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SEVENTY FIVE NEW PENCE

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S.M.C. Archives
The Comb from the Ben Nevis Plateau in 1904.

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EDITORIAL

AFTER 11 years of toil, Geoff Dutton decided last year that the time had come for him and our Journal to go their separate ways. The issues which he edited reached a standard which only the very early Journals surpassed: one could not, of course, hope to scale these Inaccessible Heights—the times and the mountains are too enfeebled. But with the crude clay of the sixties, the Wizard of Glenshee performed his annual conjuring trick to produce a Journal which had something for everybody, occasionally everything for somebody and was always enlivened by Wit, spiced with Controversy and arranged with Taste. Let no one doubt his art: it is easier to turn a Toad into a Princess than a Squirrel MS into an Article!

Of course, he had assistance from some Worthy Contributors: it would be invidious to mention those who are still with us but of the ones who have gone, MacLennan, Patey and Smith stand out. We well remember how, as an idiot boy and a new member of the J.M.C.S., we received our first Journal on a bus meet to Glencoe 11 years ago and devoured it on the homeward run, marvelling at the uproarious humour of Patey's 'With Arne Randers Heen . . .', the chilling precision of Smith's 'The Bat and the Wicked' and MacLennan's biting satire in 'We Happy Few.'

To 'take over the bigger pencil' after it has been wielded so brilliantly is an unenviable lot. We are not totally unprepared, however. For the past few years we have been privileged to prepare the Wizard's spells, to help in the collection of suitable Toads and to witness the final transmogrification, usually carried out in seedy Dundee drinking-dens. Despite this, we still feel very much the Apprentice and while we find our feet, no doubt there will be much Slavish Imitation (perceptive readers will have noticed the significance of these capital letters!).

Editorials, as Dr Dutton remarked 11 years ago, are rare events and quite properly so in a Club Journal. Moreover, we have found

in the past that members do not always approve the intrusion of Editorial Opinions. However, once more we venture a foolish rush

It seems to us that mountaineers in Scotland face an unhappy future, that the Public and the Powers-That-Be are daily taking a greater and more sinister interest in our activities and that shortly we will be obliged to defend our rights to climb untrammelled by rules, regulations, mountain-bailiffs and the like. As we write this, there is a report before us of an attempt by the Welsh police to prevent climbers going onto Snowdon in icy conditions. In our own country, the Inverness-shire police seem only a step away from similar action. In the furore that followed last year's grim disaster on Cairngorm, Russell Johnston, a Liberal (!) M.P., suggested the establishment of a 'harbour-master of the hills.' In fact, the situation is not altogether new to us: one of our traditional climbing grounds was taken from us quite some time ago. The reasons merit close examination. In the early days of our Club, Harold Raeburn, W. Inglis Clark and others living in Edinburgh enjoyed many fine climbs on Salisbury Crags and elsewhere on Arthur's Seat. However, it became apparent that small boys often emulated the climbers and occasionally came to grief, involving the Park staff in hazardous rescue operations. Now, of course, climbing is banned on Arthur's Seat because of this. Those who believe that the Cairngorm disaster and others like it will not affect *bona fide* climbers (since they are easily distinguished from guided parties of small boys) show poor understanding of the workings of the Official Mind. We will be expected to Set a Good Example

Nor is it only in the sphere of freedom to choose our climbs that we must fear restriction. There are other forces menacing our sport which are much more subtle and complex but just as damaging in the end. Worst of all, they are active amongst ourselves. Already, our Salvationists too readily accept that to venture on mountains without map, compass, whistle, etc., is somehow *blameworthy* as well as foolhardy; equally, our Ultramontanes are prone to censure those who do not wear protective headgear or who disdain the rope. In short, what constitutes Adequate Equipment is subjected to constant revision and always in the same direction.

Mountaineering is a difficult and dangerous activity. In recent years the march of the peg and the bolt have taught us much about the fragile nature of the former attribute and shown us clearly that unless these contraptions are used with extreme discretion, climbs and mountains become emasculated. In future years it is possible that the second attribute may be shown to be equally fragile (and, of course, essential) and that only by the most discreet use of safety devices can that necessary element of danger survive. There are signs that the Ultramontane are aware of this possibility—solo ascents are becoming common, the reaction against the piton has

been extended to restrict its use as a means of protection as well as a means of progress. However, there is another, worse, possibility suggested by Harold Drasdo in a recent issue of the *Alpine Journal*. Drasdo observed that, as far as one could judge from available data, despite the general increase in the use of safety devices and precautions in recent years, the proportion of climbers involved in accidents had stubbornly refused to drop. The inference was obvious—safety factors are not to be sought in the quantity or quality of protective equipment but are constants in climbers' heads. If this is so, then to encumber our mountains with refuges and our bodies with paraphernalia is mere senseless and needless despoliation. As was pointed out by many of our members before and after the Cairngorm disaster, the building of summit shelters is two-edged—it may lead simply to climbers undertaking more dangerous expeditions, thereby defeating its original purpose. However, some of those who agreed with this reasoning suggested that climbers should carry radios. Can one doubt that this would be similarly two-edged?

As this last example shows, the issues here are complex and difficult to handle. Moreover, it is certainly not our intention here to suggest that these tendencies we have mentioned are anything other than the well intentioned efforts of men of good will. However, this does not make them any less sinister. Anyone who doubts this would do well to read Pete Sinclair's account in a recent issue of *Ascent*, the Journal of the Sierra Club, of how the purest of intentions led to the wholesale restriction of climbing in the Tetons.

Our Club has not been slow to show awareness of the threats to our mountains posed by Development and Progress. Nor is its record in the matter of Artificial Aids in any way a cause for concern. In addition, there have been recent initiatives by some of our members to conserve an essential element which we have not discussed here, the continuing existence of uncharted crags and undescribed mountains somewhere in Scotland. However, in the first case it is a national resource which is threatened and we have many allies and the second and third cases are more or less internal matters which can be settled by mountaineers alone. But the mountain eering values we have been discussing here, if seriously threatened, can be preserved only if we mountaineers ourselves are vigilant and loud in their defence and, a prospect as gruesome as the Northern Slopes of Cairngorm, must involve us in a kind of Politics.

This *Journal*, to its great credit, in the past has Minded its Own Business where it could. However, we fear that, as in the case of the regrettable Coruisk Affair, unless our members make their views known in advance, they will be disregarded. Accordingly, we invite discussion in these pages of these several threats to our mountain eering values and traditions.

SCOTLAND'S SEMI-PERMANENT SNOWS

By Gordon Manley

IN 1936 the International Union for Geodesy and Geophysics met in Edinburgh. At that time, in the Association for Scientific Hydrology, the Snow and Ice section was traditionally much concerned with Scandinavian and Alpine glaciers. Under the chairmanship of Gerald Seligman whose pioneer work 'Snow Structures and Ski Fields' had recently appeared, the British members present formed an Association which, since the war, has involved into the Glaciological Society with its well known *Journal of Glaciology* and international membership.

At that meeting Professor Ahlmann's work on the relationship of glaciers to climate was attracting much attention and it was recognised that the Scottish mountains lay in a critical position in which a very small climate change might have striking effects.

Ben Nevis in particular had long been known to be liable to harbour one or two snowdrifts throughout the year, and in the days of the Summit Observatory (1883-1904) these were regarded as permanent. That there were others, notably in the Garbh Choire of Braeriach in the Cairngorms, was also noted. The comments of the Reverend R. P. Dansey, an enthusiastic Fellow of the Royal Meteorological Society are noteworthy (*Symon's Meteorological Magazine* 1908). In many subsequent seasons the comments of Mr Seton Gordon of Duntuiln in Skye, another senior Fellow, have been much appreciated especially with regard to the Cairngorms; and among more recent active contributors to *Weather* (1965, 1970 et al.) Commander P. C. Spink's notes have been particularly welcome.

Continental students of glaciation were much interested in the observations from Ben Nevis, and in the persistence of occasional snow beds reported here and there from the smaller ranges of Central Europe, such as the Harz, the Black Forest, the Riesengebirge, the Tatra. Such summits as the Pic Carlitte in the Eastern Pyrenees sometimes carry a remnant of winter snow in a well-shaded gully throughout the year. Elsewhere, glaciologists find interest in the marginal existence of small ice-masses, such as the tiny Calderone glacier in the Apennines officially listed as such by the Italian Commission; elsewhere, examples can be found in the Colorado Rockies, the Rondane in Norway, the Helagsfjall in Sweden, the Picos de Europa in Northern Spain. The assembled evidence suggests that, given a sufficient winter snowfall, drifts can be expected to persist at an altitude where, through Ahlmann's ablation season (June - September), the overall mean temperature does not exceed about 5.5°C (Manley, 1949).

The conspicuous diminution of the mountain glaciers in many countries during the climatic amelioration of the first half of this century was a further stimulus to enquiry; and the report that in the late summer of 1933 Ben Nevis was entirely clear of snow for the first time since before 1840 revived interest in the possible effect of climatic fluctuations in Scotland. In the same year the Braeriach snowbed disappeared; according to the evidence, for the first time since before 1864.

In 1938 the present writer placed a Snow Book, on behalf of the newly-founded Association, in the Club's hut on Ben Nevis for the recording of comments on the state of the snow. Studies of the conditions on the mountain observed on his own visits since 1924, together with the results from the former Observatory and the many welcome notes by climbers led him (Manley 1949) to the view that under the prevailing climatic conditions a snow line would probably be found in the neighbourhood of Ben Nevis at about 5300 feet. By 1949 it had become evident that the most persistent snowbed, in the Observatory Gully at 3800 feet was not more than semi-permanent; it had disappeared, sometime in September, not only in 1933 but also in 1935, 1938, 1940 and 1945. Moreover, years of complete disappearance on Ben Nevis are for the most part years when the Braeriach remnant, at the same altitude in the Cairngorms, has also melted.

Bishop Pococke in 1760 rode past Ben Nevis on his way to Spean Bridge and recorded that 'snow lies in holes facing the north through out the year' and Wilkinson, on his tour in 1787, made a similar observation. The locations can be described: moving from left to right across the northern cliffs, a small snow patch lingers into September in some seasons at about 3450 feet near the foot of Point Five Gully beside Rubicon Wall; sometimes there is another at about 3550 feet near the foot of the Observatory Buttress; then comes the broad Observatory Gully, which above about 3800 feet divides into the Gardyloo and the Tower Gullies; the principal snowbed, and that which is most likely to survive through the year, lies on screes just below the convergence, about 600 feet below the summit, where the floor of the Observatory Gully is about 100 yards wide. In mid September the remaining mass of snow, lying under the East wall of the gully close to 3800 feet looks very small from a distance. But when visited, a toilsome matter, it is commonly a hard compacted mass whose surface slopes at about 30° 35° , about 40 yards wide and 40 - 50 yards long measured up-and-down the gully, and attaining four to five feet in depth at its exposed edge; this might perhaps imply a depth of six to seven feet in the centre. In September 1943 however it was estimated to be fifteen feet deep. It also appears to be undercut to a variable extent by the melt-water and the summer rain that comes down the bed of the gully from above, although much sinks into the scree. On each occasion

in September when I have visited it, one's boots scarcely sank in more than an inch; and obviously much of the rain that falls on the surface runs off quickly, as the surface runnels indicate. At times some of the melt-water that penetrates in April and May probably freezes again, as the mean April temperature at this level will average about -1°C , say 30°F . The density of the compacted remnant, which at the side can scarcely be dented by kicking, may lie as high as 0.6 (based on Seligman 1936). One is confronted by the question of how many years' accumulation would be needed to establish a glacier.

West of the Observatory Gully, beyond the Tower Ridge, are the several gullies (Nos. 2 to 5) along the back wall of Coire na Ciste, above the very small lochan at 2990 feet. After a cold summer, snow beds of some size may last through the year in these gullies, between 3200 - 3600 feet. This occurred in late September 1962 (mean temperature, June - September, about 1°C below normal).

Elsewhere around Ben Nevis, small drifts survive in many years at about 3900 feet just under the summit crags of Aonach Mòr, but here there is less opportunity for drift-accumulation than appears to be provided on Ben Nevis itself. On the west side of the summit plateau, at about 4000 feet, walkers using the path will often find a remnant in mid-August; but this lacks depth and will rarely last through the year. This is almost certainly the location of the snow-bed crossed by Keats on his ascent in August 1818. It was there on 23 August, 1961, but it had completely disappeared when the Royal Meteorological Society was represented at the memorial occasion on the summit on 28 July, 1969 (*Weather*, 24, 1969).

Discussion of the persistence of snow in Scotland can therefore be focussed on events in the Observatory Gully. Since 1933 Ben Nevis has been observed to be clear of snow in 1935, 1938, 1940, 1945, 1949 (virtually certain), 1953, 1958, 1959 and 1969; and it was evidently a very close thing in 1957, 1960 and 1970. In 1935 the mountain, as Dr Graham Macphie noted, was clear for a very few days after 28 September; in 1945 it appears to have been quite clear from about 20 September until 6 November or a little later. Strictly, the statement 'clear of snow' might need to be qualified in some years, as a small remnant, not visible from below, and quite probably ice, might linger close to the summit in the recesses of the narrow and very difficult Gardyloo gully, only to be noted by the very few climbers who tackle it.

Persistence of Snow: The Effect of Temperature

Direct radiation can play very little part in the melting. The gully is flanked by steep rocks, faces north, and probably less than one-eighth of the sky is visible. Ahlmann in his discussion of the Hoffellsjökull, in the cloudy wet climate of S.E. Iceland (*Geogr. Annaler*, 1939) considered that at lower levels 90% of the ablation

should be ascribed to convection and condensation, only 10% to radiation. On Ben Nevis which is exceptionally wet, very cloudy and almost always very humid, one may reasonably put the radiation-loss in the gully even lower. Even at midsummer direct sunshine is virtually absent.

	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D	Year
Mean	24.1	23.8	24.1	27.6	33.0	39.7	41.1	40.5	38.1	31.4	29.0	25.3	31.5
Diff.	15.0	15.2	15.9	16.6	16.3	15.7	15.5	15.5	15.3	15.0	14.7	14.7	

TABLE I.—Monthly means on Ben Nevis, 1884-1903 (Fahrenheit) and differences from Fort William.

Accordingly we might first investigate the probable variations in the mean temperature of the ablation, or melting season at a level 600 feet below the summit. From the old Observatory records summarized in Table I we learn that the mean annual temperature, 1884-1903, was 31.5°F and that the average lapse rate between Fort William and the Summit was 15.5°F, varying from 14.7° in November - December to 16.6° in April (Hann, 1911). All the earlier data are given in Fahrenheit degrees, and I have retained them here as they are adequate for the purpose of discussion. It is probable that for 1941-1970 the mean annual temperature on the summit stands slightly above the freezing point, although it has fallen a little since 1931-1960; over which the mean temperature was probably higher than that of any other thirty-year period since before 1600.

The mean temperature at the Observatory was above the freezing point from early May to early October. Making some allowance for the amelioration in more recent decades, the ablation or melting season at the level of the principal snowbed should prevail from late April to nearly the end of October. Further, as the ablation will depend so largely on the temperature of the air which is almost always very humid or saturated, its amount should be closely related to the excess of the mean temperature of the day, month or season above the freezing point.

To calculate, approximately, the accumulated temperature above 32°F for the ablation season at 3800 ft. for the years since the first reported disappearance of the snow in 1933 we can combine the records from Fort William, Fort Augustus and Onich, although none of these is quite continuous. Moreover, Onich is obviously affected in summer by the breeze up Loch Linnhe; Fort William has undergone a notable change of location, and Fort Augustus, lying inland, provides anomalies in anticyclonic weather. Hence, while

we can take account of the varying average lapse rate between spring and autumn, the results of such calculations must be quite rough, more particularly because the lapse rate with altitude also varies appreciably with the character of the individual month. Hence I have rounded them to whole degrees Fahrenheit in Table II.

Mean	1901-1930	42	
	1921-1950	44	
	1941-1970	48	
<hr/>			
Individual Years			
1933	51	Warm April, May, dry June, September.	
1935	44	Little accumulation, warm wet December.	
1938	45	Warm rainy March, cloudy wet summer.	
1940	48	Dry winter and spring, warm May and June, wet July.	
1945	47	Mild late winter, warmish cloudy wet summer.	
1949	50	Generally warm, exceptionally warm October.	
1953	46	Very dry March, wet warm May, dry warm June.	
1958	45	Warm June, warm September.	
1959	48	Very warm May, wettish warm June and July.	
1969	45	Very dry all later winter.	

TABLE II—Estimated accumulated temperatures in month-degrees F. above 32°F at 3800 feet. The means for the thirty-year periods are followed by values for the years when snow failed to last, to date of disappearance.

It nevertheless appears that at 3800 feet the mean accumulated temperature, in Fahrenheit month degrees over the period 1941-1970 averages 48. Positive values, and therefore melting, have been known to prevail in March (1938 and 1957), in several Aprils, in most Octobers, in a few Novembers (notably 1938 and 1953) and probably in December 1934. But in the seasons during which the snow has been recorded as melting completely, the accumulated temperature up to the date of disappearance was as low as 44 in 1935 and 1940, 45 in 1938 and 1969. On the other hand, snow was reported to have persisted through 1955 (52) and, almost certainly, through 1960 (54).

We may here take note of the published Meteorological Office monthly means for 1901-30, from which the calculated average accumulated temperature for that period is 42. The warmest seasons were 1921 (50) and 1914 (about 49); and according to report the snow never wholly disappeared.

In Table III below I have shown the differences in the mean temperature of the months over the periods 1884-1903 when the Observatory operated, 1901-30, and 1941-70, based on the Central England tables. While these differences will not be the exact equivalent of those applicable on a mountain-top in the West Highlands, the pattern will be broadly similar. The conspicuous rise in

the spring and autumn months is noteworthy; and there is general agreement with the rise in the accumulated temperature calculated from the nearest local observations.

	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D	Year
(a)	+1.3	+1.0	+0.8	0.0	+1.1	-0.9	-0.1	-0.1	-0.4	+1.3	-1.0	+1.3	+0.4
(b)	-0.4	-0.1	+1.0	+1.4	+0.9	+0.3	+0.3	+0.7	+0.8	+2.6	+0.2	+1.0	+0.8

TABLE III—Central England: Average temperature difference (a) 1901-30 minus 1884-1903 (b) 1941-70 minus 1884-1903 in degrees F.

The most significant feature arising from these calculations is that in the ten seasons since 1933 when the snow has definitely disappeared, the average accumulated temperature to the date of disappearance is fractionally below 48. Hence warmth is not the only operative factor.

Persistence of Snow: The Effect of Previous Accumulation

We must clearly take account of a second variable; the amount of snowfall. Inspection of the monthly rainfall data, together with the miscellaneous notes in the Snow Book with regard to the depth of snow on the summit quickly reveals that since 1933 the years in which the Observatory Gully snow bed has failed to last, although the accumulated temperatures of the ablation season has been below the average (1941-70), have been those in which the previous winter's snowfall has been deficient. In 1935 Dr Graham Macphee noted that early in January the summit was almost clear of snow, following an excessively rainy December which was probably the mildest on record. In 1938 it has already been mentioned that after a very rainy and warm March, followed by a dry April, the summit became almost clear in late April, whereas it is normally covered till early June. In 1953 and 1969 March was exceptionally dry, and we learn that in mid-April 1953 less than two feet of snow remained on the summit.

So far as we may rely on such manifestly approximate figures it becomes evident that the springtime accumulation of snow may be more significant than the summer warmth and humidity. Its persistence through the very warm dry August of 1947 (accumulated month-degrees, 57) may owe something to the adventitious occurrence of an avalanche in the Observatory Gully, reported in the Snow Book in mid April; and the exceptionally sunny and virtually rainless August, in the gully where radiation can be of little significance, probably had less effect on the snow than the normal rainy, humid and cloudy weather. Avalanches in late winter above Coire

na Ciste are quite common, but are less often mentioned in the Observatory Gully.

The normal manner of accumulation of snow should be discussed. On the summit the cover is described as intermittent in October; a lasting cover generally prevails from mid-November to the beginning of June. Data are given in the review of observations (*T.R.S.E.*, 43, 1905). Measurements were made from the Observatory on a post set up on the plateau, which is about 450 by 150 yards above 4300 feet, the longer dimension lying from ESE to WNW. The seasonal maximum depth was attained on April 15 as an average date; but in 20 years the maximum depth varied from 54 to 142 inches, at dates varying from March 9 to May 18. There were five years when snow was still measureable on July 1, but only once (in 1885) was it present on July 15. In mid-December, 1898, there was no snow to measure.

Now the average precipitation, as water, during the six months November - April is about 80 inches. If we make the reasonable assumption that 4/5 of the precipitation in those months on the summit falls as snow, and that as old or settled snow it soon attains a density of 0.3, this implies that about one third of the fall stays on the summit. With a preponderance of strong winds from between SSE and WSW we can assume that most of the remainder is drifted off the plateau, to accumulate somewhere in the lee of the north-facing crags, which drop immediately from the plateau and are largely made up of the Tower Ridge, the broad Observatory or No. 1 Gully with its upper branches, and the Observatory and North-East Buttresses. The horizontally-projected area of this north face, which drops 2000 feet at an average angle of 45° , is about four times as great (420×680 yards) as that of the summit plateau.

It is probable that at the beginning of the melting season, about the end of April, the depth of the snowfield in Observatory Gully described earlier is of the order of 35 feet. This estimate is based on an argument from the prevailing depth on the summit together with the remarks of observant climbers. As the gullies occupy roughly one quarter of the area to leeward of the summit into which, as the dominant wind is SW, snow must drift in large amount, it appears that about 50 inches water-equivalent is likely to be carried into them, the area of the gullies being roughly that of the summit plateau. With a density of 0.3 after settling, the drifting-snow accumulation might thus attain 14 feet. To this drift-snow we must add that which falls, remembering that, 600 feet below the summit, the proportion of the winter precipitation falling as dry snow will be a little less.

Assuming that a further 60 inches water-equivalent, that is three quarters of the winter half year's precipitation falls as snow it should give, after settling, a total of about 16 feet. Memory of the ascent of the Tower Ridge after a fresh snowfall supports the likeli-

hood of some additional drifting from the ridges as well as the summit. Hence while such estimates must be rough in the extreme, an accumulation in excess of 30 feet in the Observatory Gully by the end of April should not unreasonably be expected, and is in keeping with the prevailing impressions of climbers at that season, especially above Coire na Ciste. With such a mass of snow, compaction of the bottom layers with time to the estimated density of 0.6 that appears in the September remnant can be understood.

Lastly, Dr Macphée's remark in 1935 that forty years earlier in early summer there appeared to be much more snow on Ben Nevis is noteworthy; during the Observatory period, the average temperatures both in spring and autumn were lower.

The Rate of Ablation

This can likewise be estimated. In a most useful paper another Fellow of the Royal Meteorological Society, D. L. Champion (*Meteor. Mag.* **78**, 1950) analysed measurements made during the rather cloudy July of 1949 by a Durham University party, using stakes on the large drift at about 3700-4000 ft. in the depression NE of the summit of Ben Macdhui that lies above Loch Etchachan. Snow persists through some summers as Dr Patrick Baird showed in 1956, and this site appears likely to rank among the first half-dozen for persistence in Scotland. Mr Champion developed an equation which indicated a decrease in depth approximating to 1 cm./day per 1°C above the freezing point. Another series of measurements at 3650 ft. was discussed by Dr D. McVean (*Weather* **18**, 1963) and was made in 1961 in the same region, notably on the drift in Ciste Mhearidh a little NE of the summit of Cairngorm. These when reduced give an overall average, between late April and late July, of 1.2 cm./day per 1°C . Over the whole period the surface was lowered by 5.3 m. In warm weeks in July the rate of loss, 8-9 cm. daily, was very similar at both sites, which are much more open to the sky than the Observatory Gully; and the prevailing climate is less wet, and probably less cloudy. Hence an average of 1 cm./day/ $^{\circ}\text{C}$ might be reasonable on Ben Nevis; and through May to September with a mean temperature of 5.3° (which for comparison with previous calculations will provide an accumulated temperature of 48 month-degrees F) there should be a nominal lowering of the surface by 8 metres or nearly 27 feet. The effect of rain may be questioned, but with a slope of 30° - 35° the snow remains so hard just below the surface, into which one's boots only sink by an inch or so, that the rain largely runs off, as the surface runnels show.

Now there is considerable room for error in such very broad assumptions, but the figures are of the right order. They imply that if there is an adequate depth of snow at the beginning of the season it will survive; on the above assumptions, four to five feet or thereabouts would remain at the beginning of October, in agreement with

the evidence. In a cold October, further loss would probably be negligible. In a normal October, if there were no fresh snow, there should be a further decrease to about 3 feet; if October were very warm (2°C above normal) the remnant would probably melt.

If the late winter accumulation of snow gives a depth in the gully markedly less than that suggested above (27-30 feet) then even with a relatively cool season it is still likely to be removed. Taking 1935 as an example, the impression is gained that the end-of-April accumulation by drifting may only have been about half the average, and in 1938 it may have been less; never was so little snow seen on the mountain, according to the Easter climbers in that year.

In 1935 heavy drift-accumulation can scarcely have begun before January, as the summit was reported to be nearly clear after the warm December, and the January-April total precipitation was well below normal. Yet May was rather cold, but dry, and ablation was probably small. The final remnant of snow disappeared about 26 September. With a drift-accumulation half the normal, and a snowfall two-thirds of the normal, on the assumptions previously made, we should be left with 18 feet of settled snow to be removed in 118 days with 44 month-degrees F; and this, according to our estimate of 1 cm./day/ $^{\circ}\text{C}$ is almost exactly what could be expected. In 1938 there was an exceptionally warm and rainy March.

But in order that there should be enough snow to last through a season with as many as 54 month-degrees F., such as 1955 or 1960, which can be taken to imply a mean (May-September) of approximately 43°F , the depth of snow should attain about 31 feet, plus whatever is left at the beginning of October and an allowance for a little ablation in that month; a total of 37 feet might be reasonable. Such figures—say 37, 30 and 18—lie in fair relation to depth on the summit, already quoted. These can be supplemented by the scattered notes in the Snow Book of the summit depth, estimated by the extent to which the walls, about 10-11 feet high of the old Observatory remain visible. In some seasons the roof has been completely covered (June 1906, April 1925, April 1950 and 1962). Since 1938 there are estimates of the summit depth in 21 years taken between late February and mid-May, and they average seven feet. These estimates might suggest that the accumulation on the summit is not seriously less than in Victorian times; but the walls of the Observatory are not likely to provide a measure immediately comparable with the post of former days. There is now a small steel shelter about 70 yards from the Observatory standing by estimation between 4 and 5 feet high, and scattered notes indicate that the depth around the shelter is likely to be less than that adjacent to the Observatory, which probably affects the drifting unless it is completely covered. It is evident from the discussion of the original observations (*Trans. Roy. Soc. Edin.* 43, 1905) that the depth of snow over the summit was not uniform.

Other Scottish Snowbeds

Elsewhere in Scotland, the behaviour of the snowbed in the gully facing NE at the head of the Garbh Choir on Braeriach in the Cairngorms, is very similar to that in the Observatory Gully; it lies at the same altitude and accumulation is undoubtedly assisted by drifting from the plateau above. One learns that the circumstances of its survival have come under notice at the University of Aberdeen where Dr P. Baird's maintenance of a record of temperature for some months on Ben Macdhui in 1956 was a noteworthy pioneer effort. Dr A. S. Watt of the Botany School at Cambridge became much interested in the persistence of snow when studying snow patch vegetation in the Cairngorms in 1936, and his work has been followed by later botanists, for example Dr McVean (1963). The likelihood that in the 18th century there were for some time lasting accumulations in the Cairngorm corries visible from Aviemore has been considered by Dr Sugden working from the Aberdeen Geography Department; and notes are kept with regard to such locations as Coire Cas and Ciste Mhearaidh already mentioned.

I have no knowledge of the present state of play with regard to lasting accumulations of snow on Ben Wyvis, NW of Inverness; although in 1771 Pennant thought that snow was permanent. Neither altitude (3429 ft. at the summit) nor the circumstances of drifting lead one to think that persistence through the whole year is very likely today. Elsewhere in the Highlands Càrn Eige and Mam Soul, like Aonach Mòr, do not appear to have an adequately large summit drift-source.

Scrutiny of the temperatures prevailing through the last two centuries leads one to wonder whether any of the drifts in Scotland could have survived a season such as 1846, 1834 or 1798, unless perhaps the remnant from one or more earlier years' accumulations was large. Much clearly depends on the accumulation of the winter immediately preceding, which in turn must be greatly affected by the character of March and April. It is notable that the mean temperature of April has risen decidedly in recent decades, until about 1965. Unsettled chilly weather, with plenty of snow borne on strong westerly winds, is a product at that season of short track maritime polar air; over a longer period this will be an accompaniment of H. H. Lamb's eastward displacement of the mean location of upper troughs, borne out by his studies of the distribution of atmospheric pressure since 1760 and the relationship with the broader incidence of climatic fluctuations over Europe and the North Atlantic.

Possibilities of Glacier Revival

Over the past 40 years the snow has been far from permanent, and, assuming that Ben Nevis really has carried a snowpatch for a hundred years or so before 1933, the question arises for how long

and how much the climate would need to become colder in order that a glacier could be formed. Comparisons elsewhere indicate that, for a glacier to behave actively as such the ice thickness should be well in excess of 100 feet, perhaps approaching 150 feet. On the assumptions previously made and the records since 1903, we can estimate that the coolest summers such as 1907 or 1922 give an 'accumulated temperature' of about 32 month-degrees F. (or, a mean of 3.6°C which is fully 2°C below normal).

This would be sufficient to lower the surface of the principal snowbed by about 17 feet, and this would only be about half the depth available at the end of a snowy winter. Allowing a little for further compaction a snowbed 12-15 feet deep might be found remaining after a decidedly cold summer, with a length of between 100 and 120 yards. Hence a succession of about fifteen such summers, with further compaction of the firn into ice, might nominally build a glacier.

But nothing in our knowledge of the behaviour of the atmosphere from past instrument records allows us to contemplate such a continuous succession; apart from the fact that there might also be less snow. Were we to allow a fall of 1°C , which approximates to the departure of the springs and summers in the decade 1809-18 below today's average, we might require a minimum of the order of 30 years. There is no evidence that we have experienced such a lasting prevalence of cool summers in historic time. Undoubtedly there were groups of cool years in the 17th, 18th and early 19th centuries that had much consequence for the Alpine and Scandinavian glaciers, but their duration appears insufficient to lead to revival in Scotland. Without doubt however, there would be decades when remarkably persistent snowbeds would be observed at lower levels than today, not only on Ben Nevis but also, for example, in the great northern corries of the Cairngorms visible from Aviemore; or on Ben Wyvis even, we may presume, in Pennant's time.

In sum: the Scottish snows at present are not permanent; and, as the mean accumulated temperature of the summer months in years of known disappearance is equal to the present mean over 30 years (1941-70) we must seek the reason for persistence or otherwise in the amount of accumulation available at the end of the previous winter. In this the snowfall in March and April must play a large part, and therefore, the temperatures of April in particular appears to be critical.

Although these preliminary generalisations are perforce based on very varied, scattered and imperfect observations it is hoped that they may provide a stimulus to future investigations. What we need is more energetic young University men to make more and better measurements through several seasons for comparison. Nevertheless, this discussion would not have been possible without the observations recorded since 1938 by the many members and

guests of the Club that have contributed to better knowledge of the problem. Neither should we forget the remarkable achievement of Victorian Scotland, in those subscriptions from throughout the nation to the maintenance of a Ben Nevis observatory and its scientific output, to which we can still refer with profit. It was indeed a national accomplishment.

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[This article is a version of Professor Manley's article of the same title in *Weather*, November, 1971. Professor Manley wished to acknowledge the efforts of members over the years (in putting entries in the C.I.C. Hut Snow Book) in some way and to show them the fruits of their labours seemed a natural step. We are indebted to Professor Manley and to *Weather* (The Royal Meteorological Society) for permission to use the article—HON. ED.]

MADMAN'S TOUR

By Philip Gribbon

THERE was silence in the murk, but they shouted again into the dampness of the night. Big Shade fanned the lightbeam across the mist, and the falling rain glinted in streaks that sparkled in the blankness of the corrie. The Professor scowled inwardly, and huddled down further into the lee shelter of the big boulder. The east wind flung the rain untidily over their shoulders.

'ere, where's 'e gawrn?' Custard spoke in a tone of mock surprise and slouched lower, stamping his feet impatiently into the snow.

'Och, no. I'm fed up with this,' groaned the Professor, blowing through his wet fingers and running the back of his hand across his nostrils.

'Don't tell me we've lost 'im again.'

Big Shade said nothing, and switched out the torch.

It shouldn't end like this. We oughtn't to have left him, thought the Professor to himself, while he untied the drawstring of his rucksack, and digging in under the rope tangle he felt clammy fingered through the gear to get his private store of food scraps. Waiting was perfect. Returning to search the hill was another matter. Don't drop the sticky fragments for they're all I've got for dinner . . .

Incessant bad weather had not convinced him of its inevitable continuity. The slanting sun at morning banished all memories of the earlier storms. A new day inspired big things without a care for the future. It was better that way. None the less, what was his duvet doing lying in the tent? Or the lower half of his Helly Hansen waterproofs, left behind in unjustified optimism to contribute to the litter of the desolate campsite? The rainwater trickled off his upper half and soaked into his breeches. He shivered when it trickled too far.

Last night had promised stability: a clean washed speckled night, stained green with the shimmering auroral bands, with the half moon on an upward ecliptic path through the stars, a night that followed the rosebowl of serrated pinnacles sharp in sunset, with the Fang flushed with fire. Tonight promised little, save more discomfort.

If they had started off with inadequate time, then they deserved all the darkness they had got. Who would have predicted that the ridge would not have the usual obstacles and sneaks? Every mountain had provided something unexpected, and it was useless to imagine that it would not happen again. Too complacent, that's what we were, thought the Professor, too blasted carefree . . .

'Hell's teeth!' he swore. 'It ain't good enough.'

Custard nudged him with his elbow and scowled,

'ere, mate. You want to watch it. That's no sort o' talk.'

The torch beam snapped on, and outlined the expressionless faces frozen in its glow, faces that glistened in the streams of rain.

'What are we going to do about it?' asked Big Shade with a wide grin.

'Eh?' The Professor hesitated, and became evasive. 'I . . . I've been thinkin'. . .'

The other two remained silent, impassive. What could be done, except to wait?

Photograph opposite — P. Gribbon

P. Gribbon on Tour on Upervik Island, West Greenland.





'Let's give 'im a yell.' The Professor was impatient, and cold. 'He must be within distance.'

One, two, three.. They shouted together, their voices more a snarl of derision taunting the hidden cliffs as much as a call of support to their lost companion.

'Curr-rr-ris!'

'There y' are. Nothing!' It was if he didn't care about their predicament, he seemed so self-righteous. He peered along the line of the torch that tunnelled into the white curtain.

'Must 'ave fallen asleep. Jist . . .'

'Listen. Quiet a second.' Big Shade commanded obedience. They all heard the faint answering cry, somewhere high in the boulders. He must have completed the traverse above the cliffs. That was one hazard out of his way.

'He sounded a bit strange,' said Big Shade as he weighed up the information carried in the cry. 'Are . . yooo . . all . . right?' he shouted slowly.

Down the scree, the answer came faintly. It was tinged with pity. It was precise and far from encouraging. It was negative.

'F . . ff . . ,', whistled the Professor through his teeth.

'I'll go,' said Big Shade quietly.

The wall of mist swallowed up his long lanky figure, until only a glimmer marked his course as he climbed steadily uphill.

It's in my fingertips, mused the Professor to himself. Everything is going fine. No panic. It's all right. It always was, wasn't it? Of course, the sands run out, the chop comes Tonight is not the time, tomorrow is another day He began to hum a pop tune that ran into his head, and clicked his wet fingers over each other. Custard regarded him doubtfully. It was very quiet in the corrie.

Up on the ridge the wild wind scurried through the stones, calling to itself in every corner and whispering under the overhangs. Steadily the driven rain spattered on the lichened rocks in flurries of staccato wetness, creeping in flowing films into every recess. The black glutinous fronds of the rock tripe shuddered in the gusts eddying over the crest, and the tufted heads of the highland fleabane bent weakly into the turf under the impact of the storm.

How long, he thought, would the faint traces of the only people to climb along the ridge remain in the years to come? Footsteps, sweet papers, abseil loops, and then there were the two cairns at each end; the first cairn constructed under the threaded, spiralling summit bobbin where they had stopped to eat while the thin stratus

cloud spread over the shrinking sun, and the other cairn perched hurriedly on the cleft cap of the last tower as they raced against the cloak of night. The cairns would remain till the summits shattered, but the poly bags would fray and rust corrode the tin that contained their names, recorded in their unique moment of time. Huh, he grunted, an irrelevant gesture of supreme egoists written in their fading second of self fulfilment, and that mattered to no one . . . , except us.

Aye, he thought sadly, even the footsteps that they had so carefully kicked out along the steep snowbank would by now have melted in the rain. Ice axe holes prodded regularly into the snow beside their trail would have lasted better, but they had neglected to carry axes on a rock ridge. The experience of their absence had been useful. For what? Oh, the way in which the thin slices of the greasy chimney had tumbled out like dinnerplates and spun down past the last man . . . the last . . .

Soon he should appear, the Professor reminded himself, and raising his head over the top of the boulder he saw the pinpoint of the torch moving erratically down the mountainside.

The two figures came weaving and shuffling down the snow, wasting no time in their run for cover. They looked well, but something was wrong. In a flash of the torch he saw the fresh oiled gleam of gore over the hand.

'What 'appened?' the Professor enquired in a tone of impersonal sympathy.

He answered emphatically with a sarcastic tone of disgust,

'A bluidy great stone ran o'er mah 'and: I fell again on scree, an' then it got me from behind.'

Big Shade grabbed his wrist. He brought the torch nearer to have a closer inspection.

'It needs a guid bandage.'

This was obvious, and then with a sideways glance and a grin he added,

'It's your toorn to provide it.' The Professor's principle of democratic involvement for everyone on the expedition was being queried by his companion.

'Och, sure,' he grumbled, but dug into his rucksack to look for his personal first aid kit. 'Help yersel'. In a good cause.'

The rain ran red into the snow. Four faces, pale in haggard lines, surrounded the glow of the torch as they worked on the hand. Custard held the beam steady. The Professor and Big Shade busied themselves in winding the bandage round his hand and wrist. The victim accepted these attentions glumly.

'Reeal good job . . . we're doin' on th' doc, 'ere,' confided the Professor to Big Shade. 'This's the sort-o' thing that, ah, adds spice

to the day. Sure, just think, we might'a bin stuck out all night on the big ledge. It would'a been ruddy awful. Instead . . . , and he threw up his hands in glee, 'We've an epic gully descent in the dark. All good classic stuff.'

Big Shade laughed and nodded his head in agreement,
'Aye, most enjoyable. It's bin one o' th' best days o' th' trip.'

They meant completely what they said. Custard nodded his head in feigned disbelief. The last man was more forthright. He pulled his dressed hand away, and shook it at their faces.

'Bluidy madmen!'

Perhaps he was right

SONG OF AN UNFIT CLIMBER

I've been sick on Beinn Alligin's summit,
I've puked on the slopes of Beinn Eighe
And Slioch is crowned with my vomit
For such is the tribute I pay.

As, retching and wretched, I've stumbled
On Liathach's pinnacled crest,
I've proved, though my body is humbled,
My spirit is up with the best.

The agile and confident tiger
May cover a group of Munros
While planning a route on the Eiger
To spotlight that anything goes.

But who is the keener I question,
The hardened athlete in his prime
Or the man with the failing digestion
Who conquers both it and his climb.

D. J. Fraser.

SALSIPUEDES

By Yvon Chouinard

WE were walking over the avalanche debris of the Great Gully on our way to Crowberry when an ominous croak split the silence. Two black Ravens swooped over the Buachaille. Cunningham's words echoed in my head.

'Raven's the hardest climb in the Coe and you should do it if it's in good nick.'

We soloed up the perfect styrofoam, all the way to the first giant chockstone which we mounted with a mere couple of grunts. More perfect snow. When the next block offered resistance, it was promptly overkilled with 'cunning rope manoeuvres.' Authorization was Ian Clough's *Guide*, 'Speed is the critical factor . . . there is no need for an artificial code of rules . . .' Right on.

Up next, another barricade, with a dank belay cave. Leaning over the roof was a pillar ladder of meringue which collapsed with the tail man. We were already one pitch above it when we spotted Hamish's barefoot Exit going to the left. Going back meant having to lose out to that last motha chock. Anyhow it was pretty secure being in the slit, and higher up looked even darker and quieter.

Escape was now defined in a fading shaft of light coming over a Great Stone stuck between two icy walls. The verglas was too thick for boots and too thin for crampons while the distance between the walls was a bridge—or more. The game was to maximize your body and scratch up as high as you could before your legs gave. At least there was a nice soft snow bottom to the chimney. Spread eagling with his crampons, Doug managed ten feet before he jumped. Trying a Nureyev split, I did fifteen and lost it. Doug got to twenty and . . . at thirty feet the tip of a knifeblade held for a tie-off just before my legs accorded. The thin ray of light was growing faint as I was winched up to the peg for one last effort. Taking a wee rest in a sling I swore that next time I came back to the Scottish Winter I'd be better fit for climbing *rock*! The next thirty feet to the stone was indeed a shaky endeavour.

All that was left now was the slot that Hamish had slept under on his solo. Tompkins attacked the thin ice and powder snow with tied off screws and delicate body English. After what seemed an hour a long AHOOYA! We weren't on Top but we were OUT!

[Like that other gifted Californian mountaineer Royal Robbins (cf. *S.M.C.J.*, 1969, xxix, 139) Yvon Chouinard has much enjoyed his visits here. The above piece describes his first winter ascent of Cunningham's Direct Finish to Raven's Gully—HON. ED.]

PINK ELEPHANTS IN THE BLACK SHOOT

'THE Black Shoot of Beinn Eunaich?'

'You're right in tune,' said the Old Man past his umpteenth pint.

The Squirrels' Annual 'Dinner' was going its pleasantly predictable way. Another year and another place, Oban, but the bar atmosphere and long-familiar faces open a door down through the years and we remember old heroic drinking bouts and I forget my present rust-clogged thrapple and founder in a Corryvreckan of weak liquor. But the memory of the Old Man's words is locked fast.

Not only the morning is grey. Heavy clouds blanket the tops of men and mountains impartially. As we lurch up the Glen Strae track the Old Man tells a Story from his Young Days. In 1950, he had been walking up the same track with a companion, whiling away the dreary miles by playing a form of cricket with his ice-axe, when he met Willie Ling returning from the scene of Unna's accident the day before and naturally in a somewhat sour humour.

'Young man,' said Ling sternly, 'that is an Ice-axe, not a Cricket Bat. Treat it with the respect that it deserves.'

Ling then gave the Young Man some instruction in the Proper Way to Carry an Axe and passed on down the track. The Old Man in his morbid way points out the approximate site of the Unna accident and acts out this pointless story with enthusiastic cover drives and towering six-hits over Beinn Lurachan. Fortunately he doesn't have his ice-axe with him so that no graves are disturbed.

We plouter up the corrie towards Beinn Eunaich, fouling the air with our stale breath. Over on the left there's a scruffy crag peeping through a shroud of vegetation. This seems to mean nothing so we thrash on into the upper corrie to stare in disbelief at the Salvationist summit slopes.

'It must go up that scruffy little crag back down there. Imagine. Bell made a *rock climb* there.'

The significance of its name, the Beaver Buttress, sinks in as we picture the Subtle Doctor gnawing his way from branch to branch.

Soon the Black Shoot presents itself. The first pitch, a concoction of greasy flakes and saturated curtains of turf, flavours our light-headed mood with a pinch of anxiety.

'It was your idea,' says the Old Man, proffering the end of his appropriately ancient rope.

We stumble about for a bit, fumbling grannies into bowlines, shaking fuzzy heads over the topological puzzles presented by the rope. Eventually all is prepared and I kick my way ponderously up the turf, pushing-not-pulling past the greasy flakes. As the Old Man grumbles up it starts to snow heavily and soon we see nothing but the black slit of the Shoot twisting up above us.

'A real period piece,' says the Old Man with relish.

Greek meets Greek as he sloshes off up the Shoot, digging mitten and boot deep in the snowy mush. I find him again sniggering below the first chimney pitch, going on about how funny it is climbing when you're drunk, how you don't really worry about the climb, how you can't see the simplest little move and so forth. My Sense of History is much stimulated by this pitch. The climb itself is like an old book, long unread, its covers mouldering, its binding cracked. The chimney's walls and chockstones wear a thin coat of soft green lichen. A tiny stream gurgles and drips melancholy accompaniment to my staccato dither and lurch. Here the early Ultramontane chose to make their first mainland foray. For two years their stout attacks were beaten back by this twisting chimney, their tweeds torn and muddied, their pipes comprehensively extinguished, their hip-flasks mangled and crushed beyond all hope of repair, but their spirits undamaged.

There are really two chimneys: the first is commodious, well furnished with chockstones and stances, but dies at an overhang; above and to the right the very narrow second chimney starts abruptly. The intervening ten feet or so provides the crux of the pitch. I poke and prod at it while the time goes by. I cannot see the simplest little move, though naturally I'm not at all worried, not even by the sniggering Old Man down below. At length the scales fall from my eyes and the narrow chimney is gained by an impressive pull-up with the right knee. Above this a chockstone, garnished with a malodorous hemp sling which parts at a touch, gets in the way and the pitch ends with a mantlesheff onto my rump to gain a large ledge on the left. Here, as we discovered later, the intrepid Gibson, making the first ascent in 1892, had thought that the Black Shoot had finally shot its bolt but soon found that the easy-looking wall behind was most deceptive and after many vain attempts led his party back into the disgusting chimney and on to victory.

The Old Man joins me on the large ledge and fixes the wall behind with his somewhat bloodshot Eye of Faith.

'Up this easy wee wall, eh?' he says, moving purposely up the lower holds.

Time passes and the light grows dim, while History Repeats Itself as the Old Man moves like a crab across the wall, looking for a line in the snowy swirl. Sure enough, down he comes and puffs and grunts his way up the chimney and out of sight. The chimney is almost a sobering experience as sloping greasy mantlesheff follows sloping greasy mantlesheff, each one knocking the breath in and out of us in great gulps and whoops. The climb finishes as it began, with a wall of turf and loose flakes now buried in snow and dark inscrutability.

Down the long complicated slopes to Glen Strae we stagger, jumping small cliffs and sidling round the bigger ones.

'Unna fell over one of these. Probably in the dark, too,' says the Old Man.

'Treacherous stuff, this new snow lying on grass. There might be patches of old ice, even,' he adds hopefully.

But all is well and we are soon zipping down Strathfillan in his sporty little Alfa, roaring round the bends and careering past fish-lorries. He takes time off driving to enliven the long dull straights with more tales from his Young Days about how he almost hit this bridge and how he bounced off that boulder trying to take the bend at eighty and so on.

'I don't feel very well,' I venture tentatively.

'Never mind,' he says, 'We'll stop off at Strathyre for a few pints and you'll be right as rain again.'

OLD HOOLIGANS

THE folksong of the North-east, as we remarked in an earlier issue, is by no means dead; we printed then a current lament for the alterations to Lagan-garbh (*S.M.C.J.*, 1966, xxviii, 204). We print below another one, equally anonymous and likewise deprecating changes in the climbing environment. It was presumably composed by an old respected member, one of those many who feel that the ways of the Younger Generation, as manifest in their equipment, climbs, letters, articles in the *Journal*, and behaviour generally, are not altogether worthy of the best traditions of our National Club. There has indeed, he feels, been a falling-off from the standards laid down by Professor Ramsay (*S.M.C.J.*, 1964, xxviii, 20), and from these unpretentious lines we can sympathise with his bewilderment at the present scene.

The tune, of course, is that of *Nicky Tams*, suitably soured.

When I wis barely ten year auld I climbed ma first Munraw
Afore that I wis seventeen I'd done the Ben in snaw,
An efter that—the climbs I did—I canna coont them here . . .
I wonder hoo I did them aa, withoot ma Modern Gear.

We early faithers o the Club we had but raip an axe,
Braw tricounis on oor buits, guid jaickets on oor backs,
Oor pooches, aye, were deep eneuch, we'd naethin there tae fear—
I masel nicht weel hae bocht twa ton o Modern Gear.

The trash it wasna thocht o then, way back in ninety fower,
We only pu'd a piton yince, tae brak the Clubhooose door,
An six o us could cram a howff wi whisky an guid cheer—
We'd muckle room eneuch for that, withoot yon Modern Gear.

Nae tents, nae pids d'elephants, nae nonsense o that kin',
Nae fifi hooks, nae descendeurs, nae prusiks crossed oor min',
We had oor hauns, we had oor feet, they served us mony a year—
Until thae sneeshers cam along wi aa their Modern Gear.

An noo I'm juist frae oot yon Shop, I'm staunin' like a fule,
 Haudin three great paircels, in a gey lang reid cagoule,
 I'll never get tae rax ma hill, still less a Haird Severe—
 O man, whit bonnie times we had, withoot this Modern Gear.

For we were honest climbers then, could drink an fecht at need,
 Could ranty oot the polis wi young Raeburn at oor heid,
 But the Club it's fell degradit noo, it gets waur ilka year—
 Oor heritage is sappit oot by aa this Modern Gear.

They hae tae calculate, forbye, they daurna climb it free,
 They hae tae work it oot, ye ken, tae chairge the B.B.C.,
 They're nae the men that we were, they canna even sweir,
 Thae daumned Intellectuals wi aa their Modern Gear.

collected by

G.J.F.D.

A BLINDER OF A DAY

By W. Skidmore

THE heat was on. It came from a week of sun and five weeks' obsessive worry that perhaps 'they' had returned for the sling in the corner. So now it is goodbye to the ranks of those free to criticize others for competitive attitudes.

The month previous to this I had been on what was intended to be a non-climbing family holiday on Arran over on the safe side of the island, but during a solo prowling under the Nuis and Tarsuinn cliffs I remembered a Kingshouse whisper about some fiendish unclimbed crack-line round the left edge of the Meadow Face. Carrington and Higgins were the names dropped from deadpan lips. I wandered round in a sceptical frame of mind because I knew the face well enough from a few years back and couldn't believe we had missed seeing anything to justify a fuss. I passed under the great edge and there it was.

Why one look should sometimes be enough for a line to turn me on I can't say, but this is precisely what happened this time as I gazed up at the backward-curving corner-crack soaring in a single leap of three hundred feet to a big hanging recess another hundred high. It looked very hard indeed but this, for the moment anyway, was of secondary importance to the stark challenge of the thing. Straight forward or desperate, this was for me: think of lines like Yo-yo and Centurion and you have the syndrome.

The orange sling hung above a grass ledge just left of the corner at something like a hundred feet from the deck. What had stopped

Opposite and overleaf.

R. N. Campbell

Two aspects of the Meadow Face, Beinn Tarsuinn. The Blinder follows the obvious corner on the photograph opposite.





them? Then I saw the wee roof at the start of the second pitch and the apparently holdless walls, and I knew. The entire corner has the same psychological drawback as the aforementioned Yo-yo in Glencoe in that it is possible to climb the slope to the side and look right into the fearful problems which await you. This gives the mind plenty of scope to run wild and frighten itself off for home. I went back to my family holiday and started scheming because my very own captive tiger was coming to visit us the following week.

This specimen, an English Marshall called Des, floated over for his first visit to Arran by way of relaxation before heading for the Alps. A real bomber in his Lakes, I had high hopes of some great routes when he got to grips with the old granite, but all at sea he floundered in the daftest places, so I had to spend a few days breaking him in to this foreign material before steering him up to the Meadow Face for big licks.

Des was suitably impressed by the crack and up he rushed sticking in chock runners at high speed all over the place as the English are wont to do, and then he claimed fatigue and wanted lowering off for a rest. I took my turn but as usual the vital push was missing in the company of a talented leader and only managed a few more feet and another good runner (it's contagious) before backing out and handing over to Des. This time he went like a bomb over the hard bits and soon he was flapping leftwards onto the beckoning ledge with its orange sling bait. Then the jitters moved in and noises about insecure ledges and lousy peg belays came down the corner to demoralise the only person in sight—me. The fight had gone from us both as I climbed up removing gear before roping off the final chock because Des had convinced me that his ledge was certain death and one of us might as well survive. He came down from the sling and its pegs in a froth of fear and we felt lucky to be alive before stuffing the gear and going for ridge walks and great views from the Nuis summit. Des left for his Alps while I returned to breadwinning and worrying.

Now over a month later, inspiration had returned with a week of dry weather and everything seemed set for a determined attempt before the winter rains and overtime arrived. Down for the Friday night boat straight from work we went, Black Jim and I, to sit on the rail in the evening sunshine looking very casual but scanning the pier for any opposition.

'If Con and Rab appear, you take Con and I'll take Rab,' said Jim, a known pacifist. He is also the World's Best Second in Scotland and can be trusted never to complain or look fearful at the leader's antics. This only applies on the actual climb. I find I climb best with a confirmed competent second because, apart from the confidence factor, when the onus is on me to get up or it's no route, the temptation to back off and hand over the lead doesn't normally exist. This suits me fine.

Even before the boat hit Brodick our plan to be dedicated and go up the hill that very night was being undermined by talk of a visit to The Ormidale for pints. That would be the end. We had never managed to pass it before, this place, a haven for climbers, campers, cowboys, drop-outs and drop-deads all mixed up in a beer-swigging mass so that it was hard to tell the difference unless the man Fisher, the Boss, spoke to somebody and he only spoke to real climbers. But fate took a hand with the appearance at the pier of Bill Wallace with that rare piece of Arran climbers' gear, a car. Right past The Ormidale he went, callous pathologist that he is, up Glen Rosa to send us into the setting sun for great deeds while he went back to play tennis with his wife. Black Jim moaned all the way up to the corrie so I carried the tent for fear of a total stoppage.

'Never again,' said Jim, lying shattered on the dark corrie floor so as to make me pitch the tent as well. Corn or no corn, when all the stars came out it was marvellous up there and we fell asleep to the sound of roaring stags.

The dawn was faultless and even the Meadow Face soaring up from the main guy line looked attractive as we lazed around for a few hours. Already too hot for big boots, we padded up in sandshoes hard under the face to the corner and there it was with the sling intact and still in the shade. In shirt sleeves for the first time that summer I started up with nerves as tight as any top rope to hit form right on cue and make light of the cruxes to arrive on the dreaded ledge feeling quite chirpy. A great pitch. A look round left revealed a shy sideways spike which cheered things even further since someone else's pegs are always suspect. Tied to everything, Jim came up at top speed and we swopped places before the great mood had a chance to fly away for the next fearful-looking pitch.

The sun looked round the edge and changed our saliva into gum and the soil I was digging out into dust to fill our eyes. A big shaky peg planted for the gardening allowed me to reach up and flip a chock into the crack above the wee roof and I trembled up and over looking for holds which had never been made. A strong feeling came over me that any attempt to rush this bit free would end in a runner-testing session, which is fine if you have good runners, so in went another chock for pulls until I could bridge across the corner on something like a hold on the left wall ten feet above the roof. The target was another ten feet above me, a clump of grass with promises of a stance. A couple of violent moves and I had my hands on the grass only straightaway I was going to come off on my ear unless holds appeared. They didn't but my tearing at the turf where the crack vanished into it uncovered a tapered notch which the Moac people must have had in mind. A good rest and I was on the grass by a hard move to the left. This wasn't my kind of stance, I like them bigger, but thirty feet higher I pulled into a welcome

recess and drove in a good peg for bringing up Jim, who by this time was almost burned alive on his ledge. Using the old sling and pegs he tensioned into the corner and followed up removing the gear on a good firm rope.

Dehydration and a diet of granite chips made speech a painful whisper but the mutual message was that this was no joke and haste was urgent to forestall lethargy. The groove above was just hard enough until it turned to grass which I thrashed and clutched my way up with a peg runner to a dead-stop overhang. I dived into the little recess underneath to give the upper half of my body some respite from the sun while considering tactics. Leaning out on a downward-pointing spike I reached over the top for nothing and only shattered myself into a quick return dive for the shady nook. Almost demoralised, I was vaguely aware of Indians lining the ridge eyeballing us as I lay screwing down my mind for a big effort and I wished the ridge and the Indians would all fall down and leave me to my misery. Leaning out again in a arm-scraping to the elbow position and ignoring non-existent holds I managed to clean out a head-size chockstone and after the usual six tape-threading failures (rope is better) a foot loop was made and sufficient height won to reach a side hold away over the top, and I made it. Sweating blood I charged on a few more feet and suddenly and blissfully found myself in a quiet cool cave full of belays and a stance. The abrupt transition from the overheated anarchy below was remarkable and I almost enjoyed a cigarette between dry caked lips while arranging a failsafe belay for poor Jim. Quite lightheaded now from heat and effort I brought him up and he was in much the same condition, plus feeling sick, and my right hand kept snapping shut in weird cramp and had to be levered open with the left for moving in the ropes and we are never happy.

Somewhat revived by the shade, the next pitch was one of the finest chimneys I can recall in Arran. A revolving chockstone at half-height added interest to the back and knee work and I fairly shot out onto the grassy floor of the big hanging recess to measure my length in a wallow of almost certain victory. Eventually Jim was summoned and his harsh gasping amplified from the depths took my mind off that hand still snapping into a useless ball at regular intervals.

Now the back of the recess is really a pile of giant boulders which in Arran should mean a through-route but if one exists it escaped me completely. This meant taking the chimney in the left-hand corner or the one in the right-hand corner and since the left specimen was obviously impossible (unknown to us it is the V-Diff exit used by the Curtis & Townsend party in 1944 to quit the recess, alias Hanging Gully, which they gained via a hole in the floor from a cunning traverse onto the face—what a team!), I went into the right-hand one. Soon I was all-in-wrestling up what had

looked quite easy from below but wasn't and then all progress ceased in the face of a nasty boulder overhang which threatened to shatter my happy thoughts of success, even at this stage in the game. My mind seemed to be wandering and my awkward position under the bulge was beginning to get that permanent feeling when I realised that a superb notch above my head might as well have a chock in it as doing nothing. This done, a kind of bridging move onto the left wall allowed a return of balance and my troubles vanished with returning confidence as I reached up and curled all fingers round a nice sharp edge for the final pull. A broken groove followed and it was all over except for Jim who prusiked up feeling too shattered for fancy bridge moves.

'Never again,' he said, lying flat out at the top so as to make me coil the ropes.

The tent, out of sight throughout the climb, now appeared on the green corrie floor and added to the pleasure of drifting slowly down the side back to our sandshoes. My own thoughts were of honour restored for certain past failures on the Meadow Face and so I unthinkingly extracted a chocolate bar from my rucksack and pushed it whole into my mouth. It stuck horribly at the back of my dry throat and stayed there until washed down on arrival at the tent. Many brews later it was heads down for the big sleep but I couldn't because I was so uptight still fighting five cruxes and I needed a pint, which was a laugh.

A glorious morning of alternate sun and mist sent me galloping round the corrie with the camera and keeping ahead of a squadron of midges. Other lines up my sleeve would have to wait another day because we were old and stiff and the Sunday boat leaves too early for climbers intent on working in a few pints to finish off the weekend. A leisurely retreat down the hill keeping our cool in the low mist and soon enough we were resting in the Rosa Burn when two cross-country cyclists ramshackled past in boots and camping gear flattening back tyres. It was Tennent and Chalmers with eyes fixed on the granite so I hailed them as our first humans in two days because I had to tell somebody about our route. Feeling better we quickly burned up the road into Brodick where three pints on empty stomachs numbed sore feet and shoulders in no time. Jim took my pack along to the pier to make up for what he hadn't carried on the hill while I floated up to Bill Wallace's cottage to make sure he wouldn't call out the rescue team about Tuesday if I didn't look in.

'What about the big edge itself' he said, sticking a plastic bag of fresh fish in my hand as a reward and waving me off to the pier. We both dozed off up on the top deck in the warm breeze and that night even a great thunderstorm moving down the Clyde failed to waken me completely, but I remember sparing a thought for Tennent and Chalmers in their little tent in Glen Rosa.

HOW THEY SPEAK

EARLIER in this issue we print a ballad bemoaning the complexities in climbing technique described in contemporary articles. But similar gymnastics, according to certain sober members of the Club, deface the very prose of those articles and—even more so—the so-called 'verse' often accompanying them. Have we no standards? We are therefore forced to print the artificial *sestogrado* below, along a tedious and quite unnatural line, with a cradle belay to begin the 4th pitch, a holdless crux on the 5th and a strenuous but easier exit—though the last hold looks a little untrustworthy.

I suppose you might well ask
why the complete inconsequence
of the thing, why
for instance leave such a task

serious Sirjohn as life
itself and potentially
as complicated to
frivolously brief

(and badly rhymed) ellipsis.
See the long expeditions
wind the deliberate heights
all to observe the eclipses

(O.K.?) of sun or moon,
rationalising obscurity.
That (and the view) one can
understand. But not those lun-

atics tied up there by their stomachs
to incomprehensible dangerous
impudent careless and quite
unnecessary gimmicks.

Egotistical failures
disgracing a healthy sport.
Whatever would Raeburn have said.

O my big hobnailures.

G.J.F.D.

LEAN TO THE LEFT A LITTLE.....

By R. Schipper

AS ALL good lying fairy-stories begin . . . once upon a Long Red Streak, keep going left for about a week, as was originally penned by Herr Bumble Führer Robertson many campaigns ago. Thus it came about that, with a few well known phrases and sayings, the Wee Fellow (Lep, for short) and myself, Clog (for protection) came upon the famous Etive Slabs, with its guardian tombstone strangely empty of bearers.

After much conjecture and reference to our paper of words, the Wee Fellow began sidling across an area of slab towards a way known as Spartan Motoroad—indeed this is luxurious, providing many passing places and picnic areas.

It was now my turn to tow the umbilias almost to its full length to gain a most favourable picnic area high up on Spartan Road. Lep cruised past in overdrive, his evil grin later manifesting itself above me as he peered across the barren area to his right.

Here we took a slip-road and began leaning a little—what gentle art can I employ? After fixing a runner (misnamed due to the fact that they sometimes remain in place) I began inadvertently to go downhill. Lep in the meantime observed my intent and began to dance up and down on his picnic area. Some short time later I became installed on a Waiting Room not far from the ways known as Full Stop and Bonnifaces Folly (alias—What a Long Wait). Your man Lep then began these series of downward looping motions until, all the while referring to his own choice words, he joined me on the Bench.

After much casting about for the continuance of this Long Red Streak we re-housed our eyes and it was then my turn to sell out the umbilias to the horizontally-padding Lep. Half an umbilial later his lateral motion ceased within an area where apparently few feet had attempted to come to grips with the surrounding illusions. The stage was now set, though little could be said for the actors' lines. He was sweating on nothing, making holds grow big in vain. I was sitting comfortably, judicious on the Bench, warming myself with my own good fortune when my reveries were disturbed by the request for a top umbilias. Weighing up the alternatives there was little else I could do but comply, as descent was out of the question, one end of the cord still being fastened to the Wee Fellow, and the chance of him relinquishing his possession of it seemed minimal.

In tying Lep off to the Bench I absolved myself of one responsibility the other I kept securely withheld as my disturbed feet vibrated their way to a position above the prisoner, who joined me after much severing, unknottng and reuniting of umbilias.

Still in a confused condition the cord was taken leftwards to join that fine freeway, Agony, so named by J.C. who had use for many of the thorns in his crown that day.

Above this slab lay an abrupt steepening in the panorama, indeed a hideously overhanging corner-crack which needs to be attacked by magical powers of elevation. Those magical powers consisted of a series of threatening motions towards the crack with a shillelagh-shaped object in one hand, alternately dangling in leg bandages whilst ruminating through a collection of leppers, bangles and bongos. However, the reality eventually faded only to lead to an uncomfortable picnic area in leg bandages.

Now the difference in height between a Lep and a Clog is great as everyone knows, so your man after much bangle, dangle and thwack, accompanied by such outpourings as you would hear from an Orangeman's last night out in the Falls Road, arrives on the picnic area six feet taller.

'Look to the left,' says I. Says he with a sidelong glance,

'It's steep,' almost shrinking back to his original size. For this was the slab of Stammer, he stuttered. Two tied-off rurps, the words went. For protection. Well, here Lep did a very wise thing. As he could see the cracks the rurps had been tied on by, he hammered two good bangles and a knife-handle in to bring his pulse rate down, and assure his passage off the slab and into the comfortable corner, down to a superb passing place and picnic area.

After quelling a certain amount of trepidation and fear I set off, removing the attractive adornments Lep had placed on the slab, which, by their removal transformed the surroundings to an atmosphere of oppressive hostility, which I was glad to swing out of eventually into the corner.

Now, as all good lying fairy stories end . . .

'Did you feel a drop?'

'Aye.'

'Did you?'

'Let's get the hell out of here!'

[The climb 'described' is apparently Brian Robertson's Thin Red Line on the Trilleachan Slabs. The author's companion was S. Crymble—HON. ED.].

AN AFRICAN SAFARI

By Hamish M. Brown

TOURIST Class P. & O. to Cape Town is a sure way of arriving unfit for climbing. We landed on a Friday morning and by the evening were with the Mountain Club. After films we went to a flat. The members were preparing for Patagonia. Someone came in dressed in shorts and waist-line (standard November dress). They'd gone straight from the office, up the street, onto Table Mountain—just like that. It is like having several cliffs as near as the C.I.C. Hut is to the Nevis cliffs. The difference is, snow on Table Mountain is headline news.

We spent a day exploring 'the Mountain': walking up from Constantia Nek to join a Club Meet for rock climbing on the ranging buttresses of the Twelve Apostles. They have a hut on the complex plateau; 200 yards away is the hut of the non-white club.

Racial matters, apartheid, cannot be avoided; in the long run South Africa is only a marvellous country if you are white and wear blinkers. Equally, north of the Zambezi, discrimination works the other way and Anglo-Scottish clan feeling is a shadow compared to the tribal rivalries of the continent.

South African climbing is necessarily insular as citizens are denied entry to East African countries where the snowy mountains are found and the country is a long way from other worthwhile ranges. For both straight rock-climbing or rough mountain travel and walking however, it is blessed with an abundance of good things—and weather to match. North of the Zambesi there are bigger mountains and ranges, but the Africans do not take part in climbing to the extent of expatriate Europeans—who are often working on two-year contracts with the insecurity of renewing residential permits. So clubs in Central or East Africa have a very rapid turnover of members. Only the Mountain Club of Kenya seems to be really thriving, but all were extremely hospitable.

One disadvantage of African mountains is the vast distances between them. From Table Mountain, the showpiece of Cape Town, to the Drakensberg, the highest 'peaks,' will take a day, a night and another day by train. Further north distances are as big but services are slow and incredibly inefficient. You either fly (which cuts down gear) or travel hopefully and slowly.

Table Mountain (only 3563 ft.) has over 200 routes alone while Cape Province has probably a score of ranges, up to twice that height, each the equivalent of several Table Mountains in scope. They are not 'peaks' as we know them: often they are high plateaux, riven by gorges and skirted by vast faces of rock; an accessible playground for the tiger as most can be reached in a day by car.

The Drakensberg are off the Durban-Johannesburg route (as are many of the historic sites) and follow the same pattern. Approaching the Royal Natal National Park we could see this bluff reaching the full extent of the horizon. It's hard to grasp the scale of a wall, sometimes vertical, and up to 3000 feet high running the equivalent of Perth to Inverness! The rim is not regular, of course, but cut up into towers and spires and fanciful configurations. We went up with five days food from the vast Amphitheatre, quite a pech up over 5000 ft. of height. Our intended traverse flopped as the rain poured down for days on end instead of the normal afternoon's thunderstorm. We navigated up Mont aux Sources, 10,852 ft., the highest point, but that was about all.

In Rhodesia we visited the Victoria Falls and Zimbabwe, each unique in its own way, the latter reminding us of Macchu Picchu visited a few months earlier. We also looked in on the Outward Bound School in the Chimanimani Mountains on the border of Mozambique. This is real tough country, a perfect setting for such a school. First class exploration is done as a matter of course. The school is always short-staffed. A couple of years there would be most attractive; but on with the safari—we flew to Blantyre to avoid an odd civil war.

Malawi's highest range is Mulanje Mountain (formerly Mlanje but spellings, like everything else, are now nationalised), the setting of van der Post's *Venture to the Interior* of 1946. It felt like it too. The group rises brutally from a plain, for 5-6000 ft., to a plateau from which the individual peaks rose another 3000 ft. It was the wet season. We were mad. We took three days only for Sapitura, at 9847 ft. the highest summit.

Day one took us up a cut path through jungle, rock and water (snakes) for the 5000 ft. or more to the plateau: there were cedars and foxglove meadows and a Conan Doyle *Lost World* feel as the plains vanished. Day two for the 'Munro'; all twelve hours of it were spent on 3000 ft. of ascent—first a walk to the head of the valley then a long ridge to a final undulating succession of false summits. It was a uniquely purgatorial progression: a granite chaos dumped among prickly, brittle scrub, through which we did everything from V.S. moves to crawling before we finally reached the summit; hungry, thirsty, sun-smitten and puggled. But very satisfied. It is a mountain I'd recommend to all my enemies.

The plateau-level is well served by forestry, Mountain Club and other huts and 'cottages.' The others sprawled on the balcony that night as the clouds rolled in could have been in a scene from *Lord Jim*. Our third day rained we were pleased to see and the next we oozed down for a slow bus home.

Travelling from hut to hut with ascents to taste is probably the most satisfying procedure here but it is time-consuming. Here too the giant faces run into thousands of feet. To date only one major,

modern route has been done on Chambe, the finest of the mountains. The Mountain Club welcomes visitors; there are fewer Europeans in Malawi than anywhere else. It is the most slap-happy, chaotic and friendly country imaginable.

Blantyre now merges with the town of Limbwe; their railway stations only $1\frac{1}{2}$ miles apart. We were to take the train to Lake Malawi, sail up it, and on through a corner of Zambia to Tanzania as the Malawi/Tanzania border is closed. The train reached Blantyre from Limbwe $1\frac{1}{2}$ hours late—and sailed through. It was full, which was tough on the 800 waiting on the platform. (We could never have got into two carriages anyway.) However, the 1st class was nearly empty. We hired a car and tore off in pursuit at 50 mph over dirt roads, dodging bikes and baboons, kids and cattle. We could have walked. We reached the next main station an hour ahead of the time given and several hours ahead of reality and a couple more of departure. The 140 miles took over 14 sticky, fractious hours; but we caught our boat.

Twelve of us (First Class) had the top two decks, with a Christmas party and all the frills—the next deck contained the other 600 second class passengers. We disembarked on the third day.

'Onward bus?' we asked.

'Maybe next week. Maybe in March,' they replied.

We hitched a truck up the Chendo Track, bearing with us the first effects of tummy trouble and of a fever that eventually sent me sorrowfully home. Many buses and days later we reached Mbeya with a fever each and bore them with us for 23 hours on a bus to Dar-as-Salaam. Hogmanay arrived with all the ships blowing their sirens and us collapsing into bed. Now we went for two days and a night by train to Moshi where others flew out to join us. We tried to climb Meru and were collared by a Ranger and taken off like naughty schoolboys. But we saw Kilimanjaro: the white dome of some fabled palace rising from a blue haze like jacaranda blossom. This was what we'd come for—the *big* hills: Kilimanjaro, Mt. Kenya, the Mountains of the Moon. For me this was a return after seventeen years, steps set to the dream at last.

Kilimanjaro, 19,340 ft., has been nationalised—and commercialised. Everyone is expected to go via two hotels that organise everything down to table cloths and waiter service at the grotty huts. Each day you plod up another 3000 ft. over ten to twelve miles passing from banana plantations through jungly forest to open heathland and finally mountain desert. Hundreds do it. It's the Hörnligrat of Africa.

The last 4000 ft. separates the sheep from the goats, but I'd already made an ass of myself. The two of us who had been in the Alps, the Andes and the rest of Africa arrived at the top Kibo Hut feeling fresh; the other two came later, paler, feeling the height. I rose from the afternoon sleep with my innards going through a

route march of their own. A few days later I was $1\frac{1}{2}$ stones lighter and able to think of nothing but getting back to Scotland. So after dropping the Kilimanjaro conquerors off to deal with Mt. Kenya and a day beside the millions of flamingos of Lake Nakuru it was back to Nairobi for me and onto a Jumbo Jet for home. Awkward, infuriating Africa had had the better of me once more. Perhaps my third time will be lucky.

Climbing in Africa is unlike anywhere else: the people, the landscape, the customs, the approach marches, the climate—everything is different. It is probably worth doing the homework and going out with clear aims and concentrating on one place, if straight climbing is the object. Any of the great ranges will supply snow and rock for alpine routes, while Mulanje or South Africa offer rich pickings for new routes of high standard. Cheap charter flights are available. Our party with several months available managed to travel from Cape Town to the Congo, visiting the major hills and seeing the major sites and sights.

By the time this appears some of the party will have hitched down the Nile and I'll have picked up a vehicle and sailed off again, aiming to re-unite in magnificent Marrakech—possibly the most interesting city in the climbers' neglected continent.

Our rendezvous is, perhaps significantly, April the first.

THE SOUTH FACE OF THE AIGUILLE DE FOU

By Wilf Tauber

IGNORANCE is Bliss, and alcohol adds to both. How else could we have thought of climbing such a route? I still don't know out of whose cups the idea came but it was Roger Mear who cadged the armies of iron men from the campers at Montenvers, who stole me a pair of P.A's, who sent me up the darkening glacier with the lighter load because I knew the way

In the thin dawn we pegged round a yawning schrund and watched the day grow as we floundered up the rotten snow and rock of the approach couloir. Where the great blank face divides the couloir we scuttled left below the enormous roof of a seven-shaped overhang, the first main problem of the route. Here we tossed a coin and the Fates smiled on me as Roger 'won' the big roof. While his bootsoles shrunk above me, the free rope hung further and further out but I thought, this'll be alright because I have these jumars and won't have to climb it. However, even these expedient devices require a technique, which I didn't have, and I rose as slowly as my leader, mewing and pulling in my nylon harness. I pushed on up

the next pitch, a slab crossed by a crack which I strung with tied-off angles, but then the sinking sun warned us to look for a ledge and we settled for one that lurked a hundred feet below, five feet long, eighteen inches wide and tapering to nothing. I held the rope very tightly on the way down . . .

We slept too well, comfortable despite the huge exposure, and scrambled up the dangling ropes to catch the remains of morning. A long pitch brought us into the great diagonal fault, which splits the face and is the principal feature of the route. Just then it started to rain, and next I dropped a peg. Its single emphatic bounce seemed to mark the moment with commitment. Some hard free climbing now brought me to a stance in slings from which I watched Roger embark on a long bold layback. Near the end he announced that a fall was imminent and quite unnecessarily I reminded him that he had no runners . . . But he made a lunge for a tiny blade peg, stuck in a vestigial crack, and somehow this held while he feverishly planted a good knife-blade and scrambled his way to a belay.

Now we had reached the crux of the route. Bounded by smooth bulges on the right and very airy space on the left, a huge overhang swelled out to block the diagonal fault leaving only a thin slice of slab on the left. This could be pegged at A4 (as the pioneers had done) or climbed free at super-severe (as the second party had done). Both alternatives seemed equally dire. I tensioned round a corner onto the slab, finding a deep six-inch crack where it met the overhang which held a monstrous wedge about ten feet up. When I got there I hugged it thankfully only to find it was too deeply recessed to be of much real use. Hanging from the huge wedge I managed to place a thin blade behind a loose flake and squirmed a bit higher. The peg gave a squeal, I gave a squeal and the sweat began to pour coldly out of me. I tried to fit bongs into the crack but they were all too small. Thoroughly frightened now, I cursed and fought my rising panic, finally getting a grip of myself and climbing free in the end to reach a real chockstone. Roger swarmed up the free rope, not pleased to find my belay and his prussik rope attached to the same dubious flake. Making good use of my head as a ledge, he disappeared up a crack-line diverging from the diagonal fault only to reach the rope's end on a gently overhanging wall. As he penduled back into the fault he announced the discovery of a ledge. I was so excited by this news that I dropped our guidebook, but my glow faded when his 'ledge' turned out to be a 50° slab. But it was getting late and the pitch above was an unpromising A3 of uncertain length so we dangled in parched misery on the little slab while the stars went so so slowly round and we said, well this could be a lot worse, but we didn't really believe it.

In the morning we stared ruefully at a real ledge just ninety feet above. It was supposed to get easier now so I moved boldly on to

layback up a loose flake, so boldly that I shot backwards into space to dangle from my solitary runner till Roger could lower me and pull me in. At another time I would have been shaken, but we were so keyed up that it seemed to mean nothing. I went up again and this time reached the long-awaited 'system of ledges,' really just one such phenomenon but fifty feet long by three feet wide. Here a heap of dirty snow gave us our first drink for thirty hours. Some easier pegging was followed by the delight of free movement up rock with real holds and suddenly we were over the top, collapsing like punctured balloons as the tension left us. We had both found the South Face of the Fou a new dimension.

HILLWALKING FROM CAPE WRATH TO GLASGOW

By A. G. Cousins

If you like reading accounts of climbers moving slowing up a vertical wall on minute rugosities, swinging over the void on *étriers* secured by thumbnail pitons or traversing unbroken ice walls on daggers and front points, turn to another article—this will bore you. This is no account of a route which was interesting until it leaned back to the vertical and became straightforward. But if you like to wander over the hills and corries of our beautiful country then fill your pipe, pour yourself a glass of malt and come with me on a traverse of Scotland.

For some time I have wanted to spend a holiday climbing and staying in bothies and I decided to combine this into a long trip across Scotland. I suggested the idea to two or three members but there was little enthusiasm so I resolved to go on my own. In the middle of winter I started to plan the trip. I enjoyed the planning and some points may be of interest. For many evenings our front room floor was carpeted by O.S. maps as I chose the summits, ridges, glens and corries of my route. I had to expect bad weather, so to ease the navigation I marked my intended route on the maps, marking changes of direction with the bearing and distance to the next turning point. In this way I hoped to be able to maintain the route 'blind.' Alternative routes on lower ground were noted in case the high tops became too unpleasant. I wrote to various people on my route asking if some simple shelter was available, if they would keep a box of provisions I would send in advance, and if due to estate work or game there was any area on their ground I should avoid. All were most helpful offering some shelter and many offered to provide provisions if I advised my requirements in advance. I hope such hospitality will never be abused. Seventeen

supply boxes were sent to various keepers, hotels, houses, and huts *en route*. My route included some spots where there was no bothy or shelter and I intended to bivouac in an emergency polybag or whatever shelter I could make if required. However, just before I started Vango provided a nylon Force Ten featherweight (5 lbs.) tent which proved excellent. This gave me freedom to have comfortable secure nights out wherever I wanted. The tent could be satisfactorily set up with only four pegs in a few moments. I even practised setting it up from a sitting position in case I should seriously injure my leg and require shelter. The Super Ariel sac (27 ozs.) with its inflatable tube pad provided by Brown Best gave a comfortable carry with about 30 lbs. load. Hamish MacInnes kindly agreed to be my emergency contact and my wife had a schedule of about six dates when she could expect a telephoned progress report from me. If my call was a day overdue she would advise Hamish who had a copy of my route. From the date and place of my last call he could estimate where I might be. If he heard nothing the next day he could assume something was wrong and set up some search. In this way according to my schedule the longest I could expect to wait if I became immobilised was about six days!

Palatable food is essential if such a trip is to be enjoyed. I selected my provisions from a list of what I liked modified to tinned and packet varieties since the food would be packed about two months before use. For simplicity I made up a week's menu and repeated it four times in my food boxes. Although I was never hungry, I lost a stone during the journey. Practically all the food was bought in one visit to a Supermarket, and the bill was about five feet long! There would be boxes at most of my night stops, and these boxes would contain my dinner, breakfast for the next morning, and some lunch to carry. I had always one day's emergency food and with the spacing of the food boxes I only had to carry two days' food a couple of times. In some boxes, I had clothes, paraffin, maps, film, batteries, etc. I could leave unwanted items in some boxes and these were posted home by my hosts. Thus the weight carried was minimised. Yes, I did cut short my toothbrush!

I arrived at the gear I was to carry by eliminating from a list of desirable items until I had a much smaller list of necessary items. Weight reduction was achieved by discarding containers and using polythene bags, making canvas slippers as an evening change, using a Hely Hansen Polar Jacket (1½ lbs.) instead of a heavy woollen pullover, a nylon Ariel sac, home made nylon climbing jacket, and the Vango Tent. The Hely Hansen Polar (brushed nylon) socks were most comfortable and they have now done about 600 miles without any sign of wear. I used Fisher mountain boots which I found very comfortable. One sees very few wearing the kilt these days, but I find it very good for hillwalking. It is much more

comfortable than breeches for wet summer weather, and is cooler in hot weather. Even though I had snow and gales I only used my over-trousers twice on the trip. My cromach was no ornament: it served as a bog-tester, fishing rod, spare tent pole, camera tripod, support for crossing rivers, and as a crutch if required. The only preparation I felt I needed was to get used to carrying about 30 lbs., so for about three weeks I walked to my office about three miles each way carrying a load, and I had pleasant, though tiring walks across the Stockiemuir, out to Loch Lomond and across the Campsies at the weekends. About three weeks before I was due to start all my food had been sent off, all arrangements were completed, and I could relax and contemplate the exciting prospect ahead. Just about this time, through a neighbour in the B.B.C. a couple of chaps came along to film me walking to work, all rather comic I thought.

On the first of June I arrived with a co-driver by car at Durness in glorious hot sunshine. I had stashed my first food box in the heather where I would cross the main road in a couple of days' time. We were ferried across the Kyle of Durness, then joined the tourist minibus for the run out to the lighthouse. Much of the area is used as a bombing and shelling range, and I heard that a hurried phone call had recently saved the bar being blown off the Keodale Hotel when someone got his bearings wrong! At the Cape Wrath light I was given a warm send off by the Keeper and his wife and set off homeward across the short dry grass of the undulating coast. I was on my first mile when stepping into a hole I almost twisted my ankle. It was a warning to keep alert all day, every day. I had been warned that some character inhabiting one of the bothies was rather undesirable so I crossed the moor with dirk and cromach at the ready! Topping a rise I had my first view of the beautiful mile of sand at Sandwood Bay. Oyster catchers greeted me as I crossed the wide beach which was empty though criss-crossed by foot prints. The track from Sandwood took me to the road where my 'chauffeur' met me, and we camped at Oldshore Beg.

We had breakfast in the sunshine early next morning then he left for Glasgow by car and I set off on foot. This was a day of hot sunshine and the views from the twisting road by Kinlochbervie were a delight. Sitting in a hay field I shared my mid morning snack with a tramp and learned something about life on the road, while a corncrake's grating cry rose in the shimmering heat. By lunchtime I reached the Durness Road, and a kestrel flew suddenly from its concealed nest just a foot or so from my foodbox as I retrieved it from the heather. I lunched with some peat cutters then crossed the rising moor towards Foinaven. By late afternoon I was in a corrie below the hill where I intended to bivouac. I felt fit so I carried on up the steep dry mossy grass in warm sunshine and arrived at the top at about 5 p.m. to be greeted by gentlemen from the Yorkshire Ramblers who were just completing the ridge. I

camped beside the summit of Ganu Mór and made a most comfortable bed of dry moss. The evening was calm with a slow temperature inversion gradually drawing low mist across the moor below as the lights began to twinkle in the villages along the coast, and on ships in the Minch. With my dinner over it was a delight to sit with glass in hand and watch my cigar smoke drifting slowly from the tent door. Just before turning in I had a walk round the summit, and felt quite excited looking south over the mass of peaks dimly lit by the afterglow of sunset, at the prospect of the great journey ahead, yet relaxed in the knowledge that all my planning was done, and my supplies were in position.

I woke early when the brilliant sun topped the cairn above me and shone hot in the open tent door. Banks of white cloud floated in low over the coast and evaporated over the land below me. By 9 a.m. I was packed and on my way along the ridge to Foinaven. I had a cool drink of Cremola Foam made from snow and continued along the ridge and down to Bealach Loch an Easain Uaine for a lunch stop as twelve fine stags in velvet ambled past me quite unaware of my presence. *En route* throughout the trip I left wax-chalk messages such as 'Sandy 1200 3.6.71' at cairns, bothies, etc., so that if anything went wrong they could help anyone following my route. At Lone Bothy I picked up the food box left for me by the keeper at Loch Stack. I visited the Y.R.C.C. who entertained me to afternoon tea at their camp. This was in true safari style—mess tent, tables, chairs and an ample wine cellar—they do not believe in roughing it in hotels like the S.M.C.! That evening I phoned the B.B.C's *Today in Scotland* who were going to do progress reports. As they were not ready to record and I could not arrange to phone at specific times, let alone specific days, I decided to scrap the idea. After a pleasant evening with the keeper I returned to my tent and slept very comfortably on a fine bed of rushes.

A cool east wind which was to continue for a couple of weeks gave ideal hill-walking conditions next day. I crossed to Kylestrome on an old pony track with the ruins of the old pony shelter at the top of the pass. I noticed 'Beware of the Bull' notices on the track (surely a right of way) which seemed contrary to the Countryside Act. Kylestrome must be among the most picturesque ferry crossings in Scotland, and as usual the seals were bobbing around in the tidal swirls. A tourist took my sack up to the top of the road so I enjoyed an unloaded stroll up to Loch na Gainmich then I took to the path up towards the high lochan under Glas Bheinn. The path, a good one, goes over a pass to the top of the Glencoul waterfall, the highest in Britain, and well worth a visit. There is also an easy walk to the waterfall along the steep shore of the loch. An eagle passed low above me on the way and plovers with their beautiful plaintive alarm cry kept flying ahead of me, unfortunately warning deer of my coming, as shown by the continual scatter away ahead of me. With

my tent at the edge of the lochan, I was able to sit in my sleeping bag and try a few casts as whisps of mist drifted into the corrie. My rod was made by screwing a couple of rings into my cromach, and fixing my reel to the handle. I enjoy camping in these isolated corners, and the wee tent gave a feeling of comfort and security should the weather change as it was really watertight. My pocket radio was good company and reception was usually very good on the high ground.

Thick mist surrounded me next morning and my set line bore no trout though I've had good fish from the lochan before. This was a grey day on the grey quartzite tope of Glas Bheinn, Ben Uidhe, Conival and Ben More Assynt. I was taking Dextrosol a couple of times a day and though it was difficult to assess the effect I felt I was going well. I stopped for lunch making a little boulder howff and entertained myself singing—hoping there was no-one around in the mist. I considered going along Breabag, but the glen below me was too tempting and soon I was down in sunshine again washing my undies in a burn and enjoying a smoke on the long trudge to Benmore Lodge. There the keeper put me up in the bothy and I dined well from my food box. That evening in the keeper's house with its fine old hunting engravings we sat cracking about game and salmon until about midnight. His friendly deerhound could stand easily resting its paws over my shoulder.

The walk from the lodge to Coire-mór bothy was on road and track all day. A tourist took my sack along to Oykell Bridge where I collected my food box and enjoyed a delicious lunch in the hotel. I found I had a yen for fresh meat and vegetables. For a while I walked with an elderly shepherd moving his lambs and ewes away from the road. I met the keeper and he took my sack up to Corriemulzie so I enjoyed the long walk up the glen without a load. From the lodge I followed the track to the bothy under Seana Braigh. This is a grand bothy in a fine situation. After such a good lunch I had little appetite for dinner. I was tired after some 20 miles of road bashing, but enjoyed the evening sitting at the door of the bothy sipping Drambuie, listening to an opera and watching deer playing like children in the shallow lochan in front of me. My pipe smoke drifted out on the calm air, and waiting for me across the loch towered the sharp peak of Creag an Duine, as I turned in on a warm straw bed.

I was away by 8.30 in the morning. It was calm and grey and I climbed slowly and steadily to the narrow ridge leading to the Seana Braigh plateau. Having my route and bearings previously marked on my maps was useful as I was in mist until midday. I came on some ptarmigan chicks near the summit and the hen flapped around trying to distract me as I photographed the chicks at my feet. By lunchtime the sky cleared and I lunched on the big open flat before Eididh nan Clach Geala in bright sunshine. The high

ground around me was ringed with deer watching me like Red Indians in a Western. At the summit I found the boulder howff I had made three years ago. I crossed Meall nan Ceapraichean and rather wearily climbed, across snow patches to Beinn Dearg, then started the long descent and good path to Loch Droma via Lorguill. This had been a fine day's hill-walking with a great feeling of being alone in a huge group of mountains and high plateau with sunlit peaks all around as far as one could see. I was however looking forward to Bill Donaldson's (J.M.C.S.) arrival. I had just finished an enjoyable dinner when he arrived and camped beside me.

The second week began with the welcome sound of sizzling bacon for breakfast and—luxury—fresh bread! We climbed in cold mist and sleet showers to Meall a' Crasgaigh, Am Baichdaich, Sgùrr nan Clach Geala and on to Sgùrr nan Each—what beautiful names—as the weather cleared to sunshine. I had planned to go down to Nest bothy, but Bill, a Munro-bagger, lured me eastward along the Fannichs with a promise of steak his wife had for us at camp at Fannich dam. We crossed Sgùrr nan Clach Geala again, Càrn na Criche, Sgùrr Mór, Beinn Liath Mhór Fannaich, Creachan Rairgidh, Meall Gorm and An Coileachan. There were several stone howffs along the tops. We could see across Scotland from the Beaully Firth on one side to Loch Torridon on the other. This was one of the big days of the journey involving 19 miles, 6400 feet of ascent and 10 summits.

Next morning we drove back west to Achnasheen so that I could rejoin my route and Bill vanished into the wilds of the Loch Carron hills. I climbed Fionn Bheinn in sunshine and snow showers, an easy ascent made interesting by the antics of ptarmigan distracting me from their chicks, and the views of the Fisherfield hills. As often happened on the journey familiar hills reminded me of climbs I had enjoyed and friends I had been with there. Back on my route again I passed Loch Gowan and crossed the pass on a good path to Scardroy. This is a lovely spot. Rugged hillsides plunge down to the wooded loch and the bright green fields beside the river are dotted with a few tidy houses. The friendly atmosphere was confirmed when the keeper put me in his bothy complete with kitchen, hot bath and room with fire. My dinner (all from my box) that night was typical: chicken soup, beef stew, potatoes, carrots, peas, rice and fruit, Drambuie, cigar, tea and lemonade. Breakfast next day was fruit juice, cereal, kipper fillets, oatcakes, etc., and lunch as usual was shortbread, biscuits, tea, jam and sweets.

From Scardroy I went up Coire Mhoraigein and on to Sgùrr Coire nan Eun and An Sidhean. The tops were misty and I found that with my radio on in my pocket the volume altered as I altered course, thus I navigated for about a mile on a steady course which landed me right at a col I wanted. I went down the Allt na Chois to Loch Morar, and along the path to the Lodge where Bill joined me

in the evening. The keeper gave us the use of an excellent bothy with stove, cooker, and beds.

Our round of the Strathfarrar hills, Beinn na Muice, Càrn na Daimh Bhan, Sgùrr na Muice, Sgùrr na Fearstaig, Sgùrr Fhuar-Thuill, Creag Chorm a' Bhealaich, Sgùrr a' Choire Ghlas, Càrn nan Gobhar, Sgùrr na Ruidh, and Garbh-Charr, was done in a mist driven by a strong northerly wind with occasional blasts of sleet, a wild day indeed. I found polythene bags made good gloves. We were both weary as we trudged back along the road to the bothy and I found my boot was holed at the toe.

The low cloud continued next day when we crossed the dam, waded the Uisge Misgeach and climbed Càrn nan Gobhar, Sgùrr na Lapaich with its interesting rock ridge to the summit, and the An Riabhachan tops, flanked by slopes of deep old snow. From Coire Mhain we went down to Socrach bothy (private and locked) where the landowner had delivered my foodbox. This bothy, the Seldom Inn, was most comfortable.

The anticyclone had steadied up again next day and we set off in shirt sleeves along to the west end of Loch Mullardoch, where we separated, Bill going to Sgùrr nan Conbhairean and I to Mam Sodhail via Beinn Fhionnlaidh. It seemed a long hot grind and then as I topped the ridge to Càrn Eige the cloud came in and I had cold sleet showers and dark mist again. I was not usually conscious of my load on the hills but often felt it at the end of the day especially if I had to finish along a road. I had map and compass work all afternoon as the ridge twisted round deep corries and passed looming shapes on the ridges. 'This,' I found myself thinking, 'is what hill-walking is all about'. One has to be confident to navigate and to read the ground. I crossed Ciste Dubh, Càrn Conlavia and emerged from the mist at Bealach Coire Ghaidheil where I waited for Bill. He arrived and we found we had passed within a few feet of each other minutes earlier in the mist. We spent the night in the deserted Alltbeith hostel. By mistake my map for the next days' route was in my box awaiting me at Cluanie Inn, so I made a rough sketch from a map in the hostel.

A sprinkling of new snow on the summits glittered in the early sun next morning as Bill left for Mam Sodhail and home, and I headed south over Mullach Fraoch-Choire with its interesting wee pinnacle ridge and A'Chralaig, reaching Bealach Coir-a-Chait for a lunch stop. On route I had a glimpse of Ben Nevis four days' journey away. It was like seeing an old friend and I felt quite pleased that I was going well. All I had to do was relax mentally, keep going steadily and enjoy this beautiful hill-walking. I was averaging about 14 miles and 3500 feet per day. The hills were very dry and I had to seek about for tea-water for lunch. From Sgùrr nan Conbhairean I skirted the north corrie to another top. I had intended to stop the night down in Prince Charlie's cave, and

could see the boulders of the howff a long way below me, but I decided to head for Cluanie as it was still early in the day. A golden eagle drifted along the edge of the ridge beside me for a few yards with its beady eye looking at me from under its wing. I went down the Allt Coire Lair to the road, trudged wearily along to the Inn, and camped. I dined (poorly) in the Inn and the staff kindly gave me luxuries like milk, eggs, bacon and bread—very tasty! Two weeks and two hundred miles lay behind me.

Ascot Day was one of mixed showers and sunshine on the south Cluanie hills. I went up Druim Shionnach along the ridge to Creag a'Mhaim then back along to Aonach air Chrith and Maol Chinn Dearg, all interesting narrow ridge walking, then steeply down to camp in Glen Loyne at a ruined bothy. I found that one boot was deteriorating a bit and did some sewing repairs as best I could, but began to wonder if this could be the end of the trip. With rain squalls lashing the tent I felt depressed. However, I was dry and snug, and things which seem problems at night are often minimal next morning so I pushed despair aside, lit a fresh cigar, sipped more Drambuie and settled in my bag.

Up into the mist again in the morning I walked rather carefully avoiding straining my boot, and from the Bealach I followed the ridge to Gleouraich then back over the Bealach to Spidean Mialach as the weather cleared to sunshine by the time I reached the Quoich dam. It was a joy to walk down beautiful Glen Garry in warm sunshine with the birds singing and the dark cattle flicking their tails in birch tree shades. At Greenfield the farmer insisted I avoid the midges, though I had felt none on the trip, by giving me a room in his house. I attacked my boots with glue and nails and soon they were as good as new again. We talked late, and here as throughout the trip I found the folk I met most interesting and hospitable.

Fedden, the ruined house, was my lunch stop next day. I surprised some young ducks into their first splashing attempts at flight along a burn, and photographed a dappled new born red deer calf, crouching in the heather as the hind barked nervously from a distance up the hillside. On the way to Cam Bealach I came on a small (6") adder and I was surprised at the needless cold shiver I felt. I climbed Sròn a'Choire Ghairbh in cold sunshine and crossed to Meall nan Teanga. This top seemed a kind of milestone and I sat down for a time looking around. Northward I looked back over the glens, lochs, peaks and ridges forming the distant horizon and realised I had crossed that seemingly enormous distance. I thought of John Hinde's R.A.F. party who had done a similar journey in 1968, of Hugh Munro's love of hills, of past members of the S.M.C. who had explored these hills, and I felt in a small way part of that great company. To the east and west lay country I did not know well, Knoydart and the Grey Corries of Lochaber. The southward view was dominated by the great dark hump of Ben Nevis streaked

white, high over the glittering waters of Loch Linnhe, and islands that seemed to float in shimmering sunlight. I was leaving the new country and crossing into familiar country. Even though I had been climbing around the country for some twenty years, over sixty of the tops I had just been on were new to me. Lord, what a beautiful country! The noises of civilisation floated up from the Great Glen as I crossed to Meall Coire Lochain, Meall Odhar and trotted down to Ruigh-na-Beinne into the forest and down to Mile Drocha. I kept my mind off my seemingly heavy load, and tired legs until I flopped down in my tent at Gairloch. On the way I saw a wren and earlier I had seen an eagle—our smallest and largest birds in the same day. Some tourists invited me into their caravan for supper and a cheery evening. The midges were fierce.

Before breakfast I telephoned a report to *Today in Scotland* and was amused to listen to it later during breakfast in the early sunshine. Walking along the canal to Inverlochry I thought how useful the S.M.C. canoeists might have been. I had a desire for some fresh meat so had a good steak lunch in the cafe at the Distillery then went up the familiar path to the C.I.C. Hut. The hut is much improved due to the efforts of the Custodian and his work squads. There I met the first people I had seen on the hill (excluding Bill Donaldson), since Ceann Garbh sixteen days earlier. The longest I had gone without seeing anyone, even in the distance, was about 30 hours.

In the small hours I woke with toothache. I had had some twinges since Scardroy but this was different. I telephoned the police and was told to report there and a dentist would be 'standing by.' A quick breakfast and I was in the Fort in a couple of hours. There was no record of my call at the police station but I was directed to a dentist. Other pale-faced casuals arrived as I waited my turn. A man from Mallaig awaited a verdict on his last few choppers. 'Next please' and the pain vanished as I found it was my turn.

'Are you the fellow on the long walk?'

My ready story was cut short by 'Open wide.' Tap, tap. 'Oops! there it is.' Zip, zip the bits fly and the hole is sealed. I was just entering Glen Nevis again when a car passed and with a happy wave the man from Mallaig with toothless smile roared past. Early in the afternoon I was back at the hut, and I climbed the Arête and soon reached the summit of Ben Nevis. I could just see my last top Ben Lomond and almost felt regret that the end was in sight. I dropped quickly down to the car park at the head of Glen Nevis and noticed there that the chaffinches hopping about kept the humans in mobile cages! The path through the gorge had been thoughtfully repaired and improved so it still looked 'natural.' Steall Hut was a welcome sight. I was a day ahead of schedule and unfortunately missed some Lochaber J.M.C.S. friends who came up next evening to meet me.

Steall Hut to Lagangarbh Hut was a walk I had not done before and I recommend it for its variety of ridges, wild scenery and good walking tracks. The morning was wet as I made my way up through a jungle of dripping birches onto the misty slopes of Sgùrr a'Mhaim, along the narrow south ridge with the impressive though easy gap and on to Am Bodach where the weather improved and the sun came out. The Loch Leven hills looked wonderfully rough and the sea lochs were like waterfilled trenches. I followed the ridge past An Garbhanach and on to the double top of Na Gruagaichean. Because I still had to go a long way I was reluctant to go out to Binnein Mór so I headed down to Kinlochleven, where I had a good high tea before following the water pipes and the Devil's Staircase to reach Glencoe in the lovely soft evening light. There was a halo round the sun foretelling wild weather to come in a few hours. As I cleared the last rise the Buachaille rose majestically before me with Lagangarbh nestling below. I remembered my first visit to the hut on a snowy February day years ago when I was a new boy all eyes and ears to catch the pearls of wisdom and technique from the old hands. I may be a bit sentimental but I think the S.M.C. is more than a Club, it's a living tradition. The Hut was empty of people but full of memories as I turned in.

It was raining heavily from low cloud scudding in from the west next morning, when I crossed the Coupal just above the waterfall and went up Sròn na Creise. On the ridge the cold front weather really hit me with a full gale so that I could hardly move and squalls of hail and rain came across like wire. I wandered a bit and, being sure that the top of Clach Leathad lay in one direction, I had to force myself to trust my compass which told me it was in another direction. The compass as usual was right. For the second time on the trip I had put my day's map in the box ahead of me, but I had again made a sketch map and had been over this ground a few times before. On the Bealach before Stob Gabhar I was briefly below the mist so I stopped to fill up with some chocolate and Dextrosol to heat me up, and wrung out my socks. The roar of the wind on the ridge was awe-inspiring and I had to keep just the right distance from the edge to seek the slightly calmer area one gets due to the uplift of the wind. At the summit I could just get shelter enough to eat more. As the rain had forced through my clothes I was a bit chilled, so I set off down the familiar fence posts and soon emerged below the mist. The forecast had been for clearing skies in the late afternoon. I sat down for a rest just below the mist and quite suddenly the rain stopped, the cloud shredded and the warm sun shone from huge patches of blue. It was 4 p.m. How's that for timing? I took off my wet clothes and hung them around me to dry off as I walked to Bridge of Orchy. Looking back at the sunlit hills there was no hint of the wild conditions I had just come through. The proprietor at Bridge of Orchy added fresh food to

my foodbox, and I dried off my gear as I slept in Glencoe Ski Club Lodge.

After wading across the Orchy I strolled down sunny Glen Orchy and across Am Mam to the Dalmally road where I collected my box at a house, lunched and set off up Ben Laoigh. New tree-planting may soon affect access to the west side. At over 3000 feet on the south ridge I found a trickle of water and a flat site for my tent. During dinner I watched a lovely sunset over Cruachan as the evening shadows crept across the Arrochar hills.

The burbling of sheep in thick mist around me woke me at about 6 a.m. and I visited the summit a few feet above me. Early mist cleared as I crossed Ben Oss and Ben Dubhcair on my way to Glen Falloch. On the road some tourists leapt out to take my photograph and one was nearly run over in the process! From Ben Glass farm I headed through the tangled woods on the east side of the loch to Ardleish where I dined from my box. A short way down the loch I climbed over the Maol an Fhithich ridge with unfamiliar views of the loch and the Arrochar hills, and went down the rough Garrison Glen to Inversnaid as I listened on my radio to Bill Sproul and party telling of their trip to the Hindu Kush. As usual the midges at Inversnaid were vicious.

Real Loch Lomond weather (low mist and drizzle) greeted me in the morning and I was soon soaked on my way through the dripping woods to Rowchoish. I hope this side of Loch Lomond is left unspoilt for those who enjoy rough walking away from the rumble and peeps of the traffic on the west side. Climbing through the wood I emerged on the high moor below Ben Lomond and watched a troop of some forty wild goats with kids. One sees so much more wild life when one is quiet and alone on the hills. At 4.30 p.m. I arrived at the familiar triangulation pillar at the summit and camped in mist and strong wind in a calm spot where the uprising wind lifts over the summit. After dinner, feeling a little disappointed that expected friends had not turned up I listened to a concert from Glasgow then slept soundly.

The walk to Drymen and to Glasgow is marred by the danger from traffic. Even where corners are being realigned there is no footpath. In Drymen I stayed with a friend. The last day's walking was one of enjoyable reflection. The view back northward to the hills, the cry of the curlew on the Stockiemuir Road, the scent of bog myrtle, these reminded me of the sights and sounds of the trip. The crisp early morning light with mist drifting in the corries, sunlit ridge-walking, wild days scrambling past dark shapes in the mist, the soft colours of the highland evenings in the hills—I can close my eyes and see them all.

Approaching Bearsden I had a panoramic view of Glasgow. I was home.

THE FIRST SCOTTISH ICE CLIMBERS

At the Coming-of-Age Dinner of the Club, in 1909, Professor Ramsay (our first President) remarked that the Club had 'come into the world . . . nearly a hundred strong, . . . starting full-blown like Athene from the head of Zeus.' Whatever one thinks of this startling simile, it is certainly true that the late Victorian pioneers showed extraordinary enterprise and competence and that in one particular sphere, ice-climbing, they immediately established a standard which endured until very recent times.

Most of us who have come to mountaineering in the last 20 years or so can fumble our way back through Brooker, Marshall and Patey to the great pre-war ice-climbers—Bell, Macphée and the well-known Glasgow group of Mackenzie, Murray *et al.* Knowing that the ice-climbs of the former group were in certain ways an advance over those of the latter often engenders the assumption that the climbs of the pre-war group were similarly superior to those of their great predecessors, the Victorians. In fact, with the exception of Bell's partial ascent of Zero Gully in 1936 (see *S.M.C.J.*, 1936, xxi, 200) and Mackenzie & Murray's ascent of Garrick's Shelf in 1937 (see *S.M.C.J.*, 1937, xxi, 237), the pre-war group's main achievement was to *re-establish* ice-climbing in Scotland at the former high standard attained by the Victorians. This is not, of course, in any sense a criticism of their efforts: from the Ultra-montane viewpoint, Scottish mountaineering in the late twenties and early thirties was enjoying a veritable Dark Age—there is no doubt that the pre-war ice-climbers were regarded by the bulk of their contemporaries as the most Desperate and Dangerous Radicals—and that they achieved as much as they did under the circumstances was remarkable.

We are now in the throes of another Great Leap Forward in ice-climbing. That bugbear of the fifties and sixties, the Unmitigated Ice-pitch, has been divested of most of its terrors by a new technique, sprung on the unsuspecting Cairngorms by that ageless Lion of the Creagh Dhu M.C., John Cunningham. Lest this new advance (if that is what it is) delude us into supposing that we are now remote from our ancient predecessors in technique as well as time, let us Cut a Retrograde Step and remember the incomparable Victorians . . .

First and most illustrious was Collie, who blazed a trail of fine climbs through Glencoe to Ben Nevis from the Inveroran Meet of Easter 1894. The culmination of this fortnight of effort was his two ascents of Tower Ridge, the first with Solly and Collier, the second with Hastings. The first ascent occupied five hours and Dr Collie thought that it 'resembled the Italian side of the Matterhorn, and was the best climb he had ever had in Scotland.' However, his account of the climb in the *Journal* was cloaked in pseudonymity and took the form of a third-person report of a quasi-religious Quest.

After some preliminary meanderings, the Allt a'Mhuilinn is reached and Ben Nevis described.

'Across the valley they see the great Mountain, the Immensity of Greatness, the majestic Silence, the prodigious Dampness, the Height, the Depth, in shape like a great Dome . . . Before them rose hugeous rocks and bulky stones standing on end facing to the north, where the ice and snow tarry from one winter even until the following, for in these places the sun shines not, neither are found the comfortable soft and juicy breezes of the south; there the brood of the black Crow and the white vapours and comprehensive congelations of the Mistus Scotorum are produced. So were the three

Brethren sore amazed, but as yet could not see even the first matter of the Work.'

But the Eye of Faith soon detects the Tower Ridge.

'"See," said one, "the way leadeth upward, for doth not a mighty petrolific ridge, full of points, towers and pinnacles, descend from above, whereon the pursuit may be pursued, the operation of the great work may be begun? First must we fashion in the snow and ice great stairs of steps, by the aid of which, through prolongation, extension, reduplication, and multiplication, shall we be brought on to the ridge, even at the beginning".'

This is soon done and the ridge is followed with little comment until the Great Tower is reached and the Western Traverse assailed.

'But presently came they to a great rock, a majestic tower; here were they perforce compelled to depart to the right hand, placing themselves in steep and perilous positions on slopes of ice, which downward seemed to end in the empty air, even in the great void. . . . Still all things have an end at last—good Wine, Pinnacles, Spires, cabalistic Emblems, and oromaniacal Wanderings, even the green Sauce of the philosophers and the pythagoric Mustard of the Great Master himself, spoken of by Alcofribas Nasier in his merrie work. So did the Three find the perilous passage across the headlong steep finish. Then did they pass onwards to the Labyrinth, the rocky Chaos, and greatly did they marvel at the exceeding steepness thereof; so that only by great perseverance, turning now to right and now to left, were they able to break themselves free from the bonds and entanglements, and climb sagaciously upwards to the summit of the great tower.'

Here they stop to look back on their journey and survey the difficulties ahead.

'Behind, and far below, imprinted in the snow were the steps by which they had mounted upwards, winding now this way and now that, looking like scarce seen veins in finest marble. But before them lay the narrow Way, the Ridge, the Cleft, and the white Slope, leading even unto the utmost height, the sovereign summit of the mighty mountain.'

These delights are soon disposed of and the Quest is satisfactorily ended when the travellers gain admittance to a Temple on the summit.

'So were they shown by the dwellers in the Temple many and marvellous wonders. In the centre stood a furnace for all the transmutations and agitations by heat; whilst on shelves did they see divers bottles, pans, boxes and bags, wherein were stored succulent sauces and philosophical essences to the end that the

delectable concoctions of the pious might be completed. Likewise great store of books. In some could be found treatises of the true science, also devices, hieroglyphic interpretations, and perspicuous renderings of great wisdom, in others histories of joyous diversions. Also were there curious and ingenious engines for all sorts of motions, where were represented and imitated all articulate sounds, and conveyed in trunks and strange lines and distances. Likewise mathematical instruments, exquisitely made, for the discovering of small and minute bodies in the air. Also were shown many and marvellous things pertaining to the harmony of the heavenly spheres.

'Then did they drink the mixed draught, the comfortable potation, joyously, philosophically, and with discernment, for they had attained to the divine Secrets of the Philosophers, even unto the mystagorical Delight, the great Fulfilment of the spagyrick Quest of devout Oromaniacs.'

Dr Collie's description of the technical problems presented by the climb is not illuminating,

'And what joy, think ye, did they feel after the exceeding long and troublous ascent?—after

Scrambling, slipping

Pulling, pushing

Lifting, gasping

Looking, hoping

Despairing, climbing

Holding on, falling off

Trying, puffing

Loosing, gathering

Talking, stepping

Grumbling, anathematising

Scraping, hacking

Bumping, jogging

Overturning, hunting

Straddling,—

for know you that by these methods alone are the most divine mysteries of the Quest reached.

Snow and ice climbing in Scotland, then, began with the ascent of a route which even now enjoys a fair reputation. Nor was this an isolated ascent: J. H. Bell, Napier and Macgregor climbed it the following winter and at the Easter Meet of 1896 the ridge was climbed by at least five parties. Reporting the Meet, William Brown remarked that, 'under winter conditions the Tower Ridge affords a most respectable climb and no one can complain that the passage of the Tower is devoid of interest or difficulty.' In September of the same year W. Inglis Clark and J. A. Parker visited the Ridge expecting, of course, a summer climb. However,

'we were surprised to find the cliffs plastered with snow for 600 ft. below the summit, so . . . we made for the Observatory to

borrow an ice-axe. We encountered a heavy snow-storm . . . and on reaching the top found icicles three feet long hanging from the doorway The only available axe was one of which the pick was partly broken, and the handle had no point. Leaving this at the halfway Observatory, we returned home to prepare for a winter ascent Retracing our steps to the Hut, where we recovered our axe, and striking round by the screes of Càrn Dearg, we were not long in reaching the scene of operations. Out of the sun it was very cold, and ice encrusted the ground.'

The climb is begun and in the early stages the borrowed 'axe' is something of an encumbrance.

'The chief difficulty encountered was in taking the ice-axe along with us, and we found it often profitable to send it up on a spare rope. At one very steep pitch a ledge had to be followed round a corner to the right, and here the axe was a regular obstruction.'

However,

'Until we reached the Tower proper we had no real difficulty.'

This statement, implicit in the earlier accounts too, will ring strangely in the ears of those many of us who have spent anxious hours on the Little Tower

Later on, the ice-axe comes into its own, even the lack of a spike proving to be an advantage.

'On reaching the Tower itself we found all the holds covered with hard snow or ice, and even the preliminary climb up the lower walls required careful treatment. Reaching a narrow ice-covered platform . . . a great wall of rock towered above us for about sixty feet. On this the holds were very few indeed, and our hopes centred in a shallow recess or gully which, starting about twenty feet up, led to the top. A narrow ledge, four or five inches wide, crossed the wall about fifteen feet up, but terminated about five feet from the lower end of the gully. Up to this ledge there were but suggestions of holds. A narrow crack, sufficient to admit the pick of the axe, went vertically up the face. To make a start, it was necessary to step off the platform on to a projecting knob on the right, where you overhung the precipice descending far below. The only available hitch is about three feet up, and from that point Parker, who led in excellent style, virtually took his life in his hands. Progress was very slow, and the horizontal ledge could not be reached until the leader had obtained two steps for his left foot—one on the ice-axe, the handle resting on my shoulder; the other on the ice-axe held up at arm's length in my left hand. In each case the pick was placed in the narrow crack already mentioned. The ledge proved to be covered with ice, and had to be cleared before a foothold was obtained on it The gully itself was filled with ice, and being at a very steep angle, afforded no safety. Leaving the axe here,

Parker crept cautiously to the right, where a projecting knob vertically above me afforded the first and only safe hitch.'

The Victorians, then, made of Tower Ridge a winter Trade Route—it was climbed by all and sundry, in all weathers and with the most primitive equipment.

Another great winter pioneer was William Naismith, one of the Club's founders. His retrospective article in the *Journal* of April 1925 recalls his youthful beginnings,

'Professor Ramsay gave his Junior Latin Class a fascinating lecture on Alpine Climbing in 1872, and showed us his ice-axe and how to use it. About the same time there fell into my hands Whymper's *Scrambles* . . . and I devoured it with the most intense delight . . . In 1880 I took part in a first ascent of Ben Nevis for the year on 1st May with two friends. The conditions were wintry, and we got good practice in glissading, with the help of stout walking-sticks, on the slopes above Lochan Meall an t'Suidhe. The upper 2000 feet of the mountain being in cloud, we steered almost entirely by map and compass, but found the top all right. There were then no buildings on the summit—only a big lonely cairn, the top of which was just visible above the snow. This ascent was regarded as sufficiently unusual to be referred to in several newspapers.'

Four years later he visits Ben More, Perthshire, in March.

'Staying overnight at Luib Inn, I asked the inn-keeper whether anyone had climbed Ben More yet. His reply was emphatic that it would be quite impossible at that season, and if anyone were foolish enough to try it, he would likely lose his life; "and besides," he added, "if a man *did* get to the top he might see ghosts!"'

This good advice is of course ignored.

'In the morning I started early, carrying an alpenstock . . . I first approached the north-east base of Ben More, but found the slope too formidable. So a traverse was made to the left above the Allt Coire Chaorach, until below the col between Ben More and Stobinian—the V-shaped gap as it is often called. There an easier snow-slope presented itself, and was mounted with little difficulty. From the col to the top of Ben More was, however, a different story, for the snow was covered in most places with a sheet of ice, the surface having evidently melted and frozen again, and my alpenstock was, of course, useless for making steps. Fortunately, however, the angle was not severe, and by going now to the right and now to the left one could often avoid the most slippery parts. There were also rocks and stones projecting from the ice, and so, by dodging about from one rock or platform to another, the cairn was at last reached without any mishap.'

Or, presumably, sight of ghosts! However, Naismith draws a moral from the day's experiences:

'In winter and spring the higher Scottish mountains ought to be treated as seriously as Alpine peaks—with the same equipment of axes and a rope.'

In the early days of the Club, Naismith took part in a number of fairly modest winter climbs such as the Upper Couloir of Stob Gabhar and the North Coire of Beinn Dothaidh, but under Collie's influence his record blossomed with ascents of Castle Ridge and the North-east Ridge of Aonach Beag in April 1895. However, his greatest achievement was the first winter ascent of the great North-east Buttress of Ben Nevis on 3rd April 1896 with Brunskill, Kennedy, King and Squance. Something of Naismith's well-known self-effacement and of the Victorian climbers' attitude to winter climbing is shown by Brown's matter-of-fact report, 'The N.E. Buttress was only ascended by one party. It held a good deal of ice, and was reported to be in a rather difficult condition. The gully above the first platform was paved with blue ice, and had to be left severely alone. Higher up also, below the last 'peeler,' the summer route was impracticable for the same reason, and a new line had to be struck out up the rocks on the left.' Thirty years later, Naismith 'admits' that it was he who made the ascent:

'This was a long day, for we were on the buttress for nearly seven hours. The party was a jolly one, but rather large for speed. The rocks were plastered with ice and snow and distinctly difficult. At one or two places the route followed by the first climbers

[here Naismith is referring to the first summer ascent.]

was impossible and had to be varied. Until we actually reached the summit, there was a slight doubt as to whether the top would 'go' or not, for a pitch that Brown had climbed with difficulty was now found to be iced and hopeless; but by crossing to the left side of the buttress, we followed a narrow gully, at first hard ice but afterwards good snow, which led us past the last obstacle. It was pitch dark long before we arrived at the Alexandra Hotel.'

In fact, this astonishing early ascent was so little noted at the time that our present guidebooks either fail to mention those responsible for it or list them as 'unknown.'

Collie and Naismith, despite their great achievements, were, however, no more than Minor Prophets of the New Faith. The greatest of the Victorian ice-climbers, beyond any doubt, was Harold Raeburn, who burst upon the scene in 1896. In the ensuing twenty-five years or so, Raeburn was responsible for a glittering constellation of ice-climbs which spanned the winter-climbing firmament from Ben Nevis in the West to Lochnagar in the East. Many of these climbs, such as the Central Buttress of Stob Coire nan Lochain and Observatory Ridge on Ben Nevis, stand comparison with the great ice-climbs of the late thirties and forties and the early fifties. In our current guidebooks these fine routes are credited to Raeburn but two others, equally fine, have unaccountably been 'mis-laid' and are now credited to other, later, parties. The first of these was Crowberry Gully on Buachaille Etive Mòr. Discussing the climb in the *Journal* of June 1911, Raeburn remarks,

'So far as is known only three ascents of the gully have been made. The present writer has had the good fortune to be in all

three. The first two were in spring with the assistance or otherwise of ice and snow. The third, that of last year, was a summer climb.'

The first ascent was made with E. B. Green on 10th April, 1898.

'The season had been a snowy one. Vast quantities of snow lay in the gully. The smaller pitches were completely obliterated, the larger, greatly diminished in height. Long tongues of hard snow and ice, behind which dark and gloomy caverns stretched far into the heart of the mountain, reared themselves high in the air. From their summits it was usually possible to affect a lodgment, after some cutting, on the north wall of the gully and then contour in above the pitch. The only serious difficulty, according to the writer's recollection, was encountered at the last great pitch not far from the summit. Here the gully forks, or rather there branches out of the main gully a comparatively short, but deeply cut and overhanging chimney.'

Raeburn attempts this but is soon discomfited,

'The leader, by back and foot wedging, climbed the lower pitch to a far out chockstone. Above, the far projecting top pitch looked horribly uninviting. To settle the matter a fierce blatter of hail came on, and a stinging *mitraille* of cataracts of ice-pellets poured down upon the uplifted countenance of the leader.'

However, the right fork was then attacked and proved not too difficult. On this ascent the rocks were more or less free of snow but on his second visit at Easter 1909 'the Crowberry Ridge was sheathed in masses of new ice.' Raeburn was acting as host to a party of English climbers who had been expecting a rock-climbing holiday. Two decided to remain at the Hotel, being 'lately recovered from influenza,' but the others, Brigg and Tucker, were safely manoeuvred to the Gully.

'After lunch we attacked it. There was less snow in the gully than in 1898 and the first great pitch was very stiff. Fortunately the thick glaze of ice on the right wall allowed of steps and hand-holds being cut and it was eventually overcome. At the great pitch below the fork we were forced to make a long traverse out on the north wall, rather nasty with ice, and slippery with new snow The summit was gained at 3.30, after a tough struggle of four hours and twenty minutes. Here the furious blasts of wind laden with hail proved an unwelcome change after the peace of the gully.'

However, although expeditiously completed, the climb had not been without incident, thanks to the frequent spindrift avalanches.

'At one pitch, where the gully narrowed, and the only possible route lay up the "fall," the party was struck by a larger "rush" of new snow than usual. The leader was buried to the shoulders as he held the second's rope taut round the perfect hitch of his well-

buried ice-axe. The second, who at the time was occupying the position of a chockstone in the pitch, was completely snowed over, while the third man, at the foot of the pitch, was overwhelmed, and went off down the gully till brought up by the rope.'

Raeburn's second great forgotten ice-climb was Green Gully on the Comb, described in the *Journal* for January 1907. The climb was made in April 1906 with 'a Genevese gentleman, a member of the Swiss Alpine club, Monsieur Eberhard Phildius, who was staying at Fort William and who proved a pleasant companion and a keen and capable climber.' The mountain was clearly in splendid condition.

'Many feet of snow lay in the deep chasms below the Tower Ridge, and sheets of snow ice covered the *roches moutonnées* below the glacier-planed lip of the Lochan na Ciste. Above us rose the jagged arête of the Tower Ridge, but how different from its summer aspect! Just like a great iceberg it was, or perhaps more like a mass of rough marble, all the dark rock hid by a plating of ribbed and embossed dull white snow ice, with here and there streaks, ribs and columns of pale green water ice from a few inches to several feet in thickness.'

Raeburn's intention is to climb not Green Gully but the Comb, using the gully as a link between the lower diagonal ledge of the Comb and the upper arête. This ledge is traversed and the foot of the gully reached.

'Now we found ourselves looking up, so far as the mist and the descending cataracts of snow dust would permit, the steep gully which should give access to the ridge. Then began the real struggle. Keen frost reigned, and a biting wind moaned among the icy battlements impending over the great moat of the Corrie na Ciste. We two, stormers of one of the salient towers, felt the blast strike us now and again as it swept round the angle of the Comb.'

Nor is the wind the only problem,

'The worst was that the snow batteries were opened on us from above and below. From above one could, to a certain extent, take cover beneath the shield of our cone-pointed, brim-turned-down felt hats, but occasionally the snow that fell mixed with the seldom ceasing stream that poured down the gully, was caught by the powerful ascending eddy and rushed up, thus taking us behind our defences. The pain of a stream of icy snow in the face is so great that work must stop, and the face be covered till breath is regained. Fortunately those underhand tactics were never long continued, and the interrupted sapping and mining was soon renewed.'

The gully puts up a stubborn fight,

'Two of the pitches we now encountered, if we make a distinction in what was practically one great pitch, were what is usually known as perpendicular, *i.e.*, probably 70° to 75°, with small portions approaching 90°.

'It was of course only due to the peculiar tough quality of the snow-ice curtain hanging down these steeper portions that they were climbable at all. At angles such as these it is impossible to remain in toeholds in ice without holding on as well, and it is impossible to hoist the body up unless the handholds are cut so as to give a "pull in." These icy curtains allowed of this being done; frequently the pick broke through to soft snow or black vacancy, backed with green bulbs of ice, and "pigeon-hole" holds resulted.

'Ice-work of this kind is, however, particularly cramping and exhausting, and progress was slow. To hang on with one hand, while that long two-handed weapon, the modern ice-axe, is wielded in the other, is calculated to produce severe cramps in course of time, and did so now.'

Raeburn now makes a futuristic suggestion.

'I suggest for climbs such as this our going back to the original Swiss icemen's tools, the iron-shod straight "baton," the light tomahawk-like hatchet stuck in the belt when not in use. The second of these pitches almost stumped us, but yielded at the third attempt, and the reserves, in the person of M. Phildius, were now brought up, and took their place in the van.'

The way to the arête is now clear, but it looks so heavily corniced that they press on up the gully, passing the cornice by traversing to the right.

'Obviously our only chance . . . was to traverse out on the right where a rib of ice covered rock ran up to meet the cornice, reducing it to half-height, and where it was only slightly overhanging. This way eventually "went," but the Comb was game to the last, and I must confess to a feeling of helplessness for a moment as I stood on my ice axe, driven horizontally into the vertical snow wall, some hundreds of feet of little less than vertical ice plastered rocks stretching away down into the depths of the mist beneath, while my fingers slid helplessly from the glassy surface of the cornice *nové*, in the vain endeavour to find or make a hold by which I might haul myself up. The problem was solved by a retreat, until Phildius was able to pass me up his axe. Then the ice-plating was quickly shattered, and with fingers well crooked in the tough *nové*, a steady drag landed the body over the cornice lip, and Phildius soon followed.'

Raeburn now forestalls a strange objection,

'Objections may be made to this climb that it is not the actual climb of the Comb. This is true, for we were never once on the exact arête. But what does that really matter? Phildius and I came out for a climb, and we got one, up one of the steepest cliffs on Nevis, in as icy condition as I have ever seen the old berg. We were both

pleased and enjoyed it every bit, except perhaps when under the "hottest" fire of the rear batteries.'

It seems that by pretending to have climbed the Comb poor Raeburn was later deemed not to have climbed Green Gully!

[The early articles from which this 'memorial' was culled are *Divine Mysteries of the Oromaniacal Quest*, by Orlamon Linecus, Volume III, pp. 151-7; *Lochnagar and Ben Nevis* by W. Inglis Clark, Volume IV, pp. 218-23; *Early Winter Climbing* by W. W. Naismith, Volume XVII, pp. 124-32; *The Crowberry North Gully*, *Buachaille Etive* by Harold Raeburn, Volume XI, pp. 255-62; and *A Scottish Ice Climb* by Harold Raeburn, Volume IX, pp. 153-8. I am indebted to J. R. Marshall for pointing out the shortcomings of our current guidebooks, those which are relevant being fully or partly his responsibility! —HON. ED.].

P. J. H. UNNA AND THE MOUNTAINOUS COUNTRY TRUST

AT the last A.G.M. of the Club a request was made of us that we reprint Unna's edifying 'Rules' once again. Happily, our Honorary President, Alex. Harrison, has provided us with a fascinating account of Unna's extraordinary generosity to the nation in helping to secure so many outstanding tracts of mountainous country for the benefit of the Common Weal. We print Harrison's account below and follow it with the letter to the National Trust in which Unna laid down his 'principles for the management of mountainous country for the use of the public.'

We are glad to reprint these 'rules' since it seems to us that, if preservation of the wild character of these regions is the aim, then they could hardly be bettered. Unfortunately (in our view) they have not always been strictly adhered to—paths have appeared in Torridon, bridges in lower Glencoe. It should perhaps be pointed out, however, that not all mountaineers agree that the Rules should be given a stringent interpretation. Harrison himself argues that 'under the changed circumstances (here he is referring to the increase in mountain accidents—HON. ED.) if paths and signposts will assist in certain cases in the prevention of accidents and in enabling the public to enjoy low-level walks there should be no hesitation in providing them.' Whatever one thinks of this argument, it seems to us that it would be mealy-mouthed to appeal to a more liberal interpretation of Unna's wishes in support of such a flagrant breach of the letter of the Rules. If 'changed circumstances' can justify such a breach, then what breach can they not justify?

'Unna was a realist,' writes Harrison. Here, then, is the story of the realist who gave away a fortune to preserve a wilderness . . .

After the 1914-18 war the creation of a war memorial for Mountaineers was considered and I understand that an offer was made to buy the Cuillins. The reply was that they were not for sale but the mountains would always be open to mountaineers.

In 1935 Lord Strathcona decided to sell his estate and the Scottish Mountaineering Club decided to raise funds to buy the portion which included the north side of Glen Coe as far east as the

Study and also a small strip on the south side of the river which included the summit of Bidean nam Bian. The area has 2,600 acres and this was accomplished. P. J. H. Unna was active in this.

In 1937 it was learned that the Forest of Dalness was in the market and Unna, who was President of the Club, took action and with the assistance of James M. Wordie (later Sir James) issued an appeal to the members of the British Mountaineering Clubs to raise £9,000 to buy the forest of 11,600 acres. Unna himself was a most liberal anonymous contributor. Thus an area of 22 square miles of mountaineering country was made available to mountaineers at all times of the year.

Unna, realising the importance of maintaining the wild nature of the country (probably from his experiences in the Lake District), addressed the letter of 23rd November 1937 to the Chairman of the Council of the National Trust for Scotland giving the views of the subscribers to the appeal regarding the making of footpaths and the erection of Sign Posts and other matters. Mindful of the necessity of providing a fund for the upkeep of the area he executed 7-year covenants which produced a fund of £20,500 known as the Mountainous Country Fund for upkeep and further purchases, and at the same time appointed a small committee to advise on further purchases.

In 1943 the Forest of Kintail came into the market and the committee advised that it was a suitable area and Unna put the National Trust in funds amounting to £12,500 to purchase it (again anonymously).

In 1951 the committee advised the purchase of Ben Lawers and adjacent summits for £8,000 and this sum was drawn from the Mountainous Country Fund, and in 1958 £5,000 was contributed to make the purchase of Goat Fell possible.

Late in 1950 Unna handed over to Trustees an investment in an engineering company worth approximately £6,000 with instructions that the Income and Capital should be given to the National Trust for Scotland for such use in connection with mountainous country as the Trustees thought suitable. This again was anonymous. The payments made from time to time included £3,500 for the purchase of Loch Skeen or the Grey Mare's Tail and in 1967 the balance of the Fund of approximately £17,000 was given to the National Trust to form an endowment fund to enable the Trust to take over Torridon Estate for the Mountainous Country Fund.

Unna died early in December 1950 and as residuary legatee the Trust received £83,000 after payment of duties. The interest from this fund has been used to maintain and improve the Properties which he donated. The Trust have very wide powers in the use of capital. The present value of all the Unna Funds is approximately £300,000.

Such is the story of the munificence of Unna which has been of inestimable value to climbers and hill lovers.

Letter from P. J. H. UNNA, Esq., President, Scottish Mountaineering Club to the Chairman and Council of the National Trust for Scotland, dated 23rd November, 1937.

DEAR SIRs—As the movement initiated by a group of members of the Scottish Mountaineering Club to acquire Dalness Forest and hand it over to the National Trust for Scotland, to be held for the use of the nation, so that the public may have unrestricted access at all times, has now materialised; as subscriptions to that end were invited not only from the members of the Scottish Mountaineering Club, but also from the members of all the other mountaineering clubs in Great Britain; and as the fund so subscribed enables the forest to be handed over free of cost to the Trust, together with a surplus to be used as an endowment fund—it is considered desirable that what are believed to be the views of the subscribers as to the future of the estate should be expressed in writing, and recorded in the Minutes of the Trust. This is all the more necessary, as in the attached circular which was issued for the purpose of inviting these subscriptions it was stated that the land 'would be held on behalf of the public and preserved for their use,' and 'that the Trust' would 'be asked to undertake that the land be maintained in its primitive condition for all time with unrestricted access to the public.' The views in question are:

1. That 'Primitive' means not less primitive than the existing state.
2. That sheep farming and cattle grazing may continue, but that deer stalking must cease, and no sport of any kind be carried on, or sporting rights sold or let; any use of the property for sport being wholly incompatible with the intention that the public should have unrestricted access and use. It is understood, however, that deer may have to be shot, as that may be necessary to keep down numbers and so prevent damage, but for that purpose alone.
3. That the word 'unrestricted' does not exclude regulations, but implies that regulations, if any, should be limited to such as may in future be found absolutely necessary, and be in sympathy with the views expressed herein.
4. That the hills should not be made easier or safer to climb.
5. That no facilities should be introduced for mechanical transport; that paths should not be extended or improved; and that new paths should not be made.
6. That no directional or other signs, whether signposts, paint marks, cairns or of any kind whatsoever, should be allowed; with the exception of such signs as may be necessary to indicate that the land is the property of the Trust, and to give effect to the requirement in the Provisional Order of 1935 that by-laws must be exhibited.
7. That should a demand spring up for hotels or hostels, it is possible that it may be satisfied to a limited extent. If so, they should only be built alongside the public roads, and should be subject to control by the Trust; and it is suggested that no hotels or hostels should be built in Glencoe itself, or on any other part of the property, except, perhaps, in the lower reaches of the Trust property in Glen Etive. It is hoped that the Trust may be able to come to an understanding with neighbouring proprietors as to corresponding restrictions being maintained in regard to land near to that held by the Trust.
8. That no other facilities should be afforded for obtaining lodging, shelter, food or drink; and especially, that no shelter of any kind be built on the hills.

9. It is hoped that the design of any buildings which may be necessary will be carefully considered by the Trust; and that, where possible, trees will be planted in their vicinity.
10. In conclusion, it is suggested that the whole question of the management of the Trust properties in Glen Etive and Glencoe should receive special attention, in view of the possibility that the policy adopted by the National Trust for Scotland in the present instance may create a precedent for similar areas in other mountainous districts, not only in Scotland, but also in England and Wales.—Yours faithfully,
P. J. H. UNNA.

A LETTER TO THE EDITOR

(Views expressed are those of correspondents).

SIR—The Tealasdale Slabs which hang out on the side of Griomaval in Lewis (see *S.M.C.J.*, 1971, xxix, 399 & 426) are indeed magnificent and give enjoyable climbing. They are also, however, rather featureless, have a lot of holds and interesting bulges and are climbable anywhere at, or below, Severe standard. Any Very Severe climbing encountered would only be a contrivance and unlikely to contribute more than a couple of moves in 1000 feet of climbing.

Are the two move-by-move descriptions on page 399 of what seems to be virtually the same route, therefore really necessary?

One of the pleasures obtained from climbing mountain crags in the Outer Isles and Northern Highlands stems largely from their isolation and, at present, relative lack of description. Yet each year the *Journal* publishes more and more route descriptions to new climbs without seeming to question either their merits or the effect of all this on the natural remoteness of the place.

At a time when more people are becoming increasingly aware of the dangers of pollution, and the conservation of our environment, perhaps we climbers should take a hard look at the present trend and its effect on our mountains. The remoteness of cliffs in the Outer Isles and Northern Highlands is for climbers a tremendous asset, yet we seem bent on destroying this, not only for ourselves but for future generations of climbers. Is it too much to ask that we have one area in Scotland which is not bogged down in paperwork and descriptions to routes? What does it really matter if A or B went this way before, or where you belay or put runners in, what holds you use or where you eat your piece?

Perhaps a start could be made by this *Journal* by stopping publication of new route descriptions to climbs in this area. This is arguably an artificial way of preserving the remoteness, but it surely can be no worse than the present situation—Yours, etc.

RUSSELL SHARP.

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

North America

IAN ROWE went 'with Mike and Shura Galbraith to the Rockies and Bugaboos in August, 1971. We met Bugs McKeith in the Cascade Bar in Banff and later established ourselves in the basement of the Canadian Alpine Club Hut—a good system this, providing a reduced tariff for active bums. A week later Galbraith, McKeith, Judy Sterner and I climbed the North Face of Mount Edith Cavell—a 5000-ft. face 20 minutes from the roadhead. We included a variation and McKeith declared the magic numbers . . . five-nine, our first. She was a superbird, Judy Sterner (not Edith Cavell), a Wagnerian Californian with a string-vest breast-plate.

Boulder Camp in the Bugaboos is an idyllic place, forgetting the mosquitoes and ground squirrels who chew everything. Here Galbraith and I plus now-liberated wives climbed Pidgeon Spire. Late the Edith Cavell team traversed Bugaboo Spire. My wife and McKeith then climbed South Howser Tower while I was in tow with two American draft dodgers dangling on a new route on the North Ridge of Snowpatch Spire. At a bivouac one of them awoke in a nightmare screaming that the F.B.I. were climbing into his hammock. The crack system we were following widened until we were able to walk through the mountain to the East Face, down which we beat a scaring retreat in a storm. The last 200 ft. abseil was made in the dark, hanging free, using jumars to negotiate a knot in the rope.

The Bugaboos are recommended to lovers of perfect granite and phallic simplicity, as is the easy-going attitude of the Calgary climbers, if you have time to become conditioned.'

South America

H. M. BROWN was in the Cordillera Blanca of Peru from the end of July until early September 1971. He writes, 'Myself, BARCLAY FRASER, ALISTAIR LAWSON and several others were in Peru, dividing the time between the mountains and general travel. Cuzco at 10,000 ft. itself gave good acclimatisation with visits to Saqsayhuaman, Pisac, the Urabamba, Ollantaytambo and unique Macchu Picchu. The Inca sites are strange and impressive. The main trip was a two-week trek through the Cordillera Blanca with 13 burros to do the donkey work. Several minor things on the 5000 metre mark led to an attempt on Pucaraju but the south snowslopes, running out of time on the final rocks and descending with a storm that by morning gave an unusual mixture of snow and midges in camp. The main Andes watershed was crossed by the Punta Union, 4750 m., eastward and then again by the Porto Yanganuco, 4767 m., westward to Yungay, the village destroyed by Huascan's earthquake and avalanche last year: a numbing sight. The Cordillera Blanca has its share of giants: Quitaraju, Artesonraju, Chacaraju, Chopicalqui, Huandoy, Alpamayo, Taillaraju and Huascan. The last three in particular are beautiful, frightening and just colossal in character. Some visited Lake Titicaca, Arequipa, Sillistani to finish the visit. Five weeks worked surprisingly well; though to do anything big or hard, goods by sea would still be essential, something this modest charter flight party managed to avoid. There is as much scope as anywhere in the world with the development of charters. Seven climbing groups went on this flight. The Cordillera Blanca has had 20 or more parties from Australia, New Zealand, Italy, Switzerland, France and the U.S.A. in 1971 with some new routes on the 6000-metre peaks: Pisco, just under 6000 m., was the highest climbed summit by our group, whose journey up the Santa Cruz valley, the Huaripampa and back by the Yanganyuco was all one could desire of travel. The most commonly heard phrase was 'Next time . . .'

Norway

A. WATSON, Jnr., writes, 'I spent a week in late July 1971 on a working visit to see ecological research in the Senja region of Troms county in north Norway. The island contains some very fine wilderness areas, mountains and sea-cliffs, has mostly not been affected at all by pollution and other human developments, and has a sparse human population and a rich subarctic wild life. Moose and lemmings are abundant and there are fair numbers of sea eagles whose populations have not been affected at all by pesticides. Two days were spent walking and climbing in the new Anderdalen National Park, an area of mountains, virgin pine and birch forests, lakes and great forest bogs. There was unusually much snow from a long snowy winter and late spring, and heavy fresh snow fell on the mountains during the visit. We were in an area with some fine rock peaks of 700-900 m. or more, but unfortunately the only day we could spare for climbing turned out misty and sleety. The higher peaks were out, but we climbed the lower mountain, Blåfjell, a big rock dome of about 700 m., by a long rambling route on mixed snow and ribs of rock, and later a 1000 ft. glissade. The tree line varied from 100-200 m. above sea-level, less in places, and peaks of 800-900 m. were glaciated and also had extensive firn snow caps. Later we visited the north end of Senja, an area of wild sea cliffs and fine peaks especially a remarkable mountain at the head of Stordalen with an impressive vertical north wall. The Norway Travel Association's handbook on *Mountain Holidays in Norway* by Per Prag, which summarises information on routes all over Norway, mentions only a few climbs in Senja near Ersfjord, so there is a lot of scope for exploration.'

Alps

GEORGE ROGER writes, 'I had the pleasure of attending the A.B.M.S.A.C. Meet at Täsch from 15th-28th August. The weather was a bit unsettled but the company was very good and we had plenty of exercise which included the Breithorn and a traverse of the Alphubel from the Täsch Hut to the Britannia Hut, returning next day by the Rimpfischhorn. We visited the Rothorn Hut and the Mischabel Hut but storms broke out on each occasion with thunder and snow and we had to return to base.'

Later I joined EDDIE THOMPSON's party which included LES WILSON and ANDY JAMES (J.M.C.S.) at Randa. The weather was good and from the Mischabel Hut we climbed the Nadelhorn and Ulrichschorn and from the Dom Hut we did the Dom by the North-west Ridge which was a fine finish to the holiday.'

ALLEN FYFFE writes, 'This summer Ken Spence (Squirrels M.C.) and myself went to the Chamonix area to try the North Face of Les Droites (Corneau Davaille). The first attempt with S.M.C. stalwarts IAN ROWE and PETER MACDONALD failed in the heat of the night and the roar of the snows. We crossed over a large part of the face on the retreat back down the glacier.'

Later we returned and Spence and myself climbed the face in 26 hours with one bivouac above the crux rock-band about two-thirds of the way up. The route is entirely front-pointing but fairly interesting although long and strenuous.

We then moved on to Grindelwald to meet Creag Dhu Nicolson and English Knowles to do the 1938 route on the Eigerwand. Our first attempt floundered at the Hinterstoisser waterfall where we sat out a storm in the aptly-named Wet Cave. Some days later we returned, starting about 10 a.m. from our base in a cave in the Alpigen. We bivouacked above the Second Icefield in fine weather. Next day we stopped early, bivouacking below the Spider on the Traverse of the Gods. We reached the summit next day about 2 p.m. We spent about 26 hours actually climbing and found the route to be really great apart from the stonefalls which were fortunately never very bad.'

H. M. BROWN writes, 'I was in the Stubai Alps in Austria in April 1971 as a solitary S.A.C. Scot in a largely English O.A.V. party; twelve days of perfect weather for ski-climbing-touring, usually giving long first light hauls on skins, fine narrow summit ridges to climb and downhill ski perfection. We were based on the Franz Senn, Amberger and Dresdner Huts and ski-ing many 3000 m. passes between. Peaks climbed were the Wildes Hinterberg, Ruderhof Spitz, Innere Sommerwand Spitz, Schrankogel, Kuhschiebe, Hinter Daunkopf, Zucherhütt, Wilder Pfaff, Stubaier Wildspitz, Ost Daunkogel, Schussgrubenkogel and Schaufel Spitz.'

JOHN STEELE (J.M.C.S.) writes, 'A return visit was made to Arolla in the Pennine Alps, which was unfortunately restricted to eight days. We traversed the Petit Dent de Vesivei, which proved once again to be a strenuous but excellent training climb. This was followed by an ascent of the west ridge of the Dent de Tsalion, a long rock ridge at a fairly easy angle. A successful traverse of the Aiguilles Rouges was also made. This was done from north to south, using the Walldkirch Hut as a base. The snow patch mentioned below the Col Slingsby was in fact ice and descent over this or from the Col Sud looked dangerous. The general snow conditions overall were poor, as the upper névés had shrunk considerably compared with last year. While in Arolla, successful guideless British traverses were made of La Singd and the Bouquetins Ridge.'

JOHN FAIRLEY (J.M.C.S.) writes, 'I spent the first three weeks in August in Chamonix accompanied by a female friend. For training we climbed the Aiguille des Petits Charmoz and went on to climb the Moine, L'Eveque and La Nonne. Bad weather then set in and our hopes to climb the Aiguilles Dorées were never fulfilled. However, we managed the Forbes Arête of the Chardonnet and the Readie Route on the East Face of the Dent du Requin.'

H. M. BROWN writes, 'BOB AITKEN (J.M.C.S.), five other friends and myself made a brief visit to the Ortler Alps in mid-July 1971—an area seldom visited by British climbers and strangely so, since it offers a wide range of climbing and now has an English guidebook. Suldén in the north and a camp by the Buzzi Inn to the south were our bases. The Huts were well-run and cheaper than we had expected. The Bernasconi has been replaced by a bivouac hut further up on Tresero. Climbs done were a traverse of M. Cevedale and M. Pasquale from Casati to Branca Huts, P. be Segnale above the Bernasconi Bothy, the traverse of P. Tresero and P. Pedranzini and Cima Ortles (at 3899 m. the highest peak in the range and a fine mountain in every way) from the Payer Hut and the Coll dell'Orso, and a traverse over the iced ridges of L'Angelo and Cime Vertana in a storm.'

IAN ROWE writes, 'Allen Fyfe and I made an ascent of the Central Spur of the North Face of Les Courtes in March 1972. We left the Refuge Argentièr by moonlight on the 2nd and climbed the initial spur before the dawn. After a short bivouac we traversed hard ice and slabs to reach the upper slopes. A further bivouac followed in worsening weather and we reached the summit at one o'clock on the 4th. We then traversed to the Col des Cristaux in strong wind and spindrift and commenced a dusk-to-darkness wade in powder snow to the glacier. We made the acquaintance of two bergschrunds and minor frostbite before arriving on the flat where we could no longer tell which way was down. We waited in snowy graves until gravity returned with the light and impatience and got back to the hut on the 5th.'

The climbing had none of the technical interest or allotropic complexity of a Scottish Gully, being merely hard work, powder snow and hard, hard ice. Crampons and picks soon blunted and front-pointing was an uncertain and strenuous procedure. The chief delights were the MAGNIFICENT SITUATION

and the COMMITMENT. Occasionally a sheet of ice would be pierced by underlying rocks so that a tenuous series of moves could be made without strain on the calves, but really winter climbing in the Alps is the admission of an inability to ski.'

W. TAUBER writes, 'I met ALAN PETTIT (J.M.C.S.) in Milan in early July. We went to the Civetta where we did several routes: the Via Carlesso-Menti on the Torre Valgrande (an over-pegged favourite, but nevertheless a strenuous climb up a brilliant line) the Via Ratti-Vitali on the North Face of the Cima Su Alto—a fine line with much poor rock, long and sustained with its crux near the top. The descent is very unpleasant, down a gully which overhangs violently in one place.

Next we went to the Bregaglia where we made two ascents, the North Ridge of the Piz Cengalo—an excellent route—and the Cassin route on the North-east Face of the Piz Badile. On the latter route an Austrian party in front of us led through several desperate variations until we learned to trust the guidebook. A cloudburst while we were in the final chimney-couloir almost drowned us, but we were up in about 7 hours. The descent by the North Ridge in persistent electric storms was an epic.

We then returned to the Dolomites whence poor weather sent us to Chamonix where we ascended the North Face of the Aiguille du Plan. This was our only ice-route, done in first-class conditions front-pointing the whole way—standard was about Scottish Grade III.

Pettit now returned home and I remained in Chamonix to make the following climbs: a solo ascent of the Couzy Route on the Aiguille de L'M (20 mins.), a three-day attempt on the traverse of the Chamonix Aiguilles with Roman Lata (U.S.A.) which had to be curtailed on the second day when Lata's elbow was smashed by a falling rock at the Brèche du Caimen, the ordinary route on the Dent du Géant with ALAN NORTH, the north face of the Aiguille du Dru with René Walter (Switzerland)—this was in very good condition and we took only 11 hours from Montenvers, the West Face of the Pointe Albert with Roger Mear (England) and lastly the South Face of the Aiguille du Fou, also with Mear (this ascent is described in an article earlier in this issue).'





J. Crawford

Skidmore struggling with his Conscience on The Blinder's Crux
(see *Arran New Climbs*).

NEW CLIMBS

THERE are two innovations in this section of the *Journal* this year. Firstly, some of the subsections are introduced by a paragraph or two of evaluative comment from individuals with good local knowledge. In the years to come we hope to farm out the entire section in this way to willing horses. If achieved, this would ease our own task considerably and would also, we believe, add interest and authority to our recording of new climbs. Anyone interested in helping in this way is invited to offer their services.

The second innovation is of greater importance. Recently Ian Rowe and Graham Tiso have mooted the idea that a moratorium on the publication of fresh information about new climbs in the north-west highlands should be called by the Club. This proposal arises from fears that it may shortly be impossible, if nothing of this sort is done, to find a sizeable piece of rock in Scotland that has not been described in detail and that future generations of Scottish climbers may be deprived of the opportunity to acquire the vital skills of route-finding and to exercise these skills in the exploration of unknown crags within the confines of their own land.

This proposal has been well received by the Club, but is clearly unworkable unless it has the support of climbers in general. In particular, those individuals and organisations involved in the dissemination of information about our mountains would have to give us their support. In the meantime, however, while this support is being solicited this *Journal* will stockpile any information it receives about climbs in the area. In the coming year a firm decision will be made about the proposal one way or the other, and if the proposal is not adopted then the backlog of new climbs will be published in next year's *Journal*. The precise area affected by the Rowe-Tiso Moratorium is all the land (highland or island) west of the Great Glen with the exception of the traditional climbing grounds of Skye.

ROBIN N. CAMPBELL.

ARRAN

ONLY four new routes in a good summer would suggest Arran will continue to develop at a nice sane pace despite the runaway condition of so many other areas. The vegetation, blank rock, long pads, social diversions and lack of a hut would temper the pace anywhere, let alone on an island. It is an excellent state of affairs.

Of the routes climbed only The Blinder can be considered worthy of inclusion in the mere handful of Arran climbs which determined men keep in mental notebooks ready for the day when everything is right. Not all will tick off this one.

The ironically-named Eliminate on the back of Rosa Pinnacle requires nothing more than a few chocks for protection against the possibility of tired arms failing at the end of a hard day.

When one is confronted, after the boggy walk up Glen Sannox, with the dank North-East Face of Cir Mhór it is only natural to cry off and look for something less horrible at hand. Thus it is likely that the Lower Slabs will soon be worked out. The two new Severs are probably as good as any here but the time when a party will walk past the slabs to do another Silo is overdue. Good luck to them.

Repeat ascents include at least one of Brachistochrone, that thought-provoking slit down the full height of the Meadow Face. To then hear it described as an 'interesting enough struggle' can make a man suspect the approach of old age or a leg-pull.

The well known 'aura of mystery' about Sickle on Rosa Pinnacle (1957) has been dispelled by Bill Wallace who has been worrying about it for years and has now climbed it. He considers the new description in the guide book to be reasonably accurate but found the middle pitch best split into two of thirty and sixty feet, both hard in the prevailing dry conditions.

Just in time to fill the gap a new mystery comes along in the form of Klepht on Cioch na h'Oighe where several attempts have failed at the start of pitch three, to judge by the gear littering the rather inadequate stance. This writer added his bit. As far as is known it has not had a second ascent but new details incorporated in the description below from the pioneers might change things. A free ascent of the whole route will require more than a fair share of courage, or something.

Further up the glen on Cir Mhór, two independent and irate opinions have been voiced that Nor-Easter Slabs which is recommended in the guide book, should not be!

W. SKIDMORE.

Beinn Tarsuinn: Meadow Face.—*The Blinder*. 450 ft. Very Severe. J. Crawford & W. Skidmore. 21st August 1971.

The route follows the steep corner-crack referred to in the new Arran guide and lies just round the great left edge of the main face.

Gain crack from small ledge and climb direct until possible to traverse left to grass ledge and piton belay (in place), (120 ft.). Also hidden spike on left. Regain main corner and go up to small roof (piton) which surmount with chock aid and continue using another chock to grass clump 20 ft. above roof. Climb to good stance and piton belay (in place) in recess, (60 ft.). Climb groove to grass section and follow this (piton runner) to undercut bulge. Surmount bulge using sling on chockstone to reach good stance and belay at bottom of deep chimney (100 ft.). Climb this fine strenuous chimney via swinging chockstone and exit onto stance in floor of great square recess (80 ft.) Enter tight chimney hard in right hand corner and struggle to boulder bulge then bridge left for finishing holds. Continue easily left up broken groove to top at large flake belay (90 ft.).

Cir Mhór: Rosa Pinnacle Gully Face.—*Sunshine Corner*. 150 ft. Very Severe. D. Marshall, R. Richardson & W. Skidmore. 12th July 1971.

Immediately right of the Double Cracks start to Easter Route is a large corner enclosing twin cracks.

Climb corner direct, roof, bulges and all (strenuous) in one run-out to finish up final chimney of Labyrinth Original in same line.

Caisteal Abhail: Lower Slabs.—*Hode On*. 400 ft. Severe. S. Docherty & B. Dunn. April 1971.

Start 20 ft. right of Central Grooves at bottom of a large pock-marked slab.

Climb to overlap and belay (80 ft.). Surmount overlap at lowest point and continue straight up to heather terrace (100 ft.). Follow thin crack to bottom of steep wide crack (110 ft.). Climb crack to top (110 ft.).

—*Mystic*. 510 ft. Severe. K. V. Crockett & D. C. Forrest. 27th July 1971.

Start as for Central Grooves at cairn. The first two pitches follow the slab left of this route.

Climb twin cracks near left edge to overlap and belay in corner 30 ft. above (125 ft.). Step right and climb slabs trending left to block belay (125 ft.). Cross heather terrace and directly above climb slabs to left end of overhanging wall (150 ft.). Climb wall by sloping shelves to slabs and top (110 ft.).

Cloch na h'Oighe.—*Klephit*. 280 ft. See Arran guide for location, etc.

Climb overhanging corner using chocks and piton and soon pull left to small ledge. Piton belay (40 ft.). Climb short corner on right to gain grass and traverse this to rock wall which leads to right end of higher grass ledge. Return left to main corner for poor stance and piton belay (70 ft.).

The next two crucial pitches are possibly best climbed as one. Pitons and wedges used on first ascent for protection whilst cleaning.

Follow main crack and gain recess on left wall. Belay (35 ft.). Continue in crack until smaller crack on left wall allows final corner to be climbed to grass ledge and good thread belay (60 ft.). Traverse off left to Ledge 4 (75 ft.).

SKYE

Sgùrr MhicCoinnich:Coireachan Ruadh Face.—*Hanging Slab*. 665 ft. Very Severe. J. A. Austin & D. G. Roberts. 3rd June 1971.

Start as for King Cobra and scramble up the 'exiguous gully' to a belay. Climb left wall of gully to stance in gully (45 ft.). Traverse across undercut slab on left for 120 ft. or so to line of vertical cracks. Climb these, then make short traverse left to small stance and high flake belay (150 ft.). Move up and left again to climb steep little rib to large ledge (50 ft.). Climb steep cracks behind ledge (100 ft.). Follow line of cracks and chimneys more easily to top (320 ft.).

Sgùrr Sgumain: North Buttress.—*Grannie Clark's Wynd*. 500 ft. Very Severe. J. S. Shade & W. Tauber. 12th June 1971.

The buttress has a large area of unclimbed rock, bounded below and on the left by Frankland's Gully and on the right by the so-called Direct Route, which in fact traverses well clear of the main problems to finish up the side of the buttress in the same place as Frostbite. The present route takes a direct line up the unclimbed face, between a large blank wall and slab on the left, and some very steep, loose rock on the right.

Climb about 150 ft. up Frankland's Gully, which can be entered directly. Make a rising traverse rightwards below roof, climb over it and past large block to platform (35 ft.). Go up into shallow corner, passing loose flake on the right, and up this to ledge (85 ft.). Climb up and left through line of bulges at easiest point (peg runner, crux), then back slightly right crossing some loose rock to peg belay (130 ft.). Finish straight up the buttress (100 ft.).

Sgùrr Thuilm.—*Fosdyke*. 200 ft. Hard Severe. A. J. Gilbert & D. A. P. Steel. 14th May 1971.

The climb lies on the Coire an Dorus face of the Sgùrr, just left of Gail. Evidence was found of previous attempts which appear to have failed at about 60 ft.

Start 20 ft. left of Gail by following prominent vertical dyke to small stance below roofs (80 ft.). Traverse slab on left below large roof using undercuts (crux) to small stance (15 ft.). Climb slab corner above until it becomes grassy. Move right and follow steep groove to belay on scree terrace (105 ft.).

CAIRNGORMS I

Beinn a'Bhuird: Coire na Ciche.—*Three-step*. 450 ft. Very Severe. R. H. Ford & R. A. North. 25th May 1964.

Start right of the Carpet at a short slab with a grassy left-hand corner. Climb slab to overhanging corner (30 ft.). Climb corner (A1) and then traverse right and upwards to weakness in overhangs above (50 ft.). Climb thin crack (1 peg) and move rightwards round corner (crux, 40 ft.). Follow easy vegetated ledges to short wet corner and climb this or wall on right (80 ft.). Continue

up broad grass rake for 40-50 ft. Climb steep wall and broken slabs above crossing shallow couloir (40 ft.). Cross short vertical step to gain huge slab and climb this directly on sparse holds—a splendid pitch (120 ft.). Move right onto edge of buttress, thence by layback crack and exposed overhang on skyline reach final slab and so to the plateau (120 ft.).

NOTE: This is the description of the original ascent of the route. A description of a more recent ascent appeared in last year's *Journal*, p. 409. Comparison suggests that the pioneers were unfairly ostracised!

Ben Macdhui: Creagan a'Choire Etchachan.—*Hex*. 280 ft. Severe. D. Dinwoodie, M. Forbes & B. Lawrie. 1971.

This is a short but steep route on excellent clean and rough rock. Start 20 ft. above the start of Pikestaff at a shallow pink bay (arrow).

Climb vague rock fault to left of system of grass cracks and belay at top of cracks beneath bulge (130 ft.). Step left and follow continuation fault to point where cracks become grass-choked. Step right to crest and into Pikestaff and finish by the last 20 ft. of that route (150 ft.).

—*Pathfinder*. 320 ft. Very Severe. D. Dinwoodie & D. Riley. 17th July 1971.

This climb is a direct line up Pioneer Buttress. Start at the toe of the buttress immediately right of Cambridge Route.

Climb trending right to peg belay in obvious overhanging bay (60 ft.). Step left onto rib overlooking steep groove. Follow rib making occasional moves into the groove which closes at 100 ft. Now either make difficult move up short corner or step onto rib and go *via* small pocket (harder). The flaky crack above crack leads to good ledge (135 ft.). Belay on *arête* to left. Climb wall above *via* a grassy ramp to easier ground (125 ft.).

—*Carmine Groove*. 250 ft. Very Severe. D. Dinwoodie, G. S. Strange & D. Stuart. 17th July 1971.

This is the prominent red groove on the upper cliff between Bodkin and The Serpent. Start at the left edge of the Meadow.

Go up clean groove then move right to flake. Climb straight up, re-enter groove and continue to belay below overhang (70 ft.). Step left onto steep red slab and climb corner groove directly to roof. Exit right to small ledge and climb finger-crack to ledges (90 ft.). Move right and climb narrow grey rib to easy ground (90 ft.).

Coire Sputan Dearg.—*Ferlas Mor*. 450 ft. Severe. J. Mothersele, G. S. Strange & D. Stuart: D. Dinwoodie & B. T. Lawrie. 22nd May 1971.

This route takes a direct line up the centre of Grey Man's Crag between Grey Slab and Hanging Dyke.

Climb first pitch of Grey Slab to stance at foot of corner (50 ft.). Swing up right and climb grooves and ribs on edge overlooking Grey Slab to basalt fault. Climb this to ledge below crux of Hanging Dyke (100 ft.). Move left and continue up grooves to small stance level with the top of Grey Slab (120 ft.). Go up right and follow crest *via* short chimney and easy rib to top (140 ft.).

—*Wee Heavy*. 150 ft. Very Severe. D. Dinwoodie & B. T. Lawrie. 19th June 1971.

This route lies on the steep wall between April Wall and the Swing. Just below the Chute a huge hanging block is jammed at the top of a corner. Start up the corner and thread between the block and the back wall. Belay on top of the block.

Go up directly to awkward position 12 ft. above. Climb deep crack slanting right (peg runner) and continue across lip of overhang to gain shallow gully left of April Wall. Follow the gully mainly on the right wall (loose).

—*The Fly*. 200 ft. Severe. D. Dinwoodie & B. T. Lawrie. 19th June 1971.

The route takes the steep cracked wall near the centre of the slabby buttress right of Flake Buttress. Start at base of wall to the left of The Web (arrow).

Climb crack leftwards then move up right to gain horizontal crack. Traverse this across wall and climb easily up left to belay below prominent deep S-shaped crack. Climb crack to join The Web below the final slab.

Braeriach: Garbh Coire Dhaidh.—*Twilight Gully*. 600 ft. GRADE II. J. Bower, B. S. Findlay, G. S. Strange & D. Stuart. 1½ hours. 11th April 1971.

This is the bow-shaped gully between Boomerang and Helicon Rib. In a normal winter it is a straightforward snow chute capped by a huge cornice. On this occasion it was a long runnel of snow and water-ice. The cornice was outflanked on the left.

Garbh Coire Mór.—*Pinnacles Couloir*. 400 ft. GRADE III. J. Bower, B. S. Findlay, G. S. Strange & D. Stuart. 2 hours. 10th April 1971.

This is the obvious couloir leading to the col on Pinnacles Buttress. A leftward rising traverse from below the Tower of Babel led across Phoenix Gully to the foot of the couloir. This gave a steep 150 ft. pitch on wet snow and water-ice. The upper pinnacle was climbed direct to a small cornice.

—*Phoenix Buttress*. GRADE III. M. G. Geddes & J. S. Robinson. 2½ hours. 21st December 1971.

The buttress was well plastered in new snow and the summer route was followed throughout. Recommendable.

Cairngorm: Coire an t-Sneachda, Aladdin's Buttress.—*Doctor's Choice*. 350 ft. GRADE III. W. March (ldr) & N. Dille. 12th February 1972.

Start below prominent overhang in centre of buttress. Climb to overhang, exit left onto slab and climb rightwards to foot of prominent gully (150 ft.). Climb a further 150 ft. up gully onto open face where angle eases. Continue easily to top.

—*Original Route*. GRADE III. W. March (ldr) & B. Manson. 13th February 1972.

The summer route was followed throughout.

—*Broken Pillar*. 350 ft. Difficult. K. Schwartz. 24th June 1967.

This takes a fairly direct line on the ill-defined pillar just left of Broken Gully. Start 40 ft. left of the latter route on a ledge level with the start of Fingers Ridge.

Climb step and cross broken rock to steeper section with obvious big block. Climb more or less directly up this section to finish on the ridge above.

—*Western Rib*. GRADE II. W. March (ldr) & R. Mansfield. 1972.

The crux of the route was the tower at the top which was climbed direct with the aid of a sling.

Creag an Leth-choin, Lurcher's Crag.—*Window Gully*. 710 ft. GRADE III. W. March (ldr), J. Cleare & J. Bradshaw. 9th March 1972.

Midway between North and South Gullies a large ice-fall festooned with icicles hangs halfway up the face. This is the line of the climb.

Climb quite steeply for 250 ft. to reach the foot of the overhanging wall from which the ice falls in a screen. Some objective danger was provided by a 40 ft icicle hanging above these lower pitches (it fell off the next day). Stomach traverse and climb leftwards between the ice-screen and the rock

wall to the most substantial section of the ice. Cut a window in the ice curtain and climb through this onto steep ice which is climbed to easier ground (60 ft.). Continue up the gully over short ice pitches for 400 ft. to the top.

Hell's Lum Crag.—*Brimstone Grooves*. GRADE IV. S. Docherty & K. Spence. 27th December 1970.

Take the line of Brimstone Grooves as far as the big overhanging nose. This was turned on the left for 150 ft. to a belay. A short right traverse was made to easy snow and this was climbed to the top. 2 pegs were used for aid.

—*Salamander*. 500 ft. Very Severe
D. Dinwoodie & J. Tweedie. 18th September 1971.

The climb takes a direct line between Brimstone Grooves and Hellfire Corner. Start 30 ft. left of Vacuum (arrow) below an obvious corner.

Climb directly and delicately up to corner and follow this to ledge. Continue upwards passing prominent overlap by bulging slab at left end to reach platform (140 ft.). Follow easier rocks to glaciis (60 ft.). From glaciis climb twin cracks up steep slabs left of obvious corner to platform (60 ft.). Climb directly by black bulge just right of short corner and go up slabs trending rightwards to obvious shallow scoop (60 ft.). Continue up slabs to reach shallow groove. Follow this to break through upper overhangs by striking chimney slit. Thread belay (100 ft.). Continue upwards through open funnel to easy ground (80 ft.).

—*Big Deil*. 420 ft. Hard Severe. G. S. Strange & D. Stuart. 18th September 1971.

The route lies on the gently-overlapping slabs between Auld Nick and Kiwi Slabs. Start as for Kiwi Slabs and scramble directly to the foot of a vertical crack (arrow).

Climb crack to belay below large overlap (70 ft.). Gain continuation of crack on upper slab (1 peg) and continue, trending left across slabs to two-tiered corner. Climb this to stance below small overlap (110 ft.). Go up diagonally rightwards over steepening slabs to ledge just right of short corner leading to break in long low roof (100 ft.). Follow corner, surmount overhanging cleft and continue to ledge (50 ft.). Climb slab wall straight ahead (75 ft.). Scramble to plateau.

—*Kiwi Gully*. GRADE III. W. March & I. Nicolson. 2nd January 1972.

This is the obvious gully left of Kiwi Slabs.

Longbow Crag.—*The Sandpiper, Direct Finish*. 200 ft. Very Severe. M. G. Geddes & J. C. Higham. 1st July 1971.

Just after the loose block on the fifth pitch step back left over the lip of the roof and climb up left by a groove line to a heather ledge and nut belay (90 ft.). Move left, climb a filthy crack, and continue by a clean one to a small roof and easy ground. This is possibly a better finish than continuing up right to join Wigwag.

The sling on the fourth pitch can be eliminated with little increase in standard.

Stac an Fharadh.—*Rectangular Gully*. 350 ft. GRADE II. W. March. 5th January 1972.

This is the gully between the east and west slabs. It gave several ice pitches.

—*Throwover*. 440 ft. Very Severe. Miss M. Horsburgh, D. Regan & K. Schwartz. 11th August 1971.

This is a route starting left of, then crossing and finishing right of Bellows. Go up crack 15 ft. right of Whispers (145 ft.). Move diagonally right to sloping ledge just below peg runner on second pitch of Bellows. Break through over-

lap a few feet right with aid of nut and belay left of rib (95 ft.). Climb thin rib to gain and follow crack directly above. Climb straight over bulge (1 peg) about 15 ft. right of peg runner on the third pitch of Whispers. Belay 25 ft. above (100 ft.). Climb rounded crack then go rightwards up awkward wall right of grassy recess and wet step to finish (100 ft.).

CAIRNGORMS II

Broad Cairn: Creag an Dubh Loch.—*Last Oasis.* 450 ft. Hard Severe. J. Bower & J. Ingram. 20th September 1971.

The route lies on the Broad Terrace Face and follows the obvious fault on the left of Sword of Damocles. Although the fault was hanging with slime in places, the more repulsive sections were avoided by excursions on the flanking walls, where clean rock was found.

Follow fault for 100 ft. to steepening then go up right on slabby shelf to belay (130 ft.). Traverse left to regain line and go up 10 ft. chimney to grass ledge. Now move up, using right wall occasionally, to belay beneath overhang (120 ft.). Turn this on right and go up thin crack in corner to ledge level with top of bolt pitch on Sword of Damocles (40 ft.). Descend crack a little and gain ledge on left by tension and 1 peg. Continue up and left to belay on edge of fault (40 ft.). Avoid precarious section ahead by traversing left for 20 ft., then go up 10 ft. and back right over blocks into leftward-slanting crevasse leading to plateau (120 ft.).

—*Goliath Direct Start.* 150 ft. Very Severe. S. Docherty & N. Muir. 22nd May 1971.

Start at arrow below large hanging block. Climb groove for 30 ft., traverse left to overlap, climb groove to ledge then go up chimney to roof and swing right to slab and belay (1 peg and 2 nuts for aid, 100 ft.) Climb large wedged flake on left to ledge, climb groove (1 peg) with loose undercut to ledge and traverse right to belay on ring peg (50 ft.).

Mayar: Corrie Fee.—*A Gully Buttress.* 700 ft. GRADE III. A. Macdonald & J. Mackenzie. 5th February 1972.

Left of A Gully is a large triangular buttress which has no summer route. This is the buttress climbed. Start directly beneath the conical mass of rock and climb snow to base of rocks just right of centre below vertical groove.

Climb groove (3 pegs) and pull out over the overhung top by a straddle and a further peg. Make short left traverse (peg runner) to frozen turf, climb this to steepening and veer right to short corner. Climb this (peg runner) and traverse hard left along sloping ledge to narrow runnel of snow (thread runner) and follow this for 50 ft. to small tree and peg belay (150 ft.). Climb runnel to broad snowfield and go up this to base of broken arête (150 ft.). Climb the middle of three gullies left of the arête to terrace (150 ft.). From end of terrace climb straight up buttress to ledges (150 ft.). Go round corner on left by narrow ledge then finish up broken rocks to crest of buttress (100 ft.).

—*Wet Knees.* 450 ft to Terrace. GRADE III/IV. N. D. Keir & A. Lawson. 30th January 1972.

The route followed a fairly direct, though discontinuous, line of chimneys breaching the steep rock bands on the immediate right of Look C Gully. It was climbed with heavy powder overlying verglassed rocks and firm snow.

From start just inside Look C, climb short V-groove on right to gain, by broken slopes and a short right traverse, snow runnel below first chimney. Climb runnel to second impressive hanging chimney with tree at two-thirds height. Climb this by hard bridging (1 nut). Climb more easily for two run-outs to terrace and finish by moving left into upper section of Look C.

Deteriorating weather and light prevented an independent finish but no doubt one could be made.

Red Craigs, Glen Clova.—*Rander*. 70 ft. Very Severe. A. Moore (ldr) & C. Norris. 8th May 1971.

This is a groove in the wall of the gully right of Monster Crack on the Lower Section of North-west Crag.

Climb groove to overhangs, go right for 10 ft. and climb wall to top.

—*Golae Grooves*. 120 ft. Very Severe. C. Norris (ldr) & A. Moore. 8th May 1971.

Start below patch of red rock, near the right end of Central Crag. Climb slab for 20 ft., surmount overhang, then follow heather ramp diagonally rightwards until groove can be climbed back left. A corner (peg runner) leads to top.

NOTE: A free variation of Witches Mate on North-west Crag was also climbed by Norris & Moore. The arête 4 ft. left of the normal start was followed to join the route at 15 ft. No pegs were used for aid or protection.

Royal Burgh of Aberdeen, Rubislaw Quarry.—The quarry at its western end has a large terrace at half-height, the West Terrace. The first two climbs below start from this terrace and lie on the north side of the quarry where there is a poorly-defined red tower crowned by two 20ft. x 3ft. concrete slabs.

The two climbs following these also lie on the north side of the quarry but begin about 30 ft. above the quarry lake.

—*Alsora*. 210 ft. Very Severe. A. J. Maxfield (ldr) & H. Taylor. 9th July 1971.

The route takes a rightward traversing line from the eastern end of the West Terrace to finish on top of the red tower.

From the last tree on the terrace traverse 12 ft. right to old metal spike used for carrying electric wires. Climb above spike moving right to ledge with trees (60 ft.). Climb steep gangway from left end of ledge to ledge above with tree belay (20 ft.). From right end of ledge climb steep wall with crack to gain top ledge next to left of tower. Tree belay (crux, 60 ft.). Traverse right onto left of red tower's top slabs. Climb airy scoop and crack beyond to finish at concrete slabs (70 ft.).

—*Hirsute*. 410 ft. Very Severe. A. J. Maxfield (ldr) & J. Dyczek. 10th July 1971.

The route traverses right under the red tower and climbs the corner on the right of the tower to finish at the concrete slabs.

Start as for *Alsora*. Climb down 12 ft. to gain easy traverse line and follow this past bush and grass (110 ft.). Traverse up and right across delicate slab, then climb to top of wall. Ledge belay (70 ft.). Climb down right for 15 ft. and traverse right across steep slab above steep wall. Move right and up to gain ledge below right-hand side of front wall of tower (70 ft.). Move right 15 ft. into groove which follow to ledge below corner. Metal spikes belay (50 ft.). Climb corner, a series of steps, until 15 ft. below top of cliff. Move out left onto easy slabs at top of tower under the concrete slabs (crux, 110 ft.).

—*Lucre*. 400 ft. Very Severe. A. J. Maxfield & P. Smith. 31st October 1971.

The vegetation below the West Terrace runs down to the lake. Where the northern end of this vegetation meets the face there is a 10 ft. square ledge. Start from the right end of this ledge, roughly below the first pitch of *Hirsute*.

Traverse right for 6 ft. to gain corner. Follow left-trending gangway for 15 ft. then move right and up to block belays (60 ft.). Climb over blocks to right-angled corner at 70 ft. Climb wall on left to small ledge and peg belay (100 ft.). Climb wall above to easier vegetated ground at end of first pitch of *Hirsute* (120 ft.). As for *Hirsute* (70 ft.). Climb 20 ft. right and up to reach



R. Campbell

J. R. Marshall on the First Ascent of Unicorn, Stob Coire nan Lochain.
(see *Glencoe New Climbs*).

left-trending scoop. Follow this and steep corner finishing left across wall to gain top ledge of Alsora (120 ft.).

—*Chac Mool*. 460 ft. Very

Severe. A. J. Maxfield & P. Smith. 14th November 1971.

Start 10 ft. right of Lucre. Traverse right and up over grass and rock (60 ft.). Traverse right and up to gain crack which follow for 10 ft to ledge (80 ft.). Climb 10 ft. on left to enter left-trending gangway. Climb crack on right of gangway and move right onto ledge (120 ft.). Traverse right for 30 ft. across steep wall to corner (1 peg). Climb left-trending gangway and move right to ledge (80 ft.). Climb series of steps 15 ft. right of belay for 20 ft. Move left past small bush and climb wall to gain left-trending gangway. Climb crack in middle of gangway. 6 ft. below top of gangway move left to join the right traverse of the third pitch of Hirsute (120 ft.).

White Mounth: Eagles' Rock.—*Spectrum*. 350 ft. Very Difficult. D. Dinwoodie, G. S. Strange & D. Stuart. 8th May 1971.

The route takes a line of corners and grooves immediately right of the Waterfall. Start at the first obvious break right of the watercourse and climb up into corner leading to recess below dark slanting crack (150 ft.). Climb short steep wall right of recess (crux) and follow slabs up rightwards to belay below prominent V-groove (100 ft.). Climb groove and continue to top (100 ft.). Recommended.

BEN NEVIS REGION

Ben Nevis: North east Buttress. *Newbigging's Route, Far Right Variation*. 600 ft. GRADE IV. R. Campbell, R. Carrington & J. R. Marshall. February 1972.

This route, despite its complicated name, is the natural winter line up the front of the lower buttress. Difficulties on this ascent were largely confined to the first 200 ft.

—*Wagroochimsa*. 500 ft. GRADE IV.

S. Docherty (ldr) & G. Adam. 24th January 1972.

The summer line was followed throughout with a sling used for aid in the overhung corner. The route lacks seriousness as escapes can be made to other routes.

—*Left Hand Route*. 900 ft. GRADE V.

S. Docherty & N. Muir. 8 hours. 30th January 1972.

Start up direct start. Climb steep snow ice to belay below overlap. Descend 20 ft., swing round to rib then up snow arête to belay on wall below overhang. Arrange peg in overhang and tension over to edge of slab, then go up to belay on right wall. Now climb steep ice to above overhanging section. From here steep loose snow leads over slabs and grooves to the second platform. Either traverse off left or go straight up chimneys and grooves to crest of buttress.

—*Orion Direct Direct*. 180 ft. GRADE IV.

S. Docherty & N. Muir. March 1971.

This is a direct start to Orion Face Direct and takes the line of ice grooves on the small buttress between Direct Route and Zero Gully, eventually joining the Direct Route.

Observatory Ridge.—*Hadrian's Wall Direct*. 1000 ft. GRADE IV. M. G. Geddes & G. Little. 5 hours. Easter 1971.

This is a good direct line on the face between Observatory Ridge and Point Five Gully.

An obvious smear of steep ice leads directly to the foot of the chimney of West Face Lower Route. On this ascent, at the end of the winter, the smear was narrow and the nest line led diagonally left past a bulge at 60 ft., then up right to a peg belay on the right of the smear (150 ft.). The route continued up and over the final bulge (poor ice: 1 screw for aid) to an easier groove leading to the chimney (150 ft.). Continue by the chimney and ice above to the snow scoop on the right of Observatory Ridge. A fine long ice pitch (150 ft.) led from the top of the scoop to snow and the plateau about 100 ft. right of Zero Gully.

Douglas Boulder.—*Left Hand Chimney.* 700 ft. GRADE IV. R. Carrington & J. R. Marshall. February 1972.

The defined section of the chimney was entered by a long traverse over snow from the lowest rocks on the left. The chimney provided several difficult pitches.

—*Nutless.* 470 ft. Severe. Miss M. Horsburgh & K. Schwartz. 7th July 1971.

This is a groove system in four progressively harder sections between Right Hand Chimney and Gutless. Start as for the latter route and gain a ledge some way left of and level with the start of the Cutless chimney (130 ft.). Go up 15 ft., then left to groove which follow to big grassy bay (80 ft.). Climb vertical corner above to overhanging groove which is partially avoided by rib on right. Belay below obvious overhanging chimney crack (80 ft.). Climb strenuously up this crack (crux) to easy ground (40 ft.). Finish wall above directly (140 ft.).

Garadh Buttress.—300 ft. GRADE III. N. Muir & G. Whitten. February 1970.

The buttress was climbed by a line of snow and ice ramps up its centre.

Tower Ridge, Upper West Flank.—*The White Line.* 900 ft. GRADE III. M. G. Geddes & H. Gillespie. 3 hours. 18th March 1971.

This route is on the face between Glover's Chimney and Raeburn's Easy Route. Climb the initial icefall of Glover's Chimney, cross a snow ramp and continue just right of that route to gain a snow ledge leading up right. Climb icefall, difficult to start, to gain snowfield. From top of snowfield climb short chimney then shallow gully to open snow slopes, finishing at same point as Tower Ridge.

This is an enjoyable climb, comparable to the Brenva routes and many variations are possible in the Grade III-IV range of difficulty.

Three Gully Buttress.—*Aphrodite.* 600 ft. GRADE III/IV. M. G. Geddes & J. C. Higham. 3 hours. 15th March 1971.

This route climbs the left side of the buttress. Start up the same snow depression as Three Gully Buttress route but from the top of the depression move up left mainly by snow ledges till possible to move down slightly and gain the foot of an open groove. This groove lies just right of a rib beside Green Gully and is undercut by a large rock wall. Climb the groove and its continuation on the crest to the right of Green Gully (thin ice and a peg at the top on this ascent). Move up right across snow to gain the cornice which presented considerable difficulty.

—*Arthur.* 400 ft. Very Severe. K. Schwartz & G. Webster. 12th September 1971.

This is a line left of Knuckleduster starting immediately left of it. Gain ledge below obvious corner (25 ft.). Climb vertical groove on right to pinnacle platform at top. Step across cleft and continue by short groove to obvious traverse left. Pass behind blocks to belay on platform round edge (140 ft.).

Climb corner above, step left round edge and go up to short overhanging wall split by crack. Climb crack (1 peg) and continue straight above to tiny exposed platform at 95 ft. directly above last stance (peg or nut runner). Move up awkwardly and more easily rightwards to groove which follow to belay on small ridge in its centre (140 ft.). Follow groove to finish on platform of the original route (95 ft.).

Càrn Dearg: Central Trident Buttress.—*Steam*. 300 ft. Very Severe. S. Docherty & B. Gorman. Summer 1970.

Start at obvious corner groove 60 ft. left of Heidbanger (arrow) and climb this to overhang which pass on left to stance and peg belay (80 ft.). Climb wall above for 20 ft. then move left to corner. Climb this to leftward-sloping ramp and belay in greasy corner (100 ft.). Traverse diagonally up and right till a mantleshelf left on sloping ledge can be made (peg runner). Continue left and climb steep wall to top of buttress (120 ft.).

—*Metamorphosis*. 350 ft. Very Severe. S. Docherty & D. Gardner. August 1971.

Start just left of a prominent overhanging crack at the right end of the face about 80 ft. right of Heidbanger (arrow). Climb rightwards to join crack below bulge. Surmount this and continue to below corner. Go right and up to corner (peg runner) which follow to ledge and peg belay (120 ft.). Continue past recess to ledge. Go right along ledge and up to peg belay beneath obvious flake (poor stance, 90 ft.). Climb flake and wall above, then trend right to easier ground (90 ft.). Finish by corner and wall above (50 ft.).

North Wall of Castle Ridge.—The following two routes lie on this wall on the very steep section high up and close to Castle Ridge itself. The foot of the wall is gained by traversing round the ridge from the bay below the Castle. The location of the second route, Night Tripper, may be wrong as given. From photographs and other information it seems more likely that the two lines share an approximately common start for 150 ft. or so at which point Night Tripper veers off to the left. They may even be the same route.

—*Plastic Max*. 500 ft. Very Severe. D. Bathgate (ldr) & G. Anderson. 10th July 1971.

Start in the obvious grooves to the right of the large roof. Climb straight up to belay in muddy niche (150 ft.). Go up waterworn wall to belay beside jammed block (80 ft.). Traverse left (40 ft.). Climb groove then move left on small holds. Climb straight up bridging grooves then left to ledge (130 ft.). Move up over blocks by an awkward mantleshelf and scramble to Castle Ridge (100 ft.).

—*Night Tripper*. 600 ft. Very Severe. N. Muir & R. Schipper. 12th September 1971.

The climb starts 60 ft. right of Plastic Max up the groove systems on the right of the crag (arrow). The main feature of the climb is the series of square-cut roofs at two-thirds height.

Climb open groove to steepening and move out right over overhang to belay above, below short corner (150 ft.). Climb corner to glaciis and cracked wet wall above to groove continuation on left. Step into this and go up to large stance below overhangs (130 ft.). Move up corner for 30 ft. till series of handholds lead left under roofs continuing till possible to step left round overlap and onto slab. Climb slab trending right to comfortable stance and belay (150 ft.). Climb black corner slab on left to final corner which is climbed steeply, first direct then out left at top to block belays (140 ft.). Climb up and left to final belays on boulder-strewn ledges (30 ft.).

—*The Moat*. 2000 ft. GRADE II.

I. Sykes (ldr), I. Rae & I. Dewar. 8th February 1972.

This is the huge ledge which crosses the whole face above the Serpent. It can be very easily seen from the path. The ledge may be reached with some difficulty from Castle Ridge or as on this ascent by following the Serpent for 200 ft. then making a 400 ft. left traverse. The climb is a continuous rising traverse in very fine situations on highly banked snow. Exit by a steep gully onto the shoulder overlooking Lochan Meall an t-Suidhe.

Meall Cumhann.—From Steall car park a large vegetated crag can be seen near the summit of Meall Cumhann. Two large overhangs can be seen on the cleaner right hand side of the crag. The approach takes about a ½-hour from the park. The two climbs described below are both on clean sound rock.

—*Druim*. 210 ft. Very Severe. I. Sutherland & I. Sykes.

June 1971.

Scramble up gully on right of crag until below two huge overhangs. An obvious deep crack splits the right hand side of the buttress.

Climb crack then overhanging wall and move left into corner level with large overhang at hollybush (120 ft.). Move left across slab and up to overhang which turn on left (peg runner, 60 ft.). Go easily up to large ledge and so to top.

—*Croch*. 200 ft. Very Severe & A2. I. Sutherland & I.

Sykes. June 1971.

Enter crack 30 ft. left of Druim by rightward hand traverse and steep wall (peg runner) to good ledge and peg belay (70 ft.). Climb to 12 ft. roof, surmount this (5 pegs), then with difficulty reach belay halfway up second pitch of Druim (75 ft.). Continue as for Druim.

Pollidubh Crag.—The resources of these very popular crags are seemingly inexhaustible: ours, however, are not. This year we publish only a selection of the routes we have been sent. Next year the selection will be more ruthless. Climbers are asked to exercise their discretion, to give ours a rest!

—*Wulz*. 310 ft. Very Severe. Miss M. Horsburgh &

K. Schwartz. August 1971.

On High Crag, Lower and Middle Tiers. Go up between R.T. Route and Central Lower Tier to recess on upper part of Lower Tier. Belay on 1st terrace (120 ft.). Climb over block slab to easy corner. Go left from its top and up vertical crack to belay at old peg on Hot Tin Roof (90 ft.). Move slightly right and then straight up to second terrace (100 ft.).

—*Alfonselli*. 185 ft. Severe. Miss M. Horsburgh & K. Schwartz. August 1971.

High Crag, Middle Tier. Go up between Autobahnausfahrt and Thirst to ledge with trees (55 ft.). Climb wall behind left of boulder slab of Thirst with aid of tiny nut. Join Autobahnausfahrt higher up and follow this to second terrace (130 ft.).

—*Patdoug*. 260 ft. Severe. K. Schwartz & Loch Eil Centre party. September 1971.

On High Crag, Upper Tier. The route lies right of Thirst, starting about 50 ft. right of Enigma. Go up behind tree to rightwards-leading fault which follow to tiny tree. Gain slab and ledge above (60 ft.). Go up to steeper final wall (140 ft.). Finish just left of this (60 ft.).

—*Marie Celeste*. 130 ft. Very Severe. C. Burgess, K. J. Donnan, L. D. Morris & G. Skelton. 2nd October 1971.

The route takes the narrow wall right of Graduation. Start at 1st stance on Flying Dutchman. Climb bulge behind trees to small birch on slab above,

traverse 10 ft. right and climb second bulge on hold in downward-slanting crack above. Trend left to peg runner and continue on undercut flakes to tree runner on left edge. Finish directly up edge to good nut belays (100 ft.). Take leftward-slanting crack to slab and top.

Upper PollDubh Crag.—*Chick*. 170 ft. Very Difficult. K. Schwartz. February 1972.

On the buttress (Grid Ref. 154 694) described in last year's *Journal* (and given an incorrect map reference there). Climb rib left and below Penguin Direct and finish by crack left of top groove of that route.

—*Blow*. 120 ft. Very Difficult. K. Schwartz.

February 1972.

On the smooth solid crag (Ref. 153 659) just above and 75 yards left of the above buttress. Start in fall line of small obvious groove at top. Trend right then left and finish by groove.

—*Airlift*. 320 ft. Very Difficult. K. Schwartz.

February 1972.

On the obvious sweep of excellent rock lying against the slope of Càrn Dearg South (Ref. 152 695), just beyond gully and 150 yards left of Blow. Climb rib over steepening to grass ledge (70 ft.). Go up centre of narrow slab above to ledge below short vertical step (110 ft.). Go up left to ledge below wide final slab (30 ft.). Climb this to top (110 ft.).

GLENCOE, GLEN ETIVE & ARDGOUR

Apart from the much-publicised TV production from the West Face of Aonach Dubh, little activity was to be found in the Glencoe region this year. The Mediterranean-warm winter meant that few of the winter routes came into condition and anyway most ice-climbers' attention was directed to the big routes of Ben Nevis and Creag Meaghaidh.

With dry weather in April and May the rock-climbing season started early but failed to keep its initial impetus and few new ascents were made, though a couple of them, Band of Hope on the Slabs and Cough right of Yo-yo, look as if they could provide some fine climbing. Second ascensionists have bestowed praise upon the directness and sustained nature of Unicorn on Stob Coire nan Lochain whilst Whillans' Direct Finish to Carnivore on Buachaille gives a better and harder finish to that route. Also worthy of note are the routes Snowba's and Lift-off on Cuneiform Buttress which provide excellent clean rock once the repugnant initial band is overcome. Down on the Slabs the much neglected problem of the peg climb Agony was tackled and produced a good route, Ecstasy, requiring only one tension move and two pegs.

The lack of activity in this area is primarily due to the indeterminate nature of the weather which is drawing more climbers south and east and also the lure of the Alps, which removes the most active climbers from the scene for several months every summer.

ROBERT CARRINGTON.

Beinn Trilleachan: The Slabs.—*The Band of Hope*. 640 ft. Very Severe. I. Anderson, K. V. Crockett, J. Newsome & C. Stead. 14th August 1971.

This route takes a direct line between The Pause and The Long Reach. Climb pitch 1 of The Long Reach to the belay on Spartan Slab (120 ft.). Step left onto spike and climb slab to left end of horizontal band of The Long Reach and find a peg runner 10 ft. higher. Go up right for 20 ft. to hold and continue up slab slightly right and then leftwards to reach left end of The

Crevasse (130 ft.). Climb directly to belay on The Pause (40 ft.). Continue straight up by bulges and small overlaps to belay in black corner below larger overlap (130 ft.). (The bottom half of this pitch has been climbed previously in mistake for The Pause). Climb straight up and belay below short overhanging corner of The Long Reach (120 ft.). Finish as for The Long Reach or The Pause (100 ft.).

Buachaille Etive Mór: Blackmount Wall.

This name is suggested for the stretch of crag between the upper half of The Chasm on the left and Lady's Gully on the right. The wall rises above the Chasm to Crowberry Traverse and is about 500 ft. high. It is divided into two sections by a fine narrow chimney which broadens out after 350 ft. into a grassy bay. From this bay an easy gully runs out leftward to meet the final arête of the Chasm North Wall, the only route on the left-hand portion. Above the bay is a splendid 200 ft. pink wall (very prominent from Glen Etive) bounded on the right by an impressive chimney. The steep section on the right is girdled at half-height by an easy terrace, attainable from the grassy bay. The lower chimney (V. Diff) was explored in 1970 by P. Brian & R. Campbell, who encountered traces of a previous ascent. The name *Central Chimney* seems appropriate.

—*Paleolith.* 500 ft. Severe.

P. Brian, R. Campbell & A. Ewing. Autumn 1970/Spring 1971.

Some way right of Central Chimney an obvious undercut flake crack springs up from the Chasm to Crowberry Traverse, about 50 ft. left of the prominent overhung cave. Climb this crack and follow the line of least resistance to the Halfway Terrace. The steep face above is recessed in its centre. Climb for one pitch on the left of the central line, then traverse awkwardly right to reach the recess and finish by the line of least resistance to the top.

Bidean nam Bian: Aonach Dubh, Lower North-east Nose.

Two routes have been (literally) unearthed on the right flank of the Nose. The second route was in fact climbed by three different parties within a month and may well have had unrecorded ascents before this. The major difficulties of both routes are confined to the (undescribed) approach marches through the exotic jungles below the cliff!

—*Slake.*

300 ft. Severe. J. Crawford & W. Skidmore. June 1971.

About halfway between the Nose and Abomination there is a large amphitheatre with a steep right wall bounded on its left by a curving corner. Gain the foot of the corner above the band of grey rock and climb it in three pitches with cave belays. Seldom dry.

—*Sinus.*

300 ft. Very Difficult. K. Crockett & C. Stead. 1st May 1971.

This takes the line of the rib marking the right edge of the steep wall referred to above.

North Face.—*The Cough.* 250 ft. Very Severe. S. Belk & D. M. Jenkins. 26th June 1971.

The route takes the obvious crack-line right of Yo-yo. Start at the right-hand end of the large shallow cave right of the start of Yo-yo.

Climb up and left to top of cave. Using a peg, swing round left onto wall, climb this, then move left to ledge belay (100 ft.). Climb short corner on right and go up to belay on ledge of Girdle Traverse (30 ft.). Climb right-hand crack above, with a deviation left and back at corner near top to reach terrace (120 ft.). *N.B.* The right-hand crack referred to in pitch 3 is, when

seen from the bottom of the crag, the continuous one between the V-notch on the Girdle Traverse and a crack on the left which is larger to start with but disappears higher up.

West Face, No. 2 Gully Buttress.—

Steptoe. 200 ft. Very Severe. K. V. Crockett & C. Stead. 2nd May 1971.

This route follows a direct line to the right of Rose Innominate. Start 30 ft. right of Rose Innominate (arrow) where there is a deep chimney groove, the right wall of which is formed by a pinnacle.

Climb groove to thread belay (40 ft.). Move left onto arête and back right by crack in slab to belay on grassy ledge (60 ft.). Move right below overhang and back left to ledge below another overhang, which climb to rock bay with loose flake (peg belay, 60 ft.). Climb groove on right and easier rocks on top (40 ft.).

B Buttress.—Pinnacle Face Route.

GRADE III. K. V. Crockett & C. Stead. 3 hours. 31st January 1971.

Starting 40 ft. right of the chimney, an awkward slab was followed leftwards to the crest of the buttress, which was then followed for two pitches to a steep wall. This was climbed on the right and easier ground followed to the Rake.

Stob Coire nan Lochan, South Buttress.—Moon-

shadow. 270 ft. GRADE III. 2½ hours. 30th January 1972.

This route lies on the east side of the buttress and follows the prominent rightward-sloping corner groove which cuts the flank of the buttress from a point about halfway up Twisting Gully. The line of the groove is very obvious when seen from the corrie.

Climb the right fork of Twisting Gully to belay 40 ft. above the crucial ice bulge (230 ft.). The corner starts on the right wall of the gully. Climb this wall to thread belay in corner (120 ft.). Continue up groove past large chockstone to top of buttress (150 ft.). The route was well plastered in snow and ice and gave a more sustained finish to the right fork of Twisting Gully.

—*Crow-step*.

400 ft. Very Severe. B. Dunn & J. R. Houston. 11th July 1971.

Start 15 ft. right of Direct Route below a tiny rowan. Climb groove for 50 ft. then go left into foot of prominent chimney, which follow to its top (150 ft.). Climb corner above, moving over bulge and avoiding top part of crack by slight right traverse and go up to terrace (120 ft.). Traverse left to foot of prominent chimneys and climb rightmost one to top (130 ft.).

Garbh Bheinn: South Wall of Great Ridge.—Targe. 350 ft. Very Severe. R. G. Ross & R. Watters. 5th June 1971.

Start 20 ft. right of Right-hand Route below a bottomless corner. Climb wall to corner, move left into corner-crack (crux) and continue up this past large flake to ledge belay (90 ft.). Continue directly, passing small pinnacle on left, to reach Broad Ledge (100 ft.). Climb final section directly up two walls broken by large cracks (160 ft.).

Bealach Gully Buttress.

This name is suggested for the buttress to the right of Bealach Gully, Bealach Buttress being the buttress on the left of that gully.

—*Garnet*. 190 ft. Very Severe.

K. V. Crockett & C. Stead. 22nd August 1971.

Start from the gully at some slabs forming the toe of the buttress. The route follows a prominent line of corners up the nose of the buttress.

Climb slabs to reach short corner with arrow on right wall. Climb corner, step right and follow line of corners to peg belay (150 ft., 2 peg runners). Finish more easily (40 ft.).

CENTRAL HIGHLANDS

Binnein Shuas: Lower Sector.—*Crisscross Edge*. 180 ft. Very Difficult. D. Regan & K. Schwartz. 26th July 1971.

The prominent edge right of Cross. Start just right of a tree, climb steep ramp to platform and follow the edge above.

Far Eastern Sector.

This is the 300 ft. buttress facing Binnein Shios (Grid Ref. 469 832) round the corner from the main cliff. It is best approached by following the grass band below the Eastern Sector northwards beyond the end of this sector and then crossing a small shallow valley to the continuation of the band which is followed for another 200 yards to the foot of the crag. This is bounded on the right by a gully containing a 100-ft. rib, which appears to have been climbed.

—*Near Miss*. 250 ft. Hard Severe. Miss M. Horsburgh, D. Regan & K. Schwartz. 28th July 1971.

Left of the centre of the buttress there is a small groove. Start at a steep rib just to the right of this. Climb 20 ft. up rib, then go left into groove and climb this to near its end. Traverse up leftwards to crack in overhang. Climb crack and then slabs straight to steepening, go right to reach small niche and then climb vertical crack to steep grass and belay near small tree (145 ft.). Go up right to block, then left to edge and finish by wall on right (105 ft.).

Creag Dubh, Newtonmore: Central Wall.—*The Organ Grinder*. 440 ft. Very Severe. K. V. Crockett & C. Stead. 27th June 1971.

This route follows a left-trending line, starting below the overhangs of The Brute and finishing between Erse and Nutcracker Chimneys.

Start (arrow) 30 ft. left of The Hill and well right of the trees. Climb 10 ft. to flake and follow left-sloping crack for a few feet until wall above can be climbed direct to peg belay (70 ft.). Move left, then right and climb overhang into crack (as for The Brute). Now go left up slab to good ledge and belay on numerous old bolts (100 ft.). Climb wall above directly to reach large roof, traverse hard left 10 ft. step down and go up into overhanging recess (junction with Erse). Climb overhang as for Erse (peg runner) and move leftwards across wall to gain right-bounding rib of Nutcracker Chimneys. Climb rib to ledge and tree belay (130 ft.). Move leftward to higher ledge and tree, climb overhang to second overhang, step out right on lip of roof and climb corner and short walls to finish (140 ft.).

—*Outspan*. 200 ft. Very Severe. A. Barley & R. Griffiths. 13th April 1971.

At the start of The Brute there is a birch tree. Start 10 yards right of this at a thin blind crack.

Gain handrail with difficulty and move to left end. Climb steep rock directly to small ledge and peg belays below overhangs (60 ft.). Traverse 20 ft. right and climb strenuously up overhanging rock to large semi-detached flake. Move right and follow short slanting groove to niche. Climb straight up into niche above then move rightwards to good stance and peg belay (90 ft.). Inbred crosses leftwards here. Move a few feet up left then go diagonally right across slab and wall to finish using sound flakes on skyline (50 ft.).

—*The Mighty Piston*. 170 ft. Very Severe. K. V. Crockett & I. Fulton. 4th September 1971.

Start 25 ft. left of the chimney of Cunnulinctus. Climb up, trending left, past grass tufts to small ledge with gorse bush. Climb up and left past spike then straight up to tree belay (140 ft.). Behind tree, climb steep rib immediately right of prominent white vein to peg belay (30 ft.). Scrambling to top.

Sgùrr a'Mhaim: Creag Uamh Shomhairle.—*The Strip*. 320 ft. Very Severe. J. Mount & K. Schwartz. 22nd August 1971.

This route lies on the left of the main crag (more commonly known as Car Park Crag). Start just left of overhanging section about 100 ft. left of Sunset Boulevard.

Climb overhanging crack with aid of inserted nuts to niche with trees (this point may be reached more easily by a diagonal fault from the left) and follow groove to peg belay at holly bush above (65 ft.). Move awkwardly left (peg runner) and up into groove which follow to ledge below steepening. Go right a few feet and climb vertical dièdre (peg runner). Exit left to gain bay with trees (135 ft.). Climb rib behind trending left at 45 ft., then finish straight up to highest point of crag (120 ft.).

Creag Meaghaidh: Inner Coire.—*Fairy Godmother*. 800 ft. GRADE III. M. G. Geddes & N. C. Rayner. 27th December 1970.

This route lies on the open buttress between Diadem and Claes Slipper. Start midway between these routes and follow a rightward slanting snow ramp for one pitch, then climb up left by a series of ramps and walls to reach the central snowfield. Climb the obvious short gully midway between Diadem and the Will o' the Wisp exit, which finishes with a steep ice pitch, then go up left on a ramp to an airy perch above Diadem. Finish by the steep tower above, starting slightly back down to the right. A good varied route which may be a grade harder under a heavy build-up of ice.

—*Ugly Sister*. 700 ft. GRADE III. M. G. Geddes & N. C. Rayner. 28th December 1970.

Start up the obvious snow ramp which slants steeply up the buttress between Cinderella and Crescent Gully. From the small exposed saddle at the end of the line of the ramp, which contained two small ice pitches, climb straight up the crest of the buttress for 20 ft. till it is possible to traverse right and gain a better line leading on up left to a crest above The Prow. Continue over snow to finish by the last pitch of that route. This ascent was made in favourable conditions of poor build-up.

Loch Roy Coire.—There are two good winter climbing areas in Loch Roy Coire, just $\frac{1}{2}$ mile north west of the Window. The north facing 600-ft. Creag an Lochain (Grid Ref. 417 890) and the east-facing Càrn Dearg buttress, about 750 ft. in height (Grid Ref. 412 895).

The coire can either be reached from Coire Ardair through the Window or, maybe better, from Glen Roy with Luib chonnall bothy (Grid Ref. 394 936) as base, about $1\frac{1}{2}$ hours walk from the climbs.

Rock belays are generally quite good and there is scope for at least another dozen climbs.

Càrn Dearg.—*Wet Walk*. 450 ft. GRADE I. B. J. G. Chambers & K. Schwartz. 6th February 1972.

The left branch of the shallow double gully on the right-hand side of the buttress with a steep uncorniced section at the top.

—*The Rough Ride*. 500 ft. GRADE III. B. J. G. Chambers & K. Schwartz. 6th February 1972.

The steep rightwards trending chimney above and to the right of the lower part of the obvious deep-cut gully (The Spin). Follow chimney over bulge to ridge. Climb buttress edge above to plateau.

—*The Spin*. 550 ft. GRADE II. B. J. G. Chambers & K. Schwartz. 6th February 1972.

The deepest cut gully in the right hand section of the buttress. Keep to right near top where huge cornice is smallest. Good situations.

—*Midnight Crunch*. 600 ft. GRADE II/III. B. J. G. Chambers & K. Schwartz. 6th February 1972.

The pleasant gully curving between the broken centre wall on the left and the well defined buttress left of The Spin. Follow gully with several short, steep ice pitches to snow ridge. Then left past rocks to cornice.

—*Big Red Van*. 750 ft. GRADE III/IV. J. Mount & K. Schwartz. 7th February 1972.

A good route on the broken central wall between the big gully on the left and Midnight Crunch on the right, closer to the latter. Go up short ice-gully to snow-field which leads to shallow steep ice-gully. Move from its top to short vertical pitch further right. From its top go left over steep ground to start of obvious rightwards-trending gully-ramp. Steep ice steps above lead to snow slope and cornice.

SOUTHERN HIGHLANDS

Balnacoul Castle Crag, Glen Lednock.—This crag lies on the south side of the glen about 4 miles from Comrie. The best approach is to leave the road just past the crag, cross the river and cut back diagonally, reaching the base of the rocks in about 15 minutes. The crag is of steep schist and offers climbing similar in nature to Creag Dubh, Newtonmore. Following the approach recommended, one passes below a steep nose split by a huge crack, then two smaller jutting buttresses before dropping down below the largest buttress which has a patch of pinkish rock high on its western side. The grooves on either side of the first small jutting buttress have been climbed and offer unsatisfactory routes, the rightmost of the two being a particularly disgusting combination of heavy vegetation and short brutally steep sections. The two routes described below are on the second jutting buttress and the largest buttress respectively, the latter route giving a very enjoyable climb.

—*Castle Crawl*. 150 ft. Severe. J. Monan (ldr) & F. Binning. June 1971.

In the centre of the cliff a large rake covered with bracken rises to a point. The climb starts from here.

Climb wall trending left to trees and up crack to rock-scar (50 ft.). Move rightwards to mossy ledge and break back left up steep mossy slab to old peg. Traverse rightwards to vegetative ledges leading to overhanging crack. Climb this quickly and finish more easily up groove.

—*Carcase Wall*. 270 ft. Severe. R. Campbell, J. Monan & P. Murray-Rust. June 1971.

Start at the lowest rocks of the largest buttress. Climb a crack to two small trees, transfer to second crack on left and go up this to niche and over grass above to tree belay (80 ft.). Move up to base of steep wall and climb strenuously to flake. Continue trending slightly right to grass ledge in exposed position below cracked overhangs (120 ft.). Move right a few feet and up onto slab on right side of overhangs. Traverse delicately round corner on undercuts and up to top of crag (70 ft.).

Craig-y-Barns: Upper Cave Crag.—*Fall-out*. Very Severe & A3. M. Forbes & G. Miller. 1970.

Start just left of Squirm Direct directly beneath the prow of the overhang. Climb to reach a line of old bolts and follow these to belay of Squirm Direct. Step left (2 pegs) and go straight up beneath the prow (bad pegging). Step right and finish up the flakes of Squirm.

NOTES

Islands Notes

Rhum.—We are informed by H. M. Brown that the Cicerone Press are shortly to publish a guide to the island including up-to-date information about rock-climbing there.

Lewis.—G. M. Wallace notes that there are several cliffs on the west side of Sròn ri Gaoith (Grid Ref. 075 291) overlooking Loch Suainaval, on which 300-400 foot climbs may be made in the middle grades.

J. Mackenzie notes that good climbing may be had on the 200 ft. gneiss sea-cliffs north of Islivig and that at Garry Bay beyond New Tolsta in north-east Lewis there is a pinnacle of rock, locally known as the Grey Castle, which is 150 ft. high on the mainland side and 250 ft. high on the seaward face. The pinnacle should be climbable by a variety of routes of all standards.

Skye Notes

Fiscavaig.—R. Taplin notes that the Struan Face of Fiscavaig offers climbs.

Sròn na Ciche.—As many people have pointed out, a Gross Editorial Error appeared last year (see *S.M.C.J.*, 1971, xxix, 401) when a winter ascent of Little Gully was reported in late June. As one correspondent remarked, 'you never know with the Scottish winter!' We apologise to all those who packed their crampons for Skye last summer . . .

Sgùrr Sgumain.—W. Tauber notes that 'O'Donovan's claimed new route on the north buttress of Sgumain Ione, follows exactly the line of Guillard & Irwin's *Frostbite* (*S.M.C.J.*, 1969, xxix, 184). What is worse, it uses aid on a climb whose standard is never above medium V.S. The remarks made at the end of O'Donovan's description are totally unjustified: it is not a hard route and the protection is excellent throughout.'

In fairness to O'Donovan it should be added that he wrote to us this year pointing out his error (and ours, of course!).

Greg Strange notes that Penitentiary Grooves, a MacInnes-Clough route on Sgumain's Final Tower, has been freed by D. Dinwoodie & B. Lawrie, who found it not much harder.

Sgùrr a'Mhadaidh.—Tauber notes that he found the crux pitch of *Thor* on the Coire a'Mhadaidh face considerably harder than any other route he has done in Skye, and that, he adds impressively, 'includes all the recommended Very Severses in the guidebook.'

Northern Highlands Notes

Although, as stated in the introductory remarks to this year's *New Climbs*, no detailed route descriptions are being published in this area or in the northern islands (except Skye) or in the Western Highlands, we shall continue to publish descriptions and locations of new crags in these areas. Any new crags reported to us this last year are described in this Notes section.

Clo Mhór, Cape Wrath.—Paul Nunn notes that, 'These sandstone cliffs emerged with outstanding success from our explorations last April and May. At Easter a 450-ft. abseil led to the cliff base but incapacitated one member of the party leaving two cowards to continue. The line attempted gave A2/3 climbing on appalling rock and was abandoned. A larger and

stronger attempt at an obvious line made 100 ft. of progress in unsavoury wet and bird-infested conditions in May. Some form of bird-parasite also attacked one member, to the detriment of his sexual prowess for a short time afterwards. Bolts were found essential for belays and protection on very loose free climbing. Withdrawal followed when we realised that the ascent would require very large food stocks and a multiple-day effort.

Climbing is most ill-advised during the nesting and breeding seasons as there is a huge colony of cormorants on the rocks at the cliff foot which is unlikely to remain quiescent through further human invasions.'

Cnoc a'Mhadaidh, North Face.—Nunn notes that this crag (Grid Ref. NC 328 528) offers about 700 ft. of climbing, although it is often wet.

Creag Staonsaid, Foinaven range.—This crag, mentioned in the Corriemulzie Club's Guide to the area, was visited by Tony Brooder of the Black & Tan M.C., Manchester, last summer. Brooder confirms that 'there are considerable crags on the east face of the mountain' but that the crag, about 500 ft. in height, is somewhat wet and vegetations.

Gruinard Bay.—A. J. Anderson, of the military establishment at Fort George, notes that there is another crag, Goat Crag, close to Gruinard Jetty Buttress. The crag (Grid Ref. 960 920) is above the road and offers about 200 ft. long Very Severe climbs.

Western Highlands Notes

Biod an Fhitich, Balmacara.—This crag, briefly alluded to in the Western Highlands Guide, has recently been explored by K. Schwartz, R. Sharp and others. It is situated on the northern slope of Boc Mór above Bundalloch (Grid Ref. 913 274) and is about 400 ft. high. The rock is sound with very good holds and protection is scarce: a vertical lower section is topped off by clean steep slabs and a number of routes are possible, of varying standards.

Creagan Duilisg, Plockton.—We are in receipt of a great many new routes done on this crag last year by climbers from the Loch Eil Adventure Centre together with S. Docherty and N. Muir. The crag lies across the bay from Plockton village, behind Duncraig Castle (Ref. 83 33) and gives routes in the middle and higher grades of about 300 ft. The best climbing, we are told, is to be had on the main face, easily identified by three groove lines high up. The grassy West Gully gives access to some of the lines whilst a stone shoot further right provides a means of descent. Our correspondents note that the 'residents are friendly—the lounge bar of the Plockton Hotel is a good vantage point—there are often dances on a Saturday night in the Village Hall, there being a girls' college in Duncraig Castle—what more do you want?' and also report the following deflationary exchange,

H. MacInnes 'Aye, some guid lines to be had up there.'

N. Muir 'Aye, they've aa bin dun!'

Cairngorms Notes

Cairngorm, Stag Rocks.—Greg Strange notes that *Spindle Gully* (recorded last year) seems to be identical with *Stag Route* (recorded three years ago).

Creag an Dubh Loch.—Strange notes that on an ascent of the *Blue Max* with D. Stuart last year the crux pitch was avoided by climbing straight up a crack system to break through overlaps at an obvious fault 30 ft. right

of the triangular block. They then continued directly to the terrace by cracks and grooves parallel to *Black Mamba*. The *étrier* belay was found to be unnecessary.

W. Tauber notes that Bill Sproul and he made a second ascent of *The Giant* last summer. They reduced the aid to one peg on the first pitch and three pegs and a nut on the second, but were unable to free the final corner, which was wet. Tauber adds that 'it would be extremely hard even if dry.'

Lochnagar.—D. Stuart & B. S. Findlay climbed the first pitch of *Parallel Gully B* last summer directly up the vertical crack using 1 peg for aid. They note that this proved harder than the rest of the gully.

Pass of Ballater.—Strange notes that the 'south facing granite outcrops above the road in the pass offer the best low-level climbing in Upper Deeside. To date there are about 20 known routes of all grades ranging from 40-120 ft. Since the crags are a useful wet weather alternative to the higher corries it is hoped to include a short section dealing with them in the forthcoming S.M.T. Climbers' Guide to the Southern Central Cairngorms.'

Shelter Stone Crag.—W. March notes that he and I. Nicholson made a second ascent of *Sticil Face* this last winter, which gave a very fine climb. The top pitch was climbed without combined tactics.

The Barley brothers note that they made an ascent of *The Citadel* in mid-April last year in 'very mixed conditions.' It appears that only the lower section of the climb was in full winter condition. They remark that they 'noticed' much abseil gear left by Cunningham and March a few weeks earlier!

R. Carrington and I. Nicholson completed a new route on the central nose of the crag last summer. The route, *The Haystack*, finishes by the very striking crack between the finish of *Citadel* and *Steeple* but we have no further details at the moment.

Grantown-on-Spey.—March notes that a good new crag has been discovered near Grantown which offers several fine V.S. routes. Details next year.

Central Highlands Notes

Creag Chathalain, Upper Spey Valley.—K. Schwartz notes that this crag (Grid Ref. 492 947) though 'not too bad-looking from the road, is on closer inspection rather disappointing, being very broken and vegetated.' The crag is about 300 ft. high and Schwartz unearthed a route of Severe standard up its left-hand side.

Creag Doire na h-Aclaise.—Schwartz notes that there is a 200-ft. crag on the southern slope of this hill (Grid Ref. 607 888) about 3 miles north of Dalwhinnie, which offers some climbing.

Ben Nevis Notes

Càrn Dearg Buttress.—N. Muir made a solo ascent of *Centurion* in September last year. R. Carrington completed a new route, *Cowslip*, which starts near the start of *Torro* and slants leftwards through the obvious break left of that route, but further details are lacking.

New 4000 ft. Tops.—G. Manley notes that the newest (1966) 6" O.S. sheet NN/17/SE is contoured to 25 feet and includes a good number of the climbers' names, e.g. *Point Five Gully*, etc. Perhaps more interestingly we now have two more 4000 ft. tops 'to provide exercise for those who like to do them

all in one day, etc., and a burning conscience for others.' CARN DEARG shows a summit marked 4005 ft. about 200 yards north of the head of No. 4 Gully (the old 'summit height' of 3961 is omitted and there is a small ring at 3975 ft. about 200 yards north of the 4005 ft. top. AONACH MOR has a very small contour ring at 4000 ft., about 50 yards wide, so that the summit will be 4001 or 4002 ft. by estimation.

AONACH BEAG has dropped 6 ft. from its former height of 4060 ft., not enough to make the two names right unfortunately, but things are definitely looking up for Aonach Mòr!

Southern Highlands Notes

Creag Varr, Kinloch Rannoch.—This crag has been explored in the last year or so by climbers from the school on the south of the loch and from Stirling University's outdoor centre at Croiscrags. We gave all the details to a hack to sort out the priorities but he disappeared. Hopefully we'll have them for next issue.

The Cobbler.—W. Tauber notes that the pegging at the start of *Porcupine Wall* may be avoided by starting twenty feet left of the overhanging crack and climbing across the wall to the first belay.

Dunleacan.—K. V. Crockett notes that his route *Finesse* (recorded two years ago) may coincide in part with *Devil's Elbow*. The 'rightwards-trending ramp' of *Finesse* may be identical to the 'large hanging groove' of *Devil's Elbow*.

Miscellaneous Notes

New Broomsticks.—As mentioned last year Iain Smart will be assisting us in our onerous editorial duties henceforth. No stranger to readers of the *Journal*, Dr Smart is readily recognisable by his Caustic Wit and Talent for Instant Deflation (see, for example, his brutal vignette of Slessor in *S.M.C.J.*, 1970, xxix, 261). His responsibilities at present extend throughout the Small Print (except for New Climbs and Books) and any material of that sort may be sent direct to him at Dept. of Anatomy, University of Dundee. We are grateful for his assistance and hope that his slightly older head may temper our slightly wilder outbursts . . .

Bill Sproul has moved to Newcastle and after several years in charge of our advertisements (a dull but necessary task) has felt the need of a rest. Fortunately a new member, Bill Jones of 88 Albany Road, Broughty Ferry, has offered to take over from Sproul. Any communications or suggestions about advertisements should be sent to Bill Jones at the above address. We would like, on behalf of the Club, to thank Bill Sproul for his years of unglamorous toil.

Golochs.—Last issue we severely condemned the practice, growing now that members seek paid employment as hacks for various glossy *ephemera*, of contributors sending to us articles wholly or partly re-hashed from, or into, similar articles for these other publications. We had one regrettable lapse of an esteemed contributor in mind: but similar sins of two other members were revealed as a result . . . We should never have lifted that stone; too many naked consciences are squirming beneath—angry, astonished or ashamed. Let us gently replace it, and remind members that they have an obligation to their fellows to send in only *original, fresh* contributions, if on the contemporary scene; and thank them for bearing, like the gentlemen they are, the delays, vexations and occasional downright denunciations scattered on them from the overworked unpaid editorial heights.

[We found this in the files when we moved in—we would only add that we are quite happy to look at material already published, *provided we are told about it*—Hon. Ed.]

Encore.—As you may see from the Dinner Report, the ex-Editor, instead of making a speech at the Dinner, delivered an Editorial. Many who were not there and, surprisingly, some who were, have asked that it be printed in this issue. But the ex Editor disclaims it as a mere Harangue, not up to the standard he expects of this *Journal*, and unless we can do something in the meantime promises us a printable article next issue or so. He offered to give us a Puff of his forthcoming book, but as such behaviour is quite unethical even in a non-paying member of this Club, we refused.

The First Traverse.—The President wrote to L. G. Shadbolt, now 88, on the 60th anniversary of the first traverse of the Cuillin Main Ridge which was made by Alastair MacLaren and himself on the 10th June 1911. Leslie Shadbolt replied as follows, 'I was delighted to have your good wishes. Please thank the Club and my fellow members when the opportunity arises. We were very lucky to succeed on our first attempt as there were large sections of the ridge we had never seen. Fortunately it was a perfect day and quite clear. My stalwart and well tried companion Alastair MacLaren was as always a tower of strength. He was ever at his best in his beloved Highlands—steeped in all the lore and having the Gaelic. It was a great day for us both.'

Tigers of Yesterday.—The President wrote to the two most senior members of the Club, Euan B. Robertson, who joined in 1901, and Douglas Menzies, who joined in 1910, inviting them to attend the Annual Dinner as guests of the Club. Gracious replies were received extending thanks and good wishes but regretting that their rucksacks were too full of years to be carried as far as Glasgow in the dour days of the month of December.

Facing the Past. In last year's *Journal* we printed two photographs of S.M.C. gatherings of yesteryear. In the *lower* photograph 'S.M.C. Meet at Corrour 1933' Peter H. Armour Brown identifies the following faces. From *right to left*, Ling (standing), Glover (sitting), Anon (sitting), Harry McRobert (standing), Stuart Jack (standing). Others unknown. Further identifications would be welcomed.

Ordering a Double Century.—Last year the number of recorded Munroists reached one hundred. Now we can all relax. The records will be kept up to date, for a time at least, as a pure art form without any competitive blemish. The conventions, you will remember, are to give the person's number in the queue, followed by his name and then the years in which the Munros, Munro tops, and the 3000-footers furth of Scotland were completed. The last group comprises the qualifying hills of Ireland, Wales and England.

(101) R. Gilbert, 1971, —, —; (102) G. Downs, 1971, —, —; (103) P. Edwards, 1971, —, —; (104) I. Rae, 1971, —, —; (105) I. Butterfield, 1971, —, —; (53) C. M. Smith has now been twice round the lot and stands at 1963, 1966, 1968 and 1969, 1969, 1971. For the record he writes that in doing the furth group 'he took care to do twice every top and knob in the list.' (61) H. M. Brown has been over the last group for a third time. His dog who has also completed the Munros and the furth group may be willing to act as the recorder of canine Munroists. (96) W. G. Carter writes to claim a full set having completed the furth list last year.

Donald Duff Memorial Exhibition.—This exhibition has been prepared in mobile form. It consists of eight stands dealing with all the main causes of avoidable accidents in the hills. It is available, in whole or in part, to any organisation or Education Authority prepared to stage it. The project is, however, still short of money and the appeal fund remains open. Donations however small will be welcomed and acknowledged. Cheques should be sent to the Hon. Treasurer, John Watson, C.A., 39 Clepington Road, Dundee, and made payable to 'Duff Memorial Exhibition.'

Honour Bright. Ben Humble has been awarded the M.B.E. for many years of service to mountaineering. Gilbert Little, in the same list, received the C.B.E.

The Long March.—Sandy Cousins sent us much ancillary material to complement his article appearing earlier in this issue, including some vital statistics, which are listed below 26 days 369 miles 90,000 ft. 103 tops —47 Munros—longest day, traverse of Fannichs: 19 miles, 10 tops, and 6400 ft.

Mr Cousins has recently resigned from all his Committee posts 'in order to concentrate on climbing.' Let the Bens tremble . . .

The Cairngorm Disaster.—This dreadful accident, unprecedented in the age and number of the dead, has excited so much interest that we felt that a rather fuller account than that normally given in our Accident Reports might be in order. This account is, of course, factual and its accuracy depends on that of reports published in the Press and on those reports submitted to Mr Humble. We had hoped to consult the transcript of the Public Inquiry subsequently held in Banff this February but this was not possible. Members who wish to do so may obtain a transcript at the going rate of (or so we are informed) £70 per day . . .

On Friday 19th November last, Mr William 'Ben' Beattie (23), Miss Sholagh Sunderland (18) and Miss Catherine Davidson (20) left Edinburgh with a party of 14 schoolchildren for Lagganlia, an Edinburgh Corporation Outdoor Centre on the shores of Loch Insh. Mr Beattie, a climber of considerable experience and a professionally qualified instructor, was head of the outdoor education department at Ainslie Park School, Edinburgh, and was in charge of the group: Miss Sunderland was an assistant instructress at Ainslie Park and Miss Davidson, a friend of Beattie's undergoing training at Dunfermline College of Physical Education, Edinburgh, had had several years experience of climbing in Scotland but possessed no paper qualifications. The children were all from Ainslie Park and were members of the school mountaineering club.

The party arrived late at Lagganlia. In the morning they split into two groups: the weekend trip was planned as a navigation exercise and one group was more advanced than the other; Mr Beattie was in charge of this more advanced group and Miss Davidson of the remaining group of 6. Miss Sunderland accompanied Miss Davidson. Route cards were prepared and left with the Lagganlia Principal, Mr John Paisley. The planned route was as follows—11 a.m. Cairngorm Car Park—12.30 p.m. Cairngorm summit—2.30 p.m. Lochan Buidhe—3.45 p.m. Ben Macdhui—5.15 p.m. Corrour Bothy, returning through the Lairig Ghru the following day. An arithmetical error of one hour in the route card resulted in their E.T.A. at Corrour being 4.15 p.m. rather than 5.15 p.m., which was after dark. A bad weather alternative was to stop overnight at Curran Bothy—a primitive one roomed shelter on the plateau beside Lochan Buidhe. The children in the party were all well-equipped and carried packs of approximately 20 lbs. each. The weather forecast was for snow and high winds.

Beattie's party left according to schedule and were seen leaving Cairngorm summit at 12.30 p.m. When the weather deteriorated Beattie's group made directly for Curran Bothy where they spent the night.

Miss Davidson's party set out somewhat late and tried to make up time by taking the chairlift to the Ptarmigan Restaurant just below the summit. There they stopped to eat their lunches. They were seen passing the summit of Cairngorm at about 1.15 p.m. Miss Davidson began navigation exercises but soon decided that they would have to scrap their plans and make directly for Curran Bothy. At around 4 p.m. she decided that they might not find the bothy as it was sometimes snowed over and resolved to bivouac for the night on the flat ground just north of the Feith Buidhe, the burn draining

Lochan Buidhe to the east. The bothy was about 400 yards distant from this point. They attempted to build a snow wall to provide some shelter from the driving snow but this kept collapsing. They spent the night there in sleeping bags and polythene sacks and experienced considerable difficulty from the drifting snow which was always threatening to bury them.

Beattie thought that Miss Davidson's party, when they failed to turn up at the bothy, had either turned back or had taken shelter in the St. Valery Refuge. The St. Valery Refuge stands above Stag Rocks overlooking Loch Avon from the north: it measures 8 ft. long by 5 ft. wide by 5 ft. high. On Sunday morning it was still snowing heavily so Beattie decided to evacuate his party as quickly as possible and took them down into the Lairig Chru and out of danger. He then telephoned Lagganlia from Rothiemurchus Hut around 5 p.m. and the alarm was raised at once. Six instructors from Glenmore Lodge were out on the plateau on Saturday night in atrocious conditions.

Meanwhile, Miss Davidson had made one effort during the day to go for help with William Kerr (15) but the weather had forced them back. Miss Davidson had mini flares with her but these had got buried in the snow and could not be found. The party spent Sunday night in the same position.

On Monday morning a major search was mounted involving several rescue teams and a helicopter. The weather had improved overnight and Miss Davidson again set out for help. She was soon spotted from the helicopter on the point of collapse. When she had left the bivouac, Miss Sunderland and Kerr were unconscious or asleep and the others buried. When the rescue parties got there, all were dead except for Raymond Leslie (15), one of those buried.

The four other children who died were Carol Bertram (16), Susan Byrne (15), Lorraine Dick (15) and Diane Dudgeon (15).

Snow Anchors.—Graham Tiso has supplied us with the following interesting notes:

Snow anchors, of a type known as Dead Men in Britain, were introduced to mountaineers by climbers who had served with the British Antarctic Survey. In the Antarctic a piece of marine plywood with a heavy rope threaded through the centre is used to anchor dog teams, huts, aeroplanes, etc.

It was soon realised in Scotland that a wire loop would cut through the snow more easily than a rope and it seemed likely that aluminium alloy plate would be lighter, stronger and more durable than a plywood plate. It also seemed sensible to make the plate pointed at the bottom and to reinforce the top so that it could be hammered into hard snow.

A series of preliminary tests were undertaken on various types of snow anchor in the Cairngorms on the 16th and 17th February, 1969.

THE DEAD FAMILY.—These were most impressive. The wire could be broken at will before extraction on Dead Men (25cm × 20cm) even when placed incorrectly. Dead Boys (15cm × 13cm) also worked well and amazingly one Dead Baby (13cm × 10cm) also suffered wire failure before extraction. It seems likely however that the smaller sizes could work less well in softer snow and the Dead Man (size 5) is considered the standard size in Britain.

One significant test was the one on an early experimental Dead Man made from a different aluminium alloy than the rest. It folded back along its vertical axis when loaded and indicated that the plate should be made from a high strength alloy correctly heat treated. It seems likely that the strengthening at the top of the plate, although fitted for a different reason, also helps resist this folding. Because of the infinitely variable texture of snow it may never be possible to fix a standard for snow anchors. However, preliminary tests do lead me to believe that Dead Men are likely to give the most secure belay on widely differing types of snow. Glenmore Lodge have been teaching the use of and testing Dead Men for four years. It is a very rare occurrence when a flat Dead Man is pulled out with six fully grown men pulling on it.

The tests in the Cairngorms were all made with flat plate Dead Men loaded vertically down the fall line. No tests were done at an angle to the fall line. Since that time various manufacturers have put forward different designs in attempts to give the plate greater directional stability with respect to both the angle at which it sits before commencing its dynamic downwards travel and in respect of its movement, when loaded at an angle to the fall line.

Further assessment of the effects of different design features is required. A variety of different systems have been tried in attempts to create a fixed angle between the wire and plate but opinions on what is the optimum angle differ.

The edges of some flat plates have been bent back in an attempt to increase lateral stability but tests by different people prove that this sometimes improves and sometimes diminishes the stability! Tests in plates folded to an open V form along their vertical axis have produced similarly conflicting reports.

A Dead Man, in spite of its name, is a dynamic energy-absorbing belay anchor. It is designed to pull through the snow and in doing so absorb the energy generated by the falling climber. A further factor which must therefore be considered is the amount of energy absorbed by a moving Dead Man. Does a large plate which takes a comparatively high load to start it moving eventually absorb more energy than a smaller one requiring a lower load to move it? Many tests will need to be undertaken in attempts to determine the optimum size of plate for different snow conditions. The Cairngorm tests only measured static load on the Dead Man immediately before the wire broke or the plate extracted.

MACINNES SNOW STAKES.—These metal ice axe shafts with a hole at the top to take a karabiner, pulled out rather than broke or bent at loads averaging less than 350 kg. An ice axe could be expected to perform in the same manner. The angle of placement seemed to have little effect on the load required to extract the stake; as the load increased the stake pulled through the snow until the angle between it and the rope exceeded 90° when the stake pulled out.

CLOG SNOW STAKES.—These are 'V' section pickets with lightening holes. When loaded, they bent across a lightening hole causing the angle between the rope and stake to exceed 90°. The stake then pulled out.

Scottish Mountaineering Accidents 1970-71

DUE to last year's postal strike no Accident Report appeared. Consequently we have two years of accidents this year. We would point out that we accept no responsibility for the accuracy of the reports given here; nor do we necessarily concur with any value judgments contained therein—these are our correspondent, Mr B. H. Humble's, own. We would also point out that this is not really a record of accidents but a record of incidents on the Scottish mountains which have either (a) been reported to Mr Humble or (b) involved the calling out of official rescue bodies. As may be seen, many of the incidents are unremarkable and would have gone unnoticed in former, less complicated, times, when benightedness, for example, was looked on as part and parcel of normal climbing and the leaving of detailed route plans unthinkable. These factors should be taken into account when considering the incidence of accidents.

Mr Humble notes that in 1970, '80 incidents were reported involving rescue or search parties. Of these, 70 were accidents (22 deaths) and 10 were searches for parties lost or benighted. Most accidents (18) occurred in Glencoe and most fatalities (5) in the Ben Nevis area. Just under 50% of incidents involved parties from south of the border. Among accidents to hill walkers

20 were due to slips and inadequate footgear was often reported. There were also a number of incidents involving poor navigation, even distrust of compasses. There were 11 accidents to roped parties. Our thanks are due to all the Mountain Rescue Teams which have given splendid service and to the Police and R.A.F. M.R. teams.'

In 1971, Mr Humble notes that, 'there was a welcome reduction in the number of call-outs compared with 1970. Only 60 incidents were reported: of these, 47 were accidents (20 deaths) and 13 were searches for parties lost or benighted. Most accidents occurred in the Ben Nevis area (13) and most fatalities in the Cairngorms (8). 50% of the incidents involved parties from south of the border.' However, it is also noted that 'although the number of incidents is less, the total number of man-hours (about 20,000) is up. Helicopters were much more used, being out on 30 incidents involving 60 helicopter-hours.' As to causes, Mr Humble observes that inadequate footwear and poor navigation are to the fore as usual and that 'of nine incidents involving roped parties, five involved belays giving way when a slip took place.'

We are indebted to Ben Humble for his painstaking annual collection of these accident statistics and look forward to the day when some intelligent use may be made of them. Anyone involved in an accident or incident who wishes an accurate report to appear should communicate with Mr Humble at 'Feithlinn,' Aviemore, Inverness-shire.

1970

NORTH AND WEST HIGHLANDS

16TH FEBRUARY — Michael Heller (20) Birkenhead, Michael Jacobs (22) Otford, Kent, and Robert Mutch (23) Kinlochleven, climbing Ciste Dubh with two other St. A.U.M.C. members. Soft snow over old snow-ice. Party avalanched near summit for 300 ft. Heller had to be dug out and was unconscious with head injury. Jacobs sustained broken ankle and Mutch a head wound. One uninjured member went down hill for sleeping bags, etc., and Mutch descended to raise alarm. Teams evacuated injured during night in blizzard conditions. Two policemen injured in rescue.

18TH FEBRUARY — Neil Heaton (27) Bolton, and Sheila Gillot (24) London, left Glen Hostel, Torridon at 10 a.m. to follow Route 16 of Poucher's *Scottish Peaks* on Beinn Alligin. Route card left. Crossing the Horns, Gillot became fatigued—descent attempted by south-west face of Central Horn. Route too difficult and party benighted. Huge team out at first light found party and brought them down. Party inexperienced.

30TH MARCH — Bryan Phillips (36) and Bernard Roach (54) both of Coventry, left Dundonell Road at 10.30 a.m. to climb An Teallach. Preparations made for large-scale search when party had not returned by 11 p.m. During night Dr Tom Patey and member of Police M.R.T. made spot check and located party beginning to descend at dawn, having been benighted. Roach very exhausted and suffering from exposure. Search called off by radio.

1ST APRIL — *Fatality*. Neil McGovern (27) Stroud, Glos., and Jannis Indrans (18) Watford, Herts., left Achnashellach at 12.20 p.m. to climb Fuar Tholl. Caught in blizzard and tried to descend. McGovern slipped negotiating small ice-pitch and fell about 1000 ft. Indrans eventually got down and raised alarm. Body recovered by police and volunteers. McGovern fairly experienced, both well-clad but *no map or compass and only one axe between the two*.

9TH MAY — *Fatality*. Harry Spilsbury (72) Windermere, Westmorland, traversing Beinn Alligin with very experienced Fell & Rock C.C. party. About 4 p.m. party started to descend from col between Toll a'Mhadaidh and The Horns in good weather. Spilsbury suddenly slid, fell and rolled down about 300 ft. with fatal results. Body recovered by large team.

25TH MAY — *Fatality*. Tom Patey (38) S.M.C., Ullapool, making first ascent of The Maiden, a sea-stack off Whiten Head, Sutherland, with four English climbers. Patey, abseiling from the summit with a figure-8 descendeur, somehow became detached from rope about 30 ft. below summit and fell 120 ft. onto flat rocks at base.

26TH MAY *Fatality*. Peter Thomas (25) Southport, Lancs., and Paul Walters, Keswick, Cumberland, traversing An Teallach. Walters slipped at difficult part of ridge. He stopped himself and noticed that Thomas had disappeared. Heard 'thud' from below. Assumed Thomas had fallen and went down to raise alarm. Enormous team carried out roped search of crags and located body late next day halfway down face.

3RD AUGUST — Linda Collis (24) Appleton, Berks., with James Smith (26) St. Andrews, hill-walkers, traversing Ben Attow, Kintail. Descending from Sgùrr a'Choirè Garbh Collis fell as rock broke away beneath her feet. Unconscious and serious head injuries. Smith descended for help and local party of volunteers started out. Large party of police and R.A.F. arrived later to assist evacuation.

CAIRNGORMS

31ST JANUARY — Party back late from Creag an Dubh Loch. Teams called out.

21ST FEBRUARY — 1st Cardross Scout Group ski-ing in Cairnwell area. In snow and mist crossed watershed and lost themselves, meeting two adults also lost. Found in late evening. Younger boys exhausted. Scout in charge a member of Glenshee Ski Rescue Service.

6TH MARCH — Edward Fowler (31) Falkirk, and Alex. Agnew (21) Stirling, both Ochils M.C., failed to return to base after being last seen at 4 p.m. descending Aladdin's Couloir, Coire an t-Sneachda, Cairngorm. Large scale search mounted in deep snow and strong winds. Party had found descent too difficult, climbed up again, lost way *through poor navigation* and spent night in St. Valery's Refuge. Met search parties on their way down next morning.

3RD MAY — *Fatality*. Duncan McInnes (55) collapsed and died returning from Loch Builg with hill-walking party. Heart failure.

9TH MAY — *Fatality*. Miss Jane Cameron (55) L.S.C.C. with club party walking through Glen Feshie. Party attempted to cross River Eidart, running very high, holding hands. Miss Cameron slipped, was carried into River Feshie and drowned. Bridge over river a short distance upstream.

19TH MAY — Jan de Wanderleer (42) Belgium, slipped descending Morrone Hill. Broken ankle.

5TH JULY — *Fatality*. John Gemmel (26) Edinburgh J.M.C.S., climbing Ben Macdhui *via* easy Pinnacle Gully right of Shelter Stone Crag. Near top he dislodged large rock and fell with it down gully. Found dead from head injuries about 50 ft. below Forefinger Pinnacle. Body carried up gully to plateau. Aviemore police notified but body removed by Braemar team since accident occurred in Banffshire.

19TH JULY — George Sangster, Monifeith, lost on Braeriach-Cairn Toul plateau. Benighted. Met search parties on way down. Well clad and properly equipped.

11TH AUGUST — Raymond Dunnet (18) and Graham Batson (18), both of Edgeware, Middlesex, inexperienced and with borrowed equipment, conducted up Lochnagar from Glen Clova by youth (unidentified). Near summit of Lochnagar Dunnet felt ill. Party arrived Fafernie 8.30 p.m. No time to return for pre arranged pick up so youth set off alone to allay fears and collect food, *he being only one with map and compass*. He took cramp in Glen Doll.

Other two wandered north towards head of Glen Callater and stopped at dark, bivouacking behind stone. Eventually reached Braemar 11.45 a.m. Ground and air search all morning.

18TH JULY — American student from Aberdeen University slipped scrambling in Coire an Lochain, Cairngorm. Head injuries. He was wearing gymshoes.

12TH DECEMBER — Douglas Kelly (22), Joseph Mann (17) and Malcolm Sime (16), Venture Scouts from Dundee walking over Jock's Road from Glen Doll to Callater. Party failed to arrive and were reported missing. Several search parties out. Eventually found at 2.10 a.m. at Loch Esk, having lost their way in mist at the top of Jock's Road. *Party were carrying map and compass but their navigation was very poor and their equipment inadequate.*

28TH DECEMBER — Party of six men from Crawley Caving and Climbing Club walking on Cairngorm. Left car park in late afternoon — reached summit in mist — strayed into Coire na Ciste. Knew escape route lay to north but *thought their compasses useless and distrusted them* (they were, of course, accurate) — wandered round in circles and eventually dug in for the night — walked back to Glenmore next morning *via* Strath Nethy. Teams called out. Party very well equipped.

31ST DECEMBER — Skier overdue—spent 14 hours on Cairngorm plateau—located by helicopter. Team out.

BEN NEVIS REGION

8TH JANUARY — *Fatality.* Elspeth Dickson (20) St. A.U.M.C., with Club party returning from Aonach Mór over Aonach Beag to Steall Hut. At 4 p.m. weather began to deteriorate rapidly with gale force winds. Party decided to try to descend leeward of col at head of Coire Giubhsachan. About 200 ft. below ridge moving parallel to cliffs in line Miss Dickson slipped and stopped herself in a few feet with her axe—snow hard but steps lickable. Leader helped her up and when he turned round she fell once more, this time not retaining full control of her axe which she held by the head. Fell about 300 ft. over mixed ice, rock and soft snow, sustaining fatal injuries. Body brought down later same night.

18TH JANUARY — *Fatality.* Mary Ann Hudson (22) Benmore Adventure Centre, James McArtney (25) S.M.C. and Fergus Mitchell (23) Paisley, on The Italian Climb, Tower Ridge, Ben Nevis, with John Grieve, Kinlochleven. Above the steep lower section Grieve, last on the rope, found his rope badly snagged and released it from his karabiner to shake it free. Just then there was a roar from above and the rope was swept from his grasp. A slab avalanche had swept the other three away. Grieve trapped on ledge. Search mounted following morning when party failed to turn up for work. Gale force winds and driving rain. Grieve found and rescued and bodies of other three found in avalanche debris.

8TH JULY — *Fatality.* David Delafield (17) member of English party of four on Observatory Ridge. *Unroped to descend* and retrieve rucksack left behind. Slipped and fell a long way with fatal results.

2ND AUGUST — James McKean (19) Bromley, Kent. Fell on boulder field on Càrn Dearg, Ben Nevis. Severe bruising *wearing ordinary clothes and light shoes.* Teams out.

8TH AUGUST — *Fatality.* Man (56) collapsed and died from heart failure on Nevis path.

5TH SEPTEMBER — Ben Nevis Race. Two runners assisted off suffering from exposure.

9TH SEPTEMBER — Man (36) slipped and fell over embankment on path through Glen Nevis gorge. Fractured arm, dislocated shoulder and bruising.

27TH DECEMBER — Susan Holloway (23) Bristol, hill-walker, had recurrence of old knee injury on path from C.I.C. Hut to Red Burn, Ben Nevis. Teams out.

GLENCOE

1ST JANUARY — Michael Burt (39) Keswick, Peter Sturmey (22) Humberston and Ian Gordon (21) Cleethorpes, all experienced and well-equipped, climbing Crowberry Gully, Buachaille. Benighted. Met by search parties on way down next morning.

3RD JANUARY — Maxwell Morris (26) Christchurch, Hants., I.C.I. Climbing Club, descending steep slope with party of five. Slipped, fell about 100 ft., sustaining chest, back and head injuries. Team out.

24TH JANUARY — Ivor Thomson (14) Edinburgh, Darroch Secondary School, member of party of twelve boys undergoing practice in snow techniques with very experienced climber in charge— all well equipped. On way up Lagangarbh corrie, Buachaille, several boys climbed over a large boulder, dislodging it. Boulder rolled against Thomson's legs—severe bruising. Brought down by own party.

7TH FEBRUARY — *Fatality*. Gunn Clark (34) Edinburgh, climbing Great Gully, Buachaille, in party of four. Clark very experienced. Heavy snow fall the previous night. Party decided to retreat as snow conditions very dangerous, but avalanche occurred. Three buried—two quickly extricated but Clark could not be found at once although the rope leading to him was located. Clark eventually dug out, unconscious, from depth of 48 ft. Efforts to resuscitate him were unsuccessful.

3RD MARCH — *Fatality*. Victor McFadyen (15) Glasgow, traversing frozen snow on west face An t-Sròn with Scout party. Slipped, fell about 1000 ft.

5TH MARCH — Eric Atkins (50) and Gordon Ashmore (26) both members of Chester M.C. traversing Aonach Eagach. Benighted. Flashing lights seen 10.30 p.m. and team called out. Contacted men on mountain and found they did not require or want assistance and elected to spend night out.

27TH MARCH — Martin Lockett (24) and Robert Owen (21), both of Crewe and South Cheshire M.C., climbing upper portion of Great Gully, Buachaille, in windy conditions. Owen slipped and pulled down leader—both fell about 500 ft. Lockett, fractured vertebrae—Owen, ice-axe wound in left armpit and ankle injury. Both extensively bruised. Team out.

28TH MARCH — Jeffrey Scott (17) Cranhill Secondary School, Glasgow, descending north face An t-Sròn with a companion. *Both wearing jerseys and jeans and cheap workboots. No ice axes.* Scott slipped on snow and fell 100 ft. onto scree. Head, chest and arm injuries.

19TH JUNE — John Escott (22) Cambridge U.M.C., descending West Face Aonach Dubh. Slipped on loose scree and fell 40 ft. Laceration of left knee and grazed back.

27TH JULY — Bernard Thomas (43) Birmingham, inexperienced, *wearing slacks, plimsols and sweater*, left to climb An t-Sròn at 6.30 p.m. Team called out at 11 p.m. Met him descending.

23RD AUGUST — *Fatality*. Arthur Little (19) Belfast, and Neil Scott (22) Warminster, Malligin Adventure Training Centre, Northern Ireland, climbing on Central Buttress, Buachaille. Both experienced rock-climbers. Bodies found at foot of buttress—cause of accident uncertain. A karabiner was found attached to the main climbing rope and clipped through soft steel piton in very rusty condition which had broken off at shoulder. Further along rope was found another runner, clipped to rope with karabiner and to wire nut sling. Thought that Scott, leading, had belayed, with the old peg and the nut sling as runners, and that Little had fallen and pulled Scott off his belay, combined weight breaking the old peg and pulling the nut out.

25TH AUGUST — Roderick Watt (14) Ballachulish, climbing west face of Aonach Dubh with other boys *poorly clad and with soft boots*. Trying to extricate his dog from a slab he slipped and fell 30 ft. into gully. Broken nose, pelvis and ankle.

9TH SEPTEMBER — Caroline Bowden (48) Surrey, descending at top of Lost Valley with companion, both inexperienced. Could not find way, became exhausted, benighted. Team called out and helped them down.

22ND SEPTEMBER — Roger Hunt (24) Plymouth, scrambling on lower slopes Aonach Eagach, novice, *walking shoes*, etc. Slipped and fell. Lacerations to head and arm.

27TH SEPTEMBER — John Merson (24) Bonnyrigg, climbing Chancellor Gully of Aonach Eagach solo. Hillwalker with some rock-climbing experience. Fell into bed of gully and injured back.

13TH DECEMBER — Alan McFadyen (27) Bearsden, climbing Crowberry Tower, Buachaille. Experienced. Decided to turn back due to difficult conditions—abseil anchorage broke and he fell 30 ft. to base of tower. Broken ankle.

29TH DECEMBER — Caroline Knight (21) Somerset, climbing Hidden Gully, Stob Coire nam Beith with companion, unroped. Both South Wales M.C. Slipped and fell 100 ft. when edging on rock with crampons. Shoulder injuries. Team out in bad conditions.

29TH DECEMBER — Hilary Taylor (21) and Paul O'Hara (20) both English and of South Wales M.C., experienced and well-equipped, climbing Crowberry Ridge, Buachaille. Apparently O'Hara fell, Taylor led up past then both fell and landed on the west face of the ridge about 6 p.m. Extremely difficult rescue operation occupied whole of next day, girl being badly injured. Girl was lowered diagonally onto North Buttress and stretchered down from there.

CENTRAL HIGHLANDS AND PERTSHIRE

26TH MARCH — Ninian Reid (24) Edinburgh, hill-walker, climbing Ben More on his own, *no ice-axe*. Got stuck on very steep slope of névé. After 5 hours decided to try to descend, fell, slid for 300 ft., injuring himself, but managed to make his way down. Meanwhile search parties had been called out.

30TH MARCH — *Fatality*. George Lewis (27) Edinburgh, rock-climbing in Glen Doll. Fell.

11TH AUGUST — Paul Timms (19) Coventry, on cross-country expedition organised by Endeavour Training, Coventry. Collapsed from exhaustion and exposure on Beinn Ghlas S.W. ridge. Stretchered down.

23RD AUGUST — Bernadette Doran (15) London, descending S.W. ridge of Beinn Ghlas. Slipped and landed awkwardly, breaking arm. Stretchered down. *Wearing smooth-soled canvas shoes*.

28TH AUGUST — *Fatality*. Alexander Donaldson (44) Harpenden, Herts., hill-walking alone in Ben Alder range. Body found in Garbh Choire, Ben Alder, after extensive search.

30TH DECEMBER — Alison Lambe (22) Surrey, David Stallard (20) Malvern, and Paul Wigglesworth (18) Manchester, all of Hull University, climbing in Coire Ardair, Creag Meaghaidh. Party overdue, having been benighted because of bad conditions. Search party called out met them on their way down next morning.

SKYE

1ST JANUARY — *Fatality*. Nicol McIntyre (37) Glasgow, climbing Bruach na Frithe, ice axe *but no crampons*. Slipped on steep snow and fell about 800 ft.

10TH JUNE — Christopher Bate (27) London, leading Collie's Route to the Cioch, Sròn na Ciche. Hold gave way, fell about 80 ft. sustaining broken leg and bruising. Second man suffered rope burns of forearm and hand. Team out.

10TH JUNE — Kathleen Towell (27) Notts., walking up path to Coire Lagan in hot weather. Collapsed with sunstroke and had to be brought down by stretcher.

13TH JUNE — Boy (16) Portree, descending scree slope on Clach Ghlas. Slipped—minor injuries to head and legs.

24TH JULY — Jasper Kirkby (22) Manchester, traversing steep slabs on Sgùrr a'Ghlèadaidh in wet misty weather. Slipped on greasy surface—severe lacerations to head, wrist and knee and bruised back. Team out.

28TH JULY — Hugh MacKenzie (17) Edinburgh, climbing on Cioch, Sròn na Ciche. Slipped and fell about 15 ft.—broken ankle.

25TH AUGUST — *Fatality*. John Ellis (39) Càrn Dearg M.C., Dundee, climbing on West Buttress Sgùrr Sgumain with brother, roped. Slipped on basalt rock—fatal skull fracture.

25TH AUGUST — Gerald Akroyd (25) Rochdale, experienced and well-equipped, following path round foot of Garsbheinn in low mist and rain at 9 p.m. Lost path and slid down gully sustaining facial injuries. Eventually reached Glenbrittle after search parties had been called out. One search party lost in mist and suffered benightment.

ARRAN

13TH APRIL — Martin Haslett (18) Ilford, Essex, climbing Goatfell with Geology Field Study group from Birmingham University, *poorly shod and without ice axe*. Crossing snow-filled gully on North Goatfell he slipped, fell and rolled down striking boulders on the way—fractured nose, lacerations to head and bruising to head and body. Team out.

22ND MAY — Andrew Falconer (46) Newmilns, Ayrshire, hill-walking between Glens Rosa and Sannox in rain and low mist. Failed to return and reported missing that night. Search parties found him next day at Bowman's Pass near A'Chir Ridge at 2.15 p.m. *He was wearing jersey, flannel trousers and smooth-soled shoes and had no map or compass*—suffering from shock and exposure. Helicoptered off.

6TH JUNE — Paula Cunningham (14) climbing Goatfell by path with Mansfield Secondary School party in very hot weather. Overcome by heat—stretchered off.

28TH JUNE — John Henderson (57) Canterbury, Kent, traversing A'Chir Ridge in rain and mist. Jumped 6 ft. from ledge and broke ankle and leg. Team out.

SOUTHERN UPLANDS

19TH APRIL — *Fatality*. William Edgar (17) Lesmahagow, Lanarks., inexperienced and poorly shod, climbing near Grey Mare's Tail. Instead of using path, tried to climb very steep rock face. Dislodged rocks and fell 200 ft. to death. Body brought down by local team with great difficulty.

ARROCHAR, LOCH LOMOND AND TROSSACHS AREA

6TH FEBRUARY — Man climbing Ben Vorlich, Argyll. Slipped on snow near summit—injured. Evacuated same evening.

6TH FEBRUARY — *Fatality*. Mrs Pauline MacKay (50) Cardross, introducing party of overseas students to hill-walking in Scotland. Climbing Ben Ime she slipped, lost hold of ice-axe and fell a long way. Others descended but could not find her—notified Arrochar police. Body located 3 a.m. Mrs MacKay had 20 years' experience *but was wearing slacks and ordinary ladies' boots with rubber soles*.

19TH MAY — Lorraine Speirs (15) Glasgow, climbing on hill known as Stepple above Lochgoilhead with group of children from Queen's Park Secondary School, Glasgow. Slipped, fell and struck her head on rock, sustaining lacerations to her head. Stretcher party out. *Speirs was wearing high-heeled shoes*.

16TH JUNE — Tom Weir (55) S.M.C., climbing the topmost band of rocks on Ben A'an with L. S. Lovat, also S.M.C. Weir belayed on main rope at a small spike halfway up crag. Lovat started up but handhold gave way and he fell about 10 ft., sustaining no injury. Lovat's weight pulled Weir's belay off the spike and he fell onto the steep heather slope below. He was unconscious when found but soon came to—abrasions, cracked ribs, damaged vertebrae and cracked hip. Rescued by S.M.C. party from Glasgow.

27TH JUNE — Gerard Monaghan (16) Barrhead, hill-walking on Ben Ime in rain and mist. Party from Renfrew Youth Club with leader said to be member of 'Mountain Leadership Group' with hill-walking experience. Monaghan fell about 10 ft. climbing on rock face—broken femur, lacerations to head, fractured skull. Team out. Monaghan *wearing sweater, jeans and cheap workboots*. No other equipment.

13TH JULY — James Blackwood (30). Climbing A'Chrois with two others in drizzling rain. Experienced hill-walker. About 1500 ft. up, slipped descending grass and fell about 20 ft. into burn. Lacerations to arm, scalp and bruising to body. Team out.

15TH JULY — Three young girls aged 13 and 14 from Old Kilpatrick and Milton of Campsie set off 7 p.m. up Campsie Glen intending to walk along summit ridge of Campsies and down to Milton. They started a mile too soon and got on to *Two Steps*, the steepest part of this face of the Campsies. Two of them got stuck on a ledge. The third made her way down to farm and informed police at 12.10 a.m. Rescued during night by police and local team.

2ND AUGUST — Anthony Huckstop (25) Garelochhead, climbing on Cobbler. Experienced hill-walker but no rock-climbing experience. Slipped descending from summit of South Peak and fell about 20 ft. onto ledge. Fractured vertebrae. Team out.

3RD AUGUST — Kenneth Newall (16) Surrey, Adventure Scout leader, hill-walking in hills round Lochgoilhead. Fell over banking onto rocks of waterfall. Fractured skull, broken kneecaps. Team out.

31ST AUGUST — *Fatality*. Owen Edmund (25) Esher, Surrey. Seen climbing lower slopes of Craig Ghorm, Kentallen at 4.30 p.m. Found dead next day by search party, believed to have fallen jumping a hill-stream. *Wearing Wellington boots*.

1971

NORTH AND WEST HIGHLANDS

12TH APRIL — Mrs Susan Allen (32) Dundee and Nora McCallum, Midlothian, the former very experienced and both well-equipped, climbing on Sgòrr Ruadh, Achnashellach. About 1 p.m. they were ascending north face when Mrs Allen, leading, fell about 60 ft. to bottom of crag. Three running belays came out but ameliorated the effects of her fall, which was said to have been caused by a loose hold—fractured spine, ribs and pelvis—unconscious. Companion made her comfortable and went down to notify police. Helicopter took team in but broke down and casualty had to be carried out.

18TH APRIL — M. Record, S. Waters, R. Howarth and Miss Egert, all from London, staying at bothy at Kinlochmorar in very bad weather of gales and rain. Abandoned bothy leaving equipment and food and went to Morar, *informing no-one of this move*. Later party found equipment and raised alarm. Extensive search parties out.

5TH JULY — *Fatality*. Old man missing on hills near Ullapool. Huge search parties out for two days. Search called off and body found a week later outwith search area. Death due to exposure and exhaustion.

17TH AUGUST — Eva Kolski (60) London, traversing Beinn Eighe from west to east. Seen on summit ridge of Sgùrr Ban about 6 p.m. Failed to return. Search parties out next morning but Kolski descended unnoticed by searchers. It appears she had sat in a concealed position watching search parties pass by. When questioned why she did not use her whistle or torch she maintained there was no reason for attracting attention as she was unhurt. Kolski had been rescued two years previously in Skye (see *S.M.C.J.*, 1970, xxix, 327).

28TH AUGUST — Godfrey Barton (51) Harrogate, Yorks., left Torridon alone with intention of climbing Liathach. Failed to return and landlord notified police. Found next day on Stuc a'Choire Bhig, having been benighted by mist and darkness. Well clad and shod but *no spare clothing, map or compass.*

17TH OCTOBER — Douglas Paterson (25) and James Millar (27), both of Elgin, fairly experienced hill-walkers, climbing Beinn Eighe by Cromasaig ridge in mist. Compass fell and broke on summit ridge. Descended wrong corrie and found burns in spate. Could not cross them and eventually were benighted. At first light they succeeded in crossing and picked up Glen Grudie path—met by search parties, both fatigued.

19TH SEPTEMBER — Mr and Mrs Kumpiss (both about 25, Australian) left campsite at Morvich, Kintail to visit Falls of Glomach via Loch a'Bhealach. Failed to return. Search mounted next morning. Found at Grid Ref. 028 233 in late afternoon, both soaked and woman very tired. They had walked to Alltbeath Y.H. the day before but were too tired to return. When found they thought they were walking back to Morvich. *Party had neither map nor compass.*

CAIRNGORMS AND LOCHNAGAR

JANUARY — Alan Frost and Robert Notman (20), both from Edinburgh and of Aberdeen U.L.C., experienced and well-equipped, descending lower part of Bunting's Gully, Garbh Coire Mór, Braeriach. Frost was belaying Notman with a *dead boy*, a 7" by 5" aluminium plate, hammered into hard snow-ice. Frost lowered Notman down ice-pitch and as he did so his stance collapsed. Belay came out and both fell 200 ft. to base of gully, Notman fracturing his tibia. Frost made Notman comfortable with sleeping bag from nearby bivouac and went to Luibeg for help. Rescue party reached Notman, guided by Frost, at 2.15 a.m. and he was evacuated during night. The snow conditions allowed the stretcher to be used as a sledge and this facilitated a most gruelling rescue.

13TH MARCH — Colin Barber and Tony Mercer (both 28) from St. Helens, Lancs., climbing in Coire an t-Sneachda, Cairngorm. Barber fell, sustaining fractured skull and lacerations. Evacuated by helicopter.

1ST APRIL — *Fatality.* Bryan Jones (30) climbing instructor with party from Lake District, hill-walking in Cairngorms. Party climbing easy snow slope right of Coire an t-Sneachda, wearing crampons and unroped. Girl slipped and Jones tried to stop her—both fell down several hundred feet hitting rocks on way. Jones killed, girl broken arm and shock. Evacuated by helicopter.

1ST MAY — *Fatality.* Douglas Scott (23) Inverness, climbing Eagle Buttress, Lochnagar, with David Firth (26), both Lomond M.C. Scott fell leading crux of climb after calling down that he had clipped into a peg and was placing another for direct aid. Scott fell about 200 ft. before tension came on rope and Firth was unable to hold the fall. Scott fell a further 50 ft. to end of rope and pulled Firth off his stance, but peg belay held both. Firth regained ledge and heard Scott ask for the rope to be taken in. It is believed that Scott had gained a ledge. About an hour later, at 4.30 p.m., the rope went slack and Scott fell to the screes sustaining multiple fatal injuries. Firth pulled up rope and found no knot. Firth stayed put and was pulled up the cliff by rescuers later that night.

23RD MAY — Mullard Electronics Works Outing from Aberdeen under leadership of Richard Woods. There were 16 in party aged 16 to 45. Party split in two and one group set off to walk up Glen Quoich *via* Clach Poll Bhat and back to Linn of Dee *via* Derry Lodge. At 2.15 p.m. Margaret Parks (16) at Grid Ref. 066 950 felt faint and complained of severe headache, then chest pains and difficulty in breathing before almost collapsing. Carried to Derry Lodge and thence to Braemar by Landrover. Found to be suffering from exhaustion and exposure. *Casualty wore knee-length boots with plain rubber soles and 1½ in. heels, woollen trousers, no headgear and no waterproof clothing.* Other young women in party were unprepared for bad weather and few carried spare clothing.

10TH AUGUST — Woman carried out from Corroul Bothy with slipped disc.

13TH AUGUST — David Driffield (28) York, one of party of 10 from St. Mark's Adventurers Boys Club, York, under leadership of Rev. Victor C. Cowel. Party started on 10th August from Braemar for week's camping and walking in the Cairngorms. Party included children aged 8-15 years. According to leader, planned course was 'on a bearing of 320° from Mar Lodge until a mile or two west of Sinclair Hut, then 270° thereafter.' On Friday 13th party was in Creag Follais area at which stage Driffield had fallen behind or left the party (there was said to be some friction). The party reached Kingussie next day. When Driffield did not appear the police were notified. Enormous search parties combed the area for three days without result. On Sunday 22nd August party in Loch Einich area found Driffield alive and well in an area that had been carefully searched on the 19th. The weather was perfect throughout the period and Driffield could have easily walked down Glen Einich. Not known where Driffield was during the period when he was understood to be lost.

10TH SEPTEMBER — Young girl stuck on Coire na Ciste crags. Rescued.

20TH NOVEMBER — Cairngorm Disaster (*see* Miscellaneous Notes).

BEN NEVIS REGION

30TH JANUARY — Janice Dickie, Hazel Stewart and Sheila Chambers, all of Heriot-Watt M.C., climbing Ben Nevis by tourist path. Weather good but snow soft. Girls fit, experienced and well-equipped. Shortly after reaching summit weather deteriorated very rapidly to blizzard and white-out. Party started to descend but decided conditions too bad for safe descent so went back to summit and spent night in summit shelter. Reported missing at 9 p.m. Search party tried to ascend mountain during night but gave up in terrible conditions. Resumed search at 6 a.m. and found girls at 11 a.m. Girls had left to descend at 10 a.m. but winds too strong so they returned to shelter.

27TH FEBRUARY — *Fatality.* James Whitfield (23) U.S.A. post-graduate student at Edinburgh, descending Am Bodach, Mamores. Said to have stopped to adjust clothing, *laid down axe* and slipped. Fell a long way receiving fatal head injuries. Body removed next day.

23RD MARCH — Patricia Sutherland (20) Lerwick, climbing North Castle Gully, Càrn Dearg, solo. Slipped, failed to stop with ice-axe, and fell down gully—head injuries—stretchered down by team.

27TH MARCH — *Fatality.* James Buchanan (29) Falkirk, climbing Green Gully, Ben Nevis, with George Skelton, both of Ochils M.C. Buchanan was using old steps which collapsed under him in sudden rise in temperature. Party fell about 600 ft. Buchanan killed.

13TH APRIL — C. F. May (44) and Keith Hillman (23), both of Birmingham and M.A.M., climbing Tower Ridge, Ben Nevis. Benighted on ledge on side of Great Tower. Teams alerted and party found by police. Well-equipped but said to have *started late*.

18TH MAY — R. Flatman (23) Grimsby, hill-walker, slipped at Glas Burn, Ben Nevis. Fell some distance and suffered slight head injuries. Team out.

15TH JULY — J. Bannon (35) Liverpool, set out from Corrour Y.H. to walk *via* Lairig Leagach to Roy Bridge and return by train. Failed to return at stated time. Alarm raised but turned up at 11.30 p.m.—had not walked right through and retraced steps. Team out.

27TH JULY — *Fatality*. F. Maeser (63) London, descending steep slope south side of Meall an t-Suidhe. Fell, receiving fatal head injuries. *Wearing canvas shoes*.

28TH JULY — Man (22) fell on Tourist Path, Ben Nevis. Fractured thumb and slight back injuries. Canvas shoes with plain soles.

30TH JULY — Man (35) collapsed from exhaustion on summit of Ben Nevis.

9TH AUGUST — J. Lightfoot (37) Luton, descending Ben Nevis by Tourist Path. Took short cut, slipped, broke leg—*wearing walking shoes*. Team out.

17TH AUGUST — *Fatality*. W. D. Rowe (48) Fareham, Hants., slipped at waterslide on Carn Dearg S.W. at about 1700 ft. Fell about 200 ft., fractured skull. *Wearing plimsoles*. Team out.

22ND SEPTEMBER — C. Vernon (57) Surrey, collapsed from exhaustion low down on Ben Nevis. Team out.

22ND SEPTEMBER — Woman (25) slipped and fell at Polldubh. Slight injuries and bruising. *Wearing Wellington boots*.

3RD OCTOBER — Kinloss M.R.T. members climbing Observatory Ridge saw party of two in difficulties on The Long Climb, Orion Face. George Turley, instructor at Loch Eil Adventure Centre, had slipped and fallen 30 ft. onto runner, sustaining minor leg injuries and a suspected head injury. Kinloss rope descended face and assisted Turley to summit. Stretchered down. No helmet.

29TH DECEMBER — *Fatality*. David Trafford (20) and John Clough (21), both of Hitchin, Herts., climbing Gardyloo Gully, Ben Nevis. Slipped and fell down Observatory Gully fracturing their skulls fatally. Both experienced and well-equipped but *neither wore a helmet at time of fall although normally they did so*.

GLENCOE

4TH APRIL — Eric Henry (24) and Anthony Lawrence (27), both members Leuchars M.R.T., climbing Clachaig Gully, Sgòr nam Fiannaidh. Both well-equipped and experienced. Leader fell when hold gave way and second's belay snapped off rock flake—both fell into gully. Leader was bruised and dislocated ankle: second had back injury. Accident happened about 8 p.m. Henry removed Lawrence to safe place, made him comfortable and sent up mini-flares. Very difficult and complicated rescue during night involving pulleys, winches, radios, portable generators, arc lamps and a helicopter.

10TH APRIL — Martin Bent (21) Manchester, member of Valhalla M.C., descending Stob Coire nam Beith in unroped party of six. At about 2800 ft. Bent slipped, *failed to stop himself with axe and fell about 900 ft.* Broken thigh.

1ST JUNE — *Fatality*. Charles Ross (62), experienced climber, climbing Bidean nam Bian with hill-walker companion. Rope left behind since only scrambling intended. Companion felt unable to continue up snow slope about 200 ft. below summit. Decided to attempt summit by chimney on west face of Church Door Buttress. Companion stuck at 40 ft. Ross pressed on a further 15 ft., fell off and rolled down snow into scree. Teams called out. Ross alive when found but died shortly afterwards. Body evacuated by helicopter.

14TH AUGUST — James McDowell (30) S.M.C., experienced and well-equipped, leading Big Top, E Buttress, West Face of Aonach Dubh. Block fell away beneath him on last 10 ft. of climb. Last runner also came out but a nut

runner held sprained ankle and bruised leg. McDowell managed to rejoin companion who then completed the climb. McDowell tried to complete the climb using aid, but because pitch is traverse this proved impossible. Companion raised alarm after making sure McDowell secure. Rescued four hours later.

18TH AUGUST — Ian Dyer (21), John Barnsley (23) and Maurice Dickson, hill-walkers, climbing scree slopes below Stob Coire nam Beith. Top man dislodged large boulder and fell about 40 ft., bringing boulder and other rocks down on other two. All three leg injuries—team out.

3RD SEPTEMBER — Rosemary Glen (20) Lancaster, hill-walker, descending Bidean nam Bian. Slipped on wet grass and broke ankle.

9TH SEPTEMBER — Gerald Buchanan (11) St. Ninian's Approved School, Gartmore, Stirlingshire, descending North Face of Aonach Dubh at about 450 ft. Slipped on loose rock, fell about 100 ft. over rock face, fall being broken by trees. Fractured wrist, multiple cuts and bruises. Team out.

SKYE

11TH APRIL — Man slipped on wet stone between Strathaird and Loch Coruisk, fracturing ankle. Police out.

6TH JUNE — *Fatality*. Margaret Stansfield (28) Rochdale, was struck by falling stones as a result of rock face giving way in Central Gully, Sròn na Ciche. Chest, back and head injuries. Died next day.

30TH JUNE — Trevor Marshall (37) Manchester, on Sgùrr a'Ghreadaidh dislodged stone and fell into gully. Fractured pelvis and lacerations to face and hands.

6TH SEPTEMBER — Man (20) fell when handhold gave way in Eastern Gully of Sròn na Ciche. Shoulder injury.

15TH SEPTEMBER — Frank Monkhouse (57) Ennerdale, of F. & R.C.C., slipped traversing slabs on normal route up Coire a'Ghrunnda in misty and wet conditions. Dislocated shoulder.

22ND SEPTEMBER — Roger Smith (25) and Ian Birkenshaw (25) Yorkshire, both very experienced, climbing Sgumain-Alasdair Ridge in mist and rain. Smith fell on Bad Step and rolled down scree, unroped. Smith seemed all right except for scalp wound, although short of breath. Managed to walk down as far as path from Coire Lagan to Glenbrittle. Stretchered down from there. Later found to have cracked rib and punctured lung.

CENTRAL HIGHLANDS AND PERTSHIRE

16TH MARCH — Michael McDonald (16) Dunkeld, slipped over Crag, Craig-y-Barns, and fell onto ledge—abdominal bruising—*wearing slacks and casual shoes*. Team out.

28TH MARCH — Helena Meist (65) German, wandered off road in Glen Orchy in rain and wind *wearing high heeled shoes and summer clothes*. Found by rescue team.

4TH APRIL — *Fatality*. Dennis Norman (44) Bucks., Steven Turney (30) and John Turney (12), both of London, climbing Centre Post, Coire Ardair, Creag Meaghaidh. Thought that steps gave way, belays came out and all three fell to foot of gully. Weather warm and overcast. Alarm raised. Norman killed by fall, Steven Turney very serious injuries and John Turney slight injuries. Large team out on all-night rescue effort.

18TH APRIL — Four boys from Borstal Institution lost on trek between Lochearnhead and Callander in high winds and rain. Located by rescue team.

3RD JUNE — Eleanor Mallarkey (15) with group under very experienced leader from Frederick St. School, Aberdeen, tripped near summit of Beinn

Ghlais and fell badly, injuring back. Stretcher obtained from Ski Club Hut in Coire Odhar and casualty carried down.

30TH AUGUST *Fatality*. Argyll police found car at roadside Grid Ref. 133 283 on 31st August and enquiries showed it belonged to Robert Russell (55) Motherwell, last seen the previous Friday and known to be a keen hill-walker. Tent, rucksack and boots absent from car. Extensive search of surrounding country and Ben Cruachan range during next five days. Body found about 1000 ft. up south-facing slopes of Beinn Bhuidh. Death due to exposure—legs showed some bruising. Body evacuated by helicopter.

ARRAN

1ST JUNE — *Fatality*. Andrew Brunton (16) Galashiels, with party from Galashiels Academy on Field Study Course. Two boys went to Holy Island to study goats. Brunton slipped descending hill and fell about 180 ft. fatally fracturing skull—*wearing leather boots with smooth soles*.

8TH JUNE — David Arthur (17) Whitley Bay, with Field Study Group from school in Newcastle. Slipped descending path from Goatfell, bruised and sprained ankle—*wearing ordinary dress shoes with smooth soles*.

ARROCHAR, LOCH LOMOND AND TROSSACHS AREA

2ND FEBRUARY — *Fatality*. Hamish Cormack (15) Cambuslang, fell crossing top of Guibhas waterfall on west face of Cobbler. Fell 40 ft. receiving fatal head injuries.

12TH APRIL — Robert Curtis (24) Welwyn Garden City, member of Scout party from Lochearnhead Scout station, climbing on Ben A'an. Slipped from path above First Thirty and fell down crag broken ankle. Team out.

21ST SEPTEMBER — Leonard Skerrow (17) with party from Junior Training Regiment, Troon, collapsed from exhaustion on south face of Ben Donich.

21ST NOVEMBER — Kenneth Morrison (14) with party from Adelphi St. Secondary School under experienced leader collapsed from exhaustion on lower slopes of south face of Cobbler. Weather dry with drifting snow.

IN MEMORIAM

DOUGLAS MENZIES

THE death of Douglas Menzies in November of last year removes one of the Club's oldest members. He joined the Club in 1910 and was for many years a regular attender at meets.

He together with his great friend Willie Morrison were my first instructors in rock-climbing, first on Salisbury Crags in the early morning and then in Glencoe and Skye. His yearly June visits to the Cuillin firstly with Morrison and then with such members of the Club as Sandy Scott, George Murray Lawson and myself and finally with his wife were the highlights of his year.

When the 1914-18 war broke out, he joined the Lovat Scouts and served on the Salonika front.

He retired as a law agent in 1943 and this gave him the opportunity of spending part of each summer in the West Highlands with his wife. Later they moved to Catehouse of Fleet and for a number of years he and his family enjoyed the neighbouring hill country.

He was 77 when he made his last ascent of the Merrick.

A.H.

ROBERT A. PEEL, 1907-1971

BOB PEEL was a Yorkshireman who came to Scotland in the early 30's, fell in love with our country and decided to settle in the Helensburgh district for the rest of his life.

Bob lost no time in turning his experience on the crags of Yorkshire and the Lakes to good account by seeking out the Arrochar hills and the people who climbed them. I met him on the Cobbler where he had already made the acquaintance of Andy Saunders, founder of the Creag Dhu Club. Thereafter our trio applied itself to seeking routes on the Scottish crags with occasional trips to the Lakes. There, among the Lakeland Fells, Bob was the Authority introducing us to Eagle's Nest Arête, Botterills' Slab, the Central Buttress of Scafell and other classics.

It was a pleasure to climb with Bob if only to hear his wholehearted response when all tensions were over and we were relaxed and free to enjoy our surroundings. I remember best his reactions to a joint ascent of Tower Ridge. The conditions were the finest I have experienced on Ben Nevis. The sky was cloudless. Every ridge and buttress was heavily cloaked in hard snow and the rock faces were encrusted with fog crystals. Crampons and other metallic aids were unknown then and hundreds of steps had to be cut throughout the climb. Night fell before we had reached the Tower Gap, but a full moon had taken over and every detail was clear in the reflected light of the ice. We broke through the final cornice sometime around midnight and started the trudge along the moon washed plateau to gain our tent in Glen Nevis where Bob's 'Baby Austin' was waiting to be warmed into life for the long overnight run to Glasgow the top cruising speed was 30 mph. We had spoken little all day, largely because Bob was hard of hearing and never wore his hearing aid on a climb, but the moment we topped the cornice Bob poured out his impressions of our glorious progression up the ridge and rhapsodised, mile after mile, on other remembered climbs until a new day found us in the outskirts of Glasgow.

Bob was a very competent climber and never in our long association became unstuck on a crag. Like most of us he accepted the obligations of marriage and fatherhood by a slow down-grading of his climbing aspirations. He had some Alpine experience but found most pleasure in the hills of Scotland. An expert on textiles, he specialised in dyes and contributed articles to trade magazines, varied at times by essays on mountaineering. He immersed himself at an early stage in the life and affairs of the local community and an impressive number of people paid tribute to his memory at the funeral service. As in climbing circles, Bob's warm personality made him many friends. We extend our deepest sympathy to Mrs Peel and her three daughters.

J.B.N.

PROCEEDINGS OF THE CLUB

Easter Meet 1971 — Dundonell

IN contrast to the previous year's rather dismal experience at Easter, we were fortunate in enjoying ideal weather at Dundonell. Admittedly snow was somewhat sparse, but the days were dry and sunny with very little wind, so that it was possible to admire the panoramas while enjoying a leisurely lunch on the summit. The comforts of the recently modernised and extended hotel and the kind attention of the proprietor and his staff were also much appreciated.

Climbs included:—An Teallach, Beinn Dearg Mhór, A'Chailleach, Sgùrr Breac, Meall a'Chrasgaidh, Sgùrr nan Clach Geala, Sgùrr nan Each, Sgùrr Mór, Beinn Liath Mhór Fannaich, Eididh nan Clach Geala, Scana Bhràigh, Ben More Assynt, Conamheall, Stac Pollaidh.

Present:—*Members*: The President, J. H. Barber, D. Barclay, J. W. Baxter, W. L. Coats, D. McArthur, J. E. Proom, J. D. Sturrock, A. T. Taylor, J. A. Wood, F. E. Yule. *Guests*: H. Allison, K. M. Brannan, V. Burton, J. D. Clayton, M. V. McKenzie, T. Wright.

W.L.C.

New Year Meet 1971-2—Glencoe

REASONABLE weather conditions made the Meet an unusually enjoyable one. New Year's Day was one to be remembered.

Climbs included:—Beinn Bheithir, Bidean nam Bian, Buachaille Etive Mór, Buachaille Etive Beag, Sgùrr Eilde Mór, Beinn Sguliard, Stob Coir' an Albannaich, Stob Gabhar, Beinn a'Chrulaiste, Fraochaidh, Pap of Glencoe.

Present:—*Members*: The President, D. J. Bennet, W. L. Coats, A. G. Cousins, E. S. Chapman, C. G. Gorrie, A. H. Hendry, R. G. Inglis, J. N. Ledingham, T. Mackinnon, W. H. Murray, G. Peat, I. McNicol, C. Warren, F. R. Wylie. *Guests*: J. Douglas, K. Macrae, R. Zanotti.

R.G.I.

Cave New Year Meets 1971-2

Ling Hut. A party of 12 members and guests enjoyed a comfortable and pleasant New Year at the Ling Hut. All were most impressed by the remarkable improvement in the hut's facilities and decor. The weather was mixed and the snow scarce. However, everybody was on the hill each day and the following hills were either ascended or traversed:—Liathach, Beinn Eighe, Beinn Alligin, Beinn Liath Mhór, Sgòrr Ruadh, and all the eastern Fannichs. Coire Mhic Fhearchair was visited but no routes climbed.

Present:—*Members*: D. Lang, G. Peet, N. Quinn, R. Richards, G. Wilkinson, W. Young. *Guests*: I. Burley, I. Burton, S. Littlefords, S. Quinn, A. Saunders, I. Young.

C.I.C. Hut. A party of 4 members and 3 guests spent New Year beneath the Ben. Their achievements have not been reported.

Present:—*Members*: J. Crawford, J. Gillespie, R. Richardson, W. Skidmore.

Our correspondent in these matters, G. Peet, suggests that large numbers are avoiding the official meets because of the pedestrian choice of location. He writes, 'Maybe it is time the S.M.C. reviewed its reactionary process of selecting next year's meet at this year's do it would appear to be a self-defeating process. Only those who are prepared to go to such places as Crianlarich, Dalmally, Glencoe or Killin get to have a say.'

Club Meets at C.I.C. Hut — Winter 1972

11TH 12TH FEBRUARY.—The weather was poor with heavy snowfalls. Not much was done.

Present:—*Members*: L. Brown, P. Brian, D. Lang, G. Peet, N. Quinn, R. Richards, I. G. Rowe, G. Wilkinson, W. Tauber. *Guests*: I. Burley (J.M.C.S.), P. Turnbull, J. Wells.

10TH-11TH MARCH.—The meet enjoyed magnificent weather, possibly the best of the winter.

Climbs included:—Slalom, North-east Buttress, Minus Three Gully, Orion Face Direct Route, Hadrian's Wall, Observatory Buttress (Direct

Route and The Liquidator), Tower Ridge, Italian Climb, Glover's Chimney, Ledge Route, Intermediate Gully, Càrn Mór Dearg, Càrn Dearg Meadhonach.

Present:—*Members*: The President, L. Brown, I. Fulton, C. G. Gorrie, D. Lang, G. Peet, N. Quinn, R. Richards, C. Stead, G. Wilkinson, W. Young. *Guests*: I. Burley, H. Donnelly, K. Crockett, M. Shaw.

G.P.

Reception, A.G.M. and Dinner, 1971

RECEPTION.—This was followed by an edifying lecture on the Golden Age of Cairngorm Climbing given by the redoubtable Graeme Nicol (one of the Prime Movers) and illuminated by suitably ancient slides. It was gratifying for all present to have their worst suspicions about the lowly origins of such as Brooker, Grassick & Taylor so amusingly confirmed.

At the ensuing bunfight, many members were surprised to find a Bouncer at the door, readied to debar those without the appropriate ticket. All in all it was a day for Aberdonians.

A.G.M.—This continued the theme by beginning with a wrangle about the increase in price of that Bane of Hut Custodians, the Season Ticket, and ended with another about whether it was worth our while remaining in the B.M.C. fold. This last discussion was concluded, if memory serves, by the remarkable spectacle of that well-known philanthropist and anglophile, Dr Slesser, enjoining us to continue our subscriptions to the Council as a gesture, since it would be penny-pinching to do otherwise!

In between these financial squabbles there was some discussion of the recent disaster in the Cairngorms and anxiety was expressed that a pure Mountaineer from the Club should offer to give evidence at the forthcoming public enquiry, since most members who had been asked to give evidence had been asked *qua* this and *qua* that. Dr Slesser and the Secretary agreed to do their best for the Club in this respect.

The following new members were welcomed:—L. Brown, J. A. Crawford, W. H. Jones, H. J. Oldham, R. F. J. Richards, R. T. Richardson, A. Sommerville, A. C. Stead, R. Taplin.

DINNER.—We are indebted to Malcolm Slesser for the following report.

'A dinner chaired by George Roger could hardly fail to be a jolly affair. In Glasgow, our President radiated bonhomie. It was the warmth of the purrhearted mountaineer, one who likes to see his fellow men extract from life the same pleasure as he does himself. The Club responded, aided by a dinner, which if not gastronomically memorable was edible and tasty. At £2.50 the St. Enoch dared hardly offer less.

The atmosphere was established during the second course trout when the retiring editor, more accustomed to the intimacy of the Glenshee S.W.R.I. than to the rigours of city banquets, was observed to peel off his jacket. This frivolity from one sitting next to the President drew an instant murmur of disapproval, soon to be overlaid with a roar of delight. By the time the steaks were served the room was virtually jacketless, save for the President, Sir Robert Grieve and the guest from the Climbers' Club, whose outer attire possibly offered no opportunity for further shedding.

The President's traditional review of the Club's activities was given with a geniality that totally compensated for the almost complete lack of hard detail. But we all had the impression that George was right when he said it was all "a jolly good show." Not that our President is above offering reproof. A report that a member had entered the C.I.C. encramponed drew the phrase, "most irregular." Connotating deepest distaste, this phrase had once before been used when George, as custodian of Lagangarbh, had encountered a 14-hand horse in the S.M.C. bedroom. When we drank the Club's health, it was George we thought of.

Bill Brooker, in a shirt of hideous blue, stood to deal with the guests, quoting a little ditty from the Kincorth Club. It seems the present participle

of four-letter words is now dinner currency. Brooker was expected to be entertaining. He was better. He was witty. McInnes, disguised as the A.C. guest, he sadly observed, was now embarking upon his third free dinner. He was deftly dismissed as a canine impresario. Mr Black of the Cairngorm Club, who had till now seemed a trifle bored with the proceedings, rose a little to the Brooker bait. Of Mr Hatton of the Climbers' Club, he recalled the Patey quote. "It was better to be misquoted than missed out." We hope he agreed. Rob McMillan, representing the J.M.C.S. is a policeman. Diplomatically Brooker passed that one with "least said soonest mended."

Meanwhile the retiring editor was pouring himself and all around uncommonly generous drams from the top-table bottle.

Donaldson, replying for the guests, chose a theme which for an aspirant was impertinent. He dwelt long upon the fact that every time he ventured forth with S.M.C. companions, he either found himself on the wrong hill or the wrong side of the railway station, or on one occasion ascending the River Spey with a view to gaining its mouth. No-one disbelieved him.

Dr Dutton rose to thank the Club for their gift of honorary membership, and a free dinner, remarking that he had waited long, too long, for this moment. He was however, mollified by the fact that the price of the dinner had never been higher. We were smitten with an editorial hail of words, ingeniously linked, too complex, too clever for the drink-taken audience to understand in full—but part was enough. This was no empty, amusing speech. He urged us not to yield to "universal smotherhood," but to go "back, back past the bronze-mongering Tisos and elkskin P.A's to the unrecorded past." With which he sat down to great acclaim, and not a little wondering.

It was as animated an occasion as the recorder has ever observed in the Club.

J.M.C.S. REPORTS

Edinburgh Section.—Attendance at the year's meets fluctuated considerably but never-the-less an active and eventful year has been experienced with the summer meets coinciding with some very fine weather. The average attendance at meets was fifteen. A total of 16 weekend meets were held along with some 10 evening meets to local outcrops for climbing practise. Regrettably, one weekend meet had to be cancelled through lack of support. During the winter months, the Section made use of the Climbing Wall at the Meadowbank Centre.

The Smiddy, the Section's hut at Dundonell is now virtually completed and it is hoped that the official opening will take place early in the summer. Following the installation of the services, an increase in the hut charges has been made.

Several members were in the Alps during the summer, either as groups or as members of other parties. Weather conditions varied considerably but a number of ascents were recorded.

The Annual Dinner was again held at the Beinn Sheann Hotel, Strathyre, and was well attended by members and guests. Surprisingly, most of the company felt sufficiently able to take part in hill activity on the Sunday.

Those admitted to membership of the Section during the year numbered 6 but, as a result of resignations and subscription arrears, the total membership has been reduced to 55.

Hon. President, G. Tiso; Hon. Vice-President, M. Fleming; President, D. Stone; Vice-President, B. Collignon; Treasurer, W. Myles; Hut Custodian, J. H. Clark; Secretary, J. R. R. Fowler, 14 Craigcrook Square, Edinburgh, EH4 3SJ (031-336 6122).

Glasgow Section.—During the 1970-71 Club Year, 11 new members have joined the Club and there have been 25 enquiries from prospective members. Membership now stands at 115, a slight decrease over last year.

Meets continue to be held fortnightly and have generally been well attended. Two meets were held at the Coruisk Hut this year, but the Creag Meaghaidh Hut received few visits due to the poor winter conditions which directed attention mainly to the C.I.C.

A highly successful long trek was held in June between Dundonell and Kinlochlewe. Several parties were active in various parts of the Alps during the summer and a variety of good routes and peaks were done.

The Annual Dinner, held in Glencoe, attracted over 50 people, the highest number for some years.

Indoor lecture evenings are again being held at Strathclyde on winter Fridays, alternating fortnightly with the S.M.C. Western District. Lecturers have included Niki Clough, Bill Young and our Hon. President, Gerry Peet, who judged our photographic competition and commemorated the termination of his long and valued association with the Club by awarding a prize for the best portrait.

Hon. President, G. S. Peet; President, D. Somerville; Vice-President, R. McMillan; Treasurer, D. Begg; Secretary, J. Messer, 55 Cecil Street, Glasgow W.2 (041-339 8537).

Perth Section.—Something of an active but routine year to report on. There were 15 official meets held with the support varying from a minimum of 12 to a maximum of 39 members attending. An experiment with a holiday-Monday weekend meet in late May to Kintail found good support and may establish the more distant type meet as an annual event.

The Annual Dinner of the Section was held during April at the Jubilee Arms Hotel in the Glen Clova area. The move southwards from our usual Deeside haunts did not reduce the number attending; participation at a local Dance in the Glen Hall followed by vocal activity in the Càrn Dearg Club's Hut rounded the social side off in good style.

Our members' scattered locations remain a feature of the Section's overall membership. While grateful for more local reinforcement we do appreciate the continued support of members now in residence between Shetland and Surrey.

The Section's A.G.M. was held during November in Perth when all reports seemed to be quickly accepted. There followed almost minimum change in the set-up of Office-Bearers to see the Section through another year.

Hon. President, Chris Rudie; Hon. Vice-President, John Proom; President, Andrew White; Treasurer, Andrew Calvert; Secretary, David Wares, 2 Rowanbank, Scone.

London Section. Membership now stands at 63, a slightly reduced number from last year, with 13 members falling to the Treasurer's pruning, while 8 new members were elected.

Climbing standards continued to rise, approaching those of former days. 14 meets were held in all, mainly in N. Wales, but with several in the Lake District, Derbyshire and Glencoe.

Almost all of these were very well attended, and invariably seemed blessed with the best of weather. Three parties went to the Alps during the summer, continuing a trend of the last few years, though perhaps with modest success.

The 26th A.G.M. and Dinner was held at the Dog and Partridge Hotel, Dovedale, Derbyshire, where the proceedings were blessed with the first real snows of the winter.

Hon. President, Joe Della Porta; President, J. Whitrow; Vice-President, P. Whitechurch; Hon. Treasurer, D. Edmunds, 67 Bourton Road, Olton, Solihull (021-706 6746); Hon. Secretary, also Hut Booking (Glenafon, North Wales) and Meets Secretary, S. Steele, 16 Westbourne Gardens, London W.2 (01-727 2752).

BOOKS

One Man's Mountains. By Tom Patey. (1971; Gollancz. 287 pp. and 26 photographs and diagrams. £3.00).

This posthumous collection of Patey's Songs and Stories (Essays and Verses, as Gollancz would have it, if you like) hardly needs reviewing here. Most members will have read the book and those who have not will be familiar with the bulk of it through this *Journal*. Moreover, Patey merits better than a mere review and we have a promise of an article about his writing in our files so we will not attempt much here.

The Stories are arranged with the Scottish ones naturally first, then those which deal with Patey's climbs abroad and finally his later satirical pieces commenting on the Mountain Scene. These last are perhaps the weakest: Patey's humour bites deeper in describing the absurd behaviour of himself and his friends at grips with the mountain. The uproarious 'Greatest Show on Earth,' his description of a televised ascent of the Holyhead Cliffs is of course misplaced, being no more satirical than any other of Patey's mountain stories, and belongs in the Abroad section. The only new material is 'A Short Walk with Whillans' which describes an attempt on the Eigerwand in 1963 and 'The Shape of Things to Come' which looks forward to an outlandish future. This last piece will soon be horribly dated.

The Verses include many that have not been published before and with some of them, for example 'The Squirrel's Song,' we can see clearly why not.

On the whole, one feels sorry indeed for Patey that he did not live long enough to complete the book himself for the collection has been wholly uncritical and surely Patey would have wished to be more selective.

These, however, are minor blemishes. The book is extraordinarily satisfying and provides a colourful history of the post-war period. While it has sat on my shelves awaiting review, it has been read by all sorts and conditions of men, all of whom found it as interesting and readable as any best-seller. Patey's racy style and high humour, which bit but never hurt, made him the most entertaining of our mountain writers and our *Journal* cannot measure his loss.

R.N.C.

Annapurna South Face. By Christian Bonington. (1971; Cassells. 324 pp., 48 colour photographs. £3.25).

Everyone knows the story . . . of how the boat broke down at Cape Town, Whillans stalked a yeti and they found the site for basecamp covered in snow. Everyone knows how, despite very difficult terrain, the party stocked six camps on the face from which two lead climbers were almost forging ahead. Making extensive use of every modern aid, especially fixed ropes and jumars, the team put Whillans and Haston on the top on 27th May, 1970. Three days later, Ian Clough was killed by serac fall during the descent. Anyone reading this review, or even this book, probably knows as much.

Why then write a book at all? We have all seen the television films; we have already climbed Annapurna from our living rooms, many returning for a second ascent only hours after struggling for Everest. Many of us, thousands at a time, have paid our ten bobs and heard first hand accounts. Why bother to read the book? In the event one reads it with a sense of *déjà vu*, skipping pages here and there, and, in full knowledge of the outcome, failing to be gripped.

But there is a new slant on things. Christian Bonington tells of how he had just swum down the Nile and was looking around for a greater challenge when he remembered the south face of Annapurna—'the Himalayan equivalent—on a vaster scale—of the north wall of the Eiger.' One hears of a basecamp thrash during which Whillans and Haston dance together around

the tent before driving off to the local hop on Whillans' packing case. One learns the sad misfortune of Clough's death. One reads of dissent and illness, glossed over in the lectures and films; and one realises more than before how difficult and arduous was the climbing. Furthermore, and reason enough for buying the book, one can peruse at leisure the many magnificent photographs.

Almost as interesting as the text are the numerous appendices. One hundred and forty porters, curiously enough equipped with three hundred pairs of shoes and twenty pairs of trousers, must have made an impressive sight as they carried the party's two thousand feet of bootlace in single file along the track from Pokhara, feeling their way along five and a half miles of kernmantel rope. Or were some of them, perhaps those without trousers, carrying the Expedition's eighteen housewives, secured with its hundred padlocks? The inclusion of fifty boxes of toilet paper amongst the kitchen ware and none in the section headed 'Hygiene' may reflect strange customs in Nepal. Two and a half thousand pounds were spent on oxygen equipment which was little used. Dinner at Camp Three on 7th May included olives and smoked Austrian cheese, thick onion soup and fried pork, yet there is no mention of the social perturbation which follows such ingestion in a confined space.

As with Herzog's book, the most puissant writing is in the last paragraphs. There is no justification attempted for the 'heavy seige tactics that we were forced to employ' but one senses that Bonington's next trips might be 'light-weight assaults against [these] huge mountain problems.' Too big a party, too much backing and too much publicity mean too much commitment, too little flexibility and too high a premium on the summit. When Maurice Herzog's team went out in 1950 they first had to find their mountain. Thinking Dhaulagiri too difficult, they turned to Annapurna, only setting up base camp in mid May. Their first ascent of this eight thousand metre peak was heralded as the start of the golden age of Himalayan mountaineering. The party set out little known and returned national heroes. The book was widely acclaimed and became a best seller. Chris Bonington's team planned to usher in the era of Himalayan face climbing. They set out national heroes, at least in the climbing world, and returned little better known. The Expedition was in daily radio contact with Pokhara and Kathmandu and extra supplies could be quickly sent. Television bulletins appeared regularly in Britain. Visitors wandered into basecamp. Lecture tours were arranged in advance. In such circumstances, all credit is due to Bonington for writing a credible and gently interesting account of a best-sold Expedition: one doubts that it will become a best-seller.

R.A.N.

Everest—The West Ridge. By Thomas F. Hornbein. (1970; Allen & Unwin. £3.50).

I was going to say that this book is a poor man's version of the Sierra Club Exhibition Format Series publication of 1968 (see *S.M.C.J.*, xxix, 1968, 105). Then I noticed the price. Some of the excellent pictures of the 1968 edition are reproduced here with diminished size and quality and the book must therefore stand or fall by Tom Hornbein's writing.

I liked his descriptive passages though they are few and far between. And I liked Hornbein himself. The trouble is that the soul searching bit is a little heavy. I suppose that American society, especially the ivy league stratum from which the 1963 American Expedition drew its members, demands that motives be rationalised and actions justified. Hornbein seems to be making a sort of moral investment which will be realised at the summit. Unsoeld is another. The conversations are recorded, and Unsoeld must actually have said,

'I guess I'm hunting for some answers too. Where do I go after the Peace Corps? Philosophy, foreign service or what? That's the big thing I hope this trip will clarify.'

Your nihilistic Valley Freak would blow his mind at that one, and hurry down for his social security.

Hornbein's search for dreams or answers, and his failure to find satisfaction, are neatly paralleled by the impressive feat itself. Firstly his obsessive championing of the West Ridge Route is as difficult and intense as the climb itself; Dyhrenfurth is shown to be a cautious and conservative man, even a pedant. It was superb that they went on knowing that they could not return by the West Ridge. At the summit he almost gets his unity . . .

'The moment became an end in itself'

. . . but the insight passes and the old investment and return conditioning takes over . . .

'maybe there was something more, something beyond the three-dimensional form of the moment. If only it could be perceived . . . The memories had to be stored, the meanings taken down.'

So his chance passes. He bundles up his meanings and trots off down the other side like a Squirrel with his nuts, but no Zarathustra he.

'The answers lay not on the summit of Everest, nor in the sky above it, but in the world to which we belonged and must now return.'

Poor old Hornbein. Mind you, you could tell he wasn't going to make it. There is a ludicrous passage early on.

'The lamas of Thyangboche lived in enviable purpose. They were not halfway to heaven; they were there . . . And maybe understanding could be found here, even of the thing that prevented my staying to seek it.'

A man to be admired for his obsessions rather than his logic, and the book because it is personal rather than journalistic.

I.G.R.

The Mountain World 1968/9. Edited by Malcolm Barnes. (1970; Allen & Unwin. £3).

Regrettably, this is the last of *The Mountain World*. Since 1953, it has provided the British mountaineer with an abundance of information on the distant mountain ranges and expeditions to these ranges.

This volume contains the usual high-standard photographs, of which there are fifty-three, four in superb colour. In the text, the Hindu Kush is well provided for, with accounts of the Czech and Japanese parties competing in the same valley. There is a pleasant story of old timers climbing Daman-e-Koh, Persia's highest peak. The traverse of Yerpaja must rank very highly as the most perfect expedition, with a fantastic spell of good weather, no illnesses, accidents or great discomforts . . . despite the immensity of the New Zealand party's achievement.

The four colour plates accompany an interesting geological observation of the high altitude lakes which apparently contribute greatly to the huge flood disasters that occur in the lower valleys.

'And now for something completely different' should have been the title for a very detailed description of the Alpine Salamander's sex life. For the intrigued, it includes action photographs. Eighteen years of climbing in the Stannings Alps by Donald Bennet also has a list of the previous expeditions to the area. Perhaps the most disappointing article is a ghosted account of the first winter ascent of the north east face of the Badile. It lacks the excitement which must have prevailed on such a climb.

Overall, this volume is certainly worth having. For the low price asked, it's amazing considering printing costs today that the Swiss Foundation can publish such a high-quality production.

D.P.

On Ice and Snow and Rock. By Gaston Rebuffat. (1971; Kaye & Ward. £3.50).

Not him again. Another lovely blue book with 'old Ghastly' dangling as usual over the Céant, and those immaculate skies behind him. Just a few

wrinkles showing now, but the circus must go on. Whympers was another one, you know. All those exaggerated engravings. Vulgar fellow, carried hooks and rings for roping down. Things that nice Prof. Tyndall would never use. Had to let him into the Alpine club eventually, of course.

Its too boring to examine the technical lessons he gives; an attempt has been made to include most of the modern range of gear but I suspect 'old Chastly' is not too well up on tapes, jumars, nuts or Yosemite techniques. While acknowledging a debt to Chouinard and quoting from his book on artificial techniques, he nevertheless continues with the cumbersome double rope method and jumars are given only a desultory mention. Nor is there anything about double axe work, or angled picks. The Sticht belay system surely deserves an explanation. But then, a close and continuing acquaintance with new developments in gear demands a certain level of activity and youth which our hero, I suggest, no longer maintains.

Nor can he possibly get much time for maudlin philosophising, with all those photos to be taken . . .

'Hey, Pierre, have you got a comb?'

'Are my socks straight? What time is the last *telepherique*?'

'*Merde*. How the hell do you use these American pegs. Pierre, read me Chouinard's little book. Here we go. Better use one of these nut runner things. Getting too old for this job. Pierre, are you sure the last cabin goes down at five?'

'And another thing. All my photos of the Midi have got *telepherique* cables in them.'†

I.G.R.

The Black Cliff. By Jack Soper, Ken Wilson & Peter Crew. (1971; Kaye & Ward. 158 pp., 111 photographs. £2.50).

To devote a whole book to the rock climbing history of a single cliff and make the result at all readable must be a difficult task. This book on Cloggy is certainly readable, if not at one sitting, and is bound to be the model for future close-up views of other cliffs (Ben Nevis?) which will inevitably follow. We should be glad of this high standard.

The research which must have been necessary for the pre-Brown-Whillans era (by far the best part) can only be admired as we are led through the making of the Piggott, Longland & Kirkus climbs with splendid original photographs as a bonus. Much of this is the work of Rodney Wilson who handed it all over to the named authors.

Curiously, little or no mention is made of route lengths and this can occasionally be irritating. The 'finest cliff in Britain' is perhaps the only loose superlative in a text which has refreshingly few.

W.S.

Climbing. By James Lovelock. (1971; Batsford. £1.70).

This handbook tries to be both informal and informative. The wealth of detail is interspersed with a good number of anecdotes, but the quality of the book is patchy.

Among the better chapters are those on the history of mountaineering, climbing on snow and ice, and safety, survival and first aid. Even here, however, reservations have to be made: cf. 'Rock pitons have no place in snow and ice climbing . . .'

Less interesting are the chapters on equipment and rock technique, though a practical approach partly makes up for the lack of inspiration. But 2½ pages devoted to various grading systems are boring in the extreme. The lack of diagrams is an obvious shortcoming: of the many knots described, the only illustration is of the exotic Penberthy Knot. Particularly poor is the chapter on artificial climbing with eleven pages devoted to all the gear of the day, and less than one page to the actual business of climbing. Even there the technique described is one long since outmoded.

† This dialogue is of course a fictitious product of the reviewer's diseased imagination. HON. ED.

Finally, more than a quarter of the book is taken up by appendices, some partly out of date. This looks too much like padding. In short, if you know anything about climbing, this book is unlikely to increase your knowledge, and if you know nothing, the amount of gear one seems to need might just put you off.

W.T.

The following books were also received for review. We regret that we are unable to review all books received: **Summits and Secrets**. By Kurt Diemberger. Translated by Hugh Merrick. (1971; Allen & Unwin. 344 pp., 86 photographs and sketches. £5.50). **Mountaineering in the Alps: an historical survey**. By Claire Elaine Engel. New Edition. (1971; Allen & Unwin. 318 pp., 24 photographs. £5.25). **Give me the Hills**. By Miriam Underhill. (1971; Appalachian Mountain Club. 119 illustrations. \$6.95). **Scottish Climbs Volumes I & II**. By Hamish MacInnes. (1971; Constable. Numerous photographs. £1.75 each).

Journals of Kindred Clubs.—*The Alpine Journal*, 1971—This is the first issue from the new editor, Edward Pyatt, and is very dreary stuff indeed.

Mr Pyatt claims a certain excuse in the postal strike having delayed manuscripts; it is perhaps unfortunate that several of those published had not been delayed also. There are far too many tales of earnest Himalayan endeavour, which although no doubt factual and precise, have no literary merit whatsoever.

The journal is mainly expedition stuff although there are some things Alpine recorded by Ian Howell and John Cleare. McInnes recounts honouring a certain Mr Lenin by climbing a route for him in the Caucasus, and we have Brown and party nervous on El Torro. There is a pedestrian look at the first steps towards Everest, interesting for historians I suppose. The Climbs and Regional Notes section is, however, very interesting and informative: at least Spence, MacEachern and McKeith get some credit here for their new route on the Eiger North Pillar, which is more than our own *Journal* gave them.

For those interested in Submillimetre Wavelength Atmospheric Studies at Jungfraujoch this journal is a must. *American Alpine Journal*, 1971.—This journal is consistently good and is an object lesson on what can be achieved with the correct blend of articles, photographs and expedition notes.

On May 31st 1970, some fifteen million cubic metres of rock and ice avalanched from the West face of Huascaran Norte, killing some seventy thousand people. The article on the Peruvian earthquake is a remarkable piece of documentation obtained from first hand observation by climbers in the disaster area.

Elsewhere there is South Face of Half Dome, Heart Route on El Capitan and the Willis Wall in winter, these should set most tigers' palms sweating. James McCarthy briefly traces the development of ice climbing and equipment which has taken place in the last several years. *Canadian Alpine Journal*, 1971. This is a large glossy magazine packed with information, articles and superb photographs.

Christopher Jones in 'The End of the Mountains' raises many interesting points, some of which could well apply to our own backyard. He asks, 'Should not we, as climbers, take a hard look at where we are going, and where the promoters could push us? What are the implications in ten years, in fifty? Will our children have unknown mountains nearby, or will they all be minutely detailed?'

The photographs by Dick Culbert and Ed Cooper are remarkable. Cooper's study of Mount Robson is especially beautiful. *Ascent*, 1971.—The

ideal mountaineering journal, this seems to get better each year. There is an amusing fable by H. G. Wells, 'Little Mother up the Morderberg,' and a nice little story about Rojo's Peon by Tejada-Flores. Warren Harding reminisces from the Rock of Ages Home for Old Climbers and has a characteristic broadside for those that criticise and pontificate. Mr Harding just goes out and climbs and leaves others to argue over the ethics of the tactics he employs. Australian climbing with its infinite grading system (they are now at grade 21), is described in a lively article in Climbing Down Under. Ward Drummond writes about his St. John's Head climb in an article which can really only be described as gibberish.

The photographs, as usual, are brilliant. The cover shows Doug Tompkins on Hell's Lum Crag in Winter.

R.S.

Fell and Rock Climbing Club Journal, 1970.—This most civilised Journal is a pleasure to read as usual: the articles are short and pithy; Allan Austin's 'An Ice Gully on Grasmoor' is full of his usual cunning irony and, once again his clothing proves defective (this time it is a glove that turns against its master), Ian Roper writes about an interesting new route in the Bregaglia and also about the balance of fear and determination involved in climbing. Eric Arnison gives an account of an ascent of Mount Kenya at the age of 70 and F. Alcock has some hard words for Hut Custodians in 'The Frightful Fifty-second'. The Journal is well-illustrated with many unusual photographs from Ian Roper. *Climbers' Club Journal*, 1969.—A bilious English friend shoved this into my hand with the words, 'This is the poxiest journal they have ever done.' I would not go so far as that, but it certainly is a withered branch compared with the sturdy trees of the late fifties and early sixties, there being no new climbs or notes sections and very little Club information. I fear that journals such as this one and our own must be sources of information about the respective mountain areas and clubs. This is their primary purpose and deprived of it they are hardly viable. It is this eclecticism and cosmopolitanism which makes the national Alpine Journals such dull dishes. Let them dig up their roots (old and new)! However, the articles in this issue are mostly good and the photographs by Wilson and Roper excellent. There is a bonus for Scottish readers in Andrew Maxfield's article 'New Climbs on Arran' which describes his various raids on the Arran crags. *Yorkshire Ramblers' Club Journal*, 1970.—This, at least, is as robust as ever, with few concessions to the International Mountaineer. Articles deal, as usual, with various holes and pots and one by J. H. Hooper describes the 1969 Fellsman Hike (first prize—a silver mounted stone age axe), a splendid indigenous phenomenon. Other articles roam further afield, to the Watkins Mountains in Greenland, the Currie Walls in Edinburgh and Nepal. Long may they ramble. *Cambridge Mountaineering*, 1971.—This has perked up a bit, as has the Club, after a long period in the doldrums. There is the usual flavour of intimacy, common in university journals, not a second name to be found anywhere, obscure private jokes and the like which doesn't really matter unless they expect other people to read (and pay for) their journal. However, there is plenty of variety—they jump about from Greenland to the Ruwenzori—and much of interest to the Scottish reader, particularly 'Some life in the Whispering Wind' by Mike Geddes. Despite its precious title this manic account of a tour of Scotland by Geddes and others has some fine florid prose and well rounded vulgarities. *Journal of The Mountain Club of South Africa*, 1970. This is as lavishly produced as ever—a beautiful journal—however this year they have advertisements at the back so presumably they are feeling the pinch like the rest of us. Another problem they share is the creeping spread of 'development' of their mountains. In an interesting article on the Club's property, Steenboksberg, Denis Woods remarks that 'many summits (are) desecrated by uglifications such as radio and weather stations, with ways to them sprawled and torn across the heights to destroy their last vestiges of romantic mystery.'

Woods also deals with the continuing efforts of the Alien Vegetation Subcommittee, a body dear to this reviewer's heart which has throbbed with pleasure at their outlandish activities over the years. We are delighted to report that the battle continues against the 'cancerous menace' and that the toughest of the aliens, *hakea*, has finally been expunged from Bastianskloof in Steenboksberg.

R.N.C.

Also received: *The New Zealand Alpine Journal*, 1971, *Polar Record*, 1971, *Ladies' Alpine Club Journal*, 1971.



OFFICE BEARERS, 1971-2

Honorary President: ALEXANDER HARRISON, C.B.E.

President: GEORGE S. ROGER.

Vice-Presidents: W. D. BROOKER and R. GALL INGLIS.

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Hon. Treasurer: J. C. DONALDSON, Bank House, Braemar, Aberdeenshire.

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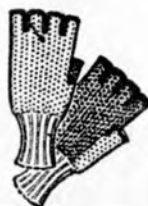
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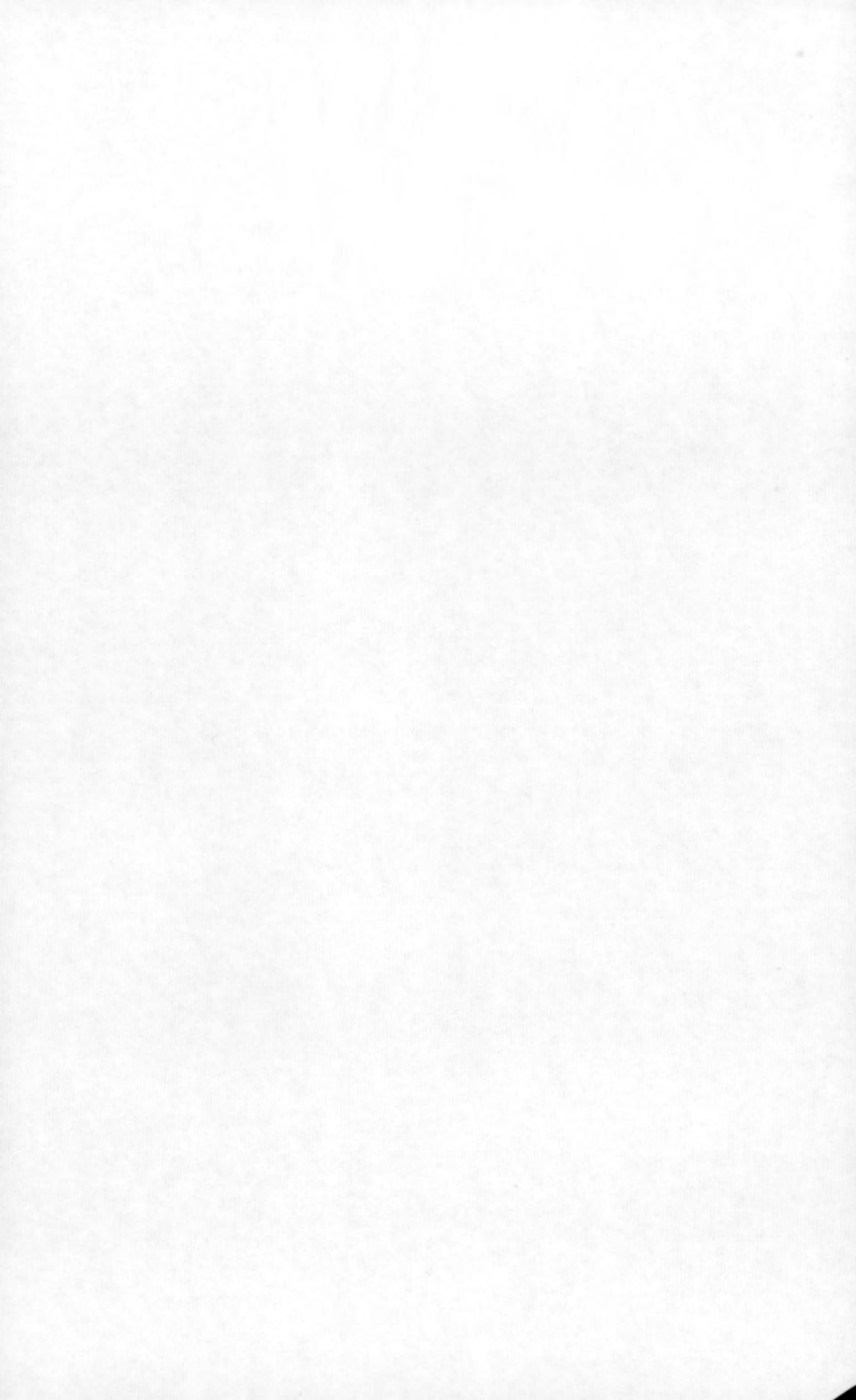
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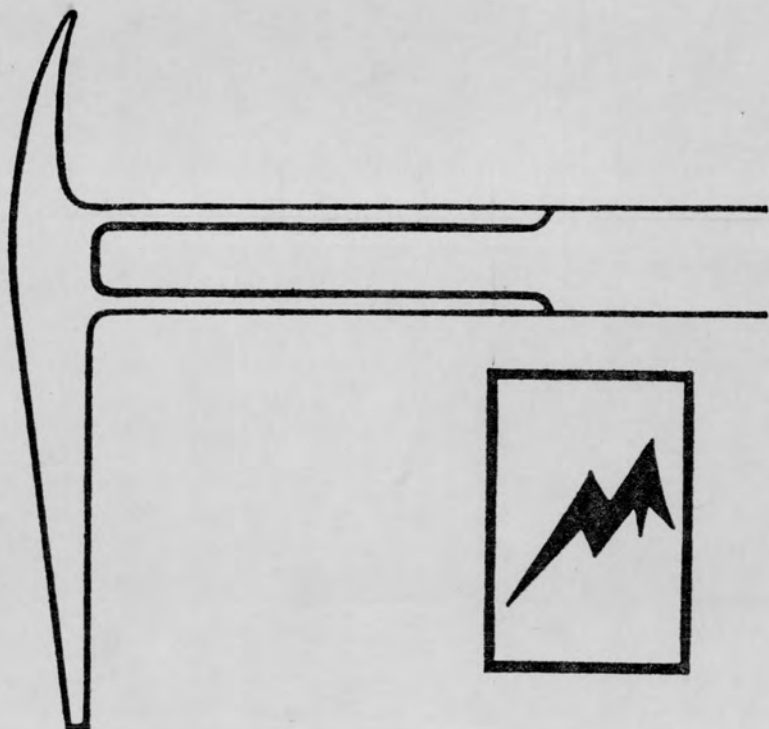
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