

THE
SCOTTISH
MOUNTAINEERING
CLUB JOURNAL



VOL. XXXIII

No. 178

1987

CONTENTS

	PAGE
30 YEARS AGO by L. S. Lovat - - -	389
THE ENDURING IMAGE By Donald M. Orr - -	397
BEN MUICH DHUI AND BEN NEVIS - - -	401
NO ENTRY FOR THE VEEPEES By Philip Gribbon -	405
THE LEGEND OF THE SPACEWALK GANG	
By D. F. Cassidy - - - -	408
SUMMIT SEARCH By H. M. Brown - - -	417
SPACE-TIME EXCERPTS FROM THE HILLS	
By Des Rubens - - - -	419
EVEN THE WIND WAS SILENT By Malcolm Slessor -	424
A SUNNY BEACH By Sandy Allen -	427
HILL WALKS IN FRANCE By D. W. I. Piggott -	430
M'GOUN REVISITED By Hamish M. Brown -	434
TWO SIDES OF GASHBRUM IV By Allan Shand -	442
ON THE HILLS By Tom Rix - - - -	447
DAWN ON OLYMPUS By Theo Nicholson - -	448
NEW CLIMBS SECTION	
WINTER GRADINGS - - - -	451
NEW CLIMBS - - - -	451
MISCELLANEOUS NOTES - - - -	514
TECHNICAL SECTION	
COMPOSITE MATERIALS - - - -	519
SCOTTISH MOUNTAIN ACCIDENTS, 1986 - -	520
IN MEMORIAM	
JOHN HARTOG - - - -	536
JOE DELLA PORTA - - - -	537
DENIS PILKINGTON - - - -	537
KENNETH HUNTER - - - -	538
PROCEEDINGS OF THE CLUB - - - -	539
J.M.C.S. REPORTS - - - -	542
S.M.C. AND J.M.C.S. ABROAD - - - -	544
REVIEWS - - - -	548
OFFICE BEARERS - - - -	562

EDITED BY K. V. CROCKET

Published by THE SCOTTISH MOUNTAINEERING CLUB

Printed in Scotland by Culross (P) the printers, Coupar Angus, Perthshire

Copyright © 1987 Scottish Mountaineering Club, Edinburgh

ISSN 0080-813X

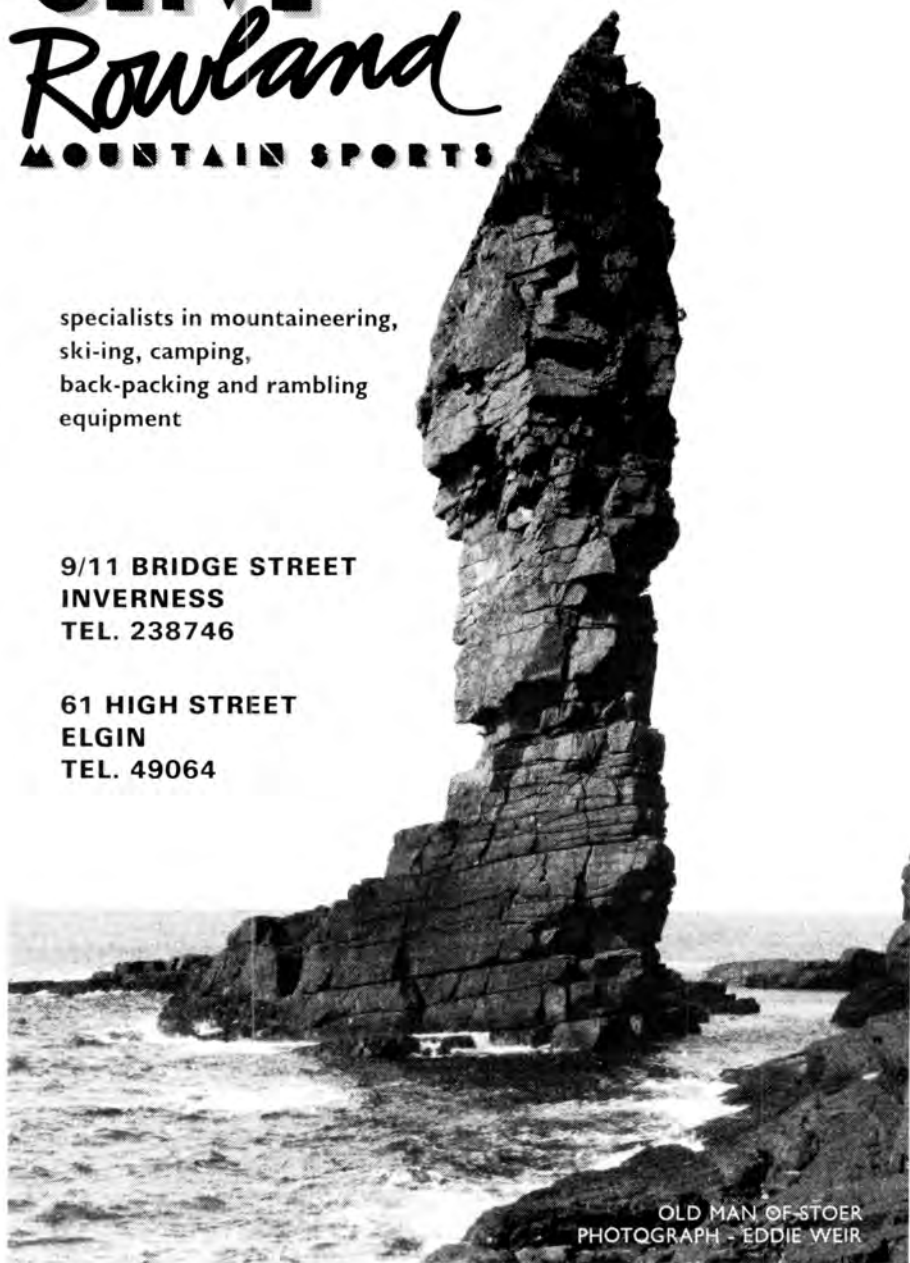
Distributed by Cordee, 3a De Montfort Street, Leicester LE1 7HD

CLIVE *Rowland* **MOUNTAIN SPORTS**

specialists in mountaineering,
ski-ing, camping,
back-packing and rambling
equipment

**9/11 BRIDGE STREET
INVERNESS
TEL. 238746**

**61 HIGH STREET
ELGIN
TEL. 49064**



OLD MAN OF STOER
PHOTOGRAPH - EDDIE WEIR

AA**

RAC**



Glenspean Lodge Hotel, Roy Bridge
INVERNESS-SHIRE

Telephone SPEAN BRIDGE 224

The hotel stands in its own grounds 2 miles east of Roy Bridge on the A84 overlooking Monessie Gorge. The hotel is warm and tastefully decorated with an excellent cuisine. Shooting and fishing are available by arrangement and there are unrivalled opportunities in the neighbourhood for hill walking and rock climbing. There are laundry and good drying facilities available to guests.

Resident Proprietors: Mr & Mrs NEAL MACPHERSON SMITH



Photo: Alan Leary

The 'e.1 tilt' of Slime Wall; Crux pitch of Guerdon Grooves

THE SCOTTISH
MOUNTAINEERING
CLUB JOURNAL

VOL. XXXIII

1987

No.178

THIRTY YEARS AGO

By L. S. Lovat

IT HAS been said of *Homo sapiens* that he not only survived the Ice Age but even advanced before it retreated. When Ben Nevis made its annual reversion to the Ice Age in February 1957, there was not much sapientia apparent in the heads of the curious homines who assembled below its ice-falls and relished the irrational prospect of hours and days of high-angle step-cutting. They included Tom Patey and Graeme Nicol, John Cunningham and Mick Noon, Hamish MacInnes, Douglas Scott, Norman Tennent, Malcolm Slessor, Donald Bennet and myself. Had an innocent stranger entered the CIC Hut, he would have found the corporate eccentricity intolerable.

I had known Patey and Nicol, a pair of amiable fanatics, for some years and had climbed with Patey in the Cairngorms and in Chamonix. They belonged to that trail-blazing élite from Aberdeen, Brooker, Taylor, Leslie, Grassick and others of that ilk. We therefore re-united and went round in mist and wind to the Little Brenva Face, on which no winter route had been made, and promptly made one by a pleasing line of least resistance – The Cresta Climb. As was his wont, Nicol punctuated the climb with ominous quotations from the writings of the pre-war German north-face men. The snow and ice were in excellent condition and we climbed the 900 ft. route in three hours.

Three hours! The modern climber, with superior technique and tackle, will shoot up that route in a fraction of that time. He must remember that the reptilian climber of the 50's wore boots¹ without crampons and usually carried one ice-axe only. Unless steps could be kicked, they had to be cut. When the leader reached a steep pitch, he cut foot-and hand-holds. If he had a short axe or an extra slater's hammer with the pick flattened to an adze (which I favoured), so much the better. But an 80 ft. ice-pitch,

¹On this ascent L. S. Lovat was wearing Vibram-soled boots with no crampons (Ed.).

for example, could occupy a leader for one to two hours, as he cut a ladder of holds. It could be hard going, holding on, hacking overhead, panting, face mottled with snow spume and moving up cannily, often with no protection, for ice pitons were rare. But it was an endurance test for the man below, looking up amidst showers of spiculae, paying out rope with agonising slowness and stamping the feet to keep out the insidious cold. I have written elsewhere: - 'Even in halcyon conditions, there is a purgatorial element in ice-climbing, a temporary suffering from which one will often emerge elated if unpurified.' In 1957 these words held good. Yet those distant, hard days on snow and ice tend to stay in the memory longer than many of the rock-climbs, which were on the whole less demanding.

The Cresta Climb was repeated two days later by Slessor and Tennent, who found a better finish to it. Meanwhile, Bennet and I made the first winter ascent of No. 3 Gully Buttress in 2½ hours. The snow-ice was sound, the route was very exposed but not difficult and the huge, white curtains of cliff around us emphasised our minute position. A mellow, afternoon sun enlivened the deadly plateau and kindled in the clear air the far-off ranges and islands.

Most of us had to be back in Glasgow that night and at work next morning. That day, Patey, Nicol and MacInnes, with the time to risk a long siege or worse, made the famous first ascent of Zero Gully in 5 hours only. Patey's written account of it has passed into legend, as he himself has.

On the following week-end, Jimmy Marshall, Ian Haig and George Ritchie on one rope and Bill Greaves and I on another made the first winter ascent of Lady's Gully on the Buachaille Etive Mor in 4½ hours. The 150 ft. wall and the summer crux above did not give in easily. There were several ice-pitches below the junction, at which, for the sake of exploration, they took the left fork and we took the right. When this big gully is in good condition, rare enough due to its low elevation, it will give a sporting and varied climb.

John Cunningham and Mick Noon on the same day made the first winter ascent of that uniquely awkward gully, Deep-Gash Gully, on the North Face of Aonach Dubh. It required ingenious antics, swinging on and climbing the rope, going feet first through a small hole to reach an ice overhang and steep snow to finish. John met me after it, emitted one of his satirical laughs and described it as 'Ghastly,' which caused me to disqualify myself for life from attempting it.

The spring and summer found us frequently on the Buachaille, the most elegant peak in Scotland, 'sounding a clarion call to

climbers' aspirations' as Marshall brilliantly phrased it elsewhere. When I first climbed it in January 1949, I resolved that of all mountains it was to be my natural habitat. Where else, therefore, to celebrate my 60th birthday in July, 1986, than on the rocks of the Buachaille with Tom Weir, climbing companion of a lifetime? Though bearing no resemblance to Peter Pan, Weir at 71 years of age, showed that day, as he always has, an ever-young enthusiasm and energy unsurpassed by anyone I have known. Our pleasure on the Buachaille remained undiminished.

In 1957 and before it, during those days of single-minded and, for me, intolerant devotion to the crags, our parties did not tarry at the little, hanging garden between the waterslide and the start of Curved Ridge to admire the Rose-Root, Dryas and other flora. We probably did not even hear the chirping of the accompanying Meadow Pipits or the chack-chacking of the occasional Ring Ousel. We could not wait to get our philistine fingers on to the first incuts of some wall, which was drawing us like a veritable magnet. We were not alone in this. There was a kind of Buachaille fraternity, formed over the years, drawn from many clubs and places, fore-gathering at Lagangarbh and Jacksonville, converging on the peak, exchanging esoteric information and going up and down routes all day, entirely voluntarily and in a state of bliss. Had some Soviet prison-camp chief ordered us to do it, we would have dubbed it an outrage and kicked him in the teeth. John Cunningham, Bill Smith, Mick Noon, Pat Walsh, Bob Hope, Willie Rowney, Hugh Currie, John Cullen, Charlie Vigano and Hamish MacInnes were among those members of the Creagh Dhu club in this condition. Of the SMC and JMCS, Jimmy Marshall, Archie Hendry, George Ritchie, Joe Griffin, Derek Leaver, Jim Clarkson, Ken Bryan, Martin Thom, Charlie Wood, Dan Goldie, George Sutherland, Jim Simpson, Tom Weir and I were among the worst afflicted about 1957. There were others, of course, too many to list here.

The gear was basic for all standards of climbing. Vibrams or Kletterschuhe (no P.A.'s then), two or three slings and karabiners, a piton or two for emergency only on a new route and 120 feet of medium nylon rope. Helmets were unknown and étriers were not carried. We moved light-footed on long run-outs, secure in the belief that the leader would not fall. By modern standards we were ill-prepared. Despite this, the Creagh Dhu, in particular, had created a network of first class routes on the Buachaille and elsewhere. Cunningham and Smith had raised climbing standards away beyond the previous level from 1946 onwards and they and their club-mates continued to do so.

For three years I had been climbing mainly with Jimmy Marshall and we were often joined by Archie Hendry and George Ritchie, who were veterans. Our permutations on many routes worked extraordinarily well, if one considers a quartet so disparate. The veterans were entertainingly contrasted – Archie, reserved and sardonic, wincing on a delicate pitch while George, volatile and flamboyant, shouted something provocative. The saving grace was humour, not always gentle and kind. When a hapless Anglo-Saxon, baffled by the convergence of Central Buttress and nearby rocks, asked ‘Where am I?’, Archie’s acerbic response was ‘You’re on the Buachaille.’ But then, none of us could claim the Christian virtue of meekness.

We had great fun on many routes that summer, making some new ways and checking old ones for my edition of the Glencoe and Ardgour guide. There is no point in supplying an inventory. One choice Buachaille day that summer stands out vividly. There was an aura of the unknown surrounding Guerdon Grooves on the West Face of North Buttress, first climbed by Cunningham and Smith in June 1948. It was 540 feet in length, Very Severe and, in 1957, the only route from the lower tier of the wall to the top. Archie and Jimmy on one rope and George and I on the other climbed it on a beautiful June day. I wrote in the 1959 Guide that the West Face had ‘an evil tilt.’ The route followed open grooves, slanting upwards and overlooking the deep slit of Raven’s Gully. A leader coming off could fall into the gully. A second coming off might swing into it at certain points. There was a run-out of 150 feet on the crux pitch. The climbing was delicate and called for careful route-finding on sound rock but with minimal protection. We loved it. We trod up the dry, grey, tilting rocks with élan to the summit of the buttress. After a morsel or two of my food – Marshall invariably ate my marmalade rolls while insisting that they were ‘Gobi Desert.....faecal deposits’ – he and I then climbed Bludger’s Route, by contrast, short and strenuous on account of overhangs. From the summit, we looked out across the desolate steppes, the melancholy wasteland of Rannoch Moor, dappled by small reed-beds and tiny lochans, to Schiehallion. ‘This is living’ said Marshall. Aye, Buachaille days – some of the best mountain days of our lives! The ubiquitous Weir would agree. He has described in ‘Classic Rock’ two such marvellous days, which he and I shared, and he has done it with an art which matches the quality of those days.

In mid-July, Marshall and I were beyond Innsbruck, lured over the Brenner by the siren-songs of the Dolomites and heading for Bolzano and the Adige, where the lemon-blossoms grow and all that. In the Contrin Hut below the Marmolada, we dreamt

of palisades of sun-warmed pinnacles. On the South Wall of the Marmolada, where we cut our Dolomite teeth, the rocks were damp, the rain came on as we finished the route and the snow fell in the afternoon. We might as well have been on the Orion Face. But there was a grand ceilidh in the hut that night with congenial Italian climbers parodying English pop stars and roaring out 'Volare' and other hits. 'Whaur's yir CIC noo?' we thought. One huge, bovine German, who did not, of course, understand the 'codology,' volunteered a solo and bellowed his way through 'Santa Lucia,' while the Italians nearly prostrated themselves laughing. But I confess that in two other huts, Jimmy and I were asked if we were Germans, which we took greatly amiss. It had been bad enough, in the past, to be mistaken for English.

After another poor day on the Pic Ombretta, we went to Sella and climbed the North Ridge of Il Pollice in rain turning to snow. On the following day we traversed, in steady drizzle, the mist-enwrapped prows of the Cinque Dita. We might as well have been on the Cuillin, that accursed range where, on all visits, I have been followed by a personal rain-cloud which has burst on every route. But morale remained high because humour prevailed and blended, his mercurial and mine saturnine; and gradually the rewards began to follow with the spectacle of ash-grey minarets and walls and elegant routes on the North-West Arête of the Second Sella Tower and the Via Vinatzer of the Third.

Now it was bundle and go to Cortina, Misurina and the Locatelli Hut in glorious weather. We marched through the dark shades of woods on a confetti of pine-needles into the glare of sun in the meadows and the chiming of cow-bells. Turning a bend, we saw the staggering vision of that unique trinity, that tricuspid rock creation – the Tre Cime del Lavaredo – and we yearned to attain it.

One route there will convey the idyllic quality of a great Dolomite day. It was the Spigolo Giallo Comici (the yellow edge) of the Anti-Cima Piccola, described by Cassin in his recent autobiography as follows: – 'It is a stupendous and elegant route, as direct and perfect as the maestro himself. On the south corner below the summit, it goes straight up from one overhang to the next.' As we walked towards the Spigolo in the early morning, scores of swifts were scything through the scented air. We sat down to survey the route. The green sward was stippled with poppies and dragon-flies were darting and hovering. Above the scree-slope was our line, the vertical, yellow edge of a tower of rock, soaring upwards for a thousand feet. Jimmy set off up the first pitch, a wide dièdre of shattered rock, to a ledge where I

took over in the usual through-lead style. But I was so eager that instead of belaying at the top of the second pitch, I went straight on, absorbed, up the third pitch. It steepened and closed in, so that I was straddling the walls, until I reached a daunting overhang. I attached a runner, muscled up a crack (one of the hardest sections of the Spigolo) and arrived at a broad ledge about 140 feet above Jimmy. I was mildly gratified when Jimmy, unaware that I had combined two pitches, joined me with an exhalation of breath and the words 'What a pitch!' For about 400 feet we went on steadily upwards, relishing the sensational positions, the genial sun and, in the distance, the dark coniferous woods tilting over to a glen far below. Above was a succession of challenging pitches. One crucial pitch, led by Jimmy, involved a hard and exposed traverse, with the odd, protective piton. While on it, Jimmy called out encouragingly 'Just like Peasants' Passage!' – Willie Rowney and Hamish MacInnes please note – and I then savoured it with the sangfroid of a Buachaille connoisseur. The yellow arête ended with some strenuous sections. Finally, with elation tinged with regret, we came to the summit and to the end of this idyll, which had lasted a few hours only but had already borne the fruit of a life-time memory.

On our Dolomite climbs we had a very small supply of slings, étriers and pitons and agreeably light sacks. We had hoped to climb the North Face of the Cima Grande, but learned from the hut guardian that guides had just removed most of the fixed pitons and flattened some that they could not remove! We simply did not have sufficient pitons. So we romped up the delightful North-East Ridge of the Cima Grande before leaving for the Falzarego Pass. There, we made a quick ascent of the South Face of the Torre Grande d'Averau by the 500 ft. Via Dimai. Due to a gross excess of buttery rolls just eaten, I felt queasy and resigned the lead of an overhanging pitch, saying that I was off-form. Marshall rebuked me. I then mildly claimed the climber's right to have an 'off-day.' Marshall, censorious, invalidated this with words of indictment – 'A man of your quality should never have an off-day!' thus implying that to have one was to prove one's lack of quality. But he relented and led that pitch and all the rest of this miniature classic. That evening, we saw for the last time the sunset rose-glow on the Dolomite Campaniles and in two days travelled by Venice and across the plains to Courmayeur below Mont Blanc.

What a stunning contrast! In glaring sunshine we pounded up and over the brim of the huge corrie, where the Noire Hut nestles below the Aiguille Noire de Peuteret. Our aim was to climb the 4,500 ft. South Ridge, up the spine of the five great,

hunched towers which leap to the summit. We were relieved to find that the only other party planned another route.

Back to the frowsy Alpine start! We roped up on the Pic Gamba at 4.30 a.m. Division of leads was by towers and not by pitches. Since we believed that to carry bivouac equipment was to bivouac, we did not carry it. We intended to be back in the hut for a leisurely dinner.

The two hardest pitches were on the Pointe Brendel and on the Fifth Tower respectively. Marshall led the Brendel and with it the 'Ressaut en demi-lune,' a pitch of character on a steep wall capped by an overhang. I watched him moving smoothly over the overhang, his figure projecting beyond reddish granite into a sky of almost oppressive blue. The rocks reflected the great heat and the horizon peaks seemed utterly remote. Our occasional calls emphasised the immense silence.

The Fifth Tower fell to me and with it the 35 metre dièdre followed by a right traverse below overhangs on a sloping, interrupted slab. The dièdre was in the cold shadow of the West flank and contained a lot of verglas, causing me to tip-toe delicately. When I completed the crucial traverse, I emerged from the shade into the searchlit brilliance of the arête.

We reached the summit of the Aiguille at 2.30 p.m., ten hours of sustained enjoyment from the lowest rocks. We could afford to take our ease. Mont Blanc and all the jagged entourage of peaks smouldered in the all-embracing heat. That spectacle of beauty and tranquillity survives in the memory.

Unroped, we cantered down the broken rocks of the long and dull South-East Ridge and arrived at the hut for dinner. It was the end of a mountain day of magnificent character; and it was the end of an Alpine holiday par excellence.²

Most of our free-climbing technique in 1957 was not much different from that of the previous 25 years; and, in the Alps, some of us were adapting to a degree that artificial technique which had already been developed by the great European climbers of the 1930's. But one did not have to look far in 1957 to see, emerging all over Scotland, a new breed of younger climbers, who were not content to use this out-dated technique and equipment. There was about that time an evolution of superior and safer technique with a proliferation of equipment designed for hard rock and ice. This brought a change of attitude and it enabled the venturesome race of young mountaineers to perform to the utmost margin of their skill from Scotland to the Himalaya.

²On the South Ridge of the Aiguille Noire de Peuterey most parties required one bivouac; Robin Smith took 17 hours (Ed.).

And so it has continued to the present day, so that the roll of their names is far too great to call.

What do we all share? Is it just a common interest in a high-level rock and ice gymnasium? Are we solely concerned with degrees of difficulty or scale or technique? Surely not. Mountaineers are varied and change but the mountains remain constant in what they offer to the generations who find adventure on them. They offer, beyond difficulty or scale, a far greater dimension, which is complex and probably beyond rational analysis; but it is a dimension which is there for young and old. So I salute the young mountaineers of 1987 on their remarkable attainments. And I salute my old comrades of 1957 and remind them of the feeling behind the wistful words of George Meredith –

‘Would you know what it is to hope again and have
all your hopes at hand? Hang upon the crags at
a gradient that makes your next step a debate
between the thing you are and the thing you may
become.’

THE ENDURING IMAGE

By Donald M. Orr

HORATIO McCULLOCH (1805-67) was the foremost Scottish landscape painter of the nineteenth century romantic period and the one artist in Britain most interested in mountain subject matter.

Born in Glasgow, at a time when the Clyde was still a fine salmon river, he studied under John Knox, a panoramic landscape painter, and was later employed in Cumnock as a painter of snuff boxes and in Edinburgh as a colourist of anatomical drawings. Thereafter he turned to landscape painting travelling throughout the north and west of Scotland in search of the vistas and prospects that had inspired his tutor, fired many of Scott's Highland romances, and taken Queen Victoria to Balmoral and Lochnagar.

By the 1830's he was a member of the Royal Scottish Academy, not yet forty, a bachelor, and the possessor of a pronounced sense of humour. While visiting his mother and sister in Hamilton in 1835 he borrowed an elephant from a menagerie and rode through the town in the moonlight, creating panic in the citizens of first floor apartments.

Art in Scotland had long been dominated by the themes of Man, set in, or viewing, his environment. The European fusion of Art and Religion, Philosophy and Nature that flourished in the Romantic period did not fare well in the Calvinist North. Schlegel's 'Symbolic representation of the infinite' and the use of allegorical images played little part in the development of McCulloch's work. The main features of his work can be seen in 'Glencoe' (1864) where the use of brown tones, so common in Victorian painting, combine to produce a massive solidity, more realistic and more mindful of appearances, particularly in the subtle transitional sweep to the cooler colours of Coire an Lochan and the sky beyond. He takes fewer liberties than his contemporaries and captures the truth and spirit of the place.

Throughout McCulloch's work there is found none of the mountain mysticism that is so much part of the great German landscape painter Friedrich's art. We find none of the atmospheric effects of Turner or McTaggart; none of the philosophical symbolism of John Martin. In 'Glencoe,' as in the glen itself, we are faced with the mountain mass -

'A company of mountains, an upthrust of mountains
a great garth of growing mountains
a concourse of summits, of knolls, of hills,
coming on with a fearsome roaring.'¹

His painting of 'Glencoe' contains some magnificent areas of drawing and reveals an incredible understanding of the structure of mountains and a subtle appreciation of the voids and defiles that make up the mountain scenery. His 'grandiose but empty style'² may have been more scenic than the pictorial qualities desired by the nineteenth century academies but his treatment of landscape was realistic in intention and application.

It is not just McCulloch's artwork that is inspirational: the journey to Glencoe in 1864 must have been an expedition in the fullest sense of the word. General Wade had avoided the glen in the previous century because of the difficulties in negotiating the gorge of the River Coe and had taken his military road over the Devil's Staircase to Kinlochleven. It was noted in 1907 and remained true for many years that,

'the fact remains that those climbers, and they are a strong majority, who reside in southern Britain can get to the Alps more quickly and more easily than to the best of the Scottish climbing centres.'³

His titles reflect the wider extent of his travels in Scotland: 'The Head of Loch Awe,' 'Loch Goil,' 'Loch Eck,' 'Kinlochaline Castle, Morven,' and his last great work 'Loch Maree,' painted in 1866, the year before his death.

In 'Loch Maree,' which is closely related to 'Glencoe' in style and painted two years after, is reflected again his great understanding of space folded by mountain ridges. His foreground drawing of rocks reveals thorough observation and his inclusion of cattle does not stand as the usual cliché, rather as a finely integrated aspect of the composition which starts a dramatic spatial movement through the work.

Anyone who has recently travelled from Aberfoyle to the Trossachs over the Dukes Pass knows what a tortuous, twisting switchback it is. In the mid-nineteenth century when McCulloch passed over it on his way to Loch Katrine, filled no doubt by Scott's images from 'The Lady of the Lake,' to paint 'The Silver Strand' and 'Ben Venue,' it is distinctly possible that 'road' would not have been a strictly applicable term.

¹Sorley Maclean, Kinloch Ainort.

²Sir James L. Caw, 'Scottish Painting Past and Present.'

³George D. Abraham, 'The Complete Mountaineer.'

In 1848 he married Marcella McLennan of Gillean in Skye and embarked on another series of journeys to the then distant and wild places.

'.....when the wild Atlantic storms sweep across the mountains; when the streams gather in volume, and the bare rock faces are streaked with the foam of a thousand waterfalls; when the wind shrieks amongst the rock pinnacles, and the sky, loch and hillside is one dull grey, the Coolin can be savage and dreary indeed.'⁴

It was not until the turn of the century that steamship and train reached the north and west of Scotland and even then travel was a lengthy and uncomfortable business:

'Even nowadays from London it takes almost as long to reach Sligachan Hotel, which is practically the only centre, as it does to travel to Grindlewald. The most picturesque means of approach is by utilising the ordinary tourist steamers, which, starting from Glasgow sail up the western coast by Oban and round Ardnamurchan Point, where the Atlantic swell may necessitate a short retirement from the enjoyment of the beauties of Nature. The quickest journey can be made almost wholly by railway via Glasgow, Fort William and Mallaig, whence a short sea trip of about five hours will land the traveller in Portree.'³

McCulloch's link with the contemporary mountain scene is quite direct. The acceptance of physical dangers and the acknowledgement of hardship as a fact of life in remote areas ally him to the modern mountaineer with whom these qualities are shared. His travels in Torridon and Skye brought back the first visual indication of what the Cuillin might contain and which left Collie a vast amount to do in the 1880's.

'Nowhere in the British Islands are there any rock climbs to be compared with those in Skye, measure them by what standards you will; length, variety or difficulty. Should anyone doubt this let him some fine morning walk up from the foot of Coruisk to the rocky slabs at the foot of Sgurr a' Ghreadaidh. There he will see bare grey rocks rising out from the heather not 500 feet above the level of the loch, and these walls, ridges, and towers of weather worn gabbro stretch with hardly a break to the summit of the mountain, 2,800 feet above him.'⁵

⁴J. N. Collie, 'A Chuilionn,' SMCJ, 4, 1897, pp. 259-266.

³George D. Abraham, 'The Complete Mountaineer.'

⁵J. N. Collie, 'Climbing on the Himalaya and other Mountain Ranges.'

It is clear that Scotland in the mid nineteenth century possessed the same explorative quality and sense of mystery that today's mountaineers acknowledge in western China.

'The North, just now, might be in Africa, for all we ken about it: nobody dare venture there except in arms.'⁶

The man and his work are now largely neglected. Of his canvases in public collection most will be found lying unseen in the cellars of the municipal galleries, rejected and disowned as hackneyed, romantic, Victorian landscapes.

'Highland cattle knee deep in the loch, mist covered mountains, crags and stags, lochs and rainbows. McCulloch was caught up in the Romantic Movement of the 19th Century, and has suffered the same eclipse as many of his cliché'd contemporaries.'⁷

Quite wrongly, as only in the paintings done by Loch Katrine are there definite literary romantic cross references. McCulloch expressed his romanticism within a painting language based on realism rather than the realms of 'The antler'd monarch of the waste.'⁸

There is no record of his output; the whereabouts of many of his canvases are unknown. He left few letters and much of his personal life is obscure, yet he was the foremost landscape painter of his day, an academician and a prominent member of Edinburgh society.

His visual records of the highlands relate directly to the work of modern wilderness photo-journalists who fill our winter lecture circuits and supply periodicals, no longer galleries, with today's mountain images. His realistic depiction of the raw, wild places of Scotland: his obvious love of desolate, remote areas incurs no feeling of isolation. He recorded throughout his life what he saw and felt in the mountains: the ageless feeling of challenge.

⁶Neil Munro, 'The New Road.'

⁷BBC Scotland, Spectrum Script.

⁸Sir Walter Scott, 'The Lady of the Lake.'

The Glasgow Art Gallery, Kelvingrove, has the largest collection of McCulloch's paintings – about 15 in all, including 'Glencoe,' 'Loch Maree,' and Kinlochaline Castle, Morven.' Many other works are in private ownership, while some may well have been lost, known only by prints. There are also McCulloch works in the National Gallery, Edinburgh, and in the municipal collections in Dundee and Perth. (*Photographs of 'Glencoe' and 'Loch Maree' are reproduced here by kind permission of the Glasgow Art Gallery and Museum, Kelvingrove.*)

WHICH IS HIGHER – BEN MUICH DHUI OR NEVIS?

In 1864 Blackwood's published a booklet by John Hill Burton entitled 'The Cairngorms.' The excerpts given here record the real doubt extant at that time about which was the highest mountain in Scotland. The Ordnance Survey was just beginning its war of attrition with the Munros, and soon put Ben Muich Dhui in its place, despite Burton's request for them to find in favour of Muich Dhui, his preferred candidate. He arrives at the summit of the Ben....

TURNING my eyes from the terrible fascinations of the precipice to the apex of the hill, now in full view, a strange sight there met them – a sight so strange that I venture to say the reader no more anticipates it than I did, at the moment when I looked from the yawning precipice to what I expected to be a solitary mountain-top. No experience or learning in mountain phenomena will help the reader in guessing what it was. It was neither more nor less than a crowd of soldiers, occupying nearly the whole table-land of the summit! Yes, there they were, British troops, with their red coats, dark-grey trousers, and fatigue caps, as distinctly as I had ever seen them in Marshall's panoramas or on the parade-ground of Edinburgh Castle!

Could it be some awkward squad sent to be drilled on this remote spot that it might escape the observation of the sarcastic public? Such were the theories as suddenly rejected as they were suggested. It was vain to speculate. No solution that could be devised made the slightest approach to probability; and the only prospect of speedy relief was in pushing rapidly forward. A very short sentence from the good-humoured-looking young fellows who received our first breathless and perplexed inquiry, solved the mystery, – 'Did you never hear of the Ordnance Survey?' To be sure everybody had heard of it; but the impression created concerning it was as of something like a mathematical line, with neither breadth or thickness; but here it was in substantial operation. The party were occupied in erecting a sort of dwelling for themselves – half tent, half hut. Though in fatigue dresses, and far from being very trim, it was easy to see that they were not common soldiers. They belonged to the educated corps of sappers and miners; and a short conversation with them showed that the reputation of intelligence and civility long enjoyed by that distinguished body had not been unjustly earned.

In the course of conversation with these friends, I alighted on a subject in which I had long taken an interest. They had already conducted some operations on Ben Muich Dhui, and they were

now commencing such surveys on Ben Nevis as would enable them finally to decide which of these mountains has the honour of being the highest land in the United Kingdom. Competition had of late run very close between them; and the last accounts had shown Ben Muich Dhui only some twenty feet or so ahead. I freely confess to a preference for Ben Muich Dhui, which the recent decision against him has not mitigated – indeed, one is always bound to back one's favourite the more warmly if he is unfortunate, and driven from the eminence to which he has been deemed entitled.

It is true that Ben Nevis is in all respects a highly meritorious hill. I must do justice to his manly civility and good-humour. I have found many a crabbed little crag more difficult of access; and, for his height, I scarcely know another mountain of which it is so easy to reach the top. He stands majestic and alone, his own spurs more nearly rivalling him than any of the neighbouring hills. Rising straight from the sea, his whole height and magnificent proportions are before you at once, and the view from the summit has an unrivalled expanse.

Still there are stronger charms about the cluster of mountains forming the Cairngorm range, of which Ben Muich Dhui is the chief or chairman. Surrounded by his peers, he stands apart from the everyday world in mysterious grandeur. The depth and remoteness of the solitude, the huge mural precipices, the deep chasms between the rocks, the waterfalls of unknown height, the hoary remains of the primeval forest, the fields of eternal snow, and the deep black lakes at the foot of the precipices, are full of such associations of awe and grandeur and mystery, as no other scenery in Britain is capable of arousing. The recollections of these things inclined me, even when standing on the rival's top, to put in a good word for Ben Muich Dhui; and before separating from these hermits of her Majesty's Ordnance, I requested, if they had any influence in the matter, that they would 'find' for my favourite, to which I shall now introduce my reader; but duty is peremptory, and they were subsequently bound to reveal the fact that Ben Nevis had it by a few feet.

AN EARLY DESCENT FROM BEN MACDHUI

The following is another excerpt from the booklet 'The Cairngorms,' published by Blackwood's in 1864. The author, John Hill Burton, records therein an incident from his boyhood when he lost his way descending from Ben Muich Dhui. If this event occurred, say, thirty years before 1864, then it is indeed an early record of a hill walking expedition in the modern sense. A century later, if you met a dozen people in Glen Avon they would in all probability be wearing fluorescent orange and be led by a youth leader. The picturesque ruffians who spoke the Gaelic and swore fluently in the Scottish vernacular are no more. It became necessary to move them on; they were unprofitable natives. Also of interest in this excerpt is the 'minimal technology' bothy, architecturally blended in with the mountain side to avoid visual pollution of the environment - an extraordinary modern concept.

ANOTHER adventure I remember in the same place, but that was long, long ago; in fact, it was when in boyhood I had first entered into that grand wilderness. Some note of the blunders that brought it about may be a seasonable warning to the unwary, of the characteristic difficulties and perils of the ground. I had reached the top of Ben Muich Dhui early in the day. The little wallet of provisions had been carelessly left on a tuft of heather where I had rested, and I could not afterwards find the spot. Somewhat tired and faint with hunger, I descended the rocks by the side of the cataract, believing that Loch Avon, seemingly so small from the summit of the mountain, was the little Tarn of Etichan, which had been passed in the ascent from Deeside. It was alarming to find the lake extending its bulk as I approached, and to see the glens looking so different from any of those I was acquainted with on Deeside; but to have returned up the mountain would have been insanity, and by pursuing the track of the stream, one is sure in the end - at least in this country - to reach inhabited land; so I followed the waters of the Avon, so deep and transparent, that many miles down, where they join the Spey, their deceptious character is embodied in the proverb -

'The water of A'an, it rins sae clear,
'Twould beguile a man o' a hunder year.'

A few miles below the exit of the stream from the loch, as the extreme dimness of the valley showed that sunset was approaching, I met a drover who had gone up into the wilderness in search of stray black cattle. He could speak little English, but was able to give me the startling intelligence that by what was merely a slight divergence at first, I had gone down towards the strath of the Spey instead of that of the Dee; and that I was some thirty miles from the home I had expected to reach that evening. My new

friend took me under his charge, and conducted me to a bothy, made of the bent roots of the pine-tree found in the neighbouring mosses, and covered with turf. It was so low that one could not stand upright in it, and a traveller might have walked over it without observing that it was an edifice made with human hands. The sole article of furniture of which it could boast was a trough, in which my new friend hospitably presented me with a supper of oatmeal and water – my first nourishment of the day. The supply was liberal, whatever might be thought of the quality of the repast. The floor of the bothy was strewn with heather, somewhat coarse and stumpy, on which I lay down and slept.

Conscious of a confused noise and a sort of jostling, it was with some surprise that I perceived that no less than ten men had crowded themselves into that little hut and had lighted a fire.

This was like a realisation of some of Cooper's romantic incidents, where, after a silent desert has been described, it somehow or other becomes suddenly full of people and fertile in adventure. My new companions were not of the most agreeable cast; they were rough and surly, hiding, as I thought, a desire to avoid communication under the pretence of inability to speak anything but Gaelic; while, in the midst of their Celtic communications with each other, they swore profusely in the Scottish vernacular. What their pursuits were, or what occasion they had to be in that wild region, was to me a complete mystery, opened up slightly by reflecting on the two great lawless pursuits, smuggling and poaching, of the fruit of neither of which, however, did I see any symptom. Such a position was not, for many reasons, great and small, to be envied: however, it was the best policy to make one of themselves for the time being, so far as their somewhat repulsive manners would permit.

It was not, however, with much regret, that, after having been packed for some hours with them on the hard stumps of heather, I left them in full snore at sunrise on a clear morning, and ascended the hill dividing the waters that run into the Spey from those which feed the Dee.

Today, Burton would have been aroused by the thrashing rotors of a big yellow helicopter, sent in pursuit by someone reporting his failure to report home on the previous evening.



Photo: Tom Weir

Len Lovat descending the Douglas Boulder, Ben Nevis, mid-1950s



George Armstrong on 2nd pitch of No. 6 Gully,
West Face of Aonach Dubh, Glencoe

Photo: Alan Lacey

NO ENTRY FOR THE VEEPEES**By Philip Gribbon**

'WHAT a pair!'

I opened the car boot, picked out mine, and in disgust flung them on the ground. One his, one hers, one right, one wrong. We had been about to make our way up to the hut. What to do?

We reversed the car and drove back down to the town. No luck, Nevisport never hires out boots. Think again. My companion displayed some mistrust: first he bought a more powerful head torch, then spare batteries. He was anticipating a prolonged evening on the march.

Now, I have a pal who has more boots at his finger tips than the Club would wear out in a year. Okay, turn right at Loch Eil, enter the portals, leave with some borrowed flimsy footwear. We parked at the golf course and wove across the fairway before teetering over the stile, whence plunging and ploughing we squelched into the morass marking the rising path. Dusk was coming quickly. We toiled in zig zags to the dam, we could just make out the dim distant hut. Two and a half hours had passed, we had gained nothing.

It is that kind of a walk, seldom memorable, always unignorable, often unmentionable. You need to keep going, to look for clues that loomed in the mist, the murky markers of the mind that measured out the last yards to the hut. We knew when it was close, but where exactly was it? There weren't any footprints in the snow, there wasn't even any snow, only an unmarked landscape, with everything unrecognisable, where undistinguished ribs were cut by swollen burns and big boulders pretended to be a high gable or sloping roof. We brooded with indecision, made a careful little exploration, saw in the gloom the familiar profile and staggered up the bank to the desolate hut.

Off with the packs, thump, tinkle... and a dark stain flooding through the fabric. A good claret was trickling away. It was also drizzling.

Out with the key. It isn't a secret that the door is a massive solid structure, weather and vandal proof, giving little encouragement to casual maurauders and itinerant locksmiths. Two keys are used, one opens the plate that protects the inner keyhold, the other allows access to the sanctum. We gazed contemplatively at our single key. Silly people! Oh well, practice a few maladroit skills, then place the key in the hole. Yes, all the way. What do

you mean it won't go? Try again. Dammit, I'll try it. It's the wrong key. Sillier people. Expletives deleted.

Disconcerted, we looked morosely at each other. Right, put on more clothes and prepare to wait. The mist layer was lifting and we saw down the valley. We caught a tantalising glimpse of a faint torch glimmer as it bobbed along the path. Someone was following us.

'Let's give him an hour,' estimated my friend. He had halved his own time in deference to an assumed faster ascent rate of his more youthful associate who in his turn was toiling up towards the hut. We, a pair of hooded guardian ghouls, shrank within ourselves, waiting and watching, with a foot stomp here and a quick step there. Nearer he came, his beam stotting at the edge of a wee bluff, tracing a furrow, swinging through the boulders, a figure that jiggled and dipped, coming up the final rise with a breathless rush, our laden harbinger of good cheer, the man with the key.

'Why aren't you inside?'

'We're waiting for you,' we replied with a humourless quip. 'Actually we're locked out. Given the wrong key. You've arrived to save us. Now you're here, Crocket, we can all get in. It's past ten o'clock, and we're fed up waiting.'

'Wait some more.' He dropped his sack by the door. Then turned to transfix us in his beam, and laughed maniacally in our faces. 'You won't believe this, Smart. I called, but there were no free keys available. He was a bit short. Swore you'd have one, and so you have. Ha, ha!'

We weren't enamoured by this misanthropic sense of humour but soon he too was caught in our dejected mood and lapsed into apathy against the wall. Our hopes were directed now at another twinkling light coming up the Allt a' Mhuillin. This should be my climbing partner Meldrum; he's always well organised, the custodian sends him a key.

None the less an hour before midnight the dark farce was due to be played again. The innocent newcomer, aglow and asteam, shed his load. First came the expected query, then the standard reply. His words were thoughtful and admirably controlled in the circumstances. 'I left my key in the car.'

Yes, a few minutes after setting off he remembered that his key was perched on the dashboard. However when he glanced up he had seen the flickers of our torches by the misty cliffs and assumed the best, but little did he know that he had witnessed the first non-arrival of the nebulous keys. Perhaps he wondered

when the lights continued to flash intermittently while the shuttered windows remained without light or life. Ahead, he mused, there were keys, bunches of them, so he walked onwards.

'I'll go down and get it,' he said. What a noble gesture, how selfless, but there was no alternative, no other key, no one else in sight. Down the slope he went in long bounds, he was definitely not in a dawdling mood, so we revised our estimated time for his return and piled into the radio shack. It was cramped and cosy in the pitch darkness, wedged upright, able to converse in disembodied voices. Now that we had extracted ourselves from the unpleasantness outside it was the right moment for the learned doctor to produce his bottle which he was keeping for medicinal purposes. It may have been merely plastic, but its contents were relaxing, warming and duty free. Minutes raced: a time of brooding contentment and slow thoughts, a nodding head and a snatch of sleep.

Wow, he couldn't be back so quickly. Impossible, but true.

Stick it in, twist and click, push hard, and we were into the porch of the hut.

I turned and looked out into the rain. I could see other torches making their way up the glen. More keys were coming up. The Vice-Presidents, Senior and Junior, were getting ensconced in front of the fire. Our achievement had taken eight hours.



PARADISE ROAD, SWISS ALPS, SWITZERLAND, 1977

John Mitchell 1977

THE LEGEND OF THE SPACEWALK GANG

By D. F. Cassidy

Back in the grey and murky mists of time
 When fate with playful subtlety sublime
 To its web those five men drew.
 And there entwined their fears and hopes
 Not to say their gear and ropes
 Then from that muddled, motley crew
 a legend grew.
 A doubtful tale of derring do
 On the North East Nose of Aonach Dubh

(From The Ballad of the Spacewalk Gang).

GOOD taste demands that this narrative be prefaced by a warning. The events to be unfolded contain unsavoury details, offensive to hard, free-climbing purists. As justification for the telling of this tale, remember that it was born at the dawn of our newly enlightened age, when ethical dilemmas which now preoccupy the teachers of our 'sport' were not so widely appreciated. The narrator, this prefatory warning notwithstanding, makes no apology for the tale, the events of which have assumed the character of legend in the oral traditions of those lesser men. Men who lurk anonymously in the shadow of the new order; men who blithely go forth from their secure niches to frighten themselves silly on forgotten steps, before crawling back once more, reality fading into the glorious distortion of memory.

This story's unique popularity and status as legend arises from its incorporation of so many of the elements now accepted as classical climbing folklore: the meeting of two parties, combined tactics, benightment, suspect rope, doubtful belay and the essential hair-trigger hold all appear. Considerable doubts have been cast on the factual basis of the story. To believe that so much could have happened to so many on such a short route demands dogged credulity. Like all legends, there is a foundation of fact. The principal protagonists, naturally defensive after the event, have all confirmed the essentials. On the other hand, if pressed for details, an alarming disagreement arises. Attempts to suggest a reconciliation lead only to heightened violence. The narrator has therefore simply recounted what he believes to be the received version.

By all accounts it was the back end of August. In Glencoe the hills had begun to bare their bones. The Don and CMC were scavenging at the foot of the North East Buttress on Aonach Dubh,

where the Don had been deflected for the moment from his relentless pursuit of long mountain days. At this point it may help to explain a little of our hero's psyche. We all have an image of ourselves that we clutch protectively. The less adept at concealment are more vulnerable to ridicule. The Don saw himself as the last of the Mountain Tigers. Like the sabre-tooth variety that preceded them, these are now destined for extinction. Only a very few remain to roam the hills and rattle their swords at the generation that succeeded the Crag Rats and Rock Athletes. The great handicap to a Mountain Tiger is the proliferation of new climbing equipment. This 'fear gear' is both a help and a hindrance. Every Tiger must have his redoubtable second, and this was the role that CMC was pressed to play. His resourcefulness *in extremis*, and instinct for the safe option went unquestioned. However, he had one great fault – he stubbornly refused to assume the role of Sherpa. Indeed, he expended much low cunning in carrying as little weight as possible, to the extent that he had on one occasion, purporting to trip, hurled himself at an unsuspecting boulder. In the darkness, he declared himself concussed, forcing the Don to carry both rucksacks. After this, the Don read of climbers with broken legs crawling down mountains, so that he was never such a soft touch again.

For this day the Don had in mind the Bidean. Again. Via the Crypt Route this time. And after that – they would see. CMC knew this for a reference to the Etive Slabs. Perhaps it was panic. Perhaps it was just impatience, but on this occasion CMC did not employ the considerate tactics normally adopted to restrain the Don's excesses. No. This time he went straight for the Don's weakness. (As the reader will have guessed this was not the classical hero's weakness. His lay at the other extremity – not in his heel but in his head).

CMC suggested that Mountain Tigers were no match for modern Crag Rats. Though spawned at the roadside, they could beat the Tigers in the mountains. The Don was shocked into stony silence. Not since Brutus stabbed Caesar had there been such a betrayal. In the shambles of his mind he clung to straws. 'Twas not so, it defied the natural order. Tigers were high. Rats were low.' CMC pressed on ruthlessly – the matter could be tested at a neutral venue. And so to the North East Nose of Aonach Dubh. Here, explained CMC, was an arena where the Tiger could measure himself against the Rats. Since TV cameras had endowed it with the necessary glamour, and furthermore shown it to be within reassuring proximity of the road, the Rats had made the effort to meet the mountains half way. They regularly pranced all over this bit of rock.

From their more than frequent escapes from certain disaster, it would appear that the very young and the very foolish enjoy the good offices of a guardian angel. For once the Don was receptive to the clamourings of his own guardian angel, who was screaming hysterically in his ear not to go on to this route. Though he lacked any depth of climbing experience, the Don was steeped in its literature. Drawing almost intuitively from the late, great Patey's 'The Art of Climbing Down Gracefully,' he began by declaiming the seedy vulgarity to which the crag had been reduced. He swore there was make-up where there should have been nail marks. Why, the place was only a couple of bounces from the road. He would not perform (how he spat the word) in front of tourist hordes. (For those unfamiliar with the scene, it should be explained that the ancient Scottish tradition of reiving cattle is still practised throughout the Highlands. Nowadays, the cattle are dressed up as tourists and herded on to coaches. At certain well-chosen car parks the coaches are waylaid and the cattle parted from their currency by characters brandishing costumes that defy the art of camouflage. Just such a car park is situated off the A82, opposite Aonach Dubh).

The Don made out an exceedingly graceful case for retreat. CMC, having led the Don to the water, now had no intention of forcing him to drink. Indeed, having seen the place, it was hoped that he would not. Sufficient for the day that the knackers yard had been avoided. CMC, content at the prospect of a saunter home, was tolerant of the Don's babblings. All would have been well, our heroes fading into the sunset. But for Fate. Fate was intent on play.

A second party appeared on the scene. This party consisted of three members, and the meeting that followed has come down to us as the climbing equivalent of Goldilocks meets the Three Bears. One was tall, dark and grizzly, with muscles. The second was medium-sized, dark and grizzly, with even bigger muscles, while the third was small, dark, and of course grizzly, but apparently with no muscles. Mummy bear was in the van, Daddy bear loomed behind, and Baby bear followed bleating at the back. As the bleating became more distinct the imminent arrival of the second party was brought to the attention of the Don. His reaction was similar to that of Captain Hook's, on hearing the ticking of the crocodile's clock. Alarm turned to outright panic when the Don realised there was no escape. For him, unlike Peter Pan (a much-admired figure in climbing circles), flight was impossible. He turned to CMC. It couldn't be. No. Surely not. Not, Rats. CMC squinted then shook his head slowly. His secret vice was an addiction to the glossies, with their siren summons to short routes

on sun-soaked rock. He was, therefore, familiar with the Rat outline. The Don was momentarily calmed.

When the leading bear emerged at the foot of the buttress the Don saw for himself that the party owed more allegiance to 'ape,' than to 'ballerina.' Different altogether from the Rats, they were in some ways to be feared even more. As soon as the bear opened his mouth the sub-species was identified – *Glasguensis*. The first hard man, inevitably named Jimmy, dumped his sack and removed his shirt, to reveal an initial-emblazoned simmet grossly distorted by bulging pectorals. Jimmy McShane.

'Yi dayen Spacewalk?' Jimmy stabbed brutally.

CMC assumed a masterful expression of bewilderment. It would seem he had thought they were at the Shelter Stone and not Aonach Dubh. All in vain. He turned to see the Don's head bobbing agreeably like the bell on Noddy's cap. They were committed.

CMC was in despair. To a man who prided himself on his ability to successfully manipulate events, things were now sadly out of control. The second hard man had now ploughed in, and when it emerged that his name was Craig the Don jumped to, for him, the obvious conclusion. Creag Dhu himself. A surge of climbing lore swelled and swept the Don from his tenuous hold on reality. On this tide there came to him a thought which appealed with equal satisfaction to his honour as a Mountain Tiger, and to the reawakened concern of his guardian angel. Inspired, the Don with appropriate solemnity made the concession that convention demanded. They would defer to the stronger rope. Jimmy bared his teeth. CMC cringed. Jimmy shook his head and observed that their 11mm was the strongest around. The wind-up had begun. CMC's head disappeared between his shoulders as he waited for the axe to fall.

'If ye stretch it yif goat tae cum doon.'

The Don's jaw sank to his chest as all the subtle nuance washed through. The sharp end had been honed.

The reference to the bright yellow strength of their 11mm rope had cut to the quick. The Don was very sensitive about the fact that he had omitted an essential part of the Mountain Tiger's apprenticeship. He had not started his career with his mother's washing line. This had left him with a chip on his shoulder. More to the point, their other rope had several chips in it. CMC had marked the more significant of these with black tape, of which there were now a large number along the length of the rope. Disconcerting they were. And there was more. The length of the rope was uncertain. Indeed, there was disagreement between

the core and the sheath, which parted company at the threat of a knot. Again, disconcerting. It was all very disconcerting. But the most disconcerting thing of all was Baby bear. Jake (for that was his name) was missing a certain amount of grizzle from the top of his head. Wild eyes stared through you to some precarious vision beyond. He had been too long at the front. His mind, haunted by a thousand cruxes, had retreated into itself, and was now fixed by an obsession. This was revealed by the intermittent bleating to which Jimmy and Creagh Dhu were seemingly deaf.

'Let's huv a wee go at the Peg Crack. Cum'n wull huv a wee go at the Peg Crack. Fancy a wee go at the Peg Crack.' Jake The Peg.

A nervous man is urged to answer certain pressing calls. It was while endeavouring to make these calls that the Don's initial impression was reinforced. This was a very public place. The clicking of the tourist cameras wafted up from the A82, intermingled with the drone of 'Scotland The Brave.' He would be revealed in home movies and snapshots all round the world. (Thus has this Legend gained international status. It is particularly popular in Yosemite, where bears are of course a familiar part of the climbing scene). The Don reflected on tactics, in consultation with his guardian angel. There is a myth abroad in some quarters that climbing is about risk, whereas it's actually about avoiding risk, with style. The climbing down ploys had already been taken out of the game. That left the far less efficient and often wholly unreliable ascent ploys. These also are directed to the postponement, reduction, and wherever possible outright evasion of risk. Style requires that although the rules may be bent or even broken, such infringements must be concealed, disguised, or in the last resort justified in accordance with certain approved conventions. A code for survival, both physical and social, it owes much to the tactical principles of popular team games. Ideas such as; when in the lead play for time, sending in a substitute when things look hopeless, and the professional foul, all these find application. The Don returned to the foot of the buttress and played what he thought to be a very stylish back pass. Drawing pleasurably from precedent he announced to CMC that,

'The stern code of the climber decrees that the lighter man shall lead doubtful pitches.' (Anton Nelson to Jack Arnold, first ascent Lost Arrow Spire, Yosemite).

CMC paused only to draw in venom. 'You're a balloon. You'll float up it.' The ball hit the back of the net. Own goal. Jeers.

The Don turned ruefully to the centre spot where the initial crack flung itself rudely up for about 15 feet.

'What grade is this route anyway?'

CMC opened the new guide and read E3. It seems absurd nowadays, but in those far-off times there was considerable uncertainty as to what E3 meant. Now there is uncertainty as to what E7 means. This is called inflation. In response to the Don's frown, Jimmy explained that it was simply a numerical system that was replacing the old Easy, Moderate, Difficult etc. One equalled easy and so on.

'What did the E stand for then?'

Well, the system came from the North of England where they put E in front of everything; Ee lad, Ee by goom, Etc. CMC suggested, politely, that E stood for Extreme. Jimmy shrugged his shoulders. Maybe. Aye, maybe. Extremely easy etc. Aye maybe that was right after all. Then it was no different from the traditional Scots 'Good.' Good V. Diff. etc. Trust the English to make out they'd thought of it first. So it was, after all, just a good Diff. with an English label.

By scrambling in from the left it was possible to gain a bench of rock above the initial moves. Jimmy and Creagh Dhu settled themselves on the balcony to watch the performance. For a time they were content to regard the Don as he pawed ineffectually at the crack. But then boredom set in and Jimmy decided to bait the Tiger.

'Thurs jugs at the tap.'

One man's jug is another man's wrinkle. Nevertheless, on the strength of this most suspect authority the Don lunged for the promised jugs. All the smart money was on wrinkles. But no. Improbable. Yes. A jug. Two. Impossible. And a place for a runner. Jackpot. Rope clips into krab. One happy punter. So that was the 'good' bit over. Just the Difficult bit to do then. Sure enough a line of Diff. sized holds led up and right, while they were not much smaller going left under the roof and across the corner. On the wall round the corner things changed. The Don mouthed a couple of words that described the prospect ahead. Neither can be printed. The only similarity between this and the other Diff. he had done (Quiver Rib) was the lack of runners. If he had been a diver he would have been out of his depth. The old muscle tremble set in and he felt his strength leak like a Dubh Loch doss. Life's minutiae passed before him. That inspirational creature from Scottish history crept into view. A spider. The response of our hero owed more to Miss Muffet than The Bruce. Up and left was the way. Down and left he sped. A ledge.

A foul had been committed, so justification was required. After a pause to collect himself, he commenced the pantomine

beloved of leaders in such situations. First the spurious attempt to investigate another line. Then the ritual call to second for a reading of the description. Followed by requests for repetition(s). Grammatical dissection. A useless, one-sided comparison with the features ahead. Thereafter, there drips down upon the second a revelation of the horrors so far encountered. The extent and duration of the ritual depends on how severely the leader is gripped. From the length of time he spent on the ledge there was no doubt the Don had a very bad dose indeed. Jimmy and Creagh Dhu had meanwhile removed from the stand and now reviewed the state of play from the terracing. It was clear that control had broken down in midfield. They needed more width. Jimmy launched Jake up the wing. Jake soloed up Boomerang, skipped the easy bit at the top, and crossed over the shambles that passes for the top of the buttress until he was at the tree that marks the end of Spacewalk. From here he hurled down invective to the effect that the Don should remove a digit attached to his hand from its present place of concealment and employ it more usefully upon the rock. Perhaps he mistook 'be bold' for 'big hold,' perhaps he spotted the monster krab and peg that dwell corrosively in Boomerang and thought they could be clipped. This is conjecture. Myriad are Man's motivations. Whatever; the Don made the moves. And in the fullness of time the belay. Here he was greeted by a polite peg. It stood up and bowed as it took his weight. A hanging belay requires considerable skill and care for lasting comfort.

CMC was glad to move before the onset of winter. Jimmy left immediately after. CMC lifted a boot. Jimmy replaced it with his hand. CMC quickened his pace. Jimmy likewise. CMC moved. Jimmy moved. By the time he reached the nippy bit, CMC had built up a fair head of steam. He was in the middle of it before he knew it. At this point, Jimmy paused and hung judiciously from the last realistic hold. CMC glanced back nervously at the now occupied hold. Jimmy grinned. An innocent grin. This is called forcing the route. CMC was forced to continue. When he reached the belay he was constrained to pause briefly. Habit obliged him to complain about the back-up to the peg. Leaving the stance he snapped.

'Mind this rope,' then, 'Stop fiddling with that ----- camera.'

It would seem that Jimmy's attentions had somewhat unnerved him. He fingered the little black barb he carried for emergencies and was reassured.

The second pitch starts with a pedestal of rock followed by a short wall leading to a roof and a move left to gain the final corner. CMC set off up the pedestal, leaving the Don cowed and uncomfortable in his hanging belay. The Don was further cowed by

the arrival of Jimmy, who wasted no time in bending the peg further. Action became intense. Creagh Dhu was on his way. CMC was fiddling at the top of the pedestal. Jake was tying on. They were buzzed by a helicopter. CMC crouched frog-like under the roof. Fiddling. All the while Jimmy chatted affably with the Don. The season passed and the winter to come. Nobody saw the rescue boys arrive. Not the local team, but a couple of renegade RAF lads. It is presumed they had been scrambled by a tourist. Jake raised an eyebrow as the leader took off up the first pitch of Freak-Out. Jimmy's raised eyebrows alerted the Don to the bandit approaching at nine o'clock. There were by this time three men on a peg. Creagh Dhu had arrived and added his weight to it. With Jake on his way there would soon be four. Five and Six were not welcome.

This was communicated to Five. The Don, who was nearest, tried to explain the evident hostility provoked by the bandit's accent. It was simply borne of tension created by their present overcrowded circumstances, which vented itself in racial intolerance. In better circumstances they were sure to express sympathy for a race still recovering from the scars inflicted at Bannockburn. But being English, and therefore by nature more gregarious, Five could not understand this unsociable exclusion. Club Meets at selected belays are common enough in the Lake District. No, he was assured, they did not wish to be rescued. Five traversed back left, in the huff, and with considerable resourcefulness belayed to a flake. Six came up. Five stormed up the second pitch so smoothly one couldn't see where the difficult bits were. It was very impressive. Jimmy was forced to give a nod. He explained that it was all done with weights of course, but to the Don this only served to make it more impressive. Creagh Dhu, unable to overcome racial prejudice, muttered something about lemon puffs and Harrison's Rocks. The connection is lost, except that both are reputed to be soft.

Meanwhile, back at the sharp end CMC's rope had been creeping out unnoticed. He was now diligently binding himself to the tree at the top. There was a suspicion of foul play, but the only evidence was a sling waving aimlessly low down on the right side of the final corner. Not proven. When you're ready the man said. So many ropes to choose from. An initiative test. Jimmy quickly took charge before the Don pulled the plug on all of them. Once cast off the Don clambered over the intervening limbs to the foot of the pedestal. It was easy enough putting himself on the pedestal, but once there the Don worried about being knocked off. Obviously someone with ten-foot arms had been similarly affected, for there was a peg on the wall to the left. It was steep ahead, uncomfortably steep. Steeper than the price of rock boots. He could only hope it lost its edge as quickly.

He wished he was a diver. The trembles returned but his guardian angel had lost interest. With the rope above him he might still lose face, but he was unlikely to fall flat on it. Nevertheless, he must save it at all costs. Hence face climbing. Turning from prying eyes he clipped a cow's tail to his harness then made for CMC's runner under the roof. Once there he sent up a smoke screen of abuse. He cursed the rope coming from over the roof, pulling him off. He cursed the rope from the corner, pulling him prematurely left. He cursed the loudest of all the runner that would not budge. And never a mention of the cow's tail clipped to it. No, it would not budge. What perfectly rotten luck. He was now compelled to give up all hope of a pristine ascent. Clip the sling, and hanging on it remove the runner. But it couldn't end there. Insidious stuff, aid. He was consumed by a loathsome craving. Stuff the Rats. Aid. He must have more. And more.

At this point Jimmy, like James IV before him, made what is now perceived to have been a tactical blunder. The consequences were less bloody than Flodden (except perhaps verbally), but the result was the same. Humiliating defeat before the English. Creagh Dhu was sent up after the Don. He was far too big to crouch frog-like for any length of time under the roof. Soon he was compelled to move into the final corner, though this was still occupied by the Don and a litter of slings. Immediately he became snared.

The rest, we are led to believe, is history.

Then did the Don his slings eschew
 To stand instead upon Creagh Dhu
 Thus once again a Tiger bold
 With scrape and scrabble, scrutch and thrutch
 Did upward rise to gain and clutch
 That creaking horror told of old
 The world renowned 'hair-trigger hold'
 Thence from the corner did he flee
 To pounce in panic at the tree

Meanwhile below the English pair betighted
 Into their chalk bags laughed delighted
 By them with glee the tale traduced
 How all the Scots did rock forsake
 Yes, Jimmy too and even Jake
 They one and all to aid reduced
 As by the sling they were seduced
 For shame is Scotland's ire ignited
 To hear the Sassenach recite it

Then down they came to purge their shame
Started training for a different game
Forsook they all the hills and ridges
'Twas Jimmy had the master plan
By hand upon the girder span
They would instead traverse the bridges
Then in a pool immerse the midges
Until at last they came united
To the pub and were benighted

But gather round ye Tigers tall
Ye Rats and Froggers, Flashers all
'Tis said the gang do now profess
The route they did upon that cliff
Is almost certainly no Diff.
They do indeed accord no less
Than the title, 'Good V.S.'

Author's Note:

The foregoing yarn is undoubtedly dated. The continued presence of the 'hair-trigger hold' cannot therefore be guaranteed. Climbers are warned that this may have to be sought elsewhere.

SUMMIT SEARCH

Some go tripping with the evening air
Round a clipped edge of lawn
But I would trace the many-graced
Subtleties of dawn.
I would climb into gold wildernesses,
Up black screes of soul,
Through cloud-inverted dreams, to a quartz cairn.
I am sure to find my summit, worn, torn, but
Made warm with dawn.

H.M.B.



THE N.E. FACE OF NORTH BUTTRESS, BRACHMILLÉ ETUE NÈDE

John Mitchell 1977

SPACE-TIME EXCERPTS FROM THE HILLS**By Des Rubens**

IN SCOTLAND, the week-end stands out as the most commonly used unit of hill time, certainly for most city dwellers. Reflecting on my week-ends out during this year (1986), I have found it remarkable how many richly varied experiences have been embodied in a few short months. Compare the experience of the fortnight in the Alps, the weeks of toil on a 'greater ranges' peak, or even the predictable similarities of U.S.A. rock routes with a few Scottish week-ends and you begin to see what I mean. Our hill days offer infinite variety in splintered microcosms. In this article, I have tried to show not just the conventional seasonal contrasts but also the varied experiences encountered within the same season or even within the same week-end. These contrasts are brought about by a multitude of factors – choice of style of route, companion, Scottish unpredictability, weather and, best of all, geological variety.

1. February, Applecross

The great silent coires of Beinn Bhan, each with its own natural stage, have the atmosphere of long deserted Roman amphitheatres. The sandstone hills of the Coulin Forest are indifferent spectators to the occasional action. Geoff and I had wound our way up the vertical wall of Coire nam Fhamhair by the tremendous line of Der Riesenwand. We had not actually started the route until midday and now, as the light was fading, Geoff had disappeared around the final difficulty. I waited, alone, as the darkness slowly gathered about the hills. Though very cold, the air was so still that my hands were fortunately still warm when the tug finally came. On the upper part of the crag, a thin tinsel of brittle snow running diagonally right and left marked the route on this, the steepest of Beinn Bhan's great cliffs. The line was that rare entity, a climb whose atmosphere could correspond with that of the layman's imagination. Thus, dull red crags overhung me above while the diminishing ledge was undercut below. I moved on around a bulge to meet the obstacle, a wide step over a bottomless chimney where the ledge finally merged with the face. And here, due to some mountain vagary, the placements were insecure for the first time. After several minutes of probing, I found that I couldn't promise myself security from the frozen moss tufts adorning the wall above me. My primary circuits were humming to a single theme – not falling off, the consequences of which would be disastrous – in short, a

spinning night spider. But these Torridonian peaks are still hospitable, their flanks and summits friendly places. A lifeline was to be extended. The full moon, rising over the peaks of Achnashellach, flooded the coire with fresh light, a few lumens of which identified a short foothold on the edge of the void. Using the familiar technique of (i) breath-holding, and (ii) simultaneously employing the axes without requiring them to bear weight, I swung slowly across to the foothold and security. Acquittal was once again secured. The top few hundred feet relented in an abundance of glistening névé. The climbing was now so perfect, the coire so pristine and the moonlit hills so beautiful that an emotion of pure joy overwhelmed me.

2. March, Skye

Imagine winter climbing conditions so good that the pleasure of every movement over step, slab, bulge and rib is enhanced by rock-solid névé. Add an intensely blue, cold sky and choose for your climbing, not the confined, slow progress up a coire wall but the unadulterated luxury of continual movement, with views from Barra to Ben Nevis – and you have the Cuillins as Barry and I found them on the first day of March. Travelling light, our progress along the Main Ridge was sufficiently sybaritic as to allow for a midday brew stop on Bruach na Frithe. Nevertheless, we had some exciting minutes, such as the semi-free abseil down the sharp edge of the Bhasteir Tooth, and the tip-toeing around on the thinly iced slabs of Bidein Druimh nan Ramh. Such moments contrasted with the arctic-blue morning shadows under Sgurr nan Gillean's Pinnacle Ridge during the approach, and the sheer delight of the golden ridges of Sgurr a' Ghreadaidh towards the end of the day.

We prepared our bivouac on the Banachdich col to the gentle music of Handel (Barry had required the radio for the test scores). The sun slid down over the Hebrides, a red column on glass. I lay back before sleep to scan a brilliant, starry sky such as one only sees when sleeping out in high, unfrequented places.

Unzipping my bag at dawn's first light, I registered the quiet change instantly. Clouds were drifting across the col – from the west. Forerunners of the morrow's gales and heralding at last the end of Skye's long winter drought of a month or more. Still, we had yet a few hours of grace while the atmosphere adjusted to its new tempo. Before eight, Barry was embarked on the Inaccessible Pinnacle's long side. As I gazed into the mist while he climbed, the cloud began to drift down around the coire below and the most fabulous array of pinnacles and ice-girt faces began to appear. I stared as the clouds swirled silently around the great



'Glencoe' Horatio McCulloch (1864)



'Loch Maree' Horatio McCulloch (1866)

peaks and chasms of the high Cuillin and suddenly shivered, jolted by some deep primitive fear reflex, a realisation of our brief unnatural presence in this inhuman place.

Climbing the Pinnacle restored thoughts to more immediate matters. The axe picks found suitable placements without great difficulty and the ascent of this great blade in a setting of such drama put us both in high spirits. Later, on Sgurr Alasdair, the mist gathered close about us, muffling our voices and pervading the air with a damp chill. We abseiled down the Thearlaich-Dubh Gap and descended to Glen Brittle by the giant boulders and wide frozen lochain of Coir' a Ghrunnda.

Postscript: further surprising contrasts lay ahead. Following the irreversible collapse of the old Saab near Broadford, we passed our third bivouac in a car graveyard, exchanging the silent majesty of the Plough and Orion for creaking aerials and an oily concrete bed.

3. April, Cairngorms. A long week-end.

Saturday. The Sticil. Early on, calm, clear weather, a steep crux on good water ice. Later, above the usual difficulties, the temperature soared with an incoming low. Two desperate, final rope-lengths on masses of deep thawing snow. At last, a plateau belay in hard, driving sleet. Misery waiting, as Geoff follows.

Sunday. Huntly's Cave. Describing outcrop climbing is acceptable everywhere nowadays, even in the pages of this journal. Thus, a quiet day on sensationally exposed lines with the music of a black stream, some milky sunshine and the flush of spring.

Monday. The Great Moss. The landscape up here in late April was reminiscent of photographs of the days of polar exploration. We skied on perfect spring snow, vaulted by an immense sky, the nearby peaks of the great Cairngorm summits rimming the horizon. No vestige of rock, grass or moss showed through the snow and we saw no living thing; man, woman or beast all day. It was curious to think that in a few short weeks this high plateau would be ringing to the cries of curlew, ptarmigan and plover. Meanwhile, we revelled in the sunshine, the still air and the thrill of effortless movement. We explored secret corners and hidden cols. Then, in the late afternoon, desiring a high peak, we skimmed up Angel's Peak and peered into the dark recesses of the Garbh Choire, before being chased by storm clouds back across the Moss and far down into the spring meadows of Glen Feshie.

4. Midsummer, Carnmor

A stiff easterly breeze white capped the blue waves of Loch Maree. Standing by a little bay on the south shore, I felt slightly apprehensive explaining capsizing theory to Stan, whose canoeing experience was limited to a single brief foray in his youth. I took care to carry the expensive items of gear while Stan took to the craft as the proverbial duck. Our choppy crossing was punctuated with his characteristically enthusiastic wild cries. On the far bank, we stowed the canoes out of sight of Letterewe in an old oak forest. Even using canoes, the walk over to Carnmor is still long but, as always, a delight. Sunbathing over lunch above the Lodge, we surveyed a peaceful crag. My mind flitted briefly to the Langdale cliffs of the previous week-end. The four crags of the dale had acted as flypaper, drawing people away from the surrounding bracken until the valley was relatively empty, the cliffs black and buzzing with raucous yells. I soon suppressed this memory. We set to and climbed walls and slabs on the lower tier, the hair-drier effect of the breeze on the rocks instantly drawing off surface sweat under the smooth, intimidating walls of Carnmor Corner. I gazed at the sparkling waters of the Dubh Loch while occasionally cricking my neck to monitor Stan's progress. When I followed, I went up difficult cracks and hard steep walls, holds hoary and cracked with disuse. The top pitch is a gem. Though easier, a cunning zigzag culminates in a delicate traverse in a tremendous situation.

Time flows with a different rhythm in the far north in summer. Hours disappear during a few minutes doze on a belay, or in that heightened state of mind following the completion of a route. Thus, it was very late when we recrossed the causeway, though the sun still shone brightly over the Fionn Loch. The wind was as strong as before when at last we paddled back over Loch Maree at the time of minimum light. The purple glow on the wrinkled hills at our backs between dusk and dawn and the waters of the loch absorbing only the summer night sky.

5. September, Glencoe

Drizzle. A poor day. The Devil's Cauldron, The Chasm. I have managed to reach the half-way cave of the Direct Finish. By climbing quickly in full waterproofs, I have retained some inner dry garments. John followed to belay from the shelter of the cave. Above, the crux. A steep wall allowed access only back into the stream. I eventually found myself wedged tightly in a crack, barely maintaining foothold, suspended over much space, water pouring over my helmet giving rise to that rather choking, very wet smell of the swimming pool. A sense of uncertainty

came over me, which often characterises the best days in retrospect but is usually unpleasant at the time of happening. A common occurrence. For some minutes I struggled. Then, the sought-for hold came to hand, as it does eventually, and welcome predictability resumed.

6. October, Cairngorms

Very cold, dry, hands blowing. Dark grey granite crags, waterspouts on Loch Avon. An empty glen. A clouded, menacing sky. Good, solid Very Severe climbing.

Next week-end another winter.



EVEN THE WIND WAS SILENT

By Malcolm Slessor

I LEFT the summit digesting the four last words from the two youths. '*E Lunga e pericolosa* – it's long and dangerous.' A small plaque to one Luciano recorded the fact that the alpine path I was about to follow had been prepared in his memory by his friends in the Gemona section of CAI. No word of how he perished. It was a strange day; sullen, heavy vapours brushed against the white dolomite, leaving a heavy dew on the vegetation which coated both flanks of the ridge. A humid air stream from the Adriatic reduced visibility to little more than a 1000 metres, so that one could barely see the ravine below nor the way ahead. The clouds behaved like half deflated balloons, bumping against the south side of the ridge, deforming, but not passing over.

I was not well prepared for my outing. The day before fate had deposited me in Trieste, mentally and physically weary from a week's intellectual battle at a conference in Hungary where I had been fed on a diet of meat protein and alcohol. I needed exercise and wide, high, open spaces. It was Sunday and, unusual for Italy, everything was closed: no maps, no information, no food. I had, however, with malice aforethought brought a 1:250,000 map of the Dolomites, and an ancient 1:50,000 of the Julian Alps, a pair of boots and a sleeping bag. These circumstances led to my taking the train towards Tarvisio and getting off where the railway line closes to the first set of hills, not far from the Yugoslav border. There my map showed a point 1710m, and indeed as I alighted from the train I could see it leaning over the town, all scraggy dolomitic precipices. I was dreaming of a tiny *albergo* nestling in an alp, with a view of the Marmolada seen through a haze of barbera.

I was too late for lunch, but begged a plate of spaghetti and pinched some half used rolls from an abandoned lunch table. Then on and upwards, through a rather remarkable newly built town, for it had been destroyed by earthquake ten years before. At 300m I hit a serpentine road, which if I knew Italy, must lead to food and bed, so full of confidence I plodded on. Two hours later I encountered some hunters who assured me I was right, only the hut was closed! I could see I was going to be hungry ere I reached the valley again. These eastern dolomite hills are steep and cloaked in dense scrub forest – virtually jungle. One must follow the path. At 900m mercifully it gave way to open pasture where could be seen a large chalet and sounds of merriment; surely the *refugio*.

I approached eagerly, drenched in sweat, gasping for water. It turned out to be a drinking retreat for a bunch of elderly male chauvinists, who could have taught the SMC a thing or two. I was soon recognised as a fellow spirit, and wine and dined generously, left with the key and the use of a bed. They knew, they said, every wrinkle of every mountain in these parts. Their advice was to climb Cima Chiampon (1710m), take the east ridge to Musi on to Uccia where food and bed could be had. I believed them. Not a word about length or danger.

So it was that I discounted my unease, and took leave of the lads on the summit. The route was plain. The ridge descended steeply, and though the trail was faint, recurrent blobs of red and white egg yolks guided the mindless on their way. To one without a map on a strange hill on a misty day they were a very acceptable part of the scene.

Suddenly the fog lifted, revealing that my route was not down, but along an undulating ridge reminiscent of Liathach, but with one important difference. One can get off Liathach, but this ridge was 60° on both sides and cloaked in dense impenetrable scrub. This was a course I should have to see through to the last blob.

The fog drew in wrapping me in silent thought, while the ridge, twisting this way and that, up and down, offered no obvious line. The trail had vanished as if earlier parties had thought better of the venture, and my only guide now were these blobs. Indeed I was quite terrified at the thought of losing them, since I was now effectively in the middle of a three dimensional maze. Each step revealed more immense undulations. However I took to bolstering my courage with the knowledge that in the mist pimples take on the aspect of mountains.

I was struck by the silence. Not even on the Greenland ice-cap can I recall such total silence. Not the tweet of a bird. Even the wind was silent. I began to wonder if in fact I was still in the land of the living, and that perhaps I had died in my sleep and was condemned to a mountaineer's hell of plodding over an eternity of undulations. With relief I encountered a snail with its head out. We exchanged greetings, and I felt better after that.

The general level must have been falling for now the scrub forest had invaded the ridge, adding slippery limbs of pine to my tribulations. But Luciano's mates had done their stuff, and a way had been cut through. By now it was more like being in the mountains of Brazil than the Alps, and I yearned for the clean line of homeland hills.

Some hours later I came across a plastic cylinder on a rocky top, wherein lay a record book and pencil. I recorded my presence much as an explorer might do at the south pole, hoping that posterity might inform his family that he had at least got there, if not back. I was by now very tired for I was carrying my entire possessions, and very hungry. I ate the last half roll, and washed it down with a slug of precious water, for there is none to be found on these porous hills.

At last! Descent! And none too soon either for distant thunder echoed round the faces. But the trail, blobs and all vanished! Panic! A momentary gap in the mist revealed a long grassy slope. It was like a free bottle of whisky to a drunkard, and I had to take a firm grip of myself and desist. Fruitlessly I scouted around. Quite by chance in a mist clearing I saw a megablob where none was expected, and realised my route was not down anywhere, but across a face. I pursued the damned blobs, both hating them and loving them. The mist was such that they could not be seen the one from the other, and so each foray was an experiment, each discovered blob a victory for scientific probing. Still I had no doubt I was now off the ridge and on my way down, and I no longer worried about the approaching thunder. How wrong I was. A bright red arrow forced me back on to the ridge and more treadmill undulations. If only there was at least some rock-climbing. And there was. Facing me now was a *spigolo* of yellow that brooked no opposition, and another arrow sent me scuttling down an easy scree. Heaven be praised! But Oh No! I was led to the right horizontally, and by devious little passages to another scree with a commanding arrow pointing upwards, up a scree that dragged from me the last of my misspent youth. I knew then that I was condemned for ever to pound this ridge, or at least pass the night. As if to confirm the fact, it started to rain. Painfully I groped towards the ridge, like a punch-drunk boxer waiting for the next blow to fall. The knife edge ridge seemed to end in nowhere, for jagged blades rose to either side. Then I saw the arrow, the biggest ever – pointing down. A wren hopped in front of me and piped a welcome. I felt the sigh of wind. I could ask for no more comforting restoration to reality.

A SUNNY BEACH

By Sandy Allen

GANGAPURNA, north side, hang a left after the Annapurna Lodge, Manang, a day up the hillside there, passing by the goat-herders and leaving the trees behind, you're where it's at. Base Camp, we were fortunate and had the drystone walls of the cook tent built and the roof tarpaulined before the snow fell.

We had one tent exterminated and later Toni and Zeldar dug me out from mine. The Ganga team: Scott Woolums from Skamania, U.S. of A.; Wally Teare (Zeldar), Canadian but a long term resident of Tahoe City; Toni Spring, St. Moritz; *et moi*, Scottish – from who cares where? Earth Children!

The Skamania seed was sandbagged down in Manang with a pulmonary embolism complication; profuse snow prevented him from joining us. We sent a message to our illustrious Liaison Officer, who incidentally kept miles away from us – enjoying a spending spree – advising him that we wished to change our route from the direct on the North Face to the more stable N.E. Ridge. The decision was made for us by the snowfall, the fluffing, the avalanching ... if you wait long enough most decisions make themselves.

After three weeks of digging snow around base camp tents, breaking trail, only to have the snow blown in again, it was revealed to us that our number one cache of equipment had been avalanched upon; harnesses, lead rope, my Grivel Hammer and other items were gone. Cosmetics had to be performed, so we tied 'Allcord' blue tape in knots to manufacture harnesses to use with the remaining 9mm rope.

Camp 1 at the foot of the face (5,200m) was two tents. One night there, three days of food to last four days, six cylinders of butane/propane mix, and the next morning we ploughed below the serac wall, aware of the pressure not the temperature syndrome. This remaining line was the N.E. Ridge, opposite the Yugoslav line of 1983. Sometimes it became 20-step leads, ever-changing along the rope, powder hounds up to our thighs. Eventually we came to Camp 2, a reef of snow by two rock pinnacles at 5,600m.

Wasted, jaded youths, too much energy burnt away, Toni and I dug and erected the tent, while Zeldar brewed the tea. Inside, calm and quiet, occasional ruffles of tent as katabatic breezes brushed by.

Next day was a rest day, climbing nullified as we were all too tired from the trail breaking. Toni and Zeldar went light to break a trail to the steeper ground, to check conditions, or to decide to climb or descend. I melted snow, built a wall, and drifted. The lads returned, it appeared to be O.K. Tomorrow we'd go on. The rest of the day, brewing, laughing. Toni related tales of his Fitzroy trip, Zeldar was on the 'Inertia Tube,' while I was planning, shooting ideas through the air; the Nuptse Cobweb, possible routes where no summit would be the reality, real climbing. A sail board on Talicho Lake; admiring the ridge from Talicho Peak running to Roc Noire and Ganga. Speculation as to a low-level training route for the 'Everest Horseshoe.' Zeldar, a legend in his own mind, contemplated and laughed aloud.

Steps refilled up to my knees, old snow blowing in the breeze, Zeldar my belay as I climb a steep serac; stopping halfway to haul a second axe up, lead on, belay at the top. 'We'll call it the Spirig Step, eh?' 'Fine,' replied Zeldar as Toni arrived and front pointed past, impressing us with his calf stamina. Zeldar and I followed, flat-footing in his wake. Zeldar, now up and over a small ice wall, let me lead the ridge crest in azure blue. Three hours and I came to a rock pinnacle, traversed off the wind pack to crystal clear ice - to rock, with a leeper squeezed in a crack, an Alpine belay as the lads came up and disagreed with me, 'No, too steep to bivouac here!' I protested as Toni led for half an hour. On the crest now, we dug in the wind and pitched the tent for Camp 3 (6,600m). I jumped inside before the wind whipped the erection away. From 4 p.m. until 8 p.m., melting snow, eating '2 minute' noodles. Above remained some simple walking, a descent to the knife-edged ridge, then some blocks and gendarmes, to finish by walking to the summit. We were planning to go very light, a water bottle each, and return to camp late that evening.

Sleep came easy, a little blue pill. At ten p.m. a mittened hand struck my face, 'Sandy, help us brace this *** thing!' Zeldar's voice in confusion, Spindrift fogged the lithium bright inner, flappings of straining fabric. I joined the others, sitting with backs braced against the walls, arms outstretched to give maximum support. Eyes wild, Zeldar contemplated escape. Toni shouted, 'Gangapurna, home of the Queen of Sheba, Goddess of Destruction,' - thoughts isolated, we could hardly hear ourselves.

Holding on to the tent, bracing we clothed one at a time, preparing for the blast which would split the seams, and maybe us. Libond suit, Goretex outer shell, socks, omitting the vapour barrier. Alveolites, the plastic shell plus the spindrift, and closing

the gaiter zip. 'I'm ready,' I said, as Toni stuffed his sleeping bag. 'Hang on man, hang in there, it's the best place!' I shouted. He looks at me, eyes wild, real fear. Zeldar shouted, 'Let's dig in!' but outside Toni could not even stand.

The centre pole was gone and the clips holding the inner to the poles began to split. Zeldar and I managed to elastoplast the vents closed, momentarily the spindrift halted, hands frost-biting with holding. All the clips flew, Toni rushed in and we held bunches of fabric to us as we lay on our backs on the groundsheet. In control, keeping quiet, very aware that no matter how uncomfortable one is, one can always become more so. Doug Scott pictured in my mind, descending The Ogre...we've seen nothing yet. I bit at a salami sausage, handed it to a prostrate Toni - his eyes smiled from his frosted face.

Daylight, 5 a.m. Still holding on to the tent, zip door adrift, corner seams burst open, fabric flapping wildly. Zeldar - 'Let's make like a baby!' My head translated his Tahoe slang into 'Let's head out.' We hung on, hoping that the wind would die with the rising sun, but it didn't.

Toni rolled the tent as I lay on it emptying belongings, trying also to empty kilos of spindrift, like a frustrated cocaine dealer trying to destroy the evidence before the cops arrive. No success so we packed it. Zeldar leader of all hard pitches led off. Roped up we stumbled on points together, with great care, myself contemplating a 100m fall as I adjusted the chest harness of my ever-complicated rucksack. Zeldar stopped - unknown to me at the time - struggling with the same crazy system. On down, Zeldar pulled me off my feet as he jumped a serac with insufficient slack, but old Toni was there, secure, and held.

Down in automation to abseil with blaséd dexterity, hardly aware of our position. Down unroped to Camp 1, causing wind slab to crack, the three of us bedraggled on the glacier, laying in tangled heaps, steps forced one at a time only to find another twisted hoop tent. Forced on, down to Base Camp in the late dark evening of the 28th October. Sherpa stew, and the search for eternal peace and tranquillity commenced again.

HILL WALKS IN FRANCE

By D. W. I. Piggott

This article describes two summer holidays spent walking through France, following the long-distance paths known as 'grandes randonnées'. In an age of increasingly frantic behaviour, it might do us all good to slow down now and then, to read a good book at leisure, or go at the pace of the landscape.

MY WIFE and I are keen hillwalkers and last year we decided to try walking in France. I am well past the biblical lifespan and had to give up backpacking with a tent some years ago. However we were both prepared to carry 20lb packs so we required to find a route with accommodation at points no more than 6 or 7 hours apart. France has a network of long distance paths throughout the country called 'grandes randonnées' and the major ones are shown on 'institut Géographique national' map No. 903. From that we selected the S.E. corner of France and bought the appropriate 'I.G.N. Carte Topographique' 1:100,000 which gave enough mountain detail to choose a short section of 'grande randonnée 4' which actually runs from Grasse to the Bay of Biscay. We then bought the booklet 'Topo-guide' for this section which provides all the information needed - walking times between points, notes on the route, accommodation, provisions, communications and a great deal of other matter as well as black-and-white 1:50,000 maps opposite the text.

These 'Topo-guides' are quite essential and cover most of the long walks in the country. Each covers two or three weeks' walking with subsidiary deviations from the main path and I saw nearly a hundred of them displayed in Paris. We picked a section of the route which had accommodation at reasonable intervals. There are country hotels in surprisingly small places but not always where needed and walkers depend more on purpose made accommodation constructed on the route, usually old converted buildings situated in villages. A few, called refuges or abris, are unlocked huts in the hills with sleeping platforms and perhaps a woodstove. Most are 'Gîtes d'Etape' which are described as having beds or boards with mattresses and blankets (or duvets), a communal room and means for cooking and washing up, a toilet and usually showers. Where there is electricity hot water is provided. The ones we saw were without exception very well kept and not abused. Our packs included only sheet sleeping bags and no cooking stove so we depended on using Gîtes with full equipment. We have since found a valuable book 'Gîtes et Refuges en France' by A. & S. Mouraret, which

gives details including the phone number of the guardian (who holds the key). It is in summary form but runs to 350 pages.

We did not wish to spend the whole holiday on long walks so my wife wrote to the Syndicat d'Initiative of several sizeable towns in the general area as well as the departmental town, Digne, enclosing international reply coupons, asking for hotel lists and bus timetables. Rail times, even on small lines, can be got from Thomas Cook's monthly publication. My wife was soon immersed in a complex operation from which we had a pretty good idea of what would be feasible. This gave us flexibility for short stays to be chosen during the holiday. A little tram/train from Nice to Digne cuts right through some of the best of this very steep country and helped us to get started when we arrived by air at Nice. We found a book describing seventy-five walks starting and ending on this line which was most useful.

Our long distance walk on G.R.4 was interrupted in the middle by bad weather and a swollen ankle so we took buses to different areas. Eventually we completed it with a very impressive day in part of the 20 mile-long gorge of Verdon with its limestone climbing wall a mile long and up to 2,000 ft. in vertical height covered with climbs. We took that holiday in May which was too early. June would have been better and we would have been able to go higher in the Alpes Maritimes where passes were closed by snow. September is said to have more reliable weather but then one would lose the magnificent display of spring flowers, including gentians and tulips at high altitude.

This year we chose two mountain areas further north. Once again we got hotel lists and bus timetables but depended more on two Topo-guides G.R.420 'Tour du Haut-Vivarais' and G.R.9 'Hauts plateaux du Vercors' (the full length of G.R.9 is Jura to Cote d'Azur). We were able to choose six day walks from each with accommodation at reasonable intervals (although I was fully stretched by one day which took eight and a half hours). We went in early June but still encountered snow showers on each walk on the highest passes at about 5,000 ft. Much of the Vivarais is very coarse granite while the Vercors cliffs are limestone with climbs in certain places, especially Choranche, where there is also a large cave partly open to the public with eighteen kilometres of explored passageways. The Eastern edge of the Vercors is a line of cliffs about sixty kilometres long with one amazing isolated peak, the Mont Aiguille. This rises to 6,880 ft. on a forested cone of scree. It has vertical sides of about 800 ft. and a flat grassy top said to be forty acres in extent. King Charles VIII passed that way on a pilgrimage in 1489 and ordered one of his knights to climb it. They managed this with ladders and

ironmongery and presumably achieved a notable first. It was not climbed again until 1834 and then in 1877. The Vercors massif is memorable as the centre of resistance in the second world war. The impressive museum at Vassieux reveals that the Maquisards were such a thorn in the side of the Nazis that in July 1944, during the heavy fighting following the Normandy landings, the Germans diverted a strong force of S.S. parachutists from the front to eliminate this small force, by landing many gliders and scattered parachute drops over a period of a week. These crack troops were totally ruthless, killing women and children and all 200 found in a well-organised hospital hidden in a large cave. The allies were asked to help by bombing aerodromes but were too busy to do so.

We hope to follow further G.R.s next year. The ideal way would be to carry a full pack so as to be independent of supplies for two or three days. We met a Swiss lad doing the European E.2 from Basle to Barcelona in this way. He appeared to use a large waterproof (?poncho) instead of a tent and had condensation problems. The weather even in June is not reliable and we had three spells of rain lasting three days each. We used both hotels and Gîtes d'Étape but this was not as expensive as it sounds because the average cost at hotels this year was £13.50 each for dinner, bed and breakfast (including a named wine). The food was outstandingly good. The Gîtes compare in cost with our Youth Hostels. We were so early in the season that we met few walkers, mostly French.

We walked entirely in the hills, mostly lightly wooded or forested, where the paths had been selected to provide maximum variety and pleasure rather than the easiest or shortest route. They kept high where possible. These paths seemed to be old tracks used for centuries before cars were invented. Some were routes used for transferring stock or extracting produce from the forest, others seemed to be mule or cart tracks between high farms, many of which are now abandoned. They were beautifully graded so that although we repeatedly climbed and descended up to 2,000 ft. they seldom became precipitous. One consequence of their origins is that they cut through passes but not over peaks. Another is that they divide and join in a complex network or run out altogether. One has to be constantly on the alert for a change to a small half-overgrown one when least expecting it. The maps and descriptions are not detailed enough to show this and way-marks are essential for that reason and owing to the nature of the terrain. The hillsides were extremely steep, often densely vegetated and with cliffs and stoneshoots or clayslides so that any deviation led to an impasse compelling one to return to the last mark seen. Although to be deprecated in principle they are the

only new signs allowed of man's presence and show an admirable determination not to interfere with the natural habitat. They are discreetly painted on trees or rocks at longish intervals in unobtrusive places and were often missing at a point where you need them most.

What was it that made the holidays so attractive and why should consecutive walks be so popular? This is difficult to answer. Perhaps the mediaeval pilgrimages and the eighteenth century 'grand tours' were popular for the same reasons. There is no doubt however about the enjoyment to be had from moving steadily at a comfortable pace through varied and beautiful scenery, especially as in our case there was the prospect of a really good meal at the end of it. The French people made one very welcome and many of the small towns had retained intact their core of ancient housing. One escapes the motorcar and all the pressure of modern life while the constant stream of new experiences makes time almost stand still. There are challenges in the longer days and a sense of achievement when looking back to a distant feature which was near where one started. There is certainly a sense of freedom with a pack on one's back and the day before one.

I think there are lessons in the French experience. Long distance ways in Scotland do not have to go high to experience some of our finest scenery; even the existing ones only breach the 1,000 ft. contour in four places if I have read the routes correctly. The French G.R.s vary enormously in standard from the Corsican one to those in central France, with the Alps and Pyrenees in between. The people we met were obviously competent walkers with plenty of endurance but not mountaineers although they chose to walk in mountain country. Erosion was minimal because the paths were well graded. If we need more ways in Scotland they could be kept to the scenic lower ground and passes, with erosion and safety in bad weather very much in mind. Waymarks will be necessary but those who fear for the wildness of the Scottish Highlands can keep well away on the higher ground. I have walked through several Scottish routes of great beauty with a tent and only occasionally have had to carry my pack over a high pass. Of course it is an attractive thought to keep the wilderness atmosphere by discouraging all but experienced climbers from the hills. Stated so bluntly, the argument cannot be sustained against modern pressure on the biggest 'lung' of Britain, and some compromise will be necessary. The evidence of the spate of books for the walker suggests that pressure is already here and that the West Highland Way is becoming over-congested. Our first concern must be for erosion which seems to be worse in the Highlands than elsewhere for reasons of climate and geological history.

M'GOUN REVISITED

By Hamish M. Brown

CHARLES gave me a cup of tea, and a shower of ice crystals off the tent roof, just after three in the morning. We were dutifully off before 4 a.m. and it was after 3 p.m. when we returned to camp, which is about par for M'Goun.

Irghil M'Goun sounds like some character out of John Buchan but the name covers a whole long ridge of many summits in the Central High Atlas; a day's drive further inland than Marrakech's popular Toubkal Massif. Jbel Toubkal (4,167m), is the highest summit in North Africa, so suffers accordingly. There is a handful of other 4,000-ers near it, then M'Goun is the only other Moroccan peak over 4,000 metres. Its situation ensures a continental rather than a semi-maritime climate.

Donald Mill's article in the 1973 journal tells of one epic traverse of the range. As the vital car owner I'd perforce missed that trip, with retrospective gratitude, but had later traversed the range with an Eagle Ski Club party, a trip so rewarded with character and stunning scenery that I was determined to return. Even that elusive highest point of M'Goun could go a return visit, for the last time is chiefly recalled for being one of the most exhausting ascents ever. I decided I'd like a more restful visit.

Charles and I had taken a good look at the mountain the day before so we tramped off under a shock of stars on a planned route which took us onto the main crest as directly as possible. This entailed crossing the plateau-like head of the Tessaout Valley and following a black spur up into a corrie. Two hours out the sun found us cramponing over the headwall of this and curling up to the main crest, just below a 'top,' W3 of 3,978m. A gnawing wind saw us piling on plenty of clothes but this raw cold was expected from having read all the previous accounts. Though I'd been on M'Goun before I still found the scale staggering. The Anti-Atlas, where I'd been a month earlier, must have been 200 miles off, yet each peak there was sharp and clear to the eye.

We'd come up one corrie and now looked over a huge double-bite of corrie to the east, beyond which lay another and another, each a Braeriach to Cairntoul distance between their tops, each top dropping down a difficult ridge to the north in a startling sort of symmetry. Southwards lay snowy Jbel Aklim (3,437m) and the rainbow-coloured desert: barrenness and screes on a giant scale. We tried to work out just where Donald and Eric went but the vastness swallowed our speculations. We were just

thankful not to be facing their conditions of new snow and a hurricane. Such a storm had gone through less than a week ago when the heavens opened on Marrakech with the first rain I'd seen for a month, a storm which made Charles and I delay departure for a couple of days. More delay would have been wiser but precious holiday days were ticking past. Climbing M'Goun is nothing like as complex as trying to reach its foot.

We had hired a 'grand taxi' to take us from Marrakech in to the Bou Goumez Valley, the last permanently-settled glen to the north, but the car had been stopped at Aït M'Hamid, a score of miles short, by the road being blocked or perhaps because the muleteers of Aït M'Hamid have a thing going with incoming taxis. Somehow, in the middle of the day, we were trudging across a plateau behind two mules carrying our rucksacks. It was a sweeping Tibetan landscape with snowy mountains edging the horizons. We were assured we would reach the Bou Goumez by this 'short cut' for 6 p.m. – Insh'Allah.

We crossed that limestone plateau, went over two small ridges, followed a river for several miles, crossed a pass – the Tizi n-Tazdimine, 2,308m, which took us up to the snow-level, and at 5 p.m. were sitting in a house at Sremt drinking mint tea. To our horror we then set off to climb up 3,000 feet to another pass, the Tizi n'Aït Ouriat (2,606m), which edged a ragged summit Jbel Tizal (3,041m). It grows dark by 6.30 but this was not going to be allowed to deter the march. The sun set in an explosion of colours, and we still were not up to the pass. I was exhausted enough to climb onto a mule once we were up but after 10 minutes of the descent I jumped off. Self-preservation gives a grand injection of adrenalin. The older muleteer was weary enough to ride and he shone Charles' torch to light the way for two mules and five humans on a track as tortuous as any stalkers' path above Glen Kingie. Slowly we teased our way down, to the scent of juniper, the gurgle of water, squealing Barbary partridges, barking mongrels, lights, outlines of houses. We reached the Bou Goumez, having done a route march of what could have been three days of rational walking.

The muleteers led us to a doorway. A brass plate declared 'Mohammed Achahri. Mountain Guide.' Peyron's guidebook did mention a place which he called a 'welcome watering hole for whacked-out trekkers.' It fitted but we were pleased to note the muleteers were pretty whacked out too.

We were lucky. Mohammed was just home from a ski-ing holiday in the Dauphiné. His house was made ours in that splendid mountain hospitality that lies beyond the tourist trails. We had oily porridge and lashings of tea and spread ourselves

out under a painted ceiling of bright geometrical patterns. At least we were in the Bou Goumez. M'Goun was only a couple of days away. We'd think about it on the morrow.

As Mohammed could provide a mule (and a brother to drive it) we perforce went on the next day, to cross another pass to the next glen south. It was another long haul to start and eventually we demanded a break and food before exhaustion completely overcame us. This was a wise move as we toiled up into cloud and snow. How the mule coped we did not see but on the other side our muleteer fired bushes to waymark the route. Having climbed up to the Tizi n'Ait Imi (2,905m) we lost all the height again into the next valley. We expected to turn up it but the mule, away ahead, went down. Our glen joined another parallel one and Ali turned up this after a pantomimed logistical conversation. As it ran just north of M'Goun this suited us. We camped an hour up this glen, beside a smoke-blackened cave, another hefty day into the wilds.

Our ultimate objective was to camp directly under the main summit of M'Goun as we'd done before, and climb some fairly direct route. Our base would be reached easily enough we thought by just following up our valley. Muleteer Ali – or Allah – made it otherwise. He set a good tramping pace all day and there were endless deviations to avoid gorges and side valleys and eroded spires and towers. It was all very impressive in general, and delightful in the particulars of strange flowers, brilliant bird life and odd human contacts. (Nomadic families were already moving up to high camps. One bearded warrior rode by with his bejewelled daughter on a second beast which was draped with dangling bantams; a glimpse of regal simplicity; unforgettable...) The valley opened out. The M'Goun corries began to bite deeper into the crest to the south. Choughs, bee-eaters and accentors flew through. If only Ali would give us more than a few seconds at a time to relish it all.

We came to the head of the valley and the mountains above were recognised from the Eagles trip, but I could not recall exactly where we had camped and we needed to have clean water on site. Ali had charged up onto a col at the end of the valley so we gasped after him. When we reached the col (Tizi-n-Oumsoud, 2,969m) Ali had vanished – only to re-appear 200m down the other side having scree-run the mule down. We were appalled at the thought of having to chase our mule and then re-ascend those mobile scree in our weary state. We had not planned to go beyond the col.

The other side was a two mile wide hollow (the Arous) which eventually drains out northwards through an impenetrable



*Classic rock - Arran in the 1940s
(See Miscellaneous Notes)*

Photo: H. K. Mowbray



Rock for climbing – the 120m wall on Handa Island, Sutherland

Photo: Hamish Brown

gorge. Beyond this hollow was another col beyond which the waters of the Tessaout led on for many days before escaping the mountains. The popular way to M'Goun is from the Bou Goumez up the Arous as far as was possible and then by a devious side-stepping over the barrier ridge to gain the upper Tessaout col. We could only think this was where Ali was bound. A lack of language can so easily pull the tendons of logistics.

Not having much option we trundled down the screes after Ali and tailed him for several weary hours uphill work to gain the Tessaout col (2,900m). When we did catch him our gear was on the ground and Ali ready for off. 'It's too bloody cold to stay' was how we translated his words. He set off *up the ridge*. We decided his mule probably had crampons and could abseil off the other side.

The hardiness of the mountain Berbers is quite astonishing and it was comforting later on to talk to some of my local friends from the Toubkal region and hear that they thought the M'Goun area was spectacular and tough – they had just been suffering it on a guides' course organised by the CAF. I left Charles to pitch the tent and wandered off in search of water. All the near melt water was red in colour and it was not till a badly-needed off day on the morn's morn that I found clear water out on the streaky-bacon wilderness of the upper Tessaout. Pale mauve crocuses were in flower, the only delicate thing in that sun-and-wind-scoured waste. A day-off was relished and ensured our smart departure for M'Goun. Thus it was we came to be perched on the M'Goun crest, a fine line which divided a world of snow from a world of desert.

Our traverse to reach Oumsoud was along a shaly, exaggerated Cluanie Ridge. There were no difficulties over W2 at 4,008 and W1 at 4,001, and seven hours out from the tent we reached the real summit and no longer gasped along pretending to study the fossils at our feet. A sea shell from some ancient sea sits on my desk as I write, an odd souvenir from that far mountain top. The wind was rising with cirrus coming in from the west, a weather-sign we heeded by plodding back sooner than tired bodies would have liked. We climbed the Top above our access point though it was only 3,978 metres. After all they might promote it some day.

In the course of traversing to Oumsoud I had bagged my last Moroccan 4,000-der. I hadn't noticed this till Munroist/Corbetter Charles (from Sheffield, poor lad) pointed it out. 'Mais, c'est juste!' I thought, thinking of Ali's mad drive to the Tessaout.

An unidentified raptor traversed all those tops in mere minutes and flew on westwards into the sun. With some regret we turned down again for a descent made tedious, if familiar, by the work of the sun and human weakness. We reached the tent with the mud heavy on our boots. It had been a grand day. The exit days were even better, which was all bonus.

In some ways one big mountain is rather like any other big mountain. Didn't we, don't we, after all, make comparisons with the hills of home when perched on Atlas or Andes or Antarctic hills? The physical demands of climbing a route or gaining a summit are only part of the pleasure. The touches that make for memorable expeditions, for heightened experiences, are often those below the snowline. The exit from M'Goun was to surprise us with pleasures.

The tension had gone of course. Charles had bagged M'Goun and I'd enjoyed new country as well as old. Our earlier over-ambitious plans for further peaks and passes were cheerily abandoned. We set off with four days' food supply and hoped we could escape in that time.

The snell wind was right at our backs to help bully us up onto the ridge above, an effort we had rather dreaded under our hefty packs. (No mules this time). It went and after deciding Ali's mule had worn crampons we baulked at his descent line in its icy morning state and wiggled down to a col, the Tizi-n Oumskiyq (2,930m); by a route fit for humans. We half-hid the sacks and floated off to bag Ighil-n-Ikkis (3,207m) which Peyron had recommended as a viewpoint. It played a common Atlas game of presenting problems on what looked like easy ground and easy climbing when problems looked likely. It was a mixture of prickly bushes, scree, mud – and gabbro-good rock. We had our last look at the many miles of M'Goun's corries and crests.

From the unpronounceable col we descended into the Arous, below the gorge that had forced our exit over the ridge. Ikkis, first name on the map, was a mere sheiling, its few fields brown and barren. Five dogs made a combined attack on us. We scored on one each and the rest yelped off. The valley opened out for a mile or two then the track vanished into a gorge of rock seemingly made of compacted gravel. It was riddled with caves and when we found a *source* of clear water we stopped, even if it was only 4 p.m. We even had time to wash our feet so the tent no longer smelt like a box of forgotten cheeses. Locals passed with greetings. One begged aspirins. The girls giggled.

An hour below the camp we came on civilisation proper: a prosperous village set in a green bowl surrounded by an arc of sheer cliffs. We crossed it with a nightingale singing in the

bramble thickets and the sun shining out at us along the Bou Goumez valley which we joined here at its lower end. Our plan was to follow it downstream (as it soon swung northwards) and then go up the Sremt glen, when it joined in, so as to rejoin our inward route at that known spot. Maybe they'd give us tea again. As we wanted mules to take over the donkey work we followed a *segua* (watercourse) into a poor village which had a ruined fort and a breathtaking view through a frieze of almond blossom. We broke in on the local Koranic school with the children chanting a cacophony of scriptures, penned on boards which looked centuries old. A splendid character, Omar, welcomed us, and a 12 year old from the next village was sent for to act as translator which he did with shy efficiency. We soon had a mule hired and retired for tea. A *tagine* (stew) followed, with bread hot from the embers, and more delicious mint tea. There was plenty of laughter and the conversation ranged from lewd jokes to the latest international news (Reagan had just bombed Tripoli). It was a respite we savoured. Hospitality like that is a rare treat.

The lower Bou Goumez was guarded by a series of forts that made it look like a film set for a dozen epics rolled into one; beyond, the river dived down into another wild gorge and then twisted northwards. A westward valley leads into the Bou Willi, another valley reputedly even finer than the Bou Goumez and circled by giant peaks. Next time, next time, *Insh'Allah*. We broke down to a homestead nestling under its perched fort. The sheep and goats were being led out from the yard. For two hours we followed the river northwards through a landscape of crying beauty: poplars and willows edging the brawling river, rich fields of grain splashed poppy-red, the slopes covered in pines, the higher regions jagged rocks under a sparkling sky, fresh as wet china, and every now and then a glimpse of far snows, and every now and then a neat village on a spur. The Lakhdar Valley was one of the best memories – worth a few tops of M'Goun I reckon.

We had to pull up above a frog-loud gorge and a couple of miles on the river swung east into further, trackless, gorges. A piste made a tortuous exit up the side northwards (one possibility for Ait M'Hamid) but we turned east for Sremt following a cairned route up the bed of the burn. The landscape grew steadily more rugged and we had to break out over someone's dykes and fields to gain a higher path. Our rather glum muleteer had to keep asking directions and eventually a group of locals declared we could not make it through to Sremt. We were back to one of those language impasses and with everyone joining in there was a good-going barney. Matey was all for going home

but a toothy character became 'fixer' and committed our glaikit lad to take us a short cut (ominous phrase) to Aït M'Hamid. We proceeded in a chaos of men, cows, sheep, goats and our mule but after a few sweeping bends we broke off the main valley to assault an imposing flanking buttress and up this Munro equivalent we zigzagged for a couple of hours. This end-of-day assault was bearable for we were now properly fit and our pathetic mule incapable of too fast a pace. When the angle relented we drew breath and gazed over the stark and colourful wasteland to Jbel Tizal and the Tizi n-Aït Ouriat, our entry pass only slightly higher than our eventual stopping place, a threshing floor outside a lonely hamlet on the edge of cultivation. Red soil, terraced into vivid green fields, with oak woods and puffs of almond blossom made it another memorable camp site. Just to escape the Lakhdar we had come up from 1,370 to 2,150m and a mile beyond the village at 2,250m was a dip (Tizi n'Oughbar) leading to the rolling plateau country out to Aït M'hamid. We slept with the door open and a full moon looming over the starboard ridges.

We had been going a couple of hours next day when three mules caught us up. The biggest was being ridden by our toothy 'fixer' of yesterday; dressed in flowing robes, he was transformed from local shepherd into a stately prince. We were greeted exuberantly and shortly our cavalcade turned in to a solitary house where the mules were unladen and the wife of this place produced the wherewithall for brewing tea. We picnicked under the oaks and I savoured it as one of those occasions when one is 'surprised by joy.' After the third cup we stirred back to business. Toothy gave Matey's mule a kick in the stern and it broke into its sole trot of the entire trip, with Matey in flat-footed pursuit. Toothy laughed his farewells and cantered off with his companions.

The going became easier. Our party grew and shrunk in companionable variety. One man could not understand why I took photos of an old fort rather than their new irrigation dam! There were two moments of excitement. While walking with a party of kids going to school a black stallion broke loose and went galloping wildly up the road. Later a buzzard dropped on a hen-run and though it failed in its attack the outraged clucking of poultry followed us for a long time.

At Aït M'Hamid some hours later we caught a taxi into the county-town of Azilal. 'We' were seven people, gear, all in a small Renault. At Azilal a bus to Marrakech stood waiting. It was a slow journey, filled with plenty of incident, and we drove in through the palms to the walled city as the heat ebbed from the day. We humped our gear to the Hotel du Foucauld on the

edge of the exotic Medina, had a quick shower, and wandered over to the 'Iceberg' for a superb dinner. Part of Morocco's magic is in its constant contrasts. Sipping our wine in the restaurant's basement splendour it felt as if that morning's camp site belonged to some other incarnation and M'Goun rose back somewhere in the land of dreams.

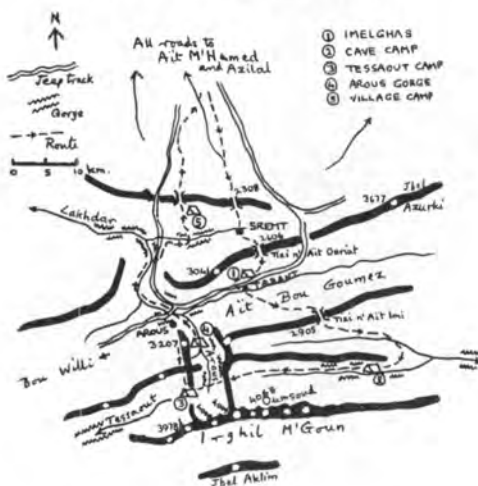
There are now two (French language) guidebooks covering the remoter Central Atlas.

Michael Peyron: *Le Grande Traversee de l'Atlas Marocain*. 1984 Rabat.

André Fougerolles: *Le Haut Atlas Central*. 1981 Casablanca.

West Col sell the former and the Alpine Club has both, as does the author. In English language reference could be made to the following: Colin Wyatt: *The Call of the Mountains*. 1952 (a chapter on a traverse of the M'Goun Massif). Donald Mill: *The Crossing of Irghil M'Goun*. SMCJ 1973; Hamish Brown: *Irghil M'Goun, a Mulepack and Ski Trip*. Climber & Rambler, June 1981. (Eagle Ski Club traverse of the range, taking in M'Goun and a ski ascent of Ouougoulzat). Maps are difficult to come by but the better mapsellers should be able to order French IGN sheets.

The M'Goun Raid 1986



TWO SIDES OF GASHERBRUM IV

By Alan Shand

THE 24th May 1986 on the West Gasherbrum Glacier. With Base Camp established at 15,800 feet, we gazed at our objective for the next eight weeks. Two miles ahead stood Gasherbrum IV, at 26,120 feet one of the highest and most impressive peaks in the Karakorum. Dominating the head of our enclosed valley was the magnificent 10,000 foot-high West Face, bounded on the right by the South Ridge, and, on the left, by the jagged outline of the West Ridge – our chosen route.

Climbed for the first and only time in 1958 by Bonatti and Mauri, by the North-East Ridge, Gasherbrum IV had seen relatively few subsequent attempts, and even less success. A British Expedition in 1979 failed on the West Ridge after injury to the team. In the years immediately following, several American expeditions tried the North Ridge but without success, and a Japanese attempt on the West Ridge ended in tragedy when three climbers were swept to their deaths in an avalanche which obliterated their camp above the West col.

In summer 1985, however, Voytek Kurtyka and Robert Schauer made a stunning alpine-style ascent of the West Face in eleven days, descending the North Ridge. Atrocious rock, poor belays and no bivouac ledges were some of the problems they encountered, as well as having no food or water for the last four days. Kurtyka and Schauer failed to reach the main summit but it was still a bold and remarkable ascent which focussed considerable attention on the mountain.

Now, after two years of planning and fund-raising, the British were back again. Dai Lampard (leader), Andy Atkinson and Alan Scott had previously been to the Trango Tower in 1984, but for the others – Rhona Lampard, Christine Watkins, Al Phizacklea, Bob Wightman and myself – it was the first trip to the Karakorum.

As the weather was fine and settled, we wasted no time in sounding out the route. A reconnaissance to the foot of the West Face soon established that this whole area was fraught with the objective dangers of avalanche and stonefall. Unfortunately this rendered impractical our proposed approach to the West col via the shortest, most direct route. The only alternative, therefore, was to reach the col from the other side of the ridge. The key to this was the North-West Cwm, a vast snow bowl tucked away between the two great ridges and out of sight from Base Camp.

An American expedition attempting the North Ridge had already established a camp in the Cwm, so the next day we set off with heavy loads to do the same.

After crossing the bottom of the icefall which drained the cwm, the route followed a long snow slope which narrowed to a steep gully splitting the ridge. Several hundred feet of fixed rope then led to the tiny saddle from where a short abseil found us at the top of the icefall. An hour later we were standing in the middle of the cwm in a superb situation. The forbidding North-West Face towered above, bounded on the left by the North Ridge, and, on the right by the serrated crest of the West Ridge. Satisfied with the day's effort, we set up camp and returned to Base.

The extremes of temperature experienced during the day had come as a shock to everyone. Nights were bitterly cold, about -20°C , but within a few hours of sunrise, we were sweltering in temperatures of over 40°C ! It was far more comfortable, therefore, to rise very early and move in the cool of the morning, utilising the daytime heat to rest and melt snow for water.

Over the next few days, Camp One was consolidated with food and equipment, and from here it looked as though access to the West col would be fairly straightforward, via a snow couloir. Dai, Andy, Al Phizacklea and myself began climbing this couloir and soon found the going more difficult than expected. Deep unconsolidated snow at the bottom meant that a trench virtually had to be forged, and, at the end of the first day, we had progressed only a hundred feet! More seriously, the quality of the rock exceeded our worst fears – dubious peg placements providing minimal security in the crumbling limestone. On occasion, the tattered remains of Japanese ropes were found secured to bolts which we pulled out by hand!

Higher in the couloir, however, the snow did improve, allowing more rapid progress, and, after three days, we reached 21,000 feet – only 500 feet from the col. On the second day, a sharp reminder was given to us of the threat from the face above, when, with Dai and myself jumaring up the ropes, an avalanche swept down the base of the couloir and obliterated our tracks made that morning. Picking our way over the debris later, we reflected on what would have happened had we made a later start.

The fine weather had finally broken now and everyone, including the Americans, descended to Base to wait for the storm to blow over. A couple of days later, although conditions were still unsettled, Bob and Alan Scott went back up to try to reach the col. Several feet of fresh snow had fallen in the cwm to hamper

our progress further, but more worrying now was the risk of a serious avalanche in the couloir. In the radio call that evening, Bob and Alan reported that they had reached about 21,500 feet – only 50 feet from the col – but that there was no prospect of a reasonably safe site for even a small tent. As it was still snowing heavily, we decided the couloir was simply too dangerous for the present and to wait until the weather cleared. The next few days gave even more snow however, and, with climbing at a standstill, a turning point had been reached. The merits and risks of continuing on the West Ridge were weighed, and at the end of the day it was reluctantly decided to abandon the line as being too dangerous.

Although everyone agreed we were doing the right thing, it did leave us in a very real dilemma as to what to do next. The obvious alternative was to attempt the North Ridge but the Americans were on that, and, after discussion with them, it was accepted as impractical to have two teams on the route at the same time. It seemed as though we would have to move back down the Baltoro Glacier and climb on peaks below 19,500 feet – which our permit allowed. Quite apart from the logistical problems in moving Base Camp about 30 miles to the Lobsang or Cathedral Spires, however, no-one really relished the prospect, as we had already reached 21,500 feet on Gasherbrum IV.

Al Phizacklea then came up with the idea that saved the trip: the South Ridge on Gasherbrum IV had appealed to us from the start as an attractive and feasible line, but access to the South col was virtually impossible from the West side – the approach slope being guarded by a hanging serac barrier. So, Al reasoned, why not traverse round Gasherbrums V and VI and approach the South col from the East side? This proposal was enthusiastically endorsed by everyone, so preparations for the move began immediately. Obviously, the first priority was to retrieve as much equipment as possible from the North-West cwm, and, despite the continuing unsettled weather, this was done in a few days – although some rope was lost in the couloir.

Ideally, it should only have taken two days at most to reach our new Base Camp at the foot of the East Gasherbrum Glacier. Unfortunately, we had only managed to get a quarter of the porters required, and, with no alternative but to carry loads ourselves, the journey soon developed into something of an epic. There were unscheduled, intermediate camps and equipment dumps scattered everywhere, as everyone toiled under the 30 and 40 kg. loads. Despite also having to contend with half of the porters quitting due to exhaustion and discontent, the last load was finally hauled into the new Base Camp eight days later and we prepared to start all over again.

Access to the East Gasherbrum glacier was initially via the complex icefall at its junction with the Abruzzi Glacier – a fascinating maze of crevasses and tottering seracs which changed almost daily. On our first day up the icefall, we marked the route with flags and dumped our loads at the top. From here, the view was tremendous – all the Gasherbrums in a line, bordering the now gently undulating glacier which stretched for about 7 miles towards Gasherbrum IV.

We were enjoying a period of excellent weather, so every day was spent pushing further up the glacier and establishing camps. On June 25th, after a week of concerted effort, Camp Two was sited at 21,000 feet, with Camp Three several miles further on at about 21,500 feet, right at the foot of the ridge. Above lay a steep 2,000 feet face of ice and mixed ground which led to the South Ridge some way right of the col. Before we could begin on this, however, the storm clouds rolled in again, and, since the pattern seemed to be for several days' bad weather, everyone returned to Base.

Two weeks remained for us to climb the mountain, and, although the ridge itself had not been reached yet, our hopes were high that it would be within a few days. On returning to Camp Three, Alan Scott and Al Phizacklea set to work on the ice slope without delay. Although not excessively steep at just over 50° or so, the ice was very thin and protection virtually non-existent. On the first pitch, Alan Scott had to lead out over 600 feet on a diagonal traverse with no runners to reach a belay! Afterwards, they continued to make steady progress, and, after two days, had reached about 22,500 feet where the face had steepened and become more mixed. Dai and myself then moved up to take over and try to reach the ridge. About 1,000 feet of rotten rock and unconsolidated snow remained, but, with Dai in the van and in determined mood, we gained height relentlessly. Eventually, late on the 4th July, he chopped through the cornice and sat astride the ridge. The weather was clear and calm and a magnificent panorama lay before us. Dominating the foreground was Broad Peak, while further afield were Masherbrum, Trango Tower, Mustagh Tower and the Ogre. Even Nanga Parbat stood clear, over a hundred miles away.

Unfortunately, there was no chance of putting a tent on the knife-edge arête where we were, and there were several hundred yards of pinnacled crest to traverse before the ridge broadened out somewhat. Dai and myself returned the next day, therefore, to find a route through this section. A precarious traverse of the steep East Face on snow-covered slabs was followed by some delicate climbing over the crest of the ridge. We were then forced

on to the West side and another traverse across steep loose rock, until finally a shout of triumph heralded success; as I pulled round the last pinnacle, Dai was belayed to a huge boulder, with a broad grin on his face. Above, the way was clear, as the ridge swept gracefully upwards for 3,000 feet to the summit which looked tantalisingly close. Although there was obviously some difficult climbing above, I think we realised for the first time just how close we were to success. All the weeks of load-carrying and fixing ropes were suddenly forgotten in the elation of the moment.

With the weather still perfect, more rope and hardware was brought up to the ridge and the fixed ropes repositioned in a better and safer line to Camp Three. Just as things were going really well, however, our luck took a dramatic turn for the worse. First of all Bob began to feel dizzy and unwell and decided to go down to a lower altitude to recover. Then, more seriously, Andy was caught and injured in stonefall above Camp Three. In considerable pain, with badly torn muscles in his right arm, he was clearly unable to take any further part in the climbing. So in one day we had lost two climbers and, to compound this, the weather also looked set for a change.

Despite these reverses, the four of us remaining went back up the next day, and, while Al Scott and myself set about establishing a tent on the ridge for Camp Four, Dai and Al Phizacklea forged on ahead. They gained height steadily over some initially easy ground, and continued up a steeper and more mixed section. Late in the day, they returned, having reached about 24,000 feet. Meanwhile, the tent had been secured in a somewhat precarious and spectacular position, but it was with dismay that we watched the storm clouds gathering over Nanga Parbat and creeping up the Baltoro towards us.

By now, the strain was beginning to show on everyone, so it was decided to have a rest day and see what the weather did. Dai made use of this to return to Camp Two to look for cigarette ends, as he had run out and was becoming very grumpy!

Throughout that day, the cloud closed in and the wind strengthened, until, in the late afternoon when Dai returned, it suddenly dropped and a dead calm ensued. Soon afterwards, snow began to fall heavily and before long it was a battle to prevent the tents collapsing and being buried under the weight. All night, we had to struggle out and clear the snow as best we could, but it was an unequal fight. When morning finally came, it was a sodden and demoralised group which surveyed the scene; no-one had slept very much, equipment was buried under snow and our clothing and sleeping bags were wet. Over four feet of snow had fallen, and with it our hopes and plans.

With the weather still unsettled, we radioed Camp Two and discussed what to do. Dai wanted to continue, but with the amount of fresh snow now lying on the mountain and the risk of a serious avalanche, no-one else was very keen. The storm had broken the resolve and determination of the last few weeks, and, although we talked for hours, it was clear that we were not going back up again: it was all over. The total dejection everyone felt was only partly offset by the work involved in evacuating the mountain safely and salvaging what equipment we could. Two weeks later, we were back in Islamabad drinking beer in the British Embassy, and reflecting on what might have been.

ON THE HILLS

At ground level
 Existence spills sideways.
 Myriad bearings strike
 Into increasing complexities:
 Materialistic fruitfulness,
 Burgeoning technologies,
 Seduce into subjection.

Whereas hills simplify.
 Contours shrink to a node,
 The clutter falls away,
 The consciousness focusses
 On half-forgotten simplicities,
 Lost instincts stir
 In redundant senses.
 We encounter the old qualities,
 Unconditional cold, wind, mystery
 And gratuitous comfort.

We retreat into reality.

T.R.

DAWN ON OLYMPUS

By Theo Nicholson

AT TWO in the morning (midnight true time) on 4th July, 1945, I left the Greek Alpine Club Hut, situated 7,000 feet above the sea, directly under the high peaks of Olympus, and made my way along the track towards the summits.

It was the last morning of the third of the short mountaineering courses I was running for my Brigade, on the instructions of the Brigade Commander – then Brigadier John Hunt, CBE, DSO. In accordance with our practice, the last day aimed to achieve the height of ideal by a night climb to greet the sunrise from the summit.

We were climbing the highest point in Greece, Mitika (The Needle), 9,478 ft., and Stefani, it's even more attractive neighbour which is lower by a few feet but is less easy to climb. 'Stefani' means 'Crown,' and anyone viewing the peak from the NE will agree that it is appropriately named. Stefani is also known as 'The Throne of Zeus,' possibly because of its comparative difficulty and its appearance, which discouraged all attempts to climb it until 1921. A Swiss cartographer, Marcel Kurz of Neuchatel, then made the first ascent, accompanied by a Greek guide from the village of Litokoron, which lies between Olympus and the shores of the Gulf of Salonika.

The men on this third course were hardy Pathans from the 3/12 Frontier Force Rifles, hillmen by nature and upbringing. They were accompanied by their own Pathan assistant instructors whom we had trained on a previous course. They moved rapidly up the steep, rough track; too quickly for my liking at that time of the morning, and I made no attempt to keep up with them.

The moon was past the last quarter and had risen about an hour before our departure. From a starlit sky it shed a pale light on the grey rocks and dimly lit the crumbling pinnacles above. Progress was easy; there was sufficient light to place the feet deliberately and accurately and the route was well known.

Looking down the scree that fall steeply to the tree-clad slopes of the gorge below, I saw that the whole of the 8 mile-long deep, narrow valley running down to Litokoron was filled with ghostly white clouds. They formed at the valley entrance, close to the sea, and remained at a height of about 4,000 ft. Out to sea was clear, and the distant lights of villages on the shores of the Khalkidiki peninsula could be seen faintly across the water.

I left the track to turn right across the steep scree slopes which descend from the foot of the Mitika and Stefani rocks. The route had been well tramped by us during the past few weeks, and a rough path or footprints were picked out by moonlight with little difficulty. I traversed diagonally up for some time. At about 3 a.m., I halted for a few minutes to look around and to take in the mystic beauty of the place. Faintly from the distance came the occasional sound of the troops climbing the track away to the left; otherwise there was complete silence, interrupted rarely by a dull, moaning, rushing sound, as a gust of wind swept down from the shattered crags above.

Looking up, the grey, pinnacled ridges of Mitika towered in solitude; so grey and remote and rugged were they that they seemed to form a fantastic piece of backstage scenery. In front and below, the mist clung quietly and soothingly, as it were, to the lower wooded slopes. Away on the left and right stretched the supporting ridges of the main massif, enclosing between them the deep gorge of the Mavrolongos, running down to Litokoron. To the NE the vaguest indications of greater light appeared. To the east, lightning flickered 100 miles away behind black masses of storm clouds, lying low on the horizon and slowly drifting away.

Half an hour later, I arrived at the foot of the steep scree and broken rock gully separating Mitika from Stefani, and which forms an easy route up the latter. The moonlight had paled before the advancing dawn and the mists below were uneasily shifting and thinning. The scramble up the gully occupied 15 minutes, then five minutes careful walk along a narrow ridge to an easy crack with a sensational downward view, then a few yards along a wide, sloping platform and up an easy 10-foot chimney on the right and so to the summit cairn.

I had expected to find some of my 'students' with their instructors already on the top, but both Stefani and Mitika, standing clear a few hundred yards away, with a 1,500-foot gulf between, were alone and quiet in their solitude. Thus I was able to appreciate in full measure the wonder of the scene. The sun was fast approaching the horizon; shafts of light tipped the clouds in gold and silver. Away to the west the hills extended to Albania, to the NW and north to Jugoslavia, to the NE as far as Bulgaria. The clouds in the valley below were dispersing quickly before the advance of the sun.

Suddenly, figures clambered around the top of Mitika – they were members of two of the 'syndicates' whose first objective was that peak. I shouted across the great gully to ask for news of the other two groups who should have preceded me to Stefani.

My voice echoed back from the smooth NW Face of Mitika, but the reassuring answer came that the two parties I was concerned about were even now coming up the gully to Stefani, having missed the route across the scree traverse in the poor light.

Away behind a black cloud on the far horizon, the flaming yellow rim of the sun now appeared, and quickly climbed above the mass, flooding the mountainside with light. The moon had paled, the stars and a brilliant planet had disappeared, and the darkness of the west dispersed. Looking west, we saw the gigantic triangular shadow of Olympus cast across the land as far as the mountains 40 miles away. The shadow moved perceptibly towards the north, the apex of the triangle closing in towards us.

The climax had passed; in the full light of day the mountain had lost something of its mystery. The memory of it remained, and with it the remark of one of our party that no man who lives in the hills can be an atheist.

NEW CLIMBS SECTION

WINTER GRADINGS

MUCH useful comment and information regarding winter gradings has now been received, many indicating that some change might be desirable. To allow a deliberate approach to the problem, it has been decided to maintain the status quo for one year, also allowing more correspondence on the subject. As before, please send in any comments to the New Climbs Editor: **A. D. Nisbet, 13 Orchard Walk, Aberdeen AB2 3DT.**

NORTHERN HIGHLANDS

FOINAVEN AREA, Creag Shomhairle, Main Face – *The Harrier*

J. R. Sutcliffe, J. R. Myers. 1st June, 1982. 270m, Very Severe (mild).

Towards the left end of the Main Face (right of *The Cage*) and below the summit of the hill, a tall pink rib rises above overhangs. The route gains this rib from the right then climbs fairly directly to near the summit via three tiers. Excellent rock and well-sustained standard more than compensate for the vegetated bits.

Start up a short vertical crack, right of an overhung corner, to gain a slab and turf ramp rising left (20m). A gangway continues up leftwards into a groove and corner (25m). Cross the slab on the left to gain the rib by a bulge, then climb direct to detached blocks (25m). The pink rib continues to a heather ledge (20m). Climb a mossy groove on the right and cross a heathery groove to a broken rib above and climb left to a small cave (40m). Gain the clean rib above and climb left of the crest to a terrace with belay well back (40m). Straight up on next rock tier to bigger terrace (20m).

An easy way off leads up right but the summit crag above is well worth climbing so walk up left to a steep open groove (30m). Climb cracks to flakes leading up right to an overhung corner with right traverse to a small stance on a nose (20m). Gain the scoop above, then up leftwards on to a higher slab leading to a terrace (20m). A final wall (10m) is followed by a short scramble to the summit.

– *The Plinth*

J. R. Myers, J. R. Sutcliffe. 3rd June, 1983. 45m, Hard Very Severe.

Below the central part of the Main Face is a smooth-fronted, semi-detached buttress. Close to its left edge, steep red rock was climbed by a sustained pitch. The grassy groove on the right provides a way off.

– *Tank Top* 45m, E6.

M. Hamilton, R. Anderson. 28th June, 1986.

Climb the impressive steep crackline at the right end of the face, just right of *Land of the Dancing Dead*.

1. 10m, 4c. Climb up as for *Land of the Dancing Dead* and move right to a small stance.

2. 35m, 6c. Move up and slightly right until moves left can be made to a point underneath the roof, pull over this and follow the crack to the top. (Three Stars).

South Face

This is the name suggested by J. R. Sutcliffe for the face up and right of the Main Face, between *South-West Edge* (see below) and *The Catwalk* gully. The large mass of broken rock above this crag could be called **Upper South Crag**. J. R. Myers and J. R. Sutcliffe climbed this crag by a 120m Severe line in 1982, not justifying a name.

– *South-West Edge*

J. R. Sutcliffe, D. Chapman. 31st May, 1967.

75m, Severe.

Left of *Windy Corner*, the edge of the South Face rises in two steps. The first step is climbed by a crack on the west side and the second by the steep slab just right of the edge. Good climbing but escapable between pitches.

– *Hot Pants*

45m, E4.

M. Hamilton, R. Anderson. 29th June, 1986.

In the centre of the South Face is a prominent roof split by two cracks which continue up a short headwall. This route takes the right-hand crack. Scramble up from the right to belay at a flake-line in the middle of the wall.

1. 20m, **5a**. Climb the flake, step left and continue to belay on a ledge beside a holly bush.

2. 25m, **6b**. Move right and climb the crack to below the roof. Surmount the roof and continue up a crack in the headwall to the top.

– *Catwalk Direct* 50m, Severe.

J. R. Sutcliffe, D. Chapman. 18th August, 1966.

From the foot of the gully in corner on right of South Face, climb the slab direct to finish up a small corner, as for *Catwalk*. Descend *Windy Corner* or continue up the edge, an airy Difficult scramble for 150m.

Note

J. R. Sutcliffe notes that the original climb on Creag Shomhairle, *Crescent-shaped Chimney* (SMCJ 1954, p.236) is probably partly coincident with *The Cage* (SMCJ 1968, p.57). No other feature on the crag bears any resemblance to the description.

Although previous guides have said the crag is composed of quartzite, it appears to be mainly gneiss with some quartz-schist.

Creag Urbhard – *Weather or not*

200m, Hard Severe.

B. Mattock, G. Mitchell, R. Webb. July, 1985.

Left of the scree cone at the start of *Chicken Run* is a ledge. From the left end of the ledge climb more or less directly up, following a small waterfall, for six pitches.

– *Fiscal's Rib*

150m, Very Difficult.

G. Mitchell, J. Dunn. July, 1986.

Left of *Pantagrue* and high up is a prominent grey rib which gives the line.

Dionard Buttresses

The following routes are described exactly as recorded. The authors are of the opinion that the routes are on the First Dionard Buttress and that *Late Breakfast* is not the same as *Double Corner* (see District Guide).

On the left (southern) side of the First Dionard Buttress, directly above the old Nissen hut, the buttress splits into three tiers, the middle being the most pronounced.

Lower Tier – *Hirsuit*

30m, E1 5b.

B. Mattock, R. Webb. July, 1986.

This is a good approach to the superior middle tier. Towards the left of this tier is a prominent square area of clean rock defined by two prominent cracklines. This is the right-hand crack.

Middle Tier – *Late Breakfast*

60m, Hard Very Severe.

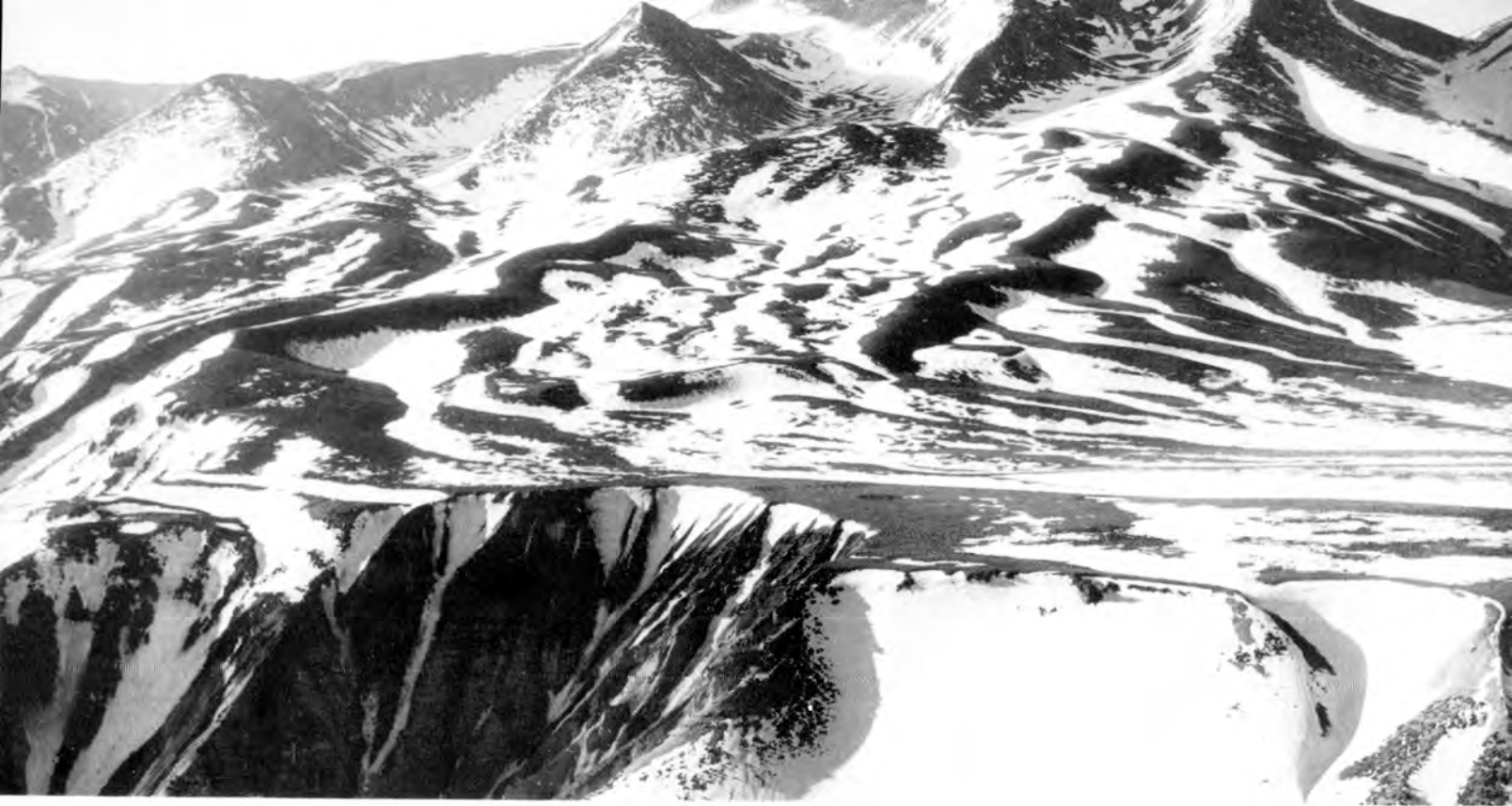
R. Webb, G. Mitchell. July, 1986.

Towards the upper right end of this tier is a very obvious clean corner with another corner capped by a large roof on its left arete. This is the big corner, climbed in two pitches (4b, 5a), with the crux at the top. Recommended.



Irghil M'Goun (1986)

Photo: Hamish Bruce



More Irghil M'Goun (1986)

Photo: Hamish Brown

- Look North

65m, E2.

R. Webb, B. Mattock. July, 1986.

This is the left-hand corner.

1. 25m, **5b**. Start as for *Late Breakfast*, beneath the big corner, climb it for 5m, then traverse left round a corner and cross the slab from right to left to gain better rock. Move up 5m to belay.

2. 20m, **5c**. Climb the corner to a small roof beneath the main roof (peg runner placed while climbing), swing left to gain an easy traverse line beneath the main roof and traverse out left to a good belay.

3. 20m, **5b**. Climb the crack in the arete.

On the upper tier is a big banana-shaped groove which is 'Scottish VS' and very character-building (G. Mitchell, J. Dunn, July, 1986).

COIGACH, Sgurr an Fhìdhleir - Nose Direct (summer line) 320m, GRADE V/VI.
W. Moir, C. Forrest. 17th January, 1987.

The route followed the summer line, as described in the SMC district guide (a previous ascent being further left). The route was long, hard and superb climbing, mostly on frozen turf.

Climb broken ground from the lowest rocks (numerous lines) to gain the long grassy groove (obvious) which twists up the centre of the buttress, passing two flat-topped overhangs. The groove leads to a sweep of slabs (the Pale Slabs). From a bay below the slabs climb a grassy groove in the right corner and traverse along a level snow ledge leftwards to a stance. Turn the second slab by climbing a grassy groove on the left to another good ledge. Climb the left ledge of the steep undercut slab on the right by a vague right-slanting groove (crux, one nut for aid) to another ledge (old peg). Continue up grooves on the left edge of the slab to exit on to an airy pedestal. A 3m crack leads up and a 3m ice wall on the left leads to easy ground. Scramble up the crest to reach the summit in about 100m.

CORRIEMULZIE, Meall nan Fuaran, North-east face (NH 391897) - Campsite Cleft
I. Rae, J. Wilson. 4th April, 1986. 210m, GRADE II/III.

This is the longest gully which slants diagonally left up the highest part of the face. A short ice pitch at the start and two further ice pitches higher up.

Bodach Beag, North-west face (NH 354878) - Freewater Gully.
I. Rae, J. Wilson. 3rd April, 1986. 220m, GRADE III.

From the approach up the Glasha Burn, two buttresses can be seen below the summit of Bodach Beag. These are separated by a broad couloir. From the foot of this couloir a hidden gully cuts diagonally left up the left-hand buttress. This provides good sport for the first 100m, with a number of short ice pitches, the longest being 12m. The angle eases where the gully broadens and swings to the right.

Carn Ban, Coire Toll Lochan (NH 330880) - Toll Gate
I. Rae, J. Wilson. 8th April, 1983. 210m, GRADE II.

This, the main feature of a lovely secluded corrie, starts almost immediately above the lochan. Several straightforward pitches.

Seana Braigh, Luchd Corrie - Y Gully Buttress 300m, GRADE II.
I. Rae, J. Wilson. 7th April, 1983.

This is the big sprawling buttress to the left of *Sunday Post*. A Y-shaped gully splits its frontal face. The lower 200m follows the stem and right branch of the Y. The latter becomes a ramp which peters out on the right of the buttress, from where pleasant mixed ground leads up to the crest. This leads easily, with an optional tower, to the plateau.

ANTEALLACH, Coire a' Ghlas Thuill – Pawn Cocktail 280m, GRADE III.
C. Forrest, W. Moir. 18th January, 1987.

Takes a line left of *White Knight*. Climb the obvious 90m icefall (the latter part of which can be avoided on the right but is best climbed direct) to gain a right-slanting gully which contained more easy-angled ice. Where this peters out go straight up to a big tongue of rock. Go left round this to gain the ridge.

Toll an Lochain – Potala Buttress 240m, GRADE IV.
D. Rubens, D. Broadhead. 31st January, 1987.

The V-shaped buttress which culminates in the Corrag Bhuidhe pinnacles (between *Lady's Gully*(?) and the upper part of *1978 Face Route*).

Follow *1978 Face Route* to the toe of the buttress. Start 10m above and right by the line of least resistance to a stance overlooking the ramp of *1978 Face Route* (35m). Go up slightly and traverse left to below a rib. Up to belay below small rock band (40m). Go through the rock band (sling used), then up more easily (50m). Continue without difficulty to a snowfield (30m). Up the snowfield trending slightly right to a weakness (50m). Up weakness to finish in notch just left of the rightmost tower.

Several days of cold conditions probably helpful to allow the turf to come into optimal condition.

BEINN DEARG, Glen Squaib – Emerald Edge 200m, GRADE IV.
S. Falconer, R. Robb. March, 1986.

Climbing a series of short ice walls and steep snow shelves this route follows the buttress immediately right of Emerald Gully, and ultimately its right-hand edge. It is not recommended in lean conditions and a good build-up of snow and ice is required, although the protection is fairly good.

Start 50m right of *Emerald Gully* at an ice fall forming the lowest point of the buttress. Climb this ice fall for 15m to a snow basin (alternatively climb into basin from further right) and follow this to a broad ice fall forming a corner at its left edge (30m). Climb this ice fall for 20m trending left and up a shallow groove leading to the first snow shelf (30m). Climb snow shelf direct to the base of an overhanging rock wall and belay (20m). Take the steep groove to the left of belay and continue over rock wall to the second snow shelf (30m). Follow this trending left to belay 20m from the edge of *Emerald Gully* on the 3rd rock step (30m). Traverse 10m right to the base of an exposed ice pillar. Climb this (crux) and a steep turfed groove above exiting onto another narrower snow shelf. Follow this to a small cave and belay (45m). Climb the rocks above which form the right shoulder of *Emerald Gully*, to the final snow slopes and summit cornice.

CARNMORCRAG – Death-Wolf 75m, E6.
G. Livingston, D. Dinwoodie (Alt.). 9th August, 1986.

Takes the great roof and wall round left from *Abomination*. Traverse left 10m from the foot of *Abomination* to a peg belay under an obvious overhanging flake-gangway in the roof. Alternatively gain this belay by climbing directly up the slabs below.

1. 30m, **6b**. This pitch is very strenuous with no rests until a ledge 10m above the roof is gained.

1(a). (The start of flake is often wet on the inside; this doesn't however affect the difficulty as the flake is climbed on the outside).

Climb the flake-gangway out over the lip of the roof and into a little scoop. (Hidden side-pull inside crack here). Go straight up the wall to a hidden jug then move right and up onto a small ledge. Climb the small arete and groove above to a belay ledge close to the right arete.

2. 30m, **6a**. From the right end of the ledge move up and across left then up left to gain isolated knobbls. Traverse right by a thin horizontal crack to gain better holds and pull out right to easy ground. Move up left to belay at the left end of a heather ledge.

3. 15m, 5c. Climb the wall above the belay (unprotected for some distance) veering left under an obvious scooped groove and up the wall to the top.

(The roof on the main pitch was yo-yoed. The detailed description leaves no excuse for hang-dogging).

— *Beastmaster*

46m, E4.

D. Dinwoodie, G. Livingston (Alt.). 8th August, 1986.

The corner-system just left of *Dragon*. Escape is possible back into *Dragon* in places but the climbing is very good.

1. 20m, 5b. Climb the obvious crack-line just left of the start of *Dragon*, running up past the left side of the roof. Go up an easy section of *Dragon* to belay under the bulge at the base of the corners.

2. 20m, 6a. Climb the bulge up left to enter the first corner. Climb this and two succeeding corners direct to the belay after the *Dragon* traverse (crux at top).

3. 6m, 5b. Finish directly up the flake-choked corner-crack above.

— *Lion Rampant*

80m, E5.

G. Livingston, D. Dinwoodie (Alt.). 9th August, 1986.

The main pitch climbs the wall right of *Dragon*. A crack in the steep right-bounding wall of the *Dragon* slab provides a good introductory pitch. The third pitch takes the obvious break in the roof just right of the *Gob* break. (The first and last pitches were actually climbed the following day on the *Ride of the Valkyrie* ascent).

1. 20m, 6b. Climb the obvious crack (strenuous and sustained) and go up to the ledge under the wall.

2. 30m, 6a. Climb the original start of *Sword* past the spike to an expanding block. Pull straight over the bulge and move up right to gain small ledges at the foot of a great shallow scoop in the wall. Go up left then out right and up to an expanding flake. Move out left to another flake and pull up onto the left-slanting ledge above. Continue directly up the unprotected wall above, just beside the arete overlooking the groove of *Sword*, past a poor peg runner to gain a ledge. Go left along this to belay at the right side of great detached blocks.

3. 25m, 6a. Climb the wall right of the belay to gain *Gob* traverse under the roof. Climb the bulge up into a small corner then pull out right on layaways to reach slabs, and belay above.

4. 15m, 5c. Climb straight to the roof above. Traverse left and pull over the roof using a jug to swing up and right to gain blocks. Veer left and up the steep wall to an overhanging finish on big flakes.

— *Ride of the Valkyrie*

E5.

D. Dinwoodie, G. Livingston (Alt.). 10th August, 1986.

A more direct and artificial line up the *Dragon* wall. The first pitch goes up right of an obvious unclimbed crack which would give a variation start to *Dragon*. A twin-break just left of the *Gob* one is taken through the roofs.

1. 30m, 6a. Climb up to the expanding block as for *Lion Rampant* then step left to surmount the bulge at a thin crack. Climb up slightly left to a peg runner. Step left and go up to gain a good horizontal flake running across the wall. Step up right then back left and straight up the wall to gain a left-pointing jug. Go up and left to ledges on *Dragon* and up to belay on top of the pedestal.

2. 35m, 6a. Climb the cracks up the wall above then move right and up *Gob* for a few feet, below the break in the roofs. Move up left and go rightwards up a bulge to gain undercut slabs under the main roof. Traverse rightwards up under the roof and pull out right using undercuts under a nose to gain easier ground. Finish as for *Gob*.

GAIRLOCH, Ravens Crag

The following routes are located at the west (left-hand) end of the crag where an obvious heather terrace divides the crag, sloping up from left to right.

- *Far Post* 22m, Very Difficult.
- M. McKay, R. A. Napier. 3rd April, 1986.
At extreme left end of crag is a dark slab.
Climb the rib on the left of the slab. Finish up a groove, to belay at the back of a broad terrace.
- *Leac McCac* 22m, Severe.
- M. McKay, R. A. Napier. 3rd April, 1986.
Climb the dark slab direct on thin ledges and crack, to belay at the back of the terrace as for *Far Post*. Sound rock.
- *Groove Climb* 22m, Very Severe, 5a.
- E. Simpson, G. Callander. 6th April, 1986.
Start at centre of heather terrace beneath steep upper wall.
Directly up prominent groove system in centre of upper wall. Continue up easier slabs to belay on ledge near top of crag.
- *Entasis* 33m, Very Difficult.
- M. McKay, R. A. Napier. 3rd April, 1986.
A scoop divides the red slabs beneath the heather terrace.
Start from boulders at foot of scoop. Begin up ledge sloping up left to right. Directly up slabs just right of scoop. Continue directly up, to belay at back of a ledge at top of a ramp above heather terrace.
Next route is a logical continuation.
- *Thatch* 20m, Difficult.
- M. McKay, R. A. Napier. 3rd April, 1986.
From the belay at top of *Entasis* climb up ramp on right for 5m, round corner to ledge. Continue directly up past holly tree and bushes, over easier rocks, to belay on top of crag.
- *Bash Vein* 35m, Severe.
- D. Conway, R. A. Napier. 6th April, 1986.
Start 20m right of *Entasis*, near centre of crag.
Pull up 3m wall on to ledge. Climb slabs, trending left on sloping ledges and overlapping slab-flakes to where wall steepens.
Traverse up left to belay on ledge as for *Entasis*.
Next route provides a harder finish to top of crag from belay.
- *Flowerdale Corner* 20m, Very Severe, 4b.
- D. Conway, R. A. Napier. 6th April, 1986.
Start at belay ledge at top of *Bash Vein*.
Climb directly up broken wall above ledge. Pull up on to heather shelf which slopes up right from heather terrace. Step left across shelf into recess and climb layback crack. Continue left up easier rocks to belay near top of crag.

SLIOCH

The Western aspect of Slioch is dominated by a steep and gloomy sandstone buttress known as the Atlantic Wall. The buttress, about 180m high, appears continuous from below but actually consists of three steep tiers separated by broken terraces and culminates in a soaring ridge which provides a further 200m of scrambling to the West summit.

Although difficulties on the upper tiers tend to be less continuous, direct access to these is effectively barred by the lower band of steep and unusually unco-operative sandstone – on his *Original Route*, A. Parks avoided this obstacle by means of a long traverse in from Easy Gully.

– *Skyline Highway*

355m to summit, Very Severe.

S. Chadwick, I. Davidson. 14th July, 1986.

This line addresses the lower difficulties directly, starting a few metres in from the right edge of the buttress (cairn). The initial tier is steep and sustained but gradually gives way to more relaxed climbing.

1. 30m, **5a**. Follow a shallow groove up to two obvious parallel cracks. Climb these on the left (crux) then continue up past a ledge and awkward finger crack to a stance.

2. 20m, **4c**. Move left then up past a small roof (poor rock) and continue up to the first terrace.

3. 30m, **4b**. Scramble up the terrace (25m) to the second tier which is climbed directly to finish up the obvious open corner. The blank wall at mid height is crossed left to right.

4. 30m, **4c**. Up the second terrace (20m) to the third tier and a flake-choked groove leading to a smooth overhanging corner and off width crack (short but strenuous). Easier to stance.

A final easy groove (15m) leads from here to the long summit ridge. (200m to summit, worth the effort for the view).

Note

After reconsideration, *Norse Requiem* (SMCJ, 1986) has been regraded Hard Very Severe, 5b.

BEINN EIGHE, Coire Mhic Fhearchair, Far East Wall – *The Rising Son* 100m, E2.

D. Rubens, S. Pearson. 22nd June, 1986.

Start at the recess of *Kami-Kazi*.

1. 25m, **4c**. Climb up leftwards from the recess to belay on a grass ledge.

2. 30m, **5c**. From the right edge of the ledge go right and up over a bulge (loose block) to a position immediately under the overhangs (seen from the ground). Traverse left under the overhangs for about 5m, then go up steeply for about 10m until able to make a delicate move left to a small belay below a prominent overhung niche.

3. 15m, **5b**. Climb through the niche and past a ledge to belay.

4. 30m, **4c**. Continue up trending slightly left to gain the major fault which leads to the top.

Eastern Ramparts – *Pale Rider* 125m, E1.

A. Nisbet, B. Lawrie (var.). 10th August, 1986.

The route takes the most prominent crackline on the wall left of *The Pale Diedre*. The crackline is characterised by two projecting blocks just at the point where its angle eases. Start at the same point as Rampart Wall, below a left-facing diedre.

1. 45m, **4c**. Climb directly up to the base of the diedre. Immediate entry was barred by a detached block so go up left and enter above the block by delicate moves across pale rock. Follow the diedre to the girdle ledge. Belay 10m further left, just below and left of the crackline (which is approx. 20m left of *The Pale Diedre*).

2. 40m, **5b**. Climb the crack to a small ledge beside the projecting blocks. Go easily up right to belay on a large ledge.

3. 30m, **4c**. Return left to the original line which has a blank section below a bulge. Instead, go left round an edge and straight up the wall above to belay below a short chimney on the left.

4. 10m, **5a**. The chimney was wet and loose so the wall 3m right was climbed.

East Buttress Direct – *The Chimney Start*

R. Anderson, G. Nicoll. 30th March, 1986. 90m, GRADE V.

An ascent of this buttress was made directly up the sandstone tier via *The Chimney* to join the original route. The upper part of the chimney is in fact more of a corner.

1. 25m. Gain and climb the steep chimney to a belay just where the angle appears to ease and the chimney opens out facing a corner above. (Peg in place).

2. 35m. Continue directly up the corner above until a pull out left enables good protection to be arranged, step back right and climb up until a short ramp can be followed to a flake. Move over this and up to a good belay at a short corner just below the terrace and only 10 feet left of the top of the chimney corner line.

3. 20m. Climb the short corner to the terrace and move up rightwards to belay on the ordinary route. Finish up the ordinary route in five pitches mainly via the crest.

Central Wall – Pelican 180m, GRADE V.

A. Cunningham, A. Nisbet. 9th January, 1987.

A fine direct route, steep and sustained. The description of the summer route being vague, the line taken is described fully.

1. 45m. Climb the gully to the right of the Tower. Access to the Tower is now on the left.

2. 25m. Continue on up the gully (a steep ice pitch) to belay under a prominent chimney with two sections.

3. 20m. The first section of the chimney is very narrow and was climbed by a shallow corner on its immediate right. The second section tapered and forced a very awkward and thrutchy exit on to the outside (crux).

4. 35m. Above is a large roof, avoided by a ramp on the left and pulling through the roof at its left end into an icy groove which led to the Upper Girdle ledge. Pull through the bulge above and up a groove to a stance.

5. 35m. Continue on up the groove (more of a shallow chimney) with difficulty to a ledge. Move left into another groove system and up this to belay.

6. 20m. The groove leads to the top of *Central Buttress*.

– *Condor Crack* 75m, Severe.

D. Roberts, J. Scarborough. 27th June, 1986.

The route lies on the wall between *Pelican* and *Piggott's Route*. Start on the terrace below the final tier of *Central Buttress*, well round to the East side. Scramble up easy rock until it steepens.

1. 20m. Step up and go easily left along the line of the *Upper Girdle* to an awkward step down, then up. Climb over some blocks (easily seen from the start).

2. 25m. Muscle up the corner, step left then right into a crackline. Follow this to some freshly fractured blocks.

3. 30m. Climb over the blocks and step right to a little slab which leads to a band of steeper rock. Pass this by a shallow chimney, then easier rock to the top.

The West Buttress – Direttissima

R. Anderson, R. Milne. 5th April, 1986.

345m, GRADE VI.

This direct line on the West Buttress climbs most of the obvious large corner of the summer route *Senior* on the sandstone tier, shares two pitches of *The Ordinary Route* (if you do the ordinary route the left hand way up the crest) then finishes as for the Bonington/Patey summer variation. Traverse the initial shelf to belay below the corner line.

1. 30m. Move up a short crack/groove to gain the corner which leads to a narrow ledge, step left and belay.

2. 20m. Step back right and climb the corner direct via a steep crack with a difficult exit to a good belay just above.

3. 40m. Move up the corner a little then right and up to gain the ledge system girdling the buttress, traverse this leftwards to the frontal face. A belay is taken below an obvious groove barred by a ledge (better seen from the left). This is just past a narrowing of the ledge where a step has to be made over a loose block.

4. 40m. The way ahead looks difficult but once the initial bulge is overcome the difficulties cease after 10m and the shallow groove then leads easily to the crest of the buttress.

5. 45m. Continue up the crest of the buttress over numerous short steps to join the left hand variant of the *Ordinary Route* at a terrace.

6. 40m. Continue up the easiest line as for this part of the *Ordinary Route*.

7. 30m. Climb up over short walls and blocks to belay below a short wall at the foot of the final tower, the *Ordinary Route* traverses right here.

The line ahead is now by Bonington/Patey summer variation up the left hand side of the huge 'domino shaped block' on the frontal face of the tower. A worthy finish to the *Ordinary Route* on its own.

8. 30m. Climb the short wall behind the belay to gain another short wall with a thin crack in it. Overcome this, step left and continue to belay in a recess formed by a large flake at the foot of the impressive final corner/flake line.

9. 35m. Move up then left to gain the flake line which leads via a fine finish over the obvious projecting block to the ledge below the short 20 foot chimney of the *Ordinary Route*.

10. 35m. Climb the chimney and ensuing easy ground to the top.

The Upper Girdle

— Part One (Eastern Ramparts)

M. Fowler, C. Watts. 21st February, 1987. 300m, GRADE V/VI.

Follows the summer line and gives approx. 10 pitches of fine difficult mixed climbing with the crux at the end. Finish up *East-Central Gully*.

— Part Two (Central and West Buttress)

M. Fowler, T. Saunders. 14th March, 1987. 500m, GRADE V.

Again follows the summer line exactly. Intermittent difficulties across Central Buttress lead to a spectacular but well-protected section across the East Face of the West Buttress. Finish easily up *Fuselage Gully*.

West Buttress — Fuselage Wall Direct

G. Nicoll, R. Anderson (Alt.). 3rd January, 1987. 80m, GRADE V.

An excellent short route based on the summer line. Start midway along the ledge running out from Far West Gully to the buttress edge, there an obvious 3m high pinnacle at the top of the first pitch.

1. 30m. Move up to small bay then up corner to pull round left to climb a crack in the corner leading to a belay beside the pinnacle.

2. 20m. Continue up the fault/crack the bottom of which the summer line avoids to gain a good belay ledge on the left.

3. 30m. The summer line moves out right but instead climb the flake beside the belay and continue up the fault over a small roof to follow a corner leading to the top.

Coire Rudha-staca — Midge Ridge

145m, GRADE IV.

A pleasant route based on the summer line.

1. 35m. Climb the left edge of the buttress beside the gully to some hard moves up a bulging corner immediately right and just below the huge chokestone. Easier ground leads to a belay.

2. 45m. Go up a short way then right behind a block to gain a narrow chimney and corner leading to a belay on the crest.

3. 40m. Continue easily up then right to belay behind a large block.

4. 25m. Gain short corner up on left and follow this to the top.

LIATHACH, Coire Dubh Mor — Hooded Claw

150m, GRADE IV.

A. Cunningham, A. Nisbet. 13th January, 1987.

This is the obvious ice line left of *Umbrella Fall*, started from a traverse left along the large terrace above the first tier. The superb crux pitch was a steep iced groove leading to an ice hood which was passed by a short icicle on the right.

— *The White Tiger*

220m, GRADE V.

A. Cunningham, A. Nisbet. 14th January, 1987.

A tremendous ice climb following the right-hand of the three lines between *Umbrella Fall* and *The Salmon Leap*. The fall was incomplete on the second tier (first main one) and an improbable right traverse made from the highest point of an ice bay on the left. Four more tiers, all very steep, led to the final barrier (bare rock wall) which was avoided by a long delicate traverse right into the final pitch of *The Salmon Leap*.

The face between *Poacher's Fall* and *George* forms four obvious icefalls which last year failed to bottom out down the initial extremely steep tier. This January, however, all but the first fall right of *Poacher's* were, in varying degrees, complete.

— *Test Department*

185m, GRADE V.

M. Fowler, C. Watts. 11th January, 1987.

Takes the second fall right of *Poacher's* (the first has an obvious gap over a large overhang at 45m). A fine route. The lower icicle did not reach the ground so a start was made just to the right.

1. 15m. Use 2 rock pegs to gain the icicle and climb it to belay by a fine free-standing column.
2. 30m. Climb the column and follow very steep ice to a ledge. An excellent pitch.
3. 45m. Continue up deceptively steep ice bulges to below a steepening.
4. 40m. Take the left-hand of two ice lines above.
5. 45m. Easily for 30m to below the mixed ground of the final wall. Follow a shallow groove, almost directly above the lower pitches, to a niche 6m below where the angle eases.
6. Continue to easy ground.

— *Brain Drain*

180m, GRADE IV/V.

A. Nisbet, A. Cunningham. 13th January, 1987.

The third fall right of *Poacher's* formed a thin bulging entry pitch. This was avoided on the left by a hidden icy chimney-groove (crux) followed by a traverse right to join the main line.

Coire na Caime — *Bell's Buttress, Left Chimney* 230m, GRADE IV/V.

G. Cohen, D. Broadhead. 11th January, 1987.

This climbs the leftmost of the obvious chimney lines on *Bell's Buttress*, with a slight kink to the right at half height. An excellent route. Start from a snow terrace below the continuous part of the buttress.

Climb the left one of a pair of chimneys for 8m, step into the right chimney and go up to where it overhangs; climb out on the right and go up the gully above to a huge block belay on the left (30m). Continue up the gully to below a small overhang, climb a thin groove on the right for a few metres and make a hard step back above the overhang. A little further up is a recess below a large overhang; turn this on the right to attain snow ledges (27m). Follow the gully on the right through several narrowings to where a ramp goes off to the right (45m). Continue in the same line up a rocky chimney (30m). The top of the buttress is reached after a further 100m of easy climbing.

— *Toll Dubh Chimney*

250m, GRADE V.

D. Rubens, D. Broadhead. 17th January, 1987.

Follows a line through a deep chimney starting about 20m left of *Twisting Gully*. Climb to the foot of the chimney in two pitches. The chimney is overhung and was climbed by a non-iced crack in the right wall until ice was again regained (25m). The next pitch culminated in a short overhang after which difficulties eased.

Stuc a' Choire Dubh Bhig

On the South-eastern flanks, far above the Coire Dubh footpath, is a bank of short cliffs (with the summer route *Triceratops*). Approx. 180m from the right end is a deep conspicuous gully (grade I/II). *Triceratops* is immediately right of the gully.

– *Fairy Queen* 80m, GRADE IV.

A. Cunningham, A. Nisbet. 15th January, 1987.

Climbs the obvious icefall 30m right of the gully in two fine steep pitches; the first an ice-cased corner and the second unique bridging and chimneying between a large icicle and iced wall, moving right at half height on to the icicle front, then up right to finish on easy ground above the cliffs.

– *Snow White* 200m, GRADE III/IV.

A. Nisbet, A. Cunningham. 15th January, 1987.

100m left of the deep gully is another easy gully, broadening into a large bay at the top. Left of this the crag heightens into numerous tiers and an obvious wide icefall forms at half height. Starting at the lowest tier, this is the line of *Snow White*, the middle tier providing the meat of the climb.

Toll a' Meitheach

This is the coire right of *Pyramid Buttress* on the south side of the mountain. The backwall is split by two prominent gullies (both grade II with short pitches). Between these lies a terraced cliff with a very steep 50m bottom tier.

– *Soul-searcher* 210m, GRADE IV.

M. E. Moran. 13th January, 1987.

Climb the central scoop line in the bottom tier, trending slightly right (45m); then go diagonally right on easy angled ice, (25m) to a groove and chimney in the next rock band which was taken direct and gave a second fine ice pitch (bulge at top) (40m); easier climbing in the continuation of the chimney led on to snowfields below the main ridge (100m).

– *Salvation* 55m, GRADE V/VI.

M. E. Moran (unseconded). 17th January, 1987.

Left of *Soul-searcher* an impressive icefall can form down the lower tier, rarely if ever reaching ground level. The gap of 5 metres was surmounted by use of a convenient pedestal, a long reach and a series of forceful armpulls (serious); an 80° ice screen then led rightwards to a stepped corner line (good rock belay in the 2nd step, 25m). On the left of a cave above the corners the impending upper cascade was attacked direct, then trending left to a block belay on the big terrace at the top of the tier (30m). (Abseil descent). (An easier pitch could be contrived above the terrace on the second tier where a line of usable ice was spotted on the right).

BEINN ALLIGIN, Tom na Gruagaich, North-East Face – Bilas

D. Rubens, D. Broadhead. 18th January, 1987. 280m, GRADE III/IV.

The icefall parallel to and right of *Koh-i-Noor*. After three pitches traverse left, go up a further 15m and go left again, joining the easier upper part of the aforementioned route.

M. Moran, P. Bower, R. Cooke made the probable second ascent of *Giveaway Gully* on 20th February, 1987 and provide the following description.

– *Giveaway Gully*
350m, GRADE IV.

The main corner line on the left of the upper face. The gully takes 9 full ropelengths. There are 4 short but awkward steps in the lower section. After the gully bends right a series of gradually steepening grooves culminate in a fine ice column and chimney before 40m of steep snow leads out to the summit. Rock belays throughout.

One of the finest Torridonian gullies, harder and better than *March Hare's* and equally impressive in scenic ambience.

ACHNASHELLACH, Fuar Tholl, High Cliff

Deception Buttress is separated from the main cliff by a prominent gully which is easy except for a very steep 45m step. *Cold Hole* takes the ice groove forming the left corner of the step. Short but hard and good.

– *Cold Hole* 50m, GRADE V.

M. Fowler, C. Watts (Alt.). 10th January, 1987.

1. 25m. Up the ice corner to belay on a small ledge on the right wall 10m below where the groove curls left and overhangs.

2. 25m. Very steep ice leads round the left edge of the overhang to easier ground.

– *Pipped at the Post* 100m, GRADE V.

M. Fowler, C. Watts (Alt.). 10th January, 1987.

About 30m down the gully from *Cold Hole* is a continuous ice streak on the main face. Low in its grade.

1. 45m. Climb the ice to a thinly covered wall at 15m which provides the crux. Continue to ledges.

2. 35m. Continue in the same line, up a steep corner at 20m, to gain ledges.

3. 20m. Finish directly on mixed ground.

APPLECROSS, Meall Gorm – Lobster Gully 160m, GRADE IV.

M. Fowler, T. Saunders. 15th March, 1987.

The obvious gully separating *Blue Pillar* from *Cobalt Buttress*. Several short steep steps in the first 80m lead to two fine chimney pitches in the upper section.

Beinn Bhan, Coire na Poite – Harlequin Rib 265m, GRADE IV.

H. M. A. Towler, G. S. Strange, J. C. Higham, B. S. Findlay and R. J. Archbold (Team effort). 2nd February, 1986.

Takes the right edge of the buttress between *Madhatter's Gully* and *March Hare Gully*.

From the start of *Madhatter's Gully* go diagonally left up a huge snow-covered slab until beneath the obvious steep wall. Turn this by a groove round the left edge then continue up to a steep band which girdles the buttress at about mid-height. Gain a groove either directly or by a tool traverse from the left then continue up until able to move right to easier ground. Several easier pitches lead to the top.

RUBHA MOR**Situation and approach to the sea cliff**

The peninsula is a marvellous extension of the wild and contorted landscapes of the Coigach region, which houses the tumbling geometry of such famous peaks as Stac Pollaidh and Ben Mor Coigach. Exploration has so far been limited to the west side of the peninsula and its northern tip, known as Rubha Coigach.

Most climbers will approach from the south. Take the A835 Ullapool northwards to Drumrunie junction (10 miles). From here a tortuous single track road, signposted Achiltibuie, is followed under Cul Beag and Stac Pollaidh to a road junction at Achnahaird Bay. Turn right here and follow the signs to Reiff. Reiff is the starting point for all those walking out to the peninsula to climb. Achnahaird camp site is approximately 1 mile along the road to Reiff. A left turn at Achnahaird junction leads along the shores of Loch Raa and Loch Vatachan to Achiltibuie village. Reiff is easily reached from Achiltibuie by following the coast road northwards, through the settlements of Polbain and Altan Dubh.

Facilities

There is an official campsite at Achnahaird Bay with basic facilities. Camping is not encouraged elsewhere in the area, but if you are prepared to carry your tent a little distance out into the peninsula no interference will be met with. There is a shop at

Achiltibuie which also sells petrol. There is another shop at Polbain. Pubs will be found at Altan Dubh and Achiltibuie. There is sometimes a chipshop van at Altan Dubh during the summer months.

Character of the area

Although the cliffs of the peninsula, particularly those at the Rubha Coigeach can be reached by walking from Achnahaird Bay, this is very wet and boggy and not recommended. Rather leave the car at Reiff and by contrast, enjoy an extremely fine moorland walk by the edge of the sea. Combined with the many superb views of the mainland hills and the general solitude of the peninsula, climbing here has much to offer anyone prepared to make the effort to pay a visit.

The rock of the Rubha Mor is sandstone. The quality of the rock is nearly always good, occasionally perfect, resembling more the solid firmness of gritstone than the tottering vegetated sandstone towers more generally characteristic of the mountains of the area. There are one or two places, however, where the rock can become more 'snappy' in nature and this should be looked out for.

The rock is commonly red in colour but various algae have colonised some sections to produce black looking rock. The quality of the rock is in no way affected.

The sandstone of the Rubha Mor provides a variety of rock climbing problems, usually with strenuous solutions. Sometimes the walls run to jugs, and when they do steep exhilarating routes often of reasonable grades are produced. Frequently however, and typically of sandstone, the holds are rounded, quite often small, producing a fingery style of climbing. Although there are not many 'pure' crack climbs, the jamming enthusiast will find a few gems. The rock dries quickly after rain, but cliffs with a more northerly aspect, particularly on humid days, can stay damp until the sun gets a chance to play on them.

The peninsula offers everything from micro routes to four pitch climbs, although the latter is definitely an exception. On the whole, single pitch climbs, between 10 and 25m are the norm. Very little of the climbing is actually above the sea but rather takes place above non-tidal rocky shelves or dry boulder gullies. Obviously being sea-cliffs there are exceptions to this.

History

Many of the shorter routes were soloed first by Brian Lawrie. Also from Aberdeen, Dougie Dinwoodie, Doug Hawthorn, Kevin Murphy, Neil Morrison and Andy Nisbet have done some fine routes. From Edinburgh Murray Hamilton and Rab Anderson have made at least one fruitful sortie. Other climbers have undoubtedly visited some of the cliffs.

THE REIFF CLIFFS

Having parked the car at Reiff follow the tarmac road to where it ends at a bridge over the outlet from the tidal Loch of Reiff. The first rocks can be seen from here, no more than 5 minutes distance to the North West on the coast. They stretch northwards more or less continuously for about ½ mile to a point known as Roinn a Mhill (not marked on all maps) before petering out into the boulders and sand of a fine bay, Camas Eilean Ghlais. These cliffs divide naturally into three sections for the purpose of description.

1. The Pinnacle area.
2. The Bouldering Cliff.
3. The Black Rocks.

Diagrams are provided for 1 and 2 only.

THE PINNACLE AREA (NB 962143) Fig. 1.

This section takes its name from a squat 10m detached block of rock, with a fine clean cut slab showing towards Reiff. Immediately obvious. Cross the bridge (see above) and follow any one of several sheep tracks, first round the loch and then across

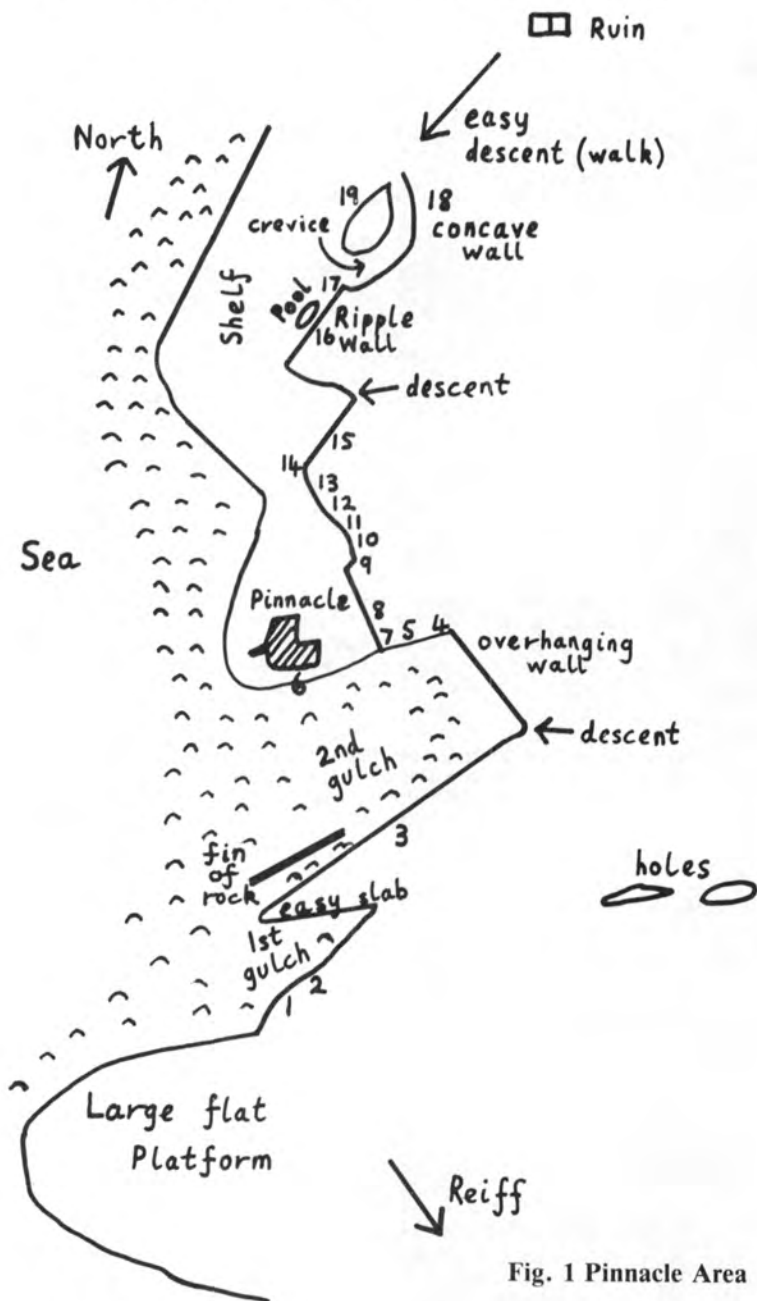


Fig. 1 Pinnacle Area

the grassy moor towards the rocks. Just beyond a little boulder beach and an enormous flat platform of rock stretching down to the sea is the first gulch. This gulch is a small affair. Either traverse in, or at high tide approach over the top and descend an easy slab at the landward end. There are some fierce possibilities in this gulch. So far only two routes have been done at the seaward end of the south wall.

1. *Amorous Prawn* 6m, Severe. Rightmost corner, not particularly good.
2. *Lanky* 12m, Very Difficult. Interesting climbing on good holds.

Second gulch

This gulch is a much bigger affair. At its head is a ferocious overhanging wall. On the north side is an easy angled slab which can be used as a descent (see routes).

There is also an easy descent down a gully on the south side, just under the ferocious wall. There is a great deal of unclimbed rock on this side. The most prominent corner, roughly in the middle of the wall, provides a good route.

3. ***Tangle of the Isles* 10m, Hard Severe. Gives sustained climbing all the way.
4. **Slab and Corner* 15m, Difficult. Up the right hand corner of the easy angled slab on the north side of the gulch.
5. **Jellyfish Slab* 15m, Difficult. The central line on the slab.

Round the corner from the Jellyfish slab is the Pinnacle. The Pinnacle can be reached from the gulch or by descent of some of the easier routes. If in doubt locate an old ruined building approximately 60m further up the coast and back from the cliff edge, and follow an obvious fault leading back towards a wide easy-angled break in the continuity of the cliffs. Descend this and walk round the base of the cliffs to the Pinnacle.

The Pinnacle

The Pinnacle itself is an interesting playpiece.

6. ***Moonjelly* 10m, Very Difficult. This route takes the centre of the slab which is sustained on small holds.

The right and left edges have been climbed at about the same standard. The east face of the Pinnacle has some good juggy climbing at about Difficult standard and there is a strenuous hand traverse on the seaward face under a prominent protruding nose of rock. Descent from the top is by abseil or by descending a route.

7. *Sip from the Wine of Youth Again* 10m, E15b. Starts from the near edge of the platform overlooking the 2nd gulch and takes an obvious diagonal crack out towards the edge. Pull round and finish easily.

8. ****Channering Worm* 10m, E3 5c. A few feet left, just past a right to left diagonal crack which goes through a roof and roughly opposite the edge of the Moonjelly slab. Climb over a roof to gain a curious flange of rock. Make hard moves up and then right to gain the diagonal crack, which is followed to the top. Left of the *Channering Worm* is a corner.

9. *Slanting Corner* 10m, Severe. Climb corner on good holds to the top.
10. **Skel* 10m, Mild Severe. A few feet left of the corner is an obvious parallel diagonal crack. Crux high up.
11. *Xyles* 10m, Severe. A few feet left again. Climb a shallow groove.
12. *The Krill* 10m, Hard Severe. A few feet left again. An overhanging crack. Finish straight up rather than escaping right.
13. **Puckered Wall* 10m, VS 4b. Starts right of the fine arete and follows a left to right line up the wall.
14. ***Hy Brasil* 10m, VS 4c. The fine arete. Start left of the arete then follow the first obvious line out right on to it. Finish direct.
15. ***Westering Home* 10m, E25b. Climb some thin vertical cracks in the middle of the wall. The wall continues left to a corner (Difficult and a possible descent). A long wall leads out to the right arete of Ripple Wall and has a reasonable route of about Severe running up near the edge. Round the corner is:

16. ***Earth Shaker* E25c/6a. Directly above a little pool is a short corner. It can be gained from the left or the right. Above the corner go slightly left then straight up the wall to finish.

This wall offers hard possibilities for micro routes. Just left of the wall is a little corner tucked in.

17. *More of the Same* 10m, VS 4c. Climb the corner then go left over the roof to finish.

Left of the Ripple Wall is the Concave Wall above a large crevice. Up the centre is Severe but escapable.

18. **Diagonal Crack* 8m, Difficult. A surprisingly fine route at its grade. Keep traversing out all the way.

The cliff here is actually on two levels. The lower tier above the tidal shelf has a fine little route.

19. *Le Mer* 5m, HVS 5a. Climb cracks and pockets to top.

Bouldering Cliff (NB 962146) Fig. 2.

This very fine area of superb rock offers many short micro routes (hence the name) and also a number of superb sustained long routes. Some futuristic problems await a solution here. It is possible to reach this area at low tide by continuing the traverse round from the Concave Wall (see Pinnacle Area). A number of problems have been done here, but although the rock is very good the routes are shorter and less well defined and the effort has not been made to catalogue them as yet. To approach the Bouldering cliff direct, re-locate the ruined building (see Pinnacle area) and follow the obvious fault, this time to the north, to descend a grotty wet gully (although very easy), then a short ramp down to a large flat platform of rock, which extends round the base of the cliff. From the foot of the ramp (near some large boulders) the cliff rises in height over its 80m length from a minimum of 5m in height to a maximum of 25m.

The routes start at the little ramp which descends from the grotty gully.

1. *Hors d'oeuvre* 5m, VS 4c. First little corner. Step off the ramp to start.

2. *In the Land of Dreamy Dreamers* 5m, HVS 5a. Next corner to the left.

3. *Eliminator* 6m, HVS 5c. A few feet left, a line goes up to an obvious rounded ledge. This can be traversed into 4 but better to finish out right.

4. **The Corner* 10m, VS 4c. Climb the corner.

5. *White Horses* 10m, HVS 6a. Hard start if done absolutely direct up the arete. Finish is boldish.

6. *Scallog* 10m, HVS 5b. Face climb just left of the arete joining 7.

7. **Black Zone* 10m, HVS 5b. The original route on the cliff. Palm rightwards up obvious ramp and get established with difficulty on a high ledge. Either finish by 8 or step out right.

8. ***Golden Eyes* 10m, HVS 5b. Climb the big corner left of *Black Zone*. Finish straight up. A blank wall follows to another arete. Just left of this on the face is a fine problem.

9. ****Romancing the Stone* 10m, HVS 6b. Climb the obvious thin cracks left of the arete. This route can be finished direct with friend placements in the break (E3). If soloing finish rightwards along the break by the hand traverse.

10. ****The Hand Traverse* 15m, HVS 5a. A fine traverse across the break above *Romancing the Stone*. The crux is at the end. Well protected. Start as for *The Ramp* to gain the break.

11. ***The Ramp* 10m, Severe. A fine little route following the obvious left to right ramp. Starts above a little pool.

12. ***Hole in the Wall* 10m, HVS 6a. Begin a few feet right of the big corner (13) and gain an obvious hole in the rock. Layback the shallow overlap above to gain its flaky end, then up to traverse the break out right to finish by the ramp. The pool makes it awkward to jump from.

13. ****Wyatt Earp* 20m, E3 6a. Now the cliff gets bigger and this climb takes the large corner in the recess. A fine route but often wet.

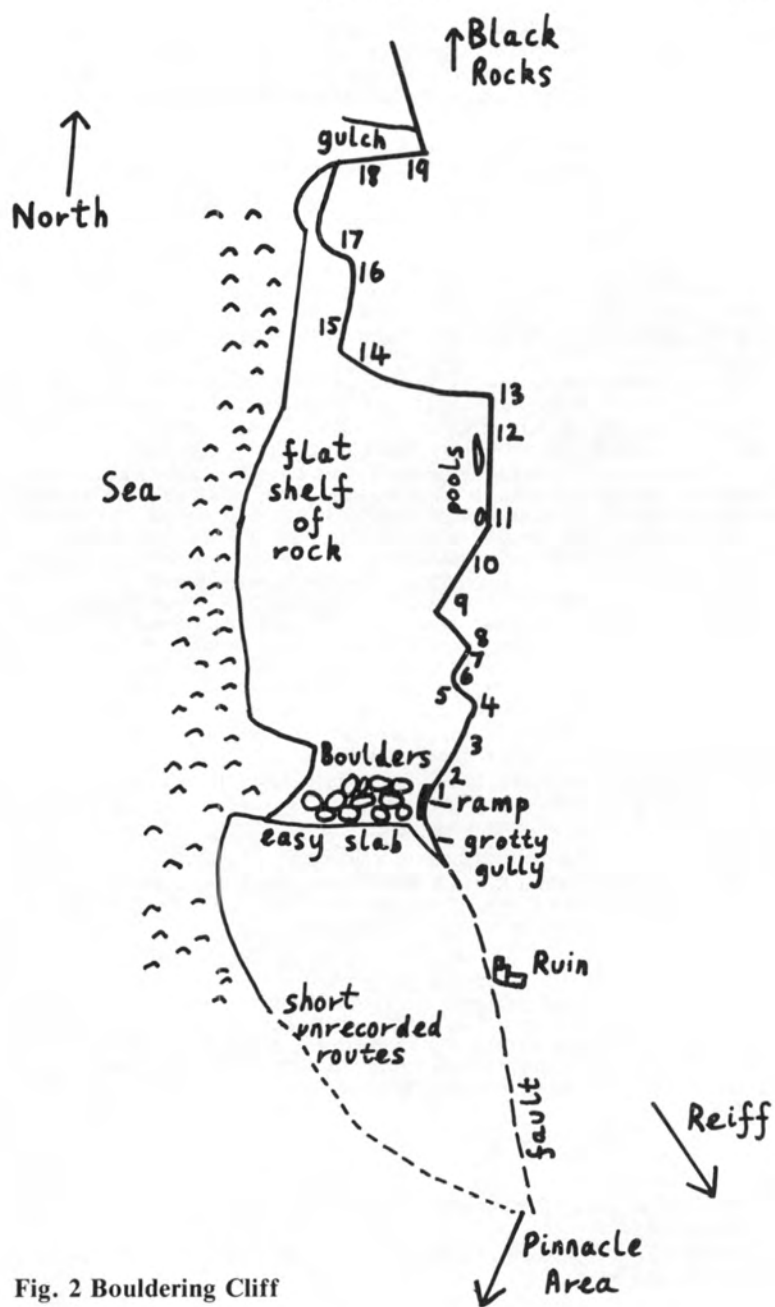


Fig. 2 Bouldering Cliff

14. *Leaning Meanie* 20m, E2 6a. This is the overhanging crack near the left edge of the wall. Upper chimney crack is much easier. Round the corner on the sea-facing wall a stunning diagonal crack line is the obvious feature 16.

15. *Variant Start* 10m, E3 6a. An obvious shallow ramp line leading up to the half way point of 16.

16. ****The Crack of Desire* 20m, E35c. Climb the lower crack of the 'stunning' line but after the midway bulge it breaks out into the wall on the left and goes straight up. Start by a corner.

Black Rocks (NB 963148)

The Black Rocks are an immediate continuation of the Bouldering Cliff but separated from it by a narrow impassable gulch. From here they stretch northwards, at first continuously and then in more broken and isolated buttresses, to a point marked on some maps as Roinn a Mhill, before losing height and petering out into the bay of Camas Eilean Ghlais.

The cliff is described from left to right (facing the cliff) because this approach gives a fine little expedition in its own right, as well as providing a look at the potential of the whole crag. At high tide sections of this approach will not be possible and other descents, which are described at appropriate points, will have to be used.

Walk northwards over the cliff top towards its left hand end and walk down a long easy-angled slab almost to the sea, where the slab abuts a vertical wall. Ten feet up the wall an easy (Difficult) traverse can be made out to a ledge on the right. Go round the corner and climb up a short wall to a large ledge. Belay. On the main wall above the ramp descends from left to right ending at the foot of an impressive arete. Climb a short wall to gain the ramp, descend it and belay 6m beyond the arete, below another bulging arete. At very low tide this point can be reached by scrambling round the bottom, although there is strenuous pull up at the end on barnacled rock. The aim now is to reach the flat platform just out of reach across a narrow gully. Above is a vicious smooth groove bounded on the right by yet another unlikely looking arete. Having descended the crack, walk over the platform and belay (4c). The platform is on two levels. From the highest platform the first recorded route is:

**The Grooves* 20m, Severe. This takes the left side of the wide groove right of the 'unlikely looking arete.' Steep climbing on big holds.

Right of the grooves is a flat faced arete. From the foot of this arete a crack runs up right for 10m to join the corner of *Black Donald*.

Auld Nick 10m, Severe. Climb the crack.

By traversing round the lower platform a large slab is reached.

***Tystie Slab* 30m, Very Difficult. Excellent. Climb the slab up the easiest line to fine pockets and horizontal breaks, finishing up left where the slab narrows considerably. The slab can be climbed on the left edge (harder).

**Black Donald* 25m, Mild Severe. Tucked in the left side of the slab is a fine corner. Finish by *Tystie Slab*.

There is a corner right of *Tystie Slab* then a prominent slabby buttress (with yet another corner tucked in on its left). Both are quite short. It is possible at reasonable tide levels to traverse round the foot of the buttress to gain some continuation ledges. There is a good abseil point above the buttress for access to cliff. It is also possible to gain *Tystie Slab* via a break, from the top of the buttress and then the foot of the cliff by that route.

***Black Magic* 25m, MVS 4b. Climb the centre of the slabby buttress, starting from some ledges down on the right. This line is left of a curving crack which is the line of the following route.

*(*Unnamed*) 25m, VS 4c. Climb the curving crack then climb the upper wall just right of *Black Magic*.

At the far end of the wall, up right well beyond the end of the platform, just left of a perched block is

Ricks Route HVS 5a. Climb obvious leaning crack.

AN STUIR (NB 964156) Fig. 3.

The next area of climbing lies on An Stiuir the headland on the north side of Camas Eilean Ghlais. Camas Eilean Ghlais is a very pleasant bay with a sandy beach. To reach the bay directly follow the path from Reiff along the east side of the Loch of Reiff (10 mins.). For An Stiuir continue round the bay and then follow a path, close to the cliff edge out over the headland in a further 10-15 mins. The cliffs overlooking the bay, and seen so conspicuously from the Reiff Cliffs have no recorded routes as yet. Right out at the top of the headland is a cluster of little corners and aretes which show prominently in certain lights from the far side of the bay. These corners are one of 3 sections suitable for climbing at An Stiuir. Approaching the tip of the headland it is necessary to scramble down into a long gulch which cuts back inland for about 100m in a north east direction, eventually opening out beyond some dark stagnant pools into a long dry boulder gulch. Most of the climbs are on walls above the boulders, distinguished by two fine parallel cracks near the left edge. This boulder gulch and the continuation wall which runs down to the sea, constitute the second climbing section of An Stiuir. Left of the parallel cracks there is a more broken section of cliff based round a deep chimney, before the walls continue superbly down to the water, mostly above some large partially tidal, sloping platforms. Only a few routes on the west wall are affected by the high tide. Moving north again, the cliffs dramatically and immediately lose height. Sixty metres north of the west wall past some little inlets, the cliffs begin gradually to pick up in height again and regain their continuity. Numerous scrambling descents lead down to an extensive flat platform which lies under most of this, the third section of the An Stiuir cliffs. This section culminates in dramatic corners and walls before again slowly diminishing in height and giving way to a flat open moorland type landscape.

First Section

As previously mentioned, these climbs lie right out at the top of the headland and are based on the cluster of corners and aretes found out there. All the corners and aretes have been climbed and range in difficulty from about Severe to Hard Very Severe. They are on excellent rock and it is a good bouldering area. A lower tier, below the corners, also provides some good routes. These climbs are easily reached by walking out to them from the long gulch.

Second Section

This is the long boulder gulch which is a very sheltered place, giving protection from wind from most directions. The climbs above the long narrow tapering gulch are dominated at their left end by the aforementioned magnificent parallel cracks — *Seal Song* and *Elastic Collision*. The climbs here will be described first rightwards from *Seal Song* up the gulch, and then leftwards from *Seal Song* down to the sea.

1. ****Seal Song* 15m, E3 5c. A fine route up the left hand crack. Climb easy rock on left before stepping right into the crack.
2. ****Elastic Collision* 15m, E4 6a. Equally fine right hand neighbour of *Seal Song*. Very sustained. Start with a strenuous pull over a bulge to a good flat hold. Continue.
3. **Razors Edge* 15m, E1 5b. Chimney crack 3m right of *Elastic Collision*. Begin at razor sharp undercut flake and pull round to gain a crack leading up into the chimney.
4. **Gussetbuster* 20m, E1 5b. Start as far as *Razors Edge* but climb up into the obvious diagonal crack line with an awkward bulge at mid height.
5. *Plaything* 20m, Severe. Just right, an apex formed by two corners leads to a roof.
6. *Every Which Way but Loose* 20m, HVS 5b/c. Next corner on the right. A number of starts are possible. Traversing in from left to right is probably hardest. Several other routes have been bouldered on here and might be worth recording in the future.

The first climb left of *Seal Song* is:

2. **Diamond Back* 20m, HVS 5a. Climb *Moody Blues* until it is possible to traverse right into the poised diamond shaped groove. Nice situation.
3. *Moody Blues* 15m, VS 4B. Obvious slanting ramp lying just below *Diamond Back*.

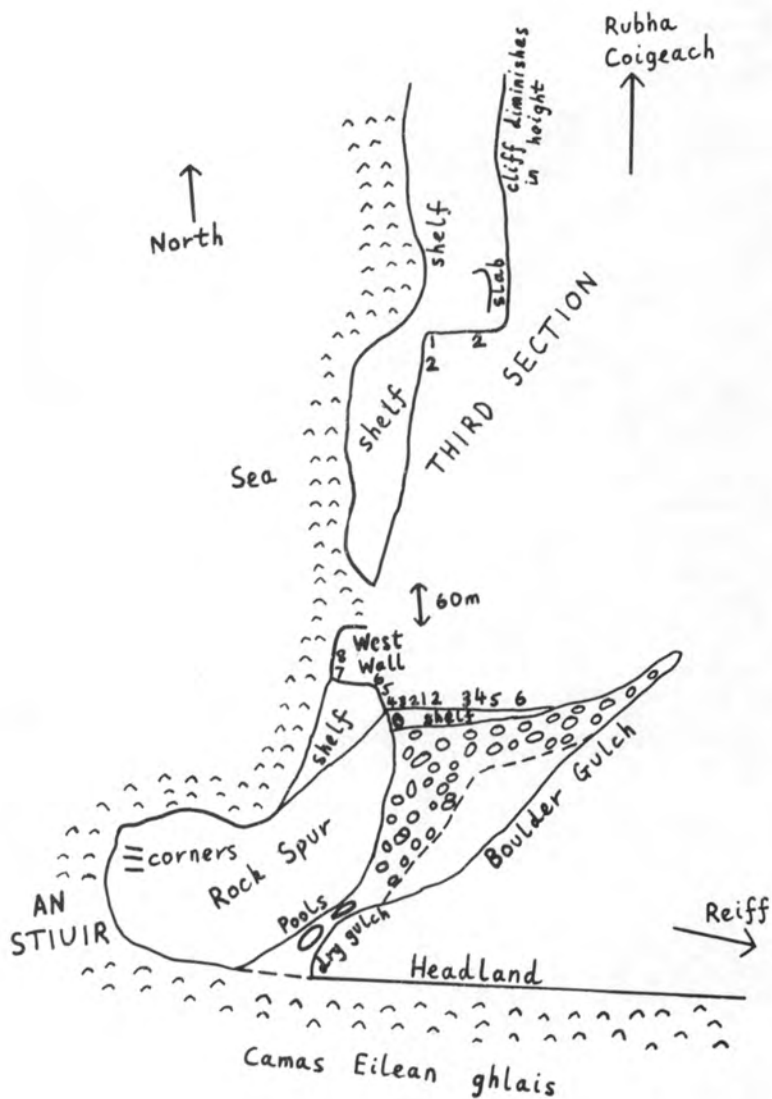


Fig. 3 An Stiuir

4. *Overhanging Crack* 15m, Severe. Left of *Moody Blues* and taking a lower but parallel line to that route. Interesting overhanging crack to start.

5. *Deep Chimney* 12m, E2 5b. Climb chimney with some doubtful blocks. Left of *Deep Chimney* there is a short section of broken rock before the wall rears up impressively down towards the sea. At the extreme right hand side of this wall above some flat shelves is an obvious right to left diagonal crack. This is the line of:

6. ***The Executioner* 12m, E2 5b. The crack provides a sustained strenuous climb. The obvious line on this wall has not yet been climbed and it is round the corner on the West Wall that the following two routes have been recorded.

7. **Skullsmasher* 12m, VS 4c. This is a steep patch at the right hand side of the wall. The crux is at the top, moving off a ledge for the top.

8. *Brainbiter* 12m, VS 4b. A steep crack left of *Skullsmasher* leads up into an easier groove.

The Third Section

Although this cliff is quite long (see introduction to section) the initial part has few interesting lines and the rock quality is poor. This leads round into an impressive area of unclimbed corners and cracks. The climbs which have been done are described first from the corner (*Where the Green Ants Dream*) rightwards, and then leftwards.

1. ****Where the Green Ants Dream* 20m, E1 5c/6a. A very fine climb, the start is easier for the wall. The climb gains a line of hard corners running up the edge of the wall.

2. **Clam Jam* 14m, E1 5b. Just right of *Green Ant* on the frontal wall is a peculiar scalloped-shaped roof. Climb up to break through right end of roof where there is a good crack; up finger crack to the top.

Approximately 10m left of *Where the Green Ants Dream* on the shaded north facing wall (left of the cave) a prominent crack runs up the slightly overhanging wall to a halfway ledge.

2. **Sexcrementalism* 15m, E1 5b. Climb the crack to ledge (strenuous) continue up the corner crack more easily.

The other hard-looking lines have not been climbed as yet. To the north of the bay there is an obvious short black slab with some interesting extended boulder problems.

**The Kraken* 10m, E2 6a. The obvious shallow groove up the centre. The first moves are the hardest but it is sustained.

Vision of Blue 10m, E1 5b. The crack up the right hand side.

Chokestone Crack 5m, Very Difficult. Just to the right.

***Curving Crack* HVS 5a. Obvious curving crack, just right again.

The cliff diminishes in height northwards from here but there are some fine little walls which would repay attention.

RUBHA COIGEACH (NB 976180) Fig. 4.

The Rubha Coigeach is the most northerly point of the Rubha Mor peninsula and is reached from Reiff by following the path as for An Stiuir and then continuing along the coast to reach the cliffs, which stretch round the point from just beyond Faochaig Bay. The walk from Reiff takes about 1 hr and it is best to follow the coastal path, close to the sea and in and out of all the little bays, particularly when approaching Faochaig Bay. Attempts to cut across the peathags are counter-productive. The first glimpse of the Rubha Coigeach is caught just beyond An Stiuir, as a distant fang of rock. It is truly a magnificent area, more lonely than many mountain crags. The cliffs stretch continuously round the headland for over ½ mile and offer a varied selection of routes of all grades (even a 100m traverse!).

Rounding Faochaig Bay it is best to contour steeply round some grassy slopes on the northern side (thus cutting a corner) and then descend on the other side towards the bay, at first rocky, but then grassy and strewn after a storm with plenty of wood for a fire (good camping spot with water a little distance back at the bay). Where the cliff begins a curious phallic block protrudes above some flat ledges.

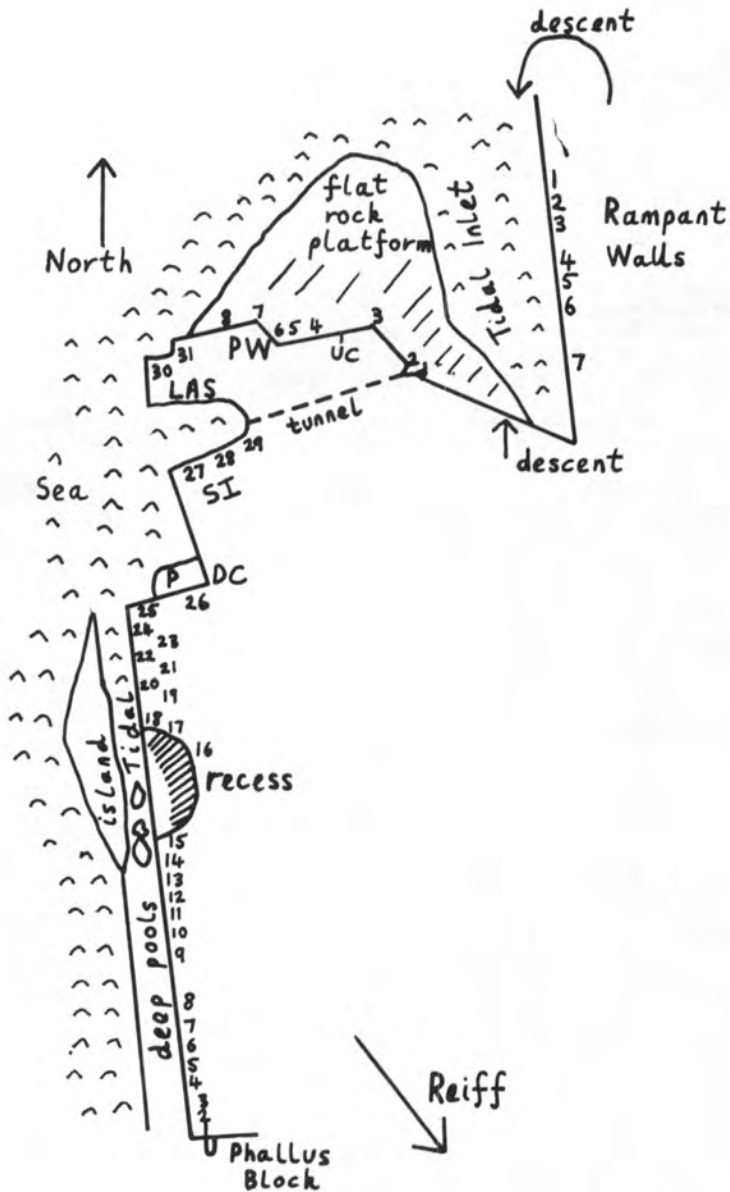


Fig. 4 Rubha Coigeach

The Golden Walls

Turn the corner and the walls stretch out beyond. There is an enclosed feeling here because of the protective capacity of the offshore island (see later). The first routes are no more than 6m high but over 200m or so the walls rise in height to about 30m. A convenient platform leads under the cliff for about two thirds of the length. At two thirds distance it is necessary to scramble along the walls and boulders of a tidal gulch which has formed between the cliff and an offshore island. The island provides a good viewpoint for the climbs opposite although access is difficult at high tide. This island is also infested with great black backed gulls during the nesting season. The end of the island is roughly opposite *Necronomicon* which is the last route on the Golden Walls to date before the cliff takes a prominent right angled turn towards a deep chimney and the wall containing *Black Gold*.

1. *The Slab* 6m, Severe. Just right of the chimney and just a few feet round the corner.

2. *The Chimney* 6m, Severe. Climb chimney.

3. *Funky Disco Pops* 8m, HVS 5b. Just left of chimney, climb to horizontal break by way of two pockets. Finish straight up.

4. **Andrews Clark* 8m, HVS 5b. About 2m left of above.

5. *Thunderhead* 8m, E1 5c. About 2m left again. Climb directly by way of small pockets, horizontal breaks and long reaches.

6. *Strange Crack* 8m, HVS 5b. A short strenuous corner crack just left of 5. Walk left about 10m under a beak of bulging rock to a peculiar puckered wall.

7. *Spasticus Autisticus* 10m, E1 5b. The route trends right up the wall to finish up the undercut nose. Now pass a wide chimney, which fans out at the top to the next main feature, an obvious corner.

8. *Safe as Milk* 20m, MVS 4b. Climb corner.

Walk on past a bulging section which partially blocks the ledgeway under the cliff until the ledge opens out again. Left of two crack lines there is another prominent corner.

9. **Murphy's Law* 15m, HVS/E1 5b. Climb corner. Strenuous at top.

10. **Halcyon Daze* 15m, HVS 5b. Climb the wall to the left with a technical start. Finishes by obvious hole-like feature at the top.

11. ***Carnival of Folly* 15m, E1/2 5b. Climbs the bulging wall just round the corner from *Halcyon Daze*. Finish straight up.

Next are the Golden Walls proper. This is a fine wall with four obvious crack lines.

12. ***Moronic Inferno* 15m, E3 5c. Climb the rightmost line.

The next crack is unclimbed. The next left is:

13. ****Crann Tara* 15m, E3 5c. Climb crack and take the right hand finish.

14. ****The Rite of Spring* 15m, E3 5c. This is the leftmost line. Gain a round hole about 3m up and traverse left into the line which finishes via a little corner.

The ledgeways peters out here but continues narrowly at a lower level for a bit. Up the very edge of the Golden Walls but starting just to the left and lower down is:

15. **Sweet Chastity* 15m, E1 5b. Start up an easy wall then with more difficulty to the top.

The next section of cliff forms a large recess and it is necessary to scramble up some 5m or so to reach some higher ledges and the only route so far done here; the leftmost of two obvious overhanging curving cracks.

16. *Skid Row* 10m, E2 5c. Climb the crack.

17. ****The Road to Nowhere* 15m, E4 6a. A very fine climb. It follows a shallow groove just left of the left edge of the wall containing the curving cracks but starting at a lower level. Belay as for 18 or just right of it. Severe climbing up short access walls have to be climbed for 5m to gain the belays. This is just beyond the point where the easy ledgeway round the base of cliff peters out into the tidal gulch.

Climb a strenuous crack a few feet right of 18 to a horizontal crack. Make a difficult move over the overlap into the groove above. Leave the groove with difficulty and climb boldly via a flange to a horizontal break and good friend placement (No. 2). More awkward moves to the top.

18. *Ordinary Route* 15m, Severe. Climb the corner which is the first obvious feature left of the recess. Some loose rock. The fine face on the left is unclimbed but the big corner bounding its left side is a fine route.

19. **Seannachie* 20m, VS 4c. Gain the corner by a traverse in from 18 rather than straight up from the gulch.

Beyond this point, at high tide, climbs can probably only be reached by abseil. The rest of the climbs can be approached by walking along the gulch.

20. *Horripilation* 20m, E2 5c. Start approximately 10m left of 18 and climbs a vertical crack system which runs up the wall to finish up a 4m scary semi-detached flake right of the crack. This line passes close (at mid point) to the tapering left end of a large ledge stretching across the face of 19. Sustained but could do with a clean.

21. ***Dragons of Eden* 20m, E2 5c. Starts 5m left of 20. Another thin crack which goes straight up the face to a ledge. Finish by a nice solid flake crack.

22. ***Saint Vitus gets on Down* 20m, E1/2 5b/c. The shattered crack line just left of previous route. Climb the shattered crack to the same ledge as on *Dragons of Eden* and finish steeply up the groove on the left.

The next route is about 10m left.

23. **Shades of Night* 20m, E2 5c. This route climbs out of a large alcove topped by an overhanging crack to gain an easier chimney crack. Climb this to a roof near the top of the cliff, then traverse out right on the face to finish.

24. ***The Presence* 25m, VS 4c. A ramp pitch going from left to right, starting as for *Necronomican*. Follow the ramp obviously to finish by an exciting sustained 3m wall.

25. ****Necronomican* 25m, E1 5b. This is a large corner near the end of the cliff. Very enjoyable and well protected. Watch out for turbulent tidal water near this end of the cliff.

26. ****Black Gold* 15m, VS 4c. This is not on the Golden Walls proper but is described here for convenience (see diagram). The route climbs the centre of the fine wall which cuts back inland from the edge of the Golden Walls toward a very steep chimney. Can be reached by abseil to avoid the long traverse along the gulch to reach this point.

The Slab Inlet

Beyond the left edge of the *Necronomican* Bay is a narrow inlet with a distinctive low angled slab forming its seaward side. The landward side is a 12m black wall with three shallow corners. The inlet is tidal with the base of the routes awash at high tide. The two leftmost corners can be approached at low tide by scrambling down the outside edge of the slab (Moderate). The righthand corner must always be approached by abseiling down the line.

27. ***The Ali Shuffle* 12m, VS 5a. This is the right hand and most prominent corner. Very well protected.

28. **Break Dance* 12m, E2 5b. Climb the wall to the left of the *Ali Shuffle* and just right of the arete. Friend runners in every break.

29. *Fingerbowl* 12m, Severe. This is the lefthand corner. Hardest at the bottom.

The back of the slab forms a prominent V-groove and gives an interesting exercise in horizontal bridging before turning into a more conventional corner (Difficult). At the top of the slab is a flat platform. Below the seaward edge of this is a corner with deep fissure. There is a crack in the right wall of the corner, *Atlantic Crack*. Approach by abseil. The climb can not be done at high tide without taking very awkward belays.

30. ****Atlantic Crack* 12m, E3 5c. A magnificent overhanging crack, mostly finger width. The most technical move is at the top.

31. **Eag Dubh* 12m, HVS 5a. The chimney crack to the left of *Atlantic Crack*.

The Platform Walls

The Slab Inlet cuts into a small headland bounded on the other side by a large flat rock platform near sea level (but mostly not tidal). A tunnel cuts through from the back of the inlet to the rock platform and at low tide gives unusual access from one

side to the other. The platform side of the headland is a long black wall of sound rock with good holds. Access is by scrambling down a black slabby area (sometimes slimy) at the extreme left or inland end of the wall. The following routes are on the wall, described from left to right.

The first feature of note is a buttress with a big roof 3m up. Just right of this is the tunnel. Right of the tunnel is an undercut and overhung slab.

1. **Autumn Sonata* 10m, E4 6a. Climb up to below the roof. Move right and climb up to a horizontal break (poor friend runners). The point now is to gain a good hold high up and left. Climb up to a small overlap and finish by obvious little corner above.

2. **The Eaves* 12m, Very Difficult. Climb the slab right of the tunnel. Only Difficult after the start, but poorly protected. Chimney up the outside edge of the tunnel until an exit can be made on to the slab. Traverse twin horizontal cracks rightwards to gain a right slanting crack which leads to the capping roof, avoided on the right. A direct start through the roof to the end of the traverse is 4c.

3. **Submarine Badlands* 12m, VS 4b. Tucked in between the slab and a vertical wall round the corner is a shallow groove. This route climbs the groove which leads round the corner to a sensational finish above the wall.

4. *The Ramp* 12m, Mild Severe. The vertical wall is split by a fierce crack which rises out of the roof of a small recess. Just right of this is *The Ramp*, which rises up to the left hand of two corners which bound the wall on its right. The crux is an awkward mantelshelf at a bulge.

5. **Corner Wall* 12m, Very Difficult. This is the left hand corner mentioned above. A flake on the left leads to a ledge. The corner above is overhanging but yields to bridging. Finish more easily.

6. **Reap the Wild Wind* 12m, Vs 4b. This is the shallow right hand corner, deceptively steep, especially at the top.

7. **Minch Crack* 12m, MVS 4b. On the wall right of *Reap the Wild Wind* is a thin crack line which slants right and goes round an edge at half height on to a long juggy wall. Start up the the edge to join and follow the crack. Following the crack throughout is a little harder (4c).

8. **Mars Crack* 12m, Severe. The long wall right of *Minch Crack* is less steep and looks climbable anywhere. This route is a fine crack cutting the wall towards its left side. There is a strenuous bulge in the lower half, then easier climbing directly up the crack to the top. Access only at low tide.

The Rampant Walls

At left of the rock platform is a tidal inlet which leaves a weedy pool at low tide. The wall above the pool is damp and overhanging but further left is a steep slab with four prominent right slanting crack lines which appear as ramps from a distance. Access is by scrambling down well to the left of the slab. Only the righthand crack is inaccessible at high tide. The left crack is shorter than the rest because it starts higher up on a small platform.

1. *Mini Crack* 8m, Mild Severe. Three metres left of the crack is another right slanting crack not obvious from a distance.

2. *Minor Crack* 8m, HVS 4c. This is a shallow right facing corner immediately left of the left hand crack. No protection.

3. *Micro Crack* 10m, Hard Severe 4b. The left hand of the main crack. Pleasant and quite technical.

4. *Seepsville* 12m, Hard Severe. The next main crack. Rather unpleasant as it has a weep at half height and some loose rock.

5. *The Receding Hairline* 12m, HVS 5b. Between *Seepsville* and *Micro Crack* is a very thin right slanting crack which only becomes definite above a small overhang at half height. The route takes this line.

Climb straight up a wall to a horizontal break. Move right then up to the small overhang. Pull through this (crux) and follow the crack to the top.

6. **Macro Crack* 15m, E15b. This is the next main crack. The crux is at the top in a good position. Well protected.

7. ***The Gods* 20m, Hard Severe 4b. The right hand crack which starts at sea level. Start easily up a deep overhanging flared chimney and up to roofs. Traverse right under the roofs and up on to a nose in a sensational position. Belay here to avoid rope drag (friends needed). A delicate step-up (crux) into the thin crack above leads to better holds and a finish out left.

Another 5-10 minute walk round the coast from the Rampant Walls area leads to a large bay biting deep back into the land. Access to the sensational route which follows is down the steep grassy slopes at the back of this bay. It is best however, to continue round the top of the cliff to have a close look at the route. The line is stunningly obvious. A crackline traversing right to left for 60m across the vertical 45m high wall. Having had a look, walk back to descend the aforementioned grassy slopes and scramble up to the beginning of the route. A bit of exposed soloing leads into a big niche.

****Spaced Out Rockers on the Road to Oblivion* 60m, E2.

1. 20m, 5c. From the big niche, traverse horizontally at same level as belay until below left end of ledge system. Hard move up to gain ledge. Belay at right end.

2. 40m, 5b. Go along to left end of ledge and up to gain handrail. Follow handrail to belay where convenient. Follow handrail until possible to gain upper handrail which passes obvious niche to finish in corner. Good belays back from cliff top.

Note

First done in 4 pitches but could be done in fewer if good range of friends carried.

NOTES

Quinag, Western Cliffs—The buttress below, and just left of the Bealach a'Chornaidh has three obvious ribs. A climb called *The Family Way* (SMCJ 1973) gained the central rib by traversing from the vegetated groove on its left. A much cleaner direct start was climbed on 5th June, 1982 by J. R. Sutcliffe and J. R. Myers, starting up the front to a small overhang then moving round the left edge to a crack which gained the platform (23m). The second pitch was only 26m. The standard of the variation was Hard Severe.

Sgurr a' Chaorachain, North-West Face. Martin Moran made a solo (second?) ascent of *Voyager* on 15th January, 1987. He considered it a magnificent natural line and grade IV/V (agreed, Ed.).

Beinn Bhan, Coire na Feola—Rob Archbold and Bob Ross note what is possibly a variation start (Grade III, 2nd March, 1986) to *Couldoran Gully* (see SMCJ, 1986). A steepish ice pitch was climbed to gain soft snow in a prominent gully which is very obvious from the walk-in. This appeared to lie to the right of the line taken on the previous day's ascent. At 45m a short section of ice gave access to the obvious rightward slanting line.

WESTERN HIGHLANDS

KINTAIL, Sgurr na Ciste Dubh—*Window Gully* 180m, GRADE III.
J. McKeever, G. Jones. 2nd January, 1985.

The gully splitting the north face of Sgurr na Ciste Dubh. A frozen ramp led into the groove which was followed via two chockstones to the window on the summit ridge (visible from the base of the climb).

—*New Year's Gully* 180m, GRADE III.

J. McKeever, G. Jones. 1st January, 1985.

The gully to the right of *Window Gully*.

Sgurr a' Bhac Chaolais (NG 957107) —

Crag on S.W. flank above Coire Reidh, roughly level with Sgurr na Sgine col, has a deep cut gully with a well defined buttress on its right.

– *Mayfly* 60m, Very Severe.

J. R. Sutcliffe, N. Fletcher. 29th May, 1985.

The buttress was climbed by its right edge, starting near the right hand side of the frontal face.

Climb a cracked slab and rightward trending groove then gain the edge above by a rising traverse left on a slab. The crest leads to a ledge (20m).

The corner above leads to a roof with a strenuous exit right. Short walls and ledges lead up leftwards onto the slabby crest (15m).

Ascend the gangway leftwards to climb an obvious crack or, more easily, the wall on its right. An easier angled crack and rib follow to the top (25m).

Loch Lochy, Meall Coire Lochain – Central Gully 120m, GRADE III.

D. A. Hetherington. 15th February, 1986.

The broken crag facing N.E. in the upper corrie is split by an obvious gully. Steepening snow, with a little ice, to where the gully closes in (40m). A good long ice pitch with two steep sections before the gully eases and fans out (40m). The exit line will be dependent on the cornice (40m).

ARDGOUR, GARBH BHEINN, South Wall – The Final Judgement

K. V. Crocket, L. S. Lovat. 21st June, 1986. 70m, Very Difficult.

An easy-angled gully/ramp leads up and left towards the bottom tier of the South Wall, for which it is often used as an approach route. Left of the start of the gully is a small buttress. A series of grooves and ribs near the right edge of the buttress was climbed, providing a more interesting alternative approach to the South Wall.

Upper Tier – Kelpie 45m, E6.

M. Hamilton, R. Anderson. 21st June, 1986.

Climbs the right to left slanting crack in the leaning wall between *Tru Cut* and *Peeler*. Three stars.

1. 25m, **6c**. Surmount the initial bulge as for *Tru Cut* then move across left to follow a flakeline leading to the half way ledge. Climb the crack above to a belay perched on the edge of the leaning wall.

2. 20m, **5b**. Continue up the crack leftwards until a groove can be followed up to easier ground leading to the top.

Lower Tier – Brack 40m, E3 6a.

M. Hamilton, R. Anderson. 21st June, 1986.

Climbs the steep area of rock left of *Gralloch*, starting up the slope a little from that route where the lower wall ends below the roofs as a short arete.

Climb the short arete to a break, pull leftwards over the roof and surmount the next bulge to reach the wall above which leads to the next roof. Move right and pull over the roof at a break then continue up passing leftwards through first one bulge and then another to reach easy ground leading to the terrace.

The Great Ridge – Direct Start GRADE IV.

A. Matthewson, J. MacLaurin. 11th January, 1987.

The summer line was followed except for the first pitch, avoided coming in from the right, and the move off 'the broad ledge,' where a traverse left was made at a lower level and diagonally back right. Some pitches entirely on ice.

North-East Buttress – Route I 330m, GRADE III.

S. Richardson & N. Kekus (Alt.). 15th February, 1986.

Follows the summer line. The Leac Mhor was well iced.

North Face 180m, GRADE III.

W. Hood, R. Turner. 5th April, 1986.

On the same buttress as *North Face* summer route. Start at the lowest point of the buttress. Keep to the left of obvious right-trending slab ramps. Follow grooves and walls heading towards a shallow depression in the centre of the buttress. Follow this to top. Good sustained climbing.

NOTES

Sgurr nan Geannaichean – Rob Archbold and Dave Nichols note a direct ascent of the North Gully on the west face (420m, Grade III/IV, 3rd January, 1987) – see p.147 of the 1983 Western Highlands District Guide. Several interesting pitches led up to the huge chockstone with its remarkable hidden through-route (see SMCJ vol. 21 (1938), pp.354-356). The exit window framed a superb panorama stretching from Liathach round to the Applecross peaks. The upper part of the gully was relatively straight-forward though still well-defined.

Ladhar Bheinn, Stob a' Chearcaill, North-West Face – *Taternick's Chimney* (SMCJ, 1986) had previously been climbed by R. Everett and S. Richardson (Alt.) on 2nd February, 1986 and called *Marguerite*. Grade IV.

CAIRNGORMS

LOCHNAGAR, Tough-Brown Face – *Diedre of the Sorrows* E2.
D. Dinwoodie, J. Hall. 21st September, 1986.

A summer ascent of the winter route to the point where it joins *Post Mortem* (5a, 5b, 5c). No cleaning carried out! The first pitch is very grassy and unpleasant, best avoided by *Dirge*.

Note

On the winter ascent all pegs which were hard to place were left in situ. A 1½ inch angle is worth taking for the section just above the hard bulge on pitch 3, especially if the cracks are too icy for friends.

On the ascent of *Trail of Tears* (SMCJ, 1986) the aid peg was pre-placed on abseil (the same move had been climbed twice on failed attempts using 2PA).

The Stack – Torquing Corpse 180m, GRADE VII.

G. Livingston. M. Charlton (Alt.). January, 1987.

The route weaves an intricate line through steep rock, finishing on the left side of the frontal face. Start 20m up from the toe of the buttress beneath a steep corner groove in the *Black Spout* main branch.

1. 20m. Scramble up turf to belay at foot of corner.
2. 50m. Climb the corner to reach a large terrace; belay at extreme right of this.
3. 20m. Traverse right to reach some steep grooves.
4. 20m. Gain the grooves with difficulty and climb them till a cave belay is reached.
5. 25m. Traverse left and then up to reach a ramp which ascends the face from the right to left.
6. 40m. Climb the ramp till its termination beneath a steep bulging wall (peg belay in situ).
7. 25m. Climb the bulging wall to reach an open groove which leads to the top.

CREAGAN DUBH LOCH, Central Slabs – *Groanmaker* 315m, E5.

D. Dinwoodie, C. Fraser. 18th July, 1986.

Goes up the main overlaps between *Dragon-Slayer* and *The Blue Max*. On the upper slabs a line between *Pink Elephant* and *Black Mamba* is taken.

1. 35m, **5b**. Climb the brown corner left of the twin-cracks of *Cyclops* for some 5m., then pull out left into the edge. Go up this to step right over the top of the corner then go straight up the crack-line and over an overlap to belay some way higher in a right-facing corner.

2. 15m, **5a**. Move up to a small overlap and move right into a subsidiary right-facing corner. Move up flakes in the slab just left of and go back left into the crack-line. Go up this to belay ledges on *Blue Max*.

3. 35m, **6b**. Continue straight up in the same line and up the 'steps' in the main overlap to a poor knife blade runner. Climb past this to the top of overlap, where there

is another peg runner (high point of on-sight attempt previous year). Climb the overlap direct and go up a thin crack in the bare slab to belay 5m below the next big overlap (old peg).

4. 20m, 5c. Climb the overhang at the right side then go straight up to the belay ledge of *Blue Max*.

5. 40m. Follow *Blue Max* to the terrace.

6. 45m. Scramble up and left to the upper ledges close to the corner of *Pink Elephant*.

7. 45m, 5a. Climb the pink rib right of the *Elephant* corner to join *Black Mamba* below its belay. Continue straight up the corner-line and up the right side at a huge downward-pointing flake. Break out left onto the wall below a niche and pull over onto pink slabs. Go up these to a grassy notch and pull up the right wall to belay.

8. 30m, 5b. Climb the big 30 ft. left curving corner above/or, if wet, a line to the left. Continue up a bulging slab to a prominent bulging crack and climb this with a detour out right with grassy ground above.

9. 30m, 6a. Climb a subsidiary corner right of *Pink Elephant* with awkward moves round the right side of the capping roof and move up and left to the plateau past loose blocks.

— *Slithy Tove*

60m, E2.

D. Dinwoodie, D. Hawthorn. 1st July, 1986.

Two new pitches between the first bits of *Cyclops* and *Black Mamba*.

1. 25m, 6a. Climb the right-hand twin of the *Cyclops* cracks for about 10m then make a thin traverse right from the last runners and up to a big hold. Continue up a crack-line to a belay ledge close to *Black Mamba*.

2. 40m, 5a. Climb the crack above and slightly left up into a corner. Move out left and pull up a bulge to gain a deep curving crack. Climb this and the bulge at the top then easily up to the *Black Mamba* belay.

— *Nemesis*

GRADE V/VI.

S. Stewart, G. Eittle (Alt.). February, 1987.

As for the summer line; sustained and hard; well protected except for pitch 3.

1. 25m. From the block, move up steep cracks left of the vegetated groove up to a niche.

2. 60m. Surmount an overhang into the grooves above, step left and up a black groove to a grassy terrace.

3. 60m. Up the impressive crack chimney above to belay below the deep cleft of *Minotaur*.

4. Up the *Minotaur* cleft.

Central Gully Wall — Four Corners Route

A. Cunningham, A. Nisbet. 21st February, 1987.

70m, GRADE V.

Technically hard and interesting. The winter line started up the corner right of the summer line and left of *Treeline Groove*.

1. 20m. Climb the corner until a step left can be made into a higher corner. Climb this and move left to a small pinnacle belay.

2. 10m. Descend a ramp to the left and belay below the second corner of the summer route.

3. 20m. Climb the second corner, then traverse right and return left above.

4. 20m. A short crack on the left leads directly to the base of the fourth corner. Climb this to the plateau (crux).

— *Sabre Edge*

GRADE IV/V.

S. Stewart, G. Eittle (Alt.). January, 1987.

As for the summer route. Combined tactics used to leave the Pinnacle. A good alternate start would be the iced corner on the left.

False Gully Wall – Hotblack Desiato

A. Ross, F. Templeton (Alt.). 20th July, 1986. 45m, Hard Very Severe.

Above *Masque* is a large horizontal roof. Start below the left end of this in a shallow corner. Climbed on sight.

1. 20m, **5b**. Climb the corner and pull over the roof. Step right to gain an obvious crackline and follow this to belay in a slabby groove, just above a small downward-pointing triangular block.

2. 25m, **4c**. Climb the groove moving right at the top, then back up leftwards to some blocks. Pull up right to gain a large slabby corner. Climb this moving left at the top and make an easy mantleself to gain easy ground.

North-West Buttress – Late Night Final GRADE V.

S. Stewart, G. Ettle (Alt.). February, 1987.

The summer line was followed using 1PA on the big corner. The route was finished up a slabby corner right of the steep summer crack.

GLEN CLOVA, Juanjorge – Good Ship Venus 100m, GRADE IV.

G. Farquhar, S. Stewart (Alt.). December, 1986.

On the main slabby face left of the Amphitheatre, taking the prominent corner. Start above the first section of *West Gully*, at the base of a big slabby corner.

1. Climb up an easy groove to a patch of trees.

2. Move right and up (awkward) to gain easy ground leading to the base of a big slabby corner.

3. Ascend the corner (3PA) and belay at tree above.

4. Move left and up a groove for 15m, move right (awkward) to gain easier ground leading to massive blocks and the top above.

Maud Buttress 100m, GRADE IV.

S. Stewart, C. A. M. Smith. 2nd January, 1987.

This is the large buttress immediately on the right after leaving the forest in Glen Doll on to Jock's Road.

1. Follow a snow groove ascending diagonally up and left, initially by a steep move, then easily to a good tree and cave belay.

2. Move 10m left and descend a good awkward corner with a large block, then continue up a nose and slab above to a big hidden ledge below an impending wall bristling with icicles.

3, 4. From the left end of the ledge, a snow shelf led left below the steep wall, then up to easy ground.

CAENLOCHAN GLEN, Glas Maol, East Face

Left of the icefall of the *Central Runnel* is a broad buttress bordered on the left by a narrow runnel. In the centre of the buttress is a slender curving ramp which ends a distance above lower steep walls.

– Blatant Theft 150m, GRADE III.

J. Mackenzie, K. Wilson. 6th December, 1986.

A more direct approach to the ramp was not possible due to partially frozen turf. A rising traverse from the left for 60m gave interesting route-finding to gain the base of the ramp, all of it exposed. Peg belay to left of shallow scoop. Follow the ramp to a rock bay, a good pitch (45m). Easily to the right and up to the top.

BEINN BHROTAIN, Coire Cath Nam Fionn, Fingal's Buttress – Tiered Cracks

I. Barron, S. Kennedy. 14th December, 1986. 100m, GRADE IV.

Situated on the buttress high on the left of the entrance to the corrie. Follows the old summer route for the most part, taking the crack line up the right edge of the buttress rising in three distinct short tiers.

Mixed ground leads to the foot of the first tier of the crack which is climbed by an obvious short corner.

The second, steep tier above is avoided by a short rightwards traverse onto a small slab. Climb slab, round a small nose and make an awkward traverse back left to the foot of the third tier. Climb the crack strenuously to easier ground and move up rightwards to the buttress edge. Steep slabs just to the right of the edge lead to the top.

A deep, narrow chimney high on the left above the third tier may offer a better finish.

CAIRNTOUL, Corrie of the Chokestone Gully – *The White Hotel* 150m, GRADE IV.
G. Taylor, J. McKeever (Alt.). January, 1987.

This is the 'direct start' to *Sasquatch*, finishing up *Bugaboo Rib*.

– *The Waster* 90m, GRADE III/IV.

A. Cunningham, A. Nisbet. January, 1987.

The fault line left of *The Wanderer*, starting up steep snow slanting right. Scrappy and poorly protected.

BRAERIACH, Garbh Choire Dhaidh – *St. Andrews Climb* GRADE IV/V.
A. Cunningham, C. MacLean, A. Nisbet (Alt.), S. Aisthorpe, J. Lyall.
19th November, 1986.

The summer line was followed, except that the main corner was climbed through-out on pitch 2 and the steep slabby wall at the top was avoided by a chimney-groove on its immediate left.

– *Koala* GRADE V/VI.

J. McKeever, G. Taylor (Alt.). January, 1987.

The summer line was followed except for pitch 2, when a groove on the right was taken. An excellent sustained route, every pitch being different in character (good conditions). Steep ice on pitch 1, torquing on pitch 2 and ice/nevé smears on the final slabby wall (serious).

– *Kangaroo* GRADE IV/V.

M. Duff, A. Black. 6th November, 1986.

A line based on the summer route.

1. Easy climbing to the foot of a groove capped at 30m by a 1m double roof.

2. Climb the groove direct, with increasing difficulty to the roof. Climb the roof by an ice dribble on the right-hand corner (crux). Continue for 2m above the roof to a foothold on the small arete on the right.

3. The groove continues for 6m to the easier section above but wasn't at the time climbable. From the belay move 2m right to a small groove and small wall which leads to the easier ground a few feet right of the continuation groove. Continue up the snow slope and mixed ground to a stance 5m left of a narrow corner on the headwall.

4. Climb the corner (névé).

Coire Bhrochain – *Midwinter* 90m, GRADE IV.

G. Taylor, J. McKeever (Alt.). January, 1987.

Follows a chimney/groove system to the right of *Braeriach Direct* summer route, finishing on the Slab Terrace.

A wide chimney 10m to the right of *Braeriach Direct* (summer) was followed until it ended. Leftward trending cracks led to a belay. A delicate traverse right allowed a steep groove to be gained and followed to the Slab Terrace.

SGORAN DUBHMOR, No. 2 Buttress – *Rose Ridge* 260m, GRADE IV.
S. Aisthorpe, J. Lyall; E. Pirie, J. Stewart. 6th December, 1986.

Followed the summer line up the crest of the ridge. The first five pitches gave sustained but escapable climbing and led to 100m of easier ground leading to the col.

No. 3 Buttress – Tristar Chimney 160m, GRADE III/IV.

J. Lyall, P. Cliff. 30th December, 1986.

Starts just right of the foot of *Diagonal Rake*. Climb a short ice pitch to gain the main fault and follow this over two chokestones to the top. The first chokestone was the crux but may bank out.

– *Cripple's Cleft* 120m, GRADE III/IV.

R. J. Archbold & J. C. Higham (Alt.). 14th March, 1987.

A worthwhile climb, similar in character to *Gargoyle Chimney* (including the vegetated approach work). The summer line was followed to gain the well-defined upper section of No. 3 Buttress. This gave 300m of easy but exhilarating ridge climbing, including a gendarme, before giving out onto the summit slopes of Sgoran Dubh.

Fan Corrie – Diamond Buttress GRADE III.

J. Lyall, J. Grosset. 5th March, 1987.

Enjoyable climbing following the summer line.

No. 5 Buttress – The Auld Wifie

J. Lyall, J. Grosset. 14th February, 1987. 230m (to pinnacle) GRADE IV.

Start halfway between *The Slash* and *No. 5 Buttress Gully*, where a short gully cuts into the lower wall. The route starts on the ridge to the left of the gully.

1. 25m. Climb a steep corner on the right side of the ridge, then traverse left along a ledge to gain a groove which leads to a recess behind a large block.

2. 25m. Climb out of the recess and onto the block. Step left and up a wall before moving diagonally rightwards to a tree belay.

The snow covered slabs now give easier climbing but are sparsely protected. After three pitches working up leftwards a shallow gully is reached. Follow the gully to reach the pinnacle from the left side. The upper part of 'Pinnacle Ridge' gives a superb finish to the route.

– *The Slash* 200m, GRADE IV.

J. Grosset, J. Lyall. 14th March, 1987.

The obvious fault on the left side of the buttress. It gives interesting climbing through superb rock and ice scenery.

1. 40m. Climb the gully over three short ice pitches.

2. 45m. A constricted chimney/groove is climbed then the gully followed over a chokestone to belay under a large chokestone.

3. 30m. This awkward chokestone leads to easy snow and a belay below a steep ice pitch.

4. 45m. The ice was climbed in the corner/chimney on the right side and led to easy snow.

5. 40m. Follow the gully over a short ice pitch to the easy upper fault.

Follow the gully to gain 'Pinnacle Ridge' near the top.

A' Phocaid

Lies between No. 5 Buttress and Coire Odhar. In the left of the corrie lies a deep easy gully. 50m right of the gully are two parallel faults which are separated by a narrow ridge.

– *The Sporrán* 100m, GRADE III.

J. Lyall, E. Pirie. 26th December, 1986.

Follows the left hand fault and has two good pitches.

– *Pick Pocket* 115m, GRADE III.

J. Lyall, E. Pirie. 26th December, 1986.

The right hand fault. Easy ice-covered slabs led to a long ice groove, then the route went right of the upper rib.

BEINN A' BHUIRD, Coire na Ciche – The Watchtower 100m, GRADE V.

C. Forrest, W. Moir, N. Ritchie. 13th December 1986.

1. 30m. Start up *Twisting Gully*.
2. 30m. Climb the big groove on the left side of the buttress left of the cul-de-sac.
3. 15m. Make a hard and exposed traverse rightwards across the wall above the cul-de-sac (at a level about 4m below a big square-cut flake) to a tiny ledge. Climb the vertical wall above to a stance.
4. 25m. Climb the big chimney crossing two overhangs to an exit on the left wall at the top.

– *Danse Macabre*

110m, E3.

E. Todd, D. Thomson. 17th August, 1986.

1. 40m. Start at the base of *Jason's Chimney* and climb the left-hand rib to an obvious flake, below a slab. Poor belay.
2. 30m, 5c. Climb direct from the belay, to a grassy ledge above, move left below the slab and move up to gain the obvious rightward-slanting undercut flake. Climb this until it peters out and move left onto the arête. Climb up the arête, slightly on the left to reach a peg runner (in situ). Now climb straight up (crux) to belay on ledge, beneath the overhanging rib. Rock is dubious and protection is poor.
3. 40m. Finish leftwards up Sickle, i.e. up the obvious narrow chimney (4b!?).

Garbh Choire – Flume Left Hand

200m, GRADE IV.

W. Moir. 31st January, 1987.

Left of *Flume Direct* a two tiered icefall flows down from a snow bowl below the plateau. This flows straight down into the easy lower couloir of *The Flume*, and provided the climb.

BEN MACDUI, Coire Sputan Dearg – Sapphire

55m, E1.

S. Richardson & R. Everett (Alt.). 13th September, 1986.

A good climb, low in its grade, taking the wall to the right of the striking arete on the far left hand side of Grey Man's Buttress. Start by climbing the first 15m of *Crystal Ridge* to a ledge, traverse the slabs and cross the gully to belay in a grassy niche below an obvious green corner below the arete.

1. 20m, 5a. Move onto the wall to the right of the niche. Climb into a short groove diagonally right, then exit left to a slab leading to a grassy ledge.
2. 35m, 5a/b. Climb the groove and overhang above the belay, and continue steeply (slightly left), until the angle eases. Move right to join the crack of *Plumbline*. At the top of the chimney, move left along a ledge to a fine finish up the exposed arete and the wall to its right.

Creagan a' Choire Etchachan – Talking Drums

115m, E2.

C. MacLean, A. Nisbet (Alt.). 4th July, 1986.

A good sustained route, well protected, with a sensational finish across the *Talisman* headwall.

1. 40m, 5b. Climb the direct start to *Talisman* to the belay at the end of its traverse pitch.
2. 25m, 4c. Take the obvious thin crack leading diagonally rightwards past a triangular block and through the girdling bulge. Move slightly back left and up to a poor belay under the headwall.
3. 25m, 5a. The first feature right of the *Talisman* arete is a shallow groove leading up rightwards to finish under a prominent jammed block on the arete. Gain the base of the groove directly via two small scoops. Climb the groove (some dubious rock at the start) to a good foothold at its top, then move right and up on hidden holds to a hand traverse line leading rightwards to a mantelshelf and peg belay (in situ).

4. 25m, **5b**. Make a delicate move up to gain a small ledge and peg runner (in situ), then swing down right and across the wall to reach the base of a corner crack. Follow this to the top where it finishes at the same place as the left-hand *Corridor* corner.

Note

An independent but much inferior start is to climb directly upwards from the start of *Talisman* traverse, then move left to the belay under the headwall (4b).

– *Tickler*

45m, E1.

A. Ross, C. Jamieson (Alt.), K. Murphy. 13th July, 1986.

1. 25m, **5b**. Start near the foot of *Scythe* (to the left) in a small right-facing corner. Climb this then follow the flake continuation leftwards to join *Sheath* where it moves right underneath the overlap. Step left and go up into a shallow roofed corner. Pull over the roof and climb thin cracks for a while, until it is obvious to pull out left to gain a prominent fin of rock. Move up this to gain small ledges. Move right to belay (common with *Sheath*).

2. 20m, **4c**. Gain the obvious rib to the right and climb this to move right across the top of a small grey corner to gain a hidden finger crack. Follow this to the top.

CARNETCHACHAN, Upper Tier – The Poison Trail

100m, GRADE IV.

A. Cunningham, A. Nisbet. 2nd November, 1986.

A counter-diagonal to *Crevasse Route*.

1. 15m. Up the ramp of *Poison Dwarf* to an awkward belay on a tiny grass ledge.

2. 20m. The remainder of *Poison Dwarf's* first pitch. It traverses left below the ledge and round the edge to a hidden corner (tension used to round the corner).

3. 30m. Traverse easily left under the 'contorted chimney' of *Crevasse Route* and continue leftwards on a ramp with two steps.

4. 35m. An easy slab, then scrambling to the top.

– *Time Traveller*

85m, GRADE VI.

A. Cunningham, A. Nisbet. 3rd January, 1987.

The winter ascent started from lower down *Equinox* gully than the summer route. This way would be good in summer too, though perhaps wet at the start.

1. 15m. Climb *Equinox* gully until just above the first chimney.

2. 20m. Chimney up to gain a ramp on the left wall which leads to a fine flake-crack above a roof. Climb the flake-crack on failing arms (one rest on axe), extra 2 and 2½ friends required), then continue up the wall above (joined by summer route) and a final bulge to a small ledge. A very sustained but well-protected pitch.

3. 20m. Continue up the crack system as for summer. The difficulties gradually ease.

4. 30m. A short groove normally leads to the plateau but on this ascent a large cornice had to be outflanked on the left.

– *Pythagoras*

GRADE V/VI.

A. Cunningham, A. Nisbet. 12th April, 1986.

A winter ascent based on the summer route. The grassy groove/ramp was followed to its top which abuts the final wall. Corners formed by the base of the final wall led rightwards to the large platform. The fine crack was quit at the point where it bends right and the wall on the left climbed to the exposed stance. On the final pitch, a rising right traverse from the start of the left-facing groove led round a slight edge to the finish.

Main Face – The Kremlin

280m, GRADE V/VI.

G. Taylor, J. McKeever (Alt.). 14th December, 1986.

Start 10m to the left of *Red Guard*. Climb a steep groove (hard) to a stance. Either traverse left and up an easy groove (as on an earlier attempt) or ascend steep cracks immediately above. Follow the continuing weakness up the wall to the left of the arete

to a bay. Belay on the right below a steep wall and on top of the arete (50m). Climb a steep crack with a block at half height to a niche (3 rest points). Traverse right into an easier groove to reach the terrace. Move up left and crawl under a chokestone. Follow the ensuing rightward groove to join *Red Guard*, or *Route Major*.

LOCH AVON, Shelterstone Crag – *Consolation Groove* (winter variations)

J. McKeever, G. Taylor (Alt.). 25th February, 1987. GRADE VI.

A vague groove line left of *Consolation Groove* was climbed to below a steep blind groove (pitch 3 of *Pointlace*). A diagonal abseil to the right led back to the summer line of *Consolation Groove* entering it just right of a small pinnacle (top of pitch 3?). The summer line was followed to the 'long overhang,' then a short chimney a little to the left led up on to the 'large terrace.' The higher buttress was climbed without difficulty on the left.

– *Pointlace* 250m, E3,

R. Anderson, A. Russell. 13th June, 1986.

Takes a direct line up the middle of the buttress left of *Consolation Groove*, starting up a groove then following cracks up a blunt arete to gain a prominent crack running up the left side of the obvious slab in the centre of the buttress. Start 3m up left from the lowest point of the buttress.

1. 45m, **5b**. Move up then right to climb a waterworn groove/flange to ledges, step up right and using a crack move across to the right and up to a ledge. Continue up cracks in the blunt arete to belay in a small triangular niche.

2. 45m, **5c**. Move up right onto the arete and follow this to climb twin cracks up a steepening, pulling out right to cross a groove and reach a loose block. Continue up right a short way until it is possible to step across left just below a tiny overlap to gain a crack. Climb the crack in the slab to where it blanks out and make a move up left to gain a grass ledge. Step back right and climb the slab to a grass ledge and belay.

3. 30m, **5b**. Continue directly above to follow a fault line and crack to below a small roof. Pull rightwards over the roof to gain grassy ledges and move up left to gain higher grassy ledges.

4. 30m, **5c**. Step left, climb a flake and continue up a right trending groove until beneath the left end of the obvious long roof. Traverse right under the roof to surmount it at its mid-point and continue up to belay on the wall just above.

5-7 100m. Gain grassy ledges just above and continue to the upper part of the buttress which is climbed easily by cracks and grooves in the crest.

Note

Cleaned and climbed on sight.

– *Sticil Face, Direct Finish* 120m.

G. Cohen, D. Rubens. 18th April, 1986.

This gives a good finish with a pitch about the same standard as the original crux. From above the awkward chimney climb without difficulty to a feasible-looking corner directly above. Climb this (awkward, thin ice) and a four foot wall above. Easier to finish.

– *Citadel Winter Variation* 300m, GRADE V,

R. Anderson, G. Nicoll (Alt.). 21st March, 1987.

An independent finish. Climb the Rouse/Hall winter variation on *Citadel* to join *Sticil Face* in 6 pitches (no aid used), and move up 10m to belay below an obvious thin rampline trending slightly left up the headwall above.

7. 25m. Climb the rampline to a ledge and belay on the right.

8. 35m. Move back left and continue to the top.

– *The Imposter* 240m, GRADE V/VI.

M. Charlton, W. Webb, J. McKeever. 19th January, 1986.

Climb *West Ridge Route* (summer) to a steep wall. Traverse left on a ledge to a niche. Ascend this via a jamming crack to a small ledge below steep cracks. Climb these (45m, first crux). Climb a snow slope to an obvious groove. This is *Clach Dhian Chimney direct finish*. Climb this with difficulty (50m, second crux).

Hell's Lum Crag, The Grey Buttress – *Good Intentions* GRADE V/VI.

A. Cunningham, A. Nisbet. 14th December, 1986.

By the summer line. The slabby ramp leading to the groove was the winter crux. The groove was very technical with overhead protection.

– *Evil Spirits* 115m, E2.

A. Fyffe & R. D. Barton. 26th June, 1986.

Takes a diagonal line between *Hell's Lum* and *Good Intentions*. Start between the deep corner of *The Exorcist* and the quartz band of *Hell's Lum*.

1. 15m, 4c. Climb greenish rock just right of the corner to a horizontal crack. Go right to a corner then up to the large flake.

2. 15m, 5c. Go straight up then up a deep crack (as for *Hell's Lum*) and continue directly into corner above which is followed to the roof. Traverse left under the roof and gain the next corner above its end with difficulty. Climb this corner and a short crack to belay above the corner of *The Exorcist*.

3. 20m, 5a. To the left is an overlap. Go diagonally left then down to gain this. Follow it left to its end and go up to a stance above the crux groove of *Good Intentions*.

4. 45m. Finish as for *Good Intentions*.

Stag Rocks – *Quartz-Diggers Cave Route*

GRADE III.

J. McKeever, N. Green. 26th January, 1986.

Climb the summer route.

– *Purge*

70m, GRADE III/IV.

A. Cunningham, A. Nisbet. 12th December, 1986.

Above *Apex Gully* is a slab corner leading to a steep wall. The next feature upwards is twin slabby grooves which are the line of the climb. The relationship to the summer route *Purge* is unknown.

Climb the right-hand groove, then transfer to the left and follow it to belay under a wall (45m). Traverse left and climb a continuation groove (crux) to easy ground.

– *Albino*

80m, GRADE III/IV.

J. McKeever, G. Taylor (Alt.). 13th December, 1986.

This is an ascent of the slab corner immediately above *Apex Gully*. Whether this is the summer route *Alb* is uncertain.

The corner was climbed to the wall. Traverse right under the wall to a stance. Move round the corner and climb on to the crest of the buttress. Follow a faint groove to the top.

– *Honest Outlet*

65m (150m overall), GRADE IV.

J. McKeever, G. Taylor (Alt.). 15th December, 1986.

Climbs the groove to the left of Deception Inlet, then merges with that route.

– *Longbow Direct*

GRADE IV/V.

A. Cunningham, A. Nisbet. 16th December, 1986.

The summer line was followed except that the summer crux (red wall) was bypassed on the left (further left than the easier summer option). The summer route was regained by an awkward short wall which led to an obvious flake traverse of the summer route. The hand traverse and short corner was the crux, technical but very well protected.

Note

On a second ascent by J. McKeever and G. Taylor, after the 'swing round an arete,' they climbed a thin crack in a smooth groove above the arete. This was climbed until a step right led to a layback slab which was climbed to a belay (Grade V). This variation has been climbed in summer also.

– *Flock of Chickens*

140m, GRADE V.

A. Cunningham, A. Nisbet. 17th December, 1986.

Takes the rib right of *Central Route*, then finishes up the obvious direct continuation to *Central Route*. Start in the depression below the wide corner-crack.

1. 25m. Start up the depression, then go up and left on to the main face and belay at the top left corner of the Juniper Ledge area. *Wig-Wag* has now been crossed.

2. 20m. Climb up turf to a point about 2m right of the *Central Route* arete and under a bulge. Go through the bulge on large blocks and move right to belay under a short overhanging corner.

3. 45m. Pull through the overhang, then go up and left to belay on the *Sand-Pyper* escape traverse just right of where *Central Route* leaves the main depression.

4. 25m. Go left into the obvious continuation of the *Central Route* depression. Climb through turf overhangs and an overhanging corner (crux). Traverse left and up into a niche.

5. 25m. Return right into the main line and follow this to the terrace.

6. Walk to the upper tier and take the easiest line to the plateau.

Note

The discovery of two old pegs suggest that Gordon Smith also finished up the direct line during his ascent of *Central Route*.

Stac an Fharaidh – Shallow Gully

160m, GRADE III.

R. Anderson, M. Hamilton. 4th December, 1985.

To the left of the *Square Cut Gully* just left of the left wing of the crag is a more broken section of cliff.

This route climbs the obvious shallow gully immediately left of the broken section of cliff, keeping right.

COIRE AN T-SNEACHDA, The Mess of Pottage – The Melting Pot

A. Cunningham, A. Nisbet. February, 1987.

90m, GRADE IV.

1. 35m. Start about 10m left of *The Message*. Climb a wall and move left into a groove which leads up towards *The Message*. Climb the groove, then move left on to its arete. Go up to belay beside *The Message*.

2. 30m. Take the obvious line leading slightly left to belay at the top right corner of a large belay.

3. 25m. Climb the overhanging groove above (crux), then continue up a crackline passing a roof surprisingly easily to the top.

Aladdin Buttress

The following routes lie on the obvious wall of good rock which rises from Aladdin's Couloir just before the bend.

– *Ali Baba*

30m, Very Severe.

A. Fyffe, T. Walker. 30th June, 1986.

Climbs the open corner right of *Babes in the Wood*. Start in the recess right of the corner.

1. 30m, **4b**. Go up the recess till level with the start of the corner then work left into via some slanting ledges. Follow the corner going left then back right near the top.

– *Babes in the Wood*

30m, E1.

T. Walker, A. Fyffe. 30th June, 1986.

Takes the obvious diagonal crack in the smooth wall.

1. 30m, **5b**. Climbs cracks into a short deep groove at the start of the crack then follow the crack leftwards to the top.

– *Doctor Janis, Direct Start*

J. Grosset, J. Lyall (Alt.), A. Nolan. 4th April, 1987. 60m, GRADE IV/V.

Gives sustained climbing and makes the route very worthwhile. Should become the normal way.

Start at the foot of *Doctor's Choice* and climb the slanting groove on the right. After the second overlap work diagonally leftwards to a snow bay, below the leaning wall. Step up right to a ledge and climb the wall by an awkward ramp. This leads to the short corner of the original line.

Fiacail Buttress – Short Circuit 110m, GRADE III/IV.

S. Monks, G. Reid (Alt.), A. Fyffe. 9th February, 1987.

Takes the line of the snow ramp and corner above and right of *Invernookie*.

From the foot of *Fiacail Couloir* move up and right to gain the main ramp (common with *Invernookie* and *The Seam*). Where ramp ends go up the corner to a snow-patch then climb a short wide crack into the right-hand of the two obvious corners. Finish via the slab on its right.

COIRE AN LOCHAIN, No. 2 Buttress – The Andromeda Strain 140m, GRADE IV.

J. McKeever, B. Stevenson. 31st December, 1985.

Climb *Andromeda* for 40m. Ascend the wall above (crux). Traverse left into the wide gully to the right of a pinnacle. Climb this to the top. *Demolition Man* (SMCJ, 1986) appears to be a less direct version of this route.

– *Astroturfer*

140m, GRADE III/IV.

J. McKeever, I. Dawson. 7th December, 1985.

Starting at the base of *Andromeda*, climb rightwards up a groove to belay a chimney. Climb this to a wall which was ascended on the right-hand side. Follow the buttress crest to the top.

NOTES

Lochnagar, Pinnacle Face. – K. A. Grassick points out that although the normal winter line described in the new Cairngorms guide deviates to the right of the summer line after the second pitch, the original FWA followed the summer route throughout.

Creag an Dubh Loch – A free ascent of *Death's Head Route* by D. Dinwoodie and D. Hawthorn at E3, 6a in June, 1986.

Creag an Dubh Loch – The following grade revisions are suggested. *Culloden* as E2, 5c. *Falseface* as E2 and 5c on pitch 1.

Glen Clova, Winter Corrie – We have note of two routes in this corrie. One is an icefall on the left wall of *Backdoor Gully* (Grade III/IV). The other is the rock rib between *Diamond Slab* and *Diagonal Gully* (Grade IV). Both are 60m in length and climbed by N. Brodie and S. Cardwell in February, 1986.

Beinn a' Bhuid, Coire an Dubh Lochain – A free winter ascent of *Bloodhound Buttress* by A. Cunningham, A. Nisbet on 6th December, 1986 at Grade V. The summer line was followed except that the crack directly above 'the comfortable platform' was climbed. A fine route.

Beinn a' Bhuid, Garbh Choire – Bell's finish to *Mitre Ridge* was climbed in winter conditions by Rab Anderson and Graham Nicoll on 12th April, 1986.

Coire Sputan Dearg – A winter ascent of *Janus Chimney* at Grade III, climbed before going right round a rib to join *Snake Gully* by W. Moir, C. Whittit on 1st November, 1986.

Corrie of the Chokestone Gully – A free winter ascent of the original line of Bugaboo Rib by R. Anderson, G. Nicoll and Jane Naismith in February, 1987 (Grade V).

Coire Bhrochain – Two one pitch routes are noted from G. Ertle and S. Stewart on the small face right of Braeriach Direct and below the Slab Terrace. The short chimney on the far right, which runs at right angles to the main face, is Grade IV. The first groove left of the chimney is Grade V. It is likely that these routes will become shorter and easier in better conditions, as this face does not ice up readily.

Stacan Dubha—In the centre of the crag is a triangular buttress flanked by gullies which join just below the plateau. The right-hand gully is left of a deep fault capped by a huge chokestone. Steep snow led to an ice-cased chimney followed by an ice bulge on the left. Easy snow then led to the plateau (Grade III). The left-hand gully was descended; a big ice pitch at half height proved an imposter (Grade II). The right side of the big buttress on the left gave another route. A turf tunnel led into a shallow snow gully which starts below the centre of the buttress and slants up right to a crest on the right edge. Easy climbing up the crest led to the steep upper wall. The wall was breached by the second chimney-fault on the right (the first being almost directly ahead) which gave a fine sustained pitch (Grade IV). These routes are 130m in length and were climbed by A. Nisbet and J. Grosset on 15th March, 1987.

Carn Etchachan, Main Face—On a repeat ascent of *Sword* in March, 1986, J. McKeever and D. Millar made the following variation. At the junction with *Red Guard* move up and left to belay below a steep groove, climbed with difficulty (Grade IV/V).

Shelterstone Crag—Rab Anderson and Rob Milne made the second ascent of *Postern* in one day (19th April, 1986). Thick snow enabled the second pitch of *Postern* summer to be climbed gingerly. A finish providing the crux under prevailing conditions was made up the direct finish to *Clach Dhian Chimney* (this finish had been climbed previously by *The Imposter*).

On the third ascent (A. Nisbet, A. Cunningham; February, 1987) the start of *The Needle* (winter variations) was used, then the original route followed throughout. This start has the advantage of requiring no consolidated snow to be consistent in standard. The original route can then be climbed under powder at Grade V(?).

Stag Rocks—We note the following minor routes.

1. A groove left of *Afterthought Arete* (McKeever, Taylor, 60m, Grade III/IV).
2. The broad gully to the left of *Serrated Rib*, leading to a junction with that route (McKeever, A. Todd, 60m, Grade III/IV).
3. The ramp and groove immediately below *Final Selection*, 80m, Grade III (McKeever, Taylor).

Coire an Lochain—A free ascent of *Nocando Crack* (originally 4PA) on 11th July, 1986 by A. Nisbet and Anne Hardwick. The grade was difficult to assess due to wetness (the route is rarely, if ever dry) but loose rock, poor protection and vegetation suggested E2, 5a on the day.

NORTH EAST OUTCROPS

Huntly's Cave—*Swing Time* 25m, E2/3 5c.
R. Anderson, M. Fowler. 12th October, 1986.

Follow *Cave Route direct start*, then step up left to climb the left-hand of two thin cracks just left of the nose. Continue easily up to the left edge of the main roof, hand jam out to the front and using a flange and a hold just above, stretch for good holds high up and swing out to the lip to gain the top.

Pass of Ballater—*Dystemper* E5 6b.
G. Livingston, W. Todd. September, 1986.

The steeply overhanging corner left of *Cold Rage*. Climb hollow flakes up to a little roof, then round that into the main corner climbed using holds on the arete. Pull awkwardly on to a ledge. Finish more easily.

—*Hot Temper* E5 6b.
W. Todd, G. Livingston. September, 1986.

Basically a direct finish to *Cold Rage* but pull directly over the roof and continue strenuously up the wall above.

—*General Anaesthetic* E5 6c.
G. Livingston (unseconded).

Start as for *Captain Copout* but at the point where *Captain Copout* traverses right, continue directly up the wall above.

CENTRAL HIGHLANDS OUTCROPS

Brin Rocks – *The Wild Man*

20m, E2 5b.

A. Nisbet, A. Cunningham. 14th June, 1986.

A fine sustained route; well protected. Right of the ramp of *Making Movies* is an obvious flake-crack. Climb it to the top, surmount the bulge immediately above and follow a short groove into a niche with small tree. Finish sensationally out right.

– *Skytrain Direct*

E2 5c.

A. Cunningham, A. Nisbet. 14th June, 1986.

Start the route by climbing the flake-crack from its base. This should become the normal way.

BURNSIDE CRAG (Sheet NH 81/91 MR 884 134)

This small crag is situated at the North end of Aviemore. It provides the nearest rock climbing to the village.

Access

Take the main road North out of town. Some 120m beyond the 30mph limit signs, take the track leading left under the new A9, to Burnside Caravan Site.

50 metres past the main entrance is a locked gate and parking space. Walk past this gate and over some open ground to a forestry fence and gate. Cross this and take the track leading left along the fence, cross over a ford to a track junction. Carry on uphill for 500 metres to track end. Go left by marked path to cross a fence in 200m. The crag is now visible ahead (15 minute walk from caravan site).

Some 200 metres East of the main crag is an area of slabs providing pleasant easy routes, and good bouldering.

Routes

The routes are described from left to right. All routes by K. Geddes and D. S. B. Wright (August 1986) except 3. by S. Hill and 9. by A. Liddell and I. Peter.

1. *Wing Commander* 10m, Difficult.

The stepped rib on the left of the crag (just right of descent gully).

2. *Sideburn Corner* 10m, VS 4b.

The obvious corner to the right of *Wing Commander*.

3. *Grendel* 10m, E2 6a.

The wall and thin cracks immediately right of *Sideburn Corner*.

4. *King Prawn* 11m, HVS 5a.

2.5 metres right of *Sideburn Corner*, climb the thin crack to the small overlap and continue to the top.

5. *Tricky Dick* 11m, VS 4c.

2.5 metres right of *Sideburn Corner*, climb to the obvious thread and continue to the top.

6. *Quick Flee McGee* 10m, VS 4c.

Start as for routes 3 and 4, go up for 3m to good runner, traverse right to smooth overhung niche and go straight up to finish.

7. *Inverted Schuss* 10m, HVS 5a.

Start 6 metres right of *Sideburn Corner* below roof. Surmount roof and climb straight up finishing between *Quick Flee McGee* and buttress edge.

8. *Ram Hawk* 14m, HVS 5a.

Take a rightward rising traverse between overlaps to the prominent nose of the buttress. Go delicately round this, and follow left edge to top.

9. *Clear for Landing* 10m, HVS 5a.

Start to left of nose of buttress, straight up to cross traverse of 8 and instead of going right round nose, straight up.

10. *Petal* 10m, E1 5b.

Start directly below the nose. Climb overhangs and directly over cracked nose. Easier to top (strenuous).

11. *Conservancy Crack* 9m, HVS 5a.

Take the obvious groove and flake corner just right of nose of buttress. Starting with an awkward move right, then left into groove.

12. *Flight Deck* 9m, E2 5c.

Start 1.5 metres right of *Conservancy Crack*, climb short groove to ledge on left. Climb wall above to cracks and over boulder to top. (Sparsely protected, small wires useful).

Farletter Crag

About 100m right and 50m above Farletter Crag is Farletter South. It has a smooth overhanging wall in the centre and a long roof at a point where a small rowan tree grows out horizontally. The rowan is remarkably strong for its size (touch wood) but should be treated with care as it is an important hold. The following routes by A. Nisbet, K. Geddes; July 1986.

– *Backwoodsman* 12m, E2 5b.

Climb the groove to the tree (excellent runners just above). Pull out left through the roof and straight up to finish. Low in its grade.

– *Bushwhacker* 15m, E2 5c.

Climb the groove to the tree (as for *Backwoodsman*). Traverse right for 3m until a difficult move upwards leads to big holds and the top of the block which forms the right end of the roof. Finish by using the big tree which droops over the cliff top.

Note

Repeat ascenders of *Ceasefire* have had difficulty finding the runners and the exact line (the two coincide). For this reason the route perhaps nudges into E3 5b. The small runner placements below the peg on *The Art of Coarse Climbing* have been destroyed in a fall. The route can no longer be described as 'well-protected.'

Creag Dubh, Waterfall Wall (Left-hand side) – *Warmer than a Badger's Bum*

R. Anderson, M. Fowler. 11th October, 1986. 12m, E2 5c.

Lies on the *Brazen* wall to the left of the waterfall. Start just left of the top of the grassy gully at the same point as *Brazen*.

Move up and right to a niche with protruding block and continue carefully past a rocking block to a ledge and tree belay.

– *Jade* 25m, E1 5b.

G. Nicoll, J. Hotchkis. 21st September, 1986.

Climbs the pale pillar at the left-hand end of the *Brazen* wall.

Start directly below a wide groove at the base of the pillar. Climb a short wall and easily up the groove to a ledge, continue up a crack in the wall above to a small roof where a hand traverse right leads to a crack in the roof and easier ground above.

Sprawl Wall – Turf at the Top

75m, GRADE III/IV.

S. Aisthorpe, J. Lyall. 14th January, 1987.

A surprisingly interesting and exposed ice/turf line which starts left of *Hornet* and goes straight up to the large, icicle-encrusted overhangs. Traverse right under these to finish by *Raven's Squawk*.

Upper Bedtime Buttress – Apathizer

25m, E66b.

G. Livingston, W. Todd. September, 1986.

Climb the wall *Ayatollah* avoids. Start 2m left of *Muph Dive*.

Climb the wall to a ledge and thence a quartz pocket (protection). Go left till some good holds enable a traverse rightwards to reach some small flakes. Go up and slightly leftwards to make some very hard moves into the horizontal break; leave the break with difficulty to finish up the slab above.

Protection is good but hard to place. Very strenuous and finery.

Craig-a-Barns, Polney Crag – Monopod

35m, E1.

G. Nicoll, J. Naismith.

1. 15m, **5b**. Climb the centre of the wall between *Twisted Rib* and *Beech Wall* to a grass ledge.

2. 20m, **5b**. Step right and climb slabby nose direct to another grass ledge, finish up short wall just left of shallow groove of *Twisted Rib* direct finish.

Cave Crag, Lower Tier – Stay Hungry

10m, E46b.

R. Anderson, M. Hamilton. 13th September, 1986.

Climbs the overhung wall immediately to the left of *Civer*, good nut placement just up on left and *in situ* 11mm thread runner.

Cave Crag, Upper Tier – Body Snatching

25m, E46b.

R. Anderson, G. Nicoll, D. McCallum. 28th September, 1986.

(Redpointed 4th October, 1986).

The arete above *High Performance*. Climb easily up to the foot of Coffin Corner and step right. Reach the projection above and move right onto the frontal face (P.R.). Move up utilising the left arete to a hold (B.R.) and continue up the frontal face to gain good holds on the right side and an easy finish.

– The Crossing

30m, E46a.

G. Latter (unseconded). 15th November, 1986.

A rising right to left line across the wall in the centre of the crag. Start at the thin crack directly below the niche on *Squirm Direct*. Climb the crack into the recess, then leftwards to the second BR on *Fall Out*. Hard moves up and left lead to the friend 2 placement on Marlina, then left and up clipping the 2nd and 3rd BR's on the new line. From here an obvious line leads into the niche on *Rat Race*. Up this past the hanging belay on the slab to the fixed belay point marking the end of *Rattle Yer Dags*. Lower off.

Birnam Quarry – Compulsive Gambler

35m, E45c.

S. Stewart, C. A. M. Smith. September, 1986.

A parallel line left of *Counting Out Time*, finishing up *Desmond Decker*.

Take the thin twin cracks 5m left of and parallel to *Counting Out Time* over three bulges (last one crux) into a shallow slippery scoop. Move right to the C.O.T. peg, up left through the roof as for C.O.T., but continue straight up manteling over *Slateford Road* to a ring peg, then up on the left as for *Desmond Decker* to the top.

Note

S. Stewart notes that *Desmond Decker* is now redundant, as pitch one is taken by the girdle and pitch two by the above route.

CENTRAL HIGHLANDS

MONADHLIATH, Carn Dearg, Loch Dubh Crag – *The Great Trek*

J. McKeever, G. Taylor, A. Todd. January, 1987. 100m, GRADE IV.

A line to the right of *Wee Team Gully*, which climbs a steep shallow gully up the buttress. A groove 20m left of *Wee Team* was climbed to a ledge system. The steep gully above was gained by a groove on the left and the icefall climbed to the top.

Note

The same team repeated *Wee Team Gully* finishing up a groove on the right instead of the normal finish. With a larger build-up, the grade was II/III.

LOCH ERICHT, Creag Dhubh (NN 590792)

This is a long broken crag with scree and boulder slopes below. High on the left side of the crag is a recessed area of rock with two icy corners.

– *Wafer Me* 60m, GRADE II/III.

J. Lyall, E. Pirie. 21st February, 1987.

Climbs the left hand corner.

– *Ice Cream* 60m, GRADE II.

J. Lyall, E. Pirie. 21st February, 1987.

Climbs the ice-filled gully in the right corner.

Further right is an obvious large ice sheet, which goes down a left facing corner in its steep, middle section. This is *The Hex Factor* which gives a good exposed ice route.

– *The Hex Factor* 120m, GRADE IV.

R. Wild, J. Lyall. 18th February, 1987.

1. 35m. Climb the initial cascades of ice to a large shelf.

2. 50m. Climb 7m of vertical ice, then the ice sheet up the corner. After 30m, traverse left under a steep nose of ice, then up to a cave belay under a curtain of ice.

3. 35m. Traverse right onto an exposed ledge and climb the curtain of ice to gain the easy ice sheet above.

– *Neapolitan* 95m, GRADE III/IV.

J. Lyall, S. Spalding. 24th March, 1987.

At the right end of the crag is an obvious waterfall. Climb this waterfall on the left side to gain a shelf at 45m. The left side of the upper tier was then climbed.

BEN ALDER, Garbh Coire Beag – *Alderwand* 300m, GRADE III.

R. Everett, S. Richardson (Alt.). 31st January, 1987.

The left-hand section of Garbh Coire Beag presents an impressive face, easily seen from Culra Bothy, and somewhat resembles an Oberland nordwand. The face is rather featureless but there are three vague gully lines (the left being the most prominent) with mixed ground in between. This route climbs the icy depression between the left two gullies directly up the centre of the face, and starts approximately at NN 503721. An initial (avoidable) ice barrier pitch leads to a snowfield below the face. The open groove line was followed for four pitches, over several short ice walls, to mixed ground then snowslopes to below the cornice (which could often be problematical).

Enigmatic Buttress – *The Walker's Spur* 250m, GRADE IV.

S. Richardson, R. Everett (Alt.). 31st January, 1987.

The north face of Ben Alder consists of about a mile of crags lining the south side of the Bealach Dubh valley. Starting from the Short Leachas, there is first an area of easy gullies and buttresses, followed by an impressive area of crag to the right (west) of a large, high depression. Further right is a deep-set gully which rises in a series of short steps to a wide open snow slope, then a broken buttress before the 'hanging valley'

mentioned in the Central Highlands District Guide. Right of the hanging valley is a buttress, provisionally named 'Enigmatic Buttress' after the comments on it in the District Guide. The buttress is characterised by a number of ramplines that slant from right to left in its lower half. This climb starts up the left-most rampline, which begins just left of the crest of the buttress at NN 490732. Climb the ramp delicately to reach a snowpatch, then move right up a short groove to belay below an obvious corner just left of the clean steep rock of the crest. Climb the corner to easier ground. The final 150m are straightforward.

North Face – The Ice Maiden

250m, GRADE V.

R. Everett, S. Richardson (Alt.). 1st February, 1987.

This climb starts up the impressive icefall on the steepest part of the north face. Start at NN 498734 below the obvious icefall. Climb a short groove to an open snow bay and belay to the left of the icicle (30m). Traverse into the centre of the ice, climb to a small cave below a rock rib, then follow ice to the left of the rib (50m). Move left to more ice in an open gully then ascend snow slopes to belay below a steep wall (50m). Traverse easy snow to the right and belay below a thin line of ice that descends an obvious open groove in the headwall (40m). Climb short walls to a ramp which leads to a vertical ice hose, which provides an exciting finish (35m). Two rope-lengths of easier climbing lead to the top.

CHNODEARG, Creagan Coire nam Cnamh – Inspiration

185m GRADE IV.

A. Nisbet, J. Grosset. 24th March, 1987.

A good route approximating to the summer line. The relationship is uncertain so a separate description is given. Start just right of *Southern Route* and scramble up for 10m, moving left past a steep wall, to the lower end of a grassy ramp sloping gently up right.

1. 30m. Climb a flake-crack with two chockstones directly above and move right to the base of twin corners, the left being an obvious wide layback crack.

2. 10m. Start up the right-hand corner and pull left to the base of the layback crack. Step back into the right-hand corner and follow it to a big ledge (crux).

3. 40m. Continue diagonally right up grassy slabby ground passing a large block (on summer route?). Climb a steep icy turf scoop to belay on the left.

4. 45m. Above is a steep wall with diagonal crack and two old pegs. Traverse left, then up two turf-topped walls to the base of a corner. Start up the corner, then go left and back right to rejoin it. Finish up the corner on to easy ground.

5. 60m. Easy snow steepening at the cornice.

AONACH BEAG, North West Face – Whiteout

170m, GRADE III.

S. Richardson & R. Webb (Alt.). 30th November, 1985.

From the col between Aonach Mor and Aonach Beag descend to the east and take the first prominent icefall on the right which is followed for 50m to reach a snowfield. Climb this and exit on the right via a short icefall to reach a further snowslope that leads up to a steep buttress with a deep chimney on its LHS. Climb the right side of the buttress to reach the final snowslopes.

– *Blackout*

120m, GRADE IV/V.

J. Dunn, R. G. Webb (Alt.). 21st February, 1987.

Climb the chimney passed by *Whiteout*. Climb directly to the chimney; climb the left wall of the chimney in one long hard pitch.

– *King's Ransom*

250m, GRADE V.

S. Richardson & R. Webb (Alt.). 14th February, 1987.

The very left hand side of the buttress that contains *Whiteout* is split by a narrow gully. This climb followed the gully for two pitches to where it fades out, and then broke out right across difficult mixed ground to reach the crest of the buttress. Climb easy angled ice for 20m to reach the foot of the gully. Climb this steeply and pass

behind a chockstone to where the angle eases slightly. Continue up ice to reach a vertical free-standing ice pillar which was climbed by chimneying up its LHS and then swinging onto the vertical wall on the left (50m). Continue up the gully, with a steepening after 25m, to reach a spike belay below an impending wall just to the right of the left edge of the buttress (40m). Follow the ramp-line on the right for 10m until it fades out and then pull over the overhanging wall above (sling used for foothold) to reach a second ramp. Follow this delicately for 10m to reach the crest of the buttress. A fine snow arete and easier mixed ground leads to the summit plateau in two pitches.

— *Royal Pardon* 220m, GRADE V.

R. Webb & S. Richardson (Alt.). 18th February, 1987.

About 50m right of *King's Ransom* is a prominent thin ice smear that runs down the centre of the buttress. This gave an excellent and sustained ice climb, reminiscent of *Smith's Route* on Gardyloo Buttress, but steeper and with thinner ice. A long ice pitch leads up a series of ice falls to a flake belay at the bottom RHS of the smear (55m). Climb the smear passing two vertical sections to reach a poor belay on the right (40m). A short pitch up a final ice wall leads to easier ground in a broad snow couloir (20m). Follow the couloir for 50m to where it steepens into an icy gully that leads up and left. Two excellent pitches up this lead to the summit plateau.

West Face — *Poached Egg* 120m, GRADE III.

R. G. Webb, J. Dunn (Alt.). 21st February, 1987.

The groove system left of Raw Egg Buttress (see District guide).

STOB BAN (MAMORES), Central Buttress

There are three gully lines on the left flank of Central Buttress. The central line was climbed in the late '60s by Grieve & MacNaughton. The other two lines have now been climbed.

— *No Toddy* 150m, GRADE III.

D. Hawthorn, R. Lee, D. N. Williams. 10th April, 1986.

Climbs the leftmost gully. Start at a small snowfield some distance up the left flank of Central Buttress. Climb a steep ice pitch to easier ground and a stance on the right. Move back left and ascend the gully easily until it slants right. Traverse left and bridge up a continuation of the lower line. Follow mixed ground to top of buttress.

— *Triad* 150m, GRADE III.

D. Hawthorn, R. Lee, D. N. Williams. 10th April, 1986.

Climbs the rightmost gully. Start between two narrow rock buttresses. Ascend the gully which gradually steepens and narrows to a chimney. Reach a stance where the right-hand buttress finishes and a ledge runs across the left-hand buttress. Follow a snow ramp on the right, then traverse left along a narrow ledge and so reach the crest of the buttress. Join the easy leftward slanting ramp above and finish as for the 1969 route.

Note

The buttress between Grieve and MacNaughton's line and *Triad* was claimed this year at Grade IV. Apparently it was climbed by Maclay and Parr in January, 1904!

— *Flake Chimney* 150m, GRADE III.

R. N. Campbell, M. Naftalin. March, 1985.

Start as for *Bodice Ripper* (front face of Central Buttress). Climb the entry pitch to a bay. Follow a chimney on the right to a notch behind a giant flake. Traverse right across a slab and two leftward-trending grooves to reach a second chimney slanting right. Climb this to easy ground.

SRON NA CREISE, North East Face

In the centre of the N.E. face there is a broad V-shaped buttress immediately left of Gully 5, the top of which is a flat-topped tower. It is the buttress climbed in June 1903 by Dr and Mrs Inglis Clark. The following winter line gave an excellent mountaineering route on a defined ridge.

— *Inglis Clark Ridge*

140m, GRADE III.

R. A. Napier & S. Downie. 14th March, 1987.

Start at right-hand edge of the ridge, about 30m up Gully 5 from the foot of the buttress. Follow grooves, over an ice bulge, and up to a steep 5m ice pitch (crux), to belay on broad terrace (35m). 30m of easier climbing leads to the prominent rock tower. Climb tower on its right, to belay below a wall (35m). Traverse 5m left along wall, and surmount blocks traversing back right. Finish up a right-angled chimney to gain easier rocks to top of tower (40m).

GLEN ETIVE

The following routes are on a south-east facing granite crag behind Druinachoish Farm (NN 127470). The approach is through a jungle. Routes by W. Hood, R. Turner, B. Williamson on 14th August, 1986.

— *Turneround*

25m, E1 5b.

At the left end of the crag. Climb the obvious thin crack with three steep sections.

— *Tattiemán*

35m, HVS 5a.

Start at the foot of the highest section of the crag. Climb a steep wall past a loose block on the right towards an oak tree. Pass the tree on the left to gain a left-trending crack leading to the final wall.

— *Gestation*

35m, HVS 5a.

Climb a steep wall and crack 4m left of *Tattiemán* towards tree. Move right before tree and climb rib before stepping back left on to wall with left-trending crack leading to corner. Move right out of corner to easier ground.

Beinn Maol Chaluim — *Lone Ranger*

220m, GRADE II.

G. E. Little. 14th March, 1987.

The north-east face of this hill presents a long wall of high though broken crags. Near the centre of the face is a shelf/groove line which divides the sprawling buttress with a steep base on the right from a wedge shaped buttress on the left. This route climbs the latter by a right of centre line.

Due to the nature of these crags endless route variation is possible at about Grade II although harder pitches can be found.

BEINN FHIONNLÁIDH, South Face — *Rapunzel*

350m, GRADE IV.

S. Richardson, R. Clothier (Alt.). 11th January, 1987.

The broken south face of Beinn Fhionnlaidh is split by a deep gully/chasm that descends almost to the valley floor at NN 091493. It gave an excellent climb with much character, a variety of interesting pitches and a general feeling of remoteness. Reminiscent of Dalness Chasm in Glen Etive but easier. Approach from Glenure up the trackless Allt Bealach na h-Innsig in two and a half hours. Due to its relatively low altitude and south facing aspect a hard frost is required to bring the route into condition. At the lower end of its grade. Recommended.

Walk into the chasm and climb a short ice pitch to reach a steep corner. This was not completely frozen and thin ice was climbed on the right wall. Short ice steps and easy snow lead to a steep chimney. Climb this for 50m using thin icicles to pass two huge chockstones at its top. The gully now splits and the right hand branch was taken. Two long ice pitches followed by a short steep ice step lead to a general easing in the angle. Follow the gully up snow, with several short ice pitches, for 150m to reach the summit snow slopes.

— *The Witch*

150m, GRADE III/IV.

R. Clothier, S. Richardson (Alt.). 11th January, 1987.

About 150m right of *Rapunzel* a shorter and less well-defined gully system leads to a snow terrace at about half-height on the face. A short ice pitch and easy snow lead to a longer ice pitch where the gully narrows. Snow slopes and a short steep icefall lead to a split in the gully. The right branch was followed on excellent ice to reach the snow terrace.

BEINN CHAORACH, Glen Ceitlin Slabs

These slabs are located high on the southern side of Beinn Chaorach, overlooking Glen Ceitlin. Access to Glen Ceitlin is easiest by means of the path leaving the Glen Etive road just south of the deer farm. Follow the Glen for a mile and turn up the hillside just beyond a low crag. The slabs form the east wall of a prominent gully. Follow the west bank of the gully to reach the base of the slabs. The slabs are formed of the same rough granite as Creag Chaorach on the northern side of the hill. They lie at a comfortable angle, extending upwards for 300m feet but narrowing rapidly above the gully base. Prominent features are an area of reddish quartz-banded grooves at half-height on the left and a large square slab high on the right. Besides the two routes reported here there are several harder possibilities.

— *Limburger Slabs* 305m, Very Difficult.

R. N. Campbell & J. R. Marshall. 30th June, 1986.

Scramble from the gully-bed to reach a prominent bollard at the lowest point of the slabs (15m). Move right and follow an indistinct crack to a steepening. Move right to a recess above a heather patch (80m). Leave the recess on the right and traverse right and up to reach prominent twin quartz grooves. Climb either groove to reach easy slabs above (60m). Move up and right easily to a niche below the left-bounding groove of a large square slab (60m). Follow this groove onto a higher slab and climb this by a thin crack to reach easy ground (90m).

Note

The first 150m of this route were climbed in May 1982 by Campbell and Dré Helwegen (Royal Dutch A.C.), who made a less satisfactory finish on the extreme left of the slabs.

— *Gruyère* 150m, Very Difficult.

J. R. Marshall & R. N. Campbell. 30th June, 1986.

About 30m above the lowest rocks there is a second easy access to the gully bed from the west bank. Above this point a prominent corner stretches up the crag, defining the large square slab on the right in its upper reaches. Reach the corner system by a ramp, steep chimney crack (awkward to enter) and follow the corner in four pitches to easy ground.

BEN STARAV, Stob Coire Dheirg — Hidden Ridge 200m, GRADE III/IV.

G. E. Little, D. Saddler. 25th January, 1986.

Three buttresses separated by deep gullies lie high in the N.E. Corrie of Stob Coire Dheirg. This line takes the central buttress which becomes a narrow, pinnacled ridge in its upper part.

Start on the right hand side of the buttress, just above its foot, at an open gully. Climb this, which becomes a groove then ramp, for about 60m, to a block belay. Up short steep groove (crux) and interesting mixed ground above to the top of the buttress.

A narrow ridge with two pinnacles lies ahead. The second two can be outflanked but the maximum enjoyment should be taken direct. Easy ground leads to the summit of the mountain.

A route of quality and variety.

— *Flexi Rib* 120m, GRADE II.

G. E. Little. 3rd April, 1986.

This route takes the left hand buttress starting at its lowest point. Climb a snow gully between rock ribs to a small col. Move left to gain edge and follow it to snow arete. The tower above is climbed direct (crux) although it can easily be outflanked on the left.

— *Shadow Groove* 100m, GRADE III.

G. E. Little. 3rd April, 1986.

Just to the right of the lowest point of the broad right hand buttress is a snow bay with steep ice groove above. Climb the groove (sustained) and easy ground to the top of the buttress.

– *Parting Shot*

70m, GRADE II.

G. E. Little. 3rd April, 1986.

A broken buttress, bounded by a short gully on its right flank, lies on the east ridge of the Stob Coire Dheirg. Climb it by a shallow icy scoop, just right of centre, to the ridge.

BEINN EUNAICH, Black Shoot Buttress – *Eager Beaver*

150m, GRADE IV.

G. E. Little, D. Saddler. 13th February, 1986.

Black Shoot Buttress lies at the termination of the east ridge of Beinn Eunaich. It is bounded on the right by a deep gully, The Black Shoot, and on the left merges into the hillside shortly before a long wide gully.

This route climbs the centre of the buttress via a sickle shaped groove/ramp, for two pitches, then gains an obvious, steep, ice smeared slab groove. A long snow pitch above leads to the top of the buttress.

GLEN NEVIS & LOCHABER OUTCROPS**GLEN NEVIS, Double Buttress – *Wall Games***

15m, E5 6a.

G. Latter (unseconded). 2nd October, 1986.

Climbs the steep cracked wall at the highest point of the left hand end of the wall. Start beneath the prominent diagonal crackline. Up this and pull right onto wall on small holds (RP 3). Up this (crux) to finish up shallow depression.

– *Double Think*

25m, E2 5c.

G. Latter (unseconded). 2nd October, 1986.

Gains the blunt central rib of the crag by the crack of *Andrea's Visit*. Climb the crack and pull round the arete to good quartz holds (fragile). Up on these, then step left and up the slab to finish up the easy groove out right.

Cavalry Crack Buttress – *Dracula*

45m, E2.

G. Latter, R. Lee. 9th September, 1986.

A direct line between *Vampire* and *Fang*.

1. 20m, **5b**. Start left of *Fang* at a prominent deep cut groove. Up this and pull right onto slab, step right to gain obvious triangular niche. Direct up slab to a small sapling, straight up the wall above (the original line of *Fang*) to belay ledge.

2. 25m, **5b**. Up the first few feet of *Fang*, traverse left round rib and up obvious line to gain a large sloping ledge. Step right and up shallow corner line to finish up the last few easy moves of *Fang*.

– *The Bats, The Bats*

45m, E2 5b.

G. Latter & I. Campbell. 23rd July, 1983.

Climb the initial slab as for *Vampire Direct* but trend rightwards heading for a prominent leftward slanting diagonal crackline through the bulges. Climb this (possible belay below) and continue up easier ground to top.

Pinnacle Ridge – *The Counter Reactionary*

15m, E5 6a.

G. Latter, E. Cameron. 11th June, 1986.

A counter diagonal line to *Soapsuds*. Start as for *Chalky Wall* to the first runner placement, then leftwards to underneath the roof on *Soapsuds*. Swing left above the roof (2 & 3 RP placements over roof) and continue leftwards and make a difficult move to gain small poor 'scoop' hold. Direct to *Hodad* to finish.

– *Nomad*

12m, E1 5b.

G. Latter. 3rd July, 1986.

The blunt rib left of *Hodad*, climbed on its right side to finish up the crux moves of *Hodad*.

Hamlet Buttress – Simple Deduction

12m, E3 5c.

G. Latter (unseconded). 2nd May, 1986.

Traverses the obvious undercut flange above *Cubby's Route* and right of *Foil*. Protection is in *Foil*. Ascend *Foil* to attain a standing position beneath the groove. Traverse right finishing at the same point as *Cubby's Route*.

Secretaries Buttress – Footnote

20m, HVS 5a.

G. Latter (unseconded). 2nd May, 1986.

Similar in style to *Last Word*, tackling a more direct line up the wall to its left. Start beneath an obvious ledge at a break in the overhang. Step right onto good footholds and climb the wall more or less directly to the belay as for *Last Word/Vincent*.

Ridge Buttress – Painted Face

30m, E2 5b.

G. Latter & R. Lee. 25th June, 1986.

Start 3m right of *Paleface* directly beneath a ledge. Gain this and pull right onto the wall and up this direct to gain some good holds just before the traverse of *Paleface*. Follow this then continue traversing left to gain leftward slanting groove up the left edge of the pale streak. Finish up this.

Nameless Crag – Faceless

30m, E2 5b.

G. Latter, R. Lee, D. Cuthbertson. 3rd June, 1986.

The deep cut groove at the right end of the left wall, just right of *Risque*. Climb easily up into the pod and up this until forced out left onto the slab. Up this and pull rightwards onto a vegetated ledge and scramble to finish.

Whale Rock – Wigley Worms

30m, E2 5c.

G. Latter (unseconded). 23rd July, 1986.

A line up the slab left of *Earthstrip*, avoiding the main challenge by taking a wandering line in its upper half. Climb the cleaned crack just right of *Le Midge* and make a hard move to good holds on the slab. Continue slightly rightwards heading for the base of the shallow right facing groove in the bulging headwall. Up this to gain second horizontal break. Left along this to crack, up this then right along next break through top slab, finishing just left of *Earthstrip*.

Gorge Crag – No Fear for the Pocketeer

10m, E5 6a.

G. Latter (unseconded). 6th September, 1986.

Tackles the short wall right of *Captain Kevlar*, the most prominent feature on the route being a series of finger pockets in the centre of the wall. Step left onto a quartz hold and up to a good pocket at mid height. Make hard moves above this (1 rock on side above) to pull onto small ledge on right. Finish up easy slab above. Tree belay well back.

Gorge Wall – The Gallery

30m, E4 6a.

G. Latter (unseconded). 6th September, 1986.

The striking diagonal crackline across the crag. Up the arete as for *Chimera* to gain the crackline and follow it across the wall with increasing difficulty to an exposed pull round the top on better holds.

Riverside Buttress – Sue's Crack, Direct Start

E1 6a.

G. Latter (unseconded). 3rd July, 1986.

Through bulging scoop to join normal route. Thrutchy.

Meadow Walls, The Terrace

At the same level as *Going for Gold* is a long band of walls. The following route is located on this terrace, approached from the right by scrambling up the open gully bounding the right edge of the face.

– *The Quartzmaster* (Grade not supplied)

G. Latter, D. Griffiths, C. Bell. 30th May, 1986.

At the right end of the wall is a prominent quartz band. Start just left of this. Pull onto footledge from the left and up quartz past a series of sloping ledges to reach rightward slanting crack and finish up this.

Wave Buttress – *Nowhere Near the Sea*

45m, E5 6a.

G. Latter. 16th June, 1986.

The left to right girdle. Start up *First Wave* then move right to gain horizontal crack. Follow this to good holds and a rest at the crack of *On the Beach*. Continue with difficulty (No. 3 RP on side at start of hard section) past a good two finger pocket (crux) to better holds on *Ground Zero*. Reverse the crux of this and pull out right to good flakes to join *Crack Attack*. Continue at the same level to reach good quartz holds (as for *Romancing*) then make a difficult series of moves rightwards to reach the lower of two horizontals and pull into *Bewsey Crack*. Across to the gully or finish up this.

– *The Dark Crystal*

35m, E5 6a.

G. Latter. 13th June, 1986.

The hanging flake and intermittent cracks up the steep slab below *Crack Attack*. Start about 5m right of *Crack Attack* and climb up to a good quartz hold. Pull right onto flake and up to a good flat hold just above. Attain a standing position on this and follow the intermittent cracks up the slab above to a welcome respite on *Crack Attack*. Directly above to gain the wide leftward sloping ramp which leads to the final quartz groove of *Ground Zero*.

– *Psycho Cats*

15m, E4 6a.

G. Latter & P. Farrell. 29th July, 1986.

Takes the line between *The Dark Crystal* and *Romancing the Stone*. Start midway between the two at a pink area of rock. Climb steeply on layaway holds to a runner placement in the thin diagonal cracks just to the right. Straight up with a hard move to gain good holds which lead to a junction with *The Dark Crystal* (RP 2 on left). Continue up this to join *Crack Attack* and finish up any of the three available finishes.

– *The Final Scoop*

20m, E4 6a.

G. Latter. 29th July, 1986.

The Direct Finish to *Romancing the Stone*, taking the scoop to the left of the head-wall of *Crack Attack*. Gain the scoop from the right and up to rounded break (small friends). Attain a standing position on this and pull over on better holds to finish directly on easier ground.

– *Straight Thinking*

35m, E5 6a.

G. Latter & N. Sharpe. 12th July, 1986.

A direct line between *The Gift* and *Think Vertical* following a vague crackline running up the steepest part of the Right-Hand Buttress. Start just left of *The Gift*. Follow vertical crack and continuation with a hard move to gain a good flat hold. Attain a standing position on this (good break for gear) from where bold climbing up the wall above (crux) leads to another break. Move up and right to finish at same point as *Think Vertical*.

– *Lateral Thinking*

25m, E3 6a.

G. Latter. 9th August, 1986.

The left to right girdle of the Right-Hand Buttress. Either abseil down gully or climb up diagonal crack on *The Gift* to good break. Follow this with the crux moves to gain *Walter Wall*. Continue in the same line to *Edgehog*, then across easier crack into *Teenoso*. Belay here or on ledge on *Ziggy*. Continue along crack or finish up this.

Blade Buttress – Cruisability

20m, E5 6b.

G. Latter. 12th September, 1986.

The stupendous overhanging groove up the left side of the blade. Gain and climb the flake crack leading to the roof. Pull through this with difficulty using a good incut hold over the lip on the left and continue up the groove. Pull out right to finish.

Note

(The route was attempted on 2 previous occasions, with the runners left in place up to roof).

– *Sabre*

E3 5c.

G. Latter. 19th June, 1986.

Now reclimbed and upgraded since the disappearance of the bottom section of flake.

Creag Dubh Na' Caillich

This is the small granite crag above Torlundy, a few miles north of Fort William. It is clearly visible from the main A82 road and can be approached directly from the forestry road (½ hour). Many easier routes (about 15) have been climbed, all on good rock and following obvious lines.

– *The Kiss of the Spiderwoman* 25m, E3 5b.

G. Latter, B. McDermot. 21st July, 1986.

Climbs the longest part of the wall at the left-hand side of the crag. Climb a line just left of a broken arete (serious) eventually leading to good holds and protection at a good block. Up thin finger/corner crack to ledge and direct to tree belay on top.

– *The Big Tree*

10m, HVS 5a.

G. Latter, B. McDermot. 21st July, 1986.

Wall and short crack direct to large tree left of centre crag.

Stac an Eich

This is the collective name referring to the two granite outcrops in the woods overlooking Loch Linnhe, including the crag now known as Creagallan.

The following route is situated on the crag obliquely up and right from Creagallan. The crag is broken, dominated by a narrow, deceptively steep slab on its right edge.

– *Death's Distance*

30m, E3 5b.

G. Latter (unseconded). 16th February, 1987.

Bold wall climbing, almost entirely protected by small RP's. Start beneath the centre of the slab. Climb up to good holds at 5m, then right and up past crack. (Good RP 3 placement at the top end of undercut flake above overlap – difficult to place). Move left into a shallow incipient groove. Directly up on good edges past along reach to an easing in the angle. Pull onto the rounded slab and step right to a good spike runner. Continue up the easier rounded edge to finish.

Note

On the first ascent the last 3m of easy rock was coated in ice, and avoided by lowering from a nut. This should not present any difficulties under more normal conditions.

Creagallan – The Leisure Trail

20m, E4 6a.

G. Latter (unseconded). 6th January, 1986.

The steep undercut groove at the left end of the crag, just left of *Let Sleeping Dog's Lie*.

Enter and climb the groove past a good nut slot (small RP's up on right). From here either gain the flange on the left or climb straight up to reach two poor peg runners at the most prominent roof. Pull over this from the left to gain a good hold, and easier up the handcrack and slab to belay. Finish up any of the routes above the belay ledge.

– *Hallmark*

30m, E3/46a.

G. Latter, D. Griffiths. 8th May, 1986.

A left to right traverse line finishing up the final groove of *Seal of Approval*. Start left of *The Leisure Trail* and up easy ground to obvious undercut flange. Pull right to the peg runners under the roof and follow *The Leisure Trail* to reach the obvious traverse line leading rightwards. Follow this to gain *Seal of Approval* at the undercut nut placement and continue as for that route.

– *Gold Seal*

6b.

G. Latter (solo). 10th June, 1986.

Direct start to *Seal of Approval*, up right-hand crack.

– *From Here to There*

(Grade not supplied)

G. Latter. 5th May, 1986.

Traverses the obvious crescent-shaped undercut flange above the scooped bowl in the centre of the crag. Start as for *Bill's* ... and finish by lowering from the tree branch. The route was reversed in order to retrieve the gear.

– *Gunrunner*

10m, E3 5c.

G. Latter, I. Campbell. 10th March, 1986.

An interesting alternative start to either *Marathon* or *Gunslinger*, useful as the start of *Marathon* is often wet. Start midway between the two, at a prominent downward pointing flake. Up this and pull directly into the groove. Up this to the roof. Either pull into *Marathon* or *Gunslinger*.

BEN NEVIS

North-East Buttress – *Rain Trip*

180m, GRADE IV.

G. Hornby, J. Fisher. 14th February, 1987.

Followed the summer line (SMCJ, 1979) throughout. A pleasant climb up snow and ice filled grooves.

Orion Face – *The Black Hole*

235m, GRADE V.

T. Saunders, M. Fowler. 5th April, 1986.

The slanting corner (climbed by *Astronomy*) forming the left hand side of the Great Slab Rib is the most prominent feature of the lower section of *Astronomy* buttress. It actually forms part of a fault line which runs the full height of the buttress and is taken by this route. Start at a right-facing corner 15m left of *Orion Direct*.

1. 50m. Climb the corner (awkward) to eventually gain the prominent slanting corner of *Astronomy*.

2. 20m. Up the corner to belay at the point where *Astronomy* quits via a flake chimney on the right (this is in common with *Astronomy*).

3. 25m. Continue very steeply in the same line for 10m, move 2m left and ascend an ice-choked overhanging crack for 8m to a snow patch.

4. 35m. The fault line overhangs leaving the top of the snow patch. Start this with difficulty and continue (easing) to a second snow patch. Move up this to belay above its top left edge.

5. 45m. Move 3m back right into the fault line and continue direct to join *Astronomy* where that route traverses left to descend into *Minus One Gully*.

6. 60m. Continue in the same line up thinly iced grooves.

Note

Parts of this had been climbed before.

— *Astronomy Direct Finish*

120m, GRADE V.

T. Saunders, M. Fowler. 30th March, 1986.

Instead of 'trending back left by walls and grooves' after the thin ice groove, trend slightly right to belay below the right hand end of the steep upper rocks (20m). Gain the crest of the buttress on the right, climb an iced slab trending right to gain a fine ice groove near the crest of the buttress. Follow this (steep) to an easier arete leading to *North-East Buttress*.

Observatory Ridge, West Face — (Unnamed)

90m, Very Difficult.

D. Hawthorn, N. Muir. Summer 1984.

This route is the crackline to the left of *Abacus* (precise location unknown). It has a cave at half height. Climb slabs to below cave (45m). Climb up to the cave and exit out left. Finish up cracks to the crest of the buttress.

— *Winter*

GRADE IV.

D. Hawthorn, A. Paul. November, 1985.

Follow the summer route.

Observatory Buttress — *Matchpoint*

325m, GRADE V.

S. Richardson, E. Hart (Alt.). 28th March, 1986.

Takes a line between *Left Edge* and *Rubicon Wall* giving the most direct route up the centre of the buttress. It is possible that parts of the route have been climbed before. Between *Left Edge* and *Rubicon Wall* are two left-facing corner systems. Climb the right-hand corner for one long pitch passing a good spike runner at half height. Take the short steep snow slope above to reach an overhanging inverted triangular wall with an icicle fringe down its left hand side. Traverse left and climb the fringe to belay on the snowfield above. Two prominent icefalls form on the steep wall above. (*Left Edge* takes the left one of these). Climb the right hand icefall to reach the snowy ledge line that cuts across the buttress. Continue up the crest of the buttress as for *Left Edge*, to reach the plateau.

The Douglas Boulder — *The Black Douglas*

280m, Very Severe.

K. V. Crocket, A. Walker. 13th September, 1986.

Start at lowest rocks; right of *Direct Route* and left of the prominent diamond-shaped wall. Climb easy rocks (these have been used as an approach to *Direct Route*) for 120m up the rib left of the wall to below a steep grey wall of excellent rock, just right of the chimney of *Direct Route*. Climb a crack up and left through a niche to a ledge and belay. Climb grooves and walls above to top.

Indicator Wall — *Riders on the Storm*

165m, GRADE V.

D. Hawthorn, E. Todd. 11th April, 1986.

The route is the large slab between *Indicator Wall* and *Albatross*. Climb from the lowest left hand point of the buttress by iced grooves in two pitches of 45m and one of 30m to the top.

Trident Buttresses — *Eastern Block*

GRADE VI.

G. Livingston, M. Charlton (Alt.). January, 1987.

1, 2. As for the first two pitches of *1944 Face Route* (bold) to reach a large ledge.

3. Traverse the ledge to some stacked blocks and attack the bulging wall above until a belay ledge is reached 15m higher.

4. Easily to the top of the buttress.

NOTES

East Flank of Tower Ridge — An ascent of the thin groove on the left of Tower Scoop at 60m, Grade III. It has been climbed before and is often Grade IV.

GLENCOE

BUACHAILLE ETIVE MOR, Central Buttress, South Face – Gravity and Grace

W. Todd, I. Rea. June, 1986.

55m, E2.

From the foot of the easy gully just left of the start of *Pontoon*, scramble up to a heather ledge at the bottom of a shallow, left-facing corner.

1. 55m, **5b**. Climb the corner and crack above. Move left below a smooth wall. Climb this rightwards to the foot of a thin crack. Up this (fragile poised flake on left) to reach left-trending ramp/groove. Follow this to overhang. Cross this on left to reach easier rock and belay on left.

Central Buttress – The Veil 180m, GRADE IV/V.

T. Brindle, A. Moore. 20th February, 1986.

Climb the icefall just right of *Waterslide Gully* (SMCJ, 1986) in two pitches (small stance on right at half height). This is also known as Waterslide Corner. A pitch up a snow bay leads to a prominent ice column. Climb this (8m vertical) to easy ground.

Ed's Note

The icefall is close to *Waterslide Gully*. Future opinion can decide whether it merits a separate route. The ice column would also be a good finish to *Waterslide Gully* but was incomplete during that ascent.

– Direct Route by Chimney Route

T. McAulay, D. Sanderson. 21st January, 1984.

130m, GRADE IV.

Follow the summer route to *Chimney Route*. Climb *Chimney Route* to belay at the right end of *Heather Ledge*.

– Has Been 70m, Hard Very Severe.

T. McAulay, D. Sanderson, D. Hawthorn. 9th June, 1984.

Between *Hiccup* and *The Gangway* is a large crack going straight up the wall. Start at a large square slab with a small roof at 6m. Climb the right-hand side of the slab to a thin crack. Step left and climb over the roof, follow the thin crack to a larger crack, climb to an undercling, step right then up left to the large ledge on *Gangway* (40m). At the left-hand end of the ledge, climb the wall at overhangs to a small ledge. Above is a rightward-slanting crack. Follow it a couple of feet until a break left up through grooves and slabs to the belay (30m).

Great Gully Buttress – Great Flake Route

T. McAulay, D. Sanderson. 2nd January, 1985.

80m, GRADE III.

Start about 6m right of the East Face of the buttress. Climb iced slabs and groove direct to the start of *Great Flake Route* (summer) – 25m. Climb the summer route via iced cracks and the Great Flake to the top of the buttress (55m).

Creag a' Bhancair – Meat Beater

35m, E3 5c.

W. Todd, G. Livingston, G. Latter. September, 1986.

Accepts the challenge of the headwall that *Carnivore* avoids by a 150m traverse! Follow *Carnivore* pitch one to the peg at the start of the traverse. Move up and right. Make an awkward move up then finish direct up the headwall on good holds. Good belays on the cleaned ledges. Abseil off.

Tunnel Wall – Fated Path

40m, E7 6c.

G. Livingston (unseconded). July, 1986.

A free climb based on the old Squirrel's bolt line which terminates on the *Carnivore* ledge.

Start at the middle of the wall at the left side of a block in the initial roof. Move left from the block and then directly up (bolt runner) until possible to swing right into a shallow groove (bolt runner). Traverse rightwards and then up to small overlap with good holds above (bolt runner). Climb the wall above past three new peg runners (one in each of the three obvious horizontal breaks which cross the wall at about 7m intervals) to a necky runout up the final less overhanging finish.

BIDEAN NAMBIAN, Lost Valley Buttress – Neanderthal 125m, GRADE VI.
R. Anderson, G. Nicoll (Alt.). 14th February, 1987.

An impossible looking line up the huge corner about 30m right of *Pterodactyl* providing superb climbing in an impressive situation.

1. 18m. Climb easily up introductory gully then left wall to a platform.
2. 15m. Traverse right and climb chute to belay at the cul-de-sac.
3. 21m. Traverse right wall until possible to move up to base of corner which is followed to a small ledge.
4. 27m. Continue up corner to right side of square roof then move underneath this left to gain cracks in the recessed wall leading over a small roof and through the final eaves by a narrow slot visible on the skyline. Belay by large blocks a short way above.
5. 39m. Continue up a short way to reach easy slopes leading to the top. Three stars.

Gearr Aonach, East Face – Newsholme's Groove

G. Hornby, C. Schasche. February, 1986. 140m, GRADE IV.

A broad groove between *Mome Rath* and *Snowstormer*. Climbed when the cliff was in very icy condition.

West Top of Bidean – Dubiety 110m, GRADE IV.

F. Yeoman, J. Mathie. 23rd February, 1987.

The route is on the right-retaining wall of *Hourglass Buttress* and finishes on the summit cairn of the West Top of Bidean. Start approximately 30m up *Hourglass Gully*.

A steep iced corner/chimney on the right leads awkwardly to a poor stance and good thread belay on the right. The iced corner above is then climbed directly to finish on the summit cairn.

Church Door Buttress – Crypt Route by Through Route

T. McAulay, D. Sanderson, D. Hawthorn. 9th December, 1984. 60m, GRADE III.

Climb *Crypt Route* to the left alleyway. Climb the through route over the chockstone to belay at the arch.

Diamond Buttress – Diamond Left Hand (lower) and Right Hand (upper) Route

D. Rubens, G. Cohen. 9th February, 1986. 255m, GRADE V.

Start at a bay about half way between *Collie's Pinnacle* and the foot of the buttress (probably similar start to *Winter Route 1983*). Fairly sustained.

1. 40m. Climb up to ramp and follow it, then go further leftwards to belay.
2. 30m. Go up steep ground to belay just below a short steep V-chimney.
3. 30m. The chimney was avoided by an awkward move right, then straight up to belay.
4. 35m. A further pitch led to the upper traversing ledge.
5. 60m. Follow ledge rightwards until it ends.
6. 25m. Climb a short difficult chimney to gain an arete.
7. 35m. Easier ground to top.

NOTES

Stob Coire nan Lochain, Summit Buttress – Ordinary Route – A good winter variation by M. Duff, N. Kekus, A. Nisbet on 2nd January, 1986. From the point where there is an escape into *Boomerang Gully*, an awkward short wall on the right gave access to a ledge system which was traversed rightwards, including a mantelshelf to a higher level, to a large block belay in a sensational position. The tapering groove above was climbed (sustained), then a short ramp on the right and a blocky chimney leading back left to easier ground. Approximately 50m, Grade IV/V.

SOUTHERN HIGHLANDS

BEINN A' CHREACHAIN, North-East Coire – *Leucocyte Buttress*

K. V. Crocket, J. M. Lackie. 5th April, 1986.

210m, GRADE III.

The central and most outstanding of three buttresses in the coire. Start at an icefall right of centre. Climb icefall, trending left, to easy rocks left of the upper, central gully. The rocks then lead to an elegant finish on the buttress crest, left of the corniced central gully.

– *Brittle Ramp* 160m, GRADE III/IV.

G. E. Little, D. Saddler (Alt.). 31st January, 1987.

The route starts about half way up the right hand gully at an 'island' and climbs the left flank of the right hand buttress by grooves to gain an obvious ice ramp. This is climbed and broken ground above to the top.

BEINN AN DOTHAIHDH, North-East Coire – *Journey to the East*

G. E. Little. 15th February, 1987.

260m, GRADE II/III.

On the left wall of *Taxus* is a ramp line. Start 50m below *Taxus* on the left. Ascend ramp line roughly parallel to *Taxus* until below a steep rock corner. Traverse right to join *Taxus* (above its ice pitches). Immediately above a wide snow ramp breaks back left. Follow this then zig zag up trending left, to the top of the buttress and junction with *Taxus* at the snow ridge. Finish up *Taxus*.

– *Pas De Deux* 155m, GRADE V.

G. E. Little, D. Saddler (Alt.). 17th February, 1986.

Midway between *Cirrus* and *West Buttress* is a striking tower of clean rock, high on the face and the main feature of this route.

Start at the base of *Cirrus* at an obvious ramp on its left wall. Climb the ramp, with increasing difficulty until a good ledge is reached (30m). Move back right to climb a short awkward corner. Traverse a ledge rightwards, until it narrows, then ascend short wall to gain a rightward trending zig zag line leading to a thread belay overlooking *Cirrus* (below and to the right of the 'tower') (45m). Ascend left side of the slab, past icicle fringe, to gain open corner on the right of tower. Ascend its steep right wall and snow ramp trending left (35m). Climb easier, broken, ground to the top (45m).

– *Menagé à Trois* 105m, GRADE V.

G. E. Little, D. Saddler, S. Visser (Alt.). 14th February, 1987.

The main feature of this route is a steep corner to the left and parallel to *Clonus*.

Start below the corner. Climb steep wall to snow bay then up to gain a ramp leading rightwards into the base of the corner. Belay on the right (35m). Climb corner (technical but well protected) then break out rightwards near the top to reach a wide ledge (35m). Ascend groove above (35m).

– *Quickstep* 90m, GRADE II.

G. E. Little. 15th February, 1987.

Start 20m right of *Clonus*. Climb slight snow grooves bounding the right side of steep rock to short barrier. Up this, then traverse wide ledge, leftwards, below vertical rock wall, to gain *Clonus*. Either break back right by short ramp or finish via *Clonus*.

BEINN DORAIN, Coire an Dothaidh – *Second Coming*

95m, GRADE IV.

G. E. Little, S. Steer. 15th March, 1987.

High in the centre of the cliff is an obvious curving ramp line which forms the demarcation between the very steep clean wall on the right and the more slabby, vegetated face on the left. A steep turfy groove drops from the ramp but does not reach the base of the crag. Start to the right of the turfy groove and ascend steepening, broken ground to a ledge (old peg). Hand traverse a sharp flake leftwards to gain ledges which are followed to gain the groove. Up this to belay in corner below steep ice (50m). Up ice or little chimney on the left, traverse left along snow ramp then up icy groove to the top (45m).

– *The Promised Land* 120m, GRADE V/VI.

G. E. Little, D. Saddler. 29th March, 1987.

Start about 20m down from *Second Coming*, well right of *Scorpion*.

Move up to gain a snow ledge then traverse left to its termination at flakes. Ascend very steep rock then move right into snow bay below groove (flake runner). Traverse hard left for 8m then up to gain large snow ledge and belay below ice scoop (*Scorpion* corner on the left), 45m. Climb ice scoop exiting right, by short awkward wall, then up to below ice chimney, 35m. Climb left wall of chimney on poor thin ice to gain ice groove and then directly up to the top by second ice groove above (common to *Second Coming*), 40m.

TYNDRUM, Beinn Chuirn – Alchemist's Wall 160m, GRADE IV/V.

S. Steer, M. Brydon, G. Lawton. 22nd February, 1986.

Climbs the face left of *Cononish Waterfall* (Eas Anie). Start below a large icicle at the left hand side of a roof, at half height on the face.

Climb steep ice trending right to an ice ribbon at the right hand side of the roof. Climb this and bulging ice slabs above to easy snow and cornice.

ARROCHAR, The Cobbler, North Peak – Heart Buttress 100m, GRADE III.

K. V. Crocket, T. Weir. 14th February, 1987.

Climbs buttress about 20m right of *Great Gully*; just right of *North Rib Route*. Frozen turf, short walls and snow grooves led sinuously to the final short gully, exited right. Finishes just right of *Great Gully*. Recommended.

– *Chockstone Gully* 100m, GRADE II/III.

K. V. Crocket, A. Walker. December, 1983.

Climbed almost certainly before that, but well worth mentioning and deserves attention. On the north face, hidden from the approach path. Leave the last steep section of the path to the North Peak at about one third height and traverse easy ledges right and up for about 200m to gain the gully edge. Two or three pitches lead to an impressive arch formed by a giant chockstone. Exit by a narrow squeeze on the left or thin slab on the right. *Great Gully* start is slightly below and left, or continue by *Heart Buttress* above.

Ben lme – Ma Fault 120m, GRADE III.

T. McAulay, D. Sanderson. 27th December, 1984.

The route is 12m left and parallel to *Ben's Fault*. On the left hand side of the buttress is a deep recess. Climb this and grooves passing left of a cave at 60m. Climb on to the buttress and on to the top in another 60m.

The Brack, Inglis Clark Buttress – The Abyss 180m, GRADE IV.

K. V. Crocket, A. Walker. February, 1986.

This is the name suggested for the buttress forming the lower tier of The Brack, the original route on the left edge having being recorded by the Inglis Clark family. The buttress is mainly of winter interest, and requires a snow cover, particularly in the lower reaches.

Start at a prominent tree above the lowest rocks, about 30m right of the obvious pinnacle below the left end of the buttress. Go up and right to the foot of a corner, flake belay up and right on ledge. Climb the corner, difficult exit, continue more easily to belay on open slope. Go up and left to belay below short wall just before left edge of this section of buttress. Go back right a short way, gain ledge above, climb to corner. Follow corner, which steepens and leads over a seemingly bottomless cavern. Bridge up chimney to belay on right. Climb short, steep ramp, go right, up then back left to ledge below steep wall. Climb wall to top.

– *Hell's Teeth* 150m, GRADE III.

K. V. Crocket & A. Walker. January, 1986.

Start in first bay from right end of the buttress. Climb mixed ground, passing chimney on right. Continue up and left to belay behind large block. Go through behind block to left then continue upward, threading through rocky walls.

– *The Plunge* 180m, GRADE IV.

K. V. Crocket, A. Walker. 10th January, 1987.

Immediately right of *The Inglis Clark Arete* is a prominent gully/corner. The left start is easy but leads to a huge impasse, the right start leads to a cave with a possible but thin exit on the right wall. Instead, a right traverse from below the cave then a left traverse above an overhanging wall took one back to the gully in two pitches. A short wall and two easy but scenic pitches in the gully led to the crux, a vertical ice column in a corner. Above this the right fork was the true finish.

Beinn an Lochain – *The Palantir* 90m, GRADE II/III.

H. Henderson, S. Kennedy, M. Macdonald & R. G. Ross. 19th January, 1987.

An indifferent route which takes the left hand of the two obvious groove lines just to left of the small crag containing *Benylin* (SMCJ, 1985) (the right hand line being *Galadriel's Mirror* (SMCJ, 1986)). The only difficulties encountered were on the initial few feet up a short, steep icefall above a small cave, leading to the more open groove above (almost a gully). Thereafter straightforward climbing leads to the top.

In better conditions the initial icefall may bank up and become much easier.

Note

This crag need a name! – the unanimous proposal seem to be *Kinglas Crag*.

Also, the comments in D. Bennet's revised Southern Highlands District Guide regarding the location of this crag are badly misleading. The crag (NN 222086) is easily seen from the Glen Kinglas road forming a long line of crags low on the hillside, virtually abutting the N.E. Ridge immediately to the left. It should not be confused with the higher, main Northern Coire containing *Edge of Darkness*.

Northern Coire – *Edge of Darkness* 70m, GRADE V.

H. Henderson, S. Kennedy, M. Macdonald & R. G. Ross. 19th January, 1987.

On the buttress immediately right of *Saxifrage Gully* is a steep ramp leading rightwards onto the exposed edge of the buttress. Start just above and right to belay below the steep ramp (10m). Climb the ramp until forced out right at the top by a steep wall and make hard moves onto the buttress edge. Very exposed (peg *in situ*). Climb up and right into a corner and belay (25m). Continue up the corner, over a small bulge, to a grassy depression. Follow the steep corner up on the left, pulling out right just below the top. Easier ground leads onto the sharp summit ridge (35m). Short but with fine, sustained mixed climbing.

Binnein an Fhidhleir – (817m point). (Opposite Beinn an Lochain)

A kilometre north-east of the summit lies a group of crags facing south-east. The central section is the highest and provides a 60m wall. A group of high angled slabs lie on both sides of this wall. Dark rumour has it that the Creag Dhu once sniffed at the place but records there are none. The rock on this crag has an easily removed black moss in places, the rock being perfect and running to delightful little holds.

The Central Wall has a gully on the left and a narrow chimney on the right.

– *Africa Gully* 60m, Difficult.

J. Mackenzie. 8th July, 1976.

On the left of the Central Wall is a narrow gully. Up grass to chockstone blocking gully and take left chimney to finish up the enclosed gully on steep ground.

– *Abyssinia Chimney* 60m, Very Difficult.

J. Mackenzie. 8th July, 1976.

Takes the line of the fine deep chimney to the right of Central Wall. Up grass and vertical vegetation to rock and chimney entrance (30m). Up chimney by back and foot to reach ledge above chockstone. Finish up steep grass and rock.

– *Horn of Plenty* 40m, Very Severe, 4c.

J. Mackenzie & Colin Ogilvie. 7th August, 1977.

On the left of the Central Wall is a prominent clean corner topped by overhangs. Scramble up *African Gully* to beneath corner; belays. Climb up short wall to enter corner, up this and slab to gain small ledge on left beneath overhangs. Pull over using horn (crux) and go right to finish. An interesting and fine pitch.

Right of the Central Wall is a wide ledge with steep slabs below and above.

– *Amin's Can-Can* 35m, Very Difficult.

J. Mackenzie. 8th July, 1976.

A pale coloured slab with a steep broken bottom section is bisected by the ledge. Start above ledge where a traversing line to the right starts from the left end. Follow this to ledges, step right and up groove to ledge. Follow 12m chimney groove on left, past chockstone, to top.

– *Amindergroove* 25m, Hard Severe, 4b.

J. Mackenzie, C. Ogilvie. 7th August, 1977.

Below *Amin's Can-Can* is a steep slab having a small tree at its base. Climb slab direct left of tree and right of thin crack to join a shallow groove near top. Hand traverse out left along fault (crux) to finish. Interesting.

The short tier immediately above can be climbed by the clean slab on the left at Severe.

– *Two-Step* 60m, Severe.

Colin Ogilvie & J. Mackenzie. 7th August, 1977.

Above the short tier mentioned is a larger slab (*Amin's Can-Can*). On its left is a diagonal line sloping rightwards. Follow this to the grass ledge and go right to beneath central crack in slab above (25m).

Climb directly up crack past perched blocks to top (35m, a good pitch).

ARRAN

CIRMHOR, North-East Face – *April Arete* 120m, GRADE IV.

G. E. Little, D. Saddler. 17th January, 1987.

Three pitches involving short, hard, though well protected sections lead to a narrow ramp on the right of the arete which gives access to the top of the second barrier in Gully 'A.' The easy gully above or the left edge finishes the route. Often in condition and probably better as a winter route than as a rock climb.

Note

The slabs above *April Arete* offer a variety of routes and eventually allow the path leading to the Saddle to be gained.

Drumadoon Point, The Electric Cliff

Seven routes were described in last year's SM CJ. A further fifteen were climbed between 22nd and 25th August, 1986, all but two by B. Davison and A. Smith (varying leads). The original routes are described again for completeness.

The crag is a series of corners and aretes. A footpath goes under the bottom of the crag. From the right hand end (golf course end) as one walks along, an old fence is passed, *Wind Generator* is the groove immediately behind the old fence. A further 60m on the crag drops back in a recess. This has been climbed at Very Difficult escaping on the right side.

About half way along the crag, (at its highest point) the path passes below a large boulder. 7m to its left is a semi-detached pinnacle, with a chimney on its right *Warp Drive* and the chimney on its left side narrows at half height, this is *Electric Chair*.

Twin parallel cracks capped by a roof are found 5m left of the pinnacle, these give *First Shock*. After 15m an easy open wall with a groove crack system on either side and a roof at the top, this is *How's Your Teslas*. About 33m left of this is a chimney ending up from here to give *Tellingbone*. About half way between this and the end of the crag is a chimney which starts at half height. There is a large loose roof in the middle cliff and the bottom wall is also very loose. This has been caused by a collapse of the lower half of the basalt columns, *Do Androids Dream Of Electric Sheep* takes this feature.

A leftwards facing groove/corner with a prominent rightward slanting crack at its top is *Electro-Therapy* 50m from the left end of the cliff.

The routes are described from right to left using the above landmarks as references.

— *Ohm* 26m, VS 4c.

Climb the groove and crack 5m right of the old fence. Near the top it is possible to step right onto a ledge. Make a few moves up then traverse left into an easier groove to gain the top.

— *Electrocak* 25m, HVS 4c.

The second crack left of *Ohm*, 2m right of the old fence is wide with a ledge on the left 5m from the top. From the ledge to the top is loose.

— *Wind Generator* 27m, HVS 5a.

The groove immediately behind the old fence is followed to the top, becoming more sustained near the end.

— *Dodgy Transformer* 27m, E1 5b.

A sloping overhang half way up the cliff is found 20m left of the old fence. Start up a crack to a large ledge at 10m. Follow the crack at the back of the ledge until stopped by the sloping overhang, then swing left onto good face holds and continue to the top.

— *Repeater* 27m, HVS 5a.

Left 2m of *Dodgy Transformer* is a wide rightward facing groove leading to a ledge at 7m. Start up this and before reaching the ledge move into a V-groove on the right and follow to another ledge after 5m. From the ledge go up to the overhang and move right to surmount the overhang gaining a ledge just below the top.

— *Circuit Board* 30m, Hard Severe 4b.

Start up the wide groove of *Repeater* to the ledge at 7m. Climb the wide crack at the ledges left end to a smaller ledge. Shuffle along this then up a crack to stand on a pedestal below a roof of loose blocks. Traverse under the roof until it is possible to exit on the loose blocks.

— *Electric Avenue* 33m, VS 4c.

50m 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. Take the flake on its right side and follow to the top.

— *Fork Lightning* 33m, VS 4b.

To the left of the recess is an S type crack. Climb the right hand of the two cracks and step left onto a ledge once this crack ends. Follow the left-hand crack to the top.

– *Shock Treatment*

33m, E4 5c/6a.

To the left of *Fork Lightning* is an open groove which peters out at half height. The bottom is Old Red Sandstone and has a small overhang to start.

Climb the overhang moving slightly rightwards, then back left to the ledge at the bottom of the groove. Climb the groove until it peters out then move up the wall on small holds to a ledge. A small flake leads to a larger ledge and then the top.

A high side runner was used to protect the start on the first ascent.

– *Quark Jive*

33m, VS4c.

A. Smith, C. Moody, N. Horn, B. Davison.

To the left of *Shock Treatment* 3m is a large flake starting halfway up the crag.

From the sandstone ledge at the bottom, follow the crack to the flake then climb this to a ledge below the top then to the top.

– *Hertz Crack*

30m, VS4c.

B. Davison, A. Atkinson, S. Bissell. 25th May, 1985.

To the right of the large boulder above the path, (right of the semi-detached pinnacle) is a leftward facing groove with a ledge on the right 3m below the top. Follow the groove until stopped by a blocky overhang near the top. Step right onto the ledge then up to the top.

– *Warp Drive*

33m, Hard Severe 4b.

N. Horn, C. Moody, B. Davison, A. Smith.

Climb the groove then the chimney in the right of the semi-detached pinnacle.

– *Electric Chair*

30m, VS4b.

This takes the chimney on the left side of the pinnacle. A horrendous thutch at half height provides the crux.

– *Are Friends Electric*

30m, VS4c.

Climbs the groove/crack 2m left of the pinnacle, 3m right of *First Shock*. The overlap near the start is the crux. The roof near the top is turned on its left to reach the ledge of *First Shock* and finish as for that route.

– *First Shock*

30m, VS4c.

Climb the twin cracks 5m left of the pinnacle moving right under the roof near the top onto a ledge then to the top.

– *Hows Your Teslas*

23m, VS4c.

To the left of the recess 10m, is an open wall 2m across, clean of lichen with a groove/crack system at either side and capped by an overhang.

Climb the wall and either crack to the roof. Move left round the loose blocks and gain the top.

– *Electrickery*

23m, Hard Severe 4b.

Climb the groove 4m left of the previous route. The groove widens and one can step in before reaching the top.

– *Giv'em Enough Volts*

23m, VS4c.

Follow the wide crack 3m left of *Electrickery*. A long run out in the middle leads to a ledge on the right and some protection, then back right and up the crack to finish.

– *Short Circuit* 23m, VS 4c.

The groove immediately to the right of *Tellingbone*. Climb the groove to a small ledge on the left, then up a shallow groove to join *Tellingbone* and finish as that route.

– *Tellingbone* 23m, VS 4b.

Left of *Giv'em Enough Volts* 25m is a chimney ending at half height in an overhang. Above this are twin parallel cracks. Climb this to a ledge on the right. From here climb a crack 1m to the right to an overhanging block and surmount this to finish on good jugs.

– *Do Androids Dream Of Electric Sheep* 22m, VS 4c.

A large section of the bottom half of the basalt column has fallen away leaving a roof at half height and a wide crack/chimney to finish. The bottom wall to the roof is very loose, as is the roof. Make difficult moves left under the roof and establish one's self in the crack. There are several possible finishes, we took the caving one.

The vegetation at the start is the most severe met on the crag, the bottom of the route having to be gained by a long leftward traverse.

– *Electro-Therapy* 26m, VS 4b.

This takes the groove and rightward sloping crack at the top, 50m from the left end of the cliff.

CENTRAL AND SOUTHERN SCOTLAND OUTCROPS

AUCHINSTARRY QUARRY – *Shot in the Dark* 16m, E1 5a.
T. Prentice & J. Christie. May, 1986.

Climbs the cracked white wall left of *Evasive Acton*.

– *Sore Throat* 33m, E4 6a.

T. Prentice. April, 1986.

Climbs the right edge of the *Deep Throat* buttress, via an undercut wall to the peg, then the vertical borehole above.

Right Hand Amphitheatre

The following routes are on previously unclimbed walls left of *Footloose*. Just right of the easy way down is:

– *Both Toes Burning*

T. Prentice & R. Everett. June, 1986. 16m, E2 5c.

Start at a shallow corner and follow the crackline through two small roofs.

– *The Colour Purple*

T. Prentice & B. McAra. June, 1986. 16m, E1 5a.

Climbs the obvious jam crack left of the large corner.

– *Red Snapper*

J. Christie & T. Prentice. July, 1986. 16m, E2 5c.

The corner gives good climbing with adequate protection.

– *Band Aid* 16m, E3 5c.

T. Prentice & B. McAra. May, 1986.

A finger crack in the white wall leads to steep moves to finish. Some loose rock.

– *Race Against Time*

J. Christie & T. Prentice. May, 1986. 16m, E3 5c.

Steep layback moves lead to the overhanging jam crack.

CAMBUSBARRON QUARRY

The following two routes lie on the right-hand side of the quarry's backwall, just left of the mound of earth, at the foot of the obvious boulder problem finger crack.

– *Pathfinder* 25m, E1 5b.

R. Anderson, N. Elstone, G. Nicoll. 7th September, 1986.

Takes a direct line immediately left of the finger crack to climb a left facing corner crack. Gain the foot of the ramp upon which the finger crack finishes and climb the wide crack above stepping up left to reach a good ledge. Climb the corner crack to the top of the pedestal, step up right then back left to finish using a small tree.

– *Trail Blazer* 25m, E2 5c.

R. Anderson, A. Russell. 8th June, 1986.

Immediately to the left of *Pathfinder* is a right facing corner crack which is followed to a ledge on the left and a finish up the short leaning headwall.

LIMEKILNS, The Sentinel – *On the Blocks* 15m, E2/3 6a.

R. Anderson, K. Spence, G. Cohen. 3rd August, 1986.

Climb directly up the wall between *Colours Fly* and *Marley's Ghost*, protection arranged in latter route, to reach the sapling. Step left and climb thin crack to top.

– *Velvet Glove, The Satin Finish* E3 6a.

R. Anderson. 5th October, 1986.

Where *Velvet Glove* moves right, continue straight up pulling left to a break at the very top and then reaching a tiny sapling to finish.

SKYE**NOTES**

Sgurr nan Gilleán. – J. W. Simpson sadly notes the *The Gendarme* which has controlled traffic on the West Ridge since the first ascent has fallen to its death. When I visited the scene at Easter 1987, the rock on the crest where it had stood was very unstable, and some of the rock on the Coire a' Bhasteir face below its stance was shattered and covered with loose stones. By the time the *Journal* comes out the Whitsun hordes will have cleaned it up, but extra care will be needed for some time.

GUIDE UPDATE

The photograph elsewhere in this issue entitled 'Classic Rock,' taken by Ken Money-penny, is of course of the 'Three-Tier Chimney Pitch' on Cir Mhor, Arran, taken during a war-time ascent. K. V. Crocket and A. Walker are now engaged on an updated climbers guide which will encompass Arran, Arrochar, and the Southern Highlands. Information on any of these areas would be appreciated, and should be sent to the Editor of the *Journal*. The more information, the better the guide.

MISCELLANEOUS NOTES

Renewed ways through the glens. – This journal, believing it reflected the views of its members has always resisted the 'improvement' and extension of footpaths by 'the authorities' (SMCJ, 1976, xxxi, No. 167, p. 67). This was based on the somewhat aristocratic belief that lonely places should be paid for by the use of initiative and physical effort. Alas, this attitude can no longer be maintained. Many paths in boggy areas are becoming broader and broader quagmires, unsightly to the eye and downward-sucking to the feet, while steep but stable hill sides are being eroded by the march of Kiplingesque boots creating bergschrunds in the fragile earth. Since the hordes cannot be discouraged, paths must be made kinder to the eye, and less damaging to the landscape.

The Footpath Management Project has been underway since 1984 under the direction of Robert Aitken. Members may have met him or his colleagues working on paths in Glen Brittle or on the Cobbler.

The aims of the project are: –

(i) to develop skills in the construction and management of footpaths, including the acquisition of any relevant knowledge about natural processes acting on paths and about the use of footpaths;

(ii) to demonstrate good practice in techniques of footpath construction and management; and

(iii) to prepare written advice on footpath construction and management.

The sites of present or projected works are displayed in the accompanying map. Interested members could probably get a copy of the 1985-86 report of the project from Robert Aitken, 11 West Craigs Crescent, Edinburgh EH12 8NB.

Sang Award. – The British Universities East Greenland Expedition 1986 received support from the Sang Award. The expedition during 40 days of unsupported travel covered 500 km and penetrated into the previously unvisited mountains of South Schweitzerland where they made six first ascents. Two separate scientific studies were carried out and an informed ethnological programme was initiated by eating, dancing, and getting plastered with the local Greenlanders. Duncan Boyd sends this account of their ascent of Mount Forel which five people unidentified by surnames took part.

THE BOOGIE BOYS ON FOREL

We didn't sleep much that day. Everyone was psyched up to the eyeballs, ready for the 'big one.' You know that feeling you get somewhere between your stomach and your heart when your hands sweat and your body trembles so much that it's all you can do to keep telling yourself that you can do it – you've got to do it.

Mont Forel forces itself into the mind of almost every adventurer to East Greenland. A seldom climbed, distant lump, broad-shouldered to the inland ice, it dominates the surrounding peaks. For me it was an obsession; it had to be climbed; it had to be climbed by me. So when Lewis phoned me in May '85 with an idea to visit the Schweitzerland mountains, north of Sermilik Fjord and Angmagssalik I knew, he knew in fact we all knew that we could not go within fifty miles of Forel without attempting it.

It had taken us fourteen days to get there, since we had been dropped from the little fishing boat on the shores of Tasilag Fjord, somewhere north of Kungmiut village. Some days had been easy ski-ing; a swish from the skis on soft, summer snow and a gentle tug from the trace of your pulk-sledge. Most days though were hard; crevasses and seracs and huge glaciers of hammer-hard, hummock ice that rattled your bones and bent at your body and spirit, so all you wanted to do now was to lie down and die. Then we'd stop for the day and sit in a stoned silence 'til Greg would say 'Ho hum' and Lewis would say 'what a head bang.' With the first few mouthfuls of brew out would come the smiles and the stories. Tomorrow would be better, so the map said, but it never was.

'Jim! Lewis! Greg! Brew!' so the familiar call starts off the day of the great attempt. With frozen fingers and boots we race the mile or so from our 'sunny southside' camp to the bottom of our chosen route. Then we're crunching, crunchily up the hanging glacier that takes us to the South Ridge Route. Lewis and Jim are ahead now leaving Greg to wait with the rope as they solo the final fifty degree ice slope to gain the ridge. But we've

FOOTPATH MANAGEMENT PROJECT 1986 SITES

- Coire Lagan : major work sites
 3. } : other sites visited for
 advice/monitoring /survey



started too late and the midnight sun is beating down on the avalanche snowslope of the summit. So we think and we talk and we shout and we tear at our hearts and gnash with our teeth and eventually Greg and I stay bathing in the warm summer sun at the foot of the ridge while Jim and Lewis descend for another rope and more pegs 'cos the ridge looks trickier than we thought and they will return earlier that evening before the sun.

About 7.00 that evening, well rested but cold, Greg and I start up again. A soft shoe shuffle snow arete tackled *à cheval* and on a prayer leads to two abseils onto the ridge proper. (Jim and Lewis did it in one, but Greg needed the practice!). Then we were storming the ridge, passing pitons from Roche's ascent in '36, that I frustratingly had to leave behind.

The 'avalanche snow' is nothing but névé and hard ice, but we make like the chouinard illustrations, though I have to suggest to Greg that it's easier holding the handles than the heads of your axes, and pretty soon we ease from thwacking and wacking to stumbling and bumbling as my crampon falls off for the third time. Then we trip-trot and stagger to the centre circle of the football pitch summit.

Now I'm standing, smiling, grinning and laughing and the tears are streaming down my frozen face and my heart is stuck in my throat trying to cry out how it feels. We shake hands like the true gentlemen we are and exchange pleasantries about the weather and the scenery, then we take photos like we're trying to put Kodak out of business.

It is 12.30 in the morning on August the tenth; today is the day when the dreaming and the obsession are the reality and it is scratched in my soul and I will hold it in my heart and I will never forget it.

Compleat Munroists. - This year the undernoted citizens have admitted climbing all the Munros. They are listed in roughly in the order in which their names reached the recorder. Conventions are as in previous Journals.

- | | |
|--|---|
| (444) Alexander M. Petrie, 1982, -, -; | (467) James Byers, 1986, -, -; |
| (445) Alan Ingram, 1983, -, -; | (468) Ronald E. Dow, 1986, -, -; |
| (446) Alan Wilson, 1985, -, -; | (469) Trixie Robertson, 1986, -, -; |
| (447) Beryl Leatherland, 1985, 1986, -; | (470) Nick Kempe, 1986, -, -; |
| (448) Tom Leatherland, 1985, 1986, -; | (471) Graeme Cornwallis, 1980, -, -; |
| (449) Sheila Murray, 1985, -, -; | (472) Francis H. Scott, 1986, 1986, 1986; |
| (450) Gordon McAndrew, 1986, -, -; | (473) Stephen E. Powell, 1986, 1986, |
| (451) Craig Caldwell, 1986, -, -; | 1986; |
| (452) Ann Bowker, 1986, 1986, 1983; | (474) Kathleen A. Slocum, 1986, -, -; |
| (453) Walter M. Stephen, 1986, -, -; | (475) Stephen Scobie, 1986, -, -; |
| (454) John G. Grummett, 1986, 1986, 1981; | (476) Ronald Torano, 1986, -, -; |
| (455) M. C. Davenport, 1981, -, -; | (477) Margaret MacLennan, 1986, -, -; |
| (456) Laurence A. Rudkin, 1986, -, -; | (478) Mark Kirby, 1986, -, -; |
| (457) David Atkins, 1986, -, -; | (479) Jack R. F. Burt, 1986, -, -; |
| (458) James A. Bloomer, 1986, -, 1986; | (480) James S. Bell, 1986, -, -; |
| (459) Fiona Cameron, 1986, -, -; | (481) Andrew Fennimore, 1986, 1986, |
| (460) Alan J. Henderson, 1986, -, -; | 1986; |
| (461) Christopher W. Pringle, 1986, 1986, -; | (482) Shirley Poulton, 1986, -, -; |
| (462) Ian V. Douglas, 1986, 1986, -; | (483) Stephen Poulton, 1986, -, -; |
| (463) Roger Booth, 1986, -, -; | (484) Peter Ilieve, 1986, -, -; |
| (464) William R. Morrison, 1986, 1986, -; | (485) Jeremy Wray, 1986, -, -; |
| (465) J. G. Cooney, 1986, 1986, 1986; | (486) Graeme Morrison, 1986, -, -; |
| (466) Jim Barton, 1986, -, 1978; | |

The following corrections, amendments and updatings have come to our attention. (55) I. A. Robertson is now 1963, -, 1961 and 1986, -, -. He was accompanied to the last summit of his second round by compleaters numbers 197, 390 and 393. On the same day he completed his first round of Corbetts. (73) A. M. Fraser is a triple offender and should now be 1967, 1980, 1977 and 1978, -, - and 1986, -, -. (94) R. Amour should be 1969, 1982, 1985 and 1979, -, - and (112) Peter Roberts 1973, 1975, - and 1986, -, -. (142) Richard Morgan has achieved the grand slam twice and is now 1976, 1976, 1977 and 1985, 1985, 1986. (198) S. R. Palmer should be 1979, 1980, 1980 and 1986, -, -; he is also a Corbetteer. (327) Stewart Logan is 1981, 1981, 1981 and 1984, 1984, 1985. (391) Brenda Griffin and (392) Mervyn Griffin point out that their surname was wrongly given as Griffen in the 1986 Journal. (399) should be Ian T. Stalker and not Stables as reported in the 1986 Journal. (435) Margaret Foster and (436) James

Foster are both now 1985, 1985, 1986 having completed the grand slam. (434) David Matthews should have been 1985, 1985, - as he did the Tops as well. (204) Chris Bond has done the Tops and Furth and should now be 1980, 1986, 1986. (451) Craig Caldwell has also completed the Corbetts; both his Munros and Corbetts being done on foot and cycle. (334) Garry McCreath is now 1984, 1986, -. (106) John Gillies has completed the Corbetts.

The following items have been extracted from this year's correspondence. The last mentioned (204) Chris Bond sent beautifully printed cards to his friends inviting them to a Champagne Reception at 004691 (O.S. Sheet 19) the summit of his final Munro. (467) James Byers is the first Insulin Dependent Diabetic to complete. His last Munro, Schichallion, was a sponsored ascent which raised £7,200 for the Diabetic Unit of the Inverclyde Royal Hospital. (469) Trixie Robertson is the wife of (61) James Robertson who completed in 1938. This must be the longest period between husband and wife completing. (474) Kathleen Slocum is the first known American to complete. (478) Mark Kirby, an Englishman, was inadvertently taken up a Munro in 1978 when he came to Scotland to see a rugby match; he is now commencing his second round. (480) James Bell was accompanied by sixty friends and four dogs on his final ascent; they drank 1½ cases of Champagne. (482) Shirley Poulton and (483) Stephen Poulton are the first members of the Gloucestershire Mountaineering Club to complete. (471) Graeme Cornwallis thinks the following are worthy of being admitted as Tops: Stob an Duine Ruadh 125410 also tops at 075227 and 139262 but that Tom a' Choinich Beag in Section II should be deleted.

Some refinements of the Art are becoming evident. Many compleaters are climbing 'expelled and demoted' Munros in case they stage a come-back as well as the 'most recently discovered' Munros. Some are even taking out 'futures' by climbing peaks 'they feel sure will be promoted sometime soon.' (151) Murdo Ewan MacDonald who completed in 1977 has hunted down all 'the new Munros that have since been discovered.' He apparently uses this as an excuse for a continuing series of celebratory parties. Some letters hint at knowing many clandestine Munroists who won't report. Others say that the most difficult part of their feat was to find out where to make their report.

Heraldic Matters. - The flow of Munro Compleaters reported annually to the Journal and which was once a hesitant trickle has become a steady stream which threatens to go into spate. To relieve the editorial burden which this imposes, registration will be carried out by the CLERK of the LIST, William D. Brooker, 25 Deeview Road South, Cults, Aberdeen AB1 9NA, and it is to him that new or amended entries should be sent. In keeping with modern practice the LIST is now stored in a computer and those familiar with these devices will appreciate that the possibilities for confusion and error will thus be greatly expanded. Submissions to the LIST are more likely to be recorded accurately and avoid entanglement with other Compleaters if full names are given and clearly printed.

Although the Munros themselves appear to be in stable phase at present there is no knowing when this may end. Any apparent adjustments should be reported to the MASTER of the TABLES, James C. Donaldson, Avondale, Braemar.

Readers may recall an invitation which appeared in these pages in 1978 xxxi (p.292) for suitable designs for a special Munroist's tie. At that time there was no response but a brand new Compleater, Gordon McAndrew of the Cairngorm Club, has designed and organised the production of a Munroist's Tie. The motif includes major features of the Arms of Sir Hugh Munro himself and has been approved by the Lord Lyon Court (it really has). It takes the form of a stylised heraldic eagle's head encircled by branches of laurel and oak and subscribed by the magic number 3000, all on a dark blue ground between two narrow, pale blue, oblique lines. It is woven in high quality terylene and is lined throughout. Not only is this tie attractive and tasteful but it is also exclusive and will only be available to those listed as Compleater Munroists. Gordon McAndrew has agreed to act as KEEPER of the REGALIA and the tie may



be obtained direct from him at 4 Lansdowne Crescent, Edinburgh EH12 5EQ, at a cost of £6.50 inclusive of post and packing.

We recognise of course that this may not suit all Munroists; lady Compleaters and male maverick fringe rarely, if ever, wear ties. The Keeper is considering applying his talents to an alternative item of regalia, a brooch or a badge, or even a garter, so watch this space, as they say.

These are hard times so if a reply is expected from any of the dignitaries mentioned above, a stamped, addressed envelope should be enclosed.

Ben Heskineath – a lost Munro. – Peter Hodgkiss sends in the following item about the mysterious lost Munro.

'Further to the article from the pen of Mr J. C. Donaldson (SMCJ xxxii, 1981, No. 172, (p.131), and, working on the assumption that *aquila non capit muscas*, the writer has been diligent during the last six years in pursuing even the smallest clue to the existence of this elusive Munro. It can now be reported that, through the assistance of Mr J. Miller (JMCS), confirmation of the peak's one-time existence has been discovered in a panorama entered and endorsed at The Stationer's Hall in 1875. This handsome engraving, draughted at the summit of Ben Cleuch in the Ochils and reproduced in 12 sections showing 85° of the horizon with 16 peaks all in their proper station and at their correct altitude, draws its data from the Trigonometrical Survey of Great Britain. Evidence of the thoroughness with which the draughtsman, Mr J. R. Knipe, compiled his panorama lies in the names of his helpers – Major-General Colby and Colour Sergeant J. Winzer, both Royal Engineers, who took determinations with the Three Feet Theodolite from 14 stations as widely separated as Ben Nevis and Ben Lawers. However, further to the fluctuation in the stature of Ben Heskineath first observed by Mr Donaldson, this appears to have continued apace, for, by 1875 its height was given as 3482 feet – a loss of 48 feet in three years. This surprising subsidence lends support to Mr Donaldson's second theory of a rapid collapse and one can only conclude that the rate of diminution persisted until the present day when the peak's lowly height of 1690 feet would not be detectable among the giants about the head of Glen Lyon.'

Peregrines and Ravens. – We have received the following request for information about breeding sites of these birds on remote cliffs and corries from the RSPB representative in Scotland.

'While on the hills climbers will have noticed on occasions peregrine falcons and ravens apparently defending nest sites on cliff faces. As well as asking climbers to avoid disturbing these birds, the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds would like to hear of instances of these species being observed holding territory in the breeding season, (mid-March to mid-July for the peregrine, February to June for the raven). Please inform Dave Dick at the RSPB's Scottish Office, 17 Regent Terrace, Edinburgh (031-556 5624) of any relevant sightings past or present.

Agag's Groove – Fifty Years on. – Alex Small sends this note about a happy reunion to celebrate the fiftieth anniversary of the first ascent of this classic climb.

'On August 16th, 1986 at Kingshouse Hotel a modest celebratory dinner of members, friends and families took place to commemorate the first ascent of Agag's Groove which was done on August 16th, 1936.

Of the six climbers forming the first two parties to perform the climb, four were in attendance.

As was to be expected nostalgia was the keynote of the few speeches, including the President's, but all the speakers showed admirable control and contained it within acceptable limits.

The principal toast was to Agag's Groove. As yet there are no serious proposals for a centenary celebration.'

Cruisin' the Cuillin – Word has reached us of a near-Nietzschean time for the traverse of the Cuillin Ridge. On August 12, 1986, two runners from the Eryri Harriers, N. Wales, Del Davies and Paul Stott, completed the traverse in an astounding 3.49.30 and 3.50.00 respectively. Does anyone know the market price of second-hand zimmers?

TECHNICAL SECTION

STRAWS IN THE WIND

By J. M. Lackie

THOSE who winter climb in the West know well the feeling of relief when the axe stops bouncing off underlying rock or merely generating a shower of ice fragments and lodges securely in a nice piece of frozen turf. Some climbers claim to prefer such frozen turf – and search out improbable vegetated buttresses in the Southern Highlands for pleasure. Even the purists who like their ice undiluted by moss (or even whisky) will recognise that not all pick placements carry equal conviction. What should we look for before hacking desperately at anything within reach? The crucial property we want is toughness – not hard ice but ice which resists cracking. Producing large dinner-plates of ice is reassuring neither for the leader nor the hapless second on whose head they land. So why do cracks form, or rather why do they spread? Essential reading for the materials conscious climber is J. E. Gordon's excellent Pelican book 'The New Science of Strong Materials – or Why you don't Fall through the Floor.' The important feature of tough materials is their resistance to crack propagation which occurs because the stress at the tip of the crack exceeds the strength of the material. To prevent cracks spreading, the material can be strengthened or the cracks can be 'defused' by introducing discontinuities in the material which distribute the local stresses which are greatest at the growing tip of the crack. One way of stopping a crack spreading in a Perspex sheet is to drill a hole at the end, so that the stresses of the crack are distributed over the circumference of the hole. Similarly, it is important to make smooth holes in a metal plate (like a dead-man), jagged holes with local areas of low radius of curvature are the points from which cracks will spread. Knowing this it becomes obvious why snow-ice, which has many small air pockets (and also therefore reflects more light) is tougher than water ice, which is homogeneous, and also why composite materials are better than simple ones. We are familiar with composite materials, fibreglass for example, but tend to accept them without wondering why they have such favourable properties. With fibreglass it is odd that a brittle resin should be strengthened by the incorporation of fibres of a brittle material – but it works because cracks don't propagate in straight lines and are deflected along the interface of fibre and matrix. Now we can see why strands of grass dispersed through ice improve its mechanical properties; it is a composite material of basically similar form. Sphagnum moss is even better because the ratio of fibres to ice-matrix is even higher. (The ability of sphagnum moss to hold water will actually raise the water table and drown trees, it also accounts for its usefulness for the improvident prune-eating hiker).

The best material to choose is therefore snow ice (providing the ice/water/air ratio is in the correct range) or, for maximum security, frozen turf or moss. But Nature doesn't always arrange things properly for the climber: if the SMC would arrange for a chaff-cutter to blow straw at selected climbs in November and December, ice climbing could be made much safer.

SCOTTISH MOUNTAIN ACCIDENTS, 1986

There have been more accidents this year than in 1985 with the sole exception that there have been fewer benightments. This year's list has been prepared by John Hinde who must be commended for his diligence.

REGIONAL DISTRIBUTION 1986

(Geographical Divisions are those used in SMC District Guidebooks)

REGION	CASUALTIES (of which fatalities bracketed)				INCIDENTS							Non-Mountain- eering		
	Injury	Exhaust/Exposure/ Heat Exh./Frostbite	Illness	TOTAL	Actual Rescues		Other Call Outs					Casualties	Incidents	
With Casualties					Cragfall	Separation	Lost	Overdue or Benighted	False Alarms	TOTAL INCIDENTS				
Northern Highlands	8 (1)	1 (1)	1 (1)	10 (2)	8	1	3	3	3	3	2	20	1 (1)	3
Western Highlands	3	3 (2)	2	8 (2)	5	-	1	4	1	-	11	1 (1)	1	2
Ben Nevis	16 (4)	2	-	18 (4)	15	4	-	1	4	3	27	-	-	-
Glencoe	26 (6)	-	1	27 (6)	21	2	-	1	2	-	26	-	-	-
Other Central Highlands	18 (4)	2	1	21 (4)	18	(2 Inc with Cas)	-	-	2	6	26	-	1	-
Cairngorms	17 (3)	6	1	24 (3)	21	-	7	-	8	1	37	5 (4)	7	7
Southern Highlands	15 (1)	3	1 (1)	19 (2)	17	1	2	2	1	5	28	2 (2)	2	2
Skye	9 (2)	3	1 (1)	13 (3)	12	1	-	-	3	1	17	2 (2)	4	4
Islands	8 (1)	2	-	10 (1)	9	-	-	1	-	-	10	2 (1)	3	3
Southern Uplands	2	?	1 (1)	3 (1)	4	-	-	1	-	3	8	2 (1)	6	6
All regions 1986 Totals	122 (22)	22 (2)	9 (4)	153 (28)	130	9	13	13	24	21	210	15 (12)	28	28
1985 Totals	98 (16)	12 (2)	3 (2)	113 (18)	100	6	-	15	34	11	166	16 (6)	22	22

NORTHERN HIGHLANDS

- JANUARY 2nd to 3rd – Father and son got off route in thick mist on Corrag Bhuidhe Pinnacles of An Teallach and were benighted and cragfast. Helped out by 2 other walkers with a rope. They were found by an RAF helicopter in Coire Toll an Lochain and lifted out. Dundonnell, SARDA.
- MARCH 2nd – Two children reported on cliffs at Lybster at night. RAF Sea King helicopter recalled en route. No assistance required. False alarm?
- MARCH 27th – Woman (22) killed and two men (24, 25) suffered broken legs and hypothermia when avalanched off the West Ridge of Beinn Alligin, Torridon. Lost in a snowstorm on Sgurr Mhor. Torridon MRT, RAF Sea King helicopter, RAF Leuchars MRT. 100mh.
- MARCH 28th – Youth (17) fell from summit of Creag Dubh, Beinn Eighe down snow and rock, sustaining serious facial injuries, possibly caused by his ice-axe. He did not rope-up, as the others did. Another report names location as Ruadh-Strac Beag. Torridon & Kinlochewe MRT. RAF helicopter. 9mh.
- APRIL 3rd to 4th – Separation incident on Ben More Assynt area. Assynt MRT called out.
- MAY 11th – Hillwalker/angler separated from companions at Loch Mor na Caorach. Benighted. Arrived safe at Armadale House, Bettyhill after an extensive search for him.
- JUNE 7th – Woman (67) stumbled and broke her leg on a hillside above Strath Kanaird, Ullapool. Stretchered to an ambulance by Dundonnell MRT. 20mh.
- JUNE 14th – Climber (m) injured in a fall from The Old Man of Stoer. Lochinver lifeboat. Lighthouse keeper, HM Coastguard, all involved. One 'bounced Czech' airlifted by RAF Sea King to Raigmore Hospital.
- JUNE 15th – False alarm caused by separation of two men (60, 76) on Glàs Mheal Mòr of An Teallach. Dundonnell MRT. 42mh.
- JUNE 15th – Attempting to climb The Old Man of Stoer near Lochinver a man (37) fell and hurt his back. Airlifted by RAF helicopter.
- JULY 14th – Hillwalker (m42) lost in thick mist. Located safe and well by Assynt MRT.
- AUGUST 5th – Woman (23) returning from Acheninver (near Achiltibuie) to Ullapool took wrong turn. Extensive search by Dundonnell MRT. She was found safe at Strath Kanaird next day.
- AUGUST 5th – Girl missing in hills near Ullapool. Picked up by RAF Sea King. Dundonnell MRT.
- AUGUST 6th to 8th – Alan Wilcox (51) suffered exhaustion/hypothermia after getting lost on Conival in mist returning to Inchnadamph from Ben More Assynt. He was found by passers-by on the third day, six miles off route and 1 mile outside an extensive search area. He had made navigation errors on previous trips to Scotland. Scott Cave Rescue, Assynt MRT, RAF Leuchars, Kinloss and Valley MRT's, SARDA, RAF Wessex and Sea King helicopters.
- AUGUST 8th – Bheinn Bhan, Applecross. Husband and wife got separated in mist. Man alerted Torridon MRT who contacted woman safe and well.
- AUGUST 13th – Triple Buttresses, Beinn Eighe. Two climbers (m19, 19) reported overdue in bad weather. Found safe. Search by Torridon MRT.
- SEPTEMBER 2nd to 3rd – False alarm for walkers near Loch Maree, Dundonnell MRT. RAF helicopter. 30mh.
- SEPTEMBER 3rd – Hillwalker (m61) stumbled on North Ridge of Beinn an Eòin, Flowerdale Forest on steep grass and boulders, falling and breaking an arm and leg. Dundonnell MRT. RAF helicopter. 18mh.
- OCTOBER 4th – Heart attack victim 7 nautical miles W. of Dingwall. RAF Sea King picked up doctor. D.O.A. Possibly non-mountaineering.

- OCTOBER 27 - Hillwalker (m21) lost in mist between Coulin Lodge and Kinlochewe. Turned up at Achnasheen. Rescue teams alerted.
- NOVEMBER 6th - Boy (10) ran away from school at Achiltibuie. Believed to be hiding in hills. Located by rescuers near Achnahaird. 58mh.

WESTERN HIGHLANDS

- JANUARY 1st - Search by RN Sea King helicopter of hills north of Oban for a man walking in the hills who had not returned to his car. Nothing found. False Alarm?
- FEBRUARY 15th - Blown over and catching his foot in deep snow a man (30) broke leg climbing near Barrisdale, Knoydart. Airlifted by RAF Sea King.
- MARCH 22nd - A school teacher and six pupils from Middlesex failed to arrive at a rendezvous on Ciste Dhubh (An Cairann Mòr) due to wet weather. Found safe at Morvich, Kintail.
- MARCH 30th - Hillwalker (57) overtaxed himself and suffered minor illness, reaching the head of Loch Arkaig. Lochaber MRT. 50mh.
- MAY 7th - Youth ill after walking to Peanmeanach Bothy, on tip of Ardnish peninsula. Loch Ailort. Evacuated by power-boat on May 9th.
- JUNE 1st to 3rd - Mother (30) and son (8) lost in Cannich Hills for 45 hours from a picnic outing at Kiltarlity. They wandered about for most of that time wearing only light clothing. Police and helicopter search. They found a house unaided.
- JUNE 27th - Search for missing person by HM Coastguard from Mallaigvaig. Found well on the North Side of Loch Nevis. Possibly Non-mountaineering?
- JULY 16th - Loch Morar. Three cross-country cyclists lost in bad weather. Contacted safely near loch shores.
- JULY 23 - Serviceman (23) slipped on scree and fell when descending Sgurr Beag, South Cluanie Ridge, sustaining scalp cut and body abrasions. Airlifted by RAF Sea King. Kintail MRT. 20mh.
- JULY 24th - Search for missing person by HM Coastguard. Morar-Mallaigarea. Presumed drowned. Possibly Non-mountaineering?
- SEPTEMBER 6th to 7th - Man (68) attempting to traverse South Cluanie Ridge East to West got benighted on the last peak (Creag nam Damh). Made his own way down at first light. Kintail and Glenelg MRT's. RAF helicopter. 58mh.
- SEPTEMBER 7th to 8th - Two ill-equipped women got lost walking in hills above Fall of Glomach. Benighted in mist. One (27) fell fifty feet into a waterfall and she was badly bruised. Location 008242 Meall Dubh, the northern spur of A'Ghlas Bheinn. They had continued walking in darkness. Friend went for help in daylight. Airlifted to Morvich. Kintail MRT. 18mh.
- OCTOBER 24th to 25th - Separation at a stream crossing caused a misunderstanding when two men attempted to walk round Loch Quoich. One turned back and reported the compleater missing. Lochaber MRT. SARDA. RAF Lossiemouth helicopter. 12mh.
- DECEMBER 4th to 6th - Exhaustion-hypothermia tragedy. Three young people left Kintail Lodge Hotel in late afternoon to walk to Glenelg (Moyle) via path and Loch Coire nan Crogachan (1,500 feet). They went too high and were benighted. Man (20) ill-clad died at 2,000 feet the first night. Girl (18) also ill-clad collapsed next morning when descending with girl (20) slightly better dressed. Eighteen-year old died later. Twenty-year old survived and went down to raise alarm. Kintail, Skye & Kinloss MRT'S. RAF Sea King helicopter, SARDA. 348mh.

BEN NEVIS

- JANUARY 17th to 18th - Five Finger Gully trap. Two men (30, 29) knew they were wrong descending from Nevis summit. When re-ascending to Tourist Track they were benighted and dug in for the night. Found their own way down next day, via Five Finger Gully. Lochaber MRT. RAF Wessex & Sea King helicopters, SARDA, 50mh.
- JANUARY 21st - Party of five climbing North Gully, Creag Coire na Ciste. Man (60) soloing over cornice when it collapsed (windslab avalanche). He fell to the bottom of No. 4 Gully together with the others in two ropes of two. Soloist sustained pelvic fracture and chest injury and it was thought he was in a diabetic coma. Man (22) broke his leg and ankle. Girl (25) had broken nose and walked down. Two were uninjured.
- JANUARY 21st - (½ half later). No. 4 Gully avalanched sweeping two of the above party 200 feet further down, partly burying both of them, including the previous soloist. Stretchered down to CIC Hut by Lochaber MRT, then airlifted by RAF Sea King, 80mh.
- JANUARY 24th to 25th - Tower Ridge. Two men (33, 31) benighted on Eastern Traverse due to poor snow conditions. Lochaber MRT flew to plateau and roped down to Tower Gap. Both 'over-nighters' were winched on board the RAF Wessex from Leuchars, 15mh.
- JANUARY 25th to 27th - Orion Direct. Big Slab Pitch. Last man (24) of two ropes of two lost a crampon and fell off. Unhurt, but did not want to continue without crampon. Lowered to stance and left. Other three were benighted on route but reached top and raised alarm on Sunday 26th. Team walked to summit and lowered rescuer to victim. Both lowered to bottom (1,300feet). Reached CIC Hut after midnight. Lochaber, Kinloss & Leuchars MRT's. RAF Wessex & RN Sea King helicopters, 163mh.
- FEBRUARY 20th - Slav Route. Double fatality. Two men (33, 27) fell from top of route into Zero Gully (see next rescue) and then into Observatory Gully. One killed outright despite 1½ hour resuscitation attempt by climbers on scene. Other died en route to hospital accompanied by a doctor. Lochaber MRT. RAF Wessex helicopter, 30mh.
- FEBRUARY 20th to 21st - Zero Gully. Three pairs of roped climbers were all ascending easy ground above the ice-pitches when roped pair fell from Slav Route, knocking off the leading man (46) of the top pair in Zero Gully. He fell 300 feet, breaking a hand and wrist, but his belay held. 3 climbers stayed with him, hauling him up to a ledge, and 2 climbed up to plateau. RAF Leuchars helicopter flew Lochaber MRT to summit. Rescuer plus casualty, plus 3 attendants all lowered into Observatory Gully (4 x 500 feet ropes needed). 138mh.
- FEBRUARY 25th to 26th - Nevis Summit Refuge. Man (30) and girl (27) got to summit in white-out and near darkness, and could not find the route down. Found by Lochaber MRT in refuge, 26mh.
- MARCH 3rd - S.E Ridge of Nevis leading to Carn Mòr Dearg Arête. Party of 26 Royal Marines descending, wearing instep crampons, with only 3 ice-axes between them. 2 to 3 minutes from summit a Marine (22), without ice-axe to break, slipped and slid over Little Brenva Face and was killed. Lochaber MRT. RAF Leuchars helicopter, 30mh.
- MARCH 3rd to 5th - 2 men (both 34) cragfast on *Cresta*, Little Brenva Face. They had set off to climb *Bob-Run* but got off route. Could not climb second ice pitch so they *abseiled* to the top of first ice-pitch and dug a snow-cave. The Marine falling past them fairly closely may have affected them. Lochaber MRT lowered a rescuer to them on 5th March in very bad conditions, then lowered all three some 800 feet total. They were able to walk down from there. RAF Leuchars helicopter.
- MARCH 24th - Well-equipped party of four walkers (m25, 22, 22, f18) descending Nevis Tourist Track could not navigate in bad visibility and got cragfast on one side of Surgeon's Gully. Just below cloudbase in darkness, their torched S.O.S's were seen by friends in vehicle in Glen Nevis. Very difficult ground. Lochaber MRT reached them with difficulty and escorted them down without injury at 4 a.m. 150mh.
- APRIL 3rd - Two climbers (m27, 23) benighted at Tower Gap. Completed Tower Ridge next day and were walking off when met by Lochaber MRT. They were in good shape. RAF Sea King airlifted them all from below cloud base, RAF Kinloss and Linton MRT's called out, 12mh.

- APRIL 8th - Couple were 'polybagging' down Red Burn Gully stopping now and then. Girl (22) could not stop at Halfway House and fell over a 10 foot cliff sustaining a back injury. Lochaber MRT. RAF Leuchars helicopter. 4mh.
- APRIL 24th - Lochaber MRT checked out report of a large bloodstain in a large avalanche in Observatory Gully. Nothing found. 5mh.
- JUNE 1st - 'Dundee Yodellers!' carried a piano up Nevis. Party of 30 were in bad shape so leader sent them down. Casualty (m27), possibly slightly hypothermic - poor gear - ran and fell in boulders near summit breaking his leg. They made a stretcher from Army ponchos and piano spars and carried him below cloud base. Used CB radio to contact teams. Lochaber and Kinloss MRT's. RAF Sea King airlift from 1,500 feet. 20mh.
- JUNE 8th - Youth (18) wearing jeans and trainers on Nevis summit, one of five, had exhaustion/hypothermia. Help called on CB radio. Evacuated by RAF Sea King helicopter but not detained in hospital. Lochaber MRT. RAF Leuchars MRT. 20mh.
- JUNE 13th - Stumble on Tourist Track descent. Woman (55) broke ankle at 2,000 feet. Stretchered from 1,000 feet by Lochaber MRT. 9mh.
- JUNE 21st - Sponsored walk. Ex-Harefield woman patient (51) with new heart, but not using crampons or ice-axe, was descending from summit down snow in Red Burn Gully when she slipped and slid 150 feet, to be stopped by boulders at the bottom of the snow, fracturing her spine. Airlifted by RAF Wessex helicopter. Lochaber MRT. 4mh.
- AUGUST 9th to 10th - Husband and wife (both 65) were very slow up the Ben. (9 hours) and waited to see sunset before coming down. They would have made it alone but were met by Lochaber MRT at 600 feet. (Midnight). 7mh.
- AUGUST 11th - Woman (44) descending from summit stumbled, breaking her ankle. Airlifted by RAF Wessex from 3,500 feet. Lochaber MRT. 6mh.
- AUGUST 17th to 18th - False alarm. 'Screams' on Brenva Face heard from First Platform in N.E. Buttress. Searches by Lochaber MRT aided by RAF Wessex helicopter. 80mh.
- AUGUST 19th - Suspected false alarm. In warm weather woman reported finding child's clothing at Halfway Lochan. Search by Lochaber MRT and diver. 31mh.
- AUGUST 23rd to 24th - Party of 3 on Tower Ridge traversed a ledge mistaking it for Eastern Traverse - probably they were not high enough. Leader (24) fell back to ledge dislocating a shoulder. Lochaber MRT airlifted by RAF Sea King to plateau. Roped down and assisted victim to point from which chopper could lift him. 40mh.
- AUGUST 24th - Climber (18) went to help a fellow climber suffering from vertigo when he slipped and fell 10 feet, sustaining bruising. Both removed from hill by Lochaber MRT.
- SEPTEMBER 6th - Search of Ben Nevis for two missing climbers by RAF Wessex. Both found safe. No action taken. Overdue?
- NOVEMBER 29th - Exhaustion/exposure sufferer (37) assisted down from Nevis summit by Lochaber MRT. One of ten, he had collapsed 200 feet below summit and had been treated by companions in summit refuge. He had been going for 6¾ hours before collapse, wearing soaked clothing in very high winds and carrying waterproofs *inside* his sac. 24mh.
- DECEMBER 31st - Five Finger Gully. Descending from plateau, two casualties: (m21) fatal, (m21) chest injuries. Probably swept down by slab avalanche. They were found by a pair of climbers descending between Five Finger Gully and Surgeon's Gully.

GLENCOE

(Including Buachaille Etive Mor, by tradition, though it is totally in Glen Etive).

- JANUARY 4th to 5th - Roped party of three climbed two-thirds up *North West Gully*, Stob Coire nam Beith in deteriorating weather; snowfall and high winds. They could not find a belay, and while searching for one they were avalanched by powder snow and swept down 900 feet. Two men (50, 46) were killed and one (18) severely bruised. A rope broke during the fall. All were well-equipped and wearing crampons and helmets. See next accident for rescue details.

- JANUARY 4th to 5th - At the same time as the above accident, two men (32, 20) who were unaware of the tragedy, spent the night in a small cave in *Deep Cut Chimney* on the same crag. All five were recovered by RAF helicopter. Glencoe MRT. The man of 20 had his father killed, and his brother injured, in the above avalanche. 68mh.
- JANUARY 9th - Clachaig Gully. One of a party of three men (age 38) twisted his knee and slowed down the group. Found and assisted by Glencoe MRT.
- FEBRUARY 8th - Descending from the Aonach Eagach by Clachaig Gully a man of 30 slipped and braked with his ice-axe, but the sudden jerk wrenched his shoulder and dislocated it. Another climber in the gully raised the alarm. Glencoe MRT, Police, Ambulance. 34mh.
- FEBRUARY 9th - Descending from Aonach Eagach, S.S.W. from Sgorr nam Fiannaich summit - this is a good route down - man (40) was killed when he slipped on snow/ice and fell 500 feet. His son (14) went to help and also fell 500 feet breaking both legs. Both had their ice-axes torn from their grasps. Alarm raised by flashing a torch. Glencoe MRT, Police, Ambulance. 66mh.
- FEBRUARY 17th - Lost Valley. Practising self-arrest with an ice-axe a youth's leg caught under him and was broken. (Age 18).
- FEBRUARY 18th - Glissading in crampons from a corrie Gairr Aonach into Lost Valley a man (29) broke his leg when his crampon caught. Evacuated by Glencoe MRT.
- MARCH 3rd to 4th - Two men (34, 32) climbed *N. W. Gully*, Stob Coire nam Beith and were benighted by bad visibility at the top, surviving in a tent-sac. Making their way down next day they were found by a RAF helicopter. Glencoe MRT alerted.
- MARCH 8th to 9th - *Curved Ridge*, Buachaille Mor. Two men (19, 20) were climbing together when one fell on the other and slid/rolled for 1,500 feet and the other 200 feet. One had head and hip injuries and the other was uninjured. Picked up by RAF Wessex helicopter. Glencoe MRT alerted.
- MARCH 25th - Two climbers swept down *Twisting Gully*, Stob Coire nam Lochan by a collapsing cornice. (m31) bruised back; (m19) strained ligaments. Glencoe MRT and RAF helicopter.
- APRIL 3rd - Stob Coire Sgreamach of Bidean nam Bian. Man (47) fractured a leg when his crampon caught in a rock, tripping him and causing a fall. Glencoe MRT and RAF helicopter.
- MAY 29th - Climbing Sgorr nam Fiannaich in a party of 21, a lad (15) was bruised on head and shoulders when rocks above him were dislodged and he moved quickly, striking his head on a boulder and being knocked out. Airlifted by RAF helicopter.
- JUNE 15th to 16th - Extensive search in a heat wave for a man (25) who left a caravanette in Glen Etive wearing underclothes during the small hours. Found near top of Stob na Broice, Buachaille Etive Mor, sunburned and hallucinating on second day of search. Kinloss, Leuchars, Lochaber, Glencoe MRT's. Wessex and Sea King helicopters. 676mh.
- JUNE 19th to 20th - Schoolboy (16) left companion in tent at 20.20 hrs and climbed mist-shrouded Stob Dearg of Buachaille Etive Mor. He got lost and finished up 9 miles down the Glen Etive road. Glencoe MRT. RAF helicopter. 19mh.
- JULY 5th - Solo climber (26) fell from 12 foot rock pitch near the top of *Easy Gully*, Buachaille Etive Mor. He fell 20 feet breaking a leg. Glencoe MRT, RAF helicopter. 50mh.
- JULY 19th to 20th - N.W. Face of Gairr Aonach. Experienced fell-runner (m23) slipped descending steep grass and rock, falling 50 feet and sustaining a fatal skull fracture. Leuchars & Glencoe MRT's initially searched the Aonach Dubh side of Coire nan Lochan because the runner's companion was unsure of location. Airlifted by RAF Sea King. 165mh.
- AUGUST 7th - Climber (29) bruised his ribs when he slipped on rock and fell 15 feet in *Crowberry Gully*, Buachaille Etive Mor. Novice companion descended solo for help. Glencoe MRT. RAF helicopter.
- AUGUST 23rd - Climbing instructor (36) died from multiple internal injuries caused by the jarring effect of his waist harness. Loose rocks fell past his student below, then he fell full length of rope and was held by a running belay. Glencoe MRT rescued his cragfast student (f24) after 2½ hours. Airlifted by RAF helicopter. *Central Buttress*, Stob Coire nan Lochan.

- SEPTEMBER 8th - Clachaig Gully. Three men (26, 26, 18) benighted. Rescued by Glencoe MRT.
- SEPTEMBER 15th - Companion raised alarm and initiated an RAF helicopter airlift from Aonach Eagach when a woman (26) slipped and fell. Slight head injuries and broken arm.
- OCTOBER 5th - Descending Stron Doire, Buachaille Etive Mor man (30) slipped on wet rock when descending, and fell 100 feet breaking his leg. Located by Glencoe MRT and airlifted by RAF helicopter into Belford Hospital.
- OCTOBER 10th - Aonach Eagach. 3 men (51, 40, 33) benighted in mist. Glencoe MRT and RAF helicopter searches. They found their own way down.
- NOVEMBER 2nd - Climbing *The Graduate* on Gearr Aonach a woman (21) fell, sustaining cuts and bruises, but she knocked off a man (23) who fell 200 feet on to a ramp. Rescued by Glencoe MRT and RAF Wessex helicopter but man died in Belford Hospital.
- DECEMBER 29th - Hillwalker (21) slipped in Lost Valley, falling and striking his head with his ice-axe. Concussed. Stretchered off by Glencoe MRT to ambulance.
- DECEMBER 29th - Woman (25) slipped and fell 10 feet into a burn when descending steep snow slopes from Bidean nam Bian into Lost Valley. Bruising of head, chest and leg. Stretchered off by Glencoe MRT and taken to Belford Hospital, Fort William.
- DECEMBER 31st to JANUARY 1st, '87 - Descending *Broad Gully*, Stob Coire nan Lochan a climber (23) snagged a crampon on his other boot. Falling, he sustained a compound tibia/fibula fracture and facial cuts. He knocked his two companions downhill also, but they were unhurt. Stretchered off by RAF Leuchars and RAF St. Athan MRT's., plus one Oldham MRT! 168mh.

OTHER CENTRAL HIGHLANDS

- JANUARY 29th - Searches after a flare reported on Ben Cruachan. Nothing found. Oban and Dumbarton Police MRT's. SARDA. 144mh.
- FEBRUARY 9th - Ice-climber (38) (roped) fell 100 feet from top edge of *Ramshead Gully*, Beinn Udhlaidh, Tyndrum, fracturing spine and humerus. He was rescued by Oban and Dumbarton Police MRT's. and airlifted by RAF helicopter. 35mh.
- FEBRUARY 23rd - Climber (47) soloed *The Prow*, Creag Meagaidh, with a friend. He was seen to stop just below the cornice and to start cutting a stance. Then he fell to his death - probably slipped. Cairngorm and Ochils MRT's. Airlift by RAF Wessex. 15mh.
- FEBRUARY 24th - Newtonmore area. Roped climber (27) was 50 feet above ground when a block of ice fell close to him, causing him to fall to ground, suffering concussion and cuts and bruises. Other climbers transported him. No rescue teams alerted.
- MARCH 2nd - Creag Meagaidh. Party of 2 had climbed *Raeburn's Gully* and were descending to *The Window* when one (age 32) stumbled and fell on to the shaft of his ice-axe which penetrated his chest cavity. RAF Wessex with Lochaber MRT doctor airlifted him to Belford Hospital. 10mh.
- MARCH 28th - Hillwalker (39) traversing ridge between Stob Coire Easain and Stob a'Choire Mheadhoin (Loch Treig) when he fell through the cornice and was avalanched 300 feet, breaking a leg. He managed to move ½ mile to easy ground aided by companions. Then he was airlifted by RAF Wessex. Coire Làire. Lochaber MRT. 9mh.
- APRIL 27th to 28th - Skiers transported to Aonach Mor by helicopter reported a man (26) missing. False alarm, as he had traversed - walking - The Grey Corries to Corrouar Station. Lift from RAF Sea King (finding him at Loch Treig) was declined. Lochaber MRT. SARDA. 100mh.
- APRIL 28th - Aonach Mor. RAF Sea King search for two rescuers overdue from above incident. They had been out of radio contact due to lack of intervisibility.
- MAY 11th - Search of Ben Cruachan by RAF Wessex. Distress signals. False alarm.
- JUNE 18th - Youth (16) transported from Laraig Leachach Bothy by Police Landrover. Illness (fever and dehydration) caused by walking in hot weather and dry E. wind.

- JUNE 22nd – North Face of An Grianan, Beinn Ceitlin, Glen Etive. Accompanied by his brother, a man (28) climbed ridge to see sunrise. Descended by a steep, vegetated, rocky route. Slipped and fell 200 feet. Killed outright. Glencoe MRT. 20mh.
- JUNE 28th – 8-week old calf lifted out from a ledge in Glen Roy gorge by Lochaber MRT. 12mh.
- JULY 5th – Solo rock-climber (42) fell 300 feet from *Hammer*, Trilleachan Slabs, Glen Etive, sustaining serious head injuries. Airlifted to Southern General Hospital, Glasgow in critical condition. Glencoe MRT. 6mh.
- JULY 20th – Hillwalker (67) slipped and fell 40 feet on Sgurr na h-Ulaidh. Bruised, he was helped to road.
- JULY 23rd – Corre na-Beinne, Sgurr na hu-Ulaidh. Man (48) bruised falling 30 feet. Glencoe MRT. RAF helicopter.
- AUGUST 11th – Girl (16) twisted ankle walking at Loch Chiarain, (Blackwater Reservoir). Glencoe MRT & Police Range Rover.
- AUGUST 17th – Separation of 2 people on West Highland Way caused false alarm. Lost lad had walked up the Ben Path! Lochaber MRT. 4mh.
- AUGUST 24th – Party of two traversing An Gearanach, Mamores, tried to descend Steall Waterfall. One had vertigo and retreated. Other (18) also retreated after dropping his sac, but he went the long way round to Steall Hut and, belayed, tried to climb up to retrieve sac. Fell ten feet on to coccyx. Severe bruising. Stretchered to road by Lochaber MRT. 42mh.
- OCTOBER 13th to 14th – Starting at Glen Nevis YH at 08.15 hrs. a 72-year-old walked to Binnein Mor, then traversed all the tops to Sgurr a'Mhaim. RAF Sea King helicopter found him next morning at 11.20 hrs. at Steall, tired but well, having taken longer than planned. SARDA. Lochaber MRT. 66mh.
- OCTOBER 26th – Accompanied hillwalker (36) mis-read Guidebook and attempted to descend north from Sgorr Dhonuill, Beinn a' Bheithir (Ballachulish Horseshoe) rather than returning East to the bealach. She fell 100 feet and was killed. RAF Wessex. Lochaber MRT.
- NOVEMBER 9th – Beinn Sgulaird. Woman (21). Open fracture of ankle. Airlifted to Fort William by RAF Wessex.
- DECEMBER 8th – Craigellachie (Cliff behind Aviemore Centre). Two men (22, 22) sight-seeing got cragfast and were suffering from exposure before timely rescue by Cairngorm MRT and Police. 6mh.
- DECEMBER 18th – False alarm. Climbers heard indistinct shouts at the head of Glen Nevis and searched with Lochaber MRT. Nothing found.
- DECEMBER 25th – Saddle between Ben Cruachan and Meall Cuanail. Woman (39) waited with man (49) because she had twisted her knee, while three others went on to the summit. Coldness decided them to descend Coire Dearg – frozen turf and boulders – but man slipped and fell 300 feet, then a further 15 feet into a burn wrenching his shoulder. Woman sat on frozen snow and glissaded to help, but lost control and also fell into burn, fracturing five ribs and sustaining face cuts. Stretchered down. Oban and Dumbarton Police MRT's. 14mh.
- DECEMBER 31st – Victim (25) was leading his party down an un-named gully on the West slopes of the North Ridge of Sron na Creise, Glen Etive, when he was avalanched 100 feet and channelled down the gully, being buried. It is likely that he triggered off a windslab. He was dead when found by a SARDA dog, and then by probes, 3¼ hours later. Stretchered down. Glencoe MRT, Police, Wessex helicopter. 86mh.
- DECEMBER 31st – Beinn a' Bheithir (Ballachulish Horseshoe). Party of four lost in darkness, one fell into a tree-lined gully (age 28) breaking a leg, and another (30) suffered bruising. Three got down unaided, fourth was airlifted by RAF Sea King already inbound for Glencoe. Flares had been used as distress signals, seen by villagers. RAF Leuchars and St. Athan MRT's. 5mh.

CAIRNGORMS

- JANUARY 5th to 6th – Two men benighted on *Deep Cut Chimney*, Hell's Lum, Loch Avon. They left sacs at the bottom and took too long on the route. There was a very bad forecast but luckily the weather moderated unexpectedly at 01.00 hrs. Cairngorm MRT and RAF Sea King. 144mh.
- JANUARY 11th – Experienced man (39) tripped or slipped on mixed rock and snow when descending West side of Fiacail a'Choire Chais, Cairngorm falling 200 feet and injuring his back. Rescued by Cairngorm and Glenmore Lodge MRT's using a vacuum mattress. Clearance allowed RAF Sea King airlift. 169mh.
- FEBRUARY 8th – Braemar and Tayside teams called out for downhill skier lost in very bad conditions at Glenshee but re-called en route.
- FEBRUARY 17th – Downhill skier on half-made Glenmore Forest piste outside normal ski-patrol area. Fell and hit rock injuring pelvis. Stretchered out. Glenmore MRT. 9mh.
- MARCH 5th to 6th – Hillwalker (50) killed by fall of 800 to 1,000 feet from the craggy west slopes of Cairn Lochan, finishing just North of the highest point of the Lairig Ghru. Slope was icy yet his crampons were in his rucksack and not worn. Winds were very strong West, so he may have been blown off his feet. Found by RAF Sea King helicopter. Very extensive searches carried out, as no clear route intention had been left. Cairngorm, Glenmore, Kinloss, Leuchars MRT's. SARDA etc. 830mh.
- MARCH 8th – Separation of a couple of skiers on Carn Aosda. Man (52) left ski piste and became lost in poor conditions, descending to Glen Baddoch and snow-holing at dusk. Found by Chairlift Company. Grampian Police, Braemar and Aberdeen MRT's. 27mh.
- MARCH 12th – Cliff faller at Cruden Bay. Airlifted by RAF Sea King to Aberdeen. D.O.A. Possibly non-mountaineering.
- MARCH 20th to 21st – Complex incidents caused by hurricane winds – 156 mph – probably highest ever recorded in U.K. – and then the anemometer broke when the wind got stronger! meanwhile students were being assessed for SMLTB certificates on the Cairngorm plateaux.
1. Student went missing 100 yards from snowhole. Instructor searching for him got avalanched, sprained his ankle, and spent the night in good company. Student re-located snowholes himself. Garbh Uisge Beag, Ben Macdui.
 2. Another assessment party was out of radio contact for a long time – walked out via Strath Nethy to Glenmore Lodge.
 3. Simultaneously another instructor fell over, or was blown over, a cornice on to steep ground which avalanched. He was unable to rejoin his students who made their own way to a telephone at Derry Lodge.
- At 07.05 hrs. on 21st weather had improved enough for RAF Sea King airlift of all still on the plateau. Braemar, Cairngorm, Glenmore Lodge, RAF Kinloss MRT's and SARDA dogs. 174mh.
- MARCH 23rd – Hillwalker (41) wearing Trionic boots slipped on icy Monega Path, Glas Maol, breaking his ankle. Companions carried him $\frac{1}{2}$ mile in a bivvy sac to steep snow above Glen Brightly, then down main path in a *fibreglass* bath acquired from Tulcan Lodge. Casualty in bath airlifted to Dundee R.I. by RAF Wessex. Taypol R.U. 27mh.
- MARCH 26th to 28th – Foot of *Parallel Gully A* or *Parallel Gully B*, Lochnagar. Last seen on 26th, two men (25, 24) were found dead, roped and partially covered by avalanche debris, on 28th. It is believed large cornice gave way as they tried to climb through or over it at top of climb. This would explain the lack of belays attached to their rope when found. Carried down by Braemar and Grampian Police MRT's. 116mh.
- MARCH 29th – Roped leader (21) fell 100 feet from first pitch of *Polyphemus Gully*, Lochnagar suffering a compound talus fracture. He had not been able to get any runners on. Airlifted by RAF Wessex. Grampian Police and Braemar MRT's. 30mh.
- MARCH 30th – Schoolboy glissader (17) sprained ankle below Loch Etchachan. Airlifted by RAF Sea King. Braemar and Grampian Police MRT's. 4mh.

- APRIL 2nd to 3rd – Poorly-clad, partially-sighted, ill-equipped hillwalker (32) lost on Cairngorm plateau in white-out. Found at Corrour Bothy, but had intended to return to Cairngorm Car Park. Braemar MRT. Extensive searches by Cairngorm, Glenmore, Kinloss and Linton teams. SARDA and RAF Sea King helicopters. He had started in afternoon during showery weather (snow storms) and was unequipped for even a low-level walk in winter. 408mh.
- APRIL 19th – Climber (m18) soloing *Left Hand Edge*, Craig-a-Barns, Dunkeld. Fell when handhold gave way. Bruises and cuts to back and arms.
- MAY 15th – One of a party of two (m22) making a ski-descent near *Jacob's Ladder*, Coire-an-t-Sneachda fell, sustaining fractured femur and head injuries. Cairngorm and Glenmore MRT's and helicopter. 12mh.
- MAY 24th – Walker in Lairig Ghru separated from party. Airlifted by RAF Sea King from Pools of Dee to Sinclair Hut.
- MAY 24th – Party of 8 young people (mixed sexes 16-21) unaccompanied by their party leader, on a simple valley walk, failed to go up not-obvious side glen (a common error when leaderless) got lost and returned to starting point. Route planned was Glen Quoich, Clais Fhearnaig, Glen Lui, Derry Lodge. Found by RAF helicopter, Grampian Police MRT. 3mh.
- MAY 25th to 26th – After a two-day expedition two girls (15, 14) were left behind by the rest of their party for the final walk from Glen Callater Lodge to Auchallater. They stated they were overtaken by dark and afraid to continue, so they camped $\frac{3}{4}$ mile from Auchallater. Grampian Police and Braemar MRT. 2mh.
- MAY 25th to 26th – Hillwalker (70) well-equipped, had difficulty in crossing swollen burn and got separated from several parties of a club outing in Glen Baddoch. He crossed An Socach and tried to locate the rest, but they had changed their planned route. He spent the night at Allt Beinn Iutharn Burn (072808). Found safe by RAF helicopter after two-stage search. Grampian Police and Braemar MRT's. 285mh.
- MAY 26th to 27th – Casualty (18) became ill hiking Joek's Road with an overnight camp. On the second day he lost consciousness (due to insulin imbalance) in Glen Doll, 1 mile South of Davie's Bothy. Airlifted by RAF helicopter with doctor on board. Tayside Police alerted. Detained in Ninewells Hospital till 29th.
- JUNE 8th – Cliff fall at Lud Castle, Arbroath. RAF Wessex stretcher-lifted teenager to Dundee Royal Infirmary.
- JUNE 21st – Separation of father and son on Stac an Fharaidh, Cairngorm caused confusion, (especially when rock-fall was heard) resulting in distress signal and call-out. False alarm. Glenmore and RAF teams and helicopter.
- JUNE 28th – Strath Nethy. Man hillwalking became exhausted. Evacuated by Glenmore Lodge MRT Landrover from Bynack Stables Bothy. 9mh.
- JULY 1st – Man died in fall from Kinnoull Hill, Perth. Not included in Mountaineering statistics.
- JULY 19th – Man left wife and son (16) on North Top of Ben Macdui while he went on to true summit in 50 yard visibility. They had done enough, but he was only one with map and compass and he did not find them again. Found by RAF Sea King helicopter well off their return course. Cairngorm and Glenmore MRT's. 34mh.
- JULY 24th to 25th – 2 walkers separated on walk to Braeriach. One returned to report. Other (m42) wandered about and turned up after midnight. Glenmore and Cairngorm teams. 26mh.
- JULY 31st – Man seen to fall from Kinnoull Hill, Perth. Fatal. Not included in Mountaineering statistics.
- AUGUST 14th – Two hillwalkers (m30, m27) in Garbh-choire, Braeriach overdue. They bivouacked and returned under their own steam. Glenmore MRT.
- AUGUST 14th – Search organised for walker who had lodged a route-card. He had cancelled route-card but cancellation went unrecorded. False alarm.
- SEPTEMBER 2nd to 3rd – Rough Cyclist (30) on Lairig Ghru crossing became exhausted and others left him behind. Found by route search in Sinclair Hut where he stayed overnight and made his own way out. Glenmore and Cairngorm MRT's. 27mh.

- SEPTEMBER 3rd to 4th - Carn Ban Mor, Glen Feshie. Overdue solitary walker (21) returned on his own. Glenmore MRT. 14mh.
- SEPTEMBER 28th - Mountain student (16) walking on Cairngorm. Stumbled near top of Fiacail T-Bar Tow in Choire Chais and broke her ankle. Cairngorm MRT. 12mh.
- OCTOBER 25th - Fall on rocky ground at summit of Mither Tap, Bennachie. Walker (58) broke her leg. Rescued by Police, Ambulance driver and Bailies of Bennachie.
- NOVEMBER 1st - One of a party of ten on Fiacail a' Choire Chais, an unconscious walker (18) suffering from exposure was taken from Cairngorm Car Park by ambulance. She later became delirious. Raigmore Hospital. Cairngorm MRT and Chairlift Company with Unimog. 24mh.
- NOVEMBER 8th - Burn O'Vat, Dinnet. Woman (38) left path to look over 40 foot rock face into burn. Slipped on steep, wet, pine needle-covered ground, and went over edge but she managed to hold on to heather. Her companion (54) went to help but she also fell over the edge on to a ledge 15 feet down where she was cragfast, and bruised. Original slipper managed to climb to top and then fell again, 40 feet to bottom, sustaining cuts, bruises and shock. Grampian Police MRT. 3mh.
- NOVEMBER 9th - Party of eight walking S.S.W. head-on to a gale and driving rain, returning from a night at Shiel of Glen Tanar to the head of Glen Esk. When half-mile N.W. of Mount Keen a youth (18) collapsed from exhaustion/hypothermia. Party then split and casualty was tented, with three students. Three went downwind to bothy, with instructor who had to go on for help, 10 miles in all. Rescued by Landrover. Grampian Police and Braemar MRT (who made their first use of 'Edeco' Thermo Gel Heat Packs) which were highly successful. 49mh.
- NOVEMBER 11th to 12th - Serious exhaustion/hypothermia (or immersion/hypothermia?) at Corrou Bothy, Lairig Ghru. Man (70) set off from Braemar to walk to Aviemore wearing town shoes, a suit and lightweight anorak, carrying two small bags. He saw a light in Corrou Bothy and made straight for it, not knowing about the bridge and not seeing it in the dark. He was knocked over by the Dee's strong current when wading and lost a shoe. At the bothy, a couple gave him clothes, hot food and a sleeping bag and man went for help next day. Airlift by RAF Wessex. Grampian Police and Braemar Team. 3mh.
- NOVEMBER 19th - RAF Sea King found hypothermic woman on beach at Covesea, near Lossiemouth and took her to Elgin Hospital. Gordonstoun MRT and Lossiemouth lifeboat. Non-mountaineering.
- DECEMBER 23rd - Coire na Ciste, Cairngorm. Piste skier overdue. When lift closed he was sheltering behind ski-lift hut and so was missed by ski patrol. Walked down and found an open hut. Cairngorm MRT. SARDA. Police. 66mh.
- DECEMBER 28th - Carn na Caim, Dalwhinnie. Two men (67, 18) poorly clad, suffered exposure. Other hillwalkers raised alarm.
- DECEMBER 30th - Just below plateau, near *Jacob's Ladder*, Coire an-t'Sneachda, Cairngorm. Instructor (m31) fell and sustained serious chest injuries when soloing. Cause of fall a small slab avalanche. Airlift by RAF helicopter.

SKYE

- JANUARY 1st - Search at Harloch by HM Coastguard for missing person. Found dead on beach. Possibly Non-mountaineering?
- MARCH 3rd to 4th - Two climbers intending to ascend *Tourist Route*, Sgurr nan Gillean, got onto *Pinnacle Ridge* due to low cloud and bad weather. Descending Coire Riabhach deceased (22) slipped and broke his leg. Companion helped him to easier ground and put him in a sleeping bag in a snowhole. Companion gave wrong map reference to searchers and further rescue attempts that day were called off due to extreme weather. After questioning messenger, search next day with dogs commenced. Victim had been avalanched to well below his snowhole and was found by probing under 2 feet of snow. Airlifted by RAF Sea King. Skye MRT, Police, SARDA, Kinloss alerted. 478mh.

- APRIL 10th to 11th - Hillwalkers separated on The Storr. Son reported father (52) missing. Found well next day by Skye MRT. Cragfast. 66mh.
- APRIL 13th - Search for woman (62) near Broadford. Skye MRT and Police. Found well. Non-mountaineering. 55mh.
- APRIL 13th to 14th - RAF Sea King helicopter found overdue woman (27) at Camasunary Bothy but she declined an airlift. Skye MRT. 30mh.
- APRIL 15th - Sgurr Alasdair, Great Stone Shoot. While demonstrating standing glissades a climber (25) was swept down 100 feet by a windslab avalanche, breaking his leg. Airlifted to Broadford by RAF.
- MAY 3rd - Missing man (54) found dead near Portree. Skye MRT. Also HM Coastguard. Non-mountaineering. 18mh.
- MAY 3rd - Descending *Pinnacle Ridge*, Sgurr nan Gillean, a climber (40) slipped on wet rock, falling 200 feet fracturing his pelvis and a leg. Skye MRT airlifted by RAF, and stretchered casualty for helicopter evacuation. 96mh.
- MAY 18th - Male (52) in a party of 5 contouring round Am Bhasteir to reach Sgurr Bhasteir was descending 10 foot face. Handhold came away and he fell 6 feet injuring his chest and breaking a leg. Skye MRT. 137mh.
- MAY 28th - Bla Bheinn (Sgurr nan Each). Climbing 12 foot pitch with 4 others, woman (28) lost her grip, falling and breaking both ankles. Airlifted by RAF to Broadford. Skye MRT. 28mh.
- JUNE 15th - *Collie's Route*, Bhasteir Tooth. Leader (34) fell 15 feet on to a ledge breaking her wrist and ankle. She had been roped to her husband with a runner placed. Winched into RAF helicopter and flown to Belford Hospital. Skye MRT. 62mh.
- JUNE 26th - Hillwalker (m66) died of a heart attack on the Quirang. Stretchered down by Skye MRT, Police also HM Coastguard. 12mh.
- JUNE 28th - Very early start on a hot, calm day - possibly attempting to do the Cuillin Ridge - fast pace in a party of 8. They had reached *The Castle* from Glenbrittle (Caisteall a' Gharbh-choire), when climber (22) was heard to cry and land with a thud. He was found dead below N.E. Face. Exhaustion caused by lack of sleep and fast pace may have contributed to fall. Also he was making do with only one contact lens, having lost the other. Airlifted by RAF helicopter. Skye MRT.
- JUNE 29th - RAF Sea King searched for missing patient, Uig. Nothing found. Non-mountaineering.
- JUNE 29th to 30th - Search for youth (23) believed to be hiding in the hills, by police and Skye MRT. Found his own way back safe. Earlish, Uig. False alarm.
- JUNE 30th - Uig. Search for missing persons by HM Coastguard. Located inland, all well.
- JULY 29th to 31st - Overdue man (63) found exhausted with exposure in Coir a'Ghrunnda by Skye MRT advance party airlifted into corrie by RAF helicopter. 35mh.
- AUGUST 3rd to 4th - Two accompanied schoolboys became exhausted walking from Glenbrittle, below Gars-bheinn to Ulfhart Point. Extricated from shore by Mallaig lifeboat. Skye MRT and RAF helicopter. Also HM Coastguard. 66mh.
- AUGUST 10th - One of twelve scrambling on Bidein Druim nan Ramh (m age 18) fell on steep scree near top of *3rd Pinnacle* falling 200 feet and sustaining serious injuries - skull and arm fractures, dislocation and cuts. Casualty stretchered by Skye MRT and airlifted by RAF Sea King to Raigmore. 98mh.
- SEPTEMBER 10th to 11th - Solo walker (22) benighted walking from Elgol to Sligachan via Camasunary. Reached destination safely. Northern Constabulary. 11mh.
- OCTOBER 14th - Scrambler (32) suffered head, arm and shoulder injuries from a 20 foot fall on scree on E. Ridge of Sgurr Sgumain. One of his companions alerted Skye MRT and RAF airlifted him to Raigmore. 11mh.

ISLANDS

- MARCH 26th - Scrambling on rock on the shoreline at Laggin, Arran, a man (20) slipped, aggravating an old ankle injury. Stretcher carry out by Arran MRT. 632mh.

- MAY 28th - Upper Glen Rosa, Arran. Party of two. When descending heather and boulders, a walker (61) slipped and fractured his ankle. Carried out by Arran MRT, 63mh.
- JUNE 4th - Girl (18) descending Allt Gobhlach, above Pirmill, N.W. Arran, with 7 others. She slipped and fell with slight injuries to back and legs. Carried down on stretcher. Police and ambulance, 48mh.
- JUNE 24th - Walker (m71) with broken ankle airlifted by RAF Sea King to Stornoway Hospital, Lewis.
- JUNE 26th - Easdale Island, near Oban. Cliff rescue (cragfast?) by HM Coastguard.
- JUNE 27th - Descending path from Coire Fhionn Lochan to North Thundergay, N.W. Arran, woman (71) slipped and fell on shale and bracken breaking an ankle. Accompanied by husband and son who went for help. Stretcher carry. Arran MRT, Police, Ambulance, 38mh.
- JUNE 28th - Shiant Islands, Harris. Youth (18) killed. A party of teachers and pupils was climbing Eilean an Tighe, when a boulder came dislodged and struck the deceased on the head. Evacuated by HM Coastguard, then lifeboat to Stornoway.
- AUGUST 10th - Port Sgibins, Colonsay. Missing person found on shore dead. HM Coastguard. Possibly Non-mountaineering?
- AUGUST 11th - Rona (E. of Skye). Missing person returned unaided. HM Coastguard. Possibly Non-mountaineering?
- AUGUST 28th - Hillwalker (57) stumbled and fell 50 feet severely spraining an ankle on Stacach Ridge (North Ridge of Goat Fell). He managed to make his own way down. Arran MRT and RN helicopter stood down. 21mh.
- SEPTEMBER 10th to 11th - Couple (m60m f62) walked shore path from Lochranza and got exhausted at Laggin where they were benighted. Search from 02.30 to 05.20 hrs. Found safe. Evacuated to Corrie by lifeboat. Arran MRT and HM Coastguard Auxillary, 52mh.
- SEPTEMBER 15th - Illness. Man (61) collapsed at Coire Fhionn Lochan above Thundergay. One of party of 12. Stretchered down and taken to Lamlash Hospital for observation. Arran MRT, 26mh.
- OCTOBER 11th - Missing man (45) (overdose) found by sweep search of open country near CraigsPURE Track, Mull and flown to Oban Hospital by RN helicopter. Non-mountaineering.
- NOVEMBER 4th to 5th - Club party of 12 under Outdoor Leader set off for Goat Fell at 10.30 hrs. and reached summit at 15.30 hrs. Caught by darkness and worsening weather they got lost. Leader told them to remain and he went to Corrie. 17 Arran MRT sweep searched and found all safe at Ref. 004416. 77mh.

SOUTHERN HIGHLANDS

- JANUARY 4th - Descending Ben Lomond by Rowardennan Path, one of a pair of hill-walkers (40) slipped on ice, which was covered by soft snow, and broke his leg. Lomond MRT stretchered him down. Also minor injury to a rescuer. 86mh.
- JANUARY 19th - Solo walker (45) made her own way down after being lost in mist without a compass on Beinn Leabhainn (West of Glen Ogle, Perthshire). Killin MRT, 6mh.
- JANUARY 26th to 27th - Walker (32) went ahead of others on Beinn a'Chreachain. They shouted but he went on in deteriorating conditions after they turned back. He got lost on summit and went down to Glen Cailliche, sheltering overnight in a sheep fank. Although lost, next day he had started up again towards the ridge when found - and airlifted - by RAF Wessex. Cold and exhausted. Dumbarton, Glencoe, Leuchars, Oban, SARDA, Tayside MRT's, 515mh.
- FEBRUARY 20th - Soft snow gave way. Climber (m26) on Arrochar Ben Vorlich suffered head and rib injuries, and was airlifted by RAF Wessex to Vale of Leven and then to Glasgow hospitals. Arrochar and Strathelyde Police MRT's.
- FEBRUARY 24th - Man (48) descending the Loch Earn Ben Vorlich by the path tripped and banged his head. He had two companions, one of whom was a doctor. Though increasingly unwell he continued down and collapsed and died of a heart attack. Central Police.

- MARCH 29th to 30th – Search by Police, Killin MRT and RAF Wessex helicopter when hillwalker's companion raised the alarm. His friend (30) had gone through a cornice and fallen 200 feet into soft snow when descending the N.E. Face of Stob Binnein. He had made his own way down but got benighted and sheltered in a wood.
- APRIL 6th – Man (over 21) sustained an ice-axe wound on thigh, and girl (19) a pelvic injury when they slipped on snow on the north side of An Caisteal. Airlift by RAF Wessex to Glasgow. Killin MRT. 45mh.
- APRIL 19th – Woman (48) was stretchered down by Killin MRT suffering from mild hypothermia. One of a party of seventeen on Stob Creag an Fhithich (Beinn Chabhair), 10mh.
- MAY 10th – Overdue from Ben Lomond Hill Race, a fell-runner (20's) had lost main group and made her own way down by Ptarmigan. Lomond MRT. 8mh.
- MAY 19th – Beinn Dòrain group. Woman (33) had been walking on Beinn Dòrain summit with her husband and a friend when she slipped on grass and fell 500 feet down rock and slab on S.E. Face of Beinn an Dòthaidh into Coire a'Ghabhalach. Killed outright. Evacuated by RAF Wessex helicopter. Oban Police MRT. 3mh.
- MAY 25th – Ben Lomond sponsored walk. One of 400 walkers (age about 25) stumbled and broke her leg on the path at 1,500 feet. Stretchered down by Lomond MRT. 10mh.
- MAY 25th – At the request of Police, Lomond MRT searched Ben Lomond with a dog because an unoccupied tent had been found. 20mh.
- JUNE 16th – False alarm. Search for three schoolboys (all aged 12) missing near Tummel Bridge. Leuchars, Rannoch School and Tayside MRT's. RAF Sea King and Wessex helicopters. 143mh.
- JUNE 22nd – Scrambling on an outcrop on S.E. side of Ben Vane (Arrochar). Man (22) fell 60 feet and fractured his spine. Flown by RAF Wessex to Glasgow Southern General Hospital. Could not remember incident. Strathclyde Police and Arrochar MRT's. 14mh.
- JULY 1st to 2nd – One of a party of eight, a girl (17) stumbled on N. Face of Beinn Chabhair and slightly injured her ankle. She spent the night in a tent due to the slight injury and a warm night, and she was carried off by Killin MRT next morning. 72mh.
- JULY 7th to 8th – Crag at Ref. 581125 on Ardnandave Hill above Loch Lubnaig. Un-equipped scrambler got cragfast when 800 feet up. Killin MRT lowered a rescuer to him, 100 feet from crag top and raised him in a harness at night. 91mh.
- JULY 19th – Man became separated from his party on Ben Lawers and disorientated due to mist and driving rain. Made his own way down. Killin MRT alerted. Turned up before RAF Wessex arrived for search. 5mh.
- JULY 24th – Man stuck on cliffs near Elie, Fife. Lifted to top by RAF Wessex.
- AUGUST 18th – Casualty with severely broken ankle stretcher-lifted on 100 foot cable by RAF Wessex from foot of Earlsferry cliffs and flown to Kirkcaldy.
- AUGUST 24th – Female with back injury stretchered by RAF Wessex from foot of Earlsferry cliffs to Kirkcaldy.
- SEPTEMBER 12th – Girl (15) stumbled on path in Gleann nam Meann (West of the Trossachs Ben Vane) slightly injuring back. Walked off with help. Killin MRT. 20mh.
- SEPTEMBER 21st – Red flares in Cobbler/Beinn Ime area. Searches by Strathclyde Police and Arrochar MRT's. Nothing found. 70mh.
- SEPTEMBER 26th – Party of four (59) (m58, 55, 38) in mist on Ben Lui summit. Came down East side in error causing long walk round. 6 members of Oban Police MRT called out.
- SEPTEMBER 29th – Connel – Oban. Missing person recovered dead. HM Coastguard. Non-mountaineering.
- OCTOBER 7th – A reported flare sighting in the Ochils caused a search by a RAF Wessex and Ochils MRT. Nothing found.
- NOVEMBER 16th – Crag near Trossachs Pier. Orienteer (45) slipped and fell 30 feet breaking his neck. Stretchered down by Killin MRT. 17mh.
- NOVEMBER 20th – Royal Marine suffering from hypothermia in Loch Goil area. Airlifted to Vale of Leven hospital by RN Sea King.

- DECEMBER 14th to 24th – Drummond Hill, Kenmore, Aberfeldy. Search for man (21) found near his car parked in old road. Death due to drugs overdose. Tayside Police search and rescue unit. 35mh.
- DECEMBER 31st – False alarm. Man (23) descending N. Ridge Stob Binnein fell through cornice and slid 150 feet down snow. Made his own way down uninjured. Killin MRT assembled. 7mh.

SOUTHERN UPLANDS

- FEBRUARY 9th – RAF Wessex lifted injured tobogganist from Pentlands to Edinburgh Royal Infirmary. Non-mountaineering.
- FEBRUARY 18th – Rescue of sheep dog trapped on ledge by snow and ice in Megget Valley near Selkirk. Tweed Valley MRT. 16mh.
- FEBRUARY 28th – RAF Wessex searched Pentlands for missing man. Nothing found. Non-mountaineering.
- APRIL 6th – Separation of a diabetic youth (18) from his three companions during a snow-storm on the Southern Uplands Way caused false alarms and searches by both separatees. Police and Moffat Hill Rescue Service. 14mh.
- APRIL 12th – Separation of a school group into two parties on Dunmoss Hill and misinterpreted arm-waving signals caused false alarm. Police and Moffat Hill Rescue Service. 28mh.
- MAY 17th – Search for ten girls, lost and therefore overdue, between Galashiels and Broadmeadows YH. Tweed Valley MRT. 28mh.
- JUNE 5th – Two hillwalkers in remote area of Carrick Forest, Ayrshire. One collapsed and died. Other went for help; evacuated by RN helicopter.
- JUNE 28th – Search for old lady overdue in extensive grounds. Border SRU. Non-mountaineering. 8mh.
- JULY 18th – Wearing trainers, a woman (54) descending with husband and friend from Criffel summit back to New Abbey stumbled and broke her ankle. Stretchered off by Police and Moffat Hill Rescue Service. Ambulance. 48mh.
- AUGUST 8th – Auchope Rig. A rucksack with a tent and cooking gear had been left at Auchope Shelter Hut, sparking off a false alarm and extensive search. It transpired that a girl had left the 'sac and she had been escorted off the hill sickened by the experience of starting to walk the Pennine Way. Border SRU, Police, SARDA, Tweed Valley MRT. 170mh.
- AUGUST 23rd to 24th – Shepherd (m65) fell at farm near Lauder, Berwickshire. Crawled into pheasant coop for shelter. Found suffering from exposure and slight injuries by Police dog. SARDA. Tweed Valley MRT. 119mh.
- SEPTEMBER 15th to 16th – False alarm. Hill and forest searches for absconded boy. Moniave Moffat Hill Rescue Service. Police. RAF helicopter. SARDA. Local workers. Non-mountaineering. 570mh.
- OCTOBER 25th – Karrimor Marathon. Very bad weather caused a number of exposure cases. Moffat Hill Rescue Service put on stand-by in case help was needed by Galloway team. Not required. Moffat Hill Rescue Service. 113mh.
- NOVEMBER 27th – Search for missing RAF Jaguar aircraft. Dead pilot and aeroplane found by Tweed Valley MRT at Stock Hill, Craik Forest, S.W. of Hawick. Border SRU, Moffat Hill Rescue Service. Police. SARDA. RAF helicopters and MRT's. Non-mountaineering. 500mh.

LATE REPORTS FOR 1985**SOUTHERN HIGHLANDS**

APRIL 9th - Injured male hillwalker (47) stretchered off hill known as 'Duin,' Tighnabruaich to Dunoon Hospital.

JUNE 24th - Sapper (17) injured on exercise at Glen Groe, Ardgarten. Arrochar and Dumbarton MRT's.

DECEMBER 30th to 31st - Two walkers overdue from Ben More. Lomond MRT. 8mh.

SOUTHERN UPLANDS

JULY 12th - Pennine Way. Lad (age 16) with rucksack far too heavy was left in Auchope Rig Shelter Hut by five friends because of exhaustion/hypothermia. Stretchered out by Border SRU, Police and ambulance crew and hospitalised in Kelso for 2 days. 9mh.

SEPTEMBER 1st - Lamb Hill, Pennine Way. Walker (53) slipped and dislocated her shoulder. Companion got her to Lamb Hill Shelter Hut. Stretchered by Border SRU, then airlifted to Kelso by RAF Bulmer helicopter. 50mh.

GRUESOME ADDENDUM

We reprint below a summary of a paper on the effects of the Big G on the human frame. We print it with respect for those who provided the statistics.

NECROPSY STUDY OF MOUNTAINEERING ACCIDENTS IN SCOTLAND - W. A. Reid, D. Doyle, H. G. Richmond, S. L. Galbraith. *Journal of Clinical Pathology* 1986; **39**: 1217-1220.

The authors of this paper, who include two members of this club, spent some five and a half years examining the causes of death from the one hundred and twenty-one people who died in mountaineering accidents in Scotland over that period (July 1978 to December 1983; all but four of the cases studied have been listed in the SMCJ Accident Reports). Inclusion of this short abstract of the paper is not to be morbid, but rather to see whether techniques and equipment can or should be modified in order to reduce fatalities in the hills. Mountaineering is a dangerous sport, as the authors state in their introduction, yet there seems to have been no systematic necropsy study of mountaineering accident victims. Although full necropsies (post mortems) were done in 41 of the cases, (partially in one other) this was enough to indicate the commonest main cause of death to be head injury (21/42), with serious chest injury also commonly found (11/42). The 42 cases split into 24 winter mountaineers, 11 hillwalkers, and seven rockclimbers. Lest hillwalkers feel complacent, head injury in that group was just as common.

The authors did not have enough data to make any general conclusion about the value of helmets, though they did think that prevention of head injuries might have saved six climbers whose injuries were otherwise minor. (Less than one in eight of the climbers was wearing a helmet). There were 14 spinal fractures, many of which being in the upper cervical region could have caused death. Unfortunately, data were also insufficient to arrive at any conclusions on the effect of a rope or climbing harness, though injuries due to rapid deceleration such as are found in traffic crash fatalities (descriptions of which are left out of this abstract, as some of our readers may be of a sensitive nature) were less common in this study, a result, the authors suggested, of a falling climber bouncing off rocks and ice or falling on to sloping ground.

Perhaps the message from the study, if there is one for climbers, is that over half of the victims with severe head injury had few other injuries, and would probably have survived had the head injury been prevented. We hand the problem over to the designers, to come up with a light-weight helmet comfortable and acceptable to climbers, which can protect our obviously vulnerable heads.

IN MEMORIAM

JOHN HARTOG

JOHN HARTOG died of a sudden heart attack in 1986, on the thirtieth anniversary of his climbing the Muztagh Tower. On that June day of '56 he had contributed more of importance to the story of Himalayan climbing than any other of our club's members before or since.

I met him first in 1939. He was 17, a schoolboy at Westminster, and I secretary of the JMCS in Glasgow. The London Section was about to be formed. John wrote to me. He wanted to join but confided in me that he was a Jew, and wondered if that would matter. I was outraged – that anyone in Britain should feel need to ask such a question – especially in 1939, when war with Nazi Germany loomed. The JMCS made him doubly welcome. John and I met. We came to know and occasionally to climb with each other.

At his London home, John confided in me further. Ever since he was 14 he'd aspired to climb the Muztagh Tower in the Karakoram. '*Muz*,' he told me, 'means Ice, and *Tagh*, Mountain. It's 23,860 feet.' He quoted R.L.G. Irving, 'Of all the great peaks it's the least accessible.' His eyes shone. Sella's famous telephoto hung on his bedroom wall. I took one look at the monolith, nearly 10,000 feet of unbroken rock – impossible! – but held my tongue and swallowed my laughter. I did not want to embarrass the boy. The north wall of the Eiger, which had just been climbed, looked by comparison stumpy and practicable. Yet I found John to be no wild-eyed youth. He had commonsense and a more orderly mind than I. Behind his glasses were quiet eyes and a quality of stillness. I liked him. He knew already that he had a first-class brain and seemed able to relax in that awareness. When he grew up, he could act with authority without seeming aggressive.

Like an avalanche, war carried us off. From 1946, when we were demobbed, we met on his excursions to Scotland, when we climbed, and on mine to London, when he put me up at his home. He went to Oxford (chemistry) and was soon president of the OUMC. He quickly became a good all-round mountaineer. His boyhood dream was still with him. The Sella photograph hung still on his wall at college, and still I discounted all thought of his acting, for he could not climb rock and ice to my standard, and I reckoned mine not equal to his Muztagh. Wickedly, he did not show me the other photographs he had, taken at other angles. (They dispelled the inaccessible myth).

John joined the SMC in 1950. He came to our meets regularly, went on two Arctic expeditions, and climbed widely in the Alps on classic routes. In due course he entered the Atomic Energy Research Establishment at Harwell. His work brought him often to Dounreay. Rather than fly, he drove a red Daimler-Sports to get climbing en route. In his later years of international repute, he excelled as a trouble-shooter, called to nuclear plants in France and America when problems were defeating the natives. But these days lay in the future.

In 1956 now aged 34, John was able at last to claim three months' leave, and to find the money for the Muztagh. He invited Ian McNaught Davis, Tom Patey, and Joe Brown to form his team. That they were able to climb the mountain at short notice that summer, with minimum reconnaissance and no hitches, was due entirely to John's twenty years' research. He had in possession every known photograph of the mountain taken from ground and air and at every angle. Every written report had been collected, filed, and analysed. Perhaps never before had an unclimbed Himalayan peak been so thoroughly studied by a man trained to research from his youth. His was the first attempt from any nation, yet he knew his approach exactly, and by what two routes he might hopefully try. He knew already that the best was most likely the north-west ridge from the Muztagh and Chagaran glaciers. But for John's long involvement and swift strike, there would have been no British first ascent. The Muztagh would have fallen that year to Guido Magnone's French expedition.

At the first try, Joe and Mac climbed the west summit, slightly lower than the true east summit, which John and Tom climbed next day. On descent, they had to bivouac near the top. John lost most of his toes by frostbite. The further descent was harrowing. He eventually recovered and continued to climb as widely as before in the Alps, and in Scotland for hill-walking.

I wish to emphasise that the Muztagh had been John's peak, his the chosen route, and principally his the first ascent: there has since been a wrong tendency to give all credit to Brown and Patey by reason of their great skills and known names (e.g. in *Summit Fever* by Andrew Greig). The truth is that while all had need of each other, John was the vital initiator, the linchpin, and the energy-source in conception. The route as climbed was technically the hardest done at that time in the Himalaya (see A.J. Nov. 1956). It made history for another reason: following the ascent of Everest and eight other 8000-metre peaks by ponderous expeditions, mounted at high cost and manageable only by use of army-type logistics, the Muztagh came as a pointer to the future. It seemed to clear the air. It directed the climbing world's attention to the new goal – not height for its own sake as before, but to high-standard climbing on lower peaks done Alpine style by small, swift parties, and with costs cut from £100,000 or more to £4000 or less.

The Muztagh story had begun with a schoolboy's dream. John was so unassuming that I forbore to scoff, but confess I had thought his dream impractical. This is an old, old story, which we all have to keep in mind – that dreams are more potent than reason; that if you can dream a thing, you can attain it too, as often as not. Dreams are for action.

W.H.M.

JOE DELLA PORTA

So JOE is dead. He'd had heart trouble for the past decade, and having made the conscious decision that a life of no smoking, little drinking and early nights was not for him, he settled down to enjoy what span was left to him. Regrettably angina prevented him from walking the hills for the final years. Obviously we are saddened at his departure, and a concern of older members is that the younger ones may wonder why he was looked upon as an elder statesman when he must have appeared to be a drunken old sot!! and so he was, but also so much more. He was never a great rock climber, but in his day he was a brilliant hill man, probably never happier than when walking the lonely expanses of the Western Highlands with lightweight camping gear, the one luxury being a hand grinder to produce fresh ground coffee.

Without Joe the London Section of the JMCS probably never would have had a hut at Glanafon. He was treasurer at the time and provided the driving force behind the search, fund raising and purchase. He was the energy pushing the conversion works, in particular the bunks are his work. It was not uncommon for his work squad of young members to finish a weekend's labouring at 9.00 p.m. on Sunday and return to London and work the following morning – and in those days there was no M6 or M54 and the M1 finished at Rugby!

At National level he was for many years, during the sixties, the Hon. Treasurer of the B.M.C. He was on the Management Committee at the time that the links were forged between the M.C. of S. and B.M.C. Indeed his affinity for Scottish climbing had much to do with the amicable but workmanlike relationship between the two bodies.

Think of him as you walk down to Idwal, which is where his ashes are scattered and if a ghostly apparition drifts in and out of the mist, grey bearded with gauloise drooping, have no fear because it will be friendly and if you are uncertain of the way and it points it out to you, the information will be reliable.

The London Section will mourn the loss of its intellectual mentor and grieve for the passing of an era, but it will carry on to be as successful a club as before, for one reason being that he would be incensed to think that anyone would contemplate it being otherwise.

H.J.

DENIS PILKINGTON

WE ALSO report the death of Denis Pilkington, who joined the Club in 1925 and served on the Committee from 1926-30.

KENNETH HUNTER

KENNETH KIRKWOOD HUNTER, a life member of the club since 1924 (committee 1946-48), died on 15th January 1987 in his 85th year.

He had had a varied and interesting life. Born in Glasgow his school days were spent at Kelvinside Academy, Warriston in Moffat and a spell as a midshipman in the Royal Navy. In 1921 he became a student at Glasgow University. Climbing became his favourite recreation with frequent visits to the Cobbler and the Arrocclosan hills.

On graduating in March 1924 with a B.Sc. in Engineering he set off for Fort William with two fellow graduates, the late Eddy Andreae and the writer. With packs holding over 30lbs of food, bedding and sacking they went up to the Half Way Hut on Ben Nevis. The wooden hut, roughly 12ft by 12ft, had been erected at 2,000ft when the meteorological observatory was built on the summit in 1883. By 1924 it had passed its best. Floor boards were rotting and windows broken but with the sacking they managed to reduce the draughts. Freezing temperatures at night made the cooking of breakfast take much longer. The weather was variable for the five nights they spent in the hut but they had some good climbs - Carn Mor Dearg, Carn Dearg by the North Castle Gully, the Ben itself and Aonach Beag. It was when Inglis Clark, a senior member of the Club, heard of this expedition that he decided to give the Club a hut similar to those in use in the Alps. He called it the Charles Inglis Clark Hut in memory of his son killed in the 1914-1918 war.

Kenneth climbed in many parts of Scotland including the Cuillin of Skye. After the formation of the JMCS at a meeting under the Cobbler Boulder in August 1925 he was a strong supporter of the new Club. He was always a good companion on the hills. Although the holder of an engineering degree Kenneth's real interest was in music. He played and sang delightfully. He qualified for ARCO, ARCM and MRST and became concert manager for Paterson's the Glasgow firm of music publishers. There he met the Michael Diacks and his future wife, Peggy Menzies. They were married in 1927 and went out to Rhodesia where Kenneth taught music for two years and then came home to teach at Warriston School, Moffat for 4 years. During the 1939-1945 war he served in the Meteorology Service and then returned to business retiring at the age of 70.

He may have retired from business but not from climbing. In 1975, well past his three score years and ten, he stood on the top of the Cobbler for the last time burying his old boots down a hole at the top. (See SMCJ 1976, p.48, for a poem on this event).

R. N. R.

PROCEEDINGS OF THE CLUB

New Members

The following new members were admitted and welcomed to the Club in the year 1986-87.

Oliver Turnbull (52) Printer, Cleabarrow, Cumbria
 Robert C. Ross (32) Engineer, Aberdeen
 Roger Wild (34) Police Constable, Kingussie
 Roger G. Webb (27) Surveyor, Glasgow
 Brian R. Shackleton (34) Development Engineer, Edinburgh
 David P. Saddler (26) Computer Systems Engineer, Edinburgh
 Christopher Rice (28) Production Engineer, Glasgow
 John S. Peden (38) Chartered Civil Engineer, Prestwick
 David M. Nichols (35) Doctor-Radiologist, Inverness
 Andrew C. McCord (37) Deputy Bridgemaster, Helensburgh
 Philip A. McAra (28) Systems Designer/Programmer, Glasgow
 Peter Langhorne (29) Doctor, Torrance, Glasgow
 Hamish C. Irvine (22) Student, Helensburgh
 Ian R. Griffiths (42) University lecturer, Glasgow
 Alasdair N. Cain (29) Town Planner, Broughty Ferry, Dundee
 Simon W. Steer (24) Social Worker, Stirling.

AGM and Dinner

A SLIGHT matter of a new roof for the Nethybridge Hotel shifted us at short notice over the Cairngorms to Braemar. In the event, not at all a disaster as among other things it further weakened the usual Aberdonian excuses for non-attendance.

A dreich day gave little encouragement to stay on the hill and the AGM got a good attendance - although this might have been somewhat influenced by one or two items on the Agenda. It was held in the Village Hall, not quite our usual environment for AGMs, but in its long aspect and semi-timbered construction conveying a faint resemblance to a Melanesian longhouse which became more apposite as the meeting progressed.

Club AGMs often start with a deceptively legato passage in which the business moves quietly and expeditiously along and one unwisely begins to think about a leisurely pre-dinner refreshment. This one was no exception but everyone knew it was the calm before the storm. Before the contentious Item 5 was reached there was a minor squall over the money to be spent on the lately acquired Halfway House. Various opinions were voiced on cost, need for professional involvement, seeking competitive tenders, demolition, renovation, showers and 'atmosphere' (it has a good start on atmosphere anyway as a vagrant hanged himself in it). Eventually a budget figure of £40,000 was approved, given assurances that the expected cost was somewhat less. During this debate members of the Huts Sub-Committee took great glee in pointing out that now that Members were facing increased subscriptions as a result of using a major part of the Hut Funds for this work, they might realise the extent to which the hut income subsidised their subscriptions.

The meeting then moved to the main item on the Agenda - the motion to open membership of the Club to both sexes (that is what it said, maybe it should have read 'genders'). Now it is the personal opinion of your reporter that there is little point in debating this issue and it should merely be voted on every year thus avoiding the venting of gallons of bile and ensuring a continuing large attendance at AGMs.

Graham Little spoke in defence of his motion although there was already a hint of retreat before the massed ranks of gerontacy had time to launch into their prepared speeches. Gerry Peet managed, just, to make himself heard to second the motion before the cavalry charged.

There followed the expected onslaught from the defenders of the true faith, determined to preserve their Dinner if not the mountains from the taint of the eternal wound (see 'The Golden Bough'). The statements of opinion that followed, one could hardly call the display of prepared positions a debate, were remarkable for the display of deeply

held beliefs on the part of the opposition to the motion. Their credo tended was almost invariably expressed with vehemence, even at times a touch venom. 'Touch not the cat but a glove.'

One speaker made reference to Naismith's letter to the 'Glasgow Herald' – presumably because of its reference to 'manly....exercise' – he did not however refer to the generous and far-seeing wording of Naismith's advertisement that led to the formation of the SMC.

Throughout the waving of arms and pieces of paper the Chairman managed to keep some semblance of order – even when that ancient chimera, the 'direct negative,' was trotted out once again by its proud owner – without concealing his own views on the subject.

Towards the end Iain Smart attempted to raise proceedings on to a much-needed higher plane by putting an appropriate ethnological gloss on the opposition's case when he referred to 'the intellectualisation of the hunting band....male creative tension....choice of directions open to Club' – one could almost see the decorated masks and double-spiral pig tusks on the walls of the Braemar Village Hall as he spoke. He then betrayed a trace of uncertainty in his case by shifting into trendy sociological gear to castigate the motion as 'old-fashioned, conformist and bourgeois,' leaving us with a noble vision of the tribe SMC marching into the mountains, a small band of rugged individualists untainted by association with females in its rituals, set aside from the lesser tribes of hen-pecked mountaineers.

The voting, when it came, was unequivocal – 43 for the motion, 79 against. And so the subject was buried once again, to re-appear perhaps in another generation when ancient wounds have healed or been buried. (The 'debating' and voting pattern appeared to follow the well-known Alzheimer relationship that tolerance is proportional to testosterone level).

After this catharsis the meeting moved on to another important and only slightly less contentious item for discussion, that of standards for admission to membership. The general increase in technical climbing standards and an increasing specialisation among younger climbers was the subject of concern. Or to put it another way, the mystique of the summit and the Holy List of the Munros has a diminishing appeal for youthful iconoclasts (so-what else is new?). Colin Grant reported briefly on the present state of the deliberations of the sub-committee that has been considering these matters. The general feeling of the meeting was that, while there was room for flexibility in considering applications, there was still an over-riding need for extensive experience of Scottish winter mountaineering to demonstrate the candidate's fitness to withstand the annual rigours of AGM and Dinner.

This more or less concluded the business of an occasionally heated meeting and the tribe shambled out of its longhouse towards the Fife Arms with Jim Donaldson's warning of the ferocity of the local constabulary ringing in its ears.

[But not before the growing number of Club Xmas Cards went up for sale; the Editor is looking for the member whose offerings include a foreign coin].

Those many of us with previous experience of the Fife Arms now saw parts of the building never encountered before as we gathered in its cavernous and luxurious foyer – a considerable contrast to the more familiar Public Bar of other wet Cairngorm weekends.

The Dinner was attended by 170, which could well be a record for a Club dinner. The reasons for this large attendance might have had something to do with the agenda for the AGM but it certainly indicates that holding the annual function away from the Central Belt is no great deterrent and may even be an attraction. In addition to those actually attending the Dinner, there was the now traditional group of exotically dressed young climbers in attendance in the bar, always ready for a bit of meaningful dialogue or a stray pint.

The meal was, by the standards of these things, a good one and the service was exceptionally rapid and unobtrusive. Altogether the Dinner Secretary is to be congratulated on a very successful late reprise from a potentially disastrous situation. The only minor quibble was the L-shaped room which made the exchange of insults more restricted than usual.

In his valedictory speech Tommy Weir announced a well-deserved Honorary Vice-Presidency for Bill Bennet. He also delivered a notable panegyric on Scottish mountaineering, in particular the conditions of last winter, which on careful listening made it evident that T. Weir Esq. has by no means hung his ice-axes, or even his PAs, on the wall. His own activities make it plain that age alone is no excuse for any mountaineer to diminish his climbing activities. In the course of his address he was able to draw on his long experience of Scottish mountaineering to comment on the vast differences that have come about in the ease of access due to modern means of transportation, a factor that has had a lot to do with the rise in technical standards in winter climbing.

Then followed the Club Song, performed by Stan (the enunciator) Stewart accompanied, at a distance, by Curly Ross on guitar. As is now the custom, Stan provided some additional verses commenting, in this case, on certain matters from the AGM which demonstrated both his powers of versification and the depth of the wound. (We are aware of the privileged position of Court Minstrels but was this not taking an undue advantage?).

Iain Smart made the usual disclaimer at the start of his Toast to Guests and Kindred Clubs and then proceeded to trample gently and elegantly on their toes in his usual erudite style. The reply was delivered by Neil Cromar of the senior Scottish mountaineering club. In it he displayed the traits of the solicitor as he had obviously done his research, commenting on Rule 3 of the Constitution (we all know that one) and casting doubts on the sexual mores of the SMC.

Tom Weir then handed over the insignia of office to Donald Bennet who, in a gracious speech paid due compliment to Tommy Weir's lifelong enthusiasm and activity.

Once again the advantages of a 'remote' locale and the virtual commandeering of a hotel was demonstrated by the discussions and socialising which continued into the early morning. This provided a rare opportunity for recent members and other active youngsters to talk to more aged and/or experienced Members and exchange views, occasionally coherent, on a variety of topics. No blood was seen to have been spilled.

R. T. R.

Torricon Meet, 420th – 22nd June, 1986 – Ling Hut

A GOOD turnout of 7 members and 3 guests reaped their just reward – 2 glorious June days – of which good use was made.

The following excursions were made: –

Beinn Dearg, Cona 'Mheall, Meall nan Ccapraichean and Euidh nan Clach Geala; Liathach from west to east via the Northern Pinnacles; Maol Chean-Dearg up east ridge returning via Clach nan Con-fionn and Bealach na Lice; Sgurr Dubh; Carnmore Crag – again by canoe, then Lower Wall and Carnmore Corner; Coire Mhic Fearchair of Beinn Eighe – routes on East Wall and Far East Wall and Pigott's Route on Central Buttress.

The meet was enjoyed by all present, these being: *Members*: – J. C. Donaldson, A. Hannah, D. M. G. Niven, D. C. Page, S. Pearson, D. W. Rubens, B. G. S. Ward. *Guests*: – A. Conkie, A. Harris, S. Young.

G. W.

New Year Meet, 26th – 28th December, 1986 – Kincaig

ONCE again the Meet was held over the weekend between Christmas and New Year.

The Ossian Hotel provided good food and accommodation, and despite poor weather – wind and snow showers on the Saturday and wind and increasing rain showers on Sunday – all present appeared to enjoy themselves both on and off the hill. In all eleven members and three guests put in an appearance.

The following summits were visited: –

Geal-charn (Glen Feshie), Sgor Gaoith, Carn Ban Mor, Braeriach, Mullach Clach a' Bhlair by Druim nam Bo, Ord Ban, Carn an Fhriceadain. One member also went ski-ing in Coire na Ciste on Saturday and rumour has it that others were seen wandering in various parts of Rothiemurchus Forest on Sunday – presumably sheltering from the elements.

Present: *Members*: – The President, J. Bennet, H. M. Brown, A. G. Cousins, B. Fleming, W. M. MacKenzie, W. M. S. Myles, I. H. M. Smart, W. Wallace, B. G. S. Ward, T. Weir. *Guests*: – H. Bennet, R. J. Smith, W. Sutherland.

G. W.

Easter Meet 1987 – Dundonnell

THE meet centred on the Dundonnell Hotel and The Smiddy. It was attended by 19 members and 2 guests.

Good Friday was glorious. Saturday was warm and dry with high cloud, while Easter Sunday started well but by afternoon was showery. The rain on Monday morning decided most people to wend their way homewards in the hope of better weather on the way.

The following excursions were made: –

An Teallach was traversed in both directions – by three parties east to west, and two parties west to east. Beinn Dearg Mòr (Fisherfield), Beinn Liath Mhor Fannaich, Sgurr Breac and 'Chailleach, Sail Mhor (Ardessie), Beinn Ghobhlach, Stac Pollaidh.

Druim Shionnach, Anach air Chrith and Maol Chinn-dearg (Cluanie) were ascended en route on Good Friday, as were Sgairneach Mhor and Beinn Udlamain at Dalnaspidal. Jetty Crag Buttress at Gruinard received a visit, with various routes being climbed.

Present were: *Members:* – President D. J. Bennet, H. M. Brown, J. C. Donaldson, T. B. Fleming, B. S. Fraser, C. C. Gorrie, J. N. Ledingham, I. D. McNicol, J. R. Marshall, H. H. Mills, W. M. S. Myles, D. M. G. Niven, J. Paterson, D. W. I. Piggott, C. G. M. Slesser, I. H. M. Smart, I. M. Walter, B. G. S. Ward and T. Weir. *Guests:* – E. R. Allen and O. Turnbull.

G.W.

J.M.C.S. REPORTS

Edinburgh Section. – The section appears to be undergoing something of a renaissance, with considerable interest being shown in climbing, in both summer and winter. One fairly new member, has broken with recent practice, by making first ascents of a high standard, of WINTER routes. The enthusiasm for climbing, with a group of section members regularly active, summer and winter, is an encouraging development as there was a tendency in the recent past for the section to amuse itself during the winter with hillwalking and ski-ing with only a small band of winter climbers in evidence.

Membership of the section is at a healthy level, with a steady trickle of enquiries from a 'Recruiting Poster' kindly displayed by G. Tiso, in the Edinburgh Shop.

The meets programme for 1986 followed the usual pattern with regular well supported hut meets to the main Scottish mountain areas during the winter, and camping meets in the summer where attendance was strongly related to the prevailing weather which was less than kind for most of the summer. The meteorological *coup de grâce* was delivered during the May Holiday weekend on Arran, when not only did it rain torrentially flooding our camp site in Upper Glen Rosa, but the precipitation was radioactive!

The only summer meet to enjoy really good weather was a trip to Glencoe in June when virtually all those present went rock climbing on a sun-warmed Buchaille.

The mid-week evening meets to local crags attracted variable levels of interest but the winter evening at the Heriot Watt climbing wall continues to be popular to the extent of overcrowding – despite the clouds of chalk and the array of perspiring bodies twitching spasmodically up the brickwork.

Members were active throughout Britain from the Old Man of Stoer at Lochinver to Dinas Mor and Tremadoc in North Wales.

Several different Alpine areas were visited, one member making ascents of the Frendo Spur, Cordier Pillar and the S.W. Face of the Aig du Pouce during a brief visit to Chamonix. The Bregalia was visited and two separate parties were in the Kaisergerbe, the early visitors found it cold but the pair who went in August enjoyed excellent climbing on steep sun-kissed limestone.

The section's huts, the Smiddy at Dundonnell and Jock's Spot at Newtonmore were the venues for several club meets notably the New Year gathering at the Smiddy when an abundance of fresh snow made hill-going hard work but proved little hindrance to the celebrations.

The annual dinner at the Kingshouse, Glencoe, drew a congregation of 39, a sizeable increase on the previous year. It was a very enjoyable social event, the formal part being

ended by an amusing speech by Dave Bathgate, the principal guest. The informal part of the evening became progressively more informal, under the tolerant eye of Ian Nicholson and the two guests from the Glasgow Section must have wondered what depths of informality might have been plumbed in the absence of ladies!

Office Bearers – *Hon. President*, M. Fleming; *Hon. Vice-President*, W. M. S. Myles; *President*, D. Buchanan; *Vice-President*, R. Dalitz; *Treasurer*, A. Carver; *Hon. Secretary*, S. Murdoch, 134 Goldrum Street, Dunfermline, Fife (0383) 721971.

Glasgow Section. – 1986 was a year of standard Glasgow JMCS activities. The winter provided a good haul of routes from the usual haunts of Glencoe, Ben Nevis and the Cairngorms. It also enabled others to move closer to or obtain Munroist status. After a wet spring the summer brought about a semi-official meet to Chamonix. Whilst the alpine peaks inspired some fine climbs the continental sense of dress does not seem to have rubbed off on some of our members, as a later slide show bore out. Other members were also seen on foreign climbs. Autumn provided the chance to go padding.

On the social side a Burns Night Supper gave a member's better half the chance to point out the faults in Burns and the JMCS. Both being numerous. The Annual Dinner was once again at the Kinghouse. There about sixty members listened to Bill MacKenzie make some relevant points regarding present day climbing. Along with the SMC Western District a cheese and wine was held in November. This event was well attended with Tom Weir giving an excellent slide show. Other lectures continue to attract only a small but an appreciative audience.

After the very poor weather of 1985 – last year saw the Coruisk Memorial Hut back at normal levels of occupancy, especially during the summer months. Plans have been set in motion to build an external gas store to comply with new insurance regulations.

Despite some misgivings about some members preference to climb outwith the Club the last meet of 1986 at Lagangarbh was well attended. With mulled wine, mince pies and a slide show an enjoyable evening was had by all. The club is still in good spirit.

Office Bearers: *Hon. Member*, W. H. Murray; *Hon. President*, Angus MacInnes; *Hon. Vice-President*, David MacDonald; *President*, Anderson Foster, 9 Ilay Court, Bearsden, Glasgow; *Vice-President*, David Ritchie; *Treasurer*, Benny Swan; *Coruisk Hut Custodian*, Dick Eadie, 47 Cairns Gardens, Balerno, Midlothian.

Lochaber Section. – The club membership has remained steady around the 60 level for the past few years. Most of the members are local based and active on a regular basis outwith the club. Because of this the club only organises weekend meets about once a month but tries to cover different areas of Scotland.

Over the winter months slide shows are held monthly in Fort William and are a convivial gathering for members and visitors.

The club hut at Steall, Glen Nevis, is slowly being modernised. Much needed improvements to the sanitary arrangements have recently been carried out, whilst plans are in hand to build on a porch cum drying room. The use of the hut is free to club members as is the extensive library of books, guide books and journals which are housed in Fort William Library for the sole use of club members.

Office Bearers: *Hon. President*, D. Watt; *President*, I. Sutherland; *Vice-President*, G. Bruce; *Treasurer*, J. Davidson; *Secretary*, L. Houliker, 3 Treslaig, Fort William (Corpach 633); *Hut Custodian*, I. Walker, 12 Grange Terrace, Fort William (0397) 3512; *Meets Secretary*, M. Tigh; *Indoor Meets*, B. McDermott; *Hut Maintenance*, J. Mathieson; *Committee*, B. McPherson, J. Cameron and K. Foggo.

London Section. – Membership has dropped during the year. In early October in terms of paid up members, plus life members the total was as low as 37. Over the year a regular pattern of Committee meetings has been established on the basis of half in London and half in the Hills. An attempt was also made to reform the meets policy by the introduction of a number of less traditional climbing areas such as Cader, Gogarth and Gower. However, although the Bethesda based meets were all well attended the innovative ones were not. Discussion has already taken place to learn the lesson of this whilst still evolving as imaginative a programme as possible. Considerable numbers of our members went North, both in Winter and Summer to climb the Scottish Hills. A regular programme of

London pub meets take place. The venue has now been altered to the White Swan in Vauxhall Bridge Road, where a private room is available and the beer is good.

The year was saddened by the death, caused by a heart attack, of the Section's Hon. President, Joe Della Porta. Approximately 15 members attended the funeral and the following convivial wake at the Union Hotel, Garth (he would have approved!). Two days later a party of members scattered his ashes in Cwm Idwal. This last was a much more meaningful ceremony than the funeral.

Circulars have gone out to members at the rate of one every other month, still in the inimicable style of Pete Tibbets, which by now has become an institution. The Section continues to be actively involved in the affairs of the B.M.C. There have been recent, substantial increases in B.M.C. subscriptions but the consensus is for maintaining membership. The Section has given its support to the appointment of a full time Access Officer. With the privatisation of the water authorities who own vast areas of the uplands, and the pressures for financial returns on even the most unproductive land, access will continue to be a major issue into the nineties. There was an excellent turnout for an excellent A.G.M. and Dinner at the Silver Fountain in Bettws Y Coed where the hotel actually closed for that night and ran virtually as a private club for the JMCS.

Office Bearers: *President*, Peter Turner; *Vice-President*, Gordon Cameron; *Hon. Treasurer*, Robin Watts; *Hon. Secretary*, Hugh Jordan, Waytes Cottages, Layhams Road, Keston, Bromley BR2 6AR (0959) 71851; *Hut Booking Secretary*, Peter Whitechurch, Dale Cottage, Tangier Lane, Tonbridge Wells, East Sussex (0892) 23531.

Perth Section. - There was a change in the secretarial department of the club in July when Ron Payne took over the hot seat as acting secretary of the club. This was precipitated by Joe Stewart's change of job, house and domestic arrangements. Joe has been the secretary for several years now, efficiently beaver away at what is the busiest job in the club. The Section is grateful for all the hard work he has put in on our behalf over the period he has been secretary.

There were 15 meets during the year with an average attendance of 11 which is slightly below last year. Membership appears to be up by 3 at 68 but this may be an overcount due to discontinuity of record keeping over the summer. The main activity of members is still hillwalking with the climbers occasionally active on meets and certainly at other times. One more member has joined the majority of active members in completing his Munros and another completed his second round of Munros and the first round of Corbetts, incidentally both on the same day.

The club was represented at the Grampian Club and Glasgow Section dinners during the year. Our own Annual Dinner was held this year at the Kingshouse Hotel, Glencoe with speeches by Bob Milne and Lou Kass, after a frantic dash back to the hut for his lines by the latter.

The Annual Joint Lecture with the Perthshire Society of Natural Science was held in the Museum, Perth in January. This was given by our own South American adventurers, Lou Kass, Graham Nicol and Rob Garner on their successful expedition to Peru in 1985 and was enthusiastically received by a capacity audience. The venue did prove too small in the event with the members of the Section failing to gain admittance and a repeat was laid on for the Section later in the year.

Office Bearers: *Hon. President*, Bob Milne; *Hon. Vice-President*, David Wares; *President*, Sandy Robertson; *Vice-President*, Andrew Lawson; *Treasurer*, Tom Rix; *Secretary*, Ron Payne, 70 Spoutwells Drive, Scone, Perth PH2 6SB (0738) 51412.

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

The Alps

JMCS London Section members were active in the Alps during 1986.

JOHN STEELE and MIKE FRENCH spent a week in Saas Fee, climbing the Mitteghorn Weissmeiss and Levitzspitz (N.Face), a few days in Zinal climbing the Point Zinal ice wall and finishing off on the Barre des Eains in the French Dauphiné Alps.

GORDON CAMERON managed a ten day circuit of the Dauphiné, using gîtes every night. This trip is recommended for strong walkers as it avoids any serious climbing/ice work. Other members active in the Dauphiné were CHRIS BASHFORD, JOHN FIMIN and friends.

The Frendo Spur was the most popular route among the Section members, receiving ascents from ANDY WALKER, PETE STOKES, STEVE SENIOR and GAVIN JORDAN, ROBIN WATTS was also active in the Arolla District.

STUART MURDOCH writes: - 'My wife Jane and I visited the Kaisergebirge in Austria. The Kaisergebirge or Wilder Kaiser are now very readily accessible from Scotland as there is a daily direct flight from Glasgow to Munich, operated by British Airways, and APEX fares are available from as little as £128 return. From Munich the Wilder Kaiser are only about 1-2 hours by train, depending on which of the main valley bases you choose, Kufstein or St. Johann in Tyrol.

The best base for the main climbing areas is the Stripsenjoch Hut, which is positively palatial compared to the standard Alpine Refuge although it does get busy with tourists during the day. We also spent a few days based at the Grutten Hut on the south side of the range which is quieter, and more traditional but suffers from a water shortage during the late summer which can be circumvented by staying grubby and drinking beer.

Our initial foray into the mountains was the classic Dulfur Route on the West Wall of the Predigstuhl (IV +) a short but enjoyable and quite spectacular introduction to Kaiser climbing. Plodding down the descent in the afternoon heat we were surprised to hear Scots voices which turned out to belong to MARTIN HYND (SMC) and Sheila Cormack (Pinnacle Club) who were setting off to do the Dulfur Route after the crowds had finished!

Subsequently, we climbed the Totenkirchl by the Haroldweg (III +), an excellent mountaineering route, the SW Ridge of the Christaturm (V -) an enjoyable route leading to a fine summit. We had an abortive attempt on the classic Dulfur Route on the East Wall of the Fleischbank (V +, A1) but our disappointment was lessened by an ascent of the 'Rittlerkante' on the Bauern Predigstuhl which proved to be the highlight of the holiday. This is a superb climb up the right hand arete of the Bauern Predigstuhl on absolutely perfect rock. The route bears little relation to the grade (V) or description given in Talbot's English guide to the area. The route as now done, has a direct finish of two excellent pitches (V +, VI + in the German Topo Guide if done completely free). If a peg or three is used on the final pitch for aid the route provides a magnificent, and a fairly sustained route at a standard of V +, A1.

In general, the current English guide is very out of date and must be treated with caution in relation to route lengths, grades and descriptions. The detailed German guide to the area is excellent but expensive, contains realistic grades based on some aid still being used while the cheaper topo guide available has most of the classic middle-grade and harder routes with grades for completely free ascents.'

BRYAN FLEMING spent the first two weeks of August alone in Obergurgl and recommends it as an excellent centre for a solitary sybarite. From the village at 6,300 feet he walked up to one of the nearer peaks or passes, at around 10,000 feet, every day except Sunday, leaving his hotel at 8.30 am and returning for beer on the terrace in the late afternoon. The Cafe-Pension Wiesental could not have been better, and the travel arrangements, by an Ingham's package Tour, were highly efficient.

Polish Tatra

STEVE KENNEDY (SMC), Charlie MacLeod, Simon Thirgood, Andy Scrase, Mike MacDonald, Richard Jones (all Etchachan Club) visited the Tatra.

Kennedy writes: - 'A large Aberdeen party took advantage of an invite by members of the Warsaw Alpine Association to visit the Tatra Mountains in Poland during early February 1986.

An apprehensive group landed at a snowbound Warsaw Airport to be greeted by two huge, smiling Poles armed with enough of the local Zitnia vodka for the whole two week trip, or so we mistakenly thought. Twenty-four hours later, barely recovered from the

previous night's welcoming party, a chaotic twelve hour train journey to Zakopane (the 'Aviemore of Poland') was embarked on. A ramshackle of a bus then transported us to the heart of the Tatra and eventually to the Stara Roztoka, a fairly luxurious, centrally heated, Alpine type hut, approximately 1 hour's walk from the main climbing area. With the Poles evidently out to impress, complaining bodies were being dragged out too soon after arrival for a first look at the Tatra. An hour later saw us being shepherded across the two lochans of Morskie Oko and Czarny Staw into a massive corrie, tightly enclosed by huge walls up to one thousand metres in height. Standing on the ice in the middle of Czarny Staw, the towering north wall of Kazalnica made a particular impression. A worried party trudged back to the hut whereupon each 'Scotski' was introduced to his very own Polish climbing partner who, almost without exception, turned out to be one of Warsaw's 'Top Ten'. Any initial apprehensiveness quickly disappeared the following morning however with the discovery that the climbing was remarkably 'Cairngormish', with huge mixed buttresses of granite and frozen turf, although the Poles were made aware in no uncertain terms that any long aid sections, of which there were plenty, were not for us. Ice routes proved something of a rarity and indeed the only two recognised icefalls in the Morskie Oko cirque were quickly dismissed by the Poles. The trip was blessed with a fortnight of virtually unbroken beautiful weather although temperatures of -25°C at night and -15°C to -20°C during the daylight were unexpected and by all accounts unusually low. A combination of great Polish enthusiasm and the settled weather ensured that numerous excellent routes were climbed, mostly at a fairly high standard (for the Scotski's at any rate), with rest days something of a luxury. No acclimatisation problems either with most of the summits between 2000 - 2500 metres. Particularly enjoyable and climbed by various Polish/Scotski combinations were: - Spadowa Kopa, 'Puzach Pillar,' Kazalnica, 'Plugosz,' Mieguszowiecki Szczyt, 'Direlissima,' Swistowa Czuba, 'Pm. Sciano.' Most routes were accomplished in one long day although the hardest routes required bivouacs. Descents in general proved fairly easy usually by means of long easy gullies some of which offered fantastic glissading. The similarity to our own winter climbing scene, especially Cairngorm climbing, was frequently commented upon with the relative ease of access and descent. Public transport was in fact available to Morskie Oko (from Zakopane) which is within a one hour walk of many of the routes. For those unlucky enough to be without their own personal Polish climbing partner, problems could be encountered in locating some of the routes as there seemed to be a distinct lack of climbing guidebooks available. However, there were any number of Polish climbers around who would no doubt gladly point any unsuspecting foreigner at the odd classic line or two!

Another epic train journey followed by a memorable farewell party brought the trip to an end. One notable aspect, not lost on the Aberdonians, was the difficulty encountered in parting with any cash (i.e. Dollars) due to the hospitality of the Poles, something which proved almost embarrassing at times. A hugely successful trip, and an official invite to the Poles (on behalf of the Etchachan Club) has already been extended to climb in Scotland during February/March 1988.'

Crete

A. L. CRAM writes: - 'In June 1986, my wife and I visited the eastern group of the 200 km long spine of limestone mountains running east and west in Crete. Psycho village is tucked away within the walls of a very large limestone depression or polje at about 2500 feet. This is the Lasithi plateau, irrigated by many hundreds of windmills flickering like moths. A walk of 8 hours takes one to the top of Dikti mountain at over 7000 feet. An elegant mule ferried our provendor and potent Gouves village wine, not to be compared with the ordinary mix. In an upper polje at about 4500 feet, the mule was left to fend for herself. Fitful traces of a path led up a gorge to a grisly steep of rock ribs and slabs with great banks of gravel. From the col the twin peaks of Psari Madari and Dikti rose to the right and left. Dikti sends down limestone buttresses with climbing prospects and a steep of broken rock and ledges overgrown with spiny spinifex bushes. From the top, I could make out the milky coast of North Africa, where, opposite, I had been charged unexpectedly with a mob of artillery mules, scraped up for the sudden defence of Crete. All were lost off the southern coast with their transport in the wastage of that lost campaign. Our muleteer, warmed by two litres of Gouves wine and a quantity of 5 star Metaxas brandy,

reminded us he had been a partisan and indicated sites of ambushes and flights and chose to ignore the steeper and looser components of his environment. Bounding along the narrow Skye-like ridge, he cast himself down the slope, its hangs and fragments, while we followed decorously behind the fan of bounding stones. Below the col, I happened to be in front when he passed me riding a bank of gravel. This cast him headfirst down a slab, lubricated by small stones, into a cleft where he was imprisoned by the clamping of spiny spinifex bushes round his middle regions. As I hastened to restore his status quo, he emitted a dismal hissing. My wife, in whom minor male lesions evokes a sensible response, aptly equated the sound to a punctured bus tyre. Once the wooden saddle had been relieved of sustenance, he swung on, but, I observed, immediately aborted. We padded in the dust, down from the harsh bright light on the limestone into the soft, welling Cretan dusk.

Indian Ocean

MALCOLM SLESSER spent 3 weeks in (or rather superimposed upon) the Indian Ocean. While in Reunion he climbed the highest point – Piton des Neiges (3070m) from Cilaos (1200m). Leaving at 5.30 am in perfect climatic conditions he ascended a superbly executed path through steep dense forest. The summit was gained at 8.50. Already a vast cloud sea was rising to engulf the summit. The mountains are volcanic, and the terrain unbelievably dissected to produce dramatic valley scenery and horrifying roads. The government of France maintains a system of gîte d'étape which afford the visitor the opportunity to make some fine hill walks.

Neighbouring Mauritius is completely different. It is as if bits of the Cuillin had been chopped up and tastefully distributed about a large version of Tiree. These astonishing volcanic plugs create a bizarre, but entrancing landscape. Access to the hills is hindered by forest and land-owners, but an invaluable assistance is Robert Marsh's 'Mountains of Mauritius,' which details approaches. The rock climber is at first excited by the sheer walls, and spindly pinnacles, but the rock tends to be lichened and can suddenly deteriorate into friable rubbish. The book enumerates 50 ascents, of which (between bouts of work) two were done: the central peak of Trois Mamelles (Deirdre must have been here!) and the Corps de Garde from which latter I was lucky enough to see Piton des Neiges 125 miles away.

Papua New Guinea

DAVID BROADHEAD begins an account of a visit to New Guinea with a pidgin version of Patey's celebrated epigram.

*'Mt Wilhelm, Mt Herbert, Sepik-Waghi Divide
Em i gudpela trainin long Cuillin bilong Skye'*

(apologies to Patey).

'In January 1986 I left a promising Scottish winter to work for 8 months in Papua New Guinea, based in the town of Lae, a sea port in the Morobe Province. The main problem in climbing the many mountains which cover this enormous rugged island is one of access, but Lae lies at the foot of the 'Highlands Highway,' a paved road leading deep into the interior. Lae Explorers Club has been active for many years with a varied programme ranging from '4-wheel drive picnics' to serious expeditions, an excellent introduction to the tropics for newcomers like myself.

An hour's drive up the Highway from Lae takes one out of the lush coastal plantations and into the broad Markham Valley. Cattle grazing under the shady trees give the flat valley floor a European feel but the steep grassy slopes of the surrounding hills are definitely tropical, especially when one realises that the 'kunai' grass grows shoulder high. Bush walkers never venture far without a local guide and a plentiful supply of drinking water, but a hot sweaty climb is rewarded with impressive views over the Markham Valley and the Huon Gulf and possibly a refreshing swim in Sintagora Lake.

In side valleys stretching to the north many of the remote villages originally contacted by aeroplane are now accessible by rough roads, though it is still possible to follow traditional paths, walking from village to village through forest and gardens. With a little knowledge of 'tok pisin' and faith in the system of 'P.M.V.s' (Public Motor Vehicles) it was possible to organise interesting weekend trips, staying overnight either in private bush material village houses or in the local community school. Unfortunately the success rate of these trips seemed to be rather low. One weekend was abandoned on the Friday afternoon in Lae after a long wait in a tropical downpour for a PMV which never turned up. Another trip was abandoned even earlier on the advice of the police when the most wanted criminal in the Province took to the bush in the valley we planned to visit.

The rascal problem also made trips into the Highlands less attractive in 1986. Regular armed holdups after dark limited travelling along the Highway to the daylight hours between six and six and prevented us from climbing in the Eastern Highlands. However we were able to take advantage of the long Easter weekend to climb Mt Wilhelm, at 4510m the highest peak in PNG. From the Markham Valley the Highway climbs over the Kassem Pass into the rolling Eastern Highlands Province, then over the Daulo Pass into the more rugged Chimbu Province. From Kundiawa, the Provincial capital, a rough road climbs up the Chimbu gorge in 4-wheel drive to Kegsugl, start of the footpath climbing steeply up the forest clad flanks of the mountain to a slightly delapidated hut above the tree line beside Lake Aunde (3480m).

An early start from the hut gives the best chance of a view from the top, so we started at 2 am, arriving on the summit five hours later, our efforts amply rewarded despite some early cloud and success toasted with a nip of malt. Gabbro ridges give the area a flavour of the Cuillins and some of the rocky coires look like they would offer some good rock climbing, though another afternoon of heavy rain was a less appealing similarity. Slithering down the forest path, ankle deep in mud, tripping over roots, a peat bog will never seem as bad again.

REVIEWS

The Cuillin of Skye. By B. H. Humble, (Ernest Press, 140 pages, many photographs, £15.95).

This is a facsimile of Ben Humble's original book first published in 1952. For those such as myself not lucky enough to have an original copy this production is an unexpected bonus. It is a classic mountaineering text. Although a good reproduction it is a pity that it is not better produced. It would be better and more in keeping with its importance if it were bound in leather. I suppose, however, if it were, most of us being climbers couldn't afford it.

Mostly an historical work, Ben takes us through the period in Skye before the climbers arrived, continues with the early climbing period and finishes with the present, which for him was the thirties to the fifties. As an historical work it is excellent and well researched.

But this book is more than just an historical work, it is also an excellent narrative of climbing in Skye. The text is well written in an easy manner which holds the reader and is full of those little anecdotes that make a book such as this so enjoyable. The photographs are a particular attraction and are in themselves historical documents. W. H. Murray looks the same as he was when a boy. If anything he has lost weight!

This is not just a book for historians nor collectors of climbing works. It is a book to be read and savoured by all those interested in the mountains. I wish I had been around in the times it describes. The magic was even greater.

S.L.G.

Climbers' Guide to Central and Southern Scotland. - Edited by Jerry Handren. (Scottish Mountaineering Club, 1986; 301 pages; 8 photographs; 54 diagrams; 5 maps, £7.95).

This fat volume documents the activities of climbers urban and suburban in the Central Belt, with the mountain and sea cliff climbing of the South West thrown in for good measure.

By any standards it is a formidable compilation, but Spence's activities in Roslin Glen make it out of date already as those crags escaped the eyes of the authors. There are a few niggles. The maps would have been better with more detail of crag location but grid references and careful directions on access are given in the text. Climbing through a gap in the billboards at Roseburn contrasts with the more seemly 10½ km hike to the Dungeon of Buchan.

Some of the Whangie grades seem a bit harsh. It was home to a numerical grading system long before modern algebra took over, but the transition to adjectival grades has resulted in a ferocious downgrading – Hangover Overhang and Ivy Crack at 'Severe' to mention two of many. The Balerno Bridge no longer exists, apparently, depriving the Currie Wa's of their longest and best routes. The editor of the Salisbury Crags section concedes that older routes are missed out. Some of them are described with action shots in *SMCJ*, volumes 4 and 6.

The all star cast of compilers have done a good job overall. Their style of writing varies. This reviewer particularly enjoyed the humour of the bouldering section and the chatty descriptions of the S.W. climbs.

While the newer quarries etc. have a preponderance of very hard routes (the front cover photograph says it all), the older areas retain plenty of easier routes for hopefuls and has-beens. A star grading system gives an indication of quality. This is a useful feature as poor routes are not included.

For any climber in the Central Belt, this book is a must. It contains a lifetime of arm-pumping evening excursions, while those looking for somewhere different to pass a day or weekend will also find it.

A.C.S.

Poems of the Scottish Hills. – **An Anthology selected by Hamish Brown.** (Aberdeen University Press, 202 pages, paperback £5.90; hard covers £11.00).

The history of this book is that the author while preparing an anthology of 20th century British and Irish verse realised that the Scottish Mountains were a particularly rich source. He decided, therefore, to produce in addition a purely Scottish anthology. Although it was published before the 'British and Irish' edition and despite my interest in poetry I had not read it until after I had seen the British and Irish anthology. The loss was mine. I regret having taken so long to read this excellent book.

When the 'British and Irish' anthology appeared it was particularly disappointing. I thought that although there had been a lot of work involved it was superficial and pretentious. I thought it lacked some outstanding Scottish works. I now know why. Hamish Brown had kept the best poems for his anthology of the Scottish Hills.

At long last then we have a collection of Scottish Mountain poetry and a collection which contains what I consider most of the important poems. There are almost 250 poems grouped together under sections ranging from 'Questions and Answers' and 'A Certain Frivolity' to 'A Backward View from the Cairn.' It is difficult to pick out the outstanding section. They are all excellent with splendid poems in each.

I am sure some will complain that this poem or that poem has been left out. Their views may be justified, but they are not a criticism of the book. No one can produce an anthology and include every poem to everyones taste. The author is to be congratulated for doing it at all.

This book deserves to be a classic. Mountaineers will treasure it. They will treasure a book which collects together some of the poems we know and introduces us to others we do not. I have already spent many happy hours with it.

S.L.G.

Ben Nevis, Britain's Highest Mountain. By Ken Crocket (Scottish Mountaineering Club, 1986, 320 pages, many illustrations, £14.95).

It is not easy to review a book on Scotland's highest mountain, Ben Nevis. It has been crying long in the last great wilderness waiting for someone to make the first ascent of this major literary problem. How can you capture the essence of this hill, the big bold bad Ben, the bright with glory, impassive beyond ken – this imperious chunk of orography, this winter weaver of cruel snow-white spells.

Nonetheless the author sets out to trace the gamut of man's interaction with the mountain. Let's go back and see what he says, what each century has on offer: four hundred years ago the topographer Pont was surveying Scotland; in 1687 'Bin Novesh' was a name on a map; in 1787 it was already famous. The sporting traveller was arriving, and Burt, a receiver of rent from unsold forfeited estates, writing in his letters from a Gentleman told how English officers, their Fancy being taken to go to the Top were thwarted by Bogs and huge Perpendicular rocks; by 1887 venturesome nameless explorers had already slowly chopped the first climbing steps up a gully of snow watched by the inmates of the summit observatory. The last century of activity was the concern of this new publication. It all had begun to happen, until today we are besmirched with the struggling processions of uphill land walkers wandering on the plateau and the tethered teams of nut placers and terra diggers swarming on dark defiles or immaculate aprons.

Nonetheless the author picks a tantalising route through the past sagas into the present uncertainties, the bleakness of his text giving the lie to the evocative vigour of the tales of the classical age of Nevisian mountaineering. It is told by those whose words matched their actions, the personalia of yesteryear, the Grand Old Masters writing out their peace. Tinder flashes and gems sparkle: Collie succeeding on the long and troublous Tower Ridge 'after scrambling, slipping, pushing, pulling, lifting, gasping' and rabbiting on with another 21 present participles: Raeburn, soloist on bird haunts, hard as nails, a moving speck on Observatory Buttress on invisible ledges amid great immensities, his route description a mere brevity, 'Below, was the fast flowing shadow tide; above, the blaze of sunlight, and oh, blessed thought, perhaps afternoon tea. It was enough, I went up, and fifteen hours from the Sea stood upon the Summit.' J. H. B. Bell, in the CIC hut, after considering breakfast courses an auld wife's nicety, issued tomato soup in porridge, with burnt toast to absorb gut gases, his fuel-intake for a perilous ice dance up Green Gully. And so it goes on, adding to reputations, putting character into people, matching human foibles with old routes. Big names, no need to mention them, fulfill their roles, and hang on in their glamorous niches. Fresh heroes are put in respectable alcoves: Kellett rampaging on his pacific blitzkrieg on the unsolved lines, Geddes projecting his dedication on transnational cool hitch hikes to the Ben and nurturing new attitudes, the ecto-twins Lang and Quinn still long-armed chopping up the last classics in the van of a revolutionary surge of the foraying sharp tool wielders and drooped pick nailers.

However, the history requires you to have a mountain mastermind with instant recall facilities, an intimate sense of both time and place, and an encyclopaedic backcloth on which to paint in the cracks and crannies on the strange lost buttresses where the slimy slicks hide their ice. You have to be in the business of what goes where with whom and when.

The reader's problem of finding his way is aggravated by the quality of the infrequent relevant photos, dragged out of antique archives, and for worse by the absence of face photos or route line drawings. One satisfactory remedy exists, firstly for the benefit of the reader and secondly and obviously for the SMT publication board - read this book in conjunction with one of the illustrated guidebooks, and so at the end of the day qualify for a trivial pursuit diploma about the Big Ben, her figures and facts.

This book however is not devoted wholly to the climbers and their world. For example, there is a worthwhile chapter on the arctic-style observatory where apprentice metmen anchored to the base hut read thermometers in sub-zero gales and whiteouts, and a chapter-promoted-out-of-an-appendix about a motley of whisky, foot races, cars and aluminium. Actual appendices cover the nat hist and geol of Nibheis, the mapping thereof, and a mountaineering glossary so that the uninitiated can start reading from the back of the book.

Herewith, this tome, a guidebook companion to Ben Nevis. Put it on your shelf, and re-read every November in anticipation of the first sprinkle of winter snow as it redusts our highest top, and sifts silently into the cauldron of the cold climb.

P.W.F.G.

Ben Nevis: Britain's Highest Mountain. By Ken Crocket, Scottish Mountaineering Trust, 1986. £14.95.

This excellent history of Ben Nevis by Crocket is the third publication of the Scottish Mountaineering Trust to stray beyond the familiar ground trodden by the district and

rock-climbing guides. Unlike *Scotland's Mountains* and *The Munros*, however, *Ben Nevis* is a book for the Ultramontane reader, with few concessions (so far as subject matter is concerned) to the Salvationists or general reader. These concessions consist of chapters dealing with the opinions of early visitors such as Keats, Macculloch and Forbes; with the old summit Observatory – this is a fascinating and evocative account – and with non-mountaineering uses of the mountain for the production of whisky, aluminium and records (e.g. the Foot-race and other wretched aberrations which highest mountains inevitably attract). In addition to these three chapters, *Ben Nevis* has a final scree of scientific appendices and a careful mountaineering glossary. It takes unusual detachment to identify and respond to the eccentricities which the Ultramontane impart to commonplace words like *corner* or *hold* and Crocket has managed this commendably well. The scientific section deserves some comment, and gets it later, but it contains an item which excited this reader more than any other in the book – the story of the intrepid badger who, tumbling down wintry Green Gully, immediately and vigorously attempted the first meline winter ascent. A close shave, indeed!

What will the general reader make of the meat of the book, which is a very comprehensive history of climbing on Ben Nevis from the visit of the Hopkinsons to the present? Presumably the Trust, and certainly Crocket, hope that this material will engender an interest sufficient to stimulate substantial sales. One problem is of course that the context for those deeds is the general history of British mountaineering, yet here that context is largely (and necessarily) limited to happenings on Ben Nevis. While Crocket takes time to introduce key individuals such as Naismith, Raeburn and Kellett in a fairly comprehensive way, others climb into the pages in a way that presupposes some familiarity. For the sophisticated reader, who enjoys this familiarity, there is no such problem. Crocket's account of the history is accurate and always interesting. There is a good deal of fresh material, particularly regarding Naismith and Kellett, and the activities of MacPhee and Bell are given deserved prominence. It is easy to forget that these latter two cantankerous individuals achieved a great deal during the long dog years between the Golden Victorian Age and the Renaissance of the Fifties initiated by the Creag Dhu, Marshall, Patey and the Rock and Ice. The treatment as a whole is evidently the product of many years of painstaking and scrupulous scholarship by Crocket, who deserves our praise and thanks for his efforts. It is easy to think of media hacks around Britain who might have attempted this history and who would have spoiled the market with a half-decent more-or-less botched job and so it is a source of great satisfaction to see one of our own, not a paid scribbler, so successfully nipping these ugly blooms in the bud. A final accolade, before turning to a paragraph of muted criticism, is due to Crocket for his selection of photographs, and to those who helped produce the book for the tasteful way in which these are presented. What a pleasure to see so many unfamiliar photographs, dug out by what must have been a prodigious effort of research and correspondence; to see historical photographs used wherever possible and to see photographs illustrating text rather than the customary 'coffee-table' converse!

As for brick-bats, I have one moderate boulder and a few small stones to trundle. Dropping the stones first, Robin Smith's middle name was Chalmers, not Clark; the colourful history of JMCS bus-meets was not anonymous, but a product of the fevered recollection of Geoff Dutton; the layout of the text shudders and spasms whenever dialogue or quotation is encountered; and a story I told Crocket about Marshall slipping on the descent from the First Platform has been blown out of proportion – when ordinary mortals slip on Ben Nevis they are certainly in peril, but when Marshall slips only a dunce would foresee any outcome other than an instant recovery and a cheery leer for the mountain's gods.

The boulder I would like to roll is concerned with conservation. Ben Nevis like our other mountains, is constantly at risk from the attentions of vandals personal and institutional, from inside and outside mountaineering. Its flanks are encumbered by roads, 'forest', water and pipe works, beaten paths; its upper slopes are trampled by multitudes, infested by helicopters and threatened by worse incursions; its summit is bestrewn with ugly artifacts including a barbarous assemblage of plaques and memorials, complete with plastic wreaths. Worst of all, the highest point is occupied by a filthy corrugated shack, painted bright orange, in which passing tourists – in Dutton's unforgettable phrase – 'take their natural ease.' To use the hideous parlance of the present-day planner, Crocket's scientific appendices and his chronicle of our struggles with the crags establish

the *heritage value* of Ben Nevis in the plainest way. But what of the future? What steps should we as Club or nation be taking to preserve or restore this heritage? On this question, Crocket remains silent. I must say that I feel an opportunity for much-needed advocacy has been neglected or spurned. Perhaps this could be rectified in later editions. At least, the reader should be informed of the Club's own struggles to come to terms with the requirements of mountain conservation; of the present worries about whether the advantages of the C.I.C. Hut outweigh its possible negative effects on 'the resource,' and certainly he should be told about the extraordinary affair of the summit indicator, erected by the Club as a memorial to members lost in the Great War. Of course this artifact, whatever the views of members might be, appears to outsiders as a creature walking on all fours with the memorials that presently disfigure the summit and, indeed, as the creature that led the way. Yet within the Club, only one voice was raised against it at the time, that of Percy Unna!

R.N.C.

Scottish New Routes. – By Rab Anderson and Gary Latter, (published by the authors, 216 pages, 5 diagrams, 161 × 104 mm, £5.95).

Though the information it contains has been taken partly from the *SMCJ*, this guide, like its predecessor – the Lomond Climbing Group's 1980 'Scotrock' – should not be thought of as a pirate guide. There is probably little intent and certainly little likelihood of either book accruing more than token profit. It appears then that the publishers have set out to fill what they consider a pressing need for a new climb's supplement and their case has ample precedent in the frequency of such publications by the BMC, the Climbers' Club, and the Fell & Rock. To counter the publisher's view by pointing to the *SMCJ*'s role in collecting and publishing new routes annually is to make the dual claim that the *SMCJ*'s listing is comprehensive and that the *Journal* has a format and distribution volume relevant to demand – the first claim is questionable and the second more so.

Regarding the book's content, more diagrams would have been welcome, but otherwise the 800 routes have been widely gathered: there are some well-informed asides on routes/gradings as yet unconfirmed by second ascensionists; some corrections to previously published route descriptions; and, some bold changes to gradings including E and technical grades for all-embracing 'Very Severses' on Ben Nevis. Both the Northern Highlands and the Cairngorms are excluded – the one steadily because of the *SMC* guide in preparation and the second presumably because of the recent Fyffe/Nisbet guide. The editors properly acknowledge their sources and are open about their role as recorders of information rather than writers of a definitive guide. There is a first ascent list but no index. In production the book is sturdy, the type-setting very clear, and the format convenient for a trousers pocket, though rounded corners would have made a nice finishing touch.

P.H.H.

Twenty Years on Ben Nevis. – By William T. Kilgour, (Anglesey Books, 1985, 168 pages, with photographs and line drawings, £5.95).

First issued in 1905 and reprinted in a second edition a year later, this book has become something of a collector's item. Its appearance in paperback form of a facsimile of the 1906 edition is therefore welcome, but a book of this staying power and semi-classic status clearly defies review. It is, of course, not really a mountaineering book (although the *SMC* gets a whole chapter to itself), but more a window on late Victorian and Edwardian attitudes to the mountain environment in general, and the Scottish Highlands in particular.

A lot of subjects have not lost their topicality in 80 years – the folly of fell running, the pleasures of trundling, the tedium of log books, the absurdity of climbing and, above all, the weather. I wonder what readers of Crocket's book on the Ben will make of it 80 years hence. (Will the SMT be issuing facsimile editions?). Even those normally allergic to mountain literature should try this book – taken in the spirit intended, it is a lot of (Victorian) fun.

C.J.G.

On and Off the Rocks. – By Jim Perrin (Gollancz, 192 pages, £10.95).

'On and Off the Rocks' is an illustrated selection of previously published essays covering a wide spectrum of mountain matters, from rock climbs to biographies to conversation issues. Many of the essays will be familiar to readers of British climbing 'glossies.' Much of the writing is deeply personal and all of it delivered with a verve and candour so characteristic of Perrin's work. His passionate love of nature and mountain country shines through the most analytical and wordy passages and even allows the reader to forgive the over-indulgence in obscure quotes.

Perrin is a man of conscience, a man of insight and, as his crafted biographies illustrate, a not uncritical observer of his fellow man. The use of language, though occasionally convoluted, is most impressive; a moulding of words into sensual images, creating the very texture of the rock, the pure elation of the moment. He uses the stark realism of a four letter word as effectively as the muted colours of an upland landscape. If there is a real failing it is perhaps in the dearth of humour, but then this is serious writing!

In one of his many enlightened reflections Perrin states: 'All places that we like best have an atmosphere which blends familiarity with mystery, and our fondness for them is a synthesis of the two.' Herein, for me, lies the great attraction of his collection of essays; that unerring ability to strike a sensitive personal chord within the reader whilst retaining some nuance that encourages a second and third reading.

This is an inspired collection – the best for decades. Thoroughly recommended.

G.E.L.

Borrowdale. – By Dave Armstrong and Ron Kenyon, (Fell and Rock Climbing Club, £7.50).

Ease of access and high quality climbing on low-lying crags have combined to make Borrowdale one of the most popular valleys in the Lake District. But for a number of years, the area has suffered from an unpopular and out of date guidebook. The authors hope to have reversed this frustrating state of affairs, with the Fell and Rock Climbing Club's sixth Borrowdale edition. The guide is the second of the club's new series with stylish covers, in-text colour photographs and all the information required by today's buyer. In fact, climbers in the valley now have a considerable amount of detail at their fingertips including; technical grades for MVS and above, E-grades, first ascent dates and a star system.

The two guide book writers even have a suggestion for those who feel too much information spoils the spirit of adventure: leave the guide at home!

There are 250 new routes in this book, many of considerable quality, as well as a major new crag at Reecastle and 20 desperate boulder problems on The Bowderstone.

The eight colour photographs are worthwhile and quite inspiring, but probably account for a fair slice of the price tag. It is a pity to see the end of W. Heaton Cooper's artistic illustrations, but Al Phizacklea's precise diagrams are a major improvement. However, some are hard to follow with route lines and numbers having little presence on the page, a situation which might have been improved with judicious use of masking fluid. The use of red ink for lines and numbers on the diagrams is inclined to make them 'dance' and I wonder how colour-blind climbers find them.

Finally, the graded list is sure to raise everyone's spirits or hackles or both, whether they climb Very Difficult or E5!

T.P.

Welsh Rock. – By Trevor Jones and Geoff Wilson, (Pic Publications, 317 pages, 62 pages of colour and black and white photographs, £16.95).

In their introduction the authors state that this book does not set out to provide a definitive history of climbing in North Wales. Faced with 100 years of development on some of Britain's major cliffs, a wide remit, and 248 pages of text, the authors have understandably reached for their blue pencils. But it is the information that has been included, rather than what has been left out, that will disappoint many readers, especially those who already know something of Welsh climbing history. So much has already been

written about the cliffs, climbs and personalities that 'Welsh Rock' inevitably covers a lot of old ground. All the familiar old stories are repeated with few new angles and less detail and one cannot help feeling that a definitive history of the Llanberis Pass or Ogwen might not have been a better idea.

Where the book does score is in the fascinating pre-First World War history, in the chapters on the 70's and 80's and when the action shifts to lesser know climbers or developments in outlying areas. Some 62 pages of colour and mono photographs give the book a distinct coffee-table look and though the quality is good, some are definitely a waste of space. A good picture is worth a thousand words, but two pictures of different people falling off the same route - Strawberries - tell the same story: it's hard! Some maps would have been useful just to find the location of Rhoscolyn which is photographed, but not mentioned in the text. A list of references would also have been worthwhile.

At £16.95 the book represents good value considering the number of colour pictures. It is sure to sell well and will delight climbers wanting to learn the history of Welsh climbing, or eager to lead E4 and above.

T.P.

The Munros in Winter. - By Martin Moran, (David & Charles, 1986, 240 pages, a number of maps and illustrations both in colour and black and white, £12.95).

Whatever one may think about record breaking Munros there is no doubt that the completion of all the Munros in one expedition is a considerable undertaking and the fact that it was done over a brief span of only 83 winter days, open winter though it was, is a feat of mental persistence and physical endurance. The book that has emerged as a result is a good one, although showing some signs of haste. The sketch maps which accompany some of the sections are so useful that their absence is badly missed in other sections. The appendices are interesting and worthwhile, although they reveal tenacity for recording detail which is a long way from the carefree approach more usual among mountaineers and even the majority of Munroists.

However, as the reader accompanies Moran in his unrelenting journey he will become impressed by his performance, his determination, and his obsession with saving every possible day, even when he has a week in hand. Central to the whole enterprise is the sacrificial loyalty of his wife, Joy, without whose support the target could not have been achieved. She is perhaps the true heroine of this absorbing tale.

W.D.B.

Climbing in the British Isles. - By W. P. Haskett-Smith and **Ireland** by H. C. Hart. First published in two volumes 1894 and 1895. (Facsimile edition by the Ernest Press, 1986, ISBN 0 948153 02 4, Price £12.00).

This is a thick 'pocket sized' volume with a red hardbacked cover which at first sight appears to be another Selected Climbs covering the whole British Isles. A look inside for one's favourite crag reveals the reality. A modern reprint of Haskett-Smith's two original volumes of over 90 years ago with Scotland reserved for a third volume which presumably never appeared.

So regarding it in a different light. The facsimile print and sketches are extraordinarily similar to the originals and the whole production is excellent. Guide books are not usually read cover to cover but dipped into and the author's laconic turn of phrase soon appears. Thus Bear Rock in Wasdale 'a little difficult to find, especially in summer when the grass is at all long.' All the main areas of the day are given good cover plus some which have since sunk from sight, perhaps to be re-discovered? The Lake District is particularly thoroughly dealt with, ascents of Moss Ghyll and Great Gully by Collie being of interest. Haskett-Smith was a model guide book writer if he visited all the areas mentioned, as various as St. Bees Head and the chalk cliffs of Dover.

Wales does not seem so well dealt with there being a peculiar emphasis on the details of the climbing areas. Likewise Ireland by Hart is thoroughly covered but the freshness and wit are lacking.

The foreword by Jim Perrin is mainly of interest for his biographical information on Haskett-Smith himself, a well bred, intelligent and energetic character.

For those who collect old climbing volumes or, failing the originals, facsimiles, this is one of the best. For others it is a fascinating insight into climbing 100 years ago and might even give ideas for 'new' routes.

I.A.

Extreme Rock. - Compiled by Ken Wilson and Bernard Newman. (Diadem Books, 1987, numerous illustrations, £27.95).

Another big Ken Wilson book and the formula is becoming a bit stale and predictable. Word of this latest venture first got round in the late seventies. In the years to follow great material advances were made in British rock-climbing and the book was inordinately delayed as the compilers struggled to keep up with events and include the outstanding new routes. Added to the problems of press-ganging the various contributors, the organisation of this book can have been no easy task. Nevertheless, at so many years in the making, and with such a price-tag, we might have expected something special, and this is not the case.

The book has been well enough gathered, as is to be expected from its main editor. As boss of Mountain (the magazine everyone is seething about, as Patey put it), Ken Wilson often seemed intent on bringing out the worst in us, propelling climbing into a striving rat-race (now in full flight as men in funny trousers try to outclimb each other for money). In spite of this the early Mountain was a first-class creation, badly missed in the morass of hype and rubbishy reportage of today's magazines. This awareness and authority shows through in the preface and introductory history where the various influences and trends are well-defined and the current 'bold or be bold' dilemma clearly explained. The Scottish section is perhaps the weak point in this short but excellent introduction and could have been more discerning even in the brief space allotted. Cubby's clutch of advanced Cave Crag routes are surprisingly not deemed worth a mention. Also unchronicled is Spence's remarkably bold lead of The Hill, way back in 1967. The same goes for Dubh Loch's Gulliver, which (like Haystack) was an outstanding piece of cragmanship. The committing nature of such strenuous journeys into the unknown is easily underestimated by today's fitter, better-equipped, and less alcoholic climbers. Nicholson and Carrington were probably climbing as well as anyone down south at this time, in an environment much less favourable for hard climbing.

The most serious oversight in the historical section in general is the mention of the abandonment of bold on-sight leading of this type. Cleaning by abseil has become a necessity as routes have got harder, e.g., Whillance got nowhere reconnoitering Flodden on-sight. It is a sad fact that all the excitement and interest of exploration now comes while dangling on an abseil rope, where it is easy to succumb to the temptation of trying out moves and protection. This matter of prior knowledge is glossed over in many histories and the importance of many ascents is questionable and needy of qualification. Many of the gritstone and limestone routes were in fact rehearsed on abseil or top-roped first. Bitter Oasis and Footless Crow are relevant studies on a bigger crag, in that Livesey considered them comparable in standard, no doubt an indication of the relative familiarity gained *en rappel*. Few of us can be free from guilt in this respect, and a time-machine would be useful equipment for future historians, zapping around the crags to see what tricks the explorers got up to.

Scotland apart, there is not much else to quibble about in the history. I suspect, however, that some of the Northumberland climbs deserve credit alongside some gritstone ones. There is a whiff of chauvinism as the conspiracy to ignore Henry Barber's influence continues.

The choice of routes and areas is as always open to controversy. An enigmatic decision was made to 'concentrate on areas of national interest.' This means including Swanage and Gurnard's Head, and missing out Cheddar and Northumberland. They seem to have got their islands outside-in, because the Outer Hebrides are in, and, absurdly, Arran out. The other most notable omissions from Scotland are probably Lochnagar, Carnmore, and Coire Mhic Fhearchair. I suspect that 'to concentrate on areas with eager contributors' might have been a more accurate description.

Readers automatically scan their own stamping grounds for inaccuracies, and a couple of comments on the Cairngorms are called for here. On Shelter Stone Crag the Needle is unjustly slighted. It is no more disjointed than the routes to its left, and just as

sustained in its grade. Also the Haystack pioneers seem to have been libelled with the suggestion that they took the Steeple ramp on the first ascent. At Dubh Loch Naked Ape is gaining celebrity, and rightly so, but at the expense of The Ascent of Man, which is a more natural line, in fact arguably the most challenging unclimbed line in Scotland at the time. This was the first route up the big 'impossible' wall, and as such deserved at least a mention in history or text.

In their parting comment on Scotland, the editors express some concern that the Creag a' Bhancair bolts will initiate bolting on the other mountain crags. Such fears are probably unfounded, at least for the time being, since the Tunnel Wall is a unique case and the old aid-bolts provided some excuse. This spread of guilt back through time also applies to Cave Crag, where Marlene is perhaps a more dubious case, because this is a line which could have been climbed with the usual pegs, nuts, and friends. Yet later ascensionists chose to add bolts, not eliminate them.

The history is only a brief section at the start of the book but I think it would have been better if the compilers had responded to the 'desperate need for a really authoritative national climbing history' and produced this scholarly work themselves. They are after all Editor and Past-editor of our main climbing magazine. Some of the essays in Extreme Rock are commendable (the Creag Dubh one for example) but many are only worth reading for information on the particular routes, and surely the guide-book tells us enough on that score. A historical work would have spared us much of the repetitive tedium while still including worthwhile sections from chosen writers.

These criticisms I feel also apply to the photos, which make the main impact in a book of this type. Many of them are in colour and the initial effect is pleasing to a reader expecting the usual black and white of Hard Rock and Cold climbs. This impression is not sustained however, since many of the shots are the routine stuff which has already become over-familiar in the magazines. The editorial decision to concentrate on 'action shots that depict important technical detail' can't have helped in this respect. This approach reaches a nadir in the Right Wall sequence which more or less shows how to climb the route's crux. Some of the most accessible of crags have inspired mediocre camera-work. It might be something of an expedition to gain good photos of Creag Dhubh Dhibadail, but we might have expected better at the likes of Almscliff or Curbar. The stunning shots of Beau Geste only underline what could have been achieved elsewhere. If the photos lack any one quality in particular it is atmosphere. John Cleare's sole studies on the Cromlech bring on nostalgia for 'Rock Climbers in Action in Snowdonia.' Climbing photography in Britain has stagnated for many years now. Distance shots are often the most evocative, bringing out not only the grandeur of a cliff but also its essential character. Classics from the past which spring to mind are O'Hara's well-known Dragon portrait, and the one of Brown attempting White Slab. The Lakes section is particularly disappointing in this respect, where spectacular routes such as Cumbrian and Bitter Oasis are rendered anonymous by lousy photography. Surely shots of Dove Crag would have been better than Langdale's measly Raven Crag, depicted here. The opportunist shots at Dubh Loch show what might have been achieved on other crags by single-minded professionals. (And Dubh Loch is not very photogenic).

What the best photos do display, however, is the dismaying level of strength and fitness which will be required from tomorrow's hot-shots. The limestone shots are among the better ones in the book, and those of German strong-man Wolfgang Gullich at Kilnsey well demonstrate the heinous steepness and strenuousness of the futuristic route. Young hopefuls would best benefit by defecting to the apes of the jungle at a tender age, or else live the life of an ascetic, like that other Wilson (of the Wizard, not Mountain) and set up home in a cave out on the moors.

Finally, there remains the big question as to whether we really want books of this sort, and many climbers in Scotland have their doubts. We are used to a reasonable amount of peace and quiet on Scottish cliffs but you never know what you've got till it's gone, as the song says. Down south they are so used to crowded crags that it is accepted as the norm. Some of the gritstone and limestone routes in this book are already so polished as to bear little resemblance to the original experience. Why funnel mobs of climbers onto our best routes? The walking books are even worse in this respect. The obvious results are loss of seclusion, crowded bothies, and erosion. Hair-raising stories circulate about the antics on Ben Nevis in winter, and Lochnagar is getting just as bad.

How much to blame is 'Cold Climbs?' The classic retort to this argument is that there are still plenty of quiet hills and crags for the lover of solitude. But I don't think John Muir would have happily watched the ravages in Yosemite just because there remained tranquil (but lesser) places over the head of the valley.

It is obvious that the commercial success of these books is dependent upon the great numbers of us now going to the hills, so it is not surprising that the media-men stay quiet about the attendant drawbacks. We can be glad about the areas missed out, while no doubt the Irish will sigh with relief over the neglect of Fair Head and the rest. It is this outlook which, in Scotland, Extreme Rock refers to as 'a curious strain of perverse romanticism! Clearly this is a perversion worth encouraging, if only to irritate Ken Wilson.

D.D.

Native Stones – A book about climbing. – By Davis Craig (Secker and Warburg, 213 pages, £10.95).

David Craig is a poet who, after only cursory encounter with the hills in his boyhood Aberdeenshire, took up rock climbing in his forties while living in England. This is very much a book about the relation and reaction between the man (the author) and the medium (rock as it manifests itself in England and Wales). This is not to say it excludes other climbs and cliffs; there is frequent mention of Scotland, the Dolomites and other places, but the terms of reference are those of the rock climber who has developed on the crags of Cumbria. However, the involvement is intense, and the philosophic exploration of the relationship between the man and his chosen arena is thorough and frank. David Craig is not only a poet but a university teacher of English and the literary standard is high. Do not look for compelling narrative for that is not what this book seeks to provide, but the insight and sensitivity of its treatment of themes such as 'the fear threshold' in rock climbing, the concept of intimacy with the rock itself and the analysis of 'the reason why' are as good and thought provoking as you will find anywhere.

A few pieces have appeared as articles elsewhere and I recall having previously read the fine account of an ascent along with its progenitor, Ed Drummond of *A Dream of White Horses*. Here and there, the going is a little heavy as in the section on climbing writing – laden with quotations and references from books, anthologies and the glossies, yet strangely ignorant of the climbing journals in which some of the material originally appeared. However, this is unwarranted carping at a worthy addition to the climbing bookshelf, a work which will raise echoes from the unexpressed feelings of many a reader of this journal.

W.D.B.

Journals of Kindred Clubs

Results of the 1983 Himalayan Conference

The German Alpine Club held an international conference in Munich in 1983, largely concerned with the affects of tourism in the Himalaya, particularly Nepal. Geoff Cohen writes, 'The well-produced English edition of the proceedings are now available. This brings together some useful material, though many of the recommendations are generalised to the point of blandness.

Many people are aware of the ecological and developmental problems facing the mountain areas of Nepal, but solutions are hard to implement. We are rightly warned here against the instant expert who, on the basis of a four week trek, 'understand everything' and 'sees through' the tourism industry. So what do the self-appointed experts of this volume, with their many years of experience, recommend? Here is just a small sample.

Tourists should share burdens and comforts equally between porters and trekkers; not go on house or village visits; not photograph people; not give money to beggars. Tour organisers should distract tourists from the 'human zoo'; erect depots for fuel; provide plastic sacks and dig trenches for rubbish; give local people more say in the planning of tours; support training for local employees. Host governments should take measures to control tourism by introducing tourism taxes and limiting the number of days tourists can spend in a district.

Even if there is a slightly authoritarian flavour to these recommendations, nevertheless much of what is proposed seems sensible, especially after reading the catalogue of negative consequences of increased tourism contained here. All the same there is a positive side too, well brought out by a description of some of the groups that have sprung up in Germany, who sponsor education, afforestation, renovation of antiquities and suchlike through their own private initiatives, often arising as a result of trekking or tourist experiences.

It is also interesting to see in this volume quite clear antagonisms between different contributors. Apparently there is 'hard' tourism and 'soft' tourism, the latter dividing into two sub-species. While these with a financial stake in organised trekking concentrate their advocacy on better training for mountain guides and sirdars, some who feel more strongly about bigger groups point to the beam in the DAV's own eye, for it too apparently organises group trips with advertising copy of the 'human zoo' and 'last unspoilt wilderness' variety.

At least the Germans debate these problems seriously and seek earnestly for solutions. There is not much evidence of the same level of concern over here.'

The Alpine Journal 1986.

I had to keep dipping into this edition of the Alpine Journal, not because it kept drawing me back, rather because the going was too heavy for a prolonged session. From the subject matter of many of the articles it is obvious that there are many competent mountaineers now visiting the greater ranges as the Alps were visited in the past. It is a pity that in the main their competence does not extend to producing good accounts of those trips. Most of the articles are written in the same style – factual, full of detail, but not terribly interesting. More thought, better use of words, and a bit of colour would have made the reading pleasurable.

As usual in this Journal, there are a large number of photographs, mainly black and white. Most of the photographs however seem to be the same angle shot of similar mountains. The best colour photographs are by an SMC member, and the reproductions of paintings add some interest. There are a few articles which make the Journal worth reading. The one regarding the bicentennial of the first ascent of Mont Blanc is well written, is amusing in places, and carries a lot of interesting snippets. The article on Australian climbing makes this reviewer realise that the Dumbarton Rock creepy crawlies may not be so awful after all. At least they don't shed skins and bite.

If you are really into collecting mountain information then the Alpine Journal is a must, the information is all there. However if like me you prefer to enjoy your reading, spend your money on some other publication.

A.W.

Berg '87 – published by the Austrian, German and South Tyrolean Alpine Clubs.

This lavish production is an example of the indulgence afforded by a well-funded organisation, for the publishers must count their subscriptions in tens of thousands – which is not to say that the book is not commercially viable but that no other type of publisher would risk lumping such a disparate group of articles in such a sumptuous printing. Articles are clearly ordered under section headings such as 'General mountaineering,' 'Art/Culture,' and 'Preservation of Natural Beauty,' and, an air of introspection and seriousness in the writing lends a certain Germanic character to the whole. Under the heading of 'Regional Survey' there is a 70 page history of climbing in the 'Kaisergebirge;' under 'Conservation' an investigative article on the deforestation of Nepal, with a not totally gloomy conclusion and with a hefty bibliography covering 2 pages. Under the same heading another writer raises the question of how many people the countryside can tolerate while still providing the qualities of solitude and natural beauty that are sought. Three of the five articles under 'General mountaineering' – 'The price of the siege on the vertical,' 'Climbing in the mirror of psychology or under the light of philosophy,' and 'On the motivation of the disabled on the mountain' – make heavy reading, but an affectionate review of climbing films from the 1920's to the ambitious, Himalayan projects of today, and a description of the exhibition of Alpine paintings featuring Cezanne alongside E. T. Compton, lighten the balance. Throughout

the book illustrations abound – many double-page colour groupings some of which are breathtaking; fine reproductions of paintings with one of an oil by Otto Bauriedl looking as though the paint daubs stand out from the page; and numerous black and white illustrations of good quality – and for these alone the book is worth a browse.

P. H. H.

The Climbers Club Journal 1985/86.

A large part of this 232 page Journal is concerned with the celebration of the Diamond Jubilee of the CC's hut in Snowdonia, Helyg. As such it also covers a lot of the history of the Club, and contrasts present day attitudes with those of the past. This alone repays a browse through this excellent edition. The other articles vary from poetry through fiction to factual accounts of modern rock climbs. I didn't like all the articles (you don't expect to in a selection of this size) but I enjoyed the great majority. Some are excellent; I particularly liked the report of the current President and Vice-President (combined ages of over a 100, and complaining that they'd only been able to do a few 'E' grade routes as training because of the poor Spring in 1985) completing an ascent of the Phillipp-Flamm on the Civetta, one of the hardest routes of the 50's and still deserving respect. There's hope yet! An interesting point that came up a number of times was that the CC suffered a crisis over the admission of women. All now agree that the right decision was made – but such thoughts could be considered subversive, and if you're prone to apoplexy when confronted with the subject....well, you have been warned.

R. D. E.

Club Alpino Italiano's LA RIVISTA: Anno 107 – N. 3 and 4.

Perhaps many members are unaware of the range of periodicals kept in the Club's library – a printed list of books and periodicals with an annual supplement would be a boon. Had there been wider knowledge about 'La Rivista' then maybe Robin Campbell would have taken a stove to the Praderio Bivacco (SMCJ vol. XXXI; p.217); Ron Hockey and the writer would not, in a later year, have hunted for the same hut devastated in May 1980 by an avalanche; and the writer would have been prepared for the extra 1000 ft slog to the third site of the Antoldi Bivacco – both previous sites having been swept clear by avalanches (SMCJ vol. XXXII; p.203). Examples like these could no doubt be multiplied and anyone planning climbs in any of the Italian alpine regions would be well advised to browse through recent issues. Over and above factual information about the Alps, these numbers contain – a heated debate, continued from a previous number, about a bungled rescue on Lyskamm; glaciological research in the Baltoro; current information about Balti potters; a grading system carried downwards – facile inférieur? – to cater for hill-walkers; and, news of bivaccos and refugios old and new. Additionally there is a mouth-watering review of the 1985 reprint of Beattie's 1836 tome on the valleys of Piedmont and Dauphiné with all 72 illustrations by Bartlett and Brockendon reproduced.

Imagine the SMC Journal published bi-monthly, printed to high standards in colour, and comprehensive on all aspects of Scottish mountaineering, and you have a picture of La Rivista.

P. H. H.

The Edinburgh University Mountaineering Club Journal 1986.

A pleasant mixture of anecdotes and stories, based on the club's regular meets. The club appears to carry an active core of keen enthusiasts, and it was nice to read an account of every meet, (perhaps something that our own Journal should consider). Of particular interest were the expeditions to the Alps and Himalayas, especially Fraser Alexander's account of Fang Peak, where he manages to capture the excitement and challenge of a 20,000-foot peak.

The Journal is mainly of interest to its own or past membership, however it was an enjoyable read. Perhaps the photographic reproduction could be better, but with the enormous cuts to Scottish Universities this is understandable.

G. R.

Fell and Rock Journal 1986: '100 Years of Rock Climbing in the Lake District.'

Club journals are usually of interest chiefly to the members of that club, guide book writers, and the smug or envious editors of greater or lesser club journals. Here though is a Club Journal with a difference – this issue, the FRCC's 70th Journal, celebrates the centenary of Haskett-Smith's ascent of Napes Needle, an achievement which signalled the start of rock climbing in the Lake District. The value of this volume, and its most significant and enjoyable section, lies in the sequential 'Short Histories of Lakeland Climbing,' and the reprinted pieces that go with them. Part I (1802-1934) is reprinted from the 1936 Journal (the 50th anniversary issue), Parts II (1935-59), III (1960-69), and IV (1970-85) cover the next half century. The four articles reveal almost as much about the way the sport has changed by their different styles and approaches as they do by their contents.

In their history of the early years Kelly and Doughty begin by suggesting that climbing history '...like the climber's rope, is made up of three interwoven strands,....' perhaps with the arrival of kernmantel rope the record was doomed to degenerate. A modern rope has a thin and garish outer sheath contributing little to the mechanical properties but which nevertheless manages to hold the multiple monofilament strands together. How much longer before we climb on monofilament alone, before the broader aspects of mountaineering and the mountain environment are ignored completely by climbers? As the history develops we see it degenerate to a list of climbs, the thesaurus rapped to find ways of linking the catalogue into prose of a sort; the cragrat as inheritor of an alien tradition; the route names a celebration of contemporary fashions in music and literature. The comment in the last of the 'Short History' sections that the 'The traditional approach of starting at the bottom of the climb is now being attacked....' leads one to wonder, despite being reminded by Tom Price that many traditional climbers made a point of descending routes, whether the climbing world knows its arse from its elbow (as the French might say). But there is hope, some rock athletes leave the roadside, cease writing in a self-conscious modern idiom and begin to communicate with style. There is much that is reassuring in the more ephemeral, but nonetheless enjoyable, 'modern' parts of the Journal.

Nevertheless, the core of this volume, almost half of the book, is the historical section which is amply backed up with reprinted articles (Sansom's 1914 account of Scafell Central Buttress; Haskett-Smith's recollections of the Napes Needle) and some of the amazing photographs taken by the Abraham brothers. (We should be properly grateful to the FRCC that they have contributed time, effort, and money to the preservation and cataloguing of the Abraham's glass plates). For this historical review alone, the volume deserves a place on the shelves of those who manage to secure one of the limited edition of this book.

J. M. L.

The Himalayan Journal, Vol. 42, 1984-1985.

The distinguishing feature of the Himalayan Journal is the wealth of fascinating minutiae detailing many nooks and crannies of the sub-continent's mountains, though with the main emphasis on the Indian areas. The Indian Alpinists obviously have less difficulty than ourselves in obtaining their inner line permits, even if they do have to 'tackle the babies big and small' (p. 49, R. Bhattachargi). It is rather overwhelming to contemplate the number of life-times required to explore even one of the regions mentioned. Further stimulation is supplied by several fine pull out panoramas. One of these accompanies Harish Kapadin's articles on the East Karakoram, where the Indians are now permitting a few joint nationality expeditions, presumably to assist in legitimising their authority over the area. There are several interesting contributions from British climbers – Stephen Venables on the East and West Karakoram, Rick Allen on Gansh II and a amusing article by Tony Saunders on Bojohagur. Perhaps – no, – certainly, the most gripping of many other articles are Roger Marshall's remarkable solo on Kanchenjunga and Voytek Kurtyka's exploits on Broad Peak and Gasherbrum IV. Little wonder that some of the folk you meet returning from valiant efforts on these big peaks have that 'over the Other Side' look about them. In the notes section a worthy effort by our own members, Geoff Cohen and Chris Hundley, to clear up the confusion surrounding the Durung Drum Glacier is frustrated by an (unsolicited) accompanying

sketch map restoring the confusion. Further corrections are apparently to be published. Geoff Dutton will be pleased to know that 'The Ridiculous Mountains' is 'recommended for a bedside chuckle' to the Indian public. To summarise, an essential reference work with some fine articles; as a minor, final quibble, it would have been nice to have had pages 233-247 along with the rest of the Journal.

D.R.

The Journal of the Midland Association of Mountaineers, 1985-1986.

I am not sure if there is such a thing as an average club journal, but if there is, this is distinctly better than average with some good low-key articles. I especially liked John Willison's account of an ascent on Mount Ararat.

C.J.G.

Tararua Tramping Club Journal 1984

Mainly tales of 10-day backpacking trips on a basic diet of dehydrated mince. Highlight is an account of an ascent of Central Gullies, South Face of Mt. Hicks.

D.F.L.

OFFICE BEARERS 1986-87**Honorary President:** ALEXANDER HARRISON, C.B.E.**Honorary Vice-Presidents:** JAMES C. DONALDSON, M.B.E. BILL BENNET**President:** DONALD J. BENNET**Vice-Presidents:** G. PEET, R. T. RICHARDSON.

Honorary Secretary: W. WALLACE, 22 Bonaly Terrace, Edinburgh, EH13 0EL.
Honorary Treasurer: R. HILLCOAT, 1 Cambridge Road, Renfrew. **Honorary Editor:** K. V. CROCKET, 18 Byres Road, Glasgow G11 5JY. **Assistant Editor:** I. H. M. SMART, Auchencleish, Bridge of Cally, By Blairgowrie, Perthshire.
Convener of the Publications Sub-Committee: G. J. TISO, 13 Wellington Place, Leith, Edinburgh. **Publications Manager:** D. J. BENNET, 4 Morven Road, Bearsden, Glasgow G61 3BU. **Honorary Librarian:** A. C. STEAD, Camas Cottage, Portnellan Road, Gartocharn, Dunbartonshire G83 8NL. **Honorary Custodian of Slides:** D. G. PYPER, 3 Keir Circle, Westhill, Skene, Aberdeenshire. **Honorary Meets Secretary:** B. G. S. WARD, 19 Trentham Court, Westhill, Inverness, IV1 2DF. **Convener of the Huts Sub-Committee:** G. S. PEET, 6 Roman Way, Dunblane, Perthshire. **Custodian of the C.I.C. Hut:** R. T. RICHARDSON, 2 Inchlonaig Drive, Balloch, Dunbartonshire. **Custodian of Lagangarbh:** R. G. ROSS, 16 Milton Court, Milton, Dunbartonshire. **Custodian of Ling Hut:** C. ROWLAND, Blackmill Farmhouse, Nr. Cawdor, Nairn. **Committee:** I. ANGELL: R. DUNCAN; R. D. EVERETT; W. A. FORBES; A. FYFFE; G. D. MORRISON; G. S. NICOLL; A. NISBET; D. RUBENS.

Journal Information

Editor: K. V. CROCKET, 18 Byres Road, Glasgow G11 5JY.
New Routes Editor: A. D. NISBET, Glenmore Lodge, Aviemore, Inverness-shire.
Advertisements: H. HENDERSON, 6 Hamilton Crescent, Bishopton, Renfrewshire.
Distribution: D. F. LANG, Hillfoot Hey, 580 Perth Road, Dundee DD2 1PZ.

Articles for the Journal should be submitted before the end of January for publication in the following issue. Lengthy contributions are preferably typed, double-spaced on one side only, and with ample margins. The editor welcomes material from both members and non-members with priority being given to articles of Scottish Mountaineering content. Photographs are also welcome, and should be black and white, unglazed glossy prints preferably 250mm by 200m. All material should be sent to the Editor, address as above.

© All textual matter appearing in this Journal, unless acknowledged, is copyright of the publishers.

The Best of Climbing Gear



PHOENIX

VANGO

koflach



ultimate
No.1 in outdoor equipment



Mountain Equipment
Thinsulate
Thermal Insulation

troll



Gore-Tex

WILD COUNTRY

KARRIMOR



Carrington
Performance
Fabrics

berghaus

DAVID LOW

21 COMMERCIAL STREET, DUNDEE

Telephone (0382) 24501/2

RAC ★ ★

AA ★ ★

KINGS HOUSE

GLENCOE

HOTEL

ARGYLL

WHETHER YOU ARE A WALKER, FISHER, CLIMBER OR SKIER,
YOU WILL FIND A WARM WELCOME AWAITING YOU

OR IF YOU JUST WANT TO RELAX AND ENJOY THE SCENERY
THERE CAN BE NO BETTER PLACE

*This family managed fully modernised Hotel has excellent
facilities including Drying Rooms just in case it rains*

MEET FRIENDS AND FRIENDLY STRANGERS IN THE
COSY ATMOSPHERE OF THE BAR AND LOUNGE

Telephone

(STD 08556) Management 259 or 250 – Guests 260



PHOENIX

Function with flair.

SKI-WEAR



SHELL CLOTHING



TENTS



INSULATED CLOTHING



Phoenix are acknowledged as Britain's premier lightweight tent manufacturers but did you know Phoenix also make some of the finest new concept waterproof and insulated clothing. Not only mountaineering garments but also ski-wear, climbing helmets and sleeping bags. Find out more, send for the new Phoenix colour catalogue now.

PHOENIX MOUNTAINEERING LTD.

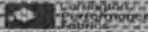
Coquitale Trading Estate, Arnbli, Morpeth, Northumberland NE45 0PE
Telephone: (0665) 710934. Telex: 527681 PHOENIX



Qualifit

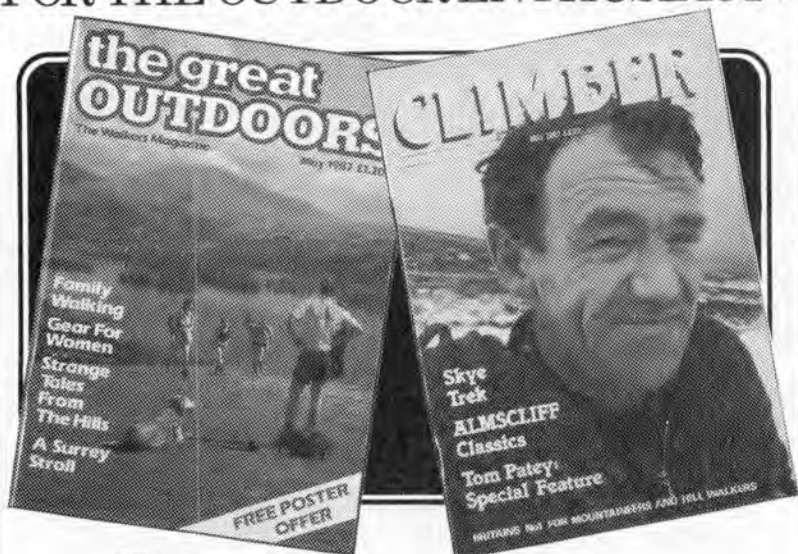
CORE-TEX

Thinsulate



MILES MORE

FOR THE OUTDOOR ENTHUSIAST!



the great OUTDOORS CLIMBER

If you like to get away from it all, you'll find these magazines are right on your wavelength. Packed with great **PHOTOGRAPHY, NEWS** and **VIEWS**, from the UK and abroad, interesting **COLOUR FEATURES** and **GEAR REVIEWS** on all the latest equipment – they're two signs of civilization you will want to take with you.

Available **NOW** from your Newsagent, Outdoor Sports Shop, or for Subscription details, write to:

**SUBSCRIPTIONS DEPARTMENT, HOLMES McDOUGALL LTD,
RAVENSEFT HOUSE, 302 ST. VINCENT STREET,
GLASGOW G2 5NL, or telephone 041-221 7000.**



SCOTTISH MOUNTAINEERING CLUB

DISTRICT GUIDES

Southern Uplands	£9.95
Southern Highlands – Revised Edition	£10.95
Central Highlands	£9.95
Western Highlands	£9.95
The Cairngorms – Revised Edition	£10.95
Northern Highlands	£9.95
Isle of Skye (3rd Edition)	£9.95

SCRAMBLERS GUIDE

Black Cuillin Ridge	£3.95
---------------------	-------

ROCK CLIMBING GUIDES

Arran	£4.20
Arrochar (New edition in preparation)	
Ben Nevis	£4.20
Northern Highlands 2	£3.40
Creag Dubh & Craig-a-Barns	£5.95
North East Outcrops of Scotland	£5.95

NEW PUBLICATIONS

BEN NEVIS – Britain's Highest Mountain	
– Ken Crocket	£14.95
Climbers Guide to Central & Southern Scotland	
– Handren	£7.95
Scotlands Mountains	
– W. H. Murray	£15.95
Ski Mountaineering in Scotland	
– Bennet/Wallace	Pub. Oct./Nov.

ROCK & ICE CLIMB SERIES

Glen Coe & Glen Etive	£6.95
Lochaber & Badenoch	£5.95
Cuillin of Skye	£5.95
Cairngorms	£7.95

MAPS

Black Cuillin of Skye	£1.95
Glencoe Area	£1.95

GENERAL PUBLICATIONS

The Munro's	£10.95
Munro's Tables (1984 Revision)	£6.95
A Chance in a Million – Scottish Avalanches	£4.95

Distributed by:

Cordee, 3a De Montfort Street, Leicester

Telephone Leicester 543579

All titles available from climbing shops and good booksellers



ERNEST PRESS FACSIMILES

TWENTY YEARS ON BEN NEVIS Wm. T. Kilgour £5.95

An account of life in the summit observatory, first published in 1905. Illustrated with photographs and drawings. 208 × 148 mm. Soft covers.

CLIMBING IN THE BRITISH ISLES W.P. Haskett Smith £12.00

The first rock-climbing guide to the British Isles. Illustrated with 54 line drawings. Originally two volumes (1894/5) combined into one of 388 pages. 160 × 105 mm. Hard back in red cloth.

Modern foreword by Jim Perrin (see Mountain 108).

THE CUILLIN OF SKYE B.H. Humble £16.00

Ben Humble's classic survey of mountaineering on Skye from the 18th century to the 1950's. Well illustrated with 75 photographs. 255 × 187 mm. Hard back. Publication date October 1986.

Modern foreword by W.H. Murray.

Available from good book shops. Distributed by Cordée.

Bunk and Breakfast
Showers
Drying Room
Cooking Facilities

Cross-Country Ski Hire
Instruction and Guiding in
Skiing and Mountaineering
Mountain Bike Hire

BRAEMAR OUTDOOR CENTRE

15 MAR ROAD
BRAEMAR
AB3 5YL
(03383) 242

Glenshee 7 miles
Linn of Dee 6 miles
Local transport available

MEMBERS



*are asked to support the Advertisers
in the Journal and to mention the
Journal in any communications with*



ADVERTISERS

IT PAYS! TO ADVERTISE IN THIS JOURNAL

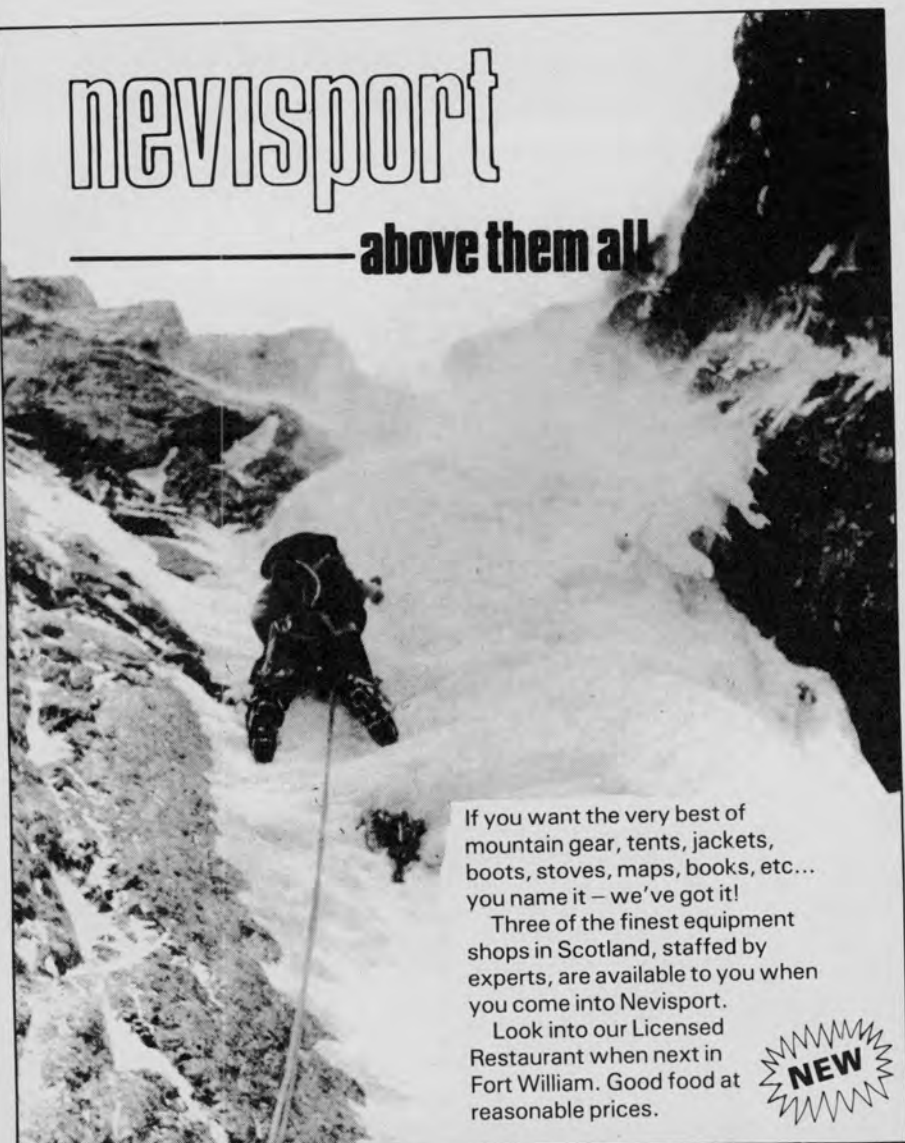
- Inexpensive
- Circulation of 1200
- Read by mountaineers
and hill-walkers

Further details from:

HAMISH HENDERSON
6 HAMILTON CRESCENT
BISHOPTON
RENFREWSHIRE
Tel. Bishopton 862251

nevisport

above them all



If you want the very best of mountain gear, tents, jackets, boots, stoves, maps, books, etc... you name it – we've got it!

Three of the finest equipment shops in Scotland, staffed by experts, are available to you when you come into Nevisport.

Look into our Licensed Restaurant when next in Fort William. Good food at reasonable prices.

NEW

GLASGOW

261 Sauchiehall Street

GLASGOW

Tel: 041-332 4814

FORT WILLIAM

High Street

FORT WILLIAM

Tel: 0397 4921

EDINBURGH

Waverley Market

EDINBURGH

Tel: 031-557 0923

The Great Outdoor Specialist

Mountaineering
Backpacking
Ski-clothing
Travelling
Canoes

NEW 4th FLOOR
NOW OPEN AT
ROSE STREET EDINBURGH



THISTLE CENTRE, STIRLING ● ROSE STREET PRECINCT, EDINBURGH ●
WELLINGTON PLACE, LEITH, EDINBURGH ● NETHERKIRKGATE, ABERDEEN