

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

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T. Weir

Spring in Wester Ross. Beinn Lair, Slioch and the Torridon Hills from A' Mhaighdean

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THE OLD MAN OF STOER

By Tom Patey

There have been three Old Men in the news recently. The first Old Man is of Hoy, in the Orkneys; he is 450 ft., Very Severe, and fell to Baillie, Patey and Bonington last year; and is described under *New Climbs* this issue and in the popular press. The second Old Man is of Storr, in Skye; according to Patey he is '160 feet high, repulsively loose and Extremely Severe,' though the report (*S.M.C.J.* xxvi (1956) 54) makes him 220 ft., Very Severe; anyway, he has remained aloof since Whillans' visit. The third Old Man is of Stoer, off the Stoer peninsula north of Lochinver; he is described on p.116 of the *S.M.C. Northern Highlands Guide* as 'evidently quite unclimbable.' He is not. He is over 200 ft. high, impeccably sound, Hard Severe, and his first ascent is described below.

'CAN we borrow your ladders again, George?'

My friend, the hotel proprietor, agreed without batting an eyelid. Years in the catering trade had taught him the customer is always right however irrational the request.

'I hope they bring you better luck this time, lads,' he remarked affably. 'Useful piece of equipment, a ladder. I've often wondered why they never used them on Mount Everest.'

'It would have been too much of a novelty,' I suggested, glossing over the horizontal ladder in the Ice-fall, de Saussure on Mt. Blanc and, of course, étriers. Ladders stick up, étriers hang down; the principle's the same.

However, we lashed the ladders to the car without prolonging the discussion. George was not alone in misinterpreting the role of the ladder in the plan of attack. Our sporadic visits had become a source of speculation to the crofters of the Stoer peninsula. It is not every day that peat-cutting is agreeably interrupted by the passage of four wild-eyed men carrying ladders over the moors towards Stoer Point. They formed their own conclusions.

'Climbers, that's what they are. With Climbing Tackle. And them thinking to climb the Old Man of Stoer with a wee bit of a ladder that won't reach a quarter of the way up the side of it. They will be asking for a two-hundred-foot ladder next. And they will not be finding it here ; no, nor in Lochinver either.'

The peat-diggers were not in the least surprised when the first two attempts failed and we returned like Sir John Cope, bearing the news of our own defeat ; sagging under the yoke of two ladders, twin symbols of our incompetence. Tales of intractable tides and gale force winds carried no conviction ; they had not even crossed the hill to watch. Once a West Highlander forms an opinion, he stays beside it.

Today there was only a solitary digger at the peats. 'Back again,' I shouted enthusiastically. 'Third time lucky.' He nodded wisely and continued his digging.

Brian Robertson muttered into his embryo beard. 'There's one thing I've been noticing about you,' he grumbled. 'Everything we do, it turns out to be an epic. Even the simplest things. Take yesterday, for instance . . .'

We had gone for an hour's run in the car, and had not returned until long after dark. This was because we had encountered a gate which was usually unlatched but which on this occasion was firmly padlocked. To save time and energy I had tried to nudge it open ; and shattered the car's headlights . . .

'That was sheer misfortune,' I claimed, 'Today we've left nothing to chance.'

'You can say that again,' interposed Paul Nunn, half throttled by the rungs of his ladder. 'How often do you do this sort of thing ? I've been on some daft games in my time, but this is the daftest. We carried less gear in the Dolomites.'

Paul Nunn and Brian 'Killer' Henderson from Buxton and Tyneside respectively, were two leading English tigers whom Robertson had ensnared on the Etive slabs and persuaded to come with us. 'Wait till you meet Killer,' he had promised me. 'The man's a born craftsman. He makes all his pitons out of scrap metal.'

Killer lived up to his reputation. 'How about this, then ?' he said, producing from voluminous pockets yet another sample of his genius. 'I reckon this little job'll come in handy today. You've probably never seen one before, have you ?'

I had to confess I had not. I could not even guess its function.

'Nice little job,' he repeated, returning it to his pocket. 'A nice clean finish, too.'

'How much ?' I asked.

'Some things are beyond price,' said Killer.

The Stoer peninsula is a huge golf course ; short cropped grass, not a tree for miles. From the little hill above the Old Man you can see all the North-west peaks spread out like inverted flowerpots.

Amid this pastoral setting the Old Man of Stoer rears up with startling suddenness.

'My God !' said Killer (or words to that effect).

His reactions were understandable. Well-thumbed Northumbrian breastworks pale before a 200-foot virgin pinnacle.

'It's like a kind of a symbol,' he mused. 'What a size . . . ' He enlarged on the idea at some length, with apt recourse to Greek mythology.

'How do we cross the water below it ?' interrupted Nunn, who had been regarding the problem from a less aesthetic standpoint.

'That's the purpose of the ladders,' I explained. 'Lash them together and you've got a thirty-foot span.'

Manhandling the ladders down the mainland cliff was quite difficult. To save time we scrambled down a 200-foot fixed rope with the ladders balanced awkwardly round our necks. The penalty of a slip was instant decapitation.

It was going to be a race with the tide. Despite consulting the West Coast Pilot and other official sources, it seemed I had made yet another miscalculation. In less than an hour the reef on the far side of the channel would be submerged, leaving us without a landing place for the ladder.

I was secretly worried about the ladders. I had a shrewd suspicion that as soon as the first man reached the rope lashing which secured the junction, the two ends would fold up like a clasp knife, bearing the unfortunate pioneer straight down to the sea-bed.

Then I had a better idea. 'Do you see that rock in the middle ? If I can reach that with a single ladder, I can pull the other after me and use it to cross the next gap.'

Once committed, I wasted few minutes. By the time I had clambered on to the reef both launching pads were awash. The 15-foot wall on the edge of the reef presented a tricky problem for bare feet until I remembered I happened to have a 15-foot ladder with me. Elementary, indeed.

Earlier on, there had been talk of swimming across. Warm sun and placid sea beckoned, but the three landlocked climbers resisted the temptation. A fine specimen of the Atlantic, or Grey, Seal had moved in for a closer inspection. This mammal is harmless, but of playful disposition ; his attentions can be quite embarrassing.

We seemed to have reached an *impasse*. Robertson was in an unco-operative mood. He was not prepared to get wet. He was not even prepared to get his rope wet. Killer was reluctant to surrender

one of his artistic specialities to anchor the Tyrolean rope, for he had guessed (correctly) that it would be left behind. I was obviously in a hopeless position to bargain; so my rope and pitons were used.

It was therefore consoling to watch Robertson getting wet. He took every conceivable precaution, but forgot to allow for the weight of ironmongery and the elasticity of nylon rope. By the time he had slid down to the halfway mark his rucksack was submerged and the water lapped about his ears. 'Pull, man!' he gasped. I responded energetically and landed him in a flurry of spray.

'The tide seems to be coming in much faster,' said Nunn doubtfully. 'I think we'll stick around here for a while. You can chuck us a traversing rope once you're up the first pitch.'

'What happens if we don't get up the first pitch?'

'That possibility has crossed my mind,' he admitted. 'At a guess, I suspect you'd have difficulty keeping afloat. But you can't grumble: few men are given such a powerful incentive to succeed.'

This situation was tailor-made for Robertson's ideology. He recalled a passage from a favourite author—*To go on was impossible, to retreat unthinkable . . .* 'This is why we must go on!' he cried with Teutonic frenzy.

The first pitch resembled one of those gritstone problems where many fall and few prevail. The waves were breaking at Robertson's feet and the seal began to bob up and down in excited anticipation of two new playmates. In these situations I usually climb well.

The landward face of the Old Man is plumb vertical for the first 100 feet. I use this overworked term deliberately. Any sharp intake of breath would displace the climber from his holds, and there is no promise of a respite for a very long way.

I had only gained twelve feet when I found myself edging leftwards by two horizontal cracks ideally spread for the hands and feet, but separated by slightly bulging sandstone. A soft-shoe-shuffle took me to the corner of the face and out of sight of the audience; I stepped into warm sunlight and a hanging gallery of jug-handles. Barely a minute later I reappeared, on the first ledge 60 feet up. Robertson, with his usual bravura, tried to bludgeon a way straight up the wall, only succumbing after a struggle to the persistent lateral tension of the top-rope. This enforced detour tore him from his principles, as he now reminded me.

'Let a seagull defaecate from the topmost pinnacle, and that is the route I must follow,' he announced, echoing the sentiments of his hero Comici, first Apostle of the Direttissima Doctrine.

Fortunes had been reversed, and now Nunn and Henderson were faced with the unpleasant prospect of ascending a 120-foot Tyrolean rope to join the assault. Even with our height advantage

we found it difficult to throw the rope across to them ; so we tied on a hammer as a range finder. The first cast with the hammer shaved Nunn's head but he grabbed it on the recoil with a spectacular leap nearly ending in the fiord. The two experts Robertson and Killer then took charge of their respective ends in order to tension the Tyrolean rope by means of Jumars. This soon became a most complex operation, as each man was so committed to his own theories he had no time to check on the activities at the other end.

But eventually all was ready for the aerial crossing of the shore party. Robertson and I turned our attention to the next pitch. So compelling was the technical interest of the whole climb that the only implication I drew from the catastrophic possibility of the Tyrolean rope snapping was the personal inconvenience of being stranded indefinitely on the Old Man of Stoer. Two phantom lighthouse keepers waiting for the relief that never came . . .

This second pitch was undoubtedly the crux—perhaps Severe, although it looked much harder. Large safe handholds led up to the overhang and Robertson could have been up it in a fraction of the time if he had not chosen to insert a security piton at the most awkward point.

I found him sharing a cave with a young bird. 'A Fulmar Petrel,' I announced. 'Now, there's something peculiar about Fulmar Petrels ; I remember reading about it in a Bird Book.'

'Anyway, this one seems to be choking' remarked Robertson.

The bird's neck had swollen hugely ; its eyes glared. It looked as if it had something urgent to communicate.

It had. Its beak shot forward, opened, and drenched us in foul-smelling slime. I recalled the fulmar's peculiarity.

Robertson's cave was overshadowed by a considerable overhang which he had already inspected before deciding to belay. I lack conviction on considerable overhangs, so I decided to try my luck once more on the landward face, improbable as this had looked from the shore. The main bulge lay below me now and the angle had reverted to the perpendicular. Vast jug-holds took me diagonally rightwards to a small eyrie. From this, a well-concealed chimney offered a one-way ticket to the summit. There was a good stance and plenty of cracks, but when I had selected the appropriate blade from the pack I realised I'd left my piton hammer down at the last belay.

Not caring to call attention to this rather elementary mistake, I pushed on, vaguely aware that I had accumulated a peel-potential of some 120 feet. That figure did not worry me unduly, as I have a healthy disrespect for the rope, which I regard as a link with tradition and a reasonable assurance against the leader falling alone ; the stronger the rope, the better his chances of company.

The chimney was V-shaped, bottomless and harder than I had thought. It was also the communal cuspidor of a thriving community of fulmars on the ledge above. I went into it back and foot, hood pulled down, P.A.'s skidding on avian regurgitations, breathless to the top. My exit was the signal for every fulmar in sight to release the final salvoes. Then up a short layback crack and almost as the rope went taut I wriggled over the top on to the summit bed of sea pinks.

It took Robertson some time to realise he had reached the top. He reckoned he was entitled to the fourth pitch and was quite put out to find he'd run out of rock. For an hour we lay in the sun waiting for the others. We passed the time bombing the seals with divots. Seeing a small movement on the distant Tyrolean rope I slung a divot at it and was surprised when it yelled back.

'What's happening?' we demanded.

Distant unintelligible noises. Finally Killer arrived at the end of the traverse rope and disentangled himself on the shore. His voice was suddenly audible. 'What the blazes held you up? We got fed up waiting and we're going back.'

'We've been shouting for you for the past hour.'

'Come off it! We heard you shouting at each other.'

'Nonsense,' I said. 'Come on up. It's a great climb. Three times bigger and better than Napes Needle.'

'Stuff Napes Needle!'

'How about a few pictures, then—for posterity?'

'Sorry, mate—film's used up.'

'Englanders!' Brian muttered. 'You can't depend on them for anything.'

We baled out on a 150-foot abseil which hung straight down to the first belay platform. Robertson came down last, and it was some consolation to the watchers on the shore when the rope jammed and he had to climb back 150 feet on Hiebeler clamps to free it. Before leaving he handed me a rope end.

'Tie this to a piton,' he said briefly.

'Which piton?'

'Any piton.'

I did as I was told, then set about clearing up the stance. About to extract the last piton, I noticed that the rope attached to it gave a twitch each time I tapped the peg.

'Don't you think you ought to leave that piton where it is?' Nunn shouted across.

'Why?'



John Cleare of Sargent/Gamma Ltd.

Old Man of Stoer. Route, with belays at triangles

Going . . . The view N.E.
from A' Mhaighdean one
Late-Glacial summer.
Below is—truly enough—
Fuar Loch; in mid-dist-
ance, Beinn Dearg Mhòr.
Behind the decaying ice-
lobe in foreground is the
Sheallag Glacier, rising
beyond to the ice-cap still
existing above Beinn
Dearg and Ben Wyvis.
Note what appears to be
a hunter(?) on the left.
Reproduction is poor, be-
cause the photograph is
obviously very old

S.M.C. Archives



For the factors deciding glacier size and movement are the weather and topography. Snow fell then as rain does now and in the west, especially round Loch Arkaig (the 'wettest place in Scotland') it mounted to a great ice-cap, which naturally grew leeward. The major ice-centres in the west lay N.-S., and further east lay N.E.-S.W., following the two high spines. From these centres the ice-sheets and glaciers flowed, pushing and grinding amongst each other, the stronger breaking aside the weaker. Those to the west were short and steep, soon meeting the sea, but to the east they were long and growing, taking in contributions from a few minor centres such as Ben Hope, Ben Klibreck, Ben Wyvis, Creag Meaghaidh, Ben Alder and Beinn a' Ghlo. So were formed the great eastern glaciers, like the Dee Glacier, fed by the ring of icefields west of, and converging on, Braemar; the Spey Glacier, fed mainly from the 'Grampian' axis; Ness Glacier fed from the western axis; and the vast Tay-Tummel Glacier, the main drainage for a huge area as far back as the Rannoch Muir Icefield and its cirque of disgorging glaciers—so that ice from the Strawberry Gully could find itself out over Strathmore and into the sea off Stonehaven.

Given this western precipitation, the topography of Scotland dictates that the east shall be drier. Consequently less snow fell in the east and the hills there were less dissected by the ice (they still preserve more of the smooth preglacial landscape than do the western hills); the snowline rose from W. to E. across the country. Now the retreat was occasioned by warmer summers. The snowline therefore rose everywhere, and the long eastern glaciers found themselves out on a limb: in a drier climate anyway and much of their length now below snowline. So they retreated westward rapidly or died in their tracks. In the west, communications were not so stretched and the valley glaciers persisted longer, fed from above. To illustrate this contrast, Charlesworth claims that at one stage of a retreat the snowline was at some 1000 ft. on N. and E. faces in the western mainland, and 1200 ft. in Mull. So there were still corrie glaciers on hills as low as Eaval (1138 ft.) of N. Uist and Sgùrr Bhuidhe (1433 ft.) of Wester Ross. But in the east the snowline was as high as 1750-2000 ft., and hills under 2000 ft. had lost all their corrie glaciers; Mount Blair (2441 ft.) and Cat Law (2196 ft.) in Angus hung on to the remnants of theirs.

Because of this deficiency of snow in the east, each glacier of the S.E. Highlands had over-ridden its worse-nourished easterly neighbour as it advanced—the Ardlie Glacier invading the Shee Glacier, the Shee the Isla. Consequently in retreat the pattern was reversed, and the great Strathmore Ice Sheet moved back south-westwards, the Highland ice retreated westwards and north-westwards, and the little glen glaciers, suddenly exposed, ran rapidly back to hide in the upper corries. Great lakes were ponded by the melting ice, and the water poured off by innumerable

channels to the south-east, seaming the clay-plastered slopes of the newly-emerged Perth and Angus foothills. Above the foothills lay isolated and immobile snowfields—particularly extensive around Mount Keen. In the west this pattern was not followed; the short steep glaciers retreated from sea to corrie according to the accidents of local topography, and there were no stagnant snowfields. But everywhere the melting glaciers were very dirty, and the turbulent stews of boulders and mud can best be imagined by those who, like the writer, have come amongst them later with a spade.

TAORLUATH

This, then, was the pattern of the last readvances and retreats. We can now look at some details. Firstly, the sequence of readvances; and here we outline the present opinion (for more details see the summary by Sissons in *The Geology of Scotland*, Oliver & Boyd, 1965) which modifies Charlesworth's correlations somewhat.

The maximum of the last glaciation had taken the ice to over 3600 ft. near Glencoe, but not over the top of Ben Nevis. It reached some 3500 ft. in the N. Highlands, 1600 ft. on the Hebrides and passed out over North Rona. In the east, as we saw, it was lower and, although touching 3000 ft. on Schiehallion and burying Ben Vrackie, it lapped the northern Cairngorms at only 2850 ft. or so. The Cairngorms, Lochnagar, Ben Wyvis and Mount Keen were nunataks, radiating their own glacier systems, though these were all pushed east by the powerful western ice. All of southern Scotland was covered, the Cheviot alone emerging; at the Highland border the ice was 3000 ft. thick.

This ice then retreated an unknown distance, to advance again in the 'Aberdeen-Lammermuir Readvance' (much as Charlesworth's 'Highland Glaciation' except that it did not reach the sea in N.E. Caithness). The Moray Firth was occupied by ice from the Great Glen and the west. Again central Scotland was covered, but the Southern Uplands had heads above and glaciers of their own.

Once more there was extensive melting, with much dead ice in Strathmore and Strath Earn, followed by the 'Perth Readvance' (roughly like Charlesworth's 'Moraine Glaciation' in the Highlands; but his '100 ft.-beach datum line' is over-simplified and so the southern Scottish ice was probably more extensive at this time than he depicts). The Tay ice only reached the neighbourhood of Perth, and the Shee, Isla, Prosen and similar glaciers halted near the ends of their glens, and the Dee at Dinnet; in the West the ice went down to the sea.

In its turn this ice fell back, to be followed by the last important surge, whose wrack lies fresh around us, the 'Lomond Readvance'

To while away the time while we are waiting in this current interglacial, or interstadial, period there is nothing better than to study Charlesworth's *Late-Glacial History of the Highlands and Islands of Scotland*, which is among the recent deposits in the Club Library. It is one of the most fascinating books there. Open it at random: '... Sligachan Glacier, by far the most powerful of the glaciers of Skye, sent out three arms respectively to W., N. and E.: they were the Drynoch, Varragill and Sligachan Tongues. The latter stretched towards the mouth of Loch Sligachan and parted from the Torramhichaig Glacier and from the corrie glaciers N. of Glamaig as the Drynoch and Varragill also shrank. The Sligachan Glacier, after withdrawing its three tongues, retired into big corries N. and E. of the Cuillins....' (This glacier's triple gesture of defiance was not unusual; most of them, in retreat, flourished arms or tongues all the way up their glens before finally retiring to hurl ever-diminishing abuse from the terminal corries).

The book is not light reading; the author tries to correlate evidence so that he can conjure up the Highlands in their successive stages of emergence from the ice. Nor is it too heavy; much more correlation appears than evidence. But the conjuring is inspired: the long-dead glaciers of Scotland move again and the shapes of their successors stir uneasily.

SIUBHAL

The maximum advance of Scottish ice reached Southern England but in Charlesworth's book we deal only with the later glaciations of the Highlands themselves. The lines of retreat are marked by moraines, channels and similar landscaping, but of course each readvance, as far as it went, disrupted evidence of the preceding retreat. Clues are further scrambled by alterations in sea-levels brought about by two opposing effects, the uneven rebound of the land freed of its weight of ice, and the increase in sea-volume from the melting ice itself. Small wonder that considerable 'modifications' of Charlesworth's approximate correlations are continually being published. Not that his story is any the less fascinating to the lay reader, nor his remarkable maps of glacial Scotland any the less helpful a guide to the sanguine mountaineer planning a post-interstadial expedition. His apology for these reconstructions still holds good: 'they crystallise our ideas about late-glacial happenings as nothing else will.' And the diligent reader, stumbling through snowbeds, splashing over ice, wading the milky rivers, peering across great lochs to the current releases, gradually finds himself there, in the new land. A hot sun dries the newborn eastern rocks, the clay steams; he can collapse there gratefully and watch the white mounds pile back into the misty west, stormfilled as Spitzbergen is today.

'I think it would be a kind gesture,' he said. 'It's holding one end of the double rope and your friend is climbing up the other.'

'Oh.' Reason dawned slowly.

'Don't worry about it,' he consoled. 'Everybody makes mistakes. Some make bigger mistakes than others.'

'Very true' I admitted.

And so the return was uneventful.

NOTE. Nunn and Henderson reached the last belay stance. Several months later the author took part in a second ascent by this route with a party of fellow-veterans from the North East—K. A. Grassick, W. D. Brooker, the Rev. S. Wilkinson and J. M. Taylor. Grassick and Taylor swam, the rest linked ladders. They estimated the standard at Very Severe. It was the first ascent led by a clerical gentleman. All agreed that the sandstone is the finest of its kind in Scotland—quite distinct from the neighbouring vegetatious cliffs.

LAMENT FOR THE HIGHLAND GLACIERS

(Cumha nan Eighstrom Albannach)

URLAR

WE all know that long ago, long before Naismith wrote to the *Glasgow Herald*, there was far better winter mountaineering in Scotland. That at the close of the Tertiary a combination of factors led to the Ice Age, or rather a succession of Ice Ages, in which the ice drove down from the north, white snouts rooting out jungles and beasts. And that at the end of each Ice Age the glaciers slunk off and Scotland welcomed back the first cautious seeds, and then the tundra and steppes and thousands of years of forests again and maybe jungles, until down came the ice and snow once more. And that as well as these hot interglacials there were very many cold interstadials, times when the ice merely went back a little up the glens before coming down again to chase out the odd exploratory mammoth or proto-Raeburn.

But for most of us this is vague and remote. The Geological Survey moraine where we drum up in the heather is quite unlike the bitter 2 a.m. Alpine reality with its high-piled tonnage, crampon-catching and clangorous. Our glaciers have gone. The last sulking remnants of the mighty Laggan-Spey glacier died out somewhere above the C.I.C. Hut on a warm September afternoon 9000 years ago. The halfhardy-perennial drifts flowering occasionally since then are no substitute. Our corries are silent and empty; their meltwaters dried and vanished.

(which generally corresponds to about Stage P of Charlesworth, three 'stages' back from his Moraine glaciation). A piedmont glacier advanced from Loch Lomond to the Drymen area. The Trossachs and the upper Tay were occupied by ice. Expectedly, the Cairngorm glaciers never ventured below 1500 ft. but in the west confluent glaciers occupied Lochaber, damming up the lakes by Glen Spean to form the Parallel Roads. In the western sea lochs ice reached the water but further north it remained in the high corries, licking the sea only in deep inlets such as Lochs Carron, Torridon, Kishorn and Erribol.

Thereafter the ice vanished completely. There may have been outbursts in some places on the way back, but at least one corrie, at 2350 ft. on the N.E. of Ben Lawers, has carried no more ice since that Lomond Readvance some 10,000 years ago.

CRUNLUATH

Now, bearing in mind the sequences, we can watch Charlesworth paint the retreat as, despite its petty readvances, the ice peels back and the Highlands emerge.

The earliest nunataks were in the east—Scaraben and Morven in Caithness, Bennachie, Morven and Ben Rinnes in Aberdeen, and 'the peaks with ragged skylines (which projected at maximum glaciation) at the east end of the Cairngorms, e.g. Glàc Bhan, and the ridge running S. to Gorm Craig, Dà Dhrum Lom, Creag Mhòr and Bynack Mòr.' And, as we saw, others farther back within the ice, even possibly Ben Lawers, were nunataks. The sheets melted, the piedmont glacier off Aberdeen lost its last calf, the Strathmore ice slunk back, leaving dead offspring in the Kincardine plains, the valley glaciers backed away, the Broom, Torridon and Applecross piedmonts broke up, Loch Hourn echoed with collapsing seracs and launching bergs In the running dissolution, the subsidiary centres gathered their own dwindling ice close about them—Ben Hope, Ben Loyal, Ben Wyvis, the Cairngorms, Ben Nevis, Ben More and Stobinian.

The Highland glaciers at a stage near the end, as Charlesworth pictures them (bear in mind his northern descriptions are probably too icy for the time and his island correlations are very approximate): The Avon Glacier had dissolved into head glaciers, the Dee Glacier into small valley glaciers S. of the Cairngorms; Lochnagar had lingering corrie glaciers and so had Mount Keen but its snowfield had gone; likewise, Beinn a' Ghlo still kept its glaciers but the great Atholl-Feshie snowfield had vanished; glaciers still hung about the heads of Glens Isla, Shee and Brerachan. In the S.W. the ice had divided N. of Loch Tulla, leaving a large lake; ice still poured from Beinn Chalum, some still from Ben More, and corrie

glaciers clustered round Ben Alder, Beinn Bhuidhe, Ben Vorlich, Ben Ime, Ben Vane and Ben Lomond. Ice persisted in upper Glen Kinglass and the ice front curved across Rannoch Muir to the head of Loch Treig. The valley glaciers of the Ben Nevis massif shrank back into their glens from the main western ice—the Arkaig Glacier had halted at Brackletter and the Eil Glacier well back along Loch Eil; the Lochaber Lakes filled the glens by Glen Roy, their waves busy at the Parallel Roads.

In the far north the Hope and Shin Glaciers had contracted into tributaries, the Glen More and Glen Coul Glaciers to the heads of their lochs. Little valley glaciers still nested in peaks over 2400 ft.—Quinag, Ben Loyal, Ben Klibreck. The Great Glen ice had split up—the Oich Glacier became the Garry and Lochy Glaciers; Cannich, Affric and Moriston Glaciers backed up their glens.

In Harris, glaciers may have remained on Mealival and other medium-sized hills; in Skye they survived S. of the Trotternish group and in the Cuillin. Rhum had lost ice from the west but not yet from the corries of Askival. Mull had a few, Arran several, glaciers at this time.

CRUNLUATH A' MACH

And now for the end. The last glaciers in Scotland probably persisted in the northern corries of the Cairngorms and Ben Nevis, the places where now their summer ghosts still linger. Just before them had gone the last fingerings on the great western hills, Sgùrr na Lapaich, Sgùrr nan Ceathreamhnan and Mam Soul, and from the southern group of Binnein Mòr, Bidean nam Bian, Ben Cruachan, Ben Starav and Beinn Laoigh. Beinn a' Bheithir, Clach Leathad, Ben Ime, Stob Ghabhar, Ben More and Stobinian gave up sooner, and Beinn Dorain and Ben Lawers before them. In the N.W., Ben More Assynt kept its ice the longest. In Harris, Clisham. In Skye, the last ice may have glared from Coir' a' Ghrunnda, in Mull from Ben More and in Arran from Goatfell; it vanished from these places at much the same time, but Rhum had been ice-free before them.

URLAR

And so it ended. The days were warm, the seeds had arrived. Birch and willow flourished, pine dug itself in, flowers and bees chased each other up the glens. All the summer nonsense had come to stay, with reality only for a few nostalgic winter months each year. Pre-Boreal man stretched in the sun. The ice had gone. The ice axe could be hung on the wall.

(But of course our predecessors in late-glacial Scotland carried ice axes. In the Stone Age, man used stone axes, in the Bronze Age bronze axes, and so on. Therefore in the Ice Age he must have used ice axes. Because they have naturally all melted, however, their actual design is uncertain).

The present summer snowline is a few hundred feet above Ben Nevis. A slight deterioration in climate and the glaciers will appear again. When they do, readers of Charlesworth's paper will be the first to get their Guide's Certificate.

(The Editors are much obliged to Mr. Scott Johnstone and his professional colleagues for taking the geological measure of the above composition (though the responsibility is of course not theirs!); to Mr. John MacInnes of the School of Scottish Studies, Edinburgh, whose philological imagination constructed a Gaelic glacier; and to Mr. Berry, of Dundee University, for the following account of the Present Condition. Further information on changes in Scottish mountain climate will be found in the article *On Disappointing Summers* by Professor Gordon Manley in *S.M.C.J.*, xxv (1955), 334).

SALUTE TO GARBH CHOIRE MÒR

By W. G. Berry

SINCE the beginning of October 1965, students from the Rucksack Club and the Geography Department of Queen's College, Dundee, have been taking part in a project which aims to study the characteristics of, and the conditions that exist in, the Garbh Choire Mòr of Braeriach. Naturally the main interest was centred on the semi-permanent snow-beds that are found there. It was believed that these snow-beds represented the last vestiges of the last Ice Age in Scotland, or alternatively, the first signs of the next. The lamented disappearance of ice from Scotland occurred some time ago, but the ice probably lingered longer in the Garbh Choire than elsewhere. Even so it is doubtful that, even in these remote recesses, the snow and ice remained during the post-glacial climatic optimum of some 8000 years ago. Since then, however, climatic fluctuations have taken place which, no doubt, restored some of the Arctic character to the area. These fluctuations seem to have been getting smaller, and during the historic period the balance in the Cairngorms has probably not been one between snow-beds and corrie glacier but on the very survival of the snow at all. There have been periods when the snow-beds probably remained extensive, particularly 1600-1750, and in a few years took on the appearance of a small corrie glacier; but since 1850 the climate has generally ameliorated in winter except for short periods.

As a result of this trend the chances of the snow-bed becoming a glacier are slim; before a glacier can form the quantity of incoming

snow must, year in year out, exceed on average the amount lost by ablation. In the Garbh Choire these figures are only just about equal. Moreover for firn or névé ice to form considerable compression of the snow must take place, and there was no evidence that this was happening extensively, if at all, in 1966.

The snow-beds in the Garbh Choire are reputed to have disappeared only three times recently (1933, 1947, 1959). However, the decay of small snow patches can be very rapid towards the end and it is likely that the snow-beds could have passed away unobserved. The fact remains that these are the most permanent of the true snow-beds, as distinct from the patches that exist in the gullies of Ben Nevis, and it is here that the first of the corrie glaciers of the next glaciation will be born. The position of the Garbh Choire is probably the most important factor in the longevity of the snow-beds. Much of the snow which fills the corrie in the winter and the summer is derived from areas outside. The wide windswept plateau of Braeriach is a major source of snow and the magnificent snow cornices which form round the lip of the corrie help to fill the bowl. The direction of the snow-bearing winds is important, as the longer the windswept areas windward of the corrie the larger the accumulations in the corrie. Only winds blowing directly up the valley of the Allt a' Garbh Choire do not cross the plateau. The greater the amount of snow in the corrie the greater the chance of the snow-beds surviving.

There are two critical periods in the life cycle of the snow-beds. The first is in March and April. Sufficient snow must fall in the winter and spring to provide a full reservoir at the end of the snow season. Heavy snow in November and December and little snow later in the winter can in mild springs leave insufficient snow to survive the summer. The second critical period is October. By this time of year the snow-bed is usually small. Low temperatures and snowfall are needed to prevent further melting and to counteract losses by ablation. If the summer has been warm and dry the critical period will be earlier, and after the normal cool wet summer the critical time is later. The conditions which are most likely to result in the complete loss of the snow-beds are a mild winter with no late snow falls followed by a warm summer with no early snow falls. Such conditions are rare and in most years the snow-beds survive.

These snow-beds give the corrie some unique (for the British Isles) characteristics. It is these characteristics which the present survey is studying. The project began in October 1965 and has gone more or less to plan. Part of the floor of the corrie and the snow-bed was surveyed at the beginning of October. At that time the snow-bed consisted of two lobes, one slightly larger than the other. The smaller lobe was about 100 ft. across and 150 ft. long

and at the 'schrund' some 20 ft. deep. By the end of October accumulation of new snow had begun and the limit of the old snow difficult to determine. Heavy snow in November and in the early part of 1966 prevented further work until the next survey was carried out in March. The whole of the corrie was filled with snow, much of it avalanche debris. The April survey party was severely hampered by the weather and having reached the corrie discovered that most of the surveying equipment and the marker cairns had been destroyed or buried. Obviously extensive accumulation occurs in April. By May 7th the snow had cleared from the lower corrie and the carefully-marked bases of the destroyed cairns were found and the snow surveyed again.

In June a party camped in the corrie for two weeks making further snow surveys, collecting animals (mainly insects) and vegetation (mainly mosses and lichens). The snow-bed provides an ecological habitat of a very special type. There are areas of ground which are only exposed for very short periods each year, yet even these are covered by mosses. These mosses retain green apical areas even when buried by 15 ft. of snow and ice, and are therefore ready to grow as soon as they are released from the refrigerated conditions under the snow. The moss provides food for insects which are, in turn, the food for small mammals (especially the pygmy shrew). Work was also begun on a scheme to measure the rate of erosion in the corrie, as several features usually associated with periglacial conditions are found there. One of the most obvious of these is the moraine which covers the lip of the upper corrie. This is probably a type of avalanche boulder tongue, built up by the accumulation of avalanche debris and by the rocks released from the walls of the corrie by frost shatter. The many painted or marked stones and boulders in the corrie are part of an attempt to determine the mode of formation of this and similar, but often smaller, landscape features in the area around the snow-bed.

By the middle of July the snow which had occupied the whole of the upper corrie in June had broken, the upper part being about 250 ft. long. The snow was again surveyed in August and by that time the snow-bed was only 140 ft. long.

From the end of August until the beginning of October a small meteorological station was established in the corrie. It was maintained almost continuously, but a severe gale which caused considerable damage resulted in the temporary abandonment of the station. Sufficient data was obtained to make an analysis worthwhile. At the same time a complete topographic survey of the corrie was made, and further insect collections taken. With the information gathered we hope to discover some of the conditions governing the rate of decay of the snow-bed, which by the end of September was extremely small, less than 45 ft. from top to bottom.

(This was probably in part the result of the activity of the survey which involved digging several deep holes in the snow.) By the time the survey party had to return to Dundee the new snow had already arrived, the snow-bed just surviving. It was believed that snow from two previous years, i.e. 1965-66, and another (probably but not necessarily 1964-65), as well as the new snow, could be seen in the corrie at one time.

Much of the data collected is still to be analysed, and, because of the field techniques used, the results of the actual snow surveys must remain vague until the results of the topographic survey have been computed. Nearly all the work, much of it extremely arduous and undertaken in very severe conditions, has been carried out by volunteers from the Rucksack Club. It is bringing in valuable information and we hope to continue throughout 1967 and, if possible, after that.

HARD LINES FROM ABROAD

(1) DIREKT

By Dougal Haston

INTO the spirits of ancient Nordwanderers came men with eyes lined straight not devious. Eight Germans there were with one slightly different idea from two Americans and a Scot. The mass would lay siege with four head and four tail; solid work which moves mountains. The three wanted wildly to push with eyes neither right nor left for ten days until it was done and done well but the weather dictated that it was not to be done quickly. It was a fierce winter. Weather forecasts continuously wrong. Two days fine, three days bad and various other permutations but the winnings always on the bad. The difficulties looked great; no doubt about that. Long steep ice to Eigerwand station. Three hundred feet of pure-aid-climbing pitch above it with handhold hacking and lobster jabbing to the second band. This was broken by a steep Scottish gully, then nothing but easier hard work to Death Bivouac. Above that problems entangled thick and fast to the Spider and the Fly and then out on to the pinnacle of direct climbing dreams.

Attacks began in mid-February. Germans putshed on steadily. Kor and Haston skated wildly up in ghostly crampon light, in head-beamed leaps to a grey dawn and one hundred A3 feet up the first band and down in a storm to a paining bivouac within a long-night powdersnow avalanche and down and down to Scheidegg in the morning on a 100 m.p.h. wind.



Garbh Choire Mòr Survey

Gone . . . The last snow-beds in Garbh Choire Mòr, 23rd Sept. 1965, from Tr.g. Station 4. Sphinx Ridge prominent

RIGHT Coming again? . . . First snows of October on the old beds beneath Sphinx Ridge. This Scottish 'schrund' was some 30 feet deep here



Garbh Choire Mòr Survey



Christian Bonington

The ultimate in Thule. Dolomitic antic by Patey, 20 feet out from the face, climbing fixed rope to top of second pitch on the Old Man of Hoy; rope fixed previous day. (See NEW CLIMBS)

Hard decisions were ordered; plans altered. Fixed ropes and snowholes were the new life. A good snowhole was hollowed beneath the first band. Both teams climbed parallel on this first band. It was artificial of the highest standard. With us Kor led with supreme American skill through avalanches while I sat slung from various slings and contemplated existence under duress. On one day Haston jammed a hanging hour swinging, somersaulting, stuck up on a free abseil; only a passed-up Gordian penknife saved a tangled Kurz. Ascents and descents continued. Everyman became expert snowholers. Supplies were hauled and progress pushed. Germen still steadily; Scotams erratically. But in one flash of weather and work Harlin and Haston found themselves above the second band in front; but once again we had overreached and the Germans caught and passed and the next day everyone who was anyone was on the face and streaming over the second icefield into a howling storm at the Death Bivouac, with us digging until midnight in the ancient burial grounds.

Packs were down at the beginning and we were up at the end. Haston and Harlin worked off into the night on a hauling dipping traverse on a 300-foot single rope with one intermediate anchor; said goodnight to Lehne, Strobel and Haag and back in ever-increasing snowslides to chaos and Bonington and Kor. A night in a spot of alpine history with only an exploding stove to disturb our concentration. Morgen fine for weather and Germans but not us. Tired weary and Bonington down. Lunch down, then we passed into slow then sudden activity and Kor and I armaxe up the blackice-third-field into a grinning Peter Haag who'd been working all day but didn't worry for he's a happy guy. Down with an ominous sun to another night in a hole. Storm in the morning and five days later Harlin and Haston still there. A continuous five-one day. Castbacks are blurred scraps of cold, cooking, think-talking, excremental problems and sleep, ragged and stormblown. Aesthetically it was formidable. A wall thin-shining blue and clear to Grindelwald on one side and Scheidegg on the other. Three and a half thousand feet down and no windowbox. We were centuries old in survival when we emerged. Importantly, still friends. Last two days of no food and no letup, so letsdown to steak in a storm. World looked good. Kor frothing and sun shining two days later. One more day Kor and Bonington tight beneath the Spider with Lehne and Golikow. Then with difficulty they were there. Harlin and I left base to Death Bivouac and our one more night. Kor went down in the morning. Strobel-Golikow reached the Fly. Harlin and I approached the Spider. Only I reached it. A broken rope and many minds wept in despair. Despair and weakness then strength again. Eigerwand a tombstone. We wanted a rood without a cross piece. A straight line to memory John. We drove it. Three days of iced eyes fingers and feet above the passed Fly.

No crackups or downs. Five fighting with all their wintered years.

Then the John Harlin Route existed. The mountain didn't have a chance they say. It took one life, twentyone toes and weeks of hospital from six people.

(2) YOSEMITE

By David Bathgate

TAKE a flat strip of lush green meadow and fill it with giant pines, poplar and spreading oak. Put blue jays in the branches, and have a silent hawk hover overhead. Tenant the woods with grizzly bears, red squirrel, deer and mischievous raccoons, and through it all let meander a sandy-bottomed trout stream. Try to conceal some canvas cabins, caravans, Cadillacs and campers in the trees, then add a medium-sized village, a supermarket and a Lodge with restaurant, bar and swimming pool. Now enclose all this between enormous walls of good, grey granite, smooth slabs, pinnacles, spires, rounded domes and overhanging faces; then drop a waterfall or two over the rim, and have the sun beat down all day. You'd better make the season spring, or early fall, and I guess you could call the place 'Yosemite' or maybe just 'The Valley' would do. Now parcel it all up in some brown paper and string then send it off to me, because there's no doubt about it, it is a rock climber's dream of paradise.

You wouldn't believe El Capitan. Granite like the South Face of the Midi, but 3000 feet of it. You'd groove behind Cathedral and Sentinel Rocks. Blow your mind over The Royal Arches and Apron Slabs, like two times Eive scale. The Lost Arrow is way out. The Washington Column - North Dome combination is just something else and Half Dome is too much.

The Valley men are proud of their area and keen to show it off. They take you on short warm-up routes, then after you've made the grade on Friction Slab, Jamb Crack, Squeeze Chimney, Blank Bolt Wall, Expanding Flake, know enough about their nailing technique, and think you can stand the dehydration and stomach the exposure, they will recommend some of the longer routes. Lend you gear, even.

Ian Howell, who was on Yorupaja with Malcolm Slessor, was my rope-mate for most of my month in the Valley. The last three climbs we did together were classic.

The Lost Arrow 5-4, A-3. The easy way. Instead of making a two-day climb up one of Yosemite's neverending chimneys, you back-pack to the rim, then take off on two 150 foot abseils, the last one definitely vertical, with a drop of 1500 feet at the end of the

line. You land in a notch, then traverse out onto the face of this 300 foot rock pinnacle. The climb is mixed free and artificial. The free stuff is probably severe, and the nailing is easy by Yosemite standards, but the exposure is horrific. Worries are only half over when you reach the Arrow tip, because the only way off, unless you fancy a trojan Tyrolean traverse, is to abseil back down to the notch, then scrape your knuckles up a hairy 300-foot prusik from the notch to the rim.

The Washington Column - North Dome combination was one helluva long day of dehydration and trying to keep up with King Bee Chuck Pratt and King-pin Yvon Chouinard. 3000 feet of ascent, 2500 feet of rock climbing, all free with 5-9 on North Dome. 15 pitches on the Column and 10 on the Dome, finishing with a 250 foot, V.S. in places, lay-back. This climb is not done very often

The North West Face of Half Dome. 2200 feet 5-8, A-3, Class 6. By Royal Robbins. It has had about 26 ascents and 1966 saw nine of them. Ours was the third British. Eric Raisin and Jock were the first, then Whillans, Burnell and Hadlum. Next, Pin (Ian Howell) and I. This is what my diary said about the climb :

'9th Oct. Gear and grub for three bivouacs. 30 pins, 30 free biners. We meet Chuck Austin as we sign out at the Ranger's Office. He gives us a lift to the start of the trail to Little Yosemite, Vernal and Nevada Falls. We back-pack pleasantly 3½ hours, Muir Trailing to the spring beside a luxury, pine-needle-cushioned bivouac clearing in the woods. It's brew time on a roaring cone fire, then sleep to be up early bright so we can make the first bivouac before dark.

'10th Oct. From here on we carry the water. On the wall by 9 a.m. Pin first, then alternate leads to a broad sandy bivouac ledge. All free climbing so far, following a cold, grey, granite crack line. Quite steep and quite V.S., sack-hauling all the way. *Too warm to sleep tonight.*

'11th Oct. Breakfast in the dark and climb by light time. 4-5 pitches of easier stuff, traversing right, towards the centre of the face, then tension to get into the most fantastic system of cracks, flakes and chimneys in the Valley. It all leads to Psych Flake, an enormous slab, detached from the main wall yet held there by air pressure The slab vibrates in time with my legs as I bridge between it and the solid stuff. One more perfect jamb-crack brings us to the second perfect bivouac, and a perfect sunset over El Cap.

'12th Oct. The start of the zig-zag pitches. Nailing all day under and over roofs. Expanding flakesville, where the pin you're standing on tends to pop out as you place the next one. Always one pitch above the sun, but this helps to cut down the dehydration and spin out the water supply.

'Thank God Ledge is about 60 feet long, 18 inches at the widest and 9 inches at the narrows. It is situated on an incredibly smooth, vertical wall. The nearest scree is 2000 feet below, and the Valley floor another 3000 feet below that. It must have got the name from what people say when they have belayed at the other end of it. A few bolts and a crack tack later we are on top of this big bald mountain. We are pleased with ourselves, but the overriding feeling is one of great admiration for the men who made the first ascent.'

Climbing in Yosemite and working up to the N.W.F. of $\frac{1}{2}$ -Dome is like making the Comici on the N.F. of the Cima Grande the climax of a season in the Dolomites. I wonder what the really hard Valley climbs are like . . .

(3) KLAUSWERNERWEG

By Fred Harper

A Cattinacio no-break in the weather, no cloud on the horizon, no relief day today. The Klauswernerweg, Punta Emma Nord day, funny feeling, strange, low down in the belly day. Can't get away from today!

De Francheschi, two Stegers, short and long, Vinatzer, faces north and south all done. Fit-making is complete, no excuses now. Or at least no good, even acceptable, ones. Time to go.

Jagged yellow spears of Vajollet encircle us, grade four guardians of the harder things. Sweat trickles faster down than we labour up the path, toward the limpid flag above the roof of the Refugio Vajollet. Smoke curls up from the chimney, tourists sip their expensive high-altitude liquids and collect their rugged mountain sunburn. We stagger past—the cheap high-wire entertainment. Not clean but fun!

The beginnings are begun, soloing up the loosening threes and fours, until after a hundred feet we are trapped by a fallen piece of six. Stay still, dress yourself for the mountain. Shining alloy necklace tinkles, steps waft gently from the waist. Terse nervous essential communication now—the roof above glowers and, without a word, subdues.

Brian leaves and takes the wall above in separate, but linked, moves. Hard enough but the bulge above is harder and he takes his time to reach a belay below the aforementioned roof.

All of a sudden I am out under the overhang swinging like a free man. Just me and the pegs and the unneeded, unwanted and unheeded advice from down below—background noise stuff. Call it nervous interaction, harmless and only slightly irritating. I climb faster, trying to get out of earshot; maybe that is his intention.

Two linked krabs in hand, stretch up and catch the next peg. Hold on one-handed, slip the fifi into the upper ring and stand up in the lowest step. Change hands, up one step and clip in, once in three or four, for protection. Like a good dog the other étrier just follows on its lead.

Up and up and over and out it, and we, go on and on. This is a mixed climb : mixed A3 and 6+; mixed feelings too . . .

Brian goes on through ; if looks could kill I would be dead. He doesn't like my smoking, reckons it wastes that precious time. It gives us something to argue about anyway—relieves tension, the argument and, for me, the smoking.

Suddenly up there he sticks. He's up and out sixty feet, I can see his chin between his legs. Two manky runners, it's hellish hard and he knows it all right. I have got the message—the bolts have gone, been battered out by the previous ascenders. Nasty, sadistic Pellegrinon !

B.R. takes a grip ; of himself I mean, there's nothing much else anyway so he might do worse. Oh so so slowly, so slowly he climbs it free. Only a fifi-skyhook for somewhat doubtful aid. It's great, not meant to be done, product of the will, come down man, but he can't, dry-throated and hand-trembling—breathhtaking ! It took my breath away ! I couldn't, or forgot to breathe !

For me, second, it's easier of course and I am up, smoking with the effort. Next pitch, mine, it's just the same again. No bolts, but sneering metal stumps. It goes, of course, slowly too but it surely does. Only one long leftward move against the drag. 'You can make it if you try !' Who said that ? I try and whoever it was seems right, for I am soon sitting clucking and crowing on a nest of bolts, big beautiful bivouac, first ascent bolts. The book's there too ; we are sixth to make it, first British too of course.

More to come so Brian goes out and right, up to belay under the big roof. O.K. Fred this is the last pitch coming up—Premature jubilation ! I join him and leave by a ladder of wooden mank sticking, I know not how, vertically up into the elongated nostril of the roof. Right on the point of the nose, swinging free, the rope sticks. I shriek for more but there is none. He comes and tries to pass but I won't have it ! We are not both going to hang free from this belay ! He argues, something about it being his lead. I, being more interested in my neck, just grab the gear and leave. Leave him there shouting at me and at the newly-risen moon, at anyone who'd listen. But nobody did, so he just quietened down and held the rope, which made me feel less bad.

Round the nose and up the crack above to, eventually, but not by any means inevitably, lie gasping on the summit block. Soon him too.

Down, shouting in the dark. Away from here, for there can be nothing better than this has been. Not here anyway, not now. Maybe not for a long time !

(4) BONATTI PILLAR, 1966

By Alasdair McKeith

'THAT'S odd—he doesn't usually climb as fast as that . . .' I paid out the rope. Then Batman came sailing into view. 'Yes, he certainly was moving fast'—I held his fall in 20 feet. 'This is the way the world ends—not with a bang but a Whymper.' Mike Galbraith had just moved out of sight on the first pitch of the Bonatti . . .

Neither of us was very fit. The air was hot and clammy and the sun still beat down. It was late evening ; we plodded slowly through sweating vegetation towards the rognon below the Dru. There were two parties of two in front. The good bivouac sites would be taken, but it was a warm starlight night. We chose an open site halfway up the rognon. The dark bulbous foreshortened Dru glowed in the twilight. Then we slept.

Three a.m. . . . Lights flickered in the German bivouac. It was warm but the sky was clear. We hastened to prepare—there is nothing more annoying than an arrogant incompetent continental party of picnic-trippers in front . . . So we blundered too high up the rognon and they overtook us. We moved past the other bivouac where lights still glowed and down across the Dru glacier under the West Face. 'Crampons?—might as well'—then one of mine broke as I put it on. I cursed and stumbled on across the glacier, a uni-cramponed spastic tripping and slipping. The air hummed and whirled with falling stones. We ran in dizzy circles while they exploded in the slush.

The Germans were out in front—we stayed behind as a special concession and they kicked huge buckets and waded up to the bergschrund below the couloir. The Dru Couloir, one of the most dangerous in the massif, leads up under the West Face to the amphitheatre at the foot of the Bonatti Pillar. It had already claimed several lives.

We crossed the bergschrund without difficulty and followed the steep rocks on the right edge of the couloir. The Germans fell behind as they moved up too far to the right and met unexpected difficulty. Beyond the terraces leading leftwards on to the West Face, the couloir narrows and steepens before opening out into the amphitheatre, a huge mountain crucible hemmed in by the *Flammes des Pierres*. All the debris from the mountain empties itself into this funnel and out through its neck.

We climbed on a fully-extended 300-foot perlon rope. On mixed terrain like this we could move fast and at the same time be certain of reaching good belays despite long unprotected sections of loose snow on ice. The Germans were losing ground fast, but just below, two others were coming up—English and fit, an unlikely combination.

At all-too-frequent intervals, large stones and blocks of ice detached themselves from the walls of the amphitheatre, clattered over our heads and down the avalanche chute to our left. The route now followed the right edge of the amphitheatre, thus avoiding a large vertical icefall above the narrowing, and curved left across its upper edge to the ledges below the pillar. The angle of the ice was now approaching 60°, but despite this it was still covered with 2 or 3 inches of porridge. With only one crampon between us, we had great difficulty in moving rapidly from the doubtful shelter of one overhang to another. The last section involved crossing a short band of rock and then the lower funnel of the incredibly steep couloir which plunges down the right side of the pillar. Every few minutes avalanches, some big, some small, roared down the couloir and hummed into space. I paused, then moved on to the rock band, fast and furious. Then a terrifying roar . . . I flattened myself against the rock and prayed. I didn't look, I could see them in my mind and could hear them, huge boulders and blocks of ice, inches from my head; the hum and whine, the fumes of shattering rock. Stones bounced from my back and my helmet. Then silence, forbidding silence. I looked up. The couloir glared at me. I looked across. Only 50 feet to the foot of the pillar and safety. I cut across the first few feet of bare ice, glancing furtively upward, then tip-toed across high-angled slush. I had made it, but Galbraith had still to come and the rope was now stretched across the mouth of the couloir. Still silence, and the next avalanche was long overdue; but luck was with us for those moments and he crossed safely.

It was here that Batman took over so spectacularly. Out of sight behind a bulge, he'd been trying to thread a sling behind a decaying wedge. With both hands free of the rock, he'd toppled backwards from the overhanging groove. Shaken, he climbed back and pulled through. Obviously, though the rope had held him, it had not held his nerves; they had fallen along with the boulders, heads, arms and blocks of ice to the bottom of the couloir. Now he would climb fearlessly to the top of the pillar.

Grade V said the book—A1 said my ropes. Who was I to argue with all these pegs? The entire route is unbelievably over-pegged and over-wedged, and yet every inch is a desperate fight with gravity. There is quite simply no easy pitch. Mike led up the crest of the pillar to the ledge at 250 feet, then up to a narrow exposed

ledge on the left edge. Here, the whole vast expanse of the West Face was revealed in one astonishing sweep of 3500 feet. The wall was silent in the cool morning air. There was nobody on the West Face.

Tom and Brian had followed us on to the pillar and were now about two pitches behind. The Germans had given up at the edge of the amphitheatre and were now moving slowly down the couloir—cretins! Far above, the slabs and roofs at the top of the pillar glowed red in the morning sun, outlined and emphasised in improbable steepness. It was the biggest face we had ever been on. Progress seemed impossible in such vastness.

Galbraith made light work of the first VI pitch, a flake chimney bristling with gear; we even found several American pegs, but we couldn't afford to collect iron. I felt sufficiently recovered from the debacle in the couloir to take over for a while. And so to the long crack, another VI pitch. At first it looked hopeless, a smooth vertical crack in a blank wall, with no gear in it at all. Then I saw wedges in a lesser crack inside it. An impressive layback, then a long poorly-protected jam-crack. I belayed and glanced warily at the wall above; I now had only one foothold.

He was directly above me and I took his full weight as he began the tension traverse. Stretched horizontally between the rope and side holds, he inched across the vertical wall, now only two feet from another line of pegs; then a hold broke and he sailed back over my head and swung like a spider on the last strand of its broken web. Next time he moved lower, and worked along a narrow ledge, held in by the rope. A conceited peg jeered at him two feet away. This time he reached it.

There was a chimney above. In the Alps, 'chimney' means a cold invariably-loose false-sense-of-security which is always strenuous. Trick moves and trick ropes helped, but brawn prevailed. This pitch was as hard as any.

Now the full heat of the afternoon sun fried us. Our fingers throbbed, our limbs ached and sweat poured from our brows. We were below the Red Slabs. Hot rocks glowed and time hung in tapes. Pitch after pitch, sustained and artificial; the ropes dragged and the sacks dragged; hallucinations and ponderous thoughts of the National Bar.

Hello said the ledge and we sprawled, heat-swollen for raisins and spaghetti and lemon tea. It was a good ledge, for two; then they arrived. Tom and Brian are kind—they perched, contorted, we lay beduveted in splendour and thought, sank and dissolved in sleep.

They were away first in the morning. The sky remained cloudless. The rising sun, still hidden by the overpowering mass of the Dru, glinted on the snows of Mont Blanc. It would get us later.

Directly above, a steep slab introduced two overhanging chimneys breaking through a roof. 'Take the first chimney' they shouted from the almost-fell-off second chimney. We took it. But at that unearthly hour of the morning, with breakfast poised between going down and coming back, this chimney with its loose pegs was the most strenuous artificial pitch on the whole route.

The 35-metre wall, by repute the crux, is more straightforward and greatly over-pegged; it turned out no more than a mental block. But the situation was remarkable. The wall, a sheet of red granite split only by a thin crack bristling with pegs, is absolutely vertical for 170 feet. I only clipped into every 3rd or 4th peg, yet by the time I had reached the foothold called a stance I had used the last of 20 karabiners. It was from a point half-way up this crack that Bonatti, finding his supply of pitons unsuited to the job, began the series of pendulums across the roofs to our right. What a man!

The Dru couloir was far below now, but we heard voices. The Germans again! If only they knew what they were in for It was 9 days before they were rescued from a ledge high on the West Face, trapped by storms and verglas beyond the tension traverse—the point of no return. We're all right, Jack, and we lurched on across the walls and slabs of the upper pillar. I led a layback crack leaning over the edge of nothing, a roof, another groove, then a slab below a roof. There was little rope left and it dragged. I stood poised on a grain of granite. I saw the next piton. I lifted the rope to attach it; then I was off. I fell backwards, slithered down the slab and shot off the overhang. Thoughts crowded my mind, broken slings and memories, loose pitons and people; then I hung inverted, contorted, right leg hooked in a sling. I remained still, not daring to move. Blood trickled down my bare arms and across the backs of my hands. I looked up. The peg smiled at me. I pulled up. I was only scratched. Galbraith didn't know I'd fallen; there'd been so much rope-drag he hadn't felt a thing.

Climb cracked walls above; V then easing said the book. But this was the last gasp. The rope jammed continually, tapes caught on rock, sack dug deeper, shins burnt raw and red, joints and lacerations ached. Then I was on the shoulder.

Welcome haven in impossible steepness. Only the last chimneys were between us and the quartz ledges below the summit. I collapsed in a patch of snow. Water for cracked lips.

Above, a waterfall of water. I feigned exhaustion and Galbraith took over. Mind you, he did need a wash; he smelt different afterwards. And soon at long last it was all finished and we stood on the quartz ledges. We could be in the Charpoua hut that night. The sun was sinking low

THE CAIRNGORM CAIRNS

By B. H. Humble

'The Committee on behalf of the Club and the A.S.C.C. have expressed opposition to proposals for erection of lines of cairns on the Cairngorm Plateau.'

THE above is an extract from our Secretary's report to the A.G.M. and as the Club's opposition has to some extent been misunderstood more complete details are now given, including opinions expressed by members at the Easter 1966 Meet, at a later committee meeting, and at other times. It has been claimed by certain of those in favour of the scheme that the Club's opposition is based on sheer conservatism; this belief arose possibly because our Club has never gone in for publicity and the general public is not aware to what an extent we have been in the fore in every development concerning Scottish mountains. Far from being conservative, we have always led the way and the Club has probably done more for others than any similar Club in the British Isles.

Long ago, when many of our mountains were unclimbed and many heights unknown, our original members rendered most valuable help to H.M. Ordnance Survey. Our series of Guide Books for hill walkers—all brought out by voluntary labour and from which the Club itself gains no financial reward—are the most complete of their kind and of immense value to Tourism in Scotland. The first Mountain Huts in Scotland were built by us and are available to kindred clubs and guests. The preservation of Glencoe for the Nation was largely due to the intervention of the S.M.C. It was the initiative of our former President—Unna—that led to the acquisition of the estate, much of the purchase price being raised by our own members and then presented to the National Trust for Scotland, while the National Trust lands in Kintail came from Unna's own funds.

More immediate to the present controversy is the fact that the S.M.C. pioneered Mountain Rescue in Scotland, equipping from its own funds the first Mountain Rescue Post and subscribing largely towards later ones, while for many years our members provided all Rescue Team personnel. The S.M.C. also first proposed the formation of the Association of Scottish Climbing Clubs and it is noted that almost all the entire subscription income of the present Mountain Rescue Committee of Scotland comes from the Scottish Clubs. It is only right therefore that our views regarding this new proposal be given publicity.

The proposal is for a line of cairns on the Cairngorm Plateau round the head of the corries of Cairngorm 'to act as a net to catch unwary people who have been caught by sudden changes of weather on the plateau and give them a line of retreat to safety,' and it is claimed that such cairns will save life.

The S.M.C. Committee decided after full consideration that, while they appreciated the public spirit which prompted the proposal, such a scheme was likely to do more harm than good. The elementary essential of mountain-going is to be able to travel safely over mountainous country, this in turn involving proper equipment and clothing and the ability to guide oneself by map and compass. Hence the proposal is directly opposed to all our present training and propaganda regarding mountain safety. Weather records show that only in one day in five are the plateaus clear of mist. Mist must, therefore, be taken as normal. At the top station of the Cairngorm Chair Lift there is a notice by the Police and the Mountain Rescue Committee telling people they *must* not go beyond the summit of Cairngorm unless properly equipped and with map and compass. The proposal is to cater for these 'unwary,' ill-equipped folk who ignore this notice—for those who break the unwritten laws of the mountains. And mist is by no means the only problem—gales and sixty-knot winds rise with appalling suddenness. W. H. Murray has put on record that he experienced worse weather and fiercer winds on the Cairngorm plateau than ever in the Alps or Himalaya. Thanks to recent publicity by the British Mountaineering Council, visiting climbers are now coping with the problems of exposure and exhaustion which ensues from such sudden weather; but the unprepared, ill-clad tourist can never be expected to do this.

The proposers claim that, as the big cairns at present in line from the top of the chair lift to the summit of Cairngorm 'have proved their value,' further cairns are now required. There is, however, no comparison. The path to the summit of Cairngorm is a well-known tourist path and marked on maps. The distance is short and cairns approved by all. Cairns on the bleak, windswept plateau are an entirely different matter and, to give the ill-equipped and inexperienced the idea that such cairns will keep them safe, is most dangerous. It is an illusion to think that such folk will keep to lines of cairns in spells of clear weather. They would leave them 'to see Loch Avon,' to go towards MacDhui or 'to picnic at that spot over there' and then become lost when weather closes in. The proposal seems to assume that such folk would automatically turn north and find their way back to the cairns. Records of the Mountain Rescue Committee show that this is not the case. Without map and compass they will wander in any direction.

There would seem to be various ideas about the projected line of cairns and suggestions put forward have been :

'... cairns should be about five feet high and ten yards apart and at least 100 yards from edge of cliffs ...'

'... cairns should be 30 yards from edge of cliffs ...'

'... that there should be a guide by cairns at edge of cliffs, also with one or two further back ...'

'... that signposts be erected instead of cairns ...'

Certainly in good weather the walk round the head of the corries is one of the most scenic in Scotland. Nothing of the grandeur of the cliffs can be seen from 30 or 100 yards to the south as that is downhill and it is most unlikely that people would keep to it. And how are the projected cairns to 'lead to safety'? The walk round the head of the corries is quite long, involving descent from Cairngorm to the head of Coire Cas, a climb to Creag Coire an t-Sneachda, a descent to head of Coire Domhain, another climb to the summit of Cairn Lochan and a descent to the Lurcher's Corrie. Between the two ends are routes where experienced climbers can descend with safety but no safe way for the inexperienced. The proposal also envisages a line of cairns down Fiacall a' Choire Cas to form a line of retreat at the eastern end. This, however, is the chief accident area of Cairngorm, as shown by records of the Mountain Rescue Committee. Snow remains till June—the route down depends on extent of snow cover and varies from time to time. The inclination is towards the corrie, and the slightest slip between cairns would take one down on to the steep ground.

A later declared object of the cairns is 'to stop people falling over cliffs,' inferring that people are in the habit of doing so. But there is no evidence to that effect. As one objector put it succinctly 'if you are going to cater for folk like that then you would have to go the whole way and erect a fence right round.' Many thousands trek to the summit of Ben Nevis, where the great cliffs are much more formidable, yet no one has ever suggested building big cairns right round their edge to stop people falling over; cairns are confined to the well-known tourist path to the summit. As far as the Cairngorm is concerned, there would seem to be no urgency or any real need—there not being a single incident concerning anyone on the plateau in 1966.

What at first sight would seem to be the most impressive argument in favour of cairns is that 'if cairns save two lives in 50 years they are justified.' But, of course, such an argument cuts both ways and it could also be said 'if cairns cause the inexperienced and ill-equipped to venture on the plateau and so lead to accidents and death they are not justified.' While all of us would wish to save life, there is no justification in saying that cairns *will* save life; though such a claim would lead to non-climbers, who know nothing of the plateau or its dangers, supporting the proposal. There is a further danger that, should young folk get the idea that

cairns are a good thing, they will start to build lines in other similar areas. Indeed there is evidence of this. When the scheme was first mentioned in the magazine *The Climber*, a reader wrote asking for a line of cairns to be built on certain Welsh hills, and at once a Scout group offered to do so. Later correspondence, however, showed that more were against the proposal. It would indeed be perilous were such an idea to spread and folk tend to forget all about map and compass training—'not necessary; just follow the cairns!'

Might it not be advisable to have some sort of ruling on this subject with the ideal being that cairns are confined to tourist paths and Rights of Way? Indeed, our Secretary, in correspondence with the proposers, suggested that the Scouts should transfer their cairn-building activities to the Lairig an Laoigh, a Right of Way path which is poorly marked and where there have been fatalities of recent years. The Mounth paths from Braemar to Glen Doll and Glen Clova could also do with more cairns—there also lives have been lost.

In addition to the S.M.C. and A.S.C.C., the R.A.F. Mountain Rescue Team which operates in the area has decided against the cairns, whilst the first A.G.M. of the newly-formed Mountain Bothies Association decided to have nothing to do with it. It is clear, therefore, that the vast mass of informed mountaineering opinion in Scotland is against the proposal. There must be a good measure of sympathy for the Rover Scouts who started this cairning, thinking it would have universal approval, and who now find such criticism; but they will be able to content themselves with the knowledge that there are plenty of other possible projects on the mountains to which they could apply themselves and to which no one could object.

Are there not other ways of dealing with the problem? While the Mountain Rescue Teams are concerned with saving life, the Mountain Rescue Committee has also the greater job of *preventing* accidents by every possible means. The concentration should, therefore, be on PREVENTION. The following is suggested:

1. Intensify by all possible means our Mountain Safety propaganda.
2. As weather records show clearly that there is very often a sudden change around midday, and as weather forecasts are very reliable, arrange for such forecasts to be displayed at the Camp Site, the Car Park and the Shieling each morning.
3. As the Gordonstoun boys have shown what good work can be done by their Ski and Rescue Patrol during the Ski season, might it not be possible to arrange for a rota of two voluntary guides to be on patrol on the mountain during the busy summer weekends to give advice and turn back the inexperienced? Should paid wardens be necessary, let us remember that a large-scale search involving hundreds of folk costs hundreds of pounds; their wages would amount to less than this.

4. Might we not follow the example of the Canadian National Parks? There the Park Wardens take parties on hill expeditions of varied length every day during the tourist season—it is part of their job and there is no charge. Again, compare the cost of this with that of search and rescue operations.

In brief, the high plateaus for the experienced and well-equipped—but under guidance for the inexperienced who wish to gain the heights.

NOTE. A certain number of cairns were built by Scouts last summer and a report was received from the Warden of the White Lady Shieling, a professional guide who is himself against the proposal—'we saw a young lad on his own in blizzard conditions erecting a cairn: it would seem that some advice be given to Scouts concerning safety on the Mountains before they try to make them safe for others.'

By October, 1966, a series of large cairns around the head of Coire Cas had been demolished and by November many others were demolished—by whom, unknown, but apparently by folk who objected to their erection.

MOUNT FAIRWEATHER, 1958

By D. Moore

At the northern extremity of the Alaska Panhandle towers a grand and beautiful mountain. It is 15,300 ft.-high Mt. Fairweather, situated about 12 miles from the coast.

The Alaska-B.C. border forms a sharp corner at the summit. This would seem to diminish the claim that it is the highest mountain in B.C. However, the elegance and stature of the peak are untouched by that political irrelevancy. Since we only required the use of the summit for a short time and carried no idea of ownership, we didn't pursue the legality of the thing too energetically. Moreover, since the trip was by invitation and, therefore, virtually without cost, it would have been gauche to fuss over that aspect of things.

The climb was made in June 1958 and the reason for that is a little unusual. Nineteen fifty-eight was a year of celebration and public rejoicing in British Columbia for it was 100 years since the formation of the Province—legally speaking, of course. Thus, 1958 was termed the centennial year and a state of excitement prevailed. Much of this was, no doubt, contrived to improve business but some was due to an innocent enough sense of exultation. This was expressed in a variety of ways. It came about that the B.C. Centennial Organization indicated they would look with favour on 'a major mountaineering expedition.' Not only look with favour but actually participate by giving money. This improbable

association of political revelry with mountaineering, while welcome enough, is fairly new. Possibly this sensation was first made available to the human race from the coincidence of news of success on Everest with a certain coronation.

By whatever chain of events, the Government of B.C. did pay out money for the purpose of having a mountain climbed. I am happy to report these enlightened legislators are still in power.

The party was to be drawn from, and organised by, the two established climbing organizations in B.C., the Vancouver section of the Canadian Alpine Club and the B.C. Mountaineering Club; four members from each club were selected. Certain ancillaries were to be on hand. Two amateur radio operators were to establish a station on the coast near Mt. Fairweather. The climbing party was to communicate with them by portable radio at pre-scribed intervals. The beach station with its more powerful equipment would be able to communicate with civilization. This channel reduced the hazards of isolation and provided an outlet for information about the climb.

Two other ancillaries were a couple of alert young fellows employed by the Canadian Broadcasting Station. One of them was the boss, as I understood it, and gave directions to the other. The boss was officially known as the producer and the other fellow was a camera man.

Yes, television.

Fortunately, it was not too difficult to dissuade them from going beyond the base camp. There were thus twelve in the party.

The mountain had been only climbed once previously, in 1931 by the Americans Dr. Terris Moore and the late Alan Carpe. They had poor weather and we planned to follow the same general line on the mountain as they had done.

We left Vancouver on the morning of June 16, in an R.C.A.F. flying boat. It was a cloudless day and after a very prolonged trundle the machine became airborne. We swept out over the Strait of Georgia, turning at once to the Northwest. Vancouver slid out of view on our right. We were embarked on a 900-mile journey to Alaska. The Gulf Islands were a velvety green in the sparkling morning ocean. On our right were the fjord-like inlets of the mainland, still in shadow and filled with the morning haze, while the slanting light caught the nearest stands of timber on the promontories. Beyond these and separating them from the sky were the snow fields of the coast range with rocky summits jutting starkly into the clear air. Grand in scale and form, but subtle in colouring, the interest was sustained. Mt. Waddington, with its twin summits, was easily seen above its neighbours. After a re-fuelling stop in the Queen Charlotte Islands we landed at Juneau in heavy rain.

We were soon milling around in old army huts on the edge of the field. Much talking between crew and weather men, uncertain talk with customs and immigration men. They are always least warm among the welcomers. Papers and forms were displayed and approved. Two of us were corralled by a southern-voiced gent murmuring something about visas which we required. We were led off to a sparsely-appointed chamber with the traditional solitary bulb. Necessary forms were completed after a few questions, although the décor promised a more robust interrogation. It was late afternoon, but we set off on the last 100-odd miles to Lituya Bay, a narrow inlet 20 miles south of Fairweather itself. This bay opens to the ocean by a narrow passage through which each tide races briskly. Two glaciers empty into small side arms 10 miles in at the landward end. The sides of the bay are steep and wooded there but for a mile or so at the seaward end are relatively flat. Apart from a spit which curves out to form the northern side of the entrance, all is heavily wooded right to the beach.

Our first attempt to land failed because of fog. We retired to an emergency landing field for the night. Next day our first attempt at least gave us a glimpse of the bay but very low clouds prevented a safe approach. Back to Juneau, more gas. Next time we swept in easily to land on the bay near its mouth. Ourselves and equipment were ferried by inflatable rubber dinghies. During moments of unemployment one could recline on the wing and enjoy the sounds and the smells of this little-visited wilderness.

The plot now was to establish our radio camp at the bay and take ashore such supplies as we needed for the walk-in to base camp. Then, whenever the weather was suitable the aircraft was to parachute our main supplies on to the glacier near the base of Fairweather.

Next morning we were off. We had just over 10 miles to walk up the coast to the river flowing from the Fairweather glacier; then about the same distance inland and up the glacier itself. We expected to be impeded by the vegetation and were agreeably surprised to find a very substantial animal trail. The chief commuters were clearly heavy large-footed bears who had pounded the earth into a firm surface. The going was very easy, steadily through the woods with an occasional creek crossing for interest. Also, one or two detours on to the beach where Bruin had deemed the bush unsuitable.

A carpet of tall wild lupins added a touch of delicate colouring to the bolder shades of the woods and foreshore. Wild strawberry plants abounded. Our drowsy enjoyment of all this was ended by glimpsing our flying boat approaching. The portable radio was portable by pre-space-age standards only and was, in fact, a substantial wooden box, but this seemed a good time to try it. We

were agreeably surprised to find ourselves in easy communication with the crew. They reported having successfully dropped the supplies at a site of their choice, having seen too many open crevasses at the previously selected spots. (This was the first time we became aware of a lack of snow on the glaciers).

Early the following day in faultless weather we had our first view of the peak, a noble and well-proportioned mountain which stirred us into full wakefulness. We now left the beach for the pathless bush with all its singular little challenges. All the delights of North America in the raw were there, dead falls, slide alder, and devil's club. We pushed, crawled, fell, and were subject to tantalisingly real hallucinations of uncluttered moorlands. We got off lightly; this part was short. We were soon on the dry glacier and into the alpine world although only a few hundred feet above sea level. We bivouacked just short of the ice.

Next day we were soon on to the ice. The snout was much ribbed and riven. Once on the level surface above it, we could see the very great bulk of Mt. Fairweather, and the proposed route. Its length seemed enormous and the general angle of the lower half appeared steep. The final part up to the shoulder presented a steep triangle of snow several hundred feet high. At present the going was easy. Level ice and no crevasses made for rapid progress up the middle of this immense glacier. After some eight miles we came to the bottom of the first icefall, an impossible-looking jumble of seracs and crevasses. We eased over to the left bank, hoping to find a convenient moraine.

After climbing far up the adjacent hillside to avoid a difficulty we found our way effectively blocked by a side creek. We had to return and make the best of things on the glacier edge. On the first ascent in 1931 the party skied straight up and down the middle of the glacier, including both ice falls. In 1958 the ice was innocent of useable snow and our route-finding problems were much different.

From the top of a bluff we identified our supplies, still two hours distant. The cloud base was now down to about 1000 ft. above the level of the upper glacier. Directly below us lay the wildly-contorted surface of the first icefall. Ahead lay a large rognon and beyond that the upper icefall. This led to the upper glacier, where only the lowest buttress of the Carpe route appeared below the lowering mist. It presented a wild and sombre scene.

Slabs and rubble led us to the top of a snow field which swept a few hundred feet down to the glacier, its surface undulating and much crevassed. Few of the crevasses were evident and many of their bridges were inadequate. The humour of the frequent disappearances which followed enlivened a rather dull evening. However, progress was much slowed and it seemed an age before the supplies were reached.

Even the tents and a few other necessary items took a while to collect. However safe dropping through a snow bridge may be, it still is inelegant, unexpected, and takes time to reverse. We never got used to it. A sort of camp was established and soon it rained and the snow-proof tents leaked, partly at least. We fell into innocent slumber.

The next days started gloomily with wind and rain. Possibly due to some lack of conversational dexterity I spent it on the tea chest chore. None had been lost and, surprisingly, none were damaged. The parachutes were a bonus and put to good use in interior and exterior decoration. A reconnaissance party returned with good news. They had climbed the slopes on the landward side of our glacial tributary for about 800 ft. and then traversed towards the main glacier, reaching it two thirds up the second icefall. A further few hundred feet on the edge of the icefall required care. They were then on the upper glacier, across which they could see the lower buttress of the Carpe route. Because the crevassed upper glacier would be time-consuming, they thought our permanent base should be on the hillside they had just descended, 800 ft. of scree and snow above us, at an altitude of about 4000 ft. So we scuttled up and down with load after load until we found ourselves established at our new base.

When the weather improved we had a dramatic view down the glacier to the Pacific beyond. On the right lay the upper icefall and towering over it all the huge mass of Mt. Fairweather itself. Size alone is intimidating. The position proved excellent for the radio, too, and we spoke easily with the beach station. We also had good reception of local daily weather bulletins from the Alaskan meteorological services, kindly arranged for our party.

Next day all were engaged in a combined route-finding and portering move to the foot of the climb. After the traverse to the icefall and the ascent to the upper glacier the difficulties began. There was little snow and it was never well frozen at that height. On both sides of the glacier the lateral crevasses were almost impassable and required the greatest care. The middle third of the stream held more snow but detours and zigzagging were constantly necessary even there. One had to keep very alert, and even then self-confessed experts would still occasionally slide from view; however, all were recovered. The situation was now exciting. The upper glacier was bordered by four enormous mountains varying in height from 10 - 13,000 ft. At that time all were unclimbed and two unnamed. They are mountains of great beauty and bold line and they regenerated that ineluctable force which had driven us there in the first place. We turned to Mt. Fairweather itself and were soon absorbed in probable and possible lines. Discussion was brisk.

We were to climb in two groups of four, taking to the mountain 24 hours apart. The first party was to climb and establish a camp at the end of the day. Next day the second party was to go to that camp site while the first party could then either establish a higher camp or try for the summit from the existing camp. In fact, the first party made their camp as planned. Then followed a night and day of snow. Thus, on Day 2 nobody moved because of the weather. The third day was good, so Party 1 elected to go for the summit while Party 2 climbed the first part of the mountain to the camp. On Day 4 at 3 a.m., Party 2 set out for the summit as Party 1 returned to the high camp. Later that day Party 1 descended to base and about 1 a.m. on the fifth day Party 2 returned to the high camp from the summit.

To look up at a long but little-known route is exciting. Although I climbed with the second party, it was with more than a tingle of anticipation that we left the glacier. The first great black buttress was joined after about 400 ft. on a moderate snow slope. The rock was loose but not of great difficulty. We had packs of about 40 lb. and reached the crest of the first rocks unroped. Then we put on the rope, and cramponed up. The surface was chiefly névé but sometimes ice lightly covered by partly-adherent powder. No liberties could be taken. We moved together, mostly without requiring to cut steps. We followed this small hanging glacier between the two spines of the ridge for several hundred feet. Ahead lay a high ice cliff and much debris from it surrounded us. We avoided this on the right, up a very steep snow slope with a final awkward move across a bergschrund.

The crampons came off and a long section of variable rock followed, a series of steps and corners, the steeper pitches being separated by passages where we could move together. Off to our right in a riven gulch lay the debris from several hanging glaciers. Beyond that another enormous ridge curled its way upward. Its lower section was largely rock with snow above running into the central bulk of the mountain. Quite a feasible route, too. Behind and below us the main Fairweather glacier with its very numerous crevasses slowly sank away. On and up, never too difficult, but becoming increasingly exposed, the climbing demanded full attention. We were still on the right hand of the two rock ribs which formed the ridge, with occasional short passages back on the glacier. By afternoon the snow was mushy.

At last, after numerous disappointments, the tents were suddenly in view. Their situation was startling. They were perched on the rock ledge on the top of a very high crag. Above them was a steep ice slope. They were dug in a few feet apart, door to door, facilitating communication and trading between them. We were soon lying back in luxurious squalor. Someone soliloquised on the plight

of the Pennsylvania coal miners but this raised no sympathy at all. A large hash was soon ready and consumed with abandoned enthusiasm. Day turned to dusk, but there was no real darkness as we retired for the night. In spite of all the uncertainties of such a camp we slept as though clubbed.

Somewhere after 2 a.m. we groped and grovelled to cook and prepare for the day. As the last of the coffee was being swilled down voices and a scrabbling were heard above. The first party were in the tents just as we were ready to leave. This precise timing was accidental but fortunate: it was no place to have four men in a two-man tent. They had made the summit and were wildly enthusiastic about the climb. Their ebullience was astounding and infectious but their dried faces and tired eyes revealed a great fatigue. We wished them a good sleep and turned to the mountain ourselves.

We could just see the seracs and crevasses in the gloom some 2000 ft. below, while ahead the steep névé rose sharply. The machine wasn't warmed up. The first three rope lengths were hesitant and insecure. There was ice with a thin layer of poorly-adherent granules. No security was possible. We cramponed, scrabbled a bit and kept moving up together. There was a long way to go and comforting thoughts of ice pitons were firmly suppressed. After what seemed an age the angle eased and we were on snow. Now that the difficulty had fallen to the level of the technique in use we began to enjoy the position. The snow was delightfully solid and we swung back and forth amongst crevasses. Perfect snow for crampons, with occasional steeper pitches requiring the axe.

We were on a small hanging glacier with a ridge of rock on our left. After an hour or so we found ourselves easing on to the crest of the ridge proper. The snow remained perfect and as it steepened we used axe belays. In the improving light the enormous size of the mountain, its other ridges, and the great glaciated basins between became evident. The morning was still grey and cold, we felt dwarfed, and after three steady hours began to realize there was still a very long way to go. For breakfast we perched on a dry and cold rock piercing the snow. There was no serious wind but the morning chill had the world in its grip. It was a bleak meal. We were near the base of the prominent snow triangle which we had noted provided access to the upper mountain. We had pondered its angle and quality on the walk-in, realizing it could present a severe difficulty in adverse snow conditions. Happily, the excellent snow we were on continued up this crucial passage. A high angle was sustained for several hundred feet but we were able to ascend rapidly, climbing through on convincing axe belays. Firm but narrow steps were easily cut. Finally, the angle eased to a fine snow ridge of inviting beauty.

The sun was now up. The scintillating brilliance of the névé, the crunching of our boots, and the rhythm of our breath were as balm to our souls. The magic which we cannot resist was on us and we abandoned ourselves to it.

This was a moment to look about. We were something above mid-height on the mountain and thus able to appreciate the heights and depth to the full. Below, a tongue of cloud extending from the patchy overcast of the ocean reached as far as the second icefall on a level with our base camp. Seemingly directly below our boots and 7000 ft. down were the rows of open crevasses of the upper Fairweather glacier. Beyond were Mt. Sabine (10,500 ft.) and Mt. Lituya (11,700 ft.), and an unnamed peak of great elegance at the head of the glacier. To our right the bulk of Mt. Quincy Adams still towered over us with its 13,500 ft. summit. The sky above was a solid blue and a few fronds of cirrus cloud resulted in some meteorological jargon being aired. As in the utterances of physicians the theory and jargon were colourful and convincing but the prognostication equivocal.

We were over 10,000 ft. and, not being used to the height, the pace slowed. The sun was now beating on us, bringing glare and heat as further increments of physical distress. For a long way there were no great difficulties, steepish snow slopes at times and narrow crests at others. Exposure was there all the time. The hours raced by and the pace slowed further as height was gained. Fatigue and thirst arrived and the first high careless rapture faded.

At 14,000 ft. the thing had become a grim struggle to keep going, the summit a cheerless abstraction to which we were committed by some ill-perceived determinism. Now there was wind and cold, and shortly we were confronted by an ice nose which had to be overcome to make the final summit cone. It took a long time in spite of the ascent of the previous day. Much cutting and scraping. I recall we even had to use an ice piton to secure one move. This pitch had everything we didn't need just then. Above were frozen wind-pack and some ice. The last few hundred feet seemed to last for ever. A small ice cloud developed at the very top. During a few minutes of dutiful photography the wind chilled us beyond belief. By the time we turned to the descent our boots had frozen to the consistency of steel. The ice pitch was no less grim than before.

It was early evening and there were some 6000 ft. down to the high camp. The ecstasy of descent was never sweeter. Evening wore on and the frozen snow glowed pink as the sun slowly sank.

The ocean's cloud cover was now solidly sealing us in the mountain world. The upper surface was at about 8000 ft. and glowed red. The sky above had become a dark steely grey. To the north-

west the peak of St. Elias, remote and proud, stood king of its alpine domain.

The deteriorating quality of the snow forced our attention to matters more immediate. We were operating in a foot of wet snow on very hard névé. The descent of the great snow triangle was a slithering compromise between speed and safety with neither object being achieved. In the dimming twilight we passed through the crevassed zone just above the camp. As the heaviest member I spent a lot of time being tugged from collapsed snow bridges.

At the ice slope above the now visible tents the surface was so appalling that a bivouac was suggested. It was almost 1 a.m. and we had less than 400 ft. to go. A staccato debate followed with words of such economy and relevance that a decision to continue down was reached in about half a minute. This slope was the only dangerous part of the climb. Its surface of crumbling ice defied adequate treatment. We were very tired, having been climbing for over 20 hours. We pinned our faith on one large ice piton half way down and shut our minds to the lethal possibilities of the abyss. It is strange how the possibility of disaster can be so easily shut out. If scribes and scholars represent it as courage, it would be clumsy to argue. A trick of the mind, fleeting, positive, and effective, it provides an aura of indestructibility. In retrospect this sham immunity is seen as it really is but magically this doesn't prevent it working on a later occasion.

We reached the tents and slept deeply until the sun was well up. Our thoughts turned to our piton, that Tiger's Badge, and the chore of retrieving it. Then there was a rattle. The weight of the rope had overcome its uncertain hold. Our equipment was thus returned automatically.

After fourteen hours of plodding we reached base at 1 a.m. In explosive jubilation rum and rescue flares were consumed with equal abandon.

Other climbs were made. Two members made an elegant first ascent of Mount Sabine. The remainder of the party failed very near the summit of Mt. Lituya due to dangerously crumbling ice. Unusually warm weather and poor snow conditions made us leave for the beach earlier than planned. We left a cache of food and gas at the base but took out up to 70 lbs. each, and unassailably hairy-chested men were heard to groan. The return to the land of the now ripe wild strawberries and the sea shore was a return to the living world.

In imagination the luxuries, comforts, and security of the beach camp had reached Hiltonian grandeur. Our faithful radio men whom we had chatted to almost daily acted host. They prepared food and assisted us in erecting our tents. A small lake provided

the first bath in three weeks. For the serious gentlemen about Alaska this could be followed by a short and uncertain exposure beneath a home-made shower. A shave and reapplication of mosquito ointment completed things. High-consumption society had not yet made after-shave lotion generally available. Life proceeded at a leisurely pace till after dinner and conversation was remodelling recent events into suitable shape for the raconteur.

We expected the plane the following morning and so were surprised to hear it suddenly burst around a promontory. We ambled to the beach, where the word was to pack up and move at once. At a time when a well-loaded digestion would demand a quiet stroll along the evening beach we found ourselves driven into feverish activity. One felt resentful. This was not a place to leave in haste. The prospect of being thrown into an unanticipated swinging evening in downtown Juneau was too great an adjustment to make without notice.

Nonetheless, tents, tea chests and other paraphernalia were folded, packed, loaded and carried. In sweat and hustling exhortations we paddled out to the flying boat rolling on the black swell of the bay. The pace was feverish, we were like pirates rushing from the beach of a treasure island.

Numbled by the rush we strapped in as the plane taxied a long way down the bay. After a period of great noise and having moved enormous quantities of air and water we flew out over the spit.

There were fishing boats in the bay. The crew of one of them was drowned after the boat was washed right over the spit on a tidal wave which swept down the bay during our flight to Juneau. At that moment we were enjoying the flight in the untroubled evening air down that unbelievable mountain coast. We were unaware of their bodies mingling with the flotsam as we approached Juneau.

The ground trembled and the car lurched as we rode to town from the air field. It was then we learned of the earthquake, only as it was subsiding. A freighter at the dock side was still rolling as we burst through the swing doors. There it all was, sawdust, games of chance, a very long bar, wagon wheels, and other souvenirs of a not-too-distant past. By way of entertainment a seventy-year old *chanteuse* belted out a song.

There had been a movement of the Fairweather fault of over 20 ft. horizontally and 3 ft. vertically. The centre near the landward end of Lituya Bay caused a huge slide of rock and ice into the water there. This in turn formed an enormous wave which reached an unprecedented 1700 ft. above the normal water level, sweeping the forest clear off the first bluff it met leaving only bare glistening rock for all that height.

The wave, contained by the hilly sides of the bay, swept seaward, diminishing, to strip the timber above our recent camp site. There is little doubt that we would not have survived had we stayed there for a further hour or so. The earthquake measured 8 on the Richter scale at Pasadena in California.

Having acquired the indifference of the rocks which had spawned us we enjoyed our night on the town. Indeed, such a crushing reminder of our temporary estate here made every breath the sweeter.

THE THIN RED LINE

By Brian Robertson

AFTER completing most of the hard routes on Beinn Trilleachan Slabs (known locally as the Etive Slabs) I felt that I had an intimate knowledge of them and had learnt to move from a 'smooth A' to a 'smooth B' without losing cohesion. When climbing on the Slabs, to lose cohesion simply means an enforced run to prevent losing balance before the ropes take the strain, and as the minimum fall on the slabs is forty feet one tries not to lose contact with the rock too often.

Climbing on the Etive Slabs is in my opinion unique, as unique as gritstone climbing in England or hard ice-climbing in Scotland; each requires its own grading system and is a specialist section of the sport of mountaineering.

I had a dream. My dream was to create a route, a girdle of the Etive Slabs. The route would not, by any stretch of imagination, follow a natural feature of the cliff, but on the slabs few climbs are able to follow any line or feature. True it did not conform to the classic method of creating routes, but if I may quote the late great Robin Smith, 'You gotta go with the times.'

With Bugs McKeith, the 'Magic climber,' we reached the Claw—moving from left to right. Very soon however I realised that by moving in that direction the pleasure of surmounting the big overlaps of Hammer and Agony would be denied to us, so it was decided that we would climb in the opposite direction.

One Saturday morning in 1966 the good weather in Glencoe drew Mike Galbraith and me away to the slabs. Mike, one of the up and coming hard men, completed the second ascent of Valkyrie with apparent ease—a good candidate for the girdle. It rained during the night but the morning was clear and sunny. Before we left the Drey—the Squirrels' hut in Glencoe—we knew that it would be impossible to complete the girdle because of the rain, but we could at least add yet another section to it that day.

Two weeks later Galbraith and I descended from the wild lights of Ullapool to the big smoke of Edinburgh for a party organised by two V.S. birds. After the party the big lights of London drew Mike away to make some silver for the Alps. However Brian (Killer) Henderson and Paul Nunn were making their way up to Edinburgh, with the prospects of fantastic new routes, on Friday night. Two o'clock struck from the Tron Kirk and no desperadoes appeared. Two policemen eyed me suspiciously as they made their way towards Holyrood Palace; one hour later they had just returned when two haggard faces grinned from the window of a beaten grey Morris van wheezing across the road.

Under the hot sun in Glen Etive, Killer complained of a broken back. This, understandably, prevented him from taking part in the first section of the girdle, but the next day—in spite of it being the Sabbath—he agreed to help us along with the second. So Nunn and I set off for the climb. This would be the very first time that Nunn had set foot on the slabs and he was 'looking forward to some easy-angled slab climbing.'

On the extreme right of the slabs, he started the show off by leading the first pitch, and as usual 150 feet of rope was just sufficient to reach the stance. The first pitch was tricky in some places but technically easy (Etive Slabs standard). Nunn led to just below some big overlaps, and taking a good selection of nuts and American pitons I moved up and left carefully placing my 'P.A.'s on the surface of the slabs. After 20 minutes I was on the Spartan Slab, however only for a short distance as I had to move left to a small overlap (this section from Spartan was previously climbed with Galbraith). This small overlap and the slab above to the small heather ledge were more awkward than hard mainly due to the drag of the rope. Four 'tied-off' coupled American pegs on one 'dead' crack were the belay. Meanwhile two parties of Aberdonians were pegging Spartan Slab and falling off the Hammer. Paul arrived at the heather stance with tales of a very near miss from a big ex-W.D. peg dropped from the leading Aberdonian cordée.

Henderson one mile away down at the pier at Loch Etive had found another use for his high powered binoculars. Quite by chance he had noticed some young ladies bathing in the nude and he informed us over the walkie-talkie that his broken back was even worse, so he would take a gentle walk and find out if they, the ladies, belonged to anybody.

More climbing litter came whistling past us and Nunn thought it would be safer to move on. The pitch that followed was a good medium V.S. but with an unusual feature—protection. Nunn, who was just beginning to get acclimatised to this form of climbing, made short work of the pitch. After that relatively easy pitch the first

major barrier was before us. Technically it exceeded any climbing I had previously done on the slabs. I laced my 'P.A.'s even tighter and selected the equipment necessary for protection—one baby nylon sling and a karabiner. The lads in red who had watched the first ascent of this pitch with Galbraith perched themselves on heather ledges like vultures waiting and hoping for a little gay excitement provided by me. Unfortunately the vultures were disappointed, but on more than one section I thought it would be otherwise. Now Mr. Nunn is a very cunning climber; when starting the thin section he left one rope through the only runner, thus giving himself a type of fixed rope to be used if necessary. Fifty feet from me he found it necessary. It was now very late for the pub. Over the radio, Killer was asked to prepare a brew as we were coming off. We fixed our two single perlon ropes from the stance to a grass rake 50 feet above and to the left of the big lunch stone at the foot of the slabs. Tomorrow it would be easy to prusik our 300 foot rope and continue the climb.

On Sunday morning the method of climbing the fixed ropes was greeted by jeers from the Glasgow climbers, but of course anything unusual introduced by climbers outside the Glasgow area is greeted similarly by this micro-élite, so we tried not to pay too much attention. Killer found out that the birds were Aberdonian property so his broken back made a swift recovery and in 30 minutes all three of us had arrived at the stance. Earlier we had agreed that the rope would be as follows—Robertson, Henderson and Nunn. I bumped off heading left on a short but thin section to the quartz-band of Swastika and then to the 4th belay stance of the Valkyrie where the first protection was established. I belayed 60 feet above the runner on a tremendous flake below a large overlap after a tight 150 feet pitch. Unfortunately Killer's back was playing up and he said he was not a fast runner so he abseiled off to watch the fun. Paul found it difficult to follow having festooned himself with all the artificial equipment we considered necessary to overcome the big overlap ahead. The great weight of gear must have either tired him or affected his balance as he found insurmountable difficulties on the V.S. overlap above the belay.

The second major barrier was the huge overhanging corner near the top of the dièdre called Agony—Agony is the first vertically running corner encountered on the girdle. The climb follows the giant corner but avoids the overhanging corner, and follows an easier, more logical line. The beautiful crack that follows the corner was surely designed for the American Chouinard angles and hanging from the first 'pin' my body was completely free from the rock. This position would have taken a good photograph if it was not for the fact that the only camera was hanging tangled amidst piles of assorted slings and nuts around my neck. Near the top of the corner, four angles later, the crack lost itself in a small recess and to

insert a piton there would mean the loss of one angle. After some hard physical and mental work I wriggled two nuts into the crack, clipped in, reached over the lip and hammered a large leaf-peg right up to the hilt. On the slabs above by way of a 'bong,' I hung from slings. An unusual belay for the slabs but nevertheless safe. Nunn depegged in a very short time, requiring very little tension on the rope from above, showing one of his many expert climbing qualities.

We were now level with the big ring-peg on the Hammer corner only 50 feet away. Between us and the peg lay a very hard slab; falling here would mean plopping over the big corner possibly resulting in a very serious injury. I found that the only possible protection that could be arranged before reaching the ring-peg and easy ground were two tied-off crack tacks. Now the idea was to abseil down the corner to the small tree and stance 40 feet below (the third belay on the Hammer) and then if possible climb straight up to Claw corner. Nunn, resembling Father Christmas with all the gear hanging from him, to save time swung from peg to peg into the corner, then descended from the fixed peg to join an Aberdonian and me at the tree for late lunch.

Ahead was the third and final barrier—the big vertical wall between the Hammer and the Claw. Now a rope from Edinburgh—Ice King J. Marshall and the Giantkiller D. Bathgate—had, only a fortnight before, pierced this section to continue Marshall's route, Grasshopper. From the tree a short but very hard left traverse ended below an open groove on the big vertical wall joining the Claw corner some sixty feet above. For a few metres there were no holds of the usual type but there were nests of small downward-pointing flakes. I could just jam my thumbs underneath the flakes and use them as sort of pinch holds sufficient to move to a small jug high up in the left. My 'P.As.' gripped well on good wrinkles. A few strenuous moves and I was at the Claw clipped to a good peg left by some fine fellow. We'll have that later! The overhanging corner that followed had a great lay-back crack. Before starting the crack it was possible to fix two magnificent jammed-nut runners; unfortunately the crack and the nearby rock had been scarred by piton marks which tended to spoil the situation. Quick precise lay-back moves brought me to a good ledge at the top of the corner with a good thread runner for a belay and I knew now that when Paul arrived the route was cracked. A little tight on the rope assisted Paul who was still carrying all of the artificial gear on the hard section of the wall. Yet another demonstration, only this time it was finger jamming in the lay-back corner. Reaching the ledge he presented me with his chain of office—the gear—and wandered left to the belay on Jaywalk. (With Bugs, two years ago I had completed this section, of course in the reverse direction).

Only then, when I followed Nunn, did I realise how difficult it was to complete reasonably simple slab moves dressed like a Victorian livingroom wall.

We had now climbed the main difficulties of the route and were left with the final slab pitch which led into the great Eden of Sickle. A magnificent volley of English oaths issued from Nunn as he battled with bushes and sliding heather while trying to claw his way out of the Sickle looking for rock. At last he found rock in the form of a short wall which brought him to the end of the climb. I followed, uttering better Scottish oaths as I slid on the wet grass and the artificial gear entangled itself in what I suspect were cacti. Before the final wall I found my right hand firmly stuck in a bush. While retrieving my paw I almost fell, grasping in my left hand coils of rope and in my right hand the bush.

The climb which, for a period of two years I had been on and off with many friends (Galbraith, Harper, Haston, McKeith, Holt and McKecheran), was finished. It had offered 1530 feet of sustained Very Severe slab work, with one artificial A2 pitch midway. Coiling the ropes and packing the equipment I had the same feeling as when Bathgate and I stood on the summit of the Dru after completing the West face: a climb which had been only a dream till that moment.

EXPOSTULATION WITH CRUACHAN

TUNE : Into thir dark and drublie dayis

Of Crechanben the crewilte,
The driftis dreich, the hichtis hie,
It sair wald tene my tong to tell ;
Quha suld reherss thy painis fell
Forgaitheris with the frenesie.

With fensom feiris thou art forfairn,
Ay yowland lyk ane busteous bairn ;
With mauchie mistis thy mirth is marrit,
With skowland skyis the spreit is skarrit,
And seitis ar cauld upon thy cairn.

Quhair is thy lown illuminat air,
Thy fre fassoun, thy foirheid fair ?
Quhair is thy peirles pulchritude ?
Quhy stayis thou nocht as anis thou stude,
Quhy girnis and greitis thou evermair ?

Return agane fra drowpand dule !
Restoir thy pure wayfarand fule,
And lat him se thee quhair thou smylis,
With Mul, Arane, and the Owt-Ylis,
Into the lufsom licht of Yule.

Quod KER.

(From the S.M.C. Journal, vi (1900), 52 ; composed by Professor Ker after two wet days on the mountain during the New Year Meet).

A HARD DAY'S NIGHT

By Hamish M. Brown

A RETURN to a distant range is perhaps even more satisfying than a first exploration. The mystery is gone, but the expectancy greater.

So it proved as we woke by the roadside and looked down to Marrakech and across to the silver rim of Atlas Mountains beyond the Haouz Plain. So it proved as we arrived back at Imlil and our Berber friends greeted us. So it proved as we stood again on the Tizi n' Tamatert, the high pass leading to Tacheddirt.

Tacheddirt is a chockstone hamlet (7520 ft.) stuck in the wedge of valley between the massive faces of Angour and Aksoual. Outside it there is an old C.A.F. hut. Each year it was our first forward base. From it, we had set out to the big rock routes of Angour ; from it, we had tried a route on Aksoual and were home, defeated, in time for breakfast.

With Roger Whewell and two others I first saw Aksoual from the Tizi nou Addi, where we had come from Oukaïmeden on a reconnaissance while waiting for our 'luggage in advance' to catch up. We had already been cut down to size but had not learnt our lesson. All the way down to the hut, we gazed across to the big face : a serrated arc across the blaze of blue, from which tumbled gullies and ridges, white and deep-covered with snow.

'We could go up that ridge, traverse along, and down that ridge there . . . ' Only slowly did it dawn that 'that ridge' was five thousand feet above the river and our gay traverse several miles of airy arc. But we tried.

We were up mere minutes after going to bed, and in ripe moonlight stumbled down to the river and round into the valley from which rose our ridge—the longest and most central.

We cramponed fast up the hard snows of the apron foot of the ridge. It then became narrower but seldom difficult, merely hair-raising where steep pitches bore downy powder or tight ice. But gradually the crust broke beneath our tread, gradually the shadows faded. Dawn dipped the shadows into the glen—and us with them. For we had ground to a halt, thigh deep in the soft stuff . . . As we descended, the snow hardened once more; we are still puzzled at the strange inversion of conditions. Atlas snow obeys no principles learnt elsewhere. We were back by six-thirty—and for 'festering' Tacheddirt excels: ninety on the terrasse in January.

Whewell is essentially a rock man and when we returned the next year, he was beguiled by Angour. There was less snow than for any January in twenty years. But, being a dour Scot and a snow slave, I found Aksoual, still white, irresistible. So, fit from a traverse of Angour, Colin Firth and I prepared for it.

The main gullies or valleys had already been climbed, presumably in summer or spring. The ridges were untouched, though Tom Weir's party had picked a fine arête near the top after going up a valley. So that ridge was ruled out. But Weir's article, (*S.M.C.J.*, xxvi (1957), 138; one of the few enthusiastic on a fine area) and his and Gavin Maxwell's slides helped our expedition to grow. Comforting to know Scots had plugged down to the river, too, and round into Aksoual's heart.

We went up the glen past the apron that had been the foot of the Great North Ridge the year before: dirty old ice and jumbles of rock and a smell of decay. Farther on, the river was split by a wall which barred progress. The left gully was a deep ice cleft with the stream spurting from a snow bridge. We found a boulder to divert any descending scree and bivouacked under it.

After dark a chill wind blew down off the snowy slopes and we lay and chattered at the stars, even Tiso sacks and cagoules failing to hold the balance of comfort.

After dawn we started up right of the barrier and for the next two hours were on a fine arête leading to the main ridge—a more enjoyable start than the previous straight plod. The side walls of the ridges themselves were big buttresses or icy chimneys; dozens of routes, all unexplored. My notes were brief: 'Easy to chimney turned on left or on right. Round and up snow-filled grooves, then nice 700 ft. chimney; cairn built. Then over sneck, on same line up snow and then chimney on to rake across prominent tower, 600 ft. Climbed by chimney with nice traverse round and up, to follow edge of crest to main ridge, another 600 ft., or so.' The rock was very loose in places; the Atlas were prickly too . . .

Memories are mixed after that, but I can recall a semi-layback up a flake soon after and hoping the flake would remain adherent.

The drops on either side were already impressive: on the right steep sweeping snow, on the left steeper crags—a big Tower Ridge. We moved unroped over odd little rocks until the swing right where we had bogged down the year before.

Then many little technical problems gave fun. We found ourselves on top of a shoogly pinnacle, very exposed indeed; the Atlas abound in splendid situations. We had a break there. We could look down to our wandering footprints and far below to the mini-hut by the smoky village.

Roped, we moved across the big snowfield to a succession of towers, the feature of the climb. The first had several pitches and was followed by a sneck of snow leading to the second, climbed by a shallow gully and a slab to its left. The third was broken and loose and we cut round its right side—across powdery deep snow and up loose slabs. Nerve-fraying stuff, with no security; I simply stamped the snow down and gingerly stood on it, step after tiring step, Colin tip-toeing after. Below us the slope swept down out of sight. Fortunately, it did not avalanche!

At three o'clock we were staring at the fourth tower. It was big, too big; we were tired, with little time and heavy sacks. Discretion prevailed—regretted ever since, for a great groove ran up from right to left, several hundred feet, steep, magnificent and direct.

We traversed right (left led to a sheer wall above the other gully, beyond which lay Weir's ridge). After a long steep traverse we broke back over snow and rocky steps to the ridge, which led easily to the foot of the summit crags at their lowest, northern end. It was very Scottish in character, delightfully varied—but not greatly appreciated. We were very tired. Gladly we skirted the top crags into the sun, to unrope and plod wearily upwards. Scree. Snow. But the snow improved and I enjoyed a spell of step cutting before the summit scramble to 12,714 ft., at 5 p.m.

Later we estimated our route at 7000 ft., and all scepticism has failed to reduce it. We simply were not used to the scale; we still innocently hoped to reach the Tizi n' Likemt in the remaining light.

We moved off along the boulders and snow crest visible from the hut. Gradually we lost the race. The sun set. We brewed and moved on by torchlight. Past a dip. Then the gendarmes—every sort and size, fine scrambling under the blaze of stars, I suppose. I was too tired to enjoy it and Colin was nearing exhaustion. When we found a sandy hollow on the crest we decided to bivouac—after all, we had brought gear and food. We settled down after a drink; in our hollow—Obadiah's 'nest among the stars'—with the night of Africa bright above. I found a new saxifrage and was content.

Two hours later, the stars had misted over and a dreich wind wound coldly round the spikes. We brewed and moved off. Colin was refreshed but my stomach tied knots.

One torch was failing. Some of the gendarmes were very big but never difficult. Lower down there may be an easy traverse, but it was deeply dark, so we continued on the ridge.

Slowly we drew the Tizi towards us, until at last the snow shot down on the left at a more reasonable angle. We took out axes and started down.

Neither in Scotland nor in the Alps had we met such a system : funnel after funnel, gully after gully, every kind of snow surface, twisting and turning. In the fitful moonlight it was magnificent. Being so narrow, we realized it was not the Tizi but an unknown route. On top of Atlas snow this certainly gave it mystery. With displeasure I watched Colin's torch flickering ahead—always ahead—while I grimly followed, body weary beyond belief, mind clear. I rested often and sucked sugary tablets till they were flour in my mouth.

Eventually we ran out of gullies and on to snow slopes. Beyond lay the shadow of rocks. There I would rest. Five minutes away.

Scale wrong again. Half an hour later, I threw myself down on the cold jumble while Colin made sweet lemon drinks, waking me to sip the scalding brew. An hour later, we set off again briskly. We hit a *seguia* (water channel) which contoured the glen, and reached the village about four o'clock. We set the Tacheddirt dogs howling at the clink of our axes as we twisted between the mud walls. Beasts moved in their stalls and their warm smell clung like a haar.

When we woke that afternoon, we looked up at Aksoual. Our route was clear. Our descent was down the hidden gully separating the top crags of No. 4 (Great) Buttress of Likempt and the lower ridges of it.

We named it 'Midnight Gully.' It had been a hard day's night.

KINDRED CLUBS

THE OCHILS MOUNTAINEERING CLUB, STIRLING

WHEN the august fathers of the S.M.C. asked for a potted history of our mob, we thought great, a grand idea. Then someone said 'Who'll write it?' Immediately, previous appointments were remembered and the room emptied rapidly leaving only the sick, the lame, and the lazy to their fate. Being neither sick nor lame, I was chosen to do the chore. Apart from being one of the few founder members left, it was reckoned that I could spell words like abseil, bivouac and Arivurichardich, and therefore had the advantage over the two who were still in the room.

In the beginning (1950), as the good Book says, there was a henhouse. I can hear you say, 'He's mad, what has a henhouse to do with climbing?' Well, tighten your belays and I'll tell you. Apart from the henhouse, there were four of us interested in climbing, hillwalking and generally getting away from 'it' at the week-ends. We founded a wee group and started to hold meetings in the said old henhouse which was situated in the historic village of Bannockburn where we all lived (or infested, depending on the point of view).

After two or three meetings we decided that other accommodation would have to be found as our shoes were becoming increasingly difficult to clean and one of the party had developed an aversion to eggs.

By this time we had discovered that a few lads in Stirling were of a like mind to ourselves and there appeared to be a possibility of founding a proper Club. Dr. J. H. B. Bell, who had discussed the matter with one fellow, suggested that we should try to start a branch of the J.M.C.S. or the S.M.T. or something in the area. But being independently minded we all decided to start our own outfit.

At the first meeting held in October 1950 in the Y.M.C.A. Rooms, Stirling, fifteen people were present and the Club was founded and committee elected. Naming it presented a difficulty. We had thought of the Stirling Mountaineering Club, but the initials posed an obvious problem

After some argument it was decided to use the name of our own rolling Ochils, not mountains indeed, but pleasant hills and a local name. So the Club was born, and a constitution later drawn up.

That New Year 1950-51, the first meet was held in Glencoe. Some of us had never been there before, but it was to be the first of many such New Years. I remember it as a wild, snowy New Year and by the fact that in our ignorance three of us were almost swept out of Bidean's Central Gully by a small powder snow avalanche.

The hills were not quite so busy then and everyone wore 'trikes' or clinkers in their boots. Ben A'an in the Trossachs, a popular rendezvous, entailed an eight-mile walk from Callander. There was, I think, one car in the whole Club and it was usual on a Sunday to walk from Callander to the Ben and back again. The hard tarmac was hell on 'trikes' so it was always a struggle to walk on the verges and protect boots from too much wear.

There were various 'hard' types who despised camping, probably because they didn't own tents, and one keen man slept beneath a rowing boat by Loch Voil for three nights and climbed all the Balquhidder/Crianlarich Munros. Another nut who for some reason known only to himself and Robert Louis Stevenson wanted to see the sun rise from Ben Venue, snatched a few hours' sleep behind a hedge on the Blair Drummond road. He awoke screaming, to find a cow standing astride him licking and slobbering over his face and flea-bag. There's no accounting for taste!

A story often retold with relish tells of the member aboard a Norwegian steamer who on being asked by a rather pukka English type, what his badge and initials O.M.C. stood for, informed the inquirer, 'Oxford Mountaineering Club,' then added, 'Cambridge can oar a boat nane.'

About two years after the Club started, members decided that it was time we had a hut, and the let of the cottage at Arivurichardich beneath Stuc a' Chroin was arranged. Paraffin heaters were carted up as firewood was a problem, and many a joyous week-end was spent in the cottage.

Unfortunately the area was limited to Stuc a' Chroin, Ben Each and Ben Vorlich and when these peaks were exhausted, week-ends tended to degenerate into card playing sessions. According to one writer, Arivurichardich is a corruption of Airidh Mhuirheartach—Muirheartach's Shiel, Muirheartach being old Gaelic for 'expert navigator'; he states that Moriarty' is the modern equivalent

Be that as it may, the cottage proved too easy of entry and all too often unauthorised intruders broke in and burned the farmer's fence stobs in the fire and did other damage. Of course the Club was blamed and we carried the proverbial can. We got tired of this and gave up the cottage and so were back where we started, with no club hut.

Some years later we acquired Inverardran cottage at Crianlarich and this has proved a great success. It has water, toilet and electric light and is available to members of other clubs. One can leave late on a Friday, stay there, and be in Glencoe early Saturday morning if you're an early riser.

As a small Club we have managed to survive when others have fallen; we have preserved our identity and run regular monthly meets. Our number has rarely been above 30, and women are allowed full membership. A popular feature is our annual dinner when an hotel is taken over for the week-end and members have dinner, bed and sometimes breakfast. These dinners have ranged from Stirling to Loch Laggan and are always well attended by members and friends.

Mountaineering has changed in the Club's short life; equipment has altered and improved and we practically can all afford sleeping bags now. Gone are the days of sleeping wrapped in an army gas-cape; now we have tents and all the kit, but maybe some of the fun has gone.

Over the years the Club has introduced many youngsters to climbing and taught them the rules of mountain safety and members have taken part in many rescues over the years, mainly in Glencoe and the Cairngorms. A few of the members are active in assisting the County's Duke of Edinburgh's Award Scheme and train participants in camping, map and compass work and survival technique.

One of us who achieved distinction in another sport was Andy Scott, a first-class rock climber who became one of Scotland's champion skiers and skied for the Army; he now works abroad. Another was Mike Ryan from

Bannockburn who ran in the Marathon at last year's Commonwealth Games—for New Zealand, where he now lives. Mike was one of the fastest men on the hill the Club ever had. No one could keep up with him. He once ran all the way from the top of Bynack Mòr to Glenmore Lodge to be in time for a lift.

There are few 'Tigers' in our ranks, but quite a few routes owe their existence to pioneering Club members. A great number of routes on Dumyat in the Ochils were put up by us and these on extremely friable rock. The S.M.C. guide to Ben Ledi lists only a few problems on the Stank Glen rocks and pinnacles; many more have been listed by our members, and on the Lubnaig Buttress across the river. The great Crag at Lochan an Eireannaich above Balquhiddy was opened up by people like Low, Shields, Scott and others, and we now have a guide book to *Routes on Dumyat, Ledi and Lochan an Eireannaich*, compiled by T. Low with a sketch by Iain Dyce. Crags in Glencoe and Ardour can also be included in the lists of first ascents.

However, all of us, from rock men to the hill 'padders' enjoy and respect our hills and *that*, we feel, is the real reason for mountaineering.

S. KERR.

A SCHOOL CLUB—THE BRAEHEAD, FIFE, MOUNTAINEERING CLUB

BRAEHEAD is a Junior Secondary School in Fife, in the mining town of Buckhaven. An important part of its educational programme is expedition work and for six years this has been my sphere of activity.

In that time we have seen many exciting things and unlike many schools we have keen climbers who can keep it up. The school club itself, the 'Braehead, Fife, Mountaineering Club' (the 'B.F.'s) has grown up and as well as being on the Schools' List of the B.M.C. is now a full member-club of the A.S.C.C. It is open to pupils (with a set qualification), former pupils, staff and friends of the school. Its main membership comes from the pupils who have been on school expeditions, have enjoyed them, and want to do more in the way of camping and climbing. Four of its members are in the S.M.C. and its mark has been left not only at home but in the Alps and further ranges.

A long way from tentative introductions with fourteen-year-olds on the Maiden Rock at St. Andrews

The school side of the club does naturally lean on staff help though a surprising number of young lads are off at weekends on independent expeditions. We will take risks to see them independent, trying things out for themselves. The world is regimented enough, and the words of the pundits so often false. We tend simply to be a large gang of friends, rather sceptical, rather unconventional, and most active. The staff-pupil relationship is uniquely informal and when the first seventeen-year-old joined a student party in the Alps it was as an equal in every way.

The growth has been possible partly because of a continuity in interested staff. There had been other mountain expeditions before, the cottage by Loch Rannoch had already been acquired (now joined by a shooting lodge near Roy Bridge), but all these activities depended on staffing available.

This growth is reflected in the actual climbing ability. It has improved steadily as it has in the history of mountaineering itself. In fact, the school's activity is almost a microcosm of climbing history, telescoped and speeded up. Six years ago Curved Ridge on the Buachaille impressed or defeated a small party. Now the rawest beginner will romp up and down it and watch with critical eye the climbers on Rannoch Wall, hopeful that before school-days end he too can be on Agag's.

This history has been rapid because young people are full of enthusiasm. We had a good first group who soon spread the gospel and themselves had brothers who came up to the school full of the jargon and traditions and tales of the past. We had our 'Golden Age.' Then we had the consolidation, the growth in numbers, the branching out and the basic bettering of summer and winter techniques. The 'Silver Age.' And now we have the 'Modern Times' when these 13-, 14-, and 15-year-olds go out and tackle days which would tax many an adult—C.I.C. Hut to Nevis Summit by Tower Ridge in under a hundred minutes, the complete traverse of the Mamores in eleven hours, in winter conditions round Glen Affric the following six-day tally—45 summits over 3000 ft. (14 Munros, 23 tops, 8 reascents) entailing 85 miles and 32,000 ft. of ascent. Ten minutes after completing the Mamore traverse the Glen Nevis Y.H. Warden was yelling at them to stop playing 'tig' in the dormitory. So much for fatigue.

Boys have left at fifteen having climbed over a hundred Munros. I have been content through long misty days to leave the navigation to them. On rainy days in the tents they have beaten me at chess. In school they have turned out some excellent writing. Yet they are the failed eleven-plus's of the world, the educational write-offs. What a condemnation some of them are of our outdated educational machinery

One of the endless fascinations is the study of the mental approach of the boys. This again is a reflection of history itself. A Mummery arises and all the traditions are shaken. A practice crag we use has a good Severe route up it. When it was first climbed two pitons were used for direct aid. It was a great day when only one was used, simply for assurance. And now the ancient 18-year-olds of its first ascent have to watch a succession of 14-year-olds climb it free with more confidence than they ever knew.

An interesting sideline on history occurred when I had leave of absence two winter terms in succession. There was a marked drop in winter climbing skills, almost a reversion to early days in outlook. Yet the recovery from these 'world wars' as it were, has been good considering almost a generation had passed through the school. It alone was affected, the F.P.'s having forged ahead with good climbs 'in the Coe' or 'on the Ben'—a comfort when one considers eventually leaving. The Club can continue for the F.P. (adult) membership is strong. Girls are given equal rights within the Club but have far less opportunity due to staffing problems.

Part of the modern ability is based on better clothing and equipment and this too we have seen. Six years ago donkey jackets and 'tackety bits' if you were lucky. Now they turn out with anoraks and vibrams. They have absorbed the history and skill of the past and not for nothing have they plastered the expeditions room walls with doings on the Eiger or Everest. They feel the confident inheritors of a tradition. Nobody in the school now can remember a time when we weren't climbing, weren't camping and trekking and canoeing, weren't having former pupils in the Alps, weren't putting up new routes on Ben Klibreck or Ben Sgriol or Rhum.

There is a world of difference between this confidence and youthful rashness. We have had fiascos, but they have largely involved adults who came to grief because they lacked the humility and 'gumption' of the lads themselves. We'll come back to this. Confidence depends both on the inherent tradition, the environment ('if Joe Snogs has done it, so can I') and practiced experience.

If anyone thinks this a picnic of a job let them consider the endless grind of training, of doing the same routine hundreds of times a year. But it must be done. They help each other of course, tremendously. With this routine behind comes a situation like last winter when we were caught in a Cairngorm blizzard. It was bad. But the reaction was 'Is it bad enough to dig in for a bivvy, Hamish?' and slight disappointment when I said 'No,' and we battered down to Corroul! Yet in almost similar circumstances recently two older boys succumbed and died of exposure. The difference I'm sure was largely mental. The older boys were English, inexperienced, unused to cold and snow, and with a leader who was uncertain; a combination which was hardly likely to produce inner confidence! Our younger lads had a Scottish tradition and training, had been on previous expeditions and certainly were not allowed to see any of the anxiety the leader felt. Accidents are always in one's mind and we do not hide the dangers. On top of this I think there is a physical difference.

Boys of thirteen and fourteen have a neatness and co ordination of mind and eye and limb which the fifteen to seventeen year-old has lost. The awkwardness of the adolescent is proverbial, for not only does puberty bring physical changes and complications but mentally there are stresses and strains that produce uncertainty. I have often seen some of our best young lads go through periods of uncoordination, usually, however, keeping up their interest and emerging as young tigers who can climb far beyond my hopes. Having just spent a weekend with some former pupils of many years ago and seldom having done any route less than V.S. I can certainly vouch that the end product is tough, daring and competent. I'm aching in every limb! But then, they are equally happy in camp, or botanizing, or walking along the tops, or in the pub, or canoeing over Rannoch Moor. They are, above all, delightful companions.

Studying these years then I think a great deal more needs be given to the mental preparation of parties. This is partly, of course, one of the drawbacks of those residential centres where the pupils come from various school, or industry or uniformed organisations. They are droplets in a bucket being plunged into the unknown. Our boys, year after year, are part of a school ingrained with a mountaineering tradition. We have half filled the bucket itself.

Almost half British mountain accidents happen to officially-led school parties. This should be reduced now with the introduction of Mountain Leadership Certificates which can be worked for by those intending taking parties into the hills. The mental preparation of leaders is vital. They must be experienced, they must balance caution and confidence, they must lead.

We had a sorry example one winter in the far northwest of Scotland. Having spent a morning on a hill we split the party to meet on top of a second. I took a fine climber to do a proper route while another teacher went with two experienced boys to skirt the cliffs and reach the summit by easy snow slopes. Half way up our climb we noticed one figure had split off by himself

and was going straight up the face. Neither of us for a moment believed it to be one of the boys and sure enough they and we met in the blast of spindrift by the cairn as planned. We stayed dug in there until frost-bite became a real danger and then went down. A full scale search was launched the next day and the teacher was found, luckily still alive.

The basic cause of this fiasco was the refusal of this teacher to accept his place in the party. He had a fraction of the experience of the boys he was with, yet insisted on leaving them to take a 'short cut' up a cliff which the boys rightly refused to go near. What a moral situation to be faced by two schoolboys—to tell a teacher he was being unwise, besides disobedient, and to refuse to obey his demands to follow. *Experienced* youngsters are probably wiser than they are given credit for. Experience can often be quickly gained, a keen boy being 'out' more in one year than many adults in ten.

From the start the emphasis in our school parties is on arousing a strength to lead, to give situations where they have to think through. 'The first rule is 'think,' the second rule is 'think,' the third rule is 'think,' and after that come the others. If you remember those three the rest follow.' It is T.V. gimmick language but remembered and applied. The boys now take more pride in preventing blisters by plastering at the first rub than in bearing out till a heel is reduced to a raw red agony. A schoolboy likes to be proved efficient, reliable, resourceful.

Some accidents are caused simply by mental pampering, by not telling them the facts of life on the hills and then wondering why they collapse when faced with terrors beyond their experience.

These are a few thoughts on mountain psychology if you like, which have crystallised after a thousand days and nights in the mountains with youngsters.

Of their actual doings and of the educational aspects I could write a book; indeed I hope to do so. Now that the B.F.M.C. has grown up it can be written for them. It might make interesting reading in the Alps or the Atlas or the Andes; for that is the way the wind blows.

HAMISH M. BROWN.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Reaction Under Stress

SIR—I am interested in obtaining reports by persons who have experienced the feeling, under stress, that everything is in some way unreal or 'dreamlike.' People who have had this type of experience often comment on their curious emotional detachment, and some of them even refer to a feeling that they expect 'to wake up soon.'

I have noticed a few examples of this type of experience in books by mountaineers, for example in *The Adventures of a Mountaineer* by F. S. Smythe.

I should be most grateful to any of your readers who might feel able to send me first-hand descriptions of their reactions to stress or danger if these were in any way noteworthy, whether or not they are of the type mentioned. Yours etc.,

C. E. GREEN, *Director*,

Psychophysical Research Unit, 118 Banbury Road, Oxford.

Making the Grade

(1)

SIR—

As I sat doon tae scribe this letter
 Fur tae mak oor gradins better
 I thocht nae o the lang Scots pitches
 Their waesome waas an dreepan ditches
 (That's tae turn gey sentimental)
 But rather systems Continental
 Grades like *Merde*, *Très Difficiles*
 Tae circumvent thae southron chieles.
 But noo I doot sic airs an graces
 Cannae beat oor guid Scots phrases ;
 So here I'll gie ma ain translation,
 Gradins fur oor generation
 Whit scaled the Eiger's icy wall
 Fresh frae Sgùrr MhicGhonagall.
 Noo :

Fur *Easy* we'll hae OCH AWA
 (Aye, I kent ye'd think that braw)
 And fur *Mod.*, that awfy scunner,
 I propose jist A WEE DAUNER ;
 Next tae *Diff.*—ye'll aa be glad
 Tae caa it simply NAE SAE BAD,
 An *Very Difficult* I'll mak
 GETTIN ON FUR IT—an, staun back,
 Gaein tae the heichmaist peaks,
Severes'll be kent as O MA BREEKS.
 Efter that, ye'll let this bard
 Cleek *V.S.* tae AWFY HARD . . .
 But whit aboot yon grade *X.S.*
 That nane but Sassunachs possess ?
 Man, we cannae let that pass,
 Chalk it up as TONGS YA BASS !

That's ma system, ma notation,
 Worthy o oor auncient nation ;
 Or sae concludes this puir bit rhymmer
 Yrs. fur aye,

A Scottish Climber.

M.G., A.M., B.W.

[Joint Editorial comments :

- (1) Doon frae Standard Englishry
 Is Och Awa for yon fine three,
 They ding it doon in abseil free
 Heedless o birls.
 Nae members o the S.M.C.;
 They maun be Squirrels.
- (2) Thai hes nat Erse na tong of Adam
 Na Middel Scottis bot the Bottome.
 Mair na this I schall nat sai :
 Timor glottis conturbat me.]

(2)

SIR—In reply to your invitation for correspondence on the explosive subject of grading, I wish to suggest a system, which, although by no means original, would appear to strike a compromise between the immobility of tradition and the moving finger of time. It is only in the last ten or fifteen years, with the gradual pushing up of standards, that a need for the reconsideration of the grading system has arisen. The *Very Severe* category has been gradually widened until it now covers something like twice the range of any one of the other grades. Herein lies the problem.

Suggested scheme.

EASY to					
MODERATE	...	...	(1—)	(1)	(1+)
DIFFICULT	...	...	(2—)	(2)	(2+)
VERY DIFFICULT	...	...	(3—)	(3)	(3+)
SEVERE	...	...	(4—)	(4)	(4+)
VERY SEVERE	...	[	(5—)	(5)	(5+)
			(6—)	(6)	(6+)

I am all in favour of the use of the six main grade divisions as used in most S.M.C. guide-books, but I find the prefixes *mild* and *hard* very misleading.

I suggest that in conjunction with any one of the six main grade divisions as used at present, a more accurate indication of the difficulty of the hardest pitch be given. This is the crucial limiting factor to any guide-book user. In practice, then, the technical difficulty of the hardest pitch on a route would be given in brackets after the over-all grade. At the same time where pitch by pitch descriptions are given, it would seem logical to grade each pitch or even each section of a pitch accurately, since this gives immediate indication of the relative difficulty of each pitch and at the same time tells us whether a route is sustained or not. In addition, comments such as : strenuous, poorly protected, delicate, loose, wet, etc., could be added in brackets. It would be ludicrous to adopt code letters and symbols to replace these terms as this would only lead to complete confusion.

The suggested system might be applied to an existing route as follows : Buachaille Etive Mòr : Crowberry Ridge, Rannoch Wall—*Agag's Groove*. 350 ft. Very Difficult (3+). J. F. Hamilton, A. Anderson and A. C. D. Small-August 1936.

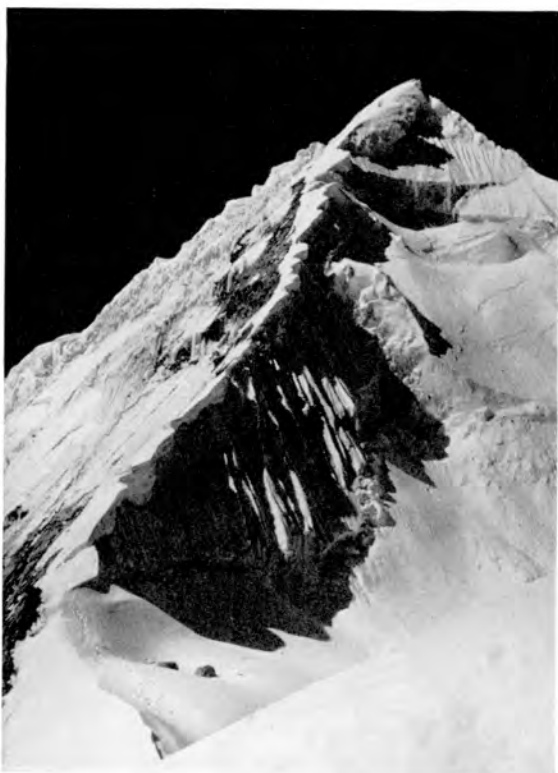
To the immediate left of the edge formed by Rannoch Wall and the North-East Face, a prominent groove curves upwards to undercut rock-leaves on the upper part of the Wall. This is the line of the climb, which is the trade route for the vicinity and the most useful route of descent on the Wall.

Start at the corner of the wall beside a detached rectangular block (just left of Grooved Arête). Climb straight up for 90 ft. to reach a block belay at the start of the groove. The crux is the short open corner a little below the block belay (3+). Now follow the groove for 110 ft. (1+) to a large block belay. Continue up the groove (2) until an easy left traverse can be made on to the open face beneath a vertical nose. Climb the nose (3, exposed) and go up left to the sloping top of a block at 80 ft. Traverse left and go 70 ft. up the face (2) to the crest of the ridge.



Mary Anne Allburger

First ascent of a virgin Scottish summit. Cut down to size are Baillie, Bonington, Patey and the Old Man of Hoy. (See NEW CLIMBS)



D. Bathgate

Repeat ascent of a South American one. Alpamayo's North Ridge, with camp 2 at foot and summit of peak just visible left of, and below, highest point on ridge.
(See NOTES)

The following list should give an approximate indication of the relative difficulty of the hardest pitches on a number of the better-known climbs both in Scotland and abroad :

SCOTLAND. *Buachaille Etive Mòr*: Curved Ridge, 1; North Buttress, 1+; D. Gully Buttress Indirect, 2; Crowberry Ridge Direct, 3+; Agag's Groove, 3+; Bottleneck Chimney, 4; Red Slab, 4+; Hangman's Crack, 5—; Crow's Nest Crack, 5; Whortleberry Wall, 5+; Mainbrace Crack Direct, 6; Carnivore, 6+. *Aonach Dubh*: Boomerang, 5+; The Big Top, 5+; Hee-Haw, 5+; Trapeze, 6—. *Aonach Eagach*: Ridge, 1—; Clachaig Gully, 3+. *Ben Nevis*: Tower Ridge, 1+; Observatory Ridge, 2+; The Bat, 6+. *Cuillin*: Main Ridge, 3; Cioch West, 3. *Arran*: South Ridge Direct (Rosa Pinnacle), 5; Sou'wester Slabs, 3.

ENGLAND. *Langdale*: Gimmer Crack, 5—; Kipling Groove, 5+; *Triermain*: Overhanging Bastion, 5; North Crag Eliminate, 6.

WALES. *Llanberis North*: Flying Buttress, 2+; Cenotaph Corner, 6; Spectre, 6.

Although this system would appear to be almost an exact copy of the continental system, there seems to be about half a grade's difference between the two, e.g.:

Knobel Crack (Mer de Glace Face—Grépon), V sup., 5—. *Fissure Whillans* (West Face—Blaitière), VI, 5+. *Lambert Crack* (North Face—Dru), V, 4+.

For completeness, I must mention the grading of artificial pitches. In Europe at least, there appear to be 4 standard artificial gradings:—A1, A2, A3 and A4. (There are terrifying rumours of A5 pitches in America).

Thus, on a climb involving both artificial and free climbing, the grade of the hardest artificial pitch would be shown along with the grade of the hardest free pitch in brackets after the over-all grade, e.g. Very Severe (5—, A2).—Yours etc.,

ALASDAIR McKEITH.

Power of Speech

SIR—For some years now your correspondent has been content to put up with the economic and aesthetic insult of the Annual Dinner, silently submitting his sensitive digestive organs and taste-buds to the unwelcome attentions of lukewarm tomato soups, tasteless poultry, boggy puddings and cold red wine of dubious pedigree, these victuals all outrageously over-priced, what little virtue they possessed *in natura* ruined by cack-handed slow-poisoners masquerading as chefs.

This annual gastronomic and financial sacrifice was justified, in his view, by the twin prospect of breaking bread with those men whom he held in high esteem (the members of his Club) and of being entertained by their words and by those of their guests. For this pleasure he was prepared even to travel to Glasgow, a journey not lightly undertaken by civilised men. Whence such zeal and self-sacrifice?

Several dinners ago, even less mature, your correspondent marvelled at the eloquence and urbanity of Dr Milner, the Club's English guest. The good doctor's example led him to expect such entertainment at future functions. He has not been altogether disillusioned; last year, for instance, there was Mr Humble and Mr MacInnes, this year Mr Brown's stirring Song.

However, the gradual but steady fall in quality of both tasting and toasting along with the similarly gradual and steady rise in price moves him to protest. Are we to have no better reason for attending our Annual Dinner than mute sentiment alone? Surely not. Yet, if the present trend continues, that's all we'll have left.

Perhaps the problem of the quality of the food is an insoluble one; perhaps it is not possible, even with the most diligent search and the unseemliest haggling, to obtain value for money for 100 nimble stomachs in these days of falling standards of service. But the quality of the after-dinner speaking can surely be improved. The President, however, must try and lead the way in any such oratorical revival. Perhaps the proposal aired at the last A.G.M., that the Presidential Term of Office be extended a further year, was made with a view to providing hard-pressed, Great-Circling, political Presidents-of-the-Future with the breathing space of an additional year in which to prepare their Valedictory Addresses!

Presidents of this Club need have little to do compared with the less exalted Officers, but they do have two little speeches to make, in honour of their Club, and whether they are glib and gifted orators or honest, silent, men, they should dam' well, by Gad, make at least the *best ones they can*.—Yours splenetically,

ROBIN N. CAMPBELL.

NEW CLIMBS

ARRAN

Beinn Tarsuinn: Meadow Face.—*Brachistochrone*. 900 ft. Very Severe (6+). M. Galbraith & A. McKeith. 18th September 1966.

A fine climb affording sustained difficulty and some remarkable situations particularly in its lower half. Under the prevailing wet conditions it was found to be a comparable undertaking to The Bat on Ben Nevis and it seems unlikely that it would be found much easier in completely dry conditions.

On the southern side of the face there are two parallel cracks leading directly to the summit of the buttress. The route follows the left-hand crack. Scramble up the first 100 ft. of the crack. Continue in the crack, first by a chimney (4+, wet), then over a flake overhang (6, strenuous) and up twin cracks (5—, wet) to belay on a sloping ledge under a huge roof (150 ft.). Climb the twin overhanging cracks above through the roof (6+, strenuous, 1 wedge, 3 pegs, wet) to a block belay in a chimney (50 ft.). Traverse left up a layback shelf (5), then back right (5) to a grass ledge and the crack, which follow over a smooth bulge (5+, wet) to the next roof. Climb an overhanging crack into a sloping recess in the roof (6+, very wet), then swing down left (1 peg, wet) on to a steep slab and go straight up to a grass ledge and block belay (150 ft.). Continue for 300 ft. by grassy cracks, slabs, corners and flakes (3+) across Meadow Slabs to reach the continuation of the left-hand crack in the upper slabs. Finish up the crack over three overlaps, detouring to the right at the second of them (5—).

Goatfell: South Slabs.—*Pochmahone*. 400 ft. Very Severe (6). A. McKeith & Margaret Kelsey. 19th September 1966.

A companion route to Pussyfoot in that it takes an absolutely direct line to the top lefthand corner of the upper slab. Start left of the cairn of Route I (arrow), go straight up a smooth slab (6—), cross Route I, continue directly over a small overlap and up a smooth slab (6—) to a peg belay in a sloping crack, (140 ft.). Move up to a heather ledge and block belay, (20 ft.). Climb the bulging rib (6) on the left of the steepening scoop common to Blank and Dogleg and continue straight up past the left traverse of Dogleg, over a small overlap (5) and up to a quartz band. Move left to the belay in Dogleg at the bottom of the upper corner, (100 ft.). Move back right, then go straight up the slab on the right of the upper corner to the top (5), (140 ft.).

Coire na h-Uaimh, Glen Sannox.—*Polhode*. 450 ft. Severe. M. Galbraith & Miss G. Miller. 19th September 1966.

This and the following route lie to the right of Central Grooves (see S.M.C.J. (1963), xxvii, p.365). They follow lines on the rock rather than the abundant grassy weaknesses. Piton belays and runners essential.

Start 100 ft. right of Central Grooves (arrow). Climb a slab for 80 ft. to a ledge below twin cracks. Climb the cracks and the slab beyond to a grassy ledge. Go left, upwards, right and upwards again to reach a spike belay. With breath held and hands in pockets, finish straight up the slabs above.

—*Herpolhode*. 400 ft. Very Severe. M. Galbraith & Miss G. Miller. 19th September 1966.

This route may share a common finish with Slapstick Wall. However, it is much more direct and probably somewhat harder.

To the right of Polhode is a large block abutting the wall. Start just to the right of this and climb several bulges to reach the foot of a small corner. Climb the corner and take the line of least resistance to the top. (See **Arran Notes**).

Beinn a' Chliabin: The Big Slab.—The most prominent feature of the Glen Rosa flank of this mountain is the big slab lying below and between the twin summits. It measures roughly 200 ft. by 150 ft. and may be climbed more or less straight up the middle. First recorded ascent by J. W. Simpson in 1960 (Severe) but this may not be a first.

RHUM

Allival: South-east Face.—Anne Littlejohn (L.S.C.C.) sends us the following note which clarifies the topography hereabouts and should make the location of future routes on this face somewhat easier:

'Seen from the floor of Coire nan Grunnd, the upper cliffs of the South-East Face of Allival consist of three main tiers:

(1) **Summit Tier.** This stands well back from the top of the middle tier and is only about 40 ft. high at its left-hand (west) end, diminishing to a mere rocky step above the Allival Slab.

(2) **Middle Tier.** This is the broadest and most continuous of the three bands of rock, stretching from the South Ridge (above the bealach with Askival) to the Allival Slab on the flank of the East Ridge. It is divided into three main sections:—

(a) *Left-hand Section.* From the South Ridge to an obvious V-gully, above the main scree shoot and also cleaving the bottom tier.

(b). *Central Section.* From the V-gully to the gully bounding the Allival Slab on the left.

(c). *Right-hand Section.* The Allival Slab and points East.

(3) **Bottom Tier.** A broad steeply-sloping ledge of grass and scree separates this from the middle tier. It is too broken up and vegetated to offer any worthwhile climbing, except under the Allival Slab.

In terms of this description the existing routes on this face (see *Islands Guidebook*) lie on the Right-hand Section of the Middle Tier and on the part of the Bottom Tier directly below this. The following routes, with the exception of the two done by members of the B.F.M.C. (full names given at end of this section), were made by an L.S.C.C. party consisting of Anne Littlejohn, Mora McCallum, Helen Steven and Pamela Cain, 21st - 31st August 1966.

Bottom Tier.—*Gargoyle Chimney.* 80 ft. Mild Severe. J.M., H.M.B., T.T.I., W.W.S., S.T.C., J.R.D.P. 19th June 1966.

This is the first chimney to the left of Oxford Groove at the extreme right of the tier. A conspicuous chockstone (the Gargoyle) protrudes from its foot. Pull strenuously over this and continue to the terrace, arriving below Cambridge Arête.

Middle Tier, Left-hand Section.—*Midgeless.* 65 ft. Hard Difficult. M.M.

150 ft. right of the South Ridge ascend a steep corner crack with an awkward finish on the right.

—*Midge.* 90 ft. Very Difficult. M.M.

200 ft. right of the South Ridge climb a V-groove with an obliquely-jammed block halfway up and a large square-cut overhang at the top which is avoided on the left.

—*Moly.* 95 ft. Very Difficult. A.L.

The most obvious feature of this section is a wide groove, centrally situated. Start by a trap-dyke behind a flake on the right wall, step into the groove about 20 ft. up and when the groove becomes a deep crack take the chimney on the right. This has a protruding flake at the bottom (loose), a large chockstone and a capstone.

Central Section.—*Amaranth.* 95 ft. Severe. A.L.

Start at a small cave on the right of the first arête from the left. Climb an overhang and a short slab to a ledge below a cracked wall. Go straight up a crack to finish just right of a triangular recess containing a square block.

—*Ashes.* 90 ft. Very Difficult. A.L.

The central section is divided by two streams. A few yards to the left of the right-hand stream climb a steep groove with an overhang about $\frac{3}{4}$ -way up.

—*Lotos.* 210 ft. Mild Severe. M.M.

Round the corner to the left of the Allival Slab there are three deep grooves. The route follows the leftmost groove. At 25 ft. avoid an overhang on the right and at the top traverse left by a rocky ramp and go up into an amphitheatre of loose earth and rocks. Finish by traversing piled blocks to the right and climbing the second groove beyond these or, better (Hard Severe. A.L.), by a layback crack immediately above the line of the groove.

—*Asphodel.* 160 ft. Very Severe. A.L.

Takes the middle of the three grooves mentioned above. Traverse on to the arête on the right, then follow a slanting crack to the foot of a vertical 15 ft. crack in the right wall. Climb this strenuously to good finishing holds on the right and continue to a stance among piled blocks (110 ft.).

Continue up a crack formed by two of the blocks to a rocky hollow. Finish up a crack directly ahead, passing an overhanging block on the left.

—*Helen's Horror*. 150 ft. Difficult. M.M.

About 25 ft. left of the left edge of Allival Slab is a deep trap-dyke chimney. Climb this by bridging. At the overhang step awkwardly right, then go up grass and easy rock to a small cave. Leave this by crawling along a small ledge on the right and then up a short wall.

Right-hand Section.—*Flake and Crack Route*. 115 ft. Very Difficult. J.M., H.M.B., T.T.I., W.W.S., S.T.C., J.R.D.P. 19th June 1966.

To the left of Cambridge Arête the Allival Slab is inaccessible 'for over 100 ft. on account of 20 ft. overhangs' (see *Islands Guide*). However, a third of the way along there is a corner where a climb up right to a big flake leads on to the Slab. Finish straight up to an obvious steep crack.

Anne Littlejohn notes the following descent routes on the Middle Tier :
Left-hand Section. Allival South Ridge.

Middle Section. Immediately west of Ashes (see above).

Right-hand Section. The Ordinary Route, Allival Slab.

Askival: North Ridge, West Face.—*Zig-zag*. 120 ft. Hard Severe. J.M. & H.M.B. 19th June 1966.

The route lies on the buttress to the right of the gully leading to the right (north) end of the level stretch of the Ridge north of Askival Pinnacle. Start at the lowest rocks up rightward cracks to avoid an overhang, break back left delicately and follow the edge overlooking the gully to a stance at the start of a wide sensational ledge. Follow this right until it is possible to climb upwards and continue to the North Ridge.

Ruinsival.—Across the big stone shoot to the right of the existing Middle Tier routes is a considerable area of rock easily distinguished by the big green platforms in its centre. H.M.B. and his pimply associates suggest that it be called **Green Wall**.

Middle Tier, Green Wall.—*Right Corner*. 160 ft. Very Difficult. J.M., H.M.B. & S.D.M. 20th June 1966.

The far right corner of Green Wall has a tongue of slabs with an undercut crack to the right. Climb up the slabs beside this crack. The difficulties are in the top section.

—*Right Corner Chimney*. 135 ft. Difficult. H.M.B., W.W.S., J.A.Y. 20th June 1966.

The chimney bounding the tongue of slabs on the right.

—*Face Route*. 200 ft. Severe. J.M., T.T.I., S.T.C. 20th June 1966.

The cairned start lies 25 ft. left of the rake leading up left to the Green Platforms, at the foot of a trap-dyke. Climb up left by a crack to a ledge and follow further cracks over two further ledges to the top.

—*Campion Crack*. 80 ft. Very Difficult. J.M. & H.M.B. 20th June 1966.

At the far left of the Wall there is a very rough, steep, diamond-shaped slab. Follow the obvious curving crack.

—*Campion Slab*. 80 ft. Very Difficult. J.M., H.M.B., J.R.D.P. & T.T.I. 20th June 1966.

Starts slightly farther right than the previous route and goes straight up.

Middle Tier, North Section.—*Number One Arête.* 180 ft. Mild Severe. J.M., H.M.B., J.R.D.P. & W.W.S. 20th June 1966.

Previously named and located (see S.M.C.J. xxiv (1948), p. 50. Start at the lowest point of the arête and scramble to where the rock steepens. Belay. Climb straight up an overhang (crux) and over a pedestal to the final grooves.

—*Seoras.* 150 ft. Very Severe. J.M. & H.M.B. 20th June 1966.

On the left wall, formerly Upper Buttress. On the right of this wall is a dark triangular depression crossed by a narrow trap-dyke. Climb to the apex of the triangle and over the overhang (crux) to gain a groove. Follow the groove, forking right near the top to finish at the top of Number One Arête. The groove is only Very Difficult.

The above routes, with the noted female exceptions, were climbed by permutations of the following B.F.M.C. members:—

J. Matyssek (S.M.C.), H. M. Brown (S.M.C.), T. T. Izatt, S. T. Crockatt, W. W. Simpson, J. R. D. Paterson, H. K. Cook, J. A. Yule, I. Mitchell, S. D. Menmuir [who will doubtless agree with senior Jt. Hon. Ed. that the term used 39 lines above should apply to his irreverent junior colleague].

SKYE

Sgùrr na Stri: Coruisk Face.—*Bee Cee Crack.* 470 ft. Very Severe. B. Sproul & B. Cuthbert. 30th May 1965.

This is the fourth crack from the left on the prominent whale-backed buttress seen clearly from Loch Coruisk. Start on the lower band of rock separated from the buttress by a grassy promenade.

Climb a crack below and left of an obvious white overhang to a terrace. Move up the terrace to a large overhang (100 ft.). Go up easy rocks to a stance behind a flake (20 ft.). Go left via a hand traverse (peg runner) to take a belay below a crack (100 ft.). Follow the crack for 250 ft., steep at first, to the top of the buttress.

ORKNEY

Old Man of Hoy.—450 ft. Very Severe and A2. R. Baillie, C. J. S. Bonington & T. W. Patey. 18th July 1966.

Tom Patey writes—'This well-known landmark in the Pentland Firth provided a 6-hour climb on the 18th July, two days having been previously spent in reconnaissance and roping the climb as far as the top of the second pitch. The route followed the landward face of the pinnacle, which was denuded nearly a century ago by the collapse of a gigantic second leg which spanned an archway and is shown on prints of the early 19th century. This may account for the very unreliable nature of the rock as far as the 300 ft. contour, although we have no first-hand information regarding the south and seaward faces, both of which should provide equally spectacular lines.

'The long second pitch of 100 ft. overhangs a total of 15 ft. throughout its length and was climbed entirely by artificial methods, although much of the pitch might have gone free had the rock been in any way trustworthy. The remaining 350 ft. was entirely free climbing and very spectacular. Most of the pitches overhang and the route spirals slightly, so that doubled ropes should be fixed in position during the ascent, to avoid bottomless abseils.'

'At the end of the boulder ridge linking the Old Man to the mainland climb a shattered pillar, at the top of which is a large ledge on the S.E. corner (70 ft.). Tension-traverse right to gain the foot of a great 100 ft. crack

(20 ft.) and climb the crack using big 'bongs' or wooden wedges throughout, passing roofs at 30 ft. and again at 60 ft. Step right at the top into a triangular alcove (100 ft.). Step right and move back left over loose easy ledges to regain the crack line, which follow for 25 ft. to a large ledge (50 ft.). Near the right-hand end of the ledge, climb up a few feet then traverse delicately leftwards to another ledge. Climb the chimney in the corner, then wriggle along a horizontal ledge to the right until easy ledges lead to a grassy slope below the Terminal Crack. Belay 20 ft. up the crack at a better ledge (150 ft.). Climb the Terminal Crack, which is both strenuous and sensational, but the rock is now excellent and the standard no more than average Very Severe (70 ft.).' (See photographs in this issue).

NORTHERN HIGHLANDS

Old Man of Stoer.—220 ft. Hard Severe. T. W. Patey & B. Robertson : B. Henderson & P. Nunn. June 1966.

Tom Patey writes—'This remarkable sea-stack, $\frac{1}{2}$ -mile south of Stoer point, is referred to in the *Northern Highlands Guide* (1953), p.116, as *evidently quite unclimbable*. In fact, it offers a very fine free climb of Severe standard on the best Torridonian sandstone in Scotland. From its slender base, the pinnacle bulges as far as mid-height, before it begins to taper and, from its appearance, might suggest a more exacting climb than its better-known namesake in Skye (which it overtops by about 60 ft.). Huge, rough-grained holds flatter the climber, so that almost anything may be attempted. Puking fulmars elevate the standard during the nesting season. There may be other routes.'

Scramble down steeply for 300 ft. to the broad shelf opposite the Old Man. To gain the supporting plinth a deep channel, 25 ft. wide at its narrowest point, must be crossed. A 30 ft. ladder, a Tyrolean traverse rope, and swimming offered different solutions on different visits, but tidal currents and underwater seaweed could often hamper a swimmer. 12 feet up the landward face, twin horizontal cracks are followed left round the first corner, then go straight up excellent rock to a large platform on the corner (60 ft.). Above the platform climb a steep slab (crux) to a fringe of overhangs. Pass the overhangs by a crack and step delicately left to reach easy ledges. Continue for 30 ft. to a cave belay above a large chockstone (70 ft.). Traverse round the airy corner to the right on to the landward face and veer up rightwards, avoiding the first upward break, to reach a small ledge and block belay (40 ft.). Climb the prominent V-chimney above, facing left, to easy ground. Finish up obvious corner-crack (50 ft.). Descent by rappel: go straight down the line of the S.E. corner to the first belay platform (150 ft.). Move along a thin ledge on the landward face to an abseil piton. Go down to the starting point (60 ft.). (See photograph and article earlier in this issue).

Beinn Dearg : West Face (Glensquaib).—*Gastronomes' Gully*. 1200 ft. GRADE I. A. W. Ewing, W. Sproul, I. G. Rowe & J. Brumfitt. 14th January 1967.

The shallow gully to the immediate left of Inverlael Gully. Enter from the Cadha Amadan by a rightward traverse. (The Cadha Amadan is the wide obvious scree gully which divides the West Face from the Glensquaib precipices).

Beinn a' Chaisgein Mòr: Carnmore Crag.—*Balaton*. 380 ft. Very Severe. W. Gorman & C. Higgins (both C.D.M.C.). May 1966.

Start at the right-hand corner of a prominent recess in the middle of the face.

Climb a crack to belay on the right (80 ft.). Descend a little, step across crack and traverse a steep slab to peg belay at the foot of a large corner (30 ft.). Climb the corner to a slab, traverse right, turn an overhang then move up left to below a large roof. Break out right then go up to stance and peg belay (120 ft.). Move up and left of a rib on the skyline then continue by slabs to the Central Bay (150 ft.).

—*Boo-Boo*. 370 ft. Very Severe. W. Gorman & C. Higgins (both C.D.M.C.). May 1966.

Start 10 ft. right of a prominent recess in the middle of the face. The climb follows a crack which splits a block and triangular overhang at 25 ft. Climb through this overhang (1 peg), move up a wall slightly right and climb a corner to a ledge belay left of a large overhang (100 ft.). Traverse left 10 ft. then back right to above belay. Climb a corner to a ledge, go up the right edge of a wall, move left then up a slab to a peg belay (120 ft.). Go up the slabs above to the Central Bay (150 ft.).

—*The Kady*. 200 ft. Very Severe. W. Gorman & C. Higgins (both C.D.M.C.). May 1966.

Start at some heather ledges below and to the right of the large corner at the top right of the crag. The route follows a break in an overhanging wall running into a hanging corner capped by an overhang which is well seen from below.

Climb a heathery groove to beneath the overhanging wall (50 ft.). Climb the break in the wall trending right to the corner. Climb the corner until forced right on to slabs which follow to belay (150 ft.).

—*Abomination*. 320 ft. Very Severe. J. McLean, A. Curry & J. Cunningham (all C.D.M.C.). 22nd July 1966.

On the upper tier of the crag there are two large grooves one on the right (unclimbed) and one on the left. The route follows the left-hand groove fairly closely. Start at an easy vegetated crack to the right of the groove. Up the crack to a narrow grass ledge and peg belay (100 ft.). Near the left edge of the groove there is a crack. Follow this to a rock ledge, awkward near the top (110 ft.). Continue up the groove to a square-cut roof, move right and up the wall above on loose flakes to the top of the buttress (110 ft.).

Beinn Eighe: Coire Mhic Fhearchair, Eastern Ramparts.—*Samurai*. 400 ft. Very Severe. J. Brumfitt & B. Sproul. 29th May 1966.

The route follows an ascending diagonal fault finishing at a square-cut notch near the highest point on the sky line (as seen from the corrie floor) and starting 60 ft. below a damp cave.

Move up towards the cave, avoiding the overhang by traversing left for 10 ft. then back right above the cave (80 ft.). Continue by the obvious fault to an overhanging chimney (80 ft.). Traverse across a blank wall to reach a vertical crack. Climb this and move round a nose to a stance (40 ft.). Continue straight up cracks and grooves to a stance at perched blocks (80 ft.). Finish by the rightmost of the three faults above (120 ft.).

Far East Wall.—*Kama-Kazi*. 350 ft. Very Severe. J. Brumfitt & B. Sproul. 30th May 1966.

This is on the steep cliff extending leftwards from Far East Gully for approximately $\frac{1}{4}$ mile at an average height of 350 ft. Start near the right end at a large damp overhung recess.

Climb up the recess until it is possible to traverse right into an obvious fault line (110 ft.). From here, the line follows a series of chimneys, cracks, walls and grooves and finishes sensationally by threading the huge beak above from the left, by an overhanging crack.

—*Sidewinder*. 300 ft.

Severe. A. Fyffe & P. Williams. 16th October 1966.

This route lies on the left of the cliff 20 ft beyond the end of a low grass terrace (cairn). Climb a fault into a niche then up to a grass platform. Continue straight up by steep walls and grooves to the foot of a rightward-slanting crack and follow this to its end. Step left and follow a fault to the top over some dubious rock.

Other Northern Routes

These routes have not been published before. Details can be obtained in the interim guides to Easter Ross and Foinaven published by the Corriemulzie Mountaineering Club (see **Northern Highland Notes**).

Sgùrr nan Clach Geala: East Face.—*Alpha Gully*. 800 ft. GRADE II.
P. Baker & D. S. B. Wright. 6th March 1965.

—*Gamma Gully*. 700 ft. GRADE IV.
P. N. L. Tranter & I. G. Rowe. 6th & 7th March 1965.

—*Slanting Gully*. 1000 ft. GRADE I.
P. N. L. Tranter. 7th December 1963.

Seana Bhràigh: Luchd Coire.—*Bealach Gully*. 300 ft. Not Classified.
W. D. Fraser & J. C. I. Wedderburn. 6th April 1963.

—*The Chute*. 1000 ft. GRADE I.
J. Wedderburn, I. D. M. Chalmers & W. D. Fraser (in descent). 6th April 1963.

—*Query Cleft*. 350 ft. GRADE III.
P. N. L. Tranter & W. D. Fraser. 8th April 1963.

—*Sunday Post*. 1000 ft. GRADE III.
W. D. Fraser & J. C. I. Wedderburn. 7th April 1963.

—*Monday Post*. 1000 ft. GRADE II.
W. D. Fraser & P. N. L. Tranter. 8th April 1963.

—*Press-on Gully*. 1000 ft. GRADE I.
D. S. B. Wright & P. N. L. Tranter. 7th April 1963.

—*Pomegranate Gully*. 1000 ft. GRADE II.
P. N. L. Tranter, J. Wedderburn & D. S. B. Wright. 4th April 1963.

—*Diamond Dièdre*. 800 ft. GRADE II.
J. Wedderburn & Miss J. Kowalska. 19th February 1965.

—*Pelican Gully*. 800 ft. GRADE II.
C. S. M. Doake, P. N. L. Tranter & J. Wedderburn. 16th February 1964.

—*Sham Gully*. 600 ft. GRADE I.
D. S. B. Wright, P. N. L. Tranter & J. Wedderburn. 5th April 1963.

—*Far West Buttress*. 600 ft. GRADE II.
J. Wedderburn & Miss J. Kowalska. 20th February 1965.

An Socach, Alladale: Alladale Slabs.—*Indecision*. 800 ft. Hard Severe.
W. D. Fraser & J. C. I. Wedderburn. 12th May 1963.

—*Indecision (DIRECT START)* 400 ft.
Severe. D. S. B. Wright & C. N. B. Martin. 11th July 1963.

—*Jug Rib*. 700 ft. Mild Severe.
W. D. Fraser & P. N. L. Tranter. 11th May 1963.

—*Gully Buttress*. 110 ft. Severe.
W. D. Fraser & A. R. M. Park. 12th July 1963.

—*The Gully*. 500 ft. Very Difficult.
P. N. L. Tranter, N. Travers & D. Martin. 11th July 1963.

—*East Route, West Face*. 800 ft.
Very Difficult. C. S. M. Doake, J. C. I. Wedderburn & J. K. L. McLean.
11th May 1963.

—*Bang*. 500 ft. Severe. P. N. L.
Tranter & P. M. MacDonald. 15th May 1966.

—*Tane*. 450 ft. Very Difficult.
A. R. M. Park & W. D. Fraser. 11th July 1963.

—*Tother*. 450 ft. Very Difficult.
P. N. L. Tranter & N. Travers. 11th July 1963.

Glenbeg : The Slabs.—*Niagara Slab*. 550 ft. Very Difficult. D. J. Wilson
& A. W. Beveridge. 5th June 1966.

Foinaven : Creag Dionard, Creag Coire na Lice.—*Rhino Buttress*. 400 ft.
Difficult. P. N. L. Tranter & D. B. Martin. 2nd April 1966.

Creag Urbhard.—*Chicken Run*. 700 ft. Hard
Severe. I. G. Rowe & P. N. L. Tranter. 25th April 1965.

—*K.W.H.* 900 ft. Severe.
M. Galbraith & A. McKeith. 14th May 1966.

—*Boreas*. 400 ft. Mild Severe.
A. R. M. Park & P. M. Macdonald. 25th April 1965.

CAIRNGORMS

Beinn a' Bhùird : Coire na Ciche.—*Trident*. GRADE IV. 380 ft. J. Bower
& M. C. MacLennan. 3 hours. 15th January 1967.

The summer route was followed throughout, except for the vertical wall above the slab layback, which was climbed direct. The summer crux required a peg and sling and a peg was also used on the slab layback due to verglas.

Garbh Choire.—*Nomads' Gully*. 650 ft. GRADE II.
M. D. Y. Mowat & A. McR. Corbett. 1 hour. 13th March 1966.

The obvious rightward-slanting ramp starting at the bottom of Consolation Gully and finishing near the top of the Flume. The first pitch consisted of 80 ft. of steep snow and ice, thereafter only minor difficulties to the top.

Ben Macdhui : Coire Sputan Dearg.—(*Unnamed*). GRADE II. A. Fyffe
& P. Williams : M. McArthur & I. McLean. 1 hour. 3rd January 1967.

The righthand of the ice-falls mentioned in the Cairngorms Rock Guide, Vol. I, p.56.

—*The Web*. 210 ft. Severe. M. C.
MacLennan & M. Rennie. 15th May 1966.

On the buttress right of Flake Buttress overlooking Main Spout. Start at the right-hand edge of the buttress at a groove set in a steep wall (arrow). Climb the groove to a small ledge and peg belay below a slightly overhanging chimney. Climb the chimney then bear left to a grass ledge and flake belay. Traverse hard left to an airy stance and block belay. Go directly up to a slab which climb by a Severe mantleself or by a corner on the left, to emerge on the plateau.

Creagan a' Choire Etchachan.—*Square-cul Gully.* 350 ft.

GRADE IV. M. Forbes & M. Low. March 1966.

Due to a thaw, the ascent was made in very poor snow and ice conditions. There were two major pitches: the first a vertical pillar of ice at the overhangs (2 screws used for tension), the second a cracked slab covered in deep powder snow at the top of which a peg and sling were used to swing out from under an overhang to easier ground on the left.

—*Flanking Ribs.* GRADE

IV. J. McCartney & A. Fyffe. 4 hours. 6th January 1967.

A fine route with a good variety of pitches and fine situations. The summer route was followed throughout, difficulties being concentrated in its upper half.

—*Djibangi (DIRECT START).*

120 ft. Very Severe. A. Fyffe & W. Forbes; M. Mowat & R. Burnett. October 1966.

Start at the foot of the grassy alcove (arrow). Climb by cracks up and to the right to a grass ledge and peg belay. Step left into the Djibangi groove and follow this to the belay below the crux.

—*Stiletto.* 350 ft. Very

Severe. M. Forbes & M. Rennie. 17th August 1966.

Midway between Djibangi and The Dagger, a thin crack ascends vertically. This is the line of the route.

Gain the foot of the crack by the Direct Start to The Dagger (60 ft.). Climb the crack to a ring-peg belay (40 ft.). Follow the line of the crack, using three pegs, to join the upper pitches of The Dagger.

—*Scabbard.* 480 ft. Very

Severe. M. Rennie & M. Forbes. September 1966.

This route ascends the Crimson Slabs between Dagger and Sheath. Follow Sheath as far as the block belay level with the start of the Dagger corner (70 ft.). Climb an obvious crack, then a succession of cracks to a point just past the first overlap. Step right and pull on to the overlap to belay on a hanging chockstone (110 ft.). Continue by a series of cracks and blocks to the Upper Terrace (120 ft.). Descend the Terrace a few feet and finish by the Gangway.

Braeriach: Garbh Choire Mòr.—*Crown Buttress.* 400 ft. GRADE III. J. Bower & P. Kale. 26th January 1967.

Summer route was followed throughout on unconsolidated snow lying on ice. The crux was the ice-filled upper chimney, which gave a very steep pitch exceeding 100 ft., above which a traverse to the right was made to gain the arête, thus avoiding the cornice.

—*Snow Bunting.* GRADE II. J. J. Light

& J. Vigrow. 15th March 1966.

Take the right fork of Bunting's Gully as far as the col at its top. Thence, a shallow gully leads up a steep slope to the giant cornice. 20 ft. to the right, a huge snow flake had split off from the cornice proper, and the resulting chimney was used to gain the plateau. Delicate. The difficulty of this climb and no doubt of many others in this corrie is set by the difficulty of surmounting the cornice, which, of course, varies yearly, if not weekly.

—*Sphinx Ridge*. GRADE III. J. J. Light & J. Vigrow. 14th March 1966.

The summer start was not possible under the mild thaw conditions prevailing at the time of this ascent and the ridge proper was gained by a small gully leading off Solo Gully. A delicate knife-edged arête led up to a steep shallow groove and a short chimney (crux) on the left. From here a double corniced arête led up to a snow platform and col beneath the cornice which was at its lowest at this point, about 10 ft. vertical. A direct start would seem possible under heavy conditions.

—*Phoenix Gully*. 350 ft. Very Difficult. J. J. Light (A.U.L.C.). 18th June 1966.

The prominent gully on the immediate right of Pinnacles Buttress. Gain the main groove on the right from the snow (build-up at least 30 ft.) and climb waterworn rock. Pass the chockstone at the top to easier ground (100 ft.). Move up in the back of the gully (50 ft.) and trend left (50 ft.) until separated from the gully by a slab. Traverse delicately back onto the waterworn rock. This steepens until another leftward trend is necessary. Return to the groove round a nose (40 ft.). Continue up by a fine bridging pitch and round the final chockstone (80 ft.). Easy ground leads to the top, which may be corniced. On the occasion of the first ascent it was 20 ft. high and was passed by a fortuitous natural ice-tunnel.

Lochnagar: Black Spout Pinnacle.—*Slab Gully*. 250 ft. GRADE III. M. Forbes & M. Rennie. 15th January 1967.

The summer route was followed throughout, the last pitch forming the crux.

West Buttress.—*West Gully Direct*. GRADE IV. A. F. Fyffe & M. D. Y. Mowat. 2½ hours. 4th April 1966.

The 200 ft. ice-fall mentioned in the guidebook was climbed to give a direct start to West Gully.

Broad Cairn: Creag an Dubh Loch, Central Slabs.—*Yakaboo*. 800 ft. Very Severe. G. N. Hunter & G. Miller (both Carn Dearg M.C.). 9th July 1966.

Start at the lowest point on the great central belt of slabs, midway between Labyrinth Edge and Theseus Grooves. Climb quartz-filled grooves (marked by arrow) for 120 ft. (pegs) to a small stance and peg belay. Surmount overhang up to the right (1 peg) and continue up steep holdless slabs (pegs) for 120 ft. to a peg belay. Traverse to the right on sloping ledges to peg belay beside a steep polished slab. Place a peg 15 ft. above the belay and tension across to very loose block belay. Climb overhanging corner directly above, slightly vegetated. Move round to the right (1 peg) into a large groove leading to steep slabs. Peg belay. Climb 150 ft. of slabs (pegs) to reach grassy terrace and finish up the final 250 ft. of Theseus Grooves. 10 pegs were used in all for belays and assurance (actual or potential?—Ed.).

Editorial Note:—This route and Dinosaur (see S.M.C.J. (1965), xxviii, p.121) share at least a common start. However, from the text it is impossible to decide just how much they overlap. Future ascenders please report.

Mayar: Corrie Fee.—*Slanting Gully*. 400 ft. GRADE II. P. Gribbon, C. Doake, W. Band, I. Campbell, A. Robertson & D. Meldrum (all St. A.U.M.C.). 6 hours. 22nd January 1967.

The waterfall pitch at the foot was avoided. The main difficulty was the 'damp section of 70 ft. past a chockstone.'

CENTRAL HIGHLANDS

Sgùrr a'Mhàim : East Face.—*Three Fingers*. 100 ft. Very Difficult.

This route lies on the best-looking piece of slab below and slightly to the right of the South Top of Sgùrr a'Mhàim, well seen from Am Bodach. Start at the left end of the slab and follow the line of least resistance to the top.

Creag Meaghaidh : Coire Ardair.—*Amustaoavoid*. 200 ft. Very Difficult (3). A. McKeith & party. 24th August 1966.

This is the short steep buttress to the right of the North Pipe of Staghorn Gully. A horrible climb, horribly named, in a fine situation, the best of a bad job. The best approach is probably by The Shelf, then start from the bottom right of the buttress, climb up leftwards by a shelf and finish up the left side of the buttress by corners and tottering blocks.

Creag Dubh : Main Face.—*Cockadoodlemoobahquack*. 200 ft. Very Difficult (3+). A. McKeith & party. 21st August 1966.

About 100 ft. left of the waterfall climb a vertical wall by a crack (3+), then traverse up to the right to a groove leading back left to a ledge and belay. Finish up easy slabs to the left of the waterfall.

—*Kneekers-Off*. 200 ft. Very Severe. J. Brumfitt & B. Sproul. August 1966.

Takes a direct line through the overhangs avoided by Tip Off.

—*Hungarian Hamstring*. 200 ft. Very Severe (6—). A. McKeith, R. Hart & Miss M. A. Thompson. 21st August 1966.

Well to the left of the waterfall there is a small, isolated crag identifiable by a leftward-facing overhung shelf rising in two vertical steps. Climb this, making a small excursion (6—) at the top on to the slab on the left. It is possible to escape to the left at midheight. An excellent route, strenuous and delicate.

Sprawl Wall.—*Slabsville*. 220 ft. Severe (4+). A. McKeith & party. 25th August 1966.

Above and to the right of the start of Tree-Hee there is a corner. Climb the slab on the right of the corner to belay under an overhang in a corner on the right (4—), (100 ft.). Surmount the overhang (4) and climb straight up then right to another large overlap. Surmount it on the right (4+), then finish up a smooth then dirty slab to the terrace (120 ft.).

Dalwhinnie : Dirc Mhòr.—The Dirc Mhòr, a slash like, or by, a 'great dirk,' lies 3 miles due west of Dalwhinnie. It is a narrow defile, over $\frac{1}{4}$ -mile long, resembling in many respects a miniature Llanberis Pass. The southern wall is lined with a number of small but impressive buttresses. The rock appears to be micro-granite and feldspar and is very sound. The climb reported below lies on the biggest and most impressive buttress, lying at the Dalwhinnie end of the Dirc Mhòr.

Sentinel Rock.—*Holy Smoke*. 300 ft. Very Severe (5+). A. McKeith & party. 23rd August 1966.

Start just above and to the right of the lowest rocks in the lowest of three grassy alcoves leading on to the buttress. Climb a short wall (4), then move right across a slab and up over two large blocks to a ledge. Climb the wall above by a crack on the right (4+) to the third grassy alcove (100 ft.). Climb a corner on the left (4+), then move left along a ledge out on to the wall of the buttress and up to belay on small ledges on a slab (5—) (80 ft.). Up the left edge of the corner above to a prominent roof (4), left along a ledge to a large block, then hand-traverse up and rightwards (5+) until a narrow ledge leads rightwards. Go straight up then left to a slab and follow the crest to the top (120 ft.).

BEN NEVIS

Ben Nevis : North-East Buttress, First Platform.—*Newbigging's 80-Minute Route.* (FIRST WINTER ASCENT). R. N. Campbell & J. R. Marshall. 3½ hours. 25th February 1967.

Summer route followed, to the best of their knowledge, over softish snow.

North-East Buttress, Minus Face.—*Marathon.* About 2000 ft. Very Severe. G. Farquhar & I. Clough. 22nd September 1966.

The climb follows a long rising traverse across the Minus Buttresses and the Orion Face. It gives fairly sustained and very interesting climbing and includes several hard pitches. Pegs were used for belays as required.

Start up Minus Two Buttress by the Left Hand Route Direct Start and traverse right (from the junction with the normal route) below the Central Route overhangs to the edge of the corner of Right Hand Route. A short abseil is followed by the Right Hand Route crux. From the belay above, traverse right to climb the upper grooves of Subtraction to a grassy ledge on the edge of Minus Two Gully. Cross the gully to a small platform, descend slightly and cross to the 'vast plinth' on North Eastern Grooves (60 ft.). The crux pitch of Minus One Direct leads up to the right to the edge of Minus One Gully (80 ft.). Climb up 10 ft., make a delicate right traverse to a stance and belay in a corner in Astronomy (50 ft.). A slightly descending traverse leads to the corner formed by the Great Slab Rib of Long Climb which follow to a grass ledge (60 ft.). Continue as for Long Climb to the foot of the Second Slab Rib. Follow a line obliquely right across slabs and continue in the same general line finishing near the final part of Slav Route, by a chimney to the right of a prominent prow.

Observatory Ridge, West Face.—*Pointless.* 1000 ft. Very Severe. J. R. Marshall & R. Marshall. 4th September 1966.

The route ascends the slab face immediately left of Point Five Gully.

Start a few feet left from the foot of the gully. Climb a groove leading to a large scree patch (100 ft.) (as for West Face Route). Continue by the crest of a broad rib, aiming for the foot of the obvious corner above, to belay under slabs barring access to the corner (60 ft.). Climb the slabs slightly right of centre to spike belay under the corner (60 ft.). Climb the corner, break out right, (peg) and belay under another corner on the right (90 ft.). Follow the steepening corner to belays (100 ft.). Continue by the same line, towards a narrow chimney and belays (100 ft.). Climb the chimney to join the ledge of the Girdle Traverse (60 ft.) cairn. Continue directly by slabs and grooves (120 ft.), thereafter, occasionally climbing, gain the plateau in 400 ft.

No. 3 Gully Buttress.—*The Knuckleduster.* 400 ft. Very Severe. J. R. Marshall & R. Marshall. 25th September 1966.

This route ascends the great groove which is an obvious feature of the steep face of the buttress overlooking the Lochan na Ciste.

Climb the groove to belay under the overhang (130 ft.). Continue, to turn the overhang by a slab on the right, belay on the outer edge (50 ft.). Regain the groove by a horizontal ledge, continue by a crack in the right wall to belay (120 ft.). Climb the wall on the right to gain the large platform of the original route (100 ft.).

North Trident Buttress.—*Central Rib Direct.* 500 ft. GRADE IV. P. Macdonald & A. McKeith. 5 hours. 18th February 1967.

From the Hut the North Trident Buttress comprises three narrow ribs. The route climbs the central rib directly.

From Moonlight Gully a rising traverse to the left in shallow grooves led to ledge and overhanging wall, surmounted with a sling on a spike. The narrow crest of the ridge was followed relatively easily to the imposing tower. This is split centrally by a narrow chimney. The vertical arête on its right, plastered in snow and black ice, was climbed to the top of the tower in 60 ft., very exposed. This particular pitch occupied three hours and several pegs and slings were used. Thereafter the route was straightforward.

Tower Ridge, East Face.—*Rolling Stones*. 440 ft. Very Severe. J. Cunningham & C. Higgins (both C.D.M.C.). July 1965.

On the same face as The Brass Monkey. Near the top (left) end of this face, 100 ft. down from a wet chimney with a huge capstone, the climb starts to the left of a green mossy corner. Go up easy rocks (loose) to rock shelves; good stance and belay (80 ft.). Traverse horizontally right across a good rock ledge about a foot wide. At its right end climb a wall to a large ledge and good belay (40 ft.). Traverse from the right-hand end of the ledge, rightwards for about 60 ft., until one reaches an overhanging recess about 4 ft. wide. Climb this and reach a small ledge on the left. Peg belay (80 ft.). Climb a corner above the belay and traverse right until a large crack is reached, which follow to a good stance and belay (140 ft.). Easy climbing leads to Tower Ridge (100 ft.).

Càrn Dearg, Great Butress.—*P.M.* 600 ft. Just Very Severe. G. Farquhar & I. Clough. 21st September 1966.

Follow the variation start to Route I to the cairn at the top. On the left, about halfway between the Route I chimney and the corner of Mourning Slab, a leftwards move round a bulge leads to a groove which is climbed (1 peg runner) to a grass ledge below a slab corner (40 ft.). Trend left across the slab, up then left to cross an overlap and reach a stance and chock belay at some flakes (120 ft.). Up and across slabs on right to a grassy stance and thread belay (50 ft.). Climb a steep grassy crack for 20 ft. then right across slabs to the 'seat beside a spike belay' of Route I, (50 ft.). Go right to climb a bulging corner and the crack above to the top (80 ft.).

Glen Nevis, Pollidubh Crag.—*G String*. 100 ft. Severe & A1. R. R. Gray & G. Low (both Starav C.C.). 2nd May 1965.

Start 10 ft. from the left edge of the violin-shaped buttress beside Storm. Traverse left, then up to the corner and continue obviously to a niche at 80 ft. Surmount a short crack (2 pegs) and continue to top. (See **Ben Nevis Notes**).

GLENCOE, GLEN ETIVE & ARDGOUR

Beinn Trilleachan: The Slabs.—*Grasshopper, Phase II*. 700 ft. Very Severe. J. R. Marshall & D. Bathgate. May 1966.

From the cave belay under the main lap on the Grasshopper move out right to surmount the overhang, continue by the slab above for 15 ft. to gain a narrow ledge. Piton belay, (25 ft.). Traverse left by slabs and ledges to gain Agony, (120 ft.). Alternatively climb Agony to the first belay ledge.

Climb the left wall (peg) to enter the corner above and climb this (5 pegs) to join Hammer, (80 ft.). Climb as for that route to tree belays, (80 ft.). Move left a few feet, climb a steep wall (peg) then by cracks and ledges gain the upper slabs and cross to peg belay, (80 ft.). Climb the bay above (arrow) then thin cracks through mossy slabs, traverse a few feet right to other thin cracks and follow these to the upper wall, (150 ft.). Traverse left to a large grass bay, (30 ft.). Peg belay. Move back a few feet, climb an overhanging

groove, 4 pegs, then traverse right to peg belay, (60 ft.). Climb a wall on the left (peg) move up to an overhung recess, climb this (peg) then the corner above to slabs and belay, (60 ft.). Finish up to the right, (30 ft.).

This was the line originally proposed when Grasshopper was climbed in 1961, but time and energies ran out. On the above ascent Agony was climbed as a start to the route. Grasshoppers I & II now await a complete ascent!

—*Girdle of the Slabs*. 1530 ft. Very Severe and A2. B. Robertson & others. See article this issue.

Beinn Mhic Chasgaig ; West Face, Bird's Eye Buttress.

Four miles down Glen Etive on the left the west ridge of this peak terminates in a rounded granite buttress, well seen from the road near Dalness. Because of the crag's accessibility and modest aspect, it is more than probable that the routes reported below have been ascended previously. However, we do not appear to have any record of them.

—*Surprise Pea*. 300 ft. Very Severe (5—). A. W. Ewing & A. McKeith. 29th October 1966.

Start at the foot of the buttress below two prominent corners. Climb the rib between them (5—), step left above an overhang and go diagonally leftwards by a jamming crack (4+) to a peg belay on slab below a bulging slab, (120 ft.). Climb the bulging slab (4+) and continue directly to a large overlap, then go diagonally left past a huge perched block and up to belay on a sloping ledge, (120 ft.). Finish directly up the rib beyond (4+, wet).

—*Fish Finger*. 250 ft. Very Severe (6). A. McKeith & A. W. Ewing. 29th October 1966.

Start 30 ft. up right from the lowest rocks (cairn) and climb a wall (6) to a grass ledge and peg belay, (30 ft.). Move round a bulge on to a sloping ledge (4+) and follow a prominent corner on the nose of the buttress (4) to reach slabs above. Belay below the final wall, (120 ft.). Climb bulging slabs rightward past a good spike (4+) to the top.

—*Secretion Slab*. 200 ft. Severe (4, wet). A. McKeith. 2nd October 1966.

Below and to the left of Bird's Eye Buttress is a steep narrow slab. Start at the foot, surmount an overlap on the left, go straight up by large pockmarks, then trend left above a bulge (4, wet) to finish left of the final overlap.

Buachaille Etive Mòr ; Coire na Tulaich.—*Nobad*. 300 ft. Very Difficult (3). A. McKeith. 26th August 1966.

Steep, clean, sound and exposed, this route takes the wall to the left of Awrong (S.M.C.J. (1966), xxviii, p.222).

—*Soso*. 150 ft. Very Difficult (3). A. McKeith. 26th August 1966.

Climb a crack in the centre of the steepest part of the red crag above and to the left of Nobad, easily reached by a left traverse along a terrace from the top of Nobad.

—*Dinnaeken*. 150 ft. Very Severe (5). A. McKeith. 3rd September 1966.

Below the rim of the corrie on the right, above and to the left of the crag holding the previous two routes, there is a small, rounded buttress. Start from the lowest rocks and climb an overhanging wall direct (5) to a sloping platform. Climb the steep wall, directly in front, on good jugs to the top, (3+).

—*Uhuh*. 100 ft. Severe (4, wet).

A. McKeith. 3rd September 1966.

A pleasant route following directly the well-defined crest of the arête, on the small buttress to the right of the buttress of Dinnaeken.

—*The Dial*. 200 ft. Very

Difficult (3—). A. McKeith (probably not a first ascent). 11th September 1966.

This is the large foreshortened slab high on the left side of Coire na Tulaich, below and to the right of Lagangarbh Buttress. It appears to be climbable almost anywhere.

Staircase Buttress.—*Bag*. 200 ft. Very Severe (5—). A. McKeith & R. Macdonald. 11th September 1966.

On the right of Staircase Buttress there is a prominent vertical arête. Climb it, first on the left to a block belay, (4+, wet), (60 ft.), then along a narrow ledge to the right and straight up the crest over a bulge on the right (5—) to the top, (140 ft.).

Great Gully Buttress.—*Girdle Traverse*. 400 ft. Very Severe. J. R. Marshall & J. McLean (C.D.M.C.). June 1966.

Start at the lowest rocks of the buttress, climb just left of watermarked rocks to loose blocks and belay, (60 ft.). Move up a few feet, enter the corner on the right and climb to a grass ledge and belay, (50 ft.). Traverse left across the face by the line of a horizontal crack. At about 60 ft., climb up then cross the Direct Route to climb a crack to belay, (120 ft.). Traverse left by the lip of the slab, crossing the lines of June, July and August Cracks to belay in a notch on Trident Crack, (90 ft.). Finish by the wall and crack on the left, (80 ft.).

—*The Whip*. 240 ft. Very Severe. J. R. Marshall & J. McLean (C.D.M.C.). June 1966.

Start 30 ft. right of the Direct Route. Climb directly to a small overhang, turn this by a groove on the right and climb to a grass ledge, (110 ft.). Climb to the foot of the brown groove above, enter this with the aid of a sling and continue to spike belays, (50 ft.). Traverse left onto a gangway then directly to the top of the buttress, (80 ft.).

North Buttress.—*Plutocrat*. 260 ft. Severe. J. R. Marshall & M. Galbraith. 28th August 1966.

Start 100 ft. below Pluto at a point beneath the left edge of that steep section of wall. Climb a groove to block belay on right, (80 ft.). Continue by steep edge to grass terrace, (100 ft.). Finish by the edge above, (80 ft.).

Flem Wall.

This mighty crag lies within 100 ft. of the summit of the Buachaille on the N.W. side. It reaches a maximum height of 300 ft. and is quite extensive. The rock is steep, clean and sound. The main feature is a centrally-placed broad sloping ledge, the Balumph, topped by a large corner, well seen even from the main road.

—*Sgub*. 180 ft. Very Severe. W. Sproul & M. Galbraith. 26th September 1966.

Below and well to the left of the Balumph is a short arête with a cairn at its foot. Follow the line of most resistance to the top.

—*Seek Tochil*. 300 ft. Severe (4, wet). A. McKeith. 3rd September 1966.

About 100 ft. to the right of the previous route, though still to the left of the Balumph is a cairn and arrow. Zig-zag up the wall by shelves, flakes

and ledges to the left extremity of the Balumph, then climb the imposing rib directly above, first by a corner on the left, right on to the crest and follow this to the top (exposed).

—*Shasmakelmanov*. 250 ft. Very Severe (6, wet). A. McKeith & R. Macdonald. 11th September 1966.

Takes the most direct line on the cliff. Start below the right-hand end of the small roof directly below the Balumph (arrow), and climb a prominent shelf leading up rightwards, then move out left on to the wall and up to the Balumph, (4), (100 ft.). Climb the prominent corner in the rib on its right for 30 ft. (6, wet), to a ledge on the right, then continue up the corner (5+, wet) to a sloping ledge, (100 ft.). Finish up rightwards and belay round the summit cairn.

Central Buttress.—*Apauling*. 300 ft. Very Severe (6—). A. McKeith & P. Brian (E.U.M.C.). 29th May 1966.

Start below and to the right of Heather Ledge at the left end of the overhangs directly below the recess on the traverse of North Face Route, (arrow) and traverse up and right into a groove which follow (4—) to the recess, (80 ft.). Climb on the right of the crack splitting the roof of the recess, (5+), then move left past a jammed block to swing across the lip of the roof to a ledge and block belay, (30 ft.). Climb the corner forming the right edge of the prominent white scar above, first by a narrow shelf, then a vertical groove (2 pegs), then by the exposed right edge of the corner (6—) to a ledge and block belay, (70 ft.). Finish up North Face Route.

—*Rockclimb* (DIRECT START). Severe. P. Brian & A. McKeith. 29th May 1966.

Start on a heather ledge midway between the starts of Swansong and Rockclimb. Go up a thin crack and make a right traverse to join Rockclimb above the first belay.

North Buttress, East Face.—*Bluebell Grooves*. 140 ft. Very Severe. J. Cunningham & F. Finlayson (both C.D.M.C.). August 1958.

Start at an overhanging groove just to the right of Bottleneck Chimney. Climb the groove to a small grass ledge, using a peg and a jammed sling at 40 ft., (60 ft.). Traverse right for about 12 ft. and climb into a shallow overhanging groove. Progress becomes difficult and three pegs are used in this groove. Continue up the groove and wall above to a good stance and peg belay, (50 ft.). Scramble up easy rocks to Green Gully, (30 ft.).

Bidean nam Bian : Lost Valley Buttress.—*Delusion*. 200 ft. Very Difficult. I. Clough & C. Kynaston. 30th August 1966.

To the left of the original route is a big vertical corner, 150 ft. high. Scramble up to a belay in the corner. Climb the left wall precariously by cracks and huge flakes leading to a belay in the corner, 20 ft. below the top. Climb the chimney above. Walk left along a ledge under an impending wall until a 40 ft. corner leads back up to the right. Grassy grooves lead to the top.

Geàrr Aonach : Upper East Face.—*Outgrabe Direct*. 300 ft. Very Difficult. I. Clough & party. 6th June 1966.

Start about 40 ft. left of Mome Rath. Climb to a recess and go left up a short slab corner to gain the left-hand of two obvious crack lines. Follow this to stance and large block belay, (120 ft.). Continue to the 'eyrie' of Mome Rath (100 ft.) and finish up the original Outgrabe Variation, the arête on the left.

—*Jabberwock*. 300 ft. Very Severe.

I. Clough & C. Kynaston. 27th August 1966.

A thin crack goes up the wall between Mome Rath and The Wabe. Climb this to a peg belay, (110 ft.). Continue up the crack then across slabs and climb a short groove to a good ledge and belays. Go up the steep corner crack on the left until it is possible to swing on to a nose on the left. Continue up the wall to the top.

—*Whimsy*. 300 ft. Severe. Mr. & Mrs.

I. Clough. 28th August 1966.

Scramble to a large grass ledge above and to the right of The Wabe. Climb a long corner crack in two pitches to a belay below a steep wall with twin cracks. Climb the right-hand crack until it bulges then move left into the other. Easier climbing leads to belays in a recess. Continue to the top.

East Face (North End).—*High Flying*. 300 ft. Very Difficult (3+). A. McKeith. 30th April 1966.

This route lies on the same crag as Harry (see S.M.C.J. (1966), xxviii, p.223), below and to the right of Marshall's Wall. Start at the lowest rocks at a prominent buttress. Up this to a large platform, (100 ft.). Climb the wall beyond by a series of cracks to below the final wall. This gives a good exposed pitch passing between an obvious perched block on the left and a large bulge on the right, (3+).

—*Hairy Kipper*. 250 ft. Very Difficult (3+). A. McKeith. 30th April 1966.

Climb a chimney right of the start of High-Flying for 20 ft. and move on to the right wall by a crack to reach a right traverse above a vertical wall and the huge roof near the ground. From its end climb a crack to the cracked wall right of the finishing bulge of High-Flying. Finish rightwards up this wall, (3+, awkward, exposed and dirty).

The following three routes lie on a small steep face, 200 ft. directly above the previous route. There are three prominent parallel cracks.

—*Leg Stump*. 150 ft. Very Difficult (3+). J. Renny & A. McKeith. 7th May 1966.

Up the lefthand crack.

—*Middle Stump*. 150 ft. Very Difficult (3). A. McKeith. 30th April 1966.

Up the middle crack.

—*Off Stump*. 150 ft. Very Difficult (3). A. McKeith. 7th May 1966.

Up the right-hand crack.

Stob Coire nan Lochain: Summit Buttress.—*Pearly Gates*. 500 ft. GRADE II. I. Clough & party. 2 hours. 17th April 1966.

Start in Broad Gully where the steep walls of Summit Buttress fade out. From the gully one can see a notch or 'gateway' immediately above. Climb an obvious line of ramps to reach this feature in 150 ft. Pass through the 'gates' into a shallow snow fan which follow to the summit.

South Buttress.—*Tilt*. 500 ft. Severe. I. Clough & J. Hardy. 28th May 1966.

Start between the Direct Route and the great corner which runs up the right-hand half of the buttress. Follow a rightward-slanting groove to a large block, (70 ft.). Move up gangway on left, back right and up a steep wall (1 peg) to gain short chimneys which lead to the top of a pedestal, (70 ft.).

Climb 30 ft. to a ledge and then up an obvious groove. Once above a prominent overhang, move right and climb a wall to belay on a huge flake. Grooves now lead to a belay on a terrace, then take a chimney on the left to the top.

North Buttress.—*Intruder*. 300 ft. Severe. G. Arkless (F.R.C.C.) & I. Clough. 11th June 1966.

Follow a thin groove between East Face and Crest Route, which continues as a crack on the upper wall.

Pinnacle Buttress.—*North-East Face*. 300 ft. GRADE III. I. Clough & J. R. Woods. 2 hours. 26th January 1967.

This ascent followed a similar line to the summer route but used the following more interesting variations: a steep icy corner crack between the first and second terraces; a chimney on the left from the third terrace to the roof of the pinnacle.

—*Juggler*. 200 ft. Severe. I. Clough & G. Arkless (F.R.C.C.). 11th June 1966.

Takes a line up the steep prominent arête split by a crack in its lower half.

Climb the crack and a chimney to a detached pinnacle on the right. Go over a block on the left and make a huge stride to gain a hidden groove. The key foothold is a delicately poised block. Finish up a system of cracks.

—*The Jester*. 30 ft. Severe. I. Clough & G. Arkless (F.R.C.C.). 11th June 1966.

The most spectacular pinnacle on the Buttress.

Approach it from the foot of North Gully by a grassy rake. Climb an overhanging crack on the short side to a ledge on the east side and swing up the north side to the top. Amusing.

Aonach Dubh: West Face.—*Amphitheatre Scoop*. GRADE IV. I. Clough, G. Lowe & J. Hardy. 4 hours. 18th February 1966.

Enter from Dinner-Time Buttress via Middle Ledge. Awkward under icy conditions. The Scoop gave an excellent climb with steep ice for the first 150 ft. This was climbed in two pitches, broken by a stance and peg belay on a pedestal on the left wall. Above the Rake an obvious continuation slants easily to the top.

West Face, E Buttress.—*Tight Rope*. 160 ft. Very Severe. J. Cunningham & J. McLean (both C.D.M.C.). 31st July 1966.

Start as for Trapeze. Easy scrambling to peg belay, (50 ft.). Climb the crack to a small ledge and peg belay, (20 ft.). Traverse left a few feet then up a steep crack which becomes progressively more difficult. The wide section of the crack (crux) is surmounted with the aid of pegs. Continue up the crack, easier now, to a large ledge on the left, (90 ft.). Continue up Big Top to finish.

—*Stumblebum*. 390 ft. Very Severe. J. Cunningham & W. Smith (both C.D.M.C.). 23rd August 1966.

This route lies on the same crag as Stickleback. Start as for Stickleback, and climb the first pitch of that route to belay, (80 ft.). Continue up Stickleback to the position where it swings up. Move under roof, then right to a stance and peg belay below overhanging crack in a corner, (70 ft.). Climb the crack to a roof, move round a corner to the right and up an overhanging groove to a poor stance and peg belay, (90 ft.). Continue up crack to a roof, move left on to an open face and climb directly up crack to the top of this face. Scramble for 30 ft. to a large boulder and chockstone belay, (150 ft.).

—*Trapeze* (DIRECT FINISH). 100 ft. Very Severe. J. Falkener & C. Higgins (both C.D.M.C.). June 1965.

From the top of the initial steep wall of the fifth pitch climb the clean corner which the original route by-passes on the right to a belay. Easier climbing leads to the top of the buttress.

—*Sideshow*. 500 ft. Very Severe. J. R. Marshall & R. Marshall. May 1966.

Start about 50 ft. right of Trapeze under a steep wall defined on the left by a short chimney. Climb the wall trending right to a ledge then more easily by a series of short walls leading to a ledge and belay, (120 ft.). Move onto the upper wall, at 20 ft. traverse right to climb a steep crack leading into a corner and belay, (40 ft.). Climb the corners above to belay at the foot of the upper slab, (60 ft.). Climb the steepening above, by a small groove then directly to the top of the slab, (160 ft.). Peg belay. Traverse to the right to a large platform, (40 ft.). Climb the steep wall on the left, (40 ft.). (These are as for Trapeze). Climb the clean cut corner above, (climbed originally by C. Higgins (C.D.M.C.)) turn the bulge on the left to belay on a slab, (80 ft.). Finish by easy slabs to the top of the buttress, (70 ft.).

The intention had been to gain the clean cut corner directly from the belay recess at the top of the slab, but danger of loose rocks to following parties excluded the attempt.

North Face.—*Angor*. 220 ft. Very Severe. I. Clough & G. Arkless (F.R.C.C.). 12th June 1966.

Follows the next obvious break below and to the left of Tober, an undercut triangular slab below a short overhanging chimney and slab corner. Gain the right-hand edge of the slab, (3 pegs), traverse left and climb the chimney bulge. Continue to belays in an overhung recess, (100 ft.). Go left then up rightwards over a bulge to the foot of a rake which leads into Fingal's Chimney.

Lower North-East Nose.—*Novity*. 300 ft. Very Difficult. I. Clough & D. G. Roberts. 6th November 1965.

The next obvious line to the right of Bell's Original Route; a corner groove near the prow of the nose.

Far East Buttress.—*Triangle*. 160 ft. Very Difficult. T. Low & G. Skelton (both Ochils M.C.). 21st August 1966.

100 ft. to the right of and higher than Hole in Corner Gully is a triangular cavity with a large flake at its apex from which a deep crack rises vertically. Climb up to the flake then directly over it into the crack which follow (awkwardly constricted) to a platform belay. Finish by the obvious groove running rightward to the top.

—*Nirvana Wall*. 250 ft. Severe. I. Clough, C. Kynaston & J. G. Garster. 26th August 1966.

Start 15 ft. left of Yen. A thin crack line goes the full height of the crag, cutting through the final roof on the right. Climb it in three pitches.

—*Yen*. 230 ft. Very Difficult. C. Kynaston & J. G. Garster. 29th August 1966.

Start well left of North-East Nose, where the crag reaches maximum height, at a cairn. Follow smooth slabs to below a steep cracked wall. Move right and climb the wall (crux) to a grassy ledge. Up groove to top.

East Face, Terrace Face.—*Hesitation*. 210 ft. Very Severe. J. Cunningham (C.D.M.C.). 3rd July 1966.

Start halfway between Gut and G String at a shallow but prominent groove. Climb the groove and continue upwards beyond its top, bearing

slightly right. Choice of poor stances and peg belay, (120 ft.). Climb diagonally right into a large groove topped by a huge roof. Small stance and peg belay, (40 ft.). Climb up to the roof and traverse left for 15 ft. (1 peg). Climb an overhanging groove to finish on a large ledge, (50 ft.).

West Top of Bidean.—This is the top between Bidean and Stob Coire nam Beith. The following routes have been made on the cliffs below this top falling into Coire nam Beith.

—*Hourglass Gully.* 400 ft. GRADE I. I. Clough & party. February 1966.

Splitting the cliff high up is this long tapering gully which fans out again below the top. It gives a straightforward steep snow climb, occasionally holding two short steps of snow-ice, similar to N.C. Gully on Stob Coire nan Lochan.

—*The Gash.* 400 ft. GRADE III. I. Clough, M. Hadley & M. Large. 2 hours. 22nd March 1959.

To the left of the above route is an obvious deep narrow gully, entered after 100 ft. of broken rocks. This gave several interesting pitches under conditions of verglas and powder snow.

Stob Coire nam Beith.—*Broken Gully.* 500 ft. GRADE I. Mr. & Mrs. I. Clough. 1 hour. 13th January 1966.

To the left of Arch Gully is No. 1 Buttress which is set back from the main face and follows a chimney line centrally up a sort of 'rognon' and then up a second tier of cliff, above a broad snow shelf. To the left of this again is a 500 ft. projecting buttress (Zero Buttress?) which forms the leftmost extremity of the cliffs. Broken Gully follows the corner between Zero and No. 1 Butresses. Climb up the left of the rognon and enter the gully proper. There are two branches separated by a rock rib. The normal, right-hand fork is straightforward steep snow. *The Left Fork* (GRADE II. I. Clough & party. 1½ hours. 25th January 1967) was steep and held more ice.

No. 4 Buttress.—*Isis.* 200 ft. Very Severe. I. Clough, M. Large & M. Hadley. 11th June 1959.

Start near the lowest rocks of the clean wall between the 'open slanting gully' of No. 4 Buttress and N.W. Gully, at the foot of an obvious groove with a pedestal 10 ft. up the right wall.

Climb the groove to a grassy ledge and belays (80 ft., 1 peg runner). Climb the overhanging flake crack above. Alternatively, move left across slabs, climb a steep wall and follow a gangway back right till above the flake. Continue more easily to the top.

N.W. Gully.—*The Mummy.* 200 ft. Very Difficult. I. Clough, C. Kynaston & J. G. Garster. 22nd August 1966.

This climb takes a central line up the bold little buttress between the final forks of N.W. Gully. It is easily reached by a left traverse from below the final wall of The Sphinx.

Climb the first groove until it is possible to move left to a good ledge and belay. Go up cracks and grooves above.

An t-Sròn : North Face.—*The Chasm.* 1200 ft. GRADE IV. H. M. Brown, J. Matyssek, R. K. Graham & M. Smith (B.F.M.C.). 6 hours. 2nd January 1963.

Scramble to first big waterfall, turn right or left and re-enter above a second 20 ft. pitch. Continue easily for 300 ft., till gully forks. Left fork is poor so take the right, a 150-200 ft. ice-fall. Small ice-pitches lead to a 100 ft.

ice-fall. At the top the gully forks again. The left fork is true but the right is more interesting, leading to a 100 ft. ice-fall, vertical in its upper section, and an easy traverse leading back into the left fork. Easy ice scrambles lead to a short 15 ft. pitch above which the difficulties end.

Sgòr na h-Ulaidh : North Face.—*Subsidiary Scoop*. 500 ft. GRADE II. Mr. & Mrs. I. Clough. 1½ hours. 31st March 1966.

This climb follows a gully immediately to the left of Red Gully and separated from it by a rocky rib. Taken direct, it gave a steep snow climb with two short steps of ice.

Garbh Bheinn : Leac Mhòr.—*One Point Five*. 250 ft. Severe. I. G. Rowe & P. M. MacDonald. August 1966.

Start from a recess 100 ft. right of Route II on the third tier and climb the slab directly by a system of cracks and grooves.

—*Girdle Traverse*. 500 ft. Severe. I. G. Rowe & P. M. MacDonald. August 1966.

On the left of the third tier there is a smooth streaky wall. Traverse under this to belay on a grassy ledge below a greasy corner. Go up, then right across a slab below an overhung wall to belay below a steep corner, (70 ft.). Go down and right along a ledge then up and right across the main slab to the large block on Route II, (90 ft.). Climb the original Route II for two pitches (240 ft.) to a belay in the corner forming the right flank of the central overhanging section. Tension right into the grooves of One Point Five. Continue rightwards to easy slabs.

Second Tier.—*Mayday*. 250 ft. Very Difficult. C. Blenkinsop, B. T. Hill & A. S. Macdonald (all J.M.C.S.). 23rd May 1966.

Start to the left of the lowest rocks at the north end of the second tier by a shallow corner and arête then up slabs to a grassy platform. Continue by two short vertical walls and a shallow rightward-slanting groove over more slabs to the top. Wet conditions.

SOUTHERN HIGHLANDS

Craig-y-Barns : Cave Crag.—*Rat Race* (DIRECT FINISH). 80 ft. A3. I. G. Rowe & D. S. B. Wright. May 1966.

After moving right under the roof at the first belay, break back left with a small leaper and a big leap and climb into Mousetrap.

Polney Crag.—*Cuticle Creek*. 100 ft. Very Severe. I. G. Rowe & P. MacDonald. April 1966.

Up the creek to the left of Cuticle Crack. Start at the painted C and climb the slab to the overhang. Climb through the nick and finish straight up the slabs above.

NOTES

Rhum Notes

Two strong parties visited Rhum last year: Miss Littlejohn with an L.S.C.C. bevy; and Hamish Macmillan Brown with his B.F.'s. We are pleased to report that Miss Littlejohn has written a useful article on the logistics of Climbing in Rhum for the *M.A.M. Journal*, 1966, and is prepared to supply offprints from the Veterinary Laboratory, Weybridge, Surrey; price (including postage) 1/-.

However, we add a few words of warning to future pioneers in Rhum. The number of New Climbs that we publish increases yearly and their individual importance likewise diminishes. Despite this, we have not yet come to such a pass that 50 ft. problems in this Gabbro Paradise (*cf.* H.M.B.'s final frenetic apothegm, *THE CLIMBING IN RHUM AWAITS THE TIGER. GABBRO WALLS AND CRACKS*) will be granted column-space.

As well as the climbs listed in the **New Climbs** section above, H.M.B. reports finding two small walls left of the top of the *Giant's Staircase* on **Ruinival**, the leftmost of which, dubbed *Fork Slab*, was climbed by each of its three prongs.

Arran Notes

A'Chir, 7-8 Buttress, Afterthought.—W. Wallace reports a guide-book inaccuracy and an unwitting variation. Pitch 2 mentions a *right traverse round a bulge* which is in fact a *left* traverse. On Pitch 3, instead of climbing the flake Wallace, in company with Hugh Stirling, traversed rather delicately 20 ft. further right to a most striking triangular detached flake with a hole near its apex and rejoined the original route above this flake. Wallace remarks, 'This buttress is smaller than the others on A'Chir and differs from them in being composed of steep walls and ledges rather than slabs. It doesn't really deserve its rating of 'inferior and scrappy' (*Arran Rock Guide*), but this doubtless stems from the unattractive nature of the original route on it (*Afterthought* is an excellent route).'

Goatfell Slabs, Angel's Pavement.—Wallace reports a variation which improves on Pitches 3 & 4. Instead of traversing left from the belay, climb straight up to finish in about 100 ft. (the first 20 ft. are Severe, the rest Easy).

Cir Mhòr, North-East Face, Ribbish.—To the Editor's chagrin and embarrassment this marvellous plum was picked in 1903 by Messrs. Goggs & Bennet-Gibbs. A chestnut.

Tòrr Nead an Eoin, Grey Wall.—Wallace once more: 'In last year's *Journal* I implied that Rucksack Club members were the first ascenders of the climb on this buttress. I have since learned that G. H. Townend & party did it around 1946. They gave it no name but did give a sketchy description which accords well enough with both the later, more detailed, descriptions. *Grey Wall* seems the better name.'

Coire na h-Uaimh (Glen Sannox), Slapstick Wall.—Wallace notes variations with Stirling to Pitches 3 & 4. Pitch 3: instead of following the crack, which is messy, take to the delightful slabs on the right to reach the same belay point. Pitch 4: follow the curve of the J directly round into the

upright via a narrow steep curving shelf to rejoin the original route some 40 ft. up. These pitches are no harder than the original but are much more attractive and turn a good climb into an excellent one. There may be some overlap between these variants and Galbraith's *Herpolhode* (see **New Climbs**).

Northern Highlands Notes

The recent spate of activity in the North by the Corriemulzie Mountaineering Club has been skimpily recorded in the **New Climbs** section. Readers requiring fuller information may find it in the *Interim Guides* to the Northern Highlands published by that Club along with all older climbs recorded by us in the areas covered, which are to date **Easter Ross** and **Foinaven**. These cheaply-produced guides will bridge the gap, it is hoped, between now and the S.M. Trust's future publication of a *Climber's Guide to the Northern Highlands*, which will consist of three volumes covering, respectively, *Torridonia and The South*; *Carnmore, The East and The North*; *Assynt and North-West Ross*. These interim guides were edited by the late A. R. M. Park & P. N. L. Tranter, both of the Corriemulzie M.C., and may be purchased from Graham Tiso, 44 Rodney Street, Edinburgh 7, from I. G. Rowe, Brediland House, Brediland Road, Paisley, or from any C.M.C. member. Prices: Easter Ross 5s. 6d., Foinaven Supplement 3s. 6d.

I. G. Rowe, at the above address, is now dealing with Northern Highland matters generally. Notes or comments on the above guides should be sent to him. He would like to publish here an *erratum* in the Foinaven Supplement: the crag named there **Creag Alistair** should of course be **Creag Alasdair**.

Cairngorm Notes

Coire Etchachan.—As the available area of unclimbed rock dwindles, one expects to receive correspondingly greater amounts of *trivia* with each day's post. However, editorial patience has limits which are below exceeded. Read on

Dear Sir,

Early in January 1967 a friend, D. McK. B., and myself camped on the edge of Loch Etchachan in the Cairngorms. As we were without a guidebook, it being out of print, we climbed on the steep slope on the west of the Lochan. The snow was hard and steep enough for us to be forced to cut steps, even with crampons on. There were two pitches of 100 ft. and a very large summit cornice. We found the climb very interesting and well worth doing and I hope you will include this area of steep snow in your new guide. We graded the climb at about Grade II-III.

Yours faithfully,

P.S. The Map Reference of our climb is 003003.

J. L. N.

Central Highland Notes

Creag Meaghaidh: Pinnacle Buttress, Glenmorangie.—This route was erroneously recorded as a first ascent in last year's *Journal*, p.219. It was first recorded by J. R. Marshall & G. J. Ritchie in *S.M.C.J.* (1957), xxvi, p.204.

Creag Meaghaidh.—McKeith has written and published a guide to the mountain obtainable from him at 86 Comely Bank Avenue, Edinburgh 4, or from Graham Tiso. He wishes to point out that 'the descriptions and any other information will, of course, be available should the S.M.C. wish to include them in any more comprehensive guide to the area.'

Creag Dubh, Newtonmore.—The guide to this and other roadside crags (see **Southern Highlands Notes**) has followed the pattern of our own publications and is something like a year behind schedule. However, I am assured by its publisher, Graham Tiso, that it is 'at the binders' and should be out before the snow thaws off its subject-matter.

Dubh-Lag, Onich.—R. Grieve (J.M.C.S. Lochaber) notes that this crag (O.S. ref. 025620) has been used as a practice crag for some 3 years now. It is a $\frac{1}{4}$ -mile long slabby wall of quartzite, reaching a height of 300 ft. at points and is situated almost at sea-level, about 100 yds. from the main road. Most of the existing routes are around Severe standard and average 150 ft. in length.

Ben Nevis Notes

Polldubh Crags, Glen Nevis.—J. R. Marshall has suggested that some local devotee of these crags (and perhaps of the **Dubh-Lag**, noted above) might render the Club and others a useful service by compiling a small guide. This might also absolve the *Ben Nevis Climbers' Guidebook* Editor from having to include them in an already bulging guide . . .

Glencoe Notes

Many of the new climbs in this area reported in this year's **New Climbs** are questionable first ascents. However, the previous first ascents are mostly oral tradition and none of these routes, as far as we can see, have previously been written down. In particular, J. R. Marshall remembers climbing most of *Apauling* (see **Buachaille Etive Mòr : Central Buttress**) and that the crag beneath the summit of the Buachaille, on the north-west side, **Flem Wall**, has been part of the route from the top of Slime Wall to the summit for some time. He also notes that *Novity* (see **Aonach Dubh : Lower North-East Nose**) fell to 5 parties on a single day some years ago. There is a note about it in *S.M.C.J.*, xxvi (1957), p.176, indicating doubt about which of the 5 came first! We will try to sort this out for next year; meanwhile Clough is the compromise candidate! Marshall also remembers climbing in winter on the crags of Clough's West Top of Bidean, ascending two gullies, one on the right and one on the left. Lastly, *Yen* (see **Aonach Dubh : Far East Buttress**) was first climbed, but not recorded, by D. D. Stewart about ten years ago.

Aonach Eagach : Chancellor Buttress.—W. Skidmore (Greenock M.C.) notes that this route has been climbed in winter, and, under a good covering of snow, 'gave a most enjoyable day of some difficulty.' The principal difficulty was route-finding on the steep section at mid-height where a solution was eventually found well to the left by way of a grooved shelf, after which the crest was regained in two pitches, the last forming the crux and being about Severe.

Geàrr Aonach : Upper East Face.—There appears doubt about the location of two climbs on this crag; *Goldfinger* (see *Glencoe II, Addendum*) and *Smersh* (see last year's *Journal*, p.223). In fact, the description of *Goldfinger* is ambiguous and of *Smersh* wrong. J. Knight (*Squirrels M.C.*) notes that the crag on which *Goldfinger* lies is quite separate from the crag diagrammed on p.86 of the guide, well below and well to the right, and has room for only one route, the existing one. The location of *Smersh* is therefore wrong. Rumour has it that lies somewhere right of *Gully A* and left of *Rain-maker* but we have been unable to corroborate this with its perpetrator, a Mr. Haston.

Southern Highland Notes

The Brack ; Great Central Groove.—W. Skidmore (Greenock M.C.) reports a second ascent of this route. He comments, 'J. Morrison was right when he described this climb as a classic (see *S.M.C.J.*, (1959), xxvi, p.358) and I gladly endorse his opinion to the full; it should not be missed.' However, having firstly failed in vibrams and good clothes and secondly succeeded in nails and old rags he notes that 'it is no place for P.A's and pretty climbing clothes.'

Glencroe.—Skidmore notes the existence of a group of outcrops above the gorge on the Cobbler side of the lower part of this glen, useful in wet weather by virtue of several overhanging cracks which remain dry.

Craig-y-Barns, Traprain Law, Aberdour, etc.—for information regarding the forthcoming guidebook to these playgrounds see under **Creag Dubh, Central Highlands Notes**.

Miscellaneous Notes

Munroists, and a Munro-and-Bar. As some recent issues of the *Journal* containing early Munroists are no longer available, and as late earliest still come in, we shall publish our full list, with revisions, next year. Meanwhile, with conventions as before, we have the latest survivors, mostly shepherded here by Mr Eric Maxwell :

(64) J. Mallinson, 1956 (he will have to be moved to position 26 in the revision); (65) R. Hutchison, 1965 ; (66) G. C. Sime, 1966, 1966 ; (67) W. D. Nicholl, 1966 ; (68) D. C. H. Green, 1966, 1966 ; (69) G. King, 1966 ; (70) D. Barclay, 1966.

G. M. Smith and W. T. Taylor, (52) and (61), have now done the tops and are dated respectively 1963, 1966 and 1965, 1966, 1965. But Mr. Maxwell, Munroist of Munroists (position 26, unrevised) has done the whole lot—*taps an aa*—a second time . . . to make sure. P. N. L. Tranter (unrev. 45) did the Munros twice (1961 & 1964) but Maxwell is the first double-topper, and undisputed *bergführer* in theory and practice. His last double Munro (MMunro) was Càrn Dearg of Alder and the TTops were on The Saddle and Faohag. Q.E.F., Mr MMaxwell.

Full Howffs. The annual combined howffing meet with Kinloss and Leuchars R.A.F. Mountain Rescue Teams took place at Arrochar 20th - 23rd January. Police teams and members of Mountaineering Clubs also took part, about 50 being involved. R.A.F. men spent three nights in howffs on different mountains under very severe weather conditions while, on the Sunday, an excellent radio-controlled search and rescue exercise was carried out in the area. It is to be regretted that so few members of the Club took the opportunity of joining in with the teams on this occasion. Thanks are due to John Hinde of Kinloss and Sgt. Hendren of Leuchars and the police authorities of Argyllshire who co-operated so well to make this function a success.

B.H.H.

The Origin of the Junior Mountaineering Club of Scotland.—At various times, and with various degrees of accuracy, accounts of the early J.M.C.S. have appeared in this journal. Recently A. G. Hutchison, one of our members who founded the J.M.C.S., described the true history of its conception, birth and weaning in a letter to a friend. With permission, we print this history here (it has already appeared in the enterprising circular of the Edinburgh Section of the J.M.C.S.).

In the year 1925, A. J. Rusk, R. N. Rutherford and A. G. Hutchison, had a season in the Alps. They met at Amiens railway station in the north of France where the latter two, waiting on the platform there, greeted a gesticulating figure at the carriage window, obviously bursting with a brand new idea. As the three journeyed eastwards through the night, A.J.R. unfolded his plans for a club that would train young aspirant mountaineers and act as a feeder for the S.M.C.

To the three next morning, the sight of the Bernese Oberland glittering in the sunshine, as the train swung down the Aar Valley heightened their dreams of a future where youth in growing numbers would be adequately trained to find their way in a competent manner to the high and majestic places of the Earth.

R., R. and H. in the days immediately following found much with which to occupy themselves. The Blumlisalp put edge on their fitness but again and again on ridge or glacier the subject of the new club was the talking point. Finally, weather bound in the Nutthorn Hut at the head of the Lauterbrunnen Valley, a draft constitution of the club was worked out and the name which was subsequently chosen, suggested.

The club, organised in two sections, a Glasgow one and an Edinburgh one, began to be active during the late summer of 1925. To be precise, the first general meeting of the Glasgow Section was held at the Narnain Boulder in the Cobbler Corrie, Arrochar, on the 30th August. Rusk outlined the aims and objects of the club. There were thirteen persons present in all who became original members and W. B. Spiers (later a President of the S.M.C.) took on the secretaryship. The Edinburgh Section had its first general meeting on September 8th, in the flat of L. St.C. Bartholomew at 14 Ramsay Garden (near the Castle Esplanade) when five persons were present. The secretary was the late T. Evershed Thomson.

The first official Meet was held at Arrochar in November of the same year and was attended by members of both Sections. So it may be said that the J.M.C.S. 'cut its teeth' on the familiar rocks of the Cobbler and Narnain.

From then on the activities of the club have been recorded in the pages of the *S.M.C. Journal* and an early reference to the J.M.C.S. is to be found in *S.M.C.J.* (1925) xvii, 236 (see also *S.M.C.J.* (1930) xix, 147, (1936) xxi, 150, (1939) xxii, 105).

A.G.H.

Falling off slowly. — Having had the pleasure of celebrating a fiftieth birthday by accompanying the first lady to do the four highest Cairngorms in a round trip Glenmore to Glenmore (though many ladies have done it since then ?) I was anxious to note how things would work out 12 years later. Hence on 18th June 1966 the same round trip was repeated, this time with Duncan Ross. The only concession to age—and as I have a hatred of walking on a metalled road in climbing boots—was a lift to the Cairngorm Car Park on the outward journey. Allowing for this, the total time was much the same. My notes read : 'very cold thick mist and wind over Cairngorm and MacDhui and down to Lairig Ghru—clear to Wells of Dee—thunderstorms with hail and lightning over Braeriach and to Chalamain Gap—otherwise good.' We remembered the experience of Murray and Mackenzie on Sgùrr nan Coireachan at Easter 1965, and the intensity of the storm and the frequency of the lightning caused us to leave the ridge and travel along rather rough ground on the slopes of Sròn na Lairig to the Sinclair Hut ; we reckoned this cost us at least an extra twenty minutes, Ross in fact receiving a slight shock. It was a sign of the times that we carried a Bantam Radio Set with us and were able to contact Glenmore Lodge from Cairntoul at noon.

The most gratifying result was the time from exactly the same spot in the Lairig Ghru to the summit of Cairntoul by the same route as twelve

years ago (*via* Lochan Uaine)—exactly two minutes longer! It would seem therefore that the deterioration due to age between 50 and 60 amounts to 10 seconds per year Further data on this point would be of interest.

B.H.H.

Equipment Notes.

THE MAN-MADE REVOLUTION

Norfolk Jackets and hemp may be 'gear' for some but not for the 'mod' climber. 'Man-made' has revolutionised the equipment scene in the last decade. A frozen column of hemp-ice, the scrape of incompetent nails, the stench of sodden tweed, remain only as bitter-sweet memories to a few. It is the privilege of the President and his clan to wear their long service medals on their feet

Boots are the climber's most important item of equipment. Early models, reminiscent of Dutch clogs, are now superseded by the laced-to-the-toe Continental design. A much neater fit is ensured but the uppers are still leather as no substitute has yet appeared. Nails are superseded by rubber composition soles. True, they need to be handled with care on dirty rock but for summer mountaineering I think everyone bows to their superiority. Winter? Hear the outraged oldies howl the tricouni chorus! Yes, there is a case, but weight, expense and small demand Back to the old idea perhaps of a strap-on tricouni-like plate? It's being tried out and may well be the answer for hill-walking. The MacInnes likes it, Q.E.D.?

The rope has probably been the major subject of attention; need I re-iterate the disadvantages of hemp? In the 1950's the British climber took his travel allowance to the Alps in 120-foot lengths. Man-made white gold, in long three strand ingots, commanded a generous rate of exchange. It was elastic and absorbed much of the energy created by those foolish enough to jump off. The Continental rope manufacturers explored different avenues and came out with Kernmantel, i.e. core and sheath ropes. They soon acquired the misnomer, Perlon. In fact Kernmantel describes the construction, Perlon is the material used and is merely the German trade name for nylon. Kernmantel in these days was valuable to the dangle-and-whack man; it didn't stretch like the British nylon (and so was roundly condemned by physicist technocrats). But the Germans, personified by Herr Benk of Edelrid, strove to improve their products, and the U.I.A.A. (Union Internationale des Associations d'Alpinisme), in co-operation with climbers and rope makers, devised a test to measure the energy absorption capabilities of a climbing rope.

The principal aim of this test was to increase the safety of the climber in a fall. A special test-stand was built on which the sudden jerk caused by a body falling on to the rope could be reproduced. On this test-stand a free rope end of 2.50 metres length must hold a load of 80 kg. falling from a height of 5 metres, the rope passing through a by-pass karabiner rigidly fixed at half height. To pass this test ropes must sustain two consecutive falls on the test stand without breaking. If a rope must sustain the fall of a climber it must, at the same time, check his fall as softly as possible by a limited extension which absorbs part of the shock. The maximum force produced at the moment of the impact and imposed on the rope, on the karabiner and on the body of the climber falling on to the rope, is called impact strength and is measured in kiloponds (kp.). The less extension there is, the harder is the

shock and the higher the impact strength. In order to diminish the risk of injury to the falling person the impact strength of the rope must therefore be as low as possible. On the other hand, the rope must not extend too much as this might result in other substantial danger.

Initially, the U.I.A.A. specified that the impact strength for single and double ropes must not exceed 1,500 kp. with double ropes being tested on two strands with the same weight (80 kg.) as single ropes. Manufacturers strove to attain this standard and did so. Indeed, the ropes they produced were of such high quality that the U.I.A.A. were able to reduce the impact strength figure to 1,200 kp. During the last two years manufacturers have again been able to improve the performance of their rope and the impact strength of many ropes available today is below 1,000 kp.

What's happened to British laid nylon rope? Has it been completely surpassed by the Kernmantel construction? As far as energy absorption is concerned—yes. It is possible that the laid rope would sustain one fall in the U.I.A.A. test but virtually certain it could not withstand two.

Recent tests carried out independently in the U.S. and the U.K. have suggested there may be a serious diminution in rope strength after 100 to 200 days' use. Various outdoor training centres in Britain are being asked to keep a log for each of their climbing ropes and it is hoped to carry out further investigations in this field. At the moment the feeling is that a rope used purely for climbing will last considerably longer than one used for abseiling. Naturally, ropes used for stretcher-lowering deteriorate very quickly. My personal feeling is that the British laid rope will not deteriorate as quickly as Kernmantel ropes. Theoretically, the strength of a Kernmantel rope is all in the core, the sheath being merely protection, but in practice this cannot be so. In a laid rope the nylon filaments only come to the surface occasionally whereas they are more or less continually on the surface in the sheath of a Kernmantel rope and therefore much more vulnerable to abrasion. It will be a long time before definite results are available but they will doubtless be publicised then.

A remarkable change has taken place in the climbers' attitude to his clothes. It is not long since it was considered impossible to wear a fully waterproof garment in the hills as condensation was an insuperable problem. To-day almost everyone has their gacoule.

Cagoules (French for *Monk's Habit*), were used originally by Alpinists on bivouac. They were voluminous, to go over duvet jackets, and had large skirts to enable the wearer to sit inside them. I suppose people found them useful when climbing in storm conditions. The garment we know as a cagoule to-day differs greatly from the original and has evolved naturally.

Lightweight waterproof nylons are largely responsible for the acceptance of this waterproof outer cover. Previously, sticky smelly and stiff P.V.C.-coated cotton was the only really waterproof cloth freely available. Cotton, being a natural material, does not grow conveniently in endless filaments. It needs to be spun before being woven into cloth. It is proofed by the application of silicones which adhere to the cloth because the spinning leaves the thread hairy and the silicones have something to attach themselves to. Nylon is spun and woven from a continuous filament and is not hairy so there is nothing for the silicones to adhere to. Most nylon garments are silicone proofed and at first the water bounces off but before long it appears to soak in. This is because the silicone, having nothing to adhere to, very quickly

washes out. Nylon can only be made waterproof by the application of a sheet proofing. Many such agents are available; rubber, neoprene, acrylic, hypelon, and polyurethane, are common ones and of these polyurethane is by far the most resilient and durable. This is applied to the nylon cloth as a very sticky micro-thin layer. It takes about a week for it to cure and after baking on forms a very secure bond. Cagoules suffer much abrasion and in time this thin layer of polyurethane wears off and the garment becomes porous. In general use this takes between one and two years. Why not put on a thicker layer? Then it becomes too heavy for the cloth and lifts off more easily. It's not planned obsolescence; it just works that way.

A recent development has been the introduction of a heavier weight of polyurethane-proofed nylon which appears to remain waterproof for considerably longer. The proofers don't know why this should be but it may be that, because the cloth is woven from a heavier thread, there are more hollows between the warp and the weft to accept the polyurethane. This cloth is now being made into heavyweight cagoules which are in fact anoraks in their own right, and is also being used in the manufacture of very light rucksacs. It weighs 4 oz. per square yard, whereas rucksac canvas weighs 15 oz. per square yard. Waterproof nylons have certainly made life more comfortable and much safer for the modern mountaineer.

Yvon Chouinard, introducing his Treatise, 'On the use of Chouinard Equipment,' says:

During the last ten years a revolution has taken place in the field of technical rock climbing. Many of the advances in this revolution are associated with the high rise in general climbing standards and refinement of existing techniques, but many of the advances have been in the development and maximum logical use of new and specialised equipment.

Technical rock climbing now has become an Art Form in itself and is as much a part of 'Le Grande d'Alpinisme' as is free climbing. Watch a rope of expert artificial climbers moving up a vertical wall, placing and removing 100 pitons a day, belaying and sleeping in hammocks from these pitons; totally adjusted to their vertical world. Watch the leader judge the size of a crack, glance down at his hardware loop and without hesitation pick the correct size piton and drive it in just enough to safely support his weight; clip in the karabiners and rope with no mistakes and move up the *étriers* with the same motion as the free climber. You cannot deny that this is indeed, a well developed form of Art.

To become this proficient takes a great deal of experience and practice. In writing this little Treatise we hope to describe a few of the techniques and tricks that are an integral part of the Yosemite Method of technical climbing.

No, I am not suggesting Scottish climbers should practice placing and removing 100 pitons a day in our Scottish 'free' rock. Nevertheless, the Americans, in the form of Yvon Chouinard, Tom Frost, Ed Leeper and Greg Blomberg, have in the last few years revolutionised the hardware scene with the intelligent use, not of man-made materials, but of more sophisticated metals than those used by the village blacksmith in Zermatt.

The B.M.C. Equipment Sub-Committee (of which I am a member) in conjunction with the National Engineering Laboratory—personified by Dr. J. Griffin—have, over the last eighteen months, investigated extensively the holding power of pitons. Their report states 'The holding power of a considerable proportion of the pitons manufactured in Europe is dangerously inadequate. This is due to the use of soft steel or other low strength materials and to bad design. In a horizontal crack adequate holding power can be obtained reliably and consistently under practical conditions only by proper design of the head and blade of the piton and by the use of high tensile alloy steel or other high strength material. At present the only pitons which fully

satisfy these requirements are manufactured in the U.S.A.' The Americans have a name for soft steel pitons; they call them '— pegs'! (18th-century word removed by an anguished 19th-century Editor, Raeburn laughing sardonically).

Joe Griffin out-did the Americans, knocking in some 450 pitons, though instead of removing them in the conventional manner he used a hydraulic ram. To see Charlet pitons, which European climbers have long accepted as being of excellent design, fold over and pull out at loads of less than 1,000 lbs. is frightening.

'Adequate holding power' can only be assured in a horizontal crack. With vertical cracks personal skill in placing the piton is most important. The optimum placement normally results when the shape of the crack prevents vertical rotation of the piton when it is loaded and so produces conditions similar to a horizontal crack. Griffin, after knocking many pitons into vertical cracks and then pulling them out, found it impossible to judge whether a piton would perform well or not.

In horizontal cracks the most important single feature determining the holding power is the blade. If by design, or use of high-strength material, it does not bend under load then there is a very good chance that the piton will not come out (if it does bend then it will most certainly come out). American 'V' section and 'Z' section pitons, together with the use of high strength steel, easily fulfil this requirement. American blade pitons, because they are made from high strength steel properly heat treated, also perform well. Most European pitons are made from what Chouinard described as 'crushed-up car bodies.' They are rarely heat-treated and often of poor design. If the blade of a piton bends, then the head comes into contact with the rock beneath the crack and levers out the remainder of the blade. Pitons with oval eyes are particularly bad. When the blade bends the karabiner immediately moves to the outside of the eye, thereby increasing the leverage. If, however, the shape of the piton shoulder allows only very limited bending of the head about the blade before meeting the rock it greatly reduces the extractive components of force on the piton.

European pitons are driven hard into a crack and the soft blade of the piton follows any bends in the crack. American chrome molybdenum pitons will not bend and therefore require different handling. Placement is all-important. Ideally, a piton which can be placed with the fingers plus one hammer blow and which will hold 4,000 lbs. is perfect. Over-driving will probably result in breaking rock (or your hammer!).

Because they do not deform, chrome-molybdenum pitons are re-useable many, many times and easily defray their higher initial cost.

Further details of the piton tests are available by writing to The National Engineering Laboratory, East Kilbride, Glasgow, for a copy of the B.M.C. Circular No. 454. *On the use of Chouinard Equipment*, by Yvon Chouinard and Tom Frost, which gives many helpful hints on the use of chrome-molybdenum pitons, is available free from any climbing shop.

Much development work is continuing to improve the quality and design of mountaineering equipment. The B.M.C. Equipment Sub-Committee are co-operating with the British Standards Institution to set up a British Standard for climbers' helmets. They are enquiring into the deterioration during use of nylon webbing slings as well as of ropes. They are carrying out

tests to put forward a European Standard for alloy karabiners and will be making recommendations to the U.I.A.A. in the light of their experiments with pitons. In the States Chouinard is experimenting with a crampon he claims will supersede all others. Many people are looking at the design of ice axes, both in the head and the shaft. Zip-on gaiters and welded sole climbing boots are among other good things to come. I am even trying to solve the problem of shirts and socks becoming detached from climbing breeches! The British retailer does not just sit back and rake in the profits; he works hard to dream up more sophisticated equipment, but whether he does this to line his own pocket or to improve your lot, I will leave to your good judgment!

G. Tiso.

Huts in the Spanish Pyrenees. None of the scrambles done by wife and self in the Catalan Pyrenees last summer merits recording but we visited two huts worth adding as a postscript to Hamish Brown's fairly full coverage of the Spanish Pyrenees in the last issue (*S.M.C.J.* (1966) xxviii, 239).

Refugio Juan Ventosa Calvell (2,200 m.). Approach by Viella tunnel via Pont de Suert to Caldas de Bohí. A rough road climbs to the dam above that curious spa. Hut—good by Spanish standards—is c. 2 hours from dam. 26 places. Probably resident guardian, but enquire at village (not spa) of Bohí. Only bread and wine supplied. Excellent centre for the lake-and-granite country west of the San Mauricio region, poetically rather than scientifically described in Fedden's *The Enchanted Mountains*. Travesany Needles just above hut, and lake-studded amphitheatre—good camping—surrounded by hills among which Pan de Sucre and Beciberri (3,030 m.) attract hard men from Barcelona. There is another hut on the latter also approached from Bohí.

Refugio Luis Estasén (1,500 m.) on Pedraforca, a striking isolated peak in the Sierra Del Cadí well south of the main Pyrenean chain. Approach from Berga by road, rough in final part, to village of Saldés where key is kept. 1½ hours walk slanting round to north face of mountain. Comfortable hut (40 places) charmingly situated on a little alp among pinewoods just below impressive precipices. For details of climbs see appreciative article by Robert Ollivier in *La Montagne*, December 1960.

BARCLAY FRASER.

Notes on Nevado Alpamayo 1966

Nevado Alpamayo is over 20,000 feet, in the Cordillera Blanca, in the Peruvian Andes and reputed to be one of the most beautiful mountains in the world.

It is not a virgin peak. In the 1940's a Swiss expedition tried to climb it by the North Ridge, but due to an unfortunate accident, they were obliged to abandon their attempt. In the 1950's a French team made the top of the North Ridge in bad weather, and thought they were on the summit, but the true summit involves a 700-foot traverse and a further 100 feet of ascent—the hardest 100. Gunther Hausor, it was, who led a German rope to the top *via* the South Ridge, and in 1961 the Japanese successfully repeated his route. In 1965 an American party was stormed off the North Ridge.

We chose to climb and film (watch your *T.V. Times*) the North Ridge, partly because of its history, and partly because of the loot we knew would be on it. Our expedition must be the only one to finish with more ice axes than it started with.

We arrived in Huaraz, the jumping-off town for the Blanca, on 3rd June, and returned from the hill 23rd July. During this time we had almost perfect weather. I cannot recall one day when it would have been uncomfortable to climb. We experienced no violent winds, no extreme cold, and any snow that fell was soon burned up by the Andean sun, leaving the glacier, at least, in good cramponing condition.

From Base Camp below the Santa Cruz's, we scree-slogged for 2000 feet to the crest of a rocky ridge, then descended 500 to the Alpamayo moraine and Camp 1. We put Camp 2 on the North Col at 18,000 feet, and a view that—if we could show it to all the 'why-do-you-climbers' they would never ask again. (See photograph this issue).

The Ridge looked beautiful from the Col camp. Just one big cornice, clinging to the rotten rock of the East Face. Burnell, Smith and I used, in seven days, 1700 feet of fixed rope, 17 ice stakes and 15 rock pegs, before we topped it; then a couple of days later Smith and I made the traverse along to the summit.

At last some real Andean snow conditions—the stuff that earns the Andes their reputation. A cottonwool cornice led to three candy-floss gendarmes, mushrooms with a 2000-foot drop on either side. You carve a road round the gendarmes and get hypnotised watching the rivers of powder snow cascading down the fluted flanks of Alpamayo. Protection was one reasonable ice stake every 50 feet, but soon there was only 30 feet to go. 30 feet of 80° candy-floss which was climbed by cutting footholds that would 'have to do.' Then, ice axe in up to the elbow, and the other arm in up to the shoulder. Think light and move up slow. One limb at a time, and never placing a hold directly above the one below. I had used my last ice stake to protect this section, but it was a pointed summit, so I cut a groove round it to form a bollard for the belay and fixed rope.

Two days later the whole team climbed the mountain, and Kelly shot his last roll of film. He panned the big lens round to take in the fantastic view. The East Ridge fell steeply away to a col, and from there the Pucacahira's challenging spires rose up, their jagged Northern Ridges etched against the brilliant blue sky, and untouched from this side. At the Southern end of the Pucacahira ridge stands Taulliraju, a solid, severe sentry. The eye travels over a myriad of unidentifiable peaks until, way in the south, Huandoy and the rocky ridges of Huascaran North unmistakably dominate the sky line. To the west is Quitaraju, the mountain nearest to Alpamayo, but this in turn is overshadowed by the three pointed summits of Nevado Santa Cruz. The rounded ridges of the Pilancos and the spectacular top of Tayapampa in the north complete the panorama.

Members of this British Andean Expedition were:—D. Gray (R. & I.; Leader), T. Burnell (R. & I.), J. Amatt (Trollind Wall), Ned Kelly of T.W.W., R. Smith, B.F.P.O., Peru, and D. Bathgate, (Squirrels, S.M.C.).

D.B.

FURTHER ADDITIONS TO THE LIBRARY—1965-66

7, *Between Heaven and Earth* (Rebuffat); 10, *British Mountains* (E. C. Pyatt); 25, *L'Oisons* (Gratier and Kay); 9, *Mountaineering* (S. Spencer); 9, *Mountaineering* (A. Blackshaw); 26, *Mountaineering in Scotland* (W. H. Murray); Norway, *Area Map of Telemark and the South Coast* (Maps); 7, *Peaks and Pleasant Pastures* (Schuster); 26, *Rock Climbers Guide to Cornwall Vol. 2*; 9, *Rock Climbing in Britain* (J. E. B. Wright); 8, *Rakaposhi* (M. Banks);

26, *Swiss Mountain Climbs* (G. D. Abraham); 9, *Technique in Mountaineering* (J. E. B. Wright); 26, *White Mountain Guide* (Appalachian Club). (Numbers refer to sections).

The Librarian reports that our member Mr Denis Pilkington is gifting to the Club Library a full, bound, set of the *S.M.C. Journal*. Thanks to his generosity a full set will be available for borrowers, as well as for reference.

Scottish Mountain Accidents 1966

Our correspondent reports :

2nd JANUARY — Party of 'experienced' climbers from England set off for Nevis 2.30 p.m.; spent night on summit; large search party met them next day.

8th JANUARY — Iain McLachlan (21), Dumbarton, slipped descending Beinn Achalladair—ice axe broken—injuries to head and ribs. Glencoe Team called out but he got down himself.

Of another party on the mountain, Ken Dunn (24), Glasgow, lost control glissading; suffered head injuries. Glencoe Team and Police brought him stretcher.

A. Morrison (26), Kinghouse, member of the Glencoe Team, carrying lantern during search, slipped on iced rock; injuries; carried down on stretcher.

15th JANUARY — John Johnston (19), Paisley, climbing solo summit gully—Stob Coire nam Beith; fell about 600 feet; ankle and ice axe broke. Rescue by Glencoe Team, Police and Greenock M.C. Snow hard and icy—crampons in rucksack.

18th JANUARY — Graham Ruxton (22), Arbroath, with party from Rucksack Club, Dundee, climbing N.W. corner Corrie Fee, Glen Doll, well clothed, no wrist strap for ice axe. *When attempting his first glissade on steep frozen snow above large scree* lost ice axe and slid to scree—fractured collar bone and ribs. Companions did all that could be done—brought down by strong party of Caledonian Climbing Club, Dundee; a well-organised rescue, in darkness throughout.

22nd JANUARY — Gordon Foster (19), Milngavie, David Grant (18), Glasgow, Stephen James (18), Brighton, from Glencoe Y.H. on Stob Coire nam Beith—one ice axe between the three (James with borrowed boots). James slipped but uninjured; party benighted; no whistle, torch, compass or map—search parties met them next day.

23rd JANUARY — John Clements (24), Surrey, and Timothy Oglethorpe (19), Wiltshire, experienced climbers, on Stob Coire nam Beith. Both well-equipped but left helmets at base; both found dead, with broken crampons and broken ice axes; accident cause unknown.

27th JANUARY — Sydney Webb (25), Derbyshire, and companion, both experienced climbers, descending East Gully of Tower Ridge when Webb fell; killed; cause not known, possibly snow balling under crampons.

31st JANUARY — Well-equipped English climber injured by rock fall on Buachaille Etive Mòr; thaw on mountain.

2nd FEBRUARY — A 14 year-old schoolboy (party of 14 boys and two instructors) collapsed on Lairig Gartain; exhaustion; brought down by Police and Glencoe Team; very icy conditions.

18th FEBRUARY — Three young climbers (English) benighted on Buachaille Etive Mòr; weather deteriorated; Rescue Team with three dogs had to spend night near summit in very severe blizzard conditions—party located uninjured in morning.

FEBRUARY — Boy Scout (18), Scots, fell and lost control on hard snow slope of Clachlet; broke arm.

14TH MARCH — John Hislop (51), did not return from a solo hill walk—found dead on Beinn na Caillich near Moy—Search parties out.

26TH MARCH — Party of six (3 boys, 3 girls, well-equipped and with tent and food, on a course at Kilmory Castle). Missing on walk by path from Furnace, Loch Fyne to Durran, Loch Awe; *no idea of map and compass work*; reached Inveraray-Lochgilphead road at Dalchennan 1 p.m. next day. Arrochar Team and Police called out.

2ND APRIL — Hector McLean (11), Edinburgh, with master and party from Edinburgh Academy Prep. School on Grey Mare's Tail, Dumfriesshire; *left party*; found after search; had fallen over 200 feet crag; killed; *wearing town clothing and town shoes*.

4TH APRIL — Alistair Park (Corriemulzie M.C.), attempting a new route on Creag Dionard fell from rock some distance above his second. Double rope held but head hit rock; killed instantly. Body recovered by club members with local help.

6TH APRIL — Stanley Brown (55), Midlothian, descending Coire Dearg (Cruachan) with friend; Brown slipped on hard snow; slid 600 ft; injuries and shock. Rescue by employees of Loch Awe Hydro scheme.

9TH APRIL — Sgt. Richard (32), 21st Special Air Service (T.A.) on exercise in Cairngorms with four other men walking through Lairig Ghru; sleet and snow, force 5 wind; about one mile south of Pools of Dee complained of cold and tiredness; collapsed; put into sleeping bag and tent till arrival of Rescue Party.

10TH APRIL — Party of Glasgow Universal Hiking Club on Ben Nevis tourist path—Turned back at approx. 3500 feet by high winds; two men slipped (slips could easily have been controlled with ice axes); Brian Henry (21), Glasgow, broken leg—other man bruises; shock and exposure; one carried by Kinloss M.R.T.

10TH APRIL — Gavin Parnell (18), Buxton, and David Woodhouse (20), Sheffield, climbed one of the Castle Gullies of Nevis and crossed the summit plateau. Left Hut at 2.30 p.m. and at 7.30 were above Allt Coire Eoghainn on S. face of Nevis. They both fell some distance on glazed névé and stopped in upper corrie (ref. 164705). Woodhouse examined Parnell and took him to be dead; descended to Glen Nevis Car Park and aroused campers. Kinloss, Police and Keswick M.R.T. searched at night but did not locate Parnell (they had passed within 10 to 20 yards of the body) and descended to glen at 4.30 a.m. At first light Glencoe Team, Police, dogs and Dr. Catherine MacInnes set out. Dogs found scent almost as soon as they entered upper corrie and soon found body—only a small piece of Parnell's anorak showing above drifted snow. Lochaber Team and also Kinloss co-operated.

10TH APRIL — Leslie Bisset (16), Iain Bisset (17), John Brown (16), all of Perth B.B., out to gain an award for cross-country trek—started on Saturday night from Comrie to Lochearnhead via slopes of Ben Vorlich—did not check in at Lochearnhead; Leuchars R.A.F. Teams, Police, large Naval party and civilians plus helicopter in search. Boys met bad weather early on Sunday and had camped—stayed in tents all day Monday and returned towards Comrie on the Tuesday—none the worse.

11TH APRIL — Christopher Johns and Alan Mortimer (24 and 22), London, climbed to 4200 feet on Nevis when Johns felt unwell—Mortimer went on to summit alone then met Johns again; descending, both fell on icy slopes in wind; separated; both got down and alerted parties to look for the other—both fairly experienced hillwalkers but not on Scottish hills in winter—*neither carried an ice axe*.

13TH APRIL — Fred Seagar (22), Liverpool, and Richard Withington (21), Coventry, climbing on Ben Fhada from Lost Valley, one ice axe between two; one slipped on snow and fell about 100 feet; injuries. Team called out but they managed down on their own.

16TH APRIL — Timothy Livett (16), Aldershot, with party of Malvern College Cadets, climbed Derry Cairngorm then Ben Macdhuì. Collapsed at summit of Ben Macdhuì; exhaustion and exposure; the party's first outing. Weather conditions good.

16TH APRIL — Robert Hutchison (26), Wishaw, with friend on Cruach Ardtrain in bad weather—lost company near summit in mist. Other man searched for two hours then found Hutchison dead about 1000 feet from summit—*had no ice axe* and apparently slipped on snow.

17TH APRIL — Peter Fone (30), Cheshire, slipped on east face of Cruach Ardtrain about 400 feet from summit—fell and slid for 100 feet; severe injuries.

18TH APRIL — Ian Ogilvie (53; A.C. and S.M.C.), Charles Handley (59; A.C. and C.C.), and Peter Francis (30), all London, climbing An Teallach on hard snow; traversed Sàil Liath to Sgùrr Fionn. Ogilvie left the other two lunching on Sgùrr Fionn and went off to Sgùrr Creag an Eich telling the others to wait or to start down towards Bealach—but to wait if difficult not only so that he could assist but because he too would need their rope. The two were roped with 50 feet No. 4 nylon; Handley, tricounis, Francis, crampons. Ogilvie and Handley great experience—Francis no experience of snow and ice but experienced rock-climber. Ogilvie saw the two descend, moving together and fairly fast; he then saw them falling down steep snow and rock on west side of the ridge. Their rope caught after about 400 feet so that they were supported either side of the projection. Ogilvie fitted crampons over his tricounis. He himself had 100 feet of nylon rope. He found that the projection was a very small one and that with any movement of either they would both have fallen further. Ogilvie lowered one man the length of the nylon line, secured him, then lowered him a further line-length and secured him with a piton on a shelf cut into the snow slope. He then climbed back to the other man and lowered him from an ice axe. Ogilvie then started to descend the slope to secure the man before going back to get his own ice axe when he slipped: he could not brake as his ice axe was at the top of the rope—he attempted to brake with a piton hammer but failed. Shaken, badly bruised and grazed by the fall he could not return up the slope without an axe. Ogilvie though injured covered the seven miles to Ardrossie and alerted Police and M.R.T. at 5.30 p.m. (accident about 1 p.m.). Tom Patey arrived at base at 6.30 p.m. and set off followed by two local men and others. Patey went ahead; after 2500 feet of ascent and 300 feet step cutting located bodies at 8.30 p.m. Lowered them 300 feet to the stretcher parties. Local party carried down Francis's body—Kinloss R.A.F. arrived, assisted and carried down other body in morning. Ogilvie's rescue effort one of the finest; he was later awarded the M.B.E., while Dr. Patey received the Queen's Commendation for Bravery.

29TH MAY — Dr. Fairfax with his sons Richard (16) and Ronald (17), returning from Bidean nam Bian by Lost Valley. Boys inexperienced, following father glissading in a steep place. Richard got out of control and finished among rock; unconscious; father alerted Rescue Teams and Police.

10TH JUNE — Norman Worrall (47), Manchester, very experienced climber unroped near South Buttress of Sgùrr Dearg (Cuillin) traversing a sloping ledge with loose stones on it—stones slid—and he slid backwards; fell about 40 feet; many injuries but managed to walk down with his second.

17TH JUNE — Crichton Miller (16), Edinburgh, stuck on steep sandstone and earth, Tammie White's Scaur, Jedburgh (ref. 654192); fell 150 feet—lacerations and bruises—Border Search and Rescue Unit out. Wearing town clothing and town shoes.

26TH JUNE — Alex Fulton (19), Kilmarnock, with party on The Brack—standing on a pinnacle below Elephant gully waving to two girls when he lost

his footing and fell about 20 feet—severe bruising and lacerations to head. Arrochar M.R. Team alerted—carried down by stretcher and in hospital within 5 hours . . .

3RD JULY — Thomas Finlayson (50) and Alan Mason (21), Scots ; Finlayson leading and fell trying to avoid the Bad Step on Alasdair-Sgùmain Ridge (Cuillin) roped but not belayed—pulled Mason off. Both bad injuries. Rock wet and weather cold. Skye M.R. Team, Police and others.

5TH JULY — Robert Wilson (25) and friend, both Peebles, climbing Window Buttress of Sgùrr Dearg (Cuillin). Wilson had climbed up to his leader and was looking for a belay when he touched loose block—fell 40 feet. Other tied rope on to a block and went for help. Wilson dead when rescue party reached him.

5TH JULY — Sheila Tough (26), Braemar, with a ten-year old boy was walking on Craig Leek and decided to climb down the rocky face (Felagie Rocks, 187925)—had descended about ten feet when the boy saw rocks were wet and slippery and stopped—girl continued and slipped almost at once ; fell 40 feet sheer, then another 70 feet among boulders ; severe injuries—died 2 days later.

13TH JULY — John Harros (20), England, slipped and fell on path near Coire Lagan, Cuillin ; broken ankle.

24TH JULY — Robert MacBeth (16), Rosyth, with other two A.T.C. Cadets on Ben Loyal in mist ; MacBeth became separated from the others. They descended and gave alarm—Local Search parties set out at midnight—body found by local shepherds after 18 hours at 1800 feet on N.W. face of Sgùrr Chaonasaid (578498) after 14 hours' search.

26TH JULY — Sapper McGowan (Royal Engineers) separated from companion near summit of Càrn Ban Mòr ; no compass and in mist ; took wrong way and reached Glen Einich. Realising he was in wrong glen he climbed back again and descended to Achlean in Glen Feshie about midnight—he continued his walk to Aviemore passing a public telephone but failed to phone. Search parties starting to go out.

30TH JULY — Iain Anderson (21), Falkirk, fell when climbing with a party in Clachaig Gully (Glencoe), loose rock gave away—fell about 40 feet ; slight injuries. Rescue by Glencoe Team and Police.

31ST JULY — Alfred Lees (53), Lincolnshire, was walking with wife and daughter up side of water slide Allt Coire Eoghainn (Glen Nevis)—at 1750 feet attempted to cross, wearing boots with plain rubber soles. Slipped and fell about 40 feet—shock and minor abrasions. Rescue by Kinloss and civilians.

31ST JULY — Steven Dickenson (15), with party of Huntingdon Senior Scouts on trek in Lairig Ghru—cold, wet and windy weather. All tired and wet at Pools of Dee where Dickenson sprained ankle and could not continue. Leader took three lads for help leaving one with Dickenson—rescue completed by 4 a.m. ; both boys suffering from exposure but party very well equipped.

1ST AUGUST — Henry Scott (59), Edinburgh, Geologist, collecting on coastal cliffs, St. Cyrus, dislodged rock by hammering—crushed under 1½ tons of rock. Body recovered by Aberdeen M.R. team plus coastguards.

3RD AUGUST — Trevor Learoyd (16) injured on fall on Storr Ridge.

16TH AUGUST — Susan Bolsworth (19), Sheffield, fell and broke ankle on Creag Mhòr (Lochinvver). Friend went for help. Dr. Nairn went up and decided to call in helicopter from Lossiemouth—evacuated by it to hospital.

28TH AUGUST — Robert Sadler (18), Norwich, at Glencoe Youth Hostel ; left in morning leaving belongings behind—told no one where he was going—had not filled in the Route Book displayed at hostel. Warden reported him missing next day. All more obvious places searched that day. Areas allocated

for the next day included Mamores and Appin. About 200 climbers available. Body found about 1500 feet up on south face of Aonach Eagach opposite Ossian's Cave; had fallen about 600 feet. He was wearing TUF boots.

3RD SEPTEMBER — Francis Mullard (14), English, twisted ankle on tourist route of Sgùrr nan Gilleann.

17TH SEPTEMBER — Robert Oram (18), Tonbridge, Wilts., after a week's course at Glenmore Lodge started out on the Saturday morning at 9.30 a.m. telling Hostel Warden he was going to do the four peaks and expected to return by 6.30 p.m. He had 3 years' experience mountain walking and was well equipped. Did not return that night and very heavy rain came on in evening. Search parties and helicopter. Oram returned to Youth Hostel at 10.30 a.m. Search called off. From Corrour Bothy (3.30 p.m.), raining all the time and poor visibility, he went N.W. to a point on Allt Coire an t-Sabhail (951965) 4.45 p.m. bad going; gave up idea of doing the four tops here but continued W. to Loch Einich; due to difficult ground did not reach lochside till 7.30 p.m., followed water to north end, spent night in a shelter with boulders and waterproof cape—managed to keep dry. Ought to have returned by Corrour and Lairig Ghru.

18TH SEPTEMBER — Party of school children from St. Ninian's School, about 14 years' old, on Aonach Eagach with teacher; one girl injured ankle and they became benighted. Rescue Team called out but party got down on their own next morning.

2ND OCTOBER — Kenneth Sutherland (23) and Peter Graham (26), Edinburgh, climbing in Glencoe. Shouts heard in the valley from Geàrr Aonach for hours. Rescue Team called out at night and found them three hours later, but they did not want or require any help. Benighted on ledges some distance apart they had kept shouting to each other. *They received much criticism . . .*

8TH OCTOBER — Thomas Winter (64), Grampian Club, and friend on walk in Glen Faolain (Glen Etive). They had gone about two miles when Winter, feeling sick, suggested his companion should go on alone while he would turn back. Companion went on and then returned to Hut but did not find Winter there. Glencoe Team called out. Dogs, radios and search light used. Winter found dead later that night, from natural causes.

23RD OCTOBER — 1st Scout Group from Oban; two set out on a very simple hill-walking test—to cross over from Lochgoilhead to Coileasan on Loch Long. Map reading and compass work poor—finished away down at Beach (ref. 216974), one lad, Alan McDougal (13), exhausted. Arrochar Team and Police out on long search.

5TH NOVEMBER — Three members of Kinloss M.R. Team were on summit of Nevis. They looked into the rude shelter there and found Joyce Warnecke (35), Glasgow, there. Her story . . . She had climbed Ben Nevis on 3rd Nov., reaching summit rather late. On the 4th it was misty all day and she thought she would have been blown away by the high wind so stayed put. She had a spare pullover and a dry pair of socks; was wearing thin shoes and a plastic mac. She was helped down by the Kinloss men. On enquiry it transpired that she had attempted to climb Ben Nevis nine times during the last two years. She had reached the summit five or six times but usually benighted. On 2nd January 1965 she was escorted off the mountain by Kinloss M.R. Team when found on steep snow using an umbrella instead of an ice axe . . . On 21st March 1965 she was rescued by a civilian party after a fall on snow near the Red Burn and taken to Belford Hospital where a scalp injury was stitched up. On this occasion she had with her a flask of coffee, some chocolate and a little whisky. She had been on no other mountain than Ben Nevis. This incident was reported to the Scottish Home Dept., and she was later visited by police officers from Glasgow to persuade her to refrain from her ill-considered activities . . .

8TH DECEMBER — Mr. and Mrs. Robson, York—both in late 20's—left Aviemore at 10 a.m., 7th December. Left no definite word of their intended route but had hinted to others they were interested in visiting Pools of Dee; did not return that night and Rescue Teams alerted. Weather good at first but worse later—heavy showers of snow and sleet—strong wind. Robsons reached Sinclair Hut and because of deep drifts contoured west towards Glen Einich, crossed two burns then turned east and came up against a Forestry fence—lit a fire all night—started at first light and found at 9 a.m. by Cairngorm Team.

15TH DECEMBER — Climber injured when loose rock came away from coastal cliffs at Burghhead, Moray.

Date uncertain — Schoolmaster with some boys camping in Glen Brittle were in Coir' a Ghrundha when master slipped; thought to have a broken ankle. They met a Service party in the corrie and as neither party knew the hills they both thought that Coruisk Hut was nearer than Glen Brittle and took the man there; then transferred to Elgol by boat from Soay and taken to Broadford Hospital; released after ten minutes—merely a sprain . . .

Notes—15 fatalities are recorded here for 1966 but there have been several others due to local cliff-scrambling. Noticeable is this increased climbing of coastal cliffs, particularly in Aberdeenshire, and warnings have been issued on their friable rocks. As in former years more than half the accidents could have been avoided with elementary precautions. It is alarming to note how many still go out in winter without ice axes, while more training in their use would seem to be indicated. Slips on hard snow on what appear to be easy slopes are still the most frequent cause in winter and it is worth quoting George Band's words 'How many climbers are confident of their own ability to recover from a slip in the split second before one loses control? I think the secret is not so much in the recovery but in always holding the ice axe so that it can be brought immediately into the correct braking position without conscious effort . . . Too many climbers I feel do not bother to think these things out or practice them in advance, and when the emergency comes there may be no second chance.' (See *S.M.C.J.* (1961) xxvii, 140). Reports also seem to indicate that parties of young folk are being sent out on expeditions before they are sufficiently trained in elementary map and compass work, calling out large search parties, while Aonach Eagach even in summer is not a suitable expedition for a large party of young school children.

Glencoe has the highest accident rate and much good work has been done by Hamish MacInnes and his stalwarts of the Glencoe M.R.T. There is now a good number of well-trained dogs and these have proved their value, while helicopters have helped on several occasions. There has been a gratifying drop in incidents on the north side of the Cairngorms in spite of the Speyside developments and it would seem that there at least the intensive mountain safety propaganda now being mounted has had some effect.

In Skye as well as those noted there have been several searches due to parties remaining at the Coruisk Hut instead of returning to Glen Brittle as expected.

Our warmest thanks are due to all the civilian and Police Mountain Rescue teams who have done such good work and to the R.A.F. teams from Kinloss and Leuchars, the former having been out on 11 occasions and the latter on four.

IN MEMORIAM

**SIR WILLIAM ROSS MacLEAN,
V.R.D., Q.C., M.A., LL.B., 1901-1965**

ROSS MacLEAN joined the Club in 1928 and took an active part in all its affairs up to the outbreak of war, serving on the Committee from 1931 till 1934. After the war his interest in the mountains was more in the sphere of ski-mountaineering and he was for some years President of the Scottish Ski Club. He still maintained his interest in climbing, however, and was proud of his membership of the S.M.C.

Everything he did was carried out with tremendous zest and it is difficult to understand how he found time for all that he undertook. He was commissioned in the R.N.V.R. in 1923 and served during the war in the South Atlantic and the Far East and retired with the rank of Commander. He had at all times a great love of the sea and was Flag Officer of the Royal Forth Yacht Club and also spent many holidays cruising off the West Coast of Scotland and racing on the Clyde.

He was educated at the Glasgow High School and Glasgow University, was called to the bar in 1927 and took silk in 1948. He was appointed Sheriff of Roxburgh, Berwick and Selkirk in 1952, Sheriff of Renfrew and Argyll in 1955, and Sheriff of the Lothians and Peebles in 1960, and was knighted in 1965.

He took a great interest in Scottish affairs and it is sad that his contribution has been cut short by his sudden death. He was always cheerful and with his wide range of interests it was a pleasure to meet and talk with him; he will be greatly missed by his wide circle of friends.

Lady MacLean only survived him for some six months, and we extend our sympathy to their son and daughter.

W.B.S.

A. N. MACLAURIN

ALEXANDER NICHOLSON MACLAURIN died on 9th March 1966. Born in 1889, he was educated at the Glasgow High School of which he was for many years Treasurer of the Club.

Having qualified as a Chartered Accountant, he joined the Army in 1914 and served as a Commissioned Officer in the 5th Scottish Rifles. In 1920 he was assumed a partner in the firm of Mann Judd Gordon & Co., Glasgow, from which he retired when senior partner in 1960.

In the Second War he was a member of the Home Guard Company which operated from the Glasgow Golf Club at Killermont where he was a well-known member.

Sandy joined the Scottish Mountaineering Club in 1924. He was very much an outdoor man, a lover of the Scottish hills, on which he was a cheerful and resourceful companion. He is survived by his widow.

J.G.C.

We regret to record also the death of **R. W. Worsdell**, for whom no obituary is at present available; Worsdell joined the Club in 1905.

ALASDAIR MACDONALD, J.M.C.S.

One day in Glencoe I met Alasdair for the first time and as we sat below Crowberry Ridge preparing to start our climb I was attracted by his quiet eager spirit. During the climb he showed himself a capable climber, moving with precise confidence and obvious enjoyment. Resting on the summit in sunshine he gazed with appreciation at the mountains, lochs and glens around us and listened with interest to our talk of climbs and climbers.

He joined the Glasgow Section of the J.M.C.S. in 1965 and attended many of the Meets, always a happy and welcome companion on the hills, which he loved.

During an ascent of Tower Ridge in deteriorating weather in February 1967 he fell from near the Great Tower.

The Club will long remember Alasdair's friendship, and extends to his parents and brother its deep and sincere sympathy.

'Or like the snow falls in the river—

A moment white—then melts for ever'

—but remembered.

A.G.C.

PROCEEDINGS OF THE CLUB

Easter Meet 1966—Skye

JUDGED by attendance this Meet was the most popular for many years. Glen Brittle House was filled, the B.M.C. Hut nearly so and a goodly number were at Sligachan.

On Friday a few early birds enjoyed the last day of a spell of glorious weather. Thereafter it was dull and colder with some rain but characterised chiefly by a very high wind, often worse in the corries than on top. This, in conjunction with some indifferent snow, rendered the more difficult routes unpopular, the most severe climb recorded being the Window Buttress.

Ascents included Am Bàsteir, Sgùrr a' Fionn Choire, Bruach na Frithe, Sgùrr Banadich (including Window Buttress and Sgùrr nan Gobhar), Sgùrr Alasdair, Sgùrr Sgùmain, Sgùrr Dubh Mòr, Sgùrr Dubh Beag, Sgùrr nan Eag, Blaven, Sgùrr na Stri (from Kirkibost and back via Coruisk), crossing the Bealach a' Bhàsteir from Harta Corrie and a visit to the Quirang.

Present at Glen Brittle House were the President, D. Campbell, W. L. Coats, J. F. Hamilton, A. H. Hendry, B. H. Humble, R. W. MacLennan, I. M. M. Macphail, D. D. Paterson, G. Peat, G. S. Roger, and A. L. Coats (guest). B.M.C. Hut: J. M. C. Aitken, E. S. Chapman, J. C. Donaldson, B. S. Fraser, D. J. Fraser, J. M. Hartog, W. H. Murray, D. G. Turnbull and guests M. F. H. Moon and R. W. L. Turnbull. Sligachan: M. H. Cooke, R. R. Elton, J. N. Ledingham, D. H. McPherson, R. W. Martin, M. Morrison, T. Nicholson, F. R. Wylie and L. Watson (guest).

W.L.C.

Reception

THE speaker was our member David Bathgate and the illustrated talk was on the ascent of Alpamayo, a most enjoyable adventure excellently told and photographed. We include a Note on the expedition earlier in this issue.

Annual General Meeting

THIS was a mercifully short game, the prize going to the wonder and dismay with which former protagonists of Lagangarbh's Development (c.f. *S.M.C.J.*, xxvii (1963) 361-4, 400) regard that hut's subsequent loss of popularity. Indeed, one pillar of the Establishment leant so far as to hint at giving it up, the sort of thing that Dreadful Marshall was saying four years ago (*ibid.*, 401). Out of respect for the thousand pounds or so spent on this necessary education of practical men, nae mair need be said.

Dinner

THE 78th Annual Dinner was held at the Grosvenor Hotel, Edinburgh, on 3rd December 1966. We are less lucky this year than last. Then, we had two Dinner Reporters, who from opposite ends enjoyed their Dinner. This year we had one, who did not, and says so firmly earlier this issue. Many others did enjoy it, but their glasses were full and their memories short, and all we can disinter from them are drowsy fragments—a graceful Presidential tribute to Sandy Harrison, still going alpinely strong at 76 (see *S.M.C. Abroad*), some stimulatingly less graceful phrases from a Vice-Presidential Marshall, and blissful memories of that great singer of spirituous ballads, Gaelic, Irish, Scots and blended, Richard Brown (*applause*). (He really was good, it seems!) Brown was accompanied on the piano, says our irreverent correspondent, 'by Jelly-Roll Thomson'. . . . Thomson's stalwart seconding to Stewart Jack's songs will long be remembered: we believe that partnership started at school May the present one thump and roar for as long!

New Year Meet 1967—Crianlarich & Inverarnan

GLENCOE it should have been, but fortuitous circumstances having rendered that impracticable for this year, the Meet reverted to the favourite haunts of Crianlarich and Inverarnan at both of which the climber-comforts are so well catered for.

Several parties out on Saturday 31st December experienced very rough conditions; high winds with snow and sleet showers and much soft snow in places. Thereafter the weather improved, culminating on Monday and Tuesday in two superb days of unbroken sunshine and extensive panoramas of snow-covered hills.

Ascents included Beinn Chabhair, An Casteal, Cruach Ardtrain, (including Y Gully), Bens Vorlich, Lui, Oss, Dubhcraig, Cruachan, Creachain, Achaladair and Dorain, Stob Ghobhar, Stob a' Choire Odhair, Clath Leathad, Meall a' Bhùiridh, Buachaille Etive Beag and Mòr (Curved Ridge, Lagangarbh Buttress, etc.), Bidean, Ben Lawers and Beinn Ghlas.

Present at Crianlarich; J. M. Aitken, W. L. Coats, A. H. Hendry, J. E. MacEwan, M. Morrison, I. H. Ogilvie, G. Peat, T. S. Ransley, W. B. Speirs, F. R. Wylie; guests: A. L. Coats and C. Warren. Inverarnan: The

President, G. K. Armstrong, D. J. Bennet, A. G. Cousins, J. K. Dunn, J. C. Donaldson, B. H. Humble, R. Hillcoat, I. D. McNicol, W. H. Murray, J. E. Proom, G. S. Roger, C. R. Steven, A. C. D. Small, J. S. Stewart and E. I. Thompson. Dividing their time between Lagangarbh and Crianlarich were H. M. Brown and J. Matyssek and their guests D. Liddell, C. Dunsire, R. Rankin and H. Cowan.

W.L.C.

J.M.C.S. REPORTS

Edinburgh Section.—In all some 42 meets or meetings were held including 15 week-end meets which ranged from Fastcastle Head to Dundonnell. Excellent conditions were enjoyed on An Teallach and Lochnagar in April and in Patterdale on May Day. Meets memorable for their miserable meteorology were held to Creag Meaghaidh in March, Ardgour for the Victoria week-end (May), Ben Nevis in June and Borrowdale in September. Other venues included Kinloch Rannoch (Dinner Meet), the Glens of Clova, Rosa and of course, Coe. As for the past six years, meets were held in conjunction with Edinburgh M.C., the average attendance was 18 persons, a bus running on eight occasions. Our meet to Arrochar on 8th-9th October, attended by 13 persons, is expected to be the last of 'those J.M.C.S. bus meets' (*S.M.C.J.* (1961) xxvii, 153). This form of transport is no longer able to compete with the more economical and numerous members' cars.

The Hawk Craig at Aberdour and Traprain Law near Haddington were the popular rendezvous for 12 midweek evening meets for rock climbing practice. Little support was forthcoming for two hillwalking meets on the Pentlands. Some ten lectures and slide shows arranged with Edinburgh M.C., the University M.C. and the senior club were generally well attended.

As always there was much unofficial activity. Conditions at British climbing centres, however, proved more favourable than those abroad, the Alpinists having a disappointing season. The identity of the 'buffoons' on Tower Ridge (p.184 in the last issue) remains a mystery. Apart from his companion, we have no knowledge of any of our members being in the vicinity of the author, and attribute the remark to his artistic licence.

On the entirely social side, the Annual Dinner at the Bunnannoch Hotel was well attended although both guests and oratory were absent. All but a few attained Schiehallion's summit on the following day. Our 41st Birthday Celebration in the Castle Arms on 8th September culminated early next morning on the city's craigs. Apart from these two occasions and our A.G.M., women have been present at all our events. By their interest and aptitude in all aspects of mountaineering they have contributed more to the club spirit than several of our members who are apparently quite happy to receive the *Journal* and the Secretary's verbiage in return for their subscription.

The present membership is (previous year in brackets): Ordinary 49 (43), Associate 4 (6).

Office-Bearers.—*Hon. President*, R. M. McDonald; *Hon. Vice-President*, G. Tiso; *President*, D. R. Kleckham; *Vice-President*, C. J. Macpherson; *Secretary*, J. H. Clark, 11 Dundonald Street, Edinburgh 3; *Treasurer*, J. Clarkson, Glenelg, Inverkeithing Road, Aberdour, Fife.

Glasgow Section.—There has been a slight fall in the membership of the Section to 137, a trend which, if continued, might result in the largest section of the Club being South of the Border. Applications to join totalled 41, and 13 of these were elected to membership during the year.

Nineteen meets were arranged during the year and were generally well supported, except for one meet which it was necessary to cancel. Nevis remained the most popular mountain, with other meets ranging, as in previous years, from the Lake District to An Teallach and Skye.

The most notable indoor occasion was the Annual Dinner and General Meeting of the whole Club at Laggan, when a party of London Section members made the journey to join in the annual pastime of wrangling over the Constitution. The weekend proved to be one of the most successful of these meetings of the whole Club and the enthusiasm of the London party in making so long a journey was much appreciated.

The Section is in good heart and remains financially sound.

Office Bearers.—*Hon. President*, R. J. C. Robb; *Hon. Vice-President*, J. W. Simpson, S.M.C.; *President*, E. I. Thompson; *Secretary*, G. S. Peet; *Treasurer*, D. E. Whitham, 'The Glen,' Balerno, Midlothian; *Hut Convener*, A. A. Thrippleton, 14 Portland Park, Hamilton.

Perth Section.—The past year has seen an encouraging increase in activity by the Section. Not only has the membership increased to 36, but the attendance at meets has improved, especially since the summer. Activity on the hills continues to take the form of monthly car meets with the accent on weekend meets, which prove most popular. In addition to this members have been doing a lot of climbing on their own account; a slide show after the A.G.M. provided an interesting record of the year's activities.

The Annual Dinner took the traditional form of the meal in Braemar followed by jollification at Derry Lodge. The Section was represented at the Annual Dinners of the Whole Club, the Glasgow and Edinburgh Sections, the S.M.C. and the Grampian Club.

During the winter the Section held a lecture in conjunction with the Perthshire Society for the Natural Sciences. This was given by Dr. Gribbon of St. Andrews University and it dealt with his most recent trip to Greenland.

Office Bearers.—*Hon. President*, Chris Rudie; *Hon. Vice-President*, John Proom; *President*, Andrew R. Wilson; *Hon. Secretary and Treasurer*, Iain A. Robertson, 'Charleston,' Bridge of Earn, Perthshire.

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

Africa

HAMISH M. BROWN was with the British Atlas Mountains Winter Expedition 1966, and writes: 'I returned for a second winter, three months, this year. We were nine of a party so managed to explore the area thoroughly. It can have few secrets now. A guide book is being prepared by Roger Whewell (Rucksack Club) who led the climbing assaults. As an example of his enthusiasm, in the last week alone, he and Scot Donohoe did three new routes on Biiguinnoussene and Tazharharht, up to 700 m. long and all classic T.D. standard. Firth led various new lines on the west end of the Angour face and our line up the biggest ridge of Angour is reported in full elsewhere in this issue. Whewell and Ogilvie traversed Anhremmher up the N.E. Ridge, reporting Chamonix-like granite there and beyond. Firth opened up the neglected face above Imlil: Azrou n' Tamadout. A direct start was added to the O.N.O. Arête of Toubkal and a new hard route was made on Tadaft. Afella yielded a splendid new face which gave several T.D. routes. Ogilvie, Dangerfield and I made a several days' journey up the Agoundis, over a new col to the Lac d'Ilni, and along under Taska n' Zat to the Tichka pass, i.e.,

right along the desert southern slopes. This side contains little of value other than one gigantic Stanage Edge. Once over the spine the rock is poor. Many of the old routes were climbed. The Clochetons traverse must be unique. Tadat is 200 metres lower than maps show! Last, we found details of a hill, Jbel Aioui, 3882 m., which has a north face, limestone, 4 km. long and up to 600 m. high; a discovery of Mailly, Contamine, etc. The two *Alpine Journals* for 1966 and the *Rucksack Club Journals* for 1966 and 1967 contain most of the information on a range which for easy access, low cost of living and high sunshine rate deserve to become a popular ground for tigers. The writer will gladly act as guide or betray secrets for a price!

W. B. SPEIRS writes: 'On 10th August I flew to Nairobi with DOUGLAS SCOTT and Dr Charles Warren.

'We spent two days in Nairobi buying stores and packing them, and on 13th, with Kisoi Munyao, one of the leading Kenyan climbers, we motored to Nanyuki where we spent the night. The following morning Raymond Hook collected us at the Silverbeck Hotel and took us in his Land Rover to the edge of the forest, where the five mules were loaded and we set off through the forest at 11 a.m. A downpour started about 1 p.m. and did not stop till we camped at the upper edge of the forest at 5 p.m. at about 10,000 feet. Next morning 15th, we set off at 9 a.m. and again cloud came over and we reached Two Tarn Hut (14,730 ft.) in a snowstorm.

'The 16th dawned fine, but mist came over and it snowed steadily from midday till dusk. The day was spent unpacking and sorting our stores. The next day we set off at 8.45 a.m. and crossed Arthur's Seat and the Hausburg Col, reaching Kami Hut (14,564 ft.) in a snowstorm.

'The 18th dawned fine, and we left the hut at 8 a.m. and went to the foot of the North Face Standard Route. The rock was good and we climbed about 600 feet up five difficult pitches to a point just below the Amphitheatre when the mist came down so we returned to the hut. Very little snow fell and the mist cleared early so the prospects were good for the next day.

'The next day we left the hut at 6.45 a.m. and reached the foot of the climb at 7.30. We climbed on two ropes, K.M. and W.S. and D.S. and C.W., but joined ropes for the severe pitches. We were up to time when we reached the Amphitheatre (about 16,000 feet) and Firmin's Tower, which is the crux of the climb, was ascended. Thereafter the difficulty was much greater than the guide book had indicated, but we reached the junction with the West Ridge and crossed the Shipton Notch. The mist had come down by this time, and at 4 p.m. when we had reached almost 17,000 feet, we decided we must turn. It was a race against darkness, but three abseils of about 100 feet each brought us to the top of the Firmin Tower at 6.30 p.m. The first down crossed the Amphitheatre to the bivouac where we had left warm clothes and food, and the last two reached it in darkness guided by a torch light.

'The mist cleared at sunset, and it was a starlit but cold night. The sun was welcome after twelve hours of darkness, and after some hot soup we continued down, for Kisoi had to join a party going down by the Sirimon track as his leave finished the next day.

'This was the easiest route on the North side of the mountain, and from our experience it is evident that we should have bivouacked a night on the way up at the Amphitheatre, or carried our warm clothing with us, which would have slowed our time further, but we could have spent the night near the top.

'On the 21st we left the Kami Hut at 9 a.m. for Top Hut. It was heavy going up the moraine at the top of the Mackinder Valley till we reached the end of the Gregory Glacier. There was hard step cutting up the snout, and one or two crevasses had to be crossed by narrow snow bridges. We crossed the col between Point Lenana and Point Thomson where the mist came down. We spent the night at Top Hut 15,730 feet, and next day went up Point Lenana 16,355 feet. The sky was clear but there was cloud in the valleys, and in the afternoon we returned to Two Tarn Hut across the top of the Teleki Valley, completing the circuit of Mount Kenya.

'There was a strong wind during the night, but the morning was fine and we set off for Top Hut with supplies for a few days with the intention of seeing whether the South Face route was possible. We reached Top Hut at 3 p.m. and an hour later mist came down suddenly with heavy snow and thunder. Next morning the 24th, the South Face was covered with new snow, so we followed the track to Simba Col to have a look at the top of Gorges Valley, the top of the approach route from Chogoria. However snow came on at 11 a.m. so we returned to Top Hut, and the following day, as the weather was still bad, we returned to Two Tarn Hut over Shipton's Peak. It snowed all day on the 26th and next day we descended to Nanyuki in a downpour, and motored back to Nairobi that evening.

'After a hectic morning sorting stores and buying fresh food we left Nairobi at midday and motored the hundred miles south to Loitokitok on the North side of Kilimanjaro, where we managed to arrange for three porters to meet us next morning. After collecting a permit from the Forest Officer next morning we went through the forest by a pleasant track which was bone dry and easy going compared with the knee deep mud of Mount Kenya. We slept well in a very comfortable cave at 10,000 feet in the heath land about 1,000 feet above the forest. On the 30th the track led us up through arid country and at about 12,000 feet we filled our water flasks at the last spring on the way to Kibo Hut 15,420 feet. There was a strong wind and it was very cold in the hut, but it was a glorious night with a full moon when we left the hut at 2 a.m. for the climb up a wearisome 3,500 feet of pumice scree. The tedium was relieved by a brilliant sunrise behind Mawenzi, and from Gilman's Point along the edge of the crater rim to Uhuru Peak, 19,340 feet, there were many extraordinary ice formations emphasised by the early morning light, but there was no distant view owing to haze. We descended the 9,000 feet to the cave in about 3 hours, where we lay in the sun and consumed large quantities of tea, and slept through the twelve hours of darkness. Next day we made our way slowly through the forest to Loitokitok, and the Outward Bound School very kindly invited us to camp in their grounds. We left at 10 a.m. and went to the Amboseli Game Reserve, where we left Douglas Scott to camp for a few days and take photographs. We continued to Nairobi, and the next day, 3rd September, we visited the Nairobi Game Park which is just on the outskirts of the town but has a large variety of game including lions, hippos and crocodiles, and in the evening I left by plane for home, while Charles Warren went on to South Africa for a two week visit, which included three climbs on Table Mountain.'

America

D. BATHGATE climbed on Alpamayo in the south and on Yosemite in the north. See his accounts earlier in this issue.

DR. MALCOLM SLESSER writes ; 'The fact that there are more virgin mountains in Brazil than almost anywhere else in the world escapes the recently arrived visitor to Brazil, because it's too hot to climb. In a year in Brazil the truth slowly dawned on the writer, who finally bagged one such peak only after a second attempt at dense brushwood, and with much apprehension of snakes and other insidious beasties. The peak was only climbable by virtue of a tenuous veneer of vegetation along one plane of weakness. These peaks are all granite, and utterly homogeneous. There being no frost, nothing cracks. The form of the rock is massive and smooth, without ledges, holds or cracks. Those that have been climbed have been safeguarded with expansion bolts, which exist in a big way in these parts. In July the writer abandoned the best of Brazil for the best of Peru, where he took part in the second attempt on the east face of Yerupaja, which failed at 20,250 feet, some 1200 feet from the summit.'

Norway

G. J. DUTTON, confined by child bearing to the less adventurous parts of Norway, managed at times in July and August to regain the dignity of rarity. By solo scrambling, various tops above Hardangerfjord and in the Jotunheim and Horungtinder were sampled. He thoroughly agrees with the Frasers' eulogy last issue and recommends emigration, temporary or permanent, to that honest modern country.

Spain and The Pyrenees

DR. J. DONALD KINLOCH and THOMAS W. BOYD write : 'To include any worthwhile climbing during family sea-side holidays can be a problem, but we had some success recently. While camping on the north coast of Spain, we visited the Picos de Europa and climbed the Pena Vieja (8579 ft.) from Espinama. The Picos—'the really difficult mountains of Spain'—are of Dolomitic character and so far unspoilt by tourism : said to harbour bears and wolves, they have an atmosphere of primitive isolation which is a refreshing surprise in Western Europe and compensates for any shortcomings in height. There is a reasonable map (1:50,000) with line diagrams of the range published (1964) by the Federacion Espanola de Montanismo, Barquillo, 19, Madrid, 4, of which we obtained sheets in Bilbao and Santander : apart from odd journal articles however, we could find nothing written in English about the group. Signor E. Bustamente, the Photographer in Potes, is the local authority on the many spectacular ascents that can be made. The Picos seem little visited, by British mountaineers at any rate, and a holiday among them would be very rewarding for both scramblers and squirrels.

'While camping, too, in Southern France we climbed the Pic de Montcalm (10,154 ft.) in the East Central Pyrenees. This is a worthwhile peak for a one day ascent, and involves almost 7000 feet of climbing from the Refuge du Montcalm at the roadside. The route was marked for the first 2700 feet at least and was via Orris de Pla-Subra, Les Tables de Montcalm and the east ridge. Conditions were misty with a recent heavy snowfall (July) and but for the latter we would probably have encountered only moderate snow slopes and rock. We had no guide book but the French Survey has published (1953) an excellent map taking in this area (Aulus-Les Bains No. 8 - 1:20,000) of which we purchased a sheet in the Rue de B. l'Horloge, Ax-les-Thermes.'

The Alps

The Squirrels, though now almost all swallowed up in S.M.C. anonymity, preserve their oromaniacal identity the hard way. Their annual Alpine Outings show this very clearly and last year's was the best yet. A. McKEITH, uncharacteristically laconic, sent us a list. Such understatement often conceals abnormal bombast, so we have dressed it up a little, out of normal spite :

FRED HARPER, ALASDAIR McKEITH, BRIAN ROBERTSON, IAN ROWE, Miss M. Shand and Miss M. A. Thompson visited the Civetta Group in the Dolomites first of all, later switching to Mont Blanc and spinning out the bad weather in the Calanque d'en Vau near Marseilles and on other local crags. In the Dolomites the following routes were climbed: Bocia Della Guglia XLIII Alpina Piave (F.H. & M.A.T.; A.McK. & M.S.), Torre Venazia, West Face (A.McK. & M.A.T.), Torre Alleghe, West Face, 200 ft., Grade VI, (First Ascent: B.R. & I.G.R.), Campanile di Brabante (A.McK. & I.G.R. 154th Ascent), Cima Della Mede, North-West Arête (F.H. & M.A.T.), Torre Di Valgrande, West Face, 2000 ft., Grade V, (First Ascent: A.McK. & I.G.R.), Piccola Civetta, Via Aste-Susatti (B.R. & an Italian friend).

En route for the Mont Blanc range, Harper and Miss Thompson stopped off in the Bregaglia to climb the North Ridge of the Piz Badile and the Punta Innominata.

In the Mont Blanc range things really began to get off the ground. Harper and Thompson continued their travels up the South Ridge of the Aiguille Noire de Peuterey, later traversing Mont Blanc, Mont Blanc de Tacul and Mont Maudit and rounding things off with the Rebuffat route on the South Face of the Aiguille du Midi. McKeith and Galbraith, after loosening up on a new route between the existing routes on the Aiguille de l'M and the West Face of the Pointe Albert, 700 ft. T.D.Sup., went to the Blaitière where they made another new route on the West Face right of the Voie Britannique, doucely named West Rib (why not Voie Ecosaise?), 1500 ft., E.D. As well as these efforts they managed to take in that Old Chestnut, the Bonatti Pillar on the Dru and the Chamonix Face of the Aiguille du Peigne. Rowe, borrowing McKeith, made a more modest new route, the South-West Face of the Briche, 1000 ft. A.D.

Other Squirrel members, JIM BRUMFITT and ARTHUR EWING, climbed the North Ridge of Mont Blanc de Tacul and the South-West Ridge of Mont Dolent.

On the Local Crags Galbraith and Rowe climbed the Croix de Fer at Sallanches, McKeith and Galbraith the Sphinx Nose at Leysin and the entire party, in various combinations, visited the Calanque D'en Vau and climbed 'a fair percentage of the best routes there,' singling out the following list as being of high quality, not to say severity: La Super Sirène, La Sirey Directe, La Super Calanque, Le Doigt de Dieu, Le Peigne, Le Saphir, La Passerella Droite, Les Aiguilles Petite et Grande.

Some of these feats are recounted by IAN ROWE, who writes: 'I hitched to Monte Civetta in mid-June via Munich, where I spent a sobering afternoon in a wet Klettergarten. In Alleghe a pleasant week's philosophising with *vieux guide* Cesare Pollazzone was interrupted by the arrival of ALASDAIR McKEITH, FRED HARPER and BRIAN ROBERTSON.

'With B.R. making me feel like a client we made a new VI route on the W. Face of the Torre Alleghé; then as planned, F.H., B.R. and myself returned to the Direct route on the N.W. wall of Monte Civetta. We were fully caloric and walkie-talkied, as on all the best North Wall directs; the only trouble was that we could not lift it all. Fred and I withdrew from the attempt. Brian stomped off with his gear, Roberto Sorgato and Ignazio Piusi, to a new direct on the Cima Su Atto.

'McKeith and I then hit the free pasta and grappa trail by making a new V route on the W. Face of the Torre di Valgrande: we made the telly and the newspapers. In addition, the 154th(!) ascent of the Campanile di Brabante, (Tissi-King Leopold, 1933).

'In Chamonix in July I climbed the Brown-Whillans on the Blaitière with W. Thompson (Corriemulzie M.C.). With Chris Doake (C.M.C.) I made the fourth, and first British, ascent of the Bec d'Oiseau (Grépon). With McKeith, a new route on the Brioche. With M. Galbraith (E.U.M.C.), having chosen the wrong descent from a slack description, I spent a night hanging in étriers on a limestone cliff near Sallanches.'

During the second half of August, M. H. COOKE, T. NICHOLSON and J. Harrison had planned to walk most of the way from Bex to Stechelberg (in the Lauterbrunnen Tal) climbing on the way the Grand Muveran, Les Diablerets, Wildhorn, Wildstrubel, Balmhorn, Altels and Tschingelhorn. In fact, due to bad weather, more walking than intended had to be done and only the Grand Muveran, Wildstrubel and Tschingelhorn were climbed. Hut nights were spent at Rambert, Lammern and Mutthorn. 'Hotel' huts included Schwarenbach (but a hut would have been preferable); Anzeinde at the Refugio Giacomini was in pleasant contrast in spite of appalling weather.

R. M. McDONALD was moved to write: 'I was in Switzerland for 2 weeks with Jim Clark (Edinburgh J.M.C.S.):

To the Alps I went again,
Looking for a bigger Ben.
Failing on the Wetterhorn,
(It's quite hard in a storm).
From Grindelwald on to Sion,
Hoping for a Matterhorn.
Dent de Nenda and Mont Gond
Were the tops I sat upon.
From Arolla, we did the Pigne,
Since when, the same I've never been;
Back in Scotland, land of rain,
I realise I can't complain;
Glencoe and Skye I still like best,
Though the Alps I've yet to test.'

J. McK. STEWART writes; 'With a few friends in the M.A. I spent the first fortnight of September in Austria visiting the Ötztal Alps from a base in the Pitzal.

'An exposed climb on the shattered pinnacles of the Mittl. Eiskastenkopf from the Sexegertenferner gave a good day. A freezing wind and mist on the arête of the North Summit of the Wildspitze and a descent through the Taschachferner in sweltering heat finished another grand day.

'The Vord Eiskastenkopf was climbed by its west ridge, latterly solo, despite a broken finger which somewhat retarded my activities.

'This district is well worth a visit and, apart from a few days fresh snow, the weather was excellent throughout the holiday when other minor summits and passes were also climbed.'

DR J. H. B. BELL, LESLIE DUFF, Dr Anthony Townsend (Mountain Club of South Africa) and GEORGE ROGER met at Goeschenen on 20th August. The weather was unsettled and after 2 nights at the Voralp Hut they returned to base. The last three went up to the Albert Heim Hut and had 3 excellent climbs on the Galenstock, Tieffenstock and Gletschhorn before the weather broke again. The unsettled weather continued so Bell, Duff and Roger went on to Adelboden and enjoyed some pleasant walking and left on 3rd September.

JOHN PROOM and George Roger joined forces on 4th September at Wengen and enjoyed perfect weather. From Murren they crossed the Seftin Pass to Kiental and returned the next day and did the Buttlassen *en route* and saw several chamois near the pass. From the Jungfrauoch they did the Jungfrau by the Rottalsattel—an excellent finish to the holiday. They plead guilty to using a mechanical contrivance to reach the Jungfrauoch.

A. HARRISON, J. R. Robertson, H. Noble and M. H. COOKE spent a fortnight in August in the Dauphiné. At first they were at La Bérarde where, after several low level expeditions, Pic Coolidge was climbed, Sandy Harrison, with 76 years, safeguarding a party whose experience was considerably less than his. Moving on to La Grave, a much more sophisticated centre, the party had a good deal of bad weather. They spent a night at the Refuge E. Chancel, where the guardian was found to be a lecturer at Sussex University, and reached the Col and Pic la Lauze. La Bérarde has good camping facilities, an excellent mountaineering centre run by the Government, and many well-placed huts. It was surprising to find no other British climbers.

HAMISH M. BROWN with V.P.S.C.-B.F.M.C. student friends visited the Ötztal in July. From Pfunds camp they went to the Hohenzollerhaus and traversed the Riffeljoch, 3149 m., and Glocksturm, 3355 m. After being weatherbound at the Gepatschaus they traversed the Rauherkopfs and the Gepatschferner (largest snowfield in E. Europe) to the Brandenburger. Only the Hinter Hintereis Spitz, 3486 m., and Dahmann Spitz, 3401 m., were possible before blizzard retreat down to Vent, Ötztal, Landeck. A trip, Engadine, Majola Pass, Bregaglia, L. Como, Bernina Pass, failed to find sunshine. In the Bernese Oberland Grindewald was as wet. In desperation (and precipitation) everyone prowled about the Lauterbrunnen or over Kleine Scheidegg. It actually cleared; 26th to Jungfrau Joch; 27th Jungfrau, from Rottalsattel, icy Mönch, from Mönchjoch and trek to Concordia (those ladders!); 28th, Hollandia Hut at the Lotschenlucke; 29th, Ebnefluh, 3962 m. and finer Mittagborn, 3895 m., down to Fäfleralp, Lötschental; 30th, cross the Petersgrat to Lauterbrunnen—4000 ft. up and 7000 ft. down. Two added Tschingelhorn, 3577. Fini. While waiting at Arolla for A.B.M.S.A.C. Party solitary wanderings were made up Mt. de l'Etoile, 3369 m., and Pte de Vouasson, 3489 m.; and Gdes. Dents de Veisivi, 3418 m. Then Meet crossed Pas de Chèvres to the Dix Hut. With two others traversed the Ruinette, 3879 m., which became a 17-hour birthday epic (ending in a night descent, Col de Cheilon-Arolla in 1½ hours). All plodded up to the Berthol Hut in

thunderstorm and plodded down in snowstorm. Exit alone over Col de Torrent and Sassenière, 3259 m., to Zinal. Stormy Randa for last week.

In April 1966, DONALD MILL, on ski, crossed from Zermatt to Verbier via Schönbühl, Vignettes, Dix and Rosa Blanche; and from Zermatt visited summits of Breithorn, Jägerhorn and Signalkuppe.

The World

At the outset of an intended tour by motor caravan IAN G. CHARLESON attended the Centenary Celebrations at Zermatt to commemorate the first ascent of the Matterhorn. Many well-known climbers were present, including our own members ALEXANDER HARRISON and WILLIE SPEIRS. He then proceeded to Moscow. Unfortunately, permission could not be obtained to cross Siberia by road, but the Russians arranged for the transport of his vehicle by freight train and ship, and it was duly delivered to him in good condition at Yokohama. Meanwhile he had a memorable journey of eight days on the Trans-Siberian Railway to the Eastern Seaboard of the U.S.S.R., and subsequently a voyage of 900 miles to Yokohama in the fine Russian ship Khabarovsk. While in Japan he climbed Mt. Fujiyama. Climbing on the mountain is largely confined to July and August, as on the last day of the latter month all stations or huts beyond No. 5 are closed for the year, and few ascents are made, particularly during the month of September, which is appropriately styled 'the month of typhoons.' Immediately following Typhoon Trix, which had caused much havoc, he proceeded to the mountain. He was fortunate in finding a small outhouse adjoining one of the huts at about 10,000 feet, and in this he bivouacked. Overnight it was cold but later the weather was perfect and there were no technical difficulties of any kind. Due, however, to infirmity and advancing age it possibly was one of the slowest ascents on record, albeit one of the most enjoyable in his experience as for many hours he had the mountain to himself. Then the voyage across the Pacific to San Francisco, a run to Mexico City, round the Gulf of Mexico to the Florida Keys and thence to Washington, New York and Montreal. From there westwards, via Niagara, Chicago, Yellowstone Park, to Edmonton, and so on across the exciting Alaska Highway, of which over 1000 miles is unpaved, to the terminus at Fairbanks. While in Alaska he visited the Mt. McKinley National Park. At Jasper he met Ron Smylie, a member of the successful Mt. Logan expedition, and with him enjoyed some mild scrambling in the Rockies. They spent a night at the commodious Canadian Alpine Club Hut at Banff, missing only by several days our member, WILLIE DOCHERTY. In the journey of 44,000 miles covering thirteen months, Charleson regrets that he was not able to climb more, but he looks back with satisfaction to many unusual camp nights spent on waste pieces of ground, disused quarries and in the streets of cities in Europe, Asia, the Orient and the Americas.

BOOKS

I Chose to Climb. By Christian J. S. Bonington. (1966; Gollancz. 207 pp., 43 photographs. 30s.).

Chris Bonington has written an excellent book; not, perhaps, the equal of those with which it must be compared (Bonatti's, Terray's, Buhl's, etc.), but certainly the best to come from Britain of that type for a long time, perhaps since Mummery. And Bonington, unlike those others, has written early, has perhaps not yet reached his Peak.

The book follows the pattern of the traditional mountaineering autobiography, the chapters following chronologically, tracing the author's gradual accumulation of experience and skill and threaded through with an account of his coming-to-terms with himself on the decision whether or not to try to make an insecure but exciting living from mountaineering or a dull secure one selling margarine for Unilever. The early chapters describe Bonington's early struggles under the beady eye of MacInnes, who comes fairly well out of it. Bonington's attitude towards MacInnes' spikiness and, earlier, somewhat manic approach to mountaineering being tolerant and humorous. One feels that this might not have been the case on some of their more farcical climbs.

The later chapters deal with his long struggle with the Eigerwand, two Himalayan trips, the Walker Spur of the Grandes Jorasses and the Central Pillar of Fréney. The Himalayan chapters made, for me, the dulllest reading of the book. What persuades men of proven mountaineering talent to involve themselves in these extravaganzas escapes me. All individual idiosyncrasy smothered in the common cause, the common trail up a foreordained lump, the Boy Scout line of Camps, full of fellow-feeling and mutual joy. I bet . . . Buhl & Diemberger, Cunningham & MacInnes, seem to have shown the only reasonable attitude to Himalayan climbing. Anyway, fun or not, it makes for boring reading.

However, the rest is excellent; Bonington maintains a high standard of writing and of mountaineering throughout the book. Perhaps one of the best things about it is the care with which he brings out the special qualities of his companions. So many supporting characters in this type of book are colourless nonentities, shadowy, silent butts for the author's wit and skill. However, Bonington plays himself down and the book, dare we say it, is the better for this. Whillans and MacInnes cry out for the detailed vignette and here they get it. A man is much more interesting than a mountain, and their interaction more interesting still.

R.N.C.

Eiger Direct. By Peter Gillman & Dougal Haston. (1966; Collins. 183 pp., 38 photographs, 15 in colour. 36s.).

Good, but could have been better. The Eigerwand is monstrous with myth, its direct line one of the world's great routes, its climbers well strapped into legend, their struggle an invigorating thresh of calculation and chaos, intent and accident, disaster and good luck, wired through with competence, courage and tenacity. Haston is one of the finest mountaineers Scotland has produced, despite his reluctance to pay membership fees, and is also a writer aware of his medium. But this book is not by Haston. A few pages are, that

hold you intense and lonely up there in the storm, point-poised against a disappearing rope. But the rest are by Peter Gillman, a covering journalist.

Gillman, a climber himself, nobly rejects sensationalism and tries hard to convey the power of the cliff, the struggle and the combatants. But they're too big for him. Despairing of objectivity, he attempts to compensate by blowing up to absurd proportions the crawling world below, the little poisons of pressmen, the excited antennae, the lip-bitings and heart-clutchings down at Kleine Scheidegg. A complicated coverage *was* inescapable, did take place, wandered comically up and down the mountain and did assist the outcome. But Gillman plays this too loud. So that our minds never—except when Haston briefly snatches the microphone—leave the telescopes and their miasma of pettifoggery. *Eiger Direct—An Epic of Reportage* by P. Gillman, with a supporting cast of climbers Specially Recruited for the Occasion. Given this title, it's a sound, well-presented piece of work.

But the book must be bought. Technical details and equipment inventory are admirable, and of the climb itself enough comes through to trace its story: how each rope eventually needed the other, how the key traverse was made by Kor; and such things. Enough to taste of two continents, of Haag with his pipe who liked staying up there, of the cat-like prehensile Kor who disappeared so readily down to his basket, of Harlin—huge with dedication, and of the rest. Yet Haston gets lost in with 'the rest,' which again is bad for the balance of the book.

Obviously Haston should have written it. His pen is only dimly discernible. The introductory invective, for example, is feeble and second-hand, a mere complaint. An account by Haston (with thirst speeding its publication) would have been worth waiting for. It might even, like his climbing, have been balanced. It would certainly, like himself, have been adequate to the occasion.

G.J.D.

The Andes are Prickly. By Malcolm Slesser. (1966; Gollancz. 254 pp., 31 photographs, 4 maps. 42s.).

This second opus from what is beginning to look like M. Slesser, Inc., really consists of three books of varied type and unequal merit.

One should certainly find a place on the shelves of those who nowadays still have bookshelves. I can't imagine any such person who would not also want to throw the other two away. Unfortunately this can't be done since the three interpenetrate, forming a curate's egg one and indivisible like the French Republic.

Book One, taking its tone from the 'with-it' sort of title, seems determined to cast the expedition's fairly prosaic discussions into gripping documentary by reporting dialogue in direct speech. A bit wearing! Good for insomnia, particularly, is Chapter II where Tennent narrates incessantly and Slesser contributes an occasional 'I suggested,' 'I chuckled' and once 'I breathed enviously.' A sad case of literary ambition, here. Total Recall is big league stuff . . . Proust, Conrad . . . and now, seemingly (a long way after) . . . *Calum bochd*!

Book Two is the climbing narrative. Invaluable, doubtless for those with designs on Padre Eterno or Yerupaja, or the ability to conceive such from an armchair without kidding themselves. Most readers—and this reviewer—can however be safely placed in the ranks of the 'soft' men and more than a

touch of genius is needed to make us find originality in the narration of yet another epic. One can be grateful here for the Slesserian touch in depicting personalities—not just satire, but the rare sympathy with which he enters into the manoeuvrings and subconscious intrigues of colleagues equally gifted. More commendable still, his knack of not diminishing a person even by the most subversive criticism. What a talent is here inhibited by libel laws and the need to avoid brawls at S.M.C. Receptions! When we are all dead and gone a surviving Slesser could well produce a masterly series of entertainingly slanted character sketches.

Book Three is the type you pick up and don't put down until it ends. It is about Peruvian mountains and wooded valleys and cultivated fields as they look to people accustomed to bens and lochs and straths: about dawns and sunsets on Elysian riverbanks and by drab small towns: about all sorts of passing Peruvians, very real and recognisable: about shadowy Inca pasts and pungent twentieth century problems—all recorded at no more than the right length by a fresh, unprejudiced and happily unhackneyed eye. A joy to read—if a darg to find.

Unusual indeed to find a blurb, of all things, in its reference to this aspect of the book ('... Dr. Slesser is consistently intelligent and amusing') being almost offensively inadequate.

R.W.M.

Rock-Climbers in Action in Snowdonia. Written by Tony Smythe. Illustrated by John Cleare. Captions, descriptions and layout by Robin G. Collomb. (1966; Secker & Warburg. 127 pp., 39 photographs. 35s.).

What can one say about this curious book? Is it a chronicle of recent climbing in Wales illustrated by action shots or is it, to use an old phrase, a portfolio of action shots illustrated by thumbnail-sketches of the personalities involved? Does it matter? I think it does; the difference of quality between Cleare's work with the camera and Smythe's with the pen is too marked to ignore. These photographs are far and away the best action shots I have ever seen. They catch the flavour of the long, steep modern lead in a unique way, communicating the doubt and fear, the precarious isolation of commitment. Of course, Cleare has gone to a great deal of trouble to achieve this special effect, dangling on fixed ropes to record intimate details of the struggle, enacted by special arrangement by Crew and his associates.

Smythe's text, however, is on a totally different level of competence. Where it matters, his 'action shots' are from the ground only, well-taken but undistinguished. In fact, to my mind the text only matches the camera-work at one point where there is a long quotation from a recent article by Allan Austin, possibly the most consistent of present-day writers on rock-climbing. It is really astonishing how many mountaineering *books* are badly written while such a wealth of talent languishes in journals, largely unread.

However, were there no text at all, the book would still be a good buy. These photographs assuage the frustrations of all of us who have fumbled with our Brownies on cramped little stances. How often have we seen last week's terror foreshortened to this week's easy slab? As Cleare remarks, 'the second man's hands should be full of rope not camera!'

R.N.C.

The Avalanche Enigma. By Colin Fraser. (1966; Murray. 301 pp. 41 photographs, 14 figures. 42s.).

MacInnes and his performing dogs, Weir, both Marshalls, Patey and many, yes many, competent Scottish mountaineers have been avalanched in recent years. Fortunately there have been few fatalities, though one club member lost his life in Glencoe and two people were killed on Beinn a' Bhùird. One of the last party survived after being buried for over 15 hours. In 1962 two people were avalanched and killed in Derbyshire!

The Concise Oxford has it: ENIGMA: *n.* Riddle; *puzzling person or thing.* Avalanches are indeed enigmas. A party in the Alps were approaching a hut and exchanging greeting with the Custodian, 'they were 6 feet apart, almost outside the door of the hut, when the avalanche broke beneath them; with a monstrous roar it carried away the whole party; where nine men had stood a moment before there was now no-one'. . . . it was an ignominious death for Alexander Burgener. As the *Alpine Journal* said at the time, 'if any party of mountaineers can be safe his ought to have been. One can only call it fate, which, in a perfectly easy spot, in one mad surging rush felled the great guide and his companions to their doom.' Fraser comments, 'fate or not, I prefer to regard the accident as an illustration of the essential unpredictability of avalanches even for guides of vast experience.' Colin Fraser writes of his work with the Davos Rescue Team and the Swiss Federal Institute for Snow and Avalanche Research. He relates many terrifying stories, amply illustrated with pictures of indescribable destruction.

'It is far from the purpose of this book to wave a finger of admonition and it would be entirely wrong to conclude from what is to follow that anyone who fixes skis to his or her feet is immediately in mortal danger. An examination of facts, however, shows that all skiers who die in avalanches to-day do so as a flagrant disregard for warnings from the local avalanche safety organisation.' There are no local avalanche safety organisations in Scotland but this statement applies as much to the Scottish mountaineer as to the Alpine skier. There is an avalanche danger in Scotland and competent climbers should be able to recognise the signs and symptoms.

'The work of unravelling the answers is often baffling, occasionally dangerous, and always exciting. It cannot be dull; the elusive and malevolent character of avalanches guarantees that.' Reading Colin Fraser's book is never baffling, though some of the more technical sections require thought. It's only danger is that it may deter one from venturing on to the Scottish mountains in winter! The book, like the research, is always exciting.

G.T.

Cloud Walkers. By Paddy Sherman. (1966; Macmillan. 161 pp., 17 photographs, 4 maps. 35s.).

Western Canada abounds in mountains climbed and unclimbed which, if only they were better known, would be the envy of European mountaineers. Unfortunately this is not the book to dispel their ignorance. While there are a couple of tantalising descriptions of ascents of Mt. Logan and Mt. Fairweather the general tenor of this volume is exemplified by the journalistic chapter headings; 'A great climber dies: a hiker lives' and 'Nightmare moulded in rock.'

A.W.E.

The Mountaineer's Companion. Edited by Michael Ward. (1966 ; Eyre & Spottiswoode. 598 pp., 24 b. & w. and several coloured photographs. 50s.).

Plump and elegant for the price, this is an acceptable gift from an intelligent aunt. The editor prudently embarrasses attackers by offering his underbelly : he picked the passages he liked, nothing more. The passages are coherently long, not twiglets. Most people will enjoy most of them. Unfortunately, really-deserving nephews may have already enjoyed them in their other books or journals ; this especially applies to the over-long stretch on Everest.

The company among the excellent photographs is certainly mixed. Emily Brontë says it in 4 lines, Quintin Hogg gets up and has a go, then Buchan, then *le Terray*, and so on. Scottish accounts rise above the usual anthological damp grey socks with the verve of men like Borthwick, Patey and Banks, but Miss Moffat is depressingly put out by the wind and a Highland bus-driver, two pleasantly objective forces. All in all, a rich mixture, with some poetry and verse ; and the editor has a sense of humour—for has he not included in full the Chinese Article on Everest and its outraged *A.J.*-editorial comments ? Which, as noted before, faithfully record the qualities of Peking and South Audley St. respectively.

G.J.D.

Americans on Everest. By James Ramsay Ullman. (1965 ; Michael Joseph. 429 pp., 74 photographs, 7 in colour. 50s.).

One would hope that the official account of an expedition which cost over \$400,000.00 and which employed 1000 people including a professional author to tell the tale would be beyond criticism. By this criterion *Americans on Everest* inevitably disappoints and I found this book rather dull in places. However, the hand of a skilled author can be seen in that there is less of the tendency common in this type of account to get lost in the interminable traffic between base camp and others designated by Roman numerals and scattered over the mountainside. Ullman leads us smoothly through the preparations for the expedition, the acclimatisation on Rainier and on to the final attack which placed three separate parties on the summit of Everest. There has been some tendency to denigrate the Americans because of the lavishness of their preparations but the ascents were considerable achievements both in the fields of mountaineering and logistics and this is well brought out by the book. There are several semi-scientific appendices, sops to the expedition sponsors, which could well have been omitted. Vicarious mountaineers will doubtless wish to add this volume to their book-shelves.

A.W.E.

Selected Climbs in the Romsdal and Isterdal Areas of Central Norway. By Tony Howard. (1966 ; The Rimmon Mountaineering Club. 46 pp., 6 photographs, 13 maps and diagrams).

A very valuable guidebook indeed ; containing all the information necessary to spending one's summer holiday in Norway rather than in the overcrowded French Alps. I predict that this area will become increasingly popular in years to come, with its enormous impeccable rock-walls, vestigial glaciers and midnight sun. The book is lucidly written and compactly presented.

R.N.C.

Rock & Ice Guide to Easter Ross ; Foinaven Supplement. Edited by A. R. M. Park & P. N. L. Tranter. (1966 ; Corriemulzie Mountaineering Club. 5s. 6d.; 3s. 6d.).

This interim guide is a photo-copied, off-pocket size, soft-backed booklet ;—the supplement fits inside the back cover. Areas covered are The Fannichs, Beinn Dearg, Corriemulzie, Bodach Mòr, Alladale, Glenbeg and Creag Dionard. It contains climbs made by C.M.C. members, not previously published, and descriptions which have appeared in this journal.

Park's and Tranter's comments on the various regions do not merely pass judgment on quality but attempt in several cases to indicate the future possibilities. This will surely serve to encourage a more comprehensive exploration of the Great North-West.

The photographs lack detail due to an inadequate reproduction system, but are indicative, and the diagrams are excellent. Members can obtain the booklet in parts or *in toto* from P. MacDonald, 17 Dreghorn Loan, Edinburgh 13, or from the persons mentioned in Northern Highlands Notes, this issue.

I.G.R.

Coire Ardair, Creag Meaghaidh, Winter. By A. McKeith. (1966 ; A. McKeith, Edinburgh. 19 pp., 2 diagrams. 5s.).

This excellent little guide fills a much-needed gap in the Club's Guide-book coverage. McKeith's Introduction is clear and concise and his diagrams enlightening, especially the one of the Inner Corrie, where it was previously impossible to locate climbs without intimate acquaintance.

R.N.C.

Journals of Kindred Clubs.—*Alpine Journal*, 1966 (1 & 2): although the *A.J.* is second to none as a source of general mountain information and in this respect may truly be said to be a World Mountaineering Journal rather than an English National one, one feels, when reading its valuable scholarly contents, that it lacks, and has always lacked, something of the sparkle of other, less ambitious, journals. All its contributors seem to produce the same colourless factual accounts of their exploits, sacrificing form for content. Consequently, those prejudices of mine lead me to ignore most of these two issues and to single out only those articles which are something more than pseudo-scientific notes. In the first issue last year there is an amusing account of an Indian or Pakistani or Nepalese (he doesn't say which !) ascent of Everest by M. S. Kohli in which the South Col is described as 'the highest junk-yard in the world.' Baillie and Harlin supply gripping tales of the Right-hand Pillar of Brouillard and the new Direct on the West Face of the Dru. The second issue has a brilliant and engrossing piece by Yvon Chouinard on 'Modern Yosemite Climbing' but not much else to enthuse over. Particularly aggravating was Peter Gillman's account of the Eigerwand Direct. Why him ? Readers of this *Journal* know that Haston *can* write well. Bonington is also an entertaining writer. But no, Gillman's pedestrian (literally !) journalism is preferred. *American Alpine Journal*, 1964 & 1965 : to my mind these two are the best of the pile on my desk. The high standard of photography and writing in these two journals places them well ahead of the field. Particularly good value are Royal Robbins' 'North America Wall,' the various accounts of the 1964 Andean Expedition and Monroe Thorington's profile of Oliver Perry-Smith. *The Journal of the Mountain Club of South Africa*, 1965 : this journal is usually beautifully-produced and this particular

issue goes a step further, appropriately enough, since it celebrates the Club's 75th anniversary. It is bigger and better than usual, has 63 photographs (6 in colour) and is hard-backed. However, most of the articles are short and, in view of its being an anniversary issue, properly domestic. R. E. Anson-Cook's Potted Club History is interesting and so is Nora Galvin's little piece, echoing amusingly the sentiment of most patient seconds that 'climbing is mostly waiting.' D. H. Woods administers a stern rebuke to this reviewer for his frivolous remarks in these columns on the subject of the Alien Vegetation Committee. The Green Cancers (*sic*) are strangling the beautiful native vegetation and must be destroyed! (Out with the Europeans!)

Climbers' Club Journal, 1965 & 1966: two good numbers, the second better than the first. Patey's self-debunking story of the B.B.C. Film at Holyhead, 'The Greatest Show on Earth,' is his best since 'With Arne Randers Heen on the Romsdalshorn' (see S.M.C.J. (1960) xxvii, p. 6). 'Royal glanced inquiringly at my hands. They were criss-crossed with cuts and covered with blood. "Back home in the States," he remarked, "you can always distinguish a good Aid Man by his hands." "Lots of scars?" I suggested hopefully. Royal shook his head gently, "No scars," he said.' This article is graced by a beautiful portrait of Joe Brown by John Cleare, looking infinitely sad and bored, captioned, 'Joe is not easily ruffled.' Also good in the second issue is Allan Austin's 'Introduction to Saussois' where he falls foul of two bikini-clad sirens. *Fell & Rock Climbing Club Journal*, 1964: best in this issue is Allan Austin's 'Dovedale Groove.' *M.A.M. Journal*, 1965 & 1966: this unpretentious little journal occasionally contains some good things. The 1966 issue has three articles of Scottish interest: David Smith's 'Thoughts of a Munro-Bagger,' W. Peplow's 'Camping in Knoydart' and Anne Littlejohn's 'Rock Climbing on Rhum' (see Rhum Notes, this issue). *Oxford Mountaineering*, 1966; *Cambridge Mountaineering*, 1966; *The Journal of the Manchester Mountaineering Club*, 1964-5 & 1965-6; *The Sheffield University Mountaineering Club Journal*, 1965-6; *Lairig Club Journal*, 1964-5. The University Journals always provide interesting reading; the writing is often experimental and although much of the stuff is very weak, the good stuff is usually very good indeed. In this category come Case History (C.M.) 'the most prominent symptom is a recurrent festering, occurring with a period of seven days,' Brian Griffiths' 'Eliminate' and Gill Cannon's 'A Grip with Griff' (S.U.M.C.J.). The M.U.M.C.J. is particularly well-produced, with some impressive photographs.

R.N.C.

The Rucksack Club Journal from Dundee is another student publication, running to 3 issues each year; technical topics range from the severely educative to the cannily comparative (a *Which* of compasses, for example, with a Best Buy), and diverse articles of which one of the most enjoyable deals with the above subject of Festering. 'Artificial Aids in Festering' details recent advances in this mountaineering technique and illustrates the much more reliable and versatile equipment available to the modern climber; with artificial aids such as transistor radios, for example, it is now possible to prolong festering expeditions for several days or even weeks, and throughout the finest weather; something which even the most determined pioneers could not do. Our *Equipment Notes* must develop this theme next issue...

G.J.D.

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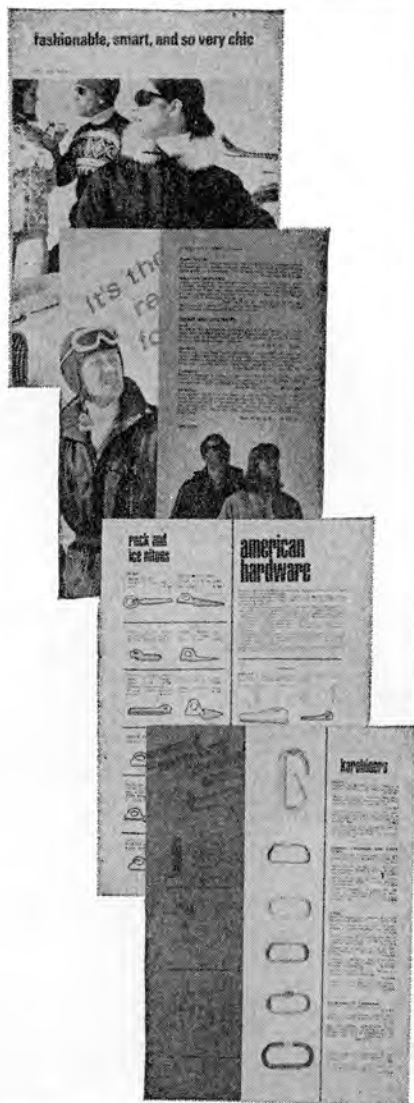
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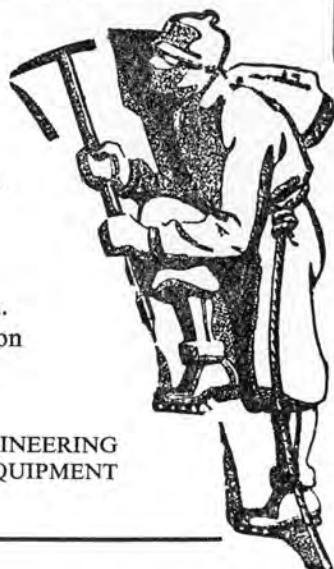
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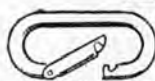
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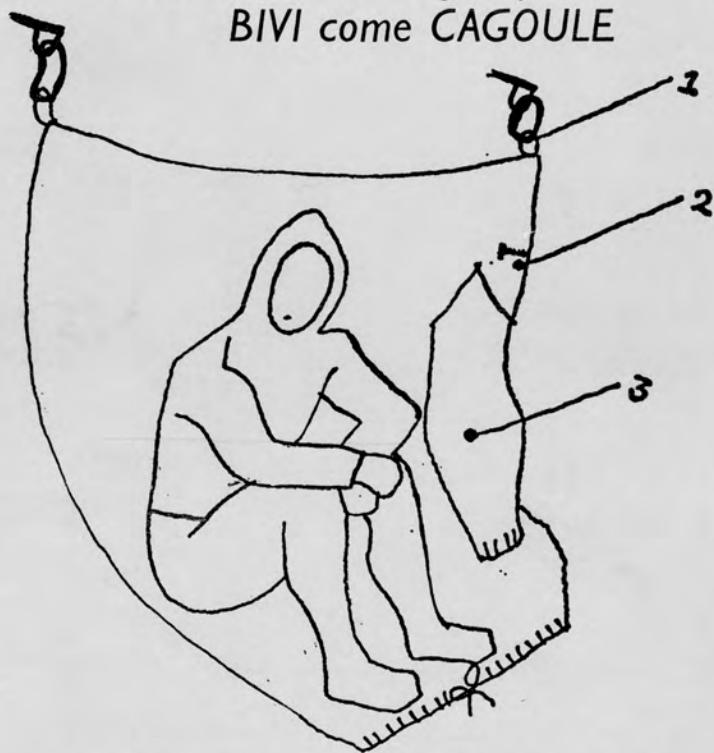


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