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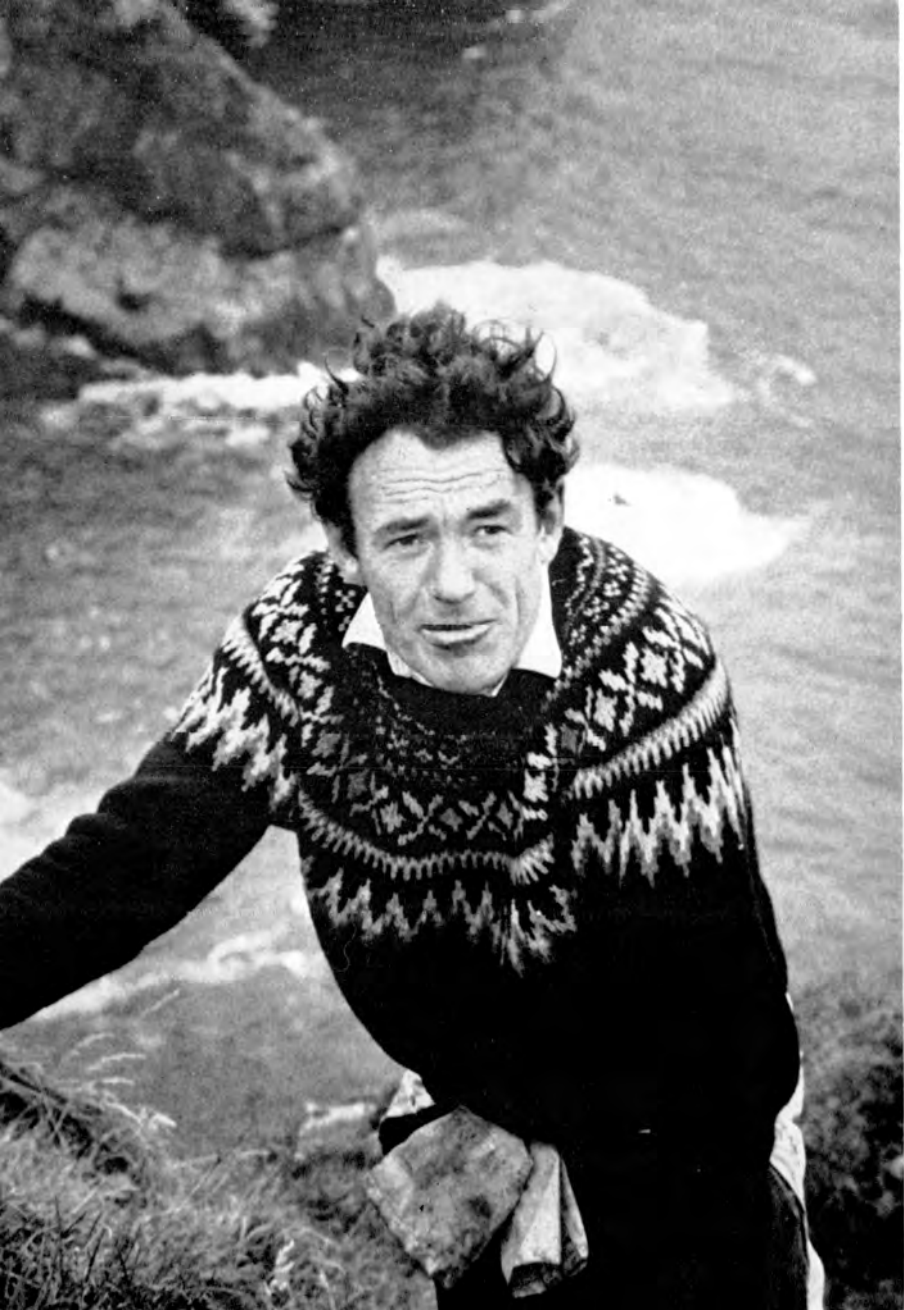
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Tom Patey.

*H. MacInnes.*

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## TWENTY-FOUR HOURS

By Robin Smith

[Whereas a lot of Robin Smith lies undeniably on 'some Russian mountain,' the rest of him goes on as strong as ever. We have lamented twice before that we could never again publish more of his remarkable writing; the second time (*S.M.C.J.*, 1968, xxix, 11) we boldly announced 'positively the Last Performance.' The next year (*S.M.C.J.*, 1969, xxix, 127) we printed the much-requested photograph of this 'most prolific of our posthumous contributors.' And . . . here he is again, in minor key but still Smith inimitable, reprinted from the Autumn 1957 *E.U.M.C. Journal* by kind permission. We risk no more predictions. The Senior Editor's opening issue in 1960 carried Smith's first contribution to this *Journal*, that unequalled tale 'The Bat and the Wicked' and his closing number still features *The Master*; editors come and go, but Smith lives on].

In the morning the three of us climbed Route I on Nevis. This was Ian's third climb, he had climbed a Difficult, a Very Difficult and now a Severe, and so we thought we should go and climb a Very Severe. Down and round the corner we came to the foot of Raeburn's Buttress. A long scramble leads to a sudden steep buttress which falls back and narrows to a shattered arête running up to the summit plateau, and the buttress in the middle is the bit that gives the trouble. There, the other routes sneak round the side, as the front of the buttress is too steep, but the Creek goes up the front. From below the climb looks deceptively easy; the first pitch just looks steep, and the rest vertical.

There are four main pitches, a wall leading to the base of the Crack and three Crack pitches. You think all is well, you will scramble up to the base of the Crack and if it looks nasty come down; the wall looks like 80 ft. of three foot steps, but the wall is a winking monster. You rush off upwards, but as you rush you feel the wall swing smoothly up through 30°, and then you aren't rushing any more but are strung up on nasty little overhangs topped by littler sloping ledges with the odd little crack in the back which will take a few fingers once you scrape out the mud and the ooze and the

moss. At 50 ft. you fix a wretched runner, which at least gives Ted something to do, for you are feeling him muttering up the rope, and then you climb another 30 ft. to reach the stance which slopes at round about 30° and you look for a belay. You throw off several boulders, big ones, until there are only small ones left, and then you get fed up and hope you've thrown off all the loose ones and take a belay on a small one.

Then you are Ted, and you climb up quicker because you know the way to go, but you find it just as nasty and the rope doesn't go straight up but is bent and if you let go you're in for a swing but you don't let go. You reach the stance but there's no room for two, so you find some more boulders to the right, big ones, and you squat on top of the biggest and probably loosest.

And then you are both Ian and depressed. This wall has depressed all three of you, but now the first two are on top and don't want to come down, the third is at the bottom, and doesn't want to climb up. Anyway it is getting on and the first two have been slow and there is hardly time for a party of three to get up. You take a step or two, prod the rock here and there, take a step or two down, untie and elect to watch.

You aren't surprised that there follows a chaos of ropes. This is sometimes found with Smith around, and here, standing on sloping slime and balancing boulders, with two ropes and a thumb nail belay, they take some time to swop stances. The first Crack pitch is 50 ft. long and is really a chimney. It overhangs and is undercut and the entry is rotten, and so it is awkward to enter, but the rest is alright and they get up it alright; then they go to the right and seem to hang around on the overhanging wall, but they will tell you later that a ledge runs right for 10 ft. from the top of the chimney and they dig out a belay down the back of a block on the right.

And now they are thus. Wise is tied to the right end of the ledge. Smith stands 10 ft. left. The ledge is two or three feet wide, slopes, is heaped with rubble, cuts out of the overhanging wall in profile like the centre stroke of a streak of lightning. The wall below then cuts back under them, above it hangs over them thrusting them outwards. The Crack swings up and over to the left from the left edge of the ledge. For 20 ft. it overhangs, overhanging walls on either side, but then the left wall falls back as a steep slant, while the right wall still overhangs and hides the rest of the crack from Smith and Wise on the ledge to the right. From the bottom you can see that the crack continues in the corner between the slab and the overhang, and once they are on the slab the crux will be past, but by now the light is going, you can hardly see them, and so the rest of the story is my own unbiased version. It took me about five grunting attempts, blowing myself up to jamb in the crack, wriggling up and hissing down, deflated, until at last I could twist up and over the final bulge and get on to the slab on the left. The

way was now clear to the third and last overhang 50 ft. above, the crack was still steep, but the holds were great and good. I went up 20 ft. or so, and tied on to a belay, but it wasn't a very good one. I went a bit higher and took a better belay; then I hauled up our spare food and clothes in the rucsac; then Ted joined the two ropes and tied on to the lower one, so that I had a great pile of slack to pull in; and this was all to the good.

By now Ted had been crouched on the ledge for a long cold time, and his stomach was sinking with the sun, but he came straight away, and from my belay I could see vertically down the crack, and through the overhang, and I made out bits of Ted blocking the light as he climbed to the left, then I saw his head coming up from under the overhang, and then he had wrapped himself over the bulge, and his hands were above the bulge, one hand in the crack, and one hand on the slab, he was very nearly there with only one more move to make, but there he came off. He was on a tight rope, but with the stretch of the nylon he went down about 2 ft. and swung away from the overhang. His fingers were too tired to pull him back, he was hanging on the rope, slowly spinning, with nothing below him for about 150 ft. but a few slight bulges near the bottom. Now I hadn't a clue as to what was going on, he shouted to be lowered, so I just lowered away, chortling the while. He told me later that the ledge he had started from was too far to the right, he was wanting to pendulum in to a smaller ledge sticking out of the overhang 30 ft. below, so he began to swing himself towards and away from the face, but when he first reached the rock he was above the ledge, as he swung away, I was lowering him past it, and when he swung in again he was too low down. A little lower he swung in to something else, but it wasn't much good and he was spinning round and before he could land he had pendulumed back and further down into space. Halfway down the angle eased a bit, and from there the face was just a little less than vertical and Ted went spiralling down here and there brushing a bulge until at last he landed on the easy rocks at the foot of the first pitch.

So Ian and Ted were safe at the bottom, they were all right Jack but I was not. I couldn't climb down and I wasn't going to abseil, because we might have lost our ropes and I didn't like abseils. They offered to go away around by the Castle Ridge to the summit plateau, then down the arête of Raeburn's Buttress to give me a top rope on 20 ft. of overhang, but that would have taken a month, already they could see me only when I moved as a darker blur against the darkness, and those last 20 ft. didn't look so bad. The face was a great leaning overhang, but the Crack cut up through the middle looking deep enough and wide enough to let me get right inside and wriggle safely up. I told them below, it would go quite easily; they could go back to the hut and I'd join them in a couple of hours.

So they beetled off and I pulled up our 220 ft. of rope and draped it in a shambles round my neck, then with the rucsac on my back I climbed up to the foot of the overhang. Just there, there was a good ledge, going left, and I thought, this is a good thing because I can stand on it while I look at the overhang. But the overhang didn't look so good now, it looked as though it might not be deep enough to climb as a straight chimney. Moreover my arms were getting fed-up and my stomach and back were all cramped after lowering and laughing at Ted. I tried the first few feet, then came down and dumped the ropes and the rucsac on the ledge, then tried them again and came down. I tied on to one end of the rope and allowed enough slack to reach the top of the pitch, then I tied the rest of the rope and the rucsac together in a bundle so that I could pull them up after me when I got up.

The Crack was at first about a foot wide, which was wide enough, and although it started shallow it soon cut back deeply enough to let me get right inside, but just before the end of the overhang the recess was blocked by a roof. So from under the roof I had to wriggle sideways to the edge of the Crack, and leaning out, fumble for the guidebooks good holds over the overhang, then swing out of the Crack and swarm over the top. When I reached the roof at wriggle level I was facing the right wall of the Crack. Just at head level throughout the wriggle the Crack was too narrow to let my head turn, it had to face sideways, either into the recess or out towards space. I set off on the wriggle, at first facing the recess, but I went too high and my head got stuck, so I came back and I thought, if I face the recess then I can't see where I'm going. I set off again, facing space, and I got to the end of the wriggle and finished up leaning out of the Crack. From here I began to fumble and before long I found the good holds, but I thought, rot the guide book, these are obviously poor. I had no qualms about the swing, it was just that having swung I might not make the swarm, and I might not manage to swing back, and around this time I looked down through my feet and I was looking straight over the overlay below and if it had not been so dark I would have looked straight down to the bottom of the climb and I shrank up into the Crack like a scared slug's horns. Then I began to reverse the wriggle, but I was still facing space and I soon got stuck and I thought, like this I can't find my footholds. So I wriggled out again to the edge of the Crack and I leaned away out and I turned my head, then I came back along the wriggle facing the recess and this time I got to the back of the Crack. From here I had just to go down about 18 ft., but going down in my state was still quite hard. I struggled and hung and scraped and finally jumped to the left and landed on the ledge that was to be a good thing because it was going to let me look at the overhang.

There I sat for a while and blew and waited for a bit of strength,

and I knew it must be getting very late. The sun was way down on the other side of the Ben and had see-sawed the shadows from the Allt a'Mhuillin up the scree of Càrn Mòr Dearg to cover up the redness. I cursed and stamped about a bit and then went back to the Crack which was really rather stupid because already it was so dark I could hardly see the holds. I got up the Crack to wriggle level, but only just, and I wedged myself away up in the back and refused to wriggle out and couldn't see how to get down. I had already been getting resigned to a night on the ledge, but unless I could find my way down I would have to pass the night trying to stay stuck in an overhanging crack.

All was well, however, and with a lot of luck and a fiendish scrabbling I finally got back to the ledge before I had fallen off, and by then it was sure that I wasn't going to get any further, but relative to an overhanging crack it seemed a very desirable sort of place. The ledge was about 8 ft. long and only slightly sloping. The right end was quite a bit higher than the left, and so I had to lie with my head at the right end, but unfortunately this was also the narrow end; the left was about  $1\frac{1}{2}$  feet wide but the right end was less than a foot. Below the ledge the face went down for about 20 ft. as the sort of steep slab that you can just about sit on without any holds, and then it heeled over into the overhangs. There was a thick moss growing all over the ledge and the slab, and I thought, this will be a good thing because it will be soft to lie on. Then I opened the rucsac and I found a spare anorak and jersey of Ted's and a jersey of my own. I pulled a jersey over my trousers and put the rest on in the normal fashion; then I found chocolate and raisins and an orange, and so I was really having it easy. I threaded a sling behind a chockstone in the Crack above my head, and I tied on to one end of the rope and threaded it through the karabiner in the sling and fixed it as a belay. Then I bundled up the rest of the rope as a pillow, and put my feet in the rucsac as all the best books recommend, and lay on my back all buckled up on the ledge. The belay could have stopped me from falling right off but still I couldn't relax because then my head slipped off the narrow end of the ledge. So I fixed the belay rope from my waist under my left arm to come out at my left shoulder and from there to the chockstone. My left hand could keep it taut between my shoulder and the chockstone, and so my head could lean out against the rope which kept it from slipping off the ledge. In this position and after a fashion I was able to relax, and so for an hour or two, but the night was very clear and I began to get cold, and only then it occurred to me that I could make more use of the moss than as a mattress. I tore away great lumps of moss and earth from the ledge, and when I had scraped it clean I started scraping the slab below as far down as I could scrape. Then I arranged myself on the ledge again and piled all the vegetation on top and beat it into a great mud pie that covered me all

but my head and I passed the rest of the night in comparative warmth.

Sometimes I dozed a little, and now and again I bawled at the night with great bursts of skiffle all about a worried man and long-lost John and Stewball and the like until the stars began to disappear and a vague sort of lightness began to come up from behind the back of Càrn Mòr Dearg. Then it was all red with sunrise and I could see everything clearly and I realised that it would be a good thing to extricate myself before search parties began to appear. I threw off the moss and scraped off some of the filth that stuck to me. I stamped about and beat myself for warmth and arranged the ropes and the rucsac and then struggled up the Crack to the roof and wriggled out to the edge. But everything was cold and I was stiff and I dithered about for along time until I heard distant shoutings from below. I looked around and I saw four figures coming up from the C.I.C. to pick up my body from the foot of the climb. I shouted back but they could not see me in the Crack, and so, glad of an excuse to go down, I struggled back to the ledge and waved things till they saw me. As they came a little nearer our shouting became a little more intelligible, but still we could hardly understand each other and it was only when I saw them making for Castle Ridge that I realised they were coming round to rescue me. With horrid visions of top ropes and tight ropes and ignominy and the like I felt the need to do something to save the situation, but then as I was bullying myself to go back and wriggle in the nasty overhang, I noticed below me, 20 ft. lower down the Crack from the ledge, a line of weakness crossing the face to the right. It had been too dark to see it the night before, but now it looked very promising. I left everything on the ledge and went down to have a look. I traversed well out to the right and it was not at all hard, and from there it was easy to go right round the bulge and back to the Crack above the stupid overhang that had stopped me for so long. By now the rescue party was well up Castle Ridge. I bawled to them to stop and so they stopped to see what I was up to. I went back to the ledge to gather all the gear around me, then down and out along the easy traverse and up and round to the top of the overhang. The rest was simple and I scrambled up the Crack till it disappeared at the terrace below the final arête of the buttress. The arête looked very good in the sun, but I thought I should get down as soon as I could as my rescuers were coming down and across to the foot of the rocks. I found a narrow shelf cutting down across the right wall and into the corrie between Raeburn's Buttress and the Castle Ridge. I rushed along this to the rumble of slabs in the corrie and I slithered down these in a great haste and a great shambles of ropes and rucsac and coated with filth and moss to make my peace on the screes at the foot of the rocks.

## SHELTER STONE CRAG, EAGLETS AND A HAIR RAPE

[Among early Scottish descents this is probably one of those that did not take place, and James Hogg was certainly more than the uproarious figure 'Christopher North' made him out to be; but we felt the following account lets good Scots fresh air into current oro- and ornithomaniacal narrative, ham an aa. It is 'The Shepherd in an Eagle's Eyrie' from, of course, the *Noctes Ambrosianae* of *Blackwood's* (November, 1834), and echoes both Smith's predicament and that of later visitors to the Crag, described elsewhere in this issue].

*Shepherd.* Oh sir! but you've a profound knowledge o' human nature! Eatin at ane's ease, ane's imagination can flee up into the empyrean—like an eagle soarin up the lift wi' a lamb in his talons, and then fauldin up his wings, far aboon shot o' the fowler, on the tapmost o' a range o' cliffs, leisurely devourin't, while ever and anon, atween the rugs, he glances his yellow black-circled een far and wide ower the mountainous region, and afore and after every mouthfu', whattin his beak wi' his claws, yells to the echoes that afar aff return a faint but a fierce reply.

*Tickler.* Does he spit out feathers and fur?

*Shepherd.* He spits out naething—devourin bird and beast stoop and roop, bones, entrails, and a', and leavin after his repast but a wheen wee pickles o' bluidy down, soon dried by the sun, or washed away by the rain, the only evidence there had been a murder.

*North.* The eagle is not a glutton.

*Shepherd.* Wha said he was a glutton?

*North.* Living constantly in the open air—

*Shepherd.* And in a high latitude.

*North.* Yes, James—for hours every day in his life sailing in circles some thousand feet above the sea.

*Shepherd.* In circles, noo narrowin, and noo widenin', wi' sweepy waftage, that seems to carry its ain wund amang its wing—noo speerally wundin up the air stair-case that has nae need o' steps, till you could swear he was soarin awa to the sun—and noo divin earthwards, as if the sun had shot him, and he was to be dashed on the stanes intil a blash o' bluid; but, in the pride o' his pastime, and the fierceness o' his glee, had been that self-willed headlang descent frae the bosom o' the blue, to within fifty fathoms o' the croon of the greenwood—for suddenly slantin awa across the chasm through the mist o' the great cataract, he has already voyaged a league o' black heather, and, een anither arc o' the meridian, taks majestic possession of a new domain in the sky.

*Tickler.* No wonder he is sharp set.

*Shepherd.* I was ance in an eagle's nest.

*Tickler.* When a child?

*Shepherd.* A man—and no sae very a young ane. I was let down the face o' the red rocks o' Loch Aven, that affront Cairngorm, about a quarter o' a mile perpendicular, by a hair rape, and after swingin like a pendulum for some minutes back and forrit afore the edge o' the platform, I succeeded in establishin mysel in the eyrie.

*Tickler.* What a fright the poor eaglets must have got!

*Shepherd.* You ken naething about eaglets. Wi' them fear and anger's a' ane—and the first thing they do when taken by surprise among their native sticks by man or beast, is to fa' back on their backs, and strike up wi' their talons, and glare wi' their een, and snap wi' their beaks, and yell like a couple o' hell-cats. Providentially their feathers weren a fu' grown, or they would hae flown in my face and driven me ower the cliff.

*Tickler.* Were you not armed?

*Shepherd.* What a slaughterhouse!—What a cemetery! Hail hares, and halves o' hares, and lugs o' hares, and fuds o' hares, and tatters o' skins o' hares, a' confused wi' the flesh and feathers o' muirfowl and wild dyucks, and ither kinds o' ggem, fresh and rotten' undevoored and digested animal maitter mixed in blue-mooldy or bloody-red masses—emittin a strange charnel-house, and yet lardner-smell—thickenin the air o the eyrie—for though a blast came sughin by at times, it never was able to carry awa ony o' the stench, which I was obliged to breathe, till I grew sick, and feared I was gaun to swarf, and fa' into the loch that I saw, but couldna hear, far down below in anither warld.

*Tickler.* No pocket-pistol?

*Shepherd.* The Glenlivet was my salvation. I took a richt gude wullie-waucht—the mistiness afore my een cleared awa—the waterfa' in my lugs dried up—the soomin in my head subsided—my stamack gied ower bockin—and takin my seat on a settee, I began to inspect the premises wi' mair precession, to mak a verbal inventory o' the furnitur, and to study the appearance or character o' the twa guests that still continued lyin back on their backs, and regardin me wi' a malignity that was fearsome, but noo baith mute as death.

*North.* They had made up their minds to be murdered.

*Shepherd.* I suspect it was the ither way. A' on a sudden down comes a sugh frae the sky—and as if borne each on a whirlwund—the yell and the glare o' the twa auld birds! A mortal man daurin to invade their nest! And they dashed at me as if they wad hae dung me intil the rock—for my back was at the wa'—and I was haudin on wi' my hauns—and off wi' my feet frae the edge o' the ledge—and at every buffet I, like an inseck, clang closer to the cliff. Dazed wi' that incessant passin to and fro o' plumes, and pennons, and beaks, and talons, rushin and rustlin and yellin, I shut my een, and gied mysel up for lost; when a' at ance a thocht struck me that I would coup the twa imps ower the brink, and that the parent birds

would dive doun after them to the bottom o' the abyss.

*Tickler.* What presence of mind!

*North.* Genius!

*Shepherd.* I flang mysel on them—and I hear them yet in the gullerals. They were eatin intil my inside; and startin up wi' a' their beaks and a' their talons inserted, I flang aff my coat and waistcoat, and them stickin till't, ower the precipice!

*Tickler.* Whew!

*Shepherd.* Ay—ye may weel cry whew! Dreadfu' was the yellin, for ae glaff and ae glint; far doun it deadened; and then I heard nocht. After a while I had courage to lay mysel doun on my belly, and look ower the brink—and I saw the twa auld eagles wheelin and skimmin, and dashin among the white breakers o' the black loch, madly seekin to save the drownin demons, but their talons were sae entangled in the tartan, that after floatin awhile wi' flappin wings in vain, they gied ower strugglin, and the wreck drifted towards the shore wi' their dead bodies.

*Tickler.* Pray, may I ask, my dear Shepherd, how you returned to the top?

*Shepherd.* There cam the rub, sirs. My freens aboon, seein' my claes, wi' the eaglets flaffin, awa doun the abyss, never doubted that I was in them—and they set up sic a shriek! Awa' roun they set to turn the richt flank o' the precipice by the level of the Aven that rins out sae yellow frae the dark-green loch, because o' the colour o' the blue slates that lie shivered in heaps o' strata in that lovely solitude—hardly howpin to be able to yield me ony assistance, in case they should observe me attemptin to soom ashore—nor yet to recover the body gin I was drooned. Silly creturs! There was I for hours on the platform, while they were waitin for my corp to come ashore. At last, ashore came what they supposed to be my corp, and stickin till't the twa dead eagles, and dashin doun upon't, even when it had reached the shingle, the twa savage screamers wi' een o' lichtnin!

*Tickler.* We can conjecture their disappointment, James, on finding there was no corpse.

*Shepherd.* I shouted—but nature's self seemed deaf; I waved my bannet—but natur's self seemed blind. There stood the great deaf, blind, stupid mountains—and a' that I could hear was ance a laigh echo-like laughter frae the ain heart o' Cairngorm.

*Tickler.* At last they recognised the Mountain Bard?

*Shepherd.* And awa they set again to the tap to pu' me up; but the fules in their fricht had let the rape drape, and never thocht o' lookin for't when they were below. By this time it was wearin late, and the huge shadows were stalkin in for the nicht. The twa auld eagles cam back, but sae changed, I couldna help pityin them, for they had seen the feathers o' them they looded sae weel wrapt up, a' drookit wi' death, in men's plaids—and as they keepit sailin

slowly and disconsolately before the eyrie in which there was naeboddy sittin but me, they werena like the same birds!

*North.* No bird has stronger feelings than the eagle.

*Shepherd.* That's a truth. They lay but two eggs.

*North.* You are wrong there, James.

*Shepherd.* Twa young ones, then, is the average; for gin they lay mair eggs, ane's aften rotten, and I'm mistaen if ae eagle's no nearer the usual number than fowre for an eyrie to send forth to the sky. Then they marry for life—and their annual families being sma', they concentrate on a single sinner or two, or three at the maist, a' the passion o' their instinck, and savage though they be, they fauld their wide wings ower the down in their 'procreant' cradle on the cliff, as tenderly as turtle-doves on theirs, within the shadow o' the tree. For beautiful is the gracious order o' natur, sirs, and we maunna think that the mystery o' life hasna its ain virtues in the den o' the wild beast and the nest o' the bird o' prey.

*Tickler.* And did not remorse smite you, James, for the murder of those eaglets?

*Shepherd.* Aften, and sair. What business had I to be let down by a hair-rape intil their birthplace? And alas! how was I to be gotten up again—for nae hair-rape cam danglin atween me and the darkenin weather-gleam. I began to dout the efficacy of a deathbed repentance, as I tried to tak account o' my sins a' risin up in sair confusion—some that I had clean forgotten, they had been committed sae far back in youth, and never suspected at the time to be sins ava, but noo seemin black, and no easy to be forgiven—though boundless be the mercy that sits in the skies. But, thank Heaven, there was an end—for a while at least—o' remorse and repentance—and room in my heart only for gratitude—for, as if let down by hands o' angels, there again dangled the hair-rape wi' a noose-seat at the end o't, safer than a wicker-chair. I stept in as fearless as Lunardi, and wi' my hauns aboon my head glued to the tether—and my hurdies, and a' aneith my hurdies, interlaced wi' a network o' loops and knots, I felt mysel ascendin and ascendin the wa's, till I heard a' the voices o' them hoistin. Landed at the tap, you may be sure I fell down on my knees—and while my heart was beginnin to beat and loup again, quaked a prayer.

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*Photograph opposite — John Cleare.*

Am Buachaille: climbed by Patey, Clough and Cleare in 1967.





## ONE MAN'S MEET

By Robin Campbell

ROUND New Year a fat student let me down. Charlie Bigshot. So what to do? Strathoykell? Too far and the same old beery faces. Lagangarbh, then—aa mucked oot or no.

There's a lot of serious faces and one with a great bloody scarred eye. All the way from Bangor, Wales, to hit bottom in Crowberry Gully and the headlines on the Ridge instead.

'Are you from the Oxford party?' polite, wary.  
Horrible insult.

'Essemsee,' I growl, all cryptic, and go off to cook furtively in the corner. A big greasy steak.

'Are you up for the Meet?'

Double take. This one is big, burly, bearded, Scottish with a great round badge. GLENCOE MOUNTAIN RESCUE TEAM.

'Didn't know there was one. Yes, I'll go down tonight.'

'I'll see you there, then.' Must be a member. Extraordinary.

*. . . . Their names are most supernal . . . .*

In the door and there they all are, firmly embedded in the main course. I make my own entree.

'Hullo, Robin, glad to see you, this is . . .'

The President is very nice. A lot of introductions, much pumping of hands.

' . . . and these are my two nephews.' A steely stare for them. Uncle George. Off to the lounge to wait. Who's this? Jimmy Houston and wife (Sophie; but hard, she has a trick of getting up pitches he can't. The humiliation) and Hugh Something from Glasgow. Hugh is hospitable.

'Three Drambuie and an empty gless fur him.'

But he fills it up from a secret bottle. Very Glasgow. There's a lot about Gaelic next—it seems he once nearly spoke it.

'A man that kens his Gaelic disna' need a map. Stob Coire nan Lochan. The Peak above a Corrie with a Lochan in it. There yuh are. Couldna' miss it,' triumphantly.

'We're awa', then. See youse at the Kingie. Tigh an Righ. Ye couldna' miss it. Oidhche mhath.' This last with a drunken grin to the respectable guests sipping in a corner, perplexed.

'What was that he said? Was it rude?'

*. . . . A Jolly Band of Brothers . . . .*

Soon they all trickle in, coffied and brandied.

'Long time since we've had a Scribe at a Meet'

'He used to call me sir, you know. On the hill.'

'I must write something for the Journal one day'

'Marshall thought this was very amusing, of course.' 'Of course.'

'What do you mean, you thought the Journal was bitty?'

'Then one day I gave him this bit of mincemeat pie . . .'

'Well, why don't you? We're very short of contributors'

' . . . and he said, "Is it heated, sir?" So I said . . .'

'Well, it *was* bitty; it just *was*. That's all.'

' . . . "What the hell! Do you want me to bloody eat it for you?" and he stopped calling me sir after that.'

Suddenly Uncle George starts banging the table. Something about a meeting. Oh yes, to decide on next year's Meet.

'Can I have a proposal?'

Scotland shrinks round the few suitable hostelries.

'We can't go to Fort William. There might be a rescue.'

Crianlarich? Dalwhinnie? A decent interval passes.

'Why not come here again? They serve excellent rhubarb.'

Noisy acclamation. A masterstroke.

'I have a proposal. Do I hear any counter-proposals?'

People return to their conversations, knowing that the meeting is over. In the corner, the respectable guests are even more perplexed.

. . . . *Our Chorus Faintly Wafted* . . . .

I get to the Kingshouse in time for a pint in the pigpen with the quasi-Welshmen and repair to the Altnafeadh Catacombs for a nightcap with Houston, wife and dog. There is a promising rumour about a pot of soup spiked with a whole sheep but this comes to nothing (the police are about), so I'm ready to call it a night when a vision in dark red hair appears at the door. The Macdonald's wife. 'Why don't you all come over and have a drink?'

Dangerous but interesting. We all troop across. Inside is Bedlam. Poised uncertainly in a cloud of peat and tobacco reek is Hugh Something—the eye of the hurricane. Other Glasgow *demimondains*, singing football songs with drunken gusto, whirl around earnestly. There is a table, littered with bottles of malt. Houston feeds me with some Glenmorangie and I huddle in a corner, hoping no-one will address me by my surname.

In a lull, Hugh glassily accuses me,

'Why don't ye sing, yuh Edinburry bastard?'

Lurching round to the company,

'They're aa the same, these Edinburry bastards. They cannae enjoy themselves.'

'Aye, that's right. Stuck-up bastards.'

He's there again, an inch from my face, so I sing: John Anderson, the strong version, through the nose and flat as Rannoch Moor. After, there's a lot of funny looks but nobody asks me to sing again.

. . . . *Lengthy Stride O'er Moorland Wide* . . . .

Next morning it's dull but the cloud is high. I think about going

down to the Hotel but I'm far too late, they'll all be pushing, attacking and foraying by now. Beinn a' Chreachain invites, sitting plumply on the Moor road. There's a long pleasant walk from Achallader Farm up through Crannach Wood. Look at these great gnarled Scots pines. Old and idiosyncratic. Territorial, too; tough, fingery roots poke at gawping birch and rowan. S.N.T. Scottish National Tree. At its best in winter, probably, too.

Beinn a' Chreachain disappoints from close up. I cut up a diagonal ledge across its westerly buttress. The ice is tough and sticky, the snow hard and perfect. I'm hurrying up a long easy section without steps, using the pick for balance when I think, what if I drop the axe, but decide against it and press on. Up on top, Ben Cruachan dominates the view, Stob Dearg sticking up rudely against the sunset.

Lagangarbh empties as I return. Off to say goodbye to their wounded in the Belford. The one with the eye and some others are left, morosely prodding suet dumplings in a villainous soupy stew. I make a point of eating well and far too much and can't move for about half-an-hour, so it's well after eight by the time I get to the Hotel.

*. . . . The Gaiters, the Gloves and the Rope and all . . . .*

But they're still at coffee.

'George insists on wearing nails, you know. He was terribly late down.'

'Where? Oh, Bidean. There was quite a large party.'

'I had a most peculiar fall today. On Binnein Beag—one of those little cliffs.'

'Oh yes?'

'Right on my head.'

'I was worried, I can tell you. Thought I might have to carry him down.'

Wilfrid keeps dotting out and in.

'What are you doing?'

'Getting the room ready for the slide show.' The slide show. This hotel is abominable. There is no place to drink.

'Come and I'll show you something. In my room.' 'All right.'

'My favourite wine. Talisker.' This is Archie, with a battered old hip-flask.

'We wanted to climb Boomerang Gully today but it was full of English.'

'Horrible.'

'D'you know? In Broad Gully there were two blokes and they had pegs, hammers, deadmen, crash-hats, axes, krompong, ice-screws and jumars.'

'JUMARS?!'

'For the crevasses. And they didn't get up.'

'Deplorable. All I have is a hat and crampons and I don't like the hat.'

'Did I tell you about my crash-hat? No? Well, I bought it from Tiso in 1966 I suppose and I took it to the Alps each year. It stayed permanently on the windowsill in the back of my car. However, this spring I was in Skye with my wife and the Cuillin was in Alpine condition. So I took my crash-hat. Now just below the Bad Step on Sgùrr Alasdair I stopped and strapped it on. Just then I felt a terrific blow on the top of my head and turned to my wife, eyeing her axe.'

'What did you do that for?'

'But no, it was a falling stone. Cracked my new hat in two.'

'Just as well you had it on, then.'

'Good God, no! All these years without it and never been hit with a stone. First time I put it on—BANG! These things are dangerous.'

*... Memories raise of joyous days ...*

We go off for a drink elsewhere. This is difficult as the Slide Show is about to start. Wilfrid has secured a special room with all the ambience of Corrou Bothy. Passing its doorway we catch a glimpse of upturned be-piped faces huddling round the projector like witches at a Sabbath Fire. Fingers brown and crooked beckon from the glowing reek. But we make it to the bar safely. Later, a nephew appears.

'Oh, here you are! I've been looking everywhere. You're wanted at the Slide Show.' The devil we are. A mere boy. We attempt to subvert him with drink, but finally go along, arriving in the middle of a Story.

'... as soon as they had left the Hut, he turned round and said in his penetrating English voice, 'If there's one thing I'm sure of, it's that these four old gentlemen won't get up the Dent d'Herens.' And somebody answered, darkly from the corner, 'Dinnae be too sure o' that. They're in the S.M.C.' 'And they got up of course.' Of course. No Story if they hadn't.

Trapped in the small stuffy room, we visit the refulgent Alpine Host and most of the thousand Bens before the stock of slides and Stories is exhausted. Leaving the Furnace with furry tongue and streaming eyes, I drive to Lagangarbh, now deserted. In the night I dream of failing to climb the Kipperhorn, a somewhere Alp. Afterwards in the Hut there is an English stage whisper,

'Of course, he's not a gentleman.'

*... The exercise he's wantin' ...*

The morning is bright and frosty, but Lagangarbh such a dungeon that it's eleven o'clock before I'm ready to climb. So I go to Bidean and have to spend another half-hour thawing boots and socks at the car heater before setting off.

Summit Gully on Stob Coire nam Beith is high enough to be in condition and it's empty so I get into it about one and start hacking. Another hour and I'll be on top. But the gully is in a very odd state and first a 50 ft. ice pitch, then a teetering avoiding manoeuvre on the left of a nasty dry cave, then another 50 ft. ice-chimney take away the afternoon and break my left crampon so that I finish hopping up the final slopes to arrive at the summit just as the sun is taking its leave. I trudge over Bidean through droves of sweating Boy Scouts and back down Coire nam Beith to reach the road in the inky dark.

At the Hotel they're mostly bathing, but John Proom and Uncle George are still about. There is a story about being chased off the Mamores with their unwieldy family saloons by an irate gamekeeper. But face and energy are saved when a Mountain Rescue Land-Rover is produced and proves acceptable.

'Do you have a pen, Robin?'

It would be a useless Scribe who did not. Pretty postcards of Dinnertime Buttress are signed to be sent to absent friends. Over a parting drink I attempt an exchange of addresses but someone has stolen my pen.

'This has been the best meet for years, George,' someone says. And another dinner still to come. As the hour of the soup approaches I leave to drive home under the bright stars, through the quivering moonlight.

[Campbells seem to do this sort of thing in Glencoe . . . . On another page we print photographs of similarly worthy Club occasions, held at a time when this particular Hon. Jt. Editor was merely an uneasily possible chromosomal conjunction—*Other Hon. Jt. Editor*].

## MACFAUSTUS

### Addicts in Arran

By Ian Rowe

A-THROB over the Clyde Arran sometimes basks like a slow shark, its dorsal fin Goatfell adrift in water still as sunshine; a batholith bathing, the sea-wrack mulching its waist just moist with a lazy tide of oil. Sometimes. At others, soft rain falls with an itch like midges in equal dispersion, and you can't tell the difference.

The granite that sees the sun is clean as Sunday best. No dirt gets under the fingernails. Northern faces and Eastern faces skulk unclean and shunned like parish poor. There is little compromise

from either—a Calvinism about the first suppresses theatres of movement and permits only strenuous geometric climbing, whereas the second inflicts on any would-be missionary slime, tattoos of dirt and sores on the knuckles.

Jim Brumfit and I approached the Meadow Face of Beinn Tarsuinn one day in 1967, Kirk elders with bongs for hymn-books. Here there are two great cracks, the left one being climbed that day by Bugs McKeith and Mike Galbraith. We made three good pitches up the right-hand one and stopped below the overhang, the crux of both routes and a *sair fecht* for body and conscience. Conscience first. Jim tested the six-inch crack where it bulged into the overhang. It looked uncomfortable. The rope basked serpent-like beneath him. He tried a few unconvincing jams, then sneaked the bong from his waist and hid it deep in the crack where the sun couldn't see. And he rose. The sun went down in distaste as I plucked out the pegs. Not to worry, it was a great pitch. We roped down quickly and it was dark and we had no torch; we stumbled down to Glen Rosa holding hands, feeling through bogs and shinning and stubbing into rocks until we arrived at our tent by a burn which was either the Rosa or the Styx. Next day we added a little at the top, where the crack continued through the Meadow Slabs.

Next spring, a fresh wind feathers the waves and foam splashes on bow and bar. I had with me a fellow-inmate of the Company Hostel, a credulous youth named Ian Dundas. Face like a Lewisian headland, Ignorant of ethics and climbing.

At the bulge I placed the bong and almost used it as I passed to a tiny ledge six feet above. No-one would believe it was only a runner. I was held in balance by a hand jam, and the mixture of slime and sweat was gradually decreasing an already critical coefficient of friction. I crouched like a gargoye on Notre Dame, with a peg instead of a tongue sticking out of my mouth. I straightened up and spat it in, then flayed a wing against the rock. Moved up; then another peg for aid, and I weakened and clipped in the etriers. Now my wings had grown hooks and I rose in a rattle of scales. The next pitch was again contorted but the hooks could be withdrawn; it was part of The Rake's Progress. (Indeed most of these pitches had been climbed before by various parties; perhaps only the overhang pitch was new). Two final ones followed on the Meadow Slabs, the last a wide back-and-knee chimney gradually keeling over so that you rolled out on to the grass that finished it. The Headland came over the top with a huge smile which threatened to burst a couple of plooks. We called it Bogle.

Having once used aid for a major line I was happily corrupt and ready to apply it to other Arran routes. Campbell is always a convenient Mephistopheles. He leers and snorts in pubs with specs stuck into his hair like knitting needles into wool, clutching straws of dubious information like dirty postcards, all dredged from an under-

world bog of yellowing print. Hands me one such, a once-fine plate, deep-brewed and deep-delved. Traces lines with a dirty fingernail. . .

Cir Mhòr, North Face, 1200 feet, NO ROUTE . . . . He beams, gap-toothed, gauging reaction. I knew that MacNiven and he, when young, had probed the outside edges. I knew the line too; it was steep and garlanded with grass. Was this the face that launched a thousand steamers?

Sandy Trees, Mike Watson and I hubbled and bubbled around the foot of that awesome pile at the head of Glen Sannox, invoking a line. Down it unrolled from the apex, which was a clean prow of rock against a sinister sky, to a crack system whose delights would be revealed only to those after us; we would be evil evangelists obscenely initiating ourselves in its black mass. Hands metamorphose to claws in vertical grass leading to a pillar about to fall now or in a thousand years; now seems imminent as Mike chimneys behind it, desperately pushing out from the face. Earth and granules rattle down, and he retreats. I traverse around its foot and try another attack; this is more successful and leads me to a corner, thence to a ledge with a bit of aid and a strenuous mantle-shelf. Then Sandy finds a beautiful clean pitch on dry rock; but after that the in-fighting begins again. We scrape, hammer, heave, dig, plant, pull, peel, uproot, mine, trepan, trundle, rumble, rape and plunder until darkness falls. We cannot bivouac here. Mike enters a numbing cave of green slime and surfaces through and above. We follow and find a site for the night, as planned.

Next morning was cold and we uncramped our limbs and decamped leftwards to the final pillar; it gave us four excellent pitches as it soared free of the hanging garden. We called the whole route Silo. I was immensely satisfied with it, a horticultural debauch offering total involvement and much work; a cross between, say, Citadel and Zero Gully, with green snow and an entrenching tool. My addiction was complete, as attested by the soil nestling unwashable into my skin. Where could I get the next fix?

In the old guide book the face right of the Ben Nuis Chimney is declared unjustifiable following a Curtis-Townsend epic which had been named 'Sucker's Slab.' A glaring lack of dots on the diagram indicated it likely territory; I had studied it often on the way up to Tarsuinn. This was the site of the remarkable feat of the remarkable Oppenheimer in 1900. Can this route have been repeated more than six times?

Sandy Trees was also an addict and joined me there early in the summer of '69. We made two hard pitches, starting in a crack-line not far right of the Chimney. We were surprised by the lack of vegetation. The first pitch was an excellent combination of hard moves, refreshingly free of aid. The second was also clean, considering Cir Mhòr, though one moved from the upper edge of a slowly-unrolling carpet of green into a bottomless groove where

balance teetered on the ball-bearings of decayed granite; then followed some ungracious knee-jamming to the belay. The cave at the start of the third pitch was cold and our wounds raw, so we retreated.

McKeith was fresh from the uncompromising granite of Yosemite, and in April 1970 suggested, with the ready vocabulary of a Valley Man, that Much Aid would be Required. I was not so sure. We spent a happy day roping down the crag unpeeling great worms of turf. You steady yourself on the abseil and lock the rope. You ridge the corner, and your hands dig out of the first part of the turf and pull it clear of the rock; the trick is then to keep it attached to the section below. Unpeel it gently, and when it grows big enough, its own weight will assist the unpeeling until the whole mass writhes and slithers away. Vile uncovered creatures scurried off from their sheltered Gorbals to a new Easterhouse. Some of the fresh cracks winked moistly in their first light and looked healthy, others were mere suggestions of joints in the wall where the water would ooze until winter froze fingers of ice into their invisible boundaries . . . where the ice had been, perhaps our pegs could follow. Next day it rained, and Monday morning found us on the boat back to Fairlie.

Bill Wallace is the Captain on this run, with sometime-First Officer Hugh Stirling. We lean over the side, throwing fag ends to the gulls. Bill is a craggy man, harder than the granite to impress with bongs . . .

'We looked at Bogle a long time ago . . .'

'Good line, eh?'

'Even measured the crack.'

'We were lucky to have the right bong . . .'

'Did you use it?'

'Well, er, not exactly . . . didn't actually touch it . . .'

'Of course, the rest of the line's been done before you know . . .'

'Of course . . .'

.....  
'Been looking at Nuis this weekend.'

'There are two good cracks there, very steep.'

'That's what we thought . . . cleaned it out . . . thousand feet . . .'

'Measured it from the contours, actually; it's about a thousand . . .'

The winter timetable changed to summer and Blyth Wright and I pedalled up Glen Rosa. That he is a man of great prudence in adversity I deduce from his prudence in non-adversity; also, his spectacles slip periodically to the end of his nose and are periodically flicked back to their proper position, an imperious gesture which usually punctuates prophecies of disaster.

We rounded the shoulder of Nuis. Specs are flicked back as I point out the route starting at the top.

'... See the prow, just right of that, then below, the corner opens and that goes all the way down to ... ———\*!

Two figures at the bottom.

We rush over, me in the van. Rab Carrington and Con Higgins.

'Ian, when will ye learn ti get up in the morning?' says Rab, another who peers over specs. At least mine fit. I paced around, kicking the turfs I had dislodged before timetables changed and got the Dhu up here on a Friday night. I was boiling.

'Hello Blyth,' says Con, rapidly tying on, 'How's it goan?'

'Oh, very well, very well (flick); well, well, well, here's a thing ...'

I was not mannerly. Rab: 'You the punters that cleaned up all this? Nice young route.' Points rightwards. 'Good lines round there.'

Con less certain, more the white man. 'That's the ghem, Ian, that's the way it goes ...'

'There's the sharp end,' says Rab, and Con hastens up to the rock as I fumble with my P.A's. Luckily, Con also fumbled with the first pitch, difficult in boots, and I spied a chance. Not far right, a grassy crack might beat them to the first belay. I clawed up twenty feet, level with Con.

'You'd better have a wee look at it, Rab,' says Con, coming down. I clawed faster. I might have made it first if Rab had not drifted up like a zephyr, and had my rate of progress relative to grass equalled that relative to rock. The vector sum only just assured my upward progress. I arrived black-fingered at what was indisputably Rab's belay.

However there seemed to be two lines if we kept to them. Rab and Con seemed intent on the line Sandy and I had followed. Faith grew in me that this line I had started in retaliation might prove a winner despite its grassy handicap; after all, we had cleaned it above. It would have to, for Con was now making ground on the left. I knew how inhospitable it grew ahead of him and encouraged them both as sincerely as possible. Blyth approached, gardening on Jumars, herbicidally exposing a good crack beneath.

Con was above me and complaining. He was slightly off-route. It was muddy. I wormed upwards on thin blade pegs which dared my frost cracks to disintegrate. Into an unbottomed chimney and up on huge undercut holds, out by a spike to the belay, with one foot on a muddy ledge. Rab was grunting unhappily up the crack on the left. Both Con and he explored the cave where Sandy and I had failed, and the slab on its left. Time was wasting, to our advantage. The heavy team, not addicts like ourselves, were getting discouraged; they discussed, decided there were better places to be, and licensed ones ... With camaraderie, therefore, we met at the bottom.

\*Editorial discretion

Con. 'That's the way it goes.'

Blyth. 'Ah well, you can't win them all . . . .'

Me. 'Sorry about the language, lads . . . .'

Rab. 'You're welcome to it. Great heap of —\*!'

Early next day we were back, but the others were not. We swarmed up the rope we had left behind. The corner above the belay grew wider as it rose, but offered little at the start; no obvious holds, no peg placements. I persevered. Tips of high-tensile blades were persuaded into the frost cracks and I levitated, wishing myself light as possible. From a good runner I could swing to a real crack in the right wall. Pendulous positive progress was made, peelsafe. I remember a cave near the top of the corner: the undressed granite showed sheepish as bikini marks on a naked sunbather. Here we had unpeeled the largest worm of all. Then I was standing on a prow of rock looking down the corner.

The next pitch was panaesthetic, man, a melange of marvellous moves. A delicate slab; aid over a bulge; bridge, layback and mantlesheff. Then another great pitch in a chimney going left, and we were scrambling to the summit.

While Blyth went one way for the boots, I ran down the south ridge to the burn. When he caught up with me in the gloaming I was asleep on a rock in mid-stream with my feet drooling in the water and even the midges could not discomfit me. That night we cooked on a wood fire and the warm darkness hid the dirt.

'Aye . . . .' said Blyth, sucking a mug of tea.

'Aye, aye . . . .' I said, for I knew what he meant. Flick.

\*Further Editorial discretion.

## INTO THE MOUNTAIN MIST

We tread high ridges at our will,  
Free in the lucent air,  
Our eagle gaze untrammelled, till  
Mist's probing fingers, damp and chill,  
Cobweb our lips and hair.  
(The old, blind spirit of the hill  
Inquiring who goes there?)

Soon, cloistered in the clinging shade,  
We stumble, no more free.  
Amorphous shadows loom and fade;  
Ambiguous shapes, made and unmade,  
Are all we seem to see.  
(And while our senses are betrayed  
Where, but in dreams, are we?)

Time will resolve our present plight.  
 Hold fast to what we know.  
 Steer carefully towards the light  
 For lower down the world is bright,  
 Colour and sunshine glow.  
 (Fantasy cloaks the cloudy height,  
 Reason resumes below).

D.J.F.

## AN EXCURSION TO AFGHANISTAN

(S.H.K.E., 1970)

By Wilfrid Tauber

THE journey was full of surprises. First, we got jammed across an Austrian railway line in the middle of a pouring night—don't ask me how. I was deep asleep when the news was announced, but I jumped out so fast that my sleeping bag disintegrated. Not much fun pushing an overloaded van in bare feet and underpants, while salacious lorry-drivers flashed their headlights and jeered. Then we nearly had Turkish mincemeat on our front grille, but Bill Sproul's teeth-marks on the steering wheel were the only evidence of that near miss on the Ankara highway. Afghanistan was the place, though, the only country where the middle of the road is studded with concrete posts to discourage overtaking on bends, where sleeping camels and lightless lorries camp on the road by night, and where each petrol station fiddles the pumps a different way.

But we made it to Kabul all the same, ten days after leaving London. A bit of bowing and scraping, by courtesy of Ian Rowe, and we had a letter of permission to visit the Togw Valley in the Central Hindu Kush. It doesn't exist, so we had trouble finding it. But we set off in hope, struggling up the sinuous curves of the Salang Pass, which took us over the spine of the Kush and down into the northern plains. We left the excellent Russian-built highway and disappeared into a maze of rutted tracks leading to the provincial capital, Faizabad, a mere 150 miles away. Two days and two punctures later we arrived to pick up our stamps from the 'pass-pot' office. Another puncture forced us to leave the van and hire a gaily painted lorry to take us to the road-head; just as well, because a freak thunderstorm meant that even the lorries were getting stuck, axle-deep in mud, and the road had to be completely re-built in places. At the end of the road was a village called Hazrat, whose gawping inhabitants made us realise what animals must feel

like at the zoo. The locals had us at their mercy and were demanding extortionate rates for the horses and donkeys we needed. It took us a day to compromise, but then came the biggest shock of all—a laden horse, tired of a life of carrying loads, and of having its testicles jabbed to make it go faster, swam across the turbulent Kocha river to freedom. Had it stayed where it landed, on an island on the other side, all might have been well, but the new pastures were not good enough, so it tried to come back, and was lost—together with our every peg, karabiner and sling. We wasted five days trying to rescue our gear, contriving several hair-raising river crossings, above, through, and under the water.

Indolence and depression in the sun, sucking of cherries and apricots at the Sarisang lapis lazuli mine; but we decided to push on, now that we had come so far. A week later we established base camp at 12,500 feet, beside a huge silty loch in the Darrah-i-Mulaw or Valley of the Many Waters. Alan North there encountered a very friendly Japanese party, who had beat us to this region. To our relief, they had only climbed three hills, which left more than enough for us; they were also on their way out, so they just handed us all their gear and wished us the best of luck . . . . The next day we were climbing, Ian and Bill taking on a short, impressive face, while Alan and I went for a longer ridge route.

We were up at half past four and away an hour later, not sorry to leave our precariously moraine-pitched tent. A brisk cramponing up a rise in the glacier and we split into pairs. A long approach for us two, then scrambling up broken rocks to a dip in the ridge. This gave us a view into the basin at the head of a neighbouring valley, the unexplored Darrah-i-Joumeh, and what a sight was there! Falling straight from the summit of the highest mountain in the district, Koh-i-Mondi (6234 metres), was an enormous north face, the best part of 6000 feet high, and very steep. It had several lines on it, all looking very formidable, and calling for more gear and technique than we had at our disposal. Expecting to see some fine mountains, we had stumbled across one worth an expedition in itself. We turned to continue our humbler task, a soul-destroying rock ridge, up and down over gendarmes with it steepened into a snow arête. It was tiring with the altitude and our packs, so we called a halt at 18,000 feet, and began to hunt for a ledge. There was none to be found, and while I started chipping some ice to get a brew going, Alan grunted and panted, heaving lumps of rubble to make a platform. Not surprisingly he got the inside, and I lay awake through the night, contemplating the sombre depths below, while the 'platform' fell to pieces slowly, and dropped into the night. A phenomenal display of lightning flickered eerily away over Chitral, adding to my feelings of unease, but mercifully it kept its distance. The morning dawned crisp and clear, and after a breakfast of lukewarm Cremola foam, we put the rope on for the last few

hundred feet. Away over the valley, two black dots crept up a gleaming whaleback of ice, and then we could see the other pair on top of their first virgin, Marble Cake Mountain (5650 metres). We ourselves enjoyed eight superb pitches of mixed climbing, the effects of altitude forgotten as we leap-frogged each other up the airy ridge. And then we were there, cairning the summit and gazing at the magnificent panorama. To the south Koh-i-Mondi was still more than 2000 feet above us, to the east lay many of the mountains of Shike '65, while to the north the view stretched as far as the monster Tirich Mir. But one mountain in particular held my gaze, Shak-i-Kabud, the Blue Mountain, which lay just north of the Mulaw valley, and dominated all the hills around it—that one would *have* to go. We returned to the bivouac site, picked up our gear and then roped off down the face below for several hundred feet before edging out into the huge ice couloir which had withstood a Japanese attempt because its steepness at the top. The water was streaming down it under the mid-day sun as we front-pointed warily downwards, ears cocked for any suspicious rumbles. And then we were down, romping home across the sodden glacier, well pleased to have finally justified our existence as a climbing team. It was, after all, more than six weeks since we had left Scotland.

The weather held, and the next ten days saw us on top of Crystal Mountain, Bride Peak, Koh-i-Fardo and Bird Peak, all between 5300 and 5800 metres. But the big one, Shak-i-Kabud, was lurking there all the time, a challenge which Bill and I took up, while Alan and Ian were engaged on an epic two-day traverse of the Skull.

We pushed up from Base Camp with food and gear for three days, and parked our little tent, an orange dot from above, among the boulders of a vast corrie. Surveying the complexities of what lay ahead, we saw that we could probably gain a high ridge which eventually abutted against the summit pyramid. The snow-capped top, although only 4500 feet above us, seemed infinitely remote. By eight o'clock the next morning we were up on the ridge, having soloed through a series of unstable gullies, steepening into some mixed and complicated rock terrain. But the ridge gave us no joy, lined as it was with great, tottering towers of rock. Besides, the weather was beginning to cause concern, as the huge banks of clouds which we were used to seeing away in the east began to spill over the nearer hills. We stopped to await developments, not keen to push the boat out on this sort of route. We were very much on our own, with the other two 15 miles away in another valley by now. The clouds covered the sun and all of a sudden it was very cool. Below us the mist was creeping up a glacier, while above us our summit wore a halo of whirling mare's tails. It started to snow, and we reluctantly turned back.

The weather did not really break, and the next day we were kicking ourselves for giving up. Too late, now, for we had very

little food left. We climbed a small peak soaring above our tent before returning to the epicurean luxuries of Base Camp, H.P. sauce and all.

Enough time was left for one last short attack on the big one, but we would have to find a better route. In a long afternoon, we pushed beyond our previous high camp, to a bivouac site at 17,000 feet, from which a gently rising glacier took us to the foot of a slender couloir which split the towering easy face of Shak-i-Kabud. This was it! Rope on over the bergschrund, then we cramponed up the variable snow and ice, taking to the side wall to avoid the occasional bottleneck of water ice. The cornice at the top looked deceptively close but was 3000 feet away. It got tired of waiting and part of it came to meet us, but the soggy mass had crumbled completely by the time it swished past as a snow slide. Finally, the couloir began opening out at the top; for the mid-day sun had melted the granular snow and we began to cut steps as the ice steepened to the cornice. Rope on again, though we had no belays. Now Bill was fighting the cornice, twelve feet of vertical mush, sending down tons of the stuff but getting nowhere fast. A hundred feet below I shivered on a minute stance with an imaginary belay, until told to come up—carefully, for a slip here would have meant a quick descent of the whole couloir. With the support of Bill's axe at my rear I floundered upwards till I could cut a hole in the solid crust of the summit snow-field. A heave, a final squirm, and I was up, a mere three hundred feet from the summit at about 20,500 feet. Up there, on top of our world, we basked in the not very warm late August sun, eating sardines and Mars Bars, happy to have fulfilled an ambition. We knew that this would probably be our last summit, but we also knew that it made a fine conclusion to a successful trip.

[Previous S.H.K.E's (1965 and 1968) appeared in *S.M.C.J.*, 1969, xxix, 131 and 135].

## CITADEL IN WINTER

### An attempt on a Buttress Route on Shelter Stone Crag

By W. March

HELL, I thought to myself, what am I doing here? I was barely sitting on a sloping ledge the size of a small tea tray, with my head between my knees 800 feet up Citadel on the Shelter Stone Crag. My teeth were chattering uncontrollably with the cold. The time was 9 p.m.—only eleven hours to go until daylight and we had already been on the ledge three hours. I glanced across to my companion who was not so comfortably perched as I. John

Cunningham was standing on what one might call a ledge, if one was a window cleaner. It was barely large enough, even for a small Scotsman. Our only belay had been a rather precarious bong, but eventually we managed to clear and thread a reasonable chock stone. This was a little to the right of John, as he faced in the way, and several feet to my right, as I faced out the way.

I cast my mind back to the events which led up to our present situation. The day had started rather late with John Cunningham, myself, Rab Carrington and John Hart setting forth from Glenmore Lodge, with aspirations for Sticil face direct, and Citadel. Hart was out of order, as he was carrying an ice axe. We had shot up the chairlift fast enough, but the traverse across the plateau to St Valery's Refuge was delayed by repeated urinations and stops to adjust gear. These Scotsmen take a light-hearted attitude to their climbing. Eventually we reached Diagonal Gully which offered a rapid descent to Loch Avon and the Shelter Stone. Here, Rab's crampon fell to pieces and more time was lost fixing this. Time that had bought some decent gear! John Cunningham and I bombed ahead and soon reached the foot of the route which looked in reasonable condition. To save time we geared up and decided to solo the first few pitches. I managed to ditch the ropes on to J.C. and shot on up the first pitch—a slabby corner-cum-chimney. It was banked up with soft snow and my crampons grated on the rock beneath. The first bulge went with wide bridging on thin ice-glazed rock. There was just enough ice to get the points in and move up. Here and there it scaled off from the rock and the points grated until they gripped on some small rugosity in the rough granite. My Chouinard Hammer (neither of us carried ice axes) bit into the odd islands of frozen turf and provided a secure hold. A pull up and mantleshelf brought me to a spike and a strong resolution to get the rope on. It was too necking to solo this standard in these conditions. I glanced back at Cunningham poised in his casual manner at the lip of the bulge. He was slightly handicapped by a number of factors—the ropes which he was carrying bandolier fashion had slipped down and pinned his arms in at the elbows; he was hampered by snow displaced as I cleared a belay spike; the thin ice weakened by the passage of a 6ft 2ins, 14-stone Englishman was breaking away; and last but not least he was much shorter than I, and could not reach the 'thank God' hold, which I had cleared. He gave me a wry grin, climbed up to me confidently and said 'let's get the rope on.' I seconded his proposal and he was soon off up the next pitch—an icy slabby corner with an interesting bulge at the top. This led to the easy ledge cutting the face low down. A short delay, the placing of the most psychological runner I have seen, and the pitch was completed. I climbed quickly bridging and backing up. It was thin and the bulge surprisingly more difficult than it looked. I pulled the peg out with my fingers, but did not mention that to J.C.

I glanced over to the lads on Sticil face. They were level with us and climbing well. It looked as though a race would develop. I collected some gear from Johnny and attacked the continuation of the route—up a steep chimney; again, bridging and backing soon dealt with 150 ft. I belayed and brought up J.C. Another pitch with an awkward ice-glazed slot led by J.C. forced me into the right wall, as I had a rucksack. I arrived at the large ledge below the first crux pitch—V.S. with pegs for aid. We had climbed quite fast and were, at this stage, quite confident. Across on Sticil face, thin ice on the direct was proving to be hard, and I saw the young lads' progress had slowed down. Just as well, I thought, as I looked at my pitch, two steep steps and a traverse to an overhanging corner which is climbed by a layback crack. The start is a real stopper and was eventually overcome by inserting Chouinard hammers in a turf ledge at full stretch, pulling up, and mantleshelfing on them. An awkward out-of-balance move brought me to the start of the layback crack. Unfortunately, my gloved hands would not fit in the crack, so I climbed without the gloves. With a good runner to spur me on, I laybacked up, with crampons gripping on the ice-glazed rock. Away above me I could see a peg. The crack narrowed, forcing my fingers out, and after three or four attempts I retreated feeling shattered. J.C. was humming to himself. Up again! A nut high up for aid, and I reached the peg—what a stretch! I clipped in two slings—one long and one short, and stood in the longer. I moved up with front points in the short sling. 'More rope' I yelled, and stood up. My fingers just reached a nice shiny peg at the top. Ping . . . 'I'm off' I yelled. 'It's okay, I can see you' said J.C. in his usual quiet manner. It was only a short fall—20 feet, but I landed upside down with a rope burn between the cheeks of my backside. Without a word I climbed back up, found a peg I had missed which had been covered in snow, and climbed, using three pegs for direct aid. I was tired and bleeding from a torn hand when I arrived at the belay ledge. J.C. followed collecting the gear and cursing my ineptitude in clipping the rope through the wrong way in the top Karabiner. Time had been lost on that pitch. It was late and there was still four pitches to go including the top crux. The lads were having an epic on Sticil face with Rab dangling from his Chouinard hammer and unable to reach the handle as the sling was too long. The problem was time, and they signalled to us that they were bailing out.

It was time for a decision and I looked at J.C. There was no doubt in our minds, after that pitch, we had to go on. We climbed fast. Two pitches brought us to the foot of the second crux and it was J.C.'s lead. The weather had changed, and the wind had increased and spindrift avalanches were sweeping the face. The pitch involved a sensational hand traverse across a steep slab and then an overhanging wall which had been climbed in summer using artificial aid.

J.C. led off gaining the hand traverse by a series of delicate layback moves around a corner. The slot which provided the hand holds was packed with snow and ice and John traversed across pushing his Chouinard hammers into the slot and gripped the handles. He gained the wall at the end which started on an awkward mantle-shelf. As he vanished from sight I felt strangely alone. It was very cold and began to snow. The sky was darkening and I knew time was running out. It was a welcome sound indeed to hear 'Climb when you're ready.' I did not hang around but climbed quickly in the failing light using slings for aid and a tight rope. The climbing was steep and hard, but well protected. I stopped below J.C. at a good peg. 'Pass up that bong so I can get a belay. I've only got a jammed hammer as a belay' said J.C. I quickly complied and hung on to the peg, which was our only attachment to the face, whilst John hammered home the bong. Safely belayed I climbed up, collected the gear and moved off. It was too late! The darkness and snowfall defeated my attempt at the top pitch, which looked desperate in the rapidly fading light.

We could not abseil as there was a 300 foot overhanging wall below us. The only way would be to climb out or climb down and reverse the traverse. It was an impossible manoeuvre in the dark, so a bivouac was the only alternative. I looked at J.C. and he shrugged his shoulders. We had no gear, only sweaters, anorak, breeches, normal climbing gear and a head torch, plus sandwiches which we had not eaten for lunch. The time was just after six. We spent a couple of hours sorting ourselves out, stowing(?) gear, clearing snow off our respective ledges and discussing the solution to our problem. There was no way of knowing what our condition would be in the morning and no certainty of climbing the top pitch, or of reversing the top crux. I know I felt cut off and isolated. The immediate problem was surviving the night. If the wind increased, and it got colder, we would be in for a bad time. Already the spindrift avalanches were sweeping over us and soon my breeches were soaking wet, as the snow accumulated on them. Several times it was necessary to clear away the snow which piled up on my back. John said very little and we both tried to get some rest. It was impossible, as neither of us could hang on the belay which was mid way between us. J.C. was standing and although I was sitting, every time I dozed I found myself falling off the ledge, and had to pull myself back. Time dragged. I dozed only to be awakened by J.C.'s teeth chattering. This shivering recurred at frequent intervals making sleep impossible, but maintained body warmth. We rationed out our food at three-hourly intervals. At about 2 a.m. I gazed wearily across at J.C. The temperature had risen and wet snow slides were hitting us at intervals. J.C. was on his knees. For one split second I thought he was praying and fear gripped me. All was lost. Then I realised he had cramp in his calves and was trying to ease the

strain. I suggested we swapped places, but he declined as it would have been a dicey operation. At 3 a.m. he was standing and swaying slightly, and I put my hand out to stop him falling off. It was useless. He had to do something. After a while he rigged up a sling basket and spent the rest of the night in that.

The morning found us absolutely shattered and frozen and it took ages to sort the gear. The thaw had continued. Ice, wet snow and streams of water ran down the top pitch. It looked desperate. Neither of us felt like climbing and we decided to retreat. I lowered J.C. on a krab brake until he reached the start of the traverse. He reversed this section placing runners and tied the rope off at the end. It was comparatively easy to abseil and take out the runners until I was moving horizontally onto the belay stance. The next abseil involved a pendulum to the right (facing out) to gain the top of the first crux. J.C. made it part of the way, but it was impossible to gain the correct ledge. He held the rope whilst I abseiled down for 80 feet and traversed across to a corner. Neither he, nor I could fix a belay, so I braced myself across the corner and he penduled across to the right ledge, belayed the rope and I abseiled down to join him. Three straightforward abseils and we were at the bottom of the crag. Our condition had improved on the descent, out of sheer necessity, as it was more difficult than we had imagined.

We made our way down to the Shelter Stone where we knew there were some climbers. They were busy cooking breakfast and when we arrived they gave us a sausage to share between us! No tea! The walk back to Coire Cas was painfully slow, as the effects of our enforced bivouac made themselves felt. We met a very strong rescue team at the top of the Ski Tow who were very pleased to see us. They appeared to be very disappointed that they had lost the opportunity of an epic rescue. We were disappointed in our failure; but it had been a good climb . . .

We had felt that siege tactics would be unacceptable, and that was why we tried all-out to make the ascent in one day.

We attempted to follow the summer route throughout, avoiding the easier variation which escapes on to the Sticil route on the left, above the first summer crux. On a buttress route of this difficulty it was thought an unnecessary encumbrance to carry the ice axe, and in its place we carried two Chouinard hammers each, one of which had an adze.

## NAISMITH REVIEWED

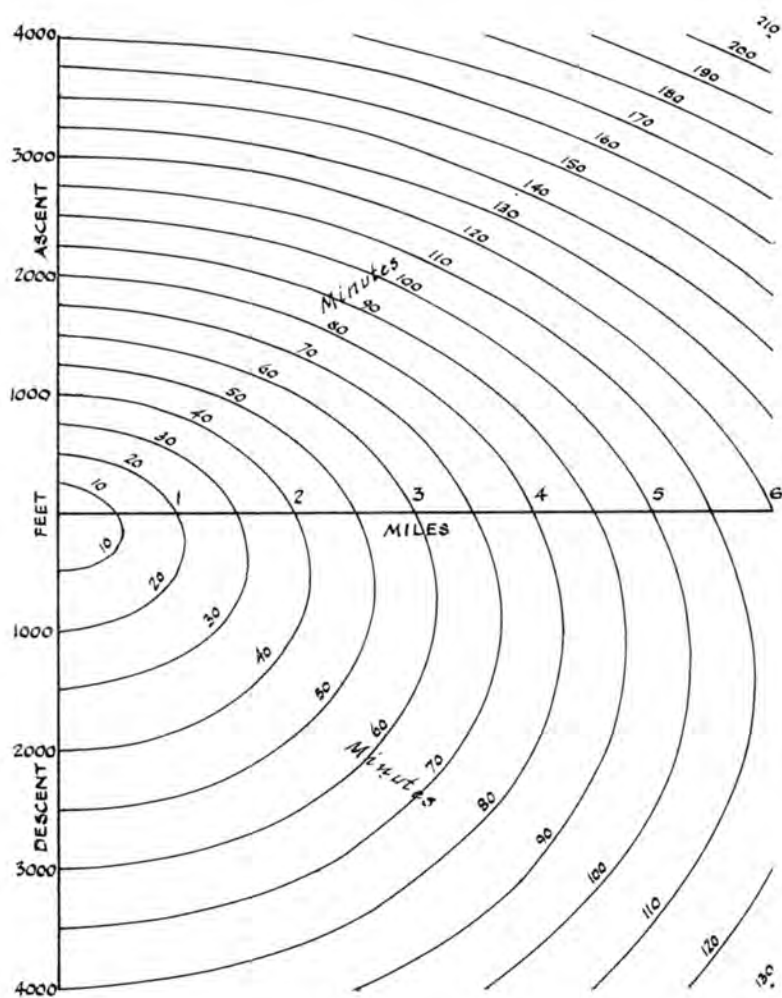
By Trevor Ransley

NAISMITH's rule for estimating the time for a mountain walk has been known, in Scotland at least, for many years and by rough practical verification it has become an accepted and invaluable yardstick. However, when re-reading recently an article in *Les Alpes* for March 1949, I was prompted to question the implications of Naismith's rule in a critical light and to consider the benefits of the method adopted by the Swiss author.

On one aspect of mountain walking, Naismith was completely silent: the time taken for descent. My own practice has varied between ignoring the height difference in the calculation and taking about one-half or two-thirds of the equivalent total time for the ascent. Neither has entirely satisfied me. There is, furthermore, a practical inconsistency in Naismith of the type that can arise from such an empirical simplification. This is that the rise is allowed the same time value whatever the horizontal distance; thus a thousand feet in one mile is given the same time as a thousand feet in four miles. To ignore in effect the gradient seems to me intuitively wrong, for as distance is increased so ultimately the time for a given rise must become of less significance.

Having now criticised a traditional precept, I must be constructive and explain the Swiss method. As with Naismith, it is based on a horizontal walking rate and a vertical climbing rate, but in this case they are not applied separately; instead a resultant is used which effectively depends on the gradient. For descent, a different resultant is used, based on the same walking rate but on a vertical descent rate equivalent to double the ascent rate. The mathematics on which the calculations are based are beyond the scope of an article like this and probably outside the interest of most readers of the *Journal*, so that the results are most useful as an easily read chart rather than as a formula. An examination of the chart with this article shows that the objection to Naismith's inconsistency is removed and moreover, not only is provision made for calculating descents, but intuitive results are also catered for. Thus it will be seen that for descents on gentle slopes up to a certain limiting gradient, the time can be less than for a similar horizontal distance alone, and beyond that as the slope steepens so the time begins to increase again.

There are two aspects of specifying a rule for a calculation of this kind: the first is concerned with basic assumptions of the way in which the variables are combined. The second is concerned with the actual constants used and this must now be dealt with. However, I do not intend becoming involved in definitions of average conditions



of ground and weather and of what constitutes an average mountaineer; such arguments beset work study in other fields. The Swiss chart is based on  $4\frac{1}{2}$  km/hour for the horizontal rate, 300 m/hour for vertical ascent and 600 m/hour for vertical descent. The English equivalents for these are about 2.8 miles/hour, 1000 and 2000 ft/hour. Since walking in the Alps involves more rugged ground than the average in Scotland, less generous values are appropriate. I have based my version, therefore, on 3 miles/hour, 1500 and 3000 ft/hour. So the walking rate is the same as Naismith but the rate of ascent is markedly and justifiably different. Although Naismith's 2000 ft/hour seems reasonable when included in his particular combination, it is hardly likely that an average person could 'walk' up a near-vertical slope at that speed!

The chart is used in this way: select a point on the horizontal axis equivalent to the measured map distance and select a point on the vertical axis (upper part for ascent, lower part for descent) equivalent to the difference in height of the two points; trace vertically and horizontally to find the point which completes the rectangle on the chart and interpolate by estimation the time from the values shown against the curves which straddle the point. For example, the time for a distance of 4 miles and an ascent of 3500 feet will be about 166 minutes, and for a distance of  $2\frac{3}{4}$  miles and a descent of 1800 feet the time will be about 59 minutes. On a long walk, the total time should be obtained from separate sections of roughly uniform slope. This is not necessary with Naismith, of course.

On one further point Naismith has little to say: the average allowance that should be made for rest, meal stops and minor contingencies. This must be mainly a personal matter, but some average guide is needed and it is perhaps not surprising that work study provides a clue to this recreational but physical activity. Therefore, 25% should be adequate for all normal needs, and all that is necessary to find the total time for an expedition is to calculate the times for the separate sections of ascent and descent from the chart then add 25% to the total. Clearly for practical purposes the final estimate will be rounded up to the nearest hour or half-hour. On this basis the whole walk to Ben Lomond and back from Rowardennan ( $3\frac{1}{2}$  miles and 3150 feet) would be allowed five hours.

Most people like to think of themselves as better than average, whether as mortals or mountaineers, but most will also be only too ready to claim on appropriate occasions that conditions of ground or weather are worse than average. Nevertheless, estimates such as those given by Naismith's or this 'Swiss' rule can only be based on average unless we wish to modify them with subjective assessments that seem appropriate from time to time. Since writing the original draft of this article, I have read Eric Langmuir's account of subjective assessments in the excellent *Handbook of Mountain*

*Leadership* but I am doubtful whether the modifications to Naismith would be easy to use in practice. So we are left with a choice that only experience can help us to make.

## KINGPIN: A SECOND ASCENT

By D. A. Knowles

KINGPIN must be the highest major rock-climb in the British Isles. Climbed in 1968 by Hardie and Thompson, it takes a magnificent Yo-yo-esque line up the West Face of Bidean's Churchdoor Buttress, finishing only feet short of the summit. From the climbers' point of view the crag combines the best features of Slime Wall on Buachaille and the tottering monolithic buttresses of Stob Coire nan Lochan. Like those buttresses, it is unrelentingly steep and marked with a regular series of groove and corner lines like the pleats of a kilt. The sloping grey holds and excellent friction is reminiscent of Slime Wall and allows Kingpin its technical interest, the balance climbing which gives the lie to its brutal verticality. The crag sees very little sunshine even in the late afternoon, as the sun is soon shaded by Stob Coire nam Beith. Like too many of the best crags in Scotland, it must be out of condition for 11½ months in the year.

But it was dry this time, and on a lovely June morning the walk from the Meeting of the Three Waters was a pleasure in itself. Heads down and the top of Gearr Aonach in half-an-hour. An easy walk along the ridge and past the lochans brought us to the Aonach Dubh col in time to watch a ptarmigan teasing us from its brood. As the buttress came into view all this charming pitter-patter was scattered by the ugly seeds of apprehension as we scrambled up the scree.

Ian doesn't like dwelling on climbs, especially if they put the wind up him, so according to Nicholson's Law, if I lead the first 150 ft.—that being the length of the rope—he can then dash past and clean up the next 150 ft., and if the route is 300 ft. or so, then we'll polish it off in no time—no bother. But unfortunately my contribution to this memorable team effort dried up at 30 ft. A short overhanging wall bars entry to a niche, formerly filled with a triangular block 'as big as a coffin'—Hardie's thoughtful simile, fully suited to our mood. Bridged on a peg and a sloping foothold with two sideholds and no prospect of immediate advancement—the reverse in fact—I decided to duck. Ian climbed the pitch and belayed at the top of the niche in a back and foot position, wrapped in a cocoon of rope. The climb up to him, sustained, technical and very hard, made me very excited about the next pitch. My lead again—so soon?

A swing right out of the niche, a few moves up a steep rib and I was sweatily pawing a mantleself ledge with a sharp-edged block poised above me like a bacon-slicer. Some very frightened and inelegant moves saw me standing on the ledge, peering into the short chimney which fortunately cuts through the black band of rock girdling the rest of the cliff like a chastity belt. Time to cool down after all this excitement. The chimney, with the aid peg at the bottom, gave straightforward bridging, and a step left brought me to the stance—tiny, but well-furnished with a sling and two pegs.

Ian soon arrived and set off almost immediately up the thin ramp leading rightwards through the wall above. This ramp had given Hardie and Thompson some trouble, resolved by means of pegs, and I expected him to baulk, but some precise layback moves with finger ends in small pockets and he disappeared, saying bye-bye to my secretly cherished hopes of showing him a bit of artificial climbing. Following these moves later, I arrived in the second niche and picked off another peg and sling. The exit from the niche was steep and rather thrutchy—or perhaps it was just me that was rather thrutchy. At any rate my style was certainly suffering from a lack of power in the right places. I crawled past Ian into the lead and met my Waterloo about 40 ft. higher underneath a big roof halfway up the impressive final groove. A big fat Leeper, still in place, was meant to facilitate a long swing out right across a near-vertical and absolutely blank wall, to reach and then mantleself onto a small ledge right on the front of a big pillar. A fantastic move, 'on the edge of all things.' I could see it all—that must have been the trouble—the swing across became a swing back, a horrific pendulum, imagination running riot, a little voice saying, 'Down boy, down, give somebody else a chance,' and so, for the second time in a day I backed off and let Ian lead it. Crossing the wall, his legs strained to do the splits in a vertical plane.

I followed up the crack, knocked out the Leeper, swung across and sat on the ledge in disgust, the same traitorous little voice saying, 'What was all that fuss about?' An awkward wall and the going eased. Wandering across the front of the pillar brought privileged views of the top section of the lines to the right. Forty feet of easier climbing and I led to the rocks just under the summit of Bidean. Coming into the sunlight for the first time since we had dropped into the corrie, we were both very conscious of the contrast with the chill menace of the shadowy regions below, where the sheer impressiveness of the crag had almost overawed us. This sense of awe had remained with me right to the top, but Ian had seemed to cast it off like an old coat when he committed himself to lay-backing the ramp on the third pitch. The magnificence of the route affected us both and wafted us into the Dubh Loch on a current of hot air, optimism and draught lager—but that's another story.

## BEHIND THE RANGES

By Hamish M. Brown

A GLIMPSE at the map to find some of Scotland's really remote Munros would lead the searcher to some splendid 'wilderness areas': rugged, isolated and often exceptionally beautiful.

By *really remote* I mean areas which are perhaps climbed with a night or two away from roads and civilisation. Any and every Munro could be done and back in a day; but there are some defended by terrain and time, which would make this more of an endurance test than a pleasure. This is the criterion, then.

My glimpse at the map brings to memory the head of Glen Affric, the 'Rough Bounds' of Knoydart, Ben Alder, parts of the Cairngorms and three groups in the North West: Seana Bhràigh, A'Mhaighdean and Lurg Mhòr—a golden triptych.

Seana Bhràigh, to begin. Impecunious student days saw us first exploring this direction. Malcolm and I were based on a tent by Loch Droma between the Fannichs and the Beinn Dearg hills, over the dam from the road which runs across westwards to Ullapool—or past An Teallach of the sunset spires. We used cycles, ranging widely east and west. But as our time ran on, Seana Bhràigh still remained unreachable. It took nineteen miles of cycling and eighteen on foot to secure it.

It is hidden away behind the Beinn Dearg hills which are rocky and steep and grand themselves. It is surrounded by great expanses of wild country with no public roads. From Strathoykell or Ullapool it would be a marathon. So we tried a left-flanking approach from Inverlael, setting out at 1 p.m. happy in the long summer light. We put up a big red fox, and a sparrow hawk took a pipit from our very feet.

There are paths on the O.S. map and these existed, leading us along a string of lochans up to the empty heights, a convulsed landscape, deep-bitten by corries. The deer seemed quite unafraid. Another Munro, Eididh nan Clach Geala, lies to the south and was added on the way back. We ran down the Lael in the gloaming and at a farm stopped for long glasses of milk (at fourpence a pint). How we slept that night!

Recently I've returned there again in successive June visits: halcyon days. Endless sunshine and stars at night; camping on the Diridh Mòr with gentle strokes of wind over the back of Scotland to keep the midges away.

We were a large party, up to Coire Grannda first, the secret loch in the heart of the Beinn Dearg desert. The spectacular twins of Cona Mheall and Beinn Dearg followed. A good day already, but, still miles away north lay the Eididh—and Seana Bhràigh. The more

staid remained and the keener went on. We all met, several weary hours later, having 'done' Seana Bhràigh, and traversed the outlier Faochagach back to camp. Some skirted it down a flanking valley of four lochs but those who kept high over the gentle hill, which echoed with endless plaintive golden plovers, were back at camp first. 'The quick and the dead.' Half an hour later a thunderstorm came racing the others across. The storm won.

The following June a similar round proved finer; some friends and I, with a dog, went over Faochagach in the evening and simply slept out right in the middle of this wilderness. We woke at four with deer about us and the palest dawn colours on Cona Mheall's rocky flanks.

Again, some went down the valley of the lochs with the bivouac gear while we went on, skirting in early day out to the far country, pilgrims almost to a promised land.

'Someone lost behind the ranges . . . lost and waiting for you—go! Lost behind the ranges. Anyone might have found it, but God's whisper came to me . . .

These odd words which I still cannot trace kept going through my mind. Pictures of perfection that day—the dog dancing through blowing bog cotton puffs—a figure perched high above the precipices of the Luchd Choire, haloed with light above the blue depths—a lingering lunch by the cairn with the peaks right up to Sutherland in view—a tingling dip in a high pool with a plover calling its woes around—a thunder of hooves on dried peat bog as a hundred head of deer stormed past—the wheeling motion of a wing-set eagle . . .

Is there anything to beat Scotland's soft and secret pageant? Alps? Andes? Antarctica? I doubt it. Subtle it is, the combination of all the senses, sharp in sun or snow, pulsing with life. It was good to be young on Seana Bhràigh.

A'Mhaighdean, next. This might be the loneliest of all, unpronounceable to the ignorant—'Armageddon,' we lazily used to call it. The traveller along the Diridh Mòr looks into the sunset over the rugged crests of An Teallach. The road to An Teallach is 'Destitution Road,' built to give labour during one of the potato famines of last century. Between this road and the one which skirts the two-toned Torridon landscape by Loch Maree lies another great mountain fastness—perhaps the very greatest of our 'wilderness areas' and as such precious.

'Deadly is the danger of destruction of all that makes dreaming possible.' It could be so easily lost, as has been so much of our irreplaceable highland scenery. For this is pre-eminently country to set one dreaming. In the north An Teallach is undisputedly one of the top ten peaks in the British Isles, while across from it is Beinn Dearg Mhòr, hardly less spectacular. The south is hidden by Slioch and the gneiss ridges above Loch Maree. West lies a wilderness leading to the sea. East is the Coire Mhic Fhearchair group. In the

centre stands A' Mhaighdean, the Maiden, crag skirted and her back to the wild west.

Several visits into this maze of mountains have brought little familiarity. Lochs and peaks lie in a crazy pattern, a complex landscape of rock and water.

A' Mhaighdean gave me one of the longest solitary days I have ever experienced. A few of us were climbing in the Torridons over the Hogmanay holiday. One evening I was given a lift up the rough road to the now deserted Heights of Kinlochewe where I managed to howff it in a stable for the cold winter night. A long time before day I had followed the path up to Loch Fada. Grey darkness changed for grey light.

It is unhurrying landscape which never knew straight travelling —yet I romped along, for the loch was frozen into a grand highway. I saw no deer, no life at all, strangely. From the east the mountain presents no difficulty but arrival on the summit brings surprises: the other side falls sheer to the Fionn Loch, crag-girt and stupendous.

An empty landscape; for the last house now stands empty by its shores. No warm blood is left to drain from this dead world. Just the occasional fisherman or stalker or climber enters quietly, has his day and departs whence he came.

Here have been only nights and days,  
Sun and clouds sailing,  
Moon and stars that went their ways  
And the dusk's soft veiling.  
Nothing has changed since time began  
But the slow ebb of the seasons.  
Go your ways, you questing men;  
Life has no need of reasons.

*Douglas Fraser.*

It was a long trek home down to Loch Maree and down the Glen Torridon road to the Ling Hut. Fitting to be among some of the oldest rocks in the world, chilled by the sneaking winter wind and humbled by a day that left tracks on more than just those pristine miles. I'm sure my memories are those of thousands of others: the memories that are all about us on our paths of days. It can be a sharp painful joy, this remembering. The land has been kind to us in storm and sun, comforting, aye restoring something lost in the bustle of life. It was good to be alone on A' Mhaighdean.

And now for Lurg Mhòr. When Philip Tranter and his party were climbing in the Hindu Kush they named one of their new summits 'Sheasgaich' after one of our remote peaks. If any be hidden behind the ranges it is Bidein a' Choire Sheasgaich and her other half, Lurg Mhòr. Many people who might know A' Mhaighdean or even Seana Bhràigh are at a loss to place this pair. A' Mhaighdean is centred in an area where walkers and climbers are likely to camp

and traverse for days on end, Seana Bhràigh is reached over singing heights, Bidein a' Choire Sheasgaich and Lurg Mhòr have defences almost reminiscent of the Hindu Kush. There is no close accommodation, the way in is long and hard. The long shank of Lurg Mhòr and the soaring cone of the other are apt to be late for one's visiting.

You set off from Strathcarron, an hour up through tall pine forests, delicious with dawn scents, you walk a further hour up the trench of glen above before crossing the pebbly burn to take a side valley with a stalkers' path up to a triple col, another hour of climbing steadily. Ahead lies Beinn Tarsuinn, 'the twisted or cross peak.' (Any Tarsuinn is enough to make anyone cross, always getting in the way—have you noticed?) It is a hog's back which has to be climbed, traversed and descended on the other side, another couple of hours perhaps. Five hours out you are at the foot of Bidein a' Choire Sheasgaich—and *beyond it* is Lurg Mhòr! Mercifully they are a splendid pair, even if a twelve-hour round is common enough, for you will linger often.

Again my memories are in triplicate; the first a solo winter visit hitching from Fife over a weekend—not planned but when lifts come, well . . .

Better wandering would be hard to find again, especially with a gang of old friends, and enthusiastic youngsters. I often think a hill day fits together like a symphony. Strange that there should be so little poetry of the feel of the hills. Geoffrey Winthrop Young was hard man supreme in his day—and almost alone delves into the spirit of the lasting hills.

We ask no blessing of wealth nor any boon  
 save one—and one—  
 The heart of the boy and health  
 with freedom to enjoy  
 The precious things brought forth by the sun  
 And the precious things thrust forth by the moon,  
 Earth's fulness and the chill of snow-fed fountains  
 The rustling of wings  
 And our men's wills;  
 The chief things of the ancient mountains  
 And the precious things of the lasting hills.

Men's wills we were to need that long day.

It followed, by a day, the steps of 'grand old master.' We were staying at Achnashellach Hostel and so were J. H. B. Bell and his wife. The youngest of the party, a boy who had recently eyed Bell routes on Nevis commented, 'But he's History!'

We were three generations then, all with that freedom to enjoy. Precious indeed. It had been a long day for the doyen of Scottish climbing, it was a long day for all; but it could not have been long enough . . .

We were up at 5.30 to a big moon-cold clearness, tramped the miles through forest and strath and glen to the triple col with its multitude of frogs. Beinn Tarsuinn was clear, so Stuart and I, who had been before, could actually see the bulky symmetry of Bidein a' Choire Sheasgaich at last. We rock-scrambled up it, every man on his line of choosing. The dog romped among the scattering ptarmigan chicks while the mother flapped about his head. We ran to the col and up Lurg Mhòr. Our shouts echoed along the craggy corrie, so the hot deer cantered away from the clinging snow patches. Soft grassy summit with all the blue remembered hills about us.

There are days lost behind the ranges like this where one feels tireless and timeless. Perhaps it was sun-stroke!

We romped down off that furthest summit to Loch Morar to see the garrons. It was a long sticky pull up to the col so before the forest there was a great welcoming pool of yellow water for the end o' day dook.

But the memory that lingers most is of young Alan, last down off Lurg Mhòr, appearing with a dappled deer-calf at his heels. It would not leave us, that fragile thing thrust forth by the sun; Alan had to carry it off the crags to the grassy flanks. Still it held by us, in strange encounter with its chiefest predator.

The spell had to break, the meet scattered, but through all the fulness of that June day, every movement, every laugh, every song cried that it was good to be alive on Lurg Mhòr, good to be behind the ranges on their sunny ways.

## IN THE GROOVE

By J. R. Marshall

NEVIS, the most massive, malevolent, most elevated lump of rock on these islands, is itself an island, humping hideous flanks from endless bogs, hard to equal for hidden depths of character.

Years of visitation, pursuing obscure ways traced by obscure men, less obscure men or obviously insane men has led inevitably to the conclusion that the hardest route on the mountain is the Allt a' Mhuillin track to the hut . . .

Countless proud ambitious men have broken on that evil thrash, to spend ensuing days gazing vacuously from the door of the hut. Drained of all spunk and harrowed by the vision of a return bout with black clutching bogs. The Marquis de Sade must have sited that damned hut!

However, as the saying goes, it's an ill bog . . . and doubtless the trials of the track made contribution to the exploration of the

craggy Ben. Only hardened men survive its noxious cruxes and so emerge anaesthetized from mental anguish, climbers capable of accepting intolerable conditions, cataracts of snow, rock, ice, rain or bodies; endowed with an ability to explore a myriad unclimbed crannies with a seemingly callous indifference.

But that's what it's all about, a state of mind, induced indifference to discomfort and danger within and without the hut. Much deliberation and endeavour left me convinced the best Guide to the mountain was an immense notice at the roadside—DANGER KEEP OFF. Obviously my motives would have been misconstrued, therefore a guide book eventually appeared; but is still a confirmed opinion and one unlikely to be withdrawn. With any luck, debilities of old age will arrive to preclude over-frequent participation in the horrors of that track and exposure to the fearful crags above.

In review, it's hard to isolate events sufficiently singular or dramatic to justify inclusion in a journal; after all one story of a climb ends much like another and a collection of such produces yet another boringly familiar *Journal*. However, from a kaleidoscope of 'joyous days' and harrowing times a few occasions provide enough colour to justify the risk of further boring a sanguine few.

There's the story of the gentle giant and dwarf working away on the summit plateau hacking lead from the old observatory, packing it into sacks and toiling down and up the Ben for a week to earn a miserable £20. To improve turnover a muckle great load was rammed into a rucksack on the giant's back, but the bottom fell out! Empty oil drums were then carried up from the C.I.C., packed with lead and rolled towards Glen Nevis for a 4000-foot trundle. A disaster for workers and sheep! The drums were lost, never to be found again; presumably carried off by motorists, or the motorists carried off by the drums. Anyone ascending this slope in future should beware the rolling of distant drums.

Another time, a small group of horrible S.M.C. men, strolling under the N.E. Buttress, scattered in fright as a great boulder plummeted 1500 feet from the summit. Closer encounter proved it to be the body of a now deceased 'instructor', which was duly carted down and deposited in the long stretcher box behind the hut, to await police collection. Later, a wee chancer looked into the hut to scrounge a bed for the night and was told he could sleep in the box behind the hut. His ensuing retches had the stags roaring for miles around.

Then there's the Groove Climb on South Trident Buttress. Stenhouse and I, checking out Kellett climbs, looked for a groove in the middle tier. Well there is one, a huge great one, so we climbed it. It matched the description O.K. but for the exit, where Kellett said a choice of routes led to the top; our only choice proved to go back down the groove or, as was done, to climb a vertical wall of unbelievable looseness.

We rationalised the disparity by assuming that a great rockfall had occurred since the passing of the pioneer, and at the same time we noted the groove could provide a good winter climb.

Years passed before the chance arose to try it. Accompanied by Eli the gentle giant I spent the first day on the lower cliffs of N.E. Buttress delicately cramponning up brittle ice, wondering when the whole lot would crackle off the face and us along with it. A worrying thought with such a big lad on the other end of the rope! . . . but it never did and the next day saw us under The Trident. It was snowing and blowing as I pointed out the groove. Eli gave me an old-fashioned look but, being gentle, acquiesced and we shuffled out along a ledge until the slopes buffed our noses, where we roped and belayed right under the groove. To those who don't know the scene, we were now in the middle of a two-tiered buttress which looks like a petit, petit Dru with us perched in the *niche*.

The groove looked thin and hard, the forty-foot entry wall glazed and awkward, with spurts of powder drifting down, so I bashed a peg between loose flakes and offered the toil to Eli. Up he went, showing the soles of his boots, forty feet to a string runner, then leftward a little into the groove and out of sight. Winter's worries assailed me, the axe belay was useless, the peg doubtful, but at least it would save me extruding through snaplinks above! Muffled mumblings and excuses filtered down the rope; brittle ice, glazed bulges etc.; the gut began to tighten, he's an enormous bloke, must get a grip and think happy thoughts. Och, he'll be alright, he's so tall he's over most problems before they start, the happy thoughts prevail and I peer into the grim corrie below. The rope moves up, good, that's the bulge over, and then—a great rasping, rumbling, thrashing, tumbling offends my ear. I race the rope back through the string runner, Jesus Christ! there isn't a higher runner. Eli streaks out off the groove head down like a 225 lb. torpedo, my eyes are on stalks as he smashes a crater from the ledge and bounces out into orbit. I wrap the rope tight and think of the 500-foot drop below—Whang he comes on the rope, I'm up in the air. If you've got to go . . . he's got his, now for mine. From a funk cocoon, I hear the peg creaking and crackling, feel the fat gut being severed by a searing rope, how to get rid of that great weighty cadaver, we seem all set to tumble down the cliff. I slip the rope a wee bit to get back on my feet, then a yelp comes up from the other end of the rope and a blood-covered face peers over the edge of the lip. Eli, get on your feet you big bastard, miraculously he does, reeling about like he never does drunk, what a relief to get the weight off! Remorseful now, I ask him to shamble off along the ledge and I follow, get him on a short rope and with gaze averted from the great blood-stained visage usher him on to the slopes of the corrie, to thankfully plank our butts in the snow.

Our shakes subside and gingerly we examine the extent of



Ben Nevis one day this snowless winter.

*D. J. Baudet.*

damage; incredibly, that cranium is as solid as ever! Then scrubbing off the gore with snow we discover the only damage (apart from pride) to be a tiny quarter-inch cut on the bridge of the nose. However, we're too shattered to push our luck any further and decide to descend.

A party of English, timorously pushing upward, meet enormous bloodstained Eli looming through the drifting snows, to have their awed enquiries treated with traditional disdain in his reply 'Never mind, but dinnae go up there, the whole bloody corrie's avalanchin'.'

Frights come and go, though some don't go too easy, so winters later, salved by an absence of like trauma, the groove was elected as a climb sufficiently possible to our degenerated competence.

The omens looked right, dark gloomy day, equally gloomy team, snarling winds building up for a storm; so with brother Ronnie and Robin Campbell the ledge was traversed to forge strong belays beneath the groove.

In no mood to relive the agonies of another wait, I left the others grumbling and clambered up the wall, sticking runners on every available nobble in sight. Then into the groove to hack away over variable bulges, past the one which had collapsed under Eli. From here it seemed impossible to survive such a nose dive. However the ice was better this time so on I went to belay above, subsequently to be joined by the others.

We were at the foot of an open bay, from which the exit was an overhanging chimney, spume belched over it now and again, so Robin was elected to force the way. He wasn't keen and complained all the way up but we jeered him on to fumble above the bulge, lying about the big holds supposedly there; but Campbell's no daft, and a fine ledge beckoned him away to the right. Despite our vile curses, he took the opportunity, suitably hidden by the now healthy blizzard, to disappear along the ledge out of our sight. A faraway hail took brother away and I hung about, engulfed every now and again by spume avalanches, freezing stiff and cursing Campbell for piking out of the direct; mind you, I disliked its look enough not to try it personally . . .

At last the call came to move and moved by curiosity I hurried to examine his escape route. It led along the edge of a flake into a chimney crack perched on the outer edge of the groove. Hell, the man must have been frightened thin to get through there; above, I could hear the two of them laughing away. Did you pair squeeze through this bloody hole? 'Yes' they chorused with malicious glee. So I pushed, squeezed, snarled, swore and stuck; I thought I'd never escape, at least not till the fat starved off. Eventually I managed to extricate downwards, relieved at the release.

More swearing, then I asked the now hilarious pair above to throw the rope out over the face. Decently they did so; after all, they could just as well have abandoned me to the crows. The rope

hung clear of the face, I hooked it in with the axe, tied on, then they heaved and I heaved, eventually to be landed like a slaying salmon on a snowy ledge. Ten minutes deriding the cowardly nature of their rabbiting, then off up the arête, blasted by storm eventually, to amaze them with a maze of obscure ledgeways spiralling downward to the peace of the corrie below.

All in all, a good day, somewhat negative but still an entertaining day and sufficiently satisfying to eliminate a return bout with that awful groove.

Months later during a balmy spring walk around the corrie the whole scene clicked into place. Our route was not Kellett's Groove Climb after all. That climb lay tucked in a corner well to the left, a tiny little chimney, ours loomed and leered in splendid scale above, a classic Nevis joke.

## TRIVIA ON A VISIT TO SCHIEHALLION

By Roger North

ON A morning in late March I woke to what promised to be a fine day. I had nothing planned and decided to visit Schiehallion, the graceful peak which I had often admired from Black Mount. Though in no sense a climb Schiehallion seemed to offer a fine view point for the country over which it occupies such a dominating position. D. K. Broster's charming book *Almond, Wild Almond* was also an incentive to the attempt.

Arrangements necessary to reach a starting point for the walk required the hire of a motor car and the company of Angus Grant of Socach whom I considered to be a trusty companion for the day's outing. George Huntly put his finest car at my disposal and Davy Stewart, who had been with me in Macedonia some 50 years ago, came as driver. He wore his best suit and Huntly was present at our departure so it was evidently looked upon as an occasion of some importance.

Angus had agreed to come, and as we approached the Glen Orchy road end I viewed him dancing over the moor towards us waving his stick in greeting. The sun was now shining gently and light mists were creeping slowly up the hillsides in Glen Lochy so that a fine day seemed likely, at all events for some hours.

I always enjoy the drive along the northern shore of Loch Tay for this is a most romantic and historic part of Perthshire. I like to imagine the procession of barges and the fleet of small craft escorting Queen Victoria and her Consort when Lord Breadalbane took her up the Loch from Taymouth to Killin, the crews all dressed in highland

costume. I try to picture, also, the little pleasure steamer with her striped awning moving smoothly over the broad sheet of water, calling in at the various landing stages now, alas, only recognisable from the ruined timbers of their supporting piers. At the time of which I write Ben Lawers was not yet marred by the gigantic pipe lines and network of rough access roads which now disfigure this fine expanse of hillside.

Beyond Fortingall we drew up at a small hotel so that I could arrange for Davy's lunch and rest before the homeward drive. A man who was standing outside approached us, doubtless to find out who could be travelling that way in such a fine car during the off season. From his appearance he might have stepped straight out of the pages of Scrope. He wore a deer-stalker hat, a knickerbocker suit of rough tweed, and heavy well-greased boots. His face, with its Highland Brigade complexion, was fringed by a curly brown beard, and his bright, pale blue eyes, those of one accustomed to searching distant hillsides, examined us with interested curiosity.

On learning our purpose he went inside to summon a maid. She was as urban in appearance as he was highland. I explained about the lunch and she replied 'Just for the one, is it?' and tottered away again on her stiletto heels. I had intended to ascend the hill by the ridge running westwards from White Bridge as this route would afford good views to right and left throughout, but on reaching the bridge it was disappointing to see that the base of the ridge and for some distance above it was festooned in Forestry Commission wire, so we went on to some buildings named Braes of Foss. Here we saw an old boundary wall which runs direct to the summit ridge, petering out a short distance below it. We were dismayed to see towards Loch Tummel large clusters of pylons which spoil the view of the loch and its environs. As we dismounted Davy observed that a new tourist attraction poster might be appropriate, 'Come to the Highlands and see the Pylons.'

The walk up the hillside was quite uneventful, remarkable only for the fact that we saw no wild life, furred or feathered, and Angus noticed the absence of sheep. The summit of Schiehallion does not give the impression of being such a sharp peak as it appears from a distance, but the southern face is very steep and in its upper slopes very rocky. The fine view over Loch Rannoch and a part of the dismal moor is quite noteworthy. We noticed also that the mountains of Black Mount and those guarding the entrance to Glen Coe present no striking view; all appear of a uniform elevation. They look much farther off from Schiehallion than the latter does from, say, Clachlet. We met no other visitors nor was there any evidence on the summit of any recent visit.

I would have liked to descend by the northern ridge to Kinloch Rannoch, but this would have entailed a longish hack by road to the rendezvous, so we descended more or less by the ascent route,

diverging only to visit a little tree-sheltered hollow to seek for specimens of the flora that sometimes exist in such places.

On leaving the ridge Angus remarked that there would be rain before many hours had passed, and certainly the hills and moorland towards Ben Chonzie had assumed the sad, grey appearance which denotes rain. The sun, too, had ceased to shine and there was a light but persistent wind from the south.

We had seen the car awaiting us long before we regained the road. Davy said he had had a fine dinner but thought he might as well come on to meet us when he had finished in case we were down early. It is always with a feeling of satisfaction at the successful outcome of an expedition, even such a modest one as we had accomplished, that one clambers into the car, especially when all has gone well. I enjoyed the drive back, my thoughts no longer disturbed by the anticipation of possible failure as is usually the case at the beginning of the day on venturing into the unknown.

Loch Tay was no longer the smooth sheet it had resembled earlier but was whipped into small waves, and the long line of hills beyond Ardeonaig were concealed by mist. We reached Luib in nice time for tea and it was with the usual feeling of thankfulness that I alighted in order to enjoy the hospitality which this comfortable inn always provides.

Both my companions were known to the Stewarts and went off to tell them of our day's experiences. Presently I was comfortably seated, and appreciating the warmth of a big fire of logs. 'Been hiking?' asked a young man seated at another table. I dislike the term 'hiking' in reference to hill walking and I also dislike the careless habit of omitting the pronoun and other parts of the verb; however, I admitted that I had been walking over the hills and I was even mildly flattered that my appearance had prompted the surmise.

'Don't believe in it, myself' he continued. 'Plenty of scope for it round here, I suppose; prefer to keep on the flat, myself.'

As I was anxious to re-trace our walk on my map (which I opened up in discouragement) while munching away at Mrs Stewart's excellent brown scones, I made no comment. I hope my fellow guest did not think me uncivil, but the dining room at Luib is a very pleasant place with its pictures of charming old gardens and old-fashioned crockery on the sideboard, and I wanted to enjoy it in silence.

After a little time he rose to go and I thanked him for his farewell 'Cheerio' as he vanished into the hall.

I would have liked to sit there in comfort cogitating over the day's events but presently I saw my companions ambling out to the car and did not like to keep them waiting.

Angus' remark on the threatening appearance of the sky as we started down the hill had proved well founded: a steady drizzle was

falling and the hills on either side of Glen Dochart were barely visible.

This is really the end to a brief account of what was, after all, a very ordinary day on the hills, remarkable only for the fact that it was undertaken on a sudden impulse. I have rarely had a happier day.

## DRUG ADDICTION IN SCOTTISH MOUNTAINEERING: THE FIRST STEPS OF A DESCENT

CLIMBERS frequently use stimulants on long or hard routes; the after-effects may be mildly or grossly harmful. Addiction is no subject to be dealt with here. Neither is it new. Whilst preferring, with the old fogeys of 1890-odd in the Club Song, 'The Genial Whisky Toddy,' the Editors feel it is their duty to point out that the more irresponsible younger generation of climber was born very long ago. Here we reprint parts of an account published by Sir Robert Christison, Bart., in *Trans. Roy. Bot. Soc. Edin.* XII (1876), 478-493, on the effects of cocaine on his climbing performance in Scotland. 'Coke' we now know to be one of the most dangerously addictive of 'hard' drugs; the spectacle of drug-pushing to the young (students at that . . .), innocently or no, must engender the gravest concern, must it not? And that dope-peddler Batchelor should be rounded up, if his own excesses have not already brought him to an early grave.

I was first led to pay attention to the Peruvian custom of chewing *cuca* by reading, full forty years ago, the 'Travels in Chilé, Peru, and on the River Amazons,' of the German naturalist Pöppig . . .

The conclusion at which he arrived is, that the habit is as seductive and as injurious to health, mind, and morals, as that of tipling in Europe, or opium-eating in the East. He says it is almost confined to natives of the aboriginal red race, has not been adopted by negroes, and is discountenanced among all of European descent; that even those who use it to no great excess must stop their work several times a day to chew their quid contemplatively, and are much displeased if disturbed in their placid enjoyment; and that those who have got thus far are apt to become mere slaves to it, surrender every other occupation for it, and, quitting society, pass their time in the wild forests between hunting for their sustenance and lying under a tree chewing their beloved weed, calling up delightful visions and building castles in the air, and so insensible to outward occurrences as to remain thus all night indifferent to cold, torrents of rain, and even the howlings of the panther in their

neighbourhood. But, in the end, life is cut short about the age of fifty by obstruction, dropsy, or jaundice, or through simple extenuation and exhaustion. When the habit has thus degenerated into a vice, the victim becomes, in the language of the country, a *Coquero*, and is irreclaimable. If a man of Spanish blood begin to use *cuca*, he is at once looked on with suspicion; for usually, in the course of time, he abandons himself entirely to it, and becomes an outcast from the society in which he moved . . . .

Von Tschudi, indeed, says, that a profligate *coquero* may be known by his foul breath, stumpy teeth, pale quivering lips, black-coloured mouth, dim eyes, yellow skin, unsteady gait, and general apathy; but, in his narrative, obviously in part compiled, he does not say he described such a man from actual observation; on the contrary, all three travellers represent in colours more or less strong the great utility of *cuca* to the Indians in the hard labour they have to undergo.

Von Tschudi observes that, in his own trials, he found it to be a preventive of that difficulty in breathing which is felt in the rapid ascent of the Andes. He mentions the following instance, which he carefully watched, of the power of the Indians to bear long fatigue without any other sustenance. A miner, sixty-two years old, worked for him at laborious digging five days and nights without food, or more than two hours of sleep nightly, his only support being half an ounce of *cuca* leaves every three hours. The man then accompanied him on foot during a ride of sixty miles in two days. Nevertheless, von Tschudi was assured by the priest of the district that he had never known the man to be ill . . . .

At all events, however, the following experiments . . . . prove that the leaves may be easily used by most, if not all, persons, so as to produce no unpleasant, unsafe, or even suspicious effects whatsoever.

My first trials were made in 1870, when I was not aware that any one else in Europe had experimented with it. My specimen was sent to me by a London mercantile gentleman, Mr Batchelor, six years before . . . .

Two of my students, out of the habit of material exercise for five months, tired themselves thoroughly with a walk of sixteen miles in the month of April. They returned home at their dinner hour, having taken no food since a nine o'clock breakfast. They were very hungry, but refrained from food, and took each an infusion of two drachms of *cuca*, made with the addition of five grains carbonate of soda, which was added to imitate the Peruvian method of chewing the leaves along with a very small quantity of lime or plant ashes. I am satisfied, however, that any such addition is superfluous. Presently hunger left them entirely, all sense of fatigue soon vanished, and they proceeded to promenade Princes Street for an hour; which they did with ease and pleasure . . . .

I reserved what remained of my good specimen of *cuca* for further trial during my autumn holidays in the country. On September 15th, while residing at St Fillans on Loch Earn, I ascended Ben Vorlich. The mountain is 3224 feet above the sea, and 2900 above the highway on the lochside. The ascent is for the most part easy, over first a rugged footpath, and then through short heather and short deep grass; but the final dome of 700 feet is very steep, and half of it among blocks and slabs of mica slate, the abode of a few ptarmigan, of which a small covey was sprung in crossing the stony part. On the whole, no Highland mountain of the same height is more easily ascended. The temperature at the side of the lake was 62°; on the summit, 52°. In consequence of misdirection, I had to descend an intervening slope on the way, so that the whole ascent was 3000 feet perpendicular. I took two hours and a half to reach the summit, and was so fatigued near the close that it required considerable determination to persevere during the last 300 feet. I was richly rewarded, however, by an extremely clear atmosphere, and a magnificent mountainous panorama, of which the grandest object was Ben Nevis, forty miles off, shown quite apart from other mountains, and presenting the whole of its great precipice edgeways to the eye. My companions, who, as well as I, were provided with an excellent luncheon, soon disposed of it satisfactorily; but I contented myself with chewing two-thirds of one drachm of *cuca* leaves. We spent three-quarters of an hour at the top, during which I looked forward to the descent with no little distrust. On rising to commence it, however, although I had not previously experienced any sensible change, I at once felt that all fatigue was gone, and I went down the long descent with an ease like that which I used to enjoy in my mountainous rambles in my youth. At the bottom, I was neither weary, not hungry, nor thirsty, and felt as if I could easily walk home four miles; but that was unnecessary. On arriving home at five o'clock, I still felt no fatigue, hunger or thirst. At six, however, I made a very good dinner. During the subsequent evening I was disposed to be busy, and not drowsy; and sound sleep during night left me in the morning refreshed and ready for another day's exercise. I had taken neither food nor drink of any kind after breakfasting at half-past eight in the morning; but I continued to chew my *cuca* till I had finished the sixty grains when half-way down the mountain.

Eight days afterwards I repeated the experiment, but used ninety grains of *cuca*. Being better acquainted with the way, no ground was lost by an intervening descent, so that the perpendicular height to be reached from the highway was 2900 feet. I took two hours and a quarter to ascend, and on reaching the summit was extremely fatigued. The weather had changed, so that the temperature, 51° at the loch-side, was 41° at the top. A moderate breeze consequently caused so much chilliness that my party were

glad to redescend in half an hour by which time I had consumed two-thirds of the *cuca*, taking, as formerly, neither food nor drink. The effects were precisely the same, perhaps even more complete, for I easily made the descent without a halt in an hour and a quarter, covering at least four miles of rugged ground; and I walked homewards two miles of a smooth level road to meet my carriage. I then felt tired, because nearly three hours had elapsed since I consumed the *cuca*, and in that time the Peruvians find it necessary to renew their restorative. But there was no more *cuca* left, and I was tempted to substitute a draught of excellent porter. I suppose this indulgence led on to the unusual allowance of four glasses of wine during dinner, instead of one or none; and the two errors together, with possibly some discordance between *cuca* and alcohol, were the probable cause of a restless feverish slumber during the early part of the night; but quiet sleep succeeded, and I awoke quite refreshed and active next morning.

One of my sons, who accompanied me on both occasions, used *cuca* the first time, but also took luncheon on the summit. Though not in good condition for such work, he made it out without fatigue; and on the second occasion, when there was no more *cuca* to give him, he felt decidedly the want of it when he reached the highway at the foot of the mountain . . .

## WHEN RAINDROPS KEEP FALLING ON YOUR CLIFF

By D. F. Lang

THE abuse being hurled at Allen Fyffe and John Grieve was unprintable. As the rest of the company at Creag an Dubh Loch on the weekend 8th-9th June '69 either had already spent themselves or preferred to soak up the sun, MacInnes had inveigled these two *artistes* to perform King Rat for him. They were now engaged on the second movement, in front of a battery of cameras.

As the Sunday afternoon shrunk we acquired that guilty feeling which inactivity brings. Certainly Graeme Hunter and I had enjoyed a whale of a time on Falseface the previous day, but other new lines were high in our thoughts as we departed for home. Stopping midway down the lochside for a farewell glance, we noticed a magnificent fault cleaving the impressive overhanging wall above South-east Gully. Our enthusiasm was mutual and we made a pact to climb this route, surely one of the most obvious features of the Dubh Loch cliffs.

The following weekend saw us esconced in the howff below the great Central Slabs. The weather had deteriorated. Rather late on

the Saturday we headed towards Broad Terrace, an exposed ascent on slippery vegetation reminiscent of Babylon. The corner loomed ahead, thrusting up through a big roof. We reached its foot by climbing a narrow chimney until a left traverse entered a comfortable ledge. I joined Graeme there and began to look for a decent belay for the next pitch. Graeme was standing on a huge block; and suddenly I noticed it was rocking . . . This brought Hunter to heel; the block was booted into the corrie. However, this next pitch and the upper ones obviously required more equipment than we had with us. So ended Try number 1. We were not alone at the Dubh Loch and climbing being competitive these days our intentions became an open secret.

Three subsequent visits to the crag were drowned out by the abominable weekend weather. However, the summer holidays were near and our own spirits rose as we put down Neil Quinn's alcoholic ones (it was his wedding). And so, at 3 a.m. the morning after, practically on our knees, we fumbled into the familiar howff. Alas, the cursed climate played its usual tricks and the morning showed us rain and mist. Spirits sank again, along with bodies into a day of Pit. We fled from the dripping crag on the Sunday, in perfect sunshine, to an appointment with MacInnes up North. Once there, one look at Clo Mòr was enough; we about-turned and went to the Great Stack of Handa, where the expert help of Alistair Munro of Tarbet allowed us to make the first ascent of that squat pinnacle.

But Creag an Dubh Loch was still calling, so we dutifully spent the last weekend of our holiday treading once more up to its precipices in search of success. Unbelievably, it rained yet again on the Saturday, after a week of fine weather.

I was not to visit the crag again until May '70. After a reconnaissance then, and some subsequent good weather, the seventh attempt at our line began on the 6th June. The pleasure of the walk-in sank somewhat under our great weight of equipment, but at last we were embedded in the howff on a beautiful evening, with the bone-dry crag clear in the moonshade. But heartbreak was with us yet again. We wriggled out at 6.15 a.m. to find drizzle and mist right down to the loch, and the rocks back in their dripping normality. How could the weather treat us like this? Surely we would be allowed to set foot on a dry rock here at least *once* again!

The fight was in real earnest now: we had spent enough time and energy with this damned route and nothing was going to keep us from it. We made a cache of our equipment to save carrying it the next weekend; the week passed quickly and then we were back, this time accompanied by Graeme's girl-friend, dishonestly promised sundrenched beaches better than the ones she had just left in Greece. At long, long last we set foot on the route again as I led up to the first belay. Graeme pushed on up in a fine corner, made very awkward by the presence of water (water!), to land on a good ledge

at 90 feet. I continued in a corner, then transferred into a fine crack on the right above an overhang, finally finding a small stance and belay some 70 feet further on. It was now for Graeme to cope with the Big Pitch which loomed frighteningly above, exhibiting its black roofs, an overhung chimney and an overhanging left wall. Only the left wall displayed any weakness, in a series of thin cracks. Approaching the base of the wall could be described as hairy. A massive tottering block lay above and right of my head. Graeme deftly climbed past it, relaxing only when he managed to insert a peg at the base of the chimney. He knocked another one in higher up, in rather doubtful rock; but beyond this there was a long way to any other usable crack, so out came the drill. He ground out a hole and then—it could only happen to us—discovered he had brought up the wrong size of bolts and they were too small for the hole he had just sweated out . . . The horror of it! Having to descend from this blasted route after such a pyramid of effort was more than sickening; we persuaded ourselves to make the best of the good weather by giving Goliath a second ascent—a fine route, in the 'classic' mould.

With the bit between our teeth we were back again at the crag for our third consecutive weekend. And robbed of our doss into the bargain. Competition lay around in the form of Ian Nicholson, Dave Knowles, Ken Martin and Allan Pettit, all set for big things. Remarkably, the weather held fine again and we went up to handle the corner for only the third time in nine visits. We soon regained our best high point, the drier rocks letting us do without some of the aid on the second pitch. Graeme then involved himself in his most exposed pitch; three hours, nine pegs and three bolts later he clambered on to haven of a huge ledge. What a superb pitch! I was so exhausted by the time I reached the belay I had to abandon thoughts of leading the next pitch. Graeme had this noted down mentally for Severe, but it taxed him to his limit and turned out to give us the hardest free moves of the whole route. Then long chimneys led to the plateau; and we were up. We had finally climbed The Sword of Damocles and the Inner Being had been rewarded! About time . . .

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

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

## The Obligations of the S.M.C.

SIR—Members of this Club cannot fail to be aware of the pressures and disagreements that exist over the question of development in the mountain areas—the Coruisk affair brought them into prominence. As we know, too, the Countryside Commission has been set up to keep an eye on developments and to act as an adviser in such matters. At the same time the landowners, particularly the public ones such as the National Trust for Scotland and the National Conservancy, have their own distinct ideas on how the countryside should be treated in the interests of the public. In general everyone is working hard in his own interests and putting as philanthropic an appearance on his actions as possible. This we have roads being built for mountain rescue, cairns in profusion to trip the hapless climber,\* caravan sites to attract the tourist and bring money into depopulating regions. All these may well be good in their way and in their proper place. Even if some may think they are never ever good we must accept the fact that they are coming. The question is one of what their proper place is. This question is not new, and the sensible suggestion has been made that certain particularly wild and primitive stretches of country should be designated wilderness areas and in these there should be no development—according to some, or only essential development—according to others, or maybe only paths, cairns and signposts. There is a notable lack of unanimity on both means and ends.

This is where the S.M.C. should, I think, step in, and speak with a loud, clear and authoritative voice. Our members have as thorough a knowledge of the Highlands as a whole as any body of people anywhere, and in particular of their wilder corners. We should, I consider, by taking action at our A.G.M., publicly endorse a policy of designating certain areas of the Highlands as wilderness areas (or special non-development areas, or what you will) and should also make a categorical statement of the principles which ought to be followed in dealing with such areas. As far as these go we need look no further than *S.M.C.J.* 1964, xxviii, 32, where Unna's Rules were last republished. Unna did more than any other individual that I can think of to improve the access to the mountains for the public, but he understood clearly where spoon-feeding had to stop, and his rules, like Munro's Tables, are of classic purity.

Obviously to designate large tracts of country wilderness areas and so prohibit every sort of development in them would not solve the problem of depopulation. The greatest care needs to be taken on fixing the boundaries of such areas, and this is not impossible. To take this area as an example: the circle within a 10-mile radius of Fasag at the head of Upper Loch Torridon could well be designated wilderness, but we should need to exclude the shores of Loch Torridon itself and the area by the lochside road. Development here is essential for the survival of the permanent population, but needs to be controlled, and while the S.M.C. would be right to object strongly to any proposals which they considered inappropriate, it has not the same authority in these areas as it has in Coire Mhic Fhearchair or on the ridge of Ben Alligin.

So, while I feel that the Club is right to do no more than maintain a watch on development in these latter areas, I think that the time has come for us to take a firm lead and make our opinion clear and public over future development in wilderness areas, preferably by endorsing Unna's Rules by acclamation at our next A.G.M.

Who will support this?—Yours etc.

DERWENT TURNBULL.

\*This actually happened to me last week on Beinn Eighe, as I was strolling along admiring the view. The cairn had been erected in the middle of the path during the last month . . . [The folly of indiscriminate cairn-building is discussed in *S.M.C.J.*, 1967, xxviii, 286].

[Although certain members of the Club have recently been personally involved in the 'wilderness' problem, our correspondent and the Editors are not alone in considering that the Club as a whole is falling short of the standards of public responsibility associated with the S.M.C. in the past, and most notably embodied in the person of that remarkable man Unna. This is no time to take refuge behind the multitude of well-meaning but often equivocally-directed portmanteau groups, or in the attitude so accurately described by a previous contributor as the Provincial Cringe. Either we speak out as a national authoritative voice on the use of our Scottish mountains or we had better save our consciences and subscriptions by joining instead some local band of climbers-for-climbing's sake].

### The Brack

SIR—In your last issue R. Richards states that I gave the Great Central Groove of The Brack as 'the last great problem at Arrochar.' At no time did I do so; I merely pointed out the possibilities of the great rock face between it and the Elephant Gully. To make the record complete I would add that when Benmore Adventure Centre started I took the instructors on a tour of the howffs in the area and up to the foot of the above cliffs to point out a line (later known as Mainline). Though Rusty Baillie was with the party curiously no attempt was made to do the climb. Later when Bill Marsh and Jim McDowall were staying at my cottage I sent them up to 'have a look' at this problem on a fearful November day. It was long after dark before they returned and Bill is due great credit for leading the first two pitches under very, very bad conditions. It is good to know that The Brack has come into its own at last and there are further possibilities on this face.—Yours etc.

B. H. HUMBLE.

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

### Asia

I. H. OGILVIE writes on the South Parbati Expedition, 1970: In May and June I visited the mountains on the south side of the Parbati Valley with Charles Ainger. We employed Sherpa Wongdi as a third climber and sardir and took two Ladaki high altitude porters, Wangal and Sonam as well as two learners Gupta Rham and Tondup. I can find no record of a visit to this range since the survey of India mapped it and the errors on the map suggest that they did not spend much time there. This neglect by climbers is surprising because it is not difficult to reach; it is not beyond the 'Inner Line,' and in an area 30 miles by 15 there is at least one 20,000-foot peak and several—probably 20 or more—above 18,000 feet, many of which are difficult.

We could obtain no information about the area before we started but as one has to have an objective we chose the highest spot height on the map, 20,101. The map suggested that it stood about 1000 feet above a broad snow field, which could be easily reached by two gentle glaciers from the north east and east. This we did not really believe but we decided to go and have a look.

From jeephead, a mile below Mamkaran (6000 ft.) we proceeded, with 20 local porters, to our proposed base camp site on the bed of a dried-out glacier

lake called Man Tali (13,500 ft.), 35 miles above Mamkaran and 10 miles short of the Pin-Parbati Pass. Going in parts of the valley was rough and it took us five days. During the journey we realised that most of the mountains were more difficult than those to the north of the valley, which have been visited by a number of expeditions. Even so, we were surprised when we saw our peak. The glacier by which we had hoped to reach it was almost flat for 4 miles, there was no snow-field at its head and the peak, a huge tower of rock plastered with snow, rose vertically for 5000 feet. On either side, it dropped steeply to cols 1000 and 2000 feet below it. These cols would be difficult to reach from this side. Clearly our small expedition could not attempt this side of the mountain but we decided that, before turning to less ambitious objectives, we would go up the next glacier and look at the other side.

Three miles above Man Tali we turned up the next valley and placed our advanced base camp on the moraine at about 14,500 ft. and 3 miles further up we established a mountain camp at 16,500 ft. Here the glacier splits into two branches surrounded by a most impressive cirque of snow and rock peaks but the situation is completely dominated by 20101, which looked even more formidable than before. The eastern of the two cols mentioned before might be reached by a narrow snow couloir but there would be considerable avalanche danger, a snow rake would then lead a little further but there would remain about 700 feet of extremely steep and difficult rock. To the left of the summit the south west ridge drops sheer for 2000 feet to a snow col and beyond, although we couldn't see it from here, the west face drops 500 feet to glaciers above the Saini Valley.

At this stage we decided to concentrate our efforts on easier mountains, intending to see as much as possible of 20101 and take photographs for future reference. I consider that it is a very difficult mountain and would require a much stronger party than ours, prepared to use a considerable amount of ironmongery. With further reconnaissance in mind Wongdi and I remained in camp for the night and the others returned to advanced base for more supplies.

Unfortunately that night, a slight cold, with which I had started and which had gone down to my chest, developed into what I was later told was pneumonia and I had no choice in the morning but to get down as best I could. This took 5 days, large quantities of penicillin tablets and some determination. The whole expedition came down with me in case I should require help but, apart from having my rucksack carried, this was not required.

Ainger went back up the valley with Wongdi, Sonam and Wangal and, during the remaining three weeks, made a number of easier ascents, which will be reported by him elsewhere.

K. GRASSICK sends these notes on climbing in Malaysia and Hong Kong. 'In July 1969 I enjoyed two weeks with my family at Tanah Rata, the village of the Cameron Highlands 200 miles north of Kuala Lumpur. Some or all of us climbed the four main surrounding peaks by means of jungle paths. These were Gunong Jasar (5565 ft.), Gunong Beremban (6038 ft.), Gunong Brinchang (6668 ft.) and Gunong Irau (6974 ft.). The first three were straightforward and required up to two hours climbing from the road, Gunong Irau is seldom climbed since it is rather remote and the marked path is overgrown in many places. This ascent took the whole day and was not lacking in excitement and incident. Small animals and snakes were encountered on the way. The views from the summits were uninspiring, consisting mainly of jungle-covered mountains.

'In April 1969 I visited Sabah in East Malaysia with two friends from Singapore. Our intention was to climb Kinabalu (13,455 ft.), the highest mountain in South-east Asia, a feature of the recently opened National Park. A difficult, exciting road leads to the base of the mountains at 5000 ft. The journey of 50 miles from Kota Kinabalu, the local capital, took us six hours

by Land Rover. The Massif of Kinabalu towered above us at the base, where we hired three pretty young female porters and a compulsory (and useless) guide. There were three mountain huts on the way up, all well-equipped. We spent three nights at the highest hut (12,000 ft.) called Sayat Sayat and from here an early morning stroll took us on to the verglassed plateau where we had a choice of peaks. The highest, Low's Peak, is the easiest and we reached it just as dawn was breaking. One could see for hundreds of miles around since the adjacent peaks are not more than 6000 ft. The furthestmost tip of North Borneo was quite visible. Unfortunately by midday the mountain was invariably clouded over so that exploration was confined each day to four or five hours. The plateau was probably the most intriguing I have ever seen: it consisted mainly of granite which was a delight to feel under one's feet. All the other peaks require a rope and some experience but we were limited to the easiest ones as my friends were non-climbers. The greatest feature of Kinabalu is Low's Gully, a 4000 ft. chasm which completely splits the Massif. Crossing the gully is a serious undertaking and has seldom been done; it involves two days work. One of the most attractive peaks on the East side is King Edward Peak with its long face disappearing into Low's Gully.

The most difficult peaks are probably those forming The Donkey's Ears, on the West side, which are about 400 ft. high. They have not been climbed, for much of the rock is smooth and overhanging. We climbed South Peak, Albert Peak and an unnamed one during our three days, reaching a V. Diff. standard at the most, but more than a week is necessary to accomplish much. However, it was a most enjoyable holiday.

I spent a short holiday in Hong Kong in October 1968 and managed to sneak two days' climbing in the hills of the New Territories of Hong Kong, a few miles from the Chinese border. The highest mountain is Tai Mo Shan (3144 ft.), and the others are around 2000 ft. There is little rock to be encountered and the ridges are mainly sharp and grassy. The countless islands to be seen from the summits give the view a Scottish aspect.'

## North America

R. V. S. LOWE writes: 'I was fortunate enough to have 8 days in the Rockies during a brief trip to Canada in June. The first 4 days were spent at Moraine lake on the Alberta side of the Main Divide near Lake Louise. From here we made two relatively easy ascents: Eiffel Peak (10,101 ft.) and Panorama Peak (9266 ft.).

'We then crossed to the B.C. side, to Lake O'Hara, and went up Mount Yukness (9352 ft.) and Mount Odway (10,175 ft.), which involves no serious climbing. We also had a most enjoyable expedition with a local guide, sleeping at the Abbott Hut on the Main Divide at 9500 ft. and going the next day along the ridge to Mt. Victoria (11,365 ft.) and then down a snow gully to the glacier.

'This is a very fine area, where a number of relatively easy ascents can be made with route finding, and is excellent for the older mountaineer as the days can be fairly short. If the weather is normally as we found it—fresh clear skies and crisp air—the area can be recommended strongly.'

## Africa

H. M. BROWN writes: 'HAMISH BROWN, BARCLAY FRASER and ROBERT ELTON of the S.M.C., ALISTAIR PRATT and KEN MARTIN of the J.M.C.S., Dr D. Riddell and Professor W. Wade of the A.C., and four others spent several weeks in the Atlas in March-April 1970. Despite tummy troubles a successful and happy trip: a few new routes and many classic peaks, passes and climbs

besides some useful exploratory work, ski-ing, etc., that should make a guide-book in English possible now, for it an area still wide open for hard modern routes. It is hoped to return again for Easter and thereafter, 1972, with another S.M.C.-J.M.C.S. party. New hard routes or old favourites. Further members invited, whatever their interest. The following is a brief summary of this year's doings.

*From Tachdirt Hut.*

B.F. and W.W. traversed Angour, west-east; R.E. and D.R. crossed over the Tizi Tachdirt, bivouacked, and descended the Ourika valley; H.B. and friends traversed Ahior to the tops of Iguenouane, one descending its 5000 ft. on ski; A.P. and K.M. crossed the Tizi Tachdirt and went up the Kissaria Gorge for Anhemmer but literally collapsed with a bug and had an epic return to base. (They were joined by D.R., H.B. and R.F., and Tachdirt must be regarded as a serious medical risk; it would be better to camp up the glen); Jbel Oukaïmeden was climbed, Azrou n' Tamdout surveyed and Assaoun traversed by one member alone.

*From Lepiney Hut.* Most of the party went *via* the Tizi Mzic and returned over El Haj. The Tazarhart plateau was traversed in both directions and Afella climbed from the Tizi Melloul.

*From Nellner Hut.* Toubkal, 13,500 ft., the highest peak in North Africa, was climbed several times: by the classic O.S.O. Arête; up and down the Ikhibi Sud (2 ski-ing down this way); and Brown went on to Immouzer and Tibheirine (its summit covered in plane wreckage, shells and H.E.!) and down the Ikhibi Nord; others put up a new route on the O.N.O. Arête. Ras and Timesguida n' Ouanoukrim were reached, two going on ski and adding Bou Ouzal and 2-3000 ft. runs on both sides of the Tizi n' Ouagane, while the rest went on to traverse Akioud n' Bou Imhraz. Akioud was also climbed and Afella was combed for guide descriptions, being traversed by the E. Ridge and the Bou Tiounna gully. Biigouenoussene had two possible new routes on its east side: an airy ridge, and the gully to its left. (This was Elton's fifth 4000-metre peak in the week: not bad for 69 years). Fraser added the Tadat while Brown traversed the endless tops of Ageuelzim for Imlil, adding a new line on Noyce's Tadat. The ridge, poorly defined on the map, resembles the Cuillin; this, like most days, ended with a glissade over 2000 ft. Two others had a 3-day event over the Tizi n' Ouanoums to the Lac d'Ifni, traversed Ifrouane from a bivouac and returned from another over the Tizi Likempt to Tachdirt and Imlil.

Lastly, Fraser produced a Ballad, which while mostly libellous, may be hinted at below:

They hae filled the Wagon wi' powdered milk,  
Wi' cairtons o' ilka size,  
An' two-three ton o' Macaroon Bars  
Fir Scottish enterprise.

And some were lads sae young and gleg  
Wi' Tiso's latest gear,  
While others had sax-fit alpenstocks  
They'd played fir fifty year.

An' some o' them were kindly Scots  
(Ithers were no so kind!)  
An' let some English in wi' the lave  
To show they'd an open mind.

'Oh, little did ma mither ken  
When first she cradled me,  
That I should climb up Toubkal hill  
At the age o' sixty-three.' (B.F.)

'An' little did ma faither ken  
When he skelpit me lang syne  
That I'd slide the bottom oot ma breeks  
When nigh on sixty-nine.' (R.E.)

(of the medical woes:—)  
It would hae wrung the hardest hert  
Tae see sic dwaibly critters;  
They couldna sclim, they couldna walk—  
Jist squitters—an' mair squitters!

Then up and spoke oor Doctor Dave  
(Wi' his face as drawn as doom):  
'I hae nae pills against witchcraft—  
An' I maun leave the room.'

(The rest will no doubt go down in oral tradition.)

## Greenland

D. J. BENNET writes: 'R. CHALMERS, C. G. M. SLESSER and D. J. BENNET were climbing in the Werner Bjerg and Staunings Alps (East Greenland) for three weeks in July, with H. Montgomery (non-member) and three Italian climbers. We made our way from Mesters Vig to the Werner Bjerg, where we climbed Bellevue, a 5000 ft. peak, through deep soft snow and tottering scree. A very undistinguished climb. Then we took a long walk over the Mellom and Skel passes to reach (eventually) the head of the Bersaerkerbræ where Slesser (who had gone ahead in a helicopter) was waiting with a fresh supply of food. Climbs from this camp included Tintagel (easy climb pioneered by Lord Hunt and Co. in 1960) and the Bersaerker Spire, where Slesser and Bennet made the second ascent by a new line, much easier than the original 1960 Slesser-McNaught-Davies route. The same pair also made the first ascent of a rock pinnacle half a mile north-west of the Bersaerker Spire. The return to Mesters Vig was delayed by two feet of fresh snow on the glaciers, but the weather had returned to its normal Riviera standard by the time we left.'

'On the return journey Bennet and family climbed Bláfell, a 4000 ft. extinct volcano somewhere in the interior of Iceland.'

## Scandinavia

To emphasise that *S.M.C. Abroad* is not necessarily for recording great feats but rather for letting members know who was recently in the region they might next be visiting, G. J. DUTTON notes that last spring he enjoyed solitary ski-touring in Finnish forests and accomplished (to him) astonishing two-dimensional sprints across vast Swedish lakes, all on very light Finnish racing ski with soft low-cut racing boots. More vertically, but still on these exiguous splinters, which dangle from one toe and are (for him) impossible to steer, he was whisked at night by a jovial Svensk bear for miles across steep crusted snow infested with rocky outcrops and willow scrub; on the return, post-prandial, journey viskygrogg softened the blows and pleasantly embedded his ursinely-confident guide in a fifteen-minute alder thicket.

## Alps

DERWENT TURNBULL writes: 'After a couple of days in early July warming up in a cold wind on the Aiguilles Dorées my son and I joined a party of friends from Geneva for a week on the Italian side of the Alpes Maritimes. We stopped at Crissolo on the way south to climb Monte Viso by the usual south face route; a superbly detached mountain, over 1000 m. higher than anything else in the neighbourhood and steep on all sides. Even though it was a fine weekend there were very few people about and this was a most memorable climb, more because of the whole atmosphere of the mountain than from any great technical interest.

'From Crissolo we drove down through Cuneo to Terme di Valdieri, and spent a week at the Remondino hut below the Argentera. The mountains there are like a large edition of the Cuillins, the rock is almost entirely excellent gneiss and the weather was, and usually is, perfect. Our best routes were the N.W. ridge of the Argentera, the traverse of the Madre de Dio ridge and the Spigolo on the Cima di Nasta—the last a most lovely 600 m. buttress, steep and exposed with good holds. Once again the whole region was deserted, and we only met two other parties in the whole week.

'The area is one where there are very hard climbs, but where the main lines give fairly long and interesting routes of III and IV, good for the less energetic or for a solo climber. I have visited the French side some years ago, and I think that on the whole the Italian huts are better placed. Coming from the north-west, though, they are of course slightly more inaccessible.

'We ended with a week at Saas Fée in variable weather, doing the Fletschorn-Laggishorn traverse by the S.W. ridge of the Fletschorn, the Allalinhorn in a lot of snow, and the Portjengrat traverse, all pleasant old-fashioned mountaineering.'

J. MCK. STEWART was in Austria with a small A.A.C. party during the first fortnight in September.

The first week was spent in the Silvretta, from Landeck up the Paznauntal to Bielerhöhe through the Kromertal to the Saarbrückner Hut. 2nd, traversed Gr. Litzner from the Litznerscharte by the Ostpfeiler, grade III/IV to summit, abseiled down Westgrat to Eisjoch, again down ice couloir to Bergschlund and upper Gletscher, good rock, some permanent pegs. 3rd, over the Litznersattel and high level route to the Rote Furka, crossed into Switzerland and up Silvretta Gl., over the Eckhornlücke and down thro' Ochsentaler icefall to the Wiesbadner Hut. 4th, off-day, high level tummy! Others did Piz Buin and Silvrettahorn. 5th, up Vermunt-Gl. to Ochenscharte, Westgrat to summit of Dreiländerspitze and on to Jamjoch, up S-grat Vord Jamspitze with descent to Jamtal Hut. 6th, down to Galtür and Landeck.

The second week was spent in the Ötztal, from Landeck up the Kaunertal to the Gepatsch Hut. 7th, thro' Gepatsch icefall to the Rauhekopf Hut, up N.W. ridge pt. 3342 m. and down to Branderburger Haus. 8th, a 'white out,' Fluchtkogel en route to Hochjochospiz. 9th, Fineilspitze by N.E. ridge and traversed Hauslebakogel on way to Samoar Hut. 10th, up Mutmalferner, thro' icefall and up North Wall of Mutmalspitze, down east ridge and traversed Hintere Schwärze by Norglat to Marzelferner. 11th, up Schalferner to Diemjoch, up west ice-flank to Schalfkogel, descent to Gurglerferner and Hochwilde Haus. 12th, Gurglerferner to North Peak Hochwilde, traversed N. to S. summit and back, all gendarmes direct, descent over Annakogel to Hochwilde Haus and on to the Ramolhaus. 13th, down to Ober-Gurgl, Sölden and Innsbruck.

Apart from two days, weather excellent and hut accommodation easy.

[Last issue the printer missed out a line of Stewart's report, on p.279. His 6th day should read (words omitted in italics): . . . traversed E. M. and W. peaks of the *Marzellspitze completing with the traverse of the Similaun* . . .].

HAMISH BROWN visited the Alps in July-August with R. AITKEN, J.M.C.S. and other B.F.M.C. members. Wanderings took in the French and Italian Graians, Saas Fée and Zermatt.

Some areas of the Isère (Col d'Isèran, Lac de Tignes) have been super-developed for summer ski-ing; but the rest of the National Park has had 11 huts added, equipped but unguarded, and is completely unspoilt. Climbs: Aig. Pers, Gd. Motte, Pt. de la Meän Martin and Pte. de la Sana. In Italy a new road is being blasted through the Nivolet glen from Pont to Ceresole, so unspoilt Pont has only a few years to go. Climbs: Cime de la Rolle, Grand Paradiso, La Tresenta.

From the Mt. Fort Hut a traverse of the Rosablanche to Fionnay. At Saas, wild, bitter weather made the Weissmeis and Laquinhorn more interesting and the Jäghorn pleasant. Saas was reached again from Zermatt (Täsch Hut) over the Allalinhorn. H.B. and a B.F.M.C. member, with Ludwig Imboden, did a thirteen-hour traverse from the Monte Rosa Hut to the Trokkener over Lyskamm, Castor and Pollux, a really great day of snow and ice climbing.

R. F. J. RICHARDS and G. W. WILKINSON (J.M.C.S.) spent 2 weeks in the Bregaglia-Bernina region last summer in mainly good weather. The following climbs were done: West of the Punta Innominata—a good training climb. North-west ridge of the Punta Pioda—(N.B. the 'obvious' chimney near the top in Crew's Guide does not exist). The Biancograt on the Piz Bernina—a

classic route, with an unpleasant descent in mushy snow. North-east Face of the Piz Badile—another classic. Many pegs were in place and the difficulties were nowhere excessive. Progress was halted by a sudden afternoon storm 300 ft. from the top, and time followed in an uncomfortable, wet and cold bivouac. The descent was effected by way of the North ridge.

JOHN STEELE (J.M.C.S.) writes: 'A London J.M.C.S. section Meet was held in the Swiss Alps, based in the Arolla Valley. This was the first official Alpine Meet for some years and 6 members plus other British climbers were camped outside the Hotel Aiguille de la Tsa at various times.

Steele and REG HAMBLETT traversed the Petite Dent de Veisivi (3186 m.) but were turned back from the Aiguilles Rouges (3646 m.) traverse when the ever-present bad weather set in.

R.H. and the Steele brothers, in the second week, traversed L'Evêque (3,716 m.); a very good route when the S.W. ridge is ascended and a descent taken via the N.E. ridge. The Pigne D'Arolla was also climbed, using the Vignettes Hut as a base.

J. TURNER, A. RUSSELL (our men in Europe) and M. KENDRICK then arrived. A second traverse of the Petit Dent and a timely retreat from the West Ridge of the Dent de Tsalion was the only activity during the third week. Low cloud and fresh snow put all further climbing out and the wiser members of our contingent sped off south to Italy in search of the sun.'

## NEW CLIMBS

As from next year the organisation of this section of the *Journal* will be slightly different. New routes will be distributed by the Editor to sundry experts who will assume responsibility for specific regions and who will comment on the year's activity within their own region.

This reorganisation unfortunately makes it necessary to 'close the books' somewhat earlier so that contributors should submit details of new routes or regional notes as soon as possible and at any rate not later than the New Year.

ROBIN N. CAMPBELL.

## OUTER ISLES

**Creag Dubh Dhibidail.**—*Via Valtos*. 500 ft. Very Severe & A3. A. W. Ewing & W. Sproul. Spring 1970.

This is the obvious crack line on the left-hand side of the face. The crack is ascended more or less directly with occasional excursions onto the flanking walls.

Climb straight up crack to grass patch (130 ft.). Move out onto left wall then up to overhung corner with sloping slab above (4 pegs, 110 ft.). Move up and right a few feet then go left into crack and straight up to ledge (100 ft.). Go right then left to below overhung corner, climb this, then move left into crack (20 ft.). Continue by a chimney and more easily to the top of the crag.

—*Solitude*. 570 ft. Very Severe. J. Ball & M.

Reeves. 1970.

The central wall of crag is flanked on either side by crack lines. This route takes the right-hand crack which is indefinite in its middle section. Scramble up to the foot of the crack to start.

Climb crack using holds on the left at steep section. Eventually climb wall on the left and move up to belay at foot of large recess (120 ft.). Climb

right edge of recess then indefinite rocks and some grass to a vegetated ledge (120 ft.). Continue in same line to niche at foot of upper section of crack. Poor stance and peg belays (60 ft.). Climb twin flakes just left of crack. Step right and go up steep crack line (sling for aid) to gain poor stance in slabby niche (50 ft.). The crack now divides. Take vertical left-hand weakness to ledge. Move left and climb short groove to foot of prominent chimney (50 ft.). Climb steep chimney then gully to reach easier rocks (170 ft.).

**Griomaval; Tealasdale Slabs.**—*Lochlann*. 800 ft. Very Severe. D. C. Forrest & J. McEwan. 4th June 1970.

This route lies on the section to the right of the steeply-inclined grass terrace (Golden Gully). Midway along the lower area of the cliff the slabs start with a series of black overlaps. Start at a cairn at the left-hand end of the overlaps and directly below a slab corner starting 30 ft. up. This is some distance left of Islivig Direct.

Climb through the overlaps to gain the corner and follow this to the slabs above. Traverse right to smooth white slab and climb this to small ledge (left of larger grass ledge), (peg belay, 90 ft.). Climb groove behind ledge and move rightwards to gain end of ramp running left. Follow this then climb a white scoop. Go leftwards to crack and climb this through several overlaps to large grass ledge and belay a few feet to the right (140 ft.). Climb slabs and corners above, going right to take peg belay in sweep of white waterworn slabs (120 ft.). Go rightwards up slabs crossing Islivig Direct and finish up crack through walls and slabs well to the right of that route (450 ft.).

—*The Scroll*. 1010 ft. Severe. J. Ball & M. Reeves. 13th August 1970.

The slabs are split by a long grassy slanting shallow gully. Right of this is a steep area of slabs with more broken slabs further right still. Scramble over grass and easy-angled slabs to the foot of the steep band. Cairn.

Go right about 30 ft. then follow weakness trending left above start to small grassy ledge (120 ft.). Continue trending left to reach good rock ledge (115 ft.). Go straight up to end of long grassy ledge (75 ft.). The grassy gully is just on the left here. Move 30 ft. right and down the grass to small groove. Start here and ascend directly until slab angle eases. Continue by trending right to small ledge (140 ft.). Go diagonally right to grassy ledge (140 ft.). Climb straight up to rock ledge (145 ft.). Climb diagonally right to crackline which leads to small rock ledge (135 ft.). Climb crack then more broken slabs to abrupt finish a few yards from the summit cairn (140 ft.). Pegs are required for belays.

## EIGG

**An Sgùrr.**—*The Nose*. 300 ft. Very Severe & A3. C. Boulton & K. Jones. 1970.

The route follows a direct line up the green fluted overhanging eastern nose of the Sgùrr. Start at foot of steep leftward-slanting groove, directly beneath the central overhanging section.

Climb thin crack in steep wall past a small overhang. Continue past loose flakes to small stance and peg belay (100 ft.). Move right along obvious ramp for 20 ft. until possible to peg up green flutes, trending slightly right (tied-off knife blades, 6 bolts) to gain stance and bolt belay on steep wall above overhang (100 ft.). Step left and climb directly up wall above to top (2 pegs, 100 ft.).

## SKYE

**Druim nan Ràmh: Loch Coruisk Face.**—*J.M.C.S. Buttress variation.* 130 ft. Severe. R. O'Donovan (ldr) & A. McInnes. 23rd May 1970.

From prominent white overhang on original route climb obvious corner above for 70 ft. and from ledge climb vertical wall on left (strenuous) to belay. Stomach traverse left along eroded trap dyke to top of buttress to rejoin original line.

**An Diallyaid: Diamond Buttress.**—*Footrot.* 400 ft. Difficult. B. Taplin (ldr) & D. Bain. 10th July 1970.

This route lies on the slabs at the foot of the buttress. Climb slabs left to right following line of least resistance. Belays are difficult to find and the slabs offer no protection.

—*Verruca.* 400 ft. Very Difficult.

B. Taplin (ldr) & R. Orrell.

The route starts on the right hand side of the obvious gully splitting the slabs of the buttress. Climb the rib, belays again hard to find.

—*Direct Start.* 200 ft. Severe. B. Taplin (ldr) & M. Chalwin. 6th July 1970.

Start almost at the entrance to North-east Gully, at the edge of a steep wall. Climb the wall (no protection) for 130 ft. to peg belay. Continue directly upward to reach the ridge in 70 ft.

**Sgùrr Dearg: Window Buttress.**—*Widow's Eye.* 140 ft. Severe. R. O'Donovan (ldr) & B. Marshall. 23rd July 1970.

Traversing left beyond the foot of the rake below Durham Slabs one comes to a steep open corner overlooking upper Coire na Banachdich. Climb corner for 40 ft. over three prominent shelves on the left to belay. Climb corner direct avoiding overhang by delicate climbing on right wall. Climb to block belay at top (100 ft.).

**Sgùrr MhicCoinnich: Coire Lagan Face.**—*Jeffrey's Dyke.* GRADE III. R. O'Donovan. 1½ hours. 11th April 1970.

The summer route gave 900 ft. of continuous snow-ice, with a 20 ft. verglassed wall above Collie's Ledge.

**Sgùrr Sgùmain: North Buttress.**—*Reluctance.* 500 ft. Hard Severe. A. Robertson & W. Tauber. 12th June 1970.

Climb through a break in the overhanging wall, forty feet left of Prometheus. Climb to terrace in two pitches, then straight up to summit of buttress over steep loose rock. The first two pitches are good, but after that the line becomes indefinite.

**North-West Face.**—*Ione.* 400 ft. Very Severe. R. O'Donovan (ldr) & M. Chalwin. 28th July 1970.

This climb takes a direct line up the face roughly midway between Prometheus and Wood-Johnson's Route. The line is well observed from the Pinnacles at the top of the West Buttress Route. Start at a rib of brown basalt, 60 ft. right of Wood-Johnson's Route.

After strenuous pull-up traverse right ascending to good platform at foot of obvious corner (peg belay, 110 ft.). Climb down then up basalt slab on left to vertical wall. Climb wall on small holds to break out on steep groove slanting right. Cross horizontal trap dyke and surmount steep wall on left to gain comfortable stance in right-angled corner on right (peg belays, 100 ft.). Climb overhanging corner using wire sling for aid (in place) and scramble over easy rocks to block belay (45 ft.). Climb trap dyke above or

right wall to gain sentry-box and belay at foot of obvious chimney (50 ft.). Climb chimney for 40 ft. and break out left on narrow ledge to highly exposed basalt nose. Climb nose and wall on left (crux) to block belays on terrace (100 ft.). Traverse right over easy ground to gain gully above Prometheus below superb cave (150 ft.). Scramble up gully to near summit of Sgumain.

Although this is a hard climb, protection is good if a wide range of chocks are carried. The final nose and wall are unprotected.

**Sgùrr Thearlaich: Coire Lagan Face.**—*Gully A.* GRADE III. R. O'Donovan. 1 hour. 11th April 1970.

The gully contained three short ice-pitches.

**Coire a'Ghrunnda Face.**—*The Whet.* 190 ft. Very Severe. M. G. Geddes, J. C. Higham & Miss A. C. Lamb. 27th August 1970.

This route climbs the buttress to the right of Grand Dièdre from bottom right to top left. Start 40 ft. right of Grand Dièdre at a broad crack slanting right towards a recess.

Climb crack for 25 ft. then straight up and left to below prominent lay-back crack. Climb this and move left for 10 ft. to stance and peg belay (105 ft.). Continue up groove above, move left round an overhang and finish up steep walls near Grand Dièdre.

**Sròn na Ciche: Cioch Buttress.**—*Little Gully.* GRADE III/IV. R. O'Donovan (ldr) & M. Chalwin. 26th June 1970.

100 ft. of steep ice bosses lead to easy entrance of cave chockstone. Exit to chockstone through funnel of powder snow (awkward). Snow with small ice-walls led to clear rocks below Cioch Slab.

—(Unnamed). 400 ft. Severe. K. Schwartz (ldr) & B. J. G. Chambers. 17th June 1970.

Start below dièdre just left of Cioch Gully. Go up left wall near edge over several steepenings (120 ft.). Continue along edge to platform below overhanging wall (60 ft.). Climb this wall by strenuous crack and follow easy ridge to next short wall which is climbed with a mantleshelf (90 ft.). Climb along ridge (Cioch West Ridge) to top of Cioch (130 ft.).

**South Crag.**—*White Slab Direct Finish.* 130 ft. Severe. R. O'Donovan (ldr) & M. Chalwin. 26th June 1970.

Start 40 ft. left of final chimney of normal finish above Pinnacle Rake. Climb prominent crack for 15 ft. then traverse right onto steep wall which is climbed direct (loose).

**Talisker Bay Sea Stacks.**—To the south of Talisker Bay there are two Sea Stacks perched on a wave-cut platform. The smaller one, about 75 ft. high, is loose and overhung in places. The larger one, about 250 ft. high, is sheer on its south and east faces with north and west faces grassy but protected from below by sizeable overhangs. The rock is conglomerate and mudstone.

—*The Corkscrew.* 210 ft. Very Difficult. R. O'Donovan.

Paddle 400 ft. across to pedestal and using a shallow gully and arched rib gain a ledge on the south-west corner of the stack. Traverse left 50 ft. under overhangs and pull up on grass and loose rock to gain crest and peg belays (60 ft.). Traverse left across grassy north face and climb direct to summit over steep rock.

## ARRAN

**Beinn Nuis: East Face.**—*Right On.* 610 ft. Very Severe & A2. I. G. Rowe & D. S. B. Wright. June 1970.

There are steep slabs to the right of the Beinn Nuis Chimney which merge into a great prow which forms the upper left edge of the formidable face. The most important feature of the slabs left of Suckers Slabs is a large corner which leads to the foot of the prow. The corner gets larger as it rises. The route follows the corner to the overhangs on the prow, which it flanks on the right. Several attempts to find a route here have been made; apart from the alternative starts, the slab on the left of the second pitch has been climbed leftwards to the open chimney and thence to the foot of the chimney-cave, which has not yet been passed. (I. G. Rowe & A. Trees, June 1969; also C. Higgins & R. Carrington, June 1970).

15 ft. left of the foot of the corner climb a short slab and move up into a very short and shallow chimney. Climb this and the corner above, stepping right to a peg belay at the top of the pillar. The large corner is now accessible to the right (70 ft.). Alternatively, climb the grassy cracks in the corner to the same belay. Climb corner (rotten), use aid on the right wall and swing back left on good holds then move up through chimney to small grass ledge and peg belay (4 pegs, 40 ft.). Continue in corner for 170 ft. until possible to gain huge ledge by moving rightwards up rotten wall and on to flaky edge giving a view down corner (continuous aid, mostly thin pegs in frost cracks, or angles in a good crack on the right wall. 10-12 pegs). There is a slab above the left end of the ledge. Get onto its right side using a peg and traverse the trap vein leftwards to the overhang. Climb the overhang (1 peg) and continue by cracks to second huge ledge gained by moving right (80 ft.). Climb wall above, step left and into a chimney. Step left out of chimney (1 peg) and continue for 200 ft. of easier ground to the top (150 ft.).

## NORTHERN HIGHLANDS I

**Beinn Eighe: Sàil Mhór.**—*Overhill.* 750 ft. Very Severe. A. MacHardy, P. Nunn & C. Rowland. June 1968.

There is a steep gully wall left of Number 2 Gully. From the foot of the lochan, one can see a prominent groove cutting into the bulging area at the base of the cliff, where the gully walls turn east to form the main face. Start at the bottom of the gully, where the groove cuts up in the general line of the rounded ribs above.

Climb groove on left wall to steep black final section. Climb this, moving right to finish (130 ft.). Climb short walls and ledges to below prominent overhang snouts and slightly to their right (100 ft.). Climb groove passing snouts on right to ledge below sharp right-angled corner. Piton belay (100 ft.). Climb corner and then left wall to good ledge. Climb groove left of overhang to terrace (120 ft.). Climb four short walls and intermediate terraces to easier ground (300 ft.).

**Creag Mhór Tollaidh.**—Some years ago we promised a rationalisation of the climbs on these crags. We failed to provide this and the first of the Northern Highlands Rock-climbing Guides did little to dispel the deepening mystery. Last year, certain notables found themselves expending nerve and sweat on lines which turned out not to be new! To spare them further ignominy we are now pleased to report that the routes reported below bring the crags up to date. The nomenclature used is that of the Guide referred to above. Proceeding from east to west we have:

**Loch Maree Crag.**—*Hoax*. 320 ft. (cf. *Guide*).

The description which follows is due to Paul Nunn, who climbed the route with C. Rowland in June 1968. As the disparity between Nunn's description and that of Sproul, Ewing and Brumfit is great, we reproduce Nunn's in the hope that future visitors will discover (and report) whether they refer to the same or different lines. Nunn hints that the first ascent may indeed have been a hoax, but this is mere libel.

Climb groove up nose for 60 ft. and move right across steep wall then back left and up to belay by obvious vast nest (peg belay, 100 ft.). Steep wall and groove leads to step left to gain loose blocks. Climb up to ledge and tree belay (60 ft.). Make remarkably ungardened traverse left across steep wall to groove above grass ledge. Gain terraces above the tree belay on right (80 ft.). Climb fine wall on excellent rough rock diagonally leftwards to final short wall (80 ft.).

Some way to the west of this crag but east of the next crag is a triangular face of excellent rock. The left arête of this gave M. Curdy & A. Wright a Very Severe climb of 130 ft. in June 1968.

**Upper Tollaidh Crag.**—*Soft Option*. 250 ft. Severe. Mr & Mrs F. W. Harper. Summer 1969.

On the left side of the crag are two black chimneys some way to the left of Teddy Bears' Picnic (in *Guide*). Start in the right-hand chimney.

Climb chimney for 60 ft. Loose. Continue in the chimney for a further 30 ft. and then break out right onto big slab. Reach obvious shallow rightward-trending scoop and belay. Do not follow the scoop, but climb cracks in steep slab above, eventually crossing Knickerbocker Glory and finishing by the 40 ft. slab above (150 ft.).

—*Pokey Hat*. 240 ft. Very Severe. D. C. Forrest & D. M. Jenkins. 18th July 1970.

Start 40 ft. left of Teddy Bears' Picnic and 10 ft. right of obvious slimy chimney.

Climb up just right of grey overhang to join wide leftward-slanting flake crack. Move left a few feet, climb a thin rightward-slanting groove for 30 ft. then move up and left to tiny ledge. Move left to wide crack and climb this to heather ledges (peg belay, 120 ft.). Climb slabs and grooves, crossing the chimney of Knickerbocker Glory to finish (120 ft.).

—*Cocaine*. 360 ft. Very Severe. M. Curdy, A. MacHardy, P. Nunn, C. Rowland & A. Wright. 1st June 1968.

This is the line referred to in the *Guide* as the 'finest feature of the crags.' Start up shallow groove just right of Knickerbocker Glory. Climb groove trending right then wall above to trees (80 ft.). Ascend right side of enormous flake and crawl through to belay on it (40 ft.). Climb magnificent crack for 50 ft., step right and pass loose blocks to ledge (peg belay, 100 ft.). Traverse left for 40 ft. and climb crack, slab and groove above to top (140 ft.). An alternative start takes the first 30 ft. of Knickerbocker Glory then breaks right up a crack and flake chimney to join the described route at the top of the second pitch.

—*Siren*. 290 ft. Very Severe. A. MacHardy, P. Nunn & C. Rowland. June 1968.

This route takes an obvious line of cracks in a corner on the right side of the buttress, but still left of The Ugly Duckling (see *Guide*).

Climb cracks past tree to ledge (100 ft.). Continue in pleasant crack to ledge and bay of trees (60 ft.). Climb fierce corner by back and foot, wedging, kneejamming and otherwise to belay on left (crux, 60 ft.). Climb short groove and slabs to reach easier rock (70 ft.).

Two big messy gullies divide Upper from Lower Tollaidh Crag. The next route lies on the buttress between these gullies.

**Middle Tollaidh Crag.**—*King Prawn*. 410 ft. Severe. Mr & Mrs F. W. Harper. Summer 1969.

Start in the little grassy bay at the foot of the leftmost of the two gullies below a slab.

Climb straight up slab to reach short heather ledge (70 ft.). Continue straight up wall above to another heather ledge (60 ft.). Climb up for 10 ft. then left along ledge to belay (30 ft.). Move up then go slanting left to prominent holly tree (50 ft.). Climb leftwards to white birch tree, pass this and continue to heather ledge (60 ft.). Ascend wall above and belay well back (60 ft.). Behind there is a wall with a black crack system. Climb this to finish (80 ft.).

**Lower Tollaidh Crag.**—*Shazam*. 270 ft. Very Severe. Mr & Mrs F. W. Harper. Summer 1969.

This and the next route lie up the wall to the left of The Hand-rail (see *Guide*). Stoney Broke takes the great right-angled corner mentioned in the *Guide* (p. 130). Shazam lies up the wall to the left of this, finishing by an obvious vertical crack. Start at the foot of the wall by some oak trees on the left.

Break through overhangs using tree or two and climb wall to constricted stance (peg belay, 60 ft.). Traverse up and right to gain main crack and follow it to top, often using walls on either side, where there is a block belay (140 ft.). Climb wall above by steep crack (70 ft.).

—*Stoney Broke*. 230 ft. Very Severe. J. Cunningham & W. March. 9th May 1970.

See description of Shazam for the location of this route. Start 40 ft. left of Hand-rail on a grassy terrace with good tree belays.

Climb steep short wall to heather patch, then up diagonally right climbing a sloping ramp leading towards the corner. Gain a ledge after a struggle with some bushes (70 ft.). Climb corner above to overhang, move onto right wall and up to ledge (2 peg runners, peg and tree belays, 60 ft.). Climb corner above with occasional detours on the left wall. A wide straddle is used on the upper section to avoid some heather. Continue to top of crag (100 ft.).

**Liathach; North-East Coire of Spidean.**—*West Gully*. 350 ft. GRADE III. D. Goodwin, P. Nunn, A. Riley & C. Rowland. 31st December 1969.

The central wall of the corrie is steep, boasting a steep icefall. To the right a steep gully cuts into the cliff, eventually splitting, the right-hand fork being easier. The gully was climbed by this fork.

**Sgùrr a'Chaoirachain; South Face.**—*Broad Sword*. 400 ft. Severe. J. Crawford & W. Skidmore. 19th July 1970.

From right to left this is the third pillar and, though well-defined, is less so than the slender second pillar on its right.

The big pitch at the start was climbed just right of centre and another big pitch near the top starts with a steep right traverse to a groove which is followed to its end. Other pitches were easier and climbed more or less directly.

**Sgùrr Ruadh.**—*Easy Gully*. GRADE I. J. Cleare & P. Gillman. March 1969.

This is the deep obvious gully several hundred feet right of Upper Coire Lair's Wide Gully, starting at the top of a scree slope just right of an isolated pinnacle.

Climb diédre on right to steep exit onto spacious bower under huge roofs (peg belay, 120 ft.). The route reported immediately below, Opportunist, follows this route as far as this point. The huge overhang above is split by a fault running across the steep walls to the left towards the extremity of the slabs of the upper buttress. Climb leftwards from bower for 30 ft. to overhangs. Use aid from awkwardly placed nuts and several pegs to continue for 40 ft. along overlapping fault until angle eases slightly. Cross overhanging groove to sloping small stance, using 1 peg to attain the ledge (peg belay, 90 ft.). Climb delicate wall and easier rock to good stance (60 ft.). Move right and up grey slabs to spike at left extremity of upper overhang of buttress (80 ft.). Traverse smooth slab on right under overhang to stance in crackline (140 ft.). Climb crackline without serious difficulties to upper terraces and finish by scrambling.

—*Opportunist*. 1400 ft. Very Severe. P. Nunn & C. Rowland. June 1969.

See Dialectic for start and first three pitches of this climb. The climb then continues rightwards to form a spiral girdle of the buttress.

Traverse slabs between overhangs on right in two long pitches. A further easy pitch leads to top of first section of Cengalo (see below), just below the inverted L overhang. Traverse rib on right onto large expanse of slabs (used by Toothache, see existing Foinaven *Guide*) and climb these diagonally rightwards for about 5 pitches without any great difficulty.

—*Cengalo*. 700 ft. Hard Severe. E. Howard & C. Rowland. June 1969.

This climb takes a line up the right side of the buttress, left of the slabs of Toothache. The lower slabs are climbed to below an inverted L overhang, which is passed by a very exposed and unprotected traverse left. The upper slabs remain sustained and sparsely protected so that the climb is unusually serious for its standard. Start in the gully used as a descent from Creag Urhard, at a point where sound grey slabs from below the inverted L overhang.

Climb slabs to edge of easier-angled area (140 ft.). Go up easy-angled slabs to small stance below groove leading up to the overhang of the L (100 ft.). Climb left wall for 40 ft. then make delicate traverse left to gain smooth frontal slabs (110 ft.). Continue more or less directly, the line being everywhere vague but technically sustained, over smooth slabby rock, with small stances and peg belays (300 ft.). Scramble to the summit ridge.

Left of Dionard Buttress No. 1 there are three buttresses, one above the other and staggered leftwards. Between these and Alasdair there is another crag at the top of a long heather ramp. The route described below starts just left of the centre of this 500 ft. face.

—*Gristoner's Revenge*. 550 ft. Very Severe. E. Howard & P. Phipps. June 1969.

Climb diagonally left to platform in corner (80 ft.). Move right then go slightly right (hard) then back left to above the stance. Climb directly to belay (peg belay, 120 ft.). Traverse right for 80 ft. making little height. Eventually reach groove and follow this to big overhangs. Belay on jammed blocks under roof (140 ft.). Climb up to roof, moving right, and keep moving right until swing round edge of overhang leads to grassy bay (60 ft.). Climb chimneys and walls, first on left by a slab above the overhangs then back to the top (150 ft.).

**Smoo Cave, Durness.**—*The Hole*. 120 ft. Severe. J. Cunningham & B. March. 21st June 1970.

Abseil down the biggest hole south of the road crossing Smoo Cave to gain a ledge some 10 ft. above the water level (dead chicken in situ). Now

climb crack in corner for 60 ft. breaking right over bulge (peg runner) to exit up the back wall of the cave. Dry weather is desirable for this route. In the event of failure a retreat may be made seaward by swimming.

**Whiten Head, Sutherland.**—*The Maiden*. 170 ft. Very Severe. P. Nunn & T. W. Patey; B. Fuller, D. Goodwin & C. Rowland. June 1970.

The Maiden is really two pinnacles in close proximity separated by a very deep channel. Their height is almost identical but the easternmost pinnacle appeared to be of greater interest. The rock is quartzite, similar to some at Anglesey. The eastern Maiden has a cave cut through its base. The approach appears quite impracticable without a boat as the coast is several hundred yards distant across deep water. Landing is tricky and best done on the landward side. The tide must sometimes cover the plinth but did not do so on this visit.

Start near the cave on the west side. Climb just above sea level across sharp rocks to the left and over bulgy rocks up to a stance on the north side of the pinnacle (peg belay, 70 ft.). Move into steep groove but avoid overhanging crack by airy traverse right onto limestone-like wall. Climb this for 25 ft., traverse left into crack line and continue to good square ledge (peg belay, 70 ft.). Traverse shelf rightwards over loose blocks to bay. Climb left edge to stance below steep rocks (peg belay, 60 ft.). Move left and climb tottering flakes to summit (70 ft.). The descent is just possible in one rope-length from the lower edge of the slanting top. Secure peg belays and huge rope loop left in position. The abseil is essentially free for 150 ft.

## WESTERN HIGHLANDS

**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 the right half of a prominent rock face which lies just to the west of the Sgùrr na Lapaich col. The gully, which is steep in its upper half, contains one ice-pitch.

**Beinn Odhar Mhór: Shiel Buttress.**—*Mic*. 300 ft. Very Severe. S. J. Crymble & K. Schwartz. 11th October 1970.

Climb obvious groove near left hand edge of loch facing wall and then go up to big block perched on ledge (110 ft.). Go leftwards up to peg stance of The Rising below small overhangs (50 ft.). Move right and up to overhang vertically above the perched block. Use sling on chockstone in overhang to gain wall above. This is then climbed trending slightly left (140 ft.). Scramble to top.

## CAIRNGORMS I

**Beinn a' Bhùird: Coire na Ciche.**—*The Carpet*. GRADE IV. J. Bower & G. Boyd. 8½ hours. 19th March 1970.

The summer line was well plastered with snow and water ice, but a sudden thaw rendered this wet and loose on the first 150 ft. Extensive clearing was required on the first pitch and the 'thin crack' of the summer crux (3 pegs for aid). Above this conditions contrasted greatly and a band of very tough ice led to shelves below the 'overhanging cleft.' Old, rotten snow had accumulated here to a great depth and excavations on the verge of tunnelling were carried out to gain entry to the cleft. An exit was made above over iced slabs which led to a shattered chimney and the crevasse (this was buried). The difficulties were now over and a short left traverse gave access to a shallow gully which was followed to the plateau.

to a grass ledge (100 ft.). Use peg to re-enter groove above belay. Climb groove and continue to large corner (50 ft.). Climb corner using right-hand crack (70 ft.). Move left up ill-defined groove. Where groove ends move left to ledge and belay (70 ft.). Move back into groove and traverse slab to right using diagonally rising crack. This leads to ledge giving access to main corner. Climb this until stopped by overhangs. Traverse right for 15 ft. by diagonal crack to ledge and belay (110 ft.). Climb corner to summit (100 ft.). Pegs were required for some belays.

**Foinaven: Creag Urbhard.**—*The Veterans*. 1000 ft. Hard Severe. A. Howard & P. Phipps. June 1969.

This route ascends the rounded bastion left of Fingal and Waterfall, probably finishing as for Fingal. Start 50 yds. left of Second Waterfall, rather left of Fingal; 30 yds. right of a big rock at the foot of the face, at a short steep corner crack.

Climb corner and go left across wall to steep curving crack, which follow to stance below overlap (120 ft.). Left of belay ascend crack and groove moving left near top to grassy platform near arête (120 ft.). Go 30 ft. right along heather ledge to wet crack. Ascend wall on its right then move back to ledge (100 ft.). Climb chimney behind then easy slabs going right on light-coloured rocks to steep chimney (2 rope lengths). Climb chimney to bay then go up and round corner to right to reach large block (100 ft.). Move right to wet overhanging undercut chimney (clearly seen from ground as moon-shaped crack) and climb this to large ledge. Above are steep walls. Climb on right for 15 ft. near edge, go round corner and straight up to huge block (120 ft.). Grooves and blocks lead into bed of gully (30 ft.). Climb right wall of gully to overhang, then follow ramp right round corner to steep 15 ft. crack, which climb to reach slab. Climb this for 90 ft. and move into big corner on right. Belay. Climb crack and chimney in corner to overhang at 80 ft. Move left for 30 ft. under the roof and climb wall to finish (120 ft.).

—*Tortoise*. 850 ft. Hard Severe. P. Nunn & C. Rowland. June 1969.

This route lies between K.W.H. and The Sickle, crossing Zigzag at the huge terrace. It is probably rather left of Crawlle Monzie for the first 500 ft., then crossing it and continuing up front of towers left of K.W.H. Start right of a rounded bastion lying to the right of the Sickle Handle, below and a little to the right of a slabby break in the steep wall.

Climb diagonally leftwards on slabby rock to terrace below imposing walls (140 ft.). From right extremity of terrace ascend to overhangs, move left and climb slabby ribs to belay (130 ft.). Climb more easily to terrace, move slightly right and climb steep awkward walls moving right to reach a stance (120 ft.). Climb direct up series of corners, the latter pitches being steep and relatively clean in V dièdres on the front of the buttress. This is the most difficult section of the climb.

**Creag Dionard, No. 1 Buttress.**—*Dialectic*. 800 ft. Very Severe. P. Nunn, C. Rowland & R. Toogood. June 1969 (two days).

This buttress is the huge overhanging buttress overlooking the east end of Loch Dionard. Nunn remarks that 'the buttress suffered the irony of being Girdled before it was genuinely climbed—this can only be taken as an indication of climbers' weakness and the buttress's strength.' Start left of the centre of the buttress, where steep walls cut through the overhangs. A difficult and magnificent climb with some loose rock.

Climb steep walls always moving rightwards to flaky small stance (peg belay, 120 ft.). Move right, up groove, then right again under overlap (peg runner). Climb wall, step left and climb steeply to stance (peg belay, 100 ft.).

## NORTHERN HIGHLANDS II

**Beinn Dearg: Inveriael Gullies, Glensquaib.**—*Emerald Gully*. 500 ft. GRADE III/IV. B. Fuller, P. Nunn & A. Riley. March 1970.

Climbed under heavy snow conditions, the gully contained two big ice-pitches, the lower one being over a 100 ft. Earlier in the season or in a lean season the gully would be much harder.

**Beinn a'Mhuinidh: Bonnaidh Donn.**—*The Rebound*. 270 ft. Hard Severe. B. Fuller & P. Nunn. April 1968.

This route lies between The Bow and Route II. Start at the same point as for The Bow, a hundred feet or so right of Safari.

Climb flakes on edge of smooth wall to ledge and stance on edge (70 ft.). Climb walls overlooking steep band on left with difficulty to small stance (120 ft.). Finish up short difficult chimney in line with the steep walls below (80 ft.).

**Waterfall Buttress.**—*Coloured Corner*. 200 ft. Severe. A. Agnew, F. Jack & G. Skelton. 4th May 1970.

Start 100 ft. left of Bell's Variation at an obvious corner with a crack at the back, a tree at 30 ft. and a tree on a ledge at 60 ft. Climb the corner direct to a large platform and belay. Climb the left wall then pleasant slabs to the top.

**Gruinard Jetty Buttress.**—*Corner Route*. 130 ft. Very Severe. D. C. Forrest & D. M. Jenkins. 22nd July 1970.

Some distance to the right of the toe of the buttress a stone dyke meets the crag at a prominent corner.

Climb corner to ledge on left, climb bulging rib by flakes and crack, traverse right to top of corner crack and continue to peg belay. An excellent short route.

**Sgùrr a'Mhuillinn (Fannichs).**—*Lady's Gully*. 600 ft. GRADE II. J. Mackenzie & Mrs N. Tennent. 5th January 1971.

The gully can be seen from the road at Achanalt and lies just right of the sloping summit buttress. Begin beneath obvious narrowing of the walls with a 130 ft. pitch of easy-angled ice. Climb a short ice-pitch to reach the true entrance of the gully. Climb ice for 30 ft., then up vertical ice-dièdre for 20 ft. to finish up more ice then snow (150 ft.). Climb runnel of snow then steep 50 ft. ice-pitch, turned by snow-ramp at mid-height (150 ft.). Gully carries on easily to finish at summit of Sgùrr a' Ghlas Leathad in 300 ft. or so. The gully has a left fork with one short pitch. This was also climbed. Since most of the pitches can be avoided and conditions were probably exceptionally icy this year, the climb was given a fairly low grade.

**Ben Loyal: Sgòr a'Chléirich.**—The following climb lies on the large crag overlooking Loch Fhionnaich.

—*Marathon Corner*. 920 ft. Very Severe. L. Brown & A. P. Turnbull. 14th June 1969.

The climb follows the obvious corner running right up the crag.

Climb steep grass into corner (120 ft.). Traverse left and then diagonally right (40 ft.). Climb in the corner for 10 ft. till a long step left can be made to a shallow groove, which follow for 50 ft (60 ft.). Traverse left 10 ft. then go straight up to a grass rake (90 ft.). Continue along rake to left to large detached block belay (110 ft.). Climb crack behind block. Traverse left 20 ft. then delicately up slab trending slightly right to runner. Traverse down diagonally right for 15 ft. to bottom of shallow groove. Climb the groove



*S.M.C. Slide Collection.*

As an article in this issue suggests, S.M.C. Meets or Dinners are frequently attended by distinguished strangers. In the upper picture ('an S.M.C. Dinner') some members have recognised the well-known statesman M. Lenin, hotting it up with the bourgeoisie; in the lower ('S.M.C. Meet at Corrou, 1933'), some have seen Vladimir Ilyich's ideological opponent, Herr A. Hitler, doubtless holidaying after his strenuous election to the Chancellorship. We offer these photographs, not to illustrate the Club's refreshing lack of political bias, but as a competition: would older members please let us know further names (with photographic positions) of the gentlemen pictured. Some are instantly identifiable! Also, and this is important to understand, we print these photographs *not* in ribaldry (this generation is certainly in no position to cast stones) but in acknowledgment of past days of mirth and good fellowship—read about 'em in old volumes of the *Journal*. [Remember—if these your fellows had been born 50 years later they too would be dossing under Creag an Dubh Loch; if you had been born 50 years earlier you also would have been beaming in a borrowed evening suit and even—provided you had washed your neck—been admitted to a Respectable Hotel].



*R. V. S. Lowe.*

Deltaform Mountain, 10,765 ft., and Hungabee, 11,457 ft., from Mt. Victoria ridge (see 'S.M.C. Abroad').

—*Three Step*. 350 ft. Very Severe.  
J. Bower & M. Rennie. August 1969.

Start to the right of the Carpet on the slab of the middle set of steps.

Climb up slab to belay below overhanging corner (40 ft.). Climb up corner onto slab above (2 pegs), traverse diagonally up right to belay below short wall (80 ft.). Climb wall (1 peg) and move right round corner to climb straight up fault finishing on grass terrace by short wet corner on right (130 ft.). Traverse ledge to easy ground; alternatively, gain slab on left above ledge to give one more pitch to plateau.

NOTE: This route has been done before with a greater amount of aid and a controversy developed about this so that the original ascent was not recorded. After doing it ourselves it turned out to be a very good and worthwhile route and is certainly worth recording as the above description stands.

*Hourglass Buttress*. GRADE IV. J.  
Bower & G. Boyd. 6½ hours. 29th March 1970.

The summer route was followed under wet snow and ice to beneath the 'very steep wall' at 250 ft. Here a succession of thaws and freezes had encased the upper buttress in an eggshell of ice. This was very unstable and 50 ft. of difficult climbing (1 peg and sling) led to the shelf below the summer crux. This was climbed (1 peg) to the '1st substantial platform' at 20 ft. The second V.S. pitch was avoided by a wall on the right then the 'wide crack' and a level arête were climbed through deep powder to the plateau in 120 ft.

—*Vatican Steps*. 500 ft. Very Severe.  
G. N. Hunter & D. F. Lang. 6th September 1970.

This route is on Slab Buttress. Go slab-climbing from the base of Quartz-vein Route in a diagonal line up to the left to a prominent detached block (250 ft., V.Diff.). The block marks the start of a line of weakness which continues up the face as a filled crack. Climb past block, continue in fault line past bulge to gain slab, step down into groove then move out and up slab to peg belay (90 ft.). Follow traverse line below belay for 60 ft., move into recess, break through overlap and gain slab. Climb crack above then go up and left to poor peg belay in niche (130 ft.). Surmount slab above, move left, climb overlap then go right to end of large black overlap (1 peg runner). Friction up yellow lichenous slab then more easily up to ledge and peg belay (130 ft.). Climb corner on left to spike on final wall and exit directly to plateau (150 ft.).

**Dividing Buttress.**—*Sentinel Gully*. 600 ft. GRADE II/III. G. S. Strange & D. Stuart. 3 hours. 14th November 1970.

The gully has only one major pitch—a steep slanting corner leading to a large snow basin at half height. Above the basin the gully trends leftwards below the upper rocks and continues more or less directly to the top of the buttress. On this ascent the gully contained mostly powder snow. The ice pitch at the slanting corner was only partly formed and was avoided by climbing the right-hand rib. Under normal conditions the ice-pitch would probably provide the easier alternative.

—*Sentinel Route*. GRADE III. M.  
Rennie & D. Riley. 3 hours. 14th November 1970.

The summer line was followed in powder snow conditions giving continuous difficulty on the steeper lower rocks. The route was finished by the depression of upper Sentinel Gully.

—*The Ramp*. 600 ft. GRADE II.  
D. Cameron & G. S. Strange. 15th January 1970.

This is the obvious corner gully undercutting the steep rocks to the right of Sentinel Gully. The gully is defined for only 150 ft. Thereafter open

snow slopes lead to the crest of Dividing Buttress. Two short ice-pitches were encountered.

**Garbh Coire.**—*Commando Route*. 450 ft. GRADE IV. B. S. Findlay, N. D. Kier & G. S. Strange. 28th March 1970. 7 hours.

An excellent winter route. The ascent was made after a blizzard with powder snow overlying hard snow and ice. The traverse from the minor gully, round the overhanging rib and up into base of the upper gully was very awkward. (Peg and sling for tension to place good peg above crux move).

Thereafter, upper gully (by right fork) gave three long sustained ice pitches to the col below final tower on the Mitre Ridge. The tower was climbed direct to plateau.

**Beinn Mheadhoin: Coire Etchachan.**—*Bellflower Buttress*. GRADE III. G. S. Strange & D. Stuart. 2nd January 1971.

The summer line was followed throughout in powder snow conditions, a peg being required for aid to exit from the initial chimney.

**Ben Macdhui: Coire Spùtan Dearg.**—*Rainmale*. 300 ft. Severe. R. Kerr & B. Laurie. 20th June 1970.

This and the next two climbs lie on the Red Slabs, the low-angled glaciated slabs approximately 200 yards left of Pinnacle Buttress.

The route follows the large corner on the left-hand section of the slabs. Gain corner directly by way of thin crack. Follow corner over overlap to reach easy-angled slabs and finish obviously.

—*Sundance*. 380 ft. Very Severe. G. S. Strange & D. Stuart. 27th June 1970.

The route takes a rising traverse across the slabs below the big overlap. Start 50 ft. up from the lowest rocks on the left at an obvious corner.

Climb corner, go right across glaciis, surmount overlap and continue to ledge below vegetated corner-crack (90 ft.). Traverse horizontally right for 20 ft. and climb middle of slab to ledge and belay (50 ft.). Go up crack to main overlap. Traverse right below overhanging block studded with quartz crystals and work up right to edge of upper slab. Step across corner and continue rightwards to ledge (90 ft.). Climb vertical crack to roof. Move right under roof and up to belay below final corner (60 ft.). Climb corner to easy ground.

—*Umbrella*. 310 ft. Very Severe. J. Bower, B. Laurie & H. Thain. 7th June 1970.

Start approximately 30 ft. right of the lowest and central point of the slabs, just past a recess where an undercut crack goes leftwards onto the slabs. Arrow. Follow crack and continue by slabs to climb a two-tiered overlap to reach a stance (80 ft.). Above is a shallow-walled 15 ft. corner. Climb corner and slab above direct moving right in last few feet to belay ledge beside smooth slab and corner (80 ft.). Step left off slab and follow crack-line to green recess below large overlap at 30 ft. The route crosses Sundance at this point. Step out left and pull round the edge. Gain crack on right and climb it to finish (150 ft.).

—*Hanging Dyke*. GRADE IV. J. Bower & D. F. Lang. 5½ hours. 2nd January 1971.

Deep powder covered the line of the dyke and the flanking slabs but good snow-ice lay underneath on easier-angled sections. Sustained climbing for 200 ft. led to the summer crux rib. After 15 ft. the rib was abandoned and a shelf high on the right was gained (1 peg). This was followed for 40 ft. then a

step left led back onto the rib and into a chimney. A further long pitch with short awkward sections followed then easy ground led to the plateau.

—*Janus*. GRADE III. J. Bower, D. F. Lang & G. R. Simpson. 5th January 1971.

The summer route was followed throughout. The lower buttress gave interesting climbing but the exposed groove of the summer crux was rather unjustifiably hard (2 pegs) in view of its shortness and the ease with which it can be avoided by McCartney's route.

—*Cherub's Buttress*. GRADE III. G. S. Strange & D. Stuart. 3 hours. 21st November 1970.

The buttress was plastered in reasonably firm snow. Starting from the foot of the Narrow Gully the summer line was followed taking the steep nose by a groove on the right.

—*The Chute*. 150 ft. Very Severe. B. S. Findlay, J. Ingram, G. S. Strange & D. Stuart. 13th June 1970.

This climb lies on the steep wall between April Wall and The Swing on Terminal Buttress. It takes the line of an obvious left-trending crack ending at a shallow V-groove left of a prominent overhanging prow. Go up right by slabs to foot of crack (30 ft.). Climb crack and groove above to platform (90 ft.). Climb easily to top.

**Creagan a'Choire Etchachan.**—*Square-cut Gully*. 400 ft. G. S. Strange & D. Stuart. 1st August 1970.

Climb the lower gully directly to stance on right below the big overhang (250 ft.). Move up to level of roof. Traverse horizontally right round huge block and climb short wall. Move back left over ledges to belay on wall immediately above overhang. Go up rightwards over steep slabs to short corner with overhang above. Climb corner and finish out left. The gully is known to have been climbed only as far as the big overhang. Above this point the line is that of the winter ascent.

**Shelter Stone Crag.**—*Raeburn's Buttress*. GRADE III. J. Hart & W. March. 11th February 1971.

The summer route was followed throughout under powder snow and ice. Frozen turf made the route relatively easy, the difficulties being concentrated in the first 450 ft.

—*Threadbare*. 965 ft. Very Severe. J. Cunningham & W. March. 18th June 1970.

Start as for Sticil Face on Raeburn's Buttress. Follow the grassy ledges up to the first grassy bay. The climb starts from the left-hand side of the bay. Arrow. Climb shallow groove by wide bridging to good ledge on left (70 ft.). Climb flake crack, step right back into groove and go up easily to small ledge (80 ft.). From left end of ledge climb thin crack with pegs for aid to gain overhanging crack and climb this with 4 nuts for aid to reach a small ledge (50 ft.). Climb steep slab until possible to step right into grassy bay. Go up this to overhanging crack at back of shallow cave, climb this with difficulty and the succeeding fault to gain a small rock ledge and chockstone belay (140 ft.). Climb wide crack easily and fault above up bulging left wall. Climb up to right of large loose-looking flake splitting shallow groove above. Cross above flake to left and into shallow groove then follow groove to its top. Climb to left side of large square roof. Using 2 pegs for aid to gain the roof it is possible to chimney up with difficulty for the last few feet with the help of a downward-facing tongue of rock. Traverse to right-hand edge of buttress overlooking Central Slabs (2 peg runners) and belay in difficult situation (150 ft.). Climb directly up good corner-crack to large ledge on Consolation (25 ft.). Follow ledge round to right and scramble up to upper

section of buttress. Belay below its right edge at large detached block (150 ft.). Arrow. Climb chimney-crack to good thread runner on right edge of buttress, move right and up over grassy ledges to awkward mantleshelf. Climb wall above to reach curving groove at mid-height. Belay at left side of top of groove (150 ft.). Climb straight up easier rocks to plateau (150 ft.).

**Braeriach: Coire Bhrochain.**—*Ninus*. 500 ft. GRADE III. B. S. Findlay & G. S. Strange. 12th April 1970. 3 hours.

Start at foot of Thisbe and climb up right to gain obvious snow ramp (glacis below overhanging central section of buttress). Continue right into depression and follow this to large snow basin (great rock scar). Traverse left and climb snow and ice plastered rib in two pitches to the plateau. Small cornice.

—*Western Couloir*. 650 ft. GRADE III. B. S. Findlay & G. S. Strange. 14th April 1970. 4 hours.

This is the shallow central couloir on the West Buttress. The lower slabs were climbed directly (crossing Vanishing Shelf) and the couloir followed throughout to a gigantic cornice—which was rather awkward.

**Braeriach Pinnacle.**—*South Face*. 500 ft. GRADE III. J. Campbell & R. Simpson. 18th April 1970.

This is an obvious winter line just left of the centre of the face. A snowy rib led to an icy chimney and two steep diagonal snow ramps on right. A snow gully led to the summit of the Pinnacle.

**Cairngorm: Coire an Lochain.**—*Ventilator*. GRADE II. D. J. Bennet & A. Sommerville. 29th March 1970.

Starting at foot of Milky Way a short traverse was made into a steep groove well-filled with snow-ice. Keeping to the left side of this groove, a good pitch led onto a rib overlooking The Vent, which was followed easily to the plateau. This might almost qualify as a winter ascent of Vent Rib, but does not follow that route exactly. It is probably the easiest winter route in the left-hand corner of the corrie.

—*Vagrant*. 320 ft. Very Severe. M. G. Geddes & H. M. Gillespie. 19th September 1970.

The route takes the extreme left side of the steep frontal face of No. 3 Buttress. Start below a prominent rib. Cairned and arrowed.

Climb right then left onto rib and follow this moving up right at top to belay below steep wall (130 ft.). Follow line of flake cracks on wall, straight up for 25 ft. then trending left to ledge below twin cracks (70 ft.). Climb cracks to topmost ledge, move right round edge then up to large grass ledges (70 ft.). Finish up apparent pinnacle above, just right of Ewen Buttress (50 ft.).

—*Prore*. 350 ft. Hard Severe. G. Bradshaw & B. Taplin. 5th July 1969.

Climb first pitch of Savage Slit. Traverse right to gain arête. Climb directly up arête for 150 ft. to easy ground and finish up the last pitch of Savage Slit.

—*Oesophagus*. 350 ft. Severe. B. & D. Taplin. 11th September 1969.

This is the obvious groove 30 ft. right of the Right-hand Fork of Y Gully.

Climb groove until forced leftwards by roof at 100 ft. Continue straight up until another roof forces one to ascend wall on left (100 ft.). Ascend rotten gully to plateau.

**Coire an t-Sneachda.**—*Goodgame*. 500 ft. Hard Severe. D. Sharp & B. Taplin. 2nd September 1969.

Start 50 ft. to the right of Original Route on Aladdin's Buttress at the leftmost edge of the main slabs.

Follow the edge of the slabs throughout.

—*Damnation*. Very Severe. D. Sharp & B. Taplin. 10th August 1969.

This route is the rightmost of four obvious corners on Aladdin's Buttress. There is an arrow at the foot.

Climb slabs directly to foot of open corner (220 ft.). Climb corner using 1 peg for aid (110 ft.). Climb slabs above to easy ground (250 ft.).

—*Thumb*. 450 ft. GRADE III. G. Bradshaw, O. Ludlow & B. Taplin.

The route lies on the right-hand side of Fingers Ridge. Climb narrow gully/chimney for 250 ft. until Fingers Ridge can be gained on the left. Traverse left across ridge to finish up open snow slopes to plateau.

**Creag an Leth-Choin.**—*Central Gully*. 1000 ft. GRADE III. O. Ludlow & B. Taplin. 4th March 1970.

This is the most obvious of all the gullies on Lurcher's Crag, straight up the centre. Several ice pitches were climbed in the lower 500 ft. of the gully. The gully forks at the top and the left branch was climbed.

**Hell's Lum Crag.**—*Puke*. 400 ft. GRADE III. T. Anderson & J. Bower. 14th November 1970.

The huge glacis was gained by a line of weakness on the wall of Hell's Lum. Thereafter the summer route was followed giving good chimney and slab work. The exit was as for Gullet but no tunnelling was required on this occasion.

**Stac an Dubh.**—*Zigzag*. 480 ft. Very Difficult. B. & D. Taplin. 20th August 1969.

The route is on the obvious slab at the far left end of Stac an Dubh. Start below a large overlap.

Climb slabs tending leftwards across overlap for 280 ft. Climb slabs still leftwards until rib is gained (100 ft.). Climb the rib (100 ft.).

**Stac an Fhàradh.**—This crag lies on the southern flank of Cairngorm overlooking Loch Avon and is approximately 30 minutes walk from the top station of the chairlift. In the S.M.C. Climbers' Guide to the Cairngorms, the crag is described as glaciated and holdless slabs near the Saddle leading to Strath Nethy.

One route, a 270 ft. Difficult, is noted in the guide and nine new routes have been added to date. It provides climbing of the Etive slab type, although it is much easier due to the rougher nature of the granite. The slabs are divided into an east and west flank by a broad gully and are broken by overlaps which provide the cruxes for most of the climbs. On the west flank the top overlap extends into a steep wall providing climbing of a different character. Routes of 500 ft. are possible and most of the obvious lines have been climbed, although there still remains scope on the west flank. A 150-ft. rope is recommended as belays are sometimes widely spaced. The routes are described from left to right.

—*Mack's Dilemma*. 500 ft. Severe. G. Shields & S. Wilkinson. 24th July 1969.

At the extreme left edge of the slab there is an obvious arête—the climb follows this. Climb slab to stance and peg belay (100 ft.). Climb greasy corner (50 ft.). Continue over large blocks and ledges to good climbing on arête proper (peg runner, 130 ft.). Climb arête (90 ft.). Continue up with pleasant climbing to the top (130 ft.).

—*Sermon*. Severe. 420 ft. G. Shields & S. Wilkinson.

Starts 40 ft. right of Mack's Dilemma.

This route takes a direct line up the buttress following the parallel cracks which break into a prominent chimney.

—*Après Moi*. Hard Severe. 500 ft. J. Cunningham & G. Shields. 1st July 1969.

Start in the gully which separates the east and west slabs.

Scramble up gully for 30 ft. to obvious traverse line which breaks left under first overlap. Traverse left until small recess is reached (70 ft.). Go up recess breaking left at top and move left into shallow corner. Climb corner (peg runner), until a move left to rock shelf can be made. Continue up lay-back crack to stance and belay (130 ft.). Follow same line of weakness trending left up second steep corner (peg runner) to finish by series of awkward mantleshelves to stance and belay (130 ft.). Finish up easy rocks (40 ft.).

—*Whispers*. Very Severe. 450 ft. J. Cunningham & G. Shields.

On the extreme left of the right-hand slab there are two cracks—the right-hand is the route.

Climb second crack system from the left. Go straight up cracks (heathery, sometimes wet). Nut runner at 60 ft. and one at 120 ft. up to stance and peg belay (150 ft.). Continue up same crack system, at one time quite near left edge and up to large flake. Nut belay at top of flake (150 ft.). Traverse right from top of flake (peg runner at 20 ft.), move up bulge above runner and on to slab above—delicate at first. Traverse diagonally leftwards, then straight up to grass ledge and peg belay (150 ft.).

—*Bellows*. Very Severe. 360 ft. R. Carrington & J. Marshall. 5th July 1970.

Start 40 ft. right of Whispers up obvious crack line. Climb crack for 150 ft. passing over a bulge at 50 ft. Peg belay. Now walk up enormous flat scoop to belay below the overlap (60 ft.). Climb series of sloping ledges to peg (in situ), move up and left over lap and climb to peg runner on pitch three of Whispers. Continue direct to top (150 ft.).

—*Pushover*. Very Severe. 500 ft. J. Cunningham & party.

The route takes the left-hand crack line on the left of Pippet. Climb crack direct—peg runners at 50 ft. and 100 ft. (150 ft.). Above is a crescent shaped overhang. Climb this and traverse left to pocket. A difficult mantle-shelf brings one to ledge and peg belay (40 ft.). Trend up and leftwards to overlap, which climb by series of cracks to stance and belay (peg) below black mossy blocks (150 ft.). Climb over blocks and up slabs to chimney to finish up wall above (150 ft.).

VARIATION—B. March & party. Pitches 4 & 5. Climb up to prominent nose of rock which is surmounted on good holds to slab above (peg belay, 150 ft.). Continue up corner, step up and traverse left to chimney where original route is joined.

—*Pippet Slab*. V.Diff. 460 ft. J. Cunningham & B. March. 14th June 1970.

Left of Sheilden the slab sweeps down for 200 ft. and at its base there are two prominent crack lines on either side of a large boulder. The route takes the right-hand crack line.

Climb crack direct to ledge and chockstone belays—small bulge at 30 ft. (150 ft.). Above is a steep wall split by a crack. This is a Severe variation when climbed direct. Trend left up easy crack to grassy ledge below wall. Now step up right and traverse along ledge to regain line. Continue up thin slab bearing slightly left to small stance and nut belay (100 ft.). Climb directly up shallow corner above some overlaps into small wet recess with peg belay (140 ft.). Up recess onto slab, which leads to short overhanging wall. Climb this to top of crag (70 ft.).

—*Sheilden*. Very Difficult. 230 ft. B. March & S.C.P.R. Party. 4th June 1970.

Climb left-hand chimney 30 ft. left of Jildden to belay (60 ft.). Straight up easy slabs 70 ft. to ledge and peg belay below obvious slabby corner. Traverse left for 12 ft. and climb diagonally right to crack which is surmounted by layback and bridging. Continue up wall to nut belay on sloping ledge (60 ft.). Traverse left across wall and mantleself. Continue to top of crag (40 ft.).

—*Linden*. Very Difficult. 170 ft. B. March & S.C.P.R. Party. 4th June 1970.

Start 15 ft. left of Jildden. Climb obvious fault in slab direct to same belay as pitch 1 of Jildden. Above is an obvious sloping ramp which gradually steepens. Climb this and exit left to steep finish up layback crack (100 ft.).

—*Jildden*. Difficult. 160 ft. B. March & S.C.P.R. Party. 5th June 1970.

At the right-hand end of the crag is an obvious chimney. In the grassy bay below there is a slab bounded by two cracks. The route follows the right-hand crack.

Climb rib to left of crack and to belay, left of obvious sloping corner (70 ft.). Walk up along sloping ramp to foot of chimney which is climbed direct (Diff.). An easier variation is possible at the top by breaking up obvious fault on the right wall (100 ft.).

**Stag Rocks, Pine Tree Buttress.**—*Purge*. 300 ft. Very Difficult. B. & D. Taplin. 7th August 1969.

Start in the groove just below Final Selection. Climb wall and groove for 150 ft. and then straight up slabs above to finish in a further 150 ft.

—*Alb*. 250 ft. Very Difficult. B. Taplin & S.C.P.R. party. 6th August 1969.

Start directly below Purge at a slab corner. Climb slab for 120 ft. Move up steepening slabs for 60 ft. and traverse right beneath overhanging wall. Move along ledge and climb steep wall for 20 ft. to reach easier ground.

—*Apex Gully*. 480 ft. GRADE III. J. Hart & W. March. 18th February 1971.

Start at the obvious boss of ice one-third of the way up Diagonal Gully on the right wall. Climb boss direct and then a series of corner grooves at peg belay (150 ft.). Climb obvious line of weakness to snowfield to belay on left (150 ft.). Move up to foot of ice-choked chimney-crack and climb direct to peg belay (80 ft.). Continue easily to plateau (100 ft.).

—*Spindle Gully*. 500 ft.  
 GRADE III. J. Brailsford & W. March. 4th March 1971.

Start 100 yards left of Diagonal Gully, left of deep-cut gully with steep overhanging right wall.

Climb up over series of steep steps following shallow gully (150 ft.). Continue up to foot of ice pitch (60 ft.). Climb pitch direct (80 ft.). Trend left over snowfield to belay on col overlooking deep-cut gully (60 ft.). Finish up continuation of deep-cut gully (150 ft.).

—*Serrated Rib*. 400 ft.  
 GRADE II. B. S. Findlay & G. S. Strange. Half hour. 8th February 1970.

Probably the quickest and safest route from the Shelter Stone to the plateau when deep powder snow conditions obtain.

—*Amphitheatre Gully*. 760 ft.  
 GRADE IV. J. Hart & W. March. 17th February 1971.

Climb initial ice-patch from right to left (100 ft.). Cross small snowfield and climb thin ice over an overhang to gain obvious ice-filled groove with difficulty and the aid of 1 peg. Climb groove and belay on right (120 ft.). Traverse left and up to left of obvious ice-bulge. Make an awkward move right around a rock corner onto the bulge and climb over it to the foot of an ice-filled groove (peg runner). Bridge up this to belay on left (100 ft.). Traverse right below overhanging ice-bulge and climb steep ice to finish awkwardly on right (80 ft.). Climb snowfield (120 ft.). Continue up obvious corner on left to peg belay (120 ft.). Climb continuation of corner over several bulges to finish through rock window (120 ft.). Highly recommended.

**Cairntoul: Coire an Lochan Uaine.**—*The Waterfall*. 200 ft. GRADE II. A. B. Lawson & N. Rayner. 23rd March 1970.

This is a summer route of Difficult standard. Starting at its lowest point it gives a good continuous ice climb a fairly moderate angle of about 200 ft.

**Coire of the Chokestone Gully.**—*South-east Couloir*. 600 ft.  
 GRADE III. J. Campbell & R. Simpson. 19th April 1970.

This is the shallow rocky couloir in the south-east corner of the coire. The start is about 150 ft. left of The Shroud. It gave six pitches of ice and snow-ice, the middle section being the steepest. Finish by steep prow on left of huge cornice.

—*Bugaboo Rib*. 500 ft. GRADE V. B. S. Findlay & G. S. Strange. 6½ hours. 13th April 1970.

The summer route was followed throughout. Difficulties were confined to the first two pitches after which interesting snow and ice climbing led to a final snow arête and the plateau. The first pitch was considerably banked up but a nut and sling was required to gain the block. A steep snow-ice ramp continued to the second pitch. This presented a very difficult problem with much snow and ice in the crack. Two pegs and a nut were used for aid and a peg and sling for tension below the overhang.

## CAIRNGORMS II

**Broad Cairn: Creag an Dubh Loch, Broad Terrace Face.**—*The Sword of Damocles*. 500 ft. Very Severe. G. N. Hunter & D. F. Lang. 20th June 1970.

This route, the most obvious feature above South-east Gully, is a huge corner capped by an overhang. Start in a narrow chimney at the base of the corner.

Climb easily up chimney until possible to traverse left wall to good ledge (50 ft.). Climb corner and move out right near top to V.S. mantleshelf and then up to good ledge (4 pegs, 90 ft.). Climb corner then move right into fault above overlap and up to belay below main corner (70 ft.). Climb to base of corner passing loose flake. Climb left wall and exit onto large ledge (9 pegs, 3 bolts, A3, 80 ft.). Gain sloping shelf by right-hand corner and continue up right-hand side (1 peg) to stance (60 ft.). Climb chimney system to reach plateau (150 ft.).

—*Bower Buttress.*

500 ft. from Hanging Garden. GRADE IV. J. Bower & R. Simpson. 6½ hours. March 1970.

Very icy conditions were encountered on this ascent and there was no let-up until below the cornice. An intimidatingly steep climb with unique situations and scenery. The climb may be approached by Broad Terrace (sometimes involving a short ice-pitch) or by climbing the lower 300 ft. of Labyrinth Groove.

Follow the summer line to the gallery (150 ft.). Now make upward traverse round arête to thinly-iced slab. Climb this back leftwards to belay (130 ft.). Climb broad groove ahead to series of ledges and ice-choked cracks trending right into steep gully which is followed to heavily-iced slopes 50 ft. beneath the cornice (130 ft.). These slopes were avoided by a left traverse to the plateau (90 ft.). Ice-screws were required for belays.

#### Central Gully Wall.—*The Predator.*

700 ft. Very Severe. B. S. Findlay & G. S. Strange. 17th May 1970.

This route takes the obvious crack-system between Cougar and Mouse-trap. Follow Cougar for 30 ft. Climb vertical crack with awkward mantleshelf at top and continue rising traverse to belay on grass ledge (80 ft.). Climb short wall and slab above to foot of fine overhanging crack in red wall. Move right and hand traverse to ledge (50 ft.). Using tension, move back left and climb short overhanging crack (sling on spike). Continue up wet groove until possible to swing left (1 peg) onto crest. Traverse slab to grass ledge with loose blocks (40 ft.). Climb bulging cracks (1 peg) to slab with overhang. Move up overhang and follow crack, first by jamming and then more easily to stance above break in large overlap (80 ft.). Follow cracks to below roofs. Use a peg in smooth scooped corner and immediately move right across slab to good holds and belay in recess (150 ft.). Climb cracks through another overlap and continue to easy ground (150 ft.). Scramble to plateau.

—*The Dubh Loch Monster.* 700 ft.

Very Severe. D. Knowles & I. Nicolson. 18th June 1970.

This route takes the line of the thin prominent crack between Kraken and King Rat. Climb thin cracked slabs right of Kraken to belay beneath conspicuous chimney break at left end of overhanging wall (120 ft.). Climb chimney to belay (peg handhold, 40 ft.). Continue up crackline to belay under overhanging corner (90 ft.). Traverse left and climb arête direct returning as soon as possible right to crackline. Follow crack to bulging slab. Traverse right for 5 ft. and continue up slabs bearing left to two-tier walls. Belay in corner of second wall (150 ft.). Traverse left 6 ft. and climb short steep wall into corner. Climb this about 15 ft., step right onto arête, follow this climbing bulge direct and continue by crack to belay and stance (150 ft.). Climb slab diagonally right to crack at right end of overlap. Continue up crack and above into obvious corner which steepens and then by crack above to belay (150 ft.). Scramble to plateau.

—*Gulliver*. 900 ft. Very Severe.  
D. Knowles & I. Nicolson. 20th June 1970.

This climb takes a direct line to the cracks in the Red Wall at mid-height of the face and continue to the top. Start at cairn and arrow.

Climb broken slabs and cracks slightly right to belay right of two-tiered corners (120 ft.). Traverse left onto corners (old peg and karabiner). Move up corners to blocks beneath wall and traverse left over blocks on lip of overhang to shelves. Return up and right to small corner and crack leading up to belay below two-tiered wall (150 ft.). Climb walls and continue above by easy slabs to belay on ledge below prominent parallel cracks in Red Wall (120 ft.). Climb cracks to belay ledge (60 ft.). Continue by crack above and surmount bulge to belay above and left of wet chimney (150 ft.). Follow leftward-sloping groove for 10 ft. and move right across wall to rightmost groove. Follow this and continue above by cracks and grooves to belay (150 ft.). Move right over black overlap and continue up narrow rib into long deep V-groove to belay at top (150 ft.).

**Lochnagar: North-East Corrie, Sinister Buttress.**—*Forsaken Rib*. GRADE III. J. Bower & R. Simpson. March 1970.

This is the rib on the right of Forsaken Gully. It gave one very steep pitch of 80 ft. which led to an obvious snowfield. This was climbed without difficulty to an arête and thence to the plateau.

**Tough-Brown Buttress.**—*Post Mortem*. 440 ft. Very Severe & A3, M. Forbes & M. Rennie. Summer 1970.

This route takes a near direct line up the centre of the buttress. Start as for Mort at a large pointed block below the centre of the slabs.

Climb up then left to groove and step right at top onto broad terrace (110 ft.). From left end of terrace climb shallow corner to step left onto peg. Follow ensuing cracks past overhang on left to belay on hanging block (A2, 100 ft.). Climb corner to peg at roof. Step right and follow crack and fault system trending left over overhang to belay on heather ramp (A3, 80 ft.). The route now trends right. Follow ramp and ledge to overhanging corner. Descend diagonally across the right wall to open groove and belay halfway up groove (A2, 80 ft.). Follow groove to short steep wall on left (30 ft.). Step left across wall to heather slope (3 pegs) and belay at top of this (50 ft.). Descend left 10 ft. to reach grass ledges and hence the Tough-Brown Traverse.

**White Mounth: Eagle's Rock.**—*Nimrod*. 350 ft. Very Severe. G. N. Hunter & D. F. Lang. 29th August 1970.

Start at the base of slabs to left of Lethargy and the watercourse. Climb slab to flake and ascend to heather-filled crack. Gain ledge on left and climb crack above (1 peg) then move right to slabby groove and exit on left (150 ft.). Continue by heathery cracks or right-hand arête. Climb corner crack to right of prominent nose to finish.

—*Likely Story Direct Start*. 100 ft. Very Severe. G. N. Hunter & D. F. Lang. 29th August 1970.

Gain ledges below obvious corner in centre of face. Climb corner-crack to belay below crescent-shaped overlap.

## CENTRAL HIGHLANDS

**Creagh Dubh, Newtonmore: Central Wall.**—*Line-up*. 480 ft. Very Severe. I. Fulton & J. R. Houston. 11th April 1970.

The route follows the leftmost of the two prominent ribs in the section between King Bee and Romp. Start at a clean steep wall about 30 yards left of King Bee.

Climb wall to ledge beneath ivy, traverse left then steeply up wall to top. Peg belay on grass ledge (100 ft.). Go up left on grass to foot of rib. Climb rib for 60 ft. then go right to belay below roof on right edge (120 ft.). Turn roof on right then go up steep corner which is climbed to a tree. Scramble up grass belay below final slab (130 ft.). Climb straight up on excellent rock finishing just left of triangular block on skyline (130 ft.).

—*Route-Tool-Tool*. 500 ft. Very Severe. D. M. Jenkins & C. Stead. 4th July 1970.

The route follows the rightmost of the two ribs mentioned above. Climb from foot of rib right of overhanging wall up mixed rock and vegetation then up left to grassy stance and peg belay below corner (120 ft.). Traverse up left on ledges, go round corner and follow pink fault up left until a pull-up right leads to three huge stacked blocks. Go up these to ledges and tree belay (100 ft.). Climb steep corner behind tree and up to broken ground and flake belay (90 ft.). There is a choice of 150 ft. finishing pitches on the right.

—*Sweetness*. 300 ft. Very Severe. F. Harper & W. March. April 1970.

Climb steep wall immediately left of *Cunnulinctus*, move into crack at 70 ft. and go up to ledge and tree belay (150 ft.). Continue up obvious chimney above and then up an arête (150 ft.).

—*Tongue Twister*. 200 ft. Very Severe. D. M. Jenkins & C. Stead. 11th July 1970.

The route follows a groove and crack line between *Phellatio* and *Fiorella*. It is better and more sustained than either of these routes. Start at the obvious groove just left of the large ivy crop. Climb groove to overhang, surmount this at left end, go up trending left for a few feet, then back right to cracks directly above groove. Climb straight up to tiny ledge and peg belay (120 ft.). Climb short wall behind then more short walls and finish up grass (80 ft.).

**Sprawl Wall.**—*Hornet*. 230 ft. Very Severe. G. Cairns & W. March. 10th March 1970.

Climb buttress left of *Fido Direct* (2 peg runners, 80 ft.). Climb slab above then move right and climb thin wall (peg runner) and continue up on good holds to the right to gain steep rake which is followed to tree and then ledge and belay (150 ft.). Scramble to top of crag.

—*Slabsville*. 280 ft. Very Severe. Mr & Mrs F. Harper. 13th April 1971.

This route is a continuation for *Tree-Hee*. Together they provide 500 ft. of climbing. From top of *Tree-Hee* walk right for 50 yards to reach large cave. Above this is a big band of waterworn slabs. Start at its lowest point.

Climb up and left using long mini-overhang and then go straight up to belay beside large loose-looking block (120 ft.). Climb right for 15 ft. then straight up slab to reach very large overhang. Go left across slab and break out onto grass ledge with belay (150 ft.). Climb short wall above (10 ft.). Descend by going hard right into streambed which follow down.

**Creag Meaghaidh: Bellevue Buttress.**—*The Snail*. 350 ft. GRADE II. B. Jones, D. Sharp & B. Taplin. 14th December 1969.

This is the gully on the extreme left of Bellevue Buttress. Straightforward hard snow was climbed in the lower 150 ft. of the gully. A steep ice-pitch of 20 ft. led to the cornice.

—*Lotsavu*. 350 ft. GRADE II.

B. J. G. Chambers & K. Schwartz. 6th February 1970.

The route takes the rib to the right of the Snail. Go up the gully for 40 ft. then traverse steep wall rightwards to gain rib which is followed to the steepening below the cornice.

**Inner Corrie.**—*Tresspass Buttress*. 1200 ft. GRADE IV. G. N. Hunter & H. MacInnes: D. F. Lang & N. Quinn. 23rd March 1969.

This is the buttress between Staghorn Gully and The Pumpkin. Start from the shelf below the ice-fall of Staghorn Gully Direct.

Climb broken ground and enter well-defined chimney. Belay large overhang (2 pitches). Traverse right and gain a 'springboard' then go up to belay. Continue easily for two pitches to base of large chimney. Traverse left on to the upper buttress and follow the crest (crux). Continue up small chimney then easily to plateau.

—*Ugly Sister*. 700 ft. GRADE I. G. N.

Hunter, D. F. Lang & S. J. Littleford. 15th March 1970.

Start as for Will o' the Wisp but continue on the line of the buttress to the plateau.

**Binnein Shuas: Western Sector.**—*Turning White*. 300 ft. Severe. J. D. Grue & K. Schwartz. 13th June 1970.

The route follows the edge between Broken Gully and Cube Wall. Start at the bottom of Broken Gully and climb easy-angled rib on right to sloping platform below vertical part of edge (75 ft.). Go up steep wall on left to gain vertical recess above and climb up this to broken ground with belay at blocks near Broken Gully (85 ft.). Finish by easier climbing up rock ribs above.

**Sgòr an Iubhair, Mamores: North-west Corrie.**—*Let Loose*. 180 ft. Very Difficult. P. T. Logan & K. Schwartz. 21st August 1970.

This is the west-facing edge of the slab just south of the summit. From nearby and below it appears to be a sharp pinnacle. The extremely loose edge, in its upper part overhanging on the right and very exposed, was followed throughout.

—*Applause*. 110 ft. Severe.

P. T. Logan & K. Schwartz. 21st August 1970.

This climb is further west and lower down about halfway along the series of slabs just left of the steepest and biggest slab. Climb 10 ft. wall to vertical groove which follow to the top.

**Sgùrr Innse: South-west Face.**—*Headjam*. 170 ft. Severe. S. J. Crymble & K. Schwartz. 2nd June 1970.

This climb takes the obvious groove on the summit cliff facing the Lairig Leacach Bothy. Climb first 50 ft. up wet crack in groove and on right wall. Steeper and more difficult climbing leads to overhang split by narrow chimney-crack. Go up this to platform on left (110 ft.). Continue up right-trending groove and scramble to easy ground near the summit of the Sgùrr (60 ft.).

## BEN NEVIS

**Ben Nevis: Orion Face.**—*Astronomy*. GRADE V. A. Fyffe, H. MacInnes & K. Spence. March 1970. 10 hours.

The line of the summer route was followed approximately. Start about 100 ft. up from the foot of Minus One Gully.

Climb twin cracks (1 peg) to reach snow shelves leading left. Follow these and then deep groove until return right can be made to large leftward-sloping

corner. Climb this and exit right by wide shallow flake chimney. Work up then right into thin ice groove and trend back left by walls and grooves. Continue this leftward trend under steep upper rocks until near top where a short descent is made into steep chimney at top of Minus One Gully. Climb this to crest of Buttress.

**Coire na Ciste.**—*Comb Gully Buttress Variation*. 250 ft. GRADE IV. I. Fulton & D. Gardner. 3rd January 1971.

Follow normal route to top of 'groove on the left edge of the buttress'. Instead of going right to the central chimney traverse left to below ice-column. Climb this to enter ice-filled groove. Follow this groove, which narrows and steepens, to its top. This line is perhaps in condition more often than the original route.

—*Joyful Chimneys*. 600 ft. GRADE III. R. Campbell & J. R. Marshall. February 1971.

This is the discontinuous line of chimneys on the right flank of South Trident Buttress. The line is well seen from the door of the Hut. Start in a chimney just right of a long thin rib about 150 ft. left and somewhat downhill from Jubilee Gully.

Four icy chimney pitches were encountered. The second was bottomless and was entered by a long stride from a flake on the left. The third was avoided by grooves on its immediate left.

—*Heidbanger*. 300 ft. Very Severe. N. Muir & I. Nicolson. 9th June 1970.

The Central Trident Buttress has a very steep circular face about 400 ft. high low down. Start 20 ft. left of the base of an obvious crack-system splitting this face.

Climb bulge moving right to top of steep groove on right at 20 ft. and climb short corner onto band of slabs. Traverse rightwards to arête and belay in cave on the crack-system (120 ft.). Climb crack and follow line of weakness up wall leftwards to belay on arête (80 ft.). Take line from corner on left up walls and corners to top (100 ft.).

**Douglas Boulder.**—*Gutless*. 400 ft. Severe. R. Campbell & F. Harper. June 1970.

Left of the line of Cutlass there is a huge dirty chimney. This was climbed and the steep wall above skirted on the left to reach easier ground. The chimney gave one excellent pitch of 120 ft.

**Meall Cumhan.**—*Steall Slabs*. 230 ft. Very Severe. W. Anderson & S. Barr. 8th August 1970.

This is a route on a narrow slab about 200 ft. left of Galax. Climb the centre of the slab by a dead crack for 130 ft. Ascend arête to top.

**Pollidubh Crag.**—*Crybaby*. 100 ft. Very Severe & A2. Miss M. Horsburgh & K. Schwartz. 29th June 1970.

On Black's Buttress. Start 25 ft. right of Kaos. Follow vertical crack-line using two pegs then trend right to ledge at 60 ft. Easier climbing leads to top.

—*Frenzy*. 90 ft. Severe. B. J. G. Chambers & K. Schwartz. 10th August 1970.

On Crown Buttress. This is the left buttress edge which is followed throughout.

—*Fibrillation*. 85 ft. Severe. B. J. G. Chambers, K. Schwartz & party. 10th August 1970.

On Crown Buttress. Go up wall right of Crown Groove to terrace two-thirds of the way up. Climb to top.

—*Palpitation*. 90 ft. Very Severe. B. J. G. Chambers & K. Schwartz. 10th August 1970.

Start just right of Fibrillation. Go over initial bulge to vertical crack. Climb this and then right to easier crack. Climb from terrace straight to top.

—*High King Chimney*. 100 ft. Very Difficult. J. Hinde.

This is the deep gully between King Slab and the lower part of the middle tier of High Crag.

—*Thirst*. 400 ft. Severe. I. Sykes & party. 8th July 1970.

On High Crag, start 30 ft. right of Autobahnausfahrt on the 1st grass terrace. Climb crack behind tree to ledge with trees (50 ft.). Go up boulder slab and step left onto wall. Climb straight up this to heathery groove and ledge. Go right along this to small tree (100 ft.). Climb rightwards up ramp to 2nd grass terrace (30 ft.). Climb another similar ramp, just right of Enigma to slabs and ledge (80 ft.). Go straight up to leftwards-leading fault and climb this to top (140 ft.).

—*Gradation*. 130 ft. Severe. K. Schwartz & party. 10th August 1970.

Start at 1st stance of Flying Dutchman on Pandora's Buttress. Go up dièdre above and break out right at overhang. Take rib on right to top.

—*Agros*. 120 ft. Very Severe. B. J. G. Chambers & S. J. Crymble. 23rd May 1970.

On Ridge Buttress. This is a direct ascent of Glen Groove.

—*Midge*. 100 ft. Severe. B. J. G. Chambers & K. Schwartz. 5th June 1970.

On Sheep Fank Wall, this is a rising traverse across the left wall starting just left of Gambit Wall.

—*Sheep Groove*. 45 ft. Very Severe. Kinloss party.

This is the groove between Sheep Fank Wall Direct Start and Brown Groove. The groove is left by an aid move to join the Direct Start below the overhangs.

—*Black Goat*. 180 ft. Very Difficult. K. Schwartz & party. 26th August 1970.

Start about 35 ft. right of White Goat on Slabs Wall. Climb in two pitches towards bush at 150 ft., then go rightwards to top.

**Upper Polldubh Crag.**—There are several granite buttresses on the southern slope of Càrn Dearg South just above Polldubh. The routes described are on the one closest to Am Mam Buidhe at Grid Ref. 155694.

—*Penguin*. 140 ft. Difficult. Miss M. Horsburgh & K. Schwartz. 2nd July 1970.

This is the slabby gully on the left of the buttress. Avoid a steep groove near the top by a traverse to the right. The groove itself is Severe.

—*Albatross*. 130 ft. Very Difficult. K. Schwartz. 2nd July 1970.

This is a groove system 20 ft. right of Penguin which leads to a steep final wall climbed by a mantleshelf. A Severe variation start, 'Seal,' 10 ft. right is also possible.

—*Penguin*. 120 ft. Severe. K.  
Schwartz. 2nd July 1970.

Start about 45 ft. right of Albatross. Climb groove to overhang which is turned on left. Straight up to top.

—*Fossil Bluff*. 120 ft. Very Difficult.  
Miss M. Horsburgh & K. Schwartz. 2nd July 1970.

This route is on the wall right of Penguin.

## GLENCOE, GLEN ETIVE & ARDGOUR

**Beinn Trilleachan: The Slabs.**—*Buzzard Arête*. 650 ft. Very Difficult.  
G. N. Hunter, D. F. Lang & S. J. Littleford. 16th May 1970.

The main slabs are bounded on the left by a large gully. This route lies up the prominent ridge on the left-hand side of the gully.

From the base of the ridge take a direct line to top. Many short but interesting pitches on good clean granite.

—*Tous Les Deux*. 600 ft. Very Severe.  
R. Carrington & J. McLean. May 1970.

The route takes a direct line between Valkyrie and Swastika. Start at tree right of Swastika Direct.

Climb slab and corner to grass ledge (100 ft.). Climb slab to overlap as for Swastika Direct, surmount this and go up to next one which follow rightwards to peg belay (peg runner at 1st overlap, 120 ft.). Use combined tactics to surmount overlap and up to ledge on Swastika (30 ft.). Climb quartz band for 15 ft. then the slab on the left corner and up this to small tree (110 ft.). Climb slab to beneath overlap (30 ft.). Climb large overlap between Valkyrie and Swastika. This is accomplished by entering from left and leaving by dubious flake. Move up to next overlap and belay in slings (100 ft.). Climb corner (1 peg) onto slab then go up this to wall and traverse left to tree (80 ft.). Climb wall behind and traverse off right (30 ft.).

**Buachaille Etive Mór: Central Buttress.**—*Waterslide Gully Direct*. 240 ft. Very Severe. I. Fulton & D. M. Jenkins. 8th August 1970.

Start 20 ft. right of Pegleg. Climb up to foot of obvious shallow groove which is line of Waterslide Gully (70 ft.). Follow groove to where original route goes left then climb straight up steepening groove to peg belay on left below steep corner (70 ft.). Climb smaller corner on right for 10 ft. then step right onto steep wall. Climb this delicately to very awkward move onto sloping ledge at 40 ft. Finish more easily up groove above (100 ft.).

—*Nim*. 300 ft. Very Severe.  
K. V. Crocket & I. Fulton. 8th July 1970.

The route follows the black rib between Pegleg and Pontoon and the thin corner between the finishes of these routes. Climb first pitch of Pegleg to peg belay at 70 ft. Move left to prominent rib and climb it for 70 ft., move a few feet left to climb wall then go across to take peg belay on Pontoon (130 ft.). Go back and right and climb to the foot of the thin corner. Climb this for 20 ft., pull out right and finish up a wall (100 ft.).

—**Rannoch Wall.**—*Rannoch Traverse*. 750 ft. Very Severe. B. Dunn, D. MacArthur & I. Nicolson. 25th August 1970.

Climb Agag's Groove to block belay (150 ft.). Go left round corner and follow obvious traverse line across red wall to belay at 150 ft. Continue traversing up leftwards round corner and finally on to reach block and spike

belays on Route I (150 ft.). Traverse horizontally round corner for 30 ft. Climb steep wall then go left to 2nd belay on Whortleberry Wall (100 ft.). Continue traversing past the block belay on Wappen-Shaw Wall to reach loose block belay in large groove (100 ft.). Climb diagonally left up wall to foot of small corner. Climb this and continue to finish at top of Domino Chimney.

**Crowberry Ridge.**—*The Widow*. 140 ft. Very Severe. J. R. Houston & C. Mitchell. June 1965.

Well below and right of Dingle is a right-angled groove capped by a roof in the side of the ridge. Climb the left arête of this groove and pull over into crack. Climb crack for 100 ft. trending slightly left until the crest of the ridge is reached.

**East Face of North Buttress.**—*Mainbrace Crack Direct Finish*. 140 ft. Very Severe. S. Belk & I. Fulton. 23rd May 1970.

Climb Mainbrace Crack to the open groove. Climb this to where the original route goes left then go straight up to beneath the overhang. Place a peg across to the right and use it to swing over to a foothold on the edge. Climb steep and delicate groove above then move slightly right and finish up steep wall on good holds.

**Cuneiform Buttress.**—*Raven Edge Direct Finish*. 100 ft. Very Severe. R. MacDonald & J. Porteous. June 1970.

From thread belay at top of pitch 3 climb steep wall on right to stance, (30 ft.). Climb chimney and twin cracks to finish.

**Bidean nam Bian; Aonach Dubh, Far North-east Buttress.**—*Blister*. 350 ft. Severe. R. MacDonald & J. Porteous. June 1970.

Start 20 ft. left of Nirvana, climb wall and follow edge of ramp in two pitches to belay below obvious chimney-crack-system and follow this to top.

**East Face.**—*Bowstring*. GRADE III. A. Fyffe & party. February 1971.

The summer route was followed throughout, the crux being the summer crux and the ensuing chimney.

—*Basin Traverse*. GRADE II/III. A. Fyffe & party. February 1971.

The summer route was followed, the traverse pitch forming the only awkward section.

**Stob Coire nan Lochan, Summit Buttress.**—*Original Route*. GRADE IV. K. Spence & party. February 1971.

The summer route was followed, most of the difficulties being concentrated on the lower section.

**Garbh Bheinn: North-east Buttress.**—*C'mola*. 550 ft. Very Severe. S. J. Crymble & K. Schwartz. 7th June 1970.

The route takes a leftward-trending line across the second and third section of the buttress and goes straight through the overhangs near the top of the Leac Mhór.

Start on the first terrace about 50 ft. right of Routes I and II, just left of a shallow groove. Climb groove and gain ledge of Route I (110 ft.). Go up leftward-slanting crack to second grass ledge (130 ft.). Scramble right and up ledge to start of thin crack (40 ft.). Climb crack, crossing Route II at 90 ft., and belay on ledge above (110 ft.). Go up groove and cross wet slab on right. Make straight for niche below overhangs. Step left over overlap onto slab and climb vertical groove above. Gain exposed left wall (peg) near top and go left round edge to gully (120 ft.). Scramble left to foot of final buttress (40 ft.).

## SOUTHERN HIGHLANDS

**Beinn Cruachan: Stob Dearg.**—*North-east Face.* 500 ft. GRADE III. D. J. Bennet & E. I. Thompson. 11th April 1970.

The north-east face of Stob Dearg is a 500 ft. sweep of granite slabs, bounded on one side by the north ridge. The best approach is over the col between Stob Dearg and Ben Cruachan from the Allt Brander, followed by a short easy descent to the foot of the face. Steep snow-ice covered the lowest slabs and the start was made at the bottom left-hand corner with a rising traverse to the right and then straight up. After two pitches the angle eased and straightforward climbing led to the top of the peak directly over snow.

**Beinn Udlaidh: Coire Daimh.**—*Sunshine Gully.* 300 ft. GRADE II. E. Fowler, F. Jack, R. McGowan & G. Skelton. 14th November 1970.

The gully lies midway between Central Gully and South Gully of the Black Wall. From the entrance to the corrie it looks like a leftward-slanting ramp. The gully contained much ice and gave an interesting climb.

—*Zigzag Gully.* 300 ft. GRADE II. A. Agnew & J. Jewel. 14th November 1970.

The gully starts at the leftmost edge of the corrie. It contained one ice-pitch of 100 ft. in the centre. From the top of this traverse left into a shallow gully which leads to the top.

**Craig-y-Barns: Polney Crag.**—*Spirocele.* 90 ft. Very Severe. J. Cameron & C. Norris. 8th December 1970.

Start 20 ft. right of the overhanging wall at the right-hand end of the crag. Climb steep wet crack to grass then make ascending right traverse to overhung niche. Exit left and finish on large holds.

—*Carpet Beater.* 50 ft. Very Severe. C. Norris (ldr) & A. Moore. 13th March 1971.

To the right of Terminal Buttress is an overhanging wall. Follow a leftward-slanting groove to the right of this past a loose block at 30 ft.

**Dunleacan.**—*Finesse.* 180 ft. Very Severe. K. V. Crockett & Miss K. Simpson. 23rd September 1970.

Start about 10 ft. right of Pluvial. Climb arête for 15 ft., step right then go up and right passing short grassy groove at 40 ft. to belay on turf ledge (50 ft.). Step onto wall and go left 10 ft. Climb wall for 30 ft. to reach ledge with large nest at right end. Step off left end of ledge onto bottom of rightward-trending ramp which follow until possible to ascend directly to belay (130 ft.). Scramble to top.

## NOTES

## Islands Notes

**Islay, Mull of Oa.**—The following two climbs are on the sea-cliffs round this headland.

**Beinn Mhór.**—*South Ridge.* 400 ft. Very Severe. R. Cuthbert & N. Tennent.

Although the full height of Beinn Mhór is only 658 ft., the south face is a sea-cliff and the upper part of this climb is an arête ending close to

the cairn. The main difficulties are in the lower section. A further 100 ft. of climbing may be had by moving right at the top onto a steep wall of reddish porphyry with good holds reminiscent of the east faces of the Buachaille.

Start on the west side of the furthest-out rock face. The route then takes a line right of a scar left by an enormous rock-fall.

Traverse right on big incut steps to shelf on seaward side of face (50 ft.). Move a few feet down and right to foot of open corner. Climb by crack on right face then by bridging. There are good incut holds on the right wall at the top (strenuous, 2 pegs, 25 ft.). Move up over more broken rock to ledge (30 ft.). Traverse left along shattered shelf and up to grass patch (60 ft.). Move down left onto steep nose. Spiral up left for 10 ft. then straight up on excellent holds. Move left to corner left of vegetative slab which climb to crest and big scar on left (100 ft.). Climb slab to crest (60 ft.). Follow crest to top.

Access to this route is easiest from the west down a heathery gully. From the east a 60 ft. abseil and some climbing are involved. There is a huge cave which goes in and down 400 ft. or so at the bottom of the cliff.

**Dun Athad.**—*Dun Athad Arête*. 300 ft. Easy. D. McLeod, I. McLeod, R. Cuthbert & N. Tennent.

This route is to the south-west of the dun. A pleasant scramble up a rocky crest providing fine views of the surrounding cliffs. The stack 200 yds. west has an interesting double arch and some good lines up its west face.

**Lewis, Griomaval, Tealasdale Slabs.**—C. Forrest writes, 'The Slabs give much better climbing than Bill Sproul's brief description of Islivig Direct (*S.M.C.J.* (1970), xxix, 280) would suggest. The slabs are an unbroken 800 ft. sweep, the rock clean and sound and giving Mild Severe climbing for most of their height. On 4th June, J. Armour, P. Hamilton and H. Mackie climbed the line of Islivig Direct for the first 500 ft. to the point where Lochlann crosses it, then for the final 300 ft. also diverged rightwards and climbed always to the right of Lochlann. This is a much better-looking finish than the line described for Islivig Direct and at the same standard.'

## Skye Notes

**Sgùrr MhicCoinnich, Coruisk Face.**—A considerable rockfall has been noted on the line of King Cobra. While the big dièdre seems unscarred, there may be debris lower down.

**Sròn na Ciche, Cioch Upper Buttress.**—K. V. Crocket notes that the climb described below has very probably been ascended before, at least in its upper section, by parties mistaking it for Wallwork's Route.

—*Fidelity*. 230 ft. Severe.  
K. V. Crocket & D. M. Jenkins. 13th June 1970.

The climb takes the obvious line to the right of Wallwork's Route. Climb large crack behind large loose block 20 ft. right of start of Wallwork's, surmounting small bulge at 50 ft. directly, to belay at small block on rightwards-sloping ramp of Archer Thomson's Route (110 ft.). Climb up and left to loose block, turn overhang on left and follow crack to finish at bottom of glaciais.

## Rhum Notes

**Fist and Finger Stack.**—H. M. Brown writes, 'This is an impressive double stack half-a-mile south-east of Sgòr an t-Snide with a steep landward side and an overhanging seaward side. The main stack is connected to the shore by a neck with several tidal gaps and low tide is advisable. A small truncated pinnacle lies just north of this neck. The main feature, however, is the finger at the far northern end—how one gets to it and climbs it is an interesting challenge. The following seems the only easy route to the top.'

—*Pinkey Crack*. Severe. H. M. Brown & G. N.

Hunter. 1st June 1970.

Cross sneck and, keeping left across the south end of the stack, climb up onto a pedestal. Take upward left-rising line of weakness under bouldery rib until possible to break up again by chimney and further blocks to gain wide sloping ledge under final wall and square-cut overhang. Climb exposed curving crack (crux) up wall on left to top.

**Sgòr an t-Snide Stack.**—This small stack is visible from Harris Lodge at the tip of southern point, Rudha Sgòr an t-Snide. The shore approach is only possible from the north at low tide and even then a big contour on the papadil side must be made before the seaward side of the stack is gained.

—*The Sea Roofs*. Very Difficult. H. M. Brown.

1st June 1970.

Scramble up to sneck on north end then up right onto roof-like slab. Traverse it to other side and break up onto second roof of slab which leads to summit.

**General.**—H. M. Brown notes, 'The pinnacles in the bays at Papadil and Harris have been climbed long ago. Beyond the above western stacks there are many crags and sea-cliffs of good rock giving climbing. North of Harris the rock is much less sound but the cliffs are the highest in the island, rising to over 600 ft. and very impressive in places. The whole island is virtually ringed with cliffs and several stacks invite climbing. The bothy at Dibidil has been restored. There and elsewhere there are great clefts running into the cliffs. The sea-cliff side of Rhum is virtually untouched.'

## Northern Highlands Notes

**Beinn Alligin.**—H. M. Brown notes, 'Apart from the usual traverse of the Horns I have not seen any mention of winter climbing on the mountain. There are several gullies on the Horns which hold snow until late and in the January 1970 *Climber & Rambler* there are notes of a 1800 ft. line from Toll a'Mhadaidh, which will certainly be a hard winter climb. The Great Cleft is of interest. We half descended it in January 1969 but a 50 ft. ice-fall turned us back. In April 1970, J. Will and I did go down it—a straight snowslope this time—to the slabs below. These slabs are prone to avalanche in thaw. The west wall of the cleft has two corners of clean rock in summer which would give climbs, one of them attractive. The east wall is completely vertical—so far no-one has considered it climbable!'

**Ben Hope.**—H. M. Brown notes that with D. McNab he climbed Bell's FGHL Ridge on 22nd December 1969 in a great gale and bad conditions. Under normal conditions the route would have been GRADE I.

**Ben Klubreck.**—H. M. Brown writes, 'Having been partly responsible for the confused account in the new *District Guide*, the following is a mini-guide to the mountain, giving all the climbing information. The routes are not difficult but add something to the ascent of an otherwise dull mountain.'

'On the West Flank of the mountain is an area of rock which can be seen from the Altnaharra-Lairg road. The easiest approach is straight across from pt. 558 on the road. The main feature of these rocks is Bell's Gully, which separates Eyrie Buttress to the north from broken slabby rocks to the south.'

—*Bell's Gully*. 500 ft. Moderate. J. H. B. Bell & D. Myles. 1933.

The gully is steep, but its main difficulties can be avoided by flanking moves on the right.

—*Bell's Gully*. GRADE II. H. M. Brown & D. McNab. 23rd December 1969.

—*Southern Crag*. 350 ft. Difficult. J. H. B. Bell & D. Myles. 1933.

The rocks are much broken and the route cannot be recommended.

—*Eyrie Buttress*. 350 ft. Difficult. J. H. B. Bell & D. Myles. 1933.

This can be climbed almost anywhere. The steep lower section is difficult and the rest is pleasant and airy. H. M. Brown & M. Barnes, keeping as close to the Gully as possible throughout, climbed into an eagles' eyrie and, as Bell gave no name, have used this.

**Beinn a'Mhuinidh; Bonnaidh Donn.**—Skidmore notes that, 'for a magnificent finish to *Virus*, step left from the bottom of the final messy groove and climb straight up the vertical edge on perfect holds.'

**Ben Wyvis.**—The Northern Highlands Guide mentions a 200 ft. slab on Ben Wyvis. J. Mackenzie notes that this was climbed on the 20th June 1970. He took a diagonal line from the lowest right to the upper left, giving a 420 ft. Very Difficult. This is apparently the only bit of clean rock on the mountain although Mackenzie remarks that the walls on either side consist of 3-400 ft. of overhanging schist. Besides Ben Wyvis itself several nearby crags (e.g. Raven's Rock near Achterneed Station) afford hard climbing on schist.

**Am Buachaille.**—P. Nunn reports a nine-man ascent of this stack by an Alpine Club party, believed to be the second. To reach the stack, one swimmer was needed for the deep channel. The return, executed at higher tide, required nine swimmers at 80 yards each and a fixed line to prevent them landing in Newfoundland.

**Maol Cheann Dearg.**—There is a line of quartz crags on the east side of the south-east ridge leading to the col with Meall nan Ceapairean as mentioned on p.20 of the *Northern Highlands Guide*. These give various short buttress climbs. The two biggest buttresses must be about 400 ft. and are easily picked out from the east. They are only about Difficult but pleasant. The left-hand one, Ketchil Buttress, was climbed by H. M. Brown, D. McNab & J. Morrison on the 29th December 1969. The right-hand one was cairned so has no doubt been climbed before. On the north side of the mountain there is a steep face overlooking Loch an Eoin. Tucked in behind it, running from low down on the east and leading right to the summit is a shallow gully, Hidden Hully, its right side forming the edge of the north face. (This arête has been climbed). The gully must be 1000 ft. and in good conditions would give a GRADE II climb with fine situations. It was climbed on the 22nd December 1968 by H. M. Brown, R. J. Rankin & R. Aitken.

**Minor Crags.**—P. Nunn notes that, 'We have climbed on lots of little cliffs that no Scotsman would sully his hands on. They include a sandstone sea-cliff north of Ullapool, a 200 ft. gneiss cliff on the opposite side of the loch from Kinlochbervie and some highly technical gneiss cliffs just north of Sheigra. None are very big but all serve when it rains.'

**Sgùrr a'Chaorachain: A'Chioch, Lower Tier.**—P. Nunn notes that a corner running the full height of the crag was attempted in June 1968 in very wet conditions, the party retreating from about 200 ft., leaving two pitons. These encouraged Patey and the MacInnesses to make a second attempt, again unsuccessful. The corner was finally climbed in June 1970 by E. Howard and C. Rowland and proved to be Very Severe. It is not certain to what extent it coincides with Cleavage but Nunn is almost certain that it lies to the left throughout.

**South Face.**—Skidmore notes that Patey's *Sword of Gideon*, although really only one long pitch is indeed first-class and itself repays a visit here. Start right on the edge and *not* at the shallow groove just left of it.

**Whiten Head, The Maiden.**—W. March notes that, 'this was climbed by John Cunningham and myself to recover the abseil rope and descendeur left after Tom Patey's fatal accident.' Their route appears to be different from the original line so we reproduce it here. 'From the large platform on the landward side traverse left along a ledge to an overhang which is climbed on large holds to gain the ledge above where the climb starts. Move right and climb the obvious overhanging crack by bridging. Continue to ledge at 50 ft. Traverse along the ledge to the seaward side of the stack and climb straight up the obvious crack line to the summit.' The route measured 210 ft. and was Very Severe.

**General.**—A large number of routes in the Applecross area done by members of staff of the Adventure Centre located there came to hand by a devious route and somehow got mislaid. These were found too late for inclusion in the New Climbs section and too lengthy for inclusion in these Notes. They will consequently be held up until next issue. Most of them are on the South Face of Sgùrr a'Chaorachain.

## Cairngorms Notes

**Creag an Dubh Loch.**—Ian Nicolson notes that Goliath was climbed free 'at a reasonable standard' last summer.

**Cairngorm.**—W. March notes that J. Bower claimed a first winter ascent of Afterthought Arête on Stag Rocks in last year's *Journal*. March climbed this route (II), Triple Towers (II), Serrated Rib (II) and Final Selection (III) in November 1969 in winter conditions.

**Lochnagar.**—J. Bower notes that he and R. Simpson made an ascent of Parallel Buttress this season under remarkable snow conditions. No rock was visible on the buttress and the snow, though thawing in places, could take body weight, enabling even the Tower to be climbed with ease!

## Central Highlands Notes

**Ben Nevis.**—In a winter remarkable for its lack of snow and mild weather (midges were sighted on the Allt a'Mhùilinn path) it is astonishing that as much climbing was done. Notable ascents included an ascent of Gardyloo Buttress (we believe the second) by a mysterious Glaswegian from

Cambridge (surely an unearthly combination) and an end-of-season romp up Point Five Gully by J. Cunningham and W. March in the frightening time of 2½ hours. Old-age pensioners please note!

**Pollidubh Crags.**—H. M. Brown notes that Gambit was first climbed on 11th August 1963 by himself, R. J. Rankin, R. Grant & J. E. Sutton.

K. Schwartz notes that on Marshall's Madness the tree is gone, making the route slightly harder. Also Ethmoid was the first route climbed on the Skull. It takes Tat as start and then follows Skull Diagonal till it traverses right above the eyes of the Skull. Thus Skull Diagonal can only be regarded as a variation to Ethmoid.

**Steall Waterfall.**—I. G. Rowe claims priority for the Steall Waterfall (cf. *S.M.C.J.* (1970), xxix, 321). He climbed it solo on New Year's Day, 1963, stepped on to a mini-ice-berg in the pool at the top and almost fell down the back of the ice.

**Glencoe.**—I. Nicolson notes on the second ascent of Kingpin with D. Knowles only two pegs for aid were used, one on the first pitch and one at the bottom of the chimney. He rates the route as better and harder than the E Buttress classics on Aonach Dubh.

I. Fulton notes that, 'on the Etive Slabs, Valkyrie has now received at least five ascents.' The description of the crux pitch is a little vague. A better description would be, 'Climb a quartz ripple leading diagonally up and right in the slab to the left on the quartz band. At its end move left and up into a small corner which leads to a heathery ledge (100 ft.).' The Grasshopper received its first combined ascent by Carrington & Nicolson who climbed all the tension traverses on Phase One free. S. Docherty & E. Dingwall made the second ascent of the Thin Red Line. On Ben Nevis, Central Route on Minus Two Buttress was climbed twice and found to be much over-graded. Subtraction received its second or third ascent by Nicolson, Dunn & MacArthur and was found to be very hard. Finally, the prize for the best climb of the year goes to Ardverikie Wall and the chestnut for the worst (undoubtedly the worst) to King Cobra.'

### Southern Highlands Notes

**Arrochar.**—W. Skidmore notes that the front cover photo-caption of the new *Arrochar Guide* is incorrect and should read, *Mainline, The Brack*, photo by J. Crawford.

**Creag Tharsuinn: Upper Tier.**—The climb described below, writes P. Mitchell, was recorded as The Chute in *S.M.C.J.* (1961), xxvii, 170, but was incorrectly described as being to the right of Solo Buttress instead of to the left and consequently could not be identified. Attempts made to inform the guide-book editor of this error became nullified with the transfer of editorship. In the new *Guide* the name 'The Chute' has been incorrectly appended to a climb originally called Alfresco. The former 'The Chute' is therefore re-named Hangover to keep confusion to the minimum!

—*Hangover*. 180 ft. Severe. P. Mitchell & J. Morrison, 26th June 1960.

Follows a prominent groove left of Solo Buttress.

From apex of grass scoop climb to overhanging rocks which are avoided by awkward left traverse to outslipping ledge. Climb short wall to reach groove, which climb to semi-detached block passed on right. Ascend smooth bulge above, continuing up groove to ledge and flake belay at 120 ft. Make short traverse right to foot of grooved wall, climbing on small holds to final overhanging corner to finish at 60 ft. beside a rock finger visible from the foot of the climb.

## Miscellaneous Notes

**Beyond the Limit.**—NOTE ADDED IN PROOF. We regret that this issue contains an article that has just appeared in a publication likely to be taken by many readers of this *Journal*.

We do not warm up cauld kail unless it is good, nourishing and not likely to be met with generally: as Robin Smith's, Hogg's and the Drug articles in this issue. We would not have burdened our readers with such a contemporary dish of more doubtful quality, and which had required strengthening to even our standards of English and Gaelic. Unfortunately, the high cost incurred by removal at page proof prevents excision.

MS. is naturally submitted to us on the understanding that it is not intended for publication elsewhere, and that unless straight rejection follows it will be held for possible insertion in the current *Journal*. This article was sent only some twelve weeks ago. Such unethical behaviour by authors will bring them their own troubles. We regret to state, however, that this author was a member of the Club.

**A Hundred Up.**—This issue records the last of the first 100 Munroists, with convention as before. Munroist-collectors may arrange them in exact chronology; if new editorial policy decides, we may do so one time in the future. Meanwhile, let us record our appreciation of Mr Eric Maxwell, who has personally decided to close his gate and retire from collecting the tickets; any further aspirants should send their facts to R. N. Campbell (Editorial address under **Office-Bearers**), in case the *Journal* decides to carry on with this fascinatingly-repellent task (which like the pursuit itself, all condemn and all enjoy).

(97) A. Farquharson, 1963, —, —; (98)\* G. Chisholm, 1970, —, —; (99) B. Finlayson, 1970, —, —; (100) J. W. Brydie, 1970, —, — [he should get a piece of Mount Keen free]. Further qualifications are: (51) K. M. Andrew, 1962, 1969, —; (73) A. C. Gardner, 1967, —, 1970; (96) W. G. Carter, 1969, 1970, —. One who should be certified elsewhere as well as here is: (61)\* H. M. Brown, 1965, 1969, 1967 and 1969, —, 1969 and 1970, —, —; or, to put it all together, 1965 & 1969 & 1970, 1965, 1967 & 1969; he did it 'because of lack of snow over Christmas' . . . his temper should be kept under better control.

**Rope Off.**—This is the last issue under the imprint of what may be called the Senior Editor, and although a flourish upon entry may be customary—and was indeed indulged in eleven years ago—one's departure should be noted with more decorum. So a few lines only, and in 8pt. type. Perhaps later, when dust has gathered and hides have thickened, a few recollections of an Editor might prove of interest; but not just now, with the blue pencil still fuming beside us on its tray.

Editors should retire when they feel that pencil no longer smokes with controllable objective zeal, but either flames to exasperation or cools down to apathy.

Gentlemen, I have felt frost at the tip. Eleven and a half years is far enough to shepherd the Club along its Fourth Dimension. Scan your three bound volumes (full speckled calf, decorative gilt borders, text crisp and clean) or your twelve loose numbers (poor condition, some pp. missing, others torn, many stained, several pencilled and some inked comments)—and agree.

Other tasks have been calling for some time and, now that my colleague is so excellently in control and this volume is closed, they have become irresistible. Let me (note the shedding of the editorial persons plural), let me

slip away and meet members as friends, not contributors, and see the hills again untethered and immeasurable; it will be lighter climbing without a typewriter on one's conscience.

To all who have helped—and how many there are!—by curse or condemnation, I record my sincere thanks. As well as a great honour, it has certainly been a great enjoyment; and, of course, hard work—occupying most free evenings between November and April—at times only made possible at all by the sweated labours of J. R. Marshall, I. H. M. Smart and R. N. Campbell, to whom the Club owes a very great debt. The inimitable Campbell now takes over the bigger pencil and, as one of our more distinguishable contributors infers in this issue, he is a man of considerable resource. Dr Smart has voluntarily sent himself to the Galleys until a more permanent colleague is enchaind. With such a worthy pair I need say nothing about maintaining the standard of the *Journal*, still less about improving it. . . . May they long continue in health!

G.J.D.

**Dundee University Scoresby Land Expedition, 1970.**—The expedition, led by Dr I. H. M. Smart, arrived in Mestersvig, East Greenland, on 6th July and left on the 24th August, travelling between Scotland and Iceland by regular Icelandair services and between Iceland and Greenland by Icelandair charter flights. In Greenland the 14 members split up into 4 largely independent groups. One party left Mestersvig by helicopter for the Schuchert valley, leaving a food dump at the Roslin Snout and Bjornbos Glaciers for the mountaineers. Four weeks were spent exploring the Year Islands and North West Fjord by boat, measuring eggs and collecting plants. Another party stayed near Mestersvig studying the microclimate and ecosystems of sand-dunes. The third party systematically sampled and surveyed ground and surface waters from many sites in Scoresby Land including Schuchert Dal and Trail Island, but mainly in the Delta Dal area.

The mountaineering party, of four, reached the Roslin Glacier, 50 miles from Mestersvig, on the 12th July after a hard journey and received the R.A.F. drop arranged by a Cambridge University group. Bad weather delayed the drop, the plane arriving a day late during the only hour's break in the cover of low cloud. Between the 12th and 21st they were hampered by new snow and bad visibility. From the 21st and 24th they traversed to the Bjornbos glacier where they met with three members of the third party. The seven then moved to North West Fjord *via* Holger Danskes Briller and traversed back to the Bjornbos over a col connecting two unnamed and previously unvisited glaciers. Eight mountains (6 virgin) were climbed during these travels.

### Scottish Mountaineering Accidents 1970

The postal strike, which unfortunately affected Scotland as well, hampered our correspondent in assembling his data and, late as we were, this *Journal* was at Press before the notes could be received for editing. We trust it may be possible to publish the list, together with its successor, in our next issue.

## IN MEMORIAM

## THOMAS WALTON PATEY

WITH the death of Tom Patey, the Club has lost a member of outstanding talent and personality. As a mountaineer, he was an all-rounder of astonishing versatility and international reputation, while at home his explorations ranged as widely as those of Raeburn and Bell, predecessors of the same stamp. In purely climbing terms his contribution was enormous; in new routes he was prolific, in directing attention to new climbing grounds and attitudes, equally so. His popularity and influence 'shifted the centre of gravity of British climbing several hundreds of miles northwards.' This achievement was all the more remarkable considering that as an individualist he was far from being an organisation man. He was doctor, musician, writer, raconteur and mountaineer extraordinary. In any one of these roles he could have made his living, and in them all he enriched the mountaineering scene.

To his wife and his children we can only offer our sincere sympathy.

In twenty years of continuous and high standard climbing many shared his rope. No one man was closely associated with him throughout the whole period. This appreciation comes therefore in two parts: the first from his Aberdeen friends with whom he climbed during the fifties, and the second from Hamish MacInnes, a frequent companion of the sixties.

W.D.B.

Born in 1932, Tom grew up in Ellon, a small country town just north of Aberdeen, going to Ellon Academy and in his final school year, to Robert Gordon's College in Aberdeen. A son of the episcopal Rectory, he was encouraged in outdoor interests and also in developing his musical talents as a classical pianist. The love of mountains which was to dominate his life began in hill walking ventures with members of the local Scout Troop. By the time he left school, he and some friends had jointly purchased a full weight hemp rope and started to explore the fine rock climbing on the red granite sea cliffs at Longhaven.

Entering Aberdeen University to study Medicine in 1949, he was one of a small group who hunted Munros, frequently ill clad and equipped, in all weathers. One recalls 'the Horrible Heelanders,' as Bob Scott termed them, and their lowly place in the pecking order at Luibeg. This was illustrated, one bitter Siberian New Year, by their consignment, kilts and all, to the keenly-ventilated stick shed. It must have seemed comfortable in comparison with their previous night spent in bivouac on Ben Macdui!

However, the tentative essaying of the Buchan sea cliffs (originally intended to provide only enough rock climbing ability 'to competently ascend any peak in Scotland') grew bolder. Before long the new found skills were being applied in the mountains. The first serious climb was the Direct Route on the Mitre Ridge of Beinn a' Bhùird in the summer of 1950 when the young Patey's epic lead of its long and formidable first pitch established him as the foremost climber of the group.

By this time Tom's initial Salvationist approach to the hills had been eroded. Gordon Leslie, one of his companions, was cultivating a distinctly Teutonic brand of humour. This influence produced the first of a long series of satirical climbing songs which used to enliven Lairig Club meets—

'Two tiny climbers on a ghastly North Wall  
And a huge hungry bergschrund just ripe for a fall'

and

'Let the Valkyries howl in the pitiless sky  
But the two tiny climbers must conquer or die.'

The ascent with Leslie in December 1950 of the Douglas Gully of Lochnagar was a triumph of determination and natural skill over inexperience. It was the first GRADE V winter ascent in the Cairngorms and pointed the way to the future. The leading strings had now been dropped, and 1951 saw the start of Patey's rock climbing explorations of Scottish mountains, beginning, naturally enough, with Lochnagar, where Shadow Chimney and Scarface were his first new routes.

The ensuing years until 1957, during which he remained associated with the Aberdeen University Lairig Club, saw him make a remarkable reputation as an exploratory climber. At the outset the Aberdeen climbing world was divided into a number of small rival groups. Tom was the catalyst which turned the competition between these groups into co-operation, and it was he who inspired new climbing partnerships to develop their talents. This leadership was not overt, but more the product of the encyclopaedic knowledge which he acquired about the history and potential of almost every cliff he visited. This research led him to seek out and develop new or little known climbing areas such as Applecross, the Loch Avon Horseshoe, and the Garbh Coire of Beinn a'Bhàird. Never secretive or selfish about the potential of new crags, he was prone to excesses of enthusiasm to encourage others. 'Finest climb in the Cairngorms' was a phrase often on his lips, and if challenged with 'Isn't it rather vegetated?' he might reply 'Good God, man; soundest vegetation on Lochnagar.' This infectious enthusiasm was applied to people as well as climbs. 'He will probably be the best rock climber in Scotland one day' was not uncommon after taking some young aspirant on his rope.

As its most accomplished performer, he thus became the mainspring of the Aberdeen climbing world of the 1950's. This was essentially an exploratory school which in a few years opened up every corrie in the Cairngorms demonstrating that excellent climbing was available on granite long neglected. Most significant, however, was the development of winter climbing on open faces and buttresses which offered serious difficulty in summer conditions. In the mainstream of this new tradition were ascents like Tough-Brown Traverse, Eagle Ridge and Parallel Buttress on Lochnagar, and Scorpion on Càrn Etchachan.

The experience Tom gained on Lochnagar (in this kind of climbing) was the basis for his remarkable reputation as a snow and ice expert. He was at his best on mixed ground where rock, ice and snow were all present, and the most impressive thing about him was not his style, which was never elegant, but his speed and judgment of line. This was first brought out during an early visit to Nevis where he fell in with the late Jock Pirrit and gobbled up a whole string of Nevis classics in staggeringly fast times.

The story goes that on arrival at the C.I.C. Hut they encountered a C.U.M.C. party, who after enquiring their intentions and being told 'Tower Ridge' gave dire warning that (a) they probably wouldn't succeed under the prevailing conditions or (b) they would require a very early start and take a long time, as ..... (a well-known Everest climber) had taken 12 hours to do it the day before. Asked when they intended to start, Tom replied—'About 2 o'clock or so, after we have had our lunch!' Tom was not a natural gamesman, his real life performance rendering such gambits superfluous. On this occasion he proved his point by being back in the C.I.C. hut comfortably before dark.

Tom was one of the pioneers of the double axe technique, but its most effective application had to await his adoption of crampons. Meanwhile, tricouni clad, during the fifties he pioneered important winter routes not only on his own stamping grounds, but also on Creag Mheaghaidh and Ben Nevis, including the classic ascent of Zero Gully, with MacInnes and Nicol in 1957 (*S.M.C.J.*, 1958, xxvi, 205).

In the 1950's his rock climbing, developed largely on granite, lacked the technique acquired later. An alarmingly ungainly climber, he moved with great determination, remaining at the same time well within his limits. He inspired a lot of confidence in his ropemates, once they were accustomed to the scraping of boot nails, desperate heaves and exhausted grunts which punctuated every hard pitch he tackled. This was partly because of the consideration he always showed to weaker climbers in safeguarding them, often arranging runners for this purpose, partly the optimism with which he haloed every prospect and situation, however unpromising. If someone were to point out that it was raining he was likely to reply that the rain would wash any mud off the holds. He was happiest when on unclimbed rock and preferred to find a new route, even if a poor one, to doing an existing climb unless the latter had some special appeal such as some doubt about its exact line. Happily this streak was accompanied by an almost uncanny eye for a natural route, so his sometimes reluctant companions were rarely disappointed. Witness to this talent is evident in climbs like Vertigo Wall on Creag an Dubh Loch, the Cioch Nose in Applecross, Square Face on Beinn a'Bhùird, the Clouded Buttress on Sgùrr na Banachdich, and King Cobra on Sgùrr Mhic Coinnich; the last with Bonington in 1960, probably the hardest rock climb he had done to that date.

His route-finding ability was not confined to cliffs. Never seen with a compass and rarely with a map, he had an almost unerring homing instinct which could be relied upon to find the quickest way to base regardless of conditions. This was probably the result of a very fine memory for detail which meant that once visited or studied, mountain topography was firmly fixed in his mind. This faculty was invaluable during the preparation of the first *Climbers' Guide to the Cairngorms*, of which he bore a large share of the work, covering most of the climbs for description and grading with the aid of a few colleagues. When the *Guide* was published it contained over 80 first ascents of which Tom was the author or co-author.

An aspect of his character which became apparent during the preparation of the *Guide* was his extraordinary stamina. On a mountain he tended to give a misleading impression of exhaustion, 'green with fatigue' (as it has been aptly put) and a racking cough to give aural backing to the illusion. In spite of this, he would travel enormous distances up and down dreary glens assessing several climbs in a day in order to enjoy the social pleasures of the Fife Arms Bar rather than some draughty bivouac. Once for instance, he left Stracathro Hospital at 6 p.m., cycled the twenty or so miles to Clova, walked the five-mile Capel Mounth path (with accordion) to Loch Muick and caroused with song and story far into the night at Lochend bothy. Next day he did the return trip to Lochnagar (fifteen miles) climbing three routes and returning to Clova, his bicycle and Stracathro, ready to commence night duty at the hospital.

The snow and ice technique and the route-finding experience he acquired in Scotland was put to good use in a series of Alpine seasons, usually only two or three weeks long, from 1951 to 1955. These began with ascents of some big peaks like the Matterhorn and Zinal Rothorn, moved on to *voies normales* on the Chamonix Aiguilles and then, in his third season, to hard routes such as the République Arête on the Chamois, the Arête Sans Nom on the Dru, and the Ryan-Lochmatter on the Blaitière. Later seasons included the Papillon Arête and the Chamonix face of the Peigne and the North Face of the Plan.

He graduated M.B., Ch.B. in 1955 and served in Stracathro and Inverurie Hospitals during his pre-registration year.

In 1956 he visited the Karakoram in a four man party which climbed the Mustagh Tower (23,800 ft.). This expedition became something of a landmark, setting an example which initiated a new phase of technically advanced Himalayan climbing. From 1957 to 1961 Patey served in the Royal

Navy attached to 42 Royal Marine Commando. He continued to climb at every opportunity. While stationed in Devon he opened up a new climbing ground in Chudleigh Rocks, climbed in the Avon Gorge near Bristol, and in 1958 returned to the Karakoram with a Services expedition to make the first ascent of Rakaposhi (25,550 ft.) with Mike Banks. A training course in Norway gave him the opportunity of the winter ascent of the Romsdalhorn along with Arne Randers Heen, recounted so delightfully in *S.M.C.J.* (1960), xxvii, 6. Ski-training visits to Aviemore with the Marines (an activity in which he did not shine) allowed him to pursue his grand passion, Scottish winter climbing, with important explorations on Creag Meagaidh.

In 1958 Tom had married Betty Davidson, an Aberdeen girl, and after leaving the Navy he eventually settled down in general practice at Ullapool. During his eight years there he practised a high standard of family medicine and tackled with enthusiasm the problems of time, weather and distance resulting from a widely dispersed Highland practice. His popularity in Ullapool was a testimony to his success as a doctor.

As his climbing evolved, so did his personality. At the outset he was a shy rather introverted youth with a somewhat ascetic approach to undergraduate life. Saturday nights in the Students' Union held little appeal for him, and he was never seen at dances. However, his musical prowess made him the focal point of climbing social gatherings.

From solo performances on the piano and later the harmonica, he promoted the kazoo bands which were such a feature of the weekend Five Arms Bar in Braemar. At length an overnight stop in a forestry bothy by Loch Carron side introduced him to the occupant's accordion. It was an instrument he took to at once, and thereafter he was rarely parted from that huge ungainly box which was so universally accursed on every journey and similarly appreciated at every destination.

His repertoire extended from a classical and traditional base—

'Past three o'clock on a cold and frosty morning,

Come jolly fellows all'—

to include Scottish songs and country dance music, then country and western style, blues, and folk music of all sorts.

The songs he wrote were a valued contribution to the climbing world. Few climbers in this country have not relished some part of them. They covered a big range, many only living briefly, brilliantly reflecting some current facet of the climbing scene and then disappearing into half-forgotten memory. Such a period piece was 'Cairngorm Tiger,' a penetrating review with its 'tricorn tricksters' illustrating the stubborn Aberdonian adherence to nails which local granite encouraged. He was ready to eulogise where he was impressed, by places as in 'Dark Lochnagar,' by people in 'The Rope-soled Mountaineer,' 'The Kincorth Club,' or the much better known 'Legend of Joe Brown,' where he demonstrates his remarkable way with words—

'But the secret of his success is his most amazing knack

Of hanging from a handjam in an overhanging crack.'

Most appreciated of all were the satirical songs which expressed his remarkable gift for seeing the comic, the absurd and the pretentious in all around him. He had a great depth of humour in him, and mountains, men and life itself all contained plenty of material for a good laugh. He poked fun at what he called 'mannies' with—

'Now from the Ballochbuie

You can always climb the Stuic,

But the pitch to make the expert blanch

Is the Chokestone in the Left Hand Branch!';

at himself, during a frustrating Alpine Season, in 'Aiguilles de Cairngorm'—

'So I'll swap all your garlic and gauloises and wine

For bridies and chips in the old Bruach Dryne';

and above all at institutions, as in 'The Alpine Club,' where—

'The Noble Blood of an English Peer  
Adapts to a rarified atmosphere  
And that is why the Old School Tie  
Can be expected to go High.'

The purpose, however, was to have fun and not to jeer. One chuckles at the memory of 'Ach, Mein Grossenbotten,' the spirited parody of the Club Song he used to render at the Annual Dinner. One should also remember that he refused to deliver it until Stewart Jack had retired from the scene lest it give offence.

The numerous articles he contributed to the *S.M.C.J.* and other climbing publications have the same stamp as his songs. They succeed in providing a rational and lucid account of the climbs they describe while 'taking off' with hilarious acuity the characters involved in the action. All his writings are marvellous entertainment, as were his lectures. On one occasion he held an audience in Aberdeen in almost continual and uncontrolled laughter for over fifteen minutes with a series of illustrated 'character sketches' of climbing personalities. The remarkable aspect of it all is that the hilarity never masked the seriousness of the climbs being described. These always came across 'for real' in both articles and lectures.

Academically gifted, Tom won the gold medal in Physiology during his second year at University. However, the real centre of his attention was in the mountains and he had no conventional ambitions in career terms, passing through to his M.B., Ch.B. without particular effort or distinction. This lack of interest in the everyday world and its values is of course no rare thing in mountaineers. In Tom Patey it was carried further than in most, becoming an almost guru-like unworldliness, which revealed itself in his lack of concern about clothes, possessions and even climbing equipment. It was normal for him to arrive at a hut with the most haphazard assemblage of clothing—single gloves and the like. He often did hard winter climbs clad inadequately in borrowed and ill-fitting equipment. You checked your gear carefully after climbing with Tom—simply because he had little idea of what was actually his and was thus liable to pocket everything in sight to be on the safe side. He was just as likely to hand out gear to others and forget about it. In the same way, his cigarette packet was always just empty and his bottle newly drained, but when full they went the rounds without stint.

No doubt his inability to cope with anything of greater mechanical complexity than a screwgate karabiner was another facet of this unworldly trait. Everything mechanical, from primus stoves to motor vehicles, he treated with complete ineptitude and contempt. His elder half-brother was a racing motorcyclist and expert mechanic, who with fraternal concern kitted him out with a 250cc B.S.A. during the 'motor bike era.' This machine used to stop every now and again with a carburettor blockage, invariably corrected with a well directed kick 'at that silver bit just under the petrol tank.'

How he ever came to terms with the road mileage he had to cover in a car during his work as a general practitioner remains a wonder to us all. In the fifties he had usually travelled as a passenger, and should anything go wrong such as a puncture, he would make a few inept gestures of assistance, mutter restlessly, and proceed to hitch-hike to his destination, leaving his driver to proceed alone.

Of few men can it be said that they become a living legend, and yet while Tom was still with us he was the subject of many stories—about his climbing prowess, his sense of humour, his idiosyncrasies. This is one measure of his achievement and his effect on those he met. However, to his friends, there is something much more. For one who was obsessed by mountains he had an astonishingly ready concern for his friends. When 'young Nicol,' for

whom Tom had always maintained an avuncular concern, went off 'to show the flag in the High Pamirs,' he made several visits to Nicol's widowed mother to reassure her that the Pamirs were not really dangerous mountains at all. Superannuated Aberdonians, whose skill and nerve had long since deteriorated, would on a visit to Ullapool find the same enthusiasm and delight in their being there to share a climb—any climb—as they had always done. They would find the same flow of stories, laughing at the pretentious things of life. Once, returning after a weekend at the Avon Gorge to the Naval Hospital where he was stationed, he climbed up some ivy and into a first floor window to avoid passing the guardroom in his scruffy condition. He was accosted by a very correct and indignant fellow officer who said 'Good God, Patey, you look as if you'd been living in a cave.' The simple reply, 'I have,' summed up Tom's attitude to it all.

To know him was a great experience. We remember him with pleasure and satisfaction, for the contribution he made to our climbing lives was enormous. We thank God for having known him and may regret his going so soon, but were we to mourn him we can imagine what he would have said!

W.D.B. and others.

#### THE LATER YEARS.

Almost ten months have elapsed since Tom Patey was killed in an abseiling accident on the Maiden, a difficult quartzite pillar off Whiten Head in Sutherland, yet the shock of his untimely death is still very much with us.

Tom was the travelling minstrel of the climbing world and a 'knight of a later age.' He would think nothing of driving from Ullapool to North Wales for the weekend, where he would sing, play his accordion all night and climb throughout the next day with abounding energy. He had the finest repertoire of tunes and ballads, from every conceivable country, of anyone I knew. His own Gilbertian type songs, many of the lines of which were the actual written words of the person he was singing about, were masterpieces of subtlety—

'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.'

He had a remarkable ability of sizing a climb up in its basic essentials, disregarding 'suspected' difficulties. Any 'last great problem' shrouded in awe was just Tom's cup of tea.

It is not possible to list all Tom's later climbs in this tribute to him, and I am sure that he wouldn't have liked such an assessment of his prowess. But first ascents such as the West Face of the Plan, the North West Face of the Aiguille Sans Nom, the North Face of the Point Migot and the West Face of the Cardinal earned him a high status in Alpine climbing. He received full recognition for his alpine ventures when he was elected President of the Alpine Climbing Group in 1969.

The Northern Highlands were Tom's playground in these later years, and this vast tract of country, which he knew and loved so well, gave him many great Scottish climbs such as his routes on Sgùrr an Fhìdhleir, Fuar Toll, Beinn Eighe and in Applecross; and other lines such as the Winter Girdle of Craig Meaghaidh, Diadem and the Last Post were all outstanding, many of them being climbed solo.

I enjoyed climbing with Tom more than with any person I can recall. Much of our climbing was done 'solo together' as he used to call it. Some of his enthusiasm for this fast technique rubbed off on me, and one certainly had a fine sense of freedom climbing in this way. I don't think that we ever felt unsafe climbing in this manner and if there was any particular difficulty, we roped up. An old bar-room verse comes to mind about Tom:

'How does he climb,  
Solo and so briskly?  
On twenty fags a day,  
And Scotland's good malt whisky!'

The Winter Traverse of the Cuillin Ridge Tom regarded as one of his finest expeditions—not the most difficult by a long way—but the enjoyment of traversing those superb mountains under crisp snow and the element of competition, which gave spice to the first traverse in glorious weather was the essence, he felt, of a great Scottish climb.

Tom popularised the sport of sea stack climbing and he earned the affectionate name of Dr Stack. The Old Man of Stoer, Am Buachaille and the Old Man of Hoy all fell to Tom or to his party. His writings on these and other escapades will stand as classics in Scottish climbing literature.

He supplied such a complete dossier on the Old Man of Hoy to the B.B.C. that it resulted in the Great T.V. Spectacular, probably the best live climbing Outside Broadcast of all time.

Tom probably did more new routes than any other Scotsman—probably more than any other climber in the British Isles. He got pleasure in pioneering new routes and later he used to avoid climbing on the more popular crags. He would pick out the best line on his new crag and leave the rest for others.

When I say that I lost an irreplaceable friend when Tom was killed, I am not alone. All who climbed with him, or knew him, feel the same way; such was the personality and the enthusiasm of the man.

Some, who didn't know him, thought he lived dangerously, but he didn't really. He was outstandingly capable; capable of soloing up to his top standard on an unknown and remote crag in the Highlands. Only a handful of men in the history of climbing have had this ability.

On the other hand he exercised amazing patience and concern with beginners on an easy route and always he was willing to go out and help anyone in trouble on our northern hills. It was the comfort of many a good climber that if anything happened to them in the northern hills, Tom was ready there in Ullapool.

The death of Jim McCartney and Mary Ann Hudson in the Ben Nevis avalanche proved a greater blow to Tom than he liked to admit, and he felt Jim's loss keenly.

Tom was one of the 'Last of the Grand Old Masters,' and many of us will recall joining in this great song long after closing time in some remote Scottish pub . . .

'Live it up, drink it up,  
Drown your sorrow,  
Sow your wild oats while you may,  
For the Grand Old Men of tomorrow,  
Were the Tigers of yesterday.'

Tom represented the freedom of the hills, laughter and music by the campfire: the Highlands feel empty without him.

H.MacI.

## IAN S. CLOUGH

WHEN Ian Clough was killed by a sérac in the closing stages of the otherwise successful Annapurna South Face Expedition we lost one of our finest mountaineers. Ian's accomplishments spread over every facet of mountaineering from the exploration of outcrops to expeditions to the greater peaks of South America and Asia. His list of routes is long, varied and impressive.

He led the successful Fortess expedition, took part in the one that climbed the Central Tower of Paine, played a major role in the attempt on Gauri Sankar and was an obvious choice for Annapurna. His skill and competence as a 'big route man' is also borne out by his exceptionally fine Alpine record. He made 'British' firsts on big Dolomite routes such as the Aste Dièdre on the Crozzon di Brenta, the Couzy route on the Cima Ovest and a host of other fine routes in that area. In the Alps proper he climbed five of the six North Faces, took part in the first ascent of the Central Pillar of Fréney and completed major expeditions such as the traverse of the Chamonix Aiguilles. Ian's best ascent, however, was probably that of the North Face of the Eiger. Done safely, competently and without fuss or epics, it speaks for itself as a measure of the man's skill and judgment.

At home Ian's delight in climbing and exploration took him all over Scotland—Skye, Rhum, Eigg, Harris, the North-West, Nevis and Glencoe were all investigated by Clough in his search for something new. He had a good eye for a line and the ability to climb them, as routes such as Astronomy, Orgy, The Great Prow, Tober and many others show. It was in winter climbing, however, that Ian's greatest talents lay. Although he incurred some displeasure with one of his earlier routes he later showed himself to be one of the most gifted ice men in Scotland. This again is evident in the journals and guidebooks, with dozens of routes of all grades. It was also in this branch of climbing that Ian's natural cheerfulness, knowledge and skill could be seen at their best.

These characteristics allied with patience, understanding and enthusiasm also made Ian an exceptionally good instructor. His ability in the hills was a great asset to the Glencoe Mountain Rescue Team and his lectures, articles and photographs were enjoyed and appreciated by many. Ian was a professional climber in every sense but one whose main delight was undoubtedly climbing. However we met him, whether as climbing companion, pupil, friend or all three, he is unlikely to be forgotten. Few people can have done so much to increase the safety and pleasure of so many others on the hills as Ian did. He was a great mountaineer and person, who will always be with us.

We extend our deepest sympathies to his wife Nikki and daughter Jane.

A.F.

### JOHN DUFF GEMMEL, J.M.C.S.

JOHN was one of the most recent members of the Edinburgh Section and had attended meets regularly since his first appearance among us at the end of the previous year. His quiet nature and ready willingness to join in our activities in which he took much obvious pleasure were establishing him as a popular companion, not only with Club members in Edinburgh, but with the Perth Section whose meets he also attended. Prior to coming to Edinburgh he had worked in Manchester where his spare-time activity had included acting as warden in the Peak District National Park. He was employed as a research chemist in industry having graduated B.Sc. at Glasgow and M.Sc. at Bristol University. John was 26 years old and died in a fatal accident in Pinnacle Gully of Ben Macdhui on the occasion of the July meet to the Shelter Stone. The sympathy of the Club is extended to his parents in Ayrshire and his sister.

R.M.B.

We regret to record also the deaths of the following members, for whom no obituary has been received at the time of going to Press: **E. N. Marshall** (1921), **A. Muirhead** (1930) and **G. A. Roberts** (1958).

## PROCEEDINGS OF THE CLUB

AFTER two exceptionally fine Easters, we had to put up this year with two days of indifferent snow conditions and most inhospitable weather (for which, in spite of Presidential allegations at the Annual Dinner, the Meets Secretary disclaims all responsibility).

One member, who arrived early traversed the Red Cuillin from Marsco to Glamaig. On Saturday it appears that all those present were out on the hills, but the only summit recorded was Sgùrr Alasdair, ascended by crampons up the Stone Shoot, with Bruach-na-Frithe a near miss. On Sunday, although some ventured forth, the wind and rain prevented any serious activity. It is not known where the President and his crony spent the day. Two members rounded off the Meet with a visit to Beinn na Cailleach.

*Present*:—The President (A. H. Hendry), I. M. Campbell, R. D. M. Chalmers, A. G. Cousins, W. L. Coats, I. A. Macleod, D. H. McPherson, R. W. Martin, W. H. Murray, T. Nicholson, G. Peat, J. E. Proom, R. J. C. Robb, G. S. Roger, J. W. Simpson, W. T. Taylor, E. I. Thompson and W. Wallace. *Guests*:—J. Cruickshanks, R. Hollingdale and D. Spence.

W.L.C.

### New Year Meet 1971—Glencoe

WHATEVER impression might result from reading the somewhat freakish account given earlier in this issue, the Meet was a great success and enjoyed by all. President Roger, ably assisted by the Meets Secretary, performed miracles of introduction, hospitality and organisation. The weather stiffened up for the first and only time of a dreadful winter and few of the neighbouring hills escaped ascent. The snow and ice, though scarce, was in outstanding condition when found and several of the higher gullies were climbed.

Despite the Hotel's somewhat primitive drinking arrangements, its comfort and excellent food encouraged those present to vote for a return next New Year.

*Peaks ascended*:—Bidean nam Bian, Stob Coire nam Beith, Stob Coire nan Lochan, Sgòr na h-Ulaidh, Beinn a'Bheithir, Fraochaidh, The Pap of Glencoe, Beinn Fhionnlaidh, Binnein Mòr, Binnein Beag, An Garbhanach, Sgùrr Eilde Mòr, Beinn a'Chreachain, Beinn Heasgarnich, Cruach Ardtrain.

*Members Present*:—The President (G. S. Roger), H. M. Brown, R. N. Campbell, W. L. Coats, B. S. Fraser, A. H. Hendry, J. N. Ledingham, I. D. McNicol, G. Peat, J. E. Proom, D. D. Stewart, W. T. Taylor, C. B. M. Warren, F. W. Wylie. *Guests*:—R. Aitken, N. Hetherington, A. Jones, J. Kerr, R. Soep, J. Soep, E. Zanotti.

R.N.C.

### Weekend Meets, 1971

Two weekend Meets at the C.I.C. Hut were held. Both were favoured by good weather and climbing conditions when judged by the generally poor standard of the past winter, and those who made the journey through the mud-swamps of the Allt a'Mhùillín voted the weekends highly successful.

*20th-21st February*. *Present*:—G. S. Peet, G. Wilkinson, D. Lang, N. Quinn, C. G. M. Slessor, H. M. Brown, P. Brian, I. Fulton (members); and I. Burley, R. Richards, J. Morrison, J. Opie, C. Stead, J. Wells and N. Tennent (guests). *Climbs*:—Glover's Chimney, Slingby's Chimney, Good Friday Climb, Moonlight Gully Buttress, 2 Gully Buttress, 3 Gully Buttress, 4 Gully Buttress.

*13th-14th March*. *Present*:—G. S. Roger, D. D. Stewart, D. Lang, N. Quinn, G. S. Peet, G. Wilkinson, D. J. Bennet (members) and R. Richards, B. Barclay, R. Watters (J.M.C.S.) and R. Pillinger (guest). *Climbs*:—Tower Ridge, North East Buttress, Slalom, Frostbite, Good Friday Climb, 3 Gully Buttress, Tower Gully.

## Reception

As last year (and the year before) these notes always suffer with shortage of space, and we can only mention (for those who were not there . . . ) that the Talk was given by W. Sproul on the latest Scottish Hindu Kush Expedition. The facts are in the article by Tauber in this issue, but the photographs (despite promises made to the author and editors) are not: and they were as good as the slides shown, which were very good. But most startling was the loudspeaker, presumably from a party either before or after the expedition, on tape, continuously muttering, whistling, rocking, rolling, beating drums, piping and gargling in the background. These noises off went well with native bazaars, motor journeys and the like but most fascinating were the morning-after sounds of chest-gripping hyperventilation and the tinkling of glasses being washed up and broken, astonishingly like steps being cut in ice at high altitude. A highly diverting performance, even if Beckett did do it first.

## Annual General Meeting

THE meeting began with a complaint from the floor that nothing had been done about the offensive and potentially dangerous blasts of the Concorde as it tore down the western Bens, bursting eardrums and dislodging cornices and even causing a member to spill molten lead in Alligin. The Secretary refused to be drawn and seemed to be having some trouble with his own ears. However, when a few moments later older members at the back of the hall complained they could not hear, they were briskly ordered to 'sit at the front!'

Anyone who hoped that the meeting, tamed by this sonic imperturbability, would now proceed with unaccustomed smoothness was soon disappointed. The main business on the Agenda was the use to which the Sang Legacy would be put. The Trustees said that the Trust would add an equivalent sum but of course the money belonged to the Club so first of all the Club had to give the money to the Trust. But then, once the Trust had the money who could say what they might do with it? Accusations of what is known in lesser institutions as 'fiddling' and 'wrangling' flew about the room. Eventually, after endless verbal quibbling and circular debates, a formula was agreed on. Roughly, the interest on the combined monies will soon be available for grants to Scottish mountaineers pursuing 'worthy projects' of one kind or another.

The Secretary welcomed the following to the Club: I. Fulton, P. W. F. Gribbon, M. McArthur, H. MacInnes (as an Honorary Member), W. J. A. Tauber and A. W. Wilkinson.

[For the benefit of readers, the Sang Legacy (or Bequest) mentioned above by our correspondent is a sum of money left to the Club by the widow of the late George Sang, a notable member and *Journal* enthusiast in the tens and twenties of this century. We hope the next issue will carry more about Sang and his Bequest].

## Dinner

THIS year's menu, much strengthened by the substitution of haggis for fish, seemed to meet with unusual acceptance and despite the somewhat cramped accommodations there is no doubt that the dinners found plenty of room.

President Hendry's speech was notably witty and urbane, balancing necessary gravity over the deaths of Patey and Clough against gratuitous levity at the expense of Tom Weir's rapid descent of Ben A'an. The Toast to the Guests was skilfully burnt by Barclay Fraser and the Fell and Rock Climbing Club's representative replied with an outrageous story about

breast-beating in Lagangarbh which sent the waitresses scuttling for cover. This set the scene for Hamish MacInnes, the Club's newest Honorary Member, to say a few words on the subject of ferrets, old men and the dangers of outdoor urination. The New Broom, George Roger, swept away all this unbecoming salaciousness and brought the formal proceedings to a close. The Dinner Secretary, Charles Gorrie, is to be congratulated on a highly successful evening.

## J.M.C.S. REPORTS

**Edinburgh Section.**—The Section has had a successful and active year. Sixteen weekend meets were held, the majority in Scotland, though three forays were made to the south, to Wastdale, Crag Lough and Derbyshire gritstone. Although the weather was, as always, variable usually ten to fifteen members attended these meets. During the summer sixteen mid-week meets were held to various local outcrops. Unhappily the summer months were overshadowed by the death of John Gemmell, one of the Section newer members, on the July meet to the Shelter Stone. An obituary appears in this *Journal*.

The Smiddy, the Section's hut at Dundonnell, is nearing completion. Work parties made the long journey north regularly throughout the year and at the time of writing the plumbing and electrical work are the only major items outstanding.

Six new members were admitted during the year and one member transferred membership from the Perth Section.

The year which began with the, by now traditional, New Year gathering at Dundonnell ended with the Annual General Meeting and Dinner at the Loch Erich Hotel, Dalwhinnie.

*Hon. President*, G. Tiso; *Hon. Vice-President*, M. Fleming; *President*, D. Pullin; *Vice-President*, R. Phillips; *Treasurer*, I. A. Ogston; *Hut Custodian*, J. Clark; *Secretary*, D. Stone, 18 Colville Place, Edinburgh 3 (031-332 7700).

**Glasgow Section.**—Weatherwise the year has been rather unsatisfactory and this has resulted in much less climbing than we wished. Two parties were in the Alps during the summer and some excellent climbing was done there.

The joint evening meetings with Western District S.M.C. continue as before, an interesting innovation being the use of a tape recorder for the commentary on the Photographic Competition. This was not due to fear of reprisal on the part of the judge but rather to enable him to escape as early as possible for a mountaineering weekend.

The revitalising of the A.S.C.C has resulted in a Council being formed—the Mountaineering Council of Scotland, the Executive Committee of which has three J.M.C.S. members on it.

This Club year was unique in having two Annual Dinners—the first in early November 1969 and the second in late October 1970. We are pleased to state that although good weather was lacking at the second Dinner, music has returned in abundance after an absence of too many years.

Membership shows a slight reduction from last year. We can again claim one member in Antarctica and for the first time in Saudi Arabia.

**Lochaber Section.**—The Club has been very active recently and our membership grew by eight last year and twenty-one so far this year. During 1970 we organised ten outdoor meets on which the total attendance was 128 members.

One of the notable events of the year has been the return of Ian Sykes from the Antarctic and the opening of his climbing shop (Nevisport) in Fort William.

The organisation of Mountain Rescue in Lochaber is now completely divorced from J.M.C.S. Lochaber Section and is now run by Lochaber Mountain Rescue Association.

Two instructors at the Loch Eil Centre, Klaus Schwartz and Blyth Wright (who is now at Glenmore Lodge), compiled a guide book to the Follidubh Crags in Glen Nevis for which the Club lent the money for printing. The profits from this book, which is being distributed and sold by five members of the Club, are being donated by the authors to the Lochaber Mountain Rescue Association.

Steall hut is now in the custodianship of John Currie, who is being assisted by his wife Margaret. The bookings for, and the condition of the hut are benefiting greatly from this partnership.

*Hon. President*, Miles Hutchison; *President*, Bill Robertson; *Vice-President*, Ian Sutherland; *Treasurer*, Will Adam; *Secretary*, John Telfer, 17 Camaghael Road, Caol, Fort William; *Steall Hut Custodian*, John Currie, 28 Henderson Road, Fort William.

**Perth Section.**—The steady increase in membership was maintained during 1971 and with the figure now 58 the Section's membership has doubled in the past 5 years. However, during the year quite a number of our most active members have been caught in the drift south over the border for work. The resulting distances constitute something of a problem for these members but with present transport and motor-ways, the climbing areas of Scotland are still occasionally within their range.

Both day and weekend meets were well attended throughout the year; the records show that the numbers varied from a minimum of 13 to a maximum of 39. Some members of the Section joined up with two Expeditions, one to the Atlas Mountains and the other to Greenland.

The Annual Dinner was again held in the Fife Arms Hotel, Braemar, when 40 members and guests were entertained and 'instructed' by our Hon. President and Founder Member, Chris. Rudie, whose after-dinner speech was particularly well up to form.

The A.G.M. of the Section was held during November in Perth and after over 40 years of having a combined post of Secretary and Treasurer these two duties were separated and a Treasurer appointed. The financial position was satisfactory but in anticipation of increased costs in 1971 the Annual Subscription was increased by 0.25p to £1.25.

*Hon. President*, C. Rudie; *Hon. Vice-President*, J. Proom; *President*, James G. Grant; *Vice-President*, Andrew White; *Treasurer*, Andrew Calvert; *Secretary*, David Wares, 2 Rowanbank, Scone.

## BOOKS

**Rope Boy.** By Dennis Gray. (1970; Collancz. 32 photographs. £2.50).

Those of us who met Mr Gray during his short stay in Scotland a few years ago will be surprised to discover that despite his youthful appearance, he has been climbing since just after the war. His autobiography is particularly interesting since he is in a very good position to take a long look at the development of the sport since that time. The early chapters deal with his own beginning efforts with a working-class Yorkshire ginger group, The Bradford Lads, and move on to give a foreigner's account of the great days of the Rock and Ice Climbing Club. This is all good stuff, full of the improbable and folk-lorish stories which surround Brown, Whillans and their like.

The later chapters cover Gray's Alpine and Himalayan mountaineering and his considerable experience of Scottish winter mountaineering. It is gratifying to find an Englishman with such a good understanding of the better qualities of our mountains and mountaineers.

It is the last chapter of the book, however, which seemed to this reviewer to be of the greatest interest. Here Gray takes his long look at our yellower press, at our television climbers, at climbing instruction, at safety-mongering and at the professional and commercial developments within the sport in general. He finds most of these persons and institutions wanting, deploring the lack of adventure and spontaneity which their influence engenders and blaming them for ignoring what might be called the artistic and spiritual side of the sport in favour of the merely technical and temporal. He expresses the hope that the old amateur and 'fuddy-duddy' clubs (like ours) will continue to emphasise these aspects of mountaineering and strenuously resist any attempt by the professionals to usurp our authority. Whether one agrees with these opinions or not, it is certainly time that these matters were discussed. Mr Gray has done us all a service by raising them.

R.N.C.

**Rock Climbing in Wales.** By Ron James. (1970; Constable. 241 pp. 57 photographs. £1.50).

This is the first of a series of guides which Constable are producing at the moment. The guides are presumably aimed at climbers who are visiting areas which are relatively unfamiliar to them or, at any rate, at climbers whose interest stops at repeating old routes. The guide consists of a selection of Welsh climbs which the author regards as being the best at their particular grade of difficulty. All grades are covered and most of the better-known Welsh crags are represented. The photographs are lavish and of uniformly excellent quality (most of them are by Ken Wilson). However, the number of photographs per crag appears to be inversely related to the height of the crag above sea-level.

The big domestic clubs must aim at guidebooks which are in the first place authoritative and comprehensive rather than commercially successful. Consequently, there are many who will view this sort of book with a somewhat jaundiced eye. However, to a certain extent this guide complements rather than competes with the standard series: it is an exceedingly awkwardly shaped affair, unlikely to be carried on climbs, and so selective that it would be a climber of poor spirit (or too much!) who did not wish to buy the full guides as well. In addition, it may well have the effect of encouraging the clubs to make their guides more attractive and that would surely be no bad thing.

**Mountaineering.** By Alan Blackshaw. (1970; Penguin. 552 pp. Many illustrations. £1.25).

This the second revised edition of Blackshaw's excellent textbook. A careful comparison with the original version shows that in fact very little has been changed and that those changes which have been made consist mainly of additions rather than alterations or wholesale rewriting. It seems doubtful whether a textbook can be kept satisfactorily up-to-date in this manner. However, it is still the best textbook that we have.

**Buttermere and Newlands Area.** By N. J. Soper & N. Allinson. (1970; Fell & Rock Climbing Club. 151 pp.).

**Eastern Craggs.** By H. Drasdo & N. J. Soper. (1969; Fell & Rock Climbing Club. 233 pp.).

**Snowdon South.** By Trevor Jones. (1970; Climbers' Club. 168 pp.).

**Cwm Silyn and Cwellyn.** By M. Yates & J. Perrin. (1971; Climbers' Club. 173 pp.).

It is interesting to compare these last guides in the Fell & Rock's current series with the first of the new Climbers' Club series. The formerly marked difference in approach to guidebook-writing, probably due to the violently contrasting ideas of Kelly in the Lakes and Archer Thomson in Wales, has now largely disappeared. In appearance, format and style the guides are largely indistinguishable. What differences remain relate to the amounts of peripheral information the guides contain, the Climbers' Club series being much superior in this respect with sections on history, geology, natural history and the S.N.P. (down there, this means the Snowdonia National Park). In this merging of two traditions of guidebook writing it is the subjectivity of the early Welsh guides which have gone by the board, although shreds of it remain in the form of a star-system of recommending routes in the Welsh guides. However, they nullify this (like the Fell & Rock) by coyly hiding the names of the originators of climbs in the end pages. What better guarantee of quality could there be than the names of Kirkus or Brown, Dolphin or Soper? This entire procedure seems to deny any place to the imagination of the pioneers. Surely a route is something more than just a way up a piece of rock?

However, for those who believe that a guidebook-writer's job should be more than just a careful recording of 'objective' details there are some comforts, particularly in the case of Soper's revision of the Buttermere guide. Soper remarks that he has been 'ruthless with poor climbs and outcrop climbs which the climber can find for himself,' that peg routes subsequently climbed free have been credited to the later party and concludes his introduction by thanking all those 'unsung heroes, few in number, who made horrible climbs and did not record them.' Though one might argue with Soper over this, at least he is not afraid to exercise his judgment in matters other than grading!

**Journals of Kindred Clubs.**—The year's bag of journals reaching this reviewer is rather small. The *Alpine Journal*, 1970 contains the usual collection of expedition reports and the like, now followed, for those who do not want to endure reading them, by brief summaries. Articles of more general interest include a stirring account of an ascent of the Salathé Wall by C. Jones, a commentary on some photographs of the Himalayas taken from Space by T. S. Blakeney, a history of the Theodulpass by Miss B. Harris, a piece on the Rockies hinterland of Calgary by B. Greenwood and an engrossing article on the early years of the G.H.M. by M. Damesme and T. de Lépiney, revealing their rather stringent points system of qualification. The Small Print contains some interesting snippets, such as an account of the Twentieth National Climbing Championship of the Soviet Union and the new Nepalese Rules Governing Mountaineering Expeditions (it now costs at least £250 to climb any of their peaks). J. O. M. Roberts, commenting on the situation there, remarks that the Japanese ski-ing expedition to Everest is 'nothing more than a stunt.' Maybe; but what then is the current International Expedition, of which the same Roberts is a leading member? An adventure? Possibly a commercial one.

Ian Clough contributes a fairly lengthy section on climbing in Scotland which is spoiled by an uncharacteristically snide comment to the effect that our climbers have been wasting their time in 'Glencoe and other popular areas' while the 'major summer explorations were carried out by English parties.' This is compounded by an anonymous reviewer later in the issue who describes Alastair Borthwick's classic *Always a Little Further*, as 'a

children's book' and an 'English' one at that. In pain, we pass on to *Ascent*, 1970 which maintains its position as the most beautiful of mountain glossies with a splendid issue featuring the sandstone buttes and spires of the Old West. Perhaps the best thing is 'The View from Deadhorse Point' by Chuck Pratt which contains much chill humour. *Oxford Mountaineering*, 1970 has fallen on hard financial times (a garishly tasteless advert for something called Tartan Bitter mocks the President's Report on the opposite page). The Journal is reduced to minute proportions. There is one article of Scottish interest by J. Winchester, dealing with Carnmore and Shenavall.

Also received: *The New Zealand Alpine Journal*, 1970; *Polar Record*, 1970; *Canadian Alpine Journal*, 1970; *Ladies Alpine Club Journal*, 1970; for all of which, many thanks.

R.N.C.



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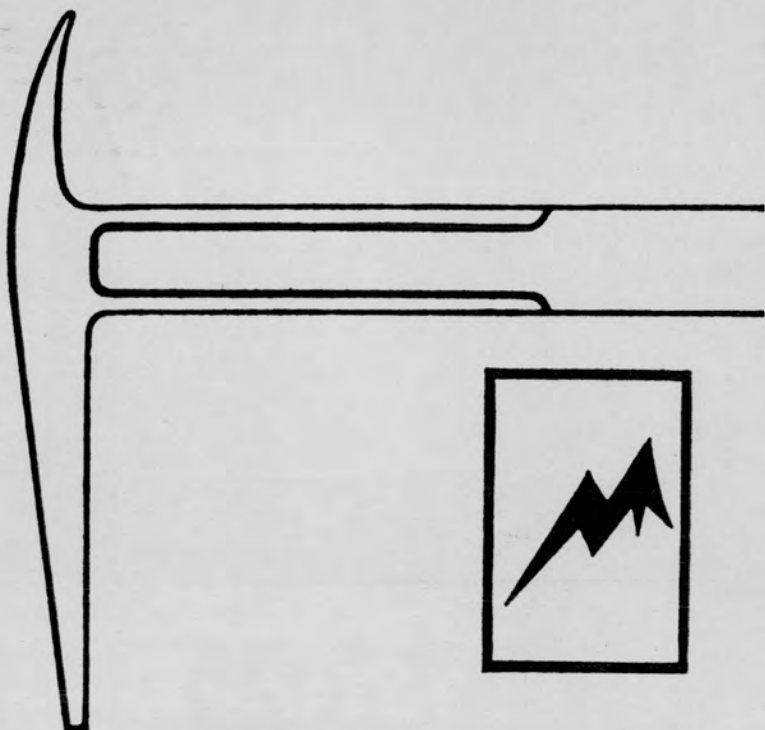
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