

THE  
SCOTTISH  
MOUNTAINEERING  
CLUB JOURNAL



VOL. XXXIV

No. 179


1988

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EDITED BY K. V. CROCKET

Published by THE SCOTTISH MOUNTAINEERING CLUB

Printed in Scotland by Culross  the printers, Coupar Angus, Perthshire

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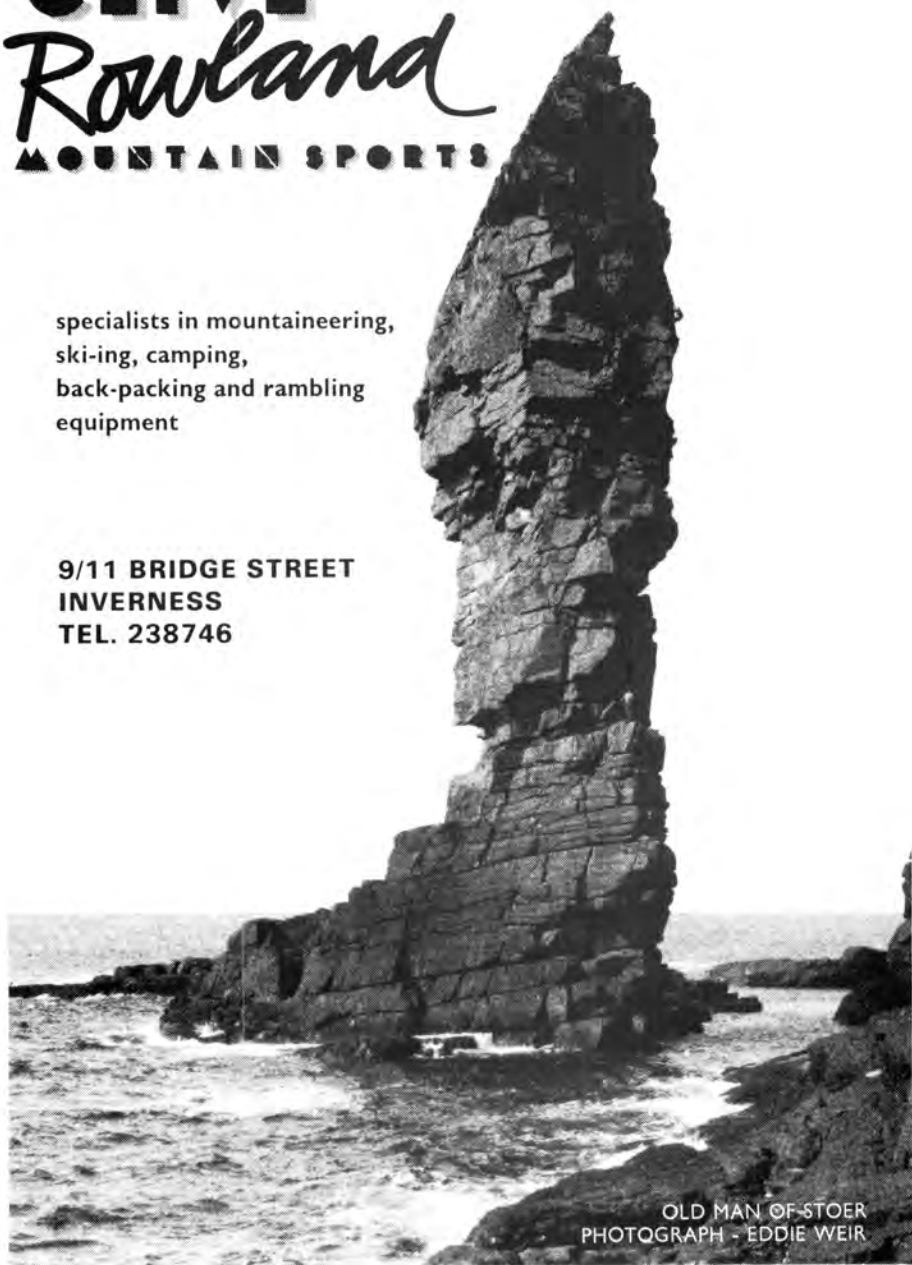
ISSN 0080 - 813X

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

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OLD MAN OF-STOER  
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Two Step Corner, Ben Nevis

*Photo: Godfrey Perreux*

# THE SCOTTISH MOUNTAINEERING CLUB JOURNAL

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## SCOTTISH WINTER CLIMBING

By Godefroy Perroux

(Translation by A. H. Hendry)

*Godefroy Perroux first came to our attention through Bob Richardson, the worthy Cerberus of the C.I.C. Hut. Perroux was camping, and unlike some neighbours was making no fuss about his privations. He was also obviously very competent. Bob being soft-centred, Perroux was enlightened as to the booking system. As we all surely exhibit a healthy curiosity as to how others see us, he was the obvious climber from whom to commission an article about his Scottish climbing experiences, and to our delight he has readily agreed. We are also fortunate in having the expert services of a club translator.*

*He began ice climbing in 1978, starting, as most of us do, with gullies (Chaud, Tombe Muré, Pré de Bar), but with an ancient axe. A teaching job in Chamonix led to enlistment in the E.H.M., where he seems to have been only too willing to pay his colleagues to take over his duties. He then branched out and started his own ice climbing courses, helped by some equipment from Simond. These courses, run for 12 weeks in the year, start with easy movement on ice and progress to wherever the clients can go, including Ben Nevis. His main centre remains Alpe d'Huez. Now read on...*

SCOTLAND, birthplace of extreme ice, is the ideal place for the ice climber to cling with his axes.

My dream of Scotland was transformed into reality in 1982. With no information except the name of a little town in the Highlands we covered 2000 km non-stop in our quest.

Exhausted by such a long journey, we saw at last our first Scottish mountains in Glen Coe. We also met for the first time English climbers who pointed casually to a valley where one climbed.

Expecting so much, we were not disappointed. Everything we had come for was there in our first route; a little ice, waves of powder snow, bad weather, a hellish wind. What we didn't like was the long approach. We were blissfully happy as we returned to the car, soaked, tired, but under the spell of Twisting Gully.

One name was known to us, Point Five on Ben Nevis, our prize target. Leaving the Youth Hostel our approach felt like a marathon. In the rain and wind we took just under 3 hours to the Hut.

The Ben was incredibly white and everything was frozen. We looked for gullies, aimed for the Curtain, wandered under the cliffs. We could find no obvious line and dodging avalanches we looked through our brand new guide without success. The conditions were the best I have seen in my 5 years' experience but ignorance prevented us from making proper use of them.

We met another party under a looming buttress and asked what it was like. Our conversation was difficult and there was no trace of *entente cordiale* on their side. In spite of this we decided to follow. Our party of five was slow compared to the leading party of two. Observatory Ridge will remain as my most vivid memory of mixed climbing. According to the English party the conditions were foul, much harder than usual. Since this was a classic climb we thought there would be fixed pitons. This was not so, and for our two ropes carrying only 3 pitons and no nuts, the route was harrowing. We literally clung to the English. We had underestimated the Ben, darkness was falling, the length of the route was astonishing. The weather was still bad and we were worried at finding ourselves alone on the summit without compass, map or headlamp and knowing nothing of the descent. Conditions on the summit were fantastic – the violent wind and the pale twilight made it all unreal, like the end of the world. Two of our party started to show signs of exhaustion. It made me think of the Pilier de Freney and the tragedy of Bonatti's party.

It was with relief, not really knowing how we got there, that we found ourselves on a good path near the lochan. Giving thanks to our guides, we left the mountain with respect.

We were overcome by the atmosphere and seriousness of the climbing. We had underestimated this little mountain and its 1345m. This first experience had shown us that Scotland is more than training. With the long approach march, bad weather and difficult descents, Scottish climbing is really taxing.

During the night the weather became really bad, almost like a hurricane, and the off-day which followed let us think of our light-hearted approach. We bought nuts, pitons, map and compass and got ready for Point Five.

The next day by some miracle the weather was splendid, the bog was frozen and we went up by the golf course. The sight of the faces and icy buttresses was beautiful. Drawn like moths to a flame we arrived at a run. With so much new snow the climbing was delicate and we progressed with serpent-like movements on what seemed to be

vertical snow. There was no ice to which to anchor our axes. But improbably, the snow held.

Descending by Tower Gully, Franck, who was leading the second rope became reckless, slipped and twisted an ankle. He was taken down by helicopter.

On our last day for a change of scene we went to Creag Meaghaidh and did the Last Post Direct. There was still a lot of snow and the bad weather had returned.

Our first visit was over and we felt we had real satisfaction from our routes. We were still impressed by the technical standard of the climbs and the commitment necessary. One must pay homage to the pioneers. Their technical level was fantastic and their courage was beyond belief.

With the right frame of mind and the equipment many grade V routes are reasonable for a fit party if the conditions are good. It is worth waiting for these conditions. I can now understand the British ethics which forbid bolts. I accept the custom of protection as one leads, even if nuts, pitons, Friends, Dead Men and so on amount to a lot of weight. Each ascent feels like a first ascent and when it is repeated, it is always an adventure.

Our first visit is still my most vivid memory but other impressions remain. I remember Orion Direct for its continuous difficulty and atmosphere. This year Slav Route provided adventure. The gullies which were most interesting were Vanishing Gully on the Ben and North Post Direct on Creag Meaghaidh. Amongst the ridges Tower Ridge can hold its own with many of the classic routes at Chamonix. I remember the cornices of Two Step Corner and the thrill of a solo ascent of Aphrodite. When I think of walls I think of Smith's Route, sheer magic, and I had to fight hard on Boomers' Requiem in March 87. It is a grade IV route which humbles one. I have not climbed the Minus Gullies but I dream of them.

Travelling to Scotland is now part of life's routine. Every year I finish the season there and still experience the same pleasure. Even if I am beginning to repeat the classic climbs too often – the Curtain 6 times, Green Gully 4 times, Point Five and Zero 3 times – I always manage to find a little part of this climbers' paradise which is new to me.

(Footnote: This winter last, Perroux climbed Minus One Gully. He now plans to make a film on the Ben. May he have luck with the weather...).

## SUPPER AT MINDY'S

By R. L. St. C. Murray

I AM SITTING in Mindy's restaurant on Broadway partaking of a dish called haggis and with me is Waldo Winchester the newspaper scribe. 'Waldo' I say 'what is the meaning of the word addiction,' and Waldo explains that it means wanting something more than somewhat which makes me think that I have no addiction for haggis.

'But' says Waldo, 'why do you want to know and what are you eating.'

'It is a long story, Waldo, which I will now proceed to tell you.'

I press Waldo back in his seat and recount as follows:

Before you came in, I had just been served with my favourite supper of tripe and onions when three guys join me at the table. The first guy is nobody but Harry the Horse; the second guy is nobody but Spanish John; and the third guy is nobody but Little Isadore.

You know that Harry's chosen vocation is to undertake the maiming or elimination of certain parties for a fee paid by certain other parties who wish these first parties maimed or eliminated. Spanish John and Little Isadore also have a vocation which is to hold the parties still while Harry fulfils his vocation.

The presence of these three characters makes me very nervous but I say 'Well Harry, I am very glad to see you.' This is by no means true but I know that Harry does not mind doing a little amateur maiming on his own account and he is liable to commence same if I say how I really feel.

'Yes,' says Harry 'we've been away for some time.' When I say nothing Harry continues: 'Aren't you enough interested to ask where we've been?' And Harry scowls at me. Then Spanish John scowls at me and I wish to say that Spanish John has the scowlingest scowl on Broadway. And I suppose that Little Isadore scowls but it's difficult to tell with Little Isadore.

'Sure, Harry' I say quickly 'but I don't believe in asking questions. I reckon that if you want to tell me, you will tell me.'

This pleases Harry and he smiles. Then Spanish John smiles and I wish to tell you that Spanish John's smile is more frightening than his scowl. And probably Little Isadore smiles but it's difficult to tell with Little Isadore.

'Last year' says Harry, 'things were pretty tough for me what with there being very little work in my line and alcoholic drinks now being

permitted. So when I hear from a certain party of a certain other party who is willing to pay cash money to have a certain other, other party's leg broken, I accept the proposition.'

'Why, Harry' I say, 'breaking someone's leg is practically legal. Surely the party could have asked some plumber to do a simple job like that without paying your price.'

'Yes,' says Harry, 'that's what I thought but it seems that the party is desperate and is willing to pay for the best. Well, the party whose leg is to be broken lives in a little country called Scotland where Scotch comes from.'

'But Harry' I say, 'Scotch comes from England.'

'By no means and not at all' says Harry, 'and anyhow stop interrupting. You're gabbier than a dolls' tea-party.' And I get the old scowl from Harry and from Spanish John and probably from Little Isadore too. So I decide to keep my mouth for eating my tripe and onions, but I find that Spanish John has eaten my tripe and onions and Little Isadore has eaten the roll and butter which Mindy throws in, no extra charge.

'Well,' continues Harry, 'we fetch up in this Scotland and the party who wants the leg broken points out the party whose leg is to be broken. We note his car number and we hire a car and follow him and he drives far into the mountains. Then he stops by the road-side and puts on boots and a back-pack and starts up a path on a steep hill. I have no chance yet to break his leg so the three of us start following him at a safe distance so that he cannot see us. We keep walking on and on and after an hour Spanish John and Little Isadore are suffering in a way that is quite pitiful. Spanish John's feet are hurting and Little Isadore wants me to carry him.'

'Meantime the party due to have his leg broken is ahead of us on a narrow ridge when I slip and fall and fetch up against a rock with my leg doubled under me.'

'Well, what happens next is quite surprising for the guy whose leg is to be broken comes hurrying back and says to us as follows:

'Gentlemen, I am a doctor. Allow me to be of assistance.' In a few minutes he examines my leg and tells me that it's broken here and there. He sends Spanish John and Little Isadore for help and makes me lie so that my leg doesn't hurt so much. I want to walk back but he will not allow it. Maybe he doesn't know about the time when I walk three blocks with a couple of slugs in me and dragging Little Isadore who is badly wounded.'

'The croaker explains that he is Dr Armstrong and that he works in a hospital in the last big town we come through.'

'I see you starting out without boots' he says, 'and I think that you may get into difficulties so I slow down to keep an eye on you. What do you mean by such foolishness?' and he looks at me severely.'

Well, Waldo, this is all most surprising to me for normally anyone who starts issuing instructions to Spanish John and Little Isadore and looking even half severely at Harry the Horse is curtailing his future quite some. But it seems that this Dr Armstrong has a sort of licence to look severely at people and he issues instructions as though he is so sure that they will be obeyed that everybody just naturally does what he says.

'While we are waiting' continues Harry, 'I ask this croaker why he goes scrambling over these rocky hills where there are no taxis or speak-easies or other evidence of civilisation. He tells me that all the mountains in Scotland are listed in some book called Munro's Tables and it is a great achievement to climb them all although it seems no big deal to me as there is no betting and no percentage in the proposition. However, this croaker says some guys get so daffy about it that it becomes an addiction. He has nearly completed them all himself but his assistant in the hospital where he works has climbed only two less, although he thinks this assistant is not always straight about saying how many he has climbed.'

'After some time a rescue party arrives and takes me to hospital and Doc Armstrong goes with me. And the Doc sure carries some weight at this hospital for all the guys in white coats and the nurses rush to do his bidding. He can hardly start to speak but at least three young croakers say 'Yes sir.' It seems the nurses are scared to speak in his presence but they all nod. So in no time I am quite comfortable in bed with my leg in plaster.'

'On the next day Spanish John and Little Isadore come to visit me and I know that this is a situation where they may be tempted to commit larceny although this goes for every situation at that. Of course it is just their fun but everyone is treating me so well that I tell Spanish John and Little Isadore to stay in line which they do pretty well. But after they go the guy in the next bed misses most of his bunch of grapes, and half the patients start counting their grapes, and the guy on the other side cannot find his false teeth.'

'Some days go by and Doc Armstrong says to me as follows: 'You are much better. This is my assistant Doctor Brown who will now look after you.' I give a start of surprise, which is agony on my sore leg, for Doctor Brown is nobody but the guy who hires me to slightly incapacitate Doc Armstrong. Doc Armstrong looks hard at us both but Doc Brown doesn't give me a rap and I make as though it's only my leg hurting.'



When I get Doc Brown alone I say: 'Why do you hire me to maim Doc Armstrong? What have you against such a saviour of mankind?'

At this Doc Brown pulls the curtains around, and starts talking a blue streak: 'Doctor Armstrong does not deserve your admiration for he is a selfish cad. He keeps all the most interesting cases to himself and only gives me the hack work. He never lets me have any days off to knock off some more Munros and it's because he hopes to finish them before me...' He pauses for breath and I take the chance to ask about my fee for the original arrangement and Doc Brown refuses to pay me for breaking my own leg and I think maybe he's right at that. After some back and forth Doc Brown, who seems to be a candidate for removal by men in white coats, except that he wears a white coat himself, gives me an old Scotch recipe as a consolation.'

'Well, Harry' I say, 'you can now set up your own still and start making Scotch. You will be rich and can afford to buy me some more tripe and onions.' I am somewhat nervous at starting a beef to Harry and I don't mention the roll and butter thinking that Mindy will supply same again free of charge.

'This is the sad part of my story' says Harry. 'When we get back to Brooklyn we find that the recipe is not for alcoholic liquor but for some food called haggis. However I can now chill your beef by asking Mindy to make this haggis for you as an experiment.'

'I find this haggis somewhat difficult to take even as a gift. But, Waldo, maybe the readers of your blat would like to hear about this Munro and his Tables. But Waldo says that he is an honourable journalist and that the ethics of his profession would not allow him to inflict such myths and fables on a trusting public.'

**ECOLOGY – A HILL'S VIEWPOINT**

There must be somewhere,  
Surely somewhere  
That can remain free  
Of their boot-spoil and garbage.  
Must their lust triumph?  
Must they impress their conceit  
Upon every vestige,  
Defile our furthestmost recesses  
Into challenges,  
Expeditions and enterprises?  
Must these chromatic Lotharios  
Rape our entire treasury  
Of its infinite innocence,  
Graft and hammer metal into our bones,  
Mutilate our flesh,  
Corrupt their progeny  
Into emulation?

Surely yet, our mother time  
And our sire geology  
Will protect us, the fossils  
Of this accumulating disgustingness  
Become too rare  
Even for glass cases.  
Perhaps yet, we shall dwell inviolate  
Awaiting elemental destiny  
Far from the clink and gleam  
Of accoutred voyeurs.

Tom Rix



*Photo: Grahame Nicoll*

Rab Anderson;  
FWA Neancertal, Lost Valley Buttress, Glencoe. February 1987



Summit Buttress, Stob Ghabhar  
(Upper Couloir behind lowest rocks)

*Photo: Bob Sharp*

## THE UPPER COULOIR OF STOB GHABHAR

By Bob Sharp

THE FIRST time I climbed the Upper Couloir of Stob Ghabhar I took along a student for his introduction to winter mountaineering. Martin was a highly skilled Scottish country dancer, and in the couloir he displayed equal skill with the ice and a total disregard for the bad weather. Not bad for a beginner, although he was a little naive technically. I had just led him over the ice pitch and as he perched next to me on the steep névé he lifted from about knee height a large piton attached to the climbing rope. 'What is this for?' he asked calmly. Controlling my fear in expert fashion I took the peg gingerly from his hand, inserted it back into the hole from where it had just fallen, and proceeded to bang it, in a vain attempt to elicit the metallic ping of a well placed peg. Martin's continued curiosity as to why the peg had departed company from the wall was satisfied with a plausible explanation about metal shrinking with the cold. At least I thought it was plausible! We completed the climb without further event, although I still shiver when I think of the two of us balanced on the steep slope tied to nothing but each other.

I went again last January, this time with two of my colleagues who were also new to the sport. We chose a delightful day and approached the gully via the stalker's path leading into the main coire and the east ridge. At the col near the summit, we tackled up and then dropped steeply across to the foot of the buttress. My colleagues had no knowledge of what would be around the corner and of what shape or form the gully would take. But I knew. I had been there before! In classic leadership style, I strode ahead and rounded the lower rocks to enter the gully proper. As I looked upwards, in disbelief I saw an enormous boulder about 20 feet tall, apparently barring any upward progress. Stunned by this unexpected sight, I thought the stone must be a meteorite or at the very least be the result of an almighty rockfall.

I didn't stop to think that the stone was covered with snow on the previous occasion! Hiding my concern, I led the way closer and tied us on at the base of the block. An easy groove to the right gave a start and then with an absolutely irreversible move I scrabbled to the top. To my disbelief – again – I saw an enormous hole on the other side. Reasoning that I could just about bridge it, I thought the move would go but there didn't seem to be any decent snow on the other side for a good axe purchase. In addition, there was a total absence of footholds. Reluctantly, I decided that reasoning was a waste of time, so I called

to my friends that the climb was over. Never have I seen such disappointment. I reversed the 'impossible' move with a precision jump and landed in a heap of arms and legs between my colleagues. Whatever crumbs of climbing credibility I had left suddenly disappeared totally. Neither of my friends seemed keen to take the initiative, so we trudged away feeling cheated and frustrated and climbed to the summit via a minor gully which compensated not one iota.

On the most recent visit I was accompanied by one of my two friends who was determined to succeed on his second attempt. As part of his preparation, not only had he been mentally rehearsing 'the jump' across the block but he had also alerted friends driving back from Glencoe to check with binoculars on the snow condition of the Upper Couloir! So, on holiday Monday with not a cloud in sight, we tackled the mountain again. We decided to walk up the southerly ridge from Victoria Bridge and follow the trodden path of walkers from the day before. The fresh snow on hard névé made the going tough and proved a real labour. Respite from a ferociously cold wind was difficult to find and it was not until near the col where the east and south ridges meet that we were able to rest for a bite to eat. With renewed strength we climbed to the col and donned harnesses etc. Abseiling over the col was straightforward enough and made all the more easy with the help of a conveniently placed fence post as anchor. We quickly descended to the lower part of the buttress, ignoring the consequences of a slip, and approached the gully proper with cautious optimism. Would the large block be there again and would we be thwarted from our intentions once more? Looking up the gully revealed a clean, uninterrupted line except for the obvious pitch in the middle. The gully was in superb condition – hard névé covered with an inch of light snow, no frozen steps from previous assaults and a clear, blue ice pitch just waiting to be attacked.

The first hundred feet or so we soloed, stopping to tie on about 80 feet below the ice pitch. The rock was quite clear of snow but devoid of cracks for belays, so a trusty deadman solved the problem of anchorage. At this point we reflected on the magnificent situation in which we were ensconced. We were about to climb one of the first recorded Scottish winter climbs and by most definitions, a real classic. It is only a grade II, but its situation so close to the top of the mountain and leading to the very summit gives it a character that is almost unique. With such superb weather and snow conditions, the emotional effect created was overpowering.

The slope up to the pitch steepened slightly and another deadman secured us just below the ice. Two lines seemed possible: a left route up steep snow or a mixed route across to the right and back again. The latter looked the more difficult but offered the opportunity to make four-point

contact with clear ice – a mouth-watering thought which begged to be enacted. Leaving behind my friend's wry comments about pendulum swings, I ventured onto the ice. A magic feeling! Looking decidedly steeper from close on, the ice was not going to provide an intermediate runner (left the ice screws at home!) and some precarious moments were wasted digging randomly for a suitable placement. During this activity my friend requested a photo-call. He is still smarting from the torrent of verbal abuse! With a 'go for it' attitude I engaged top gear and flew up the ice, enjoying the emotional mix of pleasure and fright which only Scottish gullies can provide. Moving to a position some 50 feet above the pitch I sunk another deadman and dug a platform to ease my aching calf muscles. I now smiled at the thought of my camera-happy friend clawing his way over the ice with his old-fashioned axes. This was to be a real test of whether two alpenstock-length axes are of any value in a steep gully! The test failed, and so nearly did my friend. As he 'pawed' away with the pick of each axe, the points kept catching lower down. As a result, he was forced to merely stab at the ice and rely on 'psychological' holds. My tongue-in-cheek requests to 'Climb when ready!' didn't help to improve his confidence, but finally he overcame the ice and approached me with obvious frustration written on his face. We both agreed that 'learning by making mistakes' is not always the best approach.

The last pitch presented no problems. A steep snow climb of 100 ft. to the sharp rim took us out of the spindrift and into the sun once again. Sitting on the summit encrusted in ice and snow we reflected on our success and pondered on others who had experienced such a magnificent climb. How many others had met failure before success? How many had turned back at the ice pitch? And how many had actually savoured the true spirit of a classic climb – the aesthetic line, the difficulties, the remoteness and above all, the camaraderie between two climbers fostered by such conditions.

## POEM

The bare soul will tramp  
deep footprints over trackless snow  
to feel less alone  
in the dead hills'  
emptiness.

Silly, for a night of wind and thaw  
will wipe the saucer of spilled life.  
Where we set blue footprints,  
tomorrow, is grass.

Hamish M. Brown.

## GOOD (OLD) DAYS ABOVE LOCH MAREE

By Hamish M. Brown

*'Beinn Lair is a long flat but broken ridge presenting on its south or Loch Maree side no outstanding features. To the north, however, for a distance of some 2 miles it throws down what is possibly the grandest inland line of cliffs to be found in Scotland.'*

(H. T. Munro).

*'Ben Lair: Graceful, solid and broad.'*

(John Macculloch).

*'We spent a little time on the summit of Beinn Airigh Charr and agreed that hills do not rank by height alone.'*

(G. T. Glover).

IT TOOK time to discover the spectacular nature of these northern hills above Loch Maree, for their grandest faces point northwards to one of Scotland's wildest empty quarters. Loch Maree did not have efficient roads then. The post went on foot along the north shore, which sounds impossible, and boats were the main means of travel till well into the 19th century. Macculloch, writing in 1824, enthuses both about Loch Maree and its hills, at a time when hills were still generally regarded with horror. He is worth part-quoting for he was far ahead of his time. A cart and twelve men helped get his ship's boat from the sea into Loch Maree, along which they rowed on a fair summer day.

'Loch Maree's mountains present a greater diversity of form and character than any of the Scottish lakes. Ben Lair is the principal feature. The middle ground is splendid and wild: rock and wood, silvery clouds and the sun shedding a flood of light over the lake. Even the dark firs and the cold grey cliffs of Ben Lair seemed to rejoice in the bright sunshine, while the warm brown and purple of the heath tinged the nearer hills with that richness of colour known only to these mountainous regions. Every summit assumed a bluer tone till the last peaks emulated the misty azure of the sky into which they melted. It was a scene, as the Emperor Charles said of Florence, too beautiful to be looked at except on holidays. But such days are indeed the holidays of the Highlands, rare and precious and compensating for many previous ones of mist and rain, of weariness and disappointment.

It is not only that nature gives us a keener enjoyment of those gleams of happiness which break through the dreary atmosphere of life



but, as if in compensation of the savage aspect of the mountains derived from bad weather, its hours of sunshine are hours which can be found nowhere else. No one can know the full value of summer who has not known it in a land of mountains, no one can feel, who has not felt it among the hills, the joy which can fill the mind, the sense of beauty, the bounding, exuberant happiness...

Ling and Glover in 1909 made the first serious climbing sortie to these northern cliffs and half their account is taken up telling of their travel to reach the hills. As Ling said 'It is a far cry to Poolewe.' The Munro quote above, made in 1905, was the spur that sent them this way. They hired a charabanc at Achnasheen, a bit taken aback at a fifteen seater just for the two of them. Their 'modest weight' was insufficient to keep the vehicle from bouncing into the loch so they 'were obliged to carry some ballast in the shape of bags of corn.' They walked along the north shore and up and across to the Bealach Mheinnidh (a route I too followed, in reverse) to come on 'the appalling overhangs' of Beinn Lair's north face. They climbed a gully to reach the summit, had a snack where they could look down on Isle Maree and then returned to Poolewe. That would still be a long day's walk today.

The next day a keeper led them round to the north side of Beinn Airigh Char. The great tower, north of the summit, is locally known as Martha's Peak. 'Martha was a legendary heroine who took her goats to pasture on the mountain and was reputed to have made the first and only traverse of the tower. Unfortunately she dropped her distaff and, in endeavouring to recover it, fell and was killed.' Ling and Glover's day on Martha's Peak was exciting enough that they were back again the following year with some other climbers and several new routes were climbed. This sort of chance discovery and an enthusiastic return has marked climbing on these two mountains ever since. Often, on a first visit people had just not been equipped for climbing such unexpected, huge cliffs so they felt compelled to return. Students, with longer holidays, have often been the winners in this game. If today's colourful rock climbers could actually walk they'd find rock beyond their dreams. Thankfully it is a country for those with a touch of the Maccullough enthusiasm.

Having read quite a bit about the area and made some long tramps through it, when I came seeking the summits (they are Corbetts) I did so across Loch Maree - as did Ling, Glover and Co in 1910 - as did Maccullough before 1824. I was to enjoy Maccullough's weather too, the start of a long summer heatwave such as I have never had before, or since, while actively seeking summits. I'd been canoeing further down the west coast and when I drove north it was like blundering into the Sahara. I did not launch on Loch Maree until 7.30 in the evening

and it was still monstrous hot. I paddled out on an oily swell to the choke of islands and had some interesting navigation through their jungly, chunky sandstone chaos as my maps disagreed with each other and with the reality. A startled deer on one island careered off along its shore and right round to come back, almost on top of me again. I rounded Eilean Subhainn and, accompanied by a noisy diver, moved on towards Isle Maree, where I landed.

The old walled graveyard on Isle Maree had all but vanished and the carvings on the few old stones were weathered beyond reading. St. Maelrubha's well, scene of ancient bull sacrifices and many hoped-for cures for insanity, had also disappeared but I found the penny tree, a real oddity. The original tree has died (copper poisoning?) and its bits and pieces, embedded with the scales of coins, lay about among the deep litter of pennies going back over generations. Queen Victoria visited this older tree but now a new oak has taken over and already its trunk had the scaly appearance of an armadillo hide. Pure superstition sees modern man enact this custom of hammering a penny in the tree, for the allied hope of a cure from the well has long gone. The well supposedly went dry after someone dipped a mad dog into it. (The book 'Sacred Waters,' by Janet and Colin Bard, is a good introduction to the topic of wells in Britain). The midges rather curtailed my explorations and I paddled across to the north shore. Maccullough again: 'The northern margin presents rocky, wooded bays and creeks rising into noble overhanging cliffs and mountains. The effect of Sleugach (Slioch, a spear) is perhaps more striking than of any mountain in Scotland. Where the skirts of Ben Lair descend into the water the remains of a forest are almost incredible, producing a landscape that might be expected in the Alps rather than the tamer arrangements of Scottish mountains.'

The long shadows of evening gave a repose to the scene so that even the liquid sound which followed the dip of the oars seemed an intrusion on the hush of nature. The last crimson at length vanished from the summits and all became alike wrapped in one gentle hue of tranquil grey marking the summer twilight of a northern July.'

Maccullough had fun navigating the islands in the gloaming back to the western end of the loch. Even at midnight he recorded the temperature was up over 70°F. I pulled my canoe onto a slope of bracken and camped on a knoll 200 feet up among the oak, birch, alder and holly. It was a world of grey verticalities and vegetative advancing, the hornblende schists and the most northerly outposts of the old wood of Caledonia. 'Camping' was lying stickily inside a sheet bag on top of my rucksack in the heather. There were a lot of wee beasties making scratchy noises and a roding woodcock went round and round on his clockwork flight.

'Ben Lair will well repay the toil to its summit. The height exceeds 3000 feet (mercifully, it is only 2817 ft) and though it produces few alpine plants there is perhaps the greatest variety of quartz in the world, varying from jet black to snow white. The great attraction is the view: and chiefly to the north over the wildest mountains of Ross. It is usual to speak of rocks and precipices, whether present or not, but here they exist with no need of exaggeration. Here are mountains which show the very skeleton of the earth. Everything is gigantic and fearsome, wild and strange and new.'

At 6.30 I was teasing my way up the steep mix of crag and forest which is so typical of this shore of Loch Maree. Slioch had an edging of sunrise brightness and the day soon pulsed and shimmered in the heat haze. The Torridons stood on their heads in the loch below, the reflection and the reality identical. I was not lucky enough to see a sea eagle as did Maccullough. ('Next time' maybe for, since his day, they have become extinct and reintroduced). The gorge of the Allt na Cloich-bheith led to grassier slopes and my devil's halo of flies slowly faded. The flora was quite rich and varied with quiet banks of avens and campion and louder shouts of tormentil and thyme. A wild rose had glowed a ghostly exuberance against the dark trees when I'd landed the night before. It was too hot to botanise properly. I didn't perspire so much as run with salt water. Long before the top my swimming shorts were as wet as if I'd been swimming.

Approaching Meall a' Choire Ghlais I set off some goats (the descendants of Martha's flock perhaps?) but all the deer just lay and let me past. The view all round had largely vanished into haze so when we finally stepped onto the summit of Beinn Airigh Char the view downwards came as a shock. A knoll over a bit made a fine perch. A score of goats were lying on the ridge out to Martha's Peak. A tiny tent, down by one of the lochans gave scale to that lonely country, surely one without equal in Scotland for sheer wildness.

Eventually I went on, down to the Strathan Buidhe pass and up the Middle Hill Meall Mhlinnidh (where a rabbit scampered off on the summit), and down again to the Bealach Mheinnidh where a short traverse led to welcome water and two pints of tea. I angled up – for ever it felt – to a notch above the cliffs and then wended to a cairn with the summit beyond. Gleann Tulacha, between the cliffs of Beinn Lair and those of A' Mhaighdean can have no rivals for dramatic grandeur. Superlatives falter here. They are superfluous in such elemental simplicity.

The summit cairn was reached at 11 a.m. When a small breeze blew it was like opening an oven door. I descended on a long, falling traverse line that bisected the paths over the hills (Ling and Glover reached

Beinn Lair doing the opposite) and having collected my buzz of flies, launched the canoe at once. I passed Isle Maree again and, the circumnavigation of Eilean Subhainn completed, landed below the main road at 3 p.m.

I've never sweated so while canoeing and before driving off I waded out into Loch Maree with a bar of soap for a tepid bath, to the amusement of some tourists. The canoe was left that night at Garve and the next day I was off for the Lewisian gneiss of the far north: Hee, Foinaven, Arkle, Cranstackie, Quinag – all in beating sunshine.

With hindsight, I'm amazed at my dedication but then, given our normal weather conditions, who would not push things a bit? After Beinn Airigh Char and Beinn Lair I tended to call such heat 'Maccullough conditions' – then I read further and found him complaining because his champagne was skimmed with ice by the freezing blast on top of Ben More in Mull. We were both 'just lucky' on these singing summits above Loch Maree.



## DESPERATE ROCK MOUNTAINS

By Donald M. Orr

*This article highlights mountaineering aspects in the novels of John Buchan.*

JOHN BUCHAN (1875-1940) first Baron Tweedsmuir, author, M.P. for the Scottish Universities and Governor General of Canada included in many of his adventure stories scenes and aspects of mountaineering in Scotland.

It was in 1898 that John Buchan first visited Glencoe. He was twenty-three, in his final year at Oxford and already had several of his works published. A childhood spent exploring the hill burns of Tweedside for trout and youthful rambles over the Cheviot and Galloway hills had given him a liking for high open places. A fondness that was fed by Easter excursions through Argyll, Morven and Lochaber. In Glencoe he discovered the pleasures of rock climbing. His enthusiasm for this new interest led him to Ben Nevis, Skye and Wester Ross and to Chamonix and Zermatt for several Alpine holidays, including his honeymoon in 1907 which was spent in the Dolomites. There he attempted, unsuccessfully, to introduce Mrs Buchan to the joys of rock craft.

Throughout these ventures his imagination stored the sights, sounds and smells of open moorland, an appreciation of weather conditions, and an understanding of rock and mountain structures and of climbing techniques.

In 1915 *'The Thirty Nine Steps'* revealed how much he had observed in his boyhood wanderings in Galloway. Richard Hannay's exploits in the hills displays the author's fine understanding of hill craft and an appreciation of moorland scenery that was fondly acquired.

In his novel *'Mr Standfast'* the hero, again Richard Hannay, disembarks from a steamer at Lochaline and commences a journey on foot through Morven northwards to Loch Sunart and Loch Sheil and on to Arisaig where,

'...across the strip of sea, like some fortress of the old gods, rose the dark bastions and turrets of the hills of Skye.'

On returning from South Africa in 1903, where he had climbed in the Drakensberg and explored the Zoutpansberg range of the northern Transvaal, Buchan was restless and unsettled. The following summer with his sister Anna (the novelist O. Douglas) he went to Skye on a climbing holiday; the pair later going on to Chamonix. In 1905 and

1906 he returned to Skye to spend September in the Cuillins, often in the company of John McKenzie.

'I came to know every crack and cranny from Garsbheinn to Sgurr nan Gilleann. It was my ambition to be the first to traverse the whole range in a summer's day.'

His time on Skye gabbro and his obvious interest in the rock scenery of the Cuillins was utilised later in *'Mr Standfast'*, where a peculiar rock feature is the setting for meetings between German spies. Buchan would certainly have known of, and personally visited, many of the odd pinnacles of rock, accessible or otherwise, found on the Cuillin Ridge. However an intriguing crossplot appears as it may have been that the site was an allusion to the 'window' on the Window Buttress of Sgurr Dearg, first climbed by Collie that same year (1906). An indication of this emerges from the fact that the unusual feature is only spotted by a patch of sunshine on an otherwise shadowy cliff.

'Then I guessed the explanation. There was a rock tower close against the main face of the precipice and indistinguishable from it to anyone looking directly at the face. Only when the sun fell obliquely could it be discovered.'

A sub-plot now surfaces as this was not the only rock oddity that Collie revealed that summer.

The discovery by Collie in 1899 of Sron na Ciche and of the outstanding rock feature A'Chioch was the result of a late return one afternoon in the company of Major Bruce. Looking across the great rock slabs Collie noted a large triangular shadow produced by the rays of the setting sun striking what could only be a rock tower. Collie photographed this oddity but it was not until 1906 while staying at Glen Brittle Lodge that he began a systematic search of Sron na Ciche accompanied by John McKenzie. It was the latter who led the ascent of A'Chioch and who was the first to step out on to the now famous tower.

It may well be that Buchan heard the stories from McKenzie with whom he too was climbing on Skye that summer. Did Buchan embroider the facts of one of the features or, as is perhaps more likely, stitch the two together?

Collie's account of the climb only appeared in 1918 – published in the *Alpine Journal* under the title *'Early Days in the Cuillins.'* Since Buchan had been elected to the Alpine Club in November 1906 he would have been a keen reader of the *Journal*. Certainly a year after Collie's article appeared (1919) *'Mr Standfast'* was published, in which the site is discovered prior to the arrival of the German agents.

'On one side was the main wall of the hill, on the other a tower some ninety feet high, and between them a long crevice varying in width from three to six feet.'

The following year Collie produced a more detailed description for the Alpine Journal in *'The Island of Skye.'*

'From the top of the precipice to the bottom is at least 1,000 feet, perpendicular in many places and a narrow knife edge of rock about a hundred feet long runs out from it rather less than half way down. On each side of that knife edge are clean steep slabs of rock that, at their base, overhang the gullies below. At the end of the knife edge is placed a tower which casts its shadow across the great slab.'

In *'The Three Hostages,'* published in 1924, Buchan again pulled on the memories of his climbing trips in the West of Scotland. His creation of *'Machray,'* the fictitious estate in Wester Ross, was a sportsman's and mountaineer's dream. Into it he fitted the finest mountain scenery culled from his excursions to the north and west. To do this he employed three devices:

- (a) Mountain substitutes.
- (b) The hybrid mountain.
- (c) The conglomerate mountain.

An example of type (a) can be found in the latter chapters of the novel; 'Corrie-na-Sidhe is an upper corrie, separated from the Aicill valley by a curtain of rock and scree which I dare say was once the moraine of a glacier and down which the Alt-na-Sidhe tumbled in a fine chain of cascades.'

This could easily stand as a description of the Lost Valley in Glen Coe which Buchan first visited in 1896.

*'Machray'* also contains type (b) the hybrid; a restructured mountain scene composed of two of his favourite places.

'.....its Gaelic name, I think, was the Alt-a-Mhuillin and half way up and just opposite me a tributary, the Red Burn, came down from the cliffs on Sgurr Dearg. I could see the northern peak of that mountain, a beautiful cone of rock, rising like the Matterhorn from its glacis of scree.'

The use of features so obviously linked with Ben Nevis joined to the fictitious Sgurr Dearg, the highest of the *'Machray'* peaks, is one aspect. His 'beautiful cone of rock' which rises over three thousand feet is surely a reference to Stob Dearg, the northern peak of the Buachaille Etive Mor which was the first mountain in Glencoe that he tackled in the Easter of 1898.



Sgurr Dearg, 'with its two pinnacle ridges, its three prongs and the awesome precipice of its eastern face,' introduces Buchan's third type of device; the conglomerate mountain. It would appear to be his ideal mountain for the climber; a mixture of the Buachaille and Sgurr nan Gilleann amongst others.

'Across the corrie was the first of the great buttresses which Sgurr Dearg sends down to the Reascuill. It was the famous Pinnacle Ridge (as mountaineers called it); I had climbed it three weeks before and found it pretty stiff, but then I had kept to the ridge all the way from the valley bottom, and I did not see any practical road up the corrie face of it, which seemed nothing else but slabs and rotten rock, while the few chimneys had ugly overhangs.'

The chimneys and overhangs provide the setting for the final part of the drama where for the first time Buchan deals with the practicalities of rock climbing. The hero's display of chimney, crack and wall climbing, his negotiations with various chockstones and his route planning illustrate clearly the author's competence at the former and capacity in the latter. Confident Buchan may well have been, but he was not unaware of the risks involved in rock climbing. The depiction of the attempted rescue and the villain's fall from the face to his death on the scree below confirm this.

In 1925 *John McNab* was published. Set somewhere in Wester Ross it utilises *Machray* and its mountains and introduces estates to the south. While the novel in the main deals with varying aspects of hillcraft related to stalking and game fishing, it again reveals his love of the rugged landscape and atmosphere of the west highlands whose influence remained with him throughout his life.



## A QUESTION OF ACCESS

By G. J. F. Dutton

'Ah, yes: access. That is a real problem.'

THE DOCTOR shook his head and fingered his diminishing allowance of Highland Park. We were in Daddy McKay's, studying the map for next Saturday. The Doctor had been confined to his patients' beds for many a recent weekend, and we felt that this, his first free one, should be of his own choice. To our politely-disguised chagrin, he had chosen Meall nam Fiaclan which, thanks to the regular orogenic free enterprise encouraged by the Ordnance Survey, had the previous year raised itself to Munro status. As a result, it was being assailed every weekend by voracious hordes of metre-devourers, eager for more elevated fodder than weekday jogging could afford. As a further result, those unfortunate enough to farm, forest or shoot the lower slopes of Meall nam Fiaclan, a singularly isolated protuberance, had encompassed it with a Galvanised Iron Curtain. Approaches to the frontier bristled with barbs, swung with padlocks, blistered with exceedingly rude notices. Bulls, dogs and savagely uncomfortable retainers patrolled the fences. Of course, one Route of Access had been discussed: that (the discussion) was only fair. The route was to be six feet wide, with no stepping off it. Ample; the Romans had run an Empire from only a few inches more. The trouble was that, naturally, none of the Owners would admit it might cross his particular land, and so its whereabouts – timidly signposted by various fund- and cap-raising Amenity Bodies – were bumped into, eased over or scornfully rubbed out by beast, bogey, bulldozer or busily underemployed whatnot. Wherever it went, it certainly would not take the only interesting way up Meall nam Fiaclan, a sort of craggy ridge that gave the heap its name; for that ridge rose above a very posh house indeed.

The Apprentice, numbly accepting the idea of walking up a Munro, warmed to the more attractive possibility of an Assault. The Doctor, to egg him on, read stirring accounts of climbing the Affric hills in the days of that dreadful American Mr Winans, when even the respectable Sir Hugh himself had to skip delightedly from shelter to shelter beneath the telescopes swivelling daily from the ridge of Mam Soul. We scanned the entry for Meall nam Fiaclan in the nervous little booklet on Access. Its message appeared clear enough. The Restricted Period ran, fairly comprehensively, from the 2nd April to the 31st March. The Owners' Names occupied half a page and read like an international Trotskyite hit-list – gone were those of our former

doughty competitors, the double-barrelled English of both nationalities. The Preferred Route announced itself succinctly as 'None;' the Contact was a telephone number which no longer existed; the Remarks diplomatically concluded that 'an authorised footpath is under consideration.' It looked, as the Apprentice remarked, rather a good thing to tackle. We congratulated the Doctor. He beamed, called for the next round, and briefed us on the Order of Battle.

Following the dicta of Clausewitz, Liddell Hart, Guderian, Zhukhov and other internationally popular team managers, we were to attack where the defence least expected us. In this case, directly beneath that interesting ridge – straight up the fields beside the big posh house. Our General's temerity astonished us. The Apprentice, in his excitement, even paid for the Doctor's round.

'The point is,' explained that military genius, 'Mowglie Castle has recently changed hands. The new chap's rather eccentric. Neighbours don't get on with him. Has queer ideas. Weak spot, eh? Name's pronounceable, too – Ulfen; a Swede from West Berlin – a good honest European. Can't find much else about him except that he's a self-made man and doesn't like dogs: evicted all the old Sheikh's Alsations into the Canine Defence League. Should be no trouble of that sort, anyway.' As the Assault was to begin by night ('Much more fun; and they'll never expect us then'), we had worried about padding feet, hot breath and the odd fang. (We discussed further; but the rest of our debate is not yet Cleared for Publication).

We left the car a long way off, by the River Spray, with a wrapped-up tentpole like a fishing rod inside it to divert attention streamwards. When we climbed off the road to go over the Top, we felt a tingling in the feet highly flattering to so humble a Munro of such recent creation. A mere V. Diff. took us through and over the barbs and mesh strung up by the old Sheikh to keep his Alsations in. We were careful not to damage anything; sportsmanship is half the fun of battle; victory is sweeter to the chivalrous. These highminded consolations of the criminal suffered severe abrasion during our next half hour among late-Arabian-now-Swedish Sitka spruce of southern Alaskan provenance; we decimated their infinite spears with xenophobic fury. And emerged on to a wide, horribly open moonlit field. Above us rose Meall nam Fiacan. On our left, pale gleaming turrets among tall timber. On our right, and beyond the field, a dark wood of similar trees.

The air smelt naked and ominous. Our necks prickled. And – surely that was a distant bark, or – even – howl, in the silence? We imagined paddings, breathings. We looked round; and round again. Nothing. 'Ulfen hates dogs,' insisted the Doctor hoarsely; he obviously felt the same as we did. Our genes manned Early Warning Stations.

We tiptoed across the field, beside the wood on our right, as far as possible from the house.

We had almost reached the end of the field, and the house was below, when I swore I glimpsed a Shape flitting between the tree trunks beside us. I froze and pointed. The others looked, saw nothing. We shrugged, and continued; but we moved faster and faster, led by our gallant Chief of Staff. Then: a Howl. A long, low howl. Lord...And worse – other long low howls; from all sides, it seemed. Very soft, hairily menacing, howls.

'I think,' said the Doctor, moving forward faster, 'we had better get out of this.' 'A good job,' gasped the Apprentice, moving even faster, 'that Ulfen doesn't like dogs...'

We panted uphill into the dark, followed, we swore, by Ulfen's pet aversions.

Tree after tree silently slipped below us; we were gaining height. But so were They. Howls, sobs, moans, kept pace with us, swift, swifter as we puffed and stumbled; we dared not use a torch. At the last tree before the bare open hill, with a hint of dawn beyond that black vanishing ridge far – too far – away, we spontaneously stopped, backs to its trunk. We stood breathless, strained eyes into the night.

At first we saw nothing, heard nothing but the paddings about us. And, Lord, the breathings. Then, paddings stopped; and whatever They were, they were watching. We became aware, horribly, of green eyes surrounding us. In pairs, each pair capping a deeper patch of darkness. Dogs...Dogs.

'Ho, there, boy...' suggested the Doctor, uncertain how otherwise to introduce himself.

A sort of snarl; like slowly torn-off sandpaper.

'There, there; boy...' he continued, rather desperately. Another snarl, on the right. On the left, a long howl. The Apprentice and I examined the trunk for boughs. It was, mercifully, an old Scots pine, not a Sitka, and we could – if threatened – leap and scramble up.

It was growing lighter; and our mouths dried with what we gradually saw. A whole pack of dogs encircled us, some staring at us, forefeet splayed, heads down; some sitting on their haunches, gazing at us with Red Indian gravity; others stretched out, regarding us chin on paw. Huge dogs, long grey dogs, curious sleekit hunting kind of dogs.

It was the Apprentice who voiced our mounting horror.

'Dogs! They're not bloody dogs; they're bloody WOLVES...!

Wolves!

We leapt and scrambled furiously, chimps up a tree. I regret that I trod on the Doctor's face on the way up, but Nature is red in tooth and claw, and I needed a foothold just there.

On the third branch, we sat and considered the next move. Our General was clearly nonplussed. Still, Scipio Africanus eventually overcame Hannibal's elephants. We surely could out-manoeuvre Ulfsen's wolves.

But we did not. They came right up to the trunk, jumping and slaving, moaning and howling dreadfully. Hell of a row. The only consolation was that they never bared their teeth.

Perhaps it's just play, perhaps they're quite friendly,' hoped the Doctor. But he was unwilling to test the assumption.

By eight o'clock we were sore and stiff but fairly familiar with the social habits of hungry wolves. Their sudden cessation of howling therefore aroused our interest. The Leader, then his Deputy, loped off; the remainder followed, leaving only a handful (sic) on guard beneath our tree. We were plotting, monkey-like, how to demoralise these obviously reluctant picketers when they began to howl again, noses skyward; and were answered by the others, evidently coming back. Our curses died in our mouths: accompanying the returning wolves appeared two men. Men – walking contentedly amongst them. One – a huge blond bear of a fellow in sandals – was actually roaring with laughter. He came and stood beneath our tree, slapping its trunk with one great pink hand and twiddling the Leader's ears with the other.

'Zo! You meet my vrens! Eh?'

We could not but agree.

'Kom on town, sey are harmless, harmless! Aren't you harmless, eh?' – this to the 'vrens'; the Deputy-Leader wriggled, all grisly two metres (it seemed) of him, with delirious acquiescence. We descended. Embarrassment is too mild a term for our scarlet confusion. But at least we had remained undevoured.

'They are, ...ah...fine animals,' volunteered the Doctor, unhappily.

'Vine – of course sey are vine. Sey are Vine Animals – but for von sing, von sing...' and he prised open the Deputy-Leader's jaws (the Leader being above such demonstration) – 'Look – sey haf NO TEES! NO TEES!'

Indeed they had not. No teeth. None of them. And they set up a low wailing, as if lamenting that unfortunate (for themselves) absence. Ourselves, we felt immeasurably better. The Doctor cautiously tweaked a passing ear; its owner bared up at him a yearning demilitarised gum.

The other man had reappeared with a Land Rover and trailer. Out of the trailer he poured gallons of mash into troughs.

'Zee, ve veed sem here – for you! Sey vill not kom to seir eading place – zo! ve bring seir vood to sem. Sey vould not leaf you! Sey are vond of you! Ho, ho, ho!' And he roared again, beating the tree till needles rained about us.

This was obviously Ulfesen. After introductions, he explained a little further.

'I am vond of Vulfs. My name it is Ulfesen, vich I zay means Zon of se Vulf.' He beat, this time, his own chest. A few wolves looked up from their troughs and growled agreement. 'Zo, I like keep vulfs all round me. But – , ' he leaned down at us, brows knitted (he was even taller than the Doctor, and three times as huge) 'I cannot keep vulfs in Zkottland – sey zay sey vill ead se TOURISTS!' – a great shout of laughter, in which we feebly joined – 'and zo, zo – I get sis Shenetic Breed of TOOSELESS VULFS! TOOSELESS VULFS!' Sey vill not ead anybody!'

Toothless Wolves. And all his fenced land was running with Toothless Wolves, that rare inbred strain from some Scandinavian genetics institute. We marvelled. We felt small. A Night Assault was nothing to this.

'Now – ' he darkened – 'tell me sis; vot vere you toing on my lant? In se night...EH?'

We left it to the Doctor to explain. Which he did, admirably, with much Svensk lore, ancient and modern, thrown in; and a great friend of his at the Karolinska happened (naturally) to have cured Ulfesen's cousin of some condition as rare as that of his own wolves... So all was well, very well. We drove down to a splendid breakfast ('NOW I ead se Zkottisk bregvazt, zee?') and were then accompanied by Ulfesen up the ridge to the very summit of Meall nam Fiaclan. He was enormously interested in Munros, Munroists and the story of Sir Hugh ('But I do not like your real glimbing – too dansherous – I like my vulfs!'). He would set aside a Route, a wide, wide Clearway 'up se rogs right to se Topp' himself: 'Sen, many many people can go!' But it was not all on his land? 'Pooh, pooh, it is von mountain. Only my vulfs I haf to keep in se vire.' Good for West Berlin. And he brought us down to supper and fierce Skansk refreshments.

We asked him if it was really true he did not like dogs. 'Togs? Togs vorry my vulfs. Sey haf tees. My vulfs sey haf NO tees. Sat is not VAIR? Eh? Zo I zay – NO DOGS!' And he handed us another Finnish aperitif, some three to four degrees above Absolute Zero.

Yes, it was the Doctor's day. The Apprentice and I were forced to agree that weekends with him could bring certain perquisites, besides the always recurrent possibility of having to face happenings such as – well, climbing by night through a pack of Toothless Wolves.

And as for Access? Well, again, clearly there is no difficulty of Access not readily resolvable through an appropriate adult approach...



Towards the Chasm

John Mitchell 1987

## VALUE FOR MONEY

By John Steele

'VALUE FOR money – in this day and age!' spouted Gordon in his driest Aberdonian retort.

'Yes, that's what I said, the man from BR assured me a trip to the Highlands and back for around fifty quid – no strings.'

The vague idea which had floated around for the past couple of years was now nearing fruition; a long weekend in Scotland, with the prospect of big days on the hills and no driving involved. Magic! So it was that on a sticky Thursday evening we heaved enormous sacks onto the *'Royal Highlander'*, full of youthful excitement at what the next few days might bring.

We were brought back to earth again early next morning, as we piled our baggage and ourselves out onto the wet cinders of a rainswept Dalwhinnie platform.

'Oh well it can only get better,' said I.

'Aye,' said Gordon sarcastically, poleaxed at the thought of carrying his massive sack all the way to Culra. (He had just been released from hospital, having suffered a back injury, and was supposed to be confined to light duties at home).

The long haul up Loch Ericht was a sweaty affair, but once on the moor with the bothy in sight things began to look brighter. Culra was empty on arrival, and after a refreshing brew we grabbed a few hours sleep. Feeling refreshed and eager, we set off up the grassy flank of Carn Dearg, which overlooks the bothy door. Our view from the summit was fleeting, as the evening mists rolled in and the temperature dropped by the minute. The whole area was new to Gordon and myself, although I had struggled up Ben Alder a number of years before in total whiteout conditions, only stumbling across the summit trig point when the fierce wind blew me back from the steep coire edge.

The hut had filled in our absence, and a pleasant evening followed with ex-hardmen, excessive hillwalkers, and travellers from the south like ourselves, all relating anecdotes of their mountain experiences.

The following morning brought low cloud, a strong southerly wind, and the third member of the party, Mike. He arrived hot-foot, as he put it, from the Women's Guild annual fling in London, to which he had somehow been cordially invited. He was apparently tired from the journey – but we knew better.



No rest for the wicked was our immediate reaction, so off we set for the Bealach Breabag.

'It's miserable up there!' chirped the first of three aged stalwarts,

'Couldnae find oor sacks on the way off Ben Alder,' confirmed the second,

'Off to Dalwhinnie for a pint,' piped the third, as they disappeared into the murk below.

The full blast of the gale hit us as we reached the col, so we turned tail and took in Ben Bheoil, making short work of the ridge as the wind buffeted and blew us along to its end. A short day, but it left us with plenty of time to gather armfulls of firewood.

It had been a thoroughly awful day all round, as bodies arrived from as far afield as Creag Meaghaidh and Corrour, all now delighted to be huddled in front of the roaring log fire which we had carefully nurtured since early evening. What had started as an atrocious day finished in the most perfect of ways with steaming clothes, a warm glow, and fresh burn trout grilled over the embers on the end of a stick.

Sunday was a big hill day, Ben Alder by the Long Leachas, Ben Eibhinn, Aonach Beag, and Geal Charn with a descent back to Culra by way of *Lancet Edge*. A truly memorable day in the Scottish hills in perfect conditions.

Our last day took us to the tiny outlier of Creag Pitridh and its bigger but very disappointing neighbour Mullach Iubhair (Geall-Charn).

'Come for the view, have ye?' was the quip from behind the ridiculous summit cairn on this undistinguished heap. When the two seated figures came into sight out of the thick mist I gave a reply. We had not expected to meet others, particularly on this peak, given that we had hardly seen anyone on the tops in the last three days.

'Are you John Steele frae the London JMCS?...thought so!'

That was enough for me, so off we set, back to Loch Pattack, our rucksacks, and the long haul back to the Station.

'Value for money! You can say that again' resounded Gordon, as he leapt onto the waiting train, sack and all.



## RAEBURN'S FIRST CLIMB

Edited by K. V. Crocket<sup>1</sup>

HE COULD still remember, how could he forget, the dusty flakes of lichen from the black rocks. They darkened his fingernails for days, a constant reminder of his adventure. If asked, he could not explain why the rocks had attracted him so. It was not as if they were particularly appealing to a skinny 14-year old, warm only because he was moving, happy only because he was away, for a few hours, from his dominating family life, classically Victorian; stern father, free and easy only with the beatings, timid mother, kind words too late. His sisters Ruth and Ethel were good to him, but they had their own lives to live, on top of which they helped look after Granny. Now **there** was an auld witch! He hated having to give her a kiss every day, with her hairy chin that looked as if it should scratch but somehow didn't. And close up she smelled funny.

He had school friends of course, you had to, given that the roughs were apt to pick on you on the way home<sup>2</sup> if you travelled alone. The collar and tie picked you out three tenements away – he was never bold enough to do what his second best friend Wee Jamie did, removing his tie once out of sight of the Teacher, to replace it in the relative safety of one's lane. Though right enough Jamie did get caught once by a nosey neighbour, bluffing his way out of it by pretending a coughing fit.

It looked as if this was his last year at school. Soon he would be joining his father in the family business. He would be glad to leave, the petty rules and discipline he found stifling. At school one had to teeter along the narrow path acceptable to the senior pupils and teachers. To be stupid or too clever was equally damming. Once, in a wild bid for spiritual freedom, he let slip his interest in birds, telling the class about the injured blackbird he had found and nursed. How could he communicate his feelings for the poor animal? Its body surprisingly warm, so that he almost dropped it on first picking it up, its wee heart tripping so fast it should likely burst. The class laughed and he sat down, red-faced, never to mention it again.

Though skinny, he was possessed of a surprising, wiry strength. Later in life, when appreciative of such a build, he would remember his mother Jessie. She was from the Islands, Harris, with the soft speech music to his ears, contrasting with the coarser, grating cadence of the Lowlands, the faint nasal whine of Edinburgh rising at the end of each sentence like a gust of wind off the Forth. His mother had

worked on the family's croft until the age of 20, when her father had died of one chesty cold too many, pneumonia taking him away effortlessly, as it did so many. Moving to Edinburgh to serve for an aunt, she met her future husband during a Saturday afternoon's stroll in the park. His mother he never heard complain, no matter the hours spent washing and cleaning, cooking and cleaning, polishing and dusting. She rested, he sometimes thought, while sewing or knitting in the evening, the gas mantle popping and hissing on the kitchen wall.

Sometimes she would hum a working tune from her youth, while father, ink-stained fingers the give-away sign of an office worker, would rustle his evening newspaper in irritation, the while secretly straining to listen. These were the best times at home. And then there were the bad times, with the same old stupid arguments, mostly about money. Clothing for the children had to be bought, Ruth was being courted, while the young boy's jacket from last year was already too small, his thin wrists poking out beyond the leather-reinforced cuffs like the bony joints from which his mother sometimes made the weekly broth. She seldom raised her voice, arguing her case patiently in between her husband's angry outbursts. From her, he realised later, he drew his secret strength and stamina.

Today he was alone. It was a Saturday, the best day of the whole week, with a whole penny to spend and three whole hours to himself. Saturdays were compressed between the weekly tedium of school, with messages and oddjobs to do after school hours, and Sunday, an agonisingly long day of stiff collars, Church sermons and Bible School. No, Saturday was **the** day of the week. His best friend Angus was away to visit relatives in Glasgow, an annual event, given the expense of rail travel, while Wee Jamie was in bed with the chickenpox, visitors forbidden. The elder sister Ruth was 'walking out' with her young gentleman, while his father, who was struggling to make a success as a private brewer, was not due to finish work until 4.30 p.m., Saturday being an early finishing day. His mother, sensing his bottled energy, shooed him out, first making him promise to be home for four o'clock, for in mid-October darkness would not be far behind.

Elated, he headed for the park, fifteen minutes run away even for an undersized adolescent. Two weeks ago, he and Angus had almost reached a bird's nest on the rock, before Angus had become frightened at the height reached, insisting on retreat. The rock had been dry, but their leather boots had been next to useless, slipping hopelessly on the smooth basalt. He had been exalted at the situation, 20 feet up the dirty corner that had beckoned, white streaks and an untidy mass of twigs pointing to a nest on a small ledge above. Angus, at his heels, was unhappy from the start, more at home following a smoking tar cart

through Edinburgh's dirty streets, or gawking at the life and bustle of the Saturday market area, well-heeled townies contrasting with muddy gaitered farmers, dogs snapping and weans greetin'. Retreat had been tedious, placing Angus's feet and hands on holds, once he had climbed down past him that is. But today was different, today he had no impediment, save himself. He liked Angus, but he sensed that reaching the ledge and its nest was to be a personal challenge.

The day was dry but cold, the wind off the Firth cutting through his cardigan and tweed jacket. Again, he was too young to appreciate his mother's wisdom, and the fitful parcels from the Islands, with their smoky lengths of tweed that could make a warm jacket for a wee boy. His nose was running as he reached the rocks, panting a little from the trot through the park. There had been a crowd of rowdies at the gate, and for a moment his heart shrank at passing through, but then a family sailed into view, out for an hour of appetising air. These he used as a flanking convoy might do, in the Great War still 35 years ahead<sup>3</sup>, slinking past his potential trouble-makers, invisible in the crowd. Animal behaviourists in the far-away scientific future would stumble upon this defense mechanism, call it their own, and write learned papers about the advantages of travelling in flocks, schools and herds, but small boys had known and used this survival trick for centuries.

He loved October above all months of the year; its colours and smells, lengthening nights with smoky fogs, gas lights guttering yellow in the streets, hot chestnuts sold from barrows. In the park he raced through deep drifts of fallen leaves, keeping his boots low so as to extend the sound into a satisfying swish, swish.

The corner was still there, as was the pile of twigs above on the ledge. He could see the dry pile of turfs thrown down on their previous visit, fingernails satisfyingly dirty with the effort of prying the grass out of the corner. If pushed to explain why, he would in all probability claim a destructive urge, the same as pushing rocks off a cliff top, or of filling paper bags with water to throw at girls across the playground. He had quickly learned, however, that vegetation often concealed useful holds, flat ledges for the feet, slim cracks for thin fingers.

The start went easily up a corner with ledges, until blocked by a jutting roof. It was from below this obstacle that he and Angus had retreated on the previous occasion. A few feet up and right of this was the ledge and nest, but first he had to move left on to a smooth pillar then somehow climb up this a short way before the ledge could be gained. He had had no experience until now of real climbing, unless one counted the time a visiting teacher had given them a Magic Lantern show, showing the Geography Class a series of Alpine views. The show had been exciting, as much because of the hot and smoky

source of light, as by the actual views, potentially interesting panoramas made dull by the pontificating Geography Teacher. The only climbing shown then had been on the glacier, long alpenstocks and longer skirts, ladders and coiled ropes. Today he remembered none of these things, excited by the battle ahead.

Below the roof there was a small ledge, an average enough specimen of its type, large enough for a rest, too small for comfort. His smooth-soled leather boots could just rest on the ledge without curling up and off, while a flat handhold above allowed some measure of security. There was no one about as he explored the rock about the roof. The wall on the right leaned over, cutting off access that way. The roof above, had he but known it, was possessed of good holds above, but moves over such obstacles were as yet alien to him, and he perforce looked to the left for a way up. Stretching away up and left, he could just manage to touch the lip of the ledge he wished to gain, but it was such a delicate manoeuvre that each time he reached out he could feel his boots slipping off the ledge.

Looking down he took in the panorama across a swell of roofs, a nearby factory roof<sup>4</sup> with the white-painted name 'Craigside Works'. Long lines of tenements stretched towards the Firth, fading rapidly in the smoky haze that was Industrial Edinburgh. He had been brought up with the mash smell of the breweries, and if asked by a stranger to comment on it would have expressed surprise at the mention of it.

He was cold now and becoming a little frightened. Instinctively he knew that he would have to move soon, or be defeated. Until then he had been keeping both his feet on the ledge, but now he put most of his weight – the little that was – on his hands, and taking his left foot off the ledge shuffled his right boot to its far end. Carefully reaching up with his left hand, he found he was able to grasp the edge of the big ledge. Satisfied, he reversed the sequence of moves and stood squarely on the ledge under the roof. Far away, the tinny sound of a street musician could be heard for a moment, escaping, much as he was, from the narrow streets below. He turned to the left again, blowing on his fingers in turn to warm them. The move out was made again, left hand clamping on to the ledge. It felt secure and, encouraged, he took his right hand off the familiar hold and reached up for the ledge. His foot came off just as his right hand touched the ledge beside his left, his right knee banging painfully on the rock. Heart beating wildly, he pulled up with all his desperate, boyish strength, toes scraping up the pillar. A clump of grass appeared on the ledge, but he knew from his previous attempt not to trust its feeble roots. His left elbow was on the ledge now, with his right hand pushing down on the edge, breath rasping as he slowly moved over the edge and on to the ledge.

When his feet were firmly up on the ledge, his hands grasping a good flake on the wall ahead, he realised what he had done, and to where he had journeyed. He had been frightened, that was true, but not to the point where he had lost control. For a moment, almost too fleeting to remember later, he had been oblivious of everything but the movement, the position, the rock. Some metaphysical barrier had been lowered or weakened, a doorway had been offered, and he had stepped through, and up.

The ledge had been gained, the nest lay ahead, with an exit above to the cliff-top, following an easy groove. There were no eggs, it was an old, abandoned pile of twigs, but strangely he felt no disappointment, moving happily up the final groove. As he raced the setting sun back down through the park, its huge, red orb without heat, he smelled as if for the first time the subtle, peppery odour of the dead leaves, filling his lungs until they would burst, the cold air catching his throat.

Leaving the park, winding through the cobbled streets in the twilight, he knew he was changed. Something had been gained on the rocks, and something lost. He felt strangely older, old for his years. As he swung into his lane, cooking smells kindling a sudden hunger, he knew with clarity and growing excitement that he would return, would explore further the pleated crags and hills above his native city.

## FOOTNOTES:

1. While undoubtedly much of what is described here must of necessity be conjectural, the editor, while researching for a recent project, had the extraordinarily good fortune to come across some old family papers belonging to the Raeburn family. Most were of business dealings concerning the brewery run by William Raeburn, the father of Harold, and the business into which the son, as the father, would soon enter. Amongst these papers however, was an old school essay-book, the sign, one suspects, of a better-than-average school, where slates were not the normal practice medium for the copperplate writing prevalent then. Most of the essay-book is taken up with the usual school exercises, but Raeburn must have held on to his book when finished, for on the small spaces left unfilled here and there, and running through most of the book, is a schoolboy attempt to describe a birdnesting expedition. The story begins with the emphasis on the ornithology – and even at the age of 14, Raeburn showed a firm grasp of the hobby in which he would become more than proficient. At some point in the narrative however, climbing seems to take over, as if the young Raeburn had found a new interest. This disjointed story found in an old school essay-book then, is the foundation for the article.
2. Entry number 729, in the Register of Births lodged in Edinburgh, for one Harold Andrew Raeburn, born July 21st, 1865, gives his place of birth as 12, Grange Loan. His birth would have been at home, as hospitals at that time, as now, were places to avoid if possible. Those readers who have a knowledge of Edinburgh will place Grange Loan as being in the district of Newington, adjacent to Morningside and therefore a good, solid and respectable upper-middle class district, important in a society riddled, then as now, with the mores of class distinctions. This being said, the young Raeburn would have come into contact, and possibly conflict, with boys from less privileged homes. And who is to say who had the happier home environment?

3. The story must have taken place in 1879, as Raeburn was born in 1865 and there is a reference in the narrative to his class at school, indicating that he would have been 14 at the time of writing. Raeburn describes in great detail the setting of the sun in the park, giving the time, which referring to an Astronomical Almanack for that year places the time of year as being about the middle of October.
4. While the editor, not knowing the climbing on the Edinburgh outcrops, is unable to place with any precision the route or even the crag climbed by Raeburn, there coincidentally appears in a recent SMC publication (*Climbers' Guide to Central & Southern Scotland*, by Jerry Handren), a most interesting old photograph taken on an Edinburgh crag in about the year 1905. In the background, just barely visible through the industrial haze that gave the city the name of 'Auld Reekie,' one of the factory roofs shows the name 'Craigside Works,' a name mentioned by the young Raeburn. Surely some modern climber could work out the approximate location of the route from these clues.

## THE CAIRN

It marks where mountain ends and sky begins,  
 Poking a finger through the swirling mist  
 To testify that we have earned the right  
 To add this latest conquest to our list.

The only man-made object on the hill,  
 It strikes a friendly note when much is bleak,  
 A hint of shelter to consult the map,  
 Pin-pointing our position on the peak.

We munch our sandwiches and while we rest  
 We plan the strategy for our descent,  
 Then add our tribute to the rocky, heaped  
 Memorial to those who came and went.

If every stone expressed its donor's thoughts  
 And every thought lay open to our sense,  
 There would be lively talk to overhear,  
 Each cairn a sort of summit conference.

D. J. Fraser.



Pinnacles in the Jbel Sahro, Morocco

*Photo: Hamish Brown*





Mount Hitchcock (13,184 ft.)  
and the Western Sierra from Trail Crest (13,480 ft.)

*Photo: W. M. Stephen*



## THE RANGE OF LIGHT

By W. M. Stephen

AT 14,496 feet, Mount Whitney is the highest mountain in the continental United States (although there are fifteen higher mountains in Alaska, they are distinctly less accessible). Eminently accessible, a 200-mile drive north from Los Angeles – mostly through the Mojave Desert – leads to Lone Pine, a former mining town between the 10,000-foot fault scarp of the High Sierra and the edge of Death Valley, in which is the United States' lowest point.

From Lone Pine a good road west goes through the Alabama Hills – scene of many a shoot-out in the older westerns – and on up to Whitney Portal where, at 9,360 feet, the road ends and the John Muir Wilderness begins. Everywhere in the High Sierra, John Muir's presence can still be felt. The Dunbar-born Scot stirred the environmental consciousness of America when its natural wealth was being mercilessly stripped. He explored the wilderness – often solo – and was the driving force behind the National Parks movement. Just south of Mount Whitney – which he climbed as part of a solo expedition in 1873 – is Mount Muir (14,015 feet), while the John Muir Trail of 32 miles leads north to Mount Whitney. Muir loved the Sierra Nevada, his *'Range of Light.'*

The Mount Whitney Trail starts in light forest of Jeffrey pine and red fir and winds upwards at a steady but tolerable gradient. At the rock steps across the valley the trail switchbacks. As height is gained the vegetation changes, first to lodgepole and foxtail pines, with a carpet of corn lilies, delphiniums and lupins (or lupines as the Americans call them). The pines fade into willows till, at 10,000 feet, the timber line is passed, where the only vegetation is of patches of alpine tucked into rock crevices and boulder fields. Going up the main valley the scenery is stupendous, with great rock walls of naked granite. Names like Thor Peak and Wotan's Throne show how impressed the first backpackers were! The lakes and the green around them act as a counterpoint to the blue Californian sky and the silver-grey walls around, and are the focus for a host of small birds and mammals.

Predictably, the magnet of Mount Whitney and the stunning scenery have produced their problems. Backpacking in the High Sierra has a growth rate of 18% per annum, almost doubling every 4 years. In 1972 the Forest Service closed the area around Mirror Lake to camping as it had become a montane slum. So here we have a wilderness where a permit is required to camp, where you dare not drink the water

and you are expected to use the solar toilets! And in the National Parks the Rangers are Federal Police and carry guns!

Beyond Mirror Lake (10,640 feet) the forest thins out and the sun's heat becomes very obvious – hot enough in itself because of the latitude and reinforced by reflection off rock walls and snow. Consultation Lake is aptly named. This is where many people begin to feel the effects of altitude – 'those behind cried 'Forward!' and those before cried 'Back!'' The heavy work begins here. Mount Whitney with its array of lesser pinnacles can be clearly seen towering above, though no route seems possible. But a hundred or so switchbacks, often across granite walls, lead inexorably upwards till, at Trail Crest (13,714 feet), a col is reached and a stupendous view opens up to west and north. Dozens of peaks of over 12,000 feet can be seen in ranks till one runs out of map to spot them on.

This is now Sequoia National Park but there is not a tree in sight. Instead one becomes aware of a beautiful strong perfume coming from a small plant, rather like a primula, with large bright blue flowers. This is the Sky Pilot, found only above 11,500 feet and once carried as a trophy.

Only two miles to go now and the trail actually drops a little to join the John Muir Trail. Mercifully the pinnacles south of Mount Whitney do not have to be traversed – it is enough to have to contend with 10-foot snowdrifts and peer down between them to the Owens Valley 10,000 feet and more below! By now altitude is making the last thousand feet more of a toil than it looks and the easing off to the great granite slabs of the summit is a relief. Here there is a shelter, not needed on this occasion. (Was that a wolverine which nipped under the wall, I ask myself?) Despite the shelter, there is solitude here and an absence of litter which contrasts strongly with our own highest point.

It gets dark early in California compared with a Scottish July so, despite a lifelong dislike of coming out by the same door as I came in by, the shortest route to Whitney Portal it had to be. The return was marked by euphoria, interesting chats with other euphorics, and the alpenglow as the day came to a close.

The Lone Pine Chamber of Commerce suggests that you hike to the Outpost Camp above Mirror Lake the first afternoon and camp. Rise at dawn, summit at noon, back to Whitney Portal by dark. Or you can take three days, with fishing on the way and on your return. On the other hand, the trail is so good and so well repaired every spring by the lady convicts that a middle-aged Scot on a good day can cover the 21 miles and 6,000 feet of ascent in 11 hours – the finest single mountain day he is ever likely to have.



strawberry tower

John Mitchell 1987

## NEW CLIMBS SECTION

### WINTER GRADINGS

DESPITE a general agreement that the present grading system has its problems, the expansion of the gradings as proposed in SMCJ, 1986 met with a wall of apathy. There were several alternative systems proposed, all involving a two-tier system. The second tiers fell roughly into three categories (a) technical difficulty versus seriousness (b) ice versus mixed (c) individual pitch grades. Without a consensus, or even much enthusiasm towards change, the *status quo* seems the only option. The individual pitch system has been applied this year by R. Anderson to his own routes.

Thanks are due to various correspondents who collated and supplied information, and in particular Neil Morrison and Gary Latter, for their input to the New Climbs Section.

From this year on, the S.M.C. will be publishing *Scottish New Routes*, an annual booklet separate from the *Journal* and containing full descriptions of crags and climbs. The content of this supplement is very much dependent on input by climbers, and to a certain extent it can be looked on as an informal outlet for information. Crag sketches, information and so on is welcome, and should be sent to the Editor of the *Journal* in the first instance. We are pleased to announce, however, that Bob Duncan, well known city slicker from the east coast, will be handling the Supplement. Climbers should also remember that information on the crags of the central belt of Scotland is being collated both by Bob and Tom Prentice. The Editor will pass on such information.

## OUTER ISLES

### HARRIS, Strone Ulladale – *The Scoop*

200m, E7

J. Dawes, P. Pritchard (alt). 6-12th August, 1987.

Most of *The Scoop* free. Climbed on sight, with fixed ropes.

1. 20m, **6b**. Follow scoop to hanging stance (nuts) and 2PR's.
2. 10m, **6a**. Traverse right and up into cave/ledge. PR's.
3. 15m, **6b**. Climb blocks out right and up into groove to big belay ledge. PR's.
4. 25m, **6a**. Climb up to roof, traverse left on mica schist and up to hanging belay where groove flies out left. 5 PR.
5. 25m, **6b**. Flying groove out left and groove above, out left to finger crack to 'scoop.' Belay.
6. 15m, **6b**. Traverse left past blocks to belay on blades below roof.
7. 25m, **6a**. Enter the groove above and take the left arete to a peg, exit a slab and out right on a groove to a ledge below the capping roof. 2 PR's on belay.
8. 25m, **6b**. Traverse right (2 PR's) and up over bulge past three situ pegs to a hanging belay on the lip of the cave. (Rock No. 7 and Rock No. 2 placement on a shelf, and a peg).
- 9 and 10. 40m, —. Traverse left on lip of roof and up easy blocks. (Top pitch of *The Scoop* too wet).

### EIGG, An Sgurr

Access: The situation on Eigg regarding camping and climbing is rather delicate. Camping should be restricted to the official site (for a hassle-free stay) and climbing (and cleaning) activity should be undertaken with great discretion (especially during the nesting season).

Topography: From 'The Nose,' at the abrupt eastward termination of An Sgurr, a great south-facing pitchstone wall, extends to the west to an obvious break (descent routes either side of a small, broken buttress). This face is known as 'Main Wall' and is divided into three sections by the great faults of *Botterill's Crack* and *Collie's Cleft*.

Beyond the break lies *Big Cove Buttress* with *The Slab* above and *Minor Buttress* to the west. Next comes *Chimney Buttress* with its distinctive grassy chimney and then the fine dome-shaped *Beehive Buttress*.

After a wide gap in the crags a boulder-filled gully delineates the east flank of *Ocean Wall*, with its long, slabby, upper face extending north-westwards.

The final rock feature is *Village Wall* separated from *Ocean Wall* by steep, broken ground.

Characteristic of all these rock faces is a vegetated ledge line that girdles the crags at around half height. All the rock climbs described lie on the clean upper tier, the lower tier being, in general, loose and vegetated. In places the ledge line becomes a commodious heather shelf as at the centre of *Ocean Wall (Le Jardin)*. Banding the base of the upper tier (i.e. just above the ledge) a near continuous band of friable basalt presents problematic starts to many of the routes.

The rough pitchstone provides superb friction and depending on the alignment of its columnar structure gives a wide variety of holds and in general, good protection.

Many loose blocks rest on the face requiring very careful handling if 'on sight' first ascents are made. The routes described are now fairly free of unstable rock.

#### **Main Wall – Psycho**

60m, E2/3 (5c, 5b) \*\*\*

G. E. Little, D. Saddler (Alt). 23rd May, 1987.

Takes a very impressive line up the vertical wall just west of *The Rose*. The start can be identified by a pale rock scar outlined on its left, by a reversed number seven with a tiny cave at its lower right hand corner, just above the ledge.

Start below the cave. Climb directly up the wall to a small heather ledge (30m, 5c) (some holds have a hollow sound!). From the left end of the heather ledge climb up for about eight metres, make a short left traverse, then up cracks to the top (30m, 5b).

Precleaned by abseil.

#### **– Tales of the Unexpected**

50m, HVS (4c) \*\*

G. E. Little, D. Saddler. 23rd July, 1986.

To the right of *Collie's Cleft* is a heathery groove, slightly farther right are two narrow, damp streaks with a grey wall between. This route climbs the centre of the grey wall. Small cairn on ledge at start which is gained by traversing rightwards over difficult vegetated ground from below *Collie's Cleft*.

A direct and impressive route on good holds. Precleaned by abseil.

#### **– Stepping Out**

56m, E1 (5b) \*\*\*

G. E. Little, D. Saddler, R. Wilson. 23rd May, 1987.

This fine route climbs the edge formed by the left retaining wall of *Collie's Cleft* and the face to the left.

Start below the left wall of the cleft where the basalt band disappears into the ground. Ascend steep wall for five metres then move left to gain a thin groove. Up this, step right then straight up, on good holds, to a heather ledge (47m). Scramble to the top (9m).

Precleaned by abseil.

#### **– Through the Barricades**

50m, E2 (5b) \*\*

D. Saddler, G. E. Little, R. Wilson. 2nd May, 1987.

Lies on the section of Main Wall to the left of *Botterill's Crack*. Start at the highest point of the heather ledge where it broaches the basalt band (approach from the left).

Climb directly up to ascend vague groove, presenting a weakness in the overhanging rock (big jug on the left high up 20m). Climb slabby rock above to the top 30m.

Precleaned by abseil.

#### **The Slab**

Access from the left via a wide rake.

— *Cobra*

44m, Severe \*

D. Saddler, G. E. Little. 20th April, 1987.

Near the right hand end of The Slab is an obvious heather patch at half height. Above this the slab rears into a steep wall. Climb easy rock to the heather patch then steep rock trending slightly right then back left on good holds.

— *Adder*

33m, V. Diff.

G. E. Little, D. Saddler, 20th April, 1987.

Ascend line of clean grey rock, just left of the heather patch, with steep finish.

**Minor Buttress**

This small buttress lies slightly above the general line of crags and to the east of a wide gap in the ramparts. It can be identified by a small sharp edged tower abutting its eastern flank.

— *Splinter Arete*

25m, HVS (5b)

G. E. Little, D. Saddler. 23rd July, 1986.

Climb the obvious arete, with overhanging start, between two grooves on the right hand side of the buttress.

**Chimney Buttress** — *Golden Brown*

35m, HVS (5a) \*\*

G. E. Little, D. Saddler, R. Wilson. 24th May, 1987.

Start at the base of the grassy chimney. Ascend chimney for four metres then move out left over flakes on to the face. Traverse up and left then ascend steep wall, with hidden jug at half height, to gain start of a groove. Step right on to broad rib and climb this, on perfect rock, to the top.

**Beehive Buttress**

A distinctive shaped buttress one kilometre west of *The Nose*.

— *The Comb*

45m, VS (4c)

G. E. Little, D. Saddler. 21st July, 1986.

Climb the left wall of arete, immediately right of obvious V chimney, for eight metres. Step right on to jutting spike on arete. Up easy, though enjoyable 'honey-comb' slabs, above.

— *Pooh Bear*

45m, HVS (5a) \*

D. Saddler, G. E. Little. 21st July, 1986.

Start twelve metres to the left of V chimney at small roof capped corner. Move up and rightwards, on underclings, into corner. Up this, wall and slab above.

— *The Swarm*

45m, HVS (5a) \*\*

G. E. Little, D. Saddler. 18th April, 1987.

Start four metres left of *Pooh Bear*. Climb a band of friable basalt to horizontal break. Up bulging rock above (crux) then traverse hard left for six metres to the centre of a clean gray wall of rock between a shallow open groove on the right and a weep line on the left (well seen from below). Climb this directly to the top on good holds.

— *Over the Top*

45m, EI (5b) \*\*

D. Saddler, R. Wilson, G. E. Little. 24th May, 1987.

A route of considerable character! Start at a honeysuckle plant above the left end of Arch Cave.

Up to gain a curious trench, which is stomach traversed leftwards until the overhanging rock above relents slightly. Move up then traverse right, with difficulty, to gain and climb a fine rock rib, trending slightly right.

Precleaned by abseil.



– *The Honey Thief*

65m, VS(4c, 4c) \*\*

G. E. Little, D. Saddler (Alt). 17th April, 1987.

Start at the extreme lower left hand side of the buttress. Ascend heather ledge raking rightwards then traverse ledge back leftwards to start of route at the termination of the basalt band.

Take a long diagonal line up and right to gain the left hand side of a vague wide waterworn scoop. Directly up on clean rock to a wide heather ledge, 40m. Move right, along ledge, for four metres then ascend a superb steep wall on big holds. Up slabs above 25m.

**Beehive Buttress (Upper West Wall) – Tom**

VS(5a) \*\*

– Jerry

HVS(5b) \*\*

D. Saddler, G. E. Little, R. Wilson. 24th May, 1987.

Both 25m.

This short though fine wall can be gained independently, from the left, via a heather ledge.

To the right of the top pitch of *The Honey Thief* the vertical wall can be climbed by two short lines either side of a glassy area of rock.

**Ocean Wall**

A long slabby wall to the west of Beehive Buttress bounded on its east side by a boulder filled gully.

– *Lego Route*

45m, VS(5a) \*

G. E. Little, D. Saddler. 22nd July, 1987.

This route climbs the narrow east facing flank of **Ocean Wall**, with its distinctive rock structure, then the easy angle arete above.

– *Frozen Ocean*

55m, E1 (5a, 5b) \*\*\*

D. Saddler, G. E. Little (Alt). 22nd July, 1986.

Start at an obvious break in the overhangs where the basalt band merges into the heather, to the west of the boulder filled gully. Climb diagonal weakness trending right then up wall above at the first opportunity to gain and climb a leftwards trending fault leading to a scoop and belay, 30m. Traverse up and left, by thin cracks, to a crumbly flake in slight recess. Move left three metres then directly up wall, on good holds to top, 25m. A superb if escapable (from below the scoop) route.

– *Echo Beach*

45m, VS(5a) \*\*

D. Saddler, G. E. Little. 16th April, 1987.

Traverse in leftwards below the clean upper rock shield of **Ocean Wall**, past *Frozen Ocean* to the ledge narrowing just before a short heathery groove.

Move up then make a difficult, strenuous move into a small rock scoop (crux). Climb up the great slab above, trending slightly rightwards, to the top (ignore leftward trending ramp high up).

**Ocean Wall**

The shattered, vegetated rock band that girdles the base of all the walls and buttresses of An Sgurr attains considerable height at the west end of **Ocean Wall** and the verdant ledge separating the two features at one point virtually disappears before widening to form a commodious heather ledge (*Le Jardin*). The ledge then dwindles to the west. Traversing into *Le Jardin* is rather hazardous and an abseil approach is recommended for those not at home on high angled vegetation.

– *The Haven*

50m, Severe

G. E. Little, D. Saddler. 25th July, 1986.

Start near the right hand end of *Le Jardin*. Gain groove via short wall then traverse left at top to ledge and belay, 25m. Up wall, immediately right of vegetated corner, to top 25m.



– *Paradise Lost*

36m, HVS (5a) \*

G. E. Little, D. Saddler. 16th April, 1987.

Gain *Le Jardin*. Start near the right hand side but left of *The Haven*, cairn.

Up fine steep wall via cracks, traverse right, climb up for four metres then move back left to gain an easy rock stairway and thence to the top (direct entry to the rock stairway may be possible).

**Village Wall – First Blood**

40m, HVS (5a) \*

G. E. Little, D. Saddler. 16th April, 1987.

Ascend steep rock via a zig-zag line to gain and climb pinkish slab just right of centre on the face. Trend right near the top.

**MULL, Creach Beinn (NM 637261)**

Should be avoided until August because of a nest. The first two routes are on the slabby wall overlooking the burn and take the obvious features.

– *Balloonski*

5m, Very Severe 4c

D. Donoghue, C. Moody. 16th August, 1986.

Start at the wall between two shallow corners. Up to a crack which curves left. Follow it.

– *Instant Relief*

55m, Hard Very Severe

D. Donoghue, C. Moody. 16th August, 1986.

1. 30m, –. Start at the lowest rocks below the corner. Go up to the base of the corner.

2. 25m, 5a. Climb the corner and straight over a bulge to easy ground. Block belay below short wall.

Further right is some steep rock. The small buttress left of it is Mild Very Severe. The corner between these is Mild Severe. The steep rock has an overhanging crack:

– *Do you Remember Whispering Bob Harris?*

45m, E1 5b

B. Davison, C. Moody, A. Smith. 9th August, 1987.

From the Mild Severe corner, traverse right to the overhanging crack. Climb this and continue to the top (or finish up right-slanting crack at 6a).

– *Dickie Davies' Eyes*

50m, Very Severe 4c

B. Davison, C. Moody, A. Smith. 9th August, 1987.

Takes the obvious slab right of the steep rock. Follow an overlap up right and over a bulge, then follow a line just right of the pale streak to a ledge. Finish up right. (Might now be harder following the loss of a hold).

**Creag Mhor (NM 464363)**

C. Moody notes that he climbed the ramp left of the deep gully in the middle of the cliff. The lower part had been scoured by a landslide the previous month which blocked the B8035. The route consisted mostly of unconsolidated soil but finished by a through route (Very Severe).

**SKYE****SRON NA CICHE, Eastern Buttress**– *Presdigitateur*

45m, E1 5b

R. Wightman, J. Topping. 17th June, 1987.

Situated on the buttress containing *Magic* and *The Conjuror*, this route takes the right-hand crack, starting just right of *The Conjuror*. Climb the rightward leaning crack to a ledge below a roof, pull over this then move leftwards out of the groove across the wall to follow the right rib of *The Conjuror* to the top.**Note:** On the second ascent, the groove was climbed directly to finish, lowering the grade to HVS 5a and said to be more logical.

**THE CIOCH – Prolactin**

70m, Severe

G. Farquhar, J. Robinson. 7th April, 1987.

1. 50m. Follow *Slab Corner* to belay at a large flake on the right, at the foot of an overhung ramp.

2. 20m. Climb out to the nose of the Cioch via the ramp and crack beneath the overhang, pull straight up at the end to finish on top of the Cioch.

– *Oxytocin*

70m, E2 5c

G. Farquhar, J. Robinson. 7th April, 1987.

50m. As for *Prolactin*.

20m. Follow ramp for 30 feet to beneath an obvious jam crack splitting the overhang. Strenuously layback this to gain the upper slab and top of the Cioch. A strenuous route in a fine position.

**BLAVEN, South Buttress – Rosie's Stash**

200m, Very Severe

C. Moody. 19th July, 1987.

Start left of *Escalator*. Climb cracks, then a narrow right-slanting ramp (above and parallel to *Escalator*) to a ledge. Move left and climb a bulge using a large block (4c). Continue to the terrace. Climb the arete between *Birthday Groove* and *Virgo*, with a move right to avoid a bulge.

**East Face**

A better description and line for the first pitch of *Stairway to Heaven*. From the top of the corner, move left for 5m, then diagonally right to gain the niche below the stance. This avoids the wide crack, which is very dirty and usually wet.

**Neist Point – Death Pirate**

90m, E7.

G. Livingston, P. Moores. June, 1987.

This is the spectacular arete of *The Stallion's Head*. Gain a belay at the foot of the arete by either horrible scrambling or more sensibly, abseiling in.

1. **6b.** Climb thin cracks till possible to move on to a thankgod hold on the arete. Move very boldly back left to reach a ledge and safety. Climb the short wall above until a belay is reached at the base of an overhung corner.

2. **6b.** Climb the arete and corner till a ledge at its top is gained.

3. **5b.** Easier to the top.

**KILT ROCK AREA, Elishader Wall – Black Crow King**

40m, E3 6a

C. Waddy, G. Percival. 8th June, 1987.

Start beneath the right-hand side of the stepped overhangs about 6m left of *Drop the Pilot*, at a groove. Start up the groove, but step right to a crack at 3m. Climb the crack to the roof, using a flake on the right at first, then layback round the right-hand side of the roof and up the crack to finish.

**Kilt Rock – Iron-Crow**

40m, E3 6a

D. Dinwoodie, B. Lawrie. 15th April, 1987.

The thin crackline between *Internationale* and *Footloose*. Good grass stance at bottom. Start up the right-hand crack to a roof. Pull left round the roof and up the crack to the top of a big flake. Climb the crackline to the top

– *Mystery-Cat*

40m, E3 6a

D. Dinwoodie, B. Lawrie. 16th April, 1987.

The thin crackline between *Edge of Beyond* and *Grey Panther*. Start up *Edge of Beyond* for some 12m, then move out right under a small overlap on to the pillar. Climb the crackline to finish up the left arete. A hard independent start would be escapable into *Grey Panther*.

## - The Great Deep

45m, E3

D. Dinwoodie, D. Hawthorn. 16th May, 1987.

The crackline just right of *Killer Whale*. Peg belay on grass ledge directly under *Killer Whale*, possibly reachable by scrambling. The limestone band looks nasty but is OK and well protected.

1. 12m, **5b**. Traverse the ledge right and climb on to a crumbling block at its right side. 2 PR on the left. Climb straight up the bulging wall past the pegs and pull up left on to the dolerite. A groove leads to small belay ledges and the base of the crackline.

2. 33m, **5c**. Climb the crack. Belays at exit of nearby chimney.

## - Brightside Crossing

100m, E2

G. Farquhar, G. Ettle. 25th April, 1987.

An increasingly exposed left to right girdle of Kilt Rock. Very spectacular. Climbs the obvious break at 30m.

1. 45m, **5b**. Start in the descent gully by a little shelf at the top. Traverse rightwards with an awkward move before *Staffin Special*. Continue with feet in the break to belay in the crack to the right of *Skyeman*.

2. 45m, **5b**. Continue traversing with feet and then hands in break to reach Internationale. Climb 3m up this before swinging around the lichenous arete on large holds. Follow a line of holds until a mantleshelf can be made on to a ledge in the chossy gully/chimney.

3. 10m, —. Finish up *Road to Ruin*.

## Tempest Buttress - Stormwatch

30m, MVS 4b

G. Farquhar. 6th April, 1987.

Start halfway down the descent gully at a left facing corner/groove. Climb this to a ledge on the right. Move up and left to gain another ledge and finish directly.

## - Fe Fi Fo Fum

45m, E3 5c

C. Waddy, G. Percival. 9th June, 1987.

Go down the 'possible descent' mentioned in the access description for Tempest Buttress, and towards Kilt Rock for 100m to a buttress with an obvious block roof on its left-hand side. Start 10m or so right of this, below a crack just right of an arete. Climb this finishing right over blocks. Pull one rope for iron fencepost belay. A brilliant sustained jamming pitch.

## - Ill Wind

75m, E5

C. Waddy, G. Percival (Alt). 10th June, 1987.

Go down the 'possible descent' for Tempest Buttress, as above, and walk along either at sea level, or at higher tides along a sheep track just below the limestone band for 200-300m until about 30m from the Chimney Stack. There is a large groove leading to a hexagonal roof with a straight finger crack rising from its left-hand side, and a groove to its right. Start on the grass below the groove.

1. 35m, **6a**. Zig-zag up grass and soft lime/sandstone with care to gain base of the groove (Hex. No. 7 and 2 No. 2 RP's). Climb groove, continuously technical and interesting, to belay 3m below the roof. (Some gear in a crack on the right at the start.)

2. 10m, **6b**. Continue to the roof and cheval into the crack on the left. Climb this strenuously to ledges on the left.

3. 30m, **6a**. Climb the crack above, passing a small roof with difficulty, until a crack leads diagonally left around the arete to the top. Iron fencepost belay. Three superb pitches.

Chimney Stack – *Shear Sear*

30m, E5 6a

G. Latter. May, 1987.

Splitting the south face of this very impressive stack is a magnificent shallow searing grooveline, capped by a small roof and split by a finger-crack. This provides a brilliant sustained pitch. Follow the crack with a hard move at 10m to a good rest. Continue with interest past a further hard section at a steepening in the groove, to gain better holds near the left arete. The easy looking final section is not, and the ledges prove awkward to gain. Finish up a short flake crack to a sharp final pull on to the top to reach a double bolt belay. Abseil off.

**Bob-Bob Stack Area – *Actually Hyperbole***

35m, E3 5c

R. Wightman, J. Topping. 13th June, 1987.

On the descent from the *Bob-Bob Stack* towards the *Broken Needles* are three grooves on the first wall on the left. This climbs the central groove. Move into the groove from the left and climb it to exit left. Extra rope required to belay to fencepost 15m back.

**Bob-Bob Stack Area, Fallen Pillars (Broken Needles)**D. Dinwoodie reckons that the name *Fallen Pillars* predates *Broken Needles*.– *Toll-Dubh* 50m, Hard Very Severe 4c

D. Dinwoodie, B. Lawrie. 17th April, 1987.

Climbs a remarkable hidden shaft up the back of the leftmost slumped pillars, some way right of the *Bob-Bob Stack*.

Enter a cave on the left side of the first pillar, or climb a 5b crack on the outside (less rope-drag). Climb the shaft up the back of the pillars emerging in the upper chimney of *Fish-Tail Cracks*. Continue the through route under a boulder to the top of the pillars. The easiest finish is by a small hanging corner on the right (loose).

– *Fish-Tail Cracks* 50m, E1 5b

D. Dinwoodie, B. Lawrie. 16th April, 1987.

On the right side of the leftmost pillar are three parallel cracks. Start up twin cracks, then follow the right-hand pair to finish up the central one, developing into a chimney. Finish direct up a blunt rib, or finish on the right more easily as for previous route (loose).

– *Bocan Mor* 45m, E2 5c

D. Hawthorn, D. Dinwoodie. 18th May, 1987.

Round right from *Fish-Tail Cracks* there is a precarious slumped and fractured pillar. Right of this are two hanging pillars facing a slender pinnacle. This route takes the crack-line on the right-side of the right-hand pillar and is gained by a thin crack and right traverse out under the roof. Access is via big boulders. The exit of the crack is still dirty.

– *High Noon* 40m, E2 5b

D. Dinwoodie, B. Lawrie. 16th April, 1987.

Left of the pillars is a slot-line capped by a roof. Left again are twin parallel cracks. Climb these for 12m, then move out left up a flake to follow the obvious hand crack. A rotten flake at the top needs trundling.

– *Demon Lover* 40m, E5 6a

D. Dinwoodie, B. Lawrie. 17th April, 1987.

Just round left from *High Noon* is a corner developing into a deep chimney. This route takes the fine finger-crack in the groove immediately left. Perfect protection but very sustained. Belay near the top.

– *Blasphog*

35m, E2 6a

D. Dinwoodie, A. N. Other. 17th May, 1987.

Some way left of *Demon Lover* the cliff forms an obvious nose of reddish rock, at the foot of the descent gully area. This route takes a crack-line leading up over a small roof at 10m just left of the nose. Start up on the right and swing in left to gain the crack-line. The roof is the crux and a good belay can be taken just below the top.

**Staffin Slip Buttress**

The first large cleaned crag viewed from the slip.

– *Kilt Classic*

40m, HVS/E1

W. Birkett, E. Grindley. 12th August, 1987.

The central arête is formed by a large tapering pillar. Climb the steep chimney crack twist this and the buttress, widening at the top. A striking line.

– *Dawn of Time*

30m, Very Severe 4b

D. Dinwoodie. 18th May, 1987.

This lies on the fine crag overlooking the birches and boulders at the south end of Staffin Bay. The route takes the chimney behind a leaning detached pillar in the centre of the crag. A finish was made up the left side of the pillar where a short chimney leads to the top.

**ELGOL**

100m northwest of the school at Elgol is an overhanging buttress (provisionally named *Schoolhouse Buttress*). The vertical south-east wall is split centrally by a crack high up. The wall and crack was climbed by W. F. Alexander, J. Ashbridge; 20m, Very Severe 4c, on 12th May, 1987.

**NORTHERN HIGHLANDS****FOINAVEN AREA**

The Foinaven section for the new Northern Highlands guide is currently being written by A. Nisbet. The following have come to light.

*Sigma* (SMCJ, 1979) is not on the Fourth Dionard Buttress. It is a winter route based on *Left Edge Route*, Creag Alistair. *Guinevere Gully* (SMCJ, 1979) is the gully on the immediate right of Creag Alistair.

*Hirsuit* and *Look North* (SMCJ, 1987) are on the Second Dionard Buttress. *Late Breakfast* (SMCJ, 1987) is the same as *Double Corner*, whose correct name is *Marble Corner*. *Weather or Not* (SMCJ, 1987) is the same as *Gargantua*.

**Creag Urthard – Mad Mink**

90m, Hard Very Severe

S. Richardson, T. Prentice (Alt). 25th May, 1987.

Climbs the wall left of the main corner of *Chicken Run*, with an airy and enjoyable second pitch on good rock. Follow the ramp of *Chicken Run* for one pitch before climbing three short walls to the foot of the buttress. Start below the crackline leading to the left and of the long overhang which cuts the wall at two-thirds height.

1. 35m, 4a. Follow the vague crackline on the left to a break.

2. 45m, 5a. Traverse right for 3m and climb a steep blocky wall. Continue up and left to a clean cut chimney which leads to the overhang. Climb this direct to a short corner on the right.

3. 10m. Easily up the corner.

**Dionard Crags – Beeline**

150m, Hard Very Severe

S. Richardson, T. Prentice (Alt). 23rd May, 1987.

Three small crags face Creag Alistair at grid ref. NC 365475. The lower left crag is distinguished by a prominent grooved arete which gives the line of the following route. A scramble from the left leads to the foot of a clean white corner. A good pitch.

1. 40m, **5a**. Just to the left of the main corner, a short wall leads to a slanting crack which is followed leftwards, until an awkward bulge gives access to a slab. From its top step down and right below overhangs before pulling through them, left, to a corner which leads to a stance.

2. 10m, **4a**. Continue up the corner.

**OLD MAN OF STOER – Ring of Bright Water**

80m, E1

S. Yates, I. Halliday. June, 1987.

A free ascent of a line previously climbed with some aid in the past. Start at the right end of the West (seaward) Face.

1. **5b**. Climb short wall to slab under roof. Traverse left round roof and round arete to gain steep flared crack on North Face. Up this to its top, then traverse left along ledge to peg belays on East Face.

2. **5b**. Climb bulge above belay (crux) to gain hanging slab. Follow this up left to gain deep groove of original route. Up this and short corner to top.

**– North-West Corner**

60m, Extremely Severe

M. Fowler, C. Newcombe. 29th August, 1987.

Takes the right-hand arete of the landward face (looking from the clifftop).

1. 15m, **5c**. Climb the arete on its left side (hard at 6m) to a ledge and friend belay.

2. 20m, **5b**. A layback flake just left of the arete allows holds to be gained leading up right to a resting place on the arete. Move up right round to the right hand side and follow a left-slanting crack to regain the crest. Move left to a fine belay ledge.

3. 35m, **5a**. Climb the obvious left-trending ramp (2 old PR at start) to a ledge at its top (final belay of original route). Move out right to a large ledge just left of the arete. Follow the arete to the top.

**STAC POLLADH – The Irascible Porcupine**

90m, Hard Very Severe

A. Fraser, J. Dickson. 22nd June, 1987.

Two contrasting pitches up towers in the middle of pinnacle basin. At the bottom of the basin, centrally situated between wide scree gullies, is a pinnacle.

1. 35m, **5a**. Climb the crack up the front (South) face, exiting left near the top.

2. 25m. Scramble down the back face of the tower to the col with the upper tower (17m).

3. 40m, **5b**. Directly in front is a wide crack which is climbed with difficulty. Continue first leftwards (overlooking the Lobsters Claw) then directly to finish at the top of the basin.

**– Nosferatu**

40m, Hard Very Severe, 5a

A. Fraser, Ms. W. Faulkner. 27th Sept., 1987.

This route climbs the buttress immediately right of *Vlad the Impaler* (SMCJ, 1986). Start at the foot of a prominent chimney/crack, the easternmost feature of No. 2 buttress. Climb chimney for 10m then move left into the centre of the face. Continue with increasing difficulty up twin cracks in the centre of the buttress to an excellent finish.

**REIFF**

The sea cliffs north of Reiff have proved quite popular since their unveiling. The following notes must be used in conjunction with SMCJ, 1987. There are too many routes to reproduce the complete set.



'An awkward problem.'  
Arran boulder by Fraser Campbell (ca. 1896)



*A member of the Boulder Society  
but not so very boulder wise.*



**THE REIFF CLIFFS, The Bouldering Cliff**

Left of *The Crack of Desire* is a large rockfall scar, which has left a 45° rightward-slanting, pale, tapering slab. This is *Monster Breaker*, 25m, HVS 5a, climbed by A. Matthewson, A. Tibbs, on 3rd May, 1987.

**AN STUIR, The Sea Cliff (NB 966 156)**

This is a small promontory on the north side of Camas Eilean Ghlais overlooking the island. Seen from the approach path along the bay, it lies just west (left) of a conspicuous cave near the right end of the coastline. Large fallen blocks lead to a ridged shelf south of the promontory, where a good view of the routes is possible. At half to low tides, a descent gully (mod.) in the east corner of the promontory leads to the shelf. At high tides, abseil to platforms at the base of the routes. Length of the routes range 10-15m on sound rock.

1. *Sea Quim*. V. Diff. 5m left of the descent gully, climb left facing slab corner.
  2. *Sea Sic*. Hard Severe. Bottomless Groove right of 1. Pull out R. to finish.
  3. *Sea Styris*. Severe. \*\* 10m L. of descent, climb short slab and deep L. facing corner cracks to the top.
  4. *Sea Phylis*. V. Diff. \*\*\* Start 2m L. of previous route, and gain a hanging slab to follow R. curving crack.
  5. *Sea Men*. HVS (4c) \*\* 4m L. of *Sea Phylis*, gain the L. end of the hanging slab via a dark corner crack and climb the obvious steep crack above direct to the top.
- Immediately L. is a smooth steep unclimbed corner. The next corner L. (gained by abseil or a 5a sea level traverse), gives the start of 2 routes:
6. *Sea Ping*. V. Diff. \* The corner direct.
  7. *Sea Parrot*. HVS (5a) \* The R. trending crack.
  8. *Sea Squared*. Severe. \* 2m L. of *Sea Ping*, climb the obvious L. slanting crack, moving R. at half height to finish up a wrinkled slab.
  9. *Sea Squid*. Severe. \* The next open corner left again.
  10. *Sea Moon*. MVS (4b) \*\* On the front face L. of *Sea Squid*; climb a steep crack, turning the roof on the L. to finish R. up the slab and arete.
  11. *Sea Scorpion*. Severe. Around the nose of the promontory, on the west face, climb a R. facing steepening corner; the final moves are the crux.

A fine sea level traverse can be made around the promontory from *Sea Styris*, finishing up *Sea Scorpion* (5a).

First ascents: Keith Geddes, Andy Cunningham, Graeme Livingston. August, 1987.

**First Section (NB 965 157) The Stiur Promontory**

The promontory to the south west of *Seal Song* offers some fine bouldering/microroutes (many are protectable). The south-west face has two tiers separated by a large platform. The corners of the upper tier are marked on the diagram in the SMCJ, 1987; p. 470.

**Upper Tier**

Characterised by an arete/corner formation at its L. (west) end. The routes are up to 6m high on rough sound rock, with generally good landings on the platform. The problems are described R. - L. (facing the crag).

1. **4c**. The first feature is a bulging sculptured wall; take this near its L. end.
2. Diff. Just to the L. is a corner with a mantleself start.
3. **4b**. The wall to the L. has a large protruding triangular block above it. Climb the wall directly under the block.
4. Mild Severe. The crack line near the L. end of the wall.
5. **5a**. The first arete; taken direct (without using holds on 4).
6. **5a**. The first clean-cut corner.
7. **5b**. The fine arete on its L.
8. **5a**. On the R. wall of 9 is a thin crack. Move R. to finish.

9. 4c. The second clean-cut corner.
10. 4c. The arete on its L.
11. V Diff. A crack in the wall L. of the arete.

### Lower Tier

The routes are higher here (8m) but neither the quality nor the landings are as good. This tier has a different character, with steep sculptured walls and numerous potholes making for more strenuous problems.

1. 5b. As one approaches the tier along the dry gulch on its L., there is an impressive horizontally faulted wall. Serious.
2. 5a. The first feature on the lower tier itself is an overhanging wall. Start at a flake where the wall bends round to the west.
3. Mild Severe. Just L. of the bend is a small roof. The line is a groove between this and a jutting flake.
4. Mild Severe. The wall just L. of the flake.
5. V. Diff. A prominent deep crack. Steep.
6. Severe. The wall just L. of the crack. Bulging but extremely juggy.
7. V. Diff. The long wall further L. has a L. - R. slanting crackline.
8. 4c. The wall to the L. Less attractive with sloping holds and slightly artificial.

### Second Section (NB 965 157) The Seal Song Area

— *Modern Thinking*

E4(6a)\*\*

G. Livingston, K. Geddes, A. Cunningham. August, 1987.

This is the obvious line on the wall L. of *The Executioner*. Start 4m R. of the arete, and climb up and L. to gain the hand traverse R. into the base of the corners. Follow these to the top.

The following two routes are on the wall to the right of *The Executioner*.

— *The Grateful Dead*

15m, Severe

A. Fraser, Ms. W. Faulkner. 26th Sept., 1987.

Climbs the light coloured concave slab, reached from the right, then continues directly.

— *Wendy's Flying Circus*

15m, Hard Very Severe (5a)

Ms. W. Faulkner, A. Fraser. 26th Sept., 1987.

Start 5m right of *The Grateful Dead*. Climb a roof, then continue directly to and up a rightwards-trending crack in the final wall.

— *Street Surfer*

15m, E1

S. Steer, A. Fraser. 2nd May, 1987.

Climb the corner right of *Every Which Way But Loose*, then up the wall and over a prominent thin flake at 12m.

Note: On the second ascent of *Elastic Collision*, a large jug was uncovered (?) The route is now easier, about the same standard as *Seal Song* (hard E3?)

### Third Section - (NB 965 158) The Minch Walls.

This is the area of short (10m-15m) west facing walls, about 70m long, extending from the descent at the S. end, to the corners of *Where The Green Ants Dream*. Despite initial thinking, all the routes are on excellent rock, some of which are minor classics! The routes are described from the descent, north to Green Ants. (R. - L. when facing the crag from the platform).

1. *Everybody's Fault*. Severe. The L. trending fault immediately L. of the descent. Hard to start.
2. *T Square*. V. Diff. 20m L. of the descent, beyond a loose blocky area, climb the deep corner crack.

3. *Social Democrat*. E1 (5b) \* A few metres L. of *T Square* on the west face, climb the short undercut groove.

4. *Parabolic Head*. E1 (5c) \* The next hanging groove, L. of a cracked nose.

5. *Judicial Hanging*. HVS (5b) \*\* Climb the obvious deep widening crack 3m. L. again.

6. *Dunskiing*. VS (4c/5a) \*\* Start just L. of the previous route, and climb into/up the shallow corner, moving L. round the final short prow.

7. *Athlete's Foot*. V. Diff. \* Climb into the triangular niche L. of *Dunskiing*, and finish R.

8. *Friends For Life*. HVS (5a/5b) \*\* The wide bulging corner crack curving R. to the finish of *Athlete's Foot*.

9. *Jim Nastic*. VS (4c) \*\*\* Start at the L. end of the overhanging wall L. of *Friends For Life*, and climb over ledges trending R. to a platform at mid height. From its R. end climb the thin crack in the slab to the top.

10. *Domino*. HVS (5a) \*\* Start as for *Jim Nastic*, but trend L. to climb a short hanging corner to finish R.

11. *Slip Jig*. Hard Severe \* The obvious L. trending stepped corner line 2m L. of *Domino*.

*Clam Jam*. E1 (5b) \* 8m L. of *Slip Jig*, climb up to break through the R. end of a scalloped-shaped roof, finishing up finger crack.

*Where The Green Ants Dream*. E1 (5c/6a) \*\*\* Description should read: This climbs a line of easier corners, after a hard start, set into the L. arete of the Minch Walls.

Routes 1 – 11 K. Geddes, A. Cunningham. August 1987.

### Third Section – The Bay of Pigs

This is the impressive large bay left (N.) of *Green Ants*, with some excellent climbing to date.

#### *Sexcrementalism*

15m, E1 (5b) \*

Start 10m L. of *Green Ants*, and climb the obvious Y crack to ledge (strenuous) and continue up the corner crack more easily.

#### 1. *Blackadder*

15m, HVS (5a) \*\*

K. Geddes, A. Cunningham

Climb the deep overhanging crack in the R. corner of the bay, finishing R. up the slabby fault. (Traversing R. along the shelf above the initial crack gives a pleasant Diff. finishing up the fault).

#### 2. *The Thistle*

12m, E5 (6b) \*\*\*

G. Livingston, A. Cunningham, K. Geddes

The impressive and deceptively steep crack that springs from the overhanging recess on the west facing wall L. of *Blackadder*. Well protected, but very powerful moves at the top.

#### 3. *Walk Like An Egyptian*

18m, E4 (6a) \*\*\*

A. Cunningham, K. Geddes.

The most obvious line in the bay. Climb the corners until possible? to graunch up the bomb-bay groove to an easier finish leftwards.

#### *Awesome*

12m, E5 (6b) \*\*

G. Livingston, S. Blagbrough.

The R. – L. diagonal line starting from the upper platform L. of *Egyptian*. An awkward start leads slightly R. of the crack, returning L. to follow it to an easier finish up the less steep top wall.

**Third Section – Piglet Wall.**

From the base of Egyptian, a short wall (5-8m) extends L. (north) for 25m. This is the Piglet Wall, with fine mini routes to be led or bouldered.

*Curving Crack*

HVS, (5a) \*\*

The L. curving shallow corner crack 10m L. of the right end.

1. *Dreams Of Utah*

HVS (5a/b) \*

4m L. again; thin crack leading to a triangular niche at the top.

*Chokestone Crack*

V. Diff.

Immediately L. is a deep L. slanting crack leading to a bay.

*Vision Of Blue*

E1 (5b) \*

Climb the cracked wrinkled wall just L. again.

*The Kraken*

E2 (6a) \*

The obvious shallow groove, with the hardest moves at the start, although sustained.

On the south facing terminating wall, there are 3 obvious corners. From R. – L.

2. *Jenny Wren*

VS (4c) \*

3. *Jackie in the Box*

Diff.

4. *Dulcie Bridge*

V. Diff.

**Third Section – The Pooh Cliff.**

This lies approximately 100m north of the Bay of Pigs where the rock heightens and steepens above a series of narrow platforms, eventually running out on to a storm boulder beach. All the routes lie on an 80m section of excellent rock ranging in height from 6m at either end, to 12m in the middle, with some fine 'wee classics.' From the boulder beach end (N.), working right (S.):

1. *Owl*

Diff.

The short L. facing stepped corner at the L. end of the narrow platform.

2. *Short Sighted*

Severe \*\*

The shelfy groove near the L. end of the narrow platform. Difficult to start for those with short legs!

3. *Big Ears*

VS (4c)

Diagonally R. from start of 2, up bulging wall.

4. *Big Nose*

VS (4c)

Jug pulling up the short overhanging prow, with an awkward finish R. of the block.

5. *Descent*

Mod.

The steps R. of a wet black corner.

6. *Rose Root*

V. Diff.

Short crack in steep ledgy wall R. of the descent.

7. *Tigger*

MVS (4b) \*

The thin crack in the L. wall where the cliff heightens at the L. end of a raised platform. Steep.

8. *Pooh Corner*

VS (4c) \*\*\*

The excellent black corner.

9. *The Ramp*

Severe \*

An obvious R. – L. ramp at the R. end of the raised platform.

10. *Live Entertainment* E1 (5b/c) \*\*  
The bottomless groove on the R. Sustained.
11. *Honey Pot* Hard Severe \*  
The wide crack in the next corner R.
12. *Sticky Fingers* VS (4c) \*\*  
Shallow scoop in the wall on the R., climbing direct over the bulge, and trending L. to finish. Full of surprises!
13. *The Alcove* HVS (5a) \*  
A short leaning groove at the R. end of the platform to the big ledge. Finish up just R. of 11, or: traverse off easily R. and up, or: jump for the pool.
14. *Kanga* HVS (5b) \*  
The short corner above the triangular step to the big ledge.
15. *Roo* VS (5a/b) \*  
Climb the shallow corner in the wall at the R. end of the triangular step, with a long reach from the horizontal break; still not finished!
16. *Eeyore* HVS (5a) \*\*\*  
Steep unobvious climbing up the middle of the concave wall R. again.
17. *Body Swerve* HVS (5b)  
The innocuous groove at the R. end of the concave wall, moving R. under the roof.
18. *Jelly Wobbler* E1 (5b) \*\*  
An awkward finger crack in the L. curving black corner R. of 16.
19. *Scoop* Diff.  
Next short groove above large blocks.

All routes: Jennifer Pickering, A. Cunningham. August, 1987.

### THE GOLDEN WALLS

There is no key to the diagram on page 472 (SMCJ, 1987). Should read:

P	Platform
DC	Deep Chimney (The Black Chimney – see below)
SI	Slab Inlet
LAS	Low-angled Slab
PW	Platform Walls
UC	Unclimbed (still) crack.

#### *Murphy's Law*

The grade is HVS (5a)

On the wall right of *Murphy's Law* are two cracklines:

#### *Bubblyjock*

E2 (5c)

The left crackline (B. Lawrie, W. Moir, A. Nisbet, June, 1987).

#### *Ruben Tadpole*

E1 (5b)

The right (W.M., B.L., A.N., June, 1987).

#### *Split Personality*

15m, E3 (5c) \*\*\*

A. Nisbet, N. Ritchie, S. Blagborough. August, 1987.

The 'unclimbed crack' on 'the Golden Walls proper.' The crux is the short section at the top of the main crack. The overhanging wall above runs to unexpectedly good holds in the horizontal breaks (also friend placements). Trend leftwards. Yo-yoed.

*The Black Chimney*

20m, V. Diff.

A. Nisbet. August, 1987.

The chimney left of *Black Gold*. Requires a favourable breeze to dry. The next two routes lie on the wall left of the chimney. Access only at low tide.

*The Comeback*

20m, Very Severe (4c)\*\*

N. Morrison, A. Nisbet. June, 1987.

Climbs the slabby right side of the wall left of *The Black Chimney*. Protected by 'micro-friends.' Start by trending rightwards up a very shallow scoop.

*Snookered*

20m, Severe (5a)

A. Nisbet, N. Morrison. June, 1987.

Left of *The Comeback* is an undercut shelf at head height. Gain the shelf strenuously, then climb straight up the wall above (V. Diff. and slightly loose) to finish just left of a big recess.

**ANTEALLACH, Coire a' Ghlas Thuill**— *Main Rib*

C. Forrest, W. Moir. 30th January, 1988.

330m, GRADE III/IV

Climb the lower section by the central chimney line. Go leftwards through the steep section above mid-height and return right to follow the crest to the top.

**Toll an Lochain, Sail Liath**

Facing into the corrie, a buttress on the left (above the causeway damming the Lochan) leads up to the summit of Sail Liath. A right to left-slanting snow ramp (not visible from the causeway) runs to a point about half way up the buttress. Near the top of the ramp three deep cut gullies cleave the steep walls on the right. *Bowling Alley* takes the central gully; *Bottomless Gully* the right-hand, recognisable by its ending in an overhanging wall.

— *Bowling Alley*

M. Fowler, C. Watts. 12th April, 1987.

100m, GRADE IV

1. 15m. A very steep iced corner leads to the base of the gully proper.
2. 40m. Deceptively steep iced chimneys lead to an easier-angled section.
3. 45m. Steep snow leads to a 20m steep icy section leading underneath a prominent chockstone to gain easier ground.
4. 100m. of easy ground leads to open slopes.

— *Bottomless Gully* 135m, GRADE IV/V

M. Fowler, D. Wilkinson (Alt). 13th March, 1988.

The gully is protected by an overhanging wall which necessitates a start 45m down the approach ramp.

1. 45m. Zig-zag with surprising difficulty trending generally left towards the base of the gully.
2. 20m. Easier to the gully, which is deep and narrow.
3. 30m. Easy snow in the gully.
4. 40m. A fine pitch leads out on to easy ground.

**BEINN DEARG MHOR**

The three routes recorded here have not been related to the existing buttress names. Hopefully future visits will clarify.

— *Fat Man's Folly*

220m, GRADE III/IV

A. Todd, D. Curr. 23rd March, 1987.

Between the main buttress (Central Buttress?) and east buttress is a more broken area of rock. The route is the left one of two gullies on this face. The overhanging left wall of the third pitch means that the route is not for the stout.

— *Broken Finger Gully*

250m, GRADE IV

G. Taylor, A. Todd, 2nd April, 1987.

The large buttress on the left of the coire is separated from the cliffs to the right by a deep hanging gully.

An attractive ice ramp (right to left) leads into the gully. Climb this and ice bulges for two pitches to a wide 'arena' deep in the mountain. Here the gully divides. The left fork was climbed, the final 100m being easy.

— *Spring Maiden*

250m, GRADE V

G. Taylor, A. Todd, 2nd April, 1987.

From the bottom of *Broken Finger Gully*, another and easier ramp goes rightwards into the cliff. Follow this until an obvious icefall (easily seen from coire floor) rises up on the left wall. A convenient ledge on the left allows the ice (impending in two sections) to be climbed in two 25m pitches. Continue for a pitch up easier ground to the end of the gully. Now a short traverse to the left leads to the hidden right branch of *Broken Finger Gully*. Finish easily up this.

**BEINN DEARG, Glen Squaib**— *Archway*

250m, GRADE III

R. Everett, S. Richardson (Alt). 7th February, 1988.

This route finds some spectacular rock scenery on the buttress to the left of *Emerald Gully*. Start at the lowest point of the buttress and follow open grooves just left of the steepest rocks to reach a prominent cave-like depression beneath huge roofs after 3 long pitches (150m). Climb up right through the roof of the cave – hard for the grade but short (40m). Follow an interesting gully and groove system up to the right to finish (60m).

**Coire Ghranda, Upper Cliff – *Snort Trail***

180m, GRADE IV

M. Fowler, C. Watts (Alt). 11th April, 1987.

On the left-hand side of the crag is a prominent smooth groove/shallow gully running the full height of the crag. The route takes this.

Several short ice pitches lead to the base of the upper corner which contains a long thin ice ribbon (110m). Climb the corner to easier slopes (40m). Continue more easily to the cornice (30m).

— *Traumatic Interference*

S. Venables, J. English. 11th April, 1987.

170m, GRADE IV

Takes a groove/gully line 30m right of *Snort Trail*.

— *Ice Bomb*

115m, GRADE V/VI

M. Fowler, D. Wilkinson. 12th March, 1988.

An excellent route up the very impressive fault in the centre of the cliff – passing just R. of the prominent ice boss.

Start beneath the ice boss at the highest point of the snow.

1. 30m. Traverse 5m left on tufts and move up to gain a R. trending groove. Follow this (ignoring an easier looking variant on slabs to the R. at 15m) and belay 20m below and left of the prominent ice boss.

2. 20m. Ascend diagonally right on mixed ground and cross the left end of a slanting barrier wall to gain snow beneath the ice boss.

3. 30m. Climb the ice choked groove just R. of the boss to gain a constricted chimney leading to snow beneath the final sharply overhanging corner.

4. 35m. Move up the corner for 6m to an icicle formation. Tension left across the overhanging wall from an in situ 'friend' and pull up on to slabs. Move up to the exposed arete on the left and across to a groove. Ascend this for 3m, move back R. to the arete and continue easily up the slope on the R. to the top.

### THE FANNICHS, An Coileachean, Garbh Choire Mor

— *The Turf Accountant*

S. Jenkins, M. E. Moran. 9th December, 1987.

200m, GRADE IV

Follows a corner line in the steep buttress left of *Dandelion*, starting just to its left and aiming for a protruding square block on the skyline.

1. 30m. Climb a left trending ramp to a terrace beneath a smooth rock band.
2. 20m. Take the band direct above via a sentry box (hard) to gain the bottom left-hand side of the corner line.
- 3, 4, 5. 120m. Move slightly right then follow the turfy corner with increasing interest, passing just left of the square block to gain easy ground.
6. 30m. Easy to the top.

### CARNMOR CRAG — *Jivaro Crack*

60m, E4

D. Dinwoodie, D. Hawthorn. 28th April, 1987.

The vertical crackline on the left wall of *Carnmore Corner* (*Wilderness* takes the face just left). The crack is well-protected after a bold bit at the start.

1. 20m, **5b**. Pitch 1 of *Wilderness*, an obvious diagonal break with a bulging start.
2. 20m, **6b**. Move right up the prominent wide diagonal crack (as for *Wilderness*), then climb straight up the crackline to a rest at a bucket. The crack splits before rejoining near the top and the thin right fork was taken. Pull up into an obvious slabby groove and go up this to move up right to belay beside a detached block.
3. 20m, **5c**. Step left from the block and go up a small hanging corner to pull over the bulge to good holds. Easier to the top, finishing up *Wilderness* and *Gob* original finish.

### The Grey Wall — *It was Twenty Years Ago Today*

50m, E1

D. Rubens, S. Pearson. June, 1987.

To the left of *The Grey Wall* is a very prominent diedre (just left of *The Cracks*).

1. 25m, **4c**. Climb to and then up the diedre to a stance.
2. 25m, **5a**. Hand traverse a few feet left to two spikes, then up by line of least resistance. Poorly protected on first half of this pitch.

### BEINN AIRIGH CHARR, North-West Face

— *Comic Relief*

250m, GRADE III

D. Broadhead, I. Dalley. 5th February, 1988.

This face overlooks the coire above the W. end of Loch an Doire Crionaich.

Follow the distinct gully/chimney line splitting the centre of the face, taking the R. fork at mid height. Near the top it is possible to finish more easily to the R. or follow the natural line up a narrow chimney.

### BEINN LAIR, Butterfly Buttress — *Left Wing*

350m, GRADE II/III

D. Broadhead, I. Dalley. 7th February, 1988.

The shortcomings of the summer route were hidden under a mantle of ice and snow which gave a continuously interesting climb following the crest of the buttress.



**CREAG MHOR THOLLAIDH, Lower Tollie Crag**— *Each Uisge*

45m, E4

D. Dinwoodie, A. Ross. 27th August, 1987.

Climbs the big slab immediately left of *Stoney-Broke*. Protection is sketchy in a couple of places and the top crack is sustained.

1. 20m, 5c. Climb the obvious direct start to *Shazam*, up steep cracks starting from a big block. Emerging on to slabs, follow an obvious flake out right and up to a horizontal break. Step up left and go up right and up to another break with peg belay.

2. 25m, 6b. Climb the slabs up rightwards and straight up to another horizontal break with a peg runner. Step right and climb a thin crack to a tree at the top (handy for abseiling).

The following description was supplied by the same team, same date. However, 'the obvious arête at the left end of the crag was climbed by M. Hamilton (unseconed) in 1983 — details forgotten — at E3 5c.' The relationship is at present unknown.

— *Rain-in-the-Face*

40m, E4

The obvious arête right of *Stoney-Broke*. Belay above the initial trees of *The Handrail*.

1. 20m, 6b. Hand traverse a jagged block left to heather under the left wall of the arête (Friend one placement in a slot up on the right). Climb past the Friend and a PR (crux) to gain a small ledge. Pull up right and up by a small groove to a bulge. Step right and climb a foxy crack to reach a belay stance.

2. 20m, 5a. Step left and follow a crackline up right; return left on to the edge. Easy up right to finish.

The following routes are described from the right end of the crag leftwards. A groove and crack on the arête at the right end of the crag was climbed by M. Hamilton and D. Dinwoodie in 1983 (E3 6a).

— *Cloud Cuckoo Land*

G. Nicoll, R. Anderson. 9th May, 1987.

25m, Hard Very Severe 5b

Start about 25 feet left of the right hand end of the crag below an obvious break in the steep lower wall. Climb a short corner, pull over the steepening and follow a crack stepping up left to finish by a corner crack.

— *Second Coast*

30m, E2

G. Nicoll, R. Anderson. 10th May, 1987.

Start at a shallow cracked corner groove a short way below and left of the previous route where a grassy tree lined ledge slants up leftwards.

1. 10m, 5a. Climb the corner/groove to a ledge.

2. 20m, 5b. Move up right, climb a crack in the leaning wall and continue above crossing a small overlap to finish via a short tricky slab.

— *Loctite*

30m, E3

R. Anderson, G. Nicoll. 10th May, 1987.

Start below the tree lined ledge running up from the base of the previous route at a short undercut crack, this is just right of the corner of *Rumple Fyke*.

1. 10m, 6a. Gain the crack and climb it to the ledge.

2. 20m, 5c. Climb a rightward slanting flake crack, pull left and follow a thin crack over a bulge to gain a short ramp, step left then up to gain heathery ledge.

— *Uhu*

20m, E1 5b

R. Anderson, G. Nicoll. 10th May, 1987.

Start from the tree lined ledge and climb the crack left of *Loctite* directly to finish up the last few moves of *Rumple Fyke*.

R. Anderson, M. Hamilton. 1983.

Climbs the thin crackline left of *Castasis* gained by climbing the short corner groove which starts about 5m up and stepping left immediately above a small roof. A fine route.

### UPPERTOLLIE CRAG — *The Heretic*

55m, E2/3

R. Anderson, G. Nicoll. 10th May, 1987.

Good though sparsely protected climbing up the wall in between *The Bug* and *Pokey Hat*.

1. 45m, **5b**. Start as for *Pokey Hat* and climb up right to stand on two blocks. Step right and follow the shallow slabby groove with poor protection to gain a ramp, make a detour up right to place a runner in the crack of *The Bug* then return to the base of the ramp where there is a good handhold on the wall. Move up then left and gain the start of a diagonal crack which is climbed past a shallow scoop (possible belay). Stand in the crack where it becomes horizontal and continue above, first right then left, to gain a diagonal break. Move up to gain another diagonal break and pull over on to a slabby ledge.

2. 10m, -. Move up right and climb up then off left.

### — *Big Toe*

75m, E1

R. Anderson, S. Pearson, A. Conkie. 18th April, 1987.

Start just right of *Teddy Bears Picnic*.

1. 25m, **5b**. Climb the wall up and right to reach the crack of *Knickerbocker Glory* which is climbed to easier ground and a tree belay in the chimney.

2. 20m, **5b**. Step down and follow a rising crackline rightwards across the wall to step across and belay on *Cocaine* beside a perched block.

3. 30m, **5b**. Traverse right to climb a crack leading up to the right edge, step right and continue up easier rock to the top.

### BEINN ALLIGIN

The note by S. Chadwick in SM CJ, 1986, concerning *Deep South* and *Deep North Gullies* was incorrect. The guidebook description is correct.

There are two parallel lines of weakness between *Deep South* and *Deep North Gullies*. The left-hand has been called *Errors Cleft* by S. Chadwick and I. Davidson who climbed it in May, 1987 (250m, GRADE I). The right weakness is the following route:

### — *Diamond Cleft*

260m, GRADE IV

C. Munro, S. Chadwick. 15th March, 1988.

Approach from the right to the start of the gully formed by a buttress on the right and a huge sandstone monolith on the left.

An initial steep section, then easier to the cleft itself. An entertaining 45m, then milder to the top.

### LIATHACH, Coire Dubh Beag — *Ramblers Rib*

350m, GRADE II/III

D. Broadhead, S. Sillars. 15th February, 1987.

This route follows the rib bounding the L. side of the narrow gully *Trotters* on the west side of Coire Dubh Beag. Start in the gully and climb out on to the rib at the earliest opportunity. Climb a series of walls and steps by grooves and corners, avoiding the final rock tower to the Left or Right.

**Coire Dubh Mor – The Temptress**

220m, GRADE IV

A. Cunningham, A. Nisbet. 16th February, 1988.

The rightmost icefall on the face right of *Poachers Fall*. Much less continuous than the others. A short steep introductory pitch led to the main pitch, a shallow ice groove. A long easy pitch led to a belay under steep walls and obvious direct finishes. These were avoided by traversing left to finish up *Brain Drain*.

**Coire na Caime – Bannockburn**

200m, GRADE IV

C. Forrest, W. Moir. 2nd January, 1987.

Climbs the obvious line of icy/turfy chimneys and grooves up the middle of the buttress between *Gullies 6* and *7* (MacInnes nomenclature). The crux was the steep crack up the final rock band leading to easy ground and the summit ridge.

**– Valentine Buttress**

250m, GRADE IV

D. Broadhead, W. Tring. 14th February, 1987.

This route climbs the West end of the broad broken buttress East of *Bells Buttress*. Start below the first chimney about 100m left of *Vanadium Couloir*. Climb the chimney for 100m until easier climbing leads out Right on to the buttress. Follow a series of grooves to the top.

**BEINN EIGHE, Coire Mhic Fhearchair, Far East Wall – Vishnu** 110m, GRADE VI

A. Cunningham, A. Nisbet. 14th February, 1988.

A fierce route up the major fault line to the left of *The Rising Son* (SMCJ, 1987). In prime conditions (unusual?) the route would be entirely on ice but this might well prove no easier than the mixed climbing. Protection was generally poor; ice screws required. Starting on the right, an introductory pitch led up left to belay below the initial groove (15m). The groove was climbed on ice (deceptively steep) to a belay in a deep recess below big icicles (20m). An overhanging chimney led out right to a small ledge. Here one could step left on to the ice above the roof but a mixed line was taken. From the ledge, an overhanging groove led to another small ledge and good belay (20m). The vertical corner above was climbed (good runners at half height) until the ice could be regained above its steepest section. Now a deep gully led over two steep sections to easier ground (50m) and snow slopes (10m).

**– Kami-kaze** GRADE V/VI

A. Cunningham, A. Nisbet. 6th February, 1988.

An outrageous appearance and situations *en route*, but with highly amenable rock, make this exciting route one of the best mixed climbs around. Chimneying features prominently so sacks should not be carried (approach from the top and leave sacks at the cairn?)

**– Ling Dynasty** 110m, E6

G. Livingston, A. Nisbet. July, 1987.

The route starts up *Birth of the Cool* and where that route goes right, continues straight up a magnificent crack and through the big roof above. The crux pitch was led on sight without falls and is well protected.

1. 30m, **5a**. The first pitch of *Birth of the Cool* was wet so the rib on the right was gained by steep moves out of the cave returning to the original route above the cave.

2. 15m, **5a**. As for *Birth of the Cool*, on up the fault.

3. 10m, **5b**. Climb a steep crack and the wall on the right to a ledge. *Birth of the Cool* goes right from here.

4. 25m, **6c**. Step left into the crackline and climb it to a roof. Pull out rightwards round the roof into the upper continuation of the crack and climb it to the big roof (very sustained). Traverse right to belay at the right end of the roof (more comfortable than it looks).

5. 15m, **6b**. Return left and climb the wide crack in the roof. Go leftwards up the thin ramp above and belay.

6. 15m, **4c**. Move right and up a corner to the top.

— *Sumo*

85m, E2

A. Cunningham, A. Nisbet (Alt). 20th June, 1987.

Takes the vertical crackline and wall just right of *Groovin' High*. A superb crux pitch is strenuous, sustained and well-protected. Start 2m right of *Groovin' High*.

1. 30m, **4c**. Climb corners and short walls just right of *Groovin' High* arriving on the large ledge 3m to its right. Crawl right to belay.

2. 30m, **5c**. Climb a steep corner, then the crackline to enter a groove below a roof. Move left to good holds and re-enter the groove beside the roof. A strenuous bulge leads to a belay.

3. 25m, **5a**. Take the shallow groove above to horizontal cracks. Traverse right into a corner, climb the corner and return diagonally left until above the belay at a small roof. Finish rightwards up a slight ramp and back left on big holds to the top.

**Eastern Ramparts – Turkish Delight**

A. Cunningham, A. Nisbet (Alt). 21st June, 1987.

95m, E3

Takes a crackline up the vague buttress between *Heavy Flak* and a big left-facing roofed corner system on the right. Sustained and well-protected. Start below the right end of a short ledge below the *Upper Girdle*.

1. 35m, **4c**. Climb a shallow corner to the ledge. Continue slightly rightwards to the *Upper Girdle*. Climb on to big blocks under the roofed fault, then traverse left on to a block under the first crackline left of the loose recessed area below the roof.

2. 25m, **5c**. Climb the crackline which bends right over a bulge, then immediately move left up the wall away from the fault and up to a block belay below a thin crackline.

3. 10m, **5c**. Climb the crackline to an awkward belay (optional) in a red corner.

4. 25m, **5b**. Climb the overhanging crack above, then straight up to finish at the left end of the fault.

— *Gnome Wall*

A. Cunningham, A. Nisbet. 17th February, 1988.

120m, GRADE V

The summer line gave interesting and unusual climbing to the belay below the gargoyle. A ferocious last pitch, up a wide crack immediately left of the gargoyle, added a grade. There may well be a less direct finish near the summer route on the right. Start at the right of Bottom Shelf (where it suddenly becomes more difficult to continue rightwards).

1. 45m. Work up leftwards to gain the *Upper Girdle*.

2. 25m. Traverse right along the *Upper Girdle* to where the ground above becomes more broken and belay in a recess.

3. 30m. Gain a grassy ledge on the left (summer lunge) and as for summer to a belay under the gargoyle.

4. 30m. Go up left to a pinnacle. Step off this and up the wide crack immediately left of the gargoyle. Continue to easy ground.

**Triple Buttresses – West Central Gully**

M. Fowler, M. Morrison. 5th April, 1987.

450m, GRADE VI

The gully is easy (grade II) except for a very steep 65m step sporting an ice-smear overhanging chimney leading to steep pure ice climbing. A fine, very hard (even in the excellent conditions) climb. From the base of the step.

1. 25m. Ascend the chimney forming the back of the gully.

2. 15m. Climb out and into the groove/chimney on the left of the overhang and follow an ice-choked groove to small ledges on the left.

3. 25m. Take the mixed groove on the left to the overhang; step right on to icy smears and follow these to good thick ice and easy ground 45m below the top.

### **DIABAIG, The Little Big Wall – *An Eyeful***

12m, E3 5c \*

G. Latter, I. Griffiths, D. Griffiths. 16th April, 1987.

Directly below the smooth slab is a short steep wall with a vertical crack at its right hand side. This route climbs the wall just left of the crack.

Start 2m left of the crack. Climb directly up to a small spike runner at 5m. Traverse right into the crack a few feet higher to a good friend No. 2 slot directly beneath a large flat hold. Attain a standing position on this and up on good holds to the left of the crack.

Further right the wall rears up to around the 40m mark, becoming steeper and altogether more impressive. All the following routes finish at a common tree belay. The descent from all of these routes involves a horrible scramble up and right to get off the top.

#### *– Local Hero*

40m, E5 6a \*\*\*

K. Howett/D. Cuthbertson (both led). 28th May, 1987.

Superb, bold climbing up the highest section of the crag, to the left of a system of cracks and grooves. Start just to the left of the crack. Up to the 'block' in the centre of the wall. Turn it on the left, then up and right to a good resting place. Using two pockets move up to the bulge with a hard move. Pull left over lip to good holds and runner placement. Pull over the bulge rightwards gaining a good semi-rest below obvious red streak in headwall. Climb up the wall trending left near the top to pull over on to a slab. Finish up and right around rib to tree belay.

#### *– Rubblesplitskin*

40m, E2 5c \*

K. Howett. 27th May, 1987.

A steep roof at the top and a line of cracks and grooves running down the centre of the crag mark the line of the route. Start just left of the undercut right arête below the line of the crack. Up the crack with a tricky move into jugs at the base of the right groove. Up to the roof and through it on jugs. Pull out right above the roof on to a slab and up this to tree belay.

#### *– Edgewood Wimper*

40m, E3 5c

K. Howett, D. Cuthbertson. 27th May, 1987.

Start just right of *Rubblesplitskin* at the undercut right arête. Pull on to the wall then follow the edge rightwards to a groove. Up this to pull out right on to a good ledge. Keep following the edge all the way with a hard move before reaching jugs and a slab.

### **Main Cliff – *Dead Mouse Crack***

25m, HVS 5a

G. Nicoll, R. Young. 8th August, 1987.

A pink wall lies just above the path where the Main Cliff turns to face the sea. Climb the obvious crack in this wall starting from a small black wet slab. Lots of scrambling leads to the top.

#### *– Wall of Flame*

80m, E3/4 6a, 5b

K. Howett. 10th June, 1987.

The last remaining independent line on the wall. *Northumberland Wall* starts up an obvious left facing groove capped by a small roof then up cracked wall above. On the right a black stain runs the entire length of the face, taken by *The Black Streak*. This route climbs the wall between.

1. 35m. Up the arête of the corner to a very thin diagonal line running right. Follow it to its end, then pull straight over bulge and up through small overlap above to reach large flat hold on right. Straight up for 3m to impasse. Go up left to reach good small hold in centre of slab, thin, then up to thin crack on left, and up to grass ledge. Belay.

2. 45m. Left from belay up wall just left of *The Black Streak* to overlap. Turn this on the left and up to ledge. Gain thin crack on left and follow obvious line to easier rock to top.

Ed's note: there may be some coincidence between this and *Northumberland Wall*, which also takes a thin diagonal line running right, then pulls through a bulge (but then goes diagonally left).

Beyond the main section the path turns a corner revealing a large hillside of broken rock containing some routes. Between these two is a smooth dome of rock in a slight recess.

— *Condom*

30m, E3 5c

D. Cuthbertson, K. Howett. 29th May, 1987.

This climbs the obvious central crackline. Start below the crack, just left of a large boulder at the base of the crag. Gain the crack and follow it with continual interest until it nearly fades out, where it is possible to step left on to the ledges on the edge of the dome. Step up and traverse right to gain large upper crack with a hard move. Up to the top. Belay on ledge on left.

#### **FUARTHOLL, S.E. Cliff — *Evasion Grooves***

220m, GRADE V

S. Jenkins, M. E. Moran. 4th March, 1988.

A mixed alternative to *Tholl Gate* up the big buttress to its R. Excellent climbing and more frequently in condition than its neighbour. The line probably equates in part to the summer route *The Fuar*. Start as for *Tholl Gate* at a shallow bay below the highest part of the S.E. Cliff.

1. 50m. Climb tricky icy grooves as for *Tholl Gate* to a snowy terrace and go R. along this to belay beneath a prominent smooth corner.

2. 45m. Traverse R. for 4m to a very steep groove. Climb this direct to a hard verglassed exit then continue to giant spike belays.

3. 45m. Go down R. on to a big easy snow ramp which is followed for 25m until a left sloping break is found in the tier above. Struggle up this to reach another terrace directly beneath a fine ramp.

4. 40m. Climb the ramp to belay in an overhung corner.

5. 40m. Traverse L. for 15m then trend L. up snowfields and rocky grooves to the top. Beware monster cornice.

#### **SGORR RUADH, Raeburn's Buttress, North Face — *Fox's Face***

260m, GRADE III

S. Jenkins, M. E. Moran. 6th December, 1987.

A fine mixed route up the highest part of the face finishing at the summit of *Raeburn's Buttress*. Start 5m right of an obvious left slanting fault line, which leads out to the top of the lower section of *Raeburn's Buttress*.

Take a rightward slanting crackline through the very steep lower tier (40m); then make a rightward deviation, moving back left into the big central depression of the face (40m). Go left at the top of the depression, then weave back right and take the final wall direct by grooves.

— *Ruadh Awakening*

R. Anderson, R. Milne. 2nd April, 1988.

150m, GRADE V

This climb lies on the steep North Face to the right of *Raeburn's Buttress*, gained by the prominent gully (NG 964 507). The climb could be a more direct version of Patey's *'Splintery Edge'* (Northern Highlands II, p. 68). About midway up the gully are two prominent fault lines, the right-hand of which may be that referred to in Patey's

description. Start in the middle of the very steep buttress between these two fault lines, where a system of grooves can be seen running up the face.

1. 45m. Move left along a ledge for about 5m then climb up and right to a good ledge, step right and continue up to a flake. Move up and right then up to a wide crack which is ascended to a ledge, traverse left then up to a belay on blocks.

2. 27m. Step up and move right off the blocks to regain the grooveline which is followed a short way to move right and so up the edge of the groove. Climb the bulge above and from a small recess below a steeper bulge traverse right to a ledge near the edge of the buttress.

3. 39m. Continue up the grooveline above. On the first ascent poor ice just short of the top necessitated a short deviation left then up the crest to gain easy ground and a belay at the foot of the final buttress.

4. 39m. Climb the buttress by the right-hand of two grooves to reach easy ground.

**APPLECROSS, Sgurr a'Chaoarachain, South Face – Bee Gully** 120m, GRADE IV  
M. Fowler, T. Saunders. 22nd March, 1987.

The gully between *Bumblyone* and *Bumblytwo*. The highlight is the last pitch, a fine narrow ice-smears chimney.

#### NOTES

**Beinn Alligin:** S. Chadwick notes that the correct name for *Giveaway Gully* is *West Coast Boomer* and it was climbed in February, 1973 by D. Gardiner and party. An ascent was made by G. Cohen and S. Pearson on 18th January, 1987, (300m, GRADE IV), predating M. Moran's ascent (SMCJ, 1987, p. 461).

**Baosbheinn, North-west face:** S. Chadwick notes that he climbed the left-hand diagonal left to right line on this large triangular face and descended the right-hand open line (both GRADE I, March 1987).

**Ruadh-stac Beag:** the North-eastern tip of this hill sports a 100m quartz slab which provides an interesting way up to the crest. Take the overlaps on the left to a good final pitch (K. Anderson, S. Chadwick, September, 1983. Very Difficult standard).

## CAIRNGORMS

**LOCHNAGAR, North-East Corrie, Southern Sector**

**The Cathedral – Judas Priest**

100m GRADE IV

B. S. Findlay, G. S. Strange. 14th December, 1986.

This is the larger right hand groove rising from a slight bay below the central part of the crag. Climb a small corner right of the main groove and swing right below overhang to gain ledge below another corner. Traverse left round rib to enter main groove and follow this to easier ground. Go right then up and right through slot to finish at top of *Cathedral Chimney*.

– *Sepulchre*

80m, GRADE IV

B. S. Findlay, G. S. Strange. 13th December, 1987.

This is the central groove of the crag. Starting from the left of the bay climb narrow groove twisting up right and continue to ledges. Straight ahead are twin slabby grooves. Climb out right then move back left to follow right hand groove for about 6m. Transfer to the left hand groove and climb straight up. Trend left to finish by the narrow chimney of *Transept Route*.

**Shadow Buttress B – Eclipse**

120m, GRADE IV/V

B. S. Findlay, G. S. Strange. 13th March, 1988.

Climbs the *Douglas-Gibson* face. Start well below the gully narrows, about 10m up from the smooth corner and just beyond a blunt rib. Climb shallow groove then



move left across rib to gain and follow snow and ice up and right through prominent slot to peg belay on wall above. Move up left on to big snow ramp and climb this rightwards to peg belay on right. The line of the ramp ends at overhangs below *Penumbra*. Climb the next groove left of the ramp which leads directly to the summit rocks.

### **CREAG AN DUBH LOCH, Central Gully Wall – Idol Threat**

40m, E3 6a

R. Anderson, G. Nicoll. 5th July, 1987.

Climbs the left hand crackline up the wall to the left of *Wicker Man* starting from a niche directly below the line.

Climb a crack, move across and up right to gain holds which lead back up left to a shallow niche at the start of the crack. (On the first ascent poor ropework required the leader to take an unnecessary belay here with the second belaying twenty feet below). Climb the crackline to gain a niche just below the top and gain the grass shelf above. Care should be exercised with the temperamental and unstable block which occupies the niche, however since this aids the exit it was left scowling on its perch.

A couple of pegs could be placed on the belay to facilitate an abseil descent; otherwise follow the shelf up right over a slabby rock step to join and finish up *Wicker Man*.

### **False Gully Wall – Fer-de-Lance**

65m, E6

D. Dinwoodie, J. Hall. 10th August, 1987.

The wall crack just left of *Improbability Drive*.

1. 30m, **6b**. Climb the crack past 2 PR's (crux, yo-yoed) and up past two shake-outs to gain the awkward shelf of *The Snake*. This route is followed to the belay, climbing the bulging wall above, moving right and up a corner past a spike, to exit out left on to a ledge. Peg 6m higher.

2. 35m, **5c**. Climb up past the belay peg and go up diagonally right into the corner of *Slartibartfast*. Climb this route past the bulge above then step left along a shelf. Climb the bulging crack above, step left, and pull up on to a big flake. Move up left to easier ground and the final grassy groove of *Masque*.

### **GLEN CLOVA, Winter Corrie – Backdoor Gully Direct Finish**

80m GRADE III/IV

B. S. Findlay, G. S. Strange. 31st January, 1988.

Above the basin, climb directly up several ice steepenings to below the 'Deep Crack.' Traverse right, then go back up left to climb the wall right of the crack. Continue up slightly right to finish at the apparent summit of the main buttress.

### **Corrie Fee – Crestal Clear**

240m, GRADE IV/V

G. Eittle, C. Smith. 5th March, 1988.

Take line of grooves up crest of *BC Buttress* overlooking *Look C*. Starts at base of *Look C* at cave belay.

1. 30m. Climb groove on left wall to small hidden gully (crux).
2. 45m. Up gully on easy ground to next steepening.
3. 45m. Either directly or via a left and rightward ramp system gain right-hand of two parallel hanging grooves. Easier ground to tree belay.
4. 120m. Heather bashing and crest hopping to the plateau.

### **GLEN DOLL, Craig Maud – Trouble with Lichen**

70m, E2

S. Hill, J. Morgan (Alt). 26th April, 1987.

The crag, which lies on the right side of the *Curving Gully*, has a rocky gully in the centre. Left of this is a triangular slab, with a big slabby buttress above and behind it. The climb starts in the grassy corner between these two features.





*Photo: K. V. Crockett*

The Old Master  
Tom Weir front-points Chockstone Gully, The Cobbler



A'Chir, Arran

*Photo: Hamish Brown*

1. 30m, **5b**. Climb the corner until a dirty crack leads up on to the slab on the left. Traverse left 6m below a roof to a belay.

2. 10m, **5c**. Move up and left to a niche, then traverse around the arête under a roof, via a lichenous niche (crux) to a belay.

3. 30m, **5a**. Climb the obvious corner/ramp behind to the top.

**BRAERIACH, Garbh Choire Mor – The Tower of Babel**

GRADE V

C. Forrest, A. Nisbet (Alt). 16th December, 1987.

The summer line was followed except that the main corner-crack line (summer pitch 2) was gained a little lower. At the top the ledge system on the left was taken – this involved a short, very exposed descent (high runner in place). A fine sustained route, mostly turf crack climbing.

**BEINN A' BHUIRD, Coire na Ciche – Grey Tower (Left-hand route)** 50m, GRADE IV

R. Everett, S. Richardson (Alt). 29th November, 1987.

Follows the summer line. A short but technical climb with two sustained pitches. The final off-width crack was the crux.

**Coire an Dubh Lochain – The Vital Spark** 60m, GRADE II/III

I. Barron, S. Kennedy. 12th December, 1987.

Left of *Birthday Route* (see below) are two obvious corner/chimney lines. This route follows the leftmost corner which bounds the upper buttress of *Crow Step*.

Climb the corner throughout avoiding a small roof at mid-height.

**– Birthday Route** 60m, GRADE IV

I. Barron, S. Kennedy. 12th December, 1987.

Follows the third chimney right of the upper buttress of *Crow Step*. Climb the chimney before pulling out left to easier ground near the top.

**BEN MACDUI, Coire Sputan Dearg, Spider Buttress – The Web** 80m, GRADE IV

R. Clothier, S. Richardson (Alt). 14th November, 1987.

Follows the summer line throughout. A short, but interesting and well protected buttress climb. Start at the prominent corner to the R. of *The Fly*. Climb the corner and the chimney above to a ledge. Move 5m up and L. to a small stance (25m). Traverse L. across flakes and make a difficult move to reach the arête. Easily up snowy grooves to a belay (20m). Move L. across snow on slabs to reach a flake-crack which is followed to the top (20m). 15m of snow leads to the plateau.

**Creagan a' Choire Etchachan, The Bastion – Blinker**

R. J. Archbold, J. C. Higham, G. S. Strange. 6th September, 1986. 150m, Severe

Climbs a vague straight crack between *Bastion Wall* and *Original Route*. From a grass bay some 30m up left from toe of *Bastion* climb a shallow scoop of pink rock and follow line of the crack in two pitches of continuous climbing to reach broken ground (100m). Easy to top.

**SGORAN DUBH MOR – Roberts Ridge**

GRADE IV

S. Aisthorpe, J. Lyall, A. Nisbet; M. Sclater, R. Wild. 27th November, 1987.

A true ascent of the ridge i.e. by the summer route. Descent from the *Anvil* was by abseil.

**– Einich Rib**

GRADE III

J. Lyall, J. Grosset + 2 others. 23rd January, 1988.

Followed the summer line.

**LOCH AVON BASIN, Cairn Etchachan – Inside Edge**

75m, GRADE V

I. Barron, S. Kennedy. 28th November, 1987.

Climbs the wide, sloping shelf to the left of *Crevasse Route*. Described as a summer variation to *Crevasse Route* in the Guide but independent of that route for the most part.

Climb the initial pitch of *Crevasse Route* to below the 'large leaning block' at the foot of the wide shelf. Follow the shelf on the left, entering a chimney at mid-height, to a small overhang. Surmount the overhang and traverse away left to the extreme edge of the buttress which is climbed with difficulty to a large ledge and easy ground. Good positions.

– *Revelation Arête*

140m, GRADE IV

A. Nisbet, A. Newton. 12th March, 1988.

Only the top pitch of the original route remains after the huge rockfall. Start up *Sideslip* and belay approx. 10m up the ramp from the divergence with *Castle Gully*. Climb the difficult wall above (the first feasible place above *Castle Gully*) on to a small ramp which leads left to an awkward exit on to slabs. Go diagonally right to belay under a steepening (50m, easy escape into *Castle Gully* here). Return diagonally left to the crest at a small pinnacle. An exposed groove just left of the crest leads back to a flake belay on the crest (45m). A short easy pitch to finish.

**Shelter Stone Crag – Postern Direct**

GRADE VI

A. Cunningham, A. Nisbet. 5th March, 1988.

A winter ascent of the summer direct route, each of the finishing three pitches being considerably harder than anything on the original route. A number of starts are possible; *The Needle*, winter variations is the most direct. On this occasion it was joined above pitch 1 after a start up *Clach Dhian Chimney*. The last pitch was the crux. On this pitch in summer, the 10m above the chimney is climbed by big rounded holds on the left arête. The winter route took the wide corner crack on the immediate right, giving the crux moves (one nut now in place).

**Note:** A rockfall in spring 1987, 10m above 'the wide crack,' has left the summer route in a dangerous condition. Further rockfall seems imminent.

**Stag Rocks – Gemstone**

95m, GRADE IV

S. Aisthorpe, J. Lyall, M. Sclater. 21st January, 1988.

Start 8m right of the quartz diggers cave. Climb a vague groove up a slab, passing a triangular roof on its right. Follow a ramp left to gain a block belay on the crest (50m). Traverse right over a block, up a groove, along a ledge and up a V-groove to a roof. Swing right under the roof and up to a ledge (30m). Take the upper corner leading back to the buttress crest (15m).

– *Lonesome Pine*

90m, E1

C. Forrest, A. Ross. 18th August, 1987.

1. **5a.** Climb up *Deception Inlet* for a few metres, step left into a crack and go up to gain a leftwards trending ramp. Climb this and go up a wall rightwards to belay under a leaning crack/groove system.

2. **5b.** Climb this to gain easier ground, then the continuation corner to scramble to a belay.

3. Easy pitch to top.

– *Flakes of Fear*

55m, E2/3

C. Forrest, A. Ross. 18th August, 1987.

Left of *Groove and Rib* are two large roofs.

1. **5b.** Start below the left end of the right hand roof and climb a long groove system to reach small heather ledges.

2. 5c. Climb the wall immediately above finishing just right of a triangular niche via some hollow sounding flakes. Either continue to top or scramble off left.

— *The Windpiper*

170m, GRADE V/VI

A. Cunningham, A. Nisbet. 22nd January, 1988.

A winter line based on parts of *Windchill* and *Sand-Pyper Direct*. Thin slab climbing leads to a strenuous but well-protected finish through the steep upper walls. Good winter conditions are rare on this section of crag, which is the most susceptible to sun in the Cairngorms. (Opinion based on several fruitless visits). Nevertheless, a fine sustained climb and a good option when other crags are too deeply powdered. A separate description is given due to difficulty of locating summer lines under snow. Start at the base of the fault of *Longbow Direct*.

1. 35m. Climb the fault for 5-10m (depending on build-up), then traverse right under a bulge. Climb up to a diagonal overlap (runners), descend 5m and make a thin traverse right to a good ledge. Gain a higher ledge which leads back to the right end of the diagonal overlap. Pull through the overlap and climb diagonally leftwards, then up to a ledge and belay (last 10m poorly protected).

2. 20m. Traverse right past a small jutting block and climb a right-facing corner system to a good ledge.

3. 30m. Traverse right along the ledge till it peters out (1" angle in a pocket). Step right, then go up to a bigger ledge. An old peg and tat above dates from the original aid move on *Sand-Pyper*. Traverse right and climb a vegetated wall to the left edge of grassy ground. Return immediately left to belay in the diagonal fault.

4. 25m. As for pitch 4 of *Sand-Pyper Direct* (strenuous).

5, 6. 60m. Go left to climb the groove and wide crack of *Windchill*. A choice of lines then leads to easier ground.

**NORTHERN CORRIES, Coire an t-Sneachda** — *The Lamp*

80m, GRADE III/IV

Party + A. Liddell. January, 1988.

The route previously described as *The Lamp* (SMCJ, 1985) reverts to a direct variation of the following.

Start up and right of *Original Route* (summer), at the back left corner of a small bay.

1. 30m. Climb the groove above and follow the 'inclined ledge' rightwards to a belay at its end.

2. 20m. Go diagonally rightwards to belay below an obvious break out left.

3. 30m. Follow the break, then a short corner to snow slopes.

— *Direct variation*

GRADE IV

From the belay after pitch 1, go out left to the crest. Return right and thread the overhangs above the belay to reach easier ground.

**Fiacaill Buttress** — *Polar Crossing*

175m, GRADE IV

A. Fyffe, J. Hepburn. 4th March, 1988.

Traverses *Fiacaill Buttress* from left to right. Start on the left just up from the half-way ledge and below the largest and most continuous of the right slanting ramps.

Climb a ramp which narrows and tapers out. Move left on to the big ramp and go up to belay below a steepening (30m). Climb down the open fault below (*Jailbreak*) for 8m to gain a big ramp going right into *Fiacaill Couloir* and descend to reach ledges going right, the start of *Belhaven* (45m). Go right along ledges and ramps crossing *Belhaven*, *Invernookie* and *Short Circuit* (45m). Finish up *The Seam* (30m).

– *Rampant, Direct Start* 40m, GRADE IV

G. Reid, J. Hepburn, January, 1988.

Start from the huge block where one would start to traverse across to *Belhaven*. Climb directly up to a ledge, traverse the ledge rightwards round a nose of rock, then move further right and up into a hanging groove capped by a block. Surmount this and delay above (30m). Follow the obvious groove directly upwards (joined from the left by *Rampant* after approx. 10m).

The following two routes climb the wall between *Short Circuit* and *The Seam*. The lengths are from the ledges below the wall; the routes were reached by starting up *The Seam*.

– *Slaterless* 40m, GRADE IV

J. Grosset, R. Wild, 15th December, 1987.

Start at a crack just right of the corner on *Short Circuit*. Climb the crack until a shallow niche is reached. Stand on a block in the niche (*in situ* drive-in). Climb straight out of the niche, then move easily to the top.

– *Seam-stress* 35m, GRADE III/IV

J. Grosset, M. Sclater, J. Lyall, 13th December, 1987.

Takes the parallel fault just left of *The Seam*. A right-facing corner, a crack, then a groove leads to a large roof. Climb this by the square fault (crux, despite the best jug in the world!).

## NOTES

**Lochnagar:** On an ascent of *Eagle Buttress* in February, 1988, Findlay and Strange climbed the obvious groove line trending left from the central snow scoop and finishing on the last pitch of *Eagle Ridge*. Better and more sustained than the normal route (Grade IV).

**Lochnagar:** On an attempt at *Backdoor Route* on 5th February, 1988, Brian Findlay and John Higham quit the introductory corner after 10m and climbed a steep groove on the right leading to an obvious apex. Thereafter a move right and downwards was made to gain a second groove which was climbed to below a steep wall which was surmounted to gain the ridge above. Harder and more interesting than original line (Grade IV/V).

**Glen Clova, Corrie Fee:** A. Walker repeated *Romulus and Remus*, considering it Grade III and the worst route he'd ever done.

**Beinn a' Bhuird, Coire na Ciche:** W. Moir repeated *The Carpet*. In powder snow, the left-hand of the twin grooves above The Great Slab was found to be easier (more turf).

**Sgoran Dubh Mor:** R. Ross and G. Strange made a winter ascent of *Diamond Buttress* of Sgoran Dubh on the 23rd December, 1986. The buttress was climbed in deep powder snow and was found mostly easy apart from the steep wall of the summer crux – climbed by a V-groove directly above a large pointed block (Grade IV). This ascent pre-dates the ascent recorded in the 1987 Journal (Page 482).

**Shelter Stone Crag:** The description of *Consolation Groove* has never recovered from a misprint in the 1971 guide. The following is an improved version.

*Consolation Groove* – 140m, Hard Very Severe.

1. 20m, – . Climb a groove and break left to a grass ledge.
2. 30m, 5a. Step right on to a slab and up to an overhang. Traverse right under the overhang and continue traversing until moves up and right lead to ledges (poorly protected). Go up, then return left to a steep groove.
3. 15m, 4c. Climb the groove to a ledge (winter route joins here).
4. 35m, 5a. Continue up the groove system to a grassy ledge.
5. 15m, – . Scramble up to the foot of a wall with a long overhang.

6. 25m, 4b/c? Climb a crack at the right end of the overhang and up to a large ledge. Move left and up to easy ground (winter route avoids this pitch on the left – cynics would describe the winter route as an indirect variation on Raeburn's Buttress).

The worthwhile climbing is now over and scrambling on the left leads to the plateau.

### **Shelter Stone Crag – Citadel, Moonlight Finish**

S. Richardson, R. Clothier, 5th December, 1987.

60m, GRADE V

An ascent of *Citadel* was made to the stance above the chimney/crack of the second crux. Heavy snow conditions, and approaching darkness dictated a different finish. A difficult, and bold traverse up and L. across steep slabs allowed a snowy ledge system to be gained below a prominent steep 'V' groove. A four hour wait was made here until moonlight revealed that an awkward 5m traverse could be made round to the L. into the final chimney of *Sticil Face* which was followed to the plateau.

Ed's note: The routefinding on the top slab is difficult and likely to be deeply covered when the lower pitches are in condition. The first winter ascensionists had summer knowledge of the correct line.

**Stac an Faraidh: Pippet Slab variation.** Once above the main overhang, the smooth slab forming a vague rib left of the normal finish can be climbed directly. Superb rock and quick to dry, but with minimal protection (MVS, 4a?).

**Coire an Lochain: Gaffer's Groove.** R. Anderson and P. Long note a winter ascent of the summer line (GRADE V). The line is similar to *When the Wind Blows* (SMCJ, 1985) except that the transfer left is made lower down. The normal winter route is a quite separate line further left, climbed largely on ice but rarely in condition.

Repeat Ascents: the following have been repeated in winter and the grade thought correct:

*Ice-Ox* (Lochnagar).

*The Grail*, middle of its grade (Beinn a' Bhurd).

*Guillotine, Crevasse Route* (Cairn Etchachan).

*Fall-out Corner* (Coire an Lochain).

The following routes seemed a little undergraded:

*Sidewinder, Procrastination, Auricle* (Coire an Lochan).

*Aladdin's Buttress* summer (in winter).

The following have seen numerous ascents (now classics?):

*Cumming-Crofton route* (Beinn a' Bhuid).

*Red Guard* (Cairn Etchachan).

*Savage Slit* (Coire an Lochain).

*Belhaven* (Sneachda).

## **LOCHABER, LORN, WESTERN OUTCROPS**

**MALLAIG AREA, Creag Mhor Bhrincoire (NM 742941)**

– *Fatman's Dilemma*

35m, E1

D. McGarvie, N. Wilkinson, 28th September, 1987.

The climb takes the obvious blank wall on the eastern edge of the main south-facing buttress, just to the left of a prominent gully which separates the more solid rock of the buttress from the broken ground to the east. There is a vegetated ledge about half way up the climb (not continuous). Poorly protected.



1. 10m, 4c. Start from a large ledge (best gained from the right) beside a small birch tree. Up 5m to a sloping ledge, traverse right for 5m to belay at sapling.

2. 25m, 5a. From belay move back left to middle of sloping ledge, and climb up for 6m. Just before a small and flared vertical crack make a hard move up (crux) to gain a small foot ledge. After a further 5m the prominent horizontal ledge is reached, and from this a flared crack line, slanting up to the right is followed, for a further 15m with the angle easing until a large vegetated ledge system is reached, marking the top of the climb proper.

### **Sgurr Bhuidhe, South Wall (NM 723945)**

This small, though interesting, south-facing crag sits just below the summit of the hill and is accessible from a road bridge at 722928 via a pleasant 30 min. walk up the side of the burn. The crag's main features are a slab wall on the right and a very steep rock mass bounding the left flank. The rock is quartz-studded schist. Routes by G. E. Little, D. Saddler. 31st August, 1987.

— *After the Dance* 30m, Severe

Climb the left hand side of the slab wall, finishing up a short corner.

— *Before the Rain* 20m, Very Severe 4c

Left of centre is a grassy bay. Climb crack on the left hand side of the bay. Gain and climb an obvious slim corner. Recommended.

### **Carn Mhic a' Chille-chain (NM 714955)**

The north face of this hill, overlooking the outfall of Loch Eireagoraidh, comprises an extensive series of ribs and buttresses. The central, highest and dominating feature is *Central Pillar*.

The rock is schist, liberally studded with white quartz, which, when cleared of lichen and moss provides very good quality climbing. A grassy gully, sixty metres right of *Central Pillar* provides an easy descent route.

Although North facing this crag dries fairly quickly and is accessible from the A830, one kilometre South of Mallaig, via Loch an Nactarie, in about one hour.

— *Edge of Perfection* 95m, E1

G. E. Little, D. Saddler (Alt). 30th August, 1986.

This high quality route takes a direct line up the edge of *Central Pillar*.

Start at a point where the overhanging base of the pillar meets the shabby wall on the left.

Move right and climb crack, past large spike, to a flake edge. Descend three metres to the right then pull around bulge into a corner. Up this, surmount overhang then up crack to niche (18m, 5b).

Hand traverse left for two metres then up slabby wall until it steepens. Make a short, delicate, traverse right to rock ledge. Up slight corner to another rock ledge. Climb slab, just left of edge, move right then up edge to small ledge. Continue up pillar, just left of edge to a commodious ledge (42m, 5a).

Climb two short slabs to heather ledge below vertical wall. Move left to gain and climb slab, trending right to top. Thread belay well back on the right (35m, 3c).

Precleaned by abseil.

— *Carpet Bagger* 40m, VS (4b)

G. E. Little, D. Saddler. 30th August, 1986.

This route lies on the broad buttress to the right of the descent gully.

Start just left of the buttress toe. Climb cracks trending right to gain arête. Climb this directly (short heathery section) to the top. Belay well back.



**LORN, Seil (Easdale), The Bishop's Mantle**

About 1 km North of the village of Easdale stands a prominent sharp triangular block jutting into the sea. The local name is The Bishop's Mantle.

— *North Face Direct* 50m, E2/3 5b

G. Latter, I. Campbell. 22nd August, 1987.

Start about 5m left of an obvious recess and roof at a shallow depression and a vague line of cracks running up the slab. Climb direct past a large break to a further shallow break. Past this and continue more or less directly by the line of least resistance to finish up a strip of rock between the grassier top section. Nut and friend belays on top — 50 metre ropes just reach on the stretch.

An abseil sling and carabiner is in situ to facilitate a descent through the myriad of trifids on the South side.

— *North Face* 35m, Very Severe 5a

D. Hayter, Miss K. Nicholl. 1982.

A less direct version of the above. From the large arch, traverse left and down for 15m to belay in a niche. Climb direct to top.

— (*Unnamed*) 35m, Severe

D. Hayter, Miss K. Nicholl. 1982.

Up the right-hand rib of the large arch for 12 m. Traverse left, then go diagonally up left to the highest point.

— *South Face* 35m, Very Severe

D. Hayter, P. Mallison. June, 1980.

Climb up the back of the large arch, then right into the chimney above. Up chimney (loose).

Just west of Balmacara on the A87 a few miles before Kyle of Lochalsh is a prominent, horizontally-bedded crag of mica schist, immediately behind a large layby on the north side of the road.

— *Vena Cava* 15m, E2/3 5c

G. Latter, D. Griffiths. 15th April, 1987.

Climbs the wall directly above the mouth of the prominent cavern. Up broken rock to a good horizontal spike at the right side of the roof, step left and pull through the lip of the roof (crux) at its widest point and continue up the wall above. Small Friends and RPs useful.

**KENTALLEN BAY CRAG — The Powerbulge** 21m, E4 6b \*

G. Latter, K. Howett (both led). 22nd June, 1987.

A fun technical problem attacking the hanging flake through the bulge in the centre of the crag. Start on undercuts to a good pocket, then a long reach for good break. Move right to a good undercut, from where it is possible to place runners in the flake above (RP 4 in slot to left, RP 2 just right). Pull up on half a wrinkle, and using powerful undercutting gain a pinch at the right end of the flake. A further snatch gains better holds, including a 'chickenhead.' Layback onto the slab above, then easier trending right to a fixed sling and belay ring round tree root. Lower off.

**GLEN NEVIS, Pinnacle Ridge — Eat 'Em Alive** 16m, E5 6a \*\*

Climb the thin unprotected wall right of *Soap Suds* directly over the bulge, and make some hard moves direct to the top.

- *Coca Tots*

16m, E4 6a

An eliminate taking the tiny groove and wall above, midway between *The Sugar Puff Kid* and *Chalky Wall*.

**S.W. Buttress** - *Viking's Dayout*

16m, E2 6a

The slab between *Fred's Delight* and *Tear*. Climb this from ground to overlap (runner), then pull over to centre of slab. Up on small flakes to finish directly.

**Pandora's Buttress** - *Juicy Lucy*

23m, E2/3 5c \*

Instead of swinging out right through the roof on *Lucy Lime*, continue (easier) up the corner on good holds until forced to pull out left at the top.

**Buzzard Crag** - *Liminality*

26m, E6 6c \*\*\*

Climbs the left arête of the main face. Start as for *Caterpillar*. Up on quartz holds then left to a ledge on the left side of the arête. The thin crack on the right side is followed (2 PR's, good No. 5 RP placement just above first peg) then pull left to a further PR and up arête to top.

- *Lepidoptery*

43m, E4 6b \*\*

A good well protected line up the left side of the front face. Start up *Caterpillar*, then continue straight up obvious shallow groove line past a good undercling to reach a large flat hold and PR just above (difficult to clip for midgets!). Make a hard move up and left to a good hold in the middle of the wall, then on better holds to ledge at top of arête. Scramble up broken ground to tree belay well back.

**Sheep Fank Buttress** - *Enter and Remember*

40m, E2 5b

An eliminate to the right of *Gambit*. Climb the slab on small edges to reach a small break at 50 feet (RP No. 2). Continue up the slab for a further 7m (sapling runner) and finish on good holds.

**Double Buttress** - *The Lost Fucawi Tribe*

20m, E2 5b/c \*

Climb the overhanging bulge to the right of *Playaway* to an awkward ramp, good gear (friends and stuff). Follow the ramp to a flake out on the main wall (F No. 1/2) and finish direct.

**Cavalry Crack Buttress** - *Alternative Finish to Vampire Direct*

28m, VS 4b/c

Or an alternative finish to others from the tree stance at the end of the first pitch. From the end of *Vampire Direct Start*, by the ledge and tree as for the second pitch of *Vampire*. Instead of taking the normal *Vampire* 2nd pitch (groove), take the obvious drooping flake to the right. Climb up and right on the arête proper. Continue up over the bulge and finish at the 2nd pitch belay as for *Heatwave*.

**Black's Buttress** - *Centrepiece*

33m, E5-6b \*\*\*

Superb fingery climbing directly up the centre of the slab midway between *Land Ahoy* and *Kaos*.

Start at some quartz in the centre of the wall. Up to a prominent small 'L'-shaped hold at about 5m (tied down skyhook runner on this). Hard climbing past this leads to a peg runner in the thin break. Pull direct to better holds (Rock No. 7 on side) and a reasonable stopping place. Poor RP placements in the incipient crack above protect an initially baffling move to reach a large flat hold. Easy ground remains.

**Nameless Crag** - *Bitter Days*

33m, E3/4 6a \*

The bulging arête, slab and roof forming the apex of the crag where the two faces abut. Start directly below arête, up and right of *Faceless*. Climb the left side past a flake to good holds at 6m. Up slightly left to a good horizontal slot (Friend No. 1). Swing blindly round the arête and boldly up the slab to good holds and protection under the roof. Pull through this to superb finishing holds. Spectacular.

The right-hand face now contains a good selection of short wall climbs, many of a bold nature.

— *Overlode* 20m, E4 6a \*

The rounded left edge of the wall, to the left of *Quadrode*. Scramble up lower wall to just left of *Quadrode*. Climb the thin hairline cracks with difficulty to a jug (runners). Straight up the wall above with hard moves to gain the top break. Move easily up edge to top.

— *Quadrode* 20m, E2 5b \*

Bold steady climbing up the centre of the wall near the left end of the face. Start at a triangular niche at base of wall. Climb easily on good holds to a runner placement in the second break (RP No. 3). Step left and follow obvious leftward trending holds with interest to finish at a good incut. Peg belay in situ on top.

— *Cathode Smiles* 20m, E2 + 5c \*

Fine independent climbing up the central 'tower' of rock midway between the two mossy cracklines in the centre of the face. Up through a quartz-riddled wall to a good break at half height. (Friend No. 2 in slot). Pull directly up wall above and head direct to obvious final thin crack. Good holds to finish. Peg belay just above.

— *Triode* 33m, E4/5 5c/6a \*

Climbs the wall left of *Diode*. Up small left facing groove for about 6m then move right to crack leading to horizontal. Nut placement in slot above. Move left along the horizontal, then ascend to a quartz hold. Continue on small holds to a series of undercuts going left to finish.

**Wave Buttress — Jodicus Direct** 33m, E6-6b/c \*\*

A direct line on *Jodicus Grotticus*. Climb as for *Jodicus Grotticus* to the overlap (HB No. 4 above). Step left then make thin moves to horizontal break and protection (RP's Nos. 2 and 3). Climb scoop above (RP No. 2 on left) to PR. Move up and right (crux) into scoop above, and finish up easier groove above.

— *A Spaceman Came Travelling* 30m, E2 5b

Start at the middle of three well-defined grooves midway between *Bewsey Crack* and *Boteler Wall*. Up centre of slab to gain niche of *Bewsey Crack*. Finish up this. Poorly protected.

— *Frantic Across the Atlantic* 30m, E5 6a/b \*

A diagonal line up the wall midway between *Crack Attack* and *Bewsey Crack*. Start as for *Romancing the Stone* to the nut slots, then up right to a quartz ledge (RP No. 3 upside down?!). A thin sequence leads to an *in situ* nut, then direct to PR (crux). Traverse left into *Crack Attack* and finish up this.

**Meadow Walls — Comfortably Numb** 16m, E4 5c \*

Climbs directly up the centre of the wall right of *Tickled Pink*.

— *A Cut Above The Rest* 13m, E1 5b

Groove and wall above *Crinkle Cut*.

**Steall Hut Crag — Lame Beaver** (free) E6 6b

Rock No. 3 placement also possible beside the Hex No. 1.

**Whale Rock — The Nuns of Navarone** 26m, E5 6c \*\*

Climb wall direct to obvious crack in bulge right of *Le Midge*. Climb past poor peg runner and RP No. 3 placement directly and with some difficulty. Weave around the lichen to finish.

**Buccaneer Crag – Pieces of Eight**

20m, E2 5c

Start 6m right of *Hard Station*, just right of a small silver birch tree. Climb bulging crack to ledge, then obvious leftward trending line to below a yard arm. Finish on the right.

**Gorge Crag – Acapella**

8m, E3 6a \*

The short wall left of *Mother's Day*. Climb up vague crackline to top. RP's Nos. 4 and 2 protect.

**– Driving Ambition**

42m, E2 5c \*\*

Climb as for *Travelin' Man* to belay ledge. Follow ramp to the fork off for *In the Groove* and *Travelin' Man*. Climb the wall in between these two routes (friend No. 1, crux) until a niche is reached. Climb the ramp above to gain the finishing crack to a tree belay.

**GLEN NEVIS, First Ascents: 1987**

Feb 16	<i>Death's Distance</i>	G. Latter
Feb 19	<i>The Swing of Things</i>	G. Latter
Feb 21	<i>Assorted Gems</i>	G. Latter, D. Griffiths
March 3	<i>Side Arms</i>	G. Latter/K. Howett (both led)
March 28	<i>Running Scared</i>	G. Latter
March 28	<i>Running Scared Variation</i>	M. McGowan
April	<i>A Cut Above The Rest</i>	M. McGowan (solo)
April	<i>Comfortably Numb</i>	M. McGowan, S. MacLean
April	<i>Frantic Across The Atlantic</i>	M. McGowan, S. MacLean, D. Griffiths
May 1	<i>Vampire Dt. – Alt. Finish</i>	C. Chrystal, F. Copland
May 19	<i>Triode</i>	D. Cuthbertson, A. de Clerk
May 22	<i>Liminality</i>	D. Cuthbertson/A. de Clerk (both led)
May 25	<i>Lame Beaver</i> (free)	D. Cuthbertson/A. de Clerk (both led)
May	<i>Eat 'Em Alive/Coca Tots</i>	M. Edwards, R. Edwards
May	<i>The Nuns of Navarone</i>	C. Gilchrist, J. Bain, C. Bell
June 22	<i>The Powerbulge</i>	G. Latter/K. Howett (both led)
July 6	<i>Lepidoptery</i>	K. Howett/G. Latter (both led)
July 20	<i>Jodicus Direct</i>	M. McGowan (Climbed on 2nd day's attempt, ropes clipped into top runners on abseil).
July	<i>A Spaceman Came Travelin'</i>	J. Williamson, S. MacLean
July	<i>Enter And Remember</i>	S. Bytheway, D. Orr
July 29	<i>After The Fire</i>	G. Latter
Aug 8	<i>Pieces Of Eight</i>	D. Griffiths, I. Griffiths
Aug 10	<i>Viking's Day Out</i>	N. Kirk (probably climbed before)
Sept 19	<i>Driving Ambition</i>	A. Kelly, S. Bytheway
Sept 26	<i>The Lost Fucawi Tribe</i>	A. Kelly, C. Crow
Oct	<i>Acapella</i>	M. McGowan (solo)
Oct 11	<i>Centrepiece</i>	K. Howett/G. Latter (both led)
Oct 11	<i>Juicy Lucy</i>	G. Latter
Nov 1	<i>Quadrode/Cathode Smiles</i>	K. Howett/G. Latter (both led)
Nov 1	<i>Bitter Days</i>	K. Howett
Nov 2	<i>Overlode</i>	K. Howett, P. Farrell
Dec	<i>Circus</i>	D. Griffiths, C. Bell

## WESTERN HIGHLANDS

**GARBH BHEINN, Garbh Choire Buttress – Sugarplum** 85m, E1  
G. Muhlemann, S. Richardson (Alt). 20th June, 1987.

Climbs the central depression of the buttress, between *Swingle* and *Cantata*, and the overhanging headwall above. An excellent route. Start about 8m right of *Swingle* and scramble up to the foot of a slab beneath the furthest left of the three grooves that run up through the depression.

1. 35m, **5b**. Climb the groove passing two steep bulges with difficulty to a stance below the overhanging corner that cuts through the headwall.

2. 20m, **5a/b**. Make a rising traverse across the L. wall on sharp incut holds and then move back R. to beneath the overhanging corner, which leads to an awkward finish above. Easily up to a belay.

3. 30m. Broken rocks and an easy slab lead to the top.

**Lower Pinnacle – Shiver** 40m, HVS

S. Richardson, G. Muhlemann. 20th June, 1987.

Climbs the cracked wall just L. of *Totties Route*. A steep pitch with large but suspect holds. Start 10m up and L. of *Totties Route* in the gully, at a left-facing corner formed by a large flake.

1. 40m, **4c**. Up the flake (loose) and pull on to the steep wall above on good holds. Gain the crackline above from the L. and follow it to the top.

**Great Ridge – Crescent Route** 130m, GRADE III/IV

A. Matthewson, M. Potter. 14th February, 1988.

A natural winter line up the area of cliff left of *Direct Start* (winter – SMCJ, 1987). Start as for *Direct Start* by moving up and left to base of ramp (15m). Move left and climb a 4m ice column (crux) to gain a big corner line and continue first right then left by icy grooves to belay (40m). Continue in this line, which curves round left, to belay under steep wall at top of snowfield (40m). Move left and breach the final rockband by twin grooves to belay on Lower Rake (35m).

## BEN NEVIS

**Garadh Buttress – Bluenosed Baboon** 225m, Very Difficult

K. V. Crocket, A. Walker. 25th August, 1987.

A shallow gully lies on this buttress, some 25m right of *Garadh Gully*, bounding the left edge of a pyramidal mass of rock. 85m of scrambling leads to the pyramid's apex and a poor belay down and left, in a damp hollow. Climb wall on left, steep at first, then traverse left below overhangs to belay at huge block (35m). Gain ledge above and traverse ramp leftwards until possible to break out via flake cracks to a belay (30m). Continue to top of buttress by ribs and corners (75m).

– *Cryotherapy* 75m, Very Difficult

K. V. Crocket, A. Walker. 25th August, 1987.

At the extreme right end of the Coire na Ciste face of Garadh Buttress is a steep, red wall. Belay just below corner on left of wall. Climb mossy ramp on left and continue traversing across wall with increasing exposure to belay at foot of corner (45m). Up corner to top (30m).

**Note:** relation of these two routes to an earlier one by N. Muir is not certain (SMCJ, 1985), though Muir's *Vanishing Glories* may be close, if not the same route as, *Cryotherapy*.

**Comb Gully Buttress – Roaring Forties**

220m, GRADE IV

D. F. Lang, C. Stead. 28th February, 1988.

This climbs the right side of the upper part of the buttress first by a deep groove and then by the striking V-groove which curves rightward in the upper rocks.

Climb the easy lower section of the buttress to a belay right of the deep central chimney of the original route (120m). Climb the deep groove 15m right of the chimney to a ledge on the left belay (40m). Traverse left 6m and climb the long V-groove (60m).

**Carn Dearg Buttress – The Curtain Rail**

80m, GRADE IV

D. F. Lang, R. T. Richardson, C. Stead, 31st January, 1988.

The climb follows the groove and icefall left of and parallel to *The Curtain* and offers an alternative to the queues on the latter.

Climb the groove (30m). Continue by the icefall on the right 50m to Ledge Route (60m to rock belay).

**CENTRAL HIGHLANDS****BEN ALDER, North Face, Maiden Crag – Witchwhite**

275m, GRADE IV

S. Richardson, R. Everett (Alt). 23rd January, 1988.

To the right of the initial gully of *Ice Maiden* (SMCJ, 1987) is a prominent snow bay. Take the steep corner out of the top left hand side of the bay, past a jutting flake, to a snow patch (50m). Climb the open gully line above over several steep sections to reach the snow terrace (100m). From a small cave at the top of the terrace and to the right of *Ice Maiden*, climb a series of short ice steps before moving diagonally left more easily to finish on the arête overlooking the final groove of *Ice Maiden* (45m). Easy ground leads to the top (60m).

**– Nightshift**

250m, GRADE V

C. Grant, C. Rice, R. Webb. 23rd January, 1988.

At the right centre of the face taken by *Ice Maiden* is an obvious gully leading to a terrace.

1. 50m. Climb the gully to the terrace.
2. 50m. Climb the wall directly above the gully and take an arête on the left.
3. 50m. Climb straight up then right to belay under an overhanging wall.
4. Traverse right to break through the wall to belay below a larger impending wall.
5. Climb the gully on the right of the wall to reach easy ground.

**– Wingeing Sassenach**

J. Crummy, I. Sutton. 1st January, 1986.

300m, GRADE II/III

The route climbs the buttress to the left of *Ice Maiden*. The buttress is barrel-shaped, terminating in a short arête. The route climbs the centre of the buttress by a series of icy scoops, then the short arête.

**AONACH BEAG, West Face**

The west face of Aonach Beag contains several buttresses extending for over 800m southwards from the col between Aonach Beag and Aonach Mor. The most prominent buttress is **Raw Egg Buttress** (Central Highlands District Guide, p.140) to the left of a large gully approximately at NN 193714. The slopes to the left of Raw Egg Buttress include a lot of rock outcrops and broken ground and form several icefalls. Some 400m to the left of Raw Egg Buttress is a deep easy gully slanting up to the left; **Broken Axe Buttress** is just left of this gully.

— *Raw Egg Buttress*

180m, GRADE IV

R. Everett, S. Richardson (Alt). 5th April, 1987.

A good, well-protected, mixed climb with several short difficult steps which takes a line up the front face trending from left to right. Start to the left of the lowest rocks on the left side of the crag. Climb an icy groove to below an overhanging corner, and then traverse right below a steep wall until it is possible to climb it (30m). Now trend up and left over mixed ground to belay next to a notch in the ridge on the left, formed by a tower with a prominent perched block (50m). Follow the icy groove line above for two long pitches, always trending right, over several steep steps and corners (85m). The last pitch takes a steep corner to the left of a steep wall and has a difficult exit (15m).

— *Aonach Wall*

150m, GRADE V

R. Everett, S. Richardson (Alt). 27th March, 1988.

This climb takes a direct line just to the right of the left arête of *Raw Egg Buttress*, taking in enjoyable technical climbing of steadily increasing difficulty. Start to the left of *Raw Egg Buttress* below the steep tower with the prominent perched block. Climb up and avoid the tower on the right to belay by the notch – as for *Raw Egg Buttress* (55m). Climb directly up via a short corner to gain snow below a longer corner which leads to the crest of the arête (40m). Easy snow leads to the base of the headwall (20m). Climb a groove and wide crack straight above to a ledge (20m). Move right to gain the obvious V-groove which provides the only line up the final wall. Climb this with difficulty to the top (15m).

— *Eggsclamation*

150m, GRADE II

S. Richardson, R. Everett (Alt). 5th April, 1987.

Immediately left of *Raw Egg Buttress* is an icy couloir. Follow this over short steps until the main line trends left (*Poached Egg*, SMCJ, 1987). Climb a short wall to gain the steeper direct continuation which finishes next to the final rocks of the buttress.

— *Beyond The Call Of Duty*

150m, GRADE III

R. Everett, S. Richardson (Alt). 20th February, 1988.

This climb takes the prominent series of icefalls which form in the centre of the face between *Raw Egg* and *Broken Axe buttresses*. The first is easy angled, the second is a standing pillar approached from the right and the third starts steeply but eases higher up. Snow slopes then lead to the top.

— *West Central Route*

150m, GRADE II

R. Everett, R. Webb (Alt). 16th January, 1988.

A fine open mountaineering line to the right of *Beyond the Call*. Follow open grooves to belay at the right end of the rock wall which is to the right of the second pitch of *Beyond the Call*. Climb the icefall to the right, then follow snow to a right-facing groove high on the face. Follow this then snow to the top.

— *Axeless*

150m, GRADE III

R. Webb, R. Everett (Alt). 16th January, 1988.

This climb takes an indirect but interesting line up *Broken Axe Buttress*. Gain the foot of the buttress from the deep set gully. Start at a steep wall at the foot of the buttress in a small snow bay. Climb a groove on the right to a ledge overlooking the gully. Step right on to steep ice and climb up to snow which leads back left to the crest of the buttress at a col. Move left to avoid the steep step above, then trend back right to gain a fine ridge which leads to the top.

— *Twinkle*

150m, GRADE IV

R. Everett, S. Richardson (Alt). 20th February, 1988.

An excellent mixed route which follows the crest of *Broken Axe Buttress* directly. Technically quite hard for the grade, but well protected and with several escapes possible on to easier ground. Climb a chimney-groove to the left of the steep wall left of *Axeless*, then move right to belay above the wall (30m). Climb the open groove above to a small ledge, step right and climb the continuation groove to a small col – junction with *Axeless* (40m). Step right to a steep corner. Climb this and the overhanging chimney above then continue direct to join the final easy arête (50m). Follow *Axeless* to the top.

**AONACH MOR, Coire an Lochain – Morwind**

150m, GRADE III

R. Everett, S. Richardson (Alt). 10th January, 1988.

This climb takes the crest of the large slabby buttress about 300m South of the sharp ridge that defines the northern edge of the corrie. Start at the toe of the buttress and climb a short gully leading to a shallow chimney line with several tricky steps on the crest. This leads to a small bay beneath a cave after two pitches. Exit R. up mixed ground to easier slopes beneath the cornice (which could be very large late in the season).

**MAMORES, Stob Ban, Central Buttress – Skyline Rib**

120m, GRADE IV

R. G. Webb, B. A. Mattock (Alt). 13th February, 1987.

Just right of *Triad* (SMCJ, 1987) is a distinct rib. The route takes its crest.

**GLEN ETIVE, Creag Dhubh**

This is the crag described in SMCJ, 1987, p. 496. Routes are given left to right

1. *Turnaround* (SMCJ, 1987).

2. *Graceland* 35m, HVS 5a. Just left of *Conscience Corner*. Climb left-trending corner to steep wall. Pass flake on wall to ledge. Climb top wall using two sloping ramps.

3. *Conscience Corner* 35m, VS 4c. Just left of *Ivy Corner*. Climb small corner direct. Maintain line by following grooves and cracks to top.

4. *Ivy Corner* 35m, HVS 5a. Climb ivy-filled corner direct to small overhanging nose. Pass nose on left and continue by easier ground to top. (W. Hood, B. Williamson, 9th May, 1987).

5, 6. *Gestation, Tattiemann* (SMCJ, 1987).

7. *Druim nan Gillian* 30m, E2 5c. Sharp arête at right-hand side of crag. Up steep crack, then follow arête to flake. Wedge gently up this to finish up blunt arête. (N. Horn, C. Moody. 16th June, 1987).

8. Right of the arête is a large block. The shallow corner above its left side is VS 4c but escapable. The corner above its right side is Severe.

**THE ETIVE SLABS – Valkyrie, The Pea-brained Variation**

50m, E3 5c

R. D. Everett, D. Gaffney, K. Kaiser. 24th April, 1987.

A bold, sustained and serious pitch which commits the climber to some excellent blank padding. Climb the first 3 pitches of *Valkyrie* to the stance common with *Swastika* above the overlap. From the left end of the ledge climb up slightly left, then right, then back left to an obvious red pocket with an ancient chipped spike (poor line runner). Climb straight up for 5m to a small ledge (arrange protection in the crack to the right). From the ledge, climb the blank slab diagonally to the extreme left end of the next overlap (junction with the *Big Ride* and *Fast Approaching*). Regain *Valkyrie* by moving 10m right.



Ed note: It's hard to imagine that this has not been climbed before (at least the first part), since lost leaders have been wandering around this patch of slab for years. Many have fallen off, but the odd one surely made it.

#### NOTES:

**Binnein Shuas:** *Motte*, (SMCJ, 1986). A correction.

The route starts 6m to the right of the Variation Start to *Fortress Direct*, not 'left of *Fortress Direct Start*.' The first pitch also climbs a wall, not a slab. At least one party climbed the first pitch as originally described — 'worth 5b, but the worst pitch in the Highlands.'

### CENTRAL HIGHLANDS OUTCROPS

**CREAG DUBH** (Newtonmore), *Bedtime Buttress Upper Tier* — *Legover* 15m, E2 5c  
R. Sharpe, A. Moist. 17th July, 1986.

Climbs the wall directly above the start of *Hands Off*. Ascend the wall to a good break, move up and left to gain a good layaway, then up and right to finish.

**Waterfall Wall** — *Bratach Uaine* 30m, E6 6b  
G. Livingston, A. Cunningham. August, 1987.

Start at the base of the second pitch of *Wet Dreams*. The route climbs the overhanging arête left of *Acapulco*. Gain the arête from the crack of *Wet Dreams*; a good jug on the apex of the roof allows protection to be arranged. Hard moves over the roof lead to a bold runout up the right side of the arête. Tree belay (abseil).

**Great Wall** — (Unnamed) 35m, E5 6a  
S. Monks, W. Todd. May, 1987.

Forces a line directly up the wall midway between *Colder Than A Hookers Heart* and *Over The Hill*. Start to the left of the boulder at the foot of *The Hill*. Climb the initial wall via a series of bouldery moves to stand on a ledge. Step left and climb directly up the bulging wall to gain a small niche at 15m — Friend No. 2. Climb directly out of the niche and up the wall passing through the second niche of *The Hill* traverse to the tree belay at the top.

**CRAIG-A-BARNS**, *Upper Cave Crag* — *Marlina* 40m, E6 6b  
D. Cuthbertson. 3rd August, 1986 (3 days).

This climbs the centre of the wall between *Rat Race* and *Fall Cut*. Climb up to quartz pinches at 5m (No. 6 and 8 rock). Move up and right to a bulge (Friend 2 in slot to left and Rock No. 2 above bulge to right). Pull over bulge (BR), going slightly left on reddish coloured rock to better holds in a small recess. Move up and right (BR on left) to gain the right end of a diagonal crack (BR). Follow this passing a Rock No. 3 placement and in-situ peg to a fixed belay. Continue up wall to finish up *Warfarin*.

After the creation of the above route, three further bolts were added on a variation line with more obvious holds.

— *Marlina Left Hand* 40m, E6 6b  
S. Lewis. 13th September, 1986.

Climb directly up to quartz pinches and a BR at 5m. Slightly rightwards past a BR to a prominent undercling. Undercut leftwards to reach a large flat hold. BR. Attain a standing position on this and pull right to reach further good holds on the right and a fixed sling on the fourth BR. A long reach rightwards again leads to good holds at the base of the diagonal crack. Follow this passing a Rock No. 3 placement and peg to a fixed belay. Abseil off or continue up wall to finish up *Warfarin*.

- *Fallout*

37m, E6

M. Hamilton. 20th/21st September, 1986.

Follows in part the original line of the old bolt ladder of the same name, with a better second pitch more in keeping with the grade, up the shallow hanging scoop in the centre of the headwall. Pitches climbed on consecutive days.

1. 12m, **6b**. Start 3m right of *Marlina* at an obvious black streak. Ascend direct past a BR to a second BR. Step right to a PR and a BR just above. Pull right with difficulty from a pinch hold to reach good holds and belay on pegs in the recess of *Squirm Direct*.

2. 25m, **6b**. Climb leftwards past an old golo to reach the diagonal crack and follow it to a PR. Step right and up the shallow scoop above with difficulty past 2 BR to finish.

- *The Silk Purse*

30m, E7 6b

G. Livingston. May, 1987.

This links the start and finish of *Fallout*, thus avoiding the right traverse into *Squirm Direct*. Climbs the wall in one very sustained pitch.

Up to the pinch above the third bolt and move left to join *Marlina*. Make the long reach into the crack on *Marlina*, then follow this until possible to pull into the right trending scooped groove. Up this, then move right on to the prow. Move back left under the final bulge to a bolt belay. Lower off.

- *Ultima Necat*

25m, E5/6 6b

M. McGowan. 6th July, 1987.

Climb as for *Marlina Left Hand* to the fourth BR. Step left and climb wall with difficulty to gain better holds, passing a PR to finish at the fixed belay.

- *Rattle Yer Dags*

15m, E5 6b

D. McCallum. July, 1986.

From the scoop of *Squirm Direct*, climb up and leftwards to reach the base of the diagonal crack. Follow this past a BR and PR to a fixed belay. Abseil off. Later superseded by the previous two routes but included herein for posterity.

- *The Crossing*

30m, E4 6a

G. Latter.

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 then 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 the large flat hold an obvious line leads into the niche on *Rat Race*. Up this past the hanging belay on the slab to the fixed belay point of *Rattle Yer Dags*. Lower off.

- *Lady Charlotte Direct*

30m, E5 6b

D. C. Cuthbertson.

The original line has now been improved as follows:

Climb the dark wall just left of the initial groove of *Rat Catcher* on good holds to gain the scoop. Climb the pocketed wall above, and instead of climbing the scoop to the right wide of the undercut flake, make a move left from the quartz knob and climb directly into the flake. Where the original route goes left, continue blindly up a luminous green streak until a hard move right leads to better holds (PR). Continue easier up a short groove to the ledge on *Hang Out*.

– *Cushionfoot Stomp*

20m, E3 + 5c

E. Cameron/M. McGowan. 1987.

Ascends the steep, richly pocketed wall and shallow groove midway between *Summer Days* and *The Laughing Gnome*. Good, well protected climbing. Start as for *Summer Days*. Climb up to the slanting crack just right of the holly bush. Make a long reach up and rightwards to clip 2 PR's. Climb past these (crux) and up on improving holds (runners in pockets) to a good handhold at the base of the shallow groove (F No. 2, large Rocks). Pull out slightly right to finish.

Note: 2 BR pre-placed by E. Cameron. Later led after removal of bolts by M. McGowan; no change in grade.

– *Sore Fingers*

15m, HVS 5b

M. Wilkins (solo). 1983.

Climbs a line up the wall right of *Hos*.

**BIRNAM HILL SOUTH**

A compact little crag with an overhanging South Face and slabby East. It is vegetated but has good rock with possible scope for more exciting climbs on the South Face. It lies above the railway line, hidden in trees.

Routes by R. Lambert, J. McKenzie (1968).

**EAST FACE – *Larch Crack***

33m, VD

Start at the right end of the crag. Climb slab and traverse left to central crack which is followed to top.

– *The Hinge*

33m, VS 4c

Climb central slab left of *Larch Crack* to gain tree and ledge. Gain corner on left to reach flake belays. Up flakes and slab above to finish.

**SOUTH FACE – *Victoria's Chimney***

23m, VS 4c

Climb the overhanging chimney with an awkward start and roof to finish.

**NORTH EAST OUTCROPS**

**Deeside Update**, collated by Neil Morrison.

The routes and variations detailed below update the Deeside section of the existing North East Outcrops Guide.

Since the publication of the guidebook in 1984 the **Pass of Ballater** has come under close scrutiny and the following routes and variations have appeared. In addition the area around the Pass has been looked at closely, with extensive gardening the **Cadha Dubh** has received a facelift and **Pannanich Crag** has re-appeared from the mists of time, perhaps others will appear in the near future.

The routes herein include several already recorded in the journal but are included for completeness. Many of the routes have been repeated but in the harder grades there have been few ascents so a consensus opinion on grading has not always been achieved. One should also be aware of the sometimes extensive preparation prior to the ascent of many of the harder lines. No real attempt has been made to indicate route quality, generally this is fairly obvious. The layout follows that of the guidebook.

**Pass of Ballater****Western Section – Upper Tier**1. *Dod's Dead Cat*

13m, E2 5c

E. Todd, R. Paterson.

A hybrid route. Climbs *Little Cenotaph* to a horizontal break which is hand traversed left to *Smith's Arête*. Finish up this.

2. *Wrecker's Traverse* 15m, E2 5c  
A. Ross, N. Morrison.

Climb *Fingerwrecker* until it is possible to gain the break running across *Peel's Wall*. Dash across this to finish up *Smith's Arête*.

**Note:** A 1 RP on the right side is a crucial runner for *Smith's Arête*.

3. - *Cheap Trick* 10m, E4 6b  
A. Ross, N. Morrison.

Climb the crack line left of *L.H. Crack* to the break. Go directly up the wall above to finish in a vague scoop.

4. - *The Joke* 10m, E2 6a  
G. Livingston, G. Hadwin.

The wall 6m left of *Cheap Trick* just right of a tree filled fault. Start a few feet right of a large boulder. Climb the wall going slightly left then right. A serious route unless a runner is taken in one of the trees to the left.

**Grades:** Many think *Little Cenotaph* and *Pink Wall* both HVS 5a, *Black Custard* E1 5b.

### Western Section, Upper Tier, Right Hand Side

5. - *Jackdaw's Edge* 10m, E2 5b  
G. Livingston, G. Hadwin.

The right arête of *Jackdaw Groove*. Climb mainly in the centre into the groove near the top. Quite serious.

### Western Section, Lower Tier

6. - *Skidmarks* 8m, E1 5b  
Start just left of *Razor Crack*. Climb bulge to gain break, move left on to left side of the arête and go to the top avoiding *Aftershave*.

(Ed note: is this a social commentary? Do real men avoid aftershave? Comments welcome).

7. *Silent Spring Direct Starts* 6m, E2 5c  
L.H.: A. Ross, I. Davidson. Centre: A. Nisbet, G. Strange.

Climb the double overlap left of the crevasse either at its left end or in the centre to join the parent route.

8. - *Wu Li Masters Direct Finish* E2 6a  
B. Lawrie, N. Morrison.

Climb the steep cracked wall above the 'bottomless groove,' a technical struggle.

9. - *Wu Li Masters Right Hand Finish* 13m, 4b  
A. Ross (solo).

From near the top of the 'bottomless groove' break out right along an obvious traverse line to a platform below a leaning corner. Finish up this.

Below *Lucky Strike* and to the left of *Wu Li Masters* start is a compact slabby buttress.

10. - *The Wiry Masters* 13m, HVS 4c  
C. Jamieson.

Climb the faint corner in the middle of the slab to a ledge at mid height. Move left to gain a curving flange which is followed to exit the slab, finish up a short crack.

11. - *Tough's Brush* 13m, E1 5b  
C. Jamieson, G. Livingston.

Start at the bottom right of the slab. Climb up left to the ledge, go up and left to a pocket to finish as for *Wiry Masters*.

12. *Snowflakes*

13m, E1 5b

G. Livingston.

The visionary will struggle up the centre of the slab avoiding holds on the other two routes.

**Central Section**

The first routes here lie on the gully wall above *Isolation* and are described going left (uphill).

13. — *Captain Cop Out*

15m, E4 6b

G. Livingston, C. Jamieson.

Up and left of *Isolation* are some protruding blocks. Climb up past the blocks then make a rising right traverse across the wall to finish at an obvious break above. High side runners can be placed before the traverse.

14. — *Copulation*

15m, E4 6b

W. Todd.

A direct on *Captain Cop Out*. Start below a roof down and right of *Captain Cop Out* (just left of *Isolation*). Move up right on good holds and pull through the roof at a shallow recess/groove. Step left (PR) then up to gain the finishing moves of the parent route.

15. — *General Anaesthetic*

12m, E5 6c

G. Livingston/A. Ross (direct).

Start as for *Captain Cop Out* but at the point where it traverses right continue directly up the wall passing a scarred finger hold, move slightly left to finish.

16. — *Private Parts*

12m, E6 6b/c

A. Ross, C. Stewart. 1987.

Takes a line left of *General Anaesthetic*. Climb up to a poor peg runner. Hard moves lead past a small overlap to gain a good flake. Another hard section allows quartz holds to be reached, finish straight up. Led clean after a prolonged assault (redpoint?).

17. — *Slope Arms*

8m, E3 6a

W. Todd. 1986.

Fifteen feet left of *Captain Cop Out* is a thin left sloping crack. Climb this finishing to the right, well protected by small wires.

The following routes are right (downhill) of *Isolation*.

18. — *The Terrorist*

13m, HVS 5a

W. Todd. 1986.

Start just right of *Isolation*. Climb over the bulge to gain the right hand end of the ledge above, finish directly up the wall.

19. — *Dystemper*

16m, E5 6b/6c

G. Livingston, W. Todd.

The steeply overhanging corner left of *Cold Rage*. Climb hollow flakes up to a little roof, then round into the main corner (HB or 1 stopper) which is climbed with the help of holds on the arête. Pull on to the small ledge above awkwardly then finish more easily.

20. — *Cold Rage Direct Start*

E3 5c

W. Todd. 1987.

Climb the shallow groove, just left of the normal start, on creaky holds, to join the parent route. Normal start is 6a.

21. — *Hot Temper*

16m, E5 6b

W. Todd, G. Livingston.

Basically a direct finish to *Cold Rage*. Climb *Cold Rage* to the recess below the roof. Pull directly over the roof and climb the wall above with difficulty. Strenuous but well protected.

22. — *Anger and Lust Direct Finish*

6m, E4 6b

D. Dinwoodie. 1985.

The old peg line. From the bridging rest below the top roof, traverse right along the lip of an overlap and gain a good jug above. Step left and up the corner. Sensational and well protected.

23. — *Lech Gates Direct Start*

6m, E3 6a

D. Dinwoodie. 1987.

Climb the thin crackline past a peg runner to reach the rest under the roof.

24. — *Orage*

15m, E3 6b

W. Todd, S. Clarke.

Start up *Lech Gates*, where this moves left climb up to the overhang and make a hard move up the short corner to the slab belay of *Creak and Squeak*. Finish up this route.

25. — *Stoned Immaculate*

13m, E4/5 6a

G. Livingston. 1985.

Opinions vary on the grade. Also, originally a delicate 6b direct finish was made on the unprotected exit and this way the route is E5. However this ignores jugs just to the right. The route takes the left edge of the wall left of *Bluter Groove*.

Start at some sloping holds left of the centre of the wall. Using these climb up leftwards to a horizontal break and move out left on to a ledge on the edge, common to *Convoy*. Climb the arête stepping right at the top to finish up the last holds of *Drambo* (the next route).

26. — *Drambo*

16m, E5 6a

D. Dinwoodie. 1985.

A bold route moving in from *Stoned Immaculate* to climb the centre of the wall. Climb *Stoned Immaculate* to the resting ledge on the left (runners at small ledge on the arête just above). Traverse right into the centre of the wall along the break (two No. 5 RP placements here — the last worthwhile protection). Climb past the RP's to a hand rail. Step up moving out left from the little groove to good finishing holds.

27. — *Demon Drink*

16m, E5 6b

D. Dinwoodie. 1985.

Climbs the centre of the wall just right of *Bluter Groove*. Climb *Blutered* to the left edge of the wall. Move up right and across to a protection point. Step left and go straight up to the next protection point. Make a long reach for a knob directly above (crux) then up on superb holds to the top.

28. — *Doctor Dipso*

16m, E4 6a

D. Dinwoodie. 1985.

Climbs the wall between *Demon Drink* and *Hangover Wall*. Climb *Blutered* to the peg runners. Make a hard move up and left to the protection point of *Demon Drink* (the last runners on the route). Climb straight up then move right on improving holds to finish up the arête as for *Hangover Wall*.

**Note:** *Hangover Wall* is now E2 5c, since the good undercling on the crux has been blocked by a peg runner for the previous route! Not a good route (loose).

29. - *Larup Head*

20m, E3 6a

G. Livingston, C. Jamieson. 1985.

Although escapable this gives a fine pitch up the wall 6m right of *Hangover Wall*. Start at some obvious undercut flakes below 3 horizontal breaks. Climb directly past these and up to a good ledge. Finish up the obvious crack in the headwall. Near the start most ascensionists stray right to good holds and runners on *Alcoholics Anonymous*.

30. - *Alcoholics Anonymous*

16m, E1/2 5b

A. Ross, I. Davidson. 1985.

Surprisingly inescapable. Start right of *Larup Head*, climb directly into a shallow niche to gain the ledge above. Up the obvious small corner and wall to the top. Poor protection on easier upper half.

31. - *Back Slider*

8m, E1 5b

N. Morrison, A. Ross.

The slab left of *Strawberry Ripple* climbed from bottom left to top right. Side runner in *Strawberry Ripple*.

32. - *Plane Slider*

8m, E3 5b

A. Ross.

The slab right of *Strawberry Ripple*. An exciting little route less serious (lower grade) if a side runner is used.

**Eastern Section**33. - *Glue Sniffer*

6m, 6a

G. Livingston. 1985.

The wall between *Rock n' Roll* and the *Glaswegian Problem*. A hideous landing and the crux at the top.

34. - *Chopped P.O.R.G.*

13m, VS 5a

I. Davidson. 1987.

10m up the gully from *Rock n' Roll* is a steep gray slab behind a small larch tree. Climb the slab to gain good holds at the top after a very long reach.

**Eastern Section, Upper Tier**35. - *Help M' Bob*

8m, E5 6c.

A. Ross. 1987.

Climb the wall between *Jings* and *Hairy Baboon* directly, finishing up a shallow corner (peg runner). Crucial RP 4 in blind vertical seam above half height. Led after top roping.

36. - *Fat Loris*

10m, E5 6b

A. Ross. 1985.

The unprotected wall between *Hairy Baboon* and *Slender Doris*. Avoid the temptation to move into *Hairy Baboon* for a runner at half height, if you can. Led clean after some jiggery-pokery; will obviously be a bold on sight lead.

**The Cadha Dubh**

The Cadha Dubh has been the recipient of some particularly vigorous cleaning this autumn (1987) and whilst it has produced a number of new routes more traffic will be required to complete the cleansing and to reveal the worth of the routes. Routes are described from right to left and reference is made to the guidebook.

1. - *Black Tail*

13m, VS 4c

A. Ross (solo).

Climb the wall between *Dirty Thing* and *Toy Crack*. Go up black ledges and the wall above, trending left then back right, easy scrambling follows.

2. — *Check The Divot* 20m, VS 4c  
A. Ross (solo).  
The cornerline to the left of *Dirty Thing* climbed in its entirety.
3. — *Feeling Shattered* 30m, HVS 5a/b  
A. Ross, I. Davidson, N. Morrison.  
The tree filled corner line right of *Dark Klepht* (see below). Start below and right of the corner. Climb up to a peg runner, then traverse left to gain the corner line which is followed to the top.
4. — *Dark Klepht* 33m, E3 6a  
A. Ross, I. Davidson.  
A good line taking the obvious chimney and continuation crack 10m right of *Run Rabbit Run*. Peg runner below crux bulge.
5. — *Hare Lip* 26m, E2 6a  
C. Stewart, I. Davidson, A. Ross.  
Climbs the left hand side of the *Run Rabbit Run* buttress. Climb up to a short hanging corner, go up this and the leaning wall above to a tree. Climb the slab left of the tree to finish up a short crack.
6. — *New Gold Dreams* 33m, E2 5b  
A. Ross, I. Davidson, C. Stewart.  
Climb the mossy groove line left of *Hare Lip* to gain the top of a block below a gold coloured corner. Go up this, step left then up to gain a hanging corner leading to the top. Sustained.
7. — *Crystal Hunter* 33m, HVS 5a, 5a  
I. Davidson, A. Ross, G. Reilly.  
Climb the groove left of *New Gold Dreams* to a ledge, climb the wall above leftwards to another ledge and belays. Follow a ledge system on the right to below a head-wall, step left and go through a pine tree to finish up a groove.
8. — *Fall Gold* 33m, E2 5c, 5b  
I. Davidson, A. Ross.  
Ascend a grey wall 5m left of *New Gold Dreams* to gain a small ledge, go up a flake crack to belay. Follow ledge system on the right (common to *Crysta Hunter*) and move right beneath the headwall to finish up a hanging corner crack.
9. — *Dwarves Nightmare* 30m, E4 6b  
A. Ross, I. Davidson, C. Stewart.  
Takes the wall 8m right of *Backwoodsman*. Climb a tree filled groove to reach a grey wall (peg runner up on right). Go up the wall to reach the base of a hanging corner. Up this and the wall above to a junction with *Backwoodsman*.

### **Pannanich Crag (NO 389963)**

Pannanich Crag was known to early climbers on Deeside, renowned for its cave pitch. Recently the crag has been subject to the modern touch and has been uncovered from a veil of moss and vegetation to provide some excellent climbing.

The crag is high on the slopes South of the Dee some 2kms East of Ballater and is well seen from the long straight on the A93 just before the Pass of Ballater turning. On entering Ballater cross the bridge over the Dee and turn East to follow the B976 for 2kms (1.2 miles). The parking area is a grassy layby on the right beside an outcrop of rock. From here either, thrash directly up the hillside to gain the boulder field which is slipped up leftwards to the foot of the crag. Or, walk 80 metres along the road to the second of two storm drains, fight up near it to gain a vague path which goes right to the crag. Both routes take about 10 minutes.



Most of the routes on Pannanich follow cracks with a few eliminates on the steep walls in between. In general the climbing is excellent, on sound rock, with good nut and friend protection. Unusually for granite, the rock provides an abundance of flat and incut holds. The angle varies from slabby on the left to vertical elsewhere. The routes average 30m in height with good tree belays at the top.

N.B. It may be the case that a Peregrine Falcon is nesting on the cliff in early summer, if so please be discrete and climb elsewhere.

The first record of climbing on the Pannanich Crag was in the summer of 1928 when the Ballater climber, Bill Ewen, discovered and climbed the *Pannanich Cave Pitch*. This entertaining subterranean problem lies to the right of the main face and is probably about V. Diff. except in the driest weather it can be identified by the sound of running water. It was climbed in winter conditions by G. Livingston, G. Strange and C. Henderson in January 1987, GRADE IV. Ref. to Pannanich Cave Pitch Cairngorm Club Journal Vol. XII, Page 42, Jan. 1929.

Craig Pannanich described from Right to Left.

1. - *Freebird* 30m, E4 6a

C. Forrest, C. Stewart.

Climbs the obvious crackline on the right side of the main face. Start just left of a wet patch and climb a short broken wall to gain a hand traverse (Friend above in small pod) leading into the start of the crackline. Follow this passing the bulge (crux, peg runner). The climbing continues with some reachy moves to just below the top where an awkward move out left leads to good finishing holds.

2. - *The Grateful Dead* 30m, E6 6b

A. Ross (unsec.).

Start as for *Pannanich Wall* (see below). Climb the wall right of the bottom step to the highest small ledge. Go up the blind crack above, just left of a black streak, to a ledge. Traverse right and up to a peg runner. Climb the green wall above the peg to join *Wonderous Stories*. Pull straight over the roof to finish up the bold wall.

3. - *Pannanich Wall* 30m, E3 6a

C. Forrest, A. Ross.

An excellent route climbing the frontal face by a series of steps and finally the crackline in the headwall. Start just left of *Firebird* and make a few reachy moves to reach the series of steps. Follow these to the third step, move right to climb the left hand of two cracklines (crux) to the roof, move right to pull over this via a crackline leading to easy ground.

4. - *Flush With Pride* 26m, E1 5b

C. Forrest, A. Ross.

The line links the small right facing corner near the bottom of the cliff to the top left facing corner. Start at the bottom corner and climb straight up to join the top corner which is climbed by its right edge to finish up the crackline.

5. - *German Holidays* 23m, E4 6a

C. Forrest, A. Ross.

Takes the thin crackline left of *Flush with Pride*. From a platform beneath the crackline climb a dirty groove to a small sapling, continue up the thin technical crack, over a small roof to better holds. Strenuous.

6. - *Cool As A Cat* 23m, E4 6a

C. Forrest, C. Stewart.

A bold line starting below the obvious pod and continuing up the clean wall above, escapable on the left.

Climb straight up into the pod and pull out of its top. Continue up to a peg, follow a line of small holds above this until better holds lead left to a thin crackline which is climbed to a large block.

7. — *The Navigator*

20m, VS 5a

P. Stewart, I. Davidson, A. Ross.

Left of the mossy crack is a large triangular niche. Climb up to the ledge to move right and up to the niche, exit the niche on the left wall to stance.

8. — *Wonderous Stories*

60m, E1 5b, 4b

C. Forrest, A. Ross.

A superb girdle, following the obvious horizontal break with increasing exposure, well protected.

Start at the left hand end of the cliff where the break can be gained. Traverse to the wide mossy chimney continue with a step down to an awkward move to gain the base of the headwall, traverse beneath this in a fine situation to belay at a tree (5b). Move slightly up to a wide crack, finish up this (4b).

The following routes lie on the buttress left of the main face.

9. — *Agent Orange*

15m, E1 5c.

A. Ross, I. Davidson, P. Stewart.

Climb the corner on the toe of the buttress and continue left up the obvious line to top.

10. — *Beechgrove Corner*

16m, VS 5a

I. Davidson, P. Stewart, A. Ross.

Climb the large open corner a few metres left of the foot of the buttress.

**Clachnaben — Snotty Wotty**

16m, VS 5a

C. Forrest, W. Taylor.

Start at the foot of *A Gully* at a large block. Climb obvious corner with some vegetation in cracks to roof. Turn roof on right and climb steep crack/wall above to top via a small bulge.

**Cummingston Update**, by Neil Morrison.**Orange Wall Area — Orange Peel**

6m, HVS 5b

Climb the wall direct just left of *Route One*. Using the left edge the grade is 5a (poorer).

— *Ginger Snap*

6m, VS 4c

The thin crackline just right of *Route One*.

— *Thumper*

8m, E2 5c

The next thin crackline to the right. The crux is at the top and could be protected if the crack was cleaned out.

— *Tangerine Scream*

8m, E4 6a

D. Dinwoodie.

A line of flakes in the middle of the wall, right of the previous route.

— *Hickory Dickory Dock*

8m, E3 5c.

D. Dinwoodie.

The obvious crackline right of the previous route and left of *Flaky Wall*. Protection can be arranged at a good jug above half height.

— *Berserker*

10m, E2 6a

A. Ross.

Continue the right traverse of *King Swing* to pull up right at a vertical seam. Climb this and move right into the hanging chimney. Finish up this. Strenuous and sustained.

**Gutbuster Bay**

There is a mistake here in the guide. The direct start of *Middle Muddle Groove* is confused with the route to its right, *Jugular Wall*. The guide should read as follows.

– *Direct Start* 5m, MVS 4c

Pull over the bulge a few feet right of the flakes to gain the upper groove directly.

– *Jugular Wall* 12m, H. Severe 4b

Right again is a steep wall. Pull up to a huge jug continue past a crack to ledges, and climb the steep wall above direct. Quite a pleasant route.

*Gutbuster* and *Legbuster* are undergraded.

– *Sea Witch* 13m, E3 5b

A. Ross.

Climb the flake nose just left of *Conjurer*, and the fragile wall above.

– *Conjurer Direct Start* 6a

A. Ross.

Right of the original, done when the base was sandy.

– *The Grab* 5m, 6b

The wall direct just left of *Armstretcher*.

– *The Melting Clock* 12m, E2 5c

A. Ross.

The slanting chimney line right of *Dali's Wall*. (Soloed when the landing was sandy).

**The Prophet Walls – Aesthetic Ape** 20m, E3 6a

D. Dinwoodie, A. Ross.

Approximates to the smooth little hanging corner right of the *Gripper*, just left of an overhung alcove. Climb bulging rock to gain holds under the bulging right rib of the corner (Friend and hidden No. 4 RP placement above in corner). Pull up the rib (crux) to gain the top of a block and continue straight up. Trend right and up to finish.

– *Orange Ape* 20m, E3 5c

D. Dinwoodie, A. Ross.

The obvious undercut corner in the back of the bay. Start up a bulge left of the recess in the back corner. Then swing up right over the next bulge (crux) into the corner. Finish up the corner, still a bit loose.

– *Bat's Wall* 16m, E4 6a

D. Dinwoodie.

The crackline up the back wall right of the previous route can be started by gaining a shelf up on the right or, harder, direct. A strenuous route with an awkward finish.

– *Noddy Machine* 13m, E1 5a

A. Nisbet, A. Cunningham, S. Stewart.

A sensational route on the overhanging right wall of the Bay, round left from *Triangular Groove* (see below). Climb a shallow groove to a ledge with a big flake. Step left and climb the overhanging wall until possible to gain the arête at a useful loose block (to be heelhooked, but not pulled on). Dirty but easy finish follows.

– *Triangular Groove* 20m, HVS 5a

Climb the left hand of the two peapod shaped grooves in the wall left of *Borderline* to the capping roof. Pull over (poor protection) and step right. Move right and finish up the top groove of *Borderline* (or *Border Crossing*, below). The route has been finished direct but is unpleasant.

– *Border Crossing*

20m, H. Severe

Climb the right hand twin groove until it is possible to step right into the upper groove of *Borderline*. Climb a few moves up the groove, then climb the obvious flake up the right wall to finish up the crack of *Palmist*. Devious but quite pleasant.

– *Palmist*

16m, E3 6b

D. Dinwoodie.

The bulge on the left side of *Prophet Buttress*, just right of *Borderline*. Gain an obvious spiky jug with difficulty (direct) where protection can be arranged. Gain a standing position on the jug then go on up a short overhanging crack and another step to the top. The landing is variable and can be a nasty proposition.

– *I-Ching*

20m, E2 5c

D. Dinwoodie.

Takes the edge and face just right of *Prophet*. Climb the right edge for some 8m then step out left on to the frontal face. Go straight up and move back right and up the edge to a ledge. Easier to the top.

– *Right*

This route is cleaner, harder and better than the guide suggests. Should be E1 5b and with a little more traffic might be worth a star, although still serious.

– *Spare Rib*

15m, HVS 4c

Climb the rib direct right of 'Right' corner. Poorly protected.

– *Yoo-hah*

10m, VS 5a

The first crackline right of 'Right' corner.

– *Bing Bong*

8m, Severe

The next line to the right, starting up a vague open groove then turning a bulge on the left. Tricky grass finish.

– *Gnib Gnob*

8m, H. Severe

The next corner forming the back of the bay at the top of the grass bank, where the crag changes angle.

A number of short routes and problems have been soloed on the wall above the grass bank. The first two problems were finished by traversing right into *The Weem*, direct finishes would need cleaning.

– *Pigmy Shrew*

6m, E1 5c

The first defined crackline right of *Gnib-Gnob*.

– *Bank Vole*

6m, VS 5a

The next crack just to the right again.

– *The Weem*

10m, V. Diff.

The obvious corner and slot right of the previous cracks.

– *Wobble*

10m, VS 4c

The very shallow left facing groove right of *The Weem*. Finish up the wall above.

– *Thud*

10m, HVS 5B

The next similar line to the right.

Right again are several enjoyable problems.

**The Stacks Area – *Pretty Flamingo***

6m, E1 5c

The edge left of *The Nest*, climbed on its right side, to join *Graffiti Wall*.

– *The Nest*

Two alternative starts have been climbed. The left hand start (6b) climbs just left of *The Nest* to grab the sloping perch, the right hand start (5c) goes just right of the edge to snatch left for the perch.

– *Pegless Wall*

13m, VS 4b

Climb the bulging wall right of the *Arête*, starting just left of the obvious groove in the rise above. Artificial.

– *Le Crunch*

13m, E3 5c

A. Ross (solo).

The blunt rib round to the right of *Sandstone Wall* forms the left side of the Cave Arch. Climb the rib to a big jug in a niche at 8m (protection here). Move up and left to finish. Crux serious with a poor landing.

**The Cave:**

Two routes have been made inside the collapsed cave, on the side nearest the sea.

– *Fourth Dimension*

12m, HVS 5c

The obvious crackline just right of the westerly tunnel. The undercut start is the crux. Start up the thin crack or, more easily, pull up on the left.

– *Brain Warp*

12m, E2 5c

The obvious crack above the minor tunnel whose outside aspect lies beside *Giraffe Corner*. The start is awkward undercut by the tunnel.

**Sunshine Wall – *Sunshine Extra***

6m, HVS 4b

Right of *Sunshine Crack* is another similar crackline passing just left of the recess of *Sunshine Recess*.

**The Sea Stacks, Sea Pinnacle No. 1**

– *Captain Birdseye*

13m, HVS 5a/b

Climb the left edge of *Fingers Wall* to a niche and finish directly up the bulge and groove above. Pleasant and well protected.

– *The Prow*

13m, E5 6b

D. Dinwoodie.

The big overhanging prow on the Stack. Climb out on massive holds finally pulling up on a knobble to slopy holds at the end of the roof, to gain jugs up left. A direct finish was made stepping round left but the logical finish is up the right wall (friend 1 placement across right). Gear: 7 or 8 rock with poor friend 3 helping keep it in place. Friend 4 or 3 above, with Friend 2 on its left (wide cams up on either side of a protrusion in the roof). Also a tied down cord was used on the knobble.

The route was top roped in the past using a detour out left and back right but the loss of a plate has made this much harder.

– *Cutty Sark*

13m, Severe

Start at the foot of *East Side Story* and trend left up the edge of the overhanging prow, then straight up the wall to a grass ledge, finish unpleasantly above.

*Dirty Old Man*

13m, V. Diff.

Climb the easy angled lichenous cracks up the wall right of *Back Passage*.

*Sunset Song*

13m, H. Severe

Inset in the N.E. arête of the stack is an attractive curved groove of good clean rock. Climb the groove and finish directly over the little bulge above.

*Footloose*

13m, Severe

Takes the N. wall of the stack. Climb the right edge for a few feet, then pull over left and climb to a ledge. Finish leftwards over an awkward bulge. A harder and better start goes directly up the initial wall on brittle flakes to gain the ledge (MVS 4b) still lichenous.

*Blocky*

13m, V. Diff.

Climb an obvious blocky fault just right of the start of *Footloose* to the right end of the ledge and finish up the corner above.

*Butcher's Broom*

13m, H. Severe

On the West Wall. Climb cleaned cracks up the left edge of the wall, some 5m left of *Coach Bolt Crack*.

*Shadow Flake*

13m, VS 4c

Climbs the West wall to an obvious small flake a few feet left of *Coach Bolt Crack*. Pull up past the flake and finish out rightwards.

General Note: In places the beach level has dropped in recent years, adding up to two feet to some routes. Some undercut routes are now a grade harder. This particularly applies to The Stacks area (e.g., *Classic Wall*, *Gorilla*, *Bottomless Chimney* start).

## COVESEA

This area receives a passing mention in the guidebook but has now seen a fair number of routes added, some of them being very good. To reach the area follow the directions given in the guidebook to reach the coastguard lookout. Whilst the quality of the rock is very good in **Boulder's Bay** one or two other areas, in particular the **Honeycomb Wall**, are very sandy and brittle. The grades and quality of many routes here have still to settle down.

**Covesea** by D. Dinwoodie.

**Honeycomb Wall.**

This is the wall angling up a grassy rampart at the east end of the bay containing the big dry cave. It lies just west of the coastguard lookout. There is a belay stake situated centrally back from the cliff-top. Abseil in or traverse round from **Boulders Bay** (not possible at high tide). It also looks possible to descend a grassy stepped fault between *Honeycomb Wall* and the *Cave*.

*The Sandman*

13m, E2 5b (1986)

Near the top right end of the wall. Climb the wall directly to a prominent small niche at the top. Strenuous, with friend protection.

*Invisible Sun*

15m, E4 6a (1986)

Climb the thin podded crack left of *Sandman* and climb the wall above directly. (Yo-yoed.)

*The Sandbagger*

13m, E1 5a (1986)

Left of previous route. Climb the wall centrally to finish by a small wide crack.

– *Drone Warfare* 13m, E2 5b (1986)

Left of *Sandbagger* there is a wedge-like formation formed by two converging bands of sandstone, which extends three-quarters of the way up the cliff. Start beneath the right-hand band and follow it to the apex. Pull up right to gain a small rightwards-sloping ramp. Follow this to the top. Sustained.

– *Shear Fear* 15m, E2 5c (1986)

Start just left of the wedge and continue straight up the wall above to enter a niche near the top. Make a short rightwards traverse and finish as for *Drone Warfare*.

– *Primal Scream* 16m, E5 6a (1986)

Low in the grade. Left of *Shear Fear* are two obvious rock-scars. Climb up right of these to gain a thin break just right of the second scar. (Crucial nut placement here, No. 4 rock and RP 5 in opposition). Continue straight up to reach a big right-trending ramp. Up this to the top.

– *Primitive Thoughts About Modern Girls* 20m, E1 5b (1986)

Climb a bulging wall to reach a small ledge. Move right and up to gain a small ledge. Move right along this to gain a big ramp which leads up rightwards to the top, finishing above *Primal Scream*.

### Boulders Bay

This is the bay not far East of the coastguard lookout. It contains piles of overgrown boulders. The usual access is by either of two very short square-cut chimneys some 16m West of the last boulders. It is also possible to traverse round from the stone steps East of the stack at Gows Castle (low tide).

At the back of the Bay is an imposing roofed corner, to the right of an obvious cave. This is described first and used as a reference point.

– *Fascist Octopus* 26m, E5 6b (1986)

The lower corner is messy and usually wet but is avoided by a traverse in from the right wall. Start on top of a boulder right of the corner. Step on to the wall and move left. Go up and left into the corner to a bridging rest. Unprotected and the last holds are usually wet. Move up the corner to clip a peg runner under the roof. Step back down and go across left to pull up over the roof and move up to a good flat ledge. Finish up the corner. Wee men may have to jump for a key jug on the left at the roof – a very technical crux.

– *Banana Republic* 20m, E1 5b (1985)

This route climbs over the roof about 8m right of *Fascist Octopus* and up an obvious steep crackline. Start on top of a pointed block and climb up into a corner under the roof. Pull over the roof. The direct continuation up the crackline is sometimes wet. It can be avoided using flakes on the right, returning left to rejoin the direct line, as on the first ascent. The direct was climbed in 1986. (The finish has now been cleaned).

– *Squadron Muerte* 26m, E2 5c (1986)

Goes up corners and the wall right of *Banana Republic*. Start on a boulder and climb the corners up right and then up the wall fairly direct. Above the corners there is no protection but the climbing is not so hard.

– *The Domino Effect* 20m, E2 5c (1985)

There are two obvious cracklines towards the right side of the wall. This is the left-hand crackline. Start just left of a big vegetated boulder. The first part is the crux and was yo-yoed.

– *Sandinista* 20m, E1 5b/c (1985)

The right-hand crackline. Most easily started stepping off the vegetated boulder. 5c if started direct.

– *Private Dancer*

15m, E3 5c (1986)

Climb the thin crack leading to the hanging corner round the arête from *Sandinista*. Sustained but well protected. Yo-yoed.

The next two routes are situated just past the grass and piled boulders. They take obvious chimney-lines. So far belays at the top are poor.

– *Sleepy Hollow*

20m, E1 5b (1985)

The left-hand line. Climb straight up to the base of the hanging corner at the right end of a roof. Traverse right and up then back left to climb the chimney-crack. An easier start can be made to the right.

– *Past Imperfect*

20m, HVS 5a (1985)

The right-hand line, a steep and sustained corner.

The wall right of these two routes ends in an arête. The remaining route in this direction starts some 6m left of the arête.

– *The Land Of Nod*

13m, MVS 4C (1986)

Climb a wide crack and then go straight up to the top. Has not been cleaned.

The following routes lie left of *Fascist Octopus*:

– *Bottle Dungeon*

23m, E2 5c

The obvious corner line running up above the cave left of *Fascist Octopus*. Start just right of the cove. Start up an undercut corner and go up left past a flake. Alternatively start by pulling up the right arête of the cave. Climb the corner direct to the top.

– *Dancing In The Dark*

20m, E2/3 5c (1985)

Starts up the undercut left arête of the cave, a twin line to *Bottle Dungeon*. This is right of the fierce roof-crack. Continue left using underclings to climb the obvious bulging crackline on the frontal face.

– *Orphan Annie*

20m, E2 5b (1986)

The prominent arête some 10m left of the fierce roof-crack. Poor protection.

– *Per Rectum*

20m, H. Severe (1985)

Left of the previous route is an overhung bay. The route starts here and passes up through a hole formed by a jammed block, then goes up the steep wall above the grass ledge (left of an obvious corner).

– *Thatcher's Crack*

15m, VS 4b (1986)

Climb the crack in the wall right of *Per Rectum*. Well protected and sustained.

**The Bay of Gow's Castle**

This is the next bay East of Boulders Bay and contains the stack known as Gow's Castle. The cliff line is continuous between the two bays and access between the two is cut off at higher tide. Alternative access is by traversing round from the stone steps just East of the bay – also problematical at high tide.

At the West end of the bay is a big cave. The first route described takes the buttress West of the cave.

– *Celebrate The Bullet*

15m, E1 5a/b (1985)

Lies on the seaward face of the right-hand buttress. Pull up into a short groove then follow a leftward trending crack to a bulge. Climb this into a corner which is followed to the top.

– *Slyme Cryme*

15m, E2 5c (1986)

This route takes the arête forming the left arch of the cave. Climb the arête to the junction with the cave roof. Move up to gain a thin crack. Up this to the top.



– *The Vertical Smile* 13m, VS 4c (1985)

This is the obvious crackline on the left-hand buttress beyond which the cliff bends round into a more recessed part of the bay. Climb the crackline moving left at the top to finish up the rib.

– *Crack-A-Gow-Gow* 10m, VS 4c (1986)

The obvious crackline on the N.W. facing wall of the stack.

### Stone Steps Area

The next bay East of Gow Castle contains the carved stone steps. Thirty feet to the right is an obvious chimney-crackline.

– *Gowing Nowhere* 12m, VS 5a (1986)

Climb the chimney-crack. A classic thrutch.

### Beach Wall

Just round the corner is the last climbing wall in this area of Covesea.

– *The Beachboys* 12m, HVS 5a (1986)

Climb the wall, a few feet left of the right arête, directly to the top.

– *Reach Or Beach* 13m, E1 5b (1986)

Climb the wall directly to gain a small right-facing corner-flake at half-height. Climb this to the ledges. Either side off right or finish straight up.

### Logie Head, East Face – Sea Link

10m, V. Diff.

Climb the initial break of *Sea Urchin* to below the bulge, step left and finish by the top crack of *Bladder Wrack*. A useful easy route on a crag lacking in worthwhile climbs at the grade.

– *Central Belt* 30m, E1 5a

Climb the obvious diagonal fault on the leftmost embankment. Start at *Bladder Wrack* and traverse with feet in the fault (apart from a step down just before *Fisherman's Tail*) to finish up cracks in the upper wall right of *Doc's Crack* (below).

**Notes:** The cracks on the left-hand embankment wall have proved very popular but many people find them difficult to locate precisely. The following hints may help:

*Poacher* starts just left of where the diagonal bulge reaches the foot of the crag and trends left crossing the bulge at some obvious small flakes.

*Cullenary Delight* starts a few feet up the ramp at a small undercut pocket in the rock and also trends left.

*Sunnyside Up* is the last crack before the obvious fault of *Fisherman's Tail* and finishes via an obvious thin niche. Climbed direct (best) it is E1 5b.

The wall between this and *Cullenary Delight* is E1 5b but very artificial.

Right of *Fisherman's Tale* is a steep wall above the ascent ramp. The wall is split into top and bottom halves by the diagonal fault of *Central Belt*. There are two thin vertical cracks in its smooth lower half.

– *Sandy Crack* 8m, E1 5b

Climb the left-hand thin crack and its short continuation.

– *No Hands Crack* 8m, E1 5b

Climb the right-hand crack to a niche. Finish by the crack above the niche.

– *Doc's Crack* 6m, HVS 5b

Start 3m higher up the ramp. Climb leftwards across the lower wall to reach and follow the prominent crack right of the final crack of *No Hands Crack*.

– *That Is The Question*

12m, HVS 4c

The overhang and thin crack to the left of *Dave's Dilemma*.

– *On The Beach*

10m, HVS 5a

Between *That Is The Question* and *Dave's Dilemma*. Pull over the roof at the obvious cracks and go up the thin crack above. Cross *Dave's Dilemma* at its wide crack and finish up the thin cracks on the right.

– *Holy Ground*

13m, E2 5c

Takes twin right-curving cracks right of *Dave's Dilemma* and left of a wide crack.

Start up *Dave's Dilemma* and use a thin crack just to its right to gain a standing position in the obvious hole. Step right using another hole and move up the twin cracks to swing left on reaching better holds. Finish obviously.

– *Crow's Crack*

13m, HVS 4c

The wide crack. Start up easy shelves.

– *Cullen Chimney*

13m, Severe

The steep chimney-line a few feet left of *Cullen Crack*.

– *Bouillabaise*

13m, HVS 5a (1986)

Climb directly up the piece of rock between *Cullen Chimney* and *Cullen Crack*. Near the top move right into the last few feet of *Cullen Crack*.

– *The Skink*

13m, Severe

Climb the rightmost crack of the East Face of the Eastern arm of the ridge to gain a platform on *Findlater Rib*. Finish up the rib by a corner on the right.

**The Gully Wall – *Greenvoe***

13m, Mild Severe

Start at the rock pool below *Brittle Star* and climb a stepped groove up left to a ledge above the jammed block. Follow the right hand crack of the *Greenpeace* chimney to finish up the last few feet of that route.

– *The White Dwarf*

13m, VS

Between *Anti-matter* and *Brittle Star*. Climb *Anti-Matter* to above the *Black Hole* then pull right on to the wall at a crack. Go up the crack then go right when it ends to finish direct.

**West Face – *Polaris***

16m, V. Diff.

About 2m left of the West Face is a deep long slot. Descend at the landward end to sea level and chimney out going left or right at the top where the slot is roofed over.

**Grades:** *The Cull* is E1 5b, as is *Dark Star* (round corner on left).

**Garden Wall – *Apathy***

E2 5c/6a

The thin crack immediately left of *Garden Path*.

On the back slope of Logie about 50m East of the main climbing area, an obvious crack has been climbed in the arête (moving left at half-height). Grade unknown (VS?).

**Huntly's Cave – *Huntly's Jam***

13m, E2 5b

Climbs the right arête of *Pete's Wall*. Steep. Start a few feet left of *Hanging Groove*. Go direct to roof. Using a hold on the lip make a reach for a flat hold then to a block. Left side of arête to top. (Good friend protection).

– *Cave Route – Variation Start:* HVS 5a suggested (polished).

– *Dead-Tree Wall*: The dead tree has disappeared.

– *Lime Street*: Said to be undergraded. E3 5c?

– *Lime Ade*

E1 5b

Climb the initial flake of *Lime Street* then move right to the arête. Climb the arête and the roof above at its widest point.

– *Bo-Po Crack*: E3 6a suggested.

## GLENCOE

### BUCHAILLE ETIVE MOR, Rannoch Wall – *Baptism of Fire*

60m, E5

M. Edwards, R. Edwards. May, 1987.

A direct, bold and powerful route up the left side of the Rannoch Wall.

1. **6a.** From the upper reaches of the gully, climb the 'smoothed' blank steep slab between two wet streaks. Climb this direct (thin and poorly protected) to easier rock, then move direct over the bulge moving right at the lip to a small belay ledge.

2. **5c.** Move up and back left to climb a thin crack and awkward shallow groove which leads to the top.

### EAST FACE OF NORTH BUTTRESS – *Creag Dhon't Woll*

20m, E5 6b

M. McGowan, C. Bell. September, 1987.

Climbs the short compact wall right of *Gallows Route*. Climb up easily to belay as for *Gallows*. Ascend white groove above to a good rest below thin crack. Arrange protection in hidden undercut on right (F No. 1 and 1). Make awkward moves up to R No. 2 placement then make hard moves up to slot (R No. 5; F No. ½). Make more hard moves up crack to finish a little easier above

### CREAG A'BHANCAIR – *Twilight Zone*

40m, E6 6b

G. Livingston, A. Ross. 20th June, 1987.

A single pitch climbing a weakness in the wall left of *Waltzing Ostriches*, cutting through *Carnivore* and *Le Monde* to finish up an immaculate cleaned white streak. Very bold.

Start at a small bulge directly beneath a gap in the overhang. Climb the groove boldly to a serious section through the bulge (Rock No. 2 placement) to join the *Carnivore* traverse (failsafe protection). Up the steep wall above to gain the top of the ramp on *Le Monde*, then directly up until possible to hand traverse right on spikes to the bottom of the white streak. Ascend the wall above with some technical moves at the top, then the slab above to an in situ peg belay.

– *Waltzing Ostriches*

20m, E5 6a

A good though virtually unprotected pitch up the scooped groove to the left of *Le Monde*. From the top of a pedestal 3m left of *Le Monde*, pull steeply up rightwards to good holds and protection in a recess. Up bulge above and into shallow groove. Up this to the *Carnivore* traverse (poorly protected) and follow this right to the left end of the ledge. Abseil off peg belay.

– *Celtic Dawn*

25m, E6 6a

G. Livingston, A. Ross, D. Dinwoodie. 24th May, 1987.

Climbs the grey overhanging groove about 10m to the left of *Le Monde*. Move left at the top of the initial corner to gain some good holds in a niche at about 10m (first protection – F No. 1/1, R No. 2) then up to an obvious hole. Exit rightwards from this through the bulge on to a green slab (PR). Move right from the peg to a small overlap, and climb the steep wall above on good holds. Sustained and serious.

— *Admission*

43m, E7 6c

G. Livingston. 20th June, 1987.

Another pitch in the *Fated Path* mould. Start about 6m left of *Fated Path* under a small bulge. Move up and directly past a BR to reach a small ledge. Up then rightwards through the bulge past two further BR's (possible groundfall below 2nd BR) to gain a stopping place (PR and F No. 2). Climb the wall above to reach a small overhang, move rightwards underneath it and surmount it on large undercuts. Attain a standing position on a small ledge, then using a prominent undercut move rightwards to gain the finish of *Fated Path*. Redpointed after extensive practice.

— *Uncertain Emotions*

26m, E6 6b

D. Cuthbertson.

Follows a line of scoops which lead to the belay at the end of the first pitch of *The Risk Business*. Climb a steep shallow groove to a BR beneath a small overlap. Clip the bolt above the overlap and move slightly right to gain a small but positive hold. Continue up and rightwards on improving holds to a second overlap. Pull over this (BR) using a good ramp hold and continue to a good shake out beneath the top bulge (BR). Move leftwards to a horizontal slot (BR), then climb up and rightwards into the middle of the wall above the bulge. Continue on good hidden holds to the belay. Either abseil off fixed belay or finish up the second pitch of *The Risk Business* and move left to fixed belay.

— *The Railway Children*

40m, E6 6b

D. Cuthbertson.

A truly superb pitch, one of the best in the 'Coe. Gain the shake out above the fourth bolt on *Uncertain Emotions*. Where *Uncertain* breaks out right, hand traverse left to a PR. Now climb a hard wall on sidepulls and pinches to gain better holds (2 PR's). Fine but easier climbing which is not without interest leads to the traverse line into *Carnivore*. A selection of Rocks, including No. 1, 4 and 8 are required on the top section.

— *Flying Scotsmen*

100m, GRADE III/IV

H. Henderson, R. G. Ross. 30th January, 1988.

Follow the rightward rising ramp to the left and above *Carnivore* to a cave and chimney. Traverse right out of the cave, climb steep wall and move back left above chimney. Continue up gully to a large block belay on the right. Finish up wall above by the ice pillar and up easier ground.

— *Minor Issue*

80m, GRADE IV (5)(5)(2)

R. Anderson, G. Taylor (Alt). 10th January, 1988.

Climbs the corner grooveline left of the buttress edge between *Chimney Route* and *Scoop Route*.

1. 15m. Climb the corner/groove to a ledge and belay.
2. 20m. Move left to gain the corner and climb this to a small block, step right and climb the groove to gain easy ground and a belay.
3. 45m. Continue easily to near the top of the crag.

**LOST VALLEY BUTTRESS — *Barracuda***

80m, GRADE V (4)(7)(4)

R. Anderson, R. Milne (Alt). 16th January, 1988.

Climbs the obvious steep crackline which springs from the right to left trending ramp line to the right of *Neanderthal*. Start at the edge of the buttress.

1. 10m. Follow the ramp past a groove to belay below the crackline.
2. 20m. Climb the crackline to the buttress crest and belay five metres higher in a shallow gully.
3. 50m. Climb the shallow gully facing a steepening directly to reach the top, a belay could be taken at a chokestone just short of the top.

– *The Primordial Soup Kitchen* 100m, Hard Very Severe

A. Nisbet, A. Cunningham (Alt), 16th June, 1987.

Climbs the buttress to the right of *Neanderthal*. Loose and vegetated. Start immediately right of *Neanderthal* introductory gully.

1. 20m. Climb a low-angled arête to belay under a steep wall.

2. 45m, **5a**. Move right and climb a flake set in the left wall of a small corner. Move right again and climb a prominent corner-crack (the main feature of the route) to a small platform (top of monolith). Two short walls lead to a belay.

3. 35m, **4b**. Climb a clean arête on the right (the border between the main face and Trilobite face). Finish up a gully slanting right.

The following route climbs the top half of *The Primordial Soup Kitchen*, gaining the foot of 'the prominent corner-crack' from the right. It is pitch 2 of *Savage*. The start of *Soup Kitchen* is an obvious direct start to *Savage* and had been climbed the previous week by Nisbet/Cunningham who mistakenly attempted the left side of the monolith and failed 2m below its top. The direct start is hard but good climbing and the combination should ultimately give a better route.

– *Savage*

80m, GRADE V (6)(8)(6)(2)

G. Taylor, R. Anderson (Alt), 31st January, 1988.

Climbs the obvious monolith on the wall to the right of *Neanderthal* gained from the right to left trending rampline of *Barracuda*, as for that route.

1. 20m. Follow the rampline leftwards past the belay of *Barracuda* awkward belay at the foot of the monolith.

2. 12m. Climb the rightside of the monolith to belay on its top.

3. 48m. Climb stepped walls and grooves directly above the belay to traverse right and around the buttress crest to gain a shallow groove. Climb the groove then the rib just to the left of the *Barracuda* steepening to step right and finish as for that route, belay at the chockstone a little higher.

– *Moonlighting*

120m, GRADE V (5)(7)(3)

R. Anderson, G. Taylor (Alt), N. West, 27th January, 1988.

Takes an obvious line immediately to the right of *Pterodactyl* is up that route's upper gully/chimney fault. Belay at the top of the bay.

1. 33m. Gain and climb the obvious grooveline to belay at a wall on a ledge.

2. 33m. Step left and climb up to the obvious steep flakeline. Pull in to the fault at the back of the flake and climb to its top and continue up leftwards to the edge overlooking *Pterodactyl*. Up and right to climb a shallow groove to belay at a short wall.

3. 55-65m. Move into the gully/chimney fault of *Pterodactyl* and follow this easily to the top. This gully, in fact called *Moonlight Gully*, is all the more appreciated when climbed by moonlight!

**GEARRAONACH, North Face – Chimney and Face Route**

R. Anderson, J. Naismith, R. Milne, 7th February, 1988. 135m, GRADE V (5)(6)(5)(7)

Follows the summer line but takes the logical continuation above the terrace. Start in the obvious shallow gully formed between the main crag and the turf face on the left. Climb the gully easily to beneath roof and traverse ledge leftwards around an edge to belay.

1. 35m. Heathery ground, climb up slightly left then back right to follow a ramp above the belay leading to a shallow gully and a belay below a large recess.

2. 45m. Climb across the rib on the right to enter the narrow chimney and follow this past a steepening with a constriction to another steepening immediately above which is the belay.

3. 20m. Continue up the chimney to the terrace.
4. 35m. Above is a vague left to right trending groove/fault, move left to gain this and follow it to just below the top where it bulges. Move across rightwards and up past a tiny sapling to reach easier ground leading up leftwards to above the fault then up and right to a tree belay. Easy ground up then leftwards leads one to the small cairn at the top of the zig-zags in about 80m.

### STOB COIRE NAN LOCHAIN, North Buttress

Between *Evening Citizen* (the groove left of the big roof of *Fawlty Towers*) are two grooves. In the past, the larger left-hand corner groove has been assumed to be *East Face Route* and the right-hand groove is taken by the summer route *Intruder*. Since the left-hand groove climbed direct is at least Hard Very Severe and highly dangerous, it seems likely that *East Face Route* and *Intruder* coincide somewhat. The following two winter routes, however, do not coincide and are greatly superior to their loose summer counterparts.

— *Para Andy* 90m, Very Severe

A. Cunningham, A. Nisbet. 16th June, 1987.

As mentioned above, the first section may coincide with *East Face Route*. Climb directly to the base of the big groove right of the big roof (*Fawlty Towers*)—35m. Climb the groove for about 6m until a traverse left leads to a flake-crack. Climb this and move left to gain a ledge on the front face above the big roof. Climb a crackline in the centre of the face to reach the level crest (45m). Continue to the plateau.

— *Winter* GRADE V

A. Cunningham, A. Nisbet, A. Newton. 8th January, 1988.

Notable for some sensational exposure above the big roof. First pitch as for summer (35m). The ledge on the second pitch was reached by climbing higher up the groove until squeezed against the roof (some dangerous blocks), then a traverse left and mantleself. Belay on the ledge. The short wall immediately above was passed by going left and back right along a footledge to gain the crackline of summer. This was climbed until moves left led to a ledge and blocky arête up to the top of The Tower and level crest.

— *Intruder* 90m, GRADE V (2)(7)(6)(2)

R. Anderson, G. Nicoll (Alt). 14th February, 1988.

Start at the lowest rocks.

1. 15m. Move up leftwards passing the start of *Financial Times* and climb up to belay at the base of the groove.
2. 25m. Climb the groove to belay on the ledge at the foot of the *Financial Times* flake. There are 2 pegs left from another parties' attempt at the start of the crux.
3. 35m. Step up left and move round into a groove which is climbed to the top of a pinnacle (*Financial Times* comes into this groove where it deepens). Move up then rightwards to climb a short groove, move right and belay by the perched block as for *Crest Route*.
4. 25m. Easily to top.

### AONACH DUBH, Lower North East Nose — *The Chant of Jimmy Blacksmith*

M. McGowan, B. Campbell. 30m, E5 6a

Climbs the arête to the right of *Stormtrooper*, gained from the *Direct Start* of that route. Climb crack for a short way, then break out right to an undercut on the arête. Up wall to small horizontal (RP No. 3 in flake), then up into groove past a poor blade runner, continuing on to the arête. Make a hard move past a fingerlock (crux) then easily to finish on the ledge common to *Stormtrooper/Boomerang*. Finish up this.

**North Face – Against All Odds**

150m, GRADE VI

M. Fowler/C. Watts. 14th February, 1988.

This route climbs the prominent winter line just right of *Ossian's Cave*. (Between the summer routes *Kuf* and *Fingal's Chimney*).

Excellent and very hard climbing. Start just left of the weakness at a tree.

1. 30m. Move up rightwards and tension to a bendy sapling in the fault line. Climb the overhanging fault on tufts to a niche at 25m. Exit R. and move up to an in situ nut belay.

2. 30m. Surmount a short wall on the R. and the next overhang in the corner. Continue on tufts just R. of the corner line to gain a ramp coming up from the R. (from the base of the chimney pitch of *Fingal's Chimney*). Continue for 10m to a ledge.

3. 30m. Above is a very steep section with minimal tufts. Climb up on ice smears and tufts R. of the wide crack until beneath the main overhanging section. On the FA 3 pegs were used to reach the next tufts which led steeply to snow. Move up to belay at the foot of a snow filled chimney slanting up to the L.

4. 45m. Climb steep thin ice and tufts (in the line of the lower pitches) with little protection to less continuous difficulties and a snow slope ending 16m below *Pleasant Terrace*.

5. 15m. A convenient ramp on the L. gives access to the L. end of *Pleasant Terrace*.

Easy slopes on the L. lead to open slopes or descend *Pleasant Terrace*.

**– Fall Out**

140m, GRADE VI (3)(7)(7)(7)(4)

G. Taylor, R. Anderson (Alt). 23rd January, 1988.

Follows the summer line. Directly above the right hand side of *Pleasant Terrace* is an obvious deep gully/chimney capped by chokestones, this is *Rabbits Hole*, just to the right is the open left facing corner groove of *Stock* and just right of this is a prow of rock split by a narrow chimney. This is the line of *Fall Out*. Start directly below the chimney at the foot of *Deep Gash Gully*.

1. 30m. Climb up a corner and short wall to belay just right of the chimney.

2. 25m. Move left and climb the chimney to belay beneath a huge chokestone.

3. 25m. Continue in the chimney to a good ledge.

4. 20m. Move right along the ledge and up to the base of another chimney, it would be better to belay here, climb the chimney and belay at the base of a short chimney crack.

5. 40m. The summer line climbs the short chimney crack but instead go up and left to easier ground following this back rightwards above the belay to climb grooves and short walls to a ledge.

Move up leftwards to easy ground.

**West Face of Aonach Dubh, E. Buttress – Salome**

26m, E5 6a

K. Howett, G. Latter. August, 1987.

A useful alternative first pitch to *Prophet of Purism*, following a more direct line up the left side of the awesomely steep wall, close to the left arête. Start on the large platform just above the Rowan tree below the wall, where a large flake sits at the base of the route. Step off the flake and follow two thin parallel cracks running vertically up the wall until forced to make a thin move out left to an obvious diagonal handrail. Follow this left (F No. 2 placement halfway along) and make some committing moves to gain large flakes where the handrail fades. Gain the recess up on the right and exit directly upwards on poor rock and poor protection until an impass is reached. Move diagonally left to the arête and belay at the base of the large flake on *The Big Top*, as for *Prophet*. From here either finish up *Prophet of Purism* or *The Big Top*.



**The Bendy**

This is the steep wall overlooking the pool where the River Coe changes direction shortly before forming The Meeting of the Three Waters. It is very sheltered, fast drying, and must be one of the most accessible crags in the Highlands, being only a minute (downhill) from the road. From Allt-na Reigh, descend either the right bank of the stream or continue along the top and abseil in from one of the trees (fixed sling and belay ring on top of the tree above *Roaring Silence*).

After prolonged wet spells, the bottom section of the routes are often saturated from the spray from the waterfall, but the routes remain climbable under such conditions.

On first appearances the crag is smooth and apparently holdless, split into two adjoining walls by a vegetated groove/ramp. The right wall is just off the vertical, whilst the left gently overhangs.

– *The Roaring Silence*

20m, E4 6a \*\*

K. Howett, M. Charlton. 7th April, 1987.

The best pitch on the crag, giving well protected climbing up a series of thin incipient cracks running up the left edge of the crag. Start below the left end of a long ledge system at 6m. Up past a good sidepull on the left to gain good holds at the left end of the ledge. Step right and direct up wall past a bulge to eventually reach good friend placement (No. ½ or 1) in diagonal crack on left. Pull over second bulge rightwards to a good stopping place and finish up a short technical wall.

– *Quietly Burning*

25m, E4 6a \*

G. Latter. 10th June, 1987.

A slightly eliminate line up the centre of the left-hand wall. Start as for *In Seine* and follow it to ledge. Climb the thin crack directly above past a jammed nut until forced right on good holds to join *In Seine* just below the small triangular niche. Pull up and left through the bulge to a hollow sounding spike. Launch directly up the head-wall above (RP No. 5 halfway up) to good holds just below the top.

– *In Seine*

25m, E3 5c

M. Charlton, K. Howett. 8th April, 1987.

Climbs an obvious natural line up the right hand side of the left-hand wall. Strenuous and well protected, on good holds. Start at the base of the central vegetated ramp. Up this for a few feet, then break out left and up a thin crackline to gain the right hand side of the long ledge system. Step right and up the wall on good holds to reach a good triangular niche. Move diagonally right across the wall to good holds beneath an arching overlap. Pull over this slightly leftwards to finish past a good spike just below the top.

– *Virgin Waters*

20m, E3 + 5c \*

K. Howett, M. Charlton. 7th April, 1987.

The thin vertical crack up the left side of the right-hand wall. Start at a broken, uncleaned flake in the centre of the wall. Attain a standing position on top of the flake, then directly above on good holds to reach a tiny spike runner. Move obliquely up and right from here (thin) to gain better holds which lead to the top.

– *Cockleshell Journey*

25m, E3 5c \*

K. Howett, M. Charlton. 6th April, 1987.

Follows the crescent-shaped crackline at the right side of the wall, gained by a crucial traverse from the start of the previous route. From the top of the flake, traverse hard right to a ledge below the crack. Make a long reach to place protection above, then follow the crack and pull out left on good holds to a jugular finish.



**Allt Doire-Bheith**

The 'hidden' gorge on the lower slopes of **Beinn Fhada** above the Meeting of the Three Waters. The fastest approach is direct, parking where the old road leaves the A82 a few hundred metres West of The Study. Approximately 10 minutes.

The crags are numerous, the largest a long slabby wall split by an obvious crackline in the centre, with a further broken diagonal crack system and line of roofs left of this.

The crackline gives a good well protected pitch of about 20m at VS/HVS 5a to a belay right on the edge.

*— Smouldering*

25m, E3/46a \*

G. Latter. 16th June, 1987.

Start to the right of the central crack, just left of a steep smooth slab. Up to good footholds and undercuts, pull right on to slab with difficulty and continue boldly to twin breaks. Step right at the break and up to a diagonal line of holds and a good nut crack. Pull out slightly right and up to finish.

*— Sweltering*

20m, E2/35c \*

G. Latter, P. Farrel. 19th July, 1987.

A direct line through the roof at its widest point to the left of the VS crack. Climb an easy stepped corner and up to roof. Undercut this leftwards to good holds. Step right round the bulge and make a long reach to the next break. Climb directly to the top.

**Note:** A further rope is required to facilitate a satisfactory belay to the boulders far back.

*— Don't Talk To Strangers*

12m, E45c

FA details not supplied

A line just right of *The Smouldering*. On the first ascent the lower section of the crag was avoided by an abseil into the obvious break. The start of *The Smouldering*, since cleaned, may now provide a more logical approach. From the break, climb straight up for 3m to runner (R No. 4 in horizontal). Left to a friable incut, mantle and reach left again to a sidepull. Direct to a good finger ledge (crux), and finish with a long reach for good holds.

**GLENCOE NOTES**

**Great Gully Buttress, East Face:** M. Hamilton and K. Spence note that they climbed *Direct Route* in winter, 1979. This pre-dates the ascent in SMCJ, 1986, p. 340.

**Beinn a'Bheithir, Sgorr Dhonuill:** A. Clarke, P. Yardley note that they climbed the steep buttress in the centre of the crag situated at 046 563 on the frontal face of the northern spur. 90m, GRADE III/IV, 21st January, 1988.

**SOUTHERN HIGHLANDS**

This area will be included in the new Crocket/Walker guide, to be published late autumn. Routes are also included here for completeness.

**BRIDGE OF ORCHY HILLS, Meall Buidhe**

See SMCJ, 1984, p. 67 for a full description of the cliffs.

*— Echo Edge*

135m, GRADE II/III

G. E. Little. 12th December, 1987.

Climb the edge formed by the right hand retaining wall of *Forked Gully* and the main buttress on the right. The middle section is the best.

– *Voice Beyond* 155m, GRADE III/IV

G. E. Little. 28th February, 1988.

Climb the diagonal gully of *Mortal Coil* but instead of moving right ascend directly up easy snowfield to a bay in the face above. Climb the fine, steep, 25m ice pitch and more broken ground above.

– *Rambling* 80m, GRADE II

G. E. Little. 12th December, 1987.

In the centre of the lower long buttress a slight ramp line can be seen angling from right to left (immediately left of a discontinuous ice fall). It gives an exposed snow climb.

– *Spirit Level* 90m, GRADE III

G. E. Little. 12th December, 1987.

Start at the same point as *Rambling*. Climb diagonally right to a bay below roof capped corner. Move left and climb steep groove and continuation above, to a leftwards trending ramp, which leads to the top.

**Beinn Achaladair**

From the Beinn Achaladair/Meall Buidhe col, north-facing crags extend westward into Beinn Achaladair's eastern corrie. The most obvious feature is a rock rib, low down near the eastern end, with a distinctive clean, cracked, left-retaining wall.

– *Medium Groove* 150m, GRADE II

G. E. Little. 12th December, 1987.

About thirty metres left of the obvious rock rib is a thin groove, widening into a gully higher up. Climb it directly with two chockstone constrictions (GRADE I if these are banked over).

– *Manifestation* 160m, GRADE III

G. E. Little. 12th December, 1987.

Immediately left of the obvious rock rib is a slabby corner. Ascend this to steepening rock, move slightly left, climb up, then move back right. Climb a steep groove, on the same alignment as the corner below, to gain more broken ground. Up this to the top.

– *Premonition* 65m, GRADE IV

G. E. Little. 28th February, 1988.

Near the West end of the crags flanking the North side of Beinn Achaladair's lower East ridge, just before a little col, is a steep, tower-like, buttress. Climb it by a central line with a little snow arête to finish. Sustained.

– *Apprehension* 65m, GRADE III/IV

G. E. Little. 28th February, 1988.

This route takes the open, icy corner formed by the left flank of the 'tower' and the slabby face on the left. It is often overhung by a large cornice!

– *Redemption* 140m, GRADE II

G. E. Little. 28th February, 1988.

The central part of these crags lies back offering several routes around GRADE II with much variation possible. This route starts just right of the lowest rocks and climbs a short steep corner to gain a hidden groove. Higher up the groove a ramp leads left on to easy snow and thence the top.

**BEINN AN DOTHAI DH, North-east Coire – Two Step Arête** 160m, GRADE III  
C. D. Grant, C. Stead. 11th January, 1987.

This arête starts on the right wall of *West Gully* below its narrowing and joins the buttress of *The Skraeling*.

Climb the arête to the top of the first step and continue, turning a steep wall on the left to the buttress top.

(Ed. note. This route sounds like *Stairway to Heaven*, first climbed by Evans & Kay in 1982, and repeated this winter while researching for the new guide).

**Creag Coire an Dothaidh – Lucifer Rising** 165m, GRADE V  
K. V. Crocket, G. McEwan, A. Walker, 13th March, 1988.

This mixed route climbs the steep central face of the buttress, starting at the lowest rocks. Some 20m right is the left-sloping first pitch of *B.O. Buttress*. Good and intricate route-finding.

Climb to peg belay below small roof on left wall of shallow scoop (30m). Go down 3m and traverse small ledge left (exposed). Now climb directly up steep rib via shallow corners and small turf ledges to peg belay on wall (sustained, 40m). Traverse left and climb short, deep chimney to belay above. The next pitch breaks through roofs above at their left end. Either climb slabs (if sufficiently iced), or move hard left along an exposed ledge to belay then back up and right to gain same point at left end of roofs, with belay above and right on easier-angled terrace crossing face. The final, easier tier of rock lies above, and offers a choice of finishes up grooves and corners. On this ascent darkness suggested a left traverse in three pitches, the final one crossing an exposed barrier pitch to gain the upper, easy snow ramp of *The Flasher*.

### BEINN DORAIN, Creag nan Socath

The name Creag nan Socath is suggested for the previously unnamed crag on the South side of Coire an Dothaidh (NN 332 397). *Second Coming* and *The Promised Land* (SMCJ, 1987) are on this crag. See Anderson/Latter supplement for older routes.

– *False Rumour Gully* 60m, GRADE IV  
G. E. Little, R. Reid, 12th February, 1988.

At the extreme left of the crag is a gully, 'rumoured to have been climbed at GRADE II' – see Anderson/Latter guide. This is highly unlikely. The gully starts with a long steep ice pitch. Two short pitches above lead on to easy snow.

– *The Glass Bead Game* 120m, GRADE V  
R. Carchie, K. V. Crocket, R. Duncan, G. McEwan, A. Walker. 13th December 1987.

At the left end of the cliff is a short, steep gully. Start at right end of wide ledge running out right from below gully. Climb corner, pull out left and go up groove to ledge and belay. Step left on to edge then up and left to ledge and block belay. Step on to slabby wall directly above block, make rising traverse right, aiming for small spike right of steep wall. Gain slab above spike and belay above, sustained and technical. Go right passing corner to gain ramp. Follow this to short, vertical chimney. Climb chimney over roof to belay above. Easy ground to top.

– *Messiah* 88m, GRADE VI  
G. E. Little, R. Reid (Alt). 28th January, 1988.

The right hand side of this crag (right of *Second Coming*) is extremely steep and ledgeless. The only obvious flaw is an open corner, low down, leading to a thin groove. This is the line of the route.

Climb the corner to a niche below overhanging rock. Move up and hand traverse sharp left to below a groove. Gain this and up to a small ledge 32m. Climb short corner then move directly up to the base of a vertical, ice filled, groove 11m (linking these two pitches together will cause serious rope drag). Ascend the ice filled groove, into continuation gully above and thence to the top 45m.

Although short, this is a superb, sustained and technical route.

**Beinn Udlaidh – The Corner**

100m, GRADE III/IV

H. Bennet, J. Bennet (Alt). 17th January, 1987.

Takes a corner in the buttress formed between *Greeneyes* and *Ramshead Gully*.1. Start up *Ramshead Gully* and then take the obvious shelf out left on to the centre of the buttress.

2. Climb the corner above. It consists of three short walls.

3. Continue up the narrowing buttress; belay near top.

4. A large cornice was passed on the left.

**ARROCHAR, The Cobbler, North Peak – The Mog**

30m, Hard Severe

W. Hood, B. Williamson. 13th September, 1986.

Takes the gangway/ramp between *Gimcrack* and *Spinal Rib* to an overhang which is climbed on the left edge. Probably climbed previously, but worthwhile.**Creag Tharsuinn, Sugach Buttress – Route Sinister** 150m, GRADE III/IV

C. Campbell, K. V. Crockett. December, 1986.

Start just left of the lowest rocks and climb a heathery groove to terrace as for Garrick's Route. Go left along the terrace and climb up and left on frozen turf and slabby rocks for two pitches to belay below a steep wall on the edge of the deep gully (old ring peg). Using jammed pick in crack above gain hanging slab and move up and right (crux); continue up to belay next to gully. Move left and climb final pitch in gully to reach terrace at top of buttress (as on this ascent), or continue easily up buttress to top. Descend left down terrace.

**Creag Liath – Aye-Up Youth**

20m, E2 5c

C. Moody, A. Smith. 4th October, 1987.

Climbs the crack left of *Hand-Out Crack*. Up poor flakes to *Farewell*, then follow the crack. Very good.**Note:** *Hand-Out Crack* has been cleaned and said to be E1 5b.**Beinn an Lochain, Loch Restil Face – Bufo**

250m, GRADE IV

T. Redfern, M. Leyland (Alt). 16th February, 1986.

On the buttress below and to the right of the obvious diagonal rake which rises left to right across the whole face. Start in a corner below a large obvious ice slab, to the right of *Toad* and higher up, in a rightwards-trending snow gully.

The steep ice slab to the left of the corner and the wall directly above are climbed in two pitches (30m, 12m) to easy snow slopes (this is the main climbing and escape is now possible). Follow slopes for 100m, trending right and passing occasional ice steps, to foot of upper buttress.

A short steep icefall (10m) leads to mixed ground and the N.E. Ridge.

**GLEN CROE**

Approaching from Arrochar, a fair number of small, richly pocketed crags can be seen dotted over the hillside on the North (right-hand) side of the road about a mile beyond the camp site at Ardgarten. Park at the East Kilbridge MC hut and approach directly from a few hundred yards along the old road.

**Upper Crag** is the most prominent, about ten minutes from the road, defined as an overhanging buttress, clearly visible on the skyline when driving up towards the Rest and be Thankful. Almost directly below is situated **Middle Crag**, much nearer the road, with the **Approach Walls** running up the hillside, to the left of a path/stream.

**Lower Crag**

The leftmost of the lower crags, facing the road, lies down and left of **Middle Crag**, and hosts three short routes.

— *Cluer's Clue* 8m, 5c

Climb the blunt arête at the lowest point of the crag and then its right wall.  
There is a narrow roof further along.

— *Shirley* 10m, 5a

Climb a crack left of the roof then straight to top.

— *Under Arrest* 10m, 5a

Climb around roof then straight to top.

### Approach Walls

The short rocks running up the hillside on the way to **Middle Crag**.

— *Smee Merchant* 16m, HVS 4c

Follow left to right trending scoops originating from just left of short wide crack.

— *The Handrail Effect* 8m, E1 5c

The right to left line of pockets just right of the wide crack.

— *The Pocket Poseur* 8m, HVS 5a

Climb directly up the centre of the wall on pockets.

### Middle Crag

Descriptions are only available for the more recent routes. See diagram for location of other routes.

— *Pockets of Excellence* 20m, E4 6a \*\*

Follows an intricate line of small pockets up the bulging wall to the right of the central grooveline. Start just right of the grooveline, beneath a ledge.

Follow line of pockets which lead up to the base of a shallow rightward sloping handrail (PR). From the top of this, make some hard moves to reach a large inset pocket and PR above. The original route pulled up and left from here to finish directly. The right-hand finish, *Buckets of Smee*, has become the normal way of doing the route. From the second PR pull directly up to gain a line of large pockets which lead rightwards.

— *The Cost of Living* 20m, E2 6a \*

A well-protected problematic start leads to easier, poorly protected climbing up the broken wall just right of the centre of the crag.

Start just right of *Roadman's Crack*, at a pocket in the bulge. Climb over this directly (sling on PR over bulge) and up wall trending rightwards past a break to finish.

### Little Rock

This micro-crag (or overgrown boulder) lies across the flat marshy ground, above **Middle Crag** and down and right of **Upper Crag**.

— *Cadbury's* 10m, HVS 5a

The flake. Climb the unprotected sharp defined edge of the flake.

### Upper Crag

The best of the crags so far climbed upon on the lower slopes of the hillside, this severely overhung crag offers a good selection of fine contrasting pitches. It lies almost directly behind **Middle Crag**, about five minutes up the hillside, with several largish boulders around the foot of the crag.

- *Zig-Zag*

10m, VD

The crag is bounded on the left by a cracked slab. Start up the slope a little and climb the crack.

- *Outside Edge*

10m, HVS 4c

Climbs the clean right edge of the slab direct, past a situ thread runner near the top.

- *All Heroes Die Young*

20m, E3 6a \*\*

The slab at the left end of the crag contours round to form a slightly impending wall on the front face. This route follows a line of shallow grooves near the left edge. Start at a thin crack. Follow this to a small ledge, PR, then up shallow bulging runnel passing a further PR and fixed thread runner to pull blindly on to the rounded slab at top.

- *Ledgisation*

23m, E2 5c

Climbs the initial roof of *The Hooded Groove* before breaking out left on to the broken left arête of the groove. Pull over the initial roof (crux) then directly up the left edge of the groove, surmounting bulge at top.

- *The Hooded Groove*

23m, E2 5c \*\*

Spectacular climbing, up the large open groove which cleaves the main bulk of the crag in two. Direct entry and exit from the relatively straightforward groove is barred by two, two metre roofs. Breach the widest part of the initial roof by a crack. Easily up the groove, and layback round the right end of the capping roof to finish.

- *Crossover*

30m, HVS 5a

A leftward trending diagonal line, avoiding the roofs of *The Hooded Groove*. Start to the right of that route. Climb up and left into the groove, climb it for 8m, move left and finish left around the main overhang.

- *The Edge Of Insanity*

23m, E4 - 5c \*

The steep right edge of *The Hooded Groove*, with some finely situated climbing in its upper reaches. Start beneath a prominent block just right of *The Hooded Groove*. Direct to this, then up to ledge on left. Move on to second smaller ledge on right (runners in flake - wobbly!) and stand on this. (Rock No. 7 placement in shallow pocket out on right). Make a longish reach straight up for good quartz pockets, then swing right on to a giant jug before strolling up the final easy section.

In the centre of the crag are twin overhanging cracks leading into a niche below a grassy bay.

- *Short Sharp Shock*

26m, E4 6a \*\*

The left-hand crack. Make some awkward moves to become established in the crack, and follow it on good positive fingerlocks to a rest just below the top. Pull over on good holds and easily up slabby crack above.

- *Double Clutching*

26m, E3 6a \*

The right-hand crack. Gain the crack with a long reach and climb it to a sharp pull on to ledge at its top. Easily up slabby crack to finish.

- *Prime Ape*

13m, E3 6a/b

The short bulging wall midway between *Double Clutching* and *Fear*, past a poor PR. Move right to finish as for *Fear*.

- *Fear*

13m, E1 5a

Right of the twin cracks is a short vague crack leading to broken ground. Climb this.

— *Breakdance* 10m, E3 6a

A line up the short wall left of the right-facing corner at the right end of the crag. The crux is at the top, and runners were placed in the corner itself on all the ascents thus far.

— *Cosmic Corner* 10m, S

The wide crack in the right facing corner at the right end of the crag.

Two short routes have been recorded on the boulder down on the left of the main crag. Both have a common start.

— *Quartz Slab* 10m, E2 5b

Follow a line just left of the crack to a hanging and finish up this.

— *Quartz Crack* 12m, E1 5b

Obvious crack leading out right.

Down and right of the main crag is a large boulder with a steep frontal face and a prominent overhung right arête.

— *The Sharp Kiss* 13m, E3 6b

A line up the left side of the frontal face. Start at the bottom left of the wall at a large flat boulder. Pull right and up to a good horizontal break. Through the bulge above with difficulty to finish up easy slab. 3 PR's and 1 TR in situ.

**Note:** several of the pegs are of dubious worth, and some adequate natural protection exists.

### So Far Away Buttress

The largest crag up and right of **Upper Crag**, split by a prominent diagonal break running from right to left with a band of roofs parallel to and above the break.

— *Aftershock* 33m, E3 5c \*

Climb the left edge of the buttress to join *Give Us A Break* where it moves into the gully. Pull through the bulge above on sidepulls and continue to the obvious niche in the horizontal break. Traverse right along the break until in the centre of the crag and climb direct past a poor tied-off PR to top.

— *Give Us A Break* 33m, E1 5b \*

This route follows the diagonal break. Start below the right-hand end of this, gain the break and follow it until possible to move into the gully. Nut belay above. Scrambling remains.

### Independence Crag

At the same height as **Upper Crag** on the far right lies a bulging wall containing a prominent deep hanging crack on its right side.

— *New Position* 16m, E2 5c \*

The strenuous, well protected crack.

### Great Slab

A slabby buttress some distance up and right of **So Far Away Buttress**.

— *Fearless* 33m, HVS4c

Ascends the slightly cleaner bulging rib up the centre.

— *The Ladder* 30m, HS 4b

Slab left of the heathery gully.

## FIRST ASCENTS

## GLEN CROE

## 1985

Feb 17	<i>Pockets of Excellence</i>	G. Latter
Feb 17	<i>Fear/Cosmic Corner</i>	G. Latter (solo)
July 31	<i>Give Us A Break</i>	G. Latter, M. Fowler
Aug 5	<i>Buckets of Smee</i>	C. Gilchrist, G. Latter
Aug 5	<i>Double Clutching</i>	G. Latter, C. Gilchrist

## 1986

April 13	<i>The Cost Of Living/Breakdance</i>	D. Griffiths, C. Bell
July	<i>Short Sharp Shock</i>	R. Bruce (Previously climbed on aid, then led cleanly). Now several clean on-sight leads (first M. Hamilton, Feb. 1987). Consensus E4 6a.
July	<i>Quartz Crack</i>	J. Christie, R. Bruce
July	<i>Quartz Slab</i>	R. Bruce, J. Christie
Aug 12	<i>Outside Edge</i>	D. Griffiths, C. Bell
Sept 13	<i>Cadbury's</i>	I. Griffiths, C. Bell
Sept 13	<i>All Heroes Die Young</i>	D. Griffiths
Sept 13	<i>The Smee Merchant</i>	D. Griffiths (solo)
Sept 13	<i>The Handrail Effect</i>	D. Griffiths, C. Bell
Sept 14	<i>New Position</i>	D. Griffiths, C. Bell
Sept 14	<i>The Pocket Poseur</i>	D. Griffiths (solo)
Oct 4	<i>Ledgisation</i>	D. Griffiths, C. Bell
Dec 23	<i>Prime Ape</i>	D. Griffiths

## 1987

Apr 13	<i>The Edge of Insanity</i>	D. Griffiths
May 2	<i>Aftershock</i>	D. Griffiths
May 30	<i>Fearless/The Ladder</i>	D. Griffiths (solo)
June 7	<i>The Edge of Insanity</i>	G. Latter (Bolt and peg removed prior to ascent).
July 13	<i>The Sharp Kiss</i>	D. Griffiths

## LOCH LOMOND, Corn na Muice (1:25000 name; at NS 385 951)

The routes are on the south side of a headland on the east bank of Loch Lomond, 5km north of Balmaha and 1km south of the Salloch Bay car park. The crag reaches a maximum height of 45m and consists of vegetated slabs on the left, a central ridge (the bottom 12m of which is steep and split by a mossy crack) and cleaner slabs on the right with a small steep headwall. The rock is gritty and fairly rough, though mossy and lichenous, and the holds are often small flakes. The rock is sound. The routes are all in the lower grades, and there is probably little scope for hard climbs without extensive gardening. They were climbed on two visits; *Sunset Ridge*, *Salloch Slab* and the top part of *Twilight Slab* on 22 July 1987, and the bottom of *Twilight Slab* and *Bat Flake* (both of which had been cleaned by abseil) on 2 Sept. 1987.

Routes by N. Milton and friends.

The proximity of this crag to Glasgow, and its excellent setting in the loch-side woods, makes it a very pleasant place for an evening visit, though the midges can be very bad.



— *Sallochy Slab* 40m, Very Difficult

On the right of the main slabs (right of the central ridge) is a prominent crack 3m up. Reach this from below, or start 5m to the left and tiptoe along flakes to the same point. Step right into a scoop, then head right and up the edge of the fine clean slabs above. Good climbing, low in the grade, but poor protection.

— *Twilight Slab* 40m, Mild VS 4c

Start left of *Sallochy Slab*. Climb to a prominent downward-pointing flake at 6m, then on to reach easy mossy slabs leading to the headwall, which is climbed direct. Fairly well protected.

— *Sunset Ridge* 40m, Severe

The central ridge. Start just right of the wide crack, climb up right to the arête then left to the tree. Climb the crack until the ridge can be gained, then follow this to the top (about V. Diff from this point, and extremely pleasant). Well protected.

— *The Bat Flake* 45m, VS 4c

Start left of *Sunset Ridge*, by a large fallen block, below a clean smooth slab. Climb the rib right of the smooth slab. Grassy ledges lead to a belay at 21m next to a flake with a resident bat. Care should be taken not to disturb the bat. Easier slabs lead to the top. Sustained and poorly protected on the bottom 12m, and rather overgrown towards the top.

**KILLIN, Meall nan Tarmachachan, Creag an Lochain — The Dambusters**

A. Fraser and G. Leslie. 2nd March 1986. 100m, GRADE III

At the right-hand side of the south face (i.e. facing the dam) there is a very prominent fully sloping rightwards. This is the route, it is steep and well protected.

**Cam Chreag — Maxwell's Hammer**

140m, GRADE III

R. Reid and D. Wastell. 23rd February 1996

Start just left of *Easy Gully*. Climb short ice pitch to *Easy Gully* crossing this to snow bay below shallow groove (30m). Follow groove via steep ice pitch and ramp. Belay on rib on left (35m). Steep snow covered rocks lead up and right (40m). Continue directly to apex of crag via another ice pitch (35m).



1. Chimney One I/II 60m
2. Chimney Two I/II 80m
3. Maxwell's Hammer III 140m
4. Cam Gully I 160m
5. Easy Gully -
6. ? I/II 100m
7. ? I/II 100m

**CAM CHREAG** (Meall Garbh SE face)  
(Sketch looking N.W.)  
OS Loch Tay sheet (51)  
NN 579383

**ARROCHAR NOTES****Creag Tharsuinn – Sugach Buttress**

The line of grooves close to the junction of the two faces of the buttress has been climbed. Start at the corner at the toe of the buttress, then follow the line of grooves up to a steepening where an upward left traverse leads to the pulpit. (*Pulpit Grooves*, VS 4c, 75m. A. and D. Walker, 1980).

**CENTRAL AND SOUTHERN SCOTLAND****WESTERN OUTCROPS, Craigmore – (Unnamed)**

E4 6a/b

M Hamilton.

The rib between *Curving Grooves* and *Daylight Robbery*, finishing by a short crack. Has been top-roped previously (by others).

– *Spinal Wall*

15m, E3 5c

D. Griffiths, C. Bell, 1986.

The wall left of *White Hope*, direct from ground.

– *Preliminary Exercise*

10m, E2 5c

D. Griffiths, C. Bell, 1986.

Overhanging twin cracks right of *White Streak*, without using pinnacle.

**Dunglas, West Face – Deviant**

S. Richardson, T. Prentice, 10th August 1987.

Climbs the very left and side of the wall between *The Ramp* and *Wall of Horrors*. Low in its grade. Start at the bottom of *The Ramp*.

1. 15m, 5b. Follow the left-slanting crack upto a cave. Traverse right across the horizontal break to a niche, then up and left to finish.

**East Face – Overlord**

30m, E1 5c

G. Little, 1982. – IPA; FFA. P. Linning, 1983.

This route takes the prominent nose formed by the junction between the East and the North faces.

Start 10m to the right of *Dunglas Corner*. Climb shattered rib into scoop and up to peg runner (in situ). Move left and up to bulging rock. Move up then right to gain corner crack. Wend through bulges, step right and up to belay.

**North Face – Bite Them Bequerels**

20m, E2

T. Prentice, S. Richardson, 10th August 1987.

An excellent route, high in its grade, which takes the smooth grey wall between *Nightmare* and the unclimbed flake crack mentioned in the Southern Outcrops Guide. Start beneath an obvious rock scar about 3m right of the flake crack.

1. 20m, 5c. Pull up on good holds to a ledge (peg runners on left), and make bold moves up and right across the wall to reach a left-slanting groove. Follow this to its end and up the wall above (2 peg runners). Traverse right on slabs until a break in the roofs above leads to a peg belay (in place).

**Ross Point Slate Quarry**

Situated on a promontory on the east side of Loch Lomond, near Glasgow University Field Research Station.

– *Crystal Junction*

10m, E4 6a

J. Christie, A. Kirk. May 1986.

Climbs overhanging arête facing boulder. Three in situ PRs. Three stars.

– *One Way Trip* 15m, E4 6a

J. Christie, A. Leary. May 1987.

Climbs *Crystal Junction* to first peg, then traverses right past two knifeblades to finish up corner on right.

– *Slug Death* 10m, E2 5b

J. Christie, A. Leary. May 1987.

Right-hand corner on wall. Two PRs.

**Auchinstarry Quarry – Surface Tension Direct** E5 6b

C. Gilchrist. March 1986.

Instead of pulling out left at two-thirds height, continue direct via a good hold 3m below the top (poor RP runner just below the finish). The climb is now totally independent, more sustained and the best in the quarry.

– *Stir Crazy* 12m, E1 5a

Climbs the wall right of *The Cub*.

– *Evening Wall*

The following route is on the upper-wall of the right-hand amphitheatre, which catches the evening light. The wall is characterised by a large white area and easily approached from above. (Several other routes in SMCJ, 1987).

– *Stool Pigeon* 12m, E2 6a

Climbs the wall immediately left of *Both Toes Burning*, using side runners in that route.

### **Craigbranceoch Rig (Glen Afton) NS 629 054**

A scattering of crags lie on the North West spur of this hill just north of the Afton reservoir. The most obvious feature is a smooth vertical 21m wall known as *Stayamrie*. It is split by a prominent curving crack (unclimbed).

– *Grass Roots* 30m, VS 4c

G. Little. 1977.

Start a few feet right of centre of smooth wall. Ascend a line of good holds, trending right, to a perched block. Surmount this with care, then follow awkward vegetated ramp and rock steps to finish.

– *Rehabilitation Route* 40m, VD

G. Little. 1977.

Lies on the buttress to the right of the smooth wall. Start to the left of the vague central mossy groove. Climb straight up on good holds, bypassing the overhang on the right. Move left then up edge to finish.

– *Two Plus Two* 35m, MS

R. Little. 1978.

Start a few feet right of mossy groove. Climb rib to perched block. Turn bulging rock above by a corner on the right.

– *Deception Slab* 30m, HVS 5a

G. Little. 1978.

A few hundred yards to the right of the smooth wall and slightly higher lies a prominent narrow slab. Climb this by a central line (sustained).

– *Raven Slab* 40m, HVS 5a

G. Little. 1978.

Above and to the left of the smooth wall lies a large slab. Climb this by a central line. Fine sustained climbing with little protection.

**EASTERN OUTCROPS, Rosyth Quarry – El Ricardo**

10m, E1 5b/c

D. Moffat, R. Baker. 26th March, 1986.

Start just left of *Route to Root*. Climb to a large flat hold and make a long reach to a poor flared jam and attain a standing position on the large flat hold. Up on small holds to *Route to Root* and finish as for that route.

**– Jagdhond**

10m, E2 5c

R. Howard, R. Baker. 28th October, 1985.

Left of *Serendipity* is a groove and wall. Ascend groove to niche, exit right and up on sidepulls and up to finish.

**North Queensferry Quarry – Dive, Dive, Dive** 12m, E3 6a

R. Howard, R. Baker. 15th March 1986.

The thin crack in the wall left of *The Boat*. Gain the pod in the crack strenuously and move right at break to holds up on right wall. Move left into crack and up to small ledge, step left and up past large ledge to finish.

**SOUTH-WEST OUTCROPS, Galloway Hills**

Many mountain crags in Galloway are subject to a voluntary ban, May to August, due to bird life.

**Craigencallie (NX 500784)**

Routes are by S. Aird, A. Plumb (varied) and described left to right.

**– The Shout**

35m, MS, 1984

From the lowest point of the slab, move up following the best rock to a suspect flake (possible belay). Good slab climbing leads to a long crack which is followed.

**– Secret Garden**

25m, VD, 1984

Start at the right-hand side of the slab, move right on to a ramp, up and left to finish (or straight up – 4b).

**– Talk to the Wind** 25m, HVS 5a, 1985

Takes a line 12m left of *Raven Seek Thy Brother*. Start at the groove, climb up to an ear-shaped feature. Up this to slab above. Follow to overhang. Move right then straight up (thin). Finish to right of final overlap.

**– Raven Seek Thy Brother** 45m, VS, 1985

Take the left-hand crack, over the bulge, move left on to the open slab, up this then return right to the crack. Follow crack to big ledge (35m, 4c). Continue up crack, move right, up wall to finish (10m, 4c).

**– The Screen**

55m, HVS, 1984

Start at middle of slab, move up then left to belay below overlap (10m, 4a). Climb over overlap, follow good holds to big ledge (25m, 4b). Climb the waterworn corner (crux). Go up smooth slab to finish up steep blocks (20m, 5a).

**– Walkabout**

30m, MS, 1985

Climb the buttress following a line slightly right of *The Scream* to the big ledge.

**GALLOWAY SEA CLIFFS****Meikle Ross, Dry Zawn – Pinko-subversive**

20m, Severe

A. Fraser, C. Robb. 11th April, 1987.

The short steep corner on the right-hand side of the zawn.

**Tides:**

At low water all of the cliffs can be easily reached by walking along the beach. However at high tide the main cliff and the area between caves 2 and 4 can only be reached by descending grassy ridges on the Easy Slabs (see map). Routes on the Promontory are accessible for around 2 hours either side of low tide.

**Other Notes:**

The rock at Monreith is similar to that of the other Galloway sea cliffs (i.e. Meikle Ross and Burrow Head) except that here the bedding planes are more horizontal and so, in general, the routes are more solid and have larger (sometimes huge!) holds. The routes are, on average, very steep and have a 'bigger' atmosphere than their lengths would suggest. Almost all areas between the routes described below are good for bouldering and traversing (an excellent long traverse, around 5b, lies between caves 1 and 2 (see map). Due to the flared and horizontal nature of the cracks Friends of all sizes are very useful for protecting the routes. Another point in favour of these cliffs is their relative lack of lichen compared to Burrow Head and The Ross. Nesting sea birds affect the area between Main Cliff and Easy Slabs and these should therefore be avoided between May and August (end).

**Routes:**

(a) **Main Cliff** – The routes are described from left to right (facing in, i.e. west to east). Main Cliff is obvious from the beach and starts after a prominent curved cave (cave 1 on map), approximately 100m from the start of the rocks, and lies directly behind a prominent pinnacle (see below). In the centre of the cliff lies a ramp line slanting up to the right. To the right of an obvious large groove the ramp becomes a roof at a slightly higher level. Two further grooves lead up to the slab beneath this roof. The first route starts at the central of the three grooves.

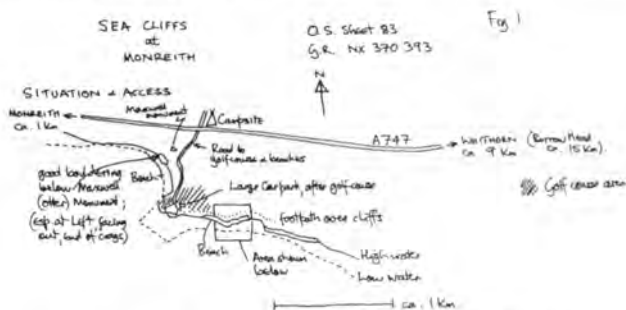
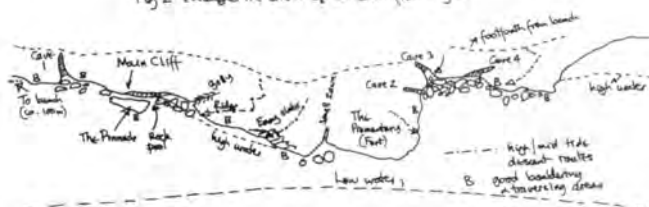


Fig. 1 shows access. Use golf course road (or public road to beach), there is simple parking space (under public toilets), at its end. Other than the bouldering area to the N (see map), the crags are reached by walking along the beautiful, sandy beach (indicated). Fig. 2 enlarges the small square area from Fig. 1.



– *The Big Dig*

35m, HVS4c/b

FA: S. Smith, F. Stevenson (alts). 5th September, 1987.

Climb the central groove or the arête just to its left and at its top follow the slab into the large groove which runs down from the left side of the roof. Traverse right across the slab under the roof and climb the awkward crack up the left side of some blocks to the stand. Continue to the right until a further short slab and arête leads to a grassy bay at the top.

– *Variation Start*: The large groove can be climbed all the way from the bottom giving a slightly less direct route of the same overall grade.

– *St Ninians Groove*

20m, HVS 5a

FA: F. Stevenson (solo). 14th September, 1987.

An alternative first pitch to the previous route. Climbs the right-hand groove and then the slab directly to the large blocks on the previous route. The overhang at around 8m being the crux.

**(b) The Pinnacle**

Lies in front of *Main Cliff* and is an obvious feature. It offers some of the best bouldering at Monreith. Particularly of note is the wall above the rock pool (see map, around 5b moving up and leftwards). The east facing overhanging wall around to the left offers some fine strenuous problems on large holds, the difficulty depending on how close to the arête you are (around 5a just to its left).

**(c) The Promontory**

Further to the east the crag becomes more vegetated until a large gully is reached. To the right of the gully rises a short steep wall (the top of which is a good scramble descent (exit at high tide). There are several short routes here, but they are not described since they are really just extended boulder problems. Further right again a series of easy angled slabs are reached (all around Moderate/Difficult standard) which are good for novices or as another mid-tide descent/exit route. Further to the east again around a corner a small zawn is reached. In its lower half it is composed of beautifully sea-sculptured grey rock and quartz veins and contains two cracks which are climbed by the following routes.

– *Hack Crack*

15m, VS4b/c

FA: F. Stevenson (solo). 15th May, 1987.

Climbs the obvious crack in the back of the zawn reached from the left corner by a lay-back move.

– *Do Barnacles Bite*

15m, HVS 5b

FA: F. Stevenson, A. Long. 16th July, 1987.

Climbs the striking slanting crack just right of *Hack Crack* joining that route at half height.

Between the small zawn and the tip of the promontory lies a steep wall around 15m high, liberally endowed with large jugs (and barnacles in the bottom 3m!). This has an obvious groove just left of centre. The following two routes lie between the small zawn and this groove.

– *Stingray*

VS, 4c

FA: F. Stevenson (solo). 15th May, 1987.

Start in the centre of the wall and climb up and left until an overlap is reached above the previous route. Pull over this (crux) to a large ledge. A variety of exits can be made from here.

– *Fireball XL 1.5*

VS 4b

FA: F. Stevenson (solo). 16th May, 1987.

Start as for the previous route and climb up and slightly rightwards to reach a right-facing groove at half height which is followed to the top.

*Variation Finish:* finishes up to the left from the bottom of the right-facing groove – large holds!

The main groove is taken by:

– *Soup Dragon*

HS 4b/c

FA: F. Stevenson (solo). 15th May, 1987.

Climb the barnacle covered wall direct to the groove (crux) and at its top traverse off to the right.

*Variation Start:* The groove can be reached from the left (from the start of the previous route).

– *Mobile-Bat*

VS, 4c/5a

FA: F. Stevenson (solo). 9th August 1987.

Climbs the next groove system around 3m to the right of the previous route. The groove first faces left (barnacle covered) and then after around half-height faces right.

– *Mobile-Kack*

VS, 4c

FA: F. Stevenson (solo). 16th May 1987.

To the right the wall becomes easy angled (a good quick descent route) and then leads northwards to two huge caves.

(d) **Cave 3**

The second of the two large caves to the right of the promontory. At high tide descent can be made down steep grass just to the east.

– *Iron-Age Crack*

18m, VD

FA: F. Stevenson (solo). 9th August 1987.

Follows the crack/groove out of the right hand side of the cave, finishing up the vegetated groove.

(e) **Cave 4**

Lies approximately 25m to the east (right) of **Cave 3** (see map). To the left of the cave entrance lies a very clean overhanging wall streaked with quartz veins. This leads into an obvious large hanging groove that is easily visible from the beach or the top of the promontory and is noticeable for its two yellow quartz 'patches.' The following excellent route follows this groove and the thinner hanging groove to its right.

– *Satori*

20m, E3 6a

FA: F. Stevenson (unseconded). 30th August 1987.

Follow the grey wall left of the cave to a large flat spike below the first overlap. Pull over this to the right to reach the large central groove. Follow this over the next overlap to a good resting place. Make a hard and sensational traverse out to the right to reach a good jug at the bottom of the thin hanging groove which is then climbed to the top. Spatial!

A direct finish up the central groove is an obvious line but is loose and so far unclimbed. Further east past a break in the cliffline lie many small buttresses and good bouldering areas. The only route climbed to date lies on an obvious red wall facing west and is visible from the promontory.

– *Jelly Fish*

15m, S 4a

FA: F. Stevenson (solo). 18th August, 1987.

The route follows the seaward arête of the red wall via an obvious series of flakes.

**Port William Sea Cliff (NX 325 457)**

The crag is about two miles north of Port William. Travelling northwards out of Port William on the A747 the main crag is visible as promontory just above the high water level. (Just past this there is a layby). The routes all lie on the south side of the promontory which has an undercut slab on the left terminating in an obvious corner on the right. (A thin crack towards the left end of the slab has had E3 6a scratched on the rock below it).

The routes are described from left to right.

– *That's Small for a Whale*

18m, S

F. Stevenson (solo). 1st August, 1987.

The left arête of the undercut slab. Start at a short groove then climb the arête, trending slightly rightwards at the top.

– *Too Cold to Chew*

16m, E3 6a

Andy Smith, Brian Davison, John Vlasto, F. Stevenson, 1st August, 1987.

The thin right hand crack on the undercut wall. Step off a large block to reach a hold, (difficult for the short) and climb the crack to a ledge. Continue with less difficulty to the top.

– *Snailey-Whaley*

15m, S

F. Stevenson, A. Smith, B. Davison, J. Vlaston, 1st August, 1987.

Climb the leftward trending crack in the right arête of the slab. Near the top step right to finish at the highest point.

– *Flubb*

15m, VS 4c

A. Smith, J. Vlasto, F. Stevenson, 1st August, 1987.

The corner at the right end of the crag.

– *A-Lubb*

15m, E1 5b

B. Davison, A. Smith, F. Stevenson, J. Vlasto, 1st August, 1987.

The arête to the right of *Flubb*. Side runner in that climb.– *The E-6 Process*

16m, E1 5b

FA: F. Stevenson (unseconded). 10th August, 1987.

Starts around 5m right of *A-Lubb*. The route is obvious from the fin-like protrusion running from half way up to the top of the route and the overhang at around 3m. Climb up to the centre of the overhang and pull over using a large jug over the lip. Move left and then back right to climb the groove on the left side of the fin.

The next slab around 100m to the north has four routes so far (all soloed on sight by F. Stevenson on 3rd September, 1987).

– *Smuggler's Grill*

10m, S

The obvious wide central crack with a very smooth looking slab to its right and a more broken buttress to its left. A tricky start.

– *Landmark*

10m, VS 4c

Climbs the centre of the slab past a peculiar wedged flake.

– *Cash'n Carry*

8m, VS 4c

The right hand side of the slab trending left to finish by *Landmark*.

There are metal stakes at the top of these routes (and one on the main crag) so these are not necessarily first ascents? (*The E-6 Process* almost certainly is though).



If included in a future guide it ought to be noted that there is some good bouldering to the south of the main routes, both on large boulders and small subsidiary slabs and buttresses. Short routes and bouldering has also been done on the roadside crags just to the north of the main area.

### Cock Inn Roadside Crag

Located on coast road. Port William 7 miles, Glenluce 6 miles. Described left to right. Routes by S. Aird, A. Plumb (varied), 1985/86.

– *Gorilla* 8m, HVS 5c

At left side of first overhang, use undercut to swing up and left. Gain arête, move to its right, then up to top. Good landing.

– *Jackdaw Crag* 8m, VS 5a

Take overhang direct to slab. Take thin crack to top.

– *Wee Pig* 10m, VS 4c

The steep wall with yellow lichen is climbed using the line of holds on its left.

– *Nay Sweat* 10m, S 4b

At cave, climb up on right to niche, move up and right to arête at top.

– *Fine Line* 8m, VS 5a

On the slab at the far right of the crag climb either up and left using small pockets or straight up the thin crack.

– *Secrets of the Coast* 20m, S 4a

Climb left side of boulder, moving out on to open face at three-quarters height.

### Portpatrick Sea Cliffs (west of Stranraer)

There is some excellent bouldering just north of the harbour as well as a small sea stack (around 500m north). The sea stack has been climbed by the obvious landward-facing groove system (14m, Severe) – old rusty peg just below summit.

There are also routes at Portpatrick Quarry.

## ARRAN

**BEINN NUIS, East Face – Gully 5** GRADE III

P. Craig, A. Walker. 21st February, 1987.

A good route with a short technical pitch at the bottom and a through route for connoisseurs at the top. Rock scenery and views are superb.

**A'CHIR, Coire Daingean – Boundary Ridge** GRADE III

F. McKie. 22nd December, 1986.

This ascent followed the summer line taking the chimney variation to pitch 4. The natural winter line is actually a turfy shelf below and left of the summer line, leading into the above-mentioned chimney.

– *Crack Climb* GRADE III

F. McKie and F. Thompson. 10th January, 1987.

The summer line is followed throughout.

## – Gully 7

GRADE II/III

F. McKie. 14th February, 1987.

From the foot of the gully take a shelf up along the left wall, followed by a chimney. Easy snow then leads to the top.

**CIR MHOR, South Face – Cubic Ridge**

GRADE III

G. A. McEwan and A. Walker. 30th January, 1988.

Interesting route finding with shortish hard steps leading to the top of the Shark's Fin. Two fine but easy pitches then lead to the top. Escapes possible to the left in places.

## – West Point

135m, E3/4

M. Charlton, K. Howett. June 1986.

Thin, poorly protected slab climbing, following a line midway between *West Flank Route* and *Sickle*. Start 3m left of *Sickle*. 1.10m, 4c. Go directly up the easy slab to belay on a ledge just left of the chimney of *Sickle*. (Block belay). 2.35m, 5c. Go up the edge of the left-hand chimney, palming its left arête until it veers right. Make committing moves left to a thin crack. Up this to roof. Left again into corner, over the roof easily to a belay. 3.45m, 5b. Follow the quartz intrusion rightwards to the arête and follow this to a belay below the impending upper wall. 4.45m, 4c. Finish up *West Flank Route*.

## – Insertion

E5 5c, 5a, 5c

M. Charlton, K. Howett. June 1986.

Alternative top pitch – from belay pull directly up steep wall via large rounded pockets (thread runner) to join normal route on arête.

## – Vanishing Point

Should be E4 6a, 5c (serious second pitch). Is said to make *Stirrup* pointless.

**GOATFELL, Coire Lan – Stacach Gully**

76m, GRADE II

W. Wallace. 1960's.

This route follows the gully which splits the *Stacach Buttress*. It is steep and may hold one ice pitch. It may well stay in condition for longer than other Arran winter climbs due to its location.

This ascent only came to light after the recording of an ascent in 1987.

**Arran – Winter Notes**

Ascents have been made by F. McKie of the great slab of ice which forms above the Meadow Face (II – climbable anywhere) and the watercourse draining the right hand side of the Main Rosa Slabs.

**Arran – Summer Notes****Rosa Pinnacle, West Face**

R. Cachrie, A. Walker, September 1987.

Variation to *Arctic Way* which goes right after the initial corner to another obvious corner, and climbs this and a slab above to belay (40m, 4b). Traverse hard left to the obvious rib, then up and left to a slanting crack to finish beside *Fourth Wall* on the terrace. (45m, 4b). Overall grade remains Very Severe.

(Possibly climbed before but superb and worth the mention).

**Cir Mhor, North-East Face – Beyond the Pale**

Described in the Anderson/Latter supplement, was climbed by C. Macadam and S. Steer (not C. M. and D. Austin).

**SKI DESCENTS****Northern Cairngorms, Coire an-t-Sneachda**

*Crotched Gully.* Normally there is a large unavoidable cornice. A rope was borrowed for this. The snow was fresh, wet and sticky – however, this is a superb descent but very serious.

The Coire has become increasingly popular particularly in the soft spring snow conditions during Easter 1988. *Jacobs Ladder*, *Aladdins Mirror*, *Central* and *Central Left Hand* have all seen a certain amount of traffic.

There have been accidents however, that clearly highlight the dangers involved in particular when the snow is firm or icy. A skier missed his first turn in *Jacobs Ladder* and fell the distance with consequent severe injuries. Sadly Dave Leitch was killed in a fall from the upper section of *Aladdin's Couloir/Mirror*.

**Creag an Leth-choin**

*South Gully.* This is a short gully running down from 1010 above *Lurchers Meadow*. It has a short steep section and provides an alternative approach to the Lairig Ghru and Braeriach plateau.

**An Garbh Choire**

There is some magnificent skiing to be had here but often with major problems at the cornice – the gullies in Garbh Coire Mor for instance are usually totally inaccessible.

**Coire Bhrochain**

There can be big cornices here too but for the descents recorded below there was no problem.

*West Gully.* Wide and steep at the top, narrowing further down.

*East Gully.* Wide and easy angled at the top with a steeper, narrow central section.

*Central Buttress Gully.* A very scenic descent curving down between Braeriach Pinnacle and the Black Pinnacle. The best in the coire.

All the above skied on névé.

**Sgor an Lochain Uaine**

*Angels Ridge.* Not a true descent of the ridge. The upper section was taken on the left (north west) side of the rocky final part of the ridge. A long shallow and open couloir was then taken running down to Lochain Uaine. A fine remote descent on névé.

**Ben Nevis**

*Tower Gully.* Completed at the second attempt. Has a serious feel on the steep open traverse under *Gardylloo Buttress*. Dangerous outrun above this point. Spring snow and surprisingly no cornice.

*No. 2 Gully.* The upper scarp slope and cornice were not skied. This descent was started some 30m down from the plateau. Soft slab.

**Glencoe**

*SC Gully.* Spring snow. Small cornice easily outflanked. Fine skiing, not too steep, in an impressive situation. Spoiled somewhat by an ice/waterfall pitch near the bottom. This was descended on crampons.

*NC Gully.* Spring snow. No cornice. There was a short icy step half way down.

**Fannichs – An Coileachain – Garbh Coire Mor**

*Central Gully.* No cornice. Spring snow. A fine descent with a choice of line in the upper section where the gully splits. The descent was complicated by ice avalanching off the left wall.

**Sgurr nan Clach Geala**

*Alpha Gully.* The upper section gave wild skiing down the sun warmed avalanching snow of the outside ridge. The gully was entered on foot and then skied with some difficulty (very narrow) and an occasional turn to the avalanche prone apron of snow at the foot of the buttress. The reascent to the plateau was complicated by further avalanches from massive cornices.

**Sgurr Mor**

*Easter Gully.* An elegant line at the left corner of Sgurr Mor's east face. The cornice was large but could be negotiated up on the left where the flanking ridge abutts against it. The gully is very variable in angle with a wide 'comfortable' start then a steep narrows to a left traverse onto a reasonably angled terrace leading out left onto the face of *Resurrection*. The gully then continues narrow and sustained to the bottom. Cold hard pack/soft slab. A further, somewhat tortuous descent has been made down the ground to the east joining *Easter Gully* at half height.

**Beinn Liath Mhor Fannaich**

The west face has several narrow gullies. To the north of these a long shallow gully gave a fine straight-forward run on hard pack.

**Seana Bhraigh**

The long approach up Corriemulzie needs snow cover to ease access to this mountain on ski and make a day worthwhile. The northern coire has a fine variety of descents.

*Press On Gully.* Spring snow. Large cornice outflanked on the right. Very sustained.

*Sham Gully.* Spring snow. Cornice easily outflanked on the open slope out to the left. There was a restriction lower down negotiated without too much difficulty.

**An Teallach**

This has proved an excellent mountain for steep skiing with many elegant, well defined and long couloirs in superb scenery. In the southern coire above Loch Toll an Lochain the couloir coming down from Cadha Gobnalach and the one running north east off the summit of Sail Liath were descended by Mark Diggins and Iain Peter on firm spring snow.

**Coire a' Ghlas Thuill**

*Murdo's Gully.* A long couloir running parallel to the Hayfork further up the Coire. It has a steep narrow central section. No cornice. Spring snow with an icy crust at the top.

*Hayfork 1st Prong.* To the east of *Hayfork Gully* there are four prongs. This line gave a straight-forward descent on spring snow.

Martin Burrows-Smith.

**GLEN CLOVA****The Red Craig**

Ed's Note: The following routes were collected from a variety of sources and are known to be incomplete, particularly on the **Lower Doonie**. It was a last minute decision to include them, so the remaining routes must wait until next year. The routes update the North-East Outcrops guide. Routes were climbed by Grant Farquhar, Simon Stewart, Graeme Eittle and a variety of Aberdeen-based climbers.

**Upper Doonie – The Shadow on the Wall**

15m, E3 6a (or E2 5c?)

Go up easy crack left of *Larch Tree Wall*, then fine slab above via horizontal break and shallow diagonal crack above.

– *Elliptical Dreams*

9m, E3 5c

Lower of two roofs at the left end of the crag; direct.

– *Catwalk*

15m, E1 5a

Traverse right below the roof of *Elliptical Dreams* and follow a slab left below an upper roof.

– *Headsread*

15m, E4 6a

Climbs the upper roof via a groove and hand traverse right to crack and top.

– *Catbird*

18m, HVS 5b

The curving groove passing just right of the upper roof.

– *The Slicer*

15m, E1 5a

Climb huge flake behind large tree, then slab above to tree belay.

– *The Grater*

15m, E2 5c

The steep crack right of *The Slicer* to slab and tree belay.

– *Fast Breeder*

21m, E4 5c

Takes huge niche left of *Vindaloo* directly. Scramble to back of niche, bridge all the way exiting via obvious flake in roof.

– *The Making of Bunny*

30m, E1 5b

Takes groove in right side of *Fast Breeder* niche. Climb groove left of green flake. Traverse on jugs to tree, move up left, then right to a precarious finish.

– *Vindaloo Direct*

33m, E1 5b

As for *Vindaloo* up slab and up to sentry box (possible belay). Move out right and over bulge to layback crack and top.

– *Chitteroo*

30m, E3 5c

Climbs the slim niche and thin cracks in the slab to the right of *Vindaloo Direct*, finishing up the layback crack of that route.

– *DRI*

45m, E6 6a, 5b

This serious and difficult route climbs the blunt overhanging arête in the centre of the **Upper Doonie** between *Chitteroo* and *Dancin' in the Ruins*. Top-roped prior to ascent and runner pre-placed.

Start below some steep cracks on the right face of the arête. Layback up these to gain and stand on a small ledge. Climb directly up the frontal face of the arête using a series of sidepulls which are difficult to gain. Step right to another sidepull (crux) and slap for the top of the arête (committing and on a groundfall). Make a strenuous move to gain a jug on the slab and pull up to belay on slab (27m). Climb directly up the wall behind the arête to gain a large niche. Hand traverse out the lip of the overhang that forms the left wall of the niche and pull strenuously into the layback crack of *Vindaloo Direct*. Finish up this.

– *The Whoremistress*

36m, E5 6a

The stunning overhanging central line on the crag, giving very sustained climbing and fine positions.

Start in the alcove in the centre of the crag, to the right of the arête of *DRI* and just left of *Dancin' in the Ruins*. Climb the alcove to gain a jug at the bottom of the V-groove. Climb this to gain a large sloping shelf (good friend runners in break at head height). Gain the ramp above with difficulty (poor PR). Either climb directly up to the left-hand side of the overhang or traverse right

across the overhanging wall to gain a crack leading to the right-hand side of the overhang (harder). Surmount the overhang directly using a prominent small flake on the wall above (crux). Step left to gain a wide vertical crack and finish up this.

– *Dancin' in the Ruins*

48m, E3 5c, 5b

A direct line left of *Cream Cracker*. Climb slab, move left and up to wet niche and cross roofs right on jugs 6m left of *Cream Cracker*. Continue steeply to tree belay. Move up to steep crack with hanging blocks leading to a metal fence post.

– *Cream Cracker*

E3 if free?

– *Jungle Warfare*

45m, HVS

Climb *Cream Cracker* to belay under the overhang. Move up right and climb the wall to a diagonal shelf, continue up right to belay underneath the prominent prow at the sapling (5a). Climb a dirty slab on the right to another tree, then go up the wide crack above to reach broken ground. Bushwhack.

– *Faulty Towers*

78m, E2 4c, 5c, 5a, 5b

A right to left girdle of the crag. As for the first pitch of *Cream Cracker* to belay under the roof fault (15m). Follow the fault up and left to belay in the *Vindaloo* niche (30m). Move down and left across slabs to peg belay (15m). Move up and left to finish as for *The Catwalk* (18m).

**Lower Doonie, Solar Wind Crag – *Solar Wind***

13m, E3 6b

Big roof at extreme top left of crag behind prominent tree. Climbed at widest point, at wide crack.

– *The Cosmic Pump*

13m, E3 6a

Left of *Solar Wind* are two black hanging grooves. Gain them from flakes on the left, move right across them, then up the left-hand side of the crag to the top.

– *Ion Drive*

13m, E3 6a

Climb the roof at its right-hand side, right of *Solar Wind*. Move left and gain a tooth, go up via a niche, then right on to a cracked slab.

– *Sidestep*

13m, E1 5b

Begin up the open corner right of the roof, then swing left into a hanging pod and up to the top.

– *Snowplough*

13m, HVS 5a

The open corner itself, easier going left at the top. In the rocks on the right are a VS (*Clothhead*) and a Severe (*Blockhead*).

**Lower Doonie, Main Section – *Jug Wall***

16m, E1 5b

On the extreme left of the crag, at a grey blank wall left of the orange wall (the Thin Wall). From the gully, climb right up a juggy slab and up cracks in the grey headwall above to black niche. Cross roof above. A right-hand finish moves right from below the roof via fine cracks (E1 5c).

– *The Thin Wall*

18m, VS 4c/5a

Climbs leftmost arête starting up middle of shattered-looking wall on extreme left of crag. Step off a block, climb up right, then left to foot of arête. Climb this or the corner on the right (easier).

– *Mandy* 12m, E2 5c \*

Sharp arête in broken ground left of *Guinness*. Traverse in from the right and up nose to the top.

– *Lichen Groove* 15m, VS4c

Groove left of *Ally's Crack*.

– *Ally's Crack* 24m, HVS 5a

Red, slightly dirty corner-line to the right of previous route. Old peg near bottom.

– *Four Corners Route* 50m, HVS 5a

Follows the rib to the right of the vegetated gully. Climb rib via several corners to a ramp leading up to *Guinness* (final pitch). Step left and belay below a hanging slab (4b). Pull on to slab (old peg) and up to top (5a).

– *Summers Over* 53m, E2 5c

Climbs the flake ladder left of the crux corner on *Guinness*. Some flakes mobile. Finish up *Guinness*.

– *Guinness* 53m, E1 5a, 5b

Climb *Guinness* pitch 1 (5a). Step right and climb corner past two old PRs. Continue straight up vague groove directly above joining *Variation One* of *Guinness* near the top.

– *Special Brew Direct* (on pitch 1) 12m, E3 5c

Climb from a belay at top of ramp to ledge and belay directly above.

– *Special Brew, Furstenberg Finish* HVS 5a

Finish directly up from the crux of *Special Brew*.

– *Belhaven* 53m, E2 5b

From belay on *Special Brew* pitch 1, break up right to wall and top.

– *Koflach Corner* 12m, HS

The groove left of *Witch's Mate* (mistakenly called *Witch's Tooth* in the guide).

– *Ent Moot* 15m, HS

The groove behind large tree on right of crag.

– *The Pub Crawl* 90m, E1

A right to left girdle of **The Doonie**. Climb *Export* crux, move left to larger slab, then roof above. Take central crack to tree belay (5b). Move up and left to belay at top of *Heinekin* corner. Move down corner and left to *Special Brew* ledge and traverse. Cross *Guinness* (crux) and step into *Guinness* below nose. Belay above (5b).

**Upper North-West Crag – Sun Goes Down** 18m, E1 5b

On the small buttress above *Roman Candle*. Start below obvious central niche in bulge on undercut wall on upper left section of crag. Pull onto wall directly below niche. Move up through niche and to top (hold).

– *Jailbreak* 18m, E3 5c

To the right of previous route. Line goes through cracked bulge.

– *Unnamed* 12m, E2 5c

The flake-line left of *Roman Candle*. Start below flake, gain and climb it onto slab above.

– *Zig-Zag Double-Direct* 45m, E2 5c

This has probably been done before. Climb a roofed corner below the block and groove of *Zig-Zag Direct* and continue up to belay (5b). Climb corner above to roof, pull up right then step up left to the top (5c).

– 999 23m, E2 5b/c

Start below triangular roof left of *Zig-Zag*. Climb easily up to spike, pull into niche below roof and pull right. Move left and right through gap in roof above. Pull onto slab above and belay (5b/c). From belay break onto right wall. With high side-runner gain obvious flake on arte. Pull round to its right and so to the top.

– *Sorcerer* 36m, E4 6a

From the bottom of *High Level Traverse* climb the wall slightly right then left to belay below a large hanging flake (6a). Traverse left underneath the flake and climb directly to the top at its end (5c).

– *The Supernatural Anaesthetist* 36m, E5 6a

This route climbs the hanging groove to the right of *The Sorcerer* flake. It is sustained, technical and serious with some dubious rock and poor protection. Nevertheless, an excellent outing crossing some improbable ground.

Climb the first pitch of *The Sorcerer* to a good runner at the flake. Move up and right to enter the steep groove. Follow this to finish via a prominent protruding flake.

– *Sorcerer's Apprentice* 36m, E2 5c

From a perch right of the foot of *Puddin Fingers*, break right then climb up and rightwards, and directly up a gently overhanging crack to the top.

– *Puddin Fingers* 24m, E2 5b

Now free.

– *Kremlin Control* 36m, HVS 5b

Start as for *Red Wall*. Traverse left onto a grey slab and move up its left-hand edge. Pull up and continue on easier ground to belay above the quartz chimney as for *Red Wall* (5a). Move up then back right under a small roof to gain the hanging slab and climb the crack parallel to and left of *Red Wall's* final pitch (5b).

A more direct version of this route has been claimed.

– *Carn Dearg Corner* 45m, E2 5c

The old aid first pitch of *Red Wall*. Climb thin crack in grey wall right at first pitch of *Red Wall* to good flakes and very steep crack leading to slab. Move right and belay below hanging slab (5b/c). Climb hanging slab, move right and up past loose blocks left of *W/S Chimney* to gain firm corner. Follow this and steep jammer to the top.

– *The Cold War* 36m, E2 5b, 5c

The main feature of this route is the small right-facing hanging diédre to the right of the second pitch of *The Red Wall*. As for *The Red Wall* old aided first pitch to belay at the foot of the quartz chimney (15m). Climb the pillar to the right of the chimney to join *The Red Wall* at a ledge. Traverse right and move up into the diédre. Climb this to the top. Side runners placed in *The Red Wall*. (21m).



**Note:** *Carn Dearg Corner* and *The Cold War* sound like different descriptions of the same route.

— *The Magical Mystery Tour* 90m, E3, 4a, 5b, 5c

An epic outing of great character with an exciting finale, taking the left to right girdle traverse of the crag.

Reverse the traverse of *HLT* second pitch to the *Zig-Zag Direct* belay (21m). As for *The Return of the Living Dead* to gain sloping ledges up on the right. Move precariously down across these (dirty) to an exposed hanging belay at the end of *The Sorcerer* flake. Often wet (21m). Move up and right above the flake to gain a small corner. Swing right via a jug to a large foothold and continue by underclinging the overlap to its end where protection can be arranged. Step down and right to the tree on *Sorcerer's Apprentice*. Swing round the nose on the right and move up to an airy perch. Belay (24m). Make a descending traverse into *Hanging Chimney*. Gain the red wall via the crux of *Kremlin Control* and move right to step into *The Red Wall* at a small sloping ledge. Climb the twin cracks above to a good handhold. Step up (feet on hold) to arrange protection then back down. Hand traverse horizontally right using three flat holds to gain a small right-facing diedre. Make a long reach out right to a good jug, swing across on this and gain a chossy ledge on the right, hence to the top.

**Note:** the last move is 5c with a potentially serious fall.

**Lower North-West Crag — *Beanstalk Direct Finish*** 12m, HVS 5b

Continue up corner-crack above stance, past some sprigs of heather.

— *Beanstalk*

Tree has now fallen off (tragic). MVS now offered.

— *Cinderella* 21m, E5 6a

This route tackles the impending wall between *Rocket Man* and *Proud Corner*. Start on top of large pinnacle at foot of wall. Move up to PR. Gain obvious hand ramp on left, move up this and stand on flat hold at top. Move up to clip tape of second peg runner (serious), swing into groove on left and follow this to top.

**Note:** Top-roped prior to ascent and rest point on top peg (which at present is absent but soon to be replaced).

— *Rocket Man* 24m, E2 5c

Start on large rock spike left of *Taken by Force*. Climb the shallow corner, pull right, follow flake and step up left into hanging corner. Finish up easy rounded arête after awkward mantleshelf.

— *Taken by Force* E2 5c

— *Monster Munch* 21m, E3 6b

An eliminate up the right wall of *Monster Crack* using some side-runners. Up the wall to hollow flakes. Break up and left (crux) to above top of *Monster Crack* (rest possible). Move up and right, gain rotten ledge. Finish from highest point direct.

— *Halloween* 14m, E2 6a

The steep wall just right of *Cauldron Crack*, with the hardest moves in the first 5m. Possible to jump off crux.

— *Plonker's Passage* 50m, HVS 5a

Left to right girdle.

**Central Crag – West Side Story**

17m, E2 5b

On the grey wall left of *Mearns Wall* starting at obvious overhung niche below the great prow. Climb strenuously up teeth into right-hand side of niche and pull right onto wall. Follow line of holds to obvious flake-crack on right. Climb straight up to top.

**– Black Adder**

24m, E4 6a

Right of *Mearns Wall* is a hanging block and flakes. Start up big doubtful blocks. Make precarious moves up right to a bridging rest right of the flakes. Swing left and up the hanging flakes to belay ledge. Short wall to top.

**– Empire of the Sun**

30m, E4 6b

Climbs the shattered orange patch and the wall directly above. Go up slabs and directly up the orange rock by a crack (loose) to gain a slabby ledge. Move up left on top of a flake then up and across left to a good shake-out and runners at a flake. Move up right along a crack and pull up to a small flat ledge (crux). Go straight up to a big ledge and final wall, climbed on the left. Probably high in its E grade.

**– Gotae Grooves**

36m, VS

This route was left out of the guide and its quality and difficulty is not known. Start below the patch or orange rock and climb the slab for 6m. Surmount overhang, then follow a heather ramp diagonally rightwards until a groove can be climbed back left. A corner (peg runner) leads to the top. A similar sounding line has been claimed at HVS 5a.

**– Upper Parapet**

Very obscure. Does anyone know where it goes?

**South-East Crag – The Spider**

20m, E2 5b

Start 3m right of the HVS crack right of 3J's. Move right up ramp, then left and directly up tower above.

**– The Wildebeast**

20m, E4 6a

Climb steep wall 6m right of ramp via a boulder to ledge. Move up and through white roofed niche above to jugs.

**– Pothole**

12m, VS 4c

Climb the left edge of the same buttress starting up a thin crack.

**– Pothole Direct**

15m, HVS 5b

Left of *Flake Route* is a short corner above a tree. Climb it, exiting left.

**– Comes the Squirmish**

14m, HVS 5b

Steep flake-crack right of main crag.

**– Rhiannon**

24m, E3 6a

The obvious corner-line in the centre of the crag. Climb straight up the slabby face below the corner. Pull over a bulge and go up a short groove to gain flakes right of the base of the corner. Climb the sustained corner to the top. Tree Abseil.

**DUNDEE CRAGS****Legaston Quarry**

Legaston Quarry is an extensive quarry situated 6 miles inland from Arbroath. It provides a useful climbing area for Dundee and the surrounding

region especially in the summer evenings when time is too limited to travel to more distant crags. The quarry is popular for training and many of the routes are well suited for 'pumping-out' on. The liberal use of the bolts reflects this 'training' aspect and the routes tend to provide safe, technically hard climbing. However a few exceptions do exist! Unfortunately the quarry is used as a dumping ground for the local farmer and as such various unsavoury rubbish is sometimes present in the place. However this is kept well away from the foot of the walls and from late May until the end of summer is cloaked in a natural screen of vegetation. The Rose Bay Willow herb being particularly pleasant in bloom (and edible).

### Access

The quarry is situated almost 18 miles from Dundee and is on the main Arbroath to Forfar road (A933) about half a mile before Friockheim is reached when driving inland from Arbroath.

From Dundee it is best to follow the back road out past Newbigging (B961) and then up through Redford and Carmyllie to join the A933 at the top of Legaston Brae. Turn left here and go down the hill to a concealed entrance on the left at the bottom. Park here, please take note of the sign and try to maintain good relations with the cottage owner and the farmer. Walk along the track past the cottage and round into the quarry. The buttresses are arranged from Ring Buttress on the extreme left to Rose Wall on the right.

### Rock

The basic rock underlying this area is Old Red Sandstone, however the close proximity of volcanic masses has produced a fine climbing medium. Heat and pressure have metamorphosed the basic structure into a compact and hard rock where pockets and horizontal breaks are common and useful for progress and protection. Cracks are uncommon but *in situ* gear is, please leave this *in situ* for the benefit of others. Friends work well in the horizontal breaks and are essential protection on many routes.

### The History

The history of the quarry as a climbing ground is short and somewhat obscure. The first recorded visits were in 1976 by a group of Royal Marines from their base nearby. They placed some stakes above Forbidden Buttress and Rose Wall but seemed mainly interested in abseil practice. Some routes may have been climbed but no details are available.

A few months later, Andrew Wilson, a prominent local climber came to have a look. He noted a few possibilities but left discouraged due to a 'moat' of slime-ridden water about 4m wide at the bottom of the crag. (Only 30 years ago the quarry was one large pool up to 15m deep).

However, a year after these initial forays came a major event which shaped the quarry as we see it now. In the nearby village of Friockheim a large viaduct which formed part of a rail junction was demolished. The quarry was chosen as the ideal dumping site for the rubble and this filled the moat and raised the quarry floor by about 3m. In the spring of 1981 two young locals, Neil Shepherd and David McKelvie rediscovered it. Another enthusiastic climber, Kenny Edwards, was recruited, and the first routes were cleaned and climbed. Unfortunately however, enthusiasm flagged and no more routes were done until a brief flurry in late 1982 brought another 3 climbs. About this time however, another group of Royal Marines were becoming interested in the place. This brought an explosion of routes with 5 on the previously untouched main wall (all at a reasonable standard). Further belay stakes were placed and the first route names were painted on the rock. Spurred on by this, Neil Shepherd again took an interest in the quarry. With the combination of the good 1983 and 1984 summers and an inexhaustible supply of enthusiasm in the form of Malcolm Cameron, a fine crop of routes were picked, including several on Main Wall, some of which rate as the quarry's best.

By late 1984 most of the hard routes had been repeated except for the loose *First to Fall* which has only recently been cleaned properly. This was a year which ended on a good note with Shepherd leading the almost always wet *Sign of the Scorpion*. Several days later Brian Tilley made the only other recorded ascent to date.

Around this time *Driller Killer* was taking its place as the quarry's popular technical test piece, a reputation it still holds.

Early in 1985 a supplement to the original guide appeared. Unfortunately it was a very poor summer and only the most determined did any new routes. Due to the unpleasant weather several of the climbs became rather neglected. The most notable events of the year were recorded around the Forbidden Buttress with *No Remorse*. *Babylon Buttress* with *Les Morts Dansant* and *Rose Wall* with *The Weasel*. Late in the year Spider McKenzie led *No Remorse* without its bolts but chose to leave them *in situ* for others – a fine achievement.

1986 was a mixed year but *Rotten Wall* was brought into condition with some ruthless cleaning and two contrasting routes were climbed at its left and right ends respectively.

*Forbidden Buttress* gained the harder right hand companion to *No Remorse* in the shape of *Spandex Ballet*. On the same afternoon but after three previous evenings sieging *Aerodynamic* was brought to life to give the quarry its first 6c up the striking thin seam on **Babylon Buttress**. Both these routes eagerly await second ascents.

### The Climbing

The buttresses are described from left to right looking at the rock and the climbs on each are described similarly. For descent, a set of steps are cut in the steep earth bank just left of R Buttress and a good path follows the top of the quarry wall. (The top is also a pleasant place to leave gear etc!).

In July 1987 all the *in situ* protection, pegs and bolts, were stolen. Most has now been replaced with permanent 12mm stainless steel bolts and the descriptions and gradings reflect the situation in March 1988.

### Ring Buttress

The buttress on the left hand side of the quarry with the prominent iron ring near its top (useful for top-roping). This buttress gets afternoon and evening sun and a couple of the routes may remain in condition all winter. Good traversing exists at the bottom of this buttress at various levels.

– *Grot* 9m, Diff

– *Choss* 9m, Diff

– *Ego Trip* 32m, V Diff

Climb the obvious fault directly. Getting cleaner with more traffic.

– *Flightpath* 32m, HVS 4c

An eliminate line giving enjoyable but unprotected climbing. Stay left of *Crowbar Crack* throughout.

– *Crowbar Cracks* 12m, HVS 4a

his wide crack gives an awkward route on good holds.

– *The Killing Fields* 12m, E1 5b

Another eliminate taking the wall between *Crowbar Cracks* and *Armygeddon*. Easier higher up.

– *Armygeddon* 12m, HVS 5b

The obvious bulging crack in the middle of the buttress. Well protected with a technical crux low down.

– *Driller Killer*

12m, E2 6a

Superb climbing up the smooth wall right of *Armygeddon*, technical and quite sustained.

– *Flight of the Mad Magician*

12m, E3 5c

The best route on the buttress. Sustained unprotected wall climbing leads to a good friend placement at 15m, finish up the thin crack directly. A popular top-rope problem using the ring.

– *Seconds Out*

15m, E1 5b

The obvious thin crack bordering the buttress on the right. An awkward crux near the top. (Use of the arête is not allowed).

– *Contraflow*

17m, VS 4b

A right to left girdle of the buttress starting from the tree on Plod.

– *Plod*

12m, Diff

A pleasant little route up the slabby arête between Ring Buttress and Main Wall.

**Main Wall**

The largest wall in the quarry, 120m long and of a uniform height of 17m. This wall contains a varied selection of routes which are generally well protected. Stake belays are in place above most of the 'topping out' places. This wall tends to be very damp during the winter but in summer the steep left-hand side remains dry throughout heavy rain whilst the easier angled areas dry quickly. The wall gets a good share of afternoon and evening sun.

– *Ratbag*

17m, E2 5b

A good though dirty climb. Climb the flake above the paint (serious) to reach a break. Make long reaches between breaks and traverse right to finish as for *Sweet Revenge*.

– *Death is the Hunter*

17m, E3 5a

A hard though well protected route up the big wall right of *Ratbag*. Start behind the ominous tree stump and make awkward moves to a break. Move up on pockets (old coach bolt runner) to the next break (BR) and continue on small edges till better holds are reached (crux). Continue more easily from break to break to finish at the top of *Sweet Revenge*.

– *Sweet Revenge*

17m, E2 5c

The most popular and possibly the best extreme in the quarry. Climb the obvious right to left slanting crack direct passing an *in situ* peg runner. The crux is situated just below the peg. At the top break traverse 1m left until directly below the tree, move up past a 'hole' on jugs to finish on the tree. A superb climb.

– *Between the Lines*

17m, E3 5b

A horrific route, poorly protected and loose up the obvious non-line right of *Sweet Revenge*. Further cleaning may yet however render this route worthwhile.

– *Bomber*

17m, E3 5c

Not a route for the unconfident. Takes the obvious square cut roof just left of *Happy Days*. The introductory wall leads to a shaky flake. Gain a standing position on this and reach a big sandy pocket (1st crux). Pull leftwards over the roof on finger pockets to reach superb holds (second crux). A fall from this move would be serious indeed! From the peg continue directly over a second smaller overhang before finishing at the mantle block of *Happy Days*.

– *Happy Days*

17m, Severe

A non-descript though enjoyable route up the obvious right to left diagonal fault, finish by a precarious move on the 'mantle block.'

– *Brian the Snail*

17m, E2 5b

Start up the first 3m of *Happy Days* before moving out right onto the wall at a good flake. Move up and left into a small right-facing corner. From here pull straight up the wall and then finish rightwards. A bold top section.

– *Brian the Snail DT*

15m, E2 6b

A very difficult direct start to *Brian the Snail*.

– *Rocking Stone*

17m, Severe

The fault line bordering the wall of *Brian the Snail DT* on its right side. The stone very rarely rocks!

– *The Head*

17m, Severe

A horrid climb up the fault cum chimney in the centre of the wall. Right of this route the wall is less steep and is split into 3 tiers by 2 broad ledges.

– *March of Dimes*

18m, E2 5b

Just right of *The Head* is an awkward bulging wall with a ledge inset at its top. This route climbs this bulge by a very devious sequence. Now a lot more serious since the (PR) was stolen.

– *Shoot to Kill*

18m, E1 5a

A very good climb which has the scoop in the middle tier just right of *March of Dimes* as its main feature. The crux involves leaving the scoop and is poorly protected. Finish directly.

– *Overkill*

18m, E1 6a

This route climbs a direct line right of *Shoot to Kill*. The meat of the route is the middle tier, well protected by 2 BRs. One of the most fallen off routes in the quarry.

– *Desperate Measures*

18m, E2 6b

A companion line to *Overkill* with a single bolt runner. Keep to the left of the bolt on tiny edges until the bolt is passed. An easier (5c) variation exists just right of the bolt.

– *Staircase A*

24m, V. Diff

The obvious corner/ledge system leading up and right.

– *Fire at Will*

18m, VS 4c

A direct, sparsely protected line up the wall right of *Staircase A*. Good climbing particularly up the top tier.

– *Staircase B*

6m, V. Diff

Direct start on large holds, joining *Staircase A*.

– *Walking the Straight Line*

17m, VS 4c

A good climb although now getting rather mossy. Poor protection with hard moves to start.

– *The Rack*

17m, VS 4b

The companion line to *Fire at Will*, nicer climbing but also getting a bit mossy.

**Rotten Wall**

This large previously neglected wall has recently seen some advanced cleaning techniques. It now sports several enjoyable routes with space for more development in the future.

— *The Golden Shot* 18m, E3 6a

Superb, sustained wall climbing, aptly named with 3 bolt runners. Start by a hard move to reach a pocket, up on small holds (BR) to a resting position. Climb direct to the top with several hard moves including one at the top involving the obvious small niche! This climb is on good rock.

— *First to Fall* 18m, E3 5c

The original route on the buttress. Since been recleaned and down-graded due to removal of much loose rock. Climb the first wall on small holds to a break (friend runner). Make long reaches on good dogs to reach the base of the small left-facing corner (crucial friend 1). Trend right from the top of the corner and straight up to finish via a long run-out.

— *The Edge of Darkness* 18m, E3 5b

The superb arête on the right edge of the wall. Climbed direct mainly on the left face before swinging right a few feet below the top. A very serious lead with sparse protection and a nasty tree stump waiting below to impale an airborne leader (this may be removed shortly).

**Forbidden Buttress**

This buttress runs parallel to Main Wall and is separated from Rotten Wall by the imposing *Edge of Darkness*. It provides pleasant easy grade climbing on its left-hand side but the smooth steep right wall gives two of the local testpieces. At present *Spandex Ballet* has not seen an on-sight ascent without prior practice. Good stake belays are present above this buttress.

— *Purple Haze* 15m, VS 4c

The obvious crack cum chimney just right of the arête, exiting left at the top.

— *Nighttime Sorrow* 15m, VS 5a

An enjoyable route up the obvious widening crack right of *Purple Haze*. Gain the crack by a reach left from *Virgin Crack* or direct over a bulge at 5B.

— *Virgin Crack* 15m, Severe

A good route though still dirty, follow the shallow corner direct to the top.

— *Kiss of Death* 15m, VS 4c

This route takes the obvious lay-back flake down the right from *Virgin Crack*. From the flake's top climb large steps before moving left to finish up *Virgin Crack*. Another dirty route.

— *No Remorse* 17m, E3 5c

One of the best routes in the quarry, this sustained wall climb is both technical and bold even with 2 bolts for protection (for an on-sight lead without the bolts being clipped the grade is E4/5 5c). Start at the paint mark and climb directly to the top (good friends just below the top).

— *Spandex Ballet* 18m, E4 6b

The hardest lead in Legaston with sustained hard climbing. Two new bolt runners make this a much safer lead. Start a few feet right of *No Remorse* at a bouldery move to gain better holds. Move up to the obvious ramp then reach to the break. Ease rightwards along here to good holds (poor friend 1) and make hard moves up the shot-hole (2BR). Go left and up to a PR; a desperate long reach right here provides the crux, though sustained and bold climbing is still required to reach better holds and the cleaned top of *No Remorse*. (A friend 2 protects this top section).

**Babylon Buttress**

This buttress so named because it once resembled the hanging gardens now sports several excellent climbs. However it is extremely wet all winter and only dries out for a few months each summer (in 1985 it was dry for one week only!). The obvious left-hand corner has only ever been dry once this decade and requires near-drought conditions. A good training traverse exists along the bottom of the wall from the start of *Roxanne* to finish at *Necrosis* (quite entertaining and once dry will remain so even in the rain). Belays at the top are the farmer's fenceposts, quite secure if used low down the post.

– *Sign of the Scorpion* 18m, E1 5c

The big square-cut left-hand corner climbed direct with one hard move near the top. May not see a third ascent this century unless a really dry summer intervenes. Even if it dries it will probably require a good cleaning before once again providing superb climbing.

– *Aerodynamic* 15m, E3 6c

A desperate but very safe route which climbs the obvious thin seam cum crack in the upper wall right of *Sign of the Scorpion*. Start up shallow corner right of the lower continuation of the crack (the lower half of the crack is almost always soaking) and move left onto the ledge (PR). Climb the thin seam directly passing a BR. After 3m, gain larger holds and the top. A route which lives up to its name.

– *Lymphomaniac* 15m, E1 5b

This route climbs the fault and ledges 6m right of *Sign of the Scorpion* to a dirty finish, sparse protection.

– *Roxanne* 23m, VS 4b

A good route which starts as for *Lymphomaniac* and climbs up and along ledges to gain the left-hand side of the *Playing with Fire* slab. Cross this in a superb position to finish as for *Necrosis*.

– *Nymphocyte* 15m, E1 5b

A serious little route up the smooth awkward wall 5m right of *Lymphomaniac*. Climb the wall to reach a good ledge. Continue up the shallow groove above to finish at the top of *Playing with Fire*. 'Friends' essential.

– *Playing with Fire* 15m, E2 5c

An excellent climb with very varied climbing. Either start from the ground or a boulder and make hard moves to good holds. Pull up (PR) and left to the obvious flake. Move over onto the slab and contrive up its centre to an impending wall. Pass this (crux) to reach ledges and an easy finish.

– *Les Morts Dansant* 15m, E3 6a

A sustained and strenuous pitch up the overhung corner right of *Playing with Fire*. Climb the corner directly and pull through the bulge rightwards passing a BR. Move up to pockets and a jug then make a hard move to a thin break (friend runner in pocket). **Note:** the grade assumes the BR *in situ*. Due to be placed in Spring 1988.

– *Necrosis* 15m, E1 5b

A good and entertaining climb up the nose on the right of *Les Morts Dansant*. Awkward moves lead to an overhang, cross this on jugs (TR) to reach a ledge. Move up the groove above (slow to dry) to ledge, finish above with poor protection.

**Rose Wall**

This small smooth wall is one of the most recently developed. It is also unique in that it catches the sun for most of the morning. A stake is in place at the top for belays.

– *Rootworks* 15m, Severe

Climb the corner at the left-hand end of the wall, the 'rootworks' hold the climb together!



– *Exodus*

15m, E1 5b

A good little climb up the smooth wall just right of the corner. Now easier due to the discovery of a new hold at the crux, friends for protection.

– *The Weasel*

15m, E2 5c

A little gem of a route. Start at the paint and move up to the large ledge. Climb steeply to gain a small ledge and good holds in the breaks above (friend runners). Make delicate and awkward moves up on the pockets above to reach a good clean top.

– *Remain in Light*

14m, E2 6a

An eliminate climbing the arête of *Capricia* on its left hand side. Start just right of *The Weasel* and move up to a good break (friends). Make a very hard move to gain better holds on the arête and continue awkwardly up this via some bold moves. A good technical route.

– *Capricia*

12m, VS 4b

One of the best easy routes in the quarry. Climb the obvious square cut corner with 2 tree stumps direct.

– *Winky*

12m, VS 4c

Good climbing up the right arête of the wall to gain the flake, finish up this.

– *Gary's Route*

11m, Severe

Start round the corner from *Winky* and climb the slab till a move left gains the top of *Winky*.

**Black Crag** (Sidlaws; No. 216317)– *Tales of the Unexpected*

24m, E2 5c

A good route. Climbs the face of the great prow. Start up an S-Crack in the lower slab, pulling over the roof centrally past a small flake on to cleaned holds. Finish via a sentry box. Some easier lines have been climbed also.

**Echybeatton Quarry** (No. 485338)– *Apocalypse*

14m, E1 5b

The obvious slanting crack on the left as you enter the quarry, giving jamming and bridging.

**Balkelle Quarry** (No. 362391) and **Lumley Den Quarry** (No 401416) give various short loose sandstone routes.

**Arbroath Sea Cliffs****The Red Head**

This crag is situated on the coast 6 miles north of Arbroath. It is a 90m pillar of intimidating stature. The most obvious feature is a huge central groove splitting the upper half of the crag. The only route at present climbs this feature in 2 pitches. Start the route by abseiling in to the halfway ledge.

– *The Engine Driver*

45m, E3 5b, 5b

N. Shepherd, K. Clarke (alts). 8th August, 1987.

Pull over the initial bulge (disposable holds) and move up onto a slab and better rock. Move out left onto a grey slab. From this, gain jugs and swing back right (crux) to a cramped position. Move onto another slab and continue more easily up the steep corner, passing a cave, to reach a small triangular ledge. Friend belay. (27m). Move up and right until below an obvious corner. Creep up and onto a block at the corner base. Finish up past a hard move to a precarious exit. (18m).

## MISCELLANEOUS NOTES

**Nevis avalanche – eye-witness account.** – *We received this interesting item from Phil Gribbon, who was luckily well away from the flow line on March 12th of this year. It describes what war gamers, political 'hawks' and other calculating 'punters' might recognise as a wild card, the rare fluke which rides over careful planning and accepted safe conditions.*

I was sitting, or standing, at my belay, an old orange sling permanently in a rusty peg, at the top of the first pitch of *Green Gully*, when I heard this faint crumping sound, the sort of muffled sound a load of snow makes when it topples off a house roof. I glanced up across the ribs and lines of *Creag Coire na Ciste*, scanned along the draped cornices above the Trident Buttresses, anywhere, but there was nothing to see in the quiet coire. There wasn't anyone even down below plodding up the snowy slopes; we had been away from the CIC quite early, and most of the toilers up from the valley had been bound for Orion Face and places of that ilk. I relaxed until....

Round the hidden corner from the top of *No. 4 Gully* came a bouncing fluffy bow wave of swiftly spilling snow that snaked silently on to the more open slopes where *No. 4* opened out into the coire. I shouted to my second, Mike Jacob, who was pointing up the *névé* below me, 'No. 4's away, quick look'; how he could do that I wasn't sure, or was I interested, as I watched what was about to happen with some measure of foreboding fascination.

I thought the collapsed cornice, for that was what it was, would funnel out on the slopes and maintain its own falling mass without any further growth in volume as it slid downhill. How wrong I was as I watched; I lost sense of time and sound (was there any?). Once the front wave poured its streamlines on to the lower slopes the added pressure of the avalanche was sufficient not just to sweep the surface snow off the brick hard *névé* underneath, for this would not in any way have been necessarily over-impressive, but to basically fracture the whole slope, stretching many metres off on either side of the fall line, and separating the whole top surface from the older weaker snows lying underneath. What one saw was a multi-flow pattern system with some parts moving over and through other parts, some speeding up, some stopping and regaining their downhill motion, while all the whiles there were snow blocks bouncing and shuffling about on top, like polystyrene stage blocks. Some seconds later it was all over, silence reigned, and there was debris for hundreds of feet down the coire slope and more surprising a similar distance across the slope, with a scattering of proverbial lumps the size of wee bothies or motor cars, and with me not having a clue where they came from.

There they were, tonnes of consolidated snow stuck on the hillside stretching down to nearly the bottom of the coire. Was there anyone inside it all? I saw none; I guessed, that for a change, it was a spontaneous avalanche. Cornices were large, many sported curled-over curtain draperies, and there had been fresh snow falls and winds the day before. The sun was out on the white edges, but not directly on the half of *No. 4* cornice that had fallen away. The air temperature was below freezing. Three figures appeared walking away on the plateau above *Carn Dearg* buttress: perhaps their steps behind the *No. 4* cornice tipped it off; who knows, but we were glad we or anyone else had not been in the fall line. That could have been it.

Later, we went home down the other side of the Ben, by the icy slopes of *Coire Leis*. After all, there was still half the cornice to come away.

**The John Muir Trust.** – Your very own hack was an invited guest at the official launch of this estimable Trust in Dunbar on Thursday, April 21st. As many mountaineers will be aware, the John Muir Trust is named after the Dunbar-born Scot who lived there until his family emigrated to Wisconsin when he was 11. Founder of the Sierra Club, Muir led a successful campaign to set up the United States National Parks, and is regarded as a father of the conservation movement. In this country, after a late and slow start, there is a growing awareness of Muir's life and work, which has led to the founding of this Trust. Recently, it has successfully negotiated the purchase of part of the Knoydart Estate, with the aim,

following the general philosophy of the trust, to conserve and protect the area, while respecting the needs and aspirations of those living in the area.

The John Muir Trust is now engaged in a membership drive, and welcomes enquiries. Write to: The Secretary, Nigel Hawkins, 5 Gray Street, Broughty Ferry, Dundee DD5 2BH.

It would be appropriate to finish this note with a quotation from Muir's writings.

'Thousands of tired nerve-shaken, over-civilized people are beginning to find out that going to the mountains is going home; that wilderness is a necessity; and that mountain parks and reservations are useful not only as fountains of lumber and irrigating rivers, but as fountains of life.'

John Muir - *Our National Parks*, 1901.

**Six Cairngorm tops on ski.** - Kenneth MacIver sends this account of this popular classic carried out on April 17th, 1987. His route started at Linn of Avon and finished at Achlean in Glen Feshie. He writes, 'I had to carry skis for only 6 miles - the ascent to the snow on Ben Avon, the lower part of the descent off Carn Ban Mor and a short section across the bottom of the Lairig Ghrù between the foot of the Taylor's Burn and the snow-filled stream bed rising to Coire an t-Saighdeir on Cairn Toul. The section between Coire Ruairidh on Beinn Bhuird and the east end of Loch Avon was done on skis all the way, with some diversions to link together the various beds of snow. However I suspect the warm weather which continued after Easter Friday would very quickly have made this section hopeless for someone hoping to maintain a good pace. The warmth of the afternoon and the softening of the snow certainly did slow my progress, to some degree. I had anticipated reaching Achlean around 9 p.m. so my arrival at 9.35 p.m. did require the use of a headtorch to lessen my 'stumbleings' on the final mile. With hindsight, I should have left Glen Avon at 5 a.m. as this would have allowed a more relaxed pace at the end of the day. However, I cannot complain, having completed the route. During the Easter holidays of '85 and '86 I spent 20 days in total waiting in vain for a suitable day.

<i>Route</i>	<i>Times</i>
Linn of Avon	D. 6.05 a.m.
Ben Avon	A. 8.25 a.m.
Beinn a Bhuird	A. 9.55 a.m.
Descent - Coire Ruairidh	A. 1.00 p.m.
East end of Loch Avon	
Cairngorm	
Ben MacDui	A. 2.45 p.m.
Descent - Allt Clach nan Taillear	A. 5.55 p.m.
Cairn Toul	
Braeriach	A. 7.00 p.m.
Descent - Allt Luineay	A. 8.35 p.m.
Carn Ban Mor	
Achlean	A. 9.35 p.m.

In total, 33 miles and about 10,000 feet of ascent.

**Beyond the Munros: Mungo's Tables.** - Graham Little opens another Pandora's Box. Only the brave should read further.

'Mungos, as a few initiates will already know, are Scottish hills over three hundred feet (ninety metres) in height and yet not attaining the stature of Donalds, Corbetts or Munros, i.e. below two thousand feet (six hundred metres). The derivation of this term is somewhat obscure. Who the responsible Mungo was is open to debate although tenuous links have been established with Saint Mungo,

Mungo Park and even Mungo Jerry. The etymological and numerical similarities to Munros could perhaps be more than just coincidence; after all what's in a 'g' or zero for that matter! Indeed certain fringe authorities even suggest that 'Mungo's Tables' were Sir Hugh Munro's true labour of love and that his 'Munro's Tables' were merely a diversionary front. He must however, have possessed some psychic premonition of the activities of Corbett and Donald.

For convenience Mungos are sub-listed into various distinct categories, such as industrial, urban, rural, marine etc. Although Mungos may lack the stature and glamour of Munros, some of them do present technical and objective difficulties of a high order; the marine ones in particular making the average Munro seem like a Sunday stroll in the park.

Ascending the Mungos can present quite unique problems never encountered on the higher hills. The summits of some are in fact obstructed by man-made features such as Ministry of Defence installations and prisons – yes, people have been arrested climbing Mungos (and escaping from them!). If your house or office is built upon a Mungo an ascent can be claimed by default. Another dilemma is raised by the presence of man-made Mungos such as pit bings and slag heaps. Should these be ignored? If not, would Mungo's Tables be continually expanding as enthusiasts constructed their own personal Mungo? Equally problematic is the destruction of Mungos during civil engineering projects (the Conservation lobby would have a field day).

So the question 'are there any Mungoists?' must be addressed. I would suggest not, although as Mungo-ology is essentially a closet pursuit (yes the summits of some are actually inside closets) one can never be certain. It is rumoured that Hamish Brown plans to do them all non-stop but I for one, am very sceptical about the feasibility of this enterprise, particularly if all the 'tops' were included. I am quite convinced that many Mungos as yet await a first ascent. Yes, there are still virgin peaks in Scotland!

Mungo climbing is undoubtedly about contrast, about extremes, from the gentle, grassy, scenic eminences of Easterhouse to the storm-lashed, guano-splashed stacks of St. Kilda. Often a demanding but never a boring pursuit. Some Mungos have already become household names and receive numerous ascents, e.g. Arthur's Seat and The Old Man of Hoy, although the ascensionists are often oblivious to the

fact that they are 'Mungo bagging.'

So to the nub of the matter – how many Mungos are there?

Ten million, two hundred and thirty seven thousand, three hundred and twenty one (approximately). Complete lists are available from me, costing £999,999.99 (excluding postage and packing).

Happy and fruitful Mungo Bagging!

**Dirty work afoot on the Munros.** – Aficionados of Munroviana will be interested in the 'Clean up a Munro' campaign. This commendable work by the Ramblers Association deserves support. Who will be the first to compleat and clean up each Munro compleated. This report of the cleansing of Schiehallion is from the Perthshire Advertiser, June 12th, 1987.

'Last Sunday 12 members of Perth and District Group of the Ramblers Association did a litter clean up on Schiehallion, one of Perthshire's best known mountains, as part of the 'Keep Scotland Beautiful – Clean Up a Munro' campaign and as the group's contribution to European Year of the Environment.

'The bulk of the litter, two sackfuls, was found around the summit cairn and in the sheltered 'lunch spots' on the summit ridge where cans of beer and soft drinks were abandoned.' (Empty, one presumes?)

**An unexploited resource.** – Our attention has been brought to a note in a booklet entitled '*Behind the scenes at the Natural History Museum.*' (The British Museum. Natural History, pp. 24. £2. pbk.). 'Kungu Cake, made from midges, collected in their thousands and compressed into a solid block, is eaten in East Africa. Allergies are developed by the eaters!' This role reversal has possibilities. Climbers in summer could carry midge compressors and live off the land (air?).

**So now you know.** - At the editorial request. Dave Griffiths has sent in this glossary of new climbing terms in current use by the Ultramontana. They may be useful for uppity Salvationists to use now and then in conversation in an appropriately casual tone of voice.

**Hangdog:** - Hangdogging is used mainly when climbing 'on sight,' the climb is attempted from the ground up, and when a fall occurs the climber does not lower down, but instead practises the moves he has fallen off until 'wired' (obviously this has to be close to gear) then he lowers down and pulls the ropes and leads the route after sufficient rest.

**Friggering:** - This is when any aid is used on an already 'free' pitch, e.g., not lowering after a fall, placing gear on aid etc.

**Yo-yo:** - After a fall the leader lowers to the stance and after a rest starts back up to continue his efforts.

**Red Point:** - This means the use of unlimited amounts of practice on a route before a lead with no falls. This technique is the most common on the hardest routes when climbers top rope the route numerous times and then lead it clipping all gear free and taking no falls or rests. If a fall occurs then the ascent has to start again, so ropes and quick draws must be removed.

**Pink Point:** - As for Red Point except that all quick draws are preplaced for quicker clipping.

**Lead Rehearsal:** - Practise of non crux moves and moves to clip gear.

**Flash:** - When a climber ascends a route with no falls or rests but has prior knowledge, e.g. knowledge of crux sequence, gear or hidden holds etc. gained from an abseil. But no top roping.

**On-sight Flash:** - A no fall ascent with no prior knowledge.

**Bolt to bolt:** - As it suggests, the leader climbs from one bolt runner to the next resting on each one until the belay is reached. Then perhaps after further practise the route is red pointed.

**Dyno:** - A controlled leap for a hold. (In a hut recently we heard that there are controlled and non-controlled 'dynos,' but we forget the terms. An uncontrolled dyno is when you leap for holds not yet seen, a technique surely hallowed by age if not desperation).

**Cruise:** - A smooth no fall ascent.

Finally, there is Slapping. Nothing to do with wife-beating, it refers to a desperate leader who slaps his chalk-encrusted hands on the rock face above, in the hope that some slaps will fall on a hold before he falls off. The difference between this and an uncontrolled dyno is obviously dynamic.

**Compleat Munroists.** - The following have admitted (or been reported) as having finished the round of 277 Munros.

- |  |                                       |
|--|---------------------------------------|
| (487) Peter Bellarby, 1987, -, -;      | (504) Robert A. Grant, 1976, -, -;    |
| (488) Robert Ward, 1987, -, -;         | and 1986;                             |
| (489) *H. W. F. Taylor, 1976, -, -;    | (505) John Speakman, 1980, -, -;      |
| (490) Mike West, 1987, -, -;           | (506) Bobby Grenfell, 1980, -, -;     |
| (491) Neville Kale, 1987, -, -;        | (507) Crystal Brown, 1980, -, -;      |
| (492) Jane Kale, 1987, -, -;           | (508) Stewart Brown, 1980, -, -;      |
| (493) Andrew Kale, 1987, -, -;         | (509) David Alexander, 1986, -, -;    |
| (494) David Kale, 1987, -, -;          | (510) Alex M. Drummond, 1987, -, -;   |
| (495) Terry Butterworth, 1987, -, -;   | (511) D. H. W. Taylor, 1987, -, -;    |
| (496) David S. Adam, 1987, -, -;       | (512) Ian Leighton, 1978, -, 1978;    |
| (497) **Edna Stewart, 1987, -, -;      | and 1984, -, -;                       |
| (498) *J. Stanley Stewart, 1987, -, -; | (513) Timothy C. Outten, 1986, -, -;  |
| (499) Douglas Wylie, 1987, -, -;       | (514) Raymond G. Porter, 1987, -, -;  |
| (500) Vaughan Hammond, 1987, -, -;     | (515) David H. Purser, 1986, 1987, -; |
| (501) Graham S. Wilson, 1987, -, -;    | (516) Dawn Strickland, 1987, -, 1987; |
| (502) Iain Crosbie, 1987, -, -;        | (517) M.R. Lees, 1987, -, -;          |
| (503) Ian R. Young, 1987, -, -;        | (518) W.A.B. Kerr, 1986, -, 1986;     |

- (519) John Wyllie, 1980, -, -;  
 (520) Ashley Cooper, 1986, 1986, 1986;  
 (521) Chris. W. Lilley, 1987, -, -;  
 (522) Robert T. Walker, 1987, -, -;  
 (523) David Smith, 1985, -, -;  
 (524) Jacqueline Brodie, 1986, 1986, -;  
 (525) Nigel F. Toothill, 1986, 1986, -;  
 (526) John Brian McKay, 1986, 1986, -;  
 (527) R. J. Buchan, 1987, -, -;  
 (528) Ian C. McCallum, 1987, -, -;  
 (529) William Harrower, 1987, -, -;  
 (530) J. A. Baird, 1987, -, -;  
 (531) Julian Lines, 1987, -, -;  
 (532) Coll Findlay, 1986, -, -;  
 (533) Sandy Donald, 1987, -, -;  
 (534) Leon D. Firth, 1987, -, 1987;  
 (535) Peter Warburton, 1987, -, -;  
 (536) John Town, 1987, -, -;  
 (537) John Crombie, 1987, -, -;  
 (538) J. A. Scott, 1986, -, -;  
 (539) William Harkins, 1987, -, -;  
 (540) Diana J. Harkins, 1987, -, -;  
 (541) Jim Teesdale, 1974, -, -;  
 (542) Jim Chalmers, 1985, -, 1983;  
 (543) Margaret Cadenhead, 1986, -, -;  
 (544) Charles Cadenhead, 1986, -, -;  
 (545) Janet Sutcliffe, 1987, -, 1981;  
 (546) Geoff Eccles, 1987, -, 1987;  
 (547) George R. Craig, 1987, -, 1987;  
 (548) Andrew Mackin, 1987, -, -;  
 (549) Kenneth Layhe, 1987, -, 1981;  
 (550) Elizebeth Layhe, 1987, -, 1981;  
 (551) Jim Montgomery, 1987, 1987, -;  
 (552) Keith Reizin, 1987, -, -;  
 (553) John Cameron, 1987, -, -;  
 (554) Uinseann MacEoin, 1987, -, -;  
 (555) Edward A. Dick, 1987, -, -;  
 (556) Robin Howie, 1982, 1984, -;  
 and 1984, 1987,  
 and 1987;

**A Matter of Order.** - The numerical sequence is roughly in the order received as the precise sequence is too complex a task for the Clerk of the List, especially since it is not unknown for compleations to occur on the same time and date on different peaks. This raises interesting questions of whether the simple gauge of Greenwich Mean Time (or BST) is a fair basis for the sequence. After all a Munroist who finishes on Blaven is doing so over 12 minutes earlier by natural sun time than his rival who steps to the summit cairn of Mount Keen at the same time on the clock. Having reflected on these matters at length the Clerk has come to the conclusion that any pecking order based on numerical sequence is illusory and that the order of reportage will continue to reign. The flawed nature of judgements based on sequence is illustrated by the cases where reporting is initiated in good faith but because of failures in Her Majesty's mails or other links in the chain of communication the name in question does not appear in the next Journal list. There are still unreported Compleaters around. Every year new ones emerge from the woodwork. Some are given away by right thinking friends and others come round to autonomous confession. It took 12 years before (489) \*H. F. W. Taylor was driven to reveal his former addiction. His particular case reveals remission rather than cure, because he transferred his obsession to the Alps where he proceeded to gather the 4000m summits. Having joined that small group of elite compleaters he is wondering what to do next and is trying to purge these tendencies by developing his ice climbing techniques.

**What's in a Number?** - Numerical listing is becoming a more serious matter because we are rapidly approaching the cut off point of number 665 as suggested in SMCJ, 1983, xxxii, 389. Munroists are frequently vilified. A recent edition of the Moray Club newsletter refers to 'Munroists and other reptiles' which makes that club a notable nest of vipers! However the considerable correspondence received by the Clerk of the List suggests otherwise. Most Munroists reveal themselves to be pure of heart and motive and it would be quite wrong to label one with the dreadful number described in Revelations XIII, 18.

**A Matter of Record.** - The List of Compleaters is merely that, and makes no attempt to rank its members according to the special characteristics of their compleations. Some are fast, some are slow and who is to say where the merit lies. Most Munroists are unique in some eccentric way or another. Where space allows we refer to some of them in these pages, not to encourage the establishment of records - an activity alien to the philosophy of most hillgoers - but because they

are of general interest. Thus notable is the outbreak of *Munrosia Conjugalis* this year which has seen the listing of no fewer than six married couples who have completed their routes together and no doubt made their ascents to the final summit cairns hand in hand. Another is the completion by four members of the family Kale, the youngest of whom, David, was a mere 13 yrs and 10 months old. An unusual variety of *M. Sybaritis* was displayed by (535) Peter Warburton who maintained the stern discipline of hotel timetables and long approach walks, eschewed the easy options of tent or bothy throughout his round. He also resolutely refused to give the Highland midge sustenance by avoiding the hills between mid-June and the end of August. He also completed a solo round except for the Inaccessible but perhaps his most bitter failure was that on four nights he failed to return to a fully equipped and licensed hotel in accordance with J. Dow's admirable precept. As has been said we are not in the record game but leave this to the athletes. Fell runners and mountain runners are in this category and readers will already be aware that Munro bagging sometimes figures in their activities. One such feat was the 'Ramsay Round' of 24 Munros in 24 hours, including the Mamores, Nevis, the Grey Corries and Loch Treig hills. First done in 1978, this was repeated by Martin Stone running solo in February 1987 and extended to 26 Munros by including Sgor Gaibhre and Carn Dearg to the S.E. of Loch Ossian. Most of us would say 'congratulations, and the best of luck.' The full house by Ashley Cooper is notable because it was done in one continuous journey of 106 days.

**A Matter of Adjustment.** - The following have been recorded as cases of *Polymunrosia*:

(102) G. Downs - and 1987; (186) C. E. Barton - and 1987; (205) Tom Rix - and 1987; (327) R. S. Logan - and 1987, 1987, 1987; R. H. MacDonald - and 1987; (260) Geraldine Guestsmith has completed her third round - probably the only lady to have done so - and also her second round of the Tops. (16) Matthew Moulton has only done four rounds and not five as formerly listed.

Full houses with the addition of Tops and Furths are recorded by (195) Leonard Jamieson, (319) K. P. Whyte and (358) Michael Slater.

Quite a few Munroists are extending their activities to include Corbetts and even Donalds but we lack the secretarial resources to maintain records of these.

**On a lighter note.** - The final cairn is a frequent scene for celebration and among the enjoyable letters we receive are accounts of festivities such as the gathering of 40 members of the Lothian Region Highways Hill Walking Club who saw W. Harrower to the top of Creise. Other dissolute gatherings took place at the complications of Jim Montgomery (Moray Mountaineering Club) and Raymond Porter (Inverness M.C.) and no doubt at others. Occasionally the Clerk of the List is aware of a forthcoming celebration but is unable to attend. It remains his hope that some day he will coincide with some well lubricated affair on one of his all too few visits to a summit cairn.

**Wagging tail piece.** - We are advised by H. M. Brown that his dog Storm was the second Canine Compleater in 1985. An interesting speculation is what HMB would have done on the Inaccessible Pinnacle if his dog had been a St. Bernard instead of a Shetland Collie!



## SCOTTISH MOUNTAIN ACCIDENTS, 1987

## REGIONAL DISTRIBUTION 1987

*(Geographical Divisions are those used in SMC District Guidebooks)*

REGION	CASUALTIES (of which fatalities bracketed)				INCIDENTS							Non-Mountain-eering	
					Actual Rescues		Other Call Outs						
	Injury	Exhaust/Exposure Heat Exh./Frostbite	Illness	TOTAL	With Casualties	Cragfast	Separation	Lost	Overdue or Benighted	False Alarms	TOTAL INCIDENTS	Casualties	Incidents
Northern Highlands	8 (2)	2	1	11 (2)	10	1	3	2	3	2	21	2 (1)	3
Western Highlands	5 (1)	—	2 (2)	7 (3)	7	—	1	1	1	—	10	—	3
Ben Nevis	26 (3)	2	—	28 (3)	25	5	1	—	10	1	42	—	—
Glencoe	12 (1)	1	—	13 (1)	13	5	—	—	1	2	21	—	—
Other Central Highlands	14 (4)	—	1	15 (4)	13	2	—	—	3	1	19	1 (1)	1
Cairngorms	16 (4)	2	6 (1)	24 (5)	23	1	—	9	7	1	41	1 (1)	3
Southern Highlands	24 (3)	2	3 (3)	29 (6)	24	1	1	2	6	8	42	1 (1)	1
Skye	7	2	—	9	8	2	1	1	5	1	18	—	—
Islands (other than Skye)	8 (2)	—	2 (1)	10 (3)	10	—	1	2	2	—	15	1	2
Southern Uplands	2	—	1	3	3	1	—	1	1	2	8	2 (1)	3
All regions 1987 Totals	122 (20)	11 (—)	16 (7)	149 (27)	136	18	8	18	39	18	237	8 (5)	16
1986 Totals	122 (22)	22 (2)	9 (4)	153 (28)	130	9	13	13	24	21	210	15 (12)	28



## SEASON/ACTIVITY DISTRIBUTION (where known)

	<i>Summer</i>	<i>Winter</i>	<i>Total</i>
Hill walking incidents (with casualties)	58	27	85
Total Hill walking Incidents	96	45	141
Scrambling incidents (with casualties)	6	—	6
Total Scrambling Incidents	8	—	8
Climbing and abseiling (with casualties)	13	21	34
Total Climbing and abseiling incidents	25	31	56
Fell Running incidents (with casualties)	1	1	2
Off-piste ski-ing incident (with casualties)	—	4	4
Total Off-piste ski-ing incidents	—	10	10
Mountain cycling incidents (with casualties)	1	—	1
Rescue search (with casualties)	—	1	1
Rescue helicopter incident (with casualties)	—	1	1
TOTALS	131 60%	89 40%	220

## CONTRIBUTORY CAUSES OF SOME ACCIDENTS

Poor timing	40	Glissading	3
Navigation	19	Ice axe/crampons	3
Separation	10	Avalanche	2
Slips/Stumbles	41	Cornice	3
River crossings/spates	—	Climbing falls	
Dislodged rocks	4	on snow/ice	15
Abseiling	2	on rock	10
Slips on snow/ice	10		

## ACCIDENT LIST, 1987

## NORTHERN HIGHLANDS

JANUARY 1st – Last man (age 23) of a party of 3 descending Mullach an Rathain Stone Shoot (Liathach, Torridon) was killed outright by a fall of 1,000 feet. What was normally scree was névé and he slipped at the top losing his ice-axe and finally falling down a waterfall pitch. Torridon MRT and SYHA volunteers. 70mh.

MARCH 17th to 18th – Solo hillwalker (54) was leaving the summit of Beinn Dearg (Ullapool) when he tripped on his crampons and fell 20 feet on steep névé, losing his ice-axe, breaking a wrist and hurting his face. Regained consciousness and descended a fair way, then sheltered in a hollow. Found in survival bag next morning by air search, in good spirits but with exposure. Dundonnell MRT, Police, Police dog, helicopter. 106mh.

APRIL 24th – Quinag, Assynt. False Alarm. A car was left for several days and people became anxious. Assynt MRT and RAF helicopter found two people safe.

MAY 19th – Woman (53) got lost above Strathbrora (Sutherland) from Balnacoil Lodge. Found by RAF Sea King. Police and local volunteers.

- MAY 23rd - Husband (76) and wife were left behind by the rest of the party walking from Loch Broom to Dundonnell by hill track. He stumbled and banged his head and wife got lost and exhausted when going for help. Dundonnell MRT, HM Coastguard, RAF helicopter, SARDA. 86mh.
- JUNE 8th to 11th - Intensive searches of moorland, lochs and rivers by RAF Sea King, and of densely wooded areas by Police, Police dogs, SARDA, and RAF Kinloss MRT, for a hotel chef missing in the Contin area. 650mh.
- JUNE 11th - Man (36) located by RAF helicopter after he became separated from his companion between Suilven and Canisp.
- JULY 9th - Search for girl suffering from an illness on hill path on N. shore of Loch Shildaig. Torridon and Kinlochewe MRT, RAF Sea King, RAF Kinloss MRT. Fishing boat crew and local volunteers. 67mh.
- JULY 9th - Cantick Head, Caithness. Sea cliff accident. Boy with minor injuries recovered by lifeboat. HM Coastguard.
- JULY 19th to 20th - Body of a solo, inexperienced hill walker (m24) recovered from below an area of steep rock on the North Face of Ben Hope, Sutherland. Large scale searches. RAF Kinloss and Leuchars MRTs, Assynt MRT, Caithness Climbing Club, HM Coastguard, RAF Sea King and Wessex helicopters, Police. 1,057mh.
- JULY 20th to 21st - Two novice hill walkers were heading for Sgùrr an Fhìdhleir, Coigach, when they got stuck on awkward ground and decided to stay for the night. They were above Lochan Dearg on the peak NW of 'The Fiddler.' When it got light and the mist cleared one (m18) was cragfast, but the other (19) found his own way down. Dundonnell MRT, helicopter. 38mh.
- JULY 26th - Glen Coul, Sutherland. Climber (21) fell 120 feet, sustaining body bruising. He was rescued by boat and Coastguard helicopter.
- JULY 29th to 30th - After completing the Main Ridge of An Teallach, a pair of hill walkers (m41, f41) at Shenavall Bothy were overdue and worried they might cause an alarm. They tried to walk out and got lost in the dark. Found by helicopter checking bothy. Dundonnell MRT, Police, Police dog. 48mh.
- AUGUST 5th - Rubha Beag, Gruinard Bay. Walker (57) fell and broke her leg. Airlifted to Lewis Hospital, Stornoway.
- AUGUST 8th - Beinn na h-Eaglaise (Beinn Damh Forest) Torridon. Husband (63) and wife (64) separated! Distress signals were heard by other hillwalkers. Torridon MRT found them reunited.
- AUGUST 9th - Near Oykeall River (which drains S. slopes of Ben More Assynt) three walkers (m29, 28, f28) got lost in low cloud, failing to use map and compass correctly. Found by Assynt MRT and RAF helicopter.
- AUGUST 18th - Suilven, Lochinver. Man and 2 children walking. Daughter (11) fell and cut her head. They were able to get down unaided and attended doctor for stitching. Police. 2mh.
- AUGUST 25th - Scoraig Peninsula, Little Loch Broom, Ullapool. Man (66) got separated from 2 companions. Found by Coastguard helicopter from Stornoway.
- AUGUST 26th to 27th - Man (20) alone undertaking navigation course slipped over small rock outcrop, low down on the E. Peak of Beinn Liath Mhòr, Achnashellach. Broken ankle. Helicopter evacuation to Raigmore Hospital. Torridon and Kinlochewe MRT, Training Centre rescuers. 20mh.
- SEPTEMBER 17th - Party of 10 including 7 mentally handicapped walking coast path from Blughasary, Ullapool towards Achiltibuie found it too arduous and was benighted. Evacuated by RAF helicopter. Dundonnell MRT, SARDA, Police dog. 74mh.
- SEPTEMBER 28th - False alarm. NW end of Loch Veyatie (under Suilven). 4 men were camping with a small fire which was mistaken for a distress signal. Assynt MRT.

NOVEMBER 27th – Tongue area. Missing man (78) found by RAF Sea King.

#### NON-MOUNTAINEERING

APRIL 17th – Young woman drowned when diving. Missing diver, her fiancé was evacuated by RAF Sea King. Rocky islet of Soyca, Lochinver. Assynt MRT, Lifeboat.

DECEMBER 22nd – Lochluichart area. RAF Sea King search. Missing man found dead by Police.

#### WESTERN HIGHLANDS

APRIL 24th to 26th – Solo hillwalker (50) killed by fall from steep ground on the North Face of Sgùrr nan Coireachan above Loch Quoich. (NB – This is not the Glen Finnan Sgùrr nan Coireachan). His ice-axe was still attached to his rucksack. Body found after extensive searches by Lochaber MRT, SARDA and RAF Wessex helicopters. 329mh.

MAY 19th to 20th – Solo hillwalker got lost on An Riabhachan and was benighted. Luckily he found his way back to his car near Monar Lodge in Glen Strathfarrar. Searches by Cairngorm and Kinloss MRTs, SARDA, RAF Sea King. 90mh.

MAY 25th to 30th – Searches for patient (m36) missing from Craig Dunain Hospital on the hills to W. and N. of the foot of Loch Ness. He died and was found at 1,300 feet on Doir Mhór by RAF Sea King, Cairngorm and RAF Kinloss MRTs, Inverness Mountaineering Club. 300mh.

JUNE 15th – An Sornum (?), Glen Affric. (Could this be An Sornach or An Socach?) A hillwalker (75) fell and broke his leg so severely that he was evacuated by RAF helicopter to Raigmore Hospital.

JUNE 15th – RAF Sea King airborne but not required. Hillwalker (m75) missing on Glen Affric hills walked down safely.

JULY 6th to 7th – Ill-equipped and inexperienced party of eight split into two groups depending on pace when darkness fell. Alarm was raised when they got into slight difficulties in Glen Lichd. Led down by Kintail MRT. 11mh.

JULY 14th – Man walking with companion near Loch Bhraomisaig, Inverie, Knoydart slipped and broke his leg. Evacuated by RAF Wessex.

JULY 15th – Man slipped on steep path in Glen Finnan and broke ankle.

JULY 28th – Girl student (16) in a large party traversing Sgùrr nan Forcan Ridge on The Saddle, Kintail, slipped on steep grass and fell 200 feet, sustaining bruises and facial injuries. She fell down the N. side of the ridge and was evacuated by RAF Sea King, Kintail MRT and Police. 25mh.

SEPTEMBER 27th – Woman (37) on Sgùrr nan Forcan Ridge, The Saddle, slipped and rolled 100 feet, breaking a leg. One companion stayed with her and the other went down to raise the alarm. Airlifted by RAF helicopter. Kintail MRT. 14mh.

OCTOBER 6th – Path over Bealach na Sroine, Kintail. Man (38) was walking with one companion and died of heart attack. Flown out by RAF helicopter. Kintail MRT and Police. 13mh.

Meanwhile his mother was paying an anniversary visit to Arran where her elder son died two years ago of a heart attack. He died on Mullach Buidhe on October 7th, 1985.

#### NON-MOUNTAINEERING

JULY 15th to 16th – Search for missing Craig Dunain Hospital patient (m67) by RAF Kinloss MRT, RAF Sea King and Police dogs. 252mh. Returned unaided.

AUGUST 25th - Search for man (47) overdue. Cut off by tide when exploring a small island near Sandaig Is. He settled down and even missed the next low tide. Seen on island by Glenelg MRT. 78mh.

OCTOBER 20th to 22nd - Search for Craig Dunain Hospital patient (m67). Found by RAF Kinloss MRT, Police dogs and local searchers. 98mh.

DECEMBER 28th - Search for missing man (28) in Upper Strathconon. His pullover was subsequently found in the river which was running high at the time of his disappearance. Local volunteers, Police search dogs and diving team, RAF Kinloss MRT, RAF Sea King helicopter.

## BEN NEVIS

JANUARY 1st to 2nd - Two men (27, 21) had gone to Nevis summit on Hogmanay to see New Year in. Having lost their map they took a westerly bearing to descend and of course came down Five Finger Gully. In a small slab avalanche one had his shoulder dislocated. The injured one bivvied in a sleeping bag and poly. bag while the other went for help, losing a boot en route. In darkness, Lochaber MRT went above waterfall in Five Finger Gully in very dangerous slab avalanche conditions, mist and spindrift, then messenger remembered he had marked the gully with his ice-axe by the roadside. It turned out to be Surgeon's Gully. Casualty was lifted out by RAF Sea King at first light. Team recovered abandoned stretcher from Five Finger Gully but had to climb up to Tourist Track to get out. Lochaber and Leuchars MRTs. 350mh.

JANUARY 2nd to 3rd - Party of 5 climbed No. 5 Gully and were descending Càrn Dearg NW very late when one (23) slipped and injured his head. A deerstalker spotted a red flare and the party was airlifted by an RAF Wessex. Lochaber MRT. 8mh.

JANUARY 3rd to 4th - After climbing Tower Ridge, two parties of two (f30, m30, 24, 23) got lost, descended Five Finger Gully, and got cragfast. Distress flares were seen and all were led down by Lochaber MRT. 100mh.

JANUARY 26th to 27th - Benighted at the top pitch of Glover's Chimney, two men (25, 20) completed climb next day and went down to CIC Hut via Halfway Lochan. Lochaber MRT and SARDA, RAF Wessex. 70mh.

JANUARY 31st - After climbing Minus 3 Gully a climber (25) fell all the way down No. 3 Gully from the cornice to the bottom, breaking his ribs and sustaining cuts and bruises. RAF Wessex on training exercise took one Lochaber MRT member to the CIC Hut whence the casualty was evacuated, having walked down to there. ½mh.

FEBRUARY 6th to 7th - Two men (36, 28) benighted on Nevis summit due to bad visibility. Found safe early next day by Lochaber MRT.

FEBRUARY 7th to 8th - Six Lochaber MRT members rescued ELEVEN climbers who were benighted at the Eastern Traverse on Tower Ridge by top roping them up. In good conditions they had just waited for rescue. They had been in two parties of 3, and one of 5. One newspaper report said all 11 were Englishmen. 36mh.

FEBRUARY 14th - Smith's Route, Ben Nevis. Roped climber (32) fell 40 feet on snow/rock. A crampon caught and twisted his knee. Friends got him to CIC Hut. Airlifted by RAF Wessex. Lochaber MRT. 12mh.

FEBRUARY 15th - Climber (26) unroped, fell down No. 3 Gully and broke his ankle. Rescued by stretcher carry and airlifted by RAF Wessex. Lochaber MRT. 12mh.

FEBRUARY 18th - Party of 2 men (36, 28) benighted on Nevis summit. They returned safe at first light.

FEBRUARY 18th - Two men (31, 25) were slowed on their climb by less competent people ahead. Consequently they were benighted on Nevis summit. Descended next morning without incident.

- FEBRUARY 21st - 5 climbers overdue. Found on NE Buttress by RAF helicopter and Lochaber MRT. They were safe and said they had decided to stay another day on the mountain.
- FEBRUARY 24th - Central Gully, Craig Coire na Ciste. Ice-axes came out and leader fell 100 feet being unhurt, but second (56) was pulled off and fell 10 feet dislocating his shoulder. Stretcher lowered to CIC Hut and then airlifted by RAF Wessex. Lochaber MRT. 14mh.
- FEBRUARY 25th to 26th - Group overdue on Ben Nevis. Turned up next day.
- FEBRUARY 25th to 26th - Another group overdue on N. Face of Ben Nevis. Turned up after night out.
- MARCH 3rd to 4th - soloing Comb Gully Buttress a climber (27) fell 200 feet into Comb Gully breaking his ankle. He was spotted by other climbers who took him to CIC Hut where he was examined by a doctor and spent the night. Lochaber MRT stretchered him down next morning. 42mh.
- MARCH 6th or 7th - The body of a solo climber (26) was found on 7th by climbers making their way up Observatory Gully. They had no idea what route he had been climbing. He had no crampons or helmet on, but they could have been lost in the fall, as was his sack. Stretchered off by Lochaber MRT to tracked vehicle. 65mh.
- MARCH 7th - Cragfast hillwalker (22) was taken down from a height of about 700 feet, just west of Antler Gully, Glen Nevis by RAF Kinloss MRT. His companion had lost sight of him. 18mh.
- MARCH 9th to 10th - Climber (22) fell on The Curtain and twisted his ankle. Airlifted from CIC Hut by RAF Wessex. Lochaber MRT. 6mh.
- MARCH 10th - Climber (m33) fell on ice at the foot of Waterfall Gully fracturing tibia and fibula. RAF Wessex airlift. Lochaber MRT. 6mh.
- MARCH 10th - Male glissader (22) in No. 4 Gully fell 700 feet and broke his leg (fibula). Evacuated by RAF Wessex. Lochaber MRT. 8mh.
- MARCH 14th to 15th - Man (33) and woman (31) cragfast halfway up Observatory Ridge. Lochaber MRT climbed up and also roped down to bring them up to the summit, from where they were airlifted by RAF Wessex. Lochaber MRT. 200mh.
- MARCH 24th - Party of 3 ascending Nevis Tourist Path took a short-cut between the zig-zags. Leading walker knocked a boulder off which broke his companion's leg. (m21) Compound fracture of tibia and fibula. Airlifted by RAF Wessex. Lochaber MRT. 6mh.
- MARCH 24th - A schoolteacher, his son and a pal (all male 40, 12, 12) suffered cuts and bruises when avalanched in Red Burn. They were rescued by Lochaber MRT and taken to Belford Hospital.
- APRIL 3rd - Roped pair were seen to fall from the Little Tower of Tower Ridge (m26, m25). They were killed outright and still roped fell to the foot of Garadh Gully. Gale at the time. Brought out by RAF Wessex. Lochaber MRT. 36mh.
- APRIL 5th - Party of 3 going up Tourist Track took a short-cut at the Red Burn end of the zig-zags. They decided it was too icy and turned back. Victim (20) without crampons or ice-axe, slipped and slid 150 feet, bounced over a boulder and slid another 50 feet on to scree, breaking his arm and sustaining a skull fracture with bad cuts to face and head. RAF Wessex flew Lochaber MRT doctor to casualty and then airlifted him. 18mh.
- APRIL 27th - Two fell runners in training got lost descending from Nevis summit and went down Coire Eoghainn of Càrn Dearg SW. Casualty (14) fell down a snow slope. He was found and flown out by RAF Wessex. Wearing trainers. No ice-axe, map, compass, spare clothing. Lochaber MRT. 2mh.
- MAY 26th - Walker (54) descending from Nevis summit by the Tourist Route slipped and gashed his head. Stretchered down by Lochaber MRT from 1,400 feet. 15mh.

- JUNE 2nd - False alarm. Walker on Càrn Mòr Dearg heard shouts and rockfall from Coire na Ciste of Ben Nevis and thought someone had 'come off.' Lochaber MRT. RAF Sea King. 12mh.
- JULY 4th - Girl (14) in a party of 8 fainted at 3,500 feet on Tourist Track. Helped down by her own party. Lochaber MRT. 2mh.
- JULY 6th - Walker (51) on Tourist Path at 2,000 feet stumbled and went over on her ankle, breaking it. She wore light walking boots. Lochaber MRT. 30mh.
- JULY 26th - Runner on Half Ben Race fell when descending Tourist Track severely cutting his knee. He was carried down on a stretcher by Lochaber MRT who were in position anyway, providing safety cover. 12mh.
- AUGUST 2nd - Roped pair (m47, m14) underestimated time required to climb Tower Ridge. They found their own way down an hour after midnight. Lochaber MRT. RAF Wessex. 42mh.
- AUGUST 6th - Walker (50) went over on his ankle, breaking fibula. Evacuated by RAF Wessex from 2,500 feet on Tourist Path. Lochaber MRT. 6mh.
- AUGUST 11th - Party took 5 hours to reach Nevis summit and were very tired. Woman's legs would no longer support her when they got down to 1,250 feet even though they had taken another 4 hours to descend. Stretchered off by Lochaber MRT. Tourist Route. 6mh.
- AUGUST 16th - Lad (13) descending Tourist Track ahead of his parents missed the zig-zag above Halfway Lochan and went down into Allt a' Mhuilinn. He was found at the dam by Lochaber MRT. 13mh.
- AUGUST 16th - Two Lochaber MRT members on previous search met a girl with torn ligaments at 2,500 feet on Tourist Path who could not walk any further. A stretcher was made from a polythene bag and they carried her down assisted by her male companion. 6mh.
- AUGUST 31st - Ill-equipped gambler (28) wearing Doc Marten type boots went up the Tourist Path to Nevis summit and decided to go to the CIC Hut. He took 'pot luck' and started to descend the cliffs from the summit! By chance he was going down Observatory Ridge. Approximately two-thirds of the way down he slid 10 feet and got stuck in a small chimney, being held by a sports bag slung diagonally over his shoulder. At this point he lost his nerve! Other climbers on Tower Ridge raised the alarm and he was winched off by RAF Sea King. Lochaber MRT. 21mh.
- SEPTEMBER 19th to 20th - Two men got stuck on Long Climb. They abseiled part way but were benighted and spent the night on a ledge, completing the abseils in the morning. They were met by Lochaber MRT members when walking down the path. 20mh.
- OCTOBER 3rd - One of a party of three descending from Nevis summit by Tourist Track suffered from locked knees, and was helped down from Halfway Lochan by Lochaber MRT.
- OCTOBER 3rd - Lochaber MRT was alerted for a walker on the Nevis Path with a Great Dane dog which could walk no further because of bleeding paws. When two team members arrived the dog, which weighed 13 stone, had been carried down by some soldiers on a makeshift stretcher. 2mh.
- OCTOBER 23rd - Family of 5 were reported to be moving down the Nevis Path very slowly in the dark with no torches. Lochaber MRT went to 3,500 feet but saw no one. 5mh.
- DECEMBER 12th - Climbing a small ice pitch in Coire na Ciste a man (24) fell, cutting his head and a knee. Airlifted by RAF Sea King helicopter. Lochaber MRT. 20mh. MRT. 6mh.

### GLENCOE including BUACHAILLE ETIVE MÒR

JANUARY 2nd to 3rd - Crowberry Gully, Buachaille Etive Mòr. Party of five cragfast (m29, 25, 25, 22, f26). Escorted down by Glencoe MRT and Police. 66mh.

FEBRUARY 7th or 8th - Man fell when roped to two companions on Stob Coire nan Lochan. Not seriously injured. Glencoe MRT and RAF Sea King.

FEBRUARY 15th - Aonach Eagach at the steep step just west of Am Bodach. Man (24) stumbled against woman (22) and knocked her off. She fell 100 feet suffering bruising and cuts to face. RAF helicopter airlifted both to Belford Hospital. Man was uninjured. Glencoe MRT and Police. 14mh.

FEBRUARY 15th or 16th - Stob na Broige, Buachaille Etive Mòr. Climber reported to have fallen down. False Alarm?

FEBRUARY 24th - Aonach Eagach steep step below Am Bodach. The ridge was very crowded with climbers. Unroped man (39) fell 500 feet to south, sustaining head and shoulder injuries, stopping in a snow scoop immediately above a big drop. Snow depth on the ridge was two inches with rock protruding and not icy. He had overbalanced forwards when trying to get past others when going down the Bad Step. Airlifted by RAF Wessex.

MARCH 2nd - Man (35) injured by a 500 feet slide down a steep snow slope into exposed scree. He was descending Buachaille Etive Mòr and slipped or tripped over his crampons at the head of Coire na Tulaich, losing his ice-axe whilst trying to brake with it. RAF helicopter to Belford Hospital. Glencoe MRT. 42mh.

APRIL 18th - Summit Gully, Stob Coire nam Beithe. Deceased (23) had no crampons and was kicking steps in the hard snow. He slipped, partially managed to arrest his fall, but his ice-axe failed to hold properly and he slid for 1,200 feet. His companion raised the alarm. Glencoe MRT and RAF helicopter.

APRIL 18th and 19th - Large scale searches of the Glencoe mountains for a climber with an alleged femur fracture were triggered off by a hoax radio message on the civilian mountain rescue frequency. Glencoe and Lochaber, RAF Kinloss and Stafford MRTs, RAF Wessex and Sea King helicopters were involved with probably about 600 or 700 man hours wasted. A man was tried in connection with the incident at Inverness in July.

MAY 10th - Rope of three climbing Crowberry Ridge, Buachaille Etive Mòr. When out of sight of the others, the leader fell fifteen feet. The rope stopped him but his ankle was fractured. Rescued by Glencoe MRT and airlifted by RAF Wessex which was in the area to Belford Hospital. 22mh.

JUNE 26th - Unequipped walker (39) intended to descend path parallel to Clachaig Gully but he went down the gully itself and got cragfast at Red Chimney. Escorted down by Glencoe MRT and Police. 25mh.

JULY 11th - Walking with an organised group of six along the Old Road through Glencoe east of Achtriochtan Farm a woman (32) slipped on the grass covered track and broke her ankle. She was stretchered out by Glencoe MRT. 6mh.

JULY 14th - Walking on steep ground, accompanied by his wife on the east slopes of Stob Coire Sgreamhach above Lairig Eilde, casualty (39) slipped crossing a burn and fell 20 feet on to scree, sustaining cuts. Glencoe MRT and RAF helicopter. 23mh.

JULY 18th - Summit Gully, Stob Coire nam Beith. Man (38) abseiling when belay gave way and he fell 40 feet breaking a leg. His companion (20) descended for help but she was not able to give an accurate location. He was found after midnight in rain and gale, and evacuation by Glencoe and Lochaber MRTs and RAF Wessex was delayed till first light on 19th. 325mh.

JULY 23rd and 24th - Glencoe MRT and RAF Sea King combined in rescuing a cragfast abseiler (21) from Raven's Gully of Buachaille Etive Mòr. His rock-spike abseil point had broken and he had fallen forty feet, being uninjured but losing his nerve, flashing the distress signal with a torch. 50mh.



- AUGUST 4th - Man broke both legs in Clachaig Gully 'negotiating' Aonach Eagach. Glencoe MRT. Flown by RAF Wessex to Belford Hospital.
- AUGUST 8th to 9th - Party of three men (37, 37, 19) were benighted and cragfast at the Red Chimney Pitch of Clachaig Gully. Glencoe MRT helped them to the path beside the gully, whence everyone was airlifted by an RAF helicopter.
- AUGUST 24th - 50 year old woman slipped and broke a leg near Signal Rock. Helped by Glencoe MRT and taken to Belford Hospital.
- AUGUST 28th to 29th - 2 men (34, 24) were benighted on the Aonach Eagach due to bad weather. Glencoe MRT met them coming down.
- SEPTEMBER 4th to 5th - SW slopes of West Peak of Sgùrr nam Fiannaidh. Woman (about 20) stretchered off suffering from exhaustion/exposure. Glencoe and Lochaber MRTs, SARDA. 46mh.
- SEPTEMBER 18th - Retired man descending Coire na Tulaich, Buachaille Etive Mòr stumbled on scree and went over on his ankle. Stretcher carried down to road by Glencoe MRT. Belford Hospital. 24mh.
- SEPTEMBER 26th to 27th - Three men benighted in Clachaig Gully below Red Chimney pitch. Recovered by Glencoe MRT by pulling first man up on a 300 feet rope, and then pulling others up on their own ropes tied between them, from the side of the gully. Loud hailer used. 35mh.

### OTHER CENTRAL HIGHLANDS

- JANUARY 27th - South Ridge of Na Gruagaichean, Mamores in good snow conditions. Victim (18) descending very steep heather stumbled and fell 100 feet causing a very deep cut to his thigh. A wooden shafted ice-axe broke during the fall. His companion raised the alarm and he was stretchered down by Lochaber MRT. 60mh.
- FEBRUARY 14th - East Face of Am Bodach, Mamores in good snow conditions. Solo hillwalker (21) was seen to fall 1,000 feet down a snow slope by a separate party. He was dead when they reached him. Reason for the fall may have been that he was not wearing crampons. Instep crampons were found still strapped to the outside of his rucksack. Lochaber and Glencoe MRTs, Police, RAF Wessex. 13mh.
- FEBRUARY 14th to 15th - Three men at the top of South Post, Creag Meagaidh, repeatedly flashed distress signals and replied to answering flashes. Lochaber MRT and RAF Wessex found them walking down the path and they claimed that they did not signal for help. 65mh.
- FEBRUARY 18th - Two men (35, 22) were benighted due to bad weather in Coire Ardair of Creag Meagaidh. Walked off unaided next morning.
- MARCH 2nd - Two walkers descending Aonach Beag towards Steall Ruin. One (23) simply slipped on steep grass (freezing) and went over on his ankle breaking the fibula. Carried on stretcher to Steall Car Park by Lochaber MRT. 40mh.
- MARCH 7th to 8th - Man (50s) and woman (40s) went on to Geal Charn of the Monadhliath Group NW of Laggan Bridge on a very stormy day, when winds (recorded on Cairngorm) were 100 to 120 mph all day. Rescuers thought they had gone through a cornice triggering off an avalanche on the East Face. Bodies were found by SARDA dogs of Cairngorm MRT. RAF Kinloss also on search. RAF Wessex broke down. Man was killed outright (asphyxia from broken neck). Woman with slight injuries died from exhaustion/exposure going for help. 300mh.
- MARCH 14th - South Pipe Direct of Staghorn Gully, Creag Meagaidh. A rope of three were climbing when the gully avalanched. The first belay came out and two climbers (m25, m20) fell till held on their ropes by the belay of the third man (20) who was not in the avalanche. One had a fractured clavicle and the other slight injuries. They were winched off by RAF Sea King. Third man, uninjured, walked down. Cairngorm and Lochaber MRTs. 86mh.



- MARCH 14th - Glass Slipper, Creag Meagaidh. Man (41) airlifted to Belford Hospital with a broken ankle.
- APRIL 2nd - Losing her footing and falling down a grassy slope on Ben Starav, Glen Etive, a walker (52) sustained bruises. Due to bad weather her companions did not find her. Glencoe MRT did so and she was airlifted down.
- MAY 18th - Corrieyairack Pass. Walking through from Fort Augustus 61 year-old took a 'turn' but was able to continue, but then he took a second attack. Doctor was flown to Ref. 395005 by RAF Sea King and patient airlifted to Raigmore Hospital. Warm weather. Lochaber MRT. 2mh.
- MAY 23rd - Leader (m) fell from First Pitch of Acapulco (E3) on Creag Dubh, Newtonmore pulling two runners. Sustained chest injuries. Cairngorm MRT and RAF Wessex. 6mh.
- MAY 25th - Roped climber fell on Creag Dubh, Newtonmore sustaining spine and chest injuries. Glenmore MRT. 6mh.
- MAY 28th - Monadh Liath area. 5704N 00424W. Missing male left with Police. RAF Sea King.
- MAY 28th to 29th - False Alarm. Flashing light seen on Beinn Inverveigh by tourist on road near Bridge of Orchy may have been caused by rays from setting sun flashing on summit wind generator. Oban Police. 17mh.
- AUGUST 2nd - Man overdue on Stob Bhan found his own way down. Lochaber MRT. 6mh.
- AUGUST 8th to 9th - Two men (23, 19) climbing 'The Long Wait' on Etive Slabs dropped their rope when carrying out an adjustment and so became cragfast. Airlifted off Slabs by RAF helicopter at 02.10 hours. Glencoe MRT. 18mh.
- AUGUST 30th - Riding a Mountain Bicycle along the old British Aluminium Co. railway line (which runs along below Ben Nevis and the Aonachs to Loch Treig, and which is now rail-less, almost bridge-less and derelict) was a youth of 16. At a bridge over a burn the cyclist's front wheel went into a hole and he went over the handlebars, falling 50 feet into the gorge. He died during rescue. Lochaber MRT. 4mh.
- OCTOBER 12th - Party of 5 friends descending steep South Face of Na Gruagaichean, Mamores (heather and boulders). Female (57) stumbled and rolled 250 feet, sustaining chest injuries. Airlift to Belford Hospital by RAF. Glencoe MRT and Police. 17mh.
- DECEMBER 30th - Descending Càrn Mòr Dearg (or Aonach Beag (?)) one of two hillwalkers (21) on steep ground used a large boulder to hold on to. As he stepped down the boulder came away; he fell 6 feet and the boulder landed on his legs, breaking one of them. Stretcher carried down by Lochaber MRT. RAF Sea King used. 138mh.

#### NON-MOUNTAINEERING

- NOVEMBER 5th - Sweep Search by Glencoe MRT, Police and SARDA for an old man (87) found dead near his home in shallow water in the River Laroch, Ballachulish. 15mh.

#### CAIRNGORMS

- JANUARY 7th - False alarm. Two climbers reported to be in difficulties in Glen Clova area, but they were OK. Tayside MRTs. 31mh.
- JANUARY 31st - 3 climbers overdue in Spiral Gully, Coire an t-Sneachda of Cairngorm. (All male 31, 25, 23). Absailed off and returned to Car Park unaided. Cairngorm and Glenmore MRTs. 15mh.

- FEBRUARY 1st - Party of three climbers overdue on Spiral Gully, Coire an t-Sneachda. They started the climb at 14.00 and abseiled off three hours later when it got dark, saying, 'We underestimated the mountain and the climb.' Cairngorm and Glenmore Lodge MRTs, SARDA. 12mh.
- FEBRUARY 7th - Roped pair climbing Pinnacle Gully 1 (Grade IV ice climb) Lochnagar. Leader (47) fell from 3rd pitch and was held by second after falling 200 feet. He sustained a crush fracture of D4 vertebra and despite wearing a helmet he suffered severe concussion. Stretchered down to snow vehicle by Grampian Police, Braemar and RUC MRTs. 157mh.
- FEBRUARY 9th - Skier in Coire na Ciste of Cairngorm lost her nerve and decided to walk back up to the summit. En route she went on a bank of rocks near to the West Wall Gully, tripped and fell, striking her head on rocks. Fatal. Evacuated by RAF helicopter.
- FEBRUARY 13th - Three male skiers (25, 18, 18) were overdue on Ben Macdui in worsening weather. Cairngorm MRT assembled and skiers turned up at Coire Cas 5 hours later.
- FEBRUARY 19th to 20th - 2 hillwalkers lost (m40, m32) trying to walk from the head of Loch Lee in Glen N. Esk to Clova via Loch Brandy, carrying on although they had left their map in the car. They stumbled on The Shielling of Saughs (396757) in mist, sleet and darkening, about 2 miles East of their intended route, and were found there next morning by RAF Wessex. Tayside MRTs. 181mh.
- FEBRUARY 19th to 20th - Ski Touring - RAF helicopter found two benighted Nordic skiers in Strath Nethy. The weather had clagged in and as their navigation was not up to it they wisely decided to stay an extra night out. Cairngorm MRT. 2mh.
- FEBRUARY 21st to 22nd - Two men, named Tough and Hardy! (40, 34) touring on Alpine skis had problems with a ski binding and a skin when returning from Ben Macdui. They found a snow cave in Coire Raibeirt and spent the night in it, making their own way down next day. Searches by helicopters, SARDA, tracked vehicle, Cairngorm, Glenmore and Tweed Valley MRTs.
- FEBRUARY 22nd - Man (23) killed when he slipped down a face and was buried in boulders at Stirling Hill, South of Boddam.
- FEBRUARY 23rd - Two experienced climbers (28, 28) overdue had last been seen at Hell's Lum. Because of the mens' experience search was postponed and they returned safely. (Loch Avon).
- MARCH 7th - One member (13) of a party of ten lads on an organised expedition suffered exposure near the summit of Cat Law, Lintrathen, Angus and was flown out by RAF Wessex. He was the one person not properly equipped for the expedition in snow and strong East wind. Tayside MRTs. 10mh.
- MARCH 8th - Boy (12) got lost in mist and drifting snow ski-ing on Carn Aosda summit and skied down the wrong side into Glen Baddoch. Aberdeen, Braemar and Police MRTs. 80mh.
- MARCH 12th to 13th - Two men (36, 35) climbing 'White Nile' on the South Face of Braeriach. Second failed to follow the leader over the cornice. The leader left him under the cornice at 14.00 on Thursday and reported to the Police at 10.50 Friday. Evacuated by RAF Sea King. Cairngorm MRT. 4mh.
- MARCH 21st to 22nd - Having failed to overcome the cornice at the top of Raeburn's Gully, Lochnagar, two men (46, 24) had to climb back down and got lost returning to Spital of Glenmuick. Met by rescuers early next morning. Aberdeen, Braemar and Police MRTs. 98mh.
- MARCH 22nd - Woman leading a roped pair up Red Gully, Coire an t-Sneachda fell 50 feet and was injured. Glenmore MRT, RAF Sea King.

- MARCH 22nd - Descending NE from Cairn Toul summit towards Garbh Coire Bothy, a party of six, all wearing crampons, unroped below cloud level. There was still steep ground below and they were about to rope up again when one woman (32) fell 500 feet from a steep snow-covered boulder field, sustaining fatal head injuries. Evacuated by RAF Sea King. Northern Constabulary. 1mh.
- APRIL 1st - Cross-country skier (18) tore knee ligaments in Lurchers Gully. Companion raised the alarm and he was airlifted out.
- APRIL 2nd to 3rd - A couple of skiers (m47, f45) went by tow to the summit of Meall Odhar, skied off in wrong direction and got lost at approximate reference 152758. They then went uphill on to the ridge of Glas Maol, remodelled a cairn into a shelter and spent the night there, returning to the A93 next morning. Searches by Aberdeen, Braemar, Leuchars, Police and Tayside MRTs. 420mh.
- APRIL 3rd - During the above search, two members of Tayside MRT (m52, m40) who were at the left end of a line sweep went through a cornice and fell 500 feet into Caenlochan Glen, sustaining back and shoulder injuries. Conditions were 'white-out' and atrocious. Leuchars and Tayside MRTs, SARDA, RAF Wessex and Sea King helicopters. 270mh.
- APRIL 4th to 5th - Group of 4 men, not sufficiently experienced, particularly in navigation, to cope with the conditions, got lost on Cairngorm and spent the night out as a result. Walked out by Strath Nethy. RAF helicopter, Cairngorm and Glenmore MRTs. 38mh.
- APRIL 6th - Student on a ski mountaineering course suffered angina for the first time. He was flown out by RAF Sea King.
- APRIL 10th - Skier with heart attack flown from Tomintoul area to Aberdeen Royal Infirmary by RAF Sea King.
- APRIL 18th - Male hillwalker suffering concussion flown from Northern Cairngorms to Glenmore Lodge by RAF Sea King.
- APRIL 19th - Leader (26) fell 30 feet from Cave Route, Huntly's Cave, Grantown-on-Spey, pulling three runners out and breaking his leg. Cairngorm MRT. 9mh.
- APRIL 20th - Lurchers Gully (North of Cairn Lochan). Woman (29) fractured her leg cross-country ski-ing. Her companion summoned help and she was airlifted direct to Raigmore Hospital, Inverness, by RAF helicopter.
- MAY 2nd to 3rd - One of a party of four (aged 38) crossing the Lairig Ghru from south to north felt ill at Pools of Dee. His companions helped him to Sinclair Hut but by then he was suffering from exposure. Stretchered out by Cairngorm MRT. 100mh.
- MAY 11th - To reach the small hill lochan known as Carlochay of Lee above Glenesk, an angler (60) had to climb 500 feet up heather and grass. Sheltering behind a rock during a downpour of rain he died of a heart attack. Tayside Police S and RU, RAF Wessex. 9mh.
- MAY 20th - Hillwalker (59) slipped on a large rock near the burn in Coire Garbhloch above Glen Feshie, breaking an ankle. His companion went for help. Winched up by RAF Sea King. Cairngorm MRT. 16mh.
- JUNE 4th - Girl (16) from a school party in Coire an Lochan, Cairngorm fell on snow and was injured. Airlifted by RAF Sea King.
- JULY 5th to 6th - Hillwalker (22) separated from his companion and got completely lost on walk to Ben Macdui in good, clear weather. Aberdeen, Braemar and Grampian Police MRTs. 38mh.
- JULY 12th - Search by RAF Sea King for missing boy at Peterhead. Nothing found.
- JULY 16th to 17th - Girl (16) with illness evacuated from campsite in Glen Quoich, Braemar by Braemar and Grampian Police MRTs. 80mh.
- JULY 26th - An exhausted woman (61) was removed from the Pools of Dee, Lairig Ghru, to Glenmore Lodge and treated by a doctor.

- JULY 28th to AUGUST 1st - Two lads (both 17) planned an expedition south through the Lairig Ghru to White Bridge, Glen Dee, then by the Geldie/Feshie pass to Feshiebridge. They made an error by crossing the Geldie on to the south (true right) bank, and then moved into the wilderness near the source of Feshie rather than down the Feshie into the glen. They had stayed put in their tent from Wednesday till found at ref 856836 at 16.30 on Saturday by RAF Sea King. Extensive searches by Sea King and Wessex helicopters, Aberdeen, Braemar, Cairngorm, Kinloss, Leuchars MRTs, SARDA. 2,011mh plus 36 flying hours.
- JULY 28th to 29th - Searches for a party of six boys and girls aged from 16 to 18 heading from Linn of Dee to Bynack Stables by the Lairig an Laoigh route. Braemar, Cairngorm, Glenmore, RAF Kinloss MRTs. 88mh.
- AUGUST 14th - Schoolgirl (15) was being chased along the Kilbo Path, Glen Doll by another member of a large party in a form of horseplay. She fell back, striking her head. No serious injury.
- SEPTEMBER 13th - On a hillwalking course, a woman (50) broke her ankle when she slipped on rough ground. Airlifted from Creagan Gorm (North of Loch Morlich) by RAF to Raigmore Hospital.
- SEPTEMBER 20th - Schoolteacher (m56) with 10 children was overdue on Cairngorm. They were found safe having been lost in poor visibility.
- NOVEMBER 8th - Search of Rothiemurchus Woods for man (61) known to be suffering from diabetes. Found by a Police dog, safe but confused. SARDA, RAF Sea King, Cairngorm and Kinloss MRTs. 287mh.
- NOVEMBER 14th to 15th - Hillwalker (28) probably got lost near Cairngorm summit. Searches were carried out (in 60 mph winds with snow drifting) by Aberdeen, Braemar, Cairngorm, RAF Kinloss and Leuchars MRTs, and Sea King and Wessex helicopters. The body of the walker was found by a SARDA dog and handler at the bottom of Stac an Fharaidh, the crag forming the South Face of Cairngorm above Loch Avon. He had apparently fallen 200 feet. His compass had been left in his car in Coire Cas. 1,071mh.

### NON-MOUNTAINEERING

- AUGUST 22nd - RAF Sea King used. Microlite aircraft crashed near Aberlour, Strath Spey.
- OCTOBER 8th - Braemar and Grampian Police MRTs searched Loch Muick area for a hillwalker later found dead in his car. 42mh.
- NOVEMBER 16th - Search by RAF Sea King for 2 schoolchildren missing 10 nautical miles north of Aberdeen.

### SOUTHERN HIGHLANDS

- JANUARY 3rd - Search carried out for a man (40) descending Lomond Tourist Path who went slower than his 2 companions so they left him behind. Lomond MRT. 40mh.
- JANUARY 3rd - Walker separated from his 3 male companions on summit of Beinn Cheathaich (Glen Lochay Hills) and reported them missing when they were overdue. They descended (one exhausted) to Auchessan. Killin MRT, 118mh.
- JANUARY 5th - A cragfast colliie was rescued by Lomond MRT from a steep gorge near Ardess Waterfall, Ben Lomond. 24mh.
- JANUARY 17th - A 23 year-old woman was killed outright from head injuries when she slipped on hard névé descending the SE slopes of Ben More, Crianlarich. She lost her ice-axe and fell 350 feet down a snow slope strewn with boulders. She was not wearing crampons or helmet. Unroped party of 4. Stretched down by Killin MRT. RAF helicopter was called but turned back due to weather. 136mh.

JANUARY 17th to 18th - Solo hillwalker (51) said he lost his torch and got lost in dark descending Stuc a'Chroin. He was delayed by deep soft snow and went down S. Ridge to near Callander. Killin MRT. 110mh.

JANUARY 31st - Girl broke her ankle on the Loch Lomondside Ben Vorlich and was flown out by RAF Wessex.

JANUARY 31st - At 2,000 feet on the NE Ridge of the Loch Lomond Ben Vorlich, a girl (14) from a school party was allowed to slide on a snow patch and broke her leg when she hit a peat bank. Flown out by RAF. Arrochar and Dumbarton Police MRTs. 13mh.

FEBRUARY 1st - Male hillwalker (37) complained of nausea and indigestion about an hour after setting off with a hillwalking club to climb Beinn Tulaichean. Party of nine, one a doctor, left him alone to have a rest and return to his car. Later he was found dead from a heart attack by another hillwalker. Killin MRT and RAF Leuchars helicopter. Recovery delayed till next day because of subsequent incidents and because he was known to be dead. 17mh.

FEBRUARY 1st - Descending 'Route Normale' of Ben More, Crianlarich (i.e. NW Ridge which is not as easy as South Ridge but probably more popular) in slippery conditions with snow patches very hard and black ground also frozen solid. Boyfriend slipped (sustaining bruising) then victim (23) also slipped and fell, sustaining head injuries from which she died. She had ice-axe and crampons, but her crampons were still attached to her rucksack. A report from a hillwalker who came across the victim indicated that she was dead, and her body was not recovered till noon on February 2nd because of helicopter crash. Stretchered down by Killin and RAF Leuchars MRTs. 420mh.

FEBRUARY 1st - A consequence of the above accident was that an RAF Wessex helicopter, engaged in a search and deployment of searchers, on the North Face of Ben More, collided with the hillside, rolled down the face and caught fire. Killin MRT co-ordinator was killed outright and another policeman was seriously injured. An RAF aircrew member was seriously injured, one slightly injured and one unhurt. Killin MRT mountain party on foot, together with the aircraft captain, managed to evacuate the injured before the fire started, and they were flown out by an RAF Sea King helicopter. The dead man had been thrown clear and was carried down by stretcher. Ochils MRT, RAF Leuchars MRT involved and Lomond MRT assembled. 302mh.

FEBRUARY 7th - Beinn Ime. Man (55) broke ankle descending via Bealach a'Mhargaidh. Below the snow line, he went over on his ankle, slipping on greasy rock on an easy slope. Evacuated by Arrochar MRT and ambulance to Vale of Leven Hospital during heavy snowfall. Casualty was in a party of 7. 80mh.

FEBRUARY 13th - Man overdue on Elistoun Hill, Tillycoultry, found his own way down. Ochils MRT. 4mh.

MARCH 2nd - Party of 10 were descending Eas Daimh, NW of Ben Lui when casualty slipped on wet, mixed ground and broke a fibula. She was evacuated by her own party while Killin MRT searched Ben Oss for 2 hours due to a Northing/Easting map reference given by the messenger. Ref. 280256 given which should have been 256280. 84mh.

MARCH 6th - Walker (61) broke his leg from a slip on the Ben Lomond Path. Flown out to Alexandria by RN helicopter. Lomond MRT. 39mh.

MARCH 7th to 8th - Campsie Fells. Party of 3 (m26, m26, f21) with no winter experience and no snow gear set to walk from Queenzieburn, Kilsyth Hills, to Fintry. Benighted by soft, deep snow and strong NW wind and camped in forest. Walked out unaided and unhurt next day. Lomond MRT, SARDA, Dumbarton Police, helicopter. 322mh.

MARCH 21st - Inexperienced party of 4 failed to reach The Cobbler when walking up from the East. When descending, a woman (25) and a man (21) slipped on a path on snow and fell about 100 feet receiving slight injuries. Arrochar and Dumbarton Police MRTs. 15mh.

- MARCH 29th to 30th – Exhaustion/Exposure incident. Youth party tramping West Highland Way on East shore of Loch Lomond with over-laden rucksacks became separated. Search by Killin and Lomond MRTs. Lad (16) found near Doune Bothy and evacuated by boat and ambulance to hospital. 142mh.
- APRIL 4th – False alarm. Flashing lights on hills behind Tillicoultry. Ochils MRT. 40mh.
- APRIL 14th – Well equipped party of 19 on N. Ridge, Beinn an Lochain. Schoolboy (13) slipped on wet grass and fell on his ice-axe which penetrated his upper thigh. Airlifted by RAF to Vale of Leven Hospital. Arrochar and Dumbarton Police MRTs. 12mh.
- APRIL 19th – A pair of hill walkers were descending the north face of the NW Ridge of Meall Glas, Glen Lochay. On the very steep, rocky slope the grass was very wet and slippery having just cleared of snow. Woman (29) slipped and sustained fractures of the skull, neck and arm. Placed on MacInnes lightweight stretcher by Killin MRT and winched out by RAF helicopter. 60mh.
- APRIL 25th – False alarm. Two boys suspected overdue on Dumyat, but they had been elsewhere. Ochils MRT.
- APRIL 25th – Right Angled Groove, North Peak of The Cobbler. Leader (23) fell after a 50 feet run-out, possibly due to a handhold giving way. His protection held but he sustained pendulum injuries from striking himself against the rock, probably fracturing pelvis and wrist. Stretcher lower to RAF Wessex pick-up. Arrochar and Dumbarton MRTs. 32mh.
- APRIL 26th – Two nineteen-year-old lads were cragfast 70 feet up a 100 feet cliff at Elie, Fife. Winched to the top before darkness by Leven Coastguard.
- MAY 16th – Hillwalker (68) was found by another hillwalker on a path on Ben Cleuch. He had a diabetic card and pills scattered round him. He was flown out by RAF Wessex but found to be dead of a heart attack. Ochils MRT. 28mh.
- JUNE 5th to 6th – Evacuation of 2 lads (16, 15) camping by the Alva Burn in the early hours during a gale and heavy rain. Ochils MRT. 36mh.
- JULY 4th – Schoolboy (14) walking with his family on the Ben Lomond Tourist Path stumbled and broke his leg, and was carried down on a stretcher by Lomond MRT. 38mh.
- JULY 5th to 6th – Search of forest walks by Oban Police MRT near Dalavich, Argyll for youth (19) overdue. False alarm caused by friends' concern. 15mh.
- JULY 11th – The Waterfall, Glenlednock Dam, Comrie. A lad of 15 years old, one of an organised group, went on his hands and knees to look over and see if it was possible to climb down beside the waterfall. He slipped on the wet rock surface and fell 60 feet, nearly vertically, on to rocks fracturing a femur shaft and his pelvis, with arm and face cuts. Stretchered out by Police (Tayside) and ambulancemen.
- JULY 12th – Walking on Ben Lomond Tourist Path, woman (52) stumbled and fell breaking her leg. Stretchered down by Lomond MRT. 27mh.
- JULY 29th – Man (63) walking with his daughter up East Ridge of Schiehallion was slightly breathless. He either tripped and fell or just collapsed, striking his head on a rock and lacerating it. He was dead when flown to hospital by an RAF helicopter. There was a history of heart trouble. 5mh.
- AUGUST 2nd to 3rd – False Alarm. Searches by Strathclyde Police and Killin MRT in response to reported cries for help on Cruach Ardtrain just East of the West Highland Way at the head of Loch Lomond. 45mh.
- AUGUST 6th – Lomond MRT alerted for family overdue on Ben Lomond. 1mh.
- AUGUST 7th – False Alarm. Search of West Highland Way S. of Inversnaid for possible missing person by Lomond MRT. 23mh.

AUGUST 10th to 11th - False Alarm. Person reported apparently cragfast on Aberfoyle Old Quarry at Craigmore. Search by Lomond MRT. An image intensifier was used at night. 72mh.

AUGUST 18th to 19th - False Alarm. Party of 6 reported missing in Fintry Hills. An extensive search was carried out by Lomond MRT but missing party had spent the night at Kippen without telling anyone they were down. 109mh.

SEPTEMBER 2nd to 3rd - Man (70) and woman (59) were benighted descending from The Cobbler summit by the main path, finding way down more difficult than expected. Found by SARDA dog, they walked off. RAF helicopter involved. Arrochar and Dumbarton Police MRTs. 20mh.

SEPTEMBER 12th - Well equipped party of 28 were descending wet rock and steep grass on the south side of Cnoc Coinnich (Ardgoil). Girl (13) slipped, fracturing an index finger and bruising ankle, knee and hip. Stretchered down and taken to Vale of Leven Hospital. Arrochar and Dumbarton Police MRTs. 20mh.

SEPTEMBER 13th - Walker (47) with his wife was crossing a boulderfield half a mile from the summit when climbing the East Ridge of Schiehallion. He slipped and fell awkwardly on the wet rocks breaking a tibia and fibula. Airlifted by RAF Wessex and later transferred to Bridge of Earn Hospital. Pitlochry Police. 4mh.

SEPTEMBER 19th to 20th - Two women (42, 38) with three dogs walking the West Highland Way were benighted south of Inversnaid failing to rendezvous at Inversnaid Hotel. Lomond MRT. 30mh.

NOVEMBER 14th - Lomond MRT searched Conic Hill, Balmaha after a boatman on Loch Lomond had seen two red flares fired. Nothing found. 33mh.

DECEMBER 5th - Beinn Bheula, Cowal. Party of 12 descending Coire Aodain. Crossing the burn, a woman (50+) slipped on wet rock and broke her leg above the ankle. Stretchered down by Benmore Centre party and taken to Dunoon General Hospital. 16mh.

DECEMBER 6th - Central Gully of NW Face of Ben More (Crianlarich). Ill-equipped party of three were going up in conditions of snow and frozen turf wearing unsuitable boots and without ice-axes or crampons. One man slipped and pulled a muscle in his chest, became frightened at the severity of the slope and would not move. Killin MRT escorted him down but he declined medical attention. 45mh.

DECEMBER 27th to 28th - Having climbed Ben Lui from Coninish by the NW Ridge a party of three split up. Two went back to Coninish over Beinn a'Chleibh, but the other (42) feeling unwell decided to return via E. slopes of Ben Lui, got lost and went down to Gleann nan Caorann. He could not cross the burn to a bothy and went back uphill. He sheltered for the night high up under the SE Face of Ben Oss, and fortunately the weather was exceptionally mild. He walked out next day to Glenfalloch Farm. The bothy and farm had been searched earlier during extensive searches by Killin MRT, Lomond, Ochils, RAF Leuchars, SARDA, Strathclyde Police MRTs. Helicopters were not used because of very poor weather and visibility. 753mh.

#### NON-MOUNTAINEERING

APRIL 10th - Search of Dumbarton Muir by Dumbarton Police MRT after reports of a man seen similar in appearance to a missing man later found dead in River Endrick. 60mh.

APRIL 17th - A calving cow got stuck down a gully on Hoish Farm. Lomond MRT hauled her out with ropes but unfortunately the calf died. 16mh.

DECEMBER 4th - Twelve blackface sheep and one collie dog were cragfast on a ledge on the East Face of Meall nan Tarmachan. Killin MRT abseiled to ledge and guided them to safety. 5mh.



## SKYE

PROBABLY Early 1987 - Loss of a policeman in the Black Cuillin. Gendarme fell off the West Ridge of Sgùrr nan Gilleann.

FEBRUARY 16th - Two inexperienced men decided to scramble up the crumbly crags of the East Face of the Quirang without ropes or gear. One got to the top and raised the alarm for his companion (20) who got cragfast two hundred feet below the top. Rescued by Skye MRT who lowered a man down to him. 20mh.

MARCH 12th - Skye team was called out but not used for 2 men (26, 24) overdue. They returned to Alltdearg Cottage unaided.

APRIL 14th - Two missing walkers in Skye. RAF Sea King recalled en route to search area.

APRIL 15th to 16th - Man and woman benighted on Sgùrr a'Greadaidh, made their own way down, but not before a search by Skye MRT and a flight by an RAF helicopter. 18mh.

MAY 20th to 21st - Man overdue in Coir a'Ghrunnda having set out at 08.00 to reach the Sgùrr Dubh Slabs at Loch Coruisk. Skye MRT and Police. RN helicopter cancelled mid flight. 12mh.

MAY 24th - This incident was probably on the Cioch. Leader lost his foothold on dry rock and fell. A running belay was pulled out but he was held by his second. Airlifted by RAF helicopter to Raigmore Hospital with both ankles badly broken. Skye MRT and Police. 39mh. This incident has also been reported as occurring on Sgùrr Mhic Choinnich. One report said 'Coich,' hence confusion with 'Chioch'.....go for Sgùrr Mhic Choinnich!

JUNE 16th - Scrambling on Sgùrr a'Mhadaidh with a companion, a man fell 20 feet on to a scree slope when he lost his foothold, and then a further 100 feet into a gully breaking a leg. Evacuated by RN helicopter. Skye MRT and Police. Raigmore Hospital. 44mh.

JULY 17th - Bright light seen on Sgùrr Sgumain thought to be a flare. Search by Skye MRT found nothing.

JULY 25th - Walking with school party into Coir a'Ghrunnda, a boy of 15 fell 30 feet off the side of the path into a stream, breaking his leg. Flown by RAF helicopter to Raigmore Hospital. Skye MRT and Police. 27mh.

JULY 26th - Casualty (24) was climbing Pinnacle Ridge, Sgùrr nan Gilleann, unroped, with a companion 30 feet above him. The companion knocked some rocks off; one hit him on the shoulder and he fell to the ground; another boulder broke his leg, trapping him under it for a short while. Skye MRT and Police. Airlifted by RAF to Raigmore. 50mh.

JULY 28th to 29th - Unroped climber (50) was descending a buttress which he thought may have been in the Sgùrr Thuilm area of the Cuillin. He fell 30 feet, carried on and fell again crossing a river, injuring his arm. He slept on the hill and went to Loch Coruisk where a Scoutmaster swam out to a yacht to get a message radioed to Oban Coastguard. Evacuated by Stornoway (Bristows) helicopter to Raigmore Hospital, Inverness. Skye MRT and Police assembled. 6mh.

Compiler's Note. If the original fall had been on Sgùrr Thuilm, he would have needed to cross the Main Ridge after the fall to get to Loch Coruisk.

SEPTEMBER 3rd to 4th - After climbing on Sron na Ciche two men (30, 36) headed for Sgùrr Alasdair. Instead of descending the Great Stone Shoot they found they were going down to Coruisk. The cloud base was 2,000 feet. As it was getting dark they carried on down and slept near Coruisk Hut. Glenbrittle Camp Site warden reported them overdue and they were found (near Camasunary Bothy) by Skye MRT leader and an RAF Sea King helicopter. 29mh.

Compiler's Note. They may have gone from near Sgùrr Sgumain and over the Main Ridge near Bealach a'Gharbh-choire instead of going over Sgùrr Alasdair.



- OCTOBER 1st - A boulder was dislodged on Bla Bheinn and struck one of three hillwalkers (aged 20) breaking his arm. He was airlifted by RAF helicopter.
- OCTOBER 4th - Separation on the Quirang Path by two men led to a misunderstanding and a search by Skye MRT which found the one who was reported missing (age 65). 2mh.
- OCTOBER 10th - Sgùrr Dearg. A 999 call was made that a man was cragfast, but he had been escorted down safely by Skye MRT leader.
- OCTOBER 13th - West Face Bidean Druim nan Ramh. Unroped climber (40) in a party of two, slipped and sprained his ankle. Airlifted by RAF to Broadford Hospital. Skye MRT and Police. 36mh.
- OCTOBER 25th - Eight youths on venture training were crossing a river in Glen Sligachan when two fell in. Later in the day they suffered from exposure and were rescued by Skye MRT and RAF helicopter.
- DECEMBER 30th to 31st - Two men (23, 19) experienced in the area and well equipped, underestimated the time required and when it was time to descend their route in Coire Lagan the weather was so severe they considered it unsafe. Searched for and escorted down. Skye MRT, Police, Civilian volunteers. 106mh.

## ISLANDS

- FEBRUARY 14th - Caisteal Abhail. Hillwalker (40) got lost on the 'Ridge over The Castles,' Arran and so became overdue. Eventually he walked out to Lochranza. Arran MRT. 8mh.
- MARCH 29th - Married couple had separated! on path down from Goat Fell to High Corrie. After waiting in Corrie for 3 hours wife reported husband (54) missing. Meantime he had gone down the path to Brodick Castle. Arran MRT. 7mh.
- APRIL 14th - Witches Step (Ceum na Caillich) Arran. From a party of 6, 2 men (23, 21) separated and got lost in mist, but got down via Glen Iorsa unaided. Arran MRT. 26mh.
- APRIL 20th - Boy (10) in a party of 8 at the summit of Goat Fell was scrambling on the boulders when he fell back and struck his head. He walked down unaided. Arran MRT. 4mh.
- APRIL 23rd - Man with broken leg recovered by HMS Coastguard, Shetland.
- MAY 16th - Walker (38) in a party of 8 going up Goat Fell Path had a heart attack. He was flown to North Ayrshire Hospital by the Royal Navy and his condition stabilised. Fortunately Arran MRT were already on the hill marshalling the Annual Goat Fell Race. 2mh.
- MAY 16th - Rescue in Harris by HM Coastguard and Bristows helicopter. Hillwalker.
- MAY 16th - Hillwalker with broken ankle rescued by Coastguard helicopter. Loch Langabhat, Isle of Lewis.
- JULY 17th - Isle of Coll. Search for missing woman (31) by RAF Sea King.
- AUGUST 8th - Beinn na Caillich, Islay. Man went further than he intended and fell, twisting his knee. Search carried out by private plane, and evacuation by life-boat. HM Coastguard.
- AUGUST 13th - Hillwalking back alone from a shooting outing with a friend, a man died of a heart attack. Found by landowner assisting Arran S and R Unit in search. Viewbank Farm, Whiting Bay. 3mh.
- AUGUST 15th - Coastguard helicopter recovered body of tourist. Papa Stour, Shetland.

- SEPTEMBER 2nd to 3rd - Organised party of 5 were benighted by heavy rain, strong wind and low cloud on Beinn Nuis. Found at 06.00 by Arran MRT. 18mh.
- SEPTEMBER 10th - Organised party of 72 were walking down from Coire in Lochan (Beinn Bhreac, NW Arran) to the coast at Mid Thundersgair. Girl (15) slipped on wet rock and injured her back. Stretchered down by Arran MRT. 3mh.
- NOVEMBER 14th to 15th - Woman (39) who had suffered from depression was found dead at Glenashdale Falls (which are situated 450 feet above Whiting Bay) in a search by Arran MRT, Royal Marines and SARDA. Evacuated by cliff lower. 108mh.

### NON-MOUNTAINEERING

- FEBRUARY 22nd - Arran MRT searched Corrie Shore for a youth (18) who had got lost after leaving a hotel and woke up in a field. He found his own way home. 11mh.
- JULY 14th - Cyclist on Ross Road crashed into a gully. Removed by stretcher carry by Arran MRT to ambulance and thereby to Lamplash Hospital with a broken leg. 1mh.

### SOUTHERN UPLANDS

- FEBRUARY 28th - Whita Hill, near Langholm. Woman (26) left her handbag on a hill path with a suicide note inside. She had not been seen for 17 hours before bag was found. She returned safe to the path as search was getting started. Moffat HRT and Police. 10mh. RAF helicopter called but stood down.
- MARCH 29th - Leader of an organised party of 7 glissaded a slope at Whirly Gill, Saddle Craigs, and hit a rock, injuring the base of his spine. Moffat HRT, Police and ambulance. 100mh.
- JULY 11th to 12th - Lammermuir Hills. Husband raised the alarm for his young wife who had gone with her baby, a blanket and a flute to the top of a hill to watch the full moon come up. She turned up safe just as search was starting. Lothian RU, Tweed Valley MRT, Police SARDA. 33mh.
- AUGUST 26th to 27th - Lowther Hills. An organised party of 8, (boys from 12 to 15 years) well-equipped, left Burleywhag Bothy (Ref: 972001) to walk over Queensberry (2,286 feet) but turned back after two failed attempts to navigate over it in mist. Their recently purchased map did not show new forest en route, although the forest is indicated on the 1987 revised map. Search by Moffat HRS, Police and SARDA found the boys in Burleywhag. They had planned to reach Raehills. 206mh.
- SEPTEMBER 11th - Grey Mare's Tail. Walker (67) suffered heart attack on path to top of waterfall. Stretchered down to ambulance by Moffat HRS and Police, then to D and G Royal Infirmary. 16mh. During 19.. he had heart attack on same path, but was pleased to have got higher this year!
- SEPTEMBER 27th - After a 'last night fling' a man of 36 walked his dog on Kirk Hill behind a rented cottage. He slipped on frozen grass, fractured his spine and suffered from exposure. Moffat HRS and Police used a scoop stretcher from the ambulance on top of a mountain stretcher to good effect. 41mh.
- SEPTEMBER 27th - Man lowered to safety by HM Coastguard from cliffs at Peace Bay, Cockburnspath.
- NOVEMBER 29th to 30th - Gameshope (Ref: 131192). False alarm. Three shooters in a Landrover reported hearing shouts on steep scree/boulder slopes. Tweed Valley MRT used a four wheel drive vehicle and various devices in a 'look and listen' search without response, and decided that shouts could not be heard anyway because of the noise of a burn in spate. 12mh.

## NON-MOUNTAINEERING

JUNE 3rd – RAF Leuchars MRT called out to search for a missing Beech aircraft. Recalled en route. 33mh.

JULY 26th to 27th – Sweep search by Moffat HRS for a missing old lady (85) resulted in finding her dead from exhaustion/exposure. 18mh.

NOVEMBER 19th to 20th – Police found an unoccupied car off the road and down a bank into Glenclach Burn (Ref: 854103). An overnight dog search failed. Man (37) was found by a Moffat HRS sweep search on the other side of the burn, ½ mile from the car, suffering from exposure. Also SARDA involved. 18mh.

Compiled by John Hinde.

## IN MEMORIAM

## ALLAN STEVEN

JOHN ALLAN STEVEN died on 9th June 1987 in his 81st year.

He was born in Glasgow and was educated at Glasgow Academy and Sedbergh School and graduated as a B.Sc. at Glasgow University in 1923. He played rugby for Glasgow Academicals as a three quarter and for Glasgow against South Africa in 1931. He also ran for the University in the half mile.

He was a Founder Member of the JMCS in 1925 and joined the SMC in 1928 and was an active Member of both Clubs until he went to India in 1931. While in India he joined the Himalayan Club and served for a time on the Committee and made several treks into the foothills.

In 1959 he retired from business and settled in Helensburgh. He played an active part in the life of the Community as a Town Councillor and was Convener of the Housing Committee at a time of considerable expansion in the programme of house building.

He married in 1937 and we extend our sympathy to his widow and family.

W. B. Speirs.

## LT.-GENERAL SIR KENNETH MCLEAN

LT.-GENERAL SIR KENNETH MCLEAN died last year at the age of ninety. He joined the Club in 1921 and outlived any member who could write knowledgeably about his climbing activities. He is known to have been active in the twenties both in Scotland and in the Himalayas during his military service in India between the World Wars. During the second war he was a major figure in planning the Second Front - *Operation Overlord* and after the war he held many influential offices. He was a polymath: his interests were musical, literary and scientific as well as military and political. It is a great pity that none of us knew him and could benefit from his learning and experience.

Iain Smart.

## H. H. MILLS

BERTIE MILLS died of a sudden heart attack when on holiday in Cornwall in August, 1987. As a boy at Marling School, he was an out-standing pupil especially in English, History and Modern Languages. In 1939 he joined the Army and was commissioned in the Somerset Light Infantry but, although he disliked flying, he volunteered for the Parachute Regiment. He was the Intelligence Officer of the battalion that captured Pegasus Bridge in Normandy. When a Company was cut off, he passed through the enemy lines, found it without officers and very disheartened and brought it to safety. For this he was awarded the M.C. Later he took part in the drop across the Rhine and at the end of the war in Europe, when his Brigadier was asked to form a Brigade of young soldiers for service in the East, he put off demob. for a year to go as the Brigadier Major.

He then went to Cambridge where, after starting to read Economics, he won a double first in Modern and Medieval Languages, played for Cambridge against Oxford as a wing forward and was a reserve for England. His College tutor wrote, 'the type of man a college remembers with pride and admiration. His abilities are such that one feels he could undertake almost anything with success.' A Commonwealth scholarship followed at Philadelphia and on his return to Cambridge to work for a Ph.D. his supervisor said, 'the best all rounder and by far the best research student I ever had.'

During all this time, he was trying to decide what to do with his life. He had long decided that the career of an academic did not provide a challenge or an answer to his wish to work for others. For a short time he worked for Kemsley Newspapers as a foreign correspondent but there followed an appointment by Bruce Lockhart, for whom he had great admiration, as an assistant master at Sedburgh. I once said to him I could not understand how he, a mountaineer trained to hold on, could face falling out of an aeroplane. He said that only after arriving at Sedburgh did he take up climbing, for there his great friend was the School Chaplain, a member of the Alpine Club, who not only introduced him to the Lakeland fells but also to the greater European mountains. Bertie was exceptionally hard working. Coaching the Sedburgh XV, teaching French at all levels, playing in the school orchestra, took up much of his time but he squeezed in many expeditions with boys to the hills and it was then he first experienced the joys of taking large parties to the Highlands, camping or hostelling with long and happy days in the hills.

His appointment in 1962 as Rector of Edinburgh Academy brought many problems with a school growing rapidly in numbers. Reorganisation of the boarding houses, the purchase of a nearby large building, a considerable increase in staff, reorganisation of the time-table and reduction in numbers in classes and sets, all went along with his determination to teach as many periods as possible and to take a football practice as well. He joined the Alpine Club just after his arrival in Edinburgh but he was more than delighted by his election to the SMC, for which he was proposed by Sandy Harrison who considered one who was doing so much to introduce Scottish youth to the hills should be a member of our Club. In 1968 there came a gift to the Academy of a large sum of money donated as a memorial to William Blair, killed while serving with the Highland Division in North Africa, the money to be devoted to acquire a property in the Highlands as a permanent Field Centre. After several false starts, part of a farm house in Glen Clova, which had served as a hostel for young foresters, was purchased. Much redecoration and improvement was required and, for over a year, parties of boys led by the Rector and the Staff worked at week-ends and during the holidays. When this was finished, the house was, and is, in constant use, not just for hill walkers and fishermen but by the choir, the orchestra, the biologists and other groups who practise their skills and then have an afternoon off to be taught mountain lore.

After his retirement, he acted as Scottish Secretary for ISCO for whom he visited schools, organised seminars and produced a guide book on career opportunities for young people. With a twinkle, he told me he took his climbing clothes with him when visiting schools in the country and during this time he completed all the Munros. Before this, in 1974, with two members of the Staff and an Academical, all thirty or more years younger, he had left Glen Brittle at 3 a.m. for the ridge and it was typical of the man that when the party reached Bruach na Frithe, knowing he was slowing the party down, he dropped off the ridge and at Sligachan had food and drink ready for the party when they arrived at 2 a.m. In the same year, to commemorate the 150th anniversary of the founding of the Academy, 150 Munros were climbed on the same day by parties of Staff, Academicals and boys of all ages. Bertie, with an Academical and two senior boys, accounted for the ten in the Mamores.

He very much enjoyed SMC Meets where he made new friends who shared his love of the hills. Theo Nicholson has remarked how helpful he was with men older than himself. Gilpin Ward tells how, at the Dundonald Meet at Easter, 1987, they had traversed all the tops of An Teallach taking about 11 hours and how Bertie brushed aside all sympathetic inquiries about his own tiredness. When I told Bertie I had only managed about 200 Munros as I preferred returning to old friends, he told me he loved studying maps and trying to visualise the country and how much he enjoyed discovering on the ground if he was right. And when I said some Munros entailed a very long and possibly rather a dull walk, he would have none of it as he loved all Scottish hill country. The Club has lost a true lover of the hills and one who has passed that love on to many young people.

Maurice H. Cooke

## PROCEEDINGS OF THE CLUB

### New Members

The following new members were admitted and welcomed to the Club in the year 1987-88.

Stephen Chadwick (40) Petroleum Construction Consultant, Gairloch, Wester Ross.

Peter Cliff (44) Outdoor Activities Instructor, Granton-on-Spey.

Hal Taylor (64) Emeritus Professor, Cults, Aberdeen.

Kevin Wilson (32) Plumbing and Heating Engineer, Yorkshire.

John Higham (38) Geologist, Cults, Aberdeen.

Mark Sinclair (30) Aircraft Technician, Forres, Moray.

### The Ninety-Ninth AGM and Dinner

Called to heel like reluctant colliers, a majority of the Highland stravaigers joined the hard core of the Metropolitan fundamentalists in Edinburgh for the Ninety-Ninth AGM and Dinner. At least the venue was at altitude, being at the Capital Hotel on Corstorphine Hill.

The proceedings started with an illustrated talk by Mick Fowler, well known for his enthusiasm for, and high standards of achievement in, winter climbing in Scotland. Mick's annual mileage in travelling to his climbing from his London base is almost as impressive as his climbing achievements. The subject of his talk was the ascent of the North-west Pillar of Spantik (7027m) in the Karakorum. From the slides this appears to be equivalent to about three Walker Spurs stacked on top of each other. This was probably the most technical ascent yet accomplished in the Himalaya, involving continuous climbing at GRADE V on an uncertain route at altitudes close to 7000 metres, followed by a dangerous descent down an unclimbed ridge. A bravura display of modern ice-climbing techniques being put to effective use on a major Himalayan objective.

The audience were as impressed by the mental concentration involved in what must have been an exercise in extended nervous tension as by the climbing standards displayed. Mick's 'amazing' and 'incredible' discourse was entertainingly delivered and illustrated by excellent slides. The photography on the route was unusually good for such a high standard and extremely serious climb. Even the conventional extended series of slides of the preliminaries and the approach along the Karakorum Highway were interesting - road travel in those parts seems to be about as dangerous as the climbing. Altogether one of the best, and certainly the most impressive, lecture for some time. Among the appreciative audience included Ian Campbell and Willie Speirs, both of whom have been SMC members for sixty years.

The Reception brought in the first of the day's innovations being a pure drug party (caffeine that is) without any of the carbohydrates that used to be the sole redeeming feature of previous Edinburgh Receptions. Somewhat taken aback by this enforced asceticism, the members attempted to pack themselves into a long narrow room with atrocious acoustics for the Ninety-Ninth AGM. The longevity of the Club is close to being matched by Sandy Harrison, our Honorary President being in attendance in his seventieth year of Club membership.

Now it is reliably reported that other Clubs manage to conduct their AGMs swiftly, smoothly and with decorum. The SMC however has yet another of its traditions to uphold and those with advance information knew that passions unspent upon the mountains were about to be unleashed. The issue was of course the imminent presence of lady guests at the Dinner.

Robin Campbell, who had obviously gone into serious training for the occasion, tried an early shot during the Secretary's report but apart from drawing a confirmation that there were indeed going to be two ladies at the top table, had to bide his time until Any Other Business.

He did draw some early blood during the Treasurer's report, wringing an admission from President Bennet that it was unconstitutional (SMCJ Vol. 1 p.38 no less) for members to be threatened with the Journal being withheld if they did not pay their subscriptions by a certain date. Robin's collection of Journals paid off yet again and the poor Treasurer was deprived of one of his meagre armoury of weapons against backsliders.

Other issues which would have been worried to death in more normal times, including the lease of the barn at Lagangarbh, the rapidly escalating cost of the Raeburn Hut and the New Climbs Supplement were merely gnawed lightly and flung aside as the pack scented juicier meat hanging in the branches.

At last the meeting got to Any Other Business and Robin Campbell asked the Chair to deny or confirm that there would be lady guests at the Dinner (now a mere hour or so away). President Bennet went where no President has gone before and bravely confirmed the historic event. Of the three Clubs with Lady Presidents who had been invited to send guests to the dinner only one had availed themselves of the opportunity to make history – the Fell and Rock. That being the case it had been thought invidious not to invite the LSCC (who were pretty restricted in their gender choice). The Cairngorm Club and the Scottish Ski Club had reneged on their opportunity to undermine the bastions of male chauvinism.

Mild uproar ensued, well fielded by the Chair, until eventually Campbell used his files to good effect and reminded the meeting that as recently as the 1980 AGM a motion to invite the LSCC to send a guest had been defeated. In that case were the Committee not acting presumptively in extending these invitations without bringing the matter before the whole Club? But it would have meant an Extraordinary General Meeting. No matter came the well briefed response – such were frequently held in the early years of the Club's existence. Was the Committee bound by AGM decisions or was it not? Grim antagonism was in the air and a motion censuring the Committee for their historic crime was moved and duly passed. The Committee members present did not seem unduly abashed but then it has been a year when the Committee has had more than its share of contentious issues to deal with.

Another morsel was tossed to the wolves when Richardson invited the meeting to congratulate Malcolm Slessor, Geoff Cohen et al. on their enterprise in producing a Booklet (unfortunately available to the President and Committee only in *samizdat*) publicising and seeking support for '*the Scottish Mountaineering Club's centenary celebration expedition*' to a peak called Nyamang'nyi in Tibet. (There is a faintly Burnsian echo to that name which suggests that the whole thing is an elaborate joke – especially when coupled to the alleged sacred lake which washes away all sins).

This invitation met a mixed response as several members seemed put out at a venture (however worthy) being publicised in this manner when the Club had no official input to its composition and objective. Malcolm rode the squall with the sang-froid born of long experience. It emerged that, despite the confident tone of the blurb and the patronage of the Lord Provost of Edinburgh, the project was in its early infancy and perinatal mortality was probable. This may be just as well as the Committee had, on being informed at its October meeting that such an expedition was being contemplated, decided that while it could describe itself as 'a' Scottish Mountaineering Club centenary expedition, the use of 'the' was not sanctioned. Vaguely heard cries of 'Gasherbrum Four' from the back of the room further confused the issue. One awaits further developments.

So concluded an AGM rife with contentious issues (more than have been reported here), the discussion of which was made more difficult by an unsuitable room. Chairman Bennet handled it smoothly, despite drawing considerable fire over the lady guests issue. The number and variety of the issues which emerged again point out that 'mountaineering' is no longer a simple matter and if the Club is to continue to attempt to play a major role under its present constitution and committee structure it is going to add to the load on an already overburdened Committee, particularly the executive members. Possibly after the Centenary is out of the way we can take a harder look at ourselves and where we hope to go in the next hundred years.

The Dinner was graced by the historic presence of Hilary Moffat, President of the Fell and Rock, and Anne Murray, President of the LSCC, the first two ladies to attend (as opposed to wait upon) an SMC Dinner. Within our own ranks, the presence of Willie Speirs (sixty years a member) and Bill McKenzie (fifty years a member and still the Terror of Coire Cas) exemplified the long traditions of the SMC.

The meal itself was adequate, indeed better than some metropolitan offerings of recent years.

In his Presidential Address, Donald welcomed the two courageous ladies and reviewed briefly some of the activities and achievements of Club members in the past year. Members have been active from Mount Everest to Mount McKinley and even on home ground new areas are being opened up for winter climbing. The steady rise in quality and quantity of SMC mountaineering activities is continuing, largely driven by those joining in the last five years or so.

The Club Song was duly exposed to the wondering guests, led by the now established duo of Curly Ross and Hamish Henderson.

The Toast to the Guests and kindred Clubs was proposed by Gerry Peet who now seems to have considerably mellowed since his CIC days, indeed become gracious. The reply was made by Brian Shackleton, acting in this case as a Scottish Ski Club member. His insider's knowledge of the SMC was reflected in his speech. Something should be done to protect us from our own members speaking as guests from other Clubs – they know too much.

It was, despite the venue and some indiscreet washing of dirty linen in public, a pleasant occasion for most of the members and Guests. The apéritif-dinner scene was again one of the most valuable parts of the occasion, allowing an opportunity to talk with infrequently seen friends and plan future ventures.

Bob Richardson.

### **Torridon Meet, 5th – 7th June, 1987 – Ling Hut**

Five members and three guests attended.

One early arrival was rewarded by a dry day on Friday but Saturday and Sunday unfortunately were for the most part damp and gloomy. Nevertheless one determined party put in a longish day on Saturday, and a tea-time clearance persuaded several to extend the day with evening outings.

The following excursions were made: –

Beinn Liath Mhor and Sgorr Ruadh returning via Coire Lair, Coulin and Loch Clair; Sgúrr Dubh, also returning via Loch Clair; a rather wet walk in the direction of Poca Buidhe which got as far as the north end of Carn na Feola.

Present were: Members: – G. Cohen, A. Hannah, I. H. M. Smart, W. Wallace and B. G. S. Ward. Guests: – M. Sinclair, A. Smart and W. Sutherland.

B. G. S. Ward.

### **New Year Meet 1987-1988**

A meet provisionally booked at Inveroran was cancelled due to lack of support. This is the second New Year meet to be cancelled – the other was in World War I.

### **Ski-mountaineering Meet – Winter 1988**

This meet, banned by the Huts Convener from the unfinished Raeburn hut, took place informally at Dave and Moira Snadden's residence in Kiltarlity on the same week-end. Conditions overhead were not perfect, but the snow cover above 1500 feet was continuous and superb. Sgúrr na Lapaich (Glen Strathfarrar) was traversed on the Saturday, and Tom a Choinnich and Toll Creagach in Glen Affric



on the Sunday. Present: - Moira and Dave Snadden, Iain Smart, Mike Taylor, Bill Morrison and Malcolm Slessor.

Malcolm Slessor.

### **Easter Meet 1988 - Ardelve/Dornie**

The meet was held at the Loch Duich Hotel and was attended by 11 members and 2 guests.

The weather was excellent over the entire Easter weekend. Snow was plentiful on the tops. Its condition improved with night frosts, and by Monday it was reasonably good. It did not handicap parties although it may have inhibited the attempting of long, high-level traverses without the assistance of ski. A good time was had by all; both on and off the hill.

The following excursions were made: -

The Saddle via both the Forcan Ridge and Spidean Dhomhuill Bhric, Sgúrr na Sgine and Faochag; Sgúrr a'Choire Ghairbh and Beinn Fhada; Meall Dubh (Glenmoriston); Am Bathach (Cluanie); Sgúrr an Airgiod; Bealach an Sgairne; Fuar Tholl; A'Ghlas-bheinn; Maoile Lunndaigh and Carn nam Fiaclan; Moruisg and Sgúrr nan Ceannaichean; Mullach na Dheiragain.

Present were: - Members: - President D. J. Bennet, J. C. Donaldson, C. C. Gorrie, G. S. Johnstone, J. R. Marshall, I. H. Ogilvie, C. S. Rose, I. H. M. Smart, O. Turnbull, I. M. Waller, B. G. S. Ward. Guests: - R. Allen and M. Dean.

B. G. S. Ward.

## J.M.C.S. REPORTS

**Glasgow Section.** - 1987 started off well for the Section with a strong contingent finding the best of the New Year weather in the mainland's northern bothies. This set the pace for the next few months with much climbing being done on both sides of the country. Generally well supported fortnightly meets were supplemented by mountain activity on the other weekends. This included some ski-touring, though on the barely adequate snow cover sometimes (!) found in Scotland.

The rock climbing season arrived with a blistering weekend in April during which most of the cornices on Ben Nevis collapsed. However expectations of a dry season were not to be fulfilled. In pursuit of drier weather a number of parties ventured abroad. The Pyrenees proved to be too close to home as one party discovered. The volume of rain here was only counterbalanced by the heatwaves in Greece and Turkey (where another member had his holiday). Chamonix had two visits with the September party finding better weather and also managing to get to Zermatt, already visited once this season by a member.

In more exotic regions, Diamond Couloir on Mt. Kenya was climbed along with the West Ridge of the same. Time was also spent cragging at Hell's Gate before leaving Kenya. Two members were to be found in the Himalayas, one in the Lahul valley and the other experiencing heavy snowfalls in the Everest area. This put paid to plans to climb Lobuje East and Mera Peak.

Back in Scotland, meets activity began picking up towards the Annual Dinner. In June, hard work went into constructing a gas shelter for the Coruisk Hut thereby complying with new insurance requirements. A much appreciated cheque for £500 was donated by the SMT; this went a long way towards meeting the costs of the shelter.

One wet weekend in August the Section's compleater of '86 was joined by another. September weekend was spent in Skye where some enjoyable scrambling was had amidst the occasional snow shower. October saw the Club dining at the Kingshouse with our guest speaker, Iain MacLeod, adding to the evening with an amusing recital. Along came November and the opening of the bothy season (or the close of the stalking season) - this year's season proved to be as wet as ever. 1987 wound up with the near-traditional Xmas meet, enjoyed by all and sundry.

On reflection, a good year.

*Office-bearers* - *Hon. Member*, W. H. Murray; *Hon. President*, David MacDonald; *Hon. Vice-President*, Coll Findlay; *President*, David Ritchie, The Manse, Easdale, Seil Island, Oban; *Vice-President*, Dick Edie; *Secretary*, John Morrison, 16 Grosvenor Crescent Lane, Glasgow G12 9AB; *Treasurer*, Benny Swan; *Coruisk Hut Custodian*, Dick Edie, 47 Cairns Gardens, Balerno, Midlothian.

**London Section.** - 1987 was an excellent year for the Section, with a revitalised meets programme supported by a very active, if somewhat small, core of people. Active members could be identified in the pub by their saturated, shrivelled appearance and an enthusiastic interest in wet suits and rubber clothing in general. A healthy, if somewhat perverse, enthusiasm continues for going out in all conditions and at all hours of the day and night.

Over a dozen meets were held in North Wales, Pembroke, the Lakes, the Peak District, Glencoe and at the CIC hut, the latter being particularly successful due to superb Spring weather. A meet at Argentière continued to firmly establish the tradition of an annual Alpine meet, although members were also active in Africa, the Himalayas, and throughout the Alps. A growing number of members are venting anti-social aggression by becoming enthusiastic skiers, encouraged by equipment and experience already present in the Section. The Section also hosted the A.G.M. and Whole Club Dinner, despite some uncertainty regarding whose turn it was. Rather than risk it going by default it was decided to take the initiative and organise it, resulting in a convivial meet at Dockray, near Patterdale, with climbing on Gimmer Crag, Langdale, and Castle Rock, Thirlmere.

Club activities have been well-supported by its unique circular, which not only provides details of forthcoming events and excellent meet reports, but maintains interest by avoiding editorial pitfalls such as consistent spelling, punctuation, and censorship.

Membership stood at 51 as at November, a slight increase on the previous year. It is planned to add interest to the monthly pub socials by arranging more slide shows, which should also encourage new members. The process of the induction of new members is still unsatisfactory at present. The club hut at Glanafon in North Wales has gained a new set of living room bunks, along with a shower unit and a new extension roof. While it remains a focus for club activities, away meets are now becoming more popular, particularly North of the Border.

The Section wishes to express its thanks to the editor of the SMCJ for the inclusion last year of the obituary of its late Honorary President.

*Office Bearers* - *Hon. President*, P. Whitechurch; *President*, G. Cameron; *Treasurer*, R. Watts; *Secretary*, A. Walker, 8 St. Bride Street, London EC4A 4DA; *Committee*, C. Bashforth, G. Dalgarno, S. Gladstone, H. Jordan, R. Hibbert, S. Senior, P. Tibbetts. *Glanafon Hut Booking Secretary*, P. Whitechurch, Dale Cottage, Tangier Lane, Frant, Tonbridge Wells.

**Edinburgh Section.** - 1987 was another good year for the Section, with a full programme of meets, and members active throughout the UK from Cornwall, Pembroke and N. Wales to the NW of Scotland and the Aberdeen sea-cliffs.

The Section's membership continues to increase steadily with over 50 paid-up members at the present time.

Winter meets were generally well attended despite the often indifferent conditions. Our 'ice expert' achieved more first ascents in the Cairngorms and elsewhere but his example has not yet fired the more modest performers to hurl themselves at the hardest routes. This reluctance is not altogether shared by the Club's 'flying expert,' who is suspected of receiving commission from the gear manufacturers for his services in testing protection during the average winter.

Summer activity was curtailed by the generally appalling weather. Only a long weekend meet to Glencoe in August was blessed with really fine conditions which allowed a good variety of routes to be completed.

Several parties were active in the Alps, their deeds varying from a 3-day storm-bound epic on the Dru Couloir (no casualties) to a member who joined a guided party on the Chamonix-Zermatt Haute Route (during which one of the group died from exposure due to equally appalling weather). Another party experienced severe storms in the Bregaglia/Val di Mello where the campsite flooded and high valleys were cut off for several days. A more fortunate party visited the Kaisergebirge in September and enjoyed fairly reasonable weather after a damp start. The delights of rock-climbing at Buoux and Verdon were also sampled by members.

Both the Section's huts were well used, the Smiddy being the venue for the customary New Year festivities. The other hut, Jock's Spot at Newtonmore will shortly be connected to the electricity supply and should then prove even more popular than at present.

The annual dinner at the Creag Mor Hotel, Onich, attracted an attendance of 40 members and guests who were regaled with an after-dinner address by Bob Richardson, Keeper of the CIC. The subsequent carousing was of a more restrained nature this year with fewer opportunities for blackmail.

The AGM was held immediately prior to the Annual Dinner and the following Office-Bearers were elected: -

*Hon. President*: Mike Fleming; *Hon. Vice-President*: John R. R. Fowler; *President*: Nigel Suess; *Vice-President and Jock Spot's Custodian*: David Wilson, 4a Leslie Place, Edinburgh; *Treasurer*: Andy Carver; *Smiddy Custodian*: Fraser Fotheringham, 49 St. Valery Place, Ullapool; *Hon. Secretary*: Stuart Murdoch, 134 Goldrum Street, Dunfermline, (0383) 721971.

**Perth Section.** – This has been my first full year as secretary of the club and essentially there has been little change in the statistics of the club over the past year. Membership stands at 64 members with 6 honorary members and 16 lady associates. While membership may have slipped slightly the ladies have increased in numbers. Their relative strength within the club is greater than the figures suggest as the ladies are generally more active and frequently appear on meets in considerable numbers.

There were 13 meets during the year with an average attendance of 11.5 which is similar to the previous year. Hillwalking is still the main activity of members on meets however the climbers are active from time to time. We had 4 completions during the past year including one for the second time and a husband and wife who finished together on the same Munro which is an unusual if not unique event. The main innovation this year was the first ever section meet to the Alps. This was a most successful event a fact which could well lead to a repeat in the future.

The club was represented at the Grampian Club, Glasgow and Edinburgh Section dinners during the year. Our own Annual Dinner was held again this year at the Kingshouse Hotel in Glencoe with speeches by Bob Milne and Sandy Robertson.

The Annual Joint Lecture with the Perthshire Society of Natural Science was given by Peter Smith and described the Edinburgh University Lahul Expedition. There were 3 mid-week meets over the winter covering cross Country Ski-ing by Stephen Senn, a touring trip to Alaska by Ron Payne and the Himalayas by Douglas Elder.

The Annual General Meeting was held in Perth in December at which the following officers were elected: –

*President*, Bob Milne; *Hon. Vice-President*, David Wares; *President*, Rob Garner; *Vice-President*, John Crombie; *Treasurer*, Tom Rix; *Secretary*, Ron Payne, 70 Spoutwells Drive, Scone, Perth PH2 6SB – (0738) 51412.

No report was received from the **Lochaber Section**.

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

### The Alps

NOT being a Section of the JMCS that rushes into things, the Perth Section had their first ever meet abroad at the beginning of July, 1987. At the suggestion of Sylvain Roumet, French member of the Perth Section, a small party explored the valleys of Nevache and Etroite, which lie north of Briançon. The party consisted of Lou Kass, Ron Payne, Iain Robertson, Sandy Robertson, Miss Jennifer Irving and Dr Cynthia Williamson.

This is a delightful and unspoiled part of the Alps, apparently little visited by anyone except the French themselves, and providing scope for both walking and rock climbing. The area is well provided with huts, both CAF and CAI (la Vallée Etroite having been Italian until 1947), as well as those provided by the local commune. What the area does lack is a guidebook in English. Roumet provided us with a translation of the relevant parts of the general guide, but his translation of the rock climbing guide went adrift, and so no routes were attempted.

The mountains in the area are all round about 3000 metres. The rock is limestone and tends towards the vertical. There are no glaciers. Parties were observed on some longish rock climbs, and there are no less than two rock climbing schools in the area. Although only in the area for five days (much too short), the party had excellent days on le Grand Galibier, Grand Aréa and Mont Thabor, as well as some of the lower hills.

ANDREW WALKER writes: - 'Steve Senior and I (JMCS London) climbed in the Alps with Jean-Michel Oberson (SAC). Routes done from Chamonix: La Puce, Aiguilles Rouges (South-West Face D); from Envers d'Aiguille hut: Bienvenue Georges Cinq (TD) and Marchant du Sable (ED-); from the Val d'Mello on the south side of the Piz Badile: Luna Nascente (VII) and Ravigilio de Kundalini (VI+); from the Fourka pass: Winterstock, Thuile IV (VII). 'Rest' days were spent climbing on some superb Swiss crags, notably in the Jura and in the Rhone valley near Martigny. A. Walker and S. Senior then traversed the Blumlisalp from the Blumlisalp hut to the Frundenhütte via the Morgenhorn, Wyse Frau and Blumlisalp (AD), followed by the Doldenhorn (North Face D+).'

### Africa

HAMISH BROWN in the last year or two has travelled several times through the Jbel Sahro and Anti Atlas mountain ranges in the south of Morocco. He writes: - 'The Sahro is often called 'the Hoggar of Morocco' and presents the same dramatic towers and pinnacles as the Hoggar. They would make an interesting climbing ground in winter with an assurance of sun. Camping is not difficult and the Berbers good company. It is an arid area and access is difficult for vehicles but mules can be hired for enjoyable trekking. One UK company and some French ones do treks but only the French have tackled those dramatic towers. The Anti Atlas, south of Agadir, rise starkly from vivid green valley oases which enjoy a strange prosperity as the men are great travellers and traders. February is the almond blossom time, March gives a startling profusion of alpine flowers; these are the best months for climbing or wandering the tops. The whole area has weird granite formations and some big cliffs. I've not heard of anyone climbing there. Anyone seriously interested in climbing (or trekking) in these areas is welcome to get in touch with me for practical information. Morocco is so colourful, lively and different anyway but knowing-the-ropes makes a big difference and saves much time and effort. Most years between January and April I am in the Atlas somewhere to trek, ski, climb and explore with friends and can often fit in an extra person or I'm happy to organise groups for mountain activities.'

### Crete

A. L. CRAM writes: - 'In early April 1987, my wife and I returned to the main range in Crete, this time to the western end. A powerful northerly gale smothered the Island in cloud, snow and heavy rain; thick sea brume hid the north shoreline down to the runway. Our aircraft made several passes before putting down in the cross wind and spray from waves. Torrents of rain and fierce wind continued during the four hour drive to Maleme, site of the decisive battle for Crete and persisted for the next day or two. We drove up the demanding curves the 3750 feet to the Omalos plateau. We were driven off the track to the Kaliergi Hut by wind and snow to take refuge in the Sumerias Gorge, said to be the largest in Europe and descended by the Xyloskalon to near sea level only to find the wind and snow on return. A day or two later we again took the track to the hut, blown off our feet on exposed zig-zag curves. A strange gleam from the crest, at 5370 feet, was a reflection from thick ice coating every stone and twig. We had no time to admire, roughly bundled over the crest by wind into the lee of a peninsula bounded by formidable crags on the far side at the top of which the hut was occasionally visible. Making for the shelter, buffeted by gusts, only to find the hut locked and smothered in long fog feathers. Once or twice the peaks of the Lefka Ori shouldered out of the scud. The severe rock face of Volakias emerged streaming with drift. My wife who had relied on a brochure weather chart to invest in smart beach wear, drew my attention to the reality such as she had experienced on Ben Alder, Mam Soul and other points, but with a lower cost profile. Pachness, the main summit at 8340 feet, without a base at the hut, was out of reach from sea level. Later we were able to walk over the two western summits and in later time western ridges above Kandanos.

We went back to the Island in October. Based on Iraklion we visited a number of tops before driving up the steep, testing road to Anoghia, reputed to have lost its entire male population in reprisal for guerilla war. A new road led into the midst of the central group, the Oros Idi or Psiloritis, where a hut was shown, a necessary resting place to avoid a night out on the mountains. On another day, we drove up to the hut, a long and tiresome drive over gravel and broken rock into a ring of mountains, surrounding a deep limestone sink. I hesitate to elaborate because of the risk of incurring the editorial wrath of the former editor in case of making another geological gaffe as in a previous contribution. To our dismay, the hut was dismantled for reconstruction. We went up some 500 feet to the entrance to the famous cavern of Ideon Antron and then scrambled up some distance over slabby fractured rock towards the main summit of Timios Stavros 8350 feet, veiled in wisps of cloud and rain. The route lay round the toe of the ridge to gain the crest. It seemed feasible to place a light tent above the toe, a scheme I put off mentioning to my wife, who was suffering withdrawal symptoms from her beach wear, to a more propitious time.'

### New Zealand

IAIN BROOKER was working in New Zealand from August 1986 to April 1988 and climbed and ski toured as opportunity allowed. Access and weather conditions often increase the dimensions of N.Z. mountaineering from the Alpine to the expeditionary but during his stay he enjoyed some rewarding mountain experiences. These included some good ski mountaineering on areas of the Fox and Franz Josef Glaciers and the following ascents. In the Aspiring area: Mt. Aspiring (S.W. ridge), Mt. Avalanche (W. ridge), Mt. Earnshaw and some smaller peaks. In the Mount Cook area: Mt. Haidinger, Mt. Lendenfield, Minarets, Mt. Douglas (S. face), Footstool (E. face), Mt. Tasman (N. Shoulder) and Mt. Cook itself by the normal Linda Glacier route.

## Norway

DES RUBENS writes: - 'Stan Pearson, Ian Dalley, Tom Prentice and myself spent nearly two weeks in July, 1987, north of the Arctic Circle. We suffered a week of cold rain and no sun followed by a Greek island style heatwave. During this week, we climbed on Eidetind and Hugelhommet just above the Arctic highway. A view from the latter peak inspired us to charter a boat up the Tysfjord and camp below Stetind. The 350m of this granite colossus is at least as impressive as the top three hundred and fifty metres of any Alpine peak I know. We warmed up on the classic south pillar which gave 666m of VS climbing with an E1 direct finish. The magnificent West shoulder consisted of about 1000m of Etive style climbing, followed by some intricate route finding and culminating in a formidable pillar. The climbing was very sustained with a dozen pitches of E1 and a couple of E2. Exhaustion was brought on by intense heat, hornets and no darkness during 2000m of ascent. Nevertheless, the perfect rock, the settled weather and the setting above glassy fjords and a thousand jagged peaks from the Lofoten Islands to the icecaps of the hinterland made this an unforgettable climb.'

## REVIEWS

## Tilman - Eight Sailing Mountain Exploration Books.

It is good news that Diadem have decided to follow up their publication of Tilman's seven mountain travel books with the re-printing, in one volume, of his eight sailing/mountain exploration books. Almost 1,000 pages are stuffed full of adventure, trials, tribulations, successes and failures and there are lots and lots of maps to save you searching out your old school atlas to find out just where the Crozet Islands, Jan Mayen or Bylot Island are. Twenty eight superbly reproduced colour photographs portray the flavour of Arctic and Antarctic sailing exploration.

The book records an incredible 21 years continuous exploration comprising 19 separate expeditions in the course of which Tilman sailed about 157,000 miles. Appendix II is a brief record of these expeditions and, with the exception of the 1974 trip to Spitzbergen and the 1976 trip to East Greenland, a total mileage for each journey is given. The Spitzbergen trip would, I know, be about 5,000 miles and it is reasonable to assume that the East Greenland trip, which covered a similar route to the 1974 trip, would be 3,700 miles. Perhaps in a new edition these distances could be included for completeness.

It would be foolish to sit down and read all eight books straight through. That would be rather like starting with the Avacado on a five star restaurant menu and chomping one's way, non-stop, through to the Petit Fours. One would certainly be sated before the end and in no state to enjoy the fine fare offered. Your reviewer is no glutton and confesses to not having read all the stories yet. They are to be saved and savoured over a long period and will, undoubtedly, give many hours of enjoyment and much inspiration.

It would be invidious of me to criticise Tilman's writing. It is carefully crafted, fully researched with nothing superfluous but nothing missing. Great care is taken to record detail and the text is peppered with interesting snippets of information which have been stumbled across. For example, 'just in case' he includes a recipe for guillemot soup and notes that 'on the Oslo/Bergen railway the Gravehalsen Tunnel is 3 miles 514 yards long and took 12 years to bore.' Although the books contain a great deal of background information, they are not travel guides, they are stories of exploration. Nevertheless, these little snippets of information do give us an insight into Tilman's own dry humour as well as his great knowledge on a variety of subjects.

Tilman is all too often remembered as 'the man who kept losing boats' or 'the man who kept falling out with his crew.' This is neither fair nor true and Colin Putt's assessment of Tilman in the introduction should be studied to get the true picture of the man.

Although large parts of the book describe voyages, Tilman was not just a sailor. The journeys are essentially voyages of exploration for that is what he was, an explorer. A man who needed to discover new things, see new places, always wanting to know what was over the next horizon. He was like a cat, insatiably curious. We should be curious too and read the books to learn a little more about the wild and remote parts of the planet on which we live.

I never met Tilman but would like to have done so. I came close at a reception once, but, perhaps typically, he had sneaked away early. I would like to have asked him whether he found, at sea, the same satisfaction that he had earlier found in his period of mountain exploration. Exploring mountains inevitably means travelling long distances by public transport and one is at the mercy of others before eventually reaching the remote places where the joy of being self-sufficient in a wild and hostile environment can be experienced. The sailor setting out in his own frail craft is, just a few miles from shore, in an expedition environment totally reliant upon his own planning and skill. Conversations with those who knew Tilman suggest that one of the reasons he took to sailing to those places he wished to explore was because of the total self-sufficiency it bestowed upon the whole exploit. 'Only a man in a devil of a hurry would wish to fly to his mountains, foregoing



the lingering pleasure and mounting excitement of a slow, arduous approach under his own exertions.'

Tilman's mountain objectives were, as he put it, 'lesser mountains that are almost washed by the sea or close linked to it...by the glaciers they send down into the sea.' Few mountains significantly over 6,000 feet occur within striking distance of the sea but all ascents start from sea level and the actual climb can be as long as in the Himalayas or the Andes. Maps of Arctic and Antarctic regions are usually vague, rarely is any climb less than an expedition in that one has to reconnoitre the route, often blundering up blind alleys before finding a possible way to the summit. Rock is rarely sound; when attempting a 5,800-foot peak in Greenland Tilman came across rock 'very loose, so loose that we deemed it safer to climb unroped lest the rope should dislodge something on the man below.' Success on what may seem very moderate mountains should not be underrated.

Tilman had a reputation for not getting on with people. On a mountain expedition the members are generally spread over a large area, often at different camps. Anyone getting uptight can at least go for a walk but, of course, on a small boat that is not possible. Living cooped up with half a dozen others in a cramped and leaky cabin, being tossed around on a wild ocean must inevitably lead to tensions and Tilman is remarkably frank, though sometimes a little bitter, about the problems encountered. No one could say, however, that Tilman was not without his own prejudices 'I felt that a man with the unseamanlike habit of wearing gloves at night in Summer in the Atlantic would not prosper on a voyage of this kind.'

One thing perhaps he could have done a little better was to feed his crew somewhat better than he appears to have done. The reek of the primus may bring back fond memories to those of us brought up to rely on these wayward devices but it must have been hell trying to cook with them in the forepeak of a boat enduring the violent motion one gets in a seaway.

Some chapters are headed up with delightful little 'one liners.' 'There is nothing so distressing as running ashore - unless there is also doubt as to which continent the shore belongs.' In the story of the journey to Cross Bylot Island Tilman is somewhat circumspect about his position - 'we were certainly near some part of the Canadian Arctic.' Navigation is an art not a science and, although he often claimed to be not at all sure where he was, it is remarkable how often he turned up at exactly the place he desired. With increased reliance on modern electronic aids accurate navigation by the sun as practised by Tilman will, I fear, soon become a lost art.

Every voyage was planned to get somewhere and to do something. Again in the Bylot expedition story we read 'In a region to which the voyage is not too long (a mere 7,000 miles!), Arctic waters beat upon coasts that are wild and little frequented and that are studded with unclimbed mountains...and above all the romance and excitement of icebergs and pack ice seen at close quarters from the deck of a small boat.' He goes on to quote Belloc 'in venturing in sail upon strange coasts we are seeking those first experiences and are trying to feel as felt the earlier man in a happier time to see the world as they saw it.' That's what Tilman's voyages were all about, that's what the books are all about.

Throughout the book I was continually delighted by chancing upon phrases and sentences that eloquently expressed thoughts dimly sensed but which I could certainly never have expressed with such perception and feeling. It would be easy to fill a book with quotes and I must resist the temptation to do so here. I found it difficult to resist the temptation to start reading wherever the book falls open, as I did when checking to see if we had climbed the same mountain in Seydisfjord, Iceland. I had read a whole chapter before continuing my search for the few lines required! It is easy to get caught by wonderful prose, quotes, facts and stories quite unrelated to the one being searched for.

These stories should be read and the journeys envisaged, for the likes of Tilman and his expeditions will not occur again. Myself and others have followed the same routes but not made the same journeys. Our yachts are more sophisticated, we have windvanes to steer them 24 hours a day, Satellite Navigators to tell us our

position anywhere on earth and radar to draw a map of a coastline unseen in the fog. Longyearbyen (Spitzbergen) has its thrice weekly scheduled plane from Norway, its Post Office, banks, buses and taxis, though bread from the bakery is no long available to tourists. You can pop 10 Kr. in the 'phone box and dial home straight through, clear as a bell. Jan Mayen may treat you to 20 varieties of fresh smorgasbord and you can watch Norwegian T.V. live (via satellite) though the bar only opens on Wednesday and Saturday. Tilman's way was hard by today's standards and to do it his way would, now, be artificial.

Buy this book, read it from cover to cover at leisure, or dip into it at bedtime. It will give months of fascinating, educating, stimulating, rewarding reading. Why not plan your own expedition to savour it to the full?

Graham Tiso.

**Scotland's Mountains.** - by W. H. Murray.

(Scottish Mountaineering Trust, 1987, pp.305, numerous maps and photos, £15.95).

This book is an enlarged, updated and enhanced edition of the Trust's general guide *The Scottish Highlands*, published in 1976. That book was comprehensively and enthusiastically reviewed by Adam Watson Jnr. in the 1978 *Journal* (XXXI, 325-7); his careful analysis still largely applies to this version, allowing this reviewer the indulgence of a more subjective and selective response to the new edition.

Resist any inclination you may feel to leave this book unexamined on the bookseller's shelf as being a kind of grand but greyish summation of the SMT's regional hill-walking guides. It is vastly more than that, being effectively the basic reference source on Scottish mountains and mountaineering, encyclopaedic in breadth, authority, and style. It should be acquired even (or perhaps most of all) by those weary old climbing cynics who think they know it all.

Maitre Murray presents his feast in three substantial courses. The first is a systematic account of the physical and human geography and history of the Scottish hills, in which the author displays the breadth and grasp he has developed through his topographic writings of the last three decades. A degree of compaction of the material is evident, but not oppressive; the inherent sense is of a holistic view of our mountain country, not as a glorious playground but as part of our wider national heritage. This section bluntly challenges us all to remove the oromaniacal blinkers. It is surely ominous, though, that Murray has felt able to leave unaltered his 1976 critique of the failure to conserve our mountain landscapes: on that front there has been scant progress worth reporting.

The middle course, enlarged for this edition by the incorporation of a modest but sympathetic treatment of the Southern Uplands, comprises six chapters of regional description of Scotland's hills. The author's high skill is displayed in the alternation of broad topographic accounts with deft vignettes of local landscape. But inevitably, in this day of shelf- and mind-oppressing masses of guidebook, one has to wonder whether and where this necessarily general and compressed treatment fits into the market. The coverage, though extraordinarily extensive, is not absolutely comprehensive, inviting pleasant speculation on the Munros that have failed to attract or satisfy the author's refined tastes. At a practical level, Murray's mix of vertical metres and horizontal miles is perhaps no more than an accurate reflection of the muddle of measures with which most of us have struggled over the past decade, as we grudgingly replaced our dignified but disintegrating Seventh Series sheets with those misbegotten semi-metricated First Edition 1:50000 maps.

For the third course we are given the history of mountaineering in Scotland, brought firmly up to date since the 1976 edition, with a dutiful note on the history of Scottish skiing that by contrast shows minimal sign of revision. The detailed account of the evolution of climbing practice in the past ten years shows that Bill Murray has retained in an extraordinary degree a youthful fascination with, and delight in, not only mountains but also mountaineers and the technical minutiae of their arcane doings. No hint of Struttishness obtrudes, except in a marvellously Delphic concluding statement.

In that sense and in others, however, this chapter, as in the first edition, is far more stimulating than satisfying. Here more than elsewhere in the book Murray's encyclopaedic virtues of objectivity and compaction tend towards vice. The history of Scottish climbing reeks of personality and character; even the baldest of factual accounts hints at machination and at fondly cherished antipathies. In recent years Bill Murray has himself demonstrated in historical notes and obituaries a most delicately devastating way with characterisation which has been too long muted, and which could have transformed this masterly but detached history into a mighty saga. Of that, more below.

What of the garnishings? The book now shares the handsome larger format and layout of the Ben Nevis history, giving an overall impression of a clean modernity. As a hawser-laid reactionary, however, I doubt that this style of design will withstand the surge of fashion as the classic Old Red guides have done. The greatest single benefit of the more generous format is the presentation of maps and photographs cross-page, eradicating the rubbernecking needed in the earlier book. Superb photographic reproduction is now the norm in SMT publications. The lavish selection of monochrome and colour pictures complements the text in conveying much of the diversity of Scottish mountains and climbing, though I feel that contemporary winter climbing has yet to receive adequate treatment. Bill Murray's own front cover landscape of Cruachan down Loch Etive in the gloaming, seen to greater advantage on p 130, conveys more emotion than many fine words of text. I am less enamoured of the maps: crayon-colouring, a technique as redolent of the classroom as chalk-dust, does little to enhance James Renny's admirably crisp pen and ink work. And I felt that in places, as on pp 3-4, a more expansive touch with the sub-heading layouts could have helped open up what is sometimes a visually daunting mass of text.

As a piece of writing, the book is a work of high craftsmanship. Overall, no writer could have done a better job to this limiting specification. But Bill Murray is an artist, the finest writer about mountains and mountaineering we may ever have in Scotland, and this essentially functionalist book, worthy though it be, seems less than an ideally fitting capstone for the cairn atop Sgùrr Uilleum.

One had hoped that the Scottish Mountaineering Club, recognising its obligations to the wider mountaineering fraternity and to posterity, would on the proud occasion of its centenary have eschewed a series of self-congratulatory beanfeasts and a cauld-kail collation from the Journal in favour of commissioning a true work of mountain art from its Old Master. Is it yet too late?

Robert Aitken.

**Norman Collie, a life in two worlds: mountain explorer and scientist. 1854-1942.** By Christine Mill (Aberdeen University Press. xiii + 197 pp: £14.90).

For some reason it seems that a disproportionate number of the sane and sensible people who spend their spare hours on the hills are scientists, engineers, or doctors: all from one of Snow's two cultures, the group often dismissed by the other as being uncultured. For those of us who find reality interesting and time in the hills a healthy antidote to intellectual pride and relief from struggling with the abstract, it is strange that not everybody shares our enthusiasm – but selfishly we are happy that the crowds are not worse. Clearly it was ever so, and J. Norman Collie is one of the best early examples: a Professor of Chemistry who collected oriental ceramics, a gourmet and oenophile, a scholar and experimentalist, mountaineer and explorer, a man capable of contemplation as well as of vigorous action. Very much in the Victorian tradition – but unusual in having close friends from a different social class. A recurring thought as I read this biography was that things had changed, that both science and mountaineering had suffered a decline. As a senior academic scientist today he would do little practical science (though his skill at glass blowing would be useful in an impoverished British laboratory!) – and certainly he would have difficulty in spending as much time in the hills – though he would have the fun of interminable committees by way of consolation. And an expedition to the Himalaya like Collie's would demand greater organisation, more

bureaucracy – though media sponsorship would be a new pleasure. Even in those days though, Collie was grumbling about the intrusion of more people into the remoter regions of Canada – so some things remain the same. Inevitably one looks with envy at the freedom Collie had to follow his research interests, and the more leisurely pace of academic life which allowed him to spend long vacations in the hills.

There can be few British mountaineers who have not set foot on one of the several routes named after Collie: few too who do not realise that Sgùrr Thormaid, one of the peaks of Sgùrr na Banachdich in the Black Coolin, is named after him. The discovery of the Cioch by Collie, who realised the significance of the evening shadow on Sron na Ciche, is one of the classic stories in the history of climbing on Skye. Collie was one of the great pioneers of Scottish mountaineering – and of mountaineering in many other countries too. Not only did he do much to develop climbing in Britain, but he went well afield, and left an impressive legacy of new routes.

This workmanlike biography, extensively illustrated from Collie's own slide collection (courtesy of the Alpine Club), describes his early climbing in Britain, his trip to the Alps with Mummery, Hastings and Slingsby, the trip to Nanga Parbat on which Mummery was lost, his exploration of the Canadian Rockies and the climbs in Lofoten. Interspersed with the mountaineering biography is an account, rather less detailed, of Collie's life in the world of science, which occupied more of his hours but possibly less of his nervous energy. But at the end one is left feeling that Collie is still a mystery as a person – but then most of us have friends whose 'strangeness' we habitually remark, and Collie was clearly a very unusual man. Understandably the non-mountaineering biography is sketchier – but we are told enough to show that he was a first-rate scientist, and there is much more detail than in the earlier biography written in 1973 by W. C. Taylor ('The Snows of Yesteryear'), which is almost entirely devoted to Collie's mountaineering life. The book concludes, in scholarly fashion, with lists of Collie's climbing achievements and a scientific bibliography. I enjoyed this biography, and it compares favourably in content (though less perhaps in presentation and style) with the earlier book by Taylor, but I had a nagging feeling that it was missing some essential ingredient. Possibly the successful biographer has to identify with the subject, and this is clearly very difficult with an enigmatic character like Collie.

John Lackie.

**The Cairngorm Club 1887-1987.** – By Sheila Murray. (Published by the Cairngorm Club, 130 pages, with photographs and drawings).

The Cairngorm Club is arguably the senior mountaineering club in Scotland, being one year older than the SMC, and they have produced an excellent history of their club on the occasion of its centenary. One which sets a high standard for others wishing to publish similar books in the future.

The first thing that strikes you is the front cover, a superb romantic print of Loch Avon and the surrounding peaks. This sets the scene for the first chapter which describes the founding of the Club, appropriately on the shores of the loch below Cairngorm itself. Then follows a well researched, logically laid out record of the Club and its activities. The author has not been tempted into writing a chronological list of events but more interestingly devotes separate chapters to different aspects, for example Personalities and Social Occasions.

Readers personally involved with the Cairngorm Club will obviously get most from the book – others may not find it quite so relevant, although several passages, particularly those describing how the hills were approached in the early years will be of interest to most.

The author, the first lady president of the Club, has clearly put much time and effort into both researching and writing this book. Her enthusiasm for the Club comes across in the reading.

Grahame Nicoll.

**Fawcett on Rock.** - By Ron Fawcett and John Beatty. (Unwin Hyman 1987; 158 pages; £14.95).

When first picking up this book the names on the cover made me look forward to seeing some good photographs of Fawcett in Action. 'A series of 40 breathtaking colour photos taken on rock faces around the world' the dust cover informs us, and taken by a photographer of John Beatty's talent, that could be no bad thing. The text, a technique book for intermediate and advanced climbers, held no great promise of riveting reading, especially as the small print informs us that the real writer is Mike Harrison - 'all the ideas and techniques are Ron's own, though the words and expressions are Mike's.' However, I was totally wrong on both counts.

The colour pictures are very disappointing and, far from being from around the world, are not even from around Britain (not even from all round the bit south of the border). It is grit and limestone in the Peak and Yorkshire, French limestone and two shots from Joshua Tree. Although some are good and show the dynamism of modern rock climbing, others are mediocre. Many have been poorly reproduced, the ones taken at Buoux would seem to indicate that your skin turns purple when you climb there. In these days of books such as *Extreme Rock* we have become used to good shots of hard routes, and, with a climber such as Fawcett performing for a photographer such as Beatty, I expected better than we see here.

The black and white photos used throughout the book, mainly to illustrate points of technique, are also poor, many of them lacking in contrast. In spite of this they are more interesting pictures than the others. Some of the action shots and sequences such as those on *Rheinstor* and the *Direct Start to Living at Speed* show what hard modern rock is about. Perhaps they should have been in colour and the colour left out.

The text starts off with an entertaining and readable essay by Jim Perrin on Fawcett, the man, his beginnings, his climbing career and a potted history of climbing in England and Wales in the 70's and 80's. The bulk of the book then takes us through the techniques used on slabs, walls, overhangs and so on. This, however, is not a straight-forward technical treatise, but rather a blend of technique, philosophy of the rock athlete, anecdotes, tips, equipment reviews, pointers to the future of the sport and the like which makes for surprisingly interesting reading. How easy it is to learn how to move on rock from a book is hard to say, but the insights and information on modern rock climbing make that aspect of the text of secondary importance here. Some of the ideas such as 'if you aren't falling, you aren't learning' may come as a surprise to the traditionalists as would the section on falling, learning routes and the death of concepts such as on-sight leads for the hardest routes.

This section is followed by chapters on gear for the hard man; how to use RPs, TCUs, Friends and bolts indicate that it is aimed at the Extreme leader, not those who prefer big slings round bigger spikes. A section on training compliments all this on the rock activity. This is excellent, up to date, helpful and sensible, pointing out the pit-falls waiting for the over-enthusiastic or the unwary. This runs naturally into bouldering and the conclusion which again mixes facts, stories and ideas.

Throughout the book the emphasis is hard rock; this is not in any way about mountaineering but 'a celebration of movement for its own sake.' Fawcett's exploits, such as soloing 100 Extremes in a day, his thoughts on the sport and his humour make this a very worth-while read whether you want to do it yourself or only know what is happening at the leading edge of the sport.

Allen Fyffe.

**Ski Mountaineering in Scotland.** - Edited by Donald Bennet and Bill Wallace. Scottish Mountaineering Trust, 1987, pp 121, 170 route descriptions, 112 colour photographs and 72 maps. £12.95.

I was invited to contribute to this guide-book but, by the time I got round to thinking about it, fourteen Club members had sewn it up - with as many in reserve. Well, that's interesting compared with Slessor's bold solo lead with his little blue book not so long ago. With a deep knowledge of that era I now find

myself, by default, well placed to review the book; more unfortunately, perhaps, to advise younger members how not to go about enjoying it.

The book itself is possibly the best of the current S.M.T. publications. Every page is a delight with excellent colour photo reproduction and a particularly pleasing print. The hard cover is attractive – the garb, gear and gait of the solitary skier suggests the reviewer but, without immodesty, he cannot be sure. The title page is well composed round one of the editors coming off Spidean Mialach against the background of Loch Quoich. Very Scottish. Jim Renny's maps are better than ever. As a guide it is not pocket-size.

The Introduction is brief, concise and full of interest. It reminds us of the place of ski-ing in Scottish mountaineering and of the distances covered by birch-limbed pioneers almost since the Club began. Of the two photos here, the earlier is a fascinating social commentary of the Thirties. The routes are two- to five-star graded for 'quality, character and ambience,' with II to IV classification of difficulty of descent. I could not fault one assessment. (Already I hear complaint that this guide is thereby spoiling the mystery. I do not agree). Gradients, too, are worked out (12° to 52°). They always seem steeper. Some of the particular problems of ski navigation are mentioned and here I would endorse the great value of the altimeter. Weather, avalanche and safety are touched upon but this is no handbook of technique. Neither, fortunately, does the Introduction more than suggest equipment. In this last decade nothing dates ski-mountaineering writing more quickly than naming makes and types of skis, bindings and boots.

I had thought that the route descriptions were to be more personal. Either the editors have heavily ironed out the differences or we all write pretty well alike. That is not to say that the text is not lively as well as clear. It is interesting to detect behind the uniform facade small expressions which match the authors. I thought the outstanding contributor was Dave Snadden, one of our fitter ski-mountaineers, with his work beyond the Great Glen. Maybe it is because he deals with those great remote tours which are my own last Scottish dreams: the head of Glen Strathfarrar, the Beinn Dearg round. A small detail caught my eye – I had not seen before in print the hazard of crossing frozen reservoirs. A small glint in Neil Mather's eye on Ben Chonzie?

It is regrettable that we do not take more photographs in bad weather. It is difficult enough getting the camera out when a blistering pace is being set on a fine day; how much worse when the party is really getting a move on in blustery conditions. The grandeur of cloud and drifting snow is missing. Also, we miss the reminder of foul-weather discipline when changing from ski to crampon, or from up- to down-hill mode at the summit. Can I liken it to the control required in planting a snarg in spindrift? In short, the flavour of hellish inclemency is lacking throughout.

Although the text tends to be uniform the photographs, if all agreeable, are not. Some I found to be especially interesting or evocative: Ben Lomond (p 14), Ben Nevis (p 42), Creag Meagaidh at sundown (p 53), the Bealach Dubh (p 57), Morven (p 82), Ben Avon (p 88) and Cona' Mheall (p 114).

No two-day, or longer, tours are described. That is a pity. There are few more romantic experiences in Scottish mountaineering than to ski down in the moonlight to a lonely bothy.

The good point is made that the skier can, by the very ease of his progress, enter very remote areas – in itself a hazard when things go wrong. This book leaves it to other modern authorities to emphasise the place of ski-ing ability in all round mountaineering. I hear it is a skill now demanded of British guides. Our own Peter Cliff's *'Ski Mountaineering'* and Martyn Harris' *'Ski-ing Real Snow'* spell it out.

[For me the inspiration to widen my mountain skill came from Adam Watson's great *'Cairngorm Langlauf'* of 1962 and also from David Grieve's return from Canada with Nordic glides to add to student Alpine swoops. I possessed splendid hill-bashing, rock- and ice-climbing legs. All I needed was the planks. Nae bother.

Working 'mid the Convict, the Fish and the Black, Black Oil on remote Aberdeenshire coasts I felt cut off from Scottish skiers and climbers (that was a



while ago; now outside the discos every second car has its ski-rack, on the school Wall every second O-grade pupil his E-grade). So how to get the gear and get started? I asked a local businessman to find a shop in Oslo. I wrote. Within two weeks there arrived, via ship to Leith, an exquisite set of Bonnas, rat-traps and little leather boots. Total cost: £12. Waxes and ex-W.D. mohair skins were acquired, where I remember not.

Fully equipped then, in the winter of '63, I tagged on to a party leaving the Cairngorm car park to ski to Derrylodge - David, Adam and his boss, Prof. V. C. Wynne-Edwards (with skins he had shot himself, naturally). As I fumbled with my bindings, Grieve advised, 'For you, this trip, in climbing terms, is like a lower Deeside hillwalker venturing on to the Eigerwand.'

'Damn you,' I muttered, and that was about the last exchange all day. In fact, we all arrived at Derrylodge neck and neck but it was hardly a sociable outing. I had scarcely seen my companions all day because I had to go like fury to be first up the steep bits, and on the downhill bits I was forced to take off my skis and run. Somehow, not really what I had imagined. Later that year I thought I would 'practise.' In knee-length cagoule, bunnet, Dachsteins (and the essential climber's day-sac) I ventured to buy some tickets for the Coire Gas ski-tow. Nobody told me what to do (and I would not ask!). So I just sat heavily and expectantly on the cross-bar. When the power suddenly reached me - Hoop La! I was astonished to be catapulted backwards. That was just the start. The T-bar hooked into the essential sac and I was carried aloft, upside down, like a horrible thing, still alive, on the conveyor belt from abattoir to cold store - past queues of grinning beef inspectors. Mercifully, about the level of the first pylon, the whole mechanism was brought to a halt and I was let, nay, assisted, off the hook. (The tragedy is that I can be the amused spectator in exactly the same scene today, twenty-five years later). Angry and humiliated, I donned skins and crept up into the mists of Coire an Lochain for a long, brooding afternoon. Slowly I worked it out. I was indeed like a stupid stirk, louping and stomping to new fields and blundering into an unpleasant, hitherto unseen, electric fence. Messages became clear. President McKenzie glared at hushed diners in St. Enoch's halls and declared the Albigenian creed, 'learn to ski, I tell you!' Tom Weir twinkled the same advice, privately. My children said the same, but more explicitly.

And so, I took formal down-hill lessons - middle-aged, frowning with concentration and disapproval, the only mountain-lover in a class of teenage girls giggling and swooning at the instructor's obscene wedeln.

But it happened! My skills advanced. I skied steeper slopes and crossed longer hills. I bought all kinds of better equipment (a mad scramble in the last decade of ski-touring goodies). I felt a growing 'ambidexterity' in both Alpine and Nordic styles, the former leading properly now to the latter. I bubbled about it to anyone who would listen (and many who would not). I bounced up to John Wilson in Lagangarbh and demanded to know if he, too, could ski. His look, through an amused curl of cigarette smoke, is unforgettable to this day. I toured in the Alps and I lauded in Norway. I had the presumption to accompany my mentor in a week's crossing of the Highlands. I could clatter down anything Scottish.

But, new fences interrupted my progress. First, I found myself very much the panting tail-end of a crowd of slick French randonneurs descending in appalling crust and porridge from the Fiescherhorn to the Finsteraarhorn Hut. Hmm! Then, about the same time, I was severely burned off by Slessor and Wallace in a descent of the West ridge of Stob Choire Claurigh in conditions I could not handle. Slessor pointed it out, his contempt just nullified by his ridiculous pseudo-tartan ski-hat, 'You must take off-piste lessons.' And so I did. But this time I was helped across the fence, a bit breathless and with shirt-tail hanging out, by French guides who put their love of the mountains into their teaching.

So, young readers, a hard week on the piste with all the advantages of modern gear and teaching. Then a week of off-piste instruction. Expensive, decadent, great! Get to know your Harscheisen like your Friends. (Of course it works the other way, too. The S.M.C. is a climbing club towards whose new standards of entry older members should make at least a spastic thrutch). I implore you not to take

the first 'easy' Nordic road. Save that very great pleasure for later. While, with little skill, you can enjoy great Spring plateau tours or long glen crossings, do remember that in Scotland we enjoy the icy hillsides of a temperate maritime climate, not the continental powder of 'Cross Country Downhill' and Lito Tejada-Flores. Having said that, I am unstinting in my praise of those modern exponents of the superb Telemark turn (so well illustrated on p 96 of the guide-book by R. Ferguson).

And so, on the threshold of senility, I finally found I could just about hold my own with any ski-mountaineer in Scotland. That is until I came to the last great chapter of the guide...].

Good accounts of extreme ski-ing make my heart race and my palms sweat. Imagine! Imagine! This chapter does just that. How pathetic are the angles of descent I am accustomed to! Not only is the technique of gully descent absorbing, but its validity is clear in the context of improving ski-tours. Simple examples are the confident descents of the March Burn and Garbh Choire Mor as important links in Cairngorm crossings.

During a respite in an off-piste lesson, Yves Détry was describing his descent of the Coutourier Couloir (during which he had a delightful ten-minute chat with a solitary Englishman front-pointing upwards). I asked him what was special about his turns. 'Nothing,' he replied. 'You just ski like I teach you. But you ski very well.' Another electric fence, heh? Must look up Martin Burrows-Smith.

For Para-Ski possibilities I eagerly await the Second Edition....

J. M. Taylor.

**Alan Rouse - a Mountaineer's Life.** - Various contributors, compiled by Geoff Birtles (Unwin Hyman, £12.95).

When Alan Rouse died on K2 there was left behind no substantial amount of published work to stand as testimony to a remarkable climbing career. This book redresses that to a certain extent, but, being more of a collection of affectionate remembrances than a coherent biography, the picture it paints has to be built up from various disconnected fragments.

Naturally enough, the Alan Rouse that emerges differs substantially between contributors. Part of this must be due to the particular period under discussion, but one cannot help but feel that some contributions tell us more about their authors than they do about Rouse. However, the story unfolds, the early climbs leading rapidly to national attention with the audacious solo ascent of the *Boldest*; the first ascent of *Positron* not long afterwards; the first repeat of *Orion Direct* with Mike Geddes; trips farther afield, to the Alps and South America with his partner for some of the most productive years, Rab Carrington, and on to the Himalaya.

Throughout the book the very deep affection held by many people for Rouse is plain, and the articles give insights into the aspects of his character which engendered this. However, as usual in climbing biographies, and even more understandable in one written under such circumstances, one is left little wiser as to what drives an individual to a life of semi-permanent insecurity and hardship, and regular exposure to real danger. Yet, since this is what sets men such as Rouse truly apart from the rest of us, an account of his life which avoids the issue is incomplete and unsatisfactory.

The book has been put together in a very short space of time, and this is all too evident in a number of areas. Some of the contributions could have been better edited, and the proof-reading was clearly very rushed. The effect of this is to give a slightly amateurish feel to the book at points, unworthy of the topic. Incidentally, quite what Geoff Birtles and family are doing coiled with rope on the inside rear jacket isn't clear.

There are three articles written by Alan Rouse himself, one of which discusses the changing approach being brought to bear on Himalayan mountaineering. Apart from a rational and considered outlook which could profitably be studied by



activists in other areas of climbing, this article also foresees the circumstances of his own death, stormbound at high altitude without the massive support of the traditional siege. The concluding contribution by Jim Curran describes this unfolding tragedy high on the mountain in a short but extremely moving account. In respect to readers' feelings and to the subject of the book it might have been thought decent to have ended this chapter with a blank page, but unfortunately Curran's thoughts as he says goodbye to his friend are immediately and clumsily followed by the notes on contributors. At least it's not an advert for *High*.

Despite these quibbles I enjoyed this book; the warmth of the contributions compensate for occasional inadequacies. A further virtue is the fact that the royalties from sales are being donated to the establishment and maintenance of the Alan Rouse Memorial Library, surely as fine a tribute as anyone could wish.

Bob Duncan.

**Rock Climbing.** – By Steve Ashton. (The Crowood Press, Ramsbury, Marlborough, Wiltshire, 1987, 159 pages, with photographs and line drawings, £10.95).

Before reading this book, I had a preconception that there were enough textbooks on rock climbing and that this one could add little that hadn't been published before. But I was wrong. Steve Ashton has taken an unusually personal (and successful) approach. He vividly describes the first joys and fears of the beginner and, surprisingly for a book largely concerned with instruction, he encourages the reader to learn by climbing rather than reading and formal instruction. The text should encourage the beginner to make enthusiastic attempts at improvement, and the sections on climbing areas, rope work and technique will help to find the best places to learn safely. Most of all I enjoyed the advice aimed at climbers of intermediate or advanced standards. It is all excellent down-to-earth stuff; don't drink the night before you climb – 'a hard route is challenging enough without...throwing up your breakfast on the stance'; be determined – 'stopping in mid sequence to fiddle with runners is self-defeating...the ascent loses all momentum and grinds to a halt in a web of runners.' How true all this is! Our older members also may find these chapters interesting, since they explain much about modern rock climbing without the off-putting skin-tight leotard image of contemporary magazines.

I have one or two minor complaints. There is no mention of the current dispute between bolt protected and traditional climbing (although he points out rather interestingly that the sport has not always followed the lead of its most accomplished practitioners) and the coverage of Scottish rock is rather sparse. His vision of alpine rock is not one that I share, nor does it seem attractive. Lastly, every reviewer has to find a typo or two, so my contribution is to point out that the photographs of figures 118 and 119 have been mixed up. But these are minor points; the excellent text, the clear illustrations and the good photographs add up to an excellent buy for the beginner or someone interested in improving to 'E' grade climbing.

Roger Everett.

**Abode of Snow.** – By Kenneth Mason. Diadem.

Kenneth Mason's classic work is still, more than thirty years after its first publication, the definitive volume on the Himalaya at large. It is unlikely that one person ever again will have such a broad understanding of the whole Himalayan range, of its mountain people, its geography and its climate. Mason also knew well the early European explorers such as Conway and Bruce as well as those better known to ourselves such as Shipton. So Doug Scott writes in the foreword to this new edition.

It is the great love that Mason has of his subject that shines through every page and makes this a volume to return to again and again. For example, he records the contribution of the native surveyors, usually unnamed and largely forgotten, one of whom reached 23,050ft in Spiti in 1860. We learn that a scholarly Tibetan

expression for Everest is 'You cannot see the summit from near it, but you can see the summit from nine directions, and a bird which flies as high as the summit goes blind.' And so on.

Mason was a surveyor in the first instance and his descriptions of the original surveyors and their methods are as interesting as any other part of his book. The 19th century surveyors did their work so well that accepted heights of the great peaks have scarcely altered over a hundred years. At present, there exists a new question mark over the relative heights of K2 and Everest and satellite technology will be used to update older methods. If the long established figures are far out, I for one will be surprised.

Anyone with any interest and love of the Himalaya should have this book.

Des Rubens.

**Ski Mountaineering.** - By Peter Cliff, (Unwin Hyman, 1987, 160 pages, with photographs and line drawings, £12.95).

This is a timely publication. Mountaineers are realising that to reach climbs in the Alps in winter, being a competent skier is a considerable advantage while skiers, bored with queues and crowded pistes, are looking for more challenging terrain.

The first half of this book explains in detail the equipment and techniques for mountain touring, particularly Alpine touring, and should be recommended reading for the tyro. The techniques are well illustrated by the line drawings.

It seems, however, illogical that in a book which explains basic technique in detail, the majority of tours recommended in the Alps are in the higher, glaciated regions. This is especially so since there are many attractive areas where there are no glaciers, which would seem to provide better terrain on which the *aspirant* ski mountaineer could cut his teeth.

The tours described in the last part of the book are outwith Europe, and for most of us will never be possible. How many will ever have the opportunity to ski on Mount Forel or Mustagh Ata? Nevertheless, the tours do indicate the potential and are well illustrated by both colour and black & white photographs.

Bill Wallace.

**Mountain Days and Bothy Nights.** - By Dave Brown and Ian Mitchell. 1987 Luath Press, Barr, Ayrshire, £5.95, 182pp.

This is a small book in the *Always a Little Further* mould which ranges across much of Scotland describing people, places and experiences in lighthearted fashion, capturing the fifties and sixties as Borthwick did the pre-war years. Perhaps, in places, it is a bit too self-consciously trying to be Borthwick but for all who were roughing it on the hill in those years there will be many a chuckle, or stabs of nostalgia. I even recognised a couple of incidents. The fun element comes through and how innocent the social polemic seems in our nastier world of today. If you like salty yarns this is the book for the rucksack this year, if not, you can always take it with a pinch of sugar.

H. M. Brown.

**A Dream of White Horses.** - By Edwin Drummond, Diadem Books, 1987, £10.95.

I was struck by this book. The Editor had more appropriately sent it to RNC, who promptly found it too Extreme and dropped it to me as a spectator below. It hit me hard because I have long been looking the other way, but he shouted down it was because of the Poetry.

The book has to be recommended. I cannot review it better than Allen Steck has done in his Foreword. Read that in the bookshop before you decide to pay.

Naturally, I shall try. True to its author, the book – subtitled *Recollections of a Life on the Rocks* – is a collection of brilliant moves and zany interludes, woven into something like sequence by astute presentation and disarming honesty. One's irritation at the monkeynesses is soothed by the author's building them into his act. A literal Act. Being now over forty, he tours the halls with an aluminium tripod of monkey-poles, wriggles his way up them, and at the summit delivers his Verses. It seems to catch on, even before 'cynical climbers,' because Drummond, who describes himself as:

...the Bottom; or Fool  
of British climbing...

can put across that admirably unblinking analysis with athletic zest and almost shocking humility. You have to take him All, those solitary North Walls and the most public auto-elevations up various Pillars of the Establishment. It is difficult to resist technique, courage and self-revelation on such a scale.

And the writing? The editors of *Ascent* in 1973 considered 'Ed the only true successor to Scotland's immortal Robin Smith as a creative climber/author.' Maybe; but Smith's art hid a hard objectivity behind a dazzlingly integrated flow of words. Drummond is a spasmodic, and never gave the classic repose of action. But the prose always eagerly quests for new holds; and the verse, despite its various Prizes, is more than the declamatory rhetoric of late 20th-century Pastoral. It can be sharp and searching as a piton, and peaks frequently to Poetry along its always readable, tight and splintery progression. No fat. Smells of the rock.

I came away with a great respect for Drummond, and found the most respectable chapter his long critique of Perrin's excellent life of Menlove Edwards (which critique, agreeably, was rejected by the bisexual *Alpine Journal* apparently because it raised the tender subject of self-abuse....). Faced with the annihilating rockfall of Edwards' life, Drummond and Perrin disagree about the worth of rescue. Drummond has more doubts than Perrin, and gives powerful reasons in a sane well-written essay on the philosophy of risk; serious and healthy. Drummond, monkeying up or down or thinking as a human being, is always, because of his own exposure, on the side of life. Which excuses a lot.

G. J. F. Dutton.

**North Wales – 100 Classic Climbs.** – By Steve Ashton (Crowood Press, £8.95).

You know what its like to be landed in it. 'Oh, review this for me, will you. Say what you think. I'll get it next week.' But certainly.

Well, why would you buy this guide? Because of the use of topos rather than traditional text descriptions? Perhaps, but topos which are shown in many cases on otherwise blank pages, i.e. not on a crag diagram, suggest that the publishers consider a climb's line less important than its features, not a point of view yours truly would generally endorse. There are some crag diagrams, wee things mostly; pity they didn't make them bigger and stick the topos on them.

Maybe, then, its worth lies in the selection of routes, all between Diff and E2? OK, so you can't lead anything above HVS, but that'll still leave you the vast majority of routes in the book. Well, if you insist on routes of VS – HVS for most of your days on your Welsh trip, you'll just have to be prepared to travel. But you should get in a few week's climbing before you start to exhaust the possibilities. What? You can't climb above V Diff? Lots of these at Ogwen. Why not get one (or both) of the Ogwen guides instead? I'll tell you why not. Don't have topos, for one thing. Nor matey chat from Steve Ashton about how hard you're going to find your chosen route.

And as for you, if you're good enough to want descriptions for the other Welsh classics, like Great Wall, Resurrection, Void...buy another book.

Bob Duncan.

**Buttermere and Eastern Craggs.** – By D. Craig and R. Graham, (Fell & Rock Climbing Club, £7.95).

Although Borrowdale will remain the obvious choice for climbers from the central belt of Scotland, in search of rock drier than that found in the Highlands, Buttermere is only another 30 minutes' drive over the Honister Pass. Thus a new guide to this little known area is a welcome addition to the seventh series of Fell & Rock guides. The Buttermere guide is in fact the first in the seventh series; the second in the series, the Borrowdale guide, was reviewed here last year, and the general comments on the high quality of presentation apply here.

Though likely to remain a backwater, Buttermere contains about 60 small, easily accessible crags with fine scenery and a wide variety of grades. New routes are described on Raven Crag, and the guide is current up to September '87. With so many crags described, the topographical maps to locate them will be very useful to first time visitors. Similarly, the line diagrams of the crags by Al Phizacklea and Dennis Lee combine clarity and detail to give superb climber's eye impressions of the crags. The red ink to show the routes has been criticised for optical effects, but it is difficult to see how they could be made clearer – green perhaps?

All the other features of good guides are present – graded list, star ratings, first ascent list with historical notes, but an unusual feature is an historical section consisting of six previous histories plus a current update. Very much for the local lads. Climbers often criticise colour photographs in guides for adding to the price unnecessarily, but the inspirational value of the illustrations in this guide are worth at least the price of a pint.

Alan R. Walker.

**Mountain Notebook.** – By Donald M. Orr (Mnemosyne Publishing, Troon. 32pp, spiral bound, no price).

Just arrived as we squeezed the *Journal* onto disk was this modest booklet. It is a small collection of Orr's writings, varying from his avowed interest in the Scottish landscape, to the mountain content in literature and art, recently seen in the pages of the *Journal* (1987, pp 397-400, and this issue). There are some more private notes, as he calls the essays, which indicate a way with words and a romantic outlook. He writes – 'We cannot hide inside the townscapes from the all embracing effects of the natural world. It is this awareness, the totality of the landscape, that I wish to state.' He has stated this awareness well, never over-reaching for a dubious hold or making long runouts on no pro.

## Journals of Kindred Clubs

*The Alpine Journal, 1987.*

Now edited by Ernst Sondheimer, the AJ again combines club news with a global mountaineering survey. The Andes inspire several articles, including a finely written account of the Cordillera Huayhuash by John Nixon.

Scottish interest is confined to Ken Crocket's summary of new winter climbs, though Hamish Brown also contributes an article on a winter traverse of his beloved Atlas Mountains.

The Reaper's work is represented, too, in obituaries of Nea Morin, H. R. C. Carr (it is sixty-three years since he wrote *The Mountains of Snowdonia*), Dorothy Pilley and Katharine Hopkinson. All had enjoyed a good innings; not so Alan Rouse, whose untimely death is described in a melancholy account of the K2 storm.

As always, this 300-page journal is lavishly produced, with several photographs in colour; but at £15 the hoipolloi will browse rather than buy.

Grahame Morrison.

*La Rivista del Club Alpino Italiano: Sept. 1986 - October 1987 - six issues, 500 pages.*

The mountain world is a wonderful and diverse place, especially seen through the pages of *La Rivista del CAI*. No mountain journal in the world can compare with it for variety and extent. The only trouble for most of us is that it is in Italian. Nonetheless the would-be explorer would find perusal of its pages highly stimulating, and worth the effort of a translation of key material. Of particular note are articles on the Hoggar (Sept. '86); Shisma Pangma on ski and Kalash in the Hindu Kush (Nov. '86); Kenya and Anatolia (Jan '87) Seychelles and Patagonia (July '87); New Zealand and Greenland (Sept. '87); plus of course, the Alps from end to end. The advertisements alone are worth an hour's attention.

Malcolm Slesser.

*The Pinnacle Club Journal.*

First impressions are of a journal not dissimilar to our own; the progeny of a single gender club, with a similar style and format, although the paper quality, if not the photographic reproduction, is far superior. Significant differences are that the Pinnacle Club Journal spans three years of activity and does not contain new route descriptions.

A wide spectrum of outdoor activity is represented; canoeing, cycling, rambling, rock climbing at home and abroad and expeditions to various far flung locations, but no ski-ing.

The births and deaths page presented a nice balance, a sort of logical continuity that we could well emulate!

Much of the writing is enthusiastic and informative, if not inspiring, but as the Pinnacle Club recently wined and dined me I don't wish to be too critical! The description of a Western Karakorum trek by Annabelle Barker and Sheila Cormack, in the footsteps of Shipton and Tilman, can be recommended.

The book reviews are worth reading (now there's a job for life - writing reviews of book reviews) and even manage to say a few nice things about John Barry and the SMC!

Finally I have to report that **MEN** are mentioned in this journal; there's even a photograph!

Graham Little.

*The Himalayan Journal, Vol. 43, 1985 - 1986.*

To obtain a real flavour of Himalayan mountaineering as it is today one cannot do much better than to take a look at the Himalayan Journal. This is not a glossy colour publication full of action shots and dramatic accounts of the sport's superstars operating at the cutting edge of contemporary mountaineering, nor does it attempt to document every Himalayan climb or expedition. By taking a relaxed approach, and giving articles by 'average' mountaineers as much prominence as the big expeditions, the HJ has always managed to cover a broad cross-section of Himalayan activity. This issue is no exception, and the articles vary from the very impressive, such as the Polish first winter ascent of Kangchenjunga, to perhaps more interesting accounts of exploration and ascents of 6,000m peaks. It is the latter which give the journal its charm and much of the information published here would be difficult to find elsewhere. Harish Kapadia describes the Kinnaur and Kulti regions of India, and his superb fold-out panoramas, which have become a feature of the HJ in recent years, point to several objectives in these little known regions.

Sadly the K2 tragedy was perhaps the most significant event in the Himalayas in 1986 and references to it occur throughout the journal. A letter from 3 elder statesmen from the Alpine Club questions the current fashion for alpine style ascents of Himalayan giants, and H. Adams Carter - editor of the American Alpine Journal, writes objecting to a more disturbing tactic of climbers agreeing in advance that each is responsible only for himself in the event of disaster high on the

mountain. Time will tell whether the K2 disaster has been instrumental in a reassessment of the acceptable risk in Himalayan climbing, but it already appears that the number of accidents in 1987 (amongst British climbers at least), was less than in recent years.

On a brighter note Geoff Cohen's account of an attempt on Gasherbrum III is one of the most readable articles in the journal which honestly describes the motives (at 7,952m GIII offered 'the best bargain in terms of metre per rupee'), frustrations and delights of attempting a big Himalayan peak. It will surprise many to discover that whilst 10 expeditions were at work on the adjacent GII, their's was the second ever to GIII. Such is the lure of 8000m! Of particular interest is Cohen's description of the climbing in terms of Alpine and Scottish grading and conditions. Other Scottish mountaineers are well represented too; Mal Duff describes the first ascent of the SW Pillar of Mera, Sandy Allan summarises an attempt on Gangapurna's north face, and Roger Everett writes about the first ascent of Shani. A simple description of a new winter route on the NE Face of Ama Dablam by Carlos Buhler, stands out as one of the most inspiring accounts and captures the spirit, commitment and adventure of climbing alpine style on a big (but not too big!) mountain. If you are looking for inspiration for a trip east, take a look at the HJ, but if titillation is all you after, you would do better sticking to the glossies.

Simon Richardson.

#### *The American Alpine Club Journal.*

Amongst club journals this must be the Rolls Royce. The book is packed with well written and informative articles on the high ranges of the world, amply supported by high quality colour and black and white photographs. K2 featured large in the annals of mountaineering history in 1986, and this is reflected in the journal with six of the twenty-two articles being concerned with various aspects of the mountain.

The majority of articles are written in a rather dry factual style, which leads to my only criticism, that the journal lacks warmth and humour, and as such is not one to be read from cover to cover in one go. As a bedtime read it is superlative, and sets the standard for others to follow.

Iain Hyslop.

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**Journal Information**

**Editor:** K. V. Crocket, 9 Brandon Drive, Bearsden, Glasgow G61 3LN.  
**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.

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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 (minimum 30mm). Articles may be accepted on 5" floppy disk, IBM format (contact editor beforehand). 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 200mm. All material should be sent to the Editor, address as above.

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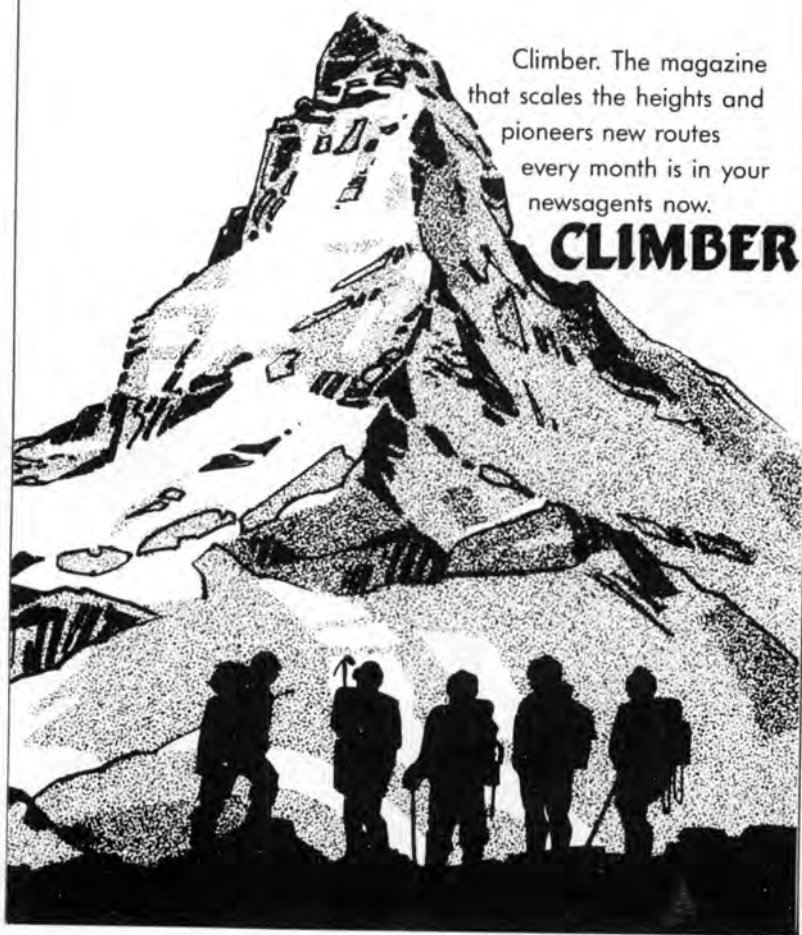
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