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D. J. Bennett

Beinn Achladair from Crannach Wood.

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BEANNTAN GLASCHU

By John Mackenzie

It is not commonly known that for a wet day or a spare evening in Glasgow there are alternatives to visiting the Whangie or staying at home. In fact there are no fewer than six separate areas within three miles of George Square where a climber may 'practice' his art. There are even a few places where, no matter how wet the day, he may climb without a drop reaching his head. Haston secured a permanent niche in climbing history for Edinburgh's Currie Walls by using the generous pages of the Tiso Eastern Outcrops Guide to show others the way; but the much greater scope of the Glasgow Walls remains unknown except to a few initiates.

The Currie Walls have an important advantage, in that the local law takes little notice, whereas in Glasgow sombre clothing and considerable guile are required to escape detection. Like the numerous small boys who peer over parapets with round eyes and open mouths, the police, if not so far professionally interested, are at least curious and a carefully-worded explanation usually gives sufficient satisfaction that we are not breaking the walls down, but are *bona fide* climbers who wish to be left alone; lunatics, perhaps, but essentially harmless.

For those who have never climbed a man-made wall before, the Reason Why should not pose an insuperable problem. It is obvious that it is different—there's not much point in taking your ice-axe along, for example—and that exotic difficulties and objective dangers could be quoted *à la Haston*. But the real reason perhaps lies in the fact that most climbers, when sufficiently caged in, will somehow find a way of climbing out into the allegorical sunlight, constantly reaching for new nooks and crannies to climb, wriggle or squirm out of. More commonly, however, people say it strengthens the fingers.

NOTE—The captions for the photographs went missing while the Hon. Editor was incommunicado in the Alps. Misty improvisations have been ad libbed by the hack left in charge of the final steps in publication. Weather and words have always added interesting obscurity to our hills. The verbal mist may lift by our next issue.

There are traverses and straight-up routes and even diagonal routes leading nowhere in particular; they come in all shapes and sizes, from 60 feet high to 3,000 feet long! Sometimes a rope is needed but in others soloing is normal, often avoiding an embarrassing failure and that committed feeling when pirouetting gently on a rope to enthusiastic curtain-calls from above. So far, there are something over 130 routes of all grades, the grading being that of the Southern British sandstone guides—grades 1-6, each subdivided into a, b, or c in increasing order of difficulty. The continental grades used by Haston in the Currie guide were found to be insufficiently accurate to capture all the obsessive technical nuances which these climbing grounds require.

The walls are a soft red sandstone, weathering into slightly sloping holds with good friction and occasionally into pockets. Jug handles are almost entirely unknown. Some fine cracks exist as well, especially in areas of prominent vertical jointing, as is found in corners.

Ground rules for first visitors are as follows: go dressed in old mouldies and retired P.A.'s, take a rope and a couple of slings for the higher routes and stuff them in a bag, since house-breakers might mistake you for the Genuine Article, beating them to it.

The River Kelvin flows near all the climbing areas, the Kelvin Bridge being in a roughly central position about 10 minutes walk from the other walls. The bridge itself is one of the main straight-up areas and is reached by descending the Gents' Lavatory steps at the west end. If seen by the attendant hopping over the small locked gate in descent, tell him what you are doing. Otherwise, being a man of the world, he gets suspicious, particularly so if there are two of you and he sees you changing your clothing beneath the bridge. In such an occasion, he is liable to voice popular opinion, viz.,

'Gerrabloodyyellootatherryerrbleedenpoofs' etc.

This can be very embarrassing and is apt to bring a crowd quicker than anything.

From the foot of the Lavatory steps the main wall will be on your right, with an obvious overhung alcove at the far end. An interesting if strenuous route, well suited to admirers of the old Tarzan films, hand-traverses out to the halfway mark and, after a sloth-like move, pulls up the wall above. Technically about 5c (though low in the grade) it is known as *Rumble Tumble*—a real back-breaker. A slightly easier route at 5b goes up the right-hand side of the last route, missing out the left traverse, and is rather delicate in its upper reaches. These routes are about 30 feet high. Two superb routes come next, as good as any in the City. The first, called *Buttock* in deference to its shape, lies up the vertical stonework between the last route and the pillar on the right, between

two brick arches. Graded an easy 6a, it is the local test piece. Many a relaxing hour can be spent watching a newcomer trying the 'thumby mantleshelf' and waiting for him to realize that the crux is in fact above it.

Next door is the obvious pillar previously mentioned. The face and both corners have been climbed, but far the best is the left corner. It boasts an evil and pointless-looking pipe halfway up which, in the event of a fall from the crux mantleshelf above, would stand a fair chance of beheading the climber, or worse! The pipe is not used, however, the corner being laybacked. The route is called *Didymograptus*, a fossil, which seems apt and is a good 5a.

The wall to the right has a fixed peg high up on it to assist a lunge for a parapet. This peg proved very troublesome to insert since the hammer-blows had to coincide with passing traffic, at night (of course), and, being an old ex-ice-peg, over four hours of work were needed for the operation. An additional precaution involved covering the head of the peg with a folded handkerchief, to deaden the sound, and a new dimension was added to the meaning of 'tatters.' The route is 6a. The corners and pillar to the right also give climbs and the next good route lies right of the fortified and turreted Lavatory, up a thin corner crack, nearly hidden by a tree. It is a hard 6a.

Walking through the bridge past this, a line of low walls present themselves on either side of the span. These provide many problems of the utmost severity, a particularly tricky one being the recessed corner in the left wall. A muddy path leads immediately past the bridge, above a long wall. This wall is over 200 ft. long and may be reached by descending a green corner adjacent to the bridge and then traversing right above the water, or, more usually, by descending the wall at its far end, where it is low, walking to the water's edge and then traversing rightwards. This saves wet feet. The wall is delicate, not particularly strenuous and has a move of 5c. Many straight-up routes exist also, but most of these require aid to surmount the headwall of steep mud.

The main arches of the bridge were once the scene of a minor epic, when an abortive attempt was made to cross them, using slings for aid on the struts. Unfortunately the struts were a good seven feet apart, so that a cunning combination of lassos and clamps had to be used, assisted by ten-foot bamboo poles to reach and retrieve the weighted lassos, thus forming a series of endless loops, along which slow progress could be made. A tremendous and horrifying pendule started the process off, giving a satisfying sense of commitment, there being only one way to go on, so to speak. Much time was spent trying to lasso struts whilst gyrating in the opposite direction. The light began to fade after a miserable 70 feet or so, lending seriousness to the operation. Eventually, total,

sepulchral, darkness fell when still forty feet above the Stygian river. The trouble was that, apart from the trifling inconvenience of sitting in étriers, the abseil rope was still fully seven feet away, somewhere in the darkness. This appalling situation was eventually resolved by furious circling movements whilst lashing out wildly with the bamboo pole. A further thousand calories or so resulted in a satisfactory abseil position. All was prepared for a controlled descent into the water. Regrettably the peaceful scene was then disrupted by lamenting female voices from the far bank where a good deal of confusion reigned as to what was going on! It was a curious feeling, hanging there in mid-air like a trapped bomber while torches stabbed at the surrounding bridgeworks, never quite finding their target, and the slow descent continued.

The next area of importance is the Belmont Bridge in nearby Belmont Street. The climbs lie on the north side, opposite the church. There are several worthy routes, but the finest, and perhaps the best straight-up route in Glasgow, lies to the right, over a muddy drop. This pointed pillar, *The Needle*, is rather awkward to reach in wet weather, but a stone-hugging traverse to its foot can usually be effected. The pillar is climbed directly up the front until near the overhung top, when an exposed right traverse into a corner leads to the crux mantleself at a hard 5a. The route is a little over 50 feet in height. Belaying is difficult here, with a busy road behind you: it is very hard to remain composed when a hundred feet of rope lie on the pavement. Moreover, drunks have been known to become over-affectionate and to insist on having a go themselves. However, belaying here is still preferable to placing a sling over the top of the pillar and belaying from the bottom—one is never free of the niggling thought that someone will cut the sling at a crucial stage.

A more normal climb can be made nearby on an isolated pinnacle. To find it, walk down the path on the north bank of the river from the bridge. The pinnacle lies about 200 yards upstream. It is the middle pier of a demolished bridge, about 40 feet high. About ten pegs were used in a conventional ascent on the river side at about A2. A fixed bolt on the summit facilitates the abseil onto the landward side. The first ascensionists were apprehended by the Law, who were very good about the whole thing. Naturally they were asked what they thought they were doing. 'Climbing Britain's last unconquered peak,' was their disarming reply. 'You wouldn't have us stand by while the Japs steal it from under our own noses. Our prestige is low enough already.' This last inanity sent the already bug-eyed policemen off in some confusion. Appropriately, the route is known as the Tower of Babel.

The next area of importance lies across the river from the pinnacle. It provides the longest routes of any of the walls as well as having the two hardest. Seen from the opposite bank, six ramp-



Above—By the banks of Kelvin Water. Note the challenging walls and buttresses, much copied by designers of mountains.

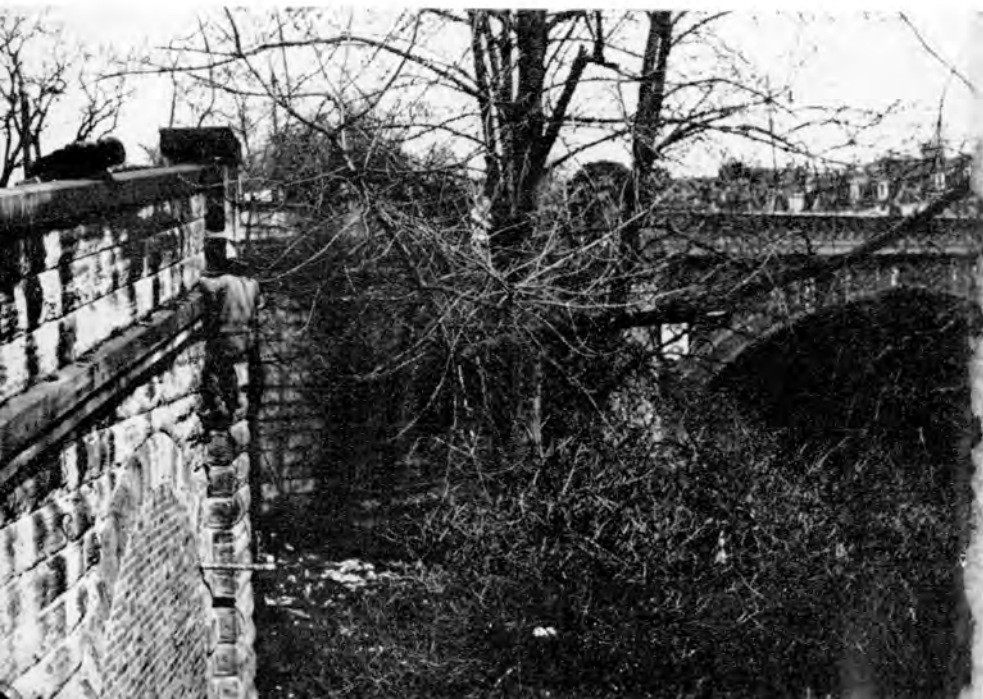
Below—Finniston Walls. These interesting inscriptions which state opposite answers to a fundamental philosophical proposition are useful for locating the start of a classic route.





Above—Glasgow's Kelvin Bridge. An important centre of urban alpine activity.

Below Climber surmounting the crux of *Didymographus* on the great Kelvin Bridge Wall.



like buttresses enclose five vertical corries. To get there, cross the Belmont Bridge again and turn down La Crosse Terrace. Step through the break in the fence on the right and walk through mud and trees to the top of the walls. Thanks to the thick vegetation, camouflage is the best in Glasgow and top-roping can be done in comparative seclusion. However, for the same reason, only the very oldest garments should be worn here.

Starting then at the west end, the first buttress provides a 60 foot ramble at 4b, a good introduction. A better one, the best of the ramps, is the next one along, *Delicatessan*, 5b if you don't touch the sides.

The bounding corners give excellent delicate bridging and two might be singled out for special commendation. The first of these, *The Splitter*, is the left-hand corner of the last buttress facing the river and provides the finest line here. It is climbed directly at 6a, and on the long hard section there are no positive holds—a most unusual route. The other lies on the third ramp's right side, is 5b and has the dubious name, *Dièdre of Doubt*. (There is also a *Dièdre of Double Doubt* on this ramp's left side).

The intervening corries impend slightly, but are fairly well provided with holds and about 40 feet high. The best is undoubtedly *Slitherous*, a 5b lying between ramps two and three. It has some unusual fingery moves midway and finishes by a tiny, loose, tree-let. *Tumbleweed Avenue*, between ramps five and six, is a comfortable 4b, but creeps through a tunnel of over-arching vegetation. Mention might also be made of the corner on ramp four's right side. This is a route of unmitigated ghastliness, rivalling the most atrocious Highland gully and is a useful reminder of the rigours endured by the pioneers on these walls.

The two hardest routes, probably of most use as theoretical pubtalk, were done last year in very dry conditions. They are both 6b. The first and possibly harder route lies up the sixth ramp. This has had concrete poured down it and features a girdling metal bracket at one-third height. It is easy as far as the bracket but progress beyond that was only achieved at the cost of three small holds being chopped with a peg-hammer in the concrete. Above this point the route was continued by grabbing hold of each side of the ramp and waddling up to the finish. Because of the inordinate stretching powers demanded by this route it was called *The Brown-stained Orangutan Chipper*. The other 6b lies up the right bounding corner of the last route. The dirty lower half involves a small tree-let and finishes on a small ledge. The upper part is clean, smooth and practically holdless, providing a series of most unusual bridging moves.

The next area is the last of any consequence, the Finnieston Walls, and must provide the best finger-training in Scotland. The

overall length exceeds 3,000 feet and climbing is continuous for a measured 2945 of them, broken up at intervals by holes, pipes or obscure arrows which mark the starts and finishes of traverses. Strong persons can often join two or more of the traverses together, but to do the whole thing in one go would be an inconceivable Ultimate.

There are several ways of reaching the walls. Probably the safest route is to walk along Argyle Street, down Minerva Street and onto the Pointhouse Road where the wall can be reached by a step over the lowest part of a lower retaining wall. This lower wall, though equally long, is not climbed on because of its proximity to heavy and fast-moving traffic. Another approach follows the Kelvin Way across Argyle Street then down the Haugh Road and up a dirt track leading to the Signal Box. Finally, the railway line is crossed to reach the low end of the top wall.

The first traverse starts at a little concrete pipe-hole and goes right for 115 feet to an embossed arrow bearing the legend 'Tiring.' This traverse is by far the hardest and comes in at 6a. It is called *Bower's Rocket* and may be done in either direction. The next two traverses lead to a huge ventilation hole in the wall and commonly start from there. The first is the wall 'classic' and also the easiest at 4b. It stretches 225 feet to the obvious rone-pipe and provides some awkward little bulges. It is called *The Punter's Dilemma*, probably because the odds on a newcomer reaching the pipe are all on the bookie! It is the best place to watch the disastrous effects of prolonged muscle fatigue. A relaxed pose soon gives way to enormous stretches from a hunched crouch, as the first effects are felt. A classic sequence of events now ensues: firstly, there are the 'shakes'—the leading P.A. executing rapid and barely controllable vertical oscillations; next comes the 'peeling fingers syndrome' as sweating fingers gently slide off large holds; finally, and catastrophically, there are the dreaded 'judders' in which the whole body resonates in sympathy with the 'shakes', leading inevitably to separation.

The next traverse leads leftwards from the pipe to the embossed arrow previously mentioned. It has few bulges but much thinner holds and good footwork is at a premium. It rates 5b/c and is called *The Peeling Fingers Traverse*. It is 165 feet long. Returning to the large ventilation hole, a rather loose traverse of 230 feet leads rightwards to the start of a blackish wall. This, the *Progression Wall*, is the second easiest traverse at 5a.

The *Black Wall Traverse* is extremely difficult, second only to *Bower's Rocket*, and is 180 feet long at 6a, normally done right to left. The last traverse is the longest and is also done right to left. Walk to the wall's far end by a bridge and start at the bridge's left side. The first hundred or so feet passes from metal bracket to metal bracket, with no great difficulty. However, the route then

turns sharply left and passes under some wooden beams with great difficulty, where a foul layer of soot masks many holds. Next the traverse goes high on the wall, level with some recessed hollows, until almost at the black wall, when it descends before finally rising to join up with the *Black Wall Traverse*. This last section provides the crux at 5c. The route is 1,030 feet long.

There are some interesting straight up routes around the bridge. The *Kama-kazi Traverse* is one such which finishes with a traverse right over the bridge in an exposed position. A smooth corner right of the deformed arête on the bridge's right pier, *The British Standards' Unequal Corner*, is 5b. The large ventilation hole gives a peg route of 35 feet across its roof at A3 (*A Wet Day's Struggle*). However, a good straight up route lies near the halfway point on the *Peeling Fingers Traverse*. It is designated by a splendid engraving entitled 'Ye Cannae Wack It!' but alongside is a historically interesting reply, presumably inscribed before education became compulsory, showing man's eternal answer to the impossible—'I Ye Kan'! The route is a pleasant 4c. Of other routes further to the left, one in particular is a 6a, situated halfway along *Bower's Rocket*, where there is a small hole in the wall.

There is one last area, somewhat exotic, which nevertheless deserves a mention. This is St. Mungo's Cemetery—the famous Necropolis—where climbs up to 50 feet may be had on a terrible basalt called Teschenite. However, the objective dangers are so high (rotten rock, poisoning and possible apparitions, spiritual and temporal) that the risks are not worth it. Getting in after 'closing time' is the only solution and involves a difficult and very public climb over the railings.

These then are the climbing grounds of Glasgow so far discovered. No doubt others will be found— but the walls, particularly those of Finnieston will continue to provide the main challenge.

[Since receiving this MS. two important and unfortunate changes have occurred, which we feel should be mentioned. The Lavatory Attendant, by all accounts a pleasant man, was clubbed to death on New Year's Day and the Lavatory is now closed. Also Glasgow's last unconquered peak—the *Tower of Babel*—has been demolished—Hon. Ed.].

RANNOCH

Rannoch in June, Loch Tulla blue
Beside white sand; the rusted heather
Rubbing in the sun.

Rannoch of Scotland, where the pine
Jags from the bog, the fist shuts sharp
On memory, and where the hawk

Dips down beyond Loch Erich.

G.J.F.D.

CLUB POLITIC

By Dennis Gray

'SOME of us regard the B.M.C. with the deepest suspicion as the thin end of a very unpleasant English wedge!'

S.M.C. editor (Honorary) writing to
B.M.C. National Officer (Pecuniary).

This is to be a discursive essay built around some of the present day elements of Scottish climbing, and some Scottish climbers past and present. Its author is well aware of his limitations in the field, but will offer as his credentials for such an act of adumbration, a misspent prime in Scotland's ale houses in the company of a few with a specialised knowledge of these matters, and the honour once conferred by my late Lord Patey of the Isles of being The Yorkshire Scot!

It has afforded me high amusement over the last few years or so, to see the S.M.C. aggressively parading itself as a 'with it,' revolutionary body, when actually along with other clubs like the Alpine Club, it is in the U.K. climbing context a part of an establishment! Just as the Alpine Club 'took in' the Alpine Climbing Group, so Scotland's premier club has swallowed successive generations of youth which it needed to keep up its position of authority; the Luibeg clansmen, the Currie Boys, The Squirrels, etc., etc. It seems only one group has spurned the embrace of Imperialism, The Creagh Dhu, and who knows? Cunningham may yet wear the Presidential crash hat. It's a well known fact in left-wing climbing circles that the mountaineering aristocracy of Britain has only maintained its position so long because it has always been wise enough to enrol into membership any climber(s) who threatened its own place in the league table.

Let's look at this business that no new guide information will ever be published again to the Northern Highlands. On first hearing of this proposal, aimed I guessed at the goddess of conservation, I exclaimed 'Fabulous!', but on thinking it over carefully I came to the conclusion it's a pie in the sky! The numbers who climb today are but a few compared to the numbers who are yet to come. No mountain area of Scotland has yet (with the exception of the skiers on Cairngorm) seen numbers who climb there on such a scale as one can see in Llanberis or Borrowdale—but it will come, it will come! Guide books, especially to new areas, and new cliffs help to spread climbers thinner over the ground. If all were curtailed to only the climbs known about in say 1930, then even in Scotland despite its other empty spaces, at all main holidays the queues

would be unbearable. Fortunately we have new finds every year and the publication of this information takes climbers to other districts, other parts of a mountain. Concentrate climbers more and more by withholding guide information and you will have the greater evils of erosion, pollution, etc., and it will mean writing off certain cliffs to over population! It's a sad fact, only a few mountaineers are pioneers, a small elite of the total climbing population, the majority unfortunately follow where the guidebooks lead. If the S.M.C. tried to put through such a ban, and even if all other climbing agencies agreed to help, they might still have to contend with traitors in their midst, and the worshippers of Mammon. I know of one climber, of some eminence and Scottish, who categorically states that should an attempt be made to apply such a move, he will personally undertake the task of compiling further guides of new climbs, and he has a commercial backer! In this day and age the latter are not difficult to find lurking deep in their plush mountaineering armchairs! The S.M.C. in Scotland, like the Climbers' Club in North Wales and the Fell and Rock in the Lake District, has established itself as the authoritative guidebook source for the mountains and climbs north of the border. One of the guidebook sources mentioned have tried a similar scheme, the slowing down of the publication of new climb information, albeit on a smaller scale, but other climbers seized the opportunity to provide the service, on a lucrative commercial basis, and the established club was forced to act and publish! Better to have an authoritative, uniform guidebook, than a pirate hotch-potch, however sad a comment it may be on our human frailties and problems!

This does not mean I am implying that Scottish climbers are less altruistic or in any way different from other British mountaineers, they only think they are(!), though climbing in Scotland has a character and quality very different from that in England and Wales. The biggest carry-out I ever saw was in Aberdeen, under the generalship of the late Jolly Boy himself, Jim McArtney. The occasion was after an Etchachan dinner, at which he was paradoxically my guest having being dismissed the service in the best Scottish tradition for sleeping where he should not, in company he should not have kept, but he was still the King! It was £5 each in the kitty at two in the morning, resulting in three van-loads of drink (to the brim), and the ensuing Ceilidh still echoed as we left the Granite City the following night. At that time Edinburgh had its 'wild' S.M.C. parties in the High Street, all juvenile, hard climbing talk, genuine big deeds with the beer consumed by midnight, the Squirrels' hey day(?), whilst Glasgow could boast its offhand, sawdust-on-the-floor bar in West Nile Street where the Dhus were supreme and you paid for your own beer. But if you wanted to experience the genuine malt it had to be with the Aberdonian

revellers. Times have changed since Naismith's day, who would never climb on Sunday in deference to his Maker and who never touched a drop himself!

I would say that Scottish rock climbing is of a quality and standard comparable to that found anywhere else in Britain, only the weather is inferior and it is not concentrated like it is in North Wales or even in Derbyshire's Peak District. There is no high standard free limestone, nor gritstone and sandstone outcropping which are as unique in their own way as Scottish winter climbing! Here the Scots have at its best something which in a U.K. context is the utmost, for he who wants to achieve something climbs a hard rock route in summer, but he who wishes to experience something climbs the same route in winter conditions; for a time a uniquely Scottish notion! and that's where it's still at, hard and tough! Though I do believe the big swing to sea cliff activity in England and Wales will have yet further repercussions in the north, particularly in the Isles for it is there that many of the greatest challenges in this medium exist, the deeds already enacted on such cliffs as Hoy are just the overture of what is yet to come!

The groundswell interest amongst English climbers in Scottish winter activity is now gathering momentum. Let it here be noted: there are more climbers living in the Manchester conurbation than there are in the whole of Scotland, and to this add the fact that most U.K. activists live north of Nottingham. The new motorways open up for the first time as a real practicability the possibility of regular weekends for such mountaineers in Glencoe, the Cairngorms and Ben Nevis. Because of this there is now need for further accommodation in the Allt a' Mhuillin besides the C.I.C. hut. I have tacitly proposed to the B.M.C. executive (and I believe the S.M.C. sympathises with the idea) that plans now be laid for a new National hut, similar to the Glen Brittle Memorial hut on Skye, working with the Mountaineering Council of Scotland and in conjunction with the Scottish Mountaineering Trust. (Not to be confused with Scottish Motor Traction!) It is perhaps also worth noting here that any such climbers' hut, having wider than local significance as a facility, and open for use by all member clubs of the Council, would automatically qualify for grant aid from the new Sports Councils. It would have to be of necessity I think one of the new Alpine types, prefabricated and helicoptered into position on a prepared platform, a shining aluminium abortion, diminishing still further memories of the old C.I.C. (as it was before modernisation!) There I was called 'a wee Sassenach bastard!' by grand old S.M.C.'ers Ritchie and Hendry, met Marshall in his prime, was threatened with eviction by Norman Tennent and through it all nursed the pot-bellied stove. ('Oh where are the snows of yesteryear?') But of my defence for such outrageous proposals let it be remembered it was a Yorkshireman, Ernest Maylard, who con-

ceived the idea of the original C.I.C. hut; he obtained the permission, drew up the plans, and Inglis Clark provided the money as a memorial to those S.M.C. members who were killed in the Great War (including his own son).

It's an interesting business and one worthy of an independent study, the history of Scottish climbing clubs! Why did not the Cobbler Club of Glasgow, founded in 1866, the first ever such club with the purpose of encouraging climbing solely in Great Britain become paramount in Scotland instead of defunct? How did the S.M.C. become the leader of Scottish climbing? Obviously the answer lies somewhere in the men they attracted, but the S.M.C. had a national appeal, and through its sections each striving for dominance, Perth, Edinburgh, Glasgow, etc., this provided a real climbing impetus, but also a club of interest with plenty of political infighting, rivalry and local affinities besides the wider national issues. When I lived in Scotland it was in Glasgow, in the Slesserian camp that the cabinet were to be found, the king-makers of the Clyde, but this dominance has now shifted to a point a little to the north, or so court circulars report! I'm all for such parochialism, on a friendly basis; my own neck of the climbing woods, West Yorkshire, makes the Scottish scene look like one big close-knit family, but personally speaking I abhor chauvinism, Scottish or English!

Some of this worthy parochialism is now bound to be swept overboard by the incoming tides, the masses now coming to climbing in steadily increasing numbers. In so far as training schemes help to cater for newcomers, the Scots have always been well to the fore in serious efforts to aid beginners in our sport. The J.M.C.S. was founded as we all know as such an attempt—to help prepare mainly young climbers for the awful rigours of full membership of the S.M.C. I think it no accident that the author of the official handbook of the Mountain Leadership Training scheme is a Scot, a member of the S.M.C. The scale of this one training body is breathtaking, over 11,000 persons involved in England and Wales, and 1,500 in Scotland. The B.M.C. has now taken over responsibility for administration of the English/Welsh Board, and obviously it makes sense for the Mountaineering Council of Scotland to do the same in the north. It is essential that all such training schemes are in the last analysis in the hands of mountaineers, not desk-bound, non-climbers, however well-intentioned. What does concern me at this moment is that nowhere in the syllabuses of any of these schemes have I found mention of our rich traditions, appreciation of any aesthetic values, or of the wealth of literature (easily the greatest of any sport!), or of the witty and irreverent verse and song that is truly an integral part of this country's mountain scene . . . our very own heritage! These must be preserved and passed on somehow as well as the know-how and technical skills of performance. The

newcomers must be absorbed by the main stream, our traditional basis, the Clubs, for it is in those bodies that traditions are passed on, contact made by the old with the young, and a link of past with present kept aflame. If we do not make this attempt to pass on what we consider worth preserving and close our doors to the flood of newcomers, then they will eventually outnumber the traditional mainstream and replace it, bringing in an entirely new set of values, ethics and approaches, and our sport might then become a sport like any other sport, with climbing competition circuses *à la Russe*, drug-using to improve our performance like Olympic weightlifters, and adherence to strict training programmes like athletes. Those responsible for mountain training programmes are thus charged with a heavy responsibility for the future well-being of this country's climbing. Some of such persons that I have met in the last few months have filled me with awe and admiration, but they were a minority—the majority seemed blissfully unaware of anything but the correct way of tying on!

More and more climbers will mean more and more calls upon the mountain rescue services. It is a source of amusement to me that those responsible for publicising Scottish mountain accident statistics never fail to point out, relentlessly, that '47% of accidents north of the border, involve folk from the South!' This in a manner which often seems to imply a complete incompetence on the part of '*Der Engländer*' on the Northern Bens. To me in my naivety, since more climbers live in Manchester than in Scotland, and since many clubs considered small local clubs in, say, London, have a greater membership than the S.M.C., then it is not a very clear example of Gaelic superiority on their native midden. Do not think I am biased; with one parent pure Gaelic and one pure Dalesman, I would not mind a bit if it were so! Another astonishing fact to me is the way it is also inferred by some authorities, that given good equipment, the right experienced leadership, the correct training, hey presto! . . . no more accidents! This is rubbish! I am sure we all dread a life needlessly wasted, but I have lost in my twenty-five years of climbing, more than that many friends killed '*im der wand*'! Amongst them were Scots, or men who climbed in Scotland: Patey, Clough, McArtney, Smith, etc. . . . they were absolute aces! It is the nature of our human existence that things do go wrong from time to time, the unexpected, the miscalculation, even what our insurance men refer to as 'acts of God'! We should make plain to any tyros or parent to whom we have any kind of responsibility the true nature of our sport; to do otherwise is morally wrong! To digress with the mention of Robin Smith (not Jeremy), I do remember the time he accused me of talking a load of bullshit! At that time I was Hon. Secretary of the A.C.G. and I replied to him, writing on a long length of toilet roll, headed 'narrow paper-width for writing to a narrow-minded Scotsman!' But he out-

smarted me by immediately joining the A.C.G. in retaliation, a most worthy fellow!

Increased calls on mountain rescue facilities will eventually lead, sooner or later, to a professional organisation being required. This may sound heresy now, but we may yet see full-time co-ordinators, team leaders or even training instructors. Sooner or later voluntary effort will be swamped, though I must acknowledge that Scottish mountain rescue is in my judgment as good at the present time as any. However, if it lost a few of its key personnel it might experience grave difficulty in functioning as efficiently. Scotland has yet to experience the real pressure of numbers in its mountain lands with the exception of Cairngorm but their time will come! More leisure for all, whether forced or calculated is inevitable and affluence of whatever kind, with its urgent need for human beings to preserve a balance in living will bring eventually to the wilderness areas, the Golden Hordes. Some sports are on the decline, but mountain activities, whether we like it or not, will not look back in popularity this century. There are approximately 50,000 climbers in Britain persons who take the sport seriously—but perhaps something like 200,000 dabblers, to say nothing of the ski-ing fraternity and the hillwalkers. Mountain activities as a whole are now one of the major sports, and others not unrelated in their requirements such as orienteering, canoeing and fishing are looking to hill country for the land or river they need. Mountains will probably have more importance in years to come for national finance (through tourism and sporting activities), and certainly more on our physical and mental health than any of the now-popular mass sports like football, cricket and rugby.

The pressure for access to the hill regions will cause immense problems which only wise, and careful management can successfully solve. In Scotland, despite the attempt in 1884 by James Bryce to get an 'Access to Mountains Bill—Scotland' through parliament (which failed), most of the land is still privately owned, and thus climbers and hillwalkers could be forbidden access. Land-owners have not bothered too much in the past because it has only been marginal numbers that have been involved, but once it becomes a flood, any owner of private land may feel himself bound to act. Then the S.M.C. like other bodies may have to revise its own time-honoured formula, laid down by its first president, Professor Ramsay, 'We have no desire to see the club mixed up in any attempt to force rights of way. Such can be sought by friendly negotiation.' But will it work in the days to come? Times are changing fast and the Scots had better learn from the mistakes and the apparent victories of the 1930's and 1940's in England and Wales. Scotland has no National Parks, and her mountain areas cry out for such protection, but the enlightened ones working towards such conservation had better heed the rape of the Lake District and the

attacks on Snowdonia, otherwise they will end up with the same unsatisfactory situation!

Conservation is the name of the game these days, but it leads one to wonder at what point mountaineering will be declared harmful in this context, forever placing it beyond the pale for the character-builders. Gardening new climbs rips off rare plants and mosses, frightens away birds forever and destroys their habitat, etc. Does putting a steel piton into a climb and leaving it there harm anything or anyone? Sooner or later the battle lines will be drawn and we need to look a little deeper at ourselves and our activities, otherwise we could all be on the wrong side at Armageddon!

The future holds great promise for Scottish mountaineering, but the problems associated with climbing become more difficult and complex each year! Climbing needs a little organisation, and a lot of freedom, but unfortunately it does now need more organisation than hitherto! I think our fuddy-duddy club system in British mountaineering has everything to commend it. I would never favour a truly National Mountaineering Club, like the C.A.F. or the D.A.V. But our clubs do need a vehicle for speaking corporately to government, to official (officious!) bodies, landowners, educationists, body-builders, mind-blowers, etc., to say nothing of international representation over areas of concern and relationships. Geoffrey Winthrop Young, the poet and grand old man of South Audley Street, knew what he was about when he paved the way for Mountaineering Councils. In Scotland, with its great difference of terrain, and its citizens' earnest need always to express their own identity, then it makes sense to the writer to have a Mountaineering Council for Scotland. The B.M.C. is pledged to help that body in any way it can, though if it wishes to go it alone, I for one would say 'Good Luck!' but it makes even greater sense for the B.M.C. and the M.C. of S. to work closely together in the form of a unified association. A common fate will, I am sure, force this latter into being sooner or later.

Finally let us retreat back, first to J. D. Forbes, an Alpine Club founder member, in 1848 cutting the first steps in native climbing history, into Scottish snow and ice on the Ben, of course. And then we move on to Norman Collie, the Manchester man that Scottish mountaineers look on as their own, making the first ascent of the Cioch in 1906, think on Raeburn's many gullies Raeburn, the first of Edinburgh's royal line of super tigers, wonder at the Abrahams on Crowberry Ridge with Puttrell and Baker, admire Hargreaves (Albert) and Macphee making the first ascent of the Rubicon Wall on Ben Nevis, or on that same mountain Whillans and Bob Downes attacking Centurian, Smith on the Bat! On the hill there are no divisions, and we in the British Isles share a common mountaineering heritage. For myself I am not really

influenced by which part of the country a climber comes from, I am more interested in his attitudes to mountains and climbing. For I do believe mountaineering is first and foremost about attitudes. Unless the approach is right, what matters the technique and the skill? For without such an approach, nothing of any lasting value, neither physical or aesthetic is achieved.

[Pangs of remorse after rejecting one of Mr Gray's poems led us to invite him to unburden himself in prose, letting down as much hair as he wished. This he has surely done! Mr Gray would like it known that these are his own views, and not necessarily those of the B.M.C. We would also like it known that we have stayed our Editorial Hand in a number of places where we would normally have reached for the Blue Pencil . . . The notion that Archie Hendry should have addressed a foreigner in such terms we find quite unswallowable, for example. We trust that any other infelicities in Mr Gray's essay will be equally obvious to the reader—HON. ED.].

OLD MAN'S MOUNTAIN

So many steps to reach the top !
 (Sweat salt on the lips)
 So few before I need to stop !
 (Hands resting on hips).

 So steep the slope and rough the ground !
 (Sweat salt on the lips)
 So fine the view that turns me round !
 (Hands resting on hips).

 So menacing the crags that block !
 (Sweat salt on the lips)
 So smooth and vertical the rock !
 (Hands searching for grips).

 So grand to reach the final crest !
 (Sweat cold on the brow)
 So well-deserved the food and rest !
 (Hands gauntleted now).

 So very steep the downward route !
 (Sweat damp on the neck)
 So stubbed the toes inside the boot !
 (Hands ready to check).

 So stiff the legs on level path !
 (Hands shaken all round)
 So comforting the steaming bath !
 (Sweat slimmed off a pound).

D.J.F.

THE CROSSING OF IGHIL M'GOUN

By Donald Mill

We had planned to leave the car at the roadhead, Ait Mehammed, where we would hire mules for a relaxed two-days-in, one-day-for-the-summit, two-days-out, trip, with all the luxurious living which goes with mule travel. In fact we arrived at Ait Mehammed before we expected to, by a fine modern road, unmarked on our (1946) map, which led seductively onwards in the right direction beyond the town. Two bends later it reverted to track, rough, rocky, but, at a pinch, Beetleworthy, so we pressed on, and on, climbing gradually through a bleak landscape for many miles to a great windswept watershed where the track changed dramatically to mud and a long contouring decline into a distant valley. Strategically perched on the pass was an old Foreign Legion fort, in front of which two signposts, relics of the more peaceful years of the French occupation, announced AIT BOU GUEMEZ 26 KM and TEMDA—TELEPHONE—REFUGE. Ait Bou Guemez is the name of the valley which leads to M'Goun.

A figure approached from the ruins of the fort. Persistent questioning (a feature of the Atlas is the number of people you meet whose French is even worse than your own) established that the road to Bou Guemez was under snow and passable only for jeeps. Our suggestion of telephoning for mules brought a pitying smile and a shrug towards the few remaining poles, devoid of any signs of wire.

We eventually settled down beside the fort for the night, having reached a somewhat vaguely understood agreement with a passing group of muleteers that they would collect us at nine the next day. We were up early sorting gear into mule loads. Nine came and went. By eleven we realised that the muleteers must have thought better of their hard Scottish bargain. The weather was showing every sign of approaching storm. World travellers Brown and Lawson, with nine months holiday behind them and another six months to follow, accepted with equanimity the prospect of a few days' rest. Roberts and I had only five days left of our four-week holiday, and in any case it would take more than the loss of a few mules to keep Roberts away from his ultimate North African four-thousander. (I had already been eliminated from the four-thousand-metre stakes by my boycott of the ignoble Iferouane—4001m—Africa's answer to Càrn a' Bhutha). In a few minutes a new plan was drawn up: Roberts and I would cross the range travelling light while Hamish would drive round to meet us at Skoura, the nearest point of metalled road on the south side of the range, in four days time. This would leave us half a day to get to Marrakech and catch the train for Tangiers. Half an hour later, anxious to get out before the storm made the track impassable, the Brownwagen beetled off



in a shower of stones leaving Roberts fussing as usual over his pile of gear and me wondering vaguely how, if we failed to get across, we would manage to find the van, our passports, money and return tickets, this side of Kinghorn.

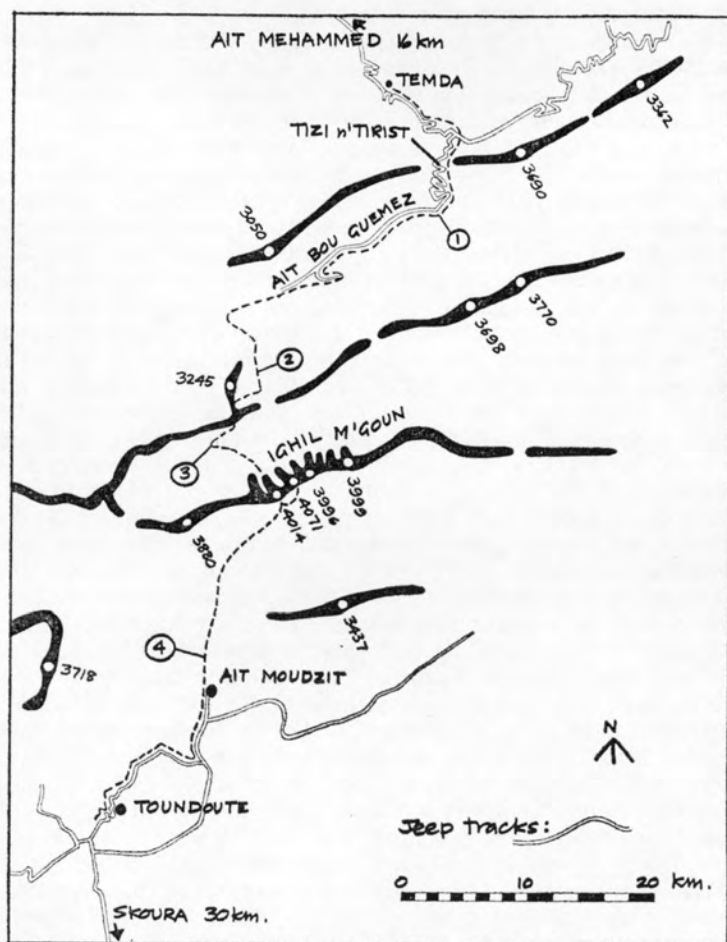
By noon we were off, down into the valley and the long drag over the 2800m Tizi n'Trist in a blizzard of sleet and down again into the broad valley of Ait Bou Guemez as darkness fell. We spent a restless night in our saturated Salewa tunnel: every half-hour one of us would wake to push a mass of wet snow off the sagging, dripping, roof. The snow did not slacken till we were slogging up the valley again next morning. Frequent clusters of towering dwellings seemed strangely prosperous after the tiny slope-hugging hovels of the High Atlas. Quite a number of men were travelling in the same direction on foot and on mules and we thankfully accepted lifts on two mules. After an hour's jogging we descended just as thankfully into the centre of a crowd of hooded faces. It was the local market. Since the high mountains were hidden in cloud and almost none of the many villages we had passed was marked on the map, and since no one spoke anything but Berber dialect, we were flummoxed for some minutes until we became aware that the crowd was deferentially making way for someone of authority. He introduced himself, in mediocre but fluent French, as the local guide, and, apologising for not wearing his Alpine breeches (he was dressed in *jelabar* like everyone else), he placed himself at our disposal. We quickly came to an arrangement with him to put us on the right path for M'Goun. He set off across several miles of fields at a loping pace which left us, carrying packs, rather breathless until, by making him carry a selection of the heaviest objects in our loads, we managed to reduce him from a canter to a civilised walk. Though in his enthusiasm he was anxious to press on with us until dark, the thought of having to share our already minimal food, coupled with mental exhaustion after four hours of coping single-handed with his very bad, high-speed, non-stop French (Eric having opted out from the conversation at an early stage), I persuaded him that his place was with his wife and family as soon as were clearly in the right side-valley.

We spent our second night inside a sort of loft in the second last sheiling. We pitched the tent inside to protect us from the leaky roof. Damp sleeping bags and sodden nylon tent combined to give us a night of extreme humidity and we were glad to get up at the first sign of light. It was a happy contrast to the previous day. A crisp frost, a strong wind whipping up the frozen powder snow, and a rosy dawn light on the surrounding peaks, visible for the first time. To reach M'Goun we had still to cross an intervening range at about 3200m. A long slog up a steepening corrie took us onto a spur leading up leftwards onto the main ridge. On the spur we put on every stitch of clothing we had with us as protection from the full

(Opposite)

Above—Ighil M'Goun in the heart of whitest Africa.

Below—Foreign Legion Fort and Ighil M'Goun mirroring Kilchurn Castle and Ben Cruachan.



force of a biting north wind. About a thousand feet of deep snow into which we sank as far as the thighs separated us from the ridge, and we could see that it was going to be touch and go whether we would get there before the mist, now closing in fast. I found the going exhausting and had to rest every few steps but Eric, gathering up new energy from somewhere, surged ahead and tracked all the way to the ridge, reaching it two minutes before the mist. We found ourselves looking down onto a snowy plateau about half a mile wide. On its far side a row of white spurs with great corries between them disappeared upwards into the clouds. The chain was several miles long and there was no way of telling where the highest top lay. We went down and camped on the plateau, excavating a level platform in the lee of a large boulder. Whiteout and blizzard conditions lasted till nightfall, while we lay in our bags wondering how long the storm could last. A 4000m range and 50km of unknown country separated us from our rendezvous with Hamish in two days' time. If the weather did not let up we could either sit tight or retreat to the north. If we sat tight we would go hungry. Either way we would miss Hamish and our flight home.

Something woke us about midnight. Through thin shifting veils of mist a full moon showed every detail of the M'Goun range. I grabbed the compass and took a bearing on what seemed the highest summit. An age to melt snow for a brew and another to thaw our four boots one by one over the stove and it was nearly two o'clock before we were on the move. The wind had dropped but the cold was intense. Mist came and went, keeping us in doubt about the weather prospects but, each time it cleared, that white summit shone in the moonlight and we headed straight for it up easy snow slopes, gradually steepening and deepening as we left the plateau behind us. For two hours we made good progress then the moon suddenly set, and for the next hour we floundered in the dark until gradually the sky began to lighten towards the east. By this time we had penetrated to the upper part of our chosen corrie. Eric then took the bit between his teeth and tracked non-stop up the final thousand feet of steep snow into sunlight on the skyline ridge, which turned out to be just the crest of a spur leading eventually to the first summit.

The wind on the main ridge was full gale force and extremely cold. I can remember two occasions in my life, both in Scotland, when I have encountered wind of similar force, but never combined with such cold. It penetrated cagoule, wool and leather gloves, wool breeches, long johns, double duvet, two pullovers and wool shirt and left me shivering with each gust. There was that slice of skin between goggles and mouth which is always difficult to protect from spindrift, but I was more concerned about my feet. Persistent toe-wriggling at each step since leaving the campsite could not prevent a steady loss of sensation.

From the first summit we looked south over a complexity of green valleys and foothills dying away into the reddish haze of the desert beyond. To the east was a higher summit a mile away, and behind that another. A struggle to make progress along the ridge, particularly at each col, where the wind was funnelled up each great corrie and only a few staggering steps could be made between gusts which hunched us braced tripodlike on embedded axes. From the second summit, a third could be seen just ever so slightly higher, another mile further. This must be *the* summit, we felt, and it was, at ten o'clock—after eight hours of continuous movement from the bivouac. Weather still clear, all we had to do was head south and if we hit the right valley system and could keep going it was only a matter of time.

I had a generous helping of frostbite tablets before we started battling back over the two miles of ridge. A careful check on choice of valley (luckily the map had one of its rare moments of verisimilitude) and we dived into the shelter of the south face in a swooping glissade. An hour later we were flat on our backs on a grassy bank by a stream, drinking hot soup with our damp gear spread out in the sun. The tablets and the dramatic improvement in the climate had done their work and my toes were tingling merrily already. The first sign of human life, as usual in the Atlas, was a goatherd, then a narrow path, and before long the first sheiling. For the rest of the day we pounded onwards down a system of spectacular gorges, contouring five hundred feet above the river one minute, then plunging down a jarring series of hairpins to the river bed, normally almost dry but at present a white torrent of meltwater often difficult to cross on foot (all the long-distance travellers we met were on muleback). In other places the river flowed between sheer rock walls which offered exposed and sometimes quite technical traverses as alternatives to thigh-deep wading.

We passed by villages of steadily increasing size, meeting many people, none of whom spoke French beyond 'Bonjour, monsieur.' Due no doubt to our pronunciation, none of the names on the map evoked a flicker of recognition. By pressing on as fast as possible we had hoped to reach the jeep-track-head by nightfall. Night fell, and we pressed on by marvellous moonlight till at last tiredness struck, and we realised we had been going hard for twenty hours with an hour's lunchbreak. Assembling the fibreglass frames for the tent (a fiddly job at the best of times) took enormous efforts of concentration but eventually we were in our bags and seconds later the sun on the tent woke us. Ten yards away a Berber on horseback watched motionless (how long had he been there and what were his thoughts on finding this strange red module in his path?) Reassured by signs of life he approached. Communication was more successful this time. 'Ait Moudzit' drew an encouraging response. We quickly finished off our food and moved on.

Signs of civilisation became more frequent—tall impressive casbahs, some rudimentary decoration on their mud walls—till suddenly the silence was shattered by the chonk-chonk of a diesel engine starting up on the far side of the valley—a stationary engine, probably a pump or generator, but welcome nevertheless. And at the next village we found ourselves on a definite jeep track. A confluence of rivers verified our position: Ait Moudzit. It was even marked on the Michelin map of the whole of Morocco. To Skoura, the nearest metalled road, it was now a mere 45km. At worst, we could walk there by dark. At best (and faint traces of tyre treads beneath layers of mule and sandal prints on the dusty track encouraged our hopes) we might get a lift.

We got one, almost immediately, but on a mule whose owner caught up with us and offered to take us to Toundoute, about 15km on our way. That the mule was to carry both us and our packs took some time to sink in. Any qualms of feeling for the beast were suppressed without difficulty. Our packs were slung pannier-fashion on the creature's neck, I leapt nimbly onto its back, and Eric leapt nimbly up behind. When we picked ourselves out of the dust Eric was nursing a bleeding elbow and I was massaging a strained thigh muscle. A second attempt was more successful, and a couple of hours later we were entertaining the youth of Toundoute as we hobbled about trying to recover the use of our limbs.

Walking rather stiffly through the village we met a young man wearing the first pair of trousers we had seen for days. In abominable French he asked us if we were the friends of two 'English' in a blue VW who had been enquiring after us the previous day and had returned to Skoura in the evening. There were one or two trucks in the village, one of which might be returning to Skoura later. Meanwhile, perhaps we would care for something to eat, in his father's house? Father was a wealthy merchant, owner of the local salt mine, and after the inevitable introductory mint tea there appeared an enormous stew accompanied by fresh-baked loaves half a metre in diameter. We were pleased to discover that the tradition of hospitality was still alive. The quantity of food defeated even Eric and after an appropriate digestive period we decided that in case a lift did not materialise we had better make a start.

Thanking our host profusely we set off rather heavily. Suffering now from the effects of the mule-ride, the food, and the heat, we weren't feeling at all like slogging the final twenty-five dusty, horizontal, kilometres, when, round the first bend, there was a most pleasant sight to behold: picnicking in the shade of a blue caravan beside a cool stream were Hamish and Alistair. At a respectful distance a small knoll was completely covered with an audience of Arab boys, intently, silently, watching their every move.

YOSEMITE APPRAISED

By Rab Carrington

No more are the days when 'Men were men and 5.8 was nailed.' A new generation of climbers has arisen from the ashes of the old! Times and traditions have altered radically. No more is Camp 4 the elitist gathering point for men with eyes only for the 'Big Routes': now it resembles Les Praz, Chamonix, with its polyglot inhabitants, all with different ideas of why they are there. Camp 4 is a patchwork of multi-coloured vinyl shelters tucked discreetly away behind the filling station and the ever-humming transformer. Morning will find the climbers, wearing the ubiquitous baggy painters' trousers, in the coffee shop 'scarfing' free coffee from the Currie Co., planning what routes to do or not to do that day. The weather is always good, so there's no rush.

The climbing is the main thing that has changed in the Valley. All interest is now focussed on the abundant short routes clinging to the skirts of the mighty walls overlooking the Merced River. The routes are very short, generally no more than two pitches, and involve finishing with an abseil from some more or less arbitrary height, usually from the first ledge attained. The type of climbing is quite different from anything found in Scotland; unfortunately, 'there's nae grips' and upward progress is made by wriggling, squirming, slithering one's body up ill-fitting cracks. The nearest I've seen to this elsewhere is on gritstone, e.g. Forked Lightning Crack. Each width of crack . . . I'd better explain about these cracks before I go on. What a climb is here is a parallel-sided crack with no holds in the interior and only smooth steepness on the exterior. Each width of crack has its own technique: up to 1 in. one can finger-lock and toe-jam, an awkward and generally painful process; from 1½ to 2½ in. hand-jams are employed and a much more comfortable foot-jam; about 3 in. fist jams can be achieved in the crack but from 4 in. up to the point where the body can be introduced into the crack is the problem width for all but the initiated. The technique, invented by some anonymous masochist, is called 'off-width.' To do it one adopts a frog-like position and introduces the right arm into the crack as if trying to reach some non-existent hold in its murky depths. The right leg is now boldly placed as far into the crack as is humanly possible. Now with amazing confidence and a degree of levitation (for me this was generally provided by the rope above) the left leg is raised and takes up its position toe-forward at the front of the crack with the heel locked against the back of the crack. Some degree of foot tilt must be employed to accommodate to the differing crack widths. The last move is to place the final limb, i.e. the left arm, wherever

it may aid upward progress, usually just in front of the nose grasping the edge of the crack. Now that the starting position has been achieved the only additional knowledge we lack is how to go up. This is done with a pumping action usually propelled by the heel-toe mechanism of the left leg while the other three limbs attempt to assume a locking position. The left leg is then raised and cycle repeated, usually about 20 or so times before a resting-place appears.

The climber is girded at the foot of the climb with a perfect selection of nuts. His selection of nuts is perfect because he has already been told precisely what is required to protect the climb. The Valley Climbers have an amazing memory for that sort of thing.

The leader has already applied his tincture of benzoid to his hands—it toughens the skin and prevents the pain from being felt. The leader now dips his hands in his little puff bag of french chalk and he's off, leaving behind him little patches of chalk, odd bloodstains and occasional chunks of E.B.

Let me now be sure that you're not still wallowing in the misconception that the U.S. climber, whenever the going gets rough, whops in a peg every three moves—he doesn't. That procedure was used in the transition period while they were feeling their way from aid climbing into free climbing. Now a great renaissance is under way to do away completely with protection pegs except for the odd fixed pin, and nuts are now being used more frequently than in Scotland. New routes are now being put up with the leader carrying neither hammer nor pegs. Also a book recording 'all-nut' ascents of routes can be found in the Valley climbing shop

For those not over-inspired by cracks there is always the Apron, where climbing is very reminiscent of the Etive Slabs except that a lot of the climbing tends to be on small flakes rather than the slab and padding style. One of the disappointments of the Apron must be the bolts—thank goodness there aren't any on the Slabs—this means there are few exposed lead-outs such as may be found in certain parts of the Slabs.

The climbing's over now, so what next? Generally, the first port of call is Degnon's to 'hang-out,' i.e. extol the virtues or otherwise of the climb just completed over a quart of milk—chocolate flavoured—and glazed or buttermilk doughnuts. Then it's back to Camp 4 for a final work-out on the many boulders before dinner. Bouldering needs a group of four or more before rivalry gives it spice and egos can be sufficiently boosted when the others fail on *your* problem. Luckily darkness comes early and food has to be eaten and strung up out of the reach of bears before dark, which marks the start of the second dose of 'hanging-out' of the day. This time it takes place in the Lodge, the scene of our early morning

get-together, where now the odd beer is drunk and many Abba Zabbas consumed (Note: Abba Zabba—confectionery consisting of peanut butter covered with a white nougat-like toffee—price 5¢).

I've made a point of generalising and as you know there's always one exception to any rule—well, in the Valley there are several. There is still the odd 'Big Wall' Freak myopically wandering round and murmuring to himself about rurs, mashies, trashies, dowels, etc. There is one in particular still to be found in Camp 4 and he likes to spend more time on walls than in camp—he was in the Valley five months and that means an awful lot of 'Big Walls.' The only time you notice him is when he's not there and out tackling some awful wall of impending doom. Still . . . it takes all types.

The old-timers come back to Camp 4 on occasion and sadly shake their heads at the Olympians working out on the boulders or the rings, walking the slack chain or just doing a spot of Yoga. The effort required to get back into the new scene is too much and suddenly they find they've developed into big range climbers and shuffle off muttering about how glad they are not to be caught up in the turmoil of the Valley, how glad they are not to have had any form of rivalry, how glad not to have prostituted the sport with working-out and chalk, how glad to have found true happiness among the new ranges.

THEME AND VARIATIONS

Give me my scallop shell of quiet: let me go
Over the bent ground and high over the fells,
And further to the west, among the granite wells,
To hear the very streams of Iorsa where they flow:

Or over to Kintyre and Knapdale, and to know
The burning heather again, and all the former spells,
The golden plover's tune, and what the curlew tells;
And, rounding ancient hills, the white bird of the snow.

A highway and a way, they are not hard to win;
The fond wayfaring man, he shall not err therein;
They take you through the woods, above the fallow lea:

For past the red bracken, you find a rocky stair,
And so come out at last on the world open there,
Ridges white to the north, and islands in the sea.

W. P. KER.

L. C. & P.

By Hamish M. Brown

'A SUPERB snow mountain, one of the most beautiful in the Alps and Himalayan in character. Foremost is the traverse of its two summits—apart from two small rock outcrops this ridge is snow and one of the finest expeditions in the Alps. This traverse can be continued to Castor and Pollux.'

Words like these in the guide were enough to decide on Lyskamm, Castor and Pollux rather than the Dent d'Hérens for the last climb of the summer.

Jim was in his first season, Alex had eyes only for the Matterhorn and I was affluent enough to consider one critical fling with a guide. 'L. C. & P.' would be a good chance to see a guide in action. Ludwig Imboden was a young guide from St. Nicklaus still interested in adding good things to his *Führerbuch* and not just ferrying dollars up the Hörnli. He spoke enough English to talk and argue on a range of topics—so seemed fine. We would meet at the Monte Rosa Hut, my S.A.C. Section approximately.

Alex went off for his magic mountain and its yo-yo ridge, so Jim perforce came with me. Anyway he had managed several summits over 4000 metres during his first ten days in the Alps, being a depressingly fit teenager.

I never sleep well in huts and was glad when Ludwig quietly shook us in the 'wee sma' 'oors.' We crept down to a dark, silent room and lit a little candle. Empty, polished, wooden tables, shadowy corners which one could fill with the ghosts of a century of climbing. We made coffee with tepid water from a flask. The automatic agony of eating and fighting into boots and gaiters. Familiar lethargy.

At two o'clock the door creaks open onto the balcony—to an etched world roofed with stars; a tingling, dark abyss. A breathless embrace.

Slabs, slabs, stabbed with torch beams, picking out the flares of ice or a sleeping flower; slabs, slabs, rough to the tread of vibrams, ringing to the knock of ice-axes, trickling tiny water runnels. A dream just to follow—vaguely remembering the teasing of a previous route up the jumble of the Plattje for Monte Rosa. This time we wend right to end on the snow at the edge of the Grenzgletscher, where we rope—once Ludwig gets the rope unfinkled.

The glacier was perhaps best done in the dark. There were several places where its complexities and difficulties had Ludwig crying, 'Tread like on eggs, Brown' ('Hamish' was beyond him).

'Like a ballet dancer, Jeem.'

We assured him we were!

There was in fact a track but its line had no doubt been affected by movements. The inky silence was often broken by belly rumbles and deep, half-sensed crashes. A foot goes through a crazy bridge. Long seconds before the collapsed snow tinkles below. An organ array of icicles plays down the crags off our port bow. Ludwig navigates steadily on. Torch batteries die and are replaced, the duds vanish into the nearest crevasse. Always it is uphill too. A fast pace despite the long day ahead. But steady. Rhythmic. The world held within the radius of a cheap torch's beam.

Dawn inched a greyness out of the darkness. Out of the star-board haze towered the great flank of Lyskamm: three thousand feet of séracs and ice drapes, rock ribs and plastered new snow. It was like waking in an imagined Antarctic with ice cliffs looming out of the long night. Its high summit sweep was our traverse!

We recalled an early Victorian fiasco when a dog fell to one of those clinging snowbosses to bark through the days and nights and then to bark no more . . . Strange dawn thoughts and fancies.

We were onto the penultimate flat at about 4000 metres before torches could be stowed away. A pale sun gilded our hidden corrie but there was little to see beyond our icy hollow. Suddenly we were very conscious of being very small. No blanket of the dark to hide under!

We headed for the sunlit crest ahead: an array of snowy pyramids and knobles, swung round the flank of one, snow slipping away from our feet with a hiss, to reach the Lisjoch and breakfast. None too soon for me; my sweaty feet had frozen and my hands were numb. In fact I felt ghastly, why I don't really know, but over breakfast I recovered. We had gone four and a half hours non-stop so enjoyed what proved to be one of the few real breaks all day. Italy was coldly clear, the snowy slopes tilting over into deep, dark, valleys; ridges ranging up to split the sun into white searching beams. Down there at six o'clock valley dwellers still slept. Out of the Gnifetti-Hut-depths ant-like lines of climbers began appearing. White lines were traced over and round the Paps.

'The Monte Rosa mobs,' Ludwig laughed.

It was W. P. Ker, that poet of the peaks, who called the Nordend 'the Taynuilt Peak of Monte Rosa.' A less gifted comparison had me linking Lyskamm with winter Sgùrr nan Ceathreamhnan in Glen Affric, for it has the same bold flank, the same high traversing crest. Lyskamm has epic tales of double cornices; my smaller Scottish mountain is the only place where I've had to retreat from that hazard. So 'Kerranan' it was!

There was a by-pass route running under the south side of Lyskamm and tracks seemed to descend to each Italian valley.

Swiss maps, however, showed as little over the border as possible. Logically, it would be more sensible to drop down into Italy after L. C. & P. but I'm sure no Swiss would dream of that. They'd rather walk round the Breithorn! It always leaves Italy as the land beyond the beyond, though.

The ridge rose in a series of crests, steep enough for crampon front-points to be useful, then more corniced, waving upwards, huge precipices on both sides, a few rocky bits to scrape over or edge round, and suddenly there: a snow curl above a memorial cross.

Ludwig was pleased at the fast time, not yet eight o'clock; I was just pleased to feel all right again; Jim was in obvious glory, perched as few summits allow, with a view as fine as any in the Alps. Alex's Matterhorn looked remote and small—a stabbing thought that our day was to end at its foot!

Our mentor allowed us no rest; enthusiasm anyway took us off along the exhilarating ridge to the West Summit. My log book written sleepily at the end of the day called it 'a magnificent, airy crest—walking on air and sun it felt.' Perhaps I could have added 'wind' for the gusts at times demanded care to ensure happy adhesion. The high cirrus was perhaps a warning too, for later; but the Italian side was not the usual hotch-potch of cloud.

Leslie Stephen, E. N. Buxton with J. Anderegg and F. Biner were the first to do the traverse in 1864. The highest summit had been first ascended three years before by a gang of Alpine Club and famous guides: a roll call of fourteen names in fact.

The two-hour traverse was done in forty-five minutes, so we were given hand shakes. It was probably the most serious part of the day.

Jim, the Alpine novice, being in the middle I had the fun of going ahead for the descent: some rock scrambling, icy patches and snow flogging across the flat of the Felixjoch (4063m), round a small cone to the start of the ridge up Castor.

The toil up Castor's easy S.E. ridge I would like to forget. It needed a deal of effort to cry '*bon giorno*' to endless gay Italians; but it made us adamant in demanding a break on top. We preferred to eat and drink a little often; Ludwig preferred to fast all day and make up for it later.

While perched on our sacks there, a voluble English trio arrived along the North Ridge. They were full of monosyllables: 'Wow! Did you ever? What a ridge! Fantastic!' It sounded quite interesting till we realised it was our way off. It had its comic aspect for when we suddenly spoke, in English, they were all confusion for having poured forth like Italians!

No matter, it was quite a ridge. Certainly about the narrowest I've been on. When I stuck my ice axe in—the point actually

pierced right through and out the other side. We stuttered along till it was possible to bale off left, steeply, icily down towards the Zwillingssjoch, 3845m; below the magic 4000 mark. The col was reached across breakable crust, the worst surface of the day. I'd found a fourth wind or so but Jim was feeling the effects by now.

Having been on snow all day, Ludwig led to rocks for a change, making Pollux rock-climbing both up and down. We were inclined to call it something else. Typical Alpine scramble, loose yet safe enough. Jim found it 'a pech.' He declared Ludwig a worse slave-driver than myself. The top was very icy and Ludwig's steps and belaying (or lack of it) were not comforting. The summit was a real windy hill, quite Scottish and homely, but Ludwig, after a sweeping 'Look at the panorama!' drove off again. We went down with the snow torn from the flanks driving past like broken glass.

Castor to Pollux took just under two hours and was reached just under ten hours from the Monte Rosa haven. We went south west to rocks where a modernistic Madonna clasped some plastic flowers, too aware that with the peaks past, half our actual mileage lay ahead. However to be five hours ahead of book time satisfied all.

A vile fixed wire led into a gully and onto a long rambling ridge. Ludwig was apt to bawl 'Relax!' at Jim which was hardly the way to help. We followed a blood trail down. On the edge of the snow we demanded a pause and refreshment.

The wind was our friend now for it kept us cool for the long snow traverse 'round the Breithorn.' This I think would often be a real purgatory. Clouds too were slowly building up. There would be an evening storm. It proved weary walking: bearable downhill or on the level but heart-bursting upwards. The rocks with the smart tin bivvy box across the first snowslope gave a bit of fun but mainly it was straight marching with crevasses clear.

I had coils but Jim was on a very short rope, often *too* short really for belaying across doubtful bridges or choked-up crevasses. Guides, I'm sure, tend to rely too much on strength, where safety measures are called for.

The pace up to the Breithorn pass was a bit too fast. Jim was not *enjoying* it which after all was what we were there for. When across the plateau Ludwig bombed down the steeper slope so wildly as to leave us gasping—we blasted him.

He argued that speed was vital; but as our safety did not require it, and our pleasure was being spoilt by it, this was not true. He was read a lesson on sensitivity to clients' feelings and placed at the back. Our pace down the Plateau Rosa was steady and fast still, but pleasantly so. We walked non-stop and left the snow at the Trokkener at 3 p.m.: thirteen hours to the minute from the Monte Rosa Hut. As much a pleasure *then*, as anything, was the fact that Ludwig was patently weary too! A few minutes later at the cafe he

certainly tucked into the rum and lemon drinks with salami pieces lathered in mustard. He took obvious glee in reporting the day: all three of us looking as casual as possible. Nothing to it really. Oof!

We had an interesting swopping of notes too. The day was gone over quite critically. We had all learnt quite a bit. Our discomfort at the racing pace after Pollux Ludwig simply had not experienced enough to recognise. He was afraid we would get tired and drag slower and slower where, in fact, our own relaxed but machine-like pace had the effect of freeing us mentally so we could appreciate more. (Like the Matterhorn before us and then the returning view of the start of the reel: Monte Rosa seen round the other side of the Breithorn).

Without Ludwig what differences? Certainly a much longer time up the Grensgletscher at the start. That was fine leading. On glacier terrain, however professional we are on our own hills, we will never reach that sort of natural standard.

Elsewhere we would have coped as well but with a deal more time-consuming care. Off Castor, to the top of Pollux, and over certain dubious bridges we would have belayed better.

We found my brother and his wife had arrived at the tents. Alex was back happily with the Matterhorn climbed. It was obviously a night for a *Coup Maison* at the Seilerhaus. Next day Alex and Jim were heading home.

ALL THE WAY

By Russell Sharp

Two prominent landmarks for climbers in the North are George Shields, the Aviemore cobbler, and the Mainreachan Buttress of Fuar Tholl, the Achnashellach Cobbler.

George Shields is a sort of middle-aged hippy so his Hero is Frank Sinatra, one or other of whose songs is always passing tonelessly through George's pursed lips. The other thing to know about George is that he is a Phenomenon—he ticks off as many new climbing 'partners' as new routes (which he never bothers to record) and he ticks off plenty of these. Other Local Phenomena, like Cunningham for example, give him a wide berth—they like to choose their own Hard Times.

The Mainreachan Buttress is a big, 700 foot, grey monster that crouches over a tiny lochan on the backside of Fuar Tholl. Like other Big Grey Monsters, it's not often seen. Even walking up

towards it doesn't help, until, five minutes away, you reach a certain little hump and—BANG! it hits you like a kick in the gut.

It was with Pete Macdonald that I first peered through the mists at it. His plan was to climb a dirty chimney line, way left of all the obvious good rock and steep bits. This misty prospect dissolved before a sharp mental picture of cartwheeling chockstones, creaking flakes and P.A.-pointing on vertical mud with the occasional turf overhang. There seemed little point in wriggling up such an assault course in these conditions, or, indeed, in any conditions, so I voiced my opinion and we left.

However, this mental picture stuck in my mind until winter came and transformed it. Dave Smith seemed keen to pay the Mainrechan a visit, so we left a Stag Party in Glencoe (this turned out to be the usual refined Kingshouse soiree of stimulated conversation, punctuated by thudding darts, breaking glass and cursing barmen) and headed, achingly, north to Achnashellach. Coming over the hump it was nice to see Dave sag at the knees as he Spotted the Monster. However, there was no frost, so no route. We sat around in the sun, taking in the sights, before heaving up the slush to the summit. I took the Monster's photograph, for proof.

By this time I was firmly lodged in the North and, inevitably, had fallen into the clutches of whistling Mr Shields, casting around for grist for the new year's mill. So, a few weekends later, George and I were sat on barstools, huddled in a corner of the Cluny Lounge (the Aviemore Centre's idea of a traditional Highland Pub). The solid wall of juke-box noise made conversation difficult, but the odd snatch came over. I mulled over my pint while George added his tuppenceworth of Sinatra (*Fools Rush In*) and thumbed his way through my Mainrechan photographs. One in particular showed a big vertical wall. His old gnarled fingers started to trace lines here and there, provoking mental pictures of a different sort. I gobbled nervously at my beer. 'How's about a trip there, son?' he asked, not in any fatherly way. Bravely spluttering out my affirmative, I noticed his tune change to *My Way*. Was this significant?

Fortunately, for the next few weekends he had a problem with a sore foot and couldn't get his P.A.'s on. This was fine. It meant I could get in a bit of practice and try to settle my nerves. When Dave Saddler said he fancied seeing the Mainrechan and that he would drive, it sounded like an offer that I shouldn't refuse. It was a bright cold April day and, as we plodded up the path, we found we were even enjoying the walk. We climbed a line on the front of the buttress, most of which was an ancient exploit of Godfather Marshall's. The climbing was very enjoyable, with the best pitch about halfway up. This went up the side, then balanced along the top of a huge flake. It finished steeply in a very exposed

groove with an awkward exit at the top. Scratches on the rock puzzled us for a while, until we realised that these and the piles of fag ends and matches on the ledges were the effluvia of a winter party, not a hobnailers' revival. The last 100 feet or so was a bit loose, but 700 feet of climbing and nice big fat belay ledges with good places to sit, made it a good way of passing a cold Sunday.

A few weekends later George and I arrived at Achnashellach. Only now it was about midday due to a bit of trouble with the car. We went away up and over some nice slabs to stand below the South-east cliff of Fuar Tholl. Here was any number of new lines. So he chose one and I chose another then we ended up doing one which was neither his nor mine. This was very nice and not very hard and went up some awkward ribs and corners with a final exit over a big loose roof. We carried on over the top and round a wee ridge into a leg-shattering run back down to the valley with ferocious thirsts and time enough to appease them. Our lodgings were in the independent hostel which is very pleasant and has no rules. It is owned by a specimen called Gerry whom George christened 'Ben Gunn.' He has a pile of good records and a big fire, a good way of laughing and he smokes his fags like joints. We sank into a vast sofa as 'Ben' rushed off to stew up some tea. Some steak and improbable Vivaldi later we rode down to Lochcarron to deal with our thirsts.

Early next morning, to the strains of Beethoven and *Deep Purple*, we breakfasted on the patio. It was very warm and this cleared our minds and sent us off hot-foot up the path, full of enthusiasm, raving about the colours and the trees and the rocks like real nature-lovers. This is a common but harmless pretence which serves to stave off morbid worrying about the Hard Times Ahead. All this went by the board when we reached the crucial Hump. Even Sinatra stopped demanding to be *Flown to the Moon* while George paid homage to the Monster with a bout of appreciative swearing. Eventually he came out of his trance and set off, muttering about his 'wee fingers itching,' stumbling and running over the scree with his neck bent back horizontal, trying to take it all in.

The Mainrechan's left side is a terrible mess of grassy meadows, tottering walls and Pete Macdonald's greasy chimneys. Its right side is surely one of the most impressive walls in Scotland. Nowhere looks too obvious to go, and climbing here is a cunning exercise in route-finding on steep technically difficult rock. Where the two walls meet up is the Nose. This is not so steep as the right, and better rock than the left. Godfather's route goes up hereabouts as does a meandering line from the Old Fox which carefully avoids the odd steep bits. There were three or four routes on the right wall and it seemed somewhat annoying to us that these had all been done by Englishmen. George decreed that our route should be short,

because the Hero was making a rare appearance on television that night, so we couldn't be late. That and his itchy fingers brought us below the short right-hand end of the face. Hereabouts an English route, Investigator, wanders about not very convincingly, so we planned a more direct line, crossing Investigator on the way.

The rock was very steep, complicated by plenty of little roofs. Away at the top was a big beak of rock, so we thought if we start below that and keep it in our sights we won't get lost. We shuffled away, along and up a little black greasy shelf which took us to a stance. The beak was now about 300 feet away. Here, very conveniently, a line went up in a couple of jumps of bulging corner and overhanging groove. The climbing was great, on excellent rock, very steep, with the odd bit of loose stuff falling free all the way to our rucksacks. We came out with musclebound fingers into a little recess with the bottom of the beak about 20 feet above. George went up then across right to sidle between two roofs and onto a hold below the beak, which now stuck out above his head for several horizontal feet.

He then made a very strange manoeuvre leftwards, across, then up the front of a big bulge, to end up still in place (to my great surprise), and now perched right above my head on a big flake. Through the whistles and the chortles I gathered that his perch was somewhat loose and that I'd better hide. I wasn't laughing and informed him of a certain looseness starting to develop down at my stance. He clattered off, out of view, whistling *Come Fly With Me* while I stood and contemplated his strange series of moves. The only Sinatra song that came to my mind was *Let's Call The Whole Thing Off*, but I didn't dare whistle it. On my way up I had a couple of preliminary peeks at the bulge, and was informed by the Voice of a little incut away up and out of sight, but available if enough groping was made. In the teeth-clenched manner, I reached away across for a little edge, then the trouser-splitting bit, and with a grunt sank into a lay back position. I shuffled up a few miserable feet, then made the great lunge and hit the little incut first time. A heave up and over and out of the steepness and there was a tiny ledge to mantleshelf onto. The only way to go was via George's loose flake and I gave it an affectionate pat, but it would not budge. So there it lurks, ready to give someone the best trundle they'll ever have. Up a steep slabby wall and onto the belay and a place to sit and have a smoke and a 'what a great route' session. We decided to finish up the last 50 feet of Investigator which now came in from the left and across our belay, and looked like the only bit worth doing. There is a sensational move round a bulge on the front of the beak on what George calls 'great huds.' It's just the place to hang, and look through your legs several hundred feet to the scree. The climb ended suddenly right on the plateau which is a good way to finish.

We had a bit of time to spare so we lay in the sun for a while so that George could serenade the Bens (*Under My Skin, On a Clear Day*, etc.) but we lay too long and in the end had to run all the way back down for the mad drive to Aviemore and the Man Himself.

The next weekend it was the Ella Fitzgerald Songbook, but that's another story!

HADRIAN'S WALL

By K. V. Crocket

'The secret is to hang on and bore the Fates into Submission.
I, Claudius, Robert Graves.

WE found a kind of ironic pleasure in following our yesterday steps up Observatory Gully. The steps ended however, on the second pitch of Point Five, where the rate of upward movement was at first equalled by, then overtaken by the downward movement of sugary steps.

Today was Sunday, one of these rare days so fine you wanted to capture it whole and lock it away in a giant deep-freeze, to bring it out every so often like a precious stone. We were chasing what we hoped would be the runner-up's prize, a route with the inspiring title of West Face, Lower Route, but more often called Hadrian's Wall. Reference to Marshall indicated that it was a good Grade 4, including a tension traverse, while Clough's Bendy guide spelled such chilling phrases as 'sustained difficulties of the highest order'—'unrepeated'—'Grade 5'—etc'. etc. Rumour had it that on the first ascent two of the pioneers were annoyed at the first for using that peg, but knowing the calibre of that team the thought of 'tidying up' the route didn't even occur to us. The usual drawing of lots at the foot gave me the first round and inside ten minutes the sweat was pouring, not because of difficulties, but because I was conscious of the interested gaze of two A-teams, busily engaged on Observatory Buttress. It was like being back at school, in the front row of course, but despite this I coolly carried out my usual ice technique; twenty large holds followed by a bucket, repeat four times then belay. This method I have evolved after years of traumatic study, and I find that it gives me great security, as well as allowing me to contemplate the view, keep my inner calm (not to mention my breakfast) and generally procrastinate. Eventually I reached a small snow bay and belaying on

a peg and one of these clattering hunks of aluminium, brought Colin up. (Why aren't Deadmen made in Fort William?)

Behind the snow bay the route steepened again, with two possible lines of attack. Colin attempted the righthand line, a steep groove trending slightly rightwards directly behind the belay. This groove had but a modest covering however, and Colin was a bit bashful, so after a few feet he came down and traversed left to look at the other line. This was another steep groove, going left at first then curving upwards. He spent even less time on this and returned with bearded mutterings to his original line. He soon cheered up on realising he could drop snow and ice directly onto me.

Cold inaction tempted me to try and hurry him up, but I could sense it was a difficult pitch and like a good second I made encouraging noises and marked time as quietly as possible. The occasional scrape and grunt from above was punctuated by the frequent bang and clatter on my helmet, as shards of snow and ice whined past. It was with relief, on my part at least, that he eventually heaved himself onto a small stance.*

The third pitch looked thin, with poorly covered slabs which had to be overcome, but adrenalin was trickling now and we were rarin' to go. Colin wanted me to traverse left, but I put my faith on a narrow tongue of snow-ice which had been caught by surprise and clamped frozen to the slab. On both sides of this tongue decaying molars of dark rock leered through thin snow, while at the top of the slab gaped a hungry chimney, but it led out rightwards onto a snowfield and I wanted to be swallowed.

I started up the tongue and soon realised that but for the slabby angle the steps would have collapsed. Once more I thanked my lightness (future generations of ice-men will have long necks, calves of steel and weigh in at Bantamweight). Progress up the slab was delicate and with relief I entered the chimney, only to find it full of useless, fluffy snow. Sheathing my old axe I swam and bridged my way up, and finding a thin crack near the top I remembered Finagle's Second Law and quickly whipped in a peg runner.† Another stroke or two and I splashed out onto the snowfield, gasping like a beached whale. Recovering I looked back and recognised the pointed flake in J. R. Marshall's excellent photograph.‡

*Later we decided that the pioneers had taken the left-hand groove on pitch two, whereas we had climbed pitches two and three more directly, avoiding the need for the tension traverse.

†Finagle's Second Law: If anything can go wrong it will go wrong. By definition, the First Law has long been lost.

‡See *One Man's Mountains* by Tom Patey. The top of the hungry chimney and thin slabs are well shown.

Now the rope was only half-used and I'm Scots, so I continued to traverse along the snowfield, which like the previous slope was unsure of itself. Half-way along I ditched a Dead-boy runner as a possible but unwanted experiment—in any case I was finding it as about convenient to carry as a sticky sweetie paper. Finally I reached the foot of the steep wall and played the usual game of Hunt the Crack, before finding a poor specimen at knee-height. The Dead-man was dropped in a hole and jumped up and down on and at last the quiet one was brought up.

The next pitch was a continuation of the traverse, at the far end of which could be seen the fine little ice-chimney referred to in the description. Colin scuttled across, a St. Andrews cross, so as not to place any steps close to each other, and after a passable imitation of a four-legged spider reached the chimney and belayed. He took all of fifteen minutes belaying, and when Colin does this you know there's something funny about the next pitch. There was. Every few seconds he would curl himself up as a silken ribbon of spindrift rushed invisibly down the chimney to explode with an angry hiss at the bottom. The entire upper basin and much of the ridge above was funnelling loose snow down through the narrows of the ice-chimney in a continuous rush. The spindrift was bad, despite it being a windless day, but we were well committed, with most of the difficulties passed and there was no need for discussion.

Every so often the flow would moderate slightly, allowing the steep left wall of the ice-chimney to shine through. Seizing one of these moments I boldly stepped up to the back of the chimney, just in time to be covered by a fresh torrent of icy misery. Most will know the feeling only too well. Through reflex action I had lowered my head, to be rewarded with a two-inch high collar of snow. I spluttered and shook my head and managed to fumble up a few moves before it got dark again.

On better days the pitch would have been immensely enjoyable; the chimney being initially climbed at the back, until a stretch of back and footing allowed the left wall to be gained, but I was so miserable, clinging on precariously in a continuous stream of snow that I could have quite happily let go and jumped down, had not the best possible thing happened—my temper snapped. I was literally climbing most of it with my eyes shut and my head down, relying on touch to check holds that were filled in immediately they were made. At the top I had to move onto the left wall and here the spindrift was worst. I hastily chopped a few handholds, forcing myself to cut them well, and when the next lull came stepped out onto the wall. A sudden rush of snow nearly swept me off but I hung on, cursing feebly and rotating slowly on one good foothold. Colin asked me how it was going and I spat out an obscenity. I couldn't risk cutting intermediate footholds, so making a few blind moves I kicked my points in and hastily pulled up out of the main

stream. Once out I calmed down and became a reasoning being again. I was surprised how little snow appeared to move down the slope towards the chimney, the surface barely rippled. I reached a rocky outcrop a hundred feet further on and thumped in a good peg belay.

Now fate had obviously decreed that since I crashed up the chimney without paying the tolls, Colin would have to stump up. Half-way up, squirming about under the deluge like a grubby urchin who hated washing, his peg carrier fouled in the chimney and neatly opened. Two expensive American pegs and an ice-dagger promptly escaped and tinkled a merry laugh down the corner, executing a graceful skidding turn on the snowfield below before plunging out of sight into the deep blue. Unfortunately, as Colin opened his mouth to comment the deluge intensified. A few more tugs on the rope and he emerged from the snow shower, shaking himself like a wet dog before joining me at the belay.

The next four pitches have blurred into one by now, as they were exactly alike. These led up the upper snowfield easily, with stretched ropes and Deadman belays to the foot of the final steepening. Here there were clearly a choice of finishes; more easily on the left onto the ridge, or more directly up a corner to the plateau. We decided on the more aesthetic finish in the corner, as being more in keeping with the rest of the route.

The corner was very attractive, with sculptured flutings of snow and ice coldly blue in depth. However the day was growing murky and the cliffs were beginning to radiate that awful stillness of twilight, so that a sense of urgency came over us and we forced tired limbs on. Now the quiet one doesn't like bald pitches, so he placed a Deadman runner at fifty feet, then changed his mind and brought me up to belay at it, before continuing on. He belayed for the last time below a steep corner which was patently the tailend sting.

I was quite tired now and the corner was steep. It was tempting to go out onto the ridge, but daylight was fading and besides this was THE finish. I entered the corner and wearily began chopping. A few moves up and I leaned against the right wall for a rest. The sunset was burning and the top of the Orion face was a fantastic tapestry of purples, pinks and reds. I was running out of strength and enthusiasm now, after fourteen hundred feet of climbing, and I played for time.

'Look at the colours, Colin,' I stalled.

'Never mind the ——— colours, just get up,' he shouted back. He was right, I was just hanging about. I forced myself on and cutting a few more holds finally drove in the axe vertically and pulled myself onto the flat. Going back about twenty feet, I laid the Deadman to rest and brought Colin to heel. By the time he

reached me I had eaten two bars of chocolate and was stuffing down a third.

As we reached the summit the first stars were out and the surrounding hills glinted steel-blue. It had been the best climb of our year on the best day of the winter.

HIVERNAL

By Allen Fyffe

THE hut door clattered in the pre-dawn still as Rowe and I, laden, stepped out into the twenty below. Down and across the Argentière towards the cardboard cut-out Courtes. Snow-shoe shuffle through the powder, wade into the glacier bay, up the couloir and on to the ridge (the wrong ridge). A narrow rib of spiked granite. Moving together over easy pitches and jagged towers, brushing powder off every hold till slab bars straight up. Down and left into an ice runnel—Rowe front-pointing up the hard black ice. Leading through, dodging up the frozen stream from one rock island to the next until the ridge is regained.

Afternoon and the rib rears up into great yellow towers. The book says left so I go left. Traversing over space to a hanging couloir, then sneaking up its icy side to the col at the top. Posting granite letters to space to clear the way but the rock lets me down. Bruised and hanging from a loop of rope turned round a vague spike. Back up to the treacherous col which lets me down again—a cul-de-sac perched nowhere. Dragging up ropes, fixing anchors and sweating down a diagonal abseil and traverse to Ian. Who goes up and right. Twenty feet up and a loose block deals with the ropes. Two 80-foot lengths and a large variety of 9 mm. perlon slings. The only way is down then, back over the spikes and towers in the dying day. Trundling loose blocks for badness to a fair ledge and a good still bivvi night. Then next day all the way down. Climbing and roping down in giant 80-foot leaps. Thrashing through the powder that gets everywhere.

Some days, much drink and a good fresh fall of powder and we're back again, clutching a borrowed rope of dubious origin. The first half is now known so we leave at nine at night to climb by moonlight. Accompanied by three English hard men. Up the Central Spur of Les Courtes (not the Cordier route as we first believed) but no moon. Dark fumbings by starlight and fading torch until it's too dark. Shivering on a ledge till dawn, a brew, then on. Two foot of powder over everything but by one we are at our previous high. A conference in the snow and the three southerners leave us for down but we go on and up into the white-out ahead. Pitch after

pitch up and right over the ice. So hard that the points skate off and hammers bounce. Steps to rest and rocks to clutch where possible; screws go in painfully and come out mangled. Continually clearing powder with a sweeping hand, point up, clear above repeat and repeat and repeat. In a white world we're lost with night near but no ledges. A small mound of boulders in the ice where stone mattresses can be made.

The shambles of a disorganised bivouac. The breakfast is dropped and the two-man sack will hold Rowe and no more. Struggling into a duvet, then pit, then into a Tiso sack. Lashed on by the straps and sliding down, eating dehydrated mince and drinking lemon tea. Very civilised! Terrified something will drop, like an outer boot, or a crampon or the whole damned issue including me. Till sleep takes us through to the snow-covered morning. Breakfast of tea and a pummelled orange; hopping into boots, getting packed, cursing and cold.

Then up the ice; pitch after pitch into the milky above with trembling legs. The leader leaving a vee trail and avalanches of powder breaking round the crouching second. Soft white billows whoosh down the face. Then at one we stumble onto the ridge and the top. Take stock of the situation and finish all the brew gear in the gathering storm.

We've only got to go along the ridge to the col then down to the hut. The Col des Cristeaux that's somewhere along there but we've forgotten the guide. Four hours of traversing—along knife-edges, round towers, over gendarmes. Always the wind and the spindrift and the powder. So much ice on my beard I can hardly talk. Then the Col in the last light of day. One false start and we hit it.

Down through the gloom. Scraping down the rocks by the feeble light of one torch between two. Rowe's got frost-nipped fingers and I'm not happy either. Feeling our way down and over the easy rocks into the main couloir. Chest deep powder and crevasses I plunge into. Visions of huge avalanches blasting us to eternity. A dim world of grey exhaustion to the glacier where it's so bad you can't tell up from down.

Dug into snow graves we drift over for the night. Continually cold and shivering. Nothing to eat or drink, nowhere to go and nothing to do. Except wiggle your toes. Eventually the light appears and a horizon is made out. Completely buried in white with everything frozen solid. Then the last lap. Alternate trail breaking, a knee deep mumble stumble down the flat white. The final crawl up the moraine to the hut—struggle, rest, change round, keep going. Then we're back, eating frozen oranges, gulping drinks, sleeping and watching the weather clear.

[This elliptical tale concerns the first winter ascent of the Central Spur of *Les Courtes*, made last year in March by Fyffe & Rowe—Hon. Ed.].

THE SEPARATION OF MOUNTAINS

By F. F. Bonsall

THERE is ample evidence that H. T. Munro thought deeply about the problem of selecting the separate mountains from his list of tops, but he has left us very little guidance on the principles underlying his solution. Perhaps his most explicit statement is in a note (*S.M.C.J.*, 1903, vii, 298) where he justifies counting Stob Diamh in the Cruachan group as a separate mountain on grounds which include distance from the main peak, the intervening dip, and the structure of the group. By contrast, P. Donald, in the Introduction to his list of Hills in the Scottish Lowlands, gives an explicit rule for determining the tops that are not to be counted as separate hills:

'tops are not more than 17 units from the main top of the hill to which they belong, where a unit is either 1/12 mile measured along the connecting ridge or one 50-feet contour between the lower top and its connecting col.'

But he qualifies the rule with 'except where inapplicable on topographical grounds.'

It seems to be generally agreed that it is not possible to give a satisfactory rule for determining the separate mountains among a list of tops. As in the somewhat analogous problem of determining the distinct species of living organisms, it is agreed that the only valid solution is a list acceptable to experts in the field. However, to abandon the problem in this way does not commend itself to a mathematician, and my purpose in this note is to suggest a simple explicit solution. I should say at once that the solution involves no mathematics.

It is clear that for our purpose the appropriate measure of separation of a point B from a point A is the time taken to walk from A to B; and we cannot do better than accept the Naismith rule to determine this time: 20 minutes for every mile of horizontal distance and 3 minutes for every 100 feet of ascent. I denote this Naismith time by $t(A \nabla B)$ minutes, so that

$$t(A \nabla B) = 20d + 3a,$$

where d is the horizontal distance in miles and a is the ascent in 100 feet units.

Our next step is to fix some arbitrary interval of time, say 30 minutes, that will be regarded as sufficient separation. Donald's rule then takes the following form. List the highest top as a separate mountain and call it A. Then regard all tops P with $t(A \nabla P)$ less than 30 as subsidiary tops of A, which are not to be listed as separate mountains. Next, let B be the highest remaining

top, list B as a separate mountain, find B's subsidiary tops, and so on. This certainly is an effective rule, but it leads to some most unsatisfactory results. Walking along a ridge away from A, we pass over P which is a subsidiary top of A, and arrive at Q which is a separate mountain. But Q may be close to P and inferior to it (Fig. 1).

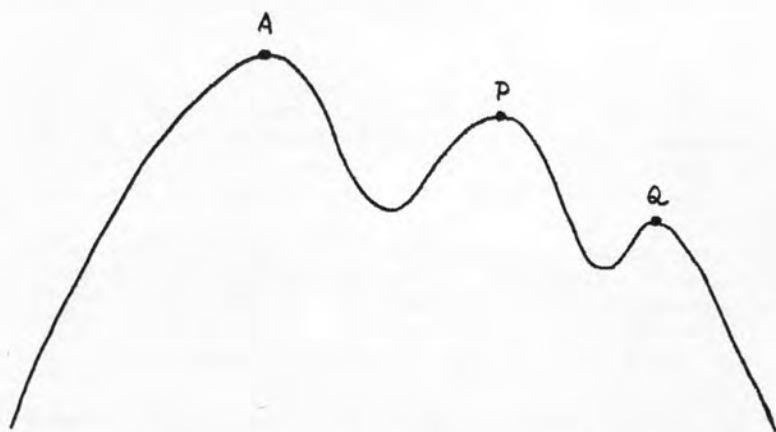


Fig. 1

Again, if A has a massive top, an insignificant pimple Q on the flank of A may qualify as a separate mountain (Fig. 2).



Fig. 2

Common sense leads us to reject Q in both cases. No doubt it was the recognition of results like these that caused Donald to qualify his rule and persuaded others to abandon hope of a satisfactory rule.

The key to my proposed solution is to consider the separation of a top from *all higher ground* rather than from higher tops. Thus, if we still regard 30 minutes as the appropriate separation, I propose to list a top P as a separate mountain if it is not possible to walk

to P from any higher ground in less than 30 minutes. The number 30 here has been chosen arbitrarily, and I shall indicate how an appropriate number can be chosen.

The proposed rule does not suffer from the defects that we have noted in Donald's rule. It also has the merit that the listing of a top as a separate mountain does not depend on decisions made about other tops.

In detail the procedure is as follows. We take a list of tops, for example Munro's list of 545 tops (including Beinn Tarsuinn). For each top P, other than the highest, we determine a number which I call the *separation* of P and denote by $s(P)$. We find $s(P)$ by finding the minimum of $t(X \rightarrow P)$ for all points X that are higher than P. In other words $s(P)$ is the least number of minutes in which we can walk to P from higher ground. We now arrange the list of tops in order according to their separations. We put the highest top at the head of the list, then the top with the greatest separation, then the top with the second greatest separation, and so on. Finally we decide how many separate mountains we wish to have, and take that number from the beginning of our list. For example, if we decide that 277 is an excellent number of separate mountains, we take the first 277 from our ordered list.

The calculation of $s(P)$ sounds formidable, but in reality there is little difficulty. Firstly, we need only consider those points X that lie on the boundary of the ground higher than P, because to walk to P from any higher ground we must pass through such a point X. Secondly, there will usually be at most three significant ridges running from P, and so we shall need to measure $t(X \rightarrow P)$ for at most three points X, and very often for only one. Moreover it would suffice to do a very rough preliminary measurement of $s(P)$ for all tops P and reserve careful measurement for the borderline cases. The last few difficult cases could well be settled by practical experiment with stop-watch and aneroid.

I have not carried out even a rough determination of the separations of Munro's tops. However, I suspect that if we selected a list of 277 mountains by this rule, most of Munro's list of separate mountains would remain unchanged, but a few familiar injustices would be put right. For example, Liathach might become two mountains, Beinn Eighe three, while Càrn Ghluasaid (Cluanie), Meall Dubhag (Cairngorms), and Càrn Bàn (Monadh Liath) might be deleted.

Very rough measurements for Section 1 of Munro's tables carried out on a well worn one-inch map give complete agreement in the sense that the 18 Munros are also the 18 tops with the greatest separations. Most of the Munros have very large separations, only Beinn a' Chleibh ($s(P)=27$) and Beinn Tulaichean ($s(P)=29$) having separations less than 45. Among the remaining tops the

greatest separation is for Meall na Dige ($s(P)=24$). Section 1 may be exceptional in that most of the mountains have very simple structures.

For comparison, I have carried out similar rough measurements for Section 10, where the mountains have much more complicated structures. Here again the 6 Munros are also the 6 tops with the greatest separations, the least separation being $s(P)=52$ for Beinn Liath Mhór. However in this section there are 4 other tops with quite high separations:—Spidean Coire nan Clach ($s(P)=49$) and Sàil Mhór ($s(P)=45$) on Beinn Eighe, Mullach an Rathain ($s(P)=38$) on Liathach, and Tom na Gruagaich ($s(P)=30$) on Beinn Alligin.

When more accurately surveyed maps of the Scottish Highlands become available, presumably with the heights given in metres, it will become appropriate to construct new tables of tops and separate mountains. I would suggest that these tables should list mountains over 900 metres in height. To choose 1000 metres would throw away too many good mountains; 900 metres, being a little less than 3000 feet, would bring in some fine new ones.

It is my hope that this note will provoke discussion of the principles on which these new tables should be constructed.

[Dr Bonsall's interesting article shows that the famous Tables continue to fascinate. Readers unfamiliar with the nuances of this perversion should refer to Dr Dutton's splendid *vade mecum*, 'Munros and Munroists' in *S.M.C.J.*, 1968, xxix, 39-43. Dr Bonsall's final suggestion was, of course, made by Robin Gall Inglis in *S.M.C.J.*, 1969, xxix 169.—HON. ED.]

FEBRUARY THAW

About us in white mist, ptarmigan
Scold, and hopefully; below,
Bottoming a punctured corrie,
Lochs lie black against the snow.

But here: axes vanish, ropes
Bedraggle, each new step's one huge
Considered extrication, while
The next's beyond all thought A refuge

In no thought. For thoughts, you know,
Deceive us. Just now they could bring
Some beneath an avalanche;
Others, one day nearer spring.

G.J.F.D.

INCIDENT AT GAMRIE HEAD

Two years ago we sampled early 19th century attitudes to climbing and to Nature with Christopher North's plausible, if fictional, account of James Hogg's struggle with some eagles on the Shelter Stone Crag. This was well received and we are encouraged to make a return visit, this time with a true, if implausible tale.

Thomas Edward (1814-86), the author and protagonist, was as extraordinary as Hogg in his own way. He developed a strong and, as will be seen, acquisitive interest in natural history from a very early age and established himself as the foremost authority on the zoology of the North-East during his life as a shoemaker in Banff. This he accomplished without the aid of books or expert advice: everything he knew, he knew as a result of observation. Since he worked on six days of the week and would not leave the house (except to go to church) on the seventh, his observations, with rare exceptions, were confined to the late evenings and early mornings, few of which were spent at home. When darkness fell he would lie down, wherever he happened to be, and sleep till dawn.

This amazing man, the personification of the Protestant Ethic, treated mountains and cliffs lightly—if they stood in his way, he climbed them. Naturally, he met with accidents: on one occasion, pursuing butterflies and moths, he was caught in a violent storm high in the Banffshire hills and extricated himself only with difficulty; on another occasion, trying to locate a shot sea-bird, he fell down a considerable cliff, sustaining quite severe injuries. These incidents, however, do not stand comparison with the tale which now follows. It first appeared in the *Banffshire Journal* and was reprinted in Samuel Smiles' excellent biography, *The Life of a Scotch Naturalist*.

HAVING promised to visit some friends in Gardenstown to partake of their hospitality during the festive season of the New Year, I left home with that object on the morning of the 31st of December 1850. I passed through Macduff, and took the path which leads along the cliffs, hoping thereby to meet with something rare or strange in the ornithological world, and worthy of my shot. In this way I had nearly reached the highest point of Gamrie Head without meeting with anything but the common tenants of these rocky braes, when my attention was attracted by the screaming of a number of birds at the bottom of the cliff. On looking over I observed that they consisted of several hooded and carrion crows, together with two ravens, two Iceland gulls, and a number of other dark-coloured gulls, apparently immature specimens of the great black-backed species, one of which, in perfect plumage, was standing and picking at an object floating in the water close to the rock, and about which all the other birds were screaming.

Having feasted my eyes for a while on the Icelanders, the thought struck me that I would descend the cliff in order to procure one of them if possible. Accordingly, observing a narrow track near me, I commenced my descent, but I had only proceeded a short distance when I found myself on the brink of a precipice. I was about to return, when, accidentally looking over, I observed a portion of

the rock jutting out a little beyond the one on which I stood, and about four feet and a half below it. I now concluded that, if I could gain this rock, I would still find the path to enable me to continue downwards. With these hopes, and having laid down my gun, I swung myself down upon the rock. I had no sooner done so, than I heard a low growl, as if proceeding from a rabid dog; and on looking along the rock, I was a good deal surprised at seeing two foxes standing in a rather slouching attitude at the other end of the shelf, apparently very much discomfited at my unwarrantable intrusion.

Another look at the place and its surly occupants was enough to convince me of the unmistakable truth that, instead of having met with a path leading to the bottom of the cliffs, I had only found one to a fox's lair. My first impulse was to ascend the rocks, but in this I was completely baffled. The brow of the cliff to which I wished to ascend, was fully as high as my breast, and overhung the rock on which I stood. I had nothing of the nature of a step to put my foot on to aid myself up, and nothing to lay hold of with my hands but small tufts of withered grass and some small stones, all of which gave way so soon as any stress was put upon them. The last and only remaining object within my reach was a stone about twice as large as my head, and partially embedded amongst the grass. I took hold of the big stone with both hands, and succeeded in drawing myself about half-way up when it suddenly gave way. The stone came into collision with my right shoulder, and would in all likelihood have borne me along with it to the bottom of the cliff, had it not been that at that instant I got hold of a short tuft of heath with my mouth, by the aid of which, and by using my fingers as a beast would its claws, I was enabled to regain my former position.

It was now quite evident that I would require to descend the cliff by some means or other, but how? That was a matter for deep consideration. I was standing on the brink of a precipice—had two cunning fellows to deal with—had to hold on, at least with one hand, to the rock above in order to maintain my equilibrium—and had to keep a steady eye on my companions for fear lest they should rush at me and throw me over the cliff.

Such being the case, was I not in a pretty fix? If there were any means of escape, it was from the point near which the foxes were. But how could I dislodge them to get at that point? The space on which I stood was only from about two feet and a half to one foot broad, and about nine feet long, projecting to some distance over the cliff beneath. To have shot them, and rid myself of their presence in that fashion, was, from my position, utterly impossible.

At length a thought struck me, and with the view of putting it in execution, I laid down my gun close to the back of the

shelving, out of harm's way; then crouching down with my feet towards my shaggy friends, who kept up a constant chattering of their teeth during the whole time, and pushing myself backwards until I reached the nearest, I gave him a kick with my foot on the hind quarters, which produced the desired effect; for I had no sooner done so, than I felt first the feet of one and then of the other passing lightly along my back, and before I had time to lift up my head, they had bolted up the precipice and disappeared.

I was now master of the place, though not of the situation. On looking over the cliff, I found that there was no way of getting down but by leaping into a crevice of the rocks, more than eight feet beneath me, and in a slanting direction from where I was. This was a doleful discovery, but there was no help now; so, taking off my coat, shot-belt, and powder-flask, that I might be so much the lighter, and have the free use of my arms, I threw them down to the bottom of the rock. I next bound the gun to my back, having previously emptied it of its contents. I then crawled over the edge of the rock, and hung dangling in the air for a little, like the pendulum of a clock. I would have given all that I ever possessed in the world to have been again in the foxes' den, stinking though it was. For then, and not till then, did I discover, to my sorrow, that a rugged portion of a rock projected over the entrance to the aperture to which I wished to descend, and that, in leaping, I would require to go beyond it in order to reach the landing underneath. To accomplish such a feat seemed to me impossible.

I hung thus, being afraid to make the leap, though up I could not get, until my hands began to give way; when, mustering all my remaining strength, and having taken the last swing with some force, I let go my hold to abide by the dreadful alternative—for I had little hope of gaining the desired haven. Most fortunately, however, I did gain it, but, in doing so, I received a severe blow on the left temple from the rock I had so much dreaded. I also lost my cap, which fell off when my head struck the rock. From this cavity or chink, which was the worst that I ever had to deal with, I managed—by leaping and swinging from one rocky shelf and cavity to another, and by crawling from crag to crag, alternately, as circumstances required it—to reach a huge stone, which evidently had once formed a part of the higher portion of the cliff, but had, at a bygone period, by some means or other, become detached from it, and on rolling down had found a temporary resting-place there.

Beyond this stone, I found my leaping was at an end, for I had now arrived at the top of a rather rough and almost perpendicular declivity, fully fifty feet from the bottom, and bounded on both sides by steep and overhanging cliffs. Before me was the sea, behind and above me was an insurmountable barrier of 300 feet of cliff. Although I had descended thus far, there was no human possibility of my being able to re-ascend by the same path. In such

a place—alone, and almost powerless—bruised and nearly worn out with exertion—what could I do? Throw myself down, and meet my fate at once, or wait till help should arrive? But where was help to come from? Two boats had already passed from Gardentown, both of which I hailed, but they sailed along on their way. Perhaps they were too far out at sea to hear my cries, or to notice my signals of distress.

Despairing of success, I sat down to consider what was next to be done. While thus resting, I observed a falcon sailing slowly and steadily along, bearing something large in his talons. On he came, seemingly unconscious of my presence, and alighted on a ledge only a few yards from where I sat. I now saw that the object he carried was a partridge. Having fairly settled down with his quarry on the rock, I could not help wondering at and admiring the collected ease and cool composure with which he held his struggling captive (for it was still alive) until death put an end to its sufferings. There was no lacerating with his beak at the body of the poor and unfortunate prisoner, in order, as it were, to hasten its termination; no expanding of the wing to maintain his equilibrium; although the last and dying struggle of the bird caused him to quiver a little.

All being now over, with one foot resting upon his game, and the other on the rock, silent and motionless as a statue, the noble captor stood, with an inquiring eye gazing at the now lifeless form of his reeking prey, seeming to doubt the fact that it was already dead. But there was no mistake. The blood, oozing from its mouth and wounds, its body doubtless pierced by the talons of the conqueror, already began to trickle down the sides of the dark cliffs, dyeing the rocks in its course. Satisfied at last that life was fairly extinct, an incision was then made in the neck or shoulder of the victim, and into this the falcon thrust his bill several times, and each time that it was withdrawn it was covered with blood. This being done, and having wrenched off the head, which he dropped, he then began not only to pluck but to skin his food, from the neck downwards; and, having bared the breast, commenced a hearty meal by separating the flesh from the sternum into portions, with as much apparent ease as if he had been operating with the sharpest surgical instrument. I should have liked well to have seen the end of the work thus begun; but unfortunately, a slight movement on my part was detected by the quick eye of the falcon, and my nearness was discovered. Having gazed at me for a few, and only for a few seconds, with an angry and piercing scowl, mingled with surprise, he then rose, uttering a scream so wild and so loud as to waken the echoes of the surrounding rocks; whilst he himself, with the remains of his feast, which he bore along with him, rounded a point of the cliff and disappeared; there is no doubt that he ended his repast in unmolested security.

The falcon had no sooner fled, than the reality of my own situation again burst upon my mind. I had as little prospect of relief from passers-by as ever; and, becoming a prey to evil forebodings, I felt cold and sick at heart. It was now afternoon, and daylight would soon be on the wane. I had no time to lose, for it was necessary that something should be done to extricate myself, if possible, before dark. The only way of doing so was by sliding down the declivity, be the consequences what they might. Accordingly, I unloosed the gun from its place on my back, and having taken my garters, which were very long, from my legs, I tied them together, then attached one end of them to the gun, and holding the other end in my hand, I dropped it as far as the string would allow, and then letting go, I heard the gun clash to the bottom. I next took the two napkins, which had bound the gun to my back, and wound them round my head, in order to save it as much as possible from the edges of the rocks. I then stretched myself upon the rocky slope, with my feet downwards, and was ready for the descent, when, repenting, I would again have drawn myself up. But the scanty herbage which I held by gave way, and I was hurled down, whether I would or no, and with such violence that, on landing amongst the rocks, I became quite unconscious.

On recovering, I found myself lying at the foot of the cliff, sick and very sore. I found that I had bled profusely from the nose and one of my ears. My first impulse, on recovering, was to move my limbs to ascertain if any of them were broken, when, to my inexpressible joy and thankfulness, I found them whole, though somewhat benumbed. Becoming thirsty, and observing a pool of water at a short distance, I attempted to rise, but my spine pained me so much that I was obliged to lie down again, without being able to reach the desired spot. The thirst increasing, I dragged myself to the water. I thrust my mouth into it, and had partaken of a draught before I discovered that, instead of fresh, I had swallowed *salt water!*

If I was ill before, I was worse now. Having sickened and vomited again, I revived a little, and after I had washed the blood from my face and head, I was enabled to sit up with my back against a rock. Whilst thus seated, I observed all the articles which had been dropped, except my cap, which, however, I afterwards found. After sitting for about half-an-hour, I made another attempt to rise, and succeeded, though I reeled about like a drunken fellow, and could scarcely stand steadily without the aid of my gun, which I found was not so much bruised as I had expected. Having again assumed my coat and other appendages, I then endeavoured to load my gun with the view of procuring one of the Icelanders which I had seen from the top of the cliff. This, however, proved a very difficult matter; and when I had loaded the gun I found to my disappointment that I could not bring it to bear upon the object.

I made the attempt several times, but was at last obliged to abandon the hope I had entertained of obtaining either of the birds.

I now wished to get to a sandy beach, at some distance to my left, known as Greenside, from which I knew that a path led to the top of the cliff. On my way thither, I met with a very serious obstacle in the form of a huge rock, whose base extended into the sea; and, as a matter of course, as I could not get round it, I required to get over it. I was then far from being in a condition to climb a rock. However, I had no alternative. The tide, then about to come in, would have shown me no mercy. Accordingly, my gun was once more on my back, and on hands and knees, for feet here were of no use, and with the aid of my mouth, I succeeded in crawling over, and, with some further difficulty, I contrived to reach Greenside. Instead of holding on to Gardenstown, I turned my face towards home, where I arrived betwixt five and six in the evening—with the impression of the last day of 1850 so deeply stamped upon my body and mind, that it will not easily, if ever, be obliterated from either.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

(Views expressed are those of the correspondents).

Accident Reporting

SIR—In your preamble to the above reports in your last issue you state that the opinions expressed are my own in which you do not necessarily agree.

The reports sent to you are the official reports of the M.R.C. of Scotland received from Civilian, Police and R.A.F. mountain rescue teams. I am merely the reporter and never at any time express a personal opinion. These reports were started on the suggestion of a former editor—Dr J. H. Bell—who asked that facts only be given and that these would speak for themselves. This is the procedure which has always been followed.

You also state that you 'look forward to the day when some intelligent use be made of these accident statistics.' Surely anyone reading them can draw intelligent use from them. Hundreds of copies of the Survey indicating the avoidable causes shown in these reports go out each year to clubs, organisations and the Press. It was the information given in these reports over many years which led to the organisation of the Duff Memorial Mountain Safety Exhibition which has now toured both in Scotland and England and which has received official recognition in Government circles. I trust therefore that you will now agree that the M.R.C. of Scotland has not been remiss in failing to make use of these accident reports.

This letter has been read before and approved by the Mountain Rescue Committee of Scotland.—Yours, etc.

B. H. HUMBLE.

New Route Publication Policy

SIR—There is a misleading passage in your preamble to the 'New Climbs' section of the 1972 *Journal*. The proposal to call a moratorium on route descriptions in the North-West Highlands certainly does not arise from the grandiose, humanitarian motives with which you have graced it.

That all attempts to produce a guide-book to so vast and complex an area should fail is understandable; that these failures should be not only covered up but whitewashed and flaunted by the S.M.C. as an 'innovation' is not. In 1967 we proudly announced a three-volume publication, which soon grew into six projected volumes as new routes multiplied. In five years we have produced just one volume, more than half of which had been written already. Is it pure coincidence that the new proposal to give up the battle comes from the official editor of this selfsame guide-book, supported by one of its despairing would-be retailers? Or that the exclusion of North-Western routes from the 'New Climbs' section of the *Journal* comes simultaneously with the halving of your own editorial staff? If the task is too much for us, then fair enough, but for goodness' sake let us be honest about it.

In my view the S.M.C. has a responsibility to record Scottish mountaineering history as fully and as objectively as possible. A large part of the interest of the Waterfall Buttress lies in the knowledge of Glover's and Inglis Clark's activities of 1899. The whole joy of pioneering depends upon knowing with reasonable certainty what has been done and what remains unexplored. Hang the guide-book by all means—it is better that we should produce none than a second-rate one—but let us at least continue to keep our *Journal* records complete, so that those of us who are interested enough may still enjoy the pleasure of research. Others will still be able to savour the obscurity which the region already holds for them, and even in the areas covered by the existing Guide they can always adopt the simple expedient of not buying it.

To discontinue the records now would be a serious and irreversible step, and one which should not be idly undertaken. It would furthermore lay us open to a crop of 'pirate' guides and publications from inevitably less authoritative sources. It would be, in fact, to opt out of our responsibilities.

We do not need endless, pitch-by-pitch descriptions, nor should we concern ourselves with trivia, either here or in the more popular areas. All we need is a sense of proportion.

See that magnificent 45-footer on Polladubh? And all those lovely accident reports . . . —Yours, etc.

PETER F. MACDONALD.

SIR—The Creagh Dhu Mountaineering Club has duly considered the Moratorium on the new routes in the North-West and has decided to issue a statement concerning it.

The Club sympathises with the general sentiment of the proposal but is of the opinion that it is both a dangerous and retrograde step for Scottish climbing. The non-publication of new routes, we feel, would be a disincentive to the majority of present and future climbers, resulting in the reduction of the numbers going to the North-West. It would in fact only benefit a small privileged minority.

For those who do not wish rock-climbing guides the answer is simple—don't buy one. There are many climbers who through personal choice will climb established routes in well-known areas without a guide. However these individuals are not crying out for a ban on route descriptions just because *they* do not use them. No one is forcing people to buy guide books! The proposal is seeking to take away the freedom of choice for the individual by laying down that no one will climb in this area with a guide book.

If the proposal is adopted on a permanent basis these objections may, in any case, soon become irrelevant. The non-publication of new routes would be seen by many as an abdication by the S.M.C. of its traditional role as the controlling body for publishing route descriptions in Scotland. We must avoid the situation prevalent in England where the publication of new routes and guide books is in a state of near anarchy. Whether the authors of this proposal like it or not there is a ready market for guide books for this area. The S.M.C. will only be leaving the field open to a few enterprising individuals who will soon bring out 'pirate guide books.' Thus all your efforts of crag preservation will be neatly by-passed, leaving in the end, Scottish climbing and the S.M.C. all the poorer.

If the interest generated by this particular proposal was aimed at removing from the market such publications as Poucher's *Scottish Peaks* and others by the mountain draughtsmen then the C.D.M.C. would look upon it with greater sympathy. Possibly a compromise would be the best solution. The description of routes could be made less generous, giving only the general line and grading. However a complete ban on the documentation of the North-West crags, we feel, would be acting against the trends and realities of our times.—Yours, etc.

B. DUNN, Secretary, C.D.M.C.

The Squirrels Rights

SIR—We in the Squirrels is objecting to your snidy remarks about our manuscripts and taods and princesses. Just because old Dutton hasn't got a plate in his head is no reason for going on about our writing. If we was good enough to write our S.M.C. application forms we are good enough for to get our articles published and another thing all that poetry and capital letters and 'we' stuff doesn't go down a bundle in the Dray—no wonder that old Dutton — that you couldn't understand got the old heave-ho, why couldn't he call a spade a spade, and it looks like the new man wont be any better. Some of our lads even stopped climbing so they could get married and its hard enough paying the mortgage and looking after the kids never mind writing articles which is why we never get up to Glencoe anymore, trying to be respectable like you S.M.C. smart alecs that we are just as good as. Anyway who's interested in your rotten journal when we can write for Mountain and Ascent and the Alpine Club and climb the Eiger and Mount Everest and North America Wall first British ascent, because you dont have to be a good writer to climb all them things only a good climber which is more than all youse old —s is even if you can write, though none of us is getting any younger.

Youse should ask yourselfs how many good climbers has never been heard of because they couldn't write good over the years since you started, what makes you think its the S.M.C. that's done all the climbing its not everybody likes to write their own trumpet?—Yours, etc.

THE SQUIRRELS.

[I suppose if one refers to the Squirrels as an undifferentiated entity, one must except a similar reply. The blank lines are, of course, instances of 'Editorial Discretion,' as our predecessor put it.—HON. ED.]

NEW CLIMBS

SINCE the proposal for a Moratorium on new routes in the North-West is still under discussion, I have been directed to publish any backlog of new routes (to minimize confusion if the Moratorium falls through). Accordingly, many of the routes here are two years old.

Pressure of work (and lack of response) has forced me to discontinue the practice of sending individual sections out for expert checking and comment. I apologise for any resulting errors or wrongly included routes.

ROBIN N. CAMPBELL.

OUTER ISLES

Creag Mò.—*Footpad.* 350 ft. Very Severe. B. Clarke & J. Macdougall. 1st June 1972.

This route takes a line up the steep area of rock to the right of the Amphitheatre. Below and to the right of the Amphitheatre is an arête of white slabby rock; scramble up steep grass and belay under small overhang. Step left and climb grooved arête then wall to grassy terrace beneath smooth walls of Amphitheatre, (peg belay, 130 ft.). Descend slabby grooves and grass diagonally right until one can step into groove. Climb this to grass pedestal on right, (peg belay, 70 ft.). From right hand end of pedestal climb steep crack then chimney to small stance, (peg belay, 60 ft.). Continue up groove above, stepping out right at the top, (90 ft.).

Mealisval-Creagan Thealastail.—*The Porkey.* 300 ft. Severe. M. H. Moar & G. Lawson. 15th September 1970.

This route lies on the central buttress described by R. G. Folkard in S.M.C.J., 1949, xxiv, 104. Near the middle of the buttress is a recess bounded on the right by overlapping slabs. Still further to the right is a just distinguishable waterslide. The climb follows the overlapping slabs. Start at the obvious ramp leading up right to the slabs proper (cairn and arrow). Move up ramp and then climb straight up following grooves to belay (60 ft.). Continue up cracks and slabs to flake, above which a belay can be found, (70 ft.). The vertical crack, above and behind the stance, is now climbed (20 ft.) and from the top of the crack step left onto large slab. Traverse leftwards and upwards across slabs above recess to join slabs which initially bound the left hand side of the recess. Now climb directly upwards over easy rock, until terrace can be reached (150 ft.).

Sgòran Dubh Theinneasbhal.—*Flannan.* Very Severe. T. Fletcher, J. Macdougall and I. Sommerville. 4th June 1972.

Following the nomenclature of Tennent's *Islands Guide*, this climb takes a line up No. 1 rib. No trace was found of the cairn mentioned in the guide nor did the buttress fit the description of the route.

Start at an earth ledge below the rib and at the side of No. 2 gully. Climb rightward slanting groove onto crest of rib and climb this to belay (peg) below obvious corner, (120 ft.). Make rightward descending traverse for 20 ft. then go straight up overlapping wall overlooking No. 1 gully to belay (peg) on large grassy ledge below steep slab with prominent chimney above. Climb slab to chimney, up chimney then move left onto crest of rib. Follow this to top of crag—belays as required.

—*Nosferatu*. 620 ft. Very Severe. B. Clarke

& K. Tremain. 4th June 1972.

Scramble up to the right from the start of South Buttress Route for 20 ft. to a peg belay below a slab. Climb slab and belay below corner, (50 ft.). Traverse right, climb wall then up slab and groove to niche on arête. Climb arête to stance and belay, (130 ft.). Continue up arête to ledge, (140 ft.). Climb short corner to terrace. Cross terrace to right. Peg belay, (60 ft.). Climb groove just left of arête then short slab into corner. Traverse right under overhang and go up to ledge. Move right and climb slab on arête to reach grassy recess. Peg belay, (100 ft.). Step left and climb slab above (peg runner) to grassy niche. Traverse slab on left, move up corner then climb overlap on right to top, (120 ft.).

SKYE

Fiscavaig: Struan Face.—*Girdle Traverse*. 500 ft. Very Severe. B. Taplin & party. 20th August 1971.

Start at foot of cliffs immediately below farm. Climb black wall by a rightward rising traverse to large ledge, (100 ft.). Continue along ledge to end, (250 ft.). Descend awkward chimney a few feet and traverse wall to second ledge, (100 ft.). Climb steep crack to finish.

Talisker Bay.—*Noodle*. 200 ft. Severe. B. Taplin (ldr.), & D. Sharpe. 3rd June 1971.

This route is on the same stack as Corkscrew, the largest of the three stacks.

Climb South arête to ledge and belay. Climb overhangs to large ledge and peg belay. Follow arête to summit on precarious blocks.

ARRAN

Caisteal Abhail: Lower Slabs.—*Ourpolhode*. 390 ft. Severe. R. Blythe & M. Harrison. July 1972.

Climb clean slab between Central Grooves and Polhode to shallowest part of overhang. Climb this (crux) using undercut handhold above to belay on flakes above, (110 ft.). Climb slab above on right to heather terrace and belay, (50 ft.). Trend left on terrace, gain slabs by diagonal cracks, (60 ft.). Trend left to slab with V-cracks, climb this to vegetated corner and belay, (60 ft.). Climb corner and easy slabs above, (110 ft.).

NORTHERN HIGHLANDS I

Fuar Tholl: East Face.—*The Pile*. 400 ft. GRADE II. P. Christie & P. Macdonald. 24th January 1971.

Fuar Tholl presents three spurs to Coire Lair. The leftmost spur has the cleanest and most continuous rock and contains Patey's Nose route. The middle one is broad, low and indefinite and the rightmost one is seamed by three parallel gullies. The Pile is the rib to the left of the leftmost of these three gullies.

Mainreachan Buttress.—*Nimrod*. 250 ft. Very Severe. G. Anderson, J. R. Brumfitt & P. Macdonald. 3rd August 1968.

The first groove of three to the left of Enigma Route. Occasional deviations were made on account of loose rock. At the final corner below the halfway terrace the steep right-hand wall was climbed (strenuous) but an easier way exists to the left. The route was not continued beyond the terrace, where one can walk off.

—*Nebula*. 500 ft. Severe. D. Barr

& P. Macdonald. 17th July 1971.

The second of the three grooves. Climb it with a move left onto a small nose at 40 ft. (peg runner) and continue to the terrace, moving out left again just below the top. Above the terrace, climb continuation groove to ledge, then take left hand of two chimneys (shoulder useful) but beware of loose rock. *N.B.* The lower section of the groove was climbed in the early 1960's by C. S. M. Doake & P. N. L. Tranter.

Maol Chean-dearg: Loch an Eoin Crag.—

There is a conspicuous light coloured quartzite cliff (grid ref. 923 505) below a darker band of broken crags on the northern slopes of the hill (mentioned in *S.M.C.J.*, xxix, 1971, 428) about 500 ft. above Loch an Eoin. The crag is surprisingly clean with a horizontal ledge one third up and two big leftwards leading ramps resembling staircases near the top. Protection is scarce. There is an easy walk-off to the right.

—*No Birds*. 330 ft. Very Difficult. K. Schwartz. 1st August 1971.

Start below the right-hand staircase, just below very light-coloured rocks. Go straight up, crossing ledge, in two pitches to staircase and follow this leftwards to finish on steps above.

—*But Midges*. 360 ft. Severe. Miss M. Horsburgh & K. Schwartz. 1st August 1971.

Start below the lefthand staircase, a few feet right of the lowest rocks. Climb ill-defined pillar and steep groove above to horizontal ledge, (140 ft.). Move up 15 ft., then go right a few feet before climbing short vertical step (peg runner). Trend left into steep recess, climb this and go very steeply rightwards to reach broken staircase, (130 ft.). Climb slightly leftwards to top, (90 ft.).

Meall Gorm: The Blue Buttress.—*Rattlesnake*. 450 ft. Severe. P. Macdonald & A. R. M. Park. 15th May 1965.

The route follows the obvious line of corners running up the centre of the buttress (well seen in plate IV of the 1970 Northern Highlands District Guide).

Scramble to first unavoidable tier and climb directly below line of corners some distance left of large black patch, (120 ft.). Follow grass to foot of first and most impressive corner, climb smaller corner to right (crux) until right-slanting crack leads more easily to grass ledge, (110 ft.). Traverse left into line of corners and climb to top of third tier, (120 ft.). Climb last set of corners directly (100 ft.).

—*The Smooth Creep*. 300 ft. Very Severe. S. J. Carroll & P. F. Macdonald. 4th September 1971.

This route lies on the wall between Rattlesnake and The Blue Pillar. Scramble up preliminary tiers to the foot of a smooth vertical corner about halfway along the wall (cairn).

Start up corner, trend right and climb crack to belay below steep wall, (70 ft.). Step right and climb to stance below lefthand of two corners, (70 ft.). Climb corner (nut and cling as handhold) to ledge below small overhang (25 ft.). Go left along ledge and climb steep cracked slabs then two huge precarious looking flakes to good ledge, (12 ft.). Finish by short overhanging chimney, (15 ft.).

Sgùrr a'Chaorachain: A'Chioch.—*African Waltz*. 600 ft. Very Severe. A. S. Macdonald & R. Popham. 14th April 1971.

The route follows a line immediately left of the Nose. Climb the first pitch of The Nose. Traverse left along terrace to belay in niche beneath line

of broken rock, (130 ft.). Move up crack by broken rock, (30 ft.). Climb onto right-hand wall and up to grass ledge. Belay 20 ft. left of obvious corner, ((80 ft.). Follow left-trending crack to niche, move above this and traverse right to ledge 10 ft. from corner, (90 ft.). Climb wall above belay to niche and surmount this on left to belay above, (70 ft.). Follow by easier ground to summit, (170 ft.).

South Face.—*Gideon's Wrath*. 300 ft. Very Severe. K. V. Crocket & C. Stead. 21st August 1971.

Start on the red wall 40 ft. left of the Sword of Gideon at a thin crack below an obvious triangular niche. Climb thin crack to niche (old peg here for runner) and traverse left 10 ft. to peg belay below overhang, (60 ft.). Climb overhang above and follow obvious line trending right past an abandoned nut runner to reach short wide crack. Continue up and right to finish just right of biggest bulge, (100 ft.). Climb short walls and corners above, (140 ft.).

—*Ganglion*. 250 ft. Very Severe. K. V. Crocket & C. Stead. 20th August 1971.

Just left of Gideon's Wrath the wall is set back slightly. An obvious crack leads to a large block recess below an overhanging groove. Climb crack to peg belay in recess, (60 ft.). Climb recess and groove onto face and continue directly to belay, (80 ft.). Easier rocks lead to top, (110 ft.).

—*Dougie's Climb*. 300 ft. Severe. G. Anderson, P. F. Macdonald & D. B. Scott. 25th April 1971.

This route lies on the very steep South-East-facing crag above and right of the Sword of Gideon cliff, on a buttress to the right of the main wall.

Climb to terrace below steep wall breached by shallow chimney, (80 ft.). Climb chimney and continue to another overhanging wall. Walk a few yards right and gain undercut corner by steep rising leftward traverse. Above corner move right and climb final tier to top.

Beinn Airidh a'Charr: North East Face. *The Beanstalk*. 350 ft. Very Severe. D. Bathgate & P. F. Macdonald. October 1971.

This is the steep arête below and left of the big overhanging wall west of Staircase Gully. Climb the arête with deviations onto the left wall. One peg was used for protection.

Beinn a'Chasgein Mór: Tòrr na h Iolair, Upper Summit Buttress. *Eryr*. 500 ft. Severe. C. L. Jones & C. F. Walmsley. 18th June 1970.

Start at the foot of the very prominent deep-cut T-shaped chimney just left of the lowest point of the rocks and immediately left of the conspicuous slab of Hieroglyphics. As for West Face Ledge Route, climb chimney to foot of overhangs, (70 ft.). Traverse 15 ft. left to gain bottomless groove and follow this to belay, (150 ft.). Climb right then left along rake and right to foot of open chimney which follow to top, (230 ft.).

Beinn a'Mhuinidh: Bonnaidh Donn.—*The Tappit Hen*. 500 ft. Very Severe. B. Dunn & J. R. Houston. 5th July 1971.

On the bottom left side of the crag there is a large slab which lies to the left of a prow. Climb the right edge of the slab for 120 ft. Climb wall behind and traverse left onto steep nose and finally up easier slabs to block belay, (130 ft.). Continue by rib to steep wall, (100 ft.). Climb this and short corner beyond and continue to top, (150 ft.).

The following four routes are situated on the steep wall between Virus and Saufari.

(ldr.) & D. Campbell. May 1967.

Starts at the bottom of the shallow groove just to the right of Virus. Climb groove to small ledge at 130 ft. (Peg belay). Climb up wall above to grass ledge at 100 ft. (Peg belay). Continue up surmounting overhang at 40 ft. at its narrowest point to finish up prominent overhanging niche, (120 ft.).

To the right of Centaur is a fairly wide flake crack, the next climb starts at the bottom of this.

Stoater. 300 ft. Severe. J. Cunningham & B. March. 13th May 1971.

Climb the flake crack. When this finishes climb wall above to belay on small rock ledge beneath beak-shaped overhang, (peg belay, 150 ft.). Up to the overhang, over this and up the wall above excellent holds to top of crag, (150 ft.).

To the right of Stoater at the centre of the wall is a fine flake crack with an overhanging base. This is the line of the next route.

Vertigo. 280 ft. Very Severe. J. Cunningham & B. March. 13th May 1971.

Climb flake crack to top and belay on small rock ledge. Traverse left and step onto steep grey wall, move upwards and slightly left to obvious spike (peg runner.). Move above peg and make awkward move leftwards into shallow corner, which is climbed to ledge and peg belay, (70 ft.). Climb above belay to overlap. Get over this and then move up and rightwards towards obvious easy corner. Avoid this by climbing slab on left and up to top of crag, (100 ft.).

The Creep. 300 ft. Very Severe. J. Cunningham & B. March. 13th May 1971.

Start at centre of wall as for Vertigo. Move diagonally right, first crossing grass ledges then small rock ledges until one reaches point 10 ft. from edge of groove of Safari. Climb straight up wall to ledge, (3 peg runners, 100 ft.). Continue up overhanging corner over roof and up steep crack to belay, (150 ft.). 50 ft. of scrambling leads to top of crag.

Waterfall Buttress.—*Waterfall Corner*. 225 ft. Severe. K. Baird & P. Macdonald. 30th May 1971.

Between the Waterfall and Tuit there is a corner which gives a good pitch. From its top go slightly left and continue on either side of a prominent crack which runs to the top of the cliff. *N.B.* The route follows approximately the line shown for Tuit on p.21 of the Guide. The true line of the latter route is thought to be a short distance to the right of this.

Linea Nigra. 300 ft. Severe. A. C. Cain & M. Gate. 5th August 1972.

Follows the black rock on the immediate left of the Waterfall. Starts about 60 ft. to the right of the West Climb at a rowan sapling about 20 ft. right of a large holly in a corner.

Traverse right 20 ft. and follow groove near edge to foot of prominent slab on edge. Move left over pinnacle and along ledge to ash tree belay, (80 ft.). Go back along ledge to pinnacle, step off top and go straight up wall. Move right and back left over block and go up short walls until exhilarating traverse right across a final steep wall leads onto ledges. Follow these up left into corner, (nut belays, 130 ft.). Go diagonally right and round arête to upper basin of Waterfall. Go up left easily to ledge and belays below shattered crack, (60 ft.). Climb crack and exit left onto sloping ramp. Move left into easy corner and follow this to top about 20 ft. left of top of Waterfall, (30 ft.).

Creag Mhór Thollaidh: Lower Crag.—*Gudgeon*. 230 ft. Very Severe. C. Jackson & T. Proctor. 18th August 1971.

The route takes a thin crack up the right-hand edge of the crag. Start a few feet right of the start of The Trip.

Climb rib to heathery ledge and descend this rightwards to short steep corner. Climb this, move out right and climb groove above to roofs where it is possible to traverse right to good stance, (70 ft.). Move back left and climb corner above to horizontal break. Stepping right, two nuts were used to reach crack-system above. Follow cracks to belay at large flake, (peg belay, 90 ft.). Climb flake and cracks above to reach shoulder of crag, (70 ft.).

—*Toady*. 270 ft. Very Severe. C. Jackson & T. Proctor. 17th August 1971.

A harder variation of Catastasis. The route is as for Catastasis except for the second pitch, a description of which follows.

Traverse left to rising diagonal rake blocked by large wedged boulder. Follow rake to where it is crossed by vertical crack. Follow this to stance at top of second pitch of Catastasis, (90 ft.).

Upper Crag.—*Minute*. 150 ft. Severe. Miss M. Horsburgh & K. Schwartz. 2nd August 1971.

This is the first ridge east of and level with the Upper Crag, about 3 minutes' walk from the latter.

NORTHERN HIGHLANDS II & III

Creag na Faolinn, Loch Eriboll.—*Monkey Gull*. 570 ft. Severe. Miss M. Horsburgh & K. Schwartz. 5th August 1971.

On the right-hand side of the crag is an obvious smooth grey wall. The route goes up on the left of this, starting below just right of a tree. Up very loose groove to ledge below the grey wall, (60 ft.). Walk left and climb quartz groove near left end of ledge. Turn overhang on right and back left to steep rib. Belay in heather niche above, (110 ft.). Up to light-coloured groove. Follow this to where its continuation splits right-hand end of belt of overhangs. Turn overhang on right and back to less steep cracks. Belay on ledge about 35 ft. right of obvious overhang, (130 ft.). Up to ledge and straight to foot of obvious rounded and ice-smoothed rib, (100 ft.). Take crest of rib and scramble 30 ft. to rocks above, (110 ft.). Finish easily, (60 ft.). The rock improves with increasing height.

—*Offside*. 380 ft. Very Difficult. C. Stead & Mrs M. Stead. 23rd August 1969.

Start at right end of crag, just left of two birch trees and right of prominent nose (arrow).

Go up left to terrace, (60 ft.). Climb V-groove, avoiding overhang to right and go up slabs to peg belay in heathery corner, (120 ft.). Climb corner and short crack to peg belay below overhangs, (60 ft.). Climb overhang on good holds and easy slabs above, (140 ft.).

Creag Shomhairle.—*Land of the Dancing Dead*. 260 ft. Very Severe. C. Jackson & T. Proctor. 21st August 1971.

The route follows a thin crack on the right hand side of a feature suspected to be called the great slab. It is characterised by a Damoclean flake at about 60 ft., and an overhanging corner higher up.

Climb wall to crack and follow it to large hanging flake. Move left round flake and its continuation to small stance on sloping ledge, (peg belays, 80 ft.). Traverse back right to corner and follow this to small stance above, (peg belay, 40 ft.). Climb corner direct (strenuous but well-protected) to spike belays on sloping ledge, (80 ft.). Continue up corner, layback round roof, climb groove above and traverse right to belay on slabs, (50 ft.).

Foinaven: Ceann Garbh, Creag Dubh.—*Gualin Wall*. 350 ft. Severe. J. A. Brooder & M. Simpkins. July 1971.

The crag is described in S.M.C.J., 1969, xxix, 188. This climb lies on the left hand part of the crag. The start is on the large grass terrace above the broken lower rocks, and directly below an obvious corner in the upper part of the cliff. Climb directly up slabs, trending right at the top. Belay on upper grass ledge below a wet crack, (150 ft.). Avoid the crack by pleasant climbing up the wall on its left, trending right at the top to a ledge at the foot of the corner, (100 ft.). Climb the corner, and exit on the right wall. Scramble to top, (100 ft.).

North Face of Cnoc a'Mhadaidh.—*Quergang*. 670 ft. Very Severe. P. Nunn & B. Toogood. 2nd June 1971.

The crag is at G.R. NC 328 528. Start in the middle of the crag below a large crack splitting the central overhangs.

Climb vegetated slabs to large grass terrace, (100 ft.). Take red slab at centre and climb to fault trending right. Follow it to peg belay in crack descending from the roof crack, (130 ft.). Follow cracks to wet bay, 15 ft. above it strike out across slabs to left, passing several overlaps and heading for junction of overhangs and steep central area of cliff. Belay at very wet black ledge, (140 ft.). Climb wet slab to base of Fisheye Corner—a peculiar overhanging crack. Climb the corner (3-4 pegs in upper reaches, may be avoidable by low exit) to hanging block ledge, (peg belay, 90 ft.). Descend (abseil) to grass ledge on left and climb to eyrie belay, (peg belay, 50 ft.). Up corner (loose blocks) to ledge, (peg belay, 40 ft.). Traverse slab left below steep walls into recess and gain rib (peg runner). Step left and move up to ledge, (120 ft.). Move up steep chimney on right and continue up easier ground, (200 ft.).

Lord Reay's Seat.—*Pobble*. 700 ft. Severe. P. Macdonald & R. A. North. 8th May 1971.

A fine, steep route following a line of chimneys to the left of the nose and finishing at the summit of the seat. Start near the centre of the face left of a light coloured patch of rock. Climb up then rightwards round exposed corner to reach grassy ledge at foot of first chimney, (100 ft.). Climb chimneys for 250 ft. to reach foot of grey, crinkly slab. Ascend slab, then trend leftwards to foot of an ill-defined arête. Climb this arête, traverse right above steep wall then return leftwards and climb a short corner. Easier ground leads to the summit.

Quinag: Western Cliffs.—*The Family Way*. 200 ft. Severe. B. Dunn & J. R. Houston. 3rd July 1971.

This buttress lies below and to the left of Bealach a'Chornaidh. A shallow gully splits the middle of it. Start at the back of it at its right corner. Climb mossy groove and then traverse horizontally to gain steep crack giving access to crest of rib. Belay on rock platform on crest, (90 ft.). Continue up rib finishing up steep chimney, (110 ft.).

Sgùrr nan Clach Geala: North Face.—*Delta Gully*. 800 ft. GRADE IV. D. Dinwoodie & M. Freeman. March 1972.

A fine gully with impressive rock and ice scenery.

—*Seller's Buttress*. 800 ft. GRADE IV. G. S. Strange & D. Stuart. 19th February 1972.

The buttress was liberally plastered in crusted powder. It gave a magnificent climb.

Stac Pollaidh.—*Felo de Se*. 240 ft. Very Severe. R. Carrington & J. MacLean. July 1969.

The route lies on the east face of the West Buttress. It follows the crack line up the wall right of Jack the Ripper. Climb crack line to good stance, (120 ft.). Move up awkward wide groove (1 peg) to peg belay below block overhang, (50 ft.). Climb prominent corner using one nut for aid at mid-height, (70 ft.).

CAIRNGORMS I

Beinn a'Bhuird: Garbh Coire.—*Squareface*. GRADE IV. C. Butterworth & R. Maguire. 28th January 1972.

Follow the summer route throughout: this ascent was made by front-pointing on crust; where this deteriorated at the top of the first pitch, the stance before the traverse was gained *via* a ledge on the left. The crack of the top pitch was filled with powder snow: a traverse led to half way up this. Imperfect crust below the steepening made it necessary to move right.

Ben Macdhuil: Coire Sputan Dearg.—*Ghost Crack*. 300 ft. Very Severe. R. Kerr & B. Lawrie. June 1972.

Start between Hanging Dyke and Ardrath Chimney at a crack. Climb crack to obvious overlaps, (140 ft.). Climb through overlaps and follow thin crack above until it fades out. Traverse up right to edge of Ardrath Chimney then step back left and climb slab by grassy crack to reach ground.

Shelterstone Crag.—*Clach Dhian Chimney*. GRADE III/IV in easy conditions. C. Butterworth & A. Frost. 4th January 1972.

Follow the summer route throughout: the chimney yields a steep but straightforward ice pitch. The exit from the chimney was made on excavated rock jugs: better conditions might make this easier. On joining Postern, there is a chimney which may be hard when choked with snow; this leads to a traverse pitch. The last pitch was avoided by further traversing to an easy way off. Six hours in powder.

Braeriach: Garbh Coire Mór.—*Gaunt Gully*. GRADE III. D. B. Redway. 10th April 1971.

The climb follows a narrow runnel of snow between Bunting's and Solo Gullies onto a snowfield and through rock-ribs above by an ice-pitch. The cornice above proved extremely awkward and involved tunnelling.

Cairngorm: Hell's Lum Crag.—*The Wee Devil*. 500 ft. GRADE IV. D. Dinwoodie & J. Mothersele. 17th November 1971.

The summer route was followed fairly closely, giving an excellent and very sustained climb on thin unstable ice and powder snow. Difficulties were concentrated in the *dièdre* system. The summer flake exit was taken from the upper *dièdre* where thin tongues of ice ran up an exposed slab alongside to reach the easier upper grooves. Without ice on this slab the climb may not be feasible.

—*Auld Nick*. 500 ft. GRADE III/IV.
M. Freeman & G. S. Strange. 20th November 1971.

The climb followed a line of thinly-iced grooves and slabs approximating the summer line. Near the top a right traverse led naturally to the top of Escalator. Late in the season much of this route would bank out.

Stag Rocks.—*Rodent*. 400 ft. Severe. A. Kimber (ldr.), D. Wearing & T. Calvert. 3rd August 1972.

Start in Diagonal Gully opposite the lowest routes of Serrated Rib. The climb follows a corner to the left of the lowest of three prominent overhanging slabs on the right wall of the gully for 250 ft. Now gain arête of jumbled blocks on the right and climb towards large skyline capstone block by a series of cracks. A short steep wall leads to the plateau.

CAIRNGORMS II

Broad Cairn: Creag an Dubh Loch.—*Labyrinth Direct*. GRADE V.
P. Arnold & A. J. Bolton. 10 hours. 11th March 1972.

Start as for Hanging Garden, taking the bottom pitch direct. Instead of traversing left towards the Garden, continue straight up the obvious groove. After 200 ft. of sustained climbing a large roof is encountered. This was turned on the left wall, which was covered with water ice, and gently overhanging for 30 ft. A steep groove continues for a further 100 ft. The final 150 ft. to the cornice is easy.

—*Dragon Slayer*. 1200 ft. Very Severe. D. Dinwoodie & B. Lawrie. 4th October 1972.

A direct line on the Central Slabs taking a central line through the main overlap. Between the starts of Blue Max and Black Mamba is an obvious stepped corner system. Scramble up grassy rake to belay near foot of main corner. To right of corner are obvious twin crack-lines. Climb left-hand crack-line to cracked overlap edge, go round lap and up corner for 10 ft. to swing left onto edge. Go up edge, traverse left under lap, go over bulge into shallow corner and belay at 30 ft., (140 ft.). Continue up corner to exit left at top and go up left over bulge by diagonal crack to gain line of Blue Max with small ledges 20 ft. higher. Traverse left over sloping ledges and go up left by crack in pink slabs to belay under a great open 'mouth,' the main feature of the lower slabs, (110 ft.). Go up and climb over lap into the mouth and climb cracked, overhanging left wall using a peg (in place) and a nut for aid (etriers) to gain slab above. Go up slab for 20 ft. to belay under next overlap, (80 ft.). Go up left to obvious chockstone in bulge of overlap. Climb bulge and follow crack over another bulge to ledge. Step right, and go up cracked slabs for 40 ft. to good stance and belay in obvious crack-line of Blue Max, (120 ft.). Climb to broken ground in 150 ft. by obvious line of Blue Max, turning black overhang on right, and climb to Terrace in another 120 ft. or so.

On right edge of upper slabs, just right of vague broad rib of Blue Max, is obvious long corner. Scramble up right for 50 ft. to obvious thread belay at foot of corner, where obvious escapes to right are apparent. This is below and left of a big unclimbed pink *dièdre*. Climb this sustained corner direct to sloping ledge below obvious slabby layback corner. This leads to very uncompromising ground so turn it on left and go up slabs to belay 30ft. higher, (140 ft.). Traverse left over slabs for 20 ft. to corner and rib of Blue Max and climb this to belay, (130 ft.). Finish up grassy grooves of Blue Max, (150 ft.).

—*The Om.* 260 ft. Very Severe.

D. F. Lang & S. J. Littleford. 8th May 1971.

Start at wall right of Four Corners Route on Central Gully Wall. Climb to flake, then up overhanging wall (wet, A1), swing out and gain spike (crux) and move up to ledge belay on Four Corners Route. Move left and up obvious corner to platform and belay. Exit on right, break back left, step out onto face and traverse to V-groove. Gain rib on right and climb to ledge. A fine exposed pitch. Climb corner and exit on right to finish.

—*Vampire.* 600 ft. Very Severe.

D. Dinwoodie & G. Strange. 8th October 1972.

The route stays close to the obvious corner-line between Cougar and Predator on Central Gully Wall. Climb Cougar for 100 ft. to belay under big bulge. Step right and climb overhanging crack above flake (2 pegs) to gain big corner. Climb corner to grass ledge level with the big Cougar slab and go slightly higher to better stance and belay, (130 ft.). The corner is now abandoned for the slabs on the right. Step back down and traverse right along lower ledge to climb over bulge to slabs. Go delicately up right to gain big holds leading over bulge. Work rightwards and go up by short corner and straight up to step left onto a Blaeberry ledge. Make exposed 30 ft. traverse left along tiny diminishing ledge, go up corner to small sloping ledge, step left over slab, gain higher slab, and go left up this to grassy stance and belay, directly above the last belay and the continuation of the corner, (140 ft.). Go left over slab into short recessed corner. Climb this and go right and up to foot of obvious crack in bulging wall above. Climb crack (2 pegs and a nut) and go up left under bulges and above smooth slab to traverse left to fine platform and belay topping the slab, (100 ft.). Go up left to more broken ground and climb back right to vegetated grooves to easy grass, (130 ft.). Scramble and climb to the plateau. The upper crack was climbed in deteriorating weather and should go free, with some difficulty, on dry rock.

—*Mistral.* 600 ft. GRADE IV.

G. S. Strange & J. Tweddle. 12th March 1972.

This route follows the obvious line of grooves right of False Impression. Start on broad shelf of False Gully. Climb easy snow ramp up right (as for False Impression), then follow snow and ice grooves in four pitches to plateau.

Lochnagar.—*Giant's Head Chimney Direct.* 650 ft. GRADE IV. D. Dinwoodie & N. Keir. 12th February 1972.

Above the initial ice-pitch of the ordinary route, a steep ice-ramp runs up the left wall past the overhangs. This was gained at its base and provided the crux pitch, sustained with some thin ice. Above an icy groove alongside Giant's Head Arête led to an easy snow-bowl. At the top right of the bowl an unstable snow-wall was climbed to gain the crest of Giant's Head Arête. This leads onto the crest of Shadow Buttress A above its tower.

—*Polyphemus Gully, Tower Variation.* GRADE IV. A. J. Bolton & C. Butterworth. 20th February 1972.

After climbing out of the gully along the line taken by the summer pioneers when faced with the beginning of the upper section, traverse easy snow to the foot of the obvious tower on the left. Climb the first corner/groove on the right of this. Surmount cornice on the right. 160 ft. on the Tower; 1 peg used for aid due to exceptionally poor ice.

—*Umbra.* 400 ft. GRADE III/IV. A. J. Bolton & C. Butterworth. 2½ hours. 5th March 1972.

Probably follows the line of Original Route. The route follows the shallow chimney system near the left hand edge of the slab forming the right flank

of Shadow Buttress B. It emerges on the crest of the buttress some 160 ft. below the plateau. Rather disappointing after the one steep slab pitch.

—*Penumbra*. 400 ft. GRADE IV. P. Arnold & C. Butterworth. 2 hours. 18th March 1972.

Follows the large corner running from the narrows of Douglas-Gibson Gully to top of Shadow Buttress B. An excellent situation.

—*Psyche*. 350 ft. Very Severe. M. Freeman & B. Lawrie. 1972.

The climb gains and follows a magnificent crack in the face of Tough-Brown Buttress which runs up to a white rock scar midway between Parallel Gully B and Crypt. Start just left of Crypt (arrow). Follow obvious left-trending fault for about 100 ft., then climb straight up to belay 20 ft. below and slightly left of the crack, (140 ft.). Gain corner on right and, after 10 ft., step left into base of crack. Climb crack to belay at jammed blocks. Follow crack to white scar, climb scar 15 ft., break left onto ledge. Climb up 10 ft. then move delicately to edge of Parallel B. Follow this to overhang and tension traverse from peg to grassy crack which follow to easier ground in easy section of Parallel B.

—*Scarface*. 600 ft. GRADE IV. G. S. Strange & D. Stuart. 12th February 1972.

In most winters the lower face becomes an impressive icefall. On this occasion it gave 250 ft. of sustained climbing on sugary snow-ice and water-ice. The upper rib was relatively straightforward.

Mayar: Corrie Fee.—*The Comb*. GRADE IV. I. Robb & J. Thomson. 4½ hours. 20th January 1973.

The route followed a series of grooves to the right of the summer route to the wide gap at 150 ft. The arête was then climbed on the right side, then a short gully leading to a break in the arête. The slabby face was then traversed for a short distance and then climbed (1 peg) to rejoin the arête at the top. Grooves and a chimney led to the plateau.

Red Craigs, Glen Clova: The Doonie.—*Vindaloo*. 175 ft. Very Severe & A2. J. Cadger & J. Thomson. 6th August 1972.

At start of terrace above Ant Slab there is a high wall with overhangs. Start 10 ft. left of large detached block (arrow). Climb crack for 10 ft. Use aid and climb to overlap. Climb this and slab above, moving right from last bolt to stance on edge and belay, (5 pegs, 3 bolts, 1 rurs, 1 nut), (55 ft.). Move up and left to steep crack, climb wall on left to stance and belay in sentry-box, (25 ft.). Traverse left across steep wall (1 peg) to ledge. Climb wall leftwards and continue over slab to grass ledges. Finish by sharp arête on left to tree belay, (75 ft.).

White Mounth: Eagle's Rock.—*Spectrum*. 350 ft. GRADE III. D. Dinwoodie & J. Mothersele. 1st December 1971.

The summer line was followed throughout giving a sustained climb on near-continuous water-ice.

BEN NEVIS REGION

Ben Nevis: Little Brenva Face.—*Moonwalk*. 890 ft. GRADE III/IV. K. Hughes & J. Mothersele. March 1973.

Start 30 ft. left of Cresta, below a small, easy ice-pitch. Climb this and continue over snow slope to foot of ice-pitch formed by rock corner, (300 ft.). Climb this (spike runners) to start of next snow slope, (150 ft.). Move up to a

steep ice wall, (150 ft.). Climb this for 50 ft. then follow ice groove leading to a snow-ice field in 110 ft. Cross this rightwards to belay below rock wall, (140 ft.). Traverse horizontally right below this to a steep rock arête, which follow to summit slopes.

Minus Three Butress.—*Right Hand Wall Route.* 400 ft. GRADE IV. R. Ferguson & J. Higham. 3½ hours. 7th March 1972.

The summer route was followed over two ice bulges to a cave with twin chimney exits, neither of which could be entered because of apparently bottomless powder snow. A 10 ft. left traverse led to a thinly-iced groove returning to the natural line. The steep slabby final was climbed near its left edge and formed the crux. The climb might well be easier with a good covering of hard snow.

3 Gully Butress.—*Sioux Wall.* 400 ft. Very Severe. I. B. Nicolson (ldr.) & G. Grassam. 4th September 1972.

This route lies on the steep West Face of the butress to the right of Knuckleduster. Start below the obvious large grooves of that route. Follow obvious diagonal weakness up and right to beneath grooves in the centre of the face, (130 ft.). Climb up wall to crack, then move left onto ramp which follow to ledge at start of groove. Continue up groove, moving left at roof to peg belay, (130 ft.). Now go by steep crack and groove above to break small overhang easily to belay, (80 ft.). Climb directly above to finish, (60 ft.).

Càrn Dearg: South Trident Butress.—*Strident Edge.* 300 ft. Very Severe. R. N. Campbell & J. R. Marshall. September 1972.

This is the obvious sharp arête between Spartacus and Sidewinder. Despite its fearsome appearance it yielded a pleasant and straightforward climb. In the very steep middle section a crack splits the arête in two. This was gained from the left and followed over a small roof to easier ground.

Jubilee Butress.—This name is suggested for the steep diamond-shaped butress lying between Central Gully of the Trident and Jubilee Climb.

—*Nosepicker.* 300 ft. Severe. R. N. Campbell & J. R. Marshall. September 1972.

This climb takes the line of least resistance on the butress—a rising leftward movement below the vertical central section is followed by a right traverse onto the nose.

Start below the 10 ft. pitch of Jubilee Climb. Gain slab to left and cross to left-hand side of butress. Climb wide open corner/ramp to platform overlooking Central Gully, (150 ft.). Traverse steep wall on right to gain short steep chimney at 10 ft. Climb this, move right and finish up nose of butress, (150 ft.).

—*Gulbuster.* 330 ft. Very Severe. R. N. Campbell & D. Palmer. October 1972.

This route takes the front of the butress as directly as possible. It involves some very awkward moves and fine situations.

Start just right of toe of butress. Gain it and traverse 20 ft. left to groove which follow to join Nosepicker below corner/ramp. Climb this for 40 ft. to stance and peg belay where two huge ledges breach the steep central part of the butress, (120 ft.). Traverse lower ledge to its end and move round onto right-hand face. Move down and across to rib and up this to gain rotten fault rising rightwards below roof. Enter this head first and stomach traverse below roof to emerge at foothold. Peg belay, (60 ft.). Traverse thin wall on left between roofs to crest of butress, follow gangway to left and ensuing ramp to finish as for Nosepicker up nose of butress, (150 ft.).

GLENCOE, GLEN ETIVE & ARDGOUR

Beinn Chaorach: Creag Chaorach.—*Xenolith*. 470 ft. Very Severe. K. V. Crocket & Miss K. Simpson. 2nd July 1972.

At the right of the crag and at three-quarter height is a prominent black overlap. The following route climbs the slabby rib leading directly to the right end of the overlap. Above the lowest rocks is a small, curving overlap. Start 25 ft. left at a small cairn. Climb slabs to steep rib, move up then left to small stance at pink rocks (195 ft.). Climb steep slab past large block and follow system of quartz veins to enter obvious rectangular recess. Step left and move up flake belay, (110 ft.). Climb groove then thin crack at right end of large overlap and continue up carious slabs to peg belay just below grass ledge, (145 ft.). Finish by a choice of routes up short walls, better to left, (120 ft.).

—*Deadline*. 470 ft. Severe. K. V.

Crocket & C. Stead. 8th July 1972.

Start 20 ft. left of *Xenolith* at large boulder. The route climbs fairly directly up always on the left of a natural watercourse to the left end of the black overlap mentioned in the description of *Xenolith*.

Bidean nam Bian: Aonach Dubh, West Face, B Buttress.—*Bumblebee*. 390 ft. Very Difficult. P. Brian & R. N. Campbell. July 1972.

The most obvious feature of this face is its central rib, well seen in profile when ascending the lower reaches of Dinnertime Buttress. The first 50 ft. of this rib is split by a deep crack. The Shake seems to start at a short corner below and just left of this crack. On the right flank of the rib, starting about 100 ft. above the lowest rocks is a system of grooves leading into a final crack. The route gains this system fairly directly from the rocks to the right of the deep crack referred to earlier and follows the grooves and the final crack to the top of the buttress. The rock is excellent and the grooves section gives a fine pitch.

Geàrr Aonach: North Face.—*Footpad*. 550 ft. Very Severe. K. V. Crocket & C. D. Grant. 22nd July 1972.

This route starts as for *Kneepad*, but continues upwards where that route traverses right.

Climb as for *The Kneepad* to reach the main girdle ledge, (180 ft.). Above is a clean, shallow corner. Climb it to belay in small cave, (60 ft.). Go left 15 ft., climb chimney, step left at top to peg belay on slabby ledge of *The Late Late Show*, (90 ft.). Traverse right off ledge and climb wall with a right bias to peg belay on ledge, (80 ft.). Climb wall to top, (140 ft.).

—*Sidewalk*. 200 ft. Severe.

K. V. Crocket & C. D. Grant. 22nd July 1972.

The North Face is bounded on the right by a scrappy gully. A few hundred feet up this on the left is a steep, smooth wall. The route breaks through the wall at the only point of weakness, near the right end, and just left of a steep, subsidiary gully.

Start by a boulder. Gain heather ledge, sidle left, up layback crack to tree belay, (80 ft.). Climb wall on left on good rock, (120 ft.).

Stob Coire nan Lochain, South Buttress.—*Scausor*. 350 ft. Very Severe. P. Braithwaite & G. Cohen. 2nd September 1972.

This route takes the line of the obvious steep pillar bounding Unicorn on the right. Start as for Unicorn.

Climb up to ledge and peg belay on right, (20 ft.). Climb obvious groove to small ledge. Continue up steep wall above to protection peg and past this to doubtful spike. Traverse right and continue by steep arête to block

and peg belay, (150 ft.). Make awkward move to upper ledge on left. Follow left arête for a few feet then traverse right to small foothold in centre of pillar (peg runner). Now make several strenuous moves up and right to ledge and belay, (110 ft.). Climb obvious steep chimney behind stance, moving out right at top, (60 ft.).

West Top of Bidean.—*Caradhvas Cleft*. 400 ft. GRADE

III. T. Cuddy & L. D. Morris. 29th March 1972.

This is the obvious narrow gully to the right of the Gash, reached from directly below or by means of an icy traverse from Hourglass Gully. On this ascent the small overhanging pitch where the gully becomes defined formed the crux.

Beinn Trilleachan: The Slabs.—*Mosquito*. 300 ft. Severe. R. G. Ross & L. D. Wilson. 15th April 1972.

The route starts in a grassy corner on the extreme left edge of the slabs, where they are bounded by a burn.

Climb steep crack (arrow) to overlap. Surmount overlap and continue up prominent crack until traverse to right can be made. Move up, trending rightwards, on small footholds and belay (peg) below a blank slab, (150 ft.). Climb the blank slab referred to above and traverse right to slab with twin cracks, which is best climbed by its left edge on very rough granite. Follow this slab to grassy terrace and block belay, (150 ft.).

—*Groundhog*. 550 ft. Very Severe.

D. Dinwoodie & G. S. Strange. 23rd September 1972.

The route goes up the slabs between Sickie and Jaywalk to finish by the last section of Jaywalk.

Start at the foot of Sickie corner. Move right and climb up grassy cracks. Continue past loose flake and go up right using sling on spike to reach old sling at obvious break in big overlap. Use tension on this to place peg in bulging crack to right and use slings to gain upper slab. Go up crack to peg and tension up left to big holds. Move up to ledge and climb obvious crack to belay ledge, (120 ft.). Continue up crack-line and grooves in bulging slabs, never far right of grass patches, to finish by short left traverse to loose flake in obvious 80 ft. corner, (150 ft.). (The second man can tension into the big grassy corner to take a safer belay). Climb corner and go up right to old sling in small circular depression on line of Jaywalk. Go straight up then left to belay in flanking corner, (150 ft.). Climb up to big grass ledge of Jaywalk in 20 ft. and climb final wall by Jaywalk, (140 ft.).

Buachaille Etive Mór: Blackmount Wall.—*Neolith*. 500 ft. Very Severe. K. V. Crocket & C. Stead. 12th August 1972.

This route starts just left of the undercut cave on the Chasm to Crowberry Traverse at the first prominent corner some 20 ft. right of Paleolith (see S.M.C.J., 1972, xxx, 78).

Climb corner and continuing chimney to ledge and belay, (140 ft.). Climb wall above to reach Half-way Terrace, (60 ft.). Cross Terrace and continue at mossy groove some 30 ft. right of Paleolith on front of face. Climb mossy groove to ledge and follow obvious steep rib to ledge and peg belay, (130 ft.). Continue up rib to large ledge and follow obvious line leading right and up steep rib ahead, (130 ft.). Continue to top, (40 ft.).

The following three routes lie on the splendid pink wall above and left of the Terrace, which gives climbing of high quality at a reasonable standard.

—*Limbo*. 220 ft. Very Severe.
K. V. Crocket & C. Stead. 12th August 1972.

Follows the impressive chimney bounding the pink wall on the right. Climb chimney direct to belay in cave, (80 ft.). Climb wall on left to top, (140 ft.).

—*Flamingo*. 240 ft. Very Severe. K. V. Crocket & C. Stead. 13th August 1972.

On the steep wall left of Limbo is a thin crack. Climb it and the wall above directly in the same line to a small ledge and peg belay, (140 ft.). Continue directly to top, (100 ft.).

—*Whispering Grooves*. 250 ft. Very Severe. K. V. Crocket & C. Stead. 13th August 1972.

Start 20 ft. left of Limbo at a prominent groove, most obvious from a distance. Climb groove 40 ft., step right into parallel groove and continue to belay on ledge, (130 ft.). Move left, then back right and continue to top, (120 ft.).

D Gully Buttress.—*Alpen*. 840 ft. GRADE IV. S. Belk & I. Fulton: K. V. Crocket & C. Stead. 5 hours. 5th March 1972.

This route follows a prominent twisting chimney-gully system on the East flank of D Gully Buttress. The gully trends steadily left to a big snow bay, then zig-zags rightwards.

Start at the foot of the gully from half-way up the easy gully of Original Route on Central Buttress.

Climb steep turf ledges to belay at start of corner, (150 ft.). Continue up corner to belay in large cave, (60 ft.). Climb right wall of cave near edge and belay in upper chimney, (30 ft.). Climb chimney and trend left on easier ground to small spike belay, (130 ft.). Move left to belay below the rightward of two parallel chimneys, (50 ft.). Climb this ice-chimney and follow a ramp rightwards to belay, (130 ft.). Go up left in the now open gully, (140 ft.). Finish up right on the top of the Buttress, (150 ft.).

Garbh Bheinn: Bealach Gully Buttress.—*Sapphire*. 200 ft. Very Severe. K. V. Crocket & C. Stead. 15th August 1972.

Start at a chimney on the right wall of the gully 30 ft. up from Garnet. Climb chimney to ledge on right, traverse right 20 ft., (peg runner), and climb overhanging corner to ledge and peg belay, (70 ft.). Climb groove above to its conclusion and continue up wall to good flake belay, (130 ft.).

Pinnacle Buttress.—*Tottie's Route*. 180 ft. Severe. B. Dunn & C. Higgins. 20th May 1972.

Start round corner from Blockhead below obvious chimney. Climb left side of chimney for 30 ft., enter chimney and follow it until it opens up into a corner. Regain left edge and continue to belay, (140 ft.). Climb to top of buttress, (40 ft.).

—*Bears' Picnic*. 300 ft. Very Severe. B. Dunn & C. Higgins. 20th May 1972.

Start 50 ft. right of Blockhead, left of whitish slabs. Climb up edge to grass ledge and chockstone belay, (130 ft.). Continue up groove and move onto right rib to reach ledge and chockstone belay, (130 ft.). Move down and left a few feet then climb short chimney to top, (40 ft.).

South Wall.—*Jock*. 220 ft. Very Difficult. A. M. James & Miss C. L. Purdey. 6th June 1971.

Below the broad grassy rake under the lower tier is a somewhat broken face. In the middle of this face is a large area of continuous, sound rock, about 200 ft. high.

The route follows the edge of a prominent corner up the line of a steep crack for 90 ft., to reach the base of an overhang. Make delicate traverse right across slab, and belay below short wall. Climb wall trending leftward to arrive at large ledge. At back of ledge is wall split at left end by prominent crack about 25 ft. high: climb it to easier rocks and the grassy rake.

South Wall, Upper Tier.—*Excalibur*. 250 ft. Very Severe. K. V. Crocket & C. Stead. 10th June 1972.

This route starts below the right-hand end of the upper of two overhangs, breaks out right, then goes back left above the upper overhang with some fine situations.

Start 20 ft. right of Clasp at groove just left of yellow wall. Climb groove until traverse leads to rib on right. Go up then left along lip of big overhang to steep corner. Climb this, step left to ledge and peg belay, (130 ft.). Traverse left 10 ft. then climb walls above, (120 ft.).

Garbh Coire Mór.—*Rampage*. 350 ft. Very Difficult. M. H. Moar & J. D. Roberts-James. June 1971.

This route lies up the prominent expanse of slab on the South-West flank of Garbh Coire Mór, opposite the South Wall of Garbh Bheinn.

The climb starts at the lowest point of the rocks at the left hand side and follows a system of cracks and grooves to a belt of overhangs, which is climbed to the left. It is likely that an earlier but shorter climb has been made in the same area (see S.M.C.J., 1949, xxiv, 140).

CENTRAL HIGHLANDS

Binnein Shuas.—*Left Foot First*. 1100 ft. Very Severe. B. Dunn & C. Higgins. 8th July 1972.

This is a girdle of the main face, giving pleasant, mostly Severe, climbing. Only the second last pitch is Very Severe and this can be avoided.

Start at right end of main cliff. Climb 80 ft. up Second Prize to block belay. Traverse left along ledges and slabs passing belay on Soft Shoe Shuffle (ignore arrow) then go up short corner and mantleself to reach peg belay, (140 ft.). Traverse left across quartz band and up slabs on good holds to grass ledge with belay on left, (140 ft.). Traverse left, crossing top of small square-cut overhang and finally belay (peg) in open groove, (140 ft.). Go round edge to join Ardverikie Wall and follow this route for 35 ft. Leave it and belay in niche above grassy terrace, (150 ft.). Move up left to bulge. Cross this and move up slabs to narrow terrace, (150 ft.). Cross slabby wall above from right edge to flake belay, (100 ft.). Go left again a few feet and continue to peg belay, (150 ft.). Scramble to reach top, (50 ft.).

Craeg Dubh, Newtonmore: Central Wall.—*L.M.F.* 430 ft. Very Severe. F. Harper & W. March. 10th October 1971.

This route takes an almost straight line up between the Brute and Erse. Start at the trees below the first ledge of Brute. Climb straight up to ledge, (60 ft.). Continue straight up overhang and with the aid of a peg surmount it on the left. Climb more easily to ledge with belays, (120 ft.). Above is a long roof—climb up almost to roof and traverse right with difficulty until step can be made on to ledge. Climb up and left to reach large grass ledge, (130 ft.). Climb overhang above on right and continue to top of crag, (120 ft.).

—*Snoopy*. 370 ft. Very Severe. W. March & C. Norris. 1971.

Start right of Rib Direct. Climb into niche and continue up to tree belay on pitch 2 of Rib Direct, (120 ft.). Step left and climb up to foot of

mossy slab, (70 ft.). Climb slab moving left at top (1 peg), (100 ft.). Climb up to overhang using tree and hand traverse 15 ft. right to step up onto nose. Continue to top of crag, (80 ft.).

—*Phellatio Direct*. 140 ft.

Very Severe. K. V. Crocket & C. Stead. 4th June 1972.

Climb first pitch of Phellatio to peg belay, (60 ft.). From left end of ledge climb directly up past small niche to thin grass ledge, move left, and finish up crack (2 peg runners). Peg belay on grass terrace below small overhang, (90 ft.). Climb overhang and slabs above, (50 ft.).

—*Scraping the Barrel*. 160 ft.

Very Severe. F. Harper & W. March. April 1972.

Start at foot of Fred in an obvious corner crack. Climb crack and surmount bulge to belay in corner by small tree, (50 ft.). Climb steep right wall to gain slab. Go straight up and then hard left 10 ft. before continuing directly over ledge to finish, (110 ft.).

—*Pshaw*. 100 ft. Severe.

F. Harper & W. March. April 1972.

Start left of obvious corner 20 ft. left of Potato. Climb straight up wall to overhang which is overcome on right by loose corner and still looser wall above, (100 ft.).

Sprawl Wall.—*Felix*. Very Severe & A2.

W. March & C. Rawlings. 1972.

Start at the foot of Sprawl Wall left of Slanting Groove below a grey wall capped by a large roof. Climb up to roof using one peg for aid. Traverse left onto grass ledge and up to large ledge, (50 ft.). Climb straight up left of Raven's Squawk (peg runner) to gain a stance midway on the traverse ledge of Raven's Squawk. Peg belay, (100 ft.). Climb up and left to below overhang below steep slab. Climb slab (2 pegs) and step right to gain cave below large roof. Traverse right and climb through overhang to ledge (pegs). Traverse left along ledge and up wall above (2 pegs), (100 ft.).

—*Sloop So Low, Direct Finish*.

60 ft. W. March & R. Smith. 1972.

Instead of following last pitch, step left and climb the steep loose wall (1 peg runner), (60 ft.).

Waterfall Wall.—*Brazen*. 120 ft. Very

Severe. A. Fyffe & W. March. 1972.

This and the next climb, Brass, lie on the steep wall left of Oui-Oui where a gully trends diagonally leftward.

Start low in gully at right end of wall. Climb obvious steep crack to grass ledge and trend right up the wall above.

—*Brass*. 110 ft. Severe.

A. Fyffe & W. March. 1972.

Start 20 ft. left of Brazen. Traverse right to ledge and then climb to W-shaped roof. Pass this on left and finish by corner above.

Creag Meaghaidh: Pinnacle Buttress.—*Appolyon Ledge Variation*. 350 ft. GRADE III. W. March. 1972.

From Smith's Gully climb gradually rightward across a series of ledges to gain a steep snow ramp crossing the final wall. Climb this and traverse narrow ledge beyond skyline to reach easy ground 150 ft. below summit of crag.

—*Nordwand*. 1000 ft. GRADE IV.

D. Dinwoodie & B. Lawrie; M. Freeman & G. S. Strange. 11th March 1972.

Starting near the foot of Raeburn's Gully, this climb takes a diagonal line across the Buttress to finish by the Upper Gully of 1959 Face Route. Above the snow-fan of Raeburn's Gully an obvious ledge runs out onto the face. (Raeburn's Ledge). If the climb is in condition, the ledge will probably be draped by a big blue icefall some 200 ft. along the face. Traverse the ledge for one pitch then break through the slabby iced walls above, well before the ice-fall is reached, to reach easier grooves leading up to the central snowfields. Traverse rightwards up the snowfields to join the Face Route at the big icefall barring the Upper Gully.

SOUTHERN HIGHLANDS

This region yielded an extraordinary collection of revolting little routes this year, of which we present a sample. All credit to the E.U.M.C. party for making (on Beinn an Dothaidh) the only route to pierce the tree-line. As one of the prime offenders, John Mackenzie may perhaps be permitted a few extenuating comments here. He writes, 'Considering the number of wee, odoriferous and vegetated crags in remote, pokey, holes in the Central Highlands mentioned in the 1972 *Journal* I feel encouraged to add a few myself in more homely and established areas.' Mr Mackenzie also draws attention to the unusual objective dangers menacing his routes (rolls of barbed wire, etc.), beside which the much-feared loose rock and vegetation of the higher hills 'shrinks to piffling insignificance.' To paraphrase Dr Bell, 'Any fool can climb loose rock and vegetation, but it takes craft and cunning to get up the Old Kilpatrick Rubbish Shoot.'

Beinn an Dothaidh.—*Haar*. 450 ft. GRADE III. M. H. Moar & C. Walmsley. 12th March 1972.

The climb takes the leftmost gully splitting the steep buttress beneath the right-hand branch of West Gully. This gully is referred to in the Southern Highlands Guide (p.196) and has repulsed several strong parties in the past.

The gully contained several ice-pitches, the second one which was very steep and 70 ft. high forming the crux.

Beinn Dubh, Glen Lochy: Central Gully.—A winter ascent of this gully was reported in S.M.C.J., 1970, xxix, 321, and rather arbitrarily tucked away in the Notes Section. We feel that we probably did Beinn Dubh (and its explorer, Mr Mackenzie) an injustice and so are happy to publish his description of a summer ascent in full.

—1000 ft. Very Difficult. A. MacDonald & J. Mackenzie. 27th November 1971.

Four main waterfall pitches were encountered in the gully. The first (about 150 ft.) was turned on the left by broken rock. The next was begun on the right of the fall, then passed through it, leading to an exposed left traverse from the top of the fall into the main gully. This was followed by a long easy stretch leading eventually to a 200 ft. quartz rib studded with beautiful crystals and some rare rose quartz. Above this a steep white quartz wall led to a final overhanging pitch. This was climbed on steep loose rock to a cave with a difficult exit. Another awkward chockstone pitch was climbed by very steep turf.

Bonskeid Crag, Strathtummel.—This crag is described in S.M.C.J., 1966, xxviii, 225. This year, one of its discoverers, Iain Rowe remarks that it is an 'unaccountably neglected crag.' He also urges that (after this route is published, of course) the crag should now be declared FULL UP!

—*Johnny Apollo*. 160 ft. Very Severe. D. Hamilton & I. G. Rowe. 1972.

The route follows the groove left of The Wall. Climb short crag to large ledge. Climb groove above its right-hand end, moving left at mid-height and back right below overhang. Step right using sling on spike to large belay ledge. Finish by The Wall.

Castle Crag, Glen Lednock.—Despite many desperate attempts this year, little has been achieved here. The great 200 ft. crack 'saw off' the newly-naturalised Les Brown (amongst others) and deserves a word of praise.

—*Spare Rib*. 100 ft. Severe. R. N. Campbell & I. Thomson. May 1972.

This is the thin rib flanking the overhanging west buttress on the right. The start is somewhat awkward and there is a spectacular hand-traverse at 60 ft.

A'Chrois.—*The Vice*. 150 ft. Hard Severe. A. Macdonald & H. Smeaton. J. Mackenzie & H. Mundy. 26th February 1972.

From the foot of the largest cave on the South side of A'Chrois a thin vertical chimney can be seen. This is The Vice. It is completely waterproof.

Climb overhanging wall on big holds on right side of cave to belay beneath roof, (30 ft.). Bridge upwards and outwards and squeeze past crux chockstone to belay in recess, (60 ft.). Continue by back and knee to thread runner and then move horizontally to ledge on left with bolt belay, (30 ft.). Squeeze past eyehole and wriggle horizontally to finish, (30 ft.).

Craig Varr, Strathtummel.—This group of crags lies $\frac{1}{2}$ -mile east of Kinloch Rannoch on the north side of the glen, and about 5 minutes walk from the road. They have been explored by various persons from Rannoch School at Dell and from Stirling University's 'Outdoor Centre' at Croiscraigs. As they seem no worse than the 'unaccountably neglected' Bonskeid Crag, we include curtailed descriptions.

Working up the hill we come to the rightmost, lowest crag,

The Lower Tier.—*Venison*. 100 ft. Very Difficult. Climb a slab, some grass and a groove at the left end of the crag.

—*The Black Hat*. 90 ft. Very Severe. Climb short crack on right of grassy central area, trend left and then right below overhangs, finishing at a tree.

—*The Bobble*. 70 ft. Severe. After the first 30 ft. of The Black Hat, trend rightward up wall passing to right of rightmost overhang.

—*Dialectic*. 125 ft. Severe. A good route. Start just right of The Black Hat at a rowan. Climb directly on good holds to reach flake crack, which follow to top.

—*The Great Sod*. 90 ft. Severe. Start below overhang at right end of crag. Go left beneath it and up past rowan to groove which follow past overhang on right to top.

Slightly above and to the right of this first crag is

Mother's Buttress.—*Sprog*. 100 ft. Severe. Follows the left-bounding edge of the buttress, starting from a grassy bay.

—*The Womb*. 110 ft. Severe. This follows an obvious crackline into and through a small cave on the right-hand section of the buttress.

—*Tubes*. 150 ft. Severe. Follows the right-hand arête of the buttress, traverses left across the Womb and finishes up behind detached flake.

Some way left and slightly downhill from the top of Mother's Buttress is **The Upper Tier, East Crag**.—*The Black Handle*. 90 ft. Very Severe. This takes the ridge between the south and east facets of the crag.

Still further left, easily identified by a huge block at its foot, is **The Upper Tier, West Crag**.—*Boulevard*. 80 ft. Severe. The crack and ensuing corner springing up just left of the detached block at the foot.

—*Curved Slab*. 90 ft. Severe. Trend left then right from the top of the detached block up slabs.

—*Woggle*. 90 ft. Severe. Takes an obvious crack line 10 ft. right of the previous route.

Kilpatrick Hills: Loch Humphrey Crag.—*The Old Kilpatrick Rubbish Shoot*. 160 ft. Severe. A. MacDonald & J. Mackenzie. 9th September 1971.

The crag lies between Loch Humphrey and the main Dumbarton road, is steep, high and long and composed of an extremely loose mixture of basalts, dolerites and basaltic breccias. It is also defended from a frontal attack by serried ranks of private houses. In the middle of the face is a large tree-filled gully—the line of the route.

Start left of the gully mouth, climb a steep wall by a crack and mantleself messily rightwards. Trend left and climb green groove to belay at big tree. Climb left wall of gully to awkward position beneath overhanging branch. Let go of the rock and use the branch to catapult you up unclimbable rock, to land on a roll of barbed wire. The next pitch is perhaps the most painful and was climbed in heavy leather mitts. Climb back wall of gully through trees, wild roses and brambles to mantleself onto small ledge. Make a further mantleself onto a tree and bridge up overhanging V-groove. Difficulties soon ease after this. Belay on fence post at top.

The Whangie.—Mackenzie also reports two hard artificial routes here, one 20 ft. right of Back Step and the other on the blank wall right of Triangle. Both are A3 and involve recondite methods employing long ice-pegs and other strange devices.

NOTES

Islands Notes

Harris: Ben Luskentyre, Uamasclett.—K. V. Crocket notes that 'this hill, mentioned in the *Islands Guide* as the eastern summit of Ben Luskentyre, has a rocky northern face overlooking West Loch Tarbert, well seen from the road just west of Tarbert.

'The face is broken by terraces, but at the right of the face, the lowest tier forms a fine little buttress. The climbing is good with slabs and grooves reminiscent of the Etive Slabs. A pleasant Severe was climbed with Miss K. Simpson and took the form of a rising traverse, but harder, more direct lines of a few hundred feet are possible, with fine slab climbing.'

Northern Highlands Notes

Beinn Eighe: Coire Mhic Fhearchair.—D. F. Lang notes that 'the huge square-cut corner to the right of the Door, high up on the West Buttress, gives a magnificent 110 ft. Very Severe pitch.'

Fuar Tholl.—D. Dinwoodie notes that he and Brian Lawrie found that Patey's Nose Direct 'paradoxically takes a zig-zag line up the most attractive buttress with holds masked in vegetation.' Instead, they followed a line 'more or less up the centre, which gave a good climb, steep and sustained on excellent clean rock.'

Inchnadamph.—The factor of Inchnadamph estates has written to point out (referring to p. 153 of Strang's *Northern Highlands Guide*) that cars should not be parked on the River Traligill road (which is private), but should be left at the main public road. Furthermore, camping is not encouraged at the site mentioned in the guidebook.

Cairngorms Notes

Creag an Dubh Loch.—D. Dinwoodie notes a probable second ascent of Predator on Central Gully Wall with D. Lang, made without recourse to aid. He adds that it is 'certainly one of the best routes [there] and deserves to become popular.'

D. Lang notes that 'J. Bower and I climbed to the right of Gulliver by an ascending line to the right above the initial overhangs and then fairly directly to the Caterpillar. [This] gave two superb pitches (both quite hard) and two lesser pitches and took 6 hours.'

Glen Feshie.—I. Fulton notes that the bridge over the Feshie at Grid Ref. 845995 no longer exists. The river is, of course, difficult to ford here and the alternative is a 4 mile walk upstream.

Lochnagar.—Dinwoodie notes that 'in January 1972 the direct start to Parallel Buttress was climbed by two ropes taking independent lines. Both were steep, sustained and occupied most of the day. The better line was an obvious icy groove left of centre.'

Ben Nevis Notes

Minus One Buttress.—K. V. Crocket notes that on Minus One Direct the peg on the third pitch is not required.

South Trident Buttress.—N. Muir & D. Regan reported an ascent of a route on this buttress similar in description to Strident Edge (see *New Climbs*), but climbed sometime earlier in the year. Marshall & Campbell encountered no evidence of a previous party on their ascent and threw down much loose rock. Moreover, Muir's name for the route, 'Pink Dream Maker,' suggests that he may have been suffering from hallucinations. However, we will attempt to resolve the issue of priority by next issue.

Central Trident Buttress.—The excellent routes on this buttress by Nicholson & Docherty (particularly Metamorphosis) deserve more popularity and to this end we have published a photograph showing the approximate lines of their routes (see p. 186). Climbers visiting this buttress should note that descent is something of a problem, if time does not allow crossing Càrn Dearg to No. 4 Gully. Jubilee Climb is perhaps the best descent but it requires care.

While on the subject of Jubilee Climb, we receive 'first winter ascents' of this route with great regularity. In fact there is a recorded descent of the route by Haston & Smith in the early 1960's. Moreover, it seems almost certain to have been climbed long before then. Matters are not helped by Clough's Guide, in which Central Gully is referred to as 'Jubilee Gully.'

Winter 1973: A personal view.—'The Ben endured a terrible beating this winter at the hands of foreign visitors. Large groups of Americans occupied Fort William throughout the winter and every weekend red-eyed teams from Lancashire were to be seen on the mountain, muttering 'Oop the M6, oop the M74, etc.' Point Five and Zero Gullies received numerous ascents in derisory times, showing the effectiveness of the new ice-climbing techniques. Perhaps the most freakish performance of the season was Ian Nicholson's solo ascents of these two gullies in a combined time of approximately three hours. Afterwards, he was overheard to remark in surprised tones, 'You know, when you're doing these big icy climbs solo, you sometimes wonder what might happen if you fell off.'

'The only new climb made seems to have been Con Higgins & Dougie MacArthur's ascent of Continuation Wall. An interesting repetition was Mike Geddes & Alan Rouse's second ascent of Minus Two Gully. This, the last of Marshall's great ice climbs to be repeated, no doubt marks the end of an era, if not the beginning of a new one.

'Lastly, one must draw attention to the increasingly frenzied activity of the local search and rescue battalions. On most winter Sundays, helicopters, dogs and assorted ground forces deploy up and down the Allt a' Mhuilinn, adding to the already intolerable Babel and further disfiguring the mountain scene. The consequences of benightment have never been more serious.'

R.N.C.

Glencoe Notes

Aonach Dubh: East Face.—K. V. Crocket notes an ascent of Hesitation here with I. Fulton, in which the peg was not required.

North Face.—J. Mackenzie notes that the guidebook description of Fingal's Chimney is seriously at fault. On an ascent with A. MacDonald last summer they found the climb to be 720 ft. in length, not 500 ft. as in the published description. Moreover, they followed the line of the chimney throughout (unlike the pioneers who moved off leftwards at some point below Pleasant Terrace) and this gave about 400 feet of climbing, the last 100 feet of which provided the crux of the climb—a 'desperate flake (loose) climbed *a cheval*.' Other opinions about this route are invited.

Stob Coire nan Lochan.—K. V. Crocket notes that the anonymous ascent of Moonshadow reported in last year's *Journal* was 'perpetrated by Colin Stead and myself.' This was, of course, an Editorial error, for which we apologise.

Central Highlands Notes

Creag Dubh, Newtonmore.—Dinwoodie notes that 'Harper's route Slabsville (S.M.C.J., 1971, xxix, 419) is a duplication in nomenclature, if not also in route, of McKeith's route of the same name (S.M.C.J., 1967, xxviii, 329).

Creag Meaghaidh.—Dinwoodie notes that 'McKeith's guide would suggest that the big ledge below Apollyon Ledge is Raeburn's Ledge. This is in fact called Vanishing Ledge, according to an old *Journal* (S.M.C.J., 1937, xxi, 265). Raeburn's Ledge is much lower, with a diagonal tilt, and, although obvious, is not marked on McKeith's diagram.'

(*Opposite*)—

Nicholson and Docherty's routes on Central Trident Buttress of Ben Nevis.





Stead and Crockett on the Curtain, Carn Dearg Buttress.

Miscellaneous Notes

Guardian of Glas Maol.—Adam Watson, Senior, has sent in the following account of an act of vandalism perpetrated on a Scottish hill by a service unit, which, by quick and vigorous action, he managed to reverse. The hill, Glas Maol, is one of Adam Watson's favourites which he has visited so often he regards as his special trust. He suggests that every hillman should 'adopt' a hill and protect it from the mindless sheep that are brought there for weekend pasturage by various well-intentioned organisations. Adam Watson's account makes it clear that the owners of these flocks are very anxious that their sheep and shepherds should behave well. The owner of the Glas Maol desecrators acted in a commendably civilised manner and has started to train his flock for an evolutionary ascent by making them gather up litter instead of spreading it around.

There are probably ten good and true mountaineers in Scotland for every hill in our country. It might be a good idea if we sorted ourselves out so that every hill had its guerilla band to defend it against the mindless. As Adam Watson demonstrates, organised groups can be dealt with if their name and origin can be found out and a picture of the scene of the crime taken as hard evidence.

My encounter with a service unit resulted from a visit to Glas Maol in June 1971, when I found the summit Cairn had been badly damaged and areas surrounding it made very untidy. Over the years I have seen much wanton damage by vandals to cairns and plateaux, but this was the worst; moreover, it had been done by servicemen who had obviously lacked disciplined supervision. My son, Adam, had been at the cairn a few days earlier, and while chatting with some of the servicemen who had just set up camp there, he was told the name of the unit. These men had little experience of being in the hills. One group, that day, had mistakenly gone to Cairn of Claise from Glen Isla instead of to Glas Maol; another man, pointing to the Cairngorms, said they were going on an exercise to the bigger hills, after Glas Maol, impressively referring to them as 'The Catacombs Mountains'. I photographed the cairn and its surroundings and the rubbish lying around. Then I counted over 120 different items of rubbish. This consisted of unused packets of toilet paper, packets of oatmeal, many tubes and tins of jam (some intact and some partially used), empty tins of soup, meat, and jam, stale bread, metal tent pegs, some wooden fencing posts removed from the plateau fence, many used storage batteries, and numerous service telephone pads, *some in code with the name and address of the unit*. They had unsuccessfully tried to hide some of their rubbish by pushing articles between stones on the cairn or half burying them in shallow hollows nearby. Unfortunately, they had also pulled out many stones from the cairn itself, from the vegetation nearby and from a Land Rover track on the way to Cairn of Claise, to make wind-shelters. No attempt had been made to demolish the wind-shelters of fill up the gaping holes in the vegetation and this added to the general untidiness.

As I feared that they would make a similar mess on their Cairngorm trip soon after, and on every future exercise, I decided that firm and prompt action was necessary. I wrote a long letter to the Officer Commanding the unit, saying that I knew Glas Maol well, having in the first six months of 1971 visited it over 25 times; that it was an accessible and popular hill, always tidy, with a symmetrical cairn; and that I was amazed to find so much mess made by servicemen under his command. I described in detail the damage done and the various items of rubbish, and said I was determined to prevent a repetition of the outrage. I wrote that I possessed camera pictures of the cairn before and after the damage, and that I would visit Glas Maol again on the expiry of seven days. If I then found that the cairn and its surroundings and the Land Rover track had not been restored to their original

condition and all rubbish removed from the mountain (I pointed out that burying rubbish on the hill would not be tolerated), I would give full publicity by sending copies of my letter and of the two sets of camera pictures to the Ministry of Defence, the owners of Glas Maol, the Nature Conservancy, National Newspapers, and every Climbing Club in Scotland. I stressed the likely effect that this would have on the unit's public relations; if landowners were aware of damage done by this service unit, they might not allow future units on their land. My letter certainly took immediate effect. The O.C. wrote to say that he was greatly perturbed at the contents of my letter; that disciplinary action had been taken that day; that an Officer and 30 other ranks had been that same day to Glas Maol, tidied up the areas and removed the rubbish from the hill and, that if I had further complaints, to get in touch with him at once. Following on this letter, I made a full inspection of the hill. Although I was prepared to assure him that he had satisfactorily dealt with my complaint, I saw that their effort to re-build the summit cairn had resulted in a rather irregularly shaped mass of stones; to me, the shapely old cairn can only be a memory.

In view of their effort to put matters right and the co-operative letter from the O.C., I do not wish to publish the name of the unit. Also, shortly afterwards the O.C. ordered his men to do a major clean-up of other people's rubbish in Glen Clova, which was a generous act that rightly gave them favourable publicity. He might be interested to know that I have undertaken during my leisure time to see that Glas Maol has been kept tidy ever since then. I seldom go there without removing some rubbish, and even at 7 years old my grandson has enthusiastically taken part, putting stones back into place and carrying bottles off the hill to sell at the Crathes shop! Indeed, I have come to regard it almost as "my" hill for which I am the self-appointed guardian, and now object to rubbish there more than on other hills. Iain Smart, John Duff, my son and I believe it would be a good idea if many climbers were to "adopt" hills similarly.

Search and Destroy.—After Adam Watson's successful campaign to turn the attention of Her Majesty's Armed Forces to searching out and destroying litter, we report another search and destroy operation carried out by Edinburgh University Mountaineering Club against the bewildered Munros. As with the previous Corrie Mulzie attempt to make a corporate ascent of all the Munros within 24 hours (S.M.C.J., xxix, 1970, 323) we are impressed with the honesty of the participants who have made no attempt to fiddle the results. All honour to them. M. H. Moar writes—

'A total of 56 members were employed on the "Search and Destroy" campaign on the hill, and an organising Triumvirate was aided, at the Newtonmore base by a few other sedentary members. Some expeditions, thought to be fairly long and arduous, were completed within the first 12 hours and the subsequent failure was a surprising disappointment rather than an expected conclusion. The attempt failed by three summits—Blaven was not ascended, Mayar and Driesh were "bagged" before the official Saturday mid-day start (a mysterious misunderstanding).

The worthiness of the attempt, frequently questioned by at least one notable expatriate was ignored during the weekend; it was a good chance to get out on the hill during a spell of excellent weather. At any rate (and at the expense of flogging a flagging horse) E.U.M.C. has now completed all the Munros within (a brief) month—beat that if you really want to.'

Over the Maiden.—E. W. Hodge rushes *à la* Adam Watson to the defence of his favourite mountain. He writes—'I notice in Tom Strang's Northern Highlands Guide, he gives the height of A' Mhaighdean as 3061, or only 11 feet higher than Tarsuinn, which he reduces to 3050. It would be interesting to know his reasons for this. An aneroid reading? I always had a

special affection for A' Mhaighdean and hate to see it traduced. I made a number of comparative observations all round it (2-way) with an Abney Level, and believe it to be 3100 or a foot or two more.'

District Guide hit by Rocket.—E. W. Hodge fires the following rocket to join the others passing over St. Kilda. 'The illustration on p.121 of the Islands District Guide titled Bororay and Stac Lee, quite clearly does not show Stac Lee but Stac an Armin (direct personal knowledge). Incidentally Bororay is usually spelt Boreray.'

Anvil Chorus: The Opening of the Dundonnell Hut.—A. J. Bennet reports the shoeing of a new hut by An Tealleach. 'The Smiddy, at Dundonnell, was opened as a Club Hut of the J.M.C.S. (Edinburgh Section) on Saturday 11th November 1972. The hut is to be in memory of Jim Clarkson, (1927-68) who was in both the J.M.C.S. and the S.M.C. At the opening ceremony Ian H. Ogilvie, M.B.E. addressed a considerable gathering of J.M.C.S. and others including your representative and members of the local community. Strong winds and wintry showers ensured that, in spite of the alluring peaks of An Tealleach rising above, attendance was good, and the remarks brief. A plaque in memory of Jim Clarkson was duly unveiled, and the company of 40-50 assembled in the hut, which has accommodation for 10. Refreshments were liberally provided.

'The tasteful and well planned arrangement of the hut does great credit to the J.M.C.S. There is running water and electricity. The bunks are in the bring-your-own-sleeping-bag-and-air-mattress principle. A pleasant touch is the preservation of the original(!) forge and bellows, in working order. But the customs of former years are out—a socket for electric shaver is provided. Charge 25p/night. *Custodian*, J. H. Clark, 11 Dundonald Street, Edinburgh, EH3 6PZ (031-556 3409).

The Wandering Pole.—R. D. Walton reports the following story. 'A hill walker friend recently bought a pocket compass. He checked it at his home as working quite normally. On his next expedition to the hills he took it out and could not make sense of the readings it gave. He realised quite quickly that in fact it was pointing about 180° out. He then realised further that he had driven to the hills with the compass in his jerkin pocket immediately adjacent to the buckle on a magnetic type seat belt, and he now assumes that this had reversed the polarity of his compass needle. Has this effect been noticed by anyone else? It might obviously be quite serious and quite common.' We notice that his observations all depend on the correctness of his initial observation, that the compass was originally correct and that there was not a mistake during manufacture.

Clan Munro.—Two people report having arrived peching at their last Munro. They are: (106) Andrew Nisbet 1972, —, — and (107) B. K. E. Edridge 1972, ——. Andrew Nisbet, a member of the Cairngorm Club, writes, 'I am told that I may be the youngest ever to finish; I was 18 years, 1 month, 21 days old. I finished on 13th July at 1.25 p.m. with Seana Braigh.' Edridge for his part reports—'The ascents have spanned nine years and ended on Ben More, Mull on a truly perfect day. Naturally enough the complete range of weather conditions was encountered during the nine years and many memorable days stand out. The solitary Munro-bagging epic was a benightment with Wilf Tauber on the night of last year's Cairngorm Tragedy. We were truly grateful to reach the bothy in the dark. On a point of precedence (11) E. W. Hodge points out 'I completed all the mountains in the British Isles before (12) John Hirst (thus being the first Englishman—modest as this distinction may be) although Hirst did the subdivisions which I never

did.' One day a definite list may be compiled by someone who has nothing better to do, in which the order of precedence within each year will be re-examined. Meantime let us get on with the climbing while we may, and leave the hair splitting until the hills are no longer accessible because of military and commercial developments 'of one kind or another.'

Pentland Hundreds.—Recent Journals (particular the 'In Memoriam' sections) attest Alex. Harrison's continued involvement in the Club's affairs. Ian M. Campbell sent us the following note, showing that our Honorary President will have many more obituaries to write!

'At the end of February, our Honorary President and three Club members climbed Carnethy (1890 ft.) and Scald Law (1898 ft.) and, proceeding westwards had lunch on the col below Scald Law. A bottle of sherry was here produced since the occasion was the 83rd birthday of the Honorary President. After that, the party climbed East Kip (1737 ft.) and West Kip (1796 ft.).

'Those of us who have the pleasure of walking regularly on the hills with the Honorary President are not in any way surprised by his completing this hill walk, but those of us who were with him on 1st April when we went in arctic conditions to erect a Rights of Way sign post in an area some considerable distance north of the east end of St. Mary's Loch were amazed at the cheerful sangfroid shown by him on that occasion. He disdained to wrap himself up in protective clothing which we found essential and, throughout the whole exercise, showed a cheerful enjoyment that was reassuring to the mid-60's juveniles in the party.'

Library Decentralised.—Robin Gall Inglis sends us the following note:—The Library is now in position at the Librarian's business premises at 12 Newington Road, Edinburgh, 9, and is open from 9 to 12.30 a.m. and 1.30 to 4.30 p.m., Monday to Friday, and on most Wednesday evenings from 7.45 to 9.30 p.m. Requests for books by post should be made to the Librarian at the above address.

Additions to the Library.—The Club acknowledges with thanks the generous gift by Hamish Brown of no less than 105 volumes on mountaineering and exploration. This valuable collection contains mostly recent books and the coverage reflects the donor's comprehensive interest in the bumpier parts of the earth's surface.

The titles are (arranged in alphabetical order by author):

Expedition South—W. E. Anderson; *Snow Commando*—M. Banks; *Unrelenting Ice*—R. Banks; *Travellers in Switzerland*—G. de Beer; *Nanga Parbat Adventure*—F. Bertholi; *We Dared the Andes*—Bolinder; *Adventures in Ice and Snow*—Bristow & Hinton; *The Hard Years*—Joe Brown; *Polar Exploration*—W. Bruce; *Delectable Mountains*—D. Busk; *Alone*—Admiral Byrd; *Northern Lights*—F. S. Chapman; *Six Great Mountaineers*—R. Clark; *Snowdonia National Park*—M. Condry; *Polar Exploration*—A. Croft; *Feet in the Clouds*—S. Deane; *The Ascent of K2*—A. Desio; *Summits of Adventure*—J. Douglas; *Rangi—Highland Rescue Dog*—E. Dudley; *The Third Pole*—G. Dyhrenfurth; *Mont Blanc*—C. Engel; *Scratch & Co.*—*The Great Cat Expedition*—M. le Febvre; *Ski-ing in the Alps*—R. Fedden; *Shackleton*—M. Fisher; *Bayonets to Lhasa*—P. Fleming; *News from Tartary*—P. Fleming; *Travels in Tartary*—P. Fleming; *The Antarctic World*—J. Fuller; *The Worst Journey in the World*—A. C. Garrard; *The Throne of the Gods*—Gausser; *Mountain Guide*—P. Graham; *Venture to the Arctic*—R. Hamilton; *I Come from the Stone Age*—H. Harrer; *Seven Years in Tibet*—H. Harrer; *Eiger Direct*—D. Haston; *Across the Top of the World*—W. Herbert; *Schoolhouse in the Clouds*—E. Hillary; *Summer Months in the Alps*—T. Hinchcliffe; *More than Mountains*—J. Jackson; *Alpine Days and Nights*—Kirkpatrick;

A History of Polar Exploration—L. Kirwan; *The Ascent of Alpmayo*—Kogan & Lenniger; *The Lure of the Hills*—F. Lee; *Greenland Days*—M. Lindsay; *Sledge*—M. Lindsay; *Because it is There*—G. Lowe; *Maiterhorn Centenary*—A. Lunn; *Switzerland and the English*—A. Lunn; *Karakoram*—F. Maraini; *Home of the Blizzard*—Sir D. Mawson; *The Motor Highways of the Alps*—H. Merrick; *Mont Blanc and the Aiguilles*—C. D. Milner; *Australasia's Alps*—E. Mitchell; *Home Ground*—G. Moffat; *Two Star Red*—G. Moffat; *Woman's Reach*—N. Morin; *Three Miles High*—L. Moules; *The Desolate Antarctic*—Admiral Mountevans; *The Waiting Land*—D. Murphy; *Tibet is my Country*—Thubten Norbu; *South Col*—W. Noyce; *Springs of Adventure*—W. Noyce; *They Survived*—W. Noyce; *The Unknown Mountain*—W. Noyce; *The Great White South*—H. Ponting; *Scott of the Antarctic*—R. Pound; *On Snow and Rock*—G. Rebuffat; *Nansen*—E. Reynolds; *Ski Runs of Austria*—J. Riddell; *Woman in the Polar Night*—C. Ritter; *On Rock and Ice*—A. Roch; *Mountain Prospect*—S. Russell; *Southern Lights*—J. Rymell; *Four Miles High*—J. Scarr; *Men, Woman and Mountains*—C. Schuster; *Peaks and Pleasant Pastures*—C. Schuster; *Postscript to Adventure*—C. Schuster; *Edward Wilson of the Antarctic*—G. Seaver; *Gino Watkins*—J. Scott; *The Heart of the Antarctic*—E. Shackleton; *Antique Land*—E. Shipton; *Land of Tempest*—E. Shipton; *Nanda Devi*—E. Shipton; *Home is a Tent*—M. Simpson; *Norway, the Northern Playground*—W. Slingsby; *Blue Remembered Hills*—S. Styles; *Men and Mountaineering*—S. Styles; *Adventurer's Eye*—T. Stobart; *Quest for a Continent*—W. Sullivan; *Glacier Island*—G. Sutton; *Mountains of the Moon*—P. Syngé; *Sir Hubert Wilkins*—L. Thomas; *Mischief among the Penguins*—H. Tilman; *Mischief in Patagonia*—H. Tilman; *Nepal Himalaya*—H. Tilman; *Kenya to Kilimanjaro*—R. Triffant; *Pioneer in the High Alps*—F. Tuckett; *Hudson's Bay Trader*—Lord Tweedsmuir; *Tiger in the Snow*—W. Unsworth; *Camps and Climbs in Arctic Norway*—T. Weir; *Portrait of a Mountaineer*—D. Whillans; *Mountains with a Difference*—G. W. Young.

Death Duties.—Members contemplating the Final Ascent might like to know that there is now a severe shortage of back numbers of the *Journal*. Robin Gall Inglis, who has to deal with the clamorous hordes of members anxious to plug their gaps, would like it to be known that bequests (or even posthumous sales!) of old *Journals* to the Club would be much appreciated.

The Sang Award.—The recipients of this award in 1972 were the Mountain Bothies Association. They sent us the report which follows below.

'The first visit to White Laggan is remembered only for the vehemence of the unceasing storm on the road that Friday night when a weary four, after several abortive attempts to find the watery thread of the road beyond Clatteringshaws Loch, eventually stumbled into the welcome shelter of the barn at Craigencaillie at the road head. We had intended to camp but would have been very loathe to try to attempt to erect a tent in such conditions. Needless to say, it needed a real effort of will to shoulder spades and set off along the waterlogged track to the head of Loch Dee in search of the scene of our future enterprise. As yet, a decision as to which bothy would be renovated had not been reached—either Black Laggan or White Laggan might be the subject of our attentions. This very much depended upon the condition of the shell. Neither seemed particularly inspiring when viewed in the gloom of a damp autumn afternoon but it was generally conceded that White Laggan would be the easier proposition of the two.

'Even this would be a bigger task than any we had hitherto tackled and, as the workforce would only be turning out at weekends, the task would be likely to exceed a year's duration. However, with the success of Cross Fell newly completed, it seemed nothing could stop us now and with undiminished enthusiasm I cut the first mouldy sod of rotting vegetation in the bothy and

we were under way. On that first visit we successfully cleared out the bothy and to our delight found that the concrete floor was still intact. The roof, which lay at a drunken angle, was stripped of what good slate there was to salvage and we left on the late Sunday afternoon well pleased with ourselves.

The project proposals were reviewed and as we had promise of regular work parties from Edinburgh, inspired by the local area representative, Dave Dixon, it was agreed that the White Laggan project should be the major objective for the 1972-3 season of bothy building. Although it looked as if the coffers of the M.B.A. would be very severely depleted, it was hoped that by encouraging regular visits that a team of workers could be gathered and that they would be encouraged to stay together for future projects. I had long argued that this was the only real way of tackling project work and I was strongly supported in my view by Dave, himself a tireless worker in the bothy-building field.

It was only by chance that I heard of the Sang Award though I am tempted to surmise that our good friend behind the scenes, Sandy Cousins of the S.M.C., may have had a hand in it somewhere. It seemed that if we were to get the Sang Award, a not inconsiderable sum of £150, then I could only apply on M.B.A.'s behalf on the flimsiest of pretexts. Nothing daunted, I put pen to paper and for the next three of four months kept my fingers crossed. They say that Fortune favours the few and it seemed that the few willing hands that I had were beginning to feel the support from their fellow bothyites just wasn't forthcoming. The task seemed endless and after countless weekends pointing walls which seemed to be as full of holes as ever, enthusiasm was decidedly jaded. A letter arrived from the treasurer of the Scottish Mountaineering Trust asking where he was to send the cheque from the Sang Award. This was a welcome shot in the arm and rejuvenated the whole work party. The endless slogs along the road from Craigencaillie took on a new dimension and it all seemed much more worthwhile. Recognition at last! About the same time someone mentioned that it might be a useful idea to use the bothy at Backhill of Bush instead of the midge-infested environs of Craigencaillie. An offer to get the timbers was seized upon with determination and unseen friends from Ayrshire rallied round and got the timber for the roof and several hundredweights of sand into the bothy. It was true that the cement had still to be carried in to the site but several stalwarts came forward and offered their services as sherpas and the work carried on apace.

We learned to our cost on several occasions that the weather in Edinburgh often tends to be much more favourable than that in the Galloway hills and on one occasion, having braved several withering blasts of ice-cold rain from the pass, the wall construction team finally gave up but only after several bucket-fuls of cement had oozed out of the wall. In disgust they sought the sanctuary of Backhill of Bush and the fleshpots of the Ken Bridge Hotel. It was the only time the weather really beat us. On the Sunday we even became tourists for a day and ended up in Ayr for a genuine plastic fish and chip tea. The experiment was never to be repeated!

As time passed the forestry road encroached still further along the hill towards the White Laggan burn. This made the task of carrying in the roof sarking and extra cement and sand a good deal easier. For once we only had to cross the soggy ground just below the bothy. This can be very wet at times and the number of members who have forsaken climbing boots for wellingtons has increased.

After sixteen trips we now have the roof on and we are very proud that we have built a new section of stone wall from scratch, and that we have re-slatted the roof using the blue Scottish slates from the old roof and several yards of similar material salvaged from the old ruin at Black Laggan. The roof was finally topped out on Saturday 3rd of February. A new fireplace

has been constructed and several shelves and a sleeping platform can now be used. It only requires the completion of a stone kitchen at the front of the bothy to finish the work. Opening day promises to be quite an event as the workers hope to have a dinner at the Ken Bridge Hotel followed by a slide show and ceilidh.

'It has often been remarked that bothy building isn't just putting buildings back together—it is a team achievement and this is one team that aims to stay together. This will ensure that the Edinburgh group of the M.B.A. will survive and in its way the Sang Award helped to play a part in welding together a team when it was most needed. The bonds of friendship which have resulted from this enterprise will ensure future work will be done to meet the needs of others elsewhere in the Scottish glens.'

Galley Slaves.—In the hope that the *Journal* will appear at least once on time during his term of office, the Editor has persuaded the Club to allow him the services of yet another assistant. His latest victim is Ian Rowe, who will henceforth assume responsibility for New Climbs (undeniably the nastiest job of the lot). As well as relieving the Editor of another burden (soon he will have nothing to do), it seems likely that the New Climbs section will benefit from being in the hands of someone still able to climb!

Apology.—Illustrations numbers 8, 28, 36, 38, 42 and 50 in the current edition of the *Island of Skye* guide are incorrectly credited to D. Bennet. They are in fact the work of W. Poucher, and form part of a collection of photographs presented by him to the Club some time ago. We apologise to Mr Poucher for this mistake.

Scottish Mountaineering Accidents 1972

THESE reports are published by the Club as a courtesy to the M.R.C. of S., whose Officer i/c Accident Recording, Ben Humble supplies us with them. The Club accepts no responsibility for the accuracy of these reports and any correspondence regarding them should be addressed to Mr Humble, 'Feithlinn,' Aviemore, Inverness-shire. Our impertinence in presuming to pass comment on the value of these reports in last year's *Journal* is noted by Mr Humble in this year's Letters section, to which readers are referred. We apologise to Mr Humble for supposing that the reports contained value judgments and that these were his own; it is clear that Mr Humble neither embroiders official reports, nor does he leave out important circumstances. As to the question of 'intelligent use,' we were thinking more of the significance of these reports for the mountain rescue organisations than of their significance for the climber. Personally, we feel that there is a need for more circumspect action on the part of rescue authorities. We believe that there is evidence in these reports to sustain such a point of view, but as the years go by, the rescue authorities seem to become more trigger-happy, not less. A polite, unemotional, unselfrighteous dialogue on the subject would be appropriate. Letters bearing these hallmarks would be welcome.

The following remarks are taken from Mr Humble's survey of the year's accidents.

'Reports have been received of 44 accidents on the hills (14 deaths) plus 14 searches for folks lost or benighted (no injury) plus 4 rescues of boys cragfast when climbing alone—a total of 65. There were also 4 deaths from natural causes which involved stretcher parties.

'35% of accidents occurred under winter conditions, 40% of incidents involved parties from England, in 40% of incidents climbers were involved (9 deaths) and in the remaining 60% hill-walkers (5 deaths).

'Due to the increasing use of mountains for training purposes, there were more incidents involving Army parties—6 in all, of which 4 involved Junior Soldiers' Regiments.

'There were 4 incidents involving Cadet parties from schools and colleges and two other school parties.

'Navigation (or lack of it) formed the background or was the cause of 20% of the incidents and was the cause of almost all large-scale searches. Other hill-walking accidents were mainly due to simple slips and poor footwear. There were not so many cases of poor clothing as in previous years. Among hill-walkers in winter, the main causes of accidents were slips on hard snow without an ice-axe or inability to stop slips with an ice-axe or loss of control when glissading.

'Due no doubt to the greater numbers involved, there were more accidents to roped parties while rock climbing, 12 being noted with 7 deaths. In two of these a handhold came away. In all others the cause appeared to be a slip by the leader and in 4 cases his belays came out. Among accidents to snow climbers, 2 were due to avalanche and 1 to a collapsing cornice.

NORTH AND WEST HIGHLANDS

JUNE 15TH — Party of Junior soldiers from Infantry Depot, Aberdeen, crossing from Glen Moriston to Loch Affric. Two groups reached rendezvous; third group lost. Search parties out plus helicopter. Leader of this group had failed to orientate his map and failed to check direction, so that the party travelled south instead of north, reached Loch Garry, spent night there and returned by outward route.

JUNE 17TH — Soldier (19), Royal Engineers, absented himself from survival training. Search parties out in Totaig area. He had spent night in a cave and returned under own power next morning.

JULY 24TH — Adrian Bond (17), in party of 5 staff and 24 Army Cadets from Tonbridge School on hill walk from Glen Shiel over Five Sisters of Kintail to their base camp in Glen Lichd. When crossing top of Coire Domhain this boy slipped and fell over cliffs into corrie. Killed.

AUGUST 17TH — David Evans and 10 year-old son set off from Loch Morar to walk over hills to Mallaig. Lost map, had no compass and went off route. Search parties out. Located by shores of Loch Nevis.

SEPTEMBER 4TH — Male (32). English, struck by stone dislodged by companion when hill-walking near summit of Ben Sgriol, Arnisdale. Head injuries.

SEPTEMBER 5TH — Male (37), slipped and fell, Glas Bheinn, Achnacarry. Knee injuries.

NOVEMBER 8TH — Lone walker (31), fell, Sgùrr na Ciche—crawled to Camus-rory and because of bad weather not evacuated till 10th. Broken nose, torn ligaments left leg and bruises.

FEBRUARY 12TH — Miss Margaret Gauld (37), Aberdeen, a keen hill walker, found dead Shenaval Bothy, Wester Ross.

CAIRNGORMS

JANUARY 5TH — Kenneth Duckworth (26), Aberdeen. Fell Loch Muick area. Broken ankle.

(*Opposite*)—Three men on a roof, reconstructing a mountain bothy.



JANUARY 23RD — John Morrison (24), one of party of 4 from Dundee on Lochnagar. When descending into Glas Choire party split up. Three went down to the Lochan for a drink while Morrison stayed up on ridge leading out of Choire. On leaving the lochan the others could see Morrison descending on a parallel track 300 feet above them. Occasionally cloud obscured him from view and they eventually lost sight of him but assumed he was descending independently to Gelder Sheil Bothy (G.R. 257 900). Morrison did not turn up at bothy, party returned to search but no trace found. Massive search mounted on morning of 24th. Morrison found dead at G.R. 245 915. Tracks showed that he had become disorientated soon after party split up and headed NW instead of NE, then changed to N course. He had no equipment with him as one of the others carried shared rucksack. Weather calm at first then deteriorated to high winds and low cloud. Death from exposure. Police Snowtrac was used to convey searchers into the area and saved many man hours.

FEBRUARY 13TH — Elizabeth Kettles (Dundee), one of a party from Aberdeen University Lairig Club and Carn Dearg Mountaineering Club, climbing Raeburn's Gully, Lochnagar. Leading and when trying to insert an ice screw a small powder avalanche came down the gully and just afterwards she fell off backwards. Stopped by her second who was well belayed, after sliding about 30 feet. Complained of pain in left ankle. Lowered down to bottom of gully using Dead Man Belays. Party made a rope stretcher and Miss Kettles, now inside a duvet jacket, sleeping bag and tent sac was carried to Gelder Shiel. Fractured left fibula. Club party very well equipped and rescue very well organised.

FEBRUARY 13TH — Robert Hutchison and George Mitchison with two others, all from Morpeth, set off at noon to climb in Coire an't Sneachda. Other two climbed Alladin's Couloir and returned to base. Police alerted when others did not return. Teams out overnight. Helicopter from Leuchars called. At 9.30 a.m. the two arrived at Glenmore Lodge, safe and well. They had completed climb in darkness and mist, had no map and little knowledge of the area—only information to turn left at top of climb. They had a compass and traversed east across the plateau and descended to Strath Nethy. Reached Nethy Hut and stayed there till daylight.

APRIL 1ST — Arthur Bain (58), Cluston Porteous (40), Adam Ramage (43), with party of ten youths aged 16–18 from Cadet Force, Melville College, Edinburgh, experienced white-out conditions on north top of Beinn a'Bhuird and descended to Avon instead of Quoich. Search party called out.

APRIL 16TH — Leslie Raeper (33), Aberdeen, one of three (roped), avalanched by collapsing cornice, Raeburn's Gully, Lochnagar. Leg badly gashed by dead man belay.

MAY 27TH — George Hodgson (25), Lossiemouth, lost control when glissading on Lochnagar and struck a boulder. 2 broken ribs and severe bruising.

JUNE 21ST — Tom Cripps (20), temporary instructor at Glenmore Lodge, leading on Creag Dubh, Newtonmore. A large block came away and cut rope, Cripps fell about 60 feet, fractured humerus and bruising. Evacuation by Lodge staff.

AUGUST 6TH — Male (54), English, fell Craigellachie Hill, Aviemore. Fractured right tibia. Wearing light crepe-soled shoes.

AUGUST 15TH — Young boy cragbound in Alladin's Couloir, Cairngorm. Two Glenmore Lodge staff effected rescue, lowering boy 100 feet from narrow part of couloir.

AUGUST 22ND — Brian Everitt (35), cragfast on Beinn Mheadhoin. Rescue party called out.

AUGUST 25TH — Male (19), Scots, slipped and fell 40 feet, Craigellachie hill. Fractured right arm and facial lacerations. Wearing calf length smooth-soled boots.

AUGUST 28TH — George Turley (20), Greenock, experienced climber, leading on Citadel, Shelter Stone Crag, when he slipped. Call out about 6.30 p.m. to Glenmore Lodge and Cairngorm M.R.T. Bill Smith and Bill March of Lodge staff reached Shelter Stone 8 p.m. Others followed with 1000 feet rope, stretcher, casualty bag, etc. Turley dangling 350 feet from top on end of 150 feet rope from traverse pitch of Citadel. R.A.F. helicopter ferried support party and rope to top. Two Lodge staff abseiled to casualty and effected two 300 feet lowers to foot of crag. Cliff rescue complete by 10.30 p.m.

NOVEMBER 11TH — Harriet Coleman (21), Birmingham, did not return to Glenmore Youth Hostel after setting out for a hill walk in good weather. Weather deteriorated in evening and next day. Very large search parties out from 6.30 a.m. on 12th under very bad conditions. No sign of her. Helicopter made last sweep down Loch Avon at 4.20 p.m. and saw her outside Ford of Avon bothy and evacuated her to Lodge. She had lost her map and had no compass—spent night under a boulder and wandered down Loch Avon till she found the bothy where she sheltered—suffering from exposure.

NOVEMBER 11TH & 12TH — Party of Junior soldiers from Bridge of Don Infantry Depot, Aberdeen, on trek from Mar Lodge to Cairngorm Car Park. Private Cameron (16) took stomach pains when at Corrou Bothy. Members of party returned to Derry Lodge and phoned Glenmore. Helicopter from there picked him up and took him to Lodge. Later, a mile north of Corrou, Private Frost (16) began to suffer from cramp. Put into sleeping bag, some stayed with him while others pressed on to Cairngorm Car Park—phoned Lodge and evacuated by helicopter.

DECEMBER 16TH — Martin Robertson and David McKenzie lost in Strathnethy area—search party out.

DECEMBER 28TH — Night search for three missing walkers overdue from camping expedition—had been staying in Jean's Hut. They returned safe and well on their own.

DECEMBER 29TH — Party of six from Newcastle Ski/Climbing Club set off for a short walk through Coire an t-Sneachda to plateau and back to car park. Split up and three failed to return. They had wandered to Loch Avon, tried to find Ford of Avon bothy, but failed and spent the night under a boulder—were on their way back to Ptarmigan when they were found by search party. Many teams out.

BEN NEVIS AREA

JANUARY 7TH — Peter Black (20) and Ronald Balovi (21), Clitheroe, benighted North Castle Gully. Rescue party out.

MARCH 1ST — Kenneth Spence (25), Glencoe—rock handhold came away when instructing at Polldubh crags—not seriously injured but hospitalised.

MARCH 11TH — David Stuart (21), Aberdeen, experienced climber, had finished a new route on Creag Meagaidh and was about to descend when he tripped and fell, sustaining serious injuries to head and fractures of ribs and legs. Teams out.

JUNE 9TH — Police Cadet (16) slipped on wet ground Nevis, fell about 75 feet. Facial and hand injuries.

JUNE 24TH — Douglas Kerr (28), Bridge of Weir, with another on summit ridge of Maol Odhar. Kerr left other to descend and examine old wreckage of crashed aircraft; when he did not return other descended and found him lying seriously injured, having fallen on rock. Friend gave first aid and descended for help. Other members of party ascended and reached him just before rescue teams, but found him dead.

JULY 4TH — William Hall (26), Dumbarton, collapsed and died—coronary thrombosis, summit of Ben Nevis—weather cold and showery.

JULY 14TH — Graham Goach (29) died from injuries from fall when climbing on Ben Nevis.

JULY 24TH — Iain McGregor (19), Helensburgh, experienced climber, leading 2nd Pitch Slav Route, Ben Nevis, when his piton belay came out and he fell. Broken ankle—rapid evacuation by helicopter.

AUGUST 17TH — Male (51) from England, collapsed and died. Coronary thrombosis on tourist path, Ben Nevis—weather cold, wet and thick mist.

AUGUST 31ST — Lt. Elliott (41), Dalgety Bay, P.O. McFarlane (34), Glasgow, and A.B. Ince (21), Lancashire, from *H.M.S. Cochrane*, Rosyth, did not return to C.I.C. Hut after leaving for a climb. Search parties found them dead at foot of Douglas Boulder, roped together.

NOVEMBER 19TH — Adrian Dunkley (24) and Shirley Treagust (19), near summit of Ben Nevis about 3 p.m. when Miss Treagust slipped and slightly injured her leg. Dunkley left her to see how far away the summit shelter was. While he was absent a snow blizzard blew up. He returned to where he thought she was, but could not locate her. He descended to Fort William and reported. Teams searched summit plateau in early hours of 20th November gale force winds and nil visibility hampered them. Some of them withdrew while the others remained in the summit shelters till daylight. Meanwhile more teams were called out. Systematic search started at 6.30 a.m. and covered summit plateau, North face gullies and foot of crags, Coire Eoghain and Càrn Dearg. Miss Treagust found by party which had remained on summit at 9 a.m. near top of Five Finger Gully. She had waited about an hour for Dunkley, then, thinking he had been involved in an accident, tried to find way off mountain and fell a little way down gully. She was well equipped and clad but suffering from exposure after 17 hours in blizzard conditions. Evacuated by helicopter.

DECEMBER 29TH — Male (17), Scottish, slipped on snow covered rocks north shoulder of Sgùrr a'Mhaim, Glen Nevis, fell about 100 feet. Spinal injury.

GLENCOE

JANUARY 29TH — James Neil (31), Rutherglen, experienced hill walker, descending from Bealach between Stop Coire an Lochain and Bidean nam Bian—slipped on hard snow and slid about 300 feet no crampons and ice axe not used. Concussion and laceration of skull, fractured ribs.

JANUARY 30TH — Ian Holliday (16) with Service group from Depot, Queens Division, Herts—Broad Gully, Stob Coire an Lochain—fell about 4 feet and stuck crampon point into thigh. Thigh very badly gashed.

FEBRUARY 12TH — Two parties from Border Mountaineering Club, Alpine Climbing Group and Didsbury College Mountaineering Club, joined up on climb of Crowberry Gully. Weather conditions deteriorated on summit.

Leader, William Hepplewhite (23), Manchester, attempted to find Lagan-garbh gully route off mountain, turned off too soon, got on to difficult ground and fell approx. 900 feet to his death. Remainder of party bivouacked below ridge till daylight, then found route off mountain. Two frostbite and exposure.

FEBRUARY 12TH — Julie Bloomer (19), Edinburgh University Mountaineering Club, hill walking experience only, with party climbing west face Aonach Dubh Ghlinne (G.R. 118548). Snow avalanched beneath them and they were carried down about 500 feet but not buried—snow had fallen 24 hours previously and was unstable. Injury to lower jaw and teeth, caused by ice axe during fall.

MAY 24TH — Vera Pearson (27), Instructor from Outward Bound School, Towyn, Wales, leading a vegetation pitch on left of Red Chimney, Clachaig Gully, when she fell, pulling out two runners in the process. Broken right wrist, lacerations right leg, bruising and shock.

JUNE 8TH — John Hendry (36), teacher from Hermitage Academy, Helensburgh, with another teacher took a party of seven pupils up to Ossian's Cave—ages 13–18. On descent Hendry was belayed to a rock slab and was lowering a pupil down lower part of descent when the girl slipped and pulled Hendry off his belay so that he fell about 180 ft suffering fatal injuries. Another girl, June Winning (13) fell during descent—she had gone off on her own though told by other teacher to remain at a given point—knee injuries. Incident resulted in a Fatal Accident Enquiry at which Hamish McInnes and Sgt. Whillans stated such a climb most unsuitable for such school parties.

JULY 18TH — Gordon Spence (24), Guildford, very experienced climber, leading first pitch Bow String, east face of Aonach Dubh, at about 40 feet, placed peg belay and traversed off route to left, came off and pendulumed back across the face, striking shoulder against protruding rock. Severe laceration right shoulder, cracked shoulder blade.

AUGUST 5TH — Mr and Mrs Thorncroft, Beaconsfield, Bucks, with three children aged 12, 14 and 15, hill walking west face Buchaille Etive Beag, about 200 feet above Allt Lairig Eilde, when they reached Coire Dubh gully. Richard (14) slipped and fell into gully suffering fatal injuries. Mother slipped and fell about 20 feet when descending to aid son, suffering bruises to body, legs and elbow. Other son went for help.

SEPTEMBER 9TH — Duncan Wells (40), Grantham, Lincolnshire, hill-walking lower slopes Sgòr nam Fiannaidh, tripped and fell about 10 feet down steep slope. Fractured right ankle.

OCTOBER 4TH — Party of 6 Junior Infantryman's Wing, Royal Hampshire Regiment, had climbed Buchaille Etive Mòr and on return to roadway were instructed to walk to Kinlochleven over Devil's Staircase. About 2 miles up the path Derek Cassie (15) collapsed from extreme exhaustion and had to be carried back to road—weather close and dry.

DECEMBER 8TH — Alistair Hunt (21), South Shields, Allan Howitt (23), Newcastle, and Stephen Cymbalski (20), Middlesbrough, left bunkhouse in Lower Glencoe at 10.30 a.m. giving themselves too short a time to traverse Aonach Eagach under heavy snow conditions and were benighted.

CENTRAL PERTHSHIRE

JANUARY 30TH — William Waring (21), Norfolk, little or no experience, lost footing on hard-packed snow on north side Ben a'Chleibh, Glen Lochay—slid about 400 feet. Head injuries and unconscious. Companion went for help. Dead when found by rescue team—*no ice axe carried*.

FEBRUARY 12TH — Andrew Zyma and Angus Reid, Dundee University, avalanched in B Gully, Corrie Fee. Fractured femur and ankle and facial injuries. Weather conditions, damp and warm. Rescued by Leuchars M.R.T.

MAY 19TH — David McNicoll (17), Glasgow, with party from Strathallan School Combined Cadet Corps. He was leading on Polney Crag, Dunkeld, when he slipped and fell to foot of crag. Died three days later.

JUNE 30TH — Man crag-bound on VS route, Polney Crag and rescued by Leuchars M.R.T.

AUGUST 28TH — Kevin Surrey (12), Stevenage, with Scout Group from that area—when descending north face of Cruach Ardrain slipped on loose stone injuring left leg. Fracture suspected, and carried off mountain by rescue party.

SEPTEMBER 9TH — Eight children between 11 and 14 lost in mist on Farragon Hill, Aberfeldy—no equipment, wearing jeans and sweaters—no adults in charge.

BEN LOMOND AND TROSSACHS AREA

JANUARY 6TH — Thomas Main (65), slipped on hard snow 2250 feet up on Ben Lomond. Broken ankle. Accident 1.15 p.m. Son built a snow wall round him and went down mountain. Reported to Drymen Police at 3 p.m. Teams went up, followed by others in Snow Cat. Vehicle got to within 200 feet of casualty and made evacuation much easier. Casualty off mountain by 6.45 p.m.

MARCH 11TH — Alan McCormick (45), Airdrie, collapsed and died after climbing about 750 feet above Rowardennan. Suspected coronary thrombosis.

APRIL 12TH — John Laidlaw (25), Glasgow, climbing steep loose ground, Craigmore, Aberfoyle, slipped and fell about 20 feet. Fractured skull, leg injuries and severe bruising—wearing smooth-soled shoes.

APRIL 13TH — Keith Robertson (9), Sussex, with father and two elder brothers descending Ben Lomond. Keith lagged behind and lost on upper part of mountain. Others could not find him, descended to Rowardennan and reported to Police. Teams with dogs overnight. Major search all day including helicopter until 4.30 p.m. Just afterwards boy reached Comer Farm. He had wandered off ridge down east side and been benighted in heather and wandered about the next day till he met a hill walker who took him to Comer Farm.

JUNE 22ND — Party of Junior Soldiers from Aldershot on Cobbler. Heavy rain and mist. At 2.30 p.m. David Burne (16) collapsed from exhaustion, and later, at 7.54 p.m., Stephen Kemp and James Haverston were lost and found near Narnain Stone.

SEPTEMBER 3RD — Peter Kemp (76), slipped and fell half way up Ben Lomond, suffering from Parkinson's Disease and afraid to move—smooth-soled shoes—assisted off hill.

SEPTEMBER 17TH — Derek McHugh (12), Renfrew, climbed 40 feet up an 80-feet high rock face, Craigiefort Hill, Balmaha, cragfast. Constable McGregor abseiled down and got him off.

SKYE

JUNE 22ND — Male (21), English—fell about 15 feet when climbing in Harta Corrie. Fractured ankle.

AUGUST 12TH — Peter May (22), Seascale, Cumberland, geologist—climbing a rock face in Sleat area when he fell about 30 feet and was killed.

AUGUST 15TH — Mrs Sheila Greaves (26), Cardiff, experienced climber, slipped when descending Sgùrr a'Bhasteir, fell about 50 feet. Fractured skull and minor cuts and bruises.

IN MEMORIAM

A. RONALD G. BURN

NOT many members will remember Ronald Burn. He was a life member of the Club but his active membership ended with his move to the South of England in the thirties; but for those who do remember him I am quite sure that their picture of him will remain vivid because he was one of the most interesting and striking personalities in the Club.

His intense enthusiasm for the hills of Scotland was greatly stimulated by his wide knowledge of Gaelic and shown by the fact that within a year of joining the Club he had contributed a 30-page article spread over two numbers entitled 'Out of the remote Golden Wild West' which in its every line and especially its numerous philological foot-notes brings him vividly back to life.

His ambition was to be the first to climb all the 544 tops in Munro's List of the 3000 feet high mountains of Scotland. It was this that brought an essentially 'lone-bird' hill-walker to the Cuillin Meet of the Scottish Mountaineering Club in May 1923, for he doubted his ability to ascend such rock-climbing peaks as the Inaccessible Pinnacle of Sgùrr Dearg or the Bhasteir Tooth.

It was thus that he became friendly with a group of climbers some fifteen years younger than himself, and so we learnt his most endearing qualities, his infinite capacity to accept with endless good humour the hilarity and ragging that he had to endure caused by his earnest desire to instruct his thoughtless young companions in the difficulties of Gaelic grammar, poetry and folk-song.

He also achieved his ambition, completing all his tops by June 1923, long before the days of fast motorways, luxurious Dormobiles, Climbing Huts and Youth-Hostels.

E.C.T.

JOHN DOW

MANY members will have read with regret of the passing of John Dow at the advanced age of over ninety. He did not join the Club until he was 47 years of age. In spite of that it could be said that he enjoyed 32 years of active membership. Although as a senior Inland Revenue Officer, he was for many

years resident in Dumfries, he was a frequent attender at the Official Meets of the Club as well as its other functions. He served on the Committee from 1931 to 1934.

It seems probable, that even before he joined the Club in 1928 he had, like Ronald Burn and Rooke Corbett before him, ascended every top and every separate Mountain in Munro's Tables for it was said that unlike his two immediate predecessors he was the only one to have climbed all the tops without a beard!

Probably his last appearance at a Meet was the Strath Carron Meet of Easter 1960 when he was still climbing Munros at the age of 79. But even in the last ten years of his life, when increasing deafness made communication with other members more difficult, his interest in his friends in the S.M.C. remained as great as ever and he derived pleasure from the slides shown by the Galloway Climbing Club and in visiting proposed hut sites of that Club in the Galloway Hills.

I don't think any account of John Dow would be complete without acknowledging the work he put into the first project in the early thirties for the publication of a Southern Uplands Guide Book. Unfortunately, although he completed the Galloway district which he had allocated to himself, he only received one other contribution so the project was abandoned at his own suggestion owing to lack of sufficient interest at that time.

His great knowledge of the hills which was unrivalled and his helpful and modest unassuming disposition made him a most enjoyable companion, not only on the hills but in the evenings when maps were got out to plan the next day's expedition.

Our sympathy is extended to his wife and family in their loss.

E.C.T.

R. L. GWILT

As a mountaineer Dick Gwilt's inclination was towards hill walking rather than rock climbing. On many expeditions he was accompanied by his wife.

He joined the Club in 1944. Only once did he climb abroad. This was in 1937 when he was with Mr & Mrs Robert Jeffrey and myself in Switzerland. Our expeditions included the traverse of the Wetterhorn from the Glectstein to the Dassen Hut, the Jungfrau, the Portschengrat and the Rimpfischhorn.

Illness struck him at a comparatively early age but whereas he was no longer able to go to the hills he was still for some years able to continue to fish.

He qualified as an actuary at a very early age and as a member of the Faculty of Actuaries made important contributions to the affairs of the Society. He had a world-wide reputation and served as the President of the Society from 1962-4 and during his term of office received the C.B.E.

He was manager of the Scottish Widows' Fund for fourteen years and was thereafter a director until his death last year.

A.H.

GEORGE MURRAY LAWSON

GEORGE LAWSON who died in March 1971 was one of our oldest members. I was at a preparatory school with him and remained as a friend throughout his life. Early in his life he undertook long hill walks with his younger brother.

In the spring of 1913 I had my first expedition with him. We started from Blair Atholl to Derry Lodge. Next day we ascended Ben MacDhui in

glorious weather. On the following day we were not so fortunate as partly owing to bad weather conditions but also to inexperience we failed to make Cairn Toul on our way to Aviemore.

He joined the Club in 1915 and was a regular attender at meets. He was also a member of a small party which for a number of years was to be found in June at Mary Campbell's cottage in Glen Brittle. Throughout the year he was with friends at weekends on the Pentlands. No outing was complete unless he was able to boil a kettle on a heather fire to make tea, and on some winter days this was not achieved without much blowing by members of the party.

George suffered from ill health during his later life. He contributed to the work of the Club, serving on the committee from 1920 to 1922, as custodian of slides from 1919 to 1924 and as librarian from 1925 to 1932. During the 1914-18 war he served in France and was wounded. By profession he was a law agent.

A.H.

JOHN GORDON LILLIE

ALTHOUGH he had enjoyed rather indifferent health for some years, Gordon Lillie's death last June came as a great shock to his friends in the North-East of Scotland and elsewhere.

Gordon was a lad o' pairts, an able scholar who went *via* Aberdeen Grammar School, University and Royal Infirmary to practise as a consultant radiologist in London. He had already achieved professional distinction, and was likely to go much further in his speciality. However, we are concerned with his activities as a mountaineer, which took place largely as a member of the Aberdeen group in the middle and late fifties.

An early member of the 'Boorboys,' Gordon shared in many of the successes and reverses of that none-too-reputable organisation, to which Patey makes brief and enigmatic reference. With members of the group, particularly Ken Grassick and myself, Gordon skied, climbed in most parts of Scotland, and spent a season in the Alps. His name is recorded only rarely in the literature, because we had a tendency to bite off more than we could chew, and this predisposed us to some epic retreats, especially on Creag an Dubh Loch and the Shelterstone Crag, where *élan* and determination were no substitutes for modern *matériel* and technique. We did have some successes; Gordon was on the first ascent of Postern, now a forlorn little route 'possessing only historic interest,' as the *Guide Vallot* would say. It seemed hard enough at the time, and was the most direct route on the crag for a year or two until Ronnie Sellars and later Robin Smith came along. The same weekend, Gordon led through on all the Crimson Slab routes. Naturally there was a lot of coast climbing, and winter climbing on Lochnagar. He and I traversed the Barre des Ecrins in the Dauphiné, and laid foundations for successful campaigns there in future years, in which he was unable to participate.

Unfortunately, he developed a recurrent dislocation of the shoulder, for which an operation was unsuccessful. The first post-operative dislocation occurred on the tower pitch of Eagle Ridge. The subsequent retreat, memorable for an encounter between K.A.G. and H.R.H. Princess Margaret, has been chronicled by T. W. Patey, but I also remember Gordon's great fortitude and unselfishness during a painful and arduous descent. Further attempts at climbing were frustrated by this injury and by increasing ill-health, and he gradually moved away from our mountaineering circle.

But isolated statistics of ascents and expeditions give no idea of the individual's contribution to the team. Gordon was a great lad to be with on the hill. He had a dry sardonic humour and a gift for the well-chosen phrase.

He was the soul of prudence, and a valuable counterpoise to the grandiose ambitions of Grassick and myself. He was an excellent back-up man, playing a vital but inconspicuous role within the group. In remembering him, his friends look back with pleasure and affection to his part in the great adventures of our youth.

A.G.N.

DONALD MACKAY

DONALD MACKAY was born at Broadford in Skye in 1898 and at an early age entered into the service with the Bank of Scotland there. He was not permitted to stay there long and was transferred to the mainland. Having joined the Royal Navy Volunteer Reserve he was called up for service in the Navy when the time came.

On demobilisation he returned to Broadford but again was only there for a short time. In spite of his modesty his ability was soon observed and he was transferred to head office and in due course after being appointed assistant manager in 1956 he became manager of the head office, which post he held until his retirement in 1963.

He joined the Club in 1928 from the J.M.C.S. and for many years was a keen walker and climber. Although he climbed widely in Scotland and the Lake District he had a special affection for his native island. He also climbed in Switzerland, Norway and the Pyrenees. Much of his climbing was done with Malcolm Matheson who died at a comparatively early age.

He was a delightful companion on the hills. He had a pleasant quite sense of humour. He took his full share in the management of the Club. He served on the Committee on two occasions and was custodian of the Slide Collection and Assistant Editor of the *Journal*.

In his later years he continued to walk on the hills with his wife and when too old for the hills he retained his interest in his alpine garden.

A.H.

JOHN ALEXANDER SCOTT

SANDY SCOTT's father was a keen hill walker so Sandy got to know the hills at an early age. He joined the Club in 1923. I had the pleasure of having many successful outings with him in summer and winter both on the mainland and in Skye. He was a strong climber on Rock and his high spirits and friendliness added to the enjoyment on the hills and in the evenings which followed.

His heart gave him trouble at a comparatively early age, cutting short his ability to climb so he became a keen fisherman. It also led to his retirement as a chartered accountant before the normal time. He served on the committee from 1926 to 1930.

A.H.

WILFRED TAUBER

THE whole of the central area of the island had been ravished. In a few short orgiastic weeks, eighteen peaks had been climbed; climbing all day and all the light long night. At the beginning of the short arctic summer, when the morning frost lay upon the crisp green grass, we had raced together up the sun-baked rocks of Excalibur our name, our hill its rocky sword hung with icy streaks up which we stabbed together, its narrow crest cleaving space through which, we precariously balanced as the low slung sunlight flung

shadows across the oceans of cloud down beneath us, its vertiginous eastern precipice down which we could float all six thousand feet to the tiny orange flock beside the lake. We often found ourselves on the same rope throughout those weeks of high adventure. We shared the midnight sunshine climbing and the all day snow-storm festers. We shared the discovery of a gentian on the summit of Excelsior and the fatigue of the heat of the glacier plod. We shared the peace of our final climb, an ascent so devoid of stress that I have never known its like; we shared the view, around us and within us, from the summit of the Horns.

We were on the western side of the island, encamped where the mound of the glacier dived into the beach and a short river gushed out into the ocean. The two collapsible double canoes were drawn up where the others had left them, along with a couple of hundredweight of gear, well clear of the crashing rollers. A low slanting light welled up amongst the towering cumulus, sometimes breaking through to cast a white iceberg into sharp relief. The bergs became familiar as they drifted up and down with the tidal races past the island. Early in the morning we struck camp and launched; but before we could load up and climb aboard the boats were swamped. Wait again, wait for calmer seas, for more gentleness. Driftwood and heather crackling as the big sun rolled along the northern hills, its dull redness dancing on blue-grey waters to a Beethoven symphony. The Fifth was a favourite.

In the yellowing of another day we launched again; more hungry, more resolute. Basecamp was twenty-five miles away, twenty-five miles of icy water breaking on steep rocks with few landfalls, with no escapes. Up the western waters we stroked, linking the icebergs, dodging them on the landward, skirting them on the seaward, paddling quietly through the modest swell. Whales blew off out to sea. A sandy beach by the northernmost glacier snout offered hospice for a hot drink, and then to sea again.

Around the corner of the island we came into the northern fjord. A wild wind was rushing at us from the mainland ice cap, whipping the water into white-crested waves which crashed over the gunwales. There were no spray sheets, too much baggage between our knees, and no buoyancy bags, too much baggage packed in bow and stern. Waterlogging rapidly, Wilf baled frantically with our only dixie; but paddling alone I could not beat the headwind and we slowly lost ground. Paddling together we made slow progress and filled up with wave-tops. Behind us, seemingly approaching, a mock sun peered weakly through thin cloud. A mile above us was the spiky ridge of the island's northern edge which we had trundled into the fjord just days before. Boulders still sped down the couloirs, leaping from side to side in silent bounds, finally plopping into the cold grey swell. An ignominious end for a trundle, or a mountaineer. Hour after weary hour we battled against the headwind and the swamping, struggling to keep inshore, gauging progress by familiar summits on the mountain ridge. Fatigue grew in our groaning boat, creaking and bending over the rising swell, and in aching arms thrusting and pulling, bending and baling, without respite. Half a day the struggle continued. Then a baby glacier nosing into the sea gave us a wind-break . . . coasting up into its shelter we crept ashore. Hungry still, but with humility.

The sea dropped as night approached and at midnight we set off again, now scoring against the gentler breeze and making good headway. Within two hours we had reached the northwest corner of the island and turned into the western fjord. There was not a breath of wind here. Only the bow-wakes broke the oily calm as we sliced into a reflected mountain panorama. Laid out before us on the water were all the familiar hills visible from base camp. There once more was the clean-cut west ridge of Qioqe, our remaining ambition. The soft moon which hung over the hills glistened on recent snow, a wintry mantle which heralded the end of the arctic summer. Wilf was in

front of me, shoulders rhythmically pulling, the boat cruising along at a good ten knots, the thought of basecamp food in his mind. He had not done much canoeing before.

He had not done much climbing before. Apart from a few weekends with the St. Andrews University Mountaineering Club, Wilf had arrived in Greenland a complete novice. It was strange to reflect how he had matured . . . become confident, become competent, on difficult mountain ground. It was hard, but not impossible, to surmise to myself how things would develop. How, within the next two years, his enthusiasm would have carried him over every Munro—many of them several times—and this before he was even twenty-one. Most of his time, however, was devoted to climbing rather than walking in the hills. In two years time he was back again on Upervik island, he had reclimbed the Horns and done a score of other peaks, including our own west ridge of Qioqe. A year later he was to go to the Hindu Kush, climbing many fine peaks and crossing twenty thousand feet. But that trip soured him a little of major ranges—too much travel, with its political and financial ramifications, not enough climbing. He returned to Scotland with more fervour for its hills than ever before. He had taken a First in English at St. Andrews and became a teacher—at last he had the money for unlimited access to the hills. No single partner could match Wilf's enthusiasm for the hills throughout the next eighteen months and his rope-mates ranged widely. When he at last got to the Alps he romped up the north-east face of the Badile, climbed the north face of the Dru and the south face of the Fou and came very close to completing a traverse of all the Aiguilles before his companion's injury forced them to abort. Back home again, he took more and more to solo climbing as a source of pleasure and, having visited every crag in Scotland, took to climbing in England and Wales. He was now a greatly experienced climber, yet retained an ardour and enthusiasm of a first infatuation. Whilst climbing alone on the Anglesey sea-cliffs he fell into the sea.

As we slid across the twilight waters of the western fjord with the warm pleasure within us which follows a close escape, I realised that yesterday's adventure had an extra dimension for Wilf. He was never able to swim.

A.N.

W. H. VALENTINE

W. H. VALENTINE joined the Club in 1929. That he was not more active in the S.M.C. may have been influenced by the very early death from pneumonia in 1930 of our mutual friend J. Ross Philip who was a most congenial companion to have on the hills.

Valentine had, however, before that time been an active climber with the former Dundee Rambling Club, and it was on 1st February 1925 when I was a guest of Philip at one of their outings on the Mayar and the Driesh that I first met him, when he made one of the party. We had a most memorable day in perfect conditions in one of the long icy gullies on the north face of the Mayar.

Subsequently he came as Philip's guest to the Arrochar Meet of New Year 1927 when we had his company on the distant Beinn Buidhe at the head of Glen Fyne.

E.C.T.

PROCEEDINGS OF THE CLUB

Easter Meet 1972—Glen Affric

DUE TO an oversight, no official report has been received for this Meet. The junior Vice-President was taken to task and proceeded to dredge his (very senior) memory. It seems that the weather was mixed, the Hotel excellent and 'all the usual peaks were climbed.' As an afterthought, the V.P. added that 'Mam Sodhail and Càrn Eige were not climbed,' thus calling in question his own reasoning or the Club's enterprise at its Meets.

New Year Meet 1972-3—Glencoe

THE focal point was again Glencoe Hotel, but others who preferred less sybaritic conditions enjoyed the comforts of Lagangarbh Hut or the lesser comforts of camping. One party whose tent collapsed in a gale had to take refuge for a night in their Land Rover.

A few who climbed on the day of arrival enjoyed the only clear day. For the remainder of the Meet there was much cloud on the hills and a good deal of rain, the Meet being conspicuous by the absence of snow which was confined mainly to the summits.

Climbs included:—Am Bodach (Mamores), Binnein Mór, Beinn a'Bheithir (Sgùrr Dearg, Sgùrr Dhomhnuill and Sgùrr Bhàn), Beinn Sgùlaird, Bidean Nam Bian, Stob Coire nan Lochan, Buachaille Etive Mór, Am Bodach (Glencoe), Beinn a'Chrulaiste, Beinn Laoigh (Central Gully).

Present:—*Members*: The President, D. J. Bennet, W. L. Coats, A. G. Cousins, H. M. Brown, B. S. Fraser, C. G. Gorrie, A. H. Hendry, J. N. Ledingham, T. D. Mackinnon, I. D. McNicol, K. Macrae, W. H. Murray, I. H. Ogilvie, G. Peat, G. S. Roger, W. T. Taylor, C. B. M. Warren, F. R. Wylie. *Guests*: R. Aitken, D. Bennet, J. Burslem, R. Hollingdale, P. Jardine, A. Jones, A. Keen, R. Keen, J. Kerr, K. A. Parker, D. Riddell, P. Roberts, P. Shephard, R. Wilson, T. Wright. W.L.C.

Reception, A.G.M. and Dinner, 1972

Reception

Reception—After the tea and cakes Robin Campbell gave a crowded, slowly suffocating audience of members and their guests an interesting talk illustrated by slides from the Club Archives. A wave of panic swept the audience when the celebrated Glencoe elephant (S.M.C.J. xxix, 1970, 249) appeared on the wall as if about to trundle its caravan right through the confined space of the auditorium.

Unfortunately due to the terrible acoustics these echoes from the past did not reach more than half-way to the back of the room in spite of the heroic efforts of the speaker.

Annual General Meeting

A.G.M.—The main points of interest in the meeting arose from decisions taken unconstitutionally by the main Committee at their Autumn Meeting. Remarkably, both of these were endorsed by the A.G.M. The first concerned a rise in the Club subscription (to meet increased costs). This was coupled with an offer of free Hut use which drew groans of dismay from the Custodians as they saw their only 'perk' disappear. The second 'decision' was to leave the B.M.C., thus enabling the M.C. of S. to negotiate with them

without having to look over their shoulders at us all the time (and, of course, saving money). Doubts were expressed about this in discussion, but, amazingly, when the motion was finally put it was passed *nem. con.* Nationalist jaws hung in disbelief all round the room when the expected Unionist counter-motion failed to materialise.

The pick of the other business was undoubtedly the election of new Committee Members. For the first time in many years this involved a vote. This, and the associated tramping-in-and-out of the blushing aspirants, so enlivened the meeting that one can only hope it becomes a regular feature.

Dinner

Dinner—The Annual Dinner was held in the George Hotel, Edinburgh. As frequently happens it has been difficult to find a correspondent who can remember much about it. It appears to have been a comfortably enjoyable evening graced by the outgoing *bonhomie* of our otherwise retiring President. The speakers are believed to have spoken. Dave Bathgate recited a droll account of the year's Everest Expedition in tortuously rimed doggerel, and former Vice-President Brown sang the Club Song with skill and feeling supported in the choruses by members and guests who were as usual slightly embarrassed at the excellence of their own performance. George Roger handed over the helm of the Club to Bill Brooker, the new President, who, in his introductory address, promised to devote his years of office to ensuring that Hamish MacInnes paid for his next dinner. Sometime later members dispersed into the interesting dark-nesses of our capital city.

J.M.C.S. REPORTS

Edinburgh Section.—The Section has had an interesting year and Meets have in general been well attended. All the traditional areas were visited along with a first visit to the Aberdeenshire sea cliffs and an experimental two-way walk. Early in the year, Bill Myles the Section Treasurer organised a series of Winter Training courses at Glenmore Lodge at which the Club was well represented.

The membership has increased considerably following last years decrease and now numbers 67.

The outstanding event of the year was the official opening of the Smiddy, the Section's hut at Dundonnell. Work has been progressing over a period of five years under the direction of the Hut Custodian, Jim Clark, and the conversion now forms excellent climbers' accommodation in this area. The opening ceremony was performed in somewhat less than perfect weather by Iain H. Ogilvie, M.B.E., the Section's Honorary Member.

The Tilt Hotel, Blair Atholl provided the venue for the Annual Dinner. An excellent meal was enjoyed by a large number of members along with a full complement of guests. Poor weather restricted hill activity, but as ever on these occasions, this was perhaps no bad thing.

Hon. President, G. Tiso; *Hon. Vice-President*, M. Fleming; *President*, B. Collignon; *Vice-President*, I. Brodie; *Treasurer*, W. M. S. Myles; *Hut Custodian*, J. H. Clark; *Secretary*, J. R. R. Fowler, 14 Craigcrook Square, Edinburgh, EH4 3SJ (031-336 6122).

Glasgow Section.—During the 1972-1973 season the Section has had its usual fortnightly Meets. With the exception of the Nevis Meets most have been poorly attended.

One main party visited the Alps, with various other members joining up with them and making a regular *tour de force* on the Nordwands.

Fortnightly winter lectures were held with the Western District S.M.C. in Strathclyde University. Lecturers have included Jock Nimlin, who gave an excellent talk with slides, on St. Kilda; Les Brown on his many exploits to the Alps, and Mike O'Hara on those great routes we all admire on the Slabs and Nevis.

Our Annual Dinner was again in the Kingshouse with the jokes and drink flowing harder than the rain outside.

Membership has again suffered a reduction from last year, with some of the old hands failing to re-new. I think it must be noted that only a handful of the regulars turn up at the Meets and have to shoulder the responsibilities of helping new members and running maintenance on huts, etc.

The Club has two members in Africa with the possibility of two more joining up at the end of the year, with an expedition to Mount Kenya in view.

Eddie Thomson, our retired Hon. President, has offered a prize for the best anecdote from any of the Glasgow Section members, which will be read at the Annual Dinner this year.

Hon. President, R. Chalmers; *President*, B. Barclay; *Vice-President*, J. Messer; *Treasurer*, M. Chambers; *Huts Custodian*, W. H. Duncan; *Meets Secretary*, L. Wilson; *Secretary*, R. G. Ross, 12 Dalcruin Gardens, Moodiesburn, Chryston, Glasgow, G69 0NQ.

Perth Section.—Attendance at this year's monthly Meets fluctuated from over 30 for the Spring Meets in March and April to a dozen for the Midsummer Meets in July and August. Members were very active on the hills and though rock activity increased it still isn't as high as it should be. However with an intake of younger locally based members the balance of activities should even up in the future.

Our Annual Lecture, again held in conjunction with the Perthshire Society of Natural Science, was given by Mr Ian Rowe of Edinburgh. It was a well illustrated account of his two expeditions to the Hindu Kush and a trip to the Rockies which was thoroughly enjoyed by all present.

The Annual Dinner of the Section was held in the Ogilvie Arms Hotel, Glen Clova and with the help of our Honorary President, Chris Rudie's remarks it went with the usual swing. This mood was continued at the dance in the nearby Village Hall and later at the Carn Dearg Club's Hut.

Bad news at the Section's A.G.M. held in Perth during November was the need to raise the Annual Subscription by 25p to £1.50. All other matters were quickly dealt with and the ensuing slides and film showed that members had had an active year.

Hon. President, Chris Rudie; *Hon. Vice-President*, John Proom; *President*, Gordon Downs; *Treasurer*, David Wares; *Secretary*, John Rogers, 19 Stormont Park, Scone.

London Section.—Once again we report an active and successful year for the Section. Of the fourteen official Meets most were centred in and around North Wales or the Lake District, but Derbyshire, the Gower and various sea cliffs of the South Coast of England received foraging visits through the year. Scotland was visited three times with Meets to the C.I.C. hut in February—poor snow conditions, Glen Coe at Easter—rain as usual, and Glen Brittle in August with beautiful summer weather.

With Skye replacing our official Alpine Meet few members were abroad this year. Mid-week pub Meets occurred approximately once a month, usually in various unsavoury drinking houses around Central London. These were held with a view to being expanded into a regular lecture/slide show programme.

As our hut, Glenafon, has been included in the new B.M.C. hut list, efforts to complete a new extension by next spring have been made. This will provide additional shower and drying facilities for members.

The Section A.G.M. and Dinner was held in North Wales at the 'three star' Royal Goat Hotel, Beddgelert, during November. A good turn-out enjoyed after dinner entertainment provided by our Section Piper, (craftily transferred from the Edinburgh league some years previously). Little was done on the hill the next day!

Membership showed an overall increase to a figure of 67. Those admitted to membership of the Section during the year numbered 7, of which one was transferred from the Perth Section and one from the Edinburgh Section.

Hon. President, J. Della Porta; *President*, P. Clark; *Vice-President*, H. Jordan; *Treasurer*, D. Edmonds; *Hut Booking Secretary*, J. Steele, 82 Parkanaur Avenue, Thorpe Bay, Essex (Tel. Southend-on-Sea 87596); *Secretary*, J. Russell, 22 Kingstone Road, High Wycombe, Bucks. (Tel. High Wycombe 31556).

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

Africa

H. M. BROWN writes, 'The High Atlas again! This time we went by the luxurious S.S. *Eagle* by Southampton, Lisbon and Tangiers. Our party was Donald Mill, A. Lawson, C. Knowles, Eric Roberts, T. Connor and the Simpsons. We broke ourselves in with a week's ski-ing at Oukaimeden, including "tours" to the peaks of Attar, Angour and Jbel Tachddirt. From the Neltner Hut foot and ski ascents were made of most of the major peaks—Ras and Timesguida Ouanoukrim, Akioud, Afella, Biiguinnessene, Toubkal, Imouzzar, etc. The classic "O.S.O." arête was climbed twice and a traverse made of the Tadaft-Akioud. Tazharhart was climbed *via* Afella and the Clochetons traversed. A four-day safari *via* the Lac d'Ifni was made to the Iferouane, the odd, 4001 m. peak, with a stormy return over the Tizi Tarharate. D.M. & E.R. were dropped by the dormobile at the Tizi Tamatert where they bivouacked and then made a probable second ascent of the Great Ridge of Aksoual, bivouacked at the Tizi Likempt and climbed Anhremmher on the next day. The same pair had an even wilder crossing of Ighil M'Goun, the only 4000 m. peak outside the Toubkal Massif (see article in this issue by Donald Mill). H.B. & A.L. added Jbel bou Ouriol (3573 m.) above the Tichka Pass—which was crossed twice. The Tizi Test gave a snowstorm crossing. A tour in the Sud took in the Dra and Oursazate, the Dades and Todra Gorges, and the Middle Atlas *via* Ksar-es-Souk to the Imperial Cities. Few places can offer such a delightful variety of mountain activity, yet it remains as unspoilt as ever.'

A round world retirement voyage with his wife enabled THEO. NICHOLSON to enjoy some good days on South African and New Zealand hills. He writes, 'The Mountain Club of South Africa has a fine H.Q. at 97 Hatfield Street, Capetown. They are open Mon.-Fri. inclusive and staff members are welcoming and helpful.

'Table Mountain (3563 ft.) rises steeply and invitingly from Capetown's back door. One should ignore the aerial cable car and buy instead the small booklet, published by the Mountain Club, which describes the scores of scrambling and climbing routes up the undulating summit plateau. On most weekends in the year, Club parties are out climbing well-known routes, and no doubt, exploring new ones. My personal experience is limited to having scrambled up Woody Ravine with two young South African friends. It was January and we should have sweated in summer heat. However, the well known Cape South-Easter was blowing and the upper third of the mountain was in thick mist. Clad in shorts, shirt and fortunately a jersey I well remember eating a hurried lunch shivering in the lee of a boulder whilst a 45-knot gale shrieked past and plastered the mountain with mist as wet and as chilling as any in the Highlands!

'Within 10-15 miles of Capetown are many rocky peaks such as those of the Twelve Apostles and the Kalkbay and Muizenberg mountains. They rise from sea level to about 3500 feet and give opportunity for both rock work and scrambling. The main obstacle to access is thick bush, especially burnt protea, which is frequently found. It pays to find a track, even if distance be doubled, rather than to attempt to force one's way through such bush. I write with painful memories of more than one attempt at "short cuts"!

'East of Capetown within about 50 miles, there is a wealth of fine mountains rising steeply to above 5000 feet. When clear of bush line at about 3500 feet, sheltered ridges, sheer faces and buttresses abound. The Groot Drakenstein is one such fine peak, reminiscent of a Liathach or an immense Suilven. The Paarl branch of the Mountain Club of South Africa would supply information about huts, routes and access in this area.

'In general, valleys hereabouts are intensively cultivated, often with vineyards and access to the bush or forest on the lower slopes can only be had by private farm roads, usually passing the farmstead. A call should invariably be made and permission asked before proceeding, whether through cultivated or afforested land.

'There are of course some good hills which can be directly approached from a public road or track; one such which my wife and I climbed was Dutoitskop (4657 feet) which we climbed from the top of the Franschoek Pass. Later, when travelling by the S. African Railways bus from Capetown to Oudtshorn, a mid-morning stop was made at the Protea Park Hotel, high on the East side of the Dutoitskloof Pass and set amidst magnificently rugged mountain scenery. This place is a popular base for climbing parties coming out from Capetown or Paarl and huts deep in the mountains facilitate weekend or longer expeditions.

'An annual rainfall of about 10 inches—as opposed to 35-40 inches on the coast, ensures dry mountains and scarcity of water: therefore remember to carry a well-filled bottle!

'The Drakensberg is a fine range including many peaks over 9000 feet and some over 10,000 feet all on the Natal-Lesotho frontier. There are several well-known hotels on the Natal side and Cathedral Peak Hotel at 4810 feet (about 30 miles from Winterton) is probably the best placed for mountain access as well as enjoying an incomparable setting amongst fantastically shaped peaks.

'Cathedral Peak (9856 feet) is a good 9 or 10 hour expedition and although much of it is no more than a walk, time can be saved by taking one of the two Bantu guides attached to the hotel. The last 1000 feet required some careful route-finding through and up steep slabs—wet in places—before enjoying the final 200 feet of ridge scramble to the top from where a magnificent view greeted us.

'Cleft Peak (10,860 feet) is the highest in the area. A small car can go up a forestry road to about 6500 feet on the "contour track." From there, 8 or 9 hours are required to the top and back. The approach is a long but continually interesting route along a ridge or traversing its flanks until, after a steep grass and scree shoot, you reach the skyline gap into Lesotho and thence, in about an hour, without difficulty to the top. The view is said to be highly rewarding. We—my companions were a South African professor from Bloemfontein and Johannes, a young Bantu guide—were unlucky, being caught by a thunderstorm, and were in thick mist.

'From the hotel numerous tracks through wooded glens enable a wide variety of expeditions to be carried out, from half days to several days, provided you will hump your food and gear. December and January are the hottest of the year and rainfall can be heavy, so if I am lucky enough to go again, I would chose September–October, i.e. late spring. The rain would be less, temperatures lower, and snow would still be lying on the tops.

'There is a wealth of bird and animal life in South Africa. Baboons are plentiful in the Drakensberg and one may see small herds feeding amidst the rocks with one senior baboon keeping guard from a prominent rock. He spots you a long way off and his loud but hoarse barks give warning and express his disapproval of your disturbance. The ferocious appearance of a baboon is offset by his pale-pink bare backside which makes him look a trifle ridiculous. Nevertheless, when climbing alone as was frequently the case, it was encouraging to realise that they seemed more afearred of me than I of them!

N. A. TODD, with J. K. Todd and W. C. Love (non-members) spent two weeks climbing in Kenya and Tanzania in January 1973. 'Short as it was, this time proved adequate for worthwhile visits to Mount Kenya and Kilimanjaro, but a longer spell would have been desirable both for acclimatisation and for doing fuller justice to the mountains. The very accessibility of Mount Kenya, where one can reach 10,000 ft. by Land Rover, brings the hazard of mountain sickness and the more dangerous development of pulmonary oedema. The number of casualties from this, as well as from accidents, has led to the development of a well-organised rescue service on Mount Kenya. On Kilimanjaro the risk of pulmonary oedema also exists but is less, probably because you have to walk up from 4000 ft.

'On Mount Kenya discretion prevailed over valour to such an extent that we did not attempt the highest summits of Nelion and Batian, our excuse being the undue prolongation of the "Short Rains" which should have been over. Whether our party would have achieved these summits is another question. We were assailed by showers of rain, hail and snow, from which the peaks would emerge only in early morning and late evening. We contented ourselves with a walk round the main peaks stopping overnight at Kami Hut, and making a traverse from north to south of Point Lenana (4985 m.) the third highest peak. On Kilimanjaro we took the standard 5 days to ascend Kibo, reaching Uhuru Peak (5895 m.) after plodding round the crater rim in deep snow.'

Corsica

H. M. BROWN writes, 'Alistair Lawson and I joined the Barclay Fraser family in mid-May in Ajaccio. With late snow, conditions were alpine and ideal, the weather being almost constantly sunny and the high *bergèries* (shielings) were free and available for aesthetic howffs. H.B. & A.L. went from Bastelica to the Bergèrie Latina to traverse Monte Renoso and the Col de la Cagnone to Bocognano. From the Agnone Bergèrie they went to the Col du Porc on Mount d'Oro but lacking rope or crampons had to settle for

the Punta Migliarello. B.F. joined the party and from Bergèrie de Grotelle (access by road up the high Restonica being cut by avalanches) we went on successive days to Capo Chioistro and Monte Rotondo by the ridges over Punta Galiera. From the Asco Valley we went straight up to the Bergèrie d'Entrata for a traverse of Monte Padro and the Cime della Statoja to the Tassinetta Valley. H.M. & A.L. then moved in to camp by the Grotte des Anges and enjoyed a big crampon day *via* the Col de Crocetta to Monte Cinto and back round by the Erco Valley and Calacina, then the combination of Paglia Orba and Tafonata, the former giving a snow climb by the S.W. face, the latter being a unique blade of rock with a gaping hole through it—a mountain of remarkable exposure but an easy climb. At the Col de Foggiale we met a German party who were the only other climbers we met during our visit. B.F. rejoined the party and we went to the Bergèrie Torici from near the Col de Vergio. From here we had a marathon day, traversing Monte Tozzo and Comatella, then dropping into a major valley to cross the Pont de Genice and climb up again to bivouac near the top of Monte Cervello until the moon gave us enough light to move down to a *bergèrie* from which we descended to Rosazia on the next morning. H.B. & A.L. now went up the Cruzini valley to the Bergèrie Tarracione, thence over the Col d'Oreccia to traverse Monte d'Oro. The descent over Punta Ceppa direct to Bocognano gave evil hours in the *maquis*—soon forgotten in the Hotel Beau Sejour.

'Corsica, with its granite rock, uncrowded hills and fine weather is another of those places that leaves one wondering why anyone goes to major centres in the Alps.'

New Zealand

THEO. NICHOLSON continues, 'Three weeks were spent motoring in the South Island and visits were made to the well-known mountain centres such as Franz Josef Glacier, the Hermitage at Mt. Cook and others. Lack of time, equipment and an experienced companion prevented any Alpine type of expedition but several day outings were enjoyed and gave a good idea of the layout of the higher mountains. Amongst others these included Alex. Knob (4228 feet) which rises from about 300 feet immediately above the moraine of the Franz Josef Glacier. The map showed, and the National Park Ranger confirmed, that a track went up steeply through the bush and more or less to the top. It did—a track of sorts: at first wide and clear through rain forest, later, hardly visible and overgrown by scrub and thorn, until about 4000 feet one thankfully got clear on to an open hillside of flowers, grass and rock. Mist and a few heavy showers prevented a view and ensured that everything dripped moisture so there was no temptation to dally on the top.

'My wife and I enjoyed a better day when we walked up Roy's Peak (5203 feet) above Wanaka, starting from about 1000 feet. The summit views—especially of Mt. Aspiring (9960 feet) were excellent. From Queenstown, in perfect weather, I enjoyed my most memorable day in climbing the Remarkables—a shattered rock range which rises steeply on the East of Lake Wakatipu. Leaving my car by the roadside at 7.15 a.m. at about 1000 feet I struck across country to join a subsidiary ridge which led steeply up to the main backbone at about 6000 feet. The excellent Moir's guide book Northern section indicated the route line but also made clear that to reach the true top at 7668 feet by the usual route, a two-day expedition was normal, because having reached the main ridge and followed it for about a mile, it was necessary to contour around and indeed to lose height and pass by Lake Alta on the Eastern slopes. I resolved to go as high as I could within the day and so scrambled happily along the main ridge to reach a small top above a corrie in which snow still lay. To reach the next and

higher top it was necessary to drop about 300 feet into the corrie and scramble up the scree on the other side to gain a small ridge separating this corrie from Lake Alta lying deep within enclosing ridges. This short ridge led up steeply over easy ground and finally a rock scramble put me on my high point at 7500 feet (by my aneroid) and separated from the main top by a deep gash and a considerable rock climb beyond it. Views were unbounded except towards the N.W. where clouds still shrouded the peaks above Milford Sound. By contrast, to the N.E. and over 100 miles away, Mt. Cook (12,349 feet) glistened white in the sun and in between lay practically all the Southern Alps, with the twin Earnslaw peaks and Mt. Aspiring especially fine.

'I returned to the car 9½ hours after setting out, having climbed about 7000 feet up and down again.

'Good valley walks, on which my wife joined me, included one up the West branch of the Matukituki river in the Wanaka area and another up the Moonlight Trail to Moke Creek in the Queenstown area—sites of hectic gold-prospecting in the last century.

'Many New Zealand mountains are protected by dense and often impenetrable bush up to about 4000 feet. Tourist pamphlets and more serious topographical literature are enthusiastic in extolling the beauties of the bush. I must confess I found it monotonous, concealing the true form of the mountain as well as, on occasion, forming an irritating barrier. New Zealand lacks indigenous animals; red deer were introduced from Scotland late in the 19th century and multiplied to such a degree that the Forest and National Park interests consider them a menace to the bush. Consequently they are shot by anyone and at all times of the year. One of my less happy recollections of New Zealand was of an event at Makarora, on the South side of the Hasst pass. Here was a helicopter taking off on frequent "shoot-ups" in the high mountain glens and presumably with automatic weapons, killing and no doubt wounding beasts by the score. We saw the helicopter returning from one such foray with about 10 gralloched and headless carcasses slung below it. These were dumped on the ground whilst the machine went back for more. After a night on the ground in mid summer next morning the carcasses were black with hideously large "blue bottle" flies. Later, the carcasses were carried off by helicopter to market. Venison often figured on hotel menus but we were told most of the meat was exported to Japan and Germany. Needless to say, we never ate any.

'One National Park Chief Ranger excused the practice by stressing the need to conserve bush to prevent soil erosion but admitted that "perhaps the indiscriminate slaughter had gone far enough."

'I would have thought that wholesale destruction of much bush would be beneficial in that the cleared land would provide room for many more sheep farms and thereby increase New Zealand's meat exports—always providing the world demand for her meat will increase. This interesting subject is however quite outwith an article on the hills and one which has gone on long enough!

Norway

H. M. BROWN writes, 'With R. Aitken (J.M.C.S.) and others I sailed to Bergen and followed the scenic central route to Romsdal. From Trollstigen I traversed Bispén by its South ridge. From Vengedal, I climbed the North Ridge of Store Vengetind, the traverse of Holstind, Blånebbå to Mjølva, the South Ridge of the Romsdalshorn and then from Trollstigen again I traversed the Breitind. I then moved *via* Alesund, to the Sunnmore. From Patchellhutte I climbed Slogen, the South top of Brekktind and Smørskredtind. From the Urke camp site I traversed Jakta and Risenåsi then

motored to Fonn, whence I made a double crossing of the Jostedal ice-cap (south over Suphellenipa and down into Langedalen, back from beside the Austerdalsbreen with a long traverse on the ice-cap—a 17 hour day).

'In the Jotunheim, after some had left, I traversed Galdhoppigen and in the Dovrefjell spent a day on Blahöin and visited the Fokstua Bird Sanctuary. The whole of July was fine but the last week spent in Oslo was wild. Outwith the Jotunheim we met few climbers. The Jostedalsbreen is unique in Europe, Romsdal gives good climbing but it was the Sunnmore that most impressed, with majestic scenery and fine peaks. Between there and Hellesylt there are some big faces that have hardly been looked at.'

European Alps

H. M. BROWN was in the Bernina during the second half of August with the A.B.M.S.A.C. and enjoyed good weather which steadily broke down. He writes, 'Charles Warren and David Riddell were others with Scottish connections. While there I climbed Piz Languard, Piz Albris, the traverse of the Fuorcla Pischa to Diavolezza, bouldery Piz Surlej and onto the incredible squalor of the Coaz Hut. I then traversed Il Chaputchin to the Val Fex and Sils Maria, traversed Piz Tschierva, Piz Morteratsch and down to Boval, traversed Piz Cambrena and Piz Arlas (up the interesting (D) *eisnase* and off the Cuillin Ridge rocks), climbed Monte Pers in fog and went from the delightful Es Scha Hut over the Porto for, literally, a thundering good traverse of Piz Kesch and a long descent to Bergunn.

'Both the Coaz and the Tschierva Huts are geared for tourist gangs and were not enjoyed by the climbers. The Swiss Alpine Club needs to get its priorities right. The Buët was climbed in a snowstorm in June from a bivouac in the Berard corrie.'

J. MCK. STEWART writes, 'I was in the Austrian Tyrol with a O.A.V. party during the first fortnight in September.

'The first week was spent in the Stubai, from Innsbruck by Land Rover to Ranalt in the Stubaital through the Lagental to the Nürnberger Hut. 2nd, Aperer Feuerstein by the Grublferner and the Nürnberger Scharte. 3rd, Mairspitze en route to the Sulzenau Hut. 4th, traversed Wilder Freiger by the W.N.W. and Frontier ridges, descending over the Gamsspitzl to the Grünaufener. 5th, over the Peiljoch to the Dresdner Hut. 6th, traversed the Pfaffenschneid, Zuckerhütl and Wilder Pfaff from the Dresdner. 7th, over the Bildstöckl Joch and the Gaisskarferner to the Hildesheimer Hut and so to Sölden.

'The second week was spent in the Ötztal, on the 8th from Vent to the Hochjoch Hospiz. 9th, to the Brandenburger Haus and much new snow with a good day on the Dahmannspitze and the Ehrichspitze. 10th, from the Brandenburger over the Gepatsch and Langtaufener Ferners and up the Norgat of the Weisskugel, a classic mixed rock and ice ridge. From the Summit whilst descending across the steep N.E. face to the E.N.E. ridge all on my rope were swept down the face for over 900 ft. by an avalanche, fortunately no broken bones but the four and a half hours from the Weisskugel Joch back to the hut was for some a painful journey. 11th, a late start, Fluchtkogel en route to the Vernagt Hut. 12th, up the Gr. Vernagterner to the Brochkogel Joch, traversed S. & N. Summits of the Ötztal Wildspitze and on to the Braunschweiger Hut for two nights. 14th, over the Pitztaler Jochl and down the Rettenbachthal to Sölden.

'Conditions during the two weeks were excellent apart from two days in the Stubai. Icefalls and glaciers were however exceptionally heavily crevassed this year.'

CHARLES WARREN and IAIN OGILVIE were in the Val D'Aosta from 24th July and visited two huts and failed on two peaks before the arrival of GEORGE ROGER on 30th. This presidential reinforcement resulted in the ascent of the Gran Paradiso (4026 m.) on 1st August from the Rifugio Vittoria Emmanuelle II. They then crossed the valley to the Pennines, and from Rifugio Gnifetti climbed the Pyramid Vincent (4215 m.) and the Cornorero (4321 m.) on 4th August, descending to the valley the same day. On 7th from the Rifugio Mezzolama they climbed Pollux (4091 m.) and on the following day traversed the Breithorn (4165 m.) to Bruel, escaping by the first available bus. They then ascended to the Rifugio du Dôme, and on 10th traversed Mont Blanc (4807 m.) by the Route du Pape to the Grand Mulets and on next day to Chamonix.

The weather had remained almost perfect for 3 weeks. Warren and Roger then returned home. Ogilvie remained for a few days but the weather had by now broken completely and he only achieved a traverse of the Colle Louison in a thunderstorm.

The Italian valleys of the Pennine Alps are most attractive and with one notable exception almost unspoiled. The huts are rather lower and the climbs correspondingly longer, but they are less crowded and even in the high season you can still find your own route and cut your own steps.

BOOKS

In This Short Span. By Michael Ward. (1972; Gollancz. £3.75)

Mountaineering autobiographies appear to fall broadly into two categories. There are those from the pens of the elder statesmen such as Shipton or Chapman which start with a chapter about early days at school and a photograph or two of the author as a small boy. Then there are those from the pens (or ghost-pens) of the modern tigers in which school-days are discreetly left unmentioned. Judged by this very superficial criterion, Michael Ward's autobiography 'In This Short Span' falls clearly into the former category, and there are (if one includes the dust-jacket) five photographs of the author by the time one reaches page 33.

Schooldays are followed by climbs with the C.U.M.C., and the inevitable visit to Ben Nevis in blizzard conditions. Then a chapter on the Alps culminates in the accident in the Dauphiné in which John Barford was killed, but this story has already been told by W. H. Murray.

Part 2 of the book deals with the events between 1951 and 1953 which culminated in the ascent of Mount Everest. Ward was one of the early advocates of the Khumbu Glacier approach, but his book adds little to the existing literature of the reconnaissance and ascent of Everest.

In part 3 there is a description of a high-altitude scientific expedition to the area south of Everest in 1960-61. The main mountaineering events of this expedition were the very successful winter ascent of Ama Dablam, and the disastrous attempt on Makalu a few months later. The latter climb ended in near-tragedy as first Hillary and then other members of the expedition succumbed to high-altitude ailments and had to be evacuated by helicopter. This must have been within a hair's breadth of becoming one of the great Himalayan disasters.

Finally, in part 4, the author tells of two visits under medical auspices to Bhutan. Ward and his companions made long treks into relatively unknown parts of this land, but his story lacks the excitement of mountaineering disaster, and does not really come alive. One dzong is made to sound very much like every other dzong.

In all, this is an unexceptionally autobiography with frequent references of medical interest as befits an author who is a consultant surgeon. It is not, however, compulsive reading, and many of the events related in this book have already been covered by other authors of the post-war Everest era. D.J.B.

In High Places. By Dougal Haston. (1972; Cassell and Co. Ltd. 168pp. 17 photographs. £2.75).

Hastonurge for uppermost up joyfully doubleboots through journalist-cold crust only spasmodically but never as joycean as former quests. Yet the crust is good and occasionally weight-bearing; notuptightingly falsemodest coolly explaining passion progress from Scotland to Himalaya. To stay (in Scotland) would have been to stagnate. Reviewingly difficult because hastonic experience so relevant to scotsclimberpsyche. Haston mindfields still flower unseen and there will be more harvests.

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I.G.R.

The Next Horizon. By Chris Bonington. (1973; Gollancz. 304pp. Numerous illustrations and maps. £3.80).

The continuing story . . . Those familiar with Mr Bonington's first autobiography 'I Chose to Climb' (reviewed S.M.C.J., 1967, xxviii, 369) will recall how he turned his back on the world of margarine selling (deemed too materialistic, and dull) to try to make a living from climbing. This he has surely done and The Next Horizon tells how.

Mr Bonington's new mode of life is, however, not much different from the world he turned his back on. There is a product, which is not the real thing but an excellent facsimile; there is a market of consumers who cannot tell one from the other and there is body of technique for raising capital to produce the product and for recovering it by selling it to the consumer. Thus, the book bristles with references to 'my new life as an adventure journalist,' 'the communications game' and the like; much of the reader's time and patience is taken up by tedious accounts of to-ing and fro-ing between the B.B.C., the Daily This and the Sunday That; the book itself (and the other books) are clearly recognised as work—objects which must be produced in a certain manner, at a certain time in accordance with certain wholly extrinsic motives and circumstances. Thus the first book would have been better titled 'I Chose to Buy and Sell Climbing' and this one perhaps 'The Next Five-Year Plan.'

However, we are left with the impressions that the Adventurer has not really adapted to his new way of life. Each chapter testifies to unresolved difficulties arising from the climbing values and those of the Climbing Industry. Every important mountaineering decision is reviewed and reviewed again as the two sets of values oscillate in ascendancy. Worse still, a third set of values, those relating to his role as husband and father gain in force

throughout the book, leaving our Hero stranded in the Morass of Indecision surrounded by the Mountains of his Dreams. What Next? says the last chapter. What next indeed.

There is no doubt that these neurotic processes of evaluation are real enough—they are too numerous recounted to be dissimulation. Moreover, they certainly detract from the readability of the autobiography, since they are so repetitious and always inconclusive; his maudlin outpourings about wife and children can scarcely be borne without a shudder. One wonders whether the personality of the Bold Adventurer can continue to survive these strains and stresses.

As for the climbing, well, most of it is margarine and we have heard about it all before, on the B.B.C., in the Daily This and Sunday That. There is little need to comment on it here. Telly-climbs, the Eiger Direct, the Central Tower of Paine, Annapurna form the backbone of the book, all of which have featured in Mr Bonington's lectures and other writings.

All in all, this reviewer found reading this book a gruesome chore, and can find little to say in its favour beyond that it is well-produced and cheap. As for Mr Bonington, he perhaps deserves sympathy rather than the scorn which he invites from those who subscribe to climbing values. He has carried out an important experiment the results of which should serve as an object lesson to all young mountaineers tempted to live for climbing and throw up their jobs. Clearly, it is one thing to live *for* climbing and quite another to live *by* climbing. The latter, as Mr Bonington would surely agree, distorts climbing values, lessens enjoyment, makes no fortune and possibly debases the activity and the actor. The former has none of these defects.

Let the Adventurer have the last word:

'Tom [went] back to the mainland to search out another sea-stack. I couldn't help envying him, for in my relative success as a photo-journalist I had lost a great deal of freedom, was getting trapped into the very rat-race from which I had wanted to escape in 1972.'

But in the next line,

'It was, at least, a self-sought race—one by which I couldn't help being enthralled'

R.N.C.

Hazards in Mountaineering. By Paulcke & Dumler. Translated by E. N. Bowman. (1972; Kaye & Ward. £2.90).

Appearing in its initial form in 1885, this book has been re-issued several times. The present edition is the first to be in English and is a condensed and updated version. As one would expect, the contents are specifically directed at Alpine conditions and the sections dealing with rock types and formations, glaciers, ski-ing, snow and avalanche conditions are excellent. The chapter on mountain weather is particularly good, apart from an inadequate treatment of exposure.

The section on equipment is less satisfactory with a confusion of 'authoritative' quotations. Footnotes, presumably for the English translation, are added to include current British attitudes to ropes, pitons and axes and to update the text.

The book does not claim to be a manual of technique. However, some things which ought to be stressed in a publication of this kind are omitted or given very cursory treatment, such as the insertion of pitons, the use of nut runners, ice axe arrest, and crevasse rescue techniques.

The art work is highly individual with a large number of photographs and diagrams interspersed through the text. There is a useful bibliography and a somewhat unnecessary glossary.

Overall this is a useful book. Much of its content would be worthwhile to all but the widely experienced alpinist while its shortcomings can be made good from other sources without difficulty. The philosophy toward mountain hazards which emerges here and there in the text is refreshing in these days of warnings, condemnations and threatened prohibitions—'Daring is fine, reckless impetuosity is stupid.' Experience, responsibility and mature judgment are regarded as the basis of real mountain safety rather than elaborate equipment or lists of rules, while observations like 'A winter ascent can never be regarded as a pleasure but rather as a magnificent adventure' will raise a nostalgic echo in many an ageing S.M.C. heart.

W.D.B.

Journals of Kindred Clubs.—Exhaustion and the lateness of this year's *Journal* compel us to forgo our usual Journal-bashing tailpiece this year. The following Journals were received:—*Chester Mountaineering Club Journal*, 1971-2; *Climber's Club Journal*, 1970-71; *Edinburgh University M.C. Journal*, 1972, 1973; *Ladies' Alpine Club Journal*, 1972, 1973; *Leeds University M.C. Journal*, 1973; *The M.A.M. Journal*, 1971-2; *Journal of The Mountain Club of South Africa*, 1971; *The Mountain Club of Rhodesia Journal*, 1972; *The New Zealand Alpine Club Journal*, 1972; *Oxford Mountaineering*, 1972; *Polar Record*, 1972-3; *The Rucksack Club Journal*, 1970-71; *Sheffield University M.C. Journal*, 1973.

We are indebted to the clubs concerned for their generosity.



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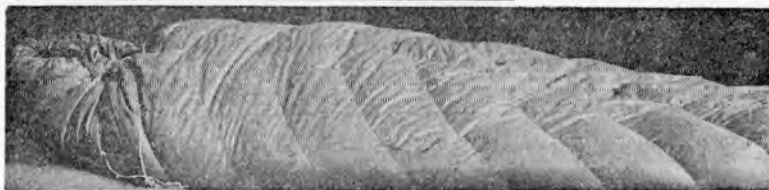
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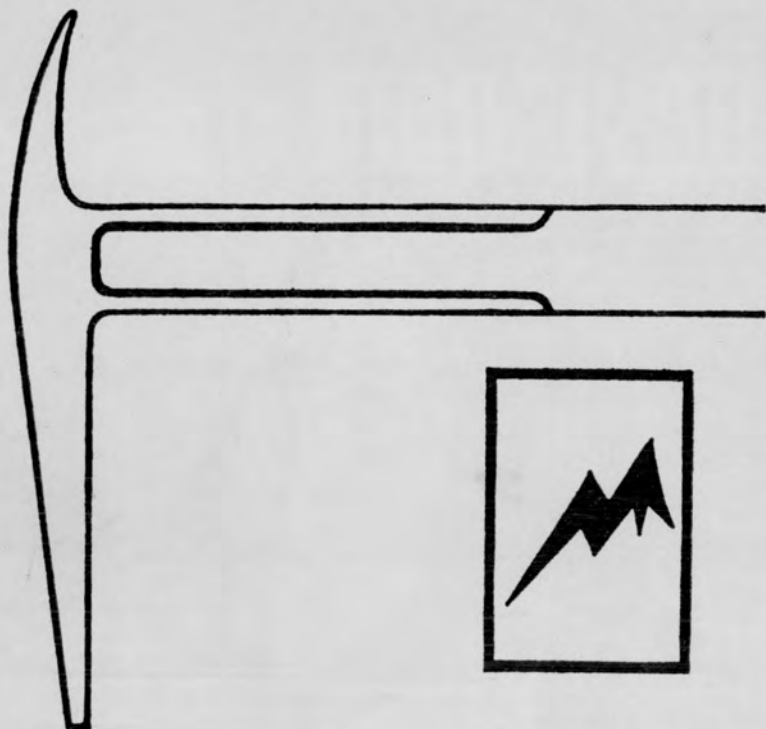
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