

THE SCOTTISH MOUNTAINEERING CLUB JOURNAL

EDITED BY J. H. B. BELL



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EDITORIAL NOTES

Guide Books Due for Publication.—The *Northern Highlands Guide*, price 15/-, and *Munro's Tables*, price 7/6, will be published within the next few months. The latter is supplemented with Corbett's 2,500-foot mountains and Donald's 2,000-foot tops in the Lowlands. Copies of each book are available **to Members only** from Guide Books General Editor, Mr R. G. Inglis, 36 Blacket Place, Edinburgh, 9. Prices are respectively 12/6 and 6/-, and remittances must be received before 31st May 1953.

Reports of New Climbs.—This issue contains 21 pages of New Climbs, as well as those noted in the first two articles. By all means let the activities continue, but please condense accounts on the model of the best shorter ones, e.g., Skye section or those in *Glencoe Guide*. We have no space to note individual handholds or belays. Be clear about the start, general line and finish, and any outstanding features. Unfortunately we can seldom afford marked photographs or drawings for single routes.

Accuracy of Heights and Lengths of Routes.—It would be very helpful if some parties would make actual measurements for a few prominent routes on different crags in various districts as standards of comparison for others. Carefully checked aneroid readings for heights should be compared with those made accurately with ropes. Guessing the heights of pitches and adding them together is utterly misleading.

Communications.—Distribution queries to **Mr P. E. MacFarlane, 217 Crofthill Road, Glasgow, S.4**; advertisement queries to **Mr G. J. Ritchie, 31 Warrender Park Terrace, Edinburgh, 9**; Club affairs to **Mr R. R. S. Higgins, Hon. Secretary, 430 Sauchiehall Street, Glasgow, C.2**; articles, illustrations, notes for the *Journal* to **Dr J. H. B. Bell, Hon. Editor, 3 Park Place, Clackmannan**. Send as much as possible by October, and all but the last short items before New Year. Those climbing abroad please send their "S.M.C. Abroad" notes by October.

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MOUNTAINEERING CLUB JOURNAL

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J. H. B. BELL



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January 1953

Tom Weir

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(Climbing up Geal Charn, Ardverikie, New Year Meet, 1953)

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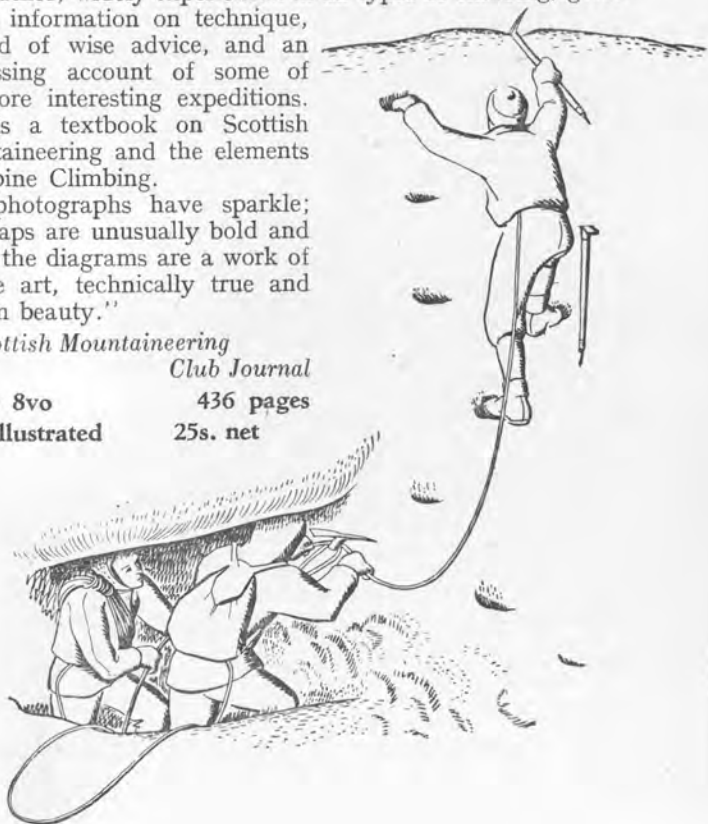
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THE SCOTTISH MOUNTAINEERING CLUB JOURNAL

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NO. 144.

WINTER CLIMBING ON LOCHNAGAR AND THE CAIRNGORMS.*

By William D. Brooker.

THE Cairngorms form a large part of our mountain country and offer some of the wildest corries and most beautiful glens in Scotland. For the most part the summits consist of bleak, level plateaux. There are no sharp peaks and narrow ridges such as exist in Skye or in the west. Perhaps for this reason the development of difficult mountaineering has been slow. In the early days the Cairngorms had their share of attention from the ubiquitous Raeburn and his contemporaries, but there followed a long period of stagnation with only infrequent visits by rock climbers. As is to be expected, in view of its greater accessibility, Lochnagar was the scene of a good deal more activity, but even here climbing development lagged far behind that in Skye, Glencoe, Ben Nevis and other areas.

In recent years many new climbs have been made, both summer and winter, and these offer a wide variety of interest and difficulty. Nevertheless, although mountaineering activity is now considerable and on the increase, there are still comparatively few visits by other than local parties. Many unfair criticisms have been applied to

* The reader should consult the new 1950 edition of the "S.M.C. Guide to the Cairngorms" for the various routes mentioned in this article.

Cairngorm granite. It has been said that it is unsound, grassy and lacks belays. These opinions are probably derived from experience of gully climbs and are largely correct when applied strictly to gullies. On face and buttress climbs the rock is usually very good and belays are seldom lacking. Many of the cliffs face north. Consequently they carry a good deal of vegetation, but this is usually confined to ledges and chimneys, leaving the open ridges and walls free.

The rock is a massive granite, often lacking in positive holds or cracks, with many smooth slabs and corners. Lichen prevails, becoming rather slippery when wet, and for this reason vibrams are not much used. Most pitches are more difficult than they appear, and this is especially true of grooves. Route-finding is often difficult on account of the rock structure and owing to lack of scratches on many climbs. On south-facing crags heather is the predominant vegetation. This is much more adhesive than grass. North-facing crags usually have blaeberry ledges, which are also fairly secure. On some climbs the use of vegetation holds is necessary and, with practice, there soon develops a special technique with attractions of its own.

As time goes on the removal of turf and any loose holds may make the Cairngorms much more popular with climbers from other areas. I hope that this will happen, for newcomers will find that the inaccessibility of some of the corries brings a very satisfying isolation from the outside world; and that the typical Scottish nature of many of the climbs is completely free from that artificiality which tends to develop as cliffs are covered with a complicated network of routes.

In winter the Cairngorms offer the widest scope for all branches of mountaineering. It is beyond the range of this article to discuss the multitude of snow climbs, and only passing reference will be made to them. It seems certain that fine ice climbing abounds in most corries, but unfortunately very little has been done. This is due, in the main, to the great distances to some of the best corries, often through deep snow. It is to be remembered that

avalanche conditions are not uncommon, blizzards may last for days and that temperatures may sink to levels not normally associated with these islands. With these last two facts in mind, careful consideration is advisable before bivouacking in high corries in winter. There is no sharp division between the rock and ice climbing seasons, and the two may overlap considerably. Normally, however, good winter climbing may be had from November to April.

A Brief Survey.

Braeriach, Coire Bhrochain.—West, Central Buttress, East and Pyramus gullies give fairly straightforward snow climbs. Champion and Thisbe gullies appear more difficult but have never been investigated. There is no record of an ascent of Black Pinnacle under really wintry conditions, but it should make a fine climb.

Braeriach, Garbh Choire.—There is no record of any winter climbs except by fairly easy snow gullies, of which there are several. Both here and in Coire Bhrochain bergschrunds may present problems as late as August.

Angel's Peak.—The obvious climb is Chokestone Gully, unclimbed as yet. In the first 400 feet there are no pitches, but the bed is steep and may be icy. The chokestone itself offers a very steep 50-foot ice pitch. If this is unclimbable the summer exit beneath the pitch should be possible unless there is a heavy covering of incoherent snow.

Devil's Point.—The face has been climbed at several places under winter conditions. Being about 1,000 feet in height, it may give varied climbing of an Alpine nature. There is a lack of definition in places, and traversing should be possible. The most obvious lines are the south-east and south-west gullies.

Cairngorm, Coire an t-Sneachda.—Jacob's Ladder and Aladdin's Couloir offer snow climbs, and the Aladdin Buttress an interesting ridge, once the lower rocks have been passed. To the right of the Aladdin Buttress there are two slender gullies which might repay investigation.

The Fiacail Ridge.—This sometimes becomes buried in fog crystals and snow. When this occurs, the crest may become quite hard and extremely enjoyable.

Coire an Lochain.—The Central Slab is covered with snow in winter and should be treated with care if avalanche conditions prevail. The Couloir is an easy snow climb. The Vent is harder and may have a big ice-pitch. "Y" Gully by the right branch is easy, though steep, but the left branch may have an ice-pitch. Nameless Gully is unclimbed but has a good deal of ice and should give a fine climb.

The Loch Avon Cliffs.—There are plenty of snow climbs such as Castle Gates and Pinnacle gullies on the Shelter Stone Crag. A very fine ice-route, Scorpion, has recently been made on Carn Etchachan. Both on the cliffs behind the Shelter Stone and on the line of cliffs on Ben Macdhui there appear to be extremely good possibilities.

Creagan a' Coire Etchachan.—There is a very steep, slabby face toward Coire Etchachan. A great deal of ice is usually present in the gullies and chimneys, and the face has good potentialities although as yet only one winter climb has been made.

Coire Sputan Dearg.—The right branch of Slab Chimney is the only ice climb to date, but Pinnacle Buttress, Crystal Ridge and Flake Buttress have all been climbed under winter conditions and can give excellent climbs. Between Cherub's Buttress and Flake Buttress lie two large and complicated ice-falls, neither of which has been ascended, although that on the right certainly seems possible. The climbs are all fairly short and can usually be done from Derry Lodge within the brief daylight hours of winter.

Beinn a' Bhuid.—Little winter climbing has been done. There are snow gullies in all the corries. In Coire na Ciche the South Gully is often heavily corniced and, on its left wall, has a steep chimney which may be possible. The Coire na Ciche face of the Chioch has been ascended and also the Dividing Buttress. Under certain snow conditions the Mitre Ridge should make a magnifi-

cent climb, although its inaccessibility is an obstacle to its ascent.

The White Mounth.—There are several winter crags such as Corrie Kander and the Stuic Buttress, but it is to Creag an Dubh Loch and the N.E. Corrie of Lochnagar that we turn for the best climbing.

Creag an Dubh Loch.—The Central Gully is generally easy. The S.E. Gully is much better and has an ice-pitch. It may be desirable to avoid the cornice by the left wall.

Nothing else has been climbed, but N.W. Gully should be good with its two interesting features, the complicated initial ice-fall and the exit slab.

Lochnagar.—In the N.E. Corrie lie snow and ice-routes of the greatest interest, variety and difficulty, and it is here that most of the Cairngorm ice-climbing has been done. It has been said that ice does not form in very large quantities in the East of Scotland. This is completely untrue. Sometimes the ice is not confined to the gullies but forms large, clear masses over parts of the easier rocks and even stretches of the plateau rim.

There is little information to be had on conditions in the past, and the descriptions below are based on observations during the last four years.

The corrie often receives its first snow in September and its first permanent fall in October, the rock climbs then becoming more difficult on account of a few inches of powder snow on the upper half of the cliffs. The snow lies most thickly at the rear of the corrie, *i.e.*, on the cliffs between Douglas and Raeburn's gullies. At this period the vegetation tends to be very unstable and wet rocks are usual.

The first heavy snowfall seems to occur during the second half of November, when heavy plastering of all the cliffs takes place. At times the rocks may be completely covered and even vertical walls may have a wind-packed coating of snow and fog crystals up to 12 inches thick. From now on a variation of conditions takes place with successive thaw, fall and frost.

At Christmas and New Year conditions vary a good

deal. The New Year week may bring a strong thaw for a day or two. In the Cairngorms this may allow easy access to corries such as Sputan Dearg and Etchachan and leave the buttresses fairly free of snow, but with enough ice to make interesting climbing. Towards the end of January there is a period which brings excellent conditions. The snow is mostly hard and in fairly small quantities, though there may be a covering of powder, and there is a good deal of ice.

More variable conditions follow, but there is sometimes a spring-like week at the end of March when summer rock climbing may be had. The winter climbing season may last in some years into May.

The West Buttress is the only part of the corrie which receives much sunshine in winter. Thus it is the first to revert to summer conditions. If heavy masses of fog crystals have been deposited there may be danger of falling ice on a sunny day on this face (also in Coire Bhrochain and Coire Sputan Dearg).

Temperatures may perform unusual reversals. On several occasions I have noticed a sudden thaw, lasting barely an hour during the afternoon. In addition, the lower cliffs may be freezing hard while a thaw is occurring on the plateau. This is due to the corrie being completely sheltered from the warm south or south-west winds, which consequently have no immediate effect on conditions lower down. In my own opinion, a well-frozen cornice requires a good deal more than a few hours of thaw to dislodge it, but the danger lies in cornices being loosened during previous days.

The buttresses are the first to give good climbing. Usually it is not until well into December that ice forms in large quantities. When the ice comes it forms many ice-falls in nearly all the gullies. The largest is that which occupies the lower section of Parallel Gully "B." At times it is a continuous frozen pillar, 200 feet in height.

When the rock-climbing season has returned, climbing is not recommended in Raeburn's, Polyphemus, Douglas and Parallel "A" gullies, as they may often be subject to stone-fall until June, especially in wet weather.

The Routes.

The routes discussed below are those which give major expeditions under good winter conditions. Most of them have only been climbed once or twice: thus knowledge is limited. The figures in brackets indicate the number of ascents known and the months of ascent. *Journal* references are also given where applicable. There are, of course, other climbs, but they are normally either fairly easy or very short. Piton belays are often advisable where rock belays are absent, as all the climbs except Raeburn's and Douglas gullies have very abrupt lower terminations. Certainly pitons should always be carried, as a doubtful axe belay is not an adequate safeguard where a fall may involve a party in very serious consequences.

Central Buttress (several, at various times).—This is the easiest of the buttresses. It may give a very good climb when icy or well plastered. An easier avoiding line is available along the left flank but, once fairly started on the crest, there is no escape. It is often a route which can be done when the hour or conditions prevent an attempt on bigger game. The last 150 ft. is a snow slope.

Shadow Buttress "A" (2—December and ?).—The Spiral Terrace may become a delightful snow arête at times. The difficulties should normally be fairly continuous from a little above the upper end of the Spiral to the crest of the buttress. The tower just below the plateau may be a difficult obstacle.

Giant's Head Chimney (3—Jan., Nov. and Dec.).—On the January ascent there was not a great deal of snow but a lot of ice on the rocks. The hardest section was the 80 feet after leaving the Terrace. Above this the route slanted right from the trough and finished up the slender "Feathered arête" which lies close under a big bastion of rock on the right. This is a more interesting finish than that following the trough all the way to the crest of Shadow "A."

In November the chokestone was the crux and the upper part much easier. Later in the season the chokestone

seems to become simpler with snow banking and the pitches gaining and leaving the Terrace more difficult with the formation of ice.

Polyphemus Gully (no complete ascent; *Cairngorm Club Journal*, No. 87).—This is the finest of the Lochnagar winter gullies. It contains between five and seven ice-pitches, the first of which is a double pitch of about 90 ft. An attempt in rather poor February conditions succeeded in reaching a point about 200 feet from the top. The major difficulties seem to have been overcome, but lack of topographical knowledge and bad route-finding forced the party to retreat while daylight allowed. The original summer escape by the left bank should be feasible, but the finer way would be to climb direct. After the easy snow section in the middle of the gully a steep gutter leads to a shallow cave. If there is sufficient ice the cave should go; if not, a recessed corner on the right may be the key. Above lie two open chimneys, both of which may harbour ice-pitches about which little is known. The cornice may be formidable.

Douglas Gully (1—December; *Cairngorm Club Journal*, No. 87).—It seems that this gully is only justifiable under certain conditions. The lower gully should prove no real obstacle, but the steepness of the 200-foot terminal wall—70 degrees throughout—presents a unique problem. The ascent was made when the final wall was wind-plastered with a thick layer of snow which had frozen hard. For most of the last 200 feet handholds had to be cut and the snow used as if it were sound ice. The route lay some 20 feet to the right of that taken in summer, returning left below the cornice. Half-way up was an invaluable rock cave, and in the cornice itself was an ice cave which made the ascent possible. The steepness of the upper wall was such that a groove had to be made in the snow to allow progress. This groove became deeper until the smooth rock beneath was reached. The final move into the ice cave had thus to be made without continuing the groove, and an axe was driven in and used as handhold and then a foothold. The cornice was tunnelled from the cave.



LOCHNAGAR IN WINTER

R. L. Mitchell

Whether the summer route can be followed under less heavy snow conditions is a matter for conjecture, but any party attempting the gully would be wise to examine the wall and especially the cornice carefully beforehand.

Parallel Gully "A" (1—January and 3—March; *Cairngorm Club Journal*, No. 86).—This is one of the easier winter gullies and the first of the post-war winter routes. The bottom pitch is unclimbed both summer and winter, but should not be very hard when well banked with snow and ice.

The normal Tough-Brown Traverse approach is used, and the last 60 feet before the gully may be heavily iced. Easy, steep snow follows to the fork in the gully. The final wall of the left branch is fearsome in aspect and probably impossible, but a little way up the branch a chimney splits the left wall. Its foot is reached by a rising traverse out across the wall. Unless there is an unusual depth of snow this traverse provides the crux. The chimney is steep but, except for the cornice, should not be troublesome.

Parallel Gully "B" (no winter ascent).—The lower section becomes a 200-foot ice-pitch which may be impossible. The middle section becomes well banked up and should be climbable. The upper section seems to form three large ice bulges which could perhaps be threaded. There is a possible escape on to Tough-Brown from below the upper section.

Tough-Brown Traverse (1—January).—This is one of the finest winter climbs on the mountain. Hard snow conditions were obtained for the ascent, and continuous step-cutting was required on the many traverses. The crossing of the Parallel gullies, especially "A," is often complicated by great sheets of ice, which absorbs much time. The escape from the Great Terrace was the crux and required combined tactics. The great slab above may require good snow to allow holds to be cut. After the slab the route can be varied, but the best plan is to trend left from the slab and then work back right to the crest of the ridge.

Raeburn's Gully (numerous).—This is the most popular

winter climb and is the first of the gullies to acquire good ice conditions. Owing to the presence of a spring, a big ice-pitch may have formed as early as November. Usually the gully is hardest early in the season, and may be impossible unless there is sufficient ice to climb the wall and the rocks above.

Later it becomes easier, and banking may reduce the ice-pitch considerably. It carries the heaviest cornice on Lochnagar, and the ascent of this may sometimes be the main difficulty.

Pinnacle Gully I. (1—January; *Cairngorm Club Journal*, No. 87).—On the only ascent to date, the difficulty was concentrated on the pitch by-passing the first cave on the left. The crevasse used in summer was choked with ice. Instead, a traverse on very steep snow had to be made across and down to the top of the cave. This means of passing the cave requires good, hard snow and a 100-foot run-out. After this the gully is easy to the col behind the Pinnacle.

The 50-foot ascent to the Pinnacle may be very icy. A full hour should be allowed for it, even with a *rappel* descent. The final pitch to the plateau should always be feasible.

The Stack (1—November).—The summer route was followed throughout under heavy snow conditions—a wind-plastered layer up to a foot thick. There was little ice, but a great deal of time was used in clearing the snow. The position of the crux will probably vary with conditions.

Black Spout Buttress (2—November and 1—January).—Under certain conditions this buttress can make an excellent and quite difficult climb. The lower part will be the harder if there is much ice, as is probable after the New Year. At the step in the buttress a traverse can be made to the Black Spout. If time is short the lower section may be avoided and the route joined here. Some way above this, below a tower, a long, broken shelf forms an escape to the head of the Spout. The route, however, avoids the tower on the right and regains the crest at a platform below a vertical wall. The ensuing

right traverse to a cave at the head of a gully is the crux early in the season, or if there is a great deal of snow. The slabs above should be treated carefully, as there may be thin ice beneath the snow.

Gargoyle Chimney (1—January).—The approach to the Terrace may have an ice-pitch, but the easiest way is to trend right just below the Terrace itself. In sunshine the approach may be subject to falling ice.

The chimney section forms a 120-foot ice-pitch which can be climbed in three pitches if piton belays are used. If the right wall is iced up the move on to the shelf may be awkward and this, with the swarm over the chokestone, will prove the crux.

In the wider section the narrow chimney on the right was used, and the final chimney exit gave no trouble.

Gargoyle Chimney is an excellent climb of its kind. It is fairly short, has some fine, severe ice-work and there is no difficulty in following the route.

West Gully.—The bottom pitch becomes a 100-foot ice-fall which has never been climbed. The ordinary route above the Terrace has been climbed both with fresh powder snow early in the season and with patches of old snow later on. However, there is no record of an ascent of the route under true winter conditions, when there is at least one big ice-pitch in the upper part.

Conclusion.

I have made no attempt to grade the climbs or to estimate times which are required. I shall just say that a party of two should estimate a minimum of five hours for the bigger climbs such as Giant's Head, Douglas, Tough-Brown and Gargoyle Chimney.

These, then, are the major winter climbs on Lochnagar at the moment. There is no doubt that many more routes will be added to the list. Obvious examples are Polyphemus Gully and a combination of Parallel gullies "A" and "B." Of the remaining big buttresses, Eagle Ridge is perhaps the most promising and would make a magnificent climb of sustained severity. On

Creag an Dubh Loch, N.W. Gully will probably be the first to fall. In good conditions Labyrinth might prove possible by finishing on Hanging Garden or by the huge groove even farther left.

In the Cairngorms the potential climbs are legion and range from the Mitre Ridge to the unknown recesses of the Garbh Choire of Braeriach. The Shelter Stone area shows great promise as a field for excellent climbing in both summer and winter.

I have not tried to compare the routes with established winter climbs of Ben Nevis or Glencoe. However, I think they would face up pretty well in such a comparison. Although a big climb on Ben Nevis may be much longer, a comparable route on Lochnagar may take as much time owing to its more continuous difficulty.

The writer would be very interested to hear of any new winter routes being made or the harder ones being repeated, and would welcome information as to times, conditions, etc. Thanks are due to T. W. Patey for information concerning Douglas Gully, Tough-Brown Traverse and Pinnacle Gully I.

Recent New Winter Ascents.

Cairn Lochan (Coire an Lochain), "Y" Gully.—Previous ascents of the left branch may have been made, though unrecorded. When climbed by T. W. Patey, A. G. Nicol and A. Wedderburn in November 1952, it was a snow climb, and a 20-foot ice-pitch offered some difficulty.

The Stack, Lochnagar.—J. M. Taylor, G. B. Leslie and T. L. Fallowfield climbed it on 29th November 1952, taking 6 hours owing to difficult powder snow conditions and some ice.

Carn Etchachan, North Face, Scorpion.—The first ascent of this 700-foot route, rated as very severe, was made by T. W. Patey, A. G. Nicol, J. M. Taylor and K. A. Grassick on 6th December 1952. The imposing pointed buttress to the left of Castle Gates Gully, and separated by it from the Shelter Stone Crag (possibly unsuited to summer rock climbing owing to loose rock)

gave a magnificent climb of seven hours duration, under snow and ice conditions, with the rocks well frozen in. The difficulty was sustained and no escapes were evident.

A prominent rock sentinel overhangs the entrance to Castle Gates Gully. From its roof an indefinite rib slants up for 300 feet before merging into the general face. A short distance above this point, a steep twisting gully continues the line of ascent on the right of the steep rocks forming the apex of the upper cliff. The route below followed the rib approximately, and the gully above.

Details.—Start 100 feet below the sentinel, midway between it and an obvious chokestone gully. Here a steep, mossy shelf to the left of a shallow chimney is followed for 60 feet. Continue up left for 30 feet, along the foot of a steep wall. Here a slanting crack cleaves the wall, and 10 feet up it becomes possible to enter it; for 20 feet the route is subterranean. Above the exit is an overhanging wall, climbed immediately on the right (severe). Pass round a corner to the right, and continue straight up, bearing somewhat leftwards. Continuously hard climbing, complicated at the time by a snow covering, ensues for 250 feet by a variety of slabs and corners to easier ground below the upper rocks.

From this point snow conditions would prove an important factor. As it was, easy slopes led into the upper gully, which had five pitches in its 300 feet. At the start a steep shelf climbs away to the left, but its destination is uncertain. Above the first pitch the gully bends sharply into the buttress on the left. At the bend the right wall disappears. Amid remarkable rock scenery the gully rises in two abrupt steps to the summit. The first was a 25-foot ice-pitch (almost vertical) of extreme severity, above which a 65 degree snow-slope ran up to below the final overhang, where a very hard exit on the right wall, following a tiny foot-wide ledge, led to a small rock tower and easy ground. Ideal conditions might occur in early spring, with a combination of bare rock on the rib, and an adequate deposit of hard snow in the gully. Under the existing conditions (in the absence of a snow take-off at the ice-pitch) the climb was rated very severe.

Creag an Dubh Loch, North West Gully.—The gully has an easy average angle, the only interesting parts being the initial ice-fall and the exit slab. The ice-fall was high but not hard. The exit slab was ice-coated, and a plastering of snow enabled the gully to be followed to the final overhang, from where a left traverse across the head of the slab led to easy ground. The climb was

effected in $1\frac{1}{4}$ hours on 29th December 1952 by T. W. Patey and J. M. Taylor; W. D. Brooker and J. W. Morgan.

Lochnagar, Eagle Ridge.—T. W. Patey, J. M. Taylor and W. D. Brooker (through leads) made a first winter ascent of the direct route on 25th January 1953. The climb took $4\frac{1}{2}$ hours.

This gave a fine and exhilarating climb under perfect conditions. There was no powder but a great deal of step-cutting on iron-hard old snow on slabs and ledges. The chimneys and grooves held ice. The first tower and the summer crux both required combined tactics, the former being the crux under winter conditions, owing to brittle ice in the groove above the piton.

The presence of snow and ice made for greater and more continuous difficulty than in summer, except for the final slabs which gave easy step-cutting. A knowledge of the route under summer conditions would be advisable.

Polyphemus Gully (First winter ascent).—The gully was climbed direct throughout under excellent ice and hard snow conditions. The big wall in the lower part (summer crux) was climbed close into the curving crack forming the gully bed. This was not heavily iced and would probably be harder on most occasions. The crux occurred in the upper part of the gully. Steep ice on the left wall led to a cave below a 35-foot overhanging pitch. The pitch was turned by a groove on the left which was very hard, owing to thin ice. The remaining 100 feet included one ice-pitch. The cornice was straight-forward. This was done on 24th January 1953 by K. A. Grassick and H. S. M. Bates. Time, 6 hours.

West Gully, Lochnagar.—What is probably the first ascent of West Gully under true winter conditions was made by A. G. Nicol, D. R. Grieve and A. H. B. Wedderburn on 25th January 1953.

Entering from the Terrace they encountered no large ice-pitches but found two main points of difficulty: (a) The big pitch just below the branch, climbed on a mixture of rock, snow and ice; and (b) the final narrow chimney. Time 5 hours.

PARALLEL GULLY "B," LOCHNAGAR.**By Tom Patey.**

PRIOR to 1952 all the principal gullies and buttresses in Lochnagar's N.E. Corrie had been climbed, several in the preceding few years. There remained, however, one major problem—the ascent of the 700-foot Parallel Gully "B." It had been inspected by parties on various occasions and yet, although it seemed as if there might be a route somewhere, very few determined attempts had been made.

The term "gully" is perhaps misleading. In its lower part a well-defined chimney, and above expanding into a shallow depression on an open face, it nevertheless follows one continuous fault throughout, separating the slender, tapering, Parallel Buttress on the left from the grosser flank of the Tough-Brown Ridge on the right. The climb may be roughly subdivided into three huge pitches separated by two grassy scoops. The lower scoop was crossed by Tough and Brown in 1895 in their early attempt on the ridge now bearing their name; but the upper one had never been reached, though apparently fairly easy of access from the normal Parallel Buttress route.

It will therefore be apparent that, by following the Tough-Brown Traverse, an attempt could be made on the more promising second pitch of the climb, avoiding the formidable 250-foot start. This was actually done a few weeks prior to our attempt by I. Brooker and A. Lyall, who succeeded in forcing their way up the top section by a route which they described as very severe.

This exploit immediately stimulated our interest in the gully, and several of us discussed the possibility of forcing the forbidding first pitch and thereby accomplishing a complete ascent of the gully as soon as conditions were favourable. The opportunity offered itself at a meet of the Aberdeen University Club on a brilliant Sunday in June 1952. Interest in the route was now so general that no fewer than eight assembled at the foot of the crags.

While the party debated over the dubious honour of the lead, Mike Taylor and I slipped off quietly and set to work on the lower rocks.

The first of the three great pitches forming the gully is probably about 250 feet in height, but its general contour gives an impression of greater height. Starting as a 50-foot slimy crack, holdless and nearly vertical, it leans back for a short distance at a more moderate angle, then soars up straight in a narrow 120-foot chimney, cleaving a succession of smooth, incredibly steep slabs.

Unroped, we climbed speedily up the good rocks on the left side of the crack, gaining a good stance 50 feet up. This was an excellent site from which to discharge some well-aimed divots on our companions below, just to advise them that the climb was under way.

Here the first difficulty immediately confronted us; we had reached the foot of a vertical wall, and further progress was only possible to the right, where a smooth, sloping ledge traversed back to the top of the initial crack. At the extreme end it would obviously be necessary to achieve a long stride over the top of the crack to a good ledge on the far side.

A few minutes' indecision at the start allowed the other six to catch us up. Eventually, more to relieve the congestion than from eagerness to start, I was edged out on to the traverse under the disturbing scrutiny of a large and expectant audience. One humorist even did his best to improve the leader's morale with a running commentary. The tiny rounded wrinkles on the slab afforded small purchase for tricounis, and, although the problem was merely one of balance, the handholds were few and not reassuring. Eventually I found myself poised on small holds over the steep gap which terminated the ledge. In rubbers this pitch would have been much simplified, but we had agreed to retain nails as long as possible. The final stride over the gulf was only the work of an instant, but very delicate, and I was glad to establish myself on a comfortable block and prepare to watch the discomfort of the others.

At this juncture, much to my chagrin, a cine-camera

was produced on the platform, and Taylor came nonchalantly across, his every movement a conscious exhibition of style, and passed on to the steep rocks above me. Here he was lost to view for a considerable time, and I became so absorbed in Brooker's antics on the traverse that I had to be recalled to reality by an imperious tug on the rope from above, signalling me to come on.

At first there was no sign of my companion, until eventually the rope led me towards a small dark hole in the rock in which he could be observed, crouched in ill-concealed discomfort. The 6 feet immediately below the cave were very dirty and wet, even under the dry conditions at the time, and I was thankful for a slight tension on the rope above. We had now almost attained the foot of the long chimney, but the way was barred by the short overhang above the cave. From the edge of this a short coping slab ascended steeply into the commencement of the chimney. This was the point at which a previous attempt on the climb had failed. Even from a foothold on the left wall on a level with the overhang it was still extremely difficult to gain lodgment on the slab above; two cracks, a yard or so apart, limited the slab on either side, but a widening at the foot seemed to provide doubtful friction for a jammed boot. A tiny chockstone jammed in the nearer crack provided a vital hold for the necessary jerk upwards. Even so, it took some time to pluck up enough courage for an attempt, though exhorted by sundry cheerful comments from the invisible troglodyte.

The advent of the second party ultimately provided the incentive. Although the primary move was executed according to the textbook, the next few feet degenerated into an undignified scrabble, hastened by the absence of any positive holds. From a secure stance at the back of the chimney I summoned Mike from his cave, with the encouraging information that the pitch was very severe. However, he made disappointingly short work of it, and led through into the enticing upper reaches of the chimney.

By now everyone was engaged on the climb, and the corrie re-echoed to the instructions confidently supplied by those who had successfully completed the pitches; in

contrasting tones were the protestations of those who had still to surmount the difficulties. The fact that three of the party answered to a call of "Mike" did nothing to simplify matters. Morrison alone could be identified with any certainty, his clear ringing tones revealing a fiendish joy in being at large in this abode of the mountain demons.

I was soon joined by Mike Dixon, whose head and shoulders compensated for any lack of footholds in the next few feet. Thence the going was easier for a brief space as the chimney deepened, though I felt sure that some sterner test lay ahead. I joined Taylor 60 feet below the top. It was obvious we were in no position for premature celebration. For 40 feet the chimney steepened to vertical with a dark recessed slit at its back, and finally jutted out in a slight overhang—a last gesture of defiance.

For a short distance I squirmed up the inner cleft, becoming extremely wet in the process. Then came the agreeable discovery that the main chimney was now narrow enough to allow backing up. Progress was immediately easier to a jammed block platform below the final overhang. Cavilling at the use of a piton, we had to exercise patience to manufacture a small thread belay to safeguard further progress. Mike first reconnoitred the initial few feet, cleaning several of the holds, and then invited me to go ahead. Simple back and foot technique took me almost to the top. Here, unfortunately, the walls diverged the merest fraction until equilibrium could be maintained only by exerting considerable pressure with the tip of the large toe. At this critical juncture I had a horrible suspicion of the onset of cramp, but averted the danger by the discovery of a vital handhold on the back wall of the chimney, only sufficient to swing inwards and proceed straight up the overhang. I had just extended one groping arm over the top when Brooker, from below, volunteered the information that he had heard that there were no holds above for the last move. Not deigning to acknowledge this refreshing piece of news, I struggled breathlessly over the lip, and gave tongue to an exuberant yell. The response was somewhat discouraging; the



R. L. Mitchell

SHADOW BUTTRESS "A," LOCHNAGAR

(*a*, Shadow Chimney; *b1*, Giant's Head Chimney, direct
b2, same, winter finish, see p. 107)



June 1952

D. Thomas

PARALLEL GULLY "B," LOCHNAGAR (lower half)

T, Traverse; *C*, Cave—Crux is just above; *J*, Jammed block below final
 twenty-foot chimney of first part; *S*, Scoop crossed by Tough-Brown
 Traverse

others evinced but mild surprise, and the answering cheer came instead from some climbers on Shadow Buttress, who seemingly thought I was hailing them.

The arrival of Taylor was heralded by the dislodgment of a large boulder which luckily fell outside the chimney to impact on the screes in one giant bound. No harm done, the whole party assembled below the second main pitch, with the conquest of Parallel Gully "B" practically an accomplished fact. Here four of the party called it a day and departed to the Tough-Brown Ridge, but the rest of us were anxious to complete the climb by following our predecessors' route to the plateau.

Taylor led off like a bloodhound on the leash, following a trail of tiny scratches and scars on the slabs and progressing steadily towards some particularly repulsive overhangs on the Tough-Brown flank of the gully. The first confirmation of the route was the discovery of a small belay piton in a slab. The giant holdless groove above looked the essence of impregnability. We had almost decided to retreat when a second piton was spotted, 15 feet up on the wall to the left of the groove. The challenge was accepted, and progress made up the groove by vigorous contortion—entertaining to watch but painful to perform. The ensuing traverse leftwards to the top of the second pitch was severe all the way and ended in a remarkable hand traverse which almost exacted the last reserves of energy from everyone concerned.

The familiar Lochnagar drizzle had now set in and, as a result, nobody seemed keen on following up the gully to its bitter end—a huge pitch of easy angle, yet abominably loose and wet. We agreed on æsthetic grounds that it would be a travesty to conclude such a fine route in this way. This may have been mere rationalisation, however; for by this time the call of the inner man had become more pressing. By mutual consent we unroped and sped up to the plateau by the easier rocks on Tough-Brown Ridge.

So ended one of the most enjoyable climbs we have had on Lochnagar. With sound rock, continuous difficulties and pitches following one another with sparkling variety,

it was all that a Lochnagar gully usually is not. Above all, the unorthodox tactics we were obliged to adopt at times added spice to the climb. It was indeed one of those days which are not easily forgotten, and the memory of which is rekindled anew in camp-fire reminiscence.

A FAR CRY TO LOCHOW.

By J. F. A. Burt.

I FELL in with Murray Lawson at Kingshouse in the summer of 1924, and he invited me, after some days' climbing together, to the 1925 New Year Meet at Lochawe. I felt the need of arriving at my first meet as fit as possible, so planned an approach that involved several days on the hills. Though I had scrambled about the Arran hills since boyhood, my mainland climbing was confined to the previous eight months. I had made no more than three snow ascents, but these were under excellent guidance.

Starting from Aberfeldy, I walked to Fortingal and a memorable dinner. Next day I traversed Carn Mairg, met a car at Bridge of Balgie and finished at Killin. A heavy snowfall now imposed a virtual off-day, but the next again was fine and I entrained for Crianlarich, from which I climbed Stob Garbh and Cruach Ardrain. The snow was pretty deep on the lee-sides, and much marked with tracks of mountain hares (of which, by the way, we had chased hundreds, and killed three, on the road from Bridge of Balgie), ptarmigan and a fox. As I topped one of the hummocks on the summit ridge of Stob Garbh I surprised the last in the next hollow—the only live fox I have ever seen in Scotland.

I plowtered up the short steep snowy slope from the east col to the Cruach Ardrain cairn and struck—or rather, was struck by—a south-west blizzard. I was spun round by the wind and lashed by stinging hail. Completely *désorienté*, I had a hard fight to force myself, in accordance with reason and the compass, to resist an

instinctive feeling that the way to Crianlarich lay along the ridge which, in reality, leads to Ben Tulaichean.

Happily I funked glissading down the Y-gully and set off for the western ridge. But the vicious wind and hail daunted me. I have always had a horror of the seemingly personal malignity of very high winds, and instead of continuing over the nose of the Grey Height, I made my way down from the west col to the shelter of the glen. Here I floundered about in the failing light among boulders, snow-drifts and the horrors of snow-masked peat hags. But I got down in time for a bath before dinner and the deep healing slumber I always associate with Crianlarich.

I caught the morning train to Tyndrum and embarked on the final stage of my little Odyssey—the traverse of Beinn Laoigh and Beinn a' Chleibh. The path by the side of Coninish Water was easy and pleasant, and all went well until, abreast of the farm, I broke a hookside of my spectacles while cleaning them. After that my memories, though vivid, are naturally a trifle blurred.

I climbed up, happily enough, to the lip of the great North Corrie. There, frankly, as holding my glasses to my eyes I viewed the onward way, my heart quailed. The snow in the corrie was obviously much deeper than the worst I had experienced the day before. As a matter of fact I learned later that two much more experienced climbers had reached the corrie and, without hesitation, turned back. In my inexperience the idea never occurred to me.

On I went, floundering in soft snow that was frequently up to my waist and once up to my neck. It was not pleasant, but I accepted it as being all in the day's work. But when I found myself, breathless and snow-plastered, at the foot of the Fox's Rake, I felt I must modify my plan. My snow-swim had taken it out of me: the thought of resuming it in the lower pitches of the Rake was unbearable; and for the first time in my life on the hills I felt I had not the necessary reserves of strength. So I turned to the ill-defined buttress on my left. I

clawed my way up 1,000 feet of broken rock and snow-covered turf. After the corrie, the going, though none too easy, seemed heavenly. About two o'clock I climbed on to the summit ridge, a few feet from the cairn.

The same screaming south-wester which I had met on Cruach Ardrain greeted me once more, but mercifully, there was this time no hail. I crouched in such shelter as the cairn afforded and ate some sandwiches and crystallised fruit. Then I set off for Beinn a' Chleibh.

That was a nightmare passage. The southern face of Lui was covered with a thin sheet of *verglas*, out of which stuck pebbles and outcrops of rock. These saved me from cutting steps or I should have been benighted. Slithering from jut to jut, I forced my way to the col against the raving wind.

I had some shelter as I plugged up the 400 feet to the next summit, but there the wind met me with redoubled fury, and again my heart failed me. I had only to force my way down over the nose to McLaren's farm, and a plain road to Dalmally awaited me. But I could not face again that demon wind, and sought instead a sheltered gully on the unprospected north face of Beinn a' Chleibh.

I ought to have been killed several times over. In the failing light I glissaded downwards until some sixth sense persuaded me that all was not well. I dug in my heels, produced my glasses, held them to my eyes and perceived that I was on the verge of a 20-foot drop on to what—I could not see in the gloom. I contoured to another gully and repeated the process—including the sixth sense and the 20-foot drop.

As the last gleam of daylight died I scrambled up the railway embankment and sat down by the permanent way. I ate my remaining provisions (I remember the exquisite flavour of some candied apricots) and took stock of my position. Between me and the main road raced a torrent, swollen by the snows: if there was a bridge it was now too dark to find it on the map. I had not thought of this in my panic-stricken flight from the summit. Ahead of me lay about five miles of sleepers to Dalmally.



February 1952

SLOPES OF BEINN DUBHCHRAIG

Tom Weir

I have always loathed sleepers. Too near for one to stride from one to the next, too far apart to be taken two at a time, they impose on the walker a frustrated mincing motion most trying to the muscles of the leg. But the path beside the permanent way has snares in the shape of signal wires and was not to be thought of in the dark. So, from sleeper to sleeper I plodded wearily through what seemed eternity. Once I had to step aside, when the west-bound train came along. I gazed up enviously at the figures in the warm, well-lighted carriages, borne in ease and comfort over my *via dolorosa*.

I came ashore at Dalmally Station. Only two miles and a half of sleepers stood between me and Lochawe, but once more I could not take it. I went to the general store and inquired after a car to take me the five miles by road. Someone went off to start it up, and I sat down in the genial light and warmth of the shop, dripping on the floor as the frozen snow melted out of my clothes. The villagers came in to do their New Year's Eve shopping. At last a perspiring man came to say that they couldn't get a sign of life from the car engine, "but there iss the delivery van, of course . . ."

"Man dear," said I (we had an Irish housemaid then), "I would gladly go in a hearse!"

So when Murray Lawson came to the porch to see who the latest arrival was, there was I, clambering stiffly out of a grocer's yellow van. He did not so much as raise an eyebrow, but I had a subtle feeling that he did not think it was quite the proper way for a guest to arrive at a Meet.

Nor was it. The whole expedition had been a thoroughly base-over-apex performance. And the moral of that—as the Duchess (no, the other one, in "Alice") would say—must be that there is a Providence which looks after fools and drunkards; for besides acting like a fool I was at that time climbing-drunk.

"How bad and mad and sad it was!
But then, how it was sweet!"

A CAIRNGORM ODYSSEY.

By Richard B. Frere.

THE following narrative describes an expedition by a small detachment of R.A.F. personnel to salvage an aircraft from the high plateau of Braeriach. P. A. Densham and I were with them.

Our camp lay in the forest by a stream, some two miles from Coylum Bridge by the Lairig Ghru track. On the first night we roared up to the site in our converted tank-chaser, henceforth to be known as Matilda. I was acting in my R.A.F. capacity of transport driver and P. A. Densham had been borrowed from a neighbouring unit. We were both guides to the party.

The first evening had been reserved, unofficially, for our initial attack on Sgoran Dubh. At five o'clock on a beautiful June evening we set out on our bicycles for the rough ride up Glen Einich. Rather less than an hour later we were seated at the ruins of the Second Bothy, scanning the impressive face of the mountain opposite.

At this time I had little knowledge of the routes up the various buttresses, but we chose what seemed to be an obvious climb up a deep cleft in the Second. We crossed the river by an ancient beam at the end of the loch and climbed a very steep slope into the entrance of a large chimney. A huge chockstone lay across it.

We soon found a way round this. A through-route took us below it and to the bottom of a smooth, short wall. This was not entirely easy, and, once over it, we were assailed by doubts as to the possibility of any further advance. A chockstone, larger and more impending than the first, lay across the jaws of the gully. It seemed impossible that any route could be found up either of its smooth walls. But we remembered the through-route lower down and wondered rather hopelessly whether this arrangement might be repeated.

I climbed right up underneath the stone. Its huge bulk hung above my head, daunting my hopes. I turned round and looked up. A ray of evening sunlight was



August 1914

ROTHIEMURCHUS FOREST, LOWER GLEN EINICH, LOOKING TO BRAERIACH

J. H. Buchanan

plainly visible through a small fissure at the back of the stone. With a feeling of tremendous elation I shouted down to Peter that I thought we would succeed. Then I climbed quickly into the fissure, as though I felt the little daylight might soon disappear. A moment later I stood triumphantly upon the top of the stone, to be joined within a moment by Peter. A feeling of tremendous strength and satisfaction was experienced by us both. We did not know, at the time, that we had climbed the time-honoured Bachelors' Buttress, and actually believed that this was a new route.

All difficulty seemed to be over. Easy slabs led encouragingly upwards. It was late now: damp and darkness were beginning to fall. To linger meant risking the onset of darkness and a perilous night spent on the open rock-face. So we climbed separately and unroped for speed and, at a moment when I was slightly above and to the left of Peter, the mountain struck . . .

There was an alarmed and urgent cry that echoed from gully to buttress. Glued to my steps in horror I turned towards my friend who had been near the top of a small gully. He was hurtling downwards towards the chockstone, and what lay beneath it, with a great shattered boulder in his arms. I was convinced that he was beyond earthly aid, and I turned my face to the gully wall to shut out the sight.

A second later I could bear it no longer and turned to look. Peter lay, very much alive, above the chockstone, and his morale could hardly have been better!

Once again we roped in the thickening twilight. We did not intend to give the mountain spirits further opportunity to work their fell purposes on us. We gained the easy ground above the rocks and, although a thick drizzle was falling, there was still sufficient light to make a reasonable attempt upon the summit of the mountain. But somehow, as we climbed into the higher regions of this grey and shadowy amphitheatre, our spirits—which had soared on the successful completion of the climb—began to forsake us, and the atmosphere of the mountain became dull and heavy with sorrow. With

hardly a word of explanation to each other we turned in our tracks and raced down the long slope to the head of Loch Einich whose waters were now troubled and mysterious in the gloom. Above us a heavy blanketing mist shut out the higher reaches of the mountain.

Back at the caravan we were greeted by our companions who called us fools, asked about our climb and inquired dubiously about the state of the road. Upon the first score we smiled, upon the second our comment was terse, but upon the third we waxed gloomily eloquent; so much so, indeed, that our friends regarded each other with considerable misgivings and had little enthusiasm for the morrow's ride.

We spread some jam on thick pieces of bread, newly cut. We both felt that pleasant lassitude which is the aftermath of exercise in the open air; now we wished for nothing more than a comfortable bed and dreamless slumber. Into our tent we crept and disposed ourselves for sleep. Peter dropped off first, but I lay awake for a little while, listening to the laughter of the boys in the caravan. At last each voice was silenced and there were only the forest sounds—the cracking of a twig, the drowsy chirp of a bird, the sharp scuffle of some animal disturbed in its rest. Above it all hung the eternal stillness of the woods; and, in my mind's eye, I could see the darkly empurpled hills guarding the valley of Spey.

We awoke in the morning to find the sun streaming into the open door of our tent and our breakfast awaiting us. We ate it under the trees. The day was a brilliant one and we had planned a first ascent of Braeriach.

This ascent proved to be a thoroughly routine affair. Walking at a pace which we tried to adjust to requirements we led our party up the long Bennie Corrie and on to the ridge at its head, where lay all the cohesive remains of the unfortunate aircraft. I was thoroughly upset at the sight of so much complete destruction; bits and pieces lay everywhere, and much clothing belonging to the dead crew was discernible amid the wreckage.

Peter climbed to the summit that day but I stayed with the party. When he had rejoined us we bade farewell

to the others and crossed the ridge of Sron na Lairig while they descended by the corrie.

The next morning most of the salvage party were tired and stiff after the unaccustomed exercise and the second salvage trip was postponed. Peter and I, however, did not intend to lose a single day's climbing in this glorious weather and decided to make a trip to the Bynack Barns. So we rose early, mounted our bicycles, and proceeded towards Glenmore Lodge.

It was a perfect morning. Loch Morlich lay still and shimmering in the summer sunshine. We rode and walked into the Ryvoan pass and up the rough track beyond it. We left the bicycles at the wooden bothy on the Nethy river and took to the path to Bynack.

We walked slowly, and it was not until some time had elapsed that we reached the Barns. These twisted monsters have a unique appeal. None of them is easy to climb. Some of the smooth summits of the largest Barn seem impossible of access. But on this occasion we had intended to concentrate on the centre Barn: it looked a most sporting problem. We found what appeared to be a line of weakness up a deep fissure in the western aspect. Peter promptly placed himself in a strong position while I entered the crack, found excellent holds, advanced 10 feet, paused, turned round a little unhappily, seated myself on a ledge, stood upon it and climbed easy rocks to the summit. Prolonged cheering followed this effort. Peter then advanced and, although an injured back precluded any bending at the waist and he had to modify all his movements with this fact in view, he reached the summit in admirable style.

We gained the mountain top. Bynack has a fascinating crest composed of large outcrops of rock divided by green, grassy valleys. It is an old mountain. It has the air of very, very great antiquity. It is curious to think that the rocky crest of Bynack was the same when Nero was fiddling to burning Rome; and little different when the shaggy cavemen blinked in the strong light of early days. It is a comforting thought which brings security and fortitude.

We returned from Bynack and reached the camp in the warm afterglow of a most lovely summer's evening. No sooner had we finished an excellent meal and were seated, mugs of tea in hand, on the ground near the caravan, when Peter said, "Invasion!" Two ladies, one young and one old, were coming, very slowly and painfully, down the Lairig Ghru path. They approached us and their manner indicated desperation. We at once threw off our coarse forest ways and assumed those characteristics of chivalry that are associated with medieval knighthood. Tea was offered and accepted with great gratitude. A few minutes elapsed and two more ladies arrived.

When they had fed and rested they told us their story. How they had set out from Nethy Bridge in a car that had failed them at Pityoulish; how they had walked to the head of Glen Einich; how they had crossed the high plateau between Cairntoul and Braeriach; how they had turned by mistake towards Braemar after they had completed the precipitous descent through the Garbh-Choire into the Lairig Ghru; how they had turned in their tracks, crossed the summit of the Pass and walked wearily back to the point where they now rested. Peter and I were amazed, and said so; and our eyes opened even wider when they told us that they had little, if any, previous experience. The age of the elder lady (there were two, and two girls) must have been in the region of three score summers.

They were staying at Nethy Bridge; certainly there was no other means of conveyance at our disposal than that provided by the Air Ministry, which was in our charge. I had no compunction about using it—none at all. This was a matter of humanity, and the situation offered no alternatives. We used the Prime Mover belonging to the caravan and, with the two elder ladies in front, and the faithful Densham playing Don Juan on the girders behind, we roared along through the summer's night, past Pityoulish, until ten miles had rolled away beneath our wheels.

There were lights in the great hotel which overshadows

Nethy Bridge, and anxious friends to receive our vagrant charges. A search party was out on the hills. We modestly said our goodbyes and took our leave, and at two o'clock in the morning sank into dreamless slumber, back in our tent.

The following morning the tank-chaser had broken down; so once again we set out for Sgoran Dubh on our bicycles, and with us we took a companion. In the Potluck at Aviemore we had met a man named Wasp. This was a loquacious fellow with a wealth of pointless conversation always at hand. He was one of those people whose conversation is never adjusted to time, place, or circumstance. Yet we liked him very well, and we were very glad indeed when he agreed to join our expedition on this particular day. He did excellently until we reached View Corner—that point in the road when Sgoran Dubh first becomes visible. Densham's enthusiasm (or his dread of Wasp's uncontrolled verbosity) had goaded him on, and he was far ahead. Then, alarmed perhaps by the aspect of the mountain, or paying insufficient attention to the road, Wasp allowed his bike to twist beneath him and he was hurled to the ground. He went down with a great rending sound and a terrible comment. For a moment he was quiet. Then when he had sorted himself out from the wreckage he cried, "Thank heaven, I've got my first-aid kit." I gazed at him in genuine admiration. "Go on without me; I'll meet you on the summit," he advised.

The weather deteriorated as we advanced into the glen. We waited at the remnants of the Second Bothy in the hope that it might clear; but it grew steadily worse. At last we decided to prospect our climb (a projected attempt upon an obvious fissure in the face of the Third Buttress) and persevere from its lower reaches if the conditions permitted.

We climbed heather that rose very steeply. We cut up between some slabs. By now the thrill of the adventure had entered into us. We followed a slight gully and, when this became too steep and unstable, we made an upward traverse over a small pinnacle. At this point

the general angle of the face was not considerable, but it was atrociously unreliable. Every protuberance was suspect, each patch of grass a deadly enemy. Very cautiously I advanced beyond the pinnacle, down a small slab and into another gully.

This gully proved to be most dangerous. A thin covering of earth upon a smooth face of rock persuaded me to preserve life and dignity for better places; I avoided the gully and continued up its slightly firmer left wall. At the top of this, easy climbing led to the base of the chimney.

This gave interesting climbing throughout. There was nothing desperate about it, but a fair standard of difficulty was well maintained. Peter climbed well with his injured back. It was in consideration of his fine effort that I suggested the name of "Cripple's Cleft" for this climb.

We continued on to the summit of the mountain but we did not see Mr Wasp. Knowing the man as we did, we had no doubt that he had reached the summit; we were only thankful that a beneficent Providence had so ordained that we were not compelled to hear about his ascent. In point of fact we never saw him again.

We expected that the next day's exertion would complete the burying of the aircraft on the col. The day turned out to be a clear one with a high wind, and in these stimulating conditions we soon reached the site. Peter and I had volunteered to dispose of one of the aircraft's wheels which occupied a perilous position on a cornice of old snow. We kicked steps down to it, secured ourselves on a ledge and hurled it away into the corrie. Then we worked at high speed and, having cleared up a great proportion of the crash, began to agitate for a return to the caravan. What was left to do, we asked. Nothing, we replied! The aircraft had been buried. Certain mystic signs indicated an early onset of rain. We said we had seen a ptarmigan drinking stagnant water, and this meant very bad weather quite soon. In the end, our hypnotic voices and

plausible arguments had their effect; a retreat was made in a mild panic and some disorder.

Peter and I were well pleased. The reason for this sudden antipathy for the high places was social in origin; we had been invited to supper at Nethy Bridge.

Three or four hours later we made our entry into the well-appointed Nethy Bridge Hotel. This entry was made without fanfare of any sort, but it was sufficiently impressive. Our clothes were torn and stained with mud, our hair loose and undisciplined, our beards well grown, our boots fell heavily upon the highly polished floors. It was hard for us not to feel like bounders.

A young lady of great charm approached us and conducted us to a table at which sat four other persons. We at once recognised three faces whom art and rest had greatly embellished. The fourth was a masculine face, keen and hawk-like. Densham and I are seldom afflicted with undue self-consciousness, but now we muttered platitudes, extolled the weather, condemned Germany, but could not re-establish the easy comradeship of the mountains and the subsequent ride. Help came from an unexpected quarter. He of the hawkish countenance suddenly spoke of the mountains, many mountains, mountains of which we had only read. The atmosphere loosened at once and, from then on, the quality of the conversation exceeded even that of the food.

Little more remains to be told. Two mornings later we burnt everything which would be of no further use and weighed a metaphorical anchor. And so Matilda rolled away from the hills, and Peter and I felt sad as we watched the high Cairngorm ridge drop and diminish in the blue distance. But whatever sorrow we felt was mitigated in the sure knowledge that between such friends no separation can be very long endured.

SOME OBSERVATIONS ON "MUNRO'S TABLES."

By Robert M. Gall Inglis.

THE Editor of the 1933 edition of "Munro's Tables," in his suggestions for a subsequent revision, proposed that a beginning might be made by casting out unworthy "tops." The present Guide Books General Editor, who is responsible for the new edition shortly to be published, ventures, by tabulating and applying data on Sir Hugh Munro's Card Index relative to the Appendix of Reductions and Deletions which follows the Tables (which changes were in the main Sir Hugh's own recommendations), to suggest, first of all, a basis on which unworthy "tops" might be judged; and at the same time, by comparing this data with other hitherto unpublished notes on the original Card Index, to see if an indication may be obtained as to what may have been in

TOPS PROMOTED TO BE SEPARATE MOUNTAINS.			TOPS DELETED FROM THE TABLES.		
	Section.	Dip per Map.		Section.	Dip per Map.
		Feet			Feet
Na Gruagaichean . . .	5	342	An Socach, Ben Wyvis	12	50
Meall na Teanga . . .	7	1,000+	Beinn a' Chaoruinn, middle top	6	94
SEPARATE MOUNTAINS REDUCED TO TOPS.			Beinn na Socaich, Stob Coire Easain	5	99
			Big Brae, Ben Avon .	14	125
			Blaven, south top .	17	81
			Carn Ballach, south-west top	6	59
		Feet	Creag a' Bhraghit .	1	75
Beinn a' Chuirn . . .	3	270	Creag Meaghaidh, east top	6	50
Beinn Iutharn Bheag .	15	371	Cruach Ardrain, north-east top	1	50
Bidean an Eoin Deirg .	9	280	Druim na Bo . . .	14	55
Carn Bhinnein . . .	15	206	Leachd Riach . . .	14	99
Carn Eas . . .	14	106	Sron dha Murchdi .	3	50
Creag Dubh . . .	9	352	Sron a' Ghaothair .	6	50
Creag na Dala Moire .	14	239	Top between Cruach Ardrain and Stob Garbh	1	84
Creag na Leth Choin .	14	198	Top of Coire Dubh, Beinn Creachan	3	95
Glas Mheall Mor . . .	15	287			
Meall a' Chaoruinn . .	15	104			
Sgor Choinnich . . .	5	290			
Sgor an Lochan Uaine, Cairntoul	14	300			
Sgurr na Lapaich, Mam Soul	8	401			



June 1907

COIGACH PEAKS FROM AN STAC

W. Inglis Clark

FURTHER NOTES FROM SIR HUGH MUNRO'S CARD INDEX

	Section.	Dip per Map.	Sir Hugh Munro's Comments on Relative Card.
		Feet	
Stob Diamh, Cruachan	4	472	It is a question if Cruachan should be reckoned as two separate mountains.
Stob an Cul Coire, Aonach Mor	5	250	Should this not be a separate mountain? (Dip 180 feet. J. R. Corbett.)
Carn Sgulain, Monadhliaths	6	115	Very doubtful separate mountain.
Beinn Fhionnlaidh, Carn Eige	8	594	Doubtful separate mountain.
An Coileachan, Fannaichs	11	515	Is this a separate mountain?
Meall Gorm, north-west summit	11	359	Is this a separate mountain?
Creag Leacach	16	238	Should this be a separate mountain?
Carn Dearg Mheadhonach	5	73	Doubtful top. (Dip 73 feet: 6-inch O.S. Map; 75 to 85 feet on several occasions. R.G.I.)
Carn Beag Dearg	5	50	Doubtful top. (Dip 15 to 25 feet on several occasions. R.G.I.)
Creag Mhor, Creag Meaghaidh	6	50	Doubtful top. (Dip 16 feet: 6-inch O.S. Map.)
Creag a' Coir' Aird, east top	8	50	Is this a top? (Dip 15 to 20 feet. J. Dow.)
Bhraigh a' Choire Bhig, Sgurr na Lapaich	9	50 (?)	Not a very good top. (O.S. contours doubtful. R.G.I.)
Ruadh na Spreidhe, Sgurr na Lapaich	9	50	Not a very good top.
Creag a' Chaoruinn, Sgurr na Lapaich	9	295	Not a very good top, but to be counted.
Fiacail Coire Cas, Cairngorm	14	50	This is a doubtful top.
Beinn Mheadhoin, south-west top	14	150	A very doubtful top.
Beinn Bhreac, west top	14	95	Doubtful top. (Dip 50 feet. J. R. Corbett.)
Stob Bac an Fhurain, Ben Avon	14	133	Consider if this new top should be counted.

NOTE.—"Dip," as quoted, is the maximum approximate drop between the eminence named and its immediately neighbouring summit or top, as indicated by the 1-inch O.S. Map (Popular Edition) contours. These contours, although admitted to be only approximate, prove, by observations, both visual and by aneroid, to be reasonably accurate in the great majority of cases, and for the purposes of this article, the figures quoted may be so considered. Notes in brackets and later observations, not on cards.

Sir Hugh's mind when he made these notes toward what, as is stated in the Preface to the 1921 edition (quoted in subsequent editions), was "his revision, for which he had been collecting material for many years."

That there are seeming anomalies in "Munro's Tables" cannot be doubted, for example:—

- (a) The inclusion of Carn Ban, Monadhliaths, as a "separate mountain," between which and its *higher* neighbour, Carn Dearg, only $\frac{5}{8}$ mile distant, there is a maximum possible drop of only 150 feet.

- (b) The classification as "tops" of Stob Coire Raineach of Buachaille Etive Beag, Am Bathaich of Sgùrr a' Mhaoraich, Mullach an Rathain of Liathach, each with a drop of between 450 and 500 feet from their immediate neighbouring "top." Compare these "tops," and Stob na Broige of Buachaille Etive Mor, with Stob Diamh of Ben Cruachan (drop 475 feet), Beinn Ghlas of Lawers (drop 400 feet), and Geal Charn of Sgoran Dubh (drop 170 feet), which, although also "ridge tops," with similar or much less dip, are counted as "separate mountains" in the Tables.
- (c) The inclusion of many "tops" which are but rising eminences in a ridge, or flat outlying shoulders, having less than 50 feet of dip between them and their neighbouring higher top or summit. Such are: Mam Coire Easain and Stob a' Choire Ghlais of Clachlet, Sron a' Cha No on Cairngorm, and many others.

That "dip" was a relevant factor in the 1921 revision of the Tables is indicated by notes on "dips" on the cards of the following "tops" deleted from the original Tables. The first three are Sir Hugh's own notes; the fourth, that of Mr J. R. Young, editor of the 1921 edition:—

	Dip per Map.	
Beinn a' Chuirn	270 feet.	" Rise 242 feet. Delete."
Beinn a' Chaoruinn, middle top	94 feet.	" Rise on either side 27 feet and 84 feet."
Leachd Riach	99 feet.	" Drop only 26 feet."
Top of Coire Dubh, Beinn Creachan	95 feet.	" Rise only 43 feet."

A distance factor was also suggested by the editor of the 1933 edition, but it seems doubtful if Sir Hugh intended this to be taken into consideration, since Sgùrr na Lapaich of Mam Soul, $2\frac{1}{2}$ miles along a ridge, was relegated from an original "separate mountain" to a "top."

A study of the foregoing tables indicates the virtual impossibility of inferring what was in Sir Hugh's mind

as to the qualification of a "Separate Mountain" as distinct from a "Top" in his intended revision, for why has he promoted Na Gruagaichean, which has an indicated dip of 350 feet between it and Binnein Mor, and yet degraded Beinn Iutharn Beag and Sgùrr na Lapaich of Mam Soul, with dips of 370 feet and 400 feet respectively? His notes on the cards of Beinn Fhionnlaidh (Carn Eige), and An Coileachan, Fannaichs, make the issue even more confused.

In view of this, and the statement in the Preface to the 1921 Tables regarding the impossibility of deciding what should be "separate mountains," the writer suggests that, despite seeming anomalies, such as those quoted earlier in this article, their claims to higher status be passed over, and that in any future revision of the Tables, the "Separate Mountains" of the 1933 and 1953 editions be left unchanged.

But when the list of approximate dips of the deleted "tops" in the Appendix is similarly considered, we are on surer ground. Every one, with the exception of Big Brae, whose card bears no note in Sir Hugh's hand, has a maximum probable dip of less than 100 feet. The table, giving approximate dip according to the 1-inch O.S. Map (Popular Edition), and also hitherto unpublished comments by Sir Hugh Munro on the relative cards in his Index, seems to confirm this figure of 100 feet of dip as a probable basis of minimum qualification for a "top" to be in Sir Hugh's mind.

On this basis, therefore, all "tops" whose summit is enclosed by no, or only one, contour ring (indicating a maximum probable dip of 100 feet) *should* be considered unworthy of status. The writer estimates that some eighty tops in the Tables would be thus affected. However, in order not to be too drastic, he suggests that in any future official revision of the Tables that only "tops" without any contour ring, which observation on the ground proves to have dip of 50 feet or less, and one-ring contour tops, which by observation are proved to have a dip of less than 50 to 75 feet, be *noted* as unworthy of inclusion as such, excepting "tops" on ridges that

involve good climbing or scrambling, such as the Coolin, and possibly Liathach, Teallach and Aonach Eagach.

The writer suggests, too, as stated in the Preface to the 1953 edition of "Munro's Tables," that they, as an historic document, should be left as they are at present, and that any subsequent approved list of unworthy "tops" be added under a separate heading to the existing Appendix.

It is hoped that this article may stimulate renewed interest in what is an intriguing problem, and that continued observations of the dips of the no, and one-ring, countour tops, as well as the heights of the numerous "approximates," may be sent in to the writer, with a view to collecting evidence for consideration in subsequent editions of "Munro's Tables."

CORBETT'S LIST OF 2,500-FOOT MOUNTAINS.

E. W. Hodge has pointed out that my Foreword to the above, on page 45 of the 1952 *Journal*, needs some modification, and his conclusions have been endorsed by W. M. Docharty who has been engaged, for some years and independently, in compiling a similar list. Hodge's conclusions, with which both Docharty and I are in agreement, are as follows:—

"Corbett's List is indeed welcome. But since he was not able to set his own final endorsement on it, a close scrutiny is a necessary service to him. In the first place, it needs to be expressly stated what criterion he adopted. What I find, on going through the List with the 1-inch maps, is that no point is admitted unless there is a re-ascent of 500 feet to it; and this is rigidly adhered to, no account being taken of distance, and the List therefore contains no subsidiary "tops." As an example, this explains why no "top" is included on the ridge which runs from Glas Tulaichean first 2 miles west-south-west then 5 miles south-east, until Meall Uaine is reached (Map Sheet 49). I have had the advantage of discussion with J. Dow, who was in occasional touch with Corbett. He had at first been inclined to assume that Corbett had adopted a looser method, more akin to Munro's Tables. But Corbett never made any direct statement to him on the point, and Dow therefore agrees that the above inferences, drawn from the internal evidence of the List itself, are justified. The very few apparent anomalies are not enough to affect this conclusion. Two hills of equal height (2,658 feet) will be noticed in Section 6, which are $2\frac{1}{4}$ miles apart, and divided only by about 350 feet of dip. They are probably included as alternatives, or joint

claimants. In Section 7, Sgùrr na Ba Glaise (2,817 feet) should, I think, be added, a mile east of Roisbheinn."

Corbett's last papers do not indicate how far he had been able to check the list before his health broke, but he presumably considered that this was a desirable preliminary to publication, having regard to the fact that over 1,000 feet the contour lines are only "measured" at 250-foot intervals, the intervening lines being merely "drawn in." These intervening lines are generally substantially accurate, but with his vast experience Corbett was well aware of the possibility of defects.

The List is, accordingly, not incomplete if the additional criterion is made clear that a minimum of 500 feet of re-ascent must be necessary from whichever side the peak is approached. There are, therefore, no additional "tops" in Corbett's tables. A list of summits and "tops" on Munro lines for mountains between 2,500 and 3,000 feet would be a much larger and more troublesome compilation, and Hodge is probably not alone in feeling that such a list would hardly serve any useful purpose.

JOHN DOW.

THIRD ON THE ROPE.

By **Graham S. Ritchie.**

"He led his regiment from behind
(He found it less exciting)."

W. S. GILBERT.

IT was two o'clock in the morning one day in July 1941. A final nightcap had been brewed and conversation languished. A warm, companionable silence reigned in the Hut, now the roar of the primus stove was stilled.

Then, quite unobtrusively, the faintest sound broke in upon our private musings. It came from nowhere, lingered a moment and was gone—only to force itself upon the ear again as the all-too-familiar throb of aircraft engines. "Hope he remembers to keep above 4,406 feet," John remarked disinterestedly. The throbbing drone drew suddenly very close then, as suddenly, was blanketed by the hills. "That sounds awfully like Jerry," said someone; "let's have a look outside."

Steaming mugs of tea in hand, we moved out into the night where the great cliffs of the Ben towered jet-black against a dark sky. No sound came to us save a

soft rustle of wind. Yet we lingered expectantly. Then lazily, so lazily, converging streams of red tracer-shells rose from behind Carn Dearg and mounted the sky. Two great flashes lit the horizon and the hills stood revealed for an instant. But not a sound was heard.

It was all rather eerie and exciting, yet peaceful and strangely beautiful.

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That afternoon something of the wonder of the scene was still at work in each of us. An elation of spirit demanded a fitting climax. We were a little above ourselves. At that moment the serpent whispered "Gardylloo Buttress."

So it came about that we three, Sydney, John and I, found ourselves on the Eastern Traverse regarding, without marked enthusiasm, the grand sweep of the buttress—a superb, challenging mass, with scarce a visible chink in its armour of slabs. Nevertheless we traversed the snows of Tower Gully to the base of the rocks and surveyed the scene. From a depression high up between the ridges of the buttress a snow-patch mocked us. It was quite plainly the key to the climb. Could we but reach it there seemed to be no great difficulty beyond. But between us and that promised land stretched the most hostile rock. Two long grooves slanting down from the high funnel were very promptly dismissed from mind, and we turned our attention to the left-hand ridge. This was crowned by most alluring towers, set askew; and siren-like they sang to us. The sight of an ominous grey wall, well above mid-height, should have given us pause. For, should we succeed in climbing so far by our selected route and then be stopped, a traverse to the snow-filled depression might well be impossible. Such was our mood, we gave it scarce a thought; and it was now 6 P.M.

Sydney led off from the bergschrund below the rocks, leaving John and myself contemplating a litter of Observatory rubbish, prominent among which were unmistakable portions of a certain china article which

caused quite disproportionate mirth, as such things do on such occasions. Our leader meantime was not on difficult *looking* rock; yet, after a paltry 30 feet, there he was calling for ironmongery, and in particular for a variety referred to as "wee beauties." "John," I said, "nip up and give Syd a hand; he's off form." After "nipping up" some 10 feet he descended precipitately upon me, lit a cigarette and commented shortly, "Syd's doing O.K." Thereafter we both sobered up considerably.

Sydney placed a piton before crossing a steep groove to a slab on which we all forgathered. I found the climbing hard as third man. By common consent boots were removed at this point, and we proceeded in stocking-soles. We moved right round a corner, then up left to a ledge where we found the first of the only two rock belays which we were to encounter on the whole expedition. Beyond this, easy climbing took us to a ledge overlooking the head of a slabby groove which dropped clean into the schrund below and merged above into two thin chimneys, at the top of which were some insecure-looking blocks. We eyed the chimneys with distaste and cast about for some less loathsome line of ascent. We decided that the wall of the buttress overlooking Gardyloo Gully held out the best hopes for some distance—and there, for the evening, the matter rested. In the absence of any rock belay to safeguard our descent, a piton was hammered home. The rising note of each successive blow of the hammer was sweet and reassuring to the ear. We then roped down to the schrund and returned home by Tower Ridge, leaving an ice-axe high up on the Little Tower just to ensure that we did return on the morrow.

The following morning a rather more realistic outlook was to be discerned in the party. Prior to starting out we made due obeisance before the small bottle of a liqueur which we had brought in the hope of celebrating the first ascent of Gardyloo Buttress. This done, we sallied forth and, after a period of time which shall remain unspecified, we stood at our highest point of the previous evening, roped in the same order.

My special care this day was the "boot-rope," a

50-foot length of line to which were attached all our boots, our ice-axe and our one rucksack. This tail-piece was left hanging down the cliff face most of the time, so that we could climb the pitches unencumbered and keep the stances clear.

Sydney started out on the Gardyloo Gully face and then moved back on to the true ridge after 40 feet. There he encountered a huge, unstable block which had to be passed. It proved to be so insecure that he decided to dislodge it before venturing further. John and I tucked ourselves and the rope out of the line of fire, and then the block was sent down. Observatory Gully was still filled with snow, and down this funnel that boulder rolled. From one side to the other in turn it weaved its way in great sweeps, its momentum just insufficient to surmount the snows banked against the gully walls. Finally it came to rest by the Allt a' Mhuilinn.

After climbing another 30 feet of steep but delightful rock Syd called down in high glee that he had found our second belay, a most satisfying bollard on a very small ledge which just accommodated the three of us sitting close-packed. There we sat, feet dangling in the void, for all the world like the Three Wise Monkeys. The "boot-rope" was made fast and then hauled up. Some food was extracted from the rucksack, the luggage was lowered down the cliff once more and we lunched in our strange eyrie, savouring the situation to the full. The day, which had begun dry but sunless, now broke up beautifully; but where we sat no sun could reach. The downward view, however, put us in good heart, for we felt that we were beginning to make height on the rocks. On the other hand, there was precious little chance to relax, and so we soon resumed the attack.

To the right of our perch a large semi-detached flake offered an easy ascent for some feet. The others shinned up in turn and disappeared, taking with them plenty of spare line, and I was left to admire the scene. The eye travelled straight to Carn Mòr Dearg. This complete absence of foreground made me feel distinctly isolated, so I sought solace in tobacco.

Meantime the others seemed to be making very little headway. The rope was almost static. A lengthy conference was in progress, for I could hear voices without being able to distinguish the words. Soon the sound of hammering drifted down, followed by two coils of rope, which I was adjured to look after most carefully, these being additional safeguards on the succeeding very exposed climbing. Precisely what was going on above was only made clear to me later that evening. But plainly the crux of the climb was at hand, so I sat at the ready. The complex system of ropes made me feel like a bell-ringer, and I hoped that, in an emergency, I would not get myself "imbrangled," like Wally Pratt in "The Nine Tailors."

Time passed swiftly and inexorably. The evening shadows began to lengthen in the corrie. Then a glorious light flooded down Gardyloo Gully, suffusing the rocks with an unbelievable purple glow which slowly paled and suddenly was gone. Still the contest, for such it had become, went on somewhere above me. An hour fled by while the ropes moved spasmodically upwards, never more than a few feet at a time. The tension never relaxed, but rather grew with the passing of the minutes. No verbal communication was possible, owing to the configuration of the crag; and when, at length, the ropes began to swing down like the cables of a lift I could only assume that our attempt had failed. I could not truly say that I was sorry, and when two dejected climbers came warily down to rejoin me it was with a feeling of relief that I greeted them.

For them, too, the zest of the game had for the moment departed. They told of steep, holdless grooves and ribs and continuous exposure. They had forced a way over such rocks until it became plain that further direct progress was highly problematical and a traverse to the snow out of the question. John summed it up: "There ought to be a sign up there, 'Cyclists, this hill is dangerous!'" A deeply rusted karabiner and a weather-faded belay-loop were produced—evidence that they had passed the highest point reached by a previous

party who had been forced off by bad weather. We had no such excuse, if any were needed. Sydney and John were convinced that both parties were not on the correct route, which lay almost certainly between our ridge and the grooves draining the snow-filled recess.

And so we prepared to descend. The necessary preliminary was to don our boots; no mean feat in our cramped quarters. In the event Syd was grabbed, just in time to prevent him toppling off head-first, as he struggled into his hobnailers. So, to restore his morale, we generously allowed him to test the belay for a long, airy rappel by sending him down first. A series of descents on the rope took us to the snows of Observatory Gully, down which we glissaded merrily. Soon the Hut was before us.

We felt no pricking of conscience as we ate our gargantuan meal and relived the climb. We simply hoped that Lord Woolton's slumbers would be as sweet and deep as our own.

As the three of us tumbled into bed the bottle of liqueur stood unopened on the table. No "dull opiate" was needed that night, and as I sank "lethewards" my drowsy mind recalled and re-echoed the words of Slingsby, "We'n powler't up an' down a bit an' had a rattlin' day."

NOTE.—This attempt on Gardyloo Buttress was made in June 1941, the participants being the author with W. S. Scroggie (Syd), and J. G. Ferguson (John). The route taken by B. P. Kellett in his first successful, solitary ascent in July 1944 (*Journal* (1946) Vol. 23, p. 333) lay some fifty feet to the right of the 1941 line, beyond a subsidiary buttress. There is probably only one chink in the giant's armour, and that hard-won ascent is a tribute to an astonishing climber.

BACK BEARINGS ON MERRICK.

By Ian W. Craig.

I have climbed Merrick twice. A period of over twenty years elapsed between my two ascents. In that long interval I seldom saw Merrick yet often found myself

within a few hundred feet of its summit. That was during my R.A.F. service.

I recall my first ascent, though not its exact date. It took place a few months after that successful attempt to surmount the hill by motor car. Strangely, however horrible such desecration of hill solitudes appears to the reader, that vehicle indirectly helped my ascent.

Neil, my companion, and I were then on a camping tour of Galloway. We were comparative beginners at the climbing game, ill-equipped but full of the confidence of the inexperienced. Clad in shirt, shorts and nailed shoes we felt we could tackle any Scottish hill. In those impecunious, office-boy days we invested in a cheap compass and map and thus we felt we could not become lost, though I do believe now that each was relying on the other to compute any necessary compass routes. How many have started climbing in the same fashion!

As man grows older he forgets the indiscretions of his own youth and condemns younger folk for doing exactly what he himself once practised. Those who are not assisted by the same good luck he himself experienced are taken as examples of the monumental folly to be avoided by all.

Neil and I talked ourselves into that Merrick climb. A meeting occurred in Glen Trool with two fully-equipped climbers, whose condescending words riled us into demonstrating that we too could reach the summit cairn of Merrick. Thus began a competitive hill climb.

We, knowing no other route, followed the path to Culsharg and, using that drystone dike as a guide over the col from Benyellary, found ourselves on the rim of the Merrick plateau in bad weather. Miserably we crouched behind that dike, loath to leave its shelter, yet hard put to dodge the wind-driven spears of rain which penetrated the airy crevices between the stones. Finally we turned to our map and compass and, working out some sort of course, stepped out desperately into the mist. The dark outline of that dike faded into the general greyness and we were committed, with a lurking uncertainty in our hearts, to finding that summit cairn.

A few minutes later we came on two parallel ruts. I was mystified, but Neil recalled that someone had recently climbed the hill by car. These would be the wheel tracks and would thus indicate an easy way to the summit. We built a little cairn where we joined these ruts and, hoping we had turned in the right direction, walked up between them. Soon a large cairn loomed up. We were there. After a hurried snack in the lee of the summit cairn we retreated quickly by wheel tracks and reciprocal compass bearing to that dike, an object which could scarcely be missed. Back at our camp we found that the others had failed to complete the ascent. We never confessed how we had been assisted over that summit plateau.

Years passed, and with the outbreak of war I found myself on an air navigation course at an airfield on the Solway shore. Curiously, when there I inhabited a barrack hut erected on a former camp site, and where my camp fire had been was a hut in which I was taught the intricacies of maps, charts, and compasses.

During the next few months Merrick cropped up in my thoughts in a more sinister fashion. So often flying from the north and west, I found its bulky top and foothills athwart my course and learned from the fatal experience of others to watch the altimeter carefully. The snag was that, on the last homeward leg, the plane was often above cloud and a blind descent had to be made to the Solway shore. So much depended on the navigation—navigation of the “by guess and by God” method by Sprog observers in Bothas without wireless aids. Looking back again I recall the confidence of my inexperience, and no longer wonder at the uneasiness of the pilot.

Some of these flights were marvellously beautiful, particularly so the evening trips, when between rose-pink, orange and purple tinted cloud layers whose varying strata were linked by vertical cloud pillars, the aircraft made its way like an angry wasp winging solitarily through an aerial cathedral. Or in the hard monochromatic radiance of moonlight when, but for the

distant glow of a heather fire, it was hard to distinguish between sea-girt land and cloud shadow. But always, at the end of it all, lay the threat of Merrick and its surrounding hills—the unseen reef below the surface of that cloud sea.

Only once did I come to close quarters with the hill. On one clear day my tale of Loch Enoch's "loch-in-a-loch" aroused my pilot's curiosity. We turned off track and map-read between Mulwharchar and Merrick. There, in that mountainous hollow we trailed a wing over Loch Enoch's surface and had a good look at that little island as we circled under the very shadow of Merrick. From the air it looked disappointingly dull, and I confess that never again did I feel any urge to explore the recesses of the Merrick range in a Botha.

More recently, on a January day, I again found myself on Merrick's summit plateau. This time, with the same companion as over twenty years before, I made a day trip by car to Glen Trool. A trip, memorable because we motored in clear air round the end of a cloud at ground level on the summit of the Straiton road—a stranded strato-cumulus.

We retraced our original hill route. A gleam of sun cheered us at Culsharg, but thereafter we saw nothing. Benyellary's cairn was found after we had twice passed it within twenty yards, and from it we located that dike, and its dark handrail helped us across the col to the Merrick plateau—a summit area on that day more like that on MacDhui. Conditions were really bad. This time we were well equipped, but the blizzard made the summit crossing arduous. Our footsteps filled up as we advanced and the powdery snow dust made breathing difficult. We hung on to our compass course for an interminable time until, in the snow and mist, we almost walked against a concrete theodolite stand. We were at the summit at last but where was the cairn? We never found it although we cast around within the range of our visibility. The cold was unbearable. We retreated as quickly as possible, by compass all the way, until we

located our stone handrail to Benyellary. Then a fast descent to the car parked at the Bruce Memorial.

Perhaps the third time I ascend Merrick I shall sunbathe at the summit cairn or swim in lukewarm water in Loch Enoch. Perhaps!

LOOKING AFTER YOUR CLIMBING BOOTS.

By Fred Lang, J.M.C.S. (a Tanner).

THE first thing to bear in mind is that your climbing boots are made of leather, which was once the living hide of an ox and is made of exactly the same material as the human hide. Therefore, it is a good beginning if you don't do anything to your boots that you would not do to your own skin.

Suppose you have just bought a new pair of boots. You will find they are a bit hard and stiff at first, and have to be "walked in." Before your first day out give them a good soaking with saddle soap. Any boot repairer or harness shop will sell this. A good brand is made by Proports. To apply the saddle soap use a small piece of towelling or cloth; wet it, wring it out, rub it over the soap until there is plenty on the cloth and cover your boots with it. There is no need to rub it in. It will soak in and, once it is dry, you can polish your boots if you want them to look *tiddly*.

Now, let us take what I find is a very usual day in Scotland. It has rained heavily and unceasingly all day from the moment you left in the morning, with the result that your boots have eventually become absolutely sopping through and through. If you are going out next day and there is no time for your boots to dry, there is no need to touch them other than stuffing them with newspaper. If you are very particular, a light wipe over the uppers and the inside round the ankles with saddle soap will keep them soft.

When you get home in the evening you will find that your boots, though soaking, have now no actual water lying loose on them. This is the ideal time for the

application of dubbin. Technically, it is known as the *sammed* condition. Don't dry them first or they will be hard, and the dubbin won't sink in. The easiest way to apply dubbin is to warm it on a stove in its tin until it becomes liquid. (Do not overheat; just until it is a liquid). Then apply liberally with an old toothbrush. It is a good idea to put some on the soles as well as on the uppers. Do not wipe off but allow to dry in. The drying is very important. Never, under any circumstances, dry your boots in front of or near a fire. Even resting them against the hot-water pipes of a central-heating radiator will harm them. A warm dry place, not necessarily heated, is the best. They should require two to three days at least to dry out. You will find, when they are dry, that nearly all the dubbin has soaked in and there is no need for any further treatment. Some people like their boots polished. If so, do it now, just as if you were cleaning a pair of shoes.

If you have been lucky and it has been perfect weather and you return with dry boots, it is a good thing to clean them with a wet scrubbing brush and then apply a light coat of saddle soap or boot polish; or if they have been well kept over the last few week-ends, don't put anything on at all.

It is not a good thing to apply dubbin every week-end. I would suggest every third week-end. On the other two, use saddle soap as already described. Apply both on outer side of uppers and round the ankles, and do it when the leather is damp.

Again, when the boots are dry and the saddle soap has sunk in, you may polish like shoes if you wish, but it is not necessary.

NEW CLIMBS.

NORTH-WEST REGION.

Beinn a' Chaisgein Mor.—Here there is some confusion. The hill itself is about 2,800 feet, but its southern slopes, towards the upper end of Fionn Loch, terminate in two

distinct craggy buttresses overlooking Carnmore cottage. Seen from below, the right-hand buttress which overlooks the track from Gleann na Muice Beag and Laracantivore was the scene of the first rock climb in this fascinating district by W. N. Ling and G. T. Glover in June 1911. They named this buttress or tower "Torr na h' Iolaire," and estimated the height of the cliff as about 800 feet and the summit as 2,050 feet. On the 1-inch O.S. map a name, Sgurr na Laocainn, appears here, but it seems reasonable to use the more picturesque name applied to it by the pioneers of rock climbing in the area. To the left of this, still overlooking Carnmore, but separated from the first, is another formidable craggy buttress with no special name. Tentatively it might be named Carn Mor Buttress. Slessor's routes (*J.* 25, 65) are on Torr na h' Iolaire. The following two routes were done on 24th March 1952 by E. A. Wrangham (alone) and on 31st March by E. A. W. and Arthur Clegg (respectively).

Torr na h' Iolaire, Tantivy Tower.—A 400-foot climb with one difficult and exposed pitch of 50 feet. This route was taken as the line of least resistance up the south-west face. It involves scrambling up grass ledges—left, right, half-left—to the final wall. This was climbed by traversing left to a crest, up this on good rock, and so to the top.

Carn Mor Buttress, Diagonal Route.—A Hard Severe of 600 feet. The route slants rightwards up the main face. First comes a steep wall, then a wide, central bay of slabs and heather. Then one escapes to the right of the undercut cliff which is so conspicuous a feature of the upper section. Start centrally in a gully (90 feet), and traverse right on to line of ribs to quartzite belay (70 feet). Step left on to slab, corner crack on left, to thread belay. Past corner on right is stance and small belay (40 feet). Go straight up on good crack holds until one traverses left and up to perched block. Easier now to slabs and heather of the bay. Cross to immediate right of upper cliff. Climb up, not hard, 150 feet to the top. First party had intermittent snow showers.

Glen na Muice Beag, The Sidings, Route 1.—This crag, next up the glen on right of Junction Buttress, on north-east spur of Ruadh Stac Mor gave a severe climb of 300 feet to the same party.

Near right edge of crag is straight, narrow gully. Take a line up rib on left, starting 25 feet left of gully. Go up gentle grooves



SGORR NA CAORACH
Cioch, North Wall Route, see p. 151

Tom Patey



December 1952

CREAG AN DUBH LOCH, NORTH-WEST GULLY
(J. M. TAYLOR leads last pitch. Rock arch is on right wall,
see p. 113)

Tom Patey

and corners to stance and belay (60 feet), then 25 feet more to stance overlooking gully. Bear left to triangular ledge and detached boulder (25 feet). Step round to right to stance and belay overlooking gully. The 30-foot crux follows, up left on small holds, up a groove and then short crack to a belay. (First half avoidable by using gully). Then 40 feet easier to heathery ledge, continuing 40 feet to right to a steep wall. Cross slab to left and round left of wall, with belay beyond. Thence easy to the top.

Glen na Muice Beag, Junction Buttress (referred to in previous route) was climbed at Easter 1952 by A. Parker, John Derris and Irene Richards, a 350 to 400 foot climb of about very difficult standard in rubbers. It went up the right hand edge, approaching from Laracantivore, starting at a cairn 30 feet left of corner, below a sweep of gneiss slabs showing tufts of grass. Details are as follows:—

(1) 70 feet. Up left on good holds and a clean slab to grass ledge, then 10 feet to grass tuft and flake belay. (2) 100 feet. Straight up, finishing on left edge of slabs at heather terrace with birches. (3) 100 feet. Up wall, leftish. Cross deep right-slanting crack and move left to grass and rock corner. Go up left wall by a staircase of quartzite with half-inch treads, and finish up a crack and a 10-foot wall to ledge (piton belay). (4) 110 feet. Right, over grass for 30 feet to block belay. Round corner on right below block and up left edge of rough slabs to ledge. Move right and then up, more fine slabs to top. A splendid light-hearted climb on perfect rock.

Ben Dearg Mor, Coire nan Clach, Flake Buttress.—This was climbed by Mr Parker's party on the day preceding the ascent of Junction Buttress. It was their best Easter climb; one of prolonged difficulty and extreme interest. On the first attempt there was fresh snow on the rocks. They spent five hours on the first three pitches and had to make a sensational retreat at dusk, leaving three waist loops of rope which they recovered on their successful ascent on the following day. This occupied six hours in almost snow-free conditions.

The buttress projects from the main mass of the mountain with a frontage of 10 yards. It is likely that the route is the only possible one, both side walls being very steep. The Flake Buttress is the one to the left of the prominent gully to the left of the massive Central

Buttress. It is a 350-foot climb, of which all the pitches described are rated as being severe in boots.

(1) 50 feet. On left up corner for 10 feet. Traverse delicately right to extreme edge. Up and round corner on right to block; back left and up to narrow ledge (piton). (2) 60 feet, but only 15 feet of climbing. Right, to edge of buttress, round corner to side opposite Central Buttress. Traverse 20 feet on this flank, then 15 feet up steep, awkward corner and back left to face of buttress and belay. (3) 70 feet. Up to platform on left. Difficult start up wall, 8 feet right, up slanting shelf with crack. Round corner on right and then across and up exposed slab. Up left to ledge, then to right and back again to stance and belay below steep wall. (4) 40 feet, the crux. Traverse on left flank of buttress 20 feet, then up short, steep groove 10 feet. Delicate traverse left and up to easier ground. Block belay in cave below chimney. (5) 50 feet. Up chimney then exit on right to ledge. Up easier rock to ledge. More difficult rock to another ledge and use piton belay. (6) 70 feet. Up to ledge, round to left, back and up to right to slab. This is rather artificial. Now scramble to top of buttress which connected to main mass of mountain by narrow ridge with perched block. More scrambling to the top. No pitons were left on the climb.

Ben Lair, Fionn Cliff, Excalibur.—This 400-foot route, very difficult, was climbed by E. A. Wrangham and Arthur Clegg. West (right) of the Tooth is an area of indefinite cliff for about 200 feet. The West Chimney route may be here. This cliff ends in a deep-cut gully with an outstanding buttress beset with overhangs on its right. Start up this at side of gully. Moderate initial climbing, then steeper. Keep on up some minor overhangs with good holds, to a capacious ledge below steep slab ending in an overhang. Cross diagonally left and traverse right, beneath overhang to corner. Not so hard as it looks. The way ahead is obvious and becomes easier.

Sgorr na Caorach (Applecross).—The following accounts are from Tom Patey who has, in effect, discovered an unexplored climbing ground round the north side of the Cioch of Applecross. The north wall of the Cioch itself gave about 800 feet of grand climbing on perfect rough rock with hardly any of the usual terraces. Beyond the Cioch, inwards, in a recessed corrie, they found five great buttresses of which they climbed one, where there

was only one possible route all the way. This was the inmost one, No. 5, when counting from the col on the upper side of the Cioch. They named it Turret Buttress.

Cioch, North Wall.—Hard severe, climbed on 31st May 1952 by T. W. Patey and G. B. Leslie (together), and J. M. Taylor and J. Morgan (together). The lower section has numerous grass ledges to the narrow midway terrace which girdles the Cioch, but the upper is an almost unbroken barrier of very steep rock. The start was short of a stretch of slabs and walls close to the lower grassy reaches of the N.W. Gully. Following a long grassy fault with a few rowan trees rightwards to the lower rocks, easy ledges enter the gully; but the party turned left, ascending interesting rock pitches to the midway terrace, about 50 feet along from the skyline notch seen from the usual approach from the south. The first flaw in the upper wall was about 120 feet from the notch, and there a cairn was left.

A strenuous 10-foot overhang topped by a 20-foot slab led to stance and thread belay (Severe). A short detour to right to another stance. Hard climbing up a small rock rib on right, for 50 feet, led to another easy terrace.

Above loomed an intimidating 100-foot wall—part of one continuous and apparently impregnable tier which crosses the entire north face at this level. Passing right, below a deep-cut rock funnel crowned by overhangs, in 60 feet we reached the foot of what appeared to be the only chink in its armour. Here we discovered an old abseil sling—Parker's ascent (*J.* 24, 296). This point may have been gained directly from below. There the pitches looked somewhat easier, though less clean.

The key pitch, 70 feet in height, continuously hard and exposed, followed partly a prominent layback crack. From the terrace (cairn) a recess below the crack was gained, whence a layback could be adopted until a shelf on the left was reached; the wall above was surmounted by vigorous arm pulls, and in 25 feet a large platform was gained (Hard Severe): 30 feet of the wall remains. Cross right by a ledge 8 feet above, whence a long stride over a slab and a short ascent lead to easier ledges (Severe).

After a short respite the Cioch rears up in another belt of slabs. Moving now horizontally left, 100 feet of easy ledges lead to the base of a tower seen on the left skyline. It is bounded on the right by a steep chimney, climbed for 25 feet and then abandoned for the rougher rocks on the tower itself. From the broad ledge above, 120 feet of easy climbing follows to the top of the Cioch. The upper

400 feet of this route above the midway terrace is on clean, rough rock throughout.

Sgorr na Caorach, No. 5 North Buttress, or Turret Buttress.—This 500-foot severe route was made by G. B. Leslie, T. W. Patey and J. M. Taylor on 1st June 1952. This buttress lies farthest back in the corrie facing Beinn Bhan. Seen from below, it appears to culminate in a fine pinnacle about 150 feet below the top, but this is really a promontory linked by a narrow neck to the upper cliff.

Start on the left, at the foot of No. 4 Gully (cairn). Mixed rock and grass slope to the first rock tier, 100 feet up, best tackled about 25 feet from the edge of the gully on a platform. The corner above, vertical for 12 feet, is well broken and leads to more good rock above. Easier rock leads to second tier, ascended up the left edge by a short slab. The third and steepest tier is gained by short ledges, and the only line of weakness is in the centre. Surmount a steep, narrow, 30-foot slab by a layback crack 10 feet up on the right, where there is a small but vital chockstone—a Severe pitch climbed in stocking soles. Another 200 feet of steep, interesting climbing leads to an arête to the pinnacle top. The final 150-foot cliff looked wet and unpleasant, so the party used the top part of No. 4 Gully on the left.

Liathach, Sgorr a' Chadhail, Reflection Wall.—The top of this peak has a short exposure of rock to the south, the easiest approach being from the west ridge. At the eastern end of the crag a cairn was left. On 4th August 1952 this short but severe route was climbed by W. J. Cole and J. R. Marshall (both J.M.C.S.).

(1) Surmount overhang above cairn. Move right then straight up past juniper ledge to stance and thread belay. (2) Continue up for 75 feet to stance and thread belay. (3) Climb obvious wall above, whence a 20-foot corner leads to the top.

Fuar Tholl, Achnashellach, Mainrichean Buttress.—The Enigma Route on this buttress was climbed on 25th July 1952 by W. J. Cole and J. R. Marshall (both J.M.C.S.) and I. Oliver (E.U.M.C.). The standard was severe. One starts from the left end of the lowest terrace.

(1) Go 30 feet up left skyline on easy rock to mossy stance. (2) Now climb crack on right for 60 feet to a ledge. Traverse left into steep grooves and up to large grassy ledge. (3) Go up 70 feet right-

wards to moss patch; then left up to east end of big ledge. (4) Climb for 30 feet up groove, and then crack to top of large flake. (5) The crux 50 feet. Traverse right and up steep wall on good holds to ledge. Traverse left to cairn. (6) Climb rib above for 30 feet. Scramble up to a bigger cairn below steep rib. (7) Climb rib, 70 feet, on small holds and then trend leftwards. Short pitches and easier rock leads to top in about 200 feet. There are belays between pitches.

Ben Fhada (Kintail), The Needle.—A few hundred yards south of Needle's Eye Buttress is a slabby buttress culminating in a fine pinnacle. The route goes up the north edge of the buttress, starting from the lowest point. It was climbed on 20th July 1952 by W. J. Cole and J. R. Marshall (both J.M.C.S.) and I. Oliver (E.U.M.C.).

Climb groove to left of slab. Traverse right to porphyry rib (spike belay). The direct ascent of slab is Severe. Excellent climbing up rib in pitches of 30, 90 and 65 feet to a cairn. Then traverse up to right 30 feet to large vibrating flake. Climb wall above for 30 feet to top of pinnacle. This is a magnificent situation. Cross a narrow gap and scramble up to the main ridge.

CAIRNGORMS AND LOCHNAGAR REGION.

Lochnagar.

Parallel Gully "B" ascended on 8th June 1952 by T. W. Patey and J. M. Taylor; W. D. Brooker and C. M. Dixon; D. A. Aitken and M. C. S. Phillip; C. Morrison and J. Henderson. The 600-foot very severe climb was exceptionally dry. The upper part above Tough-Brown Traverse was previously climbed during May by I. M. Brooker and A. D. Lyall. The large party divided into four pairs is evidence of the outstanding nature of this problem. T. W. Patey contributes a special article on this ascent elsewhere in this *Journal*.

New Winter Ascents also appear elsewhere as an appendix to W. D. Brooker's article on "Winter Climbing on Lochnagar and the Cairngorms."

Central Buttress.—A hard severe direct start to this climb was made on 13th August 1952 by T. W. Patey and C. Morrison. This 300-foot route lies up the centre

of the slabby base of the buttress, skirted on previous ascents by heather slopes to the left.

Start close to the foot of a long fault which cleaves the centre of the buttress slanting left (cairn). Cross to the right of the fault 25 feet up, towards a conspicuous flake; but immediately climb straight up for 30 feet to a ledge and belay (Severe): 30 feet above, the fault forms an open chimney, but to gain the foot of this is a hard problem—a slab on the left must be climbed for 10 feet and the short overhang at the top is Hard Severe.

The chimney itself is straightforward and leads on to a steep terrace mounting to the left of the buttress. After 120 feet, return right to the centre of the buttress (30 feet), and select a route at random to link up with the crest of the ridge where it is gained on the old route. Time, 1½ hours.

Although the rock is essentially sound, the route will not be enjoyable until some of the covering moss is removed on subsequent ascents.

*Shadow Buttress "A" (Alternative Route, Difficult).—*Made on 31st August 1952 by T. W. Patey and J. M. Taylor.

After scrambling up the initial gully of the normal route, instead of going right towards the spiral terrace, diverge left on to the upper part of a subsidiary rib of the main buttress. This gives 200 to 300 feet of fair climbing, including an awkward chimney (Difficult), until a point is reached where three variants are possible: (1) A route over slabs passes right, above the huge lower overhang, circling the buttress to link up with the normal route. (2) An easy grass shelf goes up to the left to a ledge overlooking Shallow Gully. An obvious though somewhat artificial route follows the ridge above to the true crest of the buttress. (3) The route selected lay between these, up a very steep 100-foot wall, following an indefinite groove, the foot of which was reached by a short traverse right. The climbing was on rounded holds and continuously Severe. The easy crest of the buttress followed immediately and was gained lower down than on the normal route. Time, 3 hours.

Shadow Chimney.—The first ascent was on 30th August 1951 by T. W. Patey and M. D. Coutts.

Much loose rock in the lower part is avoided by climbing the rib on the right of the chimney. After an awkward, half-buried chockstone in the chimney is surmounted a pile of jammed boulders leads up to a large chockstone which completely blocks the chimney, apparently barring further progress. However, a through-route permits ascent to a large cave above, the roof of which is formed by a huge chockstone. The latter is turned on the right by a series of grass ledges leading to easy ground (Difficult). From here an escape

is obvious on to Shadow "A" route on the left. The chimney, however, continues as a good pitch 25 feet high (Strenuous and Severe). The climb thus finishes on a platform on Shadow "A" route (cairn).

The Stack.—This 350-foot route, very difficult in standard, was first climbed on 7th October 1952 by T. W. Patey, W. D. Brooker and J. M. Taylor. It is the buttress between Black Spout and its Left-hand Branch. The first objective is to gain a large grassy platform 120 feet up. From there a series of dark chimneys slant up the left side of the buttress, ascending towards the top of the Crumbling Cranny.

Start 20 feet below the chockstone in the left branch (cairn). An attractive curving crack up a slab forms the first segment of a Z-crack ending below a short wall 60 feet up on the right. The ascent of this wall may require combined tactics (crux). When complicated by *verglas* on the first ascent it was Mild Severe in standard. From the platform above it is best to launch off a block on the right and to keep passing right, along a thin ledge overlooking the Black Spout until the edge of the large grassy platform is reached. Cross over now to the left side of the buttress below the cracks and chimneys. The first of these is blocked by a pile of jammed boulders. Mount to 12 feet below the impasse, then move left to a comfortable ledge. From here the first party traversed left and slightly down for 30 feet along a sensational ledge provided with a continuous handrail. They then returned upwards and to the right by two short chimneys to an alcove 30 feet above the impasse. It might also be possible to climb straight up at the start of the traverse, but the latter should not be missed.

Now follow the chimneys for a further 40 feet to a prominent block. The final chimney above proving too hard, the party mounted from the top of the block on to a sloping shelf on the right, at the end of which a short wall was climbed to a grassy platform and belay. From the left end of the platform a 15-foot slab is followed to easier ground. Below the terminal wall an easy terrace winds round to the left until an obvious slanting crack can be climbed to the plateau.

The climbing is on sound, clean rock throughout, and the difficulty sustained, although the crux alone exceeds Difficult in standard.

Twin Chimneys Route, Black Spout Pinnacle.—This difficult route was climbed by T. W. Patey and J. M. Taylor on 31st August 1952.

This route follows a straight course from the fork in the Black Spout to the top of the Pinnacle. From the extensive grassy slope

at the foot, a steep rocky gully rises almost to the top of the Pinnacle. Starting up easy ledges in the gully two definite chimneys are soon reached biting into the rib on the right. The first is straight-forward but the upper and better defined chimney gives 30 feet of Difficult climbing, then having its exit on to the rib. Steep rocks lead straight to the top (300 feet). Time, $\frac{1}{2}$ hour.

This was the route selected by Raeburn on the first reconnaissance of the Pinnacle in 1902, the ledge below the upper chimney being the highest point reached.

Coire na Saobhaidhe, Cyril's Crack, was ascended on 20th September 1952 by J. Hay, climbing alone. It is the only interesting feature in the corrie. The Crack is at the junction of slabs on the right and rocks to the left. It leads out on to scree below the summit. Rock is weathered and holds are few. There are three moderate pitches in the lower part, the final consisting of broken rock. In winter it could offer very difficult climbing.

Creag an Dubh Loch.

Creag an Dubh Loch: Labyrinth Edge (800 feet, Very Difficult).—The right wall of the Labyrinth Groove is very well defined and forms a definite edge where it meets the sheets of slab on the face to the right. In the upper section the edge is really a ridge which rises in huge steps. The lower third is fairly broken, but the central section, where the slabs sweep right across to Labyrinth, is smooth. The route never strays more than 100 feet from the edge. It was ascended on 8th September 1951 by W. D. Brooker and G. B. Leslie.

Start at the rib of rock on the right edge of Labyrinth. Forty feet up, traverse right and then up across a recessed corner; 50 feet above is a large groove with a block belay. Climb up this groove and then traverse left and up an awkward slab to a ledge. Just above here it is possible to cross to Labyrinth. Scrambling leads to a green recess with huge ferns.

Leave the recess by a short steep wall on the left and move left and then back up to the right by a groove. Still slanting right, the next pitch ends in a shallow series of grassy cracks and slabs with a poor belay. An exit to the left leads to a large groove slanting right and ending in a corner with a block belay. Following this line one emerges on a sea of polished slabs lying in great swathes across the face. The only possible route seems to be by a thin grassy crack



December 1952

CREAG AN DUBH LOCH

Tom Patey

X, Mouth of Central Gully; Y, False Gully; Z, North-west Gully



April 1952

GARBH-BHEINN, ARDGOUR, South Wall of Great Ridge

D. N. Mill

(D, Direct Approach; S, Scimitar, see p. 167)

running directly upwards and over 100 feet long. This peters out just before reaching the sanctuary of a great spike, jammed in a cleft in the line of overhangs dominating the slabs. After passing the spike a jump is made down to a ledge on the left, from where it is easy to reach a platform on the edge itself.

The tower above is the first of the three great rock steps of the upper ridge and is the crux of the climb. The second step is simple, as is the third if its overhanging fang is passed on the left, by the wall above Labyrinth. A steep wall of about 100 feet in height still bars the way to easy ground, and this is tackled by working round to the right and up a chimney; then out of the chimney by the right wall and over a few overhanging blocks. It is now easy to the plateau. The route is absolutely non-artificial with some fine situations and appears to follow the only possible (if tortuous) line through the central slabs. However, much of the climb is very vegetated. On the slabs themselves the route is by turfy cracks and grooves in otherwise unclimbably smooth rock.

False Gully.—This 500-foot severe route was ascended on 10th May 1952 by W. D. Brooker, T. W. Patey and J. M. Taylor. The route follows a prominent intermittent rake, slanting left from a cone of large scree to the left of north-west gully (see *Guide*, p. 94). The rake peters out, high on the formidable upper face.

The first grass section is easy. As the rake steepens, indefinite rocks give 250 feet of Difficult climbing, interspersed with patches of grass. A short, steep pitch below a huge wall on the right leads to a ledge which eventually fades out on the slabs. Just before the termination a steep chimney offers a route directly upwards. The problem is to pierce the 100-foot barrier of steep rock between the ledge and the more broken rocks above. From a belay 25 feet up the chimney, the rope can be thrown over a projection on the left. Lodgment is thus obtained on the edge to the left of the chimney, and a ledge with a belay is reached 20 feet up. A groove with awkward entry follows to a heather platform with no belay, but furnished with a piton. Climb the 15-foot recessed slab above to a ledge, leading leftwards to easier ground. The climb finishes with 100 feet of scrambling. Rock is sound throughout and the piton pitch could perhaps be avoided on the right.

Sabre Edge.—This route of mild severe standard was made by T. W. Patey and C. Morrison on 12th August 1952. The terrific 600-foot belt of slabs, reaching from False Gully (at right or north-west end) up to and forming the right wall (looking up) of Central Gully, appears to be quite unassailable. At somewhat above mid-height

in Central Gully the right wall falls back to form a steep, mossy gully. Immediately beyond is a prominent, sharp, exceedingly steep arête, over 250 feet in height, here named Sabre Edge. It is the lowest of several such arêtes; the rest, however, present insuperable difficulties.

The climb, although short, is continuously hard, and on the first ascent occupied 2 hours. The lower part of the arête is bounded on the left by a smooth 70 degree slab. Steep rocks, complicated by several loose blocks, provide a hard opening 90-foot pitch, the last 20 feet of which slant up to the left to a stance close to the edge of the slab: 30 feet higher the base of a curious needle of rock is reached. This abuts against a bulge in the cliff, part of a system of overhangs which here completely surround the arête. A short traverse to the left permits entry to the cleft between the *needle* and the cliff-face; thence by back and knee climbing the top of the needle is gained. The latter is unfortunately 2 feet short of the height necessary to surmount the bulge in the cliff face (crux). However, if the second stands on the ledge on the outside of the needle, belayed round it, by leaning over the top he can supply the leader with these vital inches. Above the bulge is a small grass shelf passing round to the left. Thence a steep 20-foot groove leads to easier and more broken ground. Soon a substantial platform is gained below the final vertical wall; a delicate 20-foot traverse over a slab on the right ends at a notch on the arête. The final short overhang above is turned, not without difficulty, on the right.

Broad Cairn, Coffin Chimney.—This was climbed on 3rd May 1952 by J. M. Taylor and T. W. Patey. It is the deep, narrow chimney set in the rock bluff below and east of Broad Cairn Slabs (*Guide*, p. 90). There are several chockstones and the standard is difficult, height about 200 feet. It is deep, narrow and sporting, but it may often be very wet. If too wet, the narrow rib on the right gives a moderate route.

Ben Macdhui, Coire Sputan Dearg, The Black Tower.—This severe route was climbed on 21st April 1952 by T. W. Patey, G. B. Leslie and J. M. Taylor. The Tower, part of No. 5 Buttress, rises conspicuously between Cherubs Buttress and Flake Buttress (*Guide*, p. 178).

Starting 50 feet above the lowest rocks follow a prominent groove on the left flank of the buttress. This leads in 80 feet to easier ground.

Climb broken slabs on the left to a platform 30 feet above, and at the foot of a steep 20-foot groove, close to the true crest of the tower. The groove, entered from the right by a Severe movement, gives access to a platform and block. The steep slab round the corner on the left is climbed by a 20-foot crack to a short arête. Traverse delicately for 15 feet across slab on right till possible to regain crest and the summit of the tower by way of a short crack. The tower is connected to the plateau by a shattered arête. Clean, rough rock throughout.

Sgoran Dubh, No. 3 Buttress.—R. B. Frere reports a new short route of difficult standard on the buttress south of Cripple's Cleft. The base is steep and slabby, so the first pitch goes up the gully on its left, very steep and shaky. Frere now traversed on to the buttress for about 200 feet of excellent, moderate climbing, culminating in a final exposed and sporting crack about 15 feet in height, the only apparent way of completing the climb.

Mayar, Corrie Fee, Look C Gully.—This gully, shown immediately above the letter C on diagram facing page 39 in the new "Cairngorms Guide," was climbed under winter conditions on 15th February 1953 by C. L. Donaldson and J. Marshall (Ed., J.M.C.S.). They consider that the lower 400 feet is a good severe climb, probably the finest ice climb in the area. The upper section is shallower and has no difficulties. There are five pitches in the lower section with long run-outs, and almost everything was iced up.

GLENCOE AREA.

Buachaille Etive Mor.

The following eight routes have been done by members of the Creagh Dhu M.C. over a period of two years or so:—

Rannoch Wall, Shattered Wall.—A mild severe in rubbers, climbed on 18th May 1952 by W. Smith and H. McInnes. The climb starts about 80 feet below Domino Chimney, at top of the pitch in Easy Gully.

(1) 90 feet. Climb to grass ledge; then up and over small overhang. Move right and up to big ledge and belay. (2) 100 feet.

Traverse back right. Climb to large corner and up over big, loose flake. Go up 5 feet and traverse right, round nose, then up right to belay.

Rannoch Wall, Wappenshaw Wall.—A hard severe climb in rubbers done in July 1952 by W. Smith and H. McInnes. On the left of Autumn Slab is a corner rising from the final pitch in Easy Gully. The climb starts at top ledge of the corner.

(1) 90 feet. Go up 30 feet from ledge (thread belay). Move down right and along obvious traverse to middle of wall (block belay and stance). (2) 110 feet. Move right under big overhang to rib of rock. Move straight up under smaller overhang. Go left 5 feet past detached block. Above are two grooves. Using both, very steep and exposed, ascend them. Above, move left on rock shelf. Where it broadens, follow obvious fault up to right to belay. (3) 30 feet. Back left and up short wall.

Rannoch Wall, Peasant's Passage.—This route, very severe in rubbers, was climbed in July 1952 by W. Rowney and H. McInnes. Autumn Slab is bounded on the right by an easy, broken corner below Overhanging Crack and on the left by a steep corner, rising from the final pitch of Easy Gully. Midway between the two is a shallow corner with a cairn, marking the start of the climb.

(1) 50 feet. Move up 15 feet, then swing right on to rib; over slabs on right to narrow rock ledge. Move along it to right to stance and piton belay. (2) 60 feet. Up round corner to steep wall with shallow crack. Climb its left side a few feet, to easier broken rocks, followed to right to poor stance and belay. (3) 120 feet. Above stance, slightly to right is steep corner, which climb 50 feet to white rock spike (thread). Swing on to rib on right, continuing thus and then up to top of wall.

North Buttress, Shattered Crack Variation.—Eighty-foot variant at second pitch. There are twin cracks, about 6 feet apart, going up overhang. Use right crack (left is original route) to get to green gully. This very severe variation was done in July 1949 by W. Smith (solo) in rubbers.

Great Gully Buttress, Ledgeway.—Start at top of the first pitch of Great Gully Buttress route. The first pitch was climbed by J. Cunningham alone in 1948, and the

second by W. Smith and R. Hope on 7th September 1952, severe in rubbers, on excellent rock.

(1) 100 feet. Start at right side of ledge, going up slightly right for 45 feet to small ledge below fault. Go up fault. There is a slight overhang midway, which is passed on left. Go left along grass ledge to large block belay at top of second pitch of Great Gully Buttress route. (2) 100 feet. From above block belay swing right into crack, then up groove still right to top of pinnacle. Step left and up short V-shaped chimney to finish.

Great Gully, Upper Buttress, May Crack.—Above Great Gully Buttress, further right, is a steep face on left flank of a broad buttress. Half-way up the wall is an obvious right-angled corner at a height of 60 feet. Thin crack, 20 feet to right of this, was climbed in two pitches of 70 feet each, on 17th May 1952, by R. Hope and W. Smith—a hard severe in rubbers.

(1) Climb up 40 feet from block. Make long reach for a big hold, using left wall for 30 feet to a stance. (2) Remainder of crack to top.

Lagangarbh Buttress, Bollard Slab.—This route, severe in rubbers, was climbed on 8th June 1952 by W. Smith and W. Rowney. It starts on buttress, some way up from Sassenach Groove, directly opposite small cave in Staircase Buttress.

(1) 25 feet. Climb crack to grassy ledge, large block belay. (2) 110 feet. Above block step up; slightly right, up middle of steep slab to top. Variation is possible by going right at block and climbing groove between two overhangs, then moving back left to direct route. This is easier than the first route.

Lagangarbh Buttress, Nameless Wall.—This starts 40 feet left of Bollard Slab (cairn). It was climbed on 8th June 1952 by W. Smith and W. Rowney, who rated it as very severe in rubbers.

Start at bottom left edge of wall, straight up for 15 feet. Traverse right and follow thin crack straight to belay at 85 feet.

Lagangarbh Face, Staircase Buttress.—The following two routes have been made by J. Gordon Parish and John Lees (R.A.F.M.C.). The first appears to be more direct than Haworth's original route and might well be styled

"Ridgeway" (although its authors named it Rehabilitation on account of their previous occupations). It is 300 feet long and rated very difficult. The second, climbed a day later, on 24th February 1952, was a 150-foot variation of the original route, also rated very difficult.

Ridgeway starts left of lowest right-hand rocks by a wide crack and then the slabs on the right. Keep to crest of ridge by a short wall, a crack and steep slabs until you reach the narrow neck of rock formed by the chockstone at the top of East Chimney. Traverse obliquely right and use a right-angled groove and mantelshelf to regain the crest, which is climbed to the foot of a diamond-shaped slab. Turn the upper wall at its lowest point by an undercut hand-traverse to the right.

East Chimney Variation.—Start on lowest rocks left of buttress. Climb arête until forced to traverse into gully on left. Gain crest of buttress by a 70-foot chimney on right, rejoining the original route half-way up.

North Buttress, East Face, Variation.—On 9th March 1952 J. Mason, G. K. Armstrong and E. Furness made a variant of N.E. Zigzag by traversing 30 feet left from top of first pitch.

After a brief move to right climb an 8-foot wall, then a groove to an overhang. Step out on to left wall, traversing left to detached flake. Go up slab above flake and so to foot of shallow gully, leading easily to terrace. The standard is Very Difficult.

Aonach Dubh.

East Face, Curving Crack.—This route of 300 feet, rated severe, was climbed by L. S. Lovat on 5th October 1952. C. D. Thomson and P. B. Read, apparently, did not finish. The start is well to the right of the water slide of Weeping Wall, a few yards right of detached flake.

Go up 30 feet, traversing slightly right to grass ledge. Then climb 35 feet to the foot of a steep, curving crack. This is strenuous but, after 10 feet, leads into a moderate, well-defined groove, running leftward towards the open and broken face, whence easy scrambling leads to the Terrace. A run-out of 110 feet of rope may be needed.

The following six routes have been done by members of the Creagh Dhu M.C.:—

East Face, Drain Pipe Corner.—An easy severe route in boots done by W. Smith and C. Vigano in summer of

1951. Start at right edge of Weeping Wall face, at a large obvious corner. There are four pitches, the first being the hardest, leader requiring 50 feet of rope.

Willow Wall.—A 240 feet very difficult, climbed in April 1951 by C. Vigano and J. Cullen. The first pitch seems to coincide with the start of Wall and Crack Route (*Journal*, 1952, p. 69). Start is about 100 feet right of Weeping Wall route.

Go fairly directly up the wall by rowan tree to another rowan tree at 60 feet. Move up right and traverse right on grassy ledge for about 50 feet. Climb up right towards a clump of fine grasses, with an awkward move before gaining easier ground and belay (50 feet). Follow up left, easier rocks, to complete climb.

Lament.—A very difficult route of 130 feet climbed by J. Cullen and C. Vigano in April 1951, located on the East Face. From Weeping Wall northwards and downwards is a rock face about 200 feet high and 300 feet long. From its lowest point move upwards to right along foot of rocks, about 60 feet to the start (cairn).

(1) 80 feet. Climb steep wall 20 feet. Go up and left 20 feet. Traverse right on to rib, and climb up into and up an irregular groove. (2) 55 feet. Climb wall leftish for 35 feet and scramble to finish.

Grochan Groove.—A mild severe route of 160 feet climbed on 16th August 1952 by J. Cullen and C. Vigano. The start at a well-defined groove left of lowest point of face in previous climb.

(1) 85 feet. Climb groove with small tree at top. Continue up wall, bearing right and then left to grass platform and big tree. (2) 75 feet. Start right of holly tree, climbing wall 20 feet to small ledge. Traverse right to easy slab and up it to recessed corner. Then to top, ending at a rowan tree.

North Face, Deep Gash Gully.—This conspicuous rift, named years ago, has now been climbed in September 1951 by J. Cunningham, W. Rowney and W. Smith. They found it a hard severe route.

(1) 30 feet. Climbed on right by back and foot. (2) 30 feet. Starts on right, goes up at back of cave by tunnelling and crawling through a small hole to a ledge. (3) 25 feet. This is the crux. Climb

right wall beside overhang. One may use thread belay by hole in cave roof to give leader a top rope. (4) 40 feet. Crawl, feet first, through small hole to grass ledge. Move up corner 10 feet. Scramble up gully bed to good belay on right wall.

Unstable Arête.—This 130-foot very difficult route was made by J. Cullen and C. Vigano in May 1952. Start at foot of arête right of Deep Gash Gully.

(1) 25 feet. Easy climbing to belay below slight overhanging wall. (2) 70 feet. Move 15 feet left to edge or arête, climb up 15 feet and traverse right for 20 feet across unsteady blocks, moving round corner on to wall. Climb up to chockstone in crack above heathery nook. (3) 35 feet. Climb slab beside crack for 10 feet and walk right 15 feet to belay. (4) Finally, ascend small nose and scramble to finish.

West Face, No. 4 Gully, Winter Ascent.—The gully was climbed on 26th December 1952 by J. Brown and D. Whillans of the Rock and Ice Club, Manchester.

The lower part was made difficult by soft snow. Higher up, harder snow required step-cutting. Half-way up the gully trifurcates and the central branch was used, which, however, did not appear the easiest.

Stob Coire nan Lochain, Twisting Gully.—J. Gordon Parish describes a winter ascent on 26th February 1952. Where W. H. Murray in 1946 ascended the left fork (he found the right one to be a sheet of ice), Parish climbed the first 60 feet of the right fork by steep, ice-covered rocks to left of the main snow chute, then on snow-ice near the top under overhanging rock. Traversing across ice-bulge which barred direct ascent, he reached a snow recess. A second ice-pitch was above, the last 10 feet of which were extremely steep, necessitating wedging tactics and a struggle over a chockstone with a few small holds and a delicate balance to reach the snow gully above. Higher up, Murray's route was regained. Parish recommends this as a first-class climb. The party of two required three and a half hours.

Stob Ghabhar, Upper Couloir Keyhole.—A new winter route, more interesting and difficult than the Upper Couloir, was discovered and climbed on 16th

March 1952 by C. L. Donaldson and G. J. Dutton (J.M.C.S.). A short distance to the right (N.) of the Upper Couloir, a bay cuts back into the upper rocks. The route lies up a narrow, deep-cut gully, starting (but not very obvious) at the extreme left corner of the bay. Conditions were very icy. The climbers involved had descended the Upper Couloir a week before and were thus able to compare the two routes.

The gully started with a stretch of steep, hard snow. Then came a 20-foot pitch (or so) up a high-angled wall surmounted by an iced chimney. A small axe would have been useful there. For the next 100 feet was a slope of almost pure ice (very little hard snow here and there) to a thread belay below the next pitch, a series of jammed boulders, climbed direct for about 20 feet. Another stretch of hard snow led to the top of the gully, which was a sharp snow ridge on the right of a crazy rock ridge. The party now made a short icy descent into the Upper Couloir above its ice-pitch, and further hard cutting led to the top. If another party tries the route, the climb could be finished directly up easy rocks without descending into the Upper Couloir at all.

SKYE.

Sgùrr a' Mhadaidh, Coire Tairneilear.

Shining Cleft (900 feet, Mild Severe).—G. H. Francis, J. F. Adams and E. A. Wrangham, 22nd June 1952.

Start at the lowest point of the slabby rocks left of Slanting Gully and cross them to a cairn. Climb up to the right to a trap ledge, then up a 15-foot slab to a slanting chimney gap in a long low overhang. Slabs now lead right to a recess above the big cave in Slanting Gully. A small ledge runs up easily to the right for 200 feet, to a slabby depression topped by a basalt lip. The great V-Cleft is above, easy at first, then smooth and overhanging. Traverse right from the lip on to a ledge slanting up right to a short chimney and platform on the crest of the rib to the right of the Cleft. Then a chimney on the left, and steep rocks on the crest to Foxes' Rake.

Centre Gully of the Slabs (300 feet, Difficult).—H. G. Nicol, I. H. Oliver and A. Grieve, 15th September 1952.

The high first pitch is the best of the climb and is overcome by bridging. Thereafter the gully becomes shallow and its angle lessens until, after a few short pitches, definite climbing ends at mid-height on the slabs.

Coire Lagan.

Sgùrr Dearg, Western Drainpipe, Direct (50 feet, Severe).—T. W. Waghorn, P. G. White and C. J. Breeze, 25th August 1952.

This is a direct start to the Gully. Climb past the Great Cave by parallel cracks on the right which later merge into a smooth groove. Socks may be required. The original route takes easier slabs on the left.

Western Drainpipe Ridge (480 feet, Hard Severe).—P. G. White, T. W. Waghorn and C. J. Breeze, 25th August 1952.

Start at a cairn at the foot of the right (facing) ridge of the gully. The line of this rib is held all the way, with only minor deviations, over a succession of slabs and walls. The crux occurs 100 feet from the start, when a hard move up and left is made with the aid of a piton.

Sron na Ciche, Cioch Buttress, Petronella (180 feet, Severe).—G. H. Francis and E. A. Wrangham, 29th June 1952.

A small buttress lies between Eastern and Little Gullies. Start from the screes up a prominent crack which curves leftward up the centre of the buttress. The crack is awkward. The overhangs above are turned by a shelf on the left and an airy pull-out.

Sron na Ciche, Western Buttress, Boomerang (700 feet, Hard Very Difficult).—D. D. Stewart and D. N. Mill, 11th September 1952.

Start (cairn) in an enclosed chimney 30 yards east of West Central Gully and work up and left over slabs and a water-worn slab corner into West Central Gully just below the point where the Median crosses it. Now the line is up to the right, easily across Engineer's Slant, into a conspicuous trap fault below a light-coloured wall. The fault, twice awkward, still runs up and right to a grassy finish.

AONACH BEAG, LOCHABER.

G. Scott Johnstone describes two routes on the upper western crags. Seen from Upper Steall, Glen Nevis, is a prominent nose on the left upper skyline (call it Skyline Buttress). About 100 yards beyond this buttress, towards

Humble's Raw Egg route, is a bay in the cliff with slabby wall to the south and a prominent chimney to the north. The routes are the buttresses on either side of this chimney.

The southern buttress, Crevassed Rib, was climbed in September 1951 by Mr and Mrs Johnstone, providing a route of about 300 feet, of Difficult standard, interesting climbing on steep rock with small, incut holds. The formidable upper slab was turned on the inside of the gully.

The northern buttress was ascended two days later by Vaughan Thomas and Miles Coventry (note in Steall climbs book). Johnstone, T. Ransley and R. Corson (not knowing of this first ascent) climbed it in May 1952. It looks formidable but is really moderate; steep pitches but not exposed. More climbing seems possible hereabouts, and Skyline Buttress, while terrifying, may be possible. The rock is hard, brittle schist.

GARBH-BHEINN, ARDGOUR.

The following routes were climbed by D. D. Stewart and D. N. Mill (both E.U.M.C.) on 12th and 13th April 1952:—

Leac Mhor, Turret Variation (Very Difficult).—The Turret was the name given to the great overhanging bulge at the top of the Leac Mhor. From a block about 150 feet up the crack of Route II on the upper slab, grooves lead rightwards across the slab, gradually curving upwards to a short overhang; then an easy left traverse into a grassy niche nestling beneath the overhangs. A step left round an exposed rib enables the steep rocks of the Turret to be climbed directly on good holds.

Great Ridge, Direct Approach (350 feet, Very Difficult).—The steep lower tiers of the Great Ridge, normally avoided by the easy lower section of Great Gully, give an interesting climb on sound rock. Start at the lowest rocks (cairn) some yards to the right of a prominent serpentine crack and slab, and trend slightly rightwards by slabs and grooves for 250 feet to a broad grass ledge. Climb a prominent chimney formed by a large detached flake to easy rocks and the broad rake at the start of the ridge proper.

Bealach Buttress (350 feet, Difficult).—The small buttress overlooking the Garbh-Bheinn—Sron-a-Garbh Choire Bhig bealach. Start at the lowest rocks (cairn) and follow the line of least resistance to the narrow arête at the top.

South Wall, Great Ridge, Scimitar (400 feet, Very Severe).—A feature of the base of the wall is a cave formed by an enormous detached flake. About 100 feet left of the cave (cairn), broken rocks slant up

rightwards to a shattered ledge. From the left edge of this ledge climb straight upwards by a crack until overhangs force a hard rightward move on to smooth slabs leading to a belay at 70 feet. Easier rocks and a conspicuous open chimney lead to the half-way ledge (cairn). Continue directly by a smooth vertical groove and rightwards to a flake belay. Left again, by steep slabs which ease off on to the crest of the Great Ridge near the summit cairn.

Dirk (80 feet, Very Difficult).—A conspicuous chimney with overhanging start, near the left end of the lower tier.

The south wall of the Great Ridge has much to recommend it, for, besides being composed of sound rock, steep and rough in texture, it faces south, as do few Scottish cliffs, gives remarkably fine views and climbing finishes within a stone's-throw of the summit of the hill. There is a good deal of room for exploration. Scimitar is the most central and probably the easiest line on the face.

ARRAN, BEN TARSUINN.

Caisteal Coire nam Meann.—At the south end of Beinn Tarsuinn, above Coire nam Meann, a prominent castle or tower about 250 feet high rises above steep slabs. This tower is clearly seen from Brodick, its upper part forming an apparent step in the skyline between Tarsuinn and Nuis. It was climbed on 28th September 1952 by J. M. Johnstone and J. S. Stewart, and gave a route of about 250 feet and very difficult in standard.

The slabs below are skirted either by a gully on the left or by heathery ledges on the right. Having reached the foot of the tower, the climber sees that its west flank is split by a big chimney, and to the left of that a vertical crack. Start by ascending slabby rocks by grassy grooves to a platform 60 feet up and well to the left of the crack. Then traverse right under a steep wall into the crack; ascend it about 6 feet; traverse right again by an awkward step into the chimney; ascend chimney a short distance; traverse left to stance at side of crack; ascend crack in two short pitches. Thereafter easier rocks lead to the top of the buttress. The lower portions of the chimney and crack might well be taken direct.

In Memoriam.

The Rt. Hon. LORD MACMILLAN.

BY the death of Lord Macmillan the Club has lost one of its most distinguished members. He was born in 1873 at Glasgow and was brought up in Greenock where his father was a well-known Free Church minister.

He took his M.A. degree at Edinburgh and was admitted an advocate in 1897. He rapidly became one of the most successful advocates at the Bar. With a rare combination of brains, diligence and a delightful and pleasing manner, he was eagerly sought after by all sorts of litigants, and before he took silk he enjoyed one of the largest incomes that a junior ever had. He took silk in 1912 and thereafter was chiefly in London at the Parliamentary Bar. Never a politician, he became by special request Lord Advocate in the Labour Government under Ramsay Macdonald.

In 1930 he was made a Lord of Appeal, which he was till the day of his death in 1952; save for a brief interlude as first Minister of Information in the Second World War.

Macmillan joined the Club in 1903. He was never a climber as we would call it to-day. I don't suppose he was ever on a rope in his life, but he was a most competent and skilled hill walker.

He was never so happy as on holiday in the Highlands. He had climbed numerous Munros, especially in Sutherland and North-West Ross; and the Cairngorms were familiar ground. Once at Inchnadamph he piloted my wife by compass through some very complicated and confused country, coming out of the mist just where he wanted to be.

He was an expert on fires and outdoor meals. Some of us can remember his juniper fires and fragrant China tea with a loaf of bread and special wee jars of honey from Greece. He was a most delightful companion and his conversation was a treat, so well informed about

everything. He contributed a valuable article on Rights of Way in the *Journal* of October 1917 (Vol. 14, No. 84), clear and informative as all his pronouncements were.

A. E. ROBERTSON.

LOUIS ST CLAIR BARTHOLOMEW.

ONE winter day in 1921 J. A. Scott and some friends met a solitary climber on Ben Lui. That climber was Louis St Clair Bartholomew. They considered that he would be much safer climbing in a party, and so began his connection with the Club which he joined in 1924. He served on the Committee from 1926 to 1929 and as Custodian of Slides from 1947 to 1948. As was to be expected, his work as Custodian was of the highest order; the collection of slides was rearranged, improved and added to considerably, many of the new slides being made from his own photographs.

Bartholomew took a keen interest in the inception of the J.M.C.S. in 1925 and for some years served as an honorary official of the Edinburgh Section. He attended Edinburgh University between 1927 and 1931 and graduated B.Sc. (Civil Engineering). He entered fully into the spirit of the University and all its activities, although he was much older than most of his fellow students. During this period his house in Ramsay Garden was a meeting-place for young and old mountaineers, members of the S.M.C., the J.M.C.S. and the E.U.M.C.

The *Journal* and Guide Books contain records of his activity, which included a considerable number of new climbs in which he took part. He lived an open-air life and made frequent tours, either alone or with others, in many parts of the Highlands, sometimes with and sometimes without a tent; but the North-West Highlands had the greatest attraction for him. Bartholomew did three seasons in the Alps. In 1926 he was in the Chamonix area, in 1932 in the Bernese Oberland and in 1947 in the Engadine.

Flying was one of his many interests. He learned to fly between the two wars and gained his "A" licence in 1936. He was a founder member of the Edinburgh Flying Club and flew both in this country and abroad. He took a great interest in Zoology and was an expert photographer. The Scottish Youth Hostels Association benefited by his enthusiasm and work.

He was born in 1897, being the third son of the late John George Bartholomew, LL.D., F.R.G.S., and was educated at Merchiston Castle School. He served in the latter part of the 1914-18 War, being commissioned to the H.L.I. Then he joined the family business. As part of his training as a geographer he made a tour of the world and, for a time before leaving the business, he held the position of Joint Managing-Director.

After taking his degree he spent a couple of years in Uganda helping to develop the fishing industry on Lake Albert, and he returned there in 1948 to take up the position of Fisheries Officer under the Colonial Office Game and Fisheries Department. He held this appointment with distinction until he was flown home in January 1952, when it was found that the facilities in Uganda were not sufficient to treat the illness which he had developed.

He took part in two geographical expeditions; one in 1937 with Captain Kingdon Ward from Burma into the Chinese Shan States. This was not as successful as was hoped, owing to obstruction on the part of the Chinese authorities, and St Clair Bartholomew, on his way home, made his second tour of the world. The second expedition was with Ronald Kaulback in 1939, when an extensive programme for exploring in northern Burma and Tibet was planned. This was interrupted prematurely by the outbreak of the Second World War, but several months of useful work in surveying and collecting were accomplished, mainly in the little known tract of the Burma "Triangle."

On his return to Britain he was commissioned in the army, eventually holding the rank of Major. Most of his service was in the Western Desert of North Africa,

and he took part in both sieges of Tobruk, only escaping in a small boat at the time of the surrender. He continued service in the Pioneer Corps for about two years after the war in Belgium and Germany.

He had a very wide circle of friends in many parts of the world and in many walks of life. He was original and independent in both thought and action, and his death on 17th October 1952 will be mourned by all his friends who will remember his generous and enthusiastic outlook on life.

ALEXANDER HARRISON.

Dr JOHN C. JAMES (J.M.C.S.).

IT is with deep regret that we have to record the untimely death of John C. James. He was a staunch friend, ever ready for adventure and with a quiet humour which overcame difficulties.

The tragedy occurred during a holiday in the Norwegian Horungtinder, whilst negotiating the descent from the Gjerkvasstind with two friends. To his family we proffer our deepest sympathy and to his friends we commend his memory.

J. MASON.

CRICHTON R. C. ALLAN (J.M.C.S.).

THE death of Crichton Allan in a climbing accident on 6th April 1952 came as a very great shock to his many friends in the J.M.C.S. and S.M.C. With two others he was climbing in Coire an t-Sneachda when the party was carried over the Aladdin Buttress by an avalanche, probably of wind slab. Though his two companions escaped with bruises, Allan was killed instantly.

He was 30 years old, had served in the Far East during the war and was in business in Edinburgh. He joined the J.M.C.S. in 1950 and became a symbol of all that was best in the Club. He loved the hills in the only sane way a man can; because he loved life with an honest

and unashamed vigour. He was generous in everything, his friendship being utterly unselfconscious.

He had been among the hills a good deal before joining the Club, and few could better his route-finding through the worst weather, though he had never given much time to rock climbing. It will be long, indeed, before his living personality fades from the minds of those who were fortunate to know him.

G. F. D.

PROCEEDINGS OF THE CLUB.

EASTER MEET, 1952—INCHNADAMPH AND FORT WILLIAM.

THE principal Section of the Easter Meet at Inchnadamp was exceedingly enjoyable with excellent weather except for a rainstorm on Saturday. The President, J. S. M. Jack, and twelve members, Messrs J. W. Baxter, Douglas Campbell, M. H. Cooke, R. R. Elton, R. G. Inglis, R. Jeffrey, W. N. Ling, R. W. Martin, Theo. Nicholson, S. C. O'Grady, I. F. Roberts and T. E. Thomson, were present along with J. F. M. Frew (guest). The hotel was very comfortable. The following expeditions were made :—

Thursday, 10th April.—Ling, Jeffrey and Inglis were on Quinag.

Friday, 11th April.—Cooke, Inglis, Martin, Nicholson, and Thomson were on Connival and Ben More Assynt. Elton climbed Cul Beag. O'Grady was on Quinag. Ling and Jeffrey walked in Glen Dubh.

Saturday, 12th April.—Elton and Cooke were on Quinag. Jack, Baxter and Campbell were blown off Connival. Martin, Thomson, O'Grady, Nicholson and Inglis were on Canisp. Roberts and Frew climbed Beinn Liath Mhor (Fannichs) whilst arriving. Ling, Jeffrey, Martin, Thomson and Nicholson visited caves.

Sunday, 13th April.—Roberts, Frew, Elton, Campbell and Baxter climbed Ben More Assynt and Connival. Cooke, Inglis, Nicholson and O'Grady climbed Suilven. Jack, Thomson and Martin were on Cul Mor. Ling and Jeffrey were in Glen Canisp.

Subsequent Days.—On 14th April Jack, Campbell and Baxter were on Quinag; Ling and Jeffrey on Canisp. The two latter were

walking on the two following days. Nicholson climbed Ben Hope on 14th and Ben Klibreck on 15th April. O'Grady also climbed Ben Hope and Ben Loyal as well, after leaving Inchnadamph.

The following eleven members and seven guests were at Fort William—W. J. Bannister, D. L. Campbell, W. C. Carmichael, A. Dixon, B. H. Humble, J. N. Ledingham, D. MacArthur, G. G. Macphee, R. M. Scott, A. M. Smith and A. J. Young (members); and G. S. Bower (R. and F. & R.C.C.), Duncan and William Macphee, M. Morrison (Cairngorm C.), D. McNicol, M. Moffat and F. Wylie (J.M.C.S.). P. E. MacFarlane and G. Roger looked in whilst passing on their way to Glenshiel. The weather was mixed—showers but good views on Friday, rain, cloud and cold wind on Saturday but perfect weather thereafter. The following expeditions were done:—

Friday, 11th April.—Dixon walked. Carmichael and Ledingham climbed Ben Sguliard.

Saturday, 12th April.—Carmichael, Ledingham, Wylie, Morrison, Moffat and MacArthur climbed Gairich (Loch Quoich) by its east ridge. Bannister, Dixon, Scott, McNicol and Young were on Mullach nan Coirean. Dixon and Scott also climbed Stob Ban. Campbell, Humble and Smith climbed Sgùrr Thuilm and Sgùrr nan Coireachan from Glenfinnan. The Macphees and Bower ascended Ben Nevis by the track.

Sunday, 13th April.—Carmichael was on Mullach nan Coirean. Ledingham, MacArthur, Moffat, Morrison and Wylie climbed Gulvain from the head of Loch Eil, a seven-hour day. Campbell, Humble and Smith climbed Gleouraich and Spidean Mialach. Dixon, Scott and Bannister climbed Aonach Beag. Bower went over Carn Mor Dearg and Ben Nevis. McNicol and Young climbed Sguliard on their return south.

Monday, 14th April.—Campbell and Smith were on Binnein Mor and Na Gruagaichean.

The following party was at the C.I.C. Hut—I. G. Charleson, J. M. Hartog, A. H. Hendry, G. J. Ritchie, and W. A. W. Russell (members); and Bunting, R. Gillespie, I. R. Lawson and J. Ray (guests). Their doings were as follows:—

Friday, 11th April.—Bunting, Hartog and Gillespie did the Aonachs and Carn Mor Dearg. Charleson, Hendry and Ritchie climbed Castle Ridge. Lawson and Ray climbed Observatory Gully.



LOCHAN NA H'EARBA, CREAG A' CHUIR, ARDVERIKIE FOREST

J. A. Parker

Saturday, 12th April.—Ritchie and Hendry climbed Tower Ridge. Russell, Lawson and Ray went up Castle Ridge. The others climbed N.E. Buttress.

Sunday, 13th April.—Charleson and Ray, Russell and Lawson, Bunting and Gillespie (three parties) climbed Tower Ridge and Carn Mor Dearg. Ritchie and Hendry climbed N.E. Buttress.

Subsequently Ray, Lawson and Russell moved to Loch Quoich. On 15th April they climbed Sgor na Ciche to Sgùrr Mor and on the 16th they ascended Ladhar Bheinn.

NEW YEAR MEET, 1953—NEWTONMORE.

THE meet was tripartite with the main body at the Balavil Arms, a select body of ex-Presidents (and a few of the lesser breeds) at Mains Hotel and a number of tigers and others at Craigearn and on the fringes. Hartog was on the scene early but the weather was inclement, especially at high levels when he and Tyssen-Gee went up to 2,200 feet in Glen Banchor on 31st December. Thereafter the weather built up steadily to perfect Alpine conditions. Many and distant hills were climbed, but ski-ing was even more popular.

Mr Glen, the factor of Ardverikie, very kindly gave permission for cars to use estate roads where passable, but not when in a soft condition. The Loch na-h-Earba road was used on several days for Ben a' Chlachair, but the Loch Pattack road from Loch Ericht Lodge was not practicable. The meet was well attended by thirty members and fourteen guests, and was a great success.

The following attended—Dr G. Graham Macphee (President), Messrs R. Anderson, W. C. Carmichael, M. H. Cooke, A. Dixon, C. Dodgson, R. R. Elton, J. F. Hamilton, P. Hartog, J. C. Henderson, R. S. Higgins, E. W. Hodge, J. S. M. Jack, R. Jeffrey, J. N. Ledingham, W. N. Ling, J. Y. Macdonald, J. E. McEwen, D. McKellar, J. R. Marshall, W. H. Murray, F. E. O'Riordan, J. Neil Orr, G. S. Roger, Colin Russell, W. Arnot Russell, D. Scott, T. E. Thomson, Tom Weir, J. D. B. Wilson (members); and Messrs K. Armstrong, R. Buckland, J. Douglas, Dunlop, W. L. G. Duff, J. Kerr, Macdonald, T. Mackie, I. D.

McNicol, Muirhead Moffat, Wallace Orr, Pigott, R. Tyssen-Gee, F. Wylie (guests).

Some overlapping and interchange of personnel between hotels is inevitable, but expeditions are grouped according to reports from Balavil, Mains and Craigearn Hotels. To save wording, dates are noted simply as (1), (2) . . . (5), meaning the corresponding days of January 1953. Where skis have been used (ski) is added.

Mains Hotel.—(1) Jack, Ling and Jeffrey to Creag an Loin, Glen Banchor; Weir, Marshall and Duff ski-ing there, also several others.

(2) Ling, Jack and Jeffrey on Creag Dubh; Weir, Marshall, Duff and others to Geal Charn, Laggan Bridge (ski).

(3) Ling, Jack and Jeffrey on Creag Dubh (Kingussie); Henderson, Anderson and Duff to Meall a' Chaoruinn, A' Bhuidheanach Bheag and Glas Mheall Mor; Weir to Geal Charn (Ardverikie) and Creag Pitridh (ski) while Marshall only Geal Charn.

(4) Ling and Jeffrey, Torr Garbh (Banchor); Jack, Creag an Loin; Anderson and Henderson to Carn Sgulain (ski); Weir, Marshall, McNicol and Duff to Carn Sgulain and A' Chailleach (ski); Scott, Douglas, Armstrong and McKellar to Geal Charn (Drumochter).

Craigearn Hotel.—(1) Hamilton and Mackie to Carn Sgulain (ski); Roger and Scott, Carn Dearg.

(2) Hamilton, McKellar, Scott, Roger, McNicol, Mackie, Douglas, Kerr and Buckland on Geal Charn, Monadhliath (ski).

(3) McKellar and five guests on Geal Charn, Creag Pitridh (Ardverikie) (ski); Scott and Roger to Carn Sgulain and A' Chailleach (ski); Hamilton to Carn Dearg, Carn Mairg and Carn Ballach (ski).

(4) Scott and Roger, Carn na Caim (ski); McNicol on A' Chailleach and Carn Sgulain (ski); Hamilton, Mackie and Kerr on Meall na Cuaich (ski).

Balavil Arms Hotel.—(1) Dixon and Orr on Creag an Loin, while many skiers were on near-by slopes; Wilson, A. Russell and McEwen also ski-ing; Higgins, Pigott, O'Riordan and Wallace Orr climbed A' Chailleach and Carn Sgulain; the President, Thomson and Dunlop climbed Carn na Caim; the Macdonalds (father and son) with C. Russell were on Geal Charn (Laggan Bridge).

(2) Ledingham on Carn Elrig (Aviemore); Cook, Thomson and Dunlop on Beinn a' Chlachair; Orr and Dixon on Creag Pitridh (Ardverikie); Macphee, Dodgson, Hartog and Tyssen-Gee on Glas Mheall Mor (Dalnacardoch); Higgins and Pigott on Carn Dearg; C. Russell and O'Riordan on Udlamain, Marcaonach and Sgairneach Mor; Macdonald and son on Geal Charn (same group); Elton and Arnot Russell up A' Chailleach (ski); Wilson and McEwen traversed Monadhliath group on ski.

(3) Ledingham, Carmichael and Wylie on Carn Dearg, Carn Ban and Carn Ballach; Murray on A' Chailleach and Carn Sgulain;

Dixon and Neil Orr on A' Chailleach; Cooke and Thomson did Carn Liath and its neighbours; McEwen, A. Russell, Wilson and Elton on Geal Charn, Laggan Bridge (ski); Elton collided with a stag in full flight. He noticed that it had eight points! Macphee was on Binnein Shuas, Ardverikie; Higgins, Wallace Orr, Dodgson and Pigott climbed Cairn Gorm from Glenmore.

(4) Ledingham, Carmichael, Wylie and Moffat traversed A' Chailleach and Carn Sgulain. The President, Orr and Dixon climbed Geal Charn (Loch Ericht), and many others skied.

Messrs R. Brown, C. Donaldson, J. Russell (S.M.C.), and W. Cole, I. Gauld, J. Marshall (J.M.C.S.) were present at the Lagangarbh Section of the Meet.

On 1st January Marshall, Brown and Donaldson climbed Curved Ridge. On the 2nd Marshall and Donaldson climbed North Buttress while Brown and Russell skied on Ben Chrulaiste. On 3rd January Marshall and Donaldson climbed Crowberry Ridge by Greig's Ledge. Brown and Russell skied on Stob Mhic Mhartuin.

The climbing on the first two days was very difficult and, on the Crowberry, severe. On the night of 3rd to 4th January distress signals from Raven's Gully called for a rescue party, including members of many clubs. Messrs H. McInnes, C. Vagano and J. Collins of the Creag Dubh Club were safely extricated from the gully. They wish by this note to express their thanks to all those who took part in the rescue.

Annual General Meeting.

THE Sixty-fourth Annual General Meeting of the Club was held in the Adam Rooms, George Hotel, Edinburgh, on Saturday, 6th December, at 4.30 P.M. Mr J. S. M. Jack presided over an attendance of about fifty-seven members. Office-bearers' reports, already circulated, were accepted, but only a brief statement can be included here.

The *Hon. Treasurer* reported that, with the continued increased subscription the debit balance of receipts and expenditure account was reduced from (approx.) £118 to £85. The funds stood at £54 less than a year ago, consequent on increased guide-book expenditure, not yet balanced by sales receipts.

The *Hon. Secretary* reported the death of three members—Mr G. P. Baker, Lord Macmillan and Mr L. St Clair Bartholomew. The following nine new members

were admitted and welcomed to the Club—Messrs C. V. Dodgson, D. C. Hutchison, J. M. Johnstone, M. Morrison, A. H. Read, P. D. Ritchie, G. M. Smith, J. S. Stewart, F. R. Wylie.

Taking into account resignations and removals from members list, the Club membership now stood at a total of 318. A new list of members would be issued early in 1953. As this will include changes in Office-bearers and Committee, composition of Sub-Committees, etc., the changes will not be detailed in this place.

The *Hon. Editor* reported that No. 143 of the *Journal*, along with the Index to Vol. 24, resulted in a considerably increased cost at £318. Advertisement revenue at £65. 10s. was good. Sales to the J.M.C.S. (including some to L.S.C.C. and Glasgow U.M.C.) were reasonably good. The net cost of the *Journal* to the Club was £132, or about 8s. 4d. per member. It was agreed to endeavour to secure a reduction in costs whilst maintaining the quality of the *Journal*.

The *Guide Books General Editor* reported that "Central Highlands" was published in July, "Islands" was printed and binding, "Northern Highlands" was well advanced as was "Munro's Tables," and "Arrochar Rock Climbing" was in hand. Sales figures for published Guides ran as follows: "Cairngorms" 289, "Central" 257, "Glencoe" 268, "Skye" 422, "Southern" 144, "Western" 141, "Cuillin Map" 566 (for the past year).

Librarian, Slide Custodian, Convener East of Scotland.—There were 180 books lent to members but only six postal requests. Mr Grieve announced that future additions to slide collection would be all in miniature size (2 in. by 2 in.). He appealed for slides and loan of negatives. The collection was in good order. During the year thirteen lectures were held, with an average attendance of fifty-one. Bus meets, along with J.M.C.S., were frequent.

West of Scotland Convener reported that Glasgow Club Room was in frequent use and good repair. The Library is run jointly with the J.M.C.S. and well used.



January 1953

NEWTONMORE MEET, 1953

Tom Weir

*Front row, seated left to right—I. D. McNICOL and ex-Presidents JEFFREY, JACK and LING
Back row, standing left to right—R. BUCKLAND, J. R. MARSHALL, J. DOUGLAS, K. ARMSTRONG, D. MAC KELLAR and J. KERR*

Lectures (eleven and a film show) had an average attendance of seventy. Fortnightly week-end Bus Meets were varied and successful. The Club projector and a screen could now be hired by members for private use. The S.M.C.-J.M.C.S. photographic competition was successful.

Convener, Huts Sub-Committee.—The C.I.C. Hut showed 439 hut-nights for the year—only thirty-four for members, 112 for J.M.C.S. and 179 for University Clubs. Work parties had done cleaning and minor repairs. Lagangarbh Hut showed increased hut-nights at 952, and was regularly used by the Club and the J.M.C.S. Work parties were active at four week-ends. The Hut is in good repair.

London District Convener reported a membership of about thirty. They had a successful lecture on the "Everest Reconnaissance" by W. H. Murray, and another on Corsica from Charlie Gorrie in December. The projected Ogwen Meet was, however, poorly attended. Dr Macphee is due to lecture on "Lakeland Rock Climbing" in March 1953. An experiment will be made in co-operating with other Clubs (Rucksack, M.A.M., Climbing Section of Campers' Club, etc.) for meetings. Iain Ogilvie and Angus Smith continue as Convener and Secretary respectively.

First-Aid Committee.—Under the auspices of the A.S.C.C. two new posts have been installed: Lagangarbh with rucksacks at Mr Cameron's, Altnafeadh; Central Police Office, Dundee, under titular charge of the Grampian Club. A post for the north-west area to be sited at Dingwall is under consideration. Complete exchange of information is now operating with the R.A.F. Mountain Rescue Service.

Meets.—The Meeting selected Crianlarich for New Year 1954 and approved Fort William and C.I.C. Hut for Easter 1954.

Elections.—Dr G. Graham Macphee was elected President in succession to Stewart Jack. G. C. Williams became a Vice-President following Ian Charleson. Frank Bennett became Librarian. George Arthur became

Joint Meets Secretary and A. H. Hendry became Custodian for the C.I.C. Hut.

Annual Meeting, 1953.—After a lively discussion (Friday versus Saturday) the Meeting agreed to Saturday, 5th December 1953.

Qualifications.—As the Meeting finished early, members discussed qualifications for membership and the size of the Club. Conflicting views were expressed and the issue was relegated to the Committee.

Reception and Dinner.

The Reception in the Adam Rooms, prior to the Annual General Meeting, was highly successful and attended by 130 members and guests. W. H. Murray showed slides of the "Everest Reconnaissance Expedition, 1951," to an appreciative audience.

The Dinner was held after the Meeting and was attended by ninety-six members and guests. The principal guest, Lt.-General Sir Colin Barbour, K.B.E., C.B., D.S.O., replied for the guests and Kindred Clubs, a toast proposed by Ian Campbell. W. H. Murray proposed the toast of "Mount Everest," replied to by C. G. Crawford. The President, when proposing the toast of the Club, referred to the climbing achievements of members during the year, bursting forth into welcoming and reflective verse as follows:—

INTROIT.

May you our welcome guests and fellow members
 Enjoy the fare and drink we here present,
 And all the evening's talk and happy friendships,
 And at the last go homewards well content.

Born of the Spirit of Companionship
 Of those who love to venture and explore,
 Nurtured on ever-growing craftsmanship,
 On Ridge and Face and Buttress, venturing more
 and more;

They led us to our quests of skill and hardness,
We learned where they succeeded or they failed,
And we are bound in that glad fellowship together,
To solve the tasks which they at first assailed.

And so we raise the torch and fan it brighter,
Till it must pass to generations new,
Who in the days ahead will raise it higher,
While we contented dream the distant view.

J. S. M. JACK.

THE JUNIOR MOUNTAINEERING CLUB OF SCOTLAND.

Annual General Meeting and New Year Meet.

CRANLARICH was chosen by Edinburgh Section as the location, and some twenty members arrived, the Dinner commencing at 7.30 P.M. The small attendance was undoubtedly due to the fact that most members were making the most of the four days available to travel as far afield as possible. Cranlarich is a good point to depart from for the north, but as in previous years, the majority of members appeared to think otherwise.

All Sections were represented and the meeting was taken after Dinner by the Club Secretary. The general air of well-being induced by the Dinner and the comfort provided by the hotel enabled the business to be carried through without hiatus.

As an echo from last year's meeting, Lochaber Section stated that the ghost of the badge, although laid, was still to be seen walking in Fort William and would be heard of again. As a more serious gesture, the meeting agreed that, provided Club funds could stand the strain, the subscription to the M.R.C. should be raised to £5. The most important item was that the next Annual General Meeting should be held in the spring at a date to be agreed between Section Secretaries in 1954.

The meeting concluded by members retiring to the

local dance hall and helping to bring in the New Year with dance and general conviviality, a contingent of L.S.C.C. from Inverarnan providing very charming and entertaining partners.

The next four days provided weather of almost alpine magnificence with blue skies, hard snow and keen frosts. Members having dispersed to various sites, only five remaining at the hotel, it was difficult to keep track of their activities. However, the Y-gully on Cruach Ardrain provided an excellent climb, as did the Central Gully on Ben Lui on the following day. Parties also tackled Ben Cruachan from Dalmally, and an enterprising London member walked to Crianlarich over Bens Lui, Oss and Dubhchraig to arrive in time for dinner.

All in all the weather made the meet a great success and provided a very auspicious start to the year.

Glasgow Section.—The good work of the previous years was kept up. Twenty meets took place and only three buses were cancelled owing to lack of support. Two buses were considerably overbooked and the bus convener seriously considered running another bus. Glencoe, as usual, was popular, but other enterprises were embarked on, such as The Great Trek through Glen Lochay—a great success.

The bus was filled mainly by J.M.C.S. members, while other clubs, such as the Ladies' Scottish, provided very consistent and welcome support. The S.M.C. sent on the average two members per bus, and the presence of the senior club provided a stimulus to the younger members.

Half a dozen evening meetings were arranged with the S.M.C. Western District on a joint basis, the financial arrangements being in proportion to the membership of the respective sections.

Other events were the Annual Dinner, at which the Hon. Section Bard distinguished himself by narrating a superb piece of poetry dedicated to recent club activities. A film show was held, which was successful, the films being "The White Hell of Pitz Palu" and "Kamet Conquered." The demand for this sort of diversion seems to be quite extensive and it is hoped to provide a similar show next session.

Several section members went abroad to Norway, Chamonix and the Bregaglia. At the close of the season the membership remained at approximately 200. The Committee changed at the end of the year and the Section expresses its thanks to the retiring President and Secretary for their able work. The present Secretary is J. Mason, 66 Mossbank Oval, Glasgow, S.W.2.

Edinburgh Section.—The membership of the Section at the end of 1952 was 70. During the year 1 member joined the S.M.C., 3 have resigned and 11 have been struck off for arrears in subscriptions. The influx of new members keeps the membership at 70. There are 7 associate members and about 14 intending members. About 50 are active members. Attendance at meets is still poor.

Meets have been held almost every second week-end, except at holiday periods. Of twenty-three meets scheduled only five had to be cancelled for lack of support. Places visited included the Lake District, Dalmally, Bridge of Orchy, Glen Clova, Kinlochleven, Aviemore, Kintail, Lochnagar, Arrochar and Glencoe. Many private meets were held, both in this country and in the Alps. The Pyrenees were visited. On several Sundays informal meets were held on city outcrops and the Pentland Hills.

Library meetings, held in the S.M.C. room, were fairly well attended, as were social ones held in a pub in Cockburn Street. The S.M.C. lectures have been well attended and much enjoyed. A most successful Dinner was held as usual in the "Wee Windaes" Restaurant. Guests were present from the S.M.C., the E.U.M.C. and the Glasgow J.M.C.S.

In an unfortunate accident that took place early in the year the Section lost a very popular and keen member, and had two other members injured.

The President of the Section is J. R. Marshall, and the Secretary is R. N. Millar, 34 Hazelwood Grove, Inch, Edinburgh 9.

Lochaber Section.—By the end of 1952 membership was 52, the highest yet recorded. About half of these only are local members. Several residents were admitted during the year, but others, including some of the most active rock climbers, left Lochaber to take up posts elsewhere.

Ski-ing now seems to be the favourite winter sport and several members admit that they find it difficult to both ski and climb between December and May. Practically all the recognised climbing areas in the country were visited during the year, and some of the more fortunate members went to Austria, France, Switzerland and Italy.

Many "Steall" week-ends were held towards the end of the year, and a new bridge is being erected opposite the hut. Although still solvent, the Section is finding that repairs to the hut and bridge have depleted the funds. Hence it was decided to raise hut fees by sixpence per night.

The Annual Dinner was again held in the Grand Hotel. After hearing W. H. Murray's lecture, "Everest 1951," members voted the evening one of the best yet.

President, P. J. MacDougall; Secretary, A. H. Burgon, 4 Lochiel Road, Inverlochy, Fort William.

Perth Section.—During the year the membership dwindled to 14. As the numbers did not suffice to run a bus the few meets held

were by co-operation of private car owners. Financially the Section is healthy. The Annual General Meeting was held in December and the support given augurs well for the 1953 season. The Secretary is T. P. Kemp, 151 South Street, Perth.

London Section.—Membership figures remained almost constant throughout the year around the 70 mark. Geographical distribution of members makes it virtually impossible to run bus meets, but private transport enabled very successful meets to be held in Wales at Easter and in Derbyshire in the summer. Parties of members were active in Scotland and the Alps, as well as in Wales and the Lakes. The Section appears to prefer the open air, as an attempt to revive the caving meet fell through because of lack of support. The S.M.C. members in London kindly invited the Section to their lectures, and it is hoped that more and closer contact will be possible in 1953, and that joint activities can be arranged from time to time. Section finances are sound and no alteration in subscription or entrance fee is proposed.

The President is H. Turnbull and the Secretary is E. C. Kemp, 31 Kendall Avenue South, Sanderstead, Surrey.

S.M.C. AND J.M.C.S. ABROAD.

Himalaya and Africa.

T. D. MacKinnon, D. Scott, T. Weir and G. S. Roger left Katmandu on 26th September and proceeded eastwards through the foothills of Nepal to Charikot, thence north up the Bhote Kosi and then eastwards up the Rolwaling valley to Beding and Nangaon. From Nangaon they explored a glacier system to the south and climbed peaks of 18,000, 19,000 and 20,000 feet, and MacKinnon with two Sherpas climbed a fine peak of 22,000 feet.

They returned to Nangaon and the whole party crossed the Tesi Lapche (20,000 feet) to Namche Bazar. From Namche Bazar they went north-east to get views of the Everest region. They camped at Palung Karpa and climbed a peak of 19,000 feet.

The return was made by the Dudh Kosi valley to Jubing, thence westwards over several ridges of between 9,000 and 12,000 feet to Charikot. On 20th November they arrived back in Katmandu. The party covered about 350 miles through most interesting country. The weather throughout was excellent.

G. C. G. Lewis (J.M.C.S.) reports a Himalayan expedition in October 1951, in company of George Frey (Himalayan Club). They left Darjeeling on 26th September by the Singalila Ridge northward for six days, crossing the Gharakhet La to Gombatang. Thence they reached Tseram at the foot of Yalung glacier in two days, crossing Chumbab La (15,900 feet) and Semo La.

From Tseram, Frey and Tensing climbed the north-west peak of Kangla Nangma (18,300 feet), but Lewis had to turn back 600 feet

lower, owing to stomach cramp. This peak, not difficult, was previously climbed by Raeburn and Crawford in 1920. In the next three days they moved up Yalung glacier to Raeburn's Nao camp. Views of Kangchenjunga and Jannu were magnificent. Frey and Tensing climbed to over 20,000 feet on one of the Jannu ridges, but Lewis, suffering from jaundice, was not going well. They returned to Panglamo, and two days later crossed the Ratong La (16,700 feet) to Omar Chu (Sikkim), probably a second crossing of this pass, Raeburn's being the first. The pass is easy but must be crossed early, owing to avalanche danger. Lewis now returned to Darjeeling by Dzongri, Yoksam and Pamionchi, reaching there on 26th October. He had lost two stone in weight from jaundice but was otherwise fit.

E. R. Zenthon writes from Kampala, Uganda: "I have just returned from a visit to the Ruwenzori in atrocious weather. Accompanied by P. Hudson (M.C. Kenya) I climbed Mount Speke (16,122 feet). We made a first complete ascent to Top Hudson (13,000 feet), carrying our own loads from Ibanda. I am tracing accounts of all known climbs in Uganda for the M.C.U. with the object of producing a guide book. I am also opening up rock outcrops. There is a fine 400-foot buttress about 230 miles west of Kampala. From air photographs I am producing a new 1:50,000 map of the Ruwenzori, as the extant map is in error. Last year I had a crack at Mount Kenya, but weather was hopeless. At Whitsun I made a new rock route on a 7,000-foot peak in the Karamoja."

Corsica, Spain, Norway.

C. C. Gorrie writes: "I. H. Ogilvie and I were in Corsica from 13th to 30th June. From the Cinto Hotel at Asco we climbed Monte Padro. Having camped at the Bergerie Stagno in the Asco valley we climbed Monte Cinto and Punto Minute on consecutive days, afterwards returning to the fleshpots at Calvi.

"During our second week we placed a camp some 10 miles above Calacuccia, and climbed Paglia Orbo and Capo Tafonato on the same day. We then walked over the mountains to Corte and by rail to Vizavone. From here we climbed Monte d'Oro. We returned to wallow in the sea at Ajaccio, and so home."

B. S. Fraser writes: "In the course of a family holiday in north Spain in August I visited the Picos de Europa. From Potes I scrambled alone over a number of peaks in the eastern massif, including Pico Hierro (2,438 metres). In the Parador Refugio at Aliva—a better centre—we had misty weather. The family climbed the Peña Vieja (2,606 metres) and I felt my way up Pico Tesorero (2,564 metres) next day. From Valdeon I went to Refugio of Collado Jermoso and, with Sr. Foliot of the Federation of Mountaineers, climbed the Torre de Llambrion (2,640 metres). There are more

limestone peaks and ridges in the Picos than I have ever seen in such a small space. The gorges are tremendous. I hope to return."

G. Barlow was in Slovra Fjord from June till September. This summer, his twentieth in Vesteraalen, was a record bad one for weather, as the temperature was persistently low and the rainfall abnormally heavy.

The only mountaineering expedition was the ascent, with Mrs Barlow, of the 3,250-foot snow summit on east of Blaaskavl glacier. They had made the ascent many times in previous years and this August again saw a perfect sunset from the summit, a viewpoint difficult to equal in Vesteraalen.

The Rev. W. S. Green climbed this mountain so long back as 1871 and was much disappointed to find it was not the highest in the district. It was then known as Higraven. Unfortunately this useful name is not now used.

A tent was taken up to two new places at 1,500 feet level, but these camps were only used for three nights. Before going to Slovra Fjord, a short stay was made farther north at Fiunsnes, from which place a long motor tour was taken inland through charming wooded country to Lyngen Fjord.

The Alps.

G. J. Ritchie was in the Alps from 20th July to 10th August, along with J. Wilkinson (F.R.C.C.) and P. McGovern (L.U.C.C.). From Strahlegg Hut on 21st they climbed Strahlegghorn and on 22nd the Schreckhorn by South Ridge, needlessly abandoning traverse to Lauteraarhorn owing to snow flurry and wind. On 23rd, adding H. Ironfield (F.R.C.C.) to party, they climbed Finsteraarhorn by Agassizjoch and returned in fresh snow and mist; rocks foul.

They then went by Klein Scheidegg and Eismeer to Mitteleggi Hut, climbing the Mitteleggigrat to Eiger on 25th and finishing at Guggi Hut, which they left on 26th owing to an accident to another party, on their contemplated Guggi route on Jungfrau. So they went to Kandersteg on 27th, walked down Lötschental, took bus to Ayer and walked to Zinal. The 28th was bad weather, and on 29th they went to Mountet Hut. On the 30th they climbed Zinal Rothorn by Rothorngrat, descending by North Ridge. On 31st they climbed Obergabelhorn by North Ridge, descending Arbengrat, traversing Mont Durand to Col Durand and back to Mountet Hut. On 1st August they climbed Trifhorn, descending to Zermatt.

On 2nd, with P. McGovern up to Hörnli Hut to explore traverse to Zmutt Ridge of Matterhorn. The 3rd was stormy, so they traversed over Furgjoch to Breuil and thence went to Courmayeur.

On the 4th they went to Torino Hut, left at 11.45 P.M. in moonlight and some lightning, and on 5th, with J. Wilkinson, went by Col de la Fourche and Col Moore, climbing the Route Major on Brenva face. The storm held off. There was much new snow on upper

rocks, and they reached the Vallot Hut. On the 6th they reached Chamonix by Tête Rousse and Bossons glacier. A storm on the 8th cancelled plans for Grépon. On the 9th, with J. W., A. H. Hendry and others they moved to the Aiguille de Gouter Hut (standing room only), reaching the summit of Mont Blanc again on 10th August.

D. D. Stewart (E.U.M.C.) had some climbs in the Chamonix area in July. With H. G. Nicol (C.C.): Aiguille Mummery (S.W. Face) and Ravel, Aig. de l'M. (N.N.-E. Ridge), passage of Col des Hirondelles (N. to S.) and Mont Blanc (Innominata). With A. Blackshaw (O.U.M.C.): Aig. de Roc-Grépon traverse and Aig. du Fou (S.W. Ridge). With J. G. S. Smith (G.U.M.C.): Aig. du Plan (Ryan-Lochmatter Ridge) and Aig. du Grépon (Mer de Glace face).

A Cairngorm Club party had an excellent Alpine campaign this summer. The narrator, W. D. Brooker, has been a frequent contributor to the *Journal* and writes as follows: W. D. Brooker, J. Morgan, T. W. Patey and J. M. Taylor (C.C.) along with D. A. Aitken, H. A. Imray, C. Morrison and M. C. S. Philip spent just over two weeks in the Chamonix region during July. From a base camp about 3,000 feet above Chamonix they climbed (between them) the Aiguilles de l'M, Petits Charmoz, Blaitière, Grands Charmoz, Grépon, Ciseaux and Fou. From the Couvercle Hut they climbed the Dent du Réquin and the Moine. The party then split. Four climbed Mont Blanc by the Bionnassay and later the Dru. The others, Taylor, Philip, Morgan and Brooker, crossed to Courmayeur by Col du Geant, bivouacked on the site of the Bivouac Eccles (wrecked by stonefall) and climbed Mont Blanc by the Innominata. An unforgettable climb capped by a beautiful sunset from the upper snows of the ordinary route on Mont Blanc. The weather was good for almost the whole period, with routes in good condition. (He adds, "I found the Alps exceeded any expectations I may have had, and if the Mont Blanc area were swept clear of people I think it would be a mountaineer's paradise.")

R. I. McPherson (J.M.C.S., Glasgow) writes to say that he climbed in the Dauphiné Alps during parts of July and August, when staying at Ailefroide with friends, enjoying much good weather on the whole. He was, however, unwell for part of the time. On 17th July with Prosper Mathéoud, guide, he climbed the Pic des Agneaux in perfect weather from Glacier Blanc Hut by the Col du Monetier. Next came a solo climb, a rock scramble, a peak of 9,200 feet on the Frères Erstienne Ridge. On 21st July, with Prosper, an attempt on Pelvoux was defeated by bad weather and again on the 23rd. On the 24th, with Prosper, he climbed a rock spire south of the Pic de Clouzis, the Clocher Clouzis (10,800 feet), from Ailefroide, a difficult rock climb. On the 27th with Prosper from the Refuge Lemercier, he climbed Mont Pelvoux by the Couloir Coolidge

in excellent weather, descending by the Glacier des Violettes. In August, with Jean Engilberge (guide) and two French climbers, he ascended the Barre des Ecrins from the Refuge du Glacier Blanc up the north-east face and the Brèche Lory; good conditions, some ice on the ridge and cold wind.

Charles L. Donaldson was in Zinal in the latter half of August with G. Dutton, G. Hood and R. MacLennan, all J.M.C.S. Two were on their first visit to the Alps, unfortunately not in the best of weather. From the Mountet Hut they climbed Mont Blanc de Moming from the Forcle and LoBesso by the south-west ridge in snow showers and low clouds. From Zinal they crossed the Aiguille de la Lex to the Moiry Hut, from which they crossed the Pigne de la Lex and the Bouquetin, and climbed the Grand Cornier by the north-north-east ridge in good weather, cold wind and a coating of snow on the rocks. Later, from the Tracuit Hut, they climbed the Bieshorn.

Dr R. L. Mitchell, with a Cairngorm Club party comprising Margaret Munro and Millicent and Hamish McArthur (A.C.), went first to the Lienzer Dolomites for training walks including an ascent of the Spitzkofel (2,748 met.). This very pleasant area has two good huts and climbs of all grades. The party then joined the A.B.M.S.A.C. Meet in the Stubai (26th July to 1st August), climbing the Habicht (3,277 met.) from the Innsbrucker Hut, which should be avoided at week-ends, the Schaufel Spitz (3,333 met.) from the Dresdener Hut, and traversed Zuckerhütl (3,507 met.) and Wilder Pfaff (3,458 met.) to the Müller Hut, then Wilder Freiger (3,415 met.) to Ranalt. Thereafter, from Zermatt and Taesch Hut, Allalinhorn (4,027 met.) was climbed by the south ridge and then (6th to 15th August) with Toni Biner of St Niklaus, R. L. M. and H. McA. traversed Monte Rosa (4,634 met.) from the Dufourspitz to the Signalkuppe and the Lyskamm (4,527 met.) from the Lysjoch to the Felikjoch, spending the night at the Italian Margherita Hut on the Signalkuppe (4,556 met.) where food costs no more than it does at the Bétemps. R. L. M. and M. M. did the Rothorngrat, descending the ordinary route; H. McA. and M. McA. traversed Wellenkuppe to the Obergabelhorn in both directions, also from the Rothorn Hut, where Alois Graven's service is excellent. M. M. was on the Matterhorn by the Hörnli route. In addition we climbed on the Riffelhorn and the Leiterspitzen.

All these mountains except the Matterhorn were new to Toni (a son of Franz Biner). His enthusiasm to bag new peaks was matched by his obvious ability. The weather and snow conditions were good throughout, particularly on the traverse of the Lyskamm.

L. S. Lovat writes: "J. M. Johnstone and I with W. Young and D. McCalman (J.M.C.S.) and C. D. Thomson (Aberdeen U.M.C.) climbed in the Bregaglia for ten days from 11th August. From the provisioned Forno Hut we traversed Monte Sissone and

then Cima di Rosso by its delightful southern rock ridge, a superb, rough granite. Next day we climbed Cima del Largo and the Punta Est, with skyline as fine as any at Chamonix, meeting Alexander Graven and Ursula Corning on the ridge. The next ascent was outstanding, the east ridge of the Casnile, a grand, long rock climb with severe situations, with a descent by the south ridge.

"We then moved via Maloggia and Promontogno, with a tiring ascent to the Sciora Hut. After a day's bad weather we climbed the beautiful rock needle, the Ago di Sciora, by the west ridge, in worsening weather. The west ridge was a route of character but unfortunately the last climbed, as bad weather prevented the ascent of the north ridge of the Piz Badile and completely spoiled a visit to the Bernina. We all recommend the Bregaglia for its noble peaks and charming valleys with the Disgrazia and Bernina available to satisfy all tastes."

G. G. Freeman with two members of the Midland Association of Mountaineers spent three weeks in the Eastern Alps, divided about equally between the Julian Alps of Yugoslavia and the Hohe Tauern district of Austria. "We climbed Triglav on 29th July by the ordinary route from the Staniceve Hut. The following day we descended almost to the Aljazeve Hut for an attempt on the imposing north face of Triglav by the Slovenian route, which had ultimately to be abandoned owing to route-finding difficulties. After crossing the Hribarice Pass we climbed Ticarica from the Hut of the Seven Lakes of Triglav. From the Tamar Hut we ascended Jalovec and the east peak of Mojstrovka by the north-west face.

"Dolomitic limestone is the predominant geological formation in the Julian Alps. The approaches to the peaks from the north or west are often defended by steep rock walls but the summits can frequently be reached from other sides by comparatively easy routes. It is not unusual for the well-marked routes to huts and peaks to ascend steep rock walls by stairways of pitons and fixed ropes, several hundred feet in height. The writer had not previously encountered such extensive use of these aids elsewhere in the Alps.

"The official language of this part of Yugoslavia is Slovene but most of the hut guardians and transport officials, etc., speak some German. With rate of exchange at 840 dinars to £1, our period in Yugoslavia (nine nights in huts) cost £4 to £5 per head.

"From the Oberwalder Hut in the Gross-Glockner group we climbed the Johannisberg, and the Mitterer and Grosser Bärenkopf. We then traversed the Gross-Glockner from Hofmann's Hut to the Stüdl Hut, ascending by Hofmann's route. After moving farther west, we traversed the Gross-Venediger on 12th August from Innerg-schloss to the Kürsinger Hut. After an ascent of the Grosser Geiger the holiday ended with an unsuccessful attempt on the north-west ridge of the Gross-Venediger."

J. S. Stewart and D. C. Hutchison with J. S. Orr and M. P. Cunningham (G.U.M.C.) were in Chamonix for last two weeks of

July. In perfect weather they climbed the following: south-east ridge of Réquin; traverse of Aiguilles du Tour; Chardonnet by Forbes Arête; Aiguille de l'M. from N.N.-E.; Grands Charmoz; Grépon traverse. Cunningham and Hutchison climbed latter by Mer de Glace face and Knubel crack.

ACCIDENTS, 1952.

3rd February.—M. E. Fractured leg. Ski-ing. Fort William.

9th March.—Mr B. Dislocated shoulder. Rock climbing. Glencoe.

March.—Gerald Archer (22), member of R.A.F. Mountain Rescue Team, slipped near summit of Ben Nevis—unable to stop himself with ice-axe—bruised ribs and lacerations.

March.—David A. Collis (23), Oxford University M.C., fell in Observatory Gully, Ben Nevis—head injuries. Stretcher party out.

6th April.—Crichton Allan (30), J.M.C.S., Edinburgh, avalanched in Coire an t-Sneachda—fatal. Other two members of party slightly injured.

6th April.—J. M. (26), C.U.M.C. Head injuries. D-Gully Buttress, Buachaille.

26th April.—John Harvey (30) (Climbers' Club), David Stead (20) and Margot Weaving, avalanched in Coire an Lochain near top of climb. First two killed; third, compound fracture of leg.

12th June.—H. Phillips, killed when climbing alone on Sgùrr Dearg, Coire Lagan.

29th July.—Mrs Clarissa Delfin (Novice), slipped and was killed on Bidean nam Bian.

1st August.—Joseph Madill, Belfast, killed when climbing on Buachaille Etive Mor. Roped party—second man injured.

9th August.—Miss Doris Rhind (24) fell and was killed near summit of An Teallach.

18th August.—J. G. (32). Injured knee. Glencoe.

18th September.—Man fell and fractured leg, A'Chir Ridge, Arran. Stretcher party out.

26th October.—Elizabeth Crichton (22), Edinburgh University, fell when climbing Stob Coire nam Beith—fractured leg. Stretcher party out.

25th January 1953.—Malcolm Dovey, E.U.M.C. Dinner Time Buttress, Aonach Dubh. Fatal.

SHORT NOTES.

Liathach, Coire na Caime, P.C. Buttress.—The first ascent of this was made by R. S. Horsman and H. K. Hartley in June 1939, and not by the Cunninghams in 1949 as noted in *Journal* of 1951.

Ben Klibreck.—*Cambridge Mountaineering*, 1952, notes two new routes—Creag an Lochan, Central Chimney (400 feet, V.D.) and Canyon Gully (Moderate), both by E. A. and C. B. Wilson, in June 1950.

Liathach, Meall Dearg, Pantàgruel Gully.—*The Climbers' C.J.*, 1952, records a first ascent of this 400-foot gully, Severe in snow and ice, by P. R. Falkner and D. C. Cullum.

Buachaille Etive, Guerdon Grooves.—A Creagh Dhu Club party points out that a run out of 140 feet of rope is needed on the second pitch. The "Guide" divides this pitch in two, but no intermediate belay exists.

The Munros.—Harry Hampton (J.M.C.S., Edinburgh), after five years of effort, has now done them all.

Stop Press New Ascents.—The Creagh Dhu Club have, too late for inclusion, sent some remarkable accounts of new ascents in the Glencoe region. Five are rock climbs (summer conditions), including Dalness Gully, Hard Severe of fourteen pitches in rubbers. Four are 1953 ice-climbs using crampons and pitons—Raven's Gully, Crowberry Direct, Clachaig Gully, and Agag's Groove.

Rare Scottish Birds.—Mr Patrick Sandeman (Secretary, Rare Birds Protection Committee, "Dalshian," Harelaw Road, Colinton, Edinburgh) would welcome information, treated as confidential, about the numbers and any damage alleged to be done by them, of the following birds which are now so rare as to affect their future status: Snow Bunting and Dotterel (summer breeders), Golden Eagle and Hen Harrier.

C.I.C. Hut.—Dr Maitland asks visitors who leave cars near the Distillery to indicate, if possible, when they expect to return, so avoiding anxiety to local residents or police.

BOOKS AND JOURNALS.

The Cuillin of Skye. By B. H. Humble. (Robert Hale. 30s. 144 pp., 73 illustrations and maps.)

The Cuillin, treated by a climber and for climbers, now have a book to themselves, a compendium of many facts collected from various sources, mostly climbing journals, now accessible only with difficulty. It is, first of all, a history of climbing in Skye up to the present day. In the latter part, perhaps the most enjoyable, Benny describes his own experience, full of enthusiasm and infectious gaiety. The illustrations are varied and excellent. To all who have climbed, or only walked, in Skye this book will give endless delight.

Thoughts of a Mountaineer. By Richard B. Frere. (Oliver & Boyd. 12s. 6d. 177 pp., 7 illustrations.)

In his youth, in the thirties, the author published a slim volume entitled "Rock Climbs." That was a boy's book, full of enthusiasm: this is its natural sequel. The expeditions are all Scottish—in the

Cairngorms (chiefly), in Skye, Glencoe and on Ben Nevis. Most of us have climbed in these places, but Frere thinks aloud about his mountains. For him they have personalities, friendly or fateful, and around his mountain experience he weaves a philosophy of life, coloured, no doubt, by a climbing tragedy which took away his dearest friend. As an article in this *Journal* shows, he writes well. It is a very sincere book. He gets over his tragedy in the end with a prayer, "Always let me love these things—the earth, the trees and, above all, the mountains."

British Crags and Climbers. By Wilfrid Noyce and Edward C. Pyatt. (Dobson. 21s. 235 pp., 16 illustrations.)

The book has an Introduction of twenty-six pages in the form of a historical sketch of the progress of climbing in Britain. There are fifty-four extracts from British climbing literature, fifteen of which deal with Scotland, and eight of the total deal with climbing in winter conditions. The emphasis is, therefore, on rock-climbing. Such an anthology fills a definite want, as the great majority of the extracts, coming from past volumes of climbing journals, are hardly accessible to younger climbers. Inevitably some of the extracts are all too brief, but they may lead the reader to the original source. Younger climbers ought to know about the history of their sport. Some older ones may doubt if true progress has been as great as Mr Pyatt believes.

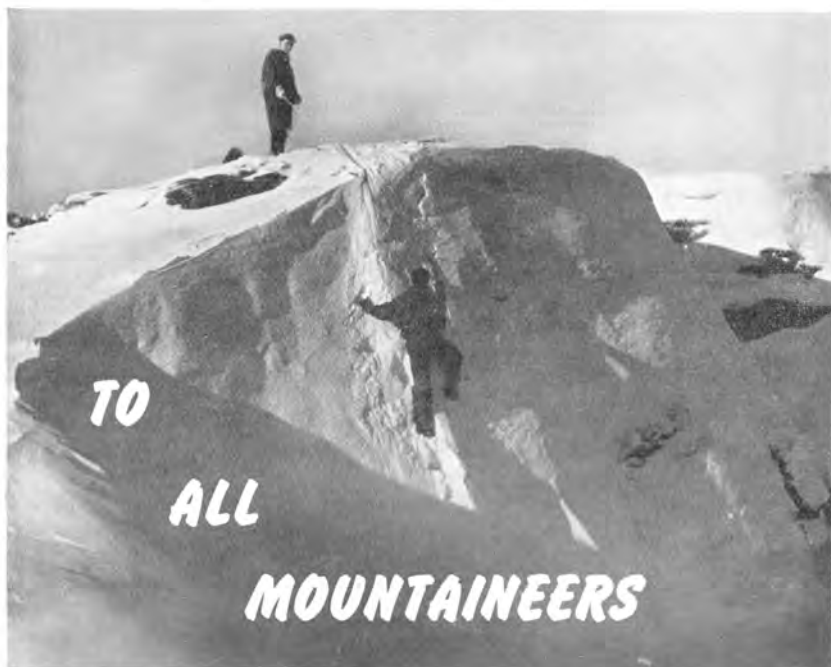
The Ultimate Mountains. By Thomas Weir. (Cassell. 21s. 98 pp., 4 maps and 48 illustrations (not in colour).)

This is another book about the Scottish Himalayan Expedition of 1950, with a much more lavish set of illustrations. The book does not compete with W. H. Murray's classic, reviewed by us last year. Much less space is allotted to text, but this is an excellent guide to the beautiful photographs and provides the reader with a concise account and a good idea of the spirit and atmosphere of the expedition.

Ladies' Scottish Climbing Club Journal, No. 3, December 1952. 64 pp., 22 illustrations.

We welcome this excellent successor to No. 2, which appeared in 1938. As then, we congratulate the Club on its wide sphere of activities—Alps, Pyrenees, Drakensberg—and, of course, everywhere in Scotland. What is especially valuable, from the historical aspect, is the composite article "Looking Back," a brief history of the Club from its foundation in 1908 to the present day. It is good to see that the younger members are well represented.

Other Journals Received, for which we tender our thanks, are in the Library. We regret that our available space does not permit of adequate comment. We should like, however, to draw attention to the Rucksack Club which reviews its past fifty years, to a packed issue of the *Himalayan Journal*, with an article by W. H. Murray, and to notes on Scottish climbs in the *Climbers' C.J.* and *Cambridge Mountaineering*.



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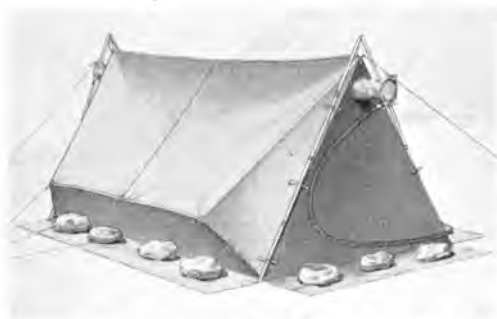
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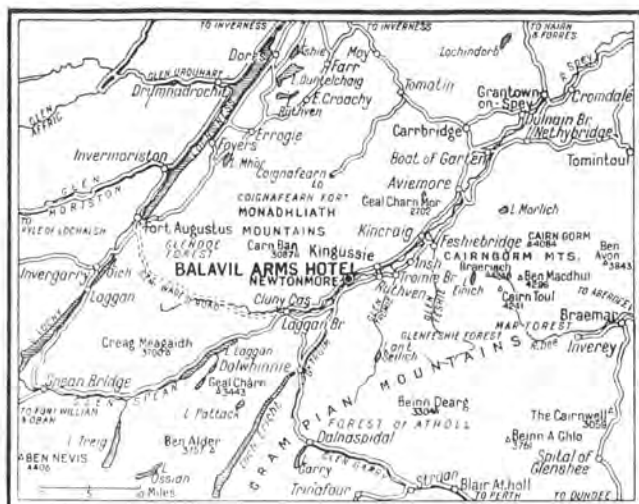
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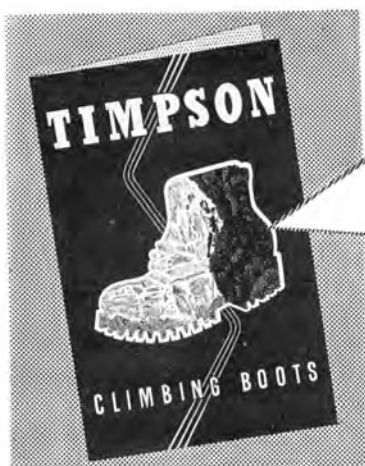
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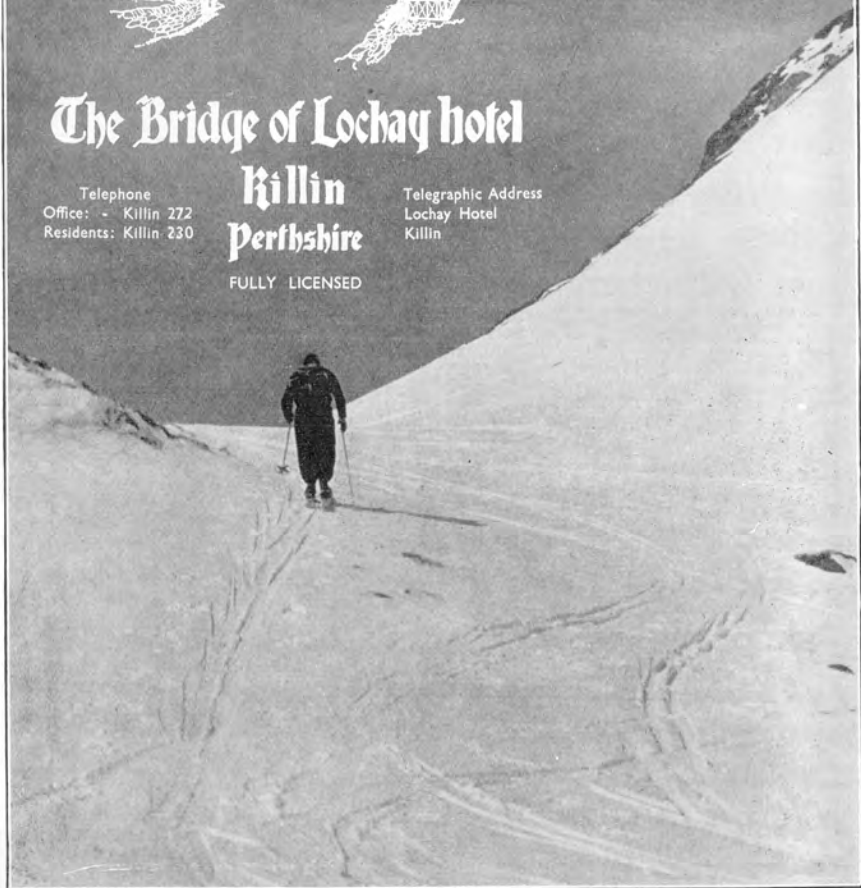
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