

# THE SCOTTISH MOUNTAINEERING CLUB JOURNAL

EDITED BY J. H. B. BELL



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THE SCOTTISH MOUNTAINEERING CLUB  
SYNOD HALL, CASTLE TERRACE, EDINBURGH, 1

Agents: EDINBURGH, Douglas & Fouli. GLASGOW, Wm. Porteous & Co.

## EDITORIAL NOTES.

WE are glad to be able to issue this number and have every hope of producing another for April 1944, but as there is now little hope of receiving much new material of topographical or climbing interest the Editor feels obliged to make a general appeal to members for contributions. Except in the case of short notes, it usually helps if intending contributors will advise the Editor beforehand of their subject; and the sooner the better, as everything has to be fitted in.

**Corrour Lodge.**—Members will be very sorry to hear of the destruction of Corrour Lodge by fire. We tender our sympathy to Sir John Stirling Maxwell.

**Cluanie Inn.**—Mrs McDonald, who has conducted this Inn for the past seventeen years and entertained many mountaineers in that period, has retired. The Inn is to remain closed for the duration of the war.

Please send all notices to the Hon. Editor, Dr J. H. B. BELL, The Knowe, Clackmannan, before February 1944. All correspondence *re* Sales or addresses to which *Journals* are to be sent should go to the Assistant Editor, Mr DONALD MACKAY, 113 Comiston Drive, Edinburgh, 10. Hon. Secretary, J. LOGAN AIKMAN, 121 St Vincent Street, Glasgow, C.2; Hon. Treasurer, JOHN G. OSBORNE, Kilknock, Davidson's Mains, Edinburgh, 4; O.C. Clark Hut, D. J. S. HARVEY, 65 Renfield Street, Glasgow, C.2.

J.M.C.S. members might please note that the Glasgow Secretary is Mr A. C. D. SMALL, 266 High Street, Glasgow, C.4, and the London Secretary is Mr E. C. PYATT, 96 Priory Gardens, Highgate, N.6.



*March 1937*

SEA AND ISLANDS FROM SGURR ALASDAIR  
(Rum in the left distance)

*G. A. Collie*

# THE SCOTTISH MOUNTAINEERING CLUB JOURNAL

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VOL. XXIII.

APRIL 1943.

NO. 134.

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## OUR EAGLES AND THEIR PREY.

By G. D. Valentine.

THE June day was glorious, all sun and an undimmed sky. We had left the shore of Loch Coruisk, passed Sgurr Dubh Beag, and wound along a narrow ridge fretted with many small pinnacles. Clambering round one of these, which had shut out the view ahead, I saw a golden eagle, perched at little beyond arm's length. The light was glowing on the tawny feathers of his neck. He gazed at me for a moment, then, like a diver, sprang from the edge over the precipice to my right; spreading his wings as he dropped, he glided away, far below my feet but far above the corrie.

*"He clasps the crag with crooked hands,  
Close to the sun in lonely lands.  
He watches from his mountain walls,  
And like a thunderbolt he falls."*

Met so on his native rock, what impresses most in the eagle is his keen eye, the half-crouching posture, and the liquid sheen on the plumage. In a celebrated passage Pindar describes the Bird of Jove, seated on the sceptre, pleased by soothing sounds, lifting his "watery" plumes (*hugron noton aiorei*, *First Pythian*, 17). The rippling play of light on the back, as smoothly the strong muscles move, explains and deserves the epithet.

There are two eyries in the Coolins; I think there is

a third and no more. I am speaking of Skye as from fifteen years ago, when I knew it best. Eagles also frequent the Storr, where once in late summer I saw five at the same time, a number a little surprising, since only two young with the parents would be expected. I cannot of course tell that they were one family, but they seemed to be consorting together, playing and wheeling beneath that gaunt precipice, or settling on some isolated crag. Never again have I seen so many in company. My belief is that each pair has its own territory, but it would be rash on meagre grounds to venture on assertion.

Of another region, Central Perthshire, I have learned something. According to the gillies there are five eyries within twenty miles or so of Killin. Allow each couple 250 square miles as a domain. The area of Scotland just exceeds 30,000 square miles. If half be suitable ground, and eagles be equally numerous throughout, that gives room for about sixty pairs, a figure which is probably not too great.

Long ago, before sheep invaded the Highlands, there were doubtless more. Then, too, the erne or sea eagle haunted the shore, and the osprey the lochs. For love of the sheep and of the grouse the eagle was persecuted, but when deer drove the flocks from many hills, the change brought him relief. The stalker has no grudge against the mortal enemy of the grouse, whose cry of alarm has spoiled so many a hopeful hour. Forty years ago, when I was a young man, the golden eagle was a rare bird; I should now rather call it sparse than rare. Yet the sea eagle, which old books describe as the commoner, I have never encountered; the osprey is quite gone.

In such books it may be read that the eagle abounds in the Outer Hebrides. It is not so now, unless fortune has been against me. For five years my avocation led me to Uist almost monthly. When not actually at work, I was in the open air, walking, fishing, or travelling, but I never chanced to see an eagle, though it may be that there is an eyrie in the vicinity of Ben More; I know not. The bird of the Outer Hebrides is not the eagle but the

loon, the red-throated diver, whose vehement flight and impetuous cry seem the very symbols of solitude. To him belong the shallow lochs with their many long, winding bays, the low smooth rocks, the few brown-roofed huts, the bog bean, the bog myrtle, all the peat and all the waters that encompass Ben Lee and Eaval.

In the Lowlands the eagle has now no abiding place. A century ago they still nested in the hills of Galloway, where Ben Yellary preserves the memory of the Gaelic name Iolaire. Sir Herbert Maxwell says: "Last spring (1906), seventy-one years since the last golden eagles were hatched in Minnigaff, a pair of these noble birds sought out the hereditary haunt of their race and built an eyrie. The female bird laid but one egg (two is the regular number), sat upon it some weeks but abandoned it, when the egg was found to be addled." (Quoted in "Highways and Byways of Galloway," by C. H. Dick, p. 176.)

A strange old story is found in the same book of a pair that dwelt on a cliff above Loch Dungeon. The farmer, unable to reach and dislodge them, let down a blazing tar barrel. "The startled birds (p. 464) flew out and back and forth over the loch, filling the air with their screams"; so fled from their brood and their country. Surely a mean way to wage war!

Birds have hot blood and live fast; they must eat plentifully. In Perthshire at least the eagle's table is abundant. His dinner of every day is a hare. Even mountaineers do not always realise how our hills teem with white or blue hares. They wander to the high tops, but these do not form their favourite haunts, nor are they cliff dwellers, though they will hop unconcernedly across a steep snow slope. It is on the far-spreading moors, about 2,000 feet above sea-level, that the multitudes take up their habitation. Every petty knoll, each miniature dingle, has its tenant, looking strangely large on the frozen hills. In some districts myriads of white hares perished in the late series of hard winters, especially that of 1940-41, which also slew many deer and, for the time, almost exterminated rabbits on the high ground.

In the winter of 1941-42 white hares wandered far down cultivated valleys where before they were hardly ever seen. Eight hares eat as much grass as one sheep, and their food certainly seems to agree with them. There is a ridiculous air of smug self-satisfaction about the white hare, as he takes his seat to contemplate the intruder. He will hardly condescend to move away. It is not that he lacks enemies, but that he has the thrice blessed gift of stupidity; he foresees no evil. After a fresh fall the snow bears perfect record. Amidst the criss-cross of tracks, here and there the larger foot of the fox is seen. Follow it up! It will lead to a little patch of blood.

In the interest of the shepherds something is done on most Highland estates to keep within limits the number of these useless mouths. About Christmas there is dire slaughter, but greater myriads survive. Persecution is vain against a race so sturdy and prolific. The spoils of the chase are not much valued. The Highlander will hardly eat white hares, calling them dry and tasteless. Knowingly cooked, I have not found them so bad, but perhaps my verdict may be suspect. I have always come to the dish after a long and laborious day on the heights, trudging over or wading through snowdrifts, scaling rocks bedecked by inch-long fog crystals, facing often bitter wind and rattling hail, ever and anon shaking off the flakes and the lumps of half-frozen snow that cling to the clothes. After such a journey and a warm bath, any food is delicious, and minced hare, with proper accompaniments, including a shell full of whisky, will by no means be rejected.

For the eagle a white hare—plump and rather slow, for he has not the agility of his brown cousin—a white hare, lacking even a burrow in which to hide his head, is easy meat. 'Tis only a short reconnaissance, a swoop, and away without even ruffling the snow. I think, however, too well of the noble bird to suppose him unaware that a young grouse, may it only be had, is a far more juicy and tastier morsel.

In Skye, grouse and white hares would be a jejune



THE GOLDEN EAGLE

*Mrs T. H. Gillespie*



diet. There the standing dish is the rabbit, a creature who, in spite of his reputation, has his wits well about him, and always keeps one eye on the road of retreat. He does not love snow, and will not make his home where it lies long and thickly. Unlike the hare, the rabbit is something of a rock-climber; no mountaineer, it is true, but a desperate scrambler. His heart is high, if his style is poor. He will attempt anything, and it is astonishing to see into what places he contrives to crawl, if there is a sweet bite of grass to tempt him on. One invaluable qualification he has; he knows how to fall. I have seen one lose his footing and fairly roll down, drop over a little cliff of 20 feet or so, and lie still. I thought it was the end, but no! In a few moments he got up, rubbed his head with his paws, and went his way.

Along Raasay Sound, north of Portree, there are 5 miles of coast, between Ben Essie and the waterfall at Bearreraig, rising directly from the sea to a height of more than a thousand feet. Though broken by crags here and there, this is in the main a grass slope, equal in steepness to any on the Alps of Appenzell, the Devon shore, or wherever else grass hangs most abruptly. To ascend it is a breathless and slippery task, not without moments of anxiety. The rabbits throng and pullulate on this gigantic bank, too steep for the trapper. Here is the regular hunting ground of eagles from the Coolins. When I lived at Portree, we knew at what time to watch for them. About five o'clock on the summer afternoon two pairs, flying at a great height, passed over the village, homeward bound on their 15-mile journey.

Above Corrie na Creiche, on the stony side of Bruach na Frithe, they may also be seen, questing slowly to and fro, in hope of picking up a rabbit or perhaps a ptarmigan. There are springs on that hill attractive to wild creatures. Every mountaineer knows Tobar nan Uaislean, the "Well of the Nobles." Passing in the dusk, on the way from the crags, I have seen the fox stealing hither to drink: but never have I surprised the eagle at the water. Perhaps he does not drink; the blood of the quarry may be enough for him.

Our old friend the late John Mackenzie of Sconser, a great favourer of eagles, vehemently contended that they did not kill lambs. Indeed, it was a common amusement to provoke him on this topic, though those who did so, like the hearers of certain politicians, were rather admirers of eloquence than seekers for enlightenment. The shepherds are of another mind.

To an attack on a creature larger than a lamb I can bear witness. Once I chanced to be wandering on Drumhain. Though the path to Loch Coruisk passes not far away, this hill is very solitary. I had come to a recess with a grassy bottom, enclosed by a low cliff, and was clambering overhead on the rocks. A herd of deer fed in the tiny corrie. They took no notice of me; they seldom look up. Suddenly I heard a shrill screaming, like that which a hare makes when seized by a stoat. I glanced below, and saw close at hand an eagle which had swooped down and was holding a young fawn by the head. The deer were moving off, except the mother, who remained near by, but did nothing to intervene. The eagle flapped its wings heavily and made repeated efforts to lift up the prey, but without success. I gave a shout. It quitted hold and sullenly departed. Either it had found the fawn too heavy or my voice alarmed it.

For all their pride eagles are not nice in their food. They have not the arrogance of lesser falcons, who will touch nothing they have not themselves captured. No doubt dead sheep or deer provide for them many a savoury banquet.

There was a story in our school books of a babe borne off to an eyrie, a tale delightful to children but perhaps scorned by the instructors of a more sophisticated age. There is no need to be sceptical about "Hannah Lamond's bairn." Doubtless an eagle could do it, and doubtless an eagle would do it. There is a tradition in Skye that a mother had laid down her child in the corner of a field at Scurrybreck, near Portree, while she was harvesting, whence it was carried across the loch to Ben Tiansaig, to be rescued unhurt. Such a crime is oftener attributed to the *lämmergeier*, a bird more impudent

than the eagle, though its grip is said not to be so powerful (Cassell's "Natural History," III., p. 278; *Die Alpen*, 1926, p. 20).

A golden eagle in captivity is a poor creature. At a Highland hotel there used to be one dwelling in a dog kennel, from whose gloom he glared malignly at visitors. Even in the ampler cages of a zoo eagles look bedraggled and miserable. The falconers did not much use them. They were too savage, and would hardly deign to stoop to the lure. Still, in Asia, eagles were and are trained to chase gazelles, a sport of which I have read exciting stories. But I rove like a haggard. I shall return and take from Cameron's "Handbook to the Isle of Skye" (p. 117) an anecdote of the late Captain Macdonald of Waternish. "I inquired of my host," says the narrator (who is unnamed), "what had become of his captive eagle, which I had seen the previous year? He replied he was no longer a captive, but added, 'If you take cover you may see him now.' He walked inland to a field, and shortly afterwards there was the report of a gun. When I looked, I saw the Captain standing still with his right arm extended holding a dead rabbit and the left holding his gun. I looked again, and down from the sky—a mere speck to begin with—I saw an eagle swoop. In much less time than it takes to write these words the Captain's right hand was empty, and the eagle was flying leisurely to a rock not far from us to eat the evening meal provided by his old friend." I note it is not said that the prey was lifted from the donor's hand, and I take the liberty of supposing that it was thrown to the bird.

The eagle has a favourite crag of outlook, where he loves to sit. While climbing along the ridges, I have several times found a pinnacle that bore plain marks of being such a haunt. Still oftener he is seen sailing on high with wings immovable, buoyed up by and riding on the wind. That must be an effortless, easy motion. More seldom he flies along near the earth, beating his pinions slowly; then he is on the hunt. I believe that when soaring aloft, though no doubt his eyes are always

open for booty, a great part of the time he is just idling. The gospel of work is not his. He has the mind of the aristocrat.

At such times the eagle, conspicuous from afar, is visible to the casual Rambler. I well recollect the first I saw, now forty years ago, and, though the incident is insignificant, it is typical, and no doubt will touch a like memory in most. On a winter's day we had taken an early train from Glasgow. At Dalnaspidal we mounted the steep slopes to the north of the railway, and soon reached the snow. All day we were by turns plunging through the drifts and walking over frozen expanses, struggling to various points, hardly identifiable in the rolling waste, which according to map and aneroid were the summits. Soon we descried an eagle wheeling at a vast height; for a long time he kept that station, then suddenly, taking some resolve, swept away towards the mountains over Loch Garry. Such a glimpse all who wander in the Highlands will often have. The shepherd and the stalker see more, but it is the cragsman, scaling the chasms which seam remote precipices, or threading the airy ridges, who beholds him in all the wild beauty of his strength and pride, at home on his rock-girdled acropolis.

## THE SPRING CUILLIN.

By John D. B. Wilson (J.M.C.S.).

AT Easter time, in recent years and happier days, Ben Nevis has become something of a Mecca to those of the true faith. And with justification, for the Ben can teach us much of the ways of snow and ice and provide climbs of technical interest at least the equal of any we are likely to encounter in the Alps. All in all, Nevis is our training ground *par excellence* for the greater ranges of the world. Nevis, however, lacks one essential feature, to wit, the nearly level, narrowly defined ridges so common in the Alps. The ideal is a combination of Nevis and the Cuillin, but, so far as my experience goes, this fact is only appreciated by a very small proportion of those who flock to the Scottish hills during the spring months. Over a number of visits to Skye in March and April I have met only one party on the hills other than our own—and it was a party from south of the Border. Surely this state of affairs cannot be accounted for by the inaccessibility of Skye, nor is it due to any inherent fault of the ridges themselves.

It must be admitted, however, that Cuillin weather can be most unkind in spring, but it is rarely that one gets the succession of soaking days which are a feature of a bad summer. The keynote is changeability; more so than on the mainland. Broadly speaking, one may experience three main types of weather in Skye during the March-April period, viz.:

1. Bad summer conditions of south wind and rain. Usually snow is confined to the highest ridges, although the rock faces are cold and often icy. When the temperature drops, ice fingers form very rapidly on all exposed faces, often with surprising results.

2. Typical mixed spring weather with wind usually north-west. Snow may be down to the 2,500-foot contour and ice is plentiful in cracks and gullies. By selection of corrie it is often possible to enjoy rock-climbing of the

harder variety in full sunshine, and later in the day to battle along the ridges in the face of blinding snow scurries. During this type of weather one has to keep a close watch on the elements, for what is an easy ridge in summer can become, in an amazingly short space of time, an inferno of driving snow and iced-up holds. One must constantly remember that safety is wholly dependent upon the strength of one's own party. There is no one in Skye at that time of year capable of bringing help.

3. Occasionally, after a period of type 2 weather, the wind changes to the north-east, generally with a snow-fall, and we get a few superlatively clear, calm days of brilliant sunshine. These are pure delight. New snow lies in the corries, and the ridges sparkle and cut glorious wedges out of the blue of the sky. If you get a few days like this, as I hope you will, you will swear the Cuillin are the finest hills in the world.

The spring of 1935 was a relatively snowless one for Scotland, and Skye was no exception. We arrived towards the end of March, after a few days on Nevis, to find the ridges black against grey skies and snow confined to the higher gullies. This visit showed us the Cuillin about their worst; for almost a week we were never really dry. The wind was persistently south, and mists smoked happily amongst the black rocks of Corrie Lagan. The ridges bore us through all weathers from salt spume to driving sleet. The Lagan side of Sron na Ciche was the most sheltered spot, and we had a few good climbs here, but ice and the coldness of the rocks kept us to the easier routes. One of these I remember particularly well, for on it we were led by a well-known member of the Club and one who has been a good friend to us during other Skye parties. It rained as we crossed the bogs to Corrie Lagan, and squalls were racing across Loch Brittle. On the Sron, water dripped discouragingly from the overhangs, but the cliff above sheltered us from all but the fiercest blasts of wind, and we could move fast to keep warm. We crossed the amphitheatre at a half run in the unwelcome company of a minor hail-storm, and sought the upper reaches of the Cioch Gully. The two top pitches gave

us good sport, especially the ultimate. I have a vivid recollection of someone's nails taking a firm grip in my scalp, the sound of an ice-axe grating in a crack, and, after what seemed an age of suspense, a half-gasp, half-shout of triumph. I remember, too, the unmitigated pleasure I derived from the support of the rope when my turn came to climb the pitch. If this was the high spot of the day the little pitch in the Eastern Gully gave us the anticlimax. At this height there was a thin and almost invisible film of ice on the rocks, but after our earlier exertions we were not to be delayed by a mere 15 feet of verglased gabbro. I was last on the rope; while the second man took up a sitting position at the foot of the pitch, I hoisted our leader as far upwards as possible. In a short time he shouted down that he had found lodgment. And so it turned out, for when I stepped back I could see that he was using his head as a chock-stone in the crack above. He had evidently forgotten the ice, for the little cameo in suspended animation was only momentarily so. After vainly trying to get a hold for his toes, his head escaped the icy vice and down he came with a rush to land sitting, neatly in the arms and lap of the second man. To this day I haven't decided which of the main actors was the more surprised.

Later on in the week the temperature dropped, sleet fell and stayed on the tops, and ice fingers, as distinct from verglas, began to form on the rocks. Conditions now closely resembled those so often found on Nevis. At the end of our holiday, masses of ice coupled with the lateness of the hour defeated us near the top of Gillean, although we had a grand day in one of its gullies. I have said that this week was Skye at its worst, but the Cuillin are never disappointing. They are merely different. Even after a particularly nasty morning of slipping around amongst bogs and fogs, the summit of Alasdair has moved us to sing the Doxology—and it did not sound out of place. Not all the rain and mist could damp our enthusiasm for the cold rocks and happy scree runs to the valley and home at close of day. My memories of evenings in Glenbrittle are as happy as those of the

days on the crags above. That year we were a party of thirteen, and lived in great amicability in the Sutherland's much corrugated bungalow. Comfort was pretty well in direct proportion to the amount of food we brought over from the mainland, and on the success or failure in obtaining steaks from Portree. To-day I shudder when I think of the number of eggs we managed to consume. Great was the rejoicing when supper was ready of an evening, and the two who had been detailed off as cooks for the day called us to the kill. We used to huddle together in the narrow confines of the corrugated-iron outhouse while the Primus gave its last despairing hiss, and the cooks kept a wary eye open for any miscreant who might "welch" a tasty morsel before the mob could be served. After supper we would sit around on bed or floor, singing and yarning until the day's fresh air, coupled with the gargantuan evening meal, took inevitable toll, and one by one we fell asleep almost where we sat.

Three of us were lucky enough to be able to get to Skye in the spring of 1940. We were, all of us, daily expecting to be uprooted from the joys of the Scottish mountains, and this visit was in the nature of a farewell to the ridges. The war had brought few changes to the West, and we had as good a week in the Cuillin as we have ever enjoyed. Weather was notably type 2, that is, strong north-west winds with squalls of snow, and glorious sunshine between times. One day sticks in my memory as being typical of the rest. The bogs were dry as we contoured under the west side of Sron na Ciche making for Coir a'Ghrunnda, and the sea sparkled in brilliant sunshine. New snow lay on the tops, while every now and again furious blasts of wind smote us from behind. In the corrie all was calm, and the gabbro dark and dry. Following the route on the Central Buttress, we made progress slowly and lazily upwards on warm rock amidst delightful situations. After a particularly steep rib we reached a narrow grassy ledge and sat down to eat. We could hear the wind above our heads, and wisps of cloud were hurrying across, high over the corrie to the slopes of Sgurr nan Eag, yet the air with us was still





*March 1937*

COIRE NA CREICHE  
(Waterpipe Gully, Sgurr nan Fheadain, centre)

*J. D. B. Wilson*



*March 1937*

THE DUBHS FROM SGUMAIN  
(Blaven on left and distant mainland)

*G. A. Collie*

and warm. The sun beat on our faces, and the sea scintillated far into the blue of the west. Over Rum and Eigg towering banks of cumulus marched steadily towards the south. All the glories of the west were in that view : one felt that one could stay there for ever ; for ever in the sunshine and calm, for ever amidst the sweep of clean rock, in the company of clouds and peace.

It was different on the top of the Sron. When we topped the rim of Coir a'Ghrunnda it was to be met by the full force of a blasting north wind. Attracted by a peculiar low roaring we made our way to the Coire Lagan side. The wind on the edge of Sron na Ciche met us like a wall, and I shall not easily forget the appearance of the crags at our feet. Nothing I had seen before or since seemed so coldly hostile as did the Lagan face that day. Sheets of ice hung on the cliff, and the rocks were grey with long icy fingers. In the Central Gully there was an inferno of wind which, being constricted in the upper reaches, accounted for the roaring we had heard. Making haste to escape the blasting of the wind, we contoured under Sgumain, over Sgurr Dubh na Da Bheinn and on to Sgurr Dubh Mor, where once again we were in sunshine and out of the wind. Here, for the space of a quarter of an hour or so, we amused ourselves by shouting at the slopes of Sgurr nan Eag and having our voices returned to us after several seconds' silence from across the Garbh Choire. There came a spatter of large hailstones, rudely interrupting our enjoyment, and we turned hastily back along the ridge towards the Thearlaich-Dubh Gap. Long before we reached it, however, the rocks under our feet were white with new snow. In the Gap conditions were so far from pleasant that I confess to finding the ascent on the Thearlaich side both hard and precarious, especially the latter part where a good deal of ice and snow had to be removed before reasonable footing could be obtained. Thearlaich and Alasdair were climbed to the accompaniment of a tremendous wind and stinging spindrift ; even this easy ground had its difficulties, mostly icy, and it was only possible to move during relative lulls in the storm. A more complete contrast to the warmth of the

morning's climb could hardly be imagined, and when we found ourselves once more at the top of the Stone Shoot it was by unanimous agreement that we sped downwards into Coire Lagan to thaw out fingers and faces.

The enjoyment of Skye is not confined to the Cuillin alone. As it is in summer, the north end of the island is most repaying during the earlier season. From the heights of the Quiraing one has as impressive a view as anywhere in Skye. With the high ridges of the south, sharp and bold under their winter garb, the long barren slopes of heather between seem doubly colourful. Even the high way to Glenbrittle over the Bealach a' Mhaim is not by any means without interest. The familiar hills are remade under snow, and the pass takes on some of the mystery and majesty of the Alps. I have climbed Bruach na Frithe in conditions which at times made it doubtful whether we would reach the top or be blown ignominiously into Corrie na Creiche. Storms from the west followed one another with persistent regularity: we could watch their course over the lowland of Skye and estimate to a minute when they would reach us. Between them the sun shone from an immaculate sky and the browns and greens below us seemed unnaturally bright. Then, away in the west a grey wall appeared, grew taller every minute and swept relentlessly across those slopes that had seemed so bright. The clouds never varied; always they approached in a solid wall about 4,000 feet high, their tops attenuated, with streamers whipping upward and forward, the vanguard dragging sheets of hail from a low base. All of a sudden it was on us, the wind tore among the rocks and scree and snow flung about us in a blinding scurry. During the height of each storm there was nothing to be done but crouch down and wait for the worst to pass. They rarely lasted more than a quarter of an hour and passed off to the mainland as quickly as they approached from the sea, and the sun was never far behind.

In the spring of 1937 I was only able to manage a very few days in Skye, and doubly unfortunate in that only at the end of my stay, and after I left, type 3 weather

obtained. But, if I had perfect weather on the last day only, the others were still a dream of delight, for the ridges were heaped under deep castor snow, almost more Alpine than the Alps. It was surprising what was possible and what was not—the Inaccessible Pinnacle allowed us about a third of the way up its easy side; the rest was a knife edge of ice and plastered snow; and the traverse of Sgurr na Banachdich occupied a long afternoon of effort. To those who know this easy ridge in summer I would say—"Go and traverse it under snow and ice; it just isn't the same ridge." It was practically continuous cutting with the axe from the top of Dearn to the col before we could start on the ascent of Banachdich, and at one place at least on the ridge of that mountain we had to rope down so as to avoid unclimbable icy slabs. Near the summit we were forced to abandon the ridge altogether and traverse a considerable distance across the face, only managing to force a route back upwards by virtue of an ice-and-snow-filled scoop, which gave us much food for thought. Afternoon was pulling into evening as we passed over the summit and came to easy ground leading down to Sgurr nan Gobhar.

The day I left was one of superlative brilliance. Some friends and I managed to fit in a short climb on the way back to Sligachan. Coire na Creiche lay deep in powder snow, while all around the peaks towered, blue and silver, to a calm and cloudless sky. Absolutely silent and dazzling in the light, they crowded round, beckoning us ever onwards. We gained the ridge from the head of the Tairneilear by way of a long slope of hard snow, steepening to a gully at the top, and turned north to Bidein Druim nan Ramh. Coruisk lay at our feet, and all about us the peaks of the Cuillin danced to the blue of the vault above. Heaven and the world were ours.

## COAST AND HILL PATHS AROUND THE FIRTH OF CLYDE.

By B. H. Humble.

As the crow flies, the distance from Helensburgh to Ardlamont Point is about 30 miles, via the coast line—by the shores of the Gareloch, Loch Long, Loch Goil, the Holy Loch, Loch Striven, and Loch Riddon—almost four times as far. At week-ends during the spring and summer of 1939 I covered this distance on foot, avoiding main roads as far as possible, following a coast path if there was one, forcing a path where none existed, and exploring also the hill routes between the lochs. The following notes deal only with the more interesting sections, refer to conditions at that time, and are no guarantee that conditions are the same now or that the routes are possible in war time. Maps mentioned are the Tourist "Loch Lomond and the Trossachs" and O.S., sheet 71, both 1 inch to the mile. On three of the journeys I was accompanied by Callum Young; on all others I travelled alone.

HELENSBURGH AREA.—At Rhu a visit was paid to the Smuggler's Glen, which Scott introduces into "The Heart of Midlothian." The glen is now neglected and ought to be opened up like Morag's Glen at Dunoon. My route from there was from Rhu Station up by the Highlandman's Wood and by path to Glen Fruin, up that glen to Auchengaich, and then by path over to Garelochhead.

My hilltop route starts at Ballevoulin in upper Glen Fruin, from where a path (unmarked) leads towards the shoulder of Bheinn Tharsuinn, and then the going is easy along the ridge to Beinn Chaorach. Circling the head of Glen Luss one makes for Cruach an t-Sithein with descent north by a long ridge to Glen Douglas and Arrochar.

ROSNEATH AREA.—The Rosneath peninsula has one marked path across it. This goes from the clachan of



*June 1934*

BEINN MHOR (LOCH ECK) FROM PUCK'S GLEN  
(The Rest Hut, designed by Sir ROBERT LORIMER)

*B. H. Humble*

Described by NEIL MUNRO as—

"A mountain gorge whose singing waters fall to the Echaig River in secret pools and cataracts from lofty, naked summits through woods of pine that already look primeval though planted in recent times."

Rosneath, up the burn for half a mile to St Modan's Well, and through the edge of the plantation to the moor. It is poorly marked from there to the farm of Cursnock, and goes on to Cove. Another route, not now marked, was the road trod by pilgrims going to Iona. The pilgrims ferried across from Rhu to Rosneath, then their track was by Clynder and in a slanting direction across the hills to Coulport ferry. Practically nothing of this hill route remains, though a stone wall north of Airlig Hill marks its approximate position.

The hill walk up the centre of the peninsula from Gallowhill to the Coulport-Rahane road is well worth while, with magnificent views all the time, though deep heather makes for tiring going. There is no path.

Coulport to Portincaple is "blank on the map." There *is* a path, undoubtedly made by humans, but long disused. In May it could be followed; in high summer it will be hidden by bracken. Even in May it was not easy going, our progress being at the rate of about 1 mile per hour. We waded through deep heather, fought through a tangle of hawthorn, brambles, and gorse, and blundered through dense little birch woods where fallen trees barred the way. Fishermen at Portincaple knew nothing of this track and said it was used only occasionally by the shepherd.

ARDGOIL AREA.—On the Ardgail peninsula the map shows no road south of Coileissan. A new one was built and has probably reached Mark by this time. An unusual approach to an Arrochar Meet, and one which I have never seen recorded in the *Journal*, is by train to Whistlefield, ferry Portincaple to Mark, climb Clach Bheinn, the southern top, and walk northwards over Tom Molach, The Saddle, Beinn Reithe, and Cnoc Coinnich to the Brack. One can then descend north to Glencroe, east to Ardgartan, or continue the hilltop walk over Ben Donich to Rest and Be Thankful.

There is said to be a path from Mark across to Beach on Loch Goil which is marked by paling stabs. We saw about six of them and nothing of a path after that. Sheep scratch themselves against such stabs and soon



have them down. The route is by the right bank of the burn, then between Tom Molach and the Saddle, and is nowhere difficult.

By contrast, the trek round the point from Beach back to Mark gave us the toughest journey we had ever experienced in Scotland. An unmarked path leads from Beach south for about a mile and finishes at a wooden hut almost opposite Cormonachan on the Carrick shore. After that the steep hillside is densely covered with young trees and complicated with bracken and rock, much undergrowth, and brambles like barbed wire. At one stage we took half an hour to cover 200 yards. For a short stretch we struggled to the lochside and, as the tide was out, had somewhat easier going among rocks and seaweed till steeper rock forced us up among those awful brambles again. Eventually we got to the lonely house of Corran, which has communication only by sea, and fought our way round Meall Daraich Point to easier ground on the Loch Long side. This journey would be well suited to Commandos.

**CARRICK TO ARDENTINNY.**—For the first part of this route from Carrick Castle to Knap no path is shown on the map. There is a really good one, well known locally, rising high above Rudha nan Eoin and descending to Knap Burn. O.S. informed me that when the last edition was published this path was not considered well enough marked to be included. Someone blundered. It is far better than many which are included. South from Knap a good path climbs over high ground and descends to Glen Finart. June is the time for this path, for then the whole headland is a blaze of rhododendron.

**DUNOON AREA.**—The best hill walk is up by the reservoir to the Bishop's Seat, then north-west over Leacan nan Gall to Cruach na Capull and on to Cruach Neuron, with a descent to Glen Lean or Corrachaive Glen. The best-known hill path is that from Glen Kin over Bealach na Sreine to Inverchaolin Glen and Loch Striven. This path is indistinct at the highest point and might easily be lost. The map shows a path going down the west side of Inverchaolin Glen, but there is also a fair path on the

east side as far as the tributary Allt a' Mhill Bhuidhe, beyond which is a bridge unmarked on the map.

Of all the paths in this area I like best that one from Inverchaolin to the head of Loch Striven. It leads well inland across The Craig then back to the lochside, but always keeps high up above its rocky shores. The upper reaches of this loch are a favourite place for seals and, being roadless on either side, a haunt of seabirds.

The west shore of Loch Striven is another section "blank on the map," and it should be noted that of the four houses shown in 10 miles, only the southern one is occupied, the other three being roofless. As usual, I found a path of sorts from the head of the loch to Ardbeg, perhaps used when that croft was occupied. A visitors' book at Ardbeg told of cyclists making the journey from Colintrave to Dunoon by this route. From Ardbeg to Troustan at the end of the road from Colintrave the path is rather easier to follow. When youth hostels come to the area this coast-line walk will become well known.

Seldom do I visit Dunoon without going to Puck's Glen, attractive at all seasons but at its best in the rhododendron month of June. From the Rest Hut, exquisitely designed by Sir Robert Lorimer, the view is reminiscent of the Canadian backwoods, with a sense of great distance and vast forest.

ISLE OF BUTE.—It was the Glasgow Fair week-end. Rothesay was packed to overflowing. It did not seem possible to find peace and quietness on such a small island. Some hours later I rested on the summit of Balnacailly Hill above Buttock Point and gained an entirely new conception of the Isle of Bute, for, looking south, I could see neither habitation nor road, nothing but rolling moorland.

I had been told that I would find a path (unmarked on map) round the coast from Rhubodach to Kilmichael and marked by the survey posts of the proposed new road. A path is there, but no posts. I had lunch with the Maids of Bute, visited the lonely Bull Loch, and had an entirely unexpected encounter with a villainous looking billy-goat.

Wild goats roam these hills and can find cover as quickly as the red deer.

That happy walk down the West Kyle was a pleasant contrast to the iron-hard new road of the East Kyle. There was much more and varied bird life, and herons appear to nest in the vicinity of Barlia Hill. I met no one the whole way round to Kilmichael. To me the proposal to blast a road down the West Kyle seems desecration. Day motorists will rush round, Bute will be spoiled, and the sail through the Narrows will lose its attraction. It is so unnecessary, for it cannot be claimed that the road will open up new beauties to those who do not care to walk, for such folk can see it all from the deck of a ship.

Why not leave one part of Bute untouched? Here is how I would *develop* that part of the island. On the lines of the present path I would construct a really good one with seats at intervals and a Rest Hut at Buttock Point. I would have bus tickets for the outward journey to Rhubodach and return from Kilmichael and vice versa. It might then become a challenge for visitors to walk round the only part of Bute they could not visit by bus, and it is just about the loveliest walk in the whole Firth of Clyde area. But probably they would require a motor boat running alongside to take off the weary ones and a "Stop Me and Buy One" ice-cream launch!

Nor do visitors seem to know anything about the hills of North Bute. I wandered over Torran Turach, Kilbride Hill, the Lying Hill, and Windy Hill to Kames Hill, the highest point on the island, and had them all to myself. But these hills, with heather sometimes almost waist deep, do not provide easy walking.

In the southern part of Bute another unmarked path goes south from Kilchattan Bay by the cliffs to Hawk's Nib and on to Glen Callum Bay; from there one can continue to Garroch Head and round to Dunagoil, not forgetting to climb St Blane's Hill.

TIGHNABRUAICH AREA.—From Ormidale to Tighnabruaich a picturesque and well-marked path keeps high up and gives magnificent views of the Kyles.



*January 1943*

THE NEW YEAR MEET: BEINN A' CHREACHAIN  
(From the north: T. E. Thomson in foreground)

*J. McK. Stewart*



*September 1937*

LOCH GOIL

*B. H. Humble*

The map shows a path from Tighnabruaich across the hill in a north-west direction to Acharosson farm near Kilfinan. We did this journey on a perfectly clear day and found it impossible to follow a definite path beyond the Tighnabruaich reservoir. A map (Gall and Inglis) on certain of the Clyde steamers in 1939 showed this route in double dotted lines, apparently indicating an old road. The farmer at Acharosson said it was never a road and seldom used nowadays. On one of the many occasions when we were off the path we climbed a little hill and became quite excited when we saw, not far off, a fair-sized loch with an island in the centre of it. Could we actually claim to have discovered a new loch, for our map did not show one there? Alas, closer examination proved that the loch must have occupied a fold of our much-worn map. It reminded us of the story of the Dutch skipper whose ship ran aground between Pladda and Arran because rats had eaten Pladda off his chart.

The last lap of our journey was by the shores of Loch Fyne. A road took us to Ardmarnock House and a new one (unmarked) for another mile to the shoreline; then we wandered by lovely little bays to Portavadie. Still southwards, a good path goes over the moor to Low Stillaig and an indistinct route over the hill from Ascog Bay to Kilbride Bay. We were crossing the sands in front of Craig House when the proprietor hailed us and came out. He had the queer notion that he could induce us to return to the main road and walk sedately down the centre of the peninsula. We declined politely and continued to find another unmarked path from Craig House almost to Ardlamont Point. This appears to have been constructed privately, and is a model of what coast paths might be. We were charmed with it, and especially with that section beyond Ardlamont House where it goes through a wood, and trees actually twine overhead to make it into a tunnel.

We lunched by the Point while little yachts beat round from Loch Fyne to the Kyles, then walked leisurely back to Tighnabruaich to join the Sunday evening boat for home. On the following Sunday war broke out and all tramping ceased.

**THE MOORFOOT HILLS.****By Robt. M. Gall Inglis.**

*Chief Tops.*—Eastern Section, Windlestraw Law, 2,161 feet; Central Section, Blackhope Scar, 2,136 feet; Western Section, Bowbeat Hill, 2,036 feet, Dundreich, 2,040 feet.

*Maps.*—1-inch O.S., Popular Edition, sheets 74, 80;  $\frac{1}{2}$ -inch O.S., sheets 27, 28;  $\frac{1}{2}$ -inch Bartholomew, sheets 8, 9.

**General Features.**—The Moorfoot hills, situated some fifteen miles south of Edinburgh, probably received their name from what is now the farm of Moorfoot, a place of some antiquity, for Morthwaite, as it was then, (mor=moor, thwaite=field surrounded by a wall) was granted to the monks of Newbattle about A.D. 1140.

The Moorfoots are grassy hills, trending southwards in three roughly parallel lines, each section being divided from its neighbour by one of the three main glens, those of the South Esk, Craighope and Leithen Water, and the Dewar Burn and Glentress Water. There are roads or footpaths up these and other of the glens, a 700-foot ascent from their head up a grass or heather slope generally leading to a ridge or plateau from which the continuation or the descent into a glen on the other side completes the traverse. The ridges and tops of the western section give the most pleasant cross-country walks, being steeper, more sharply defined and more solid underfoot than in the other two, in which, though the lower slopes may be steep, the tops and ridges tend to be flat and boggy, especially in the central section.

**Antiquities.**—The Moorfoots abound in ancient forts and earthworks of a primitive civilisation, the Corsehope Rings above Heriot, the Northshield Rings above Portmore Loch, the Milkieston Rings above Eddleston, and the Bow Broch above Bowland being the most important of these remains.

**Access.**—The district may be explored from Peebles, Innerleithen, and Stow, and also from the following points on bus or railway routes: Eddleston, Walkerburn, Heriot Station. Fala Toll, three miles south of Leadburn, is the de-bussing point for Portmore Loch and Gladhouse Reservoir, both starting points for fine traverses or afternoon walks. The ridges should be avoided in the shooting season after July, and at all times great care must be exercised so that the young trees planted by the Forestry Commission in some of the glens are not interfered with.

**Routes.**—Both day and half-day excursions may be conveniently made over the Moorfoots, considerable variation being possible by combining portions of the various routes described. The two highest summits of the range are, unfortunately, flat and boggy, and once climbed, will seldom be revisited.

1. WINDLESTRAW LAW, 2,161 feet, the highest summit in the Moorfoots, may be ascended in a somewhat heavy ridge walk from Innerleithen. From about half a mile along the Walkerburn road, ascend Pirn Craig, a steep grassy eminence some 700 feet above the road, on which are the remains of a prehistoric fort. From here a steep scramble over scree and heather leads to Kirnie Law (1,541 feet), Priesthope Hill (1,802 feet) and Glede Knowe (1,936 feet). Continue along the boggy ridge over the south shoulder or top of Windlestraw Law (2,141 feet), and, dropping only 92 feet, on to the flat summit (2,161 feet,  $5\frac{1}{4}$  miles).

There are three routes from Walkerburn to Windlestraw Law, the second being probably the driest:—

- (a) By the Walkerburn Glen: A path leads up this deep glen to a little beyond Priesthope; when the burn forks a steep climb of 750 feet, gains the spur of Glede Knowe, and so on to the main summit.
- (b) By the Gatehopeknowe Burn:  $\frac{3}{4}$  mile east of Walkerburn take the cart road and track over the hill to Seathope, whence diagonally up Seathope Rig to the Law.
- (c) The Cairn Hill—Scawd Law Ridge.

From the Leithen Water Glen and Glentress, Windlestraw Law may be climbed by its north-east ridge from Blackhopebyre, descending to either Innerleithen or Walkerburn by the ridges described.

2. BLACKHOPE SCAR, 2,136 feet, is the second top of the Moorfoots, and is very far from any base, its approaches, except from the west, being very boggy. It is best climbed from Gladhouse, from the head of the South Esk Glen, a firm ridge leading to the summit, 4 miles from Moorfoot.

3. LEITHEN WATER GLEN.—The road for the upper reaches of this glen turns off the main road  $3\frac{3}{4}$  miles north of Innerleithen and leads to Craighope, 3 miles farther on. From here a traverse may be made to Eddleston (4 miles) over Lamb Law, Cardon Law, and Whiteside Edge (whose north-eastern corrie gives a good glissade in winter conditions), or a return to Peebles (5 miles) either by the path that strikes off to the south-west for Soonhope, or by the Shirra Law ridge leading to the Dunsclair Heights and into the Soonhope Glen.

4. PEEBLES TO PORTMORE LOCH AND GLADHOUSE.—Half a mile east of Peebles this, the best Moorfoot traverse, turns up the Soonhope Glen. One mile up the path forks, and either way may be taken. The left-hand branch leads to Shieldgreen and continues up to the col between Dunsclair Heights and the Shieldgreen Kipps. The right-hand fork eventually gains this point via Caresman Hill, where, leaving the path at the summit dyke, turn left, and continue over Dunsclair Heights to the farther col. Here the Soonhope path continues to Craighope, in the Leithen Water Glen. Leaving the path, cross the Kipps, drop to a col (1,750 feet), and ascend Cardon Law (1,928 feet). Continue north over the grassy ridge of Longcote Hill (from which a descent to Eddleston may be made), and Hog Knowes, and, turning north-west at the second col, make for the southerly shoulder (1,959 feet) of Dundreich, whose main top is half a mile farther north, and is the best viewpoint in the range.

For Portmore descend the north-west ridge of



Dundreich to the path which leads along the east shore of the loch to a cart road joining the Gladhouse Road at Westloch, then left for Fala Toll,  $1\frac{1}{4}$  miles.

For Gladhouse, proceed from Dundreich north over Jeffries Corse (2,004 feet) and down the east ridge into the South Esk Glen, where a good path leads to Moorfoot, passing the ruins of Hirendean Castle, and Moorfoot Chapel, at the farm.

These routes are best taken in the reverse direction, for the convenience of finishing at a base where both refreshment and transport may be obtained.

*Distances*—Portmore, 11 miles; 5 hours.

Gladhouse, 12 miles;  $5\frac{1}{2}$  to 6 hours.

5. STOW DISTRICT.—The eastern tops of the Moorfoots are flat and boggy, and the going is heavy. From a point  $1\frac{1}{4}$  miles south-west of Stow the Luggate Water Glen penetrates  $4\frac{1}{2}$  miles into the hills, and its ascent by the path makes a pleasant excursion. From its head traverses may be made to Fountainhall by path (7 miles) and Heriot (10 miles), over Mount Main (1,688 feet) and the Corsehope Burn Glen, visiting, if desired, the considerable grass-grown remains of Corsehope or Halltree Forts on either side of the valley.

A pleasant afternoon from Stow may be put in visiting Bow Castle, above Bowland Station, this ruin being the remains of one of the only two Brochs, or stone tower dwellings, in the Lowlands. It is of the same class of stone dwelling as Dun Dornadilla, in Sutherlandshire, and Mousa, in Shetland. It stands on the ridge some 500 feet above the valley, and may be reached by a path which starts up the hill from the fourth milestone south of Stow on the Galashiels road. Return to Stow along the ridge north from the Broch.

Windlestraw Law may be ascended from Stow, the firmest route being up the ridge to the south of the Gately Burn (which flows into the Luggate Water) on to Scroof Hill, where descend 300 feet to the upper reaches of the Caddon Water, and then on to Windlestraw Law. The total distance from Stow is 8 miles, and heavy ones at that.

Short afternoon excursions may be made from the following bases:—

Gladhouse: Walk up South Esk Glen to its head, ascend Blackhope Scar (2,136 feet), or Bowbeat Hill (2,036 feet), or cross over to Portmore Loch via Dundreich.

Portmore: The scenery here is very pretty. Dundreich (2,040 feet) may be climbed, descending either to Gladhouse or else over Milky Law to Eddleston. A visit may be paid to the Northshield Rings in the wood above the south-west end of the Loch, and, coming down to the path again, continue to Eddleston.

Innerleithen: The ascent of Lee Pen and its continuing ridge may be made as far as desired, coming down into the Leithen Water Glen and returning by road to Innerleithen.

### **Bibliography.**

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## **KNOYDART HILLMEN.**

**By J. McCallum Young.**

THE amateur geographer who can turn his pencil tolerably well round the pear shape of India or the wedge of Arabia must wrinkle his brow in despair as he sits down to deal with the lochs and islands of Inverness. Has he to trace every bay and tidal inlet that Bartholomew has coloured indiscriminately green and blue? But despair turns to delight when this same coast is seen from the deck of the incoming Isles steamer, with a high ceiling of morning cloud above the host of competing peaks and the intriguing blackness between that leads to glenhead and hill-pass beyond.

“There is an arm of the sea,” wrote an Inverness minister well over a century ago, “called Lochiurn, Hell’s Loch, running up betwixt Glenelg and Cnoidart. This last is the property of Glengarry and most mountainous, craggy, and coarse; the roads are so eminently bad that there is no thought of riding, and in some places

so steep and rocky that they have ropes of withes tied to trees to take hold of, lest passengers should fall and break their bones. 'Tis a part of the parish of Glenelg, but they never give the minister any trouble except in collecting his stipend." A climbing parson would have been the answer to this Presbytery's prayer!

"Tir nan Og" Knoydart should be, but it is "Tir na Bodaich" (land of the old bachelors) whose storm lanterns used to flicker in the gloaming beside the Arnisdale river. Here, as yet, there is no Castle Ridge, no Agag's Groove, and there has never been a season when you would be certain to fall in with a climbing companion. The railway avoids it; the sea shuts it off to the westward, except for the few who sail from Mallaig in one of MacLennan's "fleet." Long tiresome glens that have their origin in the nondescript country adjacent to the Caledonian Canal thrust like prongs into the high massif; ridge forms are irregular; Munros gather like lumps in porridge, so that a tramp from the end of Loch Arkaig to Barrisdale means 20 miles and 8,000 feet of scrambling. The climber can do worse than make his half-way call at Sourlies. Where the slate stones still pave the steep gradients of the Wade\* road as it tumbles to Loch Nevis, look ahead, and there in a patch of green sward beneath the western shoulder of Sgurr na Ciche is a little square white cottage. Its windows look out on seven waterfalls and the tide washes past the front garden plot.

Mine host is John MacPherson. Lacking Maggie Gruer's native wit, he has a good share of that self-same hospitality that in former years made the Inverey cottage so famous. Spare of build, fond of a bit of fishing, slow at "The English," he has been for years his own postman, paddling out to the motor mailboat in what is just a tarry coracle—there are no thwarts, just two planks across. He is laird in all but name over the whole of this deep glen from the Mam Clach Ard to the far side of the Carnach delta. If a wild-looking sheep "hoasts" at

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\* This is not a Wade Road, see Mr Robertson's note on p. 81. Mr Robertson thinks it may be an old herring road.

you from an impossible-looking ledge on the exposed face of Ben Aden it'll be one of John's that sooner or later will supply a goodly meal of braxy in the winter. And while on the subject of food, after tackling the Sourlies variety of eggs I almost forswore eating another; the energetic fowls there scrape among dry heaps of seaweed and the result in the egg yolks is disconcerting, their hue is a glorious magenta!

At the sight my gorge rose sickeningly, but I was saved the worst, for a knock at the porch brought interruption in the shape of a wandering tailor, trousers glistening wet above the knees, and a square-looking bundle on his back. Leaving Glen Kingie in the early evening, he had struck over Sgurr nan Coireachan—the easier part of the journey—then threaded his way through the worst medley of boulders I know on the mainland—on the south side of Sgurr na Ciche—finally plunging through a deep burn to reach Sourlies by dark. Now, after refreshment, he began to ply his trade with an old patch of cloth for still older garments. Fort William had been his centre of business, but he liked this old-time packman's life far better. From him we extracted a mine of information about routes and landmarks in these roadless glens.

Beyond Carnach, in the crook of the glen, there is an old track we afterwards found useful for easing the trudge to Ben Aden and Luinne Bheinn. It peters out in loose gravel beside what looks like two primitive stone graves, 2 miles south of the Kinloch Quoich path. Climbing by several distinct terraces, this latter route, by skilful use of gradients, rises to 2,000 feet, grassy and free of bogs, commanding a view of the Saddle and the Five Sisters. It has quite a history. Years ago now, a contract to link the glens fell to a certain James Watt who, as befits this name, had been an engineer at the opening up of Rhodesia. Coming home under a cloud, he seized on this job out of the public eye, and with only two men to help him over a matter of years, left his mark from Inverie to Kinlochhourn as handsomely as Wade did elsewhere.

This, alas, for the present is "Changri La," but while our watch is dreich and the anchor chain of the M.S. "Mingulay" grates at the fairlead, it's of another flood-tide we dream—flowing irresistibly past Kyles Knoydart, now stemming the flow of the Carnach river, leaving behind its trail of seaweed among the rushes and wild iris.

"When sweet airs come seaward  
from heaths starred with broom,  
and high rocks throw midly  
on the blanched sands a gloom,  
up these same creeks we'll hie."

### GENERAL WADE'S HIGHLAND ROADS.

GENERAL WADE often gets credit for the making of many Highland roads that he really had nothing to do with. For example, the roads in Aberdeenshire, the Glen Moriston-Glen Shiel road, and the Glencoe road. These roads were made after the '45, when Wade was dead. These are old military roads, but not genuine Wade roads. Wade began his road-making operations in 1725, and he finished them, as far as he was concerned, in 1733.

The roads for which he was responsible are as follows :—

1. Fort William to Fort Augustus, 1725.
2. Fort Augustus to Inverness via Foyers and Dores, 1726.
3. Inverness to Dunkeld, 1727-29.
4. Crieff to Dalnacardoch by the Sma' Glen, 1730-1731.
5. Dalwhinnie to Fort Augustus via the Corrie-yairack, 1732.
6. Catcleugh to Ruthven, 1733.

These are the only genuine Wade roads in the Highlands. Mr J. B. Salmond has written the fullest account of Wade and his roads. It is called "Wade in Scotland," published in 1934 by the Moray Press. See also, *The Inverness Scientific Society*, vol. v., pp. 145-177 and 364-384; *The Scottish Geographical Magazine* for 15th July 1924.

A. E. ROBERTSON.

## THE KNEES OF THE GODS.

By John Buchan (Lord Tweedsmuir).

*"Another of my consolations was mountaineering. . . . But my favourite ground was our Scots hills, especially Skye and the Coolins. In them it was still possible to make first ascents, and I came to know every crack and cranny from Garsbheinn to Sgurr nan Gilleann. It was my ambition to be the first to traverse the whole range in a summer's day, but I put off the enterprise too long and others got in before me" ("Memory Hold the Door," p. 133).*

THIS story was told to me by a friend whom I shall call Smith, a man of limited imagination and unswerving veracity. He prefaced his narrative by declaring that never in his life had he dreamed before, or at any rate remembered the details in the morning, and that in any other case and to any other man he would have been ashamed to repeat the nonsense. From which I argued that my friend had been more than a little scared.

It seemed that Smith had gone to Chamonix in the end of May for a rest. He had had no thought of climbing, for at that season it is only by the merest chance that serious ascents are possible. As it fell out, however, the chance was given him. A fortnight of uninterrupted sunshine stripped the snow from the Aiguilles, and Smith, forgetful of the work he was writing on "*The Metaphysics of the Impossible*," was tempted and fell. He began with the Charmoz; he then did the Blaitière by the northern ridge; and, fired now with intolerable pride, attempted and achieved the Grépon. It was on the night following this last ascent that he dreamed the dream I am about to relate. As I have said, his pride had become overweening, and he had gone to bed with his head full of presumptuous plans. He would do the Dent du Réquin; then he might have a try at the Aiguille de la République;

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*Note.*—At this time we make no apology for reprinting the above article from the distinguished pen of our late fellow-member. The article appeared in our *Journal*, Vol. 9, p. 192 (1907), and was unsigned. It showed an uncanny prescience of modern trends in mountain training for commando troops.

after that, perhaps, at the virgin Capuchin. He would return to England with a record of achievements, done out of due season, which would make his mountaineering friends blasphemers.

The slumbers of a climber are usually dreamless. No sooner has tattered cheek been laid to cool pillow than there comes that hammering of the infamous boots on the door which announces three o'clock and time to get up. But on this night Smith had scarcely closed his eyes when he began to dream.

He found himself, he said, in what seemed to be the smoking-room of an hotel. It was winter time, for a large fire was burning on the hearth, and on closer inspection he noticed that the fuel was peat. Clearly this was not Switzerland. And then something about the room struck him as familiar. He went to the window, drew up the blind a little and looked out. Snow lay deep on the ground, and a moon in a patch of open sky showed a line of jagged white hills. The sight brought him at once to his bearings. The ancient barn-like shape had been changed. The well-worn sofa had gone; gone, too, the moth-eaten deer's horn above the fireplace, the rickety writing-tables, the few well-thumbed books. There were some good Della Robbia imitations on the mantelpiece. A Chippendale bureau stood in a corner, and some pretty Turcoman rugs lay on the floor. The place was furnished like a sitting-room at the Ritz, but it was none the less the smoking-room of the Sligachan Inn.

While Smith sat on a spindle-legged chair, wondering what had become of his pipe, and wondering still more how on earth he had got there, a party of men entered, dressed as if for some climbing expedition. It seemed an odd thing to be starting at dead of night in mid-winter for the Coolins, but somehow when he looked at the climbers he did not think their conduct ridiculous. They were all long men and incredibly lean, and about their movement was a nervous strength which Smith remembered to have noticed in one or two great guides of his acquaintance. With them came a man whom he thought he recognised. He rubbed his eyes and stared

at him, and then a nod from the other convinced him. It was his friend Brown, a Chancery barrister, longer and thinner than he remembered him, but undoubtedly Brown.

The party talked for a few minutes and drank minute tumblers of milk. Then they departed, leaving Brown behind them. Smith had by this time found his pipe, and walked to the fireplace to get a light.

"My dear good fellow," said Brown, "for Heaven's sake throw away that poison!" and he looked darkly at the pipe.

Now Brown had been accustomed to smoke cigars of a peculiar rankness, and Smith was therefore surprised at his tone.

"What do you mean?" he asked. "You know you smoke like a chimney yourself."

"I!" cried Brown in horror, "I never touched the stuff in my life. No one does nowadays, except a few obese Germans."

Smith would have liked to contradict him, but he had so many questions to ask that he forbore.

"Where are those fellows going?" he said. "They must be maniacs to set out at this time of night. I suppose they are walking to Glenbrittle or Camasunary?"

Brown stared. "My dear man, they are not trippers. They are going to do the traverse of the Coolins—Sgurr nan Gillean to Garsbheinn. They will breakfast at Glenbrittle about nine o'clock."

"Now, look here, Brown," said Smith, "what is the good of talking rot to me? That traverse has never been done in the longest summer's day, and in a winter night it is unthinkable——"

He stopped, for it seemed to him that everything about his present position was unthinkable. How had he come there, what had happened to the Sligachan Inn, what above all things had happened to Brown, who used to be a tubby little man tired out by a day's grouse shooting? Had he, Smith, gone to sleep like Rip Van Winkle and awakened in a new century? The odd thing was that he felt no alarm, only an insatiable curiosity. He wanted to cross-examine Brown, but he did not know how to begin,



for his ignorance would seem to the other to call for an explanation he was unable to give.

"You have been away from mountaineering for some years," said Brown politely. "I don't wonder that it all seems odd to you."

"I wish you'd explain things a bit," said Smith. "What do people do nowadays? As you say, I have been out of the world for some time. About Chamonix, for instance?"

"Ah, there you touch upon a sore subject. There has been a great row, but happily it is now settled. There are railways, of course, up Mont Blanc and the Verte and the Grandes Jorasses, but these we did not mind. But last year they proposed to put electric lifts on the Aiguilles, and then we had to draw the line. There are five ex-presidents of the Alpine Club in the Cabinet, including the Foreign Secretary, so we brought pressure to bear on France, and after a little fuss she climbed down. There is not much good climbing left at Chamonix, but the Aiguilles still make a pleasant day."

"How do you mean?" said Smith. "A pleasant day!"

"Oh, yes. One of the most popular scrambles in Europe is to start from the Montanvert and run over the Charmoz, Grépon, Blaitière, Plan, and Midi. The best time is nine and a half hours."

"That," said Smith excitedly, "is an infernal lie."

Brown coloured. "I beg your pardon," he said stiffly. "Do you doubt my word?"

Smith saw that he had made a mistake. "Forgive me, old man, but it seems so strange to me. I am sorry for being rude, but I feel exactly like some kind of Rip Van Winkle awakening to a more strenuous world. What about Zermatt?"

"Alas," said Brown, restored to good temper, "that is a sad tale. No mountaineer goes there now except for exercise. The Dent Blanche still offers interesting snow work for beginners. But the other peaks are festooned with railways, and the Matterhorn, as you have probably heard, is covered in."

"Covered in," said Smith in amazement. "What are you saying?"

"Oh, you go to the Schwarzsee or the Zmutt, and you find a door where you take a ticket—10 francs it costs. Then you are conducted by housemaids up carpeted stairs heated by electricity. At every third landing or so there is a restaurant where you can lunch, and there are balconies for the view. In the end you come to a little glass cupola, and you raise a skylight and climb out on the top. Or if you like you can do the whole thing in a lift. The summit is a sort of German beer-garden."

"Then where do people climb nowadays—serious climbers, I mean?" asked Smith with a doleful sinking of heart.

"Mainly in the Himalaya and the Karakoram. Everest and the other great peaks are a little hackneyed, but there are still a good many summits unclimbed. There are one or two places also in the Kuen-lun and the Bolivian Andes where, I am told, you have a chance of first ascents. Ruwenzori, too, has a good reputation because of the difficulty of equatorial snow."

"And what about Scotland?" said Smith, looking sadly around the room, filled for him with so many memories of wearied and contented evenings.

"Scotland is still fairly good, given the right kind of weather, but the Coolins are almost the only hills which are worth doing. You see, all the other places like Coire Mhic Fhearchair and Ben Nevis and the Sutherland hills are a little too much scrambled about on. But some of us combined and had the Coolins made a climbing reserve, and we don't allow fancy railways on the peaks. Of course they are useless in summer, only fit for tourists and artists and people out of training. But given a really good snowstorm or a pitch-dark night, and you may get some very fair scrambling. I had quite a hard time last Christmas Eve in a blizzard doing the traverse of the range. We nearly got hung up at the Alasdair-Dubh Gap. The best thing here, I think, is the Waterpipe Gully, when there is a real torrent coming down it, provided you keep to the gully all the time, and don't



*From a drawing by H. G. Willink,  
reproduced by courtesy of the "Alpine Journal"*

SLIGACHAN IN 1873

*Sligachan*  
*Sept. 7/1873.*

go out on the face. You're half drowned before you finish, but it's excellent fun."

Smith, having no comment to make adequate to his surprise, disregarded Brown's disapproval and lit his pipe.

"Have some Talisker," he said hospitably to his companion.

"Good Lord!" said Brown in consternation. "What are you saying? The thing's forbidden as a beverage, and there's a tremendous penalty on its sale. Unless you're ill, and have a doctor's certificate, you can't get it. . . . You were asking about Ben Nevis. The last time I was there was when my battalion of the Scottish Mountain Rifles went into camp on the top in December. We had some good practice with ice-axes among the gullies."

"What in the name of wonder are the Scottish Mountain Rifles?" asked Smith, and then he repented of his question, fearing that Brown might think him a maniac and tell him no more. But Brown seemed to have a love for explaining what to him must have been the obvious, and continued without a sign of surprise.

"In old days they were called the Scottish Horse. But when motors displaced horses in war it was thought best to utilise the advantage Scotland offered, and turn them into a mountain corps. About the same time the deer-forests were made national manœuvre grounds, so they had every chance in training. They are a very fit lot of men, and all of them can climb rocks with heavy baggage, and handle an ice-axe. The officers are *ex-officio* members of the Alpine Club. I should like to have shown you the way the sergeants took their men up the Ben Nevis buttresses."

A question had long been hovering on Smith's lips. "But what started all this colossal revolution?" he asked.

Brown stared. "This is schoolboy history with a vengeance. Everyone knows that it began years ago when the Labour Party first came into power, and introduced *geist* into our national life. The first Haldane Ministry nationalised the great landed estates, introduced

conscription, made the phonetic spelling of Gaelic names compulsory, and united the Empire. After that, of course, it was a short step to physical training and the reform of diet and the reconstruction of the individual life. Now, thank Heaven, we are on the road to national health—some way off it yet, but still on the road.”

“What the devil do you mean by *geist*?” asked Smith testily, darkly suspicious of something which stood between him and his Talisker.

“Reason,” said Brown, “reason—science—intelligence—all the things that used to be at a discount in politics, and are now the only things that matter. We have got rid of feudalism and clericalism and prejudice on the one hand, and doctrinairedom on the other.”

“And has all the world got *geist* like you?”

Brown laughed. “Oh, no! We have it in the Empire—at least the rudiments of it. The other peoples, except Japan, refused it, and have suffered accordingly. To-day we divide the world between us. Japan has China and the American continent. Europe is a collection of small republics under our suzerainty, all except France, which we have neutralised, and keep as an independent centre of art and culture.

“Give me some dates,” said Smith plaintively; “my memory is so bad nowadays.”

“You seem to have become very stupid, old man,” said Brown. “It’s all due to that infamous tobacco of yours. I oughtn’t to have to instruct you in these rudiments. The beginning was in 1911, the date of the first Haldane Ministry. In 1915 we fought the Triple Alliance. In 1916 Japan conquered and annexed the United States, and in 1920 there was the famous Conference of Ecclefechan between the Mikado and our Emperor. In 1921 the last Liberal died, and was preserved in the British Museum. In 1923—”

But at this moment Smith unfortunately chose to knock the ashes out of his pipe. As a Gladstonian of the old school, Brown’s last remark had annoyed him greatly, and he was about to declare that the new regime, for all its mountaineering pride, was one from which beer and

skittles, not to mention tobacco and Talisker, were deplorably absent. But the sound of his pipe-bowl, hammered against the mantelpiece, seemed to echo and reverberate with uncanny persistence. . . .

And then he suddenly awoke to the fact that he was not in the Sligachan smoking-room, but in his bedroom at Chamonix, and that the boots was beating at his door, and striving in broken English to tell him that it was two o'clock in the morning.

Smith got up in a daze and struggled into his clothes. As a sign of his preoccupation he told me that he was half-way to the Blaitière chalet before it occurred to him to notice the state of the weather.

### **FOR A SCOTTISH MOUNTAINEER WHO IS NOW A PRISONER OF WAR.**

We are the hills of Scotland, proud and free—  
Proud to have known you, free to your behest.  
You asked for joy of life, we gladly gave;  
You longed for quietude, we gave you rest.

You sought us while the jealous heavens hurled  
Their stormy wrath around your patient head.  
You laughed and strove against the snowy gale,  
And at our feet in peace you made your bed.

We welcomed you when sullen gloomy mist  
Shrouded us round and mocked, "He will not come";  
We knew your step when ice bound us about,  
And struck our tremulous singing rivers dumb.

The happiness you asked we freely gave—  
The treasure that you won was but your due.  
You will return to us; and in our age,  
'Tis but a minute that we wait for you.

J. C. (with thoughts on W. H. M.).

## SOME GLEN ALMOND CLIMBS (AND OTHERS).

### Foreword (by the Editor).

THE question of priority arises in connection with the interesting article by Mr M. B. Nettleton, but, alas for the frailty of human memory, it cannot be definitely established the one way or the other. Certain it is that the face of Meall Dubh, Glen Almond, and also a neighbouring corrie have been the happy hunting grounds of the Perth Section of the J.M.C.S. At that time, the years round about 1930, under the vigorous leadership of Alistair Cram, the pioneering spirit was strong and the Perth Section kept a Log Book, the fame of which, with its vivid, picturesque, and sometimes poetic accounts of meets and week-end expeditions, had become legendary in some parts of the Scottish climbing world. As I once held honorary office in the Section, I have been privileged to peruse this, although it was usually carefully and privately preserved. I also took part in one expedition to Glen Almond in October 1930, where I was credited with some new variations which were recorded as the Boulder descent direct, the Boulder traverse by the Flake, and the ascent from the Flake. "The four 'Boulder' men then ascended the Delta gully in the corrie, but, owing to wet conditions, finished by the arête," no doubt a drier and easier route. Having seen Mr Nettleton's photograph I have no doubt that the "Boulder" is Nettleton's Pinnacle. I was told that there was in existence a complete "Guide" to the Glen Almond climbs, and that the information will be incorporated in the "Southern Highlands Guide"—when it ultimately appears!

Meanwhile due credit must be accorded to the men of Perth. I remember other expeditions with them about that time—to Glencoe, up Gardy Loo Gully and Tower Ridge on Nevis, and on Sgoran Dubh when we all slept on luxurious heather beds in the stable of the now defunct

Upper Bothy of Glen Einich, and the great feature of the menu was Myles's Forfar braidies.

In these palmy days of the Perth J.M.C.S. the ventures were usually planned at a riotous general meeting, often held in the basement of the George. At any rate, such was my introduction to this cultured and variegated society—for they could also be met with in force when there was a good play at the Repertory Theatre or at a concert by the Scottish Orchestra. And, as I said, Cram was a bit of a poet, which sometimes made it a little difficult to discover quite accurately from the Log Book where the climbs were located.

In any case, the Pinnacle on Meall Dubh and the gullies and arêtes in the corrie to the west were known. About a mile south of Newton Bridge there is a fine rock face on the other side of the Almond, quite low down on the hillside. This was known to give an excellent ridge climb of over 200 feet on good rock, as I found by a visit in 1934. The rock faces of the Sidlaws (north side) were condemned by Cram as being far rottener than Craigengaw on the West Lomond, so they must have been pretty bad. Craig-y-Barns, the rock on the north side of the Pitlochry road, a mile from Dunkeld, was known to give some short, difficult climbs. I found these pretty difficult. The Log Book also describes many exciting expeditions in severe conditions of snow and ice on such places as the Glen Turret face of Ben Chonzie, on Stuc a Chroin where ten blows of the axe were required to cut a mere toe-hold and yet one member of the party followed (on the rope) with a walking-stick! On the descent it was recorded that "The buttresses and peaks took on a disdainful and saturnine appearance as the three (climbers, no doubt) plunged through the bogs. The light failed before the pass was reached and the descent of the steep snow slopes was only accomplished in the gloom by rolling balls of snow and following their faint tracks in the monotone of grey. Long after dark three people might have been seen descending the last slopes to a car at Loch Earn



side and falling with fearful destruction on packets of food."

" See where the body of the braw Munros,  
Its Southern Outpost couchant, sable, throws,  
And on sky gules is drawn.  
Feet planted the fat fields among:  
Names halting on the Lowland tongue:  
Voirlich and Stuc a' Chroin."

—" The Munro Country," A. L. CRAM.

It is sad to reflect that this active spirit is at present a prisoner of war, but the rumour is not surprising that he has already made one or more unsuccessful attempts to escape. We wish him a safe return to his beloved mountains and trust that any unauthorised quotations will be forgiven.

### **Meall Dubh, Glen Almond (by M. B. Nettleton.)**

" I HAVE never enjoyed a year's schoolmastering so much as this year at Glen Almond, especially in view of the gloriously severe winter which turned the region around the Sma' Glen into a paradise of snow ascents and glissades, accessible during even two hours' leisure any day. . . . It took me several shots to find the solution to the ascent of the Pinnacle and the subsequent ascent of the mountain from it. Our final triumph only took place a month ago, when a friend of mine, C. V. B. Marquand, a member of the Alpine Club and a retired bryologist from Kew Gardens, joined in the assault. Incidentally he produced *a priori* evidence for the newness of the climb by removing some exceptionally long-named vegetable growth (name not perfectly memorised) from a vital hold, and remarking that this particular plant took forty years to grow! "

Extract from letter from M. B. Nettleton to the Editor,  
August 1941.

At Newton Bridge on the Crieff-Amulree road through the Sma' Glen a side road runs west along the north bank of the River Almond to Auchnafree, and about  $1\frac{1}{4}$  miles along this road directly above the second gate lies a fine high corrie with a pleasant cliff on the north face of Meall Dubh, and on the south side of the river.

At an island just beyond the gate the river is easily fordable in summer, and there is also an excellent bathing-pool, while the river can usually be managed in

Wellingtons in winter, or, of course, waded by the hardy, unless they prefer the  $1\frac{1}{4}$  miles' walk along the south bank from Newton Bridge. The cliffs of the corrie are just visible in the background from the road near the ford.

A prominent gully cleaves the southern portion of the cliff in the corrie, and is a mere scramble in summer but a pleasant climb in winter. Some way up this gully an alternative cave pitch with a through route is found on the left, and a fine detached pinnacle lies on the buttress to the south (or left) of the gully. The ascent of this pinnacle and the step off its summit up the mountain are decidedly exposed, although holds are always adequate if scrutinised and tested first. The technically most difficult manœuvre in reaching the pinnacle is to emerge from the gully below the cave, which involves a wriggle and pull up the overhanging wall on to a narrow ledge, which is then followed above a somewhat awe-inspiring drop, until the pinnacle can be reached, which is a deliciously sensational and quite safe perch. It is then delightful to stand on top of the pinnacle, lean across to the mountain and swarm up an arête to a fine stance, and so on to the summit. The whole climb, though short, is an enjoyable surprise, being quite invisible from below.

This route was first ascended in July 1941 by M. B. Nettleton and C. V. B. Marquand, who then brought up two Glen Almond boys, M. E. D. Poore and D. N. Spence. All sorts of interesting scrambles can be found in this corrie on short days from Perth and the Glen Almond region. In summer a good route lies up the largest block of rocks, starting at the lowest point of the cliffs, and then traversing left half-way up to the more or less central gully, a less prominent and steeper cleft than the pinnacle gully. This was climbed throughout in winter by the same party from Trinity College, Glen Almond (minus C. V. B. Marquand), but the top pitch near a rowan tree was too steep and slippery to be forced in summer. Probably a summer route could be found, but, as the rest of this gully is uninteresting in summer, it is much more enjoyable to climb the top half of the cliff by a subsidiary branch to the south. This provides three good pitches of the chimney

variety at a vertical angle, which are surmounted by a combination of chockstone pulls and the back-and-knee method.

In summer the whole buttress can be ascended by a scramble through a succession of amusing zigzags along grass ledges and up heather and rock, but in winter it provides splendid sport with some excellent glissading down the corrie. In the exceptionally severe winter of 1941, expeditions on Meall Dubh proved scarcely less amusing than many an early April on the snows of the Bidean nam Bian corries. A very pleasant snow gully was also found, obliquely cutting the cliffs above the main road on the west side of the Sma' Glen, and afternoon glissades there took the place of snowed-up rugger at Glen Almond.

### CAIRN ON BEN LAWERS.

THROUGH the kind permission of Messrs Thos. Murray & Co. Ltd., Publishers, Glasgow, we are able to reproduce in this *Journal* an old photograph taken on 4th July 1878 of the famous 20-foot cairn erected on the summit of Ben Lawers.

The cairn was built under the superintendence of Mr Malcolm Ferguson of Glasgow, assisted by about thirty volunteers from the district. The cairn, which was about 50 feet in circumference and 20 feet in height, was built in one day, the final cope-stone, a mass of white quartz rock weighing 6 to 7 cwts., being hoisted into position at 4 P.M. Thereafter the photo was taken by Mr Gilchrist, a Glasgow photographer, and everyone present was presented with a "handsome volume of Gaelic Poetry"—a rather dry recompense for what must have been an exceedingly arduous piece of work!

Although the cairn achieved one of its objects—the raising of the height of Ben Lawers to the 4,000-foot level—it was quite unable to withstand the ravages of the weather and destructive tourists. Anyhow, there was little left of it in 1908, and to-day it is just a loose pile of stones.

HARRY MACROBERT.



THE CAIRN ON THE TOP OF BEN LAWERS  
(Erected by Mr MALCOLM FERGUSON and a few friends, 4th July 1878)



*July 1941*

*M. E. D. Poore*

THE PINNACLE, MEALL DUBH,  
GLEN ALMOND



J. NORMAN COLLIE

*Portrait by Novell*

### **In Memoriam.**

#### **JOHN NORMAN COLLIE.**

**1859-1942.**

By the death of Professor Collie on 1st November 1942 the mountaineering world has undoubtedly lost one of its greatest personalities.

Collie was born on 10th September 1859 at Alderley Edge, Manchester. It might be claimed, however, that he was a Scotsman, for his grandfather, George Collie, was tenant of the farm of Wantonwells, Inch, Aberdeenshire, and his father, John Collie, resided for several years at Glassel on Deeside prior to taking up permanent residence in Clifton, Bristol. Collie told me that he believed he first acquired his love for the hills when, as a boy at Glassel, he used to spend long days wandering over the breezy uplands of the Hill of Fare, one of the least conspicuous foothills of the Eastern Grampians.

Collie was educated at Charterhouse, and after spending some time at a German University he acted as assistant to Professor Letts at Bristol. In 1888 he became Demonstrator in the Chemical Laboratories in University College, London. In 1896 he was appointed to the Chair of Chemistry in the College of the Pharmaceutical Society, London, but in 1902 he returned to University College as Professor of Organic Chemistry under Sir William Ramsay, the Director of the Chemical Laboratories. On the retirement of Sir William, in 1913, Collie was appointed Director in his place, and he held that position till he retired in 1928.

In respect of his outstanding reputation as a scientist, explorer, and mountaineer many honours were conferred on him. The Royal Society made him a Fellow on 4th June 1896. He was an LL.D. of Glasgow University, and he was also a Vice-President of the Royal Geographical Society, and a Ph.D.

Here, however, we are more particularly concerned

with his achievements on the mountains of his homeland and as a climber and explorer among the mountains of other countries. He joined this Club in 1891, served on the Committee 1898-1900, and became an Hon. Member in 1938. He was Hon. President of the Cairngorm Club. He joined the Alpine Club in 1893 and served on the Committee in 1896. He was Vice-President in 1910 and President in 1920. These honours speak for themselves.

Collie had amazing powers of description and observation. His gifts in these directions are brought out admirably in his many contributions to the *Alpine Journal* and in his book, "Climbing on the Himalaya and other Mountain Ranges" and "Climbs and Exploration in the Canadian Rockies" by the late H. E. M. Stutfield and himself. Probably no finer articles have at any time appeared in the pages of our *Journal* than the following under his pen, "A Chuilionn" and "A Reverie." It is rather astonishing that, with his exceptional experiences of mountain form and scenery, he should have declared time and again that it was his considered opinion that "the sculptured sides of Braeriach, seen from Sgoran Dubh Mor, are in reality far richer in beautiful, intricate mountain sculpture than the whole face of the Matterhorn, as seen from the Riffel Alp."

Nature had endowed Collie as a rock-climber of the first rank, for, on account of his length of arm and leg, coupled with a fine balance, reaches were possible to him which would have completely baffled a man of ordinary stature. Consequently, some of his rock climbs, such as the Dent du Requin and the great rock peaks of the Lofoten and Skye, will remain outstanding accomplishments; and his attack on Nanga Parbat, along with Mummery and Hastings, will, in the history of mountaineering, be the record of a most desperate assault made on a great Himalayan peak by three first-rate mountaineers.

A man of varied tastes and hobbies, he was the proud possessor of a very fine collection of Chinese jade and numerous interesting curios which he had collected in

the course of his travels. Inspired by the influence of his close friend the late Colin B. Phillip, R.S.W., his water-colour drawings were no mean achievements—in fact, as Phillip once remarked, his pupil bade fair to beat him!

Collie was always encouraging and helpful to the young climber. Personally, I have much to thank him for. One fine morning I had the misfortune to be hanging about the hotel door at Sligachan feeling very annoyed because my climbing boots had got burned while drying and had to be sent to Portree for repair, and so I was reduced to ordinary shoes. Collie spotted this at once and said that I must not loaf about in this fine weather and promptly invited me to accompany him on a climb which he wished to do on the Am Bhasteir face of Knight's Peak. Needless to say I accepted his kind invitation, which, fortunately for me, was followed, a few days later, by an ascent of the Water-pipe Gully on Sgurr an Fheadain with W. W. Naismith last man on the rope. These two climbs impressed on me the marvellous skill of his leadership.

In 1939 Collie left London and settled down at Sligachan Hotel, where he could spend in peace and quiet his later days, under the shadow of his beloved Cuillin. It was not surprising, therefore, that when the call came and he had to descend the long Western Ridge and disappear in the sunset, it was his wish to be laid to rest in the churchyard beside his old companion and friend, John MacKenzie, the well-known Sligachan guide, whom he had trained and with whom he had made so many expeditions. In his "In Memoriam" of John, which appeared in our *Journal* in November 1933, Collie's concluding sentence was, "May he rest quietly in the little graveyard at Struan." Surely we cannot do better than repeat this sentiment on the passing of a very great mountaineer.

WILLIAM GARDEN.



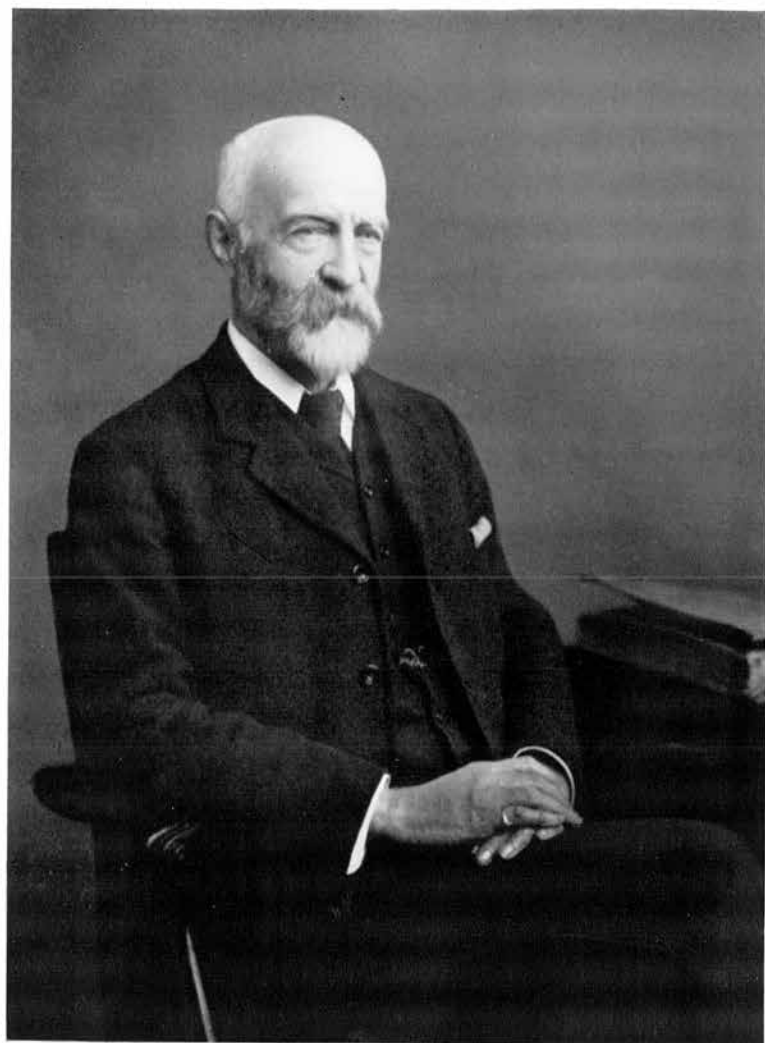
**GODFREY ALLAN SOLLY.****1858-1942.**

THE passing of Godfrey Solly in his eighty-fourth year robs our ranks of an outstanding mountaineer and personality. His climbing exploits ranged over many countries during the last fifty years, and he had climbed with or known nearly all the leading mountaineers of the past and present.

Scotland, the English Lake District, the Alps, the Caucasus, and the Canadian Rockies all bear witness to his energy and skill; in each he made a number of first ascents, many of them requiring a high degree of skill and efficiency. He already had eight seasons in the Alps and one in the Caucasus, during which he made some difficult climbs, including several guideless first ascents, with such noted climbers as Cecil Slingsby, Ellis Carr, Horace Walker, Cockin, and Woolley, when he attended his first S.M.C. Meet at Inveroran, as a guest, at Easter 1894. He was one of the party consisting of Collier, Collie, and himself which made the first recorded ascent of Buachaille Etive Mor by the Kingshouse Face, some new climbs on Aonach Dubh and Bidean nam Bian, and the first ascent of the Tower Ridge on Ben Nevis.\* The Tower Ridge had been descended by the brothers Hopkin-

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\* As there has sometimes been some misunderstanding about the first ascent of the Tower Ridge of Ben Nevis (see L. W. Hinxman, *Journal*, Vol. 3, p. 316, and also Vol. 22, pp. 51 and 58), Mr Ling notes that on 3rd September 1892 Messrs E. and B. Hopkinson climbed the "middle" (now called Tower) ridge up to where it is broken by a perpendicular face (the Great Tower), traversed to the western face and were stopped by a high pitch in a narrow chimney. Next day the same party with Mr C. Hopkinson descended the same ridge from the top to this chimney, descended the pitch, and by a short difficult traverse reached a small rock platform from which they regained the ridge and completed the descent. On 6th September they ascended the "eastern" ridge (North-East Buttress). The climbing was interesting but easier than on the centre ridge. On 8th September they climbed the outlying pinnacle (Douglas Boulder) at the base of the centre ridge and descended it on the north face.



*T. & R. Annan, Glasgow*

G. A. SOLLY

son under summer conditions, but the first ascent was made by Solly's party under the usual Easter conditions of ice and snow in five hours.

In 1898, with G. P. Baker and James Maclay, he made a new route to the Pinnacle Ridge of Sgurr nan Gilleann from Loch Coire Riabhach, and from Thearlaich to the foot of Loch Coruisk. In 1902 he made the first ascent of No. 2 Buttress on Sgoran Dubh, the Married Men's Buttress. In 1905, with Raeburn and Slingsby, he made a new ascent of the Castles from Harta Corrie.

In the English Lakes, too, he was a pioneer of many first ascents, the second ascent of the Pillar by the North Face with the first passage by the Hand Traverse, and the first ascent of the Eagle's Nest Ridge on Great Gable, a very difficult and daring lead, and the first complete ascent of the Arrowhead Ridge. The Fell and Rock Climbing Club honoured him by making him an Honorary Member, and in 1920 elected him to the office of President.

His first visit to the Alps was in 1885. From a modest beginning he quickly rose to first-class mountains, and by 1889 had collected a formidable list of ascents as his qualification for the Alpine Club, to which he was elected in February 1890. He served on the Committee in 1897 and was elected Vice-President in 1921. He always took a most active interest in the Club, attending the meetings and annual dinners with the greatest regularity.

He joined our Club in 1894, and from that date onwards was a very regular attender of the Meets, meetings, and dinners, and was always very active on the hills. Many a younger member was helped by his advice and encouragement, and he was always ready to take them in his party. His contributions to the *Journal*, too, were very welcome: "A Climb on Stack Polly," Vol. 10, p. 179; "Scottish Mountaineering and its Relation to Mountaineering Abroad," Vol. 21, p. 175; "The Club in Retrospect: The Alpine Club and the S.M.C.," Vol. 22, p. 26; and various notes on expeditions.

He served as Vice-President 1908-10, when he was elected President. He kept up his interest in the Club

and its activities to the last, and I remember seeing him fighting his way up Lochnagar at Easter 1934 with Elton and Macphee against a blizzard which had caused some of the younger members to retreat, and that in his seventy-fifth year!

In the forty-four seasons he spent in the Alps, in addition to the two in the Caucasus and one in the Rockies, he compiled a wonderful record of ascents, and he preserved his activity to an unusual degree, as is shown by a guideless traverse of the Grépon at the age of sixty-three and the ascent of the Strahlhorn at the age of seventy-five.

He was educated at Rugby, to which he was much attached, and was admitted solicitor in 1892, and appointed Clerk to the Justices of the Wirral Division of Cheshire in 1888, which office he held till his retirement in 1938. He also served as Mayor of Birkenhead, of which city he was, in 1933, elected an Honorary Freeman. He married the sister of his climbing friend, our late fellow-member James Maclay. Mrs Solly accompanied him on many of his climbs, an enthusiastic lover of the hills.

A large circle of friends will mourn his loss, not only his own generation but many younger climbers to whom he was always ready to give encouragement and a helping hand and the example of a full and honourable life which will always remain an inspiration.

W. N. LING.

### **Sir GEORGE ADAM SMITH.**

**1856-1942.**

THE Very Rev. Sir George Adam Smith, M.A., D.D., LL.D., Litt.D., F.B.A., Chaplain to the King in Scotland since 1933, and Principal of Aberdeen University, 1909-35, died at his house in Balerno on 3rd March 1942. He was born in Calcutta and educated at the Royal High School, the University, and the New College in Edinburgh. He also studied at Tübingen and Leipzig. He was one of the most distinguished scholars of our

times, his publications being mainly on Old Testament, Palestine, and New Testament matters. Having been a minister of the Free Church for several years, he occupied lectureships both at home and in several American Universities. He was Professor of Old Testament Language, Literature, and Theology in the U.F. Church College in Glasgow for a time before going to Aberdeen University.

It was in his Glasgow days that he became an Original Member of our Club. Lady Adam Smith has recently written about this period as follows: "In the days when we lived in Glasgow the S.M.C. was one of his greatest joys and one of the greatest benefits to his health. I remember so well the eagerness with which he would set forth—and the happiness with which he would return from those expeditions." His only contribution to the *Journal* was "The Works of Professor James D. Forbes," which was the fifth of a series entitled "The Rise and Progress of Mountaineering in Scotland" (Vol. 3, p. 309). This was an important and interesting historical article. He was also a member of the Alpine Club.

J. H. B. B.

### PERCY ALEXANDER HILLHOUSE.

1869-1942.

PROFESSOR PERCY ALEXANDER HILLHOUSE joined the Club in 1904 and remained a member until his death in September 1942.

Although very Scottish in his outlook, Hillhouse was really an Englishman. Born in Derby in 1869, he came to Glasgow when quite young, and was educated at two schools there. After leaving school he trained as a naval architect under Dr John Inglis. In 1889 he graduated as B.Sc. in naval architecture, and in 1893 he went to the drawing office of Messrs John Brown & Co. Ltd., Clydebank. From Brown's Hillhouse was appointed in 1898 to the Chair of Naval Architecture in the Imperial University, Tokio, where he remained for four years.

On returning to Scotland he got the post of assistant to Dr Francis Elgar, the chief naval architect to the Fairfield Shipbuilding and Engineering Co. Ltd. Dr Elgar died in 1906 and Hillhouse was appointed to succeed him. While at Fairfield he was responsible for the design of all their ships, both naval and merchant vessels. In 1921 Hillhouse was appointed to the Chair of Naval Architecture at Glasgow University, which he held until he retired last year.

Although he never did much rock-climbing Hillhouse had a great love for the hills, and in his earlier days did a good deal of hill-walking. He will be remembered in the Club for his witty speeches, his racy stories, his very clever conjuring tricks, and his happy gift of being able to entertain his friends.

JAMES CRAIG.

### HUGH GARDNER.

1891-1942.

HUGH GARDNER was born and lived his whole life in Harrow. He was educated at Orley Farm School, Harrow School, and King's College, Cambridge, where he was a scholar, and took a first class in the Classical Tripos in 1914. In the last war he received a commission in the R.M.A. and saw active service in the campaign in East Africa. In 1919 he returned to Orley Farm School as an assistant master and became joint Headmaster with Major Dickson in 1933. He had an intense respect for tradition, and was an infallible guide in all questions of correct procedure. He kept most careful records of the school's doings in both work and sports, and also kept a meteorological station with weather records extending over many years.

His principal hobbies were music, photography, and mountaineering. He was a skilled musician, and a superb photographer as most readers of the *Journal* know. He had a set of lantern slides of most of the mountains in Scotland and Switzerland, and his know-

ledge of them was almost uncanny. He could sort out and put names to a mixed bag of Swiss and Scottish mountain photos even though some of them had been printed the wrong way round, and he was seldom known to make a mistake.

He climbed his first Munro, Ben Lomond, in 1900, and his last, Derry Cairngorm, in September 1941, when his last and fatal illness was on him. It was only by a supreme effort of will that he accomplished it, as he had started out with the intention of only going a little of the way. He had a great love of the mountains and a keen appreciation of their beauty. One of my most vivid recollections of him was on Carn Eige, searching in a blizzard for good foregrounds for photos taken during brief gaps in the storm while I was thinking only of getting down to shelter. He had an equally intense hatred of all that might spoil the mountains, such as hydro-electric schemes or the inappropriate planting of straight rows of "Christmas" trees by the Forestry Commission.

He has been a staunch friend to me and my family ever since the day, thirty-six years ago, when I first met him in the schoolyard on Harrow Hill.

F. D. CAMPBELL ALLEN.

### **CHARLES E. BELL.**

WHEN we talk of Bell in the S.M.C. our minds at once conjure up J. H., our President of beloved memory; or J. H. B., our able Editor and outstanding pioneer, for few, alas, saw much of Charlie Bell. He only joined the Club in 1923 and came all too infrequently to our Meets, but to those who had the privilege of knowing him best his will always be a very gracious and happy memory.

For all his ability and experience he was the most modest of men and would have repudiated any claim to being a "Mountaineer"; but how he loved the hills, and we can still picture him stopping on the climb to examine some flower or fern or moss that had caught his

eye, or striding down some rough hillside with firm and easy steps.

Whenever he could spare the time he loved to ramble over the Campsies; they were his Church, and the sermons he heard there were reflected in his outlook on life and in his everyday work and conversation, for the hills can give elevation to the mind and spirit as much as they can to the body.

All who knew him will miss him, and some of us have lost a well-beloved comrade and friend.

J. S. M. JACK.

### **JOHN CAMPBELL OF SLIGACHAN.**

IT is with deep regret that we announce the death, last autumn, of Mr John Campbell of Sligachan. He was always a good friend to climbers, and memories of his kindly hospitality will be cherished by many mountaineers, especially of the older generation.



**PROCEEDINGS OF THE CLUB.****NEW YEAR MEET, 1943—CRIANLARICH.**

AN excellent New Year Meet took place at Crianlarich in favourable weather and fairly good snow conditions. At one time or another 18 members and 5 guests took part, although 2 members, A. G. Hutchison and K. K. Hunter, only visited the Meet in passing from An Caisteal back to their temporary residence at Inverarnan, and 2 guests also paid a very brief visit. Characteristic of the conditions was the deep powder snow in the upper corries and on the sheltered slopes, but there was good going on the wind-swept ridges. There were wonderful sky and cloud colours in the evening skies, particularly on Saturday, 2nd January, and visibility stretched from Ben Nevis to Jura, Arran, and Tinto on the afternoon of Sunday, 3rd January. Nearly all the neighbouring hills were climbed—Ben More and Stobinian, Cruach Ardrain, An Caisteal, Ben a' Chroin, Ben Chabhair and Ben Chalum, and last-day expeditions went to Ben Lui and the Achallader range. The thanks and appreciation of all present are due to the management of the Crianlarich Hotel for the homely comfort and good fare which rounded off the evenings with a well-earned and happy contentment. The Meet lasted from 30th December 1942 until 4th January 1943.

The following were present: The President, Mr R. Jeffrey, and Messrs Allan Arthur, J. H. B. Bell, W. G. Blackie, A. Harrison, N. L. Hird, K. K. Hunter, A. G. Hutchison, R. G. Inglis, J. S. M. Jack, W. N. Ling, J. Y. Macdonald, H. MacRobert, A. G. Murray, J. J. St Clair, J. M'K. Stewart, T. E. Thomson, and H. W. Turnbull (members), and Messrs C. A. and K. Atchley, G. H. Bisacre, J. N. Ledingham (J.M.C.S.), and Dr Lowenstein (guests).

Expeditions were as follows:—

*30th December.*—Macdonald and Turnbull, Ben a' Chroin.

*31st December.*—Hird, Inglis, Jeffrey, Ling, Turnbull, Cruach Ardrain.

*New Year's Day.*—Harrison and MacRobert, to west col, Cruach Ardrain; Macdonald to Stob Garbh; Blackie and Bisacre to Chaluim; Bell to Cruach Ardrain, where he lost Jack on the slopes above the west col, but both returned safely; Hird, Jeffrey, and Ling walked to Tyndrum; Arthur, Murray, Inglis, and St Clair were engineering at Black Corries Lodge and climbed Meall a' Bealach 2,292 feet; T. E. Thomson ascended Stob Creaghaichan of Ben More.

*2nd January.*—Arthur, Harrison, Murray, Ledingham, and St Clair to Ben More and Stobinian; Ling, Hird, Jack, Lowenstein, MacRobert, Inglis, Blackie, Bisacre, the two Atchleys, and the President went to Stob Garbh, whence K. Atchley and the President continued over Cruach Ardrain; Hutchison and Hunter came from Inverarnan, and Hutchison was on An Caisteal just before; Bell and Thomson also ascended An Caisteal.

*3rd January.*—Arthur, Harrison, Jeffrey, Murray, and St Clair to Caisteal and Ben a Chroin (Arthur also did Cruach Ardrain and returned at 7 P.M. only to call for tea as usual before dinner); Stewart and Thomson did Caisteal and Chabhair; Ling, Hird, and MacRobert were on Chaluim; Jack and Bell were on Ben More (but Jack was this time allowed to get home first, as Bell did Stobinian and then returned over Ben More).

*4th January.*—Arthur, Murray, and St Clair went to Ben Lui; Thomson and Stewart to Gortan and returned to Bridge of Orchy over all summits from Ben Creachan to Ben an Dothaidh.

## ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING, 1942.

THE Fifty-fourth Annual General Meeting of the Club was held in the Club Room, Synod Hall, Edinburgh, on Saturday, 5th December 1942, at 5 P.M. Mr Robert Jeffrey presided over an attendance of 21 members. The various Office-Bearers presented their reports and were thanked for their services. The Office-Bearers and Committee were re-elected for the following year.

The membership stood at a figure of 270, a reduction of 12 from last year. No new members were elected; 9 members were lost to the Club by death and 3 by resignation. The deaths comprise the Duke of Atholl (Hon. President), Sir George Adam Smith and Mr Lawrence Pilkington (Original Members), Professor J. Norman Collie (Hon. Member), Mr G. A. Solly (ex-President), Professor Hillhouse, and Messrs C. E. Bell, William Fraser, and Hugh Gardner. Messrs W.

Galbraith, W. N. Allan, and J. J. Murray resigned their membership.

Accounts for the year having been circulated by the Hon. Treasurer, the Committee decided to institute a General Reserve Fund to meet contingencies such as repairs to the C.I.C. Hut. Surplus funds were invested in Government securities. Mr Kellock, along with Mr Cumming, presented a Report on the Commutation Fund. This was declared satisfactory and no change in rates of commutation was recommended, but the transfer per member per year to Revenue was recommended to be ten shillings. The Report was adopted.

The Hon. Secretary reported that over 60 members were on Service and that 2 were known to be prisoners of war. The meeting sent cordial greetings to all those on Service. The Indicator on Ben Nevis was reported to have been destroyed, but police inquiries had not traced the culprit. On the recommendation of the President it was decided to approach Sir John Stirling Maxwell, who had been an Hon. Member for twenty years, and invite him to accept office as Honorary President.

The Hon. Editor explained that, owing to lack of contributions, especially of new matter, and owing to the fact that paper available would only be sufficient for about two further issues of the *Journal*, he proposed to bring out the next number for April 1943 and yearly thereafter as far as possible until normal conditions prevailed. A further 400 copies of the "Cobbler Rock-Climbing Guide" had been printed, and reasonable stocks were being reserved.

The Hon. Librarian reported that use of the Club Room and Library had been less than usual. Discussion ensued regarding the appeal for books for mountain warfare troops, and the Librarian was empowered to present some spare copies of books and old journals and a few Guide Books for this purpose. The Hut Custodian's report showed a slight increase in hut occupation, mostly due to members of privileged Clubs. There was some coal but no oil at the Hut. The Hut was reported to be in need of repair, the binoculars had been stolen, and the condition of the Hut generally was not very good, owing to carelessness of occupants. The Custodian was requested to warn members of privileged Clubs that privileges might have to be withdrawn unless this was rectified.

Rev. A. E. Robertson reported that Guide Book sales amounted to 1,585 copies throughout the year, more than double those for the previous year. Some binding had been done. The "Western Highlands" was sold out and the "Central Highlands" nearly so. Although a supply of paper was on hand, a Paper Control Order prohibited its use for this purpose. A request for permission to reprint the "Central Highlands" was made to the authorities but has since been refused. The price of Guide Books has been increased by about 25 per cent.

Most of those present at the Meeting dined together informally at the Princes Street Station Hotel later in the evening, when it was very pleasant to meet old friends and revive memories of days spent together on the hills.

### **Informal Lunch-time Meetings.**

Arrangements have been made for members to meet one another informally at lunch and after it as follows: In Glasgow, at Craig's in Gordon Street, every Wednesday, coffee in smoke-room after lunch. In Edinburgh, at Mackie's, lunch from 12 noon to 2 P.M. on second floor the first Thursday of each month.

### **EASTER, 1942.**

AN informal Meet was held at Bridge of Lochay Hotel, Killin, which was attended by the President, P. J. H. Unna, and W. N. Ling. H. MacRobert was prevented at the last moment. After a fine spell the weather broke, so that Friday was a very wet day and the Meet walked to the Falls of Lochay. Saturday being better, Ben Lawers was ascended in mist by the corrie and Beinn Ghlas col, and the return by the Ski Club hut. Sunday was again very wet and we did not go out till the afternoon. Monday was misty with showers, and the ascent of Tarmachan was made. The afternoon turned out fine.

W. N. L.

### **THE S.M.C. AND THE WAR.**

WE print below a further list of revisions and additions, in the endeavour to bring up to date the previous lists of our members who are serving with H.M. Forces. The previous lists appeared in November 1940 and April 1941. We are aware that the two short lists given here may well be incomplete and out of date, but we can only request our serving members to co-operate and send all available and relevant information to the Honorary Secretary so that we may be enabled to do better in future.

### Revisions to Former Lists.

MEMBER'S NAME.	RANK.	UNIT.
P. D. Baird	Major	Royal Canadian Artillery.
L. St. C. Bartholomew	Lieut.	Pioneers.
A. L. Cram	2nd Lieut.	R.A. (Prisoner of War).
Arthur Dixon	Lieut.	R.E.
D. R. A. Hotchkis	2nd Lieut.	Cameronians (S.R.).
D. W. Howe	2nd Lieut.	Black Watch.
W. M. Mackenzie	Captain	Commandos.
James Stewart MacLean	Captain	R.A. (S. L.).
J. H. Calder MacLeod	...	Back in civil life.
Campbell R. Steven	Captain	Intelligence Corps.
Wilfred A. Stewart	Captain	Black Watch.
E. A. M. Wedderburn	Lieut.-Colonel	Royal Scots.

### Additions to Former Lists.

MEMBER'S NAME.	RANK.	UNIT.
Edwin M. Davidson	...	Royal Navy.
Edward Elton	...	...
R. M. G. Inglis	Private	I.T.C.
J. E. MacEwen	Captain	A. and S.H.
R. N. Rutherford	Lieut.	R.A.M.C.
Gavin D. Stewart	Lieut.	R.N.V.R.
T. E. Thomson	Private	R.A.F. (Meteorological).
George F. Todd	...	Royal Canadian Navy.
W. M. Younger	Major	L.A.A. Regt. (awarded D.S.O.).

## NEW CLIMBS AND NOTES.

### Ben Nevis; No. 2 Gully.

IT appears that there is no record of a summer ascent of this gully. Dr G. G. Macphee was stopped at the Great Pitch by the great volume of descending water. This was in August 1935 and paralleled Raeburn's experience in September 1911. The only high pitch below this was fairly easily climbed on the left wall, and Dr Macphee considered that the rest of the gully would be feasible under dry conditions.

Mr B. P. Kellett, accompanied by Mr J. A. Dunster, succeeded in completing this ascent on 30th August 1942, and the following is a summary of Mr Kellett's account. No difficulties were encountered below the Great Pitch, which was still very wet after about a week's fairly dry weather. The Great Pitch was considered to be very severe, and harder than the right-hand route up the great pitch of Shamrock Gully on the Pillar, when climbed

under similar conditions of wetness. Owing to the very unstable scree in the upper parts great precautions were necessary to protect the second man. Indeed, he unroped and sheltered at the foot of a subsidiary gully on the right. The party took four and a quarter hours from the C.I.C. Hut to the top of the gully.

The Great Pitch appeared to be climbable by using numerous holds on the overhanging right wall, with the left foot supported on small holds in the watercourse. There was a good spike belay very high up on the right wall, over which the rope was thrown. But the small holds on the right wall were rotten and worthless and the ascent was finally effected by the back on this wall with the side pressure of the foot on small vertical holds in the gully bed. These latter holds sloped badly and were water-worn and wet, so great difficulty was experienced. Near the top one could face inwards and reach good holds at the top of the steep part, 35 feet up. There followed 20 feet of easier rock, wet and rotten, and then 40 feet of steep and unstable scree before a good thread belay was reached in the gully bed. Using a separate belay line 100 feet of rope just sufficed for the pitch. Above the Great Pitch was another wet and very rotten pitch, probably severe, followed by a large jammed boulder, easily passed by climbing the slab on its left on good holds. Both these pitches were climbed in one run-out with a 100-foot rope.

The only snow remaining in the gully was a fairly large patch just below the foot of the subsidiary gully, with its lower edge about 10 feet high, a through route underneath it on the left and a large boulder jammed between snow and right wall of gully. The subsidiary gully mentioned goes up to the right for about 50 feet, and was used as a shelter from stonefalls by the second man.

**Aonach Beag, North-east Ridge.**—Mr Kellett also reports that he has climbed this ridge in summer conditions. There was 130 feet or so of difficult climbing over pinnacles, a slab and a 12-foot overhanging rib which looked impossible without help, but was avoidable.

### **Buachaille Etive Mor—Rannoch Wall, Overhanging Crack Route.**

The first ascent was made on 1st May 1940 by Messrs B. Nelstrop and J. E. Byrom of the Rucksack Club. This summary is abstracted from the *R.C.J.*, 1942. The start is at a small cairn 20 feet to the left of the start of Route 1. The climb is very steep and exposed throughout,

and is a hard severe. The first pitch was done in boots, the rest in rubbers.

Climb a difficult red slab for 60 feet, moving right and then left. Go straight up and then left, using big and apparently firm splinters and block until you reach a big block at 40 feet. Step right and climb the vertical crack with an overhung finish, for 20 feet. Climb the steep wall above the belay, and in 20 feet finish at the foot of the crux of Route 1. Deal with this crux, which is easier than any of the preceding pitches, and finish on Route 1.

### **Stack Polly—Western Rib, Northern Side.**

On 19th July 1942 Messrs A. Slack and P. McGeoch climbed the First Rib on the northern side of Stack Polly. This is separated from the north-west face of the terminal arête by a prominent scree gully. The rib is double at the foot, enclosing a small gully developing upwards into a crack.

The climb starts up easy rocks on the western fork rib to a platform at 50 feet. Then the steep crack between the ribs is climbed for 50 feet to a deep recess. Easy rocks lead to a horizontal bit of rib with easy exit to the left (50 feet). A small tower leads in 50 feet to a col, above which the rib merges with the steep face to the east in the final 50 feet. This final section and the crack section are the hardest parts. The first rib is clean rock, and probably other ribs would also provide good sport.

A. SLACK.

### **West Face of Ben Hope, and Ben Klibreck.**

Mr A. A. Galloway of the Alpine Club writes as follows: With Mr R. L. Greg of Manchester, the following route was taken on the **west face of Ben Hope** on 1st October 1942. Starting from the debris fan above the north end of Dubh Loch na Beinne the first buttress to the south was climbed, apparently a little to the right of the Point *E* in the diagram on p. 82 of the revised "Northern Highlands Guide."

The lower part was over steep grass and broken rock. At about 2,000 feet a ridge bounding the south wall of a small amphitheatre of vertical rocks at the head of a gully was attained and followed, as closely as possible to the summit plateau. The direct route on the ridge leads up a number of pitches of some difficulty to a big gendarme. The ascent of the gendarme and of the pitch above it are probably of

severe standard. The remainder of the ridge is not hard and affords very pleasant climbing. Owing to high wind and rain we avoided a few of the lower pitches, as well as the two severe ones mentioned, adopting there the "backstairs" tactics of previous parties on this face. All detours went into the gully on our right. Time taken was about two and a half hours from the lochan.

The previous day an ascent was made on the face much farther to the south, by an indeterminate route up several buttresses and gullies, on steep and insecure grass and broken rocks. The rope was not used on this, but it would have been safer to have used it. The whole face, especially the part below the summit to the west, has considerable possibilities. There is reason to doubt the full accuracy of the diagram in the "Guide." Further exploration would be useful.

On **Ben Klibreck** we tackled the buttress to the south of the gully referred to in the description of a climb, on p. 90 of the "Guide." The nature and standard of the climbing appear to be much the same as on the northern buttress. This short climb took about forty-five minutes.

#### **Buachaille Etive Mor—D Gully.**

Mr E. C. Pyatt writes that on 25th September last, along with M. W. Erlebach (both London Section, J.M.C.S.), "D" Gully was climbed direct throughout by through leads. It may be recalled that I. H. Ogilvie and a friend, unroped, did all but the top pitch direct, as recorded in *Journal* (Vol. 20, p. 450). The final pitch is a two-storey cave, the lower part climbed on the right wall to a constricted stance and good belays. An awkward move to the left leads to an easy chimney on the left of the upper cap-stone and so to the top of the pitch. The standard is moderate. The weather was fine but bitterly cold.

E. C. PYATT.

#### **Rosa Pinnacle—Cir Mhor; Arran.**

Mr Jas. F. Hamilton (J.M.C.S.) writes to say that the route described by him in the *Journal* (Vol. 22, p. 320) has been revisited and the two pitches formerly passed by traverses have been straightened out. They are severe but sound.

#### **Bidean nam Bian—The Church Door Buttress.**

On 18th March 1942 a party comprising G. R. Scott and F. W. Cope of the Grampian Club ascended the Church Door Buttress by the normal route. Snow and ice-covered holds caused delay below the arch, but the chimney beyond this proved almost insurmountable, and immediately above this combined tactics were necessary. Thereafter no great difficulty was encountered, but the going was rather slow. The chimney to the left was climbed instead of the face, and the



summit of Bidean was reached in just over four hours from the start of the climb.

Mr Cope, the author of this account, wonders if it is a first recorded winter ascent. None is recorded in the "Central Highlands Guide," but the Editor knows that it has been done in the month of April, probably under easier snow conditions.

### **Dalwhinnie—The Fara, 2986 ft.; Meal Cruaidh, 2941 ft.**

I had an excellent day on these hills last November, and was surprised later to find one short sentence in Vol. I the only mention of them in the *Journals*. Considering the view from their summit ridge this is surprising. It is Loch Ericht, seen throughout its length, that lays the foundation to the view, and I only regret I had not a suitable map to enable me to pick out the magnificent panorama disclosed. Ben More and the Crianlarich group in the far distance; glimpses of Cruachan, the Glencoe Hills, and Nevis and Mamore peaks through gaps in the nearer massif; Ben Alder especially, near at hand; the Cairngorms in their snowy mantle shone brilliant in the sunshine. The view was much more impressive than that seen from Meall Cuaich next day.

The Fara is only two miles west of Dalwhinnie, and the walk along to Meall Cruaidh ever discloses new peaks. Descent may be made conveniently to Ben Alder Lodge and back to Dalwhinnie by road. This ridge and Geal Carn on the opposite side of Loch Ericht are probably the two best viewpoints in the Dalwhinnie district.

R. M. G. INGLIS.

### **Cave Meets.**

Mr Allan Arthur writes: I understand that a Cave Meet is a Meet that has not received official recognition from the Committee. I was therefore surprised to read in the current *Journal* that Tyndrum Meet at New Year, 1942, is designated a Cave Meet, although it was arranged by the Committee and confirmed at the A.G.M. There is no doubt that official and ex-official weight was much heavier at Luib, but that does not constitute a reason for altering the Rules of the Game. There were more members present at the official Meet at Tyndrum (7 as compared with 6), and the only day on which Luib could be called an Official Meet was on the "Jolly Day" when the Tyndrum Lightweights joined the Officials.

[The President points out that on the day officially selected for the commencement of the Meet the Tyndrum Hotel was unable to offer accommodation, so the "faithful" had perforce to go to Luib. They had no knowledge of what was going to take place at Tyndrum later on, so they remained at Luib. *Peccavimus*.—ED.]

## REVIEWS.

**British Mountain Heritage.** By Arthur Gardner. Published by B. T. Batsford Ltd. 12s. 6d. 128 illustrations and 48 pp. text.

This is a plea for National Parks, and the author sets out to illustrate by photograph and word the various areas in this country which he considers most suitable. These are the Lake District of England, Snowdonia, and certain areas on the West Coast of Scotland—all mountainous and picturesque.

The descriptions are good, but the illustrations are on the whole disappointing; probably war-time production is partly responsible.

The two areas in England are easily accessible, but most of those named in Scotland are too far removed from centres of population to allow of their full use by people of limited time and means. He excludes the Cairngorms from his list of possible sites, although it is already one of the most popular areas for walkers.

His bias against the Forestry Commission is unjustified, at least so far as Scotland is concerned, and many lovers of the countryside hope that after the war it will extend its operations still further, as they see in its expansion prosperity for the inhabitants of the Highland glens, combined with freedom of the hills for the townspeople.

A. H.

**British Mountaineers.** By F. S. Smythe. Collins. 4s. 6d. 48 pp. 8 plates in colour.

This volume, published in the series "Britain in Pictures," very rightly gives prominence to the pioneering work of British mountaineers in the Alps and elsewhere, and traces the development of Mountain Craft from these early days to modern times. There is a graphic description of the author's experience on the Schreckhorn with C. K. M. Douglas and A. Harrison. The reproductions in colour are excellent.

D. M.

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**The Alpine Journal**, Vol. 53, Nos. 263, 264, and 265. As was to be expected in war time, recollections of the past feature more strongly than accounts of present happenings. Many of the old members have contributed their recollections of mountaineering in this country and other parts of the world. To Scottish readers the article "Early Memories," by our late member, Lawrence Pilkington, in No. 263, and "The Alphubel in 1906," by G. A. Solly, in No. 264, will be of special interest. In each case the obituary notice of the contributor appears in the next number. It is perhaps

difficult to single out any one article among so many, but one outstanding is the editor's own article, "First Affections," in No. 265.

Some of the members on active service have done climbing during periods of leave. These include "Expeditions to Mount Kenya," by Lord Malcolm Douglas-Hamilton, in No. 264; "Kenya and Ruwenzori," by R. A. Hodgkin, in No. 265; two Himalayan articles also in No. 265, by R. L. Holdsworth, on "Mankial Tsukai," and "Kulu," by J. O. M. Roberts. Professor Graham Brown contributes two articles, the first in No. 263 being the concluding article in his accounts of the early attempts on Mont Blanc de Courmayeur, the second in No. 265, the account of some remarkably fine climbing which he did on the Nordend of Monte Rosa, before and during 1933.

A. H.

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**American Alpine Journal, 1942.** Altogether an excellent number, descriptively and pictorially. Alaskan mountains and airplane supply technique figure largely. There are also good articles on mountain sickness and on mountain literature of the fiction type, besides some Alpine descriptive and historical accounts.

**Journal of the Fell and Rock Climbing Club, 1942.** This is of the usual size. There is a very interesting article on Lakeland Rainfall, by F. J. Monkhouse, giving a sidelight on that of our own hills and the causes of its distribution. Three articles discuss the ethics of the use of pitons and mechanised climbing, and there are several articles of more specific Lakeland interest.

**Climbers' Club Journal, 1942.** J. M. Edwards and J. E. Q. Barford describe the new severe routes on Clogwyn du'r Arddhu with excellent illustrations. The results of a military mountain-training camp at Helyg make interesting reading. Other articles deal with Sikkim Himalaya, Abyssinia, and Glencoe.

The following Journals are acknowledged with thanks: *Journal of the Mountain Club of South Africa*, *The Tararua Trampster*, *Ladies' Alpine Club Journal*, *Les Alpes*, *The 34th and 35th Annual Records of the Ladies' Scottish Climbing Club*, and several copies of *London Mountaineering*, the organ of the London J.M.C.S.

## THE JUNIOR MOUNTAINEERING CLUB OF SCOTLAND.

**Glasgow Section.**—Organised activity during the season has been of necessity reduced to a minimum. Several lectures have been held and Club circulars issued at intervals. Informal Meets have taken place from time to time, chiefly when the exigencies of service have permitted. Climbing has ranged over most parts of the country not under restriction: Arrochar, Glencoe, Ben Nevis, and the Cairngorms being most favoured. Rumour reports a nocturnal misadventure on Ben Lomond, during the murkiest episode of which an R.A.F. member delivered a powerful commentary on the comparative simplicity of navigating a bomber across the Atlantic as contrasted with finding Rowardennan. A most encouraging aspect has been the accession of 17 new members, and if the present support continues there is little doubt that a sound foundation will exist to build upon after the war.

The Secretary has to report that Captain W. H. Murray, H.L.I., is now a prisoner of war in Italy.

**Edinburgh Section.**—Nearly all the Edinburgh Section members are in the Forces, and the present active membership is composed mainly of students. Monthly meetings continue to be held, and climbing has been done during several informal Meets. A good basis for future existence seems assured.

**London Section.**—The London Section has remained active during the past eighteen months and there now seems little doubt that it will survive the war, which at one stage seemed likely to threaten its very existence.

As the opportunities for mountaineering lessen, the intensity with which it is pursued seems to increase, resulting in a larger number of new climbs than would ever be done in a corresponding period under normal conditions. Thus a comparatively small number of visits in the past year to the local Tunbridge Wells outcrops has produced an almost record number of new climbs.

Members have also been active in the mountains. E. R. Zenthon and R. G. Folkard made a new route on Lliwedd in North Wales (the Parallel Grooves), which has been reported in the *Climbers' Club Journal*. Only one party visited Scotland, where Glencoe weather was the worst possible.

Publication of a printed bulletin, now called *London Mountaineering*, has continued at regular intervals. It is confined to matters of interest to the London climber and is now the chief link between the widely scattered members of the Association. In this connection we are most grateful to M. W. Erlebach, whose untiring work on the printing has alone enabled publication to continue. (E. C. Pyatt.)

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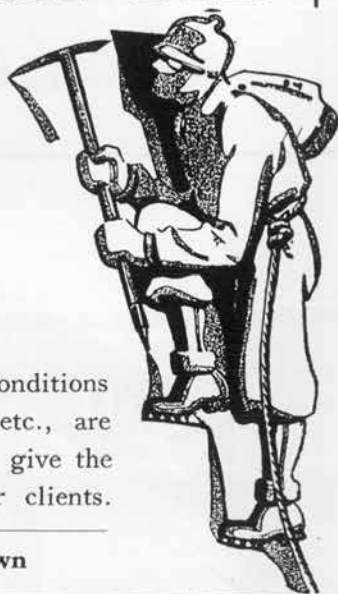
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