

THE
SCOTTISH
MOUNTAINEERING
CLUB JOURNAL



VOL. XXX

No. 166

1975

J.M.C.S. JUBILEE, 1925-75

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EDITED BY R. N. CAMPBELL

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EDITORIAL

The Once and Future J.M.C.S.

THIS year the Junior Mountaineering Club of Scotland celebrates its Jubilee. Fifty is a good age: there is, with luck, some substantial career to look back on, some peaks of achievement to record for a nostalgic Posterity, some shreds of ambition and hope to give direction and purpose in an uncertain future, while dour Mortality, again with luck, is not yet a guest at every feast. We congratulate the J.M.C.S. on surviving these fifty difficult years and on their sprightly good health. In describing these years as difficult we have particularly in mind not only the years of war, nor even the weakening effects of universal private transport, but the erosion of *raison d'être* brought about by the diminished significance of the Special Relationship between our Club and theirs. In 1925 the links between us were strong and functional: the J.M.C.S. constituted the sole and excellent route to all-round mountain competence for the novice climber, it also constituted the principal source of new members for our Club, ever in danger of becoming the Geriatric M.C.S., and, not least, they subscribed to (and *paid for!*) our *Journal*. For our part, we provided the J.M.C.S. with a target to aim for (or at) and filled their rucksacks with millstones of Tradition and Praxis—ballast often rightly discarded when confronted with particularly inviting new cruxes but probably beneficial on the whole. Nowadays, as few will need reminding, these key roles of the J.M.C.S. are no longer their prerogative: other clubs have sprung up in bewildering profusion to serve the needs of the inexperienced and, lately, Outdoor Education has laid its leprous hands on the young mountaineer; our Club, hypocritically fair, opens its doors to climbers possessed of the most dubious cultural credentials

This year the *Journal* salutes its best customers by giving over a sizeable section of this number to their adventures of the past fifty years. We thank, in particular, Jim Messer of the Glasgow Section and Bill Myles of the Edinburgh Section for their help in collecting the material for this Retrospect. However, due to editorial

Photo: D. J. Bennet

Opposite—A newcomer to Munro's Tables—Sgùrr nan Saighead
in the Five Sisters

dilly-dallying, poor communications and lack of space we are still short of our goal: Posterity should not be denied the deeds of the Lochaber, London and, yes, the Inverness Sections, nor should she be denied a Prospect. We hope that our successor-designate, Bill Brooker, will complete the pitch next year. For the moment we would ask those Custodians of the J.M.C.S. Spirit, whoever they may be, to consult their tea-leaves and write the future down. Or up.

Laying Down the Pen

WE have been concerned with this *Journal* now, in one way or another, for ten years. We are leaving it now because what began as a Passion, became a Duty and, finally and most regrettably, a Chore. No true goddesses can be adequately served in such a fashion so, fearing desecration, we withdraw. To our successor between the pages, as it were, we would make this one admonition. If this *Journal* is not the *Journal* of Stott, Douglas, Inglis Clark and Raeburn, it is nothing: they and their like down the years, their deeds and their values, montane and literary, are what keeps the Passion strong.

Abandoning the Editorial person, to those who have helped me with the *Journal* I record my gratitude here: to Geoff Dutton, who taught me the little I know of Letters and a good deal of what I know about Life; to Jimmy Marshall, who gave matter and form to the Spirit of Raeburn; to Iain Smart, Iain Rowe and Bill Jones, who shared the burden and to our printers William Culross of Coupar Angus, who have been unfailingly courteous and helpful to a wretchedly unreliable customer.

THE FORMATION OF THE J.M.C.S.

(1) The Beginning of the J.M.C.S.

By A. G. Hutchison

Two days on the still war-scarred battlefields of the Somme were enough for us and it was with relief that Rutherford and I returned to Amiens where we had arranged to meet Arthur Rusk.

It was July, 1924, and our meeting point marked the start of a mountaineering holiday in the Bernese Oberland.

As the train bearing our friend swept round the steep curve in the station, we suddenly became aware of an excited figure leaning half out of the carriage window and wildly waving its arms. This turned out to be Rusk. He was bursting with a new idea.

'A NEW Mountaineering Club'—that was the theme. An association for mountaineers in which they might meet kindred spirits and find among them those who could teach them the rules of the game. It would be a Club in which the members would learn the rudiments of mountain craft and it might also become a 'feeder' for the senior club which required conditions of membership.

The three of us talked over the project long into the night and next morning our reflections were considerably heightened by the prospects of the Bernese Alps, themselves brilliant in the sunshine. They made a glorious back-drop viewed across the central plains of Switzerland, as the train thundered its way down the Aar Valley.

Our next few days were fully occupied as we prepared for arduous things to come by several days preliminary training.

Later, having crossed the Balmhorn, and en route over the Petersgrat towards the Bietschhorn, we became stormbound for a day in the Multhorn Hut at the head of the Lauter Brunnen Valley. It was here, in that hut, that the constitution for the new club was hammered out and agreed upon. I think we also decided on the name then.

The first meet of the J.M.C.S. was held at the Narnain Boulder in the corrie below the Cobbler, Arrochar. Here is an extract from Rutherford's diary on the event, noted at the time:—

Saturday, August 29th, 1925.

Left Queen Street (Glasgow) Station by the 5.55 a.m. for Arrochar. Reached the Narnain Boulder by 9.25 and put in some good work with plenty of hands to build up the shelter wall. We stopped at noon and were back by 2.40 p.m. having traversed Jean and the Cobbler. Arthur (Rusk) arrived in the evening. It was poor weather. That night there slept seven under the Boulder, Eddy (Andreae), Waddington, Robertson, A. Hutchison, Arthur, Parry and the writer. A. J. Stevens and the Speirs emulated the coneys farther up the Narnain.

Sunday, August 30th.

The morning was bad so the inaugural meeting of the Junior Mountaineering Club of Scotland was held with Arthur and Parry still in bed. Arthur made a good outline of his aims for the Club and Eddy was elected Glasgow President, and W. Speirs Secy. E. C. Thomson and Elton came up from below. The whole party then went up Ben Arthur in mist and rain.'

It might therefore be fair to say that it was in the hills of the Arrochar Alps that the J.M.C.S. came to birth.

Rusk died in 1965. Looking back, it is possible to recollect something of his philosophy of life, one result of which being the idea which led to the formation of the J.M.C.S.

Rusk looked on mountains as a challenge. Many do. But, to him the challenge did not only provide an opportunity in which he might express himself.

He looked on mountains from a wider angle and felt the challenge as something more subtle. They were not chance phenomena. They were there for a purpose and had a part to play in the scheme of things. They influenced the lives of men and pointed a way, endlessly, up and beyond the low levels where, for the most part, man's course is run.

Metaphysically speaking, mankind need not live in the valleys. The mountains vision could and should have a wider implication in human events.

So, he had a burning urge that men and mountains must meet. I think if he were living now, how much he would rejoice that more and more they do.

Over the door of the Town Hall in Sacramento, California, a Legend is engraved:—

'Give me men to match my mountains.'

Those who go on the mountains might well ponder these words in respect of our responsibilities in today's world. Still more widely, they might provide a clue on how to restore the sense of purpose which the world needs so much.

(2) More Than Fifty Years Ago

By R. N. Rutherford

ELSEWHERE in this issue Archie Hutchison has told how he and I met Arthur Rusk on our way to Switzerland where Arthur developed his plans for the J.M.C.S. while we climbed the Alps together. So many things have changed since those days that it may be of interest to recall something of our climbing before 1925.

Both Archie and I had begun climbing before we left school in 1920. One of our schoolmasters was G. F. Woodhouse, better known as Bobbie because he led the bell ringers of the church in the ringing of 'Bob Majors.' Bobbie, a member of the Fell and Rock Club, was not only a fine climber but also a gymnast who represented his country at the 1912 Olympics in Stockholm. It was he who took each of us to Seathwaite in Borrowdale and introduced us to rock climbs such as Kern Knotts Chimney on the Great Gable. Our first climb in winter conditions were from Crianlarich when we gained the tops of Cruach Ardrain and Ben More in snow.

In May 1921 we began our weekend camps at Arrochar. In those days not everyone owned a car. We were poor engineering apprentices and so, except at New Year and Easter when we used the train, we travelled by push bike. Leaving our works in Govan and Bridgeton at 12 noon on a Saturday we would cycle home and as soon as we could, would load our bicycles with a home-made tent (7 ft. by 6 ft. by 4 ft. high), ground sheet, sleeping bags, food and a Primus stove on which to cook it. What could not be strapped to the bicycles, such as dry shirt and trousers, was carried in rucksacks on our backs. From Hillhead we soon reached Anniesland where Crow Road came in on the left, the road to Jordanhill slanted off to the left between tall hedges and the road to Temple turned sharply to the right. The carriage-way to the west through Knightswood had not yet been made. If we went past Jordanhill to join the Dumbarton Road at Scotstoun it meant many miles along a road the surface of which was cobbled with granite setts and tram-lines down the centre. Glasgow Corporation trams ran as far as Dalmuir; beyond that point the track maintenance on to Dumbarton was worse. No one liked riding over cobbles and so at Anniesland we turned right, crossed the canal at Temple Sawmills and rode on to Canniesburn Toll where horses were still being shod at the smiddy. Passing through Bearsden we climbed higher before speeding down through Duntocher to Old Kilpatrick. From there we had to put up with a few miles of tram-lines as the road wound its way through Bowling till we reached Dumbuck. After that the road had many ups and downs but no problems; we crossed the Leven at Alexandria and leaving Luss and Tarbet behind, came to the end of our 37½ mile ride.

At Arrochar we crossed the bridge into Argyll and there at the side of the Sugach Burn we pitched our tent. Breakfast on Sunday morning was always the same—porridge followed by bacon and eggs. Most of our climbing was on the rocks of Jean, the Cobbler and the Wife, but there were days on the Spear Head and other climbs on Narnain. Back down at Sugach we would brew up a cup of tea before striking camp and riding home to Glasgow ready to be at work when the horn stopped blowing at five to eight on Monday morning.

During the Glasgow Fair, at the New Year, Spring and Autumn holidays we would get farther afield, to the Cairngorms, Arran, Glen Coe, Ben Nevis and the Cuillins. We enjoyed them all but the Arrochar hills were our first love. By the standards of to-day our rock climbing was nothing to write about. We carried no pegs or other ironmongery—we worked with nuts and bolts all through the week. We wore no harness and attached ourselves to the rope with a bowline or middleman's knot. One thing is certain. We were physically fit and the feeling of achievement when we reached our tops in all weathers gave us an inspiration which still remains.

(3) Early Days

By C. E. Andreae

It was in October 1921 that I first met A. G. Hutchison and R. N. Rutherford when we were students in the Engineering Faculty at Glasgow University. Along with K. K. Hunter of the same fraternity we quickly developed a firm friendship and during that first winter at the University Hutchison and Rutherford, who had learnt their mountain craft from a schoolmaster at Sedburgh, spoke long and enthusiastically of the joys of camping and climbing and the delights of the Scottish hills generally. As a result we were first blooded in the snows at Crianlarich in March 1922 and were introduced to the Cobbler region of Arrochar in the following summer.

Proceeding out from Glasgow on the humble push-bike we always camped at the same spot above Sugach farm at the head of Loch Long, and at the time we felt like pioneers, for camping was in its comparative infancy and we never saw a tent north of Luss. On the ascent from the loch it became a ritual that we should stop at the two large boulders at the foot of Narnain, where one of the two provided good scrambling exercise, but the other held no such attraction except for a large overhang. Thence we proceeded to the Cobbler—the traverse of Jean, the airy arête to the Cobbler himself and the descent by the big gully at the back of the north peak, with variations. That first week-end was the first of many such that for me was to last for four years. The regular pattern was to camp at Arrochar in the summer, while at Easter, during a break after the University term, we went to Crianlarich where we were royally looked after by a Mrs Buckingham in her minute cottage—we called it Buckingham Palace! From there we explored the feast of snow-covered Munros that were within walking distance and with the aid of the trusty bicycle we covered the Beinn Dorain group and Stob Ghabhar.

Regarding our leaders it might be mentioned that Hutchison, though a year younger than Rutherford, was the bigger of the two and possibly more voluble, but if we tended to look to him for leadership this was not to belittle Rutherford who, though small and relatively silent, was thoroughly sound and I could not have wished for a better and safer companion on the hills. There was an occasion when he and I had been held up by some hard *nevé* on the far side of Stobinian with the result that we had to struggle down the glen to Ben More farm in the dark with a late arrival at Buckingham Palace. Mrs Buckingham was understandably a little worried and said 'I wouldn't have minded so much if Mr Hutchison had been there, but with young Mr Rutherford . . .'

At Arrochar it was generally misty and wet and I remember about that time the fickle weather produced eleven fine Fridays in succession followed almost invariably by a poor week-end. But there was always the companionship and understanding born of the hills and many are the happy times that we spent on the Cobbler, the Spear Head and Jammed Block Chimney of Narnain and others, though the Right Angle Gully of the Cobbler took a while before yielding to assault.

Our expeditions were, of course, not confined to Arrochar and Crianlarich, and among others, three in particular might briefly be mentioned. First there was a long week-end in Arran where, after a late evening climb along the A'Chir Ridge, a hurricane suddenly blew up at midnight and flattened our tents. We spent the rest of the night acting as tent poles and were glad at least that it did not rain. Next day we recovered ourselves and our tents and in any case it was far too wild to be on the tops. On the day following, in quieter conditions, we managed a climb on Cir Mhór before rushing for the mid-day boat from Brodick. Then there was a glorious spell of five days after taking our degree in March 1934 when Rutherford, Hunter and I stayed at the old half-way hut on Ben Nevis. After various climbs in misty but dry conditions we had an epic day in bright sunshine when we crossed the Ben, followed round the Càrn Mór Dèarg arête and across the col to Aonach Beag. The panorama all round was superb with Goat Fell plainly visible eighty miles away. The return was made round the north and east side of Càrn Mór Dèarg finishing up with an arduous toil of a thousand feet up from the Mhuilinn glen to the hut in pitch darkness. Never did a camp dinner taste better! Lastly, we four spent two weeks in Glen Brittle in summer 1924. We covered a lot of ground in that time in reasonable weather, climbing anything between Sgùrr nan Gilleann and Sgùrr Alasdair, but one of my clearest recollections was the limpet-like behaviour of my clothes to the rough gabbro rock—perhaps showing how *not* to climb.

For the first two years our climbs and expeditions had been limited to the original quartet, sometimes augmented by A. J. Frazer who with Hunter was to join the S.M.C. in 1924. Then late in 1924 Hutchison and Rutherford began introducing new recruits to the hills, the early ones including the Spiers brothers, C. W. Parry, C. M. Robertson and J. A. Steven; so it was that the birth of an idea began sowing itself in the minds of our leaders. They then went off to Switzerland in July 1925 to be joined there by A. J. Rusk who arrived bubbling over with excitement with the idea of forming a new club. He could hardly have had two better henchmen than Hutchison and Rutherford. The idea was discussed up the hill and down dale and finally on a day when they were weatherbound in the Mutthorn hut at the upper end of the Lauterbrunnen Valley the draft constitution was drawn up and the name Junior Mountaineering Club of Scotland was decided upon.

About the same time, though without any connection with the proposed club, we thought of building up a wall under the hitherto useless Narnain Boulder to provide a howf for intending climbers. Periods between climbs were given over to the building which was rough and ready—just large stones and sods of earth and grass with no tools except our hands, but in the end it provided reasonable accommodation for seven people, four in the inner section and three in the outer, which was just serviceable provided the weather was not too inclement.

It seemed a happy chance, therefore, that the shelter should have what I believe was its inaugural occupation at the same time as the first meeting of the J.M.C.S. So it was that on the 30th August 1925 the club came into being in the most original circumstances—'conceived' in the Mutthorn hut and 'born' under the Narnain boulder with the chairman, Arthur Rusk, conducting proceedings from inside his sleeping bag! He began by reading the constitution and putting it to the vote; the meeting then continued in a slightly informal way in the presence of thirteen people—Rusk, Bartholomew, Hutchison, Rutherford, Parry, Waddington and myself under the Boulder; A. J. Steven, the Speirs brothers and Mellon from tents in the vicinity, while E. C. Thomson (S.M.C.) and Elton came up from camp at the loch-side. The eight people who were not already in the S.M.C. became founder members, W. B. Speirs was appointed secretary and to me fell the honour of the presidency. It was a dirty day and after the club was well and truly founded the whole party attacked Ben Ime in mist and rain.

The Edinburgh section had its first meeting ten days later and in November 1925 a party of about twenty, including the president, J. G. Osborne, and secretary, the late T. E. Thomson, came through to Glasgow to meet our section. It was fine to foregather with them and to exchange experiences, and after tea sixteen of us (mostly

from Edinburgh) set off to Arrochar to celebrate the occasion on the hills. On arrival at Arrochar the party split up; the wise and perhaps more financially endowed, consisting of Osborne, Ainslie, Wright, Rose and Turnbull stayed at Ross's Hotel; Brown, Hedderwick and Edgar spent the night in a car and/or tent somewhere on the loch-side, while the stalwarts (or madmen) Rusk, Bartholomew, Kirkland, Steven, Mellon and myself struggled up in the darkness to the Narnain Boulder.

It so happened that a Naval vessel was visiting the old torpedo station at the time and on spotting our hurricane lanterns on the hillside gave us the benefit of their searchlight for several hundred feet. We discovered later that the Navy thought we were a search party (after all, what other explanation for a party being on the hillside on a November night?). They reported to the hotel where they were reassured in the best presidential manner by Osborne that it was only a case of mental deficiency, and after the exchange of a few colourful remarks the Navy retired.

Regarding the foregoing nocturnal escapade this was something like the ante meet activities of the S.M.C. in reverse. It is worth while recalling that at Easter 1891 Gilbert Thomson and Naismith took the night rain from Glasgow to Dalwhinnie where they alighted at 3 a.m. From there they set off along Loch Ericht over the top of Ben Alder and across the wild untracked waste of the Moor of Rannoch to Inveroran where they arrived at 8 p.m. for the meet. They must have travelled nearly forty miles and said they had no difficulty. Our own adventure palls beside this herculean effort, but it sets a standard for some J.M.C.S. 'toughies' to emulate.

Finally all the preceding events culminated in the first ever formal meet of the combined Edinburgh and Glasgow teams at Crianlarich at New Year 1926 at which the following were present:—Addenbrooke, Aikman, Campbell, Elton, Gibson, Macdonald, Macfarlane, Martin, Osborne, Roberts, Rose, P. Scott, W. G. Scott, Smith, the Speirs brothers, the Steven brothers, Thomson and Wright of the J.M.C.S. together with Bartholomew, Hutchison, Hunter, Rutherford and Rusk of the S.M.C. It is not proposed to tabulate who did what over the period but all the peaks within the area were well and truly covered while a party moved up to Bridge of Orchy for two nights and climbed Beinn Dorian, Beinn Dothaidh and Stob Ghabhar. The highlight of the meet was the first annual dinner at which twenty J.M.C.S. and seven S.M.C. members were present, the latter included the president and secretary, J. A. Parker and George Sang, who came over from Tyndrum as specially invited guests. Speeches were made by Rusk, Osborne and Spiers and most particularly by Parker. Three *bona fide* hotel guests were asked to join in and evidently had the time of their lives. Certainly no members who were present will forget the occasion.

THE GLASGOW SECTION

(1) Climbing in the 1920's

By William B. Speirs

MY BROTHER and I spent our summer holidays of 1922 and 1923 at Spean Bridge. Our main occupation was fishing the burns for trout but the summer of 1923 was blessed with a magnificent spell of weather and the view of the mountains across the Spean valley from the Schoolhouse where we were staying cast a spell on us. We explored the glens leading into the mountains, and from the headwaters we ascended to the summits of Stob Coire an Laoigh, Aonach Mór and Ben Nevis. Cycles were used to take us to the foothills.

We had no knowledge of the techniques of rock and snow climbing, but our O.T.C. training at school had taught us the use of map and compass and we could find our way across country without difficulty. We were fortunate in having a number of friends interested in mountaineering and were advised and encouraged by Archie Hutchison and Dick Rutherford who had joined the S.M.C. in 1922 and from this came the formation of the J.M.C.S.

Transport was the main consideration in arranging climbing expeditions in the 1920's—there were no jet flights to the Himalaya and the Andes, and even the Alps were only for those with four or more weeks holiday. Cars were few in number and for most people bus, train and cycle were the means of travel.

Our first expedition was to what was then the far north in June 1925. Five of us joined the 4 a.m. train to Inverness, and went on to Lairg where a hired truck awaited us. We loaded on our cycles and large rucksacks and climbed in ourselves, and did the 21 miles to Altnaharra by truck to help us on our way, and managed to reach Tongue by cycle before dark. The holiday was mainly fishing, but we climbed Ben Loyal and Suilven. The roads were very bad, tar macadam having not yet reached beyond the Great Glen, and in most places there were two stony tracks made by the wheels of the motor vehicles and carts, with grass in the middle. We cycled slowly south down the west coast, and as the road made a detour round the many sea lochs, we used all the old ferries which were still operating, and this saved us about ten miles in most cases. Some of the ferry boats were little better than large rowing boats, and with five of us, two ferrymen, five cycles and large rucksacks leaving little freeboard, we were glad to reach the far shore! The expedition finished at Achnasheen where we joined the train for Glasgow.

During the late summer of 1925 we learned a little about rock climbing, and reading the S.M.C. Skye Guide which was published

in 1923 we were tempted to spend our annual holiday in June 1926 in Skye. We provided ourselves with boots nailed with tricouni, an innovation, and the best manilla hemp ropes. We bought the non-perishable food in Glasgow and sent this off with our camping gear two weeks in advance by the cargo boat to Carbost to await collection. We set off on the 6 a.m. train for Mallaig, where we joined the Portree steamer. We had the mistaken idea that it would be quicker to disembark at Broadford, rather than going on by the boat to Portree. However the road to Sligachan was covered with loose stones, and as we were heavily laden we had to walk down the hills as well as up. We had expected to reach Glen Brittle that evening, but we gave up at 1 a.m. and camped beside the road half-way between Carbost and Glen Brittle!

Next day we moved on and camped beside the Banachdich burn, where we remained in complete isolation for the whole fortnight, as few people took their holidays in June in those days. Our climbs included the ridge from Gars Bheinn to Sgùrr Alasdair, The Cioch, and the ridge from Sgùrr a' Mhadaidh to Sgùrr Dearg, but not the Inaccessible Pinnacle which we thought to be beyond our capabilities. One of our longest expeditions was over the Bealach Coire na Banachdich to Loch Coruisk where we fished without success, then back by the same route, a total ascent of about 6,000 feet! Looking back what impressed us most was the solitude in the mountains—the vast range of the Cuillin with the ocean and the islands beyond and never a soul in sight. Coming home we left Glen Brittle a day early which was as well as owing to the bad roads it took us about four hours to reach Portree, where we camped on the outskirts and embarked for Mallaig next morning.

We had the use of motor vehicles in 1927 and set off for Torridon in June 1927. Three of the party travelled in a new Austin 10 h.p. car, and two on a motor cycle and side car. Unfortunately the weight of passengers and luggage was too much for the car and a rear spring broke at Fort Augustus, and we had to leave the car at the local garage and the three passengers travelled by bus to Inverness and then to Kinlochewe, where they met up with the motor cycle party. We camped at Bridge of Grudie, and climbed all the tops of Beinn Eighe, and also Slioch which was reached by crossing Loch Ewe in a hired boat. After five days there, I returned to Fort Augustus by bus and came back with the car and we all went on to Gruinard Bay. Camping was prohibited there but we found a hollow out of sight of the road where there was room for the tents, the car and motor cycle and side car. The weather was very bad for several days, but it cleared up one evening and as there were no radio weather reports in those days we had to rely on our hunch, so got up at 3 a.m. the next morning and were rewarded by a day of glorious sunshine and were able to cover all the tops of An Teallach,

and again we did all our climbs without seeing another person. The weather broke again that night, and we returned home next day.

Another expedition which stands out in my memory was a weekend about 1930. Robert Elton and I left Glasgow on a Friday afternoon in May on my 500 c.c. motor cycle, with a tent, ice axes and a rope. We made a hazardous crossing at Corran in a large rowing boat with an outboard engine, with the motor cycle propped up in the middle. We camped for the night and next morning climbed Garbheinn and then recrossed Corran, fortunately in the proper ferry boat. We camped near Spean Bridge, and at 6 a.m. on Sunday morning we started up the Allt a' Mhuillin. There had been a late snowfall and the weather was perfect and the Ben looked its best. We had a fine climb up the Tower Ridge and so to the top of Ben Nevis. We got back in the mid afternoon to the road, and it was a very tiring journey back to Glasgow, as the road from Glencoe village to Tyndrum was still that over the Black Mount and there was a lot of loose gravel which the heavily laden motor cycle did not like.

1930 saw the beginning of an improvement in the Highland roads and an increasing use of the motor car as a means of reaching the mountains. Consequently there was a steady increase in the number of climbers, and one could no longer expect to have a mountain to oneself.

(2) 1935-1940

By W. H. Murray

I DISCOVERED mountains in 1934 and had been hill-walking for nearly a year before I joined the Club. The occasional rock-scrambling I had enjoyed by the way had whetted my appetite for more. But 'more' demanded company. I knew no one who climbed. I had heard of the J.M.C.S. from passers-by on the hills, and so, in 1935, I went to see Rob Stewart the secretary. I went with trepidation—mountaineers experienced enough to climb rock would have no time for a walker. To my great relief my wasted years were overlooked; welcomed though prodigal, I learned to my delight that the Club met twice a month, indoors and outdoors. My first meet was at Arrochar, and a lift by car given. It was a grey, windy November day. In icy drizzle, John Brown led me up the Spearhead Arête, Jammed-Block Chimney, and Right-Angled Gully. My first rock-climbs disclosed no talent, yet the bareness of rock and its upper airiness exhilarated me; for years thereafter I missed no meets.

The indoor meetings were as valuable as the outdoor. Since the Club was small, they were held in members' houses, where a room was big enough to hold 20-40 men. The first was Fred MacLeod's near Charing Cross. He was one of the Club's 'characters' and once

turned up at a meet direct from an all-night party, still wearing his dinner jacket, in which he climbed. Later we moved to Archie MacAlpine's house in Ibrox. One thing about mountaineers that first astounded me was their improbable appearance. The hard men took no trouble to act up. When Graham Macphee came to give a talk, he was turned out like Beau Brummel, resplendent in white spats; another was George Williams, a top rock-climber of Rannoch Wall fame, yet slight with beautifully wavy hair and spectacles. I had been expecting muscle-men, and their rarity cheered me. (Kenneth Dunn was one exception. I prized him as a car-companion, for I ran tyres down to the canvas and when I had a puncture he could lift the whole side of the car clear of the ground to save jacking). The lectures given by eminent climbers were the least important part of meetings. A lecturer was anti-social if he spoke over one hour, for the more valuable hour was the one that followed, when members had tea and talked. It was then one came to know members, to exchange ideas, to start making friends, and to arrange climbs for the next weekend. That was a main purpose in joining a club; and the best service a club can give its members is the provision of such opportunities. When the Club grew bigger after 1937, the indoor meetings had to be held in a hotel in Bath Street, but there again tea was laid on and members given time and chance to meet and talk and make up parties. I make this point because it was so important to the development of climbing at that time, and appears now to be lost.

In this way, MacAlpine and I had the luck to meet Dunn and Bill Mackenzie, and to form the strongest team with which I ever climbed. We seemed to supply each other's lacks. Hamish Hamilton, Douglas Scott, and Tom MacKinnon were three of the best climbers of the time, and they too had their own groups. Groupings were not exclusive. There was always interchange. The important point is that the Club was the right size to allow members intimacy and opportunity. When a club's meetings grow too large they stultify the club's real object.

No very hard climbing was ever done at the monthly meets, for that was not their aim. Advances in standards and techniques developed in the weekends between. Just at the time I joined the Club the time for progress had arrived. Almost nothing had been done on ice, or on snow- and ice-bound rock, for twenty years; the tradition had died, not only on account of the war, but the ten-year succession of almost snowless winters that followed 1920. The revival of ice-climbing and winter rock-climbing began in 1934 and 1935 when Pat Baird and Graham Macphee (both S.M.C.) climbed respectively SC Gully of Stob Coire nan Lochain and Glover's Chimney on Nevis. Glover's was heavily iced with long pitches.

The Glasgow J.M.C.S. had young climbers ready to follow this up: not many—ten or twelve all told with leaders as named above.

They had already been enjoying short ice-climbs like the Upper Couloir of Stob Ghabhar and Gardyloo Gully. They now aspired to better things and the Glover's Chimney account fired their imagination. Their first discovery was Crowberry Gully, climbed when well-iced in February 1936 by Mackenzie, Hamish Hamilton, J. B. Russell, and Kenneth Dunn. This was thought to be a first winter ascent, for Raeburn's visit in 1909 was unknown. Douglas Scott quickly repeated the climb, which thereafter was done every winter. Mackenzie, Dunn, MacAlpine and I teamed up in 1936 and took to the longer winter ridges and buttresses of Nevis and Glen Coe. If one caught the right weather-cycles, and took to the rocks when under snow and ice of the right quantity and quality, climbs on the face of Stob Coire nam Beith, or the Central Buttress of Stob Coire nan Lochain, or Crowberry Ridge and North Buttress of Buachaille, or Castle Buttress and Observatory Ridge, and so on, could give much more varied climbing than the gullies, and sometimes with massive accumulations of ice. Planning in advance was needed, and this we did, following up the progress of weather-cycles till at one point or another the time seemed right to strike. Mackenzie was the best iceman of the time and had a genius for this kind of route-choice. Our aim was to catch the routes not when easy but hard. Sometimes we made mistakes. Our first attempt on Garrick's Shelf was one. I had taken the lead when I landed on verglassed slabs high up at dusk, just as the worst blizzard in twenty years was breaking. We took fourteen hours to get down in the dark (no pitons), and this upset the club committee. They had mounted a search party, which we finally met after 7 a.m. on the Moor of Rannoch. We were later asked by letter to desist from that kind of climbing, but were too thrashed to pay heed. We were committed. We turned the defeat to good account: thereafter we always carried a couple of pitons with karabiners and maybe a sling to secure swifter retreat in dire need. We never drove a piton as direct aid, but occasionally used one for belay. Another lesson we learned from the Shelf was the practicality of climbing by torchlight, provided the line of the route were known. Thereafter we devised head-torches, which proved invaluable on the longer Nevis climbs when conditions turned against us.

The main changes in equipment we introduced were the slater's hammer and long ropes. Our ice axes had 33-inch shafts. The wrist-strain of prolonged one-handed cutting above the head was severe, and a slater's pick with a 14-inch shaft eased it greatly. Climbing times were almost halved. The first man I knew to use a very short axe was Douglas Scott in 1936. He had it made by a blacksmith for his Crowberry Gully climb of that year. Whenever I heard of it I went out to the ironmonger and bought a slater's hammer for 10 shillings, and had the side-claw cut off. That was the best-spent money I ever laid down on a counter. I have rarely

enjoyed anything in life more than cutting up a long high-angle ice-pitch where balance was delicate. The craft used varied according to the quality of the ice: black, white, green, blue, brittle and watery, they all had their quirks, which had to be learnt until one could tell them apart at a glance and cut accordingly. We still used the adze of the long axe to cut handholds on white ice, for that could often save minutes.

It has to be remembered that climbers wore tricounis, therefore never carried crampons. They all had ten-point crampons for the Alps or Norway; at home they weren't reckoned worth their weight. The tricouni-clinker sole gave a non-slip grip on hard snow, allowed much neater footwork than crampons on snow- and ice-bound rock, and allowed too an occasional 'miracle' to be pulled off on thin brittle stuff that ought to have peeled. I used to call such moves levitation, for want of any other word—nothing so crude as a step up, but rather a float up, with no weight placed anywhere so far as humanly possible. It worked if you hit top form, and got Mackenzie and me up some nasty places on Garrick's Shelf, Deep-Cut Chimney, and the like.

When I joined the J.M.C.S. the accepted rope-lengths between each man were 60 feet and 80 for the leader. We doubled the first and carried more in addition for winter. The opening up of Rannoch Wall by George Williams of the Edinburgh S.M.C., and by Hamish Hamilton and Ian Ogilvie of the J.M.C.S., equally required long run-outs, which were freely accepted by leaders on exposed climbs without feeling need of intermediate runner-belays. Rannoch Wall was a big break-through at the time, especially Hamilton's route on Agag's Groove, in which Alec Small and Jim Wood participated, for rock so steep and exposed had hitherto been avoided. All the climbs there were being done in rubbers (plimsolls) except when Mackenzie, Dunn and I climbed Agag's in the winter of 1937 (hard frost) wearing nails. Severe summer climbs were nearly always done in rubbers unless the weather were bad.

The great increase in standards, both summer and winter, and in Club membership, was undoubtedly due at this time to motor-cars and improved roads, as well as to the rise of a new generation. The new road to Glen Coe opened in 1935. Second-hand cars were cheap. I paid £8 for a 500cc Norton, which achieved 80 m.p.h. across the Moor of Rannoch. One snowy winter cured me of that. Thereafter it was saloon cars only. For £30 I bought an oil-eating Morris Minor that ran like a Rolls Royce until the door handles fell off. At such prices, one could afford to climb. Much use was made of hotels in winter, for the only hut was the C.I.C. Clachaig Inn charged 5 shillings for supper, bed and breakfast, and the rats in the wainscot lent atmosphere; Kingshouse and Inverarnan, 7/6 (1935) rising to 9/6. Inverarnan in Glen Falloch virtually became the J.M.C.S. winter base. When we ran out of money, or were saving up, we

literally hit the hay at Danny's Barn at Altnafeadh, or camped. On good weekends we camped in high corries or up on the mountain tops. A spin-off from Everest expeditions had been the production of mountain tents (£6), eider-down bags (£2/10/-), and windproof anoraks. A three-weeks' camping holiday in Glen Brittle cost £10 for two men all in. It was a golden age, and even felt like it at the time. Good snow years come in cycles; we had an unbroken run.

The J.M.C.S. had a marked if delayed effect on the future organization of the S.M.C. Our members declined to leave a club running monthly meets and fortnightly talks for one running only two meets in the year and no indoor meetings at all bar the Dinner. Our membership mounted to nearly 400. The committee in 1938 (when I was secretary), passed these ill-tidings to the S.M.C., who did not take the news at all well. A brass-hat fixed me with a steely eye and barked, 'We don't want climbing gorillas in *this* club!' But given cause, the S.M.C. never fails to update opinion and practice, which it did as soon as Sandy Harrison became President.

A feature of club life from 1936-39 was the annual dinner at the Constitutional Club in Glasgow. These were the best dinners I have ever attended, and carefully organized in advance. The Club had several good singers, who met before the dinner, decided what would be sung, and rehearsed. This preparation paid off in memorable nights. Perhaps the most memorable of all, were it not lost in alcoholic haze, was the 1939 Hogmanay dinner at Bridge of Orchy, after the outbreak of war. Through a chink I recall one member, President of the S.M.C. twenty years on, making a girdle traverse of the dining room walls while another, fated to be caught by the Gestapo in Prague, flicked pats of butter on to the ceiling, and a third, soon to be one of the R.A.F's most decorated pilots, rendered the Eskimo Nell epic. The hotel sent in a big bill for material damages, but cancelled it later on counting their bar profits. It was no fitting end to an era, but it hid from us our desperation.

(3) 1940-1950

By A. C. D. Small

A DETAILED account of the history of the various sections would be an involved task possibly beyond realisation, but on a personal level (mostly Glasgow based) I have graphic recollections of the many changing activities of the different sections during this decade. The onset of war and general uncertainty of conditions made it a reasonable assumption that the J.M.C.S. would more or less cease to be active. However, as anyone connected with the Juniors will be all too aware reason wasn't a factor to bother them much and although organised meets as such were rare a surprisingly large amount of climbing continued to be carried out in the intervals of the other pressing duties.

Displaying his usual concentrated determination Bill Murray kept the Glasgow Section in being until he was posted overseas. George Marskell took over as Secretary and also acted most efficiently in the general liaison of all sections. Then in 1941 the committee with their usual wry sense of humour voted me as the possessor of one polio leg and one compound fracture leg as the one most likely to remain at home and so Secretary. Possibly it is these committee meetings that are the most enduring memory of the times.

Outside all the depression of a wartime city and the stumbling gloom of the black-out, inside the cheerful faces and banter of those who still held allegiance to the hills, optimistic and rational in a disordered world. Tom MacKinnon dispensing quiet humour and good council in his Honorary capacity. Drummy Henderson discursively giving us the benefit of his wide experience with Gaelic wit and philosophy. Billy Warnock laconic, proficient, and who whenever we met in the Christian Institute (Heaven preserve us!) always ended with a jam session on the spare organs and harmoniums in a store room. Hamish Hamilton ebullient as ever, full of new ideas, perpetually buoyant about transport, cars and petrol. No one ever doubted the ability of the J.M.C.S. to survive a war.

Naturally club functions varied in attendance, sometimes there would be only a handful present, sometimes upward of fifty. There were even 'Lantern Lectures.' The Glasgow Section had a Slide Collection, the old-fashioned glass type, the very devil to humph about and to store, and over the years several lectures were given using them to entranced audiences. In contrast, some innovators did have modern colour transparencies and in April 1942 the section held a lecture at the Grand Hotel no less, given by Anne Sheriff which attracted 56 people. Hamish Hamilton had taken up 35mm photography and his lecture artfully entitled *Elmar and I* set a new pictorial standard for Junior lectures. The commentary naturally was unique. Punctiliously we held A.G.M's at appropriate times but progressive decisions were largely acts of faith since the future was highly conjectural. Despite which, to our surprise, the number of members continued to rise even when it was decided to resume the payment of annual subscriptions.

This growth of interest was a surprise and encouragement to the committee although its causes were almost inexplicable when everything seemed to point to curtailment and decline. Not a bit of it. In the south the London Association propelled by Teddy Zenthon and E. C. Pyatt were driving to become a full section. To the north Lochaber were demonstrating that there was more around Ben Nevis than the C.I.C. Hut. Instead of despondency Club affairs were strong and encouraging. So much so that notwithstanding severe pruning of dead wood the Glasgow Section numbered 115 in 1945 and we could return to the normal ambiguous tactic of

practising independence, freedom, or as others viewed it—general bloody mindedness.

In other words the Juniors, playing from the strength of high membership and a fine record of new climbs, were displaying reluctance at going up to the S.M.C. and a disposition to strut about a bit on their own midden heid. Which as everyone knows is a regular phase of mountaineering adolescence. Diplomatic consultations took place first with Logan Aikman and later with President Robert Jeffrey whose courteous persuasion combined with the ending of hostilities easily won the day and there was a mass exit upstairs. Stronger feelings of chauvinism ran in the matter of joining the B.M.C. What benefits, it was argued, could our Club obtain by uniting with this administrative, paper generating, southern conclave, who couldn't tell a howff from a hitch; our Club with its great war-time successes even numbering both Presidents of the University Mountaineering Clubs of Oxford and Cambridge among our members. What indeed? Barford's blandishments didn't convince us until at a committee meeting we were invaded by a mediator, that most diffident personality Dan MacKellar. Dazed by the subsequent outburst of turbulently illogical rhetoric, including for some reason known only to himself a demonstration of the wonderful sun tan of his knees, we reluctantly decided to join under protest, if not duress.

A historical review of the climbs and climbers of the period cannot be attempted in these notes but some comment, invidious as usual, can be given. For the tragically short time he spent on Scottish hills Ian Ogilvy made a conspicuous addition to new climbs. He was never content to follow an established route and had a flair for discovering and completing fresh lines often on most uncompromising ground. He was a lively correspondent always full of plans for new routes and engagingly frank about his projected trips. Bad weather he tended to discount as an element of minor consequence and when wearing his favourite hundred-year-old tartan waistcoat he took it as a personal affront to have to retreat. Brian Kellett, who also died on a climb, showed a similar ability to discover new routes. An indefatigable and meticulous climber his 'Supplement' to the 1936 Nevis Guide is a monument to his enthusiasm and his industry. Not many climbers before or since have done so much high grade solo climbing. He used to chomp up to the Hut from Torlundy after finishing his work, quietly accept a cup of tea and drift off cliffwards to the particular area he was researching. With darkness he would return, enter the details, complete with Cartesian co-ordinates, in a note book of the climbs he had done, have another cup of tea and step out of the door into the dark.

Repeating his creation of a classic route Hamish Hamilton followed Agag's Groove with the South Ridge Direct on the Rosa Pinnacle of Cir Mhór. This time it wasn't a daring improvisation on

a single theme but allowed for some further orchestration to polish things up a bit, or as he would have it to make you appreciate the dooks in the Rosa Burn on the way down all the more. Arran too was the happy hunting ground of Curtis and Townend who took advantage of its many untried opportunities. Of course there were many others whom I cannot mention doing new routes and repeating old ones. A steady flow of correspondence testified to the activity, ingenuity and resourcefulness of the Club members, and in the background helpful, well-nigh omniscient and utterly logical was the father figure of J. H. B. Bell. To his encouragement, advice and support the Club owes very much indeed.

Came the New Year Meet of 1946, a combined S.M.C. and J.M.C.S. affair, normality had returned or something like it. It was a wonderfully cheerful re-union for most, we even had to turn out a search party for latecomers. Above all there was the warm feeling that the way ahead was clear.

(4) 1948-1953

By Stanley Stewart

It was about 1948 when I joined the Glasgow section. The first club event I remember was a lecture by one W. M. Mackenzie ominously entitled 'Bivouacs, Frostbite, Chills and Exhaustion.' The following week-end a slow ascent of Crowberry Gully gave opportunity to reflect on what we had heard. Soon after arrived my first copy of the *S.M.C. Journal*, with W. H. Murray's essay on 'The Evidence of Things not Seen.' All this impressed me greatly, and I had a sense of having left undergraduate frivolities behind and being out in the serious world of mountaineering.

With petrol still rationed and cars for most of us just a future hope, the late forties and early fifties were the years of the bus meets. These took place fortnightly from September to June, and were run by the J.M.C.S. though shared with the S.M.C. The bus did help to keep the Club cohesive. We ranged far and wide, but Glencoe was the most frequent objective.

Trying to focus my recollections, I picture such a Glencoe meet. After a morning at the office (every second Saturday) I would leave home for the 3 p.m. rendezvous at St. Enoch's Square. A rope of honest hemp crowned my Bergen rucksack. In season I had my ex-W.D. ice-axe, or 'mountaineer's rockpick' as fellow-passengers on tram or subway were wont to refer to it. The tricouni nailed boots were a problem; fastened outside the rucksack they could cause alarm and injury to the Saturday crowds, but on the feet were a hazard to the wearer, due to their propensity to skite on smooth cobbles and pavements. I always reckoned this was the most perilous part of the weekend.

Those assembled at the rendezvous fell into two categories, or at any rate there were two extremes; young men with big packs, balaclavas and windproofs, much camouflaged as for jungle warfare, and senior citizens, more respectably dressed in collars and ties and soft hats, with small rucksacks and suitcases. Each group derived amusement and a sense of superiority from the odd appearance of the other, but with friendly tolerance. As well as our main pursuit, a bond we had (albeit unconsciously) in common was that all of us shaved and had our hair short at back and sides.

Off we thundered in our great grey Northern bus, with Clubfoot our regular driver, at the wheel. This name did not derive from any physical deformity. The Loch Lomond road with its Corners flashed past. Despite the bus, some of us were also experimenting with our own or hired transport, and to the original Hamish's Corner at Inverbeg soon were added others—Slessor's Corner, Harrison's Corner, etc., etc., each the occasion of some experience usually of a centrifugal nature. These incidents were not allowed to be forgotten, particularly if the person concerned was now with us on the bus.

At Inverarnan we halted for a light refreshment of tea and as much home baking as we could eat. The meringues with fresh cream were especially delicious. I think 1/6 per head, amazing value even then.

And so to Glencoe: Lagangarbh, or doss, or camp for us, and Clachaig Hotel for the aristos. Lagangarbh had a coal stove and calor gas, but was otherwise much as originally designed. This was before the era of quinquennial improvements. Primitive, but we felt at home.

On the Sunday we climbed. We did the classic routes and some of the new ones, and ticked them off in Bill Murray's new Guide Book. The standard attempted and attained was less than it would be now: Clachaig Gully was an enterprise for which one prepared physically and mentally and awaited suitable weather and omens. But this is well known. Fairly soon we did get on to nylon ropes and vibrams, though not without anxious discussion and sage warnings.

I myself climbed regularly at that time with a mad Englishman, Gordon Lillie, now in U.S.A. Whilst some try to push up their own standards, we modestly tried to push up each other's, particularly when a crux loomed above. The case for the superior security of tricounis on slimy rock would be forcibly put by Lillie, shod in his new vibrams whilst I still had nails. 'It's the essence of *teamwork*, Stan, each leading where he's best equipped.'

Lillie used to travel on the bus wearing a bright orange T-shirt, which he bought especially 'to shock some of those old S.M.C. members.' Today such a garment would suit someone who likes to merge in with the background, but then it was quite something, and eyebrows did rise a little.

Once he persuaded Lovat and myself to introduce a horse to the S.M.C. members' room at Lagangarbh. It was not our horse; it just happened to be grazing outside. Somehow we got the brute through two narrow doors, set at right angles. The horse is a large animal, but one does not fully appreciate its largeness until one sees its great behind in a domestic interior, or its long melancholy face filling the entire window as it peers out through the bars. Lillie's declared object had been 'to shock old George Roger,' who was then Custodian. But the shock was too much for Lovat and me, and we rapidly reversed the process, tidying up with bucket and shovel. The Custodian sniffed a bit on his return from Buachaille, but nothing more was said.

Homeward bound, some of us sat at the back of the bus and sang our way through a varied repertory—part songs, Gaelic songs, plain chant, Handel, Gilbert and Sullivan; as well as songs chosen by Lillie, G., to shock the venerable gentlemen in front. But the old boys were pretty unshockable, and let it be known, in a kindly avuncular way, that they had heard those songs before.

I was Secretary of the Glasgow section for a year or two. R. S. Higgins invited me to luncheon. The position was about to become vacant: soundings had been taken: there was consensus in the appropriate corridors. I felt as I imagine must feel the prospective recipient of a peerage when first discreetly approached from on high as to his willingness to accept. Who could resist? But I never regretted it. The Committee met under the picture of the Jungfrau in our then Clubroom in the Engineering Centre in Sauchiehall Street, or on occasion in a private room in the Queen Anne Restaurant. The business was not too onerous, and left ample time for conviviality. The Hon. Presidents who were of course S.M.C. members took an active part, and we benefited from their guidance not only in mountaineering matters but in such questions as choice of menu and of wine.

Possibly the fact that I was earning for the first time, had no more examinations to sit and no responsibilities worth speaking of had something to do with it; but I must say that my days in the J.M.C.S. were among the happiest in my life, and I wish I could have them again, heigh-ho!

(5) Sixties and Seventies

By James G. Messer

AYE, indeed. The swinging sixties. Mini-skirts, cheap petrol, climbing glossies and T.V. spectaculars. In many ways I feel that the early sixties were the last halcyon days before climbing became the 'in' thing. It was the twilight of an era when mountaineers were

relatively anonymous, little being known about their activities outside a small group of kindred spirits. In those days it was difficult to find out about climbing clubs unless you were visiting the main climbing areas regularly or happened to know a member of a club. I found out about the J.M.C.S. via a friend of mine who knew Jimmy Simpson. I wrote to Jimmy and received the address of Tom Murray who was then the Secretary. Three weeks later I left Ayr on the 5.30 train feeling very self conscious with my ice axe, rope and tricounied army boots (ex-W.D. of course). People tended to regard climbers with that mixture of embarrassment and curiosity reserved for lunatics.

My contact with the J.M.C.S. began in St. Enoch Square at 7.30 on that Friday night, March 25th 1960. The grey drizzle was soon far behind as the Standard Vanguard ground its way up the Blackmount. The stars came out as we crossed the Rannoch Moor and there was even frost by the time we reached Lagangarbh. A brew of tea then up the wooden hill to bed, to be confronted by a naked, bearded Englishman hacking lumps out of the wooden partition with an exceptionally long ice axe!!! The explanation was quite simple. The candle had toppled, setting fire to a mound of accumulated candle grease on the floor. The wall was on fire. The ice axe was the only tool handy to put it out. My rucksack carried grease splashes for many years. The following day left memories of sunshine, blue skies, and a gully on the West side of Lost Valley Buttress. The party had four Jims and an Eddie (Thompson). The Jims became Jim, James, Jimmy and Hamish. Alas the Jim who became Hamish didn't respond to his new title very often. Very much later the five of us arrived somewhat confused, schizophrenic and tired on the summit of Bidean. When this Jim, sorry James, arrived back in Ayr he decided to set about joining the J.M.C.S.

At this period the Section was going through a very active phase, there were over 130 members and it was common to have over 20 people on meets. Kenny Bryan and Jimmy Simpson put up the East Face route on Central Buttress of Stob Coire nan Lochan that year. Other active members were Roger Robb, Martin Thom, Robin Chalmers, Eddie Thompson, Nigel Robb, Tom Murray, Norman Tennant, Brian Fleming and many others. I climbed a fair bit with Iain, Eddie and Alasdair Beaton. I remember one great day in early June with Iain MacLeod. We left Coupall Bridge, crossed over on the Ballachulish ferry and drove up to the Distillery. Two hours later, stripped to the waist we started up Tower Ridge. We agreed to put the rope on when it got difficult and subsequently soloed to the plateau. We slept in glorious sunshine for over two hours. When we wakened we watched two pretty tourists, in summer dresses and sandals energetically throwing stones over the cliffs, roared something about 'climbers' at them and felt slightly ashamed

of our rudeness when they apologised for their ignorance. Our lightheartedness returned as we ambled away from the crowded summit, crossed the Arête and topped Càrn Mór Dèarg. We made a bee line for the Allt a' Mhuilinn to enjoy a magnificent swim in a pool near the Dam.

A glance through the S.M.C. and J.M.C.S. Abroad pages of the *Journal* will show the members' activities during the early sixties. These wanderings ranged from The Alps, to the Lofoten Islands and North America. In 1963 the enterprise of the Section reached new heights. A small group inveigled the then Rootes Company who had just started to produce Imps at Linwood to lend them 2 Imps for a trip to Turkey. This was in exchange for a film and publicity I remember Robin Chalmers showing me a rather tatty photograph of what resembled a large sand dune.

'If that's typical of the Taurus Mountains it seems a long way to go to climb a heap of choss' he muttered.

On their return the film and the photographs of Demir Kazic showed that it was a very different proposition from the mound shown in Robin's earlier photograph. It was a very successful trip, the film being a fine example of Robin's camerawork and editing skills. None of us were very happy about the commentary which was added later but the film was after all to sell cars, not mountains. It was called 'Mountain Imp.'

The J.M.C.S. was very gregarious in those days, we tended to attend meets much more regularly than has been the case recently. No matter what the weather everyone on a meet would go out and do something. I remember the 1963 Coruisk Meet. It wasn't a very good weekend, in fact the weather was atrocious. The trip in from Mallaig was quite rough. On the Sunday a large party set off along the Druim nan Ramh ridge to go up to Bidean. Bill Watson who had been ill most of the way into Coruisk had brought two cases of Carlsberg Specials with him. These he sold (at a vast profit!!!) to the soaking and cold members returning off the ridge. After one or two Specials a lemming-like wave of bodies hurtled across the bog towards the landing stage and literally hurled themselves headlong into Loch Scavaig. Seconds later a mass of naked, blue and sober mountaineers gasped and fought desperately to climb up the landing stage before exposure and unconsciousness made it impossible. I doubt in the long run if Bill made much of a profit, he didn't join us as he couldn't swim and in fact hasn't been to Coruisk since. Mind you he's now the Treasurer.

One feature of the Club at this time, especially after winter meets was stopping at Inverarnan for a meal on the way back to Glasgow. As a young and new member it was fascinating to linger over a magnificent meal (for the modest sum of 6/-) and listen to people like Bill Murray, Bill MacKenzie, Alex Small and Hamish Hamilton

—all Legends in their Time and immortalised for ever by Bill Murray and Alastair Borthwick in their books about climbing in Scotland.

The Club war cry was dreamed up by Eddie Thompson and was a minor third (I think) variation of the words Ba.....lls!! Ba.....lls!! It was amazing how reassuring that sound was when you's been stuck on a belay, wreathed in mist and the rope hadn't moved for what seemed like ages. Then there were the Bendy Bendy Boys, so called because that was their war cry. The reply was Rinky Tinky. Among them were Tom Carruthers, Jim Ferguson, Bob Cuthbert and Bill Sproul. Tom was tragically killed during an attempt on the North Face of the Eiger in 1962, exactly a year after he'd climbed the North Face of the Matterhorn.

Robin Chalmers tells of the time when with Bill and Tom he was driving up to Glencoe when they were forced by a blizzard to camp at the summit of the Rannoch Moor road. They camped right beside the marker, and the following day managed to drive to Kingshouse. The hotel was bursting at the seams with stranded drivers and reporters busily informing the world about the 'White Hell of Rannoch.' The arrival of three climbers who had 'just come up from Glasgow for the weekend' caused considerable consternation.

Arran was a popular place at that time. We used to have two summer meets to Glen Rosa. Kenny Bryan's ability to keep himself spotless was remarkable. Rosa isn't the driest of glens, most of us would return after a weekend mudspattered and with our hands rather battered and filthy, but not Kenny. His pale cream drill trousers were as clean as they were when he left Glasgow. On crags Kenny seemed to pour up climbs. There was never any thrutching, or jamming, he seemed to go up hardly touching the rock. One weekend having survived the trudge back down Glen Rosa we arrived at the campsite to find all our mugs at the bottom of a six-foot deep pool. Kenny sat with a seraphic look on his face as we dived into the pool to retrieve them. As well as coming to meets Kenny was doing a lot of solo climbing. These were very often hard routes in the V.S. category. On one occasion, the day after a dinner he soloed the South Buttress of Stob Coire nan Lochan in winter conditions. He seemed to have an uncanny ability to find footholds. Very rarely did he seem to rely on his hands for more than balancing.

These were great days, usually finishing up with swims in the nearest river, whether it was the clear green/blue waters of Glen Rosa or the Rannoch-impregnated Etive. Silhouettes in the gloaming briskly towelling themselves, hopelessly swatting at the inevitable clouds of midges. We rarely used huts then. The C.I.C. in winter, Coruisk in May and at New Year and rarely Lagangarbh, but usually the meets were held under canvas.

The lectures were held in Rowan's Smoke Room in Buchanan Street. I think it was in the 1964/5 season that we moved to Strathclyde. There was a slightly 'Olde Worlde' charm about Rowan's that has gone now. I suppose we are more sophisticated now, but I remember those lectures. They broadened the mind and exposed areas of the world that many of us had very little knowledge of. Perhaps we weren't so blasé then or perhaps I'm just getting older.

In the latter half of the sixties I spent some time in Canada. Gerry Peet along with several new, young and active members embarked on the Creag Meaghaidh Hut project. It cost about £100 in cash, the premature demise of a severely abused Morris Traveller and backbreaking labour for those stalwarts who fell under Gerry's spell: Bill Duncan, George Wilkinson, Ronnie Camelford, Drew Sommerville, Ian Burley and others. They tell stories of murderous loads and exhaustion carrying the materials up to the site and Bill told me of eerie hours sleeping alone in the temporary fibreglass bivouac, snowflakes gently spattering on the roof beneath the brooding cliffs of Pinnacle Buttress.

This exploit brought the section together and the group formed the nucleus of the Section for the rest of the decade. There were many others who came away regularly like Sandy Cousins, Bob Watters, John Gillespie (The Gannet) and Dougie Simpson. These were just a few of the people I remember climbing with. This again was a very active phase. Among many other activities it was towards the later sixties that George and Ronnie Richards teamed up to go to the Alps. They made a formidable team and in 1970 they climbed the N.E. Face of the Piz Badile. Ronnie is now on his way to Everest with Chris Bonington's 1975 Expedition.

George and Gerry formed a close partnership, they climbed regularly together and I remember getting letters when I was in Canada telling of epics on the Ben and heart-rending accounts of the delights I had abandoned. I felt quite nostalgic and thought of a couple of occasions when I climbed with them. The first incident took place on Sou-Wester Slabs in Arran. We'd decided to finish it by the Three-Tiered Chimney. Gerry had got his boot stuck in a crack at the bottom of the pitch and according to George was hanging upside down trying to undo the laces. Two pitches above, blissfully unaware of this drama, I was shouting down that we only had about two hours before the boat sailed. Gerry's retort according to George was incoherent but probably quite obscene. At the time George just said,

'He says he'll be up in a minute.'

We ran the whole way down the glen and managed to reach Brodick in time to get the *Glen Sannox*. The second time George wasn't quite so composed. We were half way up Clachaig Gully. It was the current fad in the Section to have 'Milk Shakes' *en route*, so to

speak. This brew consisted of a spoon full of Lemon Cremola Foam and one of Marvel mixed into a mugful of water. It was a fine day and we'd been having brews all the way up the climb. Somewhere just above the Red Chimney pitch after a particularly vintage brew we came across a decomposing sheep lying in a pool above the waterfall we'd just tapped. George promptly turned green and said he felt sick. I told him it was all imagination, being a dentist I had vast knowledge about such things!!! George led off looking much happier. Faith is a wonderful thing. I must admit I felt a bit sick myself. I felt a lot better when we reached Clachaig Inn.

During the later sixties and early seventies George, Gerry, Ronnie and Ian Burley were climbing some fine, hard routes. On Creag Meaghaidh along with Neil Quinn and Bob MacMillan Gerry was involved in the first ascent of the Pumpkin a GRADE V. The regulars were a great bunch. I climbed with most of them at one time or another. Andy James, who is now in Canada, led S.C. Gully when we extracted as many routes as possible in the short winter of 1970/71. Dave Spence ('Daveken') was cheerfully covering me in fog crystals when we ascended Fan Gully. Other features were Les Wilson's photography, and the struggles between Roger Robb, Dave Spence, Andy James and Bruce Barclay for the prizes at the Annual Photographic Competition. They were all excellent photographers. Bob Watters who is now in the U.S.A., was leisurely studying landslides all over Scotland then, and being paid for it!!

The early seventies were a difficult time for the Section in many ways. Many of the more active members joined the S.M.C. or for various reasons began to attend meets less regularly. Transport was plentiful, petrol was still very cheap and people were tending to chase conditions in small groups rather than attend meets. There were few new members and prospective members would come away once or twice then fade away. The generally poor winters didn't help matters much. The committee at that time were concerned but by late 1973 the situation was changing. Several active and enthusiastic newcomers, largely under the guidance of Pete Hodgkiss began to form a steady group which went away to meets regularly. The old spirit returned and at present the Section is again going through a very active phase.

A feature of the seventies which stands out in my memory was the Annual Section Dinners. In 1972 we moved to Kingshouse Hotel. The manager, Jim Lees, gets on well with climbers and his hospitality on these occasions has been lavish. Excellent meals followed by good speeches and then sing songs stretched far into the night. On one occasion the whole affair was taped by a culture-seeking group of Americans. They were enchanted with the quaintness of it all. What they thought of the tapes in the cold sobriety of dawn is an interesting question. Big Bruce Barclay as

well as being a purveyor of bawdy songs was busy taking people up routes such as Zero Gully and Gardyloo Buttress. I remember the first time I ever met Bruce. He was enthusiastically scrambling about on a crag by the roadside near Mallaig harbour, the same weekend when we all went for a swim in Loch Scavaig. Eleven years ago!

There have been many changes recently. It seems to me that the Sections are drifting further apart, at present there are moves to change the name of the Club; this isn't new of course, the Glasgow Section tried to do this in the mid-sixties. Members have come and gone, Martin Chambers is at present in South Africa, Alasdair Wingate is in London, Bill (Carlsberg) Watson is now Treasurer and Bill Duncan is President in this our Jubilee year. My own contact with the J.M.C.S. is less now, for a variety of reasons. My main feeling is one of confidence that the Club will carry on as it has done for fifty years.

I have had the privilege of being a member for fifteen years. I have made many friends, enjoyed countless hours with good companions on the hills and shared the joy and sometimes sadness that makes mountaineering more than a sport or pastime. Some companions are gone for ever, Tom Carruthers, Alasdair MacDonald who was killed when he fell from Tower Ridge, and Kenny Bryan who died in a road accident in the U.S.A. I thought it was a particularly moving ceremony when Jimmy Simpson said a few words in front of a group of us standing silently near the summit of the Buachaille when he scattered Kenny's ashes on that misty Autumn morning in 1973.

The J.M.C.S. is a great Club. Its future? Who can say. I only hope that I am still around in 2025 when we celebrate our Centenary. I may not be doing much climbing then but I'm sure I'll still be wandering around somewhere between Clachaig and Kingshouse.

(6) A Hut at Coruisk

By David Whitham

'The fastnesses above Loch Scavaig contain some inviting-looking rocks which would no doubt provide good sport: when that climbers' dream, a hut at Coruisk, is realised, they will come in for a share of attention.'

—Ashley P. ABRAHAM, 1908.

BEN HUMBLE's scholarly and now rare book, *The Cuillin of Skye* recounts the fascination of the Coruisk basin for the early mountaineers. A stay of any duration in that remote place was a great prize and successive parties of artists as well as climbers made the most elaborate efforts to reach it. They lived there in tents, in specially designed prefabricated huts, in caves or on boats anchored in Loch Scavaig.

In the memory of most of us who climb now in Skye regular motor-boats from Glenbrittle and Elgol and modern light-weight tents have made the interior of the Cuillin horseshoe much more accessible, and since 1959 a hut, on the shores of Loch Scavaig, has been maintained by Glasgow J.M.C.S. for the use of all who have a legitimate wish to go there. In the Club's half-centenary year I have been asked to record the history of the Coruisk Memorial Hut.

I first landed at Scavaig in June 1950. It was a terrible day and I didn't stay long, but there was time to walk to the Coruisk outfall and see the shining black ridges ascending into the clouds and also to discover an intriguing ruin, the foundations of what had evidently been a substantial timber building, its brick-built chimney stack still standing beneath a small cliff behind the landing stage.

I returned to Skye, and to Coruisk, the following year, but my real interest at that time lay in the far north-west, where a select band, most of them known to each other at least by name, were rediscovering Torridian sandstone, that other passion of the early mountaineers. David Monro and Peter Drummond Smith were two somewhat individualistic members of this group. Both lived in the south of England but Peter was a member of the London Section of J.M.C.S. and our paths had crossed from time to time.

David Monro and I spent New Year 1953 at Buttermere where we planned a trip to Scotland together for the following summer. But he was booked to go to Nevis with Peter at Easter and the two of them were lost then in a climb on Castle Ridge. A few weeks later David's mother and father asked me to visit them. Peter Drummond Smith's parents were also there, and Dennis Greenald, who had been in the C.I.C. hut when the accident happened. The parents explained that the boys had left small amounts of money which they wished to augment in order to found a hut dedicated to their memory, and asked us to help.

Our thoughts flew immediately to the north-west, and time was spent that year exploring there, but the acquisition of any property in the right sort of place was soon seen to be out of the question. A short-term arrangement for the use of an empty house near Stack Polly was, however, offered by the owner and, scantily furnished, was used for a couple of seasons. This was a valuable asset despite its temporary nature; it was used by quite a few parties and helped greatly to keep interest up and the idea alive.

It is hard to remember now how our interest turned to Skye. In 1955 I moved to Scotland and began to get friends in J.M.C.S. involved. Quite a few people remembered the ruins by Loch Scavaig and Alan Thrippleton had quoted the words of Ashley Abraham which head this article. However it was, we began negotiations with Dame Flora Macleod in May 1966 and (such is the pace of legal processes in Skye) were ready to build a year later. The hut would

be built on the old foundations and use the old chimney stack. It was to hold nine people and include a large drying room. Strictly speaking the site is not at Coruisk but in Coire na Cuilce, at the head of Loch Scavaig, a secluded but convenient place. All concerned agreed that it would be wrong to erect any permanent building in the Coruisk basin itself.

I still marvel at our good fortune in finding our builder: Lachlan MacKinnon from Elgol was a hero, no less. Throughout a wet summer the builders camped under corrugated iron and tarpaulins in the partially completed building until they finally succumbed to the attacks of the midges. In a great storm, which rendered the Scavaig river unfordable Lachlan collapsed with a high fever. After being rescued by boat he was packed off to hospital at Inverness and work was over for the year. A visit to the abandoned site that September was a depressing experience. We made tea with the gas ring and food lying as they had been left and wondered if the hut would ever be finished.

But the following summer Lachlan was back again and by the end of August the building was virtually completed. In September three of us spent a week painting the place, inside and out in incredible weather, days of continuous sunshine and cool, clear nights. With this change in our fortune it was certain that we could plan to open the hut in the following spring.

The hut now built was owned by a trust, established for that purpose by the Monros and Drummond Smiths, but the building was the trust's sole asset, they had no resources to manage it or deal with bookings and maintain it. These responsibilities were taken on by Glasgow J.M.C.S. following their increasing involvement with the enterprise and the Club made plans for an official opening on the Spring Holiday weekend of 1959. More working parties at Easter and for a week before the event, with the builder back to apply the finishing touches, made all ready for a memorable day. Again we were blessed with splendid weather and the Saturday was very hot. A huge hamper of goodies carried from Glasgow formed the basis of a stylish garden party, marred only by the discovery—fortunately in time—that the waxed paper cups supplied were pervious to alcohol so that the drinking of healths had hurriedly to be brought forward on the programme.

Mrs Drummond Smith and Mrs Monro were clearly delighted by the success of their efforts. Their husbands, prevented by illness from being there, were both able to visit the hut a year or two later. And the hero of the story was absent. Characteristically, Lachlan MacKinnon had resisted the most earnest persuasion and spent the day on his croft at Elgol.

Alan Thrippleton was the first custodian, succeeded by Bill Duncan and now by Les Wilson. The annual trip by boat to Coruisk,

carrying gas, coal and materials for the following year, is well established as a major event in the J.M.C.S. and Western District S.M.C. calendar. Every year someone will recall that glorious first trip in 1959—I wonder if anyone has been there *every* year since then?

The Coruisk Memorial Hut in use is now part of the experience of many who climb in Skye—members of many mountaineering clubs and some members of none, for the terms set by the trust require that it shall be available to all *bona fide* mountaineers. Since it was opened both Mr Monro and Mr Drummond Smith have died, and the hut has been bequeathed to the Glasgow Section who have looked after it so well.

In 16 years the Coruisk hut has given delight to many, unremitting work and not a little worry to a few and has been the subject of a major political row. But its best testimonial is perhaps in Jimmy Simpson's rock-climbing guide, published 10 years after the hut was opened, not in overt reference, but in the *form* of the guide. There are two volumes, one dealing with climbs outside, the second inside the main Cuillin ridge. Without the Coruisk hut that would hardly be conceivable. The fastnesses above Loch Scavaig have come in for their share of attention.

THE EDINBURGH SECTION

(1) 1925-1939

By Bill Myles

IT HAS been said that a labour of love brings its own reward and so it has been with me in putting together this short history. The reward has been in reading the *Journals* of the period kindly lent by Robert Elton, an original member.

The original President, Jack Osborne, provided me with a potted history of the Twenties and Thirties as a backcloth for the activities of the Club in these far-off days. He also sent me his photograph album, one photo from which is reproduced here.*

An incident in the first official meet held at Arrochar in November 1925, clearly shows that the original members got themselves into the same sort of scrapes as the present bunch. 'A party composed of Rusk, Bartholomew, Kirkland, Andreae, Stevens and Melon arrived late at night and proceeded to Narnain Boulder. A destroyer obligingly turned a searchlight on them and guided their faltering footsteps up the hillside—to the astonishment and alarm of the Hotel party who, observing the 'pillar of fire,' were evidently not in a fit state to find the correct solution, and attributed the phenomenon to some electric, physic or volcanic disturbance.

They were finally reassured however, by a party of naval officers who called to enquire if the party were in distress; on being informed that the distress was merely mental, they expressed themselves forcibly and in accordance with the best nautical traditions.'

The Section was formed on the initiative of Arthur Rusk and Bay Bartholomew. That the idea was sound is proved by its continued thriving existence after fifty years. The fears that it might become a rival club to the S.M.C. were completely groundless and it has in fact proved an ideal training ground and weeding-out process for the Senior club.

In the early years, time and transport were the limiting factors upon the Section's activities. Literally, everyone in the land, that is, everyone fortunate to have work, worked on a Saturday morning and many in the afternoon as well. For the first few years, the official meets were held at New Year and Easter only, usually combined with the Glasgow Section. These were very well attended, there being, for example, fifty-nine members and guests at the New Year Meet of 1931 at Loch Awe.

* See photograph opposite p. 339.

The Southern Highlands were the main venue for most meets and the early meets were held at Fort William, Arrochar, Strathyre, Tyndrum and Crianlarich. In July 1928, a small meet was held in Skye and this lasted for two weeks.

The middle and late thirties saw a greatly improved economic situation in the country as well as better motor cars and roads and more extensive forays were undertaken as well as visits to the Alps by various parties.

The *Journals* of the period, published both in April and November in these years, are beautifully written and full of detail. Indeed, one cannot help thinking as one reads them that Section Secretaries to-day should be invited to read them soon after their appointments.

They provide a fascinating insight into the manners and customs of the period as well as all sorts of other information. For example, J. S. Carter's Celebrated Climbing Boots are advertised at £4 12s. 6d. from the early twenties until 1929 when disaster hit the Western World. Then they rocketed in price by half-a-crown and remained at £4 15s. until the thirties were almost out. By jove, there's inflation for you.

Several accounts pay tribute to the staffs of a number of hotels. Reading between the lines, these poor folk had a lot to put up with and probably deserved a tribute. How many reports to-day finish like the one in *J.* xviii, 388 . . . 'The Club wishes to record its appreciation of the arrangements made for its comfort by the staff?'

Roads at the time north of the Glasgow-Perth line were nearly all single track with passing places and the vehicles, to say the least, were not too reliable in adverse conditions. We have in *J.* xx, 223 the comment that 'the night in the open proved too much for Bell's car, for at 4 a.m. on Saturday it showed no signs of life, in spite of being pushed up and down the road several times. Sutherland was packed into Stobie's car and Bell was perforce left behind. The journey continued without further mishap and Glen Brittle was reached at 8.45 p.m. Bell surprised everyone by turning up next day, having reached Kyleakin on Saturday night after repairs to his car.'

Jack Osborne, in his comments, recalled that on 'one Sunday evening, we ran into a snowstorm. This was before the days of windscreen wipers, but the top half of the windscreen could be lowered, so the snow flew in our faces at the rate of the storm plus 25-30 m.p.h. of the car, which collected a drift completely filling the back seat and much of the front.'

The story, however, which gives the best picture of the hardness of the early members of our Club, both on the hill and off it, is told in *J.* xviii, 53. 'On returning to Strathyre, it was discovered that the road by Loch Lubnaig was under water and impassable.

Photo: D. J. Bennet

Opposite—'Where it all began'—The Narnain Boulder and the Cobbler Corrie





Undismayed, the party set out in three cars, only to find a mile or so from Strathyre a loch instead of a road. Bartholomew's vehicle, which started life proudly under the name *William the Conqueror*, and, falling on evil times, was degraded to *William the Conk*, put up a splendid performance and proved itself to be a genuine floater. On reaching the firm bank, it was gratefully re-christened *William the Cork*. Cox's submarine tactics were less successful, and an Alpine rope had to be employed to get him ashore. Gibson's Rover shied nervously and complaining of old age and rheumatism, retired by the Loch Earn route.'

Motor cyclists fared no better and are often mentioned, a typical instance being (*J. xix*, 445), 'One of the features of the meet was the ill-luck of the various motor-cyclists concerned. Sutherland was prevented by a cracked cylinder head from appearing at all. Stobie's lighting system failed and he achieved a traverse of the Black Mount in black moonlessness. Kellock was distressed at Ardlui by loud expensive noises which informed him that his gear-box had passed over. Lindsay, while travelling over the Black Mount at full speed on his *Galloping Terror* (about 35 m.p.h.), sustained a rapid and alarming puncture. His lights also gave trouble on the way home.'

It must be borne in mind that the transport of equipment was not the problem it is today. The axe and the rope were the only tools used. Pitons did not arrive until the mid-thirties and, in any case, were frowned upon as being unsporting.

Trains, too, presented problems such as are described in the account of the New Year 1927 meet to Tyndrum. We are told (*J. xviii*, 53) that 'On Saturday 1st January everyone was roused at an unearthly hour of the morning by the elephantine movements of Baxter, Brown, Knox, McInnes, McLaren, Pattullo, MacPhee, Robertson and Wilson. These worthies—narrowly escaping assassination—succeeding in catching the 8.07 a.m. train, and, what's more, they compelled the officials of the L. & N.E. Railway by threats, graft or other subterfuge, to stop the train at Gorton, where they alighted. This, in itself, is no mean feat, for we seem to have heard that on a former occasion, even the powerful vocabularies of the S.M.C. were unable to stop the train at this spot.' Times have changed indeed. The Modern Club Member is generally going to bed at 8.07 a.m. on New Year's Day! Trains were of course extensively used and those whose business or sport involved travel used to carry a time-table in their pocket. The Easter Meet 1931 Report reliably informs us (*J. xix*, 300) that 'it was discovered that while the scheduled connections made Glasgow at 12.15 a.m., the L.M.S. Section of the 6.05 p.m. from Dalwhinnie stops at Coatbridge (en route for London) at 10.15 p.m. and from Coatbridge, of course, there is a frequent bus service (S.M.T. and Midland) taking about thirty minutes to Glasgow.'

Photo: J. Osbourne

J.M.C.S. New Year Meet, 1931, at Loch Awe.

The usual prizes are offered for a full identification of those attending

Some things have not, however, changed with the passing of time. Take navigation for example (*J.* xviii, 203), about which we read 'On the other hand, Ben Lui drew a number of parties, but most were baffled by the mists. Bartholomew, Campbell and Mackay from Coninish searched in vain for the Central Gully, and then seem to have eaten some sandwiches under a boulder. E. A. Hutchison and Grieve found themselves at the col between Beinn a' Chuirn and Meall Odhar and beat a retreat appalled.' It would seem from this that the weather has not changed very much either.

After a small meet to the Clachaig Inn in 1935, the virtues of this well-known Hotel are extolled at some length (*J.* xx, 479) 'surely the Inn should be used more for small meets. When one can get a hot bath (first two men anyway), a five-course dinner in the cosy wee parlour upstairs, a bed, a four-course breakfast in the bar, to say nothing of a magnificent view of the Battle of the Modden River—all for 7s. 6d.—one can afford to ignore minor inconveniences.'

In spite of the economy which most were forced to practice at the time, a certain amount of indulgence appears to have taken place (*J.* xix, 225). We read that (New Year Meet 1931), 'The worst performance stands to the discredit of two well-known habitués of Inverarnan, who were so overcome by the reaction occasioned by uncontrolled indulgence at dinner that they were barely able to climb into their car and motor home.' Another field of activity, it will be observed, which has not changed with the years.

Those responsible for the management of the whole Club A.G.M. in future years, will doubtless be interested in another part of the report on the same meet, 'The attempt of the Chairman of the A.G.M. to defeat last year's record time of thirty-five minutes was ably frustrated by the introduction of a number of completely irrelevant proposals and amendments.'

Over the years, a host of names flit across the twenty-eight *Journals* covering the period. Without actually having known them all, it would be impossible to make a selection of the most notable characters. The names which seem to appear most are Rusk, Bartholomew, Osborne, Elton, Addenbrooke, the Brothers Speirs, Hutchison, Andreae, A. Scott, P. Scott, Harrison, R. Gibson, T. H. Gibson, MacPhee, Dr Myles, Sandeman, Lillie, Pattullo, Ogilvie, Campbell, Dunn, Gorrie, Russell, Grieve and the master fiddler, Geddes.

I am quite certain that those whom I have omitted through lack of knowledge are or were the sort of fellows who would not have minded anyway.

Poised on the brink of yet another new era in Scottish Mountaineering, the Section disbanded itself in 1939 to tackle a Very Severe problem of a different variety.

(2) 1945-1963

By Mike Fleming

IN HINDSIGHT, the story of the Edinburgh Section of the J.M.C.S. falls into clearly defined chapters, although this clarity of definition was not usually apparent to the immediate participants. Since the War, the story of the Club divides itself into three such chapters—the post-war period up to the mid-fifties (the age of the hard men), from the mid-fifties to the mid-sixties, and the period from then to-date.

The Post-War period was one of re-incarnation and consolidation of a Club which, like so many others, had gone into recession during the war years. The first bus meet of the Edinburgh Section, which marked the revival of the Club, was to Crianlarich on 17/18th January, 1948. On this and ensuing meets were to be found many 'weel kent' faces, some of whom now tend to be associated with Glasgow (would you believe) rather than Edinburgh. The nucleus of the new Club, for such it really was, consisted of such mountaineers as Malcolm Slessor, Donald Hill, George Chisholm, Jimmy Russell, Dan Stuart, Fred Mantz, Donald Bennett, Geoff Dutton, and that inveterate time traveller Jimmy Marshall who was certainly ahead of his time and probably not yet out of night nappies.

The solid character of the Club can well be summed up by glancing through the above selection of members. None of these were 'transient' mountaineers who flash into existence, sparkle for a brief spell, then disappear never to be seen again. Most of them are now considered to be establishment figures—pillars of the S.M.C., a whole galaxy of potential presidents of the S.M.C. They are not renowned tigers (apart from Marshall) but they are all thoroughly competent mountaineers with a wealth of experience. The reliability and staying powers of these men was precisely what was required to set the J.M.C.S. back on its feet again after the 39-'45 interruption. And this they did. And for that, they have earned our enduring gratitude.

By the mid-fifties, the Club was on a secure footing—with a membership of around seventy, from which up to thirty would attend bus meets; figures which have remained consistent through the years. The Club was building up an impressive record of achievement both at home and abroad. Peter Pan Marshall had been joined by Rip Van Winkle Clarkson. Everything was set fair. Then the chapter abruptly closed.

In the mid-fifties, many of the figures who had reinvigorated the Edinburgh Section moved on into the S.M.C., and, although many of them remained active, their connections with the Section were

largely severed. This left a vacuum which could have proved disastrous to the fortunes of the Club, but, instead, what could be described as the Golden Age of Mountaineering, was heralded in the East—an upsurge of great mountaineering talent which sprang largely from the Edinburgh J.M.C.S.

Two contrasting characters in particular preserved the necessary continuity between these two periods. Jimmy Marshall—a prime figure in the 1950's; brilliant, ebullient and through whom the 'Currie Boys'—Dougal Haston, Jim Moriarty and Jim Stenhouse—entered the scene. Jim Clarkson was the dominant personality of the early sixties; gaunt, eccentric, but super-enthusiastic and a super-organiser through whom the Dunfermline climbers, Ian MacEachran and Johnnie Knight joined the Club to meet with Dave Bathgate, Brian Robertson, Alister McKeith, and those who were eventually to form the illustrious Squirrels Mountaineering Club.

Again, the late fifties saw the emergence of the great Robin Smith, whose combination of ability, physique, enthusiasm and drive assured this precocious climber of a rapid entry into the global annals of mountaineering fame. A perfect foil to Smith was the pleasant, unassuming brilliance of Derek Leaver, perceptively described in an English Guide Book as one of the most under-rated climbers in Britain. He was perhaps the neatest and most beautifully balanced climber of all that assembly of talent. He graced all routes—hard or easy—for sheer enjoyment, but lacked the drive and ambition of some of his contemporaries. And he was none the worse for that!

Behind the stars there emerged a solid phalanx of assorted characters of varying ability but infectious enthusiasm. The tigers provided the garnishing but the latter were the solid meat of this flourishing Club. Too many to enumerate them all, but names such as Mike (Picasso) Guest, Jim Waddell, Ian (Black) Douglas, George Allan, Keith Murray, Graham Tiso, Roger Phillips, Jim Hall, Alec Barclay, the Glen Grant twins, Ron Swanson, and many others arouse pleasant nostalgia.

This was the last era of the bus-meet, which had its disadvantages—restriction of time and venue at week-ends—but nevertheless was highly functional in preserving the identity and spirit of the Club. These years preceded the affluent times of today and the only transport between official meets was usually the Clarkson 'taxi' or the Tiso 'Rocket,' plus assorted motor cycles of doubtful vintage. The climbers were an incredibly scruffy, tatterdemalion crew. The Smith encampment on Gunpowder Green would have assured him today of a spot on 'Panorama' as some strange denizen of the Third World. Hitch-hiking was still a major means of access to the hills.

Club Dinners were always held at the Glencoe Hotel. The staff religiously removed all breakable ornaments prior to the festivities, and only replaced them after the last unsteady member had departed, the hard men swarming down the outside walls of the Hotel, and the softer (or drunker) ones more conventionally, but no less noisily, by the door. After one such occasion Swanson decided that he was too tired to walk down the track to Lagangarbh, but thought that if he acted drunk enough, he might persuade someone to transport him in a wheelbarrow which lay handy in Cameron's barn. This pseudo-Thespian manoeuvre (he only *thought* he was acting) achieved its object. However, unbeknown to him, the wheelbarrow's formal function was in mucking out the byres so Swanson was left strictly alone for the rest of the meet. On another occasion Keith Murray disappeared one night in Langdale after an evening on scrumpy in the Old D.G. He was later discovered standing in the middle of the river at the dam below Gimmer staring puzzledly at the water and babbling, 'Look—no feet.'

The overseas activities of the Club flourished too. Increasing numbers of members holidayed in the Alps, the Dolomites and Norway. Climbers like Smith and Haston began to account for some of mountaineering's major ascents. The highlight of the Club's overseas activities was without doubt the highly successful expedition which was mounted to the Staunings Alps in East Greenland in 1961 (see *J.* xxvii).

But, at the apparent height of its success, this chapter too, in the history of Edinburgh J.M.C.S. began to draw to a close. The success of the bus meets began to wane as more private transport became available. For a spell, their continuation depended on a fruitful liaison with the Edinburgh Mountaineering Club, the formidable organisational talents of Jimmy Thin being combined with those of Clarkson for a few years. But this also failed to last and bus meets finally became a thing of the past.

Again, in the mid-sixties, this unique group of climbers began to split up. The Squirrels splintered off to form their own Club which, with the help of strong groups in Dundee and Aberdeen, was to keep the accent of Scottish mountaineering in the East till the end of the decade. Many other members joined the S.M.C. and gradually lost contact with the Club as their interests took them elsewhere. Haston and the Currie Boys left the scene.

But chiefly responsible for the closure of this chapter was a series of tragic mountaineering accidents. The Club had been relatively free from such incidents apart from two sorrowful deaths in the fifties—Crichton Allan on Cairngorm and Ted Wise on Nevis. But the mid-sixties dealt a series of punishing blows. Robin Smith's death in the Pamirs was the greatest loss to mountaineering in general, but Keith Murray had a fatal fall in Green Gully on Nevis and Jim Clarkson's death drew on the very life blood of the Club.

And so a chapter closed. It would have to be called Clarkson's chapter.

But, already the climbers who were to see the Edinburgh J.M.C.S. through to the present day were appearing on the scene. One chapter closed but another was already opening.

(3) 1963-1975

By Jim Clark

SINCE the early sixties the most important influences on the Club have been changes in transport. Car-ownership has increased to include the young and the affluent whilst the improvement of Highland roads from single track and the introduction of dual carriageways in the Lowlands (where the most significant development has been the Forth Road Bridge, completed in September 1964) have put many mountain areas within easier reach of Edinburgh. The joys of the bus, geared to a 5½-day week with a 2.30 p.m. start on Saturday and anguished cries to the latecomers on a Sunday night, no longer appealed. A car could provide ready access for a full weekend to a favoured spot for a few selected friends and was naturally much preferred.

Evidence of dissatisfaction with the Club's arrangements became apparent with the almost complete boycott of the 1963 Dinner at Roy Bridge, when only ten turned up. However, a club such as the Edinburgh J.M.C.S. cannot be over-selective or would not have survived fifty years of changing membership. Bus-meets, in conjunction with the Edinburgh M.C. were to continue as the basis of activities until 1966 when only thirteen people travelled to Arrochar.

With the abandonment of the bus-meets, consideration was given to our role with the Edinburgh M.C. as the only clubs in Edinburgh open to non-selective entry. Experienced, middle-aged, opinion held that we should throw in our lot with the E.M.C. and retain the J.M.C.S. part in parentheses. Views were many and various and advice sought from other sections of the J.M.C.S. succeeded only in confusing and obscuring the issue. Constitutional changes for the J.M.C.S. as a whole, however, were again in the wind and the issue was finally resolved when the autonomy given to all sections saw the Edinburgh J.M.C.S. constituted as an independent club in November 1967, but otherwise following exactly the same lines as formerly. The Edinburgh M.C. proceeded on their own way as well, concentrating more on the family and social aspects of mountaineering and open to mixed membership.

By the late sixties, the Club had a nucleus of people owning cars who were prepared to co operate for meets under the discretion of a meet secretary, this post being allocated to the committee in rotation. New meet venues were now introduced and keenly supported and remained as annual or at least bi-annual events. These included North Wales, Derbyshire, Wasdale, Rum and of course, Skye and the Northern Highlands.

Between meets, expeditions by car became more and more active with increasingly distant centres, formerly regarded as holiday venues, becoming accepted for ordinary Friday to Sunday night week-ends. Notably, one must mention what became an annual event established by Robert McDonald. Leaving on Friday evening, the early hours of Saturday were spent bivouacking at Kyle of Lochalsh. We caught the first ferry, then went on to Glenbrittle or Sligachan to set up camp and eat a hearty meal before setting off for the Cuillin Ridge traverse. The hours of darkness were spent bivouacked on the ridge then when Sunday dawned, we went on to complete the traverse and with luck, enjoy a lunch time pint before snatching an hour or two of sleep and catching the ferry to drive back to Edinburgh for work on Monday morning. To quite a few, this trip became an essential part of the annual training for an Alpine holiday and was invariably carried out in ideal weather in early June.

The late sixties also saw the opening of the Club hut at the Smiddy, Dundonnell, made possible by funds subscribed in memory of Jim Clarkson, who died on a meet ascending Càrn Mòr Dearg on 17th March 1968. Yet another tragedy occurred on a summer meet to the Shelter Stone when John Gemmel fell in Pinnacle Gully of Ben MacDhui on 5th July 1970.

Recent developments with influence on the Club have been the advent of outdoor education in Edinburgh so generously promoted by the Corporation until the Cairngorm disaster in November 1972. Committees and other such Councils have opined on our role as a Club with a responsibility to school leavers introduced to the sport and more experienced mountaineers have sought to use the Club as a general depository for novices rather than encourage young members by their own active participation. While we continue to attract new members, the increased interest is also absorbed by clubs new to the city bearing names such as the 'Care and Cray' and 'The Plantagenets.'

Increasing commercialisation of mountaineering is very apparent and is perhaps typified by the construction of climbing walls such as that at the Meadowbank Sports Centre and in numerous schools and further education centres throughout the city, while the natural attractions of Salisbury Crags remain out of bounds through Act of Parliament from Westminster. Marketing of the sport now extends beyond equipment, books, periodicals, celebrity lectures and

foreign travel to include even clubs themselves which can be found advertising in the B.M.C.'s 'Mountain of Life' and on the walls of suitably accommodating pubs throughout the land. Whether these influences and the recent inflationary increases in petrol and motoring costs will affect the Club significantly remains to be seen. As one veteran of the Club in his late thirties remarked at a recent meet to Gunpowder Green, 'It's only the names and faces that change—the Club carries on the same as ever.'

(4) The Smiddy, Dundonnell

By Jim Clark

DURING 1965, the Secretary had been in contact with a group known as Scottish Mountaineering Huts, based in Musselburgh, and believed to be a cell of the Mountain Bothies Association in Scotland. A list was provided of various derelict properties with details of the Estate Factors and from this selection, various trips were made to view the proffered premises. It was in this way that we came to spend the New Year of 1966 at the Dundonnell Smiddy.

Since the local smith retired after the Second World War, the forge had only occasionally been kindled by a visiting smith from near Strathpeffer and, as demand for his trade died out, the building fell derelict. Work on the road from Saltbed to Braemore Junction gave it a short lease of life as a howff for the contractor's camp on the Smiddy Green when the adjoining stretch of Destitution Road was upgraded from single-track status in the early sixties.

With the attraction of An Teallach, the potential for a hut in the Dundonnell area was indisputable and accordingly the committee leased the Smiddy in the name of the Club. A sum of £10 was allocated from funds for repairs and we proceeded to brush out the dirt, plug the leaks and hang a new padlock on what remained of the door. We now had a bothy which was to prove popular for holiday week-end meets and became the traditional New Year Meet venue. It was also claiming some keen devotees who would make the 220 miles trip from Edinburgh on a Friday night and return on the Sunday night, enjoying a reasonably traffic-free A9 with its associated hazards as prelude and finale to an active two days in Wester Ross.

When Jim Clarkson, our Honorary Member, died in 1968, it was decided that a memorial to him worthy of his devotion to the Club would be to improve the Smiddy to a condition which would set a new standard for mountain huts in Scotland.

Following the Memorial Appeal, it was possible to begin work on the Hut in earnest, although the budget was still limited and great reliance had to be placed on voluntary labour. This inevitably resulted in somewhat sporadic progress of the work, the bulk of which was carried out between the spring of 1970 and autumn of 1972, when the hut was deemed sufficiently complete to be officially opened. This ritual was carried out by Iain H. Ogilvie, M.B.E.

The conversion was tackled from the outset as a conservation project and unless the features of the building interfered with its use as a climbers' hut, they were retained and much of the original character remains. The forge and bellows continue to function but an octagonal table takes the place of the anvil on its spring-block, while sink, work-top and cooker replace the work bench with its adjusting frame and steel-leg vice. When being shod, the horse stood where the bunks are now positioned, tethered to the ring which can be seen in an opening in the timber lining which insulates the sleepers from the walls of Torridonian sandstone.

To the simple rectangular building with low pitch slated roof, a small extension was added to house the W.C. and provide a small tool-store. The original shutter-board window remains but the door was replaced in similar style with a two-leaf stable door. As with Alpine mountain huts, where the shutters are painted in the colours of the appropriate national flag the door was painted azure blue in a white frame and the upper leaf emblazoned with a white saltire. A small plaque beside the door records that the conversion was made possible by funds subscribed in memory of Jim Clarkson.

The total cost of the project amounted to some £860, which was raised entirely for this purpose by the Club, £600 resulting from the Clarkson Memorial Appeal, while loans, hut-dues and donations acquired during the progress of the works made up the balance. Reaction to the hut by users in the first two years of operation could not have been more favourable. Practically all the active Scottish clubs have held meets there and many have made a return visit. The facility of providing an easily reached base for ready access to the extensive area of Strathnashellach and Fisherfield is now being realised.

THE PERTH SECTION

By J. Grant and J. Rogers

THE Club past resides in the memories of those climbers who have participated in its 45 years of existence and in the cold, impersonal black and white of the red-leather-bound Minutes Book which has recorded those years. The first of this account's authors has been closely associated with the Club for all but 4 years of its life, while the latter—a mere babe-in-arms—has tried to bring fact and order to the former's senile reminiscences and has taken every opportunity (but one) to omit the words, 'When men were men and a rainy day was five Munros.'

Before the Club was actually formed, five climbers in the area had become members of the Edinburgh Section of the J.M.C.S. These were the Club's founder members and they held their first official meet at Lawers Inn (unlicensed) on 2nd March 1930, and followed it by a dinner in York House, Perth, which was attended by a guest from the S.M.C.

This propitious pentamery consisted of Alastair Cram, for a long time a judge in Kenya and now retired to Edinburgh, Chris Rudie, our current Hon. President, who now lives in Alyth and is still active with our Club, Jimmy McNab, also now living in Edinburgh, the late Matthew Gloag and Dennis Howe who was killed in an accident in New Zealand where he went as an insurance branch manager.

I joined the Club in 1934 and have pleasant memories of early Club members and though many have passed on some were very active such as Chris Andrews, Eric Annandale, Dr Isles and Dr Sellars. Others of whom we have lost trace were Bob McIntyre and Colin Allen, a great friend of J. H. B. Bell, while we still have with us in retirement Jim Anton and J. S. Kilpatrick.

Up until the end of 1933 the Club remained small but very active and regular meets were held to the main climbing centres at home and abroad. Indeed, Alastair Cram was the 8th man to climb all the Munros and was also on the short leet for one of the Everest expeditions. The law, ministry and medicine were well represented in the membership.

In 1934 the Hon. President, Sheriff Valentine, retired and J. H. B. Bell took over the office and was a very active Hon. President, taking part in the meets and leading many new climbs. I can always remember him starting his day, even in December and January, by having a dip in the nearest river.

Pre-war finances were based on an Annual Subscription of 7/6 and an embarrassing surplus of £16 12s. 3½d. prompted the purchase of a set of S.M.C. Guide Books and two climbing ropes, plus a donation to the S.Y.H.A. to help build a new hostel in Glen Brittle.

After the war, a meeting was held in December 1946 with an attendance of 26 and it was agreed to restart the Club with monthly bus meets. Up until this time members had used their private cars which were now impractical with the economic climate of the post-war years. Finally one of the Club members, Tom Kemp, was able to hire a bus without charge for a driver, as he was a spare time driver.

Thus began the most sociable era of the Club history. At this period buses were still of the austerity type with wooden seats and it was quite a trial to journey to Glencoe. This was recompensed by the fare which was only 4/6. With a full bus at almost every meet, a profit was made which was used for free drinks at the Annual Dinner. At this time the Section's Annual Dinner location became the Spittal of Glenshee Hotel. The dinner cost 4/6 then and the proprietor, Mr Duguid, allowed a great deal of licence in the true sense of the word.

The Club had by now developed a good number of rock-climbers, who were attempting the new and difficult climbs of the post-war route explosion. The position of Hon. President was held in succession by Chris Andrews, Jim Anton and W. H. Murray whose outings with the Club were greatly appreciated.

In the mid-fifties we made contact with Sandy Cameron, the owner of a bus, and everyone looked forward to the outings in Sandy's bus. Place, time and cost were secondary considerations to Sandy and he charged according to the numbers turning out. He was the cheeriest individual one could meet and he knew all the members individually. This association continued until Sandy had to go into hospital for a long spell and had to sell his bus. When he finally recovered he emigrated to Glasgow to our loss.

The Perth Section of the J.M.C.S. has fulfilled a certain function as a 'nursery' for prospective S.M.C. members and over the years a good few of the Section's ex-members have taken an active part in the affairs of the senior Club. Indeed, the present *Journal* Editor is a past member of the Perth Section which together with this article further confirms the Club's reputation for illiteracy.*

The Club has been very fortunate to have on record only five fatal accidents to members in its history.

* An interesting manifestation of the *Ah kent his father* syndrome, often remarked upon by such luminaries as Hugh MacDiarmid and Malcolm Slesser as a chronic ailment of Scottish Thought.
—HON. ED.

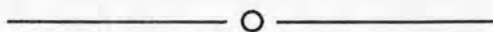
The only fatal accident on a Club meet was to Bill Thomson, an active and well-respected member from Buckhaven, in March 1961. It happened on Bidean Nam Bian when it was covered more by a sheet of ice than snow, an unusual condition for this mountain.

In the sixties many of the Club's Annual Dinners were held in Braemar, while accommodation was available at Derry Lodge until the lease expired. Fond memories of the festivities enacted by a replete company on the Saturday night after the dinner make the Club as bitter as any that this excellent centre for the Eastern Cairngorms has been lost.

No historical account would be complete without a mention of those connoisseurs of summits, the Club's Munroists. Six current members have collected their infinity of cairns and one has forayed abroad in England, Wales and Ireland to embellish his total.

Male chauvinism dies hard, as every woman from Mrs Pankhurst to Germaine Greer knows, so that ladies have not been admitted as members although the 'liberal' males have allowed them to attend as guests on Club meets. Special mention must be made of three of these hard and long-suffering women—Mrs Nan Rae, the second woman Munroist, Miss Pamela Cain, nearly at 277 and Mrs Ann Paterson, renowned for her shortbread.

The J.M.C.S. Perth Section is now concealed by its new label of the Perth Mountaineering Club but remains the same enthusiastic group that I joined forty years ago when men were men and a rainy day was five Munros.



STRAVAGERS AND MARAUDERS

By Robert Aitken

'I and my friends had no desire to see the proposed Club mixed up with any attempt to force rights-of-way. We did not desire the Club to become a straving or marauding Club, insisting on going everywhere at every season . . .'

Professor RAMSAY, S.M.C.J., iv, p.88.

ONE of the endearing features of the *Journal* is the way it evokes the flavour of the mountain scene in Scotland—if not at the time, then thirty years on. Bygones become bygones, and the truth emerges—or something like it: the rowdy, reprobate and reckless of the last generation come out, blinking nervously, into the daylight of retrospective respectability, and Peaheid and Scrubbernutt take up their niche in the hall of fame at last; the cause of history is served, the record put right.

There was a time, though, long before the dawn of the Duttonian enlightenment, when such broad-mindedness was much less evident. In the days of Ramsay, the bourgeois academic, and of that land-owning reactionary, Munro, the activities and the achievements of a whole class of hillmen—a feature of the Scottish hills for half a century—went more or less unremarked. These were the advocates and exponents of Rights of Way and Access to Mountains, the deer-disturbers and signpost-erectors who walked outwith the pale of S.M.C. constitutional precept: '... respect proprietary and sporting rights, and endeavour to obtain the co-operation of proprietors.' These bolshies of the Golden Age, the heyday of the deer forest, as well as of early mountaineering in Scotland, have rested largely in obscurity ever since. Perhaps it is time to rehabilitate some of them.

The task need not be a serious one, since there is no tradition of self-important solemnity in the Rights of Way movement; one of the prime movers was in fact noted for his sense of humour, and his contribution was almost clownish. John Hutton Balfour is now remembered chiefly as professor of botany at Edinburgh University between 1845 and 1879, and for his work in the design and development of the Edinburgh botanic gardens, but in his time he was known as an entertaining and humorous lecturer, and held the incongruous post of Punster to Lord Cockburn's Bonaly Friday Club. He was particularly energetic in conducting field excursions with his students to all parts of Scotland—the kind of excursions on which the first S.M.C. meets were modelled. His contribution to the Rights of Way movement came in August 1847, when he and seven

of his students encountered the Duke of Athole in Glen Tilt. Sir Douglas MacLagan, a friend and contemporary of Balfour, commemorated the event in some of the most unforgettably excruciating doggerel of the time:

The gerse was poo't, the boxes fill't,
An' syne the hail clamjamphrie
Would tak' the road by Glen o' Tilt,
Awa' to whar' they cam' frae.
The Duke at this put up his birse;
He vowed, in English and in Erse,
That Saxon fit
Su'd never get
A'e single bit
Throughout his yett,
Amang the Hielan' hills, man.

After a protracted argument with the Duke and his ghillies about the disputed right of passage, the botanical party ended the deadlock and circumvented the opposition by scrambling over a wall. This, the so-called 'Battle of Glen Tilt,' generated enormous publicity and led to a prolonged lawsuit in which the Edinburgh Association for the Protection of Public Rights of Roadway in Scotland, through various agents, established the public right on this ancient drove-road, and did much to clarify the law to their advantage: it was a vital precedent for what was to become the Scottish Rights of Way Society.

It has long been tacitly assumed that Balfour and his students were the innocent and inadvertent objects of the Duke's wrath. All the evidence, though circumstantial, suggests otherwise. There is the Professor's character; the fact that he had previously on the same excursion run the gauntlet of the Earl of Fife's keepers to ascend Ben MacDhui by the forbidden Luibeg route; and the singular coincidence that less than six weeks before Balfour set out, the Edinburgh Association had held a meeting at which they explicitly stated their intention of taking up the cause of Glen Tilt, and indeed asked that pedestrians hindered in their passage should contact them. Not only was this meeting reported in the Edinburgh press, but there was also at least one close friend of Balfour's, Patrick Neill, on the committee of the Association. It is difficult to imagine that Balfour could have remained ignorant of these circumstances; it is easy to picture the impish anticipation with which he probably set off on his stravaging excursion.

Such anticipation would certainly have been justified, for it was a time of general feeling against landowning Dukes, and there could hardly have been a more appropriate subject than the sixth Duke of Athole (the change of spelling from Atholl was quite characteristic of the man). He was a litigious, irascible romantic who

squandered vast sums in lawsuits to prohibit his neighbours from shooting his deer when they crossed to adjoining estates, in entertaining Queen Victoria on her Highland jaunts from Balmoral, and in equipping his Athole Highlanders with Lochaber axes and other antique arms. After Balfour, things went from bad to worse with the Duke: in August 1850 he was involved in a brawl with two Cambridge students walking through Glen Tilt, and in October of the same year at Perth Station he more or less assaulted the Provost, who had been active in raising local sentiment, not to say local money, for the case against the Duke. Even the *Times* was moved to suggest that 'it would be doing the public a service to bring this hot-headed foolish man to his senses,' while *Punch* was merciless in mock-Ossianic style on the black eye the Duke had collected in the fray with the undergraduates:

'Lament; for the visual organ of Atholl is darkened. Raise the sound of wail upon a thousand bagpipes! Closed is the eye of him who would close Glen Tilt to the traveller. Ken ye not the Chieff of Clan Atholl—the tourist-baffling Duke of the impassable glen?'

Probably nobody enjoyed all this more than J. H. Balfour. It is sad, then, that he should so rarely get the credit for starting it: Sir Henry Alexander mentioned the 'Battle' in the 1928 S.M.C. Cairngorms Guide, but made the mistake of ascribing it to Balfour's son, and the error has been perpetuated through the editions to the present one.*

Twenty years on, in 1867, it fell to one of Balfour's colleagues to show how far the deer forest and its exclusiveness had spread. In August of that year John Stuart Blackie, professor of Greek at Edinburgh, and passionate champion of the Highland people, ventured to climb Buachaille Etive Mór against the wishes of the proprietor, who also, interestingly enough, refused to provide him with a guide. It is pleasant to record the sequel: 'Arrived at Fort William, he called upon the Fiscal, who, along with a hearty welcome and some glasses of excellent port, gave him the information that he had received instructions to have him prosecuted for climbing Buachaill-more. Professor Tyndall was at Fort William . . . (visiting the Parallel Roads of Glen Roy) 'and joined him in a hearty laugh at the baffled deer-stalkers, whose attack expired in this letter.'

The continued extension of the deer forests and the gradual decline in use of the great drove roads combined in a threat to the hill rights of way which became acute in the 1880's, especially where the proprietor or shooting tenant was an outsider. Such was the American, Walter Louis Winans, who controlled over 200,000 acres

* A wrong now righted by Adam Watson, Jnr. in the 1975 edition [HON. ED.]

of jealously guarded stalking country in Affric and Kintail, paying nearly £10,000 in rents for the privilege. 'And for all this extravagance, he could not be called a true sportsman,' it is alleged; 'He believed in drives of deer and grouse, and in sumptuous hill pic-nics.'

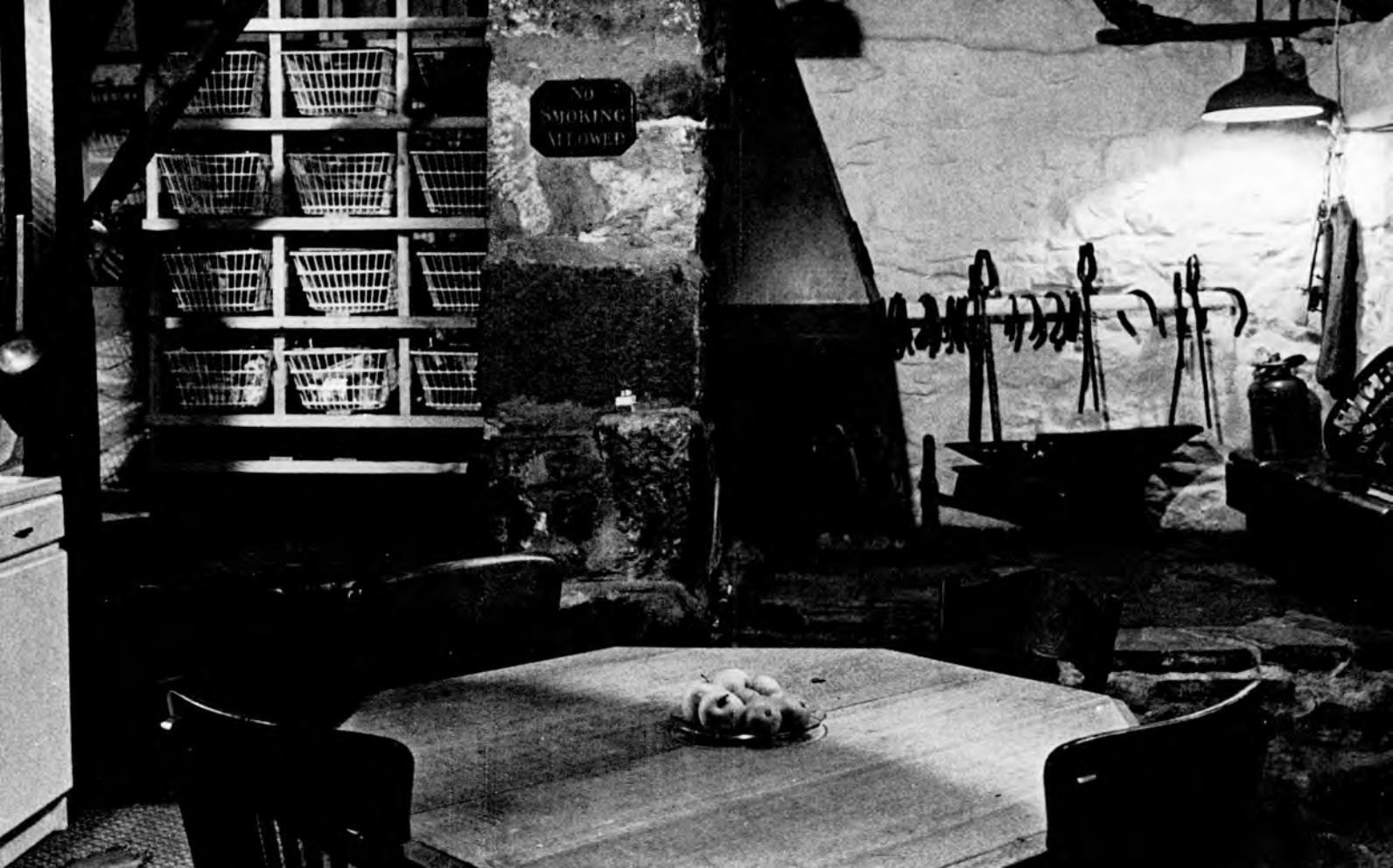
Such too was Duncan Macpherson, who purchased the estate of Glen Doll with capital acquired in Australia. In 1885 he was the first proprietor visited by a notable straving 'deputation' which toured the Central Highlands on behalf of the revived Scottish Rights of Way Society. This expedition neatly combined the impudence of the Balfour tradition with a very Victorian logistical thoroughness: the party carried signposts previously prepared to mark disputed footpaths, which they erected in the appropriate place; obstructing gamekeepers were then intimidated by the 'taking of instruments'—an obscure and no doubt impressive legal process made much easier by the presence in the party of a notary public. The passage of the deputation led to a prolonged and ruinous lawsuit over Jock's Road in Glen Doll, in which the Society was at last successful in the House of Lords, and precipitated a decade of hectic activity in claiming and forcing rights of way, activity which abated only when the Local Government (Scotland) Act of 1894 made the maintenance of rights of way a local authority responsibility. One of the leading spirits in the deputation was Walter A. Smith, who was later to become an original member of the S.M.C. and the sponsor of notable Edinburgh members such as William Douglas; he seems to have gone back over Jock's Road fairly often—it probably gave him as much satisfaction as a new route would to a different kind of mountaineer.

In fact, the S.M.C. drew several of its early adherents from the ranks of the stravers. Professor Veitch, J. Parker Smith, and Hely Almond, headmaster of Loretto and the original Salvationist, were members, and C. E. W. Macpherson, secretary of the Rights of Way Society. But the hard core of the Club was composed of Alpinists—often abroad in the critical months of stalking, and doing most of their Scottish climbing in winter and spring. And most were Glaswegian, with easy access by rail to hills noted more for their rocks and roughness than for their qualities as deer forest; almost without exception, the great right of way cases were fought in the eastern Highlands. It is not, then, surprising to find that the Cairngorm Club had its origins in a tradition altogether more radical than that of the S.M.C. The political background of the North-East was Liberal; the members, hillmen rather than mountaineers, were usually afoot on the Cairngorms during the stalking season; and the founders included Alexander Inkson McConnochie—a member of the Rights of Way Society—Alexander Copland, and Thomas Gillies. Under the unlikely pseudonyms of 'Dryas Octopetala' (the mountain avens) and 'Thomas Twayblade,' these last two chronicled

Photos: D. Stone

Opposite—The Smiddy, Dundonnell Outside and (*overleaf*)—Inside





NO
SMOKING
ALLOWED

in the Aberdeen Journal of the 1880's their early expeditions across the High Cairngorms: expeditions notable not only for their adventurous bivouacs and cuisine on the tops, but also for their encounters with, escapes from, and diatribes against stalkers, ghillies, and lairds. Copland gave us the name Angel's Peak for Sgòr an Lochain Uaine of Cairntoul, to offset the Devil's Point, itself a euphemistic translation of the Gaelic; and he was first Chairman of the Cairngorm Club, which he regarded as '... in some sense a reserve force in questions affecting rights-of-way to and on mountains.' Gillies, his son-in-law, was an advocate who acted as local agent for the Rights of Way Society in the Glen Doll case, mustering ancient drovers and couthy shepherds to give evidence of historic use of Jock's Road.

In electing their first President, however, the Cairngorm Club demonstrated that their stravaing aspirations ran to more than mere footpaths; he was James Bryce, M.P., later Viscount Bryce, the originator of the campaign for Access of Mountains. Bryce is perhaps the least known of the great Scottish mountaineers of the late Victorian period; this may well be because most of his prodigious climbing experience was gained overseas, for he was the most travelled of mountaineers, and it is unlikely that many people have climbed more widely, even in these days. The Alps, Pyrenees, Norway, Etna, Caucasus, Andes, Rockies, Tatras, Hawaii, Ararat, Himalaya, Sinai, Iceland, Mashonaland, were all grist to his mill. He contributed a short chapter on 'Mountaineering in far-away countries' to Clinton Dent's Badminton Library volume on mountaineering, was a friend of Leslie Stephen and Freshfield, and was president of the Alpine Club between 1899 and 1901. Nevertheless, his ascents seem to have been almost incidental to other interests, such as history, law, education, and botany, and to his political career, first as a Liberal Member of Parliament from 1880 to 1906, and latterly as Ambassador to the United States from 1907 to 1913, a role in which he achieved singular success and popularity, including honorary membership of the American Alpine Club. He was never a member of the S.M.C., though he was almost an exact contemporary of Ramsay; indeed, they were both successful competitors for fellowships at Trinity College, Oxford, in 1857, when Ramsay described Bryce as 'that awful Scotch fellow who outwrote everybody.'

It was mainly during his period as member for South Aberdeen, from 1885 to 1906, that Bryce waged his long campaign for free access to mountains for recreation, a concept of striking originality in Britain at that time. He did assist with the Parliamentary cause of Rights of Way, but his addresses to the Cairngorm Club, as well as his speeches in the House of Commons, show a very modern awareness of the need for a real, rather than simply linear access: '... we are by no means content to be kept to a specified limited path in the

centre of a mountain.' As long as he was in the House, Bryce took every opportunity, and used every artifice of parliamentary procedure, to present and press his Bills; but while his often eloquent argument occasionally succeeded in carrying a resolution, detailed proposals were never given time. There was considerable support among Scottish M.P.s, but the opposition included many such as J. Parker Smith, who represented Partick, and who was, as mentioned earlier, a member of both the Rights of Way Society and the S.M.C. A piece by Smith in *Blackwood's Magazine* for August 1891 examines the access question, coming down heavily on the 'amicable agreement' policy of the Club—not surprisingly, since Ramsay, Munro, Veitch, and Gilbert Thomson contributed 'evidence' for the article. Not surprisingly, too, Stott gave it a very favourable notice in the *Journal* (*S.M.C.J.*, i, 328). John Stuart Blackie, by contrast, broke into verse as he took Bryce's side:

'Bless thee, brave Bryce! all Scotland votes with thee,
All but the prideful and the pampered few,
Who in their Scottish homes find nought to do
But keep our grand broad-shouldered Grampians free
From tread of Scottish foot . . .'

The radical simplicity of Bryce's proposals for Access to Mountains has tended to obscure the breadth and the farsightedness of his concern for the countryside. He watched with dismay the extension of the railway network into the Highlands, and its impact on the scenery of such areas as Killiecrankie and Loch Earn, while he recognised another potent threat in the destruction of the Falls of Foyers to create Scotland's first hydro scheme. To counteract these and similar future developments, he outlined a system of controls that closely foreshadowed much of our present planning legislation.

Bryce's experience of the United States also gave him an almost uncanny foresight of the motorcar era—in the days when Ford and his fellows were just tooling up for mass-production. As ambassador, he urged the Americans to keep cars out of the Yosemite National Park, in terms that were entirely unequivocal: 'Do not let the serpent into Eden at all.' It is intriguing to reflect that by 1912 Bryce was thoroughly familiar with the national park concept, as realised in the United States, Australia, and New Zealand, but he seems never to have considered importing the idea, on the grounds that private ownership of the land had rendered it impossible in Britain. As it was, Bryce returned from Washington only in time for the First World War, and died in 1922 at the age of 84. The parliamentary cause of Access to Mountains, carried forward by Sir Charles Trevelyan and others, merged imperceptibly at last into the national park movement in England and Wales: but there was no such momentum in Scotland. Perhaps Bryce had too many

irons in the fire; perhaps he was essentially too restrained and self-effacing. Queen Victoria had said of him: 'I like Mr Bryce. He knows so much and is so modest'; while Freshfield, a much more astute and less amenable critic, saw in him '... a simplicity of character, an honesty, a breadth of outlook...'. This most respectable of radicals remains a prophet almost without honour in his own country; the conservation of scenery he urged so strongly is now an accepted objective, but the problems he sought to avoid still await solution.

Shortly after Bryce's death those problems were emphatically restated by Ernest Baker, leader of the notoriously dramatic climb of the Ben Nuis Chimney on Arran in 1901, in the introduction to his book, *The Highlands with Rope and Rucksack* of 1923. Republished a year later in pamphlet form as *The Forbidden Land*, and dedicated to Bryce, it is an exhilaratingly comprehensive polemic against the Clearances, the deer forests, and every form of landlordism and access restriction, with an apologium worthy of Hoston thrown in for good measure: '... we were not imbued with any superstitious reverence for legal rights. Under stress of circumstances we committed some lawless things—even a burglary on one occasion...'. The *Journal* review of Baker's book (*S.M.C.J.*, xvi, 320) is sympathetic on the whole, but coyly declines to join battle on the content of that lively first section—Baker was, after all, a member of the Club, even if his stravaging tendencies were rather too evident.

No such complaint could be levelled against Arthur Russell or A. E. Robertson, whose credentials as S.M.C. men were unimpeachable. Russell, whose death in 1967 closed seventy-one years of membership, served for fourteen years in various Club offices and was closely involved with Unna and the National Trust for Scotland in the acquisition of Glencoe and Dalness—these services concealing his sterling work as secretary of the Rights of Way Society for many years. Robertson was even more successful, plodding the Coffin Roads of the north and west with resurrectionist zeal, while doing all the Munros for light relief, and to establish his *bona fides*—achieving this so effectively that he became President of both the Club and the Society: and though the first to do so, he has not been the last—such schizophrenia seeming to be chronic, if not particularly malignant.

In fact, a relationship has always existed between the S.M.C. and the stravaging faction, however little acknowledged it may have been; the Club may have done its best to ignore them, but they have patently not gone away, though the radical passions of last century have subsided. Perhaps now they can all, earnest or impish, be permitted to come forth from the shades of obscurity to which the scurrilous scribe Stott and his successors have condemned them. They're not so very wicked, after all.

(The writer wishes to acknowledge the assistance of the Scottish Rights of Way Society Ltd., and of its Secretary, Mr D. H. MacPherson, in making available the Minutes and Sederunt Books of the Association for the protection of public rights of roadway in and around Edinburgh, and the Newspaper Cuttings books of the Scottish Rights of Way Society).

PRENTICE DAYS

By Barclay S. Fraser

MY introduction to the hills began before the Kaiser's War, in a world very different from today's. Not surprisingly, then, my apprenticeship was very different from that of today's young mountaineers. By 1914 when I was seven I had progressed far enough to climb the Carn Liath top of Beinn a' Ghlo—my first Munro; but, as it was about twenty years later before the name 'Munro' meant anything to me, it will be seen that my early approaches to mountaineering were very slow and indirect.

It all began in the family, for Dad was passionately keen on the Highlands, and infected the rest of us. Born in 1869, he was, you might have thought, destined to be an early member of the Scottish Mountaineering Club—but not so! The S.M.C., like many good things that today we all take for granted, was in Grannie's revealing and uncomplaining phrase 'no for the likes o' us.' Dad could never have afforded the hotels from which the S.M.C. members so often set off for the hills. His was a different, a more traditionally Scottish approach. As a lad reared within sight of the Braes of Angus, he had made a habit whenever opportunity offered of setting off on foot away 'up the Glen,' for so to his dying day he affectionately called Glen Esk. The old iceaxe of the Club song was not for him; for him it was the old fishing rod. From his earliest days he fished the Angus burns and roamed the Angus hills, and, when an Edinburgh job and family ties made such ploys less easily available, he cherished them more with all the fervour of an exile.

It was this countryman's attitude that he tried to pass on to his town-bred children. Every summer, except in the very straitened years of the first World War, we would rent a cottage near Blair Atholl, Lochearnhead or somewhere else not too far from Edinburgh. To climbers living in the age of the motor car such places may not appear wildly exciting, but to us they were the land of heart's desire situated at the back of beyond. On the great morning a cabby with a long whip, a shabby bowler hat and a figure incredibly puffed out by layer upon layer of clothes would trundle us and our luggage in a horse cab to the Waverley or Caley Station. There we piled into a 3rd class compartment. The steam locomotive wheezed, puffed, tooted—and we were off. Near Dunkeld, or alternatively Callander,

as the hills began to close in around us, we were rushing from window to window to catch our first glimpses of the promised land. Dad also, his blue eyes a-sparkle, was to-ing and fro-ing just like us youngsters, clad in knickerbockers, belted Norfolk jacket and cap, and looking quite different from his normal staid, respectable office self. This was the moment when he would break into his one and only song. It was about a machine he claimed to have invented to flog his children with. We knew he was as incapable of laying a finger on us as he was of singing in tune, so that dirge-like chant was sweet music to us, telling us that the holidays had really begun.

In the following weeks we would sally forth from our cottage to explore every corner of our temporary domain—that little bit of the Highlands reachable by folk with no other means of transport than their own flat feet. In early years we went on family expeditions, but later we boys went more and more on our own. We scrambled up any available hill as a matter of course, but fishing the burns was our great joy. We specialised in those stretches neglected by more skilful anglers, toiling up to the corries where infant streams leapt down from pool to pool, or forcing our way through wooded ravines, where we climbed on slimy, mossy rocks up the side of waterfalls, keeping one eye on the next precarious foothold and the other on the point of the rod that continually tried to entangle itself in the branches overhead.

Our clothes were in marked contrast to the purpose-built gear of most of today's young mountaineers. Any garment too well worn for town use had been put by to be finished off in the rough-and-tumble of the holiday. We did, it is true, wear boots, but not climbing boots; ours were the black lacing kind, the every-day town wear of those days, which we had hammered full of flat metal 'protectors.' On very wet expeditions, following Dad's example, we would sling our boots round our necks by the laces and wade bare-foot over the sodden moors—which numbed the feet but saved the boots. Bad weather, of course, was good weather for fishing, so many a time we got home soaked through to the combinations (yes! combinations!).

We fished at first with rods cut from hazel bushes but later graduated, with great pride, to the real article, using worms from midden or tattie patch as bait. The thrill of a bite exceeded every other pleasure we knew: a delicious tremor passed in a moment from fish to line, from line to rod, from rod to hand and from hand to the pit of the stomach. In early days this triggered off a strike that entangled an innocent wee trout up a rowan tree, or sent it flying across the burn to flap frantically on the opposite bank. Later, however, we learned restraint, and would normally return with quite a fish fry, strung through mouth and gills on a long heather stalk. The words 'quarter pounder' we spoke with reverence; a half pounder was the summit of our ambitions.

I suppose it was a matter of temperament but we never became real anglers. As we grew older our expeditions became longer and took us higher. We would fish to the top waters of a burn, cross the bealach, fish down the other side and walk home the long way round. A hill tramp of anything up to twenty miles with a rod in hand is not angling. Still those early days have left their mark. I cannot walk along a burnside on my way to the heights without an appraising glance at those delectable corners where the trout may lurk; my hand tightens on an imaginary rod and the old feelings stir faintly once again. Nor have I ever been able to consider the peaks above, however nobly they project, as the sum total of the mountain scene; the glens between are an essential part of it, and those mountains whose valleys are disfigured by motorways and grand hotels are not for me. In mountaineering we learned some basic lessons: we acquired a feeling for the lie of the land, an ability to let our feet look after themselves in rough country, and a delight in an occasional tussle with a wee rock face; and if there was one thing we became good at it was finding our way in the dark, for, if the fish were biting, we could not stop till nightfall, and, if they weren't, we went on and on in the hope that the next pool would see them start.

In our teens we extended our experience a little. The boy scouts—long may they flourish!—taught us camping; not the all-mod-cons motor-based camping that flourishes in organised sites today, but the back-to-nature light-weight kind that could add a new dimension to hill wandering. It was however, the discovery of the Arran ridges, so much more exciting than the rounded tops of Perthshire, that really lured us upwards. Mind you, old habits die hard, and I remember standing on the summit of Goatfell with my rod at the ready, all impatience to get down and fish the Rosa on the way home! Still we were really scrambling now. Of course we never thought of ourselves as climbers, for climbers were a different breed who wore special boots with special nails and swarmed up ropes; or so we believed—for we never met them. What we learned we learned by ourselves, the hard way. I remember for instance my delight on discovering that rubbers made rock scrambling easy, and my subsequent dismay when I picked myself up and examined my corrugated hands after an unintentional descent, while my companion remained stuck on a ledge twenty feet up—and all because of a little shower of rain!

The next big step forward was the discovery of foreign hills, but that was much later, for in those days of student penury 'the likes o' us' had to wait till University days were over and a steady income was assured before we could think of going abroad. So I was well on in my twenties before I found myself footing it along the Pyrenees, zigzagging between Spain and France with a companion even less of a mountaineer than I was. The only relevant book then available in English was *The Pyrenees* by Hiliare Belloc published as far back

as 1909. They don't write guide books like that any more. Take for instance the foreword: 'In pious memory of Pamplona, Elizondo, the canon who shot quails with a walking stick, the ignorant hierarch, the chocolate of the aged woman, the one-eyed horse of the Pena Blanca, the miraculous bridge and the unholy vision of St. Girons.' These magnificent words, though less informative than evocative, hooked us straight away. You too, they seemed to say, can have romantic adventures in distant places with resounding names. As far as Spain was concerned this was no exaggeration, for that country was unknown to tourists in those days and the mountain villages to which we descended from time to time were little more developed, though more picturesque and historical, than those in the High Atlas today. The natives were incomprehensible though hospitable; there were no roads anywhere near the high villages, merely mule tracks; the inn bedrooms were warmed and perfumed by the mules who slept just below; the loo provided a straight drop into the pig sty; in the cobbled square the village boys played pelota against the wall of a splendid Romanesque church built for the medieval pilgrims making their way across the mountains to the shrine of St. James of Compostela. The wonder is that we were not sidetracked from our original mountain programme; and indeed from then on, my foreign holidays, though they have always focussed on mountains, have had to include ancient monuments as well; and ancient monuments seldom grow on mountain tops.

Belloc's practical tips for mountain exploration, though leaving much less to the imagination than his introductory blurb, were in fact much more misleading. They were expressed in such definite and authoritative terms that we felt that to deviate from them at all would be to invite disaster. It was only gradually that we came to realise that, like ourselves, the master had taught himself all he knew about mountains without reference to the accumulated experience of real mountaineers. It was essential he wrote, for a man to be clad entirely in wool, except for his feet, which, if he was on the road, should be in leather without socks (blisters!), and, if he was on the hills should be in rope-soled sandals. (Anything more slippery than rope soles on steep grass I have yet to find). A man could avoid sunstroke by wearing a cabbage leaf in the crown of his hat. (Cabbages, we found, were not the commonest of Alpine plants). It was obligatory that he should eat the local raw sausage, though he would hate it (we certainly did); and he must slake his thirst by squirting wine down his throat from a goatskin bag 'designed by heaven to prevent any man from abusing God's great gift of wine, for the goat's hair inside gives to wine so appalling a taste that a man will only take of it what is necessary for his needs.' (And much of it, we would add, dribbled down a man's shirt as a man tried to drink it).

His route-finding instructions were equally definite, and sometimes proved so clear and simple as to do much less than justice to the actual complexities of the mountains. So, though we were looking for Belloc's lines of least resistance across high passes we didn't always find them; he was apt to leave us to our own resources in situations that entailed a good deal of interesting disentangling and some mild rock work; which was educative. I did, however, acquire then one heretical view that has remained with me in spite of all later experience. In mountain travel, as opposed to rock climbing, passes are better than summits in providing that first breathtaking glimpse of the untravelled world ahead. Stout Cortes, I fancy, was not really on a *peak* in Darien when the great revelation came to him, but on the most accessible pass he could find; or perhaps a few yards above it, if there was a more comfortable seat there.

With such ideas taking shape in my mind, my mountaineering was obviously in danger of going the same way as my fishing. Luckily it was just at this time that I belatedly met with orthodox climbers who did their best to save my soul, eradicate a few of my long-established climbing bad habits, and introduce me to such techniques with rope and ice-axe as were common in those days. And there, I suppose, I have remained—back in the 1930's with some attitudes left over from even more primitive ages.

Last year I climbed my first Munro again, sixty years after. It was a family party that included a grandson seven years old—the same age as I was on that earlier occasion. He, I know, stands a far better chance today of getting a sound mountain training than I did long ago. Isn't he the lucky lad! Or is he? I met a climbing instructor some time ago who told me something of his approach: 'A lot of youngsters,' he said, 'think they want to take up climbing, but when I get them up on the climbing wall in the gym I soon see who are going to make the grade and who will be weeded out.'

Before that moment of truth comes, I think I'll take my grandson fishing up a Highland burn. Then, however he reacts to the climbing wall, he may still be having fun among the hills sixty years hence.

REALITY RECRUDESCENT

By Hamish M. Brown

In last year's *Journal* I made a light-hearted appeal for a cleaner approach to the hills, little foreseeing that petrol prices would double, and strikes reduce the car-owner to a garage-groveller. We may, perforce, ha'e to use Shanks' pony a bit mair.

Nor did I then realise that I was already committed to this attempt on the two hundred and seventy nine Munros, Ancient and Modern, in a single, car-less venture. It succeeded no doubt in desperation of the thought of what car-using weekend supporters might do if I weakened. The piston was held to my head.

So the mouse scuttled on among the mountains, the route on the map looking just like those labyrinthine tracks when the snow melts and the winter tunnels are laid bare on the hillsides.

'The sea is so large and my ship is so small' has its counterpart among the mountains. What a marvellously wholesome yet piquant landscape we have—a veritable geological curry: richly varied ingredients and spiced with the unexpected. In so many larger lands you can travel hundreds of miles, days on end, with very little scenic variation; here, in a step so to speak, you can swap Cairngorms for Cuillins, Schiehallion for Sheneval, Heasgarnaich for Hope (etcetera). They all have their fine points. Even the Monaidh Liath! Munro's Tables ensured more than he envisaged. If for no other reason than the satisfied feelings of a good meal, they are worth devouring: you will have relished a large portion both of meat and of the cream of the country.

Having had pupils from my old school up every Munro, ditto dog, ditto various other combinations, a new excuse was needed. (One does not just give up walking; the alternative). The incentive came. A year as an office-bound bureaucrat was driving me, in the words of a mountaineering Chancellor, bonkers.

'O some grow old and dream no more
And some do dream by day, lad;
And some put feet upon their dream
And have a song to sing, lad.'

That was pretty well the progression of it. The 'logistics' were quite complex but a grand antidote to boredom.

The data then; a sort of glorified Cousins réchauffé.

It always puzzled me why Sandy should have travelled north-south, ending in a city, albeit the fine one that is his home. My natural inclination was, and is, to head west and north, 'where all dreams lie.' Ben Hope *had* to be the finish. Given that, the route was

a mere joining up of two hundred and seventy nine dots to cover the ground as easily as possible. (It was two hundred and seventy seven at the start but the new two were on a natural round anyway. Quick reference also set the mind at ease over Kitchy, the dog. 'Done 'em' he smirked in self-indulgence and sank back into merited retirement).

Planning such a route is another game for climbers to play in wet days. There is hardly a map of Scotland at home now which has not been covered with the doodles of tentative routes. The evolution of their convolutions went on for months. If wealthy, I'd offer a prize for improvements. Being lazy, it had to be as short as possible. Never have I worked so hard to be so lazy.

Setting up this trip proved every bit as complex as any to Andes or Africa. Eating, sleeping and progression is the common element of any expedition, whether in a vertical or horizontal dimension. Some fools combine both.

This proved not far off the longest U.K. walk: one thousand six hundred and thirty nine miles. Fred Wescott in 1966 walked John o' Groats to Land's End *and back*, one thousand seven hundred and sixty miles, but presumably he was avoiding the vertical whereas over the two hundred and seventy nine Munros and other worthy summits ('Tops' I never really recorded), two hundred and eighty nine in all, I ran up 449,000 feet of ascent.

'Ran up' is perhaps the wrong term. It was invariably taken very slowly and steadily—so much so that on odd occasions I read a book on the way along or up. (Twice walking into gates thereby). It took a few days in the Cuillins immediately after the end (the joys of *rock* vertically) to regain the old speed. Quite a bit of blubber was lost and I've never felt so fit yet could not manage vast meals. Over-eating is a result of stress, of civilisation so called.

John Hinde was an enthusiast for long treks when at R.A.F. Kinloss (now he just makes the poor *Captain Scott* trainees suffer) and Sandy Cousins' trip was also well known. Various others I found had not succeeded, and above all, in 1967 the Ripley brothers' attempt on the Munros had not come off. Various reports tell of diet troubles and so on. Presumably they did not know the ground so well either, as when they gave in—at 230—they were heading for a greater mileage, footage and time.

So plans were made to ensure steady progress, with at least one day in seven off, food was carefully organised to give a balance of fresh, tinned and dehydrated, and I had the advantage of at least three previous ascents of all the Munros.

It took twenty-two maps (one inch) and eventually I had two notebooks with day stints outlined, plus probable days-off spots, often coinciding with hotel, hostel or such where clothes could be washed and a bit of hot water enjoyed. Telephones were marked too.

One of these notebooks was kept by my brother and his wife, David and Marina, in Dollar and planned telephone messages kept track of my progress. Failure to check in on the next schedule would start emergency procedures.

Dollar also provided a weekly box of fresh food, film, mail, etc. which was brought out by a succession of 'week-enders' who called via Dollar and marvellously kept such cryptic meetings '9 a.m. by Loch Quoich dam on Saturday,' 'Friday night at Corrour Bothy.' This element of always having a schedule to keep was both useful, forcing on the issue when the flesh was weak, and infuriating, a shackle to the spirit when it fain would linger. (Far more often the latter). Time and time again the beautiful spots pleaded for longer acquaintance. I had two mottoes by the end. 'Push' and 'Tomorrow might be worse.' In many ways I was a slave to the very things I resented: telephones and motor cars.

The second motto was often true: July gave nineteen days of increasingly foul weather, till on Conival's Pinnacle Ridge I had the unique experience of being lifted by the wind off *all* the holds while climbing up a chimney. Seldom have I been high in such appalling conditions. My companion turned back even, muttering something about one being enough for a sacrifice. The other extreme was April's twenty-three dry days: fifty-five Munro summits before one obscured. (Expensive in film—I took a thousand slides before losing the wee Rollei on Alligin).

Basic weight lies in rucksack, tent, stove and sleeping bag—the rest is largely determined by personal choice. Having a rheumatic shoulder and an arthritic hip I have to pare down drastically. My burden was never ever as much as 30 lbs. and usually only about 24. The Tiso sack I've used happily for ten years all over the globe. It's comfy and can be slept on or in. Davie Challis of Tulloch Mountaincraft provided a superb 3½ lb. nylon tent which really seems to have cracked problems of condensation, etc. I was never damp and with camps over 3000 ft. and some real storms, it could hardly be bettered. For cooking I used a Camping Gaz 120, as I had one and they were clean, easy and no danger of contaminating spills. Refills were easily stored or carried. I also used a Meta Stove periodically but for long use it is a fiddle and the new stands are uselessly weak. In Knoydart I ran out of Gaz and had two days cooking on messy firelighters—all the shop could provide, though it had a good selection of wines! Black's Nordic sleeping bag at 4 lbs. was my heaviest item but satisfactory. In addition, I used a two-pint billy and a spoon, and had a squashy gallon container which meant I could stay in the tent (and forget rain and midges for the night) and one plastic jar for honey. All other things were carried in double poly bags. Finance and availability as much as desire dictated gear really.

A party at home in early February had all the 'week-enders' and others busy breaking down things into 2/3 day one-man size pokes, and then my mother and I spent days parcelling them up. Depot labels would be scattered round the house, then a box of sugar pokes be lugged round, then meats, then candles, maps—all the possible items for each varying parcel. I never want to tie another parcel in my life! There were forty-two of them. Three tours by car delivered them and checked odd route points, telephones, etc. What a variety of people I met, what welcomes to the stranger at the door holding a parcel (try it in Ulster). Some professions I recall: banker (Jim Donaldson), sailing school director (Clive Freshwater), Y.H. wardens (several), foresters, farmers, campside manager, shop-keeper, roadman, outdoor centre folk (Dave Challis, Tony Montgomery), hoteliers, toymaker (Charlie Rose), gamekeepers, teachers, doctor (Catherine MacInnes), railwayman, shepherds . . .

Barclay Fraser and Robert Elton were other S.M.C. helpers. Barclay sped me over the Lui hills and Robert went dashing off to Crete after dining at Strathyre. Ann Winning of the L.S.C.C. came twice and stalwarts from our local Braes o' Fife M.C. helped the rest: Ian and Mary McLeod (who landed a rescue in the Cairngorms), Ian Mitchell (who had money stolen from his car at Glen Dessary!), George Luke (Nevis), Bob Binnie and Lorna Marsh (bikini days on Ben More, Mull, a deluge in Dalwhinnie and midges at Loch Quoich. There was also John Lawton from Australia and Charles Knowles, who with Donald Mill and myself spent March in the Polish Tatras, a trip which at least meant some fitness at the start. Charles came and sat for two days in the C.I.C. while the snow fell: the only days stormed off, though to be fair, two of my twelve 'compulsory rest days' would have been as well.

Ten Munros in a day on the Mamores was the most ever and 15½ hours from Glen Affric Y.H. to Strathfarrar over the Lapaichs the longest. Sixty-two nights were spent under canvas and ten in huts while ten bothies and ten hostels were used. Seven hotels doubled the nights I've ever had in such doubtful comfort! The daily average worked out at about 4000 ft. and 14½ mls. (Sandy Cousins' 3500 ft. and 15 mls.) and the average for a Munro is 1500 ft. and 4 mls. I had two hundred and thirteen clear summits—unusually high due to April's run. I was alone on all but twelve hill days, met or saw people on forty-four peaks (inevitable at weekends until well into June). May alone gave one hundred and five summits. The one hundred and twelve days (exactly the estimate) ran from April 4 to July 24.

The route can be hinted at generally by the following summary: Mull, Cruachan, Glencoe, Achalladair, Lyon, Lochay, Lui, Cobbler, Strathyre, Chonzie, Lyon, Ghlo, Keen, Braemar, Avon to Feshie, A9, Alder, Mamores, Nevis, Treig, Bealach Dubh, Monaidh Liath,

Mheagaidh, Lochy, Gulvain, Knoydart, Quoich, Glenelg, Cuillins, Shiel, Affric, Loch Monar, Torridon, Sheneval, Fannichs, Wyvis, Deargs, Loch Shin, Klibreck, Hope.

A day-to-day account would fill a book—something I hope is happening by the time this sneaks out in the new monsoon season. So that can keep. In it too I hope to give a bit of the history of the infectious foot disease of Munro-itis; so this is very much a statistical account. A. E. Robertson was once asked why he should want to climb every hill, 'no one has ever kissed every lamp-post in Princes Street.' A. E. confessed that he had never looked at it in that profane light and that for many years he had very much wanted to kiss every summit in the historic Tables. It is an old S.M.C. custom anyway: of the first two dozen at least fifteen were S.M.C. and does not this ultramontane journal still keep these salvationist statistics? But back to the scoring.

Loch/Ben Lomond saw a canoe used: Inveruglas to Rowchoish to Inverarnan (where the renewed hotel welcomes hillmen again). A cycle helped for A9, Oban, Skye and north. Legally it's an 'aid to pedestrianism' though I doubt the definition having had contrary winds every time and being ditched three times by juggernauts on the A9. The rule of being entirely self-propelled was kept throughout.

On remoter summits I left a questionnaire when I remembered and asked over twenty of these have come back showing all but one using cars as transport.

This I'm sure accounts much for the popularity of Munro-bagging. The remoter the Munro the fewer summits the person was likely to have left to do—i.e. the really remote areas are penetrated only of necessity or by those who love loneliness for itself; the majority like the thrall of car it seems! Most forms were found the following weekend showing it is very much a weekend sport—until mid-June. Only then did I start to meet people mid-week at all. The further north and west, the usage drops steadily, with exceptions (e.g. the western Fannichs, because of the Smiddy). Ages ranged from eighteen to sixty-two with peaks at twenty-three and thirty and forty-two. Annual days on the hills came in two ranges: 'once a month' weekenders and 'every' weekenders.

The question 'Are you using a car/public transport?' had one odd answer. 'No, a ship.' This was the *Captain Scott* again.

April's fine spell was enervating but allowed a good push to clear out below a line joining L. Leven, L. Lyon and L. Tay. Once across the A9 the country is very easy (even Braemar is c. 1000 ft.). Lochaber and back was fun, entirely using bothies, lots of snow and friends for parts of it. Laggan was endlessly wet but crossing the Great Glen gave a boost as well as being over the half way.

The only serious 'low' was in the upper Glen Dessary when a real 'helm o' weat' caught me and with little food, lost tent pegs, an unpleasant emergency camp became essential. Really nasty. However strawberries and cream at Camusrory (and tent pegs too) sorted that out.

In Skye it cleared, to start a good ten day spell which only broke—for good—at Achnashellach Hostel. By then it was only a matter of time, barring accidents. The champagne on Hope was almost incidental, a very low-key ending. Having lived so long with it, it had become a routine, loved and relaxed, and to stop almost unthinkable.

An excellent discipline for my choleric nature, *having* to progress slowly and steadily and I'm sure a long-term blessing. (I can even face the waiting Income Tax Return with less horror than usual).

A few more notes on equipment may interest.

I wore out two pairs of already comfy boots (Sportiva). Heels at times gave sore tendons from bruising. Norwegian stockings were excellent, swopped to a new pair half way 'because they were there.' Next came string pants and old flannels or breeches. (I had a kilt waiting at Milehouse but had thinned beyond its tightest buckling!). On top an appropriate combination from a thick-long-sleeved Damart vest (keeps back dry and can be worn alone on hot days), thin shirt and thin Shetland pullover. A brimmed hat, two hankies, sheet liner, and either long johns or nylon swimming shorts completed the outfit.

A plastic *junk box* contained: First Aid (some bandages, plasters, aspirin, half tube Savlon, vitamin pills), two safety pins, wee scissors, pencil stub, paper, stamps, lettercards, f.p., jiffy can opener, coins for phones, two needles, thread and wool, biro and log book (I wrote 40,000 words en route), toilet paper, odd cordage, toothbrush, S.Y.H.A. card, half tube midge cream, bit of pan scourer.

Camera (7 oz. baby Rollei) and film(s), paperback reading, watch, comb, map and compass—and I think that is every jot and tittle. Some years back I'd made a list on a similar type of trip of what I had with me, then checked what was not used and pared away subsequently to a practical minimum. I lacked nothing vital. I had one big complaint.

There was never enough time!

The walking could last ten/twelve hours and by the time simple but often long meals were eaten and the day's log filled in, it was time to sleep.

It was a simple existence, often so close to nature it crawled about one a bit. (Drain a carton of milk and spit out the overnight big black slug).

It was a hectic return home, caught by press and B.B.C. The local press gave it front page headlines: between a beauty queen and a rape case. Later a chat programme with Tom Weir on the radio.

Looking back it struck me again (having missed the Alps) that we in Scotland have a landscape unique, fragile, and magnificent—in a European context. It is just a pity we do not have the overall political foresight and leadership to ensure its best survival. In this restless world the wilderness is valuable beyond price.

Marvellous peace to lie at dawn listening to a deer browsing, or the sandpiper call, to sup breakfast in bed and be off in the gold of day. The sweep of days nested in the sweep of the seasons. Snow fell and snows vanished away. Purple saxifrage flowered at the start and purple heather at the end. The arrivals of April. The clarion chorus of May. The speckled fawns of June. The last calling cuckoo of July.

What is time? What is truth? Can we know reality recrudescant?

GAMBLERS ATOP EDEN

Confusion to the ignorant but randomness
Is regular enough for those who climb in darkness
Carefully among poised blocks,
Avalanches held in check,
Plotting the geometry of a disembowelled mountain.

Gide, who thought all rocks demolished art and mountain
Climbers merely coupled with their minds' disorder,
Surely should have guessed that plans
Discriminative as his own
Composed predictable collapse into a ladder

Reaching, at dawn, the rarer apices; and rather
Should have stayed to celebrate
Axes that the sun ignites
Upon such imminence. And might have stayed to praise
Their consummate return, despite the rising day's

Goaded dissolution, moving down that maze
Perfecting their coincidence,
Mastering the crude mischances
Set by a brute labyrinth. Arrogant ahead
Through trembling masonry runs Ariadne's thread.

G.J.F.D.

THE CRAGGIE

By G. J. F. Dutton

JUST on the corner, the wheel came off. Fortunately, it was a right-hand corner and an off-side wheel. I was sitting in the front and saw it appear in the headlamp beams, skipping joyfully in its new freedom. Speechless, I grabbed the Doctor's* shoulder, and pointed.

'Ah, a wheel,' he said.

I curled myself up in the old nylon sling which served as safety belt, and watched fascinatedly through the fingers shielding my face.

Imperturbably, we slowed down, bumped along the grass verge and clomped to a halt. The wheel waved us goodbye and leapt into a sitka plantation. The Doctor opened his door and got out.

'Extraordinary. Rear wheel. Never happened before. Handled very well, considering it's i.r.s.' He rummaged in a door pocket, then he went off by torchlight to retrieve the errant accessory.

In grateful obscenity from the back seat the Apprentice voiced his admiration. We both agreed the Doctor was no more nerve-racking to his passengers on three wheels than on four.

Before he returned, bowling his wheel, we had confirmed that the threads had stripped. We were stuck on a wet Saturday night in late October, halfway to our goal.

Our goal was a kindred club hut below a well-known and easy ridge. We were to scramble up the ridge and down again; a mere excuse for a spirituous weekend to celebrate the Doctor's achievement and our own survival—for the previous weekend we had taken him up his first V.S. An experience cathartic for us—even for the iron-nerved Apprentice, who as usual led—but apparently much enjoyed by our medical companion. I need not describe it here.

We were stuck. We had no tent, and even the Doctor's old Mercedes could not sleep three when one of them was his own six feet two. We inspected the map.

'Here's the road, the plantation. Ah!' He gave a glad cry, thumped his thigh with the torch. The light went out. 'We're just by Kindraiglet! What luck!'

The luck turned out to be that Kindraiglet was a cottage on his brother-in-law's estate. It was occupied by his brother-in-law's shepherd. 'An excellent man, MacPhedran. He'll be delighted to put us up. Remarkable luck. And—yes—I'll give you a treat tomorrow.' He chuckled ominously as he wrestled out his rucksack.

* Readers not familiar with the Doctor and his grotesque associates may care to know that they are creatures of Dr Dutton's diseased imagination (cf. *S.M.C.J.*, xxix, 5-8, xxx, 232-242). Noone, however, need doubt the existence of *The Craggie*!—HON. ED.

Photo: R. N. Campbell

Opposite—Trilleachan Slabs.

Climbers can be seen on Spartan Slab and on the Moustache





Two hours later we were admitted by a jovial MacPhedran. 'Car broke down, just on the road below,' explained the Doctor, dismissing our purgatorial sojourn in drenching 20-foot sitka spruce—the prickliest stage of growth—looking for the Kindraiglet track. ('Can't be far off; know it well; pity these trees are so high; otherwise my torch would easily pick it out').

We dried, feasted, drank and sang. MacPhedran fiddled with gusto. When I fell asleep the Doctor and he were trying to explain to each other what went wrong with Scott Skinner.

The morning was fine, though cold and dripping. After cooking a late breakfast (MacPhedran was long on the hill) the Doctor referred again to his Treat.

'It was damn good of you to take me up *Constipation* last weekend. I'd never have cared to go alone. Wouldn't have missed it for the world. Remarkable how straightforward those routes are when you rub noses on 'em. Well, here's one for you two. Used to stay here years ago. Always went on The Craggie, as we called it. A jolly nice little climb, quite different from *Constipation*. You'll like the change.'

So it was to be The Craggie. We had brought the minimum of equipment—only a 60-foot line and the odd assortment of ironware inseparable from the Apprentice (he clinked perceptibly even in Daddy McKay's). But we were assured The Craggie would require none of it. 'Used to go on The Craggie by myself—just boots. Balance is all you need—and an eye for a good line.'

He led out of the door. The Apprentice and I, heavy-headed, tried to imagine the amorous rugosities of warm gabbro. We splashed up through the birches.

Disconcertingly soon, he stopped. 'There she is!' he announced. We peered past him at a clearing in the scrub. Out there, moss and slime, so long beneath our feet, reared themselves up to a sheer three hundred evil feet. The upper rim was fanged in black, and black rock gleamed hungrily at us through a thousand green and dripping moustachios.

'Wonderful view from the top,' he said. Then: 'Good Lord, there *she* is!'

'Who, now?' asked the Apprentice, sourly. His pallor, I noted, was not all attributable to the night before.

'Why, Aggie. Aggie McHattie. Up there, on the left. The old girl in tweeds. See her? Just by that big wet slab. I *thought* I heard a car early on.'

I found the Apprentice's expression interesting. Then I turned again to the extraordinary sight. The Doctor lowered his Leitz Trinovids and lent them to me. I saw, bang in the middle of the face, a square figure in tweed jacket and skirt, thick socks, nailed

Photo: D. J. Bennet

Opposite—Pitch Two on Cioch Nose, Sgùrr a' Chaorachain,
Iain MacLeod climbing

shoes, frizzy grey hair and gold spectacles. I saw it standing on a line of slime prising out something from the oozing slab. I saw it lift up the something, examine it, and throw it away. I swore I could hear the 'Pshaw!'

'Hallo' roared the Doctor. 'Allo, allo, allo,' roared back The Craggie, moistly and throatily. The figure looked round, surveyed us. A clear precise voice.

'Good morning, Doctor. I shan't be long. There's not very much here.' Then it returned to its prising, further along the line of slime.

'Miss Agnes McHattie,' explained the Doctor. 'Remarkable woman. Famous lichenologist and moss-classifier; not really Ferns, but does take a look or two at the *Ophioglossaceae*. Used to be my leader on lots of expeditions.'

The Apprentice declined the binoculars. Also, he seemed to be having difficulty in swallowing.

We squelched up to the foot of The Craggie. We stopped below a vertical pillar of green treacle. It wet my elbow.

'*Central Buttress Direct*' said the Doctor. 'A good line on to the Main Face. I'll lead and show you the way at first; although it's obvious enough. Glad I brought trikes; there's a slippery bit near the top.'

He crouched, adopted a curious kind of dog-paddle, and levitated uncannily. He paused and settled on a heap of watercress or similar vegetation twenty feet up. 'Great to be back again. Lost youth and all that. Come on up, there's acres on this stance.' As he spoke, a large plateful of cress smacked down wetly at my feet. Politely, the Apprentice waved me on. Kindly, he gave me the rope.

'Yes, we may need the rope later on,' the Doctor advised. 'It gets harder in places if you're in vibrams. They're jolly treacherous anywhere off those Trade Routes of yours.'

I agreed. It was impossible even to leave the ground with them. I only succeeded by locking each knee alternately in the soaking groove and spooning heaps of green porridge with both hands to keep me upright. I was not ashamed to take the Doctor's bony grip. I was dragged up, and thankfully clutched a long green stem.

'Ho! Watch that! It's *Lycopodium inundatum*, a mere clubmoss. No root at all. Dangerous. *Cryptogamma crispa*'s a good handhold. Here's one. Ah, there's *Luzula*—even better. You've got to know your mountains, in a place like this!'

I was in terror lest I should have to offer the Apprentice the rope. But up he came, seaweed in his hair.

The watercress was definitely crowded, and raring to go. So the Doctor continued. I instructed my companion in the deficiencies of *Lycopodium* and the relative security of *Cryptogamma*. He muttered darkly, still clutching the piton with which he had clawed his way up.

The cress hiccupped vertiginously. I grabbed several stems, pressed kneecaps into a Gorgon's head of bryophytes. The Apprentice said he was getting the hell out of here and boldly struck off leftward into a succession of roofs, mere vertical or overhanging rock relatively free of photosynthetic organisms and their less ambitious brethren. He panted and swore. Roots and fragments fell. I patted and reassured my cress.

A clear voice rang out from below and further left.

'What's that boy *doing* up there? He'll fall off. Quite pointless. There's nothing but *Hylocomium squarrosum* in that groove. I looked very carefully this morning.'

The Doctor was above me. I glimpsed his toothed toes projecting from an upper moustache. They dripped past my face.

'It's all right, Aggie,' he said. 'We're just up enjoying ourselves. But can we help *you* at all?'

Silence. Then: 'Ah, Doctor, if you would be good enough to send your Boy down here' (mercifully inarticulate splutters from the left) 'I could use him very well just now.'

My companions are both gentlemen. The Doctor continued gazing at the view. The Apprentice clambered and slithered down to Miss McHattie's line of slime.

She nodded, and beckoned him. 'Carefully, now. Just stand here. Oh, you've got boots. *Rubber* boots. How foolish. Should be nailed. And should be *shoes*—for proper flexion on small ledges. But I expect you've Weak Ankles. That's why most people have to wear boots. You should walk more. Now stand carefully there, and hold on to this loose piece of rock here and this clump of *Cystopteris*. CYSTOPTERIS! Not *Cephalozia*! That's right. Bend a little, for I'm going to have to step on to your back, I'm afraid. We'll never reach that *Stereocaulon* otherwise. Very glad you've come. I have a meeting tonight in Edinburgh, and I really must go down after this.'

The Apprentice described graphically afterwards the weight of the old battleship, and displayed the variegated indentations of triple hobs and muggers trodden across his vertebrae.

She poked away at a shiny clump with her trowel, fretting with annoyance. The Apprentice gingerly let go *Cystopteris*, tapped her shoe and offered up his piton. She tried it. Her comments were punctuated by chipping.

'H'm, useful tool. Better than anything I've brought, for this job, I must say. Where did you get it? *Who*? A most curious name. Never heard of him. A great number of' (continuous chipping) 'odd persons have taken advantage of the recent interest in lichenology. Especially since Toshpatrick-Gilchrist cleaned up all the *Lecidea alpestris* variants on Ben A'an. Winter forms, too. *That* made

headlines. Curious name, Fifo. An immigrant, no doubt. An opportunist. He won't last, poor fellow. I get all my ironware from Pflanzhanger of Munich. Still, it's very useful' (renewed chipping) 'I particularly like the hole in the handle; one could string them on to one's belt. Very handy. I'll write old Pflanzhanger himself about it. Quite time these continentals caught up on Edinburgh firms.'

Miss McHattie scraped down her spoil, lifted her spectacles, examined it, and nodded approvingly. She handed the Apprentice a mucilaginous clot. 'Hold this, young fellow,' she said '*Stereocaulon* AND *Cerania vermicularis*, an aberrant type.' She hauled at a cord, and a haversack rose from the depths behind her. The Apprentice backed in astonishment. She eyed him severely. 'Be careful, or you'll slip. That would never do. It's the first record west of Clova at this height.' She stuffed the desirable morsels into a small tube, clapped it into her haversack, and began to shuffle rapidly towards a grassy rake. Then she stopped, smiled meaningly, pulled a small flask from a voluminous pocket, poured out a generous capful of spirit and bade the Apprentice quaff. He quaffed, appreciatively. He rubbed his eyes. She screwed the flask back into her tweeds.

'Well, thank you. I expect the Doctor is teaching you to climb. A dangerous pastime, I always think. But the Doctor is an incurable Romantic. He indulges a veritable passion for the more vascular plants. I confess I outgrew the Angiosperms when I was a mere girl; we were positively stuffed with them at school. The Doctor, I fear, is more Byzantine. However, mind you listen to what he tells you, and don't fall off. Goodbye.' And rapidly she handed herself downwards out of sight. Before vanishing, she paused and looked up. 'Goodbye, Doctor,' she roared; and the cress trembled.

'Remarkable woman,' mused the Doctor, turning again to the wall. 'Had an entire liverwort subspecies named after her—*Dicronodontium uncinatum Mchattii*; should have been a genus—*Agnesia*.' He appeared greatly amused by this, and chucklings punctuated the falling moss.

We assembled beneath the final pitch, a quite vertical water-meadow. Our stance was the usual loose-stoppered and quavering cold-water-bottle. 'This is tricky. We *could* go down, if you like.' Below us the cliff dropped its 250 feet to the bottom boulders—which, characteristically, were the only bare rocks at The Craggie. They leered knowingly. Chorally, we shuddered and said no. 'The rock's quite smooth underneath, but the vegetation's sound as a bell, provided you use the insides of your arms and legs. Don't of course use your feet, or try to kick. A pity you don't wear tweed. Nylon slides off everything. Most unsatisfactory.'

He smiled paternally, dived upwards and swam rapidly out of sight. We had persuaded him to take the 60-foot line, just in case.

When it was my turn I got no further than halfway. I trod water breathlessly. Below me a great sodden wig of *Plagiothecium* peeled off and smacked on the anxious upturned face of the Apprentice. He reappeared, spluttering, but still adherent.

'Ha, I told you it was safer than *Constipation*,' cried the Doctor encouragingly, as from a boat, 'if that had been rock, all your helmets wouldn't have stopped it!'

Meanwhile, the current was washing me backwards. Towards the new black shiny rock. I called, almost for help. The Doctor swiftly knotted the line to a stem and threw me down the loose end.

'Might need a fixed rope, first time up' he agreed.

By grabbing and changing from crawl to butterfly, I reached him on his mouldering rugosity. As I looked up, a wet jelly licked my face. I spat it out.

'Ha, *Hirneola auricula-judae*—Jew's-ear fungus.' It encircled my stem. The Doctor calmed me.

'No, it doesn't attack the roots. The stem's quite sound low down where the rope is. It's rowan—fine strong safe rooting system—pliable cortex. Now if it had been ash—' he shook his head expressively. 'Many a good climber's been let down badly by young ash. Fine in an ice-axe. But not on the hoof.'

Above us a fairly dry ten feet led to the top. It was bulging with good holds such as wild rose, broom and birch seedlings. 'Never trust heather,' admonished the Doctor, as we turned to go, 'all right in ropes, but—'

'Hi,' from below. We had forgotten the Apprentice. The Doctor gave me a pebble. I placed it under my boot as support, leaned out and from my root and looked down.

The Apprentice was in trouble. My last swim had kicked away every hypnaceous deception. Between us lay a black slab, wrinkling only with water.

The Doctor looked. 'No go in vibrams,' he said. 'Try it in socks. One pair only, mind. Tie your boots round your neck, out of the way. Or to the end of the rope; but they'll get wet there.'

Bitterly, the Apprentice, on his foot-square bath-mat, removed his boots and socks. Foolishly, he slung them round his neck (he always loathed walking down in wet boots). He hauled, unashamedly upon the line. The Doctor, myself, and the root, resisted manfully.

I need not recount the inevitable. The slip on one sodden toe, the twist, the grab on the line with both hands, the clatter of falling boots, the flutter of socks. The appalling and—considering his uncertain position—imprudently blasphemous oaths from the sufferer. We landed him at last. The Doctor, in some ways quite sensitive, moved up to let him on. I inculcated the botanical rudiments necessary for the last few feet.

The Doctor sat on the cliff top, smoking his pipe.

'Pity about the boots' he said. 'Rather a lot of scree on the way down to them—Damned uncomfortable. Could go back the same way, but I don't like taking *two* inexperienced chaps down, and we'd better stick together. It's not hard, but it's not easy. Although I grant you it's not a stiff climb like *Constipation*. Just as well, when you go losing your boots. Bad technique that; hope Aggie didn't see us.'

His soliloquy was interrupted by the Apprentice vividly explaining why, in his judgment, our present route should be termed *Diarrhoea*.

'No, it's *Central Buttress Direct*,' said the Doctor. 'A good classical name. Not in the least subjective. And look at that view. There's Schiehallion—unusual from this side. We'll get you down all right. Piggyback, if necessary. Might even meet with old MacPhedran. He humphs yowes about all day. Remarkably tough. He's docked and castrated three hundred lambs in a morning. He'll take care of you all right. And there—look over there—there's Lancet Edge. Wonderful in the sun.'

RELUCTANT ZERO

By Ted Maden

ON a day in January, which was obviously great for walking, but nasty and thawing for climbing, my proposer Reg and I forwent a great walk for a nasty wet climb up the Summit Innards of Stob Gabhar. I led up thin shaky ice with thin shaking muscles. Thereupon I thought, I have done my best, a man can do no more, I am in any case past it, too old, over the hill, I shall close this feeble list of Scottish winter climbs and henceforth stick to Munros. As it happened I then withdrew totally for several weeks into the world of molecular biology.

Suddenly the telephone rang. It was Crocket, loud and terrifying. Crocket was one of my seconders so I could not easily say no. Thus next Saturday at the compromise hour of 8 a.m. I met him at St. Enoch's for the first weekend in March.

The sky was blue and the ice was good on the Clyde expressway, as was indicated by a car which had crunched into the crash barrier in an impressive diagonal orientation. Then at last I experienced my first perfect winter climbing. Crowberry Gully on Saturday, S.C. and Twisting on Sunday. Snow-ice, weather, views were excellent, and I was in good hands. I needed to be. During my weeks among the molecules I had forgotten how to walk uphill.

Damn Crocket again. Damn phone again. 'Could I manage Aonach Eagach by moonlight on Friday night?' Previously I had recklessly suggested this expedition, after a pint of two. Now the bluff was called. Whispers of doubt murmured inwardly as we set off up the hill and into the shadows. Then on top it began to make sense. Ken produced a flask of the right stuff and it was a fantastic night. Most of the snow had disappeared from the ridge, so that technically we had it easy. This was good, as a bitterly cold east wind was blowing and delays would have been uncomfortable. We scrambled along the ridge, mostly moving together, belaying occasional pitches. We felt a supreme sense of isolation, poised in the pale moonlight above deep inky shadows, while across the gulf the Bidean corries gleamed. Clouds chased past, and at one of the gaps in the ridge we encountered a fleeting nocturnal Brocken. On Sgòr nam Fiannaidh we were enveloped by mist, wind-torn, chill, spectral. On the descent I looked back and saw a slender waterfall arching from bright moonlight into the deep shadow of some mysterious chasm. Up on the ridge I had learnt to screech the Scottish way.

Soon afterwards I received a thumbs up letter from the management. Now I could relax like those brave men and true who met once a year at Club dinners to sing about their big hobnailers.

But first there was the matter of the March Nevis meet. I was booked in with Reg and had promised a ride to Ken and Chris. At the last moment Reg was obliged to cancel but now I had to go anyway because of Ken and Chris. Ken said I would be all right as Colin Stead would be there without a mate, and Colin was needing a second for Zero. Zero! Appalling prospect. I was speechless for the rest of the journey up.

We were last at the dam, and after nocturnal stumblings I was last at the hut, which was overbooked by one. That king of hutwardens was still awake, however, and let me rummage for spare mattresses in the box below his bed. Colin was there too, but he seemed to have company after all; this I deduced from the fact that he was talking. If he had come alone I imagined that he would be gazing into the infinite like Bonatti on a bivouac.

The lights went out and I began to scheme. A chill wind was gusting down the glen, so that possibly the weather would break. If that failed I would lie low until the hard teams had set off, and then perhaps the hutwarden's team would take me up something reasonable. If that also failed I could pick off one or two obscure Tops which had so far eluded me. I fell into an uneasy slumber. Uneasy? Was it the wind outside or a troubled conscience inside? Were these the thoughts that a new member should be thinking? More to the point, might something go wrong with the scheme? An alarm went off. The door grated. More gusts of wind. Seemed it was

fine though. Breakfast smells. Boots clumping. Lie low. They'd nearly all gone.

'Ted, I hear you've no-one to climb with.'

It was Colin. He had stepped outside, gear and all, to solo something, when Ken had told him I was alone. Colin was also alone; last night's rationalization had been wrong. Colin's manner is superficially different from Ken's, quietly spoken (I thought I'd get that in), but equally compelling. I gibbered about grade threes, but his next three words sealed my fate.

'Fine day. Zero.'

Just like that. Quiet, calm, devastating. I forced down a butty bolus and followed him out of the hut, like one enthralled.

Came my first full winter view of the Orion-Zero amphitheatre. Gone were the days of the virgin cirque, of the late shambolic starts by the legendary few with borrowed ropes and the hut poker. But the magic must surely be reborn each winter, and today the cirque was white from top to corrie. The modern classics indeed looked possible, and the teams were starting up them. Ken was singing his way up the second pitch of Zero. Chris dropped an ice screw,

'Catch, Ted!'

I was several hundred feet down the slope. Rashly, I stepped across into the line of fire of the rapidly accelerating screw. Busy moments followed. I deflected the screw with my free gloved hand onto my nose, which was grazed, and whence the screw bounced onto the snowslope. I grabbed instinctively with my other hand, dropping my axe. Slowly, sickeningly the axe gathered speed down the long, long slope. Then, miraculously it stopped, the pick catching in the not quite frozen snow. Breathholdingly I tiptoed down and rescued it before it could change its mind. Soon afterwards Ken dropped a sling. I told him what he could do about it.

Zero Gully is now fairly popular as such climbs go, but still serious (SERIOUS, the McInnes guidebook goes so far as to say). On this occasion the first pitch was well banked up (Colin explained), but what remained gave steep, strenuous front pointing. If it kept up like this I might not make it. But I said nothing on reaching Colin at a foothold stance. I was still under his thrall. Luckily it did not keep up like this. A steep scoop slanted up and left to where Ken had done his juggling act, then a right traverse led hard back into the line of the gully. It was technical but with occasional rests between the moves. I followed, the complete novice. I began to realise that this winter climbing game is possible, given technique and stamina; that I was not necessarily heading for certain death.

I led the next short, easy pitch, thereby boosting morale. I belayed to a deadman and a doubtful screw below the big pitch four.

I was glad to be belaying Colin and not a bunch of Sassenachs, or should I say fellow countrymen, who had now joined the fray and were battling their way up below. Most of the big pitch above was on steep snow-ice with three short vertical sections bulging at intervals, the first bulge being about thirty feet up. Here Colin paused to place a screw and to look around. This he did in the careful manner of one encountering a hard move. There was no way round, however, and in due course he cracked the bulge with precision and confidence and the rope ran up and out. When my turn came I was impressed, but we needn't go into the details. One or two old steps in the bulge, a groping reach with the axe, in the other hand the wrong kind of hammer, which I could not trust for vertical front pointing . . . 'Keep it tight.' I crawled over the bulge but I certainly could not have led it.

I peered down for a brief exchange with my fellow countrymen, who were experiencing difficulties on pitch two. I asked whether they were fit. The cheek of it. The answer, however, was no. Long afterwards we saw them finishing out in the dusk.

Meanwhile I reached Colin above the big pitch and continued up good snow and ice to a minor bulge, which I led after careful inspection. I was learning. From the stance I exchanged greetings with Neil Quinn who, with Lang, was making a superb ascent of Slav Route. Colin led through and up some narrows. Then we were racing up the upper slopes. Conditions were superb. Càrn Mór Dearg was falling away. We were moving together with deadman runners. A few feet to go. No cornice. Sunshine. Look, Steall waterfall!

It was soon after mid-day on one of those ecstatically perfect, sparkling, blue and white, crystal clear brilliant days when winter is turning to spring. We stared across the Mamores and paused for a bite and wandered around the plateau a bit and then eventually down to the Càrn Mór Dearg arête. I continued round this and up towards Càrn Mór Dearg. Tiredness struck on the upper slopes. I flopped down by the cairn and ate some chocolate and swivelled my gaze from Ben Nevis and Zero gully around the Mamores to the Aonachs and away into the sparkling distance.

BULLFIGHTING IN ARRAN

By John Mackenzie

ROUND the bend went Barry and I into arrow-straight Glen Rosa—an arrow tipped by Cir Mhór's microscopic wedge. From there it hardly seems worth bothering with, but we stumbled on. We stumbled, not just because our sacks were filled with the customary medals, badges of station, ceremonial headgear and the like, but because Glen Rosa's path belies its straightness: it winds through seas of bogs, a latter-day Pilgrim's Progress where many Sloughs of Despond await the careless. That day it claimed its tithe of victims, too. Aside from the normal complement of eccentric cyclists and small whistling boys there were other heavy-laden climbers, directing clenched faces towards Cir Mhór's South Ridge as they ploughed through the mires.

'Ah!' we said superciliously, 'Classic Route Mania.'

But we were going there too, to climb the hackneyed Ridge. Up we thronged, trying hard to look superior and blasé.

'Of course, the only technically difficult thing is putting in and taking out all these unnecessary nuts at the Y-crack.' Oh, yes, weren't we the ones.

Then we climbed the Rosetta Stone, like proper little tourists, descending on all fives and leaving trails of powdered fingernails, more Ogham than Hieroglyphic. Finally we sat on the sharp summit, watching a patchy sky become overcast, feeling a cold wind grow colder. The day was somehow incomplete

After Egypt came Crete, so we made a bee-line for the Minotaur, threading the tottering blocks and filthy chimneys of Pinnacle Gully and fetching up below a repellent crack. Rain now dribbled from a uniform grey sky and a wind got up to strike mournful chords from every nook and cranny. The Minotaur looked about as approachable as a long-starved Jabberwock. To begin with there was a nasty overhanging section: I like nasty overhanging sections, so up I went. Soon I was back at the beginning again, staring at two handfuls of rotten granite—there was no doubt of it, the Minotaur was showing a deal of promise. I went up again, more cautiously this time, and continued wedging up the crack, quite tight in places, but now on the right side of vertical.

The belay ledge took the form of a steeply-sloping deposit of loose earth. The peg belay was a connoisseur's collecting piece. Plainly, 1958 had not been a good year for pitons, so I planted a healthier specimen alongside. Soon I was watching Barry making

strange can-can motions in an attempt to establish a lodgement in the rounded, overhanging crack above. Time after time he flopped back like a tired cork from a bottle. Losing patience, I rammed him firmly into the crack with my shoulder. Now, there were some small signs of progress until my belay ledge disappeared, subsiding gently down the first pitch and leaving me hanging from the peg. All this served to reinforce our growing opinion that, after years of searching, we had at last met that Acme of Awfulness: A True Classic.

Terrible struggles now ensued above me, accompanied by piteous cries of complaint against the Minotaur (for being so brutally difficult), against me (for inducing him to climb it—for such is the falsifying power of hindsight) and against Scotland (for not being his beloved Wales, which has no such vile climbs on its pleasant crags). A loss for Wales, evidently. The treacherous wretch. Eventually the crack gobbled him up, all but his kicking legs and feeble oaths. He stuck there for a while (fixing a runner, he said, as if he could have *managed* to fall off). A long while. The sky turned even greyer and the wind began to whistle triumphantly through the crack. But at last the legs disappeared and a head emerged, mercifully higher up, and soon the rest of him wobbled into view on the left bounding rib. Pale and shaking, beyond all consideration, he sent down thundering showers of rotten granite as he flapped weakly up the upper chimney. When all this commotion ceased and the fearsome sounds of his wracked breathing died down I was enjoined to proceed with care. 'Don't fall off,' he gasped, 'I haven't the strength to hold you.'

Thus encouraged, I examined the crack. It was about ten inches wide, flared, and overhanging for the first twenty feet or so. No hold inside offered help and the first chockstone was fifteen feet above. Deep in its recesses I could see green aquatic plants, watercress and colonies of moss. The first difficulty was getting to the chockstone, a difficulty greatly exacerbated by the contents of my rucksack, now securely spread about my person in glittering array. 'Slim bodies only,' says the guidebook: I am slim, but now resembled the Michelin Man, in lights. So, an ironmonger's shop in the Bull, I scratched, scraped, squealed and clattered towards the stone, a progress marked by deep bright grooves etched on rock and ribcage. At the chockstone I managed to remove Barry's runner but could move myself no higher: the solution seemed to involve moving out and turning round. The walls here were a little further apart, perhaps a foot, but this didn't seem to help much. Progress here was measured in inches: breathe in and you stuck, breathe out and you lost those precious few inches it took you so long to gain. After a time I found myself above the chockstone. Now I had to come out of the chimney and climb onto the rib on its left. Of course, I was facing right.

Forty minutes passed; the Minotaur now gripped my helmet fast, as well as everything else. A spider, abseiling from the rocks above, looked me squarely in the eye and waved all eight legs in mockery. I wondered if this was the spirit of the great Bruce come to lend me a hand in my hour (hours!) of need. Inspired, I managed a few more inches, a few more degrees of rotation. Finally, following Bruce's lead, the move was done and I reached the rib. Bruce glared royally down from his stance on all eights before abseiling off into the murky depths below. I revelled in the open situation, a free man again, the ghastly pit beneath. The rock was gratifyingly loose: great clods of decomposing granite fairly flew down from my feet as I stumbled up to join Barry. The Bull was slain, but what a fight!

Later, much later, we turned the bend to meet the rising moon and wobbled the last weary mile to our camp. We threw the gear down and collapsed beside the tents. My wife stood over us, taking in the filth, the blood, the livid scars of battle. She eyed me with contempt.

'Where the hell have *you* been? I thought South Ridge was an old man's climb! Look at you,' she snorted.

'We've been fighting a bull.' I groaned, hoping for sympathy.

'Olé,' she said, 'Yur dinner's burnt.'

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Old Names for New

SIR—In *S.M.C.J.*, 1974, xxx, 255, F. F. Bonsall writes about the plateau top which has the name of Braeriach South Plateau in Munro's Tables. As it is one of the highest tops in Scotland, he says that it deserves a better name, and suggests that an appropriate one would be Beinn an Fhuarain or hill of the well. In many cases where a hill has no name on the map, there is in fact an old local name, and this is the case here. It is Càrn na Criche, or cairn of the march.

ADAM WATSON (Jnr.).

NEW CLIMBS

Our newly-weaned New Climbs Editor, Ian Rowe, has fled to Canada after just one year. We did not dare enrol another slave for just one year so this year's section has been handled by the departing editor, who has ruthlessly suppressed anything of dubious value, consigned new discoveries in the north and west to the Notes section and curtailed many descriptions mercilessly.

As a parting shot, we would like to deplore the shoddy workmanship involved in the creation of most contemporary route-names—any old ephemeral, private-jokey rubbish seems to satisfy the majority of contributors. It will not do. If the route is worth describing, it deserves a decent name: if you can't think of anything imaginative and apposite, have done with thought and call it *Slab and Groove*, or whatever. Our compliments to Messrs. Dinwoodie (Aberdeen), Cohen (Edinburgh) and Crocket (Glasgow), whose contributions to this section over the last few years have been models of scholarship, economy and discrimination. Our thanks to all those climbers who made trashy new climbs and had the good sense not to send them in.

OUTER ISLES

Creag Dhubh Dhibadail.—(*Unnamed*). 770 ft. Very Severe. R. Archbold & G. Cohen. 3rd July 1974.

Cohen has in fact offered a name for this excellent route but it is so weakly pretentious that we, who have passed on some pretty grisly names, cannot bear to let it go through.

The route lies up the central steep section of crag to the right of *Via Vallos* (see *S.M.C.J.*, 1971, xxix, 398 and **Notes**, this *J.*). Start at the top of a tongue of slabs reaching down towards the loch. Climb to gain the left-hand end of an obvious ramp slanting rightwards across the upper section of the crag. Follow this ramp to the top.

SKYE

Sgùrr Mhic Coinnich: Coireachan Ruadha Face.—*Mongoose*. 675 ft. Very Severe. L. G. Brown & R. G. Wilson.

Start below corner-crack 20 ft. left of *Crack of Dawn* start. Climb crack to sloping ledge, peg and nut belay (75 ft.). Climb crack and following slab to belay below big corner (75 ft.). Climb right wall of corner for 50 ft., move left into corner and follow it to thread belay under overhanging corner (130 ft.). Step down and left, then go up left arête of corner to reach twin cracks. Climb these past old peg to small stance and peg belay under the middle of three grooves, (60 ft.). Climb groove, passing two block overhangs, and overhung chimney above to belay (peg) on ledge, (140 ft.). Signs of rockfall. Continue up chimney, step left and climb a crack, (75 ft.). Climb narrow chimney and short V-corner to the ridge, (120 ft.).

RHUM

Askival: North-west Face.—*Atlantic Slab*. 350 ft. Very Difficult. S. R. Bateson & T. Little. 8th April 1974.

Seen from Atlantic Corrie there is a prominent slab running from the foot of the crag to finish slightly left of Askival's summit. The route follows this slab, starting just right of a large overhang about 100 yds. left of the start of *Atlantic Rib*.

Ruinsival: Highlander Buttress.—*Fingerless*. 130 ft. Very Severe. A. Nisbet (ldr.) & S. R. Bateson. 12th April 1974.

The prominent crack on the wall left of *Seoras*. Start 40 ft. left of *Seoras* and climb right-ward trending ledge to base of crack. Climb the crack.

ARRAN

A' Chir: Coire Daingean.—*Intruder*. 510 ft. Very Severe. B. Clarke & J. Mackenzie. 14th April 1974.

A sustained line on the buttress to the left of Gully 4. Start at cairn near gully. Climb corner and slab to traverse left and cross overlap at central point. Go up slab to flake belay in centre of buttress, (100 ft.). Go right and up curving crack in steep slab to small stance and peg belays, (50 ft.). Step up and trend left up slab to line of roofs girdling the buttress. Traverse right beneath these to obvious cracks, which follow to belays, (70 ft.). Climb slab above and traverse right beneath overlap to small niche and thread belay, (60 ft.). Climb crack and slab to traverse right below overlaps and reach flake crack. Climb this and go right to heathery stance and peg belays, (100 ft.). Climb double overlap above and slab beyond to left edge and peg belay, (50 ft.). Climb edge to overhang, traverse right and cross this strenuously. Finish by steep slab, (80 ft.).

Beinn Tarsuinn: Meadow Face.—*Brobdignag*. 640 ft. Very Severe. I. F. Duckworth, J. Frazer & W. G. Smith. April 1975 (see Arran Notes).

Start on sloping grass ledge to the right of *The Blinder*. Traverse right to small corner. Climb this and continue straight up to large grass ledge, (100 ft.). Up grassy groove to overhang. A nut was used here to rest on to place a piton runner (wet). Turn overhang on left and belay below twin cracks, (60 ft.). Climb cracks to overhang, step right to shelf below shallow chimney. Up this to belay below thin crack in wall, (60 ft.). Climb thin crack (2 pegs for aid), swing left and gain ramp. Go right then left on good holds and follow corner to belay on chockstones below small cave, (150 ft.). Easily up left, through rock arch to belay in deep hole, (40 ft.). Climb loose slab (1 peg for aid). There is a piton in place here which was used by earlier ascents to tension into *The Blinder*—this is not the one used for aid. From ledge go directly up good jamming crack and exit right to spacious stance, (70 ft.). Up left-hand crack, transfer to right-hand crack, and pull over jammed block. Belay, (50 ft.). Follow corner and slabs to summit, (150 ft.).

NORTHERN HIGHLANDS

Beinn Bhàn: Coire na Poite.—(*Unnamed*). 620 ft. Very Severe. A. C. Cain & C. Rowland. April 1974.

Looking towards A' Poite from Lochan Coire na Poite, one can see a line of corners starting halfway up the cleanest part of the crag. The route gains this system of corners and follows it approximately.

Beinn Eighe: Coire Mhic Fhearchair, Far East Wall.—*Sundance*. 400 ft. Very Severe. R. Archbold & G. Cohen. 5th May 1974.

The climb takes the first prominent feature to the right of the compact grey wall at the left-hand side of the crag—a line of steep corner-cracks. One sling was used for aid to enter the hanging chimney splitting the main bulge and a peg was used for resting at the smaller bulge below this. Above this main bulge, the next overhang was taken directly and the top overhang avoided by an excursion on the right wall. Protection pegs were used on all serious pitches.

—*Birth of the Cool.*

350 ft. Very Severe. R. Archbold & G. Cohen. 30th June 1974.

To the right of *Kami-kazi*, at the right-hand side of the crag is a steep grey pillar cleft by an obvious chimney line in the lower part. The climb follows this line and, when the chimney crack ends, breaks rightwards through a belt of overhangs and finishes up a prominent corner to the left of the finishing corner of *Groovin' High*.

Beinn Laoghal: Sgòr a' Bhatain.—*Cirith Ungol*. Very Severe. L. G. Brown & R. G. Wilson. June 1969.

This climb takes a line up the centre of the left-hand of two steep buttresses near the summit of Sgòr a' Bhatain. The buttress is roughly triangular, with a smooth central section. Start at a broken vegetated groove just right of the centre of the crag. Climb towards a prominent overhang and pass it on the left by a groove. Leave this to cross a steep wall and climb a rib to reach a corner. Follow this to a bulge split by a thin crack. Climb this and the prominent overhanging crack above. Finally, climb a pinnacle and the overhanging crack above it using slings for aid in the crack.

Creag Mhór Tollaidh: Upper Tollie Crag.—*The Bug*. 190 ft. Very Severe. L. G. Brown & R. G. Wilson.

The thin crack in the wall left of *Knickerbocker Glory*. The crack was followed for 160 ft. at which point a tension traverse was made into *Knickerbocker Glory*, which was followed to the top.

Fionaven: Creag Dionard, No. 5 Buttress?—*Smick*. 700 ft. Very Severe. C. Rowland & J. Smith. June 1973.

The location of this climb is uncertain. According to Rowland it is 'on the cliff higher up the hillside and to the right of Creag Alasdair.' This would serve to identify No. 5 Buttress, but the route described seems to share little in common with *Gritstener's Revenge* (see *S.M.C.J.*, 1971, xxix, 407), the only other route on that crag. Future visitors may care to sort it out.

The crag has two parallel slabby ramps rising from bottom left to top right. The climb follows the first ramp for one pitch, transfers to the second ramp and follows this to the top, avoiding a bulge on the right.

Creag Urbhard.—*Masha*. 900 ft. Very Severe. D. Marshall & C. Rowland. May 1972.

Start at the start of *Fingal* and take a direct line of cracks and grooves up the cliff, leading eventually to a huge open-book corner just below the top of the crag. Climb this and the ensuing gully to the top.

Sgùrr a' Chaorachain: Cioch Nose.—*Superdirect*. 560 ft. Very Severe. J. E. Howard & C. Rowland. May 1970.

This route takes the obvious line of grooves and cracks from the foot of the Cioch to the terrace from which the Nose route starts. The line lies to the left of *Cleavage*. In Rowland's view 'when combined with *Cioch Nose Direct* this makes one of the longest and finest rock climbs in Britain.'

Climb corner to blank section, move right then up and back left to corner and so to stance, (130 ft.). Continue in corner, (120 ft.). Climb right wall to good ledge, (70 ft.). Now follow the obvious chimney-crack on the left and the slab above to the terrace, (240 ft.).

Sgùrr nan Clach Geala.—*Epsilon Gully*. GRADE III/IV. M. Freeman & N. Keir. 16th March 1974. 3 hours.

Hard to start, then straightforward.

Stac Pollaidh.—*Summer Isles Arête.* 400 ft. Very Difficult. Mr & Mrs J. Mackenzie. July 1974.

The arête bounding the bay containing the various pinnacles on the right and leading to the Claw.

CAIRNGORMS I

Beinn a' Bhuird: Coire na Ciche.—*Homebrew.* 450 ft. Very Severe. R. J. Archbold, N. D. Keir & A. Lawson. 8th September 1973.

Takes right-hand of two prominent cracks in large area of slabs between *Carpet* and upper pitches of *Three Step*.

Climb first pitch of *Carpet*, traverse right 60 ft. to foot of crack, climb this (1 peg for protection) to small stance at end. Traverse right into *Three Step*, up this for 70 ft., then go leftwards up slabs, a 15-ft. crack and chimney in centre of overhung bay lead to top.

—*Jason's Chimney.* GRADE IV.

M. Freeman & N. D. Keir. 3½ hours. 31st March 1974.

Tucked in the shade, this is probably quite often in condition. On this ascent, however, thawing water-ice provided some interest. Recommended.

Coire an Dubh Lochan.—*Bloodhound Buttress.* 350 ft. GRADE IV. R. A. Smith & G. Stephen. 6 hours. 15th February 1975.

Start 200 ft. below *Tantalus Gully* up rightward-trending grassy grooves. At the foot of the short chimney move right across slab to the 20-ft. crack. This was climbed using 3 pegs for aid and one for tension to comfortable platform. The line above was taken, 3 pegs for aid, then gully followed to plateau.

Garbh Choire.—*The Flume Direct.* GRADE IV. D. F. Lang & N. W. Quinn. 15th December 1974.

The big icefall was climbed directly in two pitches.

Ben Macdui: An Sticil.—*Postern.* GRADE IV & A1. M. Coleman & N. Harding. 14/15th December 1974.

Below the Gallery, 3 pegs were used for aid in the right-angled *dièdre*, which was badly verglassed. Above the Gallery the 30-ft. chimney was also badly verglassed and again required pegs for aid.

EDITOR'S NOTE. This use of extensive aid on what in summer is a free climb is, in our view, unwarranted and selfish. We invite reports of a more respectful ascent.

Càrn Etchachan.—*Revelation Arête.* 500 ft. GRADE III. A. Fyfe & R. O'Donovan. 14th March 1975.

Summer route followed.

Creagan a' Choire Etchachan.—*Umslopogaas.* 350 ft. Very Severe. D. Dinwoodie & R. A. Smith. 21st July 1974.

Takes the big slab-corner skirted by *Serpent*. Climb the direct start to *Serpent* to belay below corner, often wet, (120 ft.). Zig-zag up slab for 30 ft. to nook on right edge and straight up cracks to top, (90 ft.). Go left round rib and up pleasant rocks to top, (140 ft.).

Photo: D. J. Bennet

Opposite—Work Party and Dog at C.I.C. Hut on completion of new porch, September, 1974





—*Carmine Groove*. 500 ft.

GRADE IV. R. A. Smith & G. Stephen. November 1974.

Unlike in summer, the groove was followed throughout except for a move onto the rib on the right at the very top.

Cairngorm: Coire an Lochan.—*Glottal Stop*. 300 ft. GRADE III. R. Baillie & J. Cunningham. February 1975.

Start 40 ft. left of *Savage Slit* below prominent groove, topped by square-cut overhang. Climb up to roof, avoid it on right and climb to belay, (150 ft.). Climb narrow chimney splitting small buttress above to reach the plateau, (150 ft.).

—*Gaffer's Groove*. 400 ft. GRADE IV.

J. Cunningham & A. Fyffe. February 1975.

Start just left of *Savage Slit*. Follow fault up and left. Join ice groove above first roof by difficult traverse. Follow groove directly or go out right up another fault to return left into the groove higher up. Continue by corner and gully trending left to upper snowfields.

Cairn Toul: Corrie of the Chokestone Gully.—*The Wanderer*. 350 ft. GRADE IV. 4 hours. R. A. Smith & G. S. Strange. 1st March 1975.

Start midway between *Bugaboo Rib* and right end of cliff. Climb gully, then rib on left (1 peg for aid). Continue straightforwardly to cornice.

Garbh Choire Mór.—*Vulcan*. GRADE IV. J. Bower, J. Ingram & K. Turnbull. 1st March 1975.

The prominent V-groove of the summer route gave continuous climbing, the lower section forming the crux.

CAIRNGORMS II

Broad Cairn: Broadcairn Bluffs.—*Yoo Hoo Buttress*. 500 ft. GRADE III. T. MacLellan, A. Nisbet, Mrs Yoo Hoo. February 1975.

This is the obvious buttress facing the path to Creag an Dubh Loch, just to the left of the green shoot mentioned in the 1960 guide (Cairngorms Area, Volume 2).

Climb ramp sloping right to terrace, then follow grooves and short ice walls (300 ft., mainly on ice). Scramble to plateau, keeping right, near crest. Harder variations on very steep ice are possible.

Creag an Dubh Loch.—*Caterpillar Crack*. 300 ft. GRADE IV. D. Dinwoodie & G. W. Stephen. 22nd March 1975.

Climb crack to corner; 4 pegs used to gain and exit from slabby groove. Continue up steep iced corners and grooves to snow bay. Follow steep ribs and grooves to top.

—*The Strumpet*. 210 ft. Very Severe. D. Dinwoodie & R. A. Smith. July 1974.

Follows the deep crack splitting the big flake-whaleback left of *Late Night Final*. Climb *Late Night Final* to belay at foot of corner, (60 ft.). Work left to gain groove leading to ledge under whaleback, (70 ft.). Climb crack up over crest of whaleback, with good stance just before easy ground is reached, (60 ft.).

—*The Aqueduct*. 400 ft. GRADE IV. J. Moreland & R. A. Smith. February 1975.

The obvious icefall leading directly to *Hanging Garden*. Poor protection.

Photo: D. J. Bennet

Opposite—The Prime Movers—Bill Young and Gerry Peet

—*Yeti*. 450 ft. GRADE IV. J. Moreland

& R. A. Smith. February 1975.

Climbs ice to left of obvious gully climbed by *Hanging Garden Route*. Go up icy grooves then onto slabs above. Up steep ice above slabs to steep iced corner with ramp on left. Follow ramp round corner. Devious line above leads to plateau.

If this route is combined with *Aqueduct*, the standard becomes GRADE V. The entire climb took 9½ hours.

Lochnagar.—*West Rib*. 600 ft. GRADE IV. R. A. Smith & G. Stephen. 6 hours. January 1975.

Follow general summer line to above slabs. The upper buttress was bare so a rightward traverse was made until it was possible to cut back left up crest. A rightward traverse was made below the Organ Pipes to chimneys leading to the plateau.

—*The Straightjacket*. 300 ft. Very Severe. D. Dinwoodie & N. D. Keir. Summer 1974.

From the corrie floor an obvious chimney-crack can be seen high on the *Scarface* wall below the *Clam*. This is the line. Follow an easy ramp and bulging blocks from *Raeburn's Gully* to belay under the 30-ft. chimney-crack, (90 ft.). Climb the crack, with a tight start, to the top of the split flake which forms it. Climb the steep corner above (wet, several pegs were used) to belay ledge, (60 ft.). Easy ground can be gained to the right but the clean crack and spiral shelves above gave a good finish, (150 ft.).

—*Nymph*. 300 ft. Very Severe. D. Dinwoodie & R. A. Smith. Summer 1974.

The less prominent twin-crackline of *Psyche*. Start 30 ft. right of *Parallel Gully B*. Climb obvious line of stepped corners slanting left, with a testing start, and up easier ground to belay below obvious corner-crack (same belay as *Psyche*). Climb corner and break over its bulge, where it curves right, to follow layback cracks to small ledges. (*Psyche* crosses left here). Climb round bulge above to belay on top, (140 ft.). Easier rock to top, (40 ft.).

Mayar: Corrie Fee.—*Central Route*. 800 ft. GRADE II/III. I. Reilly & A. Paul. 1st March 1975.

Start at *A-B Intermediate*. Climb ice-pitch then groove above for two pitches to large snow basin. Climb groove rightwards for two pitches until forced to descend into *B Gully Chimney* opposite its final ice pitch. Climb this, or leftwards to slab above and then to top.

White Mounth: Eagle's Rock.—*Flanker's Route*. 300 ft. Very Difficult. R. J. Archbold & G. S. Strange. 2nd June 1974.

A rainy day excursion on to the upper of the two areas of overlapping slabs which lie above and to the right of *Likely Story Slab*.

Scramble up to amphitheatre below waterfall. Start on right and climb out rightwards below steep rock to gain corner groove system. Climb this over several overlaps to the top.

—*Stratus*. 300 ft. Very Severe. R. J. Archbold & G. S. Strange. 22nd June 1974.

Between *Man Friday* and the vegetated rake next *Lethargy* there is a short section of good clean rock. Towards its right-hand end is a prominent groove which bifurcates at about 60 ft.

Climb groove by left fork and belay awkwardly where it closes. Traverse left below small overlap and climb crack up leftwards to break in large overlap. Surmount this and go up to belay on left. A prominent diagonal crack goes up right through upper bulge; but as this was running with water a less attractive finish was made out to the left.

CENTRAL HIGHLANDS

Creag Dubh, Newtonmore.—*Sheath*. 230 ft. Very Severe. R. G. Ross (ldr.), H. Henderson & A. Walker. April 1975.

Between *Cunnulinctus* and *Phellatio* there is some broken rock leading to a short chimney. Climb into this chimney, go left a few feet then up steep wall trending right and continue to obvious ledge and peg belay, (70 ft.). Traverse up left to tree, (60 ft.). Finish by chimney above, (100 ft.).

Creag Meaghaidh: Coire Ardair.—*Easter Pillar*. GRADE IV. D. F. Lang & N. W. Quinn. 30th March 1975.

This is the buttress forming the right-hand pillar of the *North Post*; it gives the longest direct route on the Post Face. The buttress was climbed more or less directly with an excursion into *North Post* at about 700 ft.

BEN NEVIS

Ben Nevis: Observatory Buttress.—*North West Face*. 300 ft. GRADE IV. F. Craddock & C. Stead. 21st March 1975.

Under normal conditions the lower chimney is bare and the upper groove holds a lot of ice. On this ascent the start was made 50 ft. right of the chimney at a prominent ice-groove which connected with the upper groove. This route may serve as an introduction to the route which follows.

—*Indicator Wall*. 600 ft. GRADE IV/V. G. Smith (ldr.) & T. King. 2½ hours. February 1975.

The route lies on the upper section of Observatory Buttress right of *Good Friday Climb*. Start as for the summer route. Climb iced chimney/groove, right of prominent spur, over steep ice bulges to small snow-scoop. Peg belay, (120 ft.). Climb fearsome bulge on right and steep ice above, going up and right to base of short chimney-groove. Climb this and ensuing bulge to snow-slopes, (150 ft.). Climb steep snow to base of gully, (150 ft.). Continue up gully, (150 ft.). Climb steep headwall and turn cornice on right to belay on indicator post, (15 ft.).

Tower Ridge.—*Lower East Wall Route*. 400 ft. GRADE III. K. V. Crocket & C. Gilmore. 1½ hours. 25th March 1974.

Summer line followed.

GLENCOE, GLEN ETIVE & ARDGOUR

Bidean nam Bian: Gearr Aonach, East Face.—*Snowstormer*. 290 ft. Very Severe. J. Burns & D. Rubens. 5th May 1974.

Start on the steep wall 40 feet below *Rainmaker*. The route follows close to the exposed edge overlooking *Rainmaker*.

Climb small overhanging corner to make awkward move left onto slab at 10 feet. Pass second overhang at 20 feet by arête on right. Easier up to belay below slanting slab, (90 ft.). Climb slab or (easier) traverse left to edge and move up. Climb corner to belay below steep wall, (100 ft.). Start wall on left ledge (overlooking *Rainmaker*). Go up and right into corner, then up to bulge at 30 ft. Pass bulge by traversing left to niche on the left edge, then to easier ground, (100 ft.).

Buachaille Etive Mór: Blackmount Wall.—*Saturday Rock*. 300 ft. Very Severe. B. Dunn & C. Higgins. 17th August 1974.

This climb lies on the wall on the right of *Lady's Gully*, *Left Fork* where it starts to narrow and is conveniently reached by scrambling up from the Chasm-to-Crowberry Traverse.

Start at block embedded in turf. Climb crack above and slightly left to peg belay, (150 ft.). Continue up crack to easier ground and finish by steep wall above, (150 ft.).

SOUTHERN HIGHLANDS

Balnacoul Castle Crag, Glen Lednock:—Mysterious Naval personnel from Rosyth have succeeded in finding several fine routes here, dismaying the natives in the process. Dick Baker informs us that 'the area is approaching maturity, perhaps surpassing Craig-y-Barns in importance.' We don't know about importance but we can vouch for difficulty, the incumbent Editor (a devotee of Craig-y-Barns) being unable to leave the ground on most of the routes detailed below.

The location of the crag is described in *S.M.C.J.*, 1973, xxx, 82. High on the left (east) side above the usual descent path there is tapering wedge of steep clean crag, bounded on the left by a Very Difficult chimney. This crag is named—

Superlative Buttress.—*Humdinger*. 80 ft. Very Severe. I. Conway (ldr.) & D. Baker. 3rd April 1974.

Start at left-hand of crag beneath overhanging arête. Climb short wall split by thin crack then continue up groove to ledge. Traverse left across overhanging wall to arête and peg, in place. Climb arête to top.

—*Little Brahma*. 80 ft. Very Severe. I. Conway (ldr.) & D. Baker. 7th April 1974.

Start left of tree-filled corner. Traverse left on grassy ledge to short groove. Step left onto slab and climb wall trending left then right to base of rightward-sloping crack. Using crack, traverse right to finish in niche.

—*Sweat*. 60 ft. Severe. I. Conway. 1974.

The tree-filled corner. Climb up past the trees and follow the crack in the corner to the top.

—*Barnstormer*. 70 ft. Very Severe. I. Conway (ldr.) & D. Baker. 6th April 1974.

On the right-hand side of the buttress is a large roof. Climb slab beneath the roof, traverse left up to sloping ledge below short corner. Climb corner, moving left to finish up slab.

Moving west, there now comes a long straggly buttress bounded on the right by a tree-filled grass fan which is topped by a steep (unclimbed) rib dividing two deep chimneys; the lefthand chimney, *Dividing Chimney*, is

Severe and was climbed by J. Porteous & R. Macdonald some years ago. The right-hand chimney is easy and of no interest. This long straggly buttress is known as—

Lunar Buttress.—*The Grafters*. 70 ft. Very Severe. D. Baker (ldr.) & I. Conway. 31st March 1974.

Start at extreme left-hand end of buttress, 30 ft. left of rowan tree. Climb up to thin crack, follow crack, which ascends rightwards then continues steeply to top.

—*Percy Thrower*. 60 ft. Very Difficult. D. Baker (ldr.) & T. Connolly. 17th October 1973.

Start by rowan tree at lowest point of buttress. Climb leftward trending shallow fault to slab. Finish up wide chimney.

—*Lunar Groove*. 120 ft. Very Severe. I. Conway (ldr.) & D. Baker. 12th June 1974.

Start 20 ft. up and right of rowan tree at short corner below slab. Climb corner to slab and move up to bottom of prominent leftward-trending groove. Layback into bottom of groove and continue past two small trees to short overhanging crack which leads to tree. Climb slab and short wall behind tree to top.

—*Moonbeam*. 120 ft. Very Severe. I. Conway (ldr.) & T. Connolly. 10th October 1973.

To left of *Dividing Chimney* is a steep and occasionally overhanging buttress. Start at overhang beneath buttress. Up short steep corner to ledge. Move right and climb overhanging wall to ledge below groove. Climb groove strenuously and continue to small overhang. Move awkwardly left for a few feet then climb wall directly to top.

—*Moonshadow*. 130 ft. Very Severe and A2. I. Conway (ldr.) & D. Baker. 31st March 1974.

Start as for *Moonbeam*. Climb corner and overhanging wall of *Moonbeam*. Traverse right for 15 ft. to foot of groove situated on wall overlooking steep chimney. Climb groove to roof. Move left round roof (3 pegs) and climb to belay below large overhang. Traverse left from belay, moving up and left to finish on *Moonbeam*.

—*Moonraker*. 100 ft. Very Severe. I. Conway (ldr.) & T. Connolly. 10th April 1974.

Start on right-hand wall of the *Moonbeam* buttress beneath the chimney. Traverse overhanging wall to arête (peg in place). Climb arête strenuously then traverse left into *Moonbeam*. Make two moves up the overhanging corner, then traverse right into the middle of the face. Climb direct up to large overhang, peg belay. Move left round overhang, make long reach to good layback hold (protection peg) and climb sensationally to top.

To the right of the tree-filled grass fan lies the large **East Buttress**. A direct finish to its one existing route, *Carcass Wall* (*S.M.C.J.*, 1972, xxx, 82), has been climbed by Rosyth and Squirrel parties. It is Very Severe and takes the overhangs above the belay ledge directly. This buttress has a forbiddingly steep pink right wall which is bounded by an overhanging groove, *Central Groove*, approached by starting as for *Castle Crawl* (*S.M.C.J.*, 1972, xxx, 82), then traversing left behind an enormous detached flake. So far, this groove has not received a free ascent: it succumbs, at about A1, to unethical attacks. Moving right from this groove, there are two small jutting buttresses separated by a rock bay up which *Castle Crawl* proceeds. The ramp delineating this bay on the right, *Eggreader*, is a fragile Very Difficult. On the right of these two little buttresses is a large jungly area, topped by a short, brutally strenuous ayback crack. To the right again is **West Buttress**, by any

standards an imposing piece of rock and giving the most demanding climbs here. In the middle of the buttress, which overhangs prodigiously, are two obvious lines: on the left a series of thin corner-cracks, climbed by E. Grindley (of which we have no details) and on the right a deep, continuous jam-crack.

West Buttress.—*The Great Crack.* 150 ft. Very Severe. I. Conway. 15th May 1974.

Climb corner and crack through overhang, follow crack a few feet then traverse right and up to belay, (70 ft.). Climb crack strenuously (1 nut for aid) to top of crag, (80 ft.).

To the right of this buttress is *Spare Rib* (S.M.C.J., 1973, xxx, 183), which bounds the crag on the western side. Below this route and *Central Groove* lie two featureless exposures of merely steep crag which offer a number of poorly distinguished routes.

Beinn an Dothaidh.—*Twofold Gully.* 400 ft. GRADE III. W. Skidmore & J. Crawford. 16th March 1975.

The gully forms the left boundary of the main buttress and is divided by a prominent rib in its lower half. *Haar* (S.M.C.J., 1973, xxx, 182) forms the right boundary of the buttress.

The initial cave pitch to the left was climbed by the right wall on vertical ice to gain the upper gully followed with little difficulty to the top.

Creag Tharsuinn.—*The Tingle.* 170 ft. Very Severe. J. Gillespie & W. Skidmore. 23rd June 1974.

A miniature classic up the sharp left edge of MacLay's Gully. Start a few feet up *Slab Groove* at oblique crack left of true edge.

Climb crack to stance and flake belay, (65 ft.). Climb straight up steep wall on left to thin grass ledge at 50 ft. then move right to edge which follow to large grass ledge and belay, (65 ft.). Move left to edge and climb directly up front of detached pinnacle to finish abruptly at highest point, peg belay on lip, (40 ft.).

—*Central Buttress.* 500 ft. GRADE IV. K. V. Crocket & I. Fulton. 15th December 1974.

This is the buttress defined by McLaren's Chimney and Curving Gully. Start just right of the lowest rocks and follow a line of grooves under a steep wall. Break out left onto the crest passing a flake with difficulty, continue to belay below steep wall. Traverse right to edge and climb a chimney. Continue more easily.

Dumbarton Rock.—*Cyclops.* 150 ft. Very Severe & A2. B. Shields (ldr.) & K. Haggerty. February 1974.

This is the corner crack on the overhanging West Face, to the right of *Requiem*. Peg up *Chemin de Fer* until it is possible to pendulum on to the expanding traverse flake of *Requiem*. Climb the flake and traverse into the corner. Bolt belay, (100 ft.) Climb the corner crack. The top half goes free, on jams, (50 ft.).

—*Desperado.* 100 ft. Very Severe. B. Shields (ldr.) & A. Kelso. March 1975.

This is the ferocious overhung corner between *Longbow* and *Windjammer*. This magnificent line completes the trilogy and should become a classic. Climb *Windjammer* for 25 ft. to the sloping ledge, traverse left into the corner and continue to the top.

SOUTHERN UPLANDS

Fast Castle Head.—*Cyclops*. 310 ft. Very Severe & A2. G. Davison & M. E. Moran. 24th August 1974.

A good and continuously interesting climb, but loose and poorly protected on upper pitches. The route lies on the high east facing sea wall south of the main slab mass and descent gully, which is marked by a steep solid 80 ft. high wall above a cave. Start on right-hand side of cave below a diagonal overhanging crack.

Climb crack up to right using pegs, pull into shallow corner groove and climb free to straddle stance and jammed wedge belay, (50 ft.). Continue up corner to overhang (peg protection) and back up and go over using 1 peg for assistance. Climb corner above, move out right to arête and using 2 pegs for aid move up to big stance on left, (45 ft.). Climb black corner crack above stance and follow arête breaking left to foot of big grassy groove. Follow shaley slab to right of groove until it steepens. Stance and peg belay, (90 ft.). Traverse left towards steep solid wall of rock and climb this to stance and block belay on tight side of rightward slanting loose grassy rake, (40 ft.). Climb steep loose rocks above belay tending to left until overhangs force a traverse to right. Climb straight up to finish and walk up slope to take belay on fence 30 ft. back, (85 ft.).

REGIONAL NOTES

Islands

Lewis: Creag Dhubh Dhibidail.—Geoff Cohen notes that *Via Valtos*, (*S.M.C.J.*, 1971, xxix, 398), is misgraded at V.S. & A3. Cohen's party climbed it last summer on their visit there and found no aid necessary, using only 3 pegs for protection.

Skye

Sgùrr Coir 'an Lochain.—A new route has been received at Very Severe on the North Face of this peak. Exercising our discretion we propose, in the spirit of our new New Route Policies, to close this peak down, as it lacks definite features and is not at present over-described. Dissenters please write.

Arran

Beinn Tarsuinn: Meadow Face.—The fine route, *Brobdingnag*, described in this year's New Climbs section is an improved version of an early, more devious and less clean route of the same name from the boot of Ian Rowe. Although Duckworth and his party are given credit for the first complete ascent, their climb owes much to an earlier improvement to the lower pitches effected by Geoff Cohen. Cohen also notes that he managed to eliminate all aid from *The Blinder* (on the same cliff) except for a sling (in place) just below the deep chimney. Duckworth notes that he managed to eliminate all aid from *Brachistochrone*.

It should perhaps be remarked that on a cliff such as this where extensive gardening operations have been involved, this slow elimination of aid reflects no discredit on the earlier parties (with the exception, of course, of Rowe—who was plainly route-bagging before he left for Canada, the wretch).

Northern Highlands

Creag Riabhach, Cape Wrath.—C. Rowland has supplied a description of a long, hard new route on this peaklet. In accordance with recent policy we will file this until some Arbiter of Secrets can examine it with a faithful eye.

Gruinard Bay: Jetty Buttress.—Crocket notes that, 'It is with regret and some irony that I answer the appeal by A. J. Anderson for information on this crag, (*S.M.C.J.*, 1974, xxx, 278). The rock is the best of that best rock, gneiss, and is more than well endowed with good cracks custom-built for nuts. Unfortunately, there would appear to be some virgin climbers around who have not heard of nuts; we were disgusted at the amount of indiscriminate peg scars and even more seriously, bolts. Around one bolt belay I was able to place four good nuts and one flake belay—this same bolt we took savage pleasure in destroying. This is no doubtful case, but a clear-cut transgression of the unwritten code which keeps British climbing clean. I am preparing bolts made of Plaster-of-Paris; future users will be listed in the accident section. A. J. Anderson would perform a good service by keeping his backyard clean.'

Liathach: Northern Corries.—These seem like prime candidates for Suppression of Information. We've received some and have suppressed it.

Beinn Dearg: Coire Ghranda Snow Gullies.—Same note as above.

Sgùrr a Ghlas Leathaid (Sgùrr a' Mhuilinn Group)—Same note as above.

Ben Nevis

Another Auld Sang Ends.—Colin Stead writes, 'You have probably heard of the relegation of *Gardylloo Buttress* to a trade route this winter. In the prevailing conditions the original Marshall/Smith route was not the best line. Everyone seemed to climb directly using a small cave (with a terrible belay) instead of the big traverse left then right.'

'The only big route to maintain its status was *Orion Face Direct*. It was quite satisfying to see it repelling many of its suitors, some rather abruptly! The crunch will come when Nicholson solos it.'

We would point out to Nicholson that this last, equivocal, remark was not intended by Stead as an exhortation.

Older ones prevail.—Notes of first winter ascents of Goodeve's escape route on the Tower (1907) at GRADE III/IV and *Raeburn's Easy Route* (1920) at GRADE IV have been received!

Hut News.—The C.I.C. Hut took a small step towards the Douglas Boulder last year with the help of many members and a large amount of money (see photographs in this issue).

Cairngorms

Ben Macdui: An Sticil.—Crocket notes disdainfully that '*Consolation Grooves* was freed many years ago.'

The Buck of Cabrach.—R. M. Inglis writes, 'Supplementing my article in the 1974 *Journal*, I climbed this, the highest summit in the Rhynie area,

in May 1974. A faint track runs close to the east side of the fence leading up the N.E. Ridge to within 100 ft. of the summit. The summit itself is a ruined tor, on the flat face of one of the boulders of which someone has skilfully carved a life-size representation of three large fish lying on top of each other. I have been unable to trace any reference to this carving, which is quite unweathered. Can anyone throw light as to its significance, when, and by whom, it was executed?'

Craigellachie, Aviemore.—Please don't submit descriptions of new routes on this disgusting little crag. Better still, don't even do them and go and have a drink instead: the wildlife in the bars is less likely to be impressed.

Ardgour

Garbh Bheinn: Garbh Choire Mor.—Various parties have submitted descriptions of routes made on the various undistinguished exposures of slabby crag here, opposite the Great Ridge. These have temporarily been suppressed.

Arrochar

Cobbler.—Crocket notes that the crux pitch of Deadman's Groove is 140 ft., not 110 ft. as given in the *Guide*.

Creag Tharsuinn.—Crocket notes that *Sugach Buttress Direct* gives an interesting winter climb of about GRADE III and is over 400 ft., not 200 ft. as in the *Guide*.

MISCELLANEOUS NOTES

Defining the Winter Frontier.—In response to some Editorial comments in last year's *Journal* about the problems of introducing a GRADE VI into Scottish winter climbing we have received the following discussion on the subject from Colin Stead.

'It is perhaps worth pointing out the special conditions which led to this grade being adopted in North America, viz., remoteness, bivouacs, rotten ice and the necessity of descending the route of ascent—hardly qualifications commonly met in this country!

'Messner, in his recent book, argues persuasively for an open-ended grading system, which could encompass a seventh grade for rock-climbing. If we accept this as reasonable, then a sixth grade for winter is ultimately inevitable. However, he also says that he would endeavour to grade within the current system!

'With front-pointing techniques demolishing the existing Scottish ice gullies, I cannot see that GRADE VI would ever be valid for a pure ice climb, unless, say, it involved extensive overhanging sections. It seems more likely that a major buttress route would be a candidate, but there may be problems over the definition of winter conditions on some of our steeper and harder climbs. There have been several very hard buttress climbs in recent years, e.g. Kellett's Right Hand Route and Left Edge Route but GRADE V has been used.

'Perhaps it would be appropriate at this time to consider our current winter grading system? The adoption of front-pointing has brought it into question. Fyfe describes it in a recent article as "barely adequate."

'The present system is for "average conditions" and in the preamble to the S.M.C. guides, it is admitted that grading of winter routes is "at best a haphazard affair." It is difficult to see how it can be anything else, given the infinite variability and unpredictability of Scottish snow and ice. One can hardly use the hopelessly pedantic system of subdivided rock climbing grades as McInnes did in his *Scottish Climbs*, nor yet the grading of a first ascent done in lean conditions, or we end up with the absurdity of a GRADE V, which is more usually a GRADE III. There can be no real precision in winter grading, a fact which our current system recognises.

'Possibly the greatest problems arise as usual in the top grades. Fyffe suggested 5T for technical and 5S for serious, but this seems hardly a valid solution, as by definition a GRADE V is both technical and serious. Examples are frequently quoted of GRADE IV climbs which are found technically harder than some V's, e.g. Vanishing Gully at IV is often reckoned harder than Zero Gully at V. So what? Our present system allows for GRADE IV to include "climbs of the greatest difficulty, yet too short to be GRADE V."

'In the past, particularly in Clough's Guide to Winter Climbs, the use of III/IV or IV/V has been adopted to indicate routes difficult to position precisely within a single grade. This seems quite acceptable and worthy of more consideration.

'Front-pointing has certainly made pure ice-climbing a bit easier from the point of view of effort, but hardly less serious. However, it could be that some routes will be downgraded, e.g. Comb Gully IV to III and Polyphemus V to IV, are obvious examples, but I rather suspect that many such climbs would have been downgraded in the absence of front-pointing!

'Basically, I can see little wrong with our current system for winter-grading. It seems a fair compromise solution to a difficult problem. Let there be a GRADE VI if necessary. The first perpetrators can gnash their claws, awaiting the verdict of subsequent ascenders! Possibly, however, the grade will appear insidiously, viz. by V/VI.'

REFERENCES: Messner, R. (1974) *The Seventh Grade*, Kaye and Ward. Fyffe, A. (1974) *Mountain 40*. Mountain Magazine. McInnes, H. (1971) *Scottish Climbs*. Constable. Clough, I. (1969) *Guide to Winter Climbs*. Cicerone Press.

The wark gangs bonnily on.—We give below the full text of a discussion paper sent by functionaries of the Scottish Sports Council (S.S.C.) to the Scottish Mountain Leadership Board (S.M.L.T.B.). This cliché-ridden statement (the only 'in'-words missing seem to be 'dialogue' and 'scenario') is not, repeat not, a parody put out by someone wishing to poke fun at bureaucratic colonialism. It appears to be a serious statement of intent by the S.S.C. to do something about mountaineering because it is not 'a growth activity . . . in conformity with the general pattern.' The paper regrets that the Mountaineering Council of Scotland does not see it as appropriate that it should concern itself with governing the comprehensive growth of mountaineering as a countryside activity in Scotland. It turns therefore to the S.M.L.T.B. as a more readily seducible organisation and invites them to extend their current remit.

We also print in full the reply by the Mountaineering Council of Scotland—a document hurriedly put together in response to the S.S.C. flanker.

We apologise for introducing this unpleasant business but we feel it is important that we all know what is going on. Subjecting mountaineering to 'comprehensive growth' 'positive promotion' and central 'development of new clubs' will only deepen the gulf between the factory-produced article and the man or boy who, having received the call, finds such problems as getting a pair of boots and arriving in the hills, with or without a club tent or Youth Hostel card, too easy to make a fuss about. However, we are threatened by

full-time apparatchiks whose function is to administer and whose personal promotion requires an expanding empire of 'backward' subjects on which to exercise their calling. We cannot get rid of them: the genotype is established and probably ineradicable in *Homo sapiens*; nor do we have the time to modify them into a more acceptable phenotype. Our best bet is to try to deflect them into parasiting some other unfortunate sport in the hope that they will then leave ours alone.

We have italicised the more ugsome parts of the S.S.C. paper so that those of our readers who are too busy mountaineering to read the whole thing may grasp the fundamental psychopathology of the unattractive predators that have batted onto us. The comments in parentheses are our own. Those between single quotes are interpolated, guessed-at, S.S.C. Thoughts.

K/1

January 1975.

SCOTTISH MOUNTAIN LEADERSHIP TRAINING BOARD FUTURE FUNCTIONS AND RELATIONSHIPS —A DISCUSSION PAPER.

PREAMBLE:

1. The purpose of this paper is to review various relevant factors and influences within the wide spectrum of mountaineering of which the Board is a part. The Board is therefore invited to discuss without prejudice its own situation in relation to the wider context to assess whether any more close-knit co-ordination or purposes is desirable or necessary and to formulate proposals in respect of its own future role and existence regardless of whether or not these should point differences to present arrangements and circumstances.

INTRODUCTION:

2. The Board was instituted in 1965 in response to the unanimous request of a comprehensive selection of statutory and voluntary agencies including Mountaineering, Education, Voluntary Organisations and the Armed Services and was formed by the then S.C.P.R. in co-operation with the then A.S.C.C. and the S.E.D. The purpose was to introduce training and grading for a M.L.C. such as had been set up in England and Wales in 1964 and for the same reasons. The remit of the Board was speedily widened in 1966 to include a separate and specific qualification for activity in winter. The remit was again increased together with a widening of the composition of the Board when the added responsibility of administering qualifications for Mountaineering Instructors was taken up in 1968.

BOARD—CURRENT REMIT:

3. The Board presents its schemes and publicises them but does not engage in a policy of *promotional development*. In relation to its remit the function of the Board would appear to be satisfactory in that a service to the *promoting authorities* is provided through an adequately publicised and recommended form of training aimed at reducing the number of accidents and increasing the enjoyment of participants. The proportional disparity between the numbers undergoing training and those gaining qualifications might indicate that the schemes have bred their own filtering mechanisms. Although the Board does not adopt a missionary attitude, it is associated with those who do and who are concerned with the provision of opportunities. Whilst the Board has absolute discretion as to the content and administration of its scheme *its role is supervisory and responsive to spontaneous interest in what is offered*. (As it surely should be).

S.S.C.:

4. The S.S.C. regards its main role as encouraging people to participate in sport and recreation and assisting the provision of facilities to enable them to do so and by means of three National Centres it is directly involved towards these ends. On the wide front in this *positive developmental role*, S.S.C. would normally work in support of the appropriate national body of the activity concerned ('but if the national body won't do as the S.S.C. wishes, then an alternative procedure must be adopted') and would, in any case, prefer to co-operate with one agency representative of all facets of an activity. Current grant to a national body is resolved in relation to an estimated deficit as forecast in respect of an approved annual programme, elements of which are usually identified under the headings of development, coaching and administration.

MOUNTAINEERING—CONSTRAINTS UPON DEVELOPMENT:

5. *Countryside recreation is the growth activity of present times but it would appear that mountaineering is not in conformity with the general pattern, comprehensive growth within an activity normally being the prerogative of the appropriate body.* ('Ergo, it must be made to conform'). There is in fact no one body in mountaineering with prime concern for the development of participation—introduction to the hills and afterwards. Beginners courses were pioneered a quarter of a century ago at Glenmore Lodge and many more opportunities now exist at other centres, in youth organisations, through the upsurge of interest in outdoor education and elsewhere.

6. The Mountaineering Council of Scotland does not see it as appropriate to assume a governing or developmental role in this direction. ('Therefore, it must be side-stepped'). Rather, it would appear that its function is to influence situations and to safeguard the interests of its members. *Throughout sport it is generally the case that clubs do not represent a development situation.* ('A general defect of sport which must be remedied'). *To organise and promote through the casual situation presents difficulties.* (Good. So we must strive to keep our organisations casual.) In addition, especially in the South, *there seems to be little identification between the mountaineering organisations and the devotees produced by the various institutions.* (How remarkable!).

7. *On the development front it seems that further positive promotion and consolidation are required.* (Why does it so seem? And to whom? And for what good and sufficient reasons? Here we see the bureaucratic talent for omitting only what is crucial to an argument at work). Further promotion is continually taking place and the questions arise in the cases of these initiated, e.g. through outdoor education, as to who should provide huts, what clubs can they join or even which of the existing clubs would wish an inflow of new young members. In the circumstances *it would appear that a policy for the development of new clubs is required, if for no other function than organising the creation of huts and transportation.* ('Let us not forget the function of creating new administrative posts').

8. Stress has been laid on the initiative required to be a mountaineer. *At some stage the novice must do something for himself* (fill in a form, perhaps) *but it is difficult to see how he may be encouraged when there may be no transport, no accommodation and no local cliff to climb.* (If the novice can't solve this one himself, then perhaps he could become a devoted collector of car numbers, or something less energetic). Mountaineering differs from many other sports in that *it is not beholden to organised competition for its existence* ('Pity') and it has been argued that normal coaching structures therefore do not apply. In addition it would appear that most hill-goers are outwith clubs but this is not unique as there are casual/non-affiliated participants in many sports. *Mountaineering, however, by its nature has danger elements not inherent in many other sports.* It would therefore seem that *some form of bridge is required between the*

closely supervised introductory situation, e.g. under a holder of M.L.C. and, the apparent hiatus which lies beyond. (We would certainly recommend the author of this discussion paper to cross a bridge from a situation into a hiatus).

POTENTIAL CO-ORDINATION:

9. In 1972 it was suggested that the Mountaineering Council of Scotland be reformed as a comprehensive national body to represent the interests of clubs, rescue and, to assume responsibility for training (S.M.L.T.B.) and development. The Mountain Rescue Committee for Scotland has not favoured this proposal, and M.C. of S. is not as an alternative prepared to encompass S.M.L.T.B. to create a body with a remit greater than each has at present. With regard to the original proposal the intention was not to interfere with constitutional elements but to create an umbrella body through a federation of interests thus to provide *an agency fully representative of mountaineering.*

10. The Board is associated with the bodies mentioned above and with other agencies. The Board in fact is composed of the various elements but within its current remit its considerations are restricted to the field of training. The collective representations is therefore not influential in respect of the separate entities and could not be so in the absence of specific authority and responsibility. *It may be appropriate for a supra-specialist group within the Board to look again at the articulations.* (Orthopaedic psychiatrists, perhaps).

MOUNTAINEERING—FINANCIAL REPORT:

11. At the present time the normal processes of financing (c.f. Para 4) do not apply. Where it would be undesirable to enforce conformity to a grants system *there must however be re-assurances and justification for the expenditure of public funds.* (In your ain midden, too, friend). For the reason that many if not most participants are not affiliated, bearing in mind the overtones of individuality in the activity, the policy of dealing through the national body provides no comprehensive contact. It may be that special circumstances and elements of the general mountaineering situation should be more clearly defined and put forward for recognition by S.S.C.

CONCLUSIONS:

12. The Board has been re-constituted at the commencement of a further three-year period and in view of all the above it is suggested that the Board may wish to consider at an early date:

12.1 The current remit and any constraints within that remit to fulfilment of the tasks in hand as defined.

12.2 The Board's own situation in relation to the general mountaineering scene.

12.3 The wider implications, with a view to change and any identification of a different future and independence for the Board.

12.4 The development of mountaineering in the future.

12.5 Whether, in relation to these questions and with particular reference to 12.4, the Board would prefer to consider spontaneously the formulation of any proposals for change for submission to S.S.C. or, whether it would prefer to respond to initiations put forward by S.S.C.

S.S.C. January 1975.

C. J. Wilde—Sports Development Division.

INITIAL COMMENT BY M.C.S. REPRESENTATIVES TO S.M.L.T.B.:

The writer finds it strange that a discussion paper of this sort should be aimed at the S.M.L.T.B., obviously expecting the Board to put forward proposals for development, to extend its functions and to take the role of

representing mountaineering to the S.S.C. The Board's function is surely to operate the M.L.C. scheme. The national body, the M.C.S., was formed by mountaineers to cover the full spectrum of mountaineers' interests. It would seem more appropriate that such a discussion on development within the sport should be between the S.S.C. and the national body, the M.C.S. Of course the M.C.S. would take the views of the S.M.L.T.B., M.R.C.S. and others into account.

Under CONCLUSIONS, the M.C.S. view as judged by the writer would be that the S.M.L.T.B. should:—

- 12.1 adhere to its present remit;
- 12.2 see its role as operating a particular training scheme for a particular requirement, the introduction of young people to the hills;
- 12.3 maintain the closest possible ties with the M.C.S.;
- 12.4 not attempt to popularise the sport on a grand scale and not undertake development work which may be in conflict with the M.C.S. or M.R.C.S. view;
- 12.5 suggest to the S.S.C. that on the question of the future of mountaineering in Scotland and how best the S.S.C. might assist the sport, the S.S.C. be guided by the M.C.S.

The Board's Task and Constitution in its policy statement '*within the overall purpose to promote safety with enjoyment on the hills, is to develop and implement the various schemes of training at appropriate levels for those who wish to lead parties of young people on the mountain.*' It would seem that Clubs, Huts, Transport, Development, Promotion and the Future of Mountaineering are outside its remit and purpose.

DEVELOPMENT:

The development of mountaineering has been done by mountaineers—not national bodies. The S.S.C. does not define what it means by development of the sport. I suggest mountaineers would mean:—(1) Learning more about mountains, (2) Improving climbing techniques, (3) Improving equipment, (4) Welcoming those who wish to climb, motivated by a sense of adventure and of the joy of being amongst mountains.

The S.S.C. seems in the paper to take development as implying:—

- (1) Establishing more clubs, (2) Hut and transport facilities, (3) Encouraging more people to become mountaineers, (4) Some form of shepherding for those who have left the care of an M.L.C. holder.

The M.C.S. is the national body for mountaineering in Scotland. The M.R.C.S. is a body specifically for the co-ordination of M.R. teams, equipment, etc. The S.M.L.T.B. is purely for the operation of the M.L. scheme. The B.M.C. and M.C.S. work together on a number of projects. What does the S.S.C. want in the way of development and why? Is it not up to mountaineers to say what it required? The M.C.S. is at present considering two new hut proposals. Several clubs have huts and share them with others. Clubs do not wish to based in a hut rather they range freely over the whole country. Mountaineers require minimal facilities. The S.S.C. can help with financial aid. The M.C.S. has already approached the S.S.C. for financial assistance for mountaineers going climbing abroad—the Sports Council assists the B.M.C. in this—but so far no grants have been given. M.C.S. clubs will be hosts to visitors from Bavaria this summer. The Russians have invited Scottish mountaineers to three climbing centres this summer. The M.C.S. expects shortly to lay before the S.S.C. its case for some financial aid for mountaineering as it does not exactly conform to the pattern for other sports.

The clubs do represent a development situation. A club's success is not judged by its size but by its activities and the enjoyment gained by its members. Standards are continually improving, mountain safety is promulgated by many methods, the more obvious to the outsider may be the Donald Duff Exhibition, posters, the Mountain Code, etc., but the care of mountain safety work is done by the clubs as they climb. The accident rate amongst Scottish clubs is negligible. Clubs are continually operating in an informal effective training situation as the more expert and experienced pass advice and technique to newcomers. Club members also attend formal courses. The M.C.S. is not a Governing body as there is no requirement for government, no Rules to establish, etc. The development of the sport at home is satisfactory to mountaineers, indeed the M.C.S. often finds it is in a protective role striving to maintain the availability of mountaineering in the face of other developments and restrictions.

Mountaineering is minimally organised as only a minimal level is required or desired by mountaineers. This is not a 'casual' situation, rather an *ad hoc* one. The situation in the South regarding the clubs and the course produced hill-walkers should not be pre judged as it is being examined at the moment. Mountaineers may refuse to allow an artificial line to be drawn between such people. Many of us have much respected friends in all branches of the sport. It is hoped that (if one may consider the institutional approach as new) the educationalists will accept the basics and tradition of mountaineering. There is no conflict in Scotland between the clubs and the S.M.L.T.B. at the moment. However if the S.S.C. intends to organise mountaineering as implied or to extend the function of the S.M.L.T.B. divisions would be precipitated. The B.M.C. and M.C.S. recognise that though our aims are essentially the same, many of our problems and approaches to them are different.

Who is calling for promotion and development? Club huts at present are not fully booked. Not all clubs want a hut. There is a need for national huts in specific areas as the S.Y.H.A. does not provide the type of accommodation desired by many mountaineers. Huts more akin to bothies may be more acceptable—and cheaper. There are about 50 clubs in Scotland and new members are welcomed. There is a problem of responsibility for a club accepting minors. Generally the inflow of new members is balanced by those leaving. Clubs stay at a manageable size and in mountaineering there is a safety aspect in climbers knowing each other fairly well. To seek to establish new clubs for minors would require an acceptance of responsibility, a particular organisation and the supervision (which would no doubt be demanded) would risk prolonging the course situation. If the S.S.C. have some proposals, the M.C.S. would be pleased to discuss them.

Some clubs run buses to meets but there are practical difficulties. A lot of climbing can be done by public transport or bicycle. The writer used to cycle 40 miles to and from Arrochar for climbing weekends. There are youth hostels near most climbing areas, there are many bothies and camping is fundamental to climbing. If a young climber has had an introduction under Leadership then there should be no problem to him carrying on modified activity with friends from school or course for the short remainder of his minority, then he may seek the club of his choice. The M.C.S. has an arrangement for suggesting several clubs to such people.

What statistics were used for the suggestion that there are more mountaineers outside clubs than with such organisations?

Why should a bridge be constructed to carry and protect the teenager—introduced and no doubt given some basic training by an M.L.C. holder—for a year or so left of his minority? If such youngsters are keen, they will pursue modified activity, if not then by their choice they did not wish to be mountaineers.

Discussions with the S.M.L.T.B. and M.R.C.S., following the writer's 1972 proposals, are not yet concluded and it is expected that (with the re-organisation of the B.M.C.) we shall again be reviewing the proposals.

The above notes represent the views, in general, of the representatives of the M.C.S.:

Mr A. G. Cousins
Mr H. M. Brown
Ms R. Wotherspoon
Mr W. H. Murray.

(This draft was read to the S.M.L.T.B. meeting on 13th February 1975).

Readers whose attitude to these proposals of the S.S.C. is similar to that of the M.C. of S. representatives may care to write to, or otherwise influence, the members of the two bodies. For their information the current compositions of the S.M.L.T.B. and of the S.S.C. are given below.

S.M.L.T.B.

J. W. Cook*, C. J. Wilde & F. W. Harper* (Representatives of S.S.C.; H. M. Brown*, A. G. Cousins* & Ms F. V. Wotherspoon (Representatives of M.C. of S.); F. A. Smith (M.L.T.B., England & Wales); Lt.-Col. R. H. Grant (Association of Wardens of Outdoor Centres); L. P. Carver (Dunfermline College of Physical Education); E. C. G. Langmuir* (M.R.C. of S.); Major I. Leigh (Armed Services); M. G. Scott (non-voting Assessor for S.E.D.).

S.S.C.

Chairman: L. E. Liddell; *Vice-Chairman:* P. Heatly; *Chief Executive:* J. K. Hutchinson; *Members:* Miss M. Abbott; D. I. Bloomer; W. Menzies Campbell; C. H. K. Corsar; Brigadier F. H. Coutts; A. Devlin; D. C. C. Ford; K. L. Gurnley; F. Inglis; R. W. Jenkins; R. Kyle; H. G. M. Liddell; C. S. Loughlin; A. Macpherson; Dr V. J. Marrian; Mrs C. Methven; R. B. W. MacLaren; E. Watt; R. Wilson Shaw; J. B. Wilson.

For England read Middlesex.—As the domino theory would predict another English mountaineering club has gone hermaphrodite. We quote below a comment extracted from a recent Alpine Club circular.

'Members who have not already heard will be interested to learn that the Climbers Club decided at a meeting in Derbyshire to admit women to membership. The vote was overwhelmingly in favour, and the place of women in Mountaineering Clubs in this country seems to be resolved.'

These goings-on at the anglo-saxon fringe are of peripheral interest to us. We mention the matter only to provide an opportunity of expressing our admiration for the dignity and self-restraint of the various ladies' clubs. The quoted paragraph manages to imply with typical patronising male chauvinism that the existing ladies' mountaineering clubs are not Mountaineering Clubs. We trust the Pinnacle Club and the rump of the Ladies' Alpine Club will keep their grip on their tempers and their standards and continue to bar the porcine male from membership. The fall of the first Ladies' Club will be far more unfortunate than the present slitherings of their more feckless and emotionally unstable brother clubs.

Final Identification.—For the record R. Gall Inglis has provided the following identification of the people in the photograph of the Corroir Meet in 1933 published four years ago in *S.M.C.J.*, 1971, xxix, 405.

Back row, left to right: S. F. M. Cummings, T. E. Thomson, E. C. Thomson, J. S. M. Jack, R. W. B. Morris. Front row: H. MacRobert, J. Dow, G. T. Glover, W. N. Ling.

A Turn of the Tables.—J. C. Donaldson, the Editor of the 1974 *Edition of Munro's Tables*, has sent us the following account of some errors that have turned up in his carefully prepared opus, and discusses the difficulties in getting the canner members of the group to commit themselves to a definite height, and in some cases even to a constant map reference. Spelling is another protective device against classification which is much used by the Munros (note the intrusion of the subterminal 'p' in Beinn a' Chlaidheimh, a masterly tongue-in-cheek comment by this fine mountain). Spot heights, previously nameless, on new maps are found to have acquired intriguing Gaelic names and flirt for fuller recognition. It is difficult to pin these mountains down; most of them have been a long time in the West Highlands.

'The Editor wishes to apologise for a number of errors which have crept into the 1974 Edition despite his best endeavours to produce a mistake-free book.

Sec. 4 Stob Gabhar should be Stob Ghabhar.

11 Beinn a' Chlaideimph should be Beinn a' Chlaidheimh.

14 Càrn a' Mhaim. The metric conversion is wrong. The height given in the *High Tops* map is 1037m.

17 Sgùrr nan Gilleann — Map Ref. should be 472253

Am Basteir — Map Ref. should be 467253

Bhasteir Tooth — Map Ref. should be 465253

'A word of explanation should also be given about an apparent anomaly in Section 4 regarding the heights of Clach Leathad and Creise. In the 1" map Clach Leathad exceeds Creise in height while the reverse is the case in the 6". It is now known that in the 1:50,000 map to be published in 1976 the heights will be as follows:

Clach Leathad — 1098m. Creise — 1100m.

'This information will serve as an introduction to the next four paragraphs which may be taken in part as an answer to certain criticism published earlier this year. Normally, one would accept criticism and hope to benefit from it, but when it is unreasonable and published without the opportunity being given for a reply it is only right that readers should have the case fairly stated.

'When consideration was given to a successor to the 1969 edition of the Tables it was immediately apparent that the timing of publication was important in view of the imminence of the new 1:50,000 map. Our critic queried the publication of the new Edition before the new map had appeared and said we should have asked for pre-publication details. Naturally, we did just this, and were informed that the information would not be available. Therefore, it was a question of publish in 1974 or wait to start work in 1976 which, without going into details, would have meant a publication date in 1978. This would have meant a four-year gap without any Tables which we did not consider acceptable.

'To cover the years before another edition, based on the new map, could be produced, the metric column was added, and it is clearly stated in the introductory notes that where metric heights were not available the figures shown are conversions which may differ from actual heights on the new maps. We consider it quite useful to have this information even if it is just a rough guide. And not everybody is going to rush out and buy a 1:50,000 map if he has a good 1" copy. There have been criticisms of the English maps already published.

'The 1:50,000 sheet numbers were not given because it is impossible to be certain from the diagrammatic index what the exact boundaries are of individual maps. It would thus be very easy to give wrong sheet numbers for peaks on the edge of any particular map. Helpful critics would have been quick to point out these errors in two years' time!

'The noting of a new name on a map does not automatically qualify the spot height for inclusion in the Tables as a new top.

'Looking to the future it can be taken for granted that the next edition of the Tables will incorporate many more changes than have appeared in the current one. A first indication of this appears in Mr Inglis's note on the updating in the new High Tops of the Cairngorms map. But there should not be changes only in detail. The next edition should be a major appraisal of every peak on a more standardised system of classification than at present exists. Mr Bonsall has had some useful words to say on this in the last two numbers of the *Journal*. But the system must not be too rigid. There are peaks of merit the status of which would depend on some give and take. For instance, some have advocated in the past that Stob Coire nan Lochan should be a separate peak and not just a top of Bidean na Bian. Now we have the case of Clach Leathad/Creise. Is the former to lose its present status or is Creise to become a separate peak? These are two examples but there are many others which could be mentioned, especially in the North West, where in addition there will be the changes resulting from modern surveys.

'One recent point has cropped up which has given cause for concern. The new height given to Beinn a' Chaoruinn (Sec. 6) by the Ordnance Survey has been challenged and comments from climbers who visit this peak would be welcome.

'The Editor would like to air two other points with a view to getting general reactions.

'In his view most climbers use only the 1" map except in special cases, and it has only been necessary to refer to the 6" in the Tables because of the many differences in heights between the two maps. There should be no such variations between the 1:10,000 and the 1:50,000 maps, in which case the next edition can be produced without reference to the larger scale map.

'There have been arguments about the qualifying height for a Munro under the metric system, some advocating 900m and others 1000m. It can be assumed that if the metric system had been in use when Munro compiled his Tables he would have adopted 1000m as his qualifying height, and if a change were made it would seem logical to adopt that figure. But a Munro has so long been established as a Scottish mountain of 3000 feet and over that I do not think the standard should be altered now. Further, there are no significant metric equivalents or near equivalents for the Corbetts and Donalds.

'Finally, the Editor would like to thank those who have written to him about the 1974 edition. Their points of view, whether approving or critical, will be most useful when the time comes to produce the next edition. Further letters would be welcome from anyone who wants to express an opinion whether on the Tables or this article but it is regretted that it may not be possible to answer all letters.'

And Another.—R. Gall Inglis sends us this short note on the publication of the first of the Metric Maps of Scotland.

'It has generally been agreed that Munro's Tables of the 3000 ft. Mountains of Scotland should, as an historic document, remain unchanged when the new maps in metric measurement were published. The Publications Committee therefore published the 1974 edition of the Tables with a supplementary column with the old heights converted into the equivalent metric height.

'With the publication of the first of the Metric Maps of Scotland (*The High Tops of the Cairngorms*) in the autumn of 1974, however, it would appear that many changes will have to be made in the next edition of the *Tables*, with a symbol against the new metric height to show that this differs from that in the 1974 edition, for many of the former stated heights (especially the 'approx' and 'contour' ones will be wrong by one, or several, metres, and in two cases already a new name has been given to a 'top.'

'The following are the changes from the 1974 edition of Munro's Tables that are relevant to the *High Tops* sheet:

	1974 ed.	<i>High Tops Sheet</i>
Cairngorm, Fiacail Coire an-t-Sneachda	1125m	1120m.
Ben Macdhui, Cairn Etchachan	1113	1120
Derry Cairngorm	1155	1156
Càrn a' Mhaim	1064	1039
Braeriach, Stob Coire' an Lochan (Einich Cairn)	1230	1237
Braeriach, Stob Lochan Cnapan (New Name: Stob Dubh)	917	918
Cairntoul	1293	1291
Sgòr Gaoith, Meall Buidhe	970	978
Beinn Mheadhoin, S. Top: New Name: Barns of Beinn Mheadhoin.		

'Contour intervals on the new map are for 10 metres (33 ft. approx); many col heights are now stated; and the location of many of the climbs: for instance, the five Buttresses of Sgòran Dubh are indicated, and on Braeriach, the East Gully, Black Pinnacle, West Gully, The Couloir, and the West Buttress.'

And Yet Another.—We turn now from the theory of Munroölogy to its practice. The following have either reported personally, or have been clyped on by others, as having completed the lot. The list is of course provisional. The dates of completion are not always available and we suspect a lot of Munro-bagging is going on which is unknown to the Authorities. Clandestine activity of this sort will eventually have to be brought under the control of the Scottish Sports Council. The conventions are the same as in previous lists. The number in brackets preceding the name is the provisional place in the list; the first date is the date of completion of the Munros, the second date of completion of the Tops, and the third the date of completion of the 3000-ers in the junior mountain countries, Ireland, Wales and England.

(112) K. MacLean, 1973, —, —; (113) A. Robertson, 1973, —, —; (114) J. Dawson, 1973, —, —; (115) Ms D. Stadring, 1973, —, —; (116) A. R. Dunn, 1974, —, —; (117) E. A. Lawson, 1974, 1974, —; (118) D. J. Farrant, 1974, —, —; (119) R. Hardie, 1974, —, —; (120) J. W. Simpson, 1974, —; (61) H. M. Brown has again completed his annual round climbing them for the fourth time in 112 days. (81) W. Shand and (82) G. Shand have completed the furth of the Scotland group. (109) P. Roberts is now 1974, 1975, —.

(There is a great deal of interesting correspondence in the Editorial files on this subject which the hack who edits the small print in the *Journal* is incapable of handling. The theory and practice of Munroölogy is becoming so advanced that the Editor would be interested in acquiring the services of a full-time consultant to record and adjudicate—a Lord Lyon who will maintain rigid standards and after due scrutiny will award the appropriate Heraldic Achievements).

Some Interesting Old Journals.—The Hon. Librarian sends the following note:

'Sir Robert Grieve has presented to the Club Vols. iii to vii of the *Journal*, which belonged to William Douglas, the second Editor. Their interest is that they are interleaved with letters relating to many of the articles from the the authors and others. Here is a unique collection of correspondence in their own hand by the Founders and famous men of the early days of the Club: long, chatty letters about Club affairs from Naismith, Gilbert Thomson, Maylard, and especially, Stott, in style as racy as his articles, and many of them in the Scots tongue, pining in far-off New Zealand for the hill air of the Highlands.

'While most of the letters are mainly formal, and of little interest, some offer frank criticism of the *Journal* and individual authors, with pungency. A few give interesting and amusing snippets:

Vol. iii, 157: 'Orlamon Linecus' (the signatory to an article) is an anagram for 'Norman Collie' (his letter of 11 July 1894).

Hinxman, 'took a shot at the ospreys at Loch an Eilan. The chicks hatched out all right.'

Stott: 'That d . . . d idiot of a hotel porter put my big hobnailers in the kitchen oven, after a bad soaking, and forgot all about them. The cook lit the fire . . . !' (1894).

Even in 1894 they were concerned about Wilderness areas: Munro's presidential speech at the Dinner referred to 'the increased facilities for reaching new centres . . . this accessibility might be carried too far.'

The actual telegrams despatched from the Nevis Observatory Post Office, announcing conquest of the 'Precipice Route (Tower Ridge)—not difficult' (Naismith), and the N.E. Buttress: 'extremely difficult and sensational,' (W. A. Brown).

Edward Whymper (1895) acknowledging receipt of an old *Journal*.

First Meet at Fort William (Easter 1896)—an unrecorded sequel: presentation by those attending of 24 books (list recorded) to the observers in the Summit Observatory, in recognition of their hospitality.

Friendly threat to the Editor to 'dangle you over the precipice of Ben Nevis if you tamper with the author's manuscript.'

'Pic Robbieson,' the little pinnacle at the east end of the Salisbury Crags, Arthur's Seat, Edinburgh, is referred to in a letter in Vol. vii signed by 'your grateful President, 'R. A. Robbieson'. Did R. A. Robertson make the first recorded ascent? When? There is a probable pointer in Vol. iv, 66 ' . . . in the remote ages before the S.M.C. was born.' The pinnacle is referred to by both names in this context by Stott in another letter.'

Some Interesting Old Climbers.—Ian M. Campbell sends us the following account of two outings by some of our senior members. If certain people get to hear of this sort of thing there will undoubtedly be a Scottish Geriatric Mountain Leadership Training Board set up; there should be some good pickings for the bureaucrats in this field. Meanwhile we extend the Club's congratulations to our Hon. President on his 85th birthday. We hope he drank his birthday champagne on the top of Scald Law from a chorus girl's climbing boot. We note, as a sign of harder times, that only one bottle of champagne was drunk and not the usual two (see *S.M.C.J.*, xxix, 1970, 273).

'Ten members of the Club foregathered at Glenspean Lodge Hotel on 26th February 1975. Those who started early from Edinburgh climbed Beinn a' Chaoruinn (3437 ft.) before reaching the hotel for dinner. The next day the whole party, in groups, climbed Creag Meagaidh (3700 ft.) and came off by An Cearcallach (3250 ft.). The following day half the party climbed Beinn Eibhinn (3611 ft.) and the other half did Aonach Beag (4060 ft.). The snow conditions and the weather were perfect. Returning to Edinburgh the following day, one half of the party stopped in Glencoe in order to go up to the Hidden Valley, and others came from Kinloch Leven via the Devil's Staircase into Glencoe, where one member of the party had gone with transport.

'The average age of the whole party was over 70. Five totalled between them 230 years of membership of the Club. The senior was Bertie Martin, who, at 76, was a very active member of the party. Others were Fred Wylie, Robert Elton, and Myles Morrison, each over the 70 mark. Myles was wearing his kilt. This is, of course, normal practice for him, but it is perhaps worth

noting here that, when Myles was 68, he went on an Everest Trek led by Eric Shipton and that he was then wearing his kilt when they reached an altitude of 18,500 ft. The others in the Glenspean party were Theo Nicholson, Duncan Macpherson, Maurice Cooke, Norman Ledingham, Kenneth Macrae and myself, all in mid- or late 60's.

'The day after our return to Edinburgh, the Hon. President was the guest of seven of us on the top of the highest of the Pentlands (Scald Law 1898 ft.) where we toasted him in champagne on the occasion of his 85th birthday. The day was rather cold and wet, so we only did the one top. Usually the Hon. President does two or three tops when he comes out with us.

'It might perhaps be asked why, at our age, we elect to go on remote hills where the weather is sometimes rough. The quick answer is that we go because we like it; and we do not go out of any spirit of ascetic discipline, or to provide data for geriatric research. In these forays to the high hills one does have a sense of privilege that tends to increase with the passing years, and, at the end of a day's climb, one has a pleasant feeling of fulfilment. Could one ask more?'

IN MEMORIAM

EUAN B. ROBERTSON, 1880-1975

Our senior member, and almost certainly our oldest, died earlier this year, after a fall in his home. He was a cousin of mine, a close friend of the family and, I think, the kindest person I have ever met. I cannot claim to have climbed with him, as he was giving up climbing at about the time that I was beginning but it was greatly due to his encouragement that I took to the hills myself.

Euan did his first Alpine climb at the age of fourteen. It was the first ascent of the South-west ridge of L'Évêque, climbed with his father and, as was common in those days, in a large party with two guides. He joined the Club in 1901 and the Alpine Club in 1907 with a qualification which would have been considered adequate even today. He may never have been a great mountaineer, but he sometimes climbed with Harold Raeburn, who would probably not have suffered fools gladly.

He gave up active climbing in his forties and became an enthusiastic golfer, but he never lost interest in mountaineering, loved to talk about it and read most of the new books. His views were surprisingly advanced for one of his generation and he considered *The White Spider* to be the finest mountaineering book ever written.

When he was in his late eighties, I got a postcard from him in Zermatt. It said, 'I'm afraid I can't climb now but only walk a little. But I had to have a last look at the Matterhorn, which I haven't climbed since 1902.' He first climbed it in 1899.

By profession he was a Writer to the Signet and succeeded his father as senior partner of J. & R. A. Robertson, W.S. I last met him in his office in 1968, when he admitted that he no longer came to work often but walked up the stairs to see me because the lift would make him old. I don't know if he ever officially retired.

With Euan's death, we not only lose our senior member, we lose a link with the past, because Robert Robertson, his father, was one of our original members, who climbed in the Alps into his seventies and died at the exalted age of ninety-seven.

Euan leaves a wife, a son and a daughter to whom we offer our sincere sympathy.

IAIN H. OGILVIE.

GEORGE M. SMITH

GEORGE SMITH died on Tuesday, November 19th, 1974. He had a sudden and fatal heart attack while traversing Càrn Ban Mór alone on his way to 'bag' for the *third* time the Lochan nan Cnapan Top (3009 ft.) of Braeriach. As a member remarked, 'George made the Final Ascent with his boots on doing something he very much wanted to do.' Indeed many of his Munro and Top expeditions were made alone so his death was typical of his life on the hills.

George joined the Club in 1952 and was a well known figure at the winter evening meetings in Glasgow which he faithfully attended and enjoyed. He also attended the Receptions, A.G.M's (at which he occasionally spoke) and Dinners of the Club. He was not as often present at Meets, mainly because they did not fit in with his chief interest of ascending, over and over again, the Munros and Tops. This interest he extended to the 3000+ ft. Summits and Tops in Wales, the Irish Republic, and England.

In the 1972 *Journal* George's Munro record is summarised as (53) G. M. Smith, 1963, 1966, 1968 and 1969, 1969, 1971. It was his ambition to add at least two and possibly three dates to this record. In fact, at the time of his death, he had only eight more Munros and eleven more Tops to ascend for the *third* time. George's record must be unique amongst Munroists and I very much regret that he did not live to complete the treble.

George was an efficient and respected teacher, particularly as Principal Teacher of Mathematics at Victoria Drive Secondary School, Glasgow, from which post he retired in June 1974. He disregarded the jibe that 'A mathematics teacher should know that to start reascending Munros is to embark on an infinite series!' When questioned about 'new' Munros he retorted that his record was under the O.R. (Old Regulations).

George was a strong and capable hill walker. Being accustomed to solo expeditions he was a good route-finder and a reliable companion, particularly in adverse conditions. He had poor sight, rendering him almost blind in dim light, so that to be benighted with George was a memorable experience. Needless to say he always took particular care to avoid this happening when he climbed alone.

Many of his ascents were made under winter conditions when he took especial pride in having walked from King's House to Inveroran via the Black Mount and from Rannoch Station to Dalwhinnie Station via Ben Alder (before he owned a motor car!). Though not a rock climber he roped up to traverse the Dubhs and to ascend the Bhasteir Tooth and the Inaccessible Pinnacle. I shall always remember his 'astride' descent of the long side of the last named on his first ascent and his first and only abseil down the short side on his second ascent.

George had a complete and thorough knowledge of areas in the British Isles where 3000 ft. summits are situated. When criticised for never having visited other areas, e.g. Ardgour, he replied that he was saving up such expeditions for his retirement. His many friends must regret that this proved to be all too short.

W.T.T.

PROCEEDINGS OF THE CLUB

Easter Meet 1974—Dundonnell

ONCE again the Easter Meet at Dundonnell was held in perfect weather and attended by about 23 members and 10 guests.

We were delighted to have our Honorary President, Sandy Harrison, with us as usual, this time with his son, grandson and son-in-law—a truly historic occasion—and he was as active as ever. A message of good wishes was received from the President who unfortunately was prevented at the last minute from attending.

Parties were out every day on An Teallach, the Fannichs, the Beinn Dearg massif and other peaks. So far as is known the list of summits achieved was as follows: Bidean a' Ghlas Thuill, Sgùrr Fiona, traverse of An Teallach, A' Chailleach, Sgùrr Breac, Sgùrr nan Clach Geala, Càrn na Criche, Sgùrr Mór, Meall a' Chrasgaidh, Sgùrr nan Each, Beinn Dearg, Conamheall, Meall nan Ceapraichean, Clach Geala, Am Faohagach, Mullach Coire Mhic Fhearchair, Sgùrr Ban, Beinn a' Chlaidheimh, also en route to or from the meet, Cairngorm, Cairn Lochan and Càrn na Caim.

We record our thanks and appreciation to Mr & Mrs Selbie Florence and their staff for looking after us so well at the hotel.

Present were the Honorary President, J. M. C. Aitken, B. Barclay, J. Brumfitt, W. L. Coats, M. H. Cooke, R. R. Elton, B. Fraser, R. G. Folkard, J. N. Ledingham, R. C. S. Low, M. Morrison, P. F. MacDonald, D. H. McPherson, K. Macrae, T. Nicholson, R. A. North, G. S. Roger, R. G. S. Ward, C. B. M. Warren, R. G. S. Ward, J. A. Wood and F. R. Wylie. The Guests were K. Brennan, C. Cox, A. Harrison Jnr. and his son, P. Ledebøer, J. Nicholson, C. Simpson, L. Watson, M. Ward, and G. Wylie.

It was a very enjoyable and successful meet.

New Year Meet 1975—Roy Bridge

THE New Year Meet was held at Glen Spean Lodge Hotel in fairly rough weather. We were very well looked after by Mr & Mrs Smith and Mr & Mrs Evans and their staff at their very comfortable hotel. We record our grateful thanks to them and also to Vice-President Douglas Scott and his wife for a most enjoyable Hogmanay party at their delightful cottage.

Parties were out every day and so far as is known the summits achieved included: Càrn Dearg, Sgòr Gaibhre, Beinn a' Chaoruinn, Stob Coire an Laoigh, Creag Pitridh, Geal Chàrn, Stob Coire Sgriodain, Chno Dearg, Meall nan Teanga, Stob a' Choire Mheadhoin, Stob Coire Easain, Stob Ban, Stob Choire Claurigh and Stob Coire na Ceannain.

19 members and 2 guests attended the meet—Members: The President, A. H. Hendry, L. Kaeziynski, J. N. Ledingham, R. C. S. Low, H. H. Mills, I. D. McNicol, K. Macrae, I. H. Ogilvie, D. D. Paterson, G. Peat, G. S. Roger, D. Scott, C. G. M. Slesser, I. H. M. Smart, D. Stewart, W. Wallace, C. B. M. Warren, F. R. Wylie; Guests: A. Jones and R. Hollingdale (both Mountain Club of South Africa).

It was a very enjoyable and successful meet.

Reception, A.G.M. and Dinner, 1974

THIS year we returned to the George Hotel, Edinburgh, notable for its inadequate supplies of beer and its mock-ethnic menus.

RECEPTION

The lecture was given by Alan North, who spoke in a rather negative way about his recent trip to the Pamirs with other members. The ensuing Bunfight seemed even more congested and hurried than usual. Surely it is time that we put an end to this annual endurance test. The spectacle of old friends, all round the room, spraying each other's faces with crumbs and trousers with tea in the effort to combine communication with consumption does us no credit at all.

A.G.M.

The A.G.M. began briskly enough with a noisy discussion of a mooted Watchdog Committee to keep an eye on the filthy doings of the oil companies and parasite industries around the coasts. Many members spoke, some at length, but we cannot for the life of us recall what, if anything, was decided. We do, however, recall the droll contributions of Peter Macdonald, who seemed to be practising to be old and of Bill Skidmore, who pretended to be a lawyer.

Next came a long apologetic speech from President Brooker who had indicated to the Scottish Office that the Club would prefer the Skye power line to pass through Glen Quoich and Loch Hourn—a point of view roundly disapproved of by the majority of those present. As Scott Johnstone put it, 'Glen Shiel is already ruined by a four lane highway.' In fairness to Brooker it was plain that he was already beset by second thoughts and that, in any case, it was obvious even to the most benighted member present that the Skye power line should begin and end in Skye; that the Secretary of State should present the Public with such absurd conundrums is beyond understanding.

The high point of the meeting came towards the end when Skidmore rose again to advocate Putting Women in the Club, as it were. This provoked predictably spirited reaction: Slessor made an obscure remark about Balls of Hate, some master of sophistry pointed out that there were 'plenty of ways of keeping women out of the Club without having it written in our Constitution,' Humble said it was 'a Deplorable Proposal. Aaaaah!' In the end Skidmore's motion was heavily defeated.

The last point of interest concerned the venue for next year's Dinner, Glasgow being unable to accommodate us further. Secretary Bennet expounded an insoluble Constitutional problem and then invited the members to solve it. Again many spoke, some at length, but the problem remained, and remains, unsolved. E. C. Thomson brought the meeting to an entertaining conclusion by rising to make two points, making one, then announcing with great pride and finality that, 'That's the first point and I've forgotten the second one.'

DINNER

Now that the Constitution has been interfered with (but not raped) the Eighty-sixth Dinner might well have been the last in the old format. If so, it was not a climax. After the dreadful eighty-fifth it could only be an improvement on the culinary side. Even so the prudent ones blunted their hunger with Reception sandwiches and slaked their drouth with cheaper beverages before facing the caterer's version of a meal and a wine-list. However let us not dwell on a graceless and Graceless dinner—perhaps it was felt that to ask the Almighty's blessing for an assembly of largely non-believers about to partake of a non-meal was to risk a demonstration of the origin of the Brooker phenomenon (*S.M.C.J.*, xxx, 263)—the Dinner is an occasion not just a meal. The meat of the matter is in the speeches not on the plate.

Two general features of these were a welcome change from last year, a sharply diminished political content and an absence of the obsession with anal venting. Bill Brooker's departing presidential address dwelt with matters Pamirean and parochial while giving us the ritual assurances that we are an excellent club and our future is in reliable hands (constitutional slip-ups notwithstanding). The (now sadly diminished) Club membership of 333 provoked our former President into a reference to our most famous former member—to whom he bears a more than passing resemblance. More popular was the suggestion that the 'Metric Munros' be christened Donaldsons after our wizard of the balance sheet. All-in-all a creditable performance in the robust Brooker manner with mercifully few excursions into dialect and none into dialectic.

Another robust performance was the Club Song. Now that more of Stott's literary style has been unveiled in the *Journal* I suppose we can be grateful it is not worse than it is. However, do we know what his original metronome markings were?

The event of the evening was Ben Humble's toast to the guests and kindred clubs—a remarkable tour-de-force. He began, 'I find from my records . . .,' but he wasn't referring to some poor victim of the mountains (or the sea-cliffs or even the dense forests of Arran) but to the Cairngorm Club, 'Representatives of which,' he computed, 'had consumed some 172 bottles of wine at the S.M.C's expense over the years.' If true, a useful subsidy to the senior club. The Recording Angel of Scottish Mountaineering spared few in a speech which was remarkable not only for vigour of delivery but also for making more references to Scafell than to the Cobbler. The final delivery of the toast, terminating in the Humble war-cry, sounded more like a challenge than a compliment.

The reply on behalf of the guests by Mr Farrant of the Yorkshire Ramblers was both elegant and eloquent. Once again we were reminded that the emigré Englishman is often readier to extol the value of the Scottish mountain environment than the natives.

The formal proceedings were terminated by the handing over of the insignia of Presidential office (that ice-axe still hasn't been shortened) to Alec Small. Ex-President Brooker fumbled the hand-over of the badge, hinting that it was but a replica and the original had been melted down to strengthen the Aberdonian hedge against inflation—he wasn't altogether disbelieved.

The representative from the Creagh Dhu Guide to Gracious Living awarded the function half a bent fork.

R. RICHARDSON.

J.M.C.S. REPORTS

Edinburgh Section.—The Section again finds itself in a strong position with a membership of over 70. It has been particularly encouraging to note that the active membership has increased, and that the Club consequently seems to be active on most week-ends. This can probably be attributed to the regular, but informal, mid-week gatherings which are always well attended and form a contact point for members.

Eighteen official week-end meets were held but unfortunately many were marred by the poorest of weather. Several meets did however coincide with the very fine Spring period of which the outstanding week-end was that of our trip to Barrisdale in Knoydart. A party of thirty, many with full winter gear, trudged the long way to the bothy beneath bright blue skies and sun, the temperature of which was rarely below 70°F. There was of course no snow but

all the Munros were visited. Secretary Brodie, who spent the first half of 1974 in Shetland, spent this week-end fog-bound in Lerwick but did manage to fly in for a meet in Buttermere a few weeks later!

Other notable meets were held to Skye, the Shelter Stone and Derbyshire where the Castle Mountaineering Club were our hosts and laid on splendid weather for our useless attempts on the celebrated gritstone. The two training week-ends organised by the Mountaineering Council of Scotland at Glenmore Lodge were attended by some newer members. We continued to hold mid-week meets to local outcrops and these were popular and often hilarious.

Three members of the Club succeeded in their second attempt to climb The Old Man of Storr. They report that it is inadvisable to make the return traverse from the stack to the mainland during high tide!

The Smiddy, the Section hut at Dundonnell, is now well established and is proving popular with clubs from all over the country despite the considerable distance involved in travelling to the north-west. The Annual Dinner was held in the Fife Arms Hotel, Braemar, and was as successful as ever.

Finally, the Section has after many years taken one step upwards; we congratulate Jim Clark on his election to the senior club.

Secretary · Iain D. Brodie, 4 Springfield Street, Edinburgh.

Glasgow Section.—The Section has enjoyed an active year—a resurgence in fact—with fortnightly meets well attended both by the Old Guard and by a batch of keen, new members. Climbing standards have been high and enthusiasm has been such that foul weather has been no bar, thereby providing some memorable days. Membership stands at 110 with 12 new members having been admitted during the past year.

The late Mr Monro kindly donated the Coruisk hut to the Section and transfer of title deeds is almost complete. Improvements to the Coruisk hut in the form of a new toilet connected to a septic tank are also under way. However, attempts to make the Creag Meagaidh hut waterproof and lock-proof have not been successful—the former defeated by condensation and the latter by vandals.

We continued to organise Friday night lectures during the winter months, alternating with the Western District S.M.C. as hosts. These functions are a most successful feature of the Club's activities and usually provide better entertainment than that from the professional circus.

A proposal for the admittance of women members was defeated by a massive majority at the A.G.M.—only two voted for—the proposer and the seconder!

Plans for the year ahead include a meet in the Dauphiné and the celebration of the Club's 50th anniversary with a dinner to be held in the Central Hotel on Saturday, October 11th. Judging by the excellence of the entertainment for the Burns' Supper, when Stanley Stewart, Ian MacLeod, and Nancy Sommerville—ably supported by members of the committee—gave us a hilarious evening, the Club's anniversary should be celebrated in a proper manner.

Office-bearers—*Hon. President*: Ian MacLeod; *Hon. Vice-President*: George Wilkinson; *President*: Bill Duncan; *Treasurer*: Bill Watson, 46 Norse Road, Glasgow, G14 9HW; *Secretary*: Peter Hodgkiss, 595 Clarkston Road, Glasgow, G44 5QD.

Lochaber Section.—During the year greater effort was made to contact young local climbers and others who have recently taken up residence in the district. This has resulted in the membership list being raised to around the 70 mark and it is to be hoped this increase in the local proportion will be reflected in better attendances at indoor and outdoor meets.

The current winter season has seen tremendous activity on Nevis with many serious routes being accomplished despite the relatively poor snow and ice conditions. Summer and Autumn climbing was, on the whole, more subdued this year as the rainfall from July onwards, even by Lochaber standards, surpassed itself—the last three months alone producing a near normal annual average.

The A.G.M. was better attended than usual and an active committee is arranging a programme of indoor and outdoor activities. The good attendance may partly be attributed to the innovation of having a show of members' slides after the business—the slide 'lecture' by Willie A. in no small way contributing to the general hilarity.

Poor weather which curtailed more ambitious hopes was encountered in the Alps by Lochaber parties but Ronnie Cameron's successful ascent of the West Face Route on Mt. Kenya is worthy of mention.

The Spring season was marred by a series of accidents to climbers visiting the area and much time and energy was devoted by many local members to rescue operations leaving little scope for other activities. Steall Hut continues to be well occupied and the change of Custodianship has taken place smoothly; in this respect we are all indebted to the dedication of John Currie and his wife.

Office-bearers—Hon. *President*: J. Ness; *President*: A. Kane; *Treasurer*: W. Adam; *Hut Custodian*: N. Parrish, 86 Kennedy Road, Fort William; *Secretary*: G. Templeton, 72 Blar Mhór Road, Caol, by Fort William.

Perth Section.—Membership of the Section dropped slightly from last year's zenith and now stands at 62. 11 week-end and 4 day meets were held during the year and as usual attendances were very good and showed that a large proportion of the membership managed to attend meets at some time during the year. Rock and snow and ice activity on meets has increased while the dedicated hill-walkers seem to be seeking out still lower summits.

Our Section's Annual Dinner Meet was once again held in the Fife Arms, Braemar, with the majority of members staying in the Muir of Inverey. This was as usual the best attended of the Club's meets and all those present enjoyed an excellent meal and the after-dinner offerings of Messrs. McNeill, Rudie and Anton, who were all in good form. The other very successful meets held were to Glen Etive in February, Glencoe in March and to Dundonell in August which all demonstrated the properties of a successful meet—two days good weather, a high attendance of members and an interesting area.

As in previous years the Club combined with the Perthshire Society of Natural Science to organise our Annual Lecture in early January. This year's illustrated lecture was given by Jim Anton of the S.M.C. who had recently returned from a nine-year sojourn in New Zealand and who described the mountains and wildlife of both the North and South Islands.

The Section was well represented at the Annual Dinners of our fellow Sections and at that of the Grampian Club. Representatives also attended the A.G.M. of the Mountaineering Council of Scotland.

Our own Section's A.G.M. was held in Perth in mid-November and the routine matters on the agenda were quickly dealt with and only two topics promoted much discussion. The first of these was the annual review of the Club subscription which is remaining at last year's rate due to an offer by one

of our retired members, Jimmy Grant, to distribute the monthly circular in the Perth area and so make a considerable saving on postage. The second was the change of our Section's name. It was agreed almost unanimously to change the Club name to The Perth Mountaineering Club (J.M.C.S.—Perth Section). When business was over there followed a showing of member's slides of their past year's activities.

Office-bearers—*Hon. President*: Chris Rudie; *Hon. Vice-President*: John Proom; *President*: Peter Franklin; *Treasurer*: Iain Robertson; *Secretary*: John Rogers, 19 Stormont Park, Scone, Perth.

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

North America

BILL MARCH writes, 'After returning from the unsuccessful R.A.F. Dhaulagiri IV expedition in May, I flew to Pocatello, Idaho, to work as a graduate assistant in the Idaho State University Outdoor Program. The summer was hectic with climbing trips to the Teton, the Sawtooths, the Wind Rivers and the Pioneer mountains and a descent of 100 miles of the Middle Fork of the Salmon River in a rubber boat. In the Sawtooth mountains of southern Idaho the Steyr Chimney and north couloir of Mt. Heyburn (10,229 ft.) were guided with clients and a first complete west-east traverse of the mountains was accomplished. The latter climb was similar in quality to the Charmoz-Grepon traverse and contained several awkward abseils and one short aid pitch.

'In July a seven-day trip was made with Stan Hilbert into the wild and beautiful Wind River Range of southern Wyoming. These granite peaks form one of the greatest wilderness areas of the U.S.A. and two days back-packing were required to reach the major peaks. The northern area was visited and several fine climbs were done, all first-class ascents—the North Face of Sulphur Peak (12,825 ft., 1800 ft. T.D. sup.), North Couloir of Mt. Ladd (12,975 ft., 2000 ft., P.D.) and the South Face of Split Mountain (13,355 ft., 1500 ft., D.). Food supplies ran out and a hungry night march was stopped when a porcupine blocked the trail. In the darkness it was mistaken for a bear and we beat a retreat to the trees. After this episode we decided to bivouac and next day reached the road head with no further mishaps. The summer ended with a probable first ascent of the North West Face of Mt. Hyndman (12,078 ft.) in the Pioneer Range—the route followed a 1000 ft. ice couloir and then ascended a 100 ft. of tottering rock steps.

'The winter has been less successful—whilst attempting the North Ridge of Leatherman Peak in the Big Lost River Range of South Idaho my companion, Bill Andrews and I were avalanched whilst crossing a couloir. Fortunately neither of us were injured although Bill went 200 ft. The retreat was an unanimous decision. Misfortune followed our attempt on the North Ridge of Mt. Moran (12,605 ft.) in the Tetons in mid-December. After a seven-mile trip across Jackson Lake in an open canoe to the foot of the mountain, deep snow and a blizzard forced us to retreat. The wind-lashed waters of the lake were no place for an open canoe so we constructed a sail out of a bivouac sack and a mast and out-rigger out of skis and sailed to safety with a following wind. As in Scotland the best winter climbing appears to be late in the season and after these escapades I have decided to confine my activities to ski-ing for a while.'

The Alps

IAIN OGILVIE and CHARLES WARREN spent two weeks in and around the Aosta valley and were joined by OLIVER TURNBULL for the second week.

A day spent in the Velan hut in bad weather was followed by sunshine and Mont Velan was climbed on 22 July in deep soft snow. They then crossed into Italy and after a stormy night in the Bivacco di Montet and a late start, climbed the Torre di San Orso on the Cima Degli Apostoli.

On 28 July with OLIVER TURNBULL the Grivola was traversed from the Rifugio Vittorio Sella, ascending by the south ridge of Tucketts' first attempt and descending by the ordinary south-east face route. This is a fine expedition, mostly on rock but rather far from the hut and took 16½ hours. They then had an easier day on the Testa de Rutor and finished the holiday with a traverse of the Grand Combin on 3 August. The ascent from the Valsorey hut was made by the west ridge and the descent by the Corridor Route on the north side. They returned to the hut by the Col du Meitin. The northern approach to this col, after two snowless winters, is no longer a snow slope but is crossed by an ice wall which must be climbed or circumvented. This was another 16½ hour trip.

COLIN STEAD writes, 'I was in Chamonix with DOUG LANG for the latter half of July, enjoying mostly good weather. We did two routes. On the 23rd the Direct (Swiss) Route on the North Face of the Aiguille des Courtes in 11 hours. This was a long plod, with much sun for a north face. The bottom third did contain 300 feet of surprisingly steep, thin ice which was climbed in the dark. About Scottish GRADE IV. On the 29th and 30th we did the Gervasutti Pillar on Mont Blanc du Tacul which gave a most enjoyable rock climb.'

J. McK. STEWART was in Austria with three O.A.V. friends in late August and early September, experiencing the worst weather in the Eastern Alps for ten years. He writes, 'From Obergurgl, in the Ötztal we ascended to the Neue Karlsruher Hut and next day climbed the moraine on to the Gurglerferner to the Annakogel, retreating from below the North West shoulder down the glacier to the Hochwilde Haus in a hailstorm. On Tuesday, in thick mist, we crossed the Gurglerferner above the wide crevasses and went up to the Ramol Haus which stands at 3000 m. on a Pinnacle Butress. Our plans to climb the Ramolkogel next day were abandoned when we awoke to two feet of fresh snow which continued to fall all day until Thursday morning when we descended to the valley through debris of many avalanches that had swept down from the buttresses of North Peak Ramolkogel and the Gampleskogel. Obergurgl from above appeared as a Winter Ski-ing advert and this was August! We went on down to Zwieselstein then by Postal Bus through head-high snowdrifts up the single-track road to Vent, followed by a long tramp to the Martin Busch Hut.

'On Friday in deep snow we climbed to the Kreuz Joch and up the narrow North East ridge of the Kreuzkogel, being defeated by an unstable cornice below the summit. On Saturday we went over the Niederjochferner to the Hauslab Joch to climb the Fineilspitze but alas met a complete white-out and deep snow, so moved on to the Italian Similaun Hut for a Hot Meal before the long trek in soft snow down the glacier to the Martin Busch. On Sunday morning, in clear blue skies at last, we set off early up the South East and South ridge of the Saykogel enjoying a half-hour on top in sunshine before storm clouds approaching from the Italian border drove us quickly back to the Hut.

'On the following morning we went down to Vent and up to the Breslauer Hut. I arrived with a heavy cold which prevented my joining the others next day on a successful climb up the Wildspitze. Wednesday dawned, everywhere blanketed in deep snow, so having had enough we descended, in a blizzard, to Vent and on to Sölden. On our last full day, we ascended to the Geislaher Alm and climbed up to the Geislaher See for an easy day on the south flank of the Aussere Schwarze Schneide.'

P. V. BRIAN, J. BRUMFITT, R. N. CAMPBELL and A. W. EWING paid a brief visit to the Italian side of the Pennine Alps at the beginning of July last year. After an inconsequential expedition in the Valpellina they moved to Breuil (except BRUMFITT, who limped home on feet tattered by exceptionally hard-wearing acrylic socks) whence they attempted the Italian Ridge of the Matterhorn, which provoked a strong flow of errors of judgment. First of all, the Pavillon de Rondet was discovered closed at about 8 p.m. Unfortunately undaunted, they moved up to the Luigi Amedeo Hut (now Rifugio Carrel) encountering appalling snow conditions on the Tête du Lion and ice on the ridge itself, which delayed their arrival until 2 a.m. In the morning a late start and heavy icing on the Ridge stopped BRIAN and CAMPBELL just below the Pic Tyndall. A dismal performance.

The party then moved to Alagna in the Val Sesia. From the Gnifetti Hut (expensive) they enjoyed a very long but satisfying day on Monte Rosa, climbing to the Dufourspitze by the Cresta Rey and traversing back over the Grenzgipfel and Zumsteinspitze. The descent of the Grenzgipfel consumed much time and patience, being still snowbound and heavily verglassed. Alagna can be highly recommended. There is a moderately-priced cable-car service to the Punta Indren (3260 m.), only a short distance from the Gnifetti, and the village is pleasantly unspoiled with an excellent eating-place, the Trattoria d'Oro, doing 4-course meals with wine for about 2,000 lire.

JOHN STEELE, PETER FOSTER and HENRY TINDALL (J.M.C.S.) spent ten days climbing in the Dolomites during early August. The following climbs were completed: First Sella Tower West Ridge (IV), Second Sella Tower North Wall (IV), Sass Pordoi South Pillar (IV), Sass Pordoi North West Face (IV), Sassolunga North East Face (V) and Cinque Dita Schmidt Chimney (IV).

JOHN STEELE writes, 'The holiday started badly, with the fourth member of our party being confined to bed just before we left. Then on our way across Europe the car developed piston trouble. Because of these two mishaps, we decided to set up permanent camp just to the east of the Sella Pass.

'Our first two routes took us to the Sella Towers where we climbed the short West Ridge of the First Tower and the longer North Wall of the Second Tower. We then turned our attention to Sass Pordoi across the valley. Here we ascended the South Pillar Route, which gave good GRADE IV climbing with an exposed crux pitch on the final wall. Next we had a look at the impressive North West Face. This huge wall overshadowed the campsite and on the evening before we attempted the route it supported three waterfalls, emanating from a ledge some 1500 ft. up. The first half of the face provided superb crack and wall climbing which led to a deep chimney below the large ledge. The chimney contained a veritable torrent, but the route escaped by a slippery traverse half way up. On reaching the ledge, we were greeted with cries for help from two Austrian guides who had attempted the chimney direct and who were in the process of drowning. Having eventually completed the rescue, these two "expert climbers" then showed their appreciation by literally climbing over us on their way up the final wall. It turned out that they were in danger of missing the last cable car down! A few days later, we walked over the Sella Pass and bivouacked under the North Face of Sassolungo. Our intended climb was by the East Tower, but after the initial pitches we got off route and ended up doing a totally

independent line, about 2000 ft., mostly GRADE V. However our progress was halted by the overhanging summit walls, so down we had to go. The subsequent retreat off the North East Face was accomplished only by some pretty exciting abseiling. Our last route was on Cinque Dita by way of the Schmidt Chimney. As on the previous climb, the route description was misleading but we did manage to complete it, although one of our ropes was chopped in half when a huge flake decided to join the scree far below.

P. HODGKISS, R. HAWTHORN, J. MILLER and S. ORR (J.M.C.S.) visited the Valais for their first trip to the Alps. Due to an excess of caution and poor weather, only four peaks were climbed—Petite Dent de Veisivi, Pigne d'Arolla, Mont Blanc de Cheilon and Aiguille de Tsa. Arolla was surprisingly free of people during the second half of July, and the huts were correspondingly quiet.

BOOKS

1:25000 O.S. map: The High Tops of the Cairngorms.

In late 1974 the Ordnance Survey published the *High Tops of the Cairngorms*, one of their special *Outdoor Leisure Maps* which cover some of the most important tourist areas in Britain. For ramblers and climbers it is the finest map of the Cairngorms ever produced. The scale is 1:25000, or about 2½ inches to the mile. A new survey in 1969-71 led to the publication of 1:10000 maps of the area, and the new 1:25000 map is derived from them. All heights are in metres, with contours every 10 metres, and the heights of many cols are given as well as hill tops. The map covers the most-visited part of the Cairngorms, from Abernethy south to Glen Geldie and from Glen Lui west to Glen Feshie and Loch Alvie. Camp sites, information centres, viewpoints, 'mountain refuge huts,' other tourist facilities, and mountain rescue posts stand out boldly in large letters. Recent bulldozed tracks in the area are shown, up to the date of the new survey, and also new forestry plantations.

The blue cross for each mountain refuge hut is such a dark blue and is so wide that one cannot easily see the hut's precise position; the arrow for the Shelter Stone looks much clearer. The boundaries of the National Nature Reserves and the Glenmore Forest Park appear as a wide line in light green, clear enough on the high tops but confusing in areas with woodland (also coloured light green), for instance in Glen Feshie, Glen Luibeg and Glen Derry. A bold, bright blue mark draws attention to a viewpoint on Craigellachie, immediately behind the Aviemore Centre and thus likely to be visited by many people, but the 'viewpoint' is centred upon the dangerous steep cliff-face of Craigellachie. An interesting point is that the three infamous high-level bothies of Curran, El Alamein and St. Valery are not shown at all, although all three are still up on the plateau; maybe their non-appearance on the map will help slightly towards removing them for good. Surprisingly, the good low-level shelter on the lower Geldie at about 003869 is not shown, although the nearby Ruigh nan Clach (in no better state) is marked clearly. The hut at about 906885 below Eidart is also not shown clearly.

It is not clear precisely where the big stones of Clach Mhic Cailein, Clach Choutsaich and Clach nan Tailleir are. On Sgòr Gaoith, A'Chailleach is shown on the plateau edge, whereas in fact it is a rock pillar nearly half way down No. 5 buttress. In Garbh Choire Mór, Great Gully is marked below the main col between Sgòr an Lochain Uaine and Braeriach, but this is the easy scree shoot of Col Gully, whereas Great Gully is steeper with broken rock pitches. Crown buttress is shown to the east of the col, whereas in fact both it and Great Gully lie west of the col. The other rock-climbing features on the map are marked reasonably accurately. However, one wonders about the value

of showing individual routes on a map, as a tourist standing in the corrie could not identify the routes from the map alone. (This criticism does not apply to the naming of separate cliffs, such as No. 5 Buttress on Sgòran Dubh, which would easily be identified on the ground). One error is that the Derry Dam is shown about 1 km. upstream from the actual site; you can still see the remains of the wooden breastworks of the dam just above the footbridge at 040958.

The map is generally very good for place names. Obvious printer's errors are Allt ant-Seallaidh (should be Allt an t-Seallaidh) at 035015, Lochan t-Seilich (should be Loch an t-Seilich) in Gleann Einich, Càrn an Fhidleir Lorgaidh (should be Fhìdhleir) at 855875, and Dhomain instead of Dhomhain at 868929. In Coire Gorm a' Chrom-alltain at 889993, another printer's error is Allt a' Chram-alltain (should be Chrom). The revised spelling Chaorainn is used for Beinn a' Chaorainn at 045014, but inconsistently the older form Chaoruinn at 873881. At Loch Mhic Ghille-chaoile, the final 'e' is an error as this is a feminine form of the adjective, an insult with the masculine noun for 'gille,' a young man! Accents on the Gaelic vowels are accurate when shown but are not always shown consistently, though there are none of the many incorrect accents that were so prevalent on the old 1-inch to the mile maps. A deplorable feature of this map is the unnecessary anglicisation of place names. Creag an Leth-choin has Lurcher's Crag after it in parentheses, although this English version was not shown at all on recent Ordnance Survey 1-inch to the mile maps. The rocky gap at 965053 is denoted by the entirely artificial name of Chalamain Gap, although the good local name of Eag Coir' a' Chomhlaich still exists and was shown on earlier Ordnance Survey maps. Another anglicisation is Bynack Stable at 0211105, instead of the old name Pit Fyannich (phonetic spelling), a name which is still in use locally.

On hill tops with triangulation pillars, the heights 'refer to the station height at ground level and not necessarily to the summit. Details of the summit height may be obtained from the Ordnance Survey.' Obviously, a certain vagueness now pervades the summits, and no longer do we have these firm old favourites 4084 feet for Cairn Gorm or 4241 feet for Cairn Toul. To those who have a great interest in the exact details of the summit heights, whether Munros or not, one can only offer sympathy and suggest a less complicated alternative hobby!

For topographical detail this map is excellent. Thus, for precise and accurate navigation in the central and west Cairngorms, it will be of very great value. The detail of streams, pools, and other features on difficult ground like the plateau of Braeriach or the plateau between Cairn Gorm and Ben Macdui is very fine, easy to read, and quite outstanding compared with any previous map. Apart from the abrupt small crag at Creag Bad an t-Seabhaig at 036942, which is not marked, this map shows all cliffs in the Cairngorms, not just some, and moreover shows all major cliff edges accurately for the first time in the area. Despite its various errors and faults, many of which could be corrected in future editions, the map can therefore be recommended as outstanding, even though fairly expensive.

ADAM WATSON.

The Snows of Yesteryear—J. Norman Collie, Mountaineer. By William C. Taylor. (1974; Holt, Rinehart & Winston, Toronto. 186pp., 23 ill.).

It is fitting that this biography, written by a Scot, of one of our most famous former members, should be in the Club Library to supplement his obituary notice in the *Journal* (xxiii, 95). In addition to giving an insight into his family history and character, and his early and closing years, Collie's climbing achievements in the British Isles, the Alps, the Himalaya and the Canadian Rockies are described in detail, as well as his scientific achievements. A list of his articles published in mountaineering journals is also given.

R.G.I.

The Eiger. By Dougal Haston. (1974; Cassell of London. 170pp., 14 photographs, 1 sketch. £3.95).

This is an excellent book, constituting a thorough survey of events on the Eiger since Harrer's *White Spider*. Haston has a great respect for factual accuracy and this shows through in his meticulous descriptions of the Eiger's new clothes and his strong preference for first-hand accounts of the climbs. Over the years he has developed a prose style, spare and bony as himself, which is attractive and easy to read.

As usual Haston's attitude to ethical questions is equivocal, although he wrinkles a nostril or two at the Japanese fondness for bolts and at the increasing use of the Eiger helicopter safety-net as a remedy for *failure* as well as injury. I found his uncompromising attitude to critics who have not themselves done battle with the Eiger somewhat irritating: this seems little more than the customary resentment of critics by actors—if the complaints are reasonable what does it matter who makes them?

The only serious defect of the book, however, is the low standard of illustration. The photographs are clearly just what Haston could find in the bottom of his rucksack and the lack of a decent topographical sketch makes parts of the story rather difficult to follow.

R.N.C.

Hard Rock: Great British Rock-climbs. Compiled by Ken Wilson. (1975; Hart-Davis-MacGibbon. 220pp., 160 photographs. £6.95).

Little point in debating the ethics of the thing now that it is published. We will consider the merits of the finished job and worry about the queues under the climbs later.

The plan of this large and handsome hut table (definitely not rucksack) book is a collection of sixty selected rock-climbs from the higher grades throughout the British Isles. The carve-up of routes is: Scotland seventeen, Lake District eleven, Wales fifteen, and outlying crags and sea cliffs seventeen. The climbs are described by a collection of experts with the result that the quality and style of the text varies as much as the climbs but Ken Wilson pulls all this together very well in his authoritative opening essay on the development of hard rock-climbing in Britain. Each chapter and its climbs is illustrated with large, generally excellent black-and-white photographs, many quite outstanding (but no technical photo-data) and all without the ubiquitous and annoying dotted-line. Instead each route has its own thumbnail sketch from the masterful pen of Brian Evans clearly showing the (dotted) line and easily related to the main crag shot in every case.

The result of this carefully thought out format comes surprisingly close to avoiding the inevitable snag suffered by all books of this kind—the fact that paper rock, however good, is ultimately boring. We will probably never know if the proposed S.M.C. 'glossy' would have avoided this problem since it is now shelved but perhaps the idea of including Winter climbs and hill-walks would have helped. In any event *Hard Rock* has stolen some of our thunder. . . .

The Scottish section is generally good but the Rosa Pinnacle photograph is the poorest in the book* and, please note, the Arran boat no longer leaves from Fairlie and never has arrived at 'Broderick'!

Our MacInnes, about due for a compliment, does well with his interesting account of Nimlin not falling out of Ravens Gully, in nails. . . .

Wilson is aware that his choice of routes will provide endless argument and we must not disappoint him. *Dragon* and *Gob* side by side in the book as well as on Carnmore Crag seem an odd combination when you consider

* Taken by the Hon. Editor!

that almost all first-visit parties make a bee-line for *Fionn Buttress*. Similarly on Nevis we get, naturally enough, *Centurion*. But why the *Bat*? The Smith Myth can be overdone . . . *Minus One Buttress Direct* would have been a better partner for *Centurion* being quite magnificent and on another part of the mountain. Arrochar is ignored. One of the Creag Dhu Cobbler routes would have been more relevant than many of the short outcrop climbs over-catered for in the book. The Cobbler has a special place in early Scottish climbing.

Having said all this it must be admitted that it was necessary and amusing to have to tear the book away from some of the most critical scrutineers. In short, a big desirable 'glossy' at a big price yet worth buying unless you agree with the pundit who crushingly remarked—'You would be cheaper just doing the routes!'

W.S.

The Mont Blanc Massif (the 100 Finest Routes). By Gaston Rebuffat, translated from the French by Jane and Colin Taylor. (1975; Kaye and Ward Ltd., London. 239pp., 265 photographs (89 colour), 100 route diagrams. £5.95).

Rebuffat has rewritten his earlier 1946 guide (*The Finest 50 Routes of the Mont Blanc Massif*) in the modern format (10" x 9") with several photographs and individual diagrams for each route. He has chosen these routes to include all levels of difficulty and arranged them in sequence so that 'the routes are at each standard the finest corresponding to the technical expertise and experience' of the climber. Each route includes a short introduction, recommendations on equipment, estimated time and difficulty together with a normal guide-book description of the climb. The photographs are chosen to give both a clear indication of the exact route in each case and also the general character of the mountain or the type of climbing. The line diagrams showing the route are very closely and clearly related to at least one of these photographs. The book has a short introduction aimed mainly at the alpine novice with the usual advice on equipment, fitness, speed and caution, etc. with some brief thoughts on the history and geology of the area along with some of Rebuffat's philosophy of the mountains.

Whatever the aspirations or abilities of the reader, this volume is no substitute for the conventional guide-book. Rebuffat assumes that the reader is already quite familiar with the geography of the area. No information is given about huts and access to them and the lack of any sort of map of the range is irritating. The information given for each route is not more detailed than usually given in most guide-books and sometimes disappointing in the comments about the character or history of the route (for example, Route 100 (the Freney Pillar) has no mention of the tragic Bonatti-Mazeaud expedition although stressing the danger of the climb). Rebuffat's selection of routes is unexceptionable; they are, of course, the most popular—which guarantees you company on them (see the picture of the Aiguille de L'M (route 18)). There seems to be an increasing tendency in many continental alpinists to concentrate on routes which are popular to the omission of others of less fame but equal quality and this book will undoubtedly reinforce this trend.

If you buy this book it will not be for the writing but for the photographs, which are technically excellent and give a good impression of the area and the types of climbing. But if you are interested in getting to know the Mont Blanc area, buy the normal guide-books.

P.M.R.

The Seventh Grade. By Reinhold Messner. (1974; Kaye & Ward. 160pp., 30 illus. £2.50).

The title follows from the debate on the top heavy, top grade of climb, GRADE VI, and is a plea both for a reduction in technically aided climbing, and for an open ended scale of grading, leading inevitably to a seventh grade. Messner's argument is openly confined to the first section of the book, but he quietly goes on to back it by his solo ascents of sixth grade routes 'in good style.'

The author begins this slippery game by climbing, appropriately enough, a greased pole during an Italian student festival, goes on to train with methodical intensity on a local version of the railway walls, and finishes with a personal nightmare on Nanga Parbat, losing several toes and one brother.

In between are terse accounts of hard first and second ascents, mostly soloed, alternating with passages giving a more personal side of Messner through his thoughts, preparations and training between routes. This layout prevents the action being broken by belay ledge star-gazing, and is as refreshing as the author's daily cold shower (which he claims he cannot do without). Many of his observations are acute, and strike a sympathetic chord; although Messner has not fully bared his soul it is apparent that he has a genuine feeling for the game, and the players therein. I would disagree however, that 'any well trained healthy climber' is capable of mastering climbs of the sixth grade, but to be fair, this point is later compromised. Messner is right to place more reliance in hard work and preparation than in miracles, but he must surely believe to some extent in luck more than he would have us think.

The illustrations, including four in colour, are better than some seen in recent, more costly titles. (The end sequence of prints, taken on Nanga Parbat, could easily be of a winter defeat somewhere on Ben Nevis).

Finally, the translator, who is unnamed, somewhat softens the harsh focus on modern hard climbing by his, or her, selection of idioms. I cannot really imagine Messner referring to his 'mates,' or taking a 'breather.'

This reviewer, who has a dislike for tight ropes, will none the less use them when the need arises; Messner's file should sharpen many crampon points. K.V.C.

Big Wall Climbing. By Doug Scott. (1974; Kaye and Ward. 348pp., many illustrations. £4.75).

This book examines the whole concept of Big Wall Climbing, both historically and technically and covers most of the major climbing areas of the world. Much of the historical material is gathered together in English for the first time.

The technology of the sport is covered in some detail in part 2 and this may be found fascinating or absurd, according to one's views on such indispensable equipment as mashies, trashies, crack-n-ups, etc.!

The last part covers planning for a major climb in different locations and offers helpful suggestions on routes to try.

Particular attention is paid to the evolution of artificial aid in mountaineering and there is a preoccupation with its ethics. Doug Scott tries to establish a rationale based on traditional, environmental and moral grounds. One senses the sinner come to repentance here! Happily, bolts are taboo, except curiously in Yosemite. Nuts are now respectable and may even supersede the piton. Those who have viewed the peg damage on the Etive Slabs will happily subscribe to this.

Numerous photographs, line drawings and maps complement the text.

This is a major literary contribution to the history of our sport as well as being a useful technical manual. Essential reading for aspirant, established hard man or dreamer. C.S.

Journals of Kindred Clubs. We must begin with the *Ladies' Alpine Club Journal*, 1975 since we will never receive it again. 67 years of independence are casually examined here before the ladies rush off to South Audley Street and, as my colleague puts it, the porcine male. One or two tears are shed, by Nea Morin in particular, but most seem to see it, poor souls, as a kind of promotion. I, for one, will miss their Journal—it has a special kind of easy-going familiarity which others lack, an air of friends talking unself-consciously to friends—unlike *The Alpine Journal*, 1974, that most portentous of Journals. This issue has many enjoyable articles, however, despite its habitual seriousness. David Cox gives a good-natured and entertaining Valedictory Address, Z. Ryn contributes a terrifying discussion of the personality of Polish climbers—a most repulsive Hall of Mirrors, and T. S. Blakeney reviews amusingly the early editors of the *A.J.* I particularly enjoyed the forthright remarks of Pete Boardman and Rob Collister on the subject of large expeditions. Surely these dinosaurs' days are almost done. *The Fell & Rock Journal*, 1974 (now edited by Gordon Dyke and Terry Sullivan) maintains its usual high standard of content and presentation: this issue features a fascinating article by George Sansom, Goodbye to All That, in which he recalls his early days in the District with Siegfried Herford. *The Journal of the Mountain Club of South Africa*, 1973, like the *New Zealand A.C.J.* has left out a lot of interesting small print which, for foreign readers, is undoubtedly a loss. Other Journals received with thanks were *The American A.J.*, 1974, *Ascent*, 1974; *The Canadian A.J.*, 1974; *Polar Record*, 1974.

R.N.C.

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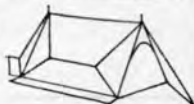


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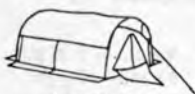
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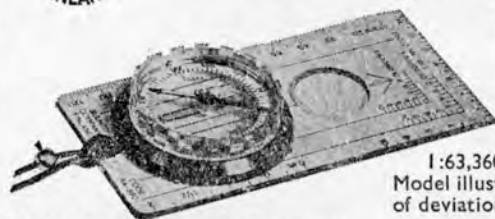
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