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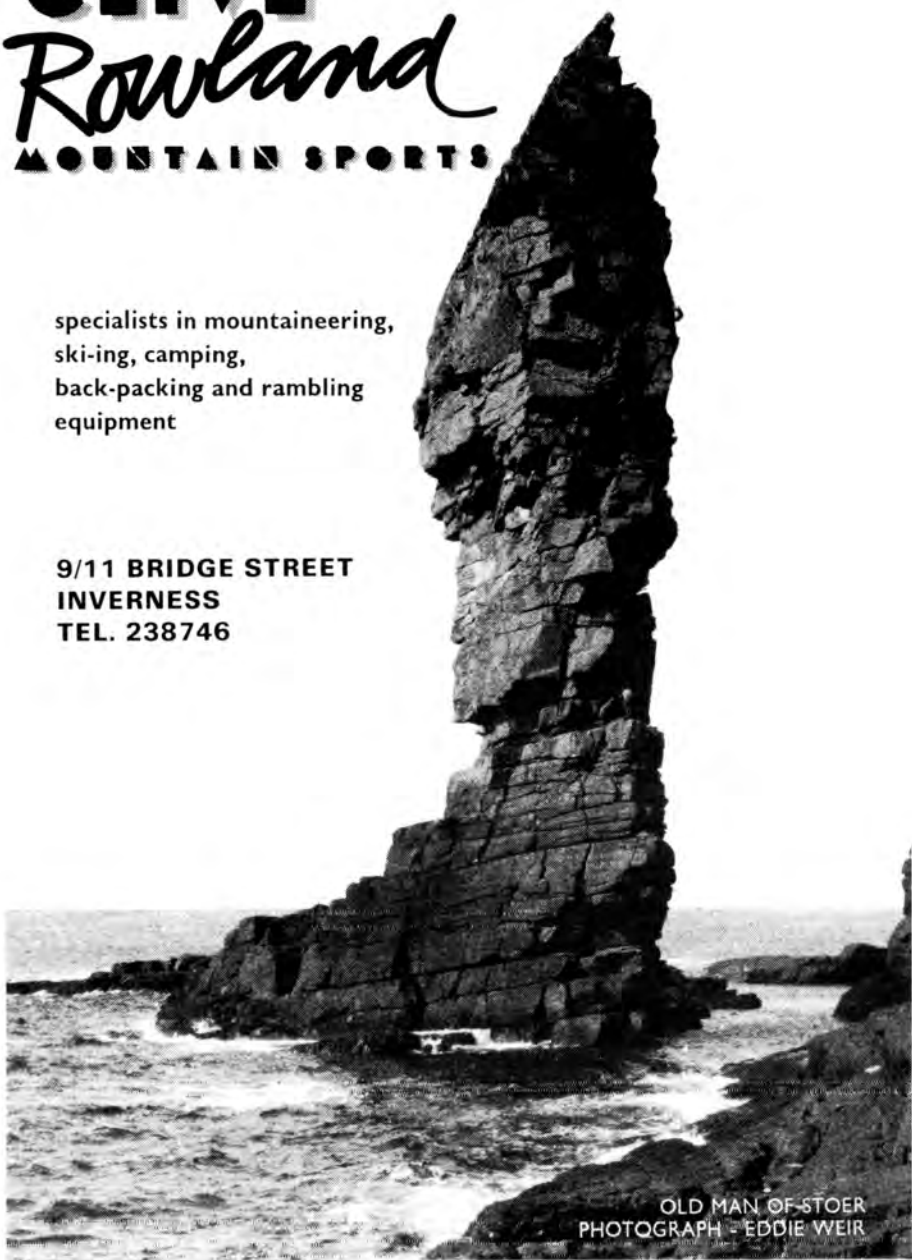
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EDITORIAL

The Scottish Mountaineering Club is 100 years old, which event is being celebrated by a selection of writings and illustrations from past journals, splendidly collected into a worthy, if not weighty, tome. The Journal itself will have its birthday in 1990, while the Centenary Book, through its selections, paints a better picture of the Club's travels through time and other dimensions than any Editorial could. That might make this Editorial superfluous, were it not for the uncertain future, looming up fast through the warm drizzle. As we write of the Club's Centenary, we have enjoyed the warmest winter for a century, with an irritating lack of the white stuff.

Many are convinced that we are now paying for our disregard for the environment, that our fragile spaceship Earth is being choked and polluted into something warmer and wetter. The weather of recent years, one or two outstanding summers apart, would support this. Though individually most climbers care for the environment, this aspect has had a low profile in these pages, taken for granted almost. There are occasions however when the voice must be raised in protest, as when, yet again, we fight for the protection of the Northern Coires of Cairngorm. The fragility of the tundra ecosystem has been appreciated for long enough now that a charade of the type acted out by the ski lobby in search of Lurchers Gully should not have to be repeated. But it is. A week, unlike Nature's clock, is a long time in politics, with the smell of tourist money as strong as any pheromone.

Not that we footsloggers of the hills can plead total innocence. Boots can damage substrate too, given sufficient numbers, noisy ropes and lurid garments chase off other dwellers of the crags, while the picking axe and probing fingers dislodge flora from its rare niche. Old, familiar hills, condemned to be a Munro, have ruts worn where before was smoothly rounded contour. But we try. And we should try, because it's still worth it, because we have to understand the environment and its needs, and adapt to them, not break them. With increasing numbers

going to the hills this pressure, and the reaction against it, can only rise. If we can foresee the pressures surely we can design the safety valves.

To the Journal and more immediate doings. Like those before, we take on its management from curiosity, from a regard to its well-being, for the challenge, and for fun. We are nudging it into the electronic age, while maintaining its outward decorum. There will be changes in the practice of climbing which we hope to record, so that the Bicentennial Editor can wonder what we were like, just as we wonder what Stott, and Douglas and the rest were like. We may not like some of these changes, but we can at least pay out some rope, given a good belay. There will likewise be changes in the social profile of the Club, no doubt, as its members slowly begin to acknowledge the increasing numbers of women climbing, and the Journal will record these too.

We have gone on long enough, though we plead a special occasion. Let the Scottish Mountaineering Club enjoy its second century, as it surely has done its first. And on the way, let us be sure to leave some enjoyment for those who follow.

THE GREENOCK TEAM

By Jim Crawford

MANY YEARS AGO Patey (or perhaps it was Brooker) drew attention in this Journal to the SMC's capacity for absorbing groups of wild young men and reducing them to conformity with the Club's conservative standards. The assimilation is probably never complete, and may contribute to the curmudgeonly attitudes for which the SMC is notorious. These are most evident at the AGM, when former hooligans strain against the bonds of civilised behaviour, and occasionally break loose.

A few years ago I was prompted into reflecting over the group to which I once belonged. The stimulus was attendance at a CIC winter meet, the first for a long time. The representatives of the younger generation I met were no hooligans, but their polite indifference to relics from times past only emphasised a separation between us which was more than a 25-year age gap could explain. The links which joined my contemporaries to these self-absorbed young men seemed so tenuous that I wondered if the SMC would have the digestive capacity to absorb them in their turn.

Perhaps the self-confidence with which the new men apply their startling talents to rock and ice is as much a pose as the self-deprecation with which we masked our uncertainties. The apparent affluence indicated by their clothing and equipment was a more tangible sign of fundamental change, and conveyed an impression of a lifestyle which many from my day might have envied but would have felt obliged to publicly scorn.

The group to which I belonged was the Greenock Team—a name applied by outside observers many years after it coalesced. When one examines its middle aged remnant critically, it is clear that the wildest adherents faded away long before membership of the SMC was even a remote possibility. Nevertheless, 25 or 30 years ago the casual observer might at times have found it difficult to distinguish between the irredeemable barbarians and those who were receptive to civilising influences.

The Greenock Team developed out of the Greenock Mountaineering Club (SMCJ, 1963, XXVII, 360-1), which had been a lively body in the fifties but was moribund by the early sixties and expired around 1966. Most of its membership concentrated their energies on an annual dance, with holiday weekend booze-ups in Arran which turned out a crowd whose

main interest was having a good social time. The active rump was divided between two groups; one with Bill Skidmore as its focal point, and the other led by Pete McKenzie. The latter was a talented but undisciplined climber who, in Bob Richardson's words, '*had a high noise to signal ratio.*' The two bodies co-existed uneasily, as there were individuals in both who were incompatible to the edge of violence. Skidmore's group evolved into the Greenock Team.

Both bodies helped along the dissolution of the club in its final years by scorning the occasional bus which left Greenock at 1 p.m. on a Saturday and trundled to Glencoe at a pace calculated to allow just enough time to get the tents up before the Clachaig opened its bar. Skidmore's group used Richardson's van, which started from Ardrossan on a Friday evening and collected its load along the Clyde coast with a detour by Elderslie for John Madden. The van was occasionally supplemented by Ken Davis's Morris Oxford, for those who placed comfort ahead of peace of mind (Ken drove with confidence only after closing time).

Richardson's other interests included a young lady in a distant part of Scotland, and a fencing activity good enough to take him into the Scottish team, so that the van was not always available. Ken also divided his time between rock climbing and romance. Skidmore overcame this problem by bringing along his girlfriend (whom he later married). As she dressed like us, climbed with us, and we drank only in pubs which did not bar women, we were almost unaware of her as a female among males. The rest of us were chaste through choice, immaturity, or incompetence.

When the van or the Morris was elsewhere, we relied on public transport. Hitching was never a practical alternative for those of us with beards, as these were still some years away from public acceptance. A day trip to Arrochar would have me out at 6 a.m. to walk two miles over the hill to meet Skidmore at Gourrock Pier for the first steamer to Craigendoran – usually the '*Jeanie Deans.*' From there, the Fort William train or a local diesel set took us to Arrochar station for a day on the Cobbler. The return journey began with the 7 p.m. Glasgow bus, which dropped us where we could cross the Clyde by the Renfrew Ferry to catch a bus for Gourrock. The day ended with a walk back over the hill to reach home around midnight.

Arran

Arran was easier. To get to that is. We gathered in Largs at the '*Anchor Bar*' on a Friday evening and, after closing time, the

last bus to pass Fairlie Pier would take us to our doss for the night. This might be a railway carriage in a siding, a pile of sleepers at the pierhead, or the coffin barrow. This last grisly object transported the dead between steamer and hearse. It was quite comfortable if you were unaware of its primary function, or ignored the fragments of wreaths littering its base. The first boat invariably, it seems now, took us to Arran on a morning which promised a glorious weekend, as Goatfell shrugged the mist off its flanks and heaved up into sunshine.

The Arran hills are an entrancing sight in the early morning. As my city-bound train leaves Wemyss Bay I often see them reflecting the new day's light, and I am drawn back across a quarter century to some of the great days of my life. There was no Sunday ferry then, and in summer we returned on the '*Duchess of Montrose*,' or one of the other turbine steamers which came winging into Brodick Bay on the final legs of a day-long cruise down the length of the Clyde. If there were any romantics among us they were as indifferent as the rest to these survivors from the Golden Age of Clyde Cruising. We resented the short day on the hills and an early return forced on us by a steamer which left Brodick at 5 p.m. We envied Richardson and Davis, who lived and worked in the Ardrossan area and would sometimes stay on to catch the Monday morning *deathboat*. If McPhee's father was on the gangplank, our Fairlie tickets would take us up to Gourock, otherwise Largs was the farthest that would avoid a surcharge. A bus to Greenock would then complete the weekend, with an irate conductress climbing over a passage full of rucksacks.

Skidmore and Richardson were the leaders of the pack. They were older, more experienced, and technically more advanced than most of us. Both had been hillwalking and climbing since the mid-fifties, but only linked up after Skidmore completed National Service in 1960. This interruption to his development consisted of two years' careful avoidance of the last three terrorists in Malaya. The remainder of the team, with the exception of Madden who was too young to be of interest to Her Majesty's Armed forces, evaded their contribution to the Decline & Fall of The Empire by repeated deferments for educational reasons, or through the fortuitous possession of physical handicaps.

Skidmore and Richardson climbed together as a rope intermittently, since both preferred to lead, but when together it was often to break new ground, or start up another phase of activity in the two areas where the Greenock Team felt most at ease - Arran and Arrochar.

Their first significant new route was *The Rake* in Arran in 1962. The climb opened up the Meadow Face of Beinn Tharsuinn to serious development, although some of the Greenock boys had made earlier, unavailing attempts to overcome the main cracks in the lines which would eventually become *Bogle* and *Brachistochrone*. These efforts ended when McKenzie made a journey into space from the crux of the latter. *The Rake* has the principal features of many Arran climbs - a mixture of good rock, grass, and an awkward problem. The last has defeated a number of attempts since the first, and the climb has had few repeat ascents, although of modest difficulty by present day standards. This success was the starting point for an outburst of activity which, over the next decade, brought Arran wider recognition as a rock climbing area. In earlier days it was known to a relatively small number of climbers for its pleasant ridges and classic, if somewhat old-fashioned, rock climbs.

Richardson's performance on rock was assisted by explosions of a nervous energy which, when coincident with an intransigent Arran problem, usually resulted in its solution. The rest of us were in awe of him when he blew off at every *fumarole*, until we came to realise that it was more gas than lava. He still exploits this characteristic with great effectiveness as the custodian of the CIC Hut.

Skidmore's climbing technique was well developed by 1962. It was based on balance, great reach, an extraordinary ability to find positions of ease for long periods in the most awkward situation, and was supported by very careful attention to protection and overall safety.

Early in 1963 they made the first winter ascent of *Ben's Fault* on Beinn Ime. The climb is long by Arrochar standards, and was the forerunner of a number of quality winter climbs in the area which finished off the notion, current in those days, that serious winter climbing began at Glencoe. The finest of these was to be *Great Central Groove* on the Brack (SMCJ, 1970, XXIX, 227-30).

West Flank Route on Cir Mhor had been on Skidmore's mind for a year or two before we actually tackled it - rather casually to begin with - in August 1963 after a night of thunderstorms and rain. The rock was still drying out, but there was enough friction for feet on the lower slab of the first pitch to help our strenuous efforts to stay in the overlapping, holdless groove while making progress upwards by back and foot. Richardson and Madden had started to climb *Hammer*, but joined Skidmore and me when it looked as if a serious attempt was possible. The second pitch is similar in character to the first

but more constricted, and as Richardson tackled it in the same manner as we had climbed the first, he was soon in difficulty and it seemed likely that he would come off. We watched his struggle with the kind of detached interest which is just permissible when the only things at risk of injury are the leader's pride and some skin.

The fourth pitch was much more serious. A rounded layback crack became increasingly blind with height, and no effective protection could be found. A lump of rock which resembled a flake protruded from above the point where the crack faded, but Arran flakes usually amount to less than they promise from below. Skidmore had run out of decent holds and his arms were tiring in an awkward layback position, with retreat not a practical option. The flake could be reached, but a long, precarious stretch was necessary, and if it was truly deceptive then he would come off whether he reached it or not. Richardson was out of sight of Skidmore in a small niche, and could do nothing more than make adjustments to a less than first class belay position.

I had a clear view of Skidmore's situation and became acutely sensitive to every sound and movement as he tried with decreasing vigour to remain attached to the rock while he struggled with his doubts about the flake. Several times he called down for a firm hold to be kept on the rope, which was as close as he could get to admitting that he was in trouble. As the strength in his arms died he swung up and stretched for the flake. Just as reached it he cried out and I thought with a jolt of fright that he was off but it was a cry of relief—the flake was good. I was sweating and shaken.

On a second ascent a year later we were better prepared for this pitch, and even found some protection. I recall much of the second ascent more clearly than the first because I led some of the pitches in big boots, while the second pitch was a sharp reminder of my lack of concern for Richardson's plight a year earlier. *West Flank Route* is a splendid climb, and although it is overshadowed on Cir Mhor by the *South Ridge Direct*, it has a character which challenges the older climb closely, and a continuity which improves on it.

Transport

On most weekends in the early 1960s there was activity somewhere, even if the somewhere was only Loch Eck or the Luss Hills. Lack of transport became a problem when Richardson turned increasingly to his other pursuits and Davis went abroad. From time to time other cars and vans appeared on

the scene then vanished, to match the ebb and flow of personalities less obsessed with climbing than Skidmore and his closest friends. McPhee had the unlucky distinction, twice in two years, of being a passenger in vehicles which were written off at the schoolhouse bend near Tyndrum. Eventually, most of the other Greenock M.C. members drifted away to lead more normal lives, leaving Skidmore, Madden and myself as the hyper-active core. Richardson only appeared on odd occasions until mid-1965, when he broke off his romance and concentrated on climbing.

Motorbikes had flourished in the Greenock club in the 1950s, but the availability of only one or two cars had been sufficient to cause their disappearance. We turned to them again as the answer to our transport difficulties. Madden led the way with a succession of decrepit machines, including an *Ariel Huntmaster* which could be coaxed up to 100 m.p.h. downhill but which was unsafe at any speed. Skidmore followed with a 650 single cylinder *Panther*, coupled to an ex-Greenock Corporation toolbox decorated with the municipal coat-of-arms. This combination was ballasted with a large anvil, so that the beast could be steered round corners. Richardson, who had lost his petrol subsidy with the development of personal transport, made some of his infrequent appearances on a 1949 *Triumph Speed Twin*, which clung to British Standards (Motorbikes) by leaking oil. My first was a *Tiger Cub* of more recent vintage but less power, so that several spills resulted on corners cut to keep up with the rest.

Any comparisons drawn between us and modern bikers in £500 leathers on £4000 *Kawasakis* would be all to our disadvantage. We were the guttering candle ends of the gangrel tradition in Scottish motorcycling. Our transport reflected our poverty and exemplified the reasons why the British motorcycle industry died. Lack of money was underlined by clothing which was employed for both wet weather or winter climbing and motorcycling. Sometimes the only things we changed were our boots if we were using wellies on the bike. Crash helmets doubled as climbing helmets and, at one stage, shipyard safety helmets performed both functions. All this ensured that a soaking in a wet winter gully led to an ice-encrusted ride home, with frequent stops to bang enough life into frozen hands so that brake and clutch levers could be felt.

Our wellies were made in Hong Kong from reconstituted chewing gum. They were very cheap but wore through quickly. One cold, stormy Easter, Madden and I met Skidmore in Glencoe as he travelled north to Poolewe while we fled south for home. I had a new pair of wellies and these were exchanged for

Skidmore's which, he claimed, were 'getting a bit thin.' We were beaten to a standstill by hail and sleet on the Rannoch Moor, and when I set my feet down on a flooded road, the boots filled with ice-cold water to my ankles. The misery of the next two hours lingers in my memory to this day.

Equipment

In the early sixties the revolution in climbing gear, clothing, sleeping bags and tents was still over the horizon. Nailed boots and hemp ropes were extinct and ex-W.D. gear increasingly rare, but low incomes had had a restraining influence on developments since *Commando* soles and nylon ropes had appeared after the war. We generally used double 150-foot lengths of 7/8 inch laid nylon. One of the lengths would be boiled in a jam pan to a semi-fixed blue or red colour, using *Dolly* dyes. If the first outings afterwards were in wet weather, much of the dye transferred on to the users. We almost never climbed on single ropes and at times, for economy, each partner owned one half of a double rope. The rope was tied on to using an elaborate friction knot called a *Tarbuck*, which was a trial to frozen hands in winter.

Skidmore and Richardson experimented with primitive chocks which were either brass nuts with the threads filed, or aluminium blocks cut and drilled from bulb plates, intended for use in ship superstructures. We normally carried *Stubai* blades and channels. The latter were very soft and flattened out in use to follow the shape of the crack. This meant that they could only sensibly be used once but we could not afford such profligancy. Seconds had to recover any protection used or face the wrath of the owner. Richardson perfected the balance in placement between ease of recovery and, he hoped, adequate protection. Skidmore put security above everything else but still expected to go home with the same amount of gear he had when he came, if not more. This sometimes resulted in a more arduous time for the second than for the leader.

I lacked Skidmore and Richardsons' ability to make the best use of our slender resources, and had a very casual attitude towards the need for protection until I received a profound shock on a not very hard Severe in Glencoe called *Preamble*. I climbed the first pitch without runners and failed to find a belay so climbed on, but went off route up a steep wall to the left. I then developed the shakes as never before or since and lived from move to move until I reached the top with the rope taut behind and not a runner in its length. After that I discovered possibilities for protection where before there had been none.

Overall we were very moderate in our use of pitons, and resented the damage being done, even then, by overpegging in places like the Etive Slabs. Later in the sixties we were tempted into sin for a brief period when the introduction of American pegs coincided with a modest improvement in our financial circumstances, but the simultaneous development in chocks quickly put an end to that.

Boots, both big boots and rock boots, were the subject of much argument and some envy. In 1962 the last word in big boots was the *Toni Eger*—narrow, weltless and very elegant when compared with the British equivalents. The *Toni* combined with its fashionable contemporary—the winkle picker—to wreck the feet of a generation of climbers. Tom Leahy was the first in the group to own a pair. At the end of a day in the hills his toes and heels would be raw and bleeding. Tears ran as he peeled off his socks and skin, but he refused to give them up. Wallace Gibson of the Kyle Club sometimes climbed with us, and on one occasion had to finish the Clachlet Ridge in stockinged feet.

My first boots came from Lawries and at eight guineas took most of a week's wage. They had large welts and could be bent almost double, but were very comfortable. Despite their deficiencies I had two years' rock climbing in them before I got my first rockboots. These were *E.B. Klets* two sizes too small, to allow for stretch in the uppers. The rubber soles rapidly became hard and useless for anything but Skye rock and they ended up as Richardson's pub boots. The others went through a variety of briefly fashionable and cheaper alternatives to the *P.A.*; *Masters*, *R.Ds*, *R.Ls* etc, but none approached the original. Much later, Skidmore made an attempt to resurrect nails in a form which is likely to remain unrepeated. He fabricated stainless steel plates, shaped to fit his boots, and pinned tricounis to the edges. The plates were then strapped on like crampons. They were very effective in mixed ice and rock conditions, but could never wholly replace crampons, even in pre-front pointing days, or be used with them, so that they were an ingenious deadend.

Accommodation

The Greenock Team camped all the year round, whatever the conditions. In one year I had 30 camping weekends in succession, and only missed six others. This might not mean much today, but 25 years ago regular winter camping was regarded as mildly eccentric, while the clothing and tents within our reach lacked the wind and waterproof qualities of modern materials. Despite the frequency with which we used tents I never liked camping. Skidmore did, but then he had every detail

organised and kept everything in first class condition. No torn flysheet, broken guys, or missing prickers ever disturbed his comfort. I guddled along in a state of disrepair, confusion and disorganisation. It was usually only with the greatest reluctance that Skidmore would share a tent with me.

We never used Hostels. There was no objection to them in principle, but their rules involved restrictions which we preferred to avoid, while the elderly types who hung around the more popular ones induced an uneasy feeling in the pit of the stomach.

I can recall only three times when we stayed in SMC huts in the sixties. On one winter weekend we had the CIC and the Ben to ourselves, but on another occasion, at Lagangarbh in Glencoe, the squalor of the contemporary facilities was supplemented by the squalor of what seemed like 200 members of St. Andrews U.M.C. Years later, when I was custodian of the same hut, I found that the behaviour of that club had not changed, and I took belated revenge by banning them. Ling Hut was another disappointment. When we found the coal dump following a long search in a snow storm it was to discover that the stove was designed for asphyxiation, not heat.

Skidmore was very fond of boulder dosses and brought Nimlin's *Cobbler View* on the Brack up to a considerable level of comfort. We utilised such refuges from time to time, and I can remember a comfortable night in the one under *Sassenach*, but none of the others shared Skidmore's enthusiasm. Richardson, Madden and I used the Rannoch Doss in Glencoe as an occasional alternative to camping, and devoted an off-day to constructing the original dam which protected its present location. In the great storm and thaw of December 1966 the dam was washed away as we retreated over it, when it had become apparent that the Doss was in imminent danger from flood and landslip. McKenzie was the last across as the dam boulders began to shift and, just ahead of him in the rain, noise and darkness, I saw his torch waver and disappear. I thrust an arm into the darkness and by little more than chance caught hold of an edge of material and was able to haul him onto solid ground, wet but unhurt. He was very merry after an evening in the Clachaig, and was quite unaware of how close he had come to a fall of 20 feet with several tons of rock on top of him. Next day, the doss was still intact, though deeply surrounded by boulders and debris, while the interior contained a thick layer of silt.

Sleeping bags were always a problem. Their cost meant that the *Icelandic Special* was normally the best which could be aimed at. My first bag fell well short of that standard. It really only served to extend the time required to die from exposure to a

slightly longer period than a winter dusk till dawn. When camped remote from pubs and other comforts it was possible to doze until about 10 p.m. The night thereafter was usually entirely sleepless. The traditional method of drying out wet clothing by sleeping in it didn't help much, while the airbeds which preceded camping mats were little better than useless deadweight. Camping involved an assured amount of misery in winter, but the worst tent and sleeping bag still meant a quantum leap in comfort after 100 miles of pain on a motorbike through a wet or freezing night. Knees required two days to thaw out completely after a long ride, and I wonder how many arthritic joints can be traced back to long motorcycle journeys on cold nights.

Summer camping had its dismal side too. Every Scottish climber becomes inured to rain and treats it as a variable factor in route gradings, but no one ever becomes inured to the midge. In the dreadful summer of 1968, when a long period of humid, still weather came close to making the West of Scotland inaccessible to most forms of warm-blooded life, I was camping with Hugh Donohue of the Kyle Club on the Ben. We were tortured for three miserable, sleepless nights before we cracked and fled. There was no escape on the rocks, and I can recall the midges as an unwelcome addition to the difficulties of the second pitch of *Centurion*. On the positive side, they were a spur to a rapid ascent and did keep the mind off the exposure.

Motorbikes extended our horizons and the distances travelled were only limited by the amount of agony which could be tolerated, though their unreliability did put us further out on a limb when things went wrong. A trip to Donegal ended with Madden on a *350 Panther* being towed across Northern Ireland to Larne by Richardson on another solo, after the exhaust valve blew a hole in it. This illegal and highly dangerous performance was only capped for folly when Madden used his solo to tow Skidmore's combination from Loch Lomondside to Gourrock after a breakdown. Later, when I owned the *350 Panther*, it had to be abandoned in Glencoe for a week with wheel bearing failure. I went up by bus and inserted a new bearing in teeming rain. On the way home I had to take emergency action to avoid hitting a suicidal tramp. The chain broke beyond repair and the bike was abandoned at Ardlui for a second week.

It was not always the fault of the bike. One conflict between a Glencoe sheep and Madden's combination left both the worse for wear. I had to make my way home with two rucksacks and two tents. The sidecar remains were seized on by MacInnes and converted into a trailer. Some of our acquaintances were not much more careful

with their machinery. One splendid June evening, en route for Nevis, we met Davie Crabbe of the Rannoch Club, stranded on the Moor with a broken-down, newly purchased but elderly *Matchless*. He was two days out from Dundee and as he didn't understand the purpose of the choke, this had been pulled out since his departure. The maximum speed which he attained for much of the journey was about 15 mph until the coked-up engine died. With Madden in the saddle the bike was towed to Glencoe at a speed which furthered its destruction. Using the brakes in order to retain some degree of control, he overheated the drums and boiled the grease out of the bearings. Crabbe was a slow learner. We met him some weeks later — again with a broken-down bike. When Skidmore stripped the clutch he found the cork inserts reduced to charcoal.

We associated Crabbe with Doug Lang in those days. He (Crabbe) was on the first winter traverse of the Cuillin but was never the same man after a car load of the Rannoch went off the Glencoe-Kinlochleven road and rolled several hundred feet downhill towards the Loch, fortunately without fatalities.

In the end, Skidmore's combination cracked up and I lost interest in motorcycles after a couple of back tyre blowouts. The other bikes had already faded away and better times in the Shipbuilding Industry (it was a long time ago and we had a Labour Government) encouraged us into car ownership. Our resistance to cold and discomfort, painfully acquired over thousands of winter miles, sloughed away like wet snow off a slab.

By the late sixties the Team was expanding again. We met John Gillespie soloing at Arrochar and he joined Skidmore for the first of a near annual succession of family holidays in Arran which continued until around 1980. I tended to avoid these as I had an innate dislike of children which was only to be modified slightly in later years by two of my own. Keith Burns arrived as a white settler from Wigan, the forerunner of a number of agreeable Englishmen who came to live in the West of Scotland and homed in on Skidmore. They included John Weatherseed, an Oxford student who died on Mt. Blanc in sad circumstances in the mid seventies. He appears with Keith and four other members of the Team in a photograph of a work party at the CIC (SMCJ, 1975, XXX, facing p. 386). That was one of the very rare occasions when Skidmore got involved in physical labour.

Gillespie was already a member of the SMC and opened the door through which most of us entered the Club. He was a formidably competent rock climber with a long record beginning in JMCS days but had little interest in new routes before he joined up with Skidmore and Richardson in Arran. *Pothole Slab* is one of the best of their climbs and a number of lines in Coire nan Ceum added to the growing reputation of Arran as an important climbing area. Another Skid-

more/Gillespie climb which is worth anyone's attention is *The Tingle* on Creag Tharsuinn at Arrochar. Skidmore accurately described it as a mini-classic. Gillespie introduced me to serious Lake District climbing and we were regular attenders at Spring and Autumn JMCS meets for a number of years. The JMCS members encountered then were entertaining company. Hamish Henderson and Curly Ross are inevitably the ones who stand out in the memory.

One night, half a dozen of us were in a crowded pub where Curly's predatory instincts soon had him trying to chat up a pretty but rather sluggish girl. From some distance away we watched events develop as her boyfriend and his companions became aware that another male was poaching on their territory. They weren't quite skinheads or Hell's Angels but a repellent mixture of both, with scars, tattoos and bits of ironmongery attached to their bodies. Curly was slow to notice their approach but when he did, his expression showed a flicker of alarm before he turned with a confident smile to the mates who would back him up. The mates were backing out of the door as fast as feet would take us. In the last glimpse I had of Curly the confidence was replaced by something like panic. I don't remember how he talked his way out of trouble but being Curly he managed and emerged shaken but intact.

Gillespie and I shared an obsession with old recordings of operatic singers which we discussed in detail that drove the others into paroxysms of boredom. His other defect was to suffer from nightmares. One night he surprised his wife by sitting up in bed, still asleep, and shouting 'No holds! No holds!' On another occasion when we were dossing in the barn at Carnmor, he awoke convinced that he was being attacked by rats and had Skidmore and me in sleep-fuddled terror as rocks and other lethal objects close to hand hurtled around in the darkness.

Nuis Chimney

Two significant winter climbs fell to the Team during the most active years – *Great Central Groove* and *Nuis Chimney*. Each was preceded by summer ascents of routes which were rarely climbed at the time. *Great Central Groove* in July 1967 had every appearance of being unclimbed since the first ascent nine years earlier. I can recall feeling a bit resentful about spending a warm, sunny day in a damp, sunless corner keeping Skidmore happy, but it was a fairly entertaining route despite the slime. Skidmore disliked climbing in bright sunshine and on a hot day would retreat into the kind of places which had been abandoned for half a century. The ironically named *Sunshine Corner* on Cir Mhor is a memento of one such summer day. The only occasion when he broke with this practice was on our ascent of *The Blinder* in Arran (SMCJ, 1972, XXX, 24-8), when I burned

up on a super-heated belay for three hours in a state of profound unhappiness while he gardened his way up the second pitch in the partial shade of the corner.

Nuis Chimney on a fine afternoon in 1968 belied its reputation and climbing as the outer edges of the chimney gave splendid rock and magnificent situations. Madden enjoyed it less as his P.As were much too small and he had to make the descent from the summit in bare feet. I think it was on this occasion that I picked up a machine gun round on the second pitch, which was part of the aircraft wreckage in the area. Later, on the winter ascent, I wondered if there were any more about, and what would be the effect of a blow from an ice pick.

The first attempt on *Nuis Chimney* in winter ended in failure. The conditions were right but we were not. After a night on Brodick Pier which was the coldest for 50 years, I went home to bed for a week with 'flu and Skidmore was in little better shape. The following year a few days of ideal conditions encouraged us to head for Arran on the Saturday evening. Next morning a thaw had set in and Skidmore, despondent, had to be nagged up the hill from Glen Rosa for a look. Close up the ice was not as good as before but adequate except for the chockstone pitch where our previous attempt had foundered. This boasted nothing better than a coating of verglas, too thin for crampons but sufficient to destroy the friction required for a normal ascent. I have a dim memory of Skidmore standing on my shoulders and trying to reach the first chockstone while I fretted about the damage his crampons were inflicting on my duvet. Years later I read the route description for the first time and was puzzled by a reference to a peg used for aid on the last pitch. I can remember Skidmore placing a peg for a runner near the top as the ice was very rotten where exposed to bright sunshine, and there seemed to be an awkward finishing move, but I don't remember it being used for aid or of there being any such need.

The SMC

We spent the night after *Nuis Chimney* in Bill Wallace's cottage in Brodick. Wallace and Skidmore had been acquainted for years as Arran specialists and he was one of the few members of the SMC whom we encountered in the sixties. From such exiguous contacts and chance glimpses of another way of life around the CIC, we formed an impression of the SMC as a sort of civilised Creagh Dhu. The impression was reinforced by odd copies of the Journal from the Bell era which came our way, and which resonated with the deeds of mighty men. In later years Skidmore bought a copy from Wylies as it appeared. This was eagerly awaited and was passed round the Team where its contents were absorbed and discussed. Doubts only began to creep in when Madden and I, giving assistance on a rescue from

the slopes below the Aonach Eagach one winter night, were attached by the police to a group of hostellers out long past their bedtimes and led by two elderly gentlemen who announced that they were members of the SMC. Our leaders pointed us up into the night in the general direction of the accident site which we had located earlier from the blink of a solitary torch. It slowly became apparent that not only were we off line for a successful rendezvous but we were on the wrong side of a deepening gully.

Gentle hints that we had to change direction were ignored and more urgent requests for action only brought warnings that we were under their authority and must behave as directed – besides, there was a perfectly straightforward traverse higher up. This we knew was not so and at the last place where we could climb into and across the gully with any hope of getting out on the other side, Madden and I mutinied and broke away, followed by a duet of wails and threats. We reached the injured party within a few minutes, just as the stretcher arrived by another route. We could see the torches of our former companions winking ever upward in an extended and meandering line and were halfway back to the road with the casualty before we judged from the movement of lights that the oppressed had risen against their tormentors and the advance on the ridge turned to a retreat.

Perhaps the most grievous blow to our image of the SMC came at the first Dinner which I attended with Skidmore. We were taken aback by how old everyone seemed to be. Brooker told Skidmore that he was pleased to see younger people attending as the Dinners had been going down in recent years. We looked around for John Jackson or some of the teenage prodigies of the day but it seemed that he meant us. A year or two later during an overheated Dinner in the St. Enoch Hotel some bolder spirits removed their jackets and placed them over the backs of their chairs. This provoked some tutting at the next table and the comment that 'this has never happened before at a Dinner. It wouldn't have happened in Edinburgh.' I suppose that it is disenchantment which breeds iconoclasm.

The ten years between 1964 and 1974 were the best for the Team as a whole. Transport was available, petrol was relatively cheap and our economic circumstances were improving slowly. Most of the Team were now married but wives either came along on weekends or were lenient with time off, while children were still young or not yet. My own affairs were out of step with the rest since, as a late university student I was poverty stricken until 1969 and I hung on to a motor-cycle longer than the others. These disadvantages were offset by greater freedom as I was almost the last to remain single.

The oil crises of 1973 and 1974 which pushed up travel costs dramatically, coincided with pressure on leisure time from growing



Photo: Jim Crawford

Bill Skidmore on Cir Mhor, 1964



Photo: Jim Crawford

The British Motor-Cycle Industry, 1965



Ultramontane: Two new members completing a new route.
The Ozone Layer, on Cir Mhor, February 1989. (Climbers: George McEwan & Boò Carchrie)

Photo: Ken Crockett

families and from wives who were demanding holidays during which husbands did not disappear to the hills. The regular weekend pattern broke up slowly although the appearance of Dave Dawson and Alastair Walker around this time brought an upsurge of activity.

Changes

A series of events and incidents eventually loosened the ties between individuals or changed attitudes towards rock and ice climbing risks. Marriage and a new job in 1977 reduced the freedom which I had come to take for granted and, a decade or more behind the others, I found myself with a wife, weans and Building Society to support. In 1978 Gillespie was the victim of an unfortunate accident. Skidmore, Richardson, Gillespie and I were climbing *Mainline* on the Brack in a fairly lighthearted spirit as it was a pleasant day and no-one was in the mood for pushing things too far. Gillespie, leading the second pitch, pulled up on a jammed block in the crack above him. The block came out and he came off, heading for a soft collision with the heather ledge on which we sat 20 feet below him. The runner held and the rope was under control but the block followed him down and, as he landed on the ledge, it bounced off the back of his helmet, piercing it and fracturing his skull. In addition to the presence of the helmet it was fortunate that the party was a large one as it required a considerable effort to get him off in a semi-conscious state from above an 80-foot overhang. Several weeks in hospital led to recovery but the old Gillespie was gone and he never regained his previous enthusiasm for rock climbing.

We were ill prepared for Gillespie's accident. It was the first serious one involving the closest members of the Group since Richardson had had a fall on the Ben in 1961 which cost him a tooth. Skidmore's philosophy and practice of safety before everything else had permeated our thinking and a certain amount of arrogance had developed among us, so that whatever happened to more distant friends and acquaintances, we had the sense and experience to avoid serious accidents. It was a bit like being made redundant for the first time — never such innocence again.

Some years later, Dawson was blown from the top of *Bobrun* on Nevis. He and his second fell 400 feet and were saved when the rope between them snagged on some rocks. He was released from the Belford after a day or two but became increasingly aware of numbness in his extremities during the week which followed. A visit to Sam Galbraith led to a diagnosis of a dislocated neck vertebra and a condition which could end in paraplegia. Several weeks in traction removed that danger but the after effects of the accident remained with him for some years and diminished his interest in rock or ice climbing.

The greatest breach in the Team came with the breakdown of Skidmore's marriage after which he ceased to climb, quit the SMC and moved away from Gourock. For 25 years he had been the central figure in the Greenock Team and had been the one through whom each of us had made initial contact with the group and developed links with the others.

If the Greenock Team earns a small footnote in the history of Scottish Mountaineering then it is on account of Skidmore. He initiated and created most of the new climbs with which the group was involved although others had significant parts to play as well. The record indicates that it was Arran and Arrochar and little else. This was partly due to choice and partly to circumstance. Our main climbing area was Glencoe but we were happy to exploit its existing riches and had no drive to compete with those who regarded it as their territory for exploration. The Tory slogan 'You've never had it so good' had little relevance in the West of Scotland during the fifties and sixties when no-one got fat on shipbuilding wages. By the time that cars were freely available and more comfortable accommodation readily accessible, our freshest years were behind us. We did travel farther afield but were dogged by ill-luck with the weather outside our regular Scottish haunts. Skye was usually kind but Nevis, the mainland north of the Great Glen and the Cairngorms too, were disaster areas for us. In 1969/70 Skidmore and I spent a total of 3 months in Torridon, Carnmor and Loch Maree and had one sunny day and 5 other dry ones to show for it. In February 1971 there wasn't a flake of snow north of Glenshiel and we spent a week in the Torridon area rock climbing in rain. The weather changed on the morning we left and I came close to crashing off a snow covered road above Glengarry. Some luck and what I convinced myself was skilful driving saved the car for another two hours until I wrecked it in a collision with a Jaguar on the back road to the Clachaig in Glencoe.

These are the excuses. The main reason for the Team's limited impact is that we were overshadowed by Skidmore. All of us were competent climbers and even excellent at some things but Skidmore was the focal point for most of our activities and his whims and preferences dominated the group. He disliked many types of climb and could be easily put off if conditions were not to his taste. He hated seconding and was never too reliable in that role. The rest of us frequently acceded to his wishes and as a result we got along amicably for more years than do most climbing groups. Even today when the bonds which climbing teams form are part of a distant and irrecoverable past, we all maintain friendly relations. There were other factors for climbers in the sixties which have almost slipped out of the memory. The reputation of some Creagh Dhu routes, particularly if Patsy Walsh was associated with them, created a block, but it was

Robin Smith above all who, even long after his death, left an aura of extreme difficulty over his legacy of climbs which distorted the attitude of many Scottish climbers to them.

The Greenock Team was active during a period of considerable changes in the Scottish climbing scene; between the last years of the post war era and the present wretched decade. In 1960 the outstanding climbers were readily identifiable, the Scottish hills were relatively empty, equipment was pretty basic and we were fresh and enthusiastic which, with hindsight, is the condition most to be envied. In the late eighties my middle-aged viewpoint is warped by the attrition of too many injuries and deaths involving friends and acquaintances, and by alienation from the obsessions of a greedy, self satisfied era, reflected in an overdressed, shoddy pop culture that has permeated every part of our lives. Come the Revolution I intend to ensure that outdoor activities shops and ego-stuffed rock climbing magazines go the same way as pop presenters and Saturday morning T.V. programmes for children.

I began these meanderings by wondering if the SMC would be able to absorb the young talents of the present day and whatever contemporary equivalents there are to the Greenock Team. It undoubtedly will, and both sides will deserve each other unless there is a retreat from the self-absorbed attitudes of the young and a recognition by the SMC that not all traditional postures are creditworthy. The mean minded opposition to women members which was so rantingly displayed at a recent AGM, still rankles.

For our part, we survive as a loose association of friends who meet on infrequent occasions and who continue with the habits of the past or have developed from them into fresh interests. Richardson and Walker are still active on rock and ice although Richardson spends more time fell running. Burns led the way into this masochistic activity which has also claimed Gillespie. Madden, who was always the best athlete among us, prefers to build houses but has the odd outing with Gillespie. Dawson is a rabid Munroist and I make occasional forays while I await the coming of better times as the children grow older. No-one has completely degenerated into skiing for which God be praised. I don't suppose that those of us who have made it this far will ever wholly lose our pleasure on hill, rock and ice and in the friendships and acquaintanceships derived from this most ludicrous of pastimes. It is likely that for many years to come there will be a table at the SMC Dinner occupied by some members of the group which was, once, the Greenock Team.

RAVEN'S GULLY

By John Mackenzie

'NEVERMORE' croaked Poe's bird. 'Nevermore' say those misguided enough to think that 'gully' always means neat front-pointing. Wisdom comes from hindsight or (infinitely preferable) someone else's. *Crowberry Gully*, a mere half-hill away may be white, immaculate and entrancing, like a lovely woman keen to please, given the correct courtesies in understanding her current condition. *Raven's* however is just that wee bit more subtle. Like the infamous '*Lady of the Camelias*,' *Raven's* substitutes the red flower for black rock when she doesn't feel like letting you pick and stick your way up her. Mind you it's not as simple as that either. Let's face it, lots of would be suitors are mere striplings, short in tooth and claw, and whilst passable for the more gentle *Crowberry* are really quite taken in by that old harridan lurking in the dark evil slot high up against Slime Wall.

Thus we are dealing with a climb of uncertain mood, horribly experienced in expert rejection, sometimes vicious and always fatally attractive. Best chances of success are – 1) Long in tooth and claw, 2) To be expert in the art of subterfuge; viz. You are taking an aimless walk up *Great Gully*, with nothing in particular to do. Suddenly you leap sideways into the bottom of *Raven's*. This is the great element of surprise, so essential to success as, a) you have not given advance warning to *Raven's* so that she can suddenly melt; and b) you have surprised yourself by suddenly being there in the first place and thus arrive, at least mentally, with faculties still intact and not fazed by the previous night's pub talk.

Such a foursome therefore suddenly find themselves spread out over various ice pitches in *Great Gully*. A long drive from York the previous night in frost and stars, now reduced to low cloud and a slight, keen wind. Kevin Wilson, Nick Harper, Dick Lockie and self. All terribly long in tooth and sometimes claw, all innocence lost ages ago. *Great Gully* was in good condition, a skin of powder on iron hard snow. The great gloomy cleft of *Raven's* and the awesome Slime Wall lie on our left, fleetingly transparent in the mist. Impossible to look up and not wonder at the chance remark (surprise tactic cleverly sublimated) which brought us here and not elsewhere. Immediately in front a steep ice pitch, the crux of *Great Gully*. Thinking that I had flu coming on, and potentially a Sick Man, a bit of adrenaline on this was needed to sort out town lethargy from mountain action.

Mountain Action seemed to be winning, at least as far as the entrance to *Raven's*. Here one entered the dark portals of a gully ten feet wide and steepening to a fortunately harmless ice pitch, which we all soloed over, probably one of the ghastly summer chockstones of which I had none-too-fond memories. Ahead lay the most reviled and sworn at cube of rock in our hills, the notorious summer crux.

It doesn't look much from a hundred feet away, just a blank wedge, neatly filling the gully to a height of twenty feet and, like some Inca stone walling, crack-free at either side. Close up, indeed under it in a little cave, one's immediate impression is worse because it overhangs as well. A fringe of ice lay on its pate but failed to curl over. This was no place for *Raven's* to follow skin-head styles! On either side ice smuts adorned the walls, interspersed with rock. The summer 5a pitch takes the left wall and as I sat marooned way down the gully, Nick attacked the summer crux whilst simultaneously Dick assaulted the right wall.

Such a little stone but so much effort. Finally Nick succeeded on the right wall, placing a handy Friend 3 to immortalise his effort. Kevin followed and they were soon out of sight. So far so good. Dick then led up, and when my own turn came, the ice, or what there was of it, decreased by a marked percentage since the blob the others had used for a crucial pull came down to join me.

Left in the cave, decidedly flu-worthy, a slack rope and sod all ice. The others were discussing the merits of tonight's meal miles up above. In fact all this was adding up to a fairly usual situation. Despite such tremendous odds a certain native cunning did not entirely desert me. Climbing the vertical verglas a little right of the chockstone gave access to thicker ice. This, plus a few sweet words to *Raven's* did the trick and it was nice to be over the top at last.

Ahead stretched a pleasant névé slope of no difficulty which stopped abruptly beneath the smooth summer groove. Kevin and Nick were already at work, shouting mantras at the fixed piton which lay below more vertical verglas. Dick and I studiously ignored them, assuming that *Raven's* would fix her vexatious wrath on the other pair and forget about us. We fully expected one or both to be spat out contemptuously, but time passed and it was clear that they had succeeded. Another important rule about climbing *Raven's* is if in doubt about success ahead, take an immediate belay on one of the handy chockstones and let someone else take the lead. However in this case the only comment that floated down was the word 'hard.'

The other two now out of mind, I decided to lead, warning Dick of my lowered resistance to everything that could be found in *Raven's*. Another important rule I soon found, is never try to elicit sympathy from a Yorkshireman. Ears ringing, I ran up the lower ice

wall to escape and cowered in a corner. The fixed piton was downward pointing and in a similar condition to myself. However I could not help noticing that though superficially rusty, the core looked sound. There is much comfort to be had even in old pitons. Approaching the problem ahead as a rock climb, I found a fine Friend 2.5 fitted into the cave behind the peg, a boon discovery.

Stepping out left onto glazed rock I spied two curious holes above. By placing the correct axe in the lower hole, a terrible contortion gained entrance to a squeeze groove. This was full of soft powder and the névé above was only reached by genuine effort of the type unknown to the majority of the modernist movement.

Nick was hidden in a cave at the apex of the névé whilst Kevin had his knees on the lip of an ice overhang, feet dangling and seemingly praying. Not the sort of place to be whooping it up and yelling 'Smith Lives' when forty foot-fanged points could impale me at any second. Joining Nick at the belay was one of the high points of the day for me. Flu forgotten, bugs killed off by the sheer excellence of *Raven's*, I merely admired the slender organ pipes of ice at the back of the cave which I had thrown myself into with an enthusiasm that prompted the dry remark 'Public school enthusiasm' from Nick, when open enthusiasm threatened to become infectious.

The others made short work of the icy overhang. Two good picks at full stretch in névé, legs-a-dangle and a hard pull, not elegant but certainly effective. Another cave ahead, more icicles and our first route finding mistake. The trouble with the '*Cold Climbs*' article is that it optimistically suggests that *Raven's* is a series of caves separated by tea and biscuits. This is not usually the case. Another rule whilst climbing here is not to miss the bifurcation, such as it is. I had casually mentioned this to the others some time before, but this seemed not a word in common usage. A narrow rib of rock is shyly tucked away on the far left of the névé slope, so inconspicuous that we failed to notice it in our headlong charge to tea and biscuits in the cave ahead. Another difficult move on iced rock led to a groove which passed under a huge hanging chockstone and the impressive, almost claustrophobic walls of the *Right Fork*.

Yvon Chouinard had bridged up these wide, wide, walls to reach the platform below the final *Corkscrew Pitch*. It was thinly iced and looked supremely difficult. I left Nick and Kevin pondering the unlikely and descended rapidly to a fixed peg where Dick and I lowered off. I could not help yelling up to the crestfallen duo 'bifurcation' with considerable glee.

Twenty feet lower than our former cave was a small chockstone with a tape around it. To this I belayed whilst noticing another party of two climbers preparing themselves for the *Junction Pitch*. Now

Dick's no slouch when it comes to cunning. Seeing the other pair getting ready, he shot up the start of the *Left Fork* without so much as a cursory nod at their startled leader. A frantic pace was set, slowed only by immense rope drag that gradually brought him to a stop sixty feet higher. A belay was announced and whilst our friends were abseiling down from the *Direct Exit*, I climbed the left, the main difficulty being in avoiding the leader's head of the other party.

Joining Dick on a small, and for *Raven's* an exposed stance, I glanced up. The groove gradually steepened to a tight snow-encrusted vee, a shallow chimney of mean looking disposition. Climbing sixty runnerless feet to its base, I soon discovered that not only was it vertical but seemingly unprotected. Rock lined the back and the good névé was well out of reach. Much dithering and many false starts later, a hastily de-iced crack accepted a Friend 3 on one set of cams, hardly sufficient for what seemed like the crux ahead. By now Kevin and Nick had also stomped over the lower party with the unanswerable excuse that we were a rope of four, temporarily parted by a grammatical misinterpretation. Looking down all I could see were three anxious faces watching the sparks fly from my crampons.

Rejected and despondent, I moved up the ghastly little groove once more to spy – merciful Heaven – a small angle peg lurking on a rib to my right. Just out of reach, I had to move higher, straining to clip it. Great relief! The difference between a rope arcing uselessly down and the rope running safely through overhead. The chimney-groove was still difficult, but a turf, hidden under powder, enabled a few extra feet of scraping progress to reach the névé. More pleasant slopes followed to a little niche and a good belay, which after the confines of below now felt open with that curious lightening of the atmosphere, sometimes sensed near the top of a climb.

There followed a more reasonable pitch, a thinly iced groove with good runners, giving nice open climbing all the way to the foot of the infamous *Corkscrew Pitch*. This is quite definitely the top, a mere short corner crack which provides a 4c move or two in summer. It is just too narrow to insert any more than an arm or leg and has the scenic attraction of overlooking the *Direct Finish*.

By now the gully had become jolly and unserious again. In my sojourn at the niche I was distinctly aware of Dick having overcome the *Corkscrew* and was in fact up and out. After a great deal of freezing and admiring the snow speckled horror of Slime Wall and thinking what a cosy little patch this was in comparison, I joined the other pair up above.

I was just in time to give Nick a foot up, gingerly avoiding all those points and then I was alone on the misty ledge. A slack rope

and laughter above meant unaided effort, but summer knowledge helped. A left leg in, a poor hook with the right axe, pull hard and higher with that leg, a bit more 'oomph' and I was up. Very satisfying it all was too, a superb climb requiring plenty of strong arm tactics, a rough wooing if ever there was, but then one instinctively feels that that is how 'she' likes it best. *Raven's* did get back in a subtle way though. As Dick poured out his steaming tea, ready for all that internal warmth, out came a shower of glass. It hardly worried him, since this was his fifth broken flask that winter.



MUCH ADO ABOUT NN 867 820

By Ivan Waller

Note: Reference to O.S. 1:50 000, sheet 43 might make what follows slightly less unintelligible.

BEINN BHREAC standing at the head of the Tarf Water is easy to climb but awkward to approach from any direction. It is the fourth highest Corbett at 912 m. and the highest summit between Carn Ealar and Beinn Dearg.

In 1982 I finally completed my ascent of all the Munro tops, 517 of them plus a few extras, also the 3000 ft. tops of England, Wales and Ireland, only to be asked when I was going to do the Corbetts. This may be beyond my span because I still have more than 160 of the 223 to do at 81 years of age, but a man can always try.

It was in May 1985 that I arrived by train at Blair Atholl to make my first attempt on Beinn Bhreac. I obtained permission from the factor at Blair Castle to camp in Gleann Mhairc and walked up to where that glen comes down to join the River Tilt, a mile beyond Gilbert's Bridge. I camped that night on the far east side of the Mhairc looking down into the main glen. Next morning, just beyond the confluence of the Diridh with the Mhairc, I was delighted to find a beautiful old packhorse bridge, not shown on the map, which gave access to the land enclosed between the two rivers, where my route lay.

Gleann Mhairc is steep sided at first but then opens out to give reasonable going until 3 miles beyond the bridge there is an abrupt rise of several hundred feet. Above this step the glen levels out again at 2000 feet but the terrain here and beyond is very rough indeed and I just could not carry my load through the peat hags any further. After much searching I found a place just large and level enough to pitch the tent and at around midday I lay down in it for a rest.

In the afternoon I climbed Beinn Mheadonach, the Corbett which rises between the Mhairc and the Diridh, but the weather was closing in and when I got back to the tent the wind was slapping the side-walls together in the gusts. It went on like this all night and I felt isolated and remote, terrified that the tent would be blown down. However, my little 4.75 lb. Robert Saunder's 'Backpacker G.C.2 Plus' has never let me down. It was raining when I woke in the morning. The clouds were down and the wind was still strong so I decided to beat a retreat to Blair Atholl, just a bit demoralised.

I caught an afternoon train to Kingussie and went to the Youth Hostel for the night. I was able to hire a bicycle in the morning and ride to Glen Feshie Lodge, whence I walked up Leathad an Taobhain, a 912 m Corbett above the Minigaig Pass. It was a lovely day but Beinn Bhreac looked impossibly far away along an undulating winding ridge, 10 miles there and back with a further 4 miles down to the bicycle. It was obviously too far for me and I was expected back at the hostel that evening, so I went no further.

Later that summer I was up the Tilt with a friend, a motor caravan and two bicycles. Beyond Forest Lodge we cycled for 3 miles and left our bikes where the Landrover track turns off before Dun Beag. We walked to the Bedford Bridge and on up the Tarf, forded the river to the stable and sheep station and walked back over the Landrover track to our bicycles. This walk convinced me that although the Tarf bothy further up the glen would provide a staging point, I did not really want to approach Beinn Bhreac by this route. I had also thought of the approach from Old Blair by the Sheicheachan bothy, which I had already visited, and Bruar Lodge, but I am afraid that my experience in Gleann Mhairc had quite put me off the whole area around the southern side of Beinn Bhreac.

The following year, 1986, we moved house and I only got to Scotland once, but I had plenty of time during the year to plan a final attempt. It became clear that the easiest approach but also unfortunately the longest, would be from the Linn of Dee. I had proved to myself that I could not do it carrying a tent and all that goes with it, but I had learned meanwhile about the merits of a Gore-tex bivi-bag and a friend had lent me one which weighed less than 1 lb. I added to this my very old Black's 'Icelandic Special' down sleeping sack with lightweight inner sack, and a closed-cell polyurethane mat to lie on. All this together with a Gore-tex anorak, overtrousers and a Polar-fleece jacket, made up a load which I found I could manage quite well.

The route I planned starting at the Linn of Dee was via White Bridge and up the Geldie Burn along the well-trodden path towards Glen Feshie. Half a mile short of the bridge over the Eidart the route turned left off the path and headed down to the River Feshie, following this up-stream to the sharp bend where the river comes down from the west. After a further 200 yards the path turns away south from the river. It is rather difficult to find but it is important as it takes you through a labyrinth of peat hags into the glen between Carn Ealar and Carn Meall Tionail. On the saddle at the head of the glen my route doubled back to the north-west to pass over the summit of Tionail which throws out a fine rocky nose to the north. From here it is 2.5 miles south-west along the ups and downs of the hummocky ridge leading to Beinn Bhreac.

Carn Ealar has the unique distinction of draining into all three of the main rivers of the eastern highlands, the Dee via the Geldie, the Spey via the Feshie, and the Tay down the length of the Tarf, the Tilt and the Garry. This strategic position lends credence to the tale that in years gone by a cattle and horse fair took place on this remote watershed, and if true one can imagine some whisky trading going on as well.

The day duly arrived in May 1987 when I set off from the car park at the Linn of Dee. I had not foreseen any difficulty on the way over to the Feshie, but after about 8 miles, opposite the ruins of Geldie Lodge, I found the Allt Dhaidh Mor, the burn coming down off Ben Bhrotain, so swollen by melting snow above, that after searching up and down I thought I was not going to be able to cross. However I just managed it in the end and was lucky not to get my feet wet, thanks to wearing gaiters. Thereafter I was haunted by fears that I might be cut off on my return the following day, except that on the way back it would not be so important to keep dry as prior to a bivouac.

I had my first rest and food 3 miles further on when I reached the Feshie. There had been quite a headwind all the way which had called for extra effort. It had been a bright day but showers were becoming more frequent and I had been wearing my Gore-tex anorak and over-trousers. Once in the glen between Ealar and Tionail it was more sheltered, but before reaching the saddle it had become cold enough to make me put on my Polarfleece under my anorak, and it turned out to be very fortunate indeed that I had done so.

It was early evening before I reached the top of Tionail and set off along the moorland ridge towards Beinn Bhreac with absolutely breath-taking views. There was a ceiling of cloud at about 3000 feet and wherever the hills dipped down to the various gaps and passes they were silhouetted black against a brilliant sky beyond; with the dark cloud layer above, the sunset colours and contrasts were quite fantastic.

Halfway along I dropped down to a little narrow pass at about 2400 feet, the lowest point on the ridge, and there I noticed a little grassy corner in the shelter of a small rock wall. It was the first and only welcoming place for a bivouac that I had seen in all this wilderness. It was at the head of a steep burn with a small waterfall flowing down into the upper reaches of the Feshie which here runs east before turning half-circle to run back west to Glen Feshie. There was still time before dark to push on up Beinn Bhreac, which I reached at about 8.30 p.m. 11 hours after leaving the car, perhaps the slowest 16 miles on record and showing how little chance I would have had of climbing the mountain without a bivouac.

On the way back to the bivi-site which I had spotted in the pass, the price was exacted for the stupendous sunset, when the whole north-western sky turned black and torrential rain poured down. I hurried down to the pass and arrived with the outside of my Gore-tex garments streaming with water but beautifully dry inside. To have taken them off even for a moment would have seen me soaked to the skin in the deluge, but I had to get into my bivouac as it would soon be dark.

I spread out my mat which instantly collected pools of water, removed my boots, and stood temporarily in a plastic bag to keep my stockings dry. Luckily my down sleeping sacks were already arranged inside the Gore-tex bivi-bag and I now had no alternative but to get straight into them, dripping outer garments and all. Miraculously my Polarfleece jacket kept my body warm and the two layers of Gore-tex with the now thoroughly damp sleeping sacks between them, kept me dry although I was lying in pools of water.

My feet were warm throughout the night, but for the first 2 hours before midnight the wind and rain continued and my legs began to chill so I organised some leg exercises. The bending and straightening was too much for my old sleeping sacks and there were feathers everywhere, all wet and matted. By now I was beginning to ponder on the chances of an old man of 80 surviving this treatment, and then there was the worry about the effect of all this rain on the already swollen burn which would have to be crossed on the way home. Optimism was getting sorely strained but around midnight I fell asleep.

I woke up with the dawn, warm and comfortable soon after 4 a.m. and lay in for another hour. When I got up I found to my amazement that my bivi-bag and my rucksack beside me were covered in an inch or so of snow. The clouds were down but the wind had dropped. Snow covered the ground but I was away in a few minutes and navigation proved easy across the flank of Tionail to head directly to the saddle. The glen beyond on the north side leading down to the Feshie was clear of cloud and below the level of the snow, but in spite of this I managed to keep too high on the flank of Ealar, and failed to find the path through the peat until I was nearly at the river. Down the Geldie path the dreaded river crossing was not as bad as I had feared, but I did get one boot full of water in spite of my gaiters. Soon the sun came out and everything dried out except my down sleeping sacks which must have been carrying their own weight of water. By the time I reached White Bridge the Sunday tourists were out, and I even saw a young woman riding a tricycle. I got to the car happy and relaxed and soon after 4 p.m. I was back in Braemar greeting a very relieved wife.

In *'Hamish's Mountain Walk'* the author describes the dreadful rough going on the walk round the four Munro's surrounding the Tarf Water, which he calls "The Ring of Tarff." He does not disclose the origin of the ff, but who needs another f in Tarf?

MUNRO AND THE SALVATIONIST TENDENCY

By Robin N. Campbell¹

IN VOLUME II of the Club Journal, Hely Almond² published an article entitled 'Ben-y-Gloe on Christmas Day' in which he drew a distinction between two tendencies within the new Club. It is a false distinction, since many early members – notably Naismith – cut right across it. However, the labels stuck and they serve as a handy basis for grouping some at least of the prominent figures in the Club's early history. He wrote: –

'Members of the Mountaineering Club may be divided into 2 classes. There are those whose ambition is to scale the inaccessible side of peaks with unpronounceable names, who look upon a quarry face with fond enthusiasm, as affording chances quite as great, and nearly as glorious, of getting badly hurt, as a genuine mountain doesBut let me confess, with all due humility and shame, that I have permanently enlisted in the Salvation Army, which is the name I give to the second class of mountaineers. As our name implies, we like to know that we are safe – absolutely safe. We don't like contusions; we would rather go home to dinner than lie on the ground till people came to set our bones, or carry us off on a stretcher; we have no desire to be the conscious element of an avalanche or land-slip. And yet, like Mark Twain on his celebrated ascent of the Riffelberg, we like something of the pomp and circumstance of glorious war – an alpenstock, a bit of rope, blue spectacles – a good deal of noise and fuss about it when we come home again.'

Among the prominent Salvationists of the early Club, Joseph Stott, Colin Phillip, Hugh Munro, Archibald Robertson, and Ronald Burn deserve special mention. Stott had already been active with the Edinburgh Tramps for many years before 1889. His only recorded expedition of note after Formation is a trip with Munro on December 21, the shortest day of 1891, in which they climbed all the tops of the Tarmachans and Meall Ghaordie for good measure, in vile conditions. This gives an idea of the prodigious feats of walking achieved by the pioneers: this was in no way considered an exceptional expedition.

Colin Phillip was an artist in watercolour, the son of John Phillip of Aberdeen – a well known painter. He evidently knew the mountains extremely well: Munro and other walkers were often at pains to acknowledge Phillip's superior knowledge and to defer to him in matters of mapping or nomenclature. His doings are unfortunately rather spottily recorded and we are left with a very inadequate picture of him.

Among the members of the Tendency, however, none is better known than Munro. His likeness appears in numerous books, sporting Balmoral bonnet, full Highland fig and – often – a large and mysterious bag of dark cloth; he and his deeds are described here and there, most notably in 'Munro and his Mountains,' a typically effective piece by Tom Weir³. Of course, we need not seek far to discover the reason for Munro's fame. He volunteered for the task set by the early Club of compiling a list of all the Scottish mountains, and, completing it, began a hill-walking game that continues to fascinate the climber of today.

Munros and Tops

Munro's compilation rests upon three foundations: the criterion of 3,000 feet for mountainhood, a distinction between Tops and mere wrinkles, shoulders or undulations and a distinction between ordinary Tops and an officer class of Separate Mountains, or 'Munros' as they have been called since shortly after publication of the original list, which enumerated 538 Tops and 283 Munros. It is noteworthy that even today no satisfactory account of the physical or metaphysical basis of these foundations has been offered. R. G. Inglis⁴ argued that whereas 'maximum amount of dip encountered *en route* to the nearest (higher) summit' served as a workable basis to explain Munro's first distinction, this criterion fared very badly in accounting for the second. Then F. F. Bonsall⁵ offered a formula to deal with both distinctions, namely 'the Naismith-Rule time to reach the peak from the nearest higher ground.' However, Bonsall's criterion leaves several major anomalies unexplained. The matter is complex and I will not explore it further here, save to remark that it may be necessary to cast the net well beyond the purely orographic criteria so far considered if Munro's criteria are to be captured. Criteria such as possession of a name, or a decent cairn, seem to have mattered to Munro. He also seemed reluctant to grant more than one Munro to ranges bearing a singular name distinct from that of any constituent peak, such as Buachaille Etive Mor, Liathach, An Teallach, etc. Although we learn from Douglas⁶ of 'a great visit paid (by Munro) to Sir Colin Phillip's in Arran, where 'hills and tops' were discussed for three days and three nights with but little intermission,' we can only lament the fact that *none* of the contemporary discussion of these issues has survived.

Munro, Robertson and Burn: What did they climb?

History teaches us that the first Munroist was the Reverend Archibald Eneas Robertson, who Completed on Meall Dearg, Aonach Eagach in 1901⁷, and that the first man round the Tops was the Reverend Ronald Burn who Completed Munros and Tops on Beinn a'Chroin

in 1923⁸. However, what of Munro himself? Munro suffered from rheumatism⁹ and his climbing seems to cease in 1915. He died without completing either the Munros or Tops. The official wisdom about what he *did* climb is given by Jim Donaldson¹⁰, 'When Sir Hugh died of pneumonia in 1919 he had climbed all the Tops except the Inaccessible Pinnacle and Carn Cloich-Mhuilinn.' This is very close to Ling's account¹¹, 'He had...visited all the 3000-foot tops in Scotland except one or two.' It is also very close to the truth, so far as one can uncover that commodity amongst the leavings of the long-dead.

However, some unofficial histories tell a different story. It would be invidious to identify those responsible, but we read in various quarters stories that imply (a) that Munro was trying to complete the Munros, and (b) that he was thwarted in this attempt by the Inaccessible Pinnacle. For example, (passing over blatantly erroneous stories to one that is more subtly wrong) I have read that Munro would have been mortified by the demotion of Carn Cloich-Mhuilinn to ordinary Top, since he had left it specially for his last ascent. Sir Hugh might well have been mortified by the demotion, since there is no indication that he wished it to be demoted. However, it would only have affected these supposedly-intended celebrations if his object had been to complete the Munros. Since his object was not the Munros but the Tops, the demotion of Carn Cloich-Mhuilinn would not have mattered a jot: it would still have been his last Top.

How do we know that his object was to complete the Tops? Well, he *climbed* all but a few of them, which is a fair indication. Besides, accounts of his early doings are plentiful in the Journal and these make it plain that he never lost an opportunity to visit a Top, however humble or downright dubious it might be.

So, Munro's object was to complete the Tops. If, however, it had been to complete the Munros, the Inaccessible Pinnacle would have constituted no obstruction, since *the Pinnacle is listed as an ordinary Top in the original list*¹², and Sgurr Dearg is the Munro. In Section 17 of the Tables the two peaks are listed as follows: —

<i>Mtn.</i>	<i>Top</i>	<i>Height</i>	<i>Name</i>
157	279	3234	Sgurr Dearg (Ordnance Point)
	256	3250 ap.	Sgurr Dearg ('Inaccessible Peak')

Exactly the same numberings and heights appear in the Altitude Tables.

This state of affairs may strike us as curious, but there is no help for it. The heights are given correctly, or at any rate the Pinnacle is correctly listed as higher than Sgurr Dearg. There cannot be any clerical error, since the order of the heights is confirmed by the order of the Top-numberings, and the Mountain-numbering for Sgurr

Dearg (157) is as it should be, given the stated height. Besides, if there had been any clerical error, it is remarkable that Munro never saw fit to correct it – he was quick enough to correct other errors in the Tables, and elsewhere¹³. Indeed, so far as I can see the question of the bizarre status of these two peaks is discussed *nowhere* in the Journal and simply 'corrected' without comment in the 1921 revision of the Tables. So, Munro could have completed the Munros, and possibly before Robertson, had he chosen to ignore the Pinnacle.

Robertson's case is further confirmation of the perverse status of the Pinnacle. It is not at all likely that Robertson had climbed the Pinnacle when he claimed completion. In his notebooks¹⁴ there is mention of climbing Sgurr Dearg, but no mention of the Pinnacle: on the other hand, his other roped ascents in the Cuillin and elsewhere are described in minute detail¹⁵.

Robertson claimed completion on 28th September 1901, and wrote about his feat as follows¹⁶: –

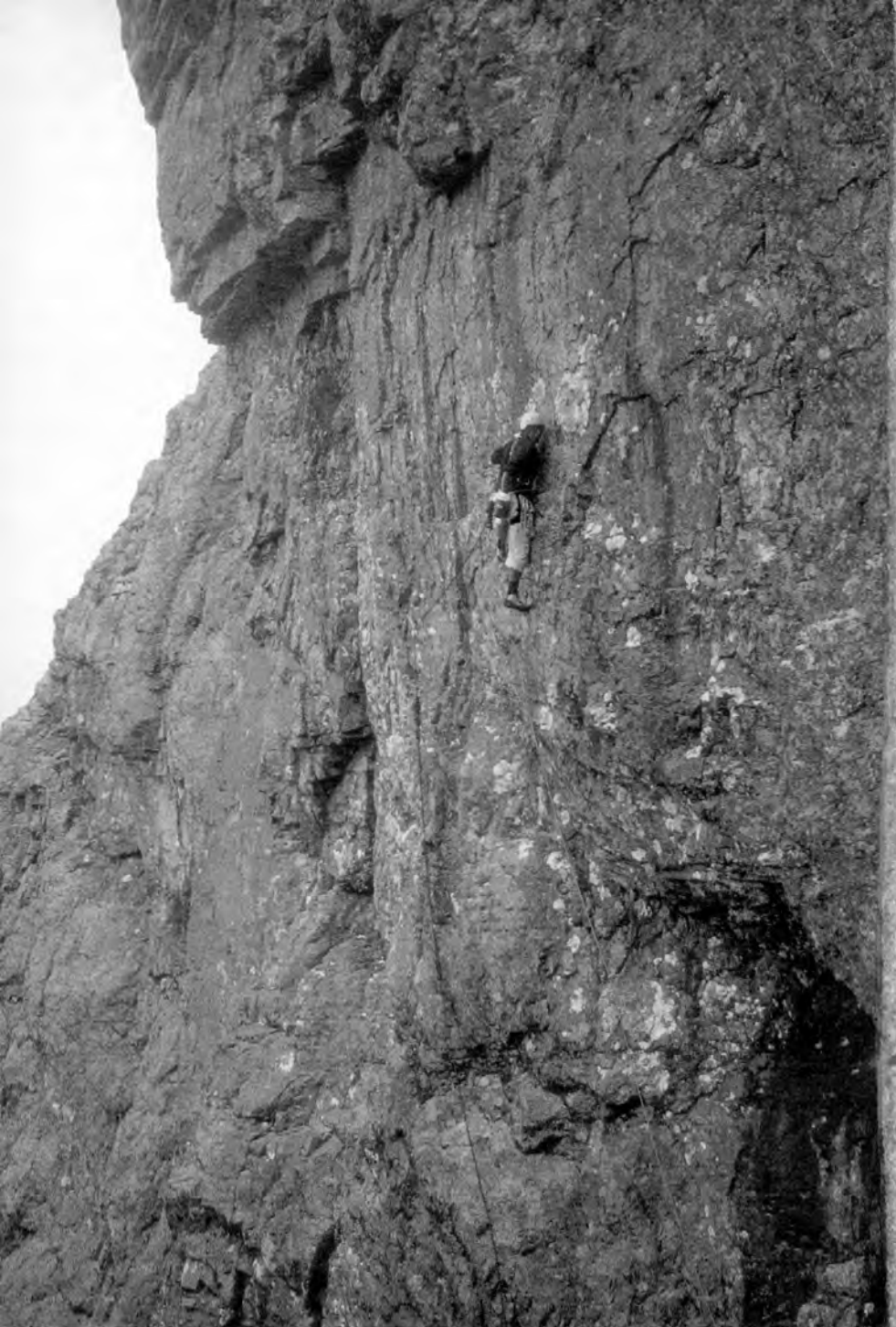
'The first thought that strikes one in looking back over the hills of Scotland as a whole, is that there are almost none that have not some fairly easy route to the top – and I regret to say it. For although the most incorrigible of peak-baggers, I love a climb as well. Like the keeper I once asked if he would have a dram or a pint of beer, I most emphatically reply 'Both is best!' I only wish I could tell the Club of some faraway unknown peak bristling with difficulties on all sides, but in fact there are none. The only hills where there are no easy ways to the top are certain of the Coolins in Skye, Sgurr Dubh for example or Mhadaidh or perhaps Sgurr Alasdair, although on Alasdair you have got the Stone Shoot which leads to within 125 feet of the top.'

No mention of the Pinnacle, which surely 'bristles with difficulties on every side' if any peak does! So, for those who insist that Munro was thwarted, it seems that poor Robertson must be considered thwarted as well! Robertson returned to the Cuillin in 1906: although it is not made absolutely clear that he climbed the Pinnacle then, it is likely that he did. He was there on a fine day with MacRobert and other able climbers and took a photograph of the Pinnacle¹⁷. He was certainly capable of climbing it: his boast that 'Both is best!' is amply substantiated by other routes climbed. In passing, it is perhaps worth mentioning that scrutiny of Robertson's notebooks results in a tick placed by every one of the 283 Munros of the original list, *except for Ben Wyvis*. He made an early visit there alone¹⁸ – 'I followed the usual way up, but near the top it came on heavy rain and as I did not want to get soaked, I turned.' Although Robertson makes various returns towards the end of his notebooks to correct other half-finished peaks, there is no later mention of Ben Wyvis. So perhaps Robertson was thwarted in more ways than one!



Photo: Andy Tibbs

More Ultramontane: G. Jones on the *The Bat*, pitch 3



Ant Waters on *The Clearances*, pitch 1

Photo: Andy Tibbs

Whatever doubts there may be concerning Robertson, there are none at all regarding the next claimant, Burn. Burn completed the Tops, and so certainly climbed the Pinnacle. Indeed his ascent is recorded in the *Journal*¹⁹. In Burn's obituary²⁰ E. C. Thomson recalls Burn's visit to Skye, and the heartless leg-pulling which he endured there at the hands of the young members who dragged him up! Burn was obsessively meticulous and I have no doubt at all that his completion would withstand the most sceptical scrutiny. It is likely – given the foregoing discussion of Robertson – that he was the first Munroist as well as the first over the Tops.

To return to Munro, after this lengthy traverse, it is clear that his object was to complete the Tops, but which tops did he fail to ascend? Tradition, codified by Jim Donaldson, specifies the Inaccessible Pinnacle and Carn Cloich-Mhuilinn. However, that is not quite correct.

In 1917 Munro wrote a short piece for the Cairngorm Club *Journal* entitled 'Three Nights on the Cairngorms'²¹. He remarked there, 'I still aspire to stand on the summit of the only three 'tops' in Scotland exceeding 3,000 feet in height which I have not yet climbed. Raeburn, Collie, Garden, and others, however, must combine to haul me up on a rope; otherwise the ascents will not be made!'

My own guess is that he was alluding here to his rheumatism rather than to any Salvationist weaknesses. So in 1917 (possibly slightly earlier) there were three outstanding tops, and probably these remained so, given his condition. But what were they?

An obvious step was to check through Munro's Card Index of Tops and personal copy of the Tables²². Only three tops were not crossed off. The Inaccessible Pinnacle, Carn Fhidleir (that featureless lump above the Tilt, Feshie and Geldie), and Carn Cloich-Mhuilinn. He had failed on Carn Fhidleir in extraordinary circumstances on July 11th, 1908. The account is given by William Garden²³ and is worth reproducing in full. Although Garden does not say so, it is likely that they made their attempt in darkness because of Munro's 'fanatical belief in the exclusive rights of proprietors in land'²⁴. Certainly Munro made many other ascents in summer under cover of darkness.

'I accompanied Munro through Glen Tilt. Dining early at Blair Atholl, we drove to Forest Lodge, arriving there at 7.40 p.m. The threatening afternoon had settled down to a night of persistently heavy rain. By the time we reached the Belford Memorial Bridge (9.40) we were thoroughly well soaked, and the Tarf and Tilt were already in high flood. From the bridge we followed the left side of the Tarf, but kept well on the high ground, about a quarter of a mile from the stream, and took advantage of innumerable sheep tracks

when we could strike them in the rapidly increasing darkness. At 11 p.m. we reached the remains of an old shepherd's bothy, where we rigged up a tent with a mackintosh, under which we took our bearings by aid of compass, map, and matches. From the bothy we bore away in a north-west direction over gently rising moorland. The rain poured harder than ever, and we heard the low growl of the angry Tarf dying away as we left it. As we ascended we got into dense fog, and at 1.5 a.m. we reached the large cairn on the summit of An Sgarsoch with some difficulty, as the summit is very flat and extensive. It was now quite chilly, very dark, and, what was worse, we had been unable to keep our powder dry, and so could neither read our compasses nor see our maps. We knew the wind was north, so going into its biting teeth, we dropped down by the side of the Allt a'Chaoruinn and struck the Geldie. Carn an Fhidleir, originally included in the programme, had to be abandoned, which was more regretted by Munro than I, because in consequence it still remains one of the few three-thousanders undone by him.'

I might have saved myself the trouble of rooting through Munro's copy of the Tables. Some months ago I discovered an article by Ronald Burn²⁵ describing his final Tops. Burn reports a visit to Munro at Lindertis in January 1919, just 2 months before Munro's death and notes that at that time Munro had still to climb three tops — 'Carn an Fhidleir Feisidh, Carn Cloich-Mhuilinn and the Inaccessible of Skye.'

Munro the Man

About Munro the man I have little to add to the accounts given elsewhere. There is ample evidence of his clubbable nature: his many years of service on Committee; his devotion to Dinners and Meets, attended at great expense and personal inconvenience, and latterly with little prospect of a hill; his eighty-five contributions to the Journal; the two Meets convened at Lindertis at his own expense, etc., etc. However, there are hints that he was by no means universally amiable. Douglas describes him as a curious mixture of courtesy and pugnacity²⁶. The Club Minute-Books²⁷ record disagreements between Naismith and Munro over finance, with Naismith always on the side of parsimony. He could be obdurate, too, when the Members' and his own interests failed to coincide. Many of us nowadays have Journal sets which lack the first or second volume, which were produced in rather careful quantities. This shortage was apparent as early as 1903 when a motion was put to the AGM by Mr Alex Fraser to reprint these volumes²⁸. This motion was vetoed by Munro on the grounds that it violated his copyright in the Tables, striking a valuable blow on behalf of authors! As noted above, a landowner himself, and a politically active Tory to boot, Munro took

a very uncompromising position in relation to rights of exclusion and it may be suspected that he played a large part in shaping the docile policies of the Club in respect of access. However, none of this amounts to any more than the observation that he was a man of his times, no worse and probably better than many of his peers. Further, although it might be supposed that a landowning hereditary baronet who was a member of Court would be some sort of a snob, this seems unlikely. His first act on acceding to the Presidency on the death of Veitch was to propose a motion that the Committee, *qua* scrutineers of aspirant members, 'should adjudicate solely upon a candidate's qualifications and *not upon his social status*,' leaving such dubious judgments to the ballot of members (a motion regrettably defeated). A survey of his companions on the hill certainly shows no sign that he preferred the company of any particular class of men. On the contrary, he was ready to go on the hill with any member that came to hand.

The Death of Munro

One final point may be settled here. Where does Munro lie? The Journal tells us only that he died on 19th March 1919 in Tarascon, near Avignon in Provence, where he was running a canteen for troops after the War. Douglas' obituary²⁹ suggests that he may have been buried there, quoting a report from the local paper, as follows (my translation): –

'The funeral service (les funeraillies) of Sir Hugh Munro, founder of the canteen at the station in our town, took place on Saturday 22nd March at 1.30 p.m.'

'This foreign gentlemen, rich and elderly, who died in a small hotel room, had, with his sister and his two daughters, left Scotland, his country house and his estates and comfortable rural life, to come to our small town and do good amongst us, to establish a charity and devote to it his time, nights as well as days, his wealth, his health and finally his life.'

However, Sir Torquil – Munro's son – showed Munro's grave to Tom Weir some years ago. The graveyard is private, created by Munro after a falling-out with the local kirk at Airlie (Munro's wife Selina was Roman Catholic): it is located in a small patch of waste ground between a farmhouse and a walled garden about 200 yards west of Drumleys, just north of the main road³⁰. There are three graves, one of which is very recent. Of the two old graves one was for Munro's mother and the other for his wife, both of whom predeceased him. The latter grave has a headstone, bearing details of both Munro and his wife. Although it seemed possible that Munro might only have been commemorated here, rather than buried, there is no doubt that his remains were brought home and buried here.

The local paper³¹ reports the funeral, on 2nd April 1919, 'when his remains were laid to rest in the family burial ground, in the near vicinity of the mansion of Lindertis.... The body was brought to this country and reached Lindertis on Monday (31st March). The coffin, wrapped in the Union Jack, reposed in the stately hall of the mansion The first portion of the funereal service was conducted there by the Bishop of St. Andrews, assisted by the Reverend J. A. Philip, Kirriemuir. An imposing cortege, including many school children, wound its way through the umbrageous branches of the evergreens to the graveside, where the final rites were performed by the Bishop of St. Andrews and Mr Philip.'

Munro worked hard for the good of Scottish Mountaineering, established an enduring pastime for its practitioners, and did as much as any Ultramontane to provide firm foundations for the new Club (and a solid line of income for the Scottish Mountaineering Trust!). If at any time this Club, or some other body, decided that he deserved a permanent memorial, I can think of nothing better than a cairn constructed from stones taken from the tops by Completers and built in this tiny '*umbrageous burial ground.*'

FOOTNOTES:

1. I am indebted to several people for help in compiling this piece: Tom Weir and Jim Donaldson supplied wise guidance, John M. Ross unearthed the Kirriemuir Observer from its unlikely resting-place, and Bob Aitken lent a willing, if sceptical ear to my theories about Munro.
2. *SMCJ*, 1892, II, 235-9.
3. *Tom Weir's Scotland*. Penguin Books, 1982. pp.61-70.
4. Some Observations on 'Munro's Tables.' *SMCJ*, 1953, XXV, 132-6.
5. 'The Separation of Mountains. *SMCJ*, 1973, XXX, 155-6.
'The Separation of Munros. *SMCJ*, 1974, XXX, 254-6.
6. Obituary Notice. *SMCJ*, 1919, XV, 214-9.
7. The 'Munro's' of Scotland. *SMCJ*, 1902, VII, 10-14.
8. Note. *SMCJ*, 1923, XVI, 329.
9. Wm. Douglas (Lochnagar Corrie. *SMCJ*, 1893, II, 246) wrote - 'On the afternoon of the 10th of March, J. H. Gibson and I took train to Kirriemuir, where we were met by Munro who drove us up the same evening to the charming little inn of Clova. Next day, in a blowy but fine morning, we shouldered our rucksacks and started to cross the Capel Mount to Glen Muick. We had barely reached the top of the pass when, alas! poor Munro received such a stern reminder of the near presence of his old enemy, rheumatism, that he had to turn back.' A lucky escape, perhaps, in view what transpired later that day! It is interesting that this affliction struck Munro so early: in 1893 he was only 37.
10. Foreword to *Munro's Tables*, e.g. 1974 edition. Scottish Mountaineering Trust. The comments in the foreword to the 1984 edition, while no doubt 'official' are somewhat less than 'wise.'
11. Foreword to *Munro's Tables* in *S.M.C. General Guide*, 1921.
12. *SMCJ*, 1891, I, endpapers.
13. Additions, Corrections and Remarks. *SMCJ*, 1893, II, 330-6. These lengthy and somewhat authoritarian *errata* to Volume I contain some *errata* of their own: the most spectacular is given on p.334, viz. 'the public meeting at which the Club was founded took place in November 1988!'
14. Two notebooks are lodged in the Club Library. Volume I covers the period 1889-1898 and is dated March 1st 1899. Volume II continues to 12/7/02 and is dated February 1936. The references to his visit to Skye occur on pp. 64-70 of Volume I. According to Robertson, his account of the trip is based on a letter 'written by me at the time to my cousin Miss K. C. McFarlan.' However, he adds the words 'no details recorded' to the brief description of his day round Coire Lagain, and to two other excursions on Skye. It is difficult to know what to make of these notes. Why would he need recorded details of an expedition undertaken less than a year before the date of the notebook? Perhaps he meant no details of views, since it was his frequent - and irritating - practice to record verbal panoramas throughout the notebooks. Perhaps not. In an effort to clear this matter up, I searched the *Sligachan Hotel Visitors' and Climbers' Books* (Deposits 198.2 & 3 in the National Library of Scotland) but without result.

15. e.g. Pinnacle Ridge, Sgurr nan Gillean, I, pp.64-7, Bhasteir Tooth, I, p.68 and Tower Ridge, II, pp.22-3.
16. *SMCJ*, 1902, VII, 10-11.
17. *SMCJ*, 1907, IX, frontispiece and pp.162-5.
18. Notebooks I, p.6.
19. *SMCJ*, 1923, XVI, 300.
20. *SMCJ*, 1973, XXX, 200.
21. *CCJ*, 1917, IX, 59-63.
22. Deposits 179.10 (Tables) and 198.13 (Card Index), National Library of Scotland.
23. *SMCJ*, 1909, X, 230.
24. *SMCJ*, 1903, VII, 282. Reporting the Sligachan Meet, Douglas wrote – 'We had an eloquent re-statement of what may be called the Munro Doctrine, viz., the strict, almost fanatical recognition of the exclusive rights of private property in land.'
25. Finishing the Three-thousanders in the Cairngorms. *CCJ*, 1925, XI, 147-53.
26. Obituary, see footnote 6.
27. e.g. Minutes of 13th Committee Meeting. Deposit 179.1, National Library of Scotland.
28. *SMCJ*, 1904, VIII, 74.
29. Obituary, see footnote 6.
30. Grid Reference NO 339 508.
31. *Kirriemuir Observer*, 4th April, 1919. This valuable Scottish historical record may be consulted at the British Newspaper Library, Colindale, London – after a visit to view the Elgin Marbles, perhaps.



RUNNING THE MUNROS

By Mark Elsegood

An account of a 66-day traverse of all 277 Scottish mountains over 3000 feet high in the spring of '88.

IT HAD to happen! As Martin Moran wrote in his book, *The Munros in Winter*, 'the time is long overdue for a fellrunning attempt in perhaps seventy-five days or even less.' What could be more logical. After all the Munros have been completed in most other ways and even the Himalayas have been 'run!' A lightweight summer running round seemed inevitable, to me anyway.

I was reading Moran's book at a time when I was restlessly searching for an extended outdoor challenge and this idea just fitted the bill. I've always had a love for the wild places, as well as being a fellrunner of sorts.

I was soon ensconced in the spare room during the long winter evenings reading maps and guidebooks, planning routes and devising schedules. Seventy-five days certainly seemed realistically possible and was enough of a challenge to excite my interest. I was further spiritually encouraged by Hamish's *Mountain Walk*, which seemed to encapsulate the magic of the mountains on every page.

My knowledge of Scotland's Munros at that time was limited to perhaps a dozen, so almost each mountain would be climbed for the first time, a new experience. But would it be enough to prevent each day becoming a monotonous flog, drowning the spirit and physical drive. This unknown personal reaction to the daily task of climbing 3-4 Munros came what may was my major concern in those early days. Physically I reckoned I could cope with the schedule I'd devised, hoping that the prime motivator – simply enjoying the hills – would endure.

The method I adopted was similar to Moran's, i.e. using vehicular transport to travel between the mountains. I also decided to use a tent for overnight stops unless I could beg a bed. The schedule was based on daily sorties from the car with a few 'Karrimor' style raids involving wild camps to cover the remote ranges such as Knoydart, Glen Affric, the Cairngorms and Ben Alder. Sporadic visits by friends and relatives (porters) were incorporated, each having their own preference as to areas to visit, so that my route around Scotland did not take a very logical course. But the optimum route was gladly sacrificed for company with kindred spirits with whom I could share the experience.

During the period before setting off I received much support but also some cautionary words and even disapproval. I was aware that some people condemned the trip because of the speed and intensity. Some say Munros should be savoured over a lifetime, doing a few each year to highlight the years ahead. I personally revel in the commitment and challenge and perhaps even enjoy being different, shocking the traditionalists. I still found time to stand and stare and will no doubt find plenty of other mountains to fill the years ahead. Whenever too much doubt crept into my mind I reread a few selected passages from Hamish Brown's books to rekindle the enthusiasm. No giving in to the buts....

The Munro trip itself started in the last week of May 1988 in the Arrochar Alps, accompanied by my wife and a few friends. In those early days I experienced some anxiety about what to expect but also felt a great sense of freedom and self-determination which was brought home to me when my wife and friends left for home and work. Still it wouldn't be too long before they'd be back in shifts to keep me company. In that first week I travelled from Arrochar to the far eastern Grampians, Glen Esk and Glen Doll, then via Glen Shee to the Cairngorms. I had only one overnight camp near the Corrour bothy; the rest of the time seemed to be spent running in and out of the mountains from the nearest road. Thankfully the climb wasn't excessive. That week gave me 33 Munros in 134 miles and 39,000 feet of ascent. A good start, helped by the agreeable early summer weather. The rounded humps of the Cairngorms proved to be good running terrain as long as the heather was avoided. Despite the Whit holidays I was surprised how beautifully lonely these hills could be but I was more surprised to find I needed at least an occasional glimpse of another human being to settle the uneasy experience of being almost completely alone.

Company soon arrived during the second week and together we completed the Cairngorms and then wandered down to Fort William via Creag Meagaidh and the Loch Laggan peaks. We cadged a bed with some distant acquaintances in the Fort and spent a scorching week or so roaming the Ben Alder region, the Grey Coires, the Aonachs and Ben Nevis amongst others. One particularly memorable jaunt was an evening walk round the Glenfinnan horseshoe. We sat on Sgurr nan Coireachan gazing out to Rhum and Skye in the dying rays of a still hot summer sun. A warming memory for those cold winter nights to come.

After yet another goodbye at Fort William I headed off alone again to Glen Shiel for a crack at the long ridges. I started however tidying up the outliers, Beinn Fhada, A'Ghlas Bheinn and Beinn Sgritheall. Fortune smiled as I sat on Beinn Sgritheall one evening looking to Knoydart, Rhum, Kintail and beyond. The best view of

the trip. Two more days saw the Shiel ridges complete, the averages boosted and myself roasted. I couldn't believe it could be so hot in Scotland. Hardly surprising since the West Coast was suffering a minor drought.

The next week was fairly hectic. I was a week ahead of schedule already and taking full advantage of the fair weather and my fitness. I squeezed in the Strathfarrar and Mullardoch groups, an anticlockwise circuit of the Far North, the Fannichs and Glen Affric before ending up in Glasgow a week later for four new tyres for the car! Glen Affric brought up the halfway mark which was celebrated in good style camped near Altbeithe. A friendly porter smuggled in a bottle of wine, sherry and a malt whisky amongst the camping paraphernalia for the celebrations. It was a *Balvenie* that kept us snug that night while a brief summer storm raged outside.

Whilst back in the south I raced up and down Ben Lomond which was nearly my undoing. Showing off to the crocodile of weekend walkers by descending at full speed I somersaulted on the rocks, badly bruising my knobbly bits. I managed to hobble down straight into the cooling waters of Loch Lomond. The knees stiffened for a few days but I was still able to keep up the pace with excursions around Crianlarich (the most disappointing village in Scotland!), Glen Creran, Glen Etive and Glencoe. The weather was beginning to revert back to a more normal pattern – low cloud and drizzle. The low visibility reduced the sense of exposure on my first trip along the Aonach Eagach. Just after clambering over the pinnacles I emerged jogging from the mist and stumbled on a shocked looking trio weighed down with ropes and other miscellaneous bits of climbing hardware.

Between forays into Glencoe and Glen Etive I was forever driving up to Fort William and scanning the loch to check on the progress of the Three Peaks Yacht Race as two of the competitors were to become pacers for a few days. They eventually turned up, tired from the usual bouts of rowing and joined me on a wet and windy marathon over the Mamores followed by the Black Mount before heading back to work commitments.

It was time to tidy up the Munros south of the Great Glen and plan for a finish in a couple of weeks' time. I put down temporary roots in Killin and set about bagging the Ben Lawers group and the Glen Lyon Munros before heading off to grab the remaining Grampian Munros. On the way to Blair Atholl I crossed the Garry Bridge just as somebody jumped off, thankfully attached to the parapet by a rope. And some people call me mad!

I began to realise that my original seventy-five day schedule could be reduced to possibly sixty-five days, resulting in a finish on Skye

on our wedding anniversary. To achieve this however a few ambitious runs would have to come off. The first was to squeeze in an extended circuit of the Ring of Tarf by adding Beinn a' Ghlo. This resulted in the longest day, thirty miles in all. It reminded me strongly of my home territory in the Dark Peak of Derbyshire above Glossop, all rolling peat bog and heather. A striking difference was the abundance of wildlife. I must have scared up dozens of grouse and ptarmigan, not to mention the stampeding herds of deer.

With this long day I said goodbye to the Grampians and the Southern and Central Highlands and crossed the Great Glen for the final time, aiming for the Western Highlands and in particular Ullapool. There I would set up a base where I could launch into the Fisherfield Munros, An Teallach and Seana Bhraigh.

My log for the day round of the Fisherfield Munros reads simply – very long, very lonely, very wet and very enjoyable! I spent the day cocooned in Gore-tex topped off with a souwester, plodding through claustrophobic mist and drenching rain without a glimpse of space or people. Sounds horrendous, but I enjoyed it all, well mostly, especially when back at Dundonnell.

The day tramping out to Seana Bhraigh was altogether different. I sat and listened to the silence and gazed out over a spectacular panorama. All the Sutherland peaks stood out clear and bold against an eerie yellow early morning horizon. By the time I got back to the Dirne Mor however I was back in the cagoule.

The revised plan now gambled on a single day for the Torridon trio, two days in Knoydart, two days in Strathcarron and finally three days on Skye. The only one that didn't go according to plan was, not surprisingly, Skye.

The last few days on the mainland were full of pleasurable memories. My fitness now allowed me to do almost anything with plenty of time to enjoy it. I'll never forget the elation I felt after completing the Torridon tryptych, albeit in foul conditions, or the glorious evening relaxing contentedly at Sourlies after being blasted all day on Garbh Chioch Mhor and Sgurr na Ciche, or the subsequent rough traverse of Knoydart culminating in the impressive Ladhar Bheinn. The isolation of Lurg Mhor or the surprisingly steep and craggy Bidean a'Choire Sheasgaich appearing out of the swirling mists. Only Skye left.

While all this was going on, the finishing party were gathering on Skye ready for the final push. Skye was a complete unknown to me and I had to admit to being a wee bit nervous – would my humble climbing experience enable me to scale the Inaccessible Pinnacle?

Blaven came first though, on a bright day which gave me my first breathtaking view of the Skye ridge. Every peak on the incredibly

rough serrated ridge stood out sharp against the sky, clear and readily identifiable. Good job too because the following day we struggled along the southern section of the ridge in thick mist. The route finding was so time-consuming we ran out of time just after the Inaccessible Pinnacle, which was climbed via the short side. I was knowingly informed that the longer, easier side would be too greasy!

Six Munros left and tomorrow would be day sixty-five and our wedding anniversary, but no good story is complete without a sting in the tail and this was to be no exception.

The gales which had been forecast for over a week finally arrived. Force 9, the worst winds in Scotland for thirty-five years and all that. No chance of venturing on to the ridge. The day was cancelled and we withdrew to the Talisker distillery to ease our intense frustration. The first day of inactivity caused by the weather and it had to be the 'last' day.

The following day was not much better but the weather had abated sufficiently for us to at least crawl along the ridge. Bannachdich, Ghreadaidh and Mhadaidh were bagged before lunch from Glenbrittle and the final trio, Bruach na Frithe, Am Basteir and Sgurr nan Gilleann were added in the afternoon from Sligachan. The summit celebrations were brief, handshakes all round, a wee dram and then back down before the joy was washed away. I hung back on the descent trying to collect my thoughts before the evening celebrations began.

Indeed it took quite a while to sort out my thoughts. I found the trip intensely challenging but overall much easier than I'd expected both physically and mentally. My worries about the boredom factor were unfounded. I woke up most, if not all days, keen to start, and I found I enjoyed it all thoroughly and not only in hindsight. There were the occasional dips in enthusiasm but these only served to uplift the rest of the trip.

What's next? I'd love to attempt something similar but family commitments will probably curtail that idea for a while. The Corbetts amongst others will keep me more than happy for a good while yet. The love of Scotland this trip generated will hopefully last a lifetime.

For the statisticians amongst you, I ran, jogged, walked and scrambled over 1054 miles, up 411,250 feet, over 277 Munros in 66 days. This in 442 active hours (leaving over 1142 hours sleeping, travelling or eating, what a waste!).

A LOVE STORY

By Jim Chalmers

WE WERE down into the glen again. A thin, chill wind was still behind the wetting drizzle, but at least it was on to our backs now. It blew grey, shredded clouds across ochre hillsides as the light began to fail on this October afternoon.

We cooied deep into protecting shells of high-tech fibres. Nearly every step was a squelch into soggy peat. Those that weren't were a skite on greasy rock. We were tired now, and thoughts were on warm food and sleeping bags.

Lower down, where the rough upper glen gave way to haugh land, we started to hear the deer. From both sides they came, the roars of rutting stags. We peered upwards into the mirk. There they were, a couple of herds on one side, and one on the other. From the noise, there must have been a few single stags, too, circling around hoping to entice some flighty lass out from under the watch of her current champion.

We were looking for a camp-site, and this seemed as fine a place as any. We crossed the burn and pitched the tent just on the edge of the haugh. The steep side of a moraine just above us protected our pitch from the wind, and we had a fine look-out if the deer decided to come down into the glen. We snuggled into down and lit the cooker.

A couple of hinds appeared, just the two of them on their own, probably a mother and daughter. They grazed slowly out on to the haughs, seemingly undisturbed by our presence. We weren't visible, being inside the tent, but they were down-wind and only a couple of hundred yards away. Maybe the aroma of soup disguised the stink of sweaty humans.

In the last of the light, dark shapes moved along the moraine just above us. The beasts passed, but as soon as they came down-wind, the lead hind stopped, turned and barked. They stayed still a minute or two, perhaps unsure where the danger lay, or whether it had anything to do with the funny green thing just below them. Then she barked again, and they were off, dark shapes gliding away into the enveloping night.

The sounds of lust from the hillsides died away and we slept.

Grey light again, and new sounds. We peered out into the early dawn. The weather had improved in the night, and blue patches hinted at a better day to come.

The deer didn't seem to have stirred yet, but the grouse had. From all around us came their '*Trrrrr chacka chacka chack*' as they told one another they'd survived another night. Then a stag belled, but whether in challenge or defiance we weren't sure. Others took up the refrain and the glen echoed to their roaring.

'It's like a convention of old wives at the zoo,' said Anne, who'd never heard the like before. Our neighbours, the two hinds from last night, were still out on the haugh. They grazed on peacefully, seemingly undisturbed by the uproar from all around. We lay and watched them as they drifted slowly away.

Breakfast was over and we were thinking about packing up and moving when he appeared. Down the glen he marched on the moraines just across the burn. He was magnificent; his size, his gleaming red coat and thick black mane, and not least his pibroch. On every bump he threw back his head, blew up his bag, dunted bass and treble from his drones and skirled out his lament of unrequited lust. He was magnificent all right, but incomplete. No proud spread of antlers decorated his head. He was hummel.

We lay spellbound watching his progress not fifty yards away. Then we saw someone else. From down the glen she came, hurrying, a lovely cream and pale brown damsel with brightly cocked ears. She couldn't see him, for a drumlin lay between, but she could certainly hear him, and smell him too, no doubt. He was upwind of her, and unaware of her presence.

He wandered into a gully and switched off. Maybe he'd been programmed that way, only to rant when on some eminence, however little. She looked puzzled, casting about when before she'd been homing in. He drifted up the gully and she came over the crest to see him just as they moved away out of our sight.

Later we saw them again, a big black and red hummel stag with a single cream and brown hind. It's probably just fanciful imagination, but there seemed to be a definite smirk of satisfaction on her face, and his chants were more of a reel than a lament.

DREAMTIME

By Donald M. Orr

THE ALARM cut through the blackness with the jagged keenness of broken glass. Immediately awake, sprung from warmth to cold, from dream to reality, he knew precisely where he was and stretched to switch off the alarm, checking its luminous 4.05 against his watch. His wife moaned and rolled over, pulling the quilt closer in an unconscious gesture of disgust and rejection. He slipped back into the warmth, trying to ease the tensions that had built up over the week. The hopes, plans and fears had boiled over, spoiling his night's rest.

Sliding out from under the covers he went through to the spare room where his gear was laid out; bag packed, rope coiled, axes looped and strapped. He dressed quickly and quietly. The immediate internal pressures faded as he put on the well-worn clothes, recognising the fact that their reassurance was formed over many seasons of use. The walk-ins, crags, successes, scrapes and summits that had made up his mountain days.

Dressed in all but boots he padded through to the kitchen and sat in front of the electric fire to sip coffee and stare blankly at the bars now beginning to glow a dull red. Waves of tiredness began to lap inside his head. The disturbed sleep and broken dreams demanded more time to mend. He bent and laced up his boots. Standing, he worked his toes inside the pairs of thick socks and checked the time — 4.30. Amy was asleep — he slipped out quietly into the winter darkness.

Walking into the town centre he became aware of the contrast between the turmoil he felt inside and the silence of the empty streets. The occasional single car passed, muffled, as if driving on carpet.

The air smelt and felt good while he stood waiting the ten minutes before the car arrived. A slow greyness was creeping into the sky, echoing that of the frosted streets. The cold stillness numbed the fears and distilled the dreams to actuality. As the hour chimed on the town hall clock he turned and looked down the street. He could just make out the roof of the flat, flanked by the big ash tree, as the light tinged with rose. The last vague uneasiness was nudged aside by the sound of Sandy's car coming up the hill.

He surfaced from a deep and image-ridden sleep on the back seat. Slumped in a corner, under his down jacket that spread over him like a blue, ripstop duvet. The downhill lurch and sharp right hand bend had suggested Crianlarich and the jarring stop and slow left turn confirmed his guesswork. He lay awake, keeping his eyes closed, listening

to the whine of the engine as it pulled up the slope before the long downhill stretch that, with a few twists and turns, would take them to Tyndrum and what was loosely described as breakfast. Bob, sitting with Sandy in the front, was chatting about ridges and gullies, trying to decide on conditions and the venue for the day's excursion. He opened his eyes slowly and looked at Innes who was also waking up on the other side of the back seat. He noted that his eyes still held the daze of last night's disco, while his knitted expression was the giveaway of the hang over that probably thundered through his temples.

Much younger than the other three, it was only the strength of Innes' youth that allowed the burning of candles at both ends. He liked climbing with the young man, recognising many aspects of his own character and attitudes of some ten years past. He cleared his throat. 'What time did you get to bed?' Innes frowned and stared across at his partner. 'This is it.' He turned away and smiled as Innes reacted aggressively to the cries of disbelief and warning that came in waves from the front seat. Innes was still letting them know they were all a bunch of ageing has-beens as Sandy drove into the car park outside the Tyndrum general store.

He stayed in the car under his down jacket not wishing to disturb the warmth that crept around him. Its reassurance and softness was a comfort against the cold that he knew he would experience later. A cold so numbing it could affect your gums and leave you with toothache for hours. Windchill that forced you into wool and windproof fabrics and that through exertion became a steam bath, soaking the clothing that offered protection. Worse occurred if you stopped moving, as the cooling effect was immediate and a warm, damp T-shirt became an icy rag in seconds. He lay cosily in his corner of the car munching cheese and regarding the iron grey clouds that threatened to turn the day into a soggy farce.

He was brushing crumbs of cheese from his moustache when Innes crashed back into the car in a blast of cold, fresh air with his breakfast. Just what a large Swiss roll covered in chocolate and nuts would do for the youth's stomach he did not know, but he felt sure that the packet of King's 'Oddfellows' would certainly finish it. 'Want one faither?' asked the child of the neon night. He grunted and popped one of the sweets into his mouth. Its peculiar flavour unleashed memories of parks and swings, and primary school images that had been locked away by a long dead tastebud. Sandy and Bob, packets of gammon sandwiches in their hands, came bubbling back to the car, having finally struck on Z Gully Buttress as the route of the day. He agreed with them quietly from the rear of the car, as it wound up the hill towards Bridge of Orchy. It was too early in the season for gullies to be in condition.

'That's pathetic!,' broke in Bob looking up from a newspaper sharply. 'Pure bloody sensationalism.' He took the paper from him as Innes leaned over and they scanned the headlines together.

'Climber killed in Glencoe Death Plunge!' True to form, the ten lines under the photograph of a snow plastered wall, that could have been anywhere, carried no details of how or why the accident had happened, only that another life had been 'senselessly swept away.' He hoped that Amy would not see it when she went for the Sunday papers.

'Must have been English,' said Innes. 'They come up for a week or ten days over the holiday and feel that if they don't grab a route a day, no matter what conditions are like, it's not been worth the trip.' They all agreed and were about to launch another Celtic attack on the Saxons when a sports car with skis strapped to the roof rack overtook them in a spray of slush that rattled the bodywork and smothered the windscreen, as it sped away on the long straight section towards the foot of the Black Mount. The compulsory cursing eased and Sandy started discussing a future ski trip with Bob. Leaning back he glanced at Innes who shook his head and offered him another pink confection. He declined, more images of long lost, first loves in pig-tails were not what he needed at this time of the morning, and he lapsed back into the view of Loch Tulla beneath him.

The clouds had lightened as the day struggled through dawn but the loch still resembled the dull sheen of gunmetal. He half listened to their ski plans and thought of the smooth ascents and swift, down hill runs on Meall a' Bhuiridh. His week-ends were too few and time too short for skiing. Some deeper feeling that he had never wished to examine very closely drew him continually to climbing, winter and summer. The question of 'Why climb?' invariably sprang from non-climbing friends and usually developed into a pseudo-intellectual discourse far removed from the physicality of the mountain reality. Long ago he had carefully avoided trying to answer them. He climbed because he liked it, continued to be fascinated by its problems and, on a totally private level, because he loved all of the wide variety of smells that he met within the mountain environment. The fact that Freud would probably have had a picnic with his mind, he studiously ignored.

As the car accelerated over the western edge of Rannoch Moor he thought more of the business in hand and the route that Sandy had suggested. A buttress route made perfect sense with a high freezing level, low wet cloud and the usual early season conditions. When they came above Kinghouse the view of Glencoe added to his gathering enthusiasm. The Buachaille textured the clearing air, its ribs and ridges dark against the snow, while its whole whitened mass cast the darkened recesses of the glen even further back in an optical illusion of space and depth.

While Sandy snaked the car through the long defile of the Coe he glanced up at Coire an Lochain, where the north faces loomed blue white through the clouds that were being shredded on the southern ridge of the valley, to reveal small patches of blue sky. It could happen, he mused, you do get clear days in the winter sometimes. Brightening with the weather he dug out the guidebook and read over the details of the proposed route. He had climbed Z Gully last winter with Innes and remembered the pronounced horizontal stratifications that created the central column of the climb that held the left skyline. His mind turned over any possible technical problem and he turned abruptly to Innes, 'Have you any Leepers with you?'

'Of course,' the youth smiled back, knowing exactly the way the older man would be thinking by now.

He turned again, 'Large ones?'

'Also of course.'

He smiled at the young man and went back to the guidebook.

'Anyone want to stop for anything?' said Sandy. He looked up to find that they were coming in to Fort William. No one did, and he sat back watching the town slide past his window. He loved Fort William as Amy hated it. To her it was always a crowded, noisy little town, usually wet and depressing, that signalled the end of otherwise glorious mountain holidays. In his heart and soul the small West Highland town dominated childhood memories of long summers spent with relations in Kinlochleven. Travelling up each Saturday with his aunt and cousins to shop, go to the cinema, and sit in a real cafe with his cousin Catriona, pretending to be real teenagers while Aunt Janet went off on one more trip up the narrow main street. He remembered the smell of steam trains and the noise and energy that came from the old red sandstone station in the centre of the town where steam and salt winds mingled. All gone, as were his relations, distant as the shrill scream of steam through Duror of Appin or the running glitter in the wake of ferries at Ballachulish.

The tyres scrunched on the gravel at the edge of the layby. Clouds were parting and large areas of blue sky were showing as they stretched themselves and started unloading bags and boots from the car. Within moments doors slammed and Sandy and Bob headed down the road to the bridge. He stood waiting for Innes to organise himself and checked again his hip pocket to make sure of the safely stowed packet of Pan Drops – the only thing he had ever found that eased repetitive, long walk-ins. He moved slowly down the road, Innes clumping after him in rigid boots after a few moments. He paused at the steps of the bridge over the swollen river that overflowed the boulder banks on the other side to make final adjustments to a shoulder strap.

He stared hard at Innes, 'How do you feel youth?,' he asked.

'Great. Magic. King of the Mountain!'

'King of the Disco, more like!'

He paused and looked across the river and up the rocky path to where Bob and Sandy were already bumbling along in some haste. He stared at his boots, slowly raising his head as he spoke, 'How would you like the first lead?' Innes looked at him grasping his meaning and giggled as he turned to see how far ahead the other couple had gone.

'Right Dad, you're on!'

They turned and clattered up the steps of the metal bridge and down to the path that would lead them to the mountain.

He paused only once on the first part of the walk-in, tying a great strip of faded, black, cotton fabric round his forehead to stop himself being blinded by his own sweat. He had used the rag for years, taken it to the Alps, dressed a bad laceration on his leg with it when a lump of scree bounced off his exposed calf, wrapped a hand in it one winter trip when he had lost a glove. It was much more than a simple part of his kit like his breeches or fibrepile jacket. The black rag had been everywhere with him over the years and had accrued an almost talismanic status that bordered on the mystic. 'Hoisting the black flag already. It must be getting serious,' was Innes' only comment as they gasped for air on their swift ascent. They had broken the other two early on and after an initial resurgence by the followers he and Innes had managed to maintain a slowly increasing lead. By the time they were contouring round the lochan that marked the halfway stage of the walk-in, they were comfortably in front. They drew breath deeply on this flat section, priming themselves for the next uphill push.

'Cute. Real cute,' said Innes looking across at him.

'Aye, well. I don't know where you get the energy from boy.'

'Snap!' replied the youth.

Rounding the bend in the path that led into the glen they met the first areas of snow. Sugary, wet patches that within a hundred yards had become a uniform whiteness and in another hundred had become knee deep. They were thankful that the through traffic had broken an easy trail in the deepening snow. In less than an hour they arrived at 'The Lodge.'

Loosely described as a building, the Lodge, as it was known throughout the climbing fraternity, had come into existence as a sheep fank at some point in the last century. On innumerable, lazy, summer evenings, and a few hectic, winter ones, various groups and individuals had built a wall here, thickened a support there and

gradually created a very substantial dry stone system of walls and lintels. Stolen fence posts, liberated larch poles, and metal spars from a wartime plane crash supported a roof structure of chicken wire and branches covered with a thick heather thatch and sections of old, rusted, corrugated metal sheeting which completed the cladding of the lodge. It was draughty and damp, but in a bivy bag a pleasant enough night could be spent within the walls. The site never improved as such but similarly there was never an occasion when major renovations were required. The Lodge, as all good lodges should, commanded a large knoll above the confluence of two streams that thundered down the valley in a fine string of cascades. In summer they were a joy to walk beside, or scramble up if the notion took one, while in winter they often provided ice bouldering on bad weather days.

Above the bothy a vast mountain coire opened out in a series of ridges and gullies, buttresses and arêtes that held higher subsidiary coires within their retaining walls. A massive collection of walls, slabs, grooves and chimneys rose from a mountain base buried in centuries of scree.

Z Gully was in the most easterly of the recessed, minor coires. A deep indent in its central, back wall rose steeply from a fan of snow to a fault line, where a leftward traverse followed by a tricky diagonal ramp marked the crux of the climb. This led to a further leftward traverse, to regain the vertical gully that soon relented, and gave easy access to the main summit ridge. Flanking this faulted feature, that gave the route its name, was a broad, rounded buttress scored horizontally by a combination of the same faultline and eroded, weaker rock strata. Its crux was much lower down in the narrow, friable bandings of the central column, but because of its position of jutting dominance within the high coire it took the brunt of winds that scoured the upper basin throughout the winter months.

He raised his head again to check the distance from the base of the climb and groaned inwardly at the apparent lack of gain. For some time now they had leap-frogged each other every fifty yards or so as they broke a trail through the steepening, deepening unconsolidated snow. Eventually, due to the angle of the slope, the fresh snow had sloughed off and their crampons bit into old névé, which led them to the base of the buttress. Under a small overhang a wave of snow had been sculpted into a parapet by the wind. Into this glacial *sous terrain* they collapsed, leaning back on their sacs, sucking down the chilled air past gums now beginning a slow, dull ache that could end a day in steady throbbing pain if one were not careful. The youth recovered first and started into his sac after the hardware that the climb required. He peered over the edge of the snow wall.

'They're moving away from the lodge now.'

'They must have waited for a while. Probably ate.'

'Probably waited till we'd finished breaking that bloody trail!'

'Tut, tut. No way to speak of your elders.' He grinned up at Innes.

'Tuts, nuts! Come on Dad, get your truss on and let's get motoring!'

They geared up but he insisted that they ate before starting.

He sat smiling at the imagery that the student employed and wondered, not for the first time, at their companionship and its combination of youth and maturity. He had refused to slow down over the years, but time took its toll furtively in little secret ways. Innes could now climb well beyond the standards he fought to maintain and he often wondered what it was that held them together. They had never let each other down and had certainly tucked away the routes over the years. There had been spectacular failures, quiet classics and epic ropework in all sorts of weather. Throughout it all he had always treated the youth as an equal, a partner in all the mountaineering decisions and plans. He acknowledged the restlessness in the young man and recognised it as a product of his analytical strength and not a feature of a composite weakness.

Despite his erratic lifestyle Innes' priorities remained fixed around climbing, and a lengthy trip to the delicatessen was revealed in his sandwich fillings.

He stood and looked over the snow parapet. Sandy and Bob were about halfway up the snow fan following the route they had forged through the soft stuff. He turned to Innes, 'Right youth! Time to strut your funky stuff!'

This was delivered in his best Detroit manner, with a movement of the hips and lower leg that he had acquired from The Four Tops (or perhaps it had been the Isley Brothers), but it was lost on Innes for whom Tamla Motown was History.

With a mocking gesture of feigned shock and muttering sadly about having to climb with vulgar old men, the young man led off on the start of the climb, leaving him laughing quietly on the belay and pondering again on the elements that made them a team.

Innes' initial progress went unseen as the cave was as sound a belay stance as one could have found anywhere, and fairly soon the sound of the youth's hammer driving in a peg drifted down to him. The metallic pinging rose through the scale to a reassuringly high pitch. As Innes was fixing the runner Bob and Sandy crawled into the low cave. Grunted acknowledgements broke the tense silence but he was not in the mood for any ill feeling and lay back on the belay ropes asking quietly about their walk-in and chatting idly about equipment. The conversation was not reciprocated, pettily he

thought, and an uneasy silence took over for a brief while until Innes came on to a belay position and called him up. He left saying simply that he would see them later and received a sullen but positive response. Out at the base of the buttress the wind whipped ice particles against his face while the occasional uprush of cold air filled his nose and mouth with a fine ice dust that made him gasp for breath. Far above, a clear sky promised fine views from the summit ridge, where a lone crow silhouetted itself against the blue as a ragged black shape.

Pulling over the overhanging start revealed a fairly straightforward route progressing upwards in a series of slabby steps to where he could just make out Innes' helmet, red against the white. He warmed to the task in front of him as he tackled the first slabs, picking delicately at the ice-sheathed rock, kicking in the front points of his crampons firmly. Coming up to the first runner he saw it was a large Leeper, its Z-shaped cross section yawning at him from the horizontal crack. Tapping it sideways and back slowly released it from the grip of the rock, and he placed it on the bandolier across his chest that carried spare gear and the runners he would collect. The next section was coated in a much thicker layer of ice that flooded from a runnel higher on the buttress. Here the axe placements were solid and he could fairly romp up the wall to a small ledge where Innes had placed an ice screw before the final steep section of the pitch. The wind was now far below them and they talked excitedly of the route and conditions as he undid the tubular screw, clipped it in with the rest, and front pointed his way up to Innes on the belay stance.

As they exchanged gear the sun burst through the last of the thin cloud cover to the east and flooded the far side of the coire in dazzling whiteness. He took off his helmet to remove the black scarf from underneath because their pace no longer generated great heat, and clumsily tried to untie the knot with his mittened hands. He pulled at the lump with his teeth. It gave quickly but the lack of feeling in the thick gloves delayed his reaction and the black rag flew out from the buttress, flapping down to the coire floor like a crow against the whiteness.

Innes looked at him, raising his eyebrows. 'We could pick it up on the way back down.'

He stared at the small black speck still floating above the snow. 'We'll see,' he replied.

He replaced his helmet and turned to the pitch above him. The rock continued to be cut horizontally by varying widths of cracklines, but the main feature of the pitch was an ice runnel that fell directly from an ice bulge on the wall some eighty feet above his head. After that the wall canted back slightly, more like the initial section of the route.

He climbed quite easily up to the base of the runnel, picked at the thick ice within the broad crack and inserted an ice screw. Carefully he advanced up the buttress, one set of crampons and one axe getting good purchase on the column of ice, the others picking delicately at placements on the wall. His upward movement was regular and unhurried, concentrating entirely on the next sequence of moves to gain the next few feet.

Below, Innes watched the smooth progress of the older man up this key pitch; with satisfaction he saw him climb stylishly to pause below the prow of ice that was the runnel's source.

The ice crust projected much more than it appeared from the belay ledge. He attempted to work out the technical problems as he fixed a second ice screw below the gleaming boss of ice. Certainly both axes and crampons would now bite into solid ice instead of half of him scarting about on verglased rock. As he paused, contemplating the problem, the sun inched higher over the ridge, bathing him in its comforting warmth.

Using the heavier weight of his hammer he achieved a solid placement high up on his left. With the adze in his right hand he fashioned a sloping hold for his right foot, calculating that on pulling up his left front points could be driven directly into the ice of the bulge. Striking the pick of his adze axe to the right of and above his head, he raised his right foot to the prepared hold and tested his weight on the points of contact above. Gently he came back down, aware of the fact that the next few moves of the climb were crucial. He emptied his mind quickly of the dross of little thoughts that threatened to dislodge his attention. Replacing the right axe he stood up, smoothly kicking his left boot into the ice. Quickly loosening the adze-headed axe he raised it to the level of the hammer, placed it neatly, and pulled. The side points of his right crampon scraped across the ice bulge and shot off into space as he held himself on his axes. Raising his boot higher he drove the inside edge down hard on the ice. Splinters flew out into the void but four of the points held. He pulled on both axes, pressed directly on the boot edge and raised his left leg again, forcing it quickly into the ice. Looking up he saw a small flake of rock within reach and hooked the pick of the hammer behind it. He paused, tugged on the flake to test it, released his other axe and pulled up past the ice to a small rock ledge.

Below, Innes watched carefully, letting out his breath in a long, low hiss as he saw his partner pull safely over the bulge, recognising only at that moment how caught up he had been in the older man's climbing.

At the top of the overhanging ice the wall relented slightly and he could make out a belay site in a rock recess floored with a shelf of

ice. Sweat trickled through his hair, annoying him, making him aware of the loss of his cloth amulet. Rubbing his forehead with the back of his hand he started gently picking his way towards the stance.

The recess proved to be much shallower than it had appeared from below and the shelf of ice protruded considerably without any real support, but the clean, narrow crack at the back would take protection and for him that decided the issue. Holstering his adze he stepped into the corner, his fingers curling round the corner crack. The ledge creaked under his weight causing a small wave of panic to lap inside his head. Pulling the pegs forward from the rack of gear at his waist he quickly selected the appropriate size and pressed in into the gap. He tapped it with his hammer to fix it in position then moved to get more power into the blow.

The ice shelf split in front of his feet and sent him clattering down the frozen rocks. He dug desperately with the pick of his hammer trying to force it through the ice, hoping it would catch on some flake or wrinkle in the rock. His brain was calm and worked effectively until his feet hit the top of the ice bulge causing his body to cartwheel out into space. His mind went silent. Only a quiet hiss like white noise echoed inside his head.

Forewarned by the slack rope and the scraping noise from above Innes watched first the ice slab and then his partner hit the bulge and shoot out away from the wall. Tugging the rope tightly through his Sticht plate he braced himself for the impact as an ice screw pulled above his head and his friend arced past him. Innes, tight lipped and wide eyed watched him falling, floating arms outspread, a dark rag of humanity against the whiteness.

Perhaps it was the length of the fall creating a direct downward pressure on the ice screw at the base of the runnel, or simply stronger ice; a better placement that made the difference, but somehow the runner held.

As Innes was jerked upwards he started screaming, roaring below to Sandy and Bob for help, raging after the man who had flown past him. Straining on the already taut rope to ease the feeling of helplessness he gulped at the air, trying to calm himself from the howling inside his head centred on the after image that refused to leave his sight.

Throughout the fall he had been silent. He had not called out or tried to warn Innes. As the youth had frantically tried to shorten the rope he had looked up as his partner passed him and their eyes met. The picture of the older man's face looking across the gap, the half smile still playing at the corner of his mouth and the quizzical edge to his eye that at once beckoned and questioned, was already haunting him. Pinned against the wall by his partner's weight he

shouted hard and long for his friend, their colleagues and himself, trying to rid himself of the thought that those passing eyes had provoked.

The weight was suddenly removed from the rope and with that release of pressure he too quietened, became composed and put his years of mountain experience into practice.

Bob had started the first pitch when the fall took place, and moved quickly across to where he was dangling. Driving in several pegs he rigged up an abseil rope, gently attached the unconscious figure to his back and, freeing the top rope, slowly lowered both of them down to Sandy. All this had taken some considerable time, and from the noise above Sandy and Bob had presumed that Innes too had been injured. It was only when they started lowering down to the snow cave that Innes fell silent and it dawned on them that he could well be safe enough. As Bob dealt with the immediate first aid problems Sandy managed, after much roaring, to communicate with Innes. The youth double checked his belay and set up an abseil for himself, delicately lowering off on his figure-of-eight descender. Aware of an awful mingling of desires within him to know and not know what had happened, he landed near the base of the buttress as Sandy was coiling up their abseil rope and stowing away the climbing gear in his sac.

'What happened?'

'I don't know. He was going great. A really good lead over a big bulge of ice. He was out of sight when he came off.'

Innes shook his head. To Sandy it appeared as a gesture of shock and disbelief but internally the youth was still trying to dislodge his partner's stare from his memory. Cramponing over the steep névé at the base of the buttress they entered the low snow cave to find that Bob had finished what first aid work could be done. Innes stared at the still unconscious figure. He looked asleep, dreaming. The features were relaxed, calm and bloody.

'How bad is he?' asked the boy.

'Definite broken left leg. There's a lot of blood coming out of his nose and left ear, I don't know, could be a fractured skull, but his helmet's intact. I can't tell about his insides but those seem to be the major problems. A lot of cuts that need stitches.'

'A stretcher job?'

'Definitely.' Bob paused looking hard at Innes, then continued, 'Sandy, you know all the facts, do you want to run down and raise the rescue team?'

'Right. I'll leave my sac here okay? Be as quick as I can. See you later!'

'Cheers Sandy.'

Innes watched the man start to move down the steep steps in the snow. Without the weight of his rucsac he seemed to move effortlessly along the trail that they had forged earlier. He turned to help Bob lift their injured friend gently on to a pile of ropes and jackets that would insulate him from the snow.

Sometime later he was forced into consciousness by the pain in his left leg throbbing savagely. He felt very calm, accepting the fact that he would have to be stretchered off the mountain. After being involved in quite a few rescues over the years he rationalised that it was simply his turn to be carried out and resigned himself to the embarrassment. He looked up at Innes who anxiously asked him if he was okay. He nodded, thinking that now he had the missing piece to the puzzle that their partnership suggested. They had never discussed the end, whether calamity, death or disablement. He saw the youth shocked at the blood on the snow, at the battering he had sustained, whereas Sandy and Bob had seen it before and operated automatically on a first aid/rescue basis. He himself, through age or greater experience, had acknowledged that one day by accident, fault or design this situation might arise. He looked quietly at Innes knowing how much the youth cared for him and how hard it was for the boy to return his gaze, understanding how Innes could not contemplate the realm of myth, the dreamtime; he was too full of vitality and lust for life.

Innes turned to Bob, 'That's them coming now!' and ducked out of the snow hole. Bob bent over him and examined his eyes and ears, 'How's your head?'

'Fine, not bad. I feel okay inside. I think it's just the leg really.'

'You're a lucky bugger mate!'

'I won't be when my wife finds out!'

They were still laughing quietly at the nature of his concern when the rescue team arrived at the cave.

Sandy telephoned him in the afternoon a week on Wednesday after the fall, to see how he was, wondering if he felt like going out for a drink. Standing in the hall he ran his fingers lightly over the stubble and stitches in his chin and replied that he thought he could manage to hobble down to Selkirk's Bar.

'I'll come and pick you up.'

'No. It's okay. I've been around the house for days. I could do with some fresh air and exercise.'

'On crutches?'

'It's not far from the flat.'

'As you wish! See you at eight thirty!'

He put down the 'phone and re-arranged his crutches. As he travelled through to the living room, and the Marx Brothers film he was pretending to enjoy, he wondered if the whole team would be there.

He moved towards the bar through the drizzle that seemed to catch the street lights and create a shimmer, an aura in the air itself. Standing at the kerbside waiting for the traffic to pass in a hiss of wetness, he looked at Selkirk's through the bare, dripping lime trees that clustered around a redundant Victorian fountain. Beads of rain on the branches caught and refracted the glow from the neon pub sign, making spots of bouncing, wavering light in the darkness.

Crossing the road he drew in lungfuls of the soft, damp air, drinking in its colour and becoming aware of beads of moisture on his moustache. Pushing open the swing door he limped into the brightness of the lounge bar. Sandy and Bob waved from a corner table and replied negatively to his raised eyebrows and finger pointing at their glasses. He paused at the counter to order a pint of Export, aware of something niggling his memory. He looked round the bar but there were no other faces he recognised in the mid-week crowd. He moved carefully over to the table, a vague notion like a premonition creeping into his mind as he sat down gently on his right side at the small table.

'Innes 'phoned saying that he wouldn't be,' said Sandy, 'said he was going over to work on the climbing wall at the Kelvin Hall.'

He picked up his beer and smiled impassively at his two friends.

ON FORGETTING MY CAMERA

Damn it! ... And yet
Joy's heart is fleeting life,
The inner self, transition.
The frozen moment is alchemy
Begging at Nature's skirts,
Boggling at her infinities.

Betwixt me and the June sun
Chuckling gleaming waters
From high snow melt
Poured wantonly over tiny ledges
Flaunting ropes and sprays of diamonds,
Then slid sibilantly
Down the dipping bed-rock
Bright and joyful
To the arms of gravity.

No intervening halides,
Nitrates, dyes, oxides
Or theft of Nature's art
Marred her organic union
With senses and mind.
Snows, clouds, trees, rocks, breezes,
An eagle soaring for our delectation
Heat-sore deer far below
Cooling in snow-beds,
The mountains near,
The mountains distant
Seen as much in fancy
As in focussed fact:
These were actualities
In fleeting measureless moments.

Left to themselves my senses dilated
At the impact of all this precious
Profuse ephemera.

And yet ...damn it!

Tom Rix

TROIS AVANT-DERNIÈRES PENSÉES (Three Next-to-Last Thoughts)

By Kevin Sutton

FORTY kilometres south of Paris we paid our money and left the auto-route of the sun to plunge into the sweet Forêts de Fontainebleau. I had come down with a virus from the Alps. The Col d'Influenza. On the way I read Arthaud's 1982 Guide-Bleau instead of the Michelin, saluting the 'grimpeurs specialistes,' praising the marvellous therapeutic properties attributed to the boulders of Bleau, their Paleolithic playfulness amid the arboreal splendours of the glorial forest. Forgetting the Palace, Arthaud recommends hanging at Bleau for sufferers of sciatica and lumbago; also recommends strengthening one's grip on things by squeezing tennis balls. There was no reference to Col d'Influenza, but the plethora of maps, diagrams and circuits suggested its use as a materia-medica of holistic maso-mystic self-help.

A headache buzzed round the base of my brain, frantic to swarm. The memory of many pills, many paracodaspirin cocktails popped the day before in order to capture the swarm. My face smarted as if by a blow from a pillow and there was a feather stuck in my throat.

Reaching for a carton of Jus d'Orange I first became aware that I was waking up in the Forêts de Fontainebleau. Our camp was in the Massif des Trois Pignons. A canopy of birch trees showered the tent with dry leaves and a small wind crept under the groundsheet. It began to rain heavily, instantly, and I forgot everything else until the rain stopped an hour later.

I was led to the nearest bed of boulders at La Roche Aux Sabots, to see if there were any 'specialistes.' There were none. I circumambulated the boulders, getting to 'grimps' with their unmistakable Bleau-ness. After some time I became conscious of following a cryptic yellow cypher of numbers and embryonic sexual symbols ♂ ♀, neatly painted on the boulders. I moved from 7 through to 31, understanding the 'point-directif.' After 31 mixed male and female roles I reached the androgynous 'Arrivée' (Finish) ♀ not discovering the 'Depart' (Start) until much later, on my way out for lunch. The forest continued dripping long after the rain had passed. Slugs slithered up extreme Roche Aux Sabots. Buried as it was in a dark, mature corner of the forest meant that it needed longer to dry off, just as Arthaud tells us. Many of the boulders exhibited a natural polish, or glaze – platelets of lactescent marble – which provided the 'grimpeur' with exquisite finger-pinchers. Arthaud says: 'Il est composé de blocs plutôt cubique...' rather cubically.

I formed a resolution not to take any more oral painkillers; or did I simply feel sufficiently anaesthetised by the amount of adrenaline involved in these little Picassos? The question only arose after a good session of organic, skull-cracking sneezes, otherwise I found that first foray into the 'forêt' a light-headed affair.

After lunch we penetrated further into the Trois Pignons; to the Diplodocus and its accompanying prehistoric specimens. The forest fell back from a scatter of saurian sandstone stools, dropped in warm sand and sunlight around the parent body. The Diplodocus was a large boulder to the Trois Pignons – 25m long and 10m high – shaped somewhat like a dinosaur.

I went swiftly over the Yellow Circuit, familiar with the gender, playing 'bloc-à-bloc' – known to most primary children as the game of 'pirates.' By following the 'point-directif' I found it feasible to step and jump, swing and slide from one boulder to another without ever touching the sandy floor. The sand was often a soft landing but I was not entirely happy about that because it glued up my PA's as I paddled across to the next move. It was late in the day before I happened upon some true 'Bleausards' and observed the little mats they each carried from boulder to boulder in order to wipe the sand from their feet. Also, for the fingers, they were each adorned with 'Pof' pouches containing small amounts of an eco-safe rosin.

Arthaud, I think, hints that the practice of 'bloc-à-bloc' is no longer encouraged, for reasons I was not quite sure about; obscure, discreet reasons. So, flushed with feverish strength I swung up into the Orange Circuit and proceeded to pull myself along without style or grace. Neill, that child of nature, swung along beside me. Helen found it all positively pectoral and bi-ceptual and refused to participate. The circuit was first made by five Mademoiselles; Mlle Sylvie Richard et al., and I am sure none of them were as ugly as I was. A rangatang fever rushed me up La Reta du Gibbon, allowing me one brief moment in the Blue air of the 'grimpeur confirme.' Weak and shivering in the icy winds from Col d'Influenza I fell off a long-arm traverse, bouncing my butt off a small, sharp-edged rock. Hoist by my own petard, bloated with boulders, I had to decline the last one of the day, number 23, a calculated pull-up job.

We drove over to Milly La Forêt for refreshments, stopping at a café opposite Rue Jean Cocteau. Over a glass of beer I mused upon that man's place in the heart of Milly. Was it not he who made the film: '*The Discreet Charm of the Bleausard*'? No, that was Bunuel. Cocteau was Orphée. And where was Eric Satie? He was a man who did things by three: Trois Gymnopodes, Trois Gnossiennes, Trois Morceaux; why not Trois Pignons? - after all, they too are in the minimalist mode.

Later, I returned alone to the Massif des Trois Pignons; fever having consumed all the combustible material I had on me I sought some metaphysical recreation with the stones. I walked the Sables du Cul de Chien which took me to an open and deserted stretch of sand, presumably where dogs end, or crap, or bite. Across an hectare of yellow sand sifted by the westerly breezes blowing up behind me, fringed with birch and Caledonian pine, stood an oasis of boulders in the act of Saharadrama. Behind them the three little hills of the Trois Pignons prided themselves in a crepuscular ray of late afternoon sunlight leaning through a long slash in the cloud. After the insectivorous tropics of La Roche Aux Sabots, the monkeys at Diplodocus, and the heart of Milly, I would not have been surprised by a blue fountain.

Instead I found a Bilboquet, alone in the sand. Why not Trois Bilboquets? Because Bilboquet delighted in the vanity of solitude, was sculptured in sandstone as a symbol of the particular (sand), made into the general (Bilboquet). Grimpeurs, Bleausards, and the rest of us are requested to respect the general's immunity and not surmount, traverse, or otherwise handle that ancient of sand.

While engaged by the Bilboquet form I failed to notice the change in the sky and for that dalliance I was swiftly punished by a shower of ballistic raindrops. I went for the oasis and took shelter under the overhanging fungal lobe of the Toit du Cul de Chien. Arthaud calls the roof a modern problem, VI b/c ... 'parfois physique.' It made me weak to look at it. It made me cough. After the short, sharp shower was over I came out from under the 'Toit,' and returned obliquely by '91:1' (a spot height given as the title of a boulder-cluster). Dandering along devoured by my virus I was confronted by the spectacle of two harvest moons silently (we were not in a 'Zone of Silence') rising and falling rhythmically atop a flat boulder.

That night my dreams were invaded. I dreamed I was moving over a large boulder somewhere in the moonlit forest. The fingers of one hand tweaked on a small lip somewhere over my head whilst my other hand explored a bulge parallel with the lip. My back was bent, thrusting my groin into the dip below the bulge. I was fully extended when I snapped and fell out into space. I woke up barking at the dawn. The aviators of Bleau were twittering in the treetops and I could hear some sotto-voce somewhere humming a Solfeggio over and over until I identified the origin of the minimalist canon in my own head.

The second day we crossed the Big Sand in the Vallée Close and searched for the Depart of the Roche Aux Gros Sablons. Sunlight flickered on the floor of the forest whenever the thin wind tossed the canopy. I was traversing a doughnut-shaped boulder when the sound

of urgent horses' hooves galloping close by shook me off the doughnut and landed me on a large stone carving of Ganesh, the Hindu elephant god, bathing in a pool. My arms assumed an independent strength, separate from the rest of me, as on the day before. My brain expanded and contracted as a result of the oxygen debt incurred by each strenuous move. I did climb less maniacally, less like I had a gyroscope-triggered bomb in my brain, and the rock was dryer than the day before which permitted a greater contribution from my PA's so that I was able to reduce the tyranny of my arms. Slowly the sunshine and the scent of pine cleared my head and I began to relax.

The circuit wound gently up a low pignon to the Arrivée. The rock altered its character with that very slight rise in altitude; exhibiting more of the opaque scaling with those tingling little nips and pinches round the edges. Perhaps the phenomenae were due to the closer proximity of the limestone cap that once covered the region but was now almost completely eroded away. The underlying sand was bonded together by some silica seeping down with the limestone as it dissolved, so perhaps those boulders perched on top of the pignons received greater quantities of the glue necessary for their creation than those boulders lying on the floor of the forest.

These speculations were conducted from a seat I had found near the Arrivée—a giant clam with the dimpled texture and lustre of sugary peardrops. From there I looked out across the forest in the direction of Paris. I spotted six horses and riders entering Vallée Close at a gallop and wheeling west towards Croix St. Jérôme. We departed the Arrivée with 'trois avant-dernières pensées' and rushed north to the Channel ports.



INCOMPETENCE IN HIGH PLACES

By Bob Richardson

A LONG TIME ago, when I was old enough to have known better, I found myself driving an overloaded and antique van southwards over the Brenner Pass.

It was one of those ideas which are born in the Kingshouse of a winter Saturday night when the snow and ice are absent and thoughts turn to sunshine and rock. The Dolomites were the place to go said the keen lads – you've got the transport, we've got the climbing ability. But as Spring came their thoughts turned to other ways of spending their money – principally beer and attempts on *Mons Veneris Direct*. Saturday night conversations became punctuated by embarrassed pauses and shuffling side steps. Eventually a friend and his wife decided they wanted a cheap holiday in Italy and two young lads, not long started in the hills, combined a touching faith in my climbing ability with available cash. And so it came to pass that we slowly progressed across Europe and over the Brenner Pass and down into Italy and the limestone peaks.

Now in those far-off days there was no available English language guide book to the Dolomites and so when we got to the pleasant town of Bolzano we went round the shops looking for suitable literature. At that point all our information was based on the sensationalist accounts of overhanging ascents written by Englishmen which had appeared in the climbing magazines (along with adverts for molecord breeches guaranteed to absorb two gallons of water). My knowledge of Italian was nil but my German was slightly better at minimal, and so we ended up with a German text sparsely illustrated with photographs embellished by dotted lines. Perhaps the fact that its author was a Herr Dr. gave it an air of accuracy and authenticity. I have it still – a reminder of the perils of partial understanding and inadequate literature research.

We also purchased some pitons from which to hang our *étriers* and hammers with which to drive said pitons. Do not sneer gentle youth, for in those days the hammering of pitons and the dangling therefrom in *étriers* was a Christian and well regarded activity. *Autre temps, autre moeurs* and up your nostrils with the magnesium carbonate.

From Bolzano we steamed our way over the Karrer Pass and up a narrow dirt track until the van reached its altitude and angle limits about a kilometre below the Cardecchia Hut. We unloaded our gear and set up camp near a convenient Bar-Ristorante (some years later

to become the scene of Weed and the Geordies' encounter with a litre of *grappa* – but that's another story). My sensible friend and his wife took the van and headed for Venice, leaving the two youths and myself squatting below the Dirupi di Larsec with the east wall of the Rosengarten dominating the scenery in the other direction.

The Vajolet Towers were the obvious overture for beginners. Our first wrestle with Dr Lange's prose and photographs suggested the SW-Kante of the Delago Turme might do for a start. '38, 2 st. 120m' sounded reasonable, although I wasn't sure what the '2 st' meant and I later realised that 'eine der schönsten in den Dolomiten überhaupt' appeared rather frequently in Dr Lange's guide. The rest of the description was largely incomprehensible to me though 'gelber Überhang' sounded interesting. On the other hand, the photograph looked reasonably explicit and the line impressive.

Next day the three of us wandered up the valley past the Vajolet Hut and up into the high coire below the Vajolet Towers. We duly ascended the SW-Kante of the Delago. The climbing standard was about that of *January Jigsaw* although the brief section which swings out on to the west face brought a vision of tiny pine trees a long way below our boots which was very impressive. The descent from the summit by abseil on to the coffee-table sized col between the Delago and the Stabeler towers was more frightening than the ascent (no figures-of-eight in those days) and we continued on down the chimney to the coire, past the memorial tablets to previous abseilers, in a thoughtful mood. However we soon rationalised ourselves into a feeling of confidence as we lay on the warm rocks outside the Alberto Premier Hut. If that was Grade IV we should manage OK.

On the way down, as we passed the Vajolet Hut, we lurched to a halt as the unlikely sounds of 'Hey! Are youse frae Greenock?' reached our ears. While not factually correct, the identification was accurate by association, so we concurred. The unexpected greeting had come from Con Higgins and Davie Agnew, newly arrived and staying at the Vajolet. After clearing up the identification problem and establishing our limited credentials with the Creagh Dhu team we continued on down to the tent and the cheap wine of the Stella Alpina.

At this point I had better introduce the two youths but will spare them identification – no one wanted to be associated with me after the events of the next few days. One was tall and came from a religious family, which no doubt accounted for his ability to believe what I said – let us call him the Tall Youth. The other was a more worldly youth with considerable climbing ability but at this stage in his career he had found the exposure of the route on the Delago Tower and the

uncertainties of the descent not to his liking. He decided that bouldering and exploring the valleys would do him for the rest of the trip. Let him be the Short Youth.

After a rest day the Tall Youth and I began pointing fingers at the Rosengarten. The plum route seemed to be the Stegerführe; 'H in der ersten 130m, 600m, 9 st ... durchzeit die geschlossene O-wand direkt unter dem Hauptgipfel der Rosengarten-Spitze.' Now I have seen many grading systems come and go in my time and at that time the understanding was that in the Dolomites grade VI did not mark the next grade of difficulty from Grade V but was an indication that artificial aid was employed. Dr Lange omitted to give any other grading information and so we came to our first fallacious conclusion i.e. that if we could get up the first 400 feet (the Grade VI bit) the rest would surely be a dawdle. There was some other stuff about 'gelbgefärbten' and 'vorspringenden,' 'Felsblöcke' and 'überhangs' which sounded impressive. As all this was subsumed in the Grade VI bit which was described in great but totally enciphered detail we weren't too worried. The rest of the route was dismissed in a relatively few (if equally opaque) lines and this was taken as confirmation of our diagnosis.

The next morning we were up at daybreak to find a most un-Italian morning. Light mist and snow on the grass – was this the Dolomites in July or were we back in Glencoe in April? We placed our faith in the Mediterranean climate and went up over the grassy slopes, sloshing through an inch of wet snow hiding the flowers. At the top of the grass we got our first surprise. We were on top of a ridge, looking across a shallow valley at an expanse of rock (or at least what we could see of it) somewhat bigger than we had expected. From down at the tent we had been unaware of this hidden valley and our fingers had traced the 'ersten 130m' up some nice red rock which was now definitely not 'ersten,' in fact not even 'zweiten.' We looked across a snow field at some distinctly unfriendly yellow and black stuff draped in mist. The route had suddenly grown by about 30 percent. We decided to have a look anyway.

As we crossed the snow field to the foot of the face I was intrigued by the large number of small holes pockmarking its surface. At the bottom of each nestled a stone. An example of dark surfaces absorbing more heat and melting into the snow? Despite the mist, which we were certain would soon disperse as the sun got higher, the start of the route was easily found – up on to a plinth and then up a leftward sloping ramp into a line of chimneys. We garnished ourselves with slings, pitons and étriers (I remember being in Manchester once and seeing two lads sitting on the pavement making up étriers) and tied my home-dyed nylon ropes around our waists.

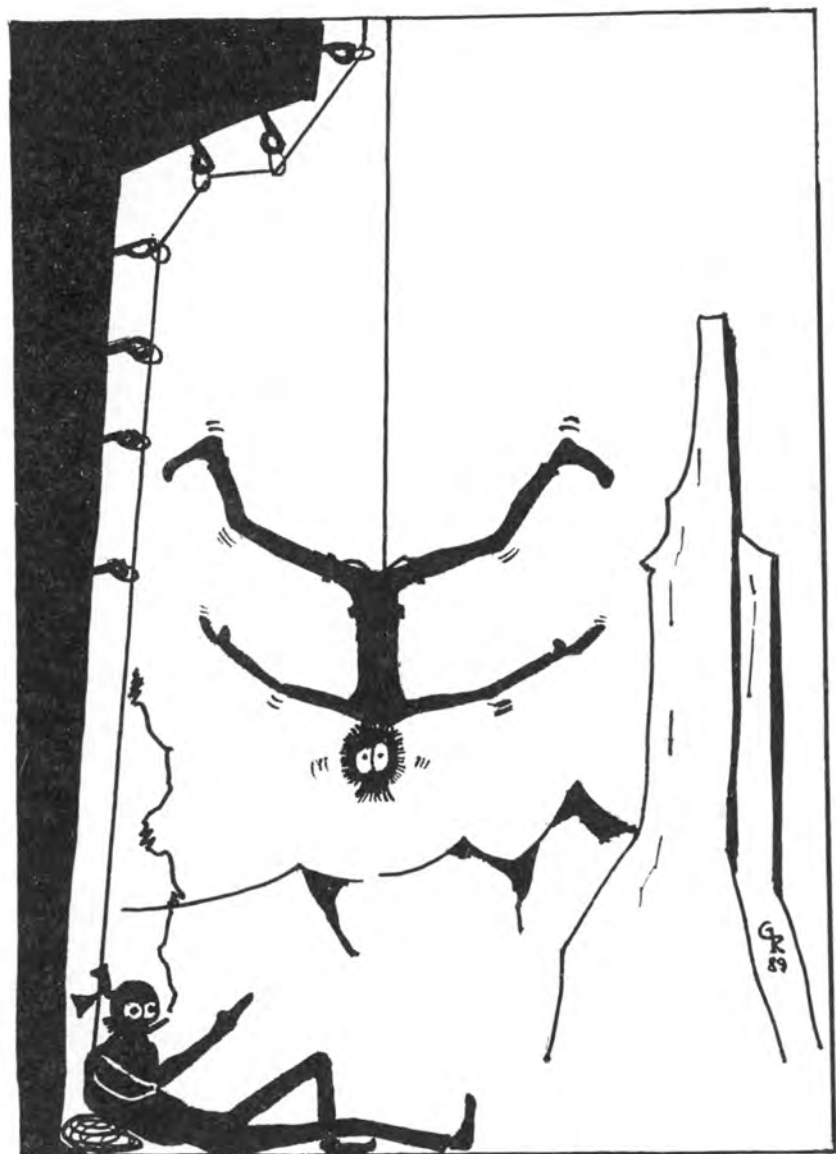
It went easily enough for a few pitches. The Felsblocken were fitted out with large jugs on top and it all went free. I even coaxed the Tall Youth into leading a pitch which he managed without trouble. The sun came out and we began to feel confident.

Then I shot up a nice chimney which opened out on to a wall which gently leaned farther and farther out above me. I hastily clipped into a resident peg and began to think that the Herr Dr was right after all. Straight on up was not within my capabilities but looking over my left shoulder I saw a couple of pegs on the left wall showing the way. I launched myself across the wall, shamelessly using the pegs, for reasons I will shortly reveal, into the bottom of a short groove.

Now the rope we were using was my first nylon rope, 300 feet of 'three-quarter inch' laid cord carefully dyed half red and half blue. (Club archeologists in possession of the key can still find a piece of it in the loft at CIC.) This had been purchased at a bargain price through an intermediary in the bar at Kingshouse – I suspect now that it started life in Leith docks. It possessed none of the lissom grace of modern ropes and was halfway to being useable for the Indian Rope Trick. In my haste I had neglected to rearrange the run of the rope clipped through the carabiner in the expectation of moving on up. By the time I was halfway across the wall the rope was imitating a corkscrew. The drag was not welcome and as it now came from behind me, the pegs were necessary to maintain contact with the rock. Straining and heaving, I fought my way up on to a nice comfy ledge and warm sunshine.

I was now happy as that seemed to be the 'ersten 130m' over, but when I attempted to pull in the slack and bring up the Tall Youth, the blue rope wound itself into a ball on the far side of the carabiner and jammed solid. The solution was obvious, the other rope hung directly down from my balcony to the stance below, and I told the youth to untie the blue rope and come up on the single red line. In view of the fact that the rope would be behind him and if he came off he would swing spectacularly into space, this tactic was not favourably received. After some negotiations in which I pointed out that if he didn't come up I couldn't get down and he would have to solo down the pitches we had climbed so far, he reluctantly and successfully climbed the pitch and released the ball of knitting *en route*.

We were now sitting on a large ledge, bathed in sunshine, with the strong feeling that retreat was not an option in view of the projection of the stance out from the face and the mass of tangled nylon sharing the ledge with us. Above was that portion of the face we had seen from the tent and there was a fair amount of that. Never mind, the hard stuff was over and it was still mid-morning. It took about an hour to beat the rope into some sort of flexibility. Then came error of judgement number two (or was it number three?).



'Normally when I fall off I do not experience.....undue panic.'

The route above was obvious enough – diagonally up the yellow wall above for about thirty feet into a small cave then rightwards on a line of pegs across the overhanging wall to reach the foot of a line of chimneys. I was conscious that we had been losing time and decided to cut the angle by a diagonal traverse across the wall to reach the chimneys higher up. A flake offered a start and up I went, placing a runner at about thirty feet. Ten feet higher the flake gave out and, after about a minute, so did my fingers.

Normally when I fall off I do not experience any sensation of falling or undue panic – it just happens and that's that until you check the damage. This time however I knew it was coming and had time to build up a clear opinion of the now considerable exposure, the quality of my runner and the inexperience of my belayer. I was wrong about the last two and ended hanging upside down below the runner, firmly held and only slightly grazed. Apart from a little skin I had lost a couple of slings and a plastic hard hat (unwittingly donated by a famous and now defunct Clydeside shipyard). As it turned out, these items had a role still to play in this farce, but at the time the loss of the slings was the major concern.

Feeling the need for a short rest after this, I tried to persuade the Tall Youth to take over the lead. Not surprisingly, he wasn't keen and, after a while, I took my only slightly damaged body on to the proper route. On reaching the comparative security of the shallow cave I banged a peg into its roof and then my nervous system pulled on the handbrake. More negotiations ensued and eventually the Tall Youth came up and passed me to finish the pitch into the comparative security of the chimneys. I shambled across to join him, retreat well and truly cut off.

At this point the Tall Youth said firmly that he wasn't leading any more. In view of his lack of experience and the fact that we were now obviously engaged in an epic in a foreign land, I wasn't inclined to blame him. Still shocked from the fall, I started up a line of steep but secure chimneys. Memories were blurred, even on the next day, but I gradually became conscious of wisps of mist obscuring the other side of the valley and then the first few dancing snow flakes spun slowly and gracefully past.

The snow gradually thickened as we climbed the steep but comfortable chimneys, taking our time as there was no place else to go and anyway the steepness of the rock kept the snow away from us. It was a weird experience, climbing dry rock with a glittering veil of snow a few feet away – very picturesque. A small, brilliantly coloured little bird fluttered across the overhanging wall to my right, a wall creeper moving with enviable three-dimensional freedom where we were constrained to an uncertain linear progress. After a while we

emerged from the chimney and found ourselves at the foot of a huge transverse rift running across the face. Snow lay everywhere, covering the rock in a wet white sludge. School had closed early, but there was no going home.

We were faced with a long wait and a bivouac, so we settled into the bottom of the rift. I found a ledge where I could sit on a coil of the accursed rope and rest my feet on the opposite wall. The Tall Youth, being somewhat taller, had a less comfortable position a few feet below. Of course we had not come prepared to bivouac, and the only food we had left was a small lump of much-travelled sultana cake. Still, we were relatively sheltered in the depths of this impressive split in the mountain. All we could do was sit, wait and think warm.

Eventually the light diminished through grey to black. I suppose I must have fallen asleep because I remember a sense of shock at finding myself staring in the grey pre-dawn light at an impressive array of icicles three feet from my face. Snow was one thing, ice was quite another. Just below, I heard the scrape of a match on the rock as my apprentice lit what, at the time, he was convinced was his Last Cigarette. At least he had breakfast.

We had decided on a strategy the previous evening. Continuing up the route held no attractions. Our one priority was to get to easy ground and to get off this lump of limestone as quickly as possible. The Stegerführe goes up the central buttress of the east face which is flanked on either side by large hanging coires with impressive rock walls beneath them. I reckoned that we were still below the level of the left-hand coire and that a rising traverse to our left should take us to it and then easily to the ridge. At the top of the chimney, a few feet to our left, there was a short rock wall, above which the angle dropped back considerably. This seemed to offer a start at least.

There was still a lot of snow about but I was fired up to get going and, as soon as there was enough light, moved up the wall on to a small plinth from where I could look on to the slab above. The situation was rather like a mirror image of the winter start to the Second Slab Rib on the Orion Face and the immediate view not dissimilar. The slab was totally covered in about an inch of transparent water ice. The rock had been shrink wrapped for our protection. I didn't bother climbing down. The blood was up, the sky was clear and the sun was on its way.

To the east, the summit snowfields of the Marmolata were pink, while away in the distance the Civetta was a black cardboard cut-out against a blue sky. The Tall Youth could see none of this, was not convinced of our chances of survival and did not appreciate my poetic description of the scene. I stood on my perch for a few hours, waiting as the sun climbed above the mountains to the east and began

to warm my back and the ice on the rock above. Eventually little streams of water started running under the ice and then little pieces of ice came tinkling past until at last I was standing at the foot of a slab which was merely running with ice-cold water.

The slab above soon led to a steepening crack over a bulge, but above this the angle decreased again. Now, one advantage of climbing in the Dolomites is that wet rock still has good friction and I went up on good holds confidently enough despite the constant stream of water running over the rock. The holds were nice and sharp but my hands had softened in the water and I was soon bleeding from cuts on my fingers (these took a week to clear up enough to make rock climbing comfortable).

The sun was well up by this time, the climbing about mild VS and I was almost enjoying myself as the Tall Youth came up out of the *bouge*¹ and we started wending our way up and left. Little stones came murmuring past in the sunshine and I realised the origin of all those pockmarks in the snowfield down below. Soon however, fatigue and uncertainty began to take their toll and I have no clear recollection of most of the morning's climbing. We were both tired and fed up. Gear started to be abandoned or dropped from fumbling fingers.

Then I hauled myself on to a ledge to find a rusty sausage tin. Never was the sight of litter so welcome, we were back on a route. So we were, but it led upwards over a steep bulge by a piton studded and wooden wedge garnished crack. We groaned our way upwards, leaving behind an *étrier* I had had to jam in under a wedge to get into the peg. It didn't matter — we were prepared to be generous with our gear so long as we got off this damned mountain. Above this we were able to break up and left again on easier ground and eventually found a narrow horizontal ledge running left. Along this we went and it led nicely to a waterfall a few feet below the left-hand coire.

We scrambled into this welcome refuge from verticality. The difficulties were over for the moment at least, a welcome stream of cold water to cross and then easy angled broken rock led up to the ridge. The climbing was now easy but we still had a deep mistrust of this mountain and continued roped up to the ridge.

Now that we were back on more certain ground the psychological roles were reversed. Over-anxious to get off the damned mountain, I came up with a wild scheme to go down a subsidiary ridge and abseil down to the hut on the Santner Pass. The Tall Youth, now that the immediate uncertainty was removed, was rapidly recovering, had more sense and anyway was not going to be cheated of the summit. Called to heel, I followed him along the ridge to the summit, graced by the standard issue metal crucifix with the standard perforations

by lightning strikes. The Tall Youth was disappointed not to find a summit book. We headed down the ridge for a bit and found the normal ascent route from the Gartl. Down we went, climbing roped again. On the last pitch, with the Tall Youth leading down, the nearness of the coire floor and the Santner Hut got to me and, still tense with the strain of the last day-and-a-half's debacle, I started screaming at him to get a move on. A sharp exchange of character references followed. When I came to climb down the last thirty feet on to the snow I found it quite tricky and had to apologise.

Now that we had our feet on level ground, or rather snow, we became conscious of lack of nourishment. The Santner Hut was about two hundred metres away and, without bothering to coil the rope, we dragged the cursed cable across the snow and dumped it outside the Hut. Despite our lack of food the first imperative was to re-coat the nerve ends with the drugs of civilisation and so we ordered large black coffees and a cigarette from the girl. The Tall Youth was carrying no money anyway and I had only a few crumpled hundred lire notes in my shirt pocket. As she served us the girl said 'Stegerführe?' I thought briefly, decided that my German wasn't up to giving even a brief summary of past events and lied, 'Ja!' End of conversation.

Our systems toxicated again, we beat the rope into submission and headed down the Gartl at the run. Food was on the other side of the Rosengarten. Further down the Gartl there is another Hut, the Alberto Premier. The path we were on diverged round this but as we passed about a hundred metres away the doors burst open and a mob headed straight towards us uttering confused cries in several languages. A feeling of apprehension gripped me as I realised the full significance of the apparently casual query at the Santner. We had obviously been posted missing.

At the head of the mob was the Short Youth. As we stood there surrounded by a motley crew of Italians and Austrians he explained what had been happening. When we didn't return to base the previous night he hadn't been unduly worried but in the morning had gone the rounds of the huts up to the Santner to see if we had stopped at any of them in view of the bad weather. Not finding us, he had then returned and gone along the foot of the East Face to see if we were visible only to find on the snow a couple of slings and a helmet.

Now a helmet with contents is unambiguous but a helmet without contents is open to a number of interpretations. Deciding to play the pessimistic card he had then gone right down to Perra in the Valley to rouse out the local MRT and then returned with them (a formidable bit of morning footage). The advance search party had been discussing tactics over refreshments in the Alberto Premier when

some alert fellow had seen two scruffy figures escaping down the Gartl and raised the hue and cry.

All being explained to the satisfaction of the immediate audience, the whole crew continued the descent in a shower of scree and boulders towards the Vajolet Hut. We three were about to sneak past and continue down the mile or so to the tent when we were firmly hailed by an authoritative voice emanating from an ominously neatly clad fellow. He had organised MRT stamped all over him. We were led on to the terrace of the Vajolet to find another spick and span type sitting behind a table. Apart from being in the open air and having about fifty spectators ranked around, it was Tosca Act II with an all male cast.

Recognised as the prime subject for interrogation, I was called to sit opposite a slim-line Scarpia. He had no English, I had no Italian and very little German. I started to give a condensed and gesture illustrated account of our adventures in fractured German. I managed to convey the bivouac at the big flake and then when I attempted to describe the next morning's 'links gehen' across the face he visibly relaxed and to my great surprise poured me a coffee from his flask and offered me one of his sandwiches. I could feel the Tall Youth's eyes burning into the back of my hand as I took the sandwich.

When I had finished my fractured account I awaited the next move in some trepidation, what was the hourly rate for the Dolomite MRT? Scarpia took our names and addresses and then dismissed me with a wave of the hand. The three Scots sidled through the massed ranks surrounding the terrace and sauntered nonchalantly down the first section of the track. As soon as the first bend hid us from the terrace we started to run.

If there was a bill, it never reached us and, as far as I know, the Tall Youth has never climbed since.

Footnote:

1. Bowge – see Dante's '*Inferno*' in the Dorothy Sayers' translation. ('pocket' or 'purse').

WHITNEY INSTANT DEATH INC.

By Ian Walton

'IAN!! Why are the two guys in front putting on their crampons?' I glanced down between my boots at the tiny gleams of sweltering light from Lone Pine; 10,000 feet below in the Owens Valley the temperature would be 103 degrees; I wondered how to respond. There was the flippant: 'Well we at "Whitney Instant Death" haven't lost a client yet — and anyway you haven't even had to use your eyelashes!' Or there was the technical: 'this ice isn't really suitable for crampons you know: soft snow balling up under your toe can be very dangerous; those two obviously don't know what they're doing!' But on reflection it was probably better just to mutter 'Grit your teeth and think of the Empire;' then plod on: step, step, breath, step, step, breath, step, breath, step, breath.....

We were perched at almost 14,000 feet on the Mountaineer's Route on Mt. Whitney — a wicked slash of ice, climbing steeply beside the giant pinnacles of the Great Wall of Whitney — the 3000 foot buttress at the summit of America's highest peak¹. I thought back to the innocent invitation which had popped through my letter box a few weeks earlier. Joey's opening shot was: 'I've heard that the skiing at Tuolumne Meadows is dynamite in mid June. How about it?' But this was swiftly followed by the source of all the trouble: 'If this doesn't entice you how about the Mountaineer's Route up Mt. Whitney later this summer? My ranger friend says it's just a tad harder than a walk up.....'

Soon it was time for the biannual visit from Scotland of my mother and father — a Scottish Mountaineering Club member. So as part of our usual misguided tour of the finest of California's mountain scenery we arranged to stay in sunny Bishop² for a few days, so that Joey and I could plan a lightning ascent. We left at a groggy 5 a.m., with the temperature at a respectably cool 80 degrees. On the drive south to Lone Pine we observed that the approach route was described totally differently in our two guidebooks. So we paused to consult Joey's trusty wilderness ranger friend. He provided a third conflicting route description and made vaguely reassuring noises. The transmission groaned alarmingly as we creaked up the steep Whitney Portal road to the start of the trail. As usual we got lost in the parking lot³. But finally we were on the way. Now we were the ones who were groaning alarmingly and creaking.

'Look for the large triangular block,' the guidebook had said. This seemed suspiciously similar to the infamous SMC guide description: 'follow the obvious route to the top of the climb,' but perhaps we would be lucky. After the large triangular block we were supposed to cross the river and climb a series of small ledges on the canyon wall. But whoever heard of rockfalls that leave just one large triangular block? As we struggled through the whiplash bushes, teetered our precarious packs from boulder to boulder and provided sustenance to starving mosquitos it seemed as if every other stone was large and triangular. But the ledge system we chose did finally eject us at the mouth of the next navigation problem. 'There's the path around the left of that lake!' 'But the map says it's on the right. We'd better go that way.' And the bushes became thicker and thicker, weaving into a truly impenetrable barrier – reminiscent of the best of South Greenland Expedition travel⁴. 'We'll just have to go back around the lake, but let's take a shortcut across this bog.' Of course 'this bog' became progressively wetter as we jumped from tussock to tussock. Finally I was wading in knee deep water and wondering whether I should have removed my boots several steps back. At least I'd had lots of good practice, following my father through the friendly bogs of Galloway.

After all these delights the glacier moraines and giant suncups were simply light amusement. Then they appeared: the three towering buttresses of Whitney's east face, with the sun starring behind the highest and slipping gently towards the golden Pacific. The black shadows lengthened across the face. The temperature dropped suddenly. We crawled on up a steep ledge of mixed rock and snow, pausing to haul the packs up a nasty out of balance corner. The altitude was winning. But just as the light faded we reached the snowy depression of Iceberg Lake. We huddled in the corner of some rocks, swallowed the undercooked macaroni, and settled in for a chilly night at 12,000 feet without a tent. Fortunately it never snows in the Sierra in July!!⁵ For once it was a relief to get up at sunrise and shake out the cold. We left camp quickly, returned to do battle with a marauding marmot, and left again to climb crisply up the lower snow slopes and sidle between two walls of rock defining the gully.

I sat at the notch in the ridge until Joey arrived mumbling things about routes where one false step means instant death on the icy rocks below. 'See! I told you we didn't need crampons. Just like we don't need ropes to get to the summit from here.' She eyed the icy slabs and the chimneys above and mumbled a little more. But soon we poked our heads out of the last chimney and drank in the panorama of peaks and valleys stretching out to the west. The summit was not as busy as I had feared, given the popularity of the tourist trail, and we even found time for a quick visit to the highest toilet in the

country. By alpine standards it proved rather tame, not operating on the well known free fall system. But the mountain itself far surpassed my expectations. The complaints about it being an overcrowded tourist trap are similar to the hazards of the tourist path on Ben Nevis. They ignore the real character that is just a step off the beaten trail.

A speedy photograph proved that we had really been there, and then we were off down the gully again. It was a long way to Lone Pine but we didn't have any dinner so I wasn't going to be impressed by suggestions that we spend a second night out. The marmot had of course thoughtfully disposed of the fruit left in our packs. So we raced on down past the snowfields, the people-eating lake and the hordes of large triangular blocks. After all, we had to get back before the hamburger stand closed!

Footnotes:

1. Mount Whitney, elevation 14,495 feet, Sierra Nevada, California. Highest peak in the contiguous states.
2. Holiday centre for eastern California/back of beyond – depending on your perspective!!
3. The National Forest Service never labels trails until 100 yards after the start, and well around the first bend!
4. St. Andrews University South Greenland Expedition 1971, Phil Gribbon.
5. 'It never rains in the Sierra,' Ian Walton, Austrian Alpine Club Newsletter, Summer 1985.

THE DRAGON'S GATE TO LITTLE HELL

By Steve Chadwick

AUTUMN comes, bringing a time of limbo, when the crags are too wet to rock climb, and the mountains have no snow or ice for winter work. A time to repair winter gear from last season's excesses, and to build up brownie points with your wife by staying at home for weekend after weekend, until at last when winter conditions come, she is so unnerved by the unaccustomed presence of you, that there is no opposition at all when you mention that fateful full phrase 'I thought I might do a spot of climbing this weekend.'

These thoughts are mere musings, and are off the main theme of the tale. Demands of work meant that I found myself in Norway for much of 1988. No hardship there for a climber you might say. True, but autumn comes to Norway as well, and if it is possible it seems to rain more here than at my home in Gairloch, Scotland.

I had been on a tour in Norway with my wife Morag in 1985, and had seen on the flank of a mountain in Gudvangen a black gaping hole. Local enquiries did not add much knowledge, except that an Englishman had climbed to it in 1907, but was killed in a fall whilst climbing down.

So here I was again with wet autumn weekends to play with, and no sensible wife to curb odd ambitions. At work were two Norwegian climbers, male and female, Alf and Rigmor, so a date was set for Gudvangen cave.

Saturday dawned and stayed wet. Heavy low clouds blanketed the mountains, greeting us as we arrived at the campsite near Stalheim, at the head of the Gudvangen valley. I had a chilling notion that the Norwegian Gods were not keen on us violating their virgin cave. Sunday however dawned dry and clear, and after an argument, which I lost, as to whether the clock should go back or forward one hour, we weighed up possible lines of ascent.

The black hole was some 250-300m up the broken mountainside of the Jordalsnuten, and protected from any direct approach by high cliffs, but the right hand side offered a sneaky way using terraces and not too many rock steps. Diagonal traversing through the lower pine wood, followed by a pitch of steep scrambling brought us to below the 'Black, Slimy Slab.' Possibly no more than grade 3 rock when dry, I spent 45 min. aiding my way up the corner which oozed black slime. Devious traversing leftwards over easy ground got us to a rock shattered gully we called Shotgun Alley. Our progress had been slow

due to the slimy slab and disagreement as to where we were; the many gullies and buttresses making visual sighting of the cave almost impossible until you are nearly upon it.

My faith in Alf's navigating abilities had taken a severe knock two weeks before, when he had been describing to me a possible road to take to Romsdal, and had pointed to a line of black crosses that ascended two vertical mountain faces, traversed longways three large lochs before finally disappearing out to sea, and was obviously a commune boundary. This notwithstanding, he was keen to press on, so took over the lead towards where he and Rigmor thought the cave was, which was to the right of my own estimation.

Two pitches further we called a halt. It was getting late, and a retreat was called for before it got dark. Four long abseils saw us at the bottom. We gathered at the only place in the valley from where the cave is visible. A heated argument followed.

There is the cave, where were we? Alf and Rigmor were sure, but so was I, and it wasn't the same place. Did the Gods hide it when humans were near? An air of quiet hostility dominated the car as we drove back to Bergen. The next day I was two hours early for work. The clocks went back after all!

Rigmor's curiosity was aroused and she began exhaustive detective work, determined to find out fact or fiction about the cave. What she found made it even more tantalising. Apparently the cave had never been reached, the tale of the Englishman falling to his death was part of a children's story written by a Gudvangen local Per Sivle early this century, whereby in a fictitious tale the Englishman ascending to the cave and falling in descent, is a preamble to the main theme of the Englishman's dog which manages to get down and is befriended by a local farmer's child.

Local legend has it that the cave is guarded by a dragon, and the cave is a gateway to 'Little Hell' inside the mountain. These enquiries aroused the interest of the press, who asked to be there on the day we tried again.

A new date was set, 23.10.88, and as was now traditional, it rained all the way there. Sunday was again bright and clear. We were joined this time by a Kiwi, Barry Scott. The lower pitches were quickly dispatched, even the 'Black, Slimy Slab' went free in ten minutes. After five pitches we again reached Shotgun Alley, and Alf took his turn to lead, the whereabouts of the cave still disputed.

Three pitches of steep scrambling saw us on a diagonal line left into a weakness we had seen from below and had called the 'Golden Gully' due to the lovely autumn gold colour of the trees growing there. Barry soloed up and shouted down that he could see our goal.

We gathered just below the cave, looking for signs of fiery breath, but nothing stirred. I had misgivings that we were desecrating a 'folk tale' but curiosity overcame this and we carefully climbed up into the cave. I admit to whispering 'Nice pussy, pussy,' just in case.

Gathering inside we savoured the grandure. The cave went up into the mountain for a further 16m and had a high vaulted ceiling. The view out to the valley was superb, framed as it was by the 6m round opening, and we pondered the odd geological faulting that had created such a thing out of solid granite.

Our names, and a poem to the dragon, were left in a poly bag, and we began the eight rope lengths of diagonal down-climbing and abseiling. At the base was the press in the form of a lady local reporter; she took our story, some pictures, and then we sped Bergenwards into the evening.

The following Wednesday a backpage headline read 'No dragons in the Dragon's Hole.' It had been fun, but I felt kind of sad that we had taken the mystery from a Norwegian Legend.

THE ISLES OF GREECE AND THE SCOTTISH HILLS

By Hamish Brown

Now, I probably appreciate Tom Patey's parodies of Byron rather than the original. Byron, that erratic Aberdonian who hirpled through the world some time before mountaineering was invented never quite lost the snell freshness of the outdoors (against all the odds, it keeps breaking through). I should think 'the steep frowning glories of dark Lochnagar' gave him kindlier memories than most in the dragging shipwreck of his later life. It took just four words of the poet's to inspire a grubby teenage schoolboy.

My daydreams bore me far away from the classroom one stultifying summer day, but a rap on the knuckles brought my eyes back from the window view of hills to the dreary grammar exercise on my desk. Spitefully I romped through the set work, then, looking round, was ready for mischief but before I could do anything, an open book was placed on my desk. 'Read that.' A finger pointed half way down the left-most column of a strata of Byronic stanzas. I remember the exact spot as clearly as the crystalline holds of the crux on the first route I led up Rannoch Wall. I was gripped.

'The isles of Greece!' 'The isles of Greece!' the stanza began, and I don't know how much more I read or how much more I took in for my wayward imagination was seared by those few words, as if I'd been a wire welcoming the lightning strike. It jolted me into new dimensions. Here was a magic world, as real in experience as the basalt braes that ran east-west above the school. Mountains might look on Marathon and Marathon look on the sea, but it was in a chalky classroom that I dreamed I might be free.

My devotion to the open air world had long been established anyway. It was as present – and natural – as breathing, but adolescence is a pretty claustrophobic experience and those stanzas from *Don Juan* were a sort of UDI against the exploitive world of school. If the classroom only looked on douce hills rather than mountains, then those hills were still the gateway to so much that has enriched since.

I took to the hills because, like the waters of a hill spring, the inner motivation simply burst forth. I had to go. It may have been inspiration but it was also choice.

'It is on etched hills and lithoed seas
That the stars appear to spin free
About the sky. Freedom is a glance
At the wheeling stars and we
Find that sight by choice, not chance.'

Tom Weir, in that recently reprinted book about his youthful exploits, *Highland Days*, shows how this same urge possessed him. Glasgow, in his case, was looked on by the lowly Campsies, but it was enough. W. H. Murray in his influential *Mountaineering in Scotland* gives the same confession, writing of, 'a great hunger to know mountains wholly; urged from within by some overpowering need...' The symbolism of 'the isles of Greece' must ring true to many thousands who have been led from inner desire to outdoor fulfilment.

While there are exceptions (Don Whillans first found his way to the hills with his local scout troupe!), I should hazard that most long-active mountain people simply put feet to their dreams – and went – rather than waiting to be initiated by any outside agency. Most survived – 'Experience is the sum of near misses' – and have been well content with their game, whatever the technical level chosen. A love of being 'out there, up there' underlies all their days and ways.

Against this we have the modern phenomenon of the educational evangelists and the bureaucratic pimps. Why they should have this attitude to the grubby outdoors is puzzling. Tiddledywinks is just as moral and infinitely safer, yet the love of hills, a most private infatuation, is given the technicolour exposure of the worst of television commercials. I have heard these pap-mongers produce phrases like 'promoting a wilderness experience' or 'giving children simulated adventure.' Outdoor education has become big business. You can gain diplomas in it, degrees, Ph.D.'s, even MBE's but the end-product, the children, are perhaps less well served. Check any group of 30-40 year old people active in mountaineering and you find very few were given an institutionalised introduction. They had no need for pseudo anabolic steroids. They simply caught the disease.

Once, on a brilliant afternoon of winter, I called into Loch Morlich hostel to find the members of a training course sitting inside, having a serious discussion on 'the optimum length of an ice axe.' When I asked why, the reply was 'That's what the programme says.' Perhaps this is the hope of course, that our iconoclastic, individualistic, ridiculous game should be turned into an organised, controlled, safe and harmless ritual.

My objections to this Big Brother approach are many but basically the end result does not justify the means. A welfare-state mentality usually means that the state fares anything but well. Beauty spots, when pin-pointed, are usually indicated by litter, cars and transistors blaring. Outdoor education is no more inspirational for its participants than O-level Shakespeare is in inspiring a love of theatre. Writers, like the aforementioned Tom Weir or Bill Murray, are not trying to grab disciples or push their wares. They simply write from first-hand experience, with enthusiasm, hot and heady as Byron, which can be contagious of course. One book, *Mountaineering in*



Photo: Hamish M. Brown

Slioch, Across Loch Maree



Photo: Bill Duncan

Hon. Vice-President Jim Donaldson
cuts through the tartan and opens the Raeburn Hut

Scotland, has had far more lasting effect than a decade of courses and conscription.

Years ago, when I was involved in outdoor education, a youngster arrived on my doorstep and said he wanted to go climbing. My reply was not encouraging and I told the skinny youth to go away but, if he was still interested in a year's time, he could come back and I'd take him out myself. A year to the day he was back to remind me of my promise. Of course I took him (grudging the wasted year) and before long it was pupil teaching master. One of my most memorable high mountain experiences was shared with him (and others) a few years later. He 'wanted' enough to wait a year (and days are long at fourteen) in order to try the only way to the hills he'd envisaged. Putting legs to dreams is not always easy.

My own early hills were a range of grassy 2,000-ders but they provided navigational problems as difficult as any hills since. On their rotten rock we climbed and on their frozen burns we fell off and on their slippery slopes I saw an avalanche of alpine proportions. 'We' was usually anyone else I could grab and, failing friends, there was always the long-suffering terrier. Not many pupils and no teachers shared my enthusiasm. It was only twenty years later I discovered the Head Master himself was a life-member of Scotland's premier climbing club. In all those years he never showed any sign of his interest, or any knowledge of ours. The nearest summits were used for frosty weather runs when rugby pitches were frozen solid. Most people regarded the hills as a punishment. My most heinous crime at school was to have failed to turn up for a rugby match because I was away over the tops. I'd woken to a resurrection Saturday morning of spring – and just took off for the singing heights. Hours, and miles, beyond recall I remembered there was a match on that day. My explanation was not very acceptable. You do not try to explain the Isles of Greece to a choleric mathematics master!

Pleasure, fun, is, in the long run, the only justification for mountaineering, but the freedom to grab great joys has always come under suspicion. Mountains were, for centuries, the haunts of devils, ugly, and evil, but even then the odd person would see them differently. Bourrit (most remembered for his sad denigration of Pacard, who 'stole' the first ascent of *his* mountain, Mt. Blanc) spent all his days exploring, painting and writing about the Alps, and he looked back to one specific moment that 'kindled his desire for the high places' (the 'Isles of Greece' experience again).

The Victorians tried to disguise their feelings by wrapping their ascents in the garb of science. Professor Tyndal went so far as to resign from the Alpine Club when a fellow alpinist (Leslie Stephen) wrote a facetious article about an ascent, '...the temperature was

approximately (I had no thermometer) 212 degrees Fahrenheit below freezing point. As for ozone, if any existed in the atmosphere, it was a greater fool than I take it for.' The British have always tended to treat vital matters, such as politics, as a joke, while treating their pastimes with deadly seriousness.

There were lighter escapades even then. The Gross Glockner, Austria's highest summit, was first climbed by a Bishop (rejoicing in the name of Franz Altgraf von Salm-Reifferscheid-Krantheim) who treated the whole thing as a picnic party. Ten friends and nineteen guides were involved. They had a hut built on the moraine and a chef installed before commencing. Blizzards pinned them inside for three days of singing, drinking and high jinks but they then made the ascent — only to find it was to a lower summit so the whole thing had to be organised again for the next year, 1800. This admirable cleric was only interested in the boiling point of water in so much as it did so quickly, to provide hot drinks and shaving water! The modern promotion of mountains stands a long way from this jovial escapade.

Any criticism of bureaucracy tends to produce a retort of 'elitism,' but considering most of these bodies were self-instituted and often ignore or go against the traditions and wishes of mountaineers this is the last word they should employ. So disinterested are thousands of happy hillgoers that they do not even belong to member clubs of the Mountaineering Council of Scotland, a body formed partly in self-defence of our dreams of freedom.

When Outdoor Activities became 'just another lot of things you do at school' they are treated as all such in later life, which is with a firm intention not to have anything more to do with them. Something in the British make-up basically resents being organised, directed, and time-tabled.

The mass of modern promoted experience I feel is one of the major contributions to the debasement of the mountains. Ben Nevis is no longer a magic mountain. It is merely an inconvenient climbing wall. Its summit has striking similarities to a slum street in poorest London. Mountaineering is largely a form of urban escapism (you don't find many shepherds traversing the Grey Coires) and the fact that such numbers do escape to the hills of their own volition indicates 'the Isles of Greece' syndrome is still safely with us. It is the hope and the salvation of our game, in a world where conformity and the expectancy of having all things provided, is becoming the norm.

Despite Mamon looking on the mountains, despite the dreary smotherings, men still put feet to the dreams. The Isles of Greece are discoverable in any heart, in any place. In Scotland the hills are never very far away.

NEW CLIMBS SECTION

AFTER several years' toil Andy Nisbet has resigned as Editor of New Climbs. The section benefited from his obvious enthusiasm and energy, and we are grateful for his time as Editor. The new Editor of New Climbs is Alastair Walker, who has the necessary attributes for this valuable if often thankless post, namely; suspicion, doubt, experience, hard-boiled centre, dedication and, joining the growing SMC collection, an IBM-PC. Descriptions can be sent direct to Alastair at 588 Clarkston Road, Netherlee, Glasgow G44 3SQ. Stamping his character on the New Climbs Section is the privilege of its Editor, and we do not doubt things will be different in this regard.

OUTER ISLES

EIGG, An Sgurr, Ocean Wall – Earthsea 42m, E2
G. Latter, G. E. Little. 1st April, 1988.

Start on a heather ledge mid-way between the starts of *Echo Beach* and *Frozen Ocean*. Move up right onto a slabby wall. Trend slightly left then directly up (5b).

Main Wall – Beyond the Fringe 55m, E1
G. Latter, G. E. Little. 3rd April, 1988.

A short corner breaks the roofline 5m to the right of *Through The Barricades*. Up this but take a low right traverse for 5m just above the lip. Climb an obvious corner/groove past a hanging flake then up a bulging right wall. Easier climbing, trending slightly rightwards leads to the top (5b).

– Going for Gold 60m, E2
G. E. Little, G. Latter. 3rd April, 1988.

Climb as for *Beyond the Fringe*, but continue the rightwards traverse, moving slightly up to gain a foothold and semi-hanging belay (13m, 5a). Move hard right for 3m then up on good flakes to gain a slight bay. Ascend bulging wall above, step right and climb clean rock to a ledge. Ascend steepening rock directly above with fine, technical moves to finish (47m, 5b).

ORKNEY, Hoy, St. John's Head – Big John 457m, Extremely Severe
M. Fowler, J. Lincoln. 20th June, 1988.

Takes the soaring arête to the left of *Longhope Route*. Not many routes compare. Start on the left-hand side of the grass slope at the base of the cliff.

Climb grass to a tangle of ropes beneath the centre of the upper wall. Belay at the top of a rope hanging down a rock wall (144m). Climb a slabby wall trending right to a ledge then back left to grassy ledges level with the base of the 4b chimney on *Longhope Route* (45m, 5b). Traverse horizontally left for 22m and climb up and back slightly right for 23m to a stance below the prominent overhanging flake crack leading up left to the arête (45m, 4c). Climb to a ledge at the start of the flake crack (23m, 4c). Layback the overhanging flake and struggle sensationally up the upper flake to a small corner ledge (26m, 5c). Continue in the same line up the corner to a ledge on the arête beneath a prominent overhang (16m, 5b). Trend leftwards round the overhang and follow a vague fault line to a ledge after 29m. Move right along this to the arête, surmount an overhang, and gain a ledge (38m, 5b). Climb a difficult but well protected crack on the right-hand side of the arête to a ledge. Traverse this round to the left side of the arête to belay where two large blocks have dropped from the overhang above about 12m left of the arête (29m, 6a). Pull over the overhang and climb direct for 6m to a traverse crack. Follow this rightwards to a ledge just left of the arête. Move up via two dubious undercut flakes and use a very poor peg in a poorly protected position to gain a ledge (32m, 5c). Climb a delicate wall on the left to gain a shallow groove leading to a ledge. Climb the short chimney above to a further ledge and belay below an overhang on the left (32m, 5b). Surmount the overhang in the fault line, easier to the top (27m).

Descent was by grassy slopes and a short rock step about 400m north of St John's Head, i.e. the other way from the Old Man.

SKYE

SGURRSGUMAIN – *The Klondyker*

137m, Hard Very Severe

A. Tibbs, D. Bearhop. 3rd May, 1988.

A recommended route with some fine climbing. Start about 8m below the white blaze directly below a chimney on *The Slant*.

Climb diagonally leftwards up a slab for 10m to gain a corner left of the chimney on *The Slant*. Layback up a corner until it is possible to move rightwards to a cracked slab which leads to a belay at the foot of a steep impressive wall (30m 4b). Climb by a small corner and cracks to gain the left side of a large sloping ledge about half-way up the steep wall. Gain weak crackline above from a perched block on the left, follow this and the wider crack above through an overhang to belay on a large ledge next to an old peg. Joint belay with *Sunset Slab*. An improbable looking pitch for the grade (30m, 5a). Climb the groove above the peg until an easy left traverse can be made to a ledge at the foot of an obvious groove with a yellow left wall (22m, 4a). Move left round an edge into an exposed position and climb up leftwards past an overhang to a basalt recess. Climb up to a small well positioned ledge, then up a short wall to a belay (30m, 4c). Move rightwards and finish up the painfully rough arête (25m).

SGURR NAN EAG – *The Chasm*

GRADE II/III

D. Rennie, C. Smith. 22nd February, 1987.

Wonderfully old-fashioned with superb rock scenery. The very recessed position should ensure a build-up in all but the leanest conditions. Recommended.

COIRE A'GHRUNDA, North Crag.

The following routes lie on **The Stack** of the **North Crag of Coire A'Ghrunda**. Seen from the slabs of lower **Coire A'Ghrunda**, **The Stack** has two very prominent rightward facing corners and a steep corner/groove system to the left. The rightmost corner curves rightwards and is formed where **The Stack** abuts the slab leaving a 30cm wide crack in the corner. The first route takes the large corner to the left of this while the second takes the steep groove.

– *Gonzo Jamming*

E1

G. Jones, A. Waters. 2nd May, 1988.

Scrambling and easy climbing lead to a leftwards rising terrace at the base of **The Stack**. Belay about 22m up the slab in the rightmost corner. Step left and continue to the base of the second corner. Climb the lower corner to a large stance and belay. Climb the upper corner direct via a slippery jam (5b).

– *Stormwatch*

47m, E2/E3

G. Jones, A. Waters. 2nd May, 1988.

Take a belay about 6m up the slab from the terrace, below a niche. Step left to a short crack, climb this and step left to another corner. Climb to a large terrace and belay on the left at the foot of the groove proper (23m, 5a). Climb this and the steep slab via strenuous fingerlocks in the rightward slanting crack (crux). Pull into a pod, swing back out left to a crack, and then break into the steep corner to emerge on the notched arête (24m, 5c/6a).

SRON NA CICHE, Eastern Buttress – *Pocks*

33m, E2

G. Suzca, C. Moody. 13th June, 1988.

Start up *Creag Dubh Grooves* then climb crack on left to overlap (*Dilemma* goes over overlap here). Move right under overlap to ledge, step right from ledge then climb overlap and move up right to *Creag Dubh Grooves* belay (5b). Go up or down *Creag Dubh Grooves*. (A variation? – Ed.)

– *Strappado, Direct Start*

E1

G. Suzca, C. Moody. 13th June, 1988.

Start up *Strappado* or *The Snake* up to crack in slab just left of *The Snake* and climb it (poor protection) to ledge and belay (5a). Climb *Strappado* for 10m (obvious crack on left), direct continues from here, original goes right. This pitch makes *Strappado Direct* almost independent of *Strappado*.

THE OLD MAN OF STORR – *Staffin Face*

64m, Extremely Severe

M. Fowler, D. Tunstall, J. Lincoln. 25th June, 1988.

Exiting climbing up the Staffin side of the Old Man. Poor protection and dubious rock make this a serious undertaking. Start at the neck on the Staffin (north) side.

A deceptively hard pitch. Climb diagonally leftwards to some holes at 6m. Move left and up to a dubious block (PR placed while hanging from this). Gain a slight groove above (PR) and trend rightwards to the arête. Follow this for 5m to a good stance common with the original route (26m, 5c). Climb straight up above the collapsing thread of the belay (PR) and then follow the right-hand side of the arête, regaining it at 19m via a large dubious block. Easier ground leads to the top (38m, 5b).

NORTHERN HIGHLANDS**STAC POLLAIDH, West (No. 1) Buttress** – *Expecting to Fly*

40m, E3

T. Prentice. 30th May, 1989.

A strenuous and delicate route in a fine position on the main wall, following the diagonal crack and grey groove which breaks through the band of overhangs, right of the mossy recess. Start above the short gully, right of the lower wall. (The dirty and artificial corner has been climbed).

Up easy rock to an old peg at the terrace. Climb flakes on the right before moving back left into the main crackline which leads to the hanging groove below the roof. Use a flake crack, runner on the left, to gain a bridge on pebbles in the groove. A steep move brings good layaways, Friend 3, which lead with difficulty to a rest. Continue up the crack (6a). Cleaned and inspected on abseil.

– *The Moine Thrutch* 42m, Very Severe

A. Tibbs, A. Matthewson. 14th May, 1988.

Climbs the rocks immediately right of the main smooth wall on the *West Buttress*.

Climb rocks to a short corner. Climb corner to a spacious ledge. Climb second corner above to a second ledge and belay (30m, 5a). Move out leftwards from belay and thrutch up the obvious leftward slanting crack to the top (12m, 5a).

No. 2 Buttress – *Bloodsucker*

20m, E2

S. Richardson, T. Prentice. 15th May, 1988.

This climbs the second deep chimney crack right of *Release The Bats*, finishing up that route. A traditional struggle (5c). 1 rest point used for cleaning.

– *Stakeout*

55m, E3

T. Prentice, S. Richardson. 14th May, 1988.

An excellent route climbing the buttress, then corners and cracks up the prominent tower. Start at the right end of a raised terrace about 10m right of *Bloodsucker*, where a crackline slants from right to left below a large blocky roof.

Climb the crack until a hard move can be made left round the roof into a sentry box. Continue up and right onto a slab, then return to the groove on the left and follow it (small loose block) to a ledge, a bold pitch (25m, 5c). Continue up the corner above then by delightful cracks and corners to the very summit of the pinnacle (30m, 5b).

- *Black Riders*

45m, E2

S. Richardson, T. Prentice. 14th May, 1988.

Right of *Stakeout* is a large open corner. Right again is a fine groove and corner line flanked on the right by a series of large overhangs.

Follow cracks and grooves round three small roofs until steep moves up a short wall lead to a roomy ledge (25m, 5b). Climb the crack above, taking care with a chockstone, and bridge with difficulty up the continuation corner (20m, 5c).

Pinnacle Gully - *Pretty Bourgeois Crack*

20m, E2

T. Prentice, S. Richardson. 14th May, 1988.

An exhilarating, well protected exercise in hand-jamming. *Pinnacle Gully* divides at the top, this route taking the obvious steep crack line in the buttress forming the left wall of the right-hand branch. Scramble to a belay left of the base of the crack.

The Keep.

From the approach path climb over **The Keep** and down into the bealach dividing it from the **East Buttress**.

- *Coigach's Burning*

20m, E1

T. Prentice, S. Richardson. 15th May, 1988.

From the bealach descend the gully towards the road (southwards) for a few metres until a grass terrace leads round to the right. This route starts at the fine crack line at the end of the terrace. Climb the crack to a heather bay, continue to an overhanging finger crack and pull into a recess with difficulty. Finish up the gully on the left.

Note

Andy Tibbs reports that the prominent chimney/crack avoided by *Noxferatu* provides a pleasant Very Difficult pitch!

BEINN EIGHE, Coire Mhic Fearchair, Far East Wall.

On the left side of the **Far East Wall** is an impressively compact, steep grey wall with a white streaked bulging nose towards its left side. Further left the cliff becomes more broken. Just left of the nose is a shallow overhanging groove, the line of *Moonshine*. Left again the wall is bounded by a much more prominent groove, at the base of which is the first belay of *Sting*. Three routes climb the main wall between the nose and the right-bounding big corner of *Sundance*.

The three have a common start, reaching the horizontal fault by a fine left-slanting corner. Thereafter, *The Reaper* takes a crackline on the right, *Seeds of Destruction* goes directly up, and *Angel Face* goes diagonally left above the bulging nose.

The main wall starts to catch the sun in June at 3 p.m. and holds it until 10.30, consequently drying out faster than much of the **Eastern Ramparts** (which lose the sun at 11 a.m.).

- *Moonshine*

95m, E4

C. Forrest, A. Nisbet. 10th June, 1988.

The main pitch takes the shallow overhanging groove left of the bulging nose of the buttress. Sustained technical climbing. Start on the long grassy ledge under the buttress, about 10m from the left end, by a small rock scar.

Go straight up the wall, then move right into a flake line and follow this to belay by the horizontal break (25m, 5b). Go diagonally left to gain the base of the groove (bold). Climb the groove with increasing difficulty to a foothold on the left arête. Climb straight up to an overhang, then traverse right and up on to a ledge (35m, 6a). Climb the short awkward corner above, then move left and up a long easy wall to finish (35m, 5b).

— *Angel Face* 95m, E2

C. Forrest, A. Nisbet. 1st June, 1988.

A highly recommended route taking a sensational and improbable line above the bulging nose of the wall. Protection is excellent apart from bold moves to gain the tiny ramp (pitch 2) – 3 each of R.P. 3, 4, and 5 recommended. Start at the left end of a long flake which is embedded against the right side of the lower wall on the long grass terrace.

Climb a narrow ramp leftwards, move right into a shallow groove, and climb it to a grass ledge at the base of a bigger groove on the right (15m, 5a). Take the left-leaning groove to the horizontal ledge (technical crux). Traverse left about 5m along the fault to a small pedestal. Climb the wall above, then move left to gain a tiny ramp. Go up the ramp to a crack, then make a long step left into the base of a thinner crack. Climb the crack to a small roof. Traverse delicately left under the roof to the edge of nowhere, then return unexpectedly right to a belay ledge. A crack above the right end of the ledge takes large Rocks (35m, 5c). Climb the crack, passing the belay nuts. When the crack becomes unfriendly move slightly rightwards and up to a large flake-ledge. Go on up the wall above to a smaller flake-ledge. Traverse left to a large block (possible belay). Now trend rightwards across slabby ground to a steep blocky finish (45m, 5b).

— *Seeds of Destruction* 95m, E3

A. Nisbet, W. Todd. 9th June, 1988.

A superb route with very sustained climbing up the wall left of *The Reaper*. Start as for *The Reaper/Angel Face*.

Climb as for *The Reaper* (15m, 5a). Climb *The Reaper* groove to the horizontal fault and traverse left to the pedestal of *Angel Face*. Move rightwards past a poor peg runner and pull over a bulge into a shallow corner. Belay on the right under a smooth groove (20m, 5c). Climb the groove to a big ledge on the right. Step back down and traverse left until a left facing corner can be gained. Climb the corner to the right end of the large flake-ledge of *Angel Face*. Climb the wall above to the next ledge (30m, 5c). Go up to a small rock scar, then steeply up and left to a rest at a horizontal break with a good runner. Traverse right, then go up into a curving groove on the right. Above this go straight up steep blocky ground to finish (30m, 5c).

Eastern Ramparts — *Claustrophobic Corner*

S. Blagborough, A. Nisbet. 13th June, 1988. 70m, E1

Scramble up to start below the large right-facing corner which lies above the start of *The Upper Girdle*.

Climb up on to a pedestal in the corner proper. Climb the corner for about 5m to an overhang. Make bold moves out across the left wall and pull into a subsidiary corner. Climb this to regain the main corner. Traverse left and climb the left rib of the corner to a belay ledge (35m, 5a). Go diagonally right and break through the band of overhangs at a jutting block on the right. Climb the wall above slightly leftwards (35m, 5b).

— *The Ho Chi Min Trail*

S. Blagborough, A. Nisbet. 15th June, 1988. 70m, E2

A good route with a sensational first pitch. Scramble up to start in the centre of the 'wet recess' (sometimes dry).

Climb the bulging wall on good holds, then move right into the right corner of the recess. Climb the corner to the capping roof and pull over using an unusual wedged block (crux). Traverse left by a flake crack which bends upwards into a shallow groove. Go up the groove until a short left traverse can be made to a tiny square belay ledge, 1 – 1.5 Friend in horizontal break above (35m, 5c). Return to the groove and climb it steeply until it peters out under the roof system. Go diagonally right under the roofs and pass them at their end. Climb the wall above into an easier groove. This leads to a short corner and roof, passed on the right (35m, 5b).

- *Paleface Wall* 100m, E2

S. Blagborough, A. Nisbet. 14th June, 1988.

A direct line up the pale wall left of *Pale Diédre*. Somewhat eliminate in nature, but a series of fine technical pitches on the best rock. Start at a 6m pinnacle below a rib, in whose left side is set the initial corner of *Pale Rider*.

Climb the front face of the pinnacle. Go up the wall above, then right and back left into a shallow corner on the crest of the rib. Go up this to *The Upper Girdle* (45m, 5b). Some 10m left of the pale diédre is a clean right facing corner. Gain this from the left and climb it to a ledge (20m, 5b). Climb the shallow corner above the right end of the ledges to jugs. Move left and go up to a ledge (10m, 5c). Climb the crackline above the right end of the ledge. Move left round a roof and make a thin move left before going straight up to a big ledge (15m, 5c). Climb the horizontally faulted wall directly above (strenuous). A rattling flake is a crucial hold (10m, 5b).

- *Tainted Galahad*

J. Mothersele, A. Nisbet. 8th June, 1988.

110m, E2

A line between *Boggle* and *Rampage*, passing left of the square-cut roof.

Start as for *Rampage* and belay on top of the large pinnacle (40m). Step right as for *Rampage*, then climb the obvious corner to belay 3m below the square roof (15m, 5a). Step down and left on to a foothold on the arête. Swing down under a bulge on the left, then surmount it (crux). Move left and climb a crack to a flake near *Boggle*. Return right and belay in a corner (15m, 5c). Climb the corner to just below its top. Traverse right on to easier ground. Go diagonally right, climb an awkward bulge by a large flake and finish by short corners and walls on the left. A more direct line will be better in drier conditions (40m, 5a).

At the right end of *The Ramparts* is a large white wall above *The Upper Girdle*. Between the white wall and the chimney line of *Shang High* on the left is formed a grey tower, *The Tower of Darkness*. The white wall is bounded on either side by a corner system and above its right side is a huge detached flake, very obvious from the base of the cliff.

- *The Tower of Darkness*

C. Forrest, A. Nisbet. 10th June, 1988.

100m, E4

Climbs the impressive grey tower, with a fingery crux. Start just right of the lower chimney of *Shang High*, which is a wide roofed fault, or a long thin crackline.

Climb the crack to a belay under the broad rib left of the pale wall (45m, 5b). Climb the rib to a block ledge under the tower itself. There is a reddish roofed groove above the left edge of the ledge (25m, 5a). Climb the thin crack above the right end of the ledge and go up to a roof. Step right under the roof and go up to another roof on the right edge of the tower. Finger traverse left, then go up the wall (crux) to an overhanging crack which leads to the top (30m, 6a).

- *Fear of the Dark*

S. Blagborough, A. Nisbet. 13th June, 1988.

100m, E1

Climbs the discontinuous corner system which bounds the white wall on its left. Start at the lower chimney of *Shang High*.

Climb the right side of the chimney and the wide crack at the right side of the roof to belay on *The Upper Girdle* (40m 5a). Walk right 10m and belay under the white wall. A crack in the white rock above is the natural line but looks hard. Instead climb a reddish corner left of the two white areas and move left to belay as for *The Tower of Darkness* (20m, 4c). Traverse right round an arête. Climb the arête a metre or so, then move right into the main corner. Climb the corner to a roof. Traverse right, then go up the wall and over a bulge into a finishing groove (which is 10m left of the large detached flake and just right of a big roof) (40m, 5b).

— *Fairytale Groove*
100m, Hard Very Severe

C. Forrest, A. Nisbet. 1st June, 1988.

The route takes the big corner which bounds the right side of the white wall. The corner is wrongly marked as *Gnome Wall* in the 1973 Climber's Guide. Start below a narrow chimney right of the lower chimney of *Shang High* (old cairn).

Climb straight up, passing the chimney on its immediate right, to reach *The Upper Girdle* at the same place as *Gnome Wall* (which comes in from the right). Belay on the right, under the pale wall (as for *Fear of the Dark*) (45m, 4b). Traverse right, then go up into a roofed recess. Pull out leftwards from the recess into the main corner and follow it to easier ground (45m, 5a). Climb a short wall to the easy crest of *East Buttress* (10m).

Central Wall – Patey's Direct Route

A. Nisbet, P. Yardley. 21st November, 1988. GRADE V

The summer route was followed, using a Friend to rest and find holds on the 'difficult 40ft wall,' which is immediately below *The Upper Girdle* ledge.

— *East Wall* 140m, GRADE V

B. Davidson, A. Nisbet. 16th February, 1989.

The description of the Lovat/Weir (1954) route can be made to fit with the following route. The 'traverse up left round base of tower' would correspond to the start of pitch 3 and the 'prominent right-angled chimney' would be a 6m overhanging corner which was avoided by the descent of the winter route and sports a very old peg. 'The large block lying against the face' would be the huge detached flake. The following full description is given.

The route takes a big stepped corner system in the steep buttress between *Assegai* and *Fulmar Chimneys*. The system starts at the foot of an obvious vertical wide crack formed by a huge detached flake and trends up right. The start of the route is just below and right of the wide crack and can be reached in good conditions at grade II/III standard by traversing in and following *East Gully*, moving right to **The Tower**, then up leftwards on blocky ground.

Climb leftwards and follow a chimney just right of the back of the corner system. At its top move right to a huge block belay below vertical twin cracks (30m). Climb the left crack, but finish by the last moves of the right crack (15m). Take a short corner on the left with a jutting block. Move left, then up to a squeeze chimney (this was attempted briefly). Traverse left, then descend 10m into the main corner system. Follow this to a big ledge on the left (35m). Go more easily right and back left by a chimney to the crest (25m). Easy ground to the top (35m).

— *Flight of the Condor*
250m, GRADE V/VI

B. Davidson, A. Nisbet. 17th February, 1989.

The route takes a line up the right side of the face, passing left of a big left-facing corner on the final tier. The relationship to the summer route (*Condor Crack*) is uncertain. The route was started by traversing in below *East Buttress* (quartzite) to the base of the gully right of **The Tower**.

Two short pitches in the gully led to an easy ramp leading out rightwards towards *Central Buttress*. Climb straight up to *The Upper Girdle*. An obvious off-width flake crack can now be seen on up on the left. Traverse left a short distance then up a groove until a long step left gains the base of the crack. Climb the crack – very hard in heavily verglased conditions (30m). Climb the wall above, trending slightly right to a ledge. Traverse right, then descend to the right to gain the top of the big left-facing corner. Climb an easy chimney to blocky ground (35m). Go diagonally left to a big pinnacle, then back right round an edge to a bay. The short chimney at the back leads to snow slopes.

Notes

The Sting now goes free at Very Severe, 5a. (S. Blagborough, A. Nisbet. 15th June, 1988).

Colgarra also goes free, and is reported to be a route of great character and considerable steepness. Grade is E3 (4c, 5b, 5a, 5c, 5b), and low in the grade. Pitch 2 should now read: Traverse right to gain a groove and follow it past the horizontal fault to belay at jammed flakes (20m, 5b).

LIATHACH, Coire Dubh Beag – Thumbscrew 200m, GRADE IV/V
I. Barron, S. Kennedy. 25th February, 1989.

Climbs the icefall parallel to and left of *Footless Gully*. As with that route, the climb is spoiled by possible escapes along wide terraces, but has good pitches nevertheless.

Start some 8m left of the initial chimney of *Footless Gully* and climb a short, leftward slanting groove to the foot of a very steep and narrow icefall. Pull on to the icefall and climb to a large terrace. Continue up and leftwards to a large icefall which leads to a second terrace. Mixed ground leads to an obvious deep chimney cleaving the final tier. An entertaining pitch, involving a through route, leads to the ridge.

Note

An alternative to the start of the above route was climbed the same day by G. Nicol and S. Pearson, starting up a short steep corner some 40m to the left of the start of *Thumbscrew*, and joining it after 2 or 3 pitches. More details later if received.

BEINN ALLIGIN, Tom na Gruagaich, North-East Face.

The area of cliff to the right of *Bilas* (SMCJ 1987) contains two further icefalls. More broken and mixed in nature than the existing routes further left.

– *Light of Bengal*

I. Barron, S. Kennedy. 26th February, 1989. 270m, GRADE III/IV

The first icefall right of *Bilas*, directly in line with a large V notch on the summit ridge. Start close to *Bilas* and climb a succession of short steep ice pitches leading to a deep gully splitting the upper rocks. Finish up the gully in two pitches.

– *Shezan* 255m, GRADE IV

M. Macdonald, A. Scrase. 26th February, 1989.

Climbs the icefall right of the previous route which leads into an obvious narrow chimney in the upper part of the face. Climb the chimney in two pitches (crux) and finish up a short gully.

ARDMAIR CRAG (NH 118 987).

The cliff is situated just above the road, 500m north of Ardmail camp site. It forms the left wall of a small valley running at right angles to the road. At the right-hand end of the highest section is an amphitheatre. This is bounded on the right by an arête and crack system which contains a stepped pinnacle.

– *Summer Isles City* 25m, Hard Very Severe

I. Taylor, D. Meldrum. 2nd April, 1988.

Start at a cairn 12m left of the amphitheatre. Gain a triangular slab at half-height, traverse right and climb the cracked wall right of a corner (5a).

– *Totem Pole Crack* 40m, Very Severe

I. Taylor, D. Meldrum. 2nd April, 1988.

This route climbs the crack and pinnacle system, just right of the amphitheatre. Gain the crack from the left and climb to the top of the pinnacle. Follow the left-hand crack on to the arête and continue to a large ledge. Climb over the roof by its left end, then trend up and right via a shallow corner (4c).

Some distance further right of *Totem Pole Crack* is another cliff containing a long ledge. At the right-hand end of this is another buttress with an obvious dead tree.

— *Market Day* 30m, Hard Very Severe

I. Taylor, S. Ryan. 12th April, 1988.

Down and right of the tree a steep corner continues from a heather topped block. Climb the strenuous corner.

Several impressive, unclimbed cracks exist on the next buttress along to the right.

CARNMOR AREA, Hanging Crag (NG 976 751).

This crag, well seen from the causeway, lies high on the hillside between **Ghost Slabs** and **Little Crag**. It can be easily recognised by its smooth slabby top. The ground directly below the crag is very steep and broken, and it is best to approach along the ridge which extends WNW from the right-hand end of the cliff towards **Little Crag**.

This approach leads to the foot of the west face, which consists of a steep, grey pocketed wall to the left, with corners and overhangs to the right. The largest (left-most) overhang is near the middle of the face, with a large right slanting corner above and to the right of it. Below this overhang are two grooves; the right-hand groove leads to the foot of the aforementioned corner; The left-hand groove contains a large detached flake and peters out just below the overhang.

— *Causeway Corner*

49m, Hard Severe

W. McCrae, N. Wilson. 26th May, 1988.

This route climbs the right-hand groove and the large corner above. Climb the groove, moving slightly right at the top into the foot of the corner. Grassy stance and belay (27m). Climb the right wall of the corner to the top of the crag (22m). Technical grade is 4b.

— *Changing Face*

67m, Hard Very Severe

N. Wilson, W. McCrae. 26th May, 1988.

An exposed and exciting climb. Gain a turf ledge at the foot of the left-hand groove (9m). Climb up the groove, passing to the right of the detached flake, and traverse back left above the flake to good holds below the overhang. Follow a rising leftwards traverse on pockets out on to a steep, undercut wall, and around a blunt rib to easier rock. Trend up and right to a grassy stance and small spike belay under an overhang (30m). Finish leftwards up the top part of the wall towards an obvious ledge on the skyline. Easy slabs above lead to the top (28m). Technical grade is 5a.

CREAG MHORTHOLLAIÐH, Lower Tollie Crag — *Across The Links* 25m, E3/E4

R. Anderson, C. Greaves. 8th July, 1988.

A direct and much better start to *Each Uisge* climbing directly through the horizontal breaks just to the right. Start on the ledge at the foot of the crack which is the obvious direct entry into *Shazam*, and is the first part of *Each Uisge*.

Move up to small wedged blocks and a short thin crack, step right and gain the horizontal break above. Continue to the next break and climb directly to break beneath roof, step left and move up to holds at the next break. Join *Each Uisge* and follow this up right to belay (6a). The overall grade of the route is E4 (6a, 6a).

— *Gulf Coast Highway* 72m, E3

R. Anderson, C. Greaves. 3rd July, 1988.

Initially takes a line between *The Trip* and *The Handrail*, crossing the latter to climb a fine crack in the headwall just right of *Rain in the Face*. Start about 10m left of *The Trip*.

Move up and traverse right to blocks to gain obvious right to left slanting crack which is climbed to a tiny sapling. Step right and climb edge to belay beside large flake of *The Trip* (24m, 5a). Start in groove on left and climb to roof, pull round left and up to gain good jug on the right. Move up leftwards to the edge, then back right to surmount roof and continue to tree belay on *The Handrail* (24m, 5c). Move up then left to gain a quartz patch and then up to the base of a thin, right-leaning crack. Climb this to the top (24m, 6a). Abseil down the corner of *Stoney Broke*.

- Home Start

24m, E1

R. Anderson, C. Greaves. 22nd May, 1988.

Climbs the obvious crack right of *Loctite*, gained from the top of that route's first pitch. Scramble up and left along ledge. Climb the flake, step right up to niche and climb crack (5c).

Upper Crag - Love is the Drug

85m, E2

A. Tibbs, A. Milne. 4th July, 1988.

Climbs the wall right of *Cocaine*. Start right of *Cocaine* below leftward slanting twin cracks and about 4m left of a broken corner.

Climb twin cracks to holly bush then up right side of holly bush. Steep twin cracks above lead to easier climbing over huge blocks to a belay on the right (25m, 5b). Traverse left over top of blocks to a small ledge. Gain another small ledge above, then a third ledge before moving left to the line of *Cocaine*. Climb up for 4m to belay at the right side of a huge flake (15m, 5a). Leave the belay on the right and climb the obvious cracks to a roof. Pull out left over roof and struggle up the crack above to a small ledge and peg belay (20m, 5b). Traverse right along ledge past perched block to the foot of a steep rightward slanting crack. Climb crack then finish up easier ground (25m, 5a).

Notes

Rain in the Face has been repeated in a single pitch, and is reported to be superb with a grade of E3 (6a). (R. Anderson, C. Greaves).

Gudgeon now goes free at E2 (5b, 5c, 5a), with a superb second pitch. (R. Anderson, C. Greaves. 22nd May, 1988).

Andy Tibbs reports that *Catastasis* has been climbed free at E2 (5c).

FUARTHOLL, Mainrechan Buttress - Reach for the Sky

198m, GRADE VI

S. Jenkins, M. E. Moran. 3rd March, 1989.

The right side of the buttress offers an awesome winter challenge, but because of its steepness and windward exposure rarely collects snow in quantity. This route follows the obvious central ramp of the summer climb *Snoopy* before breaking out left on very steep mixed ground to gain finishing grooves. Nowhere desperate, it is however a sustained and intimidating climb with some spectacular exposure. Start as for *Snoopy* at a spiral terrace leading left into the bottom of the ramp.

Follow the terrace to a bay beneath the ramp (35m). Climb the ramp corner, generally on tufts and verglas, to a terrace on the left, spike belay (30m). Go back onto the ramp and via a rightward deviation on its slab gain the corner at its top. Climb this and exit left up to loose wedged blocks beneath a sheer corner. A narrow ledge leads left out of this impasse to a well poised belay on the front of the buttress (38m). Climb mixed ground above trending left to an overhang. Mantelshelf over this then make a long left traverse, gaining a turfy ramp beneath iced grooves (exposed and unprotected), belay up and left at a huge cracked block (30m). Step right and climb an ice column to gain easier angled grooves which are followed first left then back right and left again to nut belays (30m). Go up and right to regain the groove line which is followed through two further tiers to a sudden ending (35m).

South East Cliff - The Ayatollah

190m, GRADE VI

I. Dring, M. E. Moran. 23rd February, 1989.

Takes an uncompromising line between *Tholl Gate* and *Evasion Grooves*, following an obvious steep slab corner in the second tier, and then a series of icy grooves directly above. This is a superb route. Start as for the aforementioned routes at a shallow bay beneath the highest part of the cliff.

Climb as for *Evasion Grooves*, tricky icy grooves to a snow terrace, then a right traverse to a spike belay beneath the slab corner (50m). Make some radical moves up the smooth corner until usable ice can be gained on the slab on the left. Follow the ice

smears to a narrow terrace, traverse right under an icicle, then up a rocky groove for 4m to belay at a cracked block (30m). Bridge across left to gain the icicle, then up directly. A short groove, an easier snow bay and a further iced groove lead to belays at a wedged block below a steeper icefall (35m). Climb the icefall, then go left and back right in easier angled mixed grooves to gain a terrace below the final rock wall (45m). Traverse 5m left then go up steep snow and a runnel to the cornice (30m).

SGORR RUADH, Raeburn's Buttress – First Blood 185m, GRADE IV
S. Jenkins, M. E. Moran. 21st November, 1988.

Starts directly opposite the mouth of the gully bounding the right side of **Raeburn's Buttress**, about 50m above *Fox's Face*. A shallow bay leads up to a steep corner with a prominent crack in its left wall.

Climb the bay to belay beneath the crack (20m). Follow the crack direct, finishing over a roof to good block belay, a fine hard pitch (25m). Go up grooves above, moving slightly left then traversing back right under roofs and up easily to belay beneath a left slanting groove (45m). Climb the groove (awkward to start) to gain easy ground which is followed to the top of **Raeburn's Buttress** (95m).

– *Raeburn's Superdirect* 190m, GRADE IV
M. E. Moran, P. Potter. 17th February, 1989.

The broad front face of the buttress is split by a prominent slanting chimney line which is followed directly throughout. (The Brooker/Wilkinson route *Raeburn's Buttress Direct* weaves an intricate line on the face to the left of this chimney). An excellent route, mainly on ice. Start at the foot of the chimney.

Climb a short ice pitch, then a right slanting iced groove passing a chockstone to a terrace (45m). Up the groove above to a steeper iced exit (45m). Climb over short walls into an overhung eul de sac which is surmounted by tricky mixed climbing up the left wall, then up ice to an casement, belay on the right (40m). An iced chimney then a short step lead to a belay on the left (40m). A final awkward step leads to easy ground (20m).

Note

M. E. Moran records a girdle traverse of **Coire na Feola**, **Coire na Poite**, and **Coire nan Fhamhair** (*Das Rheingold* 2.8km grade IV). The route starts at the top of *Easy Gully* above **Coire na Feola**. While the present New Climbs Editor believes that all routes should be recorded, he also believes that certain should not have a detailed description, leaving the fun of exploration for others as well. This is one such route; the full description has been archived.

DIABEG, Charlie's Tower Crag – Bromide 52m, Hard Very Severe
W. Hood, C. Moody, B. Williamson. 30th April, 1988.

Lies left of *Plunge*. Move up to overhang left of the scoop of *Plunge*. Climb crack through overhang past loose block to a tree belay shared with *Plunge* (16m, 5a). Move left and climb crack right of the arête. Continue up the arête (36m 5a).

Condom Wall – Instant Muscle 32m, E4
D. Griffiths, I. Griffiths. 4th April, 1988.

A more direct line up the crag then *Condom*. Start to the right of that route behind a small thorn bush. Climb directly up the wall to gain an obvious hanging crack, follow this and from the point it terminates move up left to join *Condom* at the ledge on the buttress edge. Finish up the left to right crack of *Condom* (6a).

Note

Dead Mouse Crack (SMCJ 1988) was climbed by one J. Brown and friend on 8th June, 1985. (Someone has always been there before you!).

GLEN AFFRIC, Sgurr na Lapaich – Punchline GRADE II/III
G. Suzca, P. Hyde. 1st January, 1985.

Right of the main face is a slabby wall with an overhang in its centre. Climb a short chimney on the left to an awkward move right and follow a ramp to a belay in the corner. Climb the corner above and follow an exposed gangway to the top.

The obvious corner gully on the main face is called *Groove into 85* and was climbed on the same day by another party at grade III.

WHITEN HEAD, Loch Eriboll, The Maiden.

The **Maiden** consists of two prominent stacks separated by a deep channel and situated off **Whiten Head**. The easterly stack was first climbed by Patey in 1970 with tragic aftermath. The westerly stack remained unclimbed. The approach was by boat.

Western Stack – Waterfront Wall 57m, Severe

M. Fowler, C. Newcombe. 28th May, 1988.

A superb route on solid rock up impressive terrain normally reserved for much harder climbs. Start on the north eastern (seaward) corner of the stack. Climb up (line variable) on good holds to a depression beneath a steep band, stance on the right (26m). Surmount the small overhang above the stance and move left to a short discontinuous crack-line. Climb this for 6m to overhangs and traverse left to a sensational stance on the arête (22m). Easier ground to the top (9m).

– Maiden Without A Hole

77m, Hard Very Severe

C. Watts, J. Lincoln. 28th May, 1988.

A loose route taken by the first ascensionists. Start in the centre of the eastern face (facing the **East Stack**). Climb awkwardly onto ramp/traverse line. Move left along ramp for 26m to belay at the base of a shattered groove (32m, 4c). Climb the groove to a large stance (13m, 4c). Move along ledge to the right and climb a short wall to a further ledge. Cross this to the base of the headwall. Climb up and right in an exposed position to gain the top (32m, 4c).

Eastern Stack – Ode 54m, Hard Very Severe

M. Fowler, C. Newcombe. 28th May, 1988.

A fine steep route taking a prominent line up the west face (facing the **West Stack**). Start just right of the cave running through the stack where the initial overhangs guard access to a scoop and right trending ramp. Surmount the overhangs trending left and move back right into the scoop. Follow the prominent right trending ramp-line to capping roofs and move right and up to gain ledges. Follow these leftwards to belay beneath the prominent central fault cleaving the upper part of the face (29m, 5a). Ascend the steep corner line to an exit on the left. The overhanging final wall is circumvented on the left (25m, 5a).

– Funeral for a Friend 77m, E1

C. Watts, J. Lincoln. 28th May, 1988.

Takes the eastern side of the East Stack. A fine hard first pitch, followed by easier climbing. Start below the east face at the base of a pillar to the left of the cave. Climb up the pillar and over a small roof to a niche on the right. Move up and right and pull over an overhang to climb a short wall to a ledge (19m, 5b). Traverse the ledge rightwards to its end. Move up to a corner above for 3m to a ledge and belay (26m, 4a). Continue up the corner then directly up short walls and ledges to the top (32m, 4c).

CAITHNESS, Fort Rock.

This stack is near Thurso. It is about 32m high and overhanging all round. It lies about 3 miles west of **Clett Rock/Holborn Head** and in the apparent absence of any local name has been christened **Fort Rock**. The only real line of weakness is a right trending groove on the east face. Approach was by boat from Scrabster.

– Fort Rock 29m, Hard Very Severe

M. Fowler, J. Lincoln, C. Newcombe, C. Watts. 29th May, 1988.

Land on the landward side and scramble to a large ledge at 8m. From the eastern end of this ledge (on the arête of the stack) move up into a niche and make a tricky traverse right above overhangs to gain the groove. Follow this to capping overhangs and escape left onto the grassy top (5a).

CAIRNGORMS

BRAERIACH, Coire Bhrochain, West Buttress – Vanishing Point 200m, GRADE IV
B. Findlay, G. Strange. 3rd April, 1988.

Start from the foot of the ramp on *Direct Route* and climb the obvious right-facing corner system trending slightly right. Continue straight up to below the final tower then move right to finish up the chimney grooves of the *Direct*.

Garbh Choire Mor – Sidetracked 150m, GRADE III/IV

A. Black, J. Cuthbert. 30th October, 1988.

On the broken buttress between **Choire Dhaidh** and the upper coire, i.e. on the right entering the latter. A series of poorly protected slabs, thinly verglased early in the season, provide constant interest interspersed with steep snow climbing. Start 15m to the left of the prominent easy snow gully.

Climb delicately up the slab for 10m and continue on steep snow above to blocks on the right (50m). Step left on to steep slab, continue over bulge into the large snow bay below the impending left wall (50m). Straight up to the series of terraces/slabs (crux), which can be climbed direct for best sport, or via the bulge on the left. Continue on easier ground above to blocks on the right.

BEN MACDHUL, Coire Sputan Dearg – Amethyst Wall GRADE V
A. Black, A. Nisbet. 24th November, 1988.

The route was started above the slanting chimney-crack which becomes artificial in winter when the snow in *Slab Chimney* builds up to the level of the first stance. The next two pitches (flake cracks, short slab) were followed as summer. The summer crux was circumvented by a devious line on the left; *The Plumblin* was followed to the base of the crack itself. From here a slightly descending right traverse led into a flake-corner which was climbed to its top. Another short right traverse led to a belay on a small ledge directly above the previous belay. A short corner and exit right on flakes regained the summer line.

– *The Black Tower, Original Route*

S. Richardson, G. Hornby. 30th October, 1988. 110m, GRADE V

Patey's summer line was climbed under powder in three sustained pitches. The 7m groove and the final steep crack provided the cruxes. (The original winter ascent took a line mainly to the right of the summer crux section).

NORTHERN COIRES, Coire an Lochain – Bulgy GRADE V/VI
A. Nisbet, J. Preston. 27th November, 1988.

This is a natural direct finish to an earlier route *When the Wind Blows* (SMCJ 1985), following the summer route *Bulgy*. In the early season conditions, a smooth wall blocked entry to the initial groove and the route was started by a low traverse in from the start of *Savage Slit*. The double roofs gave some exciting and intimidating moves, particularly the first (crux) because protection could not be arranged until the lip was gained (there is a good horizontal crack up and left from the lip).

LOCH A'AN BASIN, Hell's Lum Crag.

The following climbs lie on the Left Sector, between the line of *Styx* and *Hell's Lum* itself. All are slow to dry, but are on excellent clean rock.

– *Firewater* 110m, Very Severe

A. Fyffe, J. Hepburn. 18th June, 1988.

Climbs the slabs and overlaps in the region of *Styx*, starting left of that route and finishing to its right up a right-facing corner. Start just left of the edge of *Hell's Lum*.

Climb cracks in the wall just left of the edge then up a flat bottomed groove. Go up the ochre coloured slab to belay in a corner by a huge block (45m, 4b). Climb the slab to the first overlap and cross it by the break just right of the broken fault (just left of where *Styx* goes through its W-shaped overlap). Go diagonally right up the fine red slab to belay below the corner (35m, 4b). Climb the right-facing corner on the right of a pillar cut by big overhangs and finish up easy slabs.

– *The Bengal Lancer* 110m, Hard Very Severe

A. Fyffe, J. Hepburn. 18th June, 1988.

Approximates to the winter route *The Chancer* and climbs the big wide corner in the steep upper rocks. Follow *Firewater* to the top of the second pitch.

Climb a smaller corner on the right of the big one then move left round a rib on to a ledge (old peg runner). Move left to a crack, up this then back right to gain a thread then a jammed block above which the crack system is followed to the top (30m, 5a). (Surely only one new 30m pitch on a 110m route makes that pitch a variation, not a distinct route – Ed.).

– *Arc of a Diver*

115m, E2

J. Hepburn, A. Fyffe. 25th June, 1988.

Takes the slabs and overlaps left of *Hell's Lum* to finish up a blunt rib cut by overhangs which overlooks the gully. This is to the right of the corner of *The Bengal Lancer*. Start 2m left of the *Lum*.

Climb the thin diagonal crack which slants up left into a small sloping groove. Above, go up a short corner and easy ochre slabs to belay in a deep right-facing corner (45m, 5a). Go up the slab to under the big overlap and traverse right to below the wide fault in the nose. Climb into this weakness and exit left on to the slab. Continue up and right to belay near the edge of the slab (35m, 5c). Go up to below a roof and move right on to a fine red slab, and trend up and right till the slab runs out into steep rock. Step left on to the edge of a hanging slab then up the bulge into a short groove above which is a huge quartz hole. From the groove step left then go up to below the next overhang which is crossed on the right. Finish up the slabby wall, a superbly positioned pitch (35m, 5a).

BEINN A' BHUIRD, Garbh Coire – Black Danube

192m, GRADE IV

I. Barron, S. Kennedy. 3rd April, 1988.

Climbs the wall to the left of *East Wall Direct*, taking a vague fault in the centre of the upper buttress. The difficulties are concentrated in the upper section,

Climb *South-East Gully* for 45m then break out right and climb directly up a shallow groove line to a large snowfield (*Patey's East Wall Route* seems to cross here). Continue up snow to the base of the upper buttress (midway between *South-East Gully* and *East Wall Direct*). Climb a steep thin slab which leads into a deep groove. The groove was climbed for 10m in deep unconsolidated snow until a short traverse right led into a parallel groove which was followed to a snow bay. Exit the bay on the left by a steep slab and continue to a short wall above. Climb the wall awkwardly to reach easier ground, finishing a short distance right of *South-East Gully*.

Notes

Clova. N. Kekus and J. Fotheringham have climbed a route on a crag farther up the burn of Gowal than **Craig of Gowal** (G.R. 234 809), taking a vague gully/groove just left of centre. (*Lucky Jim*, grade II/III, 100m, 6th November, 1988).

Eagles Rocks. A winter ascent of a line approximating to *Flamingo* has been recorded dated February 1988. This had in fact been climbed by N. Spinks and friend in the winter of 1980.

LORN AND LOCHABER

BEINN SGULAIRD – Daktari

160m, E2

P. Hyde, G. Suzca. 13th June, 1986.

The route lies on the slabs which lie to the right of the main slabs. They lie from bottom right to top left, are covered with overlaps, and are not as steep as they appear. Start 10m up and right of the lowest slab, at a thread belay.

Climb straight up to the first overlap, turn this on the left, then up and slightly left to belay (38m, 4c). Traverse left for 6m to a short corner. Climb this to a good hold, move horizontally left, then slightly down until under an obvious nose of rock. Carry on diagonally left and then down slightly to belay on a large flake (42m, 5a). Above the flake is an overlap with a thin diagonal crack below it. After a hard move to get established, follow this to a good hold (crux). Continue in a straight line to belay on large boulders (47m, 5b). Move left along easy ledge and take the centre of a blank white slab to finish (33m, 4b/4c).

GLEN NEVIS, Ridge Buttress – *Rush* 12m, E4
G. Suzca, C. Moody. 21st May, 1988.

Lies on the overhanging left wall. Move up right to niche in the centre of the wall, climb up, then finish leftward along ramp (5c).

Whale Rock – *Strategic Midge Limitation Talks* 30m, E2/E3
I. Taylor, C. Moody. 26th June, 1988.

Lies on the wall which faces down the glen, to the right of the other routes. Climb crack containing a small pine tree. Finish leftwards up slab (5c).

Buccaneer Crag – *Altitude Sickness* 10m, E2
C. Moody, G. Suzca. 18th June, 1988.

The wide crack at the right-hand side (5c).

Car Park Crag – *Ex-lax* 21m, E4
G. Suzca, I. Taylor, C. Moody. 8th June, 1988.

Lies on the buttress left of the main crag. Climb up to a ledge and poor peg runner. Climb the wall using the arête, step right to a second peg, step left and continue to a tree (6a/6b).

– *Restless Natives* 80m, E5
G. Latter, K. Howett, A. Nelson. 7th May, 1988.

Climbs the long pillar at the left end of the main cliff. Start at the base of *Diagonal Route*. Go up into a niche. Make a hard move right into a second niche. Pull out into a corner groove which proves very entertaining, to a crack in the slab above and a ledge (6a). Climb the crack in the slab until it fades. Go up and right on jugs. Traverse right on to a sandwiched glacié below the main tower. Climb directly up and gain the lip of a bulge. Step left then pull over on a flat hold in the centre of the slab above. Pull over and so to ledge (6a). Climb the rib above to the top (5a).

Blacks Buttress – *Centre Piece* 29m, E5
K. Howett.

Climbs directly up the wall between Kaos and Land Ahoy, passing a peg at about 10m. Reaching this and passing it are hard (skyhook used 3m below peg). The thin crack in the slab above is also quite hard and poorly protected (6b).

Nameless Crag – *Cathode Smiles* 19m, E3
K. Howett, G. Latter. 1st November, 1987.

Climbs the central wall between the two vertical mossy cracks (5c/6a).

– *Quadrode* 19m, E2
K. Howett. 1st November, 1987.

Takes a line up the left-hand wall, left of *Cathode Smiles*, starting near centre and hears up and right to break (RP4), then up and left to top (5b).

– *Bitter Days* 32m, E4
K. Howett. 1st November, 1987.

Climbs the prow of the buttress, starting just right of the start of *Risque Grapefruit*. Climb up the hanging arête right of deep corner (*Faceless* E2 5c. G. Latter) and pull right on to a slab below the roof-like prow. Climb through this desperately for a jug over the top (6a).

— *Overload*

E4

K. Howett, P. Farrell. 2nd November, 1987.

Climbs the left bounding edge of the east face, just left of *Quadrode*. Climb desperately through lower bulge (RP's), then boldly up wall above to upper break, very necky (6a/6b).

Dog's Head Buttress.

A new buttress on the same level as Black's Buttress, but about 100m right on the way over to Bistro Buttress.

— *Parental Guidance*

E2/E3

A. Nelson, K. Howett.

The black streak at the left end of the crag (5c/6a).

— *Rebecca*

E1

A. Nelson, K. Howett.

The white streak up the right side of the crag (5c).

— *Tomsk Thumb*

Hard Very Severe

A. Nelson, K. Howett (solo).

The diagonal crack (5a).

S.W. Buttress — *Manky Tee-shirt Brigade*

G. Suzca.

Left of *Fred's Delight* is a slab with a thin fault, layback this (5b).

High Crag (The Skull) — *Circus*

38m, E4

D. Griffiths, C. Bell.

Steep and exposed climbing through the 'Eyes.' Start as for *Hawks Nest* and from under the left 'eye' climb up the steep crack in the corner to gain vertical fault-line. Continue out rightwards in a great position passing a peg runner before pulling on to a slab, which is climbed to finish (6a).

— *Ethmoid*

54m, E4

D. Griffiths. (Belayer jumared first pitch).

Free climbs the old aid route *Ethmoid*. Start at a thin crack down and left of *The Punch*, climb crack with difficulty, and then up a slab to a tree belay (6a). Climb up between the 'Eyes' and follow awkward hand crack to easier ground (5c).

Note

The above route was recorded under the name *Hot Spot*. This brings to the surface again the thorny issue of re-naming routes when they are freed. The New Climbs Editor's feelings on the matter (and the policy which he will apply) are that the first ascentists of a route, be it free or aided, put a great deal of effort into climbing it, and so have the right to name it. When a route is freed it does not create an independent new line, so the person who makes the free ascent does not have the right to give the route his or her name, although they should get all credit for that free ascent.

STEALL, Spreadeagle Crag — *Veinity Fair*

E3

A. Nelson, K. Howett. 6th May, 1986.

A brilliant route up the quartz vein rising left to right across the slab in the centre of the wall above *Singing Ringing Tree*, finishing as for that route. Poorly protected (5b).

— *Chiaroscuro*

35m, E6

K. Howett, A. Nelson. 10th May, 1986.

An excellent route of great contrast. Climbs the hanging arête right of *Spreadeagle* and just left of *Slipway*. Desperate climbing and very strenuous leading into the

hanging groove of *Spreadeagle*. It then breaks out left on to an obvious hanging block and climbs up the upper arête keeping just to the left of the arête. This gets progressively harder and is very poorly protected by an RP2 sideways. The final moves are the hardest (6b).

WESTERN HIGHLANDS

GARBH BEINN, North-East Buttress – *Hauchmagundie* 143m, E2

R. Carchrie, G. A. McEwan. 11th June, 1988.

C'mola, below an obvious triangular niche 13m up a slab. Climb slab and crack to niche, continue on up thin crack to grassy ledge and belay (19m, 5a). Immediately above the belay, climb a rightwards slanting very thin crack until it fades. Traverse right 2m until a mantleshelf can be made on to a small lip. Climb directly up to obvious rightwards slanting crack (crux), then hand-traverse crack to gain belay on *C'mola* (24m, 5c). Step up and right on to obvious ledge and gain a rightwards slanting crack. Climb the crack, when it fades climb the slab slightly leftwards to gain a rightwards slanting crack. Hand-traverse on improving holds until easier ground is reached. Pull up to grass rake (27m, 5b). Cross the rake and start in a recess common with *Route 1.5*. Climb an obvious thin crack to the left of *Route 1.5*. Belay below overlap (38m, 4c). Step left and pull up over overlap, then follow thin crack up slab trending slightly left to obvious corner. Climb corner on good holds to belay (35m, 5a).

LURGH MHOR.

A large crag of excellent rough quartzite lies high on the flank of **Lurg Mhor**, above Loch Monar (G.R. 062 405). Although facing north with many grooves and overlaps, the slabby rock is exceptionally clean, so drying very quickly. The approach from Craig, via glens Chonais, Crudhain and Sgoltaidh takes about 4 hours from the main road. There are excellent camp sites at the head of Loch Monar. A new venue for the middle grade climber who likes solitude and is not afraid of a walk.

– *Munroist's Reward*

90m, Very Severe

R. D. Everett, D. Gaffney. 23rd July, 1988.

A fine climb taking the left edge of the main slabs. Start at the lowest point of the buttress 5m right of a long grassy corner.

Climb the slab to a small steepening, then move right to the foot of a prominent V-groove at 10m. Climb the wall to the right (crux) to reach the slab above and right. Climb the slabs and two further overlaps above, moving slightly left to a pedestal stance on the edge of the buttress. An excellent pitch (50m, 4c). Climb the groove above, then the exposed wall to its left to easier ground. Scramble to the top (40m, 4b).

– *Monar Magic*

140m, Very Severe

R. D. Everett, D. Gaffney. 24th July, 1988.

This excellent climb takes a direct line up the centre of the slabs. Start just left of a fault which slants from left to right (most easily seen from below) near the middle of the crag. There is a shallow inverted U-shaped overlap just to the right of the start at the foot of the crag.

Climb straight up slabs, then thin cracks to the right of a grassy corner to a slight steepening at 30m. Move up then diagonally left to a tiny ledge in a short open corner. A poorly protected pitch (45m, 4b). Climb straight up to an obvious V-niche in the main overlap. Climb this on good holds, then the slab above to belay in a small overhung niche (20m, 4c). Move up and right into a corner in the next overlap. Swing out on to the right arête then climb directly up the slabs above (45m, 4c). The pleasant slabs above lead to the top (30m, 4a).

BEN NEVIS

Minus Two Buttress – Left Hand Route – Variation Start 80m, Very Severe
N. Richardson, R. T. Richardson, A. Walker. 11th June, 1988.

Starts as for the Clough variation, but climbs the edge overlooking *Minus Three Gully* instead of the big groove. An excellent start to the route, providing better and more sustained climbing than the original lower pitches. An old ring peg was found just below the crux, but no other signs of passage encountered.

From the foot of the 'V' groove, move out on to the left rib to climb up and left via slabs and grooves to a belay at flakes in a niche on the edge of the buttress (31m, 4b). Descend right a metre or so, then move up and right to climb a bulging groove then a further groove on the very edge of the buttress to a superb stance below an imposing wall (37m, 4c). Pass this wall on the left then go up and right to belay above the crux of the original route (12m, 4c). Continue as for the parent route.

Indicator Wall Area – Satanic Verses 115m, GRADE IV/V
C. Cartwright, R. Clothier, 7th April, 1989.

To the right of *Psychedelic Wall* are four parallel ramp-lines, to the right of which is where *Shot in the Dark* starts. Take the left ramp-line and follow it to a snow bay at 25m. Continue on the next ramp to a snow bay, belay when the rope runs out (50m). Climb straight up following grooves to a corner formed by an obvious oblong slab on the right and a buttress on the left (35m). Climb the very steep left wall until a step right on to less steep slabs can be made, then climb direct to the cornice (30m).

Garadh na Ciste – Beam Me Up Scotty GRADE III
R. G. Reid, I. Crofton. March, 1987.

Climb easily up *Raeburn's Easy Route* until a gully to the right of *Goodeve's Route* is reached. Climb the gully until forced leftwards and up to a wall (40m). Climb a ramp-line up rightwards across the wall until an icy groove can be followed directly upwards (45m). The plateau can then be reached in two pitches. (This may be close to, if not the same as, a route which was reported in the SMCJ 1986, but archived).

Creag Coire na Ciste – Unnamed 140m, GRADE IV
C. Cartwright, R. Clothier. 17th December, 1988.

Climbs the buttress between *South Gully* and *Central Gully* by way of a groove system starting to the left of *Central Gully*, to a point overlooking *South Gully*. A traverse line/ramp was taken to gain access to a loose chimney.

The Organ Pipes – This is the name suggested for the crag situated below *Carn Dearg*.
– *The Trial* 45m, E3

W. Young, A. Tibbs, A. Frazer. 19th June, 1988.

Right of the main water-course and at the right side of the crag is a dry area of buttress. At the right side of the steepest part is a corner which starts from a grass ledge. The route climbs the cracked arête on the smooth wall left of the corner. Start directly below the arête. Climb the clean wall to the arête, finish up the arête (5c/6a). An excellent pitch.

North Wall of Castle Ridge – Casino Royale 190m, GRADE V
M. Duff, R. Nowack, A. Bond. 29th February, 1988.

Start at the foot of an obvious thin gully just left of *La Petite*. Climb the wall and snow basin, followed by an icefall and open gully. Climb an icefall to below the major pitch. Climb steep ice on increasing angle and diminishing thickness to below a roof. Move left with difficulty to a very thin ice seam in a corner, which is followed to the top. A diagonal right trending snow slope leads to the finish.

Notes

Pointblank is now climbed direct throughout, M. Duff, R. Nowack, 24th February, 1988. Described as scary and hard.

G. Suzca notes a variation start to *Nordwand* on **Carn Dearg**, starting just right of the original and climbing a corner groove for 100m to join the parent, no belays or runners, Grade IV.

R. Clothier notes the following improvement to *Psychedelic Wall*, conceding that it has been climbed before. Climb the second pitch directly to 5m below an icicle fringe (belay). Climb to the icicle fringe, step left and follow ice to the top.

R. Clothier has repeated *Diana* and notes serious discrepancies in the existing description. The new description is as follows:

— *Diana* — 198m, GRADE IV

Climb ice to a chimney (70m). Climb the groove/chimney to belay right of a huge rightward facing corner (45m). Pull over an overlap and climb a straightforward slab with good protection at 20m to a snow terrace and good block belay (48m). Follow the obvious line to the top (35m).

CENTRAL HIGHLANDS

BINNEIN SHUAS, The Fortress – The Wallachran Prince 48m, E4
K. Howett, A. Nelson, 27th May, 1988.

Climbs the rock just left of *Delayed Attack*. Start as for this route. Climb the crack to a flake running out left. Up this to arête. Climb the arête and turn the roof on the right to a runner, then step left on to a small ledge. Climb the thin crack in the bulge above (hard), above which head diagonally left to gain a flake crack leading to a corner and the top (6b).

CREAG MEAGHAIDH, Inner Coire – Buttons 250m, GRADE III
C. Grant, S. Richardson, 12th March, 1988.

A prominent ramp slanting up from left to right cuts the steep lower part of the buttress between *The Pumpkin* and *The Sash*. Start in the short gully which leads up to the ramp, and follow it for two rope lengths to its end. Continue up snow and mixed ground for 2 or 3 pitches to reach a broad triangular buttress (junction with *The Sash*). Climb the buttress just right of centre to reach easier ground (50m). A pitch of snow leads to the cornice.

AONACH BEAG

This climb is located on the prominent buttress on the east flank of the un-named top (**Stob Coire Bhealaich**) on the south east ridge of **Aonach Beag**. The buttress lies just north of the **Aonach Beag – Sgurr Choinnich Beag** col from which it is well seen and which offers the best approach. An existing route, *The Ramp* takes the obvious rightwards slanting ramp on the buttress. Above the ramp, high on the left side of the buttress, is a prominent right-angled corner line which is taken by the following route.

— *The Clare Effect* — 120m, GRADE IV

S. Kennedy, L. Skoudas, 17th March, 1989.

Enter the corner by a steep ice pitch and thereafter follow the corner closely on ice to a large cornice. On the first ascent this proved to be impossible to outflank and the party were forced to tunnel, using one undefined point of aid.

The following route takes the crest of the buttress to the right of *The Ramp*. The difficulties are avoidable, but it provides a fine excursion in a remote and beautiful mountain environment.

— *Blinkers Buttress* — 300m, GRADE II or IV

R. Everett, N. Barratt, S. Richardson, 26th February, 1989.

Start just to the right of *The Ramp*, below a very steep rock wall above a snow bay. Climb a long icefall just to the right of the steep wall (50m, IV avoidable by a snow gully some way to the right). Snow leads to a belay below the steep crest of the buttress (50m). Climb a series of icy grooves to the right of the crest to the ridge above (50m). Follow the ridge to the top, joining the upper part of *The Ramp*.

West Face.

The main cliffs on the west face of **Aonach Beag** terminate at their southern end with **Raw Egg Buttress**. Well up and right of the winter routes (SMCJ 1988), is an impressive, vertical 100m wall which faces southwest down the approach valley. With the top of the buttress at 1100m, these climbs are amongst the highest Extremes in Britain.

- *Chandelle*

90m, E3

R. Everett, S. Richardson. 11th June, 1988.

A magnificent climb on good rock up the left side of the wall. Start at a grass ledge at the foot of the wall.

From the left end of the ledge climb a short groove to a platform. Traverse left along a ledge to a small spike. Climb the sustained crack above, passing a small overlap, and continue up the wall on the right to reach a belay in a prominent quartz cave (25m, 5c). Bridge up the cave then swing left on to the wall. Move left to a crack, and climb this to reach a horizontal break. Move left to a belay on a good ledge on the arête (10m, 5b/5c). Move back right along the horizontal break to some large blocks. Climb the crack above for 5m, then traverse left and up to a ledge beneath an overhang (25m, 5b). Climb the wall on the left to a ledge. Move right to a steep corner, and follow this and the groove above to the top (30m, 4c).

- *Pirates*

90m, E2

R. Webb, C. Rice. 11th June, 1988.

Another superb route, up the right side of the wall. Start beneath the right arête in a scoop.

Climb up and right to the arête, which is followed until a step left can be made on to a stance beneath an overhang (30m, 4c). Hand traverse left along the horizontal break until beneath the impending jam crack. Climb this to a stance at its top (30m, 5c). Climb the centre of the wall, then trend left to the prominent nose. Pull on to the nose and continue straight up in an exposed position to finish (30m, 5c).

AONACH MOR, East Face.

Coire na Lochain (G.R. 193 738) on the **East Face** of **Aonach Mor** presents a long line of cliffs of good granite about 100 to 150m high. The base of the cliffs is very high (starting at about 1100m), and the rock is well vegetated. The routes come into condition very rapidly and provide excellent climbing with the first snows of winter. Later in the season the climbs may become partially banked out, and there may be severe cornice difficulties. Most of the routes to date have been climbed in lean conditions. Facing east, the climbs receive the morning sunshine and are very sheltered from southerly and westerly gales. The quality and character of the climbing are similar to those of the **Northern Coires** of **Cairngorm**. Convenient descents at either end of the cliffs allow several routes to be done in a day. Many of the climbs provide more technical interest than their length and appearance might suggest. Unfortunately, the popularity deterrent of the 2.5 to 3.5 hour walk-in will soon disappear with the coming of the ski development.

The cliffs are quite hard to locate in poor visibility. If in doubt, aim for the lochan and head straight uphill (west). In good visibility it is easiest to walk directly to the summit plateau and descend into the next coire to the north, about 100m north of a large cairn on the plateau rim near its northerly limit.

The climbs can be divided into three sections; the northern area is found just to the south of the ridge bounding the north of the coire and continues for 200m to the deep cut gully of **Right Twin**. Left of **Right Twin** are two narrow buttresses and two obvious gullies. Next left is **Central Buttress**, (easily seen in the photograph in *The Munros*). The left arête of which is taken by **Morwind** (SMCJ 1988). Left of this is another gully (**Tunnel Vision**), to the left of which is another 100m of cliff before a large open gully (suitable descent gully; grade I). There are more, rather smaller, buttresses and gullies further south.

Identification of climbs may not be easy at first. The northern area is characterised by a very steep buttress, about 70m high, which is just left of the first wide gully left of the bounding ridge. It forms an icicle icefall in its lower half.

— *Jet Stream*

100m, GRADE IV

R. Everett, S. Richardson. 3rd December, 1988.

This is the narrow gully immediately left of the steep northerly buttress (which forms an icicle icefall in its lower part) about 50m left of the northerly bounding ridge. Climb the gully over several steep sections to a snow bay (45m). Exit right up a steep awkward wall to easier ground which leads to below the cornice (45m). Up to the cornice and over to the top (10m). Excellent climbing. The rock is very compact, so belays and runners are hard to find. In full conditions this climb appears to bank out to grade III. When fully formed, the icefall which forms in the headwall would make an exciting and fitting direct finish.

— *Force Ten Buttress*

140m, GRADE III

R. Everett, S. Richardson. 3rd December, 1988.

This climb takes the buttress just left of the twin icy chimneys 20m left of *Jet Stream*. Climb mixed ground just left of the crest then move right to a belay at the foot of a short chimney where the buttress steepens (45m). Climb the chimney then step right to climb a short difficult crack. Now climb interesting mixed ground, mainly just to the right of the crest, to a belay (30m). Continue on mixed ground to the right of the crest to join a gully which rises to a col where the buttress merges into the final slopes (40m). (It is probably better to regain the crest via a short chimney, just after the second belay. High winds made this unwise on the first ascent). Mixed ground leads to the cornice (25m). The climb is technically hard for the grade, with several short, difficult, well protected sections, but the rock is very friendly.

— *Iceicle Gully*

130m, GRADE III

R. Everett, S. Richardson. 26th November, 1988.

The gully to the left of *Force Ten Buttress*. Climb the gully line with interest to a belay on the right (50m). Take the wider line to the right of a narrow groove (which is bounded by *Grooved Arête* to the left). Climb this until it narrows and steepens at an icicle, which leads to a snow bay (50m). Continue up the mixed ground above (30m).

— *Grooved Arête*

130m, GRADE IV

S. Richardson, R. Everett. 26th November, 1988.

This superb climb takes the narrow arête immediately left of *Iceicle Gully*. Start at the foot of the gully, gain the arête to the left and follow this, easily at first, then with increasing interest up grooves on its left side before moving back right to belay below the steep tower (45m). Climb a series of steep grooves on the crest of the tower until it is possible to move left to a ledge. Climb the short vertical corner above with difficulty, exiting on the right (35m). Regain the crest and continue more easily to the plateau (50m). Excellent technical climbing.

— *Right Twin*

120m, GRADE II

S. Richardson, R. Everett. 22nd January, 1989.

There is a further 100m of cliff left of *Grooved Arête* before the deep cut gully of *Right Twin*. About 1.5m wide with vertical side walls, it gives an enjoyable traditional climb with steep sections at the bottom and at mid-height. Exit left at the top.

— *Siamese Buttress*

120m, GRADE II

S. Richardson, R. Everett. 19th February, 1989.

The well defined buttress left of *Right Twin* provides an enjoyable scramble. Harder (grade III) if started up the steep corners on the left.

- *Forgotten Twin*

120m, GRADE I/II

R. Everett, S. Richardson. 22nd January, 1989.

A short leftward ramp from the foot of *Right Twin* leads to an easy gully with a couple of steeper stretches before the cornice exit. If the cornices are impassable it should be possible to reach and descend this climb from all the routes in the central area.

- *The Split*

130m, GRADE III

S. Richardson, R. Everett. 19th February, 1989.

The left-hand side of the buttress left of *Forgotten Twin* is split by a deep chimney. Start at the foot of the buttress and climb the introductory chimney to snow slopes to the right of *Left Twin* (25m). Enter the deep chimney and continue under several large jammed blocks until it is possible to exit to the left some 4m below the final overhang. Continue up the arête to belay (45m). Climb easy snow leftwards to join *Left Twin* (50m). Finish up that route (10m).

- *Left Twin*

120m, GRADE III

R. Everett, S. Richardson. 22nd January, 1989.

The obvious gully a few metres left of *Forgotten Twin* and immediately right of Central Buttress. It is climbed direct and is comparable in quality and difficulty to *SC Gully*. Belays and runners hard to find.

- *Hurricane Arête*

140m, GRADE V

S. Richardson, R. Everett. 4th March, 1989.

The slabby Central Buttress, left of *Left Twin*, is the highest section of crag in the coire. On its right-hand side is a steep arête, with several overhangs in its upper section, which forms the left wall of *Left Twin*. This hard climb takes an intricate line through the overhangs just left of the arête. Start mid-way between *Typhoon* and *Left Twin*. Climb iced slabs for 30m, then a short icy corner just right of an overhanging wall, followed by a short left slanting gully, just before moving right up a narrow ramp between steep walls to a ledge and belays beneath an overhang, just left of corners capped by more overhangs (50m). The corners lead to cul-de-sacs, so climb the overhang above the belay to a slab with a leftward slanting crack. Climb this and continue to a large prominent spike. Move right below an overhanging wall to gain the snow bay above and right (20m). Climb the groove on the left to the final overhangs. Bridge up and exit to the left, then continue up easier ground (50m). Snow slopes lead to the cornice (20m).

- *Typhoon*

130m, GRADE IV

R. Everett, S. Richardson. 14th January, 1989.

This excellent climb takes a direct line up the grooves just left of *Hurricane Arête*. Climb the lower slabby grooves to a belay at the base of a chimney (40m). Climb the chimney and the groove past an overhang (30m). Continue direct on steep ice to exit on to the final slopes (40m). Easily up to and over the cornice (20m, common to *Left Twin*).

Morwind (SMCJ 1988) takes a direct line up a series of grooves on the crest of **Central Buttress**, starting from the lowest rocks about 30m left of *Typhoon*. A good technically interesting climb.

- *Tunnel Vision*

120m, GRADE III

S. Richardson, R. Everett. 22nd January, 1989.

Start at the foot of the gully immediately left of *Morwind*. An initial narrows leads to a snow bay with three possible exits. Climb ice smears up the wall at the back of the bay with interest, in an exposed position, to a steep cornice exit. In full conditions the wall may bank up to a frightening angle and the cornice become impassable. The left branch would provide a steep and technical alternative and it should always be possible to climb the right branch to reach the easy upper section of *Morwind*.

– *Temperance Union Blues* 90m, GRADE III

S. Richards, G. Armstrong, C. Millar, J. Owens. 18th February, 1989.

50m to the right of the large open descent gully (some 200m left of *Morwind*) is a deep cleft at half-height. Climb either of two converging lines to the bottom of the cleft (45m). Ascend the cleft, exiting where it steepens on to a ramp which is followed to the cornice (45m).

– *Hidden Gully* 120m, GRADE II

R. Webb, C. Rice. 21st January, 1989.

At the south end of the coire, some way left of the open descent gully, is an attractive narrow twisting couloir which gave an easy but good climb.

West Face.

The **West Face of Aonach Mor** presents several granite ridges of moderate angle but over 300m high. The steepest of these are directly below the summit cairn, and being in a slightly recessed bay, they are hidden from many viewpoints. The climbs provide excellent mountaineering routes on superb rock in a wild and remote setting. The easiest approach is probably from the north up the Allt Daim.

– *Western Rib* 500m, GRADE II/III

S. Richardson. 17th December, 1988.

From below, the second buttress from the left appears as a flying buttress joining the third, broader buttress (*Daim Buttress*). It is in fact distinct. It gave a delightful long route with sustained interest, but was never very hard.

– *Daim Buttress* 500m, GRADE II/III

R. Everett, N. Barratt, S. Richardson. 25th February, 1989.

This is the third buttress from the left, characterised by a prominent slab just above half-height. Start directly below the slab at the foot of the buttress. The first 200m give enjoyable mixed climbing up snow and rocky corners to ledges at the foot of the slab. Move left and climb cracks on the left edge of the slab to a platform (50m). Take the cracks and corners up the buttress above (50m). Scrambling leads to the top in 200m.

CENTRAL HIGHLANDS OUTCROPS

GLEN LEDNOCK, Eagle Crag – Bear Cage E1

A. Tibbs, R. McGuire. 9th May, 1988.

Climb straight up through overhangs above the start of *Sultans of Swing*. Finish left (5c).

DUNKELD, Polney Crag – Sideline 10m, E3

N. Shepherd, R. Worth. May, 1987.

The wall between *Psoriasis* and *Hot Tips*, climbed diagonally left to right with a peg runner (6b).

GLENCOE

BUACHAILLE ETIVE MOR, Rannoch Wall – Pandava's Progress 80m, Very Severe

G. E. Little, R. Reid, I. Marriot, W. Wright, G. Ertle. 14th May, 1988.

There is a prominent W-shaped hanging flake halfway between *Red Slab* and *Satan's Slit*. The route starts just right of the W-shaped flake.

Climb rightwards for 4m then up to ledge at 10m (on *Satan's Slit*). Climb curving fault line directly above to a ledge at 22m. Climb straight up to a small overhang, pull right, then up to join *Red Slab* at its crux. Belay about 15m above this (40m, 4c). Climb straight up crossing *Agag's Groove* to the top (40m).

— *A Game of Dice* 75m, E2

G. E. Little, R. Reid, G. Ertle. 14th May, 1988.

This excellent route starts to the left of the W-shaped flake between *Red Slab* and *Satan's Slit*.

Climb the obvious leftward trending crack with increasing difficulty to gain a leftward facing corner above. Up this and the hanging groove continuation (some loose rock) to gain easier ground. Continue directly up to a belay at flake on traverse ledge of *Red Slab* (45m, 5b). Climb the deceptive wall above moving left to finish (30m, 4c).

Stob Coire Altruim — *Dream Topping*

S. Richardson. 11th March, 1989. 100m, GRADE III

The buttress left of *Centre Gully* is cut by a narrow slanting gully in its lower half. The crest of the buttress was then followed to a large cornice (avoided by a long traverse left).

AONACH DUBH, Lower Walls — *Mr Bates*

24m, E3

R. Anderson. 12th June, 1988.

A direct on *Lady Jane* starting just right of that route where a short ramp slopes up leftwards from the ground. Move up and make difficult moves over the bulge, awkward to arrange protection, until it is possible to step right to a horizontal break. Move up to the base of a short flange, break on right, and continue to just below *Lady Jane*, step right to a ledge and pull up to the end of the horizontal break. Finish as for *Lady Jane* (6a).

GEARR AONACH, North Face — *White Rhino*

135m, GRADE IV/V

A. Cave, M. Duff. 7th February, 1988.

Start from the girdle ledge which is obvious from below. Access is via the *Zig-zag* ramp to a terrace below a recessed chimney and tree belay. Climb a long diagonal left-slanting rake (45m). Continue on this line to a small snow patch, belay below an open groove and capped indistinct gully (38m). Climb the groove to a recess below an overhang. Move out left over a wall and slabs to the top (52m).

— *Ziggy*

192m, GRADE II

M. Duff. 1st February, 1988.

Traverse under the face to a very shallow gully. Climb this and the short ridge above (overlooking *Avalanche Gully*), then the open buttress above trending right.

— *Trumpeting Elephants*

128m, GRADE III

M. Duff, I. McLeod, A. Owen. 10th February, 1988.

Climb the chimney seen from the start of *White Rhino*. Climb the recess and step left to gain the upper section which is climbed in three pitches.

East Face — *Eyes of Mica*

29m, E4

A. Nelson, K. Howett. 17th June, 1988.

Start up the wall just right of the diagonal fault of *Marshall's Wall*. Climb the wall to a horizontal crack. Pull over bulge and then go left into the pink scoop of *Marshall's Wall* (PR). Climb the thin crack and wall above to the right end of the final steep wall with a long reach up to better holds (6a). (Abseil off the route, ring peg in-situ).

- *Fringe Benefits*

29m, E5

K. Howett, A. Nelson. 17th June, 1988.

Climbs directly up the centre of the wall through the two roofs left of *Marshall's Wall*. Start just left of *Marshall's Wall*. Climb easily up fault then go left to a small ledge. Climb the wall left via a thin crack veering to the left edge. Climb on sloping holds to under the roof. Pull directly over the roof, then go up to the large upper roof. Traverse right along sloping ledge below the roof to its right end (RP's in the lip of the roof - all poor). Pull over the lip (poor rump on the left), then up with difficulty to a ledge (6b). (Abseil off the route, ring peg in-situ).

GLENCOE GORGE

This is the crag opposite The Drey.

- *Delusions of Grandeur*

E2

A. Tibbs, G. Jones. 8th May, 1988.

Possibly climbed before on aid. A good but short pitch. Climb thin cracks just left of *Chariots of Fire*, exiting right at the top (5b).

Notes

Colin Moody reports a route on the **East Face of Aonach Dubh**, no name or first ascentionists given. Details as follows:

Lies between *Solitude* and *Quietude*. Up the wall passing just right of the obvious block of *Solitude*. Climb up trending slightly right to finish up black streak close to *Quietude* (48m). Climb slab (24m). Overall length 72m, grade E2 5c.

Buachaille Etive Mor, Blackmount Wall. Calum Smith reports the first ascent of the following route.

- *Littlekin* 55m, Very Severe

Follows the obvious line of weakness to the left of *The Mutchkin*. Climb groove to ledge. Move left and then right to gain and follow leftwards slanting crack (4b).

K. V. Crocket remembers climbing this (more than a few years ago) with J. Armour, and found it to be Severe. It was not recorded at the time because it was too short.

SOUTHERN HIGHLANDS

BEINN AN DOTHAI DH, N.E. Coire - Splitting the Difference 155m, GRADE IV
C. S. Bonington, G. E. Little. 16th March, 1989.

Start at the right side of **West Buttress**. Follow *Slow March* for two pitches to the base of an obvious overhanging 'wide triangular corner' (55m). Climb the corner by wide bridging (crux) then groove above (30m). Continue up groove (immediately left of the clean rock tower) to gain easy broken ground (35m). Up this to the top (35m).

- *Carte Blanche* 120m, GRADE IV

G. E. Little, L. MacDonald. 11th March, 1989.

This varied line climbs the great slab between *Cirrus* and *Far West Buttress* then a steep chimney/groove system above. Start at the base of *Cirrus*.

A slight rising fault line runs out right across the slab. Follow this fault for about 10m until it is possible to break back leftwards to reach the base of a short, inverted, two-stepped groove. Climb the first part of the groove then step right on a ledge. Move slightly right, up, traverse back left (delicate) then climb directly up to a snowfield (45m). Up the snowfield to a steep chimney/groove system in the upper face, belay on the left (20m). Climb the chimney/groove with a difficult finish on to easier ground (40m). Up snow to finish (15m).

Note

G. E. Little now declares the N.E. Coire worked out (after recording the foregoing two routes of course). Any takers?

MEALL NAN TARMACHAN, Creag an Lochain, Arrow Buttress.- *Toxophily*

G. E. Little, D. Johnson. 6th February, 1988.

220m, GRADE IV

At the left and highest end of the crag lies the distinctive **Arrow Buttress** (map ref 594 396), with the shallow *Arrow Chimney* (grade III/IV) on its left flank. This route takes a fairly direct line up the centre of the face. Climbed under unfavourable conditions of unconsolidated snow - névé recommended.

Start just right of the toe of the buttress at a fence post. Ascend steep groove then its left edge to a narrow ledge. Move right to belay on an icicle (45m). Move back left then trend leftwards until a short turfy wall can be climbed to gain a good belay under an overhang (25m). (Under good conditions the groove directly above the icicle may be climbable). Climb up past a tree then break back rightwards across the face to belay on a short ramp (40m). Move right then climb directly up a shallow groove to belay at rocks on the left (35m). Up a tiny chimney and steep ground above to below an overhang. Traverse right and up to a ledge (30m). Continue further right until it is possible to break back left and up to belay on a large iron post (45m).

THE COBBLER, North Peak.- *Spain-Killer*

25m, E1

I. Taylor, A. Alexander, L. Ruiz. 18th June, 1988.

Climbs the wall left of *Chimney Arête*. Start up sloping ledges, then follow a thin, left-slanting crack. Traverse right and finish up a short thin crack (5b).

South Peak.- *Osiris*

42m, E4

D. Griffiths (unseconded). June, 1988.

This route climbs the large slab right of *Gladiators Groove, Direct Start*. Start at a cleaned ledge behind a boulder. Move up leftwards on to a small hanging slab, and from its left-hand end, pull over the overlap. Ascend the quartz band and then trend up a faint hairline crack towards a wider quartz band higher up. From this trend right and up to finish up the left-hand side of the large block on the arête (6a).

GLEN CROE CRAGS, Upper Crag.- *Pegomaniac*

10m, E3

I. Taylor, C. Moody. 4th July, 1988.

Start at the bottom of *Cosmic Corner*. Follow a traverse line left across *Breakdance* to an arête. Climb the arête to a belay on a ledge (5c).

- *Litterbug*

15m, E1

I. Taylor, A. Caren. July, 1988.

Round the edge to the right of *The Sharp Kiss* is an overhanging wall. Start at the right end of this wall, at an arête below a tree. Climb the wall keeping left of the arête, pull on to a steep slab and finish up and left. Belay well back. Protection at the start is good once found (5b).

So Far Away Buttress.- *The Nitty-gritty Dirt Route* 50m, E1

I. Taylor, J. Nairn. 9th September, 1988.

Just left of the main buttress is a series of clean slabs and walls with a tree at half-height. Start directly below the tree.

Climb up to just left of the tree, bold (25m, 5a). Continue up slabs to finish, belay well back (25m, 4c).

- *Rough and Tumble*

10m, E1

J. Nairn, I. Taylor. 9th September, 1988.

Round to the left of the previous route is an area of dripping overhangs. Just left of these is a rough rib. Climb the rib directly, keeping right of a heather bay (5b).

Great Slab.- *Lapland*

25m, E1

I. Taylor, B. Williamson. 16th August, 1988.

Climbs a series of overlapping slabs at the left end of the slab. Start on top of a heather capped block above and left of a rowan tree. Climb up to the right end of the first overlap, traverse left above the overlap to gain a slab and cross the next overlap where the slab above forms a bulge. Finish up a shallow corner (5a).

BEN VORLICH, Sub Station Crag.- *The Pylon Effect*

50m, E2

I. Taylor, C. Moody. 3rd November, 1988.

Climbs the fine left arête of the crag. Start left of the great flake at a short crack. Follow the crack until a left traverse leads to a flake on the arête. Climb the arête direct to the top. Belay well back (5b).

Loch Sloy Crag (NN 304 096).

These crags lie on the south ridge of **Ben Vorlich**, just above the Loch Sloy access road. They are best approached via **Sub-Station Crag**. From the top of **Sub-Station Crag**, looking above and left, a prominent buttress can be seen with a long roof at its right-hand end. This is **Roof Buttress**.

Roof Buttress.- *Hum*

20m, Very Severe

I. Taylor. 15th September, 1988.

On the far left-hand side of the buttress is a shallow groove with a bulge at the bottom. Pull over the bulge and climb the groove direct (4c).

- *Disney Tour*

20m, E2

I. Taylor, J. Nairn. 15th September, 1988.

Start as for *Hum*. Pull over the bulge then make awkward right traverse into corner. Follow corner to block below roof, pull left to ledge and up wall to top (5b).

Neb Buttress.

Neb Buttress lies above and left of **Roof Buttress**. It has a central, blunt arête with a wide slab on its left side.

- *Anywhere*

25m, Very Severe

J. Nairn. 15th September, 1988.

Start at the lowest rocks, traverse left into mossy groove and follow this until able to pull on to the wide slab on the right. Finish up the slab (4b).

- *Follow On*

25m, Hard Very Severe

I. Taylor, W. Hood. 15th October, 1988.

Grooves and slabs right of the blunt arête (5a).

Crescent Crag.

Crescent Crag lies up and right of **Roof Buttress**. It is identified by a prominent crescent shaped roof.

- *Quartz-vein Arête*

16m, Hard Very Severe

B. Williamson, C. Moody. 15th October, 1988.

Climb the right side of the right-hand arête, follow quartz, then up to the top (5b).

Approximately 100m left of **Roof Buttress** is an area of boulders. Above the right-most boulders is a fine ridge with a large holly bush top left.

— *Autumn Edge* 25m, Hard Very Severe

I. Taylor, 30th September, 1988.

Gain the ridge from the left and climb direct to the top (4c).

Approximately 50m up and left of *Autumn Edge* is a shallow gully.

— *Hidden Slab* 25m, Very Severe

I. Taylor, 30th September, 1988.

This is the slab on the right wall of the gully. Start just right of a small tree and climb direct to the top (4b).

Lower Tier.

Below all these buttresses is another tier. At its right hand end is a band of three wide slabs separated by broken ground.

— *Silver Soles* 40m, E2

I. Taylor, W. Hood, 15th October, 1988.

The rightmost slab, directly below **Roof Buttress**. Climb the slab by its right side until a left slanting crackline can be followed into a short groove near the top. Finish up the groove (5b).

— *The Mica Boot Route* 40m, Hard Very Severe

I. Taylor, 30th September, 1988.

Climbs the clean rock on the left side of the middle slab. There is a small tree on a heather ledge at half-height. Belay just below the top. Escapable (5a).

— *Flab Route* 20m, Very Severe

W. Hood, I. Taylor, 15th October, 1988.

The leftmost slab forms a slabby nose up and left of the previous route. Climb the nose, passing a flake at half-height (4c).

Left of these slabs is an area of smaller scattered buttresses.

— *Splinters* 17m, Very Severe

I. Taylor, 30th September, 1988.

One of the buttresses contains an obvious diagonal crack. Follow this to its end, then traverse below a heather block to the right edge of the buttress and finish up this (4c).

Floating Buttress.

This prominent buttress lies at the far left end of the lower tier. It is an unusual buttress, almost separated from the surrounding hillside.

— *Stonefingers* 15m, Hard Very Severe

I. Taylor, 30th September, 1988.

This is a fine slab round on the left face of the buttress. Pull right on to the slab from a long boulder and follow the pockets (4c).

Note

There are literally hundreds of such outcrops dotted around the Southern Highlands. The Editor knows the whereabouts of at least as many as anybody else. When recording routes on them, please spare a thought for the Editor, and remember that the chances are someone has climbed there years ago.

Sub Station Crag.– *Unnamed*

45m, E3

C. Moody, I. Taylor. 3rd November, 1988.

Lies between *Charge of the Light Brigade* and *Power to the People*. Gain the flake. From near its left end move up and step right, then up to jutting quartz lump. Move up left to bulge (1.5 Friend in horizontal crack), over a bulge using a quartz hold, and up to trees (30m 5c). Either abseil off or continue at Very Difficult.

KNAPDALE, Creag Nam Fiteach.– *Maneater*

32m, E4

D. Griffiths, C. Bell.

This route climbs the immaculate off-width crack left of *Cruxifiction Crack*, passing a peg at three-quarters height, then climbs the arête above (6a).

Note

D. Griffiths reports that *Metamorphosis* now has its aid point removed with the new grade being E1/E2 and 5c.

CENTRAL AND SOUTHERN SCOTLAND OUTCROPS**CRAIGTON QUARRY, Top Right-hand Corner.**– *Chasing the Dragon*

E2

G. Suzca, S. Downie. April, 1985.

The obvious finger crack splitting the steep slab (5c).

COURT KNOWE.– *DF118's*

G. Suzca.

The wall and arête right of *Wullie's Crack*. Once a hole is gained, dyno for a sloping ledge and finish left, no protection (6a).

BEN A'AN.– *Tricky Vicky*

E2

G. Suzca, J. Parker. 31st July, 1987.

Climb the wall on the right of *Club Corner* without using the arête on the right, no protection, bad landing (6a).

AUCHINSTARRY QUARRY.– *Weather Beaten*

19m, E3

D. Griffiths, I. Griffiths.

Climbs the wall right of *September Groove*. Start as for that route and follow it for about 5 or 6m. Move out rightwards to arête, climb directly up to gain a hanging crack which is followed to the top (5c).

– *The Gold Bug*

30m, E3

I. Taylor, J. Nairn. 26th September, 1988.

The tapering wall left of *Gold Rush*, probably climbed before. After a boulder problem start, climb the wall using the left arête. 5m from the top pull left and finish up *Midas Touch* (5c). Grade is E2 if runners are placed in *Gold Rush*.

Evening Wall.– *Al Jolson*

12m, Hard Very Severe

I. Taylor, J. Nairn. 26th September, 1988.

The arête 5m left of *Both Toes Burning*. Pull right near the top (5a).

MAUCHLINE

These sandstone cliffs are situated on the banks of the River Ayr, a few miles south of Mauchline, and close to the viaduct carrying the railway to Dumfries. The rock is quite friable, but the overhanging nature of the cliff keeps it dry.

River Buttress.

This is the large buttress with a prominent corner and roof in the centre.

— *Ayrheid*

20m, E2

T. Prentice, P. A. McAra. June, 1988.

Start in the centre of the buttress. Climb a small corner and traverse left below roofs into the main corner line. Follow this into a bay (possible belay). Traverse right and pull round bulge to a good thread belay. Climb the wall above and move left to finish (5c).

— *Sand-dancer*

20m, E2

T. Prentice, R. Everett. June, 1988.

This climbs the obvious steep crackline to the left of the previous route, traversing right to finish at the same place (5b).

DUMBARTON ROCK, North Face.

— *Supple as a Brick*

33m, E3

T. Prentice, R. Everett, S. Richardson. May, 1988.

Climb *Monsoon Gully* until a good jug gives access to the slim groove in the right wall. Follow the groove to a finger slot at the top (Micromate 00, Friend 1). Move onto the wall on the left and use an overlap to reach better holds up and left. From the ledge move left 2m and climb interesting grooves and walls to the top (5c). Descend by *Snowwhite*. Cleaned and inspected on abseil.

LOCH LOMOND, Creagan Tom Dubh.

This Mica-schist crag lies about 1km south of Doune at G.R. 337 136 on the east side of Loch Lomond, and can be approached from Inverarnan or Inversnaid in about 1.5 hours. The lower tier is the clean wall that can be well seen from the A82 across the loch. Protection is sparse and difficult to arrange, and both routes on the Lower Tier were cleaned and inspected prior to leading.

Lower Tier.

— *Sequestrator*

30m, E3

S. Richardson, R. Reid. 30th April, 1989.

Start 3m right of the central arête and climb up and left to a small ledge on the crest where good holds lead up and right to the final wall (crux). An excellent but serious route (5b).

— *Mahabharata*

25m, E2

R. Reid, S. Richardson. 7th May, 1989.

Start 10m right of *Sequestrator* below a short faint crack which runs up the lower part of the wall. Climb up past the crack (peg runner on left), and make a difficult move onto a horizontal break (crux). Larger holds now lead to the top (5b).

Upper Tier. — *Athena*

25m, E1

S. Yates, F. Mains, D. Gardner. 4th October, 1986.

Climb the obvious central groove passing two roofs, steeper and harder than it looks (5a).

— *Perfect Strangers*

15m, E1

S. Yates. 4th October, 1986.

The narrow slab to the left of *Athena*, unprotected (5a).

- *Crazy Cow*

20m, E1

S. Yates, F. Mains. 4th October, 1986.

This route climbs the slab about 20m left of *Athena*. Pull over the roof at the right end of the slab (crux), and then climb the short wall to a scoopy ledge. Traverse left a short distance and climb the wall above to another ledge. Step right and finish straight up.

KILSYTH, Main Jackdaw Quarry.- *Tazy Lady*

18m, E3

G. Suzca. 12th December, 1987.

Start at the bottom left hand of buttress. Move up and right to a horizontal crack. Make a hard move up and right to gain a standing position in the horizontal fault. Follow the obvious ramp up and left to a good foothold. Make an awkward move up and right to gain a horizontal crack which is followed rightwards to good Friends. Climb up and right to gain a vague scoop (5c). Best to leave a rope in position for the easy but loose top section.

EDINBURGH, Salisbury Crags.- *Election Special*

16m, E2

R. Anderson, G. Taylor, D. Bond, A. Williams, K. Spence. 10th June, 1987.

An eliminate based on *Ginger Nymphs Lust*, climbing directly to the 3rd peg on that route and continuing up to clip the top peg before moving left and up to finish (5c).

RATHO QUARRY.- *Lone Groover/Wally 1 (Alternative finish)*

E4

R. Anderson, A. Williams. 24th April, 1988.

From the mid way ledge on the left at the top of *Lone Groover* move up right into the groove then make an awkward step right (low down hold) to climb the thin crack to the sapling of *Wally 1*. The thin crack can be gained from *Wally 1* (6a/b).

CAMBUSBARRON QUARRY.- *Thug of War*

10m, E4

R. Anderson. 31st July, 1988.

The thin crack in the wall right of the short boulder problem crack right of *Pathfinder* and *Trail Blazer* on the back wall. Descend via ledges (6b/c).

MEIKLE ROSS.- *Grapeshot*

25m, Hard Severe

A. Wilson, S. Jackson. 27th September, 1987.

Further west of **The Slabs** and **The Pinnacle** is a small enclosed zawn facing east, with a clean slab at the back. Ascend a thin crack up the middle of the slab to an overhang which is climbed direct.

LAGGANTALLUCH HEAD

Introduction. Map: Sheet 82. G.R. 085 363.

These granite sea cliffs give entertaining climbing in pleasant surroundings. The crags were found in 1987 by S. Richardson and T. Prentice. Since then routes have been climbed by a combination of R. Everett, T. Prentice, R. Reid, and S. Richardson. The climbs average 15 to 20m, although there is a 40m slab. There are few seabirds. All climbs are described as if facing the crags. Abseil ropes are recommended. Lots of scope for hard, if short, new routes.

Access.

From Glasgow take the A77 to Stranraer, followed by the A716 to Dunmore. Take a right about 1.5km from the town, just before the Queen's Head and Welcome to Dunmore signs, and veer left at the Y junction. Drive through Kirkmaiden, B7065 and take the second turning on the right for 4km to the coast. Park at a track on the right leading to Bay Cottage. Follow the track, through a gate on the left, and down to the beach. Walk northwards, skirting small crags until the main cliff is reached in about 20 minutes.

Small Bay.

This bay has a steep right wall with a obvious corner facing the ribs and platform of the Main Cliff. The rock is poorer than elsewhere.

— *Tormentil* 15m, Hard Very Severe

Climbs the corner. Descend the grassy rib on the right and make a short abseil to a small ledge below the corner. Low tide or calm sea advisable (5a).

— *Arête* 10m, Difficult

Takes the wall on the seaward face, right of the corner.

Main Cliff.

This consists of a large cave on the right, a large slab hidden from above in the centre and on the left, corners and fins above a rock platform. Access by abseiling down the fins to a large platform. Routes are described from right to left.

— *Escape Route* 10m, Difficult

Left of the overhanging fin is a stepped corner. Step across a gap and climb the corner. A possible descent route, requiring care.

— *Rogered* 10m, Severe

Climbs the corner system right of the overhanging fin.

— *Seventh Wave* 20m, E1

Climbs the left wall of the elegant corner flanking the large slab on the left. Start below and left at a diagonal crack. Follow this into the base of the corner and move up and left to a thin crack and spike on the arête. Follow the slab above. Eliminate, but good climbing (5b).

— *Laggantalluch Corner*
20m, Hard Very Severe

The superb corner gives fine climbing on good rock with good protection (5a).

— *Ape Escape* 20m, E2

A spectacular and well protected route taking the overhanging crack in the roof right of the corner. Step on to the yellow wall from the slab and continue to a ledge below the crack. Climb this to a good spike, make a long reach up and right to a good jug, and continue with steep jamming to finish (6a).

— *Irish Mist* 40m, E1

Near the top of the large slab on the left side is a flake. Climb to the flake and from its right end climb the wall above trending right. Minimal protection (5a).

— *Freewheeling* 40m, E2

Quality climbing, though not gear. Follow the longest central black streak in the slab to a break on the right, runner. Continue up and left to a slight bulge, then trend up and left to finish. The best route on the slab (5b).

– *Dublin Packet* 40m, E1

High on the right of the slab is a black streak leading to a small grassy ledge. Climb the slab to a break below the streak and follow this past the grass to the top (5a).

– *Stingray* 50m, Very Severe

An enjoyable open traverse above the large roofs with the hardest moves at the end. Traverse the lip of the overhangs until a groove and corner leads to a small roof and the top (4c).

Lunch Bay.

The next bay is characterised by low overhangs on the left and a small steep wall of immaculate granite on the right.

– *Sciatic Nerve* 15m, Very Difficult

The stepped corners left of the overhangs.

Foam Zawn.

This small zawn is about 650m north of the Main Cliff. Descend a rock and grass rib until the corner of *Refusnik* becomes visible. Abseil towards the island and traverse ledges to the corner, Calm sea recommended. The zawn and abseil point can be seen from Simon's Bay to the north.

– *Refusnik* 25m, E2

A fine route. Climb the overhanging corner to a ledge, belay possible. From the ledge, climb poorer rock on the right to finish (5b).

– *Pillar* 25m, Hard Very Severe

Descend the ramp below *Refusnik* and make a sea level traverse round the arête. Climb the wall above, moving right to the arête and make a steep pull onto a yellow slab. Continue up the slab and easier rock to a large ledge, finishing up poorer rock on the right (5a).

Simon's Bay.

This steep little crag is about 850m from the Main Cliff. Hidden from above, it has a large rock platform at its base and a prominent line of overhangs at mid-height.

– *Seal Song* 20m, E1

Enjoyable, steep climbing. Start below the left end of the overhang where a line of holds lead out left to the lip of the roof. Traverse right across a small wall and round a rib. Continue up and right to finish (5b).

– *Back Burner* 20m, E3

The roof is climbed via the overhanging chimney. An excellent technical route, but hard to protect and climb (6a).

– *First Touch* 20m, E1

Climb to the break at the right end of the overhang. Above, traverse left to a slim corner and climb this, hard to finish (5b).

– *Wave Goodbye* 20m, Hard Severe

Right of the above route is a cave-like recess, enter this, exiting at the top, and follow easy ground above.

PORTOBELLO.

Introduction. Map: Sheet 82. G.R 961 664.

Most of the climbing is on the retaining walls of the many small grassy coves in the area. The rock is Greywacke and the climbs up to 25m in length. Most of the climbs are easily accessible, there is a lot of rock and few seabirds. The crags were found in 1986 by T. Prentice. Routes were climbed in combinations of T. Prentice, C. Rice, S. Richardson, R. Webb. Lots of unclimbed rock remains.

Access.

From Glasgow take the A77 to Stranraer, then west on the A718 to Leswalt and the B7043 and B738 to Mains of Cairnbrock. Take a minor road on the left to Portobello, parking off the track before the gate. About 2 hours from Glasgow.

Main Cliff.

This is the first cliff reached in a few minutes by following the track towards the sea. Routes are described right to left.

– *Crawford's Crackers* 20m, Hard Very Severe

Start just left of the old plaque at a right to left crackline. Follow this to an overhang which is climbed on good holds to the top. Belay well back (5a).

– *Floating Voter* 20m, Hard Very Severe

About 10m left of the previous route at a right to left curving corner-groove. Move up and left until easier ground can be reached. Continue up and right to finish (5a).

– *Blockhead* 15m, Severe

Climbs the wide crackline in the slabby black wall left of *Floating Voter*.

– *Happy Man* 15m, Hard Severe

The fine crackline in the buttress rising from the sea. Abseil to a good nut belay at the base.

Slab Cove.

Three coves to the north of the Main Cliff is a small cove with a steep slabby wall split by a fine crack.

– *The Man from Del Monte* 15m, E3

Excellent technical and sustained finger jamming up the crack in the smooth wall. Friend 0's or Slider Nuts necessary for protection (6a).

Cracked Block Cove.

Walking south from the Main Cliff this is the second cove reached and recognisable by the large block split by a wide crack.

– *Thunderbolt* 15m, Hard Very Severe

An enjoyable route climbing the wide crack in the block (5a).

– *Only Monsters* 15m, E1

Climbs the right-hand side of the wall on the block's seaward side (5a).

ARRAN

BEINN TARSUINN, Meadow Face – *The Rake, Alternative Start* 117m, E1
G. A. McEwan, A. Walker, 21st May, 1988.

A very good alternative to the first four pitches of the original route, avoiding the grass rake on clean, sound rock. This should become the accepted way of climbing *The Rake*. At the bottom right corner of the main face is a large clean slab, bounded on the right by a large groove line. Start at the foot of this slab.

Climb straight up the middle of the slab to a belay on a large grass ledge below a slabby corner containing two small overlaps (65m, 4b). Climb up left through the overlaps then traverse left to another slabby corner which is climbed to a leftwards traverse leading to a belay on top of a huge flake (37m, 5a). Gain and climb the overhanging crack above to a belay below the crux corner of the parent route (15m, 5b).

A'CHIR, Coire Daingean – *Sesame Street* 196m, Severe
F. McKie, F. Thomson, 20th June, 1987.

Follow cracks, grooves and slabs up the centre of the buttress right of *Boundary Ridge*.

CIR MHOR, Rosa Pinnacle, Lower West Face – *The Ozone Layer* 190m, GRADE IV
K. V. Crocket, A. Walker; R. Carchrie, G. A. McEwan, 25th February, 1989.

A continuously interesting climb, the natural winter line in the vicinity of *Fourth Wall*. Start below an open turf groove just uphill from the start of *Fourth Wall/Sou'wester Slabs*.

Gain and climb the groove to a belay just beneath a short chimney (15m). Move right and climb turf cracks and grooves to a belay 3m below a small overhang (37m). Move down and left round an edge into a short corner. Climb this to a traverse left on flakes into a further groove which is followed to a belay (31m). Climb the grooves leftwards (common to *Fourth Wall*) to a belay on top of the Plinth (45m). Descend left 6m on to a wide grassy shelf (roped on F.A. but should be down-climbable). Climb the shelf over steep steps to a belay 5m below the steep wall of the final corner (37m). Climb the groove and corner to reach the Terrace (25m). (See photograph).

DRUMADOON POINT – *Alternative Medicine* 130m, E5
K. Sharples, R. Brown, 1st June, 1988.

Midway between the fence and the vegetated recess where the crag is continuous, an obvious well-defined vee groove starts at ground level and gradually runs out at half-height. Follow the groove until a good foothold can be gained below its end. Make hard moves out of the groove on to the wall until a big jug can be gained on the right; small wires RP's 1 and 2 protect. Trend up and leftwards on to the obvious flake and follow this to the top. Fine climbing and mild for the grade. (6a).

– *Endangered Species* 130m, E6
N. Slater, R. Brown, 2nd June, 1988.

Immediately right of the vegetated recess is a slender pillar projecting slightly beyond the rest of the crag. In the front face of the pillar a bottomless groove terminates at half-height at a capping roof (this route is left of *Electric Avenue*). Boldly gain the base of the groove proper at 10m, peg runner, and follow it until a good ledge can be gained on the left. Climb the wall above with faith in what lies above. The attainment of a niche beneath a small roof signifies the end of the difficulties. Gain a good flake above and finish easily. Not too hard for the grade (6a).

– *Groove of Distinction*

30m, E5

K. Sharples (unseconded). 2nd June, 1988.

About half-way between the vegetated recess and the detached pillar, say 50m beyond *Endangered Species*, a big obvious, open leftward facing groove again terminates at half-height in a roof. This is some 14m left of *Shock Treatment*. Gain the top of the small pillar at the base of the groove. Follow the groove, quite sustained, until below the roof. Move out leftwards into a series of small hanging grooves and follow these by first technical then powerful climbing until a good ledge is reached 3m below the top. Follow the crack above to the finish. Excellent sustained climbing, well protected (6b).

Notes

A variation has been reported on *West Flank Route* which straightens out pitch four, the ascent being dated 1983. This is not the earliest ascent, the New Climbs Editor has known of the variation since at least 1977.

F. McKie reports a winter ascent of *Broomstick Ridge* on *The Witch's Step* at Grade III, keeping as close to the edge of the ridge as possible, said to be good.

MISCELLANEOUS NOTES

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Dear Sir,

A Century of Scottish Mountaineering

On page 288 of Bill Brooker's anthology there appears a brief obituary on J. H. B. Bell from the Journal of 1976, ascribed to W.H.M. This passage was not written by me. It is an editorial comment written anonymously by Geoff Dutton, prefacing my obituary which immediately follows in the Journal (and not quoted in the book).

Yours etc.,

Bill Murray.

Raeburn's First Climb. — Alastair Matthews writes to shed some light on this topic. 'I read with great interest your article in the latest SMCJ (1988, XXXIV, 29) of 'Raeburn's First Climb.' It is interesting to speculate on the exact route taken by the young Raeburn.

The photo in Jerry Handren's guide, captioned simply 'Salisbury Crag' shows, without doubt, the *Cat Nick Arête*, which I believe was something of a trade route in the early part of this century, having (relatively) sound rock, safe belays and lack of any great technical difficulty. Nowadays the route is vegetated and probably rarely climbed.

The Craigside Works (the old Gasworks) visible in the 1905 photo are no longer standing, of course, having been replaced by modern blocks of flats.

Assuming the Gasworks were visible from Raeburn's climb this would place it as somewhere north of the Cat Nick, probably in the vicinity of *Earth Ledge Route*, *Red Ridge Route* or one of the other vegetated climbs at this end of the Radical Road; routes which Raeburn describes some 17 years later in SMCJ (1897, IV, pp. 335-41).

Egg on Your Face. — Following the climbing, and recording, of new routes on the Scurr of Eigg last year (which were climbed during the nesting season), the owner of the Isle of Eigg Estate, Mr Keith Schellenberg, writes to inform members (and, by inference, other climbers) that 'written permission is required before anybody may camp on the Isle of Eigg Estate. This will only be permitted in an area set aside for the purpose and will not be allowed under any circumstances during the nesting season.'

To Be a Pure Munroist. — Leonard Ross, one of the afflicted, worries that he has not done the Munros 'properly.' He writes 'From the records in the Scottish Mountaineering Club's Journal of Compleat Munroists' it appears that if steps are not taken, we shall be in great danger of being overwhelmed by this vast and growing army. I have read many accounts of ascending the Munros, some taking 20 years and some just a few months. Indeed, I was so inspired that at the age of 61 I decided to try and climb them myself and 4.4 years later and 3.5 stone lighter I stood on my last Munro and felt great.

Recently, however, I have been plagued with the feeling that I really didn't climb all the Munros, as in many cases, all I did was to climb one and then just walk along a ridge or high ground to bag another one or more. I have met a few stalwarts who have 'climbed' around 11 Munros in a day, but really, in spite of this considerable feat, all they have done is to climb one and then walk up and down the higher ground and ridges to 'pass over' the rest. Also as the vast army of Compleaters increases it is not now regarded as any great achievement. Perhaps the gentlemen who have decreed that the Munros are not now the same as Sir Hugh listed them, could use their not inconsiderable power to make a new law stating that they must now be climbed separately and from motor road level in order to claim that distinction of being a true Munroist!

(There is no record of Completion by the purist approach of doing each Munro individually from sea level. However, this extreme variant of the disease was identified by Cohen in 1979 (SMCJ XXXI, 423) and named in 1984 (SMCJ XXXIII, 72) as Munrosia Totoyoensis).

MUNRO MATTERS

by W. D. Brooker (Clerk of the List)

Compleat Munroists. — The following have confessed or have been reported as having finished the round of 277 Munros.

- (557) Malcolm Lamont, 1986, —, —;
 (558) J. A. Scott, 1986, —, —;
 (559) James V. Mathieson, 1986, —, —;
 (560) James Tarvet, 1987, —, —;
 (561) A. M. Drummond, 1987, —, —;
 (562) Michael A. Taylor, 1987, —, —;
 (563) Jill Evans, 1987, —, —;
 (564) William S. Gray, 1988, —, —;
 (565) Brian Covell, 1987, —, —;
 (566) Alexander Baxter, 1988, —, —;
 (567) Fiona Torbet, 1987, —, —;
 (568) Ian A. Wallace, 1987, —, —;
 (569) G. Collinson, 1988, —, —;
 (570) Jack Veitch, 1988, —, —;
 (571) Douglas Rennie, 1988, —, —;
 (572) Douglas M. Fraser, 1988, —, —;
 (573) Tommy Hepburn, 1988, 1988, —;
 (574) Charles L. Scott, 1987, —, —;
 (575) John Blair-Fish, 1988, —, —;
 (576) Donald Shiach, 1988, —, —;
 (577) James R. Brocklehurst, 1988, —, —;
 (578) G. D. Moylan, 1988, —, —;
 (579) Cyril M. Smith, 1988, —, —;
 (580) John Green, 1988, —, —;
 (581) Keitch Skeens, 1988, —, —;
 (582) Dave Cording, 1988, —, —;
 (583) Alec M. Syngé, 1988, 1988, —;
 (584) David R. Bird, 1988, —, —;
 (585) **Helen Steven, 1988, —, —;
 (586) Marcus H. Ward, 1988, —, —;
 (587) Harry Robinson, 1988, —, —;
 (588) David W. Eadington, 1988, —, —;
 (589) T. E. Edwards, 1988, —, —;
 (590) H. Gordon Adshead, 1987, 1988, 1987;
 (591) Fraser Hamilton, 1988, —, 1988;
 (592) David F. Geddes, 1988, —, —;
 (593) W. Brian Carlyle, 1988, —, —;
 (594) Andrew C. B. Dempster, 1988, —, —;
 (595) Stewart Lang, 1988, 1988, —;
 (596) Brian R. Johnson, 1988, —, —;
 (597) Andrew Kerr, 1988, —, —;
 (598) John Gibson, 1988, —, —;
 (599) James Taylor, 1988, —, —;
 (600) Hugh R. Shercliff, 1987, —, —;
 (601) Christopher Allan, 1988, —, —;
 (602) Irvin John Cushnie, 1988, 1988, —;
 (603) Kay Turner, 1988, —, —;
 (604) Nev Wiseman, 1988, —, —;
 (605) Mal Newlyn, 1988, —, —;
 (606) Ian Holland, 1988, —, —;
 (607) Mark Elsegood, 1988, —, —;
 (608) Alasdair I. MacLennan, 1988, —, —;
 (609) Seonaid Wood, 1988, —, —;
 (610) Dairena Gaffney, 1988, —, —;
 (611) Roger D. Everett, 1988, —, —;
 (612) Ian M. Williams, 1986, —, —;
 and 1988, —, —;
 (613) Andrew Tibbs, 1988, —, —;
 (614) George Bruce, 1987, —, —;
 (615) **Jadwiga Kowalska, 1987, —, —;
 (616) **Anne Murray, 1987, —, —;
 (617) Roger Owen, 1988, —, —;
 (618) Hamish H. Johnston, 1988, —, —;
 (619) A. M. Kinghorn, 1988, —, —;
 (620) Norrie Muir, 1988, —, —;
 (621) Alistair Milner, 1988, —, —;
 (622) Robert Wilson, 1988, —, —;
 (623) Maurice Watson, 1988, —, —;
 (624) John C. S. Vaughan, 1988, —, —;
 (625) Katherine Jamieson, 1988, —, 1987;
 (626) Peter H. Nall, 1988, —, —;
 (627) Neil D. Robertson, 1988, —, —;
 (628) *John M. Burley, 1988, —, —;
 (629) Kay Simpson, 1988, —, —;
 (630) C. Clinch, 1988, 1988, 1988;
 (631) W. A. Simpson, 1988, —, —;
 (632) John Adams, 1988, —, —.

The Rising Flood. — The annual tally of Compleaters listed in the Journal over the last ten years looks like this:

1980: 24	1984 saw the	1985: 62
1981: 32	publication of a	1986: 59
1982: 27	revised edition of	1987: 43
1983: 29	<i>The Tables and 1985</i>	1988: 70
1984: 27	<i>'The Munros' guidebook</i>	1989: 76

Almost half of all Completions have been recorded in the last five years and over 70% in the last ten. Where will it all end? This is no longer a question that is even worth asking because it is obvious to anyone active in the hills that serious hill-walking is now a major recreational activity. Munroing is an inseparable part of it. One of the rewards of compiling the list is that letters come in from Compleaters of all kinds allowing vicarious contact with a wealth of motive, experience and satisfaction.

A New Usefulness? – The above list of 76 Compleaters is even longer than last year's, although it must be admitted that the first seven of this year's list were omitted from the 1988 Journal due to an anomaly in the computer print-out. It might be thought that since Completion takes most people a good many years, another year before being listed in the Journal would not matter much. However, in one case frequent weekend absences in all weathers had aroused the suspicions of a long suffering wife. These were allayed by explanations of Munros and the promise that all would be satisfactorily proven when the next Journal appeared listing the name of her errant husband. Our failure to list the name meant a divorce was threatening, but the services of the Clerk of the List were rapidly deployed to successfully rescue the marriage.

Given such social significance, the earlier intention to terminate the list at 665 (SMCJ, 1988, XXXII, 389) has been reconsidered. It will continue as long as the Clerk retains the strength, or until he transfers to a successor.

Embellishments. – (501) Graham Wilson, (502) Iain Crosbie and (503) Ian Young had all done the Tops in 1987, (161) A. F. Desmoulins, (256) Hugh Barron, (553) Sandy Donald and (278) Ewan Douglas had added the Furths in 1988.

The Full House with the addition of Tops and Furths had been made by (106) J. Gillies in 1988 and 1983, (365) Nigel Suess in 1988 and 1986, and by (259) Derek Bearhop, both in 1988.

Polymunros – Second rounds were reported by (114) Donald Smith, (280) Jim Wyllie, (358) Mike Slater and (466) Patience Barton, and third rounds by (161) A. F. Desmoulins and (186) Chris Barton, all in 1988.

Once before we referred to true *Polymunros* as the finishing of an additional round starting from scratch, with the slate wiped clean between rounds. It is apparent, however, that the bulk of multiple Completions do not fulfil this exacting condition and are examples of what had been irreverently termed *Pseudo-polymunros*. Only those actually numbered among the growing elite of multiple Compleaters will know to which category they themselves belong.

Early Starters. – (621) Alistair Milner reports that his son has already done nine Munros but only two on his own feet. These are delicate ethical questions but surely most of us would regard only automotive ascents as valid and summits reached by way of father's rucksack or the helicopter so beloved of RAF Mountain Rescue teams would not be included. Even so this is a commendably early start and it is interesting that half a dozen of the current crop of finishers did their first summit at the age of fourteen. There is of course an existing case of Completion at this age but most people prefer to spread the experience over a longer period, such as (626) Peter Wall, who took 33 years. Some do the opposite, (607) Mark Elsegood, dashing round with the aid of linking motor transport, in one continuous tour of 66 days.

Notable Quotes. – As always there are some intriguing correspondents and among them (53) Alec Syngé describes his post-Completion gathering 'The Glenelg Inn sensibly persuaded most of its residents to take their dinner elsewhere while twelve of us sat down to an excellent meal and a memorable evening. The only two people in the room not members of our party took us very much in their stride, explaining that "We are racing people ourselves..." The relevance of this was not all that clear but perhaps there are dark hints of competition.'

The Master of the Tables has at last struck gold and been invited to a final summit party, that of (585) Helen Steven on Beinn Teallach. He took a bottle of wine as a contribution but unfortunately the weather was such that he and his three companions of the advance party drank it to keep out the cold while awaiting the arrival of the main group. However, later there was champagne broached and, appropriately for an LSCC occasion, strawberries and cream at Milehouse afterwards.

Others have finished off their round in quieter fashion, some almost in secret. (566) Alexander Baxter – 'I refrained from informing my companion of the day that Ben

More Assynt was my last Munro until some hours after our descent,' (592) David Geddes found the summit of Sgurr nan Gillean a marvellous spot to sip champagne in the company of Gerry Ackroyd and others. For much of his round he had only had his spaniel for company! (590) Gordon Adshad has a Full House but has listed all the 901 points over 900m in the UK and visited 850 of them. Metro is the name already given to peaks between 900 and the magic 915m.

And Afterwards. – 'What to do next?' is a common question raised. Few find it difficult to answer. (579) Andrew Kerr is going to write about the Munros as a culinary experience – an account of the best places to eat your German sausage, etc. Most are setting off on further rounds, the Corbetts, or embellishing their basic tally with Tops or Furths.

Almost, but not quite. – Last year a rumour started that a new Munro had appeared with the elevation of Beinn Dearg Mor to 916m. Few Scottish peaks are more worthy than the splendid mountain which rises from the far side of Strath na Sheallag to tower above Shenavall but the rumour proved false and Beinn Dearg remains a Corbett. As such it may be spared the onrush of hundreds of pairs of boots seeking an extended Completion. Conversely, hundreds of Compleat Munroists who have not climbed it will be spared the obligation to do so.

Reporting in. – A surprising number of Compleaters are reported by others – Club Secretaries, spouses, 'friends,' and so on. As Clerk I much prefer a direct confession and would advise any who may read this scribble that a reply is almost certain if an s.a.c. is enclosed. Anyway, notification should go to W. D. Brooker, 25 Deeview Road South, Cults, Aberdeen AB1 9NA. Full names clearly printed are more likely to result in accuracy although in an imperfect world this can never be guaranteed.

Scottish Mountaineering Trust Report. – Although members of the Club receive a copy of the Annual Accounts of the Trust and have a brief opportunity to ask for information at the Annual General Meeting it has been felt, both by members and the Trustees, that members should be given more information on the activities of the Trust and more say in the appointment of Trustees. This report endeavours to inform and the Constitution has been amended.

The amendment to the Constitution concerns who are to be the Trustees – how many and for how long – and was adopted at the March 1989 meeting. Rule 5 now reads:

'There shall be at all times not more than ten nor less than six Trustees. The Trustees shall include the following office-bearers of the Scottish Mountaineering Club providing that they are willing to act as Trustees and that there is no legal or other impediment to their so doing, namely the President, the immediate Past President, the Journal Editor and the Convener of the Publications Sub-Committee. The remaining Trustees shall be appointed by the Scottish Mountaineering Club from among its other members in accordance with its own procedures and two of them shall retire each year on a rotational basis, but shall be eligible for re-election. Four Trustees shall constitute a quorum.'

The Club will thus appoint at least two Trustees at each Annual General Meeting. Three new Trustees were appointed in December 1988 – Robin Clothier, Bob Duncan and Graeme Morrison.

The management of the Trusts publications is carried out by the Publications Sub-Committee of the Club, with finance provided by the Trust. Apart from re-prints there are several new publications due this year thus creating a considerable outflow of funds. These are:

Rock and Ice Guide to Arran, Arrochar and the Southern Highlands.

District Guide to the Islands of Scotland – the first in a new series.

Hill-walking Guide to the Corbetts and Other Hills.

A very personal account by Syd Scroggie entitled 'The Cairngorms – Scene and Unseen.'

The surplus of Income over Expenditure in the last several years has enabled the Trustees to disburse grants and awards. During the past year the following have been made:

- | | |
|---|-------|
| 1. From General Funds: | |
| Kelvin Hall climbing wall | £2500 |
| SMC Centennial Expedition | £500 |
| The National Trust for Scotland for repairs to the Coire nam Beith path | £2000 |
| 2. From the Sang Award: | |
| The Scottish East Kishtwar Expedition | £450 |
- Bill Wallace.

Dribs & Drabs. – Excellent detective work by our well-known burrowers Campbell and Fowler has unearthed a cine film taken in 1929, of the official opening of the CIC Hut. This seems to have been the property of either Henry MacRobert or George Sang. This film has been alluded to by another club archaeologist, on page 87 of the history of Ben Nevis – ‘*Dr. Inglis Clark formally presented the hut to the SMC and amid cheers and “the ticking of amateur cinemas,” Mrs Inglis Clark unlocked the hut.*’ Our good Secretary has successfully viewed the film and transferred it to video, and the hope is to have a showing soon, possibly at the next annual dinner. On the photographic front, I owe Bill MacKenzie an apology for the wrongly captioned photograph on page 99. The names Murray and MacKenzie should be transposed. While mentioning Ben Nevis, an answer is probably in order to some points raised by Campbell’s otherwise flattering review of the Nevis tome (*SMCJ*, 1987, XXXIII, pp. 550-552). Campbell was wrong regarding Smith’s middle name – it was Clark. I was aware of the identity of the author of the entertaining JMCS bus-meet article (it was Campbell who told me!) – but was respecting his anonymity. The story of Marshall’s slip has been coloured by Campbell’s regard for his friend, just as my reaction to the story was coloured by stumbling over the body of a member who made the same slip but failed to stop. Finally, I accept the point made by Campbell over my failure to score any points for conservation. I disliked ending the story on a down-beat.

If a reader in Canada called Brian Hall is out there we owe him an apology. For the 1988 Journal he sent in a note following up the ‘*Straws in the Wind*’ Technical Note (*SMCJ*, 1987, XXXIII, 519), giving details on the amazing use of composite materials during World War II. This note, plus a few other short pieces, disappeared into a black hole called the University internal mail system, along with Mr Hall’s address. The Editor pleads incompetence and hopes that Mr Hall will send in another copy for next year.

Looking forward to the 1990 Journal – the Centenary issue – it is hoped to have articles from three previous editors; Dutton, Campbell and Brooker. There will also be original and hitherto unpublished writings by past members from different ages – Naismith and Robin Smith no less, as well as a glimpse at the climbing style of Harold Raeburn, as described by a contemporary. Iain Smart has an article, in his own, unique style blending poetry and the philosophic eye, confirming him as one of our very best wordsmiths. With the Club’s Centennial Celebrations echoing in your ears, join us for the Journal’s Birthday.

SCOTTISH MOUNTAIN ACCIDENTS, 1988

REGIONAL DISTRIBUTION 1988

(Geographical Divisions are those used in SMC District Guidebooks)

REGION	CASUALTIES (of which fatalities are bracketed)				INCIDENTS							Non- Mountain- eering	
	Injury	Exhaust/Exposure Heat Exh./Frostbite	Illness	TOTAL	Actual Rescues		Other Call Outs						
With Casualties					Cragfast	Separation	Lost	Overdue or Benighted	False Alarms	TOTAL INCIDENTS	Casualties	Incidents	
Northern Highlands	14 (1)	1 (1)	—	15 (2)	14	3	1	—	8	2	28	1 (1)	3
Western Highlands	7 (1)	4	2 (1)	13 (2)	10	—	—	—	5	1	16	1	2
Ben Nevis	16 (3)	18	1	35 (3)	18	3	—	3	6	2	32	—	—
Glencoe (inc. Buachaille)	22 (6)	1	1	24 (6)	20	5	—	—	—	4	29	—	—
Other Central Highlands	13 (3)	1 (1)	—	14 (4)	13	6	—	2	2	1	24	3 (3)	4
Cairngorms	11 (2)	3	2	16 (2)	15	—	2	4	3	2	26	—	—
Southern Highlands	27 (3)	4	3 (1)	34 (4)	28	1	3	4	6	3	45	—	2
Skye	4 (1)	1	—	5 (1)	5	—	1	—	3	1	10	1 (1)	1
Islands (other than Skye)	5 (1)	—	—	5 (1)	5	—	—	—	1	—	6	—	—
Southern Uplands	2	1	1	4	3	—	—	—	—	—	3	—	2
All Regions 1988	121 (21)	34 (2)	10 (2)	165 (25)	131	18	7	13	34	16	219	—	14
All Regions 1987	122 (20)	11	16 (7)	149 (27)	136	18	8	18	39	18	237	8 (5)	16
All Regions 1986	122 (22)	22 (2)	9 (4)	153 (28)	130	9	13	13	24	21	210	15 (12)	28

ACCIDENT LIST, 1988

NB—For brevity, rescue teams are not fully named, merely listed in last sentence of narrative. Man-hours used are stated as a number after the narrative.

NORTHERN HIGHLANDS

- JANUARY 5th—Crag to south of Am Fasarinen Pinnacles, Liathach. RAF Sea King Helicopter pluck-off of four cragfast and their Torridon MRT rescuers. Amazing flying at night by RAF Sea King. 72.
- FEBRUARY 22nd—Gordon Milne (22) in poor weather bivouacked near the summit of Ben More Assynt. Assynt, Kinloss and RAF Sea King. 100.
- FEBRUARY 24th—An Teallach. 5 men were ascending Sgurr Fiona from Bidean a' Ghlas Thuill on névé. Stephen Murray (34) stumbled, possibly tripping over his crampons, and fell down Lord's Gully. He was killed, having failed to brake with his ice-axe, which was seen to 'bounce off.' Dundonnell, Kinloss, SARDA, RAF Sea King. 173.
- APRIL 7th—Bernard Doughty (28) and Dr Andrew Miller (24) got lost and cragfast descending Liathach. Winched off next day. Torridon, Coastguard helicopter.
- APRIL 8th—Dr Robert Lee and his son, Matthew, were climbing the NW Face of Bidean a' Ghlas Thuill, An Teallach. Both had ice-axes but no crampons. The father slipped on névé and fell 50 feet, breaking a leg. Thinking he had only sprained an ankle, he tried to carry on but fell again, this time falling 100 feet and sustaining a compound fracture of the other leg. His son went for help but straight away fell 400 feet. Despite facial cuts, bruises, a fractured clavicle and a sprained ankle he managed to get down to the glen. Dundonnell and helicopter. 47.
- APRIL 9th—Leslie Davey (72) was overdue on a walk up the Allt Lair (east of Ben Dearg, Ullapool). Slightly injured from a stumble, lack of a torch delayed his return. Dundonnell, SARDA. 3.
- APRIL 14th—False alarm caused by car parked for 3 days in Loch Glencoul area.
- APRIL 30th—Thomas Bell (63) injured hand and leg on scree of Ghlas Bheinn, Assynt, but was able to walk out. 4.
- MAY 2nd—Four walkers led by Ian Brock, were lost in poor weather near Foinaven summit, and spent night out. Assynt, Caithness CC, Coastguard helicopter. 536.
- MAY 22nd—Graham Johnston (15) went too close to the edge of Black Rock Gorge, Evanton. The overhanging lip gave way and he fell 100 feet into a deep pool, then managed to swim to the side. A Dundonnell MRT pair abseiled to him and rigged him with a harness and helmet. He was hoisted out by the local fire brigade, with only grazes and bruises. 14.
- MAY 24th—Descending the NE Ridge of A'Mhaighdean, a party of 3 chose to go down an old snow patch. Martin Spooner (43) without axe and crampons slipped and fell 200 feet damaging ribs and bruising a kidney, but managed to walk out. Dundonnell, local keeper, helicopter. 14.
- MAY 26th to 27th—David Shepherd (31) and Melvyn Jones (30) abseiled off Pigott's Route on Central Buttress of Beinn Eighe. They spent a wet night in NW Gully then climbed down. They were found by an RAF Sea King but declined an airlift. Torridon. 84.
- JUNE 1st—False alarm for man (79) separated from 2 companions near the high waterfall, Eas-Coul-Aulinn, Sutherland. Assynt. 3.
- JUNE 2nd—Cragfast trio were lifted off a ledge on Seana Braigh by RAF helicopter. Donald Munro (22) radioed that Marilyn Bell (30) and Gail Crockhart (22) were frightened by squalls when descending. Assynt. 3.
- JUNE 3rd to 4th—Caroline Elwood (28) and Judith Rose (27) were benighted in bad weather on Mullach an Rathain after traversing Liathach. Torridon MRT & Coastguard helicopter. 104.
- JUNE 25th—Shore of Loch Cana, Elphin. Angela Fraser (18) fell on path and broke her leg. Assynt. 4.

- JULY 5th to 6th – Conival and Ben More Assynt. Joseph Walker (39) got lost descending, spent night in bivouac, then walked out. Assynt, Kinloss, SARDA, C/G helicopter. 235.
- JULY 7th – Claire Downing fell when mapping rocks at Faraid Head, Durness, breaking a leg. Rescued by C/G and C/G helicopter.
- JULY 17th – Alan Payne (57) carried on after his two companions turned back. They were mountain biking to Eas-Coul-Aluinn (Waterfall) in poor conditions. He had to abandon his machine near the waterfall and walk out. Assynt. 12.
- JULY 20th – An Teallach. Walking on slabs of track from Loch Toll an Lochain, Patricia Brocklebank (55) slipped on mud and broke a leg. Dundonnell, C/G helicopter. 23.
- JULY 20th to 21st – Traversing Liathach, Martin Crabtree (21) slipped on westernmost pinnacle and fell 600 feet. Lowered to easier ground and airlifted by RAF Sea King. Torridon, Kinloss. 322.
- JULY 28th to 29th – False alarm for a walker caused by a communications mix-up. Assynt, Kinloss, Leuchars, C/G helicopter, RAF Sea King. 428.
- SEPTEMBER 13th to 14th – Unable to cross Gruinard River at the foot of Loch na Sealga, Derek Kennedy (28) decided to walk round the head of the loch but he was benighted near Shenavall Bothy. Dundonnell, C/G helicopter, estate workers. 37.
- OCTOBER 1st – Robin Clothier (31) pulled down a loose block of quartzite and injured his foot on Sgurr Ban of Beinn Eighe. Difficult rescue by Torridon MRT because of desperate weather. Control refused to fly helicopters in the conditions. 180.
- OCTOBER 15th – Walker with ruptured patella ligament winched off Beinn Eighe by RAF Sea King. Torridon, Kinloss. 80.
- OCTOBER 18th – Phil Weston (c50) bivouacked low down on Liathach after separation from his party. Torridon MRT. 24.
- OCTOBER 27th – During gales 3 climbers were seen to be in difficulties on the sea-stack, Old Man of Stoer, Lochinver. They got down to the base minus ropes which had snagged. Their Tyrolean Traverse to the mainland was sloping back down to the stack, but the first climber managed to get across with difficulty. He was followed by Paul Newcombe (20) who could not get up the sloping rope because of exhaustion and breaking waves and succumbed to hypothermia. Nigel Deudney (22) left at the base of the stack, was winched by Sea King. Assynt, C/G helicopter, RAF Sea King, Lochinver lifeboat. 176.
- OCTOBER 28th – Torridon Team called out for John Bazin (38) who had slipped on snow on Beinn Liath Mhor, fracturing a wrist. He walked down. 8.

WESTERN HIGHLANDS

- FEBRUARY 7th to 8th – Party of 4 were walking on the main ridge of Carn Ghluasaid, Cluanie. Duncan Murray (28) fell through a cornice. Cragfast, but unhurt, he dug in for the night and sustained some frostbite. Kintail MRT aided him down a snow-slope next day to below cloud-base, whence he was airlifted by the RAF. Glenelg and Skye on standby, SARDA. 131.
- FEBRUARY 24th – A tramp was found dead in a hill bothy near Glenelg. Glenelg MRT helped police to carry out the body.
- MARCH – Two ill equipped men climbing the Knoydart Munros were reported overdue from Barrisdale, but they turned up safe. Glenelg, Highland Police and Lochaber involved. 43.
- MAY 5th to 6th – False alarm. Falls of Glomach area, Kintail, RAF helicopter. 28.
- MAY 11th – Beinn a'Chuirn (south of Dornie). Alan Flack (58) twisted ankle and badly gashed shin. Helped down by Kintail MRT. 21.
- JUNE 26th – 'Butterknife,' Garbh Bheinn of Ardgour. Leader had 4 runners placed. A rockfall caused him to fall 60 feet to the terrace, and below his second, ripping out 3 of the runners. Shaken, with crushed fingers and a bruised back, he was helped along the ledge and used private transport to get to Belford Hospital. No rescue teams involved.

- JULY 11th – Party of 7 on Gold Expedition near head of Loch Loyne in rain and wind. Lynda Fricker (17) and Rebecca Moss (17) suffered exposure. Kintail, C/G helicopter. 10.
- JULY 27th – Bart Bowerens (17) suffered slight exposure on summit of 844 metre peak above Glenfinnan. Instructor and 2 other students raced down for help leaving their rucksacks on summit with patient and other students. Lochaber, RAF Wessex.
- AUGUST 8th – Helicopter R134 evacuated woman hillwalker with a broken ankle from Loch Moidart. HM Coastguard Salen.
- AUGUST 16th to 17th – 3 women (28, 24, 21), unrelated, lost on 5 Sisters of Kintail (Sgurr Fhuaran). They were found by Kintail MRT trying to descend the wrong side of the wrong mountain in the dark without torches. 6.
- AUGUST 17th – William Billings (67) overdue on Sgurr Fhuaran. Uninjured. Kintail. 3.
- SEPTEMBER 11th – In good weather, a large party walked through the forest above Glean Cia-aig Gorge, a half-mile above 'The Dark Mile' Road, Loch Arkaig, 3 victims climbed a fence to look at the gorge. Baiju Nakarja (23) fell into the gorge sustaining head and rib injuries and 2 broken arms. Nanos Kachela (23), helping, fell in and was drowned, being recovered by RAF Sea King. Satyen Lakhani (22), helping, also fell in, suffering minor injuries. Baiju and Satyen were rescued by Lochaber MRT. 36.
- SEPTEMBER 25th – Jean Allan (57) rescued by RAF Sea King from near MacLean's Towel Waterfall, Ardour. Ankle sprain.
- SEPTEMBER 25th – Dr Catherine MacLeod overdue walking from Rarsaidh, Loch Nevis to Eileanriach. She could not get dogs through a riblock deer-fence. Glenelg MRT. 16.
- OCTOBER 16th – Sgurr Coire na Feinne. Walking the South Cluanie Ridge, Dorothy Minors (56) became ill and was rescued by RAF Sea King. Kintail & Skye MRTs. 10.
- OCTOBER 31st – Lochaber MRT recovered a deer hound stuck on a ledge of Cia-aig Burn, Loch Arkaig. A fox had been shot and fell into the burn. Two dogs had jumped in and the other had drowned. 12.
- DECEMBER 27th to 28th – Three men walking from Glendessary to Loch Nevis were benighted, having failed to cross a spate river. Search by RAF Sea King with Lochaber MRT on board. Men walked out unaided. 20.

BEN NEVIS

- JANUARY 6th – Richard Neil White (22) was one of a pair waiting, below Tower Scoop, to make the climb. Another roped pair on the route were avalanched by windslab, and all four went 200 feet, with White sustaining a knee injury. The others (unhurt!) helped him down to CIC hut. On January 8th he could not walk so he was stretchered down by his mates and 2 Lochaber MRT. 8.
- FEBRUARY 5th – A leader fell from the second pitch of Point Five Gully, stripping the belay and dragging off his second, who sustained a bad cut above his eye. MRTs not involved.
- FEBRUARY 8th – A windslab avalanche caused back injuries to Patrick Bell (25) in Vanishing Gully. Airlifted by RAF Sea King. Lochaber MRT. 18.
- FEBRUARY 12th – Soloing to near the top of Minus Two Gully in very bad snow conditions, Hugo Searle (22) could not downclimb and fell 800 feet, cutting his scalp. He then arsed down Observatory Gully and was taken by a guide to CIC Hut, whence he was airlifted by RAF Wessex. Lochaber MRT. 3.
- FEBRUARY 16th – Search by Lochaber and RN Sea King for 4 men (21, 21, 21, 20) who bivvied overnight at the foot of The Great Tower, Tower Ridge. 33.
- FEBRUARY 16th to 17th – Search by Lochaber MRT for Anthony Bennett (36) and David Weiss (30) benighted in a white-out near Nevis Summit. They snowholed and found their way down. 33.
- FEBRUARY 21st to 22nd – Philip Scott (38) and William Davies (21) were cragfast and benighted on the Eastern Traverse of Tower Ridge, one of them having lost a crampon. Red flares were seen. Lochaber MRT roped down from the plateau, then the clag lifted and both were winched up by helicopter. RAF Sea King, Wessex, Kinloss & Leuchars. 189.

- FEBRUARY 22nd – Descending Carn Mor Dearg Arête, Mike Spencer (24) fell and broke a leg. He was taken by companions to CIC Hut, and then airlifted by RAF Sea King. Lochaber Team. 9.
- FEBRUARY 28th – Going up to the left of Red Burn on Carn Dearg NW, Stephen Docherty (18) was blown over, falling 200 feet and breaking ribs. Colin Dempster (42) went to help but also fell injuring his knee. Lochaber and RAF Sea King. 7.
- FEBRUARY 29th – Giles Trueman (21) fell through a cornice when descending on the north side of Carn Dearg NW and was killed. Lochaber, RAF Wessex. 6.
- MARCH 4th – Search by Lochaber and RAF Sea King for Tony Howard and Mike Green (both 40) who got lost on the plateau after climbing Green Gully and went down Five Finger Gully. They made their own way down. 10.
- MARCH 8th – Mark Edwards (19) and Mr Martin (19) were found by Lochaber Team, in a tent near CIC Hut after being overdue climbing Tower Ridge. 5.
- MARCH 12th – RAF Wessex winched 2 cragfast doctors off Orion Face. Bernard Walsh (28), Nazim Mamod (25), Lochaber MRT. 12.
- MARCH 14th – False alarm. Binocular watcher in Banavie thought he saw 2 climbers stuck on Orion Face. Lochaber, RAF Sea King. 5.
- MARCH 17th – 'Cresta,' Brenva Face. Teresa Bray (26) and Claire Huxley (25) cragfast at crux. Due to high winds RAF Sea King could only get team to CIC Hut, so Lochaber rescuers were lowered from top of NE Buttress. 116.
- MARCH 21st – Pair climbed Castle Ridge and were descending Carn Dearg NW in NW direction. John Rose (25) had removed crampons, slipped on snow falling 900 feet over cliff. Witnesses gave first aid but he died before evacuation by Lochaber and RAF Wessex. 10.
- APRIL 2nd – Search by Lochaber and RAF Wessex for Guy Hawton & Tim Luke, benighted by very poor snow conditions, on the top of Zero Gully after climbing Observatory Ridge. 60.
- APRIL 9th – NW Ridge of Carn Dearg NW.....again! John Brooks (55), still roped after climbing Castle Ridge, was descending towards the Halfway Lochan when he slipped and fell 120 feet. His partner stopped him by quickly getting his axe into the snow. Despite a skull fracture he managed to the first aluminium bridge. Stretched down by Lochaber MRT. 22.
- APRIL 9th to 10th – Search by Lochaber and RAF Wessex for Dr Graham Howie (30) and James Graham (30) benighted on Tower Ridge. 28.
- APRIL 13th to 14th – Charles Eden (40) and Paul Ingram (31) were benighted on Tower Ridge. Stuck at the Eastern Traverse they traversed out into Tower Gully. Search by Lochaber and RAF Sea King. 8.
- APRIL 29th – Without an ice-axe, Claire Smiddy (21) was descending Red Burn above Halfway House. She slipped on snow and slid 60 feet on to rocks, severely bruising her bum. Managing to limp to the track, she was helped down by Lochaber MRT. 13.
- JUNE 25th – Leading, Robert Makison (42), fell off from near the top of Centurion with 4 runners placed. The top 2 runners failed but the others held. Observers at CIC Hut went above and top roped the second man. Makison had broken an ankle and was winched off by RAF Sea King. 14.
- JULY 4th – Beryl Horton (48) was stretched down by Lochaber after badly spraining an ankle descending the Tourist Path. 7.
- JULY 17th – Nevis Gorge footpath below Steall Falls. Joan Woods (47) slipped on a rock and broke an ankle. Carried down by Lochaber MRT. 18.
- JULY 19th – Christopher Cracknell (21) fell when 8 feet up Black's Buttress, Polldubh Crags. He tried to turn to land on his feet, but landed badly breaking tibia and fibula. Rescued by Lochaber and OB Loch Eil. 26.
- AUGUST 8th – Lorraine Allen (36) broke an ankle on the Tourist Path. Lochaber MRT and RAF Wessex. 7.
- AUGUST 13th – Gordon Turner (34) was rescued from the Tourist Path after he suffered a heart attack. Lochaber and RAF Sea King. 2.

- SEPTEMBER 3rd – 793 man hours were expended by Lochaber, Glencoe and Kinloss teams rescuing 15 runners and 2 helpers from the annual Ben Nevis Race which was run despite storm winds and torrential rain. All 17 were in a state of collapse; some had minor injuries to head and limbs and all were hypothermic, 1 with core temperature of 33 degrees C, and 2 with core temperatures of 31. Due to shortage of stretchers some had to be walked to Halfway Lochan for rescue by RAF Sea King and Wessex helicopters. Killin and OB Loch Eil involved and Leuchars on standby. Weather was unsuitable for the race: if a runner stopped due to cramp or fatigue, hypothermia quickly ensued. Some runners became disoriented in hill-fog near the summit with steep ground on both sides. 900.
- SEPTEMBER 10th to 11th – Ralph Milne (52) separated from his companion on Tourist Zig-zags and got lost. Searches by Lochaber. Found by RAF Wessex. 33.
- SEPTEMBER 21st to 22nd – Circuit of Carn Mor Dearg and Ben Nevis by 3 priests. 1 Father Augustine Fawley (70), 2 Father Vincent Cavey (59), 3 Father David Ryder (42). Numbers 1 and 2 started early but separated. 3 caught up with 1 who was exhausted and had to be helped down Ben Path in the early hours of 22nd by Lochaber MRT. Meantime 2 had got lost and benighted. Someone had told him of a 'short cut' to Glen Nevis by Coire Eoghainn. He made his own way down, but not before a big search by Lochaber and RAF Wessex. 92.
- NOVEMBER 11th – Giubhsachan flank of Nevis in the coire. False alarm. Marines found no one. RAF Sea King helicopter also vainly searched. A shepherd listened to the radio news, then 'phoned the police saying that his mate had left his 'sac on the hill and failed to find it when he went back for it' 10.
- NOVEMBER 29th – Noel Kurdell (31) wearing lightweight 'Trall'-type boots, had climbed the Ben with a companion via Waterslide/SE Ridge (Arête) Route. Descending the same way, just below the summit, he slipped on snow and was unable to brake with his ice-axe. He fell down the 'Slalom' area of Brenva Face and was killed. Recovery was by Lochaber stretcher carry from Coire Leis because foul weather precluded flying. RN Sea King. 140.

GLENCOE

including Buachaille Etive Mor

- JANUARY 1st – Descending Sgorr nam Fiannaidh, Mike Haggert (32) knocked his already painful knee on a rock and was unable to go on down. Glencoe MRT stretched him down after being alerted by torch flashes. 24.
- JANUARY 23rd – Two men from Aberdeen were avalanched on Stob Coire nan Lochan, and two Glasgow men were avalanched on the same mountain in a separate incident. In both avalanches injuries were sustained but the teams were not called out as the lads got themselves off the hill.
- JANUARY 23rd – Buachaille Etive Mor. Going down from North Buttress, Fraser Vinning (18) fell over Slime Wall into Great Gully. His companion went for help, then as rescuers approached Vinning he fell again and died during rescue. Glencoe Team, SARDA, Aberdeen University and SMC. 88.
- JANUARY 23rd – False alarm. Flashing lights seen near Ossian's Cave. 10.
- JANUARY 23rd to 24th – Jack Martin (44) and John Thomson (34) had to bivouac when climbing Curved Ridge, Buachaille Etive Mor. Rescuers went down from the summit (because of avalanche danger) and found them cold but well near Crowberry Tower, extricating them by Coire na Tulaich. Glencoe, Aberdeen University, Kinloss, Lochaber, RAF Sea King, SARDA. 450.
- JANUARY 29th – Glencoe MRT was called out for a member of a party of 7. He slipped and fell 100 feet when descending, about 200 feet from the top of the Pap of Glencoe. He injured a leg and genitals but recovered to walk down slowly, declining assistance from the team. 18.
- JANUARY 31st – Gillian Lyons (49), William Poole (42) and Graeme Bartrop (36) were swept 1,000 feet down Great Gully of Buachaille Etive Mor by a softslab avalanche, sustaining relatively minor injuries. They were airlifted out. 100.

- JANUARY 31st to FEBRUARY 3rd – The casualties from the previous incident reported that 2 unroped men had also been swept down and were presumed buried. This false alarm sparked off a massive search. Glencoe, Lochaber, Kinloss, Leuchars, Grantown-on-Spey, SARDA, 4 military helicopters. 1,100.
- FEBRUARY 6th – Rev. Ted's Gully, Gearr Aonach. 4 unroped men were hit by a soft-slab avalanche. Jonathan Clark (20) and Gary Crook (26) were injured and were airlifted by RAF Wessex. Glencoe, Kinloss. 93.
- FEBRUARY 6th – Colin Gilchrist (23) was killed, and Mark McGowan (19) had his arm broken by a softslab avalanche from fresh, deep snow. They were unroped, descending Easy Gully, Buachaille Etive Mor, from a harder route. Glencoe, Kinloss, SARDA, RAF Sea King. 144.
- FEBRUARY 6th – West Face of Aonach Dubh. Two men were only slightly injured when they were swept down 500 feet from the Middle Terrace, over very steep ground, to near the valley floor by an avalanche. No teams were involved.
- FEBRUARY 14th – An unroped climber was badly injured when he fell from the Chancellor, Aonach Eagach. He had been trying to pass people at the Bad Step and he had fallen over the head of another climber, almost dislodging him. The fall of 1,500 feet over rocks was one of the longest taken in Glencoe. His helmet, although damaged, stayed on his head throughout the fall and probably saved his life. Glencoe, RN Sea King. 37.
- FEBRUARY 23rd – Gary Mayrick (28) fell from the first pitch of Twisting Gully, Stob Coire nan Lochan, breaking an ankle. He was held by his second on a dead man belay. Glencoe, RAF Wessex. 42.
- FEBRUARY 26th – Falling 800 feet from the Pinnacles of Coire Cam down the north side of Aonach Eagach, Carol Brack (40) suffered broken ribs. Stretchered down by Glencoe MRT. Difficult rescue due to clouds and strong wind. RAF Wessex. 80.
- MARCH Jason Beith (17) sustained head injuries in a fall down the north side of An t'Sron and was lowered by Glencoe Team on a stretcher. An RAF Wessex helicopter was unable to help, despite ejecting fuel, because of high winds. 63.
- APRIL 6th to 7th – Descending from Aonach Eagach, Mark and Jane Singleton (25) were cragfast west of Clachaig Gully. They alerted Glencoe Team by torch flashes and were lowered to easier ground. An RAF Wessex was alerted but recalled. 50.
- APRIL 9th – Edward Cooney (34) became temporarily cragfast after he had separated from two companions when descending from Aonach Eagach. He was found by Glencoe MRT near Clachaig Gully. 14.
- APRIL 30th – Mark McCoy (24) dropped his rucksack into Clachaig Gully. Trying to retrieve it he got cragfast under a small overhang. He was rescued by fellow students just before Glencoe MRT reached the scene. 9.
- MAY 1st – Preparing to descend south into Glen Etive from Stob Coire Sgreamach, Judith Hudson (33) and a man were talked into using a 'short cut' north into Glencoe. Without ice-axe, crampons or helmet, Judith slipped going down a snow ridge towards Beinn Fhada and she was killed. Glencoe MRT stretchered her down and then she was airlifted by RAF Sea King. 60.
- SPRING/SUMMER – There were four separate accidents on the Buachaille or thereabouts involving four men who sustained injuries, but either walked out or were carried down by their friends.
- MAY 24th – Stron an Fhorsair of Stob na Broighe, Buachaille Etive Mor. Descending, Chris Howard (44) was injured when he fell over a 20 ft. cliff. Stretchered down by Glencoe MRT. 23.
- JUNE 11th – Having climbed 'Trapeze' on Aonach Dubh two men unroped and were scrambling to the ridge. Anthony Czech (26) pulled up on a loose block and fell 6 feet. The block then landed on him and he fell another 100 feet. Fatal. RAF Wessex airlifted him because of the danger of evacuation by Glencoe and Lochaber MRTs. 117.
- JUNE 18th – Glencoe MRT stretchered Margaret Alkema (59) down from the Lost Valley when her knee locked. 18.

- JUNE 19th - Three people were on Am Bodach starting the traverse of Aonach Eagach. A woman decided to turn back because she did not like the steep ground. Avril Raeper (30), her companion, went down The Red Step to collect a daysack from the man in the party to enable him to continue. Facing in, she jumped down the last few feet to the ridge, but on landing she was unable to regain her balance and fell down the north side. She died during rescue by Glencoe MRT and RAF Wessex. 27.
- JUNE 20th - 26 pupils and teachers in Coire na Tulaich, Buachaille Etive Mor, split into 3 groups. One party tried to climb a gully on the right flank. A stone was dislodged which injured Christopher Barton (15) who was walking at the back. Glencoe MRT were called when an RAF Wessex was unable to winch him out of the gully, but the helicopter was successful at another attempt. 42.
- JULY 16th - Two men were soloing up the side of the large waterfall, low down in Coire nam Beithach, Bidean nam Bian. John Hanson (21) slipped and fell 60 ft. sustaining serious head injuries. Despite his heartbeat being twice restored by Glencoe MRT he was dead on arrival in hospital. Airlift by RAF Wessex. 24.
- JULY 17th - Ronald Erskine (40) was airlifted by RAF Wessex from the Lost Valley after suffering a suspected heart attack on Bidean nam Bian. Glencoe MRT. 30.
- AUGUST 14th - Starting at 10 a.m., three men climbed Agag's Groove, Buachaille Etive Mor, very slowly and got benighted and cragfast on Curved Ridge. They flashed torches and were roped down by Glencoe MRT. 39.
- AUGUST 14th - False alarm. Lights seen from previous rescue. Glencoe and Leuchars MRTs. 36.
- AUGUST 25th - Virginia Kuhm (35) was airlifted from the Lost Valley by RAF Wessex with a broken ankle. Glencoe MRT. 22.
- OCTOBER 3rd - A local shepherd called out Glencoe MRT when he saw 11 soldiers descending the steep, loose, North Face of Aonach Dubh, but in the event the team was not needed. 11.
- NOVEMBER 19th - Sarah Wick (21) stretchered down from Coire nam Beithach, Bidean nam Bian by Glencoe MRT suffering from exhaustion/hypothermia. 23.

OTHER CENTRAL HIGHLANDS

- JANUARY 17th - Descending, Craig MacConnel (34) and Ian Fleming (28), got cragfast on Steall Waterfall, Glen Nevis, and were lifted off by RAF Wessex. Lochaber MRT. 12.
- JANUARY 21st - One of a party of 4, Michael Holland (35) suffered a broken clavicle when caught in a slab avalanche on Sgurr a'Mhaim, Mamores. Carried down by Lochaber MRT. 138.
- JANUARY 23rd to 24th - One of a party of 4, Charles Higgins was descending Creag Meagaidh looking for The Window, when he went through a cornice and fell 800 feet. He dug a snowhole where he was found next morning by Lochaber MRT, and from where he evacuated next morning by RAF Sea King. His companions got such a fright that they went down the Moy (South) side to avoid further cornices. 130.
- FEBRUARY 21st - One of a party of 4, Michael Graham (19) went through a cornice and fell 200 feet when descending Aonach Beag, sustaining arm and back injuries. Lowered to valley floor by Lochaber MRT and then RAF Sea King. 44.
- FEBRUARY 28th - Descending An Gearanach, Mamores, towards Steall, James Sanderton (23) slipped on ice and braked with his axe, but he slid about 40 feet and dislocated his shoulder. No crampons. Lochaber MRT and RAF Sea King. 14.
- FEBRUARY 28th - Coire Dearg of Ben Cruachan. Rebecca Gibbons got minor injuries when she slid 1,000 feet. Not wearing crampons or helmet, she had been descending from the ridge in strong winds when she slipped on ice. In attempting to brake she lost her ice-axe. Oban Police MRT and RAF helicopter. 12.
- MARCH 1st - Peter Pearce (49) was killed by a 200 ft. fall on Stob Coire Easain, Loch Treig Hills, Descending, he stopped to take photographs and stuck his axe in the snow. His friend's rucksack slid away, and in trying to catch it he slipped and went over a cornice. Lochaber MRT and RAF Wessex. 5.

- MARCH 2nd to 3rd – After being separated from his 3 friends, Desmond Clark (30) fell 600 feet over a cornice, breaking a femur on the East Face of Binnein Mor, Mamores. Search for him involved Glencoe, Lochaber, RAF Wessex and SARDA. He was found when he flashed his torch and would probably have died of exposure if not found then. Difficult winching. 170.
- MARCH 4th – Two people, unroped, were walking the Sron na Giubhas Ridge from Stob Gabhar, Black Mount. Barry Kenyon (49) fell down a steep snow slope and suffered multiple cuts. He managed to find his own way down, despite his friend going off to call out Glencoe MRT. 7.
- MARCH 14th – A man and a woman were off-piste ski-ing down a steep, dangerous couloir in Coire an Easain of Meall a' Bhuiridh, Black Mount. Hazel Robertson (45) removed her skis, and moments later fell 500 feet and sustained head injuries. The man went for help. Another skier tried to get down to help the woman and slipped and broke some ribs. Glencoe MRT, Ski Rescue Team, RN Sea King. 19.
- MARCH 25th – Alex and Craig McCue (36, 12) were descending from a ridge of Beinn na Lap when they were swept away by a small slab avalanche. The other member of the party went off and called out Lochaber MRT, but neither of the pair was injured and they made their own way down. 20.
- APRIL 3rd – Lochaber MRT called out on false alarm because a walker failed to find the tent of his companion at a rendezvous in the Grey Coires. RAF Sea King and Wessex. 8.
- APRIL 3rd – Carn Beag Dearg. Stephen Vanderstein (26) was descending fairly easy ground, but suffered skull and spinal injuries when he fell down a rocky outcrop. Lochaber MRT and RAF Sea King. 2.
- APRIL 9th – An animal rescue was carried out on Aonach Beag. Two people had been climbing very steep snow with an icy crust when their Labrador fell 200 feet on to boulders and refused to move. The dog had cut paws only and climbed out with a little assistance when roped up by Lochaber MRT. 12.
- MAY 8th to 9th – Cairngorm, Kinloss and SARDA searched the Monadhliath Mountains for Ian Quigley (41) touring on Nordic skis. Cairngorm MRT found tracks and he was then located, still lost, on Carn Dearg by RAF Sea King. 337.
- JUNE 22nd – Hanne Thoreson (39) got cragfast on the S. slope of Craig Varr, Kinloch Rannoch on her first hillwalking attempt. She was coaxed down by Tayside Police MRT. 10.
- JULY 21st – North Face of Garbh Bheinn immediately above Kinlochleven. Glencoe Team was called out for four boys (14, 12, 7, 5) in danger on very steep ground at 500 metres. They managed to extricate themselves. Perhaps they should be named for future recruitment to the Club. 6.
- JULY 25th to 26th – Seven teenage Duke of Edinburgh's Award expeditioners overdue, were found safe at Staoinneag Bothy by Lochaber MRT, having sheltered there in extreme weather. 40.
- AUGUST 15th – David Tulloch (91) was lifted by RAF Wessex from Staoinneag Bothy with back pains, having slipped crossing a burn on Rannoch Moor some time before. Lochaber MRT. 5.
- AUGUST 18th – Search by Cairngorm, Dundonnell, Kinloss and SARDA for angler/hillwalker benighted in Loch Tarff area near Fort Augustus. Mr Balvane got lost in mist then found his own way out in daylight. 334.
- AUGUST 22nd – Glencoe Team called out for angler/cragman who got stuck on a cliff above the River Leven. 11.
- AUGUST 27th – Charles Butterworth (39) died of exposure or drowning on a ledge half-way up the lowermost waterfall pitch in Cave of the Skulls, Duror, Argyll. Without a wetsuit, he had been battling to jumar up and got exhausted. Very difficult rescue by Glencoe, Lochaber and Derbyshire cavers. Oban and Kinlochleven Fire Brigades diverted the burn above the pothole as it had been raining heavily for some time. 124.
- SEPTEMBER 13th – Julie Dadds (24) and Richard Evans (24) got cragfast on the true right of Steall Waterfall, Glen Nevis. They had tried to descend the true left side and climbed back up before attempting to go down the other side. They were roped down by Lochaber MRT. 25.

- NOVEMBER 1st to 2nd – Large scale search for Dr James Chalmers (65) who was killed by a fall on frozen, steep ground on the Glen Etive Face of Sron na Creise. Walking alone he had been well equipped but with lightweight boots and no ice-axe. Glencoe, Kinloss, Leuchars, Lochaber, Police, RAF Wessex, RN Sea King, SARDA. 1,126.
- NOVEMBER 27th – Malcolm Scott (17) was lifted by RAF Sea King from near Creag-guanach Lodge, Loch Treig, with a twisted knee. Another lad from the party of 10 had blisters and took the chance for a flight out. Kinloss, Leuchars, Lochaber, Police, RAF Wessex, RN Sea King, SARDA. 1,126.

CAIRNGORMS

- JANUARY 7th – George Vine-Lott (57) was ill at Corrou Bothy but managed to walk out to Derry Lodge. Grampian Police MRT. 2.
- FEBRUARY 13th – Ewan McGregor and Anthony Sharkey (both 17 and novices) were benighted by deep wet snow conditions at a derelict building between Dunkeld and Kirkmichael. Tayside Police MRT. 35.
- FEBRUARY 14th – Three men in their mid-twenties were delayed by mist and snow on Jock's Road. Tayside Police.
- FEBRUARY 29th – False alarm for a party of 8 from HMS Neptune 'missing' on the Cairngorm Plateau, but actually in bed having failed to cancel their route plan. Cairngorm, Glenmore, Leuchars. 92.
- MARCH 8th – 3 lost hillwalkers were found by RAF helicopter at Loch an Eilean. Cairngorm, Glenmore. 60.
- MARCH 13th – Craig Grant (17) injured a leg scree-running at Loch Brandy, Glen Clova. RAF Wessex, Tayside Police. 3.
- MARCH 20th – C. Berry broke a leg falling from a roped winter climb in Coire an Lochain, Cairn Lochan, and was winched up by RAF helicopter. Glenmore Lodge MRT. 4.
- APRIL 9th – David Leitch (27), experienced, was killed by a fall down Aladdin's Mirror when attempting a ski-descent of Aladdin's Couloir. Cairngorm, Glenmore, RAF helicopter. 8.
- APRIL 29th to 30th – After taking 19 hours walking from Cairngorm to Ben Macdui and back, David Coe (19) returned exhausted and hypothermic. Cairngorm, Glenmore and RAF helicopter. 74.
- MAY 8th – Climbing on Red Craig, Glen Clova, a Leuchars MRT party were dropping a top rope to a civilian, Martin Forsyth (20) but he ran out of strength and fell before the rope reached him, sustaining a March fracture and a fractured tibial plateau. Mark Atkins (27), his second, had dismantled his belay trying to help, and was knocked off his stance and suffered a slight head injury. Both men fell 40 feet to the bottom. RAF Wessex airlift. 18.
- MAY 9th – Leuchars, both Tayside teams and RAF Wessex called out to search for 2 Boy Scouts, separated from their group and lost at Loch Brandy, but they managed to get down to the road in Glen Clova unaided.
- MAY 15th – Descending the path from Mither Tap, Bennachie, Inverurie, Mary Robb (54) stumbled on a loose stone and broke her leg. Grampian Police MRT, RAF Wessex. 6.
- MAY 15th – When walking the Forestry Commission Blue Trail on Meall a' Bhuaichaille, a woman (64) slipped on scree and injured a leg. Glenmore, RAF Sea King. 9.
- MAY 15th – Helen Gow (57) suffered heat trauma at Chalamain Gap. Glenmore, RAF Sea King. 12.
- MAY 31st – Coastguards, Police and ambulancemen were involved in the rescue of an injured young male climber, 'over the cliff' at Long Slough, south of Aberdeen.
- JUNE 17th – Search of Glen Quoich by Grampian Police MRT for Simon Stuart (17) lost in mist on Ben Avon and benighted near Derry Lodge. 6.
- JUNE 17th – An overdue 'hillwalker equipped with a bicycle' caused alarm because a similar bicycle had been found in Glen Dee. Grampian Police MRT, RAF Wessex. 3.
- JUNE 18th – John Shepherd (41) had heat exhaustion and an ankle injury, returning over Jock's Road from Glen Callater to Glen Doll. Tayside Police, RAF Wessex. 5.

- JUNE 26th – A RAF Sea King winched S. MacRae (male) from The Shelter Stone suffering appendicitis. Glenmore Lodge MRT. 7.
- JUNE 29th – Donald Godward (53) was killed by a fall into Glen Tilt Gorge, Blair Atholl. He was moved downstream by Leuchars and Tayside Police MRTs to a rock shelf from which he was winched by RAF Wessex. 36.
- AUGUST 18th – Roy and Beryl Bickerstaff got lost and benighted on Cairngorm Plateau. Cairngorm MRT and RAF helicopter. 8.
- NOVEMBER 5th – A man was overdue after separation from a party on Mount Keen, but he was found by the Warden of Glen Tanar Estate before teams started searching.
- NOVEMBER 19th – Returning from an ice climb on Hell's Lum, Calum Smith (31) had an unfortunate mishap in Coire Domhain. The burn was ice covered and he broke a tibia and fibula when his leg broke through the ice. Cairngorm and Glenmore Lodge. RAF helicopter waited on Aviemore but could not be used due to wind and snow squalls. 184.
- DECEMBER 4th – Braemar and Aberdeen Teams were called out when two parties from Grampian Hillwalking Club were overdue on Cairn of Claise, because of gale force westerly winds.
- DECEMBER 17th – Simon Baker (32) began climbing on the Upper Buttress of Polney Crag, Craig-a-Barns, Dunkeld, but jumped down a few feet to a wide platform to start again. There were two others standing on the ledge. Baker slipped and collided with Kim Greenald (38) to whom he was roped but not belayed. Both fell down a steep slope. Greenwald injured his back and was stretchered out by ambulance crew, Tayside Police SRU.
- DECEMBER 17th to 18th – Kevin Burns (31) and Albert Cotton (45) did a climb – they did not know which one – in the Trident area of Coire an t'Sneachda, then got lost on the Cairngorm Plateau and walked out to Derry Lodge. Cairngorm, Glenmore, RAF Wessex. 188.

SOUTHERN HIGHLANDS

- JANUARY 23rd – William McKittrick and Bernard Campbell (both 32) were benighted in a snowhole near the summit of the Arrochar Ben Vane. Uninjured they were found at 1500h next day still 'dug in.' Strathclyde Police, Arrochar, Leuchars, SARDA, RN Sea King. 426.
- JANUARY 23rd – Strathclyde Police, Arrochar, Leuchars, SARDA called out for two hillwalkers missing on Beinn Narnain. 180.
- JANUARY 23rd – Continuing alone after 3 companions had turned back in a white-out and blizzard, Bruce Mathieson (38) traversed westwards just below the summit of the Loch Earn Ben Vorlich. He fell several hundred feet down the south side sliding, uninjured, into Glen Artney. Killin, Tayside MRTs. 42.
- JANUARY 28th – False alarm. Man reported to have fallen NE on a snowslope near Ben Vorlich summit (Loch Earn).
- FEBRUARY 7th to 8th – Using one of the less accurate (first) series of metric maps, Douglas Campbell (40) was benighted near the summit of the Arrochar Ben Vorlich in appalling weather. He snowholed and descended unaided. Strathclyde Police, Leuchars, Arrochar, SARDA, RN Sea King. 655.
- FEBRUARY 12th – Man (26) was delayed in deep snow and forest plantations in Coire Chaoraich (east of the Crianlarich Ben More). Killin MRT. 17.
- FEBRUARY 14th – Andrew and Garry Kerr were overdue climbing 'Taxus,' Beinn an Dòthaidh. Met on the hill by Oban Police MRT and SARDA. 21.
- FEBRUARY 14th – Ill equipped party of 4 suffering from cold on summit of Ben Lomond escorted to shelter by Lomond MRT. 4.
- FEBRUARY 22nd – Campbeltown Police and Coastguard Rescue Company stretchered out a hillwalker with a leg injury from SW of Machrihanish, Kintyre. Arthur Thompson (73). 17.
- FEBRUARY 24th – Descending Ben Dubhchraig, David Sands (20) slipped on thick ice and fell 20 feet over a small crag, breaking an ankle. Killin MRT, RAF helicopter. 15.

- MARCH 12th – Helicopter lifted a hillwalker with a broken leg from the Campsie Fells. Lomond MRT. 8.
- MARCH 13th – David Reid (50) fell 150 feet on snow on the East Face of Beinn a'Chleibh suffering cuts and bruises. Killin MRT alerted.
- MARCH 20th – Ochils MRT called out on a false alarm. Informant probably heard and saw a shepherd shouting to his mate, and thought someone was calling for help. 6.
- APRIL 3rd – Colin Christie (14) separated from his party, and walked 100 far along the West Highland Way. He was found by Lomond MRT safe in a bothy. 32.
- APRIL 6th to 7th – Philip Davidson (11) was found by a local shepherd in Gleann Dubh, Killin, safe and well but minus a 'welly boot' which he had lost in the snow. For a £1 bet he had tried to walk from Tulloch Forest, Balquhider over the hills to Glen Dochart to beat a car driving round. He got lost in the dark, very lightly dressed, and strayed east from Ledcharrie Burn. Killin, Leuchars, Ochils, RAF Wessex, SARDA. 492.
- APRIL 13th – Neil Hadifon (16) injured his back on Meall Corranaich. With others he was 'poly bagging' down a snow patch – sliding down actually inside a survival bag. Killin MRT. 16.
- APRIL 13th to 15th – Without ice-axe and crampons, and wearing only lightweight moulded-sole walking shoes, Peter Chiene (41) slid on glazed névé and was killed by a long fall down the NW Face of Ben Lawers. Tayside teams, Killin, Leuchars, Kinloss, SARDA, RAF Wessex and Sea King, RN Sea King. 1,600.
- APRIL 15th – A SARDA rescuer, Douglas Hope (45) was injured when he slipped on Ben Lawers returning from the above recovery.
- MAY 1st – 'Boots across Scotland' event. Colin Davies (50) was killed by a fall on snow from Beinn Tulaichean. Wearing 'Doctor Martens' boots and with neither ice-axe nor crampons it was his second attempt at descending from the summit with his two sons. The first time they had retraced to the top after being lost in mist and then tried to get down the south side. Killin MRT. 80.
- MAY 3rd – George Lester (60) died of a sudden illness on Beinn nan Eachan (Tarmachan Ridge). Stretchered by Killin to below mist then airlifted by RAF Wessex. 80.
- MAY 7th – False alarm. Lomond MRT searched Dumgoyne Hill, Campsies, after a red flare had been reported. 39.
- MAY 8th – Para-gliding in Glen Douglas, Andrew March (24) hurt his back when he fell into rocks from an unsuccessful take off. Arrochar and Strathclyde Police MRTs, RAF Wessex. 14.
- MAY 11th – Abseiling on Dumyat, Neil Talbot was about to go over the edge of the cliff when his belay pulled out. He fell 25 feet and injured a knee. Ochils Rescue Team. 10.
- MAY 28th – Wearing trainers, running down the south side of Ben Ledi, Iain Wilson (13) slipped and broke a collar bone. Killin. 16.
- JUNE 6th – There were 4 casualties on a sponsored climb of Ben Lomond: two of whom were stretchered off by Lomond MRT, and two of whom were helped down.
- JUNE 8th to 9th – 462 man hours were expended by Arrochar, Strathclyde, and Leuchars teams, and 2 helicopters searching for a man separated from his group in a forestry area on Ben Donich. When he got lost in good weather he sat down and awaited rescue. 462.
- JUNE 9th – Margaret McAllister (52) crawled for over four hours to avoid troubling rescuers. She had broken an ankle tripping over a rut when admiring a kestrel. Ochils MRT, RAF Wessex. 16.
- JUNE 12th – 4 youths (14-16) got lost on Ben Reithe and were overdue. Arrochar and Strathclyde Police MRTs. 42.
- JUNE 12th – Walking at Inversnaid, M. Allan (38) broke his leg and so could not cross a fence. Lomond MRT. 37.
- JUNE 25th – RN Sea King airlifted William Burnside (65) from the summit of The Cobbler when he became ill. Arrochar, Strathclyde. 12.
- JUNE 30th to JULY 2nd – Robert Dickson (63) was killed by a fall down very steep ground on A'Chrois. After large scale searches in torrential rain by Arrochar, Ayr-

- shire, Kinloss, Lomond, Leuchars, SARDA, Strathclyde, he was found by a RN Sea King loaded with the 'extra eyes' of MRT members on board, during a break in cloud. c.3,000.
- AUGUST 2st - Ole Lumpholt (24) dislocated his shoulder on the lower slopes of The Cobbler. Treated and aided down by Arrochar and Strathclyde. 20.
- AUGUST 2nd - Lomond MRT carried a girl of 15 down from Ben A'n suffering epilepsy. 17.
- AUGUST 14th to 15th - John Dawson (16) fell 100 feet into the Dollar Gorge near Castle Campbell, breaking his leg. He was swept 100 yards downstream when he grabbed a tree. Central Scotland Underwater Team kept him out of the water but he became hypothermic. Ochils MRT hoisted him in a Tragsitz. 65.
- AUGUST 15th - HM Coastguard rescued a male fallen on to the rocks on a beach near Oban.
- AUGUST 21st - Lomond MRT rescued David Costello (18) after he had fallen into Finnich Glen, and was luckily uninjured. 13.
- SEPTEMBER 24th - Descending scree on a footpath on Beinn Ghlass, Heather Armstrong (70) broke an ankle when she was blown over. Stretchered off by Killin MRT. 34.
- SEPTEMBER 24th - Trying to recover a guidebook that had blown away Martin Gillies fell 20 feet from the summit of Dumyat. Pain and illness from a ruptured spleen was not felt for about 15 minutes. He was airlifted by RAF Wessex. Ochils MRT. 18.
- SEPTEMBER 25th - Very tired when she was descending Ben Lui, and wearing light boots with a Vibram type sole, Christina Walsh (39) slipped on steep ground and broke her leg. Killin, Strathclyde. 156.
- OCTOBER 1st - Derrick Roseburgh (28) fell off steep ground east of the N. Shoulder of Ben Lui and hurt his head. A party of 3 heading for Beinn a'Chleibh in cloud, had already got lost once, retreated to the top of Ben Lui, and was trying a second descent when the accident happened. Carried down in stretcher by Killin MRT. 40.
- OCTOBER 2nd - Walking Highland Way in lightweight boots, Doreen McCourt (57) tripped and broke an ankle. Good weather. Strathclyde Police MRT. 20.
- NOVEMBER 12th - Search of crags of Dumyat by Ochils MRT after a man separated from two others reported them overdue. They returned unaided. 7.
- NOVEMBER 19th - Killin Team on standby after Michael Armour (27) twisted a knee descending Beinn Dubhchraig. During a heavy snowfall he had slipped on an ice/snow covered rock.
- NOVEMBER 19th - Killin MRT on standby for David Leckie (45) overdue on Ben Lui and Ben Oss in a blizzard. He went down the wrong side into Glen Falloch.
- NOVEMBER 20th - Killin on standby for Clifford Simpson (39) overdue walking Ben More and Stob Binnein to Inverlochlarig, Balquhiddier Glen. He has got lost and came off the hill near Auchessan.

SKYE

- APRIL 9th - After trying to get down the Great Stone Shoot and retreating to Sgurr Alasdair, David Feltham (35) and Andrew Reynolds (21) bivouacked. They were found by Skye MRT early next morning and helped down. 93.
- APRIL 9th - Skye MRT assembled to search Sgurr nam Gillean for George Wadsworth (70) reported overdue after a separation, but he turned up safe. 25.
- APRIL 11th to 13th - Hoax. Two missing persons from a small home-made creel boat, found empty drifting near Kyleakin, were found in the Red Cuillin, one with hypothermia. Thousands of man-hours were wasted. HM Coastguard, Warship Melton, Mallaig Lifeboat, Bond helicopter, C/G helicopter, Skye and Glenelg MRTs.
- MAY 29th - Lesley Bowes (36) was killed going to get a friend (on a higher path in Coir a'Ghrunnda) to help in the previous incident. She fell off rock slabs after climbing 30 to 40 feet to shout her friend back. Skye MRT and RAF Sea King. 4.

- MAY 29th – Julie Fisher (29) fell 30 feet on Cioch Buttress, Sron na Ciche, breaking an ankle when she was held on the rope. Then she was lowered by her boyfriend and airlifted by RAF Sea King. Skye MRT. 4.
- JUNE 1st – When Nigel Godfrey (35) was abseiling down Little Gully on Sron na Ciche a rock spike moved, allowing the abseil point to come away. He fell 100 feet, breaking a leg, and was left hanging upside down 60 feet above the bottom. He was lowered by a member of Lochaber MRT who happened to be in the area. Skye Team and civilian helicopter. 27.
- JUNE 16th – False alarm caused by a man shouting, 'Below!' three times when he dislodged several large boulders on Sgurr Mhic Coinnich. Skye MR Team and civilian helicopter. 69.
- SEPTEMBER 17th – Skye MRT and a helicopter were called out next morning for Richard Thomson (50) and Robert MacKenzie (40) benighted on Sgurr Mhic Coinnich, but they turned up just afterwards. 3.
- OCTOBER 2nd to 3rd – Hugh Ward (23) and Timothy Walmsley (23) bivouacked when benighted on Mallory's Slab and Groove, Sron na Ciche. They got down unaided next day. Skye MRT, Coastguard helicopter. 27.

ISLANDS

(other than Skye)

- JANUARY 2nd to 3rd – Graham Leaver (22) was descending Askival, Rum when a small outcrop he was standing on gave way. He fell 20 feet but a large boulder fell on him causing multiple injuries from which he died 3 hours later. Two companions stayed with him while one went for help. The rescue was very protracted due to the difficulty of getting Lochaber MRT on to the island in deteriorating weather, but they reached Rum eventually on the Mallaig Lifeboat. HM Coastguard, Coastguard helicopter, RAF Sea King, RAF Wessex, MV 'Kyle Bhan' used as communications link. 394.
- JUNE 14th – HM C/Guard and C/G helicopter alerted to search for a missing person on the Ross of Mull.
- JUNE 21st – May Donaldson (47) hillwalking on Arran slipped and suffered a head injury. She was transferred by lifeboat crew to a helicopter from HMS Gannet, and the rest of her party assisted to safety by Lochranza Coastguard Company. N. Coast near Laggan. 20.
- JULY 5th – Descending from Goat Fell summit, Ann Matheson (53) fell on wet rock amongst boulders and broke a leg. Stretcher carry by Arran MRT. 22.
- JULY 7th – Hillwalking at the Còck of Arran, Elaine York (51) slipped on rock and injured a leg. Lifeboat, Lochranza and Lamash Coast Rescue. 28.
- JULY 12th – Coastguard helicopter transported a hillwalker (62) from Ben More, Mull after he stumbled and broke his leg.

SOUTHERN UPLANDS

- MAY 14th – Three Brethren (NW of Selkirk). Six schoolgirls on awards scheme. One had asthma but recovered. Another thought she had a broken leg but stumbled out on a sprained ankle. Tweed Valley. 27.
- JULY 25th – Kerry Webber (f17) was blown over in a gale on Lamb Hill in the Cheviots on the Pennine Way injuring her back. Stretchered out by Border Search and Rescue. 24.
- DECEMBER 21st, 22nd and 28th – After the Lockerbie air disaster, Tweed Valley, Borders and Lothian Teams sweep searched extensively, to pinpoint bodies and wreckage on 21st and 22nd, and to find debris and personal belongings on 28th. 2,129 man-hours.

IN MEMORIAM

RICHARD BROWN

RICHARD BROWN was always known as Broon – The Broon. Not just because we were all brought up on Dudley Watkins in *The Sunday Post*, but because the pure vowel and Definite Article fitted so well his character and his physique: his build solid, his square jaw uncompromisingly blue-chinned whatever the lather (the *black feller*, old Elliot of Loch Ossian called him), tireless, immensely strong yet never gross, and of curiously sensitive power of movement and mind. Heavy, quizzical eyebrows set off a steady gaze that could dance with delight or shrivel some cringing wrong-doer, even in wrath bright with inner kindness. You always felt the deep joy of life in Broon, because he was a Whole Man, a rounded personality, widely gifted, self-built and quietly sure of everything he did.

His climbing first: but briefly, because he fitted so naturally into the mountains. He never looked as if he had just visited them; but was of them, rugged and impermeable, one with the shepherds and tinks he yarned with, and ageless – he could have just stepped out of the old *Gaidhealtachd* whose tales and songs and music he so loved. Indeed, he looked alarmingly wrong in fancy-coloured 'hill-leisure' garments, and although he enjoyed the sport he appeared unnatural on skis – too deliberate for such downhill opportunism.

He climbed first with the Edinburgh JMCS (aside from much pre-war tandem cycling with his wife among the Border hills – one can imagine the gleam in his eyes at the *schuss* down to Moffat: Frances had great courage). He knew all the Scottish, and many Irish, hills intimately, at all seasons, and later in life walked much with his wife from hut to hut in the Tyrol and the Dolomites. G. C. Williams introduced him to rock at Arrochar in 1931 (*SMCJ* 1931, XIX, 307) and his partnership with Robert Grieve is memorialised by the first ascent (June '49) of *Needle's Eye Buttress* on Beinn Fhada of Kintail. His artist's eye enjoyed an elegant line and his craftsmanship ensured belays down to the mantle. The Shelter Stone became a favourite New Year's doss, after 'back-packing' – as he once incautiously termed it – a clinking cargo of good cheer through a then primeval wilderness; he wrote one suitably respectable account (*SMCJ* 1951, XXIV, 321), but celebrations with Broon were memorable for music, malt and mirth.

Long after joining the SMC (1947; V.P., 1968-70) he climbed with JMCS bus meets, offering – as ex-President Bennet remarked at the last Dinner – unobtrusive sound advice and, when the advice was not taken, help, to the beginner. At one period he offended Pluvius or some such dignitary, and those climbing with him were certain to be drenched whatever the forecast; so he became, in JMCS Gaelic, Broon *Fliuich*. You can imagine our delight at discovering, in the SMC membership list, the name Rainy Brown – a relationship Broon *Fliuich* staunchly denied. His fine deep voice, so resonant at weddings, ceilidhs or bivouacs with his favourites *Gleann a' Chaolais* and *An Ataireachd Ard* (you clucked the gunwales at the last, so oceanic the swell), sang for many years the Club Song at Annual Dinners, confident and true, without self-consciousness of any kind. As company on, or after, the hills, few were so satisfying as Broon.

For his skills were extraordinary. Starting as apprentice joiner, he passed examinations first class first time, became a Clerk of Works with the Air Ministry during wartime and Edinburgh Corporation later, an examiner for the City and Guilds, an exquisite craftsman in wood, a potter and silversmith whose works were exhibited widely and bought by public institutions, and a tutor in pottery at Edinburgh College of Art. Broon was a fine artist as well as craftsman, designing with clarity and strength. He knew his worth, modestly, and refused compromise; his often disconcerting artistic rectitude is amusingly caricatured by his crony MacLennan on page 124 of *A Century of Scottish Mountaineering*. That account refers to his love of *piobaireachd*, and he was a skilled piper; at one time, three SMC members (including, as well as himself, Donald McIntyre now of California) made the corridors of the Grant Institute of Geology – acoustically and administratively, but scarcely academically, convenient – resound with their 'practising.'

One could continue with stories – his studio at Lady Lawson Street plastered with posters of Bracque, Cezanne, Gaelic Football and PLAY UP ARMAGH!, his tales and MS of MacDiarmid and Garioch, his fine photography of Scotland, The Alps and old Italian towns (marred only by persistent summit panoramas swivelled to every quarter of the compass – we called these Broon's Reels); but we will have to stop. As he did, in his 81st year, still as active as he could be, attending the Dinner, driving round the Highlands and single-handed to the South of England; and but for a lung condition that over his last years confined him to shorter and shorter walks, increasingly demanding as the final slopes of Everest, he would, with his youthfulness and otherwise astonishing bodily fitness, have been climbing the hills a deal yet. Rarely can a man have inspired so many friends in so many ways, as Dick Brown. We express our condolence to his wife, daughter and two fine grandsons; and record our admiration.

G. J. F. D.

I MUST have been twenty when I first met Dick. He was the first elderly person I had ever come across who was actually human – he was probably in his early forties at the time. He knew about dawns and sunsets and how banks of mist could cascade from the Braeriach plateau into the cauldron of the Garbh Coire Mor. These things were important in the pre-industrial phase of mountaineering and he was obviously an authority. He was no passive aesthete however; in his climbing heyday he was known for his strength and tenacity by the Edinburgh hardmen of the thirties as 'Gabbro Brown.'

In one of my early encounters with him we found ourselves in Marchmont at midnight with a borrowed, lampless bicycle and a shared need to get down to Leith where we both lived at the time. In those days the streets at midnight were deserted – no cars, no people, no buses, no trams. Edinburgh was a silent chiaroscuro city of mysterious shadows and pools of soft, spooky gaslight. We pedalled hard to the top of North Bridge, taking turns to sit on the bar. Then came the exhilarating *schuss* down the bridge, past the Kirk Alloway of the GPO, over the East End and down the mile-long cobblestones of the treacherously tram-railed Leith Walk. A solitary policeman, the only other human soul abroad in the haunted town, blew his whistle encouragingly as his two fellow mortals whisked past. (Such pleasures, alas, are no longer possible. People clutter the streets at all hours and the polis have radios and panda cars.) It was this demonstration of quiet eccentricity that persuaded me that it was not inevitable that one day all the colour would go out of the world and I, too, would become an adult as boring as all the others; it was possible to excel as a conventional citizen and yet retain such apparently unadult characteristics as originality, creativity and a sense of wonder at the world and, even, to make a Tam o' Shanter ride through the midnight streets of perjink old Embro.

Scotland was a much bigger place in Dick's post-war period; public transport was expensive because money was short; few had cars and anyway petrol was rationed. At this time he made regular attempts to reach the Shelter Stone at Hogmanay. These expeditions were of Himalayan stature. Aviemore was a bleak outpost, a sort of Highland Skigatse. A cart track led from the quiet clachan of Coylum Bridge to the Koko Nor or Loch Morlich as it is now called. To reach the Pass of Rybhoan in the howe-climb-deid of winter was to stand at the entrance to the inner wilderness. Remember snow-blocked roads were then cleared not at all, or by men with spades; there were no helicopters, no radio networks, no well-trained mountain rescue teams eagerly awaiting the call.

The weather for Dick's latter day forays was always atrocious. Each year was a noble failure ending snowbound in Nethy Bothy or in a sagging tent without a sewn-in groundsheet in some blizzard-swept coire. (Admittedly, the mountains were slightly safer than as avalanches hadn't been invented). One Hogmanay he reached the Stone and was content. For his admirers, alas, there were no more epic stories to look forward to.

He was a man of many parts; widely read in history and literature (he passed it on, well-salted, in his conversation), a craftsman, artist and tradesman of integrity – a member indeed of the true aristocracy and a bit of the bedrock of Scotland. It is a sad privilege to add this stone to his memorial cairn.

Iain Smart.

STANLEY STEWART

MY ABIDING memory of Stan was his sense of fun. I first met him over forty years ago at a Glasgow JMCS bus meet at Killin Youth Hostel. I was rather down in spirits for some reason, and Stan took charge of me, shared his food and his humour, and soon had me in better form. Kind though he was, he had a delicious wit, and was not above teasing his friends. He had that lawyer's capacity to turn the tables on one. I recall an early exchange of equipment when he traded his airbed for a pair of boots. The airbed was porous, and when I expostulated he pointed out that he had been attracted to my boots because their laces were stated to be sealskin, which he now knew to be untrue. I threw away the airbed. He kept the boots!

In the summer of 1951 we joined forces with other worthies of the GUM Club at Zermatt, camping in forbidden territory below the village. The local Swiss considered us, I dare say justly, a hyperborean band of unkempt, unwashed campers, whereas we thought of ourselves as mountaineers. Stanley with his love of pranks responded to the orderly ways of the Swiss by rotating several mountain sign posts through ninety degrees!

It was on this holiday I became acquainted with his prodigious stamina. Coming off the Matterhorn he persuaded me to go straight to the Obergabelhorn. We dozed for an hour or two at Stafel, and then Stan led me down the valley in the dark, up to the col between the Wellenkuppe and the Obergabelhorn, where in the first light of dawn we followed our noses up a route unmarked in any guide book at that time. Perhaps it was a first ascent, but Stanley was not one for bothering about such things. The hills for him were sufficient in themselves. He felt no need to tell other people about his exploits.

Stan built up a considerable experience as a mountaineer. I recall a delightful holiday at La Berarde. He was in tremendous form, knocking off fine routes with consummate ease. It culminated with a sudden urge to go to Mt Blanc. Stan and I left the Fourche bivouac at midnight, and reached Chamonix that night 22 hours later via Sentinel Rouge route on the Brenva. Though after his second marriage he more or less gave up serious mountaineering, he remained very active. It is fitting that he completed his Munros the year before his death in the company of his wife (her completion too!) and many friends.

Stan had a refreshingly open mind, ready to consider the merits of any proposition. A day or an evening with him was never boring for he never allowed one to take anything too seriously, whether it was national or club politics, guide books, or expedition exploits.

He never got embroiled in expeditions, though in 1954 he did make one sortie to Colorado with his first wife, Mary. In fact he had a certain distaste for 'abroad,' and to the amusement of his friends used to mutter grateful thanks as soon as he regained an English speaking environment. The mountains were a backdrop to his life, not his only passion.

He was a prominent member of the GUM Club, and later the JMCS. He joined the Club in 1952 where he made a tremendous contribution and was honorary secretary from 1958 to 1967. Stan had many gifts, apart from the gift of friendship. He sang with the Glasgow Phoenix Choir. His repertoire of songs embraced the classical and the ribald. Who amongst us who has heard his rendition of 'Queenie, the downtown stripper' has not felt uplifted by the sheer joy with which he sang it? In 1984 when Dick Brown passed on the mantle he sang the Club song at the Dinner, always enlivening the occasion with some freshly minted words poking, as always, gentle fun:

*'Though the hills may be laced with nuclear waste
And the acid rains cause us gastric pains
And we've been refused permission by some Government Commission
We still go to the mountains in the snow.'*

Or, nearer the bone:

*'Now our President hold... well, he's getting old
He'd like you and me in the SNP...
When the yachting season's done and the skiing's not begun
He may give a demonstration, to justify his station
And fit in an odd week-end at the year's back end
When he knocks off an occasional Munro.'*

In his later years he took to canoeing and skiing as adjuncts to the hills. A circumnavigation of Jura was the excuse for climbing the Paps. He was a natural countryman, able to catch fish where no-one else could. He revelled in the delight of the well chosen campsite, and better than anyone I ever met could turn wet wood into a cooking fire.

For those of us who knew him well, and to judge by the huge turn out at his funeral that was not a few, it is impossible to imagine his life force stilled. His friendship and dry humour beyond reach. He just seemed ubiquitous. I had the privilege of sharing his last holiday – a yacht trip to St. Kilda. I sensed a quieter Stan than usual, yet he emerged his old self at a monumental ceilidh at the National Trust quarters on the island. As one might have expected of such a man, he handled his illness with dignity and humour. He died in May, 1988, of a brain tumour. To his wife, Edna, and his children we send our sympathies, adding that we too feel an irreplaceable loss.

Malcolm Slessor.

KEN GRASSICK

KEN GRASSICK died on February 8th, 1989, from leukaemia which he fought courageously and cheerfully to the end. He was one of my earliest climbing companions; although not a founder member of the Corrou Club which was better, and perhaps more appropriately, known as 'The Boor Boys' he joined that group very shortly after its formation and participated vigorously in the ensuing years of co-operation/competition with the Brooker/Patey/Taylor axis and other North-east elements.

These were the oft-narrated days of hemp rope from Campbells Rubber Shop, tricou boots (if you were lucky), buses up Deeside and push-bikes to Luibeg or Lochend.

In all these happenings Ken played a colourful part. He was a fine all round athlete, a good rugby player and strong swimmer, and took readily to climbing, although never a major enthusiast for the long approach marches of the region. These frequently evoked his totally characteristic laugh, tonally a unique blend of horse, woodpecker and kookaburra, vented both on occasions of amusement and annoyance, and never more so than when ploughing through sodden snowdrift or endless boulder field.

It was also heard in times of relative comfort; one evening at Bob Scott's bothy Ken had chimneyed up the inglenook and ensconced himself on a shelf above the unwashed thong. The Guardian himself entered to be greeted by a great flash of Grassick teeth, set in an unshaven and sooty countenance. 'Come doon aff a there, Gurrassich, ye bloody crocodile' and a hysterical tug of war preceded dislodgement.

Ken climbed with me in the Alps; we enjoyed a particularly successful season in the Dauphine in 1958, and of course his Scottish 'firsts' are in the guide books. Even when nylon had supplanted hemp and not all karabiners were ex-W.D. it was still an age of long run-outs and psychological belays; we were very lucky to survive. This said, much prominence has been given in the literature to two very bad falls he had early in his career, and these references obscure the prudence and judgement he could display. On our last season in the Alps in 1963 I very foolishly urged continuation of a route on the Salbitschen long after there was every evidence of impending storm. During the subsequent epic retreat – enlivened by lightning, torrential rain and jammed abseils – Ken was a tower of strength and imperturbability.

He will be greatly missed. Our sympathy is extended to Norma, who did so much to bravely support him during his illness, and to his two sons and two daughters.

A. Graeme Nicol.

IT IS HARD to believe that Ken Grassick has gone. The acute leukaemia which claimed him only did so after he had fought it for two and a half years. At one point some of us even thought he had beaten it. He made a defiant return to action, so typical of the man, but suffered a serious skiing accident which made his fight more difficult and in the end the disease prevailed.

In his day he was a notable performer on the Aberdeen scene. In addition to his climbing achievements 'The Count' was a colourful character who figured in a number of exploits connected with Students' Charities' Weeks and other events. These included excursions on the (then new) Forth Road Bridge, Edinburgh Castle Rock and the Eiffel Tower, with consequent brief acquaintance with at least one police cell. His encounter with Princess Margaret at the Gelder Shiel, resulting in a lift for Grassick and his injured companion down the road to Crathie and an invitation for Princess Margaret (politely declined) to the Charities' Ball, became part of the contemporary Aberdeen climbing folklore.

Ken was a bold and enterprising climber whose signature was left on some fine routes. *The Link* on Lochnagar and *Talisman* in Coire Etchachan were among them and their explorations remain in my own memory as outstanding mountain days. His determination once in action led to some notable first winter ascents. These included *Polyphemus Gully* in 1953, something of a tour de force by a young and relatively inexperienced climber in the nailed boot era. *Sticil Face* on the Shelter Stone Crag in 1957 and *Pinnacle Face* on Lochnagar in 1966 were both done in crampons but before the pick and stick revolution. Today they are still serious undertakings.

After marriage and a short spell in the R.A.F. Ken settled in Newcastle as a family man and established a reputation as a caring General Practitioner. His climbing activity lessened but continued, and although he found new companions with whom to enjoy crags in Northumberland and the Lake District his attachment to the Scottish hills was undiminished. There were few SMC Dinners at which he failed to gather with his Aberdeen cronies. Devotion to mountains was integral to his life and expressed in a variety of ways. As a late recruit he took up skiing, learning quickly and seeing its potential as a means of mountain adventure. A tendon injury affected his hill walking but rock climbing was always attractive and he took particular pleasure in repeating his own former ascents with improved style and in sharing his enthusiasms with his younger son, Kenneth, who was also a keen mountaineer.

A sociable and companionable man, Ken Grassick was as good a comrade as I ever knew. Unselfish in tent or bothy, he was considerate in his rope management and prepared to take a bold initiative when it was appropriate. Without competitively seeking the lead he was always ready to have a go. The images of him doing this are vivid whether it be in launching out from the intimation of a dripping overhang, plunging into a surging sea to take a rope across to the *Old Man of Stoer* or high diving into the bubbling black cauldron of the Linn of Dee just for the hell of it. Those who knew him well are saddened by the thought that there will be no more times with Ken Grassick but they treasure the memory of joyous days in his company.

W. D. Brooker.

A. HARRISON

ALEXANDER (SANDY) HARRISON, who had been Honorary President of the Club for some 21 years, died in December 1988 in his 99th year. He had also held the posts of President (1945-48) and Secretary (1931-35).

Sandy was the grandson of Sir George Harrison, a former Lord Provost of Edinburgh who had prodigiously wide and varied interests, many of which Sandy himself developed. After leaving school (at Merchiston) he qualified as a Chartered Accountant, winning the gold medal for the best candidate. During the First World

War he was a major in the Royal Scots and in the Machine Gun Corps (The Suicide Corps) and was one of the very few of their officers to survive the war. He had a lucky escape (though not from the Germans) when he was not required at the last minute to travel in the ill-fated troop train involved in the Gretna disaster.

Sandy set a high standard of excellence in his professional career. His merit and achievements were reflected in the posts he held which included Chairman of the Standard Life Assurance, of The Edinburgh Investment Trust, of Cowans of Penicuik, of the Edinburgh Savings Bank and Vice-Chairman of the British Linen Bank. I well remember as a humble CA apprentice, beaver away at the audit of The Edinburgh Investment Trust, of the respect which was accorded to the Chairman!

A distinguished mountaineer and a proficient skier, Sandy joined the Club in 1918, his seventy-one years of membership exceeding that of any other member. In the 1920s his skill was recognised in an invitation to join an Everest expedition which he reluctantly had to decline. He was one of the earliest of British mountaineers to climb guideless in the Alps where his companions included Frank Smythe. In 1938 R. L. G. Irving published an anthology which included an article by Smythe telling the story of a retreat in a prolonged storm from high on the Schreckhorn and in which he recounts how Sandy's endurance and skill enabled them to descend safely.

In an article in the 1980 Journal (*SMCJ*, 1980, XXXII, 22-6) Sandy reflected on his early years in the Club and how he met Harold Raeburn and other well known members at Meets in the 1920s.

Sandy in 1926 was a founding member and treasurer of the Association for the Preservation of Rural Scotland and played a dominant role in the formation of the National Trust for Scotland in 1931. He served on various committees of the National Trust for many years and had an important role in the acquisition of the Trust's mountainous properties.

In 1972 Sandy contributed to the Journal an article headed '*P. J. H. Unna and the Mountainous Country Trust*' (*SMCJ*, 1972, XXX, 57-60) in which he told how his friend, Percy Unna 'gave away a fortune to preserve a wilderness,' a generosity that is of lasting value to all who go to the hills. Unna executed seven-year covenants which produced a fund to be used by the National Trust for the purchase and upkeep of mountainous properties. Sandy was a member of the small committee which advised on further purchases.

Though latterly handicapped by blindness, Sandy retained into his nineties not only a twinkle and a smile but a keen appreciation of current affairs. He enjoyed country walking - with a friend's hand under his elbow when the ground became rough. Always friendly but with an incisive view on current events, Sandy will be missed not only by his close family, but by a wide circle of friends.

Bill Wallace.

C. LYN JONES

C. LYN JONES died of a heart attack on 7th October 1988 at the age of thirty-nine. Although he had been unwell for at least two years prior to his death, medical experts had been unable to diagnose the illness and his many friends were dismayed to see his once boundless enthusiasm and energy gradually leave him.

He came to Edinburgh University as a student in 1967, having been an outstanding scholar at Ruthin School in North Wales. At school he had already become interested in mountains and soon became an active member of the University mountaineering club. After graduating B.Sc. in 1970 he remained in Edinburgh for a number of years as a post-graduate student and part-time lecturer, and also as the warden of Graham Brown House. In 1981 he left Edinburgh to return to his native Ruthin, where he taught mathematics and science at the school.

I first met Lyn in the early 1970s, initially through a common interest in rock climbing. His confidence and enthusiasm made him a reliable and excellent companion. I can recall many long days, but one that stands out was a ski traverse of the four Munros in the Ben Lui group on a day of bitterly cold north wind, starting south of Tyndrum and finishing at the Glen Orchy road end. Lyn could always be relied on to accept and meet the challenge of a long day.

I was delighted when he joined the Club in 1976. His active interest in Club affairs soon found him on the committee, and in 1983 he took on the difficult job of Editor of Climbing Guides.

His interests outside mountaineering were wide and varied. He collected old books, particularly books on mountaineering, and over the years accumulated a valuable library. He also had a passionate love of music which in the 1980s brought him back to Edinburgh for the Festival and more than once we met unexpectedly at a concert. His love of wild places took him to the Island of Hoy to which he returned many times and, through his interest in music, became a friend of Peter Maxwell Davies. He also on at least one occasion climbed the Old Man of Hoy.

In Lyn's company his knowledge of and interest in a wide range of subjects became quietly evident. These interests included gardening, the arts, photography and wild life.

The Club has lost an active and committed mountaineer, and his many friends an intelligent and entertaining companion.

Bill Wallace.

JOCK NIMLIN

JOCK NIMLIN died in the late summer of 1988, after a short illness. I knew him many years ago, when I had a memorable title – National Trust for Scotland Mountain Safety Adviser – and not much of a job. Walkers and climbers were not disposed to seek my advice as to where they should walk or climb, and the few that I saw were chiefly interested in the splendid pictures of the Boreray cliffs displayed on the walls of the van. Jock spent a lot of time in Glencoe that summer staying, I think, in a caravan of sorts which he parked at Achnabeich.

His job was as mysterious to me as mine was to him, many of his days seemingly spent scouring dark, forested gullies on Beinn a'Bheithir for bands of serpentine. But, particularly in wet weather, I would spend a lot of time listening and laughing at his stories. I heard of great monsters looming out of the mists of Drumochter – these turned out to be the advance party of elephants leading a travelling circus. I heard of the tourist girl wandering round the Cairngorm plateau in T-shirt, shorts and gym shoes, stooping to pick up a fine topaz ten yards in front of Jock and asking, puzzled, what she had found. Jock, to his chagrin, told her. I learnt too, of how he packed up serious rock climbing when he found the run-outs getting longer and longer. In the Glen we had the same friends and the same enemies – these latter being foxy gentlemen from Charlotte Square, prone to plus-fours and 'surprise visits,' asking at five o'clock in the afternoon daft questions like 'How do I find my way to the summit of the Buachaille?'

Walter had been watching the eagle for a couple of months. Scrambling up to the cliff, he found a fine young bird standing in the nest. Ignorant of the law and sensible practice both, I set off with Dave and Anne to see the bird Walter reported. The huge nest was placed above an overhang and we found the eagle better visible from fifty yards away than from twenty feet below. Still, we had to have a photograph so Dave pulled up a corner to the left, laid back horizontally just below the nest and shot up his right arm, pointing the camera in the direction of the bird and clicking just as it flapped and spat at the intruder. On the way down we spotted and turned a coped ewe. One up for the eagle!

A few days later I told Jock the story and another trip was planned. He would get just the pictures for the folk on the cruises. I explained that the beast was very hard to photograph without any paraphernalia but Jock was optimistic. 'We'll see,' was his thought. As we approached the cliff, he realised that Dave's acrobatics could not be repeated and that the bird would be indistinguishable in a long shot from the side. 'Perhaps we can climb down to that ledge just above the nest. There should be a photo from there.'

Hope restored, we scrambled around the cliff and began descending with the aid of trees and clutches of long grass, toes scraping into the thin soil. We climbed down a wet runnel alongside a slab and arrived at the ledge. Below and to the left was the nest with the great, scrawny, vulturous bird flicking its neck to spy us discreetly.

From above, thirty feet away, it was not a good picture. The bird, impressive to sight, would shrink on a slide, melding into the nest and surrounding vegetation. An action shot was called for. Could we get it to squawk and spread its wings? We tried. My job as technical assistant was to wave branches and throw twigs, hopefully to goad the bird into a photogenic performance. I failed. The solemn creature remained impassive and aloof. It scorned my clowning and stayed immobile. Five minute's disturbance was enough, so we decided to pack the camera and climb out.

I was beginning to clutch and scramble my way up the grassy runnel when I heard, from behind, a cry of delight! Jock had spotted a ribbon of quartz trending bottom left to top right across the slab beside us. 'I always loved climbing a quartz band', he shouted, and set off up the rock, along the sharp edged intrusion. For a moment I had a shocking vision...of quartz cracking off, Jock slipping down the slab, dropping over the bottom edge and landing, ten feet below, right on top of the eagle.

The vision cleared. Jock, back for a moment in the Glencoe of the 30s and 40s and chuckling with the pleasure of it, climbed up and off the slab, quickly and neatly. I shuddered and decided not to follow.

Dudley Knowles.

EARLY one morning in April 1932 I was cooking breakfast at the fire in the Cave up Glen Loin; around was a rough circle of prostrate figures in sleeping bags and an odd looking parcel of brown paper, from which in time there issued a doubting inquiry 'any chance of a cup of tea?' Such was my first meeting with Jock Nimlin.

With his demise the Club has lost a popular, distinguished and most versatile member. He was the prototype of that group, 'rich but moneyless' which developed during the Depression years and revolutionised Scottish mountaineering. Jock preferred to travel light; slept rough – his knowledge of howifs was extensive – covered great distances on foot to reach his chosen spot; made long mountain traverses; climbed hard-rock when it was appropriate, but above all revelled in the freedom, attraction and delights of the Scottish mountains.

As early as 1929 Jock by his ability and flair had chosen from among the Craighallion Boys a score from their rumbustious adherents, to form the Ptarmigan Mountaineering Club. This set the standard for most succeeding groups with similar aims and aspirations. Some time later in conjunction with Johnny Harvey he formed the broader based Lomond Mountaineering Club.

Jock was among the best cragsmen of his time and his numerous first ascents on the Cobbler remain as a testimonial to his ability. Of course he did pioneer climbs in many other parts of the country but he was always a reluctant recorder of new routes. His attitude may be best adduced when decades later climbers reported some first winter ascents in the Blackmount area where he and friends had made visits in pre-war times, he smiled and remarked that it was good to know that the joys of a first ascent had been shared by so many more people than was generally the case. Likewise when elucidation was requested about on-goings on the first ascent at the crux pitch in Raven's Gully on Buachaille, he would only say that it was 'the man with the sharpest Tricounis' that finally made it.

Simplicity in climbing was his basic principle. Boots with Tricounis and a rope, to him were sufficient. Beyond that he would not relent. Anything more in gear or aids he considered 'just high class steeple jacking.' If the basic rock could not provide purchase to finger or boot toe, then he judged that artificial support should be left to his scaffolding friends in the shipyard who would, of course, expect time and half on Saturdays and double time on Sundays.

His enthusiasm and sympathetic, warm personality ensured that he was prominent in developments of these times and incidents and escapades evolved into something like a mythology. The Howff of a Thousands Draughts; Dougan's bugle call from Ben Lomond summit warning Mrs Campbell at Comer to prepare dinner; hitching a lift in a hearse; rescuing stranded sheep at Coirecrogain; his select list of bridges providing good shelter; the Queen's visit to his cottage on St. Kilda; the Fire Chant at Craighallion - a litany of adventure, mishap and the trials of rough travel.

When Jock joined the staff of the National Trust for Scotland his unassuming, friendly nature with his experience and abilities introduced him to an ever growing circle of people. His enthusiasm for the outdoors, hill-walking and climbing was shared by thousands who came under his leadership as an instructor. A skilful photographer, his lectures about his transparencies, coupled with his shrewd, informed commentary made him a popular lecturer on behalf of the Trust. For over twenty years he was an organiser of work parties undertaking restoration projects on St. Kilda and gained high recognition for the standard of his performance. He and his wife Jennie were accomplished couriers on many of the cruises run by the Trust.

When you visited him at Auchtermuchty you realised that Jock was an accomplished gardener. Equally he was, over the years, a skilled lapidarist with a varied and extensive collection of stones garnered from all over Scotland as an extension of his climbing trips. Another of his skills can be found in the Journal where his articles realise with literary aptness the characters and ethos of that bygone era.

Jock wanted to be remembered by a boot nail scrape on a high rock. But he will remain in the memory of many as a true friend, a brilliant climber, the kindest of companions on hill, howff or home. Just himself. Jock.

A. C. D. Small.

PROCEEDINGS OF THE CLUB

New Members

The following 16 new members were admitted and welcomed to the Club in the year 1988-89.

- Robert D. Carchrie (25) Telecommunications Engineer, Elderslie.
- John A. Dunn (25) Solicitor, Hillhead, Glasgow.
- J. Anderson Foster (25) Post-Graduate Student, Bearsden, Glasgow.
- James D. Grosset (36) Offshore Technician, Aviemore.
- David M. Gunn (30) Forester, Glencoe, Argyll.
- William U. Jessop (24) Programmer, Edinburgh.
- George A. McEwan (25) Telecommunications Engineer, Inverkeithing.
- Alastair P. Matthewson (22) Student, Aberdeen.
- Robert W. Milne (31) Managing Director, Westfield, Bathgate.
- Martin E. Moran (32) Mountain Guide, Strathcarron, Ross-shire.
- Robert G. Reid (31) Town Planner, Glasgow.
- Niall Ritchie (25) Teacher, Peterhead.
- William C. Runciman (45) Director of NPFA, Edinburgh.
- Matthew G. D. Shaw (26) Oil Analyst, Edinburgh.
- Bernard M. Swan (35) Shop Manager, Faifley, Clydebank.
- Gavin W. Swinton (35) Joinery Manager, Leven, Fife.

The One-Hundredth AGM and Dinner

The hundredth AGM and Dinner found us back at the Nethybridge Hotel for the second time. As on the previous occasion four years ago, the venue seemed to meet with general approval and there was certainly a very large turnout (about 170) at the Dinner.

The hundredth AGM gave a few hints that the Club was at last approaching pubescence, although maturity is expected to take somewhat longer. As examples, there was a smoothly conducted vote on one issue, several others were discussed without the proposer's motives being called into question, character assassination was at a new low and there was very little to frighten new members unfamiliar with the ritual. In fact, the AGM was business meeting rather than cabaret.

The meeting however started on a sad note with the report of the death of Sandy Harrison, a member since 1918 and Honorary President since 1968.

The Agenda got under way with Doug Lang (possibly troubled by cramp in his legs) making the first of his several contributions from the floor by 'regretting' that several points of view expressed at the last AGM had not been recorded. Bill Wallace justifiably pointed out the difficulties of recording all the varied points of view expressed at SMC AGMs. Indeed, it is your reporter's point of view that if all the 'points of view' aired were recorded the Minutes would be even more amazing documents than they are at present.

Still in the same area, Bill Murray gave the ashes another stir by seeking reassurance that the person responsible for the infamous 'leak' to the Press was no longer a Member. He was duly reassured, along with the cryptic hint that there was a second Member involved in the affair. Has the Club become as porous as MI5? Are more traitors to be uncovered?

Bill Wallace made his valedictory report as Secretary on his way to the Presidency, departing from a post which has become more and more a target area as well as an onerous task. His vote of thanks was well earned.

Bob Hillcoat found several members looking for a more detailed exposition of the Club and Trust accounts. The construction of the Raeburn Hut seems to have sensitised even the marginally numerate to the scale of Club operations. Maybe in future there will also be a wider appreciation of the activities which lie behind the numbers.

The meeting got briefly back to its old habits during the Editor's report when KVC committed the fundamental error of asking the assembled clamjamfrie for guidance as to inclusion of route descriptions in the Journal. This was either (relatively) youthful innocence or (premature) middle-aged malice, as all shades of opinion came bubbling from the depths. It was just like old times as deep and mainly age related schisms opened up, SI and Imperial units were conflated and opposing extremes of purism were exhibited. The Editor was left very little the wiser and in line for criticism no matter what he does (but it was ever thus).

Gerry Peet flew a trial kite over members' heads with the mention of possibly re-instituting charges for Hut usage, but no-one took him very seriously. A member reported that the discontinuation of reduced Hut rates for Kindred Clubs had caused the LSCC some disquiet. This information was treated with the usual Club respect for the interests of the fair sex, although it appears that principle rather than practice was at issue (i.e. we rarely use their Huts and they rarely use ours except in a connubial role).

The election of office-bearers was unusual in that the nominations for Members of Committee included an addition under Rule 29. This was smoothly disposed of by a paper vote without examination of entrails and the 'official' nominees were duly elected.

With time wearing on and drouths becoming drouthier, several trifling matters such as amendments to the Constitution and appointments to other bodies and the SMT were taken at a canter. Even the possibility of women appearing at the Centenary Dinner (albeit as official guests) was greeted with equanimity and accepted *nem con*. Robin Campbell's role as constitutional and procedural watchdog and educator of Committees seems to be bearing some fruit.

The rest of the business went through without fuss, even although the two Motions by Members had the names of Campbell and Slesser attached—which except at the end of a long meeting would have been expected to loose a few arrows from the undergrowth. But we had had enough, even of this numerically significant occasion, and clutching our copies of Brooker's compendium we went to the serious business of the day.

The Dinner was notable not only for being the hundredth but also for choice, quality, the number of Members present and the official presence of the Creagh Dhu. Gerry Peet scored another success in not only securing the venue but in organising a choice of dishes. The management and staff of the Nethybridge Hotel coped very well with the influx.

The point of the Dinner is not in the consumption of food and wine (these things can be equally well arranged by some cliques of Members), but in the sense of occasion. This latter has a number of components—the company, the surroundings, the speeches, the general ambience. A reporter's recollection and view tends to be severely coloured by their own experience, company and level of intoxication. This reporter would give this particular Dinner a high score with the possible exception of the speeches which were competent rather than inspired.

One appropriate consequence of the alternating Highlands and Lowlands sequence of venues is that the transfer of the Presidency now takes place in the Highlands. The retiring President suffers from having to deliver a report of the more notable Club activities of the previous year and also the dolorous duty of naming those Members who have died in the preceding year—a list containing some notable names on this occasion. These duties do not allow him time to expand with wit and wisdom upon the peculiar glories of the Club without overstraining the patience of the company. Faced with these constraints, Donald's Toast to the Club was well-turned, apposite and well received.

Bob Richardson's toast to the Guests will not be commented on here. This year the Guests included John MacLean of the Creagh Dhu. Whether his presence marks a change of Creagh Dhu foreign policy or whether the lure of a free dinner a few miles down the road proved irresistible is not known. Anyway

it was nice to have the only other serious Scottish mountaineering club represented. Unfortunately the Cairngorm Club representative was prevented from attending at the last moment. The reply from the Guests was made by Dick Carter of the Climbers' Club who responded in the traditional manner of our English speakers with an urbane and general purpose discourse terminated by the usual funny story.

Bill Wallace was duly invested with the symbols of Presidential office, appearing appropriately from the depths of the assembly in his shirt sleeves. Pointing the Club in the right direction (whatever that might be) for its second century is going to be a 'jackets off' job methinks.

The rest of the night proceeded without major incident, everyone seemed to be enjoying themselves (I was anyway) and I believe there was a show of slides from the 'Centenary Expedition' which dragged a number of people away from the bar.

Bob Richardson.

Self-Written Obituaries

The Editor politely requests that members send in self-written, short biographies. These will be filed in confidence, to provide future editors and other seekers after the truth fascinating material in the years to come. There is no set format, though reference to notable mountaineering exploits would obviously be in order, as well as such trivia as education, employment, birthday honours etc. A minimum of half a journal page would seem right. Photographs to accompany the biography would also be valuable. Write now before it's too late and one's friends give their versions.

Official Opening of the Raeburn Hut

Forty members and their guests assembled at the Raeburn Hut on the morning of Saturday 1st October, 1988, for the official opening of the Club's latest hut. Just before noon, the President asserted his authority and threw everyone out into the cold for the ceremony. There was a short speech from the President, then Jim Donaldson cut the tartan ribbon, declaring the hut open for business. The occasion was duly recorded on film, then an argument ensued over who should enter the building first. The ladies proved every bit as gallant as the gentlemen, but in the end common sense prevailed and access was gained to the food and drink within. Catering was courtesy of Annie Bennet and friends, who provided an excellent lunch, sufficient even for the well known pathological appetite of the CIC hut custodian.

Among those present were Bill Bennet, Alex Small, Bill MacKenzie, and the hut's builder.

The Raeburn Hut is the only one where the SMC owns both the land and the building. It has had its critics, both regarding its position, and the amount of money spent on it.

Position. A quick look at a map will show that there is excellent winter and rock climbing, ski mountaineering, downhill skiing, and hillwalking all within a short drive from the hut. Surely a thirty minute drive is not excessive,

Cost. The SMC is now in possession of one of the best finished and fitted huts in the country. This was accomplished with limited assistance from within the Club (hence the expense). Much hard work was done by Gerry Peet, Bill Duncan, and their (small) team of helpers. They should receive much in the way of thanks for this, their efforts will be appreciated by all who use the hut.

Alastair Walker.

Skye Meet – Glenbrittle 24th-26th June, 1988.

It is a great pity that so few attended. This was the last good weekend in a summer memorable for its incessant rain and lack of sun. The meet, however, was blessed with idyllic conditions in which the peaks soared through a sea of cloud and in the distance the peaks of the mainland floated in a white sea.

Two notable exploits took place – the first was a two day traverse of the main ridge by the Yorkists and an ascent of Cioch West by the Honorary Vice-President and the President Designate along with a guest. The first named (Hon. V.P.) also ascended Sgurr nan Gillean solo while the latter two botanised at the Quiraing.

Present were: – Members: – John Mackenzie, Kevin Wilson (both Yorkists), Jim Donaldson and Bill Wallace. Guests: – Steven Green, Nick Harpen (both Yorkists) and Roger Tuft.

New Year Meet – Raeburn Hut and Monadhliath Hotel**31st December 1988 – 3rd January 1989.**

Who can remember a New Year when ice axes were not even carried? Not only that but windproofs were unnecessary until 3rd January. Emphasising the central position of the Raeburn Hut, expeditions were as far apart as the Fiacail Ridge, Cairn Lochan and the Loch Lochy Munros.

2nd January was a splendid day with all parties making good use of the sunny, windless weather. Expeditions that day included Fiacail Ridge, Corbetts in Glen Roy, Carn Dearg (Monadhliath) while the President, stirred from his customary lethargy by his guest, traversed the Eastern Grey Coires then returned to Fersit via Beinn na Lap and Strath Ossian.

Present: Members: – D. Bennet, G. Little, P. Macdonald, W. Myles, I. Smart, W. Wallace. Guests: – J. Havard and W. Sutherland.

Bill Wallace.

Ski-Mountaineering Meet – Raeburn Hut – 24th-26th February, 1989.

After struggling to survive its infancy the annual ski-mountaineering meet looks set to thrive from its new found home. The summer temperatures of early winter did not augur well for glorious skiing, however the intervention of the elements brought a large fall of snow just in time.

The Saturday gave a classic ski-touring day of zero visibility, wet snow and broken bindings. Sunday, by contrast, was one of those rare days of clear skies, no wind and good skiing from the roadside.

The attributes of the Raeburn Hut are only just becoming apparent. It is well placed for many mountain groups and commands a scenic outlook. Watching the Blackcock Lek at breakfast time is a poignant reminder of the recent SMC AGM's – a lot of males fighting over a few females! Perhaps the creaking bones of some of the more venerable participants would have been better served by a few strategically placed mattresses – here of course I refer to the SMC members present rather than the blackcock.

Over the weekend many of the Drumochter hills were climbed, as were Creag Pitridh, Geal Charn and Creag Meagaidh.

Present were: Members: – I. P. Angell, D. J. Bennet, R. Chalmers, W. A. Forbes, R. Hillcoat, G. MacKenzie, A. Matthewson, M. Slesser, D. Snadden. Guests: – S. MacKenzie and J. Whittaker.

Dave Snadden.

Easter Meet, 1989 – Raeburn Hut

The Easter Meet was held at the Monadhliath Hotel, Laggan Bridge, and the Raeburn Hut. Ten members and two guests attended at various times.

Deep soft snow, high winds on Saturday and a general thaw on Sunday combined to make conditions singularly unpleasant, but the following peaks were climbed by various parties: –

Carn na Caim, Carn Liath (Blair Atholl), Carn Ban Mor, Sgor Gaoith and Carn Liath (Creag Meagaidh), the last on ski.

Present were: – Members – W. Wallace (President), T. B. Fleming, C. C. Corrie, J. R. Marshall, W. M. MacKenzie, W. M. S. Myles, T. Nicholson, M. Slesser, I. H. M. Smart, O. Turnbull. Guests – R. Allen, J. Nicholson.

Bryan Fleming.

J.M.C.S. REPORTS

Glasgow Section. With the last light of 1987 fading into dusk, a half dozen or so damp and snow blasted members were to be found coming off Seana Bhragh. A flooding river had to be waded before the welcome haven of Corriemulzie bothy and its wood-burning stove was ours. The alarm was set so that New Year could be celebrated in proper style – with a couple of cans of beer and some jolly!

Routes snatched from the Ben when the weather was not looking – nothing seemed to be in condition for long. What was powder in the gullies one day was rapidly falling off the next. Success or failure on a climb was determined, it seemed, by how fast you could pedal in the powder snow or how soon your clothes became too water logged for comfort.

A summer sun blazing out on to warm rock and the sight of browning knees rarely exposed to fresh air gave those few weeks a sense of unreality. There were even drought warnings to be heard, all made irrelevant when autumn and the rain came back at the beginning of July to restore normality.

A midnight pad into Blackburn of Pattack and a wintry ascent of Lancet Edge and the Aonach Bèag group followed by fireworks, a dram (or three) and a warm fire to keep the heavy frost at bay – it was Guy Fawke's night.

Such is a sample of the memories of the 1988 season. Despite or because of the extremes, the year was a good one. The Section continues to have fortnightly meets throughout the year interspersed with lectures, pub meets and other such social functions. Places visited in the course of the year included Arran, Rhum, Gleann Lichd, Torridon and, of course, Coruisk in Skye. The Whole Club AGM and Dinner was hosted in Roybridge this year with all Sections being represented. Our own Section Dinner was held in the Kingshouse Hotel at which we were suitably entertained by Bill Brooker as guest speaker.

The opening of the Kelvin Hall climbing wall in August has provided a much appreciated distraction, one of the results being that one no longer has to endure the car exhaust fumes by the Expressway. It remains to be seen whether a new wave of rock stars will shine in the 1989 rock season.

A number of members contributed to the balance of payments deficit by going abroad. The earliest visit was in May when a Glasgow/London Section team ventured into the Bernese Oberland on ski. Another member successfully crested a virgin peak (Kalidaha) in the Kashmir Himalaya – he was duly nobbled for a lecture. A foursome chose to run around Mont Blanc in July instead of climb it and an assortment of members occupied Chamonix over a three week period in September. Some got bored during some poor weather and went sightseeing near the Calanques.

Office-bearers – Hon. Member, W. H. Murray; Hon. President, Coll Findlay; Hon. Vice-President, Neil Marshall; President, Dick Edie; Vice-President, Charlie Craig; Secretary, John Morrison, 16 Grosvenor Crescent Lane, Glasgow G12 9AB; Treasurer, Anderson Foster; Coruisk Hut Custodian, Dick Edie, 47 Cairns Gardens, Balerno, Midlothian.

Perth Section. – Overall membership of the club has remained static over the past year with 63 members, 6 honorary members and 17 ladies. The ladies have increased their numbers by one at the expense of the members. In an effort to raise the profile of the club an advert has been running in the 'Climber' magazine since late summer and appears to have led to a modest increase in interest in the club. How many of these enquiries translates into members remains to be seen.

There was a considerable increase in the number of meets during the year; at 18 however the average attendance was also down to 10. Day meets during the summer were apparently less attractive than was expected. Hillwalking is still the mainstay of the club's activities however the CIC winter meet is still popular and climbers were active on other meets during the year. There was only one completion during the year.

The club was only represented at the Edinburgh Section dinner during the year. Our own Annual Dinner this year returned to the Clova Hotel with speeches by Bob Milne and Rob Garner. The Annual Joint Lecture with the Perthshire Society of Natural Science was given by Bob Aitken of the Countryside Commission for Scotland Footpath Management Project. There were three mid-week meets during the winter months which continue to be popular. Grahame Nicoll described his climbing trip to the States, Iain Robertson showed slides of the club's Alps trip and Rob Garner covered some aspects of the work of the National Trust for Scotland.

The Annual General Meeting was held in Perth in November at which the following officers were elected: - *Hon. President*, Bob Milne; *Hon. Vice-President*, David Wares; *President*, John Crombie; *Treasurer*, Tom Rix; *Secretary*, Ron Payne, 70 Spoutwells Drive, Scone, Perth PH2 6SB. (0738) 51312.

Edinburgh Section. 1988 was another good year for the Section with membership now approaching 70 and an increasing tendency for meets to be over-subscribed.

The level of activity is very encouraging with members visiting most of the main UK climbing areas and a fair number venturing further afield from the rigours of winter climbing in the Alps to the gentler pleasures of warm Provençal limestone.

The unseasonal weather in May/June made 1988 a vintage year for Scottish rock climbing. Perhaps the high point of this spell was the Meet to the Shelterstone in June, when 6 members (including two ladies) climbed the Needle in perfect conditions.

The summer meets were generally well attended, although less so than the winter ones. The Section tends to try and operate as flexibly as possible in summer when hut bookings are few and the weather can vary dramatically across the climbing areas.

The annual dinner was held at Amulree Hotel, by Dunkeld and attracted a good attendance who were regaled by amusing anecdotes of the early JMCS Bus Meets by Donald Bennet and rather more scurrilous repartee from their own President.

The Office-bearers for 1989 are: - *President*, Andy Carver; *Hon. President*, John Fowler; *Vice President*, Gillian Paul; *Hon. Vice President*, Mike Fleming; *Treasurer*, Nigel Suess; *Hon. Secretary*, Stuart Murdoch, 34 Kenmure Place, Dunfermline; *Smiddy Custodian*, Fraser Fotheringham, 49 St. Valery Place, Ullapool (0854) 2354; *Jock's Spot Custodian*, George McEwan, 30 Stephens Drive, Inverkeithing (0383) 413399.

London Section. - 1988 saw an increase in the number of active Section members, with average meet attendance rising to between 12 and 18 - a significant number considering the long distances often involved and the dearth of transport. Membership stood at about 50 and the Section still maintains a broad range of the warped and wonderful: rock climbers, skiers, mountaineers, ice climbers and perverts in general.

Two south-west meets were held at St. Just and the Count House, Bosigran, with visits to Chair Ladder, Gurnards Head, Bosigran and Lands End. Ten members attended the Whole Club AGM at Roybridge - confirming the commitment within the Section to the Club as a whole. A return visit to the CIC was a huge success, with 17 members travelling a cumulative total of nearly 20,000 miles for the meet!

Lake District meets were held at the Yorkshire Ramblers Hut at Little Langdale (hot weather on Gimmer, Heron Crag and Dow) and the Lancs. Cave and Crag Club hut at Tarnearth, Torver (rain and hail on Dow and Wallowbarrow).

Three Welsh meets were held at our own hut at Glanafon and a fourth at Rugby Mountaineering Club's hut in Cwm Eigau. One of the best club dinners for years was held at the long-suffering Tyn-Y-Coed Hotel at Betys-Y-Coed, organised by the even longer-suffering treasurer, Robin Watts: a straggle of survivors were marched down the A5 in the small hours led by the pipes of Alistair Gray. An active year finished with six members in North-West Scotland and ten at Glanafon. Members were also active in Nepal, Pakistan, Greenland and the European Alps.

There was a long overdue influx of keen prospective members and the welcome return of some familiar 'old' faces. Well-attended pub meets and Pete Tippet's excellent Section Circular continued to encourage enthusiasm. The commitment is developing to hold more 'away' meets, with four Scottish meets planned for 1989, including Glencoe, the Ben and Skye. Commitment to the Whole Club also remains strong, with increased interest in shared meets and membership cards.

The club hut at Glanafon, North Wales, was relatively under-utilised in 1988 and it is worth emphasising that the other Sections and kindred clubs are very welcome to book it.

Officers: — *President*, Gordon Cameron; *Secretary*, Andrew Walker, 186 Beccles Road, Bradwell, Gt. Yarmouth, Norfolk; *Custodian*, Peter Whitechurch, Dale Cottage, Tangier Lane, Frant, Tunbridge Wells (0892) 23531; *Treasurer*, Robin Watts, Glanaber, Trefriw, Llanrwst, Gwynedd, LL27 0JT (0492) 641564.

Lochaber Section. — No report received.

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

The Alps

C. G. M. SLESSER rented a Chalet in the Portes du Soleil area for three months, December to February, and was consequently visited by numerous members during this time. The chalet had a magnificent view over the village of Chatel and visitors found it difficult to go skiing rather than sit on the verandah in the sun drinking beer. At the end of the lease on the 4th Feb. Slesser, along with the President, Bill Wallace and Iain Smart (representing the Club rifferaff) made several ski-mountaineering ascents from various centres. From the Hospice on the Simplon Pass (where we stayed for two nights) we ascended the Breithorn in lieu of the more far flung Monte Leoni. The Hospice is a delightful refuge from weather and English speakers and has an edifying religious ambience. Later we drove up the Turtmagne Tal along 16 km of ice- and snow covered, narrow, winding road requiring snow chains and then skied up to the deserted SAC hut impressively placed on a bluff. The next day in still, sunny weather the Barhorn was ascended. We withdrew from the valley the same day as it was a steep sided trap in which a little snowfall could block the road. Even so the descent in darkness required all Slesser's skill as a driver. Then we went to Leukerbad and ended up at the Lammenhutte which was fairly crowded with amiable, cosmopolitan Swiss. From here we did the Wildstrubel and Rothorn. The weather was brilliant and the views impressive. The skiing was merely quite good rather than great.

JOHN STEELE writes: — 'John Steele, Mike French (London) and John Morrison (Glasgow) spent ten days spring ski touring in the Bernese Oberland during May (1988). Having descended most easily on the Eiger funicular we arrived and stayed at the Jungfrauoch hutte, as it turned out for several days as a series of storms had set in. We did however manage to climb the nearby Walcherhorn in misty conditions. This was followed over the next few days with a traverse to the Finsteraarhorn hutte and an ascent of the Fischerhorn. The best day was reserved for the magnificent Finsteraarhorn itself, culminating in a well earned lunch beside its monstrous summit cross. Our exit from the high plateau of the Konkordia was made via the Hollandia hutte.

John Steele (London) and Barbara Gibbons (Nordic Ski Club) spent just over a week ski touring in the Bernina Alps. This area lies in the Engadine region of eastern Switzerland and is best known for its three major peaks, Bernina, Roseg and Palu.

In a long week of mixed weather ascents were made of Mont Pers, Piz Palu, Piz Glushaint and Mont Chaputschin. Descents were also made of the Morteratsch glacier and the long picturesque Val Roseg.'

The Caucasus

DAVE SNADDEN writes: - 'I visited the Caucasus in the U.S.S.R. in September 1987, along with my wife Moira. The Caucasus stretch from the Black Sea to the Caspian Sea over a distance of some 1000 km, separating the plains of Russia and the highlands of Asia Minor. In comparison to the Alps the range is less complex, basically being a long, narrow crest with many long lateral ridges arising from it, these often bonding parallel to the main crest giving rise to two or three lines of mountains. The area of most interest to mountaineers is the 250 km of the Central Caucasus between the Klukhor and Krestovy passes. This area contains all the biggest peaks and reputedly the worst weather. In general the mountains are some 900m higher than their Alpine counterparts with a higher snowline and somewhat smaller glaciers. The vegetation in the valleys is very sparse. In latitude the whole range is 400 km farther south than the Alps.

Being wholly within the Soviet Union the only feasible way to get there is to apply to join one of the International Mountaineering Camps. We had been toying with the idea for several years but had been put off by the weakness of Sterling (the Rouble appears linked to the U.S. dollar in some mysterious way). The recently strengthening pound was the carrot which finally persuaded us to go.

We sent a simple request to the International Sport Mountaineering Centre in Moscow and received an acceptance telegram a short while later. This was followed by a request for payment in full and a promise of a letter of invitation - essential for visa procurement - eight weeks before departure. This magic letter arrived on time and we had our visas safely in our possession three weeks prior to departure - not so our tickets to Moscow.

Few cheap flights exist to Moscow and we discovered that we could save 40% of the travel costs by flying to Helsinki and taking a train - an overnight sleeper - to Moscow. After much effort on behalf of our travel agent and much cabling of money to Finland, our train was booked and we found the tickets awaiting us at Helsinki station. The train turned out to be a through one to Moscow and entry to the USSR was consequently very painless.

We were met at Moscow station by a representative of Sovintersport and taken to the Hotel Sport to meet up with the rest of the 20 or so other mountaineers heading for the Caucasus. These were a mixture of Austrians, Czechoslovaks and Americans. That evening a visit to the Bolshoi opera was arranged for us.

We left early the next day and flew to Mineralny Vody, a flight of just over two hours. We disembarked into brilliant sunshine and temperatures of around 25 degrees C, a welcome change from the cool wet weather we had experienced in Moscow. From the airport a great range of snow capped mountains stretched across the southern horizon, dominated by the vast volcanic bulk of Mt. Elbrus, at 5633m the highest peak in the Caucasus and ostensibly the highest in Europe. A four hour bus journey then took us to the Bakkan Valley where we were to be based in the Hotel Azau, a concrete block hotel owned by a Soviet Trade Union and usually used for their members to holiday in. It soon became apparent that we were the only two in the entire party who were not simply intent on Mt. Elbrus, so while the others planned their acclimatisation programmes we raided the stores and stoked our rucksacks for our first foray into the Central Caucasus.

There are no maps or guidebooks to the area so it is normal for Western climbers to be accompanied to base camp areas by a Soviet advisor who is usually a climber with considerable knowledge of the area. Previous British parties have also been asked to carry radios with them, though this was not the case with us. We set off the next day with enormous rucksacks in the company of Yuri, our advisor for the day, and Igor, an interpreter, and walked up the Adyl Su Valley to the Green bivouac. This was a flat area surrounded by moraine and glaciers beneath a superb cirque of snow and rock peaks, the whole dominated by an impressive icy fang called Jantugan. Yuri pointed out a few peaks to us and also indicated in rather vague terms the ways up them. After seeing us safely installed in our tent and fully refreshed with tea he dis-

appeared off to the fleshpots of the Azau accompanied by Igor, saying that he would see us in a day or two.

The next day we traversed the technically easy peak of Gumachi (3850m), returning to the tent by midday. This climb gave us an interesting ascent up a glacier to a small col from where a rock ridge led to the summit. The summit views were magnificent though not particularly expansive as Gumachi is small in comparison to its neighbours. The descent involved the airy traverse of an exposed snow arête followed by a long easy snow slope to the top of a rotten gully which led back to the glacier.

The following morning we left at 4 a.m. and partially retraced our steps up the Jan Kvat glacier. We then climbed the very fine E ridge of Jantugan (4200m). The final summit couloir of this climb held a considerable quantity of ice and provided interesting sport for our unacclimatised bodies. It provided even more sport on descent as we came down the same route. On our return we met Yuri ambling around the glacier sporting a pair of shorts, trainers and a radio. He was mother henning an Austrian party who were on the mountains somewhere. By radio he organised a bus for us later in the afternoon and we continued our descent to our tent, struck camp and carried on down the valley arriving at the road end at the same time as our transport.

The following day we designated as a rest day so we walked up the Shkelda valley, climbing a small peak of 3100m and obtaining the most magnificent views of Ushba and Shkelda. Ushba, with her long approach, big ice fall and beautiful twin summits, is one of the great mountains of the region. On our return we once again raided the food larder; smoked ham, chocolate, potatoes, tins of milk and jars of peas were to be our fare for the next few days.

The weather remained unbelievably settled as we walked for 10 km or so up the lovely Adyr Su along with Boris, the camps' administrative chief, and his wife. The upper reaches of the valley were deserted. We knew nothing about the mountains and soon discovered that the walking guidebook we'd brought with us was the Pamir edition. He halted at a swollen river and waved us up a side valley saying he thought we would find something to do. He and his wife then returned down the valley, heading back to the Azau.

We forded the river and then carried our enormous sacks up to 3000m at the lip of a hanging valley where we pitched camp on a flattish area below some moraine. The valley was deserted and we spent a wonderfully peaceful afternoon drinking in the breathtaking scenery. That evening mist closed in and a large herd of tur—the Caucasian version of ibex—grazed slowly past the tent, totally ignoring our presence.

The following day dawned fine and we climbed further up the valley and crossed a small but liberally crevassed glacier. This was surrounded by a rocky cirque which looked as if it might give a pleasant traverse. We ascended a steep snow couloir and then a fine snow arête to a large turret of rock on the main ridge. Here we discovered that we had arrived at the foot of the SE ridge of Via Tau (3850m). We climbed this pleasant rock ridge overtaking six Soviet climbers en route, who had ascended the mountain from the other side. These were the only others that we saw on any of the mountains we were on during our whole stay. We completed the traverse of Via Tau by descending the N ridge. This was made up of a series of small granite towers whose slabby northern sides were covered in 20cm of recent snow thus making the descent somewhat difficult and time consuming. A snow couloir led to the glacier and then to our tent where we found a Caucasian version of the local guide book languishing in the sun. He answered to Genadi, but unfortunately he was an authentic Russian version and we couldn't communicate with him. Deciding there wasn't much else to do where we were we packed up camp and descended to the main Adyr Su at 2500m where we pitched our tent again in some woods. After much sign language and a visit to the map room (a wall painting) of one of the local mountaineering camps (closed for the season), Genadi pointed out a few possible routes for the next day.

Leaving at 4 a.m. we walked up a steep track, traversed a moraine and climbed an easy glacier to a col at 3900m. We then ascended an exposed but easy snow and rock ridge to the summit of Tiu Tiu Bashi (4460m), a most superb viewpoint from where we could see the whole of the Central Caucasus range from Ushba to the great peaks of the Benzingi Basin. We returned to our tent by the same route.

The following day we returned to the Hotel Azau and turned our attention to Mt. Elbrus. Uplift is available to within an hour of the hut (4200m) and our arrival there coincided with the approach of the first of the winter storms. Elbrus is an extinct volcano and stands aloof from the main chain of the Caucasus, having quite a reputation for providing a diet of low temperatures and strong winds. It is technically easy being not much more than a long slow plod.

That night the wind strengthened and the hut shuddered to its very foundations, temperatures fell, and water and fruit in our room froze solid. Apart from a short sortie into the maelstrom we spent the next day in the illuminating company of two advisors, an interpreter and two other climbers – one a Pole and the other a Georgian who bought his delectable honey from a man who lived up a tree.

We rose at 3 a.m. the next morning but could barely open the hut door against the strong wind, despite the clear starry sky. We tried again at 6 a.m. and found that we could at least get out of the hut, so set about trying to ascend the highest point in Europe.

Elbrus was not in a mood for receiving visitors and as we gained height our progress was slowed by strengthening gusts of winds. Eventually conditions got really horrible with a constant maniacally shrieking wind throwing large chunks of ice at us and threatening to pluck us from the mountainside. On several occasions we had to lie on the snow with axes well buried in order not to literally part company with this world. With frostbite an imminent probability in the intense cold we gave up at 5400m, feeling that we'd had quite a tussle but that our defeat was at least honourable. We descended to the valley where it was surprisingly warm.

The next day, our last, produced more settled weather and we climbed Cheget (3800m) by its south face, using a chairlift to get to 2800m and walking under the magnificent N faces of Dongus-Orun and Nakra to reach our route, a mass of loose couloirs and rocky terraces. The summit was superb, though, with fine views and a sight of what we thought was a rare Lammergeyer floating past on the thermals. Our descent nearly ended in disaster when an enormous block spontaneously detached itself from near the summit and thundered down a couloir towards us, smashing into fragments en route. The largest of these, about the size of a large dining table, landed only a couple of metres from me. Somewhat humbled we retraced our descent route and succeeded in missing the last chairlift of the day. Our shortcut to the valley base through thick forest and vertically ranked rhododendron bushes owed more to a Tarzan film than to the final act of an enjoyable mountaineering trip.

We returned to Moscow the following day, visited the Bolshoi ballet, had a guided tour of the Kremlin and caught our train back to Finland.

Throughout our stay the Soviets were extremely welcoming and spent a great deal of time ensuring that we were well fed and entertained.

The Caucasus is an outstanding mountaineering area with routes to suit all capabilities. There are some spectacular glacier basins and some magnificent technical faces and long ridge traverses. As there are no maps or guide books a high degree of mountain awareness is necessary, even for the easy routes. At present there are two climbing camps in the Caucasus, one in winter and one in autumn, this latter being the one we attended. The September camp is slightly shorter than the others and consequently gives little time to acclimatise for the bigger mountains. Also being rather late in the season the glaciers tend to be dry and very crevassed, likewise easy summer gullies tend to be filled with ice rather than snow. These minor disadvantages are compensated for by the total lack of people on the mountains (the Soviet climbing camps being closed) and the tendency to settled weather, though you do run the risk of the first of the winter storms arriving.

The Soviets supplied all transport, valley accommodation and food. No freeze dried food is available, so rucksacks tend to be heavy. It's worth taking some high mountain food such as chocolate bars and dried fruit as these items are not readily available, though we were supplied with some excellent chocolate. The only fuel available was petrol which was siphoned out of the Sportscommittee bus. There are no

gear shops in the USSR and Soviet climbers come to the camp with large quantities of titanium ice screws to spend in order to acquire western gear.

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China

The Scottish Mountaineering Club Centenary Expedition, 1988, was first proposed by Malcolm Slessor in 1986. Indeed, the editor was even approached as a possible member, but probably due to his customary penniless state the wooing was short-lived. In the event, and after some trials and tribulations, including heated exchanges at one AGM, Geoff Cohen, Hamish Irvine, Grahame Nicoll, Barry Owen, Stan Pearson and Des Rubens set out for China. True to course, the intended target was changed at the last minute, with the Shiwakte Mountains, lying to the east of Mt Kongur, being visited. To cut a long story short, (and not spoil an intended article from Rubens), ascents successfully made included Aghalistan II (5300m, GN & SP), Shiwakte II (6150m, GC & HI), Aghalistan III (5300m, BO & DR), and Aghalistan IV (5200m, SP & GAC). The Club congratulates the expedition's members on a safe trip. (The nicely-produced booklet on this expedition - no author(s) given - I found more interesting than most expedition articles. More useful too. Something to be said for the strict separation of straight recording and personal narrative.

India

ALAN HUNT writes: - 'When I applied for permission for an attempt on Cho Oyu in 1985 it was with the intention of repeating the 1952 Tichy route that crossed the Nangpa-La and reached the summit via the West flank. Although this involved crossing the Tibet/Nepal frontier and was therefore strictly an approach from Chinese territory it appeared that the Nepalese authorities were turning a blind eye to this tactic by granting a permit for what they termed the S.W. Ridge and ignoring the outcome.

Between 1985, when I obtained permission and our attempt in 1988 there were ascents by several expeditions using this tactic. Notably was an attempt by R. Messner in which he used the so called 'Messner' variant to avoid crossing the Nangpa-La and joined the Tichy route high up where the clash between frontier demarcations and mountaineering objectives are of less consequence.

In 1987 the Chinese opened up the Northern approach to Cho Oyu and not surprisingly teams from this side started bumping into teams from Nepal who had crossed the Nangpa-La. The Nepalese authorities' reaction to this was to restrict approaches to the 'S.W.' ridge to the Sumna glacier approach that lies to the east of the Nangpa-La. Possible routes to the summit from the head of this glacier are all very serious with a final long and difficult ridge between 7,500m and the summit of Cho Oyu. To date there has not been a successful ascent using this approach. We learned about this restriction at our briefing with the Mountaineering section of the Ministry of Tourism on arriving in Nepal! A previous telex had confirmed our original permit but the ground rules had changed!

We were an unsupported, lightweight, Alpine style expedition and our intention was to use ski mountaineering techniques on the old Tichy route. Our suspicions that routes from the Sumna glacier would have little appeal and that they certainly would not fit into our lightweight style or favour ski mountaineering techniques were confirmed when we reached base camp on April 2nd and came face to face with the mountain. Had our Liaison Officer been around we could have attempted to negotiate a different route, but he had left base camp the day after arriving for the comforts of

Namche Bazaar, never to return. However a Swiss expedition faced with similar problems to ourselves had arranged for a change of route with their L.O. and he had said he did not see any problems in us following them on the 'Messner' variant approach, provided we let the Swiss go first. There was not too much difficulty in that, because they had porters and high altitude sherpas while we had neither, although we persuaded the base camp kitchen staff to carry one or two loads part way.

April 19th saw us perched at 5,700m on the frontier between Nepal and Tibet with as much food and equipment as we could ferry ourselves from our original base camp. It was very hard work indeed. By April 21st a further camp had been established at about 6,000m on the Gyabrag Glacier and this was as far as it was possible to use skis. From this camp to the next main ridge/camp was a 500m scree slope and the main ridge although not technically difficult was bare, bone hard ice in places.

Some fixed rope was used on the icy ridge to place camp 2 and again higher through an ice-fall to camp 3 at 6,700m and 7,100m respectively. A small higher camp was established and from this camp Wes Sterritt, Dave Walsh and Dave Morris made a summit bid on the 29th April. This was swiftly repelled by high winds and a successful attempt was made in more favourable weather the following day. Dave Walsh reached the summit at 5 p.m., the other two turned back on the way. A forced bivouac for Dave Morris resulted in frostbitten feet. Several days of poor weather followed during the retreat, by 5th May all the expedition members were off the mountain.

The weather had been reasonable throughout the trip. Although windless days were few and far between there had been little in the way of fresh snow for some time hence the bare scree and icy ridges.

The consensus of opinion of all the expedition members was that Alpine style was a very strenuous and wearing method of climbing a remote 8,000m peak such as Cho Oyu. Although it meant considerably reduced costs in terms of high altitude porters on the mountain and reduced costs on the approach because of generally smaller equipment loads, it did call for a considerable effort from the whole team to reach a high point where climbing really started. With hindsight, more food, porter help, more rest days would all have been welcomed and probably would have meant more people reaching the summit. Although this would have meant raising extra funds I think we would have gladly chipped in. As we struggled across glacial moraine and rotten scree slopes, repeating a load carry for a third time, the cost of it all was far from our minds.

Apart from the physical effort, the expedition organisation went remarkably according to plan. We spent five days in Kathmandu on the way in, flew to Lukla and reached the Sumna Base Camp seven days later. Had we approached the Nangpa-La directly it would only have taken another three/four days with porter help.

The Nepalese expedition game is well documented now and there are no new points of information to pass on but the following are worth recording: (1) You are required to have a letter of authority from the BMC stating your UK expedition status, plus the names of the expedition members. These names *must* be those of the people who arrive to climb the mountain. Late entrants must have a new letter! (2) It is not necessary to get a letter of authority from the UK embassy in Nepal to OK your mountain rescue insurance (the embassy charges for this!). Nobody asked to see any paperwork on this although we had cover. (3) You can buy everything from ice screws to plastic boots in Kathmandu and Namche Bazaar had gas and hill food in fair quantities. Obviously these goods will vary from year to year but you would be unlucky not to be able to pick up sufficient supplies in most years. (4) Unless you have a free source and a large excess baggage facility it is not worth bringing the mandatory special clothing for the L.O., Cook and Kitchen Boy. Buying them off is much more interesting.

Expedition Financial Breakdown. - Income Grants/Donations £2000, Members contribution £6534. Expenditure Peak fee £1500, Members Insurance £598, Medical kit £97, Flights UK return £2760, Kathmandu stay £125, Flights Nepal (Lukla, return) £476, L.O. Pay off, in lieu of gear £380, Pay off for Sirdar £233, for Cook £75, for Kitchen Boy £53, Insurance for above £70, Wages for above £310, Porters/Yaks Lukla-B/C return £255, Food/Lodging below B/C £269, Food/Fuel at B/C £308, Food/Fuel above B/C £154, B/C Equipment, Hire/purchase £289, Agents Fee £270, Excess baggage and Airport taxes £138, Expedition overheads £174, Total £8534.

Expedition members, — John Hall, Alan Hunt, Dave Morris, Derek Price, Wes Sterrit, Dave Walsh.

Pakistan

DAVE BROADHEAD writes: — 'In the summer of 1988 Moira Watts and I spent several weeks trekking in Pakistan. Starting in Skardu, a short acclimatisation trip took us from Shigar to Khapalu, crossing the 4877m Thalle La, one of the highest unglaciated passes in the Karakoram and a tremendous viewpoint.

Returning to Skardu we then followed the popular expedition trail by jeep to Dassu, then up through the Braldu gorge to Askole. Most parties continue to Concordia and the Baltoro glacier but we left the crowds and our solitary porter behind as we headed up the Biafo glacier, passing below the Ogre and Latok peaks to reach Snow Lake and the 5151m Hispar Pass. From the top of the pass it is only a short climb to some inviting peaks which we had hoped to attempt. Unfortunately three days of continuous rain lower down had disrupted our progress and our dwindling supplies would not allow any further delays. Descending the Hispar glacier we discovered to our cost that our information on the best route was out of date. Recent landslides have destroyed parts of the shepherds' path which follows the hillsides above the left side of the glacier. After a couple of hard days toiling through nasty moraines on and off the glacier we gradually realised that parties now usually follow the opposite side. Arriving at last in Hispar village we were able to replenish our supplies, well pleased with our traverse of the largest glacier system outside the polar regions. Continuing down to join the Hunza valley we spent a few days relaxing in Karimabad before returning to Gilgit, with enough time and energy for a final trip up the beautiful Naltar valley, crossing the 4700m Naltar (Phakor) Pass to Chatokhand in the Ishkuman valley.'

Norway

STEVE CHADWICK writes: — 'April 1988 found me working in Norway complete with broken leg in plaster due to a fall on ice, grade 1 Aviemore Ice Rink. June saw recovery enough to begin to rock climb again on the superb granite 1-3 pitch routes on Sotra Island near Bergen; one route stands out, Angel Slab HVS 5a. On July 23rd, 1988, we climbed Norway's 3rd highest peak Store Skagastolstind by 'Heftys Renne,' the Via Normal, missing the anniversary of Slingby's 1st ascent by 2 days. On October 23rd, 1988, four of us made a 1st ascent to 'The Dragons Gate to Little Hell,' a cave high up the West face of the Jordalsnuten in Gudvangen (see article). Ice climbing began in November 1988 and in March 1989 we visited Oppdal in Drivdalen where amongst others we climbed the Kongsvolds Fossen (waterfall), 5 pitches grade 4.'

Corfu

A. L. CRAM writes: — 'Early in June 1988, my wife and I walked over the hills of Corfu (or Kerkyra). In particular, we spent many days on Pantocrator, a limestone mass, just over 3000 feet. Forests of mature olive trees offered gracious quietude and shade on the lower slopes, where huge nets spread to catch the ripe fruit ensnared our feet. We visited the four tops a number of times, along with the village abandoned in a fold, like so many mountain dwellings in Europe, with occupiers siphoned off into the tourist trade. The top slopes resembled those in the Carso, the surface weathered into many thousands of razor-edged laminae. Here and there deep sinks provided micro-climates to shrubs and wildflowers. A decaying monastery situated on the highest point, had but one member of the Religious Order to perform the offices in the chapel. He exchanged views, limited by my ability in the language in return for biscuits and chocolate, for his own food store seemed meagre. As we commented on the view across the two miles wide strait to the bewitching but forbidden mountains



Centenary Expedition – Shiwakte III (6200m), August 1988

Photo: Stan Pearson

of Albania, he remarked that it was not always a sunny day above the blue Ionian Sea but half the time dark and often windy, cold and cloudy in this, perhaps outmoded, outpost of faith, draining of life.

I returned to Crete in September 1988 with objective Timios Stavros, at 8350 feet the highest point in the Psiloritis group and in the Island. I drove from Iraklion by Anogia and took the unfinished new road across the pass round the great sink to the wall of the range. The car strained up the steep curves of the old track to the great cave of Ideon Antron, where, as everyone knows, Rhea sheltered her son Zeus from the wrath of his father Kronos. On the cleared space at the small chapel with the graves of the two partisans, I put up my tent. On three previous trips, I had worked out an approach by a steep cleft and this was supported by the Secretary of the Greek Mountain Club in Iraklion. She, however, had felt unable to let me have a copy or a sight of military maps, although by a breach of security 48 years earlier, these had been seized by the Germans and were on sale in Munich.

I proposed to traverse Timios Stavros to Kamares on the south side, forced to rely on animal instinct. At first light, I stepped off the third loop of road above my site into the wilderness on a steep slope of stony soil broken by small cliffs and thickets of prickly shrubs. I mounted steadily over the unstable ground, picking out a few traces here and there. Eventually, the cleft forked, the left-hand branch leading up to a U-shaped col. Beyond the crest a few traces guided me along the reverse slope, round rocky hillsides and over small ravines. On my left rose a distant group of high tops across a great glen; with melancholy realisation, they were my destination. My ridge turned at right-angles to the left. After walking above and below terraces and slabs along hillsides, eventually I came down into a deep hollow where I surmised the route from Kamares came in. Crossing two great swells of land, traces led diagonally up across the wall of the tops towards a bright limestone bridge connecting the top I was ascending to two massive cones. I crossed the first cone to another limestone bridge with access to the second cone. The cones had a slight resemblance to the summits of Mam Soul and Carn Eige.

On top, an accumulation of stones had been hollowed out into a hermitage where hung an old bell, which I presumed to ring. The peals dwindled thinly into space. From the far end of the ridge, I looked down on a vast stretch of fractured limestone without sign of life. The time given me in Iraklion was 6 hours and I had taken 6 1/2 hours, some spent casting about for a route.... The time up from Kamares had been given as 10 hours, usually with a night bivouac. It was not a time to linger. The way down on shifting rubble and fractured slabs required a little care. Once over the two swells and into the hollow, I turned right into a dry stream bed running all the way round the bases of the tops, the eventual outcome hidden by the sweep to the right. Eventually, I climbed about 1000 feet up the left side for a view forward. On my left was another great rock wilderness and in the distance I could see a great sink. The way down was over steep but easy slabs. In the golden light of late afternoon, I entered the flat floor of the sink walled on every side. A small outlet stream had cut a way through the end wall but fell out of sight into a deep gorge garnished with fierce limestone teeth. Casting first right and then left, I came on traces up the left side of the gorge to the upper rocks. By starlight, even aided by my torch, the route above the gorge looked impractical. I returned to the shepherd's hut I had noted on entering the sink.

As a night out had always seemed a possibility, I was well prepared. The occupier had departed leaving a fire, still smouldering, banked against the outside wall. The construction was like that of a Scottish broch with drystone walls at least four feet thick supporting a domed roof ten feet high with circular ventilation opening. The air was warmed by the fire. I had ample food and bottled water. At about 2 a.m., the door opened with violence against the outer wall. I went out to placate aggrieved shepherds with dogs of uncertain temper. The new moon had long set and a calm night with great stars suggested the probability that a bubble of warm air rising from the gorge had sucked the door open, leaving the possibility that Zeus on his way up to the Ideon Antron had exerted a force against the intruder in his realm, not of course to be entertained save by a person in my isolated situation.

I left before first light and picked my way across the sink and up the slope, until in shining morning light I could cross the wall of the gorge. Occasional traces, lured round the gorge side of cliffs, obliging me to withdraw gingerly. These and scrambles into and out of ravines underlined a decision not to travel by night had been sound. One such ravine contained a rivulet of sweet water, the only one I had seen on the mountain. The wall ended in a long curtain of gravel and rubble which I edged down to the floor of the gorge with the great cave of Spileon Kamares not far away. I dismissed the notion of visiting the cave. One more problem of choosing a route had to be solved.... I went round a great ridge with trees visible on the far side and found traces leading on round the re-entrant and then a long way through scrub trees and hollows over a shelf then out over a rocky ridge and back along the next re-entrant, repeating this four times without sighting Kamares. A final pull up over a rockcrest and down steep and broken rocks among trees and I emerged suddenly at the top of a very long slope of soft earth and rubble at the foot of which glowed the red roofs of Kamares. The last problem was a vertical bank cut into the hillside for space to make a road. Down below was a taverna with men gossiping, who showed me a way down a cleft. I explained to the good men of Kamares my problem, in halting Greek, to a sympathetic gathering. A helpful police officer discovered a local resident agreeable to drive me 30 kilometres to Varvara on the main road where I took bus for Iraklion. Next day, a hired driver and car transported me back to my car unscathed, I found, by either divine or human agency.

REVIEWS

Rocks Around the World. — Stefan Glowacz and Uli Weismeier (Diadem, 144 pp, 130 colour photos, £16.95 — ISBN 0 906371 52 X).

It's unfortunate that so much rock-climbing action photography these days is aimed at the glamour market, rather than trying to present an honest picture of the sport. I suppose it sells flash gear, and that's what makes the world go round (isn't it?), but it doesn't really have an awful lot to do with the climbing experience of most of us. How many shots have you seen where gangs of the unwashed roam along the bottom of scruffy crags, pausing only to yell obscenities at unfortunates caught in the middle of whatever is currently unacceptable?

In order to guard against seduction by an illusion I have found a sure-fire way of identifying 'glamour' rock-climbing photos. I look for dirt. If there isn't any I turn the page.

This book is a 'photographic climbing odyssey' by two climbers, Stefan Glowacz and Uli Weismeier, who manage to avoid dirt. We see some slightly trashed hands, chalk and a little blood, but young Stefan, who features in virtually every photo in one of countless co-ordinated outfits (from the *de rigueur* multi-coloured lycra to rather *infra dig* white trousers) never looks like a man on a round the world climbing trip.

He never looks like a man in difficulty, to be honest; the grimaces we do get to see were probably planned. Weismeier's photos, though colourful and technically excellent, are generally rather aseptic and contrived, and ultimately tedious. Is this really 'the state of the art of rock-climbing in the late eighties'?

The climbs we know have generally been seen better before: *Chain Reaction*, *Edge Lane*, *Right Wall* and the like, although maybe the scarcity of text has something to do with it. Personally, I like my climbing pictures surrounded by words. In a book of 144 pages less than 13 are text, and most of it is pretty crass stuff. The longest piece of writing is an account of a free attempt on the *Salathé Wall* in Yosemite, in which our heroes do actually get repulsed. Not untypically failure reads better than success and it's also the best, but I'm afraid that's no great accolade. Perhaps it sounds better in German, but I prefer to give the translator — Martin Boysen — the benefit of the doubt.

The book is almost saved from a bland, designer prettiness by a truly filthy anti-podean, Eric Talmadge, showing a healthy contempt for *haute couture*. But until someone like Andy Pollitt is photographed climbing around the world I'm afraid substance is going to keep on taking second place to what passes for style.

At the Sharp End. — Paul Nunn (Unwin Hyman, 200 pp, £14.95 — ISBN 0-04-440138-8).

Throughout a lengthy, productive and influential career Paul Nunn has been one of British climbing's more thoughtful and articulate exponents. This book is a collection of some of his writings over almost thirty years. Mostly essays and reviews, almost all have appeared in print already, in publications like *Rocksport*, *SUMC Journal*, *Crags*, *Hard Rock* and *Cold Climbs*, but the majority, as one would expect from a man involved since its inception, come from *Mountain* magazine.

More than anything Nunn is an enthusiast; he has loved his climbing. His joy is well communicated, as are the concerns which he has demonstrated almost from the start: the legacy of those who came before, the fears about what we might leave behind us.

Despite chronicling a fairly 'successful' career, the book is not about shallow triumphs of the ego, but about something far more profound: the richness of a life spent in good company, doing something which superficially appears pointless, yet the greatest justification for which can be found in people like Nunn, and books such as this.

Bob Duncan.

The Island of Rhum. – By Hamish Brown. (Cicerone Press, pp.100, £4.95, ISBN 1 85284 002 1).

Hamish Brown has an unfortunate writing style which normally does not make for easy or informative reading. I therefore looked upon the task of reviewing the updated Island of Rhum guide with some trepidation. Much to my surprise I actually enjoyed it.

Those who missed this book first time round may not be aware that it is a guide for all visitors to the island, not just rock climbers and mountaineers.

There is a general section which gives all sort of information and stories about all aspects of Rhum life; history, wildlife, etc. I found this all to be very readable, maybe a touch romantic in places, but still good stuff. There are also some photographs which are not too well reproduced, but look at the cost of the book.

Modern type craggers may not appreciate the climbing guide section. The descriptions are refreshingly old-fashioned, and to a practised eye some may even seem unhelpful. Just the way it should be on a place like Rhum. Technical grades are virtually non-existent, but you wouldn't expect Mr Brown to know too much about them anyway. He also believes he has produced a definitive guide, a dangerous claim.

All in all, a well produced wee book, more than worth the money. I may even buy it myself.

Alastair Walker.

A Century of Scottish Mountaineering. – Edited by W. D. Brooker. (Scottish Mountaineering Trust, 1988, 372 pp, numerous illustrations, £15.95, ISBN 0-907521-21-5).

When first I received for review my copy of this handsome volume, the alluring front-cover photograph of the frozen, grey rocks of the Cobbler beneath an azure-blue sky took me back to 1948, when I contracted the chronic, mountaineering addiction on that peak; and the atmospheric beauty of mist and mountain in the rear-cover photograph revealed aspects of mountaineering which exist well beyond the excitement of surmounting a crux. I reconnoitred superficially the extraordinarily wide range of contents of this book and thought of that Virgilian warning '*Timeo Danaos...*' to beware of the Greeks even when they are bearing gifts; but I accepted my gift and my task, seeing the latter as negligible compared with that of the Editor of this Anthology.

The Editor of any worthwhile anthology may be confronted by an abundance of riches, rendering selection, balance and distillation a delightful but tantalising task. He may face a mass of excellent records of past and present and also more elusive material with implications for the future and I reckon that Bill Brooker faced all of that. Upon what basis was a selection from 99 Annual Journals of the Scottish Mountaineering Club to be compiled? Was the Editor to look for the 99 Best Excerpts and add, for good measure, a reserve list of 19 Second-best Excerpts? Or was he to ensure success by selecting 199 Best Excerpts, provided that there was a principle to determine what constituted a Best Excerpt? Let us consider what he did.

The mountaineers and their explorations are placed in an historical perspective and the first article bears the Scriptural title '*In the Beginning!*' Immersed in '*The First Phase*' and looking at the photographs of the hirsute pioneers, I had to remind myself, not for the first time, that these Gods were once young. (I recalled the Annual Dinner of 1951 when I had the honour of toasting as principal guest that member of the Mountaineering and Literary Deity, Geoffrey Winthrop Young, whose photograph as a young climber in his masterpiece '*On High Hills*' gave me an irrational jolt – and that despite the shock, not long before that, of learning that Whymper was only 25 years old when he climbed the Matterhorn!). So the foundation of the S.M.C. and the assembly of the Gods, amidst the steady acceleration of the Industrial Revolution, produced a stream of ardent explorers, many of them of an intellectual bent and yearning to pursue the mountain-cult.

In interesting ways this emerges clearly in '*The First Phase*.' A fine example is the extract written in 1903 by W. Inglis Clark. He describes how he and his wife were joined by Harold Raeburn and led by him on a June day up the crux of the *Crowberry*

Ridge of the Buachaille. After an excellent description of this pitch, the famous photograph of which is superbly reproduced, Clark goes on: – 'Next day, instead of going up by the easiest way, what should Raeburn suggest but that we should endeavour to ascend by the *Chasm*... which had already baffled a strong party.' What follows is a fascinating account of their bold attempt on that route despite 'a prodigious quantity of snow.' Although they failed, Clark's brief article illustrates with humour and without conceit the spirit and skill of Raeburn and those Gods and perhaps more so to those of us who, at different seasons, have climbed the water-worn pitches of the Chasm and been unable to claim that we flitted up them like rock butterflies. It is tempting to linger here amidst the great branching-out of Norman Collie, the Pilkingtons, Tough, Brown *et hoc genus omne*, but just as Bill Brooker had to prune the luxuriant foliage, so must I.

But what of their successors, many of whom are the latter-day Gods? The Editor has made a selection from '*The Middle Period*' and from '*The Later Years*', bringing us up to recent times and developments. He does not, however, make the mistake of concentrating on the achievements of the Gods and ignoring the pull which the mountains exert on so many others, whose enthusiasm is no less. These periods are brought into perspective by an extraordinary variety of excerpts, mainly brief, in which characters and events abound and verge occasionally on a state of joyous lunacy.

In an extract from a short history of Scottish climbing from 1918 to 1939, E. A. M. Wedderburn comments on the formation in the 1930s of numerous Clubs and adds significantly: – 'This group brings into Scottish climbing an element, hitherto not prominent, of youth and relative poverty.' Analysing the character of this group as 'not so much the heirs to a tradition as the discoverers of a secret hitherto kept hidden from their class,' he issues this prophesy: – 'They appear to me to have the future of Scottish climbing in their hands.' Under the epigrammatic title '*May the fire be always lit*,' Jock Nimlin, with the ingenuity of a quick-sketch artist, catches the character of this youthful group, which preferred the camp-fire and the hills to the cafe and the tenements. While many of the youthful explorers in the 1930s did not belong to this impoverished class, there is no doubt that the determined exodus from the cities of unemployed or poorly paid lads into the wilds, which they loved, was one of the significant landmarks of our mountaineering history. Tom Weir's classic book '*Highland Days*' testifies like a Shorter Gospel to the pilgrimages of that community to the mountain sanctuary. But then, he was and remains a leading, if unsanctified, pilgrim.

Enthusiasm and enterprise, however, demanded no class distinction or financial criterion. From the top-rate efforts of Graham Macphee and J. H. B. Bell, W. H. Murray, W. M. MacKenzie, A. M. MacAlpine, J. K. W. Dunn, J. F. Hamilton, A. C. D. Small and a host of others in the 1920s and 1930s, one is led past '*The Middle Period*' by many colourful contributions through '*The Later Years*' to the observant wit of '*Cairngorm Commentary*' by Tom Patey; and there one must pause to pay tribute to that outstanding mountaineer, his companions and the members of the Clubs and groups in the North-east, whose phenomenal drive produced a Scottish mountaineering Aurora Borealis.

J. R. Marshall, with his keen insight, writes about life in and about the C.I.C. Hut and on the Nevis rampsarts in the 1950s and 1960s; and M. G. Geddes, on the same subject, covers the 1970s. These short summaries are significant because the Nevis Massif became and remained a centre of outstanding achievements and developments, particularly in ice-climbing. Jimmy Marshall, in the late 1950s and for many years thereafter, created, with his steady, electrifying force, an upward spiral of skill on rock and ice, which reached a new and exciting level of excellence. That many others, including M. G. Geddes, contributed to the raising of standards right up to date is obvious; but it has to be acknowledged that for a long period Jimmy Marshall was literally and metaphorically a leader of pre-eminence. Anyone unfamiliar with this period should read that fine monograph '*Ben Nevis*' by Ken Crocket, one of those who, with expertise, pushed up the standards into the 1980s. They will continue to rise with men like Andrew Nisbet meeting the challenge.

Since I wish to leave the magnetism of the mountains to the end, it would be only right to say that the photographs and drawings are admirably illustrative of so many

aspects of this Anthology. At first glance, the typography appears satisfactory, but, as with so many modern books, far too many printing and spelling errors emerge upon reading.

The Editor shrewdly encompassed the whole span of men and mountains from the sections 'In Memoriam' and 'Melancholy Occurrences' to 'On the Boards' and 'Munrosis.' He has included 'Foreign Connections' and ended admirably with 'In Reflective Mood.' In all these sections there is writing to suit all tastes and interests. I presume that 'Munrosis' was regarded by the Editor as a psychiatric disorder and was thus named. I enjoyed what the patients wrote but asked myself – is there a list of mountains in any other country in the world, selected by one man on the basis of altitude, pounded over by thousands of ascetics following Naismith's Rule and christened with the selector's own surname as the Munros? Surely this was a unique eccentricity or worse.

There are many delightful poetic excursions from Lionel Hinxman's witty verses on the Climber's Guide to the Gaelic Tongue and J. G. Stott's classic composition 'Oh, my Big Hobnailers' (brilliantly satirised in Tom Patey's 'Ach mein Grossen Boten') to W. P. Ker's learned 'Expostulation with Cruachan' and Jeff Mason's pensive 'On Ancient Hills.' It is not easy to catch mountain visions in verse and I admire those who succeed.

My immediate reaction to the amount of space devoted to 'On the Boards' was that it was excessive and I steeled myself to read this section. My reaction served as a psychological boomerang which, thrown into the air, returned and smote me with the added force of Geoffrey Dutton's 1958 article and his comment that '...such things are comforting, even necessary, to a winter climber in Scotland, providing tangible evidence of a pursuit at times more pointless and frustrating than his own.' When he later referred to 'a successful ski-lift...bang next door to the ascetic recesses of the Buachaille' and the provoking of 'wrathful comment on all plank-straddlers from members-who-do-not-ski-' I, a creature of those recesses, was nearly out for the count. Revived, I remained of the view that the number of articles in this section was excessive in relation to the number of those in 'On The Rocks' and 'Midst Snow And Ice.' I concede that they were well written.

Many of us were introduced to mountaineering by the J.M.C.S. and the links with the S.M.C. were always such that the formation and history of the former club were rightly incorporated in this Anthology. Those links were forged not just by the learning of technique but also by the company of outstanding personalities. When I read Bob Grieve's account of the *South Ridge of Cir Mhor*, I thought of my own great days on that ridge and at the same time of memorable encounters elsewhere with the author, one of the finest raconteurs I have ever met.

Let me pass now to the mountains and mountaineering under the sections headed 'On the rocks' and 'Midst snow and ice.' This selection must have been extremely difficult to make with the wealth of material available; and it will certainly not please everyone. Some will reckon that two or three of the modern contributions lack substance; while others will feel that their character, including vulgarity, justifies inclusion. One cannot expect the Editor to be infallible. What we recognise from most of the worthwhile contributions is not just adventure or fun but renewal through effort and struggle. Tom Weir concludes his riveting description of the gruelling winter ascent of *Parallel Gully A* with this revelation: – 'Everything seemed to have a new and unexpected beauty, but I expect the rebirth was in myself, the enjoyment of relaxation and the freshness of spring after the death struggle of yesterday.' When first I encountered in 1947 an element of mysticism expressed in Bill Murray's classic 'Mountaineering in Scotland,' I had not caught the mountain addiction. When I did catch it one year later, I wondered whether I would ever meet a mountaineer who claimed to be a mystic. I never did so. Yet the beauty of mountains has a mystical aspect which draws us to them, quite apart from the adventure which we seek and enjoy. That beauty was discovered, particularly in the Alps, in the Eighteenth Century before the discovery of the joys of mountaineering. There must be few mountaineers who are immune from the magnetic attraction of the beauty of mountains. In terms of geological time the mountains change in their beauty, but the essence of timeless

beauty may remain, although elusive to all except a handful of mystics. The beauty which draws the rest of us to the mountains will vary from the almost ghostly vision of a distant, snowy peak to the fumbling and grasping exploration of the last three feet of steep rock, gaining a ledge and seeing a clump of vibrant rock flowers. These rewards come best from effort and not from arm-chair appreciation. I have never forgotten a verse which I learned as a young fellow, without knowledge of the author's identity:—

'I have loved colours and not flowers,
Their motion, not the swallows' wings
And wasted more than half my hours
Without the comradeship of things.'

The mountaineer seeks adventure, encounters beauty and profits in action by that '*comradeship of things.*'

It was fitting that this Anthology should end with the section entitled '*In reflective mood.*' There is much value in what is written there; and many will, as I did, read and re-read the two concluding articles by Iain Smart. The Editor said that 'the last word' would rest with Iain. His decision was justified. Iain has shown a gift for the analysis of beauty and the artistic expression of it and he has demonstrated that there are areas of discovery far removed from those in mountain guide-books.

In his Introduction, Bill Brooker has generously acknowledged the valuable help of many people. I join with Geoff Dutton, who, in a first-class Foreword, congratulates Bill on his selection. It represents what is worthwhile in Scottish mountains and mountaineering. Bill has succeeded in producing unity in diversity in this great Anthology.

L. S. Lovat.

Alpine Climbing.—John Barry (1988; The Crowood Press, 208pp including monochrome photographs plus 25 colour photographs, £14.95—ISBN 1 85223 001 0).

This book describes itself as a comprehensive handbook for the alpinist, but it is aimed principally at the British climber or walker who aspires to some activity in alpine regions. The *aspirant* may only wish to extend his hill walking to the alps, or may be considering climbing at a non-advanced level, but he will still find useful information in the book for his purpose. Sections outline special alpine considerations, and effectively explain the alpine hazards of stonefall, crevasses and storm which can overtake any alpine party.

The book is in general well-illustrated, although some of the diagrams on avalanches are rather small when compared to those explaining step-cutting. The colour photographs in particular are excellent and show a variety of alpine terrains in Europe and in Alaska which will be familiar to seasoned Alpinists.

Overall the book is that of a professional as one might expect from John Barry, and his enthusiasm and humour is always present. When dealing with glacier travel a photograph illustrating poor rope management is accompanied with a caption which ends by admitting that one of the climbers in the photograph is the author himself! This may of course be familiar to many others besides John Barry!

Brian Shackleton.

Climbing The Corbetts.—By Hamish M. Brown. (1988; Gollancz. 381 pp.; 8 pp. Illustrations in colour. Renny style maps for each section. £14.95, ISBN 0-04378-4).

Hamish Brown has covered the Corbetts most comprehensively in this book. Beginning with the Southern Uplands he moves northwards through Scotland section by section. There is a good introduction where he makes it clear that the book is not intended to be a guide book. The scene is set for the reader who must work out for himself how he is to climb his hill. As Hamish has climbed most Corbetts several times, he gives his readers several of his own choices of routes on many of the hills. It gave

me much pleasure to follow these on my maps. Anyone doing a Corbett will find the book a mine of information.

I think room should have been found for far more photographs. The book deserves a wider selection. The one I liked best was that of Rhum with cows in the foreground, the natural grouping of which added greatly to the interest of the picture.

There are some errors which would have been avoided with better editing or research, but only two, I think, are of interest to the cognoscenti and should be mentioned. Cook's Cairn was not eliminated for lack of dip. It was found that the 774m spot height did not exist! The actual highest point is below 762m. The second error concerns The Fara. There is a very good reference to it in the Journal, duly indexed, which Hamish has missed. It is in Vol. III, 1894, p. 161.

Finally, it was a shock to learn how narrowly Morrone missed the cut-off, having lived for 30 years in its shadow without a doubt about its status! But I do make the margin not quite so close as Hamish does, 8 feet rather than 1 or 2; still near enough.

The book is a very worthwhile one to buy. It will give much pleasure to all who do so.

J. C. Donaldson.

Peruvian Andes – A Climbing and Trekking Guide. – By Phillippe Beaud. (Translated by Anne Dale. Cordee, 288pp., illustrations, £10.95, ISBN 0-904405-74-5).

The Peruvian Andes is undoubtedly an ambitious book. Barely larger than the average British rock guide, with under three hundred pages, it packs one hundred climbs, forty treks, a wealth of illustrations (mostly in colour), a few route topos, much useful general information and maps covering the Cordilleras Blanca and Huayhuash. All this, and in three languages (English, Spanish and French)!

So just how 'user friendly' is this bumper package of Andean goodies? Given that prior to its publication, route information had to be gleaned from a wide variety of sources and was therefore often 'incomplete, totally insufficient and even false,' this compilation can only serve to make life much easier. Having said that, without any prior knowledge of the area and a large scale map to hand, considerable perseverance is required to crack the layout, cross referencing and symbolism – easier if you are multilingual!

Niggles are perhaps relatively minor ones: Why do some routes have first ascent details and others not? Routes that are predominantly rock are given Alpine grades yet ice routes only get an angle of slope assessment (beware of horrendous snow conditions on south faces). Is it really 'better to conquer an easy mountain than to fail on a difficult one?' The 'official' rates quoted for guide, porter, guardian and donkey hire seem a bit over the top but perhaps there's a built in inflation factor!

There is, however, much sound advice in this guide and a few real gems of wisdom. 'Even with a friendly dog, a stick will be your best friend,' will ring true to mountaineers the world over.

All in all a very good package and despite acclimatisation taking a little while, this guide book is a must for the aspiring trekker and climber in this captivating part of Peru.

Graham E. Little.

Scafell Dow and Eskdale. – By A. Phizacklea (Fell and Rock Climbing Club, 1988, 324 pp., £7.95).

I was surprised to see this guide appear in the shops so soon after the publication of the last edition. Only a few major new routes have been added and although there are quite a number of new short minor routes one wonders if a completely new edition was needed. The publishers have taken the opportunity to revise grades and star ratings resulting in many climbs, particularly the harder ones, being bumped up a grade or two and generally more stars added. Metres are now used instead of feet.

The book itself, like all recent Fell and Rock guides, is excellent. The route descriptions are clear and concise. The crag introductions are very informative and

include altitude and aspect, a feature that would be useful in Scottish guide books. The historical section is good but rather disjointed. The photos do justice to the superb climbing available in this area, although the one winter shot taken on Scafell Pinnacle is a bit of an impostor as no winter routes are described, apart from a passing mention of the Great End Gullies. Also I feel that the blank rear cover on Lakes guides is a missed opportunity for one more photo. The last 50 pages no less are taken up by various lists, however I am glad to see that the ludicrous alphabetical graded list is now a thing of the past.

All in all a superb production, but I doubt if I or many like me who have a copy of the previous edition will buy one as there are just not enough new routes and revisions to justify spending another £7.95.

Grahame Nicoll.

Dolomites: Selected Climbs. – By R. James. (Alpine Club Guide Books, 1988, 368 pp., £12.50).

The tutelary spirit of the Dolomites, be he masterful Teuton or wiry Italian, will dip anxiously into this guide, fearful that his secrets are laid bare, then close it with relief. The arcane lore of his limestone realm remains inviolate. Not so much as a paragraph on the story of Dolomite climbing, nor a word about Piaz or Solda. The old incantations return unexplained to haunt the uninitiated: 'One of Solleder's three great classic climbs.' – 'Typical Dolomite climbing of its era.' – 'First climbed in winter with few pegs.' Ever let the fancy roam!

As a practical guide, however, this latest edition merits praise, and maintains the high standard already set by the new A.C. Dauphine guide. Here, in a single volume, are some 426 routes, ranging from polished classics on the Vajolet Towers to recent direttissime at Grades VII and VIII, such as the Modern Zeiten on the South Face of the Marmolada. The greatly condensed text remains well presented and would lend itself to easy reference on the airiest of stances, though the lack of an alphabetical index will annoy many readers. If occasional infelicities have evaded the editorial blue pencil (I too exclaim 'OH' at overhangs, but find its present participle 'OHing' rather Irish), these are few and far between. Although the 84 photographs have been reproduced with very variable quality, no one could find fault with the bronzed girl on the back cover.

Fetching down my old two-volume edition of the guide (much battered from a fall in the Rosengarten some years ago) and comparing the texts, I looked in vain for the slavish copying to which a less assiduous author would give way. On the contrary, Ron James has been checking his facts meticulously. Thus the North-east Face of the Brenta Alta (formerly 3150m, now 2960m) has shrunk from 600m to 500m, and occupies not 10-13 hours but a mere 8, with a corresponding drop in grade, from VI+ (pegs) to V+.

Still, quite an achievement for 1934. The legendary Detassis, of course.

Graeme Morrison.

Scotland's Winter Mountains: The Challenge and the Skills. – By Martin Moran. (David and Charles, 1988, 312 pp., with illustrations, £14.95, ISBN 0-715390-996-1).

My initial reactions on receiving this book were negative. Firstly, here was another hefty volume covering everything you could possibly want to know about the hills in winter. In fact it almost seemed to be a winter only version of the MLTB instructional handbook. One of those books you feel you should read but never get round to – too much nitty gritty about the weather, the ice sheets, the snow pack. All of this wrapped up in terms like 'Equitemperature metamorphism' and 'cumuliform.' Essential reading perhaps but usually boring and heavy going.

My second thought was borne out by the press release blurb that came with the book. 'Following the success of his best selling Munros in Winter.' Yes, Mr Moran was rattling out something pretty sharpish whilst he still carries street cred with the book buying public.

As the book sat around the flat the boys all came in and browsed, said 'What nice pictures' (or words to that effect) then went to voice the same initial responses. And no, none of them wanted to review it instead of me.

So, having happily damned the book at a cursory glance I now find an apology is in order and I must change my tack (difficult as I find this, a personality defect I'm told). It's not a bad book at all, in fact once I started reading it I enjoyed it.

Certainly I still feel that the book came out whilst its author's name would still be remembered. And, surprise, surprise, wasn't the same man in the national press attempting some prodigious winter round of the Steall Munros sometime shortly after the book's publication. Still, if I had to make a living from climbing I would be using similar tactics.

But to the book. Its author describes it as 'essentially a celebration, firstly of the winter mountains and secondly of the remarkable passion with which humans have pursued their secrets during the past century.' This it certainly is and in his writing Mr Moran conveys his own deep love of the winter scene and all its vagaries. His writing is excellent and enlivened by anecdotes and examples. Part I, the technical section on the climate, weather and the many forms of snow and ice shows a wealth of research and detail, but for once it doesn't come over as too dry. The human touch and the experience are there and the diagrams complement the text.

The skills section follows the lead of the first section, there is enough to inform but not so much as to bore, again the examples are there to point out the lessons. (Just the stuff us teachers like). A lot of it we've seen elsewhere and it's on reaching the later chapters on individual aspects of the winter that the real interest arrives. The state of the art is laid out from gullies through icicles and smears to a chapter on mixed buttress and face climbing. The last written by Andrew Nisbet (The Droid) - one of the people whom we can really blame for it. In amongst the above we get a glimpse of one of the great characters of the winter scene, Mick Fowler. How anyone can have quite so much enthusiasm I don't know. The chapters on ski touring again written by people in the know are good even if it doesn't solve the dilemma of Alpine or Nordic. Perhaps a pair of each is the answer, whichever practice the answer is to enjoy it to the full and this is stressed. Once more the chapters are enlivened by tales that make you want to get out there.

The appendices are very worthy, certainly Jim Barton's contribution is worth a read by all those who have wandered past the Cairn Gorm summit weather station and thought about the thing.

The colour photos are great, the black and white less so, but none bad. Plate 61 of Brian Sprunt about to hit the air on Epitome is the business and does say it all.

In conclusion despite my initial reservations an excellent book well researched and more importantly well written. Martin Moran obviously holds Scotland's Winter Mountains as something special and it is reflected in his book.

Neil Morrison.

Scotland: Central and Southern Highlands. 100 Classic Climbs. - By Ken Crocket and Steve Ashton. (The Crowood Press, 1988, 224 pp., £8.95. ISBN 1-85223-025-8).

When the Editor sends you a Guide Book, that he has co-authored, to be reviewed in his Journal it is time, perhaps, to be a little nervous. After all, while reviewing a guide book, particularly of the selected variety, it is all too easy to fall into the trap of excessive criticism. Is this a set up? But, despite the promise that he would print anything that wasn't actually libellous, there was no need to be nervous at all. This is a good book, full of good climbs well described with all sorts of additional information not usually to be found in a guide. Unusually, the routes are presented diagrammatically rather than in conventional pitch by pitch descriptions. This could have some drawbacks for a user unfamiliar with the area, but, being classic climbs, there should be plenty of clues *en route* to reorientate the doubtful leader. The 100 climbs have been selected from Arran, Arrochar, the Southern Highlands, Glencoe, Ardgour, Ben Nevis and Creag Meaghaidh. This is of course a huge area, and to select 100 classic climbs from all those available must have been a huge task, especially since the book

covers the grading range from Moderate to E2. It would not be fair to criticise the selection given this brief – I will just point out two features; Firstly, over 40% of the climbs have already achieved 'classic' status in Cold Climbs, Classic Rock, Hard Rock or Extreme Rock. Secondly, there are no climbs included whose first ascents took place during the last 10 years, and only a handful are between 10 and 20 years old; most are really ancient. Has climbing stagnated so much that nothing from the recent era is worth including? I was under the impression that the last ten years have seen an explosion in high quality climbs, not all of which are outwith the scope of this guide. Given this rather conservative choice of routes (it's really not worth suggesting some of my favourites – others will only disagree) the guide achieves what it sets out to do in an admirably clear and professional fashion and it will certainly help the occasional visitor and lower to middle grade climber select some very worthwhile climbs.

Having said all that, I'm not sure the guide will be a success simply because it is a guide book with the coffee table concept. To illustrate this problem let's imagine you've gone to Arran. You've got a Mod, a Diff, a V.Diff, 2 Severes, a HVS and an E1 to go for. The E1 climber (about average these days) will soon get bored while the Severe climber will certainly be testing his fitness by visiting Cioch na h'Oighe followed by Goat Fell and finishing off with Cir Mhor. In other words, most people will have to fork out the loot for the forthcoming SMC Guide as well (which is probably all the better for us). This problem recurs in all the areas covered by the guide. Still, that is a problem for the publishers rather than the authors, but it does bring me to a wider point that the Club might wish to consider.

Why is it that the Crowood Press, Cicero Publications, Constable and other small or private publishers feel it worthwhile to publish climbing guides to our mountains? Why do I have to carry half a library with me every time I go to climb in Glencoe, Glen Nevis or the Northern Highlands? Why is it that superbly professional productions of guides to the Munros and even the Corbetts can be rapidly brought out by our members and published by the SMT while the most recent guidebook to our highest mountain is so out of date that you again need an armoury of booklets, supplements and inside information to find the classics that avoid the crowds? Are we serious in our intentions to be the authoritative source of information for climbing in this country? If the Club is to retain its rightful place at the centre of Scottish mountaineering we must consider these questions very seriously. The answers may well involve such innovations as comprehensive computerisation of the text of existing guides, and all new routes, and the attraction of new members who, in addition to our current members, are at the cutting edge of modern standards. This may require radical changes to the Club rules. Unless we act soon, it may well happen that we lose our influence on modern climbing in Scotland.

I hear murmurs that all this is against the traditions of a Club now 100 years old. I ask you to think very carefully about those traditions. As the excellent recent publication '*A Century of Scottish Mountaineering*' so graphically describes, our founding fathers were no mere traditionalists happily following the routines of half a century before them; they were innovators at the highest standards of their day, never afraid to challenge accepted practice or thought. Let's be true to their legacy.

Good book, Ken, and thanks for the opportunity.

Roger Everett.

Wild Walks. – By Ken Wilson and Richard Gilbert. (Diadem; London, 1988, 244 pp., many illus. colour, £19.95, ISBN 0-906371-42-2).

First it was 'Classic Walks,' then 'The Big Walks,' now we have been offered 'Wild Walks.'

There are 61 walks described, 25 in Scotland, 17 in England, 11 in Wales and 6 in Ireland.

Richard Gilbert in his preface says the walks attempt to satisfy three conditions – remoteness, untamed landscape, and impressive natural features.

I suppose in the interests of viability a good percentage of the articles has to cover England, and there inconsistency creeps in because, although some of the walks south of the Border look attractive they are certainly not 'wild' – not in a Scottish sense.

The Manifold Valley ramble and the traverse of Blaven and Clach Glas seem curious bedfellows.

Richard Gilbert has contributed 40 articles. It's a pity it was not seen fit to invite more guest authors, just for the sake of variety. One wonders why the few were used at all. Again it may be a question of viability. How many people would buy a book entitled 'Richard Gilbert's Walks?' Recalling 'Memorable Munros' still induces an involuntary shudder.

The thing that bothers me about this book is, how much will it precipitate the taming of the wild places?

Each article is accompanied by a small sketch map and summary of accommodation, maps, distance, difficulty and escape routes. No need now for those pleasurable hours of a winter's evening poring over maps and planning future trips to the hills. All the information required to walk on the wild side is here — on a plate!

Derek G. Pyper.

Photographic Review: The photographic reproduction in the book is of the highest quality with many stunning views of the mountains from the ground and panoramic views from the peaks. The rich colour photographs portray the seasonal changes, beautiful snow covered landscapes as captured by Tom Rix at the Meallach Coire range Ross-shire and Stephen Greenwood at the High Street Range, Lake District, through the lush greens of summer with clear blue skies to the delicate browns of autumn by Mike Williams at Millers Dale, Derbyshire.

The beauty of the landscapes is enhanced by the effect of light upon the mountain scenery — the clear blue skies of summer, sunlight breaking through the cloud layer illuminating the mountain peaks. The photograph by John Beatty captures the hills of Dovedale rising above the cloud layer beautifully while Paul Harksworth and Jim Teesdale have photographed the dark brooding thunderstorms engulfing the mountains. The magic effect of light and seasonal weather conditions on the landscape have been captured by all the photographers showing the bleakness and the breathtaking beauty of the mountains in Britain.

Andrew Hart.

Mountainmaster of Ben Nevis: The Grey Corries & The Mamores. (Ordnance Survey, Outdoor Leisure Map 32, 1:25,000, £5.25, ISBN 0-319-26041-0).

This new map has been designed for the mountain user, which comes as a surprise. It must mean the beginning of the end for climbing, if commercial interests have noticed our peculiar pursuits. As the blurb accompanying the map itself admits, Ben Nevis is placed on two panels, and not across folds. Of even greater interest is the enlarged inset of Uncle Ben, at a scale of 1:10,000. This is intelligently positioned at the top left, so that we can partially open the map in bad conditions and see the true horror of our position before it blows away. For bad conditions, incidentally, the map is apparently printed with water-resistant paper, which apparently becomes stronger when wet. I hope so, for the paper feels to be thinner than older maps. Looking closely at the inset, prominent cliff features are named, such as The Comb, The Garadh etc. Usefully, the descent bearings from the summit to reach the Red Burn are given. Marked as a path is the dreaded abseil post approach from the summit, something about which the Lochaber Rescue boys complained of and which the O.S. promise to remove on the next print. This is a finely detailed map which deserves to sell well, though I can't like the title. No one *masters* a mountain; we can only hope to understand it.

Finally, (pedalling off furiously on a hobby-horse) large areas of green remind us of the spread of the bloody trees, though with increasing Carbon Dioxide and shrinking forests elsewhere it may be time to rationalise this problem. Rumour has it that the Forestry Commission is now aware of its poor image. They could boost it very cheaply and easily by talking to climbers before slashing their drainage ditches across access slopes. Beinn Udlaidh in Glen Orchy and Beinn an Lochain on the Rest and be Thankful are two immediate examples, while probings are obviously beginning on the approaches to Beinn an Dothaidh. A task for MC of S perhaps?

Ken Crocket.

Skye: Walking, Scrambling and Exploring. – By Ralph Storer. (David & Charles, 223 pp., £12.95, illustrations, ISBN 0 7153 9223 9).

This book is basically a walkers' guide to the Isle of Skye. The author describes numerous walks and scrambles on the Cuillin and other hills, but what distinguishes this guidebook from previous ones to the island is the remarkably comprehensive coverage of the coastal walks.

The walks are graded for difficulty on a five-point scale. Climbers need not be put off by such fine divisions of difficulty because the grades are used unobtrusively, being given in parentheses either before or after the route descriptions. A selection of scrambles are also described, mainly in the Cuillin, and these are categorised as simple, moderate or hard.

Ralph Storer has a fairly lively style and his enthusiasm for the island is manifest. Many interesting snippets of historical and archaeological information are woven into the text. Details of various legends are also included, although you either like or loathe such fanciful nonsense. The word 'awesome' is used rather too frequently for my liking, but otherwise this is a very readable book.

The organisation of the book is slightly unusual. The Cuillin chapter precedes those for Sleat and Strath and only then are the coastal walks of Minginish described. The hills within the Strath chapter are described from west to east (i.e. from Bla Bheinn via the Red Hills to Kylerhea), and only then are Strath Mor and Strath Beag described. Coruisk is covered towards the end of the Cuillin chapter, but curiously Sgurr na Stri is described before the approach routes to Coruisk itself.

The Cuillin chapter constitutes about a quarter of the book and is competently tackled on the whole. The peaks are described from north to south and those that can be ascended with no more than simple scramblings are indicated by an asterisk. Some mistakes have crept in, but these are of minor importance. *Rotten Gully* lies on the Coruisk side of the lowest point on the Coire Lagan skyline rather than below Bealach Coire Lagan proper, but walkers are warned away from it in any case. *Gars-bheinn* is 895m and not 875m.

The author correctly translates the name of the large stack in Talisker Bay as the *Fuller's Stack*. Our own professor gives this as *The Fiddler* in the club's district guide, and the name stuck in Mackenzie's guide.

The book is well illustrated with numerous sketch maps and both black and white and colour photographs. Some of the colour photographs are a touch on the dark side, but generally they are of a high standard. There is a good mix of mountain and coastal views. Many of the latter are described in the Strath district, but these will probably only appeal to the keenest of speleologists.

Skye's coastline is very extensive and Ralph Storer must be congratulated on the thorough manner in which he has researched the island's shoreline and clifftop walks. Many of the longer walks along the remoter sections of coastline are fairly serious undertakings. Climbers will also find plenty to interest them in this book. It contains a wealth of information on sections of coast which are rarely visited. With the new routes boom on Skye's sea cliffs now well under way, it gives away too many secrets for my liking.

Noel Williams.

A Climbers' Guide to Arran, Arrochar & the Southern Highlands. – By K. V. Crocket and A. Walker (Scottish Mountaineering Trust, £9.95, ISBN 0-907521-22-3).

Reviewing an SMT Guide for the SMC Journal is always going to look like favouritism but in this case when the Editor is one of the authors and the reviewer is a long time climbing partner of the other, the reviewer has a real credibility problem. However an attempt will be made within the limits of my honesty, knowledge of the area, climbing history and available time.

Anyone writing a climbing guide casts themselves as Nicholas in the Miller's Tale, but to take on such a widespread and diverse area as covered in this Guide – which has crags and outcrops like a teenager has pooks – is exfenestration in earnest. The area

covered, from Kintyre to the Black Mount, has few big mountain faces and contains rock of all types and quality. Few other comprehensive guides are going to contain such a spread of route quality from repulsive to sublime. The authors have had a considerable task.

There are also two distinct audiences for this Guide. Those outsiders (Sassenach or East Coast) who are strangers to the area, and the Glasgow and West Coast Irregulars whose vast and diverse back yard it is. One audience requires guidance and advice, the other will use it to reinforce old prejudices and pick over old bones and maybe (just maybe) find something new for themselves in an area they think they know like — well, their own backyard.

Have the authors succeeded in satisfying both audiences? As a long term wanderer in this jungle of frequently scrofulous granite and lichenous mica schist, my test is — does it make you want to go and explore crags you haven't been to before or go back to old haunts to try fresh lines? On these grounds I think it succeeds. I have noted at least two crags to be explored before decrepitude finally wins. More able rock climbers are also firmly pointed at some items of unfinished business on older routes. I have also noted that a few locations of potential interest do not figure at all (locations available for adequate bribes).

As in the consequence of new guides, it will be harder for the initiates to enjoy the delectable Creag Tharsuinn cliffs in solitude or to be able to pick off new winter lines at leisure. On the other hand, I am glad that I won't have to fight my way through the jungle at Dùn Leacainn and can remember the delights of *Pluvial* from the days when the access was a pleasant stroll.

A climbing Guide has to contain accurate information but it should also stimulate activity and convey the essential flavour of the climbing and (just as important) the environments of the climbs in their historical context and to give good advice about access and amenities.

The introductory section on Arran is a model of its kind. The writing contains flashes of humour, very necessary when dealing with some routes, and the occasional warning to modern presumptions about past climbing standards.

The diagrams are a mixture of updated old and new with the old suffering by comparison. It would be nice to have the older diagrams replaced in future editions.

Checking the route descriptions of the few climbs I know gave me no shocks. In general they are accurate if a bit terse (the terseness is to be expected as there are 630 named routes). In one or two cases the authors have left future ascenders to experience just a soupcon of the delights of the unexpected. The only serious grading disagreement I have is that the *A'Chir Ridge* is definitely not Moderate when traversed from north to south.

Any good climbing guide can be seen as a sub-plot of social history and nowhere in Scotland is this more true than at Arrochar and Arran. Some fascinating history is buried in the records of first ascenders. One of the side-effects of the research necessary for this guide, covering an area not completely recorded before, is the ego adjustments required as antique and not so antique ascents emerge from the archives. Arran routes have had a particularly tortuous history and the whole truth has probably not yet emerged.

The policy of including all recorded routes is laudable (indeed necessary) even if it means the petit-point embroidery of hard routes on Drumadoon Point is given in its entirety (surfboard or golf clubs are preferred alternatives to rock boots here). And does a 9 metre 2a on a Glen Croe outcrop need naming, never mind recording?

Even adjusting for personal friendships, I can give the authors high marks over this Guide. Where the blame lies for the actual physical object, i.e. the book I don't know. If the copy I have been given to review is what is going to the paying punter it will do the SMT's reputation no good at all. Although the flexible covers are welcome, the spine is very stiff and unlikely to withstand the ten falls test. More seriously, there are a number of typos which I do not believe escaped KVC's eagle eye, at least one diagram still containing a correction and mismatching type densities

on pages containing both text and diagrams. Nothing major, but at the prices that are having to charged these days the customer should get as good an article as possible.

R. T. Richardson.

Journals of Kindred Clubs

The Himalayan Journal, Vol 44, 1986-1987; The Himalayan Club, published by the Oxford University Press, 1988; The Himalayan Club Newsletter, No. 41, 1988; The Himalayan Club, PO Box 1905, Bombay 400 001, India.

The Himalayan Club celebrates its 60th anniversary this year, and both the Journal and the Newsletter have a number of articles that chart the progress of the Club from its earliest days. Founded in the days of the Empire, the earliest members were largely drawn from the European members of the Alpine Club involved in Himalayan exploration, and British mountaineers posted in India. Although the close association between the Alpine and Himalayan Clubs continues, the Himalayan Club, like British India, has achieved Independence and is now administered with truly admirable enthusiasm by committees based in India with local secretaries throughout Asia, North America and Europe. Put simply, the Himalayan Journal is an indispensable reference source for all parts of the Himalayan chain. Anyone planning an expedition or researching for other purposes simply must search through the HJ to find notes on previous expeditions, attempts, ascents, maps and perhaps one of the excellent panoramic pull-out photographs that are a special feature of the Journal. But the HJ is much more than just a thorough reference list. Amongst the offerings in this issue are articles of early escapades by, for example, Lord Hunt, accounts of recent major climbs by Chris Bonington and Victor Saunders and a host of well-written articles on a great variety of smaller and less well known Himalayan ranges. If you're looking for an objective, then this is the place to look first. There is also an excellent article on the difficult question of conservation in the mountains, a topic taken up in more detail in the Newsletter. All the articles are annotated by the very industrious and knowledgeable editors who point the reader to earlier relevant articles; they even dispute with the authors on questions of history and interpretation. The Himalayan Club deserves our support, and its Journal and Newsletter are well worth reading.

Roger Everett.

Polar Record, Vol. 24

When Tyndall resigned from the Alpine Club, mountaineering became a simpler game: henceforth one could dispense with barometer and theodolite, and give oneself over to simple enjoyment unjustified by scientific motive. Polar exploration, however, has experienced no such liberation. In this latest volume of the *Polar Record*, high adventure is invariably dressed in a white coat and dignified by a scholarly title, which seldom quite conceal the essential magic of these high latitudes.

Few publications can encompass quite such diverse material, ranging from 'Variation and Wear in Inuit Teeth' to 'Non Soviet Shipping in the Northeast Passage, and the Legal Status of Proliv Vil'Kiiskogo.' On page 193 one finds a particularly lucid dissertation by W. G. Rees of the Scott Polar Institute on the subject of polar mirages, which include the bizarre *Fata Morgana*, whereby distant objects are magnified and distorted, and several remarkable instances of over-the-horizon visibility—in some cases, up to 230 miles. Little wonder that fairy lands abound in the Norse Sagas.

Another contributor speculates eruditely on a possible explanation for the astonishing hardness of H. G. 'Birdie' Bowers, one of Captain Scott's companions. Perhaps, suggests the author, Bowers's body may have been injured to cold by his habitual ablutions:

'Every morning before breakfast the spartan Bowers would...cast a bucket over astern, and hauling it aboard full of icy water and slush, would upset it, or persuade a comrade to upset it, over his nude anatomy, and then repeat the process.'

In a subsequent issue of the Record another scholarly correspondent comments:

'The cold bath is, of course, part of the mythology of the English public school, and it would be interesting for a survey to be made relating cold resistance in explorers to whether or not they were so educated.'

The Polar Record is the very medium to publish such a survey. Seldom will you open a learned journal and find it so readable.

Graeme Morrison.

Rucksack Journal 1984/85

A well presented journal with a wide variety of interest, the photographs are plentiful with the front cover luring you into some delightful anecdotes and general information.

The Rucksack Club seem to be aficionados of the rounds syndrome with the Welsh threes, the Haute route, and the Glen Nevis round being strongly tackled. (How did Graham Little manage to get in on this one?).

There is an interesting article on The Lotus Flower Tower Climb (try saying that with a drink in you), it certainly whets your appetite to visit this area in the Canadian Yukon.

'*Beware of the Dog*' deals with an expedition to the Karakorum and not The Hound of the Baskervilles as I first anticipated. However if you fancy trekking around Skardu and the Baltoro area you can get some information here.

The rest of the journal is for the local members which I suppose is fair enough.

Rucksack Journal 1986/87.

A most enjoyable read, with a wide variety of areas covered, from the Welsh mountains to the Himalaya. This particular journal is most informative and is professionally presented, with good photographs and good descriptions of the routes and expeditions.

The 1986/87 edition comprises a successful attempt on the classical Welsh round in 23 hours 16 minutes. (Similar to Andy Nisbet and Charlie MacLeod's round of the Cairngorm five ridges). Interesting expeditions to Norway (Jotunheim), the nose route, El Capitan Yosemite, cycling the three peaks, the Karrimor mountain marathon, the Cassin route on Badile for those budding rock climbers (but remember Herman Buhl soloed it in one day and cycled back to Innsbruck).

For the Himalayan climber, there is an account of the South Face of Mera (beware Les Kaczynski) and finally an excellent account of the Three Peaks Yacht Race. Here is a race for the true outdoor enthusiast. Sail from Barmouth in Wales to Ravenglass in Cumbria and then on to Fort William; as a small diversion you have to nip up Snowdon, Scafell Pike and Ben Nevis. Just a mere 5 days, 2 hours and 30 minutes, with 400 nautical miles and 73 land miles.

As I say an excellent journal, perhaps after 100 years we should be looking to this attractive format for our own publication.

Curly Ross

Braes of Fife Mountaineering Club Journal.

A home produced journal, obviously intended for internal consumption. Most of the articles have 'in' comments which will mean little to an outsider, and the journal as a whole tends to reinforce my image of the club as rather twee. Perhaps the editor ought to wield a bigger stick, much as our own.

The poor photocopying does not do John Mitchell's line drawings justice, and as for the attempt to photocopy photographs!

The BFMC must be keen to produce a journal, but if you are going to do so, it must be done properly. A decent cover, better quality reproduction, and who knows. Even I might not have been so prejudiced. I await the next issue with interest.

Alastair Walker.

The Canadian Alpine Journal, 1988, Vol. 71.

When this Journal, edited by David Harris, was rolled through the letter box, your Editor decided to claim it for himself. The impact of the snowy photographs was immediate, no surprise given the subject matter and the fact that they were all laser-scanned halftones. The Club was given a substantial discount for this apparently, so who do we know in this field who could gain cheap advertising and provide us with superb reproductions? The format is about US Letter size, a few lines less than A4 size, as anyone who uses American-written computer documentation knows only too well. This size allows them to split the pages into two columns. Since I reviewed their 1979 Journal things have improved, moving on from the then Victorian image on page to this much better production.

The writing seems better too, though it may be that the changes are in myself. Long, alpine first ascents in winter. You want to know what this involves, Canadian style? Here's the introduction from the account of a first ascent on the East Face of Mt. Fay by Barry Blanchard.

'Karl and Dave drive from Calgary after work on Friday. Pick me up in Canmore and arrive at the roadhead at midnight. Ski four hours through the dark to reach the Moraine Lake cook shelter. Sleep 'til 8 a.m., then ski up to the East Face of Mt. Fay. Climb the face in two days and ski out on the third day. Should all fit into a long weekend.'

The mountain, naturally, has other plans, and hard ice climbing on day one slows the team down. The first night sees the author's sleeping bag becoming damp, the next day a cornice decides to cut loose, hammering the team of three. Thirty hours of snowstorm, three cold bivvies, last dinner a box of Smarties split three ways (17 each, he counted them), and late for work again. Another weekend climb in the Rockies. Do I want to follow them? One look at the photograph of the Silver Stream, the icy gully followed by the route, and you would have to be dead wood inside not to.

Other worthy entries must include John Clarke's excellent photographs of the Coast Mountains, *'20,000 square miles of prime wolverine habitat where your passing will make no difference.'* An article on Wilderness Management by Alison Dinwoodie (do we have no female writers?) reminds us of the bottom line, that *'...while the developer can always re-apply next year, the conservationist doesn't get a second chance...'*

David Dornan's piece on the *Metiulus Simulator* is amusing (you don't know what a *Metiulus Simulator* is? To the back of the queue for your climbing permit), while T. Knight's cartoon spread on *'How to Deal With Growing Up'* had me stuffing tufts of carpet down my mouth to stop laughing (cartoonists apply now). And finally, while we are on the theme of humour, the serious block of text is the essay by Bruce Fairley, entitled *'Peter Croft And The Mountaineering Traditions of Manners.'* Required reading, though sadly those who would benefit the most would never be able to move their lips fast enough to take in his arguments.

'Allied to the need of top climbers to remain in the limelight is a new idea that climbing is to be taken seriously. The overwhelming impression one receives from the modern climbing press is the absence of humour which one associates with the older conquistadors like Harding, Chouinard, Tilman, Tom Patey or Hamish McInnes (sic), to name but a few...Significantly, the absence of respect, or even knowledge, of historical figures goes hand in hand.'

How true, how sadly true.

Ken Crocket.

The American Alpine Journal, 1988.

Always eagerly awaited, this must rank as the world's expeditions chronicle with nearly two-thirds of the text devoted to this section; the articles are necessarily short.

Prominence must be given to Rick Sylvester's *Climb of The Century*. A six-day aided ascent of Upper Yosemite Falls Wall when the cascade had dried up.

Also featured is the Fowler/Saunders ascent of the *Golden Pillar of Spantik*, and technical rock ascents in the Biafo Glacier region of the Karakoram. *Gumbies on Gurney* gives an insight into wall climbing in Alaska - magic (I will need to invest in a Number one TCU Wonderpuppy!), while Greenland devotees are served a review covering 1977-86. Carlos Buhler features again, this time in the Cordillera Vilcabamba Peru. Expeditions to South America appear to be the domain of the Poles, Yugoslavs and Italians.

Himalayan expeditions are known to be extremely problematical. This is borne out by the fact that few ascents were successful in the 1987 season, with ninety-seven accounts listed as *Attempts* or *Attempts and Tragedy*. I counted twenty-four deaths for 1987 compared to forty-four for 1986. One such blighted expedition was the 62-member team on Kangchenjunga, from the Indian Army Assam Rifles, on which four died following successful ascents.

Doug Lang.

Also received: *Die Joernaal Van Die Bergklub Van Suid-Afrika, 1987*; *Appalachia Bulletins, 1988*; *Tararua Trumper, the magazine of the Tararua Tramping Club (Inc), New Zealand; Tararua, 1987*; *Appalachia, 1987, 1988 (with a beautiful cover)*; *Deutscher Alpenverein, 1987, 1988*; *Berg '88*; *Cairngorm Club Journal, 1988*; *La Montagne, 1988*; *Sierra, Nov/Dec, 1988*.

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New Routes Editor:	A. Walker, 588 Clarkston Road, Netherlee, Glasgow G44 3SQ.
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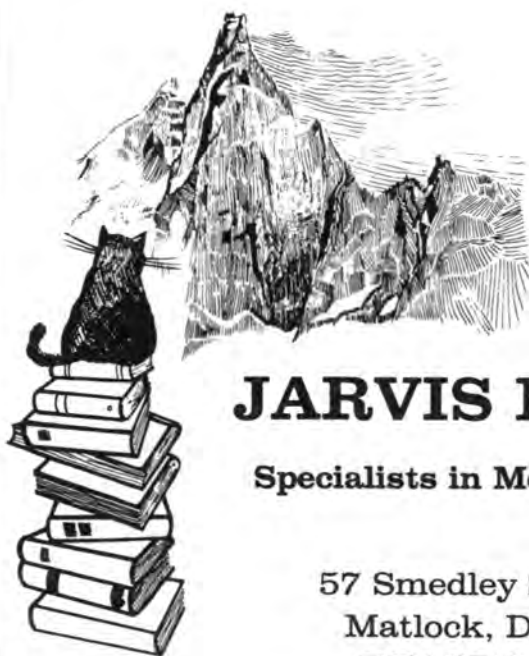
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