

THE SCOTTISH  
MOUNTAINEERING  
CLUB JOURNAL



VOL. XXVIII

No. 157

MAY 1966

TEN SHILLINGS AND SIXPENCE

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EDITED BY G. J. DUTTON AND R. N. CAMPBELL

THE SCOTTISH MOUNTAINEERING CLUB, 369 HIGH STREET, EDINBURGH, 1

OBTAINABLE FROM

*Douglas & Foulis, 9 Castle Street, Edinburgh, 2*

*J. B. Wylie & Co. Ltd., 406 Sauchiehall Street, Glasgow, C.2*





Crevasse on the Way to the Inland Ice

*Scottish Trans-Greenland Expedition*



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## THE ORIGINS OF MOUNTAINEERING IN SCOTLAND<sup>1</sup>

By D. B. Horn

I MUST first define a little more closely the problem to which I have addressed myself in this paper. By mountaineering I mean merely reaching the tops of mountains over 3000 feet, "Munros" in modern parlance. Many of the climbers used methods or had objects in climbing which would have led to their immediate expulsion from the purist and specialist mountaineering clubs of the twentieth century. While I should not care to say that none of these mountains had been climbed before the eighteenth century, no actual records of such ascents have survived. We do indeed hear of a mad laird in Glenlyon who is said to have climbed Stuchd an Lochain and of a lovesick maiden, jilted by Mackintosh of Moy, who gave her name to one of the Cairngorm corries. From these instances we may perhaps conclude that our simple-minded forefathers regarded *habitual* wandering over the high hills as one of the clearest symptoms of a disordered mind. Nevertheless the native Highlanders sometimes visited the high tops, especially in the course of a deer drive. If a mountain range formed the boundary between two clan territories there may have been something corresponding to the 'riding of the marches.' Sometimes too the most convenient route for traffic passed over or near a mountain top, as in the case of the Minigaig crossing from Blair Atholl to Kingussie or some of the Mounth roads from Deeside to Angus, but for obvious reasons such routes avoided high exposed ground whenever possible. In war, too, small groups of Highlanders

<sup>1</sup> With the kind permission of the Editor I have retained the lecture form in which this paper was originally cast.

sometimes took to the mountain tops as in Cameron of Lochiel's resistance to Cromwell's troops in the Protectorate period. Barbour describes Robert Bruce and his friends after their defeat by the English as 'Dreand in the Mounth thair payne' (*The Bruce*, book II, l. 494).<sup>1</sup> There may also have been a special reason for climbing certain mountains. Early nineteenth century tours from Glasgow to Inveraray often state that at one time the Cobbler had been the highest point in the domains of Clan Campbell and that on succeeding to the leadership of the clan the new chief was required to climb Ben Arthur and seat himself on the topmost crag. If he failed, the chieftainship passed to the next heir who had the courage and skill required for the climb. If this represents a genuine tradition and not a picturesque invention we may perhaps regard the Celtic chiefs of Scotland as the original founders of a Scottish mountaineering club. There are, I believe, somewhat similar stories about Irish kings and Norse chieftains.

My conclusion from this *prima facie* survey that ascents of Munros, though not entirely unknown, were rare before the eighteenth century is reinforced by three other considerations. (1) Scottish poetry shows, until comparatively recent times, little trace of strong delight in mountains. Though some Gaelic verse does show practical delight in mountains, the summits were never more than incidental and the normal reason given for mountaineering activity of any kind was the hunting of deer. The breathing place of the Gael was more often in the corrie than on the summit. (2) The common names given to Highland hills often do not suggest close acquaintance with their summits, *e.g.* Ben More, the big hill, nearly always one that is a conspicuous landmark from far around or the whole group of colour names—Ben Dearg, Creag Dubh, Cairngorm and dozens of others—refer to the appearance of these hills as seen from a considerable distance away. It is true that other names, notably Stob Ghabhar and Beinn Laoigh, imply that these hills, though not necessarily the actual summits, were regularly used for pasture. (3) The early topographical descriptions of the Highlands pay little attention to mountain masses—usually only outlying peaks which serve as landmarks from afar are mentioned.

I conclude therefore that down to the early eighteenth century the actual summits of most of the Highland mountains were almost as unknown to the majority of the Highlanders as they are in the main to their twentieth century descendants. Nor were they

<sup>1</sup> I owe this reference to my friend and former pupil Professor A. A. M. Duncan of Glasgow University.

climbed by the few English and other foreign visitors who penetrated the Highlands and left accounts of their travels. These are conveniently collected in Hume Brown's *Early Travellers in Scotland* and there is no indication that any of them even thought of hill-climbing, except so far as it was necessary to get from one place to another. Their attitude on the whole is that of E. Burt in his *Letters from a Gentleman in the North of Scotland*, stated to have been written in the 'twenties and 'thirties of the eighteenth century and published in 1754. Burt writes: "The Summits of the Highest mountains are mostly destitute of Earth, and the huge naked Rocks, being just above the Heath, produce the disagreeable Appearance of a scabbed Head." The Highland hills, he adds, are "a dismal gloomy Brown, drawing upon a dirty Purple; and most of all disagreeable, when the Heath is in Bloom." "The clearer the Day, the more rude and offensive they are to the Sight" and finally he observes "But of all the Views, I think the most horrid is to look at the Hills from East to West or *vice versa*; for then the Eye penetrates far among 'em and sees, more particularly, their stupendous Bulk, frightful Irregularity, and horrid Gloom, made yet more *sombrous* by the Shades and faint Reflections they communicate one to another." Much later than this Dr Johnson wrote of the Highland hills that "the appearance is that of matter incapable of form or usefulness, dismissed by Nature from her care, and disinherited of her favours, left in its original elemental state, or quickened only with one sullen power of useless vegetation."

This attitude changed in the course of the eighteenth century owing to the opening up of the Highlands after the collapse of Jacobitism. Wade's roads and the gradual establishment of inns where some creature comforts were obtainable were essential. Instead of riding through a trackless wilderness dependent on a guide whose language the visitor could not understand and whose fidelity was suspect, wondering all day in what wretched hovel he would spend the night, he now bowled along a good road in his own coach, accompanied by the latest edition of his predecessor's tour, which told him how many miles it was to the next stage, whether he could depend on good service at the next inn, and what objects he ought to examine on the way. The traveller feeling himself mentally and physically secure was now prepared to depart from the beaten track and to look for adventures, while his forerunner's aim had been to avoid any unnecessary risks. Both roads and inns were of course still objects of constant complaint. In fact the complaints of tourists began long before they reached the Highlands. Thus Princess Dashkov said in 1777 of the inn at

Linlithgow that "the English would find it execrable, the French passable, but the Scots would say it was *clean and comfortable*" (H. M. Hyde, *The Empress Catherine and Princess Dashkov*, London, 1935).

The change in attitude to mountains comes gradually. If you want a date, 1760 is as good as any. The attitude of Burt and Johnson may be contrasted with that of the Reverend William Gilpin, who in 1776 in the course of a fortnight's tour penetrated as far as Dalnacardoch and recorded his impressions in *Observations relative to picturesque Beauty*. Gilpin lays down rules to which mountains must conform if they are to be truly picturesque: he is by no means an uncritical admirer of Scottish scenery. But a few years later Isaac Forsyth goes the whole hog in his *Survey of the Province of Moray* (Aberdeen, 1798). He wrote of the Cairngorms that "the majestic features of the uncultivated wilderness and extensive prospects of nature, gained from the lofty brows of rocky mountains, yield an expansion of fancy and a native elevation of thought, accompanied in the impressions interesting and solemn, leaving in the memory traces of an entertainment serious and sublime." How tastes change in the course of a single generation! This change of attitude, while it contributed to the growing resort to the mountains of the later eighteenth century, is not by any means the only cause.

Four distinct classes of mountaineer may be distinguished: (1) the professional, (2) the sportsman, (3) the tourist and (4) the scientist.

The professionals form a mixed category of climbers who sought the tops of hills in the course of their everyday duties or else with a view to financial gain. It includes deerstalkers, foxhunters, guides and shepherds, dykers and fencers, as well as the land surveyors who spent long periods in making surveys of Highland estates. Perhaps the most interesting of these men was John Williams, a Welshman, who spent the summers 1770-75 prospecting for mineral wealth on the Forfeited Estates. Since his instructions from the Commissioners were "to examine the different sorts of stones particularly on the tops of high hills" he spent much of his time near the tops. His climbs included the second recorded ascent of Ben Wyvis in 1772 and of Ben Nevis in 1774.

Also included in this category were the eighteenth century military engineers and their successors who were employed to complete the Ordnance Survey of the Highlands in the early nineteenth century. One of these parties, for example, accompanied by a party of soldiers who acted as porters, spent from 6th June to

17th August 1847 on the summit of Ben Macdhui. Perhaps the most redoubtable Ordnance Survey engineer was Major-General Colby who used to set off with some of his men on what he called a "station-hunt," *i.e.* a pedestrian excursion to explore the country, to erect objects on the tops of some of the principal mountains and select those which, from their position and circumstances, should be preferred for future encampments. Returning on 21st July 1819 from one of these station hunts, in which he had walked 513 miles in 22 days, Colby set out two days later with a fresh party of soldiers.

"Captain Colby having, according to his usual practice, ascertained the general direction by means of a pocket compass and a map, the whole party set off [from the top of Corryhabbie] as on a steeplechase, running down the mountainside at full speed, over Cromdale, a mountain about the same height as Corryhabbie, crossing several beautiful glens, wading the streams which flowed through them, and regardless of all difficulties which were not actually insurmountable on foot." In this manner 39 miles were covered in the first day and 40 in the second day. On the third day Creag Meaghaidh was apparently climbed, on the fifth one or more of the Five Sisters above Loch Duich, but on the seventh "the summit of the Coolin hills" defeated them since they were not equipped with ladders or ropes and could not find a crevice by which to ascend the perpendicular rock at the summit. 'Scour-na-Marich' in the Coolins was, however, climbed from Sconser, also Slioch and other hills to the east of Loch Maree and the party returned to Corryhabbie having walked 586 miles in 22 days (including Sundays and days on which they could not proceed owing to bad weather).

Another special group within this class consisted of those who climbed the Cairngorms to search for precious stones. In the early nineteenth century whole families flocked to the mountains during the summer months and dug deep trenches in the summit plateaux so that they were often called Cairngorm *miners*. According to one traveller in 1818, Cairngorm was let from year to year to a jeweller in Edinburgh who made a considerable sum by it, while parties of English gentlemen at times pitched their tents on the mountain hoping to find some of the treasures it contained. Souter in his *Agriculture in Banffshire* (1812) and other authorities tell tall stories about the yield of this industry; but it seems clear that once intensive search began in the late eighteenth century, the really valuable stones were rapidly collected and the industry soon died a natural death. No doubt stones were still found, but as early as 1834 "Frederick Fag" refers to Cairngorm

as "a dreary mountain, where stones, gathered on the Andes, and purchased in London for twopence a piece, are sold by Sawney to the silly southern Sassenachs, as real Cairngorms, for five shillings each."

The second class of climber was the sportsman. So far as I know the earliest of these—usually English—shooting and fishing tenants in the Highlands was a Yorkshire squire who had studied at Glasgow University, Colonel Thornton, who recorded his exploits in his well-known *Sporting Tour*. This fascinating volume, though not published till 1804, records events dating from 1782. Roughly contemporary with Thornton were the early tenants on Deeside mentioned by Cordiner in his *Remarkable Ruins of North Britain* (London, 1788). Sir William Howe and other officers of distinction, Cordiner records some time in the 'eighties, had "this autumn" rented Braemar Castle and used it as a hunting box, while Corgarff Castle was being used at the same time as a lodge by gentlemen who delighted to "wander o'er the higher hills to enjoy the recreations of the field." The Earl of Fife, who spent the summers at Mar Lodge in single-minded pursuit of the red deer in his forest, was the most notable of native sportsmen. In the course of one of these excursions Fife records an ascent of Cairngorm, but Mr Hugh D. Welsh has convinced me that Fife here refers to Cairngorm of Derry, not the better-known mountain.

When Colonel Thornton made the first recorded ascent of Sgòran Dubh in the Cairngorms he made the most elaborate arrangements for catering. "Our dinner," he records, "proved an excellent one: the chief dish consisted of two brace and a half of ptarmigans and a moor cock, a quarter of a pound of butter, some slices of Yorkshire smoked ham, and reindeer's tongue; with some sweet herbs, pepper, etc. prepared by the housekeeper at Raits. These, with a due proportion of water, made each of us a plate of very strong soup . . . I tried the temperature of the water rushing under the arch of snow on which we sat, and wherein our champaign and sherbet were plunged and it was at 43½ Farenheit. We now drank, in a bumper of champaign, (gentlemen and servants faring alike) success to the sports of the field, and, with the addition of a tumbler of sherbet and a cordial, were enabled to pack up our apparatus and proceed." Fife, on the other hand, frequently spent a long day on the hills with nothing but a hunk of bread and cheese carried in his own pocket.

Some areas which offered little to the tourist were highly valued by these sportsmen. Oftener however there was to be competition between the sporting and tourist interests over the same areas.



This led at certain times and places to bitter hostility between them as in the famous "battle of Glen Tilt" in August 1847 between the Duke of Atholl and his retainers on the one hand and Professor Balfour and some Edinburgh University students on the other.

The third class of climber was the mere tourist, who, often unaccompanied by a guide, was beginning to climb the more accessible mountains in the second half of the eighteenth century. Much the most frequently climbed Scottish mountain in this period was Ben Lomond. There were no technical difficulties in the ascent. It was served by good inns at Tarbet and Arrochar. Most tourists passed near its base as they travelled from Glasgow to Inveraray. As early as 1804 James Denholm in *A Tour to the Principal Scotch and English Lakes* (Glasgow, 1804) states that "the greatest part of travellers who visit Loch Lomond upon a pleasure excursion in general take advantage of the ferry at Inverglas, and cross the lake to ascend Ben Lomond." *The Picture of Glasgow or Stranger's Guide* (revised edition; Glasgow, 1812) is even more emphatic though it insists that a guide is "absolutely necessary." These statements are fully substantiated by the tours which I have examined and are the more readily acceptable since they probably rest on the authority of Dr Stuart, minister of Luss.

The first recorded tourist ascent was made in 1758 by William Burrell, or rather by his companions. Burrell was a young graduate of Cambridge and his manuscript narrative is to be found in the National Library of Scotland. He writes :

"On the opposite side [of the loch] stands a mountain of the same name of a prodigious height overshadowing all the neighbouring rocks. The way to it is very irksome and in some places so steep that we were obliged to crawl on hands and knees. From the beginning of the ascent to the summit is five English miles. In several parts we sunk up to our knees in mire. We were fortunate enough to have a fine day and from the top, on one side, we could see Edinburgh and Stirling Castles at 40 miles distance : on the other, that of Dumbarton, Port-Glasgow, the Clyde and all the country beyond many miles. About two miles from our landing place we experienced the hospitality of the laird of Blairvochy, who, though a poor farmer and labouring at his harvest, left his work to entertain us with the best fare his cot afforded. It consisted of sour milk and goat's whey, which, homely as it was, we received with greater pleasure, and it was more acceptable to us than all the dainties of a palace. . . . [The laird also] furnished me with a little horse that carried me to the steep

part of the hill (where I was obliged to dismount), an advantage my companions would not have been averse to. When I got within 100 yards of the top, I had the misfortune to be seized with a dizziness which prevented my quixotism being carried to so great a height as that of my friends, who feasted very heartily on the summit whilst I was descending with the utmost caution or, rather, creeping down on all fours. Having returned safely with assistance to the first resting-place, and refreshed myself with the relics of their repast, we all set out together and by bog trotting with great rapidity arrived at our hospitable laird's without any other accident, except being much dirtied. . . ."

Burrell's example was soon followed. An English gentleman, Thomas Russell, climbed Ben Lomond in 1771 and left on the windowpane of a nearby inn a poetical effusion describing his emotions during the climb which was much quoted by later travellers. Three years later Syllas Neville, an Edinburgh medical student, left Dumbarton at 6 a.m., breakfasted at Luss and "ascended to the top of that tremendous mountain with considerable difficulty after resting ten or a dozen times. . . . We were seven hours in ascending and descending . . ." After drinking tea at Luss he returned to Dumbarton the same evening. Before 1797 a French visitor, the Chevalier de Latocnaye, after failing at a first attempt because of mist, reached the top in the company of a party of young people from Glasgow.

Sir John Stoddart, a friend of Sir Walter Scott, made the ascent in 1799 without a guide. He took three hours to reach the top and an hour and ten minutes to return to the foot of the hill. The rapidity of his descent is explained by the note which he adds for the benefit of later climbers. "To those who are in the habit of descending mountains, it is well known, that the best mode (unless in very steep parts) is to run down rather rapidly, in a zigzag direction; by which means, if the slipperiness of the ground should make you fall (which happened to me several times) little danger is to be apprehended." [*Remarks on Local Scenery and Manners in Scotland* (London, 1801).] It is worth noting that although Stoddart made an extensive tour of the Highlands this is the only ascent he recorded. The few tourists who passed on without climbing Ben Lomond usually excused themselves on the ground of bad weather or the lateness of the season.

Thomas Wilkinson of Yanwath seems to have been the earliest English tourist who came to Scotland for the specific purpose of climbing our hills, though I must add that his actual performance, like that of many of his successors, fell far short of his ambitions.



He did, however, reach the top of Ben Lomond. Seeing a party going up the Ben by the easy tourist route he hid some of his clothes in the heather and reached the top in 1 hour 38 minutes, "being previously informed that  $2\frac{1}{2}$  hours or 2 hours 20 minutes was the usual time and that it was not believed to have been climbed in less than 2 hours." It is worth noting that Wilkinson was accompanied by John Pemberton, a citizen of the United States, and this transatlantic connexion may explain his enthusiasm for setting up records. The descent took 1 hour 2 minutes, total time employed on the expedition 3 hours 17 minutes.

By this time Ben Lomond seems to have been nearly as crowded as it is at present on a fine day in summer. Wilkinson found a paper on the top addressed to the finder, by two gentlemen, one from Glasgow and the other from Edinburgh, who had been there the previous day, and before he left the top a party of 12 persons, six of either sex, two guides, a black servant and a pony laden with provisions arrived. Charles Ross in his *Travellers' Guide to Loch Lomond* (Paisley, 1792) was fully justified when he wrote: "In the months of July, August and September, the summit of Ben Lomond is frequently visited by strangers from every quarter of the island, as well as by foreigners."

Next to Ben Lomond, Ben Nevis was the summit most frequently climbed by tourists in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. In Burt's day it was reputed to be inaccessible: "Some *English* officers took it in the Fancy to go to the Top, but could not attain it for Bogs and huge Perpendicular Rocks. . . . This wild Expedition, in ascending round and round the Hills; in finding accessible Places, helping one another up the Rocks, in Disappointments, and their returning to the Foot of the Mountain took 'em up a whole Summer's Day from five in the Morning." If mist had come down, Burt adds, "they must have perish'd with Cold, Wet, and Hunger." Drummond of Balhaldy, a Jacobite agent who wrote the memoirs of Cameron of Lochiel *circa* 1737, implies that the top of Ben Nevis could be reached, and when the first recorded tourist ascent occurred in 1787, more than 30 small cairns erected by previous visitors were seen on the summit. The leaders of this expedition were an officer of the Fort William garrison, Lieut. Walker, and the Rev. James Bailey, vicar of Otley, Yorkshire. Bailey's MS. account is to be found in the National Library of Scotland; the route followed is not clearly stated but it involved some rock climbing and the use of a cord and grappling iron. The party took with them three guides and four soldiers from the garrison to act as porters. One of the soldiers, having

partaken too freely of the rum, had to be left behind in the care of two of his comrades but soon recovered. After tumbling huge stones down the precipices in a light-hearted manner, the party descended rapidly, glissading for the greater part of the way "upon our haunches" and setting in motion before them showers of stones "which amused us with their incessant rattling." Time, 13 hours.

Soon afterwards we hear of a lady of fashion who reached the summit and deliberately left a whisky bottle (full) behind her. When she returned to Fort William she told the Highland guides what she had done and one of them promptly returned to the top and duly brought back the bottle in triumph. Can this be the true origin of the annual race from Fort William up and down Ben Nevis? Another tourist in 1800 records meeting other parties near the top, including a Mr Grant of Glenurquhart who "plied the whiskey bottle with considerable alacrity, but notwithstanding found the descent more perilous and difficult than the ascent" (Leyden, *Tour in the Highlands* (Edinburgh, 1903)). Such incidents led to the insertion of solemn warnings in the guide books and tours, e.g. "the ascent can hardly be completed in less than four or five hours and the descent will require nearly as much time. The temptation, resulting from the exhaustion produced by the fatigue of the ascent, to recruit by drinking wine or ardent spirits, ought to be entirely resisted, or yielded to with great caution; otherwise from the natural unsteadiness of the footing, and steepness of the stony declivity, the descent will be a work of considerable danger as well as difficulty" [*Sketch of a Tour in the Highlands of Scotland . . . in September and October 1818* (London, 1819)].

Tourist ascents of other mountains in the eighteenth century are rare. The Cairngorms were virtually unknown to tourists until explored by the Rev. George Skene Keith in 1810. I know of no evidence of tourist ascents in the Glencoe hills before the very end of the eighteenth century when Stoddart and Leyden left the valley road and started scrambling on Aonach Dubh and Bidean nam Bian in 1799 and 1800 respectively. As for the magnificent summits beyond the Great Glen they were not explored by the tourists until well into the nineteenth century. The geologist John Macculloch in *The Highlands and Western Isles of Scotland* (4 vols. 1824) speaks of the unsuccessful attempt of one of the sailors who manned the vessel which brought Macculloch to Lochinver, to climb Suilven. By the 1830's however Suilven had been climbed by a Highland gentleman residing near Lochinver, "accompanied by a young lady from Glasgow." (*The Lakes of Scotland*, Glasgow

1834, pictures by John Fleming, letterpress by John Leighton.) It should not be forgotten that it was largely the closing of the continent of Europe to English travellers by the French Revolutionary and Napoleonic wars which gave Scotland a chance to establish herself as a tourist centre. The end of these wars was followed by a decline in the number of English tourists who visited Scotland.

The eighteenth century tourist when climbing hills habitually rode on horseback. As late as the 1830's he is frequently advised to ride to the summit and assured that it is perfectly safe to do so in the case of hills such as Ben Lawers, Ben Lomond or Cairngorm. Once pedestrian tours became common, many new routes were opened up and new mountains became prominent landmarks and tempted the tourist to climb them. The result was a great extension of interest and activity over areas hardly touched by eighteenth century travellers.

Before leaving the tourists, I should like to discuss very briefly the motives which led them to climb. Many climbed out of curiosity to see out-of-the-way places; some were unashamed peak-baggers; others, *e.g.* Stoddart, emphasised the importance of the view from the top; a few claimed that they climbed in order better to appreciate the world which God had created for man's enjoyment. In most cases their motives were probably mixed. "Frederick Fag," advocating the ascent of Ben Lomond on horseback, says that "the exercise, the mountain air, the exhilaration of spirits and the acquisition of health, are ample equivalents for any disappointments as to the prospect from the mountain's airy brow." The same author recounts another experience [of his own] on the top of Cruachan in the company of "an old East Indian" who had previously accompanied Fag on the usual steamer trip to Staffa. "On gaining the summit," Fag writes, "I asked him what he thought of the magnificent prospect around us? 'I like the journey,' said he, 'up this mountain, much better than the excursion to Staffa. That cruise took away the little appetite I had; but this morning's exercise has excited the only sense of real hunger which I have felt since I left Vizagapatam.' He then sat down and enjoyed a hearty second breakfast, without any notice of the adjacent panorama."

Perhaps the most curious reason ever given for climbing a mountain, however, is ascribed by the Rev. W. Forsyth in *In the Shadow of Cairngorm* (Inverness, 1900) to James MacIntyre, who had been colour-bearer of the Edinburgh regiment in Prince Charles's army. After Culloden he saved the colour and preserved it as a precious relic. "Once every year, on the anniversary of the

raising of the Prince's standard at Glenfinnan, he used to take it to the top of Cairngorm and there unfurl it with much pride. He wished, he said, to give it fresh air." These annual pilgrimages are hardly to be included with tourists' ascents, but I do not know where else to put them—McIntyre's motive for hill climbing is clearly *sui generis*.<sup>1</sup>

Finally there is a fourth class of early climber consisting of men whose object is the pursuit of some scientific inquiry. In fact scientific curiosity was the impulse which produced most of the earliest recorded ascents of our Highland hills. Professor John Hope of the Edinburgh Botany Chair persuaded the Commissioners on the Forfeited Estates to finance a series of tours of Scotland by James Robertson between 1767 and 1771. In each of these years Robertson spent the summer months on tour and brought back specimens for the College Museum. His MS. *Journals* for 1767 and 1771 are now in the National Library of Scotland. His 1767 climbs included Ben Wyvis, Ben Hope, Scaraben and Morven, all in the Northern Highlands. In 1771 he bagged Mayar, Lochnagar (?), Ben Avon, Cairngorm, the Sgòran Dubh range, Ben Wyvis, Ben Nevis, Creag na Caillich above Killin and apparently Stuchd an Lochain in Glenlyon—all between 5th June and 26th August. Nearly all of these are, so far as I can discover, first recorded ascents.

Hope's influence was also felt in another way. He accompanied Pennant and Lightfoot on Pennant's second tour of Scotland in 1772 and (I guess) introduced Lightfoot to the Rev. John Stuart. By 1772 Stuart was familiar with the tops of many Highland hills and guided Lightfoot to some of these summits, probably including, on the internal evidence of Lightfoot's *Flora Scotica* (2 vols. London 1777), Ben More (Perthshire), Ben Cruachan, Ben Sgriol above Loch Hourn, Ben Lomond, part of the An Teallach massif above Little Loch Broom, Bidean nam Bian and Meall Mòr in Glencoe, Meall nam Tarmachan, Meall Glas, Meall Ghaordie and several other hills in Breadalbane, Ben Dòthaidh and Ben Achaladair in Glenorchy as well as various peaks in Skye and Rhum, the Paps of Jura and Goatfell. The Rev. John Stuart was soon appointed minister of Luss, where he acted as guide, philosopher and friend

<sup>1</sup> Sir Francis Younghusband apparently retained the sleeping bags and other equipment used in his Himalayan expeditions; "I give them a pat and turn them over now and then," he told a visitor to his home in Kent, "I shall not use them any more but they served me well" (Dawn Macleod, *Oasis of the North*, p. 169).

to generations of tourists, who acknowledge their indebtedness to him in their published works.

Other botanists continued to climb in search for unknown or rare plants. Amongst these was James Dickson, who contributed an article to the second volume of the *Transactions of the Linnean Society* (London, 1794), in which he states that he has "frequently made a tour through the Highlands, and never without discovering some plants." He lists nine discoveries in 1789 and nineteen more in 1792. He visited the tops of Ben Lawers and Ben Nevis and probably other hills. His companion was Mungo Park, his brother-in-law—a curious introduction to travel for the later explorer of Africa. By this time Ben Lawers was well known as "a perfect botanical garden of Alpine plants" to quote the geologist Macculloch, who records that on one of his ascents of that mountain he met "two missionaries from the Edinburgh [Botanic] garden, with huge tin boxes slung over their shoulders, who seemed to be in a perfect ecstasy of happiness." Later on, the famous battle of Glen Tilt resulted from "an extended botanical trip" by Professor Balfour and his students in the course of which they reached the summit of Ben Macdhui and found specimens of *Silene acaulis*, etc. (1847).

The botanists did not long have the hills to themselves. A party of astronomers chose the summit of Ben More (Perthshire) to observe in 1769 the transit of Venus (G. F. Robson, *Scenery of the Grampian Mountains* (London, 1814).) In 1772, on the proposal of the Astronomer Royal, the Rev. Nevil Maskelyne, the Royal Society decided to try and measure by astronomical observations the attraction of some hills in this kingdom. After a preliminary inspection Schiehallion was selected, because it was of sufficient height, tolerably detached from other hills, and considerably larger from east to west than from north to south. In 1774 Maskelyne spent four months on the mountain. An observatory was constructed for him halfway up the south side of the hill and then moved across the summit by 12 men, who took a week to the job, and re-erected it halfway down the north face. There Maskelyne completed his observations while his assistants below were busy calculating the shape and dimensions of the hill with the aid of cairns specially erected on the summit ridge. During his residence on Schiehallion Maskelyne received numerous visits from the neighbouring gentry and also from university scholars interested in the experiment.

Maskelyne had travelled to Scotland in the company of a fellow member of the Royal Society, Colonel William Roy, a man of many parts who at this time was keenly interested in experiments

to measure heights by the use of a barometer. When Roy visited Maskelyne in 1774 he climbed Schiehallion and took barometer readings on 11th and 12th July. From these he calculated the height at 3281 feet (O.S. actual 3547). Subsequently Roy employed junior engineer officers and civilian volunteers to take similar observations from Farragon, Ben Lawers, Ben-y-Gloe and Ben More (Perthshire). Roy gives full details in his *Experiments and Observations . . . to obtain a rule for measuring heights with the Barometer* (London, 1778) in which he makes the suggestion that "reasonable accommodation" should be provided for an observer who should live a whole year on the top of Ben Nevis. Later when the Rev. George Skene Keith opened up the Cairngorms his primary object was to calculate the heights of the various summits. He made Braeriach, Cairntoul and Ben Macdhui 4280, 4285 and 4300 respectively and reckoned that Cairngorm did not exceed 4050 feet. We cannot but be impressed by the accuracy of his results. It was these observations which first displaced Cairngorm from its age-old pride of place amongst the Cairngorm summits. Also Keith despatched his son to climb Ben Nevis and take observations there which convinced Keith that Ben Nevis was higher than any of the Cairngorms, although more than a generation was to pass before this was finally established.

The geologists were comparatively late in reaching the Highland summits. B. Faujas de Saint-Fond in 1784 attempted to climb Ben More (Mull) and described the amazement of his guide who "had no conception that we could wish to climb so rugged a mountain, for any other purpose than the pleasure of the chase, which he passionately loved himself. He was therefore much surprized when I took out my hammers, and told him, that I had come to examine the stones of the place" (*Travels in England, Scotland and the Hebrides*, London, 1799, 2 vols.). For one who claimed to be an experienced Alpinist, he made very heavy weather of the ascent, complaining bitterly of the heath which covered the mountain. His companion, William Thornton, however, did reach the top, but "the stones he brought back with him afforded no variety."

In spite of this discouraging start, the geologists soon out-distanced their competitors, with the possible exception of the botanists. The best known geological climber was John Macculloch who, in a series of annual journeys between 1811 and 1821, visited various mountain tops and published his results in *The Highlands and Western Isles of Scotland* (London, 1824, 4 vols.). Macculloch's own claim to have "ascended almost every principal mountain in



Scotland" must be treated with caution as contemporary scientists were sceptical. Professor J. D. Forbes (of the Edinburgh Natural Philosophy Chair) made repeated excursions to the Highlands, mostly for geological purposes, between 1836 and 1850. While climbing Ben Nevis he is said to have cut steps in drifted snow for the first time in the history of Scottish mountaineering; but apparently this had been done in 1812 during a winter ascent of Ben Lomond by Colonel Hawker.<sup>1</sup>

Finally a few words about the female mountaineer, who is surprisingly prominent in records of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century climbs. Eighteenth century English and Scottish women were as used to riding long distances over rough tracks as their menfolk. I suspect that most of them belonged to the "ride to the summit school." Certainly we must include in this group the two ladies Daniel Defoe claims to have seen on the top of The Cheviot at the very beginning of the century. Mrs Murray Aust, who has left us the first detailed account of the ascent of Cairngorm, also rode nearly to the summit, accompanied by half a dozen members of the stronger sex. No doubt the Duchess of Gordon followed Mrs Murray Aust's example when a few years later she climbed Cairngorm in the company of the geologist Macculloch. Queen Victoria was almost the last and perhaps the most distinguished member of this school when she reached the summit of Ben Macdhui.

Even when the pedestrian comes into his own at the beginning of the nineteenth century mixed parties seem not uncommon. Thomas Wilkinson met on the top of Ben Lomond a party of 12 persons, six of either sex, at some date previous to 1824. I have also quoted earlier the ascent of Suilven by "a young lady from Glasgow" along with a Highland gentleman residing near Lochinver in the early 'thirties of the nineteenth century. By the Victorian era there was nothing unusual in such mixed parties. I may quote as typical the account given in mock heroic style by W. Grant Stewart of an ascent of Cairngorm in the late 'fifties. The party consisted of Colonel Cadogan, Major Strutt and the latter's two sisters, accompanied by a groom and a lady's maid. Caught on the top in a terrific thunderstorm, the Honourable Juliet and the Honourable Matilda Strutt made over their ponies to the servants; and, each mounted on the shoulders of one of their two guides, were carried safely to the nearest shelter at Auldrue. This unorthodox method of transport was recommended to conventional Victorianism by the example of Florence Nightingale who made

<sup>1</sup> *The Southern Highlands*, ed. J. D. B. Wilson (1949), p. 45.

use of it in the Crimea to get from hospital to hospital or ward to ward. It seems also from some mid-nineteenth century accounts (e.g. H. B. Hall, *Highland Sports and Highland Quarters*, 1845) to have been customary for sportsmen to cross streams in this way.

More interesting are the occasional glimpses of unaccompanied ascents by women. The anonymous "young Scotch lady" who, at some time prior to 1776, climbed Ben Lomond "without any difficulty" [Mary Ann Hanway, *A Journey to the Highlands of Scotland* (London, ?1777)] may well be the earliest woman mountaineer of this type. Macculloch in the second decade of the nineteenth century met on Ben Lomond two unattended young ladies, sisters, descending the mountain after making a guideless climb. The youngest and fairest displayed a "delicate silk stocking and a more delicate shoe which had suffered what might have been expected in the campaign." A generation later such unaccompanied ascents were commonplace. Hill Burton tells of a meeting, presumably in the 'forties, on the top of one of the Cairngorms with two ladies, mother and daughter, who had climbed by themselves from a cottage near 'Lochaneilan' and seemed quite at home on the summits. Some years later W. Grant Stewart suggests, no doubt with some exaggeration, that in his day, so far as the upper class was concerned, the women were more enthusiastic mountaineers than the men.

"Despite grouse disease, dear deer-forests, high rents, and expensive accommodations, the *tartan fever* and *heather mania* propagated by the wand and pen of the wizard of Abbotsford, and the pens and pencils of the poets and painters, are still in the ascendant; for, on that great day in the new Highland calendar, the Twelfth of August, every moor and shealing, shooting lodge, and Highland inn, is graced and cheered by the presence of the nobility and gentry of England and the plains of Scotland, in pursuit of the feathered denizens of the moor, the antlered monarch of the forest, or the silvery tenants of the streams; while the graceful forms of England's proudest and fairest daughters are seen patiently enduring toil and privation, in their endeavours to stand on the tops of our highest mountains—a feat to be recorded in their family histories."

The explorers, tourists, sportsmen, fox hunters, shepherds, guides and scientists whose activities have been surveyed in this paper, combined in the second half of the eighteenth century to open up vast areas of Scotland which had hitherto rarely been visited either by native or stranger. They showed the way and blazed the trails which were to be trodden by an increasing army of tourists and climbers in succeeding centuries.





Sailing Westward

*Scottish Trans-Greenland Expedition*



*J. Knight*

*Sur les pointes* in Point Five : Robertson and his Adjustable Crampons

EDITOR'S NOTE.—We are much indebted to Professor Horn for this article, which covers ground long neglected, and in part never even traversed, by this *Journal*. First given as a lecture, part of it was published in *Scottish Studies* (vol. 7 (1963), p. 1) the journal of that School whose existence in George Square, Edinburgh, somewhat offsets the neighbouring activities of a vandal University. The editor kindly gave us permission to reproduce that article, but the author's generosity offered us the whole lecture, for which we are most grateful. Perhaps some day we may persuade a member of the School of Scottish Studies to outline the role of Scottish mountains in the Gaidhealtachd, about whose ruins we now play and where, even if they were so familiar that hunting and grazing over them precluded any novelty of route- or summit-bagging, the mountains still remained a powerful inspiration down to the days of Donnchaidh Bàn with his Last Farewell to the Hills and the splendid surge of

An t-urram thar gach beinn  
Aig Beinn-dòrain. . . .

Relevant references in earlier *Journals* are: The Rise and Progress of Mountaineering in Scotland—Introductory [J. P. Smith, iii (1894) 51], Pennant [Veitch, iii (1894), 111], Macculloch [Campbell, iii (1895) 183], Robson, Anderson, Grierson and Burton [W. A. Smith, iii (1895) 247], Forbes [G. A. Smith, iii (1895) 309], whilst in Conclusion [iv (1896) 1] Ramsay deplores the Modern Tendency of Tourism and quotes the first(?) *Guide Book* of 1825, dedicated to the catalytic Walter Scott. A series *Half-hours in the Club Library* details, often with great humour, feats of early hill-tourists: Stoddart, 1801 (W. C. Smith, xi (1910) 198]; Bristed, 1803, an excellent account [Goggs, xi (1910) 145]; Gilpin, 1789 [Greig, xi (1910) 198]; Burt, 1726, good [H. Walker, xi (1911) 335]; Dr Johnson [John Buchan, xii (1912) 13]; Newte, 1791 and Skrine, 1795 [Gillon, xii (1912) 94, 99]; Mrs Murray Aust, 1796 et seq., good [H. Alexander, xi (1912) 164]; Hall, 1807, *Travels in Scotland, by an Unusual Route: with a Trip to the Orkneys and Hebrides, containing Hints for Improvement in Agriculture and Commerce, with Characters and Anecdotes, embellished with Views of Striking Objects, and a Map, including the Caledonian Canal* [Cumming, xii (1913) 275]; Wilkinson, 1824 [Macalister, xiii (1914) 157]; Knox, 1786, Lettice, 1792 and Spence, 1816 [Campbell, xiii (1915) 321, 326 and 332]. The Inglis family's reminiscences should also be noted (xvi, 287, 290; xvii, 11, 254; xviii, 10, 62; xx, 299, 311, 381; xxi, 9).

## GRØNLAND LANGRENN

### (The 1965 Scottish Trans-Greenland Expedition)

By Hugh Simpson

My pocket was light by the return Glasgow-Copenhagen fare. I regarded the two gloomy faces of the Grønland Ministeriet. No! they said, it certainly wasn't possible to grant permission for our Greenland Expedition. Our plans to ski across the ice-cap now seemed even less likely to materialise. Our medical research programme to make a study of prolonged stress hadn't impressed them in the least—even though an eminent Danish physiologist had given enthusiastic support. My mind raced over concessions we could make. Was their frigid attitude due to the fact we weren't taking dogs and were taking a woman, I wondered? I suggested insurance to cover rescue operations but even as I started speaking I realised their minds were made up. The door was already closed. The trouble is, of course, you can't really put a price on the value of scientific work, and their opinion that it might endanger the lives of locals was really impossible to discuss.

But fortunately I had appointments to see not only the established ministry but also the disestablished. That night as I sat drinking the whisky of this retired veteran, he pointed out that no-one could stop us. No-one would even know we were there. There were no immigration formalities. After the third whisky I realised that we were actually in a position of strength, for the ministry had lost all its bargaining power by refusing permission.

The beauty of a man-hauling ski expedition is its simplicity; all you need is a sledge with food and camping equipment and a party to pull it. Of necessity everything is ultra-light and therefore easy to take by aeroplane. By early June 1965 the three man- and one woman-party stood on the Reykjavik tarmac with all the gear, wondering which of the Dakotas was our private plane to Greenland. A dazzling blonde full-bosomed Icelandair hostess beckoned us forward and we soon realised that she, too, was included in the £474 air charter to Angmagssalik. We made a very shabby comparison. Our boots were falling to bits and our windproofs ragged, as we intended to abandon this equipment when the last rocky nunatak was reached, and don new Black's Everest Anaraks, windproof trousers and ex-Korean-War canvas boots (purchased

from the Headquarter and General Stores at 10s. 6d., but size variable).

The plane droned on over the vast pack-ice belt for an hour or two, and soon the Alpine fringe of the East Greenland mainland came into view. As we lost height my political fears became stronger. Would the local officials turn us back? Would we be able to hire local transport from the island airstrip to a suitable starting point on the coast? The plane lurched to a halt and we jumped out on to the dusty runway. No-one expected us or had heard of us. There were no formalities. No-one knew we had arrived.

The greatest friend of climbers in South-East Greenland is Carsten Berg-Sorensen, the government architect at Angmagssalik. A keen climber and sledger himself, he is sensitive to the peculiar aims and ambitions of explorers and is in a position to help. I spent a cosy night on his bearskin rug and after an hour or so of chat we had all our outstanding problems of local transport cleared up. In a few days' time his government boat would be near the point on the coast where we wanted to start and he would be glad to 'bend' its course a bit to oblige us.

A week later we chugged our way out of Angmagssalik in a friendly orange tug-like boat which made a fine contrast to the blue skies and white icebergs. Our plan was to land at Gino Watkins' 1931 base and use his route over the difficult and steep crevassed glaciers that lead to the inland ice. We had pored over the relevant aerial photos all winter—American of course—and we could have gone up this route blindfold.

All seemed well with the expedition and we were congratulating ourselves at this early departure from Angmagssalik before any other summer expeditions had arrived to tax the local hospitality.

Just then the boat lurched to a halt. We rushed on deck. A band of water-logged old bay ice stretched right across the strait. The captain backed away the boat and we charged with a full  $5\frac{1}{2}$  knots. But the ice was remarkably solid and soon we once more came to a feeble stop. After several hours' delay we pushed into the clear water on the far side. But now so much time had been wasted that we couldn't possibly make the old British base and allow the boat enough time to get back. And it was needed tomorrow.

The situation boiled down to the fact that either we would be dropped here on the sea-ice shore (*i.e.* in Johan Pedersen fjord) or go back and perhaps wait another week for transport. It was all very well being dumped on the sea-ice but there was no guarantee of a route through the crevasses and icefalls of the local glaciers;

moreover there were no land settlements we could reach on foot and once landed it was really a one-way ticket to the West Coast. But psychologically a return to Angmagssalik was so appalling that there was nothing really for it but to accept the risks and be landed at once.

The boat nosed its way into the fjord ice until it stuck, and we jumped down on to the slush, delighted to have something to do other than stand on the chilly deck. Our two 12-foot Nansen sledges were handed down, boxes of dehydrated rations, the Antarctic pyramid tent,<sup>1</sup> and the navigation box with bubble sextant (ex-W.D., £3 at Franks), Japanese transistor radio-direction finder and altimeters.

The Eskimo crew, of course, couldn't see why we didn't have dogs. So we fitted on the lightweight nylon harnesses and soon the two 12-foot Nansen sledges with a total load of 800 lb. were sliding over the wet sea-ice away from the ship. They were amazed how easy it was but, being the sensible people they are, they couldn't see the point of it all.

Finally we walked back to the ship for the good-bye and handshakes all round. Quite a moving moment since this was to be our last human link for some time. I had a tip for the captain and unfortunately gave it to the only passenger—a point which the others thought wildly amusing. One Eskimo looks much like another in moments of stress!

The friendly little boat now backed away from the ice and had soon chugged its way round the end of the fjord leaving the four of us looking rather insignificant on the sea-ice.

We summed up the large loads. Two hundred pounds each to pull. Roger Tufft and I, the joint leaders, had had much Antarctic man-hauling experience and we looked optimistically into the future while my wife Myrtle, and Bill Wallace remained extremely sceptical about being able to move the stuff at all. Half of the load was consumable—about 9 lb. of food per day—but it would be some time before this made a significant difference to the total.

There were about 12 miles to do over the sea-ice to the fjord head and here, we hoped and prayed, would be a glacier leading to the inland ice. The map seemed to indicate that there was. As a sledging surface the sea-ice was appalling—2 feet of slush with a

<sup>1</sup> This tent, standard equipment of British Antarctic Survey sledging parties, is made by Camptor's of London. As well as being rainproof it is excellent for drying clothes as the heat of the primus collects in the apex. When properly pitched, it resists very strong winds.

random scatter of numerous black holes where the thaw was complete. As soon as the boat disappeared and we weren't trying to impress anybody, we found that the loads had to be relayed with all four on the one sledge. Then as we rounded the last point the fjord head came into view. Not only was there no glacier but a steep rocky slope lay ahead with no obvious weaknesses. Just then Tufft stumbled on to a patch of thin ice and went up to his neck in the icy water. Wallace managed to haul him out just in the nick of time.

Two days later—midsummer—we camped at the head of the fjord. It was a beautiful twilight evening with a flat calm and the tent was pitched above high-water mark on a level site. Soon the gallon-size primus was roaring and in the cosy warmth of the tent all the hazards of the sea-ice were rapidly forgotten. Outside we could now see that the apparently impossible rocky slope had a weakness to one side—a steep snow-filled gully; and already the clear sky and low sun had resulted in a crisp, fast-sledging surface.

The route, in fact, turned out to be excellent. No back-packing was necessary and four relays saw all the loads over the steep rocky rise to a frozen glacial lake at 1500 feet. The snout of the glacier beyond was smooth and unfissured and after transferring our food out of the heavy plywood boxes into woven nylon bags, only two relays took us up to a nunatak of 3000 feet. Already we were well ahead of our planned schedule, and our fears of ice-falls or bad crevasses in the upper glacier proved quite unsubstantiated.

At the nunatak we abandoned our old leather boots and pulled on the felt sock inners and gleaming white mukluks.<sup>1</sup> This was also the moment to abandon the second sledge and I was extremely nervous as box after box was loaded on the remaining one. It does Nansen's design tremendous credit that the apparently flimsy 42 lb. structure of runners and bridges—lighter than four pairs of skis—was able to take the full load of 700 lb. plus.

We harnessed up and anxiously took the strain. Would we manage it in a 'one-er'? It moved forward majestically on the night-frost crust and once more the expedition optimism moved to a 'new high.' Surely now we would manage the 400 miles to the west edge of the ice!

<sup>1</sup> Clothing. While on the move (*i.e.* at 'night') our general clothing consisted of windproof ventile anaraks and trousers (Black's), mukluks and felt inners, long johns, woollen vests, Viyella shirts and lambswool sweaters. Gloves were leather mitts with felt inners. Hats were assorted. Cagoules were extra, when the cold plateau wind came on. Occasionally when travelling by day it was hot enough to strip to the waist.



All went well until about 4000 feet and then our weight, instead of being sustained by the crust, broke the surface, and we floundered along at  $\frac{1}{2}$  m.p.h. We tried the skis but on the gradient there wasn't enough traction.

Some miserable days followed and simple arithmetic showed that we would obviously run out of food if we could do no better than these diminutive distances. Ropes tied under the skis helped a bit but even the sledge carved its way through the flimsy crust. We didn't have skins.<sup>1</sup>

At 5750 feet it started to rain. Nearly all parties crossing the ice-cap have rain at some time but this shower was extraordinarily persistent. The surface turned into a quagmire and we all thankfully gave up the struggle and retired to the warmth and security of the pyramid tent. The downpour went on for 36 hours. Continuous rain whilst camping on snow is probably the greatest test for any tent, but our double-walled pyramid did magnificently; at no time was the inner wet and we were able to get a fabulous sleep instead of having to fend off the elements.

At last it stopped. Due to the thaw the tent was now perched on a mound. The clouds dispersed and with the clear sky came the keen night frost. Already the waterlogged surface was crisping up and as we slipped on the long Norwegian cross-country skis, another wave of optimism swept through the party. Though the crust began to form at 5 P.M., four hours elapsed before the surface was at its best. Our skis slid along easily and, with a strong shoulder push on the bamboo poles, a continuous rhythm was set up. The sledge drag was now so light it could be forgotten. Often the horizon ahead looked uphill but this appearance turned out to be mirage. Later in the evening a cold wind sprang up and most of us needed cagoules on top of ventile anaraks. With the wind came rivers of low drift through our feet, and as the sun fell to the horizon the scatter of light in the drift made the surface seem like velvet. We felt marvellous.

On this new surface we never looked back. Twenty miles was now easily possible and at the back of the sledge the wheel happily spun out the tenths on the mileometer. In fact we managed to hold this average and so covered 250 miles in only 12 days.

<sup>1</sup> We anticipated either walking on foot on a firm sloping surface or skiing over deep soft snow on the flat. In fact, between 4-6000 feet the conditions fell between these possibilities. But skins would only have been useful for these 2-3 days: then they would have had to be thrown away because of weight (and they are expensive!). Weight was our problem: we were even cutting the margins off maps to reduce it.



I loved the feeling of the desert with its infinite horizons and wide fantastic skies. We watched the sun and moon through all their phases. The utter simplicity of the scene was such a tonic to our muddled and competitive ordinary life. Occasionally birds visited us—Arctic terns and skuas and once a handsome white Arctic fox. These would almost jolt oneself out of the dream and make one realise that there were other living things too.

As the days went past we noticed the altimeters climbing slowly past 8150 feet, the summit of the cap at this point. Tufft by a brilliant piece of sextant work navigated us to an American DEW line radar post whose position had been given us by the Foreign Office (although denied by the locals). It was a grotesque and ugly war machine and we stayed just long enough (eight hours) to let the Danes know we were alive and heading in the right direction. Later I heard how important this move had been—one Danish daily had written a week after we left the East Coast 'No news of the Scottish party . . . are they lost?'

We were now on the downhill side and even though the angle of slope was only impressive by railway standards, it was just that bit easier to pull the sledge. Moreover we now had help from following winds which spill off the ice cap and the moment came for our great experiment in sailing. Tufft, of course, was in charge of the arrangements for he has had much experience with Tilman in his pilot cutter. A bamboo mast was stepped between boxes and the aluminium shovel used to attach the ski-stick cross spar. Guys went to all corners of the sledge. I can remember thinking it was all just an interesting experiment rather than something likely to be of use, when the square orange sail billowed out and the stays tugged at the sledge with several pounds' pressure. When one skier in front broke the inertia, the great ghostly galleon moved off and soon we were skiing flat out to keep it away from our heels. At best, now, we covered four miles per hour, though usually about three and a half.

All of us were now anticipating the last stage of the journey through the low-lying summer thaw belt of the inland ice. We knew this was likely to be the most difficult because of slush, morasses, rivers and hummocks. Possibly we would find a maze of difficulties, with no way out. And we had to strike land at exactly the right place or be trapped between tundra rivers which there was no hope of crossing.

Just under 6000 feet the first lake appeared in the evening gloom as a black line across the horizon. Tufft estimated we had still 40 miles to go and it appeared that the thaw zone was unusually

wide. As we approached it our skis sank into slush, and as we had to detour the sail could no longer be used.

Out of the lake came a stream, and I was glad of the long sledge which was able to bridge it completely. We lost a few hundred more feet and then soon we were in a hopeless area of morasses. Mirages made it difficult to see the way the water should flow. Suddenly the sledge sank through the crust and we were all floundering in slush and icy water. The sledge still weighed 500 lb. and was desperately difficult to move. We camped as best we could, almost floating the 'campamats' on the quagmire. Wallace and I reconnoitred only to find that a vast river blocked our way—fully 50 yards across.

The next day there was nothing for it but retrace steps, a most depressing thing when victory seems in sight. We muddled on for several days and Tufft had, of course, the greatest difficulty in plotting the position, because we were always changing direction.

But just when things seemed hopeless, patches of hard dry glacier ice became more noticeable and it was evident we had passed the morass. Rivers now became the main worry. Many ran in deep ice-gorges sometimes 100 feet deep. One slip on the bank would have been fatal. We followed down the banks of these, making detours at each tributary. Often we were 90° off course.

Then the first crevasse appeared—just a crack—but we welcomed these since soon the rivers were swallowed up in hideous gaping mills.

Of course the main topic of conversation was on the question of land ahead. Time and time again a black horizon smudge would drift off as cloud. We hadn't seen any birds but we found various old meteorological balloons on the ice, also ptarmigan droppings, feathers and even gravel. Though we couldn't see land definitely there was a line of towering cumulus cloud in the distance and since it can only occur with hot rising air, we surmised it must be over land.

At last we came over a crest and there was no doubt about the dark distant line. Little lakes shone like jewels out of the darkness and at one place there was the appearance of smoke. Later we found this was glacier dust thrown up from the valley by the afternoon breeze.

As we converged on the ice edge and the great glacial sheet became thinner, the surface became more and more hummocked. Laboriously the 500 lb. sledge was pulled up one side of these and after teetering on the crest it would come tearing down out of

control. Our mileage fell to about two per day and the sledge was beginning to break up with the strain. The front bridge was replaced with a spare and the main longitudinal glued in two places by Araldite baked in the primus. Skis were abandoned. They had almost worn through. We had still two weeks' food but there remained the possibility of a complete *impasse*—a large river or a broken-up glacier. We were also worried about our precise position since the slightest error in north or south became more and more difficult to correct. Sextant sightings were only accurate to five miles and this wasn't good enough. The compass was also rather drunk in its movements owing to the nearness of the magnetic pole.

However, the small radio direction finder was now able to pick up the Søndre Strømfjord air-base signal and this aid proved critical. We headed southwards, and in order to try and break the bogey of the last few miles, Myrtle and Bill back-packed loads on foot to try and reach land—since, although the ground was difficult to sledge, one could still make good speed walking. Only occasional step-cutting was necessary on steep banks. It was agreed that they would only leave the loads if a safe depot was established on land, since in the maze of glacier hummocks it was all too easy to lose oneself, let alone the gear.

Tuftt and I manhandled the light sledge on as best we could, and every time a crest was reached we peered out into the distance for a view of the others. Roger saw them first—just two dots—making in our direction. Quickly we focussed the binoculars—they didn't have packs and must have reached land: the bogey was broken.

Actually land was nearer than we thought—only four hours on foot—and the next day it was our excitement to see and feel the first rocks, moraines, greenery and wild life since leaving the East Coast 32 days previously. Our enthusiasm was almost childlike as we pegged the tent out on the warm dry tundra grass. A white stone moved off as an Arctic hare and a distant scuffling of scree proved to be a herd of reindeer making away from their virginal feeding place. Flowers were everywhere and buntings twittered happily around collecting seeds from the many grasses.

With the tent pitched and all the gear off the ice we then toasted with champagne the first unassisted ski crossing since Nansen, and also Myrtle who had become the first woman to do it. The fact that we had still 30 miles to go was tomorrow's problem.

## SQUIRRELS ON POINT FIVE

By Brian W. Robertson

POINT Five Gully lies just right of Observatory Ridge on Ben Nevis; its length varies, year to year, from 800 to 1000 feet, depending on the build-up of ice at the bottom. Usually three-quarters of it consists of extremely high-angle water-ice, with the other quarter at the top steep snow-ice.

Way back in '56 the first attempt was made on Point Five by a Rock & Ice party—Allen, Underwood and the legendary Joe Brown. That attempt failed when 'the man who never falls' fell out of the gully, bringing down his second man behind him to almost certain annihilation. However, luck, and the third man, held out: they fell only about 300 feet. All subsequent attempts also failed, mainly due to adverse weather and ice conditions.

During the winter of '59, Ian Clough with J. M. Alexander, D. Pipes and R. Shaw, along with 900 ft. of rope and a great collection of rock and ice pitons, bolts and etriers, made the first ascent over a period of five days (*S.M.C.J.* (1959) xxvi, 335). Their method was to climb so far up the gully, using ice-pegs for aid, and to fix ropes on the pitches as they progressed, day by day by day. However, in the winter of '60, a great team started Point Five in the 'wee early afternoon' and seven and a half hours later they found themselves at the top. Admittedly, the ice conditions they encountered were easier than the first ascent, but that team was none other than James R. Marshall and Robin C. Smith, perhaps the finest *cordée* ever to set foot on ice! (*S.M.C.J.* (1960), xxvii, 76).

Two years ago, Ian MacEacheran and Dave Bathgate of the newly formed Edinburgh 'Squirrels' climbed Point Five, making the third ascent and, according to Clough's guide, they found the conditions harder than the first ascent, with the result that they required a bivouac halfway up. An English team, using their steps, made the fourth ascent a few days later. Four weeks after the Squirrel's ascent, a party of really tough Gritstone tigers from Manchester appeared at the Hut brandishing huge new ice-axes, far too big for hard ice-climbing! From their rucksacks out came vast amounts of new ice-pitons and karabiners, and, seeing this

loot glittering in front of our eyes, we enquired what their objective was. Perhaps it was yet another English blitzkrieg on the Nevis Nordwand? Or perhaps the first spiral girdle of the Ben? They told us that they had not done any ice-climbing before and, after a few days practising, were going to climb Point Five. Hearing this we quickly packed up and hurried to the Cairngorms.

After studying the ice on Nevis throughout last winter, Jock Knight and I decided that it was time to break yet again the myth of Point Five. So it came to be that our objective, one Friday night in March, after a cold clear week, was this great climb. . . .

On the Saturday morning, Jock disturbed the whole hut by lighting the Tilley and making a brew. I dressed very slowly, checking every item of clothing, for today nothing must go wrong. The weather did not seem too good, with spindrift avalanches pouring down the ice-coated cliffs, and very low clouds swirling round and up the gullies. But I could see that Knight was happy, and when Jock's happy everyone is happy. Packing all our bivouac equipment and food into one rucksack, we set off up Tower Gully towards Point Five. On reaching the bottom, Knight, the well-oiled cutting machine, cut a large stance, told me that it was his and forbade me to set foot on it. Jock's word is law. He had tried the route before and failed in adverse conditions, so he bullied me into leading the first pitch; this in turn meant that I would have to lead the third and the fifth, the hardest pitches on the climb. So be it. Looking up the gully we saw great runnels of water-ice appear out of the mist, with the occasional bulge to add interest to the climb. To say the least, it looked hard.

With my helmet firmly strapped and screws and pitons hanging, I set off on the first pitch on 60° water-ice. Luckily enough, a thin skin of reasonably soft stuff covered the hard ice. Trusting to my front crampon-points, my calves (strong from four days on the Skye Ridge a few weeks before), and balance, I climbed the first 60 feet in a quarter of an hour, cutting only three or four handholds. Fixing two of the new Salewa ice-screws as a belay, I signalled Jock to come up. Halfway up the pitch he told me that he 'wasnae gonna climb this way on his pitches,' I agreed with him; neither would I again on mine!

Knight climbed like a robot on the next pitch, never weakening and cutting tremendous jugs on the near-vertical ice. A traverse to the right took him to the point below the bulging pitch three. In went three rock pegs. He took just about the same time to cleave the ice off the rocks for the belays as he did to climb the

pitch, though that was not long. The steps were so perfectly cut that I slid my axe through my harness and climbed only with my gloved hands and the front points of my crampons. In a very short time I was transferring the rucksack to my companion who in turn clipped it on to one of the belay pegs. After studying the next pitch, he handed me all the surplus ironmongery and gave me his condolences.

Just before I started, a party of buffoons on Tower Ridge (J.M.C.S., Edinburgh) shouted that we were all going to die. This morbid sense of humour did not make us feel any better. Cutting handholds two moves ahead of me was the usual technique, but doing this on extremely steep water-ice without using screws for aid is very tiring on one's arms and calves, so one must be very fit to avoid an icy death. Thirty feet above my poor ice-battered friend I arranged a back and knee position between a slab covered in verglas and a huge protruding icicle, to ease the strain. From my comfortable position I examined the final 10 feet of bulging ice above. I decided that a little nick in the verglas for my left crampon would help the problem a great deal. It would be dicey, but if my front points did not scrape out of the nick, sending me to kingdom come, it would be the beginning of victory over this final section. It paid off, and in under half an hour I was firmly belayed to Jock's old abseil pegs.

Keeping the rope taut, Jock danced his way up the pitch with the heavy pack, stopping only once for a breath. Leaving the pack in my care he started an orgy of step-cutting above, sending big chunks of ice down on to my crash helmet. From the grunting Knight above me, I gathered that it was steep, and that it was hard. When he eventually disappeared, the ropes moved through my cold hands quickly, and after a while I could hear the ring of the peg-hammer as Jock pounded pegs home for a belay. Using a tight rope, I extracted, with both hands, three ice-screws, which my *bergführer* had used as protection in this steep section.

At the start of pitch five, the crux pitch, we explored the rucksack for goodies. We had decided, unanimously, that we should have a rest, for it was only two in the afternoon and four hours of daylight remained to complete the climb. Gorging handfuls of peanuts (all the Squirrels like their nuts), we surveyed the great green boss of water-ice to our left. It would be hard and tiring but not technically difficult, nor cause any undue hardship to overcome. An upward traverse was called for, then straight up for 30 feet, emerging on to high-angle snow above. The traverse was quite hard, and so a large peg was hammered into the ice-wall for



protection. A few seconds later a tremendous avalanche of spindrift poured down leaving me blind and covered in snow. Uttering curses at this god-forsaken gully, I brushed the caked snow off my face and continued cutting holds to the end of the traverse. More avalanches poured down causing more delays, and just to be on the safe side, in went a couple of Salewas. Near the top of the pitch I was left hanging on for a considerable time, unable to do anything as the spindrift ran down my neck and choked me. Luckily it didn't have any weight behind it or I would have been dangling a long time ago. However, my fingers were giving out, and no one can hang on indefinitely except Bonatti. A slight break in the avalanches followed, and I cut hold after hold furiously until I was able to extract my white frozen body from that vertical white hell on to the easy 60° snowslope. After balancing up for 100 ft., I cut a huge ledge in the snow for a belay stance, and to my right a smaller bucket, in to which I hammered my ice-axe vertically as a belay.

Jock had the same trouble as I had—he emerged like a snowman. To save time, he kept the pack on and led past me until the rope had run out its full length of 150 feet. We could not be more than 300 feet from the top. Time was getting on; the epic with the spindrift must have delayed us for an hour. Another pitch of ballet-dancing on our front points led to yet another pitch of water-ice. Never mind, it looked like a doddle. . . .

Still cutting with the same power, even with one of his crampon straps now off, Knight made short work of this mere bump of water-ice. He arrived at his belay stance with the crampon dangling from his boot. With glee he informed me that he could see the top. Again, I could put my axe away and climb using gloved hands. I led the next two pitches to below the cornice; the cornice was Knight's—with his powerful arms he would break through it in less time than I. I hammered his axe, an alpenstock compared to mine, into the snow as our final belay, 900 feet above the start. Knight began destroying the cornice. A few minutes later, with his arm on the summit plateau of Nevis, he gave a final kick, a grunt and he was up. After his victory scream, he pulled me and the pack through the cornice. Nearly seven o'clock—it had taken us just under 10 hours to complete this fifth ascent of Point Five.

Before we could descend we spent a few minutes softening our frozen breeches with peg-hammers. Still roped, we cramponned down toward the Càrn Mòr Dearg arête, just as the sun disappeared below the western horizon from the snowy white mountains of Lochaber.

## THE SCOTTISH-CANADIAN COAST RANGE EXPEDITION, 1965

### (1) GENERAL ACCOUNT

By Derek Fabian

THIS story goes back to the summer of 1955. From our expedition peak (*Canad. Alpine. J.*, 1956) a quixotic group of us from the Alpine Club of Canada surveyed the enormous expanse of Coast Range mountains stretching as far as we could see and beyond—some 1000 miles northwards. Mostly unexplored; almost entirely unclimbed. I thought aloud to Don Cowie (a Scot and, like me at the time, an immigrant), ‘. . . and some climbers back home have never even heard of these mountains.’

Mid-1963, George Liddle chanced to remark that the ‘boys’ were looking for a little-known range, unclimbed, and to which an expedition could travel overland. George enjoys his driving. Misguidedly he believed me when I rejoined, ‘What about the Coast Range? We could drive practically all the way.’

Apart from the Atlantic, I forgot to mention that the roads become dust for the last 1000 miles; that they run out some hundreds of miles short; that the nearest you can then reach by river, or by sea, is still some scores of hours of desperate bush-whacking away from the peaks. Enthusiasm makes light of insuperable obstacles; even the financial ones.

By late summer 1964 we were launched financially, securing a healthy M.E.F. award, but—and I can feel the veterans smiling—with such a long haul ahead. Then George pulled off his masterpiece. Messrs Rootes agreed that a small motor convoy from Toronto across Canada to Alaska, with a bunch of bearded mountaineers from Scotland, would provide them with glamour and a 16 mm. film.

We would ‘do’ the well-known vistas *en route* in the Rockies, clear the dust from our hair in the hot springs on the Alaska Highway, and leave the expedition freight to take a smoother ride. The Stikine River cuts through the Alaska Panhandle from Wrangell to Telegraph Creek in British Columbia, some 200 miles. To the west of the Stikine is a mountainous area of over 1000 square miles, practically untouched. Glaciers run out to



sea level and the peaks, only a handful of them scaled, are of mixed ice and rock rising generally to 9000 and often to 10,000 feet. Equally complicated mountain groups lie to the north, east and south; and to the west is the Pacific, with a myriad of islands all with mountains and bush, bush, bush.

Over a 250-mile track, branching off the Alaska Highway, the cars can reach Telegraph Creek. The freight *via* Panama, Seattle and Wrangell can come up-river; there is a boat of sorts, every two weeks. The highest peak of the Stikine Ice-field, Mt. Ratz, was obviously our objective; but an American expedition got there first, in the summer of 1964. They took Burkett Needle too, but failed to push through an attempt on Burkett itself (9,800 ft.).

By including a scientist and some scientific gear we can jump the bush and justify a helicopter from the Stikine to Base Camp. We cannot cheat the bush entirely; our pockets won't stand it. Bush-whack out—we should be fit by then and it won't be quite the same torture. Much probing unearths a mining company (Kennco Ltd.) which operates on the Scud River, a branch of the Stikine, and which runs a Sikorsky. Costly things to hire; but time is at a premium when you have come 7000 miles.

Regrettably Stan Paterson (our glaciologist) couldn't leave the Arctic for the fly-in, so Norry Harthill, geologist, and now at the Colorado School of Mines, took charge of our ice-depth measurements on the Flood Glacier.

Base at the head of the Flood gave access, by 4000 feet of pleasant scrambling and glacier, to the ice cap where we established a Cache Camp at 6300 feet. We examined Burkett. Five miles on skis (it is spring in July in Alaska) brought us to the foot of the N.E. ridge, but this was decidedly liable to avalanche in the heat of the day. A bivouac on the 'Spur' at the foot of the S.E. ridge proved this to be badly shattered and offering no approach. Ken Bryan and John Denton (our Cambridge engineer) tried a Direct up the face; but we all retreated to Base and the bottles of Dawson's Special.

Ratz lies 20 miles and two long glaciers to the north. Tactics now divide us; one party, Denton, Dave Wessel (American, architect, and Rockies veteran of the Frank Smythe days) and myself do the long ski trip, limited to what we can carry, to try a new route on Ratz; Bryan, Harthill, Liddle and our indefatigable if indefinable Eddie Thompson to tackle again the E. face and S.E. ridge of Burkett. A tough proposition this but almost certainly our best chance of the peak; should it not go, then Denton and I had thoughts of a midnight start (old and tried Coast Range

strategy) to freeze-in the avalanche risk of the N.E. ridge. Plans were sealed with more Dawson's Special.

The Alaska Panhandle is a region of notorious weather—as fickle as the Scottish west coast—but a settled anticyclone brought a welcome departure from the norm. Our fly-in, delayed by heavy cloud, was followed by nearly a month of Alpine sun, spoilt only by a day and a half of storm. This storm, for the northern party, reduced climbing time and we failed to push through the route on Ratz; but the Burkett party beat the storm, which broke in traditional manner to give them a trying and hazardous return to Cache Camp the day after their highly successful ascent.

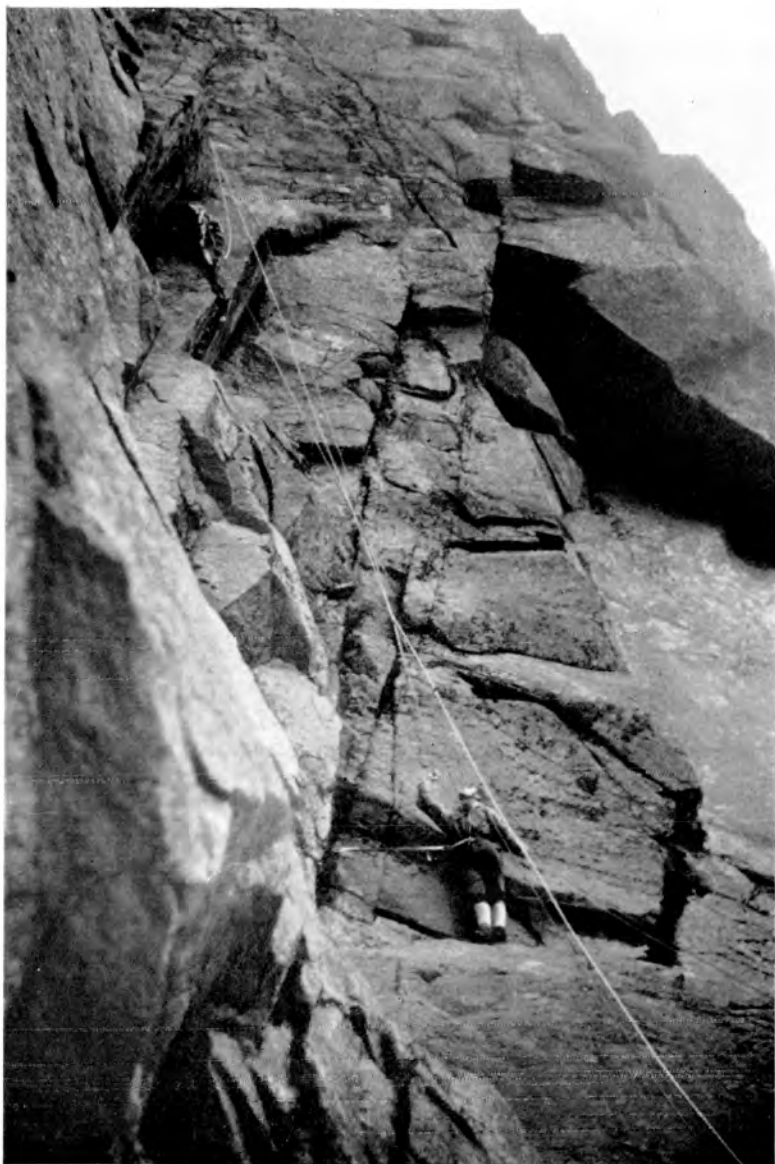
Two lesser, though massive, humps on the ice cap were recorded; we called the first, unromantically, 'Tent Peak' but Bryan and Harthill named the second, with deep feeling, 'Talisker.' Cache Camp was evacuated and our scientific gear taken out by Hillier, a helicopter species half bubble car and half primitive motor-bike. Down to Base where the snow was fast giving place to a wonderfully rich carpet of foliage and flowers; but the continuing excellence of the weather robbed us of those long-sought rest days.

The fine-looking summit tower of Dominion Peak was found by Wessel, Denton and myself to be disappointingly rotten, with no shortage of shattered rock to build a cairn. Bryan and Harthill made an impressive lightning ascent (the second) of Kate's Needle which, though some eight miles away, dominated Base Camp with nearly 8000 feet of ice from its pinnacles to our feet. They halted only for a snow-cave bivouac just below the summit ice ridge, having approached by a 4000 foot ice buttress; and from a dramatically-colourful bivouac at the top of this same buttress, the less spectacular, though virgin, Mt. Gilroy provided Thompson, Denton and myself with a most enjoyable *finale*.

A strenuous back-pack down the Flood, abandoning our skis at the last snow covering; a nightmare tussle with some really grim bush, reinforced by now swollen rivers and providing a booby trap of wasps, which so severely stung Eddie that his eyes became totally closed and we led him, by hand and by faith, through the jungle of undergrowth. The Stikine River and Telegraph Creek felt like home; another 7000 miles and we were there.



*Scottish-Canadian Coast Range Expedition*  
Kate's Needle, Gilroy and Talisker in Right Foreground



*D. Bathgate*

Ewing up, Brumfitt down, the Giant behind

## (2) THE ASCENT OF MOUNT BURKETT IN 500 WORDS

By Eddie Thompson

SPACE fortunately forbids psychoanalytical study of the four protagonists. Like Noah's animals they went two by two, but they returned four by one. The beginning has so many antecedents that it would be better to start at the middle at our camp on the Stikine Ice Field euphemised by our leader as 'Cache Camp.' It is unnecessary for readers to assemble an impression of Cache Camp because our narrative begins with its abandonment for the lower slopes of the Burkett Spur about seven miles away, where we built a bivouac on the scree. The bivouac had walls of hand-masoned stone to a height of about three feet with a roof of fly-sheet on joists of skis and poles. It was damned uncomfortable and extremely cold.

At 5.30 A.M. we made preparations to leave the bivouac and to ski to the foot of the great east face framed by two rock ridges bristling with pinnacles. The snow face is heavily crevassed in the lower part and seamed with avalanche troughs in the upper. All the snow bridges were frozen solid and we had little difficulty in cramponing up the steep slopes and across the crevasses to a point from which we reached the southerly rock ridge. A direct route on the ridge was impeded by overhanging pinnacles and there was no alternative to traversing back on to the face above the bergschrund in deep soft snow. We did this and were glad to reach the safe belays provided by the rock islands on the upper part of the face. The snow turned to ice and after a plethora of cutting we reached a most sensational stance on the ridge above the overhangs. From the stance a delicate ice ridge led to further rocks and the summit. The summit block was unable to accommodate four so we paid our respects in twos, a rope at a time, and record for the enlightenment of *Journal* readers that it was just under 10,000 feet in height and hitherto untrodden. There were no suitable materials for a cairn so we just crept quietly away at 6.30 P.M. and back-stepped down all those ice steps and over the snow which was again frozen and safe. We reached the ski park at 10.30 and the bivouac just before midnight, losing a pair of skis incidentally on the icy snow.

The second night in the bivouac was even more damnable than the first and a fine powder-snow began to fall in the early hours of the morning, penetrating our masonry and covering us. As soon as it was light we packed and left for Cache Camp but our tracks had been obliterated and the snow was falling steadily : visibility was nil and we dared not follow a compass bearing directly across the heavily-crevassed glacier. So we roped together, three skiers and a glum pedestrian, and plodded through the mist, stopping for contradictory opinions on our whereabouts ; or stopped by the yawning abyss of a crevasse which had to be circumnavigated and crossed by the least collapsible-looking bridge. By 5.30 P.M. it was clear that we were on the edge of the ice field and exhausted, but we were unable to find our camp and decided to build an igloo. We found a hollow in which we built four walls surmounted by skis and canvas, and we prepared for a miserable night—or maybe a week. About 6.30 P.M. the snow cleared and we discovered Cache Camp only 200 yards away. The following morning was clear and sunny : it was embarrassing to discover that we had built our igloo on the sunken bridge of the largest crevasse in sight.

## EXPLANATION GIANT

By D. Bathgate

AUTUMN is the best time of year, all colourful and starry night time, ravesville on the climbing calendar. In fact, the only thing I have against the season is that winter always follows it and that means I have to torture myself with early starts and long snow pads in manky weather to impossible ice on bleak buttresses, just to prove I'm still mad.

I don't hate the winter, it's just that being soaked to the skin, unable to grip an axe in long-gone hands while wandering frozen-footed in perishing mists is not "much better than lounging in too great comfort at home." Give me the carefree sun-soaked rock-roasting days of late October.

Like one weekend for instance, when for the third time in a year we trundled Creag an Dubh Loch-bound ; Big Slim Jim,



fresh from his fast in India, Arth the Doc and I with big plans for the Giant, the king of unclimbed cracks, the line that reigns supreme on the Central Gully Wall of Royal Broad Cairn. The Giant towers and slashes his way through 600 feet of monster black roofs and smooth pink walls, a more or less straight line of cracks and grooves. The rock hereabouts is very sound; otherwise it would all fall down. Ronnie Marshall first introduced us to the Big Fellah one wet Dubh day the last shooting season. Since then I'd climbed it often in my nightmares, but then it's no bother to miss out hard moves and so with each successive sleep the climb capitulated with less and less resistance. But it was different when we were standing below the thing that sunny Saturday with no face-saving excuses like wet rock, too cold or too high winds to cheer us up.

Does anyone know the recipe for an epic? The ingredients are standard, but the size of the epic depends on how much is put in the pot. (Sometimes you can get away with it if you don't stir. We had a stirring time on the Giant, which was a great pity, as classic lines deserve to be ascended with style and grace.)

It was Big Jim's mini that started it all off by getting ill on the way up on Friday night, so we had to lodge overnight in a Ballater builder's yard, and only late next morning were we able to park it at the wrong end of Loch Muick. Then we were soon strung out along the path in order of fitness of lung and limb and, in our respective solitudes, better able to appreciate the beauties of the Royal Reserve through sweat-stung eyes. All good things must end, and at about 2 P.M. we clattered up the last few feet of Central Gully to the start of the climb.

Big Jim won first lead and, tying on to the sharp end, made short work of the introductory slab, and belaying on the best peg he had ever heard, beckoned me to follow. Meanwhile Arth went to Central Gully Buttress to photograph the proceedings as it was too late in the day for him to join the rope. The slab turned out to be a damp, tricky V-Diff. and, as I joined Big Jim on his slithery stance, I noticed that although he had only made a 70-foot diagonal runout, the gully bed was now over 100 feet below. Above us the big wall leaned out, no fantastic roofs or overhangs, just a gentle slope over the plumb. Trying to display the minimum of resistance, I accepted the apparatus and, as always in such situations, attempted to shut my mind off to everything bar the next bit of rock. After a couple of moves I discovered a rusty old peg, the first evidence of previous attempts at the line. Although the wall was very steep, the holds were excellent and, 20 feet above

and slightly left of the belay, I managed to place a good runner. The way now lay to the right, past a loose block perched directly above Big Jim's crash hat, to an awkward resting position beside two parallel grooves. Choosing the one on the left, I used a peg for a pull over a bulge to reach the P.A. ledge at the bottom of the groove. It was a smooth groove, damp with a wee crack at the back and I had to make full use of two pitons before I could get to a good belay ledge below two similar grooves. As the day was fading fast there was not much point in bringing Big Jim up, but before roping off I took a quick look at the groove on the left thinking it was the easier of the two. (Arth proved this wrong next day.) The pitch had needed only 70 feet of rope, so Big Jim offered to lower me off from the belay peg. I climbed down for a few feet, but soon found that the tight rope was forcing me away from the rock and being more hindrance than help. I parted company with the rock and settled down on my abseil seat to a slow-lower four feet out from the face. We left the rope on the pitch and used a second rope as a handrail to descend to the gully.

It was a beautiful night. We slept on the heather, under a sky of sputniks and stars and talked about climbs and women and times gone by. Next day a big bank of black cloud in the east beat the sun up and a chill wind cooled our enthusiasm as we made our bleary way to work. Late as usual.

Arth and Big Jim went up the slab, then Arth continued on the second pitch, removing runners from the top rope and clipping them into the one he was trailing. When he reached the belay, I moved up to look after Big Jim's rope while he joined Arth below the doubtful dièdres. Arth tried the one on the left first. Naturally, I'd told him that it would probably go. He moved up on rounded holds to a rounded stance. Balanced there between the smooth walls, one overhanging and one not quite vertical, he placed the smallest Cassin nail in a tailor-made hole and tapped it home. He tiptoed on to the etrier and got another mini-peg in higher up. Using the second peg, he inched on for a closer look at the crack above and that was when it came out. Arth stopped level with the belay, held by the little nail. It had only been a small fall, with no damage done, but I felt responsible for it. The other dièdre overhung considerably more, but Arth decided to give it a go and, placing bigger, better pegs in deeper, wider cracks, he was soon near the top of the dièdre. Although he could reach holds above the dièdre, the position he was in was far too awkward and strenuous to move from and as he could not see any peg cracks that would help to make the move he returned to the belay. My heart

sank; surely we were not going to be defeated so soon. I must have looked my thoughts because someone shouted, "All right, Dave, come up and see what you can make of it." I asked for bags of tight, there was no time left for elegant seconds, we were up against the cliff and the clock now. On the way up I removed all the gear except Tiso's two-bob channel in the first bulge and when I reached the belay, Arth handed over the rest of the ironmongery. In no time at all I was attached to the peg at the top of the dièdre with my hands on the hold but my body in the most contorted position I'd ever used in etriers. It was just impossible to make a free move from there. The only solution was to get a peg in higher up; even six inches more would do. I battered a bugaboo on to a dead crack. The crack opened up and the blade slipped in like a razor into a warm slap of butter. It held and I moved out of the dièdre, and traversed left by a delicate slab to a broken overhanging crack, which required a jammed nut, a thrutch and a couple of pitons before I could get to the good belay ledge above. The ledge commanded an excellent view down the gully and across the lochan. Three laden ants, one red and two black, worked their way along the track on the far side of the lochan and, before you could say *Squirrel*, Brian Robertson and two English appeared in the gully. They had been partaking of ale at a wee do in Glasgow and looked none the worse for it, but Robertson was too late to join us as planned.

Meanwhile, Arth had reached me at the belay but not before telling Big Jim that he was prepared to abseil off and leave the climb to us for he thought that a party of three was too slow and we would probably be benighted and he had suffered his fair share of bivouacs this season. But Big Jim was bivouac-less and managed to persuade the usually-adamant Arth to climb on.

Now it was Big Jim's turn. He had the job of removing the pegs and this takes time, but there was another complication. He had no cord on his etriers, and when he made the free move out of the dièdre he discovered it was impossible to retrieve the etrier, no matter what sort of acrobatics he performed. Losing the odd peg is bad enough but leaving etriers halfway up a cliff is not only untidy and expensive but could have serious consequences. Anyway, with a little assistance from the rope he managed the overhanging crack and arrived at the belay mourning his loss and praying that there would be no more Artificial. As soon as he was comfortable I led off up a wall, steep but bristling with jugs and a couple of rusty old pegs (I'd like to know who put them there). Pleasant non-time-consuming stuff, but not for long

said a little slab at the top ; not very big, not very steep but very holdless. Above the slab a big block overhang barred the way and one glance right at the desperate bounding wall convinced me that leftward lay the way. By stretching till my shirt left my pants I was able to insert a piton, then, as in the traditional bar-room tale, I pulled up on it, mantleshelfed on it, stood on it and managed to scramble on to a grassy ledge almost level with the top of the block overhang. To stick to the true line of the Giant I was now obliged to traverse a few feet right by stepping across the horrible void between the left wall and the nose of the block overhang. This was the most enjoyable move on the climb. There were no real handholds, just friction. I had a toehold for my left foot but my right foot swayed just short of the nose. The only answer was to let go with one hand and judge my right foot to land bang on the nostril. A confidence-cum-balance move after which, as often happens, the body actually moves into balance and a more comfortable position. An easy groove above, then an awkward move round a boulder enabled me to reach the spacious belay ledge below the last forbidding corner.

After my call first Arth and then Big Jim climbed quickly up, hesitating only for a moment at the thin air move on to the nose and soon we were gathering along with the darkness below the final obstacle. This magnificent 100-foot right-angled corner can be plainly seen from the gully where Robertson patiently sat. Time was getting on ; there was only half an hour of daylight left when I started on the pitch. The corner was vertical with little ledges here and there and a slimy crack for fingers where the walls converged. I climbed the first 15 feet or so by complicated strenuous bridging, and when I ran out of steam I battered a wooden wedge into the crack. A few more feet and another wedge, then another, and I was reduced to etriers. I stood up in the second-top rung, placed my last wedge in a tailor-made crack and hung my other etrier on it. Using this to keep my balance I hauled in some slack and was on the point of clipping into the wedge when the one I had my weight on decided to come out. As I had been taking tension from the dud wedge my body was precipitated away from the wall and I did a complete somersault in mid-air. I didn't notice any jerk as the second wedge came out. The only thing I was conscious of was the rim of the belay ledge coming up to meet me and then I was scraping past it to twang to a halt just beside the groove above the block overhang. I dangled upside-down for a second or two watching a sling and krab that had been round my neck ping-pong their way down the gully and thought

bloodyell that could have been me. I then became painfully aware of the rope round my waist so, turning right way up, I found a stance and, after the drumming in my ears and the thumping in my heart had stopped and my stomach had decided which way up it was supposed to be, I was able to inform the boys that I was O.K. and coming up.

When I reached the belay Big Jim offered to take over the lead and, still a bit shaken, I agreed. While he was preparing himself I summed up the situation. I had just had a peel of 70 feet held by a wedge and Big Jim. The skin was off my knuckles and parts of my backside but otherwise I was physically intact. One etrier still dangled from the wedge 40 feet up the corner and, of course, I'd wasted half an hour of precious time. I explained that I was perfectly all right and that this time I'd peg the corner all the way as there was no time left for fancy free. About 14 pegs etc. later I pulled myself out of the corner, dropped my etrier down to the belay for Big Jim to use and continued across a slab to a grassy ledge somewhere in the rubble that comprises the last couple of hundred feet of the buttress. There was just enough light left to find a crack for the belay peg.

When Robertson heard I was safely belayed and that once we all reached the ledge we'd probably stay the night there he descended to the cosy wee doss in the boulder-field with its warm tea and pit. Meanwhile, Arth groped his way up to a cold cramped bivouac. It was just light enough for him to see the Cassin krabs against the black rock, and soon he scrambled across the slab, oblivious of the enormous drop on his right-hand side, and clipped in. Big Jim battered away at his belay peg (the only one we were to retrieve from the pitch) and by the time he got it out the night clouds were down with a complete blackout. Arth and I looked after a rope each and hauled in turn as Big Jim felt his way from one peg to the next, slowly, painfully, up the dark dièdre. We were able to judge his progress by the spaces between the red marks my bloody hand made on the rope and when we could hear his heavy breathing, we knew he was almost up. One last effort from the three of us and he landed safely ashore and Arth and I could try to straighten out our fingers. Despite his uncomfortable haul, Big Jim's only comment was that he had enjoyed doing artificial in the dark and dangling upside-down retrieving krabs and etriers without having the exposure to think about.

For the next 10 hours we shivered, shoved and manoeuvred, rarely slept or spoke on our fagless, foodless, ill-equipped and poorly protected perch. As soon as the morning mists permitted

we meandered up through the maze of choss to the top of the buttress, and down to giant brews, giant noshes and back to work late again.

(To prevent a chrome-molybdenum rush it should be noted that the Squirrels have now removed their expensive litter from Creag an Dubh Loch. The author's companions in this epic were Messrs Brumfitt and Ewing.—HON. EDS.)

## DAIN 'S ORAIN

In an issue of the *Journal* which carries tributes to Stuart Jack, who so loved verse and song, it is fitting to print some current specimens. The first is by the versatile Dr Patey :

### MacInnes' Mountain Patrol

Inspired by a press cutting which quoted MacInnes as saying 'The time is not far distant when dogs will replace policemen on mountain rescues.'

Dedicated to Scotland's leading philanthropist and his gallant pack of avalanche dogs. Tune (verse) after 'Anthony Clarke': (chorus) after 'The four-legged friend.'

Gillies and shepherds are shouting Bravo !  
For Hamish MacInnes, the Pride of Glencoe :  
There'll be no mercy missions, no marathon slog,  
Just lift your receiver and ask them for DOG.

*That four-legged friend, that four-legged friend  
He'll never let you down,  
When the Heat it is on, you have only to send  
For that wonderful one, two, three, four-legged friend.*

Deceased on the piste or deranged on the schist  
Maimed in the mountains, marooned in the mist,  
Dead or dismembered, the victim is found  
By Hamish MacInnes' Merciful Hound.

*O that four-legged friend, etc.*

Occasional mischief is wrought by the dogs  
On Englishmen, Irishmen, Welshmen and Wogs,  
Their only concern is to further the lot  
Of the blue-blooded true-blooded patriot Scot

*That four-legged friend, etc.*



They come from their kennels to answer the call,  
Cool, calm and courageous the Canine Patrol,  
Sniffing the boulders and scratching the snow  
They've left their mark on each crag in the Coe.

*That four-legged friend, etc.*

T. W. P.

The second is a folksong heard at the last Annual Dinner; a rollicking flyting of the Senior English Club and of some of its endearing attitudes, fortunately not yet levelled away. We have not space, nor desire, to frame in cold print robust descriptions of individuals best appreciated through smoke and wine: but as the song's subject concerns the (largely needless) misgivings occasioned in certain circles by Slessor's book (see *S.M.C.J.* (1964), xxviii, 61), deals with several Scottish mountaineers, and has achieved loud vocal currency in Scottish (and English) climbing throats, we can hardly ignore it completely in a *Journal* such as this. So we give an Editorial gist, punctuated by the more joyful (and least personal!) passages, confident that the Chosen Men will regard it as a token return for their own corresponding national jokes like Haggis, Bawbees and Whisky, to be taken in, or with, the same spirit. The author? Unknown . . .

### Extracts from RED PIQUE (The 'Alpine Club' Song)

*Chorus; What did you learn at the Alpine Club  
The Alpine Club, the Alpine Club  
What did you learn at the Alpine Club?  
Huzzah for the old A.C.!*

I learned 'Red Peak' was most unfair  
For MacNaught Davies does not swear. . . .

[and for several stanzas the refutation proceeds, the conduct of members of the expedition being vindicated, with certain ungentlemanly exceptions . . .]

The Scottish bunch were rather dour  
Their attitude was pretty poor—  
They won't be asked on another stunt  
By the Alpine Club or the Men in Front. . . .

[whose behaviour must have the gravest consequences . . .]

. . . No more trips to the high Pamirs  
No more permits for the Chaps  
Because of Malcolm Slessor's lapse. . . .

[and then follows a convincing explanation of the strength of our southern neighbour . . .]

The Noble Blood of an English Peer  
 Adapts to a rarefied atmosphere  
 And that is why the Old School Tie  
 May be expected to Go High.  
 Up they go ! DAMN' good show !  
 Stamping steps in the Virgin Snow !  
 Hey nonny No ! Fol dol dol !  
 All together to the Old South Col.

*Credo:* Our climbing leaders are no fools  
 They went to the very best Public Schools:  
 You'll never go wrong with Everest Men,  
 So we select them again and again  
 Again and again and again and again,  
 You won't go wrong with Everest Men,  
 They went to the very best Public Schools,  
 They play the game, they know the rules.

*\*So let's all join the Alpine Club  
 The Alpine Club, the Alpine Club  
 Let's all join the Alpine Club  
 Huzzah for the old A.C.*

[and the success of the expedition . . . ]

. . . the mountaineers  
 who showed the flag in the High Pamirs  
 Were men of charm and tact and skill  
 Overflowing with goodwill !

*\*That's what I learned at the Alpine Club  
 The Alpine Club, the Alpine Club,  
 That's what I learned at the Alpine Club,  
 Huzzah for the old A.C. !*

\* As an optional extra the choruses may be performed by Morris dancers wearing traditional English costume.

## A WINTER'S TALE

**By Dougal Haston**

WHERE do we go from here but up, but up with the cirrus high is not a wise up though the mind strains for the up. This should have been over it should have been all over after all we were on

the uppermost european up, the upperest up of mont blanc, in winter too and three were we and strong but mindwisely tormented by the alternative downs from the uppermost up. South into the storm and abseilingly down lay the fresnay of pillars three fame, a whillans bonington one a gervasutti one and a harlin frost one. Of we three was john harlin and a plan of boldness and burningly down the hidden fresnay and bivouac and up and bivouac until it was done and down for the glory of winter firsts. Conveyed to memory and past time was torment adding to torment of days three and torment and deep footsteps deeppowdersnowingly and heavy-packedly over the aiguille du midi and northfacingly by mont blanc du tacul to an enlarged footstep summity on mont maudit at 14,000 feet and cold, thirty below cold in a thin bivvy tent and we three as magnets in a storm and having thought of yellow canvas as existing and seemingly assuming existence but acknowledging altitude effect and possible hallucination as we three were morning snowmen. Bob boucher frostbitten in toe but not mind, John exeigerfrostbittenfeeted and eigerbooted and mindingly strong and me cold in toe and head but discerning nothing unusual in that. Warriors in mead hall wax strong on feat, climber in beer hall also. We three wax winter strong at 14,000 feet and are reflectingly proud for no other reason than that it is difficult. Up and sixty pounds and skis, not a day trip or sack, feet cold discouraging thought of feat but upper thought of feat encouraging feet to ultimate footrest. As for those who in life push, nothing but temporary relief, no not temporary implying a spell—momentarily. Conflict boiled in mind and sky, latter causing former. Caution or glory. But there is no enjoyment for the inanimate. The warnings were persistent, storm at night and freshsnowcovered fresnay means two extra days allowing for a holding, but high cirrus and cloudcap does not signify a holding so holding unanimously cowardly sanity we three turn. Up was hard on body and mind. Down is doubly so but it is hard for the relaxing mind to appreciate. Three days out and tired hardwared to the eyeballs and maniroped with consequent not much lessening of weight on body. Freshsnowfall causing the mind which has been screwed up from relaxed to be pushed to further plane with the effort to combat manycrevassed descent. No metaphysical bond. A mutual recognition of ability. No crack-ups or possibility of such. Nothing idealistic here. Brutal harsh physical and mental strain tempered by the magnificent feeling of overcoming and watching others overcoming. Incredible impressions of scenery and performance stored for retrospective enjoyment. Downward, fantastic stormcloudfiltered

sun hazily touching alpine strugglefields. Sunstrained eyes provide the gateway for a flood of superb impressions which are for the minds of the few: the brenva face, peutey ridge, northerly jorasses and dru all in white and red and contrasted suddenly, violently for bob to a more restricted even more frightening scene. Two hundred feet down and nothing but black ice and bloodflecked eyes and savage rope strain and we two left dashed into the snow. Simple enough you cant see them the crevasses i mean. Bob is heavy but lucky, skis through his pack and stuck in the narrows, skis stick so does bob. One holds one and bob jumars out. Over maudit in style and hut thoughts. Many crevasses on the north face of tacul. Down goes john and he's heavy. It's time consuming. No sun and uniform greyness and an hour till dark and near the bottom and the midi hut when it's upsidedown sixty feet down a hole haston. Good belaying friends of course but a difficult exit from icy interior darkness to snowy exterior dimness and bivouac. Cold and good with food and no snow and dawn and down to chamonix and news that frenchace desmaison had otherouted to race but equally tormented had turned and we called it quits.

afterthought

notquiteas  
hardasthe  
cuillinr  
idgeinw  
interb  
utthe  
nwaha  
tca  
nb  
e

## BIRCHERMUESLI, BRAERIACH AND BLUNDERS

By Robin N. Campbell

THE end of 1965 was a frustrating time for me. I had forsaken the opportunity of idle fire-watching and gormandising to attempt, for the second successive year, to climb in the awesome recess between Braeriach and Cairn Toul.

Last Christmas, Paul Brian and I had huddled for three nights in the fearsome squalor of Corroul with two aboriginal Aberdonians and occasional squads of miserable embryo infantrymen. The endurance of misery on this scale should always, it seems to me, bring rich rewards. Our reward was a good soaking on the walk in, a day's blizzard-watching, an already-conquered snow-gully in Garbh Choire Mhòr, and magnificent blisters on the walk out. But memories of the scale of the place and the opportunities for the making of good new routes, as opposed to variations, die very hard while blisters heal and colds are shaken off. With a choice of five corries, in four of which there is ample scope for 500-foot routes, and with the most reliable weather and conditions in the country, this region is second to none, Ben Nevis excepted, as a winter climbing spa. But problems of access are formidable: to make such an undertaking worth while the intending visitor must carry three or four days' food which can make as much as 60 lb. of misery when added to three or four days' spare clothing and the usual inordinate amount of equipment. The possible bases are Corroul and Sinclair bothies. Between these two it is a real Hobson's choice with Corroul the winner by a short lump of dung. Both are completely lacking in comfort of any kind. Both boast perennially wet and muddy floors, poor insulation and no fires. There is a fireplace at Corroul but any attempt to light a fire in it will be frustrated as we proved to our satisfaction in 1964. From either hut two hours is a very fast time to the most accessible corrie, Coire Bhrochain, and I, being unfit and averse to breaking sweat, need two and a half. With the short winter's day this means an early start in darkness, and, things being as they are in the above pigsties, this requires an extraordinary determination and enthusiasm which I do not possess.

There are others besides myself who recognise this fundamental logistic barrier. Fred Harper and Jim Brumfitt, recent recruits from the Squirrels, are of this persuasion. The plan for 1965 was that four of us (Fred, a certain Miss Thompson, Jim Brumfitt and I) would set up our standard in Garbh Choire Dhaidh in a large and spacious tent and climb in the corries for four days. Thus, with such a base, the misery would be greater, but at least we would have a better chance of the rich rewards. The gap between theory and practice can seldom have been more effectively illustrated. Due to pressure of work and other factors, I had been excused the preliminary food-gathering and distribution thereof. All I had to do was pick up my groaning pack in Laggan Hotel, where we had been carousing, sit in Miss Thompson's car with

Harper and walk from the ski-road through the Chalamain Gap through the Ghru and up into Garbh Choire Dhaidh. Brumfitt was following us with a precious pay-load comprising all our meat, and Dougal Haston and Brian Robertson who were bound for Loch Avon on a splinter mission. There had been a bit of needle during the previous week with members of the Loch Avon Expedition trying to seduce to their cause the noble members of the Garracorries Expedition (not, let it be said *vice versa*) and Fred and I had fears for Brumfitt's misbegotten soul. These fears appeared well founded when one o'clock had come and he hadn't. Alarm and despondency supervened. Colourful curses tainted the freezing air as Haston and Robertson were subjected to exotic physical assault in our imaginations. Consequently, we were somewhat appeased to hear, when we tracked down a phone message, that they had merely driven off the road and received depressingly trivial injuries. A hasty conference and we were off to the Sinclair Hut, hoping that Jim would be able to hobble across with the meat early next day. We reached the Hut in the dark boisterously pursued by a herd of amorous reindeer. They formed an instant and unrequited liking for Harper and, much to his discomfiture, butted him several times in the nethers.

Now, as I have indicated above, the Sinclair Hut is a ghastly place, quite unsuited to house members of Scotland's least spartan mountaineering club. In an attempt to improve it we drove pitons into the fabric and erected our tent. A quick inventory of our supplies revealed much bread and birchermuesli, Christmas pudding, cucumber, a foul Camembert and about two inches of stinking salami. There were other delicacies but nothing to attract an early morning stomach or to alleviate a hard day's night in the Garbh Choire Mhòr. Consequently, we were late in rising the next day, silently rejected any proposals about camping higher up and walked off to Coire Bhrochain arriving there just in time to escape via East Gully to the plateau before darkness fell. Heart-breaking was the fact that snow conditions were perfect, the buttresses well plastered and the gullies gleaming with blue and green ice.

The next day was, from the point of view of the Plan, a failure, but exciting and enjoyable nonetheless. We rose a little earlier, admitted our impotence as far as the distant corries were concerned, and tossed up between a long walk and a gully on the Lurcher's Crag which, though ill defined, was long and icy. The gully won. We had dismissed it in advance as easy and, budgeting for about four hours' climbing and a quick descent, took very little equipment



with us. Miss Thompson, somewhat less experienced than Harper or I, showed a great deal more sense and secreted in her rucksack a head-torch and a compass.

We proceeded up easy snow at the start of the gully to a blind corner. Turning this, we gazed at a large ice-pitch some 120 feet in height. Fred flexed his biceps and started to lay it waste. It was all water-ice and somewhat rotten so it took some time but eventually he groped his way over the last bulge and Miss Thompson and I followed. About 100 feet further on we met a second ice-pitch of a similar height and aspect. This was mine and, shaking with the unaccustomed exertion, I zig-zagged through its bulges to the topmost one. Passing this, my horrified gaze fell on a further 100 feet or so, lying at a lesser angle, which still remained to be climbed. Some quirk of the gully's topography had concealed this from us. A conference ensued as it was now 3.45 P.M. and the darkness was gathering. Those below opted for retreat; he above for advance. My opinion was based on fear of abseiling in winter and doubt of my ability to descend that which I had just ascended. I lied that I had found a belay and, on Miss Thompson's admission that she had a torch, I carried the day, or rather the night. Up she came with great speed and aplomb and I gladly relinquished to her my cramped stance and creaking combination of ice-bollards and jammed ice-axe. By now I was well primed with adrenalin and I fairly scuttled up the straightforward slope of ice which remained to a large rock-belay which removed, for the moment at any rate, the prospect of an icy death. In darkness and a tangle of frozen coils we foregathered at the top of the pitch. Very fortunately, the gully had no further horrors in store and ran straight out to an inconsiderable cornice and the plateau. However, our troubles were not over yet. Visibility was limited to a few yards by swirling snow and thick mist. Remaining roped up, we set off in the supposed right direction. I had been elected pathfinder due to my slightly greater knowledge of the area (we had brought no map!) and thus bore the invaluable head-torch. With its aid I could pierce the murky darkness to a depth of about 20 yards (roughly the slip distance of the largest Cairngorm cornices), and in fear and trepidation I ploughed on. The reason for the fear and trepidation was my morning memory of a long line of crags and gullies which had to be followed before the way was clear for a descent to the valley. However, aided by Miss Thompson's compass, I found a true path and soon the mist thinned and the brash lights of Coylumbridge Hotel could be seen beyond the forest. It only remained to find the Hut. This

Harper did by correcting yet another error of judgment on my part, and we were back amongst the pom and baked beans again.

The following day, after a night spent dreaming of prime red beef and sizzling bacon and "Will you have a fillet steak or a gammon steak, Dougal?" we fled, our decision bolstered by the arrival of far too many khaki defenders of the realm oozing naive enthusiasm and noisy bonhomie. At Glenmore Lodge we received magnificent hospitality from Eric Langmuir and departed homewards. The latter's presence in the lodge is a godsend to weary and wet mountaineers.

The moral of this little tale is twofold. One is never too old to make great blunders, and he who would climb in the heart of the Cairngorms must be made of sterner stuff than the writer. Regarding this last, I am rather upset that my sybaritic nature should conflict with my desire to climb in this area, which I consider to be so promising and potentially rewarding. Consequently, I should like to use the pages of this *Journal* to plead the case for a well-appointed hut in the valley between Cairn Toul and Braeriach. With a well-heated hut there what wonders could our members not perform? Moreover, its existence would reduce the demand for the C.I.C. Hut which is at present causing so much worry and bad feeling. It makes me very sad when I think that so much money has been spent on (a) a redundant hut in Glencoe and (b) an unnecessary hut in Glenbrittle and so little on the deserving case of the C.I.C. Hut and not a penny in the Cairngorms. If any who read this have the power or position to remedy this defect and the time and inclination to do something about it, then there is one comfort-loving climber who would like to hear from them.

### LAGANGARBH NO MORE

As Gavin Greig observed, the folk-verse of Eastern Scotland adapts continuously but reluctantly, and the following lines commemorate a contemporary disaster. The author is of course unknown: expression and philosophy, though tainted with modernism, do not suggest a western origin. Certain passages required editing before publication. Lagangarbh is of course pronounced 'laggangarrav.'

Tune; '*Barnyards o' Delgaty*,' with the same air of dignified injury.

As I cam owre the Moor o' Rannoch  
 Buachaille Etive for tae see  
 I little thocht I'd get tae greetin'  
 'Lagangarbh's no for me.

Chorus:

*Bill McKenzie's girnin', girnin'*  
*Bill McKenzie's girnin' aye,*  
*Murray's glowrin', glowrin', glowrin',*  
*Lagangarbh's no for me.*

I cam doon frae Alltnafeidh  
 And kickit in the auld reid door  
 But when I lookit roond aboot  
 There was cairpets doon on every floor.

*Bill McKenzie's girnin', etc.*

Cairpets doon and curtains hingin'  
 Wifes and bairnies at their tea,  
 Naethin there for an honest climber:  
 A' mucked oot by the S.M.C.

*Bill McKenzie's girnin', etc.*

We could drink just tae get drucken,  
 We could fecht and no complain,  
 We could win each ither's gear  
 And aye be welcome tae oor ain.

*Bill McKenzie's girnin', etc.*

But noo oor pans are aa washed oot  
 Oor leavin's fairly doon the drain  
 Oor bonnie picters scraipit aff:  
 It'll never be the same again.

*Bill McKenzie's girnin', etc.*

Ye canna spit, ye canna sweir  
 Ye canna tak yere natural ease:  
 Ye'll never catch me back in there  
 Though I'd be crawlin' on ma knees.

*Bill McKenzie's girnin', etc.*

I'd sooner sleep ahint a dyke  
 Wi Bathgate an' yon Squirrel crew,  
 An ye can keep yere Lagangarbh:  
 It's no worth brakkin' intae, noo.

*Bill McKenzie's girnin', girnin'*  
*Bill McKenzie's girnin' aye,*  
*Donald Bennet's glowrin', glowrin',*  
*Lagangarbh's no for me.*

ANON.

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

**From the Ordnance Survey**

*30th July 1965.*

SIR,—It was with some disappointment that I read the short article in your *Journal* dated May 1965, concerning the Ordnance Survey policy on the publication of revised heights for a number of Scottish mountains, for we are doing our best to avoid misleading or inconveniencing users of the information, and at the same time to keep all published maps up to date. You will realise that heights on maps are of importance to many sectors of the public in addition to mountaineers and I think that your comment on the extract from my letter dated 16th March has done little to promote confidence in the service we provide.

I would explain that the heights derived from the recent re-observation and computation of our triangulation network differ in many cases from the old heights, and some points have received heights for the first time. Triangulation stations are normally marked by the standard Ordnance Survey triangulation pillar, and the heights shown on maps are those of natural ground level at these pillars. The determination of these heights has been made to a high standard of accuracy, and we believe that the new heights are correct to plus or minus 1 ft. in terms of absolute altitude above our national levelling datum, established from long-term observations of mean sea level at Newlyn in Cornwall.

When we compare a new value with the 19th century value we very frequently find a discrepancy. This may be due to any one of a number of reasons. Quite often the new pillar is not coincident with the previously heightened point. Occasionally the pillars have to be built on cairns in order to increase visibility with respect to local obstructions: Ben Nevis is just such a case, and it would be quite wrong to ascribe to that famous peak a value indicating the height of a cairn rather than the natural ground level. Furthermore, the old heights were based on the old spirit levelling which was in turn based on a datum value obtained from a comparatively short period of observation of the sea level at Liverpool: this Liverpool datum differs from the currently used Newlyn datum. Finally, modern observing instruments and methods are very much better than those which our predecessors used, and more accurate, and therefore different results are only to be expected.

We are thus faced with something of a problem in deciding what height information we should show on our published maps. Where the new height relates to the highest point of the natural ground of a peak, we use that value. This was the case with Ben Macdhui. Where, as in the case of Ben Nevis, we know that the new height does not refer to natural ground we retain the old value. Every case is carefully examined before a decision is made and if our records show any ambiguity a ground inspection is usually made to determine the best height to show for the peak concerned. We particularly endeavour to avoid changing the height

shown on well-known peaks unless the validity of this change can be established.

The publication of revised heights is normally made as we revise and reprint maps to replace exhausted stock. It is impracticable to revise and reprint every map every time new data becomes available. Many height changes have appeared over the past few years but it is only when the mountains with famous names are so dealt with that this practice becomes apparent.

I hope that I have successfully explained the problems which face us and hope also that you and your readers will appreciate the efforts we are making to provide you with up-to-date, accurate and reliable information. If you have any suggestions to offer, I shall be glad to consider them.

Yours faithfully,

A. H. DOWSON (Maj.-Gen.),  
*Director General.*

[Relevant passages from the Hon. Editor's reply to the Director-General now follow.]

*15th October 1965.*

I appreciate your kind letter of the 30th July. You have well explained the problems which face you and which most of us can appreciate very well. . . .

However, to 'promote confidence in your service' (and in many respects the Ordnance Survey maps have no rival in the world), could I take up your invitation and make the following suggestions?

1. You say, 'many height changes have appeared over the past few years.' As you know, since the time of Sir Hugh Munro, the listing and climbing of every peak or shoulder over 3000—or even 2000—feet, has become astonishingly popular, and to cater for this, Tables of such hills with their Ordnance Survey heights have been published by the Scottish Mountaineering Club and the Scottish Mountaineering Trust.

Is it not practicable to publicise periodically a list of such hills whose heights have been, or will shortly be, altered on the latest Ordnance Survey maps? Nothing is more likely to undermine public confidence than the discovery that heights 'vary' from one revision to another and that no notice or explanation is available. This is especially true of the 'less famous' eminences. We ourselves would be most happy to print such a list with the succinct explanations.

2. You do not mention the unfortunate practice (surely it is *not* deliberate!) of not always marking the new hydro-electric dams and lochs, on revisions made after these were completed (cf. *S.M.C. Journal*, 1962, xxvii, 288). This has done more than anything to lower public confidence here in the Ordnance Survey, especially when competing commercial mapmakers clearly indicate them. The public complaint is not only due to dislike of inaccuracy or over-zealous security, but because lost or exhausted novices, trusting implicitly in their map, and suddenly finding

through the mist unexpected, impassable barriers, may collapse psychologically and so be in very great danger.

We should welcome an assurance that all visible physical details will be depicted as soon as *technically* practicable. . . .

[The reply was :]

24th November 1965.

SIR,—I have recently taken over as D.G.O.S. from General Dowson and I am replying to your letter of the 15th October addressed to him. I am asking the various Departments concerned to deal separately and in more detail with the points you raise but I should like now to give you an interim reply in somewhat general terms.

We certainly appreciate the significance of heights and height changes on our maps. We could probably make available to the Scottish Mountaineering Club a list of heights that have been or will shortly be changed, and although we might not wish to publish such a list ourselves we would probably have no objection to your using it for any purpose, in agreement with ourselves.

I am afraid no map is ever completely up to date, and for a number of reasons new detail may not appear on new editions. For example it may not have been completed at the time of survey as opposed to publication, or the map may in fact not be a new edition but a reprint on which only major changes are indicated. It is very rare for information to be omitted for security reasons. I can assure you that we make every effort to include all appropriate detail on our maps and to keep them up to date. . . .

Yours sincerely,

R. C. A. EDGE (Maj.-Gen.).

[A subsequent letter from one of General Edge's staff, Colonel Walmesley White, makes the following important points :]

'It would be helpful perhaps if the plan for keeping our One-Inch Maps up to date is explained. Of the 189 sheets 13 are fully revised every 7-8 years, 126 every 15 years and the remaining 50 every 25 years. The 7-8 year sheets are those with expectation of most change and the 25 year sheets with expectation of least. The sheets in Scotland North of the Edinburgh-Glasgow belt fall in this last class.

'As well as being printed with full revision in the intervals mentioned above sheets are reprinted, with "special revision" at, approximately, intervals of four years for the heavy sheets and eight years for the medium and light sheets. This special revision includes major roads (Ministry of Transport Class I), railways, reservoirs and very large industrial installations. From this you will gather that changes in reservoirs would be caught but changes in access roads that were not Ministry of Transport Class I would not. Dams and lochs are not subject to security treatment and would undoubtedly have been shown under special revision terms had



they existed when the surveyors were on the ground. Therefore their omission would appear to be a matter of timing.

‘Referring to *The Scottish Mountaineering Club Journal* of May 1962, the points you make have been examined and the situation is as follows:—

‘The Reservoir at head of **Glen Shira** is now shown on the 1965 edition of sheet 53.

‘Access roads around **Glen Dochart** and **Glen Lochay** are not yet shown.

‘The new Reservoir between **Lubreoch** and **Invermeran** is not yet shown (1960 edition of sheet 47).

‘The new reservoirs in the area of **Glen Lyon** are not yet shown (1960 edition of sheet 47).

‘**Cruachan** Reservoir is now shown on 1965 edition of sheet 53.

‘New road caused by flooding of **Tomdoun—Cluanie** road is now shown on 1961 edition of sheet 36.

‘New Reservoir at **Glen Loyne** is now shown on 1961 edition of Sheet 36.

‘Route from **Patt Lodge** to **Attadale** via Loch Calavie and footpath are now shown on 1965 edition of sheet 26. Extension of **Loch Monar** is also shown on this sheet.

‘New Reservoirs at **Glen Orrin** are now shown on 1962 edition of sheet 27.

‘Large Reservoirs in the valley of the **Glascarnoch River** are now shown on 1962 edition of sheet 20.

‘You will be interested to know that sheets of our Quarter-Inch Fifth Series are reprinted every three years with, at least, this special revision.’

[It would seem superfluous after this to remark that the notable courtesy of Generals Dowson and Edge and their staff has done a very great deal ‘to promote confidence in the service they provide’ to all who frequent the hills. We are much indebted to them for this valuable information and look forward to receiving details of any changes in the official heights of Scottish mountains.]

### Meet Sandwich

[A letter from a member who has found himself elsewhere so often he has become confused. Unfortunately, he looks like Slesser: which does not help.—ED.]

SIR,—I am H. Stirling. Sometimes I am Slesser. I am never two. Who is the other? It isn’t Slesser being me. That never happens. I am always him. The J.M.C.Ssers have a thing about Slesser. They asked me on a Mamore—Are you Slesser or just a relative? Last time was at Coruisk. I was looking for J. W. Simpson. When found, he asked—‘Is Slesser here?’ ‘No. I am here.’

Slesser’s got bigger ears, bigger nose (wideways) and more hair. At the moment. We compared at Loudonhill recently.

So who was at Kinlochewe Meet, Easter 1963? I was at Lawers pushing planks in porridge with Russell. Who was at Inchnadamph, Easter 1964? Easter again. Resurrection too soon. I wasn't there. I wasn't anywhere that Easter. Ask anyone. Except those at Kinlochewe or Inchnadamph. They don't know me. I don't go to Meets. Meets? Future meets to be decided at Meets. Can't please everyone. Can't go there says one. No baths, just showers. Must have a bath. Easter Meet, 1964, Report quote, Unusual strain on staff, particularly in the matter of individual tastes in sandwiches, unquote. I say, will anyone swop me a hamwich for their bit cake? No, I'll swop you a bit cake for your cheesewich. No. Oh. Has your hamwich got mustard? Yes. I don't want it. S.M.C. Sons of many mothers.

I'll go to Meet sometime. Some Easter. Then I'll meet H. Stirling. I wonder if he likes jam on his ham in his bath.—Yours etc.,

H. STIRLING.

### Betrayal of Trust

SIR,—My attention has been drawn to a report in the *Scots Magazine* to the effect that two members of your Club recently went astray on Buachaille Etive Mòr.

While this would at any time be a matter for regret it is particularly unfortunate in this instance as one of the two men involved is the Editor of the *Rock Guide* to the mountain on which they were climbing. I fear that the general public's confidence in the competence of our Editors may be shaken as a result, leading to a drop in the Trust's sales.

Possibly these two men were not as experienced as other members of your Club, but may I ask you, Sir, to use your influence to ensure that only climbers fully competent in all aspects of mountaineering are appointed to edit Guide Books in future. I do feel that this is a point that must be insisted on in the interests of public safety.—I am, etc.,

J. C. DONALDSON, *Hon. Treasurer, Scottish Mountaineering Trust.*

### NEW CLIMBS

THE frustration and tedium of compiling, checking and assembling these new routes prompts us to a few remarks.

Firstly, we, like General de Gaulle, resent foreign incursions such as dièdre, piton and the like. Etrier and karabiner are excusable, since there are no good equivalents, but why give features of our own mountains French names?

Secondly, please try to send in routes on separate pieces of paper, typed if possible and in the standard form used below. It saves us hours of drudgery.

Thirdly, it is hoped that climbers of the Secretion School will soon pass through the anal and genital stages and dignify their routes with more

meaningful names. In this interest we refer the more literate amongst them to Dr Dutton's excellent letter in *S.M.C.J.* (1960), xxvii, 45.

Lastly, we detect a dissatisfaction in some quarters with the present summer grading system. Correspondence is invited.

NOTE: Where winter grading of new routes is given below the words FIRST WINTER ASCENT are omitted as superfluous.

R. N. C.

## HARRIS

The following routes were submitted by M. A. Reeves (Lochaber J.M.C.S.). See Harris notes.

**Ullaval: Sròn Ulladale.**—*Inversion*. 580 ft. Very Severe. M. A. Reeves (J.M.C.S.) & J. Ball (through leads). 15th August 1965.

A tortuous route of great character which takes perhaps the easiest line up the rocks just left of the great overhang.

Start from the Rush Platform (see *Islands Guide*). To the left the upper buttress degenerates before the Recess into steep vegetation but directly above is a clean, steep face. Start in the centre of this (cairn).

Go up steep rocks and then a shallow groove until able to go right beneath a large overhang to a vertical black groove. Climb this, then a short rib on the right to a good ledge beneath the first great barrier of overhang, (80 ft.). Chockstone belay. Traverse right beneath the roof to a cracked overhanging weakness on the edge. Climb this on surprising holds then a further 20 ft. to a small stance with fine belays, (40 ft.). The second barrier of overhangs is now above. Traverse left round a corner to a cracked overhanging groove. Climb this (Difficult) to a roof, step down left then reach over roof to a hidden edge. Mantleshell up in remarkable position to a slanting niche, then go awkwardly out right to an easier wall above. Climb wall to stance level with an obvious right traversing line, (70 ft.). Traverse down to right then move up to the edge at about 40 ft., climb the bulge above to the left of a cracked chimney (loose blocks), then trend left awkwardly to a small ledge on the nose. Go straight up a slab for 15 ft. then diagonally right to a large triangular grassy stance, (90 ft.). Peg belay. Climb straight up the broad edge above, going slightly right on delicate slabby rock to a shallow black groove. Go up left and then back right up a short grassy rake to a belay beneath very steep rock, (120 ft.). Go left on to a large block then up a steep nose to easier ground, (80 ft.). Easy rocks lead to the top, (100 ft.).

**Creag Mò, Glen Scaladale.**—*Gollum*. 340 ft. Severe. M. A. Reeves & Barbara Reeves. 23rd August 1965.

Start near the far right end of the wall to the right of the central overhanging amphitheatre at an obvious easy-angled slabby rib (cairn). Go up the rib to a steep groove which climb to a ledge on the left. A slab leads to an overlap. Move over this and trend right to a steep little

wall. Ascend this and move a few feet left to a stance on large detached blocks, (100 ft.). Climb a slab on small holds, then a short groove splitting the steep wall above. Walk up a grassy rake to some large blocks and get on to wall above at an obvious left traverse. At the end of this go up right to a large grassy bay. Walk 30 ft. left to a prominent cracked corner, (120 ft.). Climb corner to the top, not without interest, (120 ft.).

—*Smeagol*. 320 ft. Hard Severe. M. A. Reeves & J. Ball (through leads). 26th August 1965.

A direct line on good rock leading to the prominent cracked corner of Gollum (third pitch). Start at the clean right edge of a vegetated recess a few yards to the left of the start of Gollum.

Go up, trending left to gain a small ledge on an edge. Move right across a steep wall to a short groove which climb to a poor ledge, (80 ft.). Line belays. Step left to a good rock ledge. Climb interesting rock above directly, past loose blocks, to the left end of a large ledge, (60 ft.). Peg belay. Move awkwardly left to a shallow bay, climb a groove on the left to a slab and thence to easy ground. Continue easily to the belay below the third pitch of Gollum, which follow to the top.

## ARRAN

**Goatfell: South Slabs.**—*Girdle Traverse*. 250 ft. Severe. W. Wallace & H. Stirling. August 1965.

Start (arrow) just over halfway up the left edge of the slabs and follow a prominent vein of fine granite more or less straight across. Cross to a belay below the final pitch of Route I, (80 ft.). Continue delicately across a slab over the top of the scoop of Blank to a flake belay, (80 ft.). Continue in the same line crossing Pussyfoot and Route II to the right edge of the slabs, (80 ft.).

**Rosa Slabs.**—*Zig-zag Variation*. 150 ft. Severe. W. Wallace, D. Sim & Grace Hamilton. June 1965.

From the second terrace near its lower end climb a little rib just left of the water-slide and in three pitches of 50 ft. go straight up to the finish of the original pitch 9. The variation has the merit of being collinear with the upper pitches of the climb.

**North Goatfell: South-west Face.**—*Diamond Slab*. 140 ft. Severe. J. Simpson, W. Wallace & Grace Hamilton. August 1960.

A prominent diamond-shaped area of steep slab lies on the right flank of the belt of slabs on the S.W. face below the summit. Start at the lower left angle of the diamond. Traverse diagonally up and across to the extreme right edge, (90 ft.). Belay. Finish straight up the edge, (50 ft.).

**Cir Mhòr: North-east Face.**—*West Gully*. Severe. H. Stirling & W. Wallace. August 1965.

This short rubbishy gully lies west of the Western Stoneshoot Buttress (Hunter's Buttress), which in turn lies to the west of the Western Stoneshoot. It contains a short, severe pitch, a more or less vertical wall of friable granite reached either by a through route from the gully-bed or by a shelf on the right wall. It was climbed by combined tactics (any other method being deemed inappropriate).

—*Ribbish*. 600 ft. Severe. P.

Brian (E.U.M.C.) & R. Campbell. May 1965.

The rib to the left of B-C Rib, bounding the lower North-East Face on the right. Description included to spare other would-be pioneers its loose and slimy horrors. An appalling climb fraught with objective danger and continually unpleasant.

**Ceum na Caillich: Glen Sannox Face.**—*Carlin's Rib*. 200 ft. Severe. W. Wallace & H. Stirling. August 1965.

The prominent steep, slabby rib high on the west flank of South Gully. Climb the rib in three pitches of 60, 90 and 50 ft. Peg belay below pitch 3. An entertaining little climb.

## SKYE

**Bidein Druim nan Ramh: Coruisk Face.**—*J.M.C.S. Buttress*. 900 ft. Severe. B. Barclay & R. Chalmers (both J.M.C.S.). May 1964.

The biggest buttress on the north-east shore of Loch Coruisk. It lies above a huge block on the shore and is split at half-height by a large grassy terrace. Start at a trap fault below a white wall about 150 ft. up. Follow the trap to more broken rocks. Up these to below a large white overhanging nose. Traverse left across a broad slabby terrace to an arête on its left and climb this and the gully on its right. The crux is the top corner of the gully. Easier rocks lead to the grassy terrace. Above the terrace climb initially on the right edge. Pleasant climbing leads to the ridge.

**Sgùrr na h-Uamha: West Face.**—*Brachead Climb*. 750 ft. Very Difficult. H. M. Brown, J. Matyssek (B.F.M.C.) & J. R. Tomlinson (C.U.M.C.). 19th August 1965.

From the ridge north of the summit a big gully drops down westwards. The route ascends the face just right of this gully as directly as possible. Start at a cairn and climb slabs and grooves to overhangs passed on the right by parallel cracks. Move left and up a pinnacle to a trap ledge with a perched block. Up a small chimney to a large ledge which follow under some overhangs. Break upwards from the right end and back left along an easy ledge. Go right to enter a groove which leads to easier scrambling on to the north ridge.

**Coire a' Ghreadaidh: Sgùrr Thuilm.**—*Gail*. 200 ft. Very Severe. J. Harwood & H. Small. 23rd July 1965.

On the first outcrop on the south flank of Sgùrr Thuilm. Several routes have been climbed here of which this is the best. It lies up the obvious corner in the centre of the buttress. Climb the corner (3 pegs) to a small stance, (75 ft.). Peg belay. Continue up the corner for 15 ft. to overhangs, then traverse right across slab to a small ledge, (45 ft.). Peg belay. Pull up into ramp on left. Step round on to a slab above the overhangs and climb this diagonally left to easier ground, (100 ft.).

**Sgùrr a' Ghreadaidh.**—*Hamish's Chimney*. 300 ft. Difficult. W. Poole & R. Gaff. 30th June 1965.

On the cliff between Eag Dubh and the north-west ridge of Sgùrr a' Ghreadaidh. Climb the obvious chimney on the right of the face.

**An Diallaid.**—*Diamond Buttress*. 800 ft. Very Difficult. G. Martin, N. Smythe & D. Boston. June 1965.

This is the buttress on the immediate left of North-East Gully on An Diallaid. Start 100 ft. left of the gully and follow the edge of a slab. After 100 ft. keep to a definite ridge and make for a large slab high up. In the middle section there is a steep undercut wall. Turn this on the left and scramble up to the slab. Start the slab at an obvious corner, move into a groove on the left and follow a series of corners to the top. Apart from the top corners the rock is excellent.

**Coire Lagain: Sgùrr Dearg, South Buttress.**—*Lelhe*. 200 ft. Severe. W. Smith (C.D.M.C.) & J. MacLean (C.D.M.C.). 1965.

Starts as for Central Route, but after 35 ft. follows the prominent right leg of a Y-crack on the left wall. Follow Central route for 35 ft., step left into the crack and climb to an overhang, (110 ft.). Peg belay. Climb right into a crack and up a corner, (110 ft.). Belay. Finish by the obvious trap chimney of Central Route.

**Sgùrr Sgumain.**—*Laceration*. 220 ft. Severe. I. MacEacheran (Sq.M.C.) & J. Renny. August 1965.

The climb lies on the face below the terminal tower of Sgùrr Sgumain. It is seen from the Eastern Buttress of Sròn na Ciche as an obvious leftward slanting line of grooves. Start 50 ft. right of Introduction at cairn and arrow. Climb the groove, (80 ft.). Peg belay. Move right into another groove with a large flake. Climb the groove for 40 ft. then traverse left into a broken groove which follow to the top, (140 ft.). The route provides a good prelude to Penitentiary Grooves.

**Sròn na Ciche, Eastern Buttress.**—*The Snake*. 370 ft. Very Severe. J. Renny, W. Sproul & J. Hall (J.M.C.S.). August 1965.

The route follows the obvious trap line up the centre of the face. Start 10 ft. right of Strappado. Go up the trap to small stance, (110 ft.). Peg



belay. Continue up the fault, (120 ft.). Peg belay. Finish up the trap to the crest of the buttress, (140 ft.).

**Central Buttress.**—Two interesting variations have been climbed on the Cioch.

1. 150 ft. Severe & A2. 100 ft. up from the Terrace an obvious overhanging crack runs straight up the face of the Cioch. Enter it from the left and climb it artificially. Up slabs to the top.

2. 150 ft. Severe. From 20 ft. below the neck a slanting crack on the face of the Cioch is gained using jammed flakes. Use the crack as a handhold to make an upward right traverse. The final few feet to a platform under the nose are strenuous. From the platform climb a short easy crack to the top. Often greasy.

**Coire a' Ghrunnda: Sgùrr Alasdair.**—*The Asp.* 250 ft. Very Severe. J. MacLean (C.D.M.C.) & party.

25 ft. right of Commando Crack is a steep crack which widens at 30 ft. to a V-groove. Further up it again narrows to a crack. Climb it.

—*Con's Cleft.* 220 ft. Very Severe. J. MacLean & party. 1965.

This is the most prominent corner in the face, about 100 ft. left of the Thearlaich-Dubh Gap. The corner starts 25 ft. up: the entry overhangs and is the crux. On the final pitch a deviation to the rib on the right is necessary to avoid loose rock. An excellent climb.

—*W. C. Route.* 350 ft. Very Difficult. Mr & Mrs I. Clough. June 1965.

Between West Gully and Central Route is a big and obvious corner.

Climb the corner to belay shortly before the overhang. Move diagonally right over slabs, then horizontally left across a wall to climb corner crack to stance and belay. Follow the steep cracks above.

## NORTHERN HIGHLANDS

**Foinaven: Creag Urbhard.**—See Northern Highlands Notes.

—(*Unnamed*). 950 ft. Difficult. J. W. Hight (J.M.C.S.) & S. Pickles. 24th May 1964.

Start at an obvious fault 50 yds. right of a waterfall about two-thirds of the way up the side of Loch Dionard. Climb the fault and continue by a broad ledge sloping up rightwards.

—*Hobbit.* 800 ft. Severe. N. D. Smith & M. R. Willis. 18th July 1965. The route runs roughly up the centre of the large pyramidal buttress above the bottom of Loch Dionard. Start in a gully with two small trees. Go up right for 20 ft. left for 20 ft., then

up a shallow chimney for 40 ft. Leave by right side and belay on small ledge 20 ft. to left. Climb a short wall then trend left up loose edge to small overhang at 70 ft. Pass this on left, go up mossy rocks for 40 ft., then left and up a V-notch. Pass a small overhang on the left to ledge and belay. Trend right for 10 ft., up a shallow loose crack for 20 ft., then up its right edge. Move right, go up a very steep face for about 80 ft. to a steep grassy slope. Belay. Trend left up steep slabs on small holds then scramble to a short wall at 120 ft. The short wall and a further one lead to easy scrambling to the top.

—*Mayday*. 300 ft. Very Difficult. J. W. Highet & N. D. Smith. 23rd May 1965.

Follows a prominent black slit seen on the left about  $\frac{1}{4}$  mile upstream from the head of Loch Dionard. Approach slit by large heathery rake. Climb slit on left wall with occasional excursions to its bed; at fork, take left fork.

## WESTERN HIGHLANDS

**Beinn Sgritheal: North Face.**—*North Buttress* (FIRST WINTER ASCENT). 400 ft. Severe. H. M. Brown & A. Smith (B.F.M.C.). 14th September 1964.

Looking up from Loch Bealach na h-Oidhche a big gully splits the north face. To the left is a shallower gully. To the left of this is the North Buttress. The buttress has three rock steps separated by grassy ledges. Choose your route. Rock loose, but the steeper the better. The route was repeated the following summer. Difficult. H. M. Brown & A. Dunsire (B.F.M.C.). 20th October 1965.

## CAIRNGORMS

**Braeriach: Coire Bhrochain.**—*The Lion*. 370 ft. Grade II. W. J. Luke, M. D. Y. Mowat & R. Robertson. 2½ hours. 4th April 1965.  
Summer route followed. No special difficulties.

**Ben MacDhui: Coire Sputan Dearg.**—*Cherub's Buttress*. 300 ft. Grade II. M. D. Y. Mowat & A. Fyffe. 1½ hours. 4th January 1966.

The buttress was climbed by its subsidiary ridge, followed by the upper buttress. Though separate from the summer route initially, the climb follows the natural winter line.

**Creagan a' Choire Etchachan.**—*Juniper Rib*. 350 ft. Grade III. M. D. Y. Mowat & J. E. Inglis (both Etchachan Club). 3½ hours. 20th February 1965.

Summer route followed. Difficulties were concentrated in the steep middle section. The cornice, being large, was by-passed on the right.

**Cairn Lochan: Lurcher's Crag.**—*North Gully*. 800 ft. Grade III. R. Campbell, F. Harper & Miss M. A. Thompson. 4½ hours. 23rd December 1965.

The big sprawling gully at the highest section of the most northerly piece of crag. Two big, easy ice-pitches provided some amusement, 90 ft. and 200 ft. respectively.

**Cairngorm: Hell's Lum Crag.**—*Auld Nick*. 540 ft. Severe. G. Brown, I. Houston & I. Small (all J.M.C.S.). 11th October 1965.

Start about 30 ft. right of Kiwi Slabs at a prominent crack in a slab. Climb crack, then scramble to a wet recess. Climb the corner above, or step left on to edge of the slab. Climb the crack above until forced left on to a slab, up this and back into the crack which follow to a roof, (70 ft.). Peg belay. Traverse right to beneath a horizontal fault, thence slant up right to a ledge. Climb straight up to a glacis, (80 ft.). Peg belay. Climb a small corner and continue up a series of steps to below a small rightward-tapering roof, (70 ft.). Peg belay. Move right, cross the roof and continue up to the left passing a large block. Belay at a large flake above, (90 ft., crux). Traverse left and follow the left edge of the large flake. Scramble to top, (100 ft.).

—*Sneer*. 400 ft. Very Difficult. A.

McKeith (solo). 27th June 1965.

An interesting and varied route on very clean rock on the overlapping slabs to the right of Escalator. Climb the obvious corner about 100 ft. to the right of Escalator to easier rock, go up rightwards by easy grooves, then finish up the right hand of two obvious cracks through three overlaps on the upper slabs.

—*Sneer*. 450 ft. Grade III. D.

Haston & B. W. Robertson (through leads) & Joy Heron. 1 hour. 23rd January 1966.

The climb followed the summer route. The first pitch was 100 ft. of snow and water-ice, the second 150 ft. of water-ice. After this the plateau was reached by 200 ft. of hard snow-ice. A good adventure.

**Beinn a' Bhùird: Coire na Ciche.**—*Lamina*. 300 ft. Severe. M. Rennie, R. Sturton & J. Bower. 28th August 1965.

This route lies on the smooth left edge of Slab Buttress, overlooking South Gully. Start left of a prominent grassy gully (cairn). Go up easy slabs to a big rock shelf, (100 ft.). Go straight up into two obvious parallel grooves, up these for 70 ft. to an awkward exit on the right then climb the slab above to a stance, (120 ft.). Climb up on small holds, traverse right into an obvious curved crack and climb this to the top, (80 ft.). Peg belays were used throughout.

**Coire an Dubh Lochain.**—*Tearaway*. 650 ft. Very Severe. A. F. Fyffe (A.U.L.C.) & M. D. Y. Mowat (Etchachan C.). 9th October 1965.

Follows the corner to the right of Polypody Groove and merges into a tapering rib on the upper buttress. Climb the first pitch of Polypody Groove to a block belay. Step right where this route trends left and climb to a small niche and belay, (80 ft.). Continue awkwardly to a flake on a rib level with an overhang in the corner. Climb by a system of cracks to a prominent crack above the second large pointed overhang, traverse right back into the corner and up to belay, (100 ft.). Continue up the corner until it meets the rib and follow this to a depression right of Polypody Continuation Chimney. Follow the rib to the top.

**Lochnagar: Black Spout Pinnacle.**—*Pinnacle Face.* 550 ft. Grade V. K. A. Grassick, J. Light (through leads) & A. G. Nicol. 12 hours to Springboard. 16th January 1966.

The ascent was made under ice, hard snow and powder conditions. This, added to its overall steepness and difficulty made it of sustained severity, no pitch being less than Grade IV. Three pegs were used for direct aid. After the right-hand starting groove the summer route was followed. Winter and summer cruxes coincided with powder snow overlying ice on the slab and the subsequent left traverse proving very awkward. This pitch consumed 3 hours. The final two pitches were complicated by darkness and the overhanging corner, leading to Route I, succumbed to combined triple-tactics. From the Springboard the party abseiled back down Route I to Black Spout. The crux and final pitch were both Grade V.

**Creag an Dubh Loch: Central Gully Wall.**—*The Giant.* 430 ft. Very Severe & A2. D. Bathgate, A. Ewing & J. Brumfitt. 24th October 1965.

The route follows the obvious series of corners and cracks that split Central Gully Wall 100 ft. or so below the start of Vertigo Wall. Climb up a rightward-sloping slab to reach the foot of the first corner, (70 ft.). Peg belay. Climb the cracks above to the foot of two parallel grooves. Get into the one on the left (1 peg) and climb it (2 pegs) to a large ledge, (70 ft.). Peg belay. Climb the short overhanging corner above (3 pegs, etriers), then go left and up an awkward crack (3 pegs), (60 ft.). Peg belay. Climb the blocks just left of the belay to a steep slab. Climb the slab to a grassy ledge (1 peg), then go up left a few feet and make an awkward traverse back right to step on to an overhanging nose. Climb the crack above, go left then up to a big platform below the final groove, (110 ft.). Peg belay. Climb the first 15 ft. of the groove free and use pegs and etriers where required thereafter. Peg belay on grassy ledge above, (120 ft.). 200 ft. of easy scrambling leads to the top. (See article in this issue.)

## CENTRAL HIGHLANDS

**Creag Meaghaidh: Bellevue Buttress.**—The leftmost buttress in Coire Ardair. It is about 1000 ft. high and sports a huge roof in its lower half: the right edge is defined by Eastern Corner.

—*The Scene*. 1500 ft. Grade

III. D. Gray & A. McKeith. 2½ hours. 15th January 1966.

This route girdles the buttress from left to right by an obvious horizontal ledge about 400 ft. below the plateau. The first 1000 ft. cross a narrow ledge of high-angled snow-ice immediately above the steep lower part of the buttress. The remaining 500 ft. cross an open snow slope into Raeburn's Gully.

—*Fifteen A*. 700 ft. Grade

III. A. McKeith & Margaret Shand (E.U.M.C.): M. Galbraith (E.U.M.C.) & Gillian Millar (E.U.M.C.); 2½ hours. 14th February 1966.

An exposed face route following a diagonal line rightwards up the buttress from the start of the Scene. Traverse diagonally right for 300 ft. to the right edge of an ice-fall. Climb this leftwards to a steep snowfield. At the top of the snowfield, traverse right below a rock-wall then diagonally up to the cornice.

—*Naevueata*. 400 ft. Grade

IV. G. Anderson (Sq.M.C.), Joy Heron (E.U.M.C.) & A. McKeith. 3½ hours. 19th February 1966.

Takes a direct line up the wall from the start of the last two routes. Steep snow, then an interesting 100 ft. ice-pitch lead to a snowfield. Above this, climb the right-hand of two short vertical ice-pitches (1 peg for aid), then go up high-angled snow to the cornice which is unavoidable and very awkward.

**Pinnacle Buttress.**—*Glenmorangie*. 500 ft. Grade

IV. M. Galbraith (E.U.M.C.) & A. McKeith. 3½ hours. 13th February 1966.

This is the obvious gully to the left of Smith's Gully. The first pitch was avoided by a detour on to Appolyon Ledge. The gully continued to the plateau giving three good ice-pitches.

—*Appolyon Ledge*. 1300 ft.

Grade IV. D. Gray (Rock & Ice Club) & A. McKeith. 4 hours. 16th January 1966.

The obvious ledge crossing the face of Pinnacle Buttress about 300 ft. below the plateau. It was crossed from left to right. It is sustained and very spectacular, particularly at 1000 ft., where there is an awkward descent on to a sloping, overhung ledge. From the crest of the buttress a further 500 ft. of easy snowslopes lead into Easy Gully.

**Main Face.**—*The Central Pillar*. 1500 ft. Grade

IV/V. I. Rowe (E.U.M.C.) & A. McKeith. 7 hours. February 1965.

The buttress between the South and Centre Posts. Follow a direct line throughout. The main difficulty was the 100 ft. rock barrier level with the big ice-pitch in Centre Post, which was climbed at its right edge by a steep, narrow arête.

**Upper Coire Ardair.**—*Quasimodo*. 700 ft. Grade III. R. Burnett (Sq.M.C.) & A. McKeith. 2½ hours. 22nd January 1966.

Enter the steep, narrow gully to the right of Crescent Gully and follow a snow ramp left past an overhanging chimney until it peters out against a wall. Traverse horizontally right on a narrow ledge round some awkward bulges for 150 ft. Now go straight up by a steep arête, then left and up to the plateau.

—*The Last Lap*. 3000 ft. Grade IV. M. Galbraith (E.U.M.C.) & A. McKeith. 2½ hours. 12th February 1966.

This route girdles Upper Coire Ardair from Staghorn Gully to the Window. From the foot of the Pipes of Staghorn Gully about 400 ft. below the plateau, traverse rightwards by a series of ledges, descend part of the Sash under the upper icefalls of Diadem and ascend rightwards on to the snowfield of Will o' the Wisp. Cross this, descend into Cinderella then climb the Prow. Cross rightwards into the upper part of Crescent Gully, 100 ft. below the plateau, descend it for 150 ft. and cross the vertical right wall by 'Positively Fourth Street,' a very narrow and exposed ledge. Continue across the traverse of *Quasimodo* to finish above the Window. The difficulties are concentrated in the last 400 ft.

**Creag Dubh: Newtonmore.**—New routes on this crag are reported elsewhere. (See Central Highland Notes).

**Craigellachie.**—This is the crag behind the Cairngorm Hotel in Aviemore.

—*Kretin*. 250 ft. Very Severe. D. Haston & T. Gooding. October 1964.

Climb the long slanting groove in the centre of the crag and go straight up when it peters out.

## BEN NEVIS

**Ben Nevis: Minus Three Gully Buttress.**—*Wagroochimsla*. 500 ft. Very Severe. D. Haston & R. Campbell. June 1964.

Climb the piece of rock to the left of Minus Three Gully.

**Douglas Boulder, West Face.**—*Cutlass*. 300 ft. Severe. E. Cairns & F. Harper. 1963.

There is a very obvious corner on this face. Climb easy slabs to its foot and then directly up the corner. Continue by the west ridge to the top.

**Càrn Dearg: Càrn Dearg Buttress.**—*Torro*. 800 ft. Very Severe. J. McLean, W. Smith & W. Gordon (all C.D.M.C.). 25th July 1962.



Start 30 ft. left of the start of Centurion at a groove. Climb the groove (1 peg) and continue up to a flake. Climb the groove above to a large flake. Climb this on its right-hand side, move back left and follow the groove to a good stance and flake belay, (100 ft.). Continue up a widening fault and cross a bulge on the left to gain the edge of a slab (peg runner). Traverse left over slab, step round corner and go up an overhanging groove to a good stance and flake belay, (80 ft.). Go diagonally right round a bulge into a crack, climb this for 20 ft., move slightly right and then up a slab to a good stance, (80 ft.). Peg belay. Climb a slight crack for 25 ft., step left on to a higher slab (peg runner). Move up slab for 8 ft., climb the overhang above trending leftwards (1 peg) and then the groove above for 20 ft. to a good stance, (70 ft.). Peg belay. Climb the fault above for 15 ft. and traverse across the slab on the right to a crack. Climb the crack to an overhang, surmount this moving leftwards and follow a groove to a grassy stance, (140 ft.). Peg belay. Continue up the fault to a grassy ledge under the large overhangs, (100 ft.). Peg belay. Go through the overhangs using the 7th pitch of Centurion. From the belay above this pitch traverse left into a steep corner. Use a peg to start this and follow it to the grassy terrace.

## GLENCOE

**Beinn Trilleachan: The Slabs.**—*Aryan*. 580 ft. Very Severe. D. Haston & G. Tiso. October 1965.

This route goes between Jaywalk & Claw. Start right of Jaywalk, cross two bulges, step left at a groove and go up slab to belay on Jaywalk, (120 ft.). Traverse right and climb slab to grassy bay overlooking the Claw corner, (130 ft.). Follow blind cracks in slab above, cross one small overlap (1 peg), then a second to a stance, (140 ft.). 60 ft. up the succeeding groove, tension right to an overlap. Go up this and slab above to a small stance, (130 ft.). Follow quartz band to final wall, (60 ft.). Failing light forced escape, but the wall should provide a good finish. Peg runners used where possible throughout.

—*The Valkyrie*. 750 ft. Very Severe.

B. W. Robertson & F. Harper. October 1965.

Climb the first pitch of Swastika Direct Start, (130 ft.). Climb straight up to belay in the cave below the large overlap, (70 ft.). Climb the third pitch of Swastika Direct, (80 ft.). Traverse left then go up the slab 30 ft. left of the quartz band. Climb a small groove to a small heather ledge, (100 ft.). Peg belay. Climb the slab above diagonally left to a flake belay below an overlap and above a heather ledge, (60 ft.). Surmount the overlap (awkward), climb the slab above slightly right to a horizontal crack, (60 ft.). Peg belay. Climb the slab to the next overlap, surmount this using one etrier, move up a sloping corner and pull up leftwards to a stance, (100 ft.). Peg belay. Climb the slab to the final wall and move left to the tree belay, (60 ft.). Traverse left for a few feet to a crack, climb

the crack then go diagonally right to the top, (90 ft.). The last two pitches are the common finish to Agony, The Long Walk and The Big Ride.

—*Attila*. 650 ft. Very Severe. D. Haston & J. Brumfitt. October 1965.

A direct line between The Pause and Spartan Slab. Climb the slab right of the Long Reach slab to a tree belay (140 ft.). Go straight up the slab above, passing the Crevasse on the right, to the tree belay above fourth pitch of Spartan Slab, (130 ft.). Climb a thin black slab to an overlap, cross this using a sling on a spike and a peg in the slab above, go thinly up for 10 ft. to a hold and a quartz pocket then straight up to a small stance under a bulge, (140 ft.). Follow Ba's for 20 ft., then go straight up to a grassy stance below the final wall, (120 ft.). Go up the corner above (arrowed) and then a short crack, (65 ft.). Up a mossy slab to finish, (60 ft.). Peg runners used where possible throughout.

—*Cut the Grass*. 800 ft. Very Severe. D. Haston, T. Shearer & Joy Heron. June 1965.

This route lies on the belt of slabs right of the descent route. Go slab-climbing always about 100 ft. to the right of Dan.

**Glen Etive: A'Chioch.**—*Bo Weevil*. 130 ft. Very Severe. D. Haston, J. Moriarty & G. B. Wakefield. Date uncertain.

Climb the steep wall on the left of the crag.

**Buachaille Etive Mòr: Central Buttress.**—*Rock Climb*. 450 ft. Very Severe. J. Knight (Sq.M.C.) & A. McKeith. April 1965.

The route winds up the wall left of Kinloss Corner, crossing Swansong midway. Start up a crack 30 ft. left of Kinloss Corner, then from a platform at 40 ft. traverse up left by a shelf to belay at its extremity, (120 ft.). Climb the wall above directly and the arête on the left of Kinloss Corner, gradually curving away to the left to a stance, (120 ft.). Traverse horizontally left above an obvious roof, (50 ft.). Climb the shallow groove above on the immediate right of a dirty chimney and then traverse right to belay (60 ft.). Finish straight up a steep slab and easier rocks to Heather Ledge, (100 ft.).

**Coire na Tulaich.**—*Awrong*. 250 ft. Very Difficult. D. Haston & Joy Heron. June 1965.

On the crag at the top right of the corrie. Climb the large central crack.

—*Awrite*. 250 ft. Severe. D. Haston & Joy Heron. June 1965.

Climb the wall right of the crack.

**Beinn Fhada: East Face.**—*Kak*. 270 ft. Very Difficult. R. Burnett (Sq.M.C.) & A. McKeith. 5th May 1965.

Facing east and overlooking the gorge, high on the left side of Beinn Fhada, there is a steep little face. Climb straight up the centre of this face, starting from an arrow below an obvious steep groove.

**West Face.**—*Greez*. 250 ft. Severe. D. Haston & M. Sclater. October 1965.

Above the Lost Valley gorge this face is split by a prominent grassy corner. Climb the slabby wall to the left of this.

**Geàrr Aonach: East Face.**—*Smersh*. 400 ft. Very Severe. D. Haston & M. Sclater. October 1965.

Takes the wall between Rainmaker and Goldfinger. Climb a steep wall, (150 ft.). Climb the groove above, (60 ft.). Traverse right beneath a bulge, (50 ft.). Climb the overhang at its right edge, move left over the main bulge and follow the wall above to finish, (140 ft.).

—*Tom*. 300 ft. Very Severe. D. Gray (Rock & Ice), Miss M. A. Thompson & A. McKeith. 4th September 1965.

Just to the right of Marshall's Wall there is an obvious leftward-trending corner. Climb straight up into the corner to a tree belay, (100 ft.). Make a rising traverse left until it is possible to go straight up to a ledge with block belay (80 ft.). Traverse up and right to the edge of the wall overlooking Bunny's Chimney, then go straight up to finish, (120 ft.).

—*Dick*. 300 ft. Very Severe. D. Haston & M. Sclater. October 1965.

This line straightens out Tom, going up where it goes left. Go up the buttress to a tree, (110 ft.). Climb a greasy crack, (40 ft., 1 peg). Follow the crack to its end, (50 ft.). Climb the wall above to an overhang. Go over this directly to finish, (120 ft.).

—*Harry*. 450 ft. Very Severe. J. Knight (Sq.M.C.) & A. McKeith. 13th June 1965.

This route lies on the face to the east of the Nose of Geàrr Aonach. This face is split in its upper half by a steep gully with an obvious chockstone. On the right of the gully is a steep buttress easily recognised by an inverted T-shaped overhang. Start directly below this overhang and 100 ft. left of the lowest rocks (cairn). Climb for 300 ft. up a series of steep walls and ledges towards the right end of the overhang. Climb a vertical groove, (50 ft. crux) to a platform. Go up left and finish up steep, exposed, rough rock on the crest of the buttress.

**Aonach Dubh: East Face.**—*Barn Wall*. 500 ft. Grade III. J. Renny, I. MacEacheran (Sq.M.C.) & A. McKeith. 27th November 1965.

The route followed the summer route. The wall was plastered in

powder snow and verglas. The main difficulty was a wall and subsequent right traverse about halfway up.

—*Drainpipe Corner*. 200 ft. Grade IV.  
D. Haston & A. McKeith. December 1965.

Much difficulty with black ice and powder snow was found.

**Lower North-east Nose.**—*Slaver*. 220 ft. Very Severe. D. Haston & Joy Heron. April 1965.

Climb the wall to the left of Turnspit.

**North Face.**—*Tober*. 500 ft. Very Severe. I. Clough & D. G. Roberts. 24th October 1965.

Follows the big break starting below and left of Yo Yo: an open corner with red slabby left wall, leading up to the Barrier Pitch of the Girdle Traverse.

Climb a slab leftwards, then a short wall, to the overhangs where a left traverse leads to a little groove. Climb this to a peg and move right into another groove which leads to a stance and peg belay, (120 ft.). Cross to ledge on right then up left to regain groove. Follow this to exit left across slabs below the Barrier. Peg belay at foot of grass rake, (120 ft.). Climb a rib and slabby grooves above for two pitches to join Pleasant Terrace at Fingal's Chimney. Walk 10 yards right and climb in two pitches, an obvious line, to the top.

**West Face, F Buttress.**—*Pocks*. 200 ft. Severe. R. Campbell & J. R. Marshall. July 1965.

On the clean pock-marked slab opposite the start of Trapezce. Start left of a prominent flake. Go up to a ledge at 40 ft., move up and traverse a few feet right then up again and right again to a grassy ledge. Climb the short steep crack above (1 peg). Scramble to top.

**Creag Bhàn: North-east Face.**—*Humpback Gully*. 1000 ft. Grade II. J. Renny, I. MacEacheran (Sq.M.C.), R. Sharp & W. Sproul. November 1965.

Creag Bhàn lies 3 miles south-west of Clachaig Hotel. Climb the obvious gully to the right of the summit.

## SOUTHERN HIGHLANDS

**Craig-y-Barns, Dunkeld.**—For details of a new guidebook to this crag and other Southern lumps see Southern Highland Notes. The following snippet was overlooked and for completeness is included here.

—*Harelip*. 70 ft. Very Severe. R. Campbell & N. Soane (E.U.M.C.). July 1965.

Yet another variation to The Hood. Start 15 ft. to the left below a tree-filled crack. Climb a tree for 35 ft. Transfer to a tiny overhung slab and traverse along a lip between roofs to join the first pitch of the Hood where it breaks the first overhangs. Diverting.

**Bonskeid Crag.**—This crag lies north of the Tummel Bridge road about  $1\frac{1}{2}$  miles from its junction with A.1. The rock is sound schist similar to Craig-y-Barns.

—*The Arête.* 150 ft. Very Difficult.

This route forms the left-hand boundary of the crag and starts from the lowest rocks. Two pitches.

—*The Wall.* 160 ft. Very Severe.

Start 40 ft. right of The Arête. Go up a groove slanting right, then straight up to a cave. Leave the cave on the left and go up to a ledge. Climb the groove on the right to a large ledge and tree belay, (110 ft.). Climb the wall above from the left end of the ledge, (50 ft.).

—*Lumbar.* 160 ft. Very Severe.

Start 20 ft. right of The Wall. Climb easily to a ledge, (40 ft.). Gain the slab on the right, move right and go up to the large ledge on The Wall, (40 ft.). Climb the cave above first on the right (1 peg) then left under the roof to finish by a groove, (90 ft.).

—*Diagonal.* 160 ft. Very Severe.

Start just right of Lumbar and follow a rising rightward line. The final steep section is climbed by a crack.

—*Bonskeid Groove.* 160 ft. Very Severe.

The best route. 40 ft. to the right of Lumbar there is a small cave. Climb it by the left wall, climb by a small tree and a black overhung recess to a large ledge beneath an obvious groove, (100 ft.). Climb the groove (1 peg).

These routes were first ascended by various combinations of G. Farquhar, R. A. P. Mellor, I. G. Rowe & D. J. Wilson.

## ARROCHAR

**Dunleacan.**—This outcrop lies on the west side of Loch Fyne, east of the Inveraray-Campbelltown road, about 1 mile north of Furnace.

—*Pluial.* 210 ft. Very Severe. R. Smith & W. Rowney (C.D.M.C.), May 1962.

Start at the centre of the face below a shattered groove. Up this to a small grass ledge, (30 ft.). A belay can be arranged in cracks on the left wall. Continue directly up the groove above until a move to the left can be made on to a slab below a shallow roof. Traverse up and leftwards to the far end of the slab. Climb the groove above for 15 ft., then go right over slabby ledges to a belay above the line of the main groove, (120 ft.). Descend left to the top of the final groove. Step across on to the arête on the left. Swing round the corner and go straight to the top. The rock is sound and the face has a sunny aspect.

## NOTES

### Skye and Islands Notes

**Winter Cuillins.**—Last issue we carried the Full Story of the first winter traverse of the Cuillin Ridge. Lest we forget, other recent accounts of this ridge in winter conditions are by W. L. Wood (*S.M.C.J.* (1962), xxvii, 281), with a disgruntled Patey ('I doubt whether satisfactory conditions for the Main Ridge ever obtain') on the next page: and by our late member Lord Malcolm Douglas-Hamilton (*Alpine J.*, 1947-8, 56, 382) who, with Wood and Donald McIntyre, traversed the Sgùrr nan Gilleann section under exhilarating conditions.

**Freed at last.**—The following climbs, originally artificial, have all been climbed free; **Sunset Slab**, Severe (Sgùrr Sgumain): **Vulcan Wall**, Very Severe: **Strappado**, Very Severe: **Cioch Grooves**, Very Severe (last three on Sròn na Ciche).

A large rock fall from the Cioch Upper Buttress in July was seen and heard as far away as Glen Brittle. None of the climbs appear to have been affected.

The new B.M.C. Hut in Glen Brittle is now in use.

**Ordnance Survey Maps.**—New 6 in. O.S. maps have recently been issued covering the Cuillin. Some of the names wrongly placed in previous surveys have now been corrected. Especially notable is that **Coir' a' Tairneilear** and **Coir' a' Mhadaidh** have been transposed. The heights of almost all tops have been changed, but do not differ much from those quoted on S.M.C. Maps and Guides.

Two **errors** have been noted—the name An Dorus is shown at the gap of Eag Dubh, instead of at the col between Sgùrr a' Mhadaidh and Sgùrr a' Ghreadaidh: and the Thearlaich-Dubh Gap is shown at Bealach Coir' an Lochain! The Ordnance Survey have stated that these errors will be corrected at the next reprint. The new 1/25,000 sheet covering the Cuillin which is due for publication in the near future will have the correct naming. This map, if similar in style to the 6 in. maps, should replace the present S.M.C. map.



**Harris.**—Marshall A. Reeves, as well as making a fine new route on Sròn Ulladale, sends us some encouraging notes. He discounts R. B. Evans' remarks (*S.M.C.J.* (1962), xxvii, 280). We do too: they reeked of southern duplicity. . . . We quote Mr Reeves with pleasure, ' . . . the main wall (of the Sròn) is really magnificent; great blank slabs, steep and clean: weaknesses with good holds and cracks. There are good possibilities for hard free climbs with occasional aid. We got 150 ft. up the right wall using only 2 pegs, but were forced off this by bad weather. The main overhang would probably be a sustained artificial route and perhaps the best thing of its kind in the country. The rock dries very quickly after rain.' On the debit side, they found Sgùrr Scaladale unpleasantly slimy.

Reeves' route on Creag Mo, *Gollum*, appears to share at least the same finish with Evans' *Miny* (*S.M.C.J.* (1962), xxvii, 266).

**A 3400 ft. Round in Barra.**—One does not usually associate Barra in terms of 3000 ft., but the ascent of the five highest summits in the Island from Castlebay and back makes a pleasant 11-mile round involving 3400 ft. of ascent. Details; Heaval and top (1300 ft. ascent): Hartaval and top (200 ft.): Greanan and Corrabheinn (250 ft.): then west by the Chambered Cairn of Dun Bharpa to Beinn Martuinn (400 ft.): down to the coast road at sea level and  $2\frac{1}{2}$  miles along it, before the final 1090 ft. to the summit of Beinn Tangaval and over its top, and back to Castlebay.

R. G. INGLIS.

### Arran Notes

**Tòrr Nead an Eoin.**—The climb reported in last year's *Journal*, *Grey Wall*, is surely the same as *Aquila* climbed in 1950 by Rucksack Club members and reported in their journal for 1951. There is a mention of such a route in the *Arran Rock Guide*, but no names or details are given.

**Cir Mhòr: South Face, Prospero's Peril.**—The variation described in last year's *Journal* is not a variation at all but follows the route as originally described by Curtis and Townend in *S.M.C.J.* (1944), xxiii, 186. The route given in the *Arran Rock Guide* is itself a variation described by the same party in *S.M.C.J.* (1945), xxiii, 243.

### Northern Highlands Notes

**Foinaven, Creag Urbhard.**—J. W. Highet and fellow members of the Caithness Mountaineering and Ski Club (they've got their priorities right!) report some routes here in this issue. Writing of their climb *Mayday* Highet remarks, ' . . . A magnificent buttress was noted to the left of this climb and there must be tremendous scope on it. The rock is quartzite and very sound.'

### Central Highlands Notes

**Creag Dubh: Newtonmore.**—We are avalanched in routes of high quality, great severity and prurient appellation on this crag. Fortunately, the editorial ethos has been spared the dilemma of censorship since these routes and others are appearing currently in a privately published guide-book (not by the Olympia Press) to the eastern outcrops (see **Southern Highland Notes**).

The crags lie above the Lagganbridge-Newtonmore road about 3 miles west of Newtonmore. At their highest point they reach a height of 450 ft. Early exploration is reported in *S.M.C.J.* (1960), xxvii, 57-58. The recent spate of routes stemmed from a visit paid by Haston to the crag in October 1964, when he climbed the great right wall of the main crag, a magnificent line called **Inbred**, probably the most impressive-looking free route of recent years.

Edinburgh laid siege throughout the spring of 1965 and 30-odd new routes have now been added. Creag Dubh is now certainly the finest low-level crag in the country.

**Creag Meaghaidh.**—Somewhat pedantically but with great persistence McKeith & Co. have strung together an enormous girdle across the cliffs starting on the buttress left of **Raeburn's Gully** and going right to **The Window** via *The Scene*, *Appolyon Ledge*, *Patey's Post Horn Gallop* and *The Last Lap*.

### Glencoe Notes

**Errata in Glencoe II Guide.**—**Trilleachan Slabs. Hammer.** In the description of the fourth pitch the phrase 'Climb crack above overhang,' occurs. It should read 'Climb crack above *to* overhang.'

B. W. Robertson notes that the diagram of **The Long Wait** is erroneous. Above the second big overlap the dotted line veers left and then traverses right beneath the steep final wall. Instead it should take a direct line from the overlap to the final wall.

**Beinn Fhada, Sentry Crag.**—Page 80, line 14; for 'south' read 'north.'

### Southern Highlands Notes

**Glen Lednock.**—George Brown (*J.M.C.S.*) reports the existence of a 150 ft. schist crag of promising appearance here. To find it, go up the road 3 miles or so: it's up the hill on the left.

**Craig-y-Barns, Dunkeld; The Hawcraig, Aberdour; Traprain Law, Haddington; Railway Walls, Currie.**—Guides to these crags, together with the *Guide* to **Creag Dubh** mentioned elsewhere, are compounded in

an eastern outcrop *Guide* obtainable from Graham Tiso, 44 Rodney Street, Edinburgh. Price at the present time uncertain. Sections edited by R. Campbell, I. A. MacEachern, A. McKeith, D. Haston and A. McKeith respectively. Overall editing by M. Fleming. Published by Graham Tiso.

### Miscellaneous Notes

**Two Heids.**—The Hon. Asst. Editor, J. R. Marshall, has had to resign; his professional work has become too demanding. This is a great loss, for his help with New Climbs, and with many other respects of *Journal* production, has been invaluable both *in* and *ex officio*. The Hon. Editor, who has found that the greater encroachments by his own professional work call for proportionately greater increases in his leisure, is very grateful to **Robin Campbell** for agreeing to become Joint Hon. Editor and so sharing the rigours of office, especially the New Climbs section. No doubt his influence will increasingly, and refreshingly, be found elsewhere. It is time.

**And a Hantle o' Feet.**—In the course of correspondence with the Director-General of the Ordnance Survey, much mystery concerning the **Revised 'Munro' Heights** has been dispersed. Readers are referred to LETTERS TO THE EDITOR for details of these, and for more information regarding **Access and Hydro-Electric Schemes** (cf. *S.M.C.J.* (1962), xxvii, 288-291; (1965), xxviii, 130-1).

**Back Numbers.**—Wise investors with an eye to the pockets of future sociologues have been snapping up old *Journal* issues. Climbers also are interested in completing their sets: two such—who wish to contact sellers and their prices—are: Professor P. D. Baird, McGill University, Montreal, P.Q., Canada, who requires one number for a full house—No. 126; and Dr W. D. Nicholl, An Teallach, Netherplace, Mauchline, Ayrshire, who wants Nos. 92, 95, 101, 135, 138 and 143. Several numbers are still available from the Club—see elsewhere in this issue.

**Index.**—Unlettered loons with no *Journals* of their own can still thumb through the Club's complete sets. But, as the last index was published in 1939 and covered volumes xi-xx (1910-35), the more recent volumes have held their secrets well. R. Gall Inglis, to whom the Club is indebted in so many ways, has now presented three finely-bound copies of a temporary index covering volumes xxi-xxvii (1936-63): one for the National Clubroom, one for the Glasgow Clubroom and one for Editorial use. He plans a permanent index when volume xxx is completed. . . .

### University of St Andrews West Greenland Expedition, 1965

[Mummery would have been amused and possibly rather apprehensive to note that at least one Educational Establishment today has discarded

the pretence of the Pursuit of Science as a reason for mountaineering, and has replaced it by the pretence of the Pursuit of Sport. . . . The following has been extracted by the kindness of Dr Gribbon from the preliminary report of the expedition.]

In June we sailed from Leith to Iceland *en route* for the mountains of the Sukkertoppen region of West Greenland. We were on the fifth Greenland expedition to be organised by members of the University since the war, but the first sponsored by the University with the pursuit of a non-competitive and individualistic sport as its purpose.

We spent a week waiting in Iceland. Some of us climbed Mount Hekla, the highest active volcano on the island in bad weather. We left Reykjavik on 1st July, flying to Narsarsuaq, and boarded the *Kununguak*, which sails regularly up and down the west coast of Greenland. In three days we sailed northwards to Sukkertoppen. With 43 crates of equipment and food we were then taken to our projected base at the head of an inlet penetrating the mountains.

Two weeks after leaving Scotland we were established at our base on a terrace close to a mountain torrent. This torrent was the outlet of a convenient lake along which we were able to transport equipment by our two canoes. It was the only way to get equipment inland since the northern shore was extremely rocky while the southern shore lay underneath a north face which discharged avalanches down the glaciers toward the lake. A depot camp was placed at the east end of the lake. A route was worked out up 1500 ft. of steep snow and slab to a narrow gap in the mountains fringing the icefield at 2800 ft. Loads were then backpacked and a camp set up at the gap of the 'Col St André.' This camp was to enable attempts to be made on the mountains close to the gap and to serve as a transit camp to the camp we hoped to place far out on the icefield.

The six weeks spent in the region can be divided into the first three weeks, in which we camped at the col and climbed as many mountains as we could reach, and the second three weeks, which were spent on the icefield, climbing and also carrying out the geophysical programme. However, these main lines of the expedition were not followed by the whole party, since it only required four to work out the route to the icefield, while the other four were free to follow a separate programme of exploration. During the second half of the expedition, we were reduced to six as two members had to return home. Five members carried up further supplies to the col, and then sledged inland to a suitable camp site for the geophysical work. The sixth member canoed along the coast in search of ptarmigan (for his research programme). Bad weather and illness split the party on the icefield, and only three members reached and inhabited the farthest camp, the other two returning to base. One required hospital treatment for an infected throat, and when the canoeist returned he and the fit member paddled overnight to Sukkertoppen, 50 miles away. The hospital boat came to the base camp, and took the patient to Sukkertoppen. The three members who were on the icefield completed

their programme, and returned in two days to the base camp, being faster than anticipated since they were forced from the Col St André in a storm which levelled both their tents and left them literally at the mercy of the elements.

The last few days at the base camp were spent in retrieving the abandoned gear at the Col St André, and snatching two final ascents of character on the mountains beside the inlet.

The members of the expedition were P. W. F. Gribbon, Leader, I. H. M. Smart, *S.M.C.*, W. M. Ledingham, C. S. M. Doake, J. C. S. Gilchrist, R. W. Hilditch, J. S. Haworth and H. M. Anderson.

Eighteen mountains were climbed, 16 being first ascents. The group visited was compact and deeply dissected, so that most of the peaks involved up to 5000 ft. of climbing. The mountains rising from the icefield involved about 1500-2000 ft. of climbing. The quality of rock was variable but most of the ridges were of excellent red gneiss. Routes varied from a few hours to over 30 hours of climbing, and the standard of difficulty from Easy to Alpine Grade III-IV. The following major peaks illustrate the variety of conditions we met. **Suilaersarfik**, 4262 ft., a fine pyramidal peak with a magnificent view over the coastline, was climbed up the N. glacier and E. ridge by I.H.M.S., J.C.S.G. and P.W.F.G. in a leisurely 14 hours. Third ascent, 11th July. **Dufourspitze**, circa 4900 ft., the main rock tower on a sharply pinnacled ridge with a 2000 ft. north face overhanging the 9th July glacier, was climbed up the south face by C.S.M.D., R.W.H., J.C.S.G. and H.M.A. in 10 hours. First ascent, 13th July. **Corax** 5005 ft., a most impressive mountain flanking the Col St André, was climbed up the E. glacier by C.S.M.D., R.W.H., J.S.H., J.S.C.G. and P.W.F.G. in 7 hours. First ascent, 29th July. **Gorgon**, 5190 ft., a mile-long rock ridge with continuous problems, was climbed in a south to north traverse by I.H.M.S., J.S.H. and P.W.F.G. in 21 hours. First ascent, 20th July. **Draco**, 5320 ft., the most massive of all the mountains climbed with three subsidiary summits to be crossed before the final pinnacle. The ascent was by the S.W. face to the first summit, which was avoided by an airy traverse over a gully bed: a bivouac was made at 5200 ft. The descent gave a 4000 ft. glissade. Climbed by I.H.M.S., J.S.H., W.M.L. and P.W.F.G. in a mean time of over 30 hours. First ascent, 22nd July. **Three Castles**, 5500 ft., the majestic peak overlooking the base camp, was climbed by the S.W. glacier and its headwall with a snow-towered ridge to the main summit by C.S.M.D. and P.W.F.G. in 27½ hours. Second ascent, 16th August.

**Munroists** are falling off in numbers. So only two survivors have been checked in this year by Mr Eric Maxwell. They are (conventions as previous lists, *q.v.*): (61) W. T. Taylor, 1965, —, 1965; (62) R. M. Milne, 1965; (63) H. S. K. Stapley, 1965, —, 1965. Number 60 in last issue has in fact done the tops as well, so his entry should be amended to; (60) H. M. Brown, 1965, 1965.

**Mountain Rescue**—An interesting combined exercise was held at Arrochar over the 21st-24th January 1966. It was arranged by John Hinde and B. H. Humble. Taking part were Kinloss and Leuchars R.A.F. Mountain Rescue Teams, Arrochar Mountain Rescue, a contingent from the Argyll Police, and as well as the two S.M.C. members mentioned above, Charles Allen, George Roger, Alex. Small and Stanley Stewart.

One object was to give experience of winter nights without tents or snow holes. On the Saturday R.A.F. parties located, and carried gear to, howffs on five different mountains, improved the howffs and put in some hill walking and snow climbing, while a Leuchars party pitched tents on Narnain summit.

On the Sunday all howffing parties were to arrive on Narnain summit not later than 12.30 p.m. while the base camp party from Glencroe together with the Arrochar Team took up stretchers and other gear, being joined on the summit by the S.M.C. group.

With all gear, tents, and a party of 50 the scene on the summit was something like Camp 2 of a major expedition. . . .

The cliffs of the Spearhead proved ideal for training. As well as the usual long stretcher 'lower' with a mock casualty there was winching up a 'casualty' with the Tragsitz, prussiking (including use of Hiebeler clamps) on the left wall of Jamblock, and practice in various abseiling methods.

Conditions throughout were very arctic, with lower slopes sheeted with ice and very hard snow conditions high up, while the cliffs were frosted and iced.

Altogether it was a most successful exercise and the S.M.C. group were much impressed by the enthusiasm and technical efficiency of the R.A.F. teams. On the Saturday night leaders of the R.A.F. teams and S.M.C. group foregathered in Humble's cottage and special credit should go to the two Leuchars men who left there with an Alsatian at 12.30 a.m. on the Sunday morning and climbed up to the summit camp on a very dark night. . . .

B. H. H.

**Equipment Notes.**—The most significant developments in the last year have been in the realm of actual climbing gear. The American top climbers have proved beyond doubt that they are the best artificial climbers in the world at present. This is not because they are supermen but because they have developed better materials than anyone else for the job in question. Climbers like Yvon Chouinard have made the study of pitons their life's work and the end product of such dedication is a full range of pitons made of alloy steel which can fit practically any crack. For information on the full range it is best to read a small booklet called "Chouinard equipment for the Alpinist."

The Americans also introduced nylon tape for artificial climbing which took the place of the runged etrier. The best type is a rigid 1 in. two-ply tape which has proved better than the old soft tape as it is easier



to use. Soft tape in two sizes, 1 in. and  $\frac{1}{2}$  in., can be used for runners. This subject is fully covered in an article 'Tiger's Web' by Rusty Baillie in *The Climber*, December 1965. With regard to rope, perlon is being used more in this country and has one or two distinct advantages over nylon: it does not kink so much, is easier to handle in wet and freezing conditions, easier to abseil on, and runs more freely through many karabiners thus making it better for aid climbing. It has also been subjected to more serious safety tests than the British ropes.

The German firm Salewa have produced a formidable new ice piten which is greatly superior to anything else on the market. This takes the form of a tubular screw, which means that when one is screwing the peg in, the displaced ice comes through the tube and out the hole in the end and does not crack the ice as the older form of screw so often did (thus rendering itself virtually useless). The best of the old screws is the Stubai but it is so fragile that one or two uses in hard ice would often snap the screw, which could lead to a dangerous situation. The Salewa on the other hand is very tough. The same firm have greatly improved their adjustable crampons, and for someone who goes through a lot of boots they may prove the most economical buy.

In boots the only innovation has been the Harlin "Le Phoque" double boot in which we have at last a light double which is hardly any larger than a standard boot and does not drop one's rock-climbing standard like the original German doubles. They are ideal for the more serious Scottish winter routes, the major Alpine mixed routes or the Alpine winter. Edinburgh has a group of climbers who are not only doing the major routes at home and abroad but are also extremely interested in the gear they are using. We also have a forward-looking climbing shop-owner in Graham Tiso who has spent many hours in wrangling on the question of equipment with the group. Thanks to these discussions all the above items are now obtainable in Scotland.

DOUGAL HASTON.

**Per mare et per terras** was part of the chorus sung by the Rev. Dr Norman Macleod at the Dinner of the Gaiter Club at Lochearnhead in the seventies of last century. This astonishing Pickwickian fellowship, in which all titles were generously eroded to the levelling appellation of 'Gaiter,' was founded and fertilised by John Burns, first Lord Inverclyde. Its motto *Flumina amo silvasque*, its badge The Gaiter, this club enjoyed purely Salvationist jaunts about each *abhunn* or *coille*, where grave men, far too tight, unbuttoned to hilarity. Of course at that time it had to have a Song, The Gaiter Song, and this is given, together with its endearing history, by Professor Ramsay (*S.M.C.J.* (1911), xi, 284).

Its relevance?

Well, it went out, with gaiters. And as a dying bequest it gave £100 to the S.M.C.—to launch the first, long-awaited, *S.M.C. Guidebook*. Now tighten your P.A.s and read on.

## WHAT HAPPENED TO 'GLENCOE II'?

Two years has been an adequate introduction to the frustration and fascination of guide-book editing. Two years in which that millstone *Glencoe II* was eventually prised loose and dropped in the laps of the decadent distributors. Such was the wonder and confusion produced by this unprecedented event that Tiso flogged it at the old price of 10s. 6d., until commercial ambitions by the editor (*Rock* not *Journal*) who offered to buy up all existing stock, sowed a seed of suspicion in the hairy man's mind. What became of *Glencoe II*? This was a question frequently fired at us, and no doubt even more frequently directed at the hapless Lovat who had completed the manuscript many moons ago, before the golden age of mountaineering had become tarnished.

In this complex age, the machinery of editing and distributing both *Rock Climbers'* and *District Guides* became too much for one man to cope with. Scott Johnstone was faced with an alternative—emigrate or resign. However, no foreign state would let him come, and the Committee wouldn't let him go. He therefore decided to become schizophrenic and assumed the identity Speirsflemingjohnstone, the first personality being that of a hardheaded businessman to fiddle the books (account not guide) and generally to rule the roost over the less dominant characters of the second, an illiterate scientist treading his first tentative steps through the corridors of power *via* the *Rock Climbers' Guides*, and the third, a harassed *District Guide* feverishly trying to lose his identity altogether—the Committee still won't let him go. Splitting one's personality three ways isn't accomplished in a day and many moons were to elapse before this interesting transmutation was completed, each waxing revealing more mildew aggregating on the Lovat parchment.

Meanwhile, the brilliant scheme was evolved of having the printing and distribution superintended professionally by a firm of publishers. A good gambit! In order to make money for themselves, they would first have to make money for the Trust. Ingenious! The offers from the publishing firms to take part in this lucrative venture were legion—two to be exact. It would only have been one had not the ubiquitous Tiso been intrigued by the thought of becoming another Harold MacMillan, and injected a counter-offer into the already confused deliberations of the Committee. While the hard-heads of the Committee were puzzling this one out, the hard-men of the mountains were throwing up (figuratively, except for Hogmanay and Saturday nights at the Kingshouse) new routes all over Glencoe. This quandary was finally resolved when Tiso learned that publishing had nothing to do with pubs.

A spate of activity now ensued. The mildew was brushed off *Glencoe II*, and when the print became visible beneath the bugs and bacilli, the guide was found to be about as up to date as Hannibal's girdle traverse of the Alps. Quick application of the Club slogan, "When in doubt, try Jimmy," resulted in frenzied scrutinising and *marshalling* of the New Climbs sections of the recent *Journals*. And so *Glencoe II* caught up with the hard-men.

About this time, a complete set of new diagrams was forthcoming from Marshall, and forthwent immediately to Chambers the publishers, who forthchucked them on to Cunningham the printers, who were so fascinated by these works of art that they sat and stared in wonder for a further eighteen months, fobbing off irate enquiries with the occasional galley and page proof. But at last the circle was completed, and this article arrives back at the decadent distributors.

In view of such a shambles can there, therefore, be any cohesive policy for the Rock Climbers' Guide? Well, oddly enough there is. The aim is to produce, by the end of the nineteen sixties, a complete set of new guidebooks to cover all the major climbing areas north of the Cheviots: these to dovetail with such privately produced guides as there are, to accommodate every worthwhile piece of rock or brick from the far north to the Railway Wa's of Currie.

Already part of the programme has been completed. Towards the end of the 'fifties the Club could boast of only five, out-of-date, Guides—The Cuillin, Ben Nevis, Glencoe, Arrochar, and, to a lesser degree, Arran. Two more volumes have been added to include the Cairngorms. Two volumes have replaced one to cover Glencoe and Ardgour. The rest of the programme is making progress. New Guides to Nevis, Skye (two volumes, including Rhum), and Arrochar, should be presented for printing this year. A major task, that of collecting and arranging data to cover the whole of the Highlands north of The Great Glen, and which will probably be published in three volumes, is now well under way. That leaves only Arran to be regenerated, and this is now being given earnest consideration. A Guide has also been prepared by Tiso, which deals with Creag Dubh of Newtonmore, Craig-y-Barns of Dunkeld, and the more well-known eastern outcrops. We believe that a similar volume is being compiled in Glasgow to include the western outcrops. These last two guides, though largely written by S.M.C. members, are being published privately, not by the Trust.

Some controversy exists over the inclusion of graded lists in many of our guides. The main arguments against these invoke the curtailment of the pioneering spirit of the climber, claiming that the competent man should be able to gauge accurately the difficulty of a climb without reference to a graded list, and that he should, in the event of an error of judgment, be capable of extricating himself from a tricky situation. It is also argued that the lists are worthless anyway, as no two climbers agree as to the exact order of difficulty of the routes. This is an unrealistic attitude. First, if the climber wishes to retain his basic explorative approach, then he need not refer to the graded lists at all. Why not tear them out of his guide? Why not just throw the guide away? Secondly, there has been such an advance in mountaineering standards and techniques since the war, that the "very severe" category now covers as wide a spectrum of difficulty as do the "easy" to "severe." The climber must know approximately where in this wide range of climbs his intended route lies, otherwise he runs the risk of running himself into real trouble. It is our contention

that a guidebook should not be instrumental in leading its reader unwittingly into danger. One which does this is failing in its duty, and it cannot be justified in that the reader should be sufficiently competent to extricate himself from his predicament. Finally, it is true that opinions do differ about the exact order in which climbs are graded. This is inevitable since personal techniques, physical attributes, and preferences vary so much between individuals. However, these differences usually resolve themselves into petty disputes concerning the order of one or two climbs with respect to their immediate neighbours, and do not significantly affect the overall grading of the routes.

The present policy is, therefore, to continue printing graded lists whenever these are feasible, *i.e.* in compact areas such as Glencoe, Arrochar, Nevis, etc. In wider areas, where the character and geology of the climbing may vary considerably, it is obviously no longer practicable to compare climbs in this way, and graded lists (but not of course the grading of individual climbs) will have to be regretfully discarded. This applies, for example, to areas such as the Cairngorms and the Northern Highlands.

Just as the content of the guides is being brought up to date, so we should consider the containers—the covers. The present maroon covers with white titles look very presentable in a bookcase. It would not be without a pang of nostalgia that we discarded them. A silver candlestick may look quite decorative on a mantelpiece, but it's not of much practical use for illumination. These guidebooks are produced for practical use by mountaineers on the hill. The present cover is not as efficient as it might be. A soft cover would be much more easily carried in the hip, or anorak, pocket. A plastic cover, as well as being more waterproof, would give the volume the advantages in durability of the pliable structure over the rigid, brittle structure. Rounded corners would further improve the guide with regard to packing it in an already overcrowded rucksack. We are more and more drawing to the conclusion that plastic covers, as used by The Climbers' Club, would contribute a significant improvement to our own guides. This will not, we are sure, pass without comment.

We intend to keep the guides reasonably up to date by the periodic inclusion of addenda listing new climbs whenever the numbers of these warrant it, these addenda to be conveniently inserted when the volumes are reprinted. When these become too large and unwieldy, it will present no difficulty to incorporate them into the body of the guide. In this way, we should avoid being placed in the invidious position of having to find an editor to rewrite a guide for a complete area from scratch.

The work on the rock climbers' guides is not, therefore, static. In little more than ten years we hope to have multiplied our volumes from the original five, to twelve: to have improved the presentation of the material: and to have streamlined the flow of new material so that it can be incorporated easily and without undue delay. And so, one plea on behalf of those members who are involved in this work. It is no mean task, so don't knock the editors. Help them!

MICHAEL FLEMING, General Editor, *Rock Climbers' Guides*.

### Notes on Norway

The Editor has asked us to jot down some notes on what the Norwegian hills we know can offer to the climber, showing how they compare with the Scottish Highlands. We must begin by coming clean about our qualifications; we are a pair of elderly mountaineers who have recently had two—in one case three—Norwegian holidays during which we have now and then escaped from our wives up to the peaks. We have carried a rope: sometimes we have even used it. With all the authority that this experience lends us we confidently affirm that any right-thinking (*i.e.* solitude-loving) climber could find satisfaction in the delectable mountains of Nordmøre and Sunnmøre.

They lie in the district of Møre og Romsdal among the fjords between Bergen and Trondheim, but nearer to the latter. They are to the Jotunheim Mountains, which lie to the south and much more inland, what the West Highlands are to the Cairngorms. In the Jotunheim you find a bare, upland, tundra-like plateau from which scattered, massive and sometimes rounded tops rise to a height of about 8000 feet: in Møre og Romsdal the original plateau has been so fantastically fractured, with dissections going so deep, that it consists of innumerable sharp peaks and ridges rising sheer for 5000 feet above valleys along which often wind long arms of the sea. The most spectacular scenery and the greatest challenge to the rock climber hereabouts are to be found among the dark precipices of Romsdal, the Glencoe of Norway. This justly famous corner, which does not require our description, is, however, merely the jam in a sandwich whose appetising slices are Nordmøre and Sunnmøre. Just as there is more to the West Highlands than Glencoe, so there is more to this country than Romsdal.

Whether we go from Romsdal north-east to Nordmøre or south-west to Sunnmøre we plunge into a land that is ideal for mountain exploration. The maps obtainable are almost useless to the climber and guidebook information is of the flimsiest. The Norwegians are superb cross-country walkers and skiers but only a small proportion go in for serious climbing. Last year we climbed an easy but fine hill whose name we have been unable to ascertain and, two years before, we only confirmed the name of the splendid peak we had climbed from the visitors' book in the summit cairn. From any summit one can look round at hundreds of peaks and there is unlikely to be a human being on one of them.

The chief difference from Scottish peaks is the presence of permanent snowfields. Many of these are genuine glaciers with crevasses and bergschrunds but, in our limited experience during the month of August, anyone accustomed to snow conditions in Scotland in winter will feel quite at home on the Norwegian glaciers in this area. The snow is generally soft enough for kicking steps and any crevasses are easily spotted. It should be said, however, that the amount of snow last year was far greater than two years before and conditions can obviously vary a great deal. Crampons are well worth taking. Rock tends to be cleaner than in Scotland, with

less moss and vegetation, and all the rock we encountered was eminently sound, even if there was much gardening to be done. A point to remember is that the lower slopes of the mountains are usually covered with birch scrub which can form an almost impassible barrier, especially where flattened by avalanches. The location of paths should therefore be noted both for ascent and descent. Though there is nearly always a way to the top that involves nothing more than scrambling, interesting routes of all grades of difficulty abound for any climber who does not insist that the climb should begin from the car. In the course of a high level walk round the back of hills more often approached from Lake Eikesdal, we passed a mountain sporting an overhanging rock face that must have been the best part of 1000 feet high. Yet its existence is probably largely unknown. There is plenty of virgin 'tiger' country in these parts.

Sunnmøre probably offers more concentrated climbing than Nordmøre and in one place it really sets out to cater for mountaineers. The Patchellhytte, above Öye, a hut that has been recently rebuilt, is well placed for these fine peaks. The traditional climbers' base, the Union Hotel at Öye on the Norangsfjord, which houses the book where Slingsby, Patchell and others, including our own Raeburn and Ling, recorded their exploits, suffers today from the proximity of noisome mink farms, but a few miles down the fjord is a camp site at Urke which is one of the most charming spots in all Norway. The path from there to the Patchellhytte is actually better, though longer, than that from Öye. There is also an approach by Habbostaddal from the thriving little town of Stranda on the Storfjord.

Most huts are intended primarily for cross-country work or fishing rather than for climbing, so ascents tend to start from sea level and days are often long and heavy. High-level camping would be a reasonable proposition for anyone prepared to carry loads and there are many saeters, or summer huts, high up the valleys, which might be used, subject always to local permission, for these are part of the crofters' living. Car camping is easy. Official sites are frequent, always well kept and, in late August at least, very quiet. Sanitation is good and many sites have huts which can be hired at little extra cost. It is, however, less easy here than in the landward parts of Norway to pitch your tent in any odd corner, as every inch of flat ground is used for the hay. Information about huts, Youth Hostels, camp sites and such mountain maps and guidebooks as there are, can be had from the Norwegian National Tourist Office, 20 Pall Mall, London, S.W.1.

Dare we draw conclusions about the weather? It has certainly seemed to us that in the sheltered fjords winds are generally light and that the climate is warmer than in Scotland—much warmer too than on the Jotunheim where winter can set in in August. Also, though we have had long spells of perfect weather, really bad weather has seemed less continuous on the Norwegian than on the Scottish West Coast. Or have we just been lucky?

It is almost uncanny how much at home a Scotsman can feel here in



country that reminds him of the West Highlands not only in its broad general lines but also in its little intimate details. Most of the flowers—basically Arctic—are his old friends: when he closes his eyes the scents take him back to the Highland holidays of his childhood. Though the hills are wilder, steeper, higher, they are still, somehow, the hills of home. The people, too, are very like our own folk, although—bitter contrast!—the Norwegians can still make a good living from their wilderness and their crofts still ring with the laughter of children.

B. S. FRASER, D. J. FRASER.

### Notes on the Pyrenees

The following notes may be of interest to those thinking of going to the Pyrenees for there is very little modern information available. I was with the usual V.P.S.C.-B.F.M.C. gang—Graham, Rankin, Burslem, Blackwood, Tomlinson and Coventry, and we spent a month in the hills.

We motored out and before leaving France we left the vehicle at Soque and climbed the Pic de Midi d'Ossau from the Refuge Pombie, which nestles under the 2000-foot sheer east face with its great peg routes. It is unequipped, small and cheap. Pallas (Ariel) was climbed from the Refuge Artouste (C.A.F.). We walked up the glen from Soque. There is a chair lift from Artouste.

The party literally gate-crashed into Spain over the Col de Portalet to Sallent de Gallego which is building ski facilities. Money can be changed, petrol bought but bread is unobtainable. From camp beyond the lochan at Lasara, the road end, a fine walk up to the Refuge Alphonso XIII followed. It is unequipped, in a superb position to the east of the loch. The guards below the dam demanded passports while in the border area. The skyline bristles with rock-spires, many named on no map, with Balaitus the biggest, 3151 metres. Good granite. Devil's Ridge worth a traverse. A brief visit was made to the Banos de Panticosa which is a revolting tourist centre with boating pond, casino, no decent shops, no bread—and tourist hotel prices.

We drove on east via Biescas—good shops, poor camping—to Torla, "Ordessa Camping," with swimming pool, supermarket, modern cafe *et al.*—at reasonable prices. Camping is forbidden in the National Park though we did so for a night of storm despite police objections. We went right up the magnificent glen to the Refuge Goriz but as they wanted 12s. just for bed (despite C.A.S., Ö.A.V. cards) we joined some English potholers in the caves for a night of storm again. (This was the only bad spell during the whole trip.) The next day we went up the uninspiring Monte Perdido and crossed the impressive Col de Cilindro to the frozen lake above the head of the Val de Pineta. We stayed in the Refuge Tuquerouye in its Brèche, a windy, empty midden, but free, half in Spain, half in France and the water supply the loch 300 feet below. We traversed Astazou, up the voie normal and down by the loose north face and the Swan Couloir, to Gavarnie, a fine French fleshpot. Hotel des Voyageurs give

a fine lunch. We then faced 4000 feet up to the Brèche de Roland Hut (C.A.F.). It is guarded and is good. The Cirque de Gavarnie is justly famous, a waterfall, 1385 feet, in one corner, and the path, the Echelle de Sarradets, in the other. We crossed the Brèche de Roland from the hut, climbed Casco and visited Casteret's Cave, a huge, frozen tunnel through a mountain! The gut-rot party made a hair-raising descent to the Ordessa canyon by the Circo de Colatuero (balancing on pegs with heavy packs with the forest 1500 feet sheer below!) while the others went via the Goriz to retrieve supplies and the two Munro-baggers added the three peaks of Marboré and traversed Cilindro. Frontier guards were dodged or dealt with as required. This 'Massif Calcaire' is geologically fantastic.

Another drive east with shopping at Boltaña and gravel and dust roads brought us to Benasque. Beyond it a very rough road branches off (just before the bridge) and actually goes up to the meadows below the Banoš de Benasque. Many camp sites. A vast modern road is being built on the far side. At the Fonda Sayo Hotel we were informed that the Estos Hut (base for Posets, etc.) had been destroyed. The Hospice on the way up to the Rencluse Mountain Inn proved to be a guard post with the inevitable 'Passeport.' We paid 3s. for straw under the rafters of the Rencluse which is busy as below Aneto (French; Néthou), 11,063 feet, and the highest in the Pyrenees. French climbers come freely over the Porto from Luchon. Aneto, Astorg and the Maladeta were climbed in the day (5.30-13.00): the last gave a fine granite ridge traverse. One member hiked off over the Col de Toro to the Val d'Aran and an official 'salida.' (It took us two days to get there by the vehicle.) Near the Rencluse is the Trou de Toro—a rocky hollow into which a foaming river quietly disappears to appear again over the mountains!

We drove to Viella in the Val d'Aran via the 5 km. tunnel which was a mixture of mud, potholes and rushing water—and then up to cross the dusty Bonaigua Pass (6734 ft.) with its 30 hairpins. Esterri let us shop before tackling the bends to trippery Espot and the worst road ever on up to the Lac San Mauricio. Not for cars. We camped by the loch in the middle of a landscape of granite spires and blue forest lochans well described in Fedden's *The Enchanted Mountains*.

The Encantats themselves rose above the camp and both summits were climbed by direct routes with the traverse completed down the "Grand Canal." The Refuge de Mitges proved a derelict barn under the Aiguille with its T.D. routes from which two, who muttered about crowded Cham, still managed to peel off. The rest were then on a circling traverse of all the peaks from the Port de Ratera to the Portarro d'Espot, some bits unrecorded in the guide. The whole area bristles with rock routes waiting for firsts, moderate in length, but splendid in quality. There are few glaciers and the peaks rise little over the 3000 metres. With the two opting out with bumps and burns the rest of the party crossed the Col de Monastero to Espot, climbing Peguera and Monastero *en route*, two of another circle of spires. A delightful swim and down past

the fine, guarded (usually) Refuge José Maria Blanc. (Check in Espot if key needed.) You can get up in a Land Rover but the path by the glen is fine. We only stayed in Espot long enough for a drink the town is losing its charm by 'modernising.'

Over the Bonaigua again to the excellent wine and food of Viella and a gentler drive along the softer, busier, French foothills to Ger, a peaceful camp site up the valley from Lourdes. French efficiency; a teleferique takes the lazy (us) up to the Lac de Gaube, with its view up to the Vignemale. Below its north face there is a fine new C.A.F. Hut and over the Hourquette d'Ossoue a very crammed old C.A.F. Hut from which we traversed the Vignemale the next day. C.A.F. give reciprocal rights of course. After the Vignemale we started eating our way home.

Some general notes. Spanish roads are often unsurfaced. There is nothing—yet—comparable to the French 'Route de Pyrenees,' though Hydro-Tourist demands are cutting into these empty regions. Most head-of-valley villages can supply food but beyond them the land is strangely deserted, apart from the (infernal) eternal border guards and shepherds. The former are neither officious nor efficient but like you to leave at the right places. Food and drink is cheap and the people friendly and helpful. Huts in Spain seem to come and go or be left to fall to bits and it is advisable to check in advance. Flies, mosquitoes and clegs are an occasional pest. The weather is remembered as endlessly good so one needs other excuses to fester—and they are there in the flora, photography, swimming and enjoying the sun itself.

R. Fedden's *The Enchanted Mountains* (Murray, 1962, 18s.) is the only useful book in English since the Victorians and contains useful notes at the back. The Spanish side has begun to produce guidebooks now: there is one for the Palars-Aran and one for the Maladeta. Maps or booklets with very large-scale maps are being produced or improved. All these are easily purchased in towns like Viella or villages like Benasque. There is little or no co operation over the border with France, which, with the C.A.F., is very organised—maps, four guidebooks and many fine huts. The Michelin Green Guide gives French touristy information. The 1931 *Guide Soubiron* (out of print), for all its limitations, is the only general guidebook to the mountains. Stanford of London (who can get maps, given warning) supplied me with six sheets which I glued together and cut up to suit and the Centro Excursionista de Cataluña, Barcelona, can provide information.

The neglect of the Pyrenees is hard to understand. The western end (Pic de Midi, Balaitus) has splendid rock climbing, the 'Massif Calcaire' (Gavarnie, Ordessa-Pineto) would be remarkable anywhere and the Encantats (Pallars-Aran) is near perfection whatever one wishes. We owed a great deal to Barclay Fraser who has travelled in the Pyrenees several times—and have only 'spilt the beans' because it gives all the signs of not lasting in its empty state for ever.

HAMISH M. BROWN.

### Scottish Mountain Accidents 1964-5

We last published an Accident list in 1964. It covered many of the 1963 incidents. Because of factors beyond editorial control, insufficiently inclusive reports were available last issue to warrant publication of a list.

Because of repeated requests, we publish another below, covering 1964-5. It cannot be as detailed as the earlier ones, but we hope it may be of use and are greatly obliged to A. I. L. Maitland, F.R.C.S., for providing it. The future of these lists is still debatable, and largely in the hands of the reconstituted Scottish M.R.C.

In 1964 there were 45 incidents with 13 fatalities. There were reported as well six benightments and two lost boys. Seven fatalities and 27 incidents occurred to people under 25 years of age.

One fatality was caused by failure to secure a minor head injury in an exposed position: this led to a further fall and fatal injuries. In one accident an efficient crash helmet prevented severe, possibly fatal, head injuries. Ten accidents with three fatalities occurred as a result of glissades (3) or slips on steep snow slopes. Three accidents occurred as a result of avalanches.

In 1965 there were 58 accidents with 14 fatalities: there were as well 24 reported cases of benightment. Twenty-five incidents with six fatalities occurred to people under 20 years of age. There were nine cases of exposure with three deaths all under 20 years.

The known causes have been slips on greasy rocks (10), slips on hard snow due to failure to wear crampons with vibrams (6), slips on glazed rocks or glissading (6), apparent inadequate knowledge (4), avalanche (2). In one accident two people were involved in a slip on a steep slope of hard snow, the man wearing vibrams was a hospital case, the other wearing tricouni-nailed boots suffered many minor bruises but walked off the mountain.

The lessons to be learned from these accidents are that an adequate crash helmet would reduce the severity of head injuries. There is also a good deal to be learned about exposure and its causes, but what has been shown is that in wet, windy conditions it may occur at higher temperatures than has been thought likely and that teenagers must be dry and well fed as well as warm to avoid it.

Helicopters were used in search or rescue on four occasions and dogs on several occasions: in one incident probably saving the injured person from a dangerous night out.

The incidents were spread over the country as follows:—

Cairngorms (20), Glencoe (18), Lochaber and Skye (12 each), Central Highlands (7), Borders (5), Other areas (6).

More of the rescues are being undertaken by organised local teams but the R.A.F. Mountain Rescue Service still gives its services as always: to all these helpers, the post wardens and others our thanks are due.

#### SUMMARY, 1961-3

Some time ago a working committee (Dr Berkeley, Messrs Humble, Langmuir and MacInnes) investigated all Scottish incidents during 1961-3.



*A. Ewing*

Squirrels Abroad ; on the Klauswernerweg. (There are two ropes of two: Robertson is hidden in his drey).



STEWART JACK



From their summary, the following facts emerge (analysis is not yet complete).

There were 150 incidents, of which 41 involved searches (24 for benightments, 7 for bodies) and of which 14 concerned school parties. These incidents concerned 230 people, of whom 36 were killed. 1962 was the peak, with 59 incidents and 19 deaths (the annual average reported from 1925-45 was 5 incidents . . .).

Of the Areas in which these incidents occurred, Glencoe held 24 per cent., Ben Nevis 19 per cent., N.W. Highlands 18 per cent., Arrochar 12 per cent., Crianlarich 12 per cent., Skye 10 per cent., and elsewhere only 5 per cent.

Of the seasons involved—summer and winter were almost equal: the months of August, March and June were the worst.

Of nationality, at least 40 per cent. were English visitors.

Of ages, some 54 per cent. were under 20 years old, 16 per cent. being under 16 years. Thirty per cent. were between 20 and 25. Only 16 per cent. of persons involved were over 25.

Of their activities, 60 per cent. (with 19 deaths) were hillwalkers, tourists or scramblers, 14 per cent. (8 deaths) rock-climbers, 12 per cent. (9 deaths) snow or ice-climbers.

At least 55 per cent. were judged to have been due to avoidable dangers. The main causes were unsuitable footwear (with ankle injuries), slips in winter (vibrams on paths), inexperienced solo walking, and parties separating; in three cases, one out of a party of three separated and was later found dead.

Skiing incidents, except for two large searches, were not included.

Recommendations included practical instruction in elementary safety precautions. The survey noted that 'the El Alamein refuge is wrongly mapped in the latest 1-inch O.S. maps and this may cause trouble.'

#### SOME RECENT ADDITIONS TO THE LIBRARY

*On the Heights* (Bonatti); *Mountains of Britain* (Pyatt); *The Hebrides* (Murray); *Mountain World, 1964-5*; *Rock-climbers' Guide to Northumberland* (N.M.C.); *Tramping in Skye* (Humble; from the late T. E. Thomson's library); *Picturesque Views in Scotland* (Banks, 1950-60); *Austria, Her People and Their Homelands* (Baker, 1913); *Modern Aboriginal Art (Flinders Range, Australia)*; *Story of the Flinders Range* (1964); *Berge and Heimat* (1935)—all presented by Col. North.

### IN MEMORIAM

There occurred also this year the deaths of two members, **A. N. Maclaurin** and **A. J. Young**, for whom obituaries are not yet available.

#### J. S. M. JACK

JOHN STEWART MUIR JACK joined the Club in 1919, served on the Committee from 1925 to 1928, was Vice-President from 1939 to 1946 and President from 1950 to 1952. He received the unusual honour of being elected Honorary President of the Club in 1959.

Jack, who died at the age of 83, was a survivor of a group of members which included such well-known names as W. N. Ling, Harry MacRobert, George Sang and P. J. H. Unna.

He climbed in Switzerland in 1924 with Harry MacRobert, but his real interest was in the Scottish hills in summer and winter, rather as a walker than as a rock climber. He will be remembered as an intense lover of Scotland and its countryside and of his fellow men. Even after his doctor had forbidden him to go on the hills, he attended Club meets.

For many years no annual dinner was complete if Stewart Jack did not sing the Club song, usually accompanied by E. C. Thomson.

Stewart Jack was educated at Merchiston Castle School, where he was a prefect and played for the XV. Thereafter he went into the family carpet-manufacturing business.

His interest in local affairs was very wide. He served on the Committee of Management of the Paisley Trustee Savings Bank for over 40 years, and acted as Chairman in 1931-32. He was specially interested in Paisley Abbey and its choir and the improvement of its surroundings, and was a prime mover in the formation of the Society of Friends of the Abbey. Amongst his other many public interests was membership of the Paisley and District Hospitals Board of Management.

A. H.

#### IN MEMORIAM—J. S. M. JACK

What can be said without invoking  
Shades of the past? For a long time back  
If when we met there were songs and joking  
There in the midst was Stewart Jack.

Bard of the Club and its old traditions,  
Genial chronicler of delights;  
Days on the hills under all conditions,  
Cheer in the snug hotel at nights.

When Ling, MacRobert,—a score of others,  
Men of a mettle hard to beat,  
Gathered, a happy band of brothers,  
Under the hills for the New Year Meet.

Vanished the tracks of the Big Hobnailers,  
Shortened the shaft of the Old Ice-axe:  
No tweed jackets engage the tailors  
Now we have vibrans and anoraks.

Times may change, but the mountains never,  
We of a later age will be  
Lucky indeed if a bard as clever  
Sings the songs of the S.M.C.

D. J. F.

**THOMAS EVERSLED THOMSON, 1905-1965**

EVERSHED THOMSON'S sudden death, a few days after reaching 60 years of age, came as a great shock and he will be greatly missed by his many friends in the Club. How much this was so was made evident at the first Meet after his death when it was hardly possible to refer to happenings at former Meets without recalling his part in them. He was a regular attender at all functions of the Club from his election in 1927 onwards, was Slide Custodian in 1929 and 1930 and was Meets Secretary for many years. He was also frequently Convener of the Dinner Committee in Edinburgh; to all these duties he carried his habitual conscientiousness, efficiency and enthusiasm.

Some people are quietly efficient behind the scenes but one could not fail to notice when Evershed was in charge of arrangements. His restless energy drove him unwillingly to the limelight even on such minor occasions as organising us all by a show of hands into groups according to our various tastes in sandwiches, but with meat fillings strictly ruled out!

He loved to join the laughter against himself, declaring that his was the role of the 'stooge' and that higher honours were reserved for other types. If this was partly true when he was younger it was due to his ingenuous good heart and his willingness to help whenever there was a job to be tackled, which continued long after his seniority might have allowed him to sit back and leave the donkey work to be carried out by younger men. Moreover, in later years this was largely disproved, for his worth was by no means unrecognised. He was Vice-President of this Club from 1955 to 1957 and his value elsewhere was shown by his election as President of the Edinburgh City Business Club, Captain of the Edinburgh Stock Exchange Golf Club, and Chairman of his Constituency Party Political Association, which last office, in which he was highly respected, he held at the time of his death.

Entering as a young man the firm of stockbrokers founded by his father, he was Senior Partner for many years and, under his leadership, the firm grew steadily in size and importance. In addition to all these activities he was a loyal churchman and gave invaluable service as an Elder of St Andrew's Parish Church, Edinburgh. He was a keen piper and was also a very active Director of Ponton House, The Edinburgh Working Lads' Home.

It was, however, to the hills that Evershed turned as the ideal outlet for his tremendous energy. He was an original member of the J.M.C.S. on its formation in 1926. Although no 'tiger,' he was a sound and careful climber and got the keenest enjoyment from his ascents both for the sake of the exercise and for the companionship of 'jolly fellows.' One will not readily forget the image of him tackling a steep slope, talking hard all the time, his arm flung out in expostulation or thumping the palm of one hand with the fist of the other as he drove home a point concerning one of his numerous interests, whether financial, political, religious or even a case for the bagpipe as a musical instrument!

As a young man he did some good climbs in the Cuillin and from

time to time visited the Alps and the Jotunheimen of which he was particularly fond, and, being stationed during the Second War in India, he joined the Himalayan Club, but bad health at that time prevented him from taking full advantage of this opportunity.

As a companion he was completely unselfish, willing to let the other man choose the hill to be climbed or the route to be followed yet always ready to unglove to read the compass in a blizzard, or in spite of his restless disposition, to adapt his pace to that of a slower climber or wait, uncomplaining, in an icy wind, while a photographer searched for a viewpoint.

Our sympathy goes out to his sister and her family on the loss of her brother and one of the best of good fellows.

E. C. T.

### T. GRAHAM BROWN, F.R.S., 1882-1965

It is surely inappropriate in many ways that one of my tender years should attempt to record some sort of tribute to a mountaineer of Graham Brown's stature. However, in his last 15 years of life, Graham lived and climbed amongst damp-eared students like myself, so perhaps there is something to be said for it.

I first met Graham some years ago in a public house in Edinburgh, perched over a half-pint, his white old face peeping between pork-pie hat and shabby raincoat. Wednesday afternoons would always find him there, hemmed in by the current maestri, Smith, Haston, Holt and the rest, who picked his brains on all matters Alpine and sought his approval, not always given, of their Scottish activities. He was their Alpine library and their conscience. Mention 'piton' and he quivered, toothless gums bared in a sudden intolerant 'Bah!', all eloquent disgust. Say 'Mont Blanc' and a stack of photographs appeared in his wrinkled clutch, tobacco-stained index tracing futuristic lines (now climbed) up the Grand Pilier d'Angle, the Pillars of Fresnay, the Pillars of Brouillard. If any man loved a mountain, Graham Brown loved Mont Blanc.

Graham achieved eminence in two fields: as Alpinist and as physiologist. To describe the second is beyond my competence. As for the first, he was one of the great Alpine mountaineers of his time.

He took to the rocks later than most do, just before the first world war, when he began to make trips to the Lakes from Manchester, where he worked at that time. The curtailing of this honeymoon by the war only served to aggravate his desires and ambitions and many bold projects were first conceived while dodging shells in Macedonia. After the war and a long recuperation from an assortment of Hellenic aches and pains, Graham began to translate dotted lines to nailmarks, first of all on Boat Howe Crags, a neglected Lakeland Gable-end. Then, as if to celebrate his election to the Alpine Club, in 1927 Frank Smythe and he climbed the Brenva face of Mont Blanc by a new route, the Sentinelle Rouge. This *tour de force*, and the neighbouring Route Major, climbed with Smythe in the following year, set the seal on the post-war bout of guideless climbing initiated by Smythe and two of our home-grown giants, Bell and MacPhee,

in various permutations. The Brenva routes constituted a long-standing ambition of Graham's, which stemmed originally from reading A. E. W. Mason's *Running Water* and A. W. Moore's *The Alps in 1864*. It was remarkable that two men of such opposite temper should have joined forces on these climbs. Smythe's sugary journalism and Graham's dry science eventually proved incompatible, and Route Major marked the end of their friendship. For the next few seasons Graham climbed with Alexander Graven, a brilliant guide for whose ability and judgment he had the greatest respect.

In 1933, Graham added a third route on the Brenva face, the Pear, with the guides Graven and Alfred Aufdenblatten. These three great routes, even in these days of alloy steel, duck-down and nylon, rank high among mixed routes in the Alps. In fact, for sheer out-and-out danger if not for difficulty, the Pear has few equals.

1933 marked the high point of Graham's Alpine career. In addition to the Pear, he made first ascents of the left-hand Pillar of Fresnay and of the North Face of Les Bans, and many others elsewhere, too numerous to chronicle here. All in all, in a period of 21 days, he took part in 10 first ascents and nine other major expeditions. An astonishing performance by any standards, but in a man of 51 it defies assessment.

In 1934, he took part in a successful expedition to Mt. Foraker, a 17,000 foot peak in Alaska, with an American party which included Charles Houston. Houston and Graham teamed up the following year in the Alps, and in 1936 they were with the successful British-American expedition to Nanda Devi, although neither reached the summit. Then, in 1938, Graham joined the British Expedition to Masherbrum, which reached a point 700 feet from the top before retreating in bad weather. This, and the second world war, ended a decade of furious and fruitful activity.

During the war and subsequently Graham turned more and more to mountaineering history, though without forsaking action by any means. He set about acquiring an extensive Alpine library and discovered a consuming interest in the early history of the Alps. Perhaps the metallic bluster of the Munichians had taken some of the sting out of Alpine exploration for him, or perhaps he merely felt his years. What small honours our sport has to offer began to come his way: honorary membership of Harvard and the Appalachian Mountaineering Clubs (not ours, regrettably: he had to pay for that!), and editorship of the *Alpine Journal*.

In 1950, Graham retired and returned from Cardiff, where he had been Professor of Physiology, to his native Edinburgh. He was offered, and accepted, the Honorary Presidency of the E.U.M.C. Far from treating this as a once-a-year eating-post, as some might have done, he flung himself whole-heartedly into it, attending Meets, climbing Severes, sleeping in draughty tents and sheltering ungrateful creatures like myself in his West End flat. Tales of his climbing feats in his last decade of life are legendary. His trip to Wales with the Club on the back of a motor-

bike is a good instance. His chauffeur, who will remain nameless, took to the woods on a particular bend, throwing Graham and himself headlong. Graham emerged unscathed, reassembled the bike and revived its owner. Once safely in Wales, he was seen leading such climbs as Holly Tree Wall. All this at 76! Much of his climbing at this time was interspersed with yachting. He had a series of converted lifeboats, leaky horrors all, on to which he would lure unwitting students. One lies at the bottom of Loch Etive, residue of a visit paid to Beinn Trilleachan some years past. Its successor outlasted him, but not before he'd taken it to Norway and back one summer. His last expedition was made with me a year ago to Fort William to see his boat, moored in the Caledonian Canal. To the last he extracted promises, freely given, to thread the Hebrides with him.

Of Edinburgh's youth, his favourite was Smith. They enjoyed each other's company immensely and spent many hours together, poring over photographs, sifting Graham's library for possible Alpine firsts and talking shop. When Robin died, Graham retreated into his shell a bit. He took an interest in MacNiven and myself, inviting us to share his home. He lived in extraordinary squalor, engulfed in old newspapers, tobaccotins and used matches. However, through the rubbish ran threads of excellence: first editions, beautiful Sella plates and antique furniture. In the garden roses bloomed in knee-deep grass and weeds.

It was about this time that his health began to fail him, his visits to the mountains became less frequent and he began to feel less and less in touch with present events. In his last year or so he spent most of his time in his library, reading and rereading the 'books' which he had constructed. The shelves of his library were dotted all over with red-and-blue-bound books. Each one contained all the material relevant to one or another great Alpine classic or controversy, culled from the mountaineering journals of Europe. These books and the remainder on his shelves he has left to the National Library so that we might not be deprived of them.

Graham died painlessly last October of an inoperable bowel complaint. Those who knew him will miss his presence in the mountains, belying his years on the rocks (Robin Smith once said that, technically, Graham was the equal of anyone). They will miss the familiar figure in the shabby raincoat, tottering about Edinburgh, smoking his long curly pipe and cursing at private cars. How refreshing he was: an old worn shell of a man who still saw the world and its mountains through a young man's eyes; a rare species indeed.

R. N. C.

## PROCEEDINGS OF THE CLUB

### Easter Meet 1965—Glenfinnan

THIS was a well attended Meet, 24 members together with eight guests having been present at one time or another. The Stage House Inn proved a most satisfactory centre. Weather conditions on the ridges were severe, winds being very strong, with rain and hail. Snow was soft, heavy on



upper flanks, but not deep on the summit ridges. High wind and light snowfall prevailed on the tops, often simulating blizzard but easing to more tolerable conditions of dark and threatening gloom. Mountains climbed were Beinn Odhar Bheag and Sgùrr Ghuibhsachan on either side of Loch Shiel, and to the north traverses of the long ridges of Streap and Comhlaidh, Sgùrr nan Coireachan and Sgùrr Thuilm, Ròis-bheinn, Gulvain, and others. Those who went farthest west fared best on Ròis-bheinn, glimpsing the Inner Hebrides. The rest saw nothing. W. H. Murray and W. M. Mackenzie were singled out for the most extreme treatment by the elements—they had reached the summit of Sgùrr nan Coireachan in blizzard conditions and had dropped 10 feet down behind a crag when a flash of lightning struck the top. They were thrown flat on their faces: both were dazed and shaken. The air smelt strongly of sulphur from the rending of rock by the lightning. They fled downhill: Mackenzie later found third-degree burns on the sole of his foot.

A welcome visitor to the Meet was Dawa Tensing who was introduced by Tom Mackinnon and was Sirdar of their successful Kanchenjunga Expedition. He has been on three Everest Expeditions, having been on the South Col on each occasion, and has taken part in many other Himalayan expeditions.

Present were: The President, Robert Aitken (Guest), Hugh Allison (Guest), J. K. Annand, J. W. Baxter, I. M. Campbell, Wm. C. Carmichael, I. G. Charleson, M. H. Cooke, C. D. Elton (Guest), R. R. Elton, A. Geddes, Richard Gilbert (Guest), A. L. Hancock (Guest), B. H. Humble, R. M. G. Inglis, G. Scott Johnstone, J. N. Ledingham, D. McArthur, W. M. Mackenzie, D. H. McPherson, W. H. Murray, G. S. Roger, D. Scott, J. McK. Stewart, J. Stanley Stewart, J. D. Sturrock, H. S. Thompson, T. E. Thomson, L. B. Watson (Guest), T. Wright (Guest), F. R. Wylie, Douglas Young (Guest).

T. E. T., W. H. M.

### Reception

THE invited speaker, Alfred Gregory, being at the time engaged on a winter ascent of A.6, Dr Hugh Simpson was called in at the last minute to recount the remarkable feat described in this issue. After feverishly racking his slides, he launched forth beneath a billowing screen. The sheer adventure of the thing held the audience enthralled; the exuberance that eluded—or mastered—all the skilfully-placed disasters forecast and foreboding, kept seats, ears and eyes glued until long after we had left the ice-cap and had been flung down vast rivers of melt-water, slaying reindeer on occasional islands. All embroideries of steroids and sex physiology vanished to where they belong, and so did time—until the President tore himself back to present problems and called for lights, lights. But it was an invigorating visit to an ice cap so far only partially littered with tinned American beer and bases. We got back just in time for tea and cakes.

## Annual General Meeting

WE were late, so the President exhibited his Chairmanship to great effect and managed to dispose of most of the fussy business of annual general meetings without fuss by smartly moving on to the next item. Not before, however, the Club acknowledged that Development of Motorism entails the inevitable roadside restrictions and that mountain living—being as yet free of this panacea—could try and make its official escape while the going is still good.

## Dinner

WE often have difficulty in obtaining Dinner Reports. This year we have two, and the Hon. Eds. have given up attempts to homogenise them; better do they illustrate the Healthy Vitality of the Club if they present themselves alternately, from right and left, roman and italic. Comment is superfluous: but it must have been a very good evening.

Following the Annual General Meeting, the 77th Annual Dinner was held and the general opinion was that the Dinner Committee, and the Hotel, were to be congratulated on providing so good a meal for so reasonable a price. Some doubts had been expressed beforehand because all the speakers were from the home team, but these were soon dispelled.

*A frugal feast preceded sumptuous speeches.*

The President in his survey of the year's activity had some considered remarks addressed to those members who thought less of what they could do for the Club than of what they could get out of it.

*President Grieve politicked by awarding unsatisfactory conduct marks to certain unnamed technicians deemed insufficiently aware of the Club's Great Law obeying Heritage. He then awarded unsatisfactory conduct marks to himself and his Sturm-und-Drang correspondent by forgetting to congratulate the heroes of the Great Skye Coup.*

Ben Humble, in proposing the toast of 'Our Guests' adopted the traditional mode of insulting them to the limits of propriety, with so much pawky wit and good humour as to delight both the victims and the members.

*Vice-President Humble humbled us all with a magnificent Toast to the Guests which had ancient men falling about in the aisles as he passed from one insult to another, all delivered lightly and in exquisite taste.*

Hamish MacInnes, in reply, told a series of what we hope were apocryphal anecdotes concerning mountain rescue in Scotland, interspersed with much good sense.

*Chief Guest MacInnes rounded off with three belles-lettres (what interesting mail these public men receive). The first was the best, a solicitous English padre preparing for the ritual sacrifice of 20 English schoolboys on the fierce Glencoe crags. The second and third, somewhat affected by poerotic licence, told of corpse-hunting blue-bottles in the High Tatra and of blue climbing tools in the Caucasus.*

The evening came to a hilarious conclusion with Tom Patey singing songs on climbing personalities with no respect for the personages involved.

## New Year Meet 1966—Crianlarich

THE first two days were battles against mist and blizzard: but the Monday was one of those unforgettable days of hard frost, cloudless skies and, above all, Alpine views.

As ever, Mrs Grieve and her staff attended to our comfort and inner men with the usual lavish hospitality.

Climbs included Beinn a'Chleibh, Sgiath Chuil, Meall Glas, Beinn Chabhair, Cruach Ardtrain, Ben More, Stobinian, Ben Lui by a gully, Buachaille Etive Mòr by Lagangarbh Gully, Meall a'Bhùiridh, Ben Starav.

Present were I. M. Campbell, W. L. Coats, M. H. Cooke, A. H. Hendry, R. M. G. Inglis, J. N. Ledingham, R. W. Martin, J. H. Ogilvie, G. Peat, T. J. Ransley, G. M. Smith, E. C. Thomson and F. R. Wylie, with guests J. M. Aitken, A. L. Coats, K. Macrae, W. T. Taylor and C. Warren. Hamish Brown was camping nearby, with his guests D. and R. Blackwood, R. K. Graham, J. Matyssek and R. Rankin.

R. G. I.

The usual Inverarnan 'cave' was ennobled by the President, Professor Grieve, and R. Anderson, G. K. Armstrong, D. J. Bennett, J. Dunn, B. H. Humble, W. H. Murray, W. M. Mackenzie, I. D. McNicol, G. S. Roger, A. C. D. Small, D. Scott, J. S. Stewart, Campbell Steven, with guests including W. Grieve and J. Soep. Proom joined a party. Apart from many man-hours on the pistes of Meall a'Bhùiridh, excursions included Beinn Dubhcairg, An Caisteal, Meall nan Corranaich, Beinn Heasgarnich (on ski), Aonach Eagach, Central Couloir on Lui, and—by rail and ski—Beinn na Lap and Chno Dearg by Dunn, Scott, Anderson and Bennet. This last expedition discovered that on the descent the force of the wind exceeded that of gravity: but they got back in the end.

J. S. S.

## J.M.C.S. REPORTS

**Perth Section.**—Membership of the section stands at 29, which is rather lower than usual, but at the A.G.M. members decided to initiate a drive for new members during the coming year.

The section has been active during the last year, with car meets held every month. These have covered most of the mountainous areas within a day's journey of Perth. As well as these, there have been weekend meets to Derry Lodge, Milehouse and Glen Etive. Apart from official meets, members have been active in most parts of the Highlands and one party visited the Alps.

This year saw the retiral of Jimmy Grant from the post of Hon. Secretary, a post he has held almost continually for the past 30 years. At the A.G.M. the President paid tribute to the way he had worked to further the interests of the section.

*Office-bearers.*—*Hon. President*, Chris Rudie; *Hon. Vice-President*, John Proom; *President*, Allan Darling; *Hon. Secretary and Treasurer*, Iain A. Robertson, 'Charleston,' Bridge of Earn, Perthshire.

**Glasgow Section.**—The year ending 31st October 1965 has seen another successful year in the Club's history. Twenty-one outdoor meets were organised, ranging from the Lake District to Torridon, Arran and Skye. Nevis remained one of the main attractions, but an intended weekend on Mull was cancelled because of the high cost of transporting the vehicles. In contrast to this, it was possible to arrange for private transport to carry members to the start and from the finish of two-day cross-country journeys on two occasions. These have been very popular and thanks are due to Martin Thom for his help in organising this transport.

The evening meetings were held jointly with the S.M.C. and these continued to be as popular as ever, members being entertained by such diverse topics as a first-hand account of an interview with the King of Nepal and a visit to the tomb of Darius.

A Dinner of the whole Club was held at the Bridge of Orchy Hotel on 20th March and was followed by the A.G.M. Thirty-seven members attended and a proposal to change the name of the Club was lost by one vote.

The Section was represented at the Annual Dinner of the Glasgow University Mountaineering Club, the Lochaber, Edinburgh and Perth Sections of the J.M.C.S. and the Ladies' Scottish Climbing Club function in Edinburgh. The Annual Dinner of the Section was held on 11th December at the Loch Laggan Inn, and, with one reservation, proved to be one of the most enjoyable events of recent years.

The most notable extramural climbing expedition was the journey to the Coast Range of Alaska, in which three members took part, the main achievement being the first ascent of Mount Burkett, a peak of some 10,000 feet.

The membership stands at 148 and 26 new members have been admitted during the year. Applications to join the Club continue to arrive in some quantity, 45 being received during the year.

*Office-bearers.*—*Hon. President*, A. C. D. Small; *Hon. Vice-President*, R. J. C. Robb; *President*, J. W. Cumming; *Treasurer*, D. E. Whitham, 'The Glen,' Balerno, Midlothian; *Secretary and Hut Convener*, A. A. Thrippleton, 14 Portland Park, Hamilton.

**Lochaber Section (Lochaber Mountaineering Club).**—An influx of new blood has increased our membership to 70. Outdoor meets have been held in all the main climbing centres, including Nevis, Glencoe, Ardgour, Skye, Torridon, Arrochar and Applecross. Bus meets to the nearer areas proved popular though somewhat expensive.

Throughout the summer months mid-weekly evening meets at Polldubh Crags were popular, as were the weekly indoor meets during the winter. Less popular, though well attended by the wielding of large whips, were the

'forced marches,' or work parties, to Steall Hut. We continue to improve the amenities there.

Club members in co-operation with Police and R.A.F. teams, were also active in the mountain rescue field, and there have been many necessary additions to our stock of rescue equipment, including duvets, crash helmets and quartz-iodine searchlights.

The Annual Dinner was an outstanding success, with 110 members and guests attending, the guest speaker being Will Fraser of the Hindu Kush expedition.

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**London Section.**—Meets last year were 14 in number, but of course many members get away to the hills at more frequent intervals, and the recently acquired hut is much in use. We are still fitting it out: it may well take another two years to complete.

The A.G.M. and Dinner were again held in Derbyshire, but in 1966 we propose to have it in North Wales if possible, and after that possibly back to London again. The Club was fairly active during the year but no one has sent in any reports of vast achievements in the Alps.

Membership now stands at 120, with some applications outstanding: plus one Honorary Member.

In March of this year the President and the Treasurer of the Section were able, with others, to attend the A.G.M. and Dinner of the whole Club at Laggan Inn. This is probably the first year we have done this, at least within recent memory, and I feel that it is a custom we should continue even though it is a long way to travel for one weekend.

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

### North America

P. D. BAIRD writes; 'Since returning to Canada in 1959, I have had our short climbing seasons. In 1962 and 1964 I attended the Alpine Club of Canada's annual camps in the Rockies. At Maligne Lake in 1962 three of us did a first ascent of the north-west face of Monkhead, a grade 5 climb which eventually took 23 hours: in the French Military Group in 1964 I was with a party led by Peter Fuhrer which made the first traverse of Mount Petain. I also ascended Mount Joffre and other peaks.

'In 1963 and 1965 I organised parties to Baffin Island in Canada's Eastern Arctic where I had climbed in 1934, 1939, 1950 and 1953. This is a splendid area with smooth gneiss peaks rising to between 6000 and

7000 feet. Naturally we have made many first ascents on these two excursions. This year one of the hardest was Mount Loki which took four of us, all from Scotland or of Scottish descent, 29 hours continuous work, and from a high camp at that. But in the Arctic there is no chance of benightment—it is a question of how long your legs will last, and I trust that mine will last for a good many years yet in this chosen mountain area of mine, that I hope I can yet introduce to the more affluent members of the S.M.C.’

### Asia

J. R. BRUMFITT spent the summer swilling Moong Dal on the hot plains of India. However, he managed to escape for three days’ holiday in the cool green Kulu Valley intent on the North Ridge of the Golang Weisshorn (Haniman Tibla), a fine peak in the Punjab Himalaya. Unfortunately, he never laid a wellington boot to its graceful slopes due to the simultaneous onset of the Monsoon and the Indo-Pakistan War.

### Norway

BARCLAY FRASER writes; ‘In Norway last August my brother Douglas and I poked about in the Nordmøre and Sunnmøre districts which lie N.E. and S.W. respectively of the better known and more easily accessible Romsdal. Though less continuously precipitous than the Romsdal area they present mile after rugged mile of impressive and neglected mountains. More ambitious climbers could achieve much more than the scrambles which contented us, especially in Sunnmøre where the recently rebuilt Patchellhytte gives easy access to Smorskredtind, Brekktind and Slögen.

We did a crossing of Smorskredtind (1629 metres) from the top saeter in Habbostaddal to Oye. Guidebook information of a sort is available but we were without it. The summit proved disappointingly easy, till we reached it and realised we were on a mere outlier. We scrambled down a rocky ridge to the intervening col, where we evaded the steep direct ascent by striking left over the snowslope beneath the E. face. After one false start up the rocks we worked out a line of least resistance to the top, only to find it was a mere knob on the ridge. Thence we made the summit at last, and then down the W. face over snow and then by a mazy trial-and-error route by buttress and gully to the valley. Then a steep, very rough track brought us to sea level and near-exhaustion. The time taken—14 hours, but August days are long in Norway—was as much a measure of the age of the climbers and their ignorance of the terrain as of the length and difficulty of the expedition. But it was a grand day all the same !

GRAHAM KING, DOUGLAS BARCLAY, and some friends spent 10 days in the Lyngen Peninsula.

From a camp in Lyngsdalen, Njalavarre was climbed giving a fine view of the Jiekkevarri Group.

Thereafter followed several attempts on Jiekkevarri. The first attempt was on the East Ridge of Austre Jiekkevarri and was foiled by the difficulty of route finding and the extremely shattered condition of the rock.



The next attempt was from the Sudbreen by the South Ridge of Søre Jiekkevarri and was foiled by dense mist. A second attempt was successful, there being no difficulties. The ice-cap was very soft and the trudge to the main summit and back was heavy. Several of the party spent an afternoon on the north side of Kjosens Fjord where they climbed Tyttebaertind. This afforded a long scramble on clean, dry, rough rock.

### The Alps

FIVE Squirrel members, DAVE BATHGATE, ARTHUR EWING, FRED HARPER, ALASDAIR McKEITH and BRIAN ROBERTSON toured the Alps in July and August. Despite the somewhat mixed bag of weather, they had a good season, scoring a few direct hits and many near misses. McKeith reports;

'We visited the Rosengarten Group in the Dolomites first, accompanied by Ray Burnett (Squirrels M.C.). After warm-ups on the Vajolet Towers, the following routes fell: on the Catinaccio Central, the Vinatzer (F. H. & B. R.) on the N. Face and the Steger direttissima (D. B. & F. H.; A. McK. & R. B.) on the E. Face; on the Catinaccio North, the Olympia (F. H. & B. R.) on the E. Face; on the Punta Emma, the Klauswernerweg (D. B., A. E., F. H. & B. R.) on the N.E. Face (a first British ascent); on the Roda di Vael, the Buhlweg (D. B. & B. R.) on the S.W. Face.

'Four of the party then moved to the Civetta to attempt a new direttissima on the N.W. Face (D. B., A. E., F. H. & B. R.) but retreated at 1500 ft. in foul weather. A. McK., with two smelly Sassenachs, moved to Chamonix and climbed the Ménégaux on the Aiguille de l'M and the W. Face of the Blaitière (12 hours). The others followed shortly and had a race up the latter route (A. E. & B. R., 2 stormy days; D. B. & F. H., 9 hours). After a short, lucrative and dangerous respite, shepherding novices up the Requin, D. B. & F. H. did the Voie Contamine on the S. Face of the Midi, A.E. & A. McK. the N. Face of the Charmoz (7 hours, first British ascent), A. E. & A. McK. the N. Face of the Dru (11 hours), and D. B. & B. R., behind two Japanese, the W. Face of the Dru (2 days).

'Round to Courmayeur and B. R. along with Rusty Baillie, Chris Bonington and John Harlin, made the first ascent of the right-hand Pillar of Brouillard on Mont Blanc, then abseiled back down in a storm, while D. B. and F. H. got to 400 ft. of the top of the Ratti-Vitali on the W. Face of the Aiguille de Peuterey and then retreated, after the same storm had plastered the rocks in snow.

'More or less the end of the season, so D. B., F. H. & B. R. went to Leysin and did some problems on Harlin's Boulder.'

IAIN H. OGILVIE with Dr Charles Warren visited the Grand Paradiso area but after their first day, 30th August, when they climbed the Punta Neva and the Punta Rossa, the weather broke and remained bad for the remaining fortnight. On the way north through Switzerland they climbed the Haute Aine of the Dents du Midi on 8th September, the only other fine day.

ALEXANDER HARRISON writes; 'I met G. A. Dummett of the A.C. and went up the Türtmannntal to Gruben. From Gruben we went up to the Schwarzhorn, which is a wonderful viewpoint. We then went up to the Türtmannhut with the intention of doing the Barrhorn but the weather broke during the night. We then went to Zermatt and joined an A.C. party. We did the Strahlhorn from Fluhalp and Adler Pass. We then had the A.C. dinner in Zermatt, and attended a wine party, a service in the English church and a musical performance. Afterwards, we went up to the Ganndeg hut to do the Triftgrat route on the Breithorn. Snow conditions did not look good and I decided that at 75 I had better not risk being a burden on the party: so next morning after the rest had started I went up to the Théodule Pass, which I had not visited for 51 years, and took photographs. The party turned back below the summit, returning after 18 hours after having been reported missing. IAN CHARLESON and WILLIE SPEIRS were also in Zermatt.'

As we go to Press, D. HASTON, with some Germans, has appeared at the top of the Eiger, having come up a new North Face winter Direct, suffering over a fortnight and frostbitten fingers. Details in the papers, congratulations here.

## BOOKS

**The Mountain World, 1964-5.** English edition by Malcolm Barnes. (1966; Allen & Unwin. 215 pp., 64 photographs, 11 diagrams and 4 maps. 42s.)

The eighth volume of this massive series, beautifully produced for the price asked, includes the too-familiar Matterhorn ascent and its aftermath, expeditions to the Hindu Kush, Momhil Sar, Nanda Devi, Americans emotional on Everest, Talung Peak, Sikkim, Bhutan geology, mapmakers and mountaineers rather cross with each other in the Andes and back in Switzerland, Munro's tables and other vital statistics for the Andes and elsewhere, Terray admiring Alaska's Mt. Huntingdon in spite of its size, Baffin Island and some of its habitués, and far too little on the fascinating mountains of Antarctica. The photographs are, as usual, superb and the maps include a fine, if self-conscious, 1:25,000 sample of Swiss cartography in the Cordillera Villacabamba. This volume feels less satisfying and more diffuse than its predecessors: and the inclusion of several 'shorties' predisposes it to a slide into the scrapbook category. But the highly-serious Swiss Foundation for Alpine Research will stand firm: though it might need to change its grip.

G. J. D.

**Between Heaven and Earth.** By Gaston Rebuffat and Pierre Tairraz. Translated by Eleanor Brockett. (1965; Nicholas Vane, London. 186 pp., 110 photographs. 63s.)

This is good—get it quick before it's sold out. If you've ever been to

Chamonix or Zermatt, you'll really appreciate it: if you haven't you'll still appreciate it. Don't read it, just look at it.

Gaston Rebuffat (or Ghostly Rubberface, as he was perhaps aptly dubbed by the late Mr Smith) and 'his mountains' pose while Pierre Tairraz clicks away furiously. I am quite certain that no-one will disagree with me when I say that a number of these photographs are unsurpassed in the realm of Alpine photography. It does, however, seem a pity that growling Gaston cannot smile at 'his mountains.' As for the filling in between the photographs—well, it's definitely in the shade. Romantic Rebuffat occasionally bubbles with arrogance. Comments such as, 'Without them [his companions], this magnificent rock face would have become for me a thing of secondary importance,' when he is describing an ascent of the Bonatti Pillar on the Dru, can only mean one of two things; 1. He is the world's greatest mountaineer, which he isn't. 2. He thinks he is!

Still, in spite of all that, it's a great book, well worth stealing from the Club Library if only for the photographs. A. McK.

**Mountains of Britain.** By Edward C. Pyatt. (1966; Batsford. 216 pp., 30 photographs, 11 outline maps. 25s.)

This is an excellent book for the price. The hills of England, Wales, Scotland and—despite the insular title—Ireland are described clearly, simply and in refreshing width: The descriptions are inter- (or over-) woven with excerpts from books and journals, whiffs of well-fed Tourists and hungry Tigers. Readers of this *Journal* will recognise familiars from a skiing Naismith to a swinging Campbell. But there are less-known quotations and it is disappointing that references disappear under an unsatisfactory umbrella acknowledgement. Again, only the dullest writing of contemporary climbers is quoted; with all that wealth of quirk and personality they appear, faceless and desperate, in spurts of piton-snatching: even Patey and Smith are levelled out. But this is to cavil—the book is fortunately chiefly on mountains, and they are here from the West Penwith Moors to Sneugen, mountains anyway to their own valleys: it is astonishing how many are, unhurriedly, mentioned—collector's pieces like The Wrekin, Eglwysg Mountain and Uist's Beinn a'Bhaile. There is also much good sense on the continuing destruction of the British habitat, and on Scotland, where the Development rake-off is just about to begin, the author quotes Murray's wise warning. Yet, he is often just the urban English tourist robbed of his Views. If he had written more on the cultures existing among his hills, and less on those visiting it, we might have had an even better-balanced book. And less complacency about the other robberies hidden now by Birmingham's bathwater and the Highland prospectuses.

G. J. D.

**Mountaineering.** By Alan Blackshaw. (1966; Penguin Books. 542 pp., 172 photographs and line illustrations, 4 maps. 18s. 6d.)

At last we have a good up-to-date textbook on technique from A to Z,

from hill-walking in Britain to hard Alpine mountaineering. One began to wonder, in recent years, whether such a text would ever appear. This is it; excellent alike for timid tenderfoots and fire-eating destroyers of crags and reputations.

Alan Blackshaw has done a splendid job. Setting himself the task of bringing up to date J. E. Q. Barford's excellent *Climbing in Britain*, he has done that and much more besides. The complex nature of the book, with continual cross-reference to diagrams and far-flung bits of text, bears testimony to many hours of sweat. No effort has been spared to make this far and away the best thing of its kind.

The book is divided roughly into three parts: a section on Hill-Walking in Britain, on Climbing in Britain, on Alpine Mountaineering. Each point of technique, from tying your bootlaces upwards, is clearly illustrated. Members will be delighted by the many photographs of Tom Patey's ample rump, achieving a surprising grace as he demonstrates ice technique. He compares very favourably with Blackshaw's other model, who appears to be demonstrating elementary knot-tying with his feet while he climbs.

A few carping points. The illustration of braking technique with an ice-axe on p. 78 illustrates nothing I have ever applied or seen applied, in Scotland at any rate. Both hands clasp the axe-head and the pick is driven in at the right shoulder. Surely it is more usual and more safe to drive the pick in centrally, about 6 in. beneath the chin, with one hand on the axe-head and the other clutching the shaft.

The section on glissading pained me a bit. I personally feel that the best description of glissading technique would be, 'Never glissade under any circumstances'!

In the *Which-type* chapter on ropes, Blackshaw rates the traditional British nylon rope as superior to the kernmantel perlon rope on a few counts. I would disagree with this, and I am sure that many others would, too, perlon being so much easier to use, so much more durable and somewhat stronger weight for weight. The *pros* and *cons* of its lesser extensibility are still a little unclear but I think that the *pros* have it. It is a pity that the book was written a little too early to give proper coverage to the American range of pegs and to the new German ice-screws (see *Equipment Notes*, this issue). One last point: no reference is made to the value of using protective headgear in this country as well as abroad. So many deaths result from head injuries and so much discomfort is caused by lack of such headgear in narrow winter gullies that there seems to me to be a clear-cut case for its adoption here. Many of our best climbers use them now.

These comparatively trivial points aside, I can find no fault with *Mountaineering*. It is a source book *par excellence*, a personal triumph for Alan Blackshaw and a potential life-saver to many impetuous climbers, young and old, green and decadent.

R. C.

**Journals of Kindred Clubs.** The reviewer apologises in advance for any omissions or discourtesies below. Overwork has made him jaded and

splenetic. In any case he feels that our Club Motto should be (do we have one?) "*Jamais la politesse.*" [But, like General de Gaulle, we resent foreign intrusions—see this Hon. Joint Editor's preface to *New Climbs*—OTHER JT. HON. ED.]

*Pinnacle Club Journal*, 1963-64: This neat little journal is full of ladies, of course. Ladies exploring Turkey; ladies on the Réquin stricken by lightning and buffeted by storms; ladies on the North-East Face of the Badile; a lady climbing all our 4000 ft. lumps in 14-odd hours, Càrn Toul to Aonach Mòr; a lady on Clogwyn du'r Arddu; ladies marrying and giving birth and two very formidable ladies naked in some Mediterranean Eden. Excellent fare; Mummery's famous prophecy has been fulfilled in triplicate. *Irish Mountaineering*, 1965: A disappointing issue. They have adopted a new economy format: cheap paper, unbound, and the text all fouled up with adverts. That apart, the journal is far below the standard of previous issues. One article pertains to Scotland recounting, amongst other triumphs, an ascent of Agog's Grove (*sic*) on Rannoch Wall. Even the new routes, with a few exceptions, do not have the pioneering flavour of earlier efforts; 36 ft. V.S. problems in the Mournes are, it seems, the order of the day. *Journal of the Mountain Club of South Africa*, 1964: This is as smooth and professional as ever. As is to be expected, in view of South Africa's insularity and relatively unexplored state, most of the articles are about internal affairs. There is one debunking effort aimed at international climbing by M. Versfeld: it misfires horribly and its tastelessness is not even relieved by good humour; school magazine stuff. However, they have a tough and fair reviewer in R. M. H., whose review of *Red Peak* should set a few notable ears burning. *Rucksack Club Journal*, 1965: This journal contains a provocative piece presenting the case for a revision of the current grading system and offering an interesting alternative. The author is R. G. Wilson and the ideas are his and P. Crew's. The alternative system has two scales, one adjectival, one numerical: similar to the Vallot system, in fact. Its main interest lies in the fact that it has been applied to Cloggy, The Pass and to the V.S. category on the Lakes and seems to have been well received. I am not sure how such a change, if desirable, might be wrought in our own midden. Perhaps it should be a matter for individual guidebooks editors, perhaps for Club policy. *Alpine Journal*, 1965 (2): Best in an unusually dull issue are the information-stuffed notes and expedition reports. Few of the articles come up to the *A.J.*'s usual scratch. There is a flurry of Matterhorn stories in a nostalgic vein. In a way, it is gratifying to know that the Italians got their own back on the *A.C.* with Bonatti's brilliant solo effort on the North Face last February, while the best our heroes could do was whimper their way up the Hörnligrat before 200 million eyes. To belabour an old pun, it appears that the Alpine Club's long association with the Matterhorn has become purely fiscal. However, a spark of romance is provided by H. K. Hockenhuill who tells of scaling the peak early on the centenary day, all unaware of the electronic storm brewing on the lower slopes, and descending, innocently bewildered, through the

tangle of fixed cables and irate B.B.C. technicians. 'The mountain is closed!' said one. *Jahrbuch des Deutschen Alpenvereins*, 1965. *Rwista Mensile*, 1965. *Journal of the Club Alpin Belge*, 1965. I think that a word or two of appreciation should be given to the clubs that send us these journals and to the other European clubs which do so also. Unfortunately the present reviewer is not sufficient of a linguist to give them the coverage that they deserve. They provide the best source of information on matters Alpine that we have and many of our members make use of them. The German journal, in particular, is an expensive and beautifully produced affair and the Italian one is always bang up to date and full of useful photographs and route-descriptions. *New Zealand A.C. Journal*, 1965, details the inevitable crisis arising when a commercial interest was put in charge of access development in a National Park: fortunately the climbing public won the day. There are other examples of Park restrictions, necessary and unnecessary, and a threatened Prosecution for Foolhardiness in the Mountains; a very relevant issue, to be read by all guerilla forces.

Because of unavoidable factors we regret that other books and journals, even some received before 1st January 1966, must await mention in the next issue.

R. C., G. J. D.

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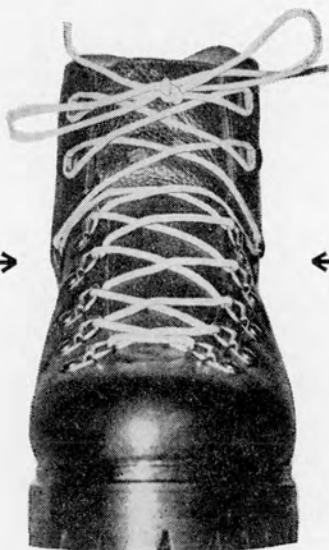
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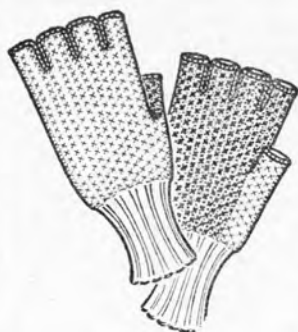
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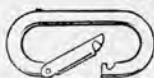
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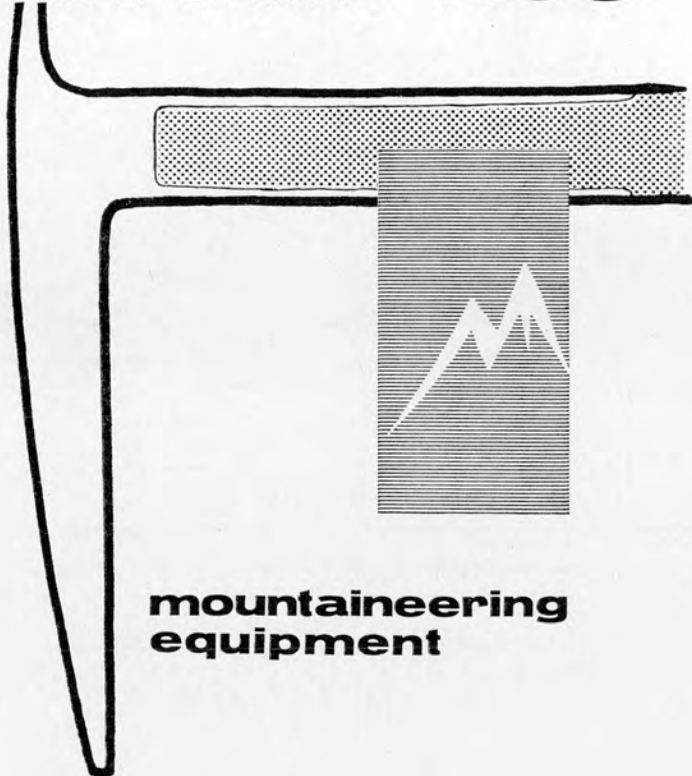
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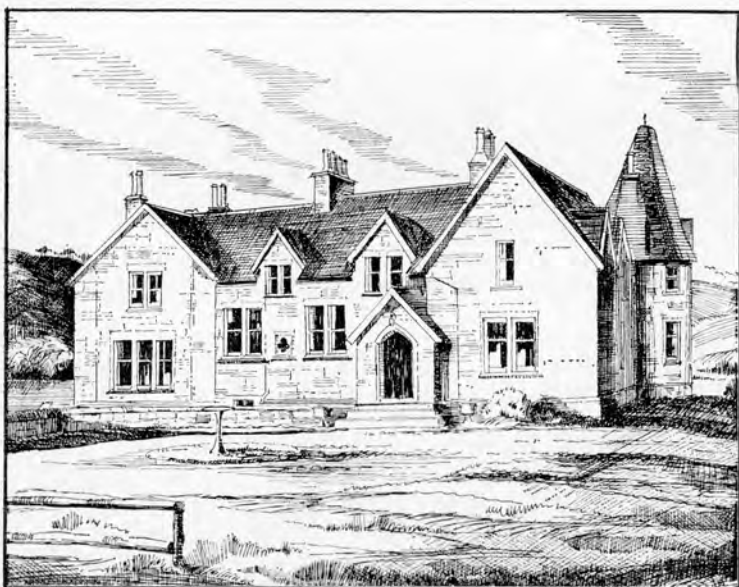
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