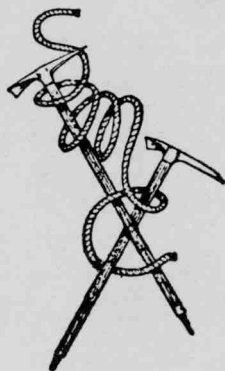


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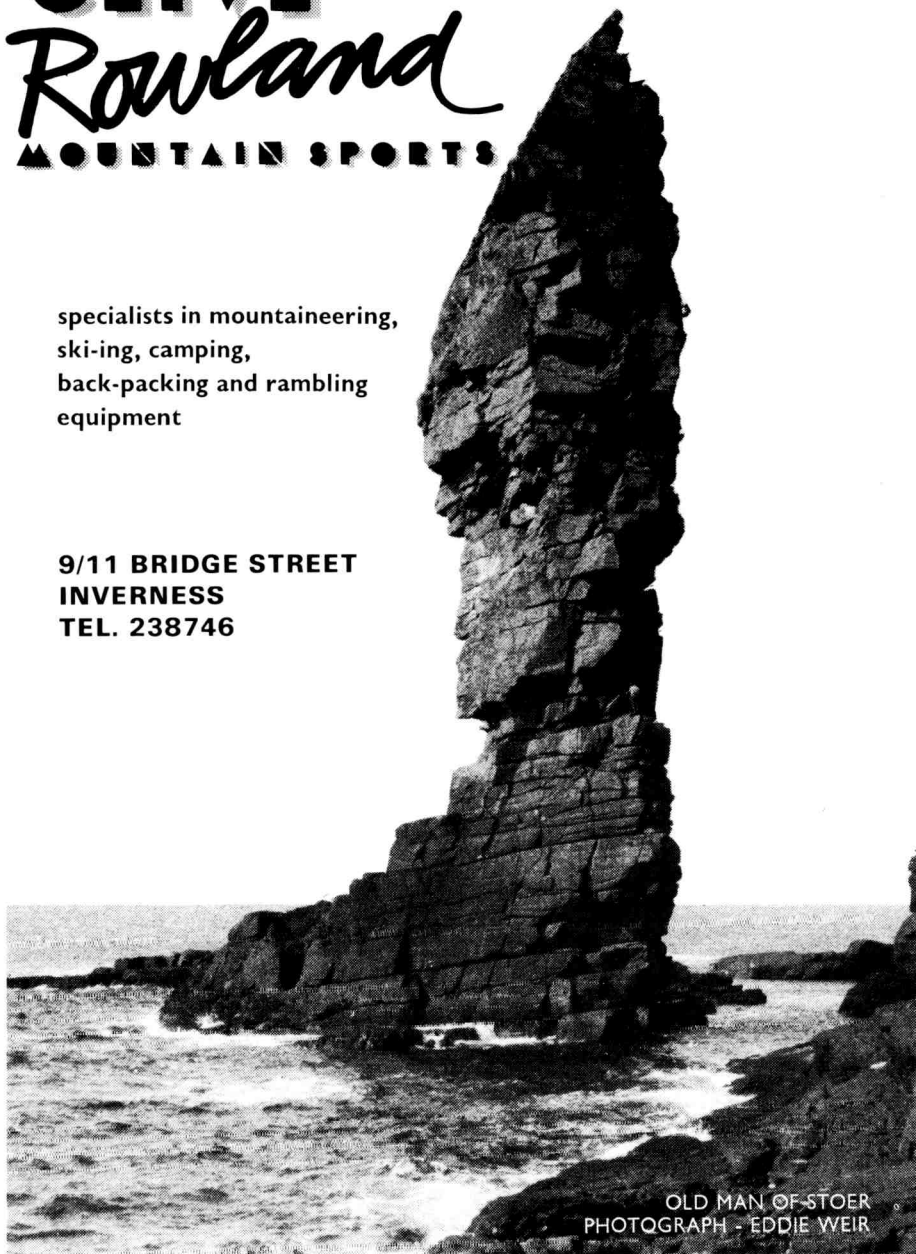
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**OLD MAN OF-STOER
PHOTOGRAPH - EDDIE WEIR**



Main pitch Eas Anie

Photo: Des Rubens

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EARLY DAYS ON CRAIG-Y-BARNS

By Robin Campbell

SOMEWHERE in James Joyce's works it is proposed that first love is different in its effects from later love. Perhaps it is stronger, and perhaps the characteristics of the first lover, though more or less arbitrary in the beginning, become mandatory aesthetic requirements in the future. Whether this theory applies to men and women I do not know, but it may well apply to men and mountains. My first mountain love was Craig-y-Barns, that modest wooded eminence above Dunkeld, and its attraction for me is as strong now as it was in 1957 when I began to climb there at the age of 14. Moreover, when I climb there now I feel at home, as I do on no other mountain or crag, and at any time I can shut the world off and imagine myself walking in its galleries of tall larch, or perched on one of its comfortable ledges, looking over sleepy Dunkeld and the Tay to Birnam Hill and beyond.

When I first made the acquaintance of Craig-y-Barns in 1957, climbing there seemed to me only a stage in a progress towards greater things. My reading of Jim Bell's *Progress* and other autobiographies had convinced me that mountaineering was a kind of career, but I now know that it is not, and that those distant days were the best time in my life. I climbed mostly with Paul Brian, who shared the joys and miseries of school in Perth along with me. Paul lived in Birnam, a mile from the crags, and so we spent the weekends at his home. We knew little about rock-climbing at the time but climbed safely enough, guided by conservative-minded books, such as those of J.E.B. Wright, and eventually by John Proom - a Perth SMC member who, courageously and selflessly, introduced us to the Glencoe crags.

Craig-y-Barns was more or less unvisited at the time, thickly cloaked in woods and with wildlife in every pocket. The three crags were scattered about the hillside, partly hidden by screens of larch and spruce, and linked by well-made needled paths which snaked like copper ribbons through the forest. Follies in the form of caves had been constructed around every suitable boulder by a former Duke of Athole. We disturbed birds of all sorts

- a kestrel from Kestrel Crack, numerous corvids and amazing capercailzie cocks which shot out from their bracken bolt-holes with heart-stopping explosions of noise and motion. Fallow deer were sometimes encountered drifting through the larches and the bucks could be heard croaking hoarsely at each other in the autumn. The whole hillside overlooked the Tay and had once formed a forest park for Dunkeld House below, now a Hotel. The small stank below Polney Crag had served as a curling station.

Local lore acknowledged some earlier climbs by Alistair Cram and Jim Bell but no details had been preserved. To begin with we could make little of the crags; *Cherrytree Ridge* and *Noddy* on the Cave Crags, *Twisted Rib* and *Consolation Corner* on Polney Crag were all we could manage. But as we acquired some muscle and our campaign became more intensive we achieved better results. The schist provided natural lines and set us problems which were almost always soluble, given patience and persistence. The crux of *Terminal Buttress* is a typical example; once the right combination of holds was found, it succumbed readily, at Severe. But even nowadays one can see able leaders stuck there for a half-hour, seeking that subtle combination. A key moment for us occurred when Paul got up *Ivy Crack* just as night fell, our first VS! I can still recall the thrill as I watched him jam his soft 'gym shoes' - canvas shoes from Woolworths with a thin sole of black rubber - into the central steep section of the crack and, incredibly, move surely upwards into the murk. We had tried this often, but only darkness could do the trick!

By now I was caught up in an idyll. I cycled on bright Saturday mornings to Birnam, then off to the crags with Paul. His mother, Iris, supplied magnificent packed lunches. We climbed, loafed in the sun and heather, ate, climbed again, invariably on new rock. Free-wheeling back to Birnam in time for tea, we read in Iris Brian's library, sunk in flowery armchairs, before eating enormous mixed grills and departing for the double Western at the Dunkeld cinema. We were characters in an Enid Blyton rock-climbing adventure story!

While Paul and I worked our way round Polney Crag, we began to climb on Day Meets with Perth JMCS: John Proom and Ron Hockey were two members who took an interest in 'our' crags. John was a middle-aged Yorkshireman, an exciseman in the Perth whisky trade, who lived in Balhousie Street; he was a safe and steady climber and he treated us with great kindness and generosity. Ron was a freshly-graduated teacher working at Strathallan School who possessed a motorcycle, and who climbed with boldness and skill. They climbed some of our routes and then branched out on their own, to great effect, accompanied by Quintin Crichton - a young Dundee climber of great ability and considerable style; I recall being particularly impressed by his practice of climbing in a ten-gallon cowboy hat! We were stunned and mortified to hear of their doings. Hockey straightened out *Cherrytree Ridge* with a fine crack pitch and found a way (now known as *Direct Route*) up the mysterious and elusive Lovers' Leap Crag. This crag was so hard to find, being plunged in thick

trackless forest, that Paul and I had only succeeded in reaching it from above. Proom and Hockey enjoyed an exciting ascent. Hockey found himself on a vibrating flake on the second pitch and vacated it just in time to see it - several hundredweights of it - slice down through the trees around the belay, narrowly missing Proom, before thundering down through the forest below. Believing that retreat was now impossible he pressed on and got up. This is a long pitch, poorly protected and still a committing lead. Later, Hockey and Crichton explored the Lower Cave Crag and climbed a gripping hand-traverse to nowhere, having to abseil off in the dark into free space and rhododendrons!

We went looking for this line some weeks later and, after many visits ending in failure, I managed to force a way through the top overhangs by an exposed traverse of a steep slab. This route, *The Hood*, remains one of the finest on the crags, involving a rich variety of moves and severe exposure on a splendid natural line. It has a pleasing and unusual symmetry too: the lower crux is a hand-traverse going right; the upper crux is a foot-traverse going left! I count it as a rare privilege to have been the first to test the uncertainties of that final slab. Possibly the technical feat of this early period of exploration was *The Wriggle* on Polney Crag - a beautiful double crack line. Both cracks have been climbed now, but at that time we were intimidated by a holly tree which blocked the bottom of the right-hand crack and by an overhung sentry-box blocking the top of the left-hand crack. So we found a devious but satisfying line, wriggling through the bottom overhangs into the left-hand crack and crossing to finish by the right-hand. I'm sure it was years before I climbed anything on a proper crag as hard as that awkward wriggling crux.

About this time Paul found that girls were more interesting than rocks (in those days it was impossible to combine these two pleasures) and so lost the opportunity to participate in the spate of adventurous climbing which began to course through Scotland from 1956 onwards. A pity - although he eventually returned to the fray - since he had more natural ability than any of us. I also came to realise that our standard had advanced considerably. I had an evening on the crags with Proom when he tested the condition of the rope at several moves of our *Wriggle*. Later, I added a direct layback crack start to the Lovers' Leap Route and John failed to follow.

When I went to Edinburgh University in 1960 I knew a lot about Craig-y-Barns, but little enough about any other sort of climbing. I naturally wished to lure other climbers onto familiar ground. I climbed then mainly with Neil Macniven, a strong climber from Dysart who later died following an accident on the West Face of the Blaitiere. Macniven had developed an impressive repertoire of pegging skills on his local crag Dumbarton Rock (his family had just moved to Helensburgh) and so he naturally wanted to tackle the ferocious overhangs of the Upper Cave Crag. We wasted a lot of time on the line of *Rat Race*, getting almost but not quite up. Then we saw sense and worked out a number of exciting free lines further right; *Squirm*, *Coffin Corner* (although a wedged tent-peg bore witness here to an earlier

ascent, apparently by a Ferranti M.C. party), *The Crutch* (the latter route by Andy Wightman from Edinburgh), *The Cludge* on the Lower Crag and various eliminates on Polney Crag. A bitter pill was *Corpse*, sister route to *Squirm* and *Coffin Corner*. I had reached the ledge below the final move - a very sweaty lead - but had to be helped off with a top rope. I foolishly told Macniven about this and he sneaked up with Wightman and pegged the top move!

What sticks in my mind, however, from these early visits was a day spent climbing solo on Polney Crag in Macniven's company. I started off along the Girdle Traverse and then, recognising that I was in unusually good form - the effect of regular training on Salisbury Crags - I applied myself to the few remaining problems, achieving *The End*, *The Chute*, *Poison Ivy* and *The Groove* - a route first climbed (solo) by Robin Smith on a passing, cursory visit which I hadn't yet done. I can't recall a day when I have felt more confident on rock: it just seemed that I could climb anything I wanted to. All it took was time and application. Boldness hardly seemed to come into it, which those who know me will confirm was just as well! Of course, I should have rushed immediately to Ben Nevis or some other proper crag but I didn't and, sad to say, I've never again achieved such a powerful state. When young, you don't see these things as transient. 'This can't be my peak!', I thought. But it was.

Just as I will never be as I was on that day in 1961, neither will Craig-y-Barns. Technical advances have reduced the climbs described here to mere guidebook footnotes. The deer and other game have gone, dispersed by the press of climbers and the felling of much of the forest, now mature. The once-pleasant paths are beaten trails soiled by litter. Only crows remain uneasily beside the climbers and, of course, Dunkeld's cinema is closed. Worse still, had it survived, it would not be showing a double Western on Saturday evenings! So it goes.

Among the heroic pioneers of Scottish mountaineering it is surely Norman Collie who best confirms the thesis of my opening paragraph. He began climbing on Sgurr nan Gilleann, inspired by the sight of Stocker and Parker tackling one of its Pinnacles. Some forty years later, after a life of exploration in the Alps, Himalayas and Rockies, he retired from his University post in London and moved to Sligachan, remaining there in the shadow of Sgurr nan Gilleann until he died in 1942. Although I cannot hope to emulate Collie's deeds in the mountains, I will count it ill if I cannot begin my last days pulling aside the bedroom curtains to reveal the pale and slender buttresses of Craig-y-Barns.

Note: This piece won second prize in the M.C.S. Mountain Essay Competition in 1990. The author, due to an attack of hubris, donated the prize-money straight back. Accordingly, M.C.S. agreed that it might be published where the author wished, that is here, rather than elsewhere (or words to this effect).

AN EDUCATIONAL EXPERIENCE

By Charlie Gorrie

AROUND late February 1959, I stood at 2000ft on the north side of Stob Coire Easain near Loch Treig in Lochaber, looking up at the prominent, north-facing gully which holds snow until very late in the year, and runs to the precise top of this 3658ft mountain. I had had my eye on it for quite some time realising that, given the right conditions, and with the techniques available to me, at that time, it would provide an interesting and rewarding climb. The conditions were now ideal.

I had just moved back to Scotland after a twelve year exile. During this period my climbing had been limited to endless visits, during weekends and evenings, to Harrison's Rocks, with the occasional trip to North Wales, with Ian Ogilvie and sundry other expatriates. I had also made the odd trip to Beachy Head to climb on the somewhat fragile chalk cliffs.

My techniques at that time accorded with the latest thinking in rock climbing. When I had been demobbed I had been climbing with nailed boots, Manilla hemp rope, tied round the waist with a bowline and, at the most, two slings. During my various climbing expeditions since the war, I had acquired the habit of winding a 20ft length of Italian hemp round and round my waist and tying the two ends together with a reef knot. On this waist band I would clip a war surplus carabiner. Finally I attached the climbing rope to this carabiner using a Tarbuck knot. The safety implications of this set-up were that a 20ft length of waist band would provide some sort of chance of protection because of a sudden load coming on the rope, such as would be the case if the leader were to be so inconsiderate as to fall off, the various loops whilst adjusting the tension would provide a cushioning effect. Added to this, the Tarbuck knot, being a limited slip knot, would ensure that the effect of any sudden load would be further reduced. So confident was Tarbuck in the effectiveness of this system, that he was reputed to have tested it by tying the loose end of a 40ft length of rope to a fixed point and jumping off into space... he survived!

During this period I had explored the possibilities of Beachy Head with its chalk cliffs. I used 3ft angle-iron pitons with one end sharpened to a point, the other end having a hole drilled in it to take a carabiner, the whole being driven into the face by means of a geology hammer, which I had acquired whilst at University. Another refinement added was the use of a loop of hemp rope or line twisted into a figure of eight, one leg being thrust through each loop, the crossed ropes being collected into the carabiner on my waist band, thus providing a 'sit harness' of sorts. I introduced Jimmy Bell to this type of climbing on Beachy Head, in which, the rock being somewhat insecure, he revelled.

One more item will set the scene for the climb I was now contemplating. Until the start of the war, the use of nailed boots had led me to believe that, in Scotland at least, the use of crampons was largely an unnecessary addition to the weight one had to carry in ones pack; therefore we were not carrying any. We were both wearing army surplus boots with moulded commando soles. I had done very little climbing in Scotland in the years since the war. I cannot say with certainty what the state of the art so far as snow and ice climbing was at the time. I had had four trips to the Alps during which I had used crampons for crossing glaciers only. I still had my original ice axe, which I had bought in 1932 - indeed I still have it - and this reaches exactly to my hip joint, so that it may be used as a walking stick and for glissading.

The basic reason for my being where I was stemmed from the fact that, as a stop gap, whilst I was deciding what to do with the rest of my life, I had taken a job as a temporary teacher at Bob MacKenzie's Braehead School in Buckhaven, the school at which Hamish Brown taught. The School had recently been given Inverlair Lodge, as an outdoor centre, by British Aluminium, and I was earmarked as potential head of this establishment. I was in the area to assess all the expeditionary and educational possibilities.

I was accompanied by a 14-year-old pupil named Andrew MacKenzie (no relation of Bob's), who had some experience of hill walking with the School, but had never embarked on an expedition such as we now contemplated. He was similarly equipped to myself, we had walked the seven miles from Inverlair, and we were to make a start at 11 a.m. on a superb cold day, with not a cloud in the sky. The overnight temperature had gone down to -14 degrees. Since the sun at that time of year never shone into the gully, the snow and ice were iron hard. From where we were standing the general angle to the cornice was about 40 degrees. The problem consisted of about 850ft of very steep snow, gradually steepening at the top to approximately 50 degrees... this stretch of snow was about 70ft wide at the top, continuing downwards slightly wider for 750ft or so, eventually tapering to a point at the bottom. This point was resting on what appeared to be an icefall, ending, finally, in a curtain of huge icicles. It would be necessary to bypass the bottom section by a rising traverse from the left of the gully, across the top of the curtain of icicles, on a convex slope on what, at first sight, appeared to be a mixture of rocky outcrops and scree, welded together by hard snow and ice. If this could be surmounted, it would then be simply a question of cutting zig-zag steps up very hard snow and possibly ice to the cornice.

This traverse of some 250ft, as far as I could see, would provide the crux of the climb. The first 100ft was at an angle of about 40 degrees and a slide would produce only a few scrapes and bruises, since the area below, although very steep to start with, ran out gradually in 500ft to something less lethal. From that point it appeared to steepen quite considerably to a position just below the point of snow at the bottom of the main field, below which it seemed to drop vertically for at least 100ft to unseen ground

beneath. The last 50ft, at least, would have to be tackled very gingerly, since a slip at that point would be potentially very serious, with the possibility of fatal injury.

We had literally no chance of not being benighted, but the conditions were excellent. Besides, there would be quite a substantial moon to light our way back to Inverlair, when it eventually rose above the ridge. I estimated this would happen anytime after 10 p.m. In any case we were pretty well equipped clothingwise, although modern climbers might not think so.

We roped up, and I led across the traverse. I soon realised that the danger of an uncontrolled slide was going to be even greater than I had anticipated. Patches of snow in which steps might be cut became less and less frequent, and thinner and thinner, until the whole slope became one of scree and rock bound together by black ice. I had two pitons, which had been sold to me as universal purpose, meaning that they could be used for both snow and ice as well as rock. In fact they were equally useless for either. Each had a War surplus carabiner attached. The problem was to find a reasonably secure place to drive them into. For this purpose I had a slater's hammer with the side claws ground off. I found the spike end of this tool invaluable for clearing very hard snow and ice from the rock and scree to provide somewhat sketchy balance footholds, on which I was going to have to rely for the safety of the party. This slater's hammer also provided me with the means to cut placements for my somewhat doubtful pitons. At this stage in the climb our long ice axes were a liability, and had to be passed down through the shoulder straps of our army surplus packs, so that they were out of the way of the main effort.

The traverse proceeded slowly in this manner until I could find a sufficiently secure placement for one of our pitons, making it reasonably safe for Andrew to remove the other piton and find his way along the somewhat sketchy footholds which I had managed to prepare for him. The slope at the start, as I have said, was about 40 degrees, but it soon began to increase, and, as it increased, so did the penalty for a slip. The angle may not seem excessive by modern standards, but for climbers in commando soles, with no crampons, and literally no handholds, facing the ever-increasing danger of a possibly fatal slide, it was quite enough for me.

The whole idea of Braehead School establishing an outdoor centre for the purpose of pursuing general studies in mountain country had met with a certain amount of opposition in the local Education Committee, so that, as I crept along this somewhat precarious traverse, I had visions of the headlines in the local and National press - 'Teacher leads Teenager to his Death!' But Andrew proved to be an excellent and calm second and, indeed, appeared to be enjoying himself.

Eventually I reached the snow, and dug out a bucket stance. The snow was so hard I could not drive the shaft of my axe in to provide the traditional (at that time) protection. Fortunately it held a piton. I tied myself to one of these and drove the spike of my axe in for additional security, then took the

rope in round my waist whilst Andrew joined me. It was now merely a question of interminable cutting, running out one length of rope at a time. The snow got harder and steeper the higher we got. The light was beginning to fade; the bottom of the climb became lost in the gloom, where an uncontrolled slide would take us to oblivion. Nevertheless this feeling, on subsequent reflection, was not really logical, since for us to come off at this moment would have been a result of gross negligence, the snow conditions being so good, with a complete absence of wind.

Anyone who has cut steps in extremely hard snow for 850ft with a long axe will know what a tiring process it can be. Eventually we arrived at the cornice, tunneled through, not without difficulty, and, when we stuck our heads out of the top, there, not more than 20ft away, was the very much snowed up cairn - surely the most satisfactory way to finish a long and arduous climb.

Just as we arrived at the cairn, the sun went down behind the Grey Coires to the West, with the top 400ft of the Ben just showing at the far end. In the fast dwindling light the view was stupendous. We could see all the high mountains from Ben Lawers to the Grey Coires and, although the ranges to the East were covered in a low haze, we could see the odd high summit poking its head through to catch the last of the dying sun. It was truly a magnificent sight.

Our problem now resolved itself into how we were to get down safely in the rapidly gathering gloom. We were 7 miles from Inverlair, where we were camping. I had expected to be able to glissade down to the bealach between Stob Coire Easain and Stob a'Choire Mheadhoin, and then back down to the floor of the coire, so losing 1500ft of height quite rapidly. It was not long before I found that to descend this way in a controlled manner would be quite impossible. It would be necessary for me to find an alternative route down. It dawned on my relatively thick skull, at this juncture, that perhaps crampons might have been a worthwhile addition to our equipment - even one pair! Or, at 45 years old, was I perhaps realising for the first time that I was not immortal?

The descent by the North ridge seemed the most plausible, for here the snow was not so steep and, in the growing gloom, it appeared to be less continuous lower down. We chose this route, although it appeared at first to take an enormously long time to get anywhere. When we came to an unavoidable patch of snow, and, for the first 800ft there were many, I would lower Andrew to the full extent of the rope, and he would anchor himself as best as he could, whilst I cut a minimum of steps to join him. This process was repeated again and again, until, eventually, we got down to the floor of Coire Laire.

It was after nine o'clock when we got to safe ground, and it was almost pitch black. We were exhausted, having been on our feet for 12 hours without rest. Our camp was still some 6 miles away. We decided to collect a heap of dry, dead bracken, of which there was a plentiful supply, put on all our spare clothing, including our waterproof outer gear, and crawl under

this heap and attempt to go to sleep until the moon came up. At 1 a.m we crawled out of our nest, to find the moon had already been up for a few hours. It was a delightful walk down Coire Laire back to Inverlair, where we eventually arrived about 3.30 a.m.

This expedition can scarcely be described as a character building epic. At the time it taught me one basic lesson only, that the use of crampons would have considerably reduced the time taken for the climb and descent. It did not occur to me that their use might have made the various aspects of the expedition any safer. There were no really dangerous moves apart from the traverse, where some very sketchy footholds had to be cut when over 80ft of rope had been run out. Great care had to be taken with every move since the penalty for a simple slip would have resulted in both climbers incurring serious, and possibly fatal injury. Nevertheless, until then I had come to accept this situation as normal.

With hindsight, modern equipment, such as front points in the latest light materials, an array of pitonry and ice screws, and a pair of short axes each, the actual climb would have been reduced to a couple of hours up and possibly a little less down, - always assuming we had been able to afford to buy this type of equipment in the first place. Affluence in those days was not as widespread as now. This would have reduced the expedition to a mere eight hours instead of nineteen hours. I think, in reflection, that I would have preferred it to be just the way it was...

DEADMAN'S GROOVE

By Rob Milne

IT WAS to be a day for new routing. I knew of the Cobbler, but had never visited it. Rab Anderson had an idea for a new route. As usual, I had no idea of what the climb might be, where it was, or how hard it might be. It wasn't that it was a secret; I just didn't know anything about routes on most crags. (Mine is not to reason why...)

I did know the weather forecast. Beautiful in the morning and a major storm later. This meant that my first visit to the Cobbler was superb. The long walk from sea level was rewarded by impressive views of the coire, with the sunrise complementing the clear blue skies and heavy snow cover. As we approached, I was definitely impressed by the rock faces. Winter conditions were great, snow everywhere and frozen turf. The North Face of the South Peak looked like a miniature alpine face.

Rab tried to explain the line of the proposed climb to me. I think he said it was *Deadman's Groove*, but I rarely know the name of a route until after we do it. He seemed to be talking about some impossible looking crack line up the middle of the steepest part of the face. Knowing that was ridiculous, I assumed he meant the wide groove line to the right. This was also a day for me to get back into leading, and I wanted an easy start.

I agreed to lead the first pitch. The climb started from a small bay located on a balcony 30 feet up. Rab suggested we solo up. I thought that was to be my lead. Oh well, I will pretend to lead it with no gear and at least it will get my heart going. A few minutes later I was 30 feet higher and nothing bad had happened. Perhaps I could lead this after all.

The first pitch looked like a simple, low-angled groove. I thought I should be able to lead this with no gear. Just as well, since I was very much out of practice at placing pro. How wrong I was. I instantly discovered that the seemingly low-angled pitch was dead vertical. This implied that the wall above must be overhanging. I couldn't chicken out yet, so I decided I would dig for a little while and when I couldn't get the first nut in, I would give up. Unfortunately for me, I found a good nut right away. I decided to go up the first moves, fail to find another placement and then back off.

The good turf gave me one good tool. The wall had nothing for my feet though. With a high step, I got one foot up on the turf. The other foot had to totter on a small flake for balance only. After some digging, I found another great nut. Damn, up another move then. At least the turf was immaculate. Now it was time for my left foot to be without a hold. A small groove on the wall was more than big enough for two points. A quick pull and both feet were on higher turf.

It was now too far above gear to back off, I have to get something else in. I can't win. If I don't get gear in, I can't back off. If I do get gear in, I will have to continue. At this angle I don't want to hang around for long. More digging out the snow and I find another good nut placement. I think about backing off now, but that would really be chicken, so far the pro has been great. As I move up, my right crampon half falls off. Great, this is my excuse, but I have to pull up onto the turf ledge first.

As soon as I get some gear, I will tell Rab he has to take over. Standing on a nice turf ledge I get two good nuts. I also see a very good hold for the hard traverse step. I sit down to fix my crampon and think about it. The weather and the view are nice, the hot aches have stopped, I may as well have a look. If I can't get gear before the traverse, then I will retreat.

Under the hold is another good nut. The step right looks very wild, but lots of fun. Should make a good photo as well. I always enjoy tottering on my crampon points and this looks like heaven. (i.e. no foot holds). Somehow I manage the step and I'm into good turf. I put in a nut after the traverse for Rab. I reckon he would get cross if I left him with a long swing on the hard move. He says to belay there, but I don't want to miss out on some easy front pointing up turf.

I don't get to front point often, as there is never ice on the mixed routes we do. The turf is better for placements anyway. I spot a good thread for a bombproof anchor. A couple of minutes later and I can't remember what I was worried about. Although the easy groove turned out to be grade V, it was fun in retrospect.

When Rab began leading the next pitch, he started to go left onto the steep wall, rather than right up the easy groove line. It was only then that I understood that the crack he described from below really was the route! It looked hard to me, but mine is not to reason why. The first attempt left didn't work. Sloping blocks and no tool placements. Rab moved above the belay and over my head.

He found a good hook behind a flake and leaned out onto the wall. Although the footholds sloped, there were a few more torques. The moves looked very delicate, but protected. A few more feet and he was into the main crack line. What looked to be steep from below, turned out to be overhanging, but with good blocky holds. A few feet higher though, and the trouble started.

By now it was cloudy and starting to snow. The warmth from leading the first pitch had faded and I was getting cold. Perhaps it would be a major storm any minute now, or maybe not. Rab was struggling. He had made the first part of the pitch look easy, in spite of the angle. Now he was trying to make a high step to a sloping ledge. Worse still was that a lot of digging had produced no torques and more importantly, no more pro. He would step up, dig a bit and then step down.

We had been in this situation many times before. I could recognise when things got hard. I knew the best thing I could do was to be quiet. I



The first pitch looked like a simple, low-angled groove

didn't want to contribute any negative views. The decision was his alone. He shouted down a status report - 'No gear and no placements'. I replied that this was a really nice place and that it looked impressive. (My version of 'it's your lead and I am not going to try it.') I also pointed out that the gear to there had been good. This was to make him think that he just thought he had a problem.

A few more attempts and we were still there. Rab had dug out every groove and found nothing. It was safer to retreat than risk a dangerous fall. He called down for the retreat sling. I reckon the storm was coming soon anyway. I also thought the pitch had looked impossible before we started. I dutifully tied the sling onto a loop of rope and sent it up. Rab doesn't fail often. He will try for ages before giving up. But no gear means no upward progress. And mine is not to reason why.

Rab rigs the sling, then decides to have another look. The prospect of defeat is not welcome. Somehow this time he finds a piece of gear. As he balances up onto the sloping ledge, a torque appears, then another nut placement. I decide I could climb in the storm anyway. His persistence pays off and we are moving again.

The next moves are very exposed. A ledge of turf hangs on the vertical wall. With small footholds, it is a spectacular position. The final short groove to the belay is hard, but has gear and good tool hooks. Although my spirits soar, I decide I will find an excuse not to lead the last pitch. With that decision made, I can relax and enjoy this pitch.

The climbing is very steep, but as a second I can balance on my points and not worry about my tools. This is good policy when there are not many tool placements. I am surprised at how steep the blocky holds are, from below it looked like one could stand in balance. It turns out to be overhanging. I can now see the problem of the hard step. I wish I could find what he used for tool placements.

I decide just to balance up. The wall is vertical and the foot ledge sloping, but by keeping my heels out, I can balance up. I grab a small flake with my finger gloves and stand up. A quick hook in a high crack just saves me from swinging off. I can also see the long, swinging fall into the blocks that Rab was worried about.

The rest of the pitch was fun. The turf ledge is a great position. With the cloud, it felt like miles up in space on a vertical wall. The moves above were hard, but with good tool placements the lack of footholds was not important.

As I arrived at the belay, Rab started to give me the gear for the next pitch before I could tell him that I was going to let him have the privilege. It did look like a low-angled groove. I might as well go up a few feet and then chicken out. I instantly discovered the flaw in my plan. The pitch was steep, and the pro was good.

One wall was very steep and the slab that formed the other wall was devoid of foot holds. At least the crack was wide and I could insert one foot.

With a bit of digging I found a few small flakes for my right points. It took a lot of digging of the snow to find gear in the wide crack, but it was always there.

I arrived at a very steep move. The wall pinched to a vertical chimney. A good time to retreat I thought. But I noticed a good torque crack and moved up. The tools locked into the crack and I squeezed higher. More torques, a high step and the end was in sight.

As I set up the belay anchor, I couldn't understand why I had been reluctant to lead. I was warm, the moves were well within my ability, I found good gear and I had had a good time (in retrospect). I had led two hard pitches with no problems. I decided maybe I was just lucky and should quit while I was ahead and not lead anymore.

Rab raced up the easy ground to the summit. We were met by the full force of the storm. It was also getting gloomy. In the strong wind, I discovered that he didn't know the way down. I certainly didn't. With all this wind, snow and cloud we had a problem. I belayed while he explored. Mine is not to reason why. We didn't want to justify the route name now that we had made the top. We knew we could climb in the storm for hours if need be, the real goal was not to leave any gear behind.

He soon found an abseil anchor. As dangerous as any abseil is, it looked safer than trying to downclimb. Soon we were safe and set off back to the car. On the way down, I reflected on a three star route. An amazing line, great tool placements, some super foot placements and good protection. I wondered where we would go next week. Maybe I would lead some more on the next climb.

THE SPELL OF SUILVEN

By W. Shipway

I CAN'T put a date on when I first came under the spell of Suilven. Perhaps it was in the days when the chapter in the Scottish Youth Hostel guide headed '*The North West*' seemed to describe an area as remote as Hudson's Bay. It was a land where the mountains seemed all humps and stumps with strange names to match - Stac Polly, Canisp, Quinag, Cul Mor and Cul Beag. And the monarch among them was the strangest and most remote, Suilven.

The name means the Pillar Mountain, said to be given by the Norsemen when they saw it from the sea west of Lochinver. It is from this point also that it looks most like its other name, the Sugar Loaf. But these names hardly begin to describe Suilven.

I suppose every hillwalker has his mystery tops, hills which in his imaginings present a special difficulty or challenge. As the years pass they develop an aura of invincibility, or the likeness of a resourceful adversary. Even on the day he stands at last by their summit cairns they are never quite like other hills. For me such tops are Bidean nam Bian, Liathach, A'Mhaighdean and - Suilven.

The first chance to break the spell came on a grey spring day in 1974. My wife and I were on holiday in the district and I longed for a chance to climb Suilven. But I knew I was hoping for a lot. The long walk-in across the hummocky moorland would make it a long day, and I would have to go alone - two factors which did not recommend the idea to my wife. Moreover I got no support from the weather: it remained cold, blustery, showery and unsettled. The calm days of sun and blue skies which would have made the walk a joy remained within the pages of the tourist brochure.

However, if you wait for ideal conditions you'll not get up many hills, and on the day Mary said she would like to walk up to the Falls on the River Kirkaig, I felt there was the ghost of a chance, for this is the start of the route to the mountain from the south. She would return to the car and I would climb Suilven. Yes, this was it, even if the skies were grey.

All went according to plan. We parked at Inverkirkaig and followed the track through birch and hazel by the swift flowing river. Then we saw the gorge, and the path climbing stonily up the hill alongside. Three miles from the car were the Falls, a tumbling cascade of foaming water - magnificent.

A picnic lunch and it was time for the big adventure. A fisherman came up the path, criss-crossed haversacks and rod at the trail. He was heading for the Fionn Loch like myself, and Mary, incredulous at seeing someone

prepared to risk drowning as well as death from exposure, bid me a dazed goodbye.

Above the Falls the path escapes from the glen and enters an altogether different landscape. In the foreground is the silver sheet of the Fionn Loch and behind, the hillocks and humps of the moorland with Suilven dominating the scene like a mighty ship on the stocks. Today a great tea-cosy of mist capped the hill, but it was worth a closer look, and who could tell ...

The fisherman followed the loch eastwards to look for a boat on the near shore, while I had to turn its western end to approach the mountain from the moor. There was a good path and all the route needed was steady leg work. Left and right it beckoned onwards, sometimes close to the water, sometimes inland, all the while following the north shore of the loch. Burns were crossed by slab bridges with well-built abutments: this must be a stalker's path. I'd never seen peatier burns: the very stones had a kippered look about them.

An hour passed, and I drew abreast of the mountain across the moor on the left. I could see the rearing stone cliffs of its west face - for rock-climbers only. Access for me would be by a gully mid-way along its steep south flank: yonder it was below the trailing skirt of mist. But reaching it was a long way across the moor, and the path still followed the lochside.

Suddenly there was a cairn in front, and a second to the left in the grass. This was where the path turned directly towards the mountain - and petered out. But I could see the screes at the gully bottom clearly ahead. What matter if the path were faint. Nevertheless it was rough going - boggy and wet, tussocky hummocks, dragging heather. It was a cheerless day, and the mountain mass looked more intimidating the closer one got. All at once I knew the climb was not on. The mist, the unknown terrain, the lateness of the hour and the long walk out - Why had I not known it all along. Put it down to the spell of Suilven, and remember, there are no failed climbs, only successful reconnaissances. Or such was the story I gave to Mary when I arrived back at the car...

Three years passed before I had another chance to climb Suilven. In the meantime I had tricked my way into an Edinburgh hill walking club, the Inverleith Tabbies (select of course) and suffered a gruelling novitiate in Munro-bagging at the hands of Alex and Marcus, Ronnie and George. Now I was on holiday with my 21-year-old son with the sole aim of exploring Coigach and Assynt. We drove up on a Monday to our base near Achiltibuie, stopping off to romp up Stac Polly out of sheer *joie de vivre*. If Tuesday were good... and it was. We threw our gear in the car and drove to Lochinver for some food for the climb - apples, biscuits, rolls, that would be enough - and back to Inverkirkaig to put on our kit. Boots laced, daysacs packed, we were off up the track to the Falls, and none too soon either for already it was 11.30.

How different the scene from last time. The glen was delightful in dappled sunshine, and after an hour we reached the open moorland and



Rob Milne, 1st pitch Deadman's Groove (Sesame Groove)

Photo: Rab Anderson



Photo: Colin Moody

Visiting Czech climber Petr Jandik on Trophy Crack, Skye

took the path round the Fionn Loch. In a pause to slap on some sunburn lotion two other climbers overtook us, but not much later we met them coming back - 'Run out of time'. Some one else learning the hard way. At 2 p.m. we turned at the marker cairns to face Suilven. Our route was across the rising moor to the central gully, up it to a saddle in the ridge above, and from there west along the crest to the summit.

But first we had a breather by the burn and attacked the rolls and biscuits. I was watching three deer through the glasses when - 'Hey Dad, there's only one apple left!' 'One apple - you must be joking'. 'It's your fault Dad - you didn't stay long enough in Lochinver to buy anything!' Ah the joys of family life! Here we were, not even on the hill yet and our food all but gone. What would the Tabbies say about that, could they know. What else but the spell of Suilven.

At 3.15 we had a council at the foot of the gully and decided to cache one of the daysacs, sharing the other. Craning upwards I decided that if I could reach a particular 'elbow' I would make the top. By avoiding the scree and keeping to turf and slabs we found fair footing, much more pleasant than our moorland slog. At last the angle relented and at 3.50 a fresh wind from the north blew on our faces. We were astride Suilven's ridge, the Bealach Mor.

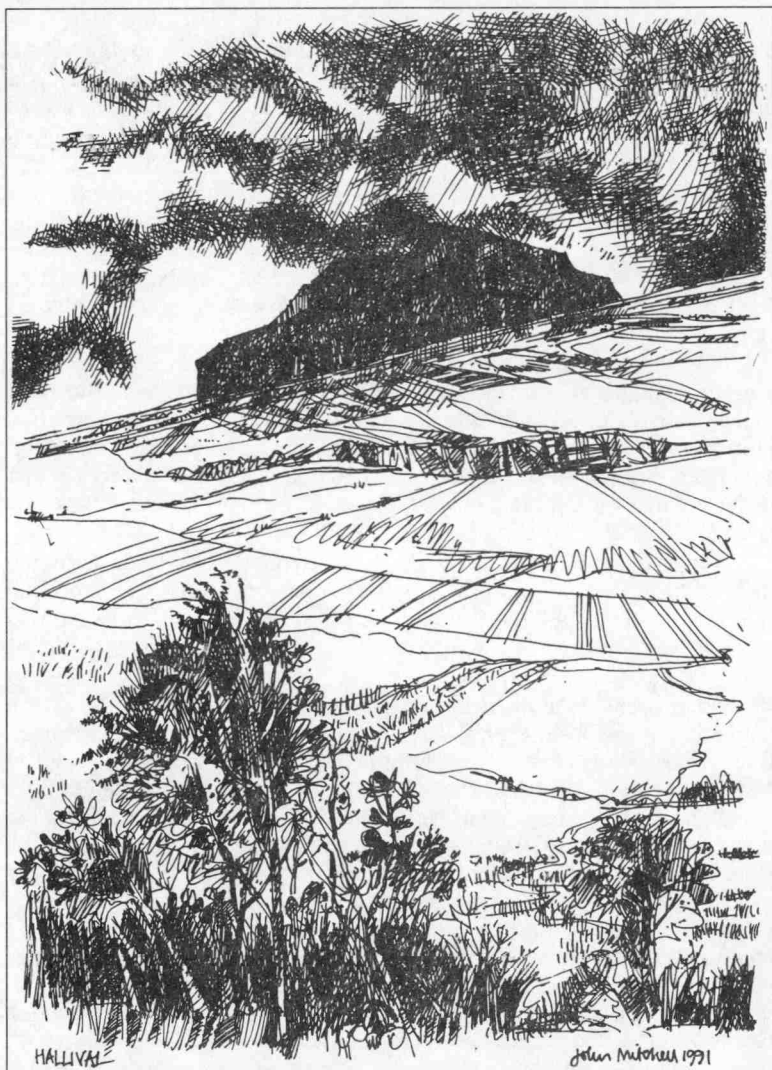
Pulling on woollies and looking round we were surprised to see a massive drystone dyke straddling the ridge like a ring on a finger. The rocks in that wall made kerb-stones look small. What heroes of ancient time had built its level courses, and for what purpose? Passing through an opening, a path led us upwards among crags and boulders, and then over short turf to the summit, Caistal Liath, 2,399ft. It was 4.15 as we flopped down at the cairn.

A marvellous land and seascape stretched out on either side, taking in the Cuillin of Skye and the Outer Isles. Lochans littered the land like scattered jewels, and the blues of sea and sky were superb. It was wonderfully peaceful; the spell again.

'Let's walk the ridge to the east top' I said to Alan. 'You go, Dad, I'm flaked out - see you at the bealach'. The mountain was narrow, for all the world like one of these pictures of a submarine taken from the conning tower. Canisp looked very close, and on the other side was the pudding shape of Cul Mor. The ridge made pleasant walking until one reached a deep cleft beyond which soared the tower of Meall Mheadonach. I could see the footholds going down into the cleft, and the twisting path going up the other side, but all of a sudden I too became aware that the day was far spent, and that there was only a half-share in an apple for at least another four hours. It was Suilven's sting in the tail, for every time I see its outline I kick myself for not having completed the full traverse of the ridge. Rejoining Alan, we picked our way down the gully, retrieved the daysac, and sprawled in the sun for half-an-hour. After that we girded ourselves for the return journey, but this is a lovely part of any climb, when the stomach unknots itself, and one 'tires the sun with talking and sends him down the sky'.

So it was with us. It was a golden evening and we strode back along the lochside in blithe spirits, reaching the car at 9.10. A brew of coffee even before taking off our boots, and then back to base where Alan wrought nobly in serving up soup and beefburgers.

Well, that's the story of one hill, one spell. But do you know a mountain in Knoydart called Ladhar Bheinn. I saw it last year from Kintail; you reach it by boat across Loch Hourn. It's mysterious, remote...



GALLOWAY - INNER SANCTUM

By Graham E. Little

MY AFFAIR with the Galloway Hills goes back a long way. Although our relationship is less passionate now than of old it's always good to see her. She has changed of course but then so have I. To be the good friend of a past lover is indeed a special privilege.

It is a short December day, a stolen day, an opportunistic day. I drive in the darkness, the castle walls looming into the headlights, the world sleeping. I take the car as far as possible. There is no point in pretending that this forest road doesn't exist. It used to be hard walking over tussocks of yellow grass along the banks of the Gala Lane, now it's hardcore, hemmed in by walls of black trees.

From the car I follow the small pool of light cast from my headtorch. In its penumbra inky black parallel lines scar the ground; underfoot the path transmits that half-frozen soggy sensation of early winter.

The trees are smaller now. Dawn reluctantly emerges from the night. Everything is grey, the smell of damp vegetation pervades the air. I ascend slightly onto the drier hillside, clear of the boggy valley, the trees falling behind me. I know Hoodens Hill is above, ahead the great sculptured bowl of The Tauchers with its gems of perfect granite. To the east, across the wide valley, the long snow flecked whaleback of the Kells range stirs memories - a stormbound night in the hollow of Carlin's Cairn, sheets of water sliced from the pools below and flung into the sky, shining waves of rusted Autumn grass mimicking the wind in her hair, the perfect neve of a Spring day long ago.

From below The Tauchers rocky rim I gaze out stunned by the great expanse of forest below, a monotone bottle green blanket broken only by long rides and roads. I turn away and play with the rough grey granite for a while.

Scrambling up the hill I gain height quickly. Plates of ice are glued to the slabby rock. My body responds to the hill's heartbeat, striding out, relishing the sting of the wind, the hardness of the ground, the wildness of it all. I have no companion yet I am not alone. To the south-east a thin horizontal band of watery blue splits the solid steel greyness of the sky. As I reach the summit cairn of Mullwharchar the sun reaches the pale band. My hill is floodlit by a golden second dawn. I sit with my back to the cairn, facing the sun, bathing in its warm glow. Below to the south-west the cold clear waters of Loch Enoch are in the shade, frozen to the toe of The Merrick. I run down the frost sparkling hillside crying to the wind, overjoyed that my memories are not a lie, that this inner sanctum is as magical as ever.

Greyness returns as I wend around ribs of granite, crunching through wreaths of crisp snow onto the shoulder of Dungeon Hill. Was it really twenty-two years ago on Dungeon's east face - body shaking with fright, throat dry with fear. That desperate move for the flake, its crashing, splintering fall to the base of the cliff, my flight to a safe ledge, fingers clawing into the heather, tears and sweat streaming down my face. And I carried on climbing! I descend a little way down the east face over rock steps, pass the time of day with a herd of patchwork-coated feral goats then head north along the ridge.

Backhill of Bush, that lone cottage to the east of the Silver Flow, is now surrounded by conifers. Memories of blazing log fires, teenage bravado and great hill days come flooding back. It was late one night in the winter of 1970 that I spent several hours removing frozen boots and socks (with the aid of an ice axe) from the feet of an exhausted hillwalker. All his toes were frostbitten and he was very fortunate not to lose them.

Traversing the east flank of Mullwharchar, red deer bark from the crags above then bound with easy strides into the upper coire. A buzzard wheels high above the ridge. I meet more goats - they are so much a part of Galloway.

I stride on into the trees, unsettled by the closeness of things after the openness of the hill.

I'm back in the car, drizzle smearing on the windscreen, the deep, dark waters of Loch Doon slipping by. Conflicting emotions of anguish and contentment struggle within me. Stolen moments, sadness, tenderness, anger, moments of vision, mountains, friends and mortality - feelings beyond words.

It is not yet mid-day. Galloway, your body is ravished yet your heart lives on. I will return again and forever.

THE THIRD QUESTION

By Peter Warburton

THE LONE walker, established in the hotel sitting room with his after-dinner coffee, will be familiar with the friendly approach of a fellow guest. 'And how many miles did you walk today?' is a usual opening inquiry. Typically, the wife then asks 'aren't you ever frightened, up there, all on your own?', but it is the third question that I take as my text - 'did you meet anybody?'

Recently I have been keeping a note. The statistical finding, based on the biased sample of West Highland holidays in May and June, is that on 60% of my excursions I encounter no one 'up there', but what never fails to surprise is the totally unexpected nature of some of the meetings on other days. As, for example, the occasion in 1986 when I would confidently have asserted that I had the Knoydart hills to myself. From Barrisdale I had made my way over Luinne Bheinn, down some distance into a mist-filled coire and up again to Meall Buidhe, from which cloud was just lifting. A simultaneous arrival at so remote a summit defies statistical probability but, there they were - two brothers approaching from the opposite direction. The circumstances are worth mention as a case of the rewards of careful planning.

The availability of a convenient supply of beer was essential to this pair's holiday enjoyment and their advance research had established that payment of a nominal membership fee would secure their admission to a drinking den in the commercial quarter of Inverie. This implausible arrangement was proving wholly satisfactory. The northern coast of the peninsula has of course been, in the specialised sense of the word, 'dry' since the regrettable closure of the inn at Skiary, a victim, not of proprietorial bigotry, but of the failure of the herring fishery, which undermined its customer base. The same fate befell the chapel at Barrisdale but, as it was a Wednesday, I felt this second deprivation less acutely.

Surprise encounters abroad sometimes have an added touch of drama. In 1964, while making slow progress up a valley, high, wide and long, in the French Pyrenees, I came upon a score or so of sleek and sophisticated horses. I ought to have realised that such expensive animals would not be unattended, but the sudden eruption of their exuberant keeper from a well hidden howff in the rocks took me by surprise. The extravagance of his greetings and his eagerness to converse became more understandable when he told me that he was there for the summer and that I was the first passer-by, in either direction, for a fortnight. The map showed two divergent exit routes over the distant headwall of the valley. As I was at the beginning of a return visit to the Pyrenees 'before they got spoiled', this

was good news, but the coarse red wine in his leather bottle was not. Fortunately, a beginner's ineptitude provided an excuse and limited my intake.

There was a more exotic meeting in 1954, when, taking advantage of an unexpected opportunity, I spent a few days in the Lebanese mountains. Setting off at a civilised hour one morning I climbed Kornet es Sauda (the 'Black Pimple'), 10,131 feet. There were no difficulties, but it was hot work. On the summit plateau, as I paused to consider Syria to my right and Turkey (maybe) somewhere ahead, all looking much of a muchness in the heat haze, a slightly disappointing day was suddenly redeemed. My arrival had awakened a goatherd and his flock. He sported a largely home made outfit featuring outerwear of animal skins, slung about with matching accessories in the form of ammunition pouches and general purpose srips. A flute would have completed the picture, but the ancient firearm he instinctively grasped in his waking moment was doubtless more practical, given the prevalence of clan feuds and also the danger to his flock from animals.

Having come unprepared for the hills, I was modelling generously cut knee length khaki shorts, a pyjama coat (in the absence of any long sleeved shirt), a towel for head and neck covering and food in a string bag secured to my waist. Neither of us had seen the like before, but good manners overcame mirth. After greetings we got down to the serious business of the exchange of hospitality. I had hotel food in plenty; he seized a startled member of the herd, milked it into a tin can, which he stuck into a bank of snow to cool and, after further exchanges of civilities, presented with due ceremony. Shutting my eyes to the sight of numerous small objects swimming for dear life, I held my breath and swallowed. No ill effects resulted, but the descent finished off the pair of rather smart brown shoes in which I had set off.

The hotel question could be interpreted to mean 'did you meet Anybody?' I mean you hear of people meeting real toffs on the hills (on reflection, I have deleted the examples I had in mind). By stretching my terms of reference in the matter of locations, I can recall three who, in my view, merit the capital letter. Also a possible near miss.

I had a very wet time of it in 1973. The rainfall totals were probably not impressive but the permanently low cloud, the saturated ground and the remorseless drizzle ensured that, by precipitation or osmosis, I got thoroughly soaked each day. There was only one other resident guest in the hotel. He was a dark, middle aged man who wore a sombre, very hairy formal suit, such as a Greek peasant farmer might wear on feast days. It came as a rebuff to my expectations when he spoke with a London accent. Whenever I saw him he was carrying two newspapers - the unusual pairing of the Financial Times and a daily exclusively devoted to the affairs of the turf - the same two copies, growing daily grubbier, but still the object of long and careful study. Our brief encounters were almost wordless until the third day.

That evening the mystery man had discarded the jacket of his suit in favour of an unusual, collarless garment of stiff translucent plastic, with sleeves and worn zipped to the neck. Perhaps I was visibly fascinated by this striking garment, in which the wearer must surely cook, but my neighbour - we were assigned to adjacent tables in an otherwise empty dining room - chose that moment to open our first conversation. 'I find', he said, 'that I can wear a shirt for a fortnight on holiday. How about you?' This original opening quite wrong-footed me and my expression of admiration and envy was inadequate. Later he asked where I had been that day and, rather to my surprise, gave me knowledgeable detail of a more enjoyable local round. The following day I went further afield in a vain search for better weather. My fellow guest too knew the Aonachs. On my last evening this surprising man casually mentioned having completed a round of the Munros. He referred to it as a past event so that, if he recorded his name, it must be among the first hundred. I sometimes think of returning to that hotel to see whether the visitor's book reveals his identity but, on balance, I prefer to let him remain, *sui generis*: My First Munroist.

The following year I was making my way along the crest of the Grey Coires in distinctly bracing conditions: an inch of overnight snow on the ground and more falling, carried on a cooling breeze. Out of the thin mist a neat, well-organised figure approached at a smart rate. I came to a halt and, as the gap between us narrowed we exchanged a brief word, but he had merely moderated his pace and, as he accelerated away again towards Stob Coire Claurigh, the personification of purposefulness, I was left, standing in the snow, grinning at my own mild discomfiture. Five years later the identity of the man-who-did-not-stop was revealed to me when I bought the book: 'Wednesday 29 May... I passed yet another solitary Englishman who explained it was the Whit Week invasion...' Even in 1974 the name had been known to me. On the walls of a dilapidated corrugated iron bothy, eccentrically sited on the open slope of A'Chailleach in the Monadhliath, I had come across seven or eight dates and different lists of names, all headed Hamish Brown - the handiwork, no doubt, of members of his parties.

Among my own favourite stopping places was an hotel that usually housed at least a minority of hill walkers. Once, though, in the early sixties, I found myself alone there among the English motorists. One of them had taken strongly against the landlord on the grounds that holders of that office should ever be the hail-fellow well met, life and soul of the party, preferably with a touch of the Harry Lauders thrown in. Happily, the incumbent did not measure up to these specifications. Whenever he had a captive audience, the opinionated guest propagated his views and actively sought seconders. One day, as I left the room, he was telling the company that he believed the landlord had quite a nasty temper when roused...

The following evening the landlord made a brisk and unexpected entry into the dining room through the service door. Silence fell, soup spoons and prawn forks remained aloft as he bore down on the writer's table. What

misdeemeanour had that unsociable fellow committed, what would be his fate? 'I am very sorry,' said the landlord 'but we haven't any half bottles left of the wine you ordered but, if you would care to split a bottle with us, my wife and I will finish it with our supper, in which case I would of course charge you half the bottle price, not the half bottle price.' A model landlord.

Later in my stay, the landlord having shown an informed interest in my outings, I inquired tentatively whether he ever got on to the hills himself. There was a barely perceptible pause before he replied, mildly, that, yes, he and his wife went out whenever they could, but that opportunities in the summer were few. No prizes for the answer. It was indeed Norman Tennent, then at the Kintail Lodge.

The next morning I heard his voice announcing to whoever was in the sitting room that Mr. So-and-so was going for a walk that day and had called to see whether anyone would care to join him. I was out of sight in the hall, quietly packing my rucksack preparatory to an ascent of the Saddle, diretissimo, via the Forcan ridge. Having been that way before, I knew that I should be operating at the interface of the heroic and the impossible. In such circumstances, one does not want to be encumbered with an unknown and possibly nervous novice. I sneaked out as soon as the coast was clear. All morning I felt guilty. If the success of that man's day depended on his finding an experienced companion, then I had behaved badly: we could have undertaken something less ambitious together. Later, I had second thoughts. Another gaffe? Somehow the form of words I had overheard had not suggested a lack of confidence. Could it be...?

You see, the name had not been Mr. So-and-so, but Mr. Murray. I dare say that, if it was Tennent's friend W.H. I should have been able, by a judicious blend of exhortation and practical tips, to coax him up the Forcan.

AN ENCOUNTER WITH GRAMSCI

By I.H.M. Smart

I FIRST heard the name Gramsci at Ben Alder Cottage in April 1944. My friend and I were both fourteen at the time. There was a war on. The Highlands were empty, the road narrow and bereft of traffic. We had walked from Rannoch Station on a sombre, windless afternoon. Heavy cloud darkened Ben Alder and Loch Ericht lay black and filled with shadow. We were very young and unsophisticated for fourteen as was the custom at that time, the result of living protected lives in a rigidly conventional straight-laced town and attending a school that drove us along intellectual tramlines. We walked through the ambient gloom in frank awe and apprehension, aware of our psychological vulnerability as unsupervised town dwellers in a wilderness devoid of the familiar artefacts of our urban world.

We first saw the cottage from the edge of the primeval wood. I can remember being aware of the awesome emptiness of the surrounding landscape and of a burn whispering from the back of a great cave of silence. A column of smoke rose straight from the cottage chimney. This disconcerted us. We thought it would be deserted. A keeper must be in residence. We knocked timidly at the door which had fishing rods propped up against the wall on each side. The buzz of conversation inside stopped. Eventually a man opened the door. He was large. His shirt was stretched over an ample abdomen so that diamond-shaped gaps opened up between the buttons. Through one of these his umbilicus stared at us like the eye of Polyphemus after Odysseus had stirred it around a bit.

‘Aye?’, he enquired without warmth.

‘We... We forgot to bring a tent... We wondered if we could sleep in your outhouse?’.

‘Where youse fae?’, he enquired in a Glasgow accent.

‘Edinburgh’

‘Edinburry? Jesus Christ’, he opined with unconcealed scorn, looking up to the sky so that this High Authority could join him in his displeasure.

‘Away in there’, he said at last, indicating the room to the right.

We entered an unfurnished room with some blankets folded on a pile of heather in one corner. We heard the Cyclopean keeper return to the other room and announce cheerfully,

‘It’s twa wee Edinburry shites’

The buzz of conversation next door resumed.

We lit a small fire in the grate and started to cook. Soon a visitor from next door appeared, a small dark man with a sensitive face, also very Glasgow. He looked with some interest at the two spoonfuls of reconstituted dried egg on a piece of bread and margarine that formed our main course. He questioned us about our background, what our parents did, where we went to school, why we were here and so on and on. He went away and soon came back with two large trout, gutted and headed and about a pound a piece, indicating that they were for immediate consumption.

'It must be grand being a keeper', we said.

He looked at us in disbelief. Thereafter he talked to us in the kindly tone that Glaswegians use when dealing with the mentally retarded or people with a weak grip on reality among whom, of course, are Edinburghians of the more harmless kind, such as we obviously were. We ate our fill of poached trout. The first time in our lives we had eaten a whole pound of first class protein in one go.

That evening in the other room there was conversation and laughter, also singing of songs both rousing and sad. There was a mouth-organ backing and occasional, expertly played chanter solos. It was quite a party; we weren't invited in. Late in the night some men came through, slumped out on the heather and snored loudly.

We left early the next morning, driven out by cold. Sleeping bags we had, of course, heard about but never seen; we would have considered them only fit for well-to-do cissies. We had slept on the floor wrapped in a couple of blankets discarded as no longer fit for home use. Our clothes were in a similar, sub-terminal condition. Wearing anything else would have been unthinkable; clothes were in any case strictly rationed. However, we did not feel deprived. We probably had never even heard the word used in this modern sense. We were just the same as everyone else. To be hungry and cold we regarded as normal; all our reading indicated that this was an integral part of travel on the edge of the known world.

We climbed Ben Alder in a bitter black wind which tore the clouds apart and blew them in bits across the sky, so that sunshine and shower patterned a moving landscape. At this time we were in our Central Asian phase and the grey-green snow-dappled Grampians we looked over were in our minds the wild rolling plateau lands of Tibet. We returned bubbling with success, naively prattling about the view and how it looked liked Central Asia. We carried very little intellectual baggage at the time and were able to hop around exuberantly within our minds, light-footed and free. The bloom, as Tom Weir would say, was still on the grapes of adventure. The occupants of the other room were a bit bemused by all this untutored enthusiasm and invited us in. A pot of stew bubbled above an ample fire, a dismembered deer lay on a newspaper on the floor. A plate of trout shared the table with a sten gun and clips of ammunition. Another gun hung from a nail on the wall. To civilians so much naked protein in display was like an Aladdin's cave of gastronomic riches. We were told to help ourselves. They taught us to boil the venison a bit and then fry it in its own

fat. We even saw how black pudding is really made. Compared to dried egg this was a man's diet.

Gradually people drifted in from the hill or lochside until about a dozen were gathered together. Our claim to have climbed Ben Alder was confirmed as we had been seen on top and we were more or less accepted into the group in spite of our dubious background.

They were soldiers on embarkation leave and we were proud to be of their company. It was a memorable night for boys avid to escape from the tramrails. The talk was of climbs on strange mountains with strange, evocative names in parts of Scotland we hadn't even read about. Remember, in those days most mountaineering lore was transmitted orally. Its acquisition was gradual and you were only told things if you were deemed worthy, that is, if you were 'sib'. The secret corners of Scotland had yet to be sterilised by the fluorescent glare from glossy magazines, and there were no razor-sharp guide books to shave the face of the land bare of mystery.

The songs that night were strange Scots songs sung in an idiom unfamiliar to us but which our school would have described as 'unrefined'. Many were political. The cyclopean 'keeper' sang one about Spain where he had fought. We were informed that after the war there would be a Labour Government and as Labour was the party of Home Rule, Scotland would rise from the ashes of the past: a new educational system would liberate the working class from whom a new generation of engineers, teachers, doctors, lawyers, artists and writers, not to mention mountaineers, would emerge. There was a great deal of learned discussion with quotes from Marx and Lenin and many others, including John MacLean and Gramsci. I remember these two because I thought it odd to have a name like MacLean mentioned in the same breath as Lenin, and Gramsci was the sort of name an anarchist would have in a comic paper. The party went on into the small hours. There was firelight on faces, the booty of hunter and fisherman on the table, the glint of guns on the wall. This was indeed an escape from our prissy school. We seemed to be living in the mainstream of events. All over Europe partisan bands in mountain hideouts just like this were heroically fighting for a great ideal. The war, *inter alia*, was for the right of small nations to exist. Scotland, it appeared, was to be one of them and a refreshing new Scotland of high standards and high endeavour at that. We were converted. Glasgow, in our minds, became Stalingrad and Edinburgh akin to Vichy, as, I suppose, it remains to this day.

The next morning we climbed Ben Bheoil and spent the afternoon vainly scouring its flanks for signs of Cluny's Cave. We were also under the influence of Stevenson's 'Kidnapped'. When we got back in the evening the cottage was empty and cleared up to the satisfaction of even the most stringent of hostel wardens; the fire was set and ample wood was neatly stacked by the hearth. Since our heroes had such high standards, when our turn came to leave we could have no less.

The next time I visited the cottage was one Hogamany years later. I was with a group of fellow students. We climbed a winter gully in the great coire

of Ben Alder; we had a great meet. My mind was too full of the rich present to think much, if at all, about my former heroes. I was now part of another dispensation; their influence had faded.

Several decades later, approaching from the south we encountered a notice warning of the danger of being shot by high-velocity rifles. Then we met a Range Rover filled with nice-enough people who languidly knotted the air with triphonged vowels. The cottage we found to be full of poor souls from the twilight zones of nether Britain. One of them was the leader of some sort of 'public' school party. He spoke with an authority from the back of his throat. He knew everything about everything but nothing at all about anything else. There was no humour here. There were no shadows in this man's world. His umbilicus would never have peered at us gallusly from between his shirt buttons. That night we slept out on Ben Alder side like Cluny MacPherson before us. Must it always end like this? Be that as may, we found ourselves closer to Scotland than if we had stayed among the cuckoos in the cottage.

What happened to the bold mountaineers of 1944 and their dreams of a native renaissance? This is where Gramsci comes in. I looked him up in a Bibliographical Dictionary after writing the draft of this story. Gramsci was a political philosopher who tried to explain to the Marxists why the established system would not in fact collapse under its internal contradictions as predicted. It must first be infiltrated, he said, by bearers of a new enlightenment until all the key positions had been occupied. He then went on to acknowledge that the system was so strong that successful infiltrators would be persuaded to string along until they eventually forgot why they were there. So this must have been what happened to the men of 1944 unless, of course, they were eliminated in the war. In either case there was never any danger of a brave native resurgence led by intellectual mountaineers.

However, they do say that Ben Alder Cottage is haunted. I'm sure it is. It is highly probable that on certain April nights the sound of aboriginal voices can be heard earnestly discussing the way forward to better things. But do not be afraid. The weight of Gramsci's chains (you may even hear them give a comforting rattle) will keep these ghosts from breaking through into the real world. You will be quite safe to go on lying snug in a warm sleeping bag on a state-of-the-art sealed-cell camping mat, dreaming short-sightedly only of tomorrow's climb. What else can you do? The more distant future will make you cooperate with it, whether you want to or not.

mountains rise

mountains rise
black against the sun,
just bullies.
block your sky
late in the day
when you're too tired to tame them, when

fumbling by,
all you wish for
is some wide green valley
lightening evening, not this dour
glen so soon
night to the eye

where you do no more
than tell again
of a white summit won;
and how, on going down,
lesser summits opposite
rose black against the sun.

G.J.F.D

RAMPANT MUNROSIS

The Scottish Disease

By W.D. Brooker

IT IS JUST over a hundred years since the 'Tables giving all the Scottish Mountains exceeding 3,000 feet in Height, by Hugh T Munro,' appeared in the *Journal* of September, 1891. This was rightly regarded as an important event and the culmination of a considerable and dedicated effort. At the outset, Munro himself 'had little idea of the enormous amount of labour and research which it would entail - a labour which, even if it had not been altogether abandoned, would have been vastly increased but for the invaluable assistance given by Colin Philip...' Even Stott, who like his editorial successors was not easily impressed, declared that it 'had occupied over three hundred hours during some five months... it forms a contribution... whose value it would be difficult to exaggerate. There is little doubt that the lists will receive the study they deserve at the hands of all who are interested in the mountains of Scotland.'

Prophetic words! And yet few would have imagined, not even the Compiler himself, that the Centenary of his work would be celebrated by a feature article in *'The Times'* (Colour Magazine, 30 March, 1991), that the word *'Munro'* was to enter the English language (*The Oxford Guide to English Usage*, p25), and that the name of Hugh Munro would become more widely known than that of any other of the founders of the Club. Munro readily admitted that the work to which he gave such commitment was incomplete. Many of the original heights given were approximate and based on aneroid readings. In 1913 he was revising the Tables and wrote 'the issue of the third edition of the revised 1-inch Ordnance Survey Map has thrown considerable extra light on the subject, and also involved a large amount of extra work; for not only has every name and height to be checked on the 1-inch, but the 1-inch and 6-inch have again to be compared to see if they agree...' etc., etc. He ended with a list of 76 tops whose precise heights remained uncertain and sought confirmation of his own readings from aneroid-bearing Members of the Club.

This will be a familiar scene to successive Masters of the Tables who have had to wrestle with the results of orogenetic frenzies by the Ordnance Survey. Even today, a hundred years on, doubts can arise. The latest 1:10000 map shows Ganu Mor on Foinaven at 914 metres. This is rounded to the nearest metre and according to the OS the true height lies between 913.8 and 915.2 (2998 and 3002.6ft), and raises the interesting question as to whether this, and not Ben Hope, is the most northerly Munro. Not that

it really matters, since Foinaven is a superb mountain and should be climbed anyway. If it is elevated, we should not be too surprised since (4) J Rooke Corbett pointed out in 1932 that the cairn did not appear to be on the highest point and suggested it deserved further investigation, while in 1920 (2) A R C Burn had mentioned that on *Heddle's Geological map of Sutherland* (1881) it was marked as 3013 and that Munro himself had been told by a local source that it was over 3000 feet. A pity he omitted it from the Tables, but perhaps his aneroid was not at its best when he was there!

It was the pioneer Compleat Munroist, (1) A E Robertson, who seems to have been the first to use the term 'Munros' (within inverted commas), for the mountains which reached 3000 feet in height. This usage seems to have continued until 1929 when J H B Bell dispensed with the inverted commas in two footnotes he added to an article about his local Lomond Hills. These notes are worth quoting here as they scurrilously caricature the two main styles of activity in the mountains. The distinction was more imagined than real of course, but it may have been more applicable in the days before Munrosis developed as an endemic disease among Scottish hillgoers.

'A salvationist, to the ultramontane, is a somewhat low-grade person, hardly a climber, who endeavours, by the easiest way, to reach the summit of any sort of Scottish hill which exceeds 3000 feet in height above sea level. Such a hill is called a Munro...', and, 'The ultramontane is, in the Lomond sense, a crazy and irresponsible person who climbs any nearly vertical face of rotten rock and vegetation by the most difficult way. He seldom visits the summit of a hill, and he is forbidden by his creed to remove any loose rocks or vegetation, which must be allowed to remain, in order to lure to destruction a future aspirant to ultramontane glory.'

What Bell did not fully appreciate was that the oft-derided peak-bagging activities of many salvationists and even some dedicated ultramontanes were symptoms of a new ailment which was to affect large numbers of Scottish hillgoers in the years ahead **Munrosis, the Scottish Disease**. It is a weakness of the currently available means of detection that Munrosis is only identified with any certainty when the disease has run its course and the sufferer becomes a mere statistic. Even so, the rate of spread is impressive. Over fifty years were to pass before the first ten cases were recorded and it took another thirty years for them to reach 100. A glance at the accompanying graph will show that since then the rate of growth has been exponential or even explosive, with the disease having run its course in almost 850 recorded cases in the hundred years since Munro first published his work. Additionally, cases which come to light long after they are concluded suggest there must be an unknown number of undetected and hence unrecorded instances in which the condition has taken effect. It should be remembered that these figures apply to cases which are 'compleat' and there must be very many sufferers who are abroad in the Scottish hills today but who will not appear in the statistics until later.

The true nature of the affliction was probably not fully appreciated until the 1980's. *'The Scotsman'* carried a brief report by Peter McCue on 'Chronic Munros.- a severe form of obsessional neurosis peculiar to Scotland.' The October 1984 edition of *'Scottish Medicine'* published a much fuller description entitled 'the Scottish Disease' by Dr Iain B McIntosh, a Stirling G.P. This paper revealed such understanding of the condition that it seemed likely the writer must himself be afflicted, as can be seen from these extracts:-

'Unique to Scotland, this is a highly contagious affliction which affects teenagers and the not so young of both sexes. Predominant in the male, it takes an acute or chronic course and in the obsessed can threaten life and limb. An acute episode can progress to ultimate recovery in months but in its chronic state it can last a lifetime, with latent intermissions and relapses resulting in fitful bursts of over-activity and mad, compulsive behaviour...

Those affected are disabled by an obsession which can interfere with social life, destroy a marriage and severely strain a marital relationship... Social effects are minimised when husband and wife suffer together and support clubs have flourished in recent years...

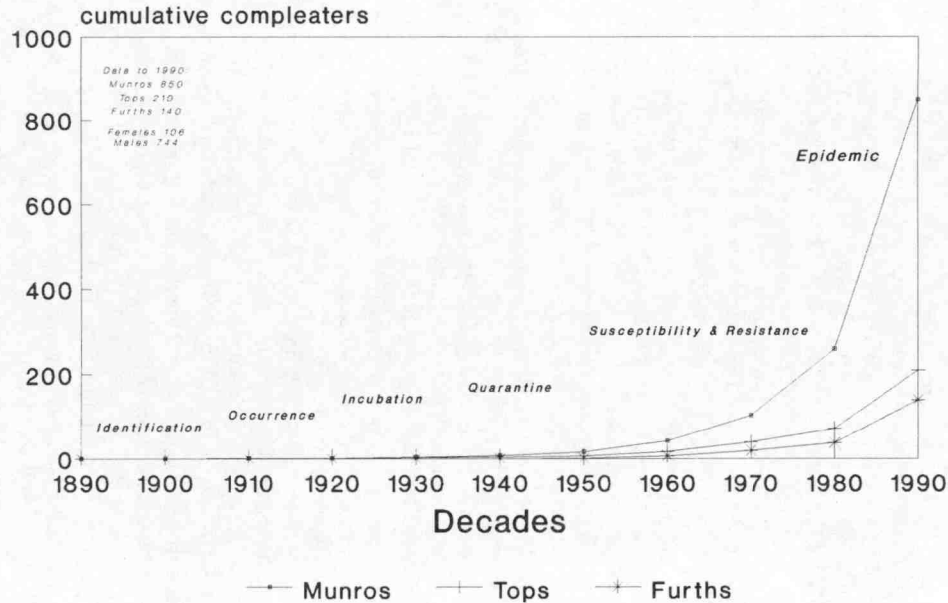
Medical services have been expanded to meet the needs of this group and volunteers provide emergency care for those who suffer from exposure, hypothermia and trauma in pursuit of their obsession... Many of the young feed their obsession, submit themselves to intense exposure and overactivity for a year or two and win free of the condition.

For a few the cycle restarts to further blight their lives, although paradoxically, with passing years, overweight and smoking lead to a compulsion-free existence as breathlessness and fatigue prevent overexposure to this bizarre activity. With advanced years this strange state burns itself out allowing the very elderly to escape from its malign influence.'

Over the last twenty years, Dr Iain Smart of the University of Dundee, in association with the writer, has carried out studies which have considerably advanced our understanding of Munros and successfully identified a number of variants. Some of these findings are summarised as follows:-

Incubation. The period taken by this preliminary phase varies greatly from individual to individual. There appears to be some correlation between its length and the time taken for the condition to run through its cycle. Many long term sufferers have experienced lengthy incubation, sometimes visiting a mountain for the climbing it affords and not even going to the nearby summit after the climb. At this stage such persons may totally ignore even easily accessible Munros if they lack climbing interest. Then discerning companions may notice signs of aberrant behaviour - a tendency to extend and distort a day on the hill beyond its natural length

A Century of Compleations



A Bilbo Baggins Production

in order to take in an additional top - the possession of a map (often surreptitiously) on which some summits have been underlined in red. These are indications that incubation is over and the disease has developed, even if not fully admitted by the sufferer. It should be said here that nowadays, like bastardy, Munrosis has a much readier and more open acceptance than in the past when in many quarters it carried a social stigma. Today it may even be flaunted! As was mentioned earlier, if incubation is brief or entirely absent there is often an intense period of overactivity in which the disease may burn itself out in a few years or even in months. However it may well recur and if so, it is likely to do so again and again until age or infirmity put an end to the obsession. Recurrence may take the form of extending the compulsion to include the adjacent summits known as Tops or even those mountains Furth of Scotland which exceed 3000 feet. Some will win free at this point, sated with what is called A Grand Slam, but there are others who have been known to suffer transference to the Corbetts, which were not part of the original Tables.

Munrosis vulgaris, sometimes called *M. inadvertens* - the most common form in which the condition only takes full hold when the victim, having enjoyed normal mountain activity for years, suddenly discovers (or has it pointed out by a misguided person) that only 50, or 100, or whatever, Munros remain to be done and the full tally might as well be completed.

Secondary Munrosis is the increasingly common situation in which an already Compleat Munroist finds that a second cycle gets underway through the well-intentioned, but probably ill-advised, practice of accompanying a spouse or other close associate experiencing the first cycle of the disease. Such involvement is liable to lead to -

Polymunrosis - where the condition recurs in cycles. The best known of a growing number of documented cases of *Polymunrosis* is that of (62) Hamish M Brown who having breathed a sigh of relief in 1965 has found himself on a treadmill which has rotated seven times (so far). A further complication endured by Brown is that on at least two of these circuits he has been pursued by dogs which have succeeded in stowing away in his rucksack at critical places such as the Inaccessible Pinnacle of Sgurr Dearg.

That a shared burden is more easily borne appears to be confirmed by the fact that about 30 cases of *M. matrimonialis* have been recorded. Here compleation occurs simultaneously by husband and wife, often hand in hand. (This is getting out of hand - Ed.)

M. familiaris is rarer, but instances of entire families succumbing certainly occur. At least three have been recorded, one of which included the most extreme case of *M. juvenilis* on record, that of (493) David Kale who had gone through the complete course of a bout of Munrosis by the age of 13 years and 10 months.

At the other end of the spectrum are examples of *M. venerabilis* such as (207) Ivan Waller who was 73 and had taken 55 years to resolve his condition. A similar case was that of (646) Iain Ogilvie who having spent

no less than 66 years in thrall must surely represent the extreme case of *M. longus*. Younger sufferers not infrequently experience very intense but mercifully short episodes. Notable cases of *M. brevis* were (607) Mark Elsegood and (777) Hugh Symonds, at 66 and 67 days respectively. (383) Martin Moran at 83 days is in the same category but since these were entirely in winter the designation of *M. hibernalis* is also appropriate.

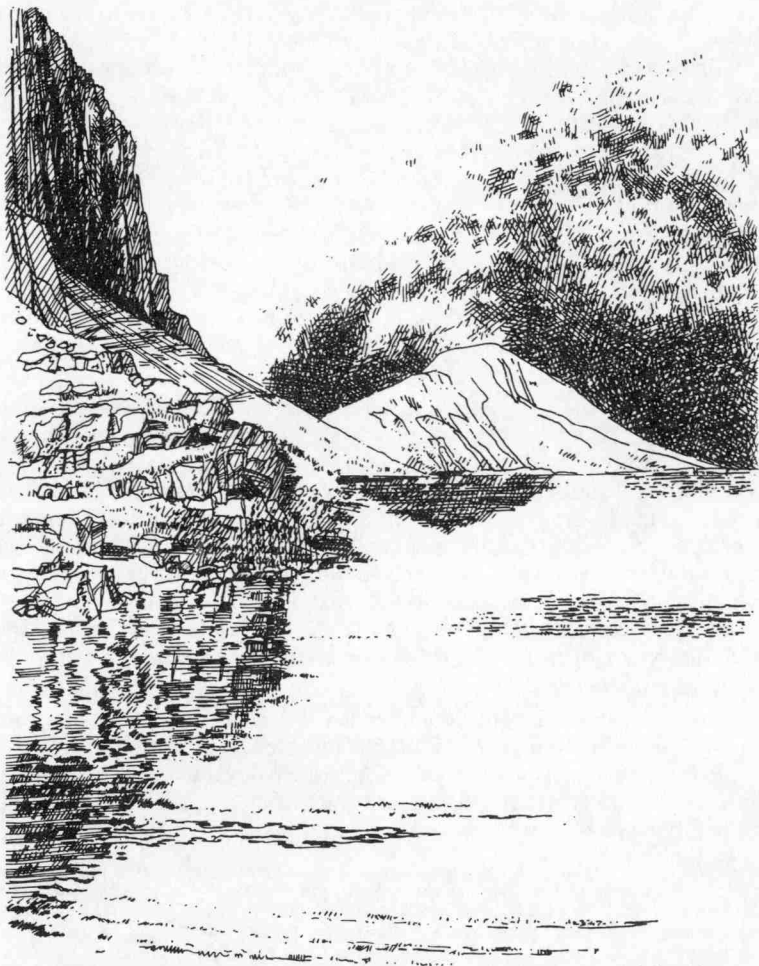
Whether persons with a solitary tendency have a liability to Munrosis or whether the condition itself encourages those afflicted to seek isolation (for obvious reasons) is not resolved, but a significant proportion of Munro activity is carried out alone and a few cases of complete *M. soloensis* have been recorded. Another rare variant which may well have gone some way to make the condition easier to bear is *M. claravistitis*, the experience of a clear view from every summit. The ingenuity of Man is well known and the motive for alleviating the burden of Munrosis powerful; thus a few like (237) Haswell Oldham have found their personal solution in the pursuit of *M. elegans* - the ascent of every Munro by an obvious sporting route, Lochnagar by *Eagle Ridge*, Beinn a' Bhuidh by *Mitre Ridge*, Nevis by *Tower Ridge* and so on. Unfortunately some Munros lack such sporting features and on them ingenuity may be tested. Oldham ascended Mount Keen on ski with the aid of a parachute!

A variant which has not yet been recorded but which would appeal to suit the needs of some in that it represents the ultimate in secrecy, solitude and anonymity would be *M. nocturnalis*. Other variants which would successfully disguise Munrosis and perhaps dilute its effect, although they would certainly extend its duration, are *M. yoyoensis* - never ascending more than one Munro on any one day and *M. totoyoyoensis* - similar but with a return to sea level between each Munro. Refinements in the ways in which a sufferer might respond to the obsession and thus obtain diversionary relief are *M. incrementalis* - starting with Beinn Teallach and concluding with Ben Nevis, or the reverse - *M. decrementalis*. More complicated might be *M. alphabeticus*, and so on.

However the variant that commends itself to my own ambition would be *M. terminalis* - dilution of the effects by spreading the activity over the entire lifetime so that the final heart attack or whatever it is to be takes place on the way down from the last summit. Mind you, it would require meticulous planning, but what a way to go!

Note: The Editor is tempted to add that *M. terminalis* might be arranged through his office, but will refrain, merely pointing out that those wishing their affliction to be recorded should do so through the beneficence of the author: - W.D. Brooker, 25 Deevie Road South, Cults, Aberdeen AB1 9NA. As usual in these parts, an s.a.e. complete with steam-proof stamp should guarantee an acknowledgement.

Finally, male compleaters wishing to purchase The Munroist Tie, if only to warn off the unaffected, may obtain one from the *Keeper of the Regalia*, Dr G.M. McAndrew, Bishop's House, 4 Lansdowne Crescent, Edinburgh EH12 5EQ. Price, including postage, £6.50 each. This distinctive tie is available only to compleat Munroists. With the approval of the Court of the Lord Lyon, the design incorporates major features from the Arms of Sir Hugh Munro. The single woven motif, a red stylised heraldic eagle's head encircled by branches of laurel and oak and subscribed by the figure 3000, is displayed on a dark blue ground between two narrow pale blue diagonal lines. The tie is in polyester jacquard weave and is lined throughout. We believe a brooch or something appropriate is being designed for the ladies. (See 'Centenary Matters', p.696 this issue).



LOCH COIRE MHAIC FHEARGHALL

John Mitchell 1931

Munro Baggins

Tune: the Highland Tinker

Chorus:

*Oh, my name is Munro Baggins,
baggin' Munros is my game -
at weekends and bank-holidays
you'll seldom find me hame!
For I'm sticking coloured pins
into a map upon my wa',
and, before I collect my pension,
I'm resolved to bag them a'!
bag them a' - toor-a-loo!
bag them a' - toor-a-lay!
and, before I collect my pension,
I'm resolved to bag them a'!*

Well, I've driven past Stac Pollaidh
in the summer once or twice,
and they say the Cobbler's bonny,
and it might be very nice -
But the shapeless lumps and sprawling bumps
are where I have to go,
for three-thousand feet's my limit,
and I widnae go below!

Chorus

And they say that Ardnamurchan
is a place that's fine to see,
but there's no wee dots upon my map,
it's no the place for me!
So I'm ticking off *Geal Charns*,
though they all seem rather plain,
I just wish I had the time to do
Ben Lui once again.

Chorus

Noo I've never been to Harris, Lewis,
Canna, Rum or Muck,
and the only time I went to Mull,
I really came unstuck -
For I missed the homeward ferry,
and it filled my heart with woe,
spending two days on an island,
that's got only one Munro!

Chorus

But there is a thought that troubles me,
in dark hours o' the night -
it's a vision o' the future,
and it's no' a pretty sight!
What happens when I've done them a',
and life seems all in vain?
- Well, I'll pull oot a' the bloody pins,
and **bag them a' again!**

Chorus

Brendan Hamill

SACK OF POTATOES

By Grant D.K. Urquhart

IT IS a grand summery evening and I am sitting in Mr. Nicholson's drinking emporium on the Rannoch Moor quaffing some of his cool 80/- and awaiting the arrival of the Portland Porker. Though the bar is crowded I am in no way concerned that I fail to observe the presence of my old friend, for he is no longer the hard and muscular companion of my early climbing years, but a very large mountaineer indeed. It is a sad fact that the combined influences of family life, American cooking, good Oregon beer, and a certain hereditary tendency to plumpness have taken their toll. Also, he is a glutton.

In truth, Portland Porker is not the name his mother gives him at birth, but if I tell you this many of you may identify him and he may feel some resentment towards me, which is not a situation I wish to encourage. Already he may think that I bear some responsibility for the fiasco which unfolds: I will tell you how it comes about.

It is the custom of the Porker on his occasional forays to the Old Country to seek me out in order that we may recapture past glories on the rock. Of course he is too fat to climb anything steep or hard, so we usually content ourselves with an Etive Slab classic such as Spartan, or Hammer, or both. Now it so happens that I have become rather bored with these itineraries, and as I sit and quaff I am becoming very hot for another route entirely. In fact, by the time the Portland Porker rolls in, I am so hot for this route I am practically steaming.

The first thing I notice about the Porker is that he has not developed any wasting disease since I last saw him. It is lucky he has a head at one end or you would not know which way up to put him, as he is about the same height in all directions. Nonetheless I am very pleased to see him, and we have much time to make up, so we buy each other many large pints while the Porker discourses far and wide, as is his wont. We discuss many important matters, such as the health of his family, and the latest developments in probability theory, and so on and so forth, until the talk comes round to mountaineering.

It transpires that the Porker has purchased a pair of Sticky Boots, and feels that these will be particularly effective when subjected to the exceptional downward force he exerts. So he suggests a visit to the Etive Slabs and an ascent of Spartan, or Hammer, or suchlike, as is our habit. Now I explain to him that we have done these routes very many times, and that I am deeply desirous of attempting a climb called Swastika, and when he protests that this is much too difficult I assure him that there is lots of

good cheating on the hard bits, as at the time I believe this to be the case. I further insist that I will provide at least E above middle C at any time he requests same, and as his judgement is by now impaired to no little degree, he at length accedes.

The next day is again astoundingly warm and sunny, and as we are only moderately overhung we are able to commence climbing quite early in the p.m. The Porker is still muttering darkly about needless and excessive difficulty, but I lead off briskly, feigning deafness. My friend's new Sticky Boots perform admirably, and though his unconventional use of the fingernails is less than elegant, we make steady progress. I am somewhat concerned at the mysterious absence of the Friendly Jug from the Moustache, but Portland takes the overlap in his stride and sportingly refrains from penduluming from the traverse, so I can see that we are certainly in clover. So much so that, having demonstrated how many modern protection devices can be slotted into the first half of the Unprotectable Quartz Band, I offer the lead on the second part.

He regards me with some suspicion, but finally accepts my assurances and copious hardware. Imagine his surprise, therefore, on finding the pitch both delicate and runnerless. I regard my belays balefully, and speculate as to whether the rapid downward motion of the Sticky Boots will continue to exceed the potential backsliding of the Porker's ample posterior. After what are known euphemistically as a few anxious moments, however, modern rubber technology and fingernails prevail.

I am now a little unpopular, as my companion unjustly questions my motives in relinquishing the lead. We regard the crux. This manifestly unclimbable roof is fortunately well supplied with stout metal holds, and yields easily to determined cheating, followed by judicious application of E above middle C. Clearly, nothing can stop us now.

Another slab pitch leads to the finishing corner, which I confidently expect to be fully furnished from bottom to top with stout pitons. I am a little disconcerted, therefore, when the stripling youth I find belayed at its foot cheerfully informs me that his leader just spent an hour and a half freeing the pitch. When I ask why he does not pull on the pitons in the time-honoured fashion, the youth points out, with some justification, that these are too far apart and, what is more, the first is some thirty feet up the vertical corner. He then leaves me to spectate quizzically as he ascends by an unusual combination of jumping, grunting, and swinging Tarzan-like on the ropes. I am glad the Porker, who is preoccupied with the delicacies of the slab, does not observe this, as it certainly does not look like his type of climbing. (Actually he only really enjoys two types of climbing: easy slabs, and wide chimneys into which he can securely wedge his great bulk.) So I keep mum about these proceedings as he lumbers towards me, perspiring pate aglow. At length he puffs onto the stance and I nonchalantly secure him to the rock.

Unfortunately it becomes more difficult to appear nonchalant once actually climbing, as the corner is both steep and smooth, and a good deal

of exertion is required to reach the haven of the stout pitons. Clearly this will be beyond the compass of my corpulent companion, but I reason that with the aid of the taut piano wires and his well-honed thrutching technique he will surely succeed.

The upper section is easy and I am soon strapping myself to a sturdy shrub on the narrow path which runs along the top of the crag. I draw up the ropes and invite my friend, out of sight beneath, to proceed. Some minutes pass during which there is no perceptible movement from below. I do not wish to seem impatient. He must be dismantling the belay. More time passes, while there is still no apparent motion. I tug the ropes more brusquely. Nothing. As usual, impatience prevails. I inquire if there is perhaps some difficulty.

'I can't do it.'

'Pardon me? Just pull on the pitons.'

'I can't reach them.'

'How far have you got?'

'Nowhere.'

'Nowhere?'

'I can't get off the ground.'

'Well just udge up a bit, I'll take in the wires, then you take a rest.'

For several minutes I haul mightily on the ropes, veins bulging on stiffening forearms.

'How far up are you now?'

'Nowhere.'

'Nowhere?'

'Still on the deck.'

'Well, try a bit harder.'

More mighty hauling, more multiple orgasms from below.

'This is hopeless, I'm totally knackered.'

'How far have you got?'

'About three feet.'

'What are you going to do, then?'

'I don't know.' A pause. 'We'll have to go down.'

'Don't be ridiculous, I'm at the top. What's more, it's 800 feet of slabs and scary overlaps with ropes jamming all over the place. I refuse to go down.'

'So untie from the ropes and I'll go down.'

'And leave all my gear in the corner? You must be joking!'

'Then I'm stuck.'

'Just prussik up the ropes.' (Rapidly backing-up the sturdy shrub.) Silence from below. 'Well?'

'Er... I can't tie a prussik knot.'

This comes as rather a surprise, as I recall the many occasions when we stagger around glaciers together, loops tucked optimistically into our harnesses. I remind my partner of this.

'What if you had fallen into a crevasse?'

'Oh well,' he replies, 'I suppose that would have been it.'

This patently insincere expression of fatalism does nothing to improve my humour. Luckily at this juncture a lycra-clad nymphet traverses the blank slab separating the marooned Porker from her route, and patiently instructs him in prussik-tying. News of this latest absurdity cheers me greatly, but the nymphet's efforts are regrettably of no more tangible help, as his great weight far exceeds the frictional capabilities of the knot. Evidently we are at an impasse. Desperate measures are called for. I look about for inspiration and find it at once.

The crag is populous. On all sides mountaineers ascend their chosen lines. And some, as the descent path is narrow and inescapable, must eventually pass my stance. I need only sit and wait. After a few minutes a pair of muscular hard men come by. Clearly they are wise and experienced climbers, as, in response to my polite 'Excuse me, chaps', they merely grunt and rush on down. Nil desperandum, however, as many large and slow parties are nearing the top of Hammer, a few yards away. I bide my time, and accost them in my best Glaswegian, surmising, correctly, that many of them will be Sassenachs and so will immediately be intimidated into doing whatever I tell them, no matter how ludicrous.

Picture the scene, if you can, of a dozen or so assorted climbers of both sexes, strung precariously along a two-foot-wide path above an abyss, heaving like a tug of war team on a cat's cradle of ropes and prussik loops attached variously to the rock and to an alarmingly bending sapling. Predictably enough, this arrangement creates enormous friction, and the hauler rises only a couple of feet more.

I am again staring into the jaws of defeat, when a small miracle occurs. One of these southern persons produces from his harness, where it has apparently dangled unheeded since some long-past Alpine excursion, a small pulley. Eureka! It takes only another hour or so of rope and anchor rearranging, followed by more hauling and heaving, and the Porker, like some great unbeached whale, or a zeppelin freed from its moorings, begins a majestic progress skywards. A few more moments and his cherubic face hoves into view, a little pink and dishevelled, but manifestly happy to arrive. If my assistants expect a show of embarrassment or contrition, then they greatly underestimate my companion. Instead, he shamelessly proclaims that, though his ascent does involve some aid, it is by modern standards a most ethical one as it is both bolt- and chalk-free. Dumbstruck, they all scuttle off. My old buddy and I unravel the spaghetti and descend at a more leisurely pace.

Back at the Coffin Stone we eat a rather belated lunch, pack our gear, and turn for the car park. About half-way down the path we are pleasantly

surprised to come upon the Porker's ever-loving parents. They tell us that they stroll up in the hope of meeting their somewhat prodigal son, and spend a most pleasant afternoon observing the local bird and animal life with the aid of their fine binoculars. I enquire if, perchance, they also observe the many mountaineers upon the cliff. Oh yes, they reply, we have a splendid view of the proceedings. And you will not believe this, they go on, but we see the most extraordinary sight. Up near the summit of the crag, they say, a person dangles for hours on the end of a rope, and he is birling around there like a sack of potatoes. Yes, they say, birling round and round, just like a big sack of potatoes.

november weekend

these hills rise
in long slow violence, ice

their final thrust;
but they are just

practising, you're much too early
for anything serious, they've not nearly

thought about what they're going to do.
gullies - nothing like ready: you

come back when they've gathered more snow.
still, be careful as you go;

there is always the chance
of an unpremeditated avalanche

G.J.F.D

A RESCUE

By G.J.F. Dutton

'THIS is worse than Princes Street the day before the Festival. Or Zero Gully at Easter.'

It was. We were pushed, jostled, poked, stood on. People overtook us, some very rudely. We overtook others, more rudely still. Children and the aged dithered in front, were helped aside, were cursed at. Luggage dented us. Infants hooted and howled. We kept losing each other in the turmoil. A few fanatics even fought against us the other way, pale with exhausted hate.

We seized a rare opportunity when we were all together, and ducked to the left, under an overhang. Traffic thundered above us, turf and small stones trebled past us, the odd whispering sweetiepaper see sawed beyond us 2000 feet to the A82. Aah...Relax...Stretch...

It was the Aonach Eagach on a fine day in late summer, and we had gone there for Doctorial 'old times' sake'; for a simple scenic stroll after the Apprentice had shown us, the previous day, some of the latest things across the glen.

'We'll wait here till sunset', declared the Apprentice, 'when the pubs are open and they've all gone home.' Otherwise, he'd be up for manslaughter; simply walking on, he'd knock dozens off, either side: satisfying, but morally wrong. The Doctor's suggestion of a descent by The Chancellor ('It's a good route, for 1920') met with an expected response: equally morally wrong, and much less satisfying. One ecological expedition sufficed for one day. Anyway, all gullies would be pattern-bombed by these passing and re-passing squadrons. We would wait. It was a fine afternoon.

At least you did see people. Fascinating. We clambered up over our overhang and surveyed the procession. Occasionally friends appeared but were borne away by the current, their greetings submerged. Many parties were roped up, often only a few feet apart, lurid in astronauts' anoraks, tintinnabulating with promenade ironware; so the tanglement at times became epic. One of the helicopters droning above would have been useful in traffic control. Our detached and lofty superiority provoked, though, occasional misinterpretation. 'Are you stuck? Can we give you a hand?' called out one eager Youth Leader from the van of his bright-faced progeny. It was left to the more genial Doctor to smile him on, dismissively. Little did we know.

As the sun went down, so did most of them, and we were about to resume our nostalgic traverse when an agitated figure approached from the west, swinging and jumping through the slap-happy pinnacles.

'It's Sandy Oliphant!' cried the Doctor, 'without babies, for once, or kids of any kind. Never sampled pure undiluted mature 35-year-old Oliphant for ages.' We thought we'd recognised him earlier, chuffing among a steaming train of schoolchildren, acting as porter, guard, stoker and driver up and down the line.

He appeared in great distress. Had any fallen off? The Doctor pursed lips as Sandy panted nearer. 'Ridiculous, taking kids along a rotten ridge like this, with such exposure and no escape. Kids depend on us adults absolutely. We should be more careful. Sandy tends to overdo things.' We doubted if any single sprog would have been adept enough to push out of such a press, and fall. Probably a whole string had gone. Dreadful.

But no. Nobody had fallen. One, however, had decided to 'go home' his own way 'home' being a camp down in the glen. He was sick of the queue. To Sandy's horror this independent youth had airily waved, jumped and slid down to that horrible loose south face. Despite entreaties he would not - probably could not - climb back up. When last visible, he was squatting on the edge of a gully, giving thumbs-up to his hand-wringing conductor - who, having noticed us a little way back, had tethered the others by a firm injunction to some rock, and then bolted here for help.

No, no, he didn't want official Rescue Teams just yet. The boy was intelligent ('certainly is, getting out of this lot', remarked the Apprentice) and would surely be waiting for assistance. 'You are the only competent climbers I've seen here,' gasped Sandy, 'you could nip over and get him up - or safely down - without any fuss. I daren't risk fuss, it would upset the others, scare the parents - and we've been that careful all weekend... People talk so...' Sandy is totally without guile, and we were touched more than flattered. We bounded along behind him, towards his bereft and quivering flock.

'You know,' hissed the Doctor, 'he should have got the M.R.T. right away. Lord knows what that boy'll get up - or down to. I don't like these private arrangements to save face, where kids are concerned - they're more important than anyone's pride.'

Of course, we had no rope or pegs. Not for a walk like this (it is indeed classified - by some - as a Walk...). Only a short nylon line - for emergency. We peered down. In the dusk a small figure crouched above the network of delapidating overhanging gullies. Still there. Poor kid.

'Fine, we'll pop down and collect him. If we see a good way out, we'll take it. And signal by torch. Then you get the rest home and drive to the bottom and pick us up. Otherwise we'll have to try and climb back up this awful stuff.' Thus the Doctor.

A most unpleasant descent. The Doctor, skilled in horticultural psychology, led us through the less neurotic vegetation. My fingernails gathered *Graminaceae* and *Ericaceae*, the Apprentice no longer enjoyed what had promised to be the only interesting part of the day. 'All right, laddie, we're here!' cried the Doctor encouragingly, as he slithered down

an invisible herbaceous thread among the unstrung and highly volatile vertical debris.

'So *you're* going this way, too?' the boy called back. He was not shocked. Not alarmed. Rather, he seemed impatient. He finished what appeared to be sandwiches, rolled the paper into a ball and tossed it into horrifying black depths. Then, waving cheerily, he vanished after it into the gloom. 'Come on, then, it's easy enough below!'

'Lord, the boy's a madman!' wailed the Doctor, and literally shinned down the ghastly slope. 'He can certainly climb - downwards, anyway.'

We caught him up, at the top of another gut-rocking gully. 'I think this'll go all right', he was saying. The Doctor clutched him, none too gently. 'Careful!' exclaimed the boy, with annoyance, 'if you're going to slip, let me know first. Don't grab!'

We tried to instil some sense of guilt. 'Don't you know we've been called out to rescue you? Don't you realise your selfishness has caused the three of us to risk our lives? We should really have had the M.R.T. out by this time, to do it properly - with more people risking their lives - and all in the papers tomorrow!'

The Doctor's exhortations fell unheeded. The boy - he must have been eleven or twelve - was pointing out his choice of route to the Apprentice, who appeared to agree. It seemed possible: with the Apprentice for the rock, the Doctor for the botany, and our 50-foot nylon line for any Emergency. Preferable to returning up that wall of short-fuse shingle, all triggered to go off downhill. We signalled back with our (only) headlamp, and then laced the vociferously protesting youth into the line.

To soothe him, we explained he was now our Leader. He demanded, if so, to wear the headlamp. No, the last man needed it, and he was not going to be the last man: he was Leader. Together, we quickly developed a technique. We dangled him down stretch after stretch, until he would call up 'O.K. - you fellers can come down now, I've sorted it.' Then one by one we would slither down to him. And off he went again, raring to go. It resembled sounding the lead, as we repeatedly cast him overboard to find bottom.

And it worked very well. Too well. Until the last pitch.

This appeared, in the by-now darkness, to be a dungeon. We had lowered ourselves optimistically - and apparently irreversibly - into it. Sheer walls, left, right, and - now - up in front of us. Our feeble headlamp (it was really only for Emergency...) scraped unhappily on the wet rocks, and on the impending vegetation behind us, most of which had been swept off beneath feet, shins, backsides and shoulderblades. Damn.

'Looks like some fun, here,' remarked the boy. He offered us a Polo mint each. 'Sorry I've no more to spare: didn't reckon on company, like. We might need the rest later,' he further informed us, sucking composedly. 'Now, shine a light, Doc; just let's have a look down there...' and wriggled

off. Our expressions were fortunately blacked out. Minutes. Badger-rattlings beneath; pebbles echoing away below. Then a shout.

'Fine. Just right. Come on, I've got you...Quite safe.'

However, we proceeded cautiously. Everything was rotten, undoubtedly irreversible. The boy had been astonishingly lightfooted. Only his (the boy's) presumed innocence prevented the accustomed string of maledictions from the insecure and disapproving Apprentice.

We found ourselves in a wet pit at the bottom of the dungeon, where some 1500 feet of trickle congregated before agreeing to run out beside our feet through a large narrow slot like a letter box. Out to freedom. We knelt in the gurgles and peered. The boy took our headlamp and demonstrated a flash of easy screees down to the road beyond this otherwise seemingly impossible chockstone.

'Terrific, eh?' He was pleased at having guided us to so elegant an exit. 'O.K.? I'll go on...' And he slipped through, tied to his line, wearing the headlamp. 'Now you fellers.'

In the blinding flash-back beam, the Apprentice tried first. Then myself. Then the Doctor, that usually infinitely extensible assemblage of limbs and stratagems. Groan. Curse. Rip.

The boy was most helpful and patient. 'Try breathing *out*, it reduces your chest,' he advised the Doctor, speechless within the Tertiary.

No. We all stuck. We could not get through. And because we had no other torch, and had forgotten crowbar and Semtex, there we would stay until it was light or until someone could climb up the outside tonight and toss us a rope from the top of the chockstone. We could hardly ask our Charge to do that - now that we had successfully brought him to safety...

'Ah; and I thought you'd be able to do it. Too bad,' sympathised the lad. 'After coming down so well, all that way.' A pause. 'Do you want me to arrange a Rescue, like?'

'He is mature for his years,' gritted the embittered Doctor, with professional self-control. 'No!' he shouted, 'just tell Sandy about it. He's coming up the road. He'll know what to do. Don't make a fuss, under any circumstances. No need to disturb people at this time of night.'

The lad came back and hissed through the slot. His beam danced on our feet, wickedly.

'No, we don't want any more people risking their lives. Just selfish. And it'd be in the papers, tomorrow, like. Though the M.R.T. *would* do it properly..' He stopped. The Apprentice had partially blown a safety valve. 'O.K.' he resumed, 'I'll no rescue you, then: if you'll no rescue me - see? Fair do's, eh?'

'Fair do's' replied the Doctor, slowly. It was checkmate. 'Be careful, now,' he added feebly, as the boy whistled off and darkness became total, our line - still tied to the brat - slipping through nerveless hands. 'Let him keep it - it'll be safer, with him going down alone...' The Doctor sighed. A

private arrangement, not the M.R.T. thank heaven. For, this time, children were not *really* concerned.

Our child certainly wasn't. We heard him whooping away in sprays of scree. A most competent youth. He would be Minister of Sport yet. And at least he had given us a mint each.

Agonies of hunger, cold and wetness were nothing to the thought of the headlines and our colleagues' mirth if that urchin failed to keep his word. 'Boy Aged 11 Brings Three Experienced Climbers Down Safely.' 'Young Child Rescues His...' Lord, they would pay him thousands...

Twice the Apprentice tried, twice he fell back, accompanied by his holds. Useless in the dark. Better to walk down in shame, than be carried.

We must have dozed, for a light woke us. A voice. Sandy's, thank the Lord. Beside us.

'How did you get in here?' we asked, seeing no rope.

'Through the little keyhole up there on the left..' and Sandy pointed his beam. 'You can really only see it from outside. The boy described it to me. He left cairns to guide us, the whole way up.' So he did know of an easy way out, all the time...our respect for the creature grew even greater.

As we stumbled to the road, munching chocolate bars, Sandy and his friend, a lean sardonic schoolteacher who, it appeared later, had suffered much from pontificating mountaineers, explained that the boy had stopped their car and told them.

'Has he.. has he told anyone else?' we mumbled.

The schoolteacher whistled an unpleasant tune and kicked the odd stone.

'Don't think so. He went straight to bed.' said Sandy.

'Probably had a pint first,' scowled the Apprentice, all of an inch high.

'I didn't scold him', explained Sandy. 'From what he told me, I gathered you wouldn't have liked us to.' Gulp. 'He's a curious child,' Sandy continued, 'unexpectedly adult in so many ways. But unpredictable, quite unpredictable.' We shivered. 'I don't think I shall bring him again. He puts a great strain on everybody, you know.' We knew.

Our own great strain lasted more than a fortnight. We avoided radio bulletins and newspapers. We escaped possible journalists. Eventually we breathed. And now - now - we can even recount it; or much of it.

'A most extraordinarily well-balanced young person - in every sense,' summed up the Doctor, admiringly - also, thankfully. 'And, remarkable, isn't it - we never asked - we don't even know his name!'

The Apprentice put it more truthfully.

'Don't want to know his bloody name...'

POSTSCRIPT: But we nearly found out his name. Some Thursdays later, the *Journal* New Climbs Editor strode into the back bar of Daddy McKay's and, beard quivering, flung a piece of paper down in front of us. 'What's

all this nonsense?' he cried, 'here's a fellow done a quite unnecessary route off the Aonach Eagach, and says he led *you* down it, and *you* will vouch for it being a fine lead, a fine route, and well worth publishing...' We paled, and read. Yes, we recognised the pitches; the last one 'goes through a horizontal cleft to easy screes and the main road; the corpulent, aged or stiff avoid it by a traverse up and left...' 'Of course, I'll not publish it. The fellow has the cheek to say if I don't he'll send a much fuller version elsewhere. Good luck to him, then!'

We froze.

'Er, well, it's - er - after all quite an *interesting* way off,' mumbled the Doctor, 'unforgettable, in fact. Do be a good chap, and put it in, this once...'

It took a great deal of Glen Droolie to convince the editor, but finally we breathed again. Before he left, we glanced hurriedly at the name of the climb; but never dared - then or later in the *Journal* - to read the name of our leader.

'I see he calls it *A Gentle Squeeze*...' mused the Doctor.

'His letter says it could be called *Blackmail*, but he thinks you'd agree that *A Gentle Squeeze* would look better, if it were printed in the *Journal*.'

When we were on our own again, we swore long and softly.

'Unexpectedly adult in so many ways,' sighed the Doctor; and drowned the whole juvenile episode in a truly mature Glen Droolie.

RAINY DAYS AND SODDEN NIGHTS

By Kevin Sutton

'FIT'S AIRCHIE daein' in the burn?'

'He's naw bluidy movin'; jus' sitting' there pickin' his toes.'

'That's just wunnerfu'. Why could he naw follow us?'

'We were intae oor balls - why should he follow us? It's yon muckle big pack o' his. He's gointae sit on that bluidy boulder a' night rather than take it aff and come o'er tae oor side.'

The Auld Skule stood conversing on the west bank of the Scavaig burn. In it's short existence between Loch Coruisk and the sea, the raging, spateful burn had leapt at their loins like a Rottweiler and snapped at their ankles like a Skye Terrier, causing the Auld Skule to hold hands - in a scholarly, prepubescent way. It was 10.30 p.m.; just turned dark. It had been raining hard all day. It was the start of the August monsoon - that season of floods and frightful midgeyness - a silly season, reflected the Halflins, for choosing to visit the Water Coire. Nevertheless, such was the popularity of the J.M.C.S. hut and such were the dictates of the Auld Skule (at whose invitation the Halflins were guests), that a Seaside Meet was declared for the middle of August.



None of that modern dehydrated stuff for Archie

The Halflins had crossed the ridge from Glen Brittle without getting their feet wet, whilst the Auld Skule chose to cross two rivers from Elgol. It was the former who set about rescuing Archie with a rope, and the latter who provided the illuminations.

'Look at the size of yon pack! He's mair claes in there than, than... Hauds ontæ ever'thing hunners of things he just cannae be daein' wi'oot.'

'I telt him we couldnae get the boat in so best travel light. In yer ain time, Archie; when yer ready, ken.'

Their voices were lost beneath the roar of the river. The Halflins - pilot and porter - brought Archie safely across only after volunteering to carry his precious pack the short distance to the hut. They sank to their knees under the weight of their office; with what manner of plenishings was that reluctant penitent equipped?

The Auld Skule had the keys to the hut; unlocking the four padlocks on the gas bunker outside was delegated to the Halflins. Rummaging about in the nest of giant bluebottle eggs until they found a couple of live ones, they lifted them indoors and connected up the heating and lighting. Half an hour later everyone was sitting in dry clothes, warm before the fire, watching Archie unpack his 'munitions of peace'.

A brace of Famous Grouse, a six pack of MacEwans lager, a five pound bag of Ayrshire tatties, four onions, five apples, two pounds of minced beef, two tins of tomatoes, four tins of rice pudding, six packets of smokey bacon, two packets of chocolate Hobnobs, two loaves of white sliced and a pound of stewing steak - in case of emergencies. None of that modern dehydrated stuff for Archie. Solid food was what he expected on his climbing trips. He kept his weight down by carrying so much solid food '- see those THP boys; meally faces,' he said, unloading the last vital part of his equipment - toilet rolls.

The rain had stopped and the sun was shining on Loch na Cuilce when the five occupants of the cosy Coruisk hut bestirred themselves the next day. Champing muesli on the hoof, the Halflins went outside, slapped the rhinoceros slabs at the back of the hut, and shook their heads: too wet. Too wet to climb even the junior J.M.C.S. Buttress across Coruisk, not to mention the enormous detour necessary to avoid getting their feet wet. The Auld Skule cooked a heavy breakfast and decided to Do the Dubhs. The Halflins saw half a challenge and announced that they would Do the South East Ridge of Sgurr a'Choire Mhig, right next to the Dubhs, but far less frequented and much more of a mouthful. Archie would recover his aplomb down at the hut.

The Halflins admitted to themselves that their ridge was not as good as the Dubhs, but it was a challenge all the same. They descended from the summit of Gars-Bheinn to the sea-end of the Cuillin fence, scattering a herd of twenty MacLeod hinds in Coire a'Chruidh. The cloud came down with them and a squall chased a yacht into Loch Scavaig. The wind was changing, the weather was going to blow again and Loch na Cuilce was a

notoriously fickle anchorage - no place for a yacht smaller than Britannia, reckoned the elder Halflin. He was not a sailor but had survived a previous Yacht Meet with the younger Auld Skoller; repeating the Celebrated S.M.C. Meet in Loch Hourn, doing the Munrovia of Knoydart and other nautical exploits.

The rain chased the Halfpins into the hut. Archie - contrite and meticulous - had done the housework; collected barrels of water from the burn (the tap supply was out of action), swept the floor and washed the dishes. The Auld Skule marched in half an hour later.

They had just finished their dinner, Archie had thrown away the cap of his first bottle of whisky, when there was a knock on the door. The Auld Skule scowled. Two men from the English Midlands were begging a dry night in the hut. The rain was really heavy by then and the wind was gusting to gale force. The Auld Skule were carefully explaining the rules, the insurance cover, the Club, and everything, when four other cagouled figures came up behind the first two.

'How many of youse are oot there?'

'Six.'

'Awa' haim. Ye must have tents - go and pitch them o'er there on that flat ground - that's wut youse came for, isnae it? This wull be the best night of yer lives and youse wantae go an' spoil it by commin' intae oor hut? Ye wid nivver forgive us.'

The Halfpins opened the shutters and the kitchen window to watch the campers pitching in the gale. In the background the Mad Burn had escaped. In three hours it had tripled in volume and was then a solid spume of water. They closed the shutters for the night and joined the others round the gas fire. The Auld Skule either dominated the only sofa or sat like a monkey on the top of the three-tiered bunks. Thin, wiry Archie sat on a straight-backed chair with his leg crossed, leaning over his whisky in a predatory way. The Halfpins sat on the edge and listened, like students.

The patter was priceless, preposterous, unpredictable and unrepeatable without a line from their publishers. From tales of Malky the Alky, the Great Bus Conductress Pie Assault-Caper, through gorges of mountain punditry to the Utter Hebrides, liberally spiced with quotations of Borthwick and other shaggy dog stories; from Jacksonville to the Hornli hut, with Big Names and Big Routes, with Bonington and Booze - Archie and the Auld Skule told all about their mountain days and bothy nights, honouring an oral tradition as old as the hills.

It was around midnight when there was another knock on the door. By that time the Auld Skule was much mellower and let them in. Their tent had blown down and there were only two of them.

'Yer a'right boys, yer black, y'unnerstaund. It's those glaikit English were nae lettin' in.'

The elder Halflin smiled, familiar as he was with the peculiar racism of Auld Caledon, but the two black students from Birmingham were



How many of youse are oot there?

dumbfounded. They were on a sixth-form college trip, had walked in from Sligachan in trainers ('Ye pair souls'), following the lead of two teachers ('Naw Scottish Teachers?'). They were equipped for an overnight trip with orange juice and light-weight, freeze-dried THP (Nivver!) The Auld Skule heated a tin of creamed rice and Archie passed two drams across the table.

In the morning the two students were convinced that they had spent an evening in the company of five famous mountaineers and they went round asking for their autographs on a Colin Baxter postcard. Outside the rain was, if anything, heavier than the night before, though the wind had moderated, allowing the bad language of the Mad Burn to fill the air. The Halfpins had to walk back to Glen Brittle over Bealach an Garbh-Choire, to keep their feet dry. The Auld Skule were staying on until the end of the week.

The Birmingham Six were permitted the use of the drying room to sort out their case while Archie gave them instructions about river crossings. When the Six departed they presented the Famous Five with three bottles of Highland Spring Water. The gift left them speechless for the first time in three days. But Archie would surely find a place for the bottles.

TESTAMENT OF LOST YOUTH

By Robert Bradbury

'NIGEL INGLIS Graves... Robert Olivier Blairgowrie... Brian Raymond Ian... Since this is your first such appearance... to H.M. Hostel for Youthful Offenders, Naysneachda, Inverness-shire... for a period of one week at H.M.'s pleasure. Send them down...

'Brian Raymond Icarus Apparently Normal Fallon and Robert Overtly Bombastic Baldeagle, you have once more been brought before me... You have both clearly repeatedly and unrepentently failed to learn from your previous custodial... and must be given the opportunity to contemplate the consequences of your... for a suitably long... at a place very remote from your normal... and consequently you are to be taken... and detained at H.M.'s pleasure at H.M. Bothy, Sourlies, Knoydart, where you can reflect on your actions in the dark, sombre waters of Loch Nevis for a period of...'

'Please, your 'onour, Lord Justice McCaskill, Sir, I've learnt me lesson now, 'onest guv' ...'

Awake to the gripped entrails of a dream's unreal...

June, Sourlies, we two to the cell, doing porridge at His McCaskill's pleasure. The long-blunt-shock treatment, with no immediate prospect of parole. After snap - porridge - once more unto these four walls, my friend. Now is the summer of our discontent that doth follow inglorious winter.

As I reached up to stuff old tatters of Press and Journal into the teeth of a damp south westerly whistling from the dank beyond the sleeping platform, my eye caught the rusty rectangular tinlet, jammed right in just below where old stone met corrugated sheeting. Inside, folded into four, the already damp papers. Message-in-a-rusty-tin...

BIGGLES ON WHITE ALERT!

Acknowledgement: The author thanks Group Captain Sir D.B. Batten-Willis, D.S.C., for inspiration and Air Marshal The Lord Sinclair McNosh, D.S.O. for technical advice.

Author's Note: Any resemblance to recent Winter Operations is purely intentional.

After November '18s decisive party in the attic high above the maelstrom-furrowed fields of Grindigon, Captain Bigglesworth soon bored of low level flying over Speyside and yearned for Operations on a higher plane...

'What-ho! Perfect terrain for the planks!' Biggles nonchalantly lowered the Camel into Coire an t'Sneachda for a pre-winter recce, but was soon high again on 'twenty foot cornices, azure skies, powder snow...'

Algy, veteran of countless Cairn Storm downhill dogfights, languidly flicked through 'An Anthology of Ski-Mountaineering Operations in Scotland' by Group Captain Sir D.B. Batten-Willis. 'Splendid fellow, Sir D.B.! Editor of S.M.G. Guidebooks. Skied throughout Scotland. Records unbelievably whizzo winter glossies. Great white wildernesses, giant bowls of coires, azure skies, powder snow...'

Ginger, keen as mustard, pored over Air Marshal The Lord Sinclair McNosh's Instruction Manual, 'To Ski is Poetry the Nordic Way'. 'Real Gent, The Lord Sinclair! Editor of 'Climber, 'illwalker and Flyin' Officer'. Skied throughout Europe. Reckons even ordinary ranks like me findin' Nordic ski-tourin' a unique wilderness experience.' Already Old Ginger, one of the few surviving walking-class war poets, due to a severe blow to the cranium had amnesiad his own piece inspired by the Training Course at the O.I.K.S. dry scree slope:

Hillhead

Grey skies, nylon snow.

Out of the gate from twelve o'clock high,

Knees gone to jelly, eyes to the sky,

From 'arf a grand up, I'm learning to fly.

Nosediving, nosediving, I'm gathering speed,

Oh God, if I prang, I'll bleed! I'll bleed!

I might even die!

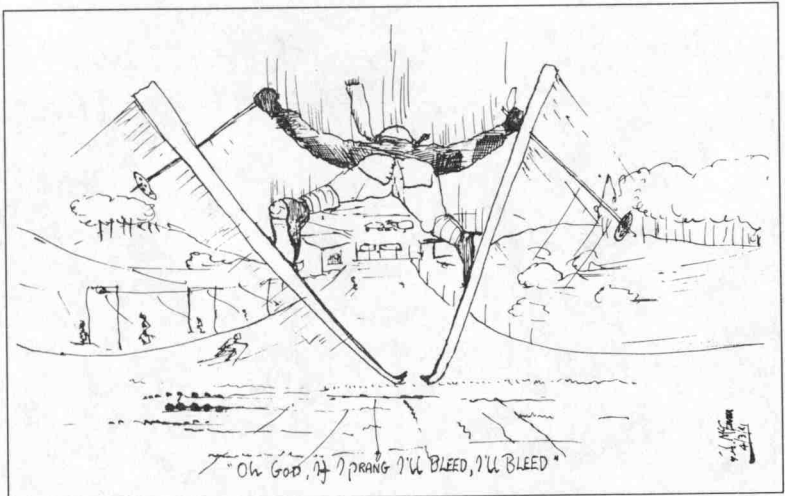
Falling, I'm falling! I'm out of control!

I'm over the fence, I'm into the park.

I'm bleedin'! bleedin'!

Jallopies all round.

Grey skies, nylon snow.



Early December, from G.C.H.Q. Bracknell Met Officer McCaskill warned, 'Chaps, woolly bedsocks at the ready! Freezing Level 2,000 feet.'

'Men. WHITE ALERT!' ordered Biggles. 'Ginger, to The Ski-Store.'

Ginger reported back, 'Sir, on order, war reparations from land of the 'Un, due imminently, three pairs of:

1. Planks, Nordic type, metal-edged;
2. Plank-poles, tolascope type;
3. Sea boots, 'eavy duty, Nordic type;
4. Bindin's, Rottweiler type.'

'Rottefella type, Ginger.'

'Sorry Sir, Rotter-weiler-feller type.'

The following weekend, with deceptive ease Biggles defied the force of Old Newton to coax the Camel on to Sneachda's winter powder...

Azure Skies, Powder Snow, No Kit

Men, damned bad show

Store still blankers on Hun Kit.

Now, let's have a go,

See if we can learn, without it.

Diagonal stride, diagonal stride,

Bash, bash on, men, knees forward, poles behind.

Now, kick turn, kick turn.

Up, round, right toe to the stern.

Telemark turn, Telemark turn,

Left knee forward, right back, back a bit.

Now, sink low, feel your thigh muscles burn.

That's it! perfect, with no Kit.



Biggles lectured on avalanche avoidance

The cold spell continued. The Store phoned. 'Sir, tolascope plank-poles and Rotter-feller-weilers arrived.' Below twenty-inch Sneachda cornices, Biggles lectured on avalanche avoidance. M.O. McCaskill predicted, 'Freezing Level 5,000 feet.' The Store phoned. 'Sir, Nordic sea-boots and planks arrived...'

With Ops imminent, Biggles demanded intense Training. In the Mess, Algy slipped on skis and sipped G and Ts over Sir D.B.'s Anthology: 'Macdui. Rating: ****/IV. A long and serious Operation. Avoid stiff drink beforehand...'

Ginger reported back on a detailed Technical Analysis of The Lord Sinclair's Kit. 'Sir, on High Level Ops over Wilderness usin' plank-poles, teloscopic type, emergency repair slieve vital. Easily made out of split metal sheet, even recycled beer can will improvise, tightened with three 'ose clamps. Mine's another can of Stella, please Captain, Sir!'

Ops very imminent...

Snowflakes over the Wilderness on the M.O.'s chart. Through the ether, Plank Hotline, 'Scotland's Top Hole Plank Information Service', echoed, 'Chief at Cairn Storm optimistic.'

'SCRAMBLE!!'

Masterfully Biggles caressed the Camel through clag onto the deserted Cairn Storm jallopy park. 'Ginger, recce Cairn Storm Mess.'

Ginger reported back, 'Sir, Artificial Ascenders non-Operational. Chief Penguin on Leave in Corfu.'



'Damned bad show! Men, strap planks to kitbags, and we'll bash up top. Plenty of powder on the plateau...' With un-telescoped poles heather planting and planktips clagwards, Biggles and Algy bashed ahead rhythmically, being passed only by two lifetime-in-the-hills Scots footsloggers 'aiming for Macdui'.

'Biggles, reckon they're S.M.G. Squadron?'

'Infantry, Algy. Not S.M.G. Squadron.'

Far below, Ginger contemplated a unique wilderness experience. 'Gawd blimey! Bashin' up'ill with sea boots, Nordic type, 'eavy duty, on me feet and cartin' two bleedin' great metal-edged Nordic planks on me back. I'm tatered...'

On locating the piebald plateau, Biggles barked firm orders. 'Men, snap sea-boots into Rottweilers and follow me in the full High Level Display...'

Circa Middle of OS Chart 36?

No skies, powder slush.

Go on man! go on man! with a free flowing glide.

Diagonal stride, diagonal stride,

Move forward, move forward, with aeronautical pride.

Get up man! Get up man!

And move, move forward, move with a fancy free glide.

Now kick, kick turn,

Skis right right up, out, out wide away from your side.

Good God man! Good God man!

Roll over! Roll over!

And for God's sake,

Get up off your side!

(Unfinished)

When all three airmen had mastered denying Old Newton with perfect synchronicity, Ginger recalled The Lord Sinclair, 'Sir, navigation, accurate type, demandin' Operation on planks.'

'All under control, Ginger. On a bearing aiming for Macdui.'

'Biggles, clag clearing!' Through binocs Algy scanned the crud-covered plateau. 'Not S.M.G. Squadron coming to town at nine o'clock to bearing.'

'Men, tail Not S.M.G. Squadron...'

Sipping double whiskies in his favourite Mess armchair with the Anthology, Biggles made Flight Plans. 'New Year's Op. The four highest Cairnstorms. Rating: *****/V. Scotland's most magnificent High Level Operation. For the Scottish Nordic Squadron Leader, a long, serious and seldom-attempted undertaking. Definitely avoid stiff drink beforehand...'

Meanwhile, in the barracks High on POT (Pre-Operational Tension), Ginger slipped on snow goggs and turned to The Lord for further Morale booming: 'On a Scottish Nordic Operation, in order to reach the powder it

is often necessary for the Officer to instruct the lower ranks... to transport their skis strapped to their... for extremely long... lower rank slang is Nordic Crucifixion...'

With the M.O.'s mercury on minus ten, the Hotline reported, 'Although currently insufficient powder at Cairn Storm, Morale High, Forecast positive, Chief optimistic.' The New Year yawned ...

Invoking aeronautical wizardry astounding to even Algy and Ginger, a sombre Biggles humped the Camel between the ice-encased summits of the four highest Cairnstorms. 'Men, boulders embedded in corrugated ice excessive, even for metal edges. Metal bases, maybe.'

Saved from Nordic bleedin' Crucifixion! thought Ginger.

Back to Base, where Biggles slipped on goggs, ordered a treble whisky, and turned to the Anthology for further solace: 'Still High from POT, but now moving rhythmically under azure skies across the deep powder of the awesome plateaux, the Squadron Leader will experience a great feeling of space ...'

The Hotline announced, 'Although currently insufficient powder, Morale still High. Cairn Storm so hard frozen Chief convinced one big dump should clinch it.'

'Men, all Leave cancelled. WHITE ALERT! for month of Jan...'

While Biggles led ski-fitness Training on Meagaidh ('Men, perfect terrain for planks'), Old McCaskill's charts recorded on Ginger's new-fangled phideo: 'Chaps, good news for snowdrops! Freezing Level 6,000 feet. Warmest Jan since Crimea.'

Biggles restless, 'Damned Green Mansion Effect!' but, 'Chief at Cairn Storm still optimistic.' Ultimatum issued:

'Ops to re-commence 0900 hrs Feb. 1st.'

On the Mess noticeboard: FOR SALE - Telescopic plank-pole and metal-edged plank. One each of a pair. Hardly used. One careful owner. Ideal for growing runner beans up.

A transcription of Biggles' Type-It-Yourself Flight Record:

'01/02/19

0900 Hrs.	Soloed Cairn Storm. Freshly driven slash above 3,000 ft.
0915 Hrs.	Operational Diffs un-telescoping Hun telescrapic poles. Duff Kit.
1000 Hrs.	Hand-to-metal combat with flying jacket zip. Duff Kit.
1200 Hrs.	Act of unashamed Hun aggression. Poles and zap joined forces in sabotage. Pole folded up. DUFF KIT.
1400 Hrs.	Damned bad show Ginger's hose clamps and flattened beer can 5 hrs. south.
1500 Hrs.	Party-in-the-attic above Snechda. Further Op Duffs. Rotweilers un-binding. DIFF.
Time unknown	Opirrational Error. Rottweiler and plank released into Sneckda via Bomb Door Buttress.



"GINGER CONTEMPLATED A UNIQUE WILDERNESS EXPERIENCE....."

Ditto	Map mislaid.
Time unknown to	Walking the plank back to the Camel. Sea-boot leaking.
2059 Hrs.	V. Duff.
2100 Hrs.	Raised the limping Camel.'

March, 'Chaps, woolly bedsocks away! Freezing Level 7,000 ft. Warmest spring since Mafeking...'

'Men, time spent on reconnaissance is never wasted...' advised Biggles, savouring quadruple whiskies on a deck chair on the Mess lawn under a beaming March sun. 'Sgurr na Ciche. Rating *****/X. Several stiff drinks strongly recommended beforehand. Best approached by Camel from Loch Nevis. Scotland's most technically demanding Nordic... Only for Squadron Leaders who enjoy long swoops of aeronautical... Strictly for those seeking sporting...'

'Men, that's us!' exclaimed Biggles.

Bleedin 'ell! thought Ginger.

Easter Leave, the Hotline broadcast, 'Morale restored. Late powder! LIFT-OFF!' Denied Camel parking space at jallop-y-infested Cairn Storm. Biggles buzzed the yo-yo downhill dogfight, cleared the burn with a delicate mess drains' fragrance, waved at lines of shin sinking civvy climbers, and defying Old McNewton with sublime skill, winged from azure skies on to Sneachda's full powder...

EASTER, 1919

Whoopee! whoopee! whizzo! spiffing!
Swooping, sweeping, planting, peeling,
Fresh blown powder booffing, biffing ...
EEeeeeeh!!... Aah?... Aaaah?...
'Mind Old McNewton, Ginger...'
'AAaaaaah!!**!*!!!... ???... OOoooooh!!...
A terrible ugliness is born.

'I say, Biggles! Two fellows broolly-hopping out of Sneachda on to the plateau. Super spiffing whizzo!'

Biggles peered through binocs, 'Aah... Full brollies, one emblazoned with full Group insignia... Take-off tow rope coiled quasi-helically round twin intersecting wing and runway ice-incisor tools... Full uniform, top brass, Group Captain with an Air Marshal...'

'MAY-DAY! MAY-DAY!' Demonstrating total technical mastery, Biggles tarmaced the ailing Camel at Drumochter, heroically avoiding plank-racked, full-beam-flashing jallop-y convoys heading south at termination of yo-yo Ops.

'Men, plenty of powder in north facing corries ...'

'More bleedin' Crucifixion,' then short sashays along strips of slush, crab, crabbing along until the trig point recced. 'Men, first Munro on planks.'

Winter Ops terminated on Meall Chuaich. 'Men, unique wilderness experience,' said Biggles.

'Roll on next winter's WHITE ALERTS!' said Algy.

For Ginger that day, the weeks, the months, the winter of abortive Operations had become a vacuity beyond even poetry's redemption.

'Sir?'

'Yes, Ginger?'

'Go and see a taxidermist.'

That June, leaving Ginger still confined to barracks with spit and ski-polish, Biggles, showing total incompetence, ditched the Camel in sombre Loch Nevis and led Algy on an unplanned recce.

'Knoydart, Algy. Soon be demanding severer terrain.' At Sourlies, a lifetime in-boathies couple. 'I say!' said Biggles to the husband, 'Didn't we see you, back-end of last year, footslogging on Macdui?' On mention of Cairn Storm, the footslogger de-amnesiad:

'We assessed the powder a bit thin for skis that day.'

'You defy Old Newton yourself, Old Boy?'

'I prefer Ski-Mountaineering ...'

Biggles engaged the Old Cove in a spot of banter. 'We considered Ski-Mountaineering Kit, but concluded Nordic clobber superior for McNewton-defying.'

'We could discuss that at some length ...'

Later, whilst the not-so-Old Boy was off reccing firewood, Algy, interrogated his half-section. 'You defy Old Newton yourself, Old Girl?'

'Yes, but less than my husband. He often skis with his Squadron.'

'His Squadron?'

'S.M.G. Squadron.'

'Crikey,' muttered Algy.

Next day, as the half-section was being partied-in-the-attic to her penultimate Munro ('My husband finished years ago...') in the teeth of Old McCaskill's south westerly worst, Biggles and Algy bravely defied Old McC by confining themselves to bothy in contemplation of the mystery. Who was he?

'Remind me, Biggles, what exactly is S.M.G. Squadron?'

'S.M.G. Squadron, Algy? Scottish Maintaineering Group Squadron, Scotland's most top-hole. Ranks Squadron Leader and above only.'

Locating the bothy book, Biggles detected the vital gen. 'Algy, look at this a.m.'s Record!'

'Crikey, Biggles! Sir D.B. Batten-Willis...'

... Biggles on WHITE ALERT! The End.

'Brian, who wrote Biggles?'

'Captain Long-Johns.'

'Thanks.'



TWICE IS COINCIDENCE

Contributed by Brian S. Findlay

Editor's Note: Mr Findlay came across this incredible story as part of his work in the Claims Department of an Insurance Company. It was sent in as a letter to the Editor, but we feel that due to the unusual circumstances surrounding an otherwise minor car accident, it is worthy of a larger type. Certain details have been deleted in the copy of the claims letter to protect the innocent...

The Editor
S.M.C.J.
Glasgow

Dear Sir

I, like many other club members, was totally enthralled by the article in last year's journal regarding the amazing survival story of Leighton Johnstone. As I read I could feel the hair bristle on the back of my neck, my palms become sweaty. Why had I never before heard of this incredible episode, which by its very nature must be part of the folklore in the annals of Scottish mountaineering? Surely others must be aware of this fascinating tale. However, all enquiries I made drew a blank, no-one it seemed could throw any light on the affair.

I must admit to being very sceptical about the entire episode, and seriously doubted the authenticity of W.H. Murray's article.

Imagine therefore my feelings, when at work I received a letter from a gentleman purporting to have been involved in a motor accident with a one LEIGHTON JOHNSTONE!! Time stood still as I read the contents of the letter (a copy of which I enclose), this surely could not be the same Leighton Johnstone? He must be almost 100 years old by now? The tale that followed is as equally fascinating as the one which occurred 60 years ago on the flanks of Britain's highest mountain.

It appears that following the episode in 1931, Johnstone and his reunited wife moved north to the town of Ellon near Aberdeen, to escape from the public eye and media attention. An accountant by profession, he set up business in the town, dealing mainly with the large farming community in the area, but, despite the nearness of the Cairngorm Mountains he never again set foot in the hills, contenting himself with fishing on the nearby River Ythan. His life developed into the routine humdrum existence

experienced by all accountants. Nothing further untoward happened, nothing that is until a minor car accident happened on 12th June 1990 in the NORCO supermarket car park in Ellon.

MY CAR NO A
FORD SIERRA

DSO

GEORGE ROBB

RECEIVED

10 SEP 1990

CLAIMS DEPT.

ELLON

5th September 1990

Dear Sir,
Re. my visit to your office on
Wednesday 5th September 90, Regarding Accident
with one of your Clients.
As the accident happened three
months back, and the hold up was my Insurance
Co., the Union.

I explained everything to a member
of your Staff, he told me to get a copy of the
Estimate, and give as much details about the
accident as possible, as all the forms, Estimate
etc., went to my Insurers, and they now tell
me they can not blame on my behalf, as I have
only THIRD PARTY FIRE AND THEFT.

The accident happened on the 12.6.90
in NORCO SUPERMARKET CAR PARK, ^{ELLON} By your Client
MR LEIGHTON JOHNSTONE, ELLON

(DETAILED Sketch of Accident)



As I pulled into parking space, your client was
sitting in his car, and before I got out of my car,
he started reversing out, and hit my rear door with
his front corner bumper.

Yours faithfully,
George Robb

It all began on 25th April 1990, exactly 59 years to the day that Johnstone made his remarkable re-appearance to the startled Grant in the C.I.C hut. On this lovely Wednesday morning, Johnstone made his way by car to the local supermarket, intent on carrying out the weekly shopping on behalf of his wife (being an accountant he knew that she had no head for figures). Had she known then that she was not to see him again for another 2 months, things might have been different! In the moments after he drove away from the family home, an almighty blizzard developed. You may think this unusual for April, but such events are not uncommon in the area at this time of year, being known locally as the Teuchit-Storms. This particular storm was, however, much more severe than any previously experienced, and heavy snow fell all morning causing chaos throughout Aberdeenshire and blocking the A939 Cockbridge - Tomintoul road yet again.

When the storm had abated and normality was restored, Johnstone had disappeared, he had simply vanished from the face of the earth, car and all.

Searches were made of the immediate area, the River Ythan was dragged, and extensive clearing by snow ploughs and tractors (provided by his grateful clients) of the supermarket car park proved fruitless. To save his distraught wife further trauma and embarrassment the matter was hushed up by the authorities. His wife even considered moving again to Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe) to escape the irony of the situation.

Almost two months had elapsed when attention was again switched to the NORCO car park. Out of the blue appeared Johnstone, sitting in his car as though nothing had happened. Before anything could be done, he had started up his vehicle and reversed into the rear door of the startled Mr Robb.

Questions flashed through Johnstone's mind. Where have I been? Where's my wife's groceries? What about my NO CLAIMS BONUS?

As they say - 'We don't make a drama out of a crisis'.

ALASKAN ODDITIES

By Ian Walton

'CHILKOOT Charlie's - where we cheat the other guy and pass the savings on to you' This admirable slogan hangs above the door as the bouncer checks that you're not carrying anything too subversive, say an Uzi or some anti-oil industry literature. Chilkoot Charlie's is the most schizophrenic bar I know: it's a rustic Alaskan saloon, complete with sawdust on the floor and goldrush prospector lookalikes, in from the bush for a good time in Anchorage. But in keeping with the dual personality of this frontier city turned sprawling metropolis (some refer to it, not so kindly, as Los Anchorage), there is another unexpected side. As I enter at 2 a.m. it's still daylight outside; in the dark neon interior I'm hit by a wall of industrial strength rock and roll as the lead singer of 'France' sways precariously atop the stage railing, a strange place to find the best rock dance club on the west coast of America. And that's not even to mention the giant Country and Western floor, the 'horseshoes' games and the custom Chilkoot Charlie's beer; it makes the Clachaig on a Saturday night seem just marginally less strange.

It's almost more than I can cope with after ten days exploring the mountains and passes of the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge. This is the strip of land near the Canadian border on the Arctic ocean; President Bush wants to sacrifice it to his oil industry friends, using Iraq as a convenient scapegoat, and the Sierra Club is equally determined to defend it as an astonishing wilderness and home to the giant caribou herds.

Getting there can be quite a pantomime. First you have to get to Anchorage and Fairbanks, which to most people are already the back of beyond, but in fact are easily accessible by scheduled jet from Europe or the rest of the United States. Then the fun begins. We flew on Audi Air amid rumours that they might go bankrupt at any minute. We had been told to show up to be weighed (passengers plus baggage) bright and early, ready for our whole group to board the elderly DC-3. After several hours of Alaska's favourite travel pastime - hanging around airstrips waiting for non-existent flights - we had talked to enough other unhappy customers to figure out that the DC-3 was a myth. But there was a chance that we could be shuttled over to the north slope on a small Piper Navaho.

All the stories about Alaskan bush pilots are true - and then some, it's like a bigger and better version of Caledonian Macbrayne folklore; everybody loves them and hates them and needs them to get to bizarre places. Everything seemed to be going fine as we wound up the Chandalar River valley. I had always laughed at tales of wartime flyers following the railway lines so as not to get lost; well, in Alaska they follow the rivers - if they can see them. We banked suddenly and shot over a pass with great

rock walls on every side. A fellow passenger began swearing loudly at the pilot to 'get the **** out of here', and instead of swooping into the Hulahula River valley on the other side of the pass we screamed up into the thick clouds. 'This is much more dangerous', confided the pilot. 'Mt. Isto is over 9,000 ft and I've no idea where it is in this muck. But he's the mayor of Kaktovik so I have to humour him.'

I was quite relieved when we emerged across the coastal plain, the native village of Kaktovik on Barter Island gleaming in a frigid sun and the rusting 'DEW Line' radars an incongruous reminder of misspent cold war millions. Gradually the second snag of the shuttle flights dawned on me. Our trusty leader was still in Fairbanks waiting for the next round. I was approached by a pilot who looked barely out of primary school. 'This was the only place in the world where I could fly all day every day', he said by way of introduction. He piloted one of the tiny Cessna 'taildraggers' which land in absurd spots on the tundra and on gravel bars in the middle of rivers; these are the legendary 'air taxis' which deliver hunters, climbers and other lunatics to their chosen spot in the wilderness. Sometimes they bring them back.

'Your landing area was under water last time I flew over. Want to go someplace else?' But we agreed to go check it out. 'There it is: that strip of peat bog beside the river. Let's see if it's firm enough to land. Wheee...' We made it. Maybe he was young, but he could land that plane in half the space it took everyone else. The rest of the group made it too. So finally we were ready to explore: ten days backpacking through the Romanzof mountains of the northern Brooks range and the giant river drainages, the Aichilik and the Kongakut.

The difficulties reminded me of my early 'Feich Trips' in Scotland - New Year backpacks with St. Andrews University Mountaineering Club where the last thing you wanted to do was leave the relative calm of a Knoydart glen for the exposed summits. We had to ford raging arctic torrents - again and again; Paul toppled over with his pack and floated off down the river, zoom lens bobbing by his side. We barely got him wrung out before it started snowing. This was August. After twenty-four hours of nonstop downpour we could no longer make the necessary river crossings. Two timber wolves howled mournfully at us from the other side of the river, 'Go back, go back'.

So we tried a different fork, winding up to a desolate pass on Bathtop Ridge. One of the early explorers clearly had a plumbing fetish. There was also a Drain Creek and a Plug Mountain. But in contrast there was a splendidly patriotic view towards the British Mountains and the Canadian border. We passed a group stalking Dall sheep, and exchanged mutual incomprehension of our activities. We staggered up interminable scree slopes with our huge packs, wobbling from boulder to boulder. We wallowed in peat bogs that would not be out of place in Jura. And of course we had the Arctic traveller's constant nightmare: the dense willow scrub clinging to the steep banks of each rushing stream.

But it was good too. There was the morning frost clinging to all those 7,000-foot summits which didn't even have a name. We could have spent weeks ridgewalking and climbing above the willow line. But we didn't. We were exploring and just soaking in the country. There's an overwhelming sense of wilderness that you just don't experience in Scotland, where you can almost always make it back to the pub by closing time. There's a vast expanse of mountains and river valleys with only you and the grizzly bears and a few million caribou. But there remains an invigorating feeling of emptiness. You could have a profound religious experience out there. Or you could just flop down and graze on the berries for a while.

And then there's the question about whether you'll make it back; perhaps the next grizzly will be the problem one, or you'll stumble in one too many river, or the crazy bush pilot will just forget to pick you up, or Audi Air will finally go bankrupt. But the clouds eventually lift down the river and the tiny Cessna bounces from rock to rock in the river bed. We wing back out to civilization - a beer in the Arctic Hotel in Kaktovik, lots of beer at Chilkoot Charlie's, and more of the clever slogans that make Alaska such an experience, 'Alaska, where men are real men, and women win the Iditarod'. 'Alaska, home of beautiful dogs and fast women', or this year's favourite on the T-shirts, 'Unless you're the lead dog, the view's always the same'.

Next I was off to south-east Alaska, to Glacier Bay and the 'Greenland experience'. If you're a rich, armchair explorer you can go on a Princess love-boat cruise and see video whales without ever leaving your stateroom. But the only real way to get there is by sea kayak. You can't easily walk because the south-east is very wet, which means impenetrable brush - much worse than up on the north slope. But you can pack your food and tent and climbing gear into an impossibly tiny space and paddle off into the rain and the navigational nightmare of the Beardslee Islands. The land in Glacier Bay is rising as the glaciers recede, which means that what you see doesn't in the slightest way match what shows on your map. And that godsend channel you're heading for probably no longer exists. But the bald eagles are unlikely to eat you anytime soon.

It's very easy to get seduced by the kayaks and spend your entire trip exploring the numerous side fjords or floating in front of the tidewater glaciers just waiting for the next huge pillar of blue ice to calve into the milky water. You can sit a quarter mile off the eight hundred foot face of the glacier and you'll never have felt so tiny. And you'll be completely out of film before you realize it.

But there are wonderful hills, mountains, and of course glaciers in Glacier Bay. Most of them were 'discovered' by that itinerant Scot, John Muir. And the kayak is the perfect way to approach them. I spent a day climbing Red Mountain which is shaped a bit like Ben Nevis - except that the tourist route is covered with dense alder. I had to crawl on my hands and knees for over an hour before emerging into an alpine flower wonderland of lupin and fireweed. The summit shoulder had a teal-blue pool with its

very own iceberg. And from the top you get a fabulous panoramic view: all the way down the bay to Icy Strait, across to the west arm glaciers of Lamplugh and Johns Hopkins and up to the 15,000-foot summit of Mt Fairweather and its satellites, and last, straight down on the braided fan of the Casement Glacier terminal moraine - mile upon mile of devastation in rock and mud.

If you're really adventurous you can arrange transportation to the outer coast and make an attempt on Mount Fairweather (surely the least appropriately named mountain in North America). But there are more accessible delights, even though there is only one trail in all of the park. Shapely Mt Wright guards the entrance to Adams Inlet and can be reached up a steep scree run direct from the beach opposite Garforth Island, with no intervening scrub. And towering above Riggs Glacier is the daunting Black Mountain with its fine alpine ridgeline and serious glacier approach. You can get a fine view of it from across Muir Inlet by scrambling up on White Thunder ridge and returning by Remnant Glacier. I was glad that someone else volunteered to pose for the photographs inside the ice caves of the beached glacier. For the most part you can explore and climb, never knowing if anyone has been there before. At the outer end of the Bay you have to cope with mature trees, dense rainforest undergrowth and bears. As you head north to the recently exposed areas of land you move into glaciers and bare rocks.

And the whole time you should feel right at home because the weather is just like Scotland. One last slogan (this one the favourite of the Bartlett Cove rangers). 'If the barometer falls, predict rain; if the barometer rises predict rain; and if the barometer is steady, then it's already raining'.

NORWAY 1958

A Journey and a Climb

By Ted Maden

This article is reproduced with minor changes from the Kings College Hospital Gazette, 38, 1959. It contains an account of an early ascent, believed to be the first British ascent, of a now famous wall, The East Wall of the Trolltind.

IN GOTHENBURG the streets were wet. It was a grey morning and there was no comfort in the noise, the bustle, the ships' sirens. Everyone was busy, everyone was going somewhere, except for me. I was feeling rather foolish. Having wandered up to Sweden through Brussels, Cologne and Copenhagen, with a morning coat under an arm and a climbing rope over a shoulder, having enjoyed a wedding (not mine) in a large, friendly Swedish country house, having overspent my money, it seemed I could do nothing but a few days' sightseeing before returning to England, rope still neatly coiled, ice axe untarnished.

'Damn it!' I said, and recklessly bought a ticket home from Bergen for ten days hence. That left seven pounds; the die was cast. 'Fortune favours the bold', said Bengt, a bright ship-building student with whom I had stayed overnight. That morning, bristling with boldness, I took the road to hitch-hike to Oslo.

Oslo Fiord was darkened by lowering thunderclouds. At Oslo railway station I spent a precious 7s. 6d. on a ticket to Eidsvoll, where, thunder far behind, stars shone above a pale blue gleam in the Northwest, while the somnolent river creaked with timber, reflecting the lights, the dark houses, a silent factory brooding under the pinebanks.

The next morning my journey continued unconventionally on the *Skiblander*, a 102-year-old paddle steamer on which, by polishing brass for two hours, I worked a seventy mile passage up the Mjose, the longest lake in Norway, to the foot of the Gudbrandsdal. Up this long valley, with its villages, its steep, forested walls, those who gave me rides told me of the German invasion of Norway in which the valley played a strategic part. Eventually I reached Lora.

Lora is just a railway station and a few farms in the open upland part of Gudbrandsdal. It was 9.30 p.m. Night was coming on, and with it the rain. Seeing a barn, I enquired of a bystander if I might sleep there. He replied, in English, that I was to ask to sleep in the neighbouring farm,

which I took to be his. I thought, if it was his, need I ask anyone else? An embarrassing misunderstanding; my subsequent discovery by the real owners precipitated acute linguistic difficulties. I was by then reclining on a straw mattress in a spare room. Luckily the English-speaking local and his wife were summoned and explained, and I was invited to breakfast the following morning.

The farmhouse was ancient, mellow, built entirely of wood, with turf on the roof. All was quiet that Sunday morning as the rain poured down from a leaden grey sky. Very occasionally a car would splatter by. Breakfast in the farm was followed by lunch with the English-speaking interpreter, who was a lawyer turned station master; apparently there is little work for the lawyers in Norway. He was a charming person, knowledgeable and kind. He talked of the German invasion, and then of a Scottish invasion three hundred years previously, in which a general, under no orders, with a thousand men, swept devastation and panic before him until at the village of Otta they were massacred by the locals, men, women and children rolling stones and hurling sticks down the hillside until only four were left. These intermarried.

Later, as I splashed through the muddy pools in the road it was hard to believe that such things had happened in these wet, grey uplands. It stopped raining. The ride came, the last ride in Romsdal.

The Romsdal is a magnificent valley. Short wooded lower slopes rise to enormous rock walls plummeting from 5,000 feet peaks. That evening they were cut off blunt by the cloud base. The valley was shut in, and an air of quiet solemnity, as of a monumental cathedral, prevailed. Something had happened to the atmosphere. Rocks, grass, trees were bathed in violet-blue; all sound was submerged in the roar of rushing water, not loud but profound. The mountains looked very unclimbable.

The following morning all this was changed. I arose early at the Andalsnes Youth Hostel by the edge of the fjord to see the sun shining on the hillsides across the water. A few wisps of mist, low on the mountain flanks, were soon dissolved by the morning warmth. Above, the sky was blue, pale, washed clear. In no time I had contacted Arne Randers Heen, a local climber of whom I had heard much.

Heen is a tailor about fifty years old, but with the air of eternal youth. He is a guide who has made many fine and difficult climbs in his homeland Romsdal peaks. He has also climbed in the Alps, and we talked of them awhile. But necessarily the inevitable arose. If he was to climb he would have to close his shop, and the money which he would thereby lose I should have to refund. This I was in no position to do. In good time a solution appeared. Another climber was prepared to pay guide's fees, while I could go as Heen's 'Kamerade', an experienced climber from the Alps.

Though these peaks present bold faces to Romsdal itself, they have much easier approaches from their reverse sides. We duly drove to a little upland side valley, remote, covered in brush, graced with a lake of

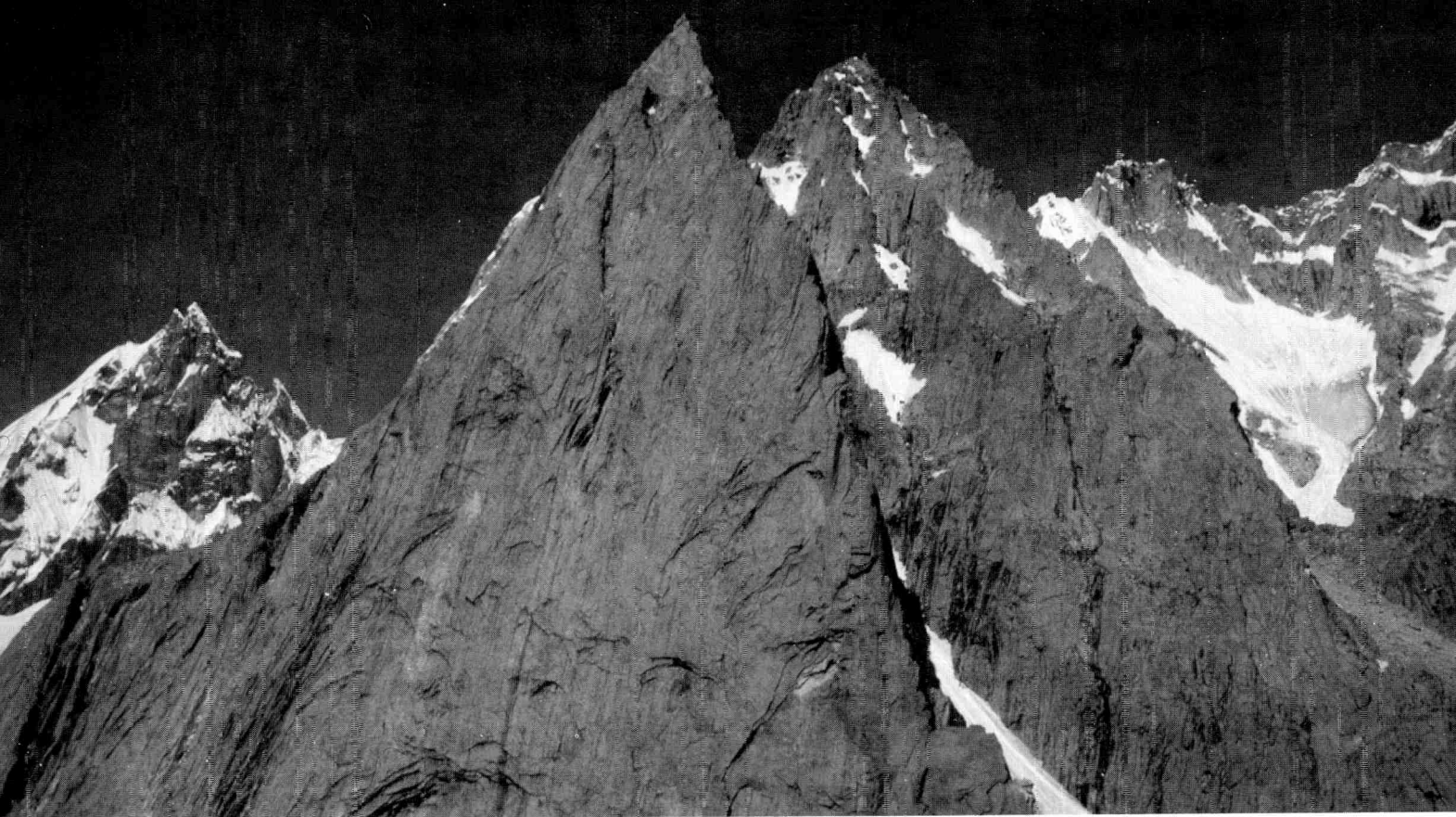


Photo: Sandy Allaa

Indian Face Arete. Route takes right edge of diamond in centre of photograph, with descent directly below summit via couloir and vague central rib

extraordinary clarity. On our left rose the Vengetind, the highest peak in the area. It offered no particular difficulty - in the upper part, two thousand feet of step-kicking in snow led to a spectacular rock gangway wide enough for a bicycle, which spiralled to an easy scramble to the summit. Heen cast his eye across the countryside, told us of his resistance work, pointed out a tiny remote hut where he had hidden an escaped prisoner for several winter months in the war.

The next day I climbed the Romsdalthorn alone. The 'back route' which I followed presented little difficulty, but from the summit the view was breath-taking. 4,500 feet almost vertically beneath was the Romsdal, while across this abyss rose the sheer East Wall of the Trolltind, one of the great mountain walls of Norway. This wall is about two miles long and mostly plumb vertical for 3,000 feet or more, but below the actual summit of the mountain a very steep but somewhat broken line in the form of a recess dropped to a hanging snow-field at half height. Idly I toyed with the idea of making a route up the wall.

To my surprise I was able to obtain a close impression of the general angle and size of this face the following afternoon. A senior English climber, who had just arrived in the area, had persuaded me against my will up the endless boulder slopes which are the back door to this peak. I now knew that Heen had made the first ascent of the face in the early 1930s. The view from the summit ridge was over the steeper, unclimbable, portion of the face, and a stone tossed lightly over the edge fell 3,500 feet before touching anything. Awe-inspiring, but not encouraging. Nevertheless the idea had formed.

A rest day followed. Heen intimated the Wall to be a climb of great character but no excessive difficulty. It still awaited a British ascent. He could not afford time off, so in despondency I resigned myself to leaving it unclimbed. Late that evening, however, a young British climber arrived. He was a tough Yorkshire lad who had never climbed abroad before. His enthusiasm bristled like his whiskers and he lived off bread and salami. His name was Ian Stutt.

Now the Trolltind is no climb for an introduction to continental mountains, so it was perhaps unfair of me to talk him into it. Nevertheless, we agreed on the climb. We borrowed bicycles for the following morning, slept little, for my part nervously, and set off at 5 a.m. At 5.30 a.m. we left our bicycles, to plough through the dense forest of the valley floor, and at 6 a.m. we started to scramble up the diagonal line of the grass and bare rock slabs which lead to the hanging snow-field. Unroped, we made height rapidly, though we agreed that the rock slabs would be unpleasant in descent, as route finding was so awkward. The valley floor fell away, and at 8.30, 2,500 feet up, we partook of a leisurely second breakfast.

Across the valley was the Romsdalthorn, thickset and lumpy, and over a drop in the valley retaining wall we saw the subsidiary glen from which rose the Vengetind, snow-streaked, graceful. The valley floor, threaded by a triple line of road, rail and river seemed already far away. We were in a

world of our own. To left and right vertical rock soared into the sky. Only ahead was progress possible. Streaks of mist, which had shone ugly orange in the dawn, still clung menacingly to the summits, adding just that little bit more to the uncertainty of the hour. Untried companionship, unknown rock, uncompromising surroundings, silence save for the far-off roar of the river - there was tension in the air.

We scrambled up a few hundred feet, crossed a heap of grit and boulders beneath a menacing yellow scar, site of a recent rockfall, traversed below the snow-field, and roped up. Some short awkward grooves led to a steep but broken ridge rising for several hundred feet on the left flank of the snow-field. Holds were large and ledges frequent. We were able to save time by moving together. Above the snow-field we began to feel the height. There was a steep drop beneath and the valley was far away. A few hundred feet in a broken gully led to another rib, and so to steeper more difficult ground where we were forced to move singly and belay each other.

At an awkward overhang which had given me some interest in an exposed position, Ian asked me to haul the rucksack up on the rope. I began to lower a loop of rope. He struggled to work the rucksack off his back, slipped, fell; I held him without trouble on the rope. Then he untied and tied the sack to the end of the rope, not understanding why I was lowering the loop. I hauled it up. He tied on again, and came up. A few seconds of explanation on my part and he would never have untied at all.

At our lunch halt 200 feet higher Ian seemed shaken, but I was too pre-occupied with my own thoughts to question why. We were high up, but about twelve hundred feet remained to be climbed. Our guidebook description amounted to a few lines, and we did not know what to expect. I think I must have been surprised at encountering so little real difficulty. It is the sort of face which, seen from a distance, makes one anticipate feeling like a fly on a church steeple, but the route, though steep, was broken, and nowhere was the exposure, that sense of a tremendous drop beneath, as much as I had expected.

We continued. Ian looked a little worried; I was tense. After 200 feet we left our long rib, which now steepened into an impressive buttress soaring to the summit ridge. To the right was a large inclined recess, walled on the left by this buttress and on the right by a vertical yellow-black wall plunging from the summit. Here, surprisingly, we encountered the hardest climbing on the face, though even this was through an error in route finding. Holds were small and outward sloping. There were no large ledges. Everything depended on balance, and the use of pitons for belays. But the exit seemed suddenly nearer, morale bounded, we were climbing well. A relatively easy looking gully appeared leading in 600 feet to the summit ridge. In this we moved together at times and as we neared the skyline tension lifted, almost physically. We climbed faster, the rocks became broken. In the middle of the afternoon we broke through, jubilant, and with dramatic suddenness to the boulders, breeze and sky of the

summit ridge, surprised and elated at finding so little difficulty on such a fine wall.

Foolishly, we lost time on a short cut to the summit so were unable to visit the actual top if we wanted to get down in time to catch a bus to Andalsnes from the nearest road.

On the descent across the miles of huge boulders Ian was slow. He looked unhappy. We caught the bus, walked back to where we had left our bicycles, stole a final glimpse at the great East face and cycled back to the Youth Hostel for an enormous dinner. Ian mentioned that when he had slipped before I had hauled his rucksack up he had already untied from the rope and only saved himself by catching the loose end. So that was why he looked so worried!

But for the grace of God, the outcome would have been very different. Was it right, I wondered, to take a beginner, however tough, up a climb of that order? I knew it was not. It is only to be condoned when absolutely nothing is left to chance, not even, as in this case, a few timely words of instruction.

Thirty years later, I realise how fortunate we were to climb the original route on this magnificent wall in near pristine state, and how lucky we were that failure to explain a sack-hauling procedure did not lead to disaster.

BRITISH LATOK EXPEDITION 1990

Indian Face Arete

By Sandy Allan

PAKISTAN'S Latok III at 6949m nestles to the West of Latok I and Latok II, 7145 and 7108 metres respectively. Our main objective was to be the North ridge of Latok II which was first attempted in 1978 by an American team consisting of some of the leading exponents of big wall climbing; Mike Kennedy, Jim Donni and Jeff Lowe. In reasonably dry conditions they reached a high point of 7000m before having to retreat because of illness and severe storms. Rab Carrington led a team from the UK in 1982 to little avail, and again in 1987 a French party made little impression on the ridge. Neither of these expeditions were able to gain the Americans' high point and both complained of heavy snow deposits which prevented efficient progress.

Our expedition, sponsored by Inspectorate OIS plc, reached base camp on the 5th June 1990, from where we could see that there was a great deal of snow on the mountain. However, at that stage optimism ruled, and we decided to begin acclimatisation for the main objective by attempting some of the other peaks in the region.

Tuesday 12th June saw Doug Scott, Simon Yates, Rick Allan and myself (Scottish Mountaineering Club) camped at 5100m on the Sim La in our North Face Himalayan Hotel, which we left at 0130 hours to make an attempt on Biacherahi peak. However after climbing unroped through a band of seracs and up and over the col we were halted by very unstable snow on the final summit ridge. This was disappointing, but we were appeased by an ascent of an adjacent snow dome which we referred to as Biacherahi Dome at 5700m.

On 15th June, Simon, Rick and his wife Alison, my sister Eunice, Richard Cowper (a Financial Times reporter) and I headed for a high camp on Hanispur (North of Base Camp). At 0100 hours the following morning Simon, Rick, Richard and I left camp. After five hours Simon and I came to a high spot on the ridge and took in a panorama of Masherbrum, Latoks and Hushe Peaks, but above us again lay steep unstable snow, so regretfully we decided to turn back to base camp.

Between such forays we took walks up the Choktoi glacier to view Latok, and could scarcely believe that we were looking at the same mountain as that in Mike Kennedy's photographs, which had initially enticed us to this area of Pakistan. Doug and I were coming to realise that the very deep snow was not melting off fast enough to allow Rick and

myself to beat our imposed timetables - back in Aberdeen's oil world, work was beckoning.

I had had enough of snow plodding with heavy sacs and was delighted to join Doug on a superb arete of a subsidiary peak of Latok III which curved steeply into the sky behind base camp. We put together a big wall rack, a haul sac and bivi equipment, and headed off to explore the ridge. We had just intended investigating the possibilities, but on getting to the foot of it, we found ourselves on superb, clean, sunkissed rock. After four pitches with moves of up to 5c, we stashed the haul sac and rappelled down to the glacier. As we wandered round the base of the arete to check the descent route, I saw what looked like the profile of an Indian's face sculpted from the rock high on the ridge, so we named our proposed route the Indian Arete. We decided that we could either descend via the crest and rounded ridge to the South, or abseil steeply down a snow/ice couloir to the right of the route.



Our plan was to depart very early from base camp, climb all day, and abseil from the summit in darkness, to return to base camp in the early morning. How are the mighty fallen!

0900 hours on the 18th June saw Doug and I at our previous high point on the arete. We had a brew and decided to jettison the haul sac, bivi equipment and some of the rack. We retained the stove and some herb tea bags, boiled sweets and two tracker bars each.

So we were committed to climbing and climb we did. Swinging pitches of 5c, sustained 5c, the rock occasionally flaking but basically very clean. As I traversed up right on the first aid pitch and moved up another

system, I was secretly pleased to belay below a huge overhang and let Doug lead the next pitch. At first it was extremely steep until he went out of my view. He was on, I guessed, a tension traverse as he shouted slack on green and tight on red. After two hours the green rope became yellow and the red pink in my head torch light. I lowered Doug off and we began to search for a bivi.

Doug went down one more pitch and called up that his previous stance was OK, perhaps roomy enough for two. I tied off the rope and hurried down. I cut a ledge in the snow with my hammer as Doug brewed, as he was not well. Meanwhile I continued clearing a level space for Doug to lie down and for myself to sit. Our meal was tepid herb tea and a tracker bar. We had no bivi gear but did not want to abseil off. Sleep came, often and intermittently, but we remained comfortable enough in our 'Buffalo' Clothing.

The morning found us shrouded in powder snow and my lead was not that pleasant as I climbed in my walking boots to regain my belay stance, tied in and shivered myself back to warmth. Doug came and was soon back at his high point of the previous evening, punctuating the Karakorum silence with the pleasing sound of the hammer again. Three hours later I started to second the pitch, and I was impressed by Doug's climbing. He had led the pitch by leap-frogging our three blades, had two small 'Rocks' persuaded into cracks, and one poor Kingpin as his only protection. Above, I enjoyed climbing free again where we were on easier 5b, 5c ground.

We soon came to the ridge proper, with its huge, balanced blocks and snow dripping in the sunshine. We changed from our rockboots into our somewhat drier and more substantial Brasher walking boots and climbed together for a spell, but soon the ground became technical again so we pitched 5b. It was good value to be high up and near the top, although the climbing was becoming progressively bittier. As we approached the summit it was late evening and Doug spied a good bivi. I reversed a scrappy pitch, filled the rucksac with snow as Doug fixed the abseil and down we went to the bivi-site on a rock ledge. Sleep came after cold herb tea and half a tracker bar.

Chattering teeth woke me - I thought they were mine, but perhaps they were Doug's. We contemplated the final steps to the summit but began abseiling instead. We were happy and felt that we had done all the good climbing. Latter-day views of climbing right to the summit were not for us on this occasion.

Back at Base camp, Simon and Rick had returned from an abortive attempt at Bobesighir (6411m) because of unstable snow, but had enjoyed exploring the Nobandi Sobandi glacier.

Robert Schauer's movie camera whirled at us climbers as we stood between the camera and Latok II as a backdrop. Under normal circumstances we would not be found loitering among avalanche debris but it was necessary - for the out-of-condition climb.

The sound recordist's cassette batteries ran flat, and of course she asked us to repeat our conversations. Feeling like a melancholy mime mannequin at a concert party, I was unhappy with their request and gladly walked back to our camp.

The corner of a plastic tarpaulin ruffled in the breeze as Doug and I pulled away from Base camp on that late morning. Indian Face Arete reflected the orange sun, moraine boulders slid as the Choctoi glacier echoed life beneath our feet. The same old situation... we felt that we might just pass that way again!

NEW CLIMBS SECTION

OUTER ISLES

HOY, St John's Head

A note, along with an 11 pitch description, has been sent of an attempt by D. Etherington, A. Moore to climb the main cliff. More impressive than the probable E5 grade and 2 bivouacs, is that a second attempt was made, with another 2 bivouacs but gaining only 10m. A big route was, however, completed and a description is awaited.

LEWIS, Dalbeg (NB 225465)

The headland right (North) of Dalbeg beach is split by an obvious deep slot. A large boulder sits prominently at the top of this. Walk through the fields to the top of the headland. The seaward side of the slot forms a narrow buttress with an arch through it at the bottom. The seaward wall of this buttress offers several fine routes on good rock.

The wall itself is split by an obvious quartz crack running diagonally right to left, Limpet Crack and two groove lines further right, not visible from above. Access can be gained by abseil or by scrambling down a gully towards the sea before traversing left on to easy-angled slabs.

The routes are described from right to left.

The left end of the wall has a rampline up its side which forms a stepped corner where it meets the wall; this is climbable at Very Difficult (Rampling, B. Davison, solo). The left edge of the ramp finishing up a short crack is climbed at VS (A. Cunningham, B. Davison).

On the wall proper are two slanting cracklines, the righthand and higher of the two, Limpet Crack, offers the better climb. To the right of this starting at half height in the centre of the wall is a groove/ramp line running to the left and taken by Neptune. The arch at the right hand end of the wall has two groove lines above it, one starting to the left of the arch and the other a few feet to the right.

-Damp Down

35m E3 6a

B. Davison, A. Cunningham. 24th May, 1989.

The lower of the two cracklines, a bit artificial as it is possible to step down on to the ramp in a few places.

Start up Rampling until it is possible to pull on to the wall using a flake. Make hard moves left along the crack under a small roof to a foothold. Continue left to a large foothold, then go up the lefthand of two cracks to a flat handhold. From this reach right into the righthand crack and follow it to the top.

-Limpet Crack

40m E3 5c

A. Cunningham, B. Davison. 17th May, 1989.

The impressive diagonal quartz crack running from the middle of the wall to the left. The crux is at mid-height.

-Neptune a Calling

35m E5 6b

B. Davison, A. Cunningham. 24th May, 1989.

Start up a blunt rib left of Neptune which leads to a small rib after 7m. From here make difficult moves left to a small horizontal slot and then left again to a vertical crack before moving up to a large flake/ledge. From here climb right into a shallow corner, then up into the finishing grooves of Neptune.

-Neptune

40m E2 5c

B. Davison, A. Cunningham. 17th May, 1989.

Starting at mid height in the centre of the wall is a groove line running right to left. Start up the wall below this (5m right of Limpet Crack) to enter the groove and follow it leftwards to the top.

-Wave Watcher

5m E3/4 6a

B. Davison, A. Cunningham. 18th May, 1989.

1. 25m, 6a. Climb the left hand of the two grooves left of the arch with a strenuous start.
2. 20m, 4c. Finish up the left arete of the slab/buttness.

-Underneath the Arches

45m E4 6a

A. Cunningham, B. Davison. 19th May, 1989.

1. 20m, 6a. Start at the left hand side of the arch and climb the right hand groove rightwards under the roof to the slab.
2. 25m, 4c. Finish up the left arete of the slab/buttness.

-Dalbeg Buttress

60m HVS 5b

B. Davison, A. Cunningham. 17th May, 1989.

The climb is affected by high tide and a sea often with a big swell. Route takes the front of the buttress but the crux is reaching it.

1. 15m, 5b. From just above the sea, lean across the gap to the right hand side of the arch. Using an RP1 as a handhold, step across the gap to a ledge, heelhooking to gain access to the ledge. This can be very slimy, and may have to be timed to miss the waves. Once on to the ledge, climb up a few metres and belay below an overlap.
2. 20m, 5a. Go on to the front of the buttress and climb up weaving through three overlaps, the top one being taken by its left arete.
3. 25m, 4a. Climb the slab above, then the corner in the middle of the slab.

East Wall

Before the black slot is reached (east or landward side of it), is an easy angled slab with a wall facing to sea with two corners. The next 3 routes are found on this wall.

-Celtic Ray

20m VS 4b

P. Mallon, C. McCartney. 1990.

Climb the first corner.

-Don't Break my Raybans

20m HVS 5a

C. McCartney, P. Mallon. 1990.

Climb the wall between the two corners, trending right to the arete to finish.

-Born to Fly

20m HVS 5a

C. McCartney, P. Mallon. 1990.

This takes the second corner.

Cave Slab

From the descent to the Dalbeg Buttress, turn right (facing out) at the top of the descent slab to gain access to the following routes.

The left edge of the slab is undercut by a large cave whereas the right side runs up to a series of steep grooves below an orange coloured slab with a crackline running up its centre. From left to right.

-The Black Hole

45m E4 6b

B. Davison, A. Cunningham. 20th May, 1989.

The crack in the overlap at the far left hand end, starting by moving into a wide undercut niche and then hard moves over the next overlap leads into a short steep corner. Swing right and follow the crack in the slab left of the overhang to finish up a short corner.

-Simple Jim

35m E3 6a

A. Cunningham, B. Davison. 19th May, 1989.

Start by hard moves up the crack 3m right of the last route. Follow the red slab up to a roof/overlap. Traverse left and pull over the overlap at a quartz vein. Move up and traverse right to the base of a steep corner. Climb this past a huge block. Finish leftwards.

-Beam Me Up Scotty

30m E1 5b

B. Davison, A. Cunningham. 19th May, 1989.

Climbs the wide crack in the easy red finishing slab. To reach this, follow a leftward-trending black ramp line to pull into a niche at the base of the final crack (crux).

-Bones

30m Severe

B. Davison. April, 1989.

Start just right of the previous route and climb up to gain the thinner right hand crack in the red finishing slab.

-Kling On Corner

25m E1 5a

B. Davison, A. Cunningham. 19th May, 1989.

Climb the smooth looking groove at the righthand side of the red slab. Loose in places.

The next routes are at the extreme left end of the slab above the sea but are reached by walking round the headland of Cave Slab and abseiling down a short seaward-facing wall to a sloping platform. An overlap at the righthand side gives access to the extreme left end of Cave Slab. Left of the overlap are 2 grooves, Dilithium Crystals and Its no Good Captain she's Breaking Up. The routes are described from the abseil point rightwards.

-Warp Drive

15m VS 4c

B. Davison. 25th May, 1989.

The abseil wall is pocketed with a crack and a shallow groove running up it 3m left of Dilithium Crystals. Climb the wall.

-Dilithium Crystals

20m HVS 5a

A. Cunningham, B. Davison. 21st May, 1989.

Climb the second groove left of the overlap on good cracks and pockets.

-Its no Good Captain she's Breaking Up

20m HVS 4c

B. Davison. 25th May, 1989.

The first groove left of the overlap. Start up a ramp harder than it looks and into the groove.

-Captain's Log

30m HVS 5a

A. Cunningham, B. Davison. 21st May, 1989.

Cross the overlap at its lowest point, then move up over 2 small overlaps on to the top slab and head up towards a groove capped by an overhang. Climb the crack on the left of this to the top.

Black Zawn

The next zawn North to Cave Wall is marked by 2 large cairns at its top. The zawn has an easy slab on its northern side and a steep back wall split by Old Salt, a right to left diagonal quartz crack starting from a ledge half way up the wall, above a cave.

The black south wall has a ledge running up left (facing the wall) from the sea and ending by some large flakes used as a belay point. The top of the wall has 3 prominent corners, the largest and left one being taken by Sea Shanty, the middle and shorter one being Briny and to the right of this is the left-facing corner of Salty Old Sea Dog.

The routes are reached by abseiling down the wall to the right of centre, and moving along the ledge. They can also be reached by climbing down at low tide from the bottom of the abseil into Warp Drive (described above).

-Sea Shanty

40m HVS 5a

A. Cunningham, B. Davison. 21st May, 1989.

From the left edge of the ledge, move up and left to lighter coloured rock and a ledge system trending left. At the bottom of the corner, move up this exiting right.

-Briny

35m E1 5b

B. Davison, A. Cunningham. 21st May, 1989.

From the same start at the flakes at the left end of the ledge, move up a faint blunt rib above the belay, directly below the V of the corner, to some overhanging unstable-looking blocks. Weave left through these to the start of a good crack and into the top corner.

-Salty Old Sea Dog

30m VS 4c

B. Davison, A. Cunningham. 21st May, 1989.

Start 5m right of the previous route. Climb a short corner to a ledge, then up a crack till possible to move left and into the bottom of the corner. Follow this to the top.

-Sea Monster

30m Hard Severe 4b

A. Cunningham, B. Davison. 21st May, 1989.

Immediately right of the last route is a corner facing the sea. A steep start up this leads to a ledge at half height. Cross this and climb up a crack at the left side of the ledge to a final steep finish.

-Navy Cut

30m HVS 5a

A. MacFarlane, D. MacGimpsey, B. Marshall. 23rd July, 1989.

Follow the two-tiered corner at the right end of the black wall.

-No Fags for Christmas

15m VS 4c

B. Marshall, D. MacGimpsey, A. MacFarlane. 23rd July, 1989.

This takes the groove at the seaward end of the West facing wall about 7m right of Navy Cut.

The back wall of the zawn has a quartz crack running down from a ledge above a cave at the bottom right side of the wall. Abseil down to the ledge.

-Old Salt

40m E3 5c

B. Davison, A. Cunningham. 22nd May, 1989.

From the left end of the ledge, follow the quartz crack diagonally left to gain a ledge after about 30m. It would be possible to finish up a groove above here. The crack, however, continues at ledge level so step down and follow it leftwards to its finish.

Small West Wall

From the headland north of the black zawn, drop down (moving away from the black zawn) to a black rock platform with a pool in it about 20m above the sea. To the right of the pool is an easy angled wall with an overhang at the bottom, which has been climbed at Hard Severe, starting from the right, or with a 5c direct start. This is bounded on the right by two corners, Original Route and Solitude, and 10m right is the wide overhanging chimney/crack of Mongrel.

-Original Route

10m Very Difficult

B. Davison. April, 1989.

The obvious corner right of the slab. It is possible to move out on to the wall near the top at Hard Severe.

-Solitude

10m VS 4c

B. Davison. May, 1989.

To the right is another corner with an awkward start.

-Sunday Stroll

10m VS 4c

B. Davison. 13th May, 1990.

Start as for Solitude, then after 4m, swing right on to the nose of the arete and round to a ledge to finish up the wall at the back.

-Hang It

10m HVS 5a

A. MacFarlane, B. Marshall. 18th June, 1989.

To the right is a short overhanging crack leading to the ledge.

-Mongrel

8m VS 4c

A. MacFarlane, D. MacGimpsey. 24th August, 1989.

Ascend the overhanging squeeze chimney right of Hang It.

Below and left of the rock platform is a wall, the centre of which is a groove capped by an overhang with a hanging plaque of rock to its left. The bottom of the wall can be reached by abseil or scrambling down stepped ledges from the platform. The routes are described from right to left.

-Tea For Two

15m VS 4c

D. MacGimpsey, A. Newey. July, 1989.

Ascends the shallow corner right of the overhang, starting up a crack. A variation start up the slab to the left is 5b.

-Down Under

15m E2 6a

B. Davison, A. MacFarlane. 13th May, 1990.

Climb the groove to the left of the overhang, then over it on good finger jams.

-Gleaning the Bone

15m E2 5c

A. MacFarlane, D. Stelfox. 28th August, 1989.

To the left of the groove is a narrow wall/pillar with a hanging plaque of rock. Climb this.

-Flying Teapot

15m HVS 5a

D. MacGimpsey, A. MacFarlane. July, 1989.

Climb the groove left of the narrow pillar.

Left of Flying Teapot past a blunt arete is an easy-angled slab/wall climbed at Severe (Henry's Hard Times) with a Diff corner on its left. Left again is an overhang with cracks going through its left and right hand ends, Endurance.

-Endurance

15m E4 6b

B. Davison, A. MacFarlane. 21st May, 1990.

This takes the corner and crack through the right side of the roof. Climb the corner to the bottom of the groove. Awkward moves up the groove lead to the overhang. A foothold on the right helps progress through the overhang to the headwall and a sloping finish.

-Ruth's Lazy Day

20m Hard Severe

D. MacGimpsey, C. Allan. May, 1989.

Climbs the groove left of the overhang.

-Clean Hand Gang

20m E3 5b

B. Davison. 24th May, 1990.

This takes the wall to the left as directly as possible. Start at the right hand side of the wall, then make moves up and left to a good hold. A long reach to a flat incut leads to good holds trending right to a ledge. Climb the edge of the groove to the top.

-Jessie James

20m E2 5b

B. Davison. 24th May, 1990.

The arete forming the left side of the wall. Start on the right side of the arete, up the left side of the wall to a good hold. Move left to good but spaced holds on the arete leading to a ledge. Finish by moving up and left into Outlaw.

-Outlaw

20m HVS 5a

A. MacFarlane, D. MacGimpsey, B. Marshall. 23rd July, 1989.

The groove immediately left of the arete, exiting up the corner.

-Robbery Under Arms

20m E1 5b

A. MacFarlane, D. MacGimpsey. 1989.

The middle of the 3 grooves starting up the lefthand series of cracks and small ledges. Continue up the hanging nose of rock, then step right ot finish.

-Thuggery

20m HVS 5b

A. MacFarlane, D. MacGimpsey, B. Marshall. 18th June, 1989.

The lefthand groove, starting up a corner past a flake to continue through the roof.

Big West Wall

Immediately after the groove of Thuggery, the wall gains height and is capped by an overhang with a corner running through it at either end. The wall curves round into the next zawn where a recess offers a corner climb up either side.

-New World

25m E1 5b

B. Davison. 17th May, 1990.

Lcft of Thuggcry, start up a steep groove just right of the overhang which runs along the botom of the wall. At the top of the groove, move right to a ledge, then climb the wall to the prominent corner at the right hand end of the top roof.

-Island of No Return

35m HVS 5a

B. Davison. 17th May, 1990.

About 7m left of where the overhang running along the bottom of the wall ends, a square-cut groove capped by a small roof is to be found. Move up to the top of the groove, then hand traverse right 4m to a foothold and ascend the cracks to a basalt intrusion. Move to a ledge on the right, then up to another ledge. Traverse left into the bottom of the corner which marks the left end of the top overhang.

About 6m left is the recess which the next 2 climbs take.

-New Addition

40m HVS 4c

B. Davison. 17th May, 1990.

The right hand corner of the recess is followed passing a flake/chimney which leads to a ledge. Follow the corner to the top.

-First Born

40m VS 4b

B. Davison. 17th May, 1990.

Climb the left hand corner of the recess to a ledge, then up a wall before stepping left into a shallow chimney and corner leading to the top.

Preacher Zawn

The next zawn North has a large block leaning against the wall and a fence ending at its top. The centre of the north wall is cut by a wide crack, Red Hand Gang.

-Red Hand Gang

35m E2 5b

D. Stelfox, A. MacFarlane. 28th August, 1989.

Ascend the prominent crack near the collapsed block. Loose.

-Mr Big Comes Clean

30m E2 5c

A. MacFarlane, D. MacGimpsey. 30th July, 1989.

To the right of Red Hand Gang are 3 corners. Climb the right hand.

-A Prophet's Doom

20m E3 6a

A. MacFarlane, D. MacGimpsey. 16th July, 1990.

Climb the crackline 3m right of the previous route. Sustained.

NEW TOLSTA, Garry Bay.

Grey Castle or Duin Athail (see SMCJ 1974, p268). From the end of the North Tolsta road to Garry Beach, continue up the peat road until the road veers inland. From here head North and in about 20 min the castle-like crag is easily seen on the coast.

The bay just North of the tower offers a few possible climbs. About 400m North of the tower is a wall with 4 large boulders at the bottom. The following 2 routes are reached by abseil down this wall.

-Haar

15m Severe

A. MacFarlane, D. MacGimpsey. 5th July, 1989.

Immediately above the 4 boulders is a slabby wall. Climb it.

-The Milky Bar Kid

20m VS 4c

A. MacFarlane, D. MacGimpsey. 15th July, 1989.

North of the 4 boulders is a large arched roof and on from this a south facing corner. Start up a ramp on the right of the corner, then enter the main corner.

Direct Start E1 5c Start up the steep jamming crack which forms the bottom of the corner.

Grey Tower

From the last routes, it is possible to see 2 obvious corner lines on the grey tower.

-Celtic Swing

65m E1

A. MacFarlane, D. MacGimpsey. 5th July, 1989.

Follows the right hand corner.

1. 4a Up the wall and corner to belay on a ledge with some loose rock.

2. 5b/c Either up from the belay 2m, then traverse left to a short corner and up right to a large ledge, or straight up a crack from the belay and then left to the large ledge. From the ledge, take the left crack to a belay.

3. 4c Follow the corner until below a large pillar. Traverse left to exit.

-Druid

65m E2

A. MacFarlane, D. MacGimpsey. 20th June, 1989.

Follows the left hand corner.

1. 10m, 5a. Climb the wall to the right of the corner to belay on the ledge.

2. 35m, 5b. Step into the corner and follow it to a ledge.

3. 20m, 5a. Continue up the corner.

To descend from these 2 routes, climb up about 15m and traverse east on grass ledges. Move a few feet on to the north wall and down heather. Delicate down climbing for 10m; or abseil from the top.

On the south side of the tower below the grass and the 1971 MacKenzie route, are 3 obvious open corners at sea level, The Open Books.

-State of Mind

20m E1 5b

A. MacFarlane, D. MacGimpsey. 13th August, 1989.

The right hand corner

-Cloud Burst

20m E2 5c

B. Davison, A. Nisbet. 13th August, 1989.

The left hand corner.

The following notes were sent by J.R. Mackenzie somewhat belatedly:

Ard Phenis Head (NA 9929)

Two miles north of Brenish village is Camus Islivig Bay. This has cliffs of up to 60m, composed of gneiss and migmatites, plus several sea stacks.

The Ard Phenis Head, which is a vertical mass of gneiss, is bordered on the right by a fine overlapped slab which provides the following route.

-Route Major

60m Very Difficult

J.R. Mackenzie, A. McDonald, A. MacDonald. 17th August, 1971.

Best approached from the bay at low tide, otherwise a 35m traverse out to the slab is needed. Start beneath the left hand corner and up a slab to step left into the corner, climb a chimney and belay in a recess. Surmount overlap above, then easily left and up steep corner on big holds. Traverse right to centre of slabs, following fault lines to finish.

Beannan a' Deas (map ref unknown by Ed)

The 1933 party climbed the very steep slabby face on the NW side of the hill, leaving a cairn to mark their route. To the left of the 1933 route is a steep crack.

-The Geal Crack

90m VS

A. MacDonald, J.R. Mackenzie. 18th August, 1971.

Climb the fine crack for 30m starting at a cairn, belay on ledge above. Climb an easy slab, then a wall split by a thin crack. Either finish up the crack or, better, step right into a scoop leading to the top. An easier alternative to the top pitch is to step right into the 1933 corner groove which makes the first pitch the crux.

The Eye Peninsula

Sea cliffs of a variable nature exist here near the village of Bayble. Cars can be taken as far as an aircraft beacon, then walk left and contour the cliff edge to follow a path down a grassy gully. At sea level, cross blocks and the route below starts by a slab, which is due east from the beacon.

-Jacob's Ladder

80m VS

A. MacDonald, A. MacDonald. 29th August, 1971.

Variation top. J.R. Mackenzie, A. MacDonald. 12th December, 1971.

Climb the slab and corner to grass and belays below a crack (15m). Go up the crack, step left to an overhang and over this, then traverse right to a groove. Climb a slab to a shallow chimney which is taken to a grassy recess and belays (40m). There is now a choice of exits. The original finish climbed over the belay to a corner; by this way the whole climb is Severe. The variation finish traverses right over first grass, then slabs, then hand traverses across the steep face on good holds before swinging over a bulge to a small ledge. Traverse right to a corner, climb this, then up a slab for a short distance before hand traversing left to a sloping shelf. Finish by surmounting the arete and an easy slab (25m).

HARRIS, Glen Scaladale, Creag Mo*-Macbeth Variation*

HVS 5a

A. MacFarlane, D. MacGimpsey. 8th July, 1989.

1. Start at the lowest rock below a corner/groove. Climb the groove passing loose blocks and a short overhanging wall. Continue a further 7m until level with the first belay of Macbeth. Traverse left for 3m, then up a rounded edge to a belay below some roofs.
2. Climb a chimney to a grassy ledge and join Macbeth.

-Antipodean Exile

40m E2 5b

A. MacFarlane, D. MacGimpsey. 8th July, 1989.

From the right hand end of the amphitheatre, follow a grass ledge to a blunt arete. Start just left of the arete which bounds the left wall.

Climb 5m to the incipient crack. It is possible to step left into the main crack and follow this but if wet, traverse right and up the arete climbing the double cracks and on to the top via a shallow chimney.

-King Billy

50m HVS

A. MacFarlane, D. Stelfox. 26th August, 1989.

1. 4c Start up the wall immediately right of the long low overhang of Little Bow Peep and go up to a grass ledge.
2. 5a Go up the wall trending right into a corner. Follow this, then exit left through a roof.

-Herbivore Direct

E3 6a

B. Davison, A. MacFarlane. 19th May, 1990.

Follow Herbivore till it traverses right midway up the obvious corner. Continue up the corner with difficulty to a sloping finish.

The original line of Herbivore was repeated, HVS 5a being the modern grade.

Sgurr Scaladale: The 1961 route Mionnir was repeated without the aid to enter the chimney (VS 4c), by A. MacFarlane, B. Davison.

STRONE ULLADALE*-Flakeway to the Stairs*

120m E2 5c 5b 5c 5a

The aid on pitches 2 and 3 was eliminated and a more direct top pitch up a corner left of the stance added. This top pitch was probably the same as for Beyond the Ranges. A. MacFarlane, B. Davison, July, 1990.

CREAG DUBH DHIBADAIL,*-Borealis*

80m E2

A. MacFarlane, D. MacGimpsey. 14th July, 1990.

Start as for Aurora.

1. 20m, 5a. Go up the groove to a sizeable ledge directly below a triangular roof.
2. 30m, 5b. Traverse right to a right facing corner. Go up this to a sloping ledge. Move left to a right-facing corner and climb this to a belay ledge, as for Midguard.
3. 30m, 4c. Go up a slab to a left-facing corner/chimney.

-Hitch Hiker

160m E2

A. MacFarlane, B. Davison. April, 1990.

Start at the right hand end of the cliff about 10m right of the wide crack of Solitude and below and left of an obvious roof.

1. 40m, 5b. Start up a slabby rampline as Take Two, trending rightwards to belay on a small ledge after passing a quartz band using 3 aid points due to wet.
2. 40m, 5c. Move up a steep groove above the belay to a sloping ledge below the right hand end of a large roof, then traverse left to a ledge at the other end of the roof.
3. 40m, 4c. Hand traverse right to the arete, then climb up a rampline trending left.
4. 40m, 4c. Move left to finish up a corner and leftward trending groove.

MULL, An Garradh (NM 609204)

The main face is an imposing plaque of steep, clean and apparently smooth rock devoid of obvious features apart from a big overhang high on its left. It is bounded on the right by a huge sandstone dyke (Dropout) and on the left by fairly vegetated slabby ground leading up to twin corners left of the big overhang. The rock is a compact rhyolite with an unpredictably brittle surface. Most cracks are formed by loose blocks and flakes and carrying a large rack, including several knifeblade pegs, is recommended. A paranoid style of climbing is required with a potential threat to both leader and second (like the runners, the belays must be treated with suspicion). The unusual grade is designed to reflect this. Despite the cautionary description, the underlying rock is sound and the central route provided a magnificent adventure with an air of tension rather than imminent doom. The cliff faces south and dries fairly quickly; a strong sun may be more of a problem.

-Knocking on Heaven's Door

210m E5

B. Davison, A. Nisbet. 30th April/1st May, 1990.

The route starts right of centre and trends left until close under the big overhang. On day 1, climbing on sight, an escape line to the left was taken. On day 2 the belay under the overhang was regained by abseil and a right finish was produced. A truly direct finish awaits! At the bottom left of the face is a long overhang. Start at easy-angled slabs midway between this and the dyke.

1. 25m, 4c. Climb steepening slabs to belay below a small heathery ledge.
2. 20m, 5c. Gain the ledge, move right to a flake, then step up into a shallow depression. Climb up this, exiting on the right to a belay ledge.
3. 15m, 5a. Climb a heathery groove on the left, then continue left to a ledge below a long overhang.
4. 25m, 5c. Climb a steep groove left of the overhang, then trend right to a ledge and poor belay.
5. 15m, 5c. Climb a flake at the right end of the ledge, then move back left across the wall to a bottomless groove. Go up this to a flake and step left to a rock ledge about 10m below the right end of the big overhang. The Seductive Finish goes left from here. Instead,
6. 15m, 5b. Go up towards the overhang, then traverse right on smoother rock to a ledge and poor belay.
7. 45m, 5c. Gain a higher ledge on the right and from its far end, descend about 5m until possible to gain the rib on the right. Continue right over a bulge and across ledges to gain the dyke. Go up this to a good belay.
8. 45m, 4c. Continue up the dyke to finish obviously on the left.

-Seductive Finish

85m E1

This is an optional finish, less direct but on better rock. It avoids the hardest pitch.

6. 20m, 5a. From the belay under the big overhang, traverse left and slightly up until a ledge appears unexpectedly below and round the arete. It is gained by a sensational small jump.
7. 50m, 5b. Star Trek goes up and right from here to climb the huge, hanging, right hand corner. After a short descent, go up the left corner on good rock until it deteriorates near the top.
8. 15m, -. Finish on the left.

-Dropout

180m E3

B. Davison, A. Smith. 26th May, 1987.

Takes the big dyke/chimney bounding the right side of the main face.

1. 30m, 5a. Climb the chimney, belay on the right before overhangs.
2. 35m, 5b. Move back left and climb through a second set of overhangs. Belay below a third set.
3. 35m, 5b. Go over the overhang and continue to grass and a tree belay.
4. 35m, 5a. Continue up the chimney, sometimes on the left wall.
5. 45m, 4c. Continue up the dyke to finish obviously on the left.

-Star Trek

180m E3

B. Davison, A. Smith. 27th May, 1987.

Takes the right hand fork of the twin corners at the top left of the crag. Start left of the overhangs at the bottom left of the main face.

1. 30m, 5a. Follow a line of weakness left, then traverse right along a grass ledge to belay below a hanging block.
2. 30m, 5a. Surmount the overhang and continue up to a tree belay.
3. 45m, 4c. Climb rightwards, mainly on grass, to a big ledge below the corners.
4. 15m, 5a. Climb the lower half of the corners to their junction.
5. 45m, 5c. Climb the right hand corner past a ledge at half height to a large ledge.
6. 15m, 4b. Climb a corner at the back of the ledge.

-Mincing Gay Bar Loiterer

165m E2/3

B. Davison, C. Moody, A. Smith. 27th June, 1987.

The route is high on the right of the preceding routes, finishing up the corner before the crag degenerates into shattered rock further right. The 5b section on the last pitch is on reasonable rock but there is also some 5a which is sustained, loose and poorly protected. Start at the top of an easy ramp.

1. 40m, -. Go up slabs to belay below a niche capped by an overhang.
2. 25m, 4c. Go up right of the niche to a large ledge.
3. 55m, 4b. Walk left, then move rightwards, then leftwards along a crack to below an overhang at the start of the corner.
4. 45m, 5b. Climb a flake on the left to a ramp and continue to a ledge. Move left and climb a detachable flake left of the corner.

Note: There are further routes on this crag but the first ascenders have declined to publicise them.

RHUM, Hallival, West Face

High on the west face of Hallival, just below the summit and over looking Atlantic Corrie, is a compact crag which looks deceptively scrappy from below. It does however offer some fine routes. The most prominent feature seen from below is the Western Slab, to the left of which is Western Wall. Right of Western Slab is Hourglass Buttress, easy angled in its lower reaches, but with a fine steep slab above a grassy ledge at the 'waist' of the buttress. Right again is a broken area of ribs (Central Ribs), ending in a prominent V-groove which bounds the left edge of Western Ridge. To the right of this, the rocks become more broken and lesser in height. There are easy descents at either end of the crag.

-Grendel

21m VS

J. Mitchell, E. Mitchell. 18th July, 1990.

From the left end of Western Wall, climb a black streaked wall and groove to ledges. Climb steeply up the right wall, mantelshelf onto an overhanging ledge, and finish up an overhanging crack.

-Fugazi

21m VS

E. Mitchell, J. Mitchell. 18th July, 1990.

10m left of Troll Corner, climb a blunt nose to gain an obvious niche. Climb the steep right wall onto a small ledge, then bridge up to a mantelshelf onto an overhanging block. Move left and climb the steep headwall, traversing right to a break, then climbing a corner to the top.

-Troll Corner

21m VS

N. Reid, J. Mitchell. 18th July, 1990.

At the junction of Western Wall and the side-wall of Western Slab, climb a steep corner crack with an overhanging direct exit. *Continue up a slab to finish left of a rock gargoyle.

-Slab Direct

23m Very Difficult

J. Mitchell, N. Reid. 18th July, 1990.

Climb straight up the centre of Western Slab, finishing to the right of the rock gargoyle.

-Cullie's Route

23m Very Difficult

M. Dunlop, A. Bain. 18th July, 1990.

Climbs the right side of Western Slab, to the right of the scrappy groove.

-Moss Slab

12m Severe

A. Bain, M. Dunlop. 18th July, 1990.

Lies on the upper section of Hourglass Buttress. Climb from the bottom left corner, traverse onto slab, and climb to the top.

-Bishop's Groove

18m Severe

N. Reid, J. Mitchell. 18th July, 1990.

This route takes the obvious V-groove to the left of Western Ridge. Scramble up some loose blocks to a belay at sound rock. Climb the groove to the top.

-Pandora's Box

35m Severe

J. Mitchell, N. Reid. 18th July, 1990.

Start at the left edge of Western Ridge. Climb a narrow slab and left-facing corner to a large overhang which is turned on the right. Climb a V-groove to a steep wall, which is climbed using the left side crack to an overhanging prow and a belay. Traverse 5m right and bridge up an easy open V-groove above.

-Western Ridge

45m Severe

A. Bain, M. Dunlop. 18th July, 1990.

From the lowest rocks of Western Ridge, climb directly to a belay at an overhang. Climb the overhang to the end of continuous climbing at 24m. Continue up over two short walls separated by grass ledges.

HALLIVAL, South-East Face, Lower Tier*-Nice'n'Easy*

20m Hard Severe

J. Mitchell, N. Reid. 16th July, 1990.

Approx 20m left of the gully bounding the left edge of Allival Slab is a small pyramid shaped buttress. Climb the well defined left bounding arete, with an entertaining finish.

Breeze (variation)

20m Severe

A. Bain, M. Dunlop 16th July, 1990

Climb Oxford Groove for 3m. Make a rightwards rising traverse onto a wall for 5m. From a broad ledge, climb a short arete, then traverse left to a crack line which is followed to the terrace.

Middle Tier*-Allivalhalla*

37m Very Difficult

N. Reid, J. Mitchell. 16th July, 1990.

Gain the bottom left corner of Allival Slab. Make an easy rising traverse into a vegetatious crack heading to an obvious corner. Where the slab steepens before the corner, move 3m right and follow a thin crack to the left of a detached block, exiting on to an easier angled slab left of an obvious horizontal overhanging block.

Note

Hallival, South East Face. Flake and Crack Route. John Mitchell reports that the original route has now been modified slightly, the flake having fallen to the coire floor. An alternative start has been made (J. Mitchell and E. Mitchell, 16th July, 1990), starting by a rising traverse from the bottom left corner or Allival Slab to an obvious small pinnacle. The original line is followed thereafter.

MULL OF CARA, Carraig Mhor

These fine epidiorite cliffs, reaching a maximum height of 40m, rise above a boulder jumble at the southern tip of Cara. They are largely steep and clean with few nesting birds. In contrast, the lower more broken crags, extending northwards along the east coast, support much bird life. The main crag is bounded on its east side by a sheer wall above a dipping band of deeply eroded sandy rock and on its west side by a dwindling slabby face. Scars (and debris) from several large, relatively recent rockfalls are evident. Access to the base of this crag can be affected from the west at beach level and from the east via the hillside above, down broken ground just beyond the sheer wall. The OS 1:10000 and 1:25000 maps do not depict this break, erroneously showing the main crag linking to the lower crag of the east coast.

-Rubha Rib

45m VS 4c

G.E. Little, R.G. Reid. 15th September, 1990.

This route takes a clean line up the slab and rib where the angle of the face eases near the west end of the crag. A kite shaped recess just above ground level (just left of a black overhanging corner) marks the start of the route.

Climb into, then directly above the kite-shaped recess to smoother rock (strenuous). Pull right, then up to the top of a large flake. Climb the clean slab wall above, just left of a groove, then step right on to the rib. Climb this and left-trending groove above.

-Cara Corner

30m E2 5b

G.E. Little, R.G. Reid. 16th September, 1990.

Takes the obvious corner bounding the left side of the sheer wall at the east end of the crag. Spectacular climbing with some friable holds. Protection just adequate, although difficult to place.

Scramble to the base of the corner. Climb it, passing a grass tuft and a slim groove on the left wall to gain a semi detached, flat topped flake on the left. Ascend the left wall to a small ledge. Move back to a rock pedestal, then up the corner to finish.

-Thomas Traverse

40m E1 5b

R.G. Reid, G.E. Little. 16th September, 1990.

Start at the bottom of the prominent crack splitting the face to the left of Cara Corner. An excellent varied route.

Traverse hard left to gain a grass patch under an obvious dark roof. Move left to a good foothold (crux), then layback up a flake edge into a groove. Gain a foothold on the left bounding rib, then up to below a small overhang. Pull over this, then climb short walls to gain a good ledge on the right below the final corner. Up this strenuously in two steps to the top.

SKYE

Sgurr Hain Crag (NG 508201)

The crag is situated approx 0.5km west of the southern end of Loch na Creitheach, and 1.5km north of the Camasunary bothy. It faces south-east, and consists of two main buttresses, separated by a wide gully. The rock varies from perfect gabbro to some rather loose sections. There is scope for many new routes on obvious lines. These routes would be both fairly hard and require cleaning.

-Peterless Crack

120m E1

T. Walkington, A. Cunningham. 20th May, 1990.

1. 15m 5b. Start 5m left of a small bay (just left of the toe of the buttress). Climb over initial bulges, moving right then leftwards to gain a crack-line in slabs.
2. 20m 5b. Continue up the crack line, going through an overhang, and up to a block belay.
3. 20m 5a. Directly above the belay, climb a crack line through overhangs to a grass ledge which is traversed left to the foot of a corner.
4. 35m. Climb a corner/groove until steep heather leads to some rowan trees.
5. 30m. Move round to the right and follow slabs to the top.

-Bryantless Crack

40m HVS

T. Walkington, A. Cunningham. 20th May, 1990.

1. 15m 4c. Start at the small bay mentioned in the previous description. Climb the overhanging corner to slabs.
2. 27m 4c. Continue up the corner to a block. Make an awkward exit onto a gangway up on the left, and continue up leftwards to the block belay on Peterless Crack which is followed to the top.

The next three routes lie on the bounding wall of the buttress, high up on the wide central gully.

-Assault Course Bimbo

30m E4

T. Walkington, A. Cunningham. 19th May, 1990.

An excellent pitch on perfect rock, very sustained with very good protection. Takes a thin crackline up the centre of a vertical wall high up on the left bounding wall of the wide central gully. Scramble up for 10m to belay at some blocks.

1. 30m 6a. Climb to the top of the blocks just left of the crack. Make a short traverse along a quartzite band to the crack, which is followed to the top.

-Witchless Corner

20m VS 4c

T. Walkington, A. Cunningham, M. Smith. 21st May, 1990.

This route takes the obvious corner several metres to the right of, and slightly higher than, Assault Course Bimbo. Pleasant and well protected.

-James' Crack

85m HVS

T. Walkington, A. Cunningham. 18th May, 1990.

The climb follows the continuous vertical corner on the right bounding wall of the gully, at about the same level as Witchless Crack. The crack starts about 12m beneath a large jammed boulder in the gully (not the wider crack 5m below the boulder). Follow the crack in its entirety, poorly protected in its upper section, but with most loose rock removed. 25m, 5a; 25m, 4c; 35m, 4b.

SGURR AN FHEADAIN, South-West Face*-Dykehead Hotel*

105m E3

G. Nicoll, K. Noble, A. Chamings. 14th July, 1990.

Takes the prominent slanting trap dyke in the centre of the face. Start 3m left of the flake-crack of Retribution.

1. 35m 4c. Climb a slabby wall directly to a grass ledge at 25m, gain the wall above by a large block on the right, move back leftwards and up to belay in a short corner at the base of the dyke.
2. 40m 5c. Follow the dyke diagonally rightwards to a ledge, move right and climb the right hand side of an overhang to regain the dyke which is followed to its conclusion at a good ledge.
- A tremendous pitch.
3. 30m 4b. Continue more easily to the top.

SGURR A' MHADAIDH, North-West Face*-Deep Gash Gully*

245m VI

M.E. Moran, M. Welsh. 14th February, 1991.

The 'Raven's Gully' of Skye. A formidable and atmospheric winter climb.

This route had in fact previously been climbed in winter by M. Fowler and J. Lincoln, on 2nd February, 1991.

1. 30m A short step and easy snow lead to a large roofed cave.
2. 15m Back and foot to huge chockstones in the roof, then out and under the lip of the overhangs to an awkward exit. Belay in recess immediately above.
3. 40m Climb a short step and easy snows to belays in hollow in right wall.
4. 40m Go up left into the extremely steep upper gully. Bridge up past an ice pillar, then climb iced grooves to a hidden cave recess below final overhangs.
5. 30m Climb 3m on the right wall, then make very committing moves to bridge the gully and enter a narrow chimney. Surmount the final capstone direct and climb steep snows to belay at the next chockstone recess.
- 6,7. 90m Bridge past the chockstone, then climb the snow gully to a short exit pitch.

Note: A rockfall on Megaton, pitch 4, has made the route unjustifiably dangerous, according to at least two opinions, one of whom freed the combined tactics move (6a) before retreating.

SRON NA CICHE, East Buttress (Vulcan Wall)*-Uhuru*

70m E2

K. Howett, T. Prentice. 22nd July, 1990.

Excellent climbing up the fine crack-line in the silver-streaked wall between Vulcan Wall and Dilemma. Start at cracks just left of the vertical crack of Dilemma.

1. 25m 5c. Climb to a small overlap and follow the crack above to a hard move right to the Vulcan Wall ledge. Traverse left to a flake block belay.
2. 45m 5c. Step right off the block, up cracks and move right over a curving overlap. Move up and right to pull into the main crack, which is followed with difficulty to better holds. Continue up the excellent crack to finish right of the large precarious block.

CLACH GLAS, East Face*-B Gully*

600m IV

S. Kennedy, D. Ritchie. 12th January, 1991.

The deep gully on the right flank of the East Face. Requires heavy snowfall and a long freeze. Numerous short steps were encountered interspersed by long easy sections. Short excursions were made out of the true line of the gully at two points.

RED CUILLIN, Coire na Seilg, Creag Druim Eadar Da Choire

APPROACH: Coire na Seilg is enclosed between the North ridges of Garbh Bheinn and Belig. A large cliff lies astride the North ridge of Garbh Bheinn at NG 528242 and is probably best approached by the longer but drier North ridge than by the boggy glen. Allow 1½h. The crag is at approx 500m, faces North and takes 2 days to dry completely. It often has better weather than the main areas of the Cuillin due to its isolated position.

DESCENT: In descent, keep to the west towards the North ridge and then follow the scree slopes below the crag.

LAYOUT: The cliff presents a face to both East and North, the eastern being 100m in height and quicker drying. The crag is best described left and right of a pronounced gully line which rises centrally above a series of heathery rakes. To the left of this gully, the crag is bottomed by a steep wall followed by more broken ground, topped by more walls which are bounded on the left by a fine rib. The lower wall has a vertical central groove, a little edge on the left and a pair of vertical corners on the right. The rib falls steeply into a groove which forms a slab below half height and the crag to the left lies back in easy angled buttresses. To the right of the gully a splendid overlapped slab is split by three cracklines and to its right a steep edge swings North, well seen from the corrie floor. This vertical north wall gradually diminishes in height towards the ridge and has two pronounced lines, a deep cracked groove and a shallow banana-shaped one to its right with a tapering buttress in between. To the right again are vertical cracks above vegetated ledges before the cliff becomes blocky and low near the ridge. Some of the rock is blocky and high up on the East face there are small sections of brittle rock.

The routes are described from left to right, starting on the East face.

EAST FACE,

-Far East Buttress

150m Difficult

G. Cain. 1980.

Left of the recessed slab of Cubs Corner (described below) is a long easy-angled buttress which gives delightful climbing on excellent rock.

-Cubs Corner

60m Severe

G. Cain, B. Scout. 1980.

Left of Skye Ride (below) is the recessed slab. Climb this, then trend left and up the blocky crack to finish up easy ground.

-Skye Ride

100m VS

C. Rowland, K. Hopper. 1980.

1. 25m, 4c. Climb the artificial left edge of the lower wall (cairn) to reach easy blocky ground.

2. 25m, - Continue in the same line to the base of the fine rib, well seen from below.

3. 25m, 4c. Climb the rib direct, following a thin crack left of a drainage groove, crux, to pull over on to a slab below an overhanging corner.

4. 10m, 4c. Climb the corner.

5. 15m, 4b. Step up to another ledge with flakes and climb a straight crack to big ledges. 20m of scrambling up and right avoids a loose wall to finish.

-Unnamed

100m E1

J.R. Mackenzie, R. Jones. 1st June, 1988.

Start at the rightmost of two corners which lie at the right end of the steep lower wall, cairn. A good and varied first pitch, thereafter somewhat artificial.

1. 40m, 5b. Go up a slab to the corner and traverse right along flakes to a grass patch. Climb a crack right of perched flakes to an overhanging corner. Surmount this via a hidden hold, crux, to exit into a groove. Climb the bold slab on the right, trending up left to belays.

2. 27m, - Up pleasant rocks right then left to belays below a cracked wall which lies right of the rib pitch right of Skye Ride.

3. 35m, 4b. Climb a gangway slanting left below the vertical crack. Trend up right, then traverse right for a few feet until a scoop can be climbed to a narrow ledge below a steep friable wall. Traverse right to a grassy groove to finish.

-Seilg Gully

150m Very Difficult

C. Rowland, K. Hopper. 1980.

The long broken gully that lies left of the big slab.

The big slab lies to the right of Seilg Gully and is the crag's finest feature. It faces NE and takes two days to dry. To reach the base, approach either up Seilg Gully, then traverse right, or scramble up heathery shelves and rock steps to the same point. A grass ledge lies centrally beneath and forms a stance for the next three routes.

-Hand Jive

55m VS

C. Rowland, J. Smith. 1981.

A good introduction to the crag, taking the left hand crack. A lobed crack runs diagonally up left from the stance.

1. 20m, 4b. Climb up to the lobe and step right on to the slab beneath it. Follow this trending left to a stance and belay overlooking Seilg Gully.
2. 35m, 4c. Step right and follow the crack through the overhanging corner to the top.

-Streetwise Dancer

50m HVS

C. Rowland, J. Smith. 1981.

1. 25m, 4c. A bold sparsely protected pitch on good rock. Below the centre of the curved overlap is a niche; climb the steep slab directly below this, then follow a slanting crack right until a line of holds trend up left before stepping back right into the niche itself.

2. 25m, 5a. Climb up above the niche to gain the overlap on the right and then pull over this at its highest point, crux. Now trend left along little edges to join Hand Jive to finish. Well protected.

-Cuckoo Waltz

50m E1 5b

C. Rowland, K. Hopper. 1980.

Excellent rock, well protected. Climb initially as for Streetwise Dancer, but aiming for the right hand end of the overlaps. The right-slanting crack then straightens out and breaks through the upper overlaps via a finger crack, crux. More easily to the top.

-Flights of Fancy

45m E2

M. Haltree, M. Frew, S. Price. 27th May, 1990.

A bolder start that joins the parent route where the right-trending crack straightens out. Start up and right on a higher ledge as for Rites of Passage and step left on to the bald slab, surmounting a little overhang, then trending up left to join the crack.

-Rites of Passage

55m E1 5b

J.R. Mackenzie, G. Cullen. 26th May, 1990.

A splendid line that follows the cleaned cracks up the wall left of the bounding arete. Scramble up heather and rock as for the other routes but go further right to a commodious ledge and belays. Climb up left to the corner, then follow a diagonal crack right to a thin move which gains the base of the main crack. Follow the crack in a great position to the top, where a step left on to the slab gives a fitting finish.

THE NORTH FACE, to the right of the black arete, is very steep and is characterised by grooves and a banana-shaped corner. It is very slow to dry and could take a week or more.

-The Alpha Groove

60m Very Severe

C. Rowland, K. Hopper. 1981.

A very good and strenuous first pitch provides the meat of the climb. Near the left end of the North face is a very prominent groove.

1. 20m, 4c. Climb the increasingly awkward groove to a tight exit on to a fine eyrie stance.
2. 20m, 4c. The continuation groove to the right of the stance is usually wet, so step right for 3m to a subsidiary groove and climb this to step back left across the top of the main groove on wet undercligs which lead to the upper wide grooves.
3. 20m, - Continue to the top.

-Direct Finish

45m HVS 5a

C. Rowland, J. Smith. 1981.

A much drier alternative to the top pitches. From the stance, step 3m right in to the subsidiary groove and climb this to a steep and awkward crack which ends at a large stance below the top pitch of Black Magic. Climb the cracks splitting the right wall and finish up a narrow gully.

-Tapered Buttress

60m E1

P. Nunn, A.N. Other. 1981.

The fine tapered buttress between The Alpha Groove and Black Magic. Start directly below the banana shaped groove of Black Magic and climb the steep buttress direct (30m, 5b). Continue in the same line to the top (30m, 5b).

-Black Magic

75m E2

J.R. Mackenzie, G. Cullen. 27th May, 1990.

The obvious banana-shaped groove which is often wet. An excellent middle pitch. Climb into The Meadow, a delightful oasis of wild flowers, and belay below the main groove (25m). Climb the groove to a precariously wedged block. Stand above the block without using it, then traverse left to a rib and crack to avoid a wet finish up the groove (30m, 5c). Now climb the increasingly difficult corner direct, artificial (20m, 5b).

KILT ROCK, Elishader Wall*-Pinnacle Chimney*

15m Very Difficult

C. Moody. 1st December, 1990.

Start at the left end of the wall at the neck between the pinnacle and the main cliff. Follow chockstones and finish by chimneying up behind a smaller pinnacle.

-Bandasky

30m E1 5a

C. Moody, B. Taylor. 28th July, 1990.

Climb the front of the small pillar just left of The Danglers. Follow twin cracks mostly using the better defined left hand crack. Sustained.

-Unnamed

30m HVS 5a

M. McLeod, C. Moody, B. Taylor. 21st October, 1990.

Left of the left hand roof is a left-facing corner-crack which is very wide near the top.

Descent Gully, South Wall*-Confiture*

10m Very Difficult

C. Moody. 1st December, 1990

Twin cracks right of Jammy Dodger.

-Marmalada

10m Difficult

C. Moody. 1st December, 1990.

Right of Confiture is a pinnacle. Chimney up the left side to gain the top, then finish up a short crack.

NORTHERN HIGHLANDS

A huge number of new routes on outcrops in the Northern Highlands have been climbed in the last three years. Descriptions will appear soon in the new guidebook and there is not space to repeat them here. The crags include Sheigra (NC 1860), Reiff, Ardmail Crag, Royal Hotel Buttress (Ullapool NH 134944) and Seana Mheallan (Torridon NG 925553)

AM BUACHAILLE -Atlantic Wall

50m E1

S. Richardson, R. Clothier. 15th September, 1990.

An exposed and intimidating route taking the seaward (West) face of the stack. Good rock and protection. Retreat after the first pitch would be difficult. Start below the South face at the left end of the rock plinth.

1. 15m, 5a. Climb a small left-facing corner to a roof at 5m. Traverse left to the arete and climb this to reach an exposed stance.

2. 15m, 4c. Strenuously up the overhanging flake crack on the seaward face, directly above the stance, and continue more easily to reach a large ledge beneath the steep final wall. Belay up and right beside a huge detached block.

3. 20m, 5a/b. Climb the thin crack above the block to a horizontal break. Traverse left to reach the continuous crack running up the left side of the wall which leads to easier ground and the top. A fine pitch.



Photo: Chris Anderson

Rab Anderson on 'Seems the Same', HVS 5a, Seana Mheallan, Torridon



Photo: T. B. Fleming

The President on the final headwall

ASSYNT, Beinn an Fhurain (NC 303215)

The cliff is formed round a nose east of spot height 860. Traversing round under the cliff from the col between Beinn an Fhurain and Conival, one soon comes to a short gully with an icefall just to its left. Climb this (40m), then traverse easily right into the gully. The gully leads into a steeper icefall (40m) which continues as a thinner version leading into an icy chimney (45m). One can now escape off left or scramble up to a mixed pitch (choice of several, all steep) leading up to the summit. A scrappy line but giving 3 long icefall pitches, steep but not with a serious disposition. Climbed by B. Davison, A. Nisbet, 9th February, 1991.

QUINAG, Western Cliffs -Noggin the Nog

80m IV

B. Davison, A. Nisbet. 10th February, 1991.

The route followed a chimney on the right wall of the bay containing The Gully of Nedd (SMCJ 1986, p308) ie. just left of the grade I gully (descent) below the third col. There is a shallower groove to the right and the two features define a small tower on the ridge bounding the gully. Two long pitches, much back and foot, then scrambling.

The Gully of Nedd was repeated that day, a fine line and easier.

COIGACH, Cul Mor, Coire Gorm -The Cul

165m V

S. Richardson, R. Everett. 13th January, 1991.

In the centre of the back wall of the coire, a prominent deep chimney slants from right to left. Climb the first steep chimney, exiting right, and continue for 2 easier pitches, passing under a flake tunnel, to a stance beneath the final overhanging chimney. Climb this to a steep finish on the right wall (35m). A spectacular pitch.

Note: Sgurr an Fhìdhleir. A free ascent of Nose Direct, Tower Finish at E1 5b/c by S. Richardson and S. Allan, 19th May, 1990. A free winter ascent of the Nose Direct, summer line at Grade VI, R. Everett and S. Richardson, 12th January, 1991.

BEINN DEARG, Glen Squaib -Jewel in the Crown

160m V

S. Richardson, C. Cartwright (alt). 6th January, 1991.

Climbs the icy corner just to the left of Emerald Gully. The crux pitches need a good build-up of ice which is fairly rare. On this ascent a fair coating was found after a heavy snowfall followed by a week of freeze/thaw. The route is not technically difficult by modern standards, but the ice will rarely be thick, and the protection is well-spaced. Low in the grade.

Start 20m below the first steep pitch in Emerald Gully. Move left across mixed ground and climb a steep icy corner for 10m to exit on a snow terrace beneath the corner (25m). The bottom of the corner overhangs, but a strenuous pull from the right gained a frieze of icicles and entry into the corner which is climbed (thread runner on left) to a good stance on the left (20m). Move right and up a steep ice wall, then continue up mixed ground to belay in a small cave on a terrace (45m). Two pitches up ice, snow and moderate mixed ground lead to the cornice (70m).

AN TEALLACH, Lord Berkley's Seat

130m V

S. Jenkins, A. Nisbet. 28th January, 1991.

This spectacular route climbs the impressive coire face of the Seat. Cooperative rock and turf (if well frozen) makes the route a slight imposter, low in its grade. Start just left of the toe of the buttress.

1. 45m Climb the crest, trending slightly rightwards until stopped by a barrier wall.
2. 35m Traverse right and climb a short slab overlooking the gully right branch. A series of walls leads to another barrier.
3. 25m Traverse left and climb corners just right of the crest.
4. 25m A short turf ramp leads diagonally right to the final wall, finishing right of the Seat's summit.

CREAG MHOR THOLLAIDH, Lower Crag -North-West Orient

60m E4

R. Anderson, C. Anderson. 12th May, 1990.

A good direct line which takes the arete to the right of Gudgeon. Start to the right of the tree start to that route and Decadent Days beneath a short crack springing from a niche between a holly bush on the left and a small tree on the right.

1. 25m, 5b. A flake-crack leads to the niche, then the short crack is climbed to move up and gain a horizontal handrail. Traverse right for 5m, ascend the wall past a crack to reach a left-slanting ramp, then move up to belay as for Gudgeon.

2. 35m, 6a. Climb the groove above to a flake, then step up right to a thin crack as for Gudgeon. Place a high wire, then traverse right to a peg and climb the arete and cracks leading to the top.

Far East Wall -Glow Worm

80m IV/V

A. Nisbet, S. Dring, 21st November, 1990.

A line based on Sidewinder but taking a parallel line below the rightward-slanting crack to belay near Sting, then crossing Sidewinder to finish on its left. Climbed under deep snow and partially frozen turf, the lower grade might apply in better conditions.

BEINN EIGHE, Coire Mhic Fhearchair, Eastern Ramparts -Eastern Promise

V

B. Davison, A. Nisbet. 12th February, 1991.

By the summer route except that the roof above the girdle ledge was passed on the left instead of right. Intimidatingly steep but cooperative and well-protected.

West-Central Wall -Wall of the Winds

120m E1

J. Lyall, A. Nisbet. 15th September, 1990.

The route is based on a continuous line of grooves 10m left of Mistral. Start midway between the initial corner of Mistral and the Pinnacle of Twilight Zone.

1. 10m, - Climb an easy blocky groove.

2. 35m, 5a. Go up a continuation groove on to a pinnacle (looks like a flake-crack from below), then up to the Girdle ledge.

3. 45m, 5b. The continuation was unattractive so a flake on the left was taken leading into a shallow groove climbed for about 8m. A left traverse led to another groove which was followed to good runners (Twilight Zone is the groove left again). A short descent allowed a return traverse to the shallow groove (crux). A rightwards-trending line through the left end of a roof system gave access to a chimney not far left of Mistral Vee-corner.

4. 30m, 4b. Finish up this.

-West-Central Wall (winter)

350m VI

B. Davison, A. Nisbet. 14th February, 1991.

A steep route based on Mistral. Start up West-Central Gully and where it widens above the sandstone, break out right by a short ice pitch on to the base of the wall. Go out right and easily up the left side of West Buttress until a ledge leads back left to the start of Mistral (second icy groove from the right). This is the start of serious climbing.

Climb the icy V-groove and the three-tiered overhanging chimney directly above. Traverse right and belay below another chimney (40m). Climb the chimney (it has a wide crack in its right wall) to the Upper Girdle. Return left to belay directly above the previous pitch and back on Mistral (25m). Climb Mistral crux pitch (20m). Traverse left and finish up the final chimney of Wall of the Winds (40m).

-Far West Buttress

IV

S. Aisthorpe, J. Lyall. 9th January, 1991.

An excellent short route with 2 technical but well-protected pitches.

BEINN EIGHE, Coire Rudha-staca -The Independent Pineapple

IV/V

G. Ettle, A. Nisbet. 13th January, 1991.

By the summer route. Short but well-protected, a natural line.

-Three Tier Chimney

150m III/IV

B. Davison, A. Nisbet. 15th February, 1991.

The gully parallel to and left of Thin Man's Ridge. Mostly easy but one strenuous pitch of 3 piled chockstones. The last short chimney pitch was common to The Independent Pineapple (winter).

MEALL GORM, Eastern Buttress -Blue Moon

200m III

S. Aisthorpe, J. Lyall. 8th January, 1991.

The route follows the crest of the buttress to the left of the Trident Gully left branch. Start on the terrace left of the gully and climb two steep walls (crux). Follow the exposed left edge of the buttress to the top.

SGURR A' CHAORACHAIN, The Cioch, Upper Tier -Glover's Route

III

A. Tibbs, M. Shaw, A. Matthewson, C. Huntley. 30th December, 1990.

Roughly by the summer route but without the 30m right traverse.

North-West Buttresses -Jupiter

390m IV/V

B. Davison, A. Nisbet. 11th February, 1991.

A winter version of the summer route but the relationship is unsure. Completely frozen turf is unusual but close to essential. Start from the toe of the buttress about 50m right of Voyager.

Climb a turfey groove (40m), then a steep chimney (40m). Go up to the base of the largest tier (50m). Take a heavily vegetated trough left of the crest (45m). Go diagonally right passing a tree to a ledge. Climb a vertical wall with a good crack passing a roof on its right (45m). Up to the next tier and a corner on the left (60m). The wall left of the corner was climbed on big flakes, then a slabby wall on the right and up to the next tier (50m). A central corner, then a right slanting line of flakes led to easier ground (50m). Blocky ground to the top of the buttress (60m).

-Dexter

III/IV

G. Ettle, A. Nisbet. 12th January, 1991.

As for summer except that the wall on the right of the dark chimney was climbed leading to a short icefall at the right side of the slab.

FUAR THOLL, South-East Cliff - W. Moir and N. Ritchie note a free ascent of Tholl Gate in February, 1991. An excellent sustained steep ice route with the crux section providing 10m of very steep thick ice, modern V.

FANNICHS, Sgurr Mor, East Face

This tremendous Alpine like face rises 300m above a shallow bowl of a coire. It faces North-East and gets the morning sun which can affect conditions late in the season. Roughly triangular in shape, it has the following routes. Easter Gully, 240m II, takes the long narrow gully on the left side of the face; Resurrection takes an almost central line via the hanging snowfields, 450m IV; East Face Route, 300m III, takes the fine shallow gully on the right of the central snowfields.

-Gelid Groove

240m III/IV

J.R. Mackenzie, G. Cullen. 27th January, 1991.

Just to the left of Easter Gully is an icefall. Peg belay by a cave on the left. Climb the very steep initial bulge and then by pleasant ice to a stance and peg belay on the left (50m). Continue up to the top bulge and climb this to snow and peg belay a little higher (40m). Move up and right to gain a minor snow rib punctuated by rock islands (50m, peg belay). Between this rib and a more massive buttress to the right is a fine but optional ice pitch. Climb the ice and belay on the next rock island (50m). Continue to the top on snow (50m). Some nice climbing in good surroundings. Repeated quickly and considered IV.

FANNICHS, Creag a' Mhadaidh, Carn a' Criche (NH 197729)

The huge (270m) triangular crag which lies above Loch a' Mhadaidh is probably one of the bigger crags in the Fannichs. It faces North and from a distance appears monolithic and rather featureless. Closer inspection reveals both the true size and steepness of the crag. The lower 70m of the crag is an almost unbroken wall of over 75 degrees, whilst the upper two thirds consists of a central scoop bounded by two ribs with a flanking wall on the left. This main section of face lies at or over 60 degrees.

The lower cliff is cut in only a few places. On the left the chimney line taken by The Boundary keeps to the left of the rib bordering the central scoop whilst towards the centre of the crag some thin ice smears lead up the lower wall. Right again a ramp cuts up right, finishing on broken ground that forms the right flank of the cliff. Below the ramp another very steep wall contours right above the loch. This is broken by a narrow cleft near the left end, a thin icefall in the centre and another, still very steep, near the right end.

-Grand Illusion

310m V

G.E. Little, J.M.G. Finlay. 14th February, 1991.

The route takes a fairly central line on the crag. Start well left of the ramp at a shallow chimney a short distance left of a blunt projecting rock boss. A fine long mountaineering route with significant technical difficulty on the first 2 pitches.

Climb the chimney for a short distance to below an overhang. Move right on to a ledge on the edge of a parallel groove. Ascend the groove to gain the top of the rock boss. Trend left up a turf fault to below a short narrow chimney. Ascend this (not for the overweight!) to take a poor belay on a small ledge (45m). Climb the steep turf groove above the belay to below an ice slot cutting through overhanging rock. Climb this to gain a turf groove and the snowfield above. Trend right to a thread belay under an obvious roof (55m). Climb a narrow ramp trending right, then move back left to find a zig-zagging line up the centre of the face to the apex of the crag. Distinctive features en route are a left-slanting ice groove, a prominent dark rock and a steep groove cutting through the headwall.

-Brumous Buttress

280m III

G. Cullen, J.R. Mackenzie. 12th January, 1991

Takes the ground just right of the right hand rib. Climb the lower ramp for 90m, easy but increasingly exposed, to where it begins to level off. Climb either of two breaks which lie just right of a prominent block, up an ice pitch and rock belays on the right (45m). Traverse up and left, then take the ice pitch in some narrows which lie just right of a jutting buttress, to belay on an isolated block above (50m). Climb up to the next band of rocks and either traverse off right, then up to reach easier ground or take the buttress on the left to reach the same spot, rock belays (45m). Climb up easily to finish (50m). On this ascent a combination of deep powder and wind produced a high misery factor. Probably quite pleasant in good conditions.

Sgurr Breac, North-East Face (NH 162716)

At the termination of its NE ridge, Sgurr Breac presents a large though somewhat broken crag. The crag is divided into two main sections by a deep snow gully with a short pitch low down (grade I/II). On the left of this gully is a rather discontinuous buttress, whilst on the right lies a wall of more continuous rock split by a chimney/corner and a short deep gully (John's Gully) near its right extremity.

-Neverending Story

300m II/III

J.M.G. Finlay, J.G. Finlay, G.E. Little. 16th February, 1991.

Tackles the wide buttress to the left of the easy central gully. Start under a rock roof below the easy gully just above the toe of the buttress.

Move left and ascend a wide snow ramp cutting out on to the face of the buttress (45m). Ascend a slabby wall (crux) and snow above to belay in a rock cave (45m). Move right into a short turf groove. Go up this and broken ground above to belay by a sapling (35m). Ascend the obvious icy corner (well left of the organ pipes icefall) and continuation groove to belay on the left (10m). Three long pitches, winding up between small outcrops, give access either to the fine NE Ridge of Sgur Breac or allow a traverse off to the right along a snowshelf.

-Ptarmigan Corner

110m III/IV

J.M.G. Finlay, G.E. Little. 16th February, 1991.

The obvious chimney/corner on the right hand side of the crag. Ascend the open corner and climb a steep chimney to gain a snowpatch. Belay under the overhang (45m). Continue up the corner to a sapling. Move right into a slot with a thin flake. Pull out right, then continue up a turf groove to belay under broken rocks on the left (40m). Steep snow leads to the top (25m).

STRATH ORRIN, Creag a' Ghlasteil -Three Stroke Gully

120m II

G. Cullen, M. Hynd, J.R. Mackenzie. 17th February, 1991.

To the right of the trees and near the right hand side of the face lies a shallow gully which is half ice, with pleasant bulges, and half snow.

Note: Ghlastail GTX was repeated in conditions of plentiful ice but little snow and the very steep top pitch was considered Grade V (first ascensionists agree).

GLENMARKSIE CRAG -Dogg'Ed

24m VS 4c

G. Cullen, P. Whitefield. 10th June, 1990.

A fine sustained line up the steep wall left of Dog Leg. Start in the gully and step onto the wall to climb via thin cracks to the traverse of Dog Mantle. Climb the wall above via wider cracks to the base of the Dog Head, and finish by the right corner as for Dog Leg.

-Variation, Direct Finish

7m E2 5b

G. Cullen, J.R. Mackenzie, R. Brown. 17th July, 1990.

Climb the unprotected and spectacular arete direct to the Dog Head pinnacle, the final move being the crux. Hard for the short.

-Little Teaser

15m E2 6a

J.R. Mackenzie, R. Brown. 3rd June, 1990.

Just left of the small corner at the right end of the crag is a rust coloured corner above a cleaned slab. Climb the slab pleasantly, then leap up the overhanging corner (PR in place on left, RP3 vital) to pull onto the slab by memorable moves. Extenders on runners will allow a falling leader to hit the slab below.

SGURR A' MHUILIN, Creag Ghlas

J.R. Mackenzie gives the following amended description of The Lizard, along with the added variation.

-The Lizard

148m HVS

Start at a cairned ledge beneath the central rib of the West Buttress, which has a steep pale side wall bottomed by a heather chimney.

1. 23m 4c. Climb the crest of the rib to a ledge (possible belay). Climb the fine curved crack which lies between two mossy corners to a ledge and belay.
2. 30m 5a. Continue up the mossy corner above to a ledge and belay.
3. 25m 4c. Step right and gain the right edge of the slab above, climbing shallow grooves to a heather exit left of a little tree, block belay on the terrace.
4. 25m 5a. Cross the terrace and climb the slab above on the right, which has an initially delicate section up a right diagonal fault. Trend back up left, step up right, then up left following a fault. An excellent pitch.
5. 45m 4b. Cross heather and climb a cracked wall. Cross more heather and gain a slanting groove. Climb this via a crack, then climb a prominent jam crack to the top. An interesting pitch making the most of the final walls.

-Variation, The Loop Pitch

33m E3 5b/c

M. Selwood, J.R. Mackenzie. 28th July, 1990.

From the stance above the first pitch, instead of climbing the mossy corner, climb it for a few metres, then make a delicate traverse right to the base of the right edge. Climb this (Friend 0) then make difficult moves up to a little pink ledge. From here make a step left into a blind crack and layback up an improving edge to a ledge and belay as for the original route. The pitch is excellent but has no protection above the Friend 0.

STAC POLLAIDH

After last year's improved description of Jack the Ripper, a further new pitch has been added, giving a direct route, for which John Mackenzie gives the following description. The pitch had been climbed before by R. Everett, D. Gaffney in 1989.

-Jack the Ripper Direct

120m E2

G. Cullen, J.R. Mackenzie, M. Selwood. 14th July, 1990.

1. 24m 4c. Start at the grassy hollow at the foot of the very edge of the buttress which is right of the grassy groove of November Groove. Climb a wall and bulge to step left and climb a fine layback crack to a ledge. Step right and belay behind a detached pinnacle.
2. 24m 5a. Climb the wall above and make a loose step right into a groove. Climb this to a little overhang and move awkwardly over this. Make an exposed left traverse for a few metres to near the left edge and climb straight up to the broken ledges below the third (slab) pitch of the original route.
3. 36m 5a. Step to the right edge below the slab and step over the bulge to climb rounded cracks to a small ledge overlooking the East Face. Continue up the cracks to then step left and up to easier ground.
4. 12m 5a. The original route now traverses up left into November Groove to finish. Instead, climb up some slabs including a crescent shaped jam crack to reach a fine ledge on the right edge.
5. 24m 5c. Take the slender curving groove above (which is left of Feò de Se's final corner), past an old nut, to mantel left onto a good ledge. Climb the wide crack above and finish up a short curving crack. An excellent sustained pitch, well-protected.

NOTE: Beinn Bhan, Coire na Feola. J. Lyall's opinion is that Flesheater should be graded easy IV. The climbing is not nearly as good as indicated.

CAIRNGORMS

CREAG an DUBH LOCH, The Central Slabs -The Titan

300m IV/V

G. Ettle, S. Blagbrough. 17th January, 1991.

Follows the ramp and corner system to the right of Nemesis. Excellent turf and protection. Start as for Nemesis taking the rightward-grooved ramp.

1. 30m Follow ramp to flake belay.
 2. 30m Continue steeply up ramp rightwards to shallow corner. Up this to ledges and belay below obvious wide corner on right of large wall.
 3. 25m Follow wide corner to small stance below a steepening.
 4. 40m Continue up corner to swing left on to easier ground and on up to belay at foot of corner above, just right of Minotaur chimney.
 5. 40m Climb corner for 10m past large hollow flake to a swing out right on to easier ground. Grooves above lead to a flake belay.
- Follow the easy crest of the buttress to the plateau (135m).

BRAERLACH, Garbh Choire Mor -Phoenix Edge

IV/V

A. Cunningham, A. Nisbet. 21st January, 1991.

A winter ascent close to the summer route. A good route taking a logical line chosen under the prevailing conditions of deep partially consolidated snow, but the line and grade may vary. A short chimney right of the initial corner led to a left-trending line on snow to the summer belay. The right edge of the slabby wall was climbed, including a mantelshelf on to the perched block, followed by a return left to finish up the summer route.

Garbh Choire Dhaidh -Didgeridoo

V/VI

B. Davison, A. Nisbet. 28th February, 1991.

A good line, but thin and poorly protected. Ice may form in better conditions. The initial green slab was largely banked out and the line is better located as the central of three, left-facing, left-slanting corners.

1. 30m The corner was gained on ice and followed for 15m to belay at a huge triangular block on the right.
2. 45m The corner was followed past the dangerous wedge of blocks and a steep section on a thin stripe of turf (good locating feature). There is no good belay and tension was used to reach a belay in the corner to the right (belaying at the wedge of blocks, if trusted, would eliminate this).
3. 50m Continue up the corner and cracks above, then move 2m left into a parallel crackline and up this to a small bay. Climb the corner at its back, then go up rightwards by short slabby walls.
4. 70m Continue rightwards up the vague ridge, then easily to the top.

GLEANN EINICH, Sgoran Dubh Mor, No 2 Buttress -Batchelor's Chimney 140m IV

S. Kennedy, D. Ritchie. 24th November, 1990.

Follows the deep chimney seen high on the buttress 50m left of Rose Ridge. The chimney involves 3 pitches. The first climbs steep slopes to a through route. The second climbs a steep wall by a groove on the right and the last pitch leads to a cave which is negotiated by another through route. Finish up mixed ground above.

BEINN a' BHUIRD, Coire nan Clach, Black Crag -Bete Noir

30m E3 6a

N. Ritchie, C.G. Munro. June, 1990.

Start 10m up the gully left of Chocolate Girls at a large block and platform. Climb the uppermost of three left-slanting cracks to gain a hanging corner. Continue up this to reach a bulge which is surmounted awkwardly on the right. A strenuous and sustained pitch.

-Abdel Wahad

35m HVS 5a

N. Ritchie, C.G. Munro. June, 1990.

The obvious corner-crack right of Twisted Sister. Gain the corner in from the left on jugs. Make an awkward move on a slab to gain the main crack (dirty). Move left and up on a flake-crack to the base of a bulge. Surmount this on the right to gain easy ground.

COIRE SPUTAN DEARG, Grey Man's Crag -Ferlas Mor

120m V

S. Richardson, C. Cartwright (VL). 1st December, 1990.

The summer line was followed in 3 pitches to below the crux of Hanging Dyke. An attempt on the next pitch failed after 20m due to poorly frozen turf, so the natural winter continuation up the groove and chimney of Hanging Dyke (climbed free, see note) was followed, and the summer line gained above. A sustained and technical route. The second pitch was particularly fierce.

Terminal Buttress -Next to Last

30m HVS 5a

A. Fyffe, K. Geddes, N. Ritchie. 26th July, 1990.

Takes the main groove line on the wall about 30m up the gully from The Swing. Start at a distinctive recess of slabby rock. Climb into the recess, then out of it by the overhanging crack. Climb the groove and its continuation crack to the top.

CREAGAN A' CHOIRE ETCHACHAN -Talismanic

30m E3 5c

W. Moir, N. Ritchie. 10th June, 1990.

Climbs the arete between Talking Drums and Talisman, starting at the foot of the latter. Pull on to the edge using obvious big holds and go up to a perch. Continue boldly for 4m, then follow cracks to the Talisman stance.

Switchblade

160m V

J. Lyall, A. Nisbet. 2nd February, 1991.

A line of turfy cracks slanting right across Sheath.

1. 20m Start as for the winter Dagger and belay just right of Scabbard.
2. 40m Climb the right-facing corner which bounds the right side of Scabbard rib, then a wide crack which leads on to slabs just right of Scabbard. Make a thin traverse right into a turfy left-facing corner and follow it into a turfy bay (Sheath crosses leftwards here).
3. 45m Go over an overhang at the top right corner of the bay, up cracks, then diagonally left to belay on the Terrace just below its top.
4. 35m Climb a thin turfy crack left of the arete of Delicatessen.
5. 20m Easy to the top.

CAIRN ETCHACHAN, Upper Tier -Snakebite

100m HVS

A. Nisbet, D. Gaskell. 1st August, 1990.

1. 40m 4c. Follow Python/Snakebite to the traverse ledge.
2. 35m 4c. Follow Snakebite to the foot of Python's final chimney (which can be climbed to make the route VS overall).
3. 25m 5b. Climb the rib on the right of Python chimney. It includes a short overhanging crack.

SHELTER STONE CRAG -Games of Chance

90m V

A. Fyffe, R. Mansfield. February, 1991.

Climbs the most obvious line up the centre of the face right of Unknown Gully. A variety of climbing types in a short way. Start in the big snow bay. Climb up and left to below the steep wall. A steep crack with bulges then leads to the foot of the big wide chimney. Climb the chimney mostly on ice in the right corner.

HELLS LUM -Lion of Judah

175m VS

J. Lyall, J. Pickering. 25th July, 1990.

Follows the rib left of Deep Cut Chimney. Start left of its Direct Start.

1. 45m 4c. Climb layback cracks up the left edge of the slab to a ledge. Climb the clean green slab above, moving left to a small ledge and belay.
2. 40m 4a. Go straight up over ledges, then follow a crackline slanting left to belay by large blocks.
3. 20m 5a. Step out right on to slab, then go up right to gain and climb the short cracked corner. Belay at its top on a tiny stance overlooking Deep Cut Chimney.
4. 20m 4c. Go straight up a short way, then work up diagonally left to climb a short hanging chimney.
5. 50m 4b. Finish as for Hell's Lump, climbing the rib adjoining Deep Cut Chimney.

STAG ROCKS -*Monarch of the Glen*

160m V

J. Lyall, R. Wild. 12th January, 1991.

The route follows a system of grooves up the left edge of the Pine Tree Buttress and is independent until the last pitch. Start 15m below Deception Inlet at the base of a steep wall with red streaks (spike belay).

1. 30m Climb the groove line up the right side of the wall to reach the right end of a diagonal roof. Move up left under the roof and break through at a V-notch. Climb the groove above and go up rightwards to a small stance between two grooves (a superb pitch).
2. 30m Pull up into the left-hand groove and climb it for 7m, then swing left to an easier groove. Follow this, then up right to a ledge and continue straight up to a higher ledge.
3. 40m A steep crack in the short wall above leads awkwardly into another groove system which is followed to a ledge overlooking Deception Inlet.
4. 30m Climb the obvious cracks in the wall above.
5. 30m Follow the easy ridge to the top.

STAC AN FHARAIDH -*Spirit Voices*

120m V

A. Fyffe, R. Mansfield. January, 1991.

A winter route based on Speakeasy. Climb the first pitch of that route to belay in the corner. Traverse under the roof, then follow ice smears up and back left to below the upper rocks. Work up into the short V-chimney and climb it to the roof and exit left. Climb a short wall, then continue more easily up and right to finish.

-Ying and Yang

190m HVS

A. Liddell, A. Maclean, A. Gerrard. July, 1990.

Good climbing but a bit disjointed. Finishes up the left side of the big prow at the top of Whispers. Start just to the right of Pushover below a blank slab with a scoop at 5m.

1. 20m 5a. Climb the slab to the ledge, move left and cross Pushover to climb the shallow crack trending left. Cross the slab on the right to belay on Pushover.
2. 45m -. Trend back left over an overlap and up corners to an easy slab which is followed to the belay corner on Bellows at the start of its crux pitch.
3. 45m 5a. Step on to the nose on the right at head height, then traverse right and pull on to the slab above. Easy climbing up left to a belay near Whispers.
4. 20m -. Move easily left round the corner to belay in the gully.
5. 15m 5a. Move up to a fine flake leading up left. quit this after 3m using a good undercut and climb straight the overhang on good holds to easy ground.
6. Easy to the top.

NORTHERN COIRES, Coire an t-Sneachda, Mess of Pottage*-The Opening Break*

100m II/III

A. Cunningham, A. Fyffe. November, 1990.

A slight, easily abandoned climb near the left edge of the buttress starting up the main left-facing corner. Climb the cracks leading to the corner turning the first bulge on the right. Climb the corner to easy ground on the terrace, then go up right. Follow the fault going left below a steeper wall. Break back right up twin cracks to an easy finish.

-No Blue Skies

110m IV/V

A. Fyffe, L. Healey. 20th December, 1990.

A subtle route which finds a way through the roof system on the headwall. Start where an obvious diagonal line leads left to a shallow horizontal cave. Climb the diagonal corner to near the apex, traverse left, then up the left side of the apex to exit on to a ledge by the horizontal cave. Continue up the crack and corner to easier ground and belay by a squat pillar. Climb broken ground, then gain a fine flake crack (below and left of the big roof) and follow it to its end. Traverse left along it to a crack (Wachacha) and finish up this.

-Mariella

V

C. Forrest, G. Eittle, A. Nisbet. 6th January, 1991.

As for the summer line.

-Droidless

80m IV/V

C. Forrest, G. Ettle. 21st December, 1990.

Climbs the parallel crackline 3m right of Mariella, sharing belays but the pitches are independent and follow natural features.

Starting just on its left, gain and follow the fault line via a short steep chimney to a ledge (25m). Continue up the crack with a difficult start to an easing in angle and belay in a bay below an obvious right-facing corner (20m). Climb the corner, then easy ground (35m).

-The Firefighter

80m IV

G. Ettle, D. Jarvis. 10th January, 1991.

The line just to the right of Droidless. Unfortunately the direct start is blank. Start 10ft right of Droidless.

1. 30m Climb thin cracks to join Droidless for 5m. Traverse under the obvious roof on the right to pull into a tapering slot, then up to a belay ledge.
2. 20m Continue up the obvious chimney slot to belay as for Mariella.
3. 30m Exit out the right wall up easy grooves to the plateau.

-Topless

190m II/III

J. Lyall, R. Wild. 15th January, 1991.

A girdle of The Mess of Pottage. Traverse easily right to the base of Melting Pot groove. Traverse steeply right to the base of the final groove on The Message. A short descent, then right traverse on rock ledges leads to easy snow going down right.

Aladdins Buttress *-The Paramedic*

80m V

G. Ettle, D. Jarvis. 15th January, 1991.

A direct line heading for the grooves between the final corners of Doctor's Choice and Doctor Janis.

1. 25m Follow an iced crack system 5m left of the start to Doctor's Choice to a belay on the rib left of the cave.
2. 25m Continue up the bulge behind the belay and belay at the base of Doctor's Choice final corner (climbed before).
3. 30m Move into the slim groove on the right wall. Climb past two pegs to the roof and a wild swing right avoiding a perched block allows entry to an upper groove. Climb past an old peg to a belay on upper walls (1 axe rest).

-Doctor Janis

130m VS

J. Lyall, A. Nisbet. 26th July, 1990.

Slightly vegetated but good quality rock, closely following the winter line (Direct route)

1. 45m 4a. Climb the main groove until it is blocked by an overhang (3 old pegs in right wall of overhang)
2. 40m 4b. Pass the overhang by slabs on the left, then go straight up to gain the subsidiary hanging groove which leads into the base of the upper corner.
3. 45m 4c. Climb the upper corner.

-Edgewood

120m E2

D. Etherington, A. Nisbet. 23rd July, 1990.

Climbs the prominent arete right of Doctor Janis. Start at the base of the wall which forms the right side of the Doctors Choice alcove. This is just below and right of Doctor Janis start.

1. 45m 4b. Climb the arete and slabs to a big ledge on the right.
2. 25m 5b. Climb a flake crack, then a thin crack (which is obvious from the start and 20m left of Magic Crack pitch 2) to make a thin exit on to slabs which lead to the belay below Genic main corner.
3. 50m 5b. Go 2m up Genic main corner, then diagonally left across the undercut slab (crux) to the arete. Cross Doctor Janis and continue left to the next arete, followed to the top.

-Brief Encounter

35m III/IV

J. Lyall, M. Sclater. 7th January, 1991.

Start 7m down to the left of Honour Among Thieves at a crackline. Climb this crack initially on ice, then on turf to gain the top of Terms of Endearment.

-The Flying Doctors

160m V

G. Ettle, J. Lyall, S. Cameron. 16th February, 1991.

A girdle of Aladdin's Buttress which involves only short sections of new climbing but still gives a good adventure. Start 30m up Aladdin's Couloir and traverse right on easy snow ledges before descending to the inclined ledge of The Lamp. Climb this and traverse right to belay at the base of the Doctor's Choice corner. Descend the shallow chimney below the corner until possible to traverse right on to a large detached flake. From the tip of the flake, make a thin traverse right, then slightly up before traversing right to the foot of Genie corner. Climb Genie for 7m before breaking out right to a stance on White Magic. Follow the unlikely traverse right under the overlap to the top of Damnation corner. Traverse right into Original Route (winter), descend it for a short way and climb a groove on to the crest of Terms of Endearment. Finish up this.

-Fingers Ridge Direct

V

J. Lyall, A. Nisbet. 20th December, 1990.

A winter ascent based on the summer line, with some thin slab climbing. Start as for the normal winter route, going diagonally left from the base of Red Gully, but after about 15m, traverse right to a ledge next to Red Gully (25m). Climb a turfey crack to the summer stance by Red Gully (10m). Thin climbing leads to a perched block, then go left and up to a stance. (30m). Climb a thin crack in the slab right of the groove on the normal route and continue up to join the final crest.

Note: An easier version but closer to Red Gully was climbed by M. Garthwaite and G. Szuca on 28th November, 1990. A start up Red Gully to belay 1 was followed by about 30m common to the above but where the above route went left (its crux), continued up via a wide crack to rejoin Red Gully (IV).

Fiacail Buttress -North-East Cruiser

125m E2

D. Etherington, A. Nisbet. 31st July, 1990.

1. 45m 4c. Climb the flake chimney (winter route Stirling Bomber) to the right end of the Terrace.
2. 25m 5c. Go diagonally right along a continuous crack (the lowest of three diagonal lines, the highest being Fiacail Buttress Direct). Where this becomes blind, descend to a ledge above an overhang, then climb the corner on the right to regain the crack. Pull out right on to a slab and make improbable moves up the overhanging arete on the left to gain a ledge (Smokestack Lightning also belays here).
3. 25m 5a. Keeping on steep ground, go diagonally leftwards using big flakes and cracks (joining Fiacail Buttress Direct)
4. 25m 4b. Continue leftwards to the top of the buttress, passing the steep final wall by joining Houdini.

-Burning and Looting

75m IV/V

A. Cunningham, A. Fyffe. 13th February, 1991.

Climbs the rib between the corners of Rampant and Belhaven. Start at the beginning of the big ledge leading into Belhaven. From near a huge block on the ledge, go up steeply to a ledge going right, then into a hanging groove capped by a block. Surmount this into a short slot, strenuous, and up to a ledge (originally Rampant, Direct start). Climb the sharp rib above by cracks and blocks on the right of the crest.

-Watch Out

50m VS

G. Ettle. 14th May, 1990.

The route follows cracks up the obvious arete to the right of The Seam. Scramble in from Fiacail Ridge or abseil.

1. 15m Scramble up to base of cracks.
2. 35m 5a. Follow twin cracks right of The Seam (PR) up to roof. Swing on to right arete and climb overhanging crack (crux). Move left on to slab and easier climbing leads to ridge. Back-roped on FA.

Winter

V

G.Ettle, J. Fitzpatrick. 2nd November, 1990.

By the summer route. A belay was taken under the crux roof and corner, 2 rests and now 2PR in situ.

Coire an Lochain -Ventriloquist

80m HVS

J. Lyall, B. Kellet. 2nd August, 1990.

A good route, climbing cracks in the wall just right of Auricle (which may be VS).

1. 30m 4c. Start 5m left of Ventricle, taking the chimney/crack start of Auricle (summer), then move right to climb a crackline into a recess and pull out right to belay below a wide crack 3m right of Auricle crux groove.

2. 20m 5a. Climb the crack (crux), then move up right by two short corners to a ledge.

3. 30m 4b. Step up left from the ledge to a line of flakes and traverse right to a thin crack. Climb the crack, making a short detour on the right at the steepest section, cross the crevasse and finish up the deep crack to the top.

Winter

V/VI

J. Lyall, A. Nisbet. 21st December, 1990.

Strenuous but well protected (3.5 and 4 friends useful). By the summer line in 5 pitches except that the thin crack on summer pitch 3 was climbed from its base, 2m right of the summer belay.

-Big Daddy

80m VI

B. Davison, A. Nisbet. 25th February, 1991.

Climb the first pitch of Daddy Longlegs (sustained, poor rests except for one on aid near the top of the first groove). Climb the wide crack of Ventricle (avoided by Ventricle, winter), then traverse left to finish up Ventriloquist.

-Conundrum

50m V

J. Lyall, A. Nisbet. 19th December, 1990.

Climbs the bottomless groove system between Hooker's Corner and The Deviant. Very steep but amenable. Start as for The Deviant but below its bulging chimney, move up left into an overhanging groove. Clip a high PR, then swing out left on to an obvious small ledge on the left arete. Move up to a chokestone, then swing left again into a wide crack in a right facing corner. Go up this, then back right and up to a blocky ledge (30m). Return left to the wide crack and follow it to the top (20m).

-Deep Throat

Very Difficult

Miss H. Melville, A. Nisbet, N. Ritchie. 18th July, 1990.

As for winter but easier.

NOTES: **Coire Sputan Dearg:** A free winter ascent of Hanging Dyke by the summer route by C. Forrest and A. Nisbet in December, 1988. Grade unchanged at IV.

Cairn Etchachan, East Face: The narrow chimney in the defined buttress above the North west corner of Loch Etchachan was climbed at Grade III (low build up). It was presumed to be Lochside Chimney, in which case the Grade I in the Cairngorms guide is wrong.

Shelter Stone Crag, Forefinger Pinnacle: A free ascent of the direct route from below at MVS 4c by G. Ettle and A. Nisbet in October, 1990.

Hell's Lum Crag: A winter ascent of The Pothole in 1989 by C. Forrest and party at grade III.

Hell's Lum Crag: Repeat ascents of Damien, Prince of Darkness and The Devil's Alternative have considered their crux sections to be well protected 5b and the routes of good quality and worth E1.

CENTRAL HIGHLANDS

CREAG MEAGHAIDH, Pinnacle Buttress -Deadline

180m V

A. Perkins, M. Duff (alt). 13th January, 1991.

Just right of 1959 Face Route is a large rib bounded on its right side by a prominent right facing, left to right curving corner system. Start below the corner on increasingly steep snow/ice-covered slabs.

1. Reach and climb the corner to where the ground eases.
2. Continue up the corner and bulging slabs to below the prominent chimney.
3. Climb the chimney.

Effectively the route finishes here although 60m of easy mixed ground reaches Easy Gully.

Post Face -Postman Pat

300m VI

A. Perkins, M. Duff. 10th February, 1991.

Right of North Post and Great Buttress is a shallow wide gully undercut by a steep wall, sloping shelf and overhanging wall. Two icicles hang down the overhanging wall from the shelf. Belay below the left hand icicle.

Climb the icicle (1 clip rest) to reach the shelf. Go up this to belay just below a narrow turf ledge on the steep retaining wall (45m). Traverse the ledge for 5m and up steeply to reach the gully (45m). Climb the gully (100m). A runnel reaches the summit snowfields.

Note: Inner Coire, Creag Meaghaidh. A. Annandale and J. Fuller note that a 15m corner left of the crux of Longfellow gives a good mixed variation to that route (III).

AONACH MOR, Coire an Lochain -Tinsel Town

110m IV/V

S. Kennedy, P. Mills. 3rd February, 1991.

Climbs the fine groove line just left of Gondola With The Wind and right of Colgate Tripper, directly below the biggest cornice on the mountain. Climb a system of grooves just to the left of the obvious small amphitheatre. Continue up a deep groove to belay on the left. Move back right into the main groove and climb steep mixed ground to belay directly under the massive cornice. The cornice was eventually outflanked by a long awkward traverse to the right. The grade takes into account the cornice.

Note: Although difficult to be certain from the descriptions, Aquafresh was climbed by C. Millar, R. Webb on 27th January, 1990 and named White Shark (IV) while Colgate Tripper was climbed by R. Reid, R. Webb on 24th February, 1990 - both predating the reports in SMCI, 1990.

-Roaring Forties

140m IV

S. Richardson, R. Everett, J. Wilkinson (var). 2nd March, 1991.

In the middle of Central Buttress is a broken depression which forms an icefall in good conditions. Start about 5m left of Typhoon and follow icy grooves into a recess. Climb the steep back wall by a groove on the right (25m), and climb the icefall above (50m), to reach the final snowslopes.

Note: Jet Stream with the Direct Finish was climbed by C. Grant and C. Rice on 27th January, 1990. Grade IV.

-The Slever

100m IV

S. Kennedy, D. Ritchie. 2nd March, 1991.

The area of cliff 15m to the left of Molar Canal comprises a large bay. A large icefall forms down the left edge of the bay which is climbed in one long pitch to easy slopes. Move right into a small gully and up to an easy cornice.

North-East Face -Riptide

IV/V

T. Gilchrist, E. McGlashan, S. McLean. 28th March, 1990.

The corner left of The Betrayal, as mentioned in SMCI 1990.

AONACH BEAG, Stob Coire Bhealaich, East Face (SMCJ 1989, p291) -Sideslip

S. Kennedy, D. Ritchie. 16th February, 1991.

180m IV

Start 10m right of The Clare Effect and climb an obvious corner up rightwards for 60m. An iced slab on the left is climbed before moving back right to reach the faultline which crosses the upper part of the entire face. Traverse right along the fault for 10m to a large spike before moving back up leftwards into a large recessed area. Climb to open slopes above on the right. Finish up the narrow ridge (as for The Ramp) which is joined just below the top. No cornice.

West Face, Raw Egg Buttress -Salmonella

125m V

S. Richardson, R. Everett. 23rd March, 1991.

A difficult and strenuous climb which follows a crack and chimney system between Raw Egg Buttress Original Route and the left edge of the Chandelle wall. The route is at the top end of its grade, but the stances are good, and the protection mostly excellent. Start about 30m up and right of Original Route, and 40m down and left of Chandelle, below a prominent and very steep, right-facing corner which cuts the lower tier. Moderate mixed ground leads to its foot. Peg belay on right.

1. 35m Climb the corner which continuously overhangs for the first 20m, and continue more reasonably to a belay on easy ground above (possible escape down rake on right).
2. 15m Scramble directly up to the obvious V groove above, with an offwidth crack at its back.
3. 40m Climb the groove to a ledge, and follow the continuation chimney to a peg belay below a prominent overhanging offwidth (well seen from below).
4. 10m Climb the offwidth to a ledge (bold to start but not quite as hard as it looks).
5. 25m Reach an alcove, and pull over an overhanging block to easy ground.

MEALL nan TARMACHAN, Creag an Lochain -Tote Gully

140m III

S. Steer, M. Bryden. February, 1987.

Right of centre on the east facing crag above Lochain na Lairige is a wall with several ice smears below a snow basin. The route follows the icy gully on the left hand side of the wall, in two pitches to the snowfields. A choice of routes leads easily to an easy cornice exit.

-Turf Accountant

140m III

M. Bryden, S. Steer. March, 1989.

Left of Tote Gully is an obvious ice smear. 10m left of this is a thin chimney/gully. Climb this, then the turfy buttress above to an easy cornice exit.

BEN NEVIS**Douglas Boulder -North-West Face Route**

260m V

C. Stead, D.F. Lang. 9th February, 1991.

The summer route was followed without the diversion into the Lefthand Chimney. The chimney and the traverse below the chockstone provided sustained difficulties. Thereafter, snow ramps and grooves led to the South-West Arete, 1 pitch from its top.

North Wall of Carn Dearg -Keller's North Wall Route

105m VI

M. Charlton, M. Burrows-Smith. 1st February, 1991.

A winter ascent, staying fairly close to the summer line. Pitch 3 is hard and serious but with good belays.

1. 25m Climb the flake chimney exiting by the window and up to the broad ledge.
2. 20m Climb a corner left of the crack of the direct start to Route B to finish on the flake terrace.
3. 30m Go 6m right along the flake and up to a recess. Go right to a steep groove and up this to join Diagonal Terrace at a good belay.
4. 30m Climb left along Diagonal Terrace and up a steep groove line on good turf.
5. Exit left into Waterfall Gully and out up this.

North Face of Castle Ridge -Le Mechant

140m IV

A. Perkins, M. Duff (alt). 9th February, 1991.

A thin gully on the wall 45m right of La Petite. Climb a small buttress to belay below the gully (35m). Scratch up a slab 5m to enter the gully. Go up this and over an icy bulge. (45m). Continue on an icy slab and groove to the crest (45m). Up the crest easily to the ridge (35m).

MALLAIG CRAGS, Carn Mhic a' Ghille-chaim (see SMCJ 1988, p70)-*Into The Light*

G. Latter, G.E. Little (alts). 22nd July, 1989.

100m E3

Start below the undercut base of the Central Pillar just left of a large pinnacle-like flake.

1. 15m 5c. Climb left trending overhanging cracks to a good rest Pull right and up strenuous bulging cracks to a ledge and belay above.

2. 20m -. Traverse right on easy ground, passing below a large flake to a second flake below a grassy groove. Belay on top.

3. 30m 5a. Move up, then follow a left trending fake crack to a niche. Climb cracks above and a short slabby wall to a commodious ledge.

4. 30m 5b. Up 2 short easy slabs (common with Edge of Perfection) then a flake crack splitting the final vertical wall. Thread belay well back on right.

Sgurr Bhuidhe (see SMCJ 1988, p70)-*Dawn Patrol*

30m Severe

G.E. Little. 25th May, 1990.

This route climbs the diagonal rib near the centre of the face (just left of a sapling at half height). Climb the rib with a move left to flakes at half height. Finish by a steep left-trending groove.

GLENCOE**BUACHAILLE ETIVE MOR, Stob Coire Altruim (NN 197532)**

This North-facing crag consists of a main rock buttress bounded by a snow gully on the left. A lower more broken buttress lies to the left of the gully.

-Dalmation Couloir 100m III/IV

G.E. Little, A. Baker. 2nd March, 1991.

An obvious deep chimney splits the centre of the main buttress. Climb the chimney in 2 pitches passing over several large chockstones (80m). Snowslopes lead to the cornice. A little gem, somewhat reminiscent of a mini Raven's Gully.

Note: The route was climbed the following day by R. Everett and

S. Richardson, a snowfall having covered any traces. It was graded IV and their name has been retained, being less suggestive.

-Huandoy Revisited 85m III

A. Baker, G.E. Little. 2nd March, 1991.

A short distance up the snow gully bounding the left flank of the main buttress, an open ice groove runs up the slabby face. Climb the ice groove to a snowfield (45m). Up steepening snow to below a large cornice, avoided by a long traverse left.

S. Kennedy notes:

In the prolonged cold spell this year the ice smear on the broken buttress just below Lagangarbh Buttress developed into a fine icefall. The route Infected (SMCJ 1990, p591) seems to have partially climbed the icefall. In any event the icefall was climbed direct by M. Macdonald, N. Morrison, S. Kennedy on 17th February, 1991.

BEINN FHADA, Sentry Crag -Sentry Slabs Direct

100m VS

S. Steer, I. Roberts, C. Scollick. 9th July, 1989.

Start at the lowest point of the lowest tier at a clean pink slab between two prominent water streaks. Climb an easy slab to a black bulge. Climb over this, then slabs to a belay at the top of a ramp which slopes down left. Climb the extreme right of the wall behind the belay, and continue directly up bulging slabs until an obvious traverse leads right to a tree belay. Climb a short pink wall behind the belay to easy ground.

-Smiley's Indecision

50m E1

S. Steer, C. Scobie. 13th May, 1990.

1. 25m 5a. Start at the same point as Showcase and climb easily up and left to the leftmost (turfiest) of two cracks. Climb the slab between the crack and the left arete of the wall until moves can be made right to the belay of Showcase.

2. 25m. Move left and climb directly on the same line to easy ground.

Descent by abseil or easy slabs and walls to terrace.

GEARR AONACH, East Face

The following 2 routes climb the clean wall between Slimcrack and Flake Groove.

-Batura Wall

60m HVS

A. Tibbs, H. Shannon. 2nd July, 1989.

Start immediately left of a large brown streak of rock a short way left of Flake Groove.

1. 30m 5a. Climb directly up through an obvious break in the wall 2m left of the brown streak to a small ledge below a bulge at

15m. Climb up rightwards on to brown rock until a short traverse left can be made above the bulge. A crack leads to a belay.

2. 30m - Finish up easier rocks.

-The Burning

60m E1

A. Tibbs, S. Cameron. 12th May, 1990.

Start midway between the left edge of the brown streak and Slimcrack (left of Batura Wall).

1. 30m 5a. Climb the wall fairly directly to a belay.

2. 30m - Continue up the easier wall above.

North-East Face -Mad Mackerel

60m E1

I. Roberts, V. Ross. 13th May, 1990.

The route lies some distance to the right of Hairy Kipper, on the approach to the Zig-zags. Start beside an obvious dirty corner with an obvious roof at 6m.

1. 37m 5a. Climb to the roof. Undercling the roof to its right hand end, step round right into the bottom of an obvious groove, and climb this to a good stance on the left of the groove.

2. 24m 5a. Follow the groove to the overhanging wall above. Pull through and up, then climb broken ground and heather to a sapling belay.

AONACH DUBH, Far Eastern Buttress -Orient Express

85m IV

R. Anderson, C. Anderson, R. Milne. 2nd February, 1991.

Takes the thin iced chimney up the left side of the main mass of rock. Start just left of an obvious corner.

1. 15m Climb easy angled ice left of the corner; belay on ledge right of steep ice.

2. 25m Move up left and climb steep iced chimney to ledge.

3. 15m Continue up ice to large boulder, threads.

-Yen

100m IV

R. Anderson, C. Anderson. 9th February, 1991.

Approximates the summer line. Start at foot of lowest rocks.

1. 40m Move right along base of crag, then follow easy ground up to base of obvious chimney. Traverse up left to belay at short corner.

2. 20m Climb corner and cracks to ledge beside gully (short technical section).

3. 40m Step left and continue up crackline/groove. Threads in large boulder over the top.

-Satori

55m VS

K.V. Crocket, G. Jefferies. 12th May, 1990.

Climbs the lefthand of two parallel and right-trending cracks, on the fine wall right of an obvious chimney groove. The arete of North-east Nose is on the right.

1. 15m Scramble or climb to stance at foot of chimney groove.
2. 40m 4b Step onto wall, move right then up to block at right end of small roof. Over this moving left to continue up crack. Block belay on top.

-Shibumi

55m VS

K.V. Crocket, G. Jefferies. 12th May, 1990.

Climbs the righthand crack, starting as for Satori.

1. 15m Scramble or climb to stance at foot of chimney groove.
2. 40m 4b Step onto wall, go right to good footholds before corner. Follow obvious crack above to easier ground at top of corner. Follow edge to block belay on top.

-Farewell Arete

80m VD

K.V. Crocket, A. Walker. 19th May, 1990.

The right wall of Hole and Corner Gully forms an arete, rising from the foot of the gully. Climb arete, with a step left at 6m then continue up superb rock to ledge and belay. Continue above on same line for two pitches.

STOB COIRE NAN LOCHAIN *-Double Entendre*

IV (hard)

A. Nelson, G. Szuca. 16th March, 1989.

Start about 10m left of and below Innuendo.

1. Move up and right along a slabby ramp, then make a hard move left. Go up and right to belay at a spike almost in Innuendo.
2. Move left for 2m, then up into a groove just left of the left arete of the steep tower. Go up the groove to belay in the gap behind the tower.
3. Move up to a good flake runner, then right up a slabby ramp. Belay on a block under the obvious hanging block 15m above.
4. Move up and right on more broken ground with better protection to an obvious off width chimney/crack. Squirm up this moving right at the top. Belay 10m higher.
5. Move right and over an awkward bulge to easier ground

-Inclination

145m VI

R. Anderson, C. Anderson, R. Milne. 17th February, 1991.

This route uses the original start to Tilt, on the right of the crest, then takes the wall on its left to finish up a chimney. Belay at start of Tilt.

1. 20m Move right to gain and climb a right-slanting, stepped groove up the right side of the crest to a ledge and large block.
2. 20m Move up the ramp on the left, step very gingerly up right on to a small block and climb cracks (formerly aid in summer) to a chimney. Climb this and easier ground above to join Tilt on the crest, chockstone belay.
3. 20m The unlikely looking wall on the left. Move up left to a foothold, then climb the wall to finish up a short groove.
4. 45m Climb the wide fault above (Direct Route and Chimney Route), then go left and up into a wide chimney. The right side of this chimney is formed by a huge fin of rock. Climb the chimney to belay on a boulder choke.
5. 40m Move up left and on to a large chockstone, then up right to easier ground, the crest, then the top.

STOB COIRE NAM BEITH, No 4 Buttress *-Isis*

55m V

R. Anderson, C. Anderson, R. Milne. 23rd March, 1991.

The summer line was followed via the flake crack in 3 pitches. Short, sustained and technically absorbing. Descend by the gully of No 4 Buttress.

BEINN TRILLEACHAN, ETIVE SLABS -*The The*

E3

G. Lawrie, G. Szuca. 13th June, 1990.

1. 25m 5b. Start right of Attila and climb the slab directly to a tree.
2. 20m 5a. Follow Attila for 10m to a tree, move horizontally right along obvious handholds to a grass ledge and poor belay (RP's).
3. 15m 4b. Go diagonally right to belay on the third pitch of Spartan Slab.
4. 6a. Move up and rightwards, then follow an obvious groove to an old peg. Go up the obvious steep corner to easier ground. Belay on a tree in a corner.
5. 4c. Pull over the overlap and follow the slab to the top of Spartan Slab.

-*Comatose*

90m VS 4c

I. Barron, S. Kennedy. 12th May, 1990.

This route lies on the clean area of slab approx 400m to the right of and at the same height as the main slabs. The slab is a short distance right of an obvious deep gully. A previous Severe appears to lie somewhere to the left of this route.

Start just right of the lowest point of the slab and climb past a small hole in the rock to reach an obvious right slanting faultline. Follow the faultline diagonally up rightwards to a horizontal fault near the right edge of the slab (45m, peg belay in situ). Climb back up leftwards to reach a grooveline which is followed to the top (45m). Abseil descent from convenient tree. Probably climbed before but worthwhile if time is short.

BEINN CHAORACH, Glen Ceitlin Slabs (SMCJ 1987, p497) -*The Whore's Apron*

S. Kennedy, D. Ritchie. 10th February, 1991.

250m III

Copious amounts of ice form down these slabs in a good winter, the best of which forms down the summer line of The Whore's Apron. Climb the icefall direct.

The following route lies on the same side of the hill

-*The Fall Line* 220m III

S. Kennedy, A. Paul. 14th February, 1991.

On the approach to the previous route an impressive icefall is seen on the right, about 400m before the aforementioned slabs. The ice forms down the largest of the watercourses. Climb the icefall direct, finishing up a narrow deep chimney just below the top.

NORTH-EAST OUTCROPS

With a new guide in preparation, no new routes from this area are included.

SOUTHERN HIGHLANDS AND ARROCHAR**BEINN A' CHREACHAN** -*Soft Option*

265m III

A. Baker, G.E. Little. 3rd March, 1991.

Climbs the front face of Coire an Lochain's right hand (westerly) buttress. Start at the first snow bay to the left of the bay below the imposing icicle.

Ascend a ramp trending left until steep but turfey ground can be climbed to belay at dubious jammed flakes at the right hand end of a short ledge (40m). Move left to the end of the ledge, go up a groove, then move back right to belay (25m). Move right and ascend a snowfield in 2 long pitches aiming for an ice groove breaking through a short rock band (95m). Climb the groove and snow above (35m). Easier ground runs off to the right but ascend an ice flow on the right flank of the upper buttress to belay at a cavelet (40m). Climb steep ice on the left, then over the final rocks to easier ground (30m).

BEINN AN DOTHaidh, North-East Coire

G. Muhlemann, R. Everett note the following straightening of Slow March. Climb straight up after the first belay to the foot of the overhanging triangular corner, then up this direct (crux) and the groove system above just left of the barrel-fronted buttress. Grade IV.

BEINN DORAIN, Creag an Socach -The Prophet

120m V

K. Howett, G.E. Little. 16th January, 1991.

A direct line between Kick Start and Scorpion. Start just left of the conspicuous rib' on the first pitch of Scorpion.

1. 30m Climb a snowy groove exiting right to gain a snow bay below an obvious open corner. Belay on a large block on the right.
2. 30m Climb the open corner until forced out on to the slabby left wall. Very thin climbing leads to easier ground. Ascend directly to gain a snow ledge with jammed flake thread belay.
3. 35m Step left 2m, then ascend to overhang. Cross the overhang moving right (clipped axe for aid). Go up to a second small overhang, make a long step left, then up to gain a snow ramp. Move right up the ramp for a few metres to take a poor belay.
4. 25m Continue to near the top of the ramp, then climb a slabby scoop (hard start) trending slightly left to finish.

-The Sting

120m V

K. Howett, G.E. Little (alt). 19th January, 1991.

Between Scorpion and The Promised Land lies an area of dark clean bulging rock low down on the face. A narrow rock ramp cuts across its right flank. Start at a fan of slabs below the clean bulging rock.

1. 30m Move up, then left across slabs to a block with a horizontal crack. Take a snow ramp trending right until it is possible to climb up to gain a small rock bay at the base of the above-mentioned rock ramp.
2. 25m Ascend the rock ramp, then directly up steep ground to belay at the right end of the central snow ledge.
3. 10m Cross to the left end of the snow ledge to belay below the slim corner of Scorpion.
4. 15m Climb the superb corner crack (large hexentrics give useful protection) to its top, then make an interesting move left to a ledge and belay.
5. 40m Climb to the base of a vague wide rock rib. Move slightly left, surmount a short difficult wall, then trend right up steepening ground to the top. A groove on the right of the vague rock rib would give an alternative and longer final pitch.

BEINN UDLAIDH, Coire Ghamhnain -Hyde and Seek

50m IV

S. Downie, G. Szuca. 16th February, 1991.

The most obvious steep icefall at the top right corner of the coire. Follow the ice out of a small cave on the right to a belay on top of a pinnacle. Finish up and rightwards.

THE COBBLER, South Peak -Gibber Crack

110m V

R. Milne, R. Anderson. 25th November, 1990.

Follows the summer line, a better winter description follows. An obvious winter line taking the open corner/groove towards the right side of the North Face. Start in the bay at the foot of the groove.

1. 10m Go up rightwards to a ledge on the edge.
2. 20m Climb corner/groove using crack in right wall, then move right at a block/bulge and go up to belay on its top.
3. 40m Continue above to climb a short crack, then move up right to follow easier ground to belay on the arete where North Wall Traverse comes in from the left.
4. 40m Ascend flake crack, move right, then go up short crack to ledge and move right again to climb to a larger ledge. It is possible to walk off here but is more fitting to climb to the top. Do so via the second corner crack to the right of the arete.

North Peak, South Face -Right Angle Direct

80m IV

C. Cartwright, S. Richardson (alt). 30th December, 1990.

A natural winter combination of the summer route Ramshead Ridge, followed by Right Angled Gully with the Direct Finish. The final pitch was excellent.

-Fold Direct

V

R. Anderson, T. Prentice (alt). 9th December, 1990.

A boulder problem start up the recess/corner some 4m left of the summer route gains the fault/chimney line which leads to the top in 4 pitches.

-N' Gombi

120m V

R. Anderson, R. Milne (alt). 6th January, 1991.

Follows the summer line.

1. 30m Ascend groove/crack to shelf, then traverse to overhung corner. Pull out right to gain ledge, then step up left and climb corner to belay at short chimney/niche.
2. 45m As for the summer line, out right to climb turf wall to gain large ledge. Up easy chimney to platform overlooking Great Gully.
3. 45m Move up left, then up turf ledges until it is possible to traverse left to reach easier ground leading to the top.

Note: K. V. Crocket and B. Dullea climbed MacLay's Crack (13/01/91) finding it an excellent, natural winter line at III/IV. Recommended.

CREAG THARSUINN -Terminator

70m IV/V

M. Garthwaite, G. Szuca. 13th January, 1991.

A fine ice climb, slow to come into condition.

1. 50m Climb the corner of Terminal Wall via iced slabs and bulges to gangway below steep upper wall.
2. 20m Climb a crack in the centre of the wall for 5m to a ledge. Traverse 3m left, then straight up a groove above and right into a niche. Step right just below the top to finish.

-McLaren's Chimney, variation start

III/IV

M. Garthwaite, G. Szuca. 12th January, 1991.

The right hand icefall.

BEINN DONICH -Flakewalk

60m V

C. Cartwright, R. Everett, S. Richardson. 31st December, 1990.

The summer route was followed in 4 short but sustained pitches, resulting in an excellent mixed route in the modern idiom. A specially modified No. 11 Hexcentric was carried to protect the 12cm wide offwidth on pitch 2, and reluctantly used as a handhold on the third (crux) pitch. Pitch 4 was climbed on ice. Attempted previously.

BEINN AN LOCHAIN, Loch Restil Face - Frog

200m II/III

T. Redfern, K. Schwartz. 10th February, 1991.

The obvious ice cascade immediately right of a small gully (II, ice) near the initial narrowing of the diagonal shelf. Climb the cascade direct in 2 obvious pitches to an easier-angled curving gully leading up right to join Toad above a wide ice slab. Cross Toad and continue up the steepening shallow gully just right of the narrow capped ice slab above. Leads eventually on to the upper slopes of the NE Ridge.

Note: Twin Caves Gully. T. Redfern notes that the through route of the first pitch is very artificial and it is more natural to climb the right wall of the gully. Also the ice pitch can be hard in thin ice. Grade III overall more realistic.

BINNEIN AN FHIDHLEIR, Creag Coire an Creagach -Africa Gully

60m III

S. Richardson, G. Muhlemann. 29th December, 1990.

Follow the summer line. The chockstone provided the only real difficulties.

-Abyssinia Chimney

60m III

G. Muhlemann, S. Richardson. 29th December, 1990.

As for the summer route. A good back and foot pitch.

-Two-Step, Direct Start

25m VS 4b

K.V. Crocket, J.M. Lackie. 13th May, 1989.

Climbs the lower tier, starting a few metres right of Heart of Darkness. Go up clean wall, passing obvious cavity to quartz veins, step right and finish directly. Excellent. The best climb on this section is now probably this pitch followed by Heart of Darkness.

-Witch-Doctor

85m VS

K.V. Crocket, B. Dullea. 2nd August, 1990.

Start 18m right of Serengeti. The route climbs the obvious clean slabby wall seen above, just left of a vegetatious gully area. On the skyline is a chockstone straddling a narrow chimney.

1. 40m. Climb mossy slabby steps of rock up then right to belay below the wall. Cleaning would improve this pitch.

2. 35m 4b. The wall is now climbed on fine incuts by a dog-leg line; first up, then right to a ledge on the edge, then up and left to the left edge and corner beyond. Continue by the corner, now grassy, to belay below the chockstone.

3. 10m. Finish by a choice of routes.

GLEN CROE Outcrops, Great Slab *-The Incredible Hulk*

15m E5

S. Robinson, K. Lawson. April, 1989.

Very bold and strenuous. Round the left side of the main slab is an overhanging wall with a thin crack starting at half height. Climb the wall and crack (6a).

-Rock Sculpture

24m E3 6a

S. Robinson, K. Lawson. April, 1989.

At the right end of the main slab, go up a heathery flake crack to reach the left end of overhangs (PR). Go up on small holds (RP3 in thin crack), then trend right to a foot ledge. Climb boldly up to PR and finish. Peg belay just at the top.

ARRAN**CIR MHOR, North-East Face** *-When The Going Gets Turf*

130m III

G.E. Little. 2nd February, 1991.

Follows a line of turfgy grooves just right of and parallel to Gully A. Although exposed, the line is a lot easier than it appears (good freeze required). Start on the grassy ramp leading into Gully A about 10m below the toe of April Arete. Move up turfgy slabs on the right, with one short difficult rock section, to gain a diagonal turfgy groove. Climb the groove in several pitches to the top.

CAISTEAL ABHAIL, Buttress 1 *-The Rift*

115m II/III

G.E. Little. 2nd February, 1991.

A better route in winter than in summer. The lower part of The Rift is easy but as height is gained, it becomes progressively more interesting with the last 30m providing a bit of a tussle.

Buttress 5 *-Hellfire Crack*

135m III/IV

G.E. Little. 2nd February, 1991.

The natural winter line on the buttress giving some strenuous climbing by the summer line. The steep V-chimney was the crux. Finish by the upper part of Rampart where the two routes join.

Sannox Beach, Conglomerate Crag -Stranger than Fiction

A. Connolly, G. Szuca. 29th September, 1990.

E2/3 5b

The route takes the slabby right hand wall with in situ gear. Start below a red runner. Move up to clip it, then traverse leftwards to a peg just before the large protruding boulder. Go up to a ring peg and follow the wall above slightly rightwards to belay. Abseil off. Four ascents that day.

KING'S CAVE

An impressive sandstone cave 2.5km north of Drumadoon Point. The rock is very sandy and needs cleaning. Stakes required for belays.

-Cave Arete

15m Hard Severe

A. Connolly, G. Szuca. September, 1990.

The obvious slabby arete on the left side of the big cave with the through route. Move left from the overhanging wall with 3 big jugs. Go up to a crack, then move right to the arete. Move up the slabby arete and finish leftwards on a sandy ledge.

-King Swing

15m E2 5c

A. Connolly, G. Szuca. September, 1990.

Start in the same place. Go up the overhanging wall just left of the thin crack to gain the rightmost of the 3 jugs. Traverse left to a crack (runner) and pull over to join the previous route.

G. Szuca admits that the crag doesn't warrant a special visit but is less lichenous than Drumadoon Point. Several parties have been disappointed with Drumadoon Point thinking that the lichen has grown back. This is not, however, true since it was never removed in the first place. It is therefore a very primitive crag and rock athletes (and other sane people) are advised to bypass or take a very large brush.

CENTRAL AND SOUTHERN SCOTLAND OUTCROPS**ABERDOUR -*Psyclobie***

20m E2 5a

A. Connolly, G. Szuca. 13th October, 1990.

Follows the space between Gaucho and Rebel's Groove. Start below a pillar and climb this centrally via a crack to a ledge. Go up the wall above using sidepulls and a blunt black rib. Move left to clip the peg on Gaucho, go back right and climb the wall above, moving slightly right to small rugosities and an undercut. Move to a good slot just right of a loose flake. Go over a bulge to good holds and straight up to finish. There is a long runout from the peg (crux).

Ross Point Quarry, Loch Lomond

The quarry is very hard to find. From the University field station, follow the rough road over a hill to the next bay, then keep to the lochside until the quarry is found behind a pile of slates.

-Forked Lightning

VS 4b

S. Robinson, K. Lawson July 1989

Climb the left hand of the jagged cracks opposite the bolted wall. The right hand finish is Severe.

NOTE: The 2 pegs on One Way Trip are now missing.

GALLOWAY, Portobello (Map 82 Ref. 961664)

See SMCJ 1989 for details of the cliff.

Main Cliff

The following three routes are on the left hand, sea washed section, best approached by abseil.

-Warsteiner

11m Very Difficult

J. Thomson, A. Fraser. 9th December, 1989.

Climbs the left-hand arete of the cliff, above a small platform.

-Surfin' Safari

12m Severe

A. Fraser, J. Thomson. 9th December, 1989.

Takes the two thin disjointed and rightward trending cracks.

-Puffin Nuffin

14m Severe

A. Fraser, J. Thomson. 9th December, 1989.

Takes the large corner about 8m right of Surfin' Safari.

Shark Fin Bay

This is the next bay to the south of the Main Cliff, recognisable by a pinnacle resembling a shark's fin. The crag comprises a lower left hand area and a larger but more vegetated right hand area. The following climbs are on the left-hand section, finishing on a peninsula. From the top of this to the top of the crag is a 30m Diff. The left-hand section is split into four sections by corners. Routes are described from left to right.

-Speed Limpets

9m VS 4b

A. Fraser, J. Thomson. 4th April, 1990.

Takes the left trending cracks on the leftmost sea-washed section of the cliff.

-Basking up the Wrong Tree

12m V. Diff.

J. Dickson, A. Fraser. 18th March, 1990.

Climbs the leftmost corner, sloping leftwards.

-Sanity Clause

20m Severe

A. Fraser, J. Thomson. 9th December, 1989.

Climbs the second, rightward sloping corner. Undercut at the bottom.

-Cutty Shark

20m VS 4b

A. Fraser, J. Dickson. 18th March, 1990.

To the right of Sanity Clause is a wall, recognisable by a niche at one third height, and a left trending corner at its right edge. Start at the foot of the corner, traverse left into the niche, then up right to a spike in the corner, climbing the corner to the top.

The U-Boat Pen

This is the name given to the narrow tidal inlet between Shark Fin Bay and Cracked Block Cove. There are two routes.

-Riverboat Gambler

25m VS 4c

A. Fraser, J. Thomson. 9th December, 1989.

Takes the fine crack which springs from the bottom of the easy leftwards sloping ramp at the left side of the crag. Climb the crack to its top, then traverse up and right to a corner at the top of the crag. Good.

-Dead Sea Strolls

20m Hard Severe 4b

A. Fraser, J. Thomson. 4th April, 1990.

The left hand wall has a prominent right to left diagonal line across it. Climb this for 6m then follow the corner above, finishing to the right of the left-hand tower.

Many of the following routes are not new. None are however included in the Guidebook and are mentioned here for the sake of completeness.

Barrow Head (NX 449341) -The Fin

30m HVS 4c

C. MacAdam, A. Fraser. 24th September, 1980.

To the west of the main cliffs, and underneath the campsite, is a sea stack. This is a direct line on orange rock to the left end of the flat, narrow arete right of the summit. Good.

NOTE: The Python (12m Severe A. Fraser, G. MacAdam, 24th September 1980). A clarification to the Guidebook. The Newt is the right fork of Boozer's Chimney. The separate chimney to the right is this route.

Meikle Ross, -Meikle Gorbachov

40m VS 4c

A. Fraser, G. Robb. 4th April, 1988.

Start at the foot of Pigeon Chimney. Climb a flake on the left wall of the chimney, then continue along this above the chimney. At its end (overlooking the pinnacle) climb the tower above.

-The Moosetrap

30m VS 4c

A. Fraser, R. Webb. 18th September, 1982.

The 'shale delight' 3m left of Bumper Dumper. Climbs the corner, the top V. Diff. section being slightly loose.

-Poison Ivy

30m Diff.

Round left of The Moosetrap is a chimney. This takes the left wall and upper section of this, and provides as easy if foul way out of this area of the crag.

-Barnacle Bill

40m Severe

A. Fraser, W. Todd. 20th June, 1982.

The arete left of Blistering Barnacles, mediocre.

Balcary Bay (NX 824487)

-The Cave Traverse

150m Very Difficult

A. Fraser, D. Walker. 1st December, 1979.

Recommended for its superb and remote coastal scenery. Low tide is preferable. Start in the large bay at the above map reference (marked Lot's Wife on the map). The peninsula on the east side of the bay is reached by easy traversing from caves at the back of the bay, then a 30m climb to the saddle at the left side of the peninsula. From the peninsula continue round the corner to the top of a chimney (50m). Descend the chimney to a cave (30m). A further passage leads out through the cave and might give a difficult continuation at very low tides.

Lot's Wife Area

The climbing is in two areas, around the pinnacle of Lot's Wife itself (NX 909558), and underneath the cliff-top cottage known as The Lookout (NX 907557), a short way further to the west.

-Lot's Wife

30m

The seaward face is Moderate, the buttress at the left end of this face is Difficult and the north-east arete is a loose vegetated Very Difficult

-Lot's Wife Slab

40m Very Difficult

A. Fraser, W. Todd. 28th June, 1979.

Climbs the slab behind the pinnacle, and to the left of the waterfall.

Lookout Area

The first two routes are on the slab to the left of the steps leading down from The Lookout.

-The Watchtower

20m VS 4b

A. Fraser, W. Todd. 2nd October, 1980.

Climbs the crack up the buttress on the left-hand side of the slab.

-Lookout Slab

40m VS 4b

W. Todd, A. Fraser. 2nd October, 1980.

The slab to the right of The Watchtower is climbed centrally, being reached by a vegetated scramble.

-The Tombstone

20m VS 4b

A. Fraser, R. Duff. 30th August, 1982.

This route climbs the next clean slab east of the above two routes. The top of the slab is separated from the main coastline.

The Railway Cuttings (NX 938739) -North Wall Traverse 250m VS 4c

A. Fraser, D. Walker. August, 1977.

Most of the worthwhile climbing is on the south (i.e. north facing) wall, but the north wall gives this route, following a natural fault at two thirds height. The climbing varies from the sublime to the ridiculous.

Dob's Linn (NY 196158) -Left Wall

80m II

A. Fraser. 11th January, 1987.

Incomplete ice led to the vegetated left wall being taken on both steps of the fall

MISCELLANEOUS NOTES

HAPE Prize. In the 1990 Journal (p.565), a prize was offered for the best explanation of the mysterious acronym HAPE. Contributions ranged from the succinct, if erroneous, HAPE = Hyper-Adrenaline Purge of the Ego (contribution D.E.H. Maden), to the slightly lewd and phallicious (sic) donation by Grant Cornwallis, and finally the winner, Mike Taylor of Peterhead, who has accepted a copy of the Climbers' Guide to 'Arran, Arrochar & The Southern Highlands', signed by both authors. While not intended to be a regular feature of the Journal, the Editor may, from time to time, spur on the reader to keep an eye on the small print by raising such baubles. First the slightly lewd. Some readers may take offense at the following entry, which is largely priapic.

H.A.P.E.

High Altitude Penile Entropy is a distressing flaccidity, caused by lack of oxygen. 'Climber's Droop' normally abates upon return to sea-level, though partners of mature mountaineers report that this is often not the case. Should not be confused with the much more rare High Altitude Penile Erethism (priapia montanus), which occurs only above the 26,000-foot contour. Hope of attaining this sensual apogee is thought to have been the impetus of such thrusting 'giants' as Messner and Bonington. Medical researchers have yet to come across a confirmed case of High Altitude Premature Ejaculation, which is as elusive as the Yeti. (Grant Cornwallis).

The Winning Entry:

Sir,

*Ye claw up heuchs wi' muckle heuchs,
An' ponder Yankee renderin',
Sic acronyms are nae in buiks,
So spier amang yer brethren...
Oor hielan' hills are nae sae High,
Their Altitude gey ordinary,
Bit fan tae Himal's summits nigh,
Bewaur Edema (Pulmonary)!*

I remain, Sir,

Your obedient servant,

J.M(cGonigal) Taylor

Note: We allowed the winner a little leeway to tailor the verse, and remind the gentle reader that the 'Yankees', of course, drop the digraph in oedema.

Down the Stank. In the Mountain Accident Section of the 1990 Journal, p. 538, there is reference in an accident on March 31st to a guidebook entitled 'Walks in The Trossachs', which refers to a signpost indicating the direction of the Stank Glen route off Ben Ledi. We owe an apology to the author Rennie McOwan, who has written a book with the title 'Walks In the Trossachs and the Rob Roy Country', with which the above reference has been wrongly connected by some readers. As a responsible hillwalker, Mr McOwan's book contains no such reference to the signpost (which no longer exists); in fact he was one of a number of local climbers and walkers who complained to the Forestry Commission about the sign. The Commission, Mr McOwan tells us, have now stopped 'signing up' higher ground, which should help alleviate extra erosion and, perhaps, prevent some accidents.

Scottish Mountaineering Trust Report

1. Office Bearers and Trustees.

Bill Wallace and Bob Hillcoat who had been Secretary and Treasurer respectively for many years, retired at the March 1991 meeting of Trustees. In their place the Trustees appointed John Fowler as Secretary and Bryan Fleming as Treasurer.

As Graham Tiso had indicated his intention to retire as Chairman, Bill Wallace was elected to fill the vacancy.

2. Scottish Mountaineering Trust (Publications) Ltd.

In February 1990 the Trustees were advised that the Inland Revenue had been given additional duties and powers for scrutinising the activities of charities. A likely result of this was that the Trust, because its publishing business was much more than incidental to the carrying out of its main purpose, could lose its charitable status. The Trustees were further advised that it was within their powers to transfer the publishing business to a private company controlled solely by the Trustees. The Company, which would be a separate legal entity, would carry on the publishing business and would enter into a Contract to pay to the Trust a fixed sum per annum or the amount of its profits before tax in any year, whichever was the greater. This Contract, being in favour of a charity, would mean that the Company's profits would be paid to a charity (The Trust) and would not be subject to corporation tax in the Company's hands.

The Company commenced trading on 1 April 1990 and has already paid to the Trust its profits as per the Contract for the year ended 31 March 1991.

3. Annual Accounts.

All members will have received copies of the Annual Accounts of the Trust for the year ended 31 March 1990 which were sent out with the papers for the Annual General Meeting. These showed a "Surplus added to General Fund" of £34,697 and this was after deduction of £10,000 transferred to the Grant Fund to finance projects which were in accordance with the objects of the Trust. Sales of publications have again been satisfactory in the year to 31 March 1991 and a similar surplus is anticipated. £10,000 will again be transferred to the Grant Fund.

Total assets at 31 March 1990 were £248,887 of which the value of stock of publications was £113,488, the remainder being cash deposits and debtors.

4. Grant Fund.

During the past 12 months the Trustees have either paid or awarded the following Grants:-

- 4.1 £2,500 to the John Muir Trust towards the cost of purchasing the Torin Estate in the Isle of Skye.
- 4.2 £500 to the Alpine Club towards the cost of compiling the computerised Himalayan Index.
- 4.3 £500 to Highland Region Council towards the cost of replacing the bridge at Skiary on the Kinlochhour to Barrisdail path.
- 4.4 £500 to Dundee District Council towards the cost of purchasing and erecting a climbing wall.
- 4.5 £1,000 to the National Trust for Scotland towards the cost of replacing the footbridge across the River Coupal at Lagangarbh.
- 4.6 £1,000 to the Scottish Mountaineering Club for administration costs incurred in connection with the publications of the Trust.

The Trustees also agreed to continue the policy of allocating the greater part of the Grant Fund towards preparing and rebuilding mountain footpaths.

Since the last report the Countryside Commission for Scotland has increased to 85% the proportion of the cost of approved footpaths projects which they are prepared to meet.

In this connection the Trustees agreed to provide funds requested by Bob Aitken who is footpaths consultant to the Countryside Commission for the following footpath repair projects:-

1. In the area around the Sinclair Hut in the Lairig Ghru - £1,500
 2. Allt a' Mhuillin, Ben Nevis - £2,000
 3. Lochnagar - £1,500
 4. Buachaille Etive Mor - £1,500
 5. Stac Pollaidh - £2,000
 6. Ben An or Ben Lomond or The Cobbler - £1,500 to £2,000.
5. Snart Bequest.
The Trustees agreed to lend £5,000 to the Scottish National Ski Council to cover the costs of publishing a book on ski safety.

Bill Wallace.

The Winter of 1947. Iain Smart recollects that one of the 'great winters' of this century was that of 1947, when Scotland was covered for a long time in deep snow. 1947 is still within living memory (the Ed. immediately recollects that he was in his second trimester at the time but read on...) If any members have photographs or reminiscences of this snowfall they would make an interesting Club archive; perhaps even a Journal article. Send any such material to the Editor. Would anyone like to be the Custodian of this Archive?

MUNRO MATTERS

by W. D. Brooker (Clerk of the List)

This year's List is bigger than ever and runs on from Number 715 at which it ended last year. The usual sequence of Number, Name, Munros, Tops, Furths has been used, but this year surnames come before initials or forenames. The Clerk apologises for this break with tradition, which is due to the lack of flexibility and intelligence in the Editorial computer. At least it is the computer which has been blamed. (The Editor meanwhile wishes the data were in a real database on a real computer...)

716	*Bielby Neil	1989 1989	745	Barrett John	1990	1990
717	Tsai H H	1989	746	Waterton James C	1990	
718	Emmerson Edgar	1989 1990	747	Thomson Leonard J	1990	
719	Smith Chris	1989	748	Horner Raymond	1990	
720	Love Stewart	1989	749	Faulds Marion	1990	
721	Greenway Jack	1990	750	Henderson David A	1990	
722	Duff Dave	1990	751	Bowes Gerry	1990 1990 1987	
723	Davey V R	1990	752	Massey Philip	1990 1990 1987	
724	Davis John E R	1990	753	Brown Andrew	1990	
725	Knox Eric Campbell	1990	754	Haigh Charles R	1988	
726	MacCallum Robert	1990	755	Roberts J Stanley	1988	
727	Critchley Kenneth	1990	756	Lamb W G C	1988	
728	Maltman William R	1990	757	Quine J W	1990	
729	Lackenby Bill	1990	758	Norrie John	1990	
730	Ellis Peter	1990	759	Beeley Alistair M	1990 1990 1990	
731	Russell Paul	1990	760	Clark David M	1990	
732	*Maden B E H	1990	761	Cormack Chris B	1990 1990	
733	Murray Duncan L	1990	762	Kilpatrick Tommy	1988 1989	
734	Rostron Bertha	1990	763	Curlie Brian D	1990	
735	Rostron James W	1990	764	Templeton Andrew S	1990	
736	Clough Neil	1990	765	Grundy Andrew	1990	
737	North Graham	1990	766	Leftley John	1990	
738	Paterson William	1990	767	Lacy Dee	1990	
739	Murray Ian J B	1990	768	Rogers Tony	1990	
740	Carmichael Dan A	1990	769	Taylor Tony	1990 1990	
741	Kilbride Andrew R	1990	770	Laing Alexander	1990	
742	Pierce Kenneth	1990	771	Russell John	1990	
743	Turner Ian	1990	772	Worth Robert D	1990	
744	Webb W John	1990	773	Sim George G	1990 1990	

774	Murdoch Andrew	1990	815	Beckett Andrew R	1990	
775	Malone Peter	1990	816	Woodall Rob	1990	1990
776	Gray D Nairne	1990	817	Patrick John	1990	
777	Symonds Hugh	1990	818	Dawes Peter A	1987 1987	
778	Ullock J E R	1990	819	Macbeth Fergus	1987	
779	Haddow James	1990	820	**Johnstone Molly	1990	
780	Sutherland Eddie	1990	821	Dutton Alasdair M	1990	
781	Sutherland Norma	1990	822	Dutton Rory N	1990	
782	Semple Guy	1990	823	Sugden Jack	1990	
783	Wilson Frances A	1990	824	Dott Harry E M	1990	
784	Wilson Peter	1990	825	Smith Bernard	1990	
785	Richardson John W	1990 1990	826	Young Ian	1990	
786	Ferranti Jonathan de	1990	827	Craven Pete	1990	
787	Williams Neil	1990	828	Colthart Gordon	1990	
788	Schwartz Klaus	1990 1990	829	McCreath Connie	1990	
789	Arney Malcolm J J	1990	830	Gray J Peter S	1990	
790	Gentles James D	1990	831	Mackenzie William	1982	
791	Steele Bethan	1990 1990	832	Rothnie Les	1990 1990	
792	Steele David	1990 1990	833	Groves Jonathan D	1990	
793	McCosh Andrew M	1990	834	Minns Harry A	1967	1967
794	Coker Iain A J	1990	835	Slack Alfred	1950	
795	Alexander Dennis	1990	836	Guy Margaret	1990	
796	Stallard David	1990	837	Boath Allan	1990	
797	MacCalman Alexander H	1990	838	Lindsay Bruce G	1990	
798	**Graham Margaret	1990	839	Lindsay Gordon F	1990	
799	Brown Fraser	1988	840	Robertson Ian S	1990 1990	
800	Clarke Harold R E	1987 1990	841	Revill Richard James	1989	
801	Bertram W Logie	1990 1990	842	Downie Allan	1990	
802	Spalding Neil G	1990	843	Soper Angela	1991	
803	Matheson Andrew J	1990	844	Underwood Michael A	1990	
804	Ormiston Hugh	1986 1989	845	Powrie Marjorie	1990	
805	Powell Colin G	1989	846	Custance Arthur C	1988	
806	Thompson Ben	1989 1989	847	Hansford John Philip	1989 1991	
807	Scott D C Hunter	1990	848	Fraser Hew B	1990	
808	Barnard John	1990	849	Knight John M	1990	
809	Jones David	1990	850	Muston A J	1990	
810	Wilson Martin	1990	851	Sillitoe H G	1988	
811	Murray W Shaw	1987	852	Picozzi Nick	1990	
812	Clements Stuart	1990	853	McKay Robert F	1991	
813	Weyman Katharine	1990	854	McHardy Douglas	1990	
814	Usher Dennis J W	1990				

The Numbers Game. No fewer than 139 names have been added to the List. The vast majority are the result of voluntary confession but a few have been reported by spouses or associates, with motives ranging from pride to envy and even sheer relief that it is over, or at least temporarily suspended. Others, in numbers unknown, remain Unlisted, doomed to be unsummoned when the Final Roll is called, except of course for the safety net of that crowded berth at (277) The Unknown Munroist. Some free spirits prefer this condition and reports have been filed of others who cannot bear to Compleat and have remained stuck at 276, no doubt to preserve their own personal sense of mystery, a state of *M. perpetualis* in fact. Still others, by no fault of their own, have found themselves mislaid by some hiccup in the reporting or recording procedure. An example is (659) David A Smith who was on the List but omitted from the Journal last year. (Having had no fewer than seven Smiths through these pages already the Editor may have had enough of them). (271) E D Clements, 1969, 1982, was another who had been left out, but the most tardy Listing of all must surely be (835) Alfred Slack 1950, who has had to wait over forty years and eight hundred places before his claim got through. (800) Harold R E Clarke had only a four year delay although he may well feel aggrieved at the waste of the s.a.e. which he sent in 1987. The postal service cannot always be blamed as one letter from Hull successfully reached me addressed simply to 'The Scottish

Mountaineering Club Journal, Aberdeen'. Reticence about Completion is not unusual but occasionally premature advances are made. One lady proudly advised me that her 69 year old mother had done her first Munro and 'When she has tackled the other 276 I will write again!'. AMENDMENTS The following are now:-

- (215) D A Baird, 1980,1981,1982. 1990. (401) John Limbach, 1985,1986. (431) Mark McCann, 1985. 1990. (260) Geraldine Howie, 1981,1984,1986. (486) Peter Bellarby, 1987,1987,1987. (498) Douglas Wyllie, 1987. 1989. (295) W A Mitchell, 1982. 1990 (544) Janet Sutcliffe, 1987,1990,1981. (327) R S Logan, 1981,1981,1981. 1984, (555) Robin Howie, 1982,1984,1988. 1984, 1984,1985. 1987,1987,1987, 1987. 1987. 1990,1990. (328) A G Haley, 1981,1981,1981. 1986, (574) Freddie G North, 1988. (1986. 1989. (603) Kay Turner, 1988. 1989. (329) Donald Lamont, 1981,1981. 1989. (640) Matthew Bramley, 1989. 1990. (336) S T Ramsden, 1984. 1989. (648) James Binnie, 1989. 1990. (346) John L Brown, 1980. 1990, 1985. (651) Innes Mitchell, 1989. 1990. (358) M B Slater, 1984,1987,1987. 1988. (654) W Douglas Allan, 1989. 1990. (375) R H Macdonald, 1984. 1987. (676) James G Bell, 1988,1988,1990. (1990. (678) Stewart Benn, 1989,1989,1990. (685) Derek G Sime, 1989,1989,1990. (689) Ian Jones, 1989. 1990. (700) Terry McDonagh, 1989,1990. 1990. 1990.

Altogether I have had about 150 letters reporting additions or amendments to The List. Some simply convey the relevant information, but others contain narrative, description, observation and even philosophy. From this epistolary harvest come the gleanings which make up this section. Needless to say much worthwhile material has had to be omitted.

Timespans.-Not everybody reveals this aspect but it is clear the range is great. The following table may be of interest to the statistically minded. It shows the duration of 111 first Munro rounds from this year's List.

Duration in years	-1	1-5	6-10	11-20	21-30	31-40	41+
% of 111 total	2.7	7.2	19.8	35.1	17.1	13.5	4.5

The vast majority of Completers take over ten years and this confirms that most Munroists contract the disease well after they have taken up hillwalking or climbing. Even the 20% between six and ten years seem to have moved into it rather than set out to do the round as a specific task.

A few only move to completion in their later years. (801) Logie Bertram celebrated his 70th birthday the day before finishing on Ben Lui. (732) *Ted Maden spread the round over 43 years, partly because he was banished to England in mid career, while (574) Freddie North was a classic case of *M. longus* by extending over 52, again from an English base.

At the other end of the spectrum are extremes of *M. brevis* such as the continuous rounds of (812) Stuart Clements and (813) Katherine Weyman who took 113 days and of (777) Hugh Symonds in only 67 days. The latter was particularly notable in that it was done on foot together with rowing the Sound of Sleat and sailing to Mull. About the only way this form of *Automunrois* could be further refined would be to swim to the Islands!

Family Affairs. As usual several instances of *M. matrimonialis* are apparent in this year's List - The (734/5) Rostons, (780/1) Sutherlands, (783/4) Wilsons and (791/2) Steeles. The (391/2) Griffins report a joint experience of *M. claravistitis* with a final clear view from Sgurr Choinnich, Glen Carron. The (260/555) Howies are a matrimonial pair who completed separately before they formed a team, but reinforced things with further rounds together and now have done a fourth. All hills have been ascended by at least two different routes and many by three or more. The (838/9) Lindsays are father and son with the latter only 14 years old. The (821/2) Duttons are brothers who finished side by side and step by step, neither yielding precedence until they were forced into conformity by the alphabetic rules of the List. There are other family features in the correspondence but the prize for the earliest visit to a Munro summit must surely go to Mark Waugh who was born in the cabin of a helicopter during a snowstorm on the summit of An Riabhachan when his mother was unable to wait until she reached Raigmore Hospital. It might seem churlish to say that in spite of this early enthusiasm most of us would agree that in an honest round the peak needs to be done again without such extreme help.

Uniquity.-Since the expression of our individuality is one of the main reasons for going to the hills in the first place it is to be expected that some Munroists are interested to know whether they are the first in this or that category. The truth is that nobody knows for certain since the only records lie in these scribbles. However this year has seen the first ethnic Chinese (717) H H Tsai, the first German (788) Klaus Schwartz and the first Member of Parliament (719) Chris Smith, who is the first M.P. but is far from being the first Smith! (728) Bill Maltman made his round with an approximation to Dow's Rule in that he climbed every Munro from a drivable road point (which must have brought a good dinner and a warm bed within easy reach). (759) Alistair Beeley reckons he was doomed to Munros by insensitive parents who gave him the middle name 'Munro'! Let me take this opportunity to say that although I have plenty of information about Munroists' activities, I am not well informed about how many have red hair, are over six and a half feet tall, have webbed feet and so on, so don't ask!

A posthumous entry is sadly included with (762) Tommy Kilpatrick who died of natural causes at the age of 46 while climbing Crowberry Ridge on Buachaille Etive Mor, his favourite mountain. Tommy was a member of the East Kilbride M.C. and is much missed by his many friends.

The Detail.-(764) Andrew Templeton has an interest in the 'esoteric gems' of Tops mentioned in last year's Journal and now deleted from the Tables. He has visited Sron dha-Murchdi in the Ben Lawers range, Druim nam Bo of Mullach Clach a'Bhlair (which he ensured now boasts a cairn), and searched in vain for Creag a'Bhragait, supposedly between Meall na Dige and Stob Coire an Lochan south of Stobinian. It has added immense historical interest (and a lot of extra miles) to his round.

A Cornucopia of Experience.-The letters I receive contain much material worthy of inclusion but these are only notes and often I must quote without acknowledgement. It is clear that for the vast majority the collecting of Munros is a very incidental matter compared to the main business of experiencing the mountains. It is a strong call which draws people time after time from as far away as Somerset, or which can make a Munroist who doesn't drive persist to the end.

'It almost cost me my marriage but it was well worth it' will raise an echo in many thankful (and perhaps in some rueful) hearts.

'There is no hill I would not climb again' and 'I have had twenty glorious years' illustrate the feelings in many letters.

There are other dividends:- 'In periods of stress in other areas of life, a tired mind has often been restored by the peace and quiet of the mountains and by simply being absorbed in the physical effort of climbing.'

Vivid recollections abound:-

'Talking to a young mountain hare sat at my feet on Ben Wyvis.'

'A steely inspection by a Glas Maol golden eagle gliding by at ten paces.'

'Charming antics of mother Ptarmigan protecting her rugby team of chicks.'

'A February day of sharp frost and deep, dry powder snow on Seana Braigh.'

'The Aonach Eagach on a perfect spring day when I seemed to have the hills to myself.'

'A June day of cloudless blue and crystal clarity on Blaven.'

'Goggles frosted, compass frosted, watch frosted, - no feet, - utter whiteout, - solo on Wyvis.'

'The frivolous waste of bagging the Knoydart Six in one day from Kinloch Hourn.'

'How helpful stalkers and estate offices can be, if 'phoned in advance.'

'The "excuse me's" and "sorry's" needed to scale Scafell Pike. How lucky we are!'

'Ghostly lights and noises beneath Devil's Point.'

'The Aonach Eagach ridge one Easter when a double cornice broke only a yard from my right boot.'

'A 200ft fall on Beinn an Dothaidh with thankfully nothing worse than a broken wrist and some bruises.'

Mr Normal.-(796) David Stallard, whose round lasted 22 years, speaks for many others when he writes - 'When I did find out about the Tables I must admit I wasn't particularly interested. I went to the hills to rock climb, for snow and ice climbing, to watch birds and wild animals and to "get away from it all". If I thought about Munro bagging at all it was with some disdain... But like so many other people, by the time I had been up about half the Munros I

got interested in finishing them. Like everyone else who has spent enough time in the hills to do the Munros I have had good days and bad days; days when the wind reduced me to a crawl, days of walking on compass bearings for hours on end, times when I could see 100 miles and times when I could hardly see two yards, times of anxiety, times, frankly, of fear, and times of tremendous excitement and jubilation... There are some Munros I won't bother to go back to though I won't name them out of politeness, but many more that I will.

That Final Party.-Champagne corks have been popping like mad all over the Highlands and especially in Mull where Ben More would have added several feet to its height by now were it not for the conscientious way in which Munroists always take their empty bottles away with them. A few still eschew celebration as much too frivolous for such a serious matter, or not in keeping with their own contemplative, or perhaps even misanthropic, approach to the hills. And there are unusual variants like that of (750) David Henderson who celebrated on the summit of Braeriach in the company of 21 dogs! Before you draw any wrong conclusions he hastily adds that they were all with their owners and part of S.A.R.D.A. Poor (759) John Norrie was dismayed to find that few of his usual companions were able to join him on Sgurr nan Gillean so he held an official celebration on the first Munro he had climbed over 40 years earlier. Not a bad idea really as the common final choice, Ben More in Mull, tends to be such a difficult place to reach! However, that first Munro can be a risky place as (848) Hew Fraser found when he arrived at the top of Stob Binnein as a knackered, drenched and bedraggled schoolboy back in 1966. The teacher gave the shivering lad some amber liquid which, ever mindful of school rules, he called 'cold tea'. Ever since that day Hew has been unable to stay off the hills - or the 'cold tea'.

Centenary Matters.-This being the centenary year of the first publication of Munro's Tables, (450) Gordon McAndrew, the Keeper of the Regalia, has arranged for a centenary version of the Munroist tie to be available. In addition he has responded to the pleas of non-tie wearing Munroists by producing a brooch/lapel badge. The former has '1891-1991' added in red and the latter is a 1 x 1 3/4 inch oval in gilt with the same Munro crest as on the original tie. Both are attractive items and I look forward to obtaining them myself when, if ever, I am Compleat.

Prices are:-	Munroist tie	£8.50	including	exclusive
	Centenary tie	£9.50	post and	to Listed
	Brooch/lapel badge	£8.50	packing	Munroists

During 1991 a contribution of £1 will be made to the Land Fund of the John Muir Trust in respect of each Centenary tie issued.

A special Munroist Dinner to celebrate the Centenary has also been arranged by Master of The Tables Derek Bearhop, Gordon McAndrew and myself. This will be held in the Roxburgh Hotel, Charlotte Square, Edinburgh. Date: Saturday, 23rd November at 6.30 p.m. (When hill weather is at its worst.) Cost: £17.50 per head. Bookings only accepted from Listed Compleat Munroists (plus their spouses or partners, many of whom will have sacrificed so much along the way!).

Orders and bookings for the Dinner to: Gordon M. McAndrew, Bishop's House, 4 Lansdowne Crescent, Edinburgh EH12 5EQ.

Dinner bookings should be accompanied by a 9 x 4 inch s.a.e. Cheques payable to 'Munro Centenary Dinner.' Please indicate if you want information on local overnight accommodation. The Roxburgh is an hotel in which Sir Hugh himself would not have been out of place, so please, gentlemen, wear a tie and lounge suit, if available.

There will be slides, toasts, celebrated speakers and splendid company. It will be a great occasion. Numbers will be limited to 250 maximum, so don't leave it too late or you may miss a unique opportunity. The next one is a century away!

For Entry to the List:-

Notification of Completion giving names of first and last summits and the time taken in years should be sent to W.D. Brooker, 25 Deevie Road South, Cults, Aberdeen AB1 9NA. A s.a.e. (steam-proof stamp) should confer immortality with an entry in the List.

The Patter of Tiny Claws.-We have received a letter from John Chester, Scottish Wildlife Trust Warden on Eigg, pointing out that the crucial nesting period on the Sgurr of Eigg runs from mid-March to mid-July. He hopes that climbers will visit the Sgurr outwith this period, and that such a voluntary restriction will suit all needs, preventing any future confrontations/restriction moves.

SCOTTISH MOUNTAIN ACCIDENTS, 1990

REGIONAL DISTRIBUTION 1990

(Geographical Divisions are those used in SMC District Guidebooks)

REGION	CASUALTIES (of which fatalities are bracketed)				INCIDENTS							Non-Mountain-eering	
	Injuries	Exhaustion/Exposure Hypothermia, Hyperthermia	Illness	TOTAL CASUALTIES	Incidents with Casualties	Cragfast	Separated	Lost	Overdue or Benighted	False Alarms	TOTAL INCIDENTS	Animal Rescues	Incidents
Northern Highlands	6 (1)	2 —	— —	8 (1)	7	1	2	1	—	3	14	—	2
Western Highlands	4 (3)	1 —	1 —	6 (3)	5	—	2	—	6	3	16	—	—
Ben Nevis	10 —	3 —	— —	13 —	13	4	1	2	4	—	24	—	—
Glencoe (inc. Buachaille)	14 (4)	1 —	1 (1)	16 (5)	16	9	2	—	8	4	39	1	1
Other Central Highlands	10 (2)	7 —	— —	17 (2)	11	2	1	—	1	—	15	3	1
Cairngorms	30 (5)	4 —	3 (1)	37 (6)	31	—	4	4	3	5	47	—	5
Southern Highlands	24 (3)	3 —	3 (2)	30 (5)	30	1	—	3	7	3	44	—	4
Skye	14 (4)	— —	— —	14 (4)	14	—	1	1	2	2	20	—	—
Islands (other than Skye)	5 —	4 —	— —	9 —	7	—	—	—	—	—	7	—	1
Southern Uplands	5 (1)	9 (1)	3 (1)	17 (3)	13	2	1	3	8	1	28	—	4
All Regions 1990	122 (23)	34 (1)	11 (5)	167 (29)	147	19	14	14	39	21	254	4	18
All Regions 1989	130 (20)	15 (1)	13 (4)	158 (25)	141	8	15	12	25	14	215	3	11

CAUSES OF INJURIES IN 1990 (where known)

(of which fatalities are bracketed)

WINTER

(meaning snow, ice or frozen turf underfoot, not meaning just the time of year)

Winter Hill Walking.....Slips.....	5	(1)
Winter Hill Walking.....Slips on neve.....	4	(1)
Winter Hill Walking.....Slips on rock/snow.....	1	(1)
Winter Hill Walking.....Slip on ice.....	1	(1)
Winter Hill Walking.....Slip descending.....	1	
Winter Hill Walking.....Slip wearing crampons.....	2	
Winter Hill Walking.....Walk through cornice.....	4	(1)
Winter Hill Walking.....Exhaustion/Hypothermia.....	3	
Winter Hill Walking.....Glissading.....	1	
Winter Hill Walking.....Glissading in crampons.....	1	
Winter Hill Walking.....Avalanche.....	4	
Snow Climbing Roped.....Avalanche.....	4	
Snow Climbing Unroped.....Slips.....	4	
Mixed Climbing Unroped.....Slips.....	2	(1)
Mixed Climbing Roped.....Slip.....	1	
Ice Climbing Roped.....Slip.....	1	
Ice Climbing Roped.....Avalanche.....	1	
Off-Piste Skiing.....Slip.....	1	
Winter Local Walking.....Hypothermia.....	1	(1)
Winter Conditions Total (25%).....	43	(7)

SUMMER

Summer Hill Walking.....Slips.....	26	(3)
Summer Hill Walking.....Slips on wet rock.....	5	(2)
Summer Hill Walking.....Slips on dry rock.....	4	(1)
Summer Hill Walking.....Slips descending wet rock and grass.....	3	(1)
Summer Hill Walking.....Slips on wet grass.....	6	

Summer Hill Walking.....Slips on paths.....	2	
Summer Hill Walking.....Slips on scree.....	2	
Summer Hill Walking.....Slip descending.....	1	
Summer Hill Walking.....Slip on wet tree root.....	1	
Summer Hill Walking.....Slip on sea cliffs.....	3	
Summer Hill Walking.....Slip crossing fence.....	1	
Summer Hill Walking.....Slip crossing burn.....	1	
Summer Hill Walking.....Tripping over a stone.....	1	
Summer Hill Walking.....Ledge gave way.....	1	
Summer Hill Walking.....Illnesses.....	11	(5)
Summer Hill Walking.....Hypothermia.....	18	
Summer Hill Walking.....Exhaustion.....	9	
Summer Hill Walking.....Sore Knees.....	1	
Summer Hill Walking.....Muscle strain.....	1	
Summer Hill Walking.....Cause not known.....	1	(1)
Summer Local Walking.....Cause not known.....	1	(1)
Summer Local Walking.....Slips.....	4	(2)
Summer Local Walking.....Slips resulting in drowning.....	2	(2)
Rock Climbing Unroped.....Slip.....	1	(1)
Rock Climbing Unroped.....Arm pull-up dislocated shoulder.....	1	
Rock Climbing Unroped.....Heat Trauma.....	1	
Rock Climbing Roped.....Slips.....	3	
Rock Climbing Roped.....Slip on dry rock.....	1	
Rock Climbing Roped.....Slips on wet rock.....	2	(1)
Rock Climbing Roped.....Handhold gave way.....	1	
Rock Climbing Roped.....Karabiner failed.....	1	
Abseiling.....Abseil point failed.....	2	(1)
Abseiling.....Hit by falling rock.....	1	
Abseiling on Sea Cliff.....	1	
Tree Climbing.....Slip?.....	1	
Mountain Biking.....	1	
Paragliding.....	2	(1)
Summer Conditions Total (75%).....	124	(22)
<hr/>		
Sub Totals —Slips (not rock climbing)	82	(16)
Avalanche	8	(0)
Illness—all in summer conditions	11	(5)
Rock Climbing and Abseiling	15	(3)

MOUNTAIN ACCIDENTS 1990

Compiled by John Hinde

RESCUE man-hours expended on each incident, are stated in figures (when known) after each narrative.

Further accidents may need to be listed in the next issue as some reports for 1990 have not been received (April 1991). The first quarter of 1991 has shown an alarming increase in fatalities on Scottish mountains and sea cliffs: over 20 deaths, of which 15 happened in 28 days. I hope to visit teams to get some first hand reports but there seems to be no real pattern or trend from the accounts I have seen. There are 11 varied activities/causes: 4 people have died from slips on neve, 4 from slips on ice climbs, 3 from avalanches, 2 glissading and 2 deaths of non-mountaineers on sea cliffs. Other causes seem to be: fall over a cornice in remote off-piste ski-ing, a piste ski fall, one hypothermia fatality, one hillwalker died from getting lost, and one fell through thin ice on Rannoch Moor.

NORTHERN HIGHLANDS

MARCH 25th—Couple with son hillwalking on Beinn Eighe. Gordon Suckley (53) tripped on descent (scree and snow) in good weather. Despite head and leg injuries he managed to walk to the burn below the NE Spur of Creag Dubh. Son alerted Torridon MRT which guided in an RAF Sea King at night. By that time Sheila Suckley (49) was hypothermic. 35.

APRIL 2nd—A man with a dog got lost when snow was falling. Having been taken by boat to the head of Loch Glencoul and intending to walk to Kylestrome, he turned up Glen Cassley 14 miles away to SE and in exactly the opposite direction. Assynt MRT. 12.

APRIL 4th—A pair came to a buttress on Corrag Bhuidhe of An Teallach. Trying to find a way round, Ian Buchan (19) slipped on snow and rock and was killed falling 300m down Constabulary Gully to about 150m above Loch Toll an Lochain. RAF Sea King lifted Dundonnell Team to the coire mouth, but a stretcher lower/drag of 5 hours was necessary due to winds and darkness. 159.

APRIL 11th to 13th—After a disagreement with his friend, a 24 year-old who suffered from depression separated and bivouacked near a bothy at Sandwood Bay (south of Cape Wrath). During a search by Assynt, Dundonnell and Leuchars MRTs he was found by RAF Sea King. 130.

MAY 6th—False Alarm occasioned by a tent being abandoned during rain. Torridon and Kintail MRTs. 7.

JUNE 18th—False Alarm. Two separate parties in Coire an Laoigh of Beinn Eighe reported whistle blasts of International Distress Signal. Torridon MRT. 11.

JUNE 22nd—An Award party were walking from Drumbeg (Eddrachillis Bay) to Loch Assynt. S. Taylor (15) tripped on a stone and sprained his ankle. Evacuated by Assynt MRT using an Argocat.

JULY 29th—Separation incident on An Groban, Loch Gairloch area. Changed plans and family anxieties led to Dundonnell MRT alert. 2.

JULY 29th—Descending Slioch, Hugh Waterman (57) slipped on a path in the SE Coire breaking a tibia and fibula. Both Torridon and Kinloss MRTs commented on vicious midge attacks during the rescue and were relieved by the arrival of HM Coastguard helicopter. 54.

AUGUST 17th—Search by Assynt MRT, RAF Sea King and HM Coastguard for Arnaud Lauisse (23) who was lost for several days in the Cape Wrath to Sandwood Bay area. He was found by HM Coastguard helicopter at Loch Airigh na Beinne on the afternoon of 18th, cold and unhurt. 250.

- AUGUST 26th—Andrew Thompson (51) slipped when descending wet rock and grass and fell down a 15 ft. outcrop, badly straining his groin. It was on Liathach behind Glen Cottage. Torridon MRT. 27.
- OCTOBER 10th—Mark MacNeill (12) got cragfast on 40 ft. seacliffs at Keiss Castle near Wick. Rescued by HM Coastguard using a double lower with Wick lifeboat standing by.
- OCTOBER 29th—False alarm caused by a report of a red flare seen near Inverael. Dundonnell MRT. 32.
- NOVEMBER 11th—Scrabster Coastguard Cliff Team recovered an injured 42 year-old from Thurso sea cliffs.

WESTERN HIGHLANDS

- FEBRUARY 18th—Party of 5 was descending from Forcan Ridge of the Saddle in poor visibility. They were going down a snow-slope diagonally when it avalanched carrying all 5 for 200 to 300 feet. 4 were completely buried; the other managed to extricate 3 of his mates, all uninjured. One was completely buried and apparently lost. One man went for help whilst the others, aided by a couple of other people in the vicinity, carried on searching. After the best part of an hour they were attracted to a spot by some noise/sound. They dug down 3 ft., then probed with axes and found the missing man buried a further 3 ft. under heavy, wet snow. Francis Scott (43) was uninjured except for a stiff neck. Kintail MRT. 25.
- MARCH 24th—A party of 9 was traversing Sgurr na Ciste Duibhe in strong, gusting wind and heavy, wintry showers. Ian Selby (47) was seen to stumble a step or two backwards and then fall down the north side of the ridge. He had given no indication of any problem and uttered no sound. He was seen lying about 50 to 200 ft. below. David Burnie (34) went to tend the casualty while the others got down off the hill.
- Kinloss, Kintail & Leuchars MRTs were involved in a difficult night search and rescue of Burnie (slight exposure). Selby's body was left for recovery by RAF Sea King in daylight. He had died instantly from the fall, but inadequate waterproof clothing may have led to hypothermia before the fall. 824.
- APRIL 15th—Colin Twamley (45) was unable to walk out from Camusrory, Loch Nevis and was evacuated by Mallaig lifeboat and HM Coastguard. 18.
- MAY 2nd—Benjamin Hatt (59) and Doreen Hatt (60) were overdue from a walk round to the Falls of Glomach recommended in a booklet. The booklet neglects to say the trip is 18 miles and the going wet and rough. Kintail MRT. 8.
- MAY 6th—False alarm. Two campers had abandoned their tent up Glenuaig in bad weather and spent the night in their car. Kintail & Torridon MRTs. 6.
- MAY 20th—Myra Campbell (37) felt ill after traversing A'Chralaig and Mullach Fraochchoire. She and a friend were overdue and were found slowly descending a glen to Loch Cluanie by Kintail MRT. 17.
- JUNE 2nd—Vain searches continued through to November for Richard Bruce Pearce (46) around the Spean Bridge, South Laggan and Tomdoun areas. He had left Spean Bridge in early June planning to walk the West Highlands to Cape Wrath. MRTs involved included Police, Dundonnell, Cairngorm, Kintail, Lochaber, RAF Wessex, Royal Marines, Gordonstoun School. A huge number of man-hours have been spent.
- JUNE 13th—False alarm caused by a climber's rucksack being left on Stob a'Chearcaill of Ladharr Bheinn. Glenelg MRT. 35.
- JUNE 23rd—A party of 7 were climbing Forcan Ridge of The Saddle in wind and rain. On easy ground above the Bad Step, Elizabeth Mathews (51) slipped or stumbled and tumbled 200 ft. Rescued by Kintail MRT & RAF Sea King but died in hospital 3 weeks later. 42.
- JULY 2nd—Jamie Penman (14) slipped on wet grass and injured his ankle on Bealach an Lapain (the col just west of Saileag). Kintail MRT & HMCG helicopter. 18.
- JULY 7th to 8th—Party of 3 separated from 9 others and stopped by a swollen river trying to walk from the head of Loch Morar to Loch Arkaig. Found by Lochaber MRT & RAF Sea King. Airlifted. 20.

JULY 10th—Separation incident during walk in Glen Affric. Bertrand Maes (19) carried out original plan—to go to Allt Beithe Youth Hostel—when others turned back in bad weather. Dundonnell MRT & SARDA. 75.

JULY 14th—False alarm. Red flare maliciously fired near Loch a' Ghille Ghobaich, Mallaig. Lochaber MRT, HM Coastguard, Mallaig Lifeboat, RAF Sea King. 50.

SEPTEMBER 23rd—A party of 8 was delayed on the Five Sisters Ridge. They descended Sgurr Fhuaran S. Ridge and were benighted 1 mile from the road with only one unserviceable torch between them. Found by RAF helicopter at 07.00 on 24th Kintail MRT. 24

DECEMBER 10th to 11th—Sven Straume (31) was benighted on Beinn Hiant, Ardnamurchan. He walked in safe just after a search by Lochaber MRT started. RN Sea King. 50.

DECEMBER 25th—Search by RAF Kinloss & Leuchars MRTs, Lochaber, HM Coastguard and civilian volunteers for James MacLean (70) at Kilchoan Village, Ardnamurchan Peninsula. He was found dead in the sea 5th January 1991. 169.

BEN NEVIS

JANUARY 3rd—Wearing light shoes or trainers and inadequate clothing; without ice-axes, crampons, or navigation equipment; Benny Jorgenson (30), Jonathan Goodchild (16) and Mark Crawshaw (16) tried to find their way down Nevis Tourist Track in poor visibility by following tracks in the snow. They spent the night huddled together (no spare clothes or bivvy gear) above a waterfall just below the snowline in Five Finger Gully. Next day they tried to reascend but made poor progress in snow, so they were airlifted by RN Sea King. Lochaber MRT. 173.

FEBRUARY 3rd—Well equipped; Nicholas Sutton (26) and Martin Whitehouse (21) got lost trying to get down Nevis in storm and snow and went into Five Finger Gully. They bivouacked and were found (uninjured) by Lochaber MRT next day when descending the Tourist Track in better weather. 16.

FEBRUARY 17th—After separating from his party and going on alone, Adam Henley (24) got lost and benighted and so he bivouacked near Nevis summit. He got slight hypothermia and frostbitten toes and fingers. Lochaber MRT found him next day descending the Tourist Path and carried him down. 40.

FEBRUARY 24th—Steven Beard (18) slipped when traversing into Observatory Gully from Tower Ridge. A belay failed and he fell, breaking a wrist. His rope partner and another pair bivouacked with him. Next day he was stretchered down by Lochaber MRT. 210.

FEBRUARY 24th—Four men (20s and 30s) were benighted in horrendous weather on Tower Ridge. They bivouacked and extricated themselves next day. Lochaber MRT. 30.

MARCH 5th—Garry Smith (17) twisted a knee when solo hill-walking. In a bivvy bag he survived 2 nights out in very bad weather. He was found at 3,300 ft. in a boulder field on Carn Dearg NW by Leuchars MRT. Suffering hypothermia he was lowered 500 ft. and then airlifted by RAF Wessex. Lochaber & Kinloss MRTs, SARDA. 978.

APRIL 5th—After traversing the Ben, Elizabeth Price (42) got exhausted between CIC Hut and Glen Nevis. Lochaber MRT. 15.

APRIL 14th—Although high avalanche risk had been forecast, David Miatt (51), Bryan Stadden (34) and Christopher Begley (32) tried to climb out of Upper Coire Leis to the right of the Abseil Posts. Unroped, all 3 were swept down 500 ft. when they triggered off a knee-deep windslab with a crown-wall 50 ft. wide. Stadden and Begley were able to walk out and help Miatt who had a broken leg and abrasions. He was stretchered to CIC Hut by climbers from there and nearby, then flown out by RAF Wessex. Lochaber MRT. 30.

APRIL 21st—Two men were overdue climbing Orion Face, but they walked out next day. Kinloss MRT, RAF Wessex.

APRIL 30th—Fallen walker Red Burn Gully had a broken arm and collar bone. Airlifted by RAF Wessex.

MAY 7th—Wearing Doc Marten boots and glissading from the Carn Mor Dearg Arete, Adrian Glover (23) lost control and cut his scalp on a rock. Lochaber MRT & RAF Wessex. 12.

- MAY 27th—Victoria Bird (18) slipped on the Tourist Path at Red Burn breaking an ankle. Lochaber MRT & RN Sea King. 15.
- JULY 8th to 9th—Neil MacLennan (28), Alan Goodman (27) and Carla How (27) got lost and benighted on Nevis summit in mist. They were found by Lochaber MRT descending the Waterslide. 7.
- JULY 21st—Sarah O'Donnell (13) slipped taking a short cut down a gully descending the Tourist Path and broke a leg. Lochaber MRT & RAF Wessex. 27.
- JULY 29th to 30th—Christopher Lane (40) and Kevin Bell (38) got benighted and cragfast on the Orion Face due to heavy rain. Lowered off by Lochaber MRT. 96.
- AUGUST 2nd—Descending the Tourist Path, Annick Madelaine (56) slipped, bruising her face and a thigh. She was stretchered down by Lochaber MRT. 37.
- AUGUST 20th—Gordon Grant (41) became unable to finish his descent of the Ben because of sore knees. Lochaber team leader happened to be in the area; he radioed a RN Sea King helicopter which he spotted overhead and which also happened to be in the area, unconnected with the incident—and so the casualty and his daughter got a quick lift to hospital, for nothing serious fortunately. 4.
- AUGUST 30th—Jeanette Marsh (51) got separated from her niece, Sylvia Watson (36) when going up the Tourist Path. With inadequate clothing and shoes they got into difficulties in bad weather. They were helped separately off the hill by other walkers. Local MRT called out. Slight exposure and bruises.
- SEPTEMBER 4th—Graham Critchley (20) slipped when pushing a mountain bike up the Tourist Path and lacerated a shin. Lochaber MRT. 9.
- SEPTEMBER 9th to 10th—Dennis McCulloch (40) and John Pease (39) got benighted (due to wet rock and exhaustion) on Observatory Ridge. The rock dried during their overnight bivouac so they were able to climb the top 5 pitches next day. Lochaber MRT, RAF Wessex. 22.
- SEPTEMBER 27th—Catherine Byham (23) suffered slight hypothermia on Nevis Path. Helped by other walkers. Lochaber MRT. 13.
- NOVEMBER 3rd—Teaming up with 2 hillwalkers, Timothy Walker (20) tried to climb Tower Ridge. The two got frightened off by the technicalities at two different places, but by then Timothy could not get down. He continued up the route, then went off it on to Echo Traverse, then on to Rolling Stones, where he got cragfast. Rescued by Lochaber MRT, RAF Sea King.
- NOVEMBER 6th to 7th—A pair of climbers were apparently overdue from climbing Tower Ridge, but later one refused to admit they were overdue. Lochaber MRT, RAF Sea King. 20.
- NOVEMBER 30th to DECEMBER 1st—Jason Myels (23) and John Graham (28) benighted on N.E. Buttress at the Man Trap.

GLENCOE

(including Buachaille Etive Mor)

- JANUARY 7th—False Alarm. Torch flashes and waves reported on the lip of Coire na Tulaich. RAF Wessex. Glencoe MRT. 26.
- JANUARY 14th—A search in the dark by Kinloss & Glencoe MRTs & RAF Wessex located Helen Wilson (29) who had become separated from her husband in very bad weather near the summit of Sgor na h-Ulaidh. She had got down alone to Fionn Ghleann. 150.
- FEBRUARY 1st—False Alarm. Camping lights seen in a storm in Coire nan Lochan. Glencoe MRT. 6.
- FEBRUARY 6th—After a late start and because of wind and deep powder, a party of 3 decided to leave the crest of Aonach Eagach at the Pinnacles and go down the Glencoe side. Marc Ferris (27), Simon Bailey (22) and Carol Keeble (21) got cragfast 200 ft. down. Lowered to easier ground by Glencoe MRT. RAF Sea King aborted at Inverness due to bad weather. 63.

- FEBRUARY 15th—When leading Pitch 2 of Deep Cut Chimney, Stob Coire nam Beith, on poor ice, David Torrington (23) was knocked down by a loose-snow, channelled avalanche, injuring his back. Glencoe and various RAF MRTs & RAF Wessex. 42.
- FEBRUARY 22nd—Party of 3 overdue on Aonach Eagach. Glencoe alert. 4.
- FEBRUARY 26th—David Green (31) and Peter Leeson (25) were blown off the summit ridge of Buachaille Etive Mor down the south side. Uninjured, they bivouacked. Next morning Green climbed back up a pitch but Leeson had untied and scrambled down to Glen Etive. Green went down Coire na Tulaich and was met by MRTs. Glencoe, Lochaber & SARDA. 80.
- FEBRUARY 26th—Attempting to traverse Aonach Eagach in poor weather, Christopher Breyton (20) and Richard Hughes (19) tried to get down from The Pinnacles as it got dark. They were cragfast 200 ft. below the ridge. Lochaber MRT could not find them in the terrible storm. Next day Glencoe & Lochaber MRTs with 3 RAF lads, with the help of a high powered telescope and radios, were 'talked' to the correct ledge and lowered the 2 down. 68.
- FEBRUARY 28th—A guide and her 3 clients were delayed by an electrical storm on Sron na Lairig. Glencoe MRT. 10.
- MARCH 1st—After traversing Aonach Eagach without problems, Gerard Brett (31), Joe Simpson (30) and Peter Frost (28) mistook Clachaig Gully as the descent route. After a few abseils their rope jammed and they were cragfast above Jericho Wall. Glencoe MRT pulled the trio out of the gully using 2 ropes from different angles. RAF Sea King was recalled en route. 55.
- MARCH 4th—John Omerod (31) fell on snow from near the top of Lost Valley Buttress and broke his leg. Stretched down by Glencoe & Lochaber MRTs. 128.
- MARCH 4th—At the bealach between Stob Coire nan Lochan and Bidean nam Bian, M. Livingston was adjusting his crampons when he fell down into Coire nam Beith, sustaining head, spine and abdominal injuries. Glencoe MRT carry, followed by RN Sea King airlift. 48.
- MARCH 4th—Bill Murrie (31) fell on Buachaille Etive Mor (Curved Ridge or D Gully Buttress?). He was left dangling over a crag, tied off to an ice-axe belay while his companion went for help. A Plas-y-Brenin party got him out of trouble. Leuchars & Lochaber MRTs. 88.
- MARCH 4th to 5th—Dave Donaldson and Dave Robertson (both 44) finished climbing Deep Cut Chimney, Stob Coire nam Beith after it got dark. They went towards Beinn Maol Chaluim and snowcaved, then walked in safe to Clachaig next afternoon. Glencoe, Kinloss, Leuchars, Lochaber MRTs, RAF Wessex. 370.
- MARCH 4th to 5th—During the search for the above pair, 2 other chilled climbers were found abseiling, who told of 2 more in a snowcave 300 ft. from the summit. Allan Vaughan (57), Craig McConnel (36) Ian Fleming (31) and Alex Runciman (29) got benighted climbing North West Gully, Stob Coire nam Beith in poor conditions. They dug a palatial snow cave complete with down gear and a stove. Next day 2 abseiled and were met by rescuers. 2 stayed in the cave: one because he had lost a crampon, the other because he was cold and the climb too hard. Eventually, in winds that required crawling, the snowcave was found by rescuers. The 2 men were motivated and 'pulled' to safety, then walked off the hill. Glencoe, Kinloss, Leuchars, Lochaber MRTs, RAF Wessex. 370.
- MARCH 9th to 10th—In very heavy rain, RAF Leeming MRT found a missing pair, moving very slowly westwards along Aonach Eagach (Stob Coire Leith). Omar Pirzada and David McKee (both 21) had been benighted. Also Glencoe MRT and RAF Wessex. 148.
- MARCH 24th—Carrying good crampons in their sacs, an unroped pair were going up to the bealach between Bidean nam Bian and Stob Coire nan Lochan on the Coire nam Beith side. Euan Craig (29) stopped to read his compass. He was wearing bendy boots on hard ice. He stuck his axe into the slope, then slipped down steep rock and ice. A strong gust of wind hit him at the time he fell. Conditions were very hard during the rescue with frightening gusts of wind reaching 100 mph with snow splinters blasting eyes and faces. At the base of the hill comprehensive resuscitation efforts were made in a RN Sea King helicopter but Craig was dead. Glencoe & Lochaber MRTs. 134.

- MARCH 28th—One of a party of sixteen, Claire Gunn (22) fell 200 ft. on neve in Coire na Tuilach, injuring a wrist and ankle. Another party of hillwalkers from Blundells Boys School stretched her down to an RAF Wessex. Glencoe MRT. 22.
- MARCH 31st—Two men climbed the Direct Route up Crowberry Ridge, Buachaille Etive Mor, by Abraham's Ledge. Near the top of the ridge, one of them; Thomas Kilpatrick (47); had a heart attack. He was stretcher winched off by RAF Wessex but found to be dead on arrival in hospital. Glencoe MRT. 28.
- APRIL 1st—Una Stewart (26) slipped descending a gully below the Bad Step on Stob Coire Sgreamach on the Lost Valley side. She hurt her ribs and a wrist. She was winched into an RAF Wessex after very difficult flying in the dark. Glencoe MRT. 62.
- APRIL 10th—A pair were delayed climbing Central Buttress, Buachaille Etive Mor. Half an hour after midnight James Swift (25) was preparing an abseil 10 ft. above his friend. By the light of a headtorch Peter Kenyon saw Swift lean back as if to test the anchor. Suddenly he was seen to fall backwards down a steep cliff face. Next morning Kenyon discovered an easy way down and found Swift's body. Lower and carry by Glencoe MRT. 52.
- MAY 2nd—Jonathon Hayter (30) and James Coubrough (28) were traversing Aonach Eagach, which was clear of the snow and ice of the winter. At The Pinnacles, due to the lateness and the trouble Hayter was having with the climb, they left the ridge and went down the Glencoe side. On the difficult way down they separated. Coubrough found a way down. Hayter, cragfast in a gully, was found by Glencoe MRT and roped to the gully lip. A Royal Navy Sea King was guided in by strobe light and winched Hayter and the team aboard. 32.
- MAY 16th—Brian Gilfoxy (33) fell from Lost Valley Buttress and was killed. It is thought he was trying to avoid a long slope of hard spring snow as he did not have the gear to be on a dangerous buttress. As he went alone, and none knew his intentions, a large search was necessary. Small clues in thick mist—first orange peel then a sock, fallen from his rucksack—led to the quicker discovery of his body which was hundreds of feet higher up, lodged inside a bergschrund. He was thought not to have fallen very far as he only had a small, deep head wound; so perhaps a helmet could have saved him. Glencoe, Leuchars & Lochaber MRTs and RAF Wessex. 42.
- MAY 27th—Leading the first pitch of Rowan Tree Wall, E. Face Aonach Dubh, in bendy hill-walking boots, James Bellarby (17) fell and sustained head injuries and unconsciousness. Undoubtedly his life was saved by his helmet which had extensive damage to the top and sides. One 'Rock' running belay had been placed but it pulled out. Glencoe MRT and RAF Wessex. 328.
- MAY 27th—A husband and wife were overdue climbing Shibboleth on Buachaille Etive Mor. Their son (10) and another man were also reported missing but all turned up safe. Glencoe MRT. 8.
- MAY 28th—Janet Paveley (41) slipped on tree roots on the Tourist Path to Signal Rock, breaking a leg. Glencoe MRT. 6.
- JUNE 9th—False alarm caused by youngsters flashing torches on Pap of Glencoe to tell friends they were OK and intended to spend the night on the mountain. Glencoe MRT and helicopter (recalled). 21.
- JUNE 12th—On the Pinnacles of Aonach Eagach John Hamilton (23) suffered heat trauma, and some of his 24 companions were cragfast nearby. Hamilton was shaded and given water, then oxygen when airlifted by RAF Wessex. His companions had extricated themselves but were guided down by Glencoe MRT. 36.
- JULY 12th—Descending from Stob Coire nan Lochan, a party of 3 missed the narrow path down the Lost Valley. Trying to relocate the path Frederick Kelly fell 50 ft. and was seriously injured, being flown by RAF Wessex to hospitals in Fort William and then Inverness. Glencoe MRT. 28.
- AUGUST 7th—Glencoe MRT were placed on standby for a night search of Aonach Eagach, for a pair overdue, who turned up safe. 2.
- AUGUST 11th—Traversing Aonach Eagach from E. to W., Neil Buchanan (20) seemed to be going a bit fast for safety. At the W. end of The Pinnacles he went a bit higher than the normal path. His friend shouted that he had gone the wrong way. Neil stopped and swung his sac on to one shoulder, as if he was about to jump (south) back on to the path. He was seen to wobble then fall (north) hundreds of feet to his death. Stretcher carry by Glencoe MRT and airlift by RN Sea King. 60.

- SEPTEMBER 2nd False alarm. Shouts were reported from near No. 6 Gully on the W. Face of Aonach Dubh. Later it was thought to have been either sheep or a party of geologists making the noise, or perhaps red deer if the rut had started early. Glencoe MRT and RAF Wessex. 50.
- OCTOBER 19th—Two men collecting bonsai trees were cragfast in Dalness Chasm, Glen Etive. One escaped by tricky climbing; the other was roped out by Glencoe MRT. 13.
- OCTOBER 19th—At the above incident, a cragfast sheep was also rescued.
- OCTOBER 21st—One of three, Joyce Smith (63) was descending Sgor na h Ulaidh by the old fence line (Steep loose ground) when she slipped and tumbled a very long way down. She escaped with minor head, leg and chest injuries. Glencoe MRT and RAF Wessex. 36.
- OCTOBER 23rd—Rock climbing on North Buttress, Buachaille Etive Mor, Stephanie Flute (25) became cragfast. Her companion escaped in thick mist but he gave Glencoe MRT a wrong rescue location (Great Gully Buttress). Rescued unhurt. 181.
- DECEMBER 15th to 16th—Edgar Emmerson (67) got lost in thick mist on Stob Coire Sgreamach of Bidean nam Bian. When benighted he fell on some rocks with minor injuries, then survived in a bivvy bag and found his way to Glen Etive next day. Glencoe MRT and RAF Sea King (recalled en route). 21.

OTHER CENTRAL HIGHLANDS 1990

- FEBRUARY 3rd to 4th—An unsuccessful search by Lochaber and Tweed Valley MRTs for a SARDA dog missing on Aonach Mor.
- FEBRUARY 10th—Descending Beinn Bhan, the easterly peak of the Ballachulish Horseshoe, David Bonham (25) slipped on snow covered rocks and broke his leg. A friend ran very fast for help, and an RAF Wessex, on exercise, was flying over a Glencoe MRT member's house at the exact moment of call out, so a very fast rescue was effected. 23.
- FEBRUARY 13th—Mary MacDonald (65) fell down a steep cliff near her home in Onich and was found dead. Evacuation by Glencoe MRT. 4.
- FEBRUARY 25th—Leuchars MRT found Iain Young (54) exhausted, exposed and with a broken CALIPER. His companion had lost sight of him near the summit of Beinn a'Choirainn (L. Laggan) when he fell through a cornice. Uninjured he had crawled for four hours. Also Kinloss, Lochaber, SARDA and RAF Sea King. 345.
- FEBRUARY 26th to 27th—Descending Coire Leachach of Stob Coir' an Albannaich, Glen Ceitlein, Leslie Witt (32) fell through a cornice and sustained a pierce wound to his skull. His friend Andy Jefferson (37) then fell through the cornice and was badly injured. Witt went down a few feet to 'spy out' the ground below when Jefferson fell past him a further 600 feet. Witt down for help after he had been unable to resuscitate Jefferson because of facial injuries. Fatal. Glencoe, Kinloss and Leuchars MRTs, SARDA, RAF Wessex. 1,562.
- MARCH 4th—RAF Wessex rescued an injured person with leg and pelvic fractures, shoulder and hand injuries. One of the four winter hillwalkers, the person had fallen through a cornice 3 miles north of Dalmally.
- APRIL 8th—Despite having placed 2 runners, when Gary Latter (27) fell from 20 ft. up the first pitch of Mother's Day (E4) (Steall Gorge) he hit the ground and injured his back. He was able to walk out to the road. Lochaber MRT. 9.
- APRIL 28th—Ian Perrin (32) and Robert Cherry (30) became cragfast 100 ft. below the summit cornice of Ben Alder in the Garbh-choire. They spent the night on the steep snow and ice while the third member of the party had gone for help. Low cloud and a washed-out road along Loch Eriicht made rescue difficult, although an RAF Sea King lifted Cairngorm MRT to Culra Bothy and keeper George Oswald stayed out at Culra with his Garron. The cragfast pair had to be lowered 1,300 ft. 123.
- MAY 26th—An angler from Glasgow was left behind by his party by the edge of Loch Ba, Rannoch Moor, Glencoe MRT. 2.

- MAY 31st—One of 12 scrambling up a steep section on the north face of Sron na Creise, Black Mount, Basil Herbert (36) pulled up with his arm and dislocated his shoulder. Airlifted by RAF Wessex. Glencoe MRT. 47.
- JUNE 8th—Andrew Cushian broke an arm and injured a leg descending Ben Cruachan. Strathclyde Police MRT. Helicopter airlift.
- JUNE 23rd—One experienced man (53) with four novices (male twenties) were attempting to walk six Munros in the Mamore Forest. Descending the last peak, Sgurr a'Mhaim, they got stopped by fatigue and mist coming in. Escorted into Glen Nevis by Lochaber MRT. 15.
- JUNE 30th—RAF Wessex rescued walker with suspected ankle fracture from Rannoch Moor.
- JULY 10th—Alexander Grey (52) slipped on a small outcrop of wet rock when descending the side of a gully near Stewart's Cave (west side of Ballachulish Horseshoe, above Kentallen) receiving cuts and bruises to his head, arm and leg. Stretchered down by Glencoe MRT. 20.
- JULY 15th—George Bowie (30) and Karen Bowie (27) got cragfast on the vegetated forest crags 500 yards south of Steall Cottage in Upper Glen Nevis. Helped down by Glencoe MRT. 31.
- OCTOBER 26th—Very difficult rescue by Glencoe MRT of a collie, cragfast on a tiny ledge in a deep gully (the Garbh Allt of Stob Dubh, Glen Ceitlin). 36.
- DECEMBER 15th or 16th—Helicopter scrambled when a hillwalker was overdue in Glen Etive, but he walked off safe.

OTHER CENTRAL HIGHLANDS 1989

- MAY 24th 1990—Body of Edgar Agudelo (33) Columbian student, found by a gamekeeper on a hill five miles north of Newtonmore. He was first reported missing in London on April 27th 1989.

CAIRNGORMS

- JANUARY 1st—After an intended bivouac at The Shelter Stone, John White (46) and John White (26) got lost on the Macdui Plateau and spent a second night out in a forced bivouac. Cairngorm MRT, SARDA.
- JANUARY 3rd—Out walking with a black labrador on the cliffs at Muchalls, Kincardine, Dawn Hillcoat (22) tripped over her dog and fell 70 feet, sustaining body bruising. Rescued by Ambulance, Fire Service and HM Coastguard.
- JANUARY 4th—Approaching the foot of Twisting Gully, Coire na Ciche, Beinn a'Bhuird, to do a climb, two men had just reached the snow level, when one of them—Moir—spotted a powder avalanche about 350 feet above them. He shouted to Kenneth Ferguson (30) to take cover, then took shelter himself behind a large boulder. The avalanche funnelled into Twisting Gully. The main part swept over Moir and he was able to get out of the debris. Ferguson was 100 feet below him, conscious and on top of the debris but with a broken leg. Grampian Police and Braemar MRTs, RAF Sea King. 138.
- N.B.—This was one of the few, if not the first, powder snow avalanches to be reported in Scotland. JH.
- JANUARY 4th—Steve Aisthorpe (26), Robert Owen (40) and Dr John Barker survived an avalanche, or avalanches, in Coire an t'Sneachda, Cairngorm but suffered injuries. RAF Sea King.
- JANUARY 10th—Barbara D'Arcy-Thomson (79) probably swept from rocks on east bank of River Findhorn at Randolph's Leap. RAF Sea King.
- JANUARY 13th—Richard Howard (16) got lost in mist on Dreish and followed a burn down into Glen Prosen instead of Glen Clova. Tayside Police S & R Unit.
- JANUARY 16th—Stuart Maddock (36) walked ahead of his 2 companions when returning to Cairnwell Ski Centre from An Socach summit. He got lost in mist and was found at 2215 sheltering behind a peat hag in a blizzard near the head of Glen Baddoch. Grampian and Tayside Police and Braemar MRTs. 150.
- N.B.—This is one of the few places in the Highlands where it is recommended to be safe to follow a burn down when lost. JH.

- FEBRUARY 4th—After a climb on Craig Rennet, Martin Brown (29) and Trevor Hughes (20) got lost in darkness on their walk back, but got down to Glen Doll safely. Tayside Police S & R Unit.
- MARCH 2nd to 3rd—Allan Coombes (35) and Tony Page (31) got lost near Cairngorm summit during a walk round the Northern Corries. They were benighted, then walked out to Tomintoul. Cairngorm and Kinloss MRTs, SARDA, RAF Sea King. 384.
- MARCH 3rd—Ian Swarbrick (30) broke an ankle when he fell from 30 ft. up the first pitch of Shallow Gully, Lochnagar. The ice was very thin and both tools pulled out. In falling he pulled 4 runners; 3 of which were ice-screws. Grampian Police and Braemar MRTs, RAF Sea King. 26.
- MARCH 4th—Kinloss MRT on exercise saw a climber fall down the Goat Track, Coire an t'Sneachda, Cairngorm. He broke an ankle and wrist. He was carried a mile on an improvised ski stretcher, then flown out by RAF Sea King. 40.
- MARCH 11th—RAF Sea King airlifted David Edwards (50) who injured his shoulder ski-ing in Coire an t'Sneachda, Cairngorm.
- MARCH 17th—James Harrison (59) left skis and rucksack with his companion near the lower summit of Lochnagar to go to Cac Carn Beag. He got lost returning and could not reunite, but managed to get down to Bridge of Dee unhurt. Grampian Police and Braemar. 56.
- MARCH 18th to 20th—Lucas Bunt (61) was crossing the Lairig Ghru with his son when he slipped between two boulders at Pools of Dee, breaking an ankle. They walked to Corrour Bothy. Rescue was delayed because they did not know how to get help and there were few people about. Grampian Police and RAF Sea King. 14.
- APRIL 7th—One experienced climber tied up with three novices and climbed Parallel Gully A, Lochnagar. They took 10 hours on the route due to inexperience and the loss of a crampon. Grampian Police and Braemar MRTs. 18.
- APRIL 17th—Christine Hall (64) hurt a knee and ankle when she fell on rough ground at the top of Birnam Hill, Dunkeld. Stretchered down by Tayside Police S & R Unit. 12.
- APRIL 29th—Celia Thomson (40) sprained her ankle by stepping in a rabbit hole. Rescued from Loch Callater Lodge by Leuchars MRT.
- APRIL 30th—Two teenage youths trapped by tide on rocks at Portsoy. Rescued by MacDuff Inshore Lifeboat.
- MAY 6th—Grampian Police and Braemar MRT lowered the body of a man (20) from crags at the Pass of Ballater. He had been camping at the top of the cliffs, drinking heavily, and died from a fall down the cliffs. 51.
- MAY 18th—Allan Payne (22) suffered abrasions and bruising in falling on scree on Creag Loisgte in The Pass of Ryvoan. Cairngorm MRT, RAF Sea King and Inverness Air Ambulance. 15.
- MAY 25th—Running along a path above a river gorge near Edzell, Jacqueline Sutherland (14) fell 50 ft. into the ravine, breaking a wrist and a collar bone. She was roped out on a stretcher by Tayside Police S & R Unit. 10.
- MAY 26th—Richard Young (26) sustained serious head injuries in a fall climbing at Huntly's Cave Rocks, Grantown-on-Spey. Stretchered to road by companions and police then airlifted.
- JUNE 2nd—Heart attack victim (dead) Glen Einich. Body plus three cold and wet companions lifted to Glenmore Lodge by RAF Wessex.
- JUNE 10th—Hit on the head by a falling rock when abseiling off 'The Needle,' Shelter Stone Crag, Brian Sheddon (32) was left dangling. Two Aberdeen climbers devised a method of lowering him 400 ft. to the bottom. An RAF Wessex and a Sea King helicopter could not reach him due to bad weather, so he was stretchered to Glenmore Lodge, then airlifted to hospital by RAF Wessex. Cairngorm, Glenmore and Kinloss MRTs, SARDA. 440.
- JUNE 25th—Cairngorm MRT used a wheeled stretcher to evacuate Agnes Jourdan (22) down Windy Ridge, killed in a paragliding accident. 15.
- JULY 10th—An RAF Wessex took Walter Robertson (67) from the ridge of Carn a'Mhaim suffering from a heart attack. Grampian Police. 3.

JULY 11th—HM Coastguard descended sea cliffs at Whiting Ness, Arbroath to ascertain injuries to a woman (24) fallen over. Body recovered by RAF Wessex.

JULY 14th—RAF Sea King found body of John Caldecott (66) swept down River Spey when fishing at Carron.

JULY 29th—Fallen climber/hillwalker? at Calvine (off A9). Recovered by ambulance. RAF Wessex.

JULY 30th—Botanising on a steep scree slope of Glas Maol at the head of Caenlochan Glen, John Fisher (80) stood on an unsupported turf ledge. The ledge gave way and he fell 50 ft. getting cuts and severe bruising. Tayside S & R Unit and RAF Sea King. 3.

AUGUST 4th—Two experienced walkers on Ben Macdui, carrying the party's map and compass, left five companions behind. The five (aged 21 to 32) went to Glen Avon instead of Glen Derry. Grampian Police and Braemar MRTs, RAF Sea King. 55.

AUGUST 26th—Leaving mountain bikes at Etchachan Hut, five people without maps and compasses tried to get to the top of Ben Macdui in thick mist. Sweep searching for the summit, Paul Cooper (25) and Paul Feldman (24) got separated from the others and went down the Lairig Ghru instead of Glen Derry. Grampian Police MRT. 6.

SEPTEMBER 2nd to 4th—Searches by RAF Wessex, Aberdeen, Braemar and Grampian Police MRTs for Kasspar Tuerler (24) who had gone mountain biking over the Lairig Ghru to Aviemore and Keith after saying he would be back at Inverey Youth Hostel two days earlier. 220.

SEPTEMBER 9th—Rory Mitchell (23) fell out of a tree at Bob Scott's Bothy near Derry Lodge, fracturing a femur. Aberdeen MRT. 12.

SEPTEMBER 9th—After mountain biking over Beinn a' Bhuid, Philip Williamson (28) fell off his cycle on a path near The Sneck and injured his ankle. RAF Wessex, Aberdeen, Braemar and Grampian Police. 70.

SEPTEMBER 12th—Fully packed rucksack, with tent inner inside, found abandoned at almost 4,000 feet on Braeriach near Wells of Dee. The matching, erected, outer tent was found by searchers on top of Coire an Lochain about a half mile north of the rucksack. Braemar and Grampian Police MRTs, RAF Wessex. 48.

SEPTEMBER 25th—False alarm. Search for Michael Coggan (21) a mountain biker missing in Cairngorms, who had gone off elsewhere. Braemar and Cairngorm MRTs, RAF Wessex. 10.

SEPTEMBER 28th—William Milne (55) walking on slippery rocks at the edge of a fast flowing river (Linn of Dee, Braemar) fell in and was drowned. Body recovered by Braemar MRT using ropes and a Landrover winch. 12.

OCTOBER 29th—Stephen Hill (23) was leading a climb on the upper crag at Craig-y-Barns, Dunkeld. Thirty feet up he clipped into a peg in place. Three or four feet above that he got tired and allowed himself to drop on to the runner, believing it would hold him. The karabiner—a DMM Males 2000 Kg—snapped and he fell to the bottom, breaking an ankle. Tayside Police MRT. 2.

The krab is to be sent away for tests. It was an old karabiner and a bit worn but the incident has caused some apprehension.

NOVEMBER 1st—Hill walking incident due to a glider forced landing. Anthony Baker (51) landed on Cock Cairn (4 miles ENE of Mt. Keen). Due to darkness and poor weather Tayside Police S & R Unit went out to make sure he got off the hill safely, but he got down himself. He was very fortunate to escape injury. 28.

NOVEMBER 10th—Woman (23) suffering from suspected food poisoning at Derry Bothy. Aberdeen MRT. 5.

NOVEMBER 23rd—Two Nordic skiers swept 100 ft. on Coire an Lochain. Uninjured. Presume no rescue?

NOVEMBER 25th—Six climbers uninjured when caught by an avalanche in Coire an Lochain. Presume no rescue?

DECEMBER 11th—False alarm. Premature alert was caused despite the subject having told his girl friend not to worry if he was a day late. He had been delayed by deep snow crossing Lairig Ghru and snowcaved near Sinclair Bothy, but he had all the gear and was shocked to be found by an RAF Sea King. Cairngorm and Braemar MRTs. 60.

DECEMBER 22nd—Fallen climber in Coire Cas, Cairngorm, airlifted to Inverness with head and back injuries by RAF Wessex. Tried snowclimbing when temperature was +6. Suspect no helmet. Route unknown.

DECEMBER 25th to 26th—David Wharton (27) was avalanched on an easy, open snow slope in Coire Brochain of Braeriach. The wet snow avalanche carried him 300 feet, injuring his jaw and pelvis. His companion sidestepped the avalanche, went down to Garbh Choire Bothy for sleeping bags etc. which he took up to David, and then walked out to Linn of Dee for help. RAF Sea King and Wessex helicopters. Aberdeen, Braemar, Grampian Police and Saint Athan MRTs.

SOUTHERN HIGHLANDS

- JANUARY 27th—Glissading down the North Face of Ben More when wearing crampons, Nigel Smith (19) fell over 200 ft. and broke both legs. Stretchered by Killin MRT from above 1,000 metres and then airlifted by RN Sea King. 212.
- JANUARY 28th to 29th—Robert Craig and James Nixon (both 26) were benighted on Beinn Narnain. Strathclyde Police and Arrochar MRTs, RN Sea King. 78.
- FEBRUARY 11th—At 3,000 feet on the North Face of Ben More a slab avalanche swept down a whole party of 8 who had been going up a slope of deep snow. They fell 500 ft. but 7 were unhurt. Gary Webb (22) was impaled with an ice-axe in his abdomen. His friends slid him down to the forest on a bivvy bag, then stretchered him to the road on a wooden gate. Killin MRT. 63.
- FEBRUARY 14th—100 ft. below the summit of Ben More on the North Face, James Wilson (27) tripped on ice and fell. A crampon caught and his leg was fractured. Helped by his partner he slid to near the road. Killin MRT. 2.
- FEBRUARY 25th to 27th—Vain search of hills, forests, and coast at Skipness, Argyll, for Robert Hunt (40) who had left a suicide note. Strathclyde Police. HMCG, RN Sea King, SARDA and Volunteers. 400.
- MARCH 3rd—A party of 6 were overdue after retreating from Ben Lui in a gale with rain and sleet. Delays were caused by some having to be roped down. Killin MRT helped at an individually roped crossing of a swollen burn at the base of the hill. Before that the leader, Peter Bellarby (53) had been fully immersed and swept down the burn. 6.
- MARCH 11th—John (11) and Stuart Davis (9) were overdue from an ascent of Dun-na-Cuaiche, Inveraray. Strathclyde Police and Arrochar. 8.
- MARCH 18th—Ochils MRT and RAF helicopter helped in search for 2 boy prisoners who were either lost on the hills or had run off. 36.
- MARCH 20th to 21st—The body of Helen Bruce (34) was found by Leuchars MRT at 550 metres at the foot of a crag on the north side of the N.E. Ridge of Beinn an Lochain. She had been walking with a male companion. Strathclyde Police, Arrochar, RN Sea King. 478.
- MARCH 24th to 25th—Search after heavy snowfalls in the Ochil Hills for 5 schoolboys who had camped off their planned route. Found by RAF Wessex and Ochils MRT. 16.
- APRIL 2nd—Timothy Burles (17) suffered serious hypothermia during a 3 day expedition over Ben Lawers to Kinloch Rannoch. He was evacuated from Glenmore Bothy (in Gleann Mor, just south of Schiehallion) by RAF Wessex with 2 other students (male 18, 17) suffering slight hypothermia. Tayside Police and Tayside MRT. 71.
- APRIL 20th—John Gregson (58) died of a heart attack ascending Ben Ledi in good weather. Killin MRT, RAF Wessex. 18.
- APRIL 21st—Graham Symington (62) survived a heart attack at Corriearklet Glen, Trossachs. Lomond MRT, RAF Wessex. 14.
- APRIL 21st—4 girls on an award scheme were overdue on Ben Lomond. Lomond MRT, SARDA. 12.
- APRIL 27th—Robert MacDonald (67) stumbled when descending from Creag na Callich (Tarmachan Ridge) breaking an ankle. Dry weather. Killin MRT, RAF Wessex. 39.
- MAY 12th—Descending a footpath on Ben Ledi, Joan O'Deill (54) slipped on wet grass and fractured her ankle. Helped by the other 3 in her party she got down to the forest road. Killin MRT. 7.
- MAY 12th—John Young broke an ankle when running in the Ben Lomond Race. He slipped on dry scree. Lomond MRT. 26.

- MAY 16th – Crossing steep, wet ground on A'Chrois, Adrian Grinnoneau (20) injured his back when he slipped and fell 40 ft. Strathclyde Police and Arrochar MRTs. 20.
- MAY 20th – Intending to swim in Menstrie Burn, Arnold Carruthers (17) one of 4 walkers, slipped on steep dry grass (wearing trainers) falling 20 ft. over rocks and sustaining concussion and severe bruising. Stretchered out by Ochils MRT. 15.
- MAY 23rd – Paul Roddie (16) was missing overnight despite a search of his intended route along Menstrie Glen. In good weather he must have changed his route. He was found dead next day by RAF Wessex at the foot of Craig Leith, Alva. Probably slipped on steep, dry grass. Ochils and Leuchars MRTs. 234.
- MAY 26th – One of 2 going down the Stank Footpath from Ben Ledi, Brenda Ashwood (50) was wearing fashion sports shoes with smooth soles which gave no grip or ankle support. She slipped on steep, dry grass and broke a fibula. Stretchered down by Killin MRT. 16.
- JUNE 3rd – False Alarm. Wrong information about a pair walking to a fishing site. Ochils MRT. 23.
- JUNE 10th – Chimney Arete, Cobbler North Peak (Severe). Robert Stewart (26) slipped on dry rock and fell 30 ft. – Breaking an ankle – before being held on the rope. Airlifted by RN Sea King. Strathclyde Police and Arrochar MRTs. 68.
- JUNE 14th – In Silver Glen, Margaret Finlayson (53) broke a tibia and fibula when she stepped off the path to look in a burn. She wore trainers which slipped on damp grass so she sat on her leg. Ochils MRT. 3.
- JUNE 25th – Paul Moutray (16) suffered muscle strain in a leg, when engaged on an award hike in Milton Glen, Ben Ledi. Killin MRT. 8.
- JUNE 25th – A SARDA dog with Lomond MRT found Eugene McGuire (40) suffering from exhaustion after he had separated from a group walking the West Highland Way. East Ridge of Conic Hill. 14.
- JULY 3rd – Helicopter evacuation of injured boy from cliffs at St. Andrews. HM Coastguard.
- AUGUST 4th to 5th – Janet McNab (46) and Pamela McKenzie (33) were overdue from supervising an award hike. They were found by Tayside Police S & R Unit on a path just above the head of Loch Lednock. Having no whistle and only a small torch they had been unable to signal when they saw initial search activity. RAF Wessex. 22.
- AUGUST 10th to 11th – False alarm for a missing pair in Menstrie Glen, caused by a lack of family communication. Ochils MRT. 18.
- AUGUST 11th – Fife Fire and Rescue team assisted Leven Coastguard in rescuing a 13 year-old from sea cliffs at Elie.
- AUGUST 19th – Eliza Pym (58) slipped on steep, wet grass descending the Ledard Footpath near the top of Ben Venue. When her companions were helping her down she suffered shock and exhaustion and could not continue. Stretchered by Killin MRT. 48.
- AUGUST 19th – Richard Webster was carried down by stretcher by Lomond MRT and volunteers from Ptarmigan, Ben Lomond. He tripped and broke a leg in poor weather. 36.
- SEPTEMBER 6th – John Cooke (71) was found dead by SARDA dogs on September 10th. He had slipped and fallen 30 ft. down a rock face amongst vegetation. Wearing trainers he had been out for an evening stroll along the West Highland Way from Inversnaid Hotel. Lomond and Killin MRTs. Police Underwater Unit. 277.
- SEPTEMBER 8th – East Lomond Hill, Fife. Paraglider with injured knee stretcher airlifted by RAF Wessex.
- SEPTEMBER 15th – Male (late 50s) dead from a heart attack on Beinn Achaladair airlifted by RAF Wessex.
- SEPTEMBER 16th – Descending towards Stank Glen from the summit of Ben Ledi, William Turner (67) slipped on steep grass and broke a leg. Killin MRT and RAF Wessex. 27.
- SEPTEMBER 25th – Brian Morgan (56) slipped on wet scree descending from the summit of Beinn Bhuidhe. Benighted he was met walking off. In hospital he was found to have an arm fracture and bruised ribs. Strathclyde Police and Arrochar MRTs. RN Sea King. 54.

- SEPTEMBER 25th—Separation incident on Ben Lui. One of two men (44, 38) reported the other missing. They had separated because one was slower due to tiredness. He turned up safe but exhausted. Killin MRT. 3.
- OCTOBER 27th—Myra Orr (44) slipped on a wet tree-root descending a steep path at Birks of Aberfeldy Nature Trail. Stretchered out with a broken ankle by Tayside Police S & R Unit. 6.
- NOVEMBER 12th to 13th—Alexandra Moores (30) and Julie Whiteside (27) got lost in cloud, missing a path and descending the much steeper (west) side of Gannel Burn. Benighted, they bivouacked till found by Ochils MRT. Central and Tayside Police. 14.
- NOVEMBER 16th—Descending steep, wet grass in Wellies, John Swanson (22) slipped and slid 60 feet, bruising and spraining an ankle. Airlifted (from Tullich Hill, Glen Douglas) by RN Sea King. Strathclyde Police. 13.
- NOVEMBER 24th—A group of 17 on a night navigation exercise in Tillicoultry Glen had been told to stay put if the mist came down, and so they did! Ochils MRT. 3.
- DECEMBER 30th—Cramponing alone near the summit of Cruach Ardrain, Neil Keith (49) stumbled down steep neve, broke an ankle and was unable to move. Two hours later he was lucky enough to have his calls for help heard by a pair of walkers, one of whom went down to alert Killin MRT. He was found by them in a blizzard and stretchered down. 228.
- DECEMBER 31st—False alarm. Flare reported on Dumyat. Ochils MRT. 2.

SKYE

- JANUARY 28th to 29th—False alarm caused by a car with climbing gear left at The Storr. Search by Skye, Kinloss and RAF Sea King. 108.
- APRIL 12th to 13th—Skye and Kinloss MRTs stretcher lowered a woman with a dislocated shoulder 800 feet down the steep north slopes of Bruach na Frith, from where she was airlifted at night in heavy snow and strong winds by an RAF Sea King. Stornoway Coastguard helicopter was also involved. 160.
- MAY 5th—Donald Barrie (23) fell 50 feet from the Fourth Pinnacle of Sgurr nan Gilleann when his rock abseil point failed. He punctured a lung and broke an arm with back injuries also. Skye MRT, Police and RAF Sea King. 24.
- MAY 17th to 18th—Searches along cliffs near Kilmorree for Rosemary Scott (67). She was found dead.
- MAY 28th—John Lomas (33) was injured by a slip on the S.E. Ridge of Sgurr nan Gilleann in good weather. RAF Sea King. 6.
- MAY 31st—Skye MRT and Police stretchered Joanne Law (15) from lower Coire Lagan when she sprained an ankle. 12.
- JUNE 3rd—Conn Cremin (35) suffered multiple fractures: back with no paralysis, neck, ribs and kneecap; when he fell 60 feet from near the top of the Thearlaich-Dubh Gap. He had been leading the pitch and slipped on greasy rock. He was wearing a helmet. Skye MRT, RAF Sea King. 74.
- JUNE 12th—Leading the Bhasteir Tooth, Robin Watts (59) fell 80 feet to the bottom when a handhold gave way. He wore a helmet and sustained pelvic and chest injuries. Skye MRT and Police stretcher lower. Winched by RAF Sea King and airlifted to Broadford then to Raigmore hospitals. 103.
- JUNE 12th—False alarm. Uninhabited tent near outlet of Loch Coruisk. HM Coastguard helicopter, Skye MRT. 10.
- JUNE 16th—Fallen climber. HM Coastguard helicopter (with Skye MRT member from Glenbrittle) double lifted injured man (Quentin Mair) from near summit of Sgurr na Banachdich. 12.
- JUNE 25th—Paul Bennet (25) slipped on a ledge in Garbh-choire (wet rock) gashing a leg and twisting his ankle. He was helped by his companion back down to Coruisk, then waited in a tent near the bad Step. Skye MRT, Police and HM Coastguard helicopter. 33.

JULY 7th—Search for walker (Male 25) at Dunvegan. Safe.

JULY 9th—An RAF helicopter began ferrying Skye MRT and Police to search for Arthur Edwards (67) (who separated from his son on Sgurr na Banachdich) when he turned up safe. 64.

AUGUST 8th to 9th—David Wilson (47) slipped on wet rock when leading the NE Face of the Centre Peak of Bidean Druim nan Ramh, falling past his client about 40 feet into a gully, and sustaining concussion despite wearing a helmet. His client went to Sligachan for help after putting Wilson in a sleeping bag, covering him with a flysheet and tying him to a belay. At 20.00 hrs. RAF helicopter could not help because of bad weather. At 01.00 on 9th. Skye MRT reached the scene but found only the gear. At 05.15 Wilson was found dead 200 feet below. Evacuated by HM Coastguard helicopter at 10.00. 150.

AUGUST 12th to 13th—Search of moorland hills and high cliffs of peninsula (Dunvegan Head) for Mark Drew (25) overdue. Turned up safe. Skye MRT, HM Coastguard helicopter. 12.

AUGUST 17th—Michael Dennis (20) with hand and knee injuries abseiling at Kilt Rock, Staffin. Strop lifted by HM Coastguard SK61N using all 300 feet of winch cable. 8.

SEPTEMBER 7th—Peter King (35) was found dead in the Great Stone Shoot by 2 hill walkers, having fallen 600 feet from Sgurr Alasdair summit in rain and mist. Skye MRT, RAF Sea King. 34.

HMCG SK61N diverted to Mayday for sinking boat.

SEPTEMBER 12th—Two brothers near Sgurr Sgumain summit separated to try to find a descent route. James Warren fell 100 feet on to a ledge and was fatally injured. Wet rock. He was found by RAF Sea King but recovery was delayed to 13th because of danger. Skye MRT. 285.

SEPTEMBER 22nd—One of five walkers, Siegud Dubois (M) was double lifted by Coastguard helicopter suffering from minor injuries. Spotted at the foot of sea cliffs at Ru Idrigill, Uig Bay. 10.

OCTOBER 11th to 12th—Paul Binks (37) got lost on Gars-bheinn. Found by RAF helicopter. Skye MRT, Police. 22.

ISLANDS (other than Skye)

APRIL 10th—Buntly Fleming (70) broke her ankle when she slipped on wet grass on a path near Guirdil, Isle of Rhum, wearing chamfered heel boots. Rescue by HM Coastguard helicopter. 5.

MAY 10th—A'Chir Ridge, Isle of Arran. Jane Lim (29) slipped on wet rock and injured her leg. Arran MRT, RN Sea King. 12.

JUNE 10th—John Reid (52) slipped on scree in Glen Rosa, Arran, and tore a tendon in his leg. Stretchered out by Arran MRT. 8.

JUNE 28th—Hillwalking in Glen Trollamarig (E. Coast of North Harris), Mr A. R. Wardie broke a tibia and was stretchered-winchd into an HM Coastguard helicopter. 4.

SEPTEMBER 14th—Bennan Head footpath, Arran. Bresda Hansen (50) slipped on dry scree and dislocated her elbow. Carried out on a stretcher by Arran MRT. 30.

OCTOBER 6th to 7th—Loch Suainaval, Isle of Lewis. Four walkers: Caroline Wade, Vervan Green, Bridget Ekin and Dr Ian Reekie, were missing in remote, rocky hills SW of Loch Roag. Despite camouflage of green wax jackets and wellies, one in a white shirt, waving, was spotted by HMCG helicopter. All well but cold. 4.

NOVEMBER 8th—Giles Evans (18) suffered mild shock when she got lost and overdue in Rhum. Found long after dark by NCC searchers. Fortunately a route card had been left. 10.

SOUTHERN UPLANDS

- JANUARY 13th—Hillwalking on Cairn Law, David Willingham (43) stumbled when crossing fence, injuring his spine. Stretchered off by Tweed Valley MRT. 49.
- FEBRUARY 10th—Moffat Grey Mare's Tail area. 5 soldiers suffered exposure during a training exercise in rain and wind. Lifted by RAF helicopter. Moffat Hill Rescue Service. 50.
- MARCH 12th—Mentally disturbed boy (9) lost in Kirkconnel old mine workings. Found safe. Moffat Hill Rescue Service. 34.
- MAY 2nd—Robin Shaw (29) broke his ankle crossing Buchan Burn when descending Merrick. With boots he would probably have been OK, but he wore sandals as it was a hot day. Galloway MRT, Police, Ambulance. 42.
- MAY 10th—Peter Leam (60) broke an ankle coming down Buchan Burn. Slip on grass. Galloway MRT, Police, Ambulance.
- MAY 26th—14 pupils on an award hike missed a track at Whiteholm (above Daer Reservoir, Lowther Hills) and were 6 hours overdue. Turned up safe. Moffat Hill Rescue Service. 40.
- MAY 26th—A woman and 2 young children were overdue in Mable Forest near Dumfries. Turned up safe. Moffat Hill Rescue Service. 16.
- MAY 30th—James Logan (76) had been out all night. He was found by Tweed Valley MRT, Lothian Sub-Unit and SARDA stuck in a bog. He was rescued and stretchered out. 85.
- JUNE 9th to 10th—SARDA dog found James Logan (76) soaking and cold in a wood at a Residential Home. Night search by Tweed Valley MRT. RN Sea King on standby. 100.
- JUNE 15th to 16th—Tweed Valley, Lothian and SARDA did night and first light searches for a man (49) missing in the Moorfoot Hills after a domestic dispute. RAF Sea King and Wessex helicopters. 344.
- JUNE 18th—False alarm (good intent) following reports of a parked car. Couple had been camping. Moffat Hill Rescue Service, RN Sea King. 30.
- JULY 8th to 9th—Search overnight by Moffat Hill Rescue Service, joined at dawn by RN Sea King, for a man (Downs Syndrome) from an adventure centre at Eskdalemuir missing beside a swollen river. The helicopter woke him from his sleep in a derelict cottage and he was found safe walking on a road. 120.
- JULY 10th—Child cragfast at Grey Mare's Tail. Moffat Hill Rescue Service arrived to find child had been walked off scree by father. 12.
- JULY 18th—Separation incident: one of four walkers went astray near Over Pawhope Bothy. Moffat Hill Rescue Service. 15.
- AUGUST 14th—In darkness, Moffat Hill Rescue Service stretchered an exhausted old lady down from the summit of Criffel, Solway Hills. 80.
- AUGUST 17th—Man (49) walking near the top of Grey Mare's Tail path reported as having a heart attack, was in fact a diabetic suffering from low blood sugar. Treated by a doctor. Moffat. 20.
- AUGUST 30th—Pentland Hills. Male hillwalker collapsed and died. RAF Wessex helicopter.
- SEPTEMBER 2nd—Moffat Team called out for a mentally retarded young man missing from a walk. Turned up safe. 20.
- SEPTEMBER 8th—Fell runner lost and overdue from a training run. Turned up safe. Moffat Hill Rescue Service. 10.
- OCTOBER 1st—Peel Fell, Cheviots. Tweed Valley MRT and SARDA called out for 2 missing boys (both 12). Walked out safe. 24.
- OCTOBER 17th to 18th—Elderly male walking the Southern Uplands Way became ill at Brattleburn Bothy. When Moffat Team arrived he had recovered but abandoned the walk after another illness. 32.
- OCTOBER 21st—Dunbar Coastguard Cliff team rescued a youth from sea cliffs at Dunbar and lowered him to an inshore lifeboat.

- NOVEMBER 26th to 27th Searches by Galloway, Moffat and SARDA teams for a missing man with suicidal tendencies carrying a shotgun. He turned up safe. 145.
- DECEMBER 2nd - Fallen walker had fallen ON summit of Carnethy Hill, Pentlands, with no vertical drop. Dead on arrival of RAF Wessex.
- DECEMBER 8th - Moffat Hill Rescue Service searched Moffat Water area in a blizzard for a shepherd long overdue. He was found crawling on his hands and knees against the wind and snow. 15.
- DECEMBER 18th to 19th A man (80) walked 3 miles in carpet slippers and shirt sleeves on a bitterly cold night. Night and dawn searches were carried out by Lothian, SARDA and Tweed Valley teams. His body was found at an ancient tower near Peebles (215392). He had fallen and died of his injuries and/or exposure. 172.
- DECEMBER 27th Search by RAF Wessex for soldier missing in Pentland Hills. Not found.
- DECEMBER 30th Steep NW slopes of Carlvain Hill, Moffat Hills. Mack Pedersen (27) fell on icy snow and broke his ankle. Tweed Valley MRT, SARDA, RN Sea King. 58.

NON-MOUNTAINEERING INCIDENTS

- JANUARY 1st Glencoe and Kinloss MRTs helped Ambulance, Fire and Police Services at a road accident in Glencoe involving 2 cars and 7 casualties. 20.
- MARCH 3rd Search of South Ugie River, Longside, Peterhead by Grampian Police MRT and RN Sea King for a man who had left a suicide note. He was found dead by civilian searchers. 16.
- APRIL 5th - Cessna 210 aircraft crash on Dunbrach Hill, Fintry. Crash guards, assistance to investigators and recovery of 2 bodies was carried out by Killin, Leuchars, Lomond, Ochils, Strathclyde Police MRTs and RAF Sea King (Boulmer). 340.
- APRIL 30th Shackleton 2 aircraft crashed at Northton, South Harris, killing all ten on board. Kinloss MRT, RAF Sea King, HM Coastguard and HM Coastguard helicopter. 1,296.
- MAY 19th to 20th - Kenneth McDonald (22) working on railway maintenance (Finart Viaduct, West Highland Line) fell and got concussed and wandered off. He was found by Strathclyde Police MRT. 12.
- MAY 20th - Woman canoeist (24) died in River Findhorn. RAF Sea King.
- JUNE 27th Kinloss MRT assisted recovery of injured navigator and dead pilot from a Canberra crash at Kinloss. 202.
- JULY 23rd - Rachel Young (12) slipped on Gruinard Beach when running into the sea, twisting a knee. Dundonnell MRT. 8.
- JULY 23rd Gavin Wolkoff (15) injured his hip falling 100 ft. from cliffs at Cove. He had been cycling along the cliff top. Aberdeen Coastguard Cliff Rescue Team and Aberdeen Inshore Lifeboat.
- AUGUST 11th Carnoustie Coastguard investigated a motor cycle at the cliff bottom at Auchmithie. No person was injured.
- AUGUST 22nd False alarm. Search by Killin MRT for a light aircraft reported to clip trees 1 mile north of Strathyre. 90.
- SEPTEMBER 5th Killin MRT recovered the body of a woman (72) from a gorge at Bracklin Falls, Callander. Suicide. 56.
- OCTOBER 18th Torridon MRT called out for a forest worker who had broken a leg trapped under a 4-wheel AT Vehicle at Coulags, Loch Carron. On arrival they found he had been rescued by Air Ambulance from Inverness. 13.
- OCTOBER 27th Galloway Team, Police, SARDA and HM Coastguard searched shores of Rascarrel Bay, Auchencairn after 2 feet had been found cut off at the ankles. However the search was called off when the feet were thought to be other than human. 125.
- NOVEMBER 21st RAF Sea King from Boulmer found the wreckage of a light aircraft crashed at Dunbar Moor, Lammermuir Hills. Dead pilot was David Barrett (49). Leuchars, Lothian, Tweed Valley MRTs, 2 RAF helicopters. 730.
- DECEMBER 8th Tweed Valley MRT called out to assist with motorists trapped in snow on A7 at Middleton Moor. Rescued 4 trapped vehicles in Yarrow Valley. 23.
- DECEMBER 26th - River Esk, Langholm. Moffat Hill Rescue Service searched 15 miles of banks for a man thought to have fallen in. No trace. 135.

IN MEMORIAM

ROBERT CARMICHAEL STUART LOW

WHEN YOU were with Mike, even on quite a long expedition, you would get little idea of his past achievements. There were many aspects to Mike's life at which he excelled.

He gained an engineering degree at Oxford and went into railway engineering, finally being chosen as Engineering Director of the newly formed company, British Rail Engineering.

He went to France in '39 with the Royal Engineers. Came out at Dunkirk to further training at Lochailort, then to Malaysia and Thailand, where he was wounded - escaped to India via Java and Ceylon. He took part in the North African and Italian campaigns - was awarded the M.C after Cassino where he was wounded again and invalided to the U.K, later becoming O.C.T.U Chief Instructor with the rank of Major. It does not take much imagination to appreciate the character and resilience that goes with that sort of history.

Mike joined the Club in '47, and although living in the deep South was often seen at New Year and Easter Meets. After retiring from the Railway, he made several treks in Nepal. In '77 I was delighted to be invited to join him and George Roger on a trip round Annapurna, delightful too to discover that wildlife and birds meant as much to him as mountains. He was in fact secretary of his local county wildlife trust.

One final mention must be made of a most engaging habit, or art, of pulling out his sketch-book at any odd moment to capture some incident, making a diary with sketches and cartoons. I am lucky to have some of these, which I treasure.

Douglas Scott.

JOHN WILSON

JOHN WILSON died in March 1990 after a long illness which had kept him off his beloved hills since 1984.

John started climbing and skiing at an early age. He was the leading light in the foundation of the University Mountaineering Club when he went to St Andrews in 1933.

All his days on the hills were recorded in his diaries, which he kept continuously from 1934 until his last entry on the 6th May, 1984. The accounts contain an amazing amount of material, and sum up a wealth of experience and proficiency which very few among us have ever been able to rival.

John was a member of the JMCS before joining the SMC. He was also a member of the Scottish Ski Club and the Alpine Ski Club. He edited the first edition of the Southern Highlands District Guide. He was a keen and expert photographer.

Of a tough and wiry build he appeared to be untiring on the hills. His climbing achievements were many. Perhaps the two most notable were his first ascent of the Long Climb on Ben Nevis with J.H.B. Bell, and the complete high level traverse of the Alps on ski from Galtur to Chamonix. The former must still rank as the longest continuous rock climb in the British Isles.

Reading through his diaries brought back many happy memories. One entry for January 1953 at the SMC Meet at Newtonmore recalled the occasion when John and Earl McEwen produced skis and skins for Bob Elton and myself, both of us at that time completely inexperienced skiers. The ascent of Geal Charn in the Laggan hills was the easy part. On the way down Bob and I were both completely out of control, while Bob collided with a stag which was also floundering about in the deep snow. John's only comment in the diary was that Bob was fortunate to have hit the rear, and not the front end of the stag.

Another occasion remembered was an ascent, mainly on skis, of the Briethorn at first light, from the Italian side. The climb up was slow, as we were all suffering from the effects of the altitude. After reaching the top, there followed a long descent across the Furgg Glacier (no lifts or pistes in these days) and down to Zermatt. The last two miles were completed in darkness and I remember feeling very tired. John's account concluded with the entry 'a lazy and satisfying day'.

John was a man of great humanity. Supportive and kind, he was always available to help out his friends without a thought for himself. He was an ideal climbing companion who showed kindness and consideration to the weaker members of the party. He was always prepared to consider the other point of view. A disagreement was always a discussion and never an argument. He rarely lost the twinkle in his eye and a sense of humour was always present.

During the last six years he was often in great discomfort, but he would always brush aside enquiries about his health with the reply 'I'm all right', and then show great interest in his questions about the doings of others.

John will be greatly missed by the many friends who were lucky enough to know him and who treasure the many happy memories they shared with him. Our sympathies are offered to Joan who did so much to help and support him during his illness.

Arnott Russell.

WILLIAM CAMPBELL CARMICHAEL b.1903 d.1990

DUE TO ill health, Bill's climbing years were prematurely terminated in 1964.

Until then, he was a familiar and popular attender at the meets of the Glasgow section of the J.M.C.S before the war, and at S.M.C meets thereafter.

His military bearing and long, raking stride made him easily identifiable, even at a considerable distance, on the hill.

We first met at the J.M.C.S Easter meet at Blair Athol in 1934. The total gathering of eight included the late Ian McKinnon who, by repeated and over-enthusiastic glissading on a mixture of Ben-y-Glas' scree and snow, succeeded in removing the seat of his trousers.

Thanks to Bill's sense of decorum, a Sunday newspaper was purchased and inserted into the offending garment and the haven of the Glen Tilt Hotel safely reached without besmirching the Club's reputation.

Our strides matching well, we enjoyed many long and happy hill days such as the circuit of Coire nan Gall from Sgurr Mhor over Sgurr Na Ciche to Ben Aven. This was before the North of Scotland Hydro Electric Board enlarged Loch Quoich into a reservoir.

On another memorable day we did Ben Tarsuinn and a'Mhaighdean from the Heights of Kinlochewe during the exceptionally stormy S.M.C Kinlochewe meet in the fifties.

Bill was a faithful attender too at our annual S.M.C summer holidays, based at the Sligachan Hotel. Graced by the presence of Myles Morrison and his vintage Rolls Royce, and favoured by perfect weather, we enjoyed consecutive June fortnights on the ridges and faces of the Cuillin with a stealthy visit to the Mountains of Rum as a bonus. Bill loved the hills and latterly it was heartbreaking for him to see us set off without him.

He was a Glasgow Academical and subsequently controlled the family chain of chemist shops in the southside of Glasgow.

A keen Territorial, he was awarded the Territorial Decoration before the war, entailing over 20 years of pre-war service. During the war he served in the Burma campaign as a Staff Officer, finishing with the rank of Lieutenant Colonel.

An outstandingly fine and upright man, his death is a great loss to the Club and our sincere condolences go out to his charming wife Ailie, and daughters Elizabeth and Flora.

J. Norman Ledingham.

JAMES F. HAMILTON

BACK in the scanty times when every trip north to the hills started by passing the rusting bulk of 534, there were growing bands of youths seeking the refreshment of the countryside and especially among the mountains. Among these neophyte stravaigers the name of Hamish Hamilton was well known as a climber and a character. Chance led him to join the Tricouni Club, a group who met at Cranstons Tea Rooms - it was a mixed club and pubs barred women - on Friday nights to arrange weekend outings. It was one of quite a few clubs with similar aims but it claimed to provide over forty outings - plus annual holidays - each year.

Hamish, a Salesman by occupation and a Mountaineer by disposition was personable, ebullient, exciting, enthusiastic and super optimistic, or as Drummy Henderson grumbled 'Any time at all he looks three drinks ahead o' everyone else'. He was a superb climber with lithe, cat-like movement, content mostly to repeat recognised routes, but on occasion he had the inborn prognostic ability to discern a new route and climb it on sight. This he amply demonstrated on Agag's Groove, the South Ridge Direct on Cir Mhor, and the Central Buttress of Coire Mhic Fhearchair.

After climbing, his prowess as a driver of motor bikes and cars was notable, many said notorious. He was the first person to take me from Coupal Bridge to Tyndrum in under half an hour. He had a private condition of travel when you went on his bike, which was that if he was caught for speeding you paid half the fine. I duly subscribed on several occasions. He had some spectacular car crashes from which he emerged unscathed. Swimming seemed second nature to him and he could cover long distances in chilly water with evident enjoyment. A party of us rowed from Tarbet across Loch Lomond to climb Ben Lomond by way of Ptarmigan. A strong wind was blowing when we came back to return, strong enough to make Bill MacKenzie sling his boots round his neck as a precaution. Hamish just swam back.

His list of pursuits was extensive. Golf and skiing he maintained all his life. Photography and lecturing were in the same category. Camping, where he was adept at lighting fires in the most obstreperous conditions, sleeping in bothies and howffs. Hostelling and sleeping out. There was a transcendent night at Coupal lying out in our bags when a stag silhouetted itself against a full moon just clearing the ebony black moorland.

Hamish was the 22nd person to complete the Munros. On an odd impulse one weekend we went a bit South of Inverary where he led two of us to the top of the then highest tree in Scotland, a bit over 180 feet. This constant, enthusiastic pursuit of new and varied pursuits, his friendly approach, widened his appeal to an even wider circle of devotees and added to his list of requests to give lectures.

He made quite a number of climbing visits to the Alps extending later to many winter visits to ski. A little known trait was playing the mouth organ, a welcome backing to camp fire singing. On an ascent of the Cioch Direct, Hamish leading, a companion found a pitch almost beyond him and called for a tight rope, when from aloft came the musical strains of the 'Wild Rover'. A very anxious face demonstrated the realisation that only one hand was taking in the slack. In atrocious conditions he would display a singularly wry sense of humour. On the redoubtable last pitch of Crowberry Gully he had toiled cutting out a stance for a long time then, just as he was raising his foot to step up, the stance slid away. Hamish peered downwards shouting 'Why, oh why did I just buy a new radio set?'.

When we came to the start of the crux pitch on the first ascent of Agag's, Hamish found wet mud and loose stones. He took off his rubbers to continue in his safer socks and looked down to me asking 'If I chuck down these loose stones will they hit you?' 'Of course they will' I protested. 'Ah well' was the reply, 'see that the rope isn't cut'. All the stones missed me by about a foot.

He thoroughly enjoyed the 50th Anniversary of the first ascent of Agag's Groove when we had a celebratory dinner at Kingshouse, in 1986. Four of the members of the two parties to climb the route on the same day in '36 were present, and nostalgia was unrestrained.

Alistair Borthwick dedicated his book 'Always a Little Further' to Hamish, giving a sketch of him redolent of his character. He was a most memorable member of the Club who will be remembered with affection and pride.

A.C.D. Small.

When Jimmy Hamilton joined the Tricouni climbing club, pre-war, the two women members pointed out that they had two Jimmy's already . . . "we'll call you Hamish", they decided.

So Hamish it was and that name now has a special place in the history of Scottish Mountaineering and his colourful and irrepressible spirit will be ever associated with Alastair Borthwick's gallery of outdoor characters of the 1930's.

When Hamish joined the SMC at the end of the War he hardly fitted the Club image; the atmosphere that clung to him was of a cheerful recklessness, a by-passing of the miles. In fact, he was simply reflecting changing times. Other clubs had risen before the War which were based on the easier attitudes of the engineering shops and shipyards of Clydeside, Borthwick's book was closer to that and—as I personally know—portrayed it accurately. Mountaineering was becoming 'democratic' and the Club was inevitably changing, too, whilst holding pride in its own special conventions and history.

But Hamish had his own conventions which, to the end, did not include mechanical aids; his climbing was not cerebral—no theories, no mechanism, press on. Swimming across lochs, foaming rivers—or jumping across river canyons—were regarded in the same light. He was not reckless, simply lion-hearted. He knew exactly what he was doing, thought rapidly, and used his craft and guts to get up and over.

A host of memories crowd around me as I write; but I am choosing only a few from his earlier days 50-odd years ago. One is the first ascent of the Rosa Pinnacle Direct which I described long after in the 1963 Journal. I can only add to that account the remarkable fact that he led it in less than one hour. When he climbed Clachaig Gully (for its second time) what remains in my mind is (a) his speed of ascent and (b) his current food-fad. We did that climb on raw eggs and tomatoes—one of each at every other pitch! At another period of his gastronomic life dried bananas were regarded by him as miniature power stations, and we would chomp them down in all kinds of airy situations.

Another notable memory is of Arch Gully in hard winter conditions when the rest of the party (since night approached) petulantly wanted to retreat. 'Shower of bloody defeatists' came from on high out of the fearsome dusk—and we meekly followed to a nightmarish but masterly finish in darkness.

Finally, his dynamic organisation of David Paterson and myself as a rescue party on Observatory Buttress. At the shortest of notices, he drove us up overnight from Glasgow. We were on the summit of Nevis at dawn, climbed down with stretcher, found on a ledge the body of the 19-year-old Cambridge University climber (who had fallen a long way) and brought him down in a grisly and frightening series of stretcher operations. He drove us back overnight through a terrible storm of wind and rain, uttering picturesque maledictions on the pub in Fort William which refused us a dram of whisky on a specious argument about war rationing.

As an end-piece, a vignette of his eternal optimism: a long hard climb in winter in Glencoe in the early days of the War—and we missed the last bus. We had to start work next morning. We stood on the road, freezing, no transport, no food, no hope. I must have girmed a bit and his merry eyes and black moustache grinned at me out of the darkness: 'Cast your bread upon the waters, Bob, and it shall be returned unto you, pan loaves with jam on them'. And a few minutes later up the Glen came an army lorry and gave us lift back to Glasgow.

Hamish was the most courageous man I have ever climbed with. He gave me back confidence at a crucial period of my life when I badly needed it—this because he also had great human warmth and insight and was, indeed, a genuinely religious man. A day or two before he died he joked to me about meeting on the other side. I do not know what heaven he visualised—the world's history has produced many—but his might be a gentler version of Valhalla.

Bob Grieve.

PROCEEDINGS OF THE CLUB

New Members

The following twelve new members were admitted and welcomed to the Club in the year 1990-91.

- Christopher Cartwright (26) Student, Netherlee, Glasgow.
- Graeme E. Ettle (22) Nightwatch, Aviemore.
- Andrew G. Kirk (29) Sales Representative, Glasgow.
- Richard J. Lockie (44) Lithographic Print Consultant, York.
- Alison J. Naismith (34) Psychiatrist, Glasgow.
- Timothy Pettifer (42) Art Director/Copywriter/Photographer, Largs.
- Simon M. Richardson (30) Petroleum Engineer, Aberdeen.
- James G. Robb (27) Professional Engineer, Dundee.
- Ronnie Robb (31) Personnel Advisor, Dyce, Aberdeen.
- Carl J. Schaschke (26) Lecturer, Hillhead, Glasgow.
- Grant D.K. Urquhart (33) Radiologist, Glasgow.
- Christine I. Watkins (36) Outdoor Education Organiser, Balloch.

The One-Hundreth-and-Second AGM and Dinner

The Prologue: GOTTERDAMMERUNG

The saga so far:- Long, long ago when the Alps were enstocked and the Bens unMunroed, the Bengods and the Benmaidens roamed the hills in tweedy amity. Then the Bengods resolved to feast and conclave in monogenderous starched shirt splendour and to set themselves apart from all earthly beings. As time passed, the Bengods accumulated the sacred Benlore and had it engraved and encased between red boards. And they did hold yearly feasts before the Winter solstice at which a few male mortals were permitted to join their wassail.

But then the dwarves who laboured to engrave the Benlore came under the sway of the Trustlings (a mysterious body of immortals immune from sword or spear). Guided by the Flying Leithman (now under a curse to roam the seas for evermore and never again set foot on ben or moor), the Trustlings learnt to use the arcane Tables of Munro to transmute the Benlore into gold. Now, as the Bengods gathered for their conclave and feast in the Forest of the Fish Eagle, their ancient order had to face twin challenges - a faction led by Droid Redbeard sought to admit the Benmaidens to their ranks and sacred rituals and the Knight of the White Dustjacket was determined to lead a raid to seize the Trustlings gold.

ACT1, The AGM

An AGM which had the potential of being the most contentious of recent times was carried through without blood being spilt. You may consult your Minutes for the details, I will just pick out a few personal observations in random order.

The historically most important item - the vote on the acceptance of women as candidates for membership - was preceded by reasoned debate on both sides. The vote, with 78 votes for and 35 against, was not far above the required two-thirds majority of those voting and there was a large number of abstentions. Definitely more of a passive acceptance of historic necessity than a burning desire to throw down historic barriers.

The problem of the Trust/Club relationship was well aired and, although some positive steps have been taken, it is likely that the relationship will continue to be uneasy. The spectre of taxation liabilities and the consequent reduction in the monies available for the charitable aims of the Trust overhangs all like a dodgy cornice. Again the debate was carried out

with restraint despite the opportunities for engaging in confusion and animosity. Dave Jenkins' swift little seminar on tax liability was much appreciated and may well have done something to relieve the 'utter confusion' of some members.

Outside our own little internal difficulties, the spectre of access and land management emerged at a number of points throughout the meeting. The questions posed by the proposed National Parks and the move towards management of popular mountain areas are potentially more serious than having to sneak past a few abusive serfs and will be a leitmotif in our annual opera in the coming decade.

ACT2, The Dinner

The Dinner as a dinner was not a success and represented a sad fall in the standards which we have enjoyed at Nethybridge in recent years. The Dinner Secretary bristled even more than usual and promised one of his famous Letters to the Management.

Bill Wallace, in his Address to the Club, noted the election of Syd Scroggie to Hon. Member and, on a sadder note, reported on Bill Murray's poor state of health. (Now recovered - Ed.) He also surveyed a wide range of Members' activities from the Himalayas (including a second British ascent of Ama Dablam) to somewhat lesser crags at home. Again, the questions of land use and access were acknowledged. The Toast to Our Guests and Kindred Clubs was ably proposed by a kiltless Malcolm Slessor. The tenor of his remarks was such as we would expect from one of our favourite eccentrics and his gifts for timing and emphasis lent an added gloss.

That the reply came from Heather King of the LSCC seemed historically apposite. It was also a welcome change from some of those male representatives we have suffered from in the past. An urbane and polished performance.

At the end of two hardworking and eventful years of Presidency, Bill handed over the symbols and authority thereof to Iain Smart who has the task of guiding the Club through a period which may see some interesting additions to the membership.

Bob Richardson.

Editor's Note: In the Journal last year we noted the retirement of the above reporter, and made the tactical error of praising his work. With the ensuing rush of blood to the head, he has reclaimed the position. The somewhat unusual style shown above brings into mind again his recent cycling accident, though we will not, at this stage, be interviewing any of the candidates who kindly offered to step into the temporary breach.

Easter Meet - Kinlochewe Hotel - 1990

This meet was less than successful from the point of view of weather, accommodation and service. No records of what was done has come down to us.

Present (an incomplete record only):- Members - W. Wallace (President), Jim Donaldson, Iain Ogilvie, Iain Smart and, say, half a dozen others. Guests - P.J. Sellar.

New Year Meet 1990 - 1991 Raeburn Hut 31st December - 1st January 1991.

The hut was double booked. The 'official' party was small. The President reached the hut on ski from Dalwhinnie on Hogmanay as the roads were blocked by several feet of snow. The weather, however, was clear and windless and the moon shone from a stormy sky. W. Jeffrey and G. Little (with a large party) were already there and preparing to overwinter.

On New Year's Day the roads were surprisingly opened by an efficient mechanical blower. Bad weather, starting in the early hours of the New Year, prevented any climbing or skiing.

Present - I. Smart, W. Jeffrey, G. Little (and guests), G. Urquhart (and 2 guests)!

Easter Meet - Knock an, Sutherland 28th March - 1st April 1991.

The meet was held at Tom Strang's comfortable establishment near Inchnadamph. It was well attended. Several members who were unwilling to camp had to be turned away. Book early for next year. The weather was mixed, the 29th dry but stormy, the 30th warm and sunny, the 31st and 1st high wind and rain. Slesser and the President traversed Stac Pollaidh from East to West (numbed fingers notwithstanding) and visited the cliffs of Breabag for a scramble. Wallace and Turnbull traversed Cul Mor and Cul Beg and on the worst day of all visited the waterfall of Eas Cul Ailean. The others climbed Quinag and Cul Mor and visited the entrances to the caves and sink holes. The Strang establishment featured excellent cooking, a log fire with store fireplace cum climbing wall rising to the roof (first ascent, J. Fowler) and a luxurious sauna.

Present were:- Members - Iain Smart (President), D. Bennet, Sandy Cousins, J.R.R. Fowler, R. Chalmers, T.B. Fleming, C.C. Gorrie, Iain Ogilvie, J.R. Marshall, Malcolm Slesser, Oliver Turnbull, W. Wallace, Ivan Waller.

Iain Smart.

J.M.C.S. REPORTS

Edinburgh Section.- During the past year our membership levels, due to a balance between emigration and recruitment, have remained more or less static, at around 60. There is a core of 30 or so more active members.

The committed and enthusiastic climbing activity seen over the last few years has continued. Due to the seemingly endless refurbishment of the Heriot-Watt climbing wall, midweek indoor training has transferred meantime to Meadowbank. Weekend meets have been generally well-attended. The Shelter Stone meet was again blessed with good, if cool, weather, and was attended by about a dozen members. Those who participated in the Onich meet, an annual favourite, were driven by cold, persistent drizzle into Fort William to sample (several times per diem) the cuisine of the NervousSport Restaurant, the dubious over-chlorinated delights of the over-heated and over-crowded swimming pool, and the interesting climbing wall.

Last winter, a snowless Scotland was abandoned by our keen skiers, in favour of Yugoslavia and Switzerland. Summer excursions were prolific, and ranged from New Zealand and Norway to the usual European venues, including the cosmopolitan Matterhorn.

Our annual dinner and AGM were held in the Kingshouse Hotel. Despite indifferent weather on the Saturday, a handful of members ventured into some gloomy, high recesses of Glencoe, and contrived to descend in the dark, thereby being too late to attend the AGM. After a huge dinner, and being mellowed by wine and a dram or two, we were lavishly entertained by our guest speaker from the senior club, Paul Brian, with his tales of times and scenes, past and present.

The November slide night was a very civilised affair, held in a member's flat and enhanced with refreshments (including home baking). As usual, there were prizes for those slides voted to be best in various categories; such was the high standard it was often difficult to reach a decision.

Our huts go from strength to strength, very largely due to the tremendous amount of time and effort expended by our custodians. If you want to stay at either hut, such is their popularity that you need to book several months in advance - you have been warned!

The year has seen the demise of the Gloucester Hotel, used by us for our weekly Thursday pub night for very many years. We now use the nearby St. Vincent Bar, where the beer may be good but we have to compete for space.

1991 has started encouragingly with what seems to be the best winter conditions for many seasons. This has prompted frantic and enthusiastic activity, in pessimistic anticipation of an early and massive thaw.

Office Bearers: *President*, J. Murdoch; *Hon. President*, J. Fowler; *Vice-President*, A. Chow; *Hon. Vice-President*, Mike Fleming; *Treasurer*, N. Suess; *Hon. Secretary*, B. Leatherland, 57 Charles Way, Limekilns, Fife KY11 3LN; *Smiddy Custodian*, F. Fotheringham, 49 St. Valery Place, Ullapool 0854-2354; *Jock's Spot Custodian*, A. Borthwick, 2 Aytoun Grove, Dunfermline 0383-732232; *Committee*: R. Dalitz, B. Donaldson, I. Simpson.

Glasgow Section.- 1990 was a hive of activity both at home and abroad. Despite another disappointing winter leaving most of us with a meagre collection of routes completed, good ice was to be found later on in the season. Point Five and the Orion Direct were both soloed in April by a member. There were also reports that the best pickings were repeatedly to be had on midweek climbs.

Those who had given up on the winter scene waited patiently for the long days of sun-kissed rock. The Secretary was the first to find his way south of the border and into Wales, while the Treasurer travelled even further afield to the coastal cliffs of Southern Spain. Not everyone, though, had been thinking of rock. The cold climbs and ambitious routes of Mount McKinley provided the objectives for two separate expeditions involving Section members.

June saw the return leg of the Czechoslovakian exchange set up in 1989. The Czechs completed the 2,000 miles from Prague in a fleet of Skodas laden with cheap petrol on the roof racks and beer in the boots. A reception held in the Clachaig Hotel formalised the start of their three-week visit. Apart from bagging a selection of the finest routes around the Highlands, the most notable incident was the loss of the minibus and rescue van (sent to assist) down an embankment on Skye.

There was no official Meet abroad over the summer, although there were two expeditions to Nepal. The first of these made an ascent of Island Peak, while the second, involving six members, attempted another trekking peak, Paldor. Good progress was later hampered by late monsoon snows and the team retired empty-handed.

One member found himself in Tanzania and took a stroll up the highest point in Africa, Kilimanjaro, while another could be found a little further north on Mt. Kenya. A certain member with too much time on his hands completed three weeks in the French Alps then hiked over to Czechoslovakia. He then met up with other members for some sandstone climbing in Ardspace, so continuing our friendship with the Czechs.

The Annual Dinner was held, as last year, in the Kingshouse Hotel and was well attended. Robin Campbell entertained us with his witty after-dinner speech. Autumnal meets were also well attended, and the early snows during Advent saw a flurry of activity in the Northern Coires. Many hope that this will be a taste of things to come for the winter months ahead.

Office Bearers for 1991:- *Hon. Member*, W.H. Murray; *Hon. President*, Dugald Mackie; *Hon. Vice-President*, Bill Forbes; *President*, Ian Thompson; *Vice-President*, Colwyn Jones; *Secretary*, Carl Schaschke, 50 Kelbourne St (3/L), Glasgow G20 8PR, Tel: (041) 946-8304; *Treasurer*, Anderson Foster, 14 Minerva Court, Finnieston, Glasgow; *Coruisk Hut Custodian*, Sandy Donald, 55 Mossmill Park, Moray IV32 7JX, Tel: (0343) 820932.

Perth Section.- Overall membership of the club has dipped slightly over the past year with 61 members, 5 honorary members and 14 ladies. However this is countered by the highest number of introductory associates for a couple of years. It was decided not to continue the advert in the Climber magazine as it appeared to have only marginal effects on membership enquiries. The magazine has failed to register this fact as the advert still appears!

There were 15 meets during the year, which is the same as last year, and the average attendance remained at 10. The figure disguises considerable variation with several well-attended meets during the year and a couple of meets with a total attendance of five! Hillwalking is still the mainstay of the club's activities though rock climbing venues have been very popular this year. The CIC winter meet, normally very popular with climbers, was a disaster again this year due to wet, mild and windy winter. There was only one completion during the year. This year's innovation was a cross country skiing weekend whose success was greatly enhanced by George's expert tuition and just about the only heavy fall of snow during the winter.

The club was represented at the SMC, the Edinburgh, Glasgow and Lochaber Sections, and the Grampian Club dinners during the year. Our own Annual Dinner this year was held at the Fife Arms Hotel, Braemar. The speeches were by Bob Milne and Grahame Nicoll with a special presentation by the latter for the best epic of the year. The Annual Joint Lecture with the Perthshire Society of Natural Science was given by Dr Alan Donaldson on the Rannoch School Rain Forest Project. There were three mid-week meets during the winter months which continue to be popular; one was a showing of the BMC video on Avalanche and Crevasse, another was a visit from Kevin Howett the Mountaineering Council of Scotland's National Officer, and the last was the President's evening.

The Annual General Meeting was held in Perth in December at which the following officers were elected: *Hon. President*, Bob Milne; *Hon. Vice-President*, David Wares; *President*, Alex Runciman; *Treasurer*, Tom Rix; *Secretary*, Ron Payne, 70 Spoutwells Drive, Scone, Perth PH2 6SB 0738 51412.

London Section.- The past year was a great success for the London Section, with improved organisation and high enthusiasm exploiting the predominantly fine weather. Meets were well-attended, with the 'body count' averaging out at about 15-20.

Rumours are totally unfounded that the Section has changed its name to the Junior Motorcycling, Canoeing and Sailing Club of Scotland. Visitors to Glanafon in the 'winter' months may have been excused the misunderstanding as newly rubberised members waffled on about greasing their gimbals. At least we now know who to blame for the Gogarth tide forecasts. The Majors' Glencoe meet is now rather more firmly consolidated than the snow conditions usually encountered during it. Cornwall was wild, wet and windy, and that was just inside the tents. A spring heatwave for Blackrock Cottage ensured not only fulfilled ambitions on the rock but even swimming in the Coe, (honest! It was that hot). Then followed a succession of excellent spring meets noted for good weather, attendance and general frivolity (some of us still have the bruises to prove it) - Low Hall Garth in Little Langdale, Cwm Eigau Cottage, the Three Stags Head in the Peak District - where fiddles were fiddled and tables used as a stage for the more acoustic members. Lundy was an absolute classic and a commitment instantly made for a return visit in 1991. Somehow the Barn, the granite and the Island stood up to the attrition of 14, even if our finger tips didn't. Post Alps saw the familiar wet early autumn weather at Bowderstone Cottage in Borrowdale. Three meets were held at Glanafon including the 'once-a-decade' work meet. The cottage was transformed in a flurry of brush and hammer wielding, although into what we're still not too sure. It is now a far cosier place for both ourselves and visiting clubs, and all Sections are particularly welcome to come down and experience the joys of Welsh rock, river and hill (OK so we need the cash.)

The membership situation was reviewed and following a Stalinesque purge by Fulmer Gladstone membership now stands at c.45. Approximately 20 of these are 'regularly active', and some even go climbing (!) Popular excuses for not climbing included sailing, canoeing, ski-ing, caving, mine exploration, and mountain biking.

Pete Tibbets produced several excellent circulars which continue to stimulate enthusiasm and assist in publicising events, if not actually confirming when and where they take place. In addition to much activity in the UK, members climbed in the Alps, Africa, the Himalayas and Malta, including rock jocking in the Verdun, the Massif Central, Boux, (France), Finale, Mello, (Italy) and in Spain. The lean snow conditions in the Alps produced some good rock routes, and some grand hills, including the Piz Badile, the Cengalo, the Dru, Mt Blanc du Tacul, the Grand Capucin, and the traverse of the Blanc from the Miage to the Midi.

Secretary: Andrew Walker, 24 Rowan House, 3 Mitten Road, Birmingham B20, *Treasurer:* Robin Watts, Glanaber, Trefriw, Llanrwst, Gwynedd, OJTL 274, *President:* Steve Gladstone, 36 Meadow Close, Hockley Heath, *West Midlands Hut Custodian:* 18 Glanafon Street, *Bethesda:* Peter Whitechurch, 1 Dale Cottages, Tangier Lane, Frant, Tunbridge Wells, East Sussex.

Lochaber Section.- No report received.

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

The Alps

GERRY MCGARRY reports:- 'I met up with Raymond O'Brien in Chamonix during July of 1990. He was spending 3 months in Argentiere before moving on to Czechoslovakia to climb in Ardspace and Teplice. This severe level of hardship was a result of his recent adoption of student status!

The weather throughout the summer was excellent and we got off to a good start by climbing the North Face of the Petite Aiguille Verte. This is a short but sensational training climb, the main part of which is 100 metres of steep ice. The whole face is devoid of turf and slush, and we had to get used to the hardship of perfect axe placements wherever we wanted them. After this we dandered up to the Argentiere Hut and climbed the Aiguille d'Argentiere. Reaching the summit shortly after dawn we were rewarded with the spectacle of the sun's rays filtering through a translucent fringe of ice crystals on the cornice. The hot weather was sending regular avalanches down the north face of Les Courtes and while I was sunbathing on the moraine I looked up in time to see a car-sized boulder erase our footprints before continuing down at 10 ms⁻². We then turned our attentions to the Aiguille de Tour which we climbed by the Table de Roc ridge. The lower part of this climb proved to be dangerous rather than difficult as our choice of route consisted of wobbling aretes and granite porta- ledges. Just as we were beginning to regret that we had ignored all the abseil tat at the foot of our gully we stumbled across the correct line. Once on route this climb proved to be a gem. The rock was sound and the move to gain the table was mind boggling.

I, having to work for a living, had to return to Glasgow at this point, but poor old Raymond had to put up with a further 2 months of perfect weather. During the remainder of his first season he ticked off the Y Couloir of the Argentiere, the Forbes Areté of the Chardonnet, a scrappy ridge on the Tour Noir, the South Ridge of the Aig. Moine, the Couzy route on the Aig. de l'M, the Cosmic Areté on the Midi, and Mont Blanc, Mont Maudit and Mont Blanc du Tacul. In addition he keeps telling me about his attempt on the Fissure Brown (possibly descriptive rather than eponymous) of the Blatière. This ends in a storm with him abbing off after having climbed the hard bit. Then, of course, there was the time he was avalanched off the Eigerwand having just climbed the second ice field in E.B.'s but that's another story'.

Walter, Klaus and Pierre (As told by Andrew Walker).

Stumbling onto the chain sawed crest of the Flammes de Pierre, the pillar is revealed suddenly, blood orange in the day's lateness. From our mid height bivvie-site, the sensation is one of colossal vertical size; of both dizzy depth and awesome height. I'm cliché-ridden, gobsmacked, stunned. Jean Michel joins me and his jaw drops an inch. Silence. The setting sun turns the cloud tops below a fiery red, and the granite golden. The horizons, sharp-edged and black, die back into the shadows below a clear evening sky. Hollow inside with butterflies and the winking uncertainty of dreams about to be realised.

One fondue, six hours and a sound doss later (I got the inside berth...), we three are abbing in the dark down the crumbling flanks of Les Flammes, a vertical building site of lightning and frost shattered rubble. The world has an unreal night-time numbness: a nightmare tower of Babel, of confusion, stonefall, fumbling darkness, jammed ropes, pendulums, incoherent shouting and headtorch pin pricks. I feel too clumsy and heavy to embrace the commitment of the day ahead. And should we fail on this colossus, do we reascend this lot, or descend the bowling alley couloir below? Into the valley...

I'm abbing free and can see a ledge by headtorch very close. I misjudge the distance and the amount of rope left and ab straight off both ends of the doubled ropes. I fall for two seconds before embracing a tree trunk-sized flake in an instinctive full nelson, feet dangling free and the darkness still resounding to the clatter of stone fall and the booming of my heart. Four hours of this finds us penduluming across the lean, verglassed bones of the snowless couloir, to the relative safety of the queue at the pillar base.

Klaus is all dangling and all spinning over the void, above the Couloir, perhaps 20 feet up and 2,000 feet down. The Teutonic solution to this 'overtaking manoeuvre gone wrong' is to jump off the ends of the ropes: he lands on a tiny sloping ledge covered in loose stones in the main runnel of the gully, clattering to a stop before the abyss. Released from its load, the ropes flick back up even higher, way out of reach. So much for short cuts. See you later, Klaus (we did too).

The Green Lizard has old wooden wedges for rotten teeth, and a long, thin, mean tongue. We're vaguely in the region where Hamish cracked his skull and jolly conversational banter has not yet surfaced today. I've a photo on the wall at home of this point: three pale faces, clustered - looking upward and anxious, open mouthed and looking like no one I know. People have said to me since, 'who's that?', pointing at me in my Kodak-captured fear. I've quite a few more of various arses subsequently silhouetted in an astral blue sky.

The face is snowless and the morning chills are dissipated by some gobsmacking climbing. Layers are shed and sleeves rolled up. All the planning, plotting and calculating evaporates in the joy of climbing classic granite in superb surroundings. The Pillar soars up and up endlessly, and we live one pitch at a time, setting no goals and measuring no time. Relaxed, the pitches blur together into one long, good feeling. Rotating stints at the sharp end, we each lead six pitches, and all three have done a second turn by mid-afternoon. Steve does some excellent grooves and cracks, and then I lead some tailor-made jamming and laybacking pitches. JM leads up to the start of the central section, where the climbing changes up a gear or three and is characterised by very steep, thin cracks and slabs. Our Piola topo is way out in grades and description. We meet him on the Montevernais train returning to Chamonix afterwards and, replying to our queries, he says 'Je n'ai pas'!!! The chameleon granite turns from hard dawn white to soft sunshine yellows and is of superb quality.

A purple-blue-black pressure squeezes over and around the Jorasses like the slow-moving black wave in a recurrent nightmare from my youth. This ominous foreshadowing is compounded by a close buzz from a gendarmerie helicopter, its doors open and the figures inside waving, watching and waiting. We give them the thumbs up and they probably beat us back to Cham by 24 hours. We become absorbed into the experience and know no other.

Slowly we draw level with our bivie-site on the Flammes. It seems desperately close across the couloir but it's going to be 15 hours before we collect our kit and descend. Steve leads the Rebuffet Crack, very overhanging but plenty of gear - where Hamish dangled 'like a corpse from a gibbet'. Bonatti went away right from here, irreversibly and awesome, under the roofs and across the dripping icy slabs towards the ridge. Huge rock and ice falls punctuate the afternoon and underline the lean conditions. Belays become delays. The Austrian Crack looms above and it's my lead again ('what, already, you bastards!'). I have a panoramic dump on the parties strung out below and erroneously run the two pitches into one. Fifty vertical metres later I crawl onto a ledge on the stretch of the ropes, simultaneously expending the last of my gear and my strength, totally knackered. I wondered what those funny little ladders were that the French party has...

The upper pitches seem endless and it starts to clag in. The Austrians behind us are getting us to clip their gear in for them, but despite this and their etriers are struggling to keep up. While JM pushes out the next pitches (a fine slab of white granite under a roof, then a steep, clean layback), Steve traverses off to the lip of all things - harness off, kecks down, hanging by both hands off newly acquired tat, he finds a typically subtle way to remind the party below who won the 1966 World Cup, amongst other things.

Someone with stronger guts than me could have had a photo of 'turd in flight' with the Aiguilles bristling beyond over the Mer de Glace - but I've already got a numb left testicle from the hanging belay, an empty sit harness on one rope and an out of earshot Swiss on the other, so I give the John Cleare bit a miss. Still, an impressive dump, even by Senior's high lack of standards - (Spectre was the height of decorum by comparison, old chap).

It's eight in the evening when we reach the Shoulder - twelve hours from the bottom of the pillar and sixteen hours on the go from the bivie on the Flammes de Picre - OK considering the delaying belaying and the three of us on two ropes. Gathering darkness, clag and snowfall are promising us a Boys Own Adventure in the descent, if we can find it in the swirling murk. Difficult route finding and some spiraling, dangling abseils down massive icy chimneys take us to a hanging belay in their dripping bowels. We're racing the ebbing daylight and coming a poor second. Steve does a huge diagonal abseil out of the icy-chimney, reaching a ledge on the full stretch of the rope and a bit more. Descending last, wild with anxiousness lest the ropes

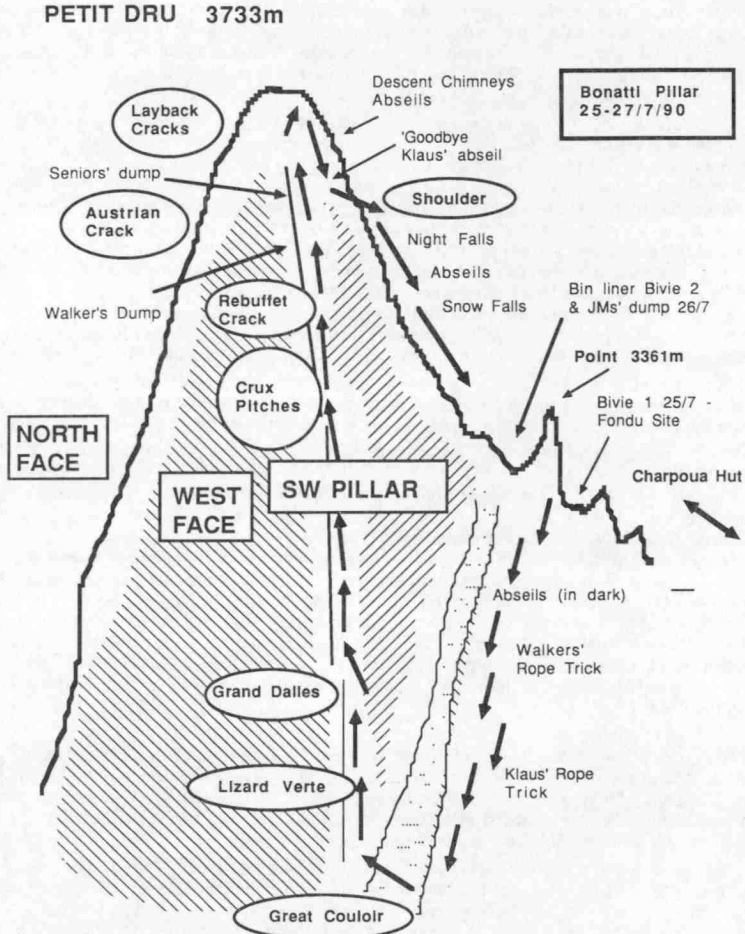


Fig. 1 : Scatological correlation of ascent of Dru with climbers bowel movements.

don't run, I find JM belayed on the ledge trying to lasso me with a sling before I spring up and away across out of reach; or worse, spring down to join him only to let the ropes spring up and away as they shrink back to a mere 50 metres. In the end I clip into the sling proffered from below and jump fall slide off the doubled ropes, grabbing the loose end in passing as it springs through the plate and pulling it down with me as I drop. JM fields me in and we have a mega-campanology session retrieving the ropes. The parting mist reveals the South West Ridge a stone's throw and a pitch or three away Houdini would have been proud of us.

This became the 'Goodbye Klaus' abseil, their shouting echoing out of the icy overhanging chasms of the chimneys above, darkness falling fast and the storm brewing - (imagine a dark Transylvanian forest at sundown, the atmosphere about right) - an evil place to spend the night, fifty metres apart separated by their dangling jammed ropes, pondering on the uncertainty of the night and the problems of the morning; 'Goodbye Klaus, and good night. See you later!' (We didn't).

Thunder preceded the snow, snow preceded the lightning. Tatters of fixed ropes dangle across to the shoulder and down the ridge, remnants of a TV broadcast of a Catherine Testicle 'solo' ascent. We part scramble, part climb, part abseil, occasionally clipping in to the less scrawny of the 'fixed' lines. It is now definitely dark and positively snowing. Steve is particularly keen to get 'home', having lightened his load of such alpine peripherals as a headtorch and bivie-bag.

'...Give us some light over here Andy...'. The Almighty responds quicker than I do, and somewhat upstages my ebbing Petzl-power - the lightning bolt illuminates everything for hundreds of yards (most of them vertical), before plunging us into sulphurous darkness again. 'Thanks mate' quips Steve as he disappears down the ropes on the next ab. The warden at the Charpoua watches our headtorches on the ridge and thinks we got toasted in that one. The odd express-train roars off the *Flammes de Pierre* below us into the *Grand Couloir*. Waiting on ledges between abs we have time to savour such aesthetically satisfying vistas as 'Dru by lightning' and 'rockfall by headtorch beam'.

It's well gone midnight; we're just well gone. Twenty hours on the go, and none of us would have exactly walked past a warm dry bed. It's pitch dark and large snow flakes drift across the ridge. The mass of Point 3303m asserts itself through the gloom and separates us from our bivie site and sleeping bags. Its not clear if its up and over or down and round. I ab down and skirt across sloping slabs and scree - it instinctively feels right but in the end I retreat, having been in my ignorance only five minutes from the key to the route, and perhaps only twenty minutes from a warm doss. We have one of our famous high altitude group discussions, not forgetting to include all the necessary components: briefness, blasphemy and boycott - OK, so its bivie time!

JM pulls up his fibre-pile trows, and unpacks a sickening range of excellent Swiss bivie gear, including bivie bag, ground sheet and over sheet. Not forgetting to have an almighty dump next to Steve's shivering head, he retires to bed. I'm a short ab below, bivie-bagged but shivering: watching the storm pass over the Blanc, the rumbling and lightning leaving the stars and the cold clear night in its wake. I spend a ravenous few minutes eating the congealed layer of whatever it was in the bottom of my sack. The prospect of a night out at 3200m only 300 metres from a warm Rab bag, food and stove was made only marginally more bearable by the thought of Senior above me, shivering his nut off in a co-op bin liner. I can see the future Migros adverts for their dustbin liners: 'As used by British climbers on the Dru'. The odd explosion from the flanks of the ridge punctuates fitful dozing of the 'too cold to sleep' variety.

The pre-dawn crunch of Senior at my ledge-room-door - I feign sleep then lie about a lie in - 'so comfy and warm am I'. He is not in a good mood and for some reason seems keen to resume the descent. His frozen and sleepless night in his oversize plastic carrier bag was exacerbated by having to spend the night huddled on his ledge next to JM's late night dump. Our bivie-site is reached in a matter of fifteen galling minutes.

The Blanc goes sunrise rouge across the *Mer de Glace*, still far below. We pause to recover our crampons and ice axes before descending the upper Charpoua glacier. Within two hours we'll be drinking the best coffee in the world at the Charpoua, a thirty-six hour round trip; in five hours I'll be taking that photo, three men on a Montanvers bench, biggest mucking smiles in the world; in twenty-four we'll be on the bench at Lac Neuchatel, ogling the girls, drinking beer, roasting on the pebbles and swimming it all off in the sandy, warm lake; skinless fingers tingling in the waters....living it up in those all too transient hours between swearing 'Never again, you bastards!!' and plotting 'What next, team?'.

JOHN STEELE and BARBARA GIBBONS spent 10 days (April 1990) ski touring in the northern Italian Alps, in and around the Gran Paradiso National Park. This lies roughly between Aosta in the north and Val d'Isere to the south. The whole area is cut by 4 main valleys; Grisenche, Rhemes, Saveranche and Cogne, with most of the main peaks on the watershed to the south. These are served by a network of wardened huts.

Peaks climbed; Traversiere, Galisia from the Benevolo hut and Paradiso, Tresenta, Ciarforon and Etret from the Emanuelle hut.

Notes: Very limited public transport is available at this time of year. Most huts/hotels have to be booked in advance. The National Park is a revelation in terms of the abundance (and tameness) of the mountain wildlife, the result of a generation of protection and conservation.

The Mediterranean

A.L. CRAM writes:- In September 1990, my wife and I returned to the Island of Kefalonia in the Ionian Sea, to find the ordinarily placid anchorage at Argostoli enlivened by two warships of the Royal Navy, bright in light grey paint and dressed overall with flags. Dazzlingly white uniforms with full dress gold braid served to remind the populace that the Navy had been first on the scene of devastation after the great earthquake of 1953 had levelled nearly all the buildings. With prescience, the rescue ship had taken on board heavy lifting gear. The population was evacuated.

After visits to the familiar tops of Enos Eros (5705ft) and Gioupari, I was able to pick out the recently bulldozed road over the shoulder of the Evmorfia group into the heart of the Agia Dianti (3485ft). The problem was to find the beginning of the new road which, thoughtfully, had not been extended downwards through the maze of service tracks.

The new road with typical elan had been burst upwards in a series of double bends, strewn shards of crystalline rock and fragments of grey dolomite to left and right, rending a way over a pass and into a cirque with a perimeter of rough looking tops. Here one was hard put to it to distinguish between damage by earthquake and roadmakers. On this day and subsequently, much toil was spent on the sharp limestone rock, calling forth often colourful descriptions in demotic Greek.

Fittingly, as a climax to the memorial service taking place at the foot of the mountains, without warning a great deluge broke over Argostoli, lacrimae rerum, as it were. Yet we remained dry on the sunlit hillside, a curious inversion of experience.

North America

GRAHAME NICOLL writes:- Bruce Kerr and I flew to Vancouver in mid July 1990, intent on a four week rock climbing tour of the region. We picked up our hire car, a brand new Toyota with only 100 miles on the clock, and within an hour were at Squamish, a small logging town trapped between the sea and a series of roadside crags up to 1500ft high. After a few days on shortish routes we felt ready for the big classic of the area - The Grand Wall (5.10c/A2). Five reasonable pitches took us to the base of a fearsome corner crack - the split pillar (see front cover of Mountain 118). This was only overcome after I had taken a spectacular back flip and head first fall. A further six pitches of mixed aid and free climbing led to the top.

We then moved east into the mountains and spent a week in the Bugaboos. The weather here had been poor for a while but turned good just as we arrived and remained so until the day we left! Tremendous spires of perfect granite combined with easy glacier approaches and a luxurious hut made this the best part of the holiday. We completed four climbs; the N.F Ridge of Bugaboo Spire, the W. Ridge of Pigeon Spire, the S.W Ridge of Snowpatch Spire and the highlight of the trip - the Beekey/Chouinard Route on the S. Howser Tower. From a

bivouac on the Pigeon/Howser col this gave us 2500ft of superb crack climbing at a sustained HVS/E1 standard in a very remote setting. Comparable to the Bonatti Pillar but without the crowds and fixed gear. The two crux sections were most memorable - a very awkward off-width crack on pitch 10 in which Bruce got his leg stuck for a few worrying minutes, and the tension traverse on pitch 17 which we managed free, by way of a strange, lurching move round an arete to pinch the rounded edge of a second arete. From the summit we abseiled the east face in some haste as it was threatened by a big melting cornice.

A drive to Calgary to look up some old friends resulted in a weekend's climbing in the Ghost Valley Wilderness with a bunch of locals, complete with children, dogs, picnic tables and lots and lots of beer. The climbs here were on limestone of variable quality, and the sight of Big Andy in his lycra tights, rapping blank walls with his Hilti, showed us that French tactics are well established in the Rockies.

We had hoped to go north to the Lotus Flower Tower next, but due to a rise in cost of the flight in (the helicopter from Tungsten is no longer available) this idea was abandoned and plan B put into operation. A couple of days were spent on the steep but juggy crags at Lake Louise then we headed south to the U.S and a quick tour of the Cascades. However, at the border they wouldn't let Bruce in. I thought they must have heard about his flatulent curries but no, it was here we discovered that Brits entering the States overland (not by air) require a visa. A day spent at the U.S consulate in Vancouver rectified the situation and soon we were over the border and back on the granite at the Index Town Walls. Godzilla (5.9) was the best route done here though it was so hot that more time was spent in the river than on the rock. We then headed over the Stevens Pass to Leavenworth where it was even hotter, 97 degrees. The climbing here was more amenable though, and we did a few routes at Castle Rock and also Outer Space (5.9) on Snow Creek Wall, which had been recommended to us by almost everyone we met - justifiably so. We noticed a considerable inconsistency in grading between Index where we failed on a 5.10a, and Leavenworth, 50 miles away, where we both soloed a 5.10c!

Liberty Bell was our last climb. This is a 1500ft tower of perfect granite rising above beautiful pine forests. We chose Liberty Crack (5.11b/A3) on the east face and arrived in the evening in time to climb the first two pitches, which included the huge Lithuanian Roof, and abseil down to a comfortable bivouac. We jumared back up the following morning and continued up pitch after pitch of superb cracks and corners to the top. A leisurely drive the following day took us back to Vancouver where we returned the car, which by now had almost 3000 miles on the clock.

South America

GRAHAM LITTLE reports:- In 1988 I joined forces with a trio of Stoats (members of Birmingham University Mountaineering Club) for a somewhat ambitious attempt to traverse the Huandoy peaks of the Cordillera Blanca in Peru. Our four man team was quickly reduced to two through illness and nearly to one when I tore the tendons of my ankle bouldering at base camp. Adrian (Dangerous) Baker and I eventually made the first ascent of a direct line on the SE face of Huandoy Este (900m, ED) encountering some of the most formidable snow formations the Andes has to offer. (See article in 'High', No. 74.) The abseil descent down the crumbling north face proved even more of an epic. I rounded off my Peruvian experience with a trek around Salkantay and a visit to Machu Picchu.

This year, again teaming up with the now infamous Dr. Adrian Baker, I plan a three week crossing of the Andean chain from Chile to Argentina climbing four of the Andes' highest volcanoes en route. Our first peak, Cerro Ojas del Salado is the world's highest active volcano and at 6900m the second highest peak in the western hemisphere (only slightly lower than Aconcagua). The accurate heighting of the volcanoes in the southern Puma de Atacama is a secondary objective of the expedition as is sampling the excellent wines of Chile and Argentina.

Graham E. Little.

Africa

JOHN STEELE and BARBARA GIBBONS spent 4 weeks (January 1991) travelling in Kenya. The first 10 days were spent in Mount Kenya National Park. Access was from the presbyterian mission at Chogoria to the east of the main massif. Ascents were made of the third highest peak, Lenana, by a mixed route on its northern (winter) flank, followed several days later by Nelion (17,022ft) via the SE (summer) face route (Gd IV).

An exit was made via the Sirimon route to the north which involved a 30km hike to the main road and thence to the nearby town of Nanyuki, famous for straddling the Equator and serving the best cold beer on the line!

Notes: There is currently a mandatory charge of around 300Ksh (£7) per person per day in the Park. Porters and guides now appear to be the norm on the mountain.

HAMISH BROWN reports:- With various friends, I spent several months in 1990 exploring some lesser-known ranges in the Atlas Mountains, Morocco, and can report enthusiastically about the untouched opportunities for both rock climbing and Alpine-like snow routes. With 2 days of rain in the original 3 months (Jan - March) the south of Morocco in particular offers a tempting alternative to Scottish winters! I would be happy to help any small climbing groups interested with information, pictures, maps, etc. The Alpine Journal for 1990/91 has an extensive Moroccan bibliography.

Morocco is very much a country where 'knowing the ropes' is a great advantage so I would indeed be happy to pass on information. The mountains are like Chamonix or Zermatt a century ago with nascent local guides and services appearing, but the scale is so vast that it will be a long time before there is any change to the mediaeval way of life, the dramatic villages and colourful, cultivated valleys. Entry is often by camionette (pick-up), an experience in itself, and local mules can take the donkey work out of the hard trekking or establishing a climbing base. One can sleep/eat in local houses or bivouac/camp. From Feb - June water is seldom a problem, assuming normal snowfall. The Berber people are incredibly hardy, friendly and hospitable and involvement with them is memorable, Moroccan food is good enough for Robert Carrier to have lauded it, ancient cities like Taroudant and Marrakech or Essaouira (on the coast) are excellent for rounding off time in 'the nearest truly exotic world'. Prices for travel, food, accommodation, etc., are about the lowest I know for any mountain region.

TOUBKAL AREA. The Toubkal massif south of Marrakech is well-enough known and has English language guidebooks. I keep my gear permanently in a home above Imilil and the owner, Ait Idir Mohammed, has rooms which are available for climbing or trekking parties - a good alternative to the often overcrowded, regimented CAF refuge. British climbers have been scarce of late but the area, with the highest peaks in North Africa (Toubkal 4167m), offers a wide range of climbing and some superb high level traverses - a bit like the winter Cuillin. The Hotel Ali in Marrakech is much used by climbers, skiers, trekkers, and the Imilil guides; recommended. Bus/shared taxis operate from nearby Bab er Rob to Asni (YH, hotel, Sat. souk, shops), whence shared taxi/camionette/truck will take one to Imilil.

ANTI ATLAS. Being south and west of the main ranges the weather here is sunny nearly all year. Occasional winter snowfalls. Agadir nearest airport and bus/taxis on to Tafraoute, the only real town in the Anti Atlas. No local guides as such but the Jbel el Kest above the beautiful, verdant Ameln Valley offers a wealth of rock faces and scramble ridges. In February (Almond Blossom Festival) Bob Dawes and I hired a Land Rover to take us up to Tagoudicht, the highest village, and packed up from there for several bivvies from which we climbed all the highest summits - just below the Munro height of 3000 feet. The rock is clean and there are endless faces and ridges, all unclimbed. Round Tafraoute itself the landscape is a weird granite jumble of weathered boulders and heaped towers, offering an entertaining coda to the bigger Jbel el Kest.

SIROUA (SIRWA) (3305m). For years we've looked south from Toubkal to this isolated volcanic upthrust and, after 2 aborted attempts, we made a successful ascent in March. Meeting Charles Knowles and Keith Skeens at Agadir airport we went by bus via Taroudant to Taliouine (Taliwine - ou usually is a w sound) where Ahmed and Michelle's idiosyncratic Auberge Souktana was our starting point. Ahmed, a desert Berber, is a qualified guide and organised the practicalities (tents, with two mules, etc.) and also produced fantastic tagines (meat and veg. stews) each night. A demanding 3-day tramp took us ever upwards through

stunning scenery to a coire camp under the summit plateau. Rising from this plateau the summit cone gives a scramble ascent. Northern slopes were still very snowy but the area has plenty of other towers and is very complex. If less of a rock climbing area the week long round trip was a superb entity in itself. We grabbed Jbel Gueliz on the way to a gorge camp and, on the way out, we descended several gorges, came on Morocco's unique cliff village of Tisgni (houses like swallows' nests on a 1000 ft wall) walked by fields of saffron, and had one bivvy at Tisli in an area of contorted conglomerate spires quite unlike any place I've ever seen. Our last day's walk gave non-stop rain, a glutinous mud-tramp of 5 hours to the main south road, to be met by Ahmed's assistant with a car. A thoroughly recommended trip, Feb - April or Oct - Nov.

WESTERN ATLAS. An area which has suffered complete neglect by British climbers until recently, the hills above Taroudant offer unusually fine rock-climbing and/or Alpine ascents in our winter season. It was an enthusiastic local, Aziz, who persuaded me to visit the Tichka Plateau in 1989. We immediately decided to return in 1990, with the Siroua pair and Kit Nelson, splitting our 10 days between 'plateau' and the fangs of the highest peak, Tinergwet (3351m) which so dominates this skyline behind Taroudant.

Aziz took care of the practicalities, arranging camionettes when needed, and accommodation/memorable food in local houses when we were not bivvying. Snow melt stopped our vehicle's approach and the ascent to Tigouga gave a roasting walk, even though mules bore off our rucksacks and left us free to explore side valleys, falls, etc. Mules also took our gear up to the Tichka Plateau rim, reached by a track of endless zigzags. (Mules are a sane rather than an easy option. There's no point exhausting oneself on the hot, tough approaches and then failing on the climbing routes as a result.) The plateau is simply the top gathering of waters of the great Oued Nfis which flows east through the heart of the Western Atlas before breaking out northwards near Amizmiz. It is quite a deep valley, not a plateau. We skittered down snowy slopes to cross to azibs (summer goat shelters) to bivvy on the few bare patches of ground. A long day on crampons won us Imaradene (or Tazziwt) 3351m, the highest peak on the northern rim. From it we looked, east and west, along long ridges of peak after peak, offering fantastic winter traverses while, northwards surrounding the upper Seksawa country lay bare rock peaks of considerable character.

We traversed to Wajir Oudadine 3139m aware of big rock walls of rock below our corniced ridge. One prow jutted out like three Shelter Stone crags on top of one another. (Envy of the potential was balanced by relief at an inability to climb such routes now.) A long haul took us right up the valley to the Tizi n' Targa (pass) and, after an easy ascent of Askawn 3078m from it, a dizzy descent (c. 100 zigzags) to the upper Medlawa valley to bivvy at the highest azibs. The walk down valley next day was stunningly beautiful, as was the old caid's house we stayed in. 26 passengers and bales of walnuts made the camionette next morning an experience; in the afternoon we walked across a many-hued pass to reach Imoulas in the next valley west. Mules could only go so far then we packed through gorges of Himalayan stature to bivvy as high as we could before a 4 a.m. departure for Tinergwet, 3351m. Daylight and icy winds found us on the saddle east of the peak after toiling (for 3 hours) up abominable rubbish. The shaly peak gave interesting scrambling. We were back in Imoulas that night, in Taroudant the next, then Agadir and home. Without Aziz's (and my own) knowledge, much less would have been achieved, and it is well worth tapping local help. This was a March trip but February - June would be good months, also late autumn. High sun is too hot for pleasure at lower levels.

Earlier, with Bob and Barbara Dawes, we'd gone up to Imouzzar, a spectacular bus ride from Agadir. Superb hotel above falls. After a day exploring we walked east for 3 hours, slept out and, in 7 hours next day, broke through to the Agadir-Marrakech road. Hot, but a very scenic trek.

IGDAT area. With the highest peak (3616m) west of the Toubkal massif this region above the Oued Nfis is little known. Dehydration is a real danger and plenty of liquid intake is essential. We took a variety of 'British' teas and, for bivvies, tins of meat, dehydrated vegetables and muesli - all other foods can be obtained in towns locally (Agadir, Taroudant, Asni). Duty free whisky and cigarettes were welcomed. I can supply addresses for both Ahmed and Aziz: a 3 week trip split between them would be memorable. It was memorable for us, and we were all 'old Morocco hands' but that is why we keep going back. We think Morocco is magic.

I've written Information Sheets to all these areas, which I'm happy to supply for 10 stamps and a large SAE: 21 Carlin Craig, Kinghorn, Fife KY3 9RX.

The Himalaya

CURLY ROSS writes: In early October Hamish Henderson, Benny Swan, Andrew James, Stewart Orr, John Miller, Moira MacLeod, Enid Brown and myself set off for the Khumbu area of Nepal.

The plan was to complete a 24 day trek and climb Gokyo Peak, Kalla Patar and our main objective of Imjatse 20,403ft. This would be a personal high for all of the team and a first visit to the Himalaya. We decided to use an agency (Mountain Travel) to organise our Sherpas, camping equipment and permits. This would save a tremendous amount of time, not to mention transporting all the paraphernalia halfway around the world.

Kathmandu provided the ultimate culture shock; colour, noise, people, smell, poverty, friendliness, prayer wheels, prayer flags, temples, throng. After a few days to adjust we set off for the plane to Luckla at 9,300ft near the Sagarmatha National Park. (S.N.P.) Some of us felt at home. We arrived in very cloudy conditions and after a landing more reminiscent of a Spitfire we were ready to meet our Sherpa team and headed into the most spectacular place on earth.

Our acclimatisation schedule took us up the Dudh Kosi into the Sherpa village of Namche Bazaar, which I think surprised us by its size and amenities. After completing the relevant documents we first of all headed up to the village of Thame, through countryside very reminiscent of Scotland - pine trees, mountain streams and good but rough paths.

The trick is of course to gain height slowly and not contract AMS (Acute Mountain Sickness); more people drop off from that, than anything else. Next we were off to the area of Gokyo to climb Gokyo Ri 18,000ft. We passed through Khunde where the Edmund Hillary hospital has been built to assist the Sherpas. From the summit of Gokyo Ri you have fantastic views of Everest, Makalu and Cho Oyu. Then it was over the Cho La Pass at 18,300ft and into the Everest valley and of course the Khumbu glacier.

Lobuche is the last settlement before heading up to Everest base and Kalla Pattar and was a real dump. Hundreds of expeditions had left more than enough junk. However the reward of climbing Kalla Pattar (18,500ft) with its view into the Khumbu icefall, Everest and Nupse were quite unsurpassed. We celebrated the climb with the highest Burns Supper ever held at 17,000ft. Finally we traversed out of the Khumbu valley and into the Imja valley for Imjatse or Island Peak as it is better known. The whole of this area is dominated by Ama Dablam and the huge wall of Lhotse, and tends to dwarf Imjatse; nevertheless we pressed on and finally completed the peak on a sunny but cold day. Imjatse was first climbed during the 1953 Everest expedition to test the oxygen equipment and provides an excellent alpine type ascent after a high camp at around 18,400ft.

The summit at 20,304ft is reached by a steep ice wall and wonderful snow arete to give a magnificent panorama of the surrounding peaks.

The trek back to Namche and Luckla were among the finest days walking I have ever experienced. It was with a heavy heart that we left Luckla and our Sherpa friends, but not without a final ceilidh and an emotional Auld Lang Syne before that take off into the void.

GRAHAM LITTLE writes: In 1985 four SMC members; Sam Galbraith, Sandy Reid, Calum Smith and I visited the Parbati Himalaya, India, with the obscure, unclimbed Point 5840m being our primary objective. Many challenges beset the team before setting foot on the mountain including the tracking down of our missing crate of gear to a customs depot in Bombay and the extraction and transport to Delhi of same. This delay either cost us the peak or saved our lives as a massive dump of snow forced a hasty retreat from one third height. More snow followed precluding a further attempt. Sam Galbraith's terse message sent up with the porters 'We had an epic. Hope all is well. Just get out' well conveys the mood of the moment. I snatched a solo ascent of a small peak above base camp, to be called Pandu Pap c. 4500m and in between lying in the thermal springs of Khirganga and sharing a chillum with the local Sadhu climbed Khirganga Dome c. 3850m with the remarkable Derek Fabian who was paying a social call en route to Japan. After a slight tussle with the police in Kulu, I made a mapless solo trek over the hills to Dharamsala then crossed the great ridge of the Dhaola Dhar via the Idrahar Pass, 4297m, into Chamba. After a quick visit to the shell pocked Golden Temple of Amritsar I caught the slow train to Delhi where an acute dose of dysentery brought the journey to a sticky end. All in all a varied trip.

In 1989, again with an S.M.C. team, I returned to the Himalaya, this time to the Kishtwar area of Kashmir. Bob Reid, Roger Webb, Dave Saddler and I had plans to climb the formidable Kishtwar Kailash, 6400m, but due to the loss of our hill food and some equipment by Air India we switched to two slightly lower, more accessible unclimbed peaks. Climbing as two man teams both peaks were ascended on the second attempt to be named Rohini Sikhar, 5990m (D. sup. via the SW face. See article in 'High', No. 89.), and Sentinal Peak, 5950m (AD via the SE face). Dave and I completed the experience with a trek over the Poat La, 5490m, to Padam in Zanskar then back to Delhi via Kargill and Srinagar. Such are the stresses of Himalayan travel that even the very mellow Dave Saddler lost his cool when he discovered that the bus seat ticket that he'd spent the best part of a day queuing for in Kargill was number 36 - there were only thirty five available seats on the bus.

REVIEWS

Gabe's Fall and other climbing stories.- Peter Lars Sandberg (Diadem, 1990, 156pp., £12.95, ISBN 0-906371-63-5).

One of the dangers of sharing the Editor's life is that of being asked to read some of the many books which land with a great thud on our doorstep. Peter Lars Sandberg's 'Gabe's Fall' was one of these delightful books.

The book is a collection of strongly emotional short stories, where Sandberg uses climbing situations to paint the characters' physical and emotional struggles. The stories reflect the characters' stormy relationships with others, and ultimately how they face themselves.

'Gabe's Fall' was born from Sandberg's own embryonic experience. It demonstrates a young climber's arrogance and false sense of security while climbing with a female he loves. The story uses simple language to describe deep seated feelings and emotions. It also teaches that one should never underestimate nature.

'The Old Bull Moose of the Woods', first published in Playboy (!), has been described as being 'outrageously sexist'. However, I found that the heroine, an excellent climber, actually gets all she wants and asks for... The hero happens to be very obliging. I wonder whether it was found sexist because of where it was first published, rather than what it actually reflects. The story shows that a capable female climber easily proved what she could do, and how far she could go in her physical relationships.

'Calloway's Climb' is about a failing marriage and the elementary feeling of jealousy; ordinary events of life really, rather than a climb. This story won the Foley Award for the Best American Short Story in 1974.

'B Tower West Wall' interdigitates an impressive and dangerous skyscraper climb with crime and blackmail, and once again reflects the hero's feelings as a father.

Both 'The Devil's Thumb' and 'Hawsmoot' demonstrate the value of experience in climbing, and human nature as well; the need to continue climbing and prove that an ageing climber is still capable. 'The Rhyme of Lancelot' is on the importance and need of something more than love and companionship in a relationship, regardless of age.

From a general view the only point I did not like is Sandberg's use of extremely long sentences which form a paragraph. I enjoyed reading this book. Although fictitious the stories were believable, and demonstrated human nature well. Even non climbers should find it interesting.

Aysel Crocket.

Snow and Ice Climbing:- John Barry (The Crowood Press, 1987, 144pp., £9.95, ISBN 1 85223 587 X). Reprinted in paperback, 1990.

This is a basic instruction book, describing the snow and ice climbing techniques move by move and runner by belay. Which it does in the John Barry style, informative but not dictatorial and made readable with intermittent anecdotes. The disadvantage is that I find the book somewhat personalised, the collected opinions and experiences of John Barry, probably inclusive of his former Plas y Brenin colleagues. And judging by the book, John Barry's experience of British winter climbing is limited to ice climbing in Wales and on Ben Nevis.

I find John Barry's idiosyncratic writing style somewhat irritating but this is less likely to be a problem for the intended reader, the rock climber who wishes to extend into snow and ice climbing. But the reader will find an alternative omission, the lack of discussion of the mountaineering aspects of the sport. Not all icefalls are beside the road (not in Scotland anyway). There is no discussion of when to put on and take off crampons, including factors such as balling up in sticky snow, or cutting steps across a small patch of icy snow on the approach, or tripping over crampons on steep ground. These are difficult decisions for the beginner. Further omitted mountaineering skills include weather interpretation, choice of venue according to conditions, and navigation. Another obvious skimp is the brief section

about mixed climbing, considering that worthwhile ice climbing conditions are far from universal. On the plus side, John Barry's obvious enthusiasm for the winter climbing sport comes across well. One can detect some mixed feelings, knowing well that the most rewarding start to winter climbing is to get out and do it. But equally it is not the safest and formal instruction makes a big difference.

The book is not aimed at the SMC member but rather the winter newcomer, but there are several technical points with which I disagree and which could be debated amongst Journal readers. Chapter 1 is about equipment. 'The banana pick... is designed to make extraction easier'. I thought it was designed to cause less ice shattering (and therefore better penetration) because the point was less steeply angled while maintaining the overall droop of the pick. Discussion of adze design recommends a large steeply-inclined adze for climbing unconsolidated snow but this seems a simplification because this use is limited without two adzes (and therefore a separate hammer, popular a few years ago) and also because steeply-inclined adzes are poor for torquing. Filing of tools and crampons is recommended but Aberdonians never do it because it wears them out faster.

Chapter 2 is Snow and Ice Skills and starts with crampon use, deliberately ridiculing excessive jargon (French, German and American technique). With this I sympathise, except that he goes on later to describe flatfooting as appropriate on ice up to 55 degrees, even showing cheating pictures of Ade Burgess pretending to do it. Good luck beginners! The pictures of bracing with an axe are similarly unrealistic. After hinting in Chapter 1 that clipping into axes is complicated and unnecessary, he spends 4 pages on it in Chapter 2 without saying that prior organisation of sling lengths is critical, or discussing the ethical qualms of many. The statement 'If rock predominates, treat it as a rock climb and drop both axes' is doubtful even in Wales and 10 years out of date in Scotland.

Chapter 3 is Belaying and Protection. The importance of a good stance to supplement the intrinsically weak snow belay should be at the beginning of the snow belay section, not as a note at the end. He doesn't say that the choice between a buried axe and T-axe belay depends on the depth of harder snow layers. The New Zealand foot brake is discussed without mention of the more useful standing axe belay (Stomper). I would say the best positions for two ice screws to belay in smooth ice are 1ft across and 3ft up. Is Barry's 1ft apart enough? The ice bollard for abseiling is tedious compared to the 'Abalokov thread', a thread made by two ice screw holes. And are threaded icicles really that weak?

Chapter 4 is Starting Out, perhaps the most important, and it should have been Chapter 1. The section on snow shelters is rather idealised for benighted climbers. The section on training (what is its relevance to starting out?) is a gimmick, showing photos of tree climbing with axes (which is both damaging to the trees and potentially to the climber), when there are those who take training for winter very seriously.

Despite these discussion points, I would expect the book to be useful for beginners to complement practical experience (under instruction or otherwise) but it is far from comprehensive. I would like to think that the big print and lack of detail was to make the book readable, not because its preparation was rushed for commercial reasons. But to his credit, John Barry has not forgotten that winter climbing is supposed to be fun.

Andy Nisbet.

Rock Climbing in Snowdonia: - Paul Williams (Constable, 1990, ISBN 0 09 468410 3 £9.95)

This is the latest in the now classic Constable guidebook series on rock climbing in North Wales. The title is slightly misleading, since not only are the best of the Snowdonia climbs described, but also those of Central Wales and the sea cliffs of the Llyn peninsula, Anglesey and the North Wales coast. Almost 500 climbs are described in full, giving a fair spread through the grades. The route descriptions are clear and full of useful hints on how to get the most out of the climbs. The directions to and from each crag are also well described and the photo-diagrams are excellent (largely because of the clarity and correct contrast of the photographs). The action photographs are also good, although some are by now rather well known and it would have been nice to have some in colour. The layout of the text is similar to previous editions; my one comment is that the type emphasis of the headings is in 'inverse' order, with the climb names in large bold type but the crag headings so small that it's easy to miss them. Overall, one of the best of the current guide writers in Britain has produced another

polished professional book full of splendid climbs which, with luck and the 5 hour drive, could become memorable personal adventures. Is this guidebook a good buy for readers of the SMC Journal? If you are planning a holiday in North Wales and would like to visit a wide range of different crags, yes, this is the book for you.

Roger Everett.

Coming Through: Andy Fanshawe (Hodder & Stoughton, £14.95)

When I first received Andy Fanshawe's new book, my first reaction was an initial glance through its contents and the thought, 'not another expedition book'. An initial reaction, I am glad to say, which was very quickly dispelled.

Fanshawe's account details a four-year period in his life from 1986 to 1990. It takes in an expedition with friends to Chogolisa in the Karakorum, his experiences as the newly appointed National Officer of the BMC, 'yeti hunting' on Menlungtse with Chris Bonington, and ends with a winter ascent of the North Face of the Eiger.

So although it covers various trips and expeditions, these turn out to be more than just a chronology of peaks and routes, but become instead settings in which people live, play, laugh, argue and die. It is death which plays an important part in the book. Fanshawe loses two friends in climbing accidents - Liam Elliot on Broad Peak, and his best friend John Taylor in an avalanche on the Ben which Fanshawe himself barely survived. Such traumatic experiences take Fanshawe some time to come to terms with. As the story unfolds we see the author maturing from a somewhat impetuous, impatient young climber into an individual more at ease with himself, the people around him, and the mountains he climbs.

The narrative is liberally spiced with character sketches and incidents of his fellow climbers and comrades. Most of them succeed, and are particularly illuminating and/or funny. But on several occasions I was left with the feeling that perhaps more could have been expanded upon. My particularly favourite scene is where the camera crew on the Menlungtse expedition were attempting to shoot footage of the expedition convoy heading up to the Lalung La.

I also felt that the build-up to the Menlungtse trip was slightly less than interesting. Still, events on the hill outweigh that minor criticism.

In all, a very readable and enjoyable book. As a bonus, the photos reproduced within are of a particularly high quality. Go for it!

George McEwan.

The Handbook of Climbing: Allen Fyffe and Iain Peter (Pelham Books, 373pp., illus., £20, ISBN 0-7207-1805-8)

This tome was handed to me amidst a welter of jokes associated with my competence, or lack of it. I will come clean. I have muddled by for years and am incompetent at times (potential climbing partners beware), and so am an ideal reviewer.

One's first instinct on picking up the book is to compare it with Blackshaw - do, but it's better. Amongst the spate of instructional books on offer this is the definitive item. It takes you from basic first steps in climbing through winter and the Alps, and ultimately by a build up of knowledge and skills to the greater ranges. This is not a book written to serve the financial needs of a big name who has to sell books to make a living. Rather, it is a carefully thought out and planned explanation of all that we do or ought to do. It is packed with knowledge and helpful hints, all superbly illustrated with custom photographs and, perhaps most importantly, clearly explained.

The book should be good as it is endorsed by the B.M.C. (but sadly not the M.C. of S.), and it is written by two people with a wealth of climbing experience, both personal and instructional. Moreover, they are both Scots.

In addition to the various sections on Rock Climbing, Snow, Ice, Winter and Alpine Climbing, there are Appendices covering interesting if not essential areas such as Snow and Avalanches, Navigation and First Aid. Additionally, it is interesting to see information on Training and Psychological Skills. They are brief, but meet the needs of this book. These last two sections were written by Ally Morgan and Len Hardy. The only failing is that a third Chapter on Injuries (Physical and Psychological?) might have been included.

So why should you or I buy the book, surely it is for beginners? I would suggest that we all have something to learn from a text such as this, beginner or expert. As a source to dip into I have found it invaluable, for informing, refreshing and reinforcing.

Failings? A learned fellow reviewer in a comic called *High* spotted a couple of errors in some diagrams, no doubt these will be ironed out in future editions. More seriously, the book has obviously been used as a publicity vehicle for wee men with Patagonia tops. Witness the wee guy with the beard or the wee fat guy posing on page 104. What has happened to all the stickmen beloved of this type of book. Seriously, the book has few flaws and £20 is not much for a book you will use time and time again - buy it!

Neil Morrison.

Mountaineer. - Chris Bonington (Diadem, 192pp, £17.95, ISBN 0-906371-97-X).

I get the feeling, like confessing to a continued enjoyment of *Led Zeppelin*, that owing up to respecting Chris Bonington is no longer likely to result in instant credibility loss. His reputation among many climbers, however, has probably still some way to go before he gets the credit he is due. One of his mistakes may have been to survive. In general, we prefer our legends dead.

His contribution to mountaineering is one thing, his contribution to its literature perhaps something rather different. One thinks of the formula expedition books, openly written to fund the ventures they describe, in particular. On first appearance, this book, a large, lavishly-illustrated coffee table effort, seems to fall into a similar category as so much of his previous work: aimed at those who consider Bonington, because of his 8000 metre profile, as 'Britain's best climber' (we've all met them), and who want to look at pretty pictures, experience the vicarious thrill of looking down a vertiginous slope on Everest's NE Ridge while still in the armchair. Well, they won't be disappointed. But look harder, for there may be something here for you.

In the course of what is a remarkable career, which I surely don't need to chronicle, Bonington has accumulated a wealth of truly magnificent photographs, as well as some of great historical interest. This book is their showcase, and includes shots by those who have climbed with Bonington. See down clad, duvet booted Bonington beside flat capped, baseball-booted Whillans, fag in hand, preparing to bivouac during their successful first ascent of the Central Pillar of Freney; an anxious Bonington on the Hinterstoisser Traverse during an unsuccessful attempt on the Eigerwand, and a very boyish looking Ian Clough during the first British ascent; Clough on the Grandes Jorasses; Whillans in drag en route for Patagonia; the Eiger Direct; I could go on and on. For myself, perhaps one of the most striking things about many of these photographs was the fact that, being in colour and in the main excellently reproduced, they don't feel dated; the experiences of the past become more accessible, more obviously a part of what I know. The spontaneity and humour of many of them also help.

Naturally enough, the Himalaya dominate the book, from a very traditional ascent of Annapurna 2 in 1960 to a very traditional ascent of Everest in 1985, with all that lies between. Some of the photographs are wonderful, just one example being a wide-angle shot of the Western Cwm; there are more good mountain photographs here than I have ever seen together before.

People and places figure, too, as I have indicated above; besides intriguing character shots of climbers past and present there are photographs of Blashford Snell, in full imperial gear (pith helmet and all), firing a pistol at bandits, of traditionally-dressed Khirgiz people in front of their yurt, of the Potala dominating the dreary modern Lhasa.

What of the text? The short answer is that you don't buy a book like this for the words. Each section gets an introduction (perhaps the most interesting being that on Climbs from China), while the photographs are accompanied by a commentary which can best be likened to that which you might expect in the National Geographic. I found it no less satisfying for that. This is an illustrated journey, where you pause to take in the grandeur of the mountain scene before you, or imagine what it must have been like to have been there. Sometime words are superfluous.

Bob Duncan.

'Free Spirit - A Climber's Life.' Reinhold Messner. (Translation: Jill Neale. Hodder & Stoughton. London. ISBN 0-340-42900-3. March 1991.)

'By The Rocket's Red Glare...'

I first reviewed Messner's writing in 1975, with the publication of *'The Seventh Grade'* (Kay & Ward, 1974). That book began with his student days, when he climbed a greased pole, and finished with his personal nightmare on Nanga Parbat, Armageddon for so many climbers, where he lost several toes and one brother. Seventeen years span the two books, and we might reasonably expect to see some difference in his outlook, if not his style. In 1974 he was not ready to fling open the shutters to his soul - he did not yet have sufficient life experience. So has he changed? Bypassing much of the early years, including details of his first climbs under his father's tutelage, let us go straight to what was probably a crucial experience in his mountaineering career - Nanga Parbat, 1970.

His first mistake, of course, was getting involved with the infamous Dr Herrligkoffer, though at the time it seemed to offer the only chance at a first Himalayan expedition. Messner was then only 25, his brother Gunther even younger. Messner had, it seemed, mastered the Alps, and was ready for the next quantum leap. Two other climbers dropped out, and his brother was invited on the expedition. Three of them reached Camp 5 in worsening weather. A pre-arranged system of coloured rockets would give the climbers some idea of the weather - red was bad, blue good, red and blue doubtful. The rocket was red, but they decided to continue, as this, they had earlier discussed, would be their last chance due to lack of time. Messner left alone at 2 a.m., climbing up mixed ground in the Merkl Couloir to reach ice slopes under the South Shoulder. Later in the morning he was joined by Gunther, and the brothers continued upwards to gain the summit.

Night fell as they descended to the Merkl Col, bypassing the Couloir which Gunther felt would be too difficult to descend. Here they made a forced bivouac without equipment. Gunther was affected by the extreme cold, well below 30°C, and kept trying to pick up a non-existent object. The next morning Messner saw two others from the expedition in the Couloir, but communication failed and the other two, thinking the brothers happy, continued towards the summit.

The second, and fatal mistake had taken place. On the long, overnight descent down the Diamir Face, Messner got ahead of Gunther, who probably fell victim to an avalanche or sheer exhaustion. Messner stumbled about the foot of the face and spent another two nights out looking for his brother. Eventually meeting some peasants he was helped to a village and gradually made his way towards Gilgit. By a freak chance, he was obliged to spend a night in a hostel, where the remainder of the expedition was also holed up, by now on their way back home. Messner must have left much between the lines, as his sole comment on that meeting, some eight days' after their last radio conversation, was that the meeting was 'very sad'. The expedition contract may have had something to do with this reticence, as it prevented Messner from making any independent report. He felt, he said after the expedition, 'frequently labelled and muzzled'.

But Nanga Parbat shaped the young Messner. He admitted a responsibility for his brother's death, he had encouraged him, had not sent him back down, had gone on too fast on the descent. He also saw however that hindsight could not undo this, that it would not help his brother if he gave up climbing. It hardened him also, so that he became mistrustful of people; when they 'smiled at him enthusiastically, he did not believe them'. A sort of forced 'Herrligkoffer immunisation booster', if you like.

After Nanga Parbat there was a reaction, a turning inwards, so that he came to like all solitary big peaks, their dangers notwithstanding.

'It was the same icy light,' he wrote, watching the night peaks from his parents' home, 'which, on clear nights, lay over the great mountains, the same stillness, the same air.' In the high camps, alone, he knew a paradoxical security. There he would be responsible for himself alone.

Successive expeditions bred slowly gathering success, which in turn bred envy. To begin with he 'reacted aggressively to expedition leaders who did not select me, to climbing partners who slandered me and "friends" who wanted to finish me off.' Messner had discovered an instinct, mistrust of all and sundry. In life, he commented, as on a mountain, there must be difficulties. This is, of course, naivety showing, but it is a partly endearing openness which is an advance over the more youthful ignorance common to us all.

In 1975 Messner and Peter Habeler made a fast, unsupported ascent of the North West Face of Hidden Peak (8068m), against the odds given by the experts. They had left the rope behind to save weight, carrying a tiny tent for bivouacs. They gained the summit on the third day of climbing. Two days later they returned to base camp. Their five-day success had put Messner ahead in the international race, a position in which he felt life was good.

But the pressure of participating in this race had its price, as when, in 1977, he returned from an unsuccessful attempt on Dhaulagiri to be told by his wife Uschi that the marriage was finished. Messner, in this short chapter (most of the chapters in this book are short), touches several times on the pull between the 8,000m peaks and a more normal life, including thoughts about his wife. This might be written with hindsight, but is none the worse for that. At the conclusion of the Dhaulagiri chapter he states that at that moment of marital crisis he had wanted to be back at the turning point on the mountain there he would have lived (died?) a part of his life again in a different way. For Messner, this was a key episode in his life. I have already posited Nanga Parbat as a key point in his career, but it is possible to have several major nodes in a life, especially when one is intent on climbing 8,000m peaks with minimal support.

The necessarily obsessive nature comes through following his ascent of Everest with Habeler, without supplementary oxygen. No sooner was he back at base camp than he was aware that he was not content; the next challenge had jumped into view, Nanga Parbat solo. This he succeeded in doing, in 1978, followed by the Abruzzi Ridge on K2 in 1979, and a death and failure on Ama Dablam, also in '79. Finally in 1980 came the successful solo ascent of Everest, leaving the sack in the small tent for the final day's climbing. Was he as mad as Maurice Wilson he asked himself, that English religious fanatic whose solo attempt on Everest in 1934 had its inevitable end? On the summit Messner knew that he could do no more - he could only stand up to go down. (At this point popped into my head the ridiculous image of Messner hopping up and down, trying to achieve another metre in altitude. If there were peaks on a moon of Jupiter, I thought, he'd try to be there, even if oxygen were a necessity.)

The remainder of the book, well translated to my eyes, is for the main taken up with Messner's record bagging, starting with the ascents of all fourteen of the world's eight thousanders. Here he confirms my own finding, that climbers are no better people than the rest of the human race, there being honest and dishonest, complacent and willing, envious and joyful amongst their ranks. They might differ, Messner thinks, by shining through in life or death situations.

Having achieved so much, more than any normal physiology could manage surely, Messner found peace walking over the continent of Antarctica, peace through working on his organic farm in the Tyrol, and peace, probably more than in any other way, through handing over his crown to the Slovakian climber Tomo Cesen, who in 1990 made the first ascent, solo, of the South Face of Lhotse. The last chapter is unusual, in that it relates this feat, finishing the book with the comment that Messner thinks Cesen the greatest climber in the world.

So what do we gain from this book? That the author has changed along life's path, that some of his early problems were due to his ignorance of some aspects of human nature, and also that, climbing ability besides, he must have led a charmed life at altitude. He returned from one expedition to find another brother dead, struck by lightning on a climb. His long-suffering mother asked him to stop attempting the Himalayan giants. He had, in any case, climbed most of the big names.

If we take his final chapters at face value, Messner has matured as a person, complementing his climbing career. Goldmund has returned home. We can only wish him well for the long life he expects to enjoy, turning over the thin soil on his mountain home, self-sufficient in food.

This book is interesting. Had it been suddenly exposed to a climbing public only twenty years ago it would have been disbelieved, such are the physical deeds described within its pages. That the physical prowess is necessarily accompanied by the mental attitude is briefly alluded to here. Messner, after all, cannot ever fully unburden himself. That he has to the extent shown here, is a testimony to the elemental forces to which he has been exposed, and through which he has passed.

Ken Crocket.

South West Climbs - rock climbs from Cornwall, Devon, Somerset, Dorset and Jersey. Pat Littlejohn (Diadem, 1991, 288pp., £14.99, ISBN 0-906371-82-1).

Let's clear one point right away, before friends write in; I have never climbed in any of the above areas, though I once did hitch down to Cornwall on the strength of a postcard from a schoolfriend. So I am concerning myself with the look and feel of the guide, not its accuracy as regards routes, which we should probably take for granted. And it does look and feel good, apart from its hard cover. Surely a plastic cover is even more necessary, given the risk of wind-blown spume and spray?

But then, the cynics would lean over and tell us, the card covers thicken up an otherwise thinnish book - at 288 pages it is lean - especially when you find that every page has either a photograph, photodiagram, map, sketch, or a combination of any four of these. This said, there are still 501 routes, just over half of which are E1 or up. The photodiagrams are surprisingly good for the most part, and where photographs were either missing or not up to quality, diagrams have been used, often thumbnails, but none the less useful for that. But the publishers have of course forestalled these criticisms by explaining that the format is taller, so there are more words on a page, and the cover is laminated, so it is tougher than it looks. Climbing on Cornish granite it had better be.

The thoughtful reader will come across many sympathetic lines in this book, viz., this from the Introduction 'It's (the South West) value as an adventurous climbing arena is becoming greater year by year as the Continental trend of "equipping" routes creeps on to certain British cliffs, eliminating self-reliance and threatening to destroy the essence of the sport.' Tell that to the wee boys with their Hilti drills and bolt kits, not that they would listen much.

The history makes interesting reading, with honourable mention of the late Tom Patey, then doing his National Service at Lymington. 'His ascents', writes Littlejohn, 'were always on sight and usually had an epic quality. On Sarcophagus, onlookers described him "battling upwards, hurling ivy and abuse into the surrounding atmosphere".' Bolting gets laid into later, with a repeated leitmotiv of first ascents using bolts followed by later ascents without, surely a good enough argument against. If you're frightened of being frightened, then maybe you should take up another game, or pull back a notch, ego permitting, of course.

This is a selected guide which would be added to my library, given that I was heading that way to climb. It's just so far away, and there's so much here to do you understand, including sea cliff climbing if that's what you like, that as yet I feel no strong pull, despite the lure of this attractive guide. And one final nicety; each route has its first ascent details where they should be, under the route name, not stuffed into a tedious chronological list at the back.

Ken Crockett.

The Rock Climbing Guide to Europe. David Jones. (Crowood Press, 1991, 255pp, £12.95, line illustrations, ISBN 1-85223-450-4).

France, our author tells us, is the most important rock climbing country in the world. The sport has come of age in the 1980s, with thousands of bolts being placed, he continues, so we have a marked contrast with the foregoing area and guide to England's South West coastal crags. But then the crags are quite different in many ways (and there are over 600 in this guide!), from the sun-dappled boulders in the woods of Fontainebleau, to the overhanging limestone found in many locations. The vastly better weather is what makes so much of the Continental climbing a pleasure, which makes the pro bolt argument given by Jones at the beginning even more specious. In Britain, he says, the weather makes the placement of protection a slow and miserable game, so why not bolt routes. If he has to scramble so hard for a defense then he must feel unsure of himself. Some climbers enjoy finding and placing protection; it's part of the fun to them. And have a thought for all the wee gnomes who would be out of a job if we stopped using the nuts they so busily polished for us in some grotty Welsh cave, little red faces bobbing up and down furiously in time with their (that's enough - Ed.)

More seriously, Jones has done another good service here with his Continental companion guide to finding crags. Included, along with crag guides to Southern Britain, Belgium, Germany, Switzerland, France, Italy and Spain, are details of the 188 circuits at Fontainebleau and over 400 routes on the Tunbridge Wells sandstone. It is, of course, a guide to use, and not admire, though the two column layout helps. The crag research in the Spanish section is but rudimentary, as Jones himself admits, but some information is better than none he thinks. It must have been a grind to write.

Ken Crockett.

Rock Climbing in Scotland.-By Kevin Howett (Constable, 1990, 467pp, £9.95. ISBN 0-09-468760-9).

MacInnes, always ahead of the rat pack, must have been pleased when this guide came out; a vindication in theory if not in style of his two prototypes of the selected guide in 1971. His foreword says it all in studied understatement.

Kevin Howett has done a masterly job. That often weak area, the diagram, is one of the really strong points in this guide, together with the maps. This is simply the best selection of crag diagrams in any Scottish guide and the consistency of their quality will ensure that the artist in question will soon be having a queue of other guide book writers at his door. The photographs do not quite come up to the standard of the diagrams - some are much better than others - and it surely must be regretted that all save the front cover, which is excellent, are in black and white. Colour photographs enhance a guide almost more than anything else, but they cost and I cannot help feel that if there had been a smattering of colour throughout, then this guide would stand head and shoulders above the rest.

The layout of the text and the route descriptions are clear and concise. There is evident enthusiasm, as on page 242, describing the Main Wall at Diabeg 'the climbing is indescribable'. Absolutely! This is not a guide for the drab at heart but an exuberant romp through all that is best in the Highlands and Islands and Lowlands. Three star routes burst from every other page and superlatives abound. You may not agree with all the gradings but here at last is the technical grade used for all areas, dispelling the dubious northern mists of Scottish VS forever. A brave man too - he has the sense to grade Chimney Arete and Whither Whether on the Cobbler at VS 4b, which may remove the mystique somewhat but will reduce the number of gobsmacked Severe leaders. A pity he did not feel free to up-grade Integrity in the same vein. One could argue that such routes had more cache as Severs, Severs that is with the killer punch, thrown at the unsuspecting, preferably English climber and lovingly cherished by gnarly old Scots as an example of a real climb, a Bannockburn for southern scoffers who think everything below VS hardly worth putting a rope on for. Fortunately he has left a few nasties lurking within the pages, which will jolt the innocents who believe in the written word and number.

So if the diagrams, maps and routes are all competently written up, where are the quibbles? Well historically there are one or two curios, for instance are there really two G. Latter's roped in tandem to climb Rock of Ages at Dumbarton and though I may have been on the hill for some time, I still was not dragged up, at the tender age of 14, by Tom Patey to climb Enigma Grooves, though R.W.P. Barclay was and that merely left me to do the direct finish in 1979. As for omissions, well the most currently obvious are Ardmair and Reiff, outcrops maybe but Reiff is a major climbing ground by anybody's reckoning. These are relatively minor points but perhaps the most curious is the attempt to 'grade' midges by a three star system. The midges are represented by pictograms, one being tolerable and three representing the heebie-jeebies. Believe me, it might be one midge category one minute and when that gentle breeze stops the next it's three, with boats being abandoned at great speed in all directions.

Many of the quality climbs are covered in this excellent guide and for the moment it is the best overall guide to Scottish rock climbing. It does not attempt to replace the comprehensive guides but for those wanting to pick and choose, here's your alternative to carrying a sac-full of guide books around the country.

John Mackenzie.

The Northwest Highlands.- By Donald Bennet and Tom Strang (1990, Scottish Mountaineering Trust, 340 pp., 108 illustrations, 28 maps by John Renny, £17.95. ISBN 0 907521-28-2).

The new Guide is to all mainland hills north and west of the Great Glen. Remote and unpeopled as that huge mountain region is, continual changes through the years require record - new roads to speed the tourist, new forest plantations that blanket the hill - approaches, dams that flood old ways through the glens, and new industries that impair the scene, such as widespread fish-farming and the oil construction yard at Kishorn. The new roads have also sped the climber, whose intensive explorations on the cliffs bewilder newcomers, and sped too the Munro and Corbett-baggers of frenetic energy. The guidebook is therefore doubly welcome as aid to access, especially since the two editors have done a most efficient job. Donald Bennet covers the south area from Morvern to Glen Carron, and Tom Strang the north from Applecross to Caithness. Both write clearly and concisely to a well thought-out design, each

explaining the best and also the quickest approaches to every mountain (ways that do not usually coincide). They spell out valuable detail largely absent from guides to either Munros or rocks. They do not of course cover the cliffs except in the general sense of showing where the recent decades of exploration have been, winter and summer. They maintain good balance between the natural and social histories of the different mountain groups, with helpful notes on access, public transport, accommodation, and paths.

An introductory chapter has notes on weather, Nature Reserves, drove roads, rights of way, caves and geology - the latter by Noel Williams. The illustrations are thickly spread, enhanced by using only one to a page. Colour prints predominate. All are of good quality, but not so the few black and whites. The 28 maps by Jim Renny are models of clear simplicity.

W. H. Murray.

One Step in the Clouds, an omnibus of mountain fiction compiled by Audrey Salkeld and Rosie Smith (1990, Diadem and Sierra Club Books, 30 short stories, 6 novels, 1 play, 1056 pp., £16.95. ISBN 0 906371-92-9).

The book opens with the compilers' most informative review of mountain fiction, which, for the benefit of all mountaineers, ought to be reprinted in their clubs' journals. Its main theme, that despite common opinion there is no dearth of good mountain fiction if a search be made, is borne out by what follows. I read this book with a growing and grateful surprise (the gratitude going to the editors for their hard conscientious search). My only real criticism is a double one: first, that their final product is far too big and weighty for comfortable handling, and second, that the two parts should have been more properly divided for publication as separate books. Together they appear to me like an ungainly monster. Part one, a 287 page anthology of short stories, would have read better by itself - a division to be preferred because the shorts and the longs are of different genre; that is, they call for and receive from authors quite different kinds of writing, which do not mix well in one book. The mere fact that both are fiction is insufficient pretext for an unhappy juxtaposition.

The shorts are a mix of old and new; the new wisely predominating and the few old allowing us to make useful comparisons. The latter include Montague's 'Hanging Garden Gully', Maupassant's 'Ulrich', and Menlove Edward's 'Scenery for a Murder'. I may say at once that the anthology has nothing to surpass Menlove Edwards, unless it be Montague. In comparing old with new, I find that writers from Scotland fare well. By happy chance, Ken Crockett's 'October Day' is immediately followed by Maupassant. Under that comparison Crockett is much the more skilful writer. His story of a teenager's first climb on Salisbury Crags shows real, creative imagination in the build-up of the boy's background environment of last century and of his natural motivation. Maupassant's story is a too contrived, theatrical drama, maybe included for the sake of his name, but none the less a choice of interest to us all as being so remote from the master's normal scene-settings. Robin Campbell contributes 'The Case of the Great Grey Man', one of his ingenious Sherlock Holmes collection, which read as no way inferior to Conan Doyle. This particular tale, linked to Norman Collie and Hugh Munro, has appeared in the SMCI, its imaginative excellence already known to us. Geoff Dutton's 'Doctor' stories are represented by a new one titled 'Midges'. These have a keen readership, among whom I am not included, although respectful. Farce has to be still more outrageous before it wins my mind.

The novels come to me as a much bigger surprise in their quality and variety. I seem to have known hitherto only the duds. There is indeed more literary talent around than I had guessed. As before, one old novel, Elizabeth Coxhead's 'One Green Bottle', provides a standard of comparison. It wears well after 40 years, retaining a depth and sensitivity that most climbing novels notably lack. The best of the other half dozen is to my mind David Harris's 'Vortex'. He is Canadian. His story of drug traffic through the North Cascades has cunningly built-in suspense, growing throughout, yet has a natural, unforced dialogue, a wide variety of characters, and a proper exposition of their human relations as a true novel should have. It even points a moral in showing how easy it can be for both men and women to get sucked into a vortex of criminal living almost involuntarily. This novel, printed here for the first time, seems to have lost its due reward. It deserved publication as a 200-page novel standing in its own right, as had Coxhead's. The rest of the too big collection would have benefited by such a reduction (as would its authors), and still have held enough merit within its 600 pages to survive and sell.

W. H. Murray.

Outcrops. By Terry Gifford (Littlewood Arc, 1991, 58pp, £5.95, ISBN 0946407-62-2).

This short anthology of poems, with a gritstone overhang illustration for the cover, is mostly about climbing, with some other ancient rocks looming up out of the mist for variety. I looked through it for lines which would change my life, but was disappointed. Asking too much I suppose, but to publish a poem is to be one of the brave and chosen ones whom I look up to. There are some lines and even poems I like, as in *'Somewhere Above Swaledale'*, in which the old, familiar outcrop afternoon is enacted by two climbers.

All it needs
is fifteen feet
of weathered rock,
a hole in the ground
without a name
will do
for a winter afternoon...'

And *'Wall'*, telling of the stone life, as shifting as the plants and roots that move the stones on a garden wall.

Stone blossoms in the mountains
With lichens, moss and ferns,
Green tying into green like
The art of a dry-stone wall.'

I suspect that Gifford may be an acquired taste, or that his rhythm did not echo mine, for there was something I could not quite grasp in many of the poems, for which I blamed myself. I found syncopation with *'Rocca Di Perti'*, where the printers had reduced the leading between the lines so as to mimic, I suppose, the massive bulk of stone.

They were cutting the mountain
into pats of butter,
great pale blocks,
unmelted even in this heat,
left on a shelf
above the shimmering valley.

Out of the natural tumble
of rounded rocks and bushes
they'd cut a box
into this living shoulder
with clean scalpel blades.

I had to touch its walls
to believe its smoothness,
finger the slicing of pink crystals
sparkling from the granite whiteness,
hear, in the evening stillness,
the breaking of atoms
inside this gentle mountain
from which basilicas are built.

Mr Gifford does good work for the mountains, viz., he has a slide/poetry performance entitled *'Ten Letters To John Muir'*, which has raised money for the John Muir Trust (to arrange this, contact Burbage Books, 56 Conduit Rd, Sheffield S10 1EW, 0742-668813). Methinks however, that in his poems he tries too hard with the words. Compare with Dutton, elsewhere in this Journal, to see what I mean. Both feel for the subject, but Gifford's words seem as a thin veil to me, an interstellar gas cloud diffusing the glorious light from the nebula. Or read Miroslav Holub, or even Yevteshenko in parts. For me, a Curate's egg.

Ken Crocket.

Journals of Kindred Clubs

The Alpine Journal 1990/91 (Frederick Muller in association with The Alpine Club, 338pp, £17.99, ISBN 0-091743-18-4).

This is still the Alpine Journal, despite its being published commercially at a rather high price. This edition contains the usual selection of articles, reports and notes from all over the world, with 90 illustrations into the bargain.

The Himalaya are well represented by a number of articles, most of which describe lightweight expeditions climbing 'alpine style', which seems appropriate for a journal of this name. The Alps, surprisingly, are catered for mainly by articles of a historical nature - Una Cameron's remarkable record of climbs in the 1930s, and Hamish Nicol's in the 1950s.

Elsewhere in this edition there is a fascinating variety of climbing tales from nearly every corner of the planet - Alaska and Columbia, Tasmania, Corsica and Skye to name but a few.

Donald Bennet.

The American Alpine Club Journal 1990

Simply the best - even the cover, which this year uses part of the new map of Mount Everest.

Three articles relating to climbs in the Himalaya are an aperitif to the six devoted to Mount McKinley (Denali) National Park, viz, Mount Russell's East Face; Foraker's Infinite Spur; Hunter's Northwest Face; Eroica, Mount Hunter; Moose's Tooth and Huntington and finally Denali's West Rib Solo in Winter. Enthralling and awe inspiring when weather statistics of 200 m.p.h winds and temperatures of -77°F (-61.5°C) have been recorded.

This harsh environment proved fatal for an experienced Japanese team attempting a winter ascent of McKinley. All three members perished, the leader Noboru Yamada having previously climbed nine 8000-metre peaks and Everest three times.

An amazing survival epic was enacted by two Anchorage climbers. Attempting to climb 'The Elevator Shaft' on Mount Johnson, the leader climbed 40ft, above his runner to an ice window, when suddenly the entire ice formation on which he was climbing collapsed, the column of ice falling down the couloir. Fortunately the runner held, but the leader fractured his hip. During the next SEVEN days the pair were hit by Eight different avalanches before they were finally rescued. This is worth a book of its own.

There's more; not content with all the Alaskan daring-do, 70 pages are devoted to the Glaciers of Alaska and adjacent Yukon Territory. Space is found to tabulate the 55 crossings of Greenland's Inland Ice over the last 100 years - No 22 being Past President Bill Wallace and Co.

Global Climbs and Expeditions - it's all here, Topo line drawings of new routes in Patagonia, Book Reviews and 56 First Class photographs.

I implore members to borrow this volume if only for armchair excitement, or to contemplate The Ten Commandments of Sustainable Climbing!

Doug Lang.

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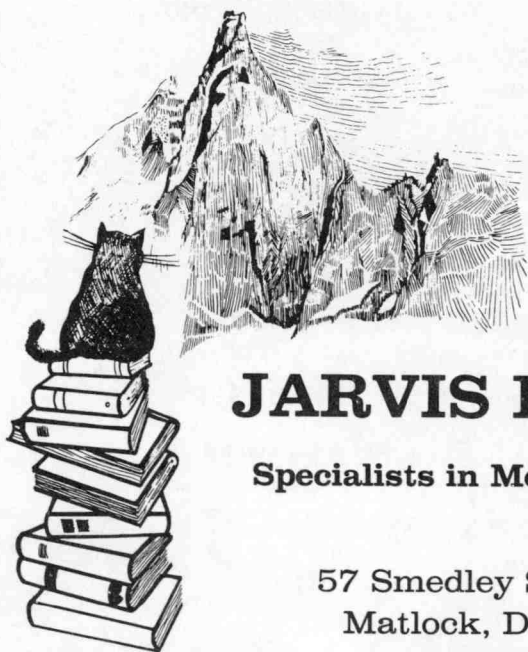
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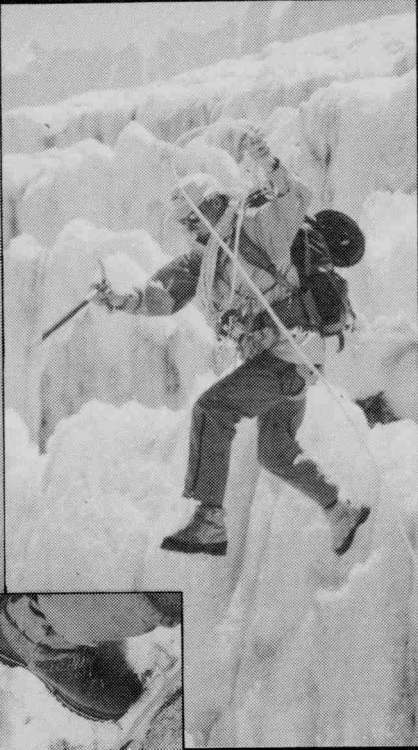
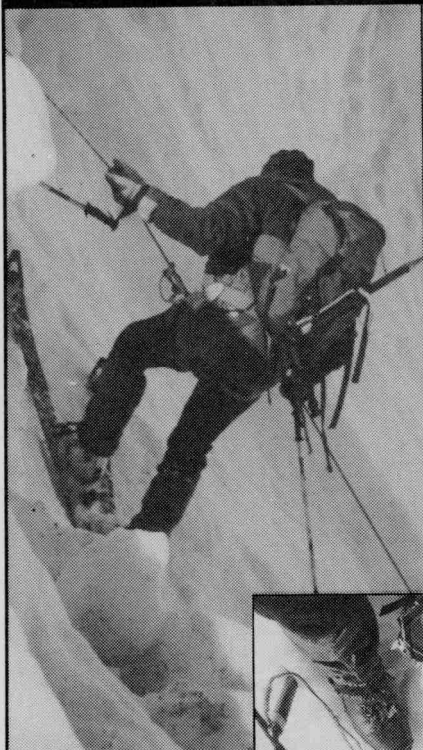
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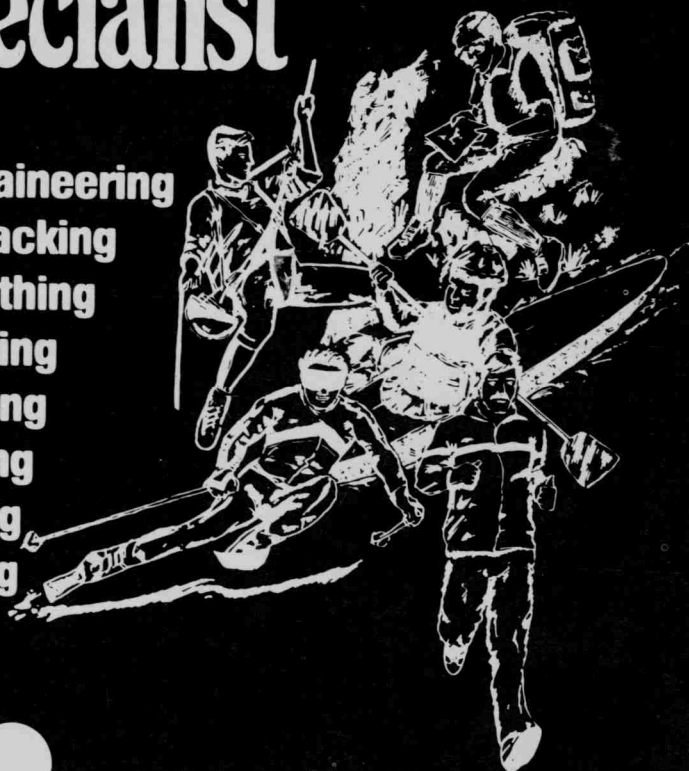
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