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*I. G. Rowe.*

Blyth Wright prospecting a Grade V pitch on the N.W. Ridge of the Fuori, Bregaglia.



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## THE BRACK

### New Routes on an Old Mountain

By R. Richardson

ARROCHAR doesn't see much rock-climbing action these days but in the late forties and early fifties The Cobbler was a major weekend scene. Transport tended to be scarce and Glencoe was easily accessible only to rich men with cars and motor cycles; so at weekends many a mica-schist wrinkle was caressed by a Creagh Dhu sandshoe. But even in those stirring times The Brack, that other mini-mountain across Glen Croe, seems to have been neglected.

Over a period of fifty years only the elite few—Inglis Clark, Shadbolt, Maclaren and Nimlin are the names in the Guide-Book—seemed to have probed its defences; and then only the fringes of its walls and slabs were touched. Here was a hill, low in height, easy of access, well-endowed with verticalities, equipped with 'Cobbler View,' a Nimlin excavated howff of superior amenities—and yet neglected. (Or was it? There are antique pegs of unknown origin in Great Central Groove). During all the period of intensive development at Arrochar from 1947 onwards only a few Mods. and Diffs. were added by Nimlin to the 1895 vintage Inglis Clark Arête and the 1906 squalor of Elephant Gully. However, to give Nimlin his due, he recognised the obvious merits of Great Central Groove and made two solo reconnaissances, one in 1938 and another in 1947. Unfortunately a serious attack was never made on this classic line for Nimlin's name on such a route would surely have led to earlier development of The Brack.

However, sometime in early 1958 the local expert B. H. Humble, in referring to Great Central Groove, is reported to have used those ever-dangerous words, '... the Last Great Problem at Arrochar.' Those two mysterious men from Greenock, Mitchell and Morrison, took up the challenge and made the first known ascent of this classic

and impressive route (*S.M.C.J.*, 1959, xxvi, 356). On their ascent they found two antique pegs on the lower pitches, but who put them there is not known.

The account of this epic ascent came under the eye of one Bill Skidmore, also of Greenock, who was at that time collecting first winter ascents around Arrochar where the competition was less fierce than in the regions to the north. As Great Central Groove was apparently both wet and steep it seemed well-qualified to go on the list and a summer reconnaissance was planned. Accordingly the first of many trips was made through the forest and up the grass slopes to that most curious of corries. (The cliffs of The Brack seemed to have been formed by a huge rockfall and the corrie is a litter of enormous boulders riddled with potholes and caves). The Groove was climbed and it was found that, despite muck and vegetation approaching Cairngorm standards on the first two pitches, a really impressive route of great atmosphere and considerable difficulty had eluded Nimlin. A genuine classic, although more suited to tricouni's than P.A.'s.

The Groove runs up the middle of the face with steep grassy slabs running up into vertical walls on the right and a fine smooth vertical wall on the left.

Now although this left wall is very vertical, with a trace of overhang here and there, it has two cracks running up the middle of it. The right-hand crack runs up to a cave near the top of the wall and from there more cracks lead to the big 'Gallery' ledge which runs along the top of the face. And so another 'Last Great Problem' had been superseded.

Contemplation of this line quickly indicated a need for iron-mongery and so a number of well-laden visits were made in the summer of 1967. An interesting and mostly free first pitch was found to bypass the first two vegetatious pitches of Great Central Groove. This led to one of those comfortable grass ledges which are a feature of The Brack routes—to be able to lie at ease on the grass at belays reading the Sunday Trash while the rest of the team get on with the struggle is a third man's privilege.

Once the route took to the wall modern methods had to be employed and it was whack and dangle up out of The Groove by way of an overhanging crack and then cunningly into a small recess. From this a stray piece of non-vertical slab led to a bulge which was conquered with a piece of table leg and a couple of pegs. More cosy ledges led to the foot of the main crack. Inspection of this quickly led to abandoning any thoughts of climbing it free and a retreat was made to saw up more table legs while Jim Crawford was despatched eastwards to buy up Tiso's complete stock of large angles.

The end of that September saw Crawford, Richardson and Skidmore sweating up through the forest with a heavy load of gear once again. The now familiar first three pitches led, all too slowly,

to the main crack. Skidmore hung himself round with bits of table leg, bongs, large angles and huge alloy chockstones before disappearing up over the first bulge. A long time later some turf came down and Richardson was summoned. The main crack is a delightful pitch for a second man who has someone else coming up behind him to take out the pegs. The crack is mainly vertical with a few bulges for interest and beautifully exposed. Despite the low altitude of The Brack this pitch has a real mountaineering atmosphere—steep, exposed and in the middle of an impressive wall. At the top of the pitch is a small cave with a good peg-belay. As we wanted to finish the route that day Bill Skidmore then led up the last pitch—swinging up out of the cave into another small overhung niche and then up merely steep cracks to the wide ledge of the Gallery.

After Bill had lashed himself to a boulder Jim Crawford was called up from the gathering gloom. Jim did not seem to appreciate the aesthetic appeal of the main crack—something to do with six hours on the same belay and the lack of remaining daylight. As an act of charity Richardson remained in the cave and allowed Jim the last few traces of daylight so that he could see at least some of the holds on the last pitch as he snarled up into the gathering night. When the last man was called forth all was dark and so Richardson cheated by prusiking up to the Gallery. And then, with one of our three torches working, a fast retreat along the ledges and down the corrie and through the forest and across the river and down the road to stop the wives calling out the rescue team.

A minor epic and a good new route; The Brack was continuing its form. We christened the route 'Mammoth' in counterpoint to Elephant Gully. So far we haven't heard of a second ascent but it deserves at least that much; with its mixture of free and artificial climbing and fine situations it is a 'modern' route and should appeal to budding Alpinists.

The following January the winter ascent of Great Central Groove was carried out by Skidmore and Richardson, beating the second team by a week. After all these years the words of the prophet Humble were being heard in the land, or at least at the Benmore Outdoor Centre at Loch Eck. The Groove is a good winter climb, probably the best at Arrochar, and, being so wet, all it needs is frost for the ice to start building up. Snow would be a nuisance.

A short steep ice chimney is followed by a long slab corner with overlaps to climb and corners to edge round—with luck the ice may be an inch thick on the slab. Above the slab is another short steep ice chimney leading to the final desperate struggle in a verglas coated vertical corner. Richardson again was reduced to prusik loops in the dark on the last few feet.

That same winter, before the freeze-up came, a couple of lads from Loch Eck, who had heard the words of Humble, came to The Brack. Bill Marsh led a magnificent pitch on the overhanging wall

to the left of Elephant Gully. This pitch led to the foot of a big open corner but wet and cold conditions forced a retreat from the second pitch and for some reason they did not return the next spring. Then came the dry summer of 1968 and Skidmore and Crawford climbed Marsh's pitch and the next, then pegged the third and climbed the fourth and finally a fifth to make Arrochar's longest rock climb—the 400-foot-plus 'Mainline.' Every pitch is interesting, with walls, slabs, chimneys and grooves for variety and a straightforward pegging corner thrown in. 'Mainline' is a free climb with a little pegging whereas 'Mammoth' is mainly a peg climb. Again 'Mainline' is a route of character which deserves some attention. With enthusiasm for The Brack regained an attack was mounted that autumn on the last feasible major line on the mountain.

Between Elephant Gully and Mainline is an overhanging face about 150 feet high crossed by a line of roofs about a third of the way up. On the upper part of the overhanging edge between this face and Elephant Gully there are connecting cracks leading to the inevitable large grass ledge. The problem is that the cracks do not reach the ground. That Rhodesian peg expert, Rusty Baillie, had seen this and proposed bolting up the edge to reach the cracks. However Skidmore and Richardson had a more devious but more ethical solution. At the foot of Elephant Gully the roof line can be reached by standing on a shoulder. So they pegged away leftwards under the roofs away from the desired edge then back rightwards through the double roofs and up a loose flake then left again and eventually right to join the long sought cracks on the edge. These led over a flake and left to a final groove which finished on the grass ledge. From there an anticlimactic descent was made through the jungle of Elephant Gully.

Being only a small route going nowhere it was christened 'Sideline.' However it occupied a number of wet Sundays at the back end of the season and is recommended for such as the overhang is sufficient to keep the rain off for most of the way. The pegging is technically interesting and the logistics complicated. The comparative isolation of The Brack is shown by the fact that we left most of the route pegged and fitted with a fixed rope for two weeks without losing anything.

So there it is, an easily accessible rock face with one route in the classic idiom and three in the modern—plus several interesting impossibilities. All it needs is some dry weather and some climbers. The Brack has suffered from its nearness to The Cobbler for too long.

## Arran

Arran of the many stags, the sea reaches to its shoulder;  
island where companies were fed, ridges where blue spears  
are reddened.

Wanton deer upon its peaks, mellow blaeberrries on its  
heaths, cold water in its streams, nuts upon its brown oaks.

Hunting-dogs, and hounds, blackberries and sloes of the  
dark blackthorn, dense thorn-bushes in its woods, stags  
astray among its oak-groves.

Gleaning of purple lichen on its rocks, grass without blemish  
on its slopes, a sheltering cloak over its crags, gambolling of  
fawns, trout leaping.

Smooth is its lowland, fat its swine, pleasant its fields, a  
tale you may believe; its nuts on the tips of its hazel-wood,  
sailing of long galleys past it.

It is delightful when fine weather comes, trout under the  
banks of its rivers, seagulls answer each other round its  
white cliff; delightful at all times is Arran.

ANON, 12th century.

(translation from the the Irish by Kenneth Jackson,  
*A Celtic Miscellany*, Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1951)

## CREAG MEAGHAIDH CRAB-CRAWL

By Tom Patey

*I'll put a Girdle round the Earth in forty minutes . . . . .*  
(Puck, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*)

NOTE the words of Alasdair 'Bugs' McKeith, Editor of the Creag Meaghaidh section of the S.M.C. *Central Highlands Guide* (1968):

'The Girdle Traverse of the cliffs of Coire Ardair . . . is certainly the longest potential expedition of its kind in Great Britain (8500 feet) . . . and still awaits its first complete ascent. The climbing is nowhere excessively difficult but the entire traverse would probably justify a high grading on account of its length and seriousness. Remarkable situations are abundant and the exposure, which is often Dolomitic, is almost certainly unrivalled in Scottish winter climbing.'

These comments have given me great comfort in the last few months. I did not make them: McKeith did. One of the oldest gambits in the climbing game is to borrow superlatives from early pioneers, e.g., *In the words of that great authority Lionel Terray . . .*

Such statements are invariably taken at face value. They never fail to impress and are, naturally, irrefutable. Never pat yourself on the back. Get someone else to do it for you. It shows good taste, good breeding, proves that you are a likeable chap and also provides a good opening for a climbing article.

'I don't get much excited about girdles,' said Don Whillans gloomily, 'especially 8000 foot ones.'

'But it's perfectly simple!' I insisted. 'You have two parties starting simultaneously from opposite ends, crossing over in the middle. The left hand party led by a right-handed leader and the right-hand party by a left-handed leader.'

'Look mate,' he interrupted, 'Do you know what you want to do? You want to team up with a crab. It's got claws, walks sideways and it's got a thick 'ead. This isn't a climb, it's a bloody crab-crawl!'

There is an air of finality in that sort of remark which does not invite contradiction. I knew better than to argue, and we compromised with the Great Gully of Garbh Bheinn.

A fortnight later a party of five returned to the empty arena of Coire Ardair. We stopped below the plastered crags to watch Peter Gillman shuffling hesitantly across the frozen loch. We laid bets that he would fall through but to everyone's surprise the ice held firm. Apathy set in.

'It's a pity about the late start,' said John Cleare.

This was putting it mildly. It was after midday, and in mid-February that does not allow much daylight for what Dennis Gray once prophesied would be a two-bivouac expedition.

Jim MacArtney and Alan Fyfe failed to respond. They looked as optimistic as two slabs of their native Aberdeen granite.

For MacArtney there were compensations. He was partnered by his girl friend, Mary Anne, on her second major ice climb. Although not ideally qualified for 'Britain's longest potential expedition,' she was more than decorative, keen to succeed, and probably the fittest member of the party.

'There's at least one consolation,' said Cleare, 'We should get enough photographs to keep my Editor happy.'

We were not consoled.

Peter Gillman, his Press Colleague, now announced that he had all the necessary material for his article, and that he ought to be getting along. Since this was the first time he had been within conversation range and we had not yet started to climb, we were impressed by his talent for improvisation.

It was not long before we got the message.

'Would you mind lacing up your crampons properly?' chided Cleare. 'I can help you if you like. I may be using some of these



*John Cleare.*

On the Crab Crawl — looking over MacCartney's shoulder to Mary Anne Hudson.



*J. Grieve.*

Crowberry Gully and Tower, Buachaille Etive Mòr.



illustrations for instructional purposes, and we don't want to set a bad example, do we? Incidentally—I should warn you that I may want to swap positions on the rope now and again, just to get the best angles.'

I was well aware of the implications of this remark, having climbed with John for several years. A rope of five with a leap-frogging snap-happy photographer is as mobile as a constipated caterpillar. That was why I evolved a plan.

'Look here, John,' I said off-handedly. 'I'll climb unroped. That will leave the rest of you free as a party of four or as two pairs, and I can go ahead and give perspective for your long shots.'

I could see from the dark look on MacArtney's face that he realised this was goodbye, but being an understanding lad he kept his mouth shut.

'Splendid,' said Cleare. 'We'll give you a shout when we want you to stop.'

Once round the first corner of the Traverse, I found I was not only out of sight but also out of sound. In fact this was the last I saw of them, although from time to time I left encouraging arrows on the snow to show I had not forgotten it was a team effort.

Once in a while it is very refreshing to climb alone. The practice is traditionally indefensible. I will therefore attempt to defend it.

There are two cardinal precepts in mountaineering: 1. The leader must not fall. 2. The leader must climb as if the rope was not there. The first commandment is self-evident. No useful purpose could be served by a leader falling except to provide his followers with belaying practice. For the second commandment, there is only one way to ensure that a leader climbs as if his rope was not there—take away the rope. Now, it is also a fact that two men climbing unroped are no more secure than one. *Ergo*—the best solution is to climb solo. Q.E.D.

By tradition the climber who habitually climbs alone is regarded as reckless. Nothing is further from the truth, because if he were other than safe, he would be dead. The main attraction of solo climbing is the freedom of movement one enjoys. The sensation is akin to coasting down the motorway after being held up at every set of traffic lights in Glasgow. You keep in top gear and your performance improves correspondingly.

The Winter Girdle of Creag Meaghaidh is the ideal circuit for this kind of abandoned gaiety. The technically difficult sections are not very long, yet the rest are not of hands-in-pocket category. It is the sort of place where you might feel obliged to rope up if you had company. Not because a rope could afford any real security but as a gesture to the exposure. In summer the line of the Winter Girdle is an intermittent narrow ledge seldom more than a few feet wide, diminishing to a minus quantity at several points, and it offers an

8000-foot gangway across some of the most inhospitable walls in Scotland, with a lot of rock overhead and a lot of air underneath. The only breaks in this Iron Curtain are the few isolated winter routes already recorded, and none of them are easy. The line of weakness goes sideways all the time instead of up and down, which makes this girdle more logical than others of its class. In fact, the most extraordinary thing about an 8000-foot ledge is that it should exist at all, but probably there is the usual geological explanation.

In winter it ceases to be a ledge and becomes a silvery band of high-angled snow-ice, a string of tinsel stretched across one and a half miles of crag. The snow banking on the ledges squeezes the climber out into the footlights, ensuring appreciation of the environment. This is equally impressive and oppressive, the free-fall potentials adding up to 500 feet in some places, a long way without a parachute.

The first two segments of the Girdle Traverse, The Scene and Apollyon Ledge, are little more than *hors d'œuvres* to the main course—the Post Horn Gallop on the Central Cliffs. Both introductory sections had been explored by McKeith and written up as separate routes, although his gradings and times seem excessive. The Scene, which crosses the broken buttress left of Eastern Corner and finishes in Raeburn's Gully, appeared to merit a winter grading of 2 instead of 3. The crossing, unroped, took only thirty minutes for 1000 feet as against the  $2\frac{1}{2}$  hours allotted. Although a solo climber moves at least twice as fast as a roped party the prevailing conditions were far from ideal—an unusual amount of black ice and heavy aprons of unstable wind-slab.

The Scene, however, is the most practical corridor to the next segment, Apollyon Ledge, and this is certainly worth inclusion. It crosses the gigantic bleak wall of the Pinnacle Buttress, 1000 feet high with an average inclination of at least 80°. This the only part of the Creag Meaghaidh cirque which promises rock climbing, the rocks here being too steep for vegetation; so far nothing has been done. Only two winter routes breach the main face of the crag. Both follow shallow water-courses and are exceptionally fine. The left-hand one, known as Smith's Gully (attempted by Robin Smith but climbed and christened by Marshall) has only had two ascents and is one of the really great ice routes of Scotland, exacting enough to satisfy anyone's tastes. As I crossed this legendary giant by an easy snow ledge midway between two appalling ice bulges, I felt I ought not to be there, having cheated in some indefinable way.

Gillman's ant-sized figure at the loch-side reminded me too vividly of the scale of things. I was glad when he stopped shouting. He evidently believed that he alone, from his special vantage point, held the key to the situation and he was trying in some unintelligible way to bridge the 1000-foot gap that had opened up.

I waited a token ten minutes, but as there was still no sign of

Cleare and his camera-party finishing *The Scene*, I gave them up as a lost cause and, scuttling across the rest of the snow ribbon, rounded the edge of Pinnacle Buttress, with the Main Face in full view ahead.

Up to now I had not seriously considered completing the Girdle Traverse in an afternoon, as I began with only six hours of daylight for a mile and a half of traversing. Totting up the guidebook estimates for the component sections gave 15 hours for the complete Girdle. My idea had merely been to go as far as I could without risking benightment and to get off the face—up or down—before nightfall. Now, with seven hours of guidebook time already condensed into  $1\frac{1}{2}$  hours and  $4\frac{1}{2}$  hours of daylight remaining for 8 hours' scheduled climbing, I was beginning to catch up with the clock, and an intriguing pipe-dream was beginning to look practicable.

Ten years ago Richard Brooke and I made a diagonal line across the Central Face, the Post Horn Gallop. This now formed essentially the critical third lap of the Girdle. From memory I knew I could scarcely hope to halve our original 5 hours, as we had then enjoyed superlative hard snow ice. However, 5 hours itself would suffice, providing nothing unexpected cropped up afterwards.

Once or twice a climber has one of those days when angles recede, when the impossible becomes possible and he is caught up in his own impetus. I found myself relying implicitly on front points and the spikes of two short axes. Steps were rarely needed, and this meant an enormous saving in time.

Whatever the source of my elation, it was certainly not my reserves of armoury, which consisted of two ice-screws and one diminutive ring-spike—no selection for a crisis. My boots, equally uninspiring, were making one of their final farewell appearances. As with ageing Prima Donnas, money—or the lack of it—was the reason for these repeated performances. Earlier in the day I had been able to waggle my big toe through a large hole in the leather. This had then seemed an amusing party trick but I had now lost the point of the joke and, for all I knew, the point of the toe as well.

Post Horn Gallop shares a common start with the Last Post. From the bed of Easy Gully a 60-foot ice colonnade points the way. A few weeks earlier Carrington and Higgins were so delayed on the Last Post they had to spend a night on the plateau. I could still see a few dimples on an enormous ice bulge probably marking their ascent. Knowing the high calibre of that partnership, I decided to look elsewhere. The alternative was a long horizontal traverse above, across a smear of metallic ice. Every axe blow jarred and the monotonous cutting began to take its toll before I eventually reached easy snow bands above the ice. A few minutes later I ran into company on the South Post.

Earlier, I had seen signs of life in both South and Central Posts and calculated that I must be on 'collision course' with both groups.

Like unsuspecting stags upwind, they seemed completely unaware of my approach, so I had time to decide upon an opening pleasantry that might make my entrance from the wings seem less dramatic or flamboyant.

'Excuse me, can you tell me the time?' I said, with studied nonchalance. The leader glanced down.

'Three o'clock,' he said briefly, and resumed step-cutting.

I was somewhat disconcerted by the lack of interest. Solo climbers don't grow on 1000-foot ice faces. Not even a polite enquiry about my intentions . . . I passed on with deflated ego.

The Centre Post encounter was more encouraging.

'Excuse me, can you tell me the time?'

'To hell with the time, mind my rope! . . . Wait a minute, who the blazes are you?'

I'm just passing by,' I replied chillingly, 'But I'll have to nip up this next pitch before I can get out of your way.'

He was visibly impressed. 'I'll come down and give you a belay, if you want to take over.'

It was a generous offer. He seemed unaware that he had already got up the worst part. I did not enlighten him and made full use of the three ice-peg runners he had already fixed. The last bit was still awkward enough, and I had to use one of my two precious screws to overcome a projecting boss of ice.

'Well done! he cried. 'Now, would you mind giving me a top rope?'

I could hardly object, despite the ominously lengthening shadows, but I was more unhappy when he arrived empty-handed.

'Where's the ice screw?' I demanded. He nodded gloomily towards the gulf.

'They'll never get up without it,' he said. 'We'll post it on to you.'

I forgot to leave my address, and was most surprised to find the screw in the mail a few weeks later. This sort of thing restores one's faith in humanity.

I hurried along towards the North Post trying to make up for lost time, but impetuosity nearly landed me in disaster.

Below the upper ice slopes, the North Post splays out in a lofty canopy, seamed by discontinuous diagonal cracks. I was half way down one of these before I realised I had selected the wrong crack. It is usually simple to reverse a descending move, but this time it was not. I tried once and failed. The second time, as I stepped back, the windslab ledge suddenly heeled off into space and I was left in the posture of a Praying Mantis, crampon points digging into verglassed slabs. It was a moment of high drama—and horror—best contemplated in retrospect. Hanging on by one gloved fist jammed behind some frozen heather roots, I had to extract the small ring spike from my pocket and batter it into the only visible crack.

It went in hesitantly for an inch and seemed to bite. Then the crack went blind. Time was running out, as my supporting hand was rapidly losing sensation. I tied off the ring spike at its base, and somehow threaded the rope, using my teeth and one free hand. I was now faced with a 20 foot diagonal rappel to reach a big ledge on the far edge of the canopy. If I missed it or swung off backwards, I would be spinning in space with little prospect of regaining the cliff face. I didn't spare a thought for the piton. It had to hold and it did.

I arrived in a rush, sinking hands, knees and toes simultaneously into a mound of powder snow. At the same instant the last ice screw came adrift from my waist and dropped silently out of sight. I yanked the double rope, hopefully, to retrieve the ring-spike, but it held firm.

Once teeth-chattering subsided, I set off along an easy boulevard that seemed wide enough to accommodate six old ladies walking abreast. The route unwound easily, across the snow bowl of Stag-horn Gully and round into the crags of the Inner Corrie where the firm crisp snow faced the north wind. I was now on the Last Lap—so far an unknown quantity. I checked out the routes: The Sash, Diadem, Will-of-the-Wisp, Cinderella, The Prow. To look back on the line of steps weaving up and down like a switchback gave a perverse sense of artistry. On Will-of-the-Wisp I met another party and made my stock enquiry about the time; they would obviously have to hurry to avoid bivouacking.

Eventually only the Quasimodo Traverse separated me from the window and 'journey's end,' but on this unfamiliar ground I selected the wrong ledge system, emerging in Crescent Gully below, instead of above, the crux pitch, and also within easy glissading distance of the corrie floor. High above I could pick out the proper line, right out on the edge of nowhere. It was tempting to call off and head for the hostelry, but this would have meant avoiding 'the sting in the tail,' referred to in the guidebook: '*On no account should this pitch be avoided.*' With that sort of recommendation, it would be really nasty. Exercising considerable self discipline I climbed back 300 feet.

The route petered out half-way across an incredibly steep wall; so steep that even in mid-February it held very little snow. There seemed to be no future on that vertical skyline, but the directions were explicit. There would have to be some enormous 'jug-handles' somewhere. I moved gingerly out on to a projecting block which immediately threatened my balance. Groping wildly, I found I could sink my right arm behind the block and start brushing away the snow drapery from the next ledge. All the time I was being nudged off balance by the bulge overhead and survival depended on a succession of unseen Thank God holds.

Even when I learned that all the holds were there I was still

relieved to find a good ledge beyond the corner. I stopped and pulled in the abandoned rucksack. The access route to the Quasi-modo Traverse now comes up from below and offers the last escape from the recommended line, but one takes the honourable path by a long airy traverse almost exactly like the preceding pitch. This unexpected second 'sting in the tail' has been graced with the extraordinary title of Positively 64th Street. I was uncertain what particular hippy significance was attached to the name apart from the author's obvious intentions that it should not be overlooked. Every step brought me a little nearer safety and the corrie floor rising up in welcome.

Quite suddenly it was all over. I had run out of rock and emerged on to broken outcrops and screes overlooking the Window. Learning to walk again was almost too much and I fell flat, slithering head-first down the snow. I scrambled up and yelled exultantly. Fortunately there was no one within earshot and by the time I met the others I had recovered sufficient composure to submit to their back-slapping with measured calm. 'It had been an interesting climb, rather over-rated but still worth a visit. In better snow conditions I could have chopped off another hour. A four hour schedule might be adequate, etc., etc.'

These are enlightened times and this kind of line-shooting kidded nobody, least of all MacArtney. There was an amused glint in his eye 'It's really made your day, hasn't it?' he said.

POSTSCRIPT—When I wrote up this climb, I was not to know it would be the last occasion on which we would all climb together. Less than a year later Jim and Mary Anne died together on Ben Nevis, betrayed by a freak windslab avalanche near the top of the Italian Climb. If I had been writing a memorial for Jim MacArtney I could have selected many better or more appropriate climbs than this one. He had spent a frustrating afternoon under the lens of Cleare's camera and because of repeated delays they had to call it a day not far beyond Apollyon Ledge. In normal circumstances Jim would have been in his usual position, well out in front, but despite the frustrations he enjoyed that day as he enjoyed every other day, wet or fine, that he spent in the mountains, and it was because of his enthusiasm that it became for all of us a day worth remembering. That was the measure of the man.

### Schüss

Startled,  
The snow bites, powders the wake:  
He who was unique  
Has dropped to his blood's delight.

The summit  
Composes its crystal to the moon.  
In the valley town  
Rat's eyes wink together.

G.J.D.

## DUN DA GHAOITHE, MULL

By Roger North

As a restful break in a morning of shopping in Oban it was always a delight to sit by the window in the Station Hotel drawing-room and enjoy the superb view of the panorama presented by the chain of hills behind Craignure on the Isle of Mull. From Dun da Ghaoithe, its highest point, this range runs gracefully westwards up to Sgùrr Dearg whence it descends steeply to meet the watershed separating the glens Forsa and Lussa at Torness. The middle distance in the picture is occupied by the eastern portion of Kerrera Island, displaying admirably the true proportions of the range.

A further attraction afforded by this view lay in the fact that the general outline, and the appearance of the southern slopes bear a strong resemblance to the hills of the N.W. Frontier of India. Seemingly, at this distance, devoid of vegetation I imagined that its surface would be stony and arid with none of the hill streams and small tarns characteristic of the Scottish hills. I liked to people it with a tribal lashkar dressed in their loose grey clothing and moving silently at their liltng gait, resembling as they strode along, the shadow of a cloud passing over a field of hay.

Whenever I contemplated this view the stronger became the urge to closer inspection, and examination of the map suggested that it would be an admirable motive for an afternoon's expedition.

I awaited eagerly the promise of a fine clear day, for to undertake the long journey from Taynuilt under conditions likely to rob me of success would lead to disappointment. Such a day at length arrived and accordingly I sailed for Craignure shortly after mid-day in the month of April, 1961.

Leaving my pack at the inn and arranging accommodation for the night I was soon on my way up the long but easy shoulder which leads direct to the summit ridge. As I gained height the view over the sound broadened; Lismore Island and the coast of Morven became visible, and I could see the little ship in which I had made the crossing steaming steadily for Lochaline on her way to Tobermory.

Once fairly on the hill my suppositions as to its surface proved incorrect. The route lay over rather boggy turf covered in low heather, and in the hollows lay small tarns bordered with cotton grass, spagnum, and Bog Asphodel. Below the final ridge the way is steeper; heather scantier and replaced by patches of short grass with here and there rocky outcrops among which I saw a fine growth of stag's horn moss.

On attaining this ridge it was necessary to go a few hundred yards to the east so as to reach an old cairn of rocks which marks the



summit. Here, on the steep northern flank, lay a large expanse of frozen snow. It is always a satisfaction to cross such a patch; the boots bite into its firm surface, giving one the suggestion of walking across the top of a meringue-covered pie. The foot impressions left upon it may serve as an indication of the route followed should any mishap occur, for though I had reported my probable route and destination I had not had time to arrange for a companion to share the walk.

From Dun da Ghaoithe there is a fine view of the eastern coastline to beyond Salen, and looking to the south east the view over the Cruachan range is magnificent.

Retracing my way to the point at which I had joined the ridge, I saw clearly the next objective, which is the rocky peak of Sgùrr Dearg. The way lies across the rather messy surface of the long shallow saddle which is such a graceful feature of this range, as seen from Oban. A few boundary fences, their iron stanchions firmly embedded in rocks, lie across the route and one ponders on the perseverance and energy applied to their erection when, so many years ago, all necessary material had to be brought from considerable distances by hand or on pony back.

Beyond the saddle the way steepens and follows a rock strewn shoulder needing care in surmounting since the rocks are both slippery and loose. The peak of Sgùrr Dearg is guarded on its east flank by a very steep face of rock some 30 feet high and it is only attainable by means of some fissures and slight foot holds which I had some difficulty in finding and negotiating. Failure to find this key to the peak meant a long traverse to the left over an expanse of rocks, set at all angles and some hundreds of yards in length.

The watershed which marks the end of the walk is directly below the foot of the hill, close to the ruined Torness cottage.

Having accomplished the steep and rather rough descent to Torness I was faced with the long road back to Craginure, a distance of some 10 miles. I was rather apprehensive of this final stage for motor cars are but few on this road towards evening, but I was fortunate in this instance for, having accomplished some five miles, I was offered a lift by the first car that overtook me and I was very thankful to avail myself of this kindness which caused me to reach the inn before darkness fell.

My admiration for the prospect of this range was in no way diminished as a result of my reconnaissance and I am grateful for the accident of fine weather which enabled me to undertake it.



## THE TECHNICAL NORTH FACE OF THE MATTERHORN

By Ian Rowe

IN mid-July Mike Galbraith and I were pecking around the snowy Bregaglia, where ice clung to the V cracks like the hard scabs of winter; thinking that the Matterhorn would be in good condition we moved to Zermatt, and sure enough, there it stood like a big Christmas Tree frosted and glinting and waving its banner in welcome. We got to the Hörnli the same evening.

Leaving there at 2 a.m. we climbed the North Face by the Schmidt Route and returned to the Solvay Hut at about 7 p.m. having worn crampons all of the day. Yet the weather had been suspiciously warm as we had departed so that the edges of the first rimaye were worryingly soft and friable in the darkness. The Ramp, which gives access to the centre of the face, was gained by crossing a second rimaye above the Upper Glacier. This had a bridge which was not obvious at first and was in an advanced state of decay. This obviously presents a considerable problem later in the season which conceivably could be avoided by a traverse from the left.

The Ramp was straightforward step-kicking for 1200 feet until the snow gets thinner and changes to ice as the rocks get nearer. At this point the guide book talks about a rightward-slanting couloir whose right-hand bank should be followed. This feature is obvious but more accurately described as a diagonal fault whose right-hand side merges into the steep angle of the face and whose left-hand wall is the steeper precipice of the rocks above. Thus the left-hand wall protects the climber to some extent from the stonefall from directly above (mostly dislodged in these conditions by tourists on the Hörnligrat), and the right-hand wall could not act in such a way as to channel avalanches, which is what the book says.

The weather was still warm and although Mike had been hit on the knee by a small stone, everything seemed well frozen and safe. We had already caught up with two Swiss who had bivouacked at the top of the Ramp; I could not recommend this, for if the face is to be in condition at all, the Ramp should take only  $1\frac{1}{2}$  hours and any time saving would be negligible. We soon passed them and moved up to a tiny shoulder which marks the end of the 'couloir.' Trending always rightwards we crossed a snow slope and came to the foot of the most difficult section. It was about 1 p.m. There was always some choice about the best line to take at any stage, but here our rightward traverse was barred by steep rock which had to be avoided by a severe and strenuous vertical pitch. Crampons are surprisingly practical to use on this type of rock, and it is certainly

quicker to keep them on. After this the line turned and headed for the summit.

Two upward pitches took us from the cold comforts of the main face and up to the convex summital slope which makes the Matterhorn look as if it were melting and falling over. The snow here was in very bad condition and incapable of bearing weight, so that we had to flay down until crampons struck rock and make insecure and dangerous tip-toeing steps upwards. We had about ten 'this must be the last' pitches like this and we were very tired when we flopped on to the Italian Summit, having followed the Zmuttgrat for about 200 feet. It was about 5 p.m.

Technically, in these good conditions the rock-ice conglomerate is safe and the climbing enjoyable at about Very Difficult to Severe, when it is a sort of rock climb with crampons on. For an impressionistic and less sterile description I would refer to Smith's article on the Nordpfeiler of the Fiescherwand (Goofy's Last Climb, *S.M.C.J.*, 1968, xxix, 11). We seldom felt the need to cut steps or indulge in running belays, even when both of these activities could be performed. Adequate belays can be made with hard steel pitons by smashing them into the shale, a tip also noticed by Haston and Burke on the winter ascent. Safety attained by speed, competence and mutual trust. One for the Salvationists . . .

## A GUIDED TOUR

By Allan Austin

It was dark. Heavy rain was falling as we rattled across the bridge. The light in front glowing in the darkness meant warmth and comfort. Just what I needed. Matie was well ahead owing to the fact that someone had inadvertently left a plank off the bridge and I managed to put my foot on it. The rushing water sounded very near indeed, as I grovelled face down on the boards, nose pressed between the gaps, securely held by the heavy sack which had come to rest on the back of my neck. I sighed; it had been like this all day. I managed to reach a position of verticality without losing my gear over the side and set off in pursuit.

Matie had been ready to start first and with practised smoothness had picked up the torch and gone. I was still bemoaning the unfairness of it all and entirely failed to see the hole in the path down which I slid in the direction of the river. It could have been worse. At least I had stopped short of the water. My feet were still dry. This was soon remedied as I plodded dourly on towards the dancing light. It seemed the path had taken a detour over a small bridge; it felt like a drainage ditch. The light stopped. He was waiting for

me! Maybe he wasn't so bad after all. But it seemed he was only waiting for moral support. He wanted to be two up when we tried for a night's lodging.

A climber lounged in the doorway propping up the doorpost. He was huge. The doorway was completely blocked. At the sight of this great black-visaged giant I resumed my rightful place at the rear; after all, Matie had the torch and anyway he was bigger than me. Then the incredible happened. The black visage cracked in a smile of welcome. A few words from Matie and the giant waved us inside. 'Be my guest,' he boomed. It seemed they had been on a rescue together in Chamonix.

They were just about to eat. There was a pale thin-faced youth with shifty eyes who seemed incapable of telling the truth. There was a stocky short-legged one with strange round eyes. A short tubby one with thinning hair and an easy-going expression, and his brother, irreverently referred to as the 'Old Man.' The evil-looking curry on the table was for all. I was thankful that 'all' did not include me. Even this strange and motley crew were failing. But our friendly giant didn't seem to mind and ate the lot, emptied the dish and finished with the pan. I lost a bet with him and he ate my biscuits. We retired to bed having lost a shilling at cards, two shillings in an electric meter that didn't work, and with the information that a climb called Hee-haw was a good one for wet weather.

We were up late the following day sluicing pots of tea into a team of Scots idlers living it up in bed. A cunning ploy this. We needed a guide to show us the way. Alas, they all had elastic bladders. No amount of persuasion seemed able to move them from their beds. Appeals to their sense of decency, sportsmanship, etc., fell on deaf ears. They all slept. We offered to make their breakfast and at once the big man rolled over. 'Aye,' he announced, 'It's no fair to let ye go on your own; I'll come wi' ye.' He stood up and stretched and decided we needed a fourth member. With an easy, effortless movement he reached a hand under the next bunk and dragged forth a blinking bleary-eyed youth, the short-legged one. We gave them grapefruit, porridge and bacon butties, and even cleared up for them. And finally when they could prevaricate no longer we set forth for the Clachaig.

I should make it clear at this point that we had entertained some doubts as to the usefulness of their recommendations and had decided on Clachaig Gully instead of some nebulous VS we had never heard of.

I stood there aghast. 'That's it,' they assured me, indicating the foaming torrent rushing down the hill. 'That's the way, just follow the burn.' There was a certain amount of confusion when they found out I had no boots, hadn't been able to wear any since last year, the results of a wee miscalculation on a boulder. P.A.'s wouldn't stand up to it, they insisted. Wouldn't stand up to it? They weren't

the only ones. I could see right away that this wasn't the climb for me. I'd made a big mistake coming down here, but there was no point in compounding it. I put on a brave smile. 'Don't bother about me, chaps,' I said, 'You just go on ahead, I can always do it some other time.' 'Och, nae bother at aa,' said the giant, dragging forth a pair of hut slippers from the depths of the van. They were Matie's old kletts, monstrously big with holes in the toes and one sole gaping. 'These'll dae fine.'

I blundered along in the wake of the giant as he ploughed his way up the stream bed, slipping and sliding on invisible boulders and eventually measuring my length in the water. I staggered to my feet to find my finger split across the end and opened out like an unzipped banana. The giant peered at it with interest, snapped it back into place and watched me spew in the burn. By this time Matie and the short-legged one had come back to see what the hold-up was. 'I think you'd better climb with me,' the short-legged one announced, obviously fearing that the giant was too soft. 'Give him the rope.' And a dripping coil of rope was hung about my neck.

He stormed off up the stream, his short sturdy legs pounding the water to foam, while I vainly tried to instil some power into mine to keep up. Eventually he stopped below a particularly difficult waterfall which fell into a deep evil-looking pool. 'We'll put the rope on here,' I breathed a heartfelt sigh of relief. I could just about second it, I thought.

'You'll have nae bother' he announced, pointing to a red shelving wall on the right, 'There's a tree up there you can use as a runner.' The tree, a ridiculously immature sapling, sprouted from a grass sod about halfway up. If I should fall off, the life expectancy of the sapling would most certainly be severely reduced. I crawled up the wall using to the maximum the friction offered by my voluminous ex-army breeches, rounded the unhappy little sapling and slithered across to a handy boulder at the top of the fall. It was all very insecure, but fortunately the rain lashing down on my spectacles effectively blinded me and the depths of the pool remained out of sight. The short-legged one followed without appearing to experience any difficulty and my hopes of fishing him out of the pool remained unfulfilled.

He disappeared upwards through some minor submerged boulder pitches and when eventually I caught him up he was standing on the edge of a pool below a particularly intimidating fall. 'That's the way' he announced, indicating the roaring torrent, which I now perceived was actually a chimney in disguise. I was beginning to suspect that perhaps this man wasn't a friend after all and it was some time before I was persuaded that salvation really did lie in that direction. Matie and the giant had caught up by this time and all three stood in a semi-circle whilst I advanced, somewhat hesitantly,

to battle with the great fall. The only possible way seemed to be to get in there and fight it out. Tentatively I poked my head in, but it was black as night. The weight of water had washed my balaclava down over my face and I was effectively blinded. Back I blundered, arms waving, tripped on an unseen boulder and measured my length in the pool. I surfaced to the sound of hoots of laughter from the ill-mannered throng, which had the effect of dredging up from somewhere a bit of determination. I felt a definite stiffening of my upper lip. Stuffing the offending balaclava into the short-legged one's hand I stormed back into the fray.

Now I had been thinking about it and had decided on a plan. I would climb as far as I could in the water, then lean out backwards, take a couple of gulps of air and plough on. A reasonable enough theory, one would suppose. The moment arrived when I could hold my breath not a second longer, and so in accordance with the plan I headed out for the light and air. There was nothing wrong with the plan. Superman could have managed it, maybe even the giant below; but a bumbling Sassenach? More hoots of laughter as once again I was fished out of the pool.

This was the end. Whose idea was it anyway? I refused to go back into that maelstrom ever again, and indeed insisted that it was the short-legged one's turn. Whereupon he discovered that a little rib just on one side was a 'variation' . . . would I like to try? It was well scratched and about moderate in standard.

It will be appreciated that climbing in such conditions inevitably subjects one's equipment to undue stresses and strains and my braces were showing every sign of falling down on their job. I was reluctant therefore to place further strain on them, but it seemed there was no way out, the only way was up. Fortunately, they showed an unsuspected tenacity to life and though at times I seemed to be climbing with my knees tied together the worst did not happen and I was saved from an embarrassing situation. Eventually in answer to my monotonous request the short-legged one agreed. We could go home, this was the top, we could go no further. Joyously I passed this bit of information down to the next team. The last bit was a boulder pitch and stimulated by the knowledge that he was almost there, Matie came sprinting up in a flying mantlesheff and with a vigorous heave crashed his head against a protruding boulder. This caused great amusement, and in no time at all Matie's face was all shades of red as blood blended with rain to run from his chin in an impressive flow. The two guides disappeared into the gloom chortling and whooping and leaving us to coil the ropes—our ropes, and follow them down.

We totally misjudged both their fitness and our own, however, for in spite of a five minutes' start we must have overtaken them somewhere on the hill, and when eventually I managed to stagger through the bar-room door, I found to my surprise I was the first

arrival. 'I'll hae a wee dram' said the voice from the rear,  
And so help me! It's all true!

[Readers will recognise characters in the above recalling Moriarty, Haston, Smith and the two Marshalls—HON. EDS.]

### The Ballad of Bill Murray

[We print below the true version of this popular pæan, authorised both by the bard and by the legendary personages he celebrates. It should be sung to the tune of *The Ballad of Jesse James*, 'cheerfully, but with dignity.' The prose version, of course, is in *Mountaineering in Scotland*—HON. EDS.]

Oh Bill Murray was a Man who scaled many crags  
In the years before the War;  
It was in the Golden Age that he strode upon the stage  
In those Grand Old Days of Yore.

*Chorus:*

With MACKENZIE, and MACALPINE, and TOM  
MACKINNON, too,  
That Philosophic, Philanthropic Crew,  
They sheltered in the spell of the mighty DOCTOR BELL,  
They were all Good Men and True!

'Twas in the Clachaig Gully that young Murray rose to fame,  
On the slopes of the GREAT CAVE PITCH,  
Where other men had failed, his experience prevailed  
And he crossed that fateful ditch!  
On the WALL OF JERICHO they shouted 'Will it go?'  
As he hung on a 'hair-trigger hold';  
He answered not a word, as he rose like a bird  
Through the Mud and the Slime and the Cold.

*Chorus:*

With MACKENZIE, etc.

In the Gullies of Glencoe they trod the virgin Snow  
With Mackenzie to lead in the van,  
'With Hawk-nose distended, and Blue Eyes flashing Fire . . .'  
He was more of a God than a man!  
They plied their ashen shaft, and applied their native craft  
Standing square, hitting home hard and true;  
They climbed the hardest routes in Tricouni-Studded Boots,  
There was nothing that those heroes couldn't do!

*Chorus:*

With MACKENZIE, etc.

In that Tournament on Ice, death or glory was the Price  
 For those knights in shining armour long ago,  
 It was each man for himself, on the dreaded GARRICK'S SHELF  
 With every handhold buried deep in snow.

There was Green Ice in the chimneys (!) and Blue Ice at the crux (!!)  
 And icicles of every different hue (!!!)  
 Murray did his Devil's Dance, on each microscopic stance,  
 And recorded his impressions of the view.

*Chorus:*

With MACKENZIE, etc.

T. W. PATEY.

## BEFORE THE FLOOD

### The First Motors in Scottish Mountaineering

Civilised communities, sadder and wiser, are now beginning to barricade the remnants of their wild country against the motor car, so that some of it may be left for future, more responsible, generations. Scotland, galloping enthusiastically behind as usual, has now reached the place the others have left, and plans New Roads to exploit 'The Potential of unusable country.' So whilst we numbly await the stink and clatter of monkey-wagons over the Lairig Ghru, and contemplate the present trail of tins and excrement from Kintyre to Cape Wrath, let us look back at a time when the motor was still a servant, and a very raw one at that, scarcely trusted to assist in the established sport of Mountaineering.

Dr W. Inglis Clark, an indefatigably catholic pioneer (his colour photographs in the 1908-9 volume are worth studying) introduced the subject to this *Journal*. He owned an Arrol-Johnston dogcart, S 2, and in *The Motor in Mountaineering* (*S.M.C.J.*, 1903, vii, 313), illustrates how the hitherto remote region of Glencoe (unlike Ben Nevis, not served by rail) was now but half an adventurous day from the cities.

... HAILING as I do from Edinburgh, I have imbibed with its east wind an intense dislike of wasting my not too superabundant energy on the mere walk to or from a mountain, and the advent of a motor car into my peaceful home seemed to open up a new era, when we would drive to the foot of our climb and count the miles between Clachaig and Kingshouse as but dust in the balance. . . .

After much heart-searching regarding the reliability of a motor car for mountaineering, we decided to chance it and make primarily for Kingshouse Inn, later on moving to Clachaig if the roads seemed practicable. But lest any may consider that motor-driving will cause a degenerate race of mountaineers to arise, I would warn them that I have distinctly lost weight as the result of my enterprise. What with dangerous corners and alarmed horses, and the physical



exertion of starting the car as often as, through carelessness, one lets it stop on a hill, motor-driving may be recommended for those troubled with *embonpoint*. Then, perhaps, one of the greatest risks the mountaineer runs is when his petrol won't flow, and the precious hours are lost in trying to find the obnoxious particle of dust which lies low when you are looking for it, and emerges as soon as you start again to shut off your motive power with a malicious cackle. One terrible experience I had, the memory of which well-nigh eclipses the dangers of purely climbing experiences, and which nearly brought the credit of the S.M.C. to naught, and the honorary office of Secretary to shame and confusion. I had fortunately narrowly escaped taking our Editor for a drive in the country, and was hurrying home for dinner . . . when 'the beastie' struck work and refused to go up the slightest hill. It was dour, and no coaxing or drinks of water from a cottage nearby would induce it to move. My experience being but limited, the 'deevil' in the petrol was undetected, and when shades of night came down a sorry nag was procured, harnessed to the car with ropes, and amid the jeers of passers-by I rode into Edinburgh in state. It was past 11 p.m. as we slowly paced through Princes Street . . . Beside such nerve strains as these, the terrors of the Crowberry Ridge and Chasni seem trifling . . .

The 12th of June came at last, the east wind holding a haar in its hand, and at 5 a.m. as we moved out of Edinburgh the distant mountains were shrouded in a pall. True to Salvationist principles, safety before speed, we passed through Stirling at 7 a.m., and soon after 8.30 were enjoying breakfast near Loch Lubnaig . . . On past Crianlarich . . . and now, for the first time did I take in the mountain proportions of Ben Doreann, Stob Ghabhar and the distant Clachlet . . . The Baa Pass, nearly 1500 feet, with its stony pitches made one feel quite anxious, but at last the puffing 'beastie' landed us on the summit, and as we ran down to Kingshouse, grand views of Buachaille Etive greeted us in front . . .

Others, motor-less, were faced to use techniques familiar again to us in days of petrol-rationing:

. . . Raeburn, who had been yacht-racing that afternoon, was to catch the night train for Tyndrum, and cycling thence to Kingshouse, join us at 6 a.m. The weather improved, the clouds cleared away, and at 5.45 a.m. he appeared after his arduous journey to attack the famous Crowberry Ridge . . . A few hours of sleep, and shortly after 10 a.m. we sallied forth in the motor to shorten by a couple of miles our distance from the peak . . .

Soon after this article several other references to motors appeared in the *Journal*, Inglis Clark remarking (*S.M.C.J.*, 1906, ix, 19) ' . . . Edinburgh climbers have a bad reputation in Glasgow, because of their assumed tendency to drive to their climbs.' G. B. Gibbs, however, started from even further afield (*S.M.C.J.*, 1906, ix, 9):





The C.I.C. Hut, Ben Nevis.

*D. J. Bennet.*



*J. Young, S.M.C. Slide Collection.*

The Elephant in Scottish Mountaineering — a reliable, but nowadays less common mode of conveyance, observed in Glen Coe, 1930.

It was not exactly with the lightest of hearts that W. A. Mounsey and the writer left Sunderland at 4 p.m. on 14th July last in a 10-14 h.p. Renault car registered BR 68, and a prospective postal address of Alexandra Hotel, Fort-William . . .

The following mid-day found us calling upon hon. officials in Edinburgh, and nine o'clock at night finishing the day's run at Dalwhinnie, being some miles short of our projected resting place of Loch Laggan Hotel. We got there for lunch next day, 251 miles from home, after a rather exciting interlude at Breakachy, in passing a broken bridge by fording the stream and being bogged in the soft ground on the far side. We had kind assistance and advice from the people of the adjacent houses, one of whom did not 'like to see anyone in distress on the Sabbath' . . .

They made several climbs, but 'the beastie' was temperamental:

BR 68 tried the shore road of Loch Eil in the evening, but found it suffering from repairs [it still is, 63 years later]; moreover, the command of the Chief, 'False wizard, avaunt!' weighing on our minds, we avaunted, and sure enough the wizardly car proved false, and the whole of the next day was spent over 'sorting the magneeto.'

Should it fall to the lot of other Members to be so held up, and a doubt as to there being any current passing, a finger-tip (somebody else's acts best) placed gently on the top of a sparking plug can be recommended as a satisfactory test! Motorists will appreciate our difficulties with incorrect 'spares' from the makers [and still do, 63 years later].

When the car was once more in order the weather changed for the worse.

Next day 'we trussed up our fardels and got' to Kingshouse. It was a fairly exciting time; for on leaving Fort-William we found the horn, in being washed outside, had imbibed about half a pint of water (not 'Long John'), and our brayings to wayfarers were dismal beyond ordinary. Then came a maddened cart-horse with a timid or nervous man in charge; a drain, open nearly the width of the road, accommodated with a one-plank bridge, and then the Ballachulish Ferry. We had investigated the method and the charge (1s. per cwt.) and had screwed up courage to risk the car on an apparently inadequate boat.

The confidence with which the operation was undertaken by the proprietor of Loch Leven Hotel was most reassuring. Two stout planks are placed abeam, resting on the gunwales of the boat; the car is run down and turned crosswise on the slipway by lifting, and then pushed on to the planks which project over the stones from the boat alongside. In our case, the forewheels rested exactly above the one gunwale and the back wheels over the other, being chocked with wooden wedges, but not tied down at all. The state of the tide was favourable, and the row across took about fifteen minutes. The slipway on the south side is not so wide as the one opposite, but the

same tactics reversed saw us landed on the Glencoe road in twenty-five minutes from the start.

There was no Kinlochleven village at that time, and no road round the loch. The 'motorists' had been expected at Kingshouse, and joined the rest for the hill.

The Kingshouse party having departed on their cycles the motorists followed and overtook them, to be overtaken in their turn on the steepest part of the road round a bend past the Study, where BR 68 refused to mount on the loose surface until the baggage had been taken out of her, while a heavy shower and jeering cyclists added to the general joy . . . .

After many ascents, they intrepidly began the trip back:

It was about 3 p.m. when the car was packed and started for the return journey to Sunderland, with the driver only inside, our friends escorting us to the top of the hill . . . . Fortunately no assistance was required by BR 68 and she got over the second rise with equal ease to ourselves, but only to find others 'in distress on the Sabbath.' A motor party from Madrid who had suffered 'something very serious' to their car were quite stranded, so we took one of them some miles on to Inveroran to get horses.

Our further run down Loch Lomond was rather spoiled by heavy showers; arriving at Balloch for the night, the skies cleared as usual.

We had a good run through Glasgow to Lanark and on to Peebles, and as far as Abbotsford when the 'magneeto' failed again, and reaching Wooler at 9 o'clock we stopped for the night. Wet weather followed us next day into Sunderland, by which time we had run almost exactly 760 miles . . . .

Two years later, this courageous pair drove from Sunderland to the Northwest and to Skye (*S.M.C.J.*, 1908, x, 47), and even to Glen Brittle!

. . . . We crossed . . . . Strome Ferry . . . . comfortably, and then to Kyle of Lochalsh where the ferry boat planks are the best seen anywhere. There was no difficulty with the road from Kyleakin as far as the head of Loch Ailort; there we found shore gravel forming the bottom as well as the top dressing of the roadway, and several small streams crossing it had to be bumped through. A little farther and we came to a hill, Druim na Cleoch, where speed was reduced to . . . . about one mile an hour . . . . Had not two young natives of Sconser come up in the nick of time we might have had to leave the car on the roadside for the night . . . . It was the hardest climb we made in our mountaineering holiday.

From Sligachan we went to Glen Brittle twice. The road after Drynoch is 'no very chancy' for a motor car, being narrow, and loose stones (representing repairs) are apt to be sharp, the twisting ruts make steering uneasy and the steep rise on a turf-bottomed road just past 'the elbow' turn crossing a stream, was . . . . rather tough. The several plank bridges looked new and stood our 17 cwt.

all right. The one at 'the elbow' might be difficult for a long car to pass and a heavy one might drop through the bridge close to Glen Brittle House, but that's at the *end* of the journey and one would be *there* right enough.

To go over this glen by car takes about an hour and is a great saving of time and strength, and I suppose gives four hours more in the day for whatever climbs may be in prospect . . . .

. . . . which has been a justification ever since. The fish-lorries have been immortalised by Alastair Borthwick, the J.M.C.S. buses and their like already described (*S.M.C.J.*, 1961, xxvii, 153), but no one has yet been brave enough to delineate the weekending avalanche of mobile bothies that rattle down Highland roads. Some day, perhaps. But let's get a decent distance away from it first.

### Party

The wine is as obligatory  
 As calling my surname.  
 Ah-ha, SMC, you too?  
 Of course, not as much as . . . .  
 I used too . . . .  
 This guilty wine,  
 Definitely the last before . . . .  
 Nowadays, nothing serious,  
 Cemping mostly. Squirrels? Oh  
 Yes  
 Well I . . . . young chaps today.  
 I remember Upper Zimmerdine, we  
 Used too; good advice, old Hermann . . . .  
 Dead now of course . . . .

Another, at the tap.  
 Auld John?  
 Wan o the best;  
 See him?  
 Coorse, yung fellies good tae . . . .  
 We didnie hae a' that,  
 Wouldnie know how tee use it . . . .  
 No sayin thurr worse minjae  
 Wir aa the same . . . .  
 As long as yi get away the weekends  
 Ken?

I.G.R.

## PEAKS OF THE FAR NORTH

By R. J. Jolly

THE reason for writing this article is to introduce the more adventurous climber to one of the more remote and most 'under-developed' rock climbing areas on the Scottish mainland. The area is that of the north coast of Sutherland and includes Ben Loyal, Ben Hope, and Foinaven. There are many miles of crags in the area with very few of their natural lines climbed. For virgin rock most of the faces are surprisingly clean and sound, with new routes waiting at every grade.

Ben Loyal, often referred to as the 'Queen of Scottish Peaks,' is situated a few miles south of the picturesque village of Tongue. From Tongue access to the mountain may be made by way of the Durness road and either turning off along the Ribigill Farm track or continuing a further two miles and using the pull-in before the steep descent to Kinloch Lodge. On the Tongue-Altnaharra road use the pull-in by Loch Craggie. Approaching the mountain from the Ribigill-Cunside track one gets a magnificent view of the 1000-foot north face of Sgòr Chaonasaid. On closer examination one finds the lower 500-feet disappointingly broken and vegetated; however, the upper section is clean and continuous, being divided by a prominent grassy rake. As far as I know the crag to the right of the rake is unclimbed whilst the buttress to the left has been climbed by a zig-zag route on very sound rock. There are many possibilities on this buttress. The rock is syenite, not unlike granite, and is excellent for the friction-type moves one has to do on these crags.

Sgòr a' Bhàtain is the next peak along the ridge with summit crags 200 feet high. There are a few routes on this crag which have accounted for some of the natural lines but there is potential for many more routes. An Caisteal, the Castle, has similar type of crags and is at a similar state of development. These two summit crags provide some easier climbing whereas the big faces of Sgòr Chaonasaid and Sgòr a' Chleirich offer nothing easier than routes of about mild VS standard.

The five-star crag of this mountain is the west face of Sgòr a' Chleirich, Priest's Scar, which overlooks Loch Fhionnaich. It is about 800 feet high and offers great possibilities for some very long and hard routes. To my knowledge there are only two routes on this crag, both VS, and one is over 900 feet long. I would rate the potential of this crag to that of some other recently developed hard crags, e.g., Càrn More and Shelter Stone Crag.

Although Ben Loyal can offer unlimited scope for rock climbing the winter climbing is very poor as the mountain neither holds snow nor gets a reasonable build-up of ice.

Ben Hope, the next mountain west, is completely different in geology and nature from that of Ben Loyal. The rock is Moine schist and is generally sound and clean on the higher rock walls of the mountain. The first recorded routes were made by Glover, Ling, and Bell on the north-west end of the mountain and are mentioned in the 1936 edition of the *Northern Highlands Guide*. The crags continue a mile down the western flank in a complex system of buttresses and gullies. Generally the buttresses provide very broken climbing but most of the gullies open out into large amphitheatres whose walls seem to offer considerable scope for the future. However it is at the southern end of the crags that the rock climbing interest is now centred, with an initial Hard Severe route completed last autumn.

During the winter the mountain really comes into its own; the gullies get a good ice build-up and there are several ice pitches continuous for over 200 feet. The big Central Gully on the western flank gives a grand day out, the main ice pitch being about 200 feet and there are usually several minor pitches. On the majority of the winter routes the main difficulties can be avoided and there is little sense of commitment. Most of the gullies have been climbed in winter but very little has been done on the buttresses.

For access to the crags use the pull-in where the road passes close to Loch Hope, then follow the north side of the small burn flowing from the terrace lochan, Dubh-loch na Beinne. Alternatively park a mile and a half further south, at the old Cashel Dhu turn-off, and then ascend the break in the roadside crags to gain the terrace.

Foinaven lies west of Ben Hope and by northern standards is at a very advanced state of 'development.' Having several miles of climbable crags this mountain and surrounding area can boast about three dozen recorded routes and has been the subject of an *interim* guide. Since Park and Tranter's guide was published in 1966 other routes have steadily been added and it would seem that the book itself has stimulated the development of the crags in the Foinaven region.

## PEAKS OF THE FARTHEST NORTH

### Three Reports (and an Echo) from Greenland

As Scottish hills become more crowded and familiar, S.M.C. members, and Scottish climbers generally, migrate even further north, Greenland has always been popular, as past issues of this *Journal* attest; we print below extracts from, or summaries of, three expedition reports received this year. They were very different in climate and character, and we hope their individual flavour has not too much evaporated on condensation. As perhaps a contrast, we conclude with the personal narrative of a ranker in one of these expeditions.

### University of St. Andrews Expedition 1969 Upernivik Island, West Greenland

THIS was the ninth expedition from the University since the early fifties. It was the third to have the adventurous travel and exploration of an unknown corner of the world as its prime object and to have its scientific programme in a minor role. It was the fourth to visit the Umanak region and it was one of the most successful ventures of them all.

The success is to be measured by the fact that the number of mountains climbed was twice the number climbed by any previous St. Andrews party (or by any other expedition for that matter), while at the same time a greater area of unknown country was explored by land and sea, a useful scientific programme was accomplished, and our University's association with the local people was strengthened. Our success was due to the facilities provided by the Scottish Universities Hut and the Carnegie motor boat based at the village of Iglorssuit on Ubekendt Island, and to the best summer weather for several years: a combination which permitted the expedition members to travel freely along the fjords and coastline and to exploit fully the climbing and exploratory opportunities provided by several different localities.

The expedition left Scotland in late June, sailing from Newcastle to Esjberg in Denmark, and then flying in a normal-scheduled commercial S.A.S. flight from Copenhagen to Sondre Stromfjord in West Greenland. A four-day boat journey up the coast in the *m/v Disko* brought us to the town of Umanak, and gave us our last travel on a regular service. At Umanak there was a week's delay until a suitable boat was available to transfer all the members with their forty crates of equipment and food to the main base at Iglorssuit fifty miles away. The delay gave us an opportunity to try and climb the impressive double-towered rock peak overlooking the town. This peak had not been climbed since the first ascent by two Germans in 1929 although other parties passing through Umanak had tried it unsuccessfully. All members reached its summit at one time or another, not only repeating the German route but making three new routes of much higher quality and difficulty in the process. These early successes gave the expedition its impetus and confidence when it reached its objectives on Upernivik Island.

Our main base at the Carnegie hut was reached just two weeks after leaving Scotland. We travelled to it after several false starts in a small general purpose boat, *Ujarak*, which then helpfully took us across the ten miles of sea to a chosen site for our basecamp on the west coast of Upernivik Island. The site was close to the main glacier which gave access into the centre of the island, and by using the motor boat we had the other glaciers of the Upernivik Island,



the neighbouring islands and peninsulae, and our main base within easy reach always. It was at this time, just when it was needed, that the fine weather of summer set in and which was to last with only minor traces of bad weather until our departure in late August.

We split first into two groups, one to go to the northern glaciers and the other to revisit the centre of the island. Both groups climbed extensively during a hectic two weeks, always expecting the weather to break and so utilising every available day for either attempting a new mountain or shifting camp up the glacier. A brief spell of cloudy weather with light snow ended with an icy wind off the Inland Ice to whip the fresh snow from the ridges but we were out on the peaks at this first improvement in conditions. The northern group finished with a mammoth return trip along a nine-mile glacier followed by a trek along the shore to collect the boat and a final voyage down the coast to the basecamp.

The third week gave the ascent of the west ridge of Qioqe. This ridge had been one of the objectives of the 1967 expedition but had been out of condition then under new snow. This year the climbing ability of a party at its maximum of fitness and keenness and the good weather allowed a serious attempt to be made on its problems. Qioqe possesses a great smooth slabby north face and a sheer west wall and between these features there is the long sigmoidal west ridge rising to a slender spire close to the summit of the peak. A party of six spent forty-eight hours on this mountain. For twenty-four hours they were climbing continuously on three ropes along a 5000-foot long ridge on excellent rock to give the longest, hardest and most sustained rock climb yet tackled by a St. Andrews party. This route is at present the hardest rock route in Greenland.

The second half of the expedition was spent in a variety of activities. Climbing was done in the two most southern glacier systems. A combined boat voyage and canoe trip was carried out through the islands and shores of Karrats Isfjord. Glaciological work was pursued on Sermikavsak glacier. A small expedition was made to Svartenhuk peninsula, a gentle land in marked contrast to the rocky terrain of Upernivik Island.

Late in August we returned to the main base at Iglorssuit to find that, since the m.v. *Disko* had been damaged in a collision with an iceberg, our departure from Umanak was to be delayed for a week, and knowing the vagaries of Greenland travel this could have lengthened and in fact would have lengthened into several weeks. Fortunately our friendly *Ujarak* was loading dried codfish at Iglorssuit, and with some persuasion, we sailed on board to Umanak. After further goodwill on both sides, we sailed further down the coast to Eghedsminde, and then once more we were carried onwards to Holsteinborg. Here with little chance of a helicopter or a fishing boat, and not too keen on a marathon cross-country walk, we managed to get the local police boat to take us to Sondre Stromfjord

so that on time we caught the S.A.S. flight back to Copenhagen, and then in sequence the connections back to Scotland.

The members of the expedition were: Dr P. W. F. Gribbon, leader, W. J. A. Tauber, W. T. Band, J. M. McDowall, J. N. Ross, D. M. Kirkland, K. F. Avery, J. S. Shade, M. D. Heller, A. T. A. Stevenson, P. Biggar.

The cost was about £2,500.

A record number of mountains were climbed by the expedition members. Some were remarkably fine rock peaks. Many gave mixed rock and snow routes, a few a good hill walk. Forty peaks were climbed, seventeen being first ascents. Most were traversed, and most ascents of previously climbed peaks were by new routes. Following the Alpine system of grading, the number of peaks in the different grades was: 1 *E.D.*, 2 *T.D.*, 3 *D.*, 11 *A.D.*, 14 *P.D.*, 11 *F.*

The motor boat logged well over 250 miles in about twenty-five separate voyages. In good sea conditions it was capable of transporting six people with a week's supply of food and equipment, and with the simultaneous use of the two double folding canoes the whole expedition could be transported at the same time. Canoe journeys logged over 100 miles. The freedom and integration with the land that these canoes offered was much appreciated.

The scientific programme was subsidiary to the adventurous travel and exploration, and was designed to fit in with the interests and qualifications of the members. Work was carried out on geophysics, glaciology, botany and zoology.

### International Mount Mikkelsen Expedition 1969

EJNAR Mikkelsens Fjeld lies inland from the Blosseville coast of East Greenland, and is the highest unclimbed group of mountains in the arctic. The expedition's main objective was to make the first ascent of the highest (10,700 ft) summit of the group.

There were two possible methods of approach: a journey of 75 miles over the ice-cap from the head of Gaase Fjord (Scoresby Sund) or a 200-mile coastal journey to Grivel Bay, from Scoresby Sund settlement, followed by a 25-mile ascent inland. A coastal approach was decided on because it offered greater general interest and a better opportunity for picking up scientific material than is usual in a mobile expedition. The coast, however, is steep and heavily protected by pack ice, and rendered dangerous to shipping of all sizes by numerous glaciers that calve into the sea, and the scarcity of anchorages. The northern portion of the coast between latitude 68°2'N and lat. 70°0'N has therefore been visited in summer only thrice in modern times: by Amdrup in the course of his famous open

boat journey in 1900, by Captain Mikkelsen in 1932 in the Sealer *Sokong*, and near Kap Brewster by a Danish survey party in 1967. An Italian expedition made certain excursions in the Savoia peninsula in 1934. Though the outline of the coast was known the detail was scanty. No botanist had been there since Degerbol in 1932, although the region is botanically interesting and bridges the high and low arctic areas.

For a coastal journey clearly a large vessel would give maximum chance of gaining Grivel Bay, but the cost was far beyond the expedition budget. It was therefore decided to emulate Amdrup, using a light 16-ft. open boat powered by an outboard engine.

In the opinion of the Greenland Technical Department, the pack ice would not permit navigation much before the end of July. The expedition planned to leave Scoresby Sund on the 29th July, taking 35 days for the return journey. Due to the risk of fresh ice in the autumn, the return had to be complete by early September.

The expedition was led by Dr Malcolm Slessor; the two other members from Scotland, Dr Iain Smart and Mr Allan Pettit, had also arctic experience, but in this field none could compare with the fourth member, Major Carlos Ziebell of the Danish army, who had spent seven winters and twelve summers in Greenland, and who in winter had sledged as far south as Kap Dalton, half way along the route.

Some 1,600 kg would have to be taken across Scoresby Sund to Kap Brewster, where an emergency wintering depot would be set up. Thereafter, approximately 1,200 kg would be taken on, diminishing daily. Since the weight of fuel could be crucial, a low horse power engine was desirable. Thus the boat selected was an open dinghy of 16½ feet, clinker built in N. Norway and powered by a 5.5 h.p. Evinrude gear-change outboard engine. It could carry 1,000 kg reasonably safely. For additional supplies and safety a second-hand Avon Redshank rubber dinghy was taken, with a 4.5 h.p. Crescent engine of great economy.

Depots were laid so that if the boats were damaged the party could walk out to Kap Brewster settlement, and winter there until Scoresby Sund was sufficiently frozen to walk over to the settlement.

Food and equipment assembled and packed in Scotland was dispatched to Copenhagen for onward shipment to Scoresby Sund by the first summer ship, which arrived on 14th July.

Major Ziebell reached Mestersvig in early July, and obtained a helicopter lift to Gurreholm in inner Scoresby Sund. From here he made a solo 8-day walk down the coast of Jameson Land to Kap Stewart, where he remained three days without food till he attracted the attention of Eskimos at Kap Hope settlement, who then fetched him by boat. At Scoresby Sund settlement he obtained the equipment, and prepared it. The expedition left as soon as the Scottish party arrived.

## DIARY OF PRINCIPAL EVENTS

30TH JUNE: Major Ziebell leaves Denmark. 19TH JULY: Major Ziebell arrives Scoresby Sund. 28TH JULY: Main party leaves Glasgow Airport. 2ND AUGUST: After five days delay due to storms in Greenland arrive in Scoresby Sund after flight up Blossville coast. Much ice, and even Scoresby Sund itself ice-filled. Obviously a late season.

3RD AUGUST: Mid-day. Depart for Kap Brewster via Kap Hope. 4TH AUGUST: Reach Kap Stewart after failing to find way through pack ice. In evening depart for second attempt at crossing. 5TH AUGUST: After sixteen hours on fjord, some on an ice floe, gain a moraine spit on south shore of Scoresby Sund. Storm. 7TH AUGUST: Deposit surplus supplies at Eskimo outpost near Kap Brewster. 8TH AUGUST: Round Kap Brewster and gain Kap Russel where high winds force emergency landing. Unable to take boat out of water due to ocean swell.

12TH AUGUST: After four days of winds up to force 9, choose a calmer moment to reach Paul Fjord. Too rough to travel further. Sea temperature +1°C. 14TH AUGUST: Ascent of Mt. Edzell (1288m). First ascent. 15TH AUGUST: In rapidly improving weather make 50 miles down coast to Turner channel. Repulsed by ice jam, and try route round outside of Turner Island. Repulsed again. Camp on Turner Island. 16TH AUGUST: Further attempt to round Turner Island. Sea temperature -1°C. Gained Lat. 69°08'N Long. 23°30'W. Hopelessly dense pack ice all the way to Henry Land. Kap Dalton sighted. Waited tide cycle, and then returned to Turner Sound. Then returned to Turner Channel.

18TH AUGUST: Penetrate inland and ascend 1480m peak in Stenos glacier region. Never before explored. 19TH AUGUST: Turner Channel clears and expedition heads for Henry Land. Examination of possible Eskimo site reveal five winter houses, two in good condition. New find. Name it Strathclyde Point. Nearby hot spring. New find. Most northerly *Plantanthera hyperborea* found in E. Greenland. 20TH AUGUST: Henry Land (head Rømer Fjord). First non-Eskimo visitors. Evidence of musk ox and reindeer. Pettit climbs Mt. Guthrie (1400m).

20TH AUGUST: Evening. With no time and no hope of further southward passage, expedition turns for Scoresby Sund. Finds new hot spring in outer Rømer Fjord on Henry Land. 21ST AUGUST: Find Eskimo tent ring at Turner Channel. New find. 23RD AUGUST: Regain Kap Brewster settlement as storm develops. 27TH AUGUST: Storm abates. Depart across Scoresby Sund for Main settlement. Arrive same day. Ziebell takes ship for Denmark. Samples and main equipment sent home, by ship.

28TH AUGUST: Depart for Gurreholm (100 miles) by expedition boat. 29TH AUGUST: Arrive Gurreholm. 30TH AUGUST: Beach boat and make ready for winter. Also depot supplies for 1970 Dundee University expedition, the new owners of boat. 31ST AUGUST: Leave Gurreholm to walk to Mestersvig (94 miles). 5TH SEPTEMBER: Arrive Mestersvig. 8TH SEPTEMBER: Leave Greenland on Scott Polar Research Institute plane, and arrive Scotland same day.

So the main peak was not even seen, far less ascended! However, Rømer Fjord was visited for the first time by Europeans and three virgin peaks were ascended. Cost was £1,387.

The summer of 1969 was the worst in living memory in East Greenland. Even in that Arctic Riviera, Mestersvig, there was rain on half the days in July and August. High winds, rare in these parts, were common. The problem of coastal navigation was increased by dense pack ice; then, after windy spells, absence of ice

together with heavy ocean swell. During the 24 days out of Scoresby Sund only 5 were suitable for coastal travel, and during them the party made great distances quite easily.

The distance gained southwards was approximately 80 miles though the expedition sailed 375 miles. Thus a great deal of coastal territory was examined. The long periods tied to shore were spent in botanical surveys and searches for remains, artifacts, and beach-combing; all with rewarding results.

A journey in a boat of this size will always be dangerous. In a good year it is probably practicable, but any party will have to run the risk of not getting the boat out. This party had too many commitments at home to run that risk too far. The best opportunity for ascending Mt. Mikkelsen would seem to be by a Spring sledging trip, and this is now under active organisation by Mr Pettit, for Spring 1971.

(An article by Dr Smart elsewhere in this issue affords a more subjective glimpse of this expedition).

### Dundee University Scoresby Land Expedition, 1968

THIS expedition grew round a nucleus of students concerned with glacier-hatching in Garbh Choire Mòr (see *S.M.C.J.*, 1967, xxviii, 273). Members were Dr I. H. M. Smart (leader), Dr C. R. Allen, Messrs. J. Carvell, B. Dodson, B. Heywood, R. O'Brien, A. Pettit and A. Runcie. This party operated in 'the remote southern fastnesses' of the South Stauning Alps. A second party, largely from Dundee city or university, arrived later by Slessair—J. Watson, Dr Kathleen Watson, Dr D. Bethell, Pauline Topham (Scottish Horticultural Research Institute) and George and Irene Waterston of the Scottish Ornithologists' Club; they worked between Ant-arctics Havn and Mestersvig, and contributed to the Official Report, a refreshingly unconventional production. Various other S.M.C. members or families were also climbing or canoeing in the neighbourhood.

Objects reported on were pingos, glacier exploration, botany, zoology, egg-measuring and base-preparing for the next visit. Regrettably, space allows only a few quotations. What, for instance, are pingos?

'Pingos are conical hills of heaved bedrock or recent deposits cored with massive lenses of injection ice, and are probably among the most striking morphological features of permafrost terrain.'

On the Arctic Environment: 'When the population density is at the maximum the land will support, minor transient climatic accidents can decimate animal populations and leave the survivors

at subsistence level. This fundamental law of biology seen so clearly in the Arctic is of more than academic interest. Politicians, economists and town planners appear to be dedicated to planning the economy of their countries to take the maximum number of people that the resources will allow. This will produce an arctic type of situation with the same penalties. On future expeditions we hope to take along a few embryo politicians and planners, who on their return will do missionary work among their dangerously ignorant brethren.'

From 'Notes on Mammals': 'Musk Ox (*Ovibos moschatus*). A lugubrious animal common in Scoresby Land . . . Solitary bulls can be troublesome to foot travellers. The Danish sledge patrol regards the musk ox as more of a danger than the polar bear. Certainly, the only potentially dangerous encounter the expedition had with Greenland wild-life was when a solitary musk ox charged a camp. It was halted in its tracks by the expedition members imitating the howls of the polar wolf, now extinct but previously the musk ox's hereditary enemy. Presumably the performance awakened ancestral memories in the animal's mind. The series of trials of this musk ox repellent is too small for any judgment on its general reliability.'

From Equipment Report: 'Two kinds of pack frames were used: ex-Army aluminium griddle frames were uncomfortable but strong and durable. B.B. Tripex frames were very uncomfortable and . . . frail. Fractures of tubes and rivets, tearing of straps and sacs, occurred; only 1 frame out of 4 returned to Scotland . . . They were a serious error . . . The best innovation of the expedition was the use of four 36" x 20" plastic sledges in which six extra holes were bored for lashings. They were used to tow loads of up to 40 lb. on glaciers, and their resistance to stone-studded ice and brutal handling was amazing. They weighed a little over 2 lb. each and were well worth carrying; the difference between backpacking 75 lb. and carrying 40-and-towing-35 has to be felt to be believed. They were used for some 60 miles, and will last out a second expedition.'

#### A brief diary of the exploration party

JULY 7TH: Depart Mestersvig by lorry to disused mine at Blyklippen. Walk to Sorte Hjerne hut in Delta Dal (5 hr.). 8TH: Cross Mellom Pass to Malmbjerg mine (12 hr.). 9TH: Bad weather. 10TH: From Malmbjerg descend Schuchert Glacier, cross Sirius Glacier, struggle through moraines to tundra west of Schuchert, then to Lomse hut (12 hr.). 11TH-27TH: Work on pingo project east of Schuchert. 21ST-28TH: Advance party reconnoitre Gannochy Glacier, climb 12 peaks, find route into Roslin system. 28TH: Gannochy party return to Schuchert and pingo party. D. dislocates shoulder crossing river. 29TH-31ST: S. & P. to Mestersvig, D. & R. (both injured) to Sorte Hjerne. JULY 30TH-AUGUST 4TH: H. & O. relay supplies from Gate of Gannochy to Nevis camp. AUGUST 5TH: H., O. & C. ascend Dudhope. 6TH: P. & A. arrive from Mestersvig. 7TH-8TH: Supplies relayed up Gannochy to Eagle's Eyrie. 9TH: P., C., O. & H. ascend Bonar Bjerg from Nevis camp. 10TH: Camp to Eagle's Eyrie. 11TH: Courier Col crossed by P., H. & O.; Wedge Peak climbed. 12TH-17TH, H.

& O. take C. over Mellom Pass, on way home to re-sit examinations : 13TH: Ascent again of Wedge Peak. 14TH: Camp on Dalmore Glacier. 15TH: Ascent of Pinnacle Peak. 16TH-20TH: Snowbound. 21ST-29TH: Retreat in bad weather and rest at Malmbjerg. S. brings boat from airstrip to Kinlochmestersvig. 25TH: Cross Mellom Pass to Sorte Hjerne. 26TH: P. & H. boat load to airstrip. Others walk.

The expedition cost £1,838; great economy was due to sharing a large charter plane with other expeditions. £170 for 55 minutes of helicopter hire saved 112 man-days, and was well spent.

## The Sinister Coast

By I. H. M. Smart

SHORTLY after our arrival in the settlement of Scoresby Sound on the north side of the biggest fjord in the world, an immaculately-dressed Eskimo with a very expensive single-lens reflex camera slung round his neck came up to us and, with some amusement, took a photograph of the well-known explorer, Dr Slesser, as he was prising open the lid of a tea chest with an ice axe. Taking no further notice of the celebrated visitor, he chatted urbanely for a moment with a fellow-citizen, and then departed on a more important errand, leaving Dr Slesser breathing heavily. This episode was the highlight of our attempt to climb Mount Mikkelsen, a 10,800-foot peak situated on a particularly inaccessible part of the East Greenland coast, 200 miles to the south of us and half way to the next habitation. The Blosserville coast, by virtue of its barrier of unpredictably moving pack ice, has seldom been visited even in recent years. The plan was to navigate southwards with a small party in a small boat using small shore leads to bypass ice-jammed bays or headlands. With good luck the return journey, including the 25-mile march inland to Mount Mikkelsen, could be done in 30 days or so.

The boat was manned by our leader, the perfunctorily-photographed Dr Slesser alluded to in the opening paragraph, and Carlos Ziebell, a Dane with long years of experience in the Greenland sledge patrol, a remarkable character and fine companion. Allan Pettit, a trendy dentist from Brechin, and myself formed the crew. We did what we were told and were frequently upbraided for minor displays of initiative. Pettit took refuge in prolonged sleep and I became a keen botanist.

The 25-mile crossing of Scoresby Sound was made about the 3rd/4th August. Two-thirds of the way across, just as we were clear of the pack ice, the sea grew gurdy and a steady drizzle set in. We caught up with a piece of ice about an acre in area, pulled up the boat and camped for some hours. The floe was travelling eastwards



with the tide parallel to the Voiquart Boon coast. The steep glacier fronts and mist-shrouded buttresses of this grim shore watched speculatively as we drifted by. Eventually some scattered pack ice approached and we darted from the lee side of one piece to another until we were opposite the Cape Brewster settlement where three families of Greenlanders lived. We tried to work our way in but the pack thickened, and we were beset. Camping was again suggested until we saw that we were being carried by the tide past the Greenlanders' houses, now visible about a mile away, out into the open coast at a speed of 5 knots or so. Next stop Amgmagssalik; good copy for *The Scotsman* and a cert for the 'National Geographic,' but not worth the risk. A hurried withdrawal through the narrowing leads took us to the edge of the shore pack, and we beat westwards back into the sound for a few hours until finally we made a landing on an arm of shingle which formed a small natural harbour below the steep moraines of glaciers discharging into the sea on either side. It rained for two days. Icebergs proceeded occasionally into and out of the mist, and thousands of black and white little-auks flew to and fro their nesting colonies in the cliffs above us. The troll-like crooning from these buttresses added a final touch to the superb melancholy.

Eventually the sun came back, and we left on a morning of unflawed calm and brilliance. We passed an hour with the Greenlanders and then rounded the cliffs of Cape Brewster in a spanking breeze, only to be storm-bound on a rocky peninsula for days while the wind battered us unceasingly. The tents collapsed at intervals. Flowers were blown from the botanist's hands and had to be pursued at a gallop. Seawards, the pack lurked several miles offshore, a thin line edging the wind-dark sea; southwards, blue headlands receded into an unknown distance. 'We are getting weak,' announced Carlos one day, 'We need fresh meat.' Wandering the wind-swept plateaus behind the camp, gun on shoulder, eventually produced a hare, which Carlos stewed to perfection.

Perhaps a week later the wind dropped, and we got under way and made about 50 miles of southing. At one time we encountered a walrus snoozing on a piece of ice. Carlos, who had shot many walrus, ordered us straight for it to get good photographs. The rest of us, who had read about the ill nature of these creatures, wished to go full astern. There were a few minutes of heated discussion, not to say shouting, while the boat zig-zagged, unsure of its direction but lured ever nearer to the unattractive beast. Before we got too close, the walrus lurched down and swam off disdainfully to a part of the coast less frequented by trippers, where it could sleep in peace. Carlos upbraided us for our lack of fibre in a photographically-interesting situation. Towards the end of this day of movement our progress was stopped by an ice jam between the mountainous Turner Island and the mainland. We tried to go round the outside of the



island but were again stopped by ice which had moved in silently from the sea. We camped in a troll-haunted valley and next day moved round the island again along a series of shore-leads until stopped by dense pack, whose only weakness was some seductive leads running for an inadequate distance into the 15 miles of ice which lay between us and the frowning coast opposite. We climbed on to a ledge on the cliffs looking southwards while the ice breathed gently against the shore. 'If you wish to get to Cape Dalton you must follow these leads' declared Carlos. 'But, Carlos, how do we get back?' 'BACK?' said Carlos, baffled by such a suggestion from men who, in spite of the walrus episode, he had believed to be as steadfast as himself. We dithered a little, posturing on the rocks Pizarro-like, gazing to the distant Cape Dalton where the real unknown began. The pack held its breath. Carlos leant against the cliff, smoking and looking southward over the expectant ice. For a party that did not wish to risk wintering, or worse, there was nothing to do but return. The pack sighed. We went back to Turner Channel to await developments, disturbing once more the outraged walrus, this time asleep on a sand-bank.

Three days, travelling light, were spent climbing a mediocre mountain 10 miles from the sea in an abrasive wind. The indifference of the immense inland glaciers contrasted well with the sinister feline patience of the pack ice. Then back to the coast. Next morning we were awakened by the sound of Ziebell roaring 'Slessen, you are sleeping again!' Carlos, who shared a tent with the leader, had a habit of waking early and entertaining him with long tales of derring-do for a couple of hours before breakfast, and found the inability of his companion to keep his eyelids open very irritating. An early rise was justified, for that day we managed to make a few miles south into Rømer Fjord, which turned out to be a place of charm, the daffodil among the skulls. On a sunlit flower-covered promontory lay a few stone huts, left by some long-extinct Eskimos. Further on, hot springs bubbled improbably, and mosses and vascular plants grew in water uncomfortably hot for the hand. In the moss close by grew a dozen of the most northerly orchids on the east coast of Greenland.

Heavy ice still blocked the outer coast. We now had to extricate ourselves from the trap. At a touching ceremony by the shore of the Arctic Sea the expedition was re-named the 'Rømer Fjord Expedition,' and thus became one hundred per cent successful. Mount Mikkelsen can be reached by this route, but it requires good weather and good luck as well as a willingness to trust the uneasy unpredictable ice which measures time in a way unfamiliar to the visitor from our urban jungles.

Four days later we reached Cape Brewster again after an encounter with two (some say three) polar bears, one of which was uncharacteristically climbing a hill. Once round the cape spirits

rose, the last whisky bottle was drunk and Carlos bellowed Jutlandic songs as he stood in the stern, feet bracing the tiller, his habitual pose. Within half an hour of our arrival at the Greenlanders' houses a 4-day blizzard struck. Life with the Greenlanders over this time was very pleasant. Our host shot passing birds out of the living-room window and when sufficient had accumulated we picked them up and ate them. After the blizzard we dodged across Scoresby Sound before the weather noticed, said goodbye to Carlos—who returned to Denmark by sea—and started on the final 100-mile boat journey into the inner sound, one day heading into driving snow and the next sculling between the bergs in bright sunshine on a mirror-smooth sea while the primus purred and a can of soup sent up clouds of steam just like a real liner. Leaving the boat in the inner fjord for the next year's Dundee University party, we wound up with a 100-mile walk to Mestersvig and returned to Scotland after an absence of 42 days.

## CREAG AN DUBH LOCH A LA CARTE

(A Gourmet's Diary)

By J. Grieve

FRIDAY NIGHT. Farewell Glencoe, we are Dubh Loch-bound—four up in the Cloughmobile; the *A* team Hardie-Clough, the *B* team Fyffe-Grieve. An uneventful journey relieved only by four near-disasters: just missing a stray cow doing sixty-five (van, not cow), nearly being blasted off the road by the afterburn of an overtaking E-typed MacInnes, reaching the bar only one minute before the fateful hour, and arriving at Ballater's centre of *haute cuisine* just as the last fish suppers were being wrapped. So far, the gods are kind. The walk in with a week's food and gear was purgatory, the campsite idyllic.

SATURDAY. Bacon and eggs and 1200 feet of slab-padding. The *A* team is knocking at the front door for breakfast, and I look through the flaps at Fyffe's Mecca, startled by the surrounding granite. On the left a long-necked Dinosaur lies back at ease in the sun, a Giant keeks wickedly round gully walls, and the big King Rat regally surveys his steep dominions. Earlier, Fyffe's eyes had waxed large as he lovingly spoke of The Dwarfie (self-identification?) that half-finished MacArtney line a little uphill from The Giant. Now he's off up Central Gully to guard the approach slab, for others are about. Then an awesome cry echoes down the walls, followed by a useful stream of invective I never thought the little man was

capable of. Halfway up 'our' route hang Rennie and Findlay from Aberdeen, posing for a MacInnes who needs good photies for his book.

A pathetic figure returns, trailing his rope, muttering about a line on the big slabs alongside Blue Max, twice as long as, and much better than, The Dwarfie anyway. Hamish, the big H, now has the stage set, with his characters deployed over the crag. A real bonanza day: Hunter and Lang are on a vicious line right of False Gully (Bannockburn), Mike Rennie is almost up his route—a great line named Goliath, the *A* team is slowly fighting up very unlikely rock between Giant and False Gully, and *B* team is now well up a direct route on the slabs right of Blue Max (Black Mamba). All this activity is rudely interrupted when I send down a massive rock, with *H.M.* chiselled on it, to explode on the roof of the doss, and so nearly make that book a posthumous publication.

On the way down we shout abuse at the *A* team still halfway up the cliff . . . Belly Pork and Tatties.

SUNDAY. Belly Pork and Eggs and the Royal Rodent. Woken up again by the *A* team just returned from a cold perch to devour their large cooked chicken. MacInnes wants some photos of King Rat, and *B* team is persuaded to do the second ascent. Just before we get there a rock as big as a cow and this time initialled *A.F.* comes bounding down. Hamish smiles and murmurs about a million-to-one-chance, I gibber, and Fyffe disappears bug-like beneath a large stone. While I go for a stick to poke him out, MacInnes talks of Posterity, and the Price of Fame, and at last coaxes him to have his picture taken on his Very Own big route.

Climbing to an audience is an acquired skill. Shouts about runners coming off and by the way could you put your shirt over your sweater it comes out better, you are going the wrong way, please stand not sit on your belay, etc., etc., do not assist one's *sang froid*. But King Rat must be one of the best routes in the British Isles. I do not like the first peg in the overhang so I don't go near it; but the second one comes out in my hand. In goes a knife blade, and it gyrates as I stand on it. A big nut solves the problem, and I am having a quiet gibber on the ledge above. Stewed Sausages and Mixed Vegetables.

MONDAY. Bacon and Egg Pieces and another Gibber. In the afternoon we wander up to Eagle Rocks and an unclimbed buttress with an intriguing inverted-L corner. An easy Fyffe pitch, a harder Grieve pitch, and then he disappears to the superb great corner. The rope runs quickly up, stops, comes down, and then up until it's tight on my waist and the two belay pegs are in. I hope I never have to lead that pitch; only mildly desperate at first, but soon laybacks around a roof with feet in slime; hard, but really good. He called it Gibber. Corned Beef Hash and a Late Night Final.

Time for a route after tea, so it's up to the small slab-buttress

right of North-West Gully; 210 feet of good late evening entertainment.

TUESDAY. Bacon and Swimming. Too hot to climb. Lie reading Kafka mixed with James Bond, interleaved by swims. Spaghetti with Cheese Sauce and Agonies of Sunburn. Late evening walk up South-East, and down Central, Buttress, vocally accompanied by blistered back and rubbing clothes.

WEDNESDAY. Boiled Eggs and The Kraken. I start a line between King Rat and Mousetrap, provisionally termed Rat-trap. The better end of the rope than reaches the Mousetrap recess by steep frightening runnerless cracks; up and belay at top of recess, and he charges through again, along a grass moustache, up a wee wall, and a delicate traverse. I discover a hard move on my next pitch, incurring the usual Grieve delay as runners are sought and prayers said; my luck is in, the next pitch is hard with three cruxes and soon we are at the top. A Very Hot Curry.

THURSDAY. Bacon and Half an Egg and The Catwalk. A girdle of the big crag had screamed at us all week. Unable to stomach the Caterpillar Crack so early in the afternoon, we abseil from False Gully and join Waterkelpie Wall, which takes us to King Rat, and from there yesterday's moustache deposits us in Mousetrap. Tremendous climbing and we sit under the final corner of The Giant, reflecting that Dave Bathgate must have got one hell of a fright when he flew out of it; impressive hereabouts. Down a groove, along a slab, to Rennie's Goliath, which takes us by a desperate Fyffe variation to the top of the crag. A great route. Mince and Tatties.

FRIDAY. Soup and Brose and the Bottom of a Pink Elephant. Low cloud makes us lazy. Not much food left, but lots of unclimbed rock. We breakfast at 4 p.m. Fyffe kicks me and considers me a pit-infested midden. Conscience and a good wash take us beneath a big pink streak falling from the base of Dinosaur Gully. We solo up the first pitch, then he goes up delightful pink slabs in real switched-on Etive-ville style. I lead through over two roofs to a Dinosaur stance. The eternal optimist heads right to whacking big roofs; a steep crack with a jug-hold above, delicate traverse, hard grass crack, another roof . . . Soon we are on the big terrace below the 'sea of slabs.' Night approaches, so we go down Labyrinth Edge. Soup and Brose.

SATURDAY. Soup and a Whole Pink Elephant. We are soon at the terrace again; 70 feet of severe corner leads to a wet crack and overhanging chimneys. My P.A's are split and I am suffering from one of my frequent bouts of intense fear. Lots of time and patience from below and 15 good runners see me up. A.F. inserts us both in the big slab groove above, and up this for 200 feet with shouts of delight to the top.

Brose and No Soup, so we went Home.

## THE LAST TEN YEARS

By Robin Campbell

WHAT began life as an intended review has ended as a Statistical Compendium, thanks to an oversize *Journal* and a flagging Editorial brain.

It is presented here, along with some tendentious interpretive comment, in the hope that it may be of some use to journalists, guidebook publishers, hut builders and other astrologers and of interest to all concerned with the health of, or forming a part of, the Scottish Mountain Body. It consists merely of numerical information about new climbs made in the different

		1960	1961	1962	1963	1964	1965	1966	1967	1968	1969	60-69	50-59
Skye	S	10	4	6	6	7	12	5	5	30	16	101	80
	W	—	—	—	1	—	1	1	—	1	—	4	—
	All	10	4	6	7	7	13	6	5	31	16	105	80
Islands (ex Skye)	S	7	23	4	2	7	8	23	33	10	9	136	36
	W	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
	All	7	23	4	2	7	8	23	33	10	9	136	36
Northern Highlands	S	5	8	16	9	7	6	23	39	16	18	147	?
	W	—	—	—	10	4	9	1	9	5	11	49	?
	All	5	8	16	19	11	15	24	48	21	29	196	171
Western Highlands	S	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	5	—	1	6	?
	W	—	—	2	—	1	—	—	—	—	1	4	?
	All	—	—	2	—	1	—	—	5	—	2	10	8
Cairngorms	S	2	10	4	7	7	4	6	13	14	29	96	146
	W	3	3	5	2	6	7	9	12	3	17	67	80
	All	5	13	9	9	13	11	15	25	17	46	163	226
Ben Nevis	S	1	6	12	3	5	1	4	3	1	1	37	36
	W	9	3	—	3	1	5	2	3	—	1	27	40
	All	10	9	12	6	6	6	6	6	1	2	64	76
Glencoe Area	S	13	5	6	3	15	18	49	25	13	10	157	161
	W	1	—	1	1	1	6	5	3	1	28	47	32
	All	14	5	7	4	16	24	54	28	14	38	204	193
Central Highlands (ex. Nevis & Glencoe)	S	2	1	2	—	5	33	7	17	4	11	82	?
	W	1	1	2	4	3	4	6	1	2	3	27	?
	All	3	2	4	4	8	37	13	18	6	14	109	14
Southern Highlands	S	2	1	1	—	—	6	2	1	3	—	16	?
	W	—	1	2	—	—	2	—	—	1	2	8	?
	All	2	2	3	—	—	8	2	1	4	2	24	12
All Areas	S	42	58	51	30	53	88	119	151	91	95	778	?
	W	14	8	12	21	16	34	24	28	13	63	233	?
	All	56	66	63	51	69	122	143	179	104	158	1011	816

regions in the last decade. It is worth stating at the outset that all figures listed are unreliable, incomplete, somewhat selective (minor crags and outcrops are largely left out of account as being beneath notice and contempt) and, to anticipate one of our points, misleading.

In the above table, the rows opposite each regional heading refer to summer climbs (S), winter climbs (W) and their sum (All).

The most notable feature of the table is the marked difference, particularly in the amount of new summer climbs, between the first five years and the last five. Particular groups (e.g. The Squirrels) may favour one explanation for this sudden increase over another. However, the rise does not seem to be attributable to increased activity in any one region, so that an explanation based on the rise to prominence of particular clubs does not seem very plausible.

One striking exception to this otherwise general trend is Ben Nevis, which provided astonishingly few new climbs—astonishing, that is, when one considers the vast store of potential routes which remains there. Ben Nevis is exceptional too in other respects: in 1960, 9 new winter routes (the most in any one of the ten years) were made on the Ben (the Marshall Smith rope was of course mainly responsible) while only 1 were made elsewhere; yet, in 1969, when only one winter route was made on the Ben, 62 were produced elsewhere! No doubt this can be simply explained by supposing that conditions on the Ben are commonly quite different from conditions elsewhere. Last winter was clearly an outstanding one and the dribble of routes from Glencoe in other years suggests that last year's bag of 28 was somewhat freakish.

Given that there was very little interest taken in the winter Northern Highlands before the Corriemulzie Club's efforts in 1963, it would seem that this has been a serious oversight (and cf. Dr Patey's remarks on this topic in *New Climbs, passim*), because since 1963 the region has produced a good crop of new winter routes in most years. Only the Cairngorms seem more reliable, on the basis of these figures.

An apparently reasonable notion that the quantity of routes done might correlate with quality or significance turns out dubious when confronted with these figures. In 1960, one of the numerically least productive years, we had the highly significant activities of the Marshall Smith rope on Ben Nevis in winter, while in summer the Bonington Patey rope visited such classic lines as the Cioch Naoise in Applecross and King Cobra in Skye. Other routes of high quality in that year were Smith's Thunder Rib in Skye and Marshall's Pause on the Trilleachan Slabs. Likewise 1968, which marks a numerical recession, saw the emergence of the Dumbarton Boys, Carrington, Fulton, Jackson and Nicolson as a force in the land along with the impressive Edinburgh combination of Spence and Porteous (N.B.: None of these gentlemen were members). These climbers produced four or five routes of great technical significance and high quality, such as The Pin and Steeple on Shelter Stone Crag, The Pinch on Trilleachan Slabs and Carnmore Corner.

On the other hand, a 'boom' year such as 1967 produced only a handful of routes of high quality and none of any technical significance.

The total number of routes in a particular region obviously does not of itself indicate whether interest in the area is high or low and the totals for the preceding decade have been added to permit such comparisons. It is of obvious interest to note the extraordinary rise in the Central Highlands, largely due to the discovery of Creag Dubh and Binnin Shuas and the continuing exploration of Creag Meaghaidh. Clearly, the Loch Laggan area is fast challenging Glencoe as a weekend stamping-ground. The Creag Dhu M.C. provided a pointer to the future when they held one of their notorious Sporting Meets there last year.

Another remarkable fact is that, despite the enormous increase in the numbers of people climbing, there has, except in the Islands and Central Highlands, been no great increase in the number of new routes, compared



*Tom Weir.*

Winter in the Far West; from Sgùrr na Ciche, looking to the Braes of Morar.



with the fifties. In fact, the Cairngorms, Ben Nevis and the summer Northern Highlands appear to be in decline. As we remarked earlier, the neglect of Ben Nevis is extraordinary—perhaps the absence of a guidebook for so many years is partly responsible or perhaps the existing routes are so attractive that exploration is spurned in their favour, or perhaps its just too damn far from the pub and a bit steep for wives or other helpmates. The widespread phenomenon of 'family' 'climbing' is without doubt the most important social development in climbing over the last ten years. It is a practice that cannot be too roundly condemned.

## UNDERTONES

By Roger North

It has doubtless been the experience of many, when travelling through some drab industrial area, to be seized with an inordinate longing for the scenery and incidents associated with climbing or walking on the hills.

The victim of such nostalgic restlessness will recall not only the hazards and problems of an expedition but also the many minor incidents which, though probably but fleetingly noticed at the time, will now recur to him with a clarity adding to and intensifying the memories so recalled.

Such reminiscences have various facets; plant and wild life, scenery, or it may be some trivial incident connected with a day's walk. One remembers a group of scarlet rowans standing above some torrent bed or an especially lovely fall of water gliding and frothing through the shining half-concealed boulders; an unexpectedly revealed clump of white bell-heather, or a scattered expanse of dwarf juniper, the *latschen* of Tyrol and the only plant one would pluck a twig from as a head-dress decoration. How pleased one was, also, to espy within a narrow rock cleft some rich tuft of fir club moss and, at the foot of the hill, a small patch of bright green turf below a lichen-covered boulder crowned with a luxuriant growth of bright heather: this last a perfect epitome of the mountain scene.

One longs to see once more these lovely vignettes, the undertones of days upon the hills.

Then there is the recollection of a herd of deer ascending in single file the snow-covered flank of a steep corry, and the brief glimpse of some hinds flitting, silent as a dream, from below a mist shrouded summit to disappear over the ridge concealing the next valley. Sometimes we would come upon a hen ptarmigan scuttling along before us to draw the strange intruder away from her chicks.

There was also, but less aesthetic, the hospitality enjoyed in hotel or inn at the end of the day; the kindly welcome to the tea table and discussion of the day's events before a fire of warmly glowing turf.



Driving home in the quiet of the evening, the hills over which one had passed the day appeared so remote and lonely and one was thankful to have seen at close hand such beauty growing and existing upon them, for one knew that a time would come when days such as these would be beyond one's power to achieve.

We recall, therefore, all the more gratefully, the treasure of these precious vignettes as a help to endure, perhaps a little more patiently, any uncongenial surroundings in which we may find ourselves in later years.

### LAST FAREWELL TO THE MOUNTAINS

I was on Ben Dobhrain yesterday,  
no stranger in her bounds was I;  
I looked upon the glens  
and the bens that I had known so well;  
this was a happy picture—  
to be tramping on the hillsides,  
at the hour the sun was rising,  
and the deer would be bellowing.

The gallant herd is joyous,  
as they moved off with noisy stir;  
the hinds are by the spring,  
and the speckled calves looked bonny there;  
then the does and roe-bucks,  
the black-cocks and the grouse cocks—  
the sweetest music ever heard  
was their sound when heard at dawn of day.

Blithely would I set out  
for stalking on the hill passes,  
away to climb rough country,  
and late would I be coming home;  
the clean rain and the air  
on the peaks of the high mountains,  
helped me to grow, and gave me  
health and vitality.

\* \* \* \* \*

My farewell to the deer forests—  
Oh, marvellous mountains they are,  
with green cress and spring water,  
a noble, royal, and pleasant drink;

to the moorlands which are well beloved,  
and the pastures which are plentiful;  
as of these places I have taken leave,  
my thousand blessings aye be theirs.

Excerpt from the poem by DUNCAN BAN MCINTYRE, 1724-1812.

(with acknowledgments to the translation  
by Angus MacLeod in his edition of *The Songs of  
Duncan Ban McIntyre*, Scottish Gaelic Texts  
Society, 1952).

## MORE ON CREAG MEAGHAIDH

By N. Quinn

LIKE most climbers I went through a stage of wanting to climb new routes, but somehow everything within my abilities seemed to have been climbed. Most of my climbing is done in winter and Patey, Marshall & Co. seemed to have been everywhere worth being.

It all started because Gerry Peat had chosen to bivouac on the summit of the 'Ben' rather than return to the flesh pots of the C.I.C. I had never found it that bad. By the time search parties had been organised and Gerry rescued from the track down to the hut the weather was back to normal and not fit for man or beast. Over a brew Gerry told me about a new route he had done on Creag Meaghaidh and mentioned another he had in mind. Would I like to come along?

Now don't think I hadn't been to Creag Meaghaidh, I had, on several occasions, but so far I had never even seen the cliffs let alone climbed on them. It always rains on Creag Meaghaidh; or so had been my experience.

I was already in camp when Gerry and Bob arrived just after midnight on one of the clearest and coldest nights for weeks. The morning fulfilled this promise and was the kind that seemed to plague W. H. Murray most of his climbing career; bright, clear and cold. A gorgeous walk into the inner corrie and there it was, The Pumpkin. The initial open corner of ice reared up nearly 300 feet, finishing in an impressive bulge of blue green ice. Upon closer investigation the initial pitches didn't seem too steep.

Fooled again. I'll nip up here and get a belay. I struggled up some unpleasantly steep ice for 50 ft. and brought Gerry up, who followed through and belayed 40 ft. above, below the first problem. The next 40 ft. up and over a very steep section was only overcome using an ice screw for direct aid, and another 50 ft. of rope was needed to reach a belay. The exit from the icefall was barred by

several bulges of blue green ice which had an ice chimney leading partly through them. By climbing the chimney to below the final overhang and traversing right and straight up between two more bulges we broke through to easier ground.

The route eased off for a hundred feet or so and then was barred by a 150-foot iced-up chimney. Gerry cut up the first 60 ft., then passed the buck. Over the steepest part it was impossible to get any artificial aid and several sorties up and back again for a rest were needed. After this the way to the plateau was reasonably straight-forward. Returning by the Window Gerry pointed out another unpicked plum, the twin icefall of Diadem, the 'Wand.' However the thaw came, and so ended the winter of '68.

Doug Lang and I first looked at the Wand in February '69 but atrocious weather, heavy snow and wind forced a retreat after 100 ft. of the icefall and we ended up in places crawling on all fours down the track.

Next weekend we returned with Graham Hunter and Quintin Crichton who didn't want to miss out. The weather was as good as the previous week's had been bad and our steps on the icefall only needed cleaning. The first pitch of about 60 ft. was led by Graham who then brought me up, and thanks to the old steps I didn't have too much trouble leading the next 40 ft. of very steep ice to our abseil peg and belay—if such this sentrybox can be called. Pegged in and wedged back and front in this ice tomb I brought Doug Lang up from base camp and he led through, using an ice screw and tapes to overcome a nasty bulge and gain the next belay. I followed through and with some rather airy bridging reached the top of the icefall. Beyond the icefall the angle eased and the line of least resistance led to the top.

A good weather-forecast sent me hunting for a climbing partner for the Sunday but all I could find was Graham Hunter. However, beggars can't be choosers, so we decided on Ritchie's gully on the pinnacle face. Walking up into the corrie in beautiful weather we met two climbers who happened to mention that Ritchie's gully had an unclimbed direct start. Oh well, what the heck!

Graham led the first pitch, good quality steep ice, until he got over the second bulge to what looked like a good stance only to find it just rubbish powder; and it took nearly half an hour for him to get across 6 feet to the wall and plant a couple of pegs. The next pitch took me on a 20-foot rightward traverse and then 110 ft. straight up on very steep ice, in places only 2 or 3 inches thick, to reach Apollon ledge. Owing to the lateness of the hour we thought of nipping off along the ledge, but decided to look at the rest of the gully. This turned out to be disappointing, and took only three-quarters of an hour.

By now we were looking for routes and noticed the buttress separating Staghorn from The Pumpkin. MacInnes was dossing in

the car with his wife and two dogs when Doug, Graham and I arrived in the by-now-expected good weather and we all trundled off up into the corrie.

At the foot of the buttress we roped up in two parties and Hamish led the first pitch with Graham following through and Doug and I making the second rope. The snow could have been better but I've seen worse. An obvious diagonal crack was followed from the bottom right for 300 ft., where the way was blocked by a large overhang necessitating an airy traverse on to the crest of the buttress to a spring-board and then up to easier ground. The crest of the steep upper buttress was gained by traversing a rather vague ledge from the right and then straight up the crest; a magnificent pitch.

Hamish and Graham having led the main part of the climb had twinges of conscience and waved Doug and I through for the last few hundred feet of easier ground. A magnificent route, it had enough to keep anyone happy, with some tremendous situations, and considerable exposure in places.

Back at the car and with coffee all round I asked Hamish if he ever wore a crash hat. 'Oh, only on hard routes.'

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

*(Views expressed are those of the correspondents).*

### A Reminder

SIR—On 26th February 1970, our Honorary President, Sandy Harrison, reached the age of 80. Two days later he was at a small birthday picnic lunch near the col between Carnethy and Scald Law on the Pentland Hills. At this lunch were Bertie Martin, Paul Fletcher, Duncan Macpherson and myself. Between the five of us there was an aggregate of well over 200 years of S.M.C. membership.

The health of the Honorary President was toasted with a bottle of champagne that had been brought in one rucksack. When this bottle was emptied, the Honorary President produced another bottle of champagne from his rucksack. The explanation of this second bottle was that, to mark his 80th birthday, the Honorary President had been given by his family 80 bottles of sherry. Those of us who have been privileged to enjoy Harrison hospitality will realise that, over the next year or two, not a great deal of the sherry will be personally consumed by Sandy Harrison, but the wine merchant regarded the order as sufficiently remarkable to entitle him to add to it, as his personal tribute, this bottle of champagne which was enjoyed at our picnic.

After lunch, Bertie Martin had to return to his car, but not because of excess of champagne. Very sportingly he had come with us as far as the col despite a recently damaged leg. The rest of us, after lunch, proceeded to climb Carnethy, Scald Law and South Black Hill, the first two named being the highest hills in the Pentlands. It was a lovely day and blue sky behind a line of snow on a ridge gave a pleasing effect, coming off South Black Hill we had a standing glissade.

Had access to the foot of Ben Nevis been easier for an Edinburgh party, we would probably have gone up it for the birthday lunch, which is not unremarkable when one considers that Sandy was invited to go on an Everest Expedition as far back as 1924. Sandy's brilliant climbing in Switzerland

with F. S. Smythe and others, followed by extensive guideless climbing in the Alps until well through his 70's, needs no further comment in this letter.

Last Easter, Bertie Martin, Duncan Macpherson and I were in a party that set out to climb the Liathach ridge. Owing to snow, we had to go over the tops of all the Fasarinen pinnacles and, having done that, deteriorating weather forced us to retrace our way back over all these pinnacles again. Bertie Martin was then aged 70 but the vigour and agility that he showed on these pinnacles would have done credit to a man half his age.

No comment is needed about the others of us as we are still only in our mid-60's, but this should be said: the peace that comes on the hills, the companionship with fellow climbers, the satisfying rhythm of movement (unencumbered by ironmongery) and the sense of achievement, even of achievement within the compass of those no longer young, is something that can be savoured and enjoyed over a long period of years—for which we must all be grateful.—Yours, etc.

IAN M. CAMPBELL.

### A Further Hazard

SIR—I have had my attention drawn to the fact that in the accounts of new climbs the names of the first ascenders are now given in alphabetical order and no longer in order of ascent. This may give rise to embarrassment, dismay and even peril. Imagine my situation in attempting to repeat, say, 'Grotty,' first climbed by D\*tt\*n and M\*rsh\*ll, V.S. I am encouraged by the name of the leader to assume that editorial licence has been exercised in the classification and that the climb is not too outrageously beyond my powers, and so press on. But if, in fact, on the first ascent it was M\*rsh\*ll who enticed D\*tt\*n up a climb which was a hard V.S. by any standards I could well find myself in the above-mentioned position of peril and dismay. This, I am sure sir, is not your intention in re-arranging names as you have, and so may I ask you to revert to the original way of ordering things and indeed to give credit where it is due.—Yours, etc.

DERWENT TURNBULL.

### Nemo Me Impune . . .

SIR—In the last number Robin Inglis fills a whole page worrying about what will happen to 'the Munros' when Scotland goes metric. Surely rather unnecessary worry.

Nothing will happen!

The magical 277 Munros (I did Tarsuinn) are still going to be standing there, nuclear war permitting, for a good few million years yet, no doubt wearing under the ceaseless scarting of Salvationists' vibram, but apart from Càrn Aosda, not likely to be so worn as to be struck off the list.

It is a *list* after all and whatever the mathematical nomenclature used by cartographers of the future the *list* is still the same. It is sacred after all, set by the law of the Medes and Persians, the Robertsons, Parkers and Maxwells an' a' an' a'.

Past collectors may smirk, the cranks who have done it all twice may say what they like, but aspiring Salvationists racing to beat D-Day—relax; it's all in the mind, if also in the feet, and I am sure nobody is going to remove the precious list of 'Munros' no matter what heathenish figures the maps may eventually give.

Rejoice too, for it will call for another protracted revising of the present volume of some enthusiastic sub-committee—and another whack on the price. What does it metre so long as the pence, new pence, roll into the Trust.—Yours, etc.

HAMISH M. BROWN.

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

## Asia

W. H. MURRAY sends these notes on the Everest region: 'In November last year, Eric Shipton and I led separate parties from Katmandu to 18,000 feet on Kala Pattar and Pumori above the Khumbu glacier of Mount Everest. This one-way walk (150 miles with 50,000 feet of ascent) was first planned by the Mountaineering Association and Col. J. O. M. Roberts of Katmandu. When the M.A. wound up, the British organization was taken over by Thos. Cook's.

'There are several items of interest to report from Solu Khumbu. In November there were two Japanese teams on Everest, each on reconnaissance for expeditions in May 1970, one trying a new route up the south-west face, the other ski-ing on the South Col slopes in preparation for a downhill run from the col itself.

'I met members of both teams. The skiers were using parachutes, which they said they released when they hit 120 mph or when they took to the air over an ice-cliff. They had had a few accidents, apparently not serious. The climbers told me that from the floor of the West Cwm they had followed a snow gully leading on to the high angle rock face (6500 feet high), which they had climbed to 8000 metres (the height of the South Col). They reported much trouble with oxygen masks, mainly through difficulty in seeing clearly enough to take small holds and make delicate moves. Since the weather last November was the best experienced in east Nepal for many years, they will need much luck in 1970. In 1971 an international expedition is planned for an attempt on this same south-west face. It will be led by Norman Dyhrenfurth and Col. Roberts. Their team will include British, American, Swiss, Norwegian, and Austrian climbers.

'The Japanese are more active in the Himalaya than the climbers of any other nation. They hope to field 20 expeditions in Nepal during 1970. Ed. Hillary, whom I met in Solu, was much concerned about the proposed Japanese tourist developments in Khumbu. They have, he told me, submitted to the Nepalese government a two-million-dollar investment plan for a hotel above Namche Bazar and an air strip at Khumjung (13,000 feet). The air strip, if made, would consume thirty-three potato fields and destroy Khumbu's economy. The Sherpas of the twin villages Khumjung and Kunde had voted against any grant of ground for the air strip, but Hillary feared that the central government might 'bulldoze' the villagers in the name of 'national interest.' In his opinion the pattern of Sherpa life in Solu Khumbu would be destroyed, for Namche and Khumjung were the heart of the Sherpa country, without which the rest would crumble.

'The irony of this situation is that some years ago Hillary made an air strip at Lukla, 9000 feet, on the flank of the Dudh Kosi 14 miles below Namche, and this has contributed much to the opening up of Solu Khumbu. My own party and Shipton's flew out by it. When I questioned the headman at Namche about Hillary's fears, he replied that instead of an air strip at Khumjung he was proposing that a motor road be built from Namche to Lukla. My hope is that the Japanese will not think this an acceptable alternative (for such a road would be subject to closure by landslide) and that their plan will collapse. If not, the Sherpas' days as a unique people are numbered. Meantime, Namche and Khumjung and all the other Sherpa villages look exactly the same as they did when first seen by me twenty years ago, and the people are still unspoiled.

'On the Khumbu glacier at 17,500 feet I met Dawa Tenzing, who attended out Easter meet at Glenfinnan in 1966. He was sirdar on Kangchen-

junga and is regarded as the 'King of Sherpas.' He named Tom MacKinnon, Douglas Scott, Tom Weir, and George Roger (without prompting by me) with all of whom he had climbed in the Himalaya, and asked me to give them his best wishes.'

### North America

ADAM WATSON, JR., 'was in North America from early August to late November, working at various universities from Alaska to Chicago. Mountains were a long way away at most places. However I had a few days on Vancouver Island, which has a very fine mountain range with plenty of glaciers and even an ice cap. One day was spent on Mount Albert Edward (about 6900 ft.) but we were beaten off at 6000 ft. above the main glacier by torrential sleety rain, thick fog and wind. The Pacific Coast rain forest showed its nature that day, with enormous trees swathed in moss, and thick moss on the ground under the gloomy dripping branches. A good point, different from Scotland, was that it was easy to dry out with a fire among the scrubby trees in the alpine zone. We were back later, in October, in good weather, climbing the 5900 ft. Mount Washington by an easy ridge alongside an impressive north east wall. The high tops were all under heavy new snow. Golden Hinde (7200 ft.) and some more impressive spires further north, looked particularly attractive. There seemed to be lots of Scottish connections with this area, with Cruickshank Canyon, Lake Helen Mackenzie, and many other Scottish place names.

'Later, I was at the University at Fairbanks in Alaska in late September, and my family and I moved out for a weekend to live in a deserted old gold mining encampment in the mountains 120 miles north east of Fairbanks, towards the Yukon. The hills here reached 4500 feet and were remarkably Scottish-looking, like the Fannichs or Cairngorms—no glaciers but some small snow patches lasting through the summer. Climbing the hills around Eagle Creek showed that even the vegetation was very similar and there were some ptarmigan to make us feel even more at home. But animal life was like what Scotland used to be, only better—wolverines, wolves, moose, caribou, Dall sheep and many others. Winter had already come, and the frosts were hard enough to freeze the hill burns almost solid.

'I was in Jasper and Banff National Parks in late October for a few days, but was working all the time. There was heavy wet snow on the mountains and in the valleys too later on. At the end of October, I was helping a Canadian with research in the Purple Canyon area of the east Kootenays in British Columbia—a very fine wild mountainous area. A last mountain day was on Mount Whistler near Vancouver in early November, in driving sleet. A near-mountain day was in north east Minnesota alongside Lake Superior, where I found on the promontories some beautiful steep cliffs and small areas of tundra at the top, due to the influence of the cold mass of water.

'A depressing feature was that wilderness areas were under attack everywhere, and even Provincial Parks and National Parks were allowing big developments to make the easy fast buck. The mountains in the east Kootenays have suffered badly in the past from enormous fires, which have led to erosion on a colossal scale involving whole mountainsides up to 1500 ft. high sliding. Forestry, logging and burning on Vancouver Island, and on much of mainland B.C., leave devastated areas of 1000 acres at a time and lead to serious erosion. Smoke from enormous pulp mills pollutes remote mountain valleys 20-30 miles away, and 'beautiful B.C.' can often only be seen through a smoke pall. Water is badly polluted almost everywhere, and mining developments are free to move into fine mountain country, leave a catastrophic mess, and pull out without tidying up. Even Alaska and Yukon are under serious threat. Wilderness areas there are being opened up with roads, mining and logging, without any attempt to clear up the mess



or replant the trees, with damage to the permafrost and erosion from tractors on seismic explorations, plus all the threats from the oil boom and pipelines. I attended a conference at Edmonton where the Eskimo representatives and many others were seriously concerned at the free-for-all that was being allowed in their homelands without their consent, and at the very serious repercussions that were likely to follow to game animals and the economy of the Eskimos.

'A warning to us in Scotland is that ski-ing developments keep on mushrooming in both Canada and the United States, and there seems to be no end to the number of new people taking up ski-ing or to the money they spend on equipment. It is becoming one of the most popular of all outdoor sports. When I told people there that we had seen only 7 years of developed ski-ing in Scotland, their inevitable reaction was that our Scottish problems of conservation, ski-ing and wilderness areas must be just beginning, and that the avalanche was still to come. Scottish mountaineers will have to be on their mettle if we are not to lose a lot of our small but precious wilderness areas in the next two decades.'

At the end of June, IAIN MACLEOD, his wife, JIM MESSER (J.M.C.S.) and Eric Henry (R.A.F.) visited the Mealey Mountains in Labrador. MacLeod writes: 'This group of neo-Munros lies to the south of Lake Melville and some seventy miles from Northwest River near Goose Bay where at that time Messer was a dentist with the Grenfell Mission.

'This range of mountains is about a hundred miles long but only the eastern end, which reaches up to four thousand feet, has any mountaineering interest. The area bears a remarkable resemblance to typical Central Highland scenery. The main rock is anorthosite which has a texture as rough as Cuillin gabbro. It lies mainly in large glaciated slabs. The tree line is around two thousand feet and the area abounds in lakes, rivers, and leg-scraping ground juniper. As far as we know, it had never previously been visited.

'We left Northwest River by chartered Beaver float plane on June 24th. Although the original choice of landing site was useless due to large ice pans, we found an alternative lake where camp was set up on a small peninsula near a very oddly shaped boulder.

'What were the feelings of the man who first climbed say, Cairn Toul? Humble? Hardly. Tired? Possibly. Sense of achievement? Probably. But at least the age-old problem of what lay beyond was solved—more Mealeys and endless Mount Puddings.

'A number of peaks were scaled without any difficulty apart from river crossings. Bad weather clamped down after a few days and prevented further activities.

'This is an area *par excellence* for Munro-baggers. In fact the ultimate in this form of endeavour lies in store for the energetic. You can go in there and at about four cents per acre stake out a whole Munro for yourself. This area must be opened up for those who want to make it 276 plus. Slessair Enterprises please note.'

## Norway

A. J. Bennet and D. J. BENNET, with two wives and six children, visited a few of Norway's mountain resorts in the course of a motor tour in July (1969). Climbs were mostly family affairs, more like high altitude picnics, and usually followed easy routes up easy mountains. In the Jotunheimen we found Turtagrø, reputedly the home of Norwegian mountaineering, cloud-shrouded and deserted, so we camped at the head of Sognefjord and climbed Nordre Skagastøltind. On Galdhøpiggen we camped at Rauberstulen and from the top of the road had only two thousand feet of easy climbing to the top of Norway's highest mountain. In the Sunmore Alps the village of Øye,



once the haunt of the pioneer climbers, lay somnolent under the heavy odour of mink farms and we camped at Urke, a few miles down the fjord. Smorskretind and Saksa were bagged. Then to Romsdal which alone of the areas we visited felt like a climbing centre. A. J. and D. J. climbed the Romsdalshorn, and D. J. with the ladies climbed Kongen. Finally we went to Innerdalen and leaving the cars behind walked up to the very pleasant Innerdal Lodge (owned by a local mountaineer of the same name). From the lodge we had our last excursion, and half the party climbed Daletarnet (the local Matterhorn), while the other half reconstructed a howff at the foot of the peak, only to discover on the way down a brand new hut just round the corner.

G. J. DUTTON, returning from Swedish elk-stalking last autumn, sampled the excellent gabbro-like buttresses behind north Bergen, a practice ground for local climbers and well worth visiting before the boat.

HAMISH M. BROWN, last Easter, was 'penguinning' or ski-touring round Geilo. Tours were made to the main peaks bordering the valley: south, Ustetind; and north, Prestholtskarvet of the Hallingskarvet Range, 6035 ft. The touring was enjoyable, the downhill limited in scale and life at the Youth Hostel intolerable at night.

## Alps

DONALD MILL, with Howard Brunton (J.M.C.S.), spent a fortnight in the Bregaglia/Bernina in July. They did the N. Face of Cima di Rosso (a nice little ice face) from the Forno, crossed over Cima di Castello to the Albigna and climbed Punta Pioda from Fuorcla di Sciora. A classic rock ridge, the N. ridge of Piz Badile, and a classic snow ridge, the Biancograt of Piz Bernina, were followed by a traverse of Monte Disgrazia from the Taveggia bivouac up the splendid N.E. ridge, down the W., and back over Monte Sissone to the Forno, a thirteen-hour day. Worn out by unremitting fine weather, they went to Zermatt, where a little verglas provided the excuse for not finishing the Zmutt, and the mild interest of the Triftjigrat on the Breithorn failed to compensate for the tedium of the descent by the Theodul.

G. J. DUTTON, with wife, introduced 3 children (11, 8, and 7) to the Alps *via* Arlberg, Morteratsch, Lenzerheide and Flims. Perfect weather, convenient machinery, amenable glaciers and domesticated snow-ridges made the lower Bernina tops highly recommendable for the partially-fledged. Easy *grat*-scrambling, conscientious ibex, black squirrels and the glorious Hot Loch of Flims were further rewards of a Primary Season along this itinerary.

HAMISH M. BROWN and up to 16 B.F.M.C., L.S.C.C., J.M.C.S., etc., were based first at Martigny, then Zermatt. He writes: 'The Vaud hills completed last year's traversing: Col du Pillon, Les Diablerets, Sanetsch Inn (off a glacier littered with cannon shells) and the Wildhorn to the Rawil Pass at the Lac de Tseuzier. Then another crossing from Le Tour to Champex: Albert Premier, Aig. du Tour and Pointe d'Orny. Best, a plastered climb up to the Gôûter for any icy traverse of Mont Blanc, descending to Chamonix by the Bossons Glacier. Three 15-year-olds on this as most things. Three on the Buet. With R. Aitken and A. Patterson fail 500 ft. below the Velan in near white-out and bad crevasses in new snow; a fine peak if dour. Some took camp to Zermatt and rest there over the hills from Arolla and Bertol Hut, crossing the Tête Blanche—a race against bad weather. This turned a party off the Breithorn, but it was done on the bad, penultimate day. The only break gave the Rimpfischhorn, fine as 9 hours instead of the usual 5, due to plastering.'

J. McK. STEWART writes: 'In September with my son Alan and an A.A.C. party I visited the Austrian Alps.

'Starting from Neustift in the Stubaital, on to the Franz Senn Hut then over the Basslerjoch to the Neue Regensburger Hut. 2nd, by the High Level route and much new snow to the Dresdener Hut. 3rd, to the Pfaffenschneid and traverse of the Zückerhüt by the W. & E. ridges from the Dresdener, Alan's rope also included the Wilder Pfaff. 4th, Stubai Wildspitze by S.E. ridge and the Schaufelspitze from the Bildstockl J. en route to the Hildesheimer Hut and so to Sölden. The second week was spent in the Ötztal, from Vent on to the Samoar Hut. 6th, traversed E. M. and W. peaks of the Similaun by the E. and W. ridges, a long day from the Samoar Hut. 7th, Fineilspitze by N.E. ridge on way to Hochjochhospis. 8th, to the Brandenburger Hut with a good day on the Dahmannspitze and the three rock peaks of the Ehrichspitze, my son on a rope of three also added the two peaks of the Hintereis Spitzen later on in the day. 9th, Fluchtkogel and Kesselwandspitze en route to the Vernagt Hut. 10th, traversed S. & N. peaks of the Ötztal Wildspitze and on to the Braunschweiger Hut. 11th, traversed Inner Schwarze Schneide by S. & N. ridges from Braunschweiger.

'Early September gives very good climbing conditions for this area compared to August which is fairly poor. One must however be prepared to start early each day, I have observed many British parties being put off by low mist at Hut level and leaving far too late to finish up sweltering on the Snowfields with increased difficulties on the heavily crevassed icefalls.

'Although the peaks of the Tyrol are at a lower altitude than the main Swiss peaks (highest is Ötztal Wildspitze at 3772m, most between 3300-3600m), they should be treated with respect and weather conditions change just as quickly. Distances can be misleading particularly on the main glaciers and icefalls, some of which are the largest in the Eastern Alps.'

IAN ROWE and M. GALBRAITH did amongst other things, the N. Face of the Matterhorn (see article this issue).

J. GRIEVE (J.M.C.S.) was with K. SPENCE, D. FORD, R. GRIEVE (all J.M.C.S.) and I. Nicholson (C.D.M.C.). J.G., K.S., D.F. and I.N. did the Gervasutti couloir in 3 hrs. at night, unroped; J. G. and D. F., the Cosmique arête on the A. du Midi, in 3 hrs. after a snow storm; K. S. and J. G., N. Face, Col du Caiman, 12 hrs., the 2nd ascent, with a bivouac on way down; K. S. and I. N. The Walker Spur, with 1 bivouac; J. G., R. G., D. F. and S. Docherty, the N.E. face of Courtes, with a dangerous descent from the Col des Cristeaux on the Argentières side. Also, PORTEOUS and Watson did N. ridge of the Peigne; Spence, Porteous, Nicholson and Watson climbed other routes.

## NEW CLIMBS

LAST year produced an enormous number of new climbs. Dr Patey's contribution alone amounted to the best part of a new guide-book. Because of the volume of exploration in the Northern Highlands I have split the area into three divisions as follows:—

Division I. The area bounded by the Achnashellach and Maree roads on the right.

Division II. The remainder of Ross-shire.

Division III. Sutherland, Caithness and offshore islands, stacks, rocks, etc. Similarly, the Cairngorms have been split into two divisions, following guide-book practice.

As in last year's New Climbs, unless otherwise indicated climbs are alternately led. Reactions to this proposal have, with one notable exception,

been fairly mild amongst the Ultramontane. (For a Salvationist opinion see Letters to the Editor.) A certain Aaron Aabacus appeared on certain routes but was summarily removed (Anti-Semitism on our part should not be inferred). As stated last year, this move is still experimental, but if no great weight of contrary opinion is received by next year, we assume it approved.

ROBIN N. CAMPBELL.

## OUTER ISLES

**Creag Mò.—Herbivore.** 340 ft. Very Severe. P. T. Newell & C. G. Winfield. 6th August 1969.

About 100 ft. left of the amphitheatre is a long overhang low down. Just right of this is a short slab at the foot of the crag.

Climb right edge of slab to grassy niche below small overhang. Step left and take this at obvious weakness. Continue rightwards up grass and rock to base of corner. Peg belay (100 ft.). Move up corner round bulge to ledge on right. Carry on up corner using thin flake to reach small ledge on left wall. Up and left again to larger ledge below corner. Small nuts and peg belays (60 ft.). Climb corner for about 15 ft., traverse right to shallow depression, descend about 6 ft. and traverse small sloping ledge round arête on right to small grass platform and jammed flake belay at base of corner (35 ft.). Climb leaning corner and exit right over heather to small nut and spike belays (25 ft.). Swing up left onto slab, cross this to corner and ascend obvious scoop on left wall to ledge. Go left again and up short corner to finish up steep vegetation (120 ft.).

**Griomaval: Tealasdale Slabs.—Ishivig Direct.** 800 ft. Severe. R. Sharp & W. Sproul. 8th June 1969.

These are the 'hopeless and manifestly unclimbable slabs' of *Islands Guide* p.156. The climb takes a direct line from the tail of the lowest slabs to the summit of Griomaval following a crack and corner system.

—*Golden Gully.* 800 ft. Difficult. R. Sharp & W. Sproul. May 1968.

This is the grassy rake which separates the right-hand buttress from the main slab.

**Sgaoth Ard: No. 1 Buttress.—Hauds, Variation finish.** Severe. P. MacDonald & I. G. Rowe. May 1969.

From the top of the pinnacle (see *S.M.C.J.*, 1968, xxix, 48) traverse right for 20 ft. and climb the edge of the buttress.

**Sgùrr Scaladale: West Buttress.—**750 ft. Very Severe. A. Powling & D. Yates. 8th July 1969.

The climb takes a direct line up the obvious buttress right of the main crag, just left of a gully. Start at the lowest rocks.

Grassily up leftwards, then back rightwards to stance and pinnacle (120 ft.). Straight up over rock and grass to stance below small overhang (120 ft.). Break out rightwards on rock, then go up to small stance beneath long crack (60 ft.). Up crack for 40 ft., then trend rightwards to thin crack very near right edge of buttress. Up this, step left and climb face for 30 ft. to grass stance (100 ft.). Go up rock above, then a greasy crack (crux) to another grass stance (50 ft.). Scrambling to top (300 ft.).

**Strone Ulladale: East Face.**—*Iron Butterfly*. 900 ft. Very Severe & A2. P. Macdonald & I. G. Rowe. May 1969.

The route lies up the unpromising buttress left of Great Gully. The main difficulties are concentrated in the first 400 ft. and it is possible that the remainder of the climb, no more than Difficult, has been done before. The steep lower rock is breached by a overhung fault slanting from bottom right to top left giving access to the easier rocks above, which give excellent climbing.

Climb steep and dangerous grass to reach the rock (200 ft.). Climb to tree on ledge, move left and climb short, strenuous crack system to eyrie below overhung fault (100 ft.). Move down and right into the fault and climb it leftwards to large ledge (8 pegs, nuts, 110 ft.). Move left to surmount bulge (1 peg) onto slab, then go rightwards into corner, which climb to belay (120 ft.). Easier rocks lead to the summit.

**West Face.**—*Stone*. 700 ft. Very Severe & A2. J. Porteous & K. Spence. 22nd-23rd May 1969.

Starting from the lowest point of the main face, this route makes for the obvious quartz ramp and twin-crack corner splitting the upper part of the face.

Climb obvious corner to large flake (90 ft.). Descend rightwards and traverse beneath overlaps for 100 ft., then up through obvious break to belay (110 ft.). Traverse back left, then go up to small roof. Turn this on left (1 peg) and belay on right (45 ft.). Traverse left 20 ft. to quartz corner and climb this (pegs) to the Ramp (45 ft.). Follow the Ramp to foot of the Corner. Belay on grass ledge (100 ft.). Climb left-hand crack, traverse into right-hand crack below roof and continue to turf (pegs). Belay on grass ledge above (140 ft.). Go up corner above (pegs) for 30 ft. and traverse right round corner to belay (50 ft.). Finish up easier rocks (120 ft.).

**Taran Mòr, Loch Resort.**—The buttresses of this hill are somewhat broken up with ledges and grass rakes and feature slabs at a relatively easy angle. However, a deep, almost hidden, gully splits the mountain and its walls give a few pitches of steeper climbing.

—*Sundowner*. 450 ft. Severe. R. Sharp & W. Sproul. 11th June 1969.

Start at foot of buttress forming left gully wall at a large boulder.

Climb wall into dièdre and go up this to ledge with jumbled blocks. Climb up left into chimney system. Some way above climb crack in wall and finish up slabs.

## SKYE

**Blaven: East Ridge, North Wall.**—*Jib*. 450 ft. Very Severe. D. Alcock & M. Boysen; I. Clough & H. MacInnes. May 1969.

This climb follows the obvious big corner-crack on the wall to the left of The Great Prow. There are three alternative starts. The first follows an overhanging corner chimney-crack. This was first climbed by two of the St Andrews University party who climbed The Great Prow last year, using two or three pegs. The second start lies about 20 ft. further right.

Climb to a gangway above the initial overhang, then go up wall above to reach sloping shelf (1 peg). A third start lies slightly right again. A very hard free move leads over the initial overhang to the sloping shelf which is then followed leftward. All starts lead into the main corner, the line of which is followed to the top, finishing by a steep groove on its right (*see Skye Notes*).

**Blaven: East Ridge, North Wall**—*Loss Leader*. 400 ft. Very Severe. Mr & Mrs H. MacInnes. 1969.

This climb follows the lowest of the diagonal gangway faults on the Main Wall (i.e. the wall between The Great Prow and Clough's Cleft). The original Main Wall climb is now to be known as Route I.

Follow gangway to where it merges into wall. Move down and round to gain chimney line and climb up to recess at common junction of Route I and Creep (see below). Route I continues by the chimney directly above the recess. Instead climb the very steep wall on the left to finish by a scoop.

—*Creep*. 300 ft. Very Difficult. I. Clough & H. MacInnes. May 1969.

This climb follows the middle of the three dyke gangways to the recess mentioned above. Exit diagonally leftwards across slabs and broken walls.

—*Bargain offer*. 350 ft. Very Severe. D. Alcock & M. Boysen. May 1969.

Start as for Route I and climb directly to a large ledge. Continue slightly rightwards by a smooth slab-groove (crux) then veer leftwards to reach easy ground.

**South Buttress**.—*South Buttress Gully*. 700 ft. Difficult. Mr & Mrs D. Adams & I. Clough. 16th June 1969.

This is the large gully immediately to the left of Central Pillar. It gives several pitches separated by scree and culminates in a chimney with a overhanging chockstone.

**Sgùrr Dearg: Bealach Buttress**.—*Tinn Lamh Crack*. 350 ft. Very Severe. J. Barraclough & J. B. Cooper. June 1969.

The route follows the impressive crack set in the 'gigantic vertical wall' of the buttress between Thunderbolt Shelf and Black Cleft. Start below the crack at the level of the foot of Rotten Gully.

Traverse right along obvious fault to place peg runner at about 30 ft., surmount shattered overlap and climb loose slab above to grass landing. Go right and through break to reach Thunderbolt Shelf some 40 ft. right of the crack (150 ft.). Follow the Shelf to belay left of the crack (50 ft.). Traverse right into crack and climb it to horizontal break and possible stance at 80 ft. Continue in crack to final steep wall where it narrows. From resting-place below wall climb up and with difficulty place nut in crack. Standing in slings brings good holds within reach almost at top of wall. Block belay (150 ft.).

**Sgùrr na Gilleann: Glen Sligachan Buttress**.—This buttress is about three miles down Glen Sligachan, not far above the floor of the glen and opposite Marsco's Central Buttress, and forms the lowest point of a rocky spur which descends to the east from the Sgùrr nan Gilleann-Sgùrr Beag col. The cliff is in two sections; a slabby frontal face and a steep right wing which is set back at a slightly higher level. From the recessed area between the two portions of the crag spring several prominent chimney lines.

—*Sidetrack*. 450 ft. Very Difficult. Mr & Mrs D. Adams & I. Clough. 17th June 1969.

Start near left edge of buttress (arrow) and climb leftward-slanting crack then slabs to recess (90 ft.). Climb directly above by shallow slab corner and slabs, then veer right to belay below steepening (120 ft.). Go up right to climb short steep groove, then move left to ledge and belay (60 ft.). Climb up left to final bulging barrier and make long horizontal traverse right to cracked block belay on corner (100 ft.). Ascend groove directly above belay then trend diagonally left to top.

**Sgùrr na Gillean: Glen Sligachan Buttress.**—*Blasphemy Chimneys*. 350 ft. Severe. Mr & Mrs D. Adams & I. Clough. 17th June 1969.

Right of Sidetrack is a big overhang then a steep grassy chimney-gully. Climb the prominent corner chimney to the right of this strenuously to a large grassy ledge (80 ft.). Walk into corner and climb left-hand of two chimneys into niche (100 ft. of climbing). Move up left and climb crack to grass ledge, then back right to belay in corner of original line at ledge. Finish up corner to top.

**Sgùrr a'Mhadaidh: Lower Coire an Uaigneis, Coruisk Buttress.**—J. R. Sutcliffe of the Gritstone Club supplies the following general description which may help to place the routes detailed below. 'Gullies (with rock pitches) descend from Coire an Uaigneis on either side of the crag which is very steep for the first 250-300 ft., with numerous overhangs. The rock is some of the soundest gabbro around—very black, except where an old rock-fall has left a prominent white scar in the centre of the buttress. A grassy terrace slopes down from above the steep frontal face to the foot of the east gully. This provides the easiest descent route.'

—*Rongwrong*.

700 ft. Very Severe. R. A. Hobbs & P. L. Jackson. 1st June 1966.

Start as for the original route (see Guide). From grass ledge below main diagonal weakness, follow obvious rising traverse line leftwards to below prominent steep groove breaking through left-hand end of large central overhangs. Continue traverse line to reach gangway which is followed rightwards to below steep corner crack in centre of left bounding wall of main groove. Climb this crack (crux) to platform level with big black roof on right. Easier rocks lead to the summit of the buttress in 35 ft.

—*Rebound*.

600 ft. Severe. D. Chapman & J. R. Sutcliffe. 25th August 1966.

This is the first feasible line round the corner to the left, on the west gully wall. Start from the gully just above the first waterfall.

Climb diagonally right to break in overhang close to right skyline. Gain small slab and follow this to grassy ramp (90 ft.). Follow gangway up right, then back left and up to obvious chimney-groove with small overhang at top (120 ft.). Escape directly or on right wall. Easier climbing above.

—*Tenderfoot*.

650 ft. Severe. D. Chapman & J. R. Sutcliffe. 25th August 1966.

At far right-hand side of main face is a prominent sloping corner topped by an inclined roof at 130 ft.

Climb corner to roof, then traverse right across slab to chimney-cracks (150 ft.). Climb these for 35 ft. to platform, then head back up wall on left past a flake to reach sloping ledge with perched boulder (55 ft.). Groove on right leads to the grassy terrace. Easier rocks follow.

**North-West Face.**—*Gargantuan*. 1200 ft. Very Severe. J. Estcott & G. Hardie. 24th June 1969.

The climb follows the right-hand edge of Goliath Buttress. At the bottom right-hand corner of the buttress a line of cracks slopes up to the right. Start just below this at a shallow groove (arrow).

Climb groove, then follow edge of buttress for 100 ft. to flake belay below slightly overhanging wall. Traverse 20 ft. left, then up slabs and grooves to large ledge below right end of block overhangs girdling front of buttress. Peg belay (90 ft.). Follow trap-dyke right for 15 ft., up then left below one overhang and out onto lip of overhang above previous stance (crux). Up wall and slab above to ledge. Peg belay (75 ft.). Climb for 120 ft. above to large terrace. Now follow crest of buttress for several pitches to join North-West Buttress.

**Sgùrr a'Mhàdaidh: North-West Face.**—*Claptrap*. 800 ft. Severe. D. Chapman & J. R. Sutcliffe. 21st August 1966.

This is a disappointing climb up the west spur of the North-West Buttress which, from the corrie, looks like a steep unbroken rib. In fact, it consisted of a series of steep walls between broad scree ledges, sloping down into the Amphitheatre.

Take a direct line from just above the main waterslide at the mouth of the Amphitheatre. The climb deteriorates after three pitches.

**Sgùrr MhicCoinnich: Coireachan Rudha Face.**—*Cocoa Cracks*. 550 ft. Very Severe. J. Barraclough & J. B. Cooper. June 1969.

The route follows the 'huge right-angled corner' in the very front of the buttress, midway between Crack of Dawn and Fluted Buttress.

Scramble up slab to foot of corner (20 ft.). Climb corner (wet) to stance and peg belay at ledge on right (60 ft.). Climb chimney above to peg belay below overhang (70 ft.). Climb the overhang (wet) using two jammed nut handholds and continue in wide chimney to belay in nook (50 ft.). Climb narrowing chimney above (wet) via the right arête to reach easy ground. Belay at next steepening (50 ft.). Easier rocks lead onto the Crack of Dawn finish (300 ft.).

**Sròn na Ciche: South Crag, Coir'a'Ghrunnda.**—*Mega Route*. 600 ft. Very Severe. J. R. Dempster & J. I. Wallace. 20th May 1968.

The climb follows the left edge of South Crag Gully.

Climb obvious crack left of gully past an overhang at 90 ft. to spike belay (120 ft.). Continue up crack to the Horizontal Ledge (50 ft.). Climb depression and corner above, then exit left to easier ground (90 ft.). Scramble up to the Pinnacle Rake and finish by the corner above (190 ft.).

## ARRAN

**Beinn Nuis: East Face.**—*Beinn Nuis Chimney*. 430 ft. GRADE IV-V. J. Crawford & W. Skidmore. 15th February 1970.

The summer route was followed throughout in nails. The chimney held plenty of ice and rather too much snow and gave a most concentrated climb.

Referring to the pitch-numbers in the Guide, Pitch 1 was obliterated, Pitches 2 and 3 were hard ice-pitches, Pitch 4 was easy snow, Pitch 5 was climbed by lassoing the larger chockstone, Pitch 6 (probably the crux) was on mixed ice and rock and required a peg for aid on the final move and Pitch 7 was easy snow. Time on first ascent, 5½ hours.

Skidmore notes that sufficient ice is usually found after any good freeze up of 4-5 days.

**Beinn Tarsuinn: Full Meed Tower.**—*Voodoo Child*. 300 ft. Very Severe. G. Little (ldr.) & J. Dykes. 12th September 1969.

The climb lies up the face of the Tower facing the Beinn Nuis cliffs. The Tower rises above steep slabs and a heather rake slants up from right to left to the base of the Tower. Start at the left end of the rake just right of the left-hand corner of the Tower, a few feet left of an overhang (arrow).

Climb corner crossing small roof to small ledge (5 pegs and 3 chocks used, 55 ft.). Up groove to small grassy triangle, then up crack to horizontal crack and move left to rock platform on corner of Tower (35 ft.). Climb up left of leaning block to two roofs. Using crack and narrow ledge move right above lower roof. Continue rightwards, then up into sentry-box stance and peg belay (3 pegs, 50 ft.). Exit left and follow crack (1 peg) to triangular inset block. Move right into chimney corner and then up overhang of jammed blocks (1 peg) to rock ledge (40 ft.). Climb crack and chimney past jammed block to block-strewn ledge. Scramble to top (120 ft.).



**Beinn Tarsuinn; Meadow Face.**—*The Curver*. 420 ft. Very Severe. R. Carrington & I. Fulton. 14th June 1969.

The route follows a series of grooves in the area of overlapping slabs on the right side of the face. Scramble up 200 ft. of broken slabs and grass to the ledge where The Rake starts. Start 10 ft. right of this.

Climb slab and groove to small stance and peg belay above damp corner (80 ft.). Climb groove on right for 30 ft. then pull up onto higher slab on right. Follow slab corner for 40 ft., move out right, then go up to small stance and peg belay (90 ft.). Go leftwards to gain foot of narrow slab corner which follow to deep crack. Climb this or layback shelf on right to large ledge and block belay (130 ft.). Pull round edge on right on quartz holds and follow line of holds across slab to corner and belay (120 ft.). Scramble to grass terrace below Meadow Slabs.

**Caisteal Abhail; Portcullis Buttress.**—*Donjon*. 220 ft. Severe. P. Brian & R. Campbell. April 1969.

Further up the left flank of the Buttress than Lee Climb there is a line of corners culminating in a stepped overhanging layback crack. On the short corner below this pitch a threaded sling was used to provide a foothold and left in place. When dry this may be eliminable. The start is just below a small cave in the streambed left of the wall.

**Cir Mhòr; Rosa Pinnacle, West Flank.**—*Insertion*. 450 ft. Very Severe. R. Carrington & I. Fulton. 15th June 1969.

Start between Anvil and Anvil, Recess Start.

Climb straight up slab and go through overlap at same point as Anvil. Step left and go straight up steep slab until it is necessary to go right for belay (140 ft.). Move back left and climb rounded bulging groove to beneath overhang. Traverse slab below overhang and climb groove to poor stance and chockstone belay below roof (70 ft.). Pull out right onto ledge and go easily up and left to peg belay below steep wall (70 ft.). Go up and left, then traverse right below overhang. Traverse round edge to crack and climb to stance and belay (90 ft.). Follow ridge to triple chimney pitch on South Ridge Direct which follow to grass terrace below upper pinnacle.

## NORTHERN HIGHLANDS I

**Beinn Bhàn.**—Dr Patey writes, 'The mountain harbours in its three great eastern corries an uninterrupted two-mile succession of 600-1200-ft. crags, whose resources have scarcely been tapped. There is also a hidden far northern corrie of which little is known. The Beinn Bhàn crags in area and conformation are more impressive than Corrie Arder of Creag Meaghaidh and the number of potential winter lines is perhaps doubled.'

As with Creag Meaghaidh, the rocks are not well laid out for rock-climbing, although there is one really outstanding crag as yet inviolate with a steeper uniform angle than any British crag of comparable height. The winter prospects are really exciting with scope for at least thirty GRADE IV-V routes of around 1000 ft. Because of the coastal environment, the winter climbing season is short, but snow comes more quickly into condition for climbing, so that, by and large, opportunities for good ice climbing are not really much less frequent than elsewhere.'

**Coire na Poite.**—This is the great bowl-shaped central corrie, known locally as the Sanctuary. In its left-hand back corner are two fine classic gullies.



**Beinn Bhàn: Coire na Poite.**—*March Hare's Gully.* 1000 ft. GRADE IV. C. J. S. Bonington & T. W. Patey. 1st March 1969.

The nearer of the two gullies. It exits exactly at the point where the dividing ridge from A'Chioch joins the summit plateau skyline. There are at least ten definite ice pitches, one or two of which could be avoided on the left. The ascent was made without ropes in the dark and occupied 1½ hours. Dr Patey estimates 4-5 hours on the average. Two pitches, the first and one in the middle reaches were avoided and the gully finished by the easier right fork. Dr Patey remarks that the gully is frequently in condition and, under normal circumstances, all pitches should be climbable, giving a longer and more sustained climb than Strawberry Gully.

**A'Chioch.**—*North Gully.* 400 ft. GRADE II. A. Fyfe (ldr.), Mrs C. MacInnes & Miss M. Alburger. 2nd March 1969.

This short gully lies just within the entrance to Coire na Poite on the wall of A'Chioch and emerges halfway up the A'Chioch spur. The gully included an easy initial cave pitch, a more awkward chockstone in the upper half which was turned on the left and a steep chimney finish by the left-hand fault.

—*Dividing Ridge.* GRADE II. J. Brown & T. W. Patey. February 1968.

This ridge connects A'Chioch with the summit plateau. Dangerous wind-slab conditions.

**Beinn Eighe: Coire Mhic Fhearchair, Central Buttress.**—*Readymix.* 315 ft. Severe. M. Green & J. R. Sutcliffe. 3rd June 1968.

The massive left half of the main sandstone tier is vertical for nearly 200 ft., with an overhanging base. Separating this bulging mass from the less steep right half of the tier is a shallow rightward-slanting groove, the first real weakness. The climb follows this groove until it becomes possible to break out left onto the upper part of the bulging mass. Start on the terrace about 50 ft. left of the detached block at the start of Original Route.

Climb 15 ft. to the top of small projecting rib then up left onto small slab to gain foot of groove. Climb groove past small ledge at 40 ft. to a bigger ledge and chockstone belay (90 ft.). Avoid bulge on the right and continue in groove to ledge and belay (80 ft.). Continue, trending left up short wall, then go round below pillar of blocks which is then climbed. Climb steep wall to ledge and belay (45 ft.). Easy slabs and short walls lead to the Broad Terrace (100 ft.). On the second tier, an impressive, steep 150-ft. flake crack on the left was followed and proved to be only Difficult.

**Eastern Ramparts.**—*Rampart Wall.* 400 ft. Very Severe. J. A. Austin & D. G. Roberts. 27th May 1969.

In the lower half of the Eastern Ramparts, below and just left of the pink dièdre of Boggle is a prominent corner. The climb starts below this and slants slightly leftwards up the crag, passing left of some prominent square-cut overhangs at half-height.

Climb for 80 ft. trending leftwards with a few moves right at 60 ft. to good stance about level with middle of prominent corner and 20 ft. to its left. Climb thin flake crack for 20 ft. then go left into next crack line to reach ledge on girdle traverse in 60 ft. Pinnacle belay just left of large shallow cave. Climb bulging crack above to top of pointed pinnacle, step left into crack line which leads to pinnacle belay (80 ft.). Go left a few feet and up to belay at foot of narrow slab slanting up to the right (70 ft.). Climb narrow slab to ledge, then continue on same line to further ledge and belay (75 ft.). Climb small wall and rib on right to finish (35 ft.).

**Beinn Eighe: Coire Mhic Fhearchair, Eastern Ramparts.**—*Cornice Groove*. 200 ft. Very Severe. J. A. Austin & D. G. Roberts. 27th May 1969.

At the left hand end of the Ramparts just before the steep part of the cliff falls back and becomes more broken there is a slim V-groove with an overhang at 90 ft. The route follows this groove, turning the overhang on its left. There is a belay at 130 ft. after which the climbing becomes easier.

**Liathach: Spidean a'Choire Leith.**—*Trollers*. 1000 ft. GRADE II. F. Fotheringham, B. T. Hill & P. Steele. 1½ hours. 2nd March 1968.

This is the obvious, steep and narrow gully cleaving the ridge dividing the North-east Corrie of Spidean and Choire Dhuibh Bhig.

**Meall Gorm, Applecross.**—*The Blue Pillar*. GRADE IV. J. Brown & T. W. Patey. February 1968.

The gully on the right of the Pillar was followed for 200 ft. and there abandoned due to falling ice. The summer line up the Pillar was then joined below its main difficulties and followed thereafter. It was well plastered and verglassed.

**Sgùrr a'Chaorachain: A'Chioch.**—There is possibly some overlap between Dr Patey's route and Cioch Corner. Gritstone Grooves may be the right-hand of the two corners mentioned in last year's New Climbs (*S.M.C.J.*, 1969, xxix, 189).

**Lower Tier.**—*Cleavage*. 500 ft. Very Severe. C. W. Dracup & R. Hobbs; M. Green & J. R. Sutcliffe. 1st June 1968.

On the usual southern approach, the Lower Tier is seen to consist of a number of very steep grooves and corners and a belt of overhangs. Roughly below the point on the Midway Terrace where the Nose starts is a light-coloured area. Just right of this is a corner running the full height of the Lower Tier. The route took the shorter, less steep corner further right, starting about 100 ft. above a slabby spur at the foot of the face. Immediately left of the corner is a prominent overhanging beak.

Climb the rightward slab and heather to ledge at foot of corner (100 ft.). Climb corner to small stance below slight overhang between the offset continuation of the corner on the right and a vertical layback crack on the left (1 peg, 40 ft.). Layback up crack for 10 ft. till a long reach left makes possible a pull across left wall onto small ledge (crux), then climb up and rightwards to ledge and belay above corner (90 ft.). Variable climbing follows, trending slightly leftwards up short walls and heathery grooves towards ledge on top of rib with twin overhangs (160 ft.). The rib may be passed on right or left. The steep corner-groove above may be climbed but better is to move up leftwards from the ledge, round the rib, then straight up to more broken ground leading to the Midway Terrace about 25 yds. right of the projecting Nose.

There were signs of previous exploration as far as the foot of the layback crack.

**Upper Tier.**—*Gritstone Grooves*. Very Severe. R. F. Allen & M. Allen. 25th May 1969.

Left of the start of the Nose on the Midway Terrace is a large overhang with a steep groove immediately left of it.

Climb the groove (2 pegs) to a nose, move into right-hand groove and go up to where it steepens. The groove continues past a chockstone to grassy ledges. Follow main groove, easily at first, then over bulge to steep crack with slab on left. Climb this to easier ground. Carry straight on up next steep section and easier rock above, following the line of the groove.

**Sgùrr a' Chaorachain: A' Chioch, Upper Tier.**—*Snothard*. 380 ft. Very Severe. C. W. Dracup & R. Hobbs. 25th May 1969.

This is the line of grooves starting 20 ft. left of the chimney pitch of the Nose.

Start as for the Nose and climb up to foot of steep wall left of chimney (100 ft.). Climb groove till possible to step left onto slab on lip of conspicuous overhang. Climb slab and crack above to ledge (70 ft.). Move left and climb crack past three overhangs (80 ft.). Easy slabs and grooves lead to top (130 ft.).

—*Cioch Nose Direct*. 500 ft. Very Severe. T. W. Patey (ldr.) & H. MacInnes. 9th June 1968.

This direct line excludes the only substandard section on the original 1960 route and further enhances a remarkably fine climb. Together with Cleavage (see above) it gives 1000 ft. of climbing to the top of the Cioch.

Start from the Midway Terrace directly underneath the Nose at a huge mossy dièdre. Climb this for 20 ft., then cross left wall to reach awkward 20 ft. slot (crux). This gives access to the bold rib left of the huge dièdre. The angle continues vertical but the holds are prolific and the climb henceforward is no more than Difficult. Belay at first good ledge 70 ft. above (130 ft.). Continue straight up fine exposed sandstone to join the original route below the third pitch (50 ft.). Continue as for original route.

—*Cioch Corner*. 400 ft. Very Severe. C. W. Dracup & R. Hobbs. 25th May 1969.

This is the obvious dark corner between the original Nose route and Maxilla (see below).

Climb corner past old peg and exit right to ledge (70 ft.). Continue to grassy recess at 30 ft., then follow line of groove over bulge then up right wall to ledge (100 ft.). Above, the groove overhangs at first then leads on to grassy bay (70 ft.). Easier climbing to top of Cioch (110 ft.).

—*The Maxilla*. 450 ft. Very Severe. C. W. Dracup & R. Hobbs. 3rd June 1968.

Start on the Midway Terrace 60 ft. right of the projecting Nose at the first break right of Cioch Corner.

Climb break via obvious groove through overhangs to triangular ledge below corner capped by large overhang (60 ft.). Traverse 20 ft. left and climb left edge of corner (60 ft.). Above are four parallel grooves. Climb over small roof into left-hand groove, go up this and exposed slab above to belay below large corner (75 ft.). Climb corner (65 ft.). Easier rocks lead to top of Cioch (200 ft.).

—*Lap of the Gods*. 500 ft. Very Severe. R. How & J. R. Sutcliffe. 25th May 1969.

Well right of the previous climbs, this route finds a way up the steep upper half of the face by way of an obvious overlapping slab leading out of North-West Gully, below a belt of overhangs. The start is best approached by traversing from the Midway Terrace and scrambling up the gully to the point where it becomes a very steep open chimney.

Climb steep grey rib just right of chimney (40 ft.). Traverse leftwards across slab to fine airy stance on far lip (65 ft.). Go straight up wall above (crux) to a good ledge at 15 ft. A steep groove above is barred by overhangs, so traverse left to flakes below overhanging nose (45 ft.). Pass just left of nose to enter shallow corner leading to easier ground (50 ft.). At this level it would be possible either to move left to join the original Nose line or right into the upper part of North-West Gully. A direct continuation was taken up steep rocks to the summit. Scramble to below prominent rib above (60 ft.). Climb rib in two pitches to reach steep final wall (150 ft.). Go slightly right

up black, slabby wall to ledge (40 ft.). Continue steeply leftwards past a poised pinnacle into a steep groove leading by strenuous laybacks through a break left of overhangs. Step back right above and climb straight up to top of Cioch.

**Sgùrr a'Chaorachain: A'Chioch—South Face.**—More than halfway up the Bealach nam Bo road to Applecross at O.S. point 1259 ft. a series of fine pillars rise almost from the roadside. The furthestmost and most compact gives the line of the Sword of Gideon (see *S.M.C.J.*, 1962, xxvii, 272). The nearest pillar, equally steep but more bristling, is the line of the following climb by Dr Patey.

—*The Sword-Stick*. 500 ft.

Severe. T. W. Patey (ldr.) & J. Cleare. 11th April 1968.

From the roadside climb clean elabs aiming for a central groove which is the key to the overhanging 200-ft. tier. This groove lies left of an area of waterworn rock (150 ft.). From platform below groove, climb 20-ft. prow on right, step left below overhang to groove and climb steep left wall for 30 ft. (crux). Trend leftwards up easier ledges to belay on edge of inset grassy groove (100 ft.). Avoid groove by climbing front of buttress edging right at top to grassy terrace (60 ft.). Walk 30 ft. right along terrace and climb obvious 100-ft. chimney breaching the second tier. Continue more easily by the right-hand rib to the top.

—*Recess Rib*. 640 ft. Very

Severe. J. A. Austin & K. Wood. 25th May 1969.

Directly above the car park and to the left of a steep square cut corner is a very steep dark coloured recess. The climb follows a thin crack in the right-hand rib of the recess.

Climb easy slabs up towards the recess to belay (100 ft.). Continue to just below the recess then traverse right to prominent square ledge (60 ft.). Climb thin crack in right hand rib of recess, pull over nose and belay a few feet higher on the right (70 ft.). Climb V-groove above on the right and continue to terrace (130 ft.). A further 130 ft. of cracks and walls followed by a prominent square chimney above the belay leads to a belay beneath a long corner. Climb corner to good belay ledge on right (150 ft.). Scramble to top in 20 ft.

**Sgùrr Ruadh: Upper Coire Lair.**—*Post Box Gully*. 600 ft. GRADE II. A. Fyffe. March 1969.

This is the narrow well defined gully on the left of the corrie recognisable by a huge chockstone near its foot. Climb up to the chockstone and continue beneath it to emerge from a slot at the top. Small pitches remain to be climbed.

—*Brown Gully*. 350 ft. GRADE III.

A. Fyffe. March 1969.

This is the gully just right of Wide Gully.

Slant up right to turn a corner of the gully and continue up over an ice pitch. Climb straight up to where the gully narrows and steepens. Climb a groove in the right wall and return to the gully as soon as possible. Continue easily to top.

## NORTHERN HIGHLANDS II

**An Teallach: Toll an Lochain.**—*Constabulary Couloir*. 1200 ft. GRADE II. T. W. Patey (ldr.), Sgt. D. Smith & Constables M. Macdonald, A. Moir & A. Sutherland.

This is the long shallow couloir on the right of the Corrag Buidhe South Buttress (top 3050 ft.) occupying the angle between this prominent shoulder

and the main crags of Corrag Buidhe. It is a snow ribbon throughout most winters and is one of the few consistent winter lines on An Teallach. There are no real pitches apart from an easy avoidable lower ice-fall. Not a descent route.

**An Teallach: A'Ghlas Toll.**—*Checkmate Chimney*. 700 ft. GRADE IV. T. W. Patey (ldr.) & C. J. S. Bonington. 2 hrs. 3rd March 1969.

This is the best winter line in A'Ghlas Toll and follows the long vertical chimney on the back wall of the corrie which is in full view during the usual approach from the Dundonell road. It is the first obvious major line left of the easy slopes at the back of the corrie and is frequently in good condition.

A 30-ft. step leads to 200 ft. of snow ending at a fierce 100 ft. ice waterfall pitch. A vertical recessed channel goes up the right side of the fall to a bollard runner at 30 ft. where the cleft twists awkwardly left to end 20 ft. higher in an overhanging canopy of icicles. A delicate airy step right leads off the ice and the gully is regained 20 ft. higher. Above this one enters the long enclosed chimney section, climbed in two long runouts, each containing at least two small ice-pitches. The climb ends in an easy 200-ft. snow channel. Probable average time 4 hours.

**Beinn Dearg: Coire Ghrannnda.**—*Yon Spool*. 850 ft. GRADE III. D. W. Duncan & M. Rennie. 3 hours. 2nd March 1969.

This is the gully left of the 'deep black chasm' mentioned on p.151 of the new *Climbers' Guide*. Three pitches near the top provide the main difficulty.

**Inverlael Gullies, Glensquaib.**—Dr Patey notes that there are 6 well defined gullies on the right side of the glen before reaching the wide easy gully known as the Cadha Amadhan (Fools' Pass). Immediately beyond this lies the main mass of Beinn Dearg, the huge West Buttress. The nearest two gullies were visited by Sproul & McKeith (see *S.M.C.J.*, 1968, xxix, 57). The remaining four gullies are described in sequence below.

—*Orangeman's Gully*. 500 ft. GRADE III. T. W. Patey.  $\frac{1}{2}$  hour. 10th March 1968.

A narrow, twisting, bow-shaped gully. Three ice pitches, the first being the hardest, lead to a bend in the gully, beyond which it is easy.

—*Emerald Gully*.

Possibly not yet climbed. Mainly green ice and obviously GRADE IV if climbed direct.

—*Fenian Gully*. 500 ft.

GRADE III-IV. T. W. Patey. 1 hour. 11th March 1968.

This, the best of the gullies, has no single crux, but all the first 350 ft. is continuous high angled ice climbing. Dr Patey remarks that the quality of the ice is variable and requires a severe frost. He compares the route to Green Gully on Ben Nevis.

—*Papists' Passage*. 600 ft.

GRADE III. T. W. Patey.  $\frac{1}{2}$  hour. 10th March 1968.

The furthestmost and deepest of the gullies. The main obstacle is a huge chockstone above a cave, 250 ft. up, which was climbed by the right-hand corner.

**West Buttress.**—Dr Patey notes that the buttress has two main facets, the North West Face, immediately left of the Cadha Amadhan and containing Inverlael Gully and Gastronomes' Gully (see *Climbers' Guide*, p. 154). This bends round to the North Face, which contains West Buttress and Penguin Gully (*Guide*, p.155). This latter climb is identical to Nomad's Gully (see *S.M.C.J.*, 1968, xxix, 57). The following three routes lie on the North Face and are described from left to right.

**Beinn Dearg: West Buttress.**—*Vanishing Shelf.* 1000 ft. GRADE IV. J. Bower & D. W. Duncan. 5 hours. 26th March 1969.

This is the steep twisting gully left of Penguin Gully and gives sustained and interesting route-finding in the lower section. Thereafter the gully proper terminates in a chimney cul-de-sac and the natural line continues by a spiralling shelf on the left.

—*Eigerwanderer.* 1000 ft. GRADE III. T. W. Patey (ldr.) & J. Cleare. 18th March 1969.

The route starts up a minor V-shaped gully about 50 ft. right of the lowest ice fall of Penguin Gully and follows a more or less direct line with a tendency to edge away rightwards from the rib of West Buttress Route. One passes two side branches leading leftwards into Penguin Gully and an easy traversing ledge system on the right before the shallow gully continues as a high-angled shelf inclining slightly rightwards and very awkward at the start. This 300 ft. section is quite technical and exposed but ultimately links up with a long shallow gully in the upper part of the face. This again peters out after 200 ft., and 100 ft. beyond that one transfers rightwards to a long broad shelf leading up to a little col on the West Buttress Route, immediately below the summit cornice.

—*The Silken Ladder.* 1000 ft. GRADE III. T. W. Patey. 1½ hours. 11th March 1969.

To the right of the previous climb is a large slabby area with a central ice ribbon formed by a watercourse originating at a prominent ice cascade 700 ft. up in the ill defined spur which divides the North and North-west Faces. This climb follows the right side of the slabby area and continues by the right edge of the 100 ft. ice cascade to finish up the dividing spur. Start opposite the middle of the lochan at least 150 ft. right of the ice ribbon. Trend slightly leftwards for 350 ft. towards a patch of orange rock near the top corner of the slabby area. Here it should be possible and somewhat easier to continue edging leftwards to join Eigerwanderer in its upper reaches but on this ascent an ice trough was climbed on the right for 80 ft. A right traverse led to an icy slab and a small basin below the ice cascade. Climb steeply onto the spur just right of the cascade and return by a higher ledge to regain the ice trough above the cascade by a delicate step. Follow the ice trough and then the dividing spur to the top.

Dr Patey commends this and the previous route, comparing them favourably with the Little Brenva routes on Ben Nevis. The Silken Ladder is more difficult than Eigerwanderer but has a less distinctive line. He remarks that numerous variations are possible on both lines and hence only a brief (sic) guide to their location is given. They are frequently in good winter condition and the crag is perhaps the most consistent and one of the most accessible winter crags in the region.

**Beinn a'Mhuinidh: Bonnaidh Donn.**—*The Tallon.* 260 ft. Very Severe. J. A. Austin & D. G. Roberts. 26th May 1969.

This takes the line of a very shallow groove, undercut at its base and about 40 ft. right of Safari.

Climb slabs and thin crack to stance under overhangs at 35 ft. Go left a few feet and pull over overhangs at highest point. Climb up and round to right to enter steep shallow groove which follow for 80 ft. till possible to traverse left and go up to a small stance on rib (120 ft.). Climb directly over two overhangs above stance then climb slabs to stance behind large flake about 15 ft. right of main corner (70 ft.). Climb steep wall to finish (35 ft.).

—*The Bow.* 260 ft. Very Severe. J. A. Austin & D. G. Roberts. 26th May 1969.

Start at a 15-ft. flake about 90 ft. right of Safari and follow a prominent wide flake crack.

Climb flake and traverse left to small ledge. Climb up to small overhang on left where thin crack leads to good stance and excellent thread belay (75 ft.). Go up and left for 35 ft. to foot of prominent flake crack which climb for 50 ft. The steep corner above is then climbed in 85 ft.

**Creag Mhòr Tollaidh: Lower Tollie Crag.**—*Catastasis*. 350 ft. Very Severe. B. Andrew & C. Jackson. 1st August 1968.

Start as for The Trip. Climb the shorter corner and rib of The Trip, then traverse right down sloping vegetations ramp to obvious corner. Climb corner to small tree on right, then groove above. Move right to sloping ledge, then up to constricted stance. Peg belay (120 ft.). Climb crack behind stance to detached flake. Move left to crack proper and go up this to small stance and peg belay (80 ft.). Climb diagonal crack behind stance (1 peg) to foot-sized ledge on left. Continue up and left to upper stance on The Trip (50 ft.). Move up and then left from stance and across to trees. Climb large flake on right to top (100 ft.). (See *Northern Highlands Notes*).

### NORTHERN HIGHLANDS III

**Beinn Laoghal: Chaonasaid.**—*Navytex Gully*. 500 ft. Very Difficult. H. M. Brown. 3rd June 1968.

From the northern prow of Chaonasaid a burn comes down to the edge of the wood (Coille na Cuile). This is the line of the climb, followed in a vain quest for water during a drought. Some clean rock at the foot but higher up it is a mixture of easy ground and incredibly loose walls, all very nasty.

**Am Buachaille.**—This 200-ft. sandstone pinnacle is a prominent landmark on the shoreline south of Sandwood Bay. The stack is comparable in height and proximity to the shore with The Old Man of Stoer. However the rock, though reasonably sound, is not of the same impeccable quality.

—200 ft. Very Severe. T. W. Patey (ldr.), J. Cleare & I. Clough. 23rd July 1967.

Cross at low tide a 25-ft. channel using ladders or swimming (seaweed hazards) and fix 150 ft. Tyrolean rope. From low-tide mark this allows approximately four hours to complete the climb before the anchorage on shore becomes awash.

Start left of centre and climb overhanging rocks up and onto prow on right. Continue straight up till impending rocks force a traverse along horizontal ledge on left. Climb left edge for 15 ft. to large ledge and large rusty belay peg (80 ft.). From inset corner of ledge make an awkward move up and across retaining wall to ledge on right edge. Continue up to inset crack of 30 ft. Climb this on dubious rock to another left traverse and belay on left edge (60 ft.). Return to centre below deep overhanging crack. From base traverse left below overhangs till mantleself can be made up between two large 'soup-plates.' Cross slab to rejoin main crack. Pull out awkwardly at top (60 ft.).

**Clett Rock, Holborn Head.**—This stack is about 160 ft. high and is separated from the mainland cliffs by an 80-ft. sea-channel (O.S. ND106 717). Although it would be possible to abseil down the mainland cliffs with a dinghy to paddle to the rock, this course is not advisable, because of dangerous currents. Instead, contact lobster fisherman Wm. Macdonald, Scrabster, who will deposit climbers on the rock and collect later for a nominal fee. Particular heed should be paid to any advice given by the aforesaid Mr Macdonald regarding weather and tides. Waves hitting the rock in a storm can send spray right over the top.



**Clett Rock, Holborn Head.**—*West Route*. 160 ft. Severe & A2. R. Jolly, M. Willis & D. Young. 14th June 1969.

From extreme left of landing platform move round corner and climb steep slab 10 ft. to ledge, move left along this then up next ledge. Peg belay (30 ft.). Step up and round corner from left end of ledge climb steep slab to overhanging crack. Climb this using bongs and channels to ledge and peg belay (40 ft.). Climb wall from left of ledge a few feet, then make awkward move right onto small platform. Easy rocks lead to next large ledge and peg belay (50 ft.). Climb prominent crack up overhanging wall to ledge and so to summit (40 ft.). Abseil back down.

**Creag Shomhairle.**—*The Ramp*. 350 ft. Very Severe. R. How & J. R. Sutcliffe. 28th May 1969.

This is a splendid climb taking the only feasible line through the steepest and most intimidating part of the face. It follows the obvious diagonal fault which starts about 50 yards along the terrace from the right-hand end of the main face and slants up leftwards as a narrow slab, continuous apart from one section in the middle.

Straightforward climbing up the slab leads to belay by large cracked flake below overhang (100 ft.). Move out left onto wall, then up to where sharp-edged flake juts from roof. Follow fault-line awkwardly and strenuously to reach grassy corner below upper slab (60 ft.). Continue up left edge of slab to good stance and belay (40 ft.). Climb mossy steepening slab above to near its top where crack out on left leads to good belay (110 ft.). Cross heather groove rightwards to gain easy slabs above (40 ft.). A further 450 ft. of broken rocks and heather lead to the top. Alternatively, a pleasant right traverse across slabs for 300 ft. leads to top of Windy Corner which can conveniently be descended.

**Cul Mòr.**—*North West Ridge*. Moderate. Mr & Mrs H. MacInnes. 1968.

This ridge, which may have been climbed before, gave a pleasant scramble and included a small pinnacle, well seen from the road at Elphin.

**Foinaven: Ceann Garbh.**—*Coire Duail Grooves*. 650 ft. Severe. G. N. Hunter & D. F. Lang. July 1969.

This is the crag described in *S.M.C.J.*, 1969, xxix, 188. Start left of central slabs, follow series of obvious grooves for 300 ft. to flake belay below dark overhanging corner on left. Climb this to stance and belay. Follow corner on right for 150 ft. to grass ledge. From highest point on ledge climb chimney and grooved slab on right. 200 ft. of scrambling lead to the summit.

**Lord Reay's Seat, East Face.**—*Original Route*. 750 ft. Difficult. T. W. Patey (ldr.), A. Scott Russell (age 12), D. & N. Bull. 28th August 1964.

The lower chimney of Fishmonger looked too loose for the party's youthful element so the right edge of the buttress was climbed for 150 ft. A long traverse leftwards was then made round two corners to a large bay. Again the crux chimney of Fishmonger looked too hard and was circumvented by following a rib on the left skyline for 100 ft. before returning to the ridge for the finish. The route is therefore S-shaped and vertically scored by Fishmonger, which it ante-dates by a fortnight. The latter is obviously a better line and should stand as the guidebook route, adds Dr Patey. His purpose in recording this visit is that it was the first ascent of the buttress and also since it provides an easier alternative.

**The Great Stac of Handa.**—The stac, which is completely surrounded by sea, lies off the north coast of the island of Handa in Sutherland. See *Northern Highlands Notes* for more information about the Stac.

**The Great Stac of Handa.**—*Great Arch*. 380 ft. Very Severe. G. N. Hunter, D. F. Lang & H. MacInnes. July 1969.

The route lies on the north face of the Stac. Step off boat onto seaward side of Stac at steep green wall, peg runner in corner, and climb to ledge and belay (40 ft.). Climb wall right of belay to higher belay ledge. From here follow steep groove above to reach left traverse line above the Great Arch overhangs. Continue traverse left (peg runner) into hidden corner, surmount wall and overhang above to peg belays on the Diving Board. A further 150 ft. of easier climbing follows to more broken rocks below the top. Scramble by loose chimney to summit. The descent was made by abseiling down the 150-ft. pitch to the Diving Board. The boat was then lined up below into which the party enjoyed a dramatic free abseil from a jammed nut. The rock is excellent and comparatively bird-free.

**Stacan Geodh Bhrisidh.**—*Great Corner*. 200 ft. Very Severe. G. N. Hunter & D. F. Lang. July 1969.

This stac lies about ¼-mile east of the Great Stac but it is easily reached by descending steep grass from the cliff-top. The stac is really a huge flake which has slipped away from the main cliff.

Start at arrow in corner on landward side. Traverse left to easier but loose rock leading to peg belay below a great corner crack. Climb corner using 4 pegs to belay on ledge with piled blocks (70 ft.). Climb flakes behind belay to reach crest of ridge, traverse right on rounded ledge on steep face for 30 ft. Follow first groove above to reach summit cairn on knife edge. Descend the north-west face by abseiling from a bolt on summit to ledge 50 ft. below. From here a final 150-ft. abseil from a chockstone reaches the base of the stac.

**Old Man of Hoy, Orkney Islands.**—*Original Route*. Dr Patey writes "This route on the East Face is now climbed free. In the preparations for the 1967 TV spectacular, J. Brown led the 120-ft. second pitch on sight, using only two bongs for protection, completing the second ascent with P. Crew in 6 hours. It had two other genuine ascents, excluding a number of partially-assisted ascents and is now as clean as it is ever likely to be, with secure belay points at each stance. The long-suffering bird population show signs of migrating elsewhere. There is a small underground howff at the summit capable of sheltering 3 people. The route has been repeated by a young housewife, a 7-year-old and an Episcopalian minister. It can be said to have become classic."

—*South Face*. 450 ft. Very Severe. J. Brown & I. G. McNaught Davis. 8th-9th July 1967.

This gives more sustained difficulty than the east face route although no single pitch is as exacting as the latter route's 2nd pitch. It was led without reconnaissance for live TV and is still complicated by much loose rock. A superb free climb, which will improve as more visitors clean off the rubbish.

Climb the introductory shattered pillar (80 ft.). Continue to the perch on top of the Pillar (30 ft.). Traverse left across wall and climb insecure-looking flake crack. Traverse left along sensational ledge above to belay near left edge (95 ft.). Climb overhang and move left into crack line. Climb this to the Mouth (The TV Bivouac Site, 50 ft.). Climb overhang and move right into crack. Climb this to good belay ledge (70 ft.). Climb wall on right, then continue up crackline to good stance below grassy Haven (70 ft.). Scramble up Haven to good belay position (20 ft.). From back of Haven climb loose chimney on left to huge block, then up final groove to top (100 ft.).

—*South-East Arête*. 520 ft. Very Severe & A4. P. Crew & D. Haston. 8th-9th July 1967.

Follow Original Route to the top of the Pillar. From here continue directly up the wall above the belay keeping close to the arête. Cross a double

roof and go up wall above to fixed sling. Traverse right to arête and climb this to Gantry Ledge (30 pegs, 8 bolts, 150 ft.). Climb to small roof on arête. Follow thin crack for 20 ft., finishing with hard free move onto good ledge (3 pegs, 2 bolts, 30 ft.). Climb straight above belay for 10 ft., move right and climb straight up to obvious groove. Climb groove to the Bicycle Ledge (80 ft.). Climb short wall to another ledge. Climb awkward roof (1 peg) and step right into groove. Climb this for 10 ft. then traverse right to good ledge (50 ft.). Traverse back left into groove. Climb up 10 ft., then stomach-traverse right along a ledge. Climb bulge (1 bolt) and move up to foot of groove (80 ft.). Climb groove to large roof. Traverse under roof (2 pegs) and climb up groove to lower summit (50 ft.).

**Quinag: The Western Cliffs.**—Dr Patey writes, 'On the western aspect of Quinag overlooking the footpath from Loch Assynt to Nedd there is a continuous cliff frontage for about 2 miles. The easier buttresses are nearly all too plagued with heather to merit attention, but the vertical features should offer plenty of scope for hard climbs. As one climbs the footpath from Loch Assynt the following features are noted. Nearest at hand is (a) the lowest col, the Bealach a'Chornaidh between the Central Top and Spidean Coinnich (Pt. 2588), (b) Pt. 2448. The Central or Junction Top of Quinag, (c) a small col, (d) a square-topped tower, apparently unnamed, (e) a second small col, (f) a third small col, (g) Pt. 2551. Reference to these features may help to locate future explorations.'

'Tenements Ridge is on the right edge of a lower crag below the square-topped tower. The Pillar of Assynt (see below), the best looking feature, is a 250-ft. clean-cut column directly below the second small col. Ricketty Ridge (see below) is the most continuous of the rocky ribs in the centre of the wide crag between the second and third cols. A deep gully below the third col provides one of the few easy descent routes, and beyond this on the flank of Pt. 2551 is another huge and complex buttress, which may repay investigation. The further side of the buttress is riven by two very deep gullies—The Waste-Pipe and The Wind-Pipe (see below).'

—*The Pillar of Assynt*. 400 ft. Very Severe. T. W. Patey (ldr.) & H. MacInnes. 12th June 1968.

Climb 200 ft. of mixed heather and outcrop to the base of the Pillar. Climb up the centre of the Pillar, diverging ultimately to a sentry-box on the right edge immediately below the first overlap (100 ft.). Traverse right-hand wall for 10 ft. to enter a strenuous crack which is climbed for 25 ft. Traverse back horizontally left across a smooth wall to regain right edge of Pillar, directly above last stance (crux, 40 ft.). Climb slab on left to reach left edge of Pillar below crowning tower. Return right and climb up front to finish spectacularly (80 ft.). A narrow gangway and col lead to an easy shattered upper rib of 200 ft.

—*Ricketty Ridge*. 500 ft. Very Severe. T. W. Patey. 28th June 1968.

Climb first pitch by delicate upward traverse to left. Then carry straight on up the spine of the ridge to first steep section. Climb this on recessed right side to finish up corner crack. This leads to foot of final 150-ft. column. The hardest move is at the start (peg runner) by a committing hand-traverse to the right. Then climb straight up column turning top fringe by left edge. After a narrow neck and a short step the ridge loses its identity. The route needs clearing out before it could be recommended.

—*The Waste Pipe*. 500 ft. GRADE II. T. W. Patey (ldr.) & R. Ford. March 1965.

This is the nearer, more southerly of the two gullies mentioned above. It has some very exciting rock-scenery but no great difficulties and provides

a few short ice pitches in winter. Because it is so deeply recessed and faces north-west, it is the only gully on these cliffs which holds snow for any appreciable period.

**Quinag: The Western Cliffs.**—*The Wind Pipe*. 500 ft. Very Severe & GRADE II. T. W. Patey (ldr.) & J. Cleare. 17th March 1969.

The further gully mentioned above. Ideal conditions obtained on this ascent—hard snow as far as the Great Chimney, which was only lightly iced and otherwise dry. This is an extraordinary pitch, very technical and overhanging some 15 ft. in 120 ft. Above this the upper chimney presented no major difficulty. Much time was spent cleaning away giant icicles on the Great Chimney pitch which occupied 2 hours. Probably an unpleasant clammy place in summer, but a magnificent ice-pitch.

**The Barrel Buttress.**—Dr Patey writes, 'This buttress, on the north side of Quinag, is confusingly described in the present *District Guide*. When the pioneer route, undeservedly hallowed by tradition, is actually identified it scarcely qualified as an ascent of the buttress. The first ascent can instead be ascribed to the first of the two routes described below.

'Confusion arises from the fact that the Buttress is in two tiers. The climbing is all on the upper tier. The lower tier, however, is not referred to in the *Guide*. The upper tier is tri-sected vertically by two long straight chimney faults to form three separate sectors or Staves. The only worthwhile climbing is on the Central Stave, the true Barrel Buttress. The pioneers' route started below the left-hand chimney fault, made an excursion onto the left-hand flanking heathery face, and finished up the chimney. The few visitors have done little to remove the traditional vegetation, the standard is about Very Difficult and the route itself scarcely merits a visit. The two routes described below on the Central Stave. Both give very fine steep climbs on excellent rough sandstone.'

—*Mild*. 350 ft. Very Severe. T. W. Patey.

May 1962.

Start up rocks right of left-hand chimney fault. Several parties appear to have gone some way here in search of the guidebook route. Climb steeply on very good rock to the crux pitch about 150 ft. up, twin cracks in a slabby wall.

—*Bitter*. 350 ft. Very Severe. T. W. Patey (ldr.) & A. G. Nicol. Summer 1963.

Start up the opposite right-hand border of the Central Stave and climb obvious 50-ft. V-shaped depression, which contained an old abseil sling. The next 40-ft. wall could probably be climbed directly and would thus have avoided the detour to the left which was taken. Traverse back above the impasse, cross an inset corner to gain right bounding edge, which follow to top.

**Stack Polly.**—*Baird's Pinnacle*. This was first climbed by R.A.F. Kinloss using wooden wedges and a top rope. The crack on the inner wall was climbed free by T. W. Patey on June 12th 1968, involved very strenuous finger-jamming and proved to be Very Severe.

—*Virgin Pinnacle*. This was first climbed by I. Clough using wooden wedges. It was led free, via the obvious layback crack by members of the Cliff Assault Wing of the Royal Marines in May 1964, and was Very Severe.

**West Buttress.**—*Enigma Grooves*. 350 ft. Very Severe. T. W. Patey (ldr.) & R. Barclay. August 1965.

The two long diverging dièdres which seam the face of West Buttress can be easily distinguished from the road. The right-hand one is November

Grooves. The left-hand one, which looks easier, is in fact less accommodating and forms the line of the climb.

Climb into the large bay 100 ft. up from which both dièdres originate. The first pitch in the dièdre is the crux, a waterworn groove started by a layback. This is often wet and greasy and always V.S. Continue strenuously up the groove and chimneys to the final pitch. This was avoided by climbing the next corner to the right.

**Sgòrr Deas.**—This peak is on the opposite side of Loch Lurgainn from Stack Polly. It has a scrappy north face and a slightly more promising west face, overlooking Lochan Dearg. The cleanest looking rib was climbed by T. W. Patey in 1966. It gave a 300-ft. rather dirty Severe and is recorded merely to save other parties a wasted afternoon.

**Sgùrr an Fhìdhleir.**—*Direct Route.* 900 ft. Very Severe. N. Drasdo (ldr.) & C. M. Dixon. May 1962.

Dr Patey has supplied us with the following notes. 'Route details have not previously appeared in the *Journal*. Since 1962, two more successful ascents have been made, but at least a dozen parties have retreated below the crux section unable to find a route and evidence of failure is littered everywhere. The description given below refers to the line followed by T. W. Patey and J. M. Taylor on the second ascent in 1964, the route being one which most parties will tend to follow. In dry conditions and equipped with P.A.'s, Drasdo and Dixon climbed the upper edge absolutely directly. Our route deviates slightly from theirs and is somewhat easier.

The lower 550 ft., which was climbed years ago on the very first attempt by Ling and Sang, is vegetated, seldom dry and only interesting as an exercise in route-finding. This is not meant to disparage the original unsuccessful attempt, which was possibly the most audacious exploit in Scottish mountaineering up to that time.

The upper 350 ft. above the Great Slab, below which most parties have retreated is in complete contrast to what has gone before, offering a crescendo of magnificently-exposed sandstone pitches. These stamp the completed route as one of the great classics of the north-west. The Great Slab (halfway up the buttress and composed of distinctive pale rock) is transected by two thin fault lines. Its first tier is easy angled but the second is smoother and steeper. To avoid it most parties traverse round the left-hand border of the Slab and then climb a 40-ft. groove lined with disintegrating heather. At the upper ledge one is now at the start of the major difficulties. Drasdo & Dixon climbed the thin Parallel Cracks pitch near the edge of the Great Slab, a bold lead. We elected instead to climb the overhanging chimney crack, 30 ft. left of the edge.'

Above chockstone, where crack splits bulge, make awkward mantleshelf (crux). Trend right on good holds to belay on edge (50 ft.). Climb fine exposed pitch up the edge (120 ft.). Climb directly up the edge (Drasdo & Dixon) or cross slabs on left for 50 ft. to clean water-worn groove which follow to top (100 ft.).

—*The Magic Bow.* 900 ft. Very Severe. M. Boysen & T. W. Patey. 1st June 1967.

This route is on the slabby East Face, well to the left of the Direct Route. A huge bow-shaped groove is the main feature of the face, which is much steeper than it appears from the road. The route aims for the groove, follows it initially, then deviates onto the sea of slabs on the right. In dry conditions and P.A.'s it is possible to avoid any vegetable contact, and under such conditions the route is cleaner, harder and more sustained than the Direct Route.

Start below the bow-shaped groove and climb walls and slabs to corner below groove proper (300 ft.). Climb corner to grass ledge (50 ft.). Continue

in groove by straddling and laybacking to ledge and block belay (120 ft.). Continue in groove less pleasantly to horizontal grass ledge (a peg 30 ft. higher in an alcove marks a false cast) (50 ft.). Traverse 80 ft. along ledge across slabs, then climb up slab to stance and cairn (100 ft.). At point marked by arrow climb awkwardly over bulge to steep slabs. Continue up slabs trending right to short black groove. Peg belay on ledge above (120 ft.). Traverse right and climb short groove to top of large square block (20 ft.). Climb middle crack of three short steep cracks. Very hard and exposed (30 ft.). Easier rocks lead to the top (150 ft.). The third, sixth and eighth pitches were all Very Severe.

**Sgùrr an Fhìdhleir.**—*The Phantom Fiddler*. 950 ft. Very Severe. T. W. Patey. 11th June 1968.

This is another very hard line on the East Face, which follows more or less directly the rib on the left of the bow-shaped groove of the above route. This is a more serious climb than The Magic Bow, with perhaps a dozen Very Severe moves, but no pitch as hard as the penultimate pitch of that route. Dry conditions are absolutely essential, as the climbing is mainly on the slabs, the cracks being too vegetative.

Trend rightwards and climb the first corner pitch of The Magic Bow to reach the foot of the bow-shaped groove. Now traverse left by 30-ft. slab to reach higher heather terrace, with a prominent spike (350 ft.). Climb straight up slabbed wall above spike, veering left near top, then continue to large terrace (90 ft.). Move right a few feet to attack next wall by strenuous layback to reach jutting block at 20 ft. Traverse 10 ft. right and climb exposed slabs overlooking bow-shaped groove (90 ft.). 2 pegs were left on this pitch on the first ascent, when the rope jammed and was abandoned: it was salvaged from below on a later visit. Continue more easily to stance below prominent inverted V-cleft (60 ft.). Jam up cleft to strenuous pull-out (50 ft.). Here there are several possible continuations, all hard-looking. Climb narrow slabby groove on edge of bow-shaped groove abyss, gaining the foot of groove by a right traverse across slabs and round a projecting holdless edge. An overhang at the top of the groove was passed on the left and the pitch finished by a desperate grubby corner crack (1 peg left, 60 ft.). Go easily left, climb groove, return right and climb last 30 ft. to reach easy ground (60 ft.). Scramble to top directly and pleasantly (200 ft.). The second, third, fifth and sixth pitches were Very Severe.

## WESTERN HIGHLANDS

**Beinn Odhar Mhòr: Shiel Buttress.**—This buttress, on the lower slopes of the mountain overlooking Loch Shiel, forms part of the narrow ridge sweeping down in a south-easterly direction from Sgùrr an Iubhair (O.S. NM 859 780). The rock is extraordinarily compact and reliable. The buttress is about 400 ft. high and is well seen in profile from the road just east of Glenfinnan. On this occasion an approach was made along the shore of the loch. This proved very time-consuming due to heavy undergrowth and difficulties of access at the start. Future visitors would be well-advised to cross over the mountain from the pass between Lochs Shiel and Eilt. As mentioned in the *Western Highlands Guide*, the slopes of the Beinn Odhars offer plenty of scope for exploration, which should be rewarding if the quality of the rock elsewhere is as high as on Shiel Buttress.

—*The Rising*. 370 ft. Severe. R. Campbell & A. W. Ewing. May 1969.

The front of the buttress is divided by a dark overhung recess high up. Start at the lowest rocks of the left-hand section. Climb to a wide ledge where the buttress steepens (150 ft.). Climb up right then back left up steep shelf to small stance below overhangs (70 ft.). An old abseil sling was found here. Climb by grooves and cracks above to the top (150 ft.).

**An Riabhachan: North-East Face.**—*Spindrift Gully*. 650 ft. GRADE II. D. Smith & J. G. Stewart. 12th April 1969.

The gully cuts straight up through right half of prominent rock face lying just west of the Sgùrr na Lapaich col. It contains one pitch and is steep in its upper half.

## CAIRNGORMS

**Beinn Bhrotain: Coire Cath nam Fionn.**—*A' Gully*. 300 ft. GRADE I. G. Boyd. 20th April 1969.

The leftmost of the two gullies in the corrie was climbed by its right branch.

**Beinn a'Bhuird: An Garbh Choire, West Face of Mitre Ridge.**—*Commando Route*. 450 ft. GRADE IV. P. F. Macdonald & I. G. Rowe. 6½ hours. 9th March 1969.

The climb was made with powder snow overlying bare rock, involving much clearing of holds throughout the route. The right fork of the gully was followed. A complete banking-up of the initial wall would seem unlikely, if not unimaginable, and entry to the main gully was made along the line of the summer route, using tension from a peg high in the minor gully on the right. This would probably be the crux of any winter ascent and in good snow conditions that gully itself should present no major problems.

—*Slochd Wall*. 450 ft. Very Severe & A2. M. Rennie & G. S. Strange. 30th August 1969.

Start at foot of North-West Gully. Climb gully to first depression. Traverse onto wall on left via grass shelf to stance immediately above loose block. Alternatively, climb rib on right of Commando Route (80 ft.). Using pegs, go up right and climb steep slab on left of corner to overhang (1 bolt, A2). Surmount overhang (A3) and continue up corner to poor stance and bolt belay (A2, 120 ft.). Climb slightly overhanging wall (3 pegs) to vertical corner and straddle up this to ledge (50 ft.). Go up and right across wall (3 pegs) to ledge at top of corner and follow narrow ramp to grass terrace (50 ft.). Traverse right and finish up large blocks beside overhanging tower (150 ft.).

**Ben Macdhui: Creagan a'Choire Etchachan.**—*Architrave*. GRADE III-IV. A. Fyfe & J. McArtney. 2½ hours. 29th December 1969.

The route follows more or less the summer route up the series of ice grooves in the right corner of the Corridor. For the last pitch either continue up the grooves or move left round a ramp and so straight up.

—*Original Route*. GRADE IV.

J. Bower & G. Boyd. 23rd December 1969.

Follow the summer route to the 7-ft. pedestal. Climb chimney right of the 50-ft. wall to ledge and block belay. Hand-traverse the block to reach leftward-sloping ramp which follow for 40 ft. to point level with foot of V-groove of summer route. Climb steep constricted chimney parallel to groove to reach easy ground. The route gave steep sustained climbing, especially in the middle section.

—*The Cutlass*. 400 ft. Very

Severe. J. Bower & B. Lawrie. 19th September 1969.

Between Red Chimney and Djibangi is a big bow overlap. The route follows the edge of the overlap, then goes straight up.

Start 10 ft. right of Red Chimney, climb a short wall, then either of twin corners to exit on right. Cross grassy alcove to belay beneath overlap (140 ft.). Step onto edge of overlap, climb straight up, then step right to belay ledge



(30 ft.). Regain edge by delicate move and climb it to point 6 ft. right of Red Chimney where an upward move can be made over small overlap to gain grassy corner and belay (70 ft.). Continue up rib as far as junction with Flanking Ribs or, level with top of Djibangi dièdre, traverse right and down to finish by that route (200 ft.).

**Ben Macdhui: Shelter Stone Crag.**—*Castle Wall*. 700 ft. GRADE III. B. S. Findlay & G. S. Strange. 3 hours. 31st January 1970.

Difficulties were concentrated in the lower 300 ft. Thereafter interesting climbing with fine situations led to the plateau (no cornice).

—*Consolation Groove*. 900 ft. Very Severe. J. Cunningham & B. March. 2nd August 1969.

Start at right side of Raeburn's Buttress. Climb steep groove breaking left to grass ledge and peg belay (60 ft.). Step up right onto slab and move up to overhang (peg runner, 30 ft.). Move up and traverse right to corner, climb corner to grass ledge below steep groove slanting up left (100 ft.). Climb groove on left of ledge (3 pegs, greasy) to ledge and belay (140 ft.). Continue up groove, breaking left at 60 ft., and onto left edge which is climbed to greasy ledge (120 ft.). Go straight up groove to large ledge, scramble to foot of wall above with a long overhang (90 ft.). Climb up and traverse right, then up crack through break at right end of overhang to ledge and peg belay (80 ft.). Alternatively, climb direct on right edge. Step left and go up to large terrace (30 ft.). Scramble for 100 ft. Above is a buttress. Climb up prominent arête to overhang, surmount this, and continue to top (150 ft.). Scramble to top of buttress (50 ft.).

—*Postern, Direct Finish*. 330 ft. Very Severe. J. Cunningham & B. March. August 1969.

Climb Postern to the deep chimney pitch on its upper section. Above is a deep groove overhanging at intervals. Make a long stride into the groove from the right 10 ft. up. Climb groove (peg runner at 100 ft.) to ledge and peg belay (150 ft.). This groove is the right-hand one of the grooves encountered. Now climb steep slab above on widely-spaced holds moving towards its right edge, then straight up to second step. Belay (40 ft.). Above is a cave with a large square block jutting from its top. Climb crack on left wall to belay in sentry-box (40 ft.). Climb up on huge loose blocks to left of edge, which follow to top of crag (100 ft.).

—*West Ridge Route*. 800 ft. Difficult. B. March & party.

Start immediately left of Forefinger Gully. Climb broken rib for 400 ft. to foot of steep triangular buttress. Abseil diagonally right or climb down moderate rocks to gully (120 ft.). Climb right edge of buttress to first step on right flank of Shelter Stone Crag (160 ft.). Finish by last pitch of Clach Dhian Chimney (120 ft.).

—*Variation finish, Clach Dhian Chimney*. 160 ft. Severe. B. March & party.

This is the prominent V-groove left of the finish of the Chimney. Start from the large ledge. Climb groove directly with a belay at 60 ft.

**Braeriach: Coire Bhrochain.**—*The Fang*. 300 ft. Very Difficult. B. S. Findlay & G. S. Strange. 17th July 1969.

Between the chimney of Pioneers' Recess Route and an unnamed chimney on the left is a detached slabby buttress tapering to a 'spectacular hooked fang.' The buttress may be gained by climbing the lower slabs of the Recess Route or by traversing in from the left. Start from a grass ledge girdling the buttress and climb up and slightly right to belay below vertical crack in slab (120 ft.). Climb crack and go directly up to good stance at base of obvious

Start just right of the lowest rocks about 100 ft. above the snow and at the bottom of a shallow gully descending diagonally from the top of the first pitch in Phoenix Gully. Easy grooves lead up to small roofs. Avoid these by stepping right into steeper cracks (1 peg for foothold) which lead after 20 ft. to easy traverse left to stance (70 ft.). Continue up crack to overhang. Step left onto crest of buttress and move up on small holds and friction onto slab above. Continue up and right to small ledge (peg in place) and climb corner to stance beneath main belt of overhangs (sustained, 110 ft.). Climb crack above to easier ground and stance on right (30 ft.). Follow clean deep diagonal crack back left to fine stance on crest overlooking Phoenix Gully (70 ft.). Start nose above by short corner (above corner a right traverse leads back to main slab and would provide a finer, if harder, finish). Climb corner (1 peg foothold) and continue up left to small rounded ledges on edge. Pivot round on knee to left and climb shallow chimney to finish behind block (70 ft.). Easy rocks lead to plateau.

This route is considerably harder than Vulcan (see *S.M.C.J.*, 1969, xxix, 191) and comparable in difficulty to Centurion on Ben Nevis.

**Cairngorm: Coire an Lochain.**—There may well be some overlap between the various routes on No. 4 Buttress detailed below. As the start and general drift of Procrastination is not given in the description, it seemed wisest to publish both it and Dr Patey's routes, leaving clarification for later years.

**No. 1 Buttress.**—*Iron Butterfly*. 580 ft.  
GRADE III. S. Docherty & B. Gorman. 31st December 1969.

About 100 ft. below and left of The Vent is a 30-ft. groove. Climb groove to ledge, then go straight up and then right under sloping slab until mantle-shelf leads to foot of long overhanging crack. Peg belay (140 ft.). Go down and left until groove leads up onto shelf, which follow for about 100 ft. to another groove. Climb this and go up 20 ft. to belay (140 ft.). Go right and up short slabby groove. Continue right into gully, then go straight up and belay (150 ft.). Continue in gully to top (150 ft.).

—*Auricle*. 340 ft. Severe.  
J. Cunningham & B. March. 8th August 1969.

Start 20 ft. left of Ventricle (see below) at a broken, rather easy-looking crack. Climb crack and easy walls above, bearing left to good rock ledge beneath overhanging crack. Peg belay (150 ft.). Climb crack to good ledge and peg belay (60 ft.). Continue up crack to large fin-like flake. From top of flake climb overhanging recess to top of buttress, which is separated by crevasse from main face. Step across and up to plateau (130 ft.).

—*Ventricle*. 315 ft. Very Severe. J. Cunningham & G. Shields. Summer 1968.

Start on left wall of The Vent. Climb overhanging crack with crackers, move right along ledge and up wall near right edge on sloping holds to small mossy recess and peg belay (50 ft.). Climb directly above belay (1 peg at 10 ft.) and up face heading for obvious groove (peg runner at 40 ft.) and make awkward move onto ledge. Peg belay (50 ft.). Directly above is steep groove. Take right-hand of two shallow grooves to reach steep groove and climb this till traverse can be made to top of groove and block belay (65 ft.). Climb wide crack in groove and steep wall above to ledges and block belay (150 ft.).

—*Daddy Longlegs*. 210 ft. Very Severe. B. Hall & G. Shields. 25th August 1968.

Start below steep groove right of Ventricle, on left wall of The Vent. Climb this using 3 pegs and 3 crackers and make a big step with mantleshell onto ledge. Peg belay (60 ft.). Carry on up groove (peg runner) by bridging

steep V-corner (80 ft.). Quit corner by swinging up left to large boulder-strewn platform (30 ft.). Continue round left flank of fang to crumbling col whence moderate rock and a natural dry stone dyke lead to the plateau.

**Braeriach: Coire Bhrochain.**—*Pioneers' Recess Route.* 700 ft. GRADE II-III. G. R. Simpson & G. S. Strange. 2½ hours. 20th April 1969.

Iced slabs and steep open snow slopes led to the foot of the chimney which contained 150 ft. of bulging ice. The recess above was a 200-ft. slope of snow-ice with a steep exit on the left.

—*Eastern Route, Braeriach Pinnacle.* GRADE II. J. Bower, J. Buchanan & A. Sproull. 16th February 1969.

The summer route was followed on deep powder snow. No special difficulties.

—*Near East Buttress.* 300 ft. GRADE II. P. C. D. Kale & C. A. MacIntyre. 3rd February 1969.

A good build-up of hard snow was present. No special difficulties.

—*Tigris Chimney.* 300 ft. GRADE II. P. C. D. Kale & C. A. MacIntyre. 19th April 1969.

This route follows the obvious chimney between Near East Buttress and Babylon Rib. After 100 ft. of mixed ice and snow-ice, the chimney opens out into a shallow snow-scoop to reach the plateau in 200 ft. At certain times in winter, the overhanging chockstone may be exposed and this can be turned on the right wall. There were no cornice difficulties.

**Garbh Choire Dhàidh.**—*Billabong.* 600 ft. GRADE III. G. Boyd B. S. Findlay, G. R. Simpson & G. S. Strange. 3 hours. 18th April 1969.

The summer dièdre being bare of snow, a series of snow-ice ramps, zig-zagging up the slabs on the left, were followed to emerge at a platform on the crest. This whole section may disappear under heavy banking. The buttress gave 300 ft. of interesting climbing above this platform leading to a narrow iced chimney cleaving the final wall.

**Garbh Choire Mòr.**—*West Buttress.* 800 ft. GRADE I-II. P. C. D. Kale & C. A. MacIntyre. 20th April 1969.

This buttress in the Lower Corrie, although not a summer climb, affords a good introduction to winter climbing in the upper corrie. The obvious winter start is the gully at the right base of the buttress flanked by Sellers' Pillar. Climb this and trend left at the top up snow runnels and ribs to steep finish at cornice which, though usually large, was fairly easily overcome. The Buttress was covered in hard snow, with overlying powder snow under the cornice.

—*She-Devil's Buttress.* 500 ft. GRADE IV. G. Boyd, B. S. Findlay, G. R. Simpson & G. S. Strange. 3½ hours. 19th April 1969.

200 ft. of iced grooves and snow arêtes on the edge overlooking Great Gully led to a right traverse over a flake to enter awkwardly the leftmost of twin iced corners. This gave 200 ft. of steep sustained climbing to a snow prow breaching the cornice on the left at the top of the buttress.

—*The Tower of Babel.* 400 ft. Very Severe. J. J. Light & A. G. McGregor. 6th July 1969.

This is the central compact buttress of the Pinnacles trio. It consists of a small overhanging south-west face overlooking Phoenix Gully and a large south-east face. The climb lies on the latter face apart from a short section near the top.

until overhang is reached and climb this direct to good stance and peg belay (50 ft.). Go round corner and up short crack on left wall to stance and belay (20 ft.). Climb overhanging crack aided by crackers to ledge and belay (strenuous, 30 ft.). Continue in crack on fairly good holds and handjams to strenuous exit (2 pegs, 3 crackers, 50 ft.).

**Cairngorm: Coire an Lochan.—No. 3½ Buttress.**—*Never Mind.* 280 ft. Very Severe. J. Cunningham & B. March. 8th August 1969.

This route lies on the very steep pillar between the forks of Y Gully. Start at the bottom rocks.

Scramble up easy rocks bearing right to good stance situated beneath easy-angled groove with steep wall on left. Peg belay (30 ft.). Climb groove a few feet till large blocks on steep wall can be used to pull out onto main face, then bear upwards and to left edge of face. Climb steep wall overlooking Grumbling Grooves (see below) on good holds and traverse right to start of large curving crack which is main feature of face. Move over large block into crack with difficulty, then go up and left round overhang by layback and step into crack. Go up left to crack with loose chockstones, then bridge up and right onto ledge with peg belay (130 ft.). Climb wide crack above to rock shelf. Above is a square roof with escape possibilities on the wall to its left. Move right and up steep slab. A small flake high up in corner facilitates insertion of peg, high in corner. Make difficult move up, then awkward tension traverse to right edge of steep slab devoid of holds. Make a controlled slide down edge to gain foothold on lip of overhang. Move slightly right and up by a series of difficult layback moves (peg runner) then up to rock platform (1 peg) and scramble to easy rocks and so to top of crag. Stance and large block belays (150 ft.).

—*Grumbling Grooves.* 250 ft.

Severe. G. Shields & S. Wilkinson. 23rd July 1969.

Start up the middle of the buttress for 80 ft., then make a left traverse for 50 ft. to edge of grooves. Stance (130 ft.). Enter groove, which is loose in places, and climb to stance and belay (60 ft.). Above the stance the groove appears to be loose but is not. Climb it to overhang exit left to plateau and finish (60 ft.).

**No. 4 Buttress.**—*Gaffer's Groove.* 350 ft. Severe. T. W. Patey & D. Whillans. 31st October 1963.

This is the line of disconnected grooves starting a few feet left of Savage Slit. Climb easily for 120 ft. The problem then is to transfer into parallel groove 25 ft. to the left. In dry conditions the obvious way would be to balance round a holdless knobble. Dissuaded by heavy rain, the party climbed the cracked wall on the right for 40 ft. to a recess, traversed left under an overhang into another recess and reached the parallel groove by a delicate toe traverse. Follow out the groove for 120 ft., avoiding easy escape into gully on left, to finish at same point as Savage Slit.

—*Fall-out Corner.* 350 ft.

Very Severe. T. W. Patey (ldr.), R. Ford & M. Stewart. 17th May 1964.

This is the obvious clean-cut dièdre about 30 ft. right of Savage Slit. It presents a challenging direct line with no escapes and provides one of the best routes in Coire Lochain, in the opinion of its architect.

Gain ledge and belay beneath roof blocking dièdre (30 ft.). Pass roof on right (wet, 1 peg) to poor stance (35 ft.). Climb obliquely rightwards for 12 ft. to edge, then straight up on small wrinkles keeping close to edge. There is no respite until at 50 ft. a good ledge is found on the other side of the edge (65 ft.). Climb wall above ledge 15 ft., then swing left round corner onto direct line. Follow out the dièdre on rather more accommodating holds, finishing by awkward bottleneck chimney (120 ft.). Scramble to plateau

(100 ft.). N.B. if last man slips, it seems that he might pendulum round overhanging edge of buttress and 150 ft. rope would be insufficient to regain the rock.

**Cairngorm: Coire an Lochain—No. 4 Buttress.**—*Procrastination*. 275 ft. Severe. J. Cunningham & G. Shields. Summer 1968.

Climb up to start of steep groove and peg belay (25 ft.). Climb groove to small roof, turn to roof on right, then go up for 15 ft. to small ledges and peg belay (130 ft.). Move back left and climb continuation of grooves (loose blocks on left wall) to large ledge and cracker belay (60 ft.). Climb steep wall for 10 ft., then scramble to large block belay at top of Savage Slit (30 ft.). Scramble to the summit plateau (30 ft.).

—*Puffer*. 270 ft. Severe.

J. Cunningham & party. Summer 1969.

Start at pinkish slab, 75 ft. right of Savage Slit, just left of overhanging crack in corner. Climb slab at left edge, move to centre and up to overhang. Move right to gap, climb this and go left to stance and nut belays (110 ft.). Climb open corner above and to the right to stance and belay (150 ft.).

**Coire an t-Sneachda, Fluted Buttress.**—*Broken Gully*. 350 ft. GRADE III. J. Cleare (ldr.), J. McCartney & T. W. Patey. February 1967.

In the middle of the buttress a bay forms the start of an indefinite and discontinuous gully which goes up the buttress some way left of Fingers Ridge ending above at the little col at the finish of that route. Where the initial gully steepens, move out and up right till good belay ledge is reached. Above, cross awkward slab to pass round corner on left and enter the continuation upper gully. There is no further marked difficulty. The gully was previously climbed in poor conditions by T. W. Patey in 1964.

—*Fingers Ridge*. 400 ft. GRADE IV. J. R. Dempster & J. I. Wallace. 6 hours. 19th January 1969.

Start just left of summer route start. Follow line of snow slanting up to left side of buttress (120 ft.). Go straight up, then right and up corner (140 ft.). Climb another corner to knife-edge leading to the Fingers, which were bypassed on the left to foot of short corner (120 ft.). Climb corner, then go left into gully and up to top (100 ft.).

**Hell's Lum Crag.**—*Raw Mince*. 250 ft. Very Difficult. J. Bower & R. Simpson. 29th June 1969.

Three obvious faults split the wall left of Hell's Lum. This route goes up slabs on the left of these faults.

Start 50 ft. left of Puke (see below) at lowest rocks. Climb straight up cracks passing grass ledge on right and at 30 ft. trend rightwards (100 ft.). Go up thin crack and slab, then continue right and up wall of blocks to plateau (150 ft.).

—*Sic*. 250 ft. Very Difficult. G. Boyd & P. Kale. 24th June 1969.

The leftmost of the three faults mentioned above. Start from a long grass shelf about 80 ft. left of the Lum. Climb fault to sloping ledge under 9 ft. chimney (100 ft.). Climb chimney (crux) and continue to overhang. Pass this on right and continue to finish by wall of blocks of Raw Mince (see above) (150 ft.). Scramble to plateau.

—*Sic*. 400 ft. GRADE III. J. Bower & H. Pinkerton. 16th November 1969.

The fault was filled with fresh powder overlying thin ice. Follow the summer route to above the 9 ft. chimney. The overhang and wall of blocks

were avoided on the left and the line regained above. Steep snow led to a huge unavoidable cornice which gave a difficult exit.

**Cairngorm: Hell's Lum Crag.**—*The Gullet*. 400 ft. GRADE III. J. Bower & B. S. Findlay. 28th December 1969.

The middle of the three faults. Though a grassy trough in summer, it fills with water-ice in winter. Start about 40 ft. left of Hell's Lum.

Gain fault by an iced slab and climb short ice-pitch to where fault overhangs (110 ft.). Take overhang direct and follow steep ice to belay (100 ft.). Continue directly up water-ice to cornice (120 ft.). Tunnel to plateau (70 ft.).

—*Puke*. 250 ft. Very Difficult. J. Bower &

P. Kale. 28th June 1969.

This is the rightmost of the three faults left of the Lum. Climb wall then cracks to huge glacis with belay at back (80 ft.). Climb crack, then up to the right to below chimney fault, pull up leftwards, then climb fault to huge ledges below final wall (80 ft.). This has been climbed and was Very Severe, but can be avoided by a chimney and slab on the right which lead to the plateau (90 ft.).

—*Slyx*. 350 ft. Very Severe. B. March &

D. K. Mardon. 27th July 1969.

Start 50 ft. up the gully on left wall, then climb obvious slanting groove till angle eases and then climb ochre slab on right to peg belay (120 ft.). Climb to corner (chockstone) and exit left onto slabs below large overlap, surmounted by bridging on left. Climb slab above and by-pass next overlap on right. Climb obvious line, surmount overlap on left and go straight up to belay below obvious overhanging crack. A superb pitch (120 ft.). Climb crack and take a straight line up obvious crack to overhang. Surmount on right using jugs and go up to peg belay (120 ft.).

—*Chancer*. 300 ft. GRADE V. J. Cunningham

& B. March.

Start at the top of the crux ice-pitch in the Lum. Climb up steepish ice moving first left then right up to steep step into cave below overlap (100 ft.). Awkward stance, ice screw and rock peg belay. Above is a large icicle. Bridge up between the ice and the back wall of cave for 15 ft., insert screw and tension out from under overhang onto front of ice face. Climb vertical and overhanging ice for 35 ft. with the aid of four screws until the angle relents to 75° for 20 ft. A further 40 ft. of steep snow leads to peg belays on small rock face (110 ft.). Climb snow slope above surmounting the cornice at its lowest point (90 ft.).

—*Hell's Lum Direct*. 110 ft. Severe.

J. Cunningham & B. March.

Climb jammed boulders on left and up to belay. Above are fierce-looking cracks (see *Guide*, p.104). The right crack is climbed on the inside with some difficulty until upward progress becomes problematical. Move left to the outside of the crack and up to peg belay.

—*Drop Out*. 360 ft. Very Severe. B. March

& M. MacArthur. 12th September 1969.

This climb follows the rake cutting diagonally up the wall right of Hell's Lum. Climb corner up right of Lum until crack of loose blocks allows one to gain ledge below large overhang (120 ft.). Traverse left below overhang and swing out onto overhanging wall. Climb rake (steep, loose and strenuous) to ledge and peg runner at 60 ft., then up to second ledge (110 ft.). Climb natural crack continuation of the rake for 50 ft. to traverse line leading to right to belay ledge at top of third pitch of Good Intentions (see below).

Continue up crack (1 peg) and at 10 ft., insert nut and tension left to gain hand-traverse on sloping holds eventually leading to a jug. Continue up to ledge, step right onto edge to gain broken ground (120 ft.). Finish up left edge of short wall above (20 ft.).

**Cairngorm: Hell's Lum Crag.**—*Good Intentions*. 400 ft. Very Severe. B. March & M. MacArthur. 12th September 1969.

This climb follows a line through the isolated shaped groove on the right of Hell's Lum.

Climb up broken ground and short wall to gain ledge below and left of groove (60 ft.). Climb up diagonally left for 30 ft. to gain groove. Climb this (1 nut), and wall above to ledge and peg belay (120 ft.). The climb now changes in character and is less steep and more broken. Climb diagonally left to ledge below wall with prominent groove (120 ft.). Climb groove and exit over loose blocks up broken ground to the final short wall which is climbed directly to top (100 ft.).

—*The Vacuum*. 230 ft. Severe. R. A. Croft & J. R. Sutcliffe. 31st August 1968.

This is a direct start to Hellfire Corner giving delightful climbing up lower slabs, about 30 ft. left of the Clean Sweep (*S.M.C.J.*, 1962, xxvii, 278).

Two parallel cracks lead up slightly leftwards to overlaps at about 100 ft., where they branch apart.

Follow mainly the right-hand crack to small stance and nut belay (70 ft.). Continue up past overlap on right and gain platform above by climbing short vertical wall. Cross right and climb a few feet up corner-crack till possible to make a high step up onto next slab above on right. The slab leads to grassy rake where a small spike belay is found low down on right (100 ft.). Gain ledge 8 ft. above, traverse right to obvious break and follow straightforward grooves up to Hellfire Corner (60 ft.).

(Two accounts of this climb were received, alternatively entitled Broomstick and Vacuum; the more modern appliance was preferred—Ed.)

**Stag Rocks, Left Sector.**—*Afterthought Arête*. GRADE II. J. Bower & G. Boyd. 20th December 1969.

The arête was gained from the right and the summer route was followed on powder and snow-ice. Difficulties were concentrated at the knife-edge and a chimney leading to plateau.

**Right Sector.**—*Pine Tree Route*. 600 ft. GRADE III. J. Bower & A. Morgan. 7th February 1970.

The summer route was followed under deep powder snow. The first pitch, 'a long tongue of broken rock' gave an interesting start as it was covered by water-ice from Amphitheatre Gully.

## CAIRNGORMS II

**Broad Cairn: Creag an Dubh Loch, Central Slabs.**—*The Pink Elephant*. 1200 ft. Very Severe. A. Fyfe & J. Grieve. June 1969.

Start at the obvious pink streak on the left of the slabs (arrow). Climb cracks in pink rock to grass terrace. Continue up pink groove for 120 ft. to belay in spiky corner. Climb corner onto rib, continue straight up, cross an overlap and climb pink rock to foot of Dinosaur gully. Traverse right to heather niche, then back up left to small hanging slab below corner in overlap. Climb corner to slab and continue up and right till right traverse along lip of overlap leads to wide crack. Climb this and bulge above to belay on right. Climb slab above and head slightly left to reach notch and move into right branch of Dinosaur gully. Climb break in wall above to reach terrace.



Climb corner right of very smooth slab, move right and continue up corners and short overhanging chimney to slab above. Climb slabs to gain tapered slab. Move right to gain slab below steep wall and further right onto short horizontal knife-edge. Descend into big groove on right and follow this to belay. Climb groove to steep step, climbed on the left wall, and regain the groove, which follow to top.

**Broad Cairn: Creag an Dubh Loch, Central Slabs.**—*Mammoth*. 1200 ft. GRADE IV. J. Bower & J. Furnell; N. Blenkinsop & I. Rae. 8 hours. 31st January 1970.

The route follows an obvious line up the Central Slabs slanting from bottom left to top right. This line was followed by B. S. Findlay & G. S. Strange in summer 1969.

Start at foot of Labyrinth. Climb first pitch Labyrinth Edge for 30 ft., then right for 40 ft. to obvious rib of frozen heather and climb rib to belay (100 ft.). Continue straight up iced slabs and frozen grass for 40 ft. then right along broad ledge to belay on edge of Dinosaur gully (150 ft.). Climb gully by right branch (300 ft.). Zigzag up and right on snow-shelves (100 ft.). Continue up and right again to belay below huge overhanging walls of Theseus Grooves (100 ft.). Move right to gain foot of steep slabs, climb these on thin ice, traverse round snow arête and belay at top of Theseus Grooves (150 ft.). Steep snow slopes now remain to cornice and plateau (300 ft.).

—*Black Mamba*.

1150 ft. Very Severe. A. Fyffe & J. Grieve. June 1969.

This route lies right of The Blue Max (*S.M.C.J.*, 1968, xxix, 64). Start at smooth slab just left of corner start of Theseus Grooves (arrow).

Climb cracks in slab to grass ledge. Follow cracks and groove above to join main corner. Climb corner to top, then left to belay on rib. Move right and up over slab to gain groove in bulge. Continue up cracks and grooves heading slightly right to large stance. Zigzag up cracks to left to reach shallow gully with large detached flake. Continue up and slightly left to reach terrace. In large shallow groove left of the rib of The Blue Max is a small squat pillar. From top of this, move up and left to overhang. Follow it to gain slabby rib and climb this to belay on slabs above. Move diagonally right to reach rib and climb to overhang, move right then up chimney crack, return left over slab to below corner, climb this for 10 ft., move right to rib and climb it. Finish up grassy grooves trending right to top.

**Central Gully Wall.**—*Goliath*. 500 ft.

Very Severe. B. S. Findlay & M. Rennie. 7th June 1969.

Start on shelf 150 ft. above The Giant (see *S.M.C.J.*, 1966, xxviii, 218). Traverse shelf and go up to peg and sling, then tension into corner (130 ft.). Climb vertical corner above (1 peg, 1 wedge) and continue to belay on right (130 ft.). Cross slab on left (1 peg) and climb to ledge leading left onto huge slab. Climb slab for 30 ft. and move onto right edge and up to belay in corner (130 ft.). Traverse horizontally right and climb cracks to belay on big ledge (110 ft.). Scramble to summit.

—*The Kraken*.

800 ft. Very Severe. A. Fyffe & J. Grieve. June 1969.

This route follows the crack system to the right of Mousetrap.

Start as for Mousetrap and climb initial easy groove but continue straight up cracks at top to grassy stance. Continue up cracks until pair of obvious parallel wide cracks are reached. Climb these to top, move left and belay at foot of large recess containing grassy groove of Mousetrap. Return right and climb cracked slabs in corner to belay. Work upwards to right edge of recess and climb it to below smooth wall. Traverse right via heather moustache to shallow corner, climb this and return left on narrow slab to crack, which

follow to belay on slab above. Climb corner above as far as possible, then move right onto rib, climb this and with difficulty gain small slab set in corner and belay on right. Climb up and left to gain hanging corner, then up this to narrow diagonal ledge. Go along the ledge and up the overhanging corner at its end. Move left again and climb another overhanging corner to belay. Climb cracks in slab above and continue to top.

**Broad Cairn: Creag an Dubh Loch, Central Gully Wall.**—*The Catwalk.* 1350 ft. Very Severe. A. Fyfe & J. Grieve. June 1969.

This route girdles the cliff from Caterpillar Crack to Goliath (see above). Gain Caterpillar from False Gully or via the Crack.

From left end of Caterpillar traverse by obvious ledge system diagonally left to ledge below leaning corner (as for first part of Waterkelpie Wall). Move left below steep wall to below short corner. Climb this to slab, traverse left along this narrow slab to first crack and up to slab above and belay. Move left with difficulty across slab below obvious bow-shaped roof, round corner and up to ledge. Climb cracks and corners above for 70 ft., move left across slab to belay below roof which tapers down to left. Move up blocks just on left to gain line of holds on lip of roof and at its end move up to gain obvious grassy ledge. Follow ledges obviously leftwards to point level with final corner of Giant. Traverse into this corner, then move left into groove and descend this for about 20 ft. to slab and belay on left. Climb straight up wall above to point where small horizontal roof juts out from corner. Move left to belay in huge corner. Move back out right and up cracked slabs as for Goliath. Scramble to plateau.

**False Gully Wall.**—*Falseface.* 450 ft. Very Severe & A2. G. N. Hunter & D. F. Lang. 7th June 1969.

This route follows the obvious steep fault in the centre of the wall. Climb directly up slab and rib to thread belay in big corner. Follow steep leaning corner above using 6 pegs and rock spike to reach peg belay on sloping ledge on left. Climb short wall above belay, then move right into hidden chockstone chimney. Climb this to peg belay on ledge. Gain sloping ledge above belay, then surmount overlap (2 pegs) and traverse right to peg on lip of overhang. Tension rightwards on steep slab to good holds, climb up, then back left to series of grooves which follow to good ledge and poor belay. Climb black overhanging wall using 4 tied-off pegs to peg belay on grass ledge on left. Follow corner above to block, then trend right to small ledge on skyline, surmount rounded nose and slabs to belay. Scramble to plateau.

—*False Impression.* 500 ft. Severe. B. S. Findlay & G. S. Strange. 1st June 1969.

Follows edge of steep wall overlooking False Gully. From broad grass shelf at start of False Gully step across rock band and scramble up grassy trough to first obvious break in wall. Climb water-washed rock for 30 ft. and pull out left to gain V-groove leading to steep wall with perched block. Climb wall to stance and peg belay. Continue leftwards 20 ft., swing up right, then go straight up to wet slabby recess. Climb rib right of recess and follow ribs and grassy grooves to easy ground below plateau.

**West Buttress.**—*Late Night Final.* 210 ft. Very Severe. A. Fyfe & J. Grieve. June 1969.

This climb lies on the small slabby buttress at the bottom right of North-west Gully. Start at the lowest point of the buttress (cairn). Climb short grooved arete and traverse left into obvious corner, then climb this to stance and peg belay at top. Continue up cracks above, then short overhanging corner into niche, whence move right and so to top.

**Lochnagar: North-east Corrie.**—*Shadow Rib*. 700 ft. GRADE III. J. Bower, R. S. Findlay & G. S. Strange. 7 hrs. 2nd January 1970.

A steeper and more continuous climb than the Original Route. From introductory gully climb iced chimney fault to platform on rib. Above this avoid upper wall by ledge overlooking Shallow Gully and regain crest by narrow gully. Climbed in rather unfavourable conditions of high wind and spindrift.

—*Tough-Brown Ridge Direct*. 600 ft. GRADE V. N. D. Keir & M. Rennie. 8 hours. 23rd December 1969.

Thin ice and verglas below crux necessitated 4 pegs for aid on the lower section. The second pitch was taken direct, thus avoiding the summer traverse. The summer crux was by-passed to the right of the vertical wall by the steep groove overlooking Raeburn's Gully (crux). The ridge was then followed to the plateau to finish by a snow arête.

**Cnapan Nathraichean.**—*Shortcake*. 250 ft. GRADE II. N. D. Keir & M. Rennie.

In winter, the cliff presents an almost alpine aspect but is disappointing on closer inspection, being rather discontinuous. The slabby face mentioned in the *Guide* yielded the route, which followed broken ribs up the left edge of the snow-banked central depression.

**White Mounth: Eagle's Rock.**—*The Waterfall*. 600 ft. Severe. G. R. Simpson & G. S. Strange. 17th August 1969.

The route takes an almost direct line up the obvious waterfall to the left of the crag.

Start at short bulge and climb cracks in green slab to glaciis. Continue straight up into chimney-crack and follow fault to spike belay below water-filled V-groove (200 ft.). Swing up left, climb crack and slab, move left, surmount overlap and belay on rib above (100 ft.). Follow a series of black overlaps and corners to large platform (150 ft.). Finish by climbing rib and scrambling up watercourse to top (150 ft.). Perfect clean granite.

—*Lethargy*. 450 ft. GRADE III. J. Bower & G. R. Simpson. 3rd January 1970.

The watercourse had formed 300 ft. of blue water-ice and this gave two long pitches, the first being the hardest. From here a steep snow shelf on the left gave access to a choice of three chimneys. The leftmost was the easiest and led to the plateau (150 ft.).

—*Gibber*. 450 ft. Very Severe. A. Fyffe & J. Grieve. June 1969.

To the right of Abstention is a grassy broken fault, then a wide broken rib bounded on the right by a similar fault. Right of this second shallow gully is a slabby pink buttress featuring a large inverted L-shaped corner near the top. The route lies up this part of the cliff.

Start at lowest rocks where the buttress comes down to tapered point. Climb corner in crest of this steeper section, then go obviously right then back left along slabby rakes to belay near the left edge. Climb shallow groove to steep wall and traverse right below it. Follow corner up and left to belay on left-to-right sloping fault. Climb up left and then back right to enter corner. Follow this to stepped roofs, go right below them and then up slab to belay. Finish up rib above.

## CENTRAL HIGHLANDS

**Binnein Shuas: Eastern Sector.**—*Plank*. 430 ft. Severe. G. Cairns & C. Higgins. May 1969.

Start 40 ft. right of Ardverikie Wall at a corner just a few feet right of a shallow gully.

Climb corner to beneath bulge. Using peg runner placed above bulge, move left and up edge, then cross turf ledges to belay beneath short wall (110 ft.). Climb wall for a few feet till corner on left is gained by traverse, move up to below rib of clean rock and climb rib to belay on ledge beside semi-detached flake and peg belay (120 ft.). Go straight up from belay weaving left then right initially, then up to belay on ledge (60 ft.). Continue direct line up wall and finish by slabs (140 ft.).

**Bienein Shuas; Eastern Sector.**—*Differential*. 200 ft. Very Severe. J. McDowell & D. Todd. 24th May 1969.

The route takes a line up the wall left of the detached block of Tip Top (see below). The climb is on good varied rock, exposed and well-protected.

From turf-filled corner of Tip Top climb diagonally leftwards past pocket of grass at 60 ft. until moves up slab lead to definite traverse left into obvious groove (peg runner). Climb groove and break awkwardly right to continue diagonally rightwards past shelf overhang to belay. Go left till easy chimney leads to top.

—*Tip Top*. 230 ft. Very Severe. J. McDowell & D. Todd. 26th May 1969.

Some 50 yds. from Eastern Chimney is a conspicuous detached block. Start at left end of block at broken corner. Climb corner to base of black lichen-covered corner. Traverse right with difficulty onto edge of detached block. Continue up to grass ledge and belay (70 ft.). Climb obvious corner on right for 50 ft. till traverse right can be made along defined line to arête. Follow arête to belay on flat ledge (120 ft.). Climb crack and continue in quartz fault to top (40 ft.). A clean route on good rock, varied and well-protected.

—*Second Prize*. Severe. 240 ft. J. Cunningham & C. Higgins. May 1969.

At right hand end of face are the East Chimneys. This route goes up the left-hand chimney.

Climb chimney and short wall, move right into large slabby corner, climb this and layback flake on left to belay on ledge (140 ft.). Climb short corner above, then cross broken ground to belay (100 ft.).

—*Eastern Chimney*. 300 ft. Severe. J. McDowell & D. Todd. 24th May 1969.

The right-hand chimney, clearly marked on the diagram in *Central Highlands Guide*. Climb chimney to grass ledge (150 ft.). Continue in chimney, break left and continue to conspicuous corner. Climb this and rocks above to belay (150 ft.). Good rock, fine situations and good protection.

**Creag Dubh, Newtonmore; Bedtime Buttress.**—*Porn*. 150 ft. Very Severe. J. Porteous & M. Watson.

Start between Cuckold and Gham (arrow). Climb wall 10 ft. and traverse right (peg runner) to crack below bulge. Climb this and continue, trending left, to small cave (120 ft.). Step right and climb steep wall (30 ft.).

**Creag Meaghaidh.**—*The Girdle Traverse*. c.8000 ft. GRADE III-IV. T. W. Patey. 5 hours. 23rd March 1969.

Dr Patey writes, 'Despite all the speculation, this gigantic crab-crawl proved (in part at least) to be an anticlimax. Starting shortly after mid-day, and despite masses of ice and the heaviest snowfall of the winter, the completed Girdle occupied only 5 hours climbing solo. This is a time that could be further reduced in more favourable conditions. All the interest and difficulty

is contained in Post Horn Gallop, the main leg of the Girdle, which was climbed as long ago as 1962. The climbing in this section was consistently serious and belays would normally be taken. The elegant 'sting in the tail' excepted, the rest of the Last Lap is merely a high-angled walk and The Scene and Appolyon Ledge are scarcely worth listing as separate entities. On future repetitions it would seem hardly worth including the last named segments as they are not strictly relevant and have little or no climbing interest. The hardest parts of the Girdle were on the Last Post, the Centre Post, the North Post, the Quasimodo traverse and its continuation, the so-called Positively 4th Street, where any rock holds were completely buried. (See Notes).

**Creag Meaghaidh: Inner Corrie.**—*Longfellow*. 700 ft. GRADE III. R. McMillan & G. Peet. 25th March 1968.

Start up the same snow ramp as Quasimodo, then, instead of traversing right, go straight up beside the blank rock wall (crux). At about 50 ft. an awkward move to the right leads to heavily banked ledge rising leftwards. This is followed by a couloir with peg belay on a small buttress. Make left ward exit over slab and go up to foot of icy groove. Climb groove for 30 ft. and continue to peg belay 20 ft. higher. Climb rightwards to reach well-defined edge of Crescent Gully and follow crest to plateau.

—*The Pumpkin*. 1000 ft. GRADE V. R. McMillan, G. Peet & N. Quinn. 8 hours. 14th April 1968.

This route is much the longest of the Inner Coire routes and only The Wand is harder. The open corner mentioned in McKeith's *Guide* forms an enormous icy dièdre in winter, over 250 ft. high, and the route goes straight up this in 4 pitches, each harder than its predecessor. The 4th pitch went over great fat bulges of convoluted ice, with a chimney formed in the ice, and caused considerable difficulty. Above the icefalls a leftward rising pitch on good snow brought the party to the foot of a narrow gully. The gully contained an awkward bulge at 50 ft. At its top, a rising leftwards traverse led to a magnificent viewpoint overlooking Staghorn Gully, from where easy climbing led to the plateau in 400 ft.

**Stob Ban (Mamores): North-east Buttress.**—1000 ft. GRADE IV. J. Grieve & C. MacNaughton.

On the left flank of the big buttress are two steep chimneys. Climb the left hand one and follow gully above. Go back left along easy ramp to gain crest of ridge which leads easily to top of buttress.

## BEN NEVIS

**Ben Nevis: East Face of North-east Buttress.**—*Route Major*. 1400 ft. GRADE III. I. Clough & H. MacInnes. 3½ hours. February 1969.

This climb follows, more or less, the line of Eastern Route. Although nowhere technically very hard, it is sustained and gives continuously complicated route finding and one of the most enjoyable winter routes on the mountain.

The climb is most easily followed by referring to the diagram on p.10 of the new *Climbers' Guide*. The winter line lies very near to the summer route in the lower half, but from the junction with Frostbite, goes further to the left on the Central Spur. From junction follow leftward slanting gangway (broken by awkward corner) up into big snow bay. Break out of bay up to snow shelves on right and follow these horizontally left for short way before groove gives access to upper slopes.

**Ben Nevis: North-east Buttress, Minus One Buttress.**—*Variation.* P. F. Macdonald & I. G. Rowe. June 1967.

This variation to the Direct route on the buttress eliminates all pegs from it. Instead of traversing right from the top of the 'vast plinth,' follow North eastern Grooves for one more pitch to the ledges above the steep nose, then traverse right close under the overhangs and pull out onto the slab above. Continue up rightwards to join the principal route.

**Creag Coire na Ciste.**—*Central Rib.* 400 ft. GRADE III. R. Campbell & J. R. Marshall. March 1970.

Apart from a few moves in the right hand chimney on the left of the steep third pitch, the summer route was followed throughout.

**Càrn Dearg: Raeburn's Buttress.**—*Teufel Grooves.* 350 ft. Very Severe. D. Bathgate & J. Porteous. 13th September 1969.

The route follows a groove system to the right of the Crack on the front of Raeburn's Buttress.

Climb to the foot of the Crack, then right for 30 ft. to belay beside large block below obvious corner (130 ft.). Climb wall (peg runner) and crack above. Move right to spacious belay ledge (70 ft.). Climb stepped corner above (60 ft.). Go left across slab, then up groove to finish on left arête (90 ft.).

## GLENCOE, GLEN ETIVE & ARDGOUR

**Aonach Eagach.**—*Chance.* GRADE III. G. Anderson & A. J. Trees. 1½ hours. 8th February 1969.

This is the first gully left of Chancellor Gully and bounds the steep rocks of the Chancellor on the left. It fades out about 700 ft. above the road. The gully contained four short ice pitches, the third of which followed a steep V groove capped by a chockstone. The gully often provides ice when conditions elsewhere in Glencoe are poor.

**Beinn Trilleachan: Etive Slabs.**—*Monsoon.* 500 ft. Very Severe. A. Fyffe & W. Marsh. July 1969.

This route lies on the upper slabs and runs at an equal and opposite angle to Dan. On the left hand side of the slab are three obvious right to left sloping corners.

Start at crack below centre corner. Climb crack and move left to grass stance where corner fades out. Traverse obviously right to gain crack. Climb this and go through small lap to belay in scoop. Continue up and right following line of cracks and corners to large scoop and belay. Climb groove above, through large bulge by way of crack and finish up wide crack in slab above.

**Bidean nam Bian: Aonach Dubh, East Face.** *Girdle Traverse of Terrace Face.* 600 ft. Very Severe. K. V. Crocket, D. C. Forrest & D. M. Jenkins. 16th September 1969.

Start just left of the Upper Bow and climb grooves to belay (110 ft.). Continue up grooves for 40 ft., traverse wall on right crossing grooves of Quiver Rib to belay near arête (130 ft.). Go round arête, then right and up to belay in corner below last pitch of Archer Ridge (70 ft.). Traverse right under leaning wall, go round corner, continue to next arête, then go down and round to ledge on G String. Climb wall for 15 ft. and belay on traverse of The Gut (140 ft.). Continue as for The Gut, then climb big groove for 10 ft. go right then round edge and make descending traverse to small ledge. Continue horizontally across bottomless groove and under huge detached block to finish (150 ft.).

**Bidean nam Bian: Aonach Dubh, East Face.**—*Eve's Arête*. 250 ft. Severe. J. Buchanan, J. Forbes, F. Jack & G. Skelton. 14th September 1969.

The route follows the extreme right edge of Weeping Wall. Start at lowest rocks at corner of face. Cairn.

Climb by line of least resistance to right end of grass ledge 30 ft. right of Curving Crack (90 ft.). Traverse diagonally right (crux) onto arête proper with block belay on right (50 ft.). Climb arête to tree belay at top of Drainpipe Corner (110 ft.).

—*Impresario*. 200 ft. Very Severe. D. A. Knowles & S. Whimster. Summer 1969.

Start 25 ft. right of Drainpipe Corner. Climb easily up right edge of steep wall to first terrace (60 ft.). Climb thin crack on right to overhang, step right, then go up very steep broken grooves to second terrace (60 ft.). Take easiest line over overhang, and finish easily (80 ft.).

—*Tartan Slab*. 120 ft. Difficult. J. Buchanan, J. Forbes & G. Skelton. 17th September 1969.

Some 40 ft. left of Lament is a multi-coloured slab forming a corner with the wall. A cairn and arrow mark the start.

Climb to large block belay (40 ft.). Climb greasy slab, then traverse grass ledges to tree belay on Grochan Groove (80 ft.). Finish by last pitch of Grochan Groove.

**West Face.**—*C Buttress*. 500 ft. GRADE II. J. McCartney, A. Smith, A. Taylor, A. Thompson & K. Withall. 2 hours. 26th February 1969.

The summer route was followed throughout.

—*The Smeur*. 300 ft. GRADE III. I. Clough, I. F. Duckworth, F. M. Wells & R. E. B. York. 2 hours. 26th March 1969.

This climb takes the ice-fall which develops on the left wall of C Buttress. Start from No. 3 Gully above Middle Ledge.

A short steep ice wall gives access to long leftward-slanting ice gangway, bulging at top. Easier climbing then leads to top of Middle Tier.

—*D Buttress*. 500 ft. GRADE II/III. J. Choat, I. Clough, J. Friend, P. Mallinson & D. Power. 2 hours. 26th February 1969.

The summer route was followed, the initial steep gangway being heavily iced and giving the crux of the climb.

—*Christmas Couloir*. 800 ft. GRADE III/IV. I. Clough & D. G. Roberts. 25th December 1965.

The climb starts from Middle Ledge and follows an obvious rake-cum-couloir above and right of the bed of No. 4 Gully and left of F Buttress. This leads to a steep section right of the Stickleback Buttress. This provides the crux and is often heavily iced. There are several possible exits above this from the Amphitheatre, the direct one being the most difficult.

—*Chaos Chimney*. 450 ft. GRADE III. A. Fyffe, P. Hardman, B. Jenkins, J. Snodgrass & E. Viveash. 3 hours. 26th February 1969.

This climb follows the chimney-gully right of No. 6 Gully which ends about halfway up the cliff. From foot of No. 6 Gully two short ice pitches lead to 80 ft. pitch in the narrows which is the crux. Further easy-angled pitches lead to top.

—*D Buttress, Final Tier*. 300 ft. GRADE II. J. Friend, A. Fyffe, P. Hardman, D. Power & A. Thompson. 1 hour. 27th February 1969.



Starting from The Rake the climb follows a shallow gully fault above the left end of the D Buttress Middle Tier. It contains a short ice pitch near the foot and an awkward chockstone finish.

**Bidean nam Bian: Aonach Dubh, West Face.**—*Amphitheatre, North Ridge.* 300 ft. GRADE II/III. J. Choat, I. Clough, A. Taylor, K. Withall & R. Viveash. 1 hour. 27th February 1969.

The summer route was followed throughout.

—*The Slot.* 300 ft. GRADE II.

I. Clough & R. E. B. York. 1 hour. 26th March 1969.

The climb started from The Rake above E Buttress and followed the slope right of and below the Amphitheatre North Ridge. This soon became a shallow gully with an awkward cave pitch above which an exit was made by way of a deep crevasse on the left.

**Gèarr Aonach, Lower East Face.**—*Bosco.* 250 ft. Very Severe. G. Anderson & J. Porteous. 31st August 1969.

Start 15 ft. right of Marshall's Wall at grassy bay (arrow). Climb wall above directly by rib and crack to ledge (60 ft.). Trending right, climb wall to huge block and climb arête behind to block belay on Tom (70 ft.). Trend left, then go straight up to easier rock (120 ft.).

**Main Peak, Diamond Buttress.**—*Direct Route.* 500 ft. GRADE IV. J. McLean & M. Noon. January 1959.

This climb finds a way up the central wall of the buttress to gain the right-hand end of a long ledge which cuts horizontally across to the left edge of the buttress at about half-height. The line continues by grooves upwards and to the right to emerge on the right-hand ridge shortly before the summit of the buttress.

**Lost Valley Buttress.**—*Sabre Tooth.* 350 ft. GRADE III. I. Clough & H. MacInnes. 9th February 1969.

There is a prominent vertical 150 ft. corner towards the right-hand side of the left-hand portion of the buttress (the line of Illusion). This has been climbed (Grade IV) but the normal winter start is further left. Climb into recess and break out rightwards, then ascend to terrace above big corner. Follow terrace leftwards to climb a steep shallow corner (crux). Above this an easier line of grooves leads to the top.

—*Tyrannosaur.* 400 ft. GRADE IV. I. Clough, D. Morrish, E. S. Taylor & T. Winkler. 5 hours. 5th March 1969.

This climb follows the well-defined right edge of the left-hand section of the cliff, approximately the same line as the original Lost Valley Buttress route. Start on the right wall well below the great corner of Pterodactyl (see below) and about 30 ft. up from the lowest rocks. The first pitch starts up a short shallow chimney and then follows the thin crack continuation slanting slightly left and over the buttress edge to reach a snow bay. The line looks improbable from below and is sustained at a high standard but protection is good. From the snow bay a steep corner crack is followed up to the left of the crest, initially using slings for aid. The final section of the climb gives two long pitches of easier climbing by a line of steep snow grooves close to the crest.

—*Pterodactyl.* 350 ft. GRADE IV. D. Crabbe & H. MacInnes. 10 hours. January 1964.

This climb takes the great corner which divides the two sections of the buttress. A steep corner leads to a stance beneath a considerable overhang which bars access to the easier-angled upper couloir. The overhang is climbed (slings for aid) by a crack to the left of the main icicle formation.

**Bidean nam Bian: Main Peak, Lost Valley Buttress.**—*Trilobite*.  
GRADE II/III. I. Clough & H. MacInnes. 1 hour. 9th February 1969.

This route is on the right-hand side wall of the buttress, leaving the gully where it begins to narrow and opposite a ramp which goes steeply out to the right. A very steep groove runs directly up the gully wall to the top of the buttress.

**Lost Valley Minor Buttress.**—*Central*  
*Scoop*. 350 ft. GRADE III. Mr & Mrs I. Clough. 2 hours. 2nd March 1969.

This climb follows the obvious line between Chimney Route and Right Edge—a shallow corner. 100 ft. of steepening snow leads to two short but difficult ice pitches, the second of which is overcome by means of a tight little chimney on the right. A further short ice pitch is followed by easier grooves to the top.

**Stob Coire nam Beith.**—*The Corridors*. 500 ft. GRADE III/IV. I. Clough, D. Davies, M. A. Hudson, C. Hutchison & C. Williamson. 3 hours. 12th February 1969.

The route lies on Zero Buttress, the buttress on the extreme left of the cone of Stob Coire nam Beith, left of No. 1 Buttress and Broken Gully. The centre of the buttress is cut by two shallow square-cut gully sections, the first ending at a ledge about 150 ft. up and the other starting from this ledge a little to the right and continuing to the top. These give the line of the climb which is steep and sustained for 300 ft. The second corridor should give two ice pitches, the second of which is a steep runnel tapering to a bulge below the final easy-angled section.

—*Adagio*. 500 ft. GRADE III/IV. R. Birch, D. Chen, P. Judge, H. MacInnes & R. O. Shea. 3 hours. 5th March 1969.

This climb is on the west side of the buttress right of Summit Gully, the lowest rightmost buttress of the cone of Stob Coire nam Beith. Hidden Gully is on its right. The climb takes the line of a narrow steep gully. Easy snow leads to steepening with thinly-iced wall on the left. This was overcome by climbing corner on right and making left rising traverse round corner to gain twin ice chimneys. The left-hand chimney was climbed for 20 ft. before moving into right-hand one above bulge. This led to easier ground. The continuation followed the main gully, keeping left, to a cave pitch which was climbed direct. The gully leads out onto the top of the buttress whence one may continue easily by the right bounding ridge of Summit Gully. Belays of any sort were very hard to find.

**Buachaille Etive Mòr: Crowberry Ridge, Rannoch Wall.**—*Phink*. 250 ft. Very Severe. D. Gardner & R. J. Gorman. 7th June 1969.

Start at the foot of Autumn Slab. Go up 20 ft., then up left to a short groove (peg runner) and continue up to diagonal crack. Follow this, then traverse left to peg belay (100 ft.). Traverse right for 20 ft. to below thin crack line, gain ledge above and continue directly up crack to ledge and belay (70 ft.). Continue directly above to narrow ledge below broken overhang. Make a long step right and continue up wall above, moving right at top to easier broken ground (80 ft.).

—*Line-up*. 240 ft. Very Severe. C. Higgins & I. Nicolson. 1st June 1969.

This is a direct line into Whortleberry Corner. Climb slab direct to first belay on Whortleberry Wall, climbing small corner on slab and stepping left above the small overlap (80 ft.). Climb corner above for 15 ft., step left and continue to belay at bottom corner (80 ft.). Climb corner and roof direct to belay at top (80 ft.).

**Buachaille Etive Mòr: Cuneiform Buttress, West Face.**—*Backing Out*, 630 ft. Severe. G. Adams & C. Higgins. August 1969.

At left-hand end of buttress is an inverted V-shaped corner. The climb begins 15 ft. left of this corner.

Move up and leftwards over edge of buttress onto slabs. Climb these by crack followed by shallow corner to belay beneath smooth walls (130 ft.). From belay move right, then go up wall to ledge sloping down to edge of buttress on right. Follow ledge, go round edge (crux) and continue rightwards on ledge line passing square-topped block. Make an awkward step to stay on ledge line, then go up to platform with large block (110 ft.). Step off block and climb, trending rightwards, to foot of broken corner right of top part of Long Chimney. The corner slopes up and right over steep wall (120 ft.). Climb corner to belay on large ledge (130 ft.). Continue up buttress to finish (140 ft.).

—*Lift-off*, 300 ft.

Very Severe. I. Fulton & C. Higgins. August 1969.

Start just right of the large corner in the middle of the face. This corner is some distance to the right of Snowba's and is so far unclimbed.

Move up wall and follow groove rightwards to belay beneath corner (90 ft.). Climb corner and wall above, passing nose on left to belay on ledge (110 ft.). Continue to top of buttress (100 ft.).

**North Buttress, Slime Wall.**—*Apocalypse*, 550 ft. Very Severe. C. Higgins & I. Nicolson. June 1969.

Climb first pitch of Guerdon Grooves to flake belay at 90 ft. Climb corner above for 10 ft., then step right into smaller corner and follow to point 10 ft. below small roof on left wall of corner. Poor belay (50 ft.). Continue up corner using peg just above small roof and by crack when corner fades out to belay ledge on left (90 ft.). Step left from ledge and climb groove to small ledge and 10 ft. crack (peg runner). Climb crack, move right into small corner and climb this and rock above to rightward traverse for 20 ft. to grass ledge and good belay (100 ft.). Follow left trending crack as for Apparition and continue by short walls ascending leftwards to belay (80 ft.). Finish above by grooves (140 ft.).

**Garbh Bheinn, Ardgour: East Face.**—*Great Gully*, 1200 ft. GRADE IV. C. J. S. Bonington, T. W. Patey & D. Whillans. 4 hours. 20th February 1969.

This provided a fine ice climb, the gully being a continuous ribbon of ice or snow-ice.

The initial 300 ft., avoided in summer, was well worth including and provided two ice pitches, the first an ice grotto with a hole in the roof, the second a 20-ft. ice-fall. At the first main bottleneck, the big chockstone was rounded by an iced slab on the right (1 peg, 1 nut sling). Above this an 80 ft. ice pitch was climbed by a zigzag traversing left at midheight (crux). The Great Cave pitch was plated with ice and was climbed by the right wall. The gully was finished by the Left Fork, the right fork being obviously inferior. The 100 ft. Very Severe chimney was lined with black ice and gave some very hard bridging.

**Stob Coire a'Chearcaill, Ardgour.**—There is a prominent buttress at the back of Coire Chearcaill which is broken by a diagonal rake. To the left of the nose are two gullies. The left-hand one is easy. The right-hand one gave a good 400-ft. GRADE III climb to J. Grieve in February 1969.

## SOUTHERN HIGHLANDS

**Beinn Udlaidh: Coire Daimh.**—*South Gully of Black Wall.* 300 ft. GRADE III. R. McGowan & G. Skelton. 2½ hours. 30th November 1969.

This gave a good climb over a series of short ice pitches. An ice-glacial chimney 120 ft. from the start formed the crux.

—*Central Gully.* 300 ft. GRADE III. J. Buchanan, J. Forbes & G. Skelton. 2½ hours. 29th December 1968.

The lower part of the gully is a natural ice-trap giving four pitches, the second being the crux.

**Craig-y-Barns: Upper Cave Crag.**—*Hang-out.* Very Severe & A2. M. Forbes & G. Miller.

From the wide platform of the Ramp follow a groove diagonally rightwards to finish by the last bulge of Ratcatcher (5 pegs).

—*Green Cheese.* 120 ft. A3. K. J. Martin. 4th October 1969.

Climb as for Mousetrap for 25 ft. and move left behind tree. Continue directly up wall to level of Girdle Traverse, move horizontally left to old peg, then up and slightly left to finish at top of Ratcatcher.

—*Squirm Direct Finish.* 50 ft. Very Severe. J. Porteous.

After the aid move on Squirm, step right into groove and climb this to tree. Climb the tree to exit.

## NOTES

## Islands Notes

**Harris.**—Apart from the routes recorded in this year's *New Climbs*, an English party climbed the Nose of Strone Ulladale in the spring. Their line was just right of the edge of the Nose and was climbed by artificial means. Several days were spent on the climb, fixed ropes being left in place overnight. We await further details.

**Skye.**—Once again we have a Blaven Race Meeting, with Clough triumphant this year. The also-rans were J. S. Shade & W. Tauber (2nd) and Miss A. M. Faller & R. Yuen (3rd). The course was (see *New Climbs*) the splendid crack splendidly illustrated last year (see *S.M.C.J.*, 1969, xxix, 184). The Faller-Yuen rope also straightened The Great Prow by moving up and left from the pedestal rather than back down and found that this substantially increased the difficulty.

The new *Guide* notes that 'the exact line of the original ascent (of Thunder Rib) is not clear.' Its originator, Robin Smith, probably intended it that way, but for the record P. F. Macdonald has supplied the following description. 'Climb one pitch up centre of rib to stance. A few feet above this, gain leftward traversing line which follow, descending slightly, to lip of overhangs. Continue hard left (crux) round corner until possible to resume upward movement. Go up, then rightwards, passing to right of three old pitons and continue diagonally up through bulges to edge of Deep Gash Gully. Finish up crest.'

G. Hardie notes that the first pitch of Gail on Sgùrr Thuilm can be managed with only one peg. He also notes that Rotten Gully in Coireachan

Ruadha, which the *Guide* recommends as a descent route is very dangerous, two of his companions being injured by stone-fall there last summer.

We have a number of rather confusing descriptions of routes on the west face of Sgùrr na Stri of Severe and Very Severe standard supplied by J. Mackenzie. As the *Guide* simply remarks that 'enjoyable climbing of all standards is available on the rocky west face of the hill,' we are somewhat at a loss. Can anyone advise?

**Arran.**—A new *Climber's Guide*, superseding J. M. Johnstone's excellent 1958 *Guide*, will appear this spring under the editorship of William Wallace of Kilmarnock, well-known to readers of these Notes.

## Northern Highlands Notes

**Beinn Dearg: Glensquaib Cliffs.**—Ascents of Orangeman's Gully and Fenian Gully (see *New Climbs*) were made last winter by D. W. Duncan & M. Rennie and recorded in ignorance of Dr Patey's previous visits. Their descriptions confirm Dr Patey's remarks and gradings.

**Ben Hope: North-west Crag.**—Mick Willis of the Caithness Mountaineering and Ski Club has provided us with a number of interesting notes on the climbing available in the extreme north. The Ben Hope crags come regularly into good winter condition and provide numerous gully climbs of all standards. A number of summer climbs have been made here as well. By next issue we hope to have full information on these routes.

Willis notes that in addition to Clett Rock (see *New Climbs*) a number of other sea-cliff features have been investigated and climbed by the members of his club. Dwarwick Head (O.S. ND 710200) gives the best available sea-cliff climbing in Caithness and has been extensively explored. A duplicated guide is available. Other cliffs examined have been Creag an Dherue (O.S. NC 540470), Strathy Point (O.S. NC 820690), Holborn Head (O.S. ND 109716) and Duncansby Stacks (O.S. ND 400719). Willis is collating information on climbing north of the Lairg-Laxford road for the Trust and would be grateful for any information about the ascent of Peddie Stack by a party of Norwegians in 1936. Any new routes made in the area should be sent to him as well as to this *Journal*.

**Càrn nah-Aire, Gruinard Bay.**—Dr Patey supplies the following notes, 'This 300-ft. gneiss outcrop is a commanding feature overlooking the main bridge over the Gruinard river. It was climbed on by the Bells 20 years ago and with the recently-awakened interest in Creag Mhòr Tollaidh it will probably be visited more frequently; unfortunately, most of the possible routes are cut off at the bottom by a continuous fringe of overhangs. One route on the crag, *Breach Route* (300 ft. Severe, T. W. Patey 1966) uses the the only break in the bottom overhangs. Near the centre of the cliff is an inset corner with a shattered crack on the left-enclosing wall. After 80 ft. the route is open to variation but a fairly direct line was taken to the top. There are other possibilities, all hard.'

**Creag Mhòr Tollaidh.**—Paul Nunn notes that some of his descriptions of routes made by himself and other Sheffield climbers seem to have gone astray. It is not clear whether the fault is ours or Ian Rowe's! However, in particular the right-hand crack system on Upper Tollie Crag described in the new *Guide* as (p.132) 'the finest feature of the Tollie Crag and still unclimbed despite several attempts' was climbed by Nunn and others over two years ago.

**The Great Stac of Handa.**—On 1st July 1967, T. W. Patey (aided and abetted by C. J. S. Bonington and I. McNaught Davis) made the second

recorded crossing onto this famous bird sanctuary, re-enacting the original exploit of 90 years ago. Dr Patey adds the following notes.

'The Stac is 350 ft. high, cut vertically on every side, and lies on an inlet on the precipitous north side of the island of Handa. (Boatmen may be hired at Tarbert, near Scourie.) The enclosing walls are equally vertical or overhanging and the gap between the cliff top and the flat summit of the Stac is 50 ft. at the narrowest point. We stretched 600 ft. of linked nylon ropes from side to side of the inlet so that the centre of our rope lay across the top of the Stac. To use the best anchorage points we had to cross the gap obliquely, so lengthening the Tyrolean traverse to 120 ft. Without the aid of Jumars it would have been difficult to overcome the considerable sag in the rope. Additional excitement was provided by numerous sea-birds cannoning into the taut nylon and by two Guillemots on the Stac who started pecking the rope which had invaded their territory. The appalling 350-ft. chasm underneath made this a most impressive occasion.

'I found no traces of the earlier visit, although local reports confirm that the posts which were fixed on top of the Stac by the original visitor to provide a permanent rope anchorage, could still be seen up to 20 years ago. The pioneer traverse was certainly a remarkable 19th-century exploit, perhaps more so than the feats of the St. Kilda cragsmen. It is even more certain that no mountaineering amateur of that era would have committed himself to such an undertaking and possibly, despite modern equipment, many climbers will still find the traverse a thought-provoking experience.

'The exploit is recorded in *Fauna of the North West Highlands* (1904) where Harvie-Brown writes, "About the years 1873 and 1876 the Great Stac was for the first time invaded by two men and a boy from Uist, at the request of the late Mr Evander McIver, because the Great Blackbacked Gulls were becoming destructive and were increasing in numbers. This invasion of the top of the Great Stac was accomplished by means of a rope thrown over it from the nearest cliff top of the main island, along which the boy scrambled. The rope was used once or twice afterwards and the pins holding it on the flat top of the Stac were still there some years afterwards."

'The son of the youthful pioneer now lives at Dunoon and he recently made a pilgrimage to Handa in order to view the scene of his father's triumph. It is perhaps fitting that this *Journal* should pay a belated tribute to an epic exploit.'

**Slioch.**—D. G. Turnbull notes that the description of the climbs on Slioch in the 1953 *District Guide* (perpetuated in the new *Climber's Guide*) is misleading and inaccurate. 'The North-west face is indeed reached by following up to its source the burn which cuts the Letterewe track one mile beyond Glen Bianasdaill, and the basis of operations is the large boulder at the source of the burn. However, Main Buttress forms the skyline on the left. Stepped Ridge is immediately beyond it and entirely hidden. The pinnacle which is conspicuous on the skyline in the view of Slioch from Slattadale or the Loch Maree Hotel is on a broken buttress well to the north of Stepped Ridge. The buttress immediately above the boulder is that referred to on p.53 of the *District Guide* as having been climbed in 1949 and as being Difficult in its lowest 100 ft. It gives pleasant scrambling. Stepped Ridge is a worthwhile climb and has character: although the identification of the lower steps in the *Guide* is not clear, the upper parts give clean open climbing. I hope this may save somebody from messing about frustratedly on Main Buttress in search of Stepped Ridge.'

### Western Highlands Notes

**Sgùrr a'Mhuilinn; Creag Ghlas, East Buttress.**—Renny & Strong recorded an 800-ft. Mild Very Severe here in August 1967 (see *S.M.C.J.*,

1968, xxix, 62) which 'followed the left-bounding edge of the triangular buttress more or less closely.'

Dr Patey notes that, 'Unaware of previous visits we, in June 1968, also climbed the left-bounding edge more or less directly. It seemed an obvious choice for a first visit. Although we took a direct line and did not avoid any obstacles, the standard of difficulty encountered was no more than Moderately Difficult. Detailed description seemed pointless because although the rock was good, the pitches were straightforward and lacked variety. Obviously there must be some puzzling error of identification?'

'The original Very Severe line was christened *Oh!* The 1968 Difficult line is therefore entitled *Oh Dear!* It did seem to be the natural line as well as the longest, so both routes must be within whispering distance of each other (although presumably not identical?)'

### Cairngorms Notes

**Mayar: Corrie Fee.**—J. G. Stewart notes that B Gully invariably contains a considerable ice-pitch in its main branch, which is often very steep. For that reason he suggests that it should be GRADE II and not GRADE I as it is in the present *Guide*.

### Central Highlands Notes

**Binnein Shuas.**—Dr Patey notes that in company with R. Ford and Mary Stewart he paid an early visit to the crag on 16th May 1964. 'In the prevailing wet and cold conditions the full potential was unfortunately not realised. The top part of the Fortress was climbed, approaching by the hanging garden on the left. Starting from a small triangular overhang, the crack above the roof was climbed for 20 ft. or so till a nut runner suggested a 10-ft. tension traverse to the edge on the right which was then climbed to the top (Very Severe). Among minor routes also climbed that day were Criss and Cross and a lot of short easier routes round the corner to the right of Ardverikie Wall. (On a return visit last year I was agreeably surprised to find what a fine route we had missed). On another winter visit we climbed Hidden Gully in February 1965 (with J. Brown & Joy Heron). GRADE II. Numerous short ice pitches of no great difficulty.'

J. Mackenzie notes that on the north side of the hill there is a prominent nose dropping down from the summit which gives an 80-ft. Severe route. Also, Mackenzie notes a companion crack to the right of Blaeberry Grooves, Gorgon, 300 ft., Very Severe (with N. Fraser). Above the crack, slabs led to the foot of a dièdre which was followed with difficulty, and a peg, to a left traverse and easier slabs above.

**Ben Alder.**—J. Mackenzie has submitted a description of a route on the South Buttress which appears to have something in common with Uncle's Chimney. When we find out what, we'll publish it.

R. N. Campbell and A. W. Ewing paid a visit to the huge messy North-west face overlooking the Bealach Dubh in February 1970 and found it very promising, with endless scope for long middle-grade winter routes and some harder possibilities, much like the Inner Corrie on Creag Meaghaidh though bigger and somewhat less steep. Approaching the cliffs from the north, a way was made up the first huge buttress in dangerous conditions. Mixed climbing (GRADE II-III) led to a little pot corrie and an easy exit was made to the right. Comfortable bothy accommodation may be had at Culra, which is the best centre for this side of the mountain.



**Craigellachie, Aviemore.**—J. Mackenzie notes that apart from the main face of the crag, routes have been made on the slabs below and to the left of the crag. In addition about 350 ft. right of the main crag is a water-course which gives a hard 200-ft. ice climb when frozen.

**Creag Meaghaidh.**—Dr Patey notes that some of the gradings in McKeith's *Guide* are inconsistent. He suggests, in particular, and with the support of another party that Apollyon Ledge should be GRADE II rather than GRADE IV. His other suggestions have been noted and will be taken into account when the new guide is compiled next year. He also recommends that in repetitions of The Girdle Traverse the first pitch of The Last Post might well be omitted and the line gained by a traverse from Easy Gully instead. Also, from the lower rim of the bowl at the top of the Pipes one does not 'descend the upper part of the Sash' to reach the main trough of Diadem, but crosses by a lower independent ledge with little loss in height.

**Steall Waterfall.**—G. N. Hunter notes that he climbed this, when frozen, with S. A. M. Viveash in February 1965. It gave a 500-ft. GRADE III. Also on this ascent was a somewhat bewildered Jack Russell dog called Jim.

### Ben Nevis Notes

**Càrn Dearg Buttress.**—Torro was led free last year by Ian Nicolson and the crux is now the final pitch. Nicolson eliminated the pegs from the fourth and last pitches. The peg on the first pitch was eliminated some years ago by J. Cunningham & J. Gardner. We are indebted to I. Fulton for this information and would like to encourage anyone who eliminates pegs to let us know about it.

J. Porteous received an unexpected setback on the second pitch of Sassenach last year when the large chockstone in the lip of the roof came out.

### Southern Scotland Notes

**Beinn Dubh, Glen Lochy.**—On the north slope of this 2600-ft. hill, opposite the Glen Lochy crossings are three large gullies. These, according to J. Mackenzie, offer climbs of GRADE II-III standard, the central gully being the most difficult. All contain one or two ice-pitches.

### Miscellaneous Notes

**Decline in the West.**—Followers of that now classical example of authoritarian bullying, the **Coruisk Affair** (see *S.M.C.J.*, xxix, 1969, 111-120) will not be surprised to hear it has collapsed into farce, with the same protagonists repeating even more bizarrely their ritual gestures. The following glimpses are from notes supplied by Mr Cousins.

The bridge across the Scavaig river fell down in October 1969, unassisted. The Camasunary bridge is about to fall down. (Both bridges are now hastily described by the Army as 'experimental'). The Land Rover track (presumably also experimental) has become unsuitable for casualty evacuation by vehicles. As a mountain rescue facility the scheme is shown a mechanical failure and a waste of public money.

Undeterred by this somewhat stark proof of misjudgment and incompetence, the Army gallantly intends to rebuild the bridge(s) 'early this summer.' The organisations representing those for whose 'benefit' the project was designed and against whose wishes it was carried out—including the

British Mountaineering Council, the Association of Scottish Climbing Clubs, the S.M.C., the J.M.C.S., the Scottish Countryside Activities Council—have requested the C.C. for S. and the Inverness-shire C.C. to prevent such a lunatic rebuilding. The Mountain Rescue Committee of Scotland (who surely should know) voted for removal of both bridges. Yet the authorities continue their shameful pat-ball (presumably only the petrol bomb will interrupt these games): the I.C.C. referred the matter to the C.C. for S.; the C.C. for S. said they knew of no proposal to rebuild the bridge and anyway the matter is one for the I.C.C. Oh, and Mr P. M. Jackson, M.P., has again 'brought the matter to the attention of the Scottish Office.'

A meeting in March of most bodies interested has yielded no clear statement so far, but Press reports hint at rebuilding with 'developmental' assistance; these reports are described as garbled. So the circus goes on; but it must go on, for in such a test case for mountain-users' rights it is necessary that fencesitters and timeservers be allowed to reveal themselves for what they are. We shall report, when facts appear.

**Memorial to the late Donald Duff, F.R.C.S.**—On behalf of the M.R.C. for Scotland and the A.S.C.C. we print the following extracts from their circulated Appeal.

DONALD DUFF, M.B.E., M.C., F.R.C.S., formerly Surgeon to the Belford Hospital at Fort William, was the pioneer of Mountain Rescue in Scotland, and inventor of the Duff stretcher. He was closely associated with the enquiry into Exposure and Exhaustion, took part in countless rescues, founded the first civilian mountain rescue team in Scotland, and throughout his life worked for mountain rescue, accident prevention and improved mountain safety.

He was most enthusiastic about the 'Adventure in Safety' Exhibition in Glasgow in September 1968. Many requests have been received both for annual exhibitions in Glasgow, and for similar exhibitions elsewhere. It is fitting therefore that a memorial to him should be a **permanent Mountain Safety Exhibition** and we now appeal for funds to arrange this. We envisage an exhibition in easily transportable form and Mrs Duff is of the opinion that this form of memorial is one that would have appealed to her husband.

Climbers and Mountaineering Clubs all over Britain are in debt to Donald Duff for the work he did for them in his lifetime and we trust all will contribute to this fund. We also ask help from all Education Authorities and organisations who encourage young people to the hills.

We hope to raise £5,000. Donations, however small, will be gladly received and should be sent to John Watson, Esq., C.A., 39 Clepington Road, Dundee. Cheques should be made payable to the Donald Duff Memorial.

**Haute Route Ecosaise.**—Routes for this epic ski-traverse were discussed earlier (*S.M.C.J.*, xxvii, 1961, 149). Nearly 10 years later the indomitable Slessor and his wife made a brave attempt on March 15th, facing strong to gale N.W. or S.W. winds and a thaw which naturally began when they did and which slowed them up considerably.

They left Moulzie (Clova) at 8.30, for Bachnagairn, Tolmount, Càrn na Claise, Glas Maol, sleeping at the S.S.C. hut; on the 16th, Cairnwell, Beinn Iutharn Mòr, Fealar and camping at Falls of Tarf on the 17th, Tarf to Beinn Dearg in heavy thaw, sleeping at a Bruar Lodge hay barn; on the 18th, in a N.W. gale, by Sròn a'Chleirich to Sròn Phadruig Lodge and camp; on the 19th, Càrn na Caim to Dalwhinnie, where they lunched, and then by car to Loch Pattock and camp; on the 20th, bound by gale; on the 21st, Càrn Dearg (N.W. side of Lairig to Corroul), with gale and ice above 3000 ft., and to Lubyen and Moy Lodge; on the 22nd, Corriechoille to Stob Coire an Easain; on the 23rd, feet wrecked and retired home.

Surely this traverse, as yet uncompleted but with details as in the above 1961 *Journal* reference, is more worthy for active Salvationists than the herding of Munros? In this attempt, H. Pinkerton and W. Mockridge supported, driving the car and bringing up camps.

**Munroists.**—Still they come, with Mr Maxwell at the turnstile. Ticketholders are as follows (Munroist-baggers should turn to *S.M.C.J.*, xix, 1969, 42, for conventions and the first 73; last year's issue had the rest): (88) R. W. G. Wood, 1969, —, —; (89) I. T. Stephen, 1969, —, —; (90) R. J. Grant, 1969, —, —; (91) W. T. Tauber, 1969, —, —; (92) R. Hainsworth, 1969, —, —; (93) K. R. Cox, 1969, 1969, —; (94) R. Amour, 1969, —, —; (95) Mrs E. R. Innes, 1969, —, —; (96) W. G. Carter, 1969, —, —. Some earlier numbers have acquired further merit; they now read: (33) A. G. McKenzie, 1958, —, 1969; (53) \*G. M. Smith, 1963, 1966, —, and 1969, 1969, —; (61) \*H. M. Brown, 1965, 1965, 1967 and 1969, —, 1969; (66) G. C. Sime, 1966, 1966, 1969; (68) \*D. C. H. Green, 1966, 1966, 1969; (71) D. Hawksworth, 1967, —, 1969. H. M. Brown notes that 'in June last, pupils of Braehead School climbed their last Collective Munro and in September completed the "further of Scotland" list. To have had the pupils of one school on top of all the 3000's in the British Isles is probably unique. . . .'. We wait, numbly, until the next paragraph.

**Scotblob.**—W. Tauber notes that his Club, St. Andrews University M.C., attempted this project, the brainchild of the late Philip Tranter, between mid day on Saturday 7th June and mid day on the 8th. For the uninitiated, Scotblob is an operation in which the members of a Club scale every Munro in the country within 24 hours. It is not, of course, necessary that every member should climb them all: only that the Club be represented at each summit.

This attempt failed by 18 Munros. 50 members were involved. The three who fell down on their obligations are to be commended for their honesty, under the circumstances, if for nothing else. Among notable excursions were the Sky Ridge and Blaven, the six Torridon Munros, the round of Loch Mullardoch and Glen Strathfarrar, and the 18 Munros of Glen Nevis—a repeat of Tranter's epic journey completed in just over 20 hours, with a 5-hour break in the middle.

**Mackie's at One.** The Edinburgh monthly luncheon (see last issue) is now held at Binns' Restaurant, West End of Princes Street (3rd floor) at 1 p.m. on the first Thursday of each month. Others than 'regulars' should phone R. G. Inglis (031-667 2791) before 11 a.m. on the luncheon day, if at all possible.

## Scottish Mountaineering Accidents 1969

'A Gross and Defamatory Error' appeared in the Accident Report sent to us and printed last issue. Miss Dewar, of the Heriot-Watt M.C., was carrying an ice axe, after all, in her accident of 13th January, 1968. Unfortunately, the leader of the M.R. team involved did not observe this, and as her club sent *no report* to the M.R.C. of Scotland, the M.R.C. records were therefore incomplete and inaccurate. We are naturally glad to print the H-W.M.C.'s belated information, but point out that his *Journal* publishes (at its own expense and with editorial reluctance) the Accident list only as a service to climbers, and accepts no responsibility for its accuracy. It is sent us by a correspondent who relies entirely on the official M.R.C. reports, and these in their turn depend on the co-operation of all parties involved. Our correspondent remarks 'We trust this incident will stress the necessity of

those concerned in accidents *themselves* sending in reports to the M.R.C. of Scotland (*per* Mr B. H. Humble, Rose Cottage, Arrochar). He then reports the following:

While the information below does not include them all we have notice of 77 incidents in 1969. Causes already noted arise again, particularly lack of map and compass or inability to use them. Again there is evidence of poor leadership of school and youth parties and abundant evidence of need of the Mountain Leadership scheme. For the first time there is the larger number of accidents to roped parties of rock climbers. Two of these involved roping down while the others involved artificial aids. There would seem to be lack of care in belaying and placing of pitons.

Our thanks are due to all the Mountain Rescue Teams which have given such fine service over the past year and also to the Police and R.A.F. M.R. teams; space precludes their individual mention.

#### NORTH AND WEST HIGHLANDS

27TH APRIL — Army exercise—14-mile march in mountains round Loch Maree. One man missed for 5 minutes; said he had tripped over a stone, found lying on ground unable to move; injury to back; equipment weighing 50 lbs. Made comfortable, spent night on hill and evacuated by helicopter.

27TH-28TH APRIL — Service Unit exercise by Loch Affric—snow above 2500 feet. Moray Outward Bound School also with camp by Loch Affric. At 2.30 p.m. instructor and students saw two soldiers helping a third towards Y.H. Students assisted. Shortly afterwards another group of soldiers approaching with man on rope stretcher; students assisted carry.

Soldiers treated—first slight cold damage to feet, the second for accidental hypothermia. Students made tea, lit fires and made beds for soldiers. Soldier with exposure had gone slightly berserk on hill, had run off uphill using abusive language. On being brought down escaped again and tried to jump into river. By about 3 p.m. 19 service men at hostel, two with slight injuries. 15 soldiers sent uphill again (some of them near exhaustion) to collect weapons and rucksacks; clothing inadequate; one man wore just one pair of nylon socks under boots; slept out under capes with bivvy bags. No definite arrangements or provisions made for emergency evacuation; officers and N.C.O.'s knowledge of accidental hypothermia extremely sketchy.

10TH NOVEMBER — Gordon Milne (24) London. At 2 p.m. left car at 462478 and went off to climb Ben Hope; no map, no compass, no ice axe and wearing long leather jack boots, no food other than two bars of chocolate but had a light tent. At dawn seen making way off hill; had been unable to find way off—pitched tent—lay inside till dawn. 200 man-hours search.

#### GLENCOE

24TH MARCH — Eric Jones (21) Fort William, and John Grieve, Lochaber M.C., descending Great Gully of Buchaille Etive Mòr by moonlight. Ropes left behind because of icing. Jones stepped on unstable snow, slipped and fell away down; helmet unfastened and lost in course of fall; fractured skull. *Fatal*.

16TH MAY — Carol Wilkes (12) Isle of Wight, scrambling at 500 feet on Stob nan Broige, Glen Etive. Fell for about 50 ft., struck rock outcrop, fell and rolled another 150 ft., fractured skull. *Fatal*.

18TH MAY — Anthony Blenkinsop (23) Edinburgh J.M.C.S., on Etive Slabs, wearing P.A.'s and helmet. 5mm Perlon tied single through eye of a piton, slipped, sling broke; fell, but held on lower sling. Head wound caused by 'give' in Romer helmet hitting rock. Fell from crux of 'Pause'.

17TH JUNE — James Anderson (37) Northumbrian M.C., when leaving Ossian's Cave loosened boulder on right foot.

1ST AUGUST — Moira Kennedy (16), Milngavie, on lower slopes of Sgòr nam Fiannaidh about 500 feet above road, throwing stones when overbalanced, fell down rock face to steep grass, rolled down to boulders.

1ST AUGUST — Russell Edgell (17), one year's experience, leading Ramp, Clachaig Gully, slipped at top, fell length of pitch—no runner used, severe laceration, bruising, spinal injury.

1ST AUGUST — Brian Packer (18), Edinburgh, descending to summon help for Edgell, abseiled down face of Great Cave Pitch, rope not secure at top—fell about 70 feet. Helmet split at rear base saved him, but severe concussion, unconscious 2 days.

8TH AUGUST — Edward Fowler (20), limited rock climbing experience, slipped on Buchaille Etive Mòr. Leader failed to hold him—fell about 70 feet then held by rope belay—laceration and dislocation.

There have also been 10 other accidents in Glencoe, for which no details are available.

1ST SEPTEMBER — Party of 4 from Ceunant, Birmingham, climbing Dalness Chasm—all very experienced. Leader of 2nd rope, D. Grimmit (27), belayed to two pitons at Barrier pitch; his second (R. Clark, 24) near top of pitch when used peg as hand hold, peg came out, and fell, pulling leader from stance; leader's 2 pitons came out and karabiner opened. Leader fell about 60 feet, receiving serious injuries—Clark though injured managed down. Technically a most difficult rescue.

4TH SEPTEMBER — E. Huntington (25), Wallasey, Cheshire. With Holiday Fellowship Party traversing Aonach Eagach below main party when struck on head by falling stone, broken nose—severe facial lacerations.

9TH SEPTEMBER — D. Chen (25), Chinese, and P. Groarke (21), London, London University Climbing Club, very experienced, well equipped, wearing helmets. Conditions wet and misty. Both found dead, B Buttress, Aonach Dubh; presumed leader came off and second's belay came out.

10TH OCTOBER — I. Whyte (Glasgow), Edinburgh University M.C., abseiling on Aonach Dubh when belaying sling slipped; fell 80 feet to ledge—back injury.

#### CAIRNGORMS AND LOCHNAGAR

1ST FEBRUARY — Lt. Dunbar (21), R.H.F., set out from Car Park for Jean's Hut; could not locate hut—dug snow hole and spent night there—his dog helped keep him warm; returned to Car Park in morning as search started.

1ST FEBRUARY — John Dempster (19) and James Wallace (21), E.U.M.C. Dempster much more experienced than Wallace. Last seen about three fifths up Eagle's Buttress, Lochnagar. Weather conditions severe. Alarm raised when they did not return. Teams called out following afternoon and started at first light 3rd February, plus search dogs and helicopter. At noon found body of Dempster at 245855; flown back. Search called off 6 p.m., parties of 80 were out on 3rd and about 100 on 4th; included a descent of Eagle Buttress; located body of Wallace about 200 ft. from top of Climb. Dempster apparently died of exposure when going for help. Wallace had superficial injuries. Presumed fall by Wallace; Dempster tied him to rock and went for help.

19TH FEBRUARY — Glenmore Lodge Survival Course, 3 parties climbing head of Coire Cas. Avalanche at steepest western side carried down party of 9 at 11.30 a.m. Help at once from other two parties and from Ski Patrol. All safe by 12.45 p.m.

30TH MARCH — Mr Robertson, St. Andrews, allowed two sons (10 and 13) with another boy (13) to walk to Glen Muick and back, to return by 5 p.m. At 7 p.m. stalker in Glen Muick reported 10 year-old had arrived there and

said other two collapsed by Sandy Hillock. Boys found, all soaking wet, completely exhausted wading wet snow; town shoes, two with shorts.

1ST APRIL — Donald Latuske (16), London, Party School Cadet Corps training in Cairngorms, collapsed first day but able to eat. Party camped on spot and rescue party called out next morning. Officer in charge gave inaccurate grid ref. of site.

5TH MAY — Three boys from Aberdeen lost in Mount Pattock region—mist down to 600 feet and rain. Police called out; boys arrived 6 hours late.

13TH JULY — C. Merry (19), Essex, left Loch Morlich to climb Ben Mac Dhui *via* Cairn Lochan. Lost map on Cairn Lochan, crossed Lairig Ghru and started up Braeriach thinking was Ben Macdhuì. Met climber who directed him back to Lairig. Reached it, turned south instead of north and arrived at Luibeg instead of Glenmore. Good clear weather.

13TH AUGUST — R. Tait (20), hill walking with friend—at noon on summit of Cairn Lochan friend had slight injury, returned to base at Ryvoan Bothy. Tait carried on with planned route to Shelter Stone Ford of Avon and back over Lairig an Laoigh. Did not show up; full scale search next day. Found at 1.30 p.m. on shore of Loch Avon; had not reached Shelter Stone till 5.30 p.m.; spent night there, leaving to continue walk not thinking anyone worried. He was reasonably equipped, stove, ground sheet, sleeping bag; neither map nor compass.

15TH AUGUST — Jean Nelson (21), Glasgow, appendicitis at Etchachan Hut. Rescue parties.

8TH SEPTEMBER — D. Lewis (35), Croydon, with School Cadet party, dislodged stone struck leg. Rescue parties.

12TH SEPTEMBER — 24 children, ages 8-14, from 49th Coy. Aberdeen Girl Guides, with two adults in charge, on walk from Tarfside to Feighside; 8 miles, 1250 ft. of ascent. Six hours allowed, leaving 4 hours' daylight in hand. Little food and all eaten by late afternoon; map but no compass; at highest point, a 90-degree error lost them. Stopped for night at 8 p.m. Alarm raised. Found 3.45 a.m., safe and well. Comment by rescue party: 'The children clad for dry day; adults had no idea of basic hillcraft or mountain safety.'

#### BEN NEVIS AREA

8TH MARCH — 3 experienced climbers from Cumberland lost path from summit and benighted—clear frosty weather. Search party.

2ND APRIL — P. Chapman (26), Blackpool, and E. Jackman (30), benighted after climbing Càrn Dearg Buttress. Search party.

24TH JULY — A. Drummond (11), Bournemouth, with brother, father and friend, left car park Glen Nevis, climbed up slopes of Càrn Dearg south. Separated. Next day body found at 163697, Glas Burn area; had fallen over cliff—*fatal*. Wearing jeans, T-shirt and sandals.

12TH AUGUST — S. Taylor (27), instructor at Loch Eil Outdoor Centre, climbing on Cavalry Buttress, Polldubh, with two students. Had taken spike belay above second last pitch of the climb. One student slipped, pulled Taylor from stance, belay sling rolling off spike; fell 60 ft. over vertical left wall; arrested by rope jamming in a crack (new 11mm Edelweiss Kernmantel); concussion, abrasions to back and head. Salewa Romer helmet deeply scored but saved him from more serious injury. Not wearing gloves; severe burns of wrist.

6TH SEPTEMBER — G. Cruickshanks, Edinburgh University Athletic Club, in Ben Nevis race though no experience of such a race and no training—soon dropped behind the 118 others and was recommended by officials to give up. Insisted on continuing and at 3000 ft. was only competitor left on hill; insisted

on making for summit. At 5.30 p.m. met by summit party come down to look for him at 4000 ft. moving very slowly and suffering from exhaustion; eventually persuaded to give in, given warm drink, clothing and escort, then collapsed.

12TH SEPTEMBER — Two Edinburgh students climbing Rogue's Rib, Ben Nevis. Leader fell 40 ft from first pitch; bruising; running belay said to have loosened.

19TH SEPTEMBER — Tourist slipped on scree near path.

28TH DECEMBER — Climber lost control when glissading in No. 4 Gully; injured.

#### CREAG MEAGHAIDH

22ND FEBRUARY — Group of six climbers of Creag Dhu Club climbing in Coire Ardair. Cornelius Higgins (23), Glasgow, and Robert Carrington, Surrey, did not return to camp that night. Search parties called out. Had climbed North Post, reached top in bad weather; neither map nor compass, could not find line of descent. Headed over plateau towards head of Glen Roy—bivouacked in snow hole—continued next day to Lodge, 337974.

#### SKYE

5th APRIL — S. Brookes (17), Lancashire, limited experience, in party traversing Sgùrr Thearlaich to Thearlaich-MhicCoinnich col, not on usual route. Brookes trod on large block which gave way, fell 500 ft. down gully. Fractured skull—*fatal*.

28th MAY — P. Allan (26), London, leading final pitch, Eastern Buttress, Sròn na Ciche, slipped on smooth rock—running belay said to be too low. Injured.

7th SEPTEMBER — Teresa McConnel (18), left Uig YH, in morning telling no one where going. Search started next day. Helicopter found body at foot of sea cliffs south of Uig; had fallen about 200 ft.

7TH AUGUST — 24 Junior Leaders of Irish Guards and officer-in-charge left Camasunary to walk to Glen Brittle. Near bottom of Coire a' Chrundha one collapsed and 23 marched on. Half a mile further on another collapsed and 22 marched on. On arrival at Glen Brittle officer-in-charge contacted Pete Thomas but did not know exactly where had left the two men—had not attempted to carry them on rope stretcher though had ropes. Both recovered enough to walk down.

24TH AUGUST — Eva Koleski (65), London Mountaineering Club, 4' 3" tall, walking from Sgùrr Dearg to Sgùrr na Banachdich alone when overtaken by darkness. When torch seen descending about 3 a.m., climbers from B.M.C. Hut went up to meet her but torch extinguished about 3.30 a.m.; had slipped about 150 down slabby rock. Slight injuries; found at 7.30 a.m.

16TH SEPTEMBER — Climber from Wales on Bruach na Frithe—rock gave way and fell about 30 feet—fractures.

#### HEBRIDES

P. Gray (24), Sheffield. Killed climbing on Sgùrr Scaladale, Harris.

#### ARRAN

5TH APRIL — Party called out, A. Ward (69), Wallasey, overdue—located on Goatfell Path.

14TH JUNE — Dorothy Boyd (13), with Rambling Club from Stanley Secondary School, Ardrossan, adults in charge—at 002418 crossing Corrie Burn, dropped vacuum flask, slipped and fell attempting to recover it; about 100 ft. down rocky slope; wearing flat shoes with smooth soles. Fracture.



24TH JUNE — Colin Campbell (21), Greenock, failed to return from solitary hill walk. Party found body west side of A' Chir ridge; had slipped on ridge—wearing TUF boots, soles badly worn.

4TH JULY — Jennifer Miller (16), Isle of Wight, with school party, severe asthma, collapsed on path at Cock of Arran—carried down.

9TH AUGUST — A. Maxfield (37), Liverpool, instructor at Outward Bound Courses, climbing on Torr Nead an Eoin, Loch Ranza; foot slipped trying to overcome overhang. First and second belays pulled out and third took effect as he hit ground—head and back injuries.

23RD MARCH — Christine Culling (20), Norwich, with Field Study Group from Bedford College, London, on Goatfell; slipped, fell, and slid down frozen snow gully—no axe or crampons.

#### SOUTHERN UPLANDS

27TH JUNE — D. Cadman (51), Surrey, lost on hills, low cloud, map, no compass—search party.

#### CENTRAL GRAMPIANS AND PERTHSHIRE

2ND JANUARY — A. Todd (18), Glasgow, and companion, both well-equipped; descending south ridge of Ben More, Todd lost control when glissading, ice axe with wrist sling, deep flesh wound right thigh caused by pick; stretcher.

9TH FEBRUARY — Party of six boys from Glasgow Academy, led by experienced 53-year-old teacher, severe cold, strong wind, snow showers, 300 ft. up on south side of Càrn Mairg, Glen Lyon, P. May (14), collapsed; carried off on stretcher. Later learned boy had influenza previous week; teacher did know.

20TH APRIL — William Slessor (28), Etchachan Club, Aberdeen. Left father's car at 539359 at 3.30 p.m., to climb Meall Ghaordie and left details; intention of returning at 7.0 p.m. Not returned by 9 p.m., and father called police. Search party found Slessor next morning, exposed and exhausted at 528435 in Glen Lyon. When found was adamant that he was in Glen Lochay (where father had to meet him). So much so that he later wrote a letter to *Aberdeen Press and Journal* stating he was not lost and was found almost within eight of his father's car. First time on hills since accident in 1968. Well equipped, map and compass.

27TH APRIL — P. McDonald (26), Squirrels, Edinburgh, temporary climbing instructor with Edinburgh Corporation Ed. Dept. demonstrating rock climbing roped to two other experienced climbers and leading on a climb said to be Severe. Fell about 50 feet, does not know what caused fall but pulled out two pitons; minor injuries.

27TH JULY — B. Sherman (46), American, climbing Ben More with son (13); crossing steep slope at about 2000 ft. in rain, Sherman slipped on mossy rock. Slid down for about 30 feet then fell over rock outcrop about 10 feet high, suffering minor injuries; boy came off mountain himself and raised alarm. Sherman had neither map or compass and wearing plimsolls with smooth soles.

7TH OCTOBER — Party of Junior Leaders (Army) from Troon climbing on Beinn Chabair experienced leader. P. Sell (16), collapsed with severe stomach pains. Rescue party.

29TH DECEMBER — Party of 12 Hertfordshire Scout Ass., based at Lochearnhead; instructor in charge had attended Scout course. Party set out to practice snow and ice technique on Ben Lawers; well clad and well equipped—vibrams, rope, survival gear, etc., no crampons. Climbed Beinn Ghlas and

Ben Lawers; started down, instructor leading, assistant instructor last, with boys between; followed red markers on steep path from summit—markers lost—headed towards north end of crags of South Corrie. Snow very hard, neither instructor deemed it necessary to rope up. David Bridges (16), in middle of party, slipped, could not control with axe, veered towards crags, went over and was lost to sight. All party were 'stupefied with horror'—because of poor visibility could not see where Bridges had gone. No real attempt made to reach him. Tried to get round to investigate further, then made for safer ground. Instructor went off with two boys to fetch assistance, telling assistant instructor to get others off hill quickly and safely. Because of poor visibility 'error in navigation' took them to Glen Lyon instead of car park and much time wasted. Rescue team, about to leave at 7 p.m., learned that Bridges had arrived alone and unaided at house on Killin-Kenmore Road (684379) at 6 p.m.; had fallen about 500 ft., and lain unconscious for about 1½ hours. On regaining consciousness, he struggled down hill mainly in darkness and made use of map and compass ('footsteps straight and regular'). When reached house, in shocking state—head injuries, broken rib—two abdominal wounds caused by axe. Later investigation showed Bridges could have been reached by party in relative safety within half an hour. From Police 'The boy would not have survived much longer on the hill had he not been extremely hardy.' The casualty himself comes out best in this incident.

#### ARROCHAR—BEN LOMOND AND TROSSACHS AREA

9TH MARCH — Graham Lindsay (18), Anniesland Outdoor Club, Glasgow, well clad and carrying ice axe, slipped on hard snow at about 2800 ft. up last slope to summit of Ben Vorlich (Ardlui); lost control and slid about 50 ft. Head wound; Rescue team.

9TH MARCH — Another call same evening. Arthur Ling (52), Renfrewshire, and son on Ben Ime. At 5 p.m. father slipped on hard snow and fell down gully for about 250 feet. Boy struggled down and raised alarm. Body found about 3 a.m., wearing anorak, heavy jersey, light pair of trousers and Panter Spanish Fell boots entirely unsuitable for conditions; no ice axe.

15TH MARCH — Party of 4 students from Glasgow University (not from Mountaineering Club) under experienced senior descending from col between centre and north peaks of Cobbler, roped; Frances Hughes (18), a novice, became nervous, started to shiver. Party unroped and two helped her on either side (one wearing crampons). She slipped from their grasp and one of others slipped also. Slid down striking head. Help called on.

9TH JUNE — Office group from Glasgow on Ben Lomond, descending by regular path, girl slipped and hurt ankle—continued, slipped again; brought down on stretcher; wearing low-heeled ordinary town shoes.

23RD AUGUST — Roy Norman (25), Glasgow, novice scrambling near foot of North Peak of Cobbler—fell about 10 ft; injuries to spine; stretcher.

7TH SEPTEMBER — Ben Lomond, sponsored Climb run by the Royal Commonwealth Society for the Blind. Teams of five taking part in a timed ascent and descent; Junior teams (under 17) are made up of three juniors and two adults (over 17) and under rules the team must keep together. 430 competitors. Frank Pollock (13), Army Cadet, Glasgow, wearing army boots, steel toe and heel, lost footing and slithered down rocky slope (on last steep rise of track to the summit) slight injuries and shock.

1ST NOVEMBER — Party of 1st Elderslie Scouts, including 3 adult leaders, one lad of 17, and 16 boys 12 to 14 at Kinlochard Youth Hostel. Planned exercise: road to Aberfoyle, Duke's Road to Loch Katrine Sluices, then track up Ben Venue, round the west peak (highest point 2320 feet), then over between Beinn Bhreac and Beinn Tharsuinn, and down Ladard Burn; about 17 miles. Party left Y.H. at 11 a.m., lunch at Marshall Lodge, leaving there

at 1.10 p.m.; Sluices at 3 p.m. With nightfall at 6 p.m. this left 3 hours to ascend 2000 feet and cover about 6 miles. Rough scramble up Ben Venue tired out boys. At 4.45 p.m. one boy unable to continue. Two boys sent back to Sluices with two adults—one an assistant Scout Leader and the other assistant Venture Scout Leader. This group reached Y.H. before 10 p.m. Other 16 continued; heavy rain, strong wind. At 6 p.m. near highest point Leader, Archibald Steel (42), Scoutmaster, packed up. In his own words 'just could not go any further.' The other adult, Assistant Venture Leader, Eric Stewart (21), stayed with him. Ian Malcolmson (17) told to take the party of 13 young Scouts and carry on to the Youth Hostel; they had one map, no compass, no torch, no whistle and no food, and it was dark. Steel and Stewart had map, compass, torch and whistle. They rested two hours and then descended by Ledard Burn to Hostel at 1 a.m. On arrival at Hostel the Scoutmaster was asked 'where are the boys?' and replied 'I thought they were here.' After leaving Steel, Malcolmson led on by track and at 463056 missed path and continued on falling ground which forms start of valley and burn leading north to Glasschoille, a deserted cottage on Loch Katrine. Malcolmson saw lights on far side of loch and took the burn to be the Ledard Burn. Took refuge in shed about 10 p.m. Boys by then exhausted and suffering from exposure. Malcolmson stayed with them for about an hour, then went off westwards along shore to seek help. Boys evacuated by launch at 4.30 a.m. Doctor's report: 'All had moderate degree of exposure aggravated by inadequate clothing and lack of food (all food had been eaten by 1 p.m.). All were very weak and tired.' Clothing was mostly jeans and light anoraks; little or no serviceable waterproof clothing and no rucksacks to carry it in: footgear consisted of town shoes, light elastic-sided boots and wellingtons.

## IN MEMORIAM

### JAMES MacARTNEY, 1944-1970

AN athletic ruddy-faced lad, as large as life and radiating enthusiasm like an open furnace. That was MacArtney—at the age of 25, a man with as many friends as the rest of us collect in a lifetime. It was not just the enthusiasm of the man that caught your attention. It was the way that everyone within a given radius suddenly became infected with the same enthusiasm, that was so remarkable. Mountaineering was his way of life and mountaineers of every vintage were his fellow pilgrims. You could not put Jim into any kind of bracket—he did not fit conveniently into any one corner of society, and he did not seem to belong to any one particular generation. He really enjoyed life and he lived every minute of it, holding nothing back. Life was one long hearty laugh and everybody laughed with him. You do not often meet people like that.

He graduated from the hard school of Cairngorm bothy-mongers serving his apprenticeship with Pyper and Reid, walking enormous distances to remote Cairngorm Corries every weekend and scarcely able to keep his eyes open at the printing press on a Monday morning. Between them they cleaned up the best of what the Cairngorms had to offer and might had achieved even more had Jim been able in any way competitive.

MacArtney was too big a man to seek out the bubble Glory. For him the climbing scene was more than just the mountains; it was also the people who went to the mountains, and the great evenings we had at Luibeg, Corrou and Gelder. 'His appetite was enormous, his singing atrocious, but his presence vital,' is how Derek Pyper summed it up.

On his first Alpine Season he was caught up in the disastrous Mont Blanc blizzard of 1965 which cost the lives of several climbers. Struggling through waist-deep, blinding snow for three days he managed to drag himself and two of his companions, Richie MacHardy and 'Mo' Antoine back to safety. Returning home immediately, he was given the sack from his job because he was two days overdue. Characteristically he accepted this without complaint, and spent the next month getting hospital treatment for frostbite.

Thereafter he had a variety of jobs, usually working overtime in order to save up enough money for the summer Alpine Season, and making friends wherever he went. Eventually, he took up an instructor's post at Glenmore Lodge, which was the sort of opening he had been looking for. This led to his highly successful partnership with Hamish MacInnes at the Glencoe School of Winter Mountaineering. As a climbing instructor, he was probably the best we have ever had in Scotland, and if he had a special gift it was that he could get through to people and share their enthusiasm.

In the Himalayas he was dogged by his usual bad luck. A previously tested snow bridge chose to collapse under him, leaving him wedged 60 feet down a narrow crevasse with several fractured ribs. With his usual tenacity he fought his own way out of this and in order not to prejudice the expedition's success on Ali Rattui Tibba, he walked (without assistance) down the valley to hospital.

One might have expected that Fate could have been more kind. He had been dealt a losing hand on two separate occasions but had won through solely by his own efforts. This last time he was given no chance. Most of us find the whole thing difficult to accept.

Jim was not just a friend to all of us, he was a symbol. Over two hundred climbers attended his funeral. They came from all parts of Britain and in all age groups and they were not men given to making token appearances at gravesides. Few of them could find anything to say to each other.

No doubt the shadows will eventually lift and during a rip roaring evening we will be able to remember Jim and what he stood for, in the way he would have had us remember him.

Meantime our sympathies go out to his parents, whose home was a hostel for footloose climbers, to his sister and to his young brother. His closest and dearest friend died with him in the avalanche.

He was the most accomplished winter mountaineer of his generation, and his horizons were only beginning to open.

T.W.P.

### J. R. DEMPSTER, J.M.C.S.

JOHN was a dedicated mountaineer whose enthusiasm inspired all those with whom he climbed. At 15 he had explored Munros in the North West and in the hills round Glen Affric. The following year he was drawn to rock and climbed routes on the Etive Slabs and on the Buchaille. He was always looking for somewhere else to go, new lines to climb, and great routes to conquer. Though he died at only 19 he had climbed some of the hardest routes in Glen Coe and Ben Nevis, Pendulum, the Bat, and Trapeze, to name but a few. The past few winters found him out and about at every opportunity, for he was equally at home on snow and ice as he was on rock. His determination and tenacity were unique, his technique impeccable and he was destined for greater things to come. Scotland has lost a fine mountaineer.

K.J.M.

## ERIC JONES, J.M.C.S.

A BAD back and a growing enthusiasm for motor cycle trials had kept Ike off the hills for a while, but last winter saw his return with a renewed love of climbing. We had enjoyed a great winter before his tragic death below Raven's Gully last March.

Even at fifteen, when I first climbed with him, he had a rare maturity which led people to believe him much older than his actual years. Memories will sometime fade but all who knew him will recall his infectious cheerfulness and great faith in others. He was a man who seldom complained, who never had a bad word to say about his fellows, and who had an unusual devotion to his family whose loss and ingrained sorrow cannot be expressed in mere words.

Ike climbed well, being a good leader and a brilliant second. His faith in my ability to climb a pitch worked wonders and his innate cheerfulness made every route fun.

His knowledge of the Ben was uncanny. The Lochaber Rescue Team and Fort William Fire Brigade have lost a stalwart volunteer whose strength was legend.

I will remember getting fou together on that croft in Harris, holding up the bar on Saturday nights, Ike lifting a boat out of the loch on his own when four of us could not shift it, Glover's Chimney at night, the canoe capsizing in a February Lochy, and that last great day together.

Thanks for all the good times Ike; we will lift our hearts to the hills and our glasses at the bar no more.

J.G.

## GUY BARLOW, D.Sc.

1878-1969

GUY BARLOW joined the S.M.C. in 1921. He had been climbing many years before and, with his friend E. W. Steeple, was a member of the Fell and Rock Club, and the Midland Association of Mountaineers. After the 1914-18 war it was decided to start a series of Guide Books in separate volumes and to start with *Isle of Skye*. Skye had made its appearance in 1907, *Journal* No. 54, and many rock climbers visited from all Britain the Cuillin. So Barlow and Steeple got the job of editing the new Guide (associated with several others). This guide was published in 1923. They were both excellent rock-climbers and made many new routes, particularly in the south-west near Glen Brittle.

Barlow was a physicist, and did his work thoroughly. There were doubts about which was the highest point of the Cuillin. The Ord. Survey made it Sgùrr Alasdair 3309 ft. and next across Coire Lagain came the Inaccessible Pinnacle of Sgùrr Dearg, 3254 ft. Barlow brought his survey kit, and checked his results with great care, making Alasdair 3251 ft. and Pinnacle of Dearg 3226 ft.

I first met Barlow at the Easter Meet at Kinlochewe 1923, but I really got to know him the following year in Skye. I was climbing with Frank Smythe in July 1924. After a day's climbing from Sligachan we went to Glen Brittle to stay with Mary Campbell. Barlow and Steeple arrived the same day. So they slept in the cottage and we in the tin shed by the burn, but we were together at meals and evenings.

The weather took a very bad turn. We could not climb; rain and wind. But Steeple and Barlow put on their oilskins and went out. What were they doing? They told us. They were looking for old Ordnance Survey bench-marks, and scoring points when they found an unmarked one. And we

could not even reach the Window Buttress on Dearn! We thought things over, and suggested that Barlow collect a few tins as rain gauges and start another competition. It worked! Next day at 5 a.m. the rain stopped. Smythe and I were ready and off to Gars-Bheinn. We traversed the main ridge northward in perfect weather. We entered Sligachan about 8 p.m.

On another hot afternoon Smythe and I were resting (after some hard climbing) on top of Sgòr na Ciche. Barlow was on Dubh na Da Bheinn with his survey kit. He must have been concluding his measurements. In 7 minutes he was with us, and I made the distance about half a mile of very rough going. On another day Smythe and I were trying out a new route on Sgùmain (West Trap Route). It was a good hard climb, finishing with the Terminal Tower of the mountain. We had a hard struggle, and just above the hard bit was a small heap of stones suspiciously tidy. We were late for supper, and asked our friends about the last pitch. They had left the small stones! But we had our new route below.

Barlow did not climb much in Scotland after that. He and Steeple went to Norway, which they first visited in summer 1923, taking a coasting steamer to Lofoten Islands, and neighbouring fjords.

There has always been a close collaboration between mountaineers and the exact sciences, and so it is with Barlow. When he was retired I sent him a problem. It arose out of an autumn expedition on the Cairngorms on October 4th, 1947. John Wilson and I gained our last top, Ben MacDhui at 4 p.m. The atmosphere was very clear and John, who has better eyesight than I, was sure that he saw the sharp outline of the Cuillins in about the right direction over a distant notch seen over the summit plateau of Braeriach. It was a few years before we asked Barlow to look into the problem. His solution appeared in the *Journal* (vol. 26 page 16) complete with diagrams, corrected for the earth's curvature and refraction of light. The crucial part of line of light was the passage of Glen Shiel, north slopes, and Barlow concluded that there would be a reasonable chance from Cairn Toul, but not from Ben MacDhui—but as a final word that in conditions of abnormal atmospheric refraction John Wilson might have seen the Cuillin from Mac Dhui, but nobody else has the persistence to try!

His life's work was in the department of Physics of the University of Birmingham where I once visited him. For the following paragraphs I am indebted to Professor P. B. Moon, F.R.S.

'Guy Barlow was shy of exhibiting his mountaineer's knowledge to folk who could only gape ignorantly at such skill. His reputation in research began with his measurement of the Radiation Constant in the Birmingham laboratory; later, he spent much of the 1914-18 war in research on the location of unseen guns. But among physicists he kept quiet about mountains. Once the geology students persuaded him to give them a lantern lecture on the Cuillins of Skye, with his own incomparable set of photographs; when he found the geologists' lecture room crowded with the students and staff from the Department of Physics, he showed the rough edge of his tongue at one intrusion: but what a marvellous lecture it was.

'Dr Barlow's main contribution to the advancement of physics was in collaboration with Professor J. H. Poynting about 1904. They worked on the pressure of light and demonstrated that it existed during reflection as well as absorption. These extremely delicate measurements demonstrated the skill and care that Barlow gave to everything he did.'

It seemed that Barlow had three separate, almost distinct climbing periods in his active life. He probably learned his rock climbing with the F.R.C. and the M.A.M. in association with E. W. Steeple. Then came the S.M.C. and climbing in the Cuillins, with the *Skye Guide* finished in 1923. He went to Norway, still with Steeple, the last period. They went to the Lofoten area. He always returned to this marvellous district for rock-climbing on or near the Arctic circle—Lofoten, Lyngen, Raftsund, Slova

Fjord. And there he found his helpmate, and it was a very happy marriage.

They continued to climb and Barlow made some long and difficult routes. When he could no longer go on the mountains owing to failing eyesight, he retired to a house in N. Wales. They called it *Norland* and it looked westward across the Menai Straits.

J.H.B.B.

We regret to report also the deaths of **Arthur H. H. Ross** (1920), **J. W. W. Drysdale** (1924), **John Geddes** (1931), **S. Pointon Taylor** (1937), and **Hugh Kirkland** (1948), for whom obituaries have not been received as we go to Press.

## PROCEEDINGS OF THE CLUB

### Easter Meet 1969—Torridon

ONCE again Torridon established its popularity as a Meet's centre and, with a repetition of the previous year's superb weather, it was, in all a memorable weekend.

With members resident at Shildaig, Torridon, Alligin and camping in Glen Torridon, and apparently climbing extensively every day, the list of activities may well be incomplete. From reports received, however, it would appear that there was little left unclimbed in the district, extending even to Applecross and including buttress and gully climbs in addition to all the main tops except Alligin (why was it alone spurned?) and numerous minor ones—in all, too numerous to be catalogued. In the words of the President, 'there was also much social climbing between Inveralligin and Shildaig.'

Present:—The President (A. H. Hendry), J. W. Baxter, A. J. Bennet, D. J. Bennet, D. L. Campbell, W. C. Carmichael, R. D. M. Chalmers, M. H. Cooke, A. G. Cousins, R. R. Elton, J. N. Ledingham, D. H. MacPherson, R. W. Martin, M. Morrison, T. Nicholson, D. M. G. Niven, G. Peat, D. G. Pyper, G. S. Roger, C. S. Rose, J. W. Simpson, C. G. M. Slessor, A. M. Smith, J. D. Sturrock, G. J. Tiso, D. G. Turnbull, W. Wallace, J. A. Wood, F. R. Wylie. K. M. Brannan was a guest.

W.L.C.

### New Year Meet 1970—Glencoe

As with previous Meets at Glencoe the number of those apparently willing to venture thus far (or were the others much further afield?) was somewhat restricted. Those who did attend found the combined effect of good weather, excellent snow conditions and the attractive comforts of Glencoe Hotel so much to their liking that the vote was in favour of the same centre for next New Year (reservations have already been secured, and bookings should be made as soon as possible, through the Meets Secretary).

Climbs included:—Beinn a' Bheithir (N.E. ridge), Meall a' Bhuidh, Stob Coire nan Lochan (Dinner-time Buttress and Boomerang Gully), Na Gruagaichean, Ben Starav, Stob a' Choire Odhair.

Present:—The President (A. H. Hendry), I. G. Charleson, J. N. Ledingham, I. D. McNicol, G. Peat, J. E. Proom, G. S. Roger, G. M. Smith (at Lagangarbh), F. W. Wylie. Guests:—J. Kerr, A. Jones, P. Roberts, N. Smith, R. Soep, D. Tooke, E. Zandotti.

W.L.C.



## Reception

THESE reports always suffer when space is short, and this year's inordinate number of New Climbs forces us again to condense shamefully; however, members have their circulars and non-members may be excused from interest, so we will just report that John Wilson gave an excellent illustrated talk on ski-mountaineeing as the best way to use the springtime Alps, and so on to the

## Dinner

FOR this 81st occasion, held at St. Enoch's Hotel, Glasgow, we have not only managed to find a Correspondent once again, but found one of the old Gentlemanly Sort who

'... enjoyed his Dinner very much, the food being good, the wine excellent and the company, needless to say, unsurpassable, so that he listened to the speeches in a benign and tolerant mood.

The President was suffering from recent 'flu, which was most unfortunate since after making suitably congratulatory noises to members who had distinguished themselves in one way or another he had little voice left to make what was, although short, one of the best Presidential Speeches we have heard for a long time, enjoining us to enjoy ourselves and keep our sense of proportion. It would be unfair to the President to report him fully, and we look forward very much indeed to hearing him at length next year.

The Club Song was sung, with considerable restraint and a nasty feeling that hobnailers were only worn by the C.C., and then Alec Small made a good-humoured and witty speech welcoming our guest of honour, Sir Robert Grieve.

'Those of us who were fearing a thought-provoking survey of Highland problems were relieved; our guest spoke briefly and effortlessly, told some funny stories, thanked us all, and that was the end of the Dinner.'

## Annual General Meeting

THE Secretary welcomed, as new members, Paul Brian, Douglas Lang, Graeme Hunter and William Skidmore; and among other points mentioned the Club's representation on the A.S.C.C., the B.M.C., M.R.C. for S., National Trust for Scotland, S.C.A.C. and the Mountain Bothies Association, and how John Wilson is preparing a paper on possible Wilderness Areas at the request of the Countryside Commission. The Guidebooks General Editor thanked the editors, Drs Ewing and Slesser, and West Col, for their remarkable efforts in production and selling—10,400 books and maps were sold last year. The Western District library is now sold, the proceeds going towards a collection of guidebooks and maps. Our representative on the M.R.C. of S., Iain Maitland, retired and we afforded him then our grateful thanks—and do so again here—for his tireless work, his care and his enthusiasm in these important matters; it will be strange to think of another representative, but Dr Michael Taylor will fill the post, with all good wishes. J. Stenhouse has resigned as Slide Custodian—a necessary task well carried out—and is succeeded by Trevor Ransley. Among other matters the formation of a British Mountaineering Club (almost complete with British officials and responsible Minister-to-be) was—as apparently by other clubs—laughed out of the present court; thanks were given for the salutary presence of the B.M. Council to stop this sort of thing (and even for its flickering shadow, the A.S.C.C., whose function the S.M.C. seems forced to fulfil at the present). The National Clubroom at Edinburgh existing on a very insecure tenure, thought was given to its successor; perhaps, financed by the Trust, a national

Scottish Mountaineering Institute, with library, guidebooks, lecture hall, office, license and caretaker (and a room for the S.M.C. . . .)? Edinburgh and Glasgow should hunt immediately for a site—may the better organised win!

## J.M.C.S. REPORTS

**Glasgow Section.**—The Section has had a very good year in spite of, or perhaps because of, a drop in membership. The standard of winter climbing has been maintained and it was only lack of opportunity that prevented an increased general standard on rock. The lack of opportunity is explained by the sacrifice of the August and September Meets to the Creag Meaghaidh Hut Project which was successfully completed just outwith the Club year. Apart from Creag Meaghaidh, Meets have ranged from Achtascaill to Borrowdale, 26 having been organised in the year. Only one party was in the Alps this year and did not get very good weather.

Indoors we continue to hold evening meetings jointly with Western District S.M.C. and they have proved as popular as ever. So far as the J.M.C.S. meetings are concerned the highlights of a very satisfying season were possibly Ken Wilson of *Mountain* and Norman Tennent of *Norman*. The Photographic Competition was most ably judged by Bill Robertson of Lochaber.

Behind the scenes the Committee was active, first of all with the Coruisk Campaign in which the Scottish Countryside Activities Council supported our point of view and later in the revitalising of the A.S.C.C., a process which is still going on.

Our Annual Dinner was again held at Clachaig as was the Whole Club Dinner in March when some of the best weather was experienced for a long time, this gave superb climbing and/or ski-ing on both the Saturday and the Sunday; all in all a classic weekend.

*Hon. Secretary*, Drew Sommerville, 78 Henderland Road, Bearsden, Glasgow.

**London Section.**—A satisfactory if not outstanding year, with membership a little lower at 95. Meets held were 14 official, plus numerous unofficial. Attendance, as always, varied tremendously—perhaps this year the official ones suffered more than usual at the hands of the unofficial. The tendency at the moment is for meets at the Section hut in Bethesda to be crowded and those away from home to be forgotten. A sudden influx of membership applications in recent months could well provide the youthful enthusiasm to change this situation in the coming year.

The A.G.M. and Dinner was held at the Dolbadarn Hotel, Llanberis, on Saturday 22nd November 1969, with a disappointing attendance. The Committee accounted for 30%, and a most lively and interesting meeting resulted.

The Hut continues to gather debts; the patronage of visiting brethren from the more northern outposts is always most welcome.

*Hon. President*, J. Della Porta; *President*, P. Cawdson; *Vice-President*, Vernon W. Humm; *Treasurer*, D. Edmonds; *Secretary and Hut Custodian*, Tony Griffiths, 14 Nearmoor Road, Birmingham 34.

**Perth Section.**—The Section continued with the popular pattern of monthly Meets in which those from November to February took the form of Sunday day Meets, while the remaining eight covered week-end Meets with Friday evening departures. Two of the best trips took us north of the Great Glen to Glen Arkaig and to Strathfarrar, while more routine outings were made to

the usual locations from Nevis to Arrochar and from Glen Etive to Glen Doll. Our Annual Dinner was successfully held at the Fife Arms Hotel in Braemar when 35 members and guests attended.

Between the Club's official Meets several active groups were frequently in the Scottish climbing areas, while others found diversion in making the lesser heights on the more remote Western Islands. During the year a liaison was made with the Perth Academy Athletic Club which resulted in a few 'mountain-minded' senior pupils attending some of our Meets. The intake of new members continues and the year ended with a membership of 49, being one less than the record number of 50 achieved in 1968.

*Hon. President, C. Rudie; Hon. Vice-President, J. Proom; President, J. A. Calvert; Vice-President, K. J. Martin; Hon. Secretary and Treasurer, D. Wares, 2 Rowanbank, Scone, Perth.*

**Edinburgh Section.**—The Section held a total of 35 climbing Meets during the year, of which 18 were weekends and 15 evening Meets to local outcrops. All the main Scottish centres were visited and two excursions made south of the border. The bus Meets have passed forever into history as there is almost an embarrassment of transport within the Section and most members are now able to be away the whole weekend. Attendance at Meets fluctuated with the season and weather; an average attendance was 18 members.

During the winter months the Section's usual Wednesday evening lectures and sideshows in the S.M.C. rooms were replaced by an ambitious series of lectures arranged in association with other Edinburgh clubs and held in one of the University's lecture theatres. There were six lectures in all and the enterprise proved most successful and is being repeated this year.

Work on the Smiddy, the Section's hut at Dundonnell, continues apace and a new concrete floor has been laid and bunks installed. This year should see the outstanding work completed and the hut open for use by other clubs.

The Annual Dinner, held at the Ben Shean Hotel, Strathyre, was well attended by both members and guests. The hospitality of Mine Host, more usually enjoyed on a Friday or Sunday evening on journeys to and from the west, was sampled well into the night and activity on the hill the following day was mercifully precluded by torrential rain.

Membership for the year was 69 ordinary and 8 associates; 13 new members were admitted. Two members resigned and one died in an unfortunate drowning accident.

*Office-Bearers—Hon. President, G. Tiso; Hon. Vice-Presidency, M. Fleming; President, D. Hogarth; Vice-President, D. Pullin; Secretary, D. Stone, 151 Craigmount Avenue North, Edinburgh 4.*

## BOOKS

**Mountain Leadership.** By Eric Langmuir. (1969; Scottish Council of Physical Recreation. 88 pp., very many diagrams. 10s.).

*Mountain Leadership* is the official handbook of the Mountain Leadership Training Boards of Great Britain, and its publication is evidence of the very serious thought being given to the problems and responsibilities of leaders of groups of young people (and others), in the mountains, and the need to establish high standards of competence among such leaders.

Primarily this is a handbook for aspiring mountain leaders, and it contains the necessary written information to enable these people to pass the examination necessary for the Mountain Leadership Certificate. In view of this it might not be regarded as a book of general interest to the mountaineer who does not intend to put his talents at the disposal of others. This is however not the case, and there is sufficient information of general interest to

make it worthy of study by all climbers. There are also some extremely valuable sections which deal with certain topics in greater detail than any existing British mountaineering textbook. A few of these topics deserve mention.

There is a comprehensive section on the recognition and treatment of exposure and frostbite. The time-honoured Rule of Naismith comes in for some modifications to take account of fitness, weather, terrain, etc., but one has to carry a graph and a ruler to get the answers. Mountain accidents and rescue get good treatment, and there is a very useful section on lightning with advice about safe areas. The section on weather seems to be too condensed to be of much value, and as the author himself says this subject requires at least a book for the treatment to be comprehensive.

The two most valuable sections are concerned with belaying on snow and ice, and avalanches. On the subject of belaying on snow it is sobering for the writer of this review to read that for over twenty years he has been using an unsafe method of belaying (luckily his companions were safer than his belays). The presently accepted second-best method of belaying (the best is a good spike of rock or a piton in rock), in most conditions is the dead man—an 8-in. square plate of aluminium alloy. The proper use of the dead man is here described for the first time. Another novel method of belaying on snow suitable for a fast moving party is described, but has come in for some criticism (*Mountain*, 7) and the conclusion to be drawn is that no method, however good in theory, is satisfactory unless it is correctly applied and practised.

Finally, as might be expected from the author of this handbook, there is an excellent and comprehensive section on avalanches which in view of recent events in Scotland should be read by everyone. No longer can avalanches in Scotland be regarded as Acts of God or 'one-in-a-thousand' chances, and it is time all winter mountaineers studied the conditions that lead to avalanche danger. It's no use blaming Concorde and the sonic boom.

D.J.B.

The unusually large number of New Climbs has forced us to conserve space by foregoing, for this issue, reviews and even—for some—detailed listing of the following books sent to the Library by the publishers, bought, or given by members. Whilst thanking all donors we must specially mention Lt.-Col. Roger North, whose generous gift of many volumes is included below. Reviews for this year should appear as usual next issue.

**That Untravelled World.** An autobiography by Eric Shipton (1969; Hodder & Stoughton. 286 pp. 27 photographs and 8 maps. £2 5s.). **Always a Little Further.** By Alastair Borthwick. (1969; John Smith & Son (Glasgow) Ltd. 221 pp. £1). **Mountain Midsummer.** By Michael Gill. (1969; Hodder & Stoughton. 220 pp. 70 photographs and 10 maps. £2 10s.). **Annapurna to Dhaulagiri.** A Decade of Mountaineering in the Nepal Himalaya, 1950-60. By Harka Gurung. (1968; Department of Information, His Majesty's Government of Nepal. 122 pp. 17 plates and 1 map). **Mountains of Kenya.** By Peter Robson. (1969; Mountain Club of Kenya. 80 pp. 23 plates). **Midlands' Expedition to the Hindu Kush Mountains, 1967.** Report by D. K. Scott & W. Cheverst. **The Kandahar Story.** Sir Arnold Lunn, 1970, Allen & Unwin, 16s.; **Mountain of My Fear,** D. Roberts, 1969, Souvenir Press, 25s.; **George Mallory,** D. Robertson, 1969, Faber, 55s.; **The Mountains of Switzerland,** H. Maeder, 1969, Allen & Unwin, 5 gns.; **Alps and Sanctuaries of Piedmont and the Canton Ticino,** Samuel Butler, 1920, Fifield; **In the Land of Bora,** Snaffle, 1897, Kegan Paul; **Mountain, Moor and Loch,** 1894, publ. Sir J. Costain; **Rock Climber's Guide to the N.E. Coastline of Scotland,** Etchachan Club; **Munro's Tables,** revised by Donaldson & Coats, S.M. Trust; **S.M.C. Climber's Guides to Cuillin, I & II** (Simpson), **Ben Nevis** (Marshall),

**Northern Highlands, I** (Rowe); **Climbers' Club Guides to Cornwall, I** (Biven & McDermott), **Northern Limestone Area** (Nunn), **Dorset** (White); **West Col Guides to Central Switzerland** (Talbot), **Anglesey-Gogarth** (Crew), **Ötztal Alps** (Unsworth), **Graians, East** (Collomb); **Taff Fechan**, Leyshon & Jones, B.M.C.; **Summer Holidays in the Alps**, by Durham; **Kulu & Lahoul**, by Bruce; **Between Oxus & Indus**, by Schomberg; **Wanderings in the High Alps**, by Willa; **Chiva to Chitral**, by Tilman; **High Alps without Guides**, by Girdlestone; **Dolomite Strongholds**; **Climbs on Alpine Peaks**; **Geology of Ben Nevis & Glencoe** (H.M.S.O.); **Through the Dolomites**, A. Robertson, 1896, Allen; **Die Alpenflora**, C. Schoeter, 1883, Vortrag.

**Journals of Kindred Clubs.**—*Alpine Journal*, 1969: The *Alpine Journal* has undergone a complete transformation since Blackshaw became editor two issues ago. Last year's is similar in format to the *American A.J.*, with a photographic jacket, and henceforth the *A.J.* will appear yearly and be much larger than formerly. The contents too have changed. This issue has Rude Words (in an article by Burke on El Capitan), and two gestures in the direction of Art in the form of verse by Dennis Gray and a portfolio of thoroughly impressionistic gouache and ink paintings of the Dolomites by Clifford Fishwick. The general quality and interest of the many articles seems much improved. This reviewer was greatly impressed by Harold Drasdo's 'Margins of Safety' which seemed every bit as good as 'Tejada Flores' now well known article on ethics. Drasdo attempts to show that climbers organize their affairs in such a way as to conserve danger, much in the same way as Tejada-Flores showed that they organize their affairs in such a way as to conserve difficulty. Bad news to the safety mongers is Drasdo's splendid conclusion that a margin of safety is 'not a variable on the sole of the climber's boot but a constant in his head'. The information section of the *Journal* continues, and in some sections at least (e.g. equipment) improves on its former high standard. We have much to thank Blackshaw and the *Alpine Club* for. *Cairngorm Club Journal*, 1968: This reappeared last year, much to our surprise and delight, after a sleep of years. It wakens up slowly with an account of the nature and motivation of the Club's newly acquired Coat of Arms and apart from a brief sortie to the Weisshorn, the rest of the *Journal* stays at home; but we look forward to further issues. *Rucksack Club Journal*, 1969. The *Rucksack Club* is a Club of the World. An impressive collection of articles ranges from the Karakoram to The Canaries, The Lofotens, a quick dash home to the Pennines, then back to the Karakoram. The domestic item is a very entertaining reminiscence by F. Heardman laced with unfavourable comparisons with the present. Also amusing is 'The Chronicle of High Moss,' buried in the Club Proceedings, which is a salty account by J. Cooper of the Club's disordered progress towards acquiring a Hut in The Lakes. It recalls MacLennan's high satire of our Clubroom very strongly. Space allows only the mention of *Appalachia*, 1969; *Cambridge Mountaineering*, 1969; *Canadian Alpine Journal*, 1969; *M.A.M. Journal*, 1969; *Oxford Mountaineering*, 1969; *Pinnacle Club Journal*, 1969; *Polar Record*; *New Zealand A.C. Journal*, 1969; *Ladies Alpine Club*, 1970; but we greatly appreciate their receipt.



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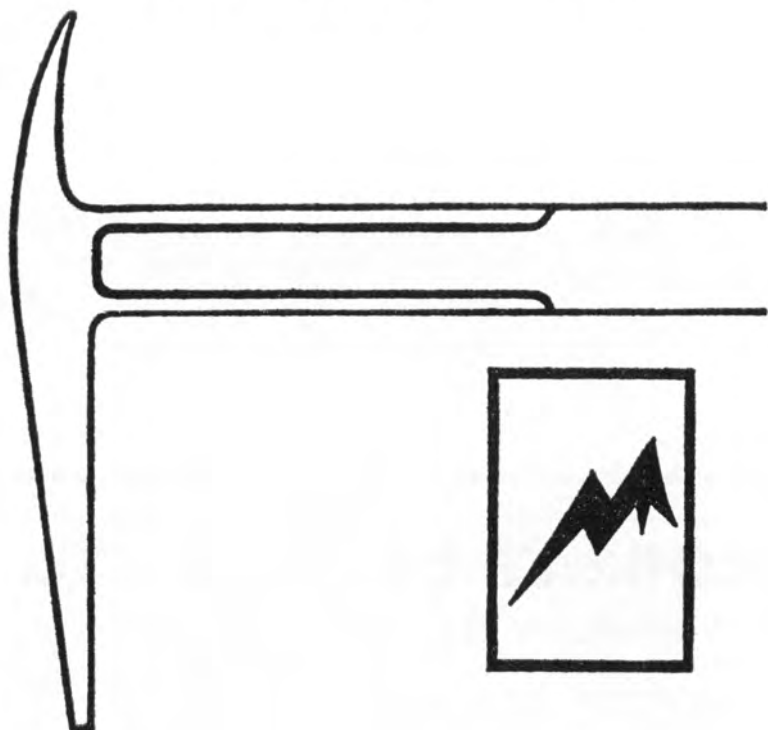
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