

THE
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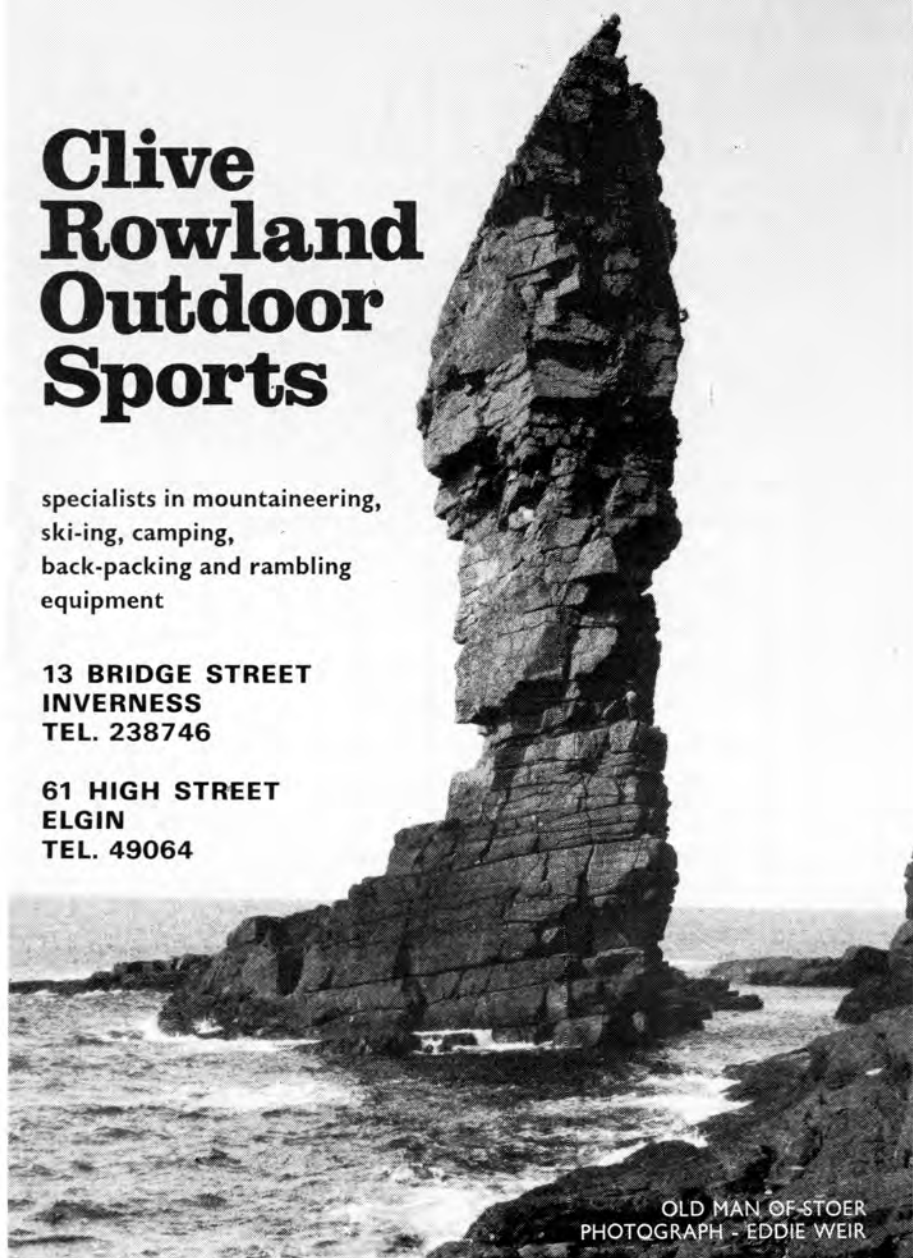
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THE SCOTTISH MOUNTAINEERING CLUB JOURNAL

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EDITORIAL

Editorials are rare in these pages, it never having been the custom to deave the reader with opinions from the Editor. However, it has become customary to claim this privilege when the Editor vacates the chair, even if only to welcome the new occupant.

We have always seen the *Journal* as a vital and integral part of the Club otherwise we would not have accepted its guardianship in the first place. Like the Club itself, it is firmly rooted in tradition but ready to alter with considered change as circumstances and service to the Club and the wider Scottish mountaineering community require. The pace of change seems to be increasing. Over the last eleven years the climbing world in Scotland has seen new patterns emerging. Rock climbing has become more specialised with the growth of outcrop climbing and the development of pre-inspection and pre-cleaning for many new routes. Winter climbing standards continue to rise both in ice work and the impressive new ascents of hard rock routes in winter conditions. More and more people are choosing to explore the winter hills on ski rather than on foot whenever conditions allow and Munro-bagging has not only become respectable but now appears to be almost a national sport!

As if these changes were not enough, the mountain world is now beset with a range of environmental pressures from ski developers, long distance walkway creators, pony trekkers, trail bike riders, snow mobilers, helicopter joy-riders and landowners responding to the commercial imperatives of the real world with bulldozed roads and conifer plantations. Reactionary forces include a variety of conservationist bodies as well as the defensive landowner equipped with electrified fences and other aids of modern technology. Any or all of these factors may provide occasional grist to the *Journal* mill and although rarely central to its concerns a responsible Editor must take heed of them.

To steer a satisfactory course through such waters while other things demand increasing attention is becoming more difficult and a new hand at the tiller is indicated. The *Journal* Editorship carries with it two particular benefits; one is its involvement at the centre of Club affairs and the other is the contact it brings with a large number of fellow mountaineers, both within and outwith the Club. This range of contacts, even if it is largely by correspondence, is a great editorial privilege and pleasure and when its maintenance threatens to become slipshod then it is time to hand over the *Journal*.

As with some other SMC posts the incumbent has an obligation to find a potential successor, suited to the task and willing to stand for election. We have been fortunate in obtaining Ken Crocket's agreement to do this and are thus in a position to relinquish the *Journal* with confidence in the future. An Editor is of course dependent on the assistance of others and our own task would have been well nigh impossible without the help of Crocket himself, Stuart Smith and now Andy Nisbet as New Climbs editors, and the continuing and highly distinctive contribution of Ian Smart as assistant editor. To these and to all the others who have arranged advertisements, distribution and contributed photographs, articles and other features, we owe sincere thanks.

To the new Editor go our own good wishes and assurances of continuing interest and support. The *Journal* will retain its place in this heart, as in those of other past editors, as it goes on toward its Centenary, a *Journal* imbued with the spirit of Stott and Douglas but meeting the needs of today.

THE CASE OF THE GREAT GREY MAN

Edited by Robin N. Campbell

from the case-notes of John H. Watson, M.D.¹

AUGUST 189 – was undoubtedly a low point in the psychic life of my friend Sherlock Holmes. The weather was unremittingly fine, Mrs Hudson was consistently managing to achieve a five minute egg and Holmes' Persian slipper contained a new supply of rare and treasured Turkish tobacco, but despite these amenities breakfast was a scene of misery throughout the month. Following a perfunctory meal Holmes would lie spredeagled on the ottoman for the remainder of the morning, clutching his brow as if in pain. The cause of this wretched condition was the case of James Phillimore, one of his few failures.²

Holmes had been invited by Lestrade of the police to assist at the arrest of Phillimore, a War Office scientist suspected of passing secret information to a foreign power. We had gone one evening in July to Phillimore's house, a large establishment in North London with extensive grounds, to effect the arrest. Under Holmes' supervision the grounds were surrounded by a force of twenty men. It was a perfectly vile evening, black as pitch and with a westerly breeze bringing deluges of warm rain upon the watchers. Holmes and I took positions at the front gate by the carriage. Phillimore was arrested at 2 a.m. and a officer waited with him while he dressed. Eventually we saw Phillimore emerge at the door of the house and peer upwards at the rain. He said something to the constable – apparently a request to return to fetch an umbrella – and turned back into the house.

When he did not emerge we immediately searched the house and grounds, but no trace of him could be found. It seemed that he must have contrived to slip past the cordon of police. At first light, Holmes and I examined the ground to the rear of the house. We could find no sign that Phillimore had passed through the gardens, despite the presence of a quantity of soft sand on a path which he must have used if he had escaped that way. Word was sent immediately to the ports and a hue and cry raised in the newspapers, accompanied by a description of the missing man. Although Phillimore could hardly be mistaken – he had a large burn scar on his left cheek, the result of some mishap in his laboratory – no further report of him was confirmed. He had simply disappeared into thin air.

By the end of the month I was very much alarmed by my friend's depressed condition, aggravated in no small measure by

his resumption of the deplorable habit of cocaine. Police interest in the case had all but ceased. Holmes' own inquiries consisted solely of some unanswered telegrams directed to obscure addresses in the Low Countries and two visits to his brother Mycroft at the Foreign Office. Mycroft had confirmed that Phillimore was indeed a foreign agent, supplying intelligence to anarchist groups in Europe.

'Forget the case, Holmes,' I urged. 'My prescription is sunshine and sea air. Biarritz perhaps. At once.'

'Am I so dilapidated, Watson, that I must wrap myself in rugs and sit on a beach?' he replied. 'No. Phillimore's escape was prepared, not fortuitous. He will act soon and I must be here and ready.'

It was not until mid-September that Holmes showed some recovery of morale. When I joined him at the breakfast table that morning his eye was bright as he held out a letter.

'At last, Watson, something worthy of my powers. Read it and then we'll pack.'

I noted that the letter was from Holmes' cousin Norman³ and read its contents with growing disbelief.

'A giant spectre? In the Cairngorm Mountains? What superstitious twaddle, Holmes! Surely there can be nothing in it?'

'But Norman has met this spectre on the slopes of Ben Macdhui and as a trained scientist he would not fabricate it. Certainly, he panicked and fled down through the wood of Rothiemurchus, but equally certainly something caused him to panic. This is no mere figment of the Celtic imagination.'

I read further: the spectre had been 'seen' by some of the ghillies on the Duke of Fife's estate, usually in mist and high on Ben Macdhui, and had even driven one unfortunate Highlander over a precipice. When the dying man was found he had croaked out with his last breath – 'Fear Liath Mór' – the Great Grey Man.

'What tommyrot, Holmes!' I ejaculated, 'This farrago is worthy of your powers? Barely worthy of the Strand Magazine, I should judge.'

But my friend could not be dissuaded. 'Come, Watson, clean air was your own prescription. Pack your bags and be sure to include your service revolver and your Alpine boots.'

I hastened to my task and by nightfall we were speeding north by train. The following mid-day found us chugging through the pinewoods towards Ballater. Holmes gestured at the passing countryside with enthusiasm, 'Royal Deeside, Watson. The Queen's home and a castle on every hillock. For once my head-gear is appropriate enough.'

He was certainly in better spirits. At Castletown of Braemar we took rooms in a hotel and in the evening met the Head Stalker over maps and whisky downstairs.

'So, Mr Scott,' said Holmes, 'because of the mist the apparition has not been clearly seen, but it has the shape of an enormous man and stalks the high plateau.'

'Just so, sir. It has a slow and steady way of walking and makes only about a yard with every step. It's a slow lumbering sort of beast. I've seen its footprints in the snow, you see. But it breathes like a mortal man. I've heard it gasping and wheezing as it came after me.'

'And how long has this been going on?'

'Och, there's a long tradition of it, but it's only in the last month or so that me and my men have been bothered.'

'Poor old Donald,' he gazed morosely into his whisky. 'One of my best men he was and him frightened right over the edge of Coire Sputan Dearg of Macdhuì. Creag Fear Liath Mór we call it now, the crag of the Great Grey Man.'

'And have there been any other curious occurrences?' asked Holmes.

'Nothing that I would set much store by,' said Scott, draining his glass, 'but one of the men has a story about seeing an enormous bird, also on Ben Macdhuì, and of course there are the usual reports of faeries, ghostly lights flickering on the slopes of Morrone, and so on.'

'My goodness, Holmes!' I put in, 'Not another giant bird!' This place is a veritable menagerie of the supernatural. Surely you don't believe this balderdash!'

Holmes refilled our glasses. 'Tut, tut, Watson. Such skepticism ill becomes a doctor of medicine, who cures diseases he does not understand with specifics of unknown composition. Restrain your doubts.'

Holmes and Scott were occupied with their maps, no doubt identifying the haunted slopes of Morrone, when the door burst open and an exhausted Highlander staggered into the bar.

'Mr Scott,' he cried, 'The Grey Man has killed again!'

He collapsed at our table, clutching the bottle firmly as he fell. When order was restored he was questioned by Holmes and Scott. Apparently another corpse had been discovered that day in Coire Sputan Dearg. The body had been identified as Dundee Wullie, a well-known visitor who roamed throughout the range looking for quartz gems. Wullie's remains had been brought down to Derry Lodge at the foot of the mountain.

'Capital, Watson!' whispered my friend. 'Tomorrow we shall examine the body. Perhaps my methods and your medical skills will provide some clues.'

On the following day at the crack of dawn we took a dog-cart up into the mountains by way of an excellent forest road. Bouldery hills bulked around us as we emerged from the pines at a high meadow beside a grey stone house. A ghillie met us with a pony and loaded our baggage up. He was to take it through the mountains to a place on the north side, over some dreary pass, the 'Lairig Ghru' by name, and would then return with a cart to meet us.

Scott led us over to a grim-looking outbuilding. As my eyes adjusted to the gloomy interior I made out the carcasses of several stags hung around the walls and the corpse of Dundee Wullie laid on a table in the centre of the room. We tied handkerchiefs about our faces – a feeble defence against such an army of odours – and bent to examine the remains, while Scott held up a light.

'Well, Watson, what are your conclusions?' asked Holmes after a time.

'They are obvious,' I replied. 'The man died from multiple injuries received in a fall.'

'Indeed,' said Holmes, 'and what do you make of these marks on his wrists?' He pointed to some faint bruises.

'That is more your province than mine. Perhaps he struck them against the rocks in his death throes.'

'Perhaps. But it seems to me that his hands may have been recently tied.'

Holmes crouched beside the corpse, asking Scott to bring the light closer. With his penknife he scraped something from the fingernails onto a sheet of paper. He bore this outside and proceeded to examine it with his glass.

'Further evidence of foul play, Watson. These are animal fibres.' Holmes gave a curious and unbecoming smirk, folded the paper carefully and put it in a pocket.

We returned to the shed and Holmes set about searching the victim's clothing. A pathetic collection of possessions emerged. A bag of oatmeal, a pipe, tobacco, a flask of whisky, a short-handled pick, a Bible, and a few miserable rock crystals. Finally, with a cry of triumph Holmes rushed from the shed with a crumpled piece of paper.

'Torn from a notebook, I'd say. Perhaps it is a trophy from his murderer.'

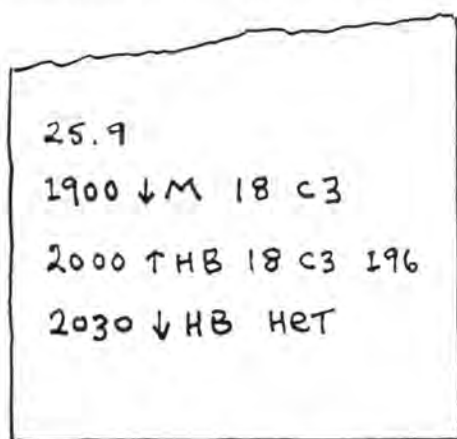
'Murderer?' said I. 'You are certain, Holmes?'

'Yes, Watson, there is more to be found up there,' he gestured at the mountain, 'than a Great Grey Man.'

We examined the paper, which I reproduce (*facing*).

'What do you make of it, Holmes?'

'It is a timetable, Watson, but I don't yet know what events it records. Let us go to the mountain now. There is nothing further to be discovered here.'



We took three ponies from the stables and set off up the hillside. At the last trees Scott tethered the ponies and we continued on foot by a pleasantly graded path beside a rushing stream. As we gained height, however, the heath gave way to stones and patches of old snow, and Ben Macdhui, defended by a frieze of decaying black crags, impended ominously on our left. Eventually we toiled up a fierce slope of slippery boulders below the largest of the crags. Scott pointed to a small cairn.

'Donald met his Maker right here, Mr Holmes. I marked the spot for the constable, but it's a very cowardly and superstitious wee policeman we have here. A damned Macdonald from the Isles. He wouldn't come up the hill at all, and Donald a good friend of his forbye.'

We moved over shortly to a further cairn, which Scott identified as the last resting place of Dundee Wullie. Here we took breakfast and recovered our wind. I passed the time by questioning Scott about his employment while Holmes busied himself with his notebook. Apparently today and tomorrow Scott had no particular duties except to keep track of the better stags on his ground. But on the following day it was possible that there would be a stalking party from Balmoral.

'There's a lot of guests there this year, you see. They've taken the shooting here and on Beinn a' Bhuid, as well as on their own ground, of course. I have a man out this morning on Cairngorm of Derry looking for beasts.' Scott indicated the mountain on the other side of the valley and added slyly, 'The Grey Man's scared them all over to there, or so the men say.'

As he relieved himself of this witticism we heard a rattle of stones and saw Scott's man come bounding down the opposite slope like a bashi-bazouk. He plodded up to us more slowly.

'You'll want to speak to this fellow, Mr Holmes,' said Scott with a sniff. 'He's the one that's seen the giant bird.'

After the new arrival had taken a pull from his flask and made his report to Scott, he addressed us in an almost impenetrable patois, of which I offer a fair rendering.

'It was last week, sir. We were up on Cairn Toul with a shooting party and I was standing by with a pony. It had just gone four o'clock when they shot a beast, right up at the head of the Garra-corries. The stalker marked it with a flag for me. So I had to get up there with the pony, clean the beast and load it up. By then it was going dark. It was a long slow way from there round the slopes and down to the bothy at Corroul. I crossed the Dee about six o'clock and stopped for a bite to eat. The pony drank and rested a bit and I took a few drams. It was a fine clear night and very mild. Anyhow I must have dozed off, because it was eight before we started off again. I'd got the pony up and we were just setting off when I saw this huge bird hovering up by the top of Ben Macdhui. It was like an enormous eagle and it just moved back and forth on the breeze. I watched it for a few minutes hoping that it might get a whiff of the stag and come down for a closer look but it never budged. After we turned the corner of the hill I lost sight of it.'

'How large was the bird, would you say?' asked Holmes.

'Oh, the wing-span would have been about ten or twelve feet, sir.'

'Thank you!' said Holmes. 'Your information has been most valuable. Indeed, it confirms the serious view that I have taken of this case. I must issue certain warnings and make some urgent preparations.'

He bent once more to his notebook, while Scott interrogated his man about the whereabouts of stags. After a few minutes Holmes removed several pages from his notebook and gave them to Scott.

'These telegrams must be sent immediately,' he said. 'The long list is to be telegraphed to Lizars in Edinburgh, Scott. There is no time to be lost if these materials are to be put on the afternoon Mail to Inverness. There will be a guinea apiece for you and your man if you can have this despatched by noon.'

I strained to catch a glimpse of the list as Scott passed it to his man, who immediately sped off down the hill.

'A Branly apparatus, Holmes?' I asked. 'What the devil is that?'

It is a device to catch the giant bird, Watson,' said Holmes with a smile. 'All will be revealed at the appropriate time, my friend. In the meantime let us desist from speculation and apply ourselves to this unpleasant slope.'

We bade Scott farewell and began to trudge up towards a stone-filled gully leading to the summit slopes. After a half-hour of tedious effort we stumbled over the rim onto the plateau of Ben Macdhui. A further dreary incline brought us in sight of the summit, marked by an enormous sprawling cairn.

Soon we reached the cairn. A great field of boulders stretched out in all directions. We moved out to the north.

'Look for traces, Watson, - for anything unusual,' said Holmes. 'Fire your revolver if you find anything.'

I was instructed to hold close to the western edge of the plateau while Holmes worked further east, moving slowly and stooping occasionally to examine the ground. In truth I saw nothing unusual, just boulder after wretched boulder against which I regularly stumbled and barked my shins. Suddenly I was enveloped in a cloud of thin mist and lost sight of my companion. I made to return to the cairn, but became unsure of my direction. A film of moisture clung to my cape. The breeze revealed occasional glimpses to some distance. I sighted the outline of the cairn and began to plod towards it. Again the mist obscured my view. But I was sure of my line now and moved on steadily amongst the boulders. After a little I stopped for breath and wrung out my moustaches. While thus engaged I was startled by a sound from dead ahead. Suddenly a huge figure lumbered out of the murk! My first impulse was to run, as terror gripped me. The Great Grey Man! But my army training proved its worth. I stood my ground, drew my revolver and fired a round over the creature's head. When it did not stop I fired again at its chest. It stopped abruptly but did not fall. Instead it turned aside and moved rapidly away to my left. What should I do? Holmes would undoubtedly have given chase, so I set off once again through the boulder-field, swearing and stumbling in the effort to catch up. A pistol shot rang out some considerable distance off to my right.

'Over here, Holmes!' I cried in response to his signal.

The beast increased its pace and I hurried on in its wake. After some minutes the ground began to fall away and the boulders to thin out revealing a pavement of smooth and slippery granite. I noticed with some relief the shadowy form of Holmes well over to my right on a converging course. Between us we should be more than a match for the creature if it turned at bay. But just then the mist began to thicken until it became as bad as the worst London fog. As Holmes hurried to join me we lost sight of the monster completely.

'I fear we have lost our quarry,' I remarked.

'You are too pessimistic, Watson,' observed Holmes. 'Look, you can see on that boulder the place where it brushed against it. The creature has left a trace!'

Indeed. So it had. I bent to inspect the scrap of greyish-yellow fur plucked from the beast's limbs by the rough granite. Holmes had by now found the next such trace and we moved forward once again in pursuit. But after a hundred yards more of steady descent Holmes halted.

'The mist is lifting,' he said. 'Let us save our legs.'

I could see that my friend was right as usual. As the fogs dispersed I told him about my set-to with the Grey Man, confident that, wounded as it must be, we should find it soon. But when all was clear we gazed only on empty slopes.

'The beast has gone to ground, Holmes. What sort of creature do you suppose we have to deal with? Presumably you can tell something from the fur?'

'Fur, Watson? Certainly these are animal hairs, like those which I removed from Wullie's fingernails, but they belong to nothing more intimidating than a sheep!'

'A sheep?' I gasped.

'Yes,' said Holmes. 'It is Belgian yarn. Mixed S and Z twist. You may compare it with the descriptions in my monograph *'European Fabrics Identified from Traces'*.'

'Good gracious, Holmes! Then it is merely a man.'

'To be precise it is a Carnival Giant from Flanders with a man inside.'

'But how do you know all this, Holmes? You show no surprise!'

'Indeed, Watson. I knew it, or most of it, some time ago. You see, this is Phillimore's work.'

'Phillimore! But how?' I demanded.

'It is time to explain my reasonings, Watson. Let us begin at the beginning. When Phillimore disappeared from his house there was a westerly breeze and sand in the garden. Surely that suggests a means of escape?'

I racked my brains but could think of nothing.

'You must have heard of gas-filled balloons,' said my friend. 'The sand was ballast discarded to effect a rapid ascent. Mycroft was able to confirm my speculation for me – Phillimore was studying the military application of aerial machines. He kept a balloon carefully hidden in his garden, as insurance against discovery of his treacherous activities.'

'And of course he would land in Belgium!' I interrupted.

'Yes, Watson. He collected the Carnival Giant and other equipment there before coming here, possibly with a southerly wind but like as not by more conventional means.'

'But how on earth did you know that he was here, Holmes?'

'I did not know. I made an assumption. According to Norman's letter, what did Donald say before he died?' he asked.

'Ferliemore,' I said in an approximation of Scott's pronunciation and clapped a hand to my brow in astonishment.

'Was it 'Ferliemore' or 'Phillimore'?' said Holmes. 'I assumed Donald's last words named his assailant as an English traitor rather than a Scottish monster. Phillimore's description was well-known and his burnt face could hardly be mistaken. Besides, we learned this morning that Donald and the constable were friends – he was sure to have known about Phillimore.'

'Astounding, Holmes! Truly astounding! But what on earth is he doing here, terrifying and killing the local men with this bogus monster?'

'Well, we can be sure that the monster is employed to keep curious people away from Ben Macdhui. Dundee Wullie must have disturbed Phillimore at his real work, whatever that is. He was overpowered, his hands bound, and eventually disposed of in the same manner as the unfortunate Donald. Come, Watson, let us see what else we can discover. I fancy the giant is lurking not far from here.'

We had searched around the massive boulders for only a few minutes when I found it, laid out flat in a crevice between two of the largest specimens. I called out to Holmes and he hurried over. The ogre measured about twelve feet and was topped by a gigantic and hideous mask of painted wood with long straggling beards and moustaches. The torso was supported by a wire framework which fitted over the head and shoulders of the carrier, who would be entirely concealed beneath the long grey skirt. The belt around the middle of the robe was punctured with two eye holes. I should have shot the creature in the stomach rather than the chest!

I fingered the frayed edge of the bullet-hole in the centre of the tunic. 'A mortal wound had it been a real giant, wouldn't you say, Holmes?'

'Indeed, Watson, your days in the Army were not wasted.'

Holmes bent to examine the bullet-hole more closely, assumed a thoughtful expression and then turned to me with a decisive look.

'I think we can learn no more here without disturbing Phillimore too greatly. I imagine he has under observation from a distance and he may have a rifle. Besides I have no wish to apprehend him until we know what he is about. Let us leave now and go in search of our dinner.'

I thought it strange that my friend should abandon the field so abruptly with the scent so hot, but I suspected that he still knew a great deal more about the case, despite his recent spectacular unburdening, so I raised no objection and we set off northwards together. After some time we made a very steep and laborious descent into the pass of the Lairig Ghru, and after a further hour

or so of wearisome work through boulders and bogs we were met by the ghillie with two ponies. These brought us down through pinewoods to a better track where we harnessed them to a dogcart and proceeded at a steady pace down through the forests and across the Spey to our hotel, the Lynwilg, which we reached around four o'clock.

After tea and a restorative bath I joined Holmes in the lounge where we took whisky beside a blazing log fire. Holmes pulled out the scrap of paper salvaged from Dundee Wullie's jacket and passed it over to me.

'This paper is evidently a log of messages sent and received,' he said.

'First there is a date, the 25th of September, then a series of times given in the foreign manner. Seven o'clock, eight o'clock and half-past eight. The messages come from 'M' and go to and come from 'HB.' What do you make of it, Watson?'

I thought hard. How could messages be sent to and from the summit of Ben Macdhu? By pigeon? Hardly. Perhaps by lights. By seven o'clock it should be dark enough, after all.

'Morrone?' I ventured. 'Could that be the 'M'?''

'Good, Watson!' said Holmes. 'We are in agreement. And that is one more supernatural occurrence explained. Messages are sent from Morrone, by flashlight, at seven o'clock. Proceed.'

But my inspiration was at an end. 'It must be in code, Holmes,' I complained. 'The word 'het' is Flemish I believe, but it means only 'the.' That can hardly be right.'

Holmes consulted his watch. 'Well, Watson, it is useless to speculate before we have all our facts. We will collect some more shortly with the aid of the contents of the parcel I am about to receive.'

A moment later the landlord entered bearing a large package. 'The boy has collected this from the station, sir, as you asked. You may use the field to the north of the house for your experiments.' He bowed and left.

I stared at Holmes in perplexity. Were we to be distracted from the case by his misplaced enthusiasm for chemistry? He opened the parcel eagerly and withdrew a very odd collection of objects – a Chinese kite, a glass cylinder filled with a grey substance, a large roll of fine copper wire and the earpiece of a telegraph. 'Come, Watson. I will need your help. You need not look so apprehensive. This is not chemistry but its gentler sister physics.' He brandished the cylinder, 'This is the Branly apparatus you were so curious about.'

When we arrived in the field, Holmes assembled the kite and attached it to the fine wire.

'Send it up a good way,' he urged, 'where it will fly steadily.'

Although it was some thirty years since I had flown a kite, I set to with a will and soon it was pulling strongly against the moderate northerly breeze. Meanwhile Holmes was busy with the other equipment. When he had connected the end of the roll of wire to the glass cylinder he beckoned me over and handed me the earpiece.

'Listen!' he said. 'Tell me what you hear.'

I clamped the instrument to my ear. 'A hideous crackling, like burning brushwood,' I replied.

'Indeed, Watson. That is the music of the ether. It comes from a band of electricity that stretches high around the Earth. We have made a wireless telegraph receiver!'

Suddenly it began to make sense to me. Of course. This was the Marconi apparatus – or a relative of it. The Queen had recently installed one on the Royal Yacht, so that she might receive regular reports of the Prince of Wales' conduct, or his 'health' as the Times had put it. And above me flew a giant bird, doubtless of the same unusual species as that seen on Ben Macdhui!

'Good heavens, Holmes! So this is Phillimore's giant bird,' I gestured aloft, 'and he is sending messages to some distant point with its aid!'

'Yes, Watson. By flashlight from Morrone, then by wireless telegraph perhaps out to sea. My information from Mycroft makes it likely that Phillimore is communicating with a foreign anarchist group. Circumstances suggest that their target may be at Balmoral. I took the precaution of recommending that security be doubled there, before we left Scott this morning. We will know more at eight o'clock when we eavesdrop on Phillimore's signal! In the meantime, let us secure the equipment and return for our dinner.'

I brought the kite down and covered the equipment with my cape before joining Holmes for dinner. There was one other guest, a distinguished-looking individual no doubt, but wearing Highland costume. From his conversation with the landlord, who addressed him in deferential tones as 'Mr Munro,' it seemed that he too had crossed the mountains from Braemar today, but during the hours of darkness. He had then spent the day sleeping in the hotel and now proposed to return by a different route this evening! I accounted this behaviour deeply suspicious and whispered as much to Holmes during dessert, but my friend reassured me.

'No, Watson. I have heard of him and of his eccentric nocturnal wanderings. He is a sound man, a harmless mountaineer. Indeed he is a close friend of our guide on the Ben Nevis case, Raeburn.' With that, Holmes rose and introduced himself to the stranger.

'I am Sherlock Holmes, the consulting detective,' he said, 'and this is my associate Dr John Watson. Forgive me, sir, but I could not help but overhear your conversation with the landlord. Are you perhaps acquainted with our good friend Harold Raeburn?'

The stranger nodded to Holmes. 'I am,' he replied, 'And I have heard from Raeburn of your exploit on Ben Nevis a few years ago.'

'Dr Watson and I are engaged on a difficult case now,' Holmes continued, 'and would be greatly obliged for your assistance, sir.'

Munro gave a guarded consent and over coffee Holmes explained the extraordinary facts of the case to him. When he produced Dundee Wullie's scrap of paper, Munro became suddenly alert.

'My goodness, this is Russian!' he exclaimed. 'Het' is pronounced 'nyet' and means 'no.' This symbol that looks like 'c3' is a Cyrillic abbreviation for a compass direction, 'severo-zapad,' which means north-west. The number 18 must be a code of some sort. 'HB' is transliterated as 'NV'.'

'Russian?' said Holmes. 'I am sure you are right, of course, but we are not at odds with Russia. What interest would Russians have in mounting an attack on members of our Royal Family?'

Munro pushed his coffee cup aside and leaned forward anxiously. 'Then you have not heard that the Tsar is at Balmoral?' he asked. 'I am a Queen's Messenger, Holmes, and I brought Nicholas there in great secrecy, only last week. He has been stalking with the Prince of Wales. I accompanied them a few days ago, on Beinn a' Bhuid.'

'What day was that?' asked Holmes.

Munro tugged his beard reflectively. 'The 26th,' he said.

At that moment the hall clock struck the quarter-hour.

'Come,' said Holmes, 'we must go out and listen to these Russians. Watson, you will call out the messages. They will be in Morse, of course. I will take them down and you, sir, will fly our kite!'

Munro seemed unperturbed by these strange instructions and joined us instantly in the hall, impressively caped and sporting a silver-mounted stick and a dilapidated and generously-dimensioned Scotch bonnet. Russian in Morse! I knew Morse code from my Army days, of course, and proceeded to go over the alphabet in my mind. But were there not more characters in Russian script than in English? Perhaps they used codes not needed for English. I recalled, too, Munro's explanation – when decoding the wind directions a moment or two ago – that Russian 'c' was equivalent to English 's.' Did that mean that if they wished to send an 's' they would use the code for 'c'? What a nightmare!

My head was spinning! What a heavy responsibility! I resolved to call out the English letters and to hope that we could make sense of it afterwards.

We strode out to the field together. It was a fine clear night, but moonless and would soon be damnably dark, I thought. Munro launched the kite with aplomb and – or so it seemed to me – a degree of skill that suggested some familiarity. Perhaps he was conversant with the new arrangements on the Royal Yacht! I applied the ear-piece and could soon hear the eerie crackle once more. Holmes lit the lantern, produced his notebook and consulted his watch. ‘Almost eight,’ he hissed in my unoccupied ear. ‘The message will certainly be repeated, so don’t despair if you miss something at first.’

These words of re-assurance steadied me and when the message arrived I began to call the letters out briskly.

N – V – STOP – N – V – STOP – N – V – STOP.’

Then came a pause and the same obscure message repeated.

‘Merely a call sign, Watson,’ murmured Holmes, ‘to allow them to tune their equipment.’

After a further repetition and a pause, the message proper arrived.

3 – 2 – STOP – S – STOP – 5 – 3 – STOP,’ I called out. This was followed by two repetitions and then silence. After a few minutes we brought down the kite and returned to the hotel.

In the lounge Holmes attempted to unravel the message.

‘What we have here, gentlemen,’ he said, ‘is a message from Phillimore to his colleagues. First we have the number 32, then ‘S’ – the abbreviation for North – and then the number 53. Now, for the numbers I have no theory, but what is to the north is very likely the forecasted wind. Phillimore is an expert on aerial engines and my hypothesis is that the terrorists will make their attack from what is known as an ‘airship.’ The Brazilian aerialist Santos-Dumont has lately perfected this new engine of war and we must assume that Phillimore has advised these Russians how to build one. They cannot sail against the wind, so knowledge of wind direction is vital.’

‘But, Holmes,’ I interjected, ‘you cannot be sure of this?’

‘No, but it fits!’ cried Holmes. ‘By what other means could Russians penetrate 40 miles inland and why else should Phillimore be involved?’

‘And these numbers?’ asked Munro. ‘What do they signify?’

‘That is the great difficulty,’ said my friend, ‘for they are undoubtedly a code.’

‘It couldn’t be, could it?’ said Munro suddenly. He pursed his lips and frowned, tapping the table nervously. ‘D’you know,

Holmes, I believe it is! They are using my list of mountaintops as a code! I will fetch a copy of the list from my room.' Munro returned a few moments later bearing a slim volume. 'Look here,' he said, flipping the pages, 'number 53 is Cairn Etchachan, a dependency of Ben Macdhui, you see. And 32.....that is Cairngorm of Derry.'

'He is right, Holmes!' I cried. 'Scott said there might be stalking there tomorrow!'

'Might be, might be,' Holmes muttered irritably. 'Let us see. On the 26th the Royal Party went to Beinn a' Bhuid. What number is that?'

'Eighteen,' said Munro, 'which was the number on Dundee Wullie's message. And 196.....let me see.....that is a small peak nearby.'

'That is conclusive, gentlemen,' said Holmes. 'The system is clear. Phillimore gets word of the next day's plans from Morrone. No doubt some treacherous domestic from Balmoral is responsible, possibly bribed by one of the Tsar's own staff. Phillimore sends that information, the forecasted wind and another location to his colleagues. I fancy the other location is a suggested landing place for the craft. The landing place should be close enough to spare them an arduous march but far enough to allow them some chance of making their escape afterwards.'

Munro passed an anxious hand over his head. 'I never dreamed that my topographical researches should be put to such an evil use!' he complained. 'I have a further thought for you, Holmes. The worst terrorists in Russia, or elsewhere for that matter, were the old People's Will, who blew up Tsar Alexander in his carriage. My information is that this group is broken up and inactive now, but the Russian name for the Will of the People is Narodnaya Volya. I fear this is our 'NV.' This business is worse, much worse, than I had expected. They are desperate men and have an impressive record of achievement in their hellish work!'

It was time to go out to the field once more and collect the anarchists' reply.

'Pray God it is 'nyet' once again,' implored Munro. After what seemed an interminable delay, the call-sign and message came. I stammered out the letters,

'D - A - STOP - 0 - 4 - 0 - 0 - STOP - 5 - 3 - STOP.'

Back in the hotel we held a rapid council. They were coming to Cairn Etchachan at 4 a.m. and would march on Cairngorm of Derry from there, to lay an ambush. Eventually we evolved a plan. Munro and Holmes were to search for Phillimore in the vicinity of Cairn Etchachan, in the hope of locating the landing site and extinguishing whatever landing-lights Phillimore would set.

'They will surely be magnesium or carbide,' said Holmes. 'Waterproof at any rate and damned hard to put out. Once the ship has a good sight of them it will find its way down, even if we do put them out. This will be a chancy business.' I was to lay a diversion. I would be lowered down the face of a convenient (!) precipice and would set a light there. With luck the anarchists would not see the precipice until too late and the airship would founder. We began our preparations.

After some hours we had assembled lights, ropes, a cart and some ponies and set off once again through the gloomy pinewoods. We reached the road end at half-past one. The night, though still moonless, was bright with stars and the dark trench of the Lairig Ghru was outlined clearly to the south. We hung the rope and lamps from our saddles, mounted our ponies and set off. The breeze, slightly fresher now, whistled among the tall pines. After an hour we reached the top of the pass and dismounted. The ponyman would continue through the pass to Derry Lodge. With luck he would forestall the stalking party and inform Scott of our plans.

We then began the ascent, infinitely laborious, of the eastern flank of the Lairig. Munro led the way, a grotesque figure in his voluminous cape and ridiculous hat, while Holmes and I followed in his footsteps as best we could. I must have pitched full-length against the slope fifty times before we gained the rim of the plateau, but suffered no serious injury. The light was better above and we proceeded slowly but less painfully across the flank of Ben Macdhuì, passing not far from the place where we had found the giant. Huge boulders lay everywhere like massive slates on a roof, cold and silver-grey in the starlight. We came in time to the edge of a precipice overlooking a deep chasm. I could make out a dark loch a thousand feet or more below.

'Here will do,' said Munro gruffly and began to unwind the rope. I lit one of the carbide lamps, which burned malodorously and shed a sinister greenish light, and fastened the rope to my waist. I shook hands with Munro and clapped Holmes warmly on the shoulder, 'Depend on me, Holmes,' I said. 'I will lure the wretches onto the crag.' Holding the lamp before me, I slipped and slithered down the cliff-face, as Holmes and Munro paid out the rope. The crag was fortunately not too steep and was well provided with ledges. When I had descended a sufficient distance I found a commodious platform and signalled to Holmes to secure the rope above. He did so, waved briefly and left.

I was alone. I turned the hissing lamp down to conserve fuel, and fashioned a seat of sorts from coils of the rope. If our calculations were correct I had less than a half-hour to wait before the

airship would arrive. From my perch I could make out the dark bulk of the mountain Cairngorm itself blotting out the lower stars in the northern sky. Further east, the new moon hung low above some distant hills and struck a glimmer from the eastern shore of the loch far below. Beneath me, the rocks stretched endlessly down into black shadow. As I stoked my pipe I reflected that the sky was too bright for our ruse to succeed. All would depend on Holmes and Munro and their desperate search for Phillimore on the plateau above me. I worried too that my friend's powerful imagination and ruthless style of reasoning may have led him astray. After all, what proof was there that it really was Phillimore who was stationed on Ben Macdhui? A fancied similarity of names seemed a pitiful foundation on which to base the supposition of an airship-borne attack. Perhaps they would come overland from the coast instead and our hectic preparations would be of no avail. We would have done better to attempt to get through to Balmoral by a night drive, I thought. Thus does our faith desert us in the dark and lonely places of the earth!

I surveyed the sky to the north once more. The mountain opposite seemed larger and nearer now. Then it came to me that our luck had changed: it was cloud that I was seeing, not mountain, moving south and speedily too. I held my watch down to the lamp and saw it was now 3.45. Perhaps I would still have a part to play! I checked my revolver, laid it on a handy ledge and sat back to wait and watch.

The cloud mass now stretched above me: the moon had gone from sight and I was confident that the cover was effectively complete. I turned up the lamp, bathing the rocky terrace in sickly green light, and adjusted the reflector so that it pointed to the north. After some minutes, as I peered towards Cairngorm I suddenly saw a bright star. At first I thought the cloud must be breaking, but then it disappeared and came again in a short flash. A signal, surely. 'N' in Morse. I thought furiously. Of course, I must return 'V.' Narodnaya Volya! I hurriedly removed my cap and, lifting the lamp, returned the signal. By now it must be quite close, I felt sure. I gripped my revolver and stood behind the lamp, staring into the blackness. Yes, there it was! I could make out the cabin and the thin shrouds leading up to the gasbag. Just at that moment the moon thrust through the cloudbank to the east. The ship showed clearly now, caught by the moonlight and my own lamp. Silently and swiftly it bore down on me – huge, alien and menacing.

I recalled Holmes' parting words of advice – 'Hold your fire until the ship has passed above you, Watson, or they will surely pick you off.' – so I continued to wait. Over the hissing of the

lamp I heard cries of alarm from the ship and could now clearly see bags of ballast being thrown overboard. Plainly they had seen the mighty crag looming in front of them! The ship began to rise slowly. It was soon directly above me and seemed certain to crash into the precipice. To my horror I saw two bodies hurtle from the cabin! The fallen men screamed as they plummeted into the rocks below and bounced off down into the depths. However, the trick was successful: the airship rose steeply into the gloom and now looked certain to clear the edge of the precipice. I fired and fired again at the huge bag, without apparent result. As the great ship passed beyond the bristling edge a single shot rang out in reply, but the round clattered harmlessly into the rocks at my side.

I put my revolver down to cool and took stock. At least I had accounted for the two wretches who had suddenly found themselves drafted as ballast-bags. Perhaps the bag would lose gas, if my shots had found their mark, and other unfortunates would be cast out to share their fate! After this grim encounter, the slope of rocks above me seemed a puny obstacle. I resolved to tackle it at once, rather than wait for rescue. I tied the rope around my waist, leaving a short tail to which I fixed the lamp, and began to work my way upwards from ledge to ledge, hauling on the rope at difficult places. This went well enough – indeed, it might have proved more unpleasant in daylight – and before long I was standing once again on the solid ground of the plateau.

I immediately searched the southern sky for a sign of the ship. At first I thought it must have crashed or – perish the thought! – landed, but then I chanced to look up. To my astonishment I saw the ship thousands of feet above me! Evidently they had discharged far too much ballast: unless they soon released gas from the bag they would surely succumb from cold or asphyxiation. I coiled the rope, slung the lamp from my waist and set off towards the summit of Cairn Etchachan, which lay less than a mile to the south, in the hope of finding Holmes or Munro.

The cloud had now almost gone and in the fitful moonlight I made my way slowly across the bouldery ground. From time to time I looked upwards to follow the progress of the ship. It had passed beyond Cairngorm of Derry so far as I could judge. Though little more than a faint grey smudge now, it had surely begun to descend. As I approached the final slopes it fell more and more rapidly and finally crashed into a distant hill, bursting instantly into flames! I did not waste time or conscience with remorse for the men on board: they had come to assassinate and deserved no better fate. Nor did I permit myself to exult in their misfortune: there is no pleasure to be got in the death of a fellow being – a lesson I had learned well in the Afghan wars⁶.

As I passed the summit cairn and began to pick my way wearily down the further slope towards Loch Etchachan I was met by Munro who had led me to Holmes. My friend was sitting smoking beside a lamp and a forlorn bundle, which I took to be Phillimore.

'Congratulations, Watson!' he said. 'You have never done better.'

'I merely followed your instructions,' I replied. 'The Laws of Gases did the rest, I suspect.'

'Indeed there seems much to be learned about the management of these machines. However, I fear there will be nothing further learned by or from this gentlemen,' he said, prodding the inert body at his side and twisting the lamp to show his hideously burned face.

'Poor Phillimore! He took poison when we succeeded in seizing him before he could light his lamps.'

We carried the body as best we could a short distance down the slope until we reached the stalking path from the Loch to Ben Macdhui.

'What shall we do now, Holmes?' I asked.

'Do, Watson?' he replied. 'We have done enough. Let us wait for Scott and his men. With luck they will bring ponies. I have a strong desire never to take another step across these dreadful boulders.' With that remark, Holmes laid his pipe aside and fell immediately fast asleep!

Some weeks later a small parcel arrived at Baker Street, bearing a Scottish postmark. Holmes opened it at the breakfast table and held up two thin octavo volumes bound in green calf.

'A note from Munro, Watson,' he announced. 'Two copies of his list of Scottish mountains over 3,000 feet. 'One for you - 'he passed it over - 'and one for me. An excellent souvenir of the case, certainly. However, I judge it best to cast mine into the fire.' With a deft twirl of the wrist he sent Munro's gift spinning into the flames.

'Holmes! How could you!' I cried in indignation. 'The gift was well meant and Munro is surely a friend!'

'Certainly, Watson, but we have so far ascended three mountains on his list. There remain 535. Surely you do not care to spend the rest of your life travelling to Scotland to complete the task.'

'Indeed no,' I protested, 'but I feel no such compulsion.'

'Then why did you take the trouble to visit Cairngorm of Derry a few weeks ago while you thought me asleep? And why do your fingers now itch for a pencil with which to place four ticks against Ben Nevis, Ben Macdhui, Cairn Etchachan and Cairngorm of Derry? No, my friend, be mindful of the trouble I have with my habit of cocaine and let your volume join mine in the embers.'

I admitted the wisdom of these remarks with a sigh and regretfully added my gift to the blaze.

'Lochaber no more!' said Holmes with a smile.

That very afternoon we attended a secret and private ceremony at the Palace, where we were joined by Munro. We were received by Her Majesty and by the Tsar himself, who invested all three of us in the Order of the Golden Cockerel and hung about us with splendid sashes, medallions and swords. I could not help reflecting that a modest pension might have suited me better than membership of an exotic order of Russian chivalry and ornaments that I could never decently wear. Afterwards we took tea at Baker Street and reviewed the case from start to finish, so that I might make sure of my notes.

'For my part, Holmes,' I said at the conclusion of our review, 'the most satisfying element of the case was the way in which each of the apparently supernatural occurrences was seen to be an ordinary event.'

'Just so, Watson. And who was it who discounted these reports as imagination feeding on superstition?'

'Indeed you are right. You have often said that imagination is a rare commodity and that it is best to take witnesses' reports as evidential, until you have grounds to discard them. I was quite wrong to complain, Holmes, and I beg your pardon.'

'I wonder whether that gracious apology is entirely merited,' said my friend. 'Tell me, Watson, do you recollect whether you shot the Grey Man in the chest or in the back?'

'Why, in the chest, certainly. It was advancing towards me and besides I could make out its face.'

'Well, I shot the creature too – you must have heard my revolver – but in the back. And surely you noticed that only one bullet-hole was to be found in the giant's costume? Of course, it was clear from a moment's examination that the bullet had entered from the back and *emerged* from the chest.'

'But Holmes!' I cried. 'Whom did I shoot, then?'

'Whom indeed, Watson, or What? Let us say you shot Fear Liath Mór and leave it at that.'

FOOTNOTES:

1. These case-notes were discovered some years ago in the bottom of a box of lantern-slides, thought to have been donated to the Club Collection by J. Norman Collie. The first set of notes formed the basis for an earlier adventure of Holmes and Watson, an account of which appeared in the *Journal* for 1979 – (*SMCJ* XXXI, p.360). The writer began work on preparing a version of the present case shortly after that date and offers apologies to impatient readers for the long delay that has ensued. This delay is due entirely to his own dilatoriness and not at all to Dr Watson's notes.

which – as usual – are a model of precision and clarity. Readers may be surprised by the accuracy of Dr Watson's Gaelic: in fact, his names are by no means accurate and his notes are punctuated by apologies for his 'poor transcription of these barbarous names.' I have done my best to render them in SMC-Gaelic of the period.

2. The case of James Phillimore is discussed by Watson in the account of the case of *Thor Bridge*. In the introductory paragraph to that case Watson observes that 'Somewhere in the vaults of the bank of Cox and Co., at Charing Cross, there (is) a battered tin dispatch-box containing (unpublished case reports). Among these unfinished tales is that of Mr James Phillimore, who, stepping back into his own house to get his umbrella, was never more seen in this world.'

It seems certain that this is the case recounted here. No doubt Watson preferred to pretend that Phillimore was never seen again and that the case was unfinished so that the politically-sensitive material in the case should remain secret until circumstances were favourable to publication.

3. The reference to 'cousin Norman' here makes absolutely certain the tentative identification with Norman Collie proposed in the notes to the previous case. As is well known, Collie encountered the Grey Man sometime in the 1890s. He did not publicly mention the encounter, however, until many years later at an Annual Dinner of the Cairngorm Club. For details of Collie's and (some) other encounters with the Grey Man, see Affleck Gray's *The Big Grey Man of Ben Macdhui*. Impulse Books, 1970. Aberdeen.

4. A reference to the previous case described in Note 1.

5. From a note in an early Journal (*SMCJ*, VII, p. 114) describing an excursion to Arran in 1900, it seems that Harold Raeburn must have known of this recondite skill of Holmes'. Raeburn comments on the Corrie Boulders as follows: 'They rarely permit an admirer to leave without retaining something, may be cuticle, may be garment. Were there a Sherlock Holmes in our Club, I have no doubt he would be able to infer for many days after, what particular member had been on the boulders by the structure and colour of the woolly fragments from his stockings or knickers, or the anthropometrical patterns on the pieces of skin from his fingertips left behind by the climber.'

Holmes' involvement with the early SMC, as recounted here and in the earlier adventure (see note 3), left other marks in the first few journals, e.g. see Dr Inglis Clark's remarks in *SMCJ*, VII, p. 202.

6. Some of the wreckage from this disaster was found many years later and wrongly attributed to the visit of a German airship during the later years of the Great War. The episode is described on p. 99 of Henry Alexander's *SMC Cairngorms Guide* (1928 edition): 'On the slope of Sgor Dubh, opposite Derry Lodge, a flare light was dropped during a night in April, 1917, by a German airship which apparently lost its way over the Cairngorms. The vessel came inland at Arbroath and passed over Cortachy, Glen Clunie Lodge, Inverey and Derry Lodge to Rothiemurchus, where it must have turned due east, for it dropped bombs first in Auchendoir, on Donside and then near Insch, in Central Aberdeenshire, finally passing out to sea near Peterhead, and being subsequently wrecked in Norway. In its course it must have gone over the summit of Ben Macdhui. The metal holder of the light was found some years later on the hillside and formed a curious relic, linking the recesses of the Cairngorms with the Great War.'

What an extraordinary coincidence that these recesses should have been visited by two of these rare birds of the air and that a piece of the carcass of one should be mistaken for the droppings of the other!

If the sceptical reader needs further evidence for the veracity of Dr Watson's tale, he need look no further than the minute-books of the SMC, held in the Manuscript Collection of the National Library of Scotland. In the record of the Committee meeting held in Glasgow on the 23rd October 1914, it is noted that Harold Raeburn had written to the Club Secretary as follows:

'(the Club) should circularise the Keepers and Shepherds in remote districts asking them to report on any suspicious circumstances and (should) form a small committee to investigate such reports; all with a view to locating enemy wireless sending stations or aeroplane depots.'

Surely Raeburn would not have made this fantastic suggestion unless he had known of the earlier incident, perhaps revealed to him in an unguarded moment by his friend Munro.

IN RESPECT OF.....

By Alastair Reid

WE WENT round the Ben, Neil and I the two of us, sharing a sack with nothing in it. North Face névé crunched under stiletto heels, prehensile points indicated the mood, free solo was good. *Comb* was cool, Haston raced in a blurr, Smith giggled up with another behind the points. Twelve points straight through the helmet, head pierced, free fall bouncing, ricochet down the walls; only a thought. Névé, cornice and over; down again with a smoke No. 3, lost from cities. Find *Green*, quick clean spindrift shower leads to bright blue Goretex. Up we go again cruisin for a bruise. No crux leads to an Isis exit. Two figures from the gloom, 'nice conditions' though no time to talk. Up to the top because we can't find a gully leading to *Glovers*. In the shelter total time one hour. The Ben blew bad and frost froze fast, good to keep moving, too cold. Now I remember, we were getting dehydrated so I went round to a large guided group and asked politely if I could partake of a little water?

'Don't you have any of your own? You should have brought some,' said one.

'And a flask,' said an authoritative second.

Maybe I should've brought a rucksack I thought!

So we parted, both heading down, Smith for home, another for Smiths. Free solo pockets weighed by smokes and guidebook. Suddenly fear, shaking anticipational fear. Stone-age man knew it running around with *his* axes. But we've got intelligence now! Take a look, *Good Friday* would go, two on *Indicator*. Check the guide, green ice with welcoming holes filled with névé; cheating, move off. Was it seventy?, immediate space, freeee solo. Mind in gear, high ratio, too high climb down and round the air filled prow, such colour, such purity. Okay so stop and relax, take in the surroundings, be calm, look, contemplate possible reversal. High up it looked interesting, the exit funnel spewed spindrift, the wind roared helicopters, high jets, avalanches; sounds accentuated by total space. Which one is the bulge? Every V has a 'bulge' you know, the bulge on *The Point*, the bulge on *Zero*, the bulge on *Hadrian's*, *The Curtain*, *Minus Two* even the bulge on *Orion*; looked to me like three bulges there! Pockets of névé spaced like handholds between crystallised pillars miniaturised but memorable. Nine foot space between possible pick and points leads over with one arm pull-up. Now seriously there ain't no such thing as a one arm pull-up in my style. Ramp at seventy, nice tools, thanks

Gordon, thanks Neil, curves left behind. Relax, Barracuda won't come out, pumping out, get above it pull it out and in again quick. Spindrift annoying. Attack the double bulge, maybe I'm off route, I should've gone back right, no retreat, no rope, freeee solo. Intense technicality (6a), move right, one foot, tools support, don't pop now. Athletic, supple, can't get the side points on, reverse, think again, yes in balance good, half way there, last moves, spindrift icing up eyes, next time goggles, can't see, Barracuda won't come out, both feet pop! Instinctive climbing, broken through another step, face frozen, get out Barracuda, wrist loop off hand. Intense, real intensity, last move out of wrist loop, snow everywhere, all reserves full on, calves and forearms unnoticed over, all quiet, blizzard stops, no howling; calm. Exit gully and nevé top. Blizzard roll-up, shake, ice-coated wreck, stumble down, aggression gone.

FOR BRIAN

Gone

The steady hand to guide the rope
The cheery curse to calm the nerves

No more

To breast the crux and see the impish smile
Above.

Gone

Nights of laughter after climbs
Talk of hills, routes and climbs
In high lonely places facing fear
Together.

Remaining

Memories of friendship forged in trust
On Summer rock bright Winter ice
Long aching walks through mud to
Mountain hut.

Those the Gods most love are early called
While we must vainly strive to follow
The light which burns the brightest burns
Not long.

A TREE FOR EACH SEASON

By I. H. M. Smart

*'...the best fantasies rest on a sound notion of reality'
Andrew Greig; 'Men on Ice.'*

HERE ARE four stories about climbs that seemed to reach their main conclusions under trees. They are four similar beads, if you like, strung on the thread provided by the introductory quotation.

Spring

*'The great wood in motion,
fresh in its spirit;'
Sorley MacLean; 'Woods of Raasay.'*

This tree was a Scots pine great in the number of its branches. I received its hospitality one memorable March night when I couldn't get back to my car because of a swollen burn. The day had begun well enough skiing across twinkling snowfields in clear, still weather. Under such conditions you can travel effortlessly for miles. At the end of the morning, alas, a front moved in bearing cloud and rain on a warm wind. The expected exhilarating ten-mile return run in the evening glory became a slow trudge through grey porridge with a visibility of yards. Eventually the burn appeared; it had been miniscule in the morning but was now huge and frothing at the mouth, tugging at the chain holding it to the hill. There was no way past this maneater burning white in its cave of gathering darkness. Fortunately some shelter lay nearby in a gloomy forest of the night, a wood of feral pine trees framed, unexpectedly, in fearful asymmetry against the last of the gloaming. The chief tree, the many-armed warrior mentioned in the opening sentence, offered the only escape from the soggy ground. The lowest branch was easily accessible and broad enough to give a perch of reasonable security. It's interesting how these old knacks come back again so easily after millenia of disuse.

Through the long night the overflowing burns roared from the corries. The winter kingdom of a few hours ago had been so peaceful. Now the old regime had collapsed and the restlessness of a new dispensation was in the air. There was life in the warmth of this disturbing wind; things were moving, not least the tree that was taking the brunt of the wind.

Hours later the rain stopped and the cloud started to break, shreds passing from time to time across the moon. Then, moon

and clouds stood still and the trees started a headlong rush through the night. It was a misconception of course; the mistake you make when you think the other train is stationary and you are moving when it's actually the reverse. Well, either you correct that impression and spend a boring night back home in a damp, wind-buffed tree or, more enterprisingly, you enter into the spirit of the thing. And so we galloped down the glen, hair streaming moonlit in the wind, gathering reinforcements from the scattered remnants of the old forest until we reached the stockaded plantation of sheep-like spruce trees, the dull usurpers that had driven the unprofitable natives into the upper glen. These boring trees we ravaged, putting them to the blunt axe of the wind. It can't have been all imagination because the next morning a lot of them lay flat on the ground.

Summer

*'Bacchum in remotis carmina rupibus
Vidi docentem....'*

This tree was a birch arching gracefully over a patch of greensward by a purring burn tumbling over and over among bright waterfalls and brown pools. I encountered this spot on a sunny day of high summer after the first of the only two VSs I have ever led in my life. It was, therefore, a long time ago but, nevertheless, clearly remembered. The climb had been delicate and exposed, cruxing in a holdless corner, a veritable dièdre of the sorrows with each move more dreadful than the last. In those primitive days we climbed VSs raw; we were too thick to think of using protection, so ascents were complicated by the cold breath of impending dissolution causing ripples to pass unnecessarily often across the nape of the neck.

Leaving the hill afterwards the descent was lightened by the glow of survivor's joy; that feeling of suspended gravitas you get when your appointment with the Great Dentist in the room next door is suddenly cancelled. It was then I encountered the patch of birch-shaded greensward. What an opportunity! The others were away ahead, too far to be consulted, so quick as a flash I was down there supine on the grass, head pillowed on my rucksack. The ambience was too good to obliterate in serious slumber; it was better to hover on the brink aware of the smell of the warm earth, the trill of water and the green canopy of the tree seen through half shut eyes flickering in the breeze as heliographing leaves deflected little bits of sunshine into the restful shade. Then came the powerful sensation of a presence and the sound of something not unlike distant singing coming from some far hinter-

land of reality. Whatever this strong and disturbing land may be, it is usually kept hidden by a protective screen of suitably opaque metaphors. My old pagan friend Quintus Horatius Flaccus who saw round many an odd corner of the normal world, recorded the sensation pretty accurately in Book ii, Ode XIX, the introductory lines of which head this section. (Bacchus, by the way, was originally a more general nature God, before he took up drink).

Its all physiological of course. The effects of falling adrenalin levels and the release of dear knows how many curious neurotransmitters, neuromodulators and endorphins by an alarmed nervous system make it relax its guard; flickering light and the melodious trilling of water in this case, confused it even further and generated a bit of wobble in the perceived world. Something similar happened after the second VS I led, so ever since I have stuck to Diffs and V Diffs which produce a lesser effect. Some people I know can climb VSs all day and every day and find it pleasantly stimulating. These are hard men with pieces of fencing wire for fuses in their nervous system. You have to be suitably deferential in their presence; some of them can even construe Horace and must know all about distant singing in rocky places.

Autumn

'Sunt lacrymae rerum et mentem mortalia tangunt'
Virgil.

'lacrymae rerum - up your jumper'
Sidney Goodsir Smith.

This was a sad sort of autumn day - dark, damp and edgily disagreeable. I left my rucksack under the ghost of a birch, a grey stem ascending to a cloud of leaves drained of colour. The path then led past an abandoned shieling, mouldering under a pall of grey nettles and dun bracken. The reason for treading this depressing place was the crag above. It had looked attractive when first seen weeks ago. A scramble on its rocks had seemed a good way of spending a poor day. This, however, was an unusually poor day. There were tears for things in general and mortal things in particular touched the heart. However, the rock seemed good and in spite of the psychological burden of pervading melancholy, the pitch went well. Thirty feet up after an irreversible move the horizon started to move or, more correctly, although it seemed to take quite a time for the mind to work this out, the slab bearing the crucial holds toppled over and fell. A hand, mine as it happened, clutched at a passing hold and swung me away from the executing crunch of the descending megalithic axe which then bounded on

downwards chopping grey scree and sombre bracken with each blow against the passing hillside. It all happened quickly and the avoiding action was calculated and carried out by an efficient subconscious organisation without, it seemed, much help from one's owned dulled persona. This fits what is known about the evolution of the nervous system. Very little is discarded; primeval circuits are retained and underpin the new accretions acquired during slow evolutionary time. In the old days the survival reflexes could get on with the job without extraneous input from higher centres given over to contemplating such absurd notions as *lacrymae rerum*. Now, in an emergency these ancient survival routines are still able to wriggle out within milliseconds from under a burden of blunting subjectivity and camsteerie logic to look after their owner's immediate interests.

Still, there are advantages. The higher centres after a near miss, seem to celebrate their reprieve by being particularly sensitive to the colour and depth of the world around. This became apparent a little later when the weather turned for the better. In the improving light a colourful landscape of near and far emerged from the flatness. Searchlights of sun came through the moving clouds and scanned the hillside, picking out from time to time autumnal birch trees, bright against the dark heather including, for one exhilarating moment as I retrieved my rucksack, the silver stem and golden crown of the one that had earlier been a grey ghost with colourless leaves.

Winter

*Dispel the cold with amber fire
From logs laid tinder dry upon the hearth
And pour the twelve year old Glenlivet
In generous drams from its earthen jar.*

*Horace Ode I, ix
(after a fashion)*

I made camp early in the morning at the head of the glen among the last trees of the old forest. The rest of the day was spent on the ridges above in an uncompromising land of winter where rock and snow were abraded by spindrift driven by searing wind. Travel in this dead land at the edge of survival was exhilarating for a while but as the day waned and the shadows grew it sharpened a hunger for other living things. The last mile back to the camp was made in dying light with the growing loneliness of seeming to be the last man left alive on a dead earth. Usually you have to grit your teeth a little before entering a wood in the twilight. The additional darkness is not easily accepted. This time, however,

the old forest offered company and protection from the callous wind and the hard glitter of the stars. As the fire flared up a comfortable room was fashioned from the darkness. Its floor was sheltered and the cold light of only a few stars penetrated the pillared walls and vaulted ceiling. Relaxing after dinner with half a bottle of malt in a comfortable fireside armchair provided hospitably by the thrust out roots of a particularly noble tree was as pleasant an experience as I can remember. The trees gathered round the fire and we communed together in a companionable way in spite of the vast difference in our ages and the divergent paths we had followed in the course of evolution. I thought of other Scots pines I had bivouacked under – in Rothiemurchus and the Derry, around Rannoch, in lonely Barrisdale and over the sea in Norway; then of more distant relations, a piñon in Utah which had shaded me from quiet moonlight and a most ancient bristle cone pine I had snoozed beneath in the noonday heat of sunny California. While we went through all this family gossip the greater darkness waited indifferently outside; in time it would reabsorb tree, man and earth alike and recycle us all into, and maybe beyond, the hadrons and leptons of an indeterminate universe. Meanwhile we living things gathered round a communal hearth, preserved for a time in an amber bubble of firelight, purring contentedly together and enjoying each other's company.

OCHIL MEMORIES

The Ochils now dance gently in the light
Of memory

I see them as long ago

When a child's eye saw evening's wondrous things,
When a child's feet ran bracken braes on wings
Of thoughtlessness – and longed to keep it so.

We shall not go again as children there.

Here the grime of the grey and soulless street
Has exiled eyes, the town ensnared our feet.
We see the suburb slopes beyond mist murk
And clink the callous chains that we have made;
Tired men and so sad at heart, who are paid
For our labours with memories that hurt.

We shall not go again as children there.

Unloved till love cannot the love repair
We shall not go again as children there.

MY MUNROS

By Sandy Cousins

MUNRO bagging is a ploy enthusiastically pursued by some and notable achievements have been reported. Rushing round them may be a worthy athletic and logistic effort but not to my taste. I've always looked on those who had done them as folk who really knew our hills, particularly if they had been climbed over a number of years.

In recent years it seems a secret group meets in some Scottish Mountaineering Club think tank and after serious deliberations peaks rise and sink, thus the Munros come and go. One may climb those done by Sir Hugh Munro himself or those he listed or those conforming to the present rules or those now listed plus the promotions and demotions over the years. Truly I'm sorry for anyone who takes it seriously because it is all a great nonsense but good fun and one would be dishonest not admitting to a real satisfaction having completed them. I was not one to pursue Munros, choosing my hills for their ridges, rock or winter climbs but when I found I had almost done the round, including promoted and demoted ones, there was nothing for it but to browse over maps and lists and join the Munroists. I suppose in a population of about fifty million the four hundred or so Munroists are a fairly small band.



Perhaps one of the delights of doing them is arriving at the last one. Some may choose a quiet solo day but having once or twice joined friends on their last one I was happy that so many friends turned up for my completion last summer. Summer, that's a laugh, it was the wettest for years! All this made me turn to my climbing logs to mull over my days on the Munros and maybe these notes will remind you of days of your own.

After youthful days cycling and walking culminating in a walk from home to Loch Lomond, about eighteen miles, and climbing Duncryne, I suddenly became aware of the long skyline of mountains. A pal and I were fired with the idea of climbing one. We didn't know anything about hills or climbing but after weeks of planning we set off festooned with pots and pans and kapok bags as my log records –

July '47. Ben Lomond. Bus to Balmaha. Walked to Rowardennan, 6½ miles. Tea at hotel. Climbed by direct route(!) to summit, joining path at well. Very warm. Summit late evening. Our first hill! Tent at summit. Very comfortable warm night. Misty morning lifting on way down giving grand view of loch and islands. Walked back to Balmaha, bus home. Very impressed by high airy summit, great feeling being above clouds watching them form in the glens at night, rolling down off the hills.



*Festooned with
pots and pans...*

A lucky start to my climbing. A fortnight later I was up again with another pal in different conditions –

July '47. Ben Lomond. Bus to Balmaha. Lift from chap going up for his 25th time. (I now realise I've been up 27 times). Lunch in hotel. Climbed by path. Very misty, rain, tent not waterproof. Thunder and lightning below us. Cold. Packed up at 2 a.m., scared. Followed my dog which followed the path, we hoped. Camped at Rowardennan. Midges fierce. Breakfasted on pier to escape midges. Little sleep. Walked to Balmaha in heavy rain. It is difficult to account for our cheerfulness this trip. This was Ronnie's first, probably his last, hill climb. (It was).

Some ten mountains later I camped on Ben Nevis summit on a fine evening in '49. (Later on Coronation Day '53 a group of us were alone on the summit to fly the highest flags. Ben Humble and a friend had done the honours for King George V in '37).

Then in February '50 I arrived at Lagangarbh. I don't know how I got in as I was not even in the JMCS then –

Feb. '50. Buachaille Etive Mor. Bus to Lagangarbh, arrived at night. Deer on the road at Kingshouse. Fine moonlight night with snow glittering on the hills. Next day climbed with three SMC. (I wonder now who they were). Climbed side of Great Gully, ice and powder snow. New ice axe. (It was ex-WD). Good slide down N corrie.

Next winter traversing the Aonach Eagach for the first time it all nearly came to an end –

..... roped together for some parts where flake ice and snow covered the rock. Fine cornice on south side and at one point on the north as well. Descended towards Clachaig Gully to see way down. Impossible to descend east of gully. Glissaded into Clachaig Gully. My axe was suddenly ripped from me, because sling was too slack. I shot down with no means of stopping. I careered into a drift and slowed enough for my axe to slide near to me so I could grab it and stop. I gingerly walked a few paces down and looked into space – and shuddered. It was a grim warning against 'blind' glissading.

In my wanderings over the years I have, like others, become involved in a number of searches and rescues. It makes one realise the slim margin between joy and sadness on the hills.

Later that winter I had one of those beautiful days –

March '51. Ben Cruachan. Snow overnight camped at Allt Brander. Cloud cleared, wind dropped completely and we felt warm in the sun. The view on the way to the summit was magnificent. Mull with Ben More showing white and blue with a fine curving ridge. East and south innumerable peaks and glens appeared with low broken cloud here and there. From Cruachan summit the ridges curved out and down clad in thick cornices. The view was one of the best I've yet seen. North, Ben Nevis, Glencoe mountains, Cairngorms, Loch Etive. East, Ben Vorlich and the Perthshire hills. South, the mountains of Argyll and Loch Awe. West, the Firth of Lorne and all the islands. Came down in pairs for roped glissade because we had only two axes for control.



Craochan... on the way to the summit...



Tony Balmforth on *The Screen*, Glencoe

Photo: Alan Learg



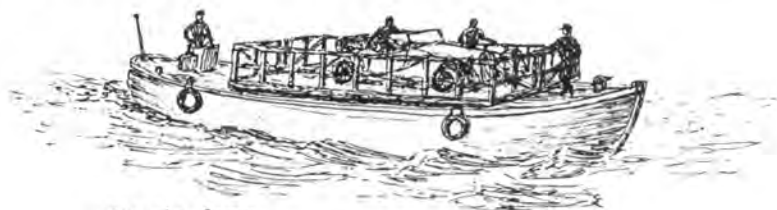
Photo: Chris Dale

Big Glossy Pitch 8

About 30 feet above the Bivouac stance.

The Dimeatrodar. Sail visible on lower slabs at left edge

Then there was my first visit to Skye in a pal's old car –



Glenelg ferry

July '51. Sgurr Alasdair. Mam Ratagan hill road very steep, loose surface. Glenelg ferry 9/-, came across after much tooting and shouting. Swivel platform on small barge. Road from ferry very steep, narrow, twisting. Stalled in first gear so jettisoned some load to get up. Mist on steep hill track down to Glen Brittle. Potholes enormous and rutted track. Wooden bridge looked sound so we drove across. Mist cleared in the evening and sun shone on crags of Coire Lagan. The Cuillin seemed out of scale, so huge, and more rugged than anything I had seen. Lochan in Coire Lagan scooped out by ice and striations still showing after all these years.

We did *Collie's* route on Sgurr Alasdair. Steep exposed scrambling, then ran down the Great Stone Shoot in 15 minutes. Of course we climbed the Cioch, on the marvellous gabbro, for its superb airy thrill. After doing the *Cioch Direct* route we looked at someone's guidebook and were elated to see it was a Severe. We probably wouldn't have done it if we'd known. Later that trip I walked out the Road to the Isles from Fort William and arrived in Mallaig on a wet stormy night. Being thoroughly soaked I sought a bed and ended up in the posh West Highland Hotel. After a bath I went into the large lounge occupied by a few yachting types peering out at the wild sea. One asked with a frown,

'Have you just come in?'

'Yes.'

Another asked.

'On your own?'

'Oh yes.'

Raised eyebrows all round. I didn't mention I had walked. Well, they never asked.

Sometimes I didn't reach my summit. In December '51 a group of us were staying at Downie's Tearoom in Glencoe. This empty wooden hut used to be beside the cottage at Meeting of Three Waters.

Bob and I roused the others with some carols at 7 a.m. as the hut shook under the violent wind. The others reckoned the weather warranted a day in bed. This shocked me. I was going out gale or no gale. I must say the weather was very, very bad. We learned later this hurricane caused much damage and some loss of life across Scotland. In the glen the gale drove the stinging snow and waterfalls became waterspouts, the wind whipping the water like smoke. Bob and I crossed the gorge by some Indian rope tricks and headed for a ramp-gully up Beinn Fhada. In blinding snow we clawed our way up deluged by spasmodic avalanches of what looked like dry rice. Up some iced rocks we reached the ridge where the wind tore at us. Staggering and crawling in the snow we tried to make progress. Suddenly I was picked off the ground and thrown in the air over Bob. I remember looking down on him as I gripped my axe and waited. Then I was rolling in the snow laughing at the wind. We huddled behind a rock, ate some biscuits and rubbed more Vaseline into our painfully cold hands and faces and decided retreat was in order.

Over the next year my wanderings took me over another dozen or so Munros, including a memorable day along the Cuillin Ridge. That day which began calm and clear at Gars-bheinn ended in rain and gale at the drenched wall of Bhasteir Tooth then with soaked clothes stripped off we slept buried in warm hay at Sligachan. Such days with a climbing friend cement lifelong friendship and the depth of understanding gained through the trust of climbing together is a special joy.

In '52 I joined the JMCS and on a Meet had my first long ski tour with a Norwegian friend, from Derry Lodge to Glenmore over Ben Macdhui and Cairngorm and back next day. My ski were ash (£3) with Telemark bindings so he taught me the Telemark turn. Things were different then for we met no-one en route and Cairngorm summit was marked only by the cairn. After a fine run down Corrie Cas we walked through the old forest on the path which has largely vanished under the ski road.

The first time I topped Meall a'Bhuiridh was on a skiing weekend. In the evening I was just settling down into my home-made oilskin bivibag near Black Rock when a chap called Charlie, probably pitying me, invited me into 'the wee doss.' This was a cosy hole in the ground, virtually invisible but dry and warm. We talked late into the night and I hung on his every word as he poured out the wisdom of wandering and his experiences. On one occasion in Germany (he had walked all over Europe) he felt ill and called into an army camp. The MO examined him and diagnosed malnutrition. He had been living on oats and apples for days. They fed him up and he went on his way.

Five years at sea interrupted my Munros then I was a new boy in the SMC. I'll never forget my first Dinner and how splendid it was to be in that great company.

Beinn Laoigh presents its classic mountain shape to the Crianlarich-Tyndrum road and the *Central Gully* has heard my laboured breathing a few times. This is a superb winter Munro. On a day of glittering cornices and steep sweeping snow slopes it is one of the finest hills to visit.



The Saddle

On New Year's Day '65 at a Kintail Meet we went to the Saddle –

Snow 900', 4/10 cloud at 1500'. Wind light NW. Light snow showers. Roped 4, 4, 3 for the Forcan Ridge. I was delighted to lead our rope on this super ridge and chose the most interesting way at each pitch, keeping to the crest. The other ropes fell behind and we could hear but not see their climbing antics. The 40' deep gap looked a bit of a challenge but I cut a few steps down on the left then regained the ridge. Crossed the steep sloping slab, finding it easier in winter than I had in summer. At the second gap we stopped for food, all feeling in great spirits. We had a hot drink from my 'Heatin,' which they called the Tibetan tea urn. (See Technical Section).

I was really enjoying the climb and the company. As light was fading we reached the summit cairn. Two then made tracks down an open gully before dark as two of us waited for the others. Soon we were all together again and it was a happy, wet, singing party that trudged down the stalkers path to dark Glen Shiel.

Next summer holiday in the NW I met a chap doing a survey for the RSPB of reported Golden Eagle eyries. He asked if I would join him on the Munro above us. I was to climb to the more in-

accessible eyries. Usually when we climb a hill we just go straight up, not these bird folk. We contoured at various levels while he noted the birds and found nests. We located three eyries. I climbed to these and in one found the remains of fulmar, ring ousel and hare. In another two cold eggs he took for analysis. All the eagles had long gone but I collected some fine primary feathers. By the time we reached the summit I was knackered. On the way down we came on a huge newly exposed slab area, about the size of four tennis courts. The turf had obviously been floated off by flood water under it, then it had split open and it was left around the edges in huge rolls, like Swiss Roll, some about eight feet diameter. An extraordinary sight and I realised I was seeing rock no-one had seen before. Later a local told me there had been a violent rain storm a few days before and it washed away a couple of bridges.

I get great pleasure from using some of our fine wee bothies. Shenavall bothy nestles in a remote location under An Teallach (p.268) and one New Year we traversed the ridge in beautiful conditions. It was gleaming white like a wedding cake. At one point I stopped to photograph my following companions and my day-bag rolled off down the north side. Reluctantly I went down for it, tracking the faint marks in the hard snow down a gully and out down the long snow slope. About 1000' or so down I found it but my heart sank as I saw what I had to reascend. I staggered up in the fading light then seeing my friends heading off along the ridge I considered whether to go down to the bothy for the night but decided to try for the ridge. How thankful I was when I found one good friend had waited in a wee snowhole. I was really shattered as I flopped down beside him but after some coffee thickened with sugar I was surprised to feel fine and we even caught up with the others.

On many Munros my border collie, Dram, was my good companion for seventeen years. Being alone on the hills with a quiet well trained dog is a special pleasure. On one such day we went to Seana Bhraigh and Eididh nan Clach Geala, where I made a howff just NW of the summit – and found it still there three years later. That day we watched roe deer, red deer, ring ousel, golden plover, ptarmigan, buzzard, golden eagle, heron and trout. In company on the hills we take pleasure in the chat and the company of friends but alone I find the huge scale gives me a feeling of real insignificance, a fleeting walker in a micron of time in the immense time scale of the landscape. Oh, how I hope we can conserve some of this lovely country for those yet to come, because surely there will be others who will seek these joys.

One of my delights after a solo day is the beautiful highland evening sunlight when, after a good meal by the lochside, tired man and dog lie contented with a peaceful pipe and rippling cry of the curlew sounds over the moor.

Soon a number of Munros were crossed on ski, a marvellous way to enjoy the long sweeping slopes which, though they may be tedious in summer, offer thrilling runs in winter. At least that's the theory, the practice was often grey ice, screaming wind or mist or wet slush and heather! But the good days were superb.

Early in the '70's I discovered Knoydart. This immediately became a favourite area and almost every year since I have wandered for a week through the glens and along the ridges alone with Corrie, my present canine pal. At first we could be there all week without meeting anyone but now the area is enjoyed by many with unfortunately untidy folk, regular wildlife disturbance, bridges – intrusions in a fine wild place. The bridges are I think sops to the soft, unless for estate work, ego trips for the builders. Even some so-called mountaineers want them. On one visit with Corrie I spent the day fishing, watching a family of foxes, rescuing a red deer calf from a bog, exploring the caves and woods of one 'secret' corner, then climbed Garbh Chioch Mhor in the evening, camping on the calm top, ready for Sgurr na Ciche next day. A thin sheet of cloud drifted in from the NE tumbling down the ridges across from us. All the tops to the north and south were clear and the islands floated on a glittering sea as we watched the orange sun roll down the Cuillin. Man and dog enjoyed fried trout in contented quiet.

My '71 hillwalk from Cape Wrath to Glasgow (*SMCJ*, 1972, XXX) was a memorable Munro journey. On that trip, as with others, I got to know a number of the interesting and hospitable folk of the glens. Knowing such kind people is an added pleasure to wandering the hills.

Taking time to do the Munros means one can choose the season to suit the hill and winter is surely the best time to climb Stob Ghabar. On one of several ascents up the Couloir we climbed 'two handed' on front points on good ice. I wonder if the old piton below the ice pitch is still there, it must have been used by hundreds of climbers by now. That day, returning to the road, we learned of an accident and went back up the hill. In the dark we found evidence at the foot of a gully then the MR team arrived and sadly we carried the fatal casualty down.

On about half my Munros and on several repeats I have been alone. This makes one sensitive to the sounds of the mountains. Almost always there is the sound of rushing water in the corries

below, the trilling of larks on sunlit moors, the plaintive plover on the high shoulders, the rattle of ptarmigan among snowy rocks, the wild siren of divers on lonely lochans, the autumn roaring of rutting stags, the grunts of hinds with meowing calves in spring, the rustle of birches, the sighing of pines and sometimes such silence on the high tops that one feels alone in the world.

Turning into the '80's there were still several areas unexplored and one spring I went to the Loch Carron and Dundonnell hills. During a week's wandering I climbed from Loch a' Bhraoin to Druim Ruidh. En route Corrie and I stalked deer, unaware of us in the easterly air, in the deep corrie. On Sgurr Breac I looked across to Slioch and other old friends of Fisherfield with the great slab above Loch an Nid shining wet in the sunshine. Westward rose the fangs of An Teallach. A couple of days earlier I had watched lightning repeatedly striking the ridge during a brief violent storm after which surprisingly I caught a good trout for my tea. Across A'Chaileach we went and I noticed rising from the corrie a curious ridge and trench apparently caused by an ancient landslip. Then down to Loch Toll an Lochan for a smoke and a few casts rewarded by a fighting trout. Back at the loch I met the gentlemen of the Yorkshire Ramblers Club and at their invitation spent a merry evening at their camp. Their hospitality is just grand, man! Another grand Munro day.

About this time I realised I'd been on over two hundred Munros so finally I became a Munro-bagger. Now happily the fever has passed.

An energetic week on the Glen Shiel ridges when every top was in mist increased the bag, and Moira my patient wife claimed she watched me climb two thousand feet in half an hour. Then a great May week in Lochaber where I had almost every top in warm sunshine and later the tops of Beinn a' Ghlo, a sweltering day when I walked naked all day. Well streaking was in vogue! More recently the Glen Shee and Braemar hills were completed in a spring week with every kind of weather from baking sun to screaming snow.

Just when I thought I had one left to do I heard from a supposedly reliable source that another hill had risen to the dizzy height. I shot off to Sgurr a Choire-bheithe in Knoydart. What a beautiful walk that is along Loch Hourn! However this turned out to be the Munro that never was, but not before the false rumour sent several others up there. It is still 913m, 2996', but a fine peak nevertheless.

So on a wild day with the Etive roaring in spate some hardy friends gathered below my last Munro. I had forgotten my boots so went up in wellies. The cold and wet turned back Moira and

my son Alasdair but Eilid, my daughter and nine pals including our piper and three dogs, huddled at the summit with Drambuie and cake. Even on this sodden day it was still worth a pause to look down the glen to Loch Etive with rain showers drifting from cloud and blinks of sun glittering on the slabs and slopes above the forests. Boiling clouds poured over the Bidean nam Bian ridge beside us and thus Buachaille Etive Beag completed my Munros.

Perhaps, dear reader, you were with me on a Munro day. If so my thanks for your cheery company. Let's go again.



MOUNTAINS OF LITERATURE

By R. L. St. C. Murray

TO ANY Munroist, who has completed and is seeking a different challenge, let me recommend Scott's *Waverley Novels*. There are 27 novels and some shorter stories giving a comparative rate of about ten Munros to a *Waverley*. If you prefer the softer option, choose the ten Munros.

In *Anne of Geierstein*, which has the alternative title, *The Maiden of the Mist*, Arthur Philipson is involved in a romantic mountaineering adventure in the early pages. This is unusual as most of the novels start with a careful construction of the scene, circumstances and characters, before leaping into action at about page 200. However, in Chapter Two we find Arthur traversing a Swiss mountainside on a route, probably only moderate, when a landslip leaves him stranded with Very Severs before and behind. He becomes panic-stricken, but before the local MRT can be alerted, a beautiful maiden appears on a nearby spur (what a stroke of luck!). She is quite at ease on these precipitous slabs, reassuring Arthur and guiding him to safety.

The romance which develops between Arthur and Anne does not run smoothly because Anne, who lives in her uncle's household, is of sturdy yeoman stock and Arthur seems to be a mere landless wanderer. Anne's uncle will not countenance such a suitor, but those familiar with Scott will not be surprised when Arthur tears off his whiskers (as Wodehouse would say) and discloses that he is an English nobleman travelling incognito. This does not solve the problem as an English nobleman cannot stoop to marriage with the daughter of a mere farmer. Those familiar with Scott will not be surprised when Anne tears off *her* whiskers, (so to speak), and discloses that her father and her uncle are also noblemen. Her father is abroad on political and military affairs and her uncle is a farmer by choice, preferring 'the good life.'

It is sad that the novels of Scott, surely our country's greatest writer, seem to be more appreciated abroad than they are in the land of his birth. They are hard work, but very rewarding, and anyone with the patience and tenacity to climb all the Munros would probably appreciate the novels of Sir Walter Scott.

ABRAXAS RETROSPECTIVE

By G. E. Little

Abraxas; the supreme power encompassing both good and evil, the ultimate deity.

Abraxas; a climb on The Bastion of Coich na h'Oighe, a line of magnificence, painted on a sheer granite canvas.

We stood before it and began to freeze from the exertion. We questioned the painting, berated it, made love to it, prayed to it: We called it Mother, called it whore and slut, called it our beloved, called it Abraxas. . . . Herman Hesse.

HANGING free on the end of a fifty metre rope, ten metres from Ledge Three, unable to prussik, the damp mist swirling about my slowly spinning form, a spider dangling from a filament, loving yet hating that crag, that line; an impossible tenuosity across a great blankness. Piecing together the giant conundrum, a monolithic maze of shining granite. Pecking at flaws in the flawlessness of it all. Finding the tiger's eye peering from a crack in all its flowering crimson intensity.

It became my dream, fixation, my creation. Soloing *Tide-mark*, in a trance, to launch into that void again, familiar yet always strange, a living surrealism.

So we arrived, my kin and I, with the ironmen, that fateful day; no longer a twisting rope from above but out on the sharp end.

Ledge Three's safe lush womb is deserted as I venture into a vertical world; a world of temptation, of contrast, of pain. The first pitch with its decomposing introduction, its roof capped yellow diedre where I cling like a lover probing its inner sweetness. Our right to fingery cracks and sacriligious pounding. That superb right traverse and pull up, coloured cords hanging over the black arch, swaying in the gentle breeze, fingers in stone pockets.

The second leads us out into the blankness by a strenuous layaway underclinging and cheating past the tiger's eye, a vertical groove brushed clean of its ancient accretions, thinning to a crack, takes me to an imaginary ledge, much labour and bolt belays. I hang there arms leaden, choking on powdered rock, mesmerized by the sweep of vertical granite all around, its sepia streaks lovingly painted by the winter weeps. A strange haze blurs the howff boulder in the corrie far below, the verdant lower reaches of Glen Sannox and the glinting sea far beyond swim in my mind.

A horizontal traverse or travesty leftwards, slime on fingers, boots and steel; denying gravity its due to the inevitable Arran turf. I return to the womb in a cavelet with foetal stance.

Up again, dubious and sound rock alternating, knowing the end is near yet refusing to believe it could ever finish. An undercut flake, a perfect hold and crumbling crack to a leftwards trending slab ramp. I scramble with *Armadillo* up an easy groove to Ledge Four and its done. The God of both good and evil is assuaged, the magic dispelled, the end of my passion.

So, was it a bold concept marred by my cowardice, a masterpiece flawed in its making? A sacrifice of ethics on the altar of my ego? Would the act live with me as an albatross? I did not care! I did not regret the deed!

They came five years later those men of the white dust, fanatics of a different kind, with commitment to an art of a different nature, Their bodies and minds tuned to their purist ethic, athletic strangers playing by their own rules, there to right the wrongs of mere mortals of the past. They danced across *Abraxas* knowing only the light, flying like birds, proclaiming a new God. Dismissing the toils of the past yet acclaiming the brilliance of the concept, the beauty of the line.

When I return to that thrusting wall, the smooth side of a perfect breast, I am glad that it was done, knowing that the moment was all, the moment when the rock and I made that dark pact. You will know that moment when a perfect quartz crystal slices your fingertip and a crimson globe of coagulating life fails, bursts and strains the grey rock; that you have lived, that you have touched the power, that you have gained, for a fleeting instance, that other reality within all men.

CUCKOO OVER CARNMORE

By Brian Findlay

ALL THE time we were there these birds kept trying to tell us something. CUCKOO-CUCKOO!

Here we are 300 feet up *Red Scar Entry* on Carnmore Crag when the boy goes and drops the guide book, still that's another story. One hour later and we are back in business and so are the birds – CUCKOO-CUCKOO!

What was it the guide book said? *directly above the finish of this climb is the start of the Dragon, to which this makes a useful preamble.* *Dragon* is the main object of our first visit to Carnmore. Having driven round from Aberdeen the day before and climbed *Fionn Buttress* that same evening we were feeling pretty pleased with ourselves. We finished *Fionn Buttress* just as the orange orb of the sun sank into the Atlantic and the moon, another huge orange orb, rose over A'Mhaighdean to the east.

CUCKOO-CUCKOO! – The birds bring us back to reality. We were warned before we left Aberdeen that we would fry on Carnmore if the weather was good, today it is exceptional! Blue skies, no cloud or wind, just merciless sun beating down on us, burning relentlessly. Perhaps we are hallucinating due to dehydration, the overhang above looms closer, we can always traverse off.

This is very steep, in places overhanging route with great exposure,highly recommended. We run the first two pitches into one, the initial slab is dazzling in its brightness and acts as a huge solar radiator. All around us is water but not a drop to drink. We can even hear the sound of it above the birds – CUCKOO-CUCKOO!

The wall above steepens, *belay beside two doubtful spikes.* Up the corner above, past the small roof, more cracks, then easier grooves. What did we do before Friends? *Go up right to huge spike belay.* Will there be an enormous spike belay?

Suddenly we are there, just the yellow chimney between us and the roof dominating the sky above, at least it provides some shade from the sun! Up the chimney crack, great protection, bombproof runners I tell myself, then its got to be left, across the great flakes, really wild.on to a rib. Call this a rib?

'A tiny ledge provides a sensational stance and belay.' Why had I not read *Hard Rock* recently? No-one in their right mind belays here now. Perhaps the birds are right after all – CUCKOO-CUCKOO!

Two small wires supplement the ancient rusting pegs as I listen to my heart forcing the blood through my brain. Sensational it certainly was, one cheek on, one cheek off, and nothing below all four but space. Christ! If the kids could see their father now!

Up comes Bob, trying to smile for the camera, it should look good. No way is he getting onto my ledge. Across the traverse he continues to the sanctuary of the corner, up the rib and back into the sunshine, and water.

By the way, did you know that the Cuckoo is a nocturnal bird? Not a lot of people know that. Ask Bob Ross he'll tell you it is. CUCKOO-CUCKOO!



BHAISTEIR TOOTH

JOHN MITCHELL 1996

PETERMAN PEAK**Malcolm Slessor**

THERE are grade 2s and grade 2s. This was one of about 2000 feet long, composed of splintered fragments of what had once been rock, standing on, it seemed, a bed of ice. This is the story of how two perfectly sane, if geriatric, members of the club thought it fit to fly 1200 miles, boat 150 miles and back-pack 40 in order to make this epic ascent, which believe it or not, was a new route, and strictly not to be recommended.

I think we knew all about that before we left home, and yet we had spent months in planning and thinking out the principal moves. Like all these endeavours, it started with an urge. For us, there was the passage of time, and who knew, as Dr Smart so picturesquely put it when 'the Great Reaper might bear down upon us.' Smart, whose brilliant exploration career had been enhanced by the skilful avoidance of any organisational chores on the specious grounds that he was incompetent, had, as a result of a rare misplaced move in the chess game that precedes all expeditions, found himself in the role of leader and organiser. Always a devolutionist, he practised what he preached and from his eyrie in Glen Shee maintained contact with lieutenants by courtesy of British Telecom.

Once after a happy day on the hill and his generous offer of a pint and a large malt, he had elicited from me an unintentional off the cuff offer to 'do' the food and be the treasurer. I had forgotten all about it by the second dram. Not Smart. I had written down some figures on an old beer mat, and Smart, pocketing it, later used it as evidence of my acceptance of both roles. One has to be up very early to beat Dr Smart at his own game.

The other members of the party fell into place just as soon as the basic qualifications were announced by our leader. They were the possession of one grand sterling, five weeks free time as from 25th July 1984, and some reputation as a conversationist. I am still uncertain how I slipped into any of these categories, but bit by bit we assembled a geriatric cohort (Smart, Slessor, Kociancich and Sellar), plus two men to do the work, Todd and Zeyen. Todd is one of the world's most polished conversationists, and it was something of a mystery that anyone of 28 could have crammed in so much in so short a life. Not one of us knew all the others, so that essential ingredient of adventure – uncertainty – was guaranteed. Sellar was not a mountaineer, but as Smart remarked, the man was a 'terrier.' Alas Kociancich, who had

been Italian ambassador to Argentina at the time of the Falkland conflict, was obliged at the last moment to stand down. Zeyen, a linguist, was no mean mountaineer.

We left Scotland on the first (and only) summer day of 1985 for Reykjavik, and 24 hours later our chartered Mitsubishi was flying above the clag at 17,000 feet heading for Mestersvig at latitude 72N. One reason for our journey was that Mestersvig is to close down this year, and this was a last chance for a reasonably priced trip to the far north. Another was that the circum-polar traveller, Wally Herbert had left two inflatable boats at Mestersvig when he abandoned his orbit. Herbert had agreed to yield temporary possession to us in return for a sum of money which left us breathless. Still what is money but a convention, so we stumped up and sailed away.

The objective was to sail to the very head of Kaiser Franz Joseph's Fjord at latitude 73N, 140 miles by sea, then to walk to Peterman Peak, the highest peak in the high arctic. Our first day's voyage on Kong Oscar's Fjord lasted four hours, and covered 400 useful metres. There was still winter ice around! The second day we achieved a mile. And what fun! The sight of Dr Smart with plimsols awash standing on tiny pans of sea-ice, like some suitor on the Cam, punting his way back to terra firma, while the low arctic sun cast larger than life shadows, was a sight seared in my memory. But, thanks to our leader, we made progress.

Day (or rather night) 3 saw us brazenly and over-confidently roaring down open water to an ice front three miles up the fjord, only to roar back again some hours later. However we managed to make landfall on a tiny rock islet – North Ran Island – in the centre of the fjord, here we enjoyed a superb situation. The chain of the Stauning stood to the south. A ceaseless armada of ice floes sailed past from the sea (jamming our future progress). The air was filled with the raucous chatter of outraged arctic terns, for whom the island was about to be a nursery. Eiders and their young swam around, and colour was everywhere; blue fjord, brilliant lichens, arctic poppies, and above all the sensation of stillness, utter stillness.

Dr Smart, a self-confessed aesthete would happily have remained there forever, had it not been for the obsessive nervous energy of certain other members. Endless binocular studies of the ice front produced many theories of how it might be penetrated, but a cowardly dislike of being pinched by the ice and tipped into the sea, stayed our hand. Eventually more out of restlessness than conviction we took again to the boats, met the ice front, entered, probed, and escaped again, till in an inspiration for which the author takes some of the credit, we sailed for the south

shore. For it was high tide, and I proposed the theory that there would be enough water between ice floes and land to squeeze past, and there was!

And so to Kap Peterson, the familiar headland before one enters fabled Alpe Fjord. In the trapper's hut was the old log book from thirty years back, and we indulged in sentimental reflection of the old times and old expeditions. The Doctor and I had first been this way 27 years before on the Scottish East Greenland expedition (SMCJ, 1959). It brought quite a lump to the throat. Eight of those nine members are still alive and still active. Five are members of the Club.

And so on, soon in clear water, under the 4000 foot precipice of the Bastion on Ella Island (unclimbed as yet), through Antarctica Sund, where we were thoroughly drenched and frightened in rough weather with no place to land, to Nanortalik, our advanced base at mile 100 on August 2nd. The wind fell, the temperature rose to 17C. We swam in water at 4C, and felt so invigorated that we instantly packed up and set off on the final forty miles.

The last leg was like a long exposed lead on easy rock. The five thousand foot walls of the fjord fell straight into the sea. For thirty miles there was nowhere to land. Soon icebergs crammed the fjord, yet left room to slalom between them. Our leader was content. The expedition was already a success in PR terms, for with the wisdom derived of earlier expeditions, we had chosen as a name not 'Peterman Peak' but the KFJ expedition, in case we didn't make the top!

The boats ground through the upper waters, filled with brash ice from the Nordenskjöld glacier which was continuously calving. In some haste we hauled the boats 15 feet above the shore line in case of serious calving, and wearily made base camp after being on the go for 24 hours. The place was an arctic desert with bare mountain walls, sandy soil, wind-swept moraines, and little vegetation. Bare dry glaciers hung like huge icicles from the edge of the snow-capped plateaus around us.

Peterman peak was now but fifteen miles off, but we had to reach it by making three sides of a square, first up a dreary valley of unconsolidated moraine and stone couloirs where Sellar narrowly missed extinction at his own hand. Two carries later we made an early morning crossing of the torrent and set up camp 1 at the first verdant tundras of Knaekedalen – exhausted. From now on the going was easy, the valley delightful, with the twin cones of Gog and Magog (2600m) ahead. Gog had been climbed during the first exploration of this valley during the Louise Boyd expedition of 1933 by N. E. Odell. Zeyen made a solo ascent on our return

and reported that the cairn was below and half a mile away from the true summit. Odell, when later challenged, admitted this was entirely possible.

The evening of the 6th August saw us encamped on the tundra below the snout of the Gregory glacier. Next day was the big day. At first the glacier was dry, the going easy. We had three 'Dundee doggies',* and were moving without relaying carrying eight days food and all the gear. Ice gave way to snow and snow to eighteen inches of crusted snow, where the foot broke through randomly. When my turn came to pull a 'doggie,' my back couldn't take the slip-stick action. With my companions disappearing over the horizon, I rashly placed the sledge load on my already heavy sac, and set off in hot pursuit. A dozen steps, break through, up, heave, and suddenly what happened next can only be understood by back sufferers.

They pitched camp and put me into a sleeping bag with pain killers. I could hear an unenthusiastic conversation about the possibility of raising a helicopter. Five hours later when they pulled me out of the tent to relieve myself I discovered life was less painful standing, and so with Todd and Zeyen carrying my pay load as well as theirs on heavily loaded 'doggies' we set forth at 10 p.m. Miraculously with height and cold the surface improved, and Peterman, which at the beginning of the day had been a small triangle in the distance grew to fill our horizon. At 4 a.m. we pitched camp 3 at the base, almost unable to comprehend the immensity of the hill above us.

Midday on the 8th we awoke to a clear sky, but threatening clouds to the south. The party was determined to make a dash for the summit, leaving me to recover. Once again, when raised into a vertical position for micturation, I found the pain eased on standing, and with the recollection of a previous occasion, when I had cured a serious back pain by uphill skiing, I persuaded Smart and Sellar to let me join them on the easy angled but virgin ESE ridge, while Todd and Zeyen went for the technically interesting NE ridge, climbed by the Dundee party of 1977.

Our route merits little description. Good snow and good ice led to a shattered ridge butting on to the ESE ridge, which then rose 2000 feet, offering the sort of shattered rock climbing that frays the nerves and calls for the greatest possible skill and caution. At one point Smart, lost the feeling in his feet, and we regrouped for anti frost-bite tactics. Yet there was no wind, and conditions could hardly have been better. Now Franz Joseph's Fjord was

*A Dundee doggie is an invention attributed to Dr Smart. One steals the light weight plastic sledges of one's children (or grandchildren) and tows them in a nonchalant way, pretending they are not there.



On the Aonach Eagach

Photo D. J. Bennet



Ben Crachan, the high:st top from the west

Photo: D. J. Byrne

visible, and the southern horizon of the inland ice revealing all its subtle forms. Shackleton peak, the highest unclimbed peak in the north was now clearly visible, remote and inaccessible, and a rather fine objective.

To our right we could see Todd and Zeyen working their way up a delicious mixed route, and then we lost sight of them. About 8 p.m. I raised my hand to grasp a firm looking vertical slab, hauled up, and found I was on the summit! Sitting a cheval the three of us gazed in awe at the endless, limitless sweep of ice, mountains and sky. Only the curvature of the earth constrained our view. We were just on 3000 metres, 400 higher than anything else around. The tents 1700m below were mere dots. Suddenly Zeyen appeared on the snow saddle below, and in two pitches reached me, as my two companions set off on the long delicate descent.

Grade 2, yes, and a lousy one at that. But a great peak in an incomparable setting, justifying every effort we had made to get there, and (in my case) the effort of my friends to get me there.

Two days later, while Sellar nursed an injured knee, the mountaineers ascended a virgin peak of around 2500m. Zeyen who comes from Luxembourg, whose highest point is some 10% of this was determined to grab it for his country, and before we could stay his hand had scratched 'Luxembourg' on the summit slab. It is a tribute to the weather that we sat on that summit for four hours. A tribute too, to one of the finest mountain views in the world.



'BIG GLASSY' OR BUST

By Chris Dale

Big Glassy is a 290m route in The Blue Mountains of New South Wales. It gave Andrew Penney and Chris Dale an E3.A3/4 first ascent over five days in January 1983.

IT ALL seems so vague looking back now as to when the first plans actually crystallized. Were they born on that blistering hot Boxing Day when we trudged down the valley to pay homage, exchange superlatives and scamper back to the reassuring classics or possibly during those epic days of *Dogface** mania. But, when the light bulb finally did start to flash, ideas of what to expect were certainly few and vague in the extreme. Little did I know that 'Big Glassy' was to become one of the most rewarding climbs I had ever done.

Hot, dry, punishing heat, hardly a whisper from the trees, lazy flies hung in the sleepy air, the sun had found us, relaxed and almost hypnotised by the enclosing silence. Thus, with an unusual unwillingness, I pulled on my E.Bs., then muttering and cursing, fought my way up through an entanglement of etriers, jumars, haulines and a birds nest of other paraphernalia to finally belly flop onto a welcome ledge. 'Not a bad wee pitch Youth.' I had repeatedly decided, in secret, to aid the perfect jamb crack, after every panting, struggled for move, but I didn't seem to get around to it.

After a few unsuccessful attempts at squeezing a knife blade into non-existent seams, Andrew launched out horizontally on some rather thin moves. Five, ten, fifteen feet from the belay and I was just assessing the impressive arc of a peel from there when he talked a Friend into a break. He continued the conversation with the rest of his rack and after 60 feet of exposed traversing he finally found a foot ledge at the other end of the quite quaint looking flake that I was belayed next to. Hmm! That flake isn't a monster, it's a dinosaur, in fact it's life size replica of a Dimatrodan sail. What a find!

I found the pitch quite exciting whilst seconding but the next pitch doesn't look like 'Make-believe-big-leader-fall-country,' it's the real thing. I boulder easily up from the belay. A finger inserted blade on the left and a weighted sky hook on the right effectively keep the ropes separated and look quite friendly too. But the angle increases and I ease up and right, small edges now for the toes and fingers. Delicately I experiment with a Lost Arrow

*A vertical sandpit 450 feet high.

and solution holes; most are blind. First a tap, sounds good, then a harder knock and suddenly it is spat out and sent ringing through silence; shimmering it captivates and is gone. Another holds well but I have to tie it off. Sweat, heat, chalk dust held on the air. Slowly up and left to a horizontal break, only small finger holds on its lip, two pegs – security. Steeply advancing cardboard flakes, an excavated sandy hole yields to a No. 3 Friend. An overlap, awkward, no, very awkward, spaced holds, a footledge, angle decreases balance, heart bursting, mind racing. 'My hands are slime.' I haul the bolt kit and start to drill my first ever bolts, whilst marooned on an ocean of surging slabs. The first bolt snuggles up tightly in a bit of handkerchief, the second hole accepts its lodger with a bit more persuasion. After an eternity Andrew follows and we share the last drop of our ten litres of water, a smoke and then decide to rope off. The upper walls explode in true Walt Disney technicolour, the sun finally slips from sight and our heroes bumble their exhausted way back to the pub by the light of the still glowing embers of a recent bush fire and the silvery moon of course.

A couple of weeks later the memory had sufficiently faded for us to return. The fourth pitch which was merely going to be HVS turned out after ten metres, to be immensely hard and insanely bold. So after ten bolts and the odd crack tack, quite a few straining hours and some battered knuckles later, I warily left the security of my little ladder to plunge up the runnerless wall above to gain yet another foothold stance. A couple of bolts, some speedy rappels into the approaching darkness and we were back having a few tinnies* in the Newnes. *Deja vu!*

The following weekend, this really was developing into a saga so I'll spare you the details of how the car got stuck in two feet of mud whilst crossing the ford and the hours of hectic struggling, or the epic five mile walk down the valley, weaving our way through the boulders, thick sands, fallen trees and other variegated flotsam, courtesy of the recent flood. Under more favourable conditions – seven eights cloud cover – we wandered our way up the climb for the third time. Andrew downgraded pitch two by four grades this time and one of pitch three's cardboard flakes crumbled into oblivion, whilst underfoot. Other than that the 100 metre mark was passed without incident. A huge damoclean sheet, a sleeping sentinel, guarded the start of the next pitch. It was ready to pounce at the slightest provocation and had to be coaxed and respected. Ever tried to layback a corner without using your feet? Problematic! But a few upside down moves established me at the base of a genuine 'layback to glory' corner. Marvellously sustained,

*Australian for cans of lager.

it was a pure joy in efficient flowing movement. Another double bolt belay and a series of rappels took us down to base and a draughty night in a small derelict shed amid the decaying remains of a tractor and a few bales of hay.

Himalayan tactics hit the Blue Mountains. Could this be a revolutionary reversal in climbing trends? I ponder these thoughts as we return the next day and jumar to our high point. A great psychological barrier is dispelled as Andrew starts to peg his way through the 12 feet thick illusory shale band. Now we're into overhanging country. He gradually weaves his way up via a series of grooves. All's cool and fruity until with a scream that would have raised the hair on the back of Christopher Lee's neck, Andrew took a resounding plummet, pulling a respectable number of blades in the process. 'Ah well, that's another half hour,' I thought as he methodically checked over his body to see if it was still complete. After concluding that he had more than he had actually started with he smugly coasted up another forty feet or so before the rope became too much of a drag.

I cleaned the pitch and with only a short period before darkness, headed on to what looked like a ledge, forty-five feet higher. A few tied off knife blades, some jiggery pokery with a couple of Lost Arrows and I found myself at the base of a corner with foot wide walls, splitting the crest of an overhanging arete. I looked between my legs and there was nothing. The placements became steadily more dubious as the hairline crack smudged into nothing. The last two blades were too poor to hold all my weight separately so I stood with an etrier in each to avoid any swinging action; no movement at all would have been best of all. A complaining sky hook off to my left and a further peg or two and I reached our 'Thank God bivouac ledge,' which was in fact 3" wide and 18" long. Hmm! A bolt went in on my right and I prepared the gear for the night as Andrew cleaned the last pitch.

It was quite a memorable bivouac really; hanging a few feet apart in our belay seats, hundreds of feet above the ground, impotent, we relax and wait. In my bivvy gear, a sheet sleeping bag worn poncho style, I merely shiver while Andrew shivers like a hero. We recount the usual tales that get retold on such occasions, the long boring ones that need a captive audience. Orion stands on his head. I almost incinerate myself when some ash falls unnoticed into the ruffles of my poncho. The moon arcs across the sky. I tie myself in knots trying to relieve myself, miss the bottle and my rope mate (who is below me) but not, unfortunately, my own leg. Still the night draws on.

With the new dawn the exposure grows until it is complete and the rich colours blend themselves once again, reds, oranges

and ochres of the upper wall merging with greys, olives and bottle greens on the slabs below. It must be very impressive when after storms, the waterfall plunges 600 feet in a single fall to the central slab below. Andrew is off again, happily pegging away, bulk blades. At mid height a flake is discarded; one bounce and it demolishes another gum tree. That damn exposure again. A pair of trails bike riders reverberate down the valley, for twenty minutes they spew their vomit sound and with its sharp acrid taste I'm brought suddenly, spinning back to reality. Meanwhile, Andrew has made a hard exit to perch on a short hanging wall that fortunately steals through the twenty feet wide horizontal roof system.

By the time I had rejoined Andrew the stiffness from seventeen hours of waiting had almost left my muscles and I prepared for the penultimate pitch. A wee knife blade and I peered onto a short wall, overhanging and compact – 'We're stuck!' I had forgotten about the bolt kit. Here the rock was much softer requiring only a quarter of the normal twenty minutes drilling time. Three bolts allowed me to gain a steep, juggy wall. 120 fragile feet later, I doggy paddled into a cave, exhausted and elated.

The last pitch was merely a scrambling escape. We were up, but since the Wolgan valley, is lined in its entirety with unbroken cliffs – so common in the Blue Mountains – the descent presented a problem. We decided to follow a stream and soon found ourselves rappelling down a rather forbidding chasm or canyon. A rope stretching abseil through sheer, unyielding walls and we found ourselves amidst an oppressive dank darkness. A short sandy walk and two further soggy abseils and we were UP, DOWN, OUT and OFF.

For the last three days we had slowly struggled, unnoticed, up one of the highest and remotest walls in New South Wales. Previously untouched, we had met its challenge and dispelled a few of our fears. Before it had been beautiful, bold, untouched, now; more of an old friend that had let us into its confidence, just for a short, short while.

HIGHLAND ROCK FALLS AND ROCK SLIDES

By Graham Holmes

FEW NATURAL processes can match the virulence or rapidity of large rock falls and rock slides (called rock slope failures here) which can culminate in the collapse of whole mountain sides in a few seconds. Many mountaineers in Scotland will have seen the results of these catastrophic events, if only from encounters with huge cliff foot boulders. Some climbers may have speculated that the odd crag they had scaled could have been formed by a rock débâcle of a quite different scale to the more usual rock fall of a few boulders.

Since the last ice sheet decayed about 13,000 years ago, hundreds of slopes have slumped or completely collapsed in the Highlands. The largest known rock slope failure in the Highlands has involved the downslope shifting of about 110 million cubic metres of rock!

LANDFORMS

All rock falls and rock slides of whatever scale begin with some form of slope failure. They may differ from one another by how movement occurred initially and also by how the material behaved (either falling or sliding) once movement had begun.

Rock slope failures generally produce a failure scar, an area of net loss of rock, which is marked by either a rock scarp or quarry-like hollow in the slope and, further downslope, either a chaotic pile of boulders or relatively intact but displaced blocks of rock. However, the landforms produced by rock slope failure are more varied than this generalisation suggests.

Rock slope failures have a tangible relevance to mountaineers as climbing routes occasionally utilise failure scars. Two examples are at Carnmore Crag in the Torridons and the Sticil – the Shelter Stone Crag – in the Cairngorms. The Carnmore Crag example has left a concave hollow high on the crag. The detached rock probably slid initially along a basal failure plane (a line or zone separating stable from sliding rock) before falling some 90m down the face of the crag. The *Carnmore Corner* route on this crag centres on a wedge-shaped recess which appears to have been formed by a second, smaller rock fall. The fallen boulders from the main slope failure lie amidst the screes about 200m NNW of Carnmore Lodge.

The Shelter Stone Crag is similarly broken in midslope by awesome slabs formed by the basal plane of a rock slope failure

which contrast with the gullied and angular buttresses that provide the majority of climbing routes on the crag. The almost 150m high slabs form a major section of the well known route *Thor*. Again, below this slope failure scar there can be found abnormally large boulders, including the Shelter Stone, which were released by the slope failure.

It appears that the Shelter Stone Crag suffered more than one rock slide as a second failure scar lies above the main slabs. An enigmatic feature of this and some other crags is that the cumulative volume of the failure scars exceeds that of the rock debris below, even with the spaces between individual boulders in the failed material. Indeed some failure scars have no related rock debris, the material evidently having been transported away.

The failed debris in the above two cases did not end up far from its source, this being the case for most of the slope failures in the Highlands. However, under more favourable conditions, given a high and sheer rock slope, falling boulders can attain high velocities and may culminate in a rock avalanche – an exceedingly rapid flow of broken rock. Rock avalanches in other areas of the world have been known to transport debris miles from their source and some examples have flowed uphill before shooting over low hills or ridges.

Only two possible rock avalanches are thought to exist in the Highlands. Their scarcity is probably due to the relatively small scale relief of the mountains so reducing the run-up afforded by the free fall of rock. The largest and most impressive of the possible rock avalanches in Scotland has formed the massive accumulation of Torridonian Sandstone boulders which dominates the Toll a' Mhadaidh SE of Beinn Alligin. The boulders are spread in a 12-15m thick tongue-like deposit which stretches some 1.2km from the foot of the corrie headwall. At the crest of the headwall and a precipitous 500m above the rock material on the corrie floor, a large failure scar – the great Cleft of Sgurr Mhor – is formed by intersecting joint and fault planes. These joints/faults provided the surfaces along which the rock was released from the corrie headwall.

Opinion is divided over how the rock debris came to be transported over a kilometre from its source. Dr J. B. Sissons, the Quaternary geomorphologist who first brought the landform to the attention of scientists, suggested that the rock fell onto a decaying glacier that occupied the Toll a' Mhadaidh about 10,000 years ago. He suggested that the failed rock material mixed with ice and then flowed slowly down the gradual slope of the corrie floor.

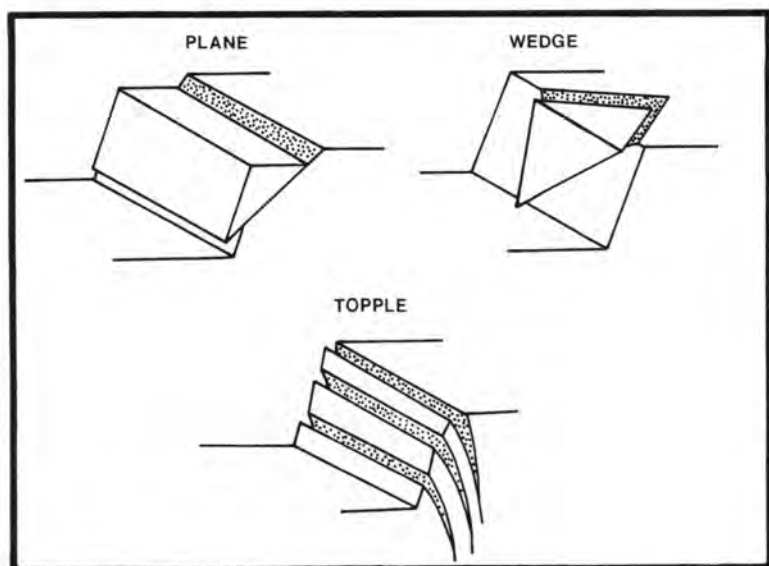
The simplest explanation, however, is that the rock fall became a rock avalanche of extreme ferocity which transported its load of rock in a single cataclysmic event lasting less than one minute. Little wonder then that the Red Deer is such a timid beast if this event has been related down the generations!

Not all slope failures in Scotland have failed completely, often the rock mass suffers only minor deformation, as is evidenced by widened joints and deep furrows and ridges traversing slopes. Some Highland mountain slopes feature a strange landform called an obsequent-scarplet, or counterscarp, which results from relatively small movements of a rock slope. Examples can be found at Glen Pean, Knoydart, on the NW facing slope of Meall na Leitreach by Drummochter, on the S facing slope of An Sornach a short distance from Alltbeithe and high above Glen Doll on the E face of Cairn Broadlands. At all these locations, obsequent-scarplets – resembling dykes with ditches directly upslope of them – can be found, usually with vegetation covered downslope faces and rock cropping out on their upslope faces. The scarplets are generally found running across the slope and in groups parallel with one another.

By far the most spectacular obsequent-scarplets in the Highlands are found on the SW facing slope of Ben Attow high above Glen Lichd where over thirty can be seen. Even the most determined Munroist should spare five minutes to walk SW from the summit of Ben Attow to see these remarkable features. The largest of the scarplets is up to 10m high and about 800m long. Several scarplets also occur close to one another resembling saw teeth in profile. The scarplets are most numerous at about 600m above sea level where a tiny lochan has been impounded upslope of one of the wall-like scarplets. Below this example there issues a small waterfall which supplies superb cold water even on the hottest days.

On some slopes the only evidence for movement of the slope is deep cracks formed by widened joints in bedrock. Examples of such cracks can be found at Hell's Glen in Ardgool a short distance N of the road at NN 181 062. The cracks are about 1-2m wide and up to 15m deep. Other examples are at The Cobbler immediately W of the Centre Peak and on Ben Donich at NN 234 046. The explorer of such cracks may well, like the author, find all manner of entrapped beasts which will inevitably offer maximum resistance to ones efforts to free them after having heard plaintive subterranean cries.

It is clear that slope failure can manifest itself in different forms. One reason for this is that slope failure is partly controlled by the orientations of joints, faults and other forms of rock dis-



Basic forms of rock slope failure

continuity. A simple classification of rock slope failures, shown in Figure 1, relies upon how rock discontinuities form different shapes of surfaces along which blocks of rock may be released. Following this scheme, the Shelter Stone Crag example would be described as a plane failure and that of Ben Alligin originated as a wedge failure. The Ben Attow scarplets have been interpreted as being the beginning of a toppling form of slope failure.

Perhaps surprisingly, the rock slope topple is common in the Highlands. One example that shows its innards, unlike the Ben Attow example, can be found opposite the deep cracks in Hell's Glen and above 'Jacob's Well.' This topple has formed a mass of large boulders which runs downslope from a 30m high overhanging crag to the glen floor 150m below. The toppling mode of failure is particularly clear at this locality as directly downslope of the crag there lies a huge block which has partly rotated then stopped. The block now stands as a rock sentinel overlooking the eastern approach to Hell's Glen.

DISTRIBUTION

A total of 432 rock slope failures larger than 10,000m³ in volume have been mapped on the mainland of Scotland NW of the Highland Boundary Fault. Of these, 68 are failure scars without debris below them. Rock slope failures have occurred in such profusion in some areas of the Highlands that they are a characteristic of the scenery and a facet of the panorama from numerous summits. The highest concentration of slope failures occurs in the Western Highlands but particularly in Cowal and Ardgool, the Trossachs and the Knoydart/Kintail area (Fig.2).

Rock type may account in part for the concentration of slope failures in the Western Highlands, as of 388 examples where the geology is known, 310 (80%) have occurred in schist – a rock renowned for its weakness by geologist and climber alike. In order of importance there then comes; gneiss (7%), quartzite (5%), granite (3%), sandstone (1%) and other rock types (4%).

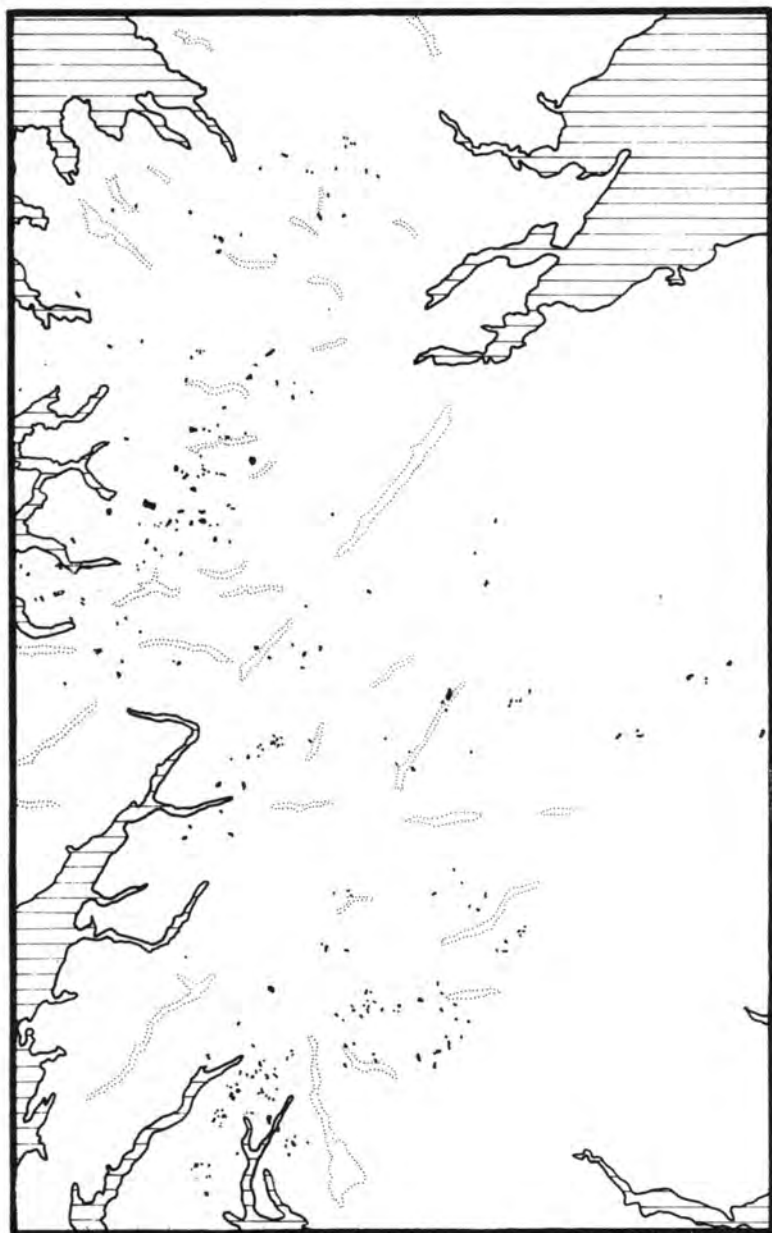
Schist is of course common in the Dalradian and the Moinean Series which crop out in SW-NE directed bands across the Highlands. The foliation within schist lowers its strength compared with other more massive rock types like granite. It is significant, therefore, that a high concentration of slope failures occurs in those areas dominated by schist such as Cowal, and a low concentration in areas composed of granite such as the Cairngorms.

There is indirect support for a connection between former glaciers and rock slope failure in the Highlands because of the correspondence between the upper limits to which the glaciers reached and the positions of slope failures. It has been shown that of 133 slope failures located in the area where the limits of the Loch Lomond Advance glaciers (active between about 11,000 and 10,000 years ago) have been reconstructed, 44% occur less than 200m outside of the upper limits of the glaciers. There may also be a relationship between slope failures and other earlier glacial advances or readvances.

The Loch Lomond Advance glaciers may have led either directly or indirectly to slope failure and the cause(s) of instability must therefore have had their greatest effect(s) when the former glaciers were at, or close to, their limits. Possible causal mechanisms are discussed in the next section.

CAUSES

A variety of processes have been suggested as the catalysts of large-scale rock slope failure in the Highlands. These processes range from simple oversteepening of slopes by glacial erosion to a new idea that earthquakes – thought to have more frequent



The distribution of rock slope failures in the Scottish Highlands.

during the deglaciation of the Highlands as sudden jumps occurred in the isostatic recovery of the crust – could have shaken down some slopes.

The mechanism commonly invoked as the cause of small-scale rock falls is the expansion of joints during freezing of water within them and collapse of blocks on thawing. It is generally thought that this process could not lead to failure of a larger mass of rock. However, freezing of the outer skin of a rock slope may prevent water from draining so building up hydrostatic pressure within a slope.

It has been suggested that former glaciers would have affected the water tables within rock slopes by raising them. The effect of this would be to saturate portions of rock slopes that would not normally have been waterlogged. Rock slopes were likely to have been saturated when deglaciations were in full swing because snow patches, permafrost and glaciers were releasing vast reservoirs of water.

Reconstruction of the mechanics of rock slope failures using data such as the estimated mass of the failed material, the dimensions of the reconstructed slope and other indices of the strength of the rock, reveal some interesting information on the forces acting on the rock slope immediately prior to failure. Calculations have shown that the simple oversteepening of slopes by glaciers will not explain, by itself, the collapse of many slopes. Some other force(s) acted to induce the collapse of many slopes. The same calculations indicate that if rock slopes had been partly or fully saturated then the pressure exerted by water within the joints could have led to failure. Water within gently sloping joints will have the effect of lifting up a rock mass, while water within steeply inclined joints will push out the rock mass.

What about slopes like the Ben Attow example that have only slumped relatively small distances? Most rock slopes fail progressively as cumulative small but irreversible movements, caused by various agents, take place along joints within the rock. These movements will gradually weaken the rock mass and may lead to its complete failure.

Displacements within the rock mass are magnified and reveal themselves at the surface in the form of widened joints similar to the examples described earlier. These 'tension cracks' are a sure sign that trouble is brewing within a rock slope.

One way to accurately measure small-scale movements of a rock slope is to return to a known datum and measure its location over a period of years. Unfortunately, it is not yet known whether slopes like the Ben Attow example are still moving or not.

Progressive failure could have begun once the support afforded by glaciers to the slopes was removed during deglaciation. It is possible that some slopes shifted only slightly and then regained stability. Alternatively, the movements could have been taking place since deglaciation in slow and perhaps sporadic episodes.

It is known that small movements of the order of up to 5% of the length of a failure plane can occur before the peak resistance to further displacements is mobilised; beyond that stability decreases. Clearly, if this had occurred at some of the larger examples which are up to several hundred metres high, portions of the slope could have crept forward and downslope, theoretically, through tens of metres without collapsing.

We cannot yet state what led to the failure of individual slopes, though some ideas can be rejected using mechanical reconstructions. Even so, the final triggers may never be known. It seems likely that the likeliest primary explanation is that rock slopes were saturated during deglaciations and that the forces created by waterlogging led to failure. Some slopes, however, may have been severely weakened only to fail later because of another factor.

AGES

Rock slope failures are most discreet about their ages. Historical records makes no mention of large (i.e. greater than 10,000m³) rock falls during the last 200 years – though small-scale rockfalls have been documented; like the Glen Ogle rock falls.

Measures of the degree of rock weathering suggest that most slope failures occurred soon after the Loch Lomond Advance. Others probably happened with reduced frequency up to about 400 years ago. In considering how often these huge rock slope failures may have occurred one can speculate that if they had taken place with constant frequency over the last 13,000 years then there should have been one every 30 years. If the majority had occurred within the first few thousand years it would seem that Fin ma Cool must have lost his cool!

Forty-one slope failures are located inside the limits of the Loch Lomond Advance glaciers or 30% where the limits of the Advance are known. If these examples had occurred before the Advance then they would have been disturbed or eroded by the later passage of the glaciers. However, no examples have yet been found which exhibit evidence of overriding by glaciers – indicating that the slope failures postdated the decay of the Advance glaciers.

At the close of the last century the geologist C. T. Clough, who was the pioneer of scientific interest in Scottish rock slope

failures, noted that some failure scars in Cowal had no failed debris below them. He suggested that the debris had been swept away by glaciers. It is now known that some failure scars lie immediately above the former limits of glaciers and perhaps released their debris onto glacier surfaces, supporting Clough's remarkable deduction.

It appears that the Highland landscape is now largely fossil when compared with the dramatic changes that have taken place in the past. Yet, it is possible that a major rock slope could fail in Scotland in the near future—possibly following a very heavy rainstorm. Members of the SMC may have the opportunity of forging new routes up fresh cliffs. In the meantime, perhaps, I may have caused some of my readers to treat that 'sturdy belay' with extreme caution.



POOLS OF 2000

EXTREME SKIING IN SCOTLAND

By Martin Burrows-Smith

In the major continental Alpine journals a significant proportion of the 'new climbs' sections consist of new extreme descents on ski.

EXTREME skiing (as it is popularly called) is practised in many areas of the world from cornice jumping in Utah, major mountain descents in Alaska, the Andes and the Himalayas, to the more popular Alpine areas particularly the well known faces, ridges and eponymous couloirs above Chamonix. Whether Scottish mountain skiing is extreme at present is a matter of opinion but nevertheless, there is no doubt that the Highlands provide a wide variety of challenging ski descents and in the future an increasing number of ski mountaineers will be testing their skill and nerve in remote mountain corries.

Some may well doubt the sanity and point of skiing steep and confined ground in an exposed and serious situation and not infrequently I have shared similar feelings myself. However, speaking personally, the challenge has become addictive and I'm constantly searching for the perfect ski descent, hopefully completed in good style and control.

Historically, I have little information of the development of the sport. Maybe some SMC members could add some light here? In the Northern Cairngorms, the new approach was initiated by Nethy Bridge ski instructor, Harry Jamieson. Harry is no climber but clearly a talented, motivated skier with bottle. In the early 70's he made many bold first descents including *Aladdin's Couloir*, the Shelter Stone gullies and the *Couloir* in Coire an Lochan. The rest of us follow in his wake.

Instructors at Glenmore Lodge, with their enthusiasm for off-piste skiing and knowledge of local corries were naturals to follow in his tracks but took their time to become really committed! *Aladdin's Couloir* became popular and eventually exploration took place elsewhere.

It is not easy to grade or compare difficulty as so much depends on conditions. Thus relatively easy angled gullies such as *Left Hand Branch Black Spout*, *Lochnagar*, or *No. 3 Gully* on the Ben have proved particularly trying because of a glaze ice, whereas others, longer and steeper and with more apparent difficulty, have proved relatively trouble free. The start of the descent is often the crux. Cornices can be cut down, outflanked, jumped or side-stepped with an ice axe for aid. My own feeling is that a

rope should not be used unless the descent is really worthwhile – I don't suppose anyone else gives a damn but it seems important to me. I have only used a rope twice, both occasions in *Hell's Lum* in the Loch Avon basin.

Snow quality is everything. Undisturbed (by climbers) hard pack and neve with good surface roughage are the most challenging and least forgiving. A slip could be terminal. Icy crusts and heavy icy rimes are nasty and have provided much soul searching. Windslabs, soft and hard, are pretty good for skiing but obviously there is a concern of avalanche. Here one is constantly test-skiing so if a fracture line is created, one can hopefully drop down onto firmer snow underneath. Powders and deeper snows are perhaps less technically satisfying but feel much safer as an accidental outside edge will only result in a deep crater below. Spring snow on the turn can be delightful as long as it is clean and undisturbed.

The following is a list of descents of which I have personal knowledge. Snow quality on these descents is mentioned and any directions are relative to the direction of travel, i.e. downwards.

Northern Cairngorms:

Coire an-t-Sneachda;

A superb skiing coire and not just because of its ease of access. The slopes left of *Jacobs Ladder* and around the *Goat Track* give good practice.

Jacobs Ladder – hard pack. Cornice outflanked by short snow ridge on the left. Usually just a cornice problem with straightforward snow underneath.

Forty Thieves – spring snow. Upper section serious as it is undercut by rocks above the couloir. Awkward narrow section 200 feet below cornice.

Aladdin's Couloir – has been skied regularly in a variety of conditions.

Aladdin's Mirror – hard pack. Needs a good cover as there is a low relief rock ridge to cross. Has a serious feel at the start as one is skiing above *Aladdin's Buttress*.

Central Gully Left Hand – hard pack. A fine descent often in condition. Has also been skied in powder on a firmish base.

Central Gully – soft slab. Needs a good fill as there are narrow sections. Cornice can be awkward.

Central Gully Right Hand – powder. Needs good cover. Steeper and more serious than its neighbours.

Coire an Lochain;

Fiacail Ridge left hand flank on wet slab. Rather pointless. Much better descents are available on the fine slope between the ridge and *No. 1 Buttress*.

The Couloir – hard pack/powder on the *Great Slab*. A very fine excitingly situated descent, 20 minutes from Cairn Lochain summit to Coire Cas car park.

Stag Rocks;

Diagonal Gully – neve, steep bulge at the top. The Descent Gully further to the west also gives a good ski descent.

Hell's Lum Crag;

Hell's Lum – skied on two occasions. The first time was very unsatisfactory with wet snow and falling icicles. The rope was used twice.

The second attempt was an improvement, the rope used once at the cornice and the gully was occasionally side slipped and skied on soft slab. Atmospheric.

Shelter Stone Crag;

Castlegates Gully – hard pack. Often awkward at start.

Pinnacle Gully – nevé.

Under good snow both of these provide an excellent introduction as they have width and good scenery.

Lochnagar:

Black Spout – softish neve.

Left Hand Branch – similar but with a glaze of ice. Nasty.

Central Gully – perfect neve. Very fine.

Red Spout – neve.

Creag Meaghaidh:

Easy Gully – relatively straightforward. Can be icy at the start. A good introduction to remote gully skiing but is an awfully long walk in!

Raeburn's Gully – neve. Initial section avoided on right via slopes above *Bellevue Buttress*. A superb descent.

Cinderella – wet fresh snow with a crust in places and short icy steps. Good value.

Ben Nevis:

No. 5 Gully – deep powder. A fine run once one realised the avalanches weren't going anywhere, although apparently shortly after my descent a climbing party was avalanched 1,000 feet from the top.

No. 4 Gully – very icy. A cornice and short steep slope problem. Would be a suitable introduction with better snow.

No. 3 Gully – icy, serious at the top. Cornice avoided. Again this could provide a fine, scenic descent with good snow.

My visits to this hill on skis have yet to coincide with good snow. The potential here is obvious for some classic and exciting runs.

Glencoe:**Aonach Dubh;**

No. 2 Gully – soft slab. Scenic and very fine. Descent curtailed at Middle Ledge due to lack of snow on Dinner Time Buttress. With a rare good cover of snow to the Glen, this would be one of the best.

Stob Coire an Lochain;

Forked Gully – icy crust and many footsteps. A lot of side-slipping required. Disappointing and worrying.

Beinn Dearg:

Cadha Amadan (the Fool's Pass) – well named, – skied on avalanche debris.

An Teallach:

Lord's Gully – soft slab. The gully forks at the diamond shaped buttress of Lord Berkeley's Seat. The descent was started from below this rock. Ice and fear prevented the link from the summit of Sgurr Fiona. If good snow were available here, there would be a truly magnificent descent.

Hay Fork Gully – soft slab. Convexity at the top avoided – avalanche risk. Impressive right wall.

In case anyone thinks I've recorded every gully that I've scratched and scraped down in atrocious style, I can only say there have been many other failures, rebuffs and half-started or not finished. For instance *NC Gully* was too tight, *Garadh Gully* too icy, *No. 2* too heavily rimed, *Inverlael Gully* on Beinn Dearg avalanche prone, and many others I don't think I'll mention.

NEW CLIMBS SECTION

WINTER GRADINGS: a proposal by Andy Nisbet

THE problem of winter gradings continues. Several first ascenders this winter have commented on the difficulty of deciding gradings and this, together with the proliferation of split grades, would seem to indicate a deficiency in the system.

In the Cairngorms, where mixed climbing predominates, classic buttress routes tend to be the grading yardstick whereas in the West the gradings are based on classic gullies. Since the familiarity with front-pointing and modern equipment have had a greater influence on ice than mixed climbing, gradings in the different areas have tended to drift apart and perhaps reappraisal is necessary.

The following list maintains the grades of the classic climbs and upgrades many of the buttresses. In particular *Point Five Gully* has been assumed as middling grade V. Taking *Parallel Gully B* as the same grade, Lochnagar routes have been reassessed. Finally routes elsewhere have been compared with Lochnagar to provide an indicator of how the new system would work.

The proposal is based only on my opinion of the difficulty of the routes and only includes routes I have done myself. So the relative position of routes on the list should not be taken too seriously, only the principle. Since I have not done any of the harder climbs on Nevis the obvious problem of comparing the highly variable, barely protectable ice smears of the Ben with the relatively consistent, well-protected, technically desperate mixed routes in the Cairngorms has perhaps been conveniently deferred.

Comments on these proposals are asked for. Please send them to the New Climbs Editor, A. D. Nisbet, 13 Orchard Walk, Aberdeen AB2 3DT.

LOCHNAGAR	BEN NEVIS	ELSEWHERE
I Black Spout Left Hand Branch (B.S.)	No. 4 Gully No. 3 Gully	Easy Gully (Meaghaidh) The Couloir (Lochain)
II Crumbling Cranny Raeburn's Gully Central Buttress		SE Gully (Dubh Loch) Fiacail Couloir (Sneachda) Red Gully (Sneachda)
III Parallel Gully A Shadow Buttress A Black Spout Buttress	Cresta Climb Tower Ridge Tower Scoop	Ewen Buttress (Lochan) SC Gully Crowberry Gully
IV Shallow Gully Giant's Head Chimney Douglas-Gibson Gully	Green Gully The Curtain	No. 6 Gully (Aonach Dubh) Route Major (Carn Etchachan) Pumpkin
V Polyphemus Gully Parallel Gully B Giant's Head Direct	Zero Gully Point Five Gully Minus Two Gully	South Post Direct Centre Post Direct Raven's Gully
VI Parallel Buttress Eagle Ridge Pinnacle Face	Orion Face Direct Minus One Gully	North Post Direct Sticil Face Cumming-Crofton Route
VII Crypt Tough-guy The Link		Labyrinth Direct Vertigo Wall Goliath
VIII Nymph Trail of Tears		Black Mamba The Rattrap (Dubh Loch) Unicorn
IX Dièdre of the Sorrows		The Needle

FORMAT: A pitch by pitch format, with technical grades 4b and above, has been adopted for multipitch summer routes. A pitch by pitch format has also been used for winter routes when a detailed description is necessary.

ORDER OF NAMES OF FIRST ASCENDERS: It seems that there is no longer a majority in favour of alphabetical order and many descriptions submitted to us use the most precise system (i.e. alternate leads, varied leads, leader of crux etc.). The alphabetical system has therefore been dropped but in this issue, as a compromise, alternate leads have been made alphabetical (i.e. not distinguishing the leader of the crux). Next year names will be published exactly as submitted.

Errata: The following corrections are made to SM CJ, 1985:

Pinnacle Surprise (Slioch) should be graded Very Difficult.

Great Overhanging Gully (Beinn Bhan) should be graded V/VI.

Tholl Gate (Fuar Tholl) was climbed by P. Butler (who led the crux) and M. Fowler.

Skydiver Direct (Arran): fourth and last pitch was 5a.

Culeig Corner: this is the correct spelling.

SKYE

SGURR NAN GILLEAN, North-East Face of the South-East Ridge – *Lament*

B. S. Findlay, G. Strange. 22nd February, 1986.

120m, GRADE III/IV.

On the two-tiered face which curves up below the South-East Ridge and stretches across to Pinnacle Ridge. The line started on the left and took an obvious icy ramp slanting right to reach a prominent icefall. About 10m before the icefall break out left through overhangs to gain and climb a hidden chimney to easy ground. Excellent water-ice and neve.

Bhasteir Coire Face – *North-West Face Route*

P. Langhorne, Miss J. Douglas. 28th February, 1986.

160m, GRADE II/III.

1. 50m. Starting at the bottom of 4/5 Gully, ascend rightwards up a ramp (above *MacLaren's Chimney*) until it steepens into a chimney.

2. 50m. Climb the chimney and move leftwards through a rock band to the buttress crest.

3. 60m. Follow the crest to the summit rocks.

LOTA CORRIE, AN CAISTEAL – (*Unnamed*)

350m, GRADE III/IV.

K. Hopper, C. Rowland. February, 1983.

Takes a line between *Raeburn's Route* and *Archer Thomson's Route*. The route takes an obvious gully formed by a basalt dyke and trending right (90m). It then breaks out left up snowfields (90m) and follows a narrow gully line to the top.

COIR' A' TAIRNEILEAR, Sgurr an Fheadain – (*Unnamed*)

150m, Severe.

G. Reilly, A. Paul. September, 1980.

On the crag on the right of the coire. The crag has two obvious crack systems. The route takes the left-hand crack, which slants slightly left, in three long pitches to the crest of the ridge leading from Sgurr an Fheadain to the main ridge.

COIR' A' MHADAIDH – *Waterpipe Gully*

400m, GRADE IV.

Top section: B. S. Findlay, G. Strange. 24th February, 1986.

Complete ascent: C. Downer, D. Scott. 28th February, 1986.

With high expectations, both parties found the route a little disappointing, as most pitches were short and separated by walkable snow. The hardest and longest pitch was the first, of 30m.

On the Findlay/Strange ascent the bottom was not frozen and the first three pitches avoided by easy climbing on the right edge.

— *South Gully*

GRADE III/IV.

M. Fowler, T. Saunders. 1st March, 1986.

Mainly banked out but with two good pitches. An attempt on 30th December, 1985 failed and the gully is obviously much harder in lean conditions.

— *Icicle Factory*

160m, GRADE V.

M. Fowler, T. Saunders. 1st March, 1986.

A superb route taking the prominent ice-choked corner in the back right-hand side of the amphitheatre up to the left of *The Smear*.

1. 30m. Climb into an ice groove and continue to a ledge on the left.

2. 30m. Climb an ice curtain on the left to gain a right-slanting ramp which is followed to belay below the main difficulties.

3. 30m. Ascend the narrowing ice ramp and surmount the capping icicle to belay on the right.

4. 25m. Continue up an icicle and continuing steep ice to belay beneath the very impressive final pitch.

5. 45m. Climb the ice column above to the overhang and transfer to an icicle on the right which leads to an easy gully. A superb pitch.

The ridge is reached in a further 45m.

COIRE A' GHREADAIDH, South Branch — *White Wedding*

100m, GRADE IV.

T. Saunders, C. Watts, M. Fowler. 2nd March, 1986.

The route takes the straight shallow gully on the back wall of the coire. It is very prominent on the approach walk and starts about 250m right of *Gael Force*.

1. 25m. Two ice steps led to a ledge on the right at the start of the steep section.

2. 45m. Excellent ice led to a ledge on the left.

3. 30m. The ice ahead was steeper but shorter and led to easier ground.

The ridge was 150m above.

SRON NA CICHE, Cioch Upper Buttress — *Piety*

90m, Very Severe.

N. Horn, C. Moody. 2nd June, 1985.

Climb the corner between *Left Edge Route* and *Depravity* to its finish. Move left to *Depravity's* belay. Go back right to a hanging arete, up this and slabs.

COIR' A' GHRUNNDA, Thearlaich Cliffs — *Atlantis*

90m, Very Severe.

K. Leinster, A. Paul. August, 1980.

This route climbs the wall and groove just right of *Con's Cleft*. Climb the lower wall by a series of leftward trending cracks to gain the upper groove. Climb this to the top of the buttress.

NOTES

Coir' a' Mhadaidh, *The Smear*. Doug Scott points out that his first ascent partner was Jim Duff, not M. Duff as described in the Skye guide, and that it is undergraded at GRADE IV (IV/V?).

RHUM**ALLIVAL, South-East Face, Lower Tier — *Relish***

20m, Hard Very Severe, 5b.

G. Nicoll, J. Banks. 5th May, 1984.

Climb the rib between *Gargoyle Chimney* and *Oxford Groove* via a wall and obvious crack above.

— *Salad Days*

25m, Very Severe, 4c.

G. Nicoll, J. Banks. 5th May, 1984.

Start 4m right of *Diamond Corner*. Climb a steep cracked wall to blocks, traverse 2m right and climb corners to top.

NORTHERN HIGHLANDS

FOINAVEN, Creag Urbhard – The Third Waterfall

150m, GRADE V.

A. Cunningham, A. Nisbet. 28th February, 1986.

A fine route, steep and exposed with an unlikely finish. The lower icefall was omitted due to thin and hollow ice and the foot of the main fall reached by scrambling up from the left. The icicle was completely absent (fortunately?) and three long pitches taking the easiest line (left to right, then right to left across the direct line) led to the top left corner of the ice. From here, a short awkward ramp breached the overhangs (this is the second break left of the icicle). A final chockstone led to a finish up a long easy gully (not included in length).

– The Fourth Waterfall

150m, GRADE IV.

W. Todd. 28th February, 1986.

The icefall consists of two tiers. The lower one was very thin but on good ice.

Coire Duail – Windfall

250m, GRADE IV.

B. Hall, A. Rouse. 28th February, 1986.

Takes the most obvious icefall in the centre of the North facing crag in Coire Duail (NC 326512). Start at the lowest point and climb by steepening slabs to finish directly via icicle terrain.

Creag Dubh (Ceann Garbh, East Face) – East Buttress

B. Hall, A. Rouse. 1st March, 1986.

350m, GRADE III.

Follow the crest of the buttress which bounds the deep gully on its right hand side, starting at the lowest rocks. Progress was made by icy grooves and the occasional snowy traverse.

Creag Shomhairle – Strabeg's Weep

50m, GRADE IV.

A. Cunningham, A. Nisbet, W. Todd. 1st March, 1986.

The small icefall at the extreme left of Creag Shomhairle, opposite Strabeg Cottage.

ASSYNT – Eas Coul Aulinn

200m, GRADE IV/V.

A. Cunningham, A. Nisbet. 21st February, 1986.

Often claimed as the highest waterfall in Britain. The waterfall is concave and rises in three steps, each steeper than the last. Water was still flowing in the centre and the first two steps were climbed on the right side. The second step was steep and 60m in length but a series of large mushrooms and short ramps eased the difficulty. A long traverse below the final step led through the spray and up to a good rock belay beside the crux, a 6m vertical pillar.

QUINAG, Western Cliffs – The Gully of Nedd

200m, GRADE IV.

D. Dinwoodie, K. Murphy. 20th February, 1986.

This gully lies at the top of the screes in the bay left of the easy gully below the third col. The steep top pitch was bare and was avoided by a tricky right traverse to gain and climb a parallel snowed-up turf runnel.

STAC POLLALIDH, West Buttress – Party on the Patio

120m, Severe.

J. Dickson, A. Fraser. 14th May, 1985.

Follows the rib immediately left of *Enigma Grooves*, starting at a terrace up and left of *Enigma's* start.

1. 33m. Climb the rib overlooking *Enigma* for 15m, then move up and left to belay beneath a steep corner.

2. 13m. Traverse right on a ledge and round the corner to belay in a hidden chimney above *Enigma*.

3. 27m. Up the chimney on the left, then continue directly, moving back right near the top of the pitch to belay on a large terrace.

4. 20m. Immediately right is a steep corner with a crack on its left wall. Climb the corner, then an awkward bulge above (nut for aid).

5. 27m. Move left and climb a chimney with a through-route.

Second Buttrass (from West) – *Vlad the Impaler*

J. Dickson, A. Fraser. 29th September, 1985. 73m, Hard Very Severe.

At the right toe of the second buttrass is a prominent steep slab, bounded on the right by an overhanging corner.

1. 40m. Climb wide cracks up the centre, then the right side of the slab. From the slab's detached summit move up right to a large ledge. An excellent sustained pitch.

2. 33m. At the rear of the large ledge is a twisting crack. Climb this directly (or move into a left crack after 7m), finishing up easy arete and pinnacle. Severe.

CHADHA DHEIRG

The following routes lie on the North facing crag at the head of Gleann a' Chadha Dheirg (NH 2786).

– *Geddes's Gully* 250m, GRADE V.

B. Hall, A. Rouse. 8th February, 1986.

The gully splits the highest part of the crag and slants slightly right. There were two steep sections. The big icicle in the final amphitheatre was not reachable on this occasion and steep thin ice was followed just to its right. A good climb, though some of it may be lost in very heavy snow conditions.

Note

Named as a tribute to the late Mike Geddes, who bequeathed knowledge of the crag to Al Rouse.

– *Captain Patience* 280m, GRADE V.

C. Downer, D. Scott. 2nd March, 1986.

On the wall left of *Geddes's Gully*. The route took the first pitch of *Geddes's Gully*, then went up left heading for a short chimney at mid-height. Up this, then trending back right to finish 10m left of *Geddes's Gully*. It gave five long ice pitches, initially on smears and frozen turf and higher up on thickly plated ice.

BEINN DEARG, West Buttrass – (Unnamed) 300m, GRADE III/IV.

Ms S. Cooper, C. Rowland. February, 1980.

Start about 30m up to the left of *Penguin Gully*. Take an obvious line of corners trending slightly right (100m). From the top of the corners, steep mixed ground leads back left.

Coire Ghranda, Upper Cliff – *Body Freeze* 150m, GRADE IV.

M. Fowler, C. Watts. 22nd February, 1986.

Towards the right-hand side of the upper cliff is a prominent ice-choked groove in the upper section. This is the substance of the route. Start at the obvious line leading up to the base of the thick ice.

1. 60m. Trend right to a stance below a steep step.

2. 30m. Surmount the step and continue to a belay below the ice groove.

3. 60m. Follow the excellent ice groove to the top.

ANTEALLACH, Coire a' Ghlas Thuill – *White Knight* 200m, GRADE III/IV.

M. Fowler, C. Watts. 23rd February, 1986.

The route takes the obvious gully left of *Stalemate* and *Checkmate Chimney*. The difficulties are concentrated in the lower 80m, after which easier slopes lead to the ridge.

FANNICHS**SGURR NAN CLACH GEALA, East Face, Skyscraper Buttress**

The original start was a traverse from *Gamma Gully*. Two new starts have been made up the icefall which usually forms at the base of the buttress. The direct start has the merit of climbing the icefall direct but is escapable into *Gamma Gully* above. The right-hand start is a purer line. By both starts the buttress is grade V.

— *Direct Start*

D. Dinwoodie, C. Jamieson, K. Murphy. 9th February, 1986. 60m.

Climb the icefall moving across left at the top to belay under a roof, just left of a shallow undercut groove. Climb the groove (crux) and move up left to join the traverse line of the normal route from *Gamma Gully*.

— *Right-Hand Start*

D. Dinwoodie, D. Hawthorn. 26th February, 1986. 60m.

Climb the right-hand corner of the icefall to belay in a snow bay. Move out right on to the rib overlooking *Delta Gully* and climb an obvious groove, then go diagonally left above the overhangs to join the ordinary route just below the main bulge.

Cuilleig Buttress (Number Three) — Destitution Road

D. Dinwoodie, K. Murphy. 19th February, 1986. 200m, GRADE V.

The central icefall of the buttress. Climb directly up the middle of the buttress using the general line of a shallow corner (well left of *Cuilleig Corner*) to gain the icefall. Climb this direct past a jutting nose of rock, then traverse right to gain a blocky corner cutting through the overhangs. Climb this to the easier crest of the buttress.

AN COILEACHAN, Garbh Coire Mor — Primrose 240m, GRADE III.

Left fork: M. Anthoine, C. Rowland. 1976.

Right fork: D. Butterfield, C. Frazer, D. McCallum, J. Mackenzie. 1979.

This is the gully in the back left corner of the coire. Climb a long ice pitch to reach the gully proper at 45m. Follow the gully until it forks at a large boulder. The right fork is considered to be more interesting and less heavily corniced.

— *Venus Fly Trap* 250m, GRADE V.

D. Dinwoodie, D. Hawthorn. 28th February, 1986.

The left-hand of two icefalls running up the steep buttress right of *Primrose*. After two pitches up the icefall a diagonal right traverse led up mixed ground to break through to a broad and prominent snow ramp. This led easily up right to the top.

— *Burdock* 210m, GRADE III.

C. Rowland, S. Rowland, D. Scott. December, 1976.

The next gully right of *Primrose*. Two long ice pitches lead to easier ground. Originally recorded as Beta Gully (SMCJ, 1977).

— *Dandelion* 210m, GRADE III/IV.

C. Rowland and Partner. 1977.

This is the steep narrow gully right of Burdock.

— *Shadow and Light* 240m, GRADE V.

Start about 45m left of *Prune Buttress*. Climb over several overlaps to gain a large overlap (45m). Overcome this on the right (30m). Climb delicate iced slabs to gain a steep snow-covered ledge (45m). Traverse right to gain a shallow weakness (30m). Climb this to top (90m).

— *Moonflower* 240m, GRADE III.

Start at the opposite foot of *Prune Buttress*. An obvious snow ledge leads out right. Follow this to beyond the skyline, then climb shallow, right-trending snow grooves with short awkward steps to the top of the crag.

— *Moonflower Direct Start* GRADE IV.

Start approx. 45m left of *Echo Face* and climb iced slabs and grooves trending left to gain the original route.

CARNMORE CRAG — *The Orange Bow* 35m, E5, 6a.
D. Dinwoodie, D. Hawthorn. 16th June, 1985.

The impressive arete right of *Carnmore Corner*. Protection is adequate. Start at ledges up on the right, 10m from the top of the last slab of *Diagonal Route*.

Traverse out left along a slabby shelf and negotiate a tricky bulge to move up left to big footholds under the bulging arete. Swing out left on flakes and climb a vague intermittent crack-line up the overhanging wall for 10m to a point where the crack gives good protection before petering out. Traverse right and up slightly for 5m to gain the edge and a rest. Climb up the edge to finish up a left-slanting crack on the left side. Cleaned on abseil.

— *Curare* 30m, E4, 6a.

D. Dinwoodie, D. Hawthorn. 16th June, 1985.

The obvious crackline on the right wall of Orange Bow arete. Start at the same belay ledges. Climb a jam-crack slanting up right, then traverse across left and up to a protection crack under bulges. Go straight up to doubtful flakes under the bulge and pull out right and up to an awkward niche under a layback crack. Climb this to a ledge and finish up the crackline over a roof. Brief cleaning by abseil.

— *Crackers* 85m, E3.

D. Hawthorn, C. MacLean. 15th June, 1985.

The route climbs the central cracks on **The Grey Wall**. Start 15m to the right of *The Cracks*.

1. **5c**, 25m. Climb a steep crack.
2. **5a**, 45m. Continue up cracks.
3. —, 15m. Easier to finish.

GAIRLOCH, Raven's Crag — *Stage Fright* Very Severe, 5a.
I. Davidson, S. Chadwick. Spring, 1985.

On the obvious blank wall left of Lonmore. It takes a steep exposed line up the right of the wall to join the final moves of Lonmore.

The party reports that any further lines on the crag will probably require a good imagination and a shoehorn.

SLIOCH

There are a number of crags above the north shore of Loch Maree, one of which is split by a large corner (clearly visible from the road, NG 991686). The name **Viking Crag** has been suggested.

— *Norse Requiem* 140m, Very Severe.

S. Chadwick, I. Davidson. Spring, 1985.

Start at a cairn under the large corner. Climb a groove to a stance under the chock-stone. Surmount this to gain the steep right wall of the corner. Follow thin cracks up to the arete, then up to an exposed stance (5a). Continue this (4c) to reach the apex of the buttress. High in its grade.

Note

The prominent crack to the left of *Norse Requiem* is believed to have been climbed at around Very Severe (A. Cain and party).

MEALL A' GHIUBHAIS

The North Face of Meall a' Ghuibhais (NG 976634) is split by a single gully, which is the following route.

— *Outrider* 180m, GRADE III.

S. Chadwick, C. Morrison, A. Taylor. 26th January, 1986.

Climb the lower icefalls in two pitches. Follow the gully, then a snow slope to the upper buttress. Up the gully continuation to a fork, then traverse steeply diagonally right to finish.

BEINN EIGHE, Sail Mhor – Achilles

250m, GRADE IV/V.

B. S. Findlay, G. Strange. 1st February, 1986.

The steep narrow cleft well right of *White's Gully*. After a easy snow introduction four pitches mainly on ice including a free-standing ice pillar led to the first substantial terrace (120m). The next band was taken by a groove on the left above which a deep chimney up on the right seemed to offer a good finish. However, with darkness approaching, the upper slopes of *White's Gully* were gained by a left traverse and the easiest line taken to the summit.

– *Smears for Fears*

100m, GRADE IV.

A. Cunningham, W. Todd. 14th February, 1986.

The route starts leftwards out of *White's Gully* and was used as a continuation for *Achilles*.

Take the first break left above the narrowing in *White's Gully*. The route is an ice-cased corner with a difficult cornice exit.

Coire Mhic Fhearchair, East Buttress, Sandstone Tier – The Chimney

R. Anderson, G. Nicoll. 30th March, 1986.

60m, GRADE V.

The chimney was climbed throughout, in two pitches.

Central Buttress, Sandstone Tier – Puddock

B. S. Findlay, G. Strange. 15th June, 1985.

60m, Hard Very Severe.

Climbs the steep grooves just right of *Central Corner*.

1. 10m. Start from a terrace and go up to belay below the groove.

2. 5a, 25m. Climb the shallow left-hand groove to reach a good ledge below a short overhanging corner. Climb the corner, exiting left to ledges.

3. 25m. Continue more easily to the broad ledge.

West Buttress, – Lang's Variation

M. Hamilton, G. Cohen. 1st February, 1986.

35m, GRADE V.

In SMCJ 1973, p.185, a variation finish to the West Buttress up the huge square-cut corner on the right was described. On this ascent it was plated in ice and gave a very fine and difficult climb in two pitches.

LIATHACH, South-East Buttress of Spidean – (Unnamed)

180m, GRADE IV.

K. Hopper, C. Rowland. 23rd February, 1986.

The buttress has two main icefalls separated low down by a rib. The right fall is *Pyramid Buttress*. The route took the left icefall but avoided the steepest section (due to the sun) by moving out right on to the top of the rib and following a narrow gully to the top.

Note

B. Ledingham and C. Rowland have also climbed the right ridge of the buttress to give a good GRADE III.

Coire Dubh Beag

On the back wall of the coire, right of *Footless Gully*, are two shallow gully lines. The left-hand line is *Headless Gully*, which starts at the top of a large triangle of snow and usually forms the largest mass of ice in the coire. The right-hand line comes down to an overhang at the top of a snow ramp leading right from the snow triangle.

– *Headless Gully*

150m, GRADE IV/V.

S. Kennedy, A. Nisbet. February, 1984.

The first pitch is short but on very steep ice leading to a terrace. The main icefall is now on the left. The ice forms down a chimney and on the first ascent a prolonged thaw had formed a gap between ice and rock up which one could conveniently chimney. On two subsequent ascents in February 1986, the chimney was obliterated by a big steep icefall 25m in length and considered to be low grade V. Easier climbing now led to an ice-filled corner (bare on first ascent), followed to the summit snowfield.

– *The Executioner*

140m, GRADE IV/V.

A. Nisbet, J. Mothersele. 15th February, 1986.

From halfway up the snow ramp mentioned above, an ice pitch led to an ice-filled corner. The first 5m of the corner was at least vertical; thereafter some bridging was possible and the difficulty eased. Belay to a pinnacle on the right. Just right of the pinnacle the icefall continued in two steps to a big snow ledge. Move right and climb a gully (the top of the right-hand shallow gully described above) to the summit snowfield.

– *The Snotter*

30m, GRADE V.

A. Cunningham, A. Nisbet. 25th February, 1986.

The big icicle which forms down the lower left wall of *Beag Pardon*. The leader placed snarg runners without clipping. Abseil descent.

Coire Dubh Mor (North-East Coire of Spidean a' Choire Leith)– *The Salmon Leap*

200m, GRADE V.

A. Cunningham, A. Nisbet, R. Arnott, G. Rowbotham. 23rd February, 1986.

This is the left side of the *Poacher's Fall*. The two routes are interchangeable in the middle but separated by a rock rib in the top half. The crux was a 6m vertical ice wall at half height.

Poacher's Fall had at least four repeats, confirming its quality. Thicker ice (compared to two known previous ascents) had eased the big groove but formed a big pillar below it, which became the crux. *Umbrella Fall* had at least one enthusiastic repeat. Between *Umbrella Fall* and *The Salmon Leap* were three thinner icefalls.

– *Snow Goose*

230m, GRADE IV/V.

A. Cunningham, A. Nisbet. 25th February, 1986.

The left-hand thinner icefall. The ice was continuous over six tiers (the first of which does not continue any further right). The fourth tier was the steep iced wall of a right-facing corner just left of an icicle fringe. The fifth tier (crux) was composed of two overhangs, the first climbed by an iced wall on its right, the second by a short icicle.

– *The Deer Hunter*

200m, GRADE V.

A. Cunningham, A. Nisbet. 24th February, 1986.

The middle icefall. It was thickly iced up a big corner at half height. The direct line on the second pitch was incomplete and avoided on the left. The last tier was bare of ice and a short right traverse led to a strenuous chimney with a difficult exit (crux).

Coire na Caime – Dru Couloir

150m, GRADE IV/V.

R. Anderson, M. Hamilton. 23rd February, 1986.

Climbs the right to left-slanting chimney-gully on the Dru Pinnacle, on the left side of Coire na Caime. Start at a left-facing tapering corner directly below the gully (right of the summer route, *Dru*).

1. 30m. Climb the corner to a ledge.
2. 30m. Gain the chimney-gully and follow it to a belay on the left.
3. 45m. Continue up the line to a belay at the col where the pinnacle abuts the summit ridge.
4. 45m. Follow the easiest line up the ridge to reach the top.

On the left half of the wide buttress between 5 and 6 Gullies (MacInnes nomenclature) are three shallow gully lines. The left one is deepest, the central one is largely a right-facing groove and the right one is only defined in its upper part. The easiest access is by an ice pitch in a lower tier (not included in length).

– *Jerbil*

120m, GRADE IV.

M. Fowler, B. Craig. 10th March, 1985.

This is the left-hand gully mentioned above.

1. 45m. A steep ice pitch slanting up to the right leads to a small snow amphitheatre.
2. 45m. Continue in the same line taking a steep mixed arc on the left (hard under the buttress).
3. 30m. Easier to the ridge.

Note

A second ascent described the gully as being much deeper with pitch 2 as a big overhang avoided by icy grooves on the right. Perhaps a difference in snow depth?

– *The Andes Couloir*

180m, GRADE IV.

A. Cunningham, A. Nisbet. 22nd February, 1986.

The central gully. The first pitch was easy. The second pitch was a steep iced corner with a strenuous bulge (crux). The third was an entertaining back and foot between rock and ice.

– *Bell's Gully*

230m, GRADE IV.

R. Anderson, M. Hamilton. 22nd February, 1986.

Climbs the right-hand and most obvious of three gully lines on the right side of *Bell's Buttress*.

1. 60m. Easily up the narrowing gully to belay below a short ice pitch.
2. 25m. Climb the ice pitch and continue up the gully to belay below another steepening.
3. 40m. Continue up the gully to belay 5m below a cul-de-sac.
4. 45m. Move left and follow the shallow gully to reach a belay on easy ground.
5. & 6. 60m. Easy up the ridge to the top.

Meall Dearg – Terminal Buttress

180m, GRADE III.

G. Nicoll, J. Hotchkis. 3rd January, 1986.

The ridge dropping eastwards from Meall Dearg terminates in a steep conical buttress. It lacks any major features and could be climbed at several places. This route takes the easiest line.

Start in a bay on the left side of the buttress and climb grooves to a shoulder on the left (100m). Continue by walls and terraces to the top.

The buttress provides an excellent approach to the Northern Pinnacles.

BEINN ALLIGIN, Tom na Gruagaich, North-East Face

The many tiered débâcle directly opposite the Cleft of Sgurr Mhor – 500m in height but with no recorded climbs except for the main corner gully in the upper face known as *Giveaway Gully* which is believed to have been ascended at GRADE III/IV in the early seventies (Dave Gardiner?).

– *Ice Gem*

S. Chadwick, M. E. Moran. 15th February, 1986.

150m, GRADE IV/V.

On the lower tier directly below *Giveaway Gully* a prominent icefall forms on rightward trending ramps. Trend left into the ramp corner, then direct to the top.

The upper face right of *Giveaway Gully* contains three major vertical weaknesses which can all hold good snow and ice.

– *Crown Jewel*

N. Adey, M. Guest, M. E. Moran. 18th February, 1986.

350m, GRADE V.

The left-hand line. Steep iced tiers culminating in a 50m mixed pitch gain an upper gully which contains many icy steps and exits just right of the summit trig point.

— *The Moonstone*

M. E. Moran. 2nd March, 1986.

300m, GRADE IV/V.

The central line is gained by thinly iced ramps and leads to a steep finishing corner. Lower pitches backroped.

— *Koh-i-Noor*

M. Hardwick, M. E. Moran. 6th February, 1986.

270m, GRADE IV.

The right-hand weakness forms a well-iced stepped scoop. Follow the scoop moving slightly left, then head directly up by mixed climbing in steeper grooves to the top.

Coire Toll nam Biast — *Backyard Buttress* 110m, GRADE III.

R. Archbold, J. C. Higham, H. M. A. Towler. 1st February, 1986.

The short buttress immediately right of *Backyard Gully* (SMCJ, 1985).

BEINN DAMPH, Creag na h-Iolaire — *Stag Gully* 150m, GRADE II/III.

R. Butler, D. Howard, D. McCallum, C. Roylance. 12th February, 1979.

The most obvious gully on the right of the main crag. It has a large chockstone at 30m and usually contains three pitches.

— *Aquila Gully* 170m, GRADE III.

R. Butler, D. Howard, D. McCallum, C. Roylance. 12th February, 1979.

The gully on the left of the main crag. It is gained by a long ice pitch and has several difficult steps which can be avoided on the left.

APPLECROSS**MEALL GORM**

The first feature when travelling up the Allt a' Chumhaing towards the Bealach na Ba is the large (Eastern) buttress of Meall Gorm. This buttress has a prominent terrace at half height. A shallow gully system ascends from a scree cone to the right-hand (Western) end of the terrace, and then divides into three branches. This forms the start of the *Spiral Terrace* and *Trident Gully* climbs.

— *Spiral Terrace* 700m, GRADE II.

P. Langhorne, N. Eagers. 16th February, 1986.

Ascend the gully to the right-hand end of the terrace (100m). Follow the terrace leftwards (crossing a deep gully at 400m) to a large flat ledge in front of a short steep wall (500m). From the right-hand end of the ledge ascend to a shallow gully slanting up rightwards to the plateau (100m).

— *Trident Gully, Left Branch* 350m, GRADE II.

N. Eagers, P. Langhorne. 15th February, 1986.

Ascend the shallow gully to the terrace (100m). Continue up the gully, keeping left where it forks, to the plateau (250m).

— *Trident Gully, Right Branch* 380m, GRADE III.

P. Langhorne, N. Eagers. 21st February, 1986.

Ascend gully to terrace (100m). Continue up the gully to where it forks below twin chimneys (50m). Climb the left chimney to regain the gully (40m). Climb easily to a large roof (100m). Traverse leftwards and ascend a narrow gully. Exit right to gain the plateau (90m).

Notes

1. The right-hand escape from below the large roof would probably provide a more sustained route.

2. N. Eagers and P. Langhorne also climbed a gully system starting below the left (Eastern) end of the *Spiral Terrace* and ascending rightwards to gain the terrace at the deep gully (200m, GRADE III/IV).

– *Wee Beastie*

250m, GRADE I/II.

Miss J. Douglas, P. Langhorne. 2nd March, 1986.

Moving rightwards (West) from *Trident Gully* there is a broad buttress, then a left-sloping gully with numerous indefinite branches to its right. The route climbs the left-sloping gully.

SGURR A' CHAORACHAIN

The following climbs lie in the unnamed coire to the south of the *Cioch Nose*. They can be reached either by approaching up the coire or by walking (driving if possible) up the road until past the hairpins and striking across to the transmitter mast. The east-facing headwall of this coire can be reached by descending easily down a gully only a few metres from the mast, where the edge of the plateau takes an obvious 90° turn, and traversing across a terrace.

There are two obvious winter lines on the wall, both very worthwhile and with easy access. The left-hand one is:

– *Excitable Boy*

120m, GRADE IV/V.

P. Long, B. Owen. 8th February, 1986.

From the terrace climb steepening snow to a good rock belay. Climb very steep ice to a small snow bay (45m). Leave the bay by a short chimney on the left and trend rightwards over short steps to the top.

– *Blade Runner*

110m, GRADE IV.

P. Long, B. Owen. 8th February, 1986.

The right-hand line. Climb steep ice to belay below a chimney (30m). Climb the rightward-slanting chimney to easier ground which leads via one short step to the top.

North-West Buttresses – *Voyager* 350m, GRADE V.

A. Nisbet, J. Mothersele. 16th February, 1986.

Between *North Gully* and the first of the North-West Buttresses is a big corner line which leads to the top of the first buttress. This fine line is marred only by a possible escape left to the top of *North Gully*. Low in its grade.

The base of the corner was reached by two pitches in the right-hand fault of North Gully, followed by an easy traverse right. After a start up the corner, a deviation left and back right led to the base of an icefall. The ice was thin in places and the steepest section was avoided by a difficult bulge in the corner on the right (well-protected). The ice led to a roof in the corner, split by a very co-operative chimney. Two pitches in the same line, the second a deceptively awkward chimney, led to the top of the first buttress.

– *Turret Buttress*

M. Hamilton, G. Cohen. 2nd February, 1986.

200m, GRADE IV.

The summer line was followed approximately. Start at the left and after one easy pitch climb a difficult 5m corner, moving right at the top (crux). The second tier was climbed near the left edge and the third tier was climbed further right by the steep slab and layback crack of the summer description. A further interesting pitch led to the top of the pinnacle and the final steep buttress was passed on the left (but not in the gully).

BEINN BHAN, Coire na Feola

The two following routes lie on the left just at the entrance to the coire. There is a large, black cave-like recess and both lines lie to the left of this.

– *Grey Hair Gully*

170m, GRADE III.

J. Lyall. 1st March, 1986.

Start 10m left of the cave-like recess at a steep ice-filled chimney. This 15m chimney proved quite hard, with the crux move right at the top. The gully above was followed to the top of the buttress.

— *Couldoran Gully*

170m, GRADE II/III.

J. Lyall. 1st March, 1986.

Start 45m left of the recess at the foot of an obvious Y-shaped gully. A 10m ice pitch was climbed at the start of the gully, then another small pitch encountered at 45m. This was climbed and the right branch followed to the top, near the finish of *Grey Hair Gully*.

— *Sniper's Gully*

280m, GRADE IV.

J. Mothersele, A. Nisbet. 17th February, 1986.

This is the shallow gully just right of *Sheet Whitening*. A series of icy grooves led to an easy ramp leading out right to snow slopes.

— *In X.S.*

250m, GRADE V.

C. Downer, D. Scott. 1st March, 1986.

On the steep face left of Y-Gully. The route followed a continuous ice smear starting in a small basin about 45m left of Y-Gully and not seen until under that route. The route gave four excellent long pitches on good quality thin ice; the highlight was a big ice-filled corner.

Coire na Poite — (Unnamed)

320m, GRADE V.

D. Gardiner, D. Hawthorn. 23rd February, 1986.

This route is between *Madhatters Gully* and *Silver Tear*. It starts about 80m up the easy ground of *Madhatters Gully*, at the base of an icefall beside a right-facing corner on its right wall.

Climb the icefall for 45m. Step out right for 5m, then up a snowfield to belay below a prominent icefall (45m). Climb this for 45m. Continue up snowfield to belay below the last rock band (45m). Traverse left to find the easiest corner through the rock band (45m). Two long pitches of mixed climbing lead to the top (cornice).

FUAR THOLL, Lower Cliff — *Olfactory*

150m, GRADE IV.

B. Owen, D. Rubens, G. Macnair, G. Cohen. 22nd February, 1986.

The lower tier of cliffs facing River Lair have a number of features. Patey's *Nose Direct* is face to be the cleanest area of rock, more or less where the line of cliffs begins to face North. A little to the right of this is a deeply-recessed easy gully. To the left of this gully are first, a short chimney with a chockstone, and then a narrow gully running up the right side of the buttress containing the *Nose Direct*. The narrow gully gave a good climb in four pitches, of which the second was a steep narrow chimney followed by steep ice on the left, and the fourth was another short steep chimney.

South-East Cliff — *Fuhrer*

190m, GRADE V.

M. Fowler, C. Watts. 15th February, 1986.

A good route up the prominent groove on the left-hand side of the cliff, crossing the wandering line of Fuar Folly. Start at the obvious mixed line trending up right to the foot of the hanging groove line.

1. 45m. Start in a short corner and trend up right to belay just below the start of the groove.

2. 35m. Gain the groove and follow it over ice bulges to a good flake on the right. Take to ice streaks on the slabs on the left and belay 8m below and left of the overhang which caps the groove.

3. 25m. Thin ice leads just left of the stance via an obvious line through a steep wall to belay below an ice-choked chimney.

4. 25m. The ice chimney gives access to the left end of a ledge which is followed 15m rightwards to a right-trending break in the wall above.

5. 60m. Take the break in the wall above and further tricky ground to the top.

SGORR RUADH – Wildcat Gully

100m, GRADE I/II.

P. J. Biggar, I. Haig. 4th April, 1983.

Clearly visible from Torridon village, this route lies in the angle formed by the West of the North Face and the crags below the main summit. The gully leads up to the col between Sgorr Ruadh and its subsidiary East top (NG 965507). The gully goes right of a pinnacled rib, easily identifiable from below.

NOTES

Quinag, Barrel Buttress – The prominent chimney right of and facing *Cooper's Gully* was climbed by N. Spinks and Miss J. Elliot at grade III in March 1979.

Beinn Eighe, Coire Mhic Fhearchair – *Eighe and Spoon Race* (SMCJ, 1985) is a direct version of *The Cool Cleft* (SMCJ, 1983). Its crux was passed on the left rib by *The Cool Cleft*; otherwise the lines coincide.

Beinn Eighe – We have received note of an ascent of the prominent gully on the South Face of Coinneach Mhor. Apparently it was done years ago at grade III, but details are unknown.

Beinn Alligin – Steve Chadwick notes that *Deep South* and *Deep North Gullies* both finish between the first (lowest) and second Horn (contrary to what is said in the climbing guide). *Deep South* curves left to right and *Deep North* goes diagonally right to left.

Beinn Bhan, Coire na Poite – A 5 man Etchachan Club team climbed the rib left of Madhatter's Gully on 2nd February, 1986. As democratic means have so far failed to produce a name, details must await the next issue.

Beinn Bhan, Coire nan Fhamhair – *Der Rise and Shine* (SMCJ, 1985) was repeated in 1986 and a more detailed description has been supplied. It follows the narrow gully splitting the largest buttress. Start left of the foot of the buttress and climb a 25m icefall at the foot of the gully. Some small ice bulges were then climbed to a belay at 45m. A short easy chimney led to another ice pitch and belay (45m). The gully was then followed without difficulty to the top.

Fuar Tholl, South-East Cliff – Martin Moran describes a backroped solo ascent of *Cold Sweat* at grade V on 3rd-4th February, 1986. After the first day (45m) the rope was left in place and the high point regained by jumar. This raises an old ethical problem for a harassed editor. Current opinion seems against such ascents. While backroping is known to be time-consuming, others (e.g. Phil Thornhill) are prepared to bivouac.

WESTERN HIGHLANDS

BEINN FHADA (Kintail), Sgurr a' Choire Ghairbh, North-East Face – *Left Hand Gully* S. Kennedy, N. Morrison. 19th February, 1983. 135m, GRADE II/III.

The narrow gully immediately left of Summit Buttress (companion to Right Hand Gully), containing numerous short steps.

– *Tropical Buttress*

S. Kennedy, N. Morrison. 19th February, 1983.

120m, GRADE II.

At the back of the coire are two large slabby buttresses separate from the main mass and facing North-West. The left contains the summer route, *The Needle*. This route is on the right-hand buttress.

Start at a small bay below the middle of the buttress and follow an obvious, slightly rightward trending depression to the top.

LADHAR BHEINN, Coire Dhorrcail, Spider Buttress – *Penny Wheep Gully*

S. Kennedy, G. Rowbotham, S. Thirgood. 28th February, 1986. 180m, GRADE III.

On the East flank of Spider Buttress, some 100m above the start of *Eastern Chimney*, are three prominent gullies. The route follows the rightmost and largest gully.

Climb a succession of short ice steps for 100m to an easy snow slope leading to a large chockstone. Turn the chockstone by ice on the right wall and continue on snow to a large amphitheatre. Exit out right to gain easy ground.



Photo: Alan Learg

Ken Johnstone on *Apocalypse Pitch 2* Slieve Wall, Glencoe



Photo: Allen Eyffe

Bob Barton on *The Pin Pitch 3*, Shelter Stone Crag

Stob a' Chearcaill, North-West Face – Bottleneck Gully

W. Jeffrey, D. N. Williams. 1st March, 1986.

300m, GRADE IV.

Climbs the narrow gully immediately left of *Gaberlunzie Gully* in seven long pitches. Start slightly left of the lowest rocks and climb directly to the mouth of a narrow chimney. Ascend the chimney passing a constriction with difficulty. Surmount an awkward step and belay just above a jammed boulder in the gully above. Continue up over a short steepening to reach a long section of easier gully. Follow the gully to a slightly steeper section and belay a short distance above, on the right-hand arete overlooking *Gaberlunzie Gully*. Return to the gully and climb it, mainly on the right side, to the summit ridge.

– Taternick's Chimney

S. Kennedy, G. Rowbotham, S. Thirgood. 1st March, 1986.

220m, GRADE IV.

Takes the line of the first prominent chimney just right of *Gaberlunzie Gully*. Easy snow leads up rightwards to mixed ground which leads to the foot of a steep narrow chimney. Climb the chimney in two long pitches (90m). Continue up the more open gully in two pitches to gain the summit ridge (90m).

NOTES

Ardnamurchan – We note an ascent of the dog-legged corner on the South-West facing crag adjacent to Eilean Carrach, North-East of the point of Ardnamurchan. (NM 429687). 15m, Very Severe, 5a, F. J. Leslie (unseconded).

Morvern, The Wishing Stone (NM 607467). G. E. Little notes: This roadside crag (somewhat reminiscent of the Inaccessible Pinnacle) is a basalt dyke pierced by a keyhole. It is 7m high, 20m long and 1m wide. It lies 7 km West of Lochaline on the Drimnin road (B 849).

The traverse is an exposed Moderate. The SE face is 80° providing good climbing from 4a to 5b. The NW face is overhanging and lichenous with no routes so far. Occasional loose holds. The crag doesn't merit a special visit, but offers good bouldering if in the area.

CAIRNGORMS**LOCHNAGAR, Shadow Buttress B – Raeburn's Groove**

GRADE V.

D. Dinwoodie, A. Nisbet. 19th January, 1986.

This is a separate start to *Shadow Buttress B*, the line chosen by Raeburn on the first attempt on the buttress in 1902. Climb the obvious groove on the left edge of the buttress (45m). It ends under a steep wall. Go up to the wall, traverse left underneath it and climb its left edge, where it is slightly less steep (crux). Go left again and up a short groove to reach the easier crest and junction with other routes (25m).

Tough-Brown Face – Trail of Tears

130m, GRADE VI.

D. Dinwoodie, A. Nisbet. 7th March, 1986.

The route climbed the first two pitches of *The Outlands*, then continued up the ramp to finish up *Post Mortem* (as does *Dirge* in summer).

Climbed in very icy but slightly thawing conditions. The second pitch (layback corner) was front-pointed on ice and was poorly protected. Under powder it can be laced up, as on three previous attempts, all of which failed on the traverse. This time the traverse was iced but still very thin (well protected). The final crack ('big step round a block') was avoided by a vicious pull over a bulge on the left (thin ice).

– Dièdre of the Sorrows

150m, GRADE VI.

D. Dinwoodie, A. Nisbet. 30th March, 1986.

A line of corners and grooves between *Dirge* and *Post Mortem*. Very sustained, with the third pitch particularly difficult. There was very little useful ice, except on the last pitch.

1. 30m. Start at the bottom of *Post Mortem/Mort* at the foot of twin snow ramps. The left-hand ramp was climbed, then a short traverse made to the top of the right-hand ramp. An awkward bulge and groove leads to the *Dirge* belay (under the damp cleft of summer).

2. 15m. Gain the grassy niche of *Dirge* up on the left either directly on the left or by a traverse from the top of the cleft. Climb the bulge above to gain the big groove and follow this to a semi-hanging belay on a good block.

3. 15m. Climb up leftwards over the hard bulge above, then follow the crackline to gain a shelf just left of *Post Mortem*. Climb the wall above to the *Dirge/Post Mortem/Trail of Tears* belay at the top of the ramp. The groove above would give a good direct finish, and also leads to easier ground more quickly, but seems problematical without ice.

4. 20m. As for *Post Mortem/Trail of Tears* to belay at the base of the continuation ramp. The traverse was lacking in ice this time and an aid peg (in situ) was used at the end.

5. 45m. Up the ramp to the final overhang. This was also barer and avoided by climbing down into the trough of *Mort* and up it easily to a belay.

6. 25m. A rising traverse leads to the spike at the top of *Backdoor Route* pitch one (abseil descent).

EAGLE'S ROCKS – Verbal Diarrhoea

100m, Very Severe.

G. Reilly, A. Ross, F. Templeton. 1985.

Takes the groove right of *Whisper*. Start below it and climb two pleasant pitches to the base of the groove. Climb the groove (4c) to gain easy ground.

CREAG AN DUBH LOCH, Central Gully Wall – Treeline Groove

90m, GRADE IV.

A. Nisbet, M. Stringer. 10th November, 1985.

Takes the second groove left of *Sabre Edge* (the first is a slabby corner which joins *Sabre Edge* below the pinnacle). Climb the groove to where it becomes vertical. Step right and pull over a bulge to belay on a flake. Traverse right to enter an area of short walls and grassy ledges. Here is a small rowan tree. From the topmost ledge traverse right to the arete, descend a little on the far side and return back to the plateau. This last pitch is common to *Sabre Edge*.

— *The Rattrap* 350m, GRADE VI.

A. Nisbet, S. Allan. 25th January, 1986.

The route was chosen as the line of least resistance and most vegetation on the right side of the Central Gully Wall, front face. The second pitch was particularly brutal and a point of aid here would probably have saved the three higher up.

1. 30m. The first pitch of *Dubh Loch Monster*.

2. 10m. The summer crux of *Dubh Loch Monster*. Yo-yoed.

3. 25m. Continue up the crackline starting with the awkward wall and take the second traverse line on the right. This is not far below the overhanging notch and is the line of *The Prowl*. Belay on a small ledge with an awkward stance.

4. 25m. Make a descending traverse to the right to join *King Rat* (also on *The Prowl*). Go up *King Rat* for 5m, then leave it going diagonally right to belay on a long horizontal ledge.

5. 50m. From the right end of the ledge descend 5m, then traverse right and slightly up until a difficult pull can be made over the wall above. Return leftwards to belay under the Red Wall of *Gulliver*.

6. 25m. Traverse left under the wall (this is on *The Catwalk*) and up a slab to enter the obvious diagonal break. Belay on a good ledge half way up (old ring peg).

7. 30m. Continue to the top of the break leaving it at the highest possible point and traverse right into the crackline of *Gulliver*. Go up this and over a bulge (3 pegs for aid) and short chimney on to easier angled ground.

8. & 9. 65m. From here on the climbing was entirely on snow and ice. The thickest ice was on the line of *Waterkelpie Wall*.

10. & 11. 90m. The easiest finish was away left.

The time taken was a single push of 19 hours, assisted by a full moon.

GLEN CLOVA

The new Cairngorms guide left out a few gems and the following winter notes from S. Stewart should bring things up to date.

Corrie Fee, South Wall – *Romulus and Remus* 250m, GRADE IV.

S. Stewart, G. Eittle. February, 1985.

The longest route in the corrie. Start at a rib amongst the lowest rocks to the right of *The Wild Places*. Climb the rib, then broken ground and a short chimney to a wide ledge. Climb up and left to the top of a great corner. Move up and left to the foot of the upper buttress. Climb this in four pitches (2 sections) to the top. It would also be possible to finish up the slab on the right, as in summer.

– *Diamond Buttress* 60m, GRADE V.

S. Stewart, B. A. Strachan. November, 1985.

Follow the summer line. Start in an alcove right of the gully at the base of the buttress. Climb a flake-crack and slab above to the base of a rib. Follow the edge of the rib past an old peg and continue up the groove above.

North Wall – *Slanting-Left Face* GRADE III.

This is the open 'gully' to the left of *Slanting Gully*. It gives a fine 30m initial ice pitch and is often in condition (unlike *Slanting Gully* itself).

– *G-Force* 200m, GRADE V.

G. Eittle, S. Stewart. February, 1986.

The central line on the deceptively steep buttress on the South side of Craig Rennet. Start at a tree below a prominent icicle. Climb the icicle and ice bulge above to a good flake belay on the left. Follow the groove and traverse right along a ledge and up right to a tree below a steep wall. Work back left over steep ground to a tree and bush at the start of easy ground. Continue direct to the top.

Winter Corrie – *Central Gully, Left Branch* 50m, GRADE II/III.

Where the gully bends right there is sometimes a large icefall on the left. Climb it to a chokestone and steep finish.

– *Easy Gully, Right Branch* 45m, GRADE II.

Climb up right below the obvious cracked buttress right of the gully.

Juanjorge – *Gimcrack Gully* 200m, GRADE II.

F. Old, D. Lang. Late 1950's.

The obvious gully on the left side of Juanjorge. There are several chokestones which can be cunningly overcome by building snow pyramids.

– *West Gully* 200m, GRADE II.

The gully just left of Juanjorge crag. It has two sections, the second has an alternative steeper finish up ice on the right.

Cairn Broadlands, The Strone (NO 273786) – *Roofed Gully*

S. Stewart, G. Farquhar. December, 1985. 110m, GRADE III.

The prominent gully on the left of the upper leftmost of buttresses on The Strone. Climb the gully avoiding roofs by ice on the slabby left wall.

Corrie of Bonhard (NO 313755) – *Chokestone Gully*

F. Anderson and Party. 1950's. 150m, GRADE II/III.

The obvious wide gully on the left of small buttresses. The chokestone can present difficulties.

– *Unnamed Icefall* 60m, GRADE III.

The short icefall on the extreme upper right of the corrie, past a deep gully.

– *Left Edge Route* 60m, GRADE III.

S. Stewart. November, 1985.

Climb vague grooves left of the icefall.

BRAERLACH, Garbh Choire Dhaidh – *Didgeridoo* 130m, Very Severe.

A. Nisbet, J. Hepburn. 26th July, 1985.

Takes a line of corners left of *The Culvert*. The crux is slow to dry (HVS when wet, as on this occasion). It starts up the first green slabby area left of the *The Culvert*.

1. 45m, **5a**. Climb a shallow crack in the centre of the green slab. Go easily up right to gain a corner and follow it to belay.

2. 20m, **4c**. Continue up the corner to a dangerous wedge of blocks below a vegetated groove (conspicuous from base of cliff). Traverse right below the blocks into a subsidiary corner and climb it to a ledge on the right (crux).

3. 50m, **4b**. Return immediately to the main corner and climb pleasant knobbly slabs, trending slightly right at the top.

4. 15m, – . Follow the vague ridge to the top.

SGORAN DUBH MOR, No. 2 Buttress – *Decoy Ridge* 150m, GRADE III.

R. Jones, G. Rowbotham. January, 1986.

Indefinite climbing on the left side of the lower buttress leads back right to steeper ground. Climb a series of grooves to easier ground leading to the top.

BEINNA A' BHUIRD, Coire na Ciche – *Pigs on the Wing* 85m, E2.

D. Hawthorn, K. Murphy. 7th July, 1985.

Takes a line right of *Sandy Crack* and left of an obvious leaning corner high on the face, starting at a pronounced compact buttress some 10m up the gully from *Sandy Crack*.

1. 25m, **4c**. Climb the buttress by the obvious central crack to a grassy belay ledge.

2. 25m, **5a**. Climb the rib above the belay, heading for the big leaning corner for 15m, then go out left under a broad hanging flake using underclings to reach a groove. Step left on to an edge and up to small ledge below a huge hollow flake.

3. 35m, **5b/c**. Climb the blunt arete up right of the belay by way of an obvious leaning pillar using a hidden crack on the right to reach easier ground.

– *Thiefs Corner* 120m, GRADE V.

R. Clothier, D. Hawthorn. December, 1984.

The route climbs the corner between *Joker's Crack* and *Sickle*. The base of the corner was reached by taking *Hourglass Buttress* to the neck, followed by a 6m traverse right. The corner was climbed for 45m. 15m of easier climbing led to the top.

COIRE SPUTAN DEARG – *Snake Ridge* GRADE IV/V.

W. Moir, N. Ritchie. 17th November, 1985.

Climbed under powder conditions by the summer line. Sustained and technical, but may not be so worthwhile later in the season as some of the route may bank out, reducing difficulties and presenting escapes.

– *Contra-Flow*

A. Nisbet, G. Strange. 13th October, 1985.

30m, Hard Very Severe, 5a.

Climbs the wall between *The Swing* and *The Chute*. Start up a flake-line just right of the corner start to *The Swing*. When this becomes blind, traverse right and finish up a crackline which is the upper continuation of a blind crack just left of *The Chute*.

CREAGAN A'CHOIRE ETCHACHAN – *Scalpel Direct*

E1, 5b.

A. Nisbet, A. Ross. 20th October, 1985.

This line includes all the good climbing on the original route and adds more. It may well become the normal way.

Instead of exiting left from the shallow groove to belay, continue on up to an overlap. Step right to place good runners in *King Crimson*, then return and make a rising traverse leftwards (crux) to an arete (the arete formed by the curving corner above *Scalpel's* original belay). Go up cracks just right of the arete to progressively easier ground (60m).

– *In the Pink*

45m, E2, 5c.

A. Nisbet, A. Ross. 27th October, 1985.

Takes a direct line up the slab between *Scalpel* and *King Crimson*, just left of the grey streak. An eliminate, but offering good climbing on lovely pink rock. The route starts from a small ledge at the top of the small corner on *Djibangi* pitch two (Hard Severe to reach from below).

Go out leftwards to an obvious big jug. Climb up the slab to a shallow flake with unexpected runners. Continue straight until a tiny footledge on *King Crimson* can be reached on the right (this is immediately under the shallow curving overlap). Follow *King Crimson* left and up for 5m to the good runner placement mentioned in the description of *Scalpel Direct*. Step left and climb straight up through the main overlap to join *Scalpel Direct* on easier ground. Continue easily upwards to the belay.

– *The Sharp End*

45m, E2, 5c.

A. Nisbet, G. Strange. 13th October, 1985.

The route climbs the slab between *Stiletto* and *Sgian Dubh* using the direct start to *Sgian Dubh* and continuing upwards to give a separate but eliminate type line. *Sgian Dubh Direct* becomes redundant since its start is taken by this route and the original route climbs the arete more directly than indicated by the guide, moving away only about 2m (the diagram in the guide is wrong).

Climb the thin crack of the Direct and move towards the arete as for that route. Return diagonally right to a downward-pointing flake. Step right and climb up over a slight bulge (crux). Move right into a niche, then up and left to finish up a shallow corner and a belay at the start of easy ground.

– *Scarlet Fever*

35m, E3, 5c.

A. Nisbet, A. Ross. 20th October, 1985.

Sustained technical climbing up the fine slab between *Stiletto* and *The Dagger*. Start midway between the starts of *The Dagger* corner and *Stiletto* crack.

Climb a thin crack and move right to reach a small scoop (peg runner). Go up and slightly right to a porthole (peg runner). Pull through the overlap into the left hand crack, transfer to the right crack, then work up and left to easier ground and belay as for *Stiletto*. The peg runners were left in situ.

Note

The best way of combining several of these pitches is to start on the left with routes between *Scalpel* and *The Sharp End*, always abseiling back down from a peg at the top of *Sgian Dubh* arete; then move right and climb between *Stiletto* and *The Dagger*, abseiling from *Stiletto* belay and finishing the last route by going up to the Terrace to collect this belay.

LOCH AVON, Hells Lum – *Hell's Lump*

140m, GRADE IV/V.

A. Cunningham, I. Fox. 6th January, 1986.

Start below the obvious high left-facing groove of *The Exorcist*. Climb a left-facing shallow corner (can bank out) and move left to belay at a groove leading right to a flake-roof (summer crux). Climb the groove and flake and follow cracks right to below an obvious square roof. Turn the roof on the right and leave the summer route by going up to climb a bulging chimney. Move right and up by grooves to an easy left-slanting rake. Follow rake and short wall to top.

– *Towering Inferno*

GRADE IV/V.

A. Fyffe, B. Barton. 5th February, 1986.

Follows the summer route which gives sustained technical climbing. The route first takes the fault by the big roof, then trends right to gain another fault by the big rock beak. This leans slightly left and leads to the top.

Stags Rocks – Amphitheatre Gully, Right Hand Finish

A. Cunningham, P. Aubrey. 27th January, 1986.

75m, GRADE V.

This finish climbs the first corner right of the normal finish. Go up the corner till it is blocked by a roof. Move right, then left to gain the corner and cracked slab above the roof. Climb these to the large ledge of *Amphitheatre Wall*. Take the icy groove/chimney on the right over bulges to the top.

Stac an Fharaidh – Sermon

120m, GRADE IV.

A. Fyffe, I. Peter. 28th January, 1986.

The summer route was followed throughout, first up thinly iced slabs to steeper icewalls and bulges leading into the big recess. The prominent corner then leads to easier ground.

NORTHERN CORRIES, Coire an t-Sneachda, Mess of Pottage – The Message

A. Cunningham, W. Todd. 23rd January, 1986.

90m, GRADE IV.

Takes the obvious large groove in the middle of the main buttress. Start at the top of the bay right of the lowest rocks.

Climb a blocky chimney and two short steep corners trending left to the bottom of the main groove. Up this to the top, then easily left to the bottom of a square right-facing corner. Gain and climb the corner to a bulge at the top and make an exciting swing left on to the edge. Climb cracked slabs to the top.

Aladdin's Buttress – The Lamp

100m, GRADE IV/V.

A. Nisbet, S. Allan. 23rd January, 1986.

A route based on The Lamp Direct. A thin icefall immediately right of a recessed area between *Original Route (Summer)* and *Doctor's Choice* was climbed. A vague ramp was then followed leftwards to join *The Lamp Direct* at the top of its inclined ledge. *The Lamp Direct* was then followed out left to the crest. This proved too slabby and the route was forced to work rightwards through a set of overhangs before rejoining the crest for its easier upper section.

Note

The ascenders were not aware that the first pitch had already been climbed by *The Prodigal Principle*. A better start would be the groove just right of *Original Route (summer)*. This joins the inclined ledge at its base.

– *The Prodigal Principle*

G. Reid, J. Lyall. 19th November, 1985.

100m, GRADE IV.

Start 10m left of *Doctor's Choice* and climb slabs to an overlap at 10m. Move left to climb a short wall with thin ice (crux). A diagonal ramp was then followed leftwards before moves led right to a snow bay. A short crack was climbed at the back of the snow bay, then 10m of easy ground led to a narrow chimney which lies immediately left of the large corner of *Doctor's Choice*. The chimney was climbed to the top.

– *Doctor Janis*

140m, GRADE IV.

J. Grosset, J. Lyall. 18th January, 1986.

Climb *Doctor's Choice* to the foot of the large corner. Traverse right on a broad ledge and make a sporting move to gain a short corner above. Climb this and step right to a small snow patch and belay. The long corner above is then climbed to the top. Poorly protected.

- *Genie*

GRADE IV.

D. Sanderson, J.-C. Tomasi. 14th March, 1982.

This is the large corner left of *Damnation*, wrongly credited to Clothier/Hawthorn in the new guide.

- *White Magic* 110m, GRADE V/VI.

A. Cunningham, A. Nisbet. 7th December, 1985.

The ascent started at the foot of *Original Route (winter)* and went left through a bulge to an easy ramp (25m). The corners above were climbed (*Magic Crack* joins these corners either low down or at half height) to belay at the base of main corner of *Genie* (25m). A short tricky traverse led to the finger/axe crack which was followed, as for *Magic Crack*, to an overlap (20m, crux). An unlikely traverse right under the overlap led to the top of *Damnation* corner. The route was finished by a ramp and short wall leading out right, then a move back left into a short squeeze chimney.

- *Damnation* 100m, GRADE V.

J. Grosset, M. Sclater. 20th November, 1985.

Follows the summer route. The upper corner constituted the crux (poor protection), although the route was fairly sustained throughout.

- *Terms of Endearment*

III. A. Liddell and party. 1981. 100m, GRADE

Climbs the buttress right of *Original Route (winter)*. Start just inside the gully of *Original Route* at the first narrowing.

Traverse a ledge right on to the crest of the buttress. Follow the easiest line to the top, turning a diagonal wall by its left side overlooking *Original Route*.

A direct start up the wide crack in the buttress crest is considerably harder than anything above.

- *Honour among Thieves*

A. Fyffe, H. Redfern, A. Johnson. 5th March, 1986. 35m, GRADE III/IV.

Takes the clean left-facing corner left of *Aladdin's Mirror Direct*. Climb the corner direct on thin ice to a huge flake at its top. Protection is fairly sparse.

Fiacail Buttress - Jailbreak 120m, GRADE IV.

A. Fyffe, A. Liddell. 31st January, 1986.

Takes a line up the front face of the buttress. Start about 15m from the right edge.

1. 45m. Climb the obvious left-slanting stepped corner to the midway ledge.

2. 25m. Go about 10m left along the ledge. Climb some short steep walls and work up and right on a steep ramp up the scooped depression till a move left leads to another bigger ramp.

3. 40m. Go up right to an easier scoop which leads to ledges going right to the crest. Before then, make steep moves up and left to the top.

- *The Seam* 100m, GRADE III/IV.

J. Grosset, J. Lyall. 2nd January, 1986.

Follows the obvious fault on the steep wall to the right of *Invernookie*.

Climb *Invernookie* for 45m before moving up right to reach the foot of the fault, close to the arete. A short wall is climbed to gain the fault which is then climbed directly to reach the Fiacail Ridge. A good route.

Coire an Lochain - Demolition Man 120m, GRADE IV.

I. Rea, J. Kerr. 3rd February, 1986.

Climb the initial gully of *The Milky Way*, then directly up in the fall line of the fault on the right side of the prominent tower. On gaining the base of the tower, a line of stepped ledges runs diagonally up right to finish. A very steep direct finish awaits.

– *The Migrant* 95m, GRADE V.

A. Cunningham, A. Nisbet. 13th March, 1986.

Originally an attempt on the huge groove on the left side of number three buttress, but forced out left to finish on *The Vagrant*. An interesting succession of unlikely but well-protected moves interspersed with small ledges. Start at the groove 5m right of *Ewen Buttress Direct Start*.

1. 15m. Climb the deceptively steep groove and make a delicate step right to belay.
2. 20m. Work up rightwards under a overhanging wall and break through it at the first possible place to a belay under the huge groove left of *Nocando Crack*.
3. 30m. Descend a few feet and break out left on to a ledge on the left arete of the groove. Follow the ledge left, then go up over a chokestone to top a pinnacle. Move left to gain the rib above and follow it to easier ground.
4. 30m. Go easily up right to the finish of *Ewen Buttress*.

– *Fallout Corner* GRADE V.

A. Cunningham, A. Nisbet. 9th December, 1985.

By the summer route. The main pitch was magnificent.

– *Torquing Heads* 125m, GRADE V.

W. Todd, A. Cunningham. 20th January, 1986.

Start below a prominent chimney/fault on the right side of number four buttress. Climb the fault over a chokestone and leaning wall (crux) to belay below a wide flake-crack. Go up the crack and bulging chimney above to easy ground. Climb easy slopes on the right of the steep upper buttress, following round left to the top.

UPPERGLENFESHIE, Creag na Gaibhre – Eastenders 90m, GRADE IV

S. Kennedy, I. Barron, R. Jones; G. Rowbotham, A. Scrase. 19th January, 1986.

Towards the right side of the crag two large icefalls often form (divided by a prominent rock rib). The left-hand icefall is *Cascade Cave* and develops into a chimney higher up. This route follows the right-hand icefall.

The best approach is from well to the right to gain a short narrow gully behind a small buttress. Climb the gully for 10m to where the icefall splits (junction with *Cascade Cave*). Climb the right-hand icefall in two pitches to broken ground. Low in its grade.

Note

The description for *Cascade Cave* (SMCJ 1978, p.279) is slightly misleading. The climb is best approached by the short gully mentioned above which avoids the initial unpleasant pitch over deep heather and rock.

NOTES

Lochnagar – On an ascent of *Gargoyle Chimney*, M. Hind and C. Rice finished up *Dod's Diversion*. February, 1985. GRADE V.

Creag an Dubh Loch – A free ascent of Vertigo Wall by A. Cunningham, A. Nisbet at GRADE V in November 1985. 9 hours. Still the best mixed route in Scotland?

Creag an Dubh Loch – G. Livingstone notes that the new Cairngorms guide does not point out that his variation on pitch two of *The Ascent of Man* is more direct (implying superior) than the original. He considered the route to be E5 by either variation.

Creag an Dubh Loch – A free ascent of *Mousetrap* by D. Dinwoodie, J. Hall in January, 1986. GRADE VI.

Dubh Loch area – Doug Lang notes that early records of routes done by Graeme Hunter and himself did not distinguish between pegs for aid and peg runners. Consequently the new guide has overstated the original aid.

Nimrod: the peg was a runner.

A Likely Story: 2PA; three pegs were runners.

The Sword of Damocles: the only aid was on the main pitch (9PA, 3 bolts).

Falseface: the sling on the spike at the top of the big corner was not used for aid; therefore 13 points only.

Creag an Fhleisdeir – E. Todd climbed the vegetated grooves just left of the *Central Slabs Cleft*, finishing by a hidden doorway, in November, 1985, GRADE II.

Coire na Ciche – We note free winter ascents of *Trident* G. Strange, B. S. Findlay, November, 1985), still GRADE IV; and *Hourglass Buttress* (A. Cunningham, A. Nisbet, November, 1985), now GRADE IV/V.

Coire na Ciche – A winter ascent of *The Grey Tower, Chimney Route* by W. Moir, N. Ritchie in November, 1985, GRADE IV.

Beinn a' Bhuird, Garbh Choire – The first ascenders of *Salamander* and *The Flume Direct* have been omitted from the new guide. *Salamander*: D. F. Lang, 1st April, 1973. *The Flume Direct*: D. F. Lang, N. W. Quinn, 15th December, 1974.

Creagan a' Choire Etchachan – A free ascent of *Talisman* by A. Nisbet, D. Thomson in January, 1986. The first groove on pitch two (regaining the crest) was considered the crux. GRADE V.

Creagan a' Choire Etchachan – A free ascent of *Square Cut Gully* by D. Rubens, G. Cohen, D. Broadhead on 16th March, 1985. GRADE V on the day.

Sron na Lairig – A winter ascent of *Lairig Ridge* by the summer route by B. Ross and G. Strange on 8th December, 1985, GRADE III.

CENTRAL HIGHLANDS OUTCROPS

BRIN ROCKS (NH 6529)

These buttresses lie on the South flank of Creag Dhubh above the B851, Daviot to Fort Augustus road. They consist of four main buttresses which are very obvious. The Main Cliff itself is marked on the OS map as Brin Rock.

History – The rocks have been climbed on for at least 30 years but there are no records (apart from a few rotting pegs) until 1975 when Richard McHardy climbed *Treasure Island*. Brin was rediscovered by Allen Fyffe and Ado Liddell, who climbed *Making Movies* and *The Block*. But the full potential was only realised in 1985 when Fyffe returned with Andy Nisbet and repeated *Treasure Island* and walked *The Gangplank*. Nisbet later climbed *The Prow*, *Gold-digger* and *Skytrain*. More recent visitors have not been disappointed.

Main Cliff

This is the largest buttress on the left. Near its left edge is a pink overhung recess, left again the cliff is more broken. It has a steep profile in its lower section.

– Pink Rib

35m, Severe.

Left of the huge pink recess is a large right-slanting black ramp. The route takes the rib left of this. Climb the rib to a tree, move right and finish up the obvious gap.

– The Gangplank

40m, Hard Very Severe, 5a.

Takes the right-slanting ramp on the left wall of the huge recess. Start at some blocks about 5m left of the recess.

Climb cracks to below a shallow corner or traverse in from the corner at the foot of the recess. Climb the left-facing corner to gain the ramp, follow this over the bulge at its top and traverse right to gain another corner system leading to the top.

– Treasure Island

40m, E1, 5a.

Towards the right end of the cliff, above a bulging lower wall, is a left-facing corner system bounding the right edge of a huge hanging slab. Start directly below the corner.

Work diagonally left, then up to gain a flake, then a shallow corner system which is climbed steeply on good hidden holds to gain the hanging slab. Climb the corner to finish by the fence. An excellent route.

The Prow

This is the next largest buttress, to the right of the Main Cliff and close to Block and Zed Buttresses. It has a prominent jutting nose which gives the following two routes.

– *The Prow*

30m, E1, 5a.

Start at a ledge above the lowest band of rocks and just right of the crest line. Go up between two overhanging flake cracks (old peg), then straight up to a ramp leading left to the crest. Climb the crest to the last ledge. Make a long reach up left for a flake-crack and a very sensational finish.

– *Gold-digger*

25m, E3, 6a.

The route takes an overhanging groove just left of the crest line. Scramble up left from the start of *The Prow* to a large ledge. The groove is now on the right. Climb the groove to where one can move right to join *The Prow* (as on first ascent – E2, 5c). It is better to continue upwards by an apparently loose flake to climb the flake-crack of *The Prow* from its base.

– *Turkish Cracks*

40m, Hard Very Severe.

Right of *The Prow* is an obvious recess with parallel cracks forming its corners. This climb makes use of these cracks. Climb the left-hand crack until it becomes vegetated, traverse right and climb the right-hand crack to the top.

– *Skytrain*

20m, E1, 5b.

Right of the recess with *Turkish Cracks* is an overhanging wall. The route takes a left-slanting ramp breaking through the wall. Start by going up right until a leftwards traverse leads past a dubious flake to gain the obvious thin crack which gives access to the ramp (it may be possible to climb the crack direct). Finish up the ramp.

Zed Buttress

The lowest walls characterised by a Z-shaped fault near its left edge. It lies right of The Main Cliff.

– *Making Movies*

30m, Hard Very Severe, 5a.

Left of centre is an obvious smooth right-sloping ramp which provides the climb. Climb the ramp to its top, move left and up, then work leftwards to finish left of the obvious roof.

– *Giant Flake*

20m, Hard Very Severe, 5a.

An obvious flake-chimney near the left edge of the buttress. Climb the flake, then the wall above on good holds.

Block Buttress

This lies above Zed Buttress and shows a spectacular leaning block on the skyline. It is cut at mid-height by a terrace.

– *Screen Test*

35m, Hard Very Severe.

Start at an obvious clean groove/ramp about the centre of the cliff. Climb the ramp up leftwards to the terrace (4b). Go up and slightly right to flake crack, up this then left to a hanging ramp. Follow this left past a small tree, move left round the nose, then up to finish (4c).

After the nose one can go down to a ledge and take in the top crack (best part) of The Block.

– *The Block*

20m, Hard Very Severe, 4c.

The skyline block is cut by an obvious overhanging crack, the line of the climb. Start on the midway terrace at a short corner below the crack. Climb the corner to a terrace, then the crack of flakes to the top.

FARLETTER CRAG (NH826032) (Creag Far-leitire)

The rock is schist and very similar to Creag Dubh (particularly to the upper tier of Bedtime Buttress), similarly offering bold strenuous climbing. The crag is gently overhanging and dries very quickly, being sheltered by the trees and its steepness.

From Kinraig, take the road to Loch Insh. Go past the loch and turn right at a junction towards Insh. 1.1 miles beyond this junction (and 0.6 miles past a minor left turn for Glenfeshie) the forest clears on the right at a white cottage (Balnacraig). Fifty metres past the cottage the crag can just be seen through the trees on the left (50m from road).

History—The pioneers were Blyth Wright and Keith Geddes from Glenmore Lodge, and the first route was *Farr One* in Spring, 1985. During that summer the crag was hijacked by Andy Cunningham and Andy Nisbet, who did the harder routes. All were cleaned on abseil.

The ground below the crag is broken by an obvious step. Routes are described first on the left and then to the right of the step.

— *Farr One* 20m, E1, 5a.

Just left of the step is a ledge 2m up. From the left end of the ledge, follow a right-wards-slanting break to finish at a small rowan tree.

— *Private Farr* 15m, E1, 5b.

Climb the wall just left of the ledge to hanging blocks. Continue straight up the wall above.

— *Ceasefarr* 15m, E2, 5b.

3m left of the ledge is a tiny ledge 3m up. Climb up to this, then up the wall above until a move right gives a semi-rest on a big foothold (good runner in a pocket). Traverse left, then go up to a small slab next to *Farrlake*. Pull out right to finish up the wall.

— *Farrlake* 15m, Severe.

The route follows an obvious corner formed by a huge flake. Gain the corner from the left or more directly, from below (5b).

— *Farr Out* 15m, E3, 5c.

Start 2m right of the step and climb straight up the wall, passing the right end of a long roof, to finish on good holds at the small tree at the end of *Farr One*. Yo-yoed.

— *Too Farr for the Bear* 15m, E3, 5c.

3m right of the step is a vertical crackline, with a porthole near the base. It gives a remorselessly strenuous route, perhaps the best here.

— *Yet so Farr* 15m, E3, 6a.

Midway between *Too Farr for the Bear* and a big tree is a white lichenous wall. After a boulder problem start up the wall, follow the main horizontal break left past a peg runner (in place) and up to gain an obvious lenticular niche. Finish straight up the wall above. A continuation up the next tier has not been climbed.

— *The Art of Coarse Climbing* 25m, E4, 6a.

On the wall to the right is a peg runner with green tape. Climb the wall to the peg, step left and back right to a slot. Up the wall above to the first ledge. Move 2m right and climb the next wall. Continue slightly rightwards up the last wall. Well protected. Practised and yo-yoed but graded for a clean ascent.

— *KG Crack* 30m, Hard Very Severe, 5b.

Just left of the big tree is a right curving crackline; climb it with a hard start. The crackline continues in the same line up the next tier, becoming a shallow groove. Finish by a short wall.

— *Farrt* 10m, Very Difficult.

Just right of the tree is a blocky left facing corner. This is the route.

CREAG DUBH, Bedtime Butress – *Most Girls Do*

30m, E1, 5a/b.

S. Richardson, R. Webb. 7th July, 1985.

Start between Porn and Cuckold just to the left of a small corner. Climb the wall above taking a direct line towards a prominent pink quartz intrusion high up on the wall. Cross this moving up and right (crux) to reach the top. Continue up Porn.

Bedtime Butress, Upper Tier – *Nobody's Fault but Mine* 60m, E4.

G. Latter (unseconded). 23rd October, 1985.

A superb left to right girdle. Start from just below the tree further up the gully then the start of *First Offence*. Abseil to start recommended.

1. 25m, 5c. Pull round on to wall about 5ft. below an obvious projecting triangular block. Follow the fault until it fades out at some quartz. Descend for about 3m; break into *Case Dismissed*; up this to the spike runner and across right to the footledge. Continue along the break rightwards to belay in the niche of *C'est La Vie* (tree belay above).

2. 35m, 6a. Follow the lower of the two most obvious breaks until it becomes blind. Make a difficult move up to gain the square recess which marks the lowest point of the top of the crag. Hand traverse this to gain a good break and follow this to a good rest on *Ruff Licks*. Continue in the same line (strenuous and sustained) until easier ground is reached on *Muph Dive*. Follow the obvious line past *Muphin the Mule* and finish rightwards up the more broken slab above.

Little Rock – *Heather Wall*

25m, E4, 6a.

G. Latter (unseconded). 16th June, 1985.

The very steep, though well-protected cracked wall to the left of *Un Petit Mort*. Start at a small ledge. Up the right-hand crack, pull left on to ledge and up finger crack (crux) to gain good break and rest. Move left to finish up another crack.

Waterfall Wall – *Orinoco*

30m, Very Severe, 4b.

A. Fyffe, M. Seaton. 20th August, 1984.

Takes the most obvious large groove left of the vertical section of the waterfall. Start at a left-facing corner which leads into a deep black groove. Climb the corner, then the groove into the huge groove which is climbed on its left wall.

– *Zambezi* has now been repeated and found to be worth resurrecting. The revised description is:

– *Zambezi* 60m, Hard Very Severe.

Takes a line up where the waterfall normally comes down. Start as for Orinoco.

1. 20m, 4c. Climb up into the short deep V-groove, break right into the next groove, then right again to belay in the main corner.

2. 20m, 5a. Go left below the roof and climb steeply into the corner above. Up this to below a square roof and exit right.

Lower Central Wall – *Sense of Urgency*

25m, E3, 6b.

M. Duff, T. Brindle. 18th August, 1983.

On the left retaining wall of *Rib Direct*. Scramble up to the top of the third pitch of *Rib Direct*. From a tree, climb twin cracks to an overlap. Move left to continuation crack. Up direct to top.

NOTES

Tony Brindle and Mal Duff (varied leads) climbed the following routes on Creag Dubh in August, 1983. Inspection from below suggested that none are major additions to the crag and full descriptions are archived.

Waterfall Wall – *Pattern of Violence* – near *Brass/Brazen* E3, 5c/6a.

– *Crazy Paving* – orange wall just right of *Hayripi*.
E2, 5c.

Great Wall – *The Force* – between *Inbred* and *Strapadicktaemi*.
E3, 5b/c.

Lower Central – *Ninja* – crosses *Ticket to Ride*. E3, 5b.
– *The Snake* – near *Arch Enemy*. E3, 5c.
– *Man on Fire* – wall and thin crack left of *Pshaw*. E2, 5c.
– *The Sting* – wall and groove just left of *Pshaw*. E2, 5c.
– *Black Shadow* – arete left of *Gossamer*. Hard Very Severe, 5a.

Sprawl Wall – *Concealed Entrance* – groove right of *Slanting*
Groove pitch 2. E2, 5c.
– *Free and Easy* – corner 100m left of *Gang Bang*. Very Severe, 4c.

Oui – Oui. There is an unconfirmed report that the direct icicle was climbed by three Frenchmen in January, 1982. Those of us who were in the area at the time are sceptical. In February, 1986 James Grosset got to within 4m of the top before tiredness and a potential ground fall suggested a top rope. The ice seems to form as icicles which will not take ice screws.

DUNKELD, CRAIG A BARNES

The following climbs are situated on two buttresses to the left of *Myopics Corner* and about 50m higher. Near the start of a forestry track leading to the main road can be seen a broken crag with a large overhang on the right. Immediately behind this and 30m higher is **Venison Crag**. To the left (North) of this crag, beyond a loose and broken buttress lies a boulder of 10m offering sport and soft landings. The best crag lies 30m above the boulder. This is **Fallow Crag**. The routes were climbed during March and April, 1983 by S. Janik and R. Paterson.

Fallow Crag – *Fell Deer* 25m, E2, 5b.

On the left of the crag is a steep slabby area. Start in a recess on the right of this area below a tree on the cliff (arrow). Climb up and left to an obvious quartz pocket. Make a couple of moves in a shallow scoop, then climb direct to the top. Poor protection.

– *Rack and Roe* 25m, Severe.

Start 2m right of *Fell Deer*. Climb a pillar to a ledge with tree. Move either left and direct to top or right and up groove.

– *Sika* 25m, Hard Very Severe, 5a.

Start 6m right of the last route at an obvious edge. Climb steeply to a thin crack and gain a ledge. Follow broken crackline up steep ground to top.

Alternative Start – start 2m right in an obvious corner. Climb this to a small ledge, then swing round the edge on the left to join *Sika*.

– *Fallow Me* 20m, Very Severe, 5a.

6m to the right of *Sika* is a tall holly tree with a groove behind. Climb the groove to a ledge, then finish up right-hand wall.

Venison Crag – *Venison Burger* 20m, Very Severe, 4c.

The left of the buttress is slabby. Start at the right end of the slab at an alcove. Climb up the edge going through broken overhangs at half height and finish directly above.

– *Switch* 20m, Very Severe, 5a.

Start 3m right of *Venison Burger* in a groove with evergreen bush at top. Climb the groove for 6m to a small roof, then break out left up the edge and climb this directly to the top.

– *Muntjac* 20m, Severe.

6m to the right of *Switch* and higher up lies a wall. Start at the right hand end of this. Climb to thin cracks and follow these to a 'small' tree. Finish steeply behind this on good holds.

DIRC MHOR

The Dirc Mhor, like a slash by a great dirk, lies 5km West of Dalwhinnie (NN 5986). It is a long narrow defile whose southern wall is lined by numerous small buttresses. The most impressive and largest buttress, Sentinel Rock, lies at the lower or northern end of this huge meltwater channel.

Access — from the A889 about one mile North of Dalwhinnie follow the path along the Allt an t-Sluie until the Dirc Mhor itself can be seen on the left. It takes about 1 ¼ hours. These rocks are, however, important nesting sites and a voluntary ban on climbing till mid July is requested.

Rock — the rock here appears to be the same as is found on Binnein Shuas, that is a mixture of mica-schist and a pegmatite vein complex. Sentinel Rock, the most impressive buttress, seems to be pegmatite, much of the climbing being on feldspar crystals.

— *Working Class Hero*

95m, E1.

A. Fyffe, K. Geddes, A. Liddell. 1st August, 1980.

A superb route which follows the thin ramp on the steep left wall of the buttress.

1. 20m, **4b**. Start at the toe of the buttress and climb a large ramp to a ledge.
2. 30m, **5b**. Gain the right-facing corner above and follow this to the foot of the thin ramp which is climbed to an overhanging niche. Break out right to a ledge on the front of the buttress.
3. 40m, **4c**. Go up to a ramp above, then into the corner and on to the top of the pinnacle. Traverse diagonally right using the thin crack (crux of *Holy Smoke*). From the end, traverse back hard left, then easier to the top.

— *Positive Earth*

85m, E1.

M. Burrows-Smith, A. Fyffe. 23rd August, 1981.

This route lies on the right-hand side of the steep central section of Sentinel Rock, and shares some features with *Holy Smoke*. Start at the lowest point of the buttress.

1. 30m, **4c**. Climb a crack to below the overhang and go up the right wall to a ledge. Go up and right to some large blocks.
2. 20m, **5b**. Move left into a small niche, then climb the thin diagonal crack leftwards till holds lead straight up.
3. 15m, **4a**. Go straight up into the large corner above, climb this and exit left below the roof to a blocky ledge on the front.
4. 30m, **4c**. Climb the fine crack above and continue directly to the top.

— *Holy Smoke*

90m, Very Severe.

A. McKeith and party. 23rd August, 1966.

Start above and right of the lowest rocks at the lowest of three grassy ledges. Climb a short wall, then rightwards to two large blocks. Climb the wall above by a crack on the right to the third grassy ledge (30m). Up the corner on the left, then left along out on to the wall of the buttress, then up to belay on small ledges on a slab (25m). Go up the left edge of the prominent corner to the roof, then left on a ledge to a pinnacle. Hand traverse up and rightwards until a narrow ledge leads right. Go straight up then left to a slab, then up the crest to the top (35m).

— *Slowhand*

65m, Very Severe.

A. Fyffe, K. Geddes. 25th July, 1980.

Follow the rib on the right of Sentinel Rock. Start on the right of the rib. Climb the groove to the roof, move up and left round the crest of the rib to a small corner. Climb this to a slabby ramp, from the top of which go left to heather patch and belay (4c). Continue up the crest via a wide crack and short groove, then trend left to finish.

CENTRAL HIGHLANDS

MONADHLIATH

CARN DEARG, Loch Dubh Crag (NH630015) – *Wee Team Gully* 130m, GRADE IV, J. Grosset, J. Lyle. 31st December, 1985.

Climb the obvious deep-set gully, taking the three ice pitches direct. It is possible to traverse in above the first pitch while the third pitch can be avoided by easier gullies on either side.

CREAG MEAGHAIDH, Coire Ardair – *Missed The Post* 220m, GRADE IV, P. Brownsort, P. Smith. 9th February, 1985.

A narrower and almost parallel line left of *Last Post*. Start in *Easy Gully* at an obvious icefall about 20m up from *Last Post*.

Climb the icefall to a steep ramp leading to easier snow (50m). The easy snow leads over two short steps to a snowfield (50m). Cross the snowfield to a short steep chimney and then to a smaller snowfield (50m). Climb the shallow icy chimney above (40m, crux). Easier to the top.

BINNEIN SHUAS, The Keep – *Motte* 55m, E1, G. Muhlemann, S. Richardson. 11th August, 1985.

A bold start and delicate slab climbing on the first pitch was followed by a strenuous second pitch. Start 7m left of *Fortress Direct Start* just to the right of a small slanting corner.

1. 30m, **5b**. Climb directly up the wall to reach a break, pass this and move delicately left (small spike runner) to reach another break. Continue up the slabby wall above, trending right to reach the stance of *Fortress Direct*.

2. 25m, **5b**. To the right of the twin cracks of *Fortress Direct* is a small corner with a smooth right wall. Climb the corner and the continuation crack above to reach the heather terrace that runs across the cliff.

MEALL GARBH, Creagan Coire nan Cnamh (NN373727)

Several routes on the crag were reported in SMCJ, 1977. Other routes were climbed around the same time and all were included in a mini-guide written by Pete Webster. The two routes in SMCJ, 1985 had been climbed previously. The following notes should bring the crag up to date. Access is fairly long; perhaps the easiest is from Loch Treig. The 50min. quoted in SMCJ, 1977 assumes the use of forestry roads. Apparently permission to use these is rarely given. Routes are described left to right.

– *Foxes Gully* 80m, GRADE I.

A. Wielochowski. 30th March, 1976.

The uppermost gully on Terminal Buttress.

– *The Cushion* 140m, GRADE II/III.

H. Davies and party. 19th February, 1977.

Start 10m left of steep slabs, 100m lower than Foxes Gully. A short steep fault leads to ice walls and bulges, trending first right, then left.

– *Terminal Buttress* 150m, GRADE I/II.

A. Wielochowski. 1st April, 1976.

Follow a leftward trending ramp on to the buttress, then ascend a fault line to the top. Many variations.

– *Nash's Gully* 120m, GRADE I.

J. P. Nash. 4th February, 1976.

The first obvious gully. Alternative finish by a small cleft on the left.

– *Dickinson's Route* 150m, GRADE II.

K. Dickinson and party. 10th February, 1977.

30m up *Nash's Gully* are ice bulges on the right. Climb these and follow groove rightwards.

– *Barry's Route* 150m, GRADE I.

P. C. Webster. 1st April, 1976.

Leftward trending gully 60m right of *Nash's Gully*.

– *Webster's Original Route*

P. C. Webster and party. 18th February, 1976. 200m, GRADE II/III.

Start 45m left of and 30m above the Blue Icicle. Climb an iced corner to gain an exit into a gully. Climb the gully over two main ice pitches. The original start was just left of the Blue Icicle.

– *The Ramp* – see SMJC, 1977. GRADE III.

It finishes near *Webster's Original Route*. There is also a direct variation.

– *The Canine* 230m, GRADE I/II.

H. Davies and party. 9th January, 1977.

A right-slanting ramp line which starts just left of the Blue Icicle and crosses *Little Spider* and *The Frozen Vice*.

– *Little Spider* 140m, GRADE IV.

H. Davies, R. Pelly. 12th February, 1977.

1. 30m. Climb the Blue Icicle trending right to below a rocky rib.
2. 40m. Climb the ice bulge left or right of the rib to the bottom of the left-hand chimney.
3. 35m. Climb the iced chimney (crux) breaking out left on to the snowfield above *The Ramp*.
4. 35m. Climb the right-hand chimney to summit snowfield.

– *The Frozen Vice* – see SMCJ, 1977.

The deep chimney just right of the steep walls. GRADE III/IV.

– *Southern Route* 220m, GRADE III/IV.

P. C. Webster, H. R. Thomas, P. Chatterley. 6th February, 1977.

Starts close to *The Frozen Vice* with a 25m ice pitch leading into a gully. Finish on the buttress on the right.

– *Central Gully* 220m, GRADE IV.

P. Moores, T. Webster and party. 8th February, 1977.

The route described in SMCJ, 1985 as *Stalactite Gully*. Originally used aid out of the second cave. Both ascents were in thin conditions and a straight steep ice pitch does form. Recommended.

– *North Buttress, Left Edge*

P. C. Webster, P. Thomas. 28th February, 1977. 220m, GRADE IV.

Start 45m right of *Central Gully* by an easy corner to a large ledge. Go 10m left of a huge detached flake and climb a crack/chimney exiting left halfway up to a ledge overlooking *Central Gully*. Two long pitches up walls with chimney-cracks leads to a prominent corner, climbed to snow slopes.



Mitre Ridge, Beinn a' Bhuid

Photo: D. J. Bennet



Mitre Ridge, Beinn a'Bhuird

Photo: D. J. Bennet

– *Ledge Route* 200m, GRADE II.

H. Davies.

Start as for *North Buttress Left Edge* but traverse the large ledge rightwards for 45m to a deep overhanging gully. Climb left of the gully, then in it, exiting right at the top.

For *Deep Slit Gully*, *Ping-Pong* and *Broad Gully*, see SMCJ, 1977.

– *Y-Gully* 150m, GRADE II.

P. C. Webster, D. Robinson, J. A. Taylor. 9th January, 1977.

Recorded as *Ossian Gully* in SMCJ, 1985.

STOB BAN (MAMORES)

Noel Williams reports: There has been some confusion in recent years over the naming and location of the mountain's three main buttresses – notably in the latest Central Highlands District Guide.

South Buttress is the large mass of rock directly below the main summit. It is split by two large gullies, (South Gully on the left and North Gully on the right). The section left of South Gully is known as the East Wing. The slender wedge-shaped mass to the right of North Gully is also part of South Buttress; it is *not* Central Buttress as described in the CHDG.

Central Buttress lies north east of the summit. It is set forward from, and at a lower level than South Buttress. It is distinguished by a large triangular front face. A slanting shelf and gully separate it from South Buttress.

North Buttress, unlike the first two buttresses, consists of mica-schist rather than quartzite. It lies some 600m north of the summit directly below a small top of about 910m (NN 146 659). A diagram is available.

The North-East Face of Central Buttress – *Bodice Ripper*

J. Murphy, D. N. Williams. 31st March, 1984. 150m, GRADE IV.

Climbs the large triangular face on the front of Central Buttress. Start right of centre at the foot of the obvious rightward slanting gully. Ascend easily to a prominent leftward slanting ramp. Follow this until it fades and takes a stance (poor belay) at the foot of a steep and narrow, rightward slanting slab. Gain the slab with difficulty and climb to its termination, then zig-zag up to the snowfield above (crux). Continue to top of snowfield and ascend obvious gully with interest. At top, squeeze up narrow chimney leading rightwards. Reach broad ramp and follow this leftwards to crest of ridge. (Junction with 1969 route). Easy to top of buttress. A short section of arete links the top of Central Buttress to the main ridge some 200m north of the summit.

Note

The length given by J. Grieve and C. MacNaughton (1969) for their route which starts up the left flank of Central Buttress (i.e. 300m) includes a great deal of easy ground. The steep section (GRADE IV) is much less than a rope length – the remainder of the route is mainly GRADE I.

BEN NEVIS

North-East Buttress – *Orient Express* 90m, E2.

J. Grant, D. Hawthorn. Summer, 1984.

This and the following route are on the face below the First Platform and to the left of *Raeburn's Arete*. The route is on the slab that rises from right to left (to the left of *Steam Train*). Scramble up to some blocks at the start of the rising traverse leading to the slab.

1. 45m, 5c. Climb the rising traverse to a good belay but poor stance on the slab.
2. 45m, 5a. Continue up the slab to finish.

— *Steam Train*

100m, Hard Very Severe.

D. Hawthorn, D. N. Williams. Summer, 1984.

The main feature of this route is the large corner in the centre of the face. Scramble up to reach the base of some corners which lead to the main corner.

1. 40m, 5a. Climb these, stepping right at the top into the line of the main corner.
2. 30m, —. Climb the main corner.
3. 30m, —. Easier climbing leads to a ledge and traverse off.

Note

The obvious ramp that traverses the face from right to left underneath the corner of *Steam Train* has been climbed by D. Hawthorn and N. Muir, Very Difficult.

— *Raeburn's Arete*

235m, GRADE IV.

D. F. Lang, C. Stead. 25th January, 1986.

Start to the left of the arete. Traverse right below the initial roof and climb a deep groove to a stance (45m). Go up and slightly right by grooves until a left traverse below the overhangs leads to a block belay on the edge (100m). Climb the arete, now easier, to the First Platform (90m).

Orion Face — *Urban Spaceman*

350m, GRADE V.

D. Hawthorn, A. Paul. 12th April, 1983.

This route lies on the buttress between *Astronomy* and *Orion Direct* in its lower section, and *Epsilon Chimney* in the upper.

Start at the same point as *Orion Direct*, and move out left to gain the rocks below the great slab rib. Now climb direct by the crest of the rib for two pitches (30m, 40m). Move up rightwards to gain a set of open grooves at 30m. Climb these for two pitches until below the steep upper section (30m, 20m). Move up rightwards over slabs to a good stance (30m). Climb a steep ice-filled chimney followed by some mixed ground (45m). Two pitches of 45m lead to the crest of *North-East Buttress*.

Gardylloo Buttress — *Augean Alley*

120m, GRADE V.

K. Leinster, A. Paul, G. Reilly. March, 1981.

This route climbs *Kellet's Route*, then continues up the upper section of the buttress by the *Haston/Stenhouse variation*.

1. 45m. Up the groove and step right over bulges to gain a shallow depression.
2. 30m. Continue by open grooves to belay at the start of the variation finish.
3. 45m. Up this to the top of the buttress.

Tower Ridge, East Flank — *Cleftanger*

90m, Hard Very Severe, 5a.

D. Hawthorn, A. Paul. 3rd July, 1984.

This route climbs a corner system to the right of *Tower Cleft*. Start at the opening of *Tower Cleft*.

1. 20m. Climb to gain a large belay ledge below a large mossy corner.
2. 45m. Traverse right, round an arete to gain a clean corner with a large dubious flake at mid height on the left wall. Climb the corner, then move up leftwards over slabs followed by a small chimney to a belay ledge.
3. 25m. Continue by leftward trending grooves to the top.

— *Winter*

GRADE V.

D. Hawthorn, A. Paul. January, 1985.

By the summer route.

— *The Urchin*

60m, E1, 5b.

D. Hawthorn, A. Paul. 3rd July, 1984.

The route lies to the left of the *Great Chimney*. It follows the first leftward-facing corner crack.

1. 30m. Climb a thin crack directly below the corner, to a small grass ledge. Continue up the corner to gain a good belay at a large detached flake.
2. 30m. Follow the corner crack to the top.

Secondary Tower Ridge – Running Hot

120m, GRADE IV/V.

M. Duff, J. Tinker, R. Nowack. 8th February, 1986.

Start a few feet left of Vanishing Gully. Climb iced slabs to reach a left traverse, along this for a few feet, then up an iced slab to a recess and roof. Go over the roof on the right, then diagonally left to a corner and short wall leading to a corner stance (60m). Move right into a groove, descend 3m, move right to another groove and up this to a spike. Exit left.

– Pirate

150m, GRADE IV.

M. Duff, A. Nisbet. 3rd January, 1986.

1. 20m. Start about 20m right of Vanishing Gully and climb easily on to and up a snow ramp slanting left.

2. 10m. Pull over its retaining wall and up into a small left-facing corner.

3. 45m. Go up slabs just left of the corner until a smooth steep wall bounded on the right by a large corner. Traverse right under the corner and climb the right rib of a second corner, then slant left into a 3m vertical corner.

4. 30m. Climb this corner and move right to follow a shallow chimney.

5. 45m. Climb grooves above to the crest of Secondary Tower Ridge.

– Bydand

150m, GRADE IV/IV.

M. Duff, M. Aldridge, J. Woods. 31st January, 1986.

On the buttress between *Italian Climb* and *The Chute*. Start at the lowest rocks and ascend two steep icy corners to below the obvious sharply-defined curving groove. Climb this in two pitches exiting left at the top. A fine route.

Comb Buttress – Mercury

150m, GRADE V.

M. Hind, J. Christie. 26th January, 1985.

The route follows a groove between Pigott's Route and Green Gully.

1. 20m. A short ice pitch in Green Gully was climbed (10m) until a traverse round a rib led to a belay below a chimney with a small chockstone. In better conditions one can climb direct up in ice groove.

2. 30m. Climb up to below a small overhang where a leftward traverse over loose flakes is made to reach the main groove line (crux). Continue upwards for another 20m.

3. 40m. Continue easily up the groove to reach a snowfield and flake belay.

4 & 5. Traverse left to the crest and follow it to the top of the Comb.

Number Three Gully Buttress

The following is a more detailed description of the route called *Direct Route* in SMCJ, 1985. Now called *Diana*. The route crosses *Aphrodite*.

– Diana

195m, GRADE V.

M. Duff, J. Tinker. 16th February, 1985.

Start at the obvious icefall 30m left of *Number Three Gully Buttress Original Route* (snow depression).

1. 55m. Climb the icefall directly (short steps) to reach a horizontal snowband and cross this to a stance under a steep rock wall. This pitch can bank up considerably.

2. 45m. Climb the obvious groove/chimney above and left, turn roof (chockstone) and continue to further horizontal snow. Move up left to a huge block stance.

3. 30m. A series of short corners leads to below the huge right-facing corner above.

4. 45m. Up to the overlap and pull into the right wall of the corner. Continue straight up on very steep thin ice. Continue to easier runnel and snowfield.

5. 20m. Snow and cornice to top.

— *Chinook*

65m, Hard Very Severe.

D. Hawthorn, A. Paul. 4th July, 1984.

This route lies on the arete to the right of the final corner of *Two Step*, and is easily spotted from the top of *Knuckle Duster*. Start on *Original Route* at a spike belay below a groove, 10m to the right of *Two Step Corner*.

1. 35m. Climb the groove, trending left at about 25m, then move back right to gain a crack which is followed to a large belay ledge.

2. 30m. Continue by a leftward slanting chimney on the arete to the top.

Note

This would make a good combination with *Sioux Wall*.

— *Last Stand*

110m, Hard Very Severe.

D. Hawthorn, A. Paul. 2nd July, 1984.

This route lies on the arete between *Knuckle Duster* and *Sioux Wall*.

1. 30m. Follow the diagonal weakness (as far as *Sioux Wall*) to gain the foot of the arete.

2. 40m. Climb by thin cracks on the right-hand side of the arete to a belay ledge on the arete.

3. 40m. Continue directly by cracks, then surmount a bulge, then move easily by cracks to finish.

Moonlight Gully Buttress — *Right-Hand Chimney*

GRADE III.

D. Hawthorn, C. MacLean, A. Paul. 17th December, 1983.

— *Diagonal Route*

GRADE III.

D. Hawthorn, C. MacLean, A. Paul. 17th December, 1983.

— *Phosphorescent Grooves*

175m, GRADE III/IV.

K. V. Crocket, A. Walker, R. T. Richardson. 22nd December, 1985.

Takes an interesting rising traverse line across the *No. 5 Gully* face of *Moonlight Gully Buttress*. Start at the buttress edge just left of the gully entrance.

Climb easy rocks to a large ledge. Continue straight up to a steep wall, then follow obvious ledges rightward to belay before a slab corner. Climb the corner to belay above. Continue right, make an awkward move into a vertical 5m chimney and climb this to belay above. Traverse right, first slightly down then up, to gain easy ground just below the top of the first section of *Moonlight Gully Buttress*.

Carn Dearg Buttress — *PM*

110m, GRADE V.

B. Hall, A. Rouse. 10th February, 1986.

Climbed in unusually good conditions, GRADE IV. The GRADE V is for more normal conditions. The line took the grassy grooves between *Route 1* and *PM* for two pitches, before joining *PM* for an exciting but surprisingly reasonable finish on the steep rock to the right of *Route 1*.

— *Ring The Alarm*

300m, GRADE V.

M. Duff, J. Tinker. 1st February, 1986.

1. 45m. The first pitch of *Dissection* (between *Route 2 Direct* and *The Shadow*).

2. 30m. Up *Route 2 Direct* for 10m, then traverse across *The Shadow* to a stance on the edge of the slab.

3. 45m. Traverse the lip of the slab (very exposed, as for *Adrenalin Rush*) to reach the groove of *Cowslip*. Up this and over an overlap to a stance.

4. Up the icefall above and icy slab to reach *Route 2*. etc. Finish up *Route 2*.

- *Centurion/Route 2*

GRADE VI.

J. McKenzie, K. Spence. 8th-9th February, 1986.

Following the summer route of *Centurion* with a bivouac after four pitches. A rest point was taken just below the top of pitch 2 although this had been climbed free on two previous attempts on the route. Easier climbing gained *Route 2* and a finish made up this.

Raeburn's Buttress - Saxifrage

85m, Severe.

D. Hawthorn, A. Paul. 5th July, 1984.

Follow a thin groove which lies 10m to the left of *The Crack*.

1. 15m. Climb the first pitch of *The Crack*.

2. 40m. Climb the grooved arete above to belay on slabs below steep cracked blocks.

3. 30m. Climb blocks up and then leftwards until reaching *Raeburn's Original Route*.

- *Compression Crack*

GRADE IV/V.

M. Hind, C. Rice. 9th February, 1985.

Climb the obvious icefalls below *Raeburn's Buttress* before a long traverse rightward is made to reach the iced cracks. A vertical ice pitch in the corner was climbed (15m). The corner was continued for approx 20m until the snowfields were reached.

- *Plum Duff*

60m, GRADE IV.

D. Hawthorn, J. Murphy. February, 1984.

This route climbs the icefall at the top of *South Castle Gully* on its left wall.

NOTES

Minus One Direct-Arete Variation. Now free, by W. Jeffrey and D. N. Williams on 8th July, 1984.

Garadh na Ciste. R. Harvey and A. Meekin record a route which is a continuation of the initial icefall of *Raeburn's Easy Route*. It climbs close to a ridge which ends at the summit cairn of *Tower Ridge* (GRADE II/III). It seems that all lines on this face merge under heavy snow.

ARDGOUR, GARBH BHEINN, Lower Pinnacle - Wild Spot

60m, E1.

M. Fowler, S. Richardson. 28th July, 1985.

Start just right of *Blockhead* below a white wall that is split by a smooth groove.

1. 35m, **5b**. Scramble up easy rocks to reach a crack that leads to a roof. Go over this (small spike runner high on right) to exit into the easier groove above. Make a rising traverse left to reach the arete on the left side of the wall. Follow this in an excellent position to reach the stance of *Blockhead*.

2. 27m, **4a**. Continue up the arete above, as for *Blockhead*.

GLENCOE

BUCHAILLE ETIVE MOR, Central Buttress - Waterslide Gully 90m, GRADE IV.

C. Murray, T. McAulay. 9th February, 1986.

Climb *Waterslide Gully* to a hanging belay near *Pegleg* (50m). From the belay, climb straight up (40m).

Crowberry Ridge, North-East Face - Symposium

A. Tibbs, D. Hainsworth, A. Winton. 4th May, 1985. 65m, E2.

The route climbs the thin cracks immediately left of *Engineers Crack*. Start at the top of the Moderate chimney.

1. 30m, **5c**. Climb directly up the crackline moving left at the top (just above a small overlap). Easier climbing leads to a belay on the right.

2. 35m, - Continue up *Fracture Route*.

Great Gully Buttress, East Face – June Crack GRADE V.

R. Clothier, D. Hawthorn. January, 1984.

Follow the summer route, going directly up at the crux corner.

– *Direct Route*

C. Jamieson, E. Todd. January, 1984.

GRADE IV/V.

By the summer route.

Broad Buttress – Ephemeron Gully 340m, GRADE IV.

P. Craig, K. V. Crocket, A. Walker. 28th December, 1985.

Hard under the West face of this buttress, left of Broad Gully, a sinuous line of icy grooves was followed giving, under icy conditions, five ice pitches and three mixed pitches. Low in the grade.

GEARRAONACH, East Face – Mimsy

130m, GRADE IV.

R. Clothier, D. Hawthorn. January, 1984.

This is the icefall that approximates to the summer line of *Mimsy*, to the right of *The Wabe*.

STOB COIRE NAN LOCHAIN, North Buttress – People's Friend

A. Nisbet, M. Duff. 31st December, 1985.

105m, GRADE V/VI.

Takes the groove left of *Evening Citizen*. Direct access to the groove is barred by a short wall so it is necessary to start at the foot of *NC Gully*.

1. 35m. Climb a groove and traverse left beyond *Evening Citizen* to a stance below a 3m pinnacle and directly above the *NC Gully* chockstone.

2. 20m. Climb the pinnacle to a groove capped by a small recess. Enter the recess with difficulty and exit via the top left corner (very committing).

3. 50m. The sharply defined groove above is started with difficulty and climbed gradually easing to the top.

– *Crest Route*

115m, GRADE IV.

R. Anderson, M. Hamilton. 24th November, 1985.

Climbs the obvious groove which runs up just right of the crest of the buttress approximating to the summer line of *Crest Route*. Start at the lowest rocks.

1. 35m. Climb broken stepped ground to a short wall where *Financial Times* comes in from the left. Climb the crack above to belay on the pedestal as for that route.

2. 30m. Climb the flake-crack above, then move up right across a slab to gain the corner/groove which is followed to the crest where a step left is made at a large spike to gain a ledge level with the large flake on *Financial Times*.

3. 20m. Regain the groove and follow this directly to belay on a ledge below an obvious perched block.

4. 30m. Easy ground to top; the final short wall is overcome by a stepped flake crack just on the right.

Variation to pitch 3. After regaining the groove, return left round the crest and climb thin cracks just left of the crest.

AONACH DUBH, Lower North Face – King Cobra

260m, GRADE V/VI.

M. Duff, R. Nowack. 17th February, 1986.

Climb the *Viper* direct start to *Venom* (3 pitches). Climb *Venom* (the chimney gully) for 25m to where an ice seep comes down the very steep left side wall. Climb the ice seep (very steep and thin) to a stance under the roof right of icicles (35m). Traverse left to reach an icicle, ascend this and a left-trending ramp above to a further steep groove. Up this to a block belay (60m). Up the easier iceflow to the top (40m).

West Face – Silent Running

120m, GRADE IV/V.

M. Duff, R. Nowack. 7th February, 1986.

An ice smear forms on the North wall of B Buttress, at the point where *Dinnertime Buttress* joins No. 2 Gully. Gain the foot of the ice smear by a ramp line from the right. Climb the ice smear in one long pitch (55m).

NOTES

Aonach Dubh, East Face. M. Hind and H. van Ryswick note a direct entry to the Basin climbed in July 1978 and called *De Vreemde Stap*. It started about 10m right of the Basin Chimney, by a shallow groove until a wide step right and up was required to gain the continuation of the groove (25m, 5b). Continue up a leftward-trending crack to the Basin (15m, 4c).

Aonach Dubh, Lower Walls. W. Todd climbed the ice smear 5m left of *Lady Jane* in February, 1986, GRADE IV/V.

Gearr Aonach, East Face. We have a note of a route up the open groove between Mome Rath and Snowstormer. The exact line is yet to be verified. GRADE V; G. Hornby, C. Schaschke.

SOUTHERN HIGHLANDS**ARROCHAR, Glen nan Caorun – Eas Ruairidh**

60m, GRADE III.

H. Henderson, G. Ross. January, 1986.

Situated a few hundred feet above Glenfalloch Farm, Glen Falloch, on the Dubh Eas burn, is a large waterfall which occasionally forms a fine icefall. Well seen from the Loch Lomond road. Climb the icefall in two pitches.

Crag Tharsuinn – Solo Buttress

GRADE III.

R. T. Richardson, A. Walker. 1st February, 1986.

Start at the leftmost groove in the face of the buttress. Climb the groove past a bulge to the foot of the wide-bottomed gully. Climb this, then the shelf, till it ends just short of a snowfield. Gain the snowfield (exit may be made here into Arch Chimney) and climb up left over steepening snow, ice and rocky steps to the top.

Beinn an Lochain – Tonton Macout

65m, GRADE IV.

W. Hood, B. Williamson. Winter, 1986.

This is on the same cliff as *Benylin* (SMCJ, 1985). It takes the obvious left-sloping ramp in the centre of the face. Start at the foot of the obvious gully below the ramp. Up a bulge to the gully which is followed to belay (20m). Climb the ramp, then steep ground (45m). Exposed.

– Galadriel's Mirror

70m, GRADE III.

H. Henderson, S. Kennedy, G. Ross. 3rd January, 1986.

Climbs the right-hand of two obvious groove lines just left of the small crag containing *Benylin* (SMCJ, 1985). Start in a small snow bay and climb a short groove to below an icefall. Climb the icefall and finish up straightforward slopes.

Beinn an Lochain, North Face – The Back Alley

60m, GRADE III.

H. Henderson, S. Kennedy, G. Ross. 3rd January, 1986.

Follows a prominent right-angled corner on the broken undercut buttress high in the left side of the corrie. Situated well left of and above *Promenade Gully*, almost directly below the summit.

Traverse rightwards along a narrow shelf below the undercut base of the buttress and surmount an awkward bulge to enter a large corner. Follow the corner directly to belay under the final headwall. Pull out leftwards on to the North-East ridge just below the summit.

Creag Liath – Paranoia

35m, Hard Very Severe, 5b.

W. Hood, C. Moody. 19th May, 1982.

Climbs the corner left of *Fall-out*, which starts as a scoop in the face. Start 4m left of *Fall-out* below a small overhang. Step right, then climb up over a bulge past an old peg. Follow a depression in the face up and slightly right to a corner. Up the corner.

LOCH AWE, Creagan Aonaigh – Lumberjack's Fall

140m, GRADE III.

C. Blyth, V. Hammond, R. Wilson. 16th January, 1977.

This is the burn flowing from Lochan na Cuaig. Best approach is from Ballinmore Farm to the lochside near Tervine, followed by a walk along the lochside. Can be seen from the A85 in the Pass of Brander. Continuous ice; good for a short day.

MEALL DUBH (NN 845305) – Central Buttress

200m, GRADE II.

A. Fraser, G. Leslie. 18th February, 1985.

The crag is in a corrie on the South side of Glen Almond about 3 miles from the Sma' Glen road. The main North-East face of the crag is split by a narrow gully which gives the route.

Climb an icefall, then easy ground to the gully. Climb the gully to a large ledge beneath the upper buttress. This is also split by a narrow gully, which is reached by a traverse from the right, then climbed directly.

The climbing in this corrie is disappointing.

GLEN LEDNOCK, Balnacoul Castle Crag, Great Buttress – Wendy's Day Out

S. Richardson, G. Muhlemann. 20th July, 1985.

45m, E4.

Takes the hanging groove between *No Place for a Wendy* and *Great Crack*. Sustained and strenuous.

1. 20m, **5a**. Start just left of *No Place for a Wendy* below a short crack. Climb this for 3m, then make a difficult move left to reach a sloping ledge. Traverse a few feet further left to gain a corner-crack which is followed to reach the peg belay of *Great Crack*.

2. 25m, **6a**. Climb the impending wall behind the stance, go over a small overhang (nut for rest below it) to make a difficult exit on to the smooth slab above (crux). Climb the overhanging groove on the left to reach *Great Crack* below its final crux. Follow this more easily to the top.

Ballindalloch Crag (NN 738262) – Jungle Warfare

S. Richardson, R. Everett. 4th August, 1985.

25m, Hard Very Severe, 5a.

On the left-hand side of the crag are two prominent left-facing corners. Start below the left-hand one of these.

From the top of a large boulder climb a short wall to reach a ledge, then move right into the corner. Climb this with increasing difficulty to reach a horizontal break under a roof. Swing round right to turn the roof and then traverse back left to finish up a series of short grooves that lead to the top of the cliff.

NOTES

Curly Ross notes that the prominent waterfall, *Eas Anie* (150m), on the East flank of Beinn Chuirn above Cononish Farm, comes into condition quite readily. The left-hand finish was climbed in the company of C. Macleod (GRADE IV) while the right-hand finish offered H. Henderson and S. Kennedy a GRADE III. May well have been climbed previously but very worthwhile.

Curly Ross also notes that the falls immediately above the Inverarnan Hotel, Glen Falloch, provided himself and H. Henderson with a pleasant GRADE II/III. Noteable in being only 20 mins from the bar. Named *Eagle Falls*.

Ed's note: these have definitely been climbed before.

Knapdale, An Garadh East Face (NR 760902). G. E. Little notes: This schist crag, although of promising appearance when viewed from afar, is on closer acquaintance rather disappointing due to its disjointed nature. A couple of short routes were done, with scope for more.

Flakeaway (20m, Very Difficult) – the sharp-edged flake and crack on the upper leftmost slab.

Steerpike (25m, Hard Very Severe) – on the clean wall at the lowest part of the crag. Climb flakes and converging cracklines above.

ARRAN

COIRE DAINGEAN, The Headwall

At the head of Coire Daingean lies a very steep vegetated wall, The Headwall.

– *The Shelf* 180m, GRADE I/II.

G. E. Little. 20th January, 1985.

On the left-hand side of The Headwall a vegetated ramp cuts diagonally across it, ending on the ridge just above the Beinn a' Chliabhain col. This is the line of the route, an exposed snow climb.

– *The Riddle* 130m, GRADE IV.

G. E. Little, C. Smith. 26th January, 1985.

A superb climb, with considerable exposure. High in its grade. Start 45m left of the obvious vertical curving fault line.

1. 45m. Climb a steep ice pitch to a ledge. Traverse left to a stance on a projecting rock pedestal.

2. 45m. Continue leftwards up a ramp until below an open chimney splitting the vertical wall above. Step down, move left then up to below a second, short well-defined chimney.

3. 20m. Climb this chimney with difficulty to a ledge. Traverse left till it fades.

4. 20m. Ascend a steep wall by flakes, traverse left and up a groove to finish.

A' CHIR, Coire Daingean – Imposter Crack 110m, GRADE II.

G. E. Little, S. Reid, C. Smith. 27th January, 1985.

Steep snow leads in two pitches to a cave in a rock barrier. This is turned on the right (crux) to gain the upper gully and thence to the top.

Note – Gully 4 quickly banks up and can be used as a descent.

CIRMHOR, South Face – Absent Friends 30m, E3, 5c.

B. Davison and party. May, 1985.

This is the prominent crack high on the right side of the *Caliban's Creep* wall. The crack starts about 10m up and was 5b, moving left at the top. The grade, however, includes a direct start up the offwidth crack on the left (2 nuts aid) followed by an easy traverse right.

North-East Face – Pinnacle Ridge 200m, GRADE III.

G. E. Little, C. Smith. 19th January, 1985.

Start from the cave near the bottom of *Western Stone Shoot*. Traverse left to the edge and climb the ridge by the line of least resistance. A classic climb with superb situations.

– *Once in a Lifetime* 350m, GRADE V/VI.

G. E. Little, D. Saddler. 8th February, 1986.

The route tackles the great vegetated face taken by *Silo* and its middle pitches are common to that route.

Climb broken ground to gain an ice scoop which falls from a narrow ice chimney (parallel and to the right of the initial chimney of Silo). Up the scoop and into a chimney/groove system. Pass under a chockstone and 15m above (below a steepening) traverse down and left for 7m passing a steep groove to a vertical chimney-crack (on Silo). Climb this and a second shorter chimney-crack above. Mixed ground leads to a shallow ice groove trending rightwards and with a big flake on its left at half height. The upper part of the slab groove presented considerable difficulty (thin ice) and led to broken ground. (From the big flake it is also possible to traverse left to gain entry to the chimney/gully bounding the right side of the clean rock nose on *Silo*). Traverse up and right on complicated ground, then break back left and thence to the top of the face. A superb, exposed and varied route.

CIOCH NA H'OIGHE, The Bastion

The long saga of Abraxas comes to a satisfactory conclusion, a free ascent in June 1985 by C. Macadam and D. Austin. The new description is sent by G. Latter – on the second free ascent the hanging bolt belay was eliminated.

– *Abraxas*

105m, E4.

An excellent route in a fine situation. The traverse at the end of the second pitch is often wet. Start directly below the right-hand end of the prominent arched overhang in the centre of the Bastion.

1. 30m, **6a**. Traverse leftwards and slightly upwards to the left end of the arch. Move left round the edge to the base of a yellow roof-capped corner. Up this and pull right on to the wall. Move slightly left at a horizontal break, then make a difficult move (crux) to gain a hidden finger pocket. Up from this to gain a rightward hand traverse line which leads to a belay.

2. 35m, **6a**. Climb a diagonal finger crack to a narrow sloping shelf, gain this awkwardly and follow it to reach a shallow waterworn groove. Up this to its top and step left to a narrow sloping ledge. Cross a narrow shelf on the left with difficulty to gain a niche and bolt belay.

3. 40m, **5b**. Up crack on decomposing rock to an undercut flake. Pull left on good holds to reach a crack, up this to heather ledge. Follow grassy ramp and continue up further grass to belay well back.

CAISTEAL ABHAIL – V-Gully

110m, GRADE III.

G. E. Little. 19th January, 1985.

The summer route was followed, the upper part of the gully providing sustained ice climbing.

– *Thrushville*

12m, E3, 5c.

G. Latter, C. Henderson. 4th June, 1985.

On the summit ridge East of the Witch's Step. An obvious crack in the block becomes progressively wider. Squeeze up this to a ledge below a flared slanting horror. This obvious continuation defied a lead after several attempts and was top roped (unprotected and very sustained at 6a/b).

CEUM NA CAILLICH, Slabby Buttress – White Magic Groove

170m, GRADE II.

G. E. Little. 7th April, 1984.

Immediately to the West of the Witch's Step a broad slabby buttress falls to the North. An open groove gives a line of weakness in the centre of the buttress. Climb the groove and continuation gully with several short interesting pitches.

BLACKWATERFOOT, Drumadoon Point (NR 883290), The Electric Cliff

From Blackwaterfoot, follow the road to the golf course. The cliff is just beyond the far end of the course. It is a basalt granite sill giving a cliff approx 35m at its highest point. There is a series of fine corners, grooves and aretes. The rock is covered with a brittle lichen and the cracks are often choked with pebbles, spoil and nest debris. The routes were therefore gardened on abseil.

There are few distinguishing features, so describing routes has been a problem. A footpath goes under the bottom of the crag. From the right (golf course) end, an old fence is passed and 55m further on the crag drops back in a recess. This has been climbed at Very Difficult, escaping on the right-hand side. About half way along the crag (at its highest point) the path passes below a large boulder. 6m to its left is a semi-detached pinnacle with a chimney on its left side. 5m left of the chimney are twin parallel cracks capped by a roof (*First Shock*). 6m left again a block lies against the crag and 6m left again is an easy open gully/chimney. 50m from the left end of the crag is a wide rightward-slanting crack at the top of a very dirty leftward-facing groove (Electrotherapy). Routes were climbed by A. Atkinson, S. Bissell and B. Davison on 22nd-25th May, 1985. Routes described right to left.

– *Electric Avenue* 35m, Very Severe, 4b/c (AA).

45m left of the old fence (10m right of the recess) is a rightward facing groove with a prominent flake at the top. The flake comes down to produce a small roof above a niche. Climb the groove (crux), then the crack to the niche, then take the flake on its right side to the top.

– *Fork Lightning* 35m, Very Severe, 4b (BD).

To the left of the recess, one third of the way along the crag, there is an S-shaped crack. This climbs the right-hand of the two cracks, steps left on to a ledge and finishes up the left-hand crack (which starts halfway up the cliff).

– *Shock Treatment* 35m, E4 (5c/6a) (BD).

To the left of *Fork Lightning* is an open groove which peters out halfway up the face. The bottom is old red sandstone and has a small overhang to start. Climb the overhang, then trend slightly right and back left to a ledge at the base of the groove proper. Climb the groove until it peters out, then move up the wall and a little rightwards to reach a good ledge (crux). Climb a small flake to large ledges and the top.

A high side runner was used to protect the start. The route is still lichenous with some loose and friable rock and a poorly protected crux.

– *Hertz Crack* 30m, Very Severe, 4c (BD).

To the right of the large boulder above the path is a leftward facing groove capped by a small blocky overhang. Climb through brambles to the start of the groove. Follow the groove to the overhang where a step right enables the overhang to be surmounted with ease and the top gained.

– *Electric Chair* 30m, Very Severe, 4b (AA).

This takes the chimney on the left side of the pinnacle. A horrendous thrutch at half height provides the crux.

– *First Shock* 30m, Very Severe, 4c (SB).

Climbs the twin parallel cracks (see introduction) moving right under the roof at the top on to a ledge.

– *Electrotherapy* 25m, Very Severe, 4b (SB).

This takes the dirty groove and wide rightward-sloping crack at the top, finishing by impressive swings rightwards.

NOTES

Most slab routes in Arran have in recent years been rejected on the grounds that the slab was climbable anywhere. This editor's opinion is that it is possible to have a good line on a slab climbable anywhere, and the following are summarised just in case.

Goatfell, Rosa Slabs

Ribald 110m, Very Severe; P. Brownsort, H. Irvine. 20th April, 1985.

On the huge slab above the second terrace, between *Guttersnipe* and *Evening Traverse*.

Extraction 80m, Hard Very Severe, 5a; K. Martin, P. Clarke. June, 1982.
Below the first terrace and left of *Evening Traverse*.

The Perfect Fool 170m, Hard Very Severe, 4c; A. Nisbet, A. Robertson.
19th April, 1981.

From a start 10m left of *Angel's Pavement*, going direct to the start of *Fool's Causeway*, then direct where that route goes right.

Cir Mhor

South Souwester Slabs 90m, Severe; G. E. Little, C. Ritchie. 4th July, 1981.
An eliminate line near *Souwester Slabs*.

Arctic Way 70m, Very Severe, 4b; W. Wood, C. Moody. 19th June, 1982.
On slabs right of *Fourth Wall*, starting up a corner crack.

A' Chir, Coire Daingean Face

Synagogue 220m, Very Severe, 4c; J. Hosie, S. Kennedy. 19th April, 1981.
A line just to the right of *Mosque*, starting 5m right.

Coire na Larach Slabs

Hedonist 140m, Severe; G. E. Little, C. Ritchie. 18th April, 1981.
On the slab left of *Diagonal*, starting at the extreme left corner.

Changeling 80m, Very Severe; G. E. Little, C. Ritchie. 18th April, 1981.
Starting at the right hand end of the undercut base of slab.

SOUTHERN UPLANDS

GALLOWAY – Dungeon Hill, Cooran Buttress – Traitor's Gait 110m, Mild Severe.
A. Fraser. 10th June, 1984.

The route is on a series of walls and slabs at the left-hand side of the Cooran Buttress (SMCJ, 1983). Start 5m right of the left-hand toe of the buttress, beneath a compact buttress (arrow).

1. 30m. Climb cracks up the centre of the buttress for 8m, then follow these left to a ledge on the edge. Move up right and traverse back into and up the centre of the buttress to a ledge.

2. 30m. On to the large slab to the right of the ledge and climb this centrally to a ledge.

3. 20m. Directly above and about 4m left of a prominent detached block is a short, steep crack. Climb this for 5m, then left to a ledge and up an arete and slabs above to belay beneath the upper wall.

4. 30m. A series of cracks are climbed for 15m, then step left to a ledge. Continue up the arete (on buttress edge) to a large ledge.

OUTCROPS

Several good and hard outcrop routes have been reported by Gary Latter. They have been held back because of the imminent appearance of the New Routes Supplement and Central/Southern Scotland Outcrops.

GLEN NEVIS

Despite the wettest ever Summer on record, Glen Nevis activity continued at a steady pace, with a constant flow of new routes throughout the year (1985).

Early on in the year, a prolonged spell of settled weather resulted in the discovery of two new, albeit small buttresses situated midway between Polldubh and the car park at the head of the glen. Barrel Buttress, opposite Whale Rock proffered two lines.

The finger crack leading to a tree gave Kev Howett and Alan Moist *The Beer Hunter*, E3 6b. Howett also soloed the leftward slanting break originating from the same point at E1 6a – *A Proper Kiss Now*. About 15 minutes up the hillside behind Barrel is Bistro Buttress, discovered by Moist and Callum Henderson who climbed *Gregory's Crack*, Hard Very Severe 5a, up the left edge and *Cool Cookie*, E1 5a, up the curving crackline. Nick Sharpe arrived on the scene and found *Self Control*, E4 6a, up the overhang and poorly protected slab between the previous two routes. Howett and Henderson completed the picture with *Winter Blues*, E2 5c, tackling the blunt rib at the right-hand end.

Also hereabouts, over on Whale Rock, Howett linked up a tenuous line of tiny flakes and edges just right of Earthstrip to produce *Run for Home*, E5 6b. Later on in the Summer, Latter with Nick Donnelly added *Midgiematosis*, E2 5c, up the crack in the wall just right of Just a Little Tease. On Evening Crag, Latter with Sharpe climbed *Lord of the Mides*, E5 5c, a bold line up the wall left of Choc Ice.

Buccaneer Crag, high up the hillside behind Whale received its inaugural route from Howett with *Hard Station*, E4 6a, with Moist and Henderson practising their rope stretching techniques on the crux moves.

Many of the finest additions of 1985 occurred in the Gorge and Steall area, with almost all the routes being of a high order of quality and difficulty. The sharp arete right of Mini Cooper on Lower Gorge Crag gave Latter and Cuthbertson *Captain Kevlar*, E4 5c. Directly below this lies a prominent neb overhanging the path, which provided Cuthbertson and Latter with the unlikely looking line of *If Looks Could Kill*, E5 6b. Only a stones throw away from here lie The Gorge Walls, the true potential was exploited by Howett, firstly with *Easy Pickings*, E4 6a/b, up the crack and ramp in the centre of the wall. This particular line had previously repelled attempts from others. The overhanging left arete of the wall became *Chimera*, E4 6a. Both routes have since proved popular.

A steep slab rising from the riverbed produced three lines after extensive wire-brushing. Paul Laughlan and Martin Macrae erroneously added a direct start to *Gawping Grockles* up the diagonal handcrack in mistake of the ordinary route to produce *Liquidator*, E1 5b. The start of this route was utilised to gain entry to the intermittent cracks up the centre of the slab which gave Cuthbertson and Latter *Aquarian Rebels*, E4 6a. The discontinuous cracks up the right edge of the slab were gained from the right by the same pair – *The Amusement Arcade*, E5 6b, sports an in situ nut below the first crux and a peg to protect the final moves.

About 50 yards downstream from here, Latter created *Rats in Paradise*, E5 6b taking a thin overhanging crack and technical slab, protected by a fixed nut at the start of the thin traverse.

Several new crags were opened up on the Meadow Walls overlooking Steall. *Stuffed Monkey*, E4 5c by Latter follows the short wall on the left on entering the meadow. Directly above this Cuthbertson added a trio of thin routes up a narrow sculptured slab of rock.

The Mutant, E4 5c, is one of the few recent routes in the glen to be climbed on sight. It follows the central scoop and obvious continuation leading to an exposed pull right round the prow at the top to finish. *Sammy the Seal* follows a parallel line to the left at the same grade, while *Reptile*, E2 5c winds its way diagonally from right to left across the wall, encountering a fine crack in its upper half.

Up and left from here, a short wall provided Cuthbertson and Latter with a couple of lines. The pink groove gave Cuthbertson *Tickled Pink*, E3 5c, its left arete *Crinkle Cut*, E4 5c to Latter.

The more established crags around here also came in for some attention. Four lines were squeezed in on Wave Buttress. Cuthbertson linked up the start of Jodicus Grotticus to the finish of On the Beach with a piece of bold climbing, resulting in *The Edwardo Shuffle*, E5 6a/b. With Latter, he added what is essentially an alternative start and finish to Walter Wall with *Washington*, E5 6a though low in the grade. The slanting groove line at the start of this route was utilised to gain Edgehog, offering *The Extended Start*, E3 5c to Latter with Howett. *The Gift*, E4 6a was grabbed by Howett, tackling the striking crackline to the left of *Think Vertical*. Latter and Cuthbertson followed on this one.

Howett also managed to produce two fine lines up the steep slabby wall on the right side of Blade Buttress. *Ugly Duckling*, E2 5b resulted from a failed attempt at the bold slab. It follows the arete and crack on the left edge. After much deliberation, a couple of tied down Skyhooks paved the way for *Flight of the Snowgoose*, E6 6b which makes use of a faint line of wrinkles to find a way up the centre of an impressive pillar of rock.

Latter managed to boulder out *Rough Diamonds*, E4 6a up the right arete of Slip Away on Upper Gorge Crag. The crux is at 25 feet and unprotected. On Galaxy Buttress Latter with Cuthbertson forced a line up the left edge of the slab in two pitches – *Diamond Delight*, E3 5c, 5b.

Howett managed to breach the left side of the overhanging wall on Steall Crag with *Lame Beaver*, E6 6b. One point of aid mars what could have been one of the most spectacular routes in the glen – definitely a route for the jackals to go for.

Down on Polldubh most of the steeper crags received a modern looking over, with many hidden gems coming into the light. On Hangover Buttress, Howett removed the aid from the roof of Route 11½ to create *Mouseplay*, E4 6b, offering well protected gymnastics. This line had been tried by several notables, including the current guide-book writer.

The last remaining aid route on Road Buttress, Wee Two succumbed to a combined effort from Latter and Cuthbertson. Renamed *Cubsville*, E5 6b, it was led by both and involves a technical sequence of moves up to and over the initial roof, after which it relents somewhat. Nearby, on Pinnacle Buttress, *The Sugar Puff Kid*, E3 6a/b finds a surprisingly independent line between Soapsuds and Chalky Wall. Again it was led by both Cuthbertson and Latter. The impending wall up the centre of Scimitar Buttress became *Fingertip Finale*, E4 5c, again courtesy of Latter and Cuthbertson.

On Cavalry Crack Buttress, Cuthbertson and Latter put up a good direct finish to Versus in the shape of *The Anniversary*, E4 6a. At a similar grade, *Lullaby in Black* tackles a prominent black groove and overhang at the right end of the crag. On SW Buttress, Raz Frew and Al McLeod squeezed in *Look no Book*, E2 5c up the slab between SW2 and Tee. The diagonal crack just left of Resurrection on Styx Buttress gave Latter *The Amazing Adventures of Smelly Macmoist*, E4 6a. The Continuing Adventures up the obvious continuation still remains unclimbed.

He also added three line on High Crag. *Chugger*, Hard Very Severe 4c, 5a follows a corner and groove up the left arete of the Middle Tier, while *Quartzite Cruiser*, E2 5c ascends a granite-like dyke and quartz blotched slab to the left of *Kinloss Grooves* on the same tier.

The rightward slanting grooves at the left end of the overhanging wall on the Upper Tier gave Latter and Cuthbertson *Stone Cold*, E3 6a. The pair swapped leads for *Slatehead slab*, E1 5b up the wall and slab right of the right-most eyeball of the skull.

Finally, on Buzzard, Cuthbertson's annual contribution of impressive lines to the crag continued with *The Monster*, E5 6a which straightens out and free climbs the old aid line of the same name. The first pitch of Steerpikie was linked with a second pitch which climbs in part the arete right of Exocet to produce a fine combination – *Spring Fever*, E3 5b, 5c is the end result.

Edinburgh climbers Alistair Todd and Doug Curr were busy at Upper Buzzard on the same day that *The Monster* was climbed. Here they were responsible for the esoteric *Green Wellies*, Hard Very Severe 5a which illustrates that there is plenty of scope for new routes of all grades around in Glen Nevis.

MISCELLANEOUS NOTES

International Icefall Climbing Symposium. — *Andy Nisbet with a full supporting cast attended the above Eisfest at the Rudolfshutte. He reports:*

Rab Anderson and I, along with Tut Braithwaite, Mick Fowler, Pat Littlejohn and Doug Scott, attended an international icefall climbing symposium organised by the Austrian Alpine Club and held at the Rudolphshutte, their Alpine Centre (hotel?) at 2300m in the Hohe Tauern region of Austria. We were two of 25 'experts' from 7 countries — Scotland, England, France, Germany, Switzerland, Italy and Austria — invited to discuss all aspects of icefall climbing and perform on the local icefalls. Also present were 70 observers from many organisations in Austria.

The ultimate aim was to interest the Austrian climbing public in icefall climbing and to initiate ice climbing courses. The experts were keen to compare techniques and see slides from the different countries. Surprisingly, many had already been to the Ben, usually short visits in poor conditions, and our slides (always of good conditions and good weather, of course) promoted a lot of enthusiasm for further visits. With such a large group and different languages, detailed discussion proved impossible but a superficial coverage satisfied the organisers and left a lot of time for climbing the local ice and looking at slides.

Ice climbing techniques were remarkably similar in the different countries, the main difference being the continuing one that the continentals used Italian hitch belays and wore full body harnesses. Every make and shape of axes and crampons were in use, with no particular one predominant (not even Footlugs) and users tending to group along national lines — probably having been given them by their local manufacturer. Ice screw belays were the norm and obviously trusted, though we Brits still preferred the rock. Survival was clearly a priority over ethics as, perhaps surprisingly, everyone clipped into their axes to place ice screws on steep ice. Snags were by far the most popular and effective screw, with few wide diameter screw-in's in evidence and warthogs clearly outdated. The ice was very extensive, steep and brittle and we Scots found it less familiar than many of the continentals, though apparently the ice softens a lot later in the season (March, compared to early February).

Icefall climbing in the Alps has only taken off in the last five years and there is much more scope than in Scotland, but already all were aware that future development was limited by the formation of ice and the Scots' greatest contribution was to demonstrate the vast possibilities for mixed and turf climbing on the smaller cliffs, both from our slides and by climbing one of the first ever turf climbs in the Alps (with Mick Fowler and Austrian Felix Kromer). We also explained the simplicity and intricacies of the Scottish grading system; at present they use detailed topos of ice angles and lengths, which on pure ice clearly gives much more information than the universally applicable Scottish system.

Overall a successful week which pleased both participants and organisers and thanks was due to the Austrian Alpine Club for programming plenty of climbing time.

Controversial Craig. There is some disagreement among the various learned authorities about the correct spelling of the popular climbing crags above Dunkeld. The O.S. has it as Craig a Barns; others say Craig-y-Barns on the grounds that the name is of Pictish provenance and that as the Picts spoke Welsh they would have spelled it with a 'y' if they had had a mind to. The interposed vowel is sometimes isolated between hyphens (but not by the O.S.). Little seems to be known about the correct Pictish usage of hyphens. Indeed the Picts may have spoken a non-Indo-European tongue and may only have spoken pidgin-Welsh with their Brythonic neighbours. Other authorities say that we are dealing with the Scots diminutive 'ie' and the name would be more correctly rendered Craigie Barns or Craggie Barns. (See the learned exchange at the end of R. N. Campbell's Review in *SMCJ*, 1984, xxxiii, 117).

Allan MacLeod writes to contribute some local evidence to this important debate. 'I have recently become aware of a Strathspey entitled *'The Craig of Barns'* composed by John Crerar (1750-1840), a pupil of Neil Gow and head keeper on Atholl estate and also featured in Landseer's *'Death of a Stag in Glen Tilt.'* He presumably knew the name

well enough and was not tempted to introduce an 'a' or 'y' into the spelling. (Pictish Chronicle please copy). MacLeod adds that it thus might be appropriate to make ascents there in Strathspey time.

Compleat Munroists. Fifty odd people have admitted to compleating the Munros. They are listed below in roughly chronological order. The first two names are those of late reporters who have been slotted in to gaps in the record left by people who have been entered twice in previous lists. The dates after each name denote the date of compleating the Munros, then the 'Tops' and finally the 'Furth' group lying outside the boundaries of Scotland that is in Ireland, Wales and England.

- | | |
|---|--|
| (339) **Pamela Cain, 1977, -, -; | (414) Brenda Jones, 1985, -, -; |
| (346) John L. Brown, 1980, -, -; | (415) Ray Peel, 1985, -, -; |
| and 1985, -, -; | (416) David MacFadzean, 1985, -, -; |
| (385) John A. Peacegood, 1980, -, -; | (417) Paul Morgan, 1985, -, -; |
| (386) William MacKenzie, 1982, -, -; | (418) Barbara Morgan, 1985, -, -; |
| (387) Richard Fuller, 1984, 1984, 1985; | (419) Gareth Morgan, 1985, -, -; |
| (388) Steven Fuller, 1984, 1984, 1985; | (420) Caroline Morgan, 1985, -, -; |
| (389) Jane O'Donovan, 1985, -, -; | (421) *Alex G. Cousins, 1985, -, -; |
| (390) May Grant, 1985, -, -; | (422) George Wostenholme, 1985, |
| (391) Brenda D. Griffen, 1985, -, -; | 1985, -; |
| (392) Mervyn Griffen, 1985, -, -; | (423) Catherine McVean, 1985, -, -; |
| (393) Jennifer M. Irving, 1985, -, -; | (424) Kenneth McVean, 1985, -, -; |
| (394) Joe Stewart, 1985, -, -; | (425) Eleanor Christie, 1985, -, -; |
| (395) Ron Payne, 1985, -, -; | (426) James MacKay, 1985, -, -; |
| (396) Alan S. Douglas, 1985, -, -; | (427) Iain Macrae, 1985, -, -; |
| (397) Isobel M. Hughes, 1985, -, -; | (428) Graham R. Wyllie, 1985, -, -; |
| (398) Ian S. Hughes, 1985, -, -; | (429) Brian D. Souness, 1985, -, -; |
| (399) Ian T. Stables, 1985, -, -; | (430) Ian R. F. Ross, 1985, -, -; |
| (400) Roger Chapman, 1985, -, -; | (431) Mark McCann, 1985, -, -; |
| (401) John Limbach, 1985, -, -; | (432) Arthur C. Dickie, 1985, -, -; |
| (402) Allan MacLeod, 1985, 1985, -; | (433) Brian Shackleton, 1985, -, -; |
| (403) Sandra Gordon, 1985, -, -; | (434) David Matthews, 1985, -, -; |
| (404) Douglas Gordon, 1985, -, -; | (435) Margaret K. Foster, 1985, 1985, -; |
| (405) Donald D. MacAusland, 1985, -, -; | (436) James D. Foster, 1985, -, -; |
| (406) Peter R. Mills, 1985, -, -; | (437) Bill Barlow, 1985, -, -; |
| (407) David S. Simpson, 1985, -, -; | (438) Dorothy Batchelor, 1985, -, -; |
| (408) Ken Falconer, 1985, -, 1985, -; | (439) Leslie A. Knight, 1985, -, -; |
| (409) J. Brewster, 1985, -, -; | (440) William S. Milne, 1980, 1981, -; |
| (410) Alan MacIntyre, 1985, 1985, -; | (441) Brian G. Coull, 1981, -, -; |
| (411) William S. Lockyer, 1985, -, -; | (442) R. Fraser Simpson, 1983, -, -; |
| (412) Len Cerajowski, 1985, -, -; | (443) Peter Keillar, 1985, -, -; |
| (413) Lorna Liddell, 1985, -, -; | |

A case of mistaken identity appears to have taken place in last year's list when (352) John Havard was listed (as indicated by his signature) as John Howard. It emphasizes that names sent to the Editor for inclusion in the list of Compleaters should be clearly printed.

The following have topped up as follows:

- (114) Donald Smith, 1973, 1982, 1982;
 (142) Richard Morgan, 1976, 1976, 1977 is now and 1985, 1985, -;
 (128) R. Hardie has a full house and should be 1974, 1976, 1976;

A double full house is by (327) R. Stewart Logan, who is now 1981, 1981, 1981 and 1984, 1984, 1985.

An up-to-date record of members of the LSCC who have compleated, topped up and 'furthed' is given in the next section.

Joe Stewart writes to say that in the Perth Section there are now 23 compleaters some of them clandestines, so the Unknown Munroist position No. 277 is probably quite crowded. Although the tripartite Dale family did so in 1982. The (417-420) Morgans seem to be the first family of four to compleat together. Their two dogs also very nearly made it to canine Munrohood! (396) Alan Douglas compleated everything except the Inaccessible Pinnacle by 1972 but waited till 1985 before finishing it off. (402) Allan MacLeod wonders if he is the first Skyeman to compleat. He also adds that he has a mind to place a 1' 5" boulder on the summit of Sgurr a Choire-bheithe to convert it into a Munro.

This year a particularly large crop of letters was added to the already bulky Munro Archive. Most of them are charming accounts of days (and nights) on the hills. Munro-bagging undoubtedly has its quietly enjoyable aesthetic side – it's only the macho crowd who hit the headlines.

A Solitary Compleater – An interesting and unusual double case of *M. Soloensis* is recorded by (346) John L. Brown who began his first solo round 38 years ago but took a mere six years to compleat his second.

Floreat LSCC – Members of the Senior Ladies' Club in Scotland are denoted in the Record of Munroists with a double asterisk. (119) **Janet Brown writes –

'The members of the LSCC were very pleased to see that you agreed with my husband's suggestion that the Compleaters amongst them should be accorded a double asterisk in the lists of names of Munroists. (SMC Journal 1984).

On checking through the 1984 edition of Munro's Tables and the updated lists in the 1984 and 1985 SMC Journals, I have found the following details:

	<i>Munros</i>	<i>Tops</i>	<i>Furth</i>
38 **Miss A. J. Littlejohn	1960	1960	1960
39 **Miss A. D. Miller	1960	–	1961
75 **Miss M. McCallum	1967	1968	–
78 **Miss L. W. Urquhart	1968	–	–
79 **Mrs E. MacKay	1968	–	–
119 **Janet Clark	1973	–	1983
174 **Mrs J. H. B. Bell	1978	1978	–
233 **Sheila Cormack	1980	–	–
292 **Kathy Murgatroyd	1982	–	–
374 **Pat Ransley	1984	–	–

I have been asked to report also that (233) Sheila Cormack is now 1980, 1980, 1985, and Kathy Murgatroyd (292) is now 1982, –, 1985. Pamela Cain has crept out of hiding and is 1977, –, –. (Also, my husband's name is (316) *James H. Clarke, 1983, –, 1983, not Robert H. Clark.)

The Single Transferable Munro System – Des Rubens, although himself a hard man on the mountains, obviously has a soft spot for Munroists and their problems. He sends in this suggestion for making life easier. Few, we think, will agree with his soft approach:

'I have been pondering the problems of compleation since a rather severe statement in a recent Journal to the effect that: after every compleation, the Munroist's slate is wiped clean, i.e. Munros inadvertently (or otherwise) ascended twice during the premier compleation cannot count towards the second compleation. The patent injustice if this edict, and the idea of a friend (an anonymous member from Sheffield) lead me to reflect upon the problems of those struggling to make a first compleation (never mind a second). I have drawn up three categories of such unfortunates:

- i. climbers who are too busy to compleat the Munros but who, through no fault of their own, end up on the cairn of certain Munros several times over (the Ben, Buchaille, etc.).
- ii. walkers who find the Inaccessible Pinnacle just so.
- iii. both climbers and walkers who find the ascent of some of the rounder Munros too tedious to contemplate (a medical statement certifying an aversion to tedium may be required here to exclude obvious malingerers).

To allow those who suffer from such problems the honour of compleating, any surplus Munros which they had accumulated could be transferred to those which they hadn't physically been able to ascend. Obviously, the system would have to be applied honourably, i.e. the effort of ascending the transferred Munro could have to be at least equivalent to the Munro to be claimed. (Perhaps a sub-committee could prepare an equivalence list). For example, Cairngorm from the chairlift could be transferred only to, say, Cairnwell, whereas Ben Nevis from the Golf Course could be applied to a large number of Munros.

The system could also usefully be used for Tops (e.g. Carn Dearg of the Ben) and Corbett's (the Cobbler, Arran Peaks, etc.).

The Munroists who compleat using this method should have their names kept in a confidential dossier to avoid discrimination. Perhaps the system could be piloted by SMC members for a trial period (say three decades) before being made available for general public use. In the long term, the result would be a much greater number of Compleaters, to the benefit of all.'

Camusrory Disclaimer – We have received the following note from Camusrory Estates:

Camusrory is no longer run as an outward-bound centre but is being developed as a sporting 'nature reserve.' For your information, Camusrory has, in the past, been referred to as a mountain rescue post. In the most recent print of the Ordnance Survey Maps of the area (est. 1984) Camusrory is shown as 'Mountain Rescue Kit.' This is completely inaccurate as no such equipment exists, apart from the remains of a rescue stretcher.

Camusrory has not had a ferry service for many years, nor does the estate have any means of communication should urgent assistance be required. We believe this information is completely misleading to the public and rather than to be of assistance to someone in distress this wrong information could exacerbate a minor difficulty into a serious situation. We believe that should you wish to maintain 'Mountain Rescue Kit' in the area, it should be kept at 'Sorlies Bothy' about 2 kilometres from Camusrory.'

and in Glen Fyne: Mr John Noble of Ardkinglas has asked us to note that the road up Glen Fyne from the head of Loch Fyne is private, and cars are not permitted along it.

Days of Long Auld Syne – Jean Callander of the Cairngorm Club found an SMC Easter Meet Circular for 1916 when clearing up some old documents. We reprint it here to remind ourselves that there have been changes during the last seventy years. Prices are just a bit higher now and public transport a lot worse.

EASTER MEET

20th April to 2nd May 1916

DEAR SIR,

As previously intimated, the Easter Meet will this year be held in Glen Coe district, from Thursday, 20th April, to Tuesday, 2nd May.

I have made arrangements with the **TARTAN HOTEL, KINLOCHLEVEN**, Argyllshire (proprietor, Duncan Sinclair), which has accommodation for 16 men. The terms for Bed, Breakfast, Sandwiches, Afternoon Tea, and Dinner are 10s. per day. Baths and fires extra. There are 11 bedrooms, 7 of which have fires. The Hotel is best approached by rail to Ballachulish, and thence by steamer to Kinlochleven. There is a feasible road from North Ballachulish to Kinlochbeg and back to Tartan Hotel, 10 miles, skirting the north shore of Loch Leven. There is also a path from Bridge of Coe to the Tartan Hotel on the south side of the Loch, 5 ½ miles. The Hotel can also be approached by pedestrians *via* Devil's Staircase and the line of the Old Military Road from Altnafeadh, near the head of Glen Coe, a distance of about 6 miles rough going. The Hotel is charmingly situated, giving easy access both to Mamore and Aonach Eagach, and altogether is to be highly recommended to members as a suitable place for a small meet.

In addition to the above accommodation, there are some beds to be got near the Hotel.

I have also made arrangements with **KING'S HOUSE HOTEL, GLEN COE** (lessee, Hugh Cameron). (Telegrams, "Cameron King's House Glen Coe," have to be sent from Inveroran). This Hotel has 6 bedrooms (one without fire). The total accommodation is 11, but the Hotel has on occasion held considerably over that number. Letters should be addressed *via* Ballachulish and not *via* Inveroran.

Mr Cameron's terms are £3 a week, owing to the general rise in prices. He has driving facilities at the Hotel, at a charge of about 1s. 6d. per mile. The Hotel is approached by road either from Bridge of Orchy Station, which is 10 miles, or the more picturesque route, from Ballachulish Station, which is 12½ miles. The quality of the accommodation at the Hotel is probably too well known to members to necessitate description.

No definite statement can be made as to railway facilities at present. The trains from Edinburgh at 7 a.m. (and 4.25 p.m. Saturday only) and Glasgow at 7.25 a.m. (and 4.45 p.m. Saturday only) to Ballachulish are still running, timed to arrive there at 2.30 p.m. and 10 p.m. respectively. The steamer leaves Ballachulish at 3.30 p.m. The Bridge of Orchy service on the Fort William line is running a train leaving Glasgow at 7.13 a.m., and arriving Bridge of Orchy at 9.43 a.m. Passengers from Edinburgh leave Waverley at 4.30 a.m. for this connection.

Members will kindly make their own arrangements with the Hotels as early as possible, and nearer the time send a postcard to say when they expect to arrive, so that they may be met at the station.

Members will oblige by kindly returning the enclosed postcard to me, so that I may arrange for a special conveyance if found necessary.

Members are reminded that the Annual Subscription fell due on 1st January. The amount is 15s., and those who have not already paid will kindly oblige by remitting to MR WALTER NELSON, 135 Wellington Street, Glasgow, acting Honorary Treasurer, without delay.

Yours faithfully,

GEORGE SANG,

Hon. Secy.

Setting the record straight - Two items in the last issue of the *Journal* call for further comment.

In 'The Five Cairngorm Ridges' (p.121) there is a reference to Derek Pyper and Davie Reid starting the theme in 1960 by doing *Eagle Ridge*, *Mitre Ridge* and *Snake Ridge* in one continuous journey from Gelder to Derry over 16½ hours. On this trip, Pyper and Reid carried their full overnight gear and did not travel particularly light.

On page 230 there is a reference to the 'Brown/Patey route' on the Mustagh Tower which is a little misleading. Joe Brown and Tom Patey climbed together only on the lower part of the ridge below Camp IV. Above this, the pairing was Brown/ McNaught-Davis and Hartog/Patey. In any case the whole thing was a four man team effort with the route being selected by John Hartog before Brown or Patey had joined the enterprise. A more accurate name would be '*The British Route*.'

TECHNICAL SECTION

SCOTTISH MOUNTAIN FOOTPATHS

IN LAST year's Journal we reviewed a report on the condition of a number of popular mountain paths, published by the Countryside Commission for Scotland and written by Robert Aitken. Reference was made to a programme of management trials linked with this reconnaissance report. This three year project is now into its third year and we have received a copy of the second interim report which covers the period from March to December, 1985.

In its first year the Project was primarily concerned with the development of understanding about the ways in which paths were affected by natural processes and by useage, together with the development of techniques in repair, maintenance, construction and management.

The second year saw the practical applications of some of the findings of the first year. In spite of the discouraging weather which prevailed for so large a part of the summer a substantial programme was carried out. This included paths in Glen Coe, on Lochangar, and Ben Lomond, where a number of experimental activities were conducted. With the help of the Scottish Conservation Project volunteers large scale trial repairs were effected at Grey Mare's Tail, on The Buttermilk Burn path up the Cobbler and on to the path to Coire Lagan in Skye. The application of small teams of two or three to follow up with corrective maintenance at several sites was also tried out and lessons learned about the best means of using such resources.

As more attention is given to this subject, awareness grows of the intimidating scale of the problems arising. However, the Project is also yielding much information and ought to establish a valuable resource of informed expertise which can be tapped by those who own or manage land liable to recreational pressures. Already the Project has been consulted by the NTS, the Forestry Commission, the HIDB, by Lothian Region and by Lochaber District Council.

Wear and tear on Scottish mountain footpaths is an increasingly serious concern to us all. No-one pretends that solutions have been found but this Project represents a valuable beginning in the task of tackling the problem.

Further information about the Footpath Management Project may be had from Dr Robert Aitken, c/o CCS, 11 West Craigs Crescent, Edinburgh.

THE COUSINS HEATIN

(see page 273)

The Heatin

Cardboard wrapped round tin, bound with string. Air slots at bottom. Small lid raised on bolt for fuel (Metafuel). Small tin with lid hangs on soldered handles, with ¼" space around it.

Water boiled in a few moments for Oxo – before the days of teabags. It could be handheld on a climb.



THE TUCKETT 'INSECT-PUZZLER'

This intriguing apparatus, developed for use in The Tropics and proven to be of some protection in feverish districts may well be of interest to those who find themselves afflicted by the attentions of the Highland midge in spite of chemical protectives.

TAKE two pieces of cedar or mahogany board, $\frac{1}{8}$ of an inch in thickness, 16 inches in length, and 5 in width, and attach them endwise to one another by a hinge, or by pieces of string lacing through corresponding holes, so that they may be folded together for economy of space. At the centre of, and one inch from, the outer extremity of each board, insert very securely a female screw in brass, into which can be screwed uprights of bamboo, 18 inches in length, and about half an inch in diameter. By means of these and three light detached canes, each about 17 inches long and furnished with sockets, an arch about 34 inches in height, and of considerable strength, is formed.

Having inflated with small portable bellows an india-rubber mattress, 7 feet in length, and 26 inches in width, made in two attached sections, A and B, Fig. 1 (a cork one may be submitted, or the contrivance may be used without any mattress at all), place the united boards underneath it at 10 inches to a foot from the head-end, as in Fig. 1, and the mattress, or the weight of the body if no mattress is available, will keep the boards and arch firmly in position.

Standing across the foot of the mattress, draw over and under it a covering, made somewhat of the shape of the foot of a sock, of which the under portion in contact with the ground, and the sides and 'toes' for a height of a foot or more above the mattress when in position, are made of strong unbleached linen, whilst the upper part is formed of 'nainsook.'

Pull the bag thus constructed backwards under the mattress, and over the top of the arch (securing it to the summit of the latter by pieces of tape sewn on inside), and then, creeping feet foremost from behind through the open end into the interior, draw in the pillow, reef up from inside, by means of a tape, the open end of the bag, and, winding the slack round until the material is tightly strained, secure the centre with a bow.

Thus all access of vermin or mosquitos is absolutely cut off in every direction, and the protected person, invisible himself, but able to see those outside, can sleep in peace, or read undisturbed, either by day or by the light of a candle (placed outside on a chair or stool), which passes freely through the 'nainsook' envelope.

From the R. G. S. publication, 'Hints to Travellers.'

FIG. 1.

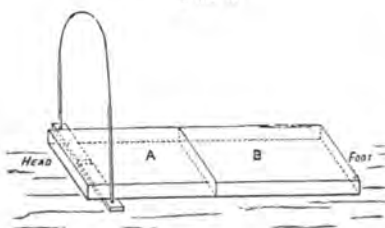
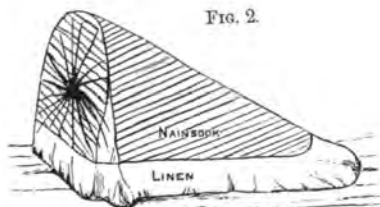


FIG. 2.



.....and why not?

SCOTTISH MOUNTAIN ACCIDENTS, 1985

In 1985 the total number of incidents remained much the same as in the year before but the number of actual casualties rose by 10% and since there were fewer rescues involving cases of illness and exposure this represents a real growth in the number of people sustaining injury. Although most of these took the form of slips and stumbles, often on paths, some involved serious falls in precipitous places. It seems that more people are venturing on to steep or difficult terrain and it cannot be emphasised too strongly that scrambling is an activity that demands great care as the consequences of a slip may well be worse than from a roped climbing fall. It is perhaps not surprising that although accidents resulting from rock climbing falls are fewer, those from regular climbing on snow and ice have increased substantially. As always there are too many accidents arising from slips on snow where either ice axe or crampons were absent or unsuccessfully applied.

Last year we commented on the increase of incidents arising from poor timing or faulty navigation. It is not always easy to separate these factors but together they were responsible for more callouts due to people being overdue or missing than ever before.

Non mountaineering callouts continue to make demands on the Mountain Rescue services and a notable rescue of a sheep in Glen Nevis involved a rope lower of 150 ft. to the victim and another 330 ft. beyond to safety. Helicopters, usually RAF and occasionally RN, were frequently used in both search and rescue. We record our thanks to the various rescue services for the valued assistance they render to those who get into difficulties. Detailed information on incidents is not always available and once again John Hinde has performed the difficult task of rounding up reports and assembling them in coherent and tabular form.

SEASON/ACTIVITY DISTRIBUTION (where known)

	<i>Summer</i>	<i>Winter</i>	<i>Total</i>
Hill walking	74	23	97
Scrambling	7	10	17
Climbing	9	18	27
Ski touring	—	1	1
Fell running	3	—	3
TOTALS	93	52	145
	64%	36%	

CONTRIBUTORY CAUSES OF SOME ACCIDENTS

Poor timing	31	Slips on snow/ice	14
Navigation	22	Glissading	1
Separation	10	Ice axe/crampons	4
Slips/stumbles	34	Avalanche	5
River crossings/spates	3	Climbing falls	
Dislodged rocks	4	on snow/ice	12
Abseiling	2	on rock	5

REGIONAL DISTRIBUTION 1985**The geographical divisions are as used for SMC District Guide Books.*

REGION	CASUALTIES (of which fatalities bracketed)				INCIDENTS Actual Other Rescues Call Outs						Non-Mountain- eering	
	Injury	Exhaust/Exposure Heat Exh./Frostbite	Illness	TOTAL	With Casualties	Cragfast	Lost	Overdue or Benighted	False Alarms	TOTAL INCIDENTS	Casualties	Incidents
Northern Highlands	8 (2)	—	1 (1)	9 (3)	9	—	1	5	1	16	1	1
Western Highlands	4	—	—	4	4	—	1	—	—	5	—	—
Ben Nevis	16 (2)	2	—	18 (2)	13	—	—	6	3	22	—	1
Glencoe	8 (2)	—	—	8 (2)	8	5	1	5	—	19	—	—
Other Central Highlands	16 (3)	—	—	16 (3)	13	—	—	4	1	18	—	2
Cairngorms	17 (4)	2	—	19 (4)	19	—	5	1	—	25	7 (3)	9
Southern Highlands	13 (1)	4	1	18 (1)	15	—	1	3	4	23	4	5
Skye	5 (1)	1	—	6 (1)	6	1	1	—	1	9	—	—
Islands	2 (1)	1	1 (1)	4 (2)	4	—	1	5	—	10	1	2
Southern Uplands	3	—	—	3	3	—	3	4	1	11	3 (3)	5
All regions 1985 Totals	92 (16)	10	3 (2)	105 (18)	94	6	14	33	11	158	16 (6)	25
1984 Totals	75 (13)	23 (7)	6 (2)	104 (22)	87	3	19	31	17	157	18 (15)	37

ACCIDENT LIST, 1985

NORTHERN HIGHLANDS

- FEBRUARY 9th – Novice climber (m19) in party of 10 ascending *Fuselage Gully*, Coire Mhic Fhearchair, Beinn Eighe. Wearing crampons, unroped on névé, slipped and immediately lost iceaxe. Fell 200 feet. Multiple severe bruising and broken hand bone. Walked down to lochan, carried, then airlifted by RAF Sea King to Raigmore Hospital. Torridon & Kinlocheww MRT 12mh.
- MARCH 28th – Hillwalker (m20) overdue near Ach nan Clach Bothy, Tongue, Sutherland.
- MARCH 31st to APRIL 1st – Solo Nordic style ski tourer (m27) killed by avalanche on An Cabar, Ben Wyvis. Buried body found by Police SAR dog. Dundonnell MRT. Casualty's dog found alive. Evacuated by RAF Sea King helicopter. 55mh.
- APRIL 27th – Party traversing Liathach in poor weather. 8 inch deep powder lying on névé, verglas on rocks and frozen turf. Casualty (m22) slipped from halfway along Am Fasarin Pinnacles and fell 400 feet down snow gully. Slight injury, but Torridon MRT members had to be airlifted by RAF to lower him for helicopter evacuation. Unroped. Crampons carried but not worn. RAF Sea King to Raigmore Hospital. 50mh.
- APRIL 28th – RAF Sea King aircraft searched for missing youth over cliffs at Dunnet Head, Thurso. Nothing found.
- MAY 28th – Hillwalkers coming off Mullach an Rathain, Liathach, found elderly man dead from natural causes in Coire Tuill Bhain. Carried down next day by Torridon MRT and SYHA volunteers. RAF helicopter used but it developed a mechanical fault. RAF Sea King. 174mh.
- MAY 29th – Girl (21) slipped descending Cul Mor via the side of a burn. Head and chest injuries. Evacuated by Dundonnell MRT and RAF helicopter. 36mh.
- MAY 30th – Couple (m30, f30) overdue on Beinn Eighe.
- JUNE 17th to 18th – Hillwalker (38) slipped on wet rock when he was descending the South side of Corrag Bhuidhe pinnacles avoiding the 'Bad Step.' Fell 200 feet down gully and died two hours later from head and chest injuries. Dundonnell MRT deployed by RAF helicopter. Casualty stretched down to Loch na Sealga and evacuated by keeper's boat and Landrover. 208mh.
- JUNE 26th – Remote hill lochan – Loch Reidh Creagain – near Ullapool. Old couple overdue from fishing trip. Dundonnell MRT alerted.
- AUGUST 8th – Mixed party of five adults went by boat to head of Loch Glencoul and walked to waterfall, Eas Chual Aluinn. Outboard motor failed and rough sea precluded rowing so they attempted to walk out. Found by Assynt MRT. 32mh.
- AUGUST 15th to 16th – Couple (m30, f27) got lost attempting to walk the inland route from Eas Chual Aluinn to Loch na Gainmhich, after having reached the waterfall by the coastal path. Found by Assynt MRT one mile south of their course and a lot higher up than they should have been. Benighted without torches. RAF Sea King also used. 64mh.
- AUGUST 19th – Hillwalker (61) tripped at Ceanachulish, Ullapool and broke her ankle. Taken to Raigmore Hospital.
- AUGUST 20th – *Maiden's Buttress*, Carnmore. Male (28) broke ankle. Helicoptered to Raigmore Hospital.
- AUGUST 27th to 28th – A'Mhaighdean and Ruadh Stac Mor. Despite heavy rain forecast, man went for a long day on the hill, and could not then re-cross rivers, having to go round to Gruinard. Dundonnell MRT, Outdoor Centre searchers, three SARDA dogs, RAF helicopter. 60mh.
- SEPTEMBER 24th – Quinag. Young woman with broken leg airlifted to Raigmore Hospital by RAF Sea King.

WESTERN HIGHLANDS

- FEBRUARY 16th - Male (19) one of a party on Carn Eighe, Glen Affric slipped and fell 150 feet bruising his legs and body. Airlifted to Raigmore Hospital by RAF Sea King.
- MARCH 27th - Hillwalker (m20) in party of ten slipped on wet snow and fell 150 feet, causing bruising and broken wrist. Faochag, Glenshiel. Kintail MRT alerted.
- JULY 23rd - Gleann Camgharaidh, Loch Arkaig. Girl (16) slipped on wet grass, sustaining bruising when she fell 20 feet. Conveyed from hill by companions and taken to Belford Hospital by ambulance.
- SEPTEMBER 11th - Path above Falls of Glomach. Hillwalker (f19) slipped and tore an ankle ligament. Kintail MRT on standby. RAF helicopter evacuation. (Sea King) to Raigmore Hospital.
- DECEMBER 22nd to 23rd - Four men climbed *The Great Ridge*, Garbh Bheinn of Ardgour. They became lost and stuck on a buttress on the wrong side of the mountain. They eventually got themselves off and were picked up by an RAF Sea King from Lossiemouth. Lochaber MRT. 24mh.

BEN NEVIS

- JANUARY 9th - After climbing *Point 5 Gully* a pair descended Coire Leis. Man (21) very tired, stumbled and fell down last 400 feet of *Abseil Posts* route. Helped by companion to Coire Leis Shelter. Pelvic injury. Flown out by RAF Wessex. Lochaber MRT. 31mh.
- JANUARY 27th - Two men (27, 19) killed by a channelled windslab avalanche in *Red Burn Gully*. They had been reported missing by a third man who had turned back. Another walker had reported finding a rucksack with a torn strap at the foot of avalanche debris. One body found seven feet down by SARDA dog. Second body (buried four feet down) found by probing. Lochaber MRT. RAF Sea King. RAF Kinloss MRT. 125mh.
- FEBRUARY 12th - 2nd pitch of *Jubilee Climb* on The Trident. Leader fell and pulled off second when belay failed. Fall arrested after 100 feet by the rope of a party below them. Second sustained femur fracture, and leader cuts and bruises. Four people were hanging on one peg and a 'manky' chock. Casualty lowered 200 feet and then evacuated by RAF Wessex helicopter to Belford Hospital. Lochaber MRT. 10mh.
- FEBRUARY 14th - Leader fell off 1st ice pitch on *Cresta* and suffered minor injuries. Second was pulled off his belay and sustained a broken leg (age 22). Lochaber MRT stretcher carry and RAF Wessex airlift. 7mh.
- FEBRUARY 16th to 18th - Six people were reported missing on Saturday. Two pairs turned up next day; one pair at CIC Hut and one pair near *Five Finger Gully*. On Monday the last pair (m28, m35) who had started on *Route Major* were persuaded to abseil from near *Cresta* on Brenva Face. Searches by Lochaber MRT, RAF Kinloss MRT, SARDA, and RAF Wessex helicopter consumed 220 manhours. The pair had spent two nights out, had seen dogs, men and helicopter but, 'did not think they were looking for us.' They had said nothing to two climbers who soloed past them on Sunday.
- FEBRUARY 22nd - Party of five climbing *No. 4 Gully*. Three completed it but two fell when a small slab avalanched from just below the cornice. They stopped at Lochan Coire na Ciste; one with a broken leg (m31). The other had a broken arm, broken ribs and cuts but walked down (m36). Lochaber MRT and RAF Wessex airlift. 42mh.
- FEBRUARY 22nd to 23rd - Three pairs of climbers benighted on Ben Nevis; One pair (f26, 26 +) snowholed on Carn Dearg NW after climbing *North Castle Gully*; one pair benighted on *Orion Face*; one pair did *Zero Gully* and *Green Gully*. Lochaber MRT and RAF Wessex. 15mh.
- FEBRUARY 28th - After climbing *Green Gully* pair attempted to descend Coire Leis, but went beyond *Abseil Posts* to the rise to Carn Mor Dearg. Man (26) stumbled and fell 200 feet down snow slope, braking somewhat with ice-axe but hitting a large boulder, breaking his leg. Airlifted by RAF Sea King to Belford Hospital. Lochaber MRT. 18mh.

- MARCH 16th – Second man (26) had his shoulder dislocated when stopping a leader fall of 100 feet at the top of *South Gully*, Creag Coire na Ciste. (Waist belay with rope round arm). Leader unhurt. Lochaber MRT roped down to casualty and pulled him to top. Walked down below cloud and airlifted by RAF Wessex. 28mh.
- MARCH 17th – Climbing an ice wall adjacent to Abseil Posts, (m20) fell 200 feet and fractured knee. RAF Wessex and Lochaber MRT. 3mh.
- MARCH 23rd to 24th – Party of three benighted at top of *Glover's Chimney* after previously climbing *Garadh Gully*. Radioed from CIC Hut next morning. Lochaber MRT and RAF Wessex, SARDA. 6mh.
- APRIL 10th – Man (32) soloed *No. 2 Gully* and was admiring the view from the top when he fell through the cornice 700 feet to the bottom. Fracture of ankle. Lochaber MRT. RAF Sea King to Belford Hospital. 10mh.
- MAY 14th – Five CB radio fanatics on Ben Nevis during a 48 hour sponsored transmission. No signals heard. All five were found in tents at Halfway Lochan where no signals from any side of the mountain would reach them! SARDA and Lochaber MRT. 13mh.
- MAY 29th – Tourist track. False alarm. Family separated and gave tired girl (12) to strange woman who took her to wrong finish point. SARDA and Lochaber MRT. 10mh.
- JUNE 2nd – *Coronation Gully*. Man fell and injured ankle. His companion assisted him to CIC Hut and then to forest track. Police Land Rover to Belford Hospital.
- JUNE 4th – Couple (early 20s) overdue in bad weather. Found by Lochaber MRT in Nevis Summit refuge. 30mh.
- JUNE 12th – Walker (f50) Glen Nevis. Broken ankle. Airlift by RAF Wessex to Belford Hospital.
- JULY 5th – False alarm. Ben Nevis search for female (21) who had been in Fort William all night after climbing Nevis on July 4th. SARDA and Lochaber MRT. 90mh.
- SEPTEMBER 4th – Climbers on *Observatory Ridge* saw a climber on *Tower Ridge* in orange cagoule. From higher up they saw an orange object down in *Observatory Gully*, and raised alarm. Two Lochaber MRT members found part of an orange polythene bag. 8mh.
- SEPTEMBER 7th – Ben Nevis Race competitor twisted ankle at 4,000 feet. Stretchered by Lochaber MRT to below cloud at 3,000 feet and then airlifted by RAF Sea King to Belford Hospital. 12mh.
- OCTOBER 28th to 29th – Couple (m26, f?) benighted on *Tower Ridge*. Lochaber MRT. 12mh.
- DECEMBER 29th to 30th – Three men (22, 20, 18) benighted on *Tower Ridge* and failed to complete it. Lochaber MRT. 10mh.

GLENCOE

- JANUARY 25th – Search for three men overdue on Aonach Eagach by RAF Sea King.
- FEBRUARY 10th – Lost Valley rescue. Glencoe MRT.
- FEBRUARY 13th to 15th – Sgòr nam Fiannaich. Well-equipped walker (f24) left valley with dog, ostensibly to go to bealach between Pap of Glencoe and Aonach Eagach, but she must have decided to go further. Dog returned alone. Extensive searches by Glencoe, Kinloss, Leuchars & Lochaber MRT's. Found and evacuated by RAF Wessex helicopter, dead, on 3rd day. She had fallen from the 'path' – hard frozen with loose pebbles – 200 feet in to *Clachaig Gully* near the top. SARDA and RAF Sea King used. 1,450mh.
- FEBRUARY 17th – Good weather. Climber (26) unroped, but with other members of his party, traversing a snow slope next to *Church Door Buttress*, and close to the top of Bidean nam Bian, tripped; he slid 500 feet and then fell 150 feet over a buttress. Killed outright he was carried down on a stretcher by Glencoe MRT. 45mh.
- FEBRUARY 17th – Am Bodach, Glencoe. Crossing Aonach Eagach W to E. Man (35) tripped over crampons on The Chancellor and fell 60 feet. Cuts, facial and body. Airlifted out by RAF helicopter with two colleagues. Glencoe MRT. 16mh.
- FEBRUARY 25th to 26th – Hillwalker (37) benighted on N slopes of An t-Sron, Bidean nam Bian. Glencoe MRT and RAF helicopter assembled, but he walked off unaided. 9mh.

- MARCH 25th – Alone, descending snow steps of a previous party, male (35) got on to steep, dangerous ground, and went back up. As it got dark he was heard shouting for help. 'Nondescript' slopes on NW of Gearr Aonach above Coire an Lochan burn. Night rescue by RAF Wessex and GMRT. 50mh.
- MARCH 27th to 28th – Completely unequipped except for what she wore, student (21), alone started to climb a gully on S side of Lost Valley and got cragfast on a ledge because of frozen snow. A vain search that night by people from the same college, who had not told the police, was followed by a successful search and rescue by Glencoe MRT. She had been stuck for about 15 or 16 hours. 36mh.
- APRIL 21st – Unroped climber (24) slipped on ice when ascending a gully leading to ridge of Beinn Fhada (NW face). Fell 250 feet suffering cuts and broken jaw but he got down aided by a companion. RAF Wessex and Glencoe MRT assembled.
- MAY 9th – Father and son (45, 17), inexperienced and ill-equipped, intended to climb Pap of Glencoe with others, but separated from main party and got on to Sgurr nam Fiannaidh. Benighted. Found own way back, but Glencoe MRT and RAF Wessex had assembled. 20mh.
- MAY 11th and 12th – Poorly-equipped pair went up Aonach Dubh from E and tried to get down N face. Female (17) got cragfast first; male (20) went 200 feet further down, going for help, but got cragfast as it got dark. He alerted motorists below by using his camera flash. Both brought down by Glencoe MRT.
- JUNE 15th – Leader (m) fell 50 feet climbing *Rowan Tree Wall* on the E face, Aonach Dubh. He was held on the rope by his father belaying, but crashed into the rock feet first during the fall, breaking a leg. Stretcher carry by Glencoe MRT and evacuation by RAF Wessex to Ninewells Hospital, Dundee. 15mh.
- AUGUST 11th to 12th – NE corrie of Stob an Fhuarain, eastern top of Sgor na h-Ulaidh. Male (25) went on alone when club party stopped to eat. Did not return. He had slipped on steep, wet grass trying to recover his rucksack which had rolled down. Fell 100 feet into burn in rocky ravine – broken arm and pelvis, also cuts. Glencoe MRT searched vainly the first night. He was found by sweep search next morning and evacuated by RAF helicopter. Glencoe MRT, SARDA. 96mh. A good example of a compound accident.
- SEPTEMBER 7th to 8th – Two ridge-walkers, off the beaten track in wind and rain, separated in mist. Man (37) got back and raised alarm. Negative search made that night. The other man (30) was found next morning walking off Bidean nam Bian into Glen Etive. Glencoe MRT and RAF Sea King. 58mh.
- OCTOBER 13th – Missing hillwalker. Glencoe. Walked off. RAF Wessex.
- NOVEMBER 17th – Married couple (both 38) climbing a steep face near the summit of Aonach Dubh. He dislodged a rock which struck his wife on the back. Evacuated by RAF helicopter. Detained overnight but injuries were slight. Glencoe MRT. 35mh.
- NOVEMBER 24th – All male school party of eight (40, 30, 24, 18, 16, 15, 15, 15) traversing Aonach Eagach. E to W in icy conditions without crampons. Overtaken by darkness just W of Meall Dearg. Ice had caused delay. Decided to stay put. Their distress torch flashes were seen and they were contacted by loud hailer. Airlifted that same evening by RAF helicopter. Glencoe MRT. 54mh.
- DECEMBER 26th – Glissader (m39) on south side of Stob Coire nan Lochan fell in Lost Valley. Head injuries. Glencoe MRT. 25mh.
- DECEMBER (m28) and (f24) cragfast in a deep gully on Buachaille Etive Mor due to darkness, exhaustion and bad weather. Glencoe MRT. RAF helicopter. 30mh.

OTHER CENTRAL HIGHLANDS

- JANUARY 1st – Ben Starav, Glen Etive. W summit. Male (25) walker slipped; ankle injuries. Airlifted by RAF Wessex. Glencoe MRT.
- FEBRUARY 10th – *Raeburn's Gully*, Creag Meagaidh. Fallen climber with internal injuries. RAF Kinloss MRT. RAF Sea King to Raigmore Hospital.

- FEBRUARY 10th – Pair descending Aonach Beag found 10 foot icefall. Both soloed it several times. On fourth ascent one man (40) fell 5 feet and broke his leg. Difficult rescue as RAF Wessex could not operate due to wind and spindrift and took Lochaber MRT back to Fort William. Eventually team located him on foot and carried him down. Casualty in good condition after 7 hours due to excellent equipment. 210 mh.
- FEBRUARY 17th – Stob a'Choire Odhar, Black Mount. Poorly equipped party of three reached summit in good weather and tried to descend steep ice and snow. Casualty (42) without crampons or iceaxe, fell 20 feet badly gashing a thigh on a sharp rock. Messenger got lost when returning to site with MRT's. Midnight stretcher evacuation. Dumbarton and Oban Police MRTs.
- FEBRUARY 22nd to 23rd – Benightment. Pair on Creag Meagaidh. One fell through huge cornice and took 4 hours to tunnel back out. Lochaber MRT. RAF Sea King.
- FEBRUARY 22nd to 23rd – Benightment. Trio climbed *The Sash*, Creag Meagaidh. Going to The Window one fell unroped through a cornice. He stopped by self-arrest, then down climbed and abseiled off. He said it was *Cinderella* but may have been nearer to The Window. Companions had stayed on the plateau. Lochaber MRT. RAF Sea King.
- MARCH 4th – In darkness and whiteout two men failed to find The Window, Creag Meagaidh after climbing *Staghorn Direct*. They spent the night out and descended unaided next day. SARDA, Lochaber MRT. 10mh.
- MARCH 21st – An Garbhanach, Mamores. Male hillwalker slipped and sustained head injuries. RAF Wessex evacuation to Belford Hospital.
- APRIL 7th – Woman hillwalker stranded. Staoineag Bothy (Loch Treig) with stiffened knees. Carried to Luib Eilt. Lochaber MRT. 51mh.
- APRIL 7th – False alarm. Red flare seen from road in Glen Spean. Attributed to people skylarking at Bohuntine in Glen Roy. Lochaber MRT. 1mh. This was the time of the SMC Easter Meet at Glenspean Lodge Hotel, but any connection has been denied!
- MAY 1st – Climber found dead at foot of Onich Slabs. Age 24. She had asked to be left to lunch alone at top of slabs, while instructor and group had left. When instructor returned with another group for the afternoon session he found her. It would appear that she intended to abseil, as her seat harness and Figure 8 descendeur were attached to rope. Rope either not attached to belay, or knot may have slipped when she started to descend. Police and Ambulance Service. 3mh.
- JULY 20th – Creag Dubh, Newtonmore. Climber (m20) injured by 80 foot fall when rescuing a cragfast boy (10) who also fell. Evacuation by RAF Sea King. Cairngorm MRT. SARDA. 44mh.
- AUGUST 10th – Mamore Forest. Traversing narrow ridge from An Gearanach a mountain student (one of a party accompanied by an instructor) fell 400 feet down E side. Fatal. Lochaber MRT, RAF MRT, Outward Bound Loch Eil. 98mh.
- OCTOBER 12th to 13th – Aonach Mòr of Stob Gabhar, Black Mount. Inexperienced hillwalker (23) separated from his companion. When descending out of mist, ground got too steep so he went back up and camped as he had food, tent and sleeping bag. Found by helicopter next day. Glencoe MRT. 70mh.
- NOVEMBER 2nd – RAF Wessex airlifted three Dutch Marines from Meall nan Eun, Glen Etive to Fort William. 1 exposure, 2 leg injuries.
- NOVEMBER 18th to 19th – Party of nine walkers descending Lairig Leacach path 1 km above Loch Treig. Girl (18) slipped crossing a very shallow narrow burn. Severe lower leg bruising and torn ligaments in knee. Party carried her to a bivouac site. Next day splinted leg with foam mattress and 'piggy-backed' her to Corroir Station on Rannoch Moor, 15 miles in all.
- NOVEMBER 21st – Hillwalker (f40s) stumbled on rough ground close to Loch Pattack (Ben Alder area) breaking a tibia/fibula. Cairngorm MRT drove a Landrover right up to her – the loch having a firm base and being fairly shallow! 12mh.
- DECEMBER 29th to April 7th – Glen Liver, Loch Etive. Hillwalker (m50) went missing in the Dalmally area and a four day intensive search was organised. He was found next April by a shepherd completely off course N of Beinn a' Chochuill. Oban and Dumbarton Police, RAF Kinloss and Leuchars MRTs. RAF and RN helicopters. 688mh.

CAIRNGORMS

FEBRUARY 10th – Corrie Kilbo, Driesh, Glen Clova. Boy, early teens, very poorly equipped, slipped on snow and slid 200 feet. Bruising, shock, concussion, and got very cold. Escorted down by Tayside MRT on exercise. 2mh.

FEBRUARY 10th – Fall in *The Vent*, Coire an Lochain.

FEBRUARY 18th to 19th – Group of three lost in area of Jean's Hut and Sinclair Hut. They had good gear but left it in Jean's Hut! RAF Sea King. Cairngorm MRT and Glenmore Lodge. 6mh.

MARCH 5th – (m25) *The Vent*, Coire an Lochain. Hit by rock-fall and sustained head injury. Taken from Jean's Hut to Aberdeen Royal Infirmary by RAF Sea King helicopter. He was wearing a helmet re-inforced with DIY padding.

MARCH 30th to 31st – Against police advice, an ill-equipped and poorly prepared pair (f21, m19) got lost going through Lairig Ghru S to N and by good fortune found Garbh Coire Bothy occupied (although thinking it was Sinclair Hut). Found by Braemar MRT and airlifted by RAF Sea King to Glenmore Lodge. Also involved were Grampian Police and Cairngorm MRT. 200mh.

APRIL 5th – Party of three descending Fiacail Coire an t-Sneachda in good weather. Patches of hard *névé* but they decided there was no need for iceaxes. Two slipped: girl (17) killed when she struck boulders (head injuries). Man (21) hip injury. Glenmore Lodge MRT and RAF Sea King. 10mh.

APRIL 24th – Party of eight scrambling down Angel's Ridge from Angel's Peak to Garbh Coire Bothy. Man (20) was hit by a rock dislodged by a colleague, and fell 100 feet down slabs. Crushed lumbar spine and severe bruising. Airlift by RAF Wessex to Raigmore Hospital. Grampian Police and Braemar MRT. 9mh.

APRIL 28th – Shank of Drumfollow, Driesh, Glen Clova. Hillwalker (59) slipped on fresh, very wet snow on Kilbo Path breaking her ankle. Improvised stretcher carry, Tayside MRT, Police, Ambulance. 18mh.

JUNE 1st – Walker (48) turned her ankle on a rough path from Bachnagairn to Car Park, Glen Doll. Tayside Police. 16mh.

JUNE 7th to 8th – Two hillwalkers (f52, f20) intended to walk from Glen Tromie to Blair Atholl, probably by the Minigaig. Next day they were found in Glen Tilt by a RAF Wessex helicopter, ten miles E of intended route. They had got lost in heavy snow showers. Unharmed, having found a bothy. They may have somehow got to the head of Tarf and followed it down into Tilt. Tayside and Police MRTs. 47mh.

JUNE 12th – Firmounth Road, Forest of Birse. An 'Award' group of twelve schoolboys walking from Tarfside to Aboyne. On Tampie, a hill of 723 metres, two (16, 16) got separated as they were unable to keep up with the others. Shouting did not avail because of headwind. When hopelessly lost the two left their rucksacks behind to make better time walking! No map or compass. Found by rescuers on South Deeside Road, Aboyne. Aberdeen, Braemar, Grampian and Tayside Police MRTs and RAF Wessex. 112mh.

JUNE 19th (presumed) – Man (22) wearing 'no grip' shoes found dead at the bottom of Craigellachie Crag, Aviemore on June 22nd. He had been killed outright by a 100 foot fall. Possibly slipped on steep, wet grass when bird watching. Found by Police dogs. Short stretcher lower and carry. Cairngorm MRT. 8mh.

AUGUST 15th – Cliff fall at Rosehearty. Casualty by RAF Sea King to Aberdeen Royal Infirmary.

AUGUST 25th – Shank of Drumfollow, Glen Clova. Hillwalker (56) broke her ankle. Simple stumble on rocky path. Stretchered up to top of Kilbo path and then airlifted by RAF Sea King. Taypol SARUs and Tayside MRT. 64mh.

AUGUST 31st to SEPTEMBER 1st – Heavy rain, NE wind. Party of three lost in mist on Ben Macdhui descended to head of Loch Avon instead of Linn of Dee. Man (55) exhausted but carried on to foot of loch, where they met two walkers encamped. Man put into tent and two sons went to Derry Lodge for help. Airlifted out by RAF Wessex. Braemar and Grampian Police MRTs. 6mh.

SEPTEMBER 2nd 1984 – Fatality. Man descending from Devil's Point to Corrouh Bothy.

- SEPTEMBER 1st to 2nd – Man (63) in a very poorly equipped party of five crossing Lairig Ghru S to N in bad weather collapsed from exhaustion/exposure at Pools of Dee. Two younger men went on for aid. Cairngorm MRT helped casualty to above Sinclair Hut, and thence by Terri-Trac. Revived at base by hot bath/warm room treatment under medical supervision. SARDA, RAF Sea King. 135mh.
- SEPTEMBER 15th – Abseiling. Craig a Barns, Dunkeld. Female (20) sustained elbow and ankle injuries. Evacuated to Bridge of Earn Hospital.
- OCTOBER 5th to 6th – Cairngorm MRT and SARDA deployed small search parties in Lairig Ghru and Glen Einich for Services party of seven, and school party of 23, both overdue. Turned up OK. 60mh.
- OCTOBER 12th – *Wriggle*, Polney Crag, Dunkeld. Climber (m29) being top-roped fell 10 feet and broke leg. Evacuated to Bridge of Earn Hospital by Ambulance Service and other climbers.
- OCTOBER 20th – Aberdeen MRT exercise. Coire an Lochain Uaine, Derry Cairngorm. *Poacher's Gully* casualty evacuation. Team member (m21) got fractured skull from a boulder dislodged by colleague. No helmet.
- OCTOBER 24th – Walker (55) left Lecht Ski Centre to go through hills to Glenmore Car Park, carrying nothing except clothes he wore. He looked at a road map then left it in the car! Went by Inchroary to two miles beyond Faindouran, then returned to Faindouran Lodge when it got dark. Alarmed by mice in bothy so he walked E down the Avon thinking it led to Nethbridge. Found by Grampian Police and Braemar MRTs E of Inchroary. 7mh.
- OCTOBER 26th – Man (62) cragfast at Reekie Linn, Glen Isla. Suffered cuts. Tayside MRTs rescued him in darkness. 7mh.
- DECEMBER 29th – *'B' Gully*, Corrie Fee, Glen Doll. Solo ice climber (20) was seen to fall from final pitch. Killed outright from head injuries. No helmet. Tayside Police and Civilian MRTs. 44mh.
- DECEMBER 31st – Climber (24) killed by windslab avalanche on headwall of Coire Cas, either triggered by himself or by other climbers. He had gone up alone to retrieve an ice-hammer which he had lost the previous day when glissading down the headwall. Asphyxia. Found by search dogs.

SOUTHERN HIGHLANDS

- JANUARY – Ben Lomond area. Man (33) suffered frostbite walking through hills. Nine toes amputated.
- JANUARY 27th – Party of four completed ice climb in Coire Daimh of Beinn Udlaigh, Tyndrum. When walking at the top of the corrie in deep snow, one of them, an experienced climber (38), was avalanched 250 feet over a buttress, injuring his ankle. Stretchered off. Oban Police MRT. 20mh.
- JANUARY 31st – Flashing lights seen on the Campsie Fells. Searchers learned they were from a landowner's shooting party. False alarm. Lomond MRT.
- MARCH 20th – Solo climber (19) on E face of Meall nan Tarmachan fell 20 feet on wet rock, sustaining severe bruising. Stretchered off and evacuated by RAF Wessex. Tayside MRT on standby. Killin MRT. 7mh.
- MARCH 20th – Walker missing on Campsie Fells who turned up. Lomond MRT and Central Police assembled. 16mh.
- APRIL 13th to 14th – Cnoc Coinnich, Loch Long. Party of five overdue. RAF Wessex. Arrochar MRT.
- APRIL 20th – False alarm. Red flare seen on Campsie Fells. After a search another flare was seen in another area, so a hoax was assumed. Lomond MRT. 45mh.
- MAY 5th – One of a party of three on a sponsored walk descending the Tourist Path on Ben Lomond, a girl (10) who was very poorly equipped, fell near summit fracturing her skull and suffering exhaustion/exposure. First aid given by LMRT member on the hill by chance. Evacuation by RAF Wessex. Lomond MRT, Central Police. 64mh.

- MAY 15th – Loch Gaineamhach, near Ford (Loch Awe). Organised school party crossing a river. Girl (14) landed badly and fractured a tibia and fibula. Stretchered for two miles to a forestry road. Oban Police. 21mh.
- MAY 26th – Ben Lomond sponsored hill race. Runner (early 20s) stumbled when descending, breaking tibia and fibula. Lomond MRT. 34mh.
- MAY 30th – Oban Police and RAF Wessex searched Ben Lui. Red flares seen. Well intentioned false alarm.
- JUNE 16th – *non-mountaineering*. Finnich Glen, near Drymen. Dog fell 20 to 30 feet into Finnich Glen and was trapped. Rescued by Lomond MRT. An *English* springer spaniel! 8mh.
- JUNE 25th – Male walker slipped on The Brack, Loch Long. Fractured skull and ribs. Evacuated by RAF Wessex to Glasgow. Dumbarton Police MRT.
- JULY 14th – Four girls (1 with ankle injury, 3 with exposure) airlifted to Stirling by RAF Wessex.
- JULY 14th – Male with heart attack lifted from West Lomond of Fife to Kirkcaldy by RAF Wessex.
- JULY 27th – Trossachs, Callander. Two missing Dutch girls turned up safe before SARDA dogs arrived. Killin MRT.
- AUGUST 4th – Male with injured ankle flown from West Lomond of Fife to Kirkcaldy by RAF Wessex.
- AUGUST 11th – Male fell descending Ben Oss, Crianlarich. Head injuries. Airlifted by RAF Wessex to Southern General Hospital, Glasgow.
- AUGUST 27th to 28th – Party of six females (40, 17, 16, 16, 16, 15) planned to walk from Rowardennan YH to Loch Ard YH by Ben Lomond. Ended up on wrong side of river which they could not cross. Retraced steps and got lost and benighted. Found by Lomond MRT. 312mh.
- AUGUST 28th – Female broke ankle. Airlifted from just above Visitor Centre, Ben Lawers to Perth by RAF Wessex.
- SEPTEMBER 23rd to 24th – Searches of Ben Venue (Bealach nam Bo) by Lomond and Killin MRTs when residents at Loch Katrine reported lights on the hill. Two walkers next day said there was no problem. 94mh.
- NOVEMBER 3rd – *Carlin Meggie Pinnacle*, Bishop Hill, Lomonds of Fife. Male fell when soloing. Head and hip injuries. Flown by RAF Wessex to Kirkcaldy.
- DECEMBER 7th – Four out of eight walkers on Ben Lawers fell down a snow slope. Minor injuries. Helped down by companions. Tayside Police and MRT called out.
- DECEMBER 30th – Man (50) slipped on ice descending E face of Ben Vorlich with three companions, hitting his head on the ground. He became sick, dizzy and faint, then collapsed and died of a heart attack. Stretchered down by Central Scotland Police MRT.

SKYE

- APRIL 6th – Bruach na Frithe. Male (43). Fallen climber flown to Raigmore Hospital by RAF Sea King with internal and arm injuries.
- APRIL 7th – Scree runner (m36) descending from Bealach a' Bhasteir into Lota Corrie was seen to fall 300 to 500 feet in good weather. Chest and head injuries. Evacuated by RAF Sea King. Skye MRT and Police. 27mh.
- MAY 25th – NE face of Sgurr nan Gilleann. Man (29) climbing alone in strong wind and heavy rain. Probably traversing from summit towards 4th pinnacle of *Pinnacle Ridge*. Either slipped on wet rock, blown off, or rock came away. Fatal. Evacuation by RAF Wessex. Police and Skye MRT. 115mh.
- MAY 27th – Woman (72) walked alone from Sligachan to foot of Loch Coruisk. No boat available. Suffering from a degree of heat exhaustion she was helped across The Bad Step by three other walkers who took her to Camasunary Lodge. Brought out by Land Rover. Northern Constabulary. 3mh.

- MAY 28th to 29th – Attempt to 'Do the Dubhs' from Glenbrittle abandoned in falling snow and strong wind when two men (40, 31) went down to Coruisk Hut for the night, after getting lost. Walked out to Sligachan. RAF Sea King. Skye MRT. 15mh.
- JUNE 4th – The Storr Cliffs. Two students (m) cragfast in a gully up which they were scrambling. Stopped by loose rock 50 feet below the top. Lowered down the crag by Skye MRT and Police. 55mh.
- JUNE 20th – Female walker (65) near Tobar na Curra at The Quiraing accompanied by her husband, stumbled on a path and fell 30 feet down grass, injuring her legs and back. Stretchered off by Skye MRT and Police, helped by Ambulance Service. 23mh.
- AUGUST 4th to 5th – Student (17) chipped a bone in her foot. She stumbled over a rock when descending steep grass and boulders on the coastal route from Glenbrittle to Coruisk south of Gars-bheinn. After strapping, continued to Coruisk and camped; but swelling precluded further walking. Extricated by Skye MRT using a boat from Elgol. 16mh.
- SEPTEMBER 4th – Well-intentioned false alarm. Coire Bhasteir. RAF Wessex helicopter.

ISLANDS

- APRIL 7th to 8th – Three walkers (m27, m26, f24) went off course, intending to walk from Glen Sannox to Glen Rosa, Arran. Woman exhausted. Benighted. Found by Arran MRT on north side of Suide Fhearghas. 100mh.
- APRIL 9th – Asthmatic lad (16) separated from three other boys halfway up Goat Fell, Arran, in thick mist. Arran MRT called out to search. Boy found safe in Lamash. 22mh.
- APRIL 12th – Party of three (f54, f23, m20) lost on summit of Goat Fell, Arran. Heavy cloud, rain and sleet. Descended dangerous W side of mountain towards Rosa Slabs. Older woman fell 80 feet and then 20 feet into a gorge. Multiple injuries. Extricated from gorge by Arran MRT and evacuated by RN helicopter from HMS Gannet. Died after rescue. 68mh.
- APRIL 17th to 18th – Rough cyclist (74) intended to go from Lochbuie to Carsaig, Isle of Mull, along the rough coastal path and return same day. Failed to take local advice about the terrain; found it heavy going and was benighted. Found by RAF helicopter following afternoon still walking with bike. Refused help. Hungry but OK. Oban Police MRT. 13mh.
- JUNE 12th – Ill-equipped walker (31) went on, after his wife had turned back, to Goat Fell summit, Arran, and got lost. Arran MRT and Strathclyde Police found him descending the correct path but long overdue.
- JULY 8th to 9th – Search on 9th by RN helicopter from Prestwick for two girls missing on Jura for 24 hours. Found safe and well.
- JULY 29th – Man fell down cliff on South Arran. Airlifted to Crosshouse by RN helicopter from Prestwick.
- SEPTEMBER 29th – Poorly equipped. Walker (46) without map and compass, separated from his companion, getting lost and overdue on the Goat Fell Path, Isle of Arran. Misty. Arran MRT. 8mh.
- OCTOBER 3rd – Poorly equipped. Male (52) and female separated on Goat Fell; he to go to summit and she to wait for him. He was seen on summit by other walkers and told them he would wait till mist cleared and then try and find his companion. Police were told and found the woman. MRT were called out before the man 'phoned to say the woman was missing! No compass or map. 4mh.
- OCTOBER 7th to 8th – Ridge between Mullach Buidhe and Cioch na h-Oighe, Arran. One of a pair of walkers (m45) died of a heart attack. Stretchered off by Arran MRT. Helicopter could not locate the incident because of dark and cloud. 110mh.

SOUTHERN UPLANDS

JANUARY 14th – Kirriereoch Hill, Glen Trool. Missing person turned up before search. SARDA, Galloway S & R Team.

JANUARY 27th – Experienced, well-equipped climber (37) leading ice climb on Grey Mare's Tail Waterfall, Moffat. At 120 feet up, with his 2nd man belayed 15 feet below him, the ice gave way and he fell to the bottom; the 2nd only managing to slow him down somewhat. Arm and face bruising, broken nose. The ice had been perfect the day before, but on 27th was beginning to thaw with water behind it. Moffat Hill Rescue Group and Police. 8mh.

FEBRUARY 10th to 11th – Four missing walkers in The Cheviots. Taken by RAF Sea King to Newcastle.

MARCH 2nd – Winterhope, Lockerbie. Two girls, unable to use compass, lost in mist. Walked out. SARDA (South Scotland), Moffat Hill S & R Team. 18mh.

MAY 24th – Four girls (16, 16, 15, 15) lost on Minch Moor, Innerleithen. Found by dog handler and walked off. Tweed Valley MRT, SARDA and Police. 98mh.

MAY 29th – Search by RAF Sea King for two missing walkers. They walked off.

JULY 15th – Man over cliff two miles N of Berwick. Taken to Edinburgh by RAF Boulmer Sea King.

SEPTEMBER 1st – Hillwalker evacuated from the Cheviots to Kelso. RAF Boulmer Sea King.

OCTOBER 6th – Moffat. SARDA stand-by for two overdue fell-runners who turned up safe after getting lost.

OCTOBER 7th – Minch Moor. Overdue hillwalker turned up safe. Tweed Valley MRT, SARDA and Police. 9mh.

OCTOBER 16th to 17th – False alarm. Culsharg, Merrick. Three boys camping heard falling stones and what they thought were cries for help. Nothing found despite intensive search. Noises could have been caused by goats. Galloway S & R Group, Police, SARDA. 76mh.

IN MEMORIAM

WILLIAM H. DINSMORE

WILLIAM DINSMORE died on 12th September, 1985 in his 78th year.

He joined the Scottish Mountaineering Club in 1930 graduating from the Junior Mountaineering Club of Scotland of which he was secretary for some time. In that capacity he represented the club at the 21st anniversary dinner of the Ladies Scottish Climbing Club at Ballachulish Hotel on Saturday, 30th March, 1929 and where his dinner companion was Margy Wilson, then the youngest member of the Ladies' Club, and who, in 1936 was to become his wife for 49 years.

On the day after that dinner with the late William T. Forsyth, he climbed Nevis by *Gardylloo Gully*. At the top they found an impenetrable cornice and after each had an attempt at overcoming, one came off and took the other with him. The story of that miraculous fall is told in the late W. Kersley Holmes' little book 'Tramping the Scottish Hills.' The only mishap in the great slide was that they lost their ice-axes. They returned when the snows had melted and found them! As they trudged towards Fort William they saw the light of the Inglis Clark Hut and made their way to it. They were the Hut's first visitors (unofficial). Almost every weekend W.H.D. was climbing in Glencoe. He led the Crowberry when that was quite a feat. Summers in Skye, then marriage, two sons and a war.

After that he turned to another love - the sea. It was easier to take a wife and two small boys sailing than climbing and it is only a few years ago that with the family married, the yacht 'Rozel' became too heavy for two elderly people and they reluctantly retired from the sea. But there were still the rivers, (he was a keen angler), the golf course and the garden. The hills were never forgotten and they look just as beautiful and fascinating from the sea as from the tops.

A Fellow of the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors, he was for many years Senior Partner of Hugh A. Low & Usherwood, Chartered Quantity Surveyors, Glasgow. He is survived by his wife and two sons.

J.W.D.

MIKE GEDDES

MIKE GEDDES had a wonderful enthusiasm for Scottish mountaineering in all its forms and in all weathers. Educated at Daniel Stewart's in Edinburgh he had done all the Munros and tops within a few months of leaving school, at that time the youngest person ever to complete. In 1969 he went to Cambridge University and it was from there that he accomplished the prodigious feats of both hitch-hiking and ice climbing that made his name as one of the most talented ice climbers of his generation. As one only a little older I can well remember fumbling my way with a single straight axe up moderately angled ice and finding it *desperate*, while regarding with total awe the unrepeatable and, to us, impossible routes of Marshall, Smith *et al.* Mike had the imagination to think creatively, and the skill and courage to use tools, some home-improved. With what would now be regarded as quite primitive equipment he managed, on a CUMC meet in 1971, to repeat *Point Five* and *Gardylloo Buttress* and put up the new *Hadrian's Wall Direct*. With Alan Rouse he established a partnership filled with irrepressible and irreverent youth that did a very fast repeat ascent of *Orion Face Direct* in 1972.

There was a winter weekend in 1972 when Mike and Alan hitched from Cambridge to Edinburgh to join us on a trip to Creag Meaghaidh. I did not know Mike very well at the time but when, setting out from Aberarder about midnight, I managed to lose a glove in the wind, he immediately offered me one of his spares. Next day he lay in the hut until about 1 pm then set off on his epic solo ascent of *North Post*. Having left his sack at the bottom of the climb he arrived at the top in a white-out with no torch and only a few minutes to dark. Unable to locate *Easy Gully* he somehow managed to trend southwards to the road and spend the night in the car at Aberarder. Next morning while we were desperately searching the base of the cliffs for his body, he suddenly appeared, cheerful as ever, walking up the glen. He gives a vivid description of the adventure in *Cold Climbs*.

After leaving University he spent a year in South America which he very much enjoyed although his Patagonian climbing plans foundered. There followed a rather unhappy period in the mid-seventies when he spent some time teaching in London. In 1977 he moved to Fort William, to work as a chemical engineer at the paper mill, and a new phase began. In 1978 with Con Higgins he put up the redoubtable *Galactic Hitchhiker* and *Albatross* and with Alan Rouse the delicate *Route 2* on Carn Dearg Buttress. But, perhaps more important, Fort William was an ideal base from which to explore the remoter mountains and crags of the North and West. From Ben Laoghal to Lader Bheinn Mike had probably an unrivalled knowledge of the winter climbing possibilities and his enthusiasm inspired others. But he was by no means only a climber; weekends spent bothying or cross-country skiing would be equally important to him. Always the conversations would be interesting, whether on new ideas for gear, new possibilities on unknown crags, protecting wild land or wider issues quite unconnected with climbing.

In 1980 Mike married Helen Wood, herself a strong walker and climber already based in Fort William, and the following year they carried out a long cherished plan of Mike's - a three week holiday in Nepal during which they trekked in Langtang and Ganesh and climbed up to 19,000 feet. They moved to Aberdeen and Mike began to plan self-employed work as a computing consultant. Then in late 1983 tragedy struck as he contracted a particularly dangerous cancer. He underwent traumatic operation but fought back steadfastly as he and Helen confronted the disease with a completely changed life style. Orthodox medicine had little to offer so they explored alternative therapies with a combination of the critical intelligence that their scientific training had developed and an inspiring faith in human potential. Mike did not allow himself to be downcast; he always had plans for the future and thoughts for others. Slowly he recovered from the operation and began walking, skiing, climbing and even running again. They moved to Boat of Garten, brimming with ideas for a successful life in the highlands: a vegetarian guesthouse, the computing consultancy, occasional guiding. At Easter 1985 he went on the SMC Meet, something Mike had long wanted to do, for he really valued the traditions of the Club though he had plenty of ideas for change. We had an excellent day on the *NE Ridge* of Aonach Beag, a long day for someone who had been so weakened by his illness. As we came down into Glen Nevis on a glorious evening he astonished me by saying that what would really round the day off for him now would be a nice bit of rain. But this was the real Mike - he had genuine affinity for the Scottish hills in all their moods.

His was a truly original mind that I feel it a privilege to have known. He had too a deeply felt yet practical concern for the world outside and worked through Friends of the Earth and Amnesty International for the causes he believed in. I think it was his basic optimism about human nature combined with a very thoughtful approach to life that gave him his personal strength and made him a support to others, though he would have been the first to say how much strength and support he derived from Helen in the last few years. To her and to his family we offer our deepest sympathy. The Club has lost one of its outstanding members.

G.C.

JOHN GULLAND OSBORNE

JACK OSBORNE, who died in Edinburgh on 2nd February in his ninetyeth year, started climbing around 1912. In 1925 he became the first President of the Edinburgh Section of the JMCS. He joined the Club in 1931 and served as Treasurer from 1936 to 1949 and as Vice President from 1949 to 1951.

Although most of his contemporaries have now left the stage he had the good fortune to have known and climbed with many of the illustrious early Members, indeed with a number of the original Members. He appears, pipe in hand, in Meet photographs for a period of fifty years.

He was a man of quiet humour and kindness as well as boundless energy and in his lifetime brought a measure of comfort and happiness to countless numbers of his fellow men and women.

During World War One he served in the Black Watch and was severely wounded on the Somme in 1916. He perceived a special need to succour the blinded and after the

war helped to found Linburn, The Scottish National Institute for the War Blinded. He served as its Chairman for 16 years and was also Chairman for many years of The Royal Blind Asylum and School for which sterling work he was made an OBE in 1970.

Managing Director of a large firm of Tanners in Leith, he was Chairman of the Edinburgh Savings Bank and President of the Rotary Club of Edinburgh. He was also Senior Elder of Cramond Parish Church, having served as an Elder for 55 years.

His sense of peace and dignity and his love of hill, river and loch were reflected in the very considerable enjoyment he found in his much-loved painting and fishing.

W.M.S.M.

BRIAN SPRUNT

WHEN Brian tragically died on the Matterhorn North face the Journal had gone to print and the following year mention was inadvertently missed. I think it is fitting that Brian is acknowledged in the Journal. In his early years he was well known to the JMCS in Glasgow and later via the Etchachan in Aberdeen he was in the process of joining the Club. Brian was acknowledged by his friends as an exceptionally talented climber, a young man with a great sense of humour and ready to have a go at anything. Right from the start he surprised us conventional cragrats as someone a wee bit special. On one of his first weekends to Skye, he made an ascent of the *Left Edge* of The Chasm on Sgurr nan Eag, which to our knowledge had never had a second ascent. As the years passed on, this little spark of genius was beginning to glow, bolder ascents, sometimes with unknown partners, like the day on *The Bat* with some New Zealand lad, he met in the Fort, seems he had him screaming all the way up.

In 1979 and 1980 respectively parties of high powered French and Polish climbers were over on a BMC/MCS visit. Brian was a prominent player in the workouts they were given on the winter cliffs of Lochnagar.

Aberdeen seems to have been Brian's Mecca, meeting new friends and stretching his talents with trips abroad to the Alps, the Himalayas and Alaska, this blond haired specky youth was starting to get around; the North face of the Eiger, an expedition to Nuptse and the *Cassin Ridge* on McKinley with Rob Milne all had their exciting moments. But the story I liked best was their attempt on *Death Couloir* on McKinley, it had never been climbed, but previous attempts recommended leaving pegs in place in case of a retreat as you had to get out fast (rumours of some wee avalanches). Anyway as Bob led up, Brian, being a canny Scot, arrived at the belay festooned with pegs. Guess what? A storm came in! and as Rob absailed into the gloom, He came up from the depth, 'You miserable Scotch bar steward, where's the belay pegs!'

When an English party were arriving at the McKinley base, which is a small shack on the glacier where all the small aircraft land, they were admiring the views with great oohs and aahs, they were most disenchanted when this apparent lumberjack with the tartan shirt leaning against the shack shouted over, 'Hey! Any of you guys frae Glesca?' What an entrance.

Brian certainly enjoyed life, he could take a good dram with the best of us, he would attempt the impossible just for the sake of it. With Charlie McLeod he had a go running from the summit of Nevis to Macdui just to celebrate their birthday.

When we met for the last time in the Blue Lamp he never forgot the old team, asking for Hamish, Coll, Pete, Fred and Big Al. We finished off a rare bottle of Malt that night and reminisced over earlier years. It was great to be in his company. I know that we all miss his laughter and memorable exploits, and when we meet in the old haunts he won't be far away.

Bill Marshall and Charlie McLeod have put together many of his slides into a wonderful presentation and if you ever get the chance, go along and see it. He could certainly take a mean picture. In conclusion when the day comes and you pass through the pearly gates, don't be surprised if an Angel with tartan wings, leaning against a wee cloud, shouts over, 'Hey! Any of you guys frae Glesca?'

C.R.

We also have to report the death of David J. S. Harvey who was on the Committee from 1936 to 39 and Custodian of the CIC hut from 1936-46.

PROCEEDINGS OF THE CLUB

New Members

The following new members were admitted and welcomed into the Club in the year 1985-86.

- John E. S. Bennet (25) Schoolteacher, Glasgow
- Ian P. Brooker (25) Medical Practitioner, Inverness
- Christopher Dale (23) Guide, Landscape gardener, drystant dyker, Penrith, Cumbria
- Malcolm R. D. Duff (31) Professional mountaineer, South Queensferry
- Andrew Martin Dytch (26) Training officer, Clydebank
- Christopher M. Huntley (27) Research chemist, Edinburgh
- Stephen D. Kennedy (27) Solicitor, Aberdeen
- Dan Livingston (75) Retired teacher, Achnasheen
- Ronald J. McGuire (38) Electrical engineer, Crieff
- Neil Marshall (29) Caravan shop proprietor, Blanefield, Stirlingshire
- Neil T. Morrison (24) Schoolteacher, Aberdeen
- Stuart Murdoch (28) Student, Dunfermline
- Malcolm A. Nicolson (32) University lecturer, Edinburgh
- David Malcolm Ritchie (23) Engineer, Oban
- Russel Sharp (41) Distiller, Elgin
- Calum Smith (30) Outdoor pursuits instructor, Glasgow
- Michael David Whitford (24) Mountain activities instructor, Glasgow

Reception, AGM and Dinner

DES RUBENS and Geoff Cohen were this year's star performers who gave an enthralling account of derring-do on Gasherbrum III. The slides were skilfully taken to give the impression of solitude although the area appeared to be seething with other expeditions. It was unfortunate that weather robbed them of the summit.

The feeding of the multitude afterwards involved the usual long queuing. Once accomplished this part of the Reception passed off successfully.

THE 97th AGM took place in a somewhat crowded and overheated back room of Dunblane Hydropathic Hotel, which may perhaps account for the relative absence of the cunctatorial strategies so often in evidence on these occasions. Like the House of Commons the Club's AGM has yet to be revealed under television arc lights, but the heat if not the oratory gave us a passable intimation of what the future may hold in store. The Officers' Reports passed with very little of the keen dissection from the floor we have come to expect. Bill McKenzie presumed to raise the question of the SDD's document on skiing developments and the presumptions therein – were they presumptions for or against? Was the Club concerned? The SSSI on Glas Maol had not been sterilised, according to Donald Bennet, and in consequence had suffered a mild attack of development, but its health was not seriously harmed. Otherwise few seemed keen to debate the matter further, although the arcane distinction between presumptions and guidelines would seem excellent material for a future AGM.

It was revealed that no one had yet found a successful route to Macpherson of Glen-truim. There was speculation that traditional equipment would be insufficient to attain this worthy objective but in view of its importance Malcolm Slesser fearlessly volunteered to mount another expedition himself.

A more familiar note sounded when Graham Tiso lamented the low price of the new Cairngorm guide (£1 too little) but to offset this he announced the outstanding success of the Munros Guide on which he and the authors were congratulated.

A nice constitutional point arose with regard to the New Year Meet, apparently now an endangered species. A proposal to abandon it foundered on the rock of Rule 39, though the view was put that this required only that the Meet should be *arranged*, not that it should be *held*. No one would propose or second any motion on this delicate matter and it was left to the Committee to chart the ship of state through the Hogmaniacal waters.

For the Dinner the management saw fit to demote us to the basement as an influential party of roofing contractors were 'dinner-dancing' in the more salubrious quarters upstairs. Here the heat was perhaps an encouragement to camaraderie – at least the traditional food seemed to be traditionally enjoyed. President Tom Weir treated us to a memorable history of post-war Scottish climbing with moving tributes to such as Tom Patey and Mike Geddes. He likened the Club to a geological stratum in which young rocks, he warned, are apt to disintegrate; but he himself was as sound and entertaining as ever. Iain McLeod, casting off the bagpipes, welcomed the guests with his masterly impersonations. The tale of the American who wanted to buy his son a cowboy outfit and was told the the Alpine Club seemed a suitable goad for the reply by expatriate John Fairley. But the Alpine Club guest was weighed down by the responsibilities of his task and having declared that the AC did not exist for the purpose of going climbing he lost us in a series of risqué jokes. A very fine impromptu speech from Bob Grieve, giving well-deserved thanks to Tom Weir, rounded off the formal festivities, and then the informal ones began.

G.C.

Torridon Meet, 17th – 19th May, 1985 – Ling Hut

THE hut was full for the whole weekend. There had been talk of some having to camp but, everyone seemed to squeeze in and, thanks to Clive Rowland's magnificent new kitchen cum common room, managed very nicely, thanks. In all 12 members and 5 guests signed in including the Hon. Vice-President and the immediate Past-President.

The weather was mixed – not good enough to tempt the tigers really to extend themselves but enough for some rock and several hills to be climbed and a low level circumnavigation of one (Beinn Damh) completed. This past event started off what could become a rather dangerous train of thought in the head of the Hon. VP – well known already for his enthusiastic research into and profound thoughts on matters Munro-ic. We may now be faced one day with a list of Munros to be circumnavigated at a set altitude rather than ascended!

Despite cloud and showers low level crags at Diabaig and An Groban (Flowerdale) were visited and Chioch of Sgurr a Chaorachain and *Beanstalk* on Beinn Airigh Charr were climbed (the latter in the course of an expedition which included in its itinerary canoeing on Loch Maree).

Hills ascended included Maol Chean-dearg and An Ruadh-stac (two parties on different days), Beinn Dearg and Beinn Airigh Charr (without canoe). The fairly low and somewhat persistent cloud obviously detracted from the lure of the higher hills (or are there a few secret Corbetters around?) Views, if any, were few and far between.

Despite the mixed weather the meet was rated a success by those present. All seemed to go home happy and expressing appreciation of the warden's efforts to improve accommodation and facilities at the Ling.

Present were: Members: – R. K. Bott, G. Cohen, A. C. Dickson, J. C. Donaldson, W. Jeffrey, D. M. G. Niven, D. C. Page, D. W. Rubens, D. Scott, C. G. M. Slesser, W. Wallace and B. G. S. Ward. Guests: – J. Ashworth, Dr Y. Dias, A. Harris, C. Lilley and W. McKenzie.

G.W.

New Year Meet 1985 – Inveroran

THE meet at Inveroran from 28th to 30th December was deemed unconstitutional by some as it did not straddle Hogmanay. Be that as it may, the weather was clear, windless and sunny. Inveroran Inn was warm and snug in the evenings after each day of cold bright winter at its brilliant best. The President celebrated his 71st birthday by an ascent of Stob Gobhar.

Only four members and one guest were present at Inveroran and three members at Lagangarbh. The summits of the following were visited:

Stob Gabhar, Stob Coire an Albannaich, Beinn an Dothaidh, Beinn Achaladair, Beinn a' Chreachain, Beinn Mhanach, Buachaille Etive Mor.

Present: *Members:* The President, B. Fleming, I. H. M. Smart, W. Wallace, *Guest:* W. Sutherland

At Lagangarbh: K. V. Crocket, Alasdair Walker.

Easter Meet 1986 – Torridon

THE meet was centred in the main on the Loch Torridon Hotel and the Ling Hut. It was attended by 24 members and 8 guests.

Apart from a few isolated squally snow showers the weather was first class throughout the whole weekend. There was plenty of snow above about 1500 feet and conditions were much better than might have been expected, improving through the weekend in most places with the colder weather, including a very hard frost on Saturday night.

The following excursions were made, many by several parties and at different times: –

Slioch, Fionn Bheinn, Beinn Liath Mhor, Sgurr Dubh and Sgurr Na Lochan Uaine, Beinn Eighe (various summits) and in Coire Mhic Fearchair the *Western Buttress* and Eastern Buttress via *Central Chimney*, Beinn Damh, Liathach from west to east and one unfinished attempt via *The Northern Pinnacles*, Maol Chean-dearg, and Maoile Lunndaigh. *Northumberland Wall* at Diabaig was also climbed.

Maol Chean-dearg was also circled as, at a lower level, were Lochs Clair and Coulin. Two parties left for home vowing skiing attacks en route on (a) Sgurr Mor (Fannaichs) and (b) Ben Wyvis.

The meet was enjoyed by all present, young and old. Once again there was an encouraging number of younger members and guests, especially at the hut.

Present were: *Members*: – President T. Weir, R. Anderson, D. J. Bennet, T. B. Fleming, C. C. Gorrie, G. S. Johnstone, J. N. Ledingham, D. Livingstone, R. McGuire, I. A. McLeod, I. D. McNicol, Sir J. Marjoribanks, J. R. Marshall, H. H. Mills, T. Nicholson, G. Nicoll, I. H. Ogilvie, J. Paterson, D. W. I. Piggott, C. G. M. Slesser, A. C. D. Small, I. H. M. Smart, W. Wallace and B. G. S. Ward. *Guests*: – E. R. Allen, J. Broadfoot, K. Byrne, M. Dean, R. Gibson, C. Slesser, O. Turnbull, A. Whyte.

G. W.

J.M.C.S. REPORTS

Edinburgh Section. – We welcomed in the New Year as usual at the Smiddy. Taking advantage of the generally good weather a few members extended their stay and did more walking in the Fannichs and routes on An Teallach.

The winter meets included weekend trips to Glen Clova, Glencoe, Jock's Spot, The Smiddy and Lochnagar. The Glen Clova weekend in particular, proved very successful. As well as experiencing good climbing conditions in Corrie Fee and Winter Coire, some members undertook ski-mountaineering tours. In response to the good attendance on these meets it was decided to increase the frequency of winter meets in 1986.

The venue for the May week meet was Skye and two members of the club completed the ridge traverse in very respectable times. Summer and Autumn meets were to Steall, Kintail, Ling and Low House, Coniston. They were well attended considering the poor weather throughout the summer.

There were no official meets from mid-October to the Annual Dinner in December. The dinner, held at the Inveroran Hotel, Bridge of Orchy proved to be a great social event. The Wednesday evening meets to Heriot-Watt climbing wall, during the winter, have continued to be popular as have the summer mid-week trips to local outcrops, despite several soakings.

Two members of the Club visited the Massif des Ecrins in France and successfully climbed, The South face of Aig, Dibona, the South-West Pillar of Aig, Mont Aiguilles, Pic Coolidge and Barre des Ecrins. Three members went to Switzerland and from their base in the Saas region climbed The Allalinhorn, The Weissmies, The Stralhorn and the Lagginhorn. It has been very pleasing to see an increasing number of club members planning trips to the Alps and it is hoped this upward trend continues in the future.

Office Bearers – *Hon. President*, M. Fleming; *Hon. Vice-President*, W. M. S. Myles; *President*, F. Fotheringham; *Vice-President*, R. Dalitz; *Treasurer*, A. Carver; *Secretary*, G. D. Lee, 265 Rullion Road, Penicuik, Midlothian EH26 9AW.

Glasgow Section. – As 1985 was the sixtieth anniversary of the foundation of the JMCS the opportunity might be taken to wonder if there is still a need for a 'junior' club. The establishment of a wealth of mountaineering clubs throughout Scotland which welcome young members, particularly in the last twenty years or so, would suggest that this might no longer be the case. Nevertheless, we continue to attract those in their late teens as enthusiastic members. Indeed our health as a mountaineering club, and not just as a 'junior' one, is as good now as it has been at most times in the past. Perhaps, if one might dare to express such heresy in the pages of its august Journal, there really is more to 'senior' mountaineering life in Scotland than the SMC!

Our meets were well attended in the winter and less so in the summer. As the memory of last summer and the mornings spent looking at the rain out of the window of Lagangarbh et al. are not easily forgotten, this lack of enthusiasm is perhaps understandable. Members had an active winter's climbing on Ben Nevis and Creag Meaghaidh and if this cannot be said to be the case for Glencoe, it was not through the want of looking for some snow or ice to climb. We even had the traditional section epic on *Observatory Ridge* without, fortunately, the assistance of the Lochaber MRT this year. Members were also seen in the Cairngorms and at Lochnagar.

The appalling summer in Scotland was partly mitigated by the first Section Alpine meet for a few years. This was to Chamonix and at various times saw as many as 14 Section members enjoy sunshine, warm rock and some excellent climbing. It was a first visit for most of these and although they soon learned that M. Gaston Rebuffat's times were to be taken with a large morceau de sel, they also adapted rapidly to 'alpine' climbing, i.e. téléphériques, pitons, following guides while pretending not to do so and paying £1.50 for a can of beer at 10,000 feet. Even the Section Secretary and the Expedition Doctor, who otherwise spent their time running in the Aiguilles Rouges as 'high-altitude training for the Ben Nevis Race,' deigned to show all the Pierres and Jean-Claudes how les écosais did le front-pointing. We are planning to return in 1986: somehow grandes bières don't taste quite as sweet in the Kinghouse.

That particular hostelry was the venue for our well attended and highly successful 60th anniversary dinner when we were much entertained by the witticisms of our guest speaker, Stan Stewart, who chose to toast 60 years of the JMCS in spoken rather than sung form. Earlier in the year we held a Burns Supper again after a break in the previous year. This was so successful that another was held in 1986 and we hope that these will again be a regular part of the Section's year. Any account of such a year would not be complete without mention of the lectures held in conjunction with the SMC (Western District) – although it must be said that attendances at these are in decline – and our hut at Coruisk, which in its freshly painted form enjoyed another successful year. It is an asset of which the Club is justly proud and we would like to encourage all readers of this Journal to use it – preferential rates for SMC members! Membership increased during the year which is a trend we hope will continue.

Office Bearers – *Hon. Member*, W. H. Murray; *Hon. President*, Alistair McGregor; *Hon. Vice-President*, Angus McInnes; *President*, Nielsen Craig, 5 Hampden Terrace, Mount Florida, Glasgow; *Secretary*, Dugald Mackie, 9 Ilay Court, Bearsden, Glasgow; *Treasurer*, Benny Swan; *Coruisk Hut Custodian*, Dick Edie, 47 Cairns Gardens, Balerno, Midlothian.

Lochaber Section. – Club membership has fluctuated around the 60 level for the past few years, with the majority being locally based, though there is a small active cell in the Glasgow area. The membership covers a wide range of age, interests and ability from hard climbers to seasoned mountaineers and walkers. New members are soon made to feel at home and will readily find someone to go out on the hill with.

Outdoor meets are held monthly throughout the mountainous areas of Scotland with occasional forays across the Border and to the Alps. Slide shows are organised over the winter period in one of the Fort William hotels. For anyone contemplating joining the club, facilities of which they can avail themselves are the free use of the club hut at Steall, an extensive library of mountaineering books, journals and guide books, and good company at club meets.

Office Bearers – *Hon. President*, Donald Watt; *President*, Ian Sutherland; *Vice-President*, George Bruce; *Steall Hut Custodian*, Ian Walker, 12 Grange Terrace, Fort William (0397) 3512; *Secretary*, Les Houliker, 3 Treslaig, Fort William (03977) 633; *Treasurer*, John Davidson.

Perth Section. – Membership is down by 2 on the last year's figure at 65. There are still a large number of female associates. There were 15 meets held throughout the year and the average attendance on meets was the same as last year viz. 12. Again hillwalking is the main pursuit of most members attending meets, however the climbers in our midst are active on meets and at other times.

Lou Kass, Grahame Nicoll and Rob Garner formed threequarters of the Perth High Andes Expedition to Peru. They set off in June and returned after a successful trip at the end of July. They also successfully raised over £600 for the Tayside Scanner Appeal.

The Annual Dinner was again held in the Clova Hotel where we had the complete run of the whole hotel and bunkhouse. Bob Milne and Ron Payne made a good double act.

There was a spate of 'Compleaters' in the Section during the summer months – 5 in all – bringing the total number of 'Compleaters' from the Section, past and present, to over 25.

The Annual Lecture with the Perthshire Society of Natural Science was held in the Art Gallery, Perth in January. Mick Pauley, Senior Countryside Ranger at Monikie Country Park, Dundee, gave an enthralling, well illustrated lecture on his experiences in Antarctica with the British Antarctic Survey.

The Annual General Meeting was held in Perth in November at which the following officials were elected: – *Hon. President*, Bob Milne; *Hon. Vice-President*, David Wares; *President*, Lou Kass; *Vice-President*, Sandy Robertson; *Treasurer*, John Rogers; *Secretary*, Joe Stewart, Flat 1, Duntrune House, Duntrune, Dundee (082-625) 391.

London Section. – Current membership is approximately 60 having stabilised around this figure now for several years. However, this is not a static state, each year sees changing membership and a most optimistic trend is the influx of hard young climbers to the Section. Not since the early sixties with standards set by a group of the calibre of Ron Yuen and

Ralph Dickson has the future looked so good in terms of pushing up climbing standards. However this does not mean a Section in danger of domination by rock jockeys and it is good to report active involvement by a group of members in the Three Peaks Race including the crewing of the boat!

Although not reported in last year's Journal, a very successful Alpine meet was held in Arolla in August 1984. This year there was no formal meet abroad but the lingering euphoria from the previous one resulted in a large number of members climbing in the Dolomites, the Pennines and Dauphine Alps.

Regular monthly meets have been held, mostly in North Wales, because of the convenience of Glanafon but the programme has included the Lakes, Derbyshire and South West sea cliffs. By southern standards it was a good winter but good snow and ice tended to avoid the official meets. The best weekends were these between, and enjoyed by members who could get away at short notice.

Active involvement in the affairs of the British Mountaineering Council continues. At times the section feels a rather lone voice in the politics of English climbing. One worry is the policy pressure imposed on the BMC, which is a democratically elected body, by the Sports Council, which is not. Also, in the South East much energy is channelled into a programme of increasing, advising and controlling the number and use of climbing walls – a programme for which the Section with its mountaineering traditions can work up little enthusiasm. However we take comfort that if and when relationships become too unpalatable to bear the Section can bolt back to the womb by leaving the BMC and joining instead the MC of S.

Office Bearers: – *Hon. President*, Joe Della Porta; *President*, Peter Turner; *Treasurer*, Robin Watts; *Hon. Secretary*, Hugh Jordan, Waytes Cottages, Layhams Road, Keston, Kent BR2 6AR (0959) 71851; *Glanafon Hut Booking Secretary*, Peter Whitechurch, Dale Cottage, Tangier Lane, Tonbridge Wells TN3 9HE.

Inverness Section. – no report.

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

The Alps

JOHN STEELE and JOHN MORRISON spent just over a week in the Zermatt area at the end of May 1985, ski touring. In a four day foray they managed the Breithorn, Castor, Pollox and Monte Rosa (Signalkuip 15,000 feet) before skiing back towards Zermatt. They stayed three nights in bivouacs on the Italian side of the Border ridge and experienced very clear, cold and, on the whole, settled weather conditions.

Two General Points: Any car entering Switzerland has to pay a new road tax of 30 Swiss francs which is valid for 1 year. Credit cards are not valid in Swiss or German motorway service stations.

One Specific Point: Zermatt is not open to the public using cars. Taesch, 4 miles down the valley, is where all cars are left (short train journey thereafter). Road to Zermatt closed (21.00 - 18.00 hrs.) at Stolden, not Taesch, every day.

M. SLESSER and W. WALLACE, accompanied by A. Pettit, a prospective member, were in the Alpes Maritimes in early April intending to complete a ski traverse of the Parc National de Mercantour. Their plans were frustrated by heavy snowfall and consequent avalanches.

An ascent of the Cime de la Lombardia was made while the snow and weather stabilized, followed by three excellent traverses across the frontier into Vinadio, in Italy, and return into France by another route. The third day, traversing from near the head of the Tinee valley to Larche, was particularly memorable and included the ascent of three peaks and an excellent north slope descent to Larche. Thereafter the weather again turned sour and the holiday finished with a long traverse over the shoulder of the Chambeyron to Fouillouse and thence over the Col de Vars to the Durance valley and the Paris train.

The Himalayas

DES RUBENS sends the following account of last summer's attempt on Gasherbrum.

*'Moru'isg, Coir'uisg, Sgurr na Stri
All seem small compared to Gasherbrum III'*

G. Cohen, with apologies to Tom Patey.

'The Scottish Karakorum Expedition 1985 had as its original objective the unclimbed north ridge of Gasherbrum III (26,090 feet). Our members were GEOFF COHEN, Paul Nunn, CLIVE ROWLAND and myself. We received some generous support from the MEF, the Scottish Sports Council, the Scottish Mountaineering Trust, individuals and firms. However, the bulk of the expedition cost were borne by ourselves.

Our approaches to the mountain went very smoothly. We all enjoyed the dramatic drive up the Indus to Skardu. We then embarked on the eleven day walk in from Dasso through the dangerous Braldu Gorge and up the increasingly spectacular Baltoro Glacier. Along the way our eyes feasted upon such initial tasty morsels as the Trango Tower, graduating to the more indigestible nuggets of Muztagh and Masherbrum before ruminating at length on K2 and Gasherbrum IV. Our own peak remained hidden until the very end of the walk but promised to be a most worthy post prandial snack (slightly too worthy as it turned out). Items of particular interest from this part of the journey to readers of the Journal are (i) the fact that the only question from customs at Islamabad concerned the import of alcohol and (ii) the existence of some grand howffs around Urdukass, an old summer grazing ground above the Baltoro.

Base camp at just under 17,000 feet had none of the sought after solitude of previous Himalayan holidays. Climbers who had opted out of their peaks early on (a not uncommon occurrence) were able to do the rounds of Italian breakfasts.

French coffee, American peanut butter, German psychoanalysis, Japanese inscrutability, Swedish friendliness and Scottish vegebangers. Afternoons could be spent watching the French hang-gliding, skiing, etc. off nearly 'acht-tausenders.' Paul, as a roving *Mountain* correspondent was able to reap much in the way of trivial information for his mag. The rest of us (Clive in particular) cast a baleful eye over these proceedings and tried to stay out of the way, a behaviour mode not understood by our sociable Liaison officer who spent much of his abundant energies bullying our placid Balti cook (not to mention annoying as many other Baltis as possible).

Fortunately, not much time was passed in this busy Snell's field of the Karakoram. Our first week was spent establishing a dump (Camp 1), then some tents (Camp 2) at 6000 metres on a wide plateau just below the south of rib of Gasherbrum II. The whole of the route up to Camp 2 lay up a long and intricate icefall (apparently similar in character to the Khumbu icefall on Everest). The way was fairly well marked by the several expeditions attempting the 'voie normale' on Gasherbrum II, but was very tedious and route findings was particularly unpleasant after a storm. Nevertheless, our surroundings were inspiring as we were now deep in the heart of the Gasherbrum cirque, with four mountains of over 26,000 feet close at hand. Across the way, the snowy flanks of Baltoro Kagri roared frequently and the not so distant spires of Indian-controlled Kashmir began to rise in view.

Beyond Camp 2, the peace of the high peaks was finally ours. Our route now lay up a steep upper icefall spilling down 800 metres from a high corrie between Gasherbrum III and IV. While Geoff and I went down to base, due to my suffering a tooth abscess, Paul and Clive pushed a route up almost to the top of the icefall, excavating an ice cave en route at 6500 metres. They finally decided that their route above the ice cave was not feasible. Eventually, we reunited at Camp 2 and finally pushed the way up the upper left flank of this unstable horror, (the final few hundred feet actually being on the slopes of Gasherbrum IV) and broke through to the gently sloping corrie on 30th July. Here, a few days were spent ferrying loads, excavating a second ice cave at about 6900 metres (much safer than the first one) and reconnoitring the approaches to the still remote north ridge. Geoff's surplus energies also took him to the Italian (1958) col below Gasherbrum IV, his laudable efforts to obtain a view rewarded with a surprise appearance of some thick high altitude cloud. We then retreated in very bad conditions, a move which I for one certainly appreciated and only some crafty route finding by Clive enabled us to reach base camp before all of six feet of snow blanketed the Karakoram.

Our enforced rest period (apart from the odd bout of shovelling) was hardly relaxing because of a quarrel with our L.O. He eventually departed but not before much mental exhaustion on our part. Clive's home commitments were such that he decided to accompany him (fortunately amicably). Clive contracted a lung infection during the descent to Dasso but managed to reach Inverness safely. The remaining three of us, after five days rest, returned to Camp 2 on the basis of an (erroneous) good snow report. We arrived exhausted after twelve hours. During the next rest day Paul also decided to descend. Geoff and I then spent another two days remaking the trail back up to our previous high point. The following day, taking bivouac gear, we set out for the SW ridge, the N ridge now being too remote and unknown for consideration. Although the sky was clear, it was extremely cold and windy. However, we made height perceptibly up the soft snow slopes leading to the foot of the ridge proper. Just after a gendarme, we roped up and lead through about eight pitches. Generally the ground was fairly steep and mixed, the rock being of a slabby nature with few positive holds. The climbing was rather difficult, but did give us the enjoyment of technical interest. We also had the excitement of seeing mountains that we had not viewed for weeks - Masherbrum, K2, and Broad Peak. Much of this enjoyment was mitigated by our remote situation and our uncertainty about reaching the top.

We bivouacked at about 24,500 feet on a most unsatisfactory exposed snow ledge. (We saw no suitable sites on the entire ridge). The following morning (15th August) we set off with minimum gear and high hopes for the summit. The wind

was gale force, but the ground was now soloable and we made steady upward progress. Accidentally leaving my nose (admittedly a large one) exposed, I was alarmed to find it superficially frostbitten. By the time I caught up with Geoff in the shelter of a gendarme, it had thawed out. We carried on up grooves and over pinnacles, the sheer west face constantly on our left. Nowhere would we have survived a fall. By midday we had to rope up, our progress slowed and we were in thick cloud. We had passed our predetermined return time. Exhaustion overcame us and without debate we began the retreat. Had the way ahead been clear, or the descent straightforward, we might have carried on. Neither of these conditions held.

During the descent, the sky cleared for a while and we were able to shelter. I sat for about ten minutes, deliberately trying to absorb some of the tremendous savagery of this wildest of landscapes – the great 8000 metre peaks, distant Nanga Parbat and the Pamirs, far to the north with the brown intervening ranges of Chinese Turkestan.

Next morning, I realised my feet were frostbitten and had a desperate struggle, assisted by Geoff, to get my boots back on. We descended very slowly and carefully in our tired condition, finally abseiling down the more sheltered side of the ridge. We reached the snow cave exhausted after more than sixty hours of nearly constant buffeting by the wind. Here, we began the slow task of rehydration. Our main disappointment was that the wind had now lessened. If only we had been a day later in making our attempt!

A few more days saw us at a deserted base camp, wrecked by differential ice melting. Two days later some smiling young lads arrived as had been arranged and we began the walk out.

We have received a report from SANDY ALLAN, joint leader of the Gangapurna (North Face) Expedition 1985 of which Dave Morris was also a member. The expedition was an international one. The original plan to make an Alpine style ascent of the North Face was abandoned early on account of avalanche danger and an alternative line on the NE ridge of this 7455 metre mountain was attempted. The 'Calendar of Events' was as follows:

11th Sept. His Majesty's Government of Nepal grant permission. 17th Sept. Team assembled in Kathmandu. All USA luggage lost, one barrel of British equipment also lost in transit. 22nd Sept. All luggage located by Airline companies. 23rd Sept. Expedition departs from Kathmandu via Dumre, Palaksangu, Bulbuhle, Change, Tal, Bratang, Humde, Manang. 4th Oct. Base Camp established at 4800 metres. Allan and Spigir reconnoitre part of glacier, leaving a cache at Moraine Bank. Scott Woolums descended to Manang with altitude sickness. 6th Oct. Allan, Spigir, Morris reconnoitre glacier and route to near Camp 1. Left cache of equipment at 5000 metres. 7th Oct. Dave Morris and Daria depart Base Camp for Kathmandu. Snow begins to fall. 8th Oct. Woolums returns to Base Camp, but still ill so descends again to Manang. Because of the large snow fall, he decides to return to Kathmandu. An accumulation of 5 metres of snow. Days spent clearing snow from tents etc. and breaking trail in order to make some progress and maintain fitness. On two separate occasions members had to be dug from their buried tents. First cache avalanched. Several days spent searching for the equipment to no avail. Harnesses, rope, ice axe/hammer and some photographic equipment lost. Became very obvious that North Face Route would not be feasible so requested alternative route from Liaison Officer. Our Nepalese staff descended with the message to L.O. and were not able to return for several days. Ran short on Kerosene. 22nd Oct. Allan, Spigir, Teare break trail to near Camp 1. 23rd Oct. Allan, Spigir, Teare break trail and carry to Camp 1 (5200 metres). Return to Base Camp. 24th Oct. Allan, Spigir, Teare up to Camp 1; spend the night there. 25th Oct. Allan, Spigir, Teare up to Camp 2 (5700 metres) – a day of mostly strenuous trail breaking. 26th Oct. Remain at Camp 2, check conditions above Camp 2 and return to camp. 27th Oct. Allan, Spigir, Teare up to Camp 3 (6600 metres). Roped up and moving together, pitching occasionally. Pitched tent and proceeded to cook from 4.00 p.m. until 8.00 p.m. Sleep, to be woken up by gale force winds battering the tent. While two of us supported the tent from the inside, the other two dressed in full gear. Once we were all clothed, we all supported the tent. By 11.00 p.m. the poles broke. Spigir evacuated, but could not stand in the strong wind, so we decided to remain within the tent as it was also difficult to dig a snow cave. We spent the remainder of the night laying on our backs on the ground sheet, holding the tent

material around us as tightly as possible. By 5.00 a.m. the seams of the tent had come apart and the zip door was damaged. It was decided to climb down to Camp 1, where we had left a spare tent, but on arrival this tent was also damaged so we returned to Base Camp, arriving late on the night of the 28th. 1st Nov. Waiting at Base Camp. Intentions of returning on to the Ridge utilising snow caves but clouds of spindrift indicated high winds still at 6000 metres. We made the decision to abandon.

The 1985 Edinburgh University Lahul Expedition. - This expedition received part of the Sang Award for 1985. Alastair Mathewson writes:

'Our party, consisting of Fraser Alexander, Ulric Jessop, Teresa Lee, Alastair Mathewson, Pete Smith and Jonathan Whitaker spent last summer climbing at the head of the Miyar Nullah glacier, in Lahul, India. The peaks at the top end of the glacier were relatively unexplored although both Geoff Cohen in '83 and the Pinnacle Club in '80 had spent time in lower side glaciers.

We flew from London on the 18th July and arrived 8 hours later in the sweltering heat of mid-summer Delhi, clad in full climbing gear and weighed down with hardware - our low budget could not cope with excess baggage charges! After collecting our Indian Liaison Officer from The IMF we boarded the infamous bus to Manali, the first of several bus journeys. Seventeen hours, and two river crossings later we arrived in Manali, at the head of the Kulu Valley, in Himachel Pradesh, where we bought most of our food supplies: rice, dahl, sugar, flour, etc.

The next stage of the journey, by bus over the 14,000 foot Rohtang La pass into Lahul was delayed for a few days due to landslides. We eventually made the journey to the roadhead at Udaipur where we hired 6 ponies and 2 porters to help carry our gear the 40 kms to the snout of the glacier. This took 5 days, we were slowed down by illness, although tantalising glimpses of the surrounding higher peaks made up for the discomfort. At the snout, the ponies descended, leaving the 2 porters (in sandals!) and the six of us to ferry loads in stages up the remaining 15 kms to our intended 'Base Camp' site. Twelve days later we had set up Base Camp at 5150 metres, our Liaison Officer had retreated to Udaipur with altitude sickness, and we were left alone to contemplate some serious climbing.

After an acclimatisation trip to the Kanga Jot Pass (5468 metres), we decided to attempt the peak marked 6150 metres on our trekking map. On the 21st August we left Base Camp at 2.00 a.m., and after some ten pitches of easy angled ice climbing reached the summit (North) ridge from where the rocky summit was reached easily at 1.00 p.m. by all six of us. Descent was by a slightly different line below the ridge, involving one abseil. Four days later we made the first ascent of the peak marked 6036 metres by two different routes: F. Alexander, A. Mathewson and J. Whitaker tackled a line up to the South Ridge, which was climbed easily, and reached the summit approximately two hours before the other party - T. Lee, P. Smith and U. Jessop who climbed a harder route on the East Face. Both teams descended the South Ridge route in cloudy and windy (typically Scottish!) weather conditions, three abseils leading back to the glacier. The height of this peak was found to be considerably higher than the marked height of 6036 metres at 6280 metres. We had now been at Base for nearly two weeks and were rapidly running out of both time and food. After a few more days resting, we started the long walk back down the glacier, and a week later were back in Udaipur enjoying fresh fruit, vegetables and other such luxuries.

The final two weeks of our ten week visit to India were spent sightseeing, including the obligatory trip to the Taj Mahal, which is definitely worth seeing, although the smooth marble does not offer much opportunity to the aspiring climber. Out thanks to the SMC (Sang Award) for providing valuable financial assistance.'

South America

GRAHAME NICOLL writes - "LOU KASS (JMCS), ROB GARNER (JMCS), Charles Lyster and I spent the last two weeks of June and most of July in Peru. The first part of our trip consisted of a three day trek along the Inca trail to Macchu Picchu, the 'lost city of the Incas.' This involved crossing three passes up to 13,776 feet so

served its purpose of helping us acclimatise. Despite being rather popular, the walk itself was excellent, providing tantalising views of the Cordillera Vilcabamba as we passed through a wide variety of terrain. Macchu Picchu fully lived up to its reputation of being one of the 'wonders of the world.'

We then moved north to the Cordillera Blanca and basing ourselves in Huaraz we made two forays into the mountains, firstly a two week excursion to the Quebrada Ishinca. From a camp at 16,000 feet we climbed Nevado Ishinca (18,140 feet), an easy peak made a bit more interesting by climbing directly up a glacier tongue to the SW ridge, which was followed to the summit snow 'mushroom,' which provided a 20 foot crux. We next turned our attention to Nevado Ranrapalca (20,218 feet). After spending a night on the Ishinca/Ranrapalca col we climbed the 2,500 foot east face to the summit plateau. Unfortunately the main summit appeared inaccessible or at least very dangerous due to unstable snow mushrooms, so we had to be content with the north top. We then descended to the main quebrada and after a rest day climbed Nevado Urus Este (17,780 feet) - a superb little peak, not difficult but with an entertaining sinuous ridge leading to the top which was climbed in mist and snow showers.

Our return to Huaraz conveniently coincided with a spell of bad weather which dumped much new snow on the mountains. When this cleared we set off for Nevado Huascaran (22,205 feet). A couple of days later we were camped on the glacier below the W face. Our original intention of climbing the West Rib had been abandoned due to the quantity of new snow high on the route and we decided to do the ordinary 'Garganta' route. A broken stove forced us to miss out a camp on the col and go for the summit in one long, exhausting, 4,000 foot day. We reached the top in excellent weather and with tremendous views of the Amazonian jungle in the east to the Pacific Ocean to the west.

We had hoped to try Nevado Alpamayo next but now had only a few days of our holiday left, this was spent raft running down the Rio Santa - a novel and exhilarating experience.

Anyone contemplating a trip to the Peruvian Andes would not be disappointed; few other ranges combine such easy access and generally fine weather with such spectacular mountains and superb climbing, also don't be put off by stories of bandits and thievery as we had no trouble of this sort whatsoever.'

Norway

IN JUNE, 1985, GRAHAM and Maude TISO set out to sail to Alusund to visit a knitwear factory nearby and then to visit the famous Romsdal district. He writes - 'Adverse winds resulted in a landfall farther south than intended and whilst sailing up the coast to Alusund saw what turned out to be the Sunnmøre Alps. They were clearly worthy of investigation.

It transpires that much early exploration was done here by Slingsby and was written up in his book 'Norway, The Northern Playground' 1904 and also by Oppenheim 'New Climbs in Norway' 1898. Slingsby's book is difficult to obtain but Oppenheim is seen from time to time in second hand booksellers' lists.

The main centre of activity for them was Öye at the head of Norangsfjorden, where fortunately there is an excellent anchorage.

Slogen is a most imposing mountain rising directly from Öye. The summit at 5,210 feet is barely a mile from the fiord's edge and the first 3,500 feet of the ascent are rather like climbing a never-ending staircase; hard going up a now overgrown path, scrambling along a ridge leads to the summit, from which there are magnificent views and an excellent impression of the area.

On the other side of the valley, we climbed Keipen and then on to Staven 4,980 feet. The initially overgrown path soon disappeared and difficult, sometimes dangerous scrambling up a precipitous hillside with many short rock outcrops was absolutely exhausting.

There are a great number of mountains which would provide excellent hillwalking/scrambling possibilities. There are many fascinating ridges. Information about what is done and what is possible is scarce if not non-existent and great pleasure could be derived from genuine exploratory mountaineering. I would be happy to provide a more detailed impression of the area to any interested member.'

Spain

AT EASTER, 1986, GRAHAM and Maude TISO and their son, Christopher, ascended Mulhacen 11,424 feet, the highest mountain in Spain, whilst on a family holiday.

'The Sierra Nevada lie close to the southern coast and consist mainly of a long ridge often attaining the altitude of 10,000 feet. For most of its length the slopes are rounded but at the eastern end a short section has precipitous rock outcrops.

It is with some trepidation that I write of our ascent as a motorable road traverses the ridge from Granada in the north to Orgiva in the south and there is a properly signposted branch road going virtually to the summit of Mulhacen!

Approaching from the south, the surface road ends at Capileira 1436 metres but a dirt road, which presents no problem whatsoever to any normal roadgoing car, winds backwards and forwards through the forest in a series of seemingly never-ending hairpins. Our mechanised ascent came to an abrupt halt when a snowdrift blocked the road at approximately 7,500 feet. We then followed the road on foot for about 4 hours to the summit in a temperature of minus 10°C with a biting northerly wind reminding us that we were, nevertheless, on a high mountain.

On the northern side of the ridge there is a large ski area but this is not visible from the summit. The ridge itself looked interesting and can probably be likened to the Aonach Eagach in full winter conditions. There did not appear to be any serious difficulties but a full traverse of the precipitous part of the ridge may well take more than a day, even with an Alpine start.

Driving down from our mechanised high point the descent seemed never-ending. A check revealed that the road descends continuously without a level or uphill section to the valley floor for 6,000 feet. Surely this must be the longest continuous motor road descent in Europe.

The area is worth a visit for someone in this part of Spain but it is certainly not worth planning a mountaineering holiday in the Sierra Nevada. There would be too little to keep up interest for more than a few days.'

REVIEWS

Climber's Guide To The Cairngorms (A Comprehensive Guide). By Allen Fyffe and Andrew Nisbet. (Scottish Mountaineering Trust, 363 pages, 6 Photodiagrams, 21 Diagrams and 3 Maps, £7.95).

This bumper edition is a guide book of the 80's. It cannot be called a selective guide as were the previous three SMT Climbers Guides; nor a totally definitive guide. The style is more akin to that suggested by Rob Archbold in SMCJ Vol. xxxii.

The authors, at the outset, have laid down their ethics. 'Rock climbs are graded for parties not carrying pegs.' 'Routes below E2 should not require the use of chalk, and any necessary pegs are to be left in situ in the hope that they will become unnecessary.' Summer ethics should be applied to the use of pegs in winter, except for belays.

Technical pitch gradings are given for crux pitches and sometimes the whole route for VS categories and above. This is a new departure for SMC guide. Alas for route lengths we are committed to the metric system once again, with routes of 30m being included in a mountain guide. A thousand foot route sounds grander than 300m.

Excellent historical notes are complemented by a section on avalanches. Worthwhile additions are the compass bearings in the corrie of Lochnagar, and the descent details included in the informative area prefaces.

A precedent has been set, in that a large number of routes previously first ascended in summer but of inferior quality are now described primarily as winter routes with the year of f.w.a. The summer grade is noted in the final sentence of the description.

A vast majority of the given route descriptions and grades have been revised to reflect the most free ascent to date. Thus many routes are now upgraded (viz. *Dragon Slayer* - HVS now E4). Devotees of Classic Rock should note that *Clean Sweep* is now deservedly VS. The emphasis appears to be for 'E' grades in summer and V/VI grades in winter. New winter ascents abound, proving Jimmy Marshall correct with his vision of 'Rock climbs done in hellish conditions (viz. *The Straight-Jacket*, V/VI 'a desperate inch by inch struggle.'

Recommended routes are mentioned but only in the text. A cunning ploy with which I heartily agree. Climbs not described due to unpopularity or otherwise are generally mentioned, sometimes with an aside.

A major work is the chronological list of first ascents included at the back of the guide. Reference to previous volumes are quoted for the undescribed routes. An attempt has been made to record any aid used on first ascents and the elimination of same. However there is no cross reference to the text.

All the Cairngorm areas have been covered with the exception of the Red Craig at Clova. (see NE Outcrops guide). Only a passing mention is made of Sgoran Dubh. Braeriach and Cairntoul activity, not covered since the 1961 guide, is now up-to-date. I felt that Coire Sputan Dearg received scant attention. Unfortunately the style of diagrams is not consistent throughout. I like the photodiagrams but I am not alone at being disappointed with the half-tone diagrams of such great crags as Shelter Stone and Hells Lum.

All in all I can thoroughly recommend this important addition to Scottish mountaineering guidebooks. It is a must for all committed climbers.

D.F.L.

The Munros. - Donald Bennet (Editor). (Scottish Mountaineering Trust, 1985, pp. 235, numerous maps and photos, £10.95).

Sir Hugh Munro's tables cataloguing the Scottish 3,000 foot mountains, published in 1891, have provided a challenge to an increasing number of people; for many decades, the number known to have climbed all the Munros has been doubling approximately every eight years. This book is addressed especially to the hillwalker who wants to be one of them. One-day expeditions leading to the summits of all 277 separate mountains are covered by succinct descriptions, in each case accompanied by one or more colour pictures and a sketch map. Routes are chosen for interest without undue length or difficulty, and the descriptions apply directly to summer conditions, though most of the routes are equally practicable in winter given the necessary skill and equipment. This is an out-

standing, authoritative volume, a 'must' for all lovers of the Scottish hills. It will appeal equally to those who have not yet climbed a Munro and to those who have climbed them all and want reminders of great days enjoyed in the past and suggestions for ones to be repeated, perhaps by a different route, in the future. The format is pleasing and the price, especially considering the large number of excellent photographs, remarkably low.

H.F.W.T.

The High Mountains of Britain and Ireland. – By Irvine Butterfield, (Diadem Books, 1986, pp.320, numerous maps and colour photographs, £16.95).

This book describes walking routes to all the 3,000 foot tops in the British Isles. For each area (27 in Scotland, one each in England, Wales and Ireland), there are notes on such matters as transport and accommodation, followed by descriptions of one-day walks, accompanied by colour photographs and sketch maps. The book is much more than a guide to routes, though; it is, at least as much, a collection of rather vivid descriptions of areas and hills, including features of interest and the pros and cons of different approaches. For the Scottish hills, the Munro definitions are interpreted generously, Beinn Dearg (Torridon), for instance, being included.

Inevitably, it will be compared with Donald Bennet's 'The Munros.' Both are trustworthy guides for the hillwalker, at least in summer, and likely sources of inspiration for future activity and recall of past memories. One might, at a pinch, take Bennet's book out on the hill; this one weighs twice as much, and one would not. It is also considerably more expensive. By its inclusion of the Munro tops and of the hills furth of Scotland, it covers a wider field. The individual walks tend to be longer and to include more tops than those in Bennet's book. In some respects, Butterfield's route descriptions are less detailed, but his book probably gives a stronger impression of what each hill or area is like. I sometimes wished for the conciseness of expression to be found in 'The Munro's.' The maps and photographs in the latter are excellent, but, partly thanks to the larger page size, those in the present book are even better. It is a very good buy.

H.F.W.T.

Scrambles in Lochaber. – by Noel Williams, (Cicerone Press, 152 pages, with photographs and line diagrams, £5.95).

This guidebook covers the area within a 45 kilometre radius of Fort William, i.e. from Oban to Fort Augustus, and Mallaig to Loch Eriach, and describes seventy routes that can be regarded as scrambles. The term scramble embraces a wide spectrum of difficulty from steep rocky hill-walks to very respectable climbs like *Crowberry Ridge* (by one of its easier variations) which I have never regarded as a scramble. Surprisingly, *The North-east Ridge* of Aonach Beag which I would consider to be one of Lochaber's best scrambles has been left out, and *Tower Ridge* has been described by a way which seems unworthy of this grand route.

However, many unfrequented and out-of-the-way climbs are described, and herein lies the value of this guide, that it encourages the scrambler to leave the beaten tracks and find relatively untrodden ways up the mountains. Noel Williams has obviously explored some very remote corners of Lochaber and unearthed some very unfamiliar scrambles.

The routes are described in considerable detail, and are illustrated by line diagrams and the author's own photographs.

D.J.B.

The Great Walking Adventure. – By Hamish Brown, (Oxford Illustrated Press, 256 pages, 8 pages colour photographs, sketch maps and bibliographies, £8.95).

As we all know, Hamish gets around a bit. Here we have a collection of route descriptions and reminiscences of a number of his excursions in the (almost) horizontal, covering a variety of locales both in these islands and (much) further abroad. One is awed by his insatiable wanderlust.

The material (and the style) inhabit territory somewhere between Christian Bonington and Dervla Murphy. The prose, with its emphasis on parentheses (lots of them) make the going reminiscent at times of that elusive bit of scree somewhere in your left boot. That being said, for those who have an interest in mountains, places and people this

book will have something to offer other than the useful bibliographies and reminders that much good travelling country still exists. Those who have conquered the Weirbahn and are looking for new trails will find new dashed lines of infinite promise. The book is marred by the poor positioning of the excellent photographs and some sloppy printing in the review copy.

R. T. R.

Rock Climbs: Glen Nevis and the Lochaber Outcrops. – By Ed Grindley, (Cicerone Press, 129 pages, 467 routes, £5.95).

Outcrop climbing in Scotland is still increasing in popularity and the impressive number of new routes in the higher grades has made this new guide a necessity. Fortunately the guide has been written by a real enthusiast for the area, and it shows. Glen Nevis has always offered good climbing in the lower grades and now has a good range.

The guide has all the features required in a modern outcrop guide, including a star rating for quality. The writing is systematic and the book efficient to use, and no doubt many will do so this summer.

In the Polldubh area in the past, the problem has not been finding the route but finding the crag. One of the best features of this guide is the emphasis that has been put on crag location. The maps are good, with good reference to page numbers and the crag sections finish with a note of the nearest crag above. With the crags described layer by layer it makes it easy to follow the stars in whatever devious ascending line you choose. The assumption seems to have been made that on the way down you'll be heading only for the bar, because the crag below is unfortunately not listed.

A brief history is given at the start of each crag and replaces first ascent credits. An interesting idea which works well here in an area with a recent and not so varied history. The overall perspective is lost, however, but this could easily have been rectified by a better introduction, which could have included information about the rock, style of climbing etc. Whether the higher grades include the sporadic undergrading that afflicts other Scottish outcrops remains to be seen; some of the old faithfuls have been corrected (e.g. *The Old Wall*) and few will complain about that.

The price of £5.95 is not cheap for a thin guide but the high quality justifies a recommendation.

A. D. N.

Helyg – Climbers' Club

This is an excellent book, for not only does it celebrate the Diamond Jubilee of the Climbers' Club hut in the Ogwen Valley in North Wales, but also chronicles the climbing achievements of the club members and characters over the same period.

It becomes very clear that Helyg was largely responsible for the revival of an almost moribund club and that from the opening of the hut in 1925 the club went from strength to strength. The years from then until the outbreak of war were indeed Golden Years for the club and new routes of high quality and characters abound. Longland, Kirkus, Edwards, Bridge, Hargreaves, Walley, Noyce, they are all there.

There is one beautifully told story of Alf Bridge and Ivan Waller ostensibly going to Helyg for a few days climbing and although they did do the odd route, their main objective was a motor race in Dublin. Ivan was driver and Alf the riding mechanic and they won the race. Alf was welcomed home by his widowed mother with a beautiful put-down on his climbing holiday.

These two, Waller and Bridge, must have formed a formidable partnership for Alf was a steeplejack and had recently won a contract to examine the struts and girders of the Eiffel Tower against international competition. Alf calculated costs based on just himself, a new rope and rubbers, while everyone else costed for ladders, scaffolding and squads of men.

A very readable book and one cannot help thinking that the CIC hut will be 60 years old in 1989.

G. P.

Journals of Kindred Clubs

Himalayan Journals Vol 40 (1982-83) and Vol 41 (1983-84).

After a regrettable lapse of some years the Club has resumed exchange of Journals with the Himalayan Club. This comes at an appropriate time, for Scottish interest in Himalayan climbing is growing, with several expeditions to major peaks in the last few years, while the Himalayan Journal, under the able editorship of Harish Kapadia, is the most authoritative English-language source of information about the Indian and Nepalese Himalayas. (Its coverage of Pakistan and China is, unfortunately, less complete). Volume 40 has a large British contribution (Doug Scott on Shishapangma, Allen Fyffe on Bhagirathi III, Martin Moran on Bhagirathi I, Crispin Agnew on Api, Steve Venables in Kishtwar, Chris Bonington and Roy Lindsay in Gangotri, Mike Searle in Ladakh); but perhaps of greater interest, because less accessible elsewhere, are the articles on Indian, Japanese and East European expeditions. Harish Kapadia himself almost invariably has an article about some out of the way place with splendid panorama pictures, while Volume 41 includes accounts of three Indian expeditions to the high peaks of the Eastern Karakoram some of which have recently been opened to foreigners. There may be nothing quite as whimsical as our own Notes but it is not all plain expedition fare. William McKay Aitken takes us on a ramble through the Himalayan Club Library and a lighthearted trip on a Himalayan railway, A. D. Moddie gives us thoughtful reflections on Himalayans tourism and Zen, and there is a most instructive piece on mountain photo orientation by Jagdish Nanavati.

G.C.

The American Alpine Journal, 1986.

Under the editorship of H. Adams Carter, we have come to expect a very high standard of production, accuracy and literature. Nevertheless, the 1985 Journal is outstanding. Even the standard chronological accounts read well and only the occasional page drags. The subject matter is much of heady big mountain drama. However, though the sincerity of an author's writing stands out, the odd phrase may rest uneasily on the cerebral lobes of our own regular readers e.g. 'long nights in the arms of my loved one.' No doubt American readers meet equivalent cultural differences in our Journals.

A gallery of paintings followed by two very good, sensitively written big wall articles lead us to the subpolar giants of Alaska. A harrowing account of a retreat down *The South Face* of St. Elias emphasises the 'out over the edge' nature of the mammoth Alaskan faces.

Charles Houston's 'Agonising Decisions' concentrates on the appalling scenario of having to abandon an injured companion. Elsewhere, Houston contributes two topical articles on altitude sickness. The rock athletes are also graced with a medical opinion advising a hand taping, essential for repeated insertions into jam cracks hotching with crystals. (Important footnote: shave hands before applying sticky tape).

An article on the American success (by a sole member) on Everest's *North Face* shows again how infinitesimally thin the line has become with the recent oxygenless ascents. I like the unconscious throwaway line 'as I had lost part of my left lung on K2 in 1978, it was decided I would use the only bottle.' Elsewhere, Scott's epic on Makalu keeps one from dozing off by even the warmest bothy fireside.

The 'magnum opus' of the Journal is Adams Carter's 'Classification of the Himalaya.' Fortunately, some areas, as in Bhutan still hold out against such uniquely human pedantic activity. Thirty-two pages list all peaks (now just exactly what defines a separate peak?) over 6500 metres and many over 6000 metres. Summits are firmly pinned down by 3-D co-ordinates. Thus, the now enormous problem of the 'worthwhile objective' is much diminished and all that is left for the researcher is to coincide his own frame with any one of the co-ordinates.

Antarctica's mountaineering history and geography are also usefully summarised.

The photographs are inspiring and informative (but don't miss the canoeists in the Braldu gorge!) Researchers after 'big problems' will find the expeditions section as comprehensive as any in the English language. Borrow this ASAP from the club library (once I've had another wee read, of course).

D.R.

La Revista del Club Alpino Italiano 107th year, No. 1.

Even if one cannot read Italian, this is well worth perusing for the advertisements and colour pictures. For the numerically inclined there is a learned discourse on 'when is a slope steep,' which for ski-mountaineering purposes would appear to be rated at 45 degrees. There is a useful list of telephone numbers of ALL the huts in Italy belonging to CAI.

Appalachia Summer, 1985.

If the SMCJ be essentially a literary magazine, Appalachia is a literary and scientific magazine, and well worth perusing, though its concerns are essentially regional (New England), the articles reveal a wide interest, and the doings of some very able climbers. But it's a little bit long winded by SMC standards.

Appalachia Bulletin Jan/Feb 1986.

It's only when one reads a bulletin like this that one realises that out there there are literally thousands upon thousands of people ready to invade the mountains if only someone would lead them. The adverts are amusing, and could be useful to the intending visitor to N America.

Polar Record No. 142, January 1986.

A journal essentially for the arctic scientist this particular issue holds no special interest for then mountaineer.

M.S.

New Zealand Alpine Journal 1985.

A really good journal. Lots of material - 53 articles on a wide range of subjects, mostly home grown mountaineering and rock-climbing but also plenty from further afield, including the Antarctic and South Georgia. A section for those who wish to 'fossick through the tailings' deals with more obscure subjects, such as botany, carrier pigeons, cannibal spiders and an article on our very own Hamish MacInnes.

There is little that is controversial or opinionated and the journal lacks a little in humour. The photos are excellent, especially those in colour, but the strength of the journal lies in the accounts of hard climbs in the Southern Alps, often on 'Weet Bix' rock and with the dreaded 'Nor-wester' fast approaching.

G.S.N.

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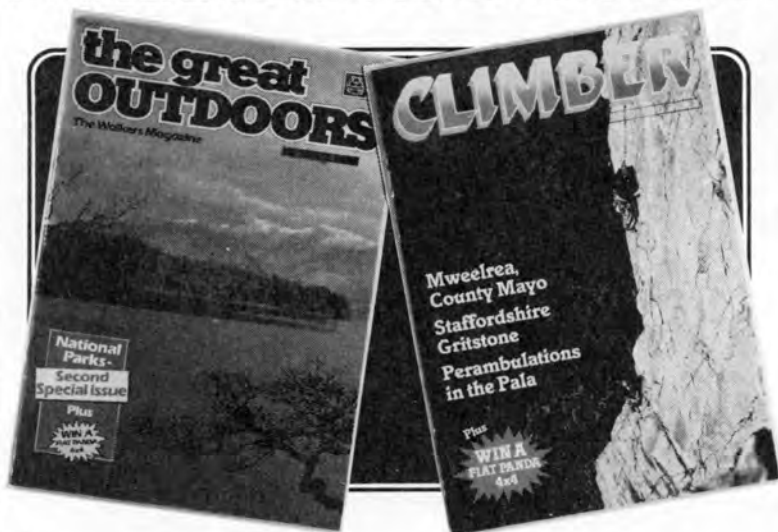
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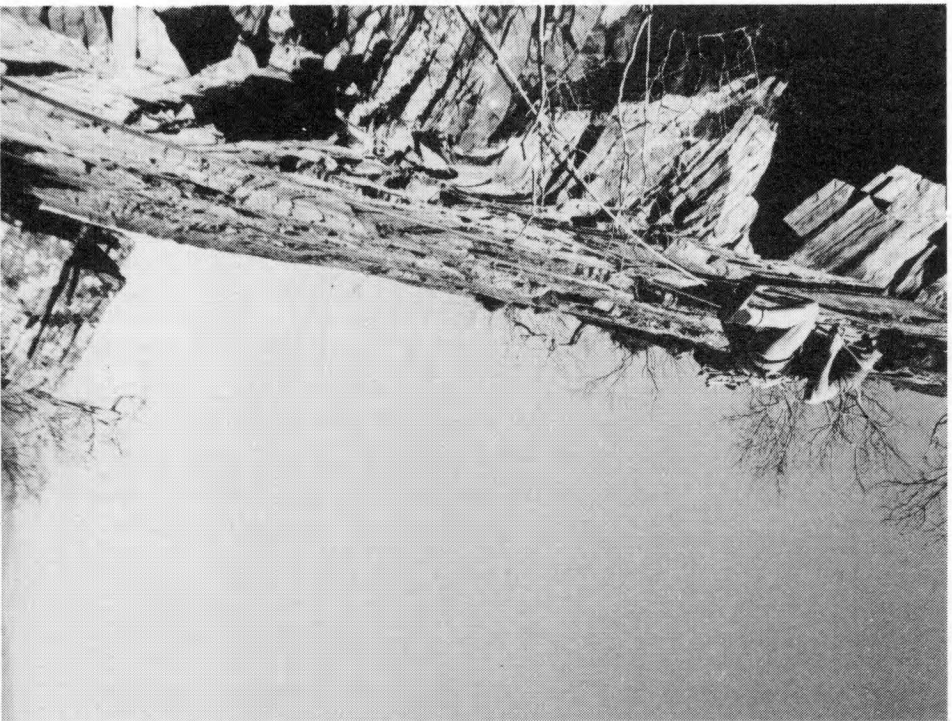


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