

THE SCOTTISH
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SEVEN SHILLINGS AND SIXPENCE

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CAIRNGORM COMMENTARY

By Tom Patey

'Any fool can climb good rock,' said Dr J. H. B. Bell, 'but it takes craft and cunning to get up vegetatious schist and granite. . . .'

'We were bound for Lochnagar, the greatest citadel of vegetatious granite.'
—W. H. MURRAY (*Mountaineering in Scotland*).

It was the opinion of most climbers of the thirties that no worth-while routes had been recorded on Cairngorm granite. This was not misrepresentation but fact. With the exception of a few classic climbs (such as the Mitre Ridge of Beinn a' Bhùird or the Eagle Ridge of Lochnagar) exploration in the Cairngorms before 1946 had not gone beyond the Gully Epoch.

Most gullies are unpleasant. A Cairngorm gully is doubly so. It is the sort of place you would incarcerate your worst enemy; a dank gloomy prison where moisture seeps from every fissure and 'all the air a solemn stillness holds'—save for a constant drip, drip from many a greasy moss-enshrouded chockstone and the occasional dull thud as another ledge sloughs away in a welter of slime and rubble.

The early mountaineers, who revelled in the false security of gullies and chimneys and spurned the hazardous freedom of the open face, must have found the Cairngorms a veritable Mecca. Here were any number of holdless muddy walls against which to erect a pyramid of stout fellows in tweed jackets, greasy constricted chimneys where they might squirm and wriggle to their hearts' content, and improbable through-routes streaming with icy water and black as Old Nick himself which 'would just admit a cragsman of average girth.'

It is a pity that so little exploration was carried out by the mud-bespattered pioneers, for their accounts in epic Victorian style would have made splendid reading. In fairness it could be pointed

out that the few climbs they did pass on to posterity earned a notoriety out of all proportion to their number.

There was Raeburn's Gully in Lochnagar which on the first ascent in 1888 harboured a great block 'surmountable only by the aid of an ice-pick hung from the upper edge.' On the second ascent 30 years later, the main obstacle had become 'an imposing two-tier pitch some 70 feet in height.' Unhappily the famous Double Cave pitch was not destined for longevity, and following a rock fall in 1940 'not a vestige of it remained.' The Editor of the *Cairngorm Club Journal* sang its requiem: 'I regard this as a catastrophe of the first magnitude . . . fitting to be classed with the fall of Constantinople, The Union of 1707, Hammond losing the toss at Sydney, and things of that kind.' A few years later I was one of a large party that had a grandstand view of the collapse of yet another entire pitch near the top of the gully. We had a special interest in this pitch because we had descended it only 10 minutes earlier in order to attack the unclimbed chimney on the right wall of the gully. At least two of our number had come along merely to watch or pass ribald remarks, but by the time the echoes had died away and the clouds of dust had settled we had suddenly become a united party of six. Thus was made the first ascent of The Clam.

There was also the Douglas-Gibson Gully of Lochnagar. Like Raeburn's, it 'changes its character from year to year'—to borrow a phrase from the pioneers. Raeburn himself made several unsuccessful attempts between 1897 and 1901; ultimately, he was lowered from the top and was 'sufficiently discouraged by what he saw not to try again.'

Up to the early 1940's the Cairngorms retained the aura of inhospitality ascribed to them by these early climbers. In 1941, however, a worthy champion emerged in the familiar colour of Dr J. H. B. Bell, who may be regarded as the patron saint of granite climbers and the first prophet of the true Gospel. None of us had ever met Dr Bell: to us he was merely a voice, thundering out a clarion call from his distant S.M.C. editorial chair. Yet he seemed to feel much as we did about the Cairngorm granite, describing the Eagle Ridge of Lochnagar, his favourite route, in fine authoritative vein as 'for difficulty, narrowness and steepness altogether superior to any of the well-known Nevis ridges.' His two companion routes on Shadow Buttress 'B' and the Tough-Brown Ridge served to illustrate that there was no lack of sound climbing rock in the Cairngorms for those who had the initiative to find it.

It had been amply proved that the Cairngorm gullies had little to recommend them, but Bell was the first to demonstrate that the

more exposed ridges, faces and buttresses of rough weathered granite had as much to offer the rock specialist as many more highly rated Scottish crags. His researches were to inspire young Aberdonian climbers after the war, for here a school sprang up owing little to any pre-war group. Many of its early struggles took place in that notorious Douglas-Gibson Gully, whose first ascent had in fact been made in 1933 by one Charles Ludwig (the first man to attach a skeleton to the spire of Marischal College and to cross the 'Blondin' wires above Rubislaw Quarry).

Ludwig in fact set little store upon his Douglas Gully adventure, and described the route as 'perhaps unjustifiable.' Such a qualification had of course the unintended effect of securing for the climb the attention of successive generations of young aspirant V.S. men who may be relied upon to accept any open invitation to deride their elders. So for a time in the bad old days 'before the dawn of reason,' many young tigers were blooded in 'Gibson's', often literally, so that the gully gained quite a reputation for itself. The more loose rock they pulled away, the more they uncovered, so that the standard varied from V.D. to V.S. in successive weeks.

It was not until 1949-50 that the winter ascent which had eluded Douglas and Gibson in 1893 was again seriously considered. Abortive attempts followed—probably the most spectacular being that on which George McLeod plummeted from the cornice almost to the lochside, a vertical height of some 800 feet. He had been turned back at the last pitch and, while roping down in the approved fashion, suddenly found that he was no longer able to maintain a grip with numbed fingers and slid down the length of the rope, rocketing off the end like a small shooting star. Deep powder snow saved him from annihilation; he escaped with bruises, and climbed up again to safeguard his companion's descent.

On 30th December 1950 'Goggs' Leslie and I emerged, shaken but triumphant, from a hole in Douglas Gully cornice, thereby ushering in a new era of winter expeditions on routes which had hitherto been regarded as solely within the provinces of the rock specialist. It was also our first *première* and earned grudging recognition from our more talented contemporaries together with admission into the select conclave that gathered in the Fife Arms, Braemar, on a Saturday night. We did not broadcast the principal factor in our surprise *coup*—that having climbed well beyond the point where we could have safely withdrawn and finding no belays for an abseil we had little option but to continue climbing. In the long run we both profited from this good fortune, and learned several important lessons. I cannot recall ever again suffering such agonies of apprehension on a climb.

Leslie and I had thus dramatically elevated ourselves to a peerage which I had first encountered two years before in rather humiliating circumstances. I was one of a motley collection of Gordon's College schoolboys who had chosen to spend Hogmanay in the Cairngorms, using as our base camp Bob Scott's bothy at Luibeg. We discovered that more than 40 climbers were housed in various outbuildings and that we had been relegated to the stick shed as befitting to our lowly station. Minor snow drifts formed inside the building and an indoor thermometer recorded 40° of frost. Next door in the bothy, which was reserved for the hierarchy and where the heat from a blazing log fire drove one back to the farthest corners, were two very celebrated mountaineers—Bill Brooker and Mac Smith. We soon guessed their identity by the excited buzz of conversation that signalled their return from a climb, the sudden hush as they entered the bothy, and the easy grace with which they accepted the seats of honour nearest the fire. Mac Smith was then (and still is) the chieftain of the Luibeg Clan—an all-round mountaineer who had taken part in almost every important summer or winter ascent in recent years. He knew the Cairngorms better than any of his contemporaries, and they would have been the first to admit it. The bothy armchair, which has only recently been vacated and converted into firewood, was Mac's prerogative—a rustic throne. Bill Brooker, 'the young Lochinvar,' cut a more dashing figure, the complete counterpart to Mac's slightly reserved manner. To all outward appearances he was merely another pimply-faced schoolboy like ourselves, full of wild talk. But then who could forget that this was the same young heretic who had but recently burst into the climbing arena with a series of routes which had defied the best efforts of preceding generations? With such a wealth of mountaineering experience behind him, you could overlook the lad's extravaganzas.

These were the real mountaineers—not mere 'hill bashers' like ourselves who had that day tramped many an endless mile in search of a minor 3009-foot Munro top away out in the middle of the Great Moss. We had built a little cairn on what appeared the most elevated undulation and been well satisfied with our day's achievement. These men spoke of icy vigils and gigantic ice falls; routes that finished long after dark; remote bivouacs in faraway corries, riotous nights in bothies, late-night dances in Braemar, and brimming tankards in the Fife Arms. Adventure, unconventionality, exuberance—these were the very elements missing from our scholarly conception of mountaineering which had led us with mathematical precision up and down the weary lists of Munro's Tables.

I do not know what impressions we left behind. A few of our number were kilted and this earned us the title of the 'Horrible Heelanders,' a name which stuck. I remember listening with envy to the two demi-gods as they planned the first winter ascent of Crystal Ridge, success already a foregone conclusion. Late next night when they did not return at the appointed hour, we spoke hopefully of a search party, but this merely earned for us the derision of the company. Their confidence was soon rewarded by the arrival of the victors, eyebrows caked with frozen drift, faces glowing with the heat of battle. . . .

A year later, in my first year at University, I became part-owner of a climbing rope. After some preliminary experiments, we started cautiously feeling our way up the well-trodden Mods. and Diff. of Lochnagar and the Sputan Dearg.

At that time it was impossible to climb for long in the Cairngorms without becoming aware of the diversities of opinions and ideals that characterised the bothy set and stamped each of its members as a genuine eccentric, uninhibited by the conventions of society. Even the names by which they were known invited a wealth of conjecture—Sandy-Sandy, Ashy, Chesty, Dizzie, Sticker, Esposito, the Hash Kings. . . .

The Hash Kings might have been a Secret Society. Their hashes, which were compounded of every conceivable ingredient known to man, were justly famous. I never learned the names of the founder members, but on one of my early bothy weekends I met a character who introduced himself with simple dignity as 'Apprentice to the Hash Kings.' Sad to relate, the Hash Kings have faded into obscurity, and the name itself has become abbreviated to Hasher, which is synonymous with bothymonger or nignog, and this is a very low order of animal life indeed.

Of a later vintage were the Boor Boys, a group of unruly youngsters from Aberdeen Grammar School who terrorised the bothies; among their numbers were Kenneth Grassick and Graeme Nicol, later to become respected sons of the S.M.C.

Then there were the individualists, although every man in that company wore the hallmark of an individualist. One remembers Stan Stewart who strummed his guitar on the back seat of the Three Fifteen. (The *Three Fifteen* from *Bon-Accord Square* was a special bus tactfully set aside for climbers by Messrs. Strachans Ltd., following incidents in which old ladies had been isolated at the back of the bus by a mountain of rucksacks, only effecting an escape, several miles beyond their destination, by a desperate hand traverse.) There was Charlie Smith, brows furrowed in concentration, whistling some obscure *aria*; Mac Smith and Kenny

Winram arguing about the early New Orleans trumpeters; Jamie Robertson engrossed in Marx; Freddy and Sticker, the inseparables, plotting new routes in Coire na Ciche; Alex Tewnion, with binoculars and camera, in quest of some unsuspecting dotterel; Chesty Bruce resplendent in tartan shirt and wide toothy grin, with his band of camp-followers; Bill Stewart, who thought nothing of cycling out to Lochend Bothy for a day's climbing on Lochnagar, a round trip of 100 miles; and Ada Adams bound for Derry Lodge, to supervise the weekend 'work party' from the Cairngorm Club.

There were three clubs in Aberdeen: the Cairngorm, the Etchachan and the University Lairig Club though, by and large, more reputable climbing was done on impromptu bothy weekends than during organised meets. Only a few regular week-enders were active club supporters and perhaps most of these owed allegiance to the Etchachan Club, a splinter from the Cairngorm Club. The latter club, though nowadays flourishing and not lacking in initiative, seemed to us then rather moribund. Most of the members were keen hill walkers, but there was a notable lack of rock climbers. Even the club circular had an archaic quality, describing club meets as 'motor coach excursions' and ending with the solemn injunction 'Members are requested not to ring the Meets Secretary at his residence.' We later found that the wording of the circular could be adapted with only minor alterations to a West Indian Calypso tune, and the song enjoyed a fair measure of popularity among the nonconformists.

The Etchachan Club was in many ways the antithesis of the Cairngorm Club. The latter wine and dined in the Fife Arms, the Etchachan Club merely stopped for a half-hour break at any convenient pub; their meets were less expensive, but there was a certain air of austerity, not to mention frustration, in leaving a half-pint standing on the bar counter to sprint for a bus which moved off punctually on the half-hour.

The University Club, like most clubs of its kind, enjoyed an ephemeral existence. Certainly its most flourishing period was during the reign of Ken Grassick. It was his policy that a mountaineering club should not solely depend on the support of accredited mountaineers. A club could be run on popular lines if it supplied suitable entertainment for its members, not only in the mountains, but also in the valleys. His recruiting campaign was initiated by an advertisement in *Gaudie*, the students' newspaper, stressing the club's need for new blood. 'Qualified climbing instructors, including some of World Repute' (this phrase was masterly) 'will be glad to show newcomers the ropes . . . climbers of (both) sexes welcomed . . . no mountaineering experience necessary! The bus will stop

at the Inver Inn for refreshments, singing etc.' The response was more than gratifying. Instructors were soon able to select their 'clients' from a large number of applicants and bus meets were attended by upwards of 70 members. Not all came to climb, though nearly all enjoyed a little fresh air prior to the evening's entertainment. Thus it came about that a day meet to Lochnagar cost merely 5s. a head, and the ends justified the means.

We saw very few climbers from farther afield: it was left to local climbers to reap a weekly harvest of new routes. Most visitors to the Cairngorms came only to collect Munros, sleep a night at the Shelter Stone or pass through the Lairig. The few who sported nylon ropes, pitons and P.A.'s almost invariably courted asphyxiation in some foul enclosed chimney, or lost themselves in a vegetatious jungle on what should have been an honest straightforward line, misled by ambiguous descriptions in the existing Guide Book.

There were, of course, the Great Unwashed—itinerant, bearded Englishmen usually unemployed or unemployable, all of them friendly fellows, particularly when the scent of food was strong. They could be distinguished by their Mancunian accents, a preference for Glen Brittle Youth Hostel, and an enthusiasm amounting to adulation for a certain Joe Brown, then an unknown name in these remote parts. 'E's incredible! . . . like a yuman spider! . . . 'e doan't cut 'and-'olds and feet-'olds in t'ice . . . 'e cuts a thin groooooove and lie-backs oop it!' (whistles of incredulity).

These hairy vagabonds were legion in the Cairngorms. One remembers Droopydrawers (an apt name this) who could imitate all the instruments in a jazz band and invariably did just that within seconds of introducing himself to a company of total strangers. His equal in megalomania was the man Bob Scott recalls as the 'Birmingham Highlander.' This gentleman wore his kilt in the manner of his professedly Scottish ancestors, i.e. *in modo naturae*. He took pains to advertise this, and it was therefore all the more ironic that it should have led to his undoing. One day when walking near the lip of a steep snowfield, he lost his footing and set off upon a long involuntary sitting glissade. Most of us are aware of the heat that can be generated through thick corduroy trousers. This gentleman had no such protection. He has not been seen around much lately.

Among other immigrants were the 'Be Prepared' types, not all of them Scoutmasters. I once accompanied such a man. After relieving him of his pack for a short distance I was curious to discover its contents. The following items came to light—one hemp rope (for use in mist), Guide Book, Maps, Compass, Protractor, Torch

and Spare Batteries, one *Do-it-Yourself* First Aid Kit, one Sleeping Bag (against possible benightment), 48 hours' rations (against further benightment), and a small tent (for indefinite benightment). He told me that the Cairngorms were dangerous mountains, and that it was unwise to take liberties with the elements.

This motley influx certainly added colour to the climbing scene, yet one could only deplore that so many were profoundly ignorant of the vast rock climbing potential. The existing S.M.C. *Guide* was partly to blame for this, the descriptions of routes being so inexact that in one instance a single route was described three times under different headings. Another route, hallowed by tradition—the Married Men's Buttress of Sgoran Dubh—has never in fact been identified since its inauguration in 1906 'when snow masked the lower rocks.'

It was not until 1954 that plans were formulated for a new Rock-Climber's Guide to the Cairngorms under the joint editorship of Mac Smith, Mike Taylor and myself, the three of us having received official S.M.C. sanction for our labours. Later on several other Etchachan Club members took an active part, but the main burden was shouldered throughout by Smith who had to compile a readable Guide Book from the various sources of information. He devoted six years of his life and a few grey hairs to this worthy cause. Thus, should the new *Guide* appear to be too partisan or too well laced with Vallot-type superlatives—(*une des plus belles, des plus difficiles, des plus importantes escalades etc., etc.*)—then this is only to be expected from such a fervent disciple as Mac, who cannot have missed more than a few weekends in the hills for sixteen years. No local climber past or present could pretend to claim such kinship with the Cairngorms.

Nor is Mac's enthusiasm so grossly unwarranted. It cannot be disputed that a lot of Cairngorm granite would benefit from a liberal application of weed killer; on the other hand, the North-east climber finds more exhilaration in opening up an exciting natural line on a 600-foot unclimbed buttress than in subjugating 150 feet of unscratched vertical outcrop. The latter calls for nerve and high technical skill but makes little or no demands upon the climber's route-finding ability and gives no expression to his imaginative talents. To my mind the magic of a great route does not lie in its technical difficulty or even the excellence of its rock but in something less readily definable—*atmosphere* is the term generally applied. A route should fulfil an honest purpose: it should follow a natural line of weakness up a natural obstacle and reach a logical conclusion. There are many so-called routes whose conception would not tax the mental faculties of an ape.

They start from cairns set midway between existing cairns and follow straight lines up the cliff to other cairns at the top. Such routes portray complete lack of purpose, imagination or logic on the part of their creators. In the Cairngorms the climber's mental horizon is fortunately wider.

There is some loose rock in the Cairngorms. So much the better. Personally, I detest rock which is intrinsically rotten and whose security can never be accurately assessed, but loose rock is a natural hazard which may be safely negotiated by a leader not lacking in guile and judgment. I must confess to finding the impeccable gabbro on Sròn na Ciche pretty dull fare. The rock is too good. It is so riddled with holds as to be climbable almost anywhere and it demands no more of a leader than an average athletic physique and some technical ability.

In case this may seem to be a tirade against accepted values in rock climbing, I admit that the Cairngorms do not offer the same scope for severe face climbs as do the playgrounds of the West, Glencoe and Ben Nevis. The Cairngorms are now firmly established as a reputable rock climbing centre and it took several years of campaigning among the infidels to achieve this; hence it may now be freely conceded that Cairngorm Granite does not measure up to Chamonix Granite or even to Glencoe Porphyry for difficult sustained face climbs. If this appears to be a deliberate *volte-face* then it should be remembered that to destroy a myth you have to create another myth. The sober truth seldom satisfies, for most mountaineers are sceptics by adoption, if not by nature. The net result has been satisfactory and the Cairngorms are now accredited with no more than their fair share of glory.

The winter potentialities should be assessed in altogether different currency. In snow and ice climbing, the Cairngorms and Lochnagar yield to none. Their only rivals are Ben Nevis and Creag Meaghaidh, where snow conditions are infinitely more variable, and inconsistent. Glencoe can be discounted right away; the first prerequisite for winter climbing is a modicum of snow, and the recent mild winters have produced nothing worthy of that name below 3000 feet in Glencoe, thus dealing a death blow to its traditional reputation for ice climbing.

The North-east climbers of the early fifties were all individualists but never rock fanatics. There are no crags in the Cairngorms within easy reach of a motorable road and a typical climbing weekend savoured more of an expedition than of acrobatics. If the weather turned unfavourable, then a long hill walk took the place of the planned climb. All the bothies were well patronised—Luibeg, Lochend, Gelder Shiel, Bynack, the Geldie Bothies,

Altanour, Corrou and of course the Shelter Stone. At one and all you would be assured of friendly company round the fire in the evening. Everybody knew everybody and formal introductions were unnecessary.

It was a sad day for Lochnagar when, in August 1953, Bill Stewart fell to his death on Parallel Gully 'B.' Although his initial slip was a mere six feet, the rope sliced through on a sharp flake of rock and he fell all the way to the corrie floor. It was a cruel twist of fate to overtake such a brilliant young climber, and for many of the 'faithful' it soured the love of the hills that they had shared with him. The numbers dwindled on the Saturday bus and the crags shed much of their glamour; the majority of the old brigade took to hill walking and ski-ing, where they could forget unhappy memories and still enjoy the camaraderie of the hills.

It was not long however before two new groups emerged from the crucible. The first were the Boor Boys, now masquerading under the more genteel title of the Corrou Club and including the aforementioned Nicol and Grassick. The flame of adventure burned as brightly as before. Nicol had read so many books about the Munich climbers of the *avant-guerre* that he had himself become pseudo-Teuton and spoke of all-night bivouacs on minute ledges 'contemplating his destiny' like a Buhl. History records that after hurtling 120 feet to the Lochnagar scree before a large, impressed audience his first words to his rescuers were as follows:— 'Turn me over and let me see the place where I fell. It wasn't V.S.', he cried bitterly, 'only Hard Severe.' He lived to redeem his lost honour and despite the trifling inconvenience of several cracked ribs was none the worse for his accident, being left without so much as an honourable scar.

His comrade, Grassick, had already fallen off once in the process of testing the security of a large block to which he had conscientiously belayed himself. Unhappily the block was loose: when it fell, Grassick fell too. He wasn't a dangerous climber in the accepted sense of the term—merely 'accident prone,' as they say in Industry. This was borne out a fortnight after his first ascent of Polyphemus Gully, scene of previous marathon bids by Brooker. Grassick had just joined the short axe school but failed to realise that the new weapon had only limited application in the art of glissading. The Left Hand Branch of the Black Spout held only a fraction of its seasonal snow build-up, and lower down the gully quite a few sharp rocks protruded from the hard icy surface. Into one of these Grassick cannoned at high velocity, shedding his axe on the impact and finally coming to a halt on the pile of big boulders at the gully entrance. Several relays of stalwart climbers carried him down

the mountain and the incident is still commemorated by two brief entries on the wall of the Gelder steading: *K. Grassick—climbed Polyphemus Gully—6 hours*, and the postscript in different handwriting *K. Grassick—carried down—5 hours*.

An even more colourful occasion followed, on which Gordon Lillie dislocated a shoulder while seconding Kenneth on another Lochnagar climb. They made their way down to the nearest roadhead and were rescued by none other than Princess Margaret. Lillie sat miserably beside the chauffeur; while Grassick in the back seat made intelligent conversation with Royalty. Next morning the press reported the rescue on the front page and Grassick, never slow to seize his share of the limelight, was quoted as saying—‘She was radiant. . . . I never knew anyone could look so beautiful. . . . Her pictures just don’t do her justice.’—a graceful tribute from a commoner of Grassick’s lowly station. We looked in vain for his name in the New Year’s Honours List.

The Kincorth Club under the joint leadership of Freddy Malcolm and Alex ‘Sticker’ Thom were formidable rivals. The majority of their new routes were located in the Coire na Ciche of Beinne a’ Bhùird, which came to be regarded as club property. The Club Headquarters was sited at the Howff, the exact location of which is still a secret for the excellent reason that the head gamekeeper turns a blind eye to its occupants. The construction is partly subterranean and is the eighth wonder of the Cairngorms, with a stove, floor boards, genuine glass window and seating space for six. The building materials were brought from Aberdeen to the assembly line by the herculean labours of countless torchlit safaris which trod stealthily past the Laird’s very door, shouldering mighty beams of timber, sections of stove piping and sheets of corrugated iron. The howff book records the inaugural ceremony—‘This howff was constructed In the Year of Our Lord 1954, by the Kincorth Club, for the Kincorth Club. All climbers please leave names, and location of intended climbs: female climbers please leave names, addresses and telephone numbers.’

‘Freddy and Sticker’s Howff’ was not unique. It stood in a small village of howffs, three in number and together capable of accommodating an entire climbing meet. There was ‘Charlie’s Howff’ which had lock and key, a tiny door of Alice-in-Wonderland proportions, and a skylight—until some misguided individual fell through the latter, deceived by the almost foolproof camouflage. ‘Raymond Ellis’s Howff,’ the third of the group, was entirely above-ground, with no attempt made at concealment. Five miles farther, and three thousand feet up on Beinn a’ Bhùird, you may still stumble upon ‘Mac’s Howff,’ a cave of the Shelter-Stone

variety, made habitable only by the extraction of a giant rock tooth which yielded to the combined efforts of 'a drill and a mason's four-pound hammer.' 'Mac's' was the first of the howffs, dating back to 1949, and it had been inspired by Jock Nimlin's article in the then current issue of the *S.M.C. Journal*. It did not enjoy any lasting popularity because of the marathon hike that it demanded after closing time in Braemar—13 miles *via* Invercauld Bridge or 9 miles if you chose to ford the Dee, waist deep in icy water.

More new routes were recorded in this period than ever before, though proportionally fewer climbers participated. Nor indeed was the exploratory trend due to any significant advance in skill or technique, because excellent climbs of Very Difficult standard or less were still coming to light. On the other hand, an early sign that the boom period was nearing or past its zenith was the relative increase in the number of first winter ascents, scope for which was still enormous. Developments had proceeded at such a pace that occasionally the first winter ascent of a route followed almost immediately the first summer ascent, and in a few cases actually preceded it, as with 'The Scorpion' on Càrn Etchachan. As potential *Guide Book* Editor, Smith's resources were severely taxed in keeping abreast, and those of us engaged upon checking route descriptions found it more profitable to anticipate new routes than fulfil our obligations with less glamorous second ascents. We had already agreed that any new route worthy of inclusion in a climbing guide covering such a wide area should at least exceed 200 feet in height and should follow a logical line up a recognisable feature. Without these limitations, guide book descriptions would have become hopelessly bogged down by technical data.

Eventually and inevitably, the first invaders began to arrive, precursors of a new régime, which was to challenge the Aberdeen climbers for the leading role in the development of Scottish ice-climb, and whose élite were to make even more exacting winter climbs, routes such as the Orion Face Diretissima and Minus 2 Gully on Ben Nevis.

In these final years of isolation, two further outstanding climbers appeared: Ronnie Sellers, who did many routes of the highest standard, along with Jerry Smith, a likeable Englishman naturalised in Aberdeen. Two accidents in the same summer cost us these two friends.

For 10 to 15 years, the Cairngorm fraternity had existed as a closed community uninfluenced by the traditions of other clubs or denominations. During these years they had perfected a new brand of ice climbing by adapting Alpine snow techniques to the

requirements of their native crags in winter. Virtually their only contact with the wider world of mountaineering was at holiday periods when a few enthusiasts reached the Alps, while others hitched a lift to Skye, the Lake District or Wales. Weekend exploration was curtailed by the shortage of car owners. Much more could have been achieved, but it would have lost the group its individuality.

Nearly all recent exploration has been from the Braemar side of the Cairngorms. Despite the wholesale exploitation of Aviemore and district as a summer/winter sports area and the seething hordes of humanity on the Speyside hills, very little has been recorded from that air. Aviemore is too far from the main climbing crags to be of any value as a rock-climbing centre. The northern corries of Cairngorm and Cairn Lochan offer only scrappy climbs and the buttresses of Sgoran Dubh, though impressive as a whole, disappoint individually. Among the popularly acclaimed climbing crags only the Shelter Stone cirque is more readily approachable from Aviemore than from Derry Lodge, and this only since the new Ski Road was constructed.

Because they have no vested interests in the northern sector of the Cairngorm massif, North-East climbers generally have been indifferent towards the new chair-lift on Cairngorm, which might seem to pose a remote threat to their privacy. The chair-lift might unleash hordes of souvenir-hunters and salvation-seekers over the central Cairngorms: of these perhaps quite a few would come to an untimely end. Against this is the complete lack of inspiration and the gregariousness that characterises the modern tourist.

Ten years ago Coire Cas was as dreich a place as you might find anywhere in the Cairngorms. As a corrie it was wholly devoid of character. At the time of writing it contains one large continental-type chalet (with the hint of more to follow), a chair-lift which works occasionally, and on an average weekend in February, upwards of a thousand skiers of all shapes and proportions. I must confess that I now find Coire Cas more stimulating. Even for the mediocre skier there is a Milk Bar selling hot coffees and no lack of gullible young novitiates upon whom to practise one's skimanship. Knowledge of a few basic terms (*mambo*, *wedln*) and a nodding acquaintance with some of the Austrian and Swiss instructors is an undoubted asset. Skis may be carried or occasionally even worn; although in the latter case the least embarrassing course is to continue steadily ascending till out of sight (*langlauf*). Coire Cas is undoubtedly a colourful scene nowadays, and it owes this to superimposed humanity and not to the landscape.

Nevertheless the danger in the Coire Cas scheme is that it may be the forerunner of others which would threaten the finer and more remote fastnesses of the Cairngorms.

The peculiar fascination that the Cairngorms hold for so many climbers cannot be ascribed to any one special feature. Different facets of the mountain scene have their own appeal for different people. For myself I have always held that it is impossible to dissociate mountains from those who climb upon them. The Cairngorms are a compact group of mountains. The Cairngorm climbing fraternity has always been a closely-knit community, linked by similar ideals and aspirations. Good climbing and good company often go together: each is essential to the enjoyment of the other. In the Cairngorms they are inseparable.

TWELVE NIGHTS ON SCHKELDA

By G. J. Ritchie

THIS is the story of a single climb in the Caucasus in the summer of 1961 when Hamish McInnes, J. M. K. Vivyan and I visited the area following the invitation of the Mountaineering Federation of the U.S.S.R. to the Alpine Club and the Scottish Mountaineering Club. But as most climbing tales are novel only to the author and as the armchair mountaineer has been there before, I propose to introduce a new element by describing principally the environment into which we were fitted. I avoid controversy on the theories of Lysenko if I explain that it is an environment of the valley, and the mountaineer on the mountain remains unmodified by evolution.

Mountaineering in Russia seems unaffected by that mystique whose devotees give up work, society and civilised living. Mountaineering is a sport, benefiting health and the advancement of economic progress. It is therefore encouraged by trade unions and student bodies. The majority of the young men and women live far from mountains and mountain weather. Their climbing must be done in their 3-week summer vacation. They come to the mountains therefore not casually but as a responsibility of the Mountaineering Federation.

The Caucasus are as yet undeveloped 'touristically.' Certainly, a *téléferique* will shortly lessen the stature of proud Elbruz, but the range is very much in its pristine state without hotels, chalets, restaurants, souvenir shops, picture postcards, excursionist buses or cadres of professional guides. Starting after the war in an area razed of all habitation but an occasional German camp, the unions

have established a number of permanent centres where a small directing staff and a somewhat larger summer staff of experienced instructors provide 3-week residential courses graduating through physical training, practical instruction and collective excursions to independent climbs by groups of friends. Progress is recorded and marked by the award of a classification of competency. The difficulties which could arise for inexperienced climbers in the Caucasus where distances and heights are greater, mountains wilder and weather less settled than in the Alps are mitigated by the introduction of a mountain safety organisation. The proposals of any party to carry out any climb are scrutinised both by the camp authorities and by the regional safety organisation. Instead of guide books there exist printed diagrams and descriptions of the principal climbs. The camp authorities probably make available diagrams of climbs considered suitable for the grading of the particular party. When they make their choice they write down details of the party, the proposed route, equipment, food, times of departure and return. The party may be medically examined. The camp authorities, if satisfied, pass the data to the regional safety organisation which has responsibility for rescue operations over great distances. This latter assesses the objective risks of existing conditions and weather prospects and on longer climbs may order the party to report regularly, either by signal rocket or radio telephony. Given approval, the party can draw from the camp stores its food and equipment. Few have personal equipment, for the camps provide clothing, boots (tricouni for snow-covered rock with felt insoles against low temperatures and easy fitting to accommodate a succession of users), axes, crampons, karabiners, pitons, webbing harness (used instead of waist loops), ropes, stoves and very efficient mountain tents. The latter are essential, for there are no high huts, indeed no huts at all, and most serious climbs involve several days away from camp; and the complication of getting away from camp accentuates the general inclination of mountaineers to stay out on their own as long as possible. On the other hand, unreasonable failure to return at the prescribed time is seriously regarded, for then the rescue service springs automatically into action. Even so, days may elapse before the rescue party reaches the scene of an accident.

By formal agreement with the Federation our party were given freedom of choice of climbs and assurance of assistance to achieve this, as long as we observed the control time procedure. The season was late and although on our arrival at Spartak camp in the Adyl Su valley in the Central Caucasus we proposed to tackle some of the great rock faces we were quickly convinced on our

practice climbs of the justice of local discouragement of these ambitions. We had visions of exploring the wilds of Suanetia and were gratified when it was proposed that with Eugen Tur from Gorky and Igor Bandarowsky from Odessa, two young Masters of Sport, we should undertake the traverse of the main ridge of Schkelda (or Shkhelda). Undismayed by the accounts of Rickmers' party which in 4 days first climbed the western summits in 1903 with a 10½-hour ascent of danger and difficulty from a distant bivouac and by those of a Russian academic party which seemed to have had six high bivouacs on a traverse of the ridge, Hamish thought we might push through in four if lightly laden. We would subsist largely over those four days on a concentrated and dietetically complete preparation, Complan, which required no other preparation than the addition of warm water. This cut down bulk and fuel requirements. Duvet jackets, boots and *pieds d'éléphant* with a spare pair of socks were our only change. Chocolate, tea, glucose and dried fruit filled the gap over the weight of rope and ironmongery in our small sacks. The Russians, with the greatest goodwill, fixed our control time at twelve days and slipped a few additional luxuries like apples, caviare and *pâté de foie gras* into the bulging sacks of our companions and we set off through the pinewoods.

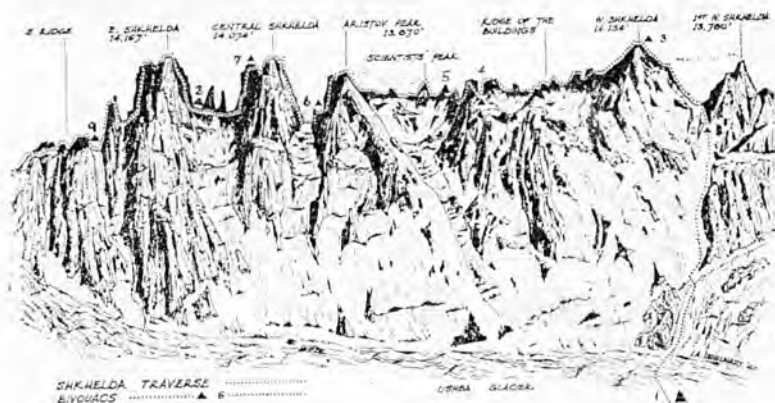
I will not dwell upon the pleasures of the juniper fire at our first bivouac under a clear sky in a tiny oasis above the Schkelda glacier. My readers should toughen themselves for hard going ahead. At first light a painless descent of the moraine and traverse of the open crevasses of the main glacier took us soon on to a branch descending from the general direction of the Akhsu Pass steep enough to make progress in crampons and stiff new boots a mortification. A traverse across even steeper névé took us on to an airy ridge descending from the 1st West Schkelda, from which the distant view gradually widened to take in the mass of Dongus Arun and the snow domes of Elbruz, with the tiny tents of glaciologists under Ozengi now right at our feet. Just as McInnes and I reached the iced rocks of the main ridge a wall of black cloud swept in from the east and great rolls of thunder told of the coming storm. Reluctant to descend the steep ice we started to cut a platform, but our companions hundreds of feet below had the tent and won the argument. Their site was certainly sheltered by a ridge, but required considerable excavation of iced-in boulders, to the great detriment of our ice hammers. Because of its general unsuitability for such work my light axe was the only one which was to survive the climb in usable state. In the midst of our effort, hailstones pelted down larger than marbles and we sought shelter

OPPOSITE: The twelfth day. Ritchie and rucksack pause for breath on the summit of East Schkelda. Ushba beyond. (H. McInnes)





in the pole-less tent. All that night and the next two days the storm continued, while we four remained in the shelter of a two-man tent pressed down with the weight of snow. McInnes went out to bale it off with a large dixie, but his frozen fingers lost their hold and for the remainder of our sojourn we cooked for four in a pint-size tea can. Within, we were snug. Igor, a collector of playing cards, produced a Polish pack distinguished by the varied charms of the ladies upon the backs and the absence of the Royal pairs whose function was taken by numbers 2 and 3; all of which (and the local rules for all the games we played) left us somewhat at a disadvantage. Between times a discussion of real wages, housing conditions, health and social services and pensions in our respective countries spaced out the occasional drink of melted



snow which marked the passing of time. On the fourth day of our trip, however, the sun broke through, blazing on a white world around and white cloud below. Hours passed as we dried out and threw snowballs at the steep slopes over the protecting rib and eventually provoked avalanches to sweep the slope clear for our ascent. Our earlier platform had already been avalanched and we counted ourselves lucky. Soon, however, we were traversing steep sloping ledges of ice covered by fresh snow and it was with relief that we attained the main ridge at the col between the two summits of West Schkelda. Hard going up steep névé and icy rocks took us to the higher summit at 14,134 feet. Supplies were now low, but the ridge had been provisioned three years before for parties which had withdrawn. We found a cache. Some tins were empty and like pepper pots with fine holes drilled by lightning. Others contained fuel, frozen sprats, meat and milk. We borrowed

OPPOSITE: Sun and blown snow on the east face of Slioch, in the stormy March of 1962. Beinn a' Chearcaill in distance. (T. Weir)

only sufficient for our immediate needs. Although the only level spot was on the summit we descended the far side to build a precarious tent platform on the steep slope. We were not alone long, for after 3 years' neglect the cache was soon yielding more of its riches to a party of stalwarts of the Red Army who ensconced themselves upon the summit.

From our tent door we looked along the other dozen or more summits of the tortuous ridge towards the incomparable beauties of the twin summits of Ushba. Below us was a slender ridge with occasional deep vertical brèches, the Bhàsteir face and the Thearlaich Gap on a vaster scale, and bearing the obvious name of Ridge of the Buildings. From now on the ridge, apart from two summits, was to vary in width between 6 inches and 6 feet. Teetering along in the dawn light with crampons catching and sparking and squawking like a pencil on a slate it was difficult to judge, for sheer discomfort, between the awkward clawing along the serrated ridge and the scarting, scratching, shin-barking, seat-splitting slides down doubled ropes in the tortuous chimneys of the gaps. But we did not seem to have moved more than a hundred yards as the chough flies when the buzzing of the brush discharge upon the pinnacles drove us down at express speed into the deepest gap. There, tied on to pitons, we set to and managed to hack and trundle and build enough of a platform to allow us to plaster the tent in under a sheltering overhang. Not a moment too soon. Above us the Army party lamented its fate as the heavens opened and lightning and hail descended and they lay in cracks unable to move. Eventually they joined us. Under our rock we could offer cooking facilities but no shelter, but after many hours of dangerous work they had a tent bulging with bodies hanging into space on a tiny platform. Safety ropes to which the occupants were clipped passed through the ventilators and primuses roared comfortably through the night as clouds of steam rose from wet clothes within.

Their position, as we climbed above them next morning on the loosest of ledges, was hazardous, but a few hours brought us out once more on to a snow ridge which, after a first icy descent, strung on, slender and sharp, in a series of arcs worthy of the skill of a slack wire artist. For myself, after savouring the full challenge of upright movement with slopes of inexorable steepness dropping thousands of feet on either side, I gave up my splay-footed efforts and traversed along a foot or two below the crest till the insidious sifting of fine snow all around warned us to set up the tents once more. Cutting blocks and building out with urgent haste as we saw the curtains of hail sweep towards us we soon had platforms

for both parties and were snug once more with snow melting in the pot and a reward of chocolate from the Red Army for our help.

Next morning a swift dash to Scientist Peak yielded another cache and we breakfasted without formality upon hard frozen chunks of icy sprat. More tempting were the great black Bologna sausages, but at a hasty bivouac farther along the ridge when a further blizzard blew up at midday these were rejected even by the besieging choucas. The day cleared, and we pushed on by awkward traverses, hanging chimneys and uncertain snow slopes. High up on the steep flank of Aristov Peak (13,570 feet) we suddenly saw the formidable northern face and heard faint voices. Fly-sized, an Army party embarked upon a summer rock climb had found their exit in fierce winter conditions and were fighting desperately. Fortunately the party above had sufficient rope to get them off the face by nightfall that day.

Great good luck yielded yet another cache from which we 'borrowed' sparingly then climbed over the pinnacles behind the summit till a great void opened beneath us. There began a series of exposed and hazardous abseils across and down the face. We were not to go scot-free. A great rock dislodged by Hamish's rope shattered beside Eugen and Igor. The latter was struck on the knee. Retching with pain, he was lowered down further abseils until we were able to build yet another tent platform on a nick halfway down the gap and looking out on to a yet greater drop to the glacier far below. With unusual forethought we prepared our line of descent to give time for the complicated and bulging ice-runs of the great west face of Central Schkelda (14,074 feet). As we folded our tent next morning we stood politely aside to accommodate the leaders of the Army party as they abseiled on to our platform. Not till the descent of all their caravan made movement safe did we budge. Their leaders had found our steps and were away. A swift pursuit found them already over the abseil and we sadly retired and re-erected our tent. Despite distant ringing of axe and piton it was after midday before a figure was seen through mist and snow below us, and still fighting hard. Nightfall found them still on the face but by then we were otherwise engaged: 12 in a two-man tent drumming up for a Ukrainian party who had followed in our footsteps. Three tents soon packed the ledge; safety ropes were everywhere and McInnes was leading a memorable ceilidh. Strung sadly on their uneasy scrapes on the face below, the military must have wished themselves transported on the wings of song as love lyrics of Burns, songs of Celtic sorrow and bawdy ballads of the Antipodes alternated with massed Russian voices rendering Kipling and songs more exotic. Next day the push was renewed.

Hamish, as usual, plunged for the Direct and I—with the contents of his rucksack in mine (60 lb.)—cursed and prayed, following his convulsive writhings over ice-bulges; a point off each crampon, axe in the wrong hand, the next foot at ear level, the sack swinging, balaclava over my eyes, a wet-knotted Russian top rope caught behind in the last cleft, these were obviously going to be some of the greatest moments of my life, possibly the last. Oddly, it did not seem long till I was looking down on the Russian leader swarming hand over hand (out of all sympathy with the mountain) up the rope. No time for contemplation: on over ridge and pinnacle in gathering darkness seeking a level platform. A snow ledge below proved to lie at 50 degrees and to be largely ice; but night was on us and platforms had to be cut for the others, so we set to. Our position gave us tent-room to accept an exhausted member of the other party and we slept, five up, better than the others, seven on an exiguous ice-ledge. The morning started with a 125-foot free abseil and followed with hours of dour cutting downwards and round several great pinnacles till we came at last to the foot of East Schkelda (14,167 feet) rising even more fiercely than its neighbour. Two fine tent platforms were cut out of a cornice with a tiny casement looking to the world's evening sunshine below. The beauty of the night sky was unsurpassable. The cold was intense. Despite brilliant sunshine next morning the first very severe pitch led out on to an eyrie on the southern face, a situation which left us without feet and fingers despite 20 minutes' work undoing 10 minutes' restriction; all eventually lost toenails. We now surmounted a series of overhanging chimneys; the 10,000-foot unrestricted exposure meant only joy on warm rough rock with great incut holds. Then McInnes again took the *direttissima*. A 50-degree ice-ribbon ran parallel with a rising rock rib which formed a constant ceiling. Every piton available went into the rock and I found the rope hanging out in space, suspended in a series of slings used by McInnes to stay on and progress. The process of extraction was involved. I was not sad to emerge at the summit and find that with great luck another cache was available. For the last day or so a single tin of milk per day had been almost our sole ration for four. Our total food intake over the period was exactly one-quarter of the 'meagre' rations of the party then in Greenland. Brief stops for photography with the splendour of Ushba fully revealed before us and we sent off along the ridge, where pinnacle alternated with steep deep snow faces. A series of long swinging rappels followed, but by now we were inured to the problems of clearing the top and were quickly at the foot of the Cock, steep fine rock presenting a problem worthy of

Chamonix with a final fierce abseil to reach a cluster of rocks as night fell. First there, we found space for a tent. The others spent the night in the open before setting off down to Suanetia. We followed the south ridge till we could plunge down a couloir, one sound axe between us, to the Ushba glacier. Elation gave way to dismay as our way back over the col steepened and climbed, but then the ice-fall opened out and we descended through crevasses and under seracs at frantic speed with a final abseil on to less dangerous ground. We broke into a break-neck run through the crevasses towards tents on the glacier below. To Igor they were cigarettes; to us possibly a drink of tea. They were even better, and after firing our last 'all well' rocket at our control time, we ambled downwards in the warm afternoon sunshine with our shrunken stomachs not dissatisfied. This was the thirteenth day of our trip.

Argyll

(With apologies to Louis MacNeice)

A Nevis gully choked with ice,
For you, a silent prayer.
They say it makes you hard and tough
For the Himalaya.
It's no go the Lhotse face. It's no go for Hillary.
All we want is the tourist track, and tea at the Distillery.

Hamish McInnes took a peg,
Banged it in a crevice,
Tried to tell us that it was
The hardest climb on Nevis.
It's no go the étrier. It's no go the piton.
All we want is an easy slab, and a stance to sit your seat on.

Willie Murray 'tween the wars
Forced a route on Buachaille.
The powers that be now think it fit
For anyone to tackle.
It's no go the long run-out. It's no go the clinkers.
Use twenty slings on every pitch, and hide the drop with biinkers.

Dr Bell when editing
Gave as his opinion,
Moss and slime are good for us
From Suilven to Stobinian.
It's no go the descendeurs. It's no go the rappel.
All we want is the quick way off, and a ticket back to Capel.

DEREK OLDMAN.

(Reproduced from *Oxford Mountaineering*, 1961, by courtesy of
Author and Editor.)

THE PRIMITIVE APPROACH

By Norman Tennent, J.M.C.S.

*O great and sane and simple race of brutes
That own no lust, because they have no (Marshall) law*

—TENNYSON

My fingers reached up over the edge of the ledge. It was sticky. Taking down my torch and watch, I found the time was 6 A.M. In my Duvet and long woollen underpants, I went to the door.

'I've always wanted a pair like that,' said Slessor. 'Where did you get them?'

'I inherited them. But you could try looking through the advertisements in old *Journals*.'

Outside in the grey gloom, nothing was visible from the trench we had cleared at the door in the chest-deep snow, but the whirling spindrift. The air was fresh, clean and searing cold.

'What's it like?' said one of the Aldershot 'squaddies' from a lower bunk.

'Lousy,' I said, giving him the answer he wanted.

He belched, and his lurid face disappeared into the black acrid pit from which it had emerged.

The others did not move. We were free to use what primuses there were. A peaceful breakfast, then back—bacon and eggs not for me: last night's steak, wine, and Austrian cheese should do for to-day. Heigh-ho for bed again!

'The Comb?' he said, already in boots and 'stop-touts.'

'Take too long without flippers.'

'Castle Ridge?'

I was dragged outside. The foot of Douglas Boulder was appearing as a formless smudge.

'Are you willing?'

'Not just now, old man. I'm too cold.'

'You can only think of one thing.'

A sharp, jabbing pain, when I fell thigh-deep into a foot-print, reminded me of the runaway car I had stopped on the Dornie Brae, at the cost of two cracked ribs.

'There's your route.'

'What Route?'

'Centurion.'

'It's not my route.'

'You did it. It's as much yours as anyone's now.'

But not for me. Some things are even worse than bacon and eggs early in the morning. Oh Lord! let me slip back into a civilised past; to the aroma of cigars and wine at blood heat. This is a scentless, colourless, impersonal landscape of death without associations. Yes, it's his route, not mine. That black gut, straight up above, and out and out, into the murk overhead.

'There's another climb on the face, to the left of Cousin's Buttress. I did it once in summer with Smart. Clarkson did it in winter, and made a new route.'

'Let me make the trail,' I said.

Wouldn't walk a hundred yards if I could take a twopenny one in the bus. Count a hundred paces. There's just one interesting place in Castle Ridge. Interesting? Uncertain. Nothing's uncertain any more. Pioneers are out of date on the mountains. They went out with Norfolk Jackets. Calculable satisfactions; your handicap is fixed forever. At this moment thousands of little boys and girls are floundering in the snow on mountainsides everywhere. All things are a personal reflection. Not that mob in the hut surely. Material to be used by someone. Conditions to-day are quite hopeless, but the slope's more regular now. Over this rib. Across the gully fan; a silly place to be avalanched, but the improbable still happens. Another hundred to the rock face.

'Do you want to try this other route?'

'Yes, please.'

'Then you are going too much right.' Avoiding my zig-zags he came straight up.

'It looks frightful. Do you want the two ends?'

'No. I'll fiddle in the middle.'

He tied on with two Tarbucks. The red cord looked more appropriately umbilical.

'Hold on, I'm not belayed,' he said.

'Oh, nuts!'

If I can stamp enought snow down below, I can perhaps implant a foot on this rotten rock. There's no friction now. Don't sprawl. Push out. Nothing but dirt underneath. Into that corner, if the inside foot can go across. The axe right in: right up. Try clearing. Looks useless. A handhold left, if you can cut at that distance. Left foot up on to that scratch. Tricounis every time. Good! There's névé on top.

'What's it like?'

'It'll take a long time. Is there a way round?'

'I think so.'

'Coming down.' The slide was painless until the bowline bit in with a firm pressure below my cracked right ribs. The hangman's

knot goes behind the left ear, I believe. One man in his time dies many deaths.

Traverse down and across. Stamp 'em in hard; he can hold a slide. This short face isn't as awkward, or as ugly, as it looks. Try cutting. There's névé again. At times a hard face is better than a soft one. Looks like a spike belay at the top of that chimney of which he should approve.

'Climbing.' He came up fast.

'You must be frozen. Like to carry on?'

He went up left, round the corner and out of sight, and when I followed, first over rocks streaming with powder snow, then over steeply angled, knee-deep powder, he was lurking behind a colonnade of massive icicles.

'Wait till I put all my sweaters on'; then: 'it looks easy,' he said, indicating a fifty-foot ice wall.

'This will give you the practice you were wanting.'

The start often seems the worst, and this bulge is no exception. Think. Start at the bottom left, and work right, then perhaps left again. Cut as many steps as you can before you start. Move up slowly, you've all the time in the world. You can't stay on at this angle. You can; must. Keep cutting well ahead; out on to the right wall. You can't hold on to ice without a handhold. Blast! I need a step at the height of my left knee. It's no good thinking the angle eases. Keep cutting. The steps are there, even though full of snow. How can my fingers be so cold? Are burnt fingers more painful than frozen ones? That wall looks the steepest yet. Keep your distance brother, and cut with both hands. Out on to the nose. The holds are all there, because you made them. Keep on cutting. You died a long time ago; now you are really living. Over the top, finish the job, give us the tools. Why keep the head; keep the feet first. Could probably finish with fewer holds, but that would be a piece of impertinence. Taking a liberty. Technique or *The Art of Love*: *Les Liasons Dangereux*.

'Come up, Malcolm.'

No road ahead, but that ledge up to the left might be the answer. The top of the gully looks like the wrong route we took at the top of 'Parallel A.' Oh, Lord, my fingers! Playing with ice is like playing with fire and no more dangerous. More painful perhaps.

'Have you done much winter climbing with Patey?'

'Unfortunately not. Was I cutting widely spaced buckets?'

'Widely spaced somethings: certainly not buckets.'

He ran out a rope's length, and following in the deep powder, I found him at an ice-axe belay in a rib of what I hoped was harder

névé. A steep funnel lay between us and where the ramp continued up and to the left. My turn.

Down gingerly but firmly. *Stand-up, stand-up for Jesus*. This stuff is just ready to slide away, so ram it down and no nonsense. You're too close to this rock pillar—should have gone lower. Clear away first if you can. Good, there's névé below, but I'll have to clear all the way now. Sidle round and find a handhold on the rock. Drat this axe! Keep moving, you're just about there. A good belay required. Thank God! Here's a spike. This is an exposed spot in every sense. Wonder how the route goes? Not on this line certainly. That ice wall is A.P. at least. Thirty feet up alright, but I can't see a thing after that.

'What's it like?'

'Great.'

He came up.

'Cripes!' he said.

Then away to the left moving beautifully. This is going to take a long time. Watch his rope carefully. Now he's on the traverse. It looks thin; I can see pretty well all the sole of his boot. He's right overhead. Ouch! That was a bull's-eye. I wonder if the resilience is in the ice or in my head?

'I'll try to put a runner on.'

Stand by to give him tension if he wants it. What the blazes am I doing here? My golly, it's cold. You are doing this for enjoyment remember; otherwise you shouldn't be here. Is shivering a pleasure? A new-found one to me, but perhaps controlled shivering could be. Just make up your mind to control it. Anyway you are above sensual pleasures now, on to higher things. Mind over matter. The body is just for moving the observing and recording mechanism from place to place. I wish I was a camera. Wouldn't work; more like a prisoner in a tower. Why tower? Let me out! There was a Martello Tower in Ulysses. 'The tower motif is allied to the idea of birth or reincarnation'; must have been reading books.

He's made the same move five times. How many times can you make it before you lose the game? Perpetual check. Could he climb down from there? Could we abseil the ice-pitch? I have a long piton. Best try to find a place in the rock wall for a peg. We've tons of time anyway, though I've been here for hours. That's his ninth attempt. The ice-wall looks like an alternative, but not without pegs, at least as a safeguard. Ye gods! What's this? Here it comes; stand by. Right over the ice-wall. Just as well we aren't there now. The whole basin above must drain down it.

'You alright?'

'Yes. It missed us.'

'I'm going to try again.'

It's the next move that counts. To go upward, not sideways, from a long stride, isn't easy. He's right across the corner now. Will he do it? He's still on anyway. Watch the rope, but don't move it; he'll do that one way or another. It is moving. Lord! not more cutting; but I think he's out of the crack.

'Belaying . . . belay on. . . . Come up.'

'Climbing.'

Easily said. Moving when you're frozen is worse than standing still. Flap you arms a bit before the traverse. I've become a bit of the frozen landscape and I don't want to shiver the place to bits. Reaching the shelf must have been hard. The ice here is good though. All the steps are in the right place. An unobstructed view right down to the screes, if it wasn't for the mist, past my boots. Concentrate on the boots. *And he never will be missed. And he never will be missed.* This traverse is the diciest thing I've seen for a long time. Ooze along it. The boy did a good job clearing down to the névé, even though my blood turned to brash in the process. Wonder his didn't at the sight of this. He has a rare capacity for taking pains. A fleeting glance too much. Prolonged respectful consideration required for a true appreciation of character. We tend to get climbs and climbers mixed. *Make the climb the hero*, said Graham Brown. Quite right.

'I'm taking the runner off.' But I wish I could leave it on. Respectful consideration. Where are the holds? Better look now, because it's probably the last I'll see of them before they are buried beneath my sprawling belly.

'Climbing.'

Just a slight slip. Wonder if he noticed? How the hell did he do it? Must have used that chockstone. Obviously; tried it severely. . . . And you aren't finished yet, by any means. A long stride right and look where you are putting that blasted boot. What a situation!

'Nice going. May I use that spike?'

'Yes. Use the sling as an étrier, if you like.'

'What's an étrier?'

A heave should do it. Put the right foot into the sling. I don't want to do a *pas de bas* on top of this pinnacle. Cut across to the névé right, then as far as possible up the shelf into the corner. Looks like a belay.

'Come up, Malcolm. . . . Either of these cracks might go. Give you a shoulder?'

'No. But I'll stand on the head of your axe.'

'Right. Then I'll give further assistance with the other end.'

'Any good?'

'No, it won't go. Coming down. I'll try the other crack.'

It looks steeper, but without that awkward traverse over high angle snow at the top. A direct finish; if it is a finish—in the basin, closet or thunder box. It's just been flushed anyway.

'Alright. I'm up.'

[This climb was on Càrn Dearg of Ben Nevis and, as far as it goes, seems to follow Harrison's Route. It started up Cousin's Buttress for 200 ft., then went left into a gully and ice-pitch. A ledge led left again for 250 ft., from the gully to the 300-ft. section below the Basin. This upper part was first climbed in winter by Brunton & Clarkson (*S.M.C.J.* (1957), xxvi, 169), but Slessor & Tennent's ascent may, according to Marshall, be regarded as the first complete winter ascent of the lower two-thirds of Harrison's Route. Slessor points out, what may be inferred from the characteristically cryptic text, that there *was* an avalanche, and that it missed them. He also points out that, avalanche or no avalanche, he does not employ terms like *Cripes*, nor Tennent those like *Nuts*. A regrettable number of words had to be removed from the original MS., but even those unfamiliar with the author should have no difficulty in restoring them.—HON. ED.]

MOUNTAINEERING IN THE NEW CALEDONIAN FOREST

By I. H. M. Smart

ONE of the first men to cross the watershed of the North American continent in its more northerly latitudes was Simon Fraser, a New Brunswick Scot. The land he saw was stern, wild, heathy in places and generally covered in shaggy woods. There was an abundance of mountains and his diary records large amounts of flood. As it fulfilled Sir Walter's criteria in all details the land was called New Caledonia, and would have remained so had the French not complained that they already had some Pacific islands of that name. Queen Victoria, in an unnecessarily placatory mood, changed the name of trans-Rocky Mountain Canada to British Columbia, but in doing so did not change its resemblance to a Scotland of the Forestry Commission's dreams. For a mountaineer it can be a depressing country; there are so many mountains that even a lifetime's activity would still leave large tracts of country unexplored and thousands of mountains unclimbed.

The Rocky Mountains themselves form the watershed of the continent, giving rise to rivers flowing to three oceans and a sea. They are the best known of the western ranges, but are not the highest nor do they offer the best snow or rock climbing, for between the Rockies and the Pacific there are some 500 miles of mountain ranges of considerable height and of both scenic and technical attractiveness.

Of these the chief is the Coast Range, which rises out of the sea without much preamble of foothills, reaching its highest point wholly within Canadian territory at Mount Waddington, an often attempted but seldom climbed peak of 13,260 feet, and culminates northward at Mount McKinley (20,300 feet) in Alaska. The coastal mountain system is about 100 miles broad and resembles the Rockies in that its west side is exceedingly wet with valleys choked with undergrowth of appalling density, whereas its eastern side is in 'rain shadow' and is in places dry to the point of being arid.

The intervening interior ranges form numerous, shorter, systems and are generally pretty wet and vegetatious, but are by no means inferior either scenically or technically; for example, the Selkirks and Bugaboos. The north-south orientation of ranges means that the west-seeking rivers of the Pacific slope of the Rockies are forced into wide detours until they can circumvent or force a passage through each range—hence the devious course of the two main rivers of the west, the Fraser and Columbia. The rainfall being generally high, even minor tributaries are hard to cross and this lends just that little bit of extra interest to an already difficult terrain. Finally there are certain large tracts of the interior of British Columbia where the hills are low and rolling. In the north these are forested. Farther south they become open cattle country and towards the American border the countryside is arid, growing sage brush and cactus, and the tree line is inverted. In this area there is considerable irrigation for fruit growing and in Spring the blossom trees cover the hillsides.

In order to reach the mountains therefore it may be necessary to traverse dense, wet cloud forests where progress of a couple of miles a day is not at all bad going, or hot, arid country, almost impossible in Summer but pleasant in Spring and Fall. The transition zones between wet and dry are the most pleasant, for the slopes are covered by open, flower-carpeted forests of ponderosa pine, pleasantly aromatic and abounding in fine camp sites.

In some areas access is easier, notably in the national and provincial parks, of which the Jasper and Banff parks are the most famous. The former is the same area as Perthshire and the latter as Inverness-shire. The towns of Jasper and Banff, which have a

Pitlochry-like atmosphere, are joined by an excellent 140-mile-long highway, away from which the thousands of tourists do not go. It passes close to many fine peaks of the 10,000 to 11,000-foot class. There are also some lesser roads of the sort that you 'sign in' giving the expected date of exit, and if you don't emerge someone will look around for you. In such areas all the mountains worth the trouble have been subjected to first ascents, and mountaineering is at the stage of opening up major routes of all standards of difficulty (parties are now passing the night clipped to karabiners or swinging gently in their étriers, as elsewhere in the world).

In the Banff-Jasper region the rock is mostly limestone and although in a few restricted situations it is good (*e.g.*, Mount Louis and Mount Colin), it is generally pretty loose and disagreeable. One attractive feature is the large number of fossils lying around. Even at 10,000 feet it may be discovered that hand and footholds are the shells of scallops or other curious marine creatures (mute evidence of the high Spring tides of a bygone geological age). By contrast a lot of good granite is found in the interior and coast ranges, some of it reasonably accessible. Guide books exist for climbs in the Rockies and one or two other areas. They are refreshingly undetailed when compared with the minute cataloguing of minor crags and variations at the bottom of the Scottish barrel.

To my mind the real pleasure of Canadian mountaineering is in the exploration of the remoter areas where the mountains are protected by bush and swift rivers. These barriers are irritating to the eager mountaineer greedy for peaks and fame, but they do protect the privacy of the mountains. The brash impatient man who went into the bush at the valley bottom emerges at the tree-line several days later, chastened, scratched, mosquito-bitten and frequently on hands and knees, which after all is the only respectful way to enter any inner sanctuary. Many a sneering, arrogant fellow has come out of the bush quite a nice chap.

The regions of rock, snow and ice above the vegetation zone are similar the world over. The straight mountaineering technique is therefore the same as for any mountains of 10,000 to 12,000 feet elsewhere in temperate latitudes. The mountains come into condition for summer climbing in July and by early September may receive their first fall of winter snow. Often the overnight temperatures are not low enough to freeze the surface of the snow, so even an early start can mean soft snow conditions. At any rate, these are minor problems compared to negotiating the bush-covered lower slopes. Rope, ice-axe, pitons and so on are really to be regarded as implements for administering the *coup de grâce* to a more than half-solved problem.

Denis Moore (S.M.C.), L. O. Brown (*quondam* E.U.M.C.) and myself made a number of expeditions in British Columbia during the years we resided there together, and the technique of bush travel evolved by this distinguished trio may be of interest to those discriminating members who like to extract the maximum amount of safety and comfort from their surroundings. At first we used a modified Scottish technique, taking tent, air mattresses, primus and paraffin (weighing 30 lb. or so for a party of three), as one would in a bothyless area of the Highlands. After a few dismal experiences of camping in thick wet bush we realised that a technique applicable to bare windswept moorlands was not efficient in the British Columbian Congo. It was L. O. Brown, who combined a love of mountaineering with an aversion for personal discomfort and danger, who discovered that the key to success lay in mastery of bush travel, after the manner of prospectors and trappers. Men of that ilk had penetrated into all the remote corners of the West long before the time of Thos. Black & Sons (Greenock) Ltd. Accordingly we substituted for the articles just mentioned a light felling-axe, some big nails, cord and a sheet of thick polythene weighing about 10 lb. in all. In the worst possible conditions of wind and rain our standard practice was to travel lightly clad, making no attempt to keep dry. When the time came for the midday halt a large fire was kindled from split cedar logs which are dry in the centre and easily split further into fine spills with a sheath knife. The heat from a fire kindled by the pyromaniacal Brown would have us dried out in half an hour and we were able to enjoy our meal in comfort and unravel over the coffee complicated theological questions for the benefit of D. Moore, who was interested in such things.

The afternoon march was broken for a leisurely tea during which we might make and enjoy a few scones. A full hour before dusk we stopped for the day and set to work with the axe. A few small pine trees were felled, branches stripped off and the trunks used to make the framework of a lean-to between two standing trees with its back into the wind. The use of cord and nails speeded assembly. The polythene sheet with superimposed branches made the roof, and the best branches were reserved for a mattress a couple of feet thick on the floor. A large fire dried out this micro-environment within half an hour and the heat also excluded mosquitoes, if present. We once survived a week of typical wet west coast weather in this fashion, travelling every day without experiencing any real discomfort. In winter this technique works even better; this is often the preferred season for travel as the unevenness of the forest floor is smoothed out by heavy snow, and

lakes and rivers, being frozen, allow forest-free progress. Once the break with conventional camping had been made the eye very quickly became accustomed to picking out the best sheltered sites for the quick construction of micro-environments.

Having abundant fuel eased the catering problem too. Long-cooking foods such as dried peas, beans, rice, flour, spaghetti, dried fruit and so on could be included as easily carried inexpensive articles which could extend the range of a party without recourse to specialised rations. We baked on occasions, and Moore made a few pounds of jam one off-day.

The bush itself has been adequately described and praised elsewhere (Smart, 1958). One quickly developed a connoisseur's interest in specially difficult stretches; areas of old fires, beaver swamps, avalanche débris, scrub alder, devil's club, or thick secondary growths of pine were particularly stimulating and a mixture of the lot, once savoured, was never forgotten. The trick was to take one's time. I remember on one occasion crawling leisurely on all fours through a thicket of jack pine while we were absorbed in an interesting discussion on the construction of sewage systems in mediæval Scottish castles. Rivers were a big problem. Some were possible to ford with the help of a pole. Sometimes a massive fallen tree had formed a bridge across which it was possible to crawl. At times parties have had to fell their own tree. On flatter stretches it is often best to get into a stream and walk along its bed, as this is pleasanter than the jungle on either side and cools the feet as well. The same technique applies to lake shores where a pole is of help in negotiating rocky stretches.

Eventually the tree line is reached somewhere in the region of 6000 feet. The flower-covered Alp-lands of the transition zone is the most lovely region of all, and it is here that the base camp lean-to is built in a clump of trees by a babbling brook. The tree line is not abrupt and it is usually possible to find small clumps of trees up to around 7000 feet which can serve as a high camp for the snatching of a particular peak. We once put up such a camp in a thicket of stunted trees on a steep slope by the snout of a hanging glacier in conditions of wind, rain and sleet which would have been disagreeable to a tent-dependent party but which were extremely comfortable with lean-to and fire. The next day we snatched our peak with only 4000 feet of climbing.

The amount of time spent in the bush can be abbreviated by the use of aircraft, which are reasonably cheap and can save days and weeks of approach march. They require a lake to land on and this convenience may not be satisfactorily placed. Sometimes a lake or reasonably navigable river leads into the heart of a

mountain system in which case a canoe can be a useful and picturesque method of travel. Where the current is too swift for paddling, the canoe can be tracked upstream by attaching a rope bow and stern and flying it against the current like a kite. A canoe enables a party to take larger supplies of food and such articles as a saw, pliers, hammer and other useful odds and ends one would never dream of carrying. To really enjoy this type of travelling it is necessary to have plenty of time, which is one of the most expensive luxuries and only available to bums and millionaires, neither of whom really know how to use it.

Living off the land is not really practicable as game is only occasionally encountered. Sometimes the reverse occurs—animals raid the party's food supplies. Food dumps are best left suspended from tripods or boughs of trees. A party of prospectors we once met had just had their camp raided, during a short absence, by a grizzly bear (*ursa horribilis*), which had rent their tent asunder and bitten holes in all their tinned food (so long and strong were the teeth of this marauding bruin). Fishing is not a reliable means of acquiring food; at least so it proved with us, who had D. Moore (*homo horribilis*) as our expedition fisherman.

There is a particular area in Western Canada which I hope to go to some time in the future with three or four good friends. We shall fly into a certain lake with a couple of canoes some time in July, spend that month and the next travelling the Alp-lands, crossing passes and climbing only the most æsthetically appealing peaks by their most elegant and well-proportioned routes. We shall adapt ourselves to the country, living in maximum comfort and making our ascents by the artistic use of natural cover. We shall have time to look at the animals, inspect the flowers, paint and photograph and savour our malt whisky leisurely at sundown. Some time in September when the autumn colours of the sumac poplar and maple are at their best we shall canoe out down a river which, although it looks navigable on the map, may nevertheless take two or three weeks to negotiate. As it will be impossible for any outsider to check the details, the stories told by the party will immortalise the expedition.

REFERENCE

- SMART, I. H. M. (1958). 'Chilko Lake, 1957,' in *Journal of the Canadian Alpine Club* for 1958.





THE 1961 J.M.C.S. EXPEDITION TO THE SOUTH STAUNINGS ALPS

By James Clarkson

IN July and August of 1961 a J.M.C.S. party was in the South Staunings Alps of North-East Greenland. The expedition was organised and led by James Clarkson, and the other members were Howard Brunton (Deputy Leader), Cyril Levene (Doctor) and Messrs Ian Douglas, Gwyn Evans, Michael Fleming, Graham Hendry, Keith Murray and Raymond Tanton. All are members of the J.M.C.S. Edinburgh Section with the exception of Tanton (London Section), Evans and Levene.

The expedition flew to Greenland and landed at the airfield at Mestersvig on 8th July. Arrangements were made for a drop of equipment and food by parachute at a selected locality of the Bjornbos Glacier, 70 miles to the south, and the party then set out on foot. Initially, the weather was poor, and progress was hampered by soft snow on the 4000-foot Skel Col. Thereafter the journey was mainly over the easy tundra of the Schuchert Valley, interspersed with sections of rough moraine. During one very difficult river crossing, Evans lost one of his boots but he carried on wearing one plimsoll and one boot. He later accomplished a fair number of climbs using boots borrowed from other members of the party. By 16th July the base camp had been established at a height of 2700 feet on the Bjornbos Glacier.

During a week at base, first ascents were made of several rock peaks. On 21st July a party of four, led by Brunton, set out on skis to attempt a crossing of the range to Alpe Fjord, 30 miles to the north. An ice-col was discovered at the head of the Main Glacier and, on the north side, beautiful snow slopes stretched for about 10 miles to the chaotic ice-falls of the Spaerre Glacier. These presented considerable difficulties and two of the party had narrow escapes from crevasses. After five hard days the party reached Alpe Fjord, later returning by the same route.

Meanwhile, the climbing party camped on the Mercury Glacier, a southern branch of the Bjornbos Glacier. Snow conditions were rather poor, but five mountains were climbed including the principal rock peak which was named The Citadel. The Alpe Fjord party arrived back on 31st July, and next day the expedition moved to the Jupiter Glacier which leads to the highest and most difficult peaks of the South Staunings. With colder nights, the snow conditions became perfect and much excellent climbing was accomplished. One party climbed the highest peak in the area

OPPOSITE: The 1961 J.M.C.S. Expedition to Greenland. *Upper*—Tent Peak (left) and Wedge Peak (centre) from Jupiter Glacier icefall. Route up Wedge Peak lies near sunlit rib directly below summit. (*H. Brunton*). *Lower*—On the Bjornbos Glacier. The central peak in the background is Sentinel. (*J. Clarkson*)

which was named Prometheus and found to be 8600 feet high. The most difficult mountain climbed was named The Wedge Peak, and this ascent is described below by Keith Murray. The climb involved 12 hours of severe rock climbing on the almost vertical north face, the party being away from camp for a full 24 hours. In all, a total of 24 virgin peaks were climbed.

The walk out was started on 9th August and the entire party had returned to Mestersvig without incident by 15th August. The expedition flew back to Iceland for home on 18th August.

After the first few days the expedition was favoured by perfect weather and this contributed greatly to the large amount of climbing and exploration achieved. The rations, based on a standard 2 lb. per man per day, together with about 70 lb. of luxury food, proved adequate and varied, and all members of the party enjoyed excellent health. Invaluable assistance was received from the Danish authorities in Mestersvig, in particular from the Northern Mining Company.

Two members of the expedition give an account of their experiences below. After that follows a list of the peaks climbed.

The Journey from Concordia to Alpe Fjord

After two days at Base Camp to find our 'ice-legs,' Brunton, Tanton, Hendry and I set off with 12 days' food to look for a route over the Staunings watershed down to Alpe Fjord. At first the Main Glacier rose innocuously, allowing good progress on skis, but we soon entered a crevassed area where we had to rope up. Hendry was speedily relegated to the rear, for his extra weight ruined the snow bridges beyond repair. This *I'm-all-right-Jack* procedure worked well; we fairy-floated over crevasses, then paused to haul Hendry out. We suggested that if he moderated his language he might not melt the bridges. After one short, and one long, day's travel we camped below the watershed dividing the North and South Staunings.

We had a choice of several cols, some easy, some more difficult. After consulting our air photographs, we rather optimistically floundered up the easiest one. The general angle was no more than 55 degrees and there was no real difficulty. A couple of hours' struggle up thigh-deep snow showed us that the other side was a gentle slope of some 2 miles, twisting right into the Spaerre Glacier. From a small peak by the col we had a magnificent view of the Staunings, and saw that our slope of descent would lead into a vast snow basin some 4 miles long by 3 wide. We galumphed back to the col, strapped on our skis and pointed them downhill. The basin was indeed a skier's paradise—long undulating slopes with an inch of icing sugar on firm crust, as smooth as glass. We named it the Sugar Bowl. We covered 6 miles from the col in about 45 minutes, and pitched camp as the midnight sun transformed it to a bowl of blood.

Next day, we came to a badly-crevassed area. The poorest skier, I was towed along behind like a guard's van on a switchback. We were

soon forced off to the side of the glacier but, keeping to the right, were able to get on to the ridge separating the Spærre and Duart glacier systems. Here Tanton and Brunton tried a couple of crevasses; Ray supported himself on chest and arms, but Howard's sole support was his 60 lb. pack jammed in the jaws of the crevasse. With admirable aplomb he asked 'Would you mind extricating me from this horrid hole?' Then, to make himself clear to the Edinburgh member, added 'Will ye pu' this — pack aff ma heid!'

Shortly after the glaciers' confluence we came to dry ice, dumped our invaluable skis and made for the tantalisingly close Alpe Fjord. However, before reaching it the glacier dropped into a chaotic ice-fall. We were eventually forced into a vile ablation valley on its true right, filled with ice, mud and scree; we took $5\frac{1}{2}$ hours to cover 1 mile. At last we emerged on to a heathy slope, overpowering in its smell of fresh vegetation. This led down easily to Dammen, at the head of the fjord.

We were astonished to find an apparently fresh vibram print on the moraine; on closer inspection it was found to contain a layer of moss. It must have been made by a member of Sir John Hunt's expedition the previous year—none of us had ever heard that the Abominable Snowman wore vibrams!

On our return we retraced our steps up the Sugar Bowl, examining a not very practicable col over to the Princessa Glacier before recrossing Main Col. The crossing had been a great success, taking 10 days, and we were all ready to move up the Jupiter Glacier for more climbing.

MICHAEL FLEMING.

The North Face of the Wedge Peak

We had intended to go up a couloir to within 500 ft. of the top and thence to the summit by the friendly-looking East ridge.

I shed my skis at the bergschrund and waited for Mike Fleming, who was feeling lazy and depressed, and kept losing a ski.

The couloir which we, in our optimism, had welcomed, was throwing stones like Gimmer at Whitsun, and was clearly out of the question, but to the right of it was the almost vertical North face which offered, if not a route to the top, at least some fine gymnastics. It rose in pillar after pillar, dominating the whole of the upper basin of the Jupiter Glacier.

I suggested all sorts of interesting and sporting routes on the lower part of the face but I received no encouragement, and the notorious pipe was produced as a weapon against my enthusiasm. Undeterred, I tied on, hacked my way through a bergschrund, cramponed up 50 ft. of 60-degree snow-ice and belayed.

Fleming followed, muttering about how he had just returned from 10 days' 'arduous travel' (to Alpe Fjord). He belayed and I pranced up to the first gangway. Surprise!—surprise!; a good Severe; plenty of room for the feet but a smooth bulging wall above. Fleming arrived, thoroughly converted, and was just about to lead through when a tiny pebble exploded at our feet into a puff of sulphurous dust. My turn to hesitate. But

Fleming was now keen and optimistic. 'I'll just try this pitch,' he said, 'and if any more fall we'll abseil off.' No more fell until it was much too late to turn back and so Fleming disappeared, after a struggle, over a bulging chock-stone. This was harder, but the rock was beautiful rough granite and a delight to climb. After this we both knew we were making for the top and it went with a swing until, after 350 ft. of Severe rock with occasional V.S. moves, we arrived at a small snowfield which gave out on to a horizontal scree ledge. Rather than fetch out the axes I cut steps with my peg-hammer, an interesting experience but a ridiculous waste of time. In a lather of sweat I reached the ledge, which seemed to peter out 100 ft. on either side, and which was overhung by the bulging columns of the upper face. I belayed. In the words of Buhl: 'A splendid place to spend the night'; only in Greenland there is no night. Fleming came up and traversed left to the end of the world, where he tied on and hopefully whispered, 'your lead,' lighting his pipe in preparation for the long wait.

I wandered aimlessly on a series of disconnected holds, before finally coming to rest in a sentry box. From here the only obvious route was down, but Fleming dumped the sac and disappeared up a narrow almost invisible crack between two pillars. I gripped the rope and arched my back, waiting for the fall, but the rope continued to pay out sweetly until I was obliged to shout, '10 ft., Mike!' No reply; it was one of those blind corners. The rope went tight and then Fleming's hat floated gently down like an Autumn leaf. I waited for him to follow but the rope grew tighter and tighter and so I went on. The crack widened out into a chimney which passed through various degrees of severity to the impossible, where I met Fleming peacefully smoking his pipe, his legs dangling.

On the left was another chimney which he thought would go, but the intervening rib was smooth, holdless and horribly bulging. I ventured a few feet before retreating. It might go with a peg-runner—but it was his turn, so I tied on. 'I can see a rugosity,' he shouted, banging in his favourite peg. I saw his feet beginning to quiver—a muttered curse—a quick, desperate move—a sigh of relief, and he was in the chimney. He bombed up, and tied on. Pocketing pride, I took a tight rope and swung across, leaving his peg like a thorn in the side of the mountain.

Somehow we knew that that was the crux. The angle eased a little, and rope lengths followed up incredibly deep chimneys. The technical difficulty was not more than Severe and this was perhaps the finest part of the climb. Safely wedged, a vertical 1000 ft. above the glacier, we admired the midnight sun dipping behind the spires of the North Staunings. But it was late in the season and the sun disappeared completely for a few hours. The rock which had been pink and warm became, in an instant, cold, grey and repellent. We noticed for the first time the tongues of ice in the back of every chimney, and at the belays the fever of finger and toe-wagging set in.

A final V.S. chimney with an awkward pull brought us on to the West ridge at the foot of the final tower, 200 ft. from the summit. We could now look down the South face and the West ridge. Neither seemed easy, the former's steep boiler plates just tending to overhang at the top, and

the latter was long and pinnacled, with no easy traverse lines and the nagging possibility of an impossible gendarme.

The way ahead was obvious though not easy. The final smooth wall was split from top to bottom by a great crack which seemed to lean right out over the North face, reminiscent of Curving Crack on 'Cloggy.' After about 20 ft., the crack opened out into a chimney, and progress was by bridging and finally backing. We took coils for the last 100 ft. of easy rocks, arriving at the small table-top summit with just enough energy to build a cairn. It was 4.30 A.M., and we had been 11½ hours on the face. After a hurried meal, we took a round of pictures, and prepared for the weary descent.

Hoping that the cold would have stopped the stonefalls in the couloir, we made for the route by which we had meant to ascend. The east ridge was comparatively easy, but it gave out within 150 ft. of the top, on to a sickening 70-degree slope of brittle ice. We both had 12-point Grivel crampons, but the ice was so hard that it was impossible to drive in even the first two points. The prospect of 2500 ft. of step cutting was not inviting, especially as the ice broke under the axe into great flakes about two feet square and three inches thick which hurtled meaningly down the couloir. We tried ice-pegs but the ice just shattered; we searched for cracks in the rocks above without success; we considered roping down the way we had come. In our despair we even momentarily thought of glissading the whole length of the gully. But finally, we were obliged to face facts and cut through to firm ice at every step, moving singly and taking direct belays round the pick of the axe, driven in hard. Five long hours and 300 short feet later, we reached the top of the couloir, a mere 2000 feet from our skis. But here, fate took a hand, and we were delivered. The easy ridge of Tent Peak was only a couple of rope lengths away. We reached it without undue difficulty, and, curbing the natural desire to run down at high speed, we moved slowly and deliberately, knowing ourselves to be tired and getting careless.

The overhanging bergschrund was an easy jump going back, but ski-ing down the glacier was a seemingly endless trial, and we were not sorry to see the tents. We arrived back in camp at midday.

KEITH MURRAY.

List of Peaks Climbed

Peaks are classified according to the French system. Times given are for ascent only and do not include glacier approaches to foot, which took up to 3½ hours. Most of heights are by aneroid.

Peaks climbed from Base Camp at Concordia on Bjornbos Glacier—

(1) HERMITAGE. 6700 ft. S.E. ridge from Mars Glacier. 7¾ hours A.D. 18th July (Clarkson, Levene, Douglas & Tanton). (2) KILROY. 5000 ft. N. buttress from foot of Demos Glacier. 8 hours D. 18th July (Murray & Fleming). (3) BASTILLE. 6000 ft. N. face from Bjornbos Glacier. 7½ hours P.D. 19th July (Brunton, Murray, Hendry & Fleming). (4)

SENTINEL. 7200 ft. S.E. ridge from Pegasus Glacier. $3\frac{3}{4}$ hours F. 20th July (Tanton, Evans, Clarkson & Douglas). (5) PISA. 4300 ft. N.E. spur from Bjornbos Glacier. $6\frac{1}{2}$ hours D. 21st July (Murray & Clarkson).

Peaks climbed from Mercury Glacier Camp—

(6) MIDNIGHT PEAK. 5500 ft. N.E. ridge. 3 hours P.D. 23rd July (Clarkson, Levene, Douglas & Evans). (7) CITADEL. 6500 ft. S. face. $3\frac{1}{2}$ hours P.D. 24th July (Murray, Levene, Clarkson & Douglas). (8) MACLEAR. 6200 ft. S. face. 3 hours P.D. 27th July (Murray, Evans & Levene). (9) HERMES. 6300 ft. N.E. face. $2\frac{1}{4}$ hours P.D. 28th July (Clarkson, Murray & Douglas). (10) First Point of ARIES. 6150 ft. W. ridge. $3\frac{1}{4}$ hours P.D. 29th July (Murray, Evans, Douglas & Clarkson).

Peak climbed during trip to Alpe Fjord—

(11) DARIEN. 6500 ft. Climbed from Main Col. 20 minutes F. 23rd July (Brunton, Hendry, Tanton & Fleming).

Peaks climbed from Jupiter Glacier Camp—

(12) EDINBURGH. 6200 ft. S.E. ridge. $4\frac{1}{2}$ hours P.D. 2nd August (Douglas, Clarkson, Fleming & Murray). (13) ZEUS. 5900 ft. W. ridge. $5\frac{1}{4}$ hours P.D. 2nd August (Brunton, Levene, Hendry & Tanton). (14) CULROSS. 6600 ft. (15) DOLLAR. 6800 ft. Fine snow and ice traverse of ridge separating Vigo and Ursus Minor Glaciers. $4\frac{1}{4}$ hours to Dollar A.D. 3rd August (Brunton & Clarkson). (16) DAEDALUS. 6700 ft. S.W. ridge. $4\frac{3}{4}$ hours F. 3rd August (Hendry & Tanton). (17) DINOSAUR (North Summit). 6000 ft. N. ridge. $2\frac{1}{2}$ hours A.D. 3rd August (Fleming & Murray). (18) NEVIS. 6800 ft. N. spur. $2\frac{3}{4}$ hours P.D. 4th August (Brunton & Clarkson). (19) PROMETHEUS. 8600 ft. and highest peak of South Staunings. S. face. $3\frac{3}{4}$ hours P.D. 4th August (Tanton, Fleming, Levene & Hendry). (20) BLAIR. 7000 ft. E. face. $4\frac{1}{4}$ hours P.D. 4th August (Murray & Douglas). (21) TENT PEAK. 7250 ft. E. ridge. $2\frac{3}{4}$ hours P.D. 6th August (Brunton & Clarkson). (22) WEDGE PEAK (EILEAN DONAN). 7400 ft. N. face. $11\frac{1}{2}$ hours T.D. Serious and sustained climb on excellent rock. 6th August (Murray & Fleming). (23) KIRRIEMUIR. 6600 ft. S.E. ridge. $4\frac{1}{2}$ hours P.D. 6th August (Tanton, Douglas, Hendry & Levene). (24) TANTALUS. 8300 ft. and second highest peak of South Staunings. S. face. $3\frac{1}{2}$ hours P.D. 7th August (Clarkson, Brunton & Hendry).

A Dream

Sweating up the windless slope 'neath a blazing sun,
Crouching 'gainst the wintry blast, driving snow and hail;
Still, whate'er befall us, yet the top is won. . . .
Heartened by our comrades, who would dare to fail?

Safe at home in comfort, dreaming by the fire
Of that perfect hill and day, crown of our desire.

STUART JACK.

THE MATTERHORN NORTH FACE

By Tom Carruthers, J.M.C.S.

THE Matterhorn North Face is reckoned one of the hardest of the six great North Faces of the Alps. Its reputation is gained not so much by technical difficulty, as by the objective dangers of falling stones and broken rock. The Eiger receives more publicity and is, I think, a more difficult climb, but the Matterhorn North Face is a close runner-up, if not in popularity, certainly in the risk of sudden storm and stonefalls.

On this face, pitons do not hold on the friable rock; one seeks security rather than a way through impossible steepness. From the glacier below, it is a giant triangle of rock, ice and snow, 3600 feet high from base to apex.

Towards the end of August, I found myself in Zermatt, surrounded by magnificent peaks, and at the beginning of a settled period of weather, with no partner for my rope.

Perhaps it was fate which brought us together. Brian Nally introduced himself in a cheery Cockney accent. We shook hands, sat down at the table and started drinking tea and talked of mountains. He had just returned from a solo ascent of the Lyskamm North Face. I found out that he was a dedicated North Face man. His two previous attempts on the Matterhorn North Face had ended abruptly in the easier lower third. He asked me to join him in another attempt. I thought it over for a day, lying out in the meadow beside the hotel. I would have liked more training, but I decided there and then that it had to be done immediately before the weather broke down. To see if we would work well together, we decided to climb the Zmutt ridge the next day. We did work well together, and the following day we were at the Belvedere prepared for the North Face.

Though unsuccessful attempts had been made as far back as 1923, the Schmid brothers of Munich succeeded in climbing this face in 1931. One British rope earlier in 1961 had ended up on the Hornli ridge. Could we, two unknown climbers, succeed?

We had little sleep that evening for thinking of what the morrow would bring. An Edinburgh 'friend' (Hendry, I think they call him) woke us up: 'I thought you chaps were getting up at midnight.' It was now 12.45 A.M. (He only did this because I was a Glaswegian!) Well, we did get up. Our reward was a cold, clear, still, moonlit morning.

We had a short breakfast and quickly checked to see if everything had been packed: five crabs each, four screw ice pitons, four rock

pitons, our cramponing spike, rope, duvet jackets, long pants, extra gloves, food. Yes, everything was there. The sacks didn't feel too heavy. We strapped on our crampons and stumbled off. A quick look at our watch—a quarter to two: the first hour had passed quickly.

We passed silently along below the séracs which protect the North Face. Then, finding a weakness, we made our way up a rocky spur that led us to a sheet of high-angled ice which we treated with great respect. It was cold, very cold. We weren't sure of the way here. Our three old photographs of the face now seemed suddenly inadequate. The route over the bergschrund should have been reconnoitred the previous day; this would have saved us hours, as we later found out. An hour after leaving the hut, we crossed the great bergschrund at a point which we thought would take us out at the bottom of the great snow ramp. Belayed by Nally I crawled on my stomach over a very delicate bridge. In front of me now was the upper lip of the bergschrund. It was vertical, and I was glad of the screw pitons as I hacked my way up this, the first of the problems.

We had been deceived by the greatly foreshortened view we had of the mountain from the glacier and now found ourselves on a short snow ramp left of our proper route. Mounting this on crampons, we made our way steadily to its upper edge. Here we were engaged in a time-consuming traverse over ribbons of ice and broken rock. Every step had to be cut in iron-hard ice and every inch battled for on crumbling rock. At last we gained our objective. Above us the great snow ramp rose into the middle of the face. It looked a short distance to the top but rope length followed rope length, and hour after hour. On this 60-degree ice-slope, steps would have been desirable but no step was cut: we wanted to conserve our energy. The spike and crampon technique worked admirably on the crisp snow. Changing belays on the upper part of this ramp, I was silently angry with myself when, fumbling with thick woollen gloves, I dropped the ice-peg I had been using as a hand spike. We looked at each other, but not a word was spoken. Fourteen hours from the hut (double what we had estimated) saw us at the uppermost edge of this great ramp.

Below us, the void widened as we looked down the unblemished expanse of snow. What unrelenting steepness and evenness of gradient, what wonderful exposure! No overhangs and intervening bumps as on a rock face: just a smooth slab of ice going down to the gaping mouth of the bergschrund and the scarred glacier. Now we began to traverse right, towards the couloir which is the key to the middle section of the North Face.





Soon after we started the traverse, a rock avalanche which we heard but could not see properly, went crashing down the couloir and sent a cloud of mingled rock and snow billowing upwards. The thought of entering this couloir after having seen such a cannonade was not in the least inviting. We were determined to go on and thoughts of turning back never once entered our heads: a retreat from this face would be a terrifying experience.

Stones fell, and the whistling and whirring of the near misses was worse than the solid clatter of one ricocheting off our fibreglass domes. My helmet, which I bought second hand from an Austrian climber, had been up the face on two previous occasions, so safety on a third attempt was, I felt, guaranteed.

The painfully slow traverse from the snow ramp to the bottom of the couloir continued over ribbons of ice and crumbling rock, till, at last, we could see this ill-defined recession stretching upwards. The lower section of the face is steep, the middle third is almost vertical, the upper part lies back but still remains steep. It was 3 o'clock in the afternoon when we had started the traverse and now another 2 hours had melted away in the undivided concentration of cutting steps on glass-hard ice and traversing unbelievably broken rock to gain the bottom of the couloir. This was 2 hours with no upward progress. Already the last tourist and the last guided party had made their way down the Hornli Ridge. We now felt quite alone on this huge face.

Now we could at last go up. We just continued with our unexciting and patient work. The terrain in this middle section reminded me of a winter ascent of the Buachaille's North Face route; but I longed for Glen Coe's stable rock! It was late in the day and we were both tired with the endless step-cutting and the unnerving climbing over rock blocks which were simply balanced on top of each other. At five in the evening we decided it was time to look for a bivouac spot. Our hope of climbing the face in a day had been shattered. We had brought the minimum amount of bivouac equipment to keep our packs light, for we hadn't allowed for the faulty route-finding and the unexpected large areas of ice we had encountered.

The face is not as vertical as those in the Dolomites but is every bit as exposed. Never a ledge. . . . Pitch followed pitch, but always those illusory little platforms receded as we approached them. The couloir went up in one long ribbon of ice broken here and there by bands of shattered rock. One hour after we began our search and at a height slightly below the level of the Solvay Hut (which was far to our left) we found a spot. It was a position on the face rather than a site. Two knobs of rock sticking out of a

slab of ice. . . . Here at least we could attach ourselves for the night. Clearing away loose snow, we hammered in four pitons. We had no great faith in these pitons, for none of them went into the cracks more than half an inch. Reclining, and partly suspended by the ropes attached to the pitons, we arranged our bivouac on the island. We looked forward to the warmth of our duvet jackets and long woollies. Our position was so precarious we had to pull our underpants over the top of our breeches; our boots were removed and hung from the pitons. The warmth of our down jackets didn't last long. Soon the cold ate into our bones and we sat shivering until the ice melted on our stove. Life now revolved round the flickering flames; our parched mouths waited patiently for the promised tea. Already the sky had darkened and the dancing stars had begun their evening performance. Far below, the lights of Zermatt glittered in competition, spread like a spider's web in the dark valley. So painfully prepared, the tea was at last ready. Nally, lifting the steaming cup, let out a yell as the heat suddenly penetrated his frozen fingers and dropped it. Luckily, the mug landed on his rucksack but the tea was lost. No oath, no word was exchanged. We each ate our dry choking supper in silence.

About 8 o'clock we drew our sacks over our feet, plunged our hands into our pockets, closed our eyes and *thought* of sleep. It was a long cold night.

On our bed of stone, leaning against the great wall facing empty space, we had watched the sun fade over the horizon on our left. Now we waited for its return on our right, after its voyage beneath this shield of scattered diamonds. We could not move till it came.

At last it came. This face only enjoys the sun for one hour in the morning. We banged our frozen boots against the rocks to soften them. How we savoured the heat! The stove worked perfectly and soon a steaming mug of porridge and concentrated fudge was being passed, this time with gloved hands, between us. With a good Scottish breakfast inside us we set off at 7 A.M. on our second day. I climbed 100 feet up mixed rock and ice. Then Brian joined me and followed on. This manoeuvre was repeated the rest of the day, a continual alternation of solitude and company.

On the face we found no single definite pitch; everything is exactly like everything else. We simply wandered here and there choosing the best or easiest line over the unrelenting steep slopes. There is no security on this climb. We used piton belays purely for psychological reasons.

Two rope lengths on, we could see the Solvay Hut below us. Above the hut we could see the tourists making their way up and down the Hornli Ridge. We exchanged yells and whistles, enjoying

their company but not their stones. We were now nearing the end of this couloir and it was here that our climb almost ended in disaster. Nally had climbed above me on the rocks to avoid a very difficult move up an overhanging corner. To gain the couloir again he started a rightward traverse. Our position was dangerous. My belay was hopeless (the piton I had was later removed by hand, like most of our belays) and the rock terribly broken, so I asked Nally if he could find a reasonably sound crack for a piton runner. Luckily, he found one, planted a piton, and moved on. Twenty feet farther to his right, attempting to regain the ice-couloir he slipped. I was whipped off my stance and the two of us hung suspended from the piton. With unbelievable luck I managed to scramble back on to my crumbling ledge and Brian regained the ice and cut himself a generous stance. His holds had given way; rock dust hung all about us. Only three rope lengths after that incident, I took off my crampons at a difficult rock pitch and hung them from my harness. Stepping up on a high hold, my knee knocked the left crampon from my rope and down it went, clanging and bouncing in a high arc. What a loss! The ice seemed much more difficult now. Still we continued to make good progress. We reached the end of the great couloir, but then we found that we had followed it too far to the left: we should have broken right 200 feet below, to gain a buttress running upwards to the summit slopes. This, the second route-finding mistake, gave us another difficult and time-consuming traverse. The effort was unrelenting, if nowhere extreme. Never a quarter of an hour's respite, never five minutes, never a single minute. Always slabs, cracked and crumbling, broken and blasted rock, glued with ice and glazed with verglas. During the climb it never failed to amaze us how the mountain has survived to exist in such a beautiful form. Everything is loose and tumbles down at the least provocation.

Above me now, and to my right, Nally shouted 'I can see the cross on the summit.' I had a wonderful feeling of relief; we had almost done it! The going was easier now but we were very tired and took great care on the last pitches. Short steep buttresses of rock alternated with sloping shelves of powder snow on ice. The approach to the summit was pleasant. I sensed the two ridges closing in on me and the chocolate wrappings told us we were nearly there. I stepped on to the summit and as Nally came up to join me we met the sun's rays; a fine finish to the two days' climbing. It was a quarter to six as we sat on the crest; the North Face dropped sharply away at our feet. It had been a disagreeable climb and yet what a splendid climb! I enjoyed every minute of it.

KINDRED CLUBS

We referred some time ago to Dr Bell's 'valuable surveys of other Scottish Clubs, whether suitably pedigreed or not.' These surveys appeared at the end of the war (*S.M.C.J.* (1945 and 1946), xxiii, 252, 295) and were largely historical. Most of the clubs have survived and many more have split or budded off or have spontaneously generated themselves (proof of vitality not of discord; preserve us from the Organiser's finger-wagging uniformity!). And they alter. One could get a Tiresian satisfaction from contemplating the fates of clubs. Of those born in the consulting-room; and of those others—healthy in red-necked youth—growing white-collared with age, and of their gallant and unsuccessful attempts to wrench that hoary harness off—and then to justify it. We hope to invite, from time to time, clubs to send us a 'profile' of themselves—as they are (and what they were) and as they hope they appear. The choice will be entirely at random and their comments, gentlemanly or otherwise, printed as they send, or allow, them. This is not to make an exhibition of specimens. (For what more curious zoo could there be than the S.M.C., that shriek-encrusted cliff of every kind of bird from the Glib-tongued Tea-stirrer to the Great Whooping Slabkeelie. . . .?) It is merely to refresh these pages now and again with a breath of nice uncomplicated assemblages of climbers who do not need Trusts, or Expeditions, or East, West, North and South Club Rooms (even though they may be clamorously and tiresomely righteous about doing without such things).

Firstly, we have the Etchachan Club. And we, Editor Adam Watson and Contributor Mr Smith, all feel that the best thing is to reprint bits of the latter's wry summation from the article *TWENTY-ONE YEARS ON* in the *Etchachan Club Journal* of 1959. So here it is, re-presented and condensed. There is much we have had to leave out. There is no mention of the library, the indoor meets or even that it is a mixed club. You should read the full thing in its salty original.

THE ETCHACHAN CLUB

Although never guilty as a club of any leanings toward the pretension which prevails in much that makes up the climbing scene, we are at this stage in our life made so much more aware of what has gone before that it would be sacrilegious if we did not grasp the chance for a reasonable show of pride, a bit of belated back-slapping in public, as it were.

How and why then did it all start? How, as a club, do we fit into the general background of Scottish mountaineering? We can delve, but not too deeply. The truth perhaps lies in the aphorism that 'Youth is never at peace with Age.'

Prior to the mid-twenties, mountaineering clubs in Scotland were limited to the older-established bodies in the four principal cities: S.M.C., Cairngorm Club, Dundee Rambling Club and L.S.C.C., all full of professional men and women, relatively expensive and, although active, rather staid and conservative in outlook (peace be with you, I write of the

past!). The start to the gingering-up came in 1926 with the formation of the J.M.C.S., ostensibly a club within a club, providing its parent with trained material, but whose affiliations even to-day are slightly suspect. The Grampian Club was next in the field in 1927. Then in 1929 came the Ptarmigan Club of Glasgow, first of what could be called Clubs of the Depression, bringing with them breaths of fresh Arrochar and Trossachs air. The Tricouni and Creag Dhu Clubs followed in 1930. Here was no staidness, but apprentices and tradesmen with limited means and with unemployment dogging them, hitching and howffing, camping and climbing, and all with the Cobbler as their shrine. With these clubs was born the 'gangrel' spirit, the fun and toughness which has always been the essential background of the more go-ahead younger Scottish clubs.

In 1931 the Moray M.C. was formed—a club out of the blue, apparently with no links, a happy-family organisation built round strong personalities in a not very large, but progressive, county town, and having the northern Cairngorms as its spiritual home. Two years later saw the foundation of the Lomond M.C., the club which is perhaps the nearest in feeling and spirit to our own. Much the best organised of the younger clubs before the war, it had already run two bus meets to the Alps before the outbreak of hostilities.

In the four years before 1939 there had been a general upsurge in British climbing activity, and in Scotland the influence of the J.M.C.S. and the Creag Dhu was most marked. This period saw the formation in 1937 of two clubs in Dundee—the Corrie Club and the Dundee Branch of the Creag Dhu M.C. Though now defunct, both these clubs had spirit, the last anticipating the B.M.C.'s buying of Harrison's Rocks by acquiring a disused quarry on which it trained its young graduating members to the high standard required of them.

We are now at our own period in history. The Etchachan Club was founded in March 1938 by William Lawson, George Beck-Slinn and Garth Lorimer, the first a member of the S.M.C. and all of them members of the Cairngorm Club. In Past-President Beck-Slinn's own words (from the first number of our Journal) . . . 'Previous to that date there had only been one climbing club in Aberdeen, and it had long been felt by a band of enthusiasts that there was both scope and demand for another. The type of club envisaged was one which would be inexpensive and which would provide transport as near to the hills as roads permitted. However, nothing came of these dreams until we heard of the Lomond Mountaineering Club. This club had commenced by running motor lorries to climbing centres accessible from Glasgow. Members found their own accommodation—most of them camped—and they were completely free to climb when and where they wished. There was one strict rule—they must be back at the transport by the time set for the return journey.

'This was the type of club we wanted. We thereupon decided to call a meeting. At this meeting it was agreed that for a club on these lines to succeed, it must firstly be inexpensive; secondly, there must be the minimum of interference in the freedom of members to move and climb at will, but any tendency to climb in large parties would be discouraged;

and, finally, good co-operation would be necessary from members, especially as regards punctuality. The Lomond Club had so caught our fancy that we resolved to name our club in similar fashion. We would make the name a link with the Cairngorms, these grand hills so near our door. Many suggestions were made, but unfortunately these were not recorded. However, Loch Etchachan seemed to have the greatest appeal and a vote left the matter in no doubt. Henceforth we were the *Etchachan Club*.

'Within the month our membership was 24—not many, when one thinks of filling a 26- or 32-seater bus. Fortunately, we had as a last resort an old 14-seater bus. It was only used about twice, but the knowledge that it was available meant the success of many an enterprising meet.

'At our first A.G.M. the following motion was proposed: *That this Club approach the Cairngorm Club and suggest to them that the two clubs be amalgamated, the Etchachan Club to become the "Etchachan Section of the Cairngorm Club. . ."*' Thankfully, it was not to be . . . at this critical stage in our life the war intervened. The Club so nearly condemned to die in its youth had been spared.'

We soon began to lose members to the Forces, but our meets by private transport were not seriously curtailed until July 1940. Up till then, dates for our long day and week-end meets in the autumn, winter and spring months were chosen to coincide with the full moon, not by any ritualistic design but to ease the strain on drivers handling their vehicles on return journeys with blacked-out lights. After this date it became impossible to hire transport and the lesser hills received unprecedented attention by a now very small but enthusiastic group of members using public bus and train services. Holiday meets were generally held in the Cairngorms, and names seldom seen nowadays kept cropping up time and again on circulars for day meets: the Geallaig, Morven, the Buck of Cabrach, Kerloch, Cairn William and Tap o' North.

In January 1946 it became possible once more to hire transport and it was decided to revive meets on a pre-war scale. From that date the Club has made steady progress. Meets have been held monthly (sometimes twice monthly) and it says much for the spirit of members—more so in these days of private individual transport—that so few have been cancelled for lack of support. They have remained cheap, thus fulfilling one of the admirable objects of the Club laid down in true Aberdonian fashion by our founders. They have ranged from Longhaven in the east to Applecross in the west, from Inchnadamph in the north to Arrochar in the south. Most of those held farther afield have been chosen to cater for both the Salvationist and the Ultramontane, but it is far from being the case in the Club that the 'twain shall never meet'; the writer remembers with pleasure the enthusiasm and aplomb with which one member, well into his sixties and on rock for the first time in his life, tackled Scimitar Ridge and Morrison's Slabs at Longhaven on one of our instructional rock-climbing meets. These sea-cliff sorties have proved popular ventures at times when climbing in the corries is at its least pleasurable.

In 1954 we had much to do with the siting and building of the Hutchison Memorial Hut in Coire Etchachan, one of those three Cairngorm shelters

built by climbers for climbers and open to all. In 1956, after protracted negotiations and on receiving permission to instal a permanent heating stove, we agreed to act as custodians.

The Club Journal has been produced yearly since 1949. Contributions have always eschewed pretension, and even when writing of great climbs have never been guilty of lapsing into technicalities; humour, often of the broad and hard-hitting kind, has been the keynote of every issue. One fault may be cited against the Journal, however; it is too slim. One finds after a reading that one always wishes for more. What, may we ask, inhibits members from writing when we know they have things to write about and have the ability to write of them? [You may well ask, Mr Smith—HON. EDITOR, *S.M.C.J.*]

In the climbing field since the war, members have opened up the Cairngorms so that the area is no longer the Cinderella of climbing grounds, and have set up new routes in most of the climbing areas in Scotland. They have climbed in Europe, in Africa and the Himalaya, in the Antipodes and in the Canadian Rockies, in the Arctic and the Antarctic. All in all, the climbing history of the Club is one in which we should have a little pride.

On this note of excusable self-esteem it would seem fitting to sum-up, to assess our character. We could hardly be called a club of traditions—a club which pins its faith in youth must always be amenable to change. The only traditions we would care to admit having are that we have always been a little intolerant of efficiency, and that we feel we are members of the best kind of club—a club without pretensions, without factions, with no honorary members, no life-members, no junior or graduating members, no club song and no club tie (although from the dark past there sprang the Club Badge, over whose blue enamel and symmetrical axes we either show great fondness or at worst an amused and benign tolerance).

Membership has fluctuated, as expected in a club where the young are in the majority. Starting at 38 in 1938 it rose to 54 in 1940; from 68 in 1946 it rose to 115 in 1951, but from this peak there came a drop as emigration took its toll. Since then there has been a very slow decrease until in 1959 stability seems to have been reached at the 90 mark.

The Club has been true to its objects and the aspirations of its founders. If we present members hold to these ideals and transmit to future members the same enthusiasm which possessed the original happy band of eighteen, the future of the Club is assured and it will go on to its Jubilee achieving more and providing better things.

MALCOLM SMITH.

Another from the East (O picked quite at random!) is the Grampian Club. Messrs Maxwell and Hill draw the following modest picture of this most hospitable and benevolent group:—

THE GRAMPIAN CLUB

Following a letter to the local press by Robert Ower, the Grampian Club was founded on 19th January 1927. The membership of the Club

has been drawn mainly from Dundee and district; both men and women are admitted and the membership has gradually risen to the present figure of 140. New members serve a qualifying period of at least a year before advancing to full membership and during this time they must have some experience of winter climbing.

The Club is not so dependent for its well-being on the individual achievements of members so much as on corporate activities. Twelve Meets (10 day and 2 weekend) have been held annually since the formation, and have invariably been well supported. Its geographical location has enabled the Club to visit in day meets almost all mountain areas below the Great Glen—for example, in one year, meets have been held at Arrochar, Clachaig, Aviemore, Braemar and the 'home' glens—Clova, Isla and Shee. Weekend meets have been held as far away as Kinlochewe, Kintail, Aultguish, and we have even ventured into the Lake District. The Club has recently acquired a cottage in Glen Etive, now open as a mountain hut.

Monthly meetings are also held, at which illustrated lectures are given, covering the whole field of mountaineering.

Whilst the main object of the Club is to enable members to enjoy themselves on the hills, considerable attention has always been given to the developing of mountain craft in new members. Parties at meets are always made up to include both experienced and inexperienced climbers, so that the latter may benefit and gradually acquire mountaineering knowledge.

The Club has explored and classified rock climbs in Glen Clova and district. Six members have climbed all the Munros; of these three have also climbed all the Tops and two of the three all the 3000 ft. hills in England, Wales and Eire.

The Club has had the benefit of advice and encouragement from its Honorary Presidents, George R. Donald and the late J. B. Salmond, and hopes to continue its successful progress under the present incumbent, J. H. B. Bell.

E. M.

L. M. H.

Boulders and caves of Clova know the next Club well. Mr Gordon Joy sends us this account of a perilous metamorphosis into respectability, triumphantly achieved with the minimum of loss.

THE CARN DEARG MOUNTAINEERING CLUB

The wave of enthusiasm for outdoor life which ex-servicemen brought home with them after the war was reflected in the numbers of young people to whom the freedom of the hills was a welcome change from war-time restrictions.

Such a body of youthful enthusiasts could be found most weekends throughout the year in the Glen Clova area, using the old Youth Hostels bothies and 'howffs.' Among them were a number of regular 'week-enders' from Forfar and district, who soon discovered that their walk,

and climbs on the 'Braes of Angus' had merely whetted their appetites for the hills.

Mostly apprentices, and generally hard up, they could hitch-hike to other districts by way of a change at holidays, but for weekends they realised that the only feasible way to reach those places farther afield would be to organise and try to run buses regularly and cheaply.

Hoping, therefore, to interest others and gain their support, a meeting was held in the Rover Den, Forfar, on 15th June 1949. Those present decided to form a mountaineering club and, after some discussion, the name 'Carn Dearg' was adopted for the new club on account of its association with Glen Clova and the scene of their early rock climbs. Catering for a young membership, it was felt that a free and easy atmosphere should prevail instead of the formality of older established clubs. Annual membership, open to both sexes, was fixed at 5s., and to augment this income, a dance and sale of work were proposed. An attempt would be made to run buses every month as cheaply as possible.

At a second meeting it was decided that the first bus would run to the Lairig Ghru. Well attended, this trip was followed by other successful meets to 'The Cobbler,' Glencoe, the Cairngorms and Glen Esk. New members flowed in and the Club prospered.

At the A.G.M. Mike Sutherland was elected the Club's first President. On account of the encouragement and advice he had always given, Davie Glen was asked to be Hon. President, a post he held for a number of years, but which he has since relinquished. Mike's brother Ian was to be Meet Secretary, and as Bill Wyllie had been so energetic as Acting Secretary and Treasurer, he was asked to carry on the job officially.

Membership, which some had tried to limit, unsuccessfully, had by this time increased to such an extent that District Secretaries were required for Kirriemuir, Brechin and Dundee. In fact, the influx of Dundee members was to become so great that meetings had to be held in Dundee as well as in Forfar.

In January 1950 the Club applied for membership of the A.S.C.C. and were admitted in February the same year.

Attempts were being made all this time to obtain clubrooms in Forfar, but apart from one ruinous period when halls in East High Street were rented, most of the new Club's meetings were held in the Cyclists' Hall. Meets were invariably well attended and sometimes two buses were needed when there was a big turn-out.

However, with so many young people in the Club, conscription took a steady toll, and members were continually leaving for National Service. Of those who served with the R.A.F., some joined Mountain Rescue Units and gained considerable experience from which everyone benefited upon their return.

Having a mixed membership, it was not long before couples discovered mutual attractions, deserting the club to seek married bliss. Quite a number still keep contact with us and look forward to enrolling their offspring as 'juniors' in the future.

More recently a further depletion of members was narrowly averted

when *The Buggy* skidded and overturned on an icy road. Affectionately named, this converted ambulance was temporarily saved from the scrap heap by a clique of enthusiasts. It served them in fits and starts for a season, which included a successful holiday in Skye and the Western Highlands, before being written off as a total loss after the crash. Luckily, no one was seriously injured.

Numbers have therefore fluctuated over the years but have recently settled down to around 50, with the majority in Dundee.

Accounts of the earlier club meetings have been well recorded but a time arose when the numbers dwindled dangerously. Then the history became sketchy, and not until 1953, when a new group of enthusiasts from Dundee reinforced the few remaining Forfar and Brechin people, did the affairs of the club run more or less smoothly again. At this time, too, a move was made away from Forfar as headquarters of the Club. Since then the general meetings have been held in Dundee. They have been reduced in number and whereas three meets used to be selected at each Quarterly Meeting, a selection is now made for the whole year at the A.G.M.

Officials have always been difficult to come by but the policy has been to encourage newcomers to take office. With this object, office-bearers are changed yearly. The post of Secretary-Treasurer is the most arduous, and the club has been lucky to have had the able services of Bill Wyllie, Margaret Ellis and Fred Old, who have all served for longer spells. Of Past Presidents, Frank Anderson has been the most popular and frequent choice.

From hitch-hiking, bothy-ing and parading around in all manner of ex-Government surplus, now it seems that cars, mountain-tents and the latest Continental gear are the fashion. And somehow, nearly everyone seems to have acquired a camera and accessories. Membership, however, is still cheap at 10s. (since 1954), and the only restriction to membership is that prospective members should attend a minimum of three meets before they can be proposed. Monthly trips are still made to all the popular areas, and on holiday weekends to places as far flung as Ardgour, Torridon and Glen Affric. Members are allowed absolute freedom on meets, being asked only to fill in the logbook, and are relied upon to be punctual and take adequate precautions for safety. Guests, however, must always be accompanied by club members.

Activities vary from difficult routes on rock, snow and ice, through walking and ski-ing to canny saunters and sun-bathing! Any exploratory rock climbing has been largely confined to the Glen Clova area where a number of variations and new routes have been put up on the Red Craig.

As experience has been gained, small parties have holidayed in Norway, Austria, France and Switzerland, and this has encouraged others to follow, some with guides and some without. Two of our keenest members, having emigrated, now climb with the Alpine Club of New Zealand.

From the early days the club was aware of the necessity for organised rescue parties and, under the guidance of the ex-R.A.F. mountain rescue personnel, a team was formed and equipped. After training exercises and

first-aid classes it was placed at the disposal of the county police. A change, indeed, to co-operate with 'law and order'! Difficulties about transportation have been solved and now the team will turn out as part of the A.S.C.C. organisation.

Last year Dundee Roads Cycling Club offered us the use of their clubrooms in Dudhope Castle, where our members can now meet on Wednesday evenings. From time to time films and slides are shown, and efforts are being made to invite speakers. Social evenings, however, have to be planned with care so that they do not coincide with the practice nights of a local pipe band!

As yet, no library or journal exists, but having taken 12 years to settle in one place that's hardly surprising! The happy-go-lucky attitude which took the founder-members 'hitching' all over Scotland on the cheap has largely vanished, but their original principles of easy membership and freedom from restrictions are still adhered to. Although none of them are active members now, they appear at the annual socials (always a huge success) and are, we hope, pleased to see the club still flourishing.

G. L. J.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Why Do We Climb?

SIR,—According to Thoreau, 'Nothing is so much to be feared as fear.' Indeed, fear is an emotion with such potential for risk to us in ordinary daily living that it is vitally important to analyse and understand it. By such study alone can we hope to combat its more baneful effects. These evil effects result where fear is uncontrolled by reason. So one gets the trembling, the cold sweats, muscular tensions, pounding heart and weakness of muscular power epitomised in popular phrases.

We talk of being *paralysed with fear*, *rooted to the spot*, *petrified*. In the Gaelic we have *uallach an eagail*, the suggestion of heavy load with laden-footedness. *Wind-up* results from disorganisation of intestinal mechanisms.

Primitively the Fear Instinct freezes action, if it does not lead to blind unreasoning flight. Consider the rabbit completely immobilised in a hypnosis-like state when it sees a stoat: every obvious function of mind and body is suspended. If the freeze-up is quick enough all is well and it survives. Higher animals like man show something of this same reaction, and risk arises where normal function is interfered with. So even complete arrest of heart action may follow an uncontrolled emotion or shock, even on cold immersion or electric shock.

Some years ago a phone call told me of a sheep-dog stuck for 4 days on a cliff face near Loch Morar. A townsman on holiday was worried lest it be shot. With a climbing club companion and a rope I had the luck of the toss, and went down to tie on the dog and bring it up. A very intelligent dog, it had chased a rabbit to a place below which there was a sheer drop and from which the return up a crack was a little risky. Even

on the safe grass above it trembled with fear and its limbs were inert and useless. We carried it down, and only when quite level ground was reached did it gambol happily with complete return of control. Humans are liable to a similar dangerous state. I recall when a young couple trying to get down in January evening light from Beinn Fhada in Glencoe were immobilised on a precipitous ledge 1000 ft. above the glen floor. It was not till next morning that with some persuasion and the moral support of a rope that I got them up to a safe descent route.

Control of fear is obtained by practice and experience in assessing risk. Children can teach us; for we see how quite early in life they like to frighten themselves and their playmates, so acquiring such tolerance in experience of the fear reaction that emotional effects can be a stimulus to action rather than an inhibition.

Balanced on a vertical rock face with a finger-tip or two and an odd bootnail to obviate the drop of some hundred feet visible between your boot soles, with the next wrinkle of a hold a little uncertain, the complete control of panic fear is vital.

Mountaineering in general and rock climbing in particular will teach the diligent enthusiast to control fear, replacing it by calm appraisal of the fear-provoking circumstances, in a hundred dangerous and exposed places in varying conditions of cold and exposure. A major satisfaction in ordinary living results, and here will be found one true answer to the question 'Why do we climb?' so inadequately replied to in the phrase 'because it is there.'—Yours, etc.,

DONALD G. DUFF.

Highland Landscape

SIR,—Last year I was given the opportunity to make a landscape survey of the Highland counties (mainland only), and to investigate closely fifty-three mountain areas. I find that since I first began to roam the Highlands in the early nineteen-thirties, great changes have occurred, mostly within the last 15 years, and mostly from hydro-electric works, forestry and tourism.

I find that within 15 years, sixteen of the areas surveyed have been seriously disfigured in themselves or in their immediate approaches. I am able to define twenty-two regions of quite outstanding natural beauty, but of these nine have already suffered impairment and ten are threatened with impairment in the near future. Only seven remain both totally unspoiled and free from threat (Knoydart, Kintail, Applecross, Torridon, Ben Damph and Coulin Forests, Kylesku-Glencoul, and Balmoral Forest). In the next decade the rate of change is likely to accelerate.

My survey gives me a powerful impression that the Highlands are coming alive, as though they had long been a fallow field that is now germinating. The beginnings at least of a Highland revival can at last be seen. And foremost among the causes are—hydro-electricity, forestry and tourism.

We cannot but welcome change where it brings and renews life, nor regret where it mars beauty. It is not change we have to fear, but haphazard

change, uncontrolled and indiscriminating—just as we may glissade fearlessly on mountains yet fear greatly if it is involuntary and without axe for check or safeguard. Scotland has already been despoiled of much of its best Highland scenery. The rest is destined to follow—change and development come under a strong head of steam—unless the Scots people can set up a landscape commission, with statutory privileges, which could serve in Scotland a purpose similar to the National Parks Commission of England: that is, by providing the needed advice, funds, checks and safeguards. The members of such a council would have to be strong-minded and energetic, for they will find it difficult to preserve even the best of what remains to us. It costs much effort to be civilised.—Yours, etc.,

W. H. MURRAY.

Holding the Axe

SIR,—I enjoyed Mr B. H. Humble's valuable contribution to safe climbing, *Glissades, Vibrams and Ice-axes*, in Vol. xxvii, and was pleased that he considered remarks of mine worth quoting. However, I had one specific recommendation which he did not quote, possibly because I did not explain it succinctly, but I feel it is of sufficient interest to be associated with an article of this kind as I have not seen it mentioned elsewhere.

The recommendation is that when a climber is on a snow or ice-slope he should hold his hand over the head of the axe in such a manner that the adze blade points forward and the pick points to the rear and not vice versa. Then if a sudden slip occurs the other hand has only to grasp the haft of the axe and the pick is already pointing downwards in a good braking position. It is not necessary to change the grip on the axe-head. This advantage had not occurred to several experienced climbers of my acquaintance so I take the liberty of mentioning it here. I feel it can make all the difference between losing or regaining control in a nasty situation.

Although the 'pick to the rear' grip may be slightly less comfortable, because of its greater safety I believe it is well worth cultivating as a habit even when using the ice-axe as a walking stick on easy terrain.—Yours, etc.,

GEORGE BAND.

Eating the Cake

[The most welcome increase in popularity of sport among mountains has its less pleasant side. The astonishingly rapid commercialisation of certain areas and pastimes has already caused concern—not only among many climbers and skiers and local inhabitants, but also among others who are merely content that there should remain in these islands one last area where man can avoid, until saner times appear, the more fatuous conditioning of this curious economic system. Because of such growing resentment it seems time that all those by pocket or policy committed to

'opening up' the hills re-examine carefully their programmes: the ends of the well-intentioned are being endangered by the means of their less-scrupulous colleagues.

In our last issue Weir forcefully called for at least some scale of expendability of this unique landscape. Murray's letter in this issue calls again for urgent action before it is too late. Clearly the existing controls are quite insufficient. Members are probably aware of the good fight being waged professionally by a few colleagues against formidable odds.

We regret that it has proved impossible to obtain, for this issue, two contributors sufficiently co-ordinated to maintain an argument about the present apparently haphazard development. But it would be as foolish to ignore the existence of such arguments as it would be to ignore the situation they are arguing about; so we print below a much-'ghosted' version, a light-hearted mock-up by the Editor, a cartoon, in fact, of the sort of conversation or harangue now being heard among devotees not only of the 'old hobnailers' but also of the '22 laminations.' Needless to say, neither Inflator nor Deflator represent the official views of the Hon. Editor nor of the Club.]

DEFLATOR: I don't see what all the fuss is about. Of course Development is a euphemism for Exploitation, but if we didn't exploit we'd still be in caves. Anyway, the Highlands are pretty tough; look at the antics and apologetics of the Hydro Board.

INFLATOR: Development by the Hydro Board is eminently defensible; exploitation by the Fun Industry is not.

DEF.: Public and Private again, I suppose. But mountains seem curiously unsuited to adventures in private profit. Remember the Stuarts, the sheep and the deer. And little Lord Sunlight.

INF.: And now the Tourist 'Industry,' that most insincere and insecure of all economies, limps up from the south.

DEF.: Why?

INF.: Jobs getting tight down there. Gold in them hills.

DEF.: Hurroo! *Alba gu brath!* From what I've seen it's purely local enterprise, and about time, too.

INF.: Of course, it has to be, for Stage I. Let the plums ripen a bit.

DEF.: They sound more like sour grapes. And what 'Stage I'—of paranoia? Another plot?

INF.: No plot; just the unrolling of Necessity.

DEF.: Most explicit.

INF.: Isolated and praiseworthy enterprises begun by skiers and inn-keepers require money; and are being transformed into concerns run from the cities—run for hungry landlords by the Grabby Boys. Excuses are many, but these concerns have to make increasing profits; and therefore increasing numbers of people must be taught that the Thing To Do is to go (or better, watch) ski-ing. Since ski-ing is physically impossible most of the year there must be an alternative. The alternative may be innocuous sitting on park seats or ponyback and getting wet or, much less inconvenient and more profitable, may be mechanical rides to the tops of

mountains, with cream buns below mountains and picture shows among mountains.

DEF.: And what is wrong with that? You are a worse prig than I thought. Finish the pamphlet.

INF.: Since by its very nature this kind of enterprise has to spread, we can look forward to more and more Developments, more and more propaganda that This Is Inevitable, This Is What People Want. And after having erected this gimcrack economy on an abandoned countryside, the sponsors are in a fine position to whine that any form of control or design prejudices the Tourist Industry—which is of course equated with Rural Economy. And by then the official planners will have been bought over by gracious concessions on the colour of turnstiles and the nutrition of attendants. Progress, they will yap: and, like commercial radio, Inevitable!

DEF.: True, but why so terrifying? We do get our ski lifts and cheap hotels.

INF.: At what cost? An example of how much this benefits the people it claims to benefit is the recent request by a much-advertised Piccadilly-Continental ski hotel to a local farmhouse to 'put its prices up'—because it was causing competition.

DEF.: And of course—

INF.: it put its prices up. Such is enterprise for the benefit of skiers. And ask the local people which city gets the contracts, and who gets the jobs. Even in Stage I.

DEF.: Stage I! What *are* your precious stages?

INF.: I have already outlined them. More generally, the first stage is to cater for those already going to the hills, to gain their confidence; to build ski lifts (climbers are as yet too unprofitably ungregarious), 'ski' hotels, and Big-Brother Youth Hostels; to encourage more of Our Younger Folk to Healthy Exercise (the Teenage Market), whether they wanted to or not; to gain the planner's confidence (the Egghead Market). Stage II is now safe to begin: Even better facilities for ski-ing—

DEF.: Your Ski Industry?

INF.: Ah, you've read that nonsense, too—and to pay for this, better facilities for summer visitors. And since the weather cannot always be good—

DEF.: !

INF.: and there are midges, let us step unashamedly into Stage III and build also ordinary honest Indoor Entertainments to collect more cash from these ordinary honest indoor visitors lured up into the stony wastes. Since the stoniness may frighten some pennies and pounds away, let the ways be made smooth (Communications and Safety); let there be footbridges, painted arrows, motor parks, motor roads, motoramas, cineramas, commissionaires and Fun Lodges. Now let the window be shut and the till opened! Tourist *Trade*? No, a Tourist *Industry* at last! And if the original customers object—where *are* your wild and wonderful Highlands you told us to come and see?—it matters not: the Majority is now here, safely conditioned and happy for generations.

DEF.: I see what you're driving at. But go easy on the horn. I find it shrill.

INF.: Of course, any opposition can be denounced right away. Neurotics! Exclusivists! Prigs! Snobs! Keeping Their Heritage from The People! That does for the distant opposition, eggheads and loonies.

DEF.: And for the local opposition?

INF.: Think of the Tourist Industry—jobs and sweets if you're good.

DEF.: The Ski Industry. The Snow Industry. The Camp Site Industry. The Rock Industry. The Piton Industry.

INF.: Think of (O ultimate symbol) think of the Dollars. . . . And in truth might they add, by then, what else have the Highlands to offer?

DEF.: Very plausible, I must say.

INF.: Effective opposition is extremely difficult, for at all stages they have these replies ready, and those most encouraged to reply are the unsuspecting exploited, using the apparently good answer that these things make the hills enjoyable to them. Like you nearly did.

DEF.: Like I nearly did. But don't forget I'm only a Stage I exploitee.

INF.: Such an answer implies that without these things the hills are less enjoyable to them. The hills, in fact, must be just a different Subtopia, essentially there for their convenience, essentially part of Hoggart's Candy Floss World, making no demands on them physically or mentally beyond an extra raincoat and a queasy sense of wonder. The qualities called for in mountaineering—the alertness, perspicacity—

DEF.: Well, well.

INF.: individual thrawnness and collective common sense—are not welcomed by the sponsors of a Fun Industry. And possibly that other advantage of mountaineering, the realisation that man is not petting a foolish fat cosmos, but is poised by his own wits over appalling drops [if we may intrude, this point seems relevant to that of Mr Duff's letter—HON. EDITOR]—possibly this is important in these days of nuclear physics and ITV.

DEF.: You are getting over-subtle. You lose your point as you approach it.

INF.: Obediently, I leave the point and return to mountaineering. A mountaineer, whether taut on a slab or tight in a bothy, damp under a boulder or triumphant on Beinn a' Bhaile, cannot be fitted in and will not be catered for.

DEF.: You should be glad.

INF.: Indeed, he will be driven from the hills as a danger-mongering heretic.

DEF.: And exhibited in special Rock Climbing Reservations.

INF.: I'm glad I am convincing you.

DEF.: You are not at all. But what are your remedies for these woes?

INF.: *Effective* control and planning. Before it's too late. Before Stage I is left behind.

DEF.: Plan to Stay Free! Fight for Peace. Control by whom?

INF.: Certainly not by the 'Enterprises.' They want the rake-off but not the responsibility. Did not Capt. MacDollar of Inveridle, landlord for some of the more blatant Improvements, infer that Rescue was no concern of his profit-making Association?

DEF.: Now we are getting personal. You have undoubtedly misunderstood the gentleman.

INF.: Nor, it would seem, by the present apologetic two-facing planners. They are so busy showing how realistic, broad-minded and *positive* they are. Look at the National Conference on Planning for Tourism. Read the double-talk—the fascinating admixture of ‘feeling administration’ of the scenery with ‘challenging advertisements’ and ‘swimming pools.’ An Industry, all right. The factory gardeners. Even ‘local festivals’ are to be ‘provided’ as ‘tourist attractions.’ Dance, damn you, dance. Such hypocrisy and humbug breeds that familiar uneasy heartiness in those committed to bolster an acknowledged ‘urban economy.’ Planners are urged to ‘collaborate with private developers of one sort or the other’ (!), to ‘guide’ developers and convince the ‘neurotic’ reactionary (the ‘schizophrenic’!) opposition. Oh, the planners have been taken well into Stage III.

DEF.: Be fair. They have to work under Existing Statutory Powers. They are caterers, not architects. They do a thankless job well. They have to live with the tiger, after all.

INF.: We are less trammelled. We must decide what we as climbers value in the Highlands, and whether our values are generally applicable. Whether, in fact, an economy and culture there founded on planned farming and forestry with help from a strictly-controlled tourist trade is more satisfying to the inhabitants than one springing from personal greed—with its caravans, bracken and the counting of sheep.

DEF.: I could be cynical.

INF.: Don’t. And whether the bare bones of the hills themselves are of more value as they are to the rest of this suffocating island, now and in the future, than if they also were covered with whistles and wardens and Coney Islands and somebody else’s money.

DEF.: You mean it might be possible that your particular brand of selfishness coincides with what might after all be the best available solution?

INF.: Put it as you like. But let’s have no more talk of fake Industries. Let them drive some responsibility and pride of life into what sorry industries they have got, before smearing that slick label over the few areas, occupations and pastimes that can still claim the remains of a pride and a life of their own. But that would be harder. That would be progressive; not an escape back to nineteenth-century Enterprise like this is.

DEF.: Yes, yes. Put calmly, your thesis is that uncontrolled—or the present equivocally controlled—exploitation of Highland beauty and amenities for Tourist ends leads inevitably to destruction of both beauty and amenities and to their replacement by the stock rations of the Entertainments Industry.

INF.: Yes, deliberately, to Sugar and Pap. All in such planned good taste.

DEF.: Tut, I think you exaggerate. But to prevent this? Since your planners are so dazzled by their own magnanimity?

INF.: We must speak out, make a fuss, show—as Weir says—that we really *care*. From what we see abroad, we must insist that nothing is left

to selfish exploitation; that no well-meaning 'collaboration' is possible with such a bitterly aggressive instinct as private profit. That a single Commission, a Corporation. . .

DEF.: Aye. But you'd need to dig deep.
I'd back the weather.

[Grieve, one of those (they seem to be many!) blown up by Inflator, was gingerly shown the above. He wrote back that, after tearing up a dozen notes, he had come to the conclusion that at this time and in this *Journal* he could not satisfactorily comment. But he would willingly come to any group of Inflators and discuss the whole matter fully.—HON. EDITOR.]

Mountain Rescue in Scotland

SIR,—The article on the above subject in your last issue will be regarded as an official history for the future. It should therefore be complete and accurate. I have been connected with the movement since 1936, and had I been able to see the proof before publication the article, while admirable in many ways, would have been more complete, for there are omissions and mistakes.

Omissions. Credit should be given to those who carried on mountain rescue work during the war years, when, with petrol and other restrictions, there were great difficulties in recruiting parties, and when it meant a call out on the B.B.C. 9 P.M. News and an early morning train to Fort William or elsewhere the next day.

Mention of the work done by the R.A.F. Mountain Rescue teams is incomplete without credit being given to Dan Stewart, formerly of Edinburgh University M.C., who, when serving with the R.A.F. Kinloss team, urged the necessity of much more climbing training. This has resulted in the high efficiency the teams have gained since then. He had also much to do with the preparation of the R.A.F. booklet on Mountain Rescue, which, to this day, is the best publication available on the subject. At that time also there was a scheme whereby, in conjunction with the clubs, young climbers due for the Services could be recommended to the R.A.F., thus ensuring an influx of experienced men.

Corrections. The first concrete step towards a better organisation in Scotland were taken at an unofficial meeting at Inverarnan in December 1959 with the approval of the then President of the S.M.C. This meeting was attended by W. H. Murray, W. M. MacKenzie, J. S. Stewart and B. H. Humble. This meeting decided that a Scottish Committee was required and asked Dr Maitland to convene a meeting through the A.S.C.C. The article infers that I had something to do with the elaborate proposals for various committees put in the circular distributed at that meeting at Perth; and, indeed, it was stated in the circular that I had a hand in drawing it up. This is not so. I knew nothing of such proposals

till confronted with them at the meeting. I disapproved of them and said so!

I saw no necessity of two committees with varied functions and responsibilities and urged that the example to follow was that of England, where one committee and one committee only looks after everything. After all we have a Scottish Branch of the Red Cross but we do not also have a Scottish Council of Red Cross.

This view has now to a great extent been accepted, as, under recent re-organisation the Scottish Council for Mountain Rescue has now been shorn of all its powers, the entire direction of such work in Scotland now being in the hands of the new Scottish Branch.

Due to the splendid work of the clubs, R.A.F., civilian and Red Cross Rescue teams mentioned in the article, rescue work now operates very efficiently and of recent years there is no record of any undue delay in reaching the casualty. Records also show clearly that at least 75 per cent. of all accidents came under the 'Avoidable' category. It is hoped, therefore, that the new Scottish Branch will concentrate on what is by far the greater problem—Prevention.—Yours, etc.,

B. H. HUMBLE.

NEW CLIMBS

HARRIS

Strone Ulladale.—*Great Gully.* 1000 ft. approx. Very Severe. R. B. Evans, L. A. Howarth & Mrs A. Evans. May 1961.

The gully cleaves the full height of the crag left of Amphitheatre Buttress. Evil-looking cave pitches are avoided on the left, but the crux—a square amphitheatre one-third of the way up—is unavoidable and is climbed in two pitches. The first, 40 ft., goes up a leftward-slanting groove; the second, 90 ft., traverse right and up a groove through an overhang. A disappointing climb, with more grass than rock.

—*Tyke.* 630 ft. Severe. R. B. Evans, L. A. Howarth & Mrs A. Evans. May 1961.

Up buttress a few feet left of Great Gully; a vegetated start, then a good line on superb rock.

Scramble up steep heather 150 ft. to a small rowan. Gain rock above a second rowan to right. Up slabs moving right then up, over a bulge to a small stance and piton belay below an overhang. Traverse right below the bulge, then easier rock overlooking the gully to a good platform and piton belay below a steep groove.

From a gangway on left enter the steep groove which is climbed (with a piton belay on ledge on right at 60 ft.) to a terrace where the angle eases; 200 ft. of pleasant slabs lead to top.

Strone Ulladale: The Right Wall (West Wall).—This is the long line of crag bounding Upper Glen Ulladale on its east, from the Great Nose of the strone to an easier-angled buttress—**SOUTH BUTTRESS**—which is split by an obvious gangway. The main Right Wall of Strone Ulladale appears to offer plenty of scope, but holds are almost entirely lacking. The only feasible major one seems to be Midgard, which takes a snaking traverse along an obvious weakness.

—*The Gangway.* Difficult. R. B. Evans, L. A. Howarth & Mrs A. Evans. May 1961.

The obvious gangway which splits South Buttress from left to right. Reach the gangway by a steep corner and short traverse left followed by 200 ft. of pleasant slabs, then scrambling.

—*South Buttress.* 340 ft. Severe. R. B. Evans, L. A. Howarth & Mrs A. Evans. May 1961.

The buttress at extreme right end of the West Wall of Strone Ulladale; in two tiers, split by the Gangway.

Start halfway along the steep lower wall and climb 15 ft. to a large, obvious block belay. Move up on to slab on left, then make long traverse to right under overhangs until an ascent is possible up a smooth wall to a ledge and belay below overhangs. A broken gangway leads through the overhangs and scrambling follows to The Gangway. The upper wall is climbed to a belay below a prominent overhang which is turned by a groove on the right.

—*Midgard.* 600 ft. Very Difficult. R. B. Evans, L. A. Howarth & Mrs A. Evans. May 1961.

A fine route with exposed situations, taking the easiest line up the wall. Starts about 80 ft. left of the Gangway at the lowest point of a tongue of rock.

Go up slabby rock on left to band of yellow rock. Move right along ledge to a belay (60 ft.). Move up to right for 20 ft., then left a few feet, traverse right again to belay below an overhang (70 ft.), at the obvious traverse line, which follow left into a corner. Then go up slab and grass patch to small flake belay after 100 ft. Continue the traverse to base of the second grass patch. Move down a little and across to an easy gangway which leads to the top. Piton belays used in places.

Creagan Leathan, Glen Ulladale.—*Windwhistle.* 310 ft. Very Difficult. R. B. Evans, L. A. Howarth & Mrs A. Evans. May 1961.

This crag, shown on the 1-inch O.S. map, is on the west side of Glen Ulladale. The climb goes up the most attractive continuous rock in the centre of the crag, finishing up an exposed wall.

Creag Mò, Glen Scaladale.—*Miny.* 350 ft. Severe. R. B. Evans, L. A. Howarth & Mrs A. Evans. May 1961.

This climb is on a short steep crag, marked on the 1-inch map, north-west of Scaladale Bridge. To the right of the overhanging central amphitheatre

the wall is broken half-way by a short grass terrace, easily accessible. The climb starts at the left-hand side of the lower wall. Go up slabs past a small sapling to the grass terrace. From the right end of the terrace a steep groove leads to the top.

Sgùrr Scaladale.—*Miolnir*. 465 ft. Very Severe. R. B. Evans, L. A. Howarth & Mrs A. Evans. May 1961.

The obvious feature of the main crag, left of Central Gully, is a steep black wall cut towards the left by a dark cleft—a gully developing into an overhung groove. The climb takes the lower part of the cleft and then breaks out left to ascend a deep V groove. A very fine steep route.

Gain the gully after 100 ft. of slabs on the left. Follow the steepening gully for 80 ft. Go up a groove on right, then back into a chimney to a boulder-strewn platform; piton belay on smaller ledge 15 ft. left. Climb steep wall above to below overhang; piton runner. Move right and up deep groove to ledge on left. With piton aid pull over the overhang and go left to stance and piton belay (100 ft.). Traverse right, into groove; go up to slabs and piton belay. Finish up steep corner above.

RHUM

Askival, South-east Crag.—*Consolation Crack*. 65 ft. Difficult. Anne Littlejohn (L.S.C.C.) & Eilidh Nisbet (G.U.M.C.). 18th May 1961.

There is an unnamed and apparently completely unclimbed line of crags, well over half a mile long, on the lower S.E. slopes of Askival. At the extreme right-hand end of these crags are two small buttresses, the right-hand one of which has several conspicuous triangular overhangs in its upper portion. To the left of this buttress is a large grassy bay.

This climb starts at the top of the bay. A rough slab on the right leads to a ledge, from whose left-hand end a steep 25 ft. crack leads, by good holds, to the top.

—*Right-hand Buttress, Direct*. 80 ft. Very Severe. Anne Littlejohn (L.S.C.C.) & Eilidh Nisbet (G.U.M.C.). 18th May 1961. (Crux first inspected from top rope.)

Starts at a cairn at the bottom right-hand corner of wall forming front of buttress.

Traverse left at first, then straight up into an awkward position close under the overhangs. Move delicately left (crux) to reach a large slab (belay high on left). Re-cross slab to right and finish by steep 20 ft. corner.

Allival: South-east Face.—*Red Brick*. 70 ft. Moderate. Eilidh Nisbet (G.U.M.C.) & Anne Littlejohn (L.S.C.C.). 19th May 1961.

Starts with the Cambridge Arête, but at sloping ledge in the deep groove leaves it to traverse left on to right-hand edge of Allival Slab. Follow this edge for a few feet, then bear left up ledges to end beside the easier (left-hand) finish of the Cambridge Arête.

Ruinsval: Lower Tier.—*Yellowstone Chimney*. 80 ft. Difficult. Anne Littlejohn (L.S.C.C.). 21st June 1961.

(For REVISED NOMENCLATURE on Ruinsval, see under NOTES.)

Between the 4th (Frigga's) and 5th (South) Buttress there is an obvious chimney, the left wall of which is formed of yellow rock. It begins easily but becomes harder towards the top.

—*Curving Chimney*. 90 ft. (Hard) Difficult. Anne Littlejohn & Alison Dinwoodie (both L.S.C.C.). 22nd June 1961.

On right flank of the 5th (South) Buttress a deep damp chimney curves up to the right. Climb left wall to large chockstones (one is dangerously loose) and follow chimney to awkward exit at top.

—*South Crack*. 65 ft. (Easy) Very Difficult. Anne Littlejohn & Heather MacGregor (both L.S.C.C.). 21st June 1961.

On the South wall of the 5th (South) Buttress, overlooking the central gully. From Curving Chimney go past a grassy corner with overhangs above and take the first weakness: a steep crack above a large block. Above crack climb short wall on right and then a steep nose.

—*June Jigsaw*. 80 ft. (Easy) Very Difficult. Anne Littlejohn & Alison Dinwoodie (both L.S.C.C.). 22nd June 1961.

On right flank of the 3rd (Thor's) Buttress there is a large dissected slab. From a cairn follow a deep crack bearing left, continue rightward by ledge and on to vertical crack (good holds), unstable blocks and then easily to top.

—*Frigga's Buttress*. 70 ft. (Hard) Very Difficult. Anne Littlejohn & Alison Dinwoodie (both L.S.C.C.). 22nd June 1961.

The lower half of the 4th (Frigga's) Buttress is a huge flake, shaped like a Gothic arch and demarcated from the main wall by a wide crack on the left. Climb this crack to top of arch, then follow front of buttress to top, finishing just left of the summit block. Upper rock rather rotten.

—*Chuckie-stane Groove*. 120 ft. Severe. Anne Littlejohn & Alison Dinwoodie (both L.S.C.C.). 23rd June 1961.

Starts at cairn at highest point of grass and scree between Woden's Wall and Thor's Buttress, below a wet groove running up between two overhangs.

(1) 60 ft. Climb wall on left until forced into groove, whose last few feet are the crux; a psychological running belay is available. Easier ground leads to good stance. (2) 40 ft. Continue in line of groove, now almost a chimney, at easier angle. Then finish in 20 ft. up steep wall.

—*Right-hand Chimney*. 120 ft. (Hard) Very Difficult. Anne Littlejohn & Alison Dinwoodie (both L.S.C.C.). 23rd June 1961.

A little to right of Chuckie-stane Groove (far back on left flank of Thor's Buttress) are two obvious chimneys, the left wide and vegetatious, the right narrow and steep. Follow the latter throughout; the crux is the steep finish.

ARRAN

A' Chir.—*Hangover Slab.* 630 ft. Mild Severe. J. Stewart & A. Cowmeadow (both E.U.M.C.). May 1961.

A rather artificial but enjoyable climb on the buttress between Gullies 5 and 6. Starts some 60 ft. left of Gully 6.

(1) 140 ft. Climb clean slab, over detached block and slight bulge, to vegetatious corner. Climb this, or slab on right, and trend left to block belay below overhang. (2) 150 ft. Through this overhang, then up slabs to piton belay. (3) 60 ft. Up slabs to heather terrace. (4) 80 ft. Pull up through overhang, then up slabs. (5) 80 ft. Up slabs to heather ledge; piton belay. (6) 120 ft. Up short severe wall, then traverse right to turn overhang and up easy slabs to large blocks.

—*Afterthought.* 290 ft. Severe. A. Cowmeadow & J. Stewart (both E.U.M.C.). May 1961.

A route up 7-8 Buttress, between the route of that name and Giant's Staircase.

(1) 40 ft. Climb slabs immediately left of Giant's Staircase to grass ledge. (2) A very good pitch. Climb wall by cracks to mantelshelf on to detached flake. Up by cracks to a block, traverse right round bulge, and up by layback move to heather edge and flake belay. (3) 130 ft. Up over flake to overhang, then traverse right and up to blocks. Trend right to block below cave, and reach ridge through cave.

Cir Mhòr: Lower North-east Face.—*Nor'Easter Slabs.* 400 ft. (approx.). Hard Severe. N. Macniven & R. Campbell (both E.U.M.C.). May 1961.

The slabs to left of Gully A are bounded at the bottom by a line of overhangs coming down diagonally to the right. This climb starts at first breach to left of bottom end of line, beside a cairn of orange peel [this may have been removed].

Climb groove to slab beneath an overlap; surmount this, and go up another slab to another overlap. Climb steep crack on left, then go by grassy cracks and layback corners to a grassy terrace. Gully A and April Arête are on the right; continue by April Arête. (Piton belays were used.)

Cir Mhòr: Rosa Pinnacle.—*Rosa Pinnacle Girdle.* 1000 ft. Very Severe. R. Campbell & N. Macniven (both E.U.M.C.). May 1961.

(1), (2) & (3) are as for Sou'Wester Slabs and Fourth Wall; 160 ft. (4) 60 ft. Up groove for 20 ft., then up right to line of knobbles leading to belay in Sou'Wester Slabs (below flake cracks). (5) 40 ft. Obvious

traverse from below belay round corner to a belay in Sickle. (6) 70 ft. Up and right to exposed corner. Traverse steep wall (avoiding loose flake) into the Layback Crack of the South Ridge; descend this to belay. (7), (8) & (9). 145 ft. Reverse South Ridge to foot of the Y crack. (10) Follow easy terrace to original route, go down this 15 ft. to grass patch, then make descending traverse on right wall to a rib; climb this to niche and flake belay. (11) 30 ft. Hand traverse under overhang to grass tuft. Continue, up then down, round corner to belay. (12) 100 ft. Down round corner, then up right to mantelshelf. Follow dwindling ledge into bottomless layback corner. Climb this 15 ft., leave on right, and traverse into Lower East Chimney. (13) 100 ft. Climb cracked slab on right to flake and traverse right above overhang into groove (piton runner). Cross rib into another groove and climb to pinnacle belay. (14) 120 ft. Climb crack above and traverse easily right to jammed block. (15) 100 ft. Continue into Sub-Rosa Gully.

The traverse may be continued by climbing Minotaur and crossing East Wall (using Labyrinth) either into Pinnacle Gully or to North-Eastern Corner.

—*Anvil*. 180 ft. Very Severe. D. McKelvie & R. Richardson (both Greenock M.C.). 6th August 1960.

Starts at foot of broad crack marked by a cairn some 100 ft. downhill from the start of Sou'Wester Slabs.

(1) 25 ft. Climb crack to stance just left of small overhang. (2) 70 ft. Using piton, descend 10 ft. and tension-traverse right, to gain holds leading up through overhang to sloping platform; thence by prominent thin crack to grass ledges and belay on right. (On the second ascent, by W. Wallace and J. Simpson a week later, the traverse was 'free'; exceptionally delicate.) (3) 60 ft. Continue up leftwards by grooves to small cave and belay. (4) 25 ft. Break out by right wall, awkwardly, to reach easy slab leading to crest of South Ridge (top of Pitch 4 of Direct Route).

—*Hammer*. 245 ft. Very Severe. D. Sim & D. Cameron (both Greenock M.C.). 7th August 1960.

Follows a fairly direct line up face; starts at cairn a few feet left of start of Anvil.

(1) 25 ft. Climb prominent crack; belay. (2) 120 ft. Move left on to steep slab above a deep crack still farther left. Climb edge, fix runner round chockstone. Go a little right and climb steep grassy crack without positive holds; on to large ledge and belay. (3) 100 ft. Follow a crack in same general line for 40 ft., then traverse right diagonally up a line of dimples to join the South Ridge Direct Route below its Layback Crack pitch.

Goatfell: South Slabs.—*Route II*. 280 ft. Hard Severe. W. Wallace & D. McCulloch (J.M.C.S.). 2nd September 1961.

Starts by cairn at bottom right-hand corner of the slabs.

(1) 70 ft. Up moderate slabs and grooves, slanting left to grassy depression; stance. (2) 100 ft. Continue, up grass and then steep slabs

to narrow grass band below small overlap; climb to stance and belay. (3) 30 ft. Up 15 ft., then left to stance on small ledge; piton belay. (4) 80 ft. Sustained, and climbed in socks. Up by friction diagonally left on steep slabs to foot of thin crack in corner (piton runner possible). Up line of cracks to nook on left; stance. Easy scrambling for 30 ft. more leads to finish.

SKYE

Sgùrr Dearg: Bealach Buttress.—*Central Groove.* 250 ft. Very Difficult. D. J. Bennet, D. A. Bennet & R. Cameron. 21st May 1960.

Starts from The Terrace, a few feet right of Pinnacle Face route. Up vertically for 15 ft., then into groove, shallow but deepening and with good holds. Avoid blocks at top, and climb easily to junction of Pinnacle Face and Gemini routes below the upper rocks. The final slopes may be enlivened by climbing a remarkable flying buttress, more difficult and exposed than it appears.

Blaven: East Face.—*Chock-a-Block Chimney.* 350 ft. Very Severe. T. W. Patey & R. Harper. 24th August 1961.

A thin prominent chimney (visible from the Elgol road) above highest point of stone shoot between Blaven and Clach Glas, ending above narrow col behind Naismith's Half-Crown Pinnacle.

A fine old-fashioned climb with much thrutch and a murky through-route.

(1) Climb bed of gully chimney, breaking out to right below first overhang; 50 ft. (2) Climb steep pitch on rocks right of chimney proper; 25 ft. Then traverse back over delicate slab into the chimney above the first overhang. Just above is a small cave topped by a greasy chockstone. This crux is overcome by backing-up. (3) The boulder bed recedes into gloom. Far back is a cave giving awkward access to a subterranean chimney climbed for 30 ft. back and knee; belay. (4) 60 ft. Straddle walls, then easily to scree channel leading up to the col. The Pinnacle can be climbed direct from the col, but is V.S. (By easiest route on West Face it seems a good V.D.)

Waterstein Cliffs, Duirinish.—*The Green Lady.* 120 ft. Hard Severe. T. W. Patey & R. Harper. 26th August 1961.

There is much climbing on the cliffs north of Waterstein, near the most westerly point of Skye. The district often receives better weather than the Cuillins.

The Green Lady is an elegant spire 100 ft. in height on the Waterstein peninsula about half a mile north of the village. It is a few hundred feet above the sea and just below the top of the upper cliffs.

The easiest route is the South West Corner above a narrow 50-ft. slit which separates the main pinnacle from its secondary rocky arête.

Either follow the arête for 100 ft. (V.D.) or squeeze up the slit for 50 ft. (strenuous) to reach the jammed chockstone at the top of the latter.

Traverse 15 ft. horizontally right by thin ledge then climb straight up for 12 ft. to gain lodgment on the South West Corner. Easier climbing to a bulge, then two or three strenuous pull-ups on unexpected holds to the grassy top. No satisfactory abseil belay.

NORTHERN HIGHLANDS

Sgùrr a' Chaorachain (Applecross): South Face.—*The Sword of Gideon*. 350 ft. Very Severe. T. W. Patey. 11th October 1961.

On the north side of the Bealach nam Bo road there is much exposed sandstone but most routes lack continuity. However, nearly opposite the waterfalls a series of steep rocky ribs descend to the road. The leftmost provides an exceptionally fine route. The climb starts a mere hundred feet above the road.

(1) Easy climbing for 150 ft. to a wide ledge below the big wall which is the feature of the route. (2) Climb the right-hand edge of the frontal face for 50 ft. till holds give out. Traverse 12 ft. left, step down and tread delicately (crux) across to good foothold in the centre of face, immediately beneath a prominent discontinuous crack (well seen from below). Climb crack for 20 ft. to good ledge. Continue up crack after an awkward start, until after further 20 ft. the difficulties diminish. (3) Continue the logical line to the top of the rib in another 100 ft.

Crux may require a 120-ft. lead.

Sgòrr Ruadh, North Wall of Raeburn's Buttress.—*Splintery Edge*. 400 ft. Very Difficult. T. W. Patey. 8th October 1961.

There is more 'live rock' on the North Face of Sgòrr Ruadh than on its better-known North East Face. Raeburn's Buttress occupies the angle between the two faces. A deep chasm separates it from the next buttress which was climbed recently (Upper Buttress; *S.M.C.J.*, xxvi (1956), 51), but the wall of Raeburn's Buttress which hems in this chasm on the left is nearly vertical for several hundred feet. The rock is very shattered and there is less scope than might be apparent.

200 ft. or so up the chasm a concealed left-hand branch ends in a formidable *cul-de-sac*. The route follows the near vertical edge on its left. The lower 150 ft. of the ridge looks very severe and dangerous, and was by-passed up the crumbly bed of the branch gully for 50 ft., whence a shelf led leftwards out on to the Edge *via* some loose blocks. The Edge was climbed more or less directly for some 300 ft., the rock improving. The route comes out exactly at the subsidiary top of Sgòrr Ruadh, the culminating point of Raeburn's Buttress proper.

Fuar Tholl, Achnashellach.—*The Nose, Direct*. Very Severe. 500 ft. T. W. Patey. 7th October 1961.

This is the precipitous Nose on the south-east ridge of Fuar Tholl, prominent from lower Corrie Lair.

The route takes a direct line up the steepest section of the Nose. A

slender triangular buttress is demarcated by two steep grassy faults. Its short base is slightly indented, thus forming two ill-defined ribs.

Start up the left-hand rib until at 40 ft. a small ledge leads rightwards on to the steep wall in the centre of the buttress. Climb this direct for some 120 ft. until about 10 ft. below the first sizeable ledge. Move to the right until the right edge next to the grassy fault is gained. Climb edge direct for 100 ft. when the fault steepens; then turn into buttress and climb 60 ft. towards a pillar of semi-detached blocks. Climb very exposed shallow groove above the topmost block and enter easy ground at the apex of the triangle (small cairn). Cross right for 40 ft. and climb an easy upper rib for 150 ft.

The climb is very exposed and although holds are plentiful many are masked in vegetation and of doubtful security. Climbing is continuously severe. There are no escapes.

Sgùrr nan Clach Geala, the Fannichs: the Geala Buttresses.—There is no previous record of any passable rock climbing in the Fannichs. The best exposure of crag is on the east face of Sgùrr nan Clach Geala. Its summit buttress (well seen from just beyond Fannich Lodge) does not fulfil expectations, but at a lower level and farther up the glen there is a fine 800 ft. cluster of crags on the left of the Allt a' Choire Mhòr. These are the Geala Buttresses, which offer climbing equal to most in the north-west. The rock is reasonably clean, sound, mica-schist, prolific of small holds but not of belays. There are six definite buttresses, the finest being the central spire, which was named Skyscraper Buttress. The only other route is on the well-defined Sellers' Buttress on its right. The other buttresses undoubtedly house worthwhile routes though probably not of such interest.

—*Skyscraper Buttress.*

800 ft. Hard Severe. T. W. Patey, J. M. Taylor, J. White & G. K. Annand. 30th April 1961.

The central spire, the fourth from the left. The best climbing is in the last 400 ft. Lower down the rock is somewhat vegetated, particularly at the crux, about a third of the way up.

The slabby base of the buttress appeared impregnable and the first ledges are about 200 ft. up. It might be possible to reach these from the right above the first pitch on Sellers' Buttress, but this is probably a very hard line. The gully-chimney left of the buttress was climbed for three pitches before breaking out on to the buttress proper.

(1) 100 ft. Friable, water-worn rock in bed of gully. (2) 70 ft. Steep wet rock (avoidable by rib on left). (3) A 100-ft. chimney, then large grass ledges lead easily rightwards for 80 ft. to an exposed stance in the centre of the buttress. (4) Further rightwards and above, a prominent rib edges the buttress. The mossy groove at the intersection of its slabby left wall and the main wall is an obvious line, but the pitch leading up to its start is the hardest on the climb. Thirty feet from the last stance clamber up on to an exposed overhanging square-cut block, partly split

away from the rock. Then step right on to a similar block and climb a few feet up the groove on small holds to easy ground in a further 30 ft. (5) Instead of the turfy groove, cross right to the edge of the right-hand rib and follow it for 100 ft. before traversing the buttress again by mossy slabs to a stance on the far left edge. (6) Climb two pitches each of 40 ft. close to the left edge. (7) Traverse under bulge to right and continue up excellent cracks to ledge on right edge, then cross left, up wall to recess and belay and so to excellent short dièdre above (30 ft., 60 ft.); then fine climbing for 80 ft. up bold spur on right leads by easy ledges to abrupt exit. There are several piton belays, but no obvious escapes.

—*Sellers' Buttress.*

600 ft. Very Difficult. T. W. Patey & R. Harper. 16th April 1961.

[First ascent probably made by R. H. Sellers and Jerry Smith in 1960, but no details available.]

This is the clean-cut buttress on the right of the central spire. It offers a fine introductory climb on the crags.

Start about 50 ft. to the right of the confluence of the gullies at the foot of the central spire below a clean rock rib. Thence follow the crest of the buttress more or less directly by four pitches (90 ft., 100 ft., 100 ft. and 110 ft.) each providing continuously Very Difficult climbing on sound rock and small holds. The fourth pitch is perhaps the hardest, but all are steep and exposed. Thence by easier mossy rocks for 120 ft. to a prominent shoulder 150 ft. below the cliff top. Finish by a shattered rib of rock in the direct line to the top (careful handling at one point).

[Sellers and Smith seem to have been the first to visit these crags, in the summer of 1960. It is almost certain they climbed this buttress. They intended returning, but were killed later that year. The present party named the buttress in memory of an outstanding climber and a staunch friend.]

Sgùrr a' Chaisgean Mòr (Fionn Loch): Sgùrr na Laocainn, Tòrr na h-Iolaire, Carnmore Crag.—*Yogi.* 400 ft. Very Severe. D. Haston & A. Wightman. April 1961.

Start at lowest rocks, at a crack on a jutting nose, just left of a high-angled recess. (1) 130 ft. Climb crack, with two pitons. (2) 150 ft. Up arête. (3) 120 ft. Up slabs to terrace below Gob.

Beinn Eighe: Coire Mhic Fhearchair, Eastern Ramparts.—*Boggle.* 450 ft. Very Severe. R. Smith & A. Wightman. October 1961.

A pale shallow dièdre runs up the middle of the upper tier of this bristling cliff. Start below this dièdre.

Zig-zag to reach the left end of a ledge about 40 ft. above ground. Climb a corner 20 ft. to ledge on left, then pull up into pale smooth corner on right. Climb this (piton runner) to below roofs, crawl left over loose blocks and go up and right to reach halfway terrace (the Upper Girdle) below the pale shallow dièdre. Move right, and climb by cracks, grooves, flakes, corners, hand-traverses and mantelshelves away up and rightwards

on to the crest of the pillar bounding the dièdre. Step left and climb a corridor between roofs to the top.

CENTRAL HIGHLANDS

Stob Gabhar, Blackmount: East Face.—*Hircine Rib*. 350 ft. Severe. P. Mitchell, J. Morrison & J. R. Ewing. 21st May 1961.

This climb is on buttress bounding the Upper Couloir on the left. Rock is fine-grained, riven into vertical furrows and is loose in some places, with mainly outslipping holds and scant belays. It starts at lowest rocks just right of centre.

Climb up and slightly left. The angle gradually increases until at 90 ft. an awkward sloping ledge is reached, overlooked by a rotten undercut rib. Climb difficult steep smooth groove to left of rib, and so by easier rocks to open ground. Belay at 120 ft. A further 70-ft. section, with an airy corner at first, completes the climb. The summit is gained after 200 ft. more of scrambling.

BEN NEVIS

Càrn Dearg: Great Buttress.—*The Bullroar*. 525 ft. Very Severe. J. R. Marshall & J. Stenhouse (shared leads). 30th May 1961.

A rising traverse across the buttress face, starting 100 ft. right of the Direct Start of Route I, at some large boulders.

Climb up into a groove (piton) and then to flake belay (90 ft.). Move up and left into a parallel groove and follow this to a belay (50 ft.). Traverse the slabs under the laps on the right, to a crack; climb to belay (45 ft.). Descend, and traverse to piton belay (50 ft.). Continue the traverse, ascending to gain belay above Pitch 3 of Centurion (100 ft.). Climb the crack above and traverse right to stance and piton belay (90 ft.). Continue rightwards and up to gain the ledge at the top of The Bat and Sassenach chimneys (100 ft.). Finish by either of these routes in 450 ft.

Càrn Dearg: No. 5 Gully Buttress.—*The Chickenrun*. 500 ft. (Easy) Very Severe. J. R. Marshall & J. Stenhouse (shared leads). 30th May 1961.

Follows easiest line up the northerly face of the buttress, and starts 150 ft. up, right, from the lowest rocks (cairn).

Climb a steep crack to a ledge (90 ft.); continue, slightly rightwards, up shattered rocks (40 ft.) to an obvious rock ledge. Traverse this leftwards for 50 ft. to gain a great flake. Climb the wall above to a ledge in 40 ft. Follow a series of cracks and awkward corners to a larger ledge (100 ft.). A relenting angle leads in 200 ft. to the top of the buttress.

Ben Nevis: Tower Ridge.—*The Brass Monkey*. 420 ft. Very Severe. J. R. Marshall & J. Stenhouse (shared leads). 31st May 1961.

Follows a deep crack on the east flank of Tower Ridge, in the corner formed by Echo Wall.

Climb 200 ft. to the slab apex under the crack. Climb up a few feet, then traverse rightwards (using two pitons) to gain the base of the crack (20 ft.; belay). Follow the crack in two 60-ft. pitches, the last few feet being taken out on the right wall to gain a ledge and belay. Re-enter the crack and climb to the ridge crest in 80 ft.

CAIRNGORMS

Lochnagar: Black Spout Pinnacle.—*Twin Chimneys Route.* (FIRST WINTER ASCENT.) 3 hours. Grade IV. T. W. Patey, W. D. Brooker & C. M. Dixon (J.M.C.S.). April 1961.

As for summer route. Deep powder snow blanketed the climb but there was not much ice. Probably always extremely difficult in winter despite its summer rating.

Ben MacDhui: Creagan a' Choire Etchachan.—*The Girdle Traverse.* Hard Severe. c. 1000 ft. T. W. Patey (solo). June 1961.

From right to left. Scramble up easy slanting rake well to the right of the Crimson Slab routes, until first reasonable traverse is reached. Cross into grassy trough well above top of the dièdre on Dagger, descend trough for 80 ft. and traverse delicately to Flanking Ribs route just below its crux. Cross the Red Chimney and descend the turf slabs (Flanking Ribs) to The Meadows. Go to extreme left and climb crux of Bodkin; continue traverse with increasing difficulty on deteriorating rock into Avalanche Gully below recent rock fall. Hard escape from gully but then an easy scramble to crest of Pikestaff. A piton planted high gave protection for very delicate traverse across main wall to Corridor bed 50 ft. above screes. (A roped party would not need these subtleties.) Climb Talisman Route to corner of the Bastion and then break out leftwards. No great difficulties in horizontal course to Quartz Vein Edge at its midway grassy slope. A left traverse and short descent terminates the Girdle.

The Girdle includes some fine pitches, notably the crux, but also much scrambling; rock is poor by Avalanche Gully. It thus resembles the Lochnagar Girdle Traverse, and is perhaps of comparable difficulty though only half as long.

—*The Serpent.* 500 ft.
Very Severe. T. W. Patey, A. Will & F. R. Malcolm. July 1961.

A devious route on overhanging upper portion of face left of Red Chimney, meandering into this route halfway up its hitherto-unclimbed upper continuation.

Climb Flanking Ribs route to the prominent Meadow just over one-third way up cliff. At its left extremity a clean-cut 60 ft. V-groove starts 15 ft. up and peters out below the main overhangs. Climb by rib on right and by groove to stance and belay at 60 ft. An awkward spruachle to right gains another small stance in 15 ft. Avoid greasy slabs; descend a few feet, edge up rightwards on good holds to lower lip of greasy inset slab (V.S.). Move round corner on right to grassy ledge close to edge of Red Chimney

below the great unclimbed 200 ft. Upper Dièdre; piton belay. Traverse 20 ft. right, move round prominent corner into a smaller parallel dièdre just within the Red Chimney upper amphitheatre (V.S.). Continue up twin turf cracks to large overhang at top of this dièdre, then swing round overhang (on the right) on undercut holds. Belay above small flying buttress beside Red Chimney wall. Descend a few feet, then go along easy ledge to true bed of Red Chimney. A 30-ft. Severe pitch leads to easier continuation and the top.

Cairn Gorm: Hell's Lum Crag.—*The Wee Devil*. 400 ft. Hard Severe. T. W. Patey and J. M. Taylor. 3rd September 1961.

The route approximates to the well-marked corner or dièdre high on the face between Devil's Delight and Kiwi Slabs. An exposed climb on firm rock.

Start as for Devil's Delight by discontinuous gully just right of lowest rocks, but climb straight to glaciais about 100 ft. up. Reach the foot of the dièdre by short wall 15 ft. right of large detached flake. Piton belay at foot of dièdre. Climb dièdre crack for 15 ft. (wet), then step left on to a great slab. Forty feet higher, traverse slab to its far left edge, then climb a short wall to a comfortable terrace continuous with the Haven farther left (110 ft.). From extreme right end of terrace return to the upper continuation of the dièdre and wedge up a narrow slot (crux). Escape by flake above on to edge overlooking dièdre on the right (60 ft.). Climb 70 ft. directly up edge alongside the overhanging culmination of the dièdre (cairn). Sixty feet of easy rocks follow.

—*Hell's Lump*. 300 ft. Severe. J. R. Marshall & J. Stenhouse (shared leads). September 1961.

On the unclimbed buttress defined by Hell's Lum and Deep Cut Chimney.

Start at pink and green slab 150 ft. right of Hell's Lum; climb a line of quartz up the slab to gain a large flake at 50 ft. Continue by the groove and crack above for 40 ft., move up rightwards to turn the overhangs by alayback crack on the right and gain a grassy bay. Continue to a recess above (60 ft.); follow this, then by cracks and corners, trending slightly rightwards, gain the rib adjoining Deep Cut Chimney (80 ft.); climb the rib to finish in 70 ft. Belays where required.

—*Architrave*. 300 ft. Severe. C. A. Sands & M. Main (Etchachan Club) (through leads). August 1960.

Follows prominent groove in slabs close to right-hand wall of the Corridor recess. Starts up slabby rib left of groove.

Enter groove 100 ft. below bulge and continue over two more bulges until it widens to a chimney; emerge after 200 ft. on to shattered rock and grassy ledges going easily to top.

—*Gangway*. 180 ft. (Mild) Severe. A. Main (Hall Russell M.C.) & M. Main (through leads). August 1961.

Starts from slanting terrace behind The Dagger and goes up the most prominent corner on the slabs.

Go up corner and trend leftwards by two ledges to platform at 100 ft.; piton belay. Climb directly up obvious groove to plateau.

—*The Sheath*. 400 ft. Very Severe.

R. Kerr & A. Kane (both Etchachan Club). 15th November 1961.

Starts up obvious groove right of direct start of The Dagger.

Climb groove for 50 ft. until forced to traverse, right, to small spike. From spike climb up another 20 ft. to big block and piton belay; block is bounded on right by red slab. Go straight up from block on small holds for 30 ft. to small red sloping ledge. Then traverse right, across the red slab, on very delicate holds to small grassy stance (wooden wedge belay). Climb crack from wedge for 20 ft. and then go up on small holds, trending slightly right, to sloping ledge and piton. Continue up a holdless crack in a corner (crux); climb overhang above to good stance and belay. Follow an obvious fault, grassy at first, on right-hand wall, then left wall, to platform below the final slab. Finish by the last pitch of The Dagger.

—*Hellfire Corner, Direct Start*. 200 ft.

Severe. R. Smith & G. Tiso. September 1961.

Climb the most isolated of the obvious cracks running leftwards up the belt of slabs below Hellfire Corner. Arrow at start.

—*The Clean Sweep*. 500 ft. Severe.

R. Smith & G. Tiso. September 1961.

Between the original start to Hellfire Corner (a grass rake) and the Direct Start described above, is a greenish whale-backed buttress. Start from arrow up corner to left of this buttress, then pull up on to buttress and climb cracks to top. Step delicately over the rake, and climb rock, first leftwards over slabs then up grooves and cracks, to huge block belay. Climb twin cracks of fine corner above, overlooking Hellfire Corner. Continue through cracked bulges and corners to the top.

GLENCOE AND ARDGOUR

Beinn Trilleachan, Glen Etive: Etive Slabs.—*The Grasshopper*. 750 ft. Very Severe. J. Stenhouse & J. R. Marshall (shared leads). April 1961.

Starts at arrow 200 ft. right of the flat boulder.

Climb a tongue of brown slabs and a groove to belay at 120 ft. Continue directly for 120 ft. to flake belay; traverse easily left to grassy corner (40 ft.) and piton belay. Descend 15 ft. Climb the wall and make a descending traverse (piton) leftwards to a tree belay (90 ft.). Continue past a higher tree and descend into the Crevasse (100 ft.). (These two pitches are a reversal of Spartan Slab.)

With the aid of the rope, gain a line of holds 10 ft. from the Crevasse, climb to grass and then traverse left under the overhang to the belay of Swastika (60 ft.). Traverse under the lap to a small tree; descend 10 ft.

to a piton and using this and one other traverse below the lower lap to a cave and belay (100 ft.). With the rope's aid, descend to a tree and belay (40 ft.). Traverse left on to the slab and by a descending traverse gain the foot of Agony (80 ft.).

Buachaille Etive Mòr: Central Buttress.—*Plumblin*. 250 ft. Severe. J. Stenhouse & J. R. Marshall (shared leads).

Immediately right of the Waterslide Gully corner is a rib of rock, defined on its right by a shallow grassy depression. The rib is the line of ascent.

Climb a small corner and continue on plentiful holds to a spike belay at 120 ft. Move right, to a steep crack, and climb to a belay near the neck of Waterslide Gully (50 ft.). Finish in 80 ft. by the cracks and slab above.

Aonach Dubh: Lower North-east Nose.—*Spit*. 200 ft. Very Severe. D. Haston & R. Smith. October 1961.

The fairly clean buttress about 80 ft. left of the start of Boomerang, and left of Little Boomerang. Climb by walls and grooves close to the right edge, then near the top go left below a bulge and finish up the crest of the buttress.

West Face, South Wall of 'E' Buttress.—*The Big Top*. 520 ft. Very Severe. R. Smith & J. Gardner (C.D.M.C.). August 1961.

This climb (on 'E' not 'East' Buttress) starts at block belay below left arête of wall.

(1) 110 ft. Go up, then left, for 50 ft., climb a slabby corner, go up right to struggle with large flake and belay on top. (2) 110 ft. Go left on to arête, climb bulge above and continue by crack on edge of arête to an easing of angle. (From here, slabs lead away left to east crest of 'E' Buttress.) (3) 150 ft. Go right and follow diagonal line of slabby grooves overlooking the slab of Trapeze, then go up and left in a 10-ft. crack to a large ledge. (4) 150 ft. Climb monster flake on right, climb wall above first leftwards then rightwards, and traverse right across groove, slab and wall to finish up a broken groove.

Garr Aonach: North Face.—*The Kneepad, Direct Start*. 320 ft. Very Severe. D. Haston & J. Moriarty. May 1961.

Starts below the huge dièdre in the middle of the Lower Tier.

(1) 80 ft. Up wall on left, then traverse right to large flakes. (2) 120 ft. Climb the dièdre for 100 ft., then traverse left on to arête; piton belay. (3) 120 ft. Climb arête to large cave below the piton pitch of The Kneepad.

Garbhenn, Ardgour: South Wall.—*The Peeler*. 180 ft. Very Severe. J. Moriarty & R. Smith. June 1961.

This climb is near the left end of the Upper Tier.

(1) 50 ft. Climb the crest of a flake-rib to share a stance with Sgian Dubh. (2) 130 ft. Traverse rightwards, move up a groove to a small

roof, pull up and leftwards round this and climb a short steep crack which falls back into a groove. Continue for 60 ft. to the top.

ARROCHAR

Beinn Narnain: South Face.—*No Highway.* 70 ft. Very Difficult. I. C. Davies & J. Blair (J.M.C.S.). May 1961.

Starts in small gully by Spearhead Chimney.

By hand traverse on left wall and a move round the corner, reach belay; then go straight up wall above, and continue over rocks above, keeping to left, until top of Spearhead Ridge is reached.

The Cobbler: South Peak.—*Grassy Traverse.* (FIRST WINTER ASCENT.) R. Robb (J.M.C.S.), P. McKenzie & W. Skidmore (Greenock M.C.). 28th January 1962.

Snow and ice and frozen turf; three run-outs; pitons used.

NOTES

Harris Notes

R. B. Evans (Y.M.C.), of Ilkley, in sending us routes printed above in the **New Climbs** section, makes the following observations:—

‘**Strone Ulladale** is a magnificent crag, but the harder possibilities appear impossible. The rock is almost holdless on the steep long right wall and pitons are difficult to place.

‘**Sgùrr Scaladale**, a very accessible crag, is described in the S.M.C. *Islands* Guide as three buttresses and gullies rising from a terrace. In fact, only the crag left of Central Gully is suitable for good climbing; but this is a major rock face 400-600 ft. high, with plenty of scope.’

Rhum Notes

Ruinsval.—Miss Anne Littlejohn (L.S.C.C.), who is combing down Rhum for the new rock climber's Guide, has straightened out a very tangled area and, as well as the climbs in the **New Climbs** section of this issue, sends us the following information on Ruinsval:—

‘As the diagram in the S.M.C. *Islands* Guide is very misleading and the nomenclature confused, these notes may be of assistance in identifying climbs on this fine little cliff.

‘When seen from Harris Lodge the cliffs of Ruinsval consist of three distinct tiers: a lower tier with five buttresses, a middle tier with a wall on the left and three grooves and arêtes on the right, and a summit tier which is as described in the guide book.

‘It is suggested that these features should be named as follows:—

A. Lower Tier, consisting of—

1. North Buttress (formerly *Lower Buttress*).
2. Woden’s Wall.
3. Thor’s Buttress.
4. Frigga’s Buttress.
5. South Buttress.

B. Middle Tier, consisting of—

1. The wall on the left (formerly *Upper Buttress*).
2. The three grooves and arêtes on the right (formerly *Upper Tier*).

C. Summit Tier, as described in the guide book.

‘In passing, it may be mentioned that there is an easy way down from the climbs on the south half of the Lower Tier, between Thor’s and Frigga’s Buttresses, either by the groove on the left or over the large jammed boulder on the right (as one faces the cliff).’

Skye Notes

The Cuillin in Winter.—We have received a most interesting letter from W. L. Wood, of Dumbarton:—

‘Whilst in Glen Brittle I was reading your very concise rock climber’s guide to the Cuillin. In it you say that very little is known about these hills in winter and that the Pinnacle Ridge of Sgùrr nan Gilleann has not been climbed when plastered with snow and ice.

‘With various companions I have lived and climbed for 10 winters in Skye and have done all the tops and ridges in winter (not at one go!). The Pinnacle and West Ridges were done twice in the great winter of 1947 when very much plastered in ice and snow; we also did the direct ascent of the Bhàsteir gorge then, without swimming or traversing.

‘The traverse of the main ridge is easier from north to south, the general standard being comparable to that of the Aonach Eagach or An Teallach, with the following points of interest:—

‘Climb Sgùrr nan Gilleann by the Tourist Route before daylight. The descent of the West Ridge is moderate, the gendarme being easily passed by looping the rope round it and abseiling down the chimney beyond. Begin the descent of Am Bàsteir to the Tooth, on the north side. The descent of the Tooth may be (i) by Shadbolt’s Chimney if entry can be made to the upper passage, the lower cave pitch being abseiled, from a belay well back; (ii) by Naismith’s Route; using a separate loop, the leader abseils to the boulder ledge, the second man to end of traverse from the neck and then making the traverse belayed from the boulder ledge—a sensational route.

‘The Castle Gap goes by the summit route and takes time, being always deep in snow.

‘The north peak of Bidein Druim nan Ramh is easy and the descent into the gap helped by a doubled rope. Combined tactics and/or a piton

may be needed on the lower slabs of the central peak; the upper part goes more easily on slabs left of the arête. The steep pitch on the descent is abseiled. There are no special difficulties on the south peak.

'The traverse of Sgùrr a' Mhadaidh is easy except for the two steep descents, which are abseiled (from a poor belay on the second). The traverse to the Bealach na Banachdich from An Dorus is narrow and very exhilarating in good snow; it involves much step-cutting in the cols.

'The west side of the Inaccessible Pinnacle has been climbed by lassoing the large upright block stone above the sloping ledge—a most exasperating performance. The "easy" ridge can be climbed in three pitches, but I have not come down it.

'Traversing An Stac on the right, the ascent of Sgùrr Mhic Coinnich is not difficult. The quickest and easiest descent to the Sgùrr Thearlaich col is the direct abseil of King's Chimney, with a separate loop; this is quite as sensational as the Naismith descent earlier. In climbing Sgùrr Thearlaich the bottom slabs are avoidable on the right, and the higher one is avoidable on the left; descent to the Stone Shoot is easy on a doubled rope.

'The Thearlaich-Dubh Gap is abseiled on the long side. The ascent of the short side varies according to the depth of snow in the gap; in deep snow the bare bottom section is wiped out. There is usually a fairly easy escape into Coir' a' Ghrunnda if the wall is impossible. The little gap beyond is easily abseiled and there are no difficulties beyond this point.

'I would suggest a 4 A.M. start from Sligachan and a camp on the Glais Mhòr for a rest and a hot meal. Some torchlight "ridging" is essential if the traverse is not to be completed the following day; without laid-on preparations, 2 days is a fair estimate, especially in the short Skye winter days. Good windless weather is of course very necessary. Rope loops, pitons and two lines (of 120-150 ft. and of 100 ft.) are required, and a 30-ft. line has been found very useful in speeding short descents and in lassoing.'

Patey was there this winter, too, and sends this disgruntled note as we go to press:—

'In an abortive winter traverse of the Main Cuillin Ridge on 3rd March 1962, R. Brooke (A.C.) and myself completed the section from Garsbheinn to Sgùrr Dearg. Snow having obliterated the Carbost road we walked to Glen Brittle and were held back for 6 hours by deep soft snow from Glen Brittle to Garsbheinn. Despite the heavy snowfall we were disappointed to find few difficulties on the Main Ridge itself. The harder summer pitches, even in a slight wind, were almost immediately denuded of snow: King's Chimney, the An Stac face and the Inaccessible were all very ordinary. Only the Thearlaich-Dubh Gap carried any ice, and was Severe. I doubt whether satisfactory winter conditions for the Main Ridge ever obtain. By the time new snow consolidates the principal rock features should have lost their winter garb; and although corries and side ridges such as the Pinnacle Ridge may be heavily smothered, the Main Ridge may be almost bare. We took only 6 hours for the section climbed, including stops for photography; the attempt—defeated by lack of bivouac gear and moonlight—followed the second-heaviest snowfall of the winter.'

King's Cave and Clach Glas.—Wood also says: 'As regards rock climbs—you say King's Cave is blocked: but there is a vertical chimney to the roof of the Tooth starting from a chamber at the back of the Cave, above the first pitch. I think Borthwick mentions it in his book. Of B Gully, Clach Glas, you say: *eight pitches, one hard, and then a scramble.* After eight pitches there are about five more, the twelfth requiring combined tactics to reach a ledge on the left wall, from which the bed can be regained. The standard is about (Hard) Very Difficult or Mild Severe.'

An Stac.—The location of a route submitted by Messrs M. Edwards and P. N. Crofton on this hill is in dispute. Would they please contact the Editor again?

Northern Highland Notes

The Upper Connecting Ridge of A'Phoit, Beinn Bhàn, Applecross.—The *Northern Highlands Guide* makes a casual reference to this ridge, bracketing it with the similar connecting ridge above the Cioch; 'difficult pitches will be found getting thence on to the mountain.' In fact, the Cioch connecting ridge is an exposed scramble, and the A'Phoit upper ridge by any logical line is a severe climb. The difficulties might be turned on the left, a very long tedious detour on steep loose grass, but few parties would resort to back-sliding tactics. At the col behind A'Phoit one is confronted by three tiers of sandstone, barring access to the easy more broken ridge above. Climb first tier centrally (30 ft. Difficult). Climb shattered blocks on left to wide ledge below third tier. (The best route might then lie 30 ft. left of the true nose—a clean holdless inset crack—which on this occasion proved too difficult.) Instead, I rounded the nose and climbed a slanting vegetated crack on the North Face. It ended in a wet overhang but a cramped move, right, across a loose flake on the slab led with surprising suddenness to the top of the tier. This route was Severe and there did not appear to be an easier alternative.

T. W. PATEY (13th October 1961).

Sgùrr a' Chaorachain (Applecross): Cioch Upper Rib, Direct Variation.—The upper rib which links the neck behind the Cioch to the top of the ridge was perhaps climbed throughout for the first time in 1952 by T. W. Patey, J. M. Taylor, G. B. Leslie and J. A. Morgan, completing the North Wall route, but was not recorded then through an error. Previous parties are described in the *Guide* as deserting the rib for the rather foul gully on the left, at a point where a wall of 'wonderfully steep rock' bars the way. The wall should on no account be missed, as it is plastered with holds and forms a fitting addition to the Cioch Nose or North Wall routes. Start left of centre from a pedestal trending rightwards till it becomes possible to climb straight up: an 80-ft. Mild Severe pitch.

T. W. PATEY.

Central Highland Notes

Creag Meaghaidh.—Patey sends us, too late for inclusion this issue, details of first winter ascents of **The Last Post** (an obvious line left of and parallel to the South Post) and **Post Horn Gallop** (a diagonal traverse across the main face of Coire Ardair); also the direct ascent of the first pitch of **South Post**. As usual in Coire Ardair these routes are 'worthless in summer' and not recorded from that season. Full details follow next issue, by which time, doubtless, Slessor will have a reply.

Ben Nevis Notes

Càrn Dearg, North-east Face.—A climb, along the lower two-thirds of Harrison's Route, was made by C. G. M. Slessor and N. Tennent early in 1962. Its relation to the earlier ascent by H. Brunton and J. Clarkson is outlined in the footnote to Tennent's article in this issue (p. 233).

Cairngorm Notes

Guide.—The *Climber's Guide to the Cairngorm Area: Vol. I (Northern District): The Cairngorms* is now available. Edited by Malcolm Smith and published by the S.M.C. at 10s. 6d., it is of pocket size and contains some 235 pages and many diagrams. This volume embraces the Cairngorms proper; Volume II will deal with Lochnagar, Broad Cairn and the Glen Clova areas. Short (100-120 ft.) climbs are not included, the editor regarding them as being at the moment irrelevant in so rich an area; the 'best and most enjoyable' routes are specified. [This is not a review—pace the Hon. Guide Books General Editor: just a gentlemanly advertisement.]

Càrn Etchachan, Lochside Chimney.—H. Spencer and M. Main, of the Etchachan Club, report the FIRST WINTER ASCENT on 28th January 1962. All pitches were covered with soft snow; the standard was Grade I and the time 1½ hours.

Cairn Gorm, Hell's Lum Crag, White Ewe.—This is the name given to a new climb by B. W. Robertson, Mrs B. Hutcheson and D. Hutcheson on 24th December 1961. This was a FIRST WINTER ASCENT also, and was Grade I, 400 ft. The line lies 250 ft. left of Hell's Lum. They climbed 100 ft. diagonally right, 150 ft. up over ice and rock and then again diagonally right for 100 ft. to the cornice. The plateau was reached 50 ft. later.

Glencoe and Ardour Notes

Ben Trilleachan, Glen Etive.—R. B. Evans, of Ilkley, writes:—

'I was very pleased to see descriptions of the Trilleachan Slabs in the 1961 *Journal*. In years past descriptions of these routes have been like gold. There is one point, I think, which is wrong: you state that Sickle, after pitch 4, takes the easiest line up the crag. The pioneer's pitch 7 took

a steep wall with aid from a piton. It appears that the easiest line would continue the leftwards traverse of pitch 6 to easier ground, below the steep wall of pitch 7; the standard would probably be Severe. I haven't done this, but it appeared the easy way. It probably is not worth bothering about, as Sickle is the most grassy and the least worthy of the climbs on Beinn Trilleachan.'

Garbh Bheinn, Ardgour.—*Great Gully, Left-hand Fork.*—The last pitch was left unclimbed in Murray's book (*Undiscovered Scotland*, p. 22: W. H. Murray. Dent: 1951) and its subsequent history has been obscure. As described in the *S.M.C.J.*, xxv (1954), 243-4, the left fork was climbed in 1952 by W. Scrimgeour and a novice, with Scott Johnstone and Ransley following later. In 1953 D. H. Haworth and Miss J. Tester made the first direct ascent of the 100-ft. vertical chimney, the last pitch, finding the final 30 ft. to be Very Severe.

This was unknown to J. C. Macleay (Inverness M.C.) and A. D. Forbes (G.U.M.C.), who also climbed this last pitch in September 1961; they, too, considered it Very Severe. Because there has appeared no other description of the route, we give their account:

'From the gully fork easy scrambling leads to an evil-looking deep-cut chimney, with a cave at 70 ft. The lower part is hard and strenuous. After 10 ft. of the gully bed, a flake rib in the middle was climbed direct for 10 ft.; thereafter a back-and-knee led up to below the overhang. A piton high up on the right in a good crack provided a key, and a second cave was entered. A runner at the back gave moral support; a good hold above this second overhang enabled the climb to be completed. An exit was made by bridging outwards in the gully until a difficult step could be made out on to the right wall and thence on to the ridge 10 ft. below the apex of the pitch. The gully was generally wet and dirty, with much loose rubble and insecure holds; some gardening was done.'

Southern Highland Notes

Beinn Chuirn.—The two gullies in the eastern corrie of this hill (beside Ben Lui) are described in the *Southern Highlands Guide* as 'vegetable and rather unsatisfactory.' However, at the end of January this year they offered good winter sport to four members of a new Ayrshire club, the KYLE MOUNTAINEERING CLUB, of Saltcoats. B. Bain and E. Whitelaw climbed the right-hand (wide) one in four hours, cutting most of the way and finding the angle much the same as in the Central Gully of Ben Lui. The left-hand gully was much narrower and steeper, especially at the top; it took M. Boyle and R. Mann some 5 hours and was 'very much tougher' than the Lui climb.

MISCELLANEOUS NOTES

Minor Outcrops.—Dr Gribbon sends us notes of some problems he has come across, too minor perhaps to be printed under their regional

notes, but deserving of record. In the **Southern Highlands** region we have Craiglug, N.W. face; this is $\frac{1}{2}$ mile N.W. of Dairsie, on the Cupar-Newport road, Fife. 'Although not more than 30 ft. high, there are more than a dozen short hard problems. As a local outcrop it is much better than Buddo Rock, the Maiden and cliffs on Lomond Hills near Strathmiglo—listed in Pyatt's *Where to Climb in Britain*.' (This crag was first explored by J. Baines and T. R. Wilkinson, from Leuchars.) In the **Central Highlands** region, on the Tullymet road, by Ballinluig, $\frac{3}{4}$ mile from the main Dunkeld-Pitlochry road, there is a 70-ft. high, 60-yd. long cliff of high standard, overhanging in its middle section; it is 5 minutes' walk from the road. Two routes have been done: (1) a prominent wide crack on the left (Difficult), and (2) a Severe overhanging chimney leading to a ledge and nest, followed by a right traverse and a short overhang.

More on Munros.—Last issue we 'welcomed brief notes on the subject.' They have arrived, and we print a list below of all those baggers whose credentials have been checked by Mr Eric Maxwell and who did not appear last time. Mr Maxwell is an acknowledged authority on the subject, and his drily entertaining accounts are familiar to all readers of the *Grampian Club Bulletin*. He has been persuaded to add a note here as well, an historical and benign presentation of the syndrome.

Munroitis

'Oh!—A Peakbagger!' they say, thus placing you irrevocably below the salt, as one who climbs not for the pure and refined joy of climbing, but for the sordid pleasure of doing better than one's fellows. It must be admitted straight away that there is something in this (though by no means as much as is made out), but it seems to be a pretty general human failing to do something individual, whether it is collecting first editions, swimming the Channel, never missing the 8.15 or climbing all the Munros.

The defence, however, is strong enough to disregard all this. What do they know of Scotland, those whose area is confined to Buachaille Etive Mòr, Nevis, Skye or Arrochar? Your peakbagger ranges far and wide, from Ben Hope to Ben Lomond, from Mount Keen to Sgùrr na Banachdich, seeing much on the way and frequently being seduced out of the way by such sirens as Suilven or Farragon (despite his detractors, he probably climbs more 'inferior' hills than they do). Being of an enquiring frame of mind, he does not merely go up and down a hill, he explores it, goes down a different way, and remembers its features years afterwards. And who can fairly blame him if, when he gets within reach of the goal, he talks about it and his 'last eight' or so? He has done a good deal before he gets there.

It is as well to make some distinction between the Munroists and the Toppers. Without going into the classification of Munros and Tops (which was, as he himself stated, the personal decision of H. T. Munro) it is clear that the Topper does about twice as much as the Munroist and sees twice as much. In some cases, such as An Teallach, he gains immeasurably, and

although a few tops are admittedly as dull as ditchwater, he gathers a much more detailed knowledge of the hills and at the same time has much more enjoyment.

One argument that should flatten the knowledgeable attacker is to point out the eminent and respected names that occur in connection with the Tables and the list of Munroists. One cannot omit H. T. M. himself, although he failed by three to complete the list, nor those two other great topographers Colin Phillip and Professor Heddle, who opened the mountains to us, whatever our climbing bent.

The Tables first appeared in the *S.M.C.J.* in September 1891, and 10 years later A. E. Robertson completed all the Munros. This was a considerable achievement—travel before the days of the internal combustion engine was a laborious matter and the hills were scarcely known. Although the *S.M.C.* was flourishing by then, no one equalled Robertson's record for 22 years when Burn became the first to climb all the tops as well. Only six more Munroists appeared before the Second World War; since then there has been a flood which shows no sign of decreasing and such invidious claims as 'done in the shortest time' have begun to appear. No doubt we shall soon hear of the first grandmother, the first in sand-shoes, or even the first with hands-in-pockets!

The 'sport' can of course be extended to the tops deleted from Munro's first edition and to those which some people think should be included, to say nothing of 'Corbochartys,' Donalds and the inferior hills outwith Scotland. Five people have climbed all the tops over 3000 ft. in Great Britain and Ireland (this includes Docharty, who, of course, has climbed everything).

In the last number of the *Journal* is a list compiled by the author of all the Munroists he could find up to 1958. The following additions and emendations have since come to hand (after name comes completion date of (a) Munros, (b) Tops, (c) similar 3000-ft. hills in rest of British Isles):—

Emendations.—(13) W. M. Docharty, 1948, 1948, 1949; (21) P. L. J. Heron, 1954, —, 1956.

Additions.—(29) Anon., Edinburgh, 1956; (30) A. McKenzie, 1957; (31) G. Peat, 1957; (32) J. Watt, 1957; (33) A. McKenzie, 1958; (34) J. C. Grant, 1959, —, 1961; (35) T. P. Kemp, 1959; (36) Mrs Anon., Edinburgh, 1960; (37) Mrs M. J. Linklater-Shirras, 1960; (38) Miss A. I. Littlejohn, 1960, 1960, 1960; (39) Miss A. D. Miller, 1960, —, 1961; (40) T. Nicholson, 1960, 1961; (41) Mrs K. M. Watson, 1960; (42) J. R. Watson, 1960; (43) J. C. Donaldson, 1961; (44) P. A. Larder, 1961, —, 1961; (45) P. Tranter, 1961.

The author (who may be reached through the Hon. Editor) will be grateful for information, preferably detailed, from any others who 'do,' or have already 'done,' the lot.

E. MAXWELL.

There are many enthusiastic eaters-of-bens, and possibly the one with so far the greatest appetite and (we hope) digestion is Mr P. A. Larder. Last issue he was gulping at great speed. He now seems to have finished,

but claims to have put down 'all the 277 Munros' in 16 months and 'all the 294 mountains over 3000 ft.' in the British Isles in 17½ months. Much more interesting than this menu-bashing, however, are his post-prandial ruminations. He climbed 260 Munros solo, and on 237 of them saw nobody; 219 summit stones were free from mist. C. E. Willes-Johnson (J.M.C.S.) has also climbed most of his Munros alone—being a journalist, he writes, he finds it difficult to find companions . . . (however, he has to work weekends!). There must, in the diaries of Munroists, be much fascinating information on weather conditions and other Natural Phenomena: let us be spared the prowess of the physical Ego (shades of 'great-bladdered Emer' . . .) and let us have *these* records from the peering cairn-whistlers.

Metros.—An amusing article in the Winter 1961 *C.H.A. Magazine* discusses the impact of the Common Market on Munros. With feet devalued to metres the number of *ein-tausender* tops is 239, with 130 separate 'Metros.' Further details are given, but the enthusiast with his slide-rule may calculate the rest for himself, and contemplate his conveniently diminished throng.

Power and the Glens.—The difficulties of Munro-devouring are increased by the thoughtless interruptions of lochs conscripted or created by the 'Hydro-Board.' Following one's (latest) O.S. map hungrily to the cairn, one steps into a sheet of water blandly ignored and, if one is not careful, drowns oneself or loses oneself. . . . Messrs Bartholomew are more helpful in their latest maps, but it would seem the O.S. regards these new lochs as deep secrets. However, some indication of the Emperor's lochs is permissible and the Hon. Guide Books General Editor gives this information below. Further details may doubtless be obtained from Washington or Moscow, whose agents disguised as tourists swarm on the hills with cameras and maps, or from the Secretaries of the local Guerrilla forces.

Guide Book Information and Hydro-electric Schemes

The North of Scotland Hydro-Electric Board has constructed new lochs, or enlarged existing ones, in many Scottish glens. In some areas this has considerably altered the access routes to the hills given in our District Guide Books, as former roads and tracks have been flooded or through-routes interrupted. However, some areas are now more easy of access, due to the construction of access roads or the improvement of old ones. As most of the alterations have come about since the production of the current editions of the Guides, these no longer contain up-to-date information for certain areas.

The 7th Series 1-inch-to-1-mile O.S. map, which has now replaced the *Popular Edition*, does not show all of the new or enlarged lochs, but only those existing before the revision. It may be several years before the new information is shown on them and this is unfortunate, as many folk frequenting the hills rely on them to a great extent. Fortunately, all

the new lochs and some of the ancillary works are shown on the most recent issues of Messrs Bartholomew's *½-inch Series*, and these should certainly be consulted if one is not familiar with the developments in the particular area one intends to visit. Note that only the most recent maps should be obtained and, to be safe, insist on new stock, as Bartholomew's maps are frequently revised.

The following notes will draw attention to places where new works have significantly affected access and especially to places where our Guide Book information may possibly be misleading. Note that only these areas are referred to: many reservoirs exist which do not affect access and therefore are not mentioned below.

Reference to new roads, tracks, etc., and such phrases as 'improved walking access' in the following notes must not be taken to imply that there is any public right-of-way over any of the new works.

SOUTHERN HIGHLANDS

Chapter VII: Beinn Bhuidhe, Lorne and Knapdale.—Reservoir at the head of Glen Shira not shown on the 1-inch map. Construction access roads shown. Improved foot access to Beinn Bhuidhe.

Chapter XIII: The Dochart Group.—Construction access roads lead well up into the corries from Glen Dochart and Glen Lochay. Not shown on the 1-inch map, but easily seen from the glens.

Chapter XIV: The Forest of Mamlorn Group.—*Glen Lochay approach.*—Much improved public road as far as Kenknock. Thereafter several construction access roads improve walking access to Beinn Heasgarnich and Creag Mhòr. *Glen Lyon approach.*—Public road now ends at Lubreoch. Former continuation to Invermeran inundated by new reservoir, not shown on the 1-inch map. No path along either side of the loch, which extends to the watershed. This does not affect the access to Beinn Heasgarnich, but Creag Mhòr, always a long excursion from this side, is now probably too far away from the road-end to be practicable.

Chapter XVIII: The Loch Lyon Hills.—*Glen Lyon approach.*—(See above.) The hills are now not really approachable from this side. Use the approach from the Auch side (see Guide). The through route from Glen Lyon to Auch is now an arduous expedition, due to lack of paths along the loch. Other reservoirs in the area, although not shown on the 1-inch map, do not significantly affect normal access to the hills.

CENTRAL HIGHLANDS

Chapter II: Ben Cruachan.—A new reservoir is being built in Coire Cruachan. An access road from near Loch Awe Hotel slants up into the corrie, and it is to be hoped that public walking access will be permitted along this when work is finished. It will be a lot longer, but much less steep, than the route up from Falls of Cruachan Halt.

WESTERN HIGHLANDS

(Full details will be included in the forthcoming Guide)

Glen Garry.—Reservoirs here are enlargements of existing lochs. Enlargements are not shown on the 1-inch map. New road, made necessary by flooding of former Tomdoun-Cluanie road, is not shown on the map, but is shown on 1962 Bartholomew's $\frac{1}{2}$ -inch and motoring association handbooks.

Loch Garry: No significant alteration to access to the hills. *Loch Quoich:* Now extends to the west as far as the watershed. *Access is very badly affected to all points west from Glen Cosaidh.* The former driving road (of sorts!) to Kinlochquoich Lodge is now inundated and no path replaces it. Rough going now from the Kinloch Hourn road (bridge N.G.R. 995035 approx.) to Glen Cosaidh. The Amhainn Chosaidh is difficult to ford in quite moderate spate and may require a safety rope. Serious thought should be given to the possibility of being cut off on the return journey if the area is visited at times of high water. Under high spate conditions the river is impossible to ford for several miles upstream, and there is no practical alternative as the streams on the south side of the loch are also large and are likewise unbridged.

The best access to several of the hills on the Sgùrr Mòr-Sgùrr na Ciche Ridge is now by way of Loch Arkaig and Glen Dessary. Public driving road of a sort to the head of Loch Arkaig. Very rough estate road for two or three miles thereafter. At the time of writing permission can usually be obtained to use this road, except during the stalking season, but there is no general right of access over it.

Glen Loyne.—New reservoir here is not shown on the 1-inch map. The former Tomdoun-Cluanie road is inundated in Glen Loyne. The two halves provide useful walking access, but to join them up involves a long boggy circuit round the head of the loch. The new road from Loch Garry to Glen Moriston *via* Glen Loyne does not open up significant new access.

Glen Cannich.—Loch Mullardoch and Loch Lungard are now one. This union is shown on the 1-inch map. Consult the map in conjunction with the old Guide when planning an excursion, as the instructions in the Guide, if taken alone, could lead to long walks! In general all routes leading from or to the old Benula Lodge are very badly affected. A path was constructed along the north side of the loch, but has now apparently reverted to nature; heavy going.

Glen Strathfarrar.—Loch Monar is in process of being greatly enlarged and will extend about three miles up Strath More. This will render foot access to Patt Lodge difficult and so seriously affect the through route to Attadale *via* Loch Calavie and the ascent of An Riabhachan, etc., by way of the Allt Riabhachan. Not yet on any map.

Glen Orrin.—A new reservoir here is not shown on the 1-inch map. It inundates part of the old track, but probably does not affect normal access to any notable hill, as most are best approached from the Strathfarrar side.

NORTHERN HIGHLANDS

Chapter XI: Loch Broom to Strath Oykell.—There is now a large reservoir in the valley of the Glascarnoch River between Loch Droma (itself enlarged) and Altguish Inn (also enlarged since the Guide!). The approach to Am Faohagach from the Dirrie More road may, at times of high-water level, be rendered rather more circuitous and boggy, but is not seriously affected. There is a smaller reservoir in Strath Vaich which may complicate the access to the above-named hill and Càrn Gorm-loch; it depends on the route chosen.

Some construction access roads lead from near Loch Droma well up into the northern corries of the Fannichs and may provide some useful walking access. Details are not known to the writer at the moment.

MUNRO'S TABLES

Information under *Best Ascended From* should be treated with caution and checked with the above notes. One-inch O.S. map numbers are now out of date, as the new 7th Series sheet boundaries are quite different from the former Popular Edition.

G. SCOTT JOHNSTONE,
February 1962.

More on Access.—Those who regard as unjustified the present concern about restrictive commercialisation of mountain sport should consider the report that a certain Aberdeenshire ski-ing club has, as from next year, been forbidden to run its own small rope-tows in a most popular ski-ing area hitherto open without question to all. The landlord now said to be denying them that privilege will next year have his own large commercial tow in operation. It is ironic that the enterprise of those more interested in the hills than in the money should be turned against them once they have shown the way. It will be interesting to see whether access to the hills for ski-ing itself will become as restricted. After all, shooting and big fishing on the hills, two older commercial enterprises, have long been restricted to those fortunate enough to be able to pay for them. With a little legal ingenuity surely impertinent ski-ing over the Development Company's *pistes* or corries could be construed as POACHING. . . . Since this particular landlord owns many mountains over 3000 ft. even peakbagging innocents may eventually come within the hands of Justice and be forced either to buy their Munros by the pound or break them up in Peterheid. Seriously, we counsel climbers to keep a careful eye on developments of this nature. It can all start with a ticket for a ski tow or for a car park.

Cleated Rubber Soles.—We have received a courteous note from Messrs I.T.S. Rubber Ltd., Petersfield, Hants, England, makers of the deservedly popular Itshide 'Commando' soles, regretting the use in climbing circles of the term *vibrams* to cover all makes of cleated rubber sole. This cannot now be avoided. The name is fixed, but bears, in common usage, no reference to any specific make. Messrs I.T.S. Rubber Ltd. accepted this explanation, and hinted at some interesting future developments of their product. Climbers will continue to use the sole they have found the most satisfactory no matter what its official trade name, or country of origin, may be. One point may be worth making regarding slips with these soles; many such slips are due to the soles being placed on wet slabs as if they were nailed—i.e., edge on—instead of being placed flat and placed on and removed as deliberately as if they were crampons.

The Nineteenth Century.—In the last *Journal* we stated that, with the sad loss of Workman, the Club's link with the last century was broken. Happily, this is not so. Arthur W. Russell, who joined the Club in 1896, is very much with us, and we offer our sincere apologies for not checking the mistaken information.

The Nineteen Sixties.—There is no need to stress the rigours of an Editorial life even if confined, as must be the present one, to a single Volume: but the painful necessity of wringing blood out of stones is exacerbated by the angularity of certain stones: small wonder, then, if sometimes the only blood that results is the Editor's. Two good examples now follow.

We all know that some members prefer to be addressed as *Dear Mr McDrool*; others as *Dear McDrool*. To prophesy the preference of an unknown correspondent is a considerable task. Last year the Editor was guilty of a bad judgment here; this year he had a similar lapse with another correspondent. The answering rebukes happily illustrate either (a) the astonishing self-importance of McDrools generally, or (b) that we still have characters as pleasantly individual as in the good old days.

Here are extracts from the respective letters, with the name *McDrool* suitably inserted in both:

Letter I, from correspondent A:

'By the way, please do not address me as *Dear Mr McDrool*. I am a member of your Club, not your customer.'

Letter II, from correspondent B:

'Never, never, use *Dear McDrool* if you wish to get anything out of me again. It has always made my childish blood boil, no matter who or what the writer.'

The Library and Slide Collection.—Besides the *Journals*, there are two other possessions of the Club that link us to the silent voices and the snows of yester-year: the Club Library and the Club Slide Collection.

Study of these is not passive nostalgia or necrophilia, but a view of the mountains from their fourth and most fascinating dimension. Here are notes on the history and present condition of the collections, by their respective custodians.

The Club Library

It was decided, at the first A.G.M. of the Club, in 1890, 'to spend £10 to £20 on the acquisition of Ordnance Survey maps and such maps as embraced the most hilly parts of the country.' Within 5 months the nucleus of the Library was thus formed, together with 'several other books presented by members' and the promise of the Alpine Club 'to send the Club a copy of the *Alpine Journal* as issued.' A further suggestion by Sir Hugh Munro that 'members be recommended to send in to the Hon. Librarian a plain map (Bartholomew's 10-inch was suggested) on which are traced in ink all the walks or noteworthy excursions undertaken by the member sending the map,' soon brought in several marked maps, which, alas, have long been lost.

The first Librarian was Mr Gilbert Thomson, one of the three co-founders of our Club, and it was kept in a room in his offices at 75 Bath Street, Glasgow. What the first 'several books' were is not stated, nor indeed are the first 'Additions to the Library' recorded until 1894. At the 1891 A.G.M. 'the Librarian placed on the table a handsome album which had been acquired for the insertion of photographs taken by members of the Club, already containing photographs by W. Douglas and J. Rennie.' This album is probably one of the three such that are still in the Library to-day. Unfortunately, the first six books reviewed in the *Journal* are missing from the Library, so the earliest-known acquisition we still have from these far-off days is Whymper's *Travels among the Great Andes of the Equator*, published in 1892.

Kindred Club Journals soon began to come in. The *Cairngorm Club Journal*, No. 1, was received with consternation by the reviewer [see under **Books**, this issue—Hon. Ed.]. Happily, his fears were groundless. The first number of the *New Zealand Alpine Journal*, received in 1893, was probably sent on by Joseph Gibson Stott, of Club Song fame who had emigrated there the previous year. The set is complete to date.

Even by 1901 the Library only contained 22 books and 10 Kindred Club Journals, but with the transfer of the Clubroom to 39 Dowell's Rooms, George Street, Edinburgh, under the Librarianship of F. S. Goggs, the Library quickly grew. By 1903 additions brought the numbers up to 300, the majority being presented by members. (*Members*, 1962, *please note*!) In these days the books and other publications belonging to the Club were kept under lock and key, 'and after use are to be returned to their places, the bookcase locked and the key returned to the Hon. Librarian'!

In 1909 the Clubroom and Library moved to the top flat in No. 12 Castle Street, Edinburgh, considered by contemporaries of its 20-year sojourn there to be the most central and best of all the Clubrooms we have had. Further moves were made in 1929 to 3 Forres Street; in 1935 to a

large room in the Synod Hall, Castle Terrace, and in 1948 to a smaller room in the same Halls. These two latter rooms, the only premises available at the time at a reasonable rent, were, unfortunately, quite unsuitable for the functions of a Library as a room for quiet relaxation, and a Clubroom for mutual fellowship. The peace of the first was continually disturbed by the sound-projector of the cinema through the wall, and the second was so small and dingy as to be completely unattractive, and consequently interest in the Library and the Clubroom moved to its lowest ebb, accelerated by the second world war and its aftermath. Sandy Wedderburn and G. C. Williams, the contemporary Librarians, were the luckless inheritors of the situation, and were in no way to blame. The story of the coming into being of the present Clubroom at 369 High Street, Edinburgh, in 1959, has recently been graphically told at some length (*S.M.C.J.* (1960), xxvii, 32). Under Frank Bennett's able direction the major operation of transferring the Library from the former bookcases to wall shelves was competently accomplished, and it has merely fallen to the present Librarian to re-plan their sectionalising and prepare a catalogue, the first published since 1907. To-day the Library contains some 1000 books, excluding Kindred Club Journals.

Let it be frankly admitted that the Library is an 'old' one: nearly half of it being books published prior to 1900. It is a fair guess, however, that, apart from the Alpine Club Library, it is one of the biggest private collections of books on mountains, and those of Scotland in particular: their geography, topography, geology, botany and meteorology, not omitting technique in the conquest of their more inaccessible sides. Our Library, too, contains a valuable consecutive picture of Scotland from prehistoric times to the present century in the many historical volumes on its shelves. These, along with descriptions of tours made through Scotland from as far back as 1629, and guide-and road-books ranging from 1782 onwards, give an interesting insight into the history, cultural and social conditions of these bygone days and their antiquities. While there are no books of outstanding value, there are many classed as 'rare,' and include some published before the Jacobite Rising in 1745.

The founding and early history of our Club makes fascinating reading in the early volumes of the *Journal*, and this set, and those of the various Kindred Clubs, tell the story of mountaineering in Britain from its early simplicity to the feats of technique which to-day characterise our sport.

Brief mention has already been made of maps in the Library. The present collection is, unfortunately, old, comprising the 1-inch hachured hill-shaded edition of the O.S. to Scotland, and an incomplete $\frac{1}{2}$ -inch Bartholomew's set. It is a debatable point whether the purchase of a complete set of the new 1-inch O.S., though very desirable, is financially justifiable, considering the amount of use that might be made of them, and without adequate safeguards regarding their availability and borrowing. It can be argued, however, that the *mountains* do not change, and if up-to-date sheets of the areas most affected by Hydro-Electric Schemes and new access roads were purchased, such a compromise might meet the situation. [But see p. 288—HON. ED.]

The Guide Books in the Library are gradually being brought up to date. Apart from the complete set of our own Guides, the Fell & Rock and Climbers' Club Guides to the Lake District and Wales have recently been purchased, as well as some of the newer Guides to the Swiss Alps. One or two local Guide Books to rock-climbing districts in England and Ireland are also in the collection.

Reference to the Classified Sections in the Foreword to the 1962 Catalogue will show at a glance the extent of the Library in its international and practical mountaineering scope, to which new books are continually being added. The Librarian would be most grateful if suitable books not in the Catalogue could be donated by members, old and young, from their private collections, if they can be spared.

It is hoped that this short article will arouse fresh interest in an aspect of the Club which has not, for many years, received the attention from members that its nature and scope deserves.

ADDITIONS TO THE LIBRARY

Section numbers in parentheses—(9) *Alpinisme Hivernale* (Kurz); (6b) *Airborne to the Mountains* (Mills); (24) *The Alps* (Noyce); (6c) *White Mountain and Tawny Plain* (Hauser); (9a) *On Climbing* (Evans) (presented by Edwin Ker); (26) *Grisedale, Deepdale and Dovedale Climbs* (Sheffield M.C.); (21) *Weekend Walks round Glasgow* (Ledingham); (26) *Guide to the Rock Climbs on the Cliffs of the N.E. Coast of Scotland* (Etchachan Club); (20) *Kintail, Balmacara and Falls of Glomach* (Scott-Moncrieff); (4) *No Picnic on Mount Kenya* (Benuzzi); (21) *Pentland Hills, Paths and Passes* (Smith); (16) *Guide to Staffa* (Macdonald); (24) *Mountain World, 1960-61*.

Current Journals from Kindred Clubs—*Alpine Journal*; *Cairngorm Club*; *Rucksack Club*; *Fell & Rock C.C.*; *Oxford Mountaineering*; *M.A.M. Journal*; *Himalayan Club*; *Ladies' Alpine Club*; *Cambridge Mountaineering*; *Pinnacle Club*; *Canadian Alpine Club*; *New Zealand Alpine Club*; *Mountain Club of South Africa*; *Harvard M.C.*; *Edinburgh University M.C.*; *Appalachian Club*; *Tararua Tramping Club*; *Iowa Climber*; *Sierra Club*; *D.A.V. Yearbook*; *Italian Alpine Club*; *Wierchy*; *Climbers' Club*; *Jugend am Berg*; *Lancashire Caving & Climbing Club*.

R. GALL INGLIS.

Slide Collection

Since the first *Journal* was published in 1890 we have a continuous record of the activities, background and personalities of the Club excellently portrayed in articles by the literary experts. Yet, after reading through some of these articles, I ask myself—what did the Club members look like when in action on the hills? Is the climbing equipment of to-day anything like that used by Naismith in 1890 or by Bell in 1930? In the Club's collection of slides these questions, and more, are at once answered: the change of the times made evident, the affairs of the Club reflected and the records of the *Journals* brought to life.

Some day, someone is going to write the S.M.C. story; I myself would like to build up such a story with photographs from the Slide Collection, for to-day we have the raw material in these 4000 slides so well described by Grieve some years ago (*S.M.C.J.* (1956), xxvi, 29). Here, again, is a brief review of this unique collection.

The majority of the plates in the collection were taken during the 20 years up to 1910 by such talented photographers as W. Douglas, W. Inglis Clark, H. MacRobert, A. E. Robertson, J. H. Buchanan and W. Lamond Howie, who thought nothing of carrying 35 lb. of photographic equipment with them into the hills. These members contributed many beautifully composed slides of Scotland's Highlands and Islands, Lochs and Glens, slides of the Alps, records of Club meets and life and action shots on the mountains.

In 1892 we have a plate taken on the first ascent of the Black Shoot of Ben Eunaich, one of the early problems, which went to Gibson, Naismith, Lester and Douglas after three previous parties had failed. There are plates depicting activity at the Ben Nevis Observatory with ponies tethered beside it, and in Skye, which was tremendously popular during this period, we see J. MacKenzie, the guide and pioneer, with Collie, and a series of the much-talked-about Coruisk Climbers' Camp of 1897, complete with spades and bags of coke. 1901 shows the Peak Bagger himself (A. E. Robertson) having completed all the 'Munros' (doing 75 in the space of 3 months); about this time Edinburgh's Salisbury Crags received a lot of attention, and W. Inglis Clark provides us with action slides showing various techniques, some of them being executed by H. Raeburn. Raeburn set many standards in his mountaineering career and it is a pity that there are very few photographs of him.

From 1920 the yield of slides from photographic mountaineers has been small, and if it were not for P. Donald, S. F. M. Cumming and latterly Grieve and some others, there would be very few. However, we do have some plates to prevent the chain from parting. In 1926 we witness the opening of the Charles Inglis Clark Memorial Hut, that haven to so many of us.

The early thirties saw greater activity and an improvement of climbing standards, an improvement that is still going on to-day and one of which we are very conscious. In the Cairngorms we have an ascent of the Mitre Ridge of Ben a' Bhuid, while in Glencoe we see Agag's Groove on the Rannoch Wall of Buachaille Etive Mòr being climbed by J. F. Hamilton and party, and farther down the glen the ascent of Clachaig Gully by Murray, Dunn, McAlpine and Marskell after many notable parties had retreated. Snow and ice-climbing was then becoming very popular and is represented by plates showing Arch Gully on Stob Coire nam Beith being climbed. Yet during this period there is a marked absence of climbing photographs in the collection: surely such photographs must have been taken. . . .

The fifties are better represented, with photographs in Skye of ascents on Cioch Upper Buttress, Crack of Double Doom, Integrity, and on Sgùrr Mhic Coinnich, Fluted Buttress and Crack of Dawn. Glencoe provides

some climbing shots on the Buachaille Etive Mòr, Aonach Dubh and Stob Coire nan Lochan.

This brings us to the present, when the Club's climbers are proving that they are just as good as 'thae Continentals,' every year producing a crop of new climbs of the highest standard. Some are recorded on film by the modern camera, and because of numerous requests for action shots I am trying to get copies made for the collection.

Now that the 3½-inch plate has been superseded by the 2-inch slide, 100 of the historical plates that were beginning to age have been made into 2-inch slides at a cost of £35, and a cabinet with a capacity of 500 slides was purchased for £15 from Stuart Jack's donation. This has been a great help.

But there are still plates to be reduced and many gaps to be filled—in the 2-inch collection there are only 200 Scottish slides and one can well imagine the gaps there. I would, therefore, be most grateful for the loan or donation of negatives from you readers who have good shots taken over the past 60 years, records of historical events and vanished scenes (and there must be many to-day when the face of Scotland is changing and your favourite haunts are being submerged), shots of climbs, attempted climbs, camps and life on the mountains. Indeed, anything that you feel would be of interest and should be included in the collection.

J. W. STENHOUSE.

Scottish Mountain Accidents, 1961

IN this twelve-month period there were 42 incidents, involving 11 deaths. All except two minor ones are summarised below. From a M.R.C. report given at a meeting of the A.S.C.C., it would seem that, of those people concerned whose ages are known, twenty-nine were aged 20 or under, ten were between 20 and 25, and only six were over 25.

1ST JANUARY.—Jean Thomson (25), Glasgow, descending from Stobinian to bealach below Ben More, slipped with snow down steep corrie to east; buried to neck in snow. Minor injuries; carried down by own party.

7TH JANUARY.—David Todd, Neil Keith and Robert Gow (all under 26), from Glasgow area, climbing last pitch of Crowberry Gully, Buachaille Etive Mòr; Gow was avalanched and pulled off other two, all falling some 1000 ft. Gow went over cliffs, but rope snagged and other two landed near each other; both injured, Keith seriously, but managed to reach their tent on the Moor. Todd went to Kingshouse for help. Hamish McInnes and David Agnew (C.D.M.C.) went up gully in dangerous conditions that night and located body; on descent, they were avalanched for 160 ft. Next day McInnes and Constable Whillans dropped body to Leuchars Rescue Team below.

21ST JANUARY.—Iain Drinnan (20) fell some 200 ft. on Ben More. Local party out, found him at midnight; back and eye injuries.

27TH JANUARY.—Peter McNicol (22) fell on Beinn an Eòin (Wester Ross); back injury.

3RD FEBRUARY.—Andrew Hutchison, Fife, tripped on easy part of Aonach Eagach, Glencoe; serious eye injury. Local shepherds helped him down and rescued his panicked companion.

6TH FEBRUARY.—Leuchars team out to a benightment on the above ridge; no serious injuries—party had underestimated conditions.

25TH FEBRUARY.—Marion Smith, Edinburgh U.M.C., lost control descending Càrn Dearg, S.W. of Ben Nevis. Minor injury.

8TH MARCH.—Alexander Duncan (20) and Robert Allen, climbing on Thomson's Buttress of Coire an t-Sneachda, Cairn Gorm. Detached block fell on leader's rope, pulled him off and started stone fall which injured Allen. Quite serious injuries. Rescue by Glenmore Lodge instructors.

19TH MARCH.—Two students on Tower Ridge of Ben Nevis had not returned by 11 P.M., so police informed. Rescue teams preparing to leave in morning when missing men arrived. At East Traverse, the crampons of one had broken; in vibrams descent was slow and torch had failed.

19TH MARCH.—Hugh Martin (20), Greenock, fell on Cobbler climb; broken ankle. Local party out.

19TH MARCH.—William Thomson, Fife (Perth M.C.), and novice were late coming off Bidean nam Bian; had traversed above normal path to corrie. Thomson lowering companion down when latter slipped and pulled Thomson off, to scree 60 ft. below. Body found by the McInneses and shepherds.

22ND AND 23RD MARCH.—Two minor injuries to English visitors on Ben Nevis; hospital treatment.

26TH MARCH.—William Stephen (17) fell when climbing Black Spout Gully of Lochnagar alone; fractured ribs and other injuries. Taken down by other climbers.

26TH MARCH.—Robert Lorne (30) slipped when scrambling round A' Chrois caves; minor injuries. Local party out.

2ND APRIL.—D. H. McPherson (S.M.C.) slipped and fell whilst descending gully on Five Sisters of Kintail; minor injuries. Stretcher party from S.M.C. meet.

2ND APRIL.—Rowena Burton (20), Wales, novice in vibrams on wet rock, scrambling on east face of Beinn Tarsuinn, Arran; stuck on ledge. Rescued by Leuchars team.

16TH APRIL.—Aberdeen party of four, all 17 or under, on Raeburn's Buttress, Ben Nevis. Lost route and began to rope down. Belay rock came away and William Luke (16) fell some 300 ft. Died in hospital next day. Rescue by police and local climbers.

30TH APRIL.—Gregory Boud (South Africa) and Robert Leaman (London), climbing on Buachaille Etive Mòr. Not returning, McInnes and party searched, found bodies roped together beneath Central Buttress. Brought down in morning. Cause probably greasy and loose rock and poor belay; rope not broken.

20TH MAY.—John Hawkins (20), Grangemouth, came off on second pitch of Satan's Slit, Buachaille Etive Mòr. Held by second, a girl. Minor injuries; carried down by McInnes and party.

19TH JUNE.—Two Edinburgh boys descending Ben Nevis in mist, lost way; stayed put till dawn, returning 9 A.M. Search parties out from 3 A.M. till 5 P.M. . . .

20TH JUNE.—Kerr Young (17), Edinburgh, fell on scree in Glencoe; minor injuries. Hostel and police rescue party.

23RD JUNE.—Margaret Stead (20), hill walker, fell from Aonach Eagach, Glencoe; minor injuries. Rescue by McInnes and party.

17TH JULY.—Party of four from London, in early twenties and poorly equipped, without map or compass, climbed Sgoran Dubh Mòr by steep slopes south of No. 3 Buttress. James Herbert (24) went ahead, in light clothing and without food. Other three lost on ridge in mist and rain, finally reached Loch an Eilean and, after searching for Herbert, raised alarm. Kinloss team found body at 10 A.M. next morning below smooth slabs of No. 3 Buttress. Large rescue party of Glenmore instructors, foresters, keepers and others out until 7 P.M.; bad liaison.

27TH JULY.—John Pollock (17), London, fell on Garbh Bheinn of Ardgour; minor injuries. Rescue party of Constable Whillans and others.

1ST AUGUST.—Alan Wilkinson (14), climbing North Castle Gully, Ben Nevis, with his father, slipped and fell between snow and rock; slight injury. Father found helpers on plateau; police and Kinloss team assisted.

6TH AUGUST.—Girl hill walker slightly injured on Cobbler; William Fenn (40), Whitley Bay, went up with others to help, collapsed and died on reaching her.

8TH AUGUST.—Party of London Boy Scouts lost in mist on hills behind Drumnadrochit; stayed put, down next day. Search party organised.

18TH AUGUST.—Steven Noble (17), London, ankle injury on Ben Lomond; rescue party from Rowardennan.

22ND AUGUST.—Richard Hargreaves (17), Staffordshire, fell 20 ft. when descending steep side of Inaccessible Pinnacle of Sgùrr Dearg; head injuries. Rescue by Glen Brittle climbers and Skye Rescue Team.

22ND AUGUST.—Mary Snow (20), Sussex, broke leg on hills in Arran. Rescue party.

24TH AUGUST.—William North (17), Sunderland, and friend, both novices, climbing at Macpherson's Cave, Newtonmore; North fell and was killed. Brought down by police and locals.

5TH SEPTEMBER.—Party of four from Keele M.C. (Staffordshire) climbing Bhasteir Tooth in Skye by moderate route; strong wind and showers before dusk. Others heard sound of falling rock, and Jeremy Erskine (22), last in line, had disappeared. Fell 350 ft. Skye Rescue Team, led by J. Dewar, recovered body on bad night, one of party having remained on ridge to guide them.

16TH SEPTEMBER.—Edward Foster (21) fell descending scree of Ben More, Mull; stretcher party from Salen.

18TH SEPTEMBER.—Ernst Vossnack and wife, Dutch (had climbed in Alps), delayed by difficulties between Sgùrr Thearlaich and Sgùrr Dubh; no map, no rope. Returned next morning, when local team out on search.

24TH NOVEMBER.—Arthur Randall (40) and two others, from Glasgow

district, climbing Ben Ime in much snow, *with no ice-axes*. Lost in mist; Randall fell down easy gully south of Fan Gully Buttress. Shepherd and local police assisted in search; body found by shepherd's dog.

2ND DECEMBER.—Arthur Read (S.M.C.), Philip Gribbon and a Californian friend, all very experienced climbers, traversing Aonach Eagach, Glencoe. Avalanched by powder snow just below point 3162 on O.S. map. Read swept away. Several parties, including the McInneses and members of Rannoch M.C., searched in vain; bad weather and dangerous slopes. Next day large party, including Leuchars team, worked on avalanche area—it extended some 700 ft. Body found at 10 A.M., completely buried, and carried down 700 ft.

16TH DECEMBER.—Two Glasgow students left C.I.C. Hut to climb Tower Ridge of Ben Nevis at 1 P.M. Naturally, they were overtaken by darkness; tried to find Goodeve's route; went down part of Glover's Chimney, reascended to Tower Ridge, went down the ridge and finally bivouacked below all difficulty, below the Little Tower. Companions in hut alerted search parties; Kinloss team arrived in morning to find bivouackers (who had not moved down till reached by their companions from the hut) annoyed at the search—they had been careful *not* to give the official distress signal and there *was* no signal for 'we are going to bivouack.' . . .

30TH DECEMBER.—Ian Ulrich (23), Andrew (26) and Iain (25) Gilliland and Nicol Morton (all from Ayrshire) motored to top of new Skiers' Road of Cairn Gorm, took ski lift, and went over Cairn Gorm and down to the Shelter Stone of Loch Avon to spend the night. They had no bags, but were adequately clothed and had primuses and paraffin. They were soaked on way over and found the Shelter Stone damp, so decided at 6 P.M. to return to the car park. They had a map and compass, but lost the map. They cut steps to the plateau and wandered there all night. At dawn they were above cliffs between Cairn Lochain and Stob Coire an t-Sneachda. Ulrich was in a bad way by then and they attempted to lower him down one of the northern corries; he was wearing crampons. The rope slipped from an icy block and Ulrich and Andrew Gilliland fell out of sight, some 200 ft., without injury, probably down the Vent of Coire an Lochain. Morton (the only one with an axe) and Iain Gilliland went for help down Coire an t-Sneachda and found a skiers' camp. Morton remained in camp with a skier, his companion going with the other two skiers until he collapsed; one skier then brought help for Gilliland. Kinloss and Glenmore Lodge were alerted; it was Sunday night by this time. Glenmore party, led by Jimmy Hutchison, covered possible areas, Hutchison's own group taking a direct compass route to the foot of the gully where Morton supposed the men to have fallen. At 2 A.M. on New Year's Day he noticed drifted tracks; they led in circles, but nearby was Ulrich lying in snow, still conscious and trying to get up. Andrew Gilliland saw flares and walked to the rescue party; he had lost Ulrich and the circles were his own tracks. Ulrich was hauled on a rope stretcher to the skiers' tent; there Kinloss team took over the difficult task. Ulrich was delirious and frostbitten. It was fortunate that the skiers had camped

where they did. But for that all four might have lost their lives; they could not have survived much longer on the hill. A most commendable rescue.

31st DECEMBER.—R. Richardson (Greenock M.C.), after entering No. 2 Gully of Nevis, was about to rope up when he slipped and fell some 300 ft.; shock and minor injuries. Carried down by own party and other climbers. Snow very hard and icy; had ascended in crampons, with no step-cutting.

The above summary has been adapted from reports by the R.A.F. Kinloss and Leuchars Rescue Teams, Rescue Teams from Skye, Arran, Arrochar, Lochaber and Glenmore Lodge, and Hamish McInnes's team. All these have been out many times and our thanks are due to them and to the many others who have helped. It is good to know that Hamish McInnes and Constable Whillans have been awarded the B.E.M. for their rescue work in Glencoe. The teams have operated efficiently during the year, but there seems need for better control at the end of searches, to avoid having teams staying out unnecessarily.

IN MEMORIAM

EDWIN DAVIDSON

EDWIN DAVIDSON had an immense and detailed knowledge of the Cairngorms—the physical factors, the vagaries of the weather, the flora and fauna. He was a source of help to many young men who in the 1930's and '40's went to the mountains from the north-east area of Scotland, when Davidson was the mainstay of the Moray Mountaineering Club. His knowledge also of the mountain region in Wester Ross and Sutherland was extremely wide.

His climbing and hill walking began about 1920 and ended with his death (he had been on the Cromdale Hills and died of a heart attack on reaching Advic). On the rope he was essentially a number two, and a leader felt doubly sure with Davidson behind him. He and I did some winter exploring in the northern gullies of the Cairngorms during the middle thirties.

He served during the latter part of the 1914-18 war, and in the 1939-45 war did duty as a coast watcher. This required nightly shifts in all weathers, which he undertook after a full day's work in his Elgin business. I think the strain must have sapped his tremendous stamina and probably was a factor in his death at a comparatively early age.

A. HENDERSON.

DRUMMOND HENDERSON, F.B.O.A.

THE writer of this cannot convey his own sense of loss at the death of Drummy Henderson. Personal nostalgia for place or person or experience is practically incommunicable and, in writing this, one is seeing so many pictures of the man not seen by those who read.

One memory, though, is of the essence. It concerns an August day of

rain and mist on Beinn Dothaidh, with Drummy stripped to the waist, his top garments in his rucksack. Moving upwards with his friends through the mist, the rain running down his face and bare chest, he said (as he would) 'It would be on a day like this that Fingal and his warriors would be coming down into Glen Etive for shelter and would be coming on the house of the giant. . . .' And from then to the summit the story, with its undertones of the Cyclops fable, came effortlessly and vividly from him as we moved in a tight huddle, so that we might miss no word, up the steep mountain slope. He was a great lover of the Gael, of all his ancient stories and of his songs—and his knowledge of them was not superficial or unduly hampered by accepted theory or analysis. From him one could always count on an absolutely personal—and penetrating—view of the matter under discussion. And depend, too, with delight and mirth, on a brilliantly unconventional phraseology.

He made a living from his optician's business, but he was not a businessman; indeed, he had little sense of possession in the worldly meaning. He was a thoroughly competent optician, but his external interests were very wide and people in many circles in Glasgow will know a diminution of their enjoyment because of his absence from their gatherings. Drummond was a good painter, a good poet and a superb raconteur. One can still see the glint in his eye and the comically sober relish with which he entered into one of his incomparable stories. His love of life, of human life and the life of Nature, was very great and I could not help thinking when I saw him on the day before his death—on the day of the last Club dinner—that Drummy enjoyed these Club events and the subsequent day on the hills almost more than anything.

He was, finally and above all, a mountaineer in the best sense. He could be depended, during his last, long, and very painful illness, to rise to that subject more than any other in his discussions with his friends. He was a sound and competent climber on rock and ice. His mountain sense was excellent as was his knowledge of the mountain scene in gross and in detail, and there was no better or more congenial companion on the hills. He was old enough to have served for a short period in the First World War, but too young to have died at 61. He was one of the first breed of climbers which was not of the more leisured class, and his early forays into Highland country on 10-day holidays were with a 50-lb. rucksack on his back in which food, bed, clothing and climbing impedimenta were packed. Apart from one climbing holiday in the Pyrenees, he was unable to climb abroad until he was 47; before that, financial stringency forbade the Alpine climbing which then was the privilege of the better-off and is now open to almost anyone. But between the age of 47 and 52 he had three holidays in the Alps and recorded a creditable number of good climbs. He was with Graham Macphee and Williams on the first ascent of Tower Gap West Chimney in March 1935—one of the crucial climbs which inspired the then younger generation of climbers to push winter mountaineering into a new phase.

One cannot see him separate from the country he loved so much. When the hills are under rain and the waterfalls are roaring in Glen Falloch; or

when the great plateau of Braeriach lies glittering and silent in the winter sunshine; or when stories are being told at night in some hill bothy, many of us will remember Drummy and will be glad that we knew him.

ROBERT GRIEVE.

HERBERT WESTREN TURNBULL, F.R.S., F.R.S.E., LL.D. 1885-1961

OUR ex-President, Professor-Emeritus H. W. Turnbull, died at Grasmere on 4th May 1961. He was a good friend and club member, a vigorous and keen mountaineer (very active to the age of 70), and a distinguished scientist and mathematician. He occupied the Regius Chair of Mathematics at St Andrews University from 1921 until his retirement in 1950.

In this modern era of specialists, a trend which has brought considerable changes of emphasis and performance to our own sport, we no longer seem to attract so many men of his type into our ranks, which is rather unfortunate. When writing this tribute to an old climbing friend I had a curious tendency to compare him with such noted Victorian mountaineers as Forbes and Tyndall. The latter, especially, achieved his scientific eminence before being drawn to the problems of glaciers and so to mountaineering where he became a considerable figure.

Turnbull, it is true, was familiar with the Lake District fells in his early days, but it was after he came to St Andrews that he climbed more regularly and extensively, especially in the company of our late member, Dr J. Y. Macdonald, with whom he was closely associated in the activities of the St Andrews U.M.C. His first Alpine campaign was in 1925, and this was followed by many more, so that he was elected to the membership of the Alpine Club in 1931, one year after joining our own Club. By 1933 he was regularly doing guideless climbing in the Alps, mainly with his friend R. C. G. Moggridge. No doubt, his frequent exploratory climbing in Scotland with Macdonald and others, much of it on Ben Nevis under winter conditions, helped his technique considerably. He had many first-class Alpine peaks to his credit—*e.g.*, Mischabel, Monte Rosa, Matterhorn (twice), Dent Blanche, Zinal Rothorn, Combin de Corbassière and many others. In 1939 he visited Norway and climbed South Dyrhaugstind and other peaks. In 1950 he climbed in the U.S.A. on Mt. Washington (main wall), Lion's Peak and Mt. Wilson. His last visit to the Alps was in 1955 when he was only able to do the Riffelhorn and Untergabelhorn. By 1957 his heart was giving him trouble, but he still climbed a little in the Lakes, taking a 6-year-old grandson up Dow Crag by an easy buttress.

He liked to revisit his peaks, either to rectify errors or to ascend by another route and so come to *really* know his mountains. I had only one Alpine holiday with him, at Bel Alp in 1936. We climbed many smaller peaks (Belgrat and Fusshörner) and traversed the Aletschhorn, also the Nesthorn. Using an older edition of the S.A.C. Guide to the area we sallied out and made what we fondly thought was a first ascent of the 8th Fusshorn. Four stones, suspiciously like a cairn, were on its small summit.

On returning to Bel Alp we found that the peak had been climbed 2 or 3 years earlier! I particularly remember one expedition on a rocky peak in the Gredetschtal when his game persistence in bad weather nearly landed us in serious trouble. As a leader I simply had to 'down tools' in a thunder-cum-hailstorm, telling him to retreat down some very steep slabs while it was still possible. He was a sincerely religious man and told me next day that I, unwittingly to both of us, had been guided by Providence! I wondered how the whole episode squared up with traditional mathematical caution and *prudence*.

But it was typical of the spirit of the man. Mountaineering was the contrasting phase to his academic studies, an outlet to his inborn spirit of adventure. Physically he was well built for it, of medium height and weight. He also wanted to climb the north ridge of the Weisshorn that year, but it was very heavily covered with new snow. I think he stalked this quarry in later years, but got no closer than the Brunnegghorn, Bieshorn and Diablons. (No more have I!)

Turnbull was an outstanding mathematician, founding a school of algebraic research at St Andrews, in a sort of final development of the work of Cayley and Sylvester on invariants, matrices, etc. He published texts on matrices and determinants. His other mathematical interest was historical and biographical. In 1929 he published a short book on 'The Great Mathematicians.' He also unearthed some hitherto unknown papers of the Scottish mathematician James Gregory (1638-1675), which established the priority of Gregory's discovery of several important theorems. All this he published in a Gregory tercentenary volume in 1938. On his own mathematical researches Professor Turnbull published some sixty papers in all. After his retirement he continued his activities by undertaking the considerable task of editing the correspondence of Sir Isaac Newton, under the auspices of the Royal Society of which he was a Fellow. The first two volumes were published before his death.

He took a great interest in the affairs of our Club, served on the Committee for 3 years, acted as Vice-President for 2 years and was President of the Club from 1948-1950. During all this time he was a fairly regular attender of Club Meets and climbed in all seasons and weather, continuing his active participation in the St Andrews U.M.C. till well into his sixties. He was also a versatile cricketer and a pianist of distinction.

It is pleasant to reflect that when he retired to Millom, Cumberland, he continued to walk the fells and do some rock climbing. His last letter to me, when the condition of his heart had compelled him to move slowly, still expressed the same delight as ever in the hills. We shall miss his genial and kindly presence at our Meets, and our sympathy goes out to Mrs Turnbull and to his son Derwent, one of our members, in their bereavement.

JAMES H. B. BELL.

J. WILLIAM R. MURRAY, M.A., C.A.

BILL MURRAY, who passed away in December 1960, had been a member of the Scottish Mountaineering Club for over 30 years, during which time

he had climbed extensively over all parts of Scotland, both in summer and in winter. He had become an original member of the J.M.C.S. when it was formed in 1925, and took part in a considerable number of the early meets of the J.M.C.S. before graduating to the senior club in 1928.

For more than 30 years thereafter he never lost his love of the Scottish hills, and he devoted much of his leisure time to mountaineering in all its forms. Even in later years, when arthritis restricted his movements and made exercise difficult and indeed painful, he was never happier than when he could be in the vicinity of the hills, and be able to gaze at the mountains he knew and loved so well.

I met Bill Murray for the first time in 1916, when as a 'new boy' at the Glasgow Academy I was put under his charge, and for 44 years we were the closest of friends. We worked and played together—we graduated and qualified together—and we spent much of our spare time on the hills together. He was 'of the salt of the earth.' I never knew him do a mean or an unkind act, and constantly in his almost shy and quite unostentatious way he was quietly doing good to others. He had a wide circle of friends, many of whom became members of the Club and came to share his enjoyment of the high hills. Many of these friends will read these notes and share with me happy memories of summer days in Skye and in the Cairngorms, New Years in Glencoe, Easters at Fortingal and Ballachulish, Midsummer Nights on Braeriach, and many other outings on the Scottish hills.

Bill's wonderful sense of humour made him an ideal companion. Long days or short, stiff climbs or easy ascents, he enjoyed them all, and drew from the hills that inspiration which was so markedly reflected throughout the whole of his other activities. His resolution, his strength of character, his courage, his sense of humour and his unfailing cheerfulness all owed something to the happy days he spent on the Scottish hills.

He leaves a wife and four children—a very happy family—and for them and for many of us his friends there remains an intense pride and joy that we have been privileged to enjoy the comradeship of such a man.

DOUGLAS H. STEVEN.

A. H. READ, M.A., Ph.D.

1920-1961

ARTHUR HINTON READ was killed on 4th December 1961 when he was 41 years old.

He was descending Sgùrr nam Fiannaidh towards Clachaig after a grand day's climbing on Aonach Eagach in weather which started well but ended as a blizzard. Much new snow was falling and as he was crossing a shallow gully an avalanche came through the cloud from the slopes up above. The others in the party managed to get clear, but Arthur was carried away down the hillside.

After working for the Foreign Office during the war and teaching at his old school, Marlborough, for a few years, he really found his true vocation

when he joined the mathematics department at St Andrews University under our late President Professor Turnbull. His quiet friendly manner and his great mathematical ability won him the deep respect and affection of both students and staff. A colleague who has shared his retiring room for the last 10 years has said that there was never a cross word in the whole of that time—a fine tribute.

He started climbing in 1946, with a fruitless day looking for a pair of spectacles among the screes of Achaladair which he appeared to enjoy immensely, and continued with great zest, climbing mainly in Scotland and Norway. In 1952 he went to Harvard for 2 years to study for his doctorate, which he achieved in a remarkably short time. Even so he twice managed to join the Harvard Mountaineering Club in expeditions to the Rockies where they made several new ascents. Like others they must have found him an excellent companion, for in the following year he was asked to join them again in an expedition to the Himalayas. He accepted, and took part in much exploration and climbing in the Karakorams.

Arthur was indeed an excellent companion, on the mountains and off them. He was a strong, steady and experienced climber with tremendous funds of patience and humour, who loved the hills in all their moods. He did so much to increase the pleasure of all of us who were fortunate enough to know him and to climb with him.

Our very deep sympathy goes out to his widow, his young family and his parents in their great loss.

D. G. TURNBULL.

G. KEITH MURRAY, J.M.C.S.

It was a big shock to hear that Keith Murray had been killed in Green Gully of Ben Nevis on 27th January 1962, one of the saddest days in the history of the Edinburgh Section of the J.M.C.S. Keith joined the J.M.C.S. in 1958 as a 17-year-old schoolboy, and right from the start he was one of the very keenest members. He lived for his climbing. Later that year, he started studies in Civil Engineering at Edinburgh University, but he continued to climb with the J.M.C.S. It was in 1959 that Keith became noticed as a rock climber of more than usual ability. That summer, he led some of the easier Very Severs including Shattered Crack and Hangman's Crack on the Buachaille, White Ghyll Wall at Langdale, and the Great Slab on 'Cloggy.' Keith continued to attend almost every bus meet, and further developed his skill as a rock climber, but a succession of rather poor mild winters prevented him from achieving so many snow and ice routes. His best efforts in winter were Comb Gully and S.C. Gully, both climbed in January 1961. Perhaps his finest lead on rock was F Route on Gimmer last September.

Keith was with us in the French Alps in 1960. It was not a good season, but we had some pleasant climbs including the Plan-Midi traverse and the Dent du Requin by the Chapeau à Cornes arête. Last summer,

he took part in the J.M.C.S. expedition to the South Staunings Alps in north-east Greenland. He did more than his share of the hard work, and was present on all the more difficult climbs achieved. The ascent of the north face of the 7400-ft. Wedge Peak with Michael Fleming was the finest climb of the whole expedition.

Keith graduated from Edinburgh University last summer, and was with a Glasgow firm. He served on successive Edinburgh J.M.C.S. Committees, and was Vice-President at the time of the accident. A short time ago, he applied for membership of the S.M.C.

I have lost one of my best climbing companions. That fiery look in his eyes portrayed a keenness and a boundless energy which we seldom encountered. He was also extremely patient with less able second men on the rope. It is sad to lose such a companion so soon, but our memories in the Edinburgh J.M.C.S. are of great and happy days at Glencoe, in the Lake District and in Greenland.

JAMES CLARKSON.

STUART F. M. CUMMING 1878-1961

STUART CUMMING joined the Club in 1905 and from then until the outbreak of the First World War he was one of our most active members, attending most meets, climbing in the Cuillins and Switzerland, serving on the Committee from 1912-14, contributing notes, articles and fine photographs to the *Journal* and slides to the slide collection. He was elected Custodian of Slides in 1914, but although he remained in this office until 1917, his duties were mainly carried out by a deputy, he being fully engaged on War Service, serving as Captain of a mobile Trench Mortar Battery. He was awarded the Military Cross.

Meeting Francis Greig in the Cuillins in the summer of 1908, their parties joined forces and made some memorable climbs which were fully described in the *Journal* of that time. They also climbed together in Switzerland in 1910, and in 1913 Cumming joined Harry MacRobert, Arthur Russell and Goggs in the Oberland and climbed a number of the highest peaks in that area.

It is interesting to recall that Cumming and Charlie Inglis Clark had been on Ben More and Stobinian with J. R. Young and MacAlister on 9th March 1912 on the occasion when Young and MacAlister returned by the big coire of Ben More and the latter was involved in an avalanche of unusual size, the first accident of that kind on such a scale in Scotland to be recorded in the *Journal*.

After the First War, the increasing commitments of his profession as a Fellow of the Faculty of Actuaries in Edinburgh, and the obligations of a family, resulted in Cumming being a less active member than before, but he still attended a number of meets, notably the Summer Meet at Sligachan in 1923 when he and Sheriff Valentine made a new climb on Sgùrr a' Mhadaidh, and the May Meet at Corrour Lodge in 1933, the

latter during his period as Vice-President, and in this period he also revised the Club's Commutation Fund which he had originally founded before the war.

Stuart Cumming had such a high sense of duty and responsibility that at first contact he appeared to be rather reserved in manner, but anyone who had the good fortune to climb with him soon found he had a most delightful and charming companion, and I, who am many years his junior, count it one of my greatest privileges to have had a long and memorable day on Clach Glas and Blaven in his company.

In his profession he served with the Scottish Life Assurance Company Limited of which he was appointed General Manager in 1934, a post which he held until his retiral in 1946.

E. C. T.

We record with regret the deaths also of the following members, for whom no full obituary is available as we go to Press: **J. H. Buchanan**, **Sir James Wordie** and **E. Wilkie Smith**; and of a former member, **Alister J. Fraser**, of Oxted.

PROCEEDINGS OF THE CLUB

Easter Meet 1961—Kintail

ALL those who attended this meet seemed to think that it was far too long since the Club was at Kintail, and certainly there are few fairer places when Spring first comes to the West Highlands. As a result, the hotel was full, the bungalow was full and some had to spend the night in the village. However, everyone was fed rapidly at the early hour that is now fashionable at meets and were then almost overcome by the choice of sandwich which the Norman Tennents prepared for us. Who hasn't, when turning over slabs of old, hard bread divided by even harder pieces of old climbing boot, thought longingly of sardines and savouries, honey and brown bread and sweet biscuits and iced cake? All these and many more were put before us each morning, and we returned at night to know there would be a fine succulent dinner.

Most people were out early and returned late, for we were fortunate with the weather, having snow during the night and sun during the day. The hotel was so crowded and people came and went so rapidly that this scribe has no record of any climb; but from people's reports most of the local hills were traversed and one party crossed Loch Hourn and climbed Ladhar Bheinn, but how and when (and if) they ever all got back was never really cleared up.

We are most grateful to Mr and Mrs Tennent for their attention and care for our comfort, especially on the evening of the unfortunate mishap to one member, Duncan McPherson, who, we are glad to hear, is fully recovered.

Those present were: the President (Ian Charleson), G. Baillie, D. L. Campbell, W. C. Carmichael, W. L. Coats, M. H. Cooke, K. Graham,

R. M. Gall Inglis, B. H. Humble, J. N. Ledingham, D. McArthur, I. M. M. MacPheil, G. G. Macphee, D. H. McPherson, A. I. L. Maitland, M. Morrison, T. Nicholson, A. H. Read, A. M. Smith, T. E. Thomson, D. G. Turnbull, R. D. Walton, F. R. Wylie and A. J. Young.

The Macphee brothers and R. D. Borthwick were guests. **Camping:** D. Bennet, G. S. Johnstone (with D. Piggott as his guest), J. Mason, G. Roger and J. S. Stewart.

We were visited also by W. H. Murray and T. D. Mackinnon.

M. H. COOKE.

Reception

The speaker, not a distinguished stranger this year, was to be George Ritchie, plucked fresh and tender from Caucasian heights. The audience waited breathlessly in a great room smelling of vacuum cleaners. The President beamed reassuringly. Serried chairs and heads peered at a blank screen. Above the hum of breathless conversation was an unusual silence. Ritchie was not there. Outside, the snow fell. Inside, the President beamed, reassuringly.

An hour or so passed.

The President beamed reassuringly.

He was sure that 'Mr Ritchie would not be long. Perhaps some delay. . . .' But he was sure that 'Mr Ritchie would not be long.'

'Perhaps some tea?'

Just before tea the speaker arrived. The President beamed reassuringly. We would have tea first and then, perhaps—as we perhaps deserved after waiting all this time—we would hear Mr Ritchie. Between nibblings and gobblings of tea we learnt the story. An icy road. A car in front. A bus in front. Boom! So! And all the Club's papers—*gulp*—in the back of the car otherwise—*gulp*—he would have come by train in spite of—*gulp*—having motored from Edinburgh to Moscow and Moscow to—*gulp*—Edinburgh with Hamish McInnes.

The President introduced Mr Ritchie and we set off on to a long, sometimes inaudible, largely plausible and always characteristic journey, the result of which one can read some pages farther back in this issue. It was a thoroughly enjoyable and very commendable effort by 'the (fortunately) indestructible Ritchie,' who seemed, if anything, better for a mishap which would have sent lesser men flying through the windscreen into a hospital bed.

Annual General Meeting

The 73rd Annual General Meeting of the Club was held in St Enoch's Hotel, Glasgow, on Saturday, 2nd December 1961, with the President, I. G. Charleson, in the chair. As before, we give only a brief summary of events, but this time CHA ROBHI MACGHILLINNEIN AN SIN! Himself was not there, and since there is no substitute for MacLennan's bitter pen, the *Journal* will limp through this section unguided and unread.

HON. TREASURER.—This last Report by the late Treasurer indicated that savings on paper administration were swallowed up by the Library, the Library Index, the Slide Collection and, of course, that Glasgow Club Room. Hut takings were rather down; at Lagangarbh this was due to cheerful substitution by visitors of I.O.U.'s for money. Stuart Jack has most generously donated £100 to the Club, part of which will be used to bind various journals and improve the slide collection.

The writer thinks, but may be wrong, that it was about this time that *The Trust*—shot, riddled, blasted, sunk with all hands finally and for good (see last issue)—calmly sailed into the room again, with trusty Long John Ritchie grinning at the helm. We will hear more of this, next issue; let it suffice that the Special Sub-Committee crystallised and dissolved several times in the year and finally went and wept to Daddy, who was very nice and said why didn't they come before and didn't really want to smack them but they must have their Trust, but it shall be a nice kind Trust with lots of sweeties. And they must tell the other boys about it at a Special Extraordinary General Meeting; but a nice meeting, not a horrid meeting like the last one, and it shall be a nice Trust, not a horrid Trust like the last one. Whereupon the craft sailed peacefully out again, its crew smiling intently. Full credit must go to Harbourmaster Charleson for his superb handling of the episode. There were no dockside scenes. (Indeed, throughout the meeting his skill in politely ushering out various arguments after what he considered to be their due closing time did much to repair the damage of Ritchie's accident.) There was, however, much guarded silence. . . . 'The man who lives the longest will see what will come of work of this kind.'

HON. SECRETARY.—Eight new members were elected and are welcomed to the Club: Messrs Douglas Barclay, A. Douglas Forbes, Robert Hillcoat, Richard Holt, Graham King, Andrew R. M. MacCorquodale, Hugh W. Simpson and William M. H. Wallace; two former members, B. Horsburgh and G. M. Roxburgh, were reinstated. The Hon. Secretary reported the deaths of Sir Hugh MacPherson and Professor Turnbull, and the loss of two members under Rule 11; membership then stood at 351.

Last year two groups of members applied to the Club for permission to climb in the U.S.S.R. Permission arrived in June for a joint S.M.C.-A.C. meet in the Caucasus; only George Ritchie could pack quickly enough to go. Another joint expedition, to the Pamirs, is being organised for 1962; members wishing to assist the enterprise financially are asked to inform the Hon. Treasurer.

HON. EDITOR.—1050 copies of No. 152 were printed, to meet some increase in demand. Costs were again slightly less than for the previous issue.

HON. GUIDE BOOKS GENERAL EDITOR.—Vol. I of the rock climber's guide to the Cairngorms area was published in August—*The Cairngorms, Vol. II: Lochnagar, etc.*, is in galley proof. An older generation of climbers may remember that it was intended to produce a second volume of the

Glencoe & Ardgour climber's guide: Scott Johnstone reports that as a result of a meeting between all interested parties things have been speeded up (production of this longed-for work requires much co-ordination between areas and compilers scattered and complex).

Arrochar and *Ben Nevis* rock climber's guides are out of print and under revision. A revised District Guide for *Skye* is in hand.

The General Editor is assisting the O.S. by supplying 'rock feature names' in climbing areas covered by the new series of 6-in. maps.

CONVENER, HUTS SUB-COMMITTEE.—The *Ling Hut* is again much as usual; a supply of coal waits expectantly at the road end. The roof of the *C.I.C. Hut* has been bitumenised, and the crockery and cutlery replaced; four beds will be kept available for S.M.C. members on every Saturday night this next year. *Lagangarbh* has been further improved; a septic tank, a lavatory, two new windows and an incinerator increase their respective amenities. Towards this, and towards repairs to the west gable, the National Trust for Scotland has most generously contributed. D. J. Bennett resigned as *Lagangarbh* Custodian on going to Canada. For his staunch work, courage and initiative he is thanked heartily. W. M. MacKenzie has taken over for a period.

CONVENER, EAST OF SCOTLAND DISTRICT COMMITTEE.—An air of wistful unreality hung over the printed report that the Convener was one A. H. Hendry. But the rude facts appear to be: R. C. Smith (*Convener*), A. H. Hendry, G. Scott Johnstone, J. R. Marshall, I. G. Charleson, R. M. Gall Inglis, J. W. Stenhouse and G. Tiso (*Secretary*). The Committee has arranged (1) joint lectures with the J.M.C.S.; (2) running of the Central Clubroom; (3) help for the Hon. Librarian; (4) last but not least, the introduction of the President to 'some of the younger members of the Club.'

CONVENER, WEST OF SCOTLAND DISTRICT COMMITTEE.—C. G. M. Slessor reports: 'The Section was active again, particularly in the realms of home decoration. The Clubroom at 132 West Nile Street was eventually completed, and thanks go to all who helped. The District Library is in process of reorganisation, and the room is now ready for use. Lectures will continue to be held in Rowan's Smokeroom. A full programme of lectures was held, in conjunction with the J.M.C.S. The new Committee consists of W. M. MacKenzie (*Convener*), G. Little, J. Dunn, C. R. Ford, K. Bryan (*Librarian*) and J. M. Johnstone (*Secretary*).'

HON. LIBRARIAN.—During the year 102 books were borrowed by 33 different S.M.C. and J.M.C.S. members. A catalogue of books in the Library was published and is now in members' hands. (Bound volumes i-xi of the *S.M.C.J.* are needed to complete a duplicate, lending set.)

HON. CUSTODIAN OF SLIDES.—Grieve having really carried out his recurrent threat and resigned, we must record our sincere thanks for his most sympathetic management and improvement of the collection over all these years. In this issue his successor, J. W. Stenhouse, contributes a note on

a unique inheritance. Stenhouse reports that during the year seven requests, for a total of 500 2-in. slides, were met. The late Professor Turnbull's private collection of 3½-in. slides has been generously presented to the Club by Mrs Turnbull. Yule and some others have donated 2-in. colour slides. Of Stuart Jack's gift, some £25 is being used to convert historical 3½-in. specimens to fresh and convenient 2-in. copies.

B.M.C. REPRESENTATIVE.—Rose writes: 'The Glen Brittle Hut proceedings having changed down into 4-wheel low-reduction, the B.M.C. Committee have occupied themselves in the last 12 months with the problems of increasing numbers of inexperienced bodies swarming on to the hills. An alarming feature has been the incidence of accidents to parties of youngsters led by teachers or others supposedly deemed competent by the relevant parent bodies.

'The B.M.C. has pointed out the grave risk to the Ministry of Education; has asked that body to "circularise" schools, etc.; is approaching the Headmasters' Association; has co-operated with the C.C.P.R. in producing the safety pamphlet now on sale; is considering producing a poster for display in hostels, etc.; persuaded the B.B.C. to show its mountain rescue film at Easter last year.'

THE FIRST-AID SUB-COMMITTEE.—In this humanitarian field events have moved fast, with such a shower of resignations and reconstitutions that details will be left until next year, when the dust should have cleared away. Humble issues a communiqué earlier in this issue.

The Annual Meeting also approved two amendments to the Club Rules. The first of these permits admission of new members more frequently than once per annum; 31st January as well as 30th September is now a target date for lodging applications. The second provides that centres for New Year and Easter Meets be decided at the preceding New Year and Easter Meets respectively, by the members present at the meets.

Dinner

Alas, we have as yet no record of this 1961 Dinner, which may go down in history for that fact alone. It was held, of course, in Glasgow, at St Enoch's Hotel.

NOTE IN PRESS.—But our correspondent has at last recovered, and sends this graceless note:—

It was a good dinner. Everybody said so, so it must have been. The President proposed the Club, A. C. D. Small proposed Guests and Kindred Clubs, and J. H. Emlyn Jones of the Alpine Club replied. The writer has a distinct recollection that they all spoke very well indeed, but now finds himself unable to elaborate on this, which is perhaps as it should be. Stuart Jack and Tom Patey embellished the occasion with their traditional vocal numbers.

New Year Meet 1962—Loch Awe

Crianlarich having delivered itself into the hands of tradesmen, to the disadvantage of mountaineers, the indefatigable Meets Secretary had arranged that we foregather at Loch Awe. This we did, in a spell of hard frosty weather which kept the hotel proprietor and his staff busy stoking the fires with logs and generally providing for our comforts. So effectual were their efforts that while Dalmally was reduced to melting snow in buckets and Clachaig to 'rolling out the barrel'—of water—we were able to enjoy the benison of really hot baths. Thereafter the fact that the bath outlet was sometimes frozen did not appear a great calamity except to the person into whose bedroom it backed up.

Thursday evening brought the first arrival, J. V. Shillito, to be followed on Friday at intervals up to midnight by the advance guard of members, one of whom had travelled for 17 hours by a circuitous route from the north. By Saturday the meet had reached its full strength of eighteen members.

Preceding the meet by 2 days was a heavy fall of dry powder snow in a high wind. The result was a mosaic of sparsely covered grass and—more predominant on the tops—patches of deep soft snow which made tedious going in places. It was observed that sheep appeared to have more intuition than mountaineers as to where the soundings were less deep, but even the latter were seen on occasions to negotiate the worst patches on all fours. Apart from these slight inconveniences, conditions were ideal during the whole meet. Saturday and Monday were particularly fine with almost cloudless skies and extensive panoramas. For those whose descent through choice or otherwise was delayed to the extent of having only just enough daylight to negotiate the lower ground, the reward was a view from the ridge of a deep alpine glow suffusing the whole snow-covered landscape from Cowal to Ben Nevis, from Morven to Badenoch. The longest expedition was an ascent of Beinn Laoigh by the western approach, ascents being confined otherwise to Beinn Eunaich and the tops of Cruachan. Beinn a' Chochuill was also visited but a crest of deep soft snow on the summit ridge served as a reminder that the distance from Beinn Eunaich includes a dimension not shown on the map, namely time.

Present were: The President, J. W. Baxter, W. L. Coats, M. H. Cooke, R. R. Elton, B. S. Fraser, C. C. Gorrie, R. M. Gall Inglis, J. N. Ledingham, T. Nicholson, J. R. Nicholson (guest), J. H. Ogilvie, F. E. O'Riordan, G. Peat, J. V. Shillito (guest), T. E. Thomson, D. Turnbull, F. R. Wylie.

W. L. COATS.

Loch Awe Hotel being an historic site for a meet (it was here the Club Song was first sung), the Hon. Editor had more than ever intended to go, and had saddled his van accordingly; but was dissuaded by the snows of Strath Ardle and the dews of Glenlivet, and ended up by conveying Smart, Slessor and Pipe-Major Brown (who were piping and singing and growing merry in Glen Shee) to a local farmhouse, where they piped and

sang and grew merry to an even greater extent. The only excuse for recounting all this is that the Editor, stung by conscience, tried five times to get through from this farmhouse to the Loch Awe Meet (by phone), to congratulate the President and members and to pipe threefold company to the gallant Evershed Thomson, whose annual solo pipings require the strenuous support of fellow MacCrimmons. Alas, it was too difficult, too late, and where was Lahore? But the girl at the Exchange was most kind.

J.M.C.S. REPORTS

Perth Section.—The year ending October 1961 has shown an increase in the funds of the Section, but the membership has unfortunately dropped to 27. However, we have a good number of under-seventeens coming out with the Club at meets and these will make up for the resignations of some of our older members.

The Club held its usual monthly meets and several also at weekends. This year the Annual Dinner was at Braemar and was one of the most successful we have had. Several parties of members spent their holidays abroad, the places visited including Switzerland, Austria, Norway and Ireland.

Office-bearers.—*Hon. President*, J. Anton; *Hon. Vice-President*, J. Proom; *Hon. Member*, J. Miller; *President*, J. Watt; *Vice-President*, D. Wares; *Secretary*, J. Grant, 37 Burghmuir Road, Perth.

Edinburgh Section.—This year proved a successful one for the Section. Membership now stands at 62, the resignations equalling the number of new members admitted.

Bus meets have been run throughout the year in conjunction with the Edinburgh Mountaineering Club. These have in general been extremely satisfactory, an average attendance being some 25. Glencoe, as usual, proved most popular. Apart from bus meets, a greater number of our members seem to be finding their way to the English Lakes, where several creditable performances have been recorded.

During July and August a party from the Section was in the Stauning Alps of East Greenland (see separate report).

Office-bearers.—*Hon. President*, D. Leaver; *President*, M. Fleming; *Vice-President*, K. Murray; *Secretary*, I. Douglas, 64 East Claremont Street, Edinburgh.

Lochaber Section (Lochaber Mountaineering Club).—The Club looks back on a most satisfactory year, with a membership of 41. Following the admission of 10 new members and judicious pruning of dead wood, the proportion of really active members is now higher than for many years.

Meets were held mainly on Ben Nevis, but mass assaults were also made on the Streaps and the Loch Quoich hills. The Club was again involved in several rescues on Ben Nevis. For the benefit of younger

members and the local police, a successful short course in mountain rescue was held last December.

At the request of D. G. Duff, the indicator posts leading from the summit of Ben Nevis towards the Càrn Mòr Dearg Arête have been moved about 20 yd. away from the edge of Coire Leis. Under icy conditions this should reduce the risk from an involuntary glissade.

Fort William Police Station now boasts a detailed model of Ben Nevis and the Alt a' Mhuillin to a scale of 440 ft. to 1 in. Our thanks are due to Keith Stanley for this labour of love.

The Annual Dinner, held on 4th February 1961 in the Alexandra Hotel, was an outstanding success. G. Scott Johnstone took a busman's holiday to be our guest speaker and introduced us to the geology of the rocks on which we climb.

Steall Hut has been very popular and receipts have contributed towards the Club's sound financial position.

Office-bearers for 1962.—*Hon. President*, P. L. J. Heron; *Hon. Vice-President*, D. G. Duff; *Hon. Member*, J. Ness; *President*, J. S. Berkeley; *Vice-President*, W. S. Thomson; *Treasurer and Custodian of Steall Hut*, J. A. Sutherland, British Linen Bank, Fort William; *Secretary*, Miles Hutchinson, 'Craigmore,' Wades Road, Kinlochleven.

Glasgow Section.—Again, we have no report. But a glance at 'S.M.C. & J.M.C.S. Abroad' will show that the members—if not the Secretary—of this Section have been exceedingly active.

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

North America

DONALD BENNET writes: 'In the middle of July I arrived in Jackson, Wyoming, to rendezvous with Roderick Cameron, of Greenland fame, for a season's climbing in the Teton and Rocky Mountains. Down at the climbers' camp-ground by Jenny Lake the Cameron was strumming his guitar by the camp fire with the same artistry as had charmed Sir John and the Chaps during many a wet Greenland day. Next morning we reported to the Park Ranger and registered as aspirant climbers (guideless, class 3); after being interrogated and having our equipment inspected we were given permission to attempt the Grand and Middle Teton.

One could write of the beauties of the trail that led up through Garnet Canyon, and of the idyllic bivouac sites in the meadows of the canyon where we lay at night listening to the marmots foraging for our food; it was much the same as the approach to any high mountain. But there was a difference—in the air; and expert ornithologists like ourselves were not slow to recognise the Clark's Nutcrackers as they swooped from the white pine tops and screamed derisively at us as we toiled uphill (most objectionable birds). Higher up, on Teepe's Glacier, Black Rosy Finches darted about looking for tit-bits on the ice, and seemed distinctly undernourished.

Both peaks were duly climbed from a bivouac on the col between them, the Grand Teton (13,766 ft.) by the Exum Ridge, and the Middle Teton (12,798 ft.) by its North Ridge, both grade 4 climbs on excellent rock. A few days later we climbed Mount Owen (12,922 ft.) by its East Ridge, an entertaining snow and rock climb, whose grading, 5, flatters the climber and the climb, which has only one Severe pitch.

With the three highest Teton in the bag we drove north through Yellowstone to the Glacier National Park in Montana. Here the mountains had a promisingly Dolomitic appearance, but they flattered to deceive, for the rock was rubble, and we contented ourselves with a modest scramble up Mount Jackson (10,030 ft.), encountering a porcupine *en route*.

At the beginning of August we camped at the Sunwapta Pass on the Banff-Jasper highway in Alberta. Here the tourist may ascend the Athabaska Glacier by snow-mobile and watch Stan Paterson (late Edinburgh J.M.C.S.) peering at the glacier through his theodolite, as he did so well in Greenland. Cameron and I, however, preferred to follow in the footsteps of Collie and Macphee—to the summit of Mount Athabaska (11,430 ft.). Sixty years ago Collie made the first ascent of this fine mountain, and 15 years ago Macphee was in a party that climbed a snow-ice spur on the north face, the route we now followed and found excellent.

We moved on to Jasper, a pleasant little town well endowed with amenities such as cafés and swimming pool, so that rest days predominated in the next week. We did, however, raise enough energy to climb Mount Edith Cavell (11,033 ft.) by its 3500-ft. East Ridge, a long and tedious rock climb, and Mount Fraser (10,897 ft.) from a bivouac in the Tonquin Valley. EDDIE THOMPSON, of Glasgow J.M.C.S., was with us on Mount Fraser, in whose summit register the signature of one W. M. MacKenzie gave us yet another link with the great men of bygone days. Our last climb in the Rockies was Neptuak (10,640 ft.), one of the ten rock peaks that encircle Moraine Lake, 30 miles north-west of Banff; it proved to be a disappointing climb with only occasional pitches of sound rock, and we were not tempted to linger in that area.

Since the end of August we have made a few weekend trips from Vancouver to the Cascade Mountains in Washington with Paterson. First, an attempt to climb Mount Rainier, a 14,400-ft. ex-volcano, failed after spending two nights in a storm at 10,000 ft. Then two weekends of excellent weather gave us Mount Shuksan (9100 ft.), a delightful Alpine climb on a small scale, and Eldorado Peak (8800 ft.), a long and easy climb on grassy ridge and glacier. Now, at the end of October, the first snow lies on the hills north of Vancouver, and the climbing season is over until next June.

Greenland

Full details of Clarkson's expedition are given earlier in this issue.

Northern Europe

TOM WEIR was in the Faroe Islands for a month and spent a fortnight of that time on the island of Mykines, which is the St Kilda of the group, with fierce rock walls and a people who live partly by catching birds for food. No rock climbing, as such, is practised; men are lowered over cliffs on ropes to raid kittiwakes of their eggs and gannets of their young. Puffins are caught by the thousand upon thousand. Hills are around 2000 ft., with skuas nesting right up on the tops, and always there is a mighty noise of whimbrel and Faroe snipe. Rock is poor, but exciting situations abound on traverses along ledges on the faces. He found the islands rewarding in interest but poor for weather. He went there by trawler from Aberdeen to Klakksvik, and came back from there on another trawler. Accommodation is plentiful, both on Mykines and on other islands. The present prosperity there is heartening to see, and could be a lesson to Scotland.

G. J. DUTTON who, though abroad at times on matters scientific, has not qualified for appearance in this section for the past few years, has managed to scrape himself in this year. In the popular Union of Soviet Socialist Republics he could not manage the Caucasus or the Pamirs, but had pleasant expeditions by bus and pavement on the Lenin Hills of Moscow; returning through Norway, he was dissuaded from mistily attempting some glaciated improbables between trains at Finse by 3 in. of new snow and the poor equipment of baseball shoes and a toasting fork. He triumphed, however, on the Pentlands behind Bergen, Ulrikken welcoming him with 8 hours of S.W. gale during which the plastic bag serving as a hat was torn and blown away, and even the impervious Norsk Sunday ramblers dispersed. Lost in mist, he avoided death and benightment by tracking down and hitching on to the scent of *aquavit* from a windward local worthy suitably fortified for the walk down.

The Alps

IAIN OGILVIE spent a week in the Italian Tyrol with Dr Charles Warren and David Brown. On 18th September they climbed the Adamello from the Mandrone hut and on the next day traversed the Resanella, descending to Pinzolo. On the 21st, Ogilvie and Warren, with Guido Alimonti as guide, traversed the Crozzon di Brenta and Cima Tosa, ascending by the N. ridge of the Crozzon—a 4000-ft. climb of high standard and superb situations. The two remaining days were spent walking in the Brenta; the Bocca di Brenta, Bocca di Tucket and two other high passes were crossed. Huts at that time of year were officially closed, but owing to the late season and perfect weather accommodation was still being provided.

JAMES SIMPSON, with ROGER ROBB (J.M.C.S.), spent the latter half of July in S.E. Switzerland, the first week being in the Bernina. From the

Croaz hut they attempted Piz Glüschaint. On the first day they lost time negotiating the Roseg glacier and were turned back from the S.W. ridge by bad weather; the following day they made the summit by the N.E. face. From the Tschierva hut they climbed Piz Morteratsch by the N. ridge in perfect weather. The second week was spent in the Forno hut in the Bregaglia. They had three good climbs. The first, and hardest, was the E. ridge of Piz Casnile. The second was the S.E. ridge of Punta Rasica. Their last day was the most enjoyable—the traverse of Cima di Vazzeda and Cima di Rosso. The N. ridge of Cima di Vazzeda provided an extremely dangerous climb on steep loose soil, but the descent by the S.W. ridge was on good rock liberally sprinkled with flowers. Cima di Rosso was climbed by the N.E. ridge: an easy ascent, mainly on hard snow with a little rock. Between climbs they spent their time on the second week drinking with other Munro-baggers in Maloja.

J. H. B. BELL and Mrs BELL were in the Eastern Swiss Alps for somewhat over 2 weeks, from 24th July. Based on Maloja, they ascended Piz Lunghino and Grivasalvas for a start, then La Margna (with Mr and Mrs Watson of the Grampian Club) and finally an abortive expedition on the Piz Lagrev cliffs which look so fine from the heights across the Lake of Silo. Then, from the Forno hut with the Watsons, Monte Sissone and Cima di Rosso. Later, Mr Watson injured his ankle and the Bells climbed the following peaks: Piz Casnile by its magnificent E. ridge of perfect rough rock, Monte del Forno by a rotten rock finish, Cima di Cantone by the excellent N. ridge, Lo Scalino and finally Piz Bacone (leaving names in summit book) and the near peak of Cima di Largo. On the last day they went to Fuorcla Surlej, a hot grind rewarded with one of the finest views in the Alps across the Roseg glacier to the main Bernina peaks. They encountered Simpson and Robb in Maloja.

BILL SPROUL (J.M.C.S.) met Tom Carruthers in Chamonix on 21st July, after having come out from Scotland by rule of thumb. During their first week they went up to Montanvers ('Chalet Austria') and were on the Aiguille de l'M; then up to the Couvertle Hut for the S. ridge of the Moine, a rock route covered in snow; the S.W. ridge was tried, but after being held up by large French parties they had to abseil off from halfway. An attempted traverse of the Courtes was abandoned because of the snow condition. They returned to Chamonix on the 27th; very heavy snow fell on the hills for the next 2 days. On 31st July they did the Pigot d'Itala from Chalet Austria, an amusing mechanical climb with a very spectacular abseil (it lies between the Petits and the Grands Charmoz); then followed a traverse of the Petits Charmoz, the 'M' and the Pointe Albert.

On 3rd August they celebrated Sproul's birthday in Courmayeur, surrendering purses and stomachs to the Italian cuisine for a day, with the result that they missed the *téléferique* that night and slept out. The following day they went to Montanvers over the Géant and the Requin. On the 5th they climbed the Aiguilles de Blaitière by the Spencer Couloir on

snow and ice. The next 7 days were hopeless for the high mountains; they did the Couzy route on the 'M' but, after going across to the Torino Hut, found 2 ft. of fresh snow in the morning, and abandoned the Dent du Géant for Chamonix.

On 13th August they went up to the Tête Rousse Hut and the next day traversed the Dôme de Goûter on to Mont Blanc by the Vallot Hut (the highest public toilet in the world) and the Bosses Arête, going down to Chamonix in the evening. They laid siege to the Chardonnet from the Albert Premier Hut, but hopelessly heavy snow fell for 2 days. They arrived in Zermatt on the 18th, but Sproul had to return to work after 2 days.

TOM CARRUTHERS, on his first visit to the Alps and the Tatra, did some remarkable things. He writes: 'At the invitation of a member of Wrocław University, I spent the month of June climbing in the High Tatra Mountains of Poland. These mountains provide a wonderful area of granite peaks with routes to suit all tastes. The standard of the present Polish climbers is very high. Two I met later did the North Faces of the Matterhorn and the Eiger within a fortnight.

'In the climbs book at the summits of a number of the highest peaks no previous British ascents had been recorded. All climbs were from Morski Oko Hut, at a height of over 4000 ft., and were never more than 2 hours' walking distance from the hut. With Dr Swierczkowski and later with his brother, several routes of great severity were climbed. The Mnich (The Monk) looking so much like the Drus and having routes of similar severity, was climbed by the classic West Face: 500 ft. of Grade IV with descent *en rappel*. First British ascents of Grade V and VI were made on Zamala Turna, Nizie-rysy, Mieguszowiecki and The Apostles.

'Leaving Poland at the end of June, great haste was made through Czechoslovakia to reach a better way of living in Vienna. As the rendezvous in Chamonix with BILL SPROUL, BOB CUTHBERT, ALAN McLEA, CORNELIUS HIGGINS and JIM FERGUSON (all J.M.C.S.) had been made for 21st July, I had 2 glorious weeks in which to admire Aryan form, solarise and swim.'

[The Chamonix climbs are described by Sproul.]

'Sickened by 5 weeks in the weather factory of Chamonix, Cuthbert, Sproul and I decided to move to Zermatt for a look at the Matterhorn and in search of some good weather. Suffering from the shock of the train fare, Bill and Bob left me after 2 days.

'The weather was set fine now but, alas, I had no rope mate.

'The Matterhorn by the Hörnli was a must (attempted murder by a Swiss Guide must be reported). Bigger and better climbs followed in the next week of fine weather: solo ascent of the Breithorn North Face; the Zmutt ridge with Brian Nally (Rockhoppers, London). Two days later Nally and I met HENDRY (S.M.C. Edinburgh) at the Belvedere Hotel. He was up 'to do' the Hörnli; Nally and I were up for an attempt on the Nordwand. Two days (double what it should have been) of un-nerving and tiring work on a heap of rubble saw the first British and

Scottish ascent in the bag (see p. 245). This was the end—no more money. An enjoyable introduction to the Alps.'

MAURICE COOKE, THEO NICHOLSON and his two sons, David and John, were at Arolla and Saas-Fee for about 2½ weeks from the end of August. Good weather was enjoyed for the first few days and for the last part of the holiday, but low cloud and snowfalls interfered with plans during the middle of their stay. Fortunately, GEORGE ROGER turned up about this time and, thanks to his useful knowledge of the district, several rewarding expeditions were made below cloud level. It was unfortunate that he had to leave for home just as the weather improved!

From Arolla, La Roussette (3261 m.) by the E.N.E. ridge made a good training day, and later the Pigne d'Arolla (3796 m.) was climbed by way of the Vignettes Hut and descended by the Glacier de Cheilon and the Pas de Chevres.

An attempt to climb the Aiguille de la Tsa was defeated by bad weather after a night at the Berthol Hut.

From Saas-Fee, after a night at the Wiessmies Hut, a 12-hour day was spent in climbing the Laquinhorn (4010 m.) by the Nordgrat and descending by the West and South-west ridge.

The Alphubel (4210 m.) was later climbed by Maurice Cooke and the two boys. Lower expeditions were made to the Monte Moro Pass at 2868 m., the beautiful Almagellen Alp (2194 m.)—both in the Arolla area—and the Egginer Joch (2991 m.) near the Britannia Hut, and the Mischabel Hut at 3329 m. in the Saas-Fee district.

G. G. FREEMAN was touring on ski in the Stubai Alps from 2nd to 14th April, centred on the Dresdener Hut. During the first week he climbed with various Germans met at the hut and later with the Möhrlings of Nürnberg with whom two of the climbs were repeated. Schaufel Sp., Zuckerhütl, Stubai Wild Sp., Hintere Daunkopf and Westliche Daunkogel were climbed; the Zuckerhütl is especially recommended as an excellent winter climb.

GEORGE ROGER and Freeman were in the Bernese Oberland from 19th August to 3rd September, climbing first from Blatten in Lötschental and later from Belalp. They climbed the Lauterbrunnen Breithorn by the west ridge from the Mutthorn Hut [Freeman was particularly pleased to complete this peak, having failed in 1954 with a strong C.C. party (*S.M.C.J.* (1955), xxv, 382)] and the Bietschhorn by the W.S.W. ridge. They failed to reach the Aletschhorn from the Oberaletsch Hut by about 500 ft. owing to a faulty crampon and had to be content with the Klein Aletschhorn. The Grossfusshorn by the S.W. ridge and S.W. flank provided an interesting and strenuous climb before Roger left to join R. GRIEVE and W. M. MACKENZIE at Arolla, and Freeman spent a final half-day on the Sparrhorn from Belalp. In sharp contrast to 1954, the Oberland rock and snow climbs were in perfect condition and they enjoyed a fortnight of virtually continuous sunshine.

BOOKS

Tables giving all the 3000-foot Mountains of England, Wales and Ireland. By D. C. Maxwell, B.Sc. (1959: Privately published, from 85 Whiteknights Road, Reading, Berks. 8 pp.)

A business-like and well-presented list of the 17 Separate Mountains and 32 Summits qualifying, with location and access. The criteria of status are clearly put down. Indispensable to the Munroist going abroad.

G. J. D.

The Trossachs and the Rob Roy Country. By Campbell Nairne. (1961: Oliver & Boyd. Some 140 pp., 20 illustrations and a map. 21s.)

This is a most successful treatment of a perilous subject. A detailed and penetrating analysis of a landscape and its visitors; a landscape not only of hills and glens but of stones and individual trees, and visitors picked out from the first gaping Goidel to the latest rock-sucking ticket-clutcher. Hogg, the Wordsworths, Sir Walter (rather too frequently) and the Hon. Mrs Murray of Kensington admire the views; the Stuarts, the Clearances and the Forestry adjust the population. Valid reasons are given for the irritation the Trossachs cause to the connoisseur: their small, smug, complacent beauty, their easy sunsets from hotel lawns, their lack of 'magnificent, austere, unenclosed country' and of the sour realities of Highland life. But the region has character and its ghosts were thrawn, and the author convinces us it deserves respect and a sounder economy than the Tourist Trade. A most refreshing and realistic book, beautifully printed, of the kind once done so well by Messrs Batsford; Messrs Oliver & Boyd are to be congratulated on doing it even better on so limited and difficult an area. May we have others—but with worthier illustrations! Recommended to all who see more than their own, or the Ordnance Survey's, feet upon the hills.

G. J. D.

The Mountain World, 1960-61. English Version, edited by Malcolm Barnes. (1961: G. Allen & Unwin. 262 pp., 64 illustrations. 32s.)

Himalayan expeditions receive special emphasis in this new volume of what is now universally recognised to be the most authoritative and topical of mountaineering publications. In view, however, of their number and the fine record of their achievement within the period under review, and the importance of these mountains as the largest remaining field of alpine exploration, it is difficult to see how the Editor could have further condensed the mass of excellent material at his disposal.

A wide variety of both text and illustration has been achieved by the inclusion of Arnold Lunn's excellent biography of Geoffrey Winthrop Young and of Bradford Washburn's outstanding aerial photographs and map of Mount McKinley. The account by Dölf Reist of his successful battle with the notorious weather of Ruwenzori, and that of the 'Peruvian Peak-Bagging' accomplished in record time by the 1959 S.A.C. Andean Expedition show that Africa and South America still have much to offer.

Finally, condensed into some 70 well-illustrated pages, there is a masterly summary of Antarctic discovery during the International Geophysical Year. In view of the interest and value of this successful experiment in international scientific research, only the extreme mountaineering purist would query the inevitable inclusion of some material not strictly justified by the title of the book.

In its high standard of writing, illustration and production, this volume is a worthy member of the series.

J. N. L.

White Mountain and Tawny Plain. By Günter Hauser. (1961: G. Allen & Unwin. 223 pp., many black and white illustrations. 28s.)

A rather piecey book, linking thinly various Andean ascents, Inca history, modern Peru, the Indian Problem and finally the ascent of Alpamayo—the first *real* ascent of Alpamayo. The author is German and proud of it, and the expedition had very good relations with its porters. The lack of unity detracts from a pleasant enough account.

G. J. D.

Mourne Rock Climbs. By Dr P. W. F. Gribbon. (N. I. Tourist Board and Belfast Section, I.M.C. 4s.)

Stand up and raise your glasses high To this brave land of Mourne—starts off this guide promisingly. Mourne granite requires tender feet and tough tweeds, the keynotes being balance and friction. Climbs are mostly on small individual outcrops, unmarked by nails and of ‘distinctive charm.’ A well-written and apparently comprehensive guide, with sensibly *rounded* corners for the pocket.

G. J. D.

Rock-climbing Guide to the Cliffs of the N.E. Coast of Scotland. (1961: Etchachan Club, Aberdeen. Some 85 pp., many detailed maps and plans. 6s. to Etchachan Club members.)

The routes have been collected by members and are ‘dispersed along 60 miles of coastline from Macduff in the north to Findon in Kincardineshire, but the better routes are closely grouped in several specified areas—in particular Longhaven, Souter Head and the South Cove cliffs. Good climbs are on excellent Cornwall-like granite; vegetative inferior ones are omitted.’ A business-like guide to local climbing by this go-ahead north-eastern Club.

G. J. D.

Airborne to the Mountains. By James Mills. (1961: Herbert Jenkins. Some 200 pp., 40 illustrations. 25s.)

This is the story of a party of four who made an enjoyable expedition to a glacier on the S.E. side of Mt. McKinley in Alaska, and should be read by those with a desire to do likewise. The four were all British Army Officers, as the author reminds the reader several times in each chapter, and inter-Services co-operation obtained free transport from the Canadian

Army and U.S. Air Force. During 6 weeks in the mountains they explored one glacier and made competent ascents of 3 more or less straightforward peaks. A fourth balked them through no fault of their own. These facts are padded out to 200 pages by including verbatim accounts of minor bickerings. Connoisseurs used to S.M.C. quarrels will find the quality of the invective poor, the profanity unoriginal and the derogatory use of simile and metaphor quite unexplored. (The art of properly giving and receiving insult is understood by few these days.)

The book is permeated throughout by military *mystique*, making the narrative seem sick and febrile to the civilian reader. The Russians are referred to as 'modern barbarians,' which suggests that Sir John Hunt, who wrote the approving Foreword, cannot have read the text. The 40-odd photographs are mediocre, with the exception of 3 borrowed from Bradford Washburn and 2 from the U.S.A.F. The 2 sketch maps give no scale or height. The index is curious: Catholicism, Communism and Colonel Nasser are listed, though occurring as mere unamplified words in the text, whereas 2 of the mountains the expedition climbed are not. We are given a scientific Appendix, and it reflects on the state of the market for climbing books when a well-known publisher offers such generous treatment to a competently-run but essentially unremarkable expedition (a dozen such go into the Coast Range of B.C. every summer), involving four rather nice stereotyped Army Officers. Writing a climbing book is difficult; the author has failed in good company.

I. H. M. S.

The Ascent of Dhaulagiri. By Max Eiselin. (1961: Oxford University Press. 159 pp., many illustrations. 25s.)

A competently translated account of the Swiss expedition, with the original superb Swiss illustrations. This was the expedition supported by the *Yeti*, that armchair-rocking innovation: supplies and men would be flown to an air-camp high up the mountain, thus removing a lot of that horrid business of climbing up; the mountaineers would then be fit for the really important task, that of knocking off the last thousand metres or so of Dhaulagiri, one of the few un-lassoed eight-thousanders then left. After landing some supplies, the machine wrecked itself, and the gods breathed again. The expedition got to the top, in spite of their legs, and this account is confused but candid, conveying Eiselin's irritation with porters, especially recommended ones, and his oblique occasional irritations with the rest of the human species, from petted Americans to Buhl-imbuéd Austrians. Well worth reading.

G. J. D.

The Real Mountaineer. By William B. McMorris. (1961: Dobson Books, Ltd. 10s. 6d.)

The author gives an account of the great climbs which have been the subject of many books—the Matterhorn, Everest, Kangchenjunga, Nanga Parbat, Annapurna, etc.—illustrated by drawings which are at times reminiscent of those in Whymper's *Scrambles*, and with his own comments

and advice scattered here and there. Some of his text is open to question: of Everest—'. . . sloping up to end in a black pyramid that was the summit of the highest mountain on earth'; of glissaders—'They can cut figures in the snow like a skier.' Of rock climbers—'The large majority of them love to spend a Sunday afternoon clinging to some sunny cliff face or performing acrobatics to surmount a bulging overhang that beetles out over a few hundred feet of thin air.' In the chapter of planning an expedition and in that of equipment there is no mention whatever of the use of map and compass. Perhaps the most useful phrase is at the end of the book: 'the simplest way for a beginner is to join the nearest climbing club.'

B. M. H.

Journals of Kindred Clubs. Books are books and somewhat suspect, but journals, as every Treasurer knows, are the literary salt of the sport and profiteth no one but the reader: we can mention only a few, but extend our thanks to all the senders of these popular (but alarmingly portable) additions to the Library. The *Alpine Journal*, 1960-2, is of interest to us principally because of Patey's 'Post-war Winter Mountaineering in Scotland,' a racily competent account of the ground covered by Marshall's article in our last issue, though of course beamed towards readers of the southern journal. The *Alpine Journal*, 1961-1, has a modest and pleasant account of the Indian Mount Everest Expedition, but after that . . . Jolmo Lungma is the food of all publicists, whether of potentates or parties, and of their dedicated opponents; and 'The Conquest of Mount Everest by the Chinese,' produced, one might think, by the Chinese equivalent of our Popular Press, lumbers on for 56 numbered paragraphs like a badly-translated Epic, shrilly circled and mosquito-bitten by an Editor striving to be impartial (always an instructive sight—see p. 259 above). The whole thing well illustrates the weaknesses of both our hemispheres. Whether the Chinese did reach the 'top' after their most remarkable and praiseworthy effort, oxygenless and benighted, cannot yet be proved. It would be a gross impertinence to assume lack of proof of success to be proof of failure, and this is prudently not done by the *Alpine Journal*: but only just not done. Noyce's ascent of Trivor is a good tale, enlivened by Whillans' kicking of porters. In *The Pinnacle Club Journal*, 1959-60, Dorothy Pilley has a brilliant account of women pioneers 'forty years back' in Wales. In Wales, too, *Oxford Mountaineering*, 1961, attempts some winter mountaineering, but in Scotland suffers profound disillusionment—which gives rise to an account of Surgeon's Gully Smith-bedevelled and slime-bedraggled, and to that good thing 'Argyll' (which we reprint), 'MacDonald's Law' in *Cambridge Mountaineering*, 1961, is excellent, too, and there is an account of The Chasm. The *Journal of the Lancashire Caving and Climbing Club*, 1961, contains an entertaining description of a Ben Nevis-Scafell-Snowdon-in-24-hours, of interest to rally-drivers and to those who wonder how such ludicrous excursions into the horizontal come about. In *The Journal of the Fell and Rock Climbing Club*, 1961, we are introduced to Hunt's account of Greenland's Stauning Alps, and in *The Journal of the Midland Association of Mountaineers*, we read of yet another trip to Greenland

—resulting from ‘John Slessor’s’ description of the 1958 S.M.C. Meet at the Staunings: such is the power of a well-known name. *The Climber’s Club Journal*, 1961, valiantly keeps the piece between Cambria and Cumbria. There is a pleasing vignette by Mortlock of Whillans dobbing Entity at last; and Patey’s tales of Skye appear, as unethically foretold in our previous issue. Of great interest is the Russian view of their visit here, translated from *Soviet Sport*: ‘The north Scottish Highlands—a land of mists and light-blue mountains—is surprisingly unpopulated. The population has emigrated to the other side of the Atlantic or gone into the towns. . . .’ Well worth reading, and including a description (unaccountably omitted from this *Journal*) of the awarding to ‘James Bell’ of a Badge of Climber of the Soviet Union for his exploits in the Caucasus. In 1893 (*S.M.C.J.*, ii, 324) the first number of the *Cairngorm Club Journal* was reviewed. The sonorously periphrastic freeze-off is well worth reading in its entirety. We can only quote a few lines: ‘It will come with no little surprise to some to find that a second journal has been started, and so much in the lines of our own that but for the name and the colour of the cover, it would be impossible to distinguish the one from the other. . . . Why,’ continued Maylard, ‘when there already exists a journal which welcomes worthy contributions from all parts of Scotland . . . should it be deemed needful to publish a second periodical on . . . precisely similar lines?’ Why, indeed! And an Editor a ‘member of the Scottish Mountaineering Club, a member of the Executive. . . .’! ‘Doubtless our field is an extensive one for essentially practical purposes; but whether that field contains a sufficiently inexhaustive stock of material and a sufficient number of those capable of giving suitable expression to it, without sinking to what might be termed twaddle and commonplaces, are questions sufficiently grave to be well pondered over. . . .’ Yet, all these years later, we can still review the *Cairngorm Club Journal*, 1962, and, if we wished, almost in the same words. A most remarkable thing, and the occasional interplay of differences, the frostiness and sniffiness, between the two journals throughout the years is of absorbing interest and explains their continued coexistence; a wet evening in the Library could well be spent thumbing and gravely pondering. This issue we have, among Scottish topics, Baird on Shelter, an excellent short article driving home many facts: the importance of considering staying put; the preliminary soaking to which the Scottish climate subjects you, that it might the more effectively freeze you higher up; the importance of keeping map and compass visible *outside* the clothing; and the dangers to parties larger than, say, three—the danger to the isolated leader and to the confused mob: one stressed, one dulled, to exhaustion. There is also an illustrated account of new footbridges in the Cairngorms; though pleasant individually, their inevitably prim and park-like appearance in such a landscape is, to many, grotesque, and their presence at all ominously suggestive of the Make-the-Hills-Safe extremists who advocate painted stones and Close Seasons; about those painted stones the Editor has sensible things to say (and we could add that the only people who are at all safe in the hills are those who are attracted to them as they are, and not because of their paths and footbridges, emergency

shelters, climbing huts, ski tows, journals or car parks; but that way lies heresy, no doubt). There are further good things, on Winter Sports 'Development,' and gleanings by Humble from the Shelter Stone Visitor's Books. As we go to Press, the *Alpine Journal*, 1961-2, has arrived. We have other versions of that 1960 Greenland trip, by Jackson, Blackshaw and McNaught-Davis. We have also another instalment of Bolshevik-baiting; we are informed, though, that this time the account 'is an improvement on the Everest narrative.' The account is of the Peking Geological Institute's Expedition to, and ascent of, Amne Machin; a good time was had by all, and honour and knowledge gained for Science, Party and Motherland. Should be read. Goodfellow has 'a further commentary' on the Chinese Everest Expedition, and a more polite one. The prisoners, this time, come out a little better. Jolly good. We'll believe 'em yet, if we're not careful. This petty bourgeois reaction to these Chinese articles must gladden Marxists' hearts: all is as foretold. In contrast, we have much dark motive-churning by an Emory returning to the hills. There is a good article by Diemberger and one, wonderful in simple clarity, by Günther Stärker; a well-written, superbly illustrated account of the Dorset Dolomites near Swanage, by John Cleare; rappels, old and new, Nuptse, and much more—but we have no space. A very readable issue.

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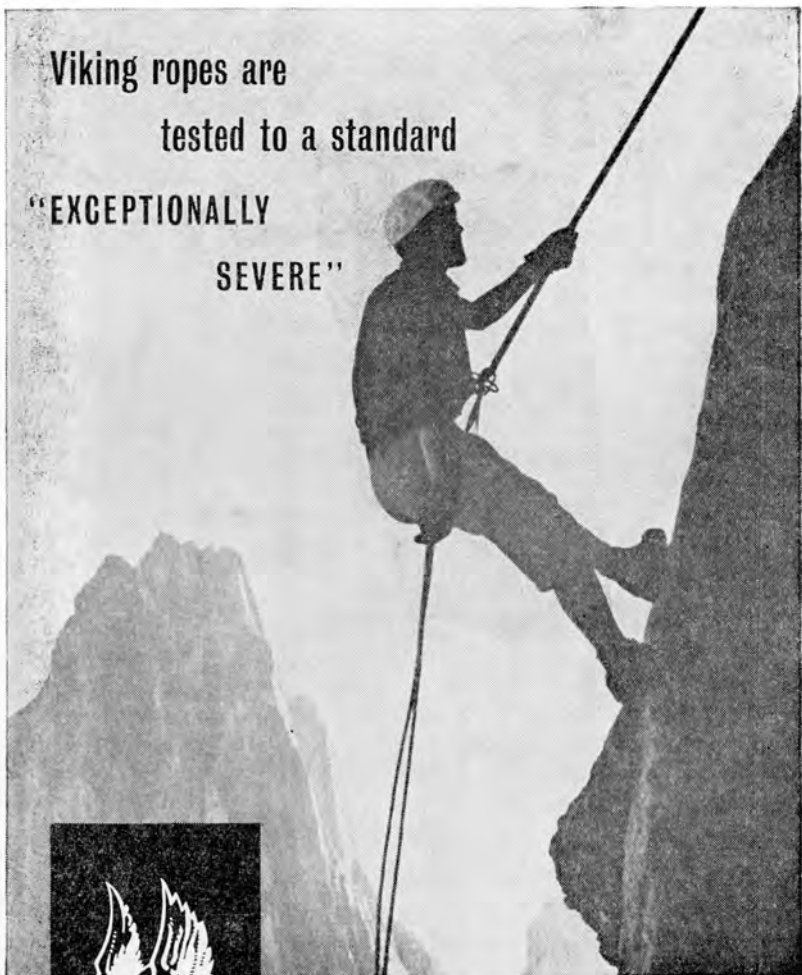
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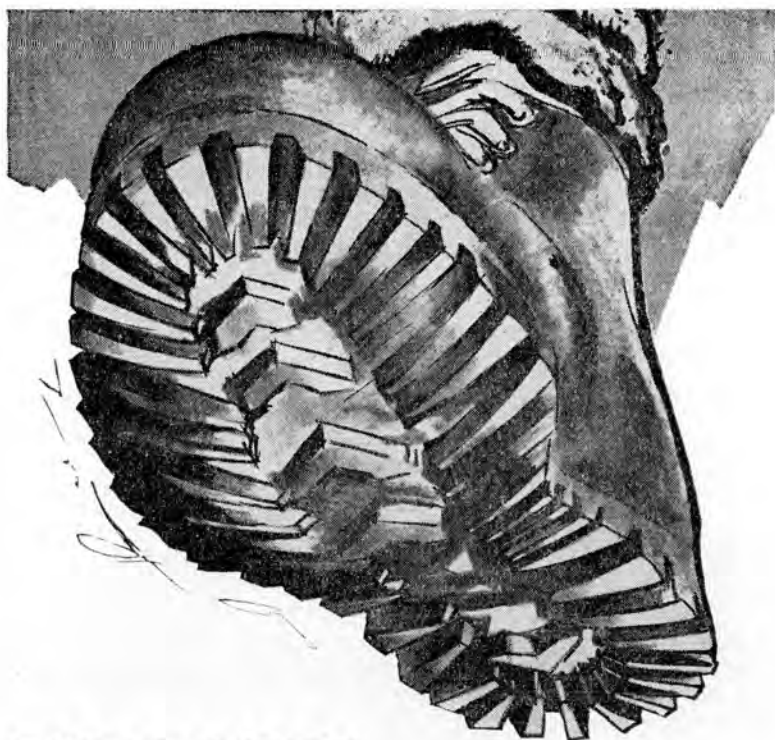
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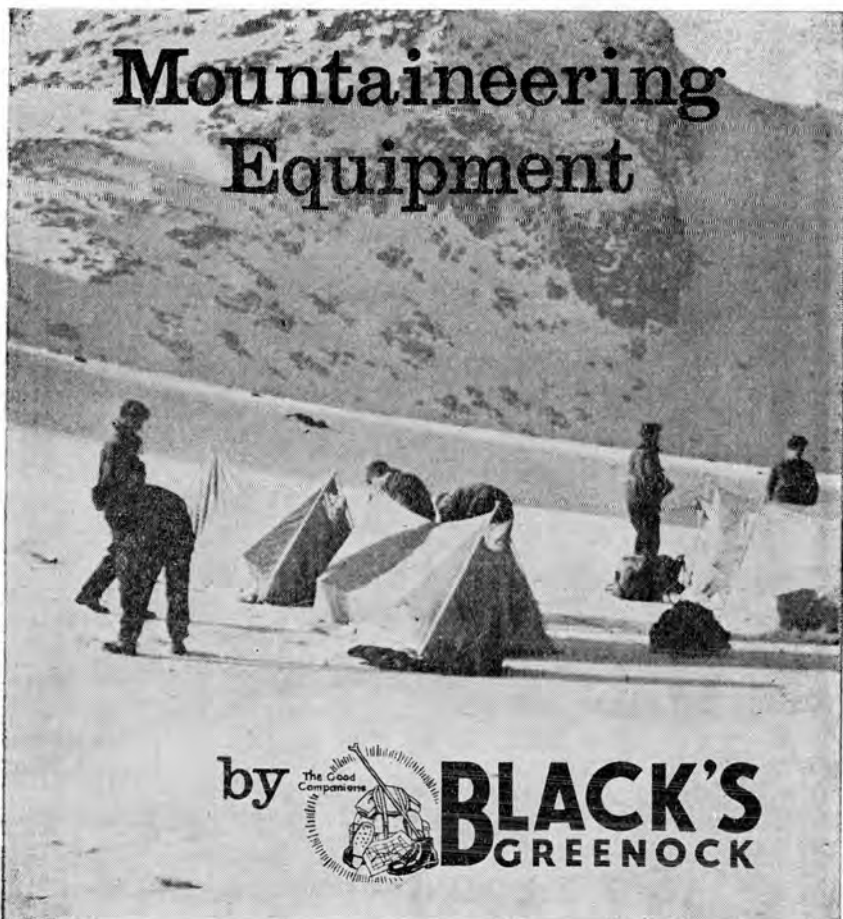
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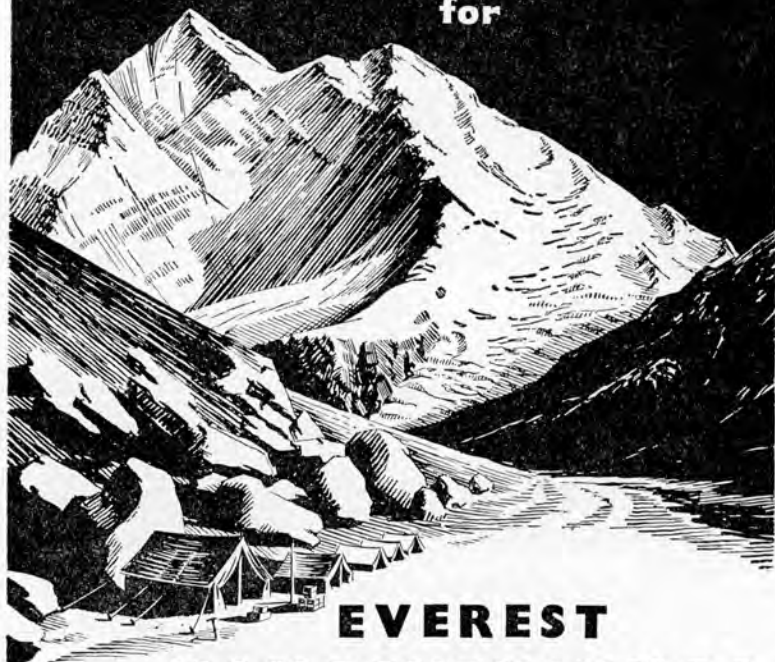


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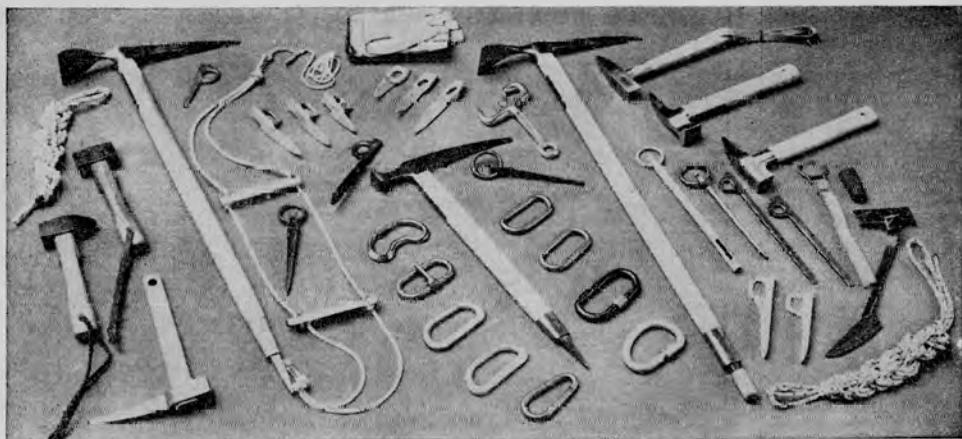
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