

THE  
SCOTTISH  
MOUNTAINEERING  
CLUB JOURNAL



VOL. XXXVI

No. 187

1996

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EDITED BY K.V. CROCKET

Published by THE SCOTTISH MOUNTAINEERING CLUB

Printed in Scotland by Review Publications, Aberdeen.

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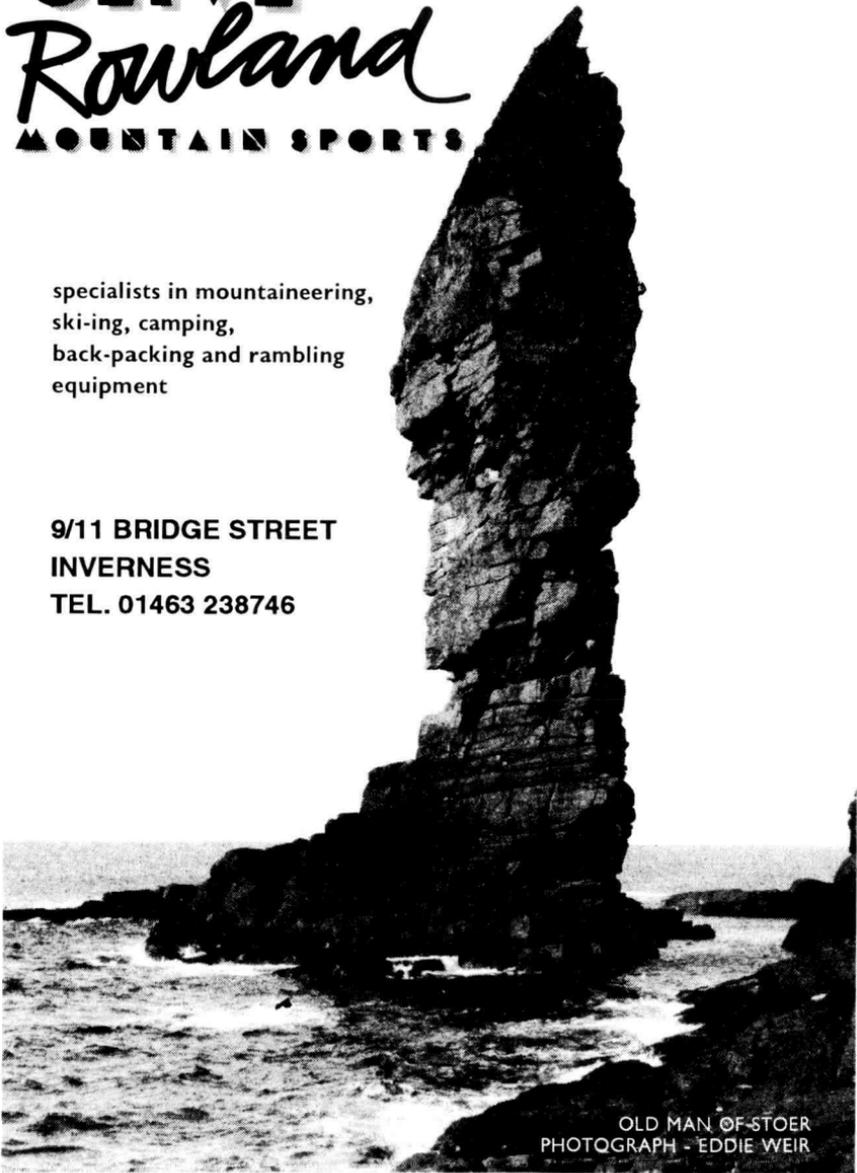
ISSN 0080 - 813X.

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

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## IMAGES

By Donald M. Orr

TELFER GLANCED at his watch. 'Christ,' he muttered. It was a mere five minutes to the final bell. 'Right! Finish off quickly! Put the paint trays back in the cupboard! Wash the brushes and put them in the correct containers and,' he paused, conscious of the chanting tone in his voice as he came to the mantra he had delivered to every junior class over the years, 'put your work in your folders and your folders in the drawer!'

The first-year class moved quickly and noisily to the sinks ranged against the tall, south-facing windows. The grey of their uniforms blurred against the dull light of the cloudy afternoon and he gazed abstractedly from his seat watching their erratic circular motion to and from their desks. They reminded him of sheep in Renfrewshire snow, high up in the Calder valley, picking their way with quick, fitful movements through the drifts.

The bell rang, stools clattered on top of desks and the class trooped out. Cries of excitement grew and echoed in the corridor. He thought vaguely of calling for quiet, but last thing on a Friday it would have been a futile gesture. Tidying his desk he checked inside his cupboard to make sure he had everything he needed for the weekend's activities. His tracksuit bottoms lay on the floor, where he had discarded them, in a Celtic spiral of mud and fabric. The blue of the textile reminded him that he wanted to take two of the large slings from the outdoor education store and he locked his cupboard, lifted his bag and crossed the corridor to the room that held the collection of activities' equipment. Opening the door he was struck once more by the overall odour of the store – a smell the children disliked but that he always associated with the outdoors and the gear linked to it. This mingling of boots and dubbin, canvas, nylon, and the pervading aroma of rain-soaked, force-dried waterproofs was the same in hostel and outdoor centre drying rooms throughout the country. It tingled his senses and, smiling to himself, he packed away a couple of slings into his bag. Buoyed up by the prospect of the weekend he whistled lightly in the gathering gloom of the school yard.

As he came through the archway to the car park he watched the late-afternoon sun rake the steep, grass-covered escarpment above the town and

marvelled at the quality of light. David came up behind him as he stood lost in thought. 'Right Telf, see you later in the pub.'

He turned: 'Don't you think it looks a bit like the high veld in South Africa?' he said, nodding towards the hills.

David looked up and back to his colleague. 'You been reading John Buchan again? How are things up in the old king's country?'

'Beat it Watoomba,' Telfer snarled. 'No, it's something to do with the quality of the light.'

'Well, it's the same sun as shines in Africa Boss, sorry Prester, er Mr John, Sir?'

'Christ, it must be Friday right enough if you're that shell-shocked. See you later at Finlay's,' he shouted as David continued blethering in a heavy Afrikaan accent. As he drove home an image fixed in his mind of the warm, sun-bathed veld in the high country superimposed with the tawny grasslands of the coires at that time of year.

Telfer tripped out of the drizzle and fell against the double doors of Finlay's Bar. The noise of dance music momentarily leapt screaming into the Paisley night to be cut off abruptly by the door swinging shut.

He groaned inwardly on the threshold at the noise as he contemplated the loss of 'the pub' as he knew it for the non-stop disco of an urban lounge. Standing at the bar in the gloom the low lights caught the beads of rain in his hair, reflected from the moisture on his face, and drew him out of the semi-darkness with a Rembrandt-like brilliance and clarity. To the bar staff he had the air of the slightly battered professional man that signalled the school teacher in their midst which the baggy cords and fashionless tweeds corroborated. His own abstracted sullenness resulted from the memory of a second-year showdown after lunch repeating the same message of warning, caution and attempted reason to the disruptive and disinterested. He drank angrily at his beer as he waited for David to show up.

The street door opened presently, wafting in the smell of damp lime trees and, turning, he saw David, hooded for the rain, stop and blink through his splattered glasses like a disturbed and soggy owl.

He turned to the bar to order another pint as David approached. 'I wouldn't let a wildebeest out in a night like this.' Telfer shook his head as David added quickly: 'Even if I had one.'

'Okay, okay we're not going to Africa.'

'Well, couldn't we go farther south just to be nearer it?'

'You going to shut it and drink your beer?'

'No crisps?'

The odour and musty atmosphere of a mountain bothy is a rank mixture in the early morning. The sweat stained, fire-dried clothing, the acrid smell of late wood smoke and cold embers, and the heavy waft of paraffin from the Primus merge to a fusty reek in the cold, small hours before dawn and settle over floor and furnishings, kit and clothing as the day begins.

Telfer lay awake, eyes closed, in the warm cocoon of his down sleeping

bag, slowly checking the sensations of first light. The harshness on his tongue from the late, last bowlful of flake tobacco, the stiffness in his joints from yesterday's exertions and the little grunts and snarlings from his partner as he fought to stay asleep. He thought of the time and opened his eyes to find he was only five minutes adrift on his calculations.

'David! It's half seven!'

The larval form beside him suddenly straightened knocking over the water bottle which rolled heavily across the floor. He eased out of his sleeping bag and retrieved his fibre pile jacket now worn and pilled along the sleeves. The double 'H' on the faded label was only faintly discernible and, as he pulled it on, he wondered how much life was left in it, and him. He remembered the day he had bought it and the years of hills and hostels, camps and climbs in between and felt the threadbare quality of his life match the fibres in his hand.

'DAVID!' The chrysalis split to reveal signs of life.

He moved to the door aware of the river's echoed roar drawing his morbid thoughts away and raised his eyes to the immediate prospect.

Although early in the autumn, at this height the nature of the land had assumed the tweedy browns and ochres of late October. Patches of dead bracken among the fading heather held a pinkish hue which melted into the withered fawns and tans of deer grass. The cloud had stayed high and the air carried that faint trace of low-tide kelp above the damp, rooty smell of high moorland that never failed to stir him.

'Are there any zebras?' David shouted, giggling at the figure silhouetted in the doorway.

'Hundreds,' he replied without turning.

'Lions?'

'Mm, a few.'

The giggles grew to a choking sound and he turned to see David totally incapable of delivering his next witticism. 'And there's one old mountain gorilla about to stomp the crap out of you in a moment.'

The report sent a spasm through the early morning air causing them to look up immediately. The noise, stinging the atmosphere, had their minds racing between high-powered rifles and snapping kernmantle. Simultaneously they turned north.

A rock fall. A huge, preglacial block of granite had seemingly split from the mountain and, large as a phone box, was launching itself on a voyage to the valley floor. Crashing off the gully walls it sent sparks and smoke billowing out of the cleft along with the noise of its thunderous passage which echoed down the glen rippling the late dawn haze out to sea. Leaving the confines of the gully the tumbling monolith picked up speed bounding and rebounding over the steep screes. It coursed through the first rough vegetation lengthways, and rolled fiercely on, mowing its way through heather and bog myrtle.

As it seemed to be slowing slightly it glanced against a deeply-embedded

rock and with the last of its spinning power planed end on into a brief, terminal flight over the gravel track and stunted rowans before implanting itself solidly, with a muffled whump, in a peat bog by the river.

Silence flooded the valley. Telfer became aware of the herbal fragrance of crushed myrtle. The early forenoon sun was already hot on his neck. Little trickles of sweat ran through his hair to the accompaniment of the tinkles of small stones still spilling out of the gully.

'Christ,' breathed David in a one-word eulogy.

Squelching forward through inches of peat stained sphagnum that served as a path, Telfer stood beside him too overawed to come up with a quick zippy one-liner.

'I wonder why that happened?' he said gazing up into the gully searching for a clue as to why such a large block fell, or was pushed, but he saw no coloured blobs of movement in a ravine and no one on the skyline ridge.

'I don't see anyone anywhere,' he added slowly, 'and even then, well, there would have to have been a team of them.'

'What?' David grasped his meaning, 'No way. Nobody trundled that thing. Look at the size of it. It must weigh tons.'

'What caused it to fall then?'

Telfer looked back at the block where it stood in a peaty bend of the river. The stains and scars it had collected on its journey would soon weather in and be unnoticeable. Already it had assumed an air of permanence in the valley, balanced between the gravel bars of the river on one side and the wizened trees on the other. It resembled one of the ancient standing stones that dotted the parkland of the castle grounds where they had once camped. A cold, disturbing thought blew into his mind, tugging and nagging at a memory in the way that the chill winds before dawn had strained at the flaps of the tent.

He walked back down the path, crossed the stepping stones, and went along the gravel trail to the rowans. There in the grit of the path were the scars and scuff marks where David's badly-packed sack had been deposited while its contents were re-arranged – directly in the flight path of the boulder. He scanned the hillside again for any signs of movement knowing that had they stopped farther down the track they would have arrived directly in the line of the tumbling boulder. True, but if they had stopped to repack . . . but the impact of the chance happening affected them both.

'Interesting. Why today? Why now?'

'Kismet, it was written,' said David. 'It was its time to fall.' He shrugged the topic away.

'It doesn't mean anything?'

'We witnessed an event.'

'That makes us part of the event.'

'Mm, yes. So?'

'So we still don't have any answers.' Telfer paused, 'Was it coincidence, a chance happening or part of a sequence, confirming a pattern of events?'

A final flurry of small stones rushed from the gully like a distant ripple of soft applause.

'The latter. Since the mountain was put up – it's been coming down.'

'But today it needed witnesses.'

'It was a big event.'

Telfer raised his eyes from the marks in the gravel and looked at David.

'Almost a total event for us.'

David met the older man's gaze and shook his head, turning to stare at the gully on the north side of the glen. 'How well is your bag packed now?' Telfer asked, looking past his profile and out to the sea haze on the Firth.

'Perfectly,' David replied still scanning the skyline.

Scrambling carefully up the gully of split blocks that led to the bealach both tensed as a loose stone clattered down the ravine, showering them with the dust and gravel of its passing. Aware of the event in microcosm they watched intently as the rock buried itself safely in the deep heather below.

On reaching the pass a welcome breeze blew away the heat and fear of the gully. Quickening the pace to clear what crushing thoughts remained, they moved round to the foot of the slabs they had decided to explore that day and, while organising the ironmongery, selected a route that started moderately up the steep, granite plates, scored here and there by sets of parallel cracks.

The climbing went smoothly enough. David led through and belayed at the end of the second pitch under a broad roof that afforded them an eyrie-like view out over the sweep of the slabs and down the glittering length of the stream far below. Off in the distance could be seen flashes of sunlight reflected from the waves in the broad bay into which the stream drained.

A faint tang of seaweed came up on the breeze. He felt a roughness on his hands from contact with the granite, a salty taste on his lips and fell into a daze as he sat on the belay ledge staring at the dried blood on his legs that was a result of his bare knees meeting the coarse rock.

'This stuff's got all the delicacy of a cheese grater,' said David scuffing at two bloodstains that had paralleled a course down his shins and into his socks.

'Mm,' he replied from his daydream.

'Scintillating.'

Telfer drew him a look and moved out to the left for the start of the third pitch. Parallel cracks flared upwards to a pinnacle on the ridge. A summit wind combing across the rocky crest sent grit and occasional small stones down the slab. He climbed steadily to a point where the cracks turned inward prohibiting the bridging action that had got him thus far. Fixing a comfortably solid runner in the right-hand crack he contemplated the problem as the wind picked up, tugging at the bag on his back. More gravel tinkled down from the ridge.

The rock here was smoother and delicately lined and, in those shadows, resembled more the hide of a fossilised elephant than the coarse granite of

the slabs. Grains of fine sand floated over the surface drifting against a tracery of small, raised seams of stone, filling tiny cracks with dust. He hesitated and mentally went through the sequence of moves necessary, and arranging his hands, stood up in the narrow gap.

A small stone, larger than the rest, clattered down the slab. The crackling sound it made grabbed his attention, snatching away a level of consciousness. His distraction was total yet his attention hungered for detail and was fed flickering images of hills and valleys, gorges and gullies, scree and sand. A view of cross referenced landscapes, rockscapes, whorls within words as if watching several slides superimposed on each other.

He was vaguely aware of a soft sadness that was associated with the final image that had stopped in his mind. It seemed to be held on film and his reason lurched when his sister appeared calling for him and he realised it was the garden at Inchcairn. A slow heaviness enveloped him. His sister turned and saw him, shouting excitedly, indicating the path to the river. The notion that his grandmother was about to appear crept over him. There was something she had to tell him, something he had to know. He choked down a wave of emotion that threatened to engulf him.

His left knee pivoted causing his right toe to shoot out of the crack. He was briefly aware of hanging in space, between rock and sky, vision and reality. 'Telf!'

The webbing of his harness dug into his thighs as the rope ran taut, jerking him on the runner firmly bedded in the granite fissure, lashing his helmeted head against the wall.

'Got you!'

A trickle of wetness ran from his nose to the corner of his mouth. His tongue automatically checked it, confirming it as blood.

He leant forward, found footholds on either side of the cracks and pressed his hands against the rock, reassuring himself of the world's solidity.

The sight of the patterned stone in front of him caused an avalanche of fractured thoughts and half memories. He glanced across at David.

'It's not easy being a friend of yours you know.'

'Mm.'

'Are you okay? Do you want me to lead?'

'No, I'm okay.' He wondered if David had seen anything, if there had been any vision for him to endorse. David grinned up at him. 'For a mammal it's the only way to fly.'

'Very good David. You can certainly bear witness to that.'

He moved slowly back to the take-off point and carefully dusted off the ledges and notions of elephant-skin rock. Placing his hands on the holds he twisted his toes to fit the crack. Telfer paused.

'How well is that toe placed now,' asked David quietly.

Telfer looked down at the young man and nodded smiling. 'Perfectly,' he replied and stepped up, quickly gaining the upper section of the crack system and on to the gravel belay ledge in the sunshine of the summit ridge.

## DISOBEYING THE RULES

By I. H. M. Smart

*One of the few privileges you get as President of the Club other than the honour (which is indeed sufficient) is your own personal key to the CIC Hut in a velvet bag. This privilege is reluctantly given and rapidly terminated on demitting office, in my case within seconds. During my tenure I once availed myself of my key and went up mid-week one winter without informing the Custodian and during the course of my stay I admitted unauthorised visitors. Both of these actions are in the eyes of the Custodian serious violations of the Hut Rules so I am only telling this story now because sufficient time has elapsed for me to escape the normal sentence for such misdemeanours. I seem to remember this begins with a fairly severe public telling-off in which all your past misdemeanours are rehearsed and commented on and audience participation is invited. The audience, if it has any sense of self-interest, backs up the Custodian and reminds him of misdemeanours he may have forgotten in the heat of the moment and eggs him on to impose an exemplary sentence. After the show trial you are banned from the hut for life. I much enjoy these little ceremonies when they are applied to others but have taken great care to keep in the goodbooks of Bob Richardson the 'genial Cerberus' in question. The story I am trying to tell you concerns what happened when I was up there on this visit of frank illegality and broke both these fundamental rules. As far as I can remember the events and the moral they led to unfolded like this:*

I LEFT the car park in brilliant winter sunshine with the great white Ben atwinkle like glittering Soracte. In the final hour the weather deteriorated and progress reverted to the usual slow slog through wind and drifting new snow. Once the lights were lit and the hut warmed up I sat relaxing with a coffee and a substantial dram, purring quietly and enjoying the thrill of being alone in a warm pocket of comfort beneath the big, bad Ben. I was hardly settled when there was a rattle at the door which, of course, I ignored. The noise went on and so reluctantly I went to investigate, hardening my heart as I went; someone was going to get a flea in their lug. Immediately I opened the door a figure walked in out of the knock-you-off-your-feet wind without waiting for an invitation. I pushed the door shut against the retinue of snowflakes surging in from the grey gloaming outside. As the flakes settled to the floor, the visitor removed its bonedome, shook out a shock of golden hair and said in a pleasant Scots voice, obviously female, 'Thank God for that. You must be deaf.'

'What's the problem,' I said trying to look dour and unwelcoming, a difficult task when confronting what was emerging as some sort of Storm

Goddess. 'The problem,' she said genially sitting on the bench of the antechamber and taking off her crampons, 'is I've left three loonies up there on the Orion Face. I thought I'd better tell someone important, like a member of the SMC.' She said this with well-modulated irony. 'Besides I need a coffee.'

She wanted a coffee! She wanted in! I ran about inside my mind trying to find the manual for dealing with this emergency. What would Bob expect me to do? Should I ask her if she had booked and if so what the secret password of the week was? Should I point to the door like a Victorian father in a cartoon? I rather liked that scenario. However, my sense of self-preservation saved me. Instead I heard my voice saying: 'Come away in then, lassie.'

After all, I was the President and had a certain authority. Not that that would stand at my trial as anything but an irrelevant technicality, a despicable cry for special treatment requiring a harsher sentence.

I made her a coffee and rather overdid the welcome by pouring her a substantial dram.

'Oh good, Bruachladaich', she said. 'My home island. 'Anns an Ile thughaimh mi, Anns an Ile bhoidheach,' she sang in a simple thrilling voice.

I was entranced. Obviously a character. She had now emerged from her outer clothing as a girl in, I would have guessed, her mid-20s. She had the mischievous, intelligent face of an intellectual gamine.

'So what happened up there on Orion?'

'I'm not sure,' she said, looking puzzled, 'I met this trio in a pub in the Fort last night. Two men and a girl; they wanted to do the Orion Face and asked me to make a fourth so we could climb more quickly as two parties of two. I had been let down by boyfriend (whom I've now discarded) so I joined them. We left when the bar closed and bivvied in our cars at the golf club carpark. It was fine this morning. They moved fast, knew what they were doing and I thought we were going to make it in record time. From the start, however, there had been an 'atmosphere' between the other three. The girl and her boyfriend were tense. The spare man who I climbed with, on the other hand, was a bit laid-back. He was the real leader and I felt he was trying to calm the emotional tension all the time. Anyway, they could all climb fast and well, even though they kept arguing. It came to an end as far as I was concerned with an incomprehensible stushie at the end of the third pitch. The boyfriend, Harry, suddenly wanted to re-arrange the ropes so he could climb with Michael, that's the name of the laid-back character I was roped to. And then he wanted me and Maggie, the girl friend, to climb together as the first rope – something about giving the girls a chance. The climb was well within our capabilities; we were all leading through without difficulty. It would have suited me fine; I like the view from the front. Mike, or Michael, or whatever he was called stopped being laid-back and would have none of it. They started to shout at each other. You don't stay with an

emotionally-unstable party on high grade ice in deteriorating weather – if you want to live. I had made a mistake, so I bailed out. I tried to get Maggie to come with me but she wouldn't leave Harry. So I just abseiled off, leaving them shouting at each other.

'You abseiled off – alone – in this wind?'

'Why not? The wind's only really got up in the last hour. Abseiling isn't all that difficult, you know – would you like a lesson?', she said impishly. Before I could say: 'Yes please, any time you're free,' she continued: 'I had to leave three ice screws behind. Thirty quid, but cheap to escape from that accident waiting to happen. There are times you have to be decisive. Anyway, I thought I would warn the people in the hut here. I'll tell the mountain rescue in the Fort when I go down that there's probably going to be trouble; you know, tell them where they should start looking for the bodies.' She added matter-of-factly. I was reminded of Tom Patey's observation: 'It pays to be realistic on these occasions.'

'Why not wait awhile, they may make it and pass this way coming down from Coire Leis,' I heard myself saying.

'Can't say I want to see them again. Well, I'll have another coffee and then go down. I don't want to hang around. I've things to do.'

From then on we got on very well. Her father was an Ileanach and her mother from Deeside – from the next parish to my own. She was a native Gaelic speaker and familiar with the present literary revival which she talked about brilliantly. I had minimal learning on the topic but, nevertheless, enough to join in an adult conversation and benefit from the poems, stories and general enthusiasm prevailing in her accounts. After a third Bruachladaich I heard myself saying: 'Why not stay for supper? I have a nice bottle of Mouton Cadet and enough steak for two.' In the back of my mind I knew that, if discovered, I would now be banned from the hut for life without the possibility of appeal, but that seemed a trivial inconvenience compared to corrieneuchin cosily with a Storm Goddess over dinner.

'Okay, I'll do the soup,' she declared cheerfully, 'You do the steak.'

We had a very pleasant little party during which the conversation became incandescent. At one stage I surreally agreed to meet her two weekends hence to do Point Five Gully. She was completing a Ph.D. in the social anthropology of some Third World country. Her basic findings seemed to be that in any run-down, declining community it was the men who failed first; any residual intellectual and emotional strength resided in the women who intuitively understood the realities of long-term community survival. True for Scotland, too, she declared. It was the women who were realising that you can't treat the communal home as just another salcable commodity to be frittered away. Scots men she dismissed by singing a few lines from Michael Marra's *Hermless* in a voice appropriately flat and sardonic, followed by some hilarious imitations of well-known figures that, if delivered in public or in print, would have been actionable. The Renaissance in Scotland, she declared, if it comes at all, will come appropriately

enough from women. I valiantly tried to defend us men as equally aware and was just getting into my stride when there was a banging at the door. Naturally, I tried to ignore it. She was more charitable.

'Surely you're going to open it? It may be "them". They may need help'

I tried to explain about the Hut Rules and the fierceness of the Custodian. I had already endangered my standing by letting her in. She said something in Gaelic which sounded withering. When I looked it up later in the dictionary I found out that it translated, roughly, as 'pusillanimous creep'. Gaelic is an expressive language. However, this is not the place for a digression into semantics.

Stung by her body language I went to the door resolved to deal firmly with the situation. I donned a flinty expression and cautiously unnecked the door meaning to conduct a conversation through a crack. Such was the wind pressure I couldn't hold it back from blowing open. Three people blundered into the porch while I was engaged in heaving the door shut again against the wind, snow and darkness billowing in from the outside. It was indeed 'them'. 'Can we come in – my boyfriend is in a bad way,' said a worried female voice.

'I suppose so,' I said reluctantly. What else could I do? They were in point of fact already in. Apart from ruining a pleasant evening discussing important matters concerning the future of Scotland with a well informed fellow Scot and part-time Storm Goddess here was the further infringement of the Rules. If this sort of thing went on, I could end up being the first President to be expelled from the Club while still in office. The trio decramponed, dumped their gear and helped the casualty into the inner room. I crept after them pusillanimously. The situation was getting out of hand.

The casualty was Harry, the boyfriend, a nice-looking young chap about, say, 25. He was indeed in a state of collapse. Maggie, the girlfriend had dark hair, dark eyes – a real stunner. I would have put her in her 30s. She was in a state of high anxiety. Mike seemed a detached, slightly bored bystander,

'He's suddenly become *quite* irrational,' continued the dark lady once inside. 'He's had at *least* one fit. I think he's got a *brain tumour* or something. He's *got* to see a doctor *quickly*.' She somehow very attractively inflected her voice so you knew when she was using italics, an interesting trick. She reminded me of Ursula Cairnwhapple only in a much minor key. We installed Harry in a bunk where he lay on his face moaning and twitching. He seemed in a bad way. We tried to contact someone on the radio but it either wouldn't work or we lacked the technical aptitude to coax it into activity.

'Well I'm going down *now*, he needs a doctor *quickly*,' the dark-eyed Maggie repeated. 'I've *never* seen him like this before.'

I remembered that once upon a time I had been a doctor and offered to take a look. I got Harry onto his back and examined him with my head

torch. I took his pulse and managed to see his pupils were equal and reacted to light.

'It's that bastard Mike', he moaned. 'I wanted to fall off and take him with me.'

Whatever was wrong with him it wasn't a brain tumour.

'He seems to be having some sort of anxiety neurosis or maybe a hysterical episode', I said delivering a likely diagnosis to the surrounding circle of waiting laity.

'Nonsense,' said the girlfriend contemptuously, 'He's not the type.'

I was never very convincing as a doctor – I didn't seem to have lost my touch.

'I'm going down now to get help. A helicopter with a proper doctor must come up first thing in the morning.' She said this firmly in an authoritative boarding school accent. Everyone tried to dissuade her but she was neither to hold or to bind. She snatched a cup of coffee prior to departure and sat by Harry keeping an affectionate hand on him.

'You can't go down the glen alone in a night like this,' declared the Storm Goddess. 'I'm going with you.'

'Why can't Mike here go with her, it's *his* responsibility,' I said desperately, lapsing inadvertently into italics myself at the thought of losing the company of the Storm Goddess.

Michael, however, declared quite emphatically that he didn't think it necessary.

'I think the Doctor here is right. Harry'll be all right after a rest. Go down if you want. I'll stay with him here until he gets a grip of himself.'

The Storm Goddess went off to get booted and spurred. When she came back she quickly pencilled her telephone number on a piece of paper torn from a Ryvita wrapper. She handed it to me with a ravishing smile saying: 'Give me a ring to confirm arrangements for Point Five.'

I saw the two of them to the door. At the threshold the Goddess and I spontaneously struck the palms of our upraised hands together as if we were Pavarotti and Placido Domingo changing places on centre stage. 'Hang in there', she said mischievously nodding her head towards the inner room where Michael the laid back and Harry the recumbent had remained. She vanished into the swirling snow from whence she had come leaving a void behind her. The flame in my heart became a bonfire

So there I was left with these two unwelcome men. I sat down and started to read without trying to hide my ill-temper. Michael, a handsome bastard who might be pushing 30, if that, sat there pleasantly minding his own business with a sort of regal equanimity. An occasional moan came from Harry. After about half-an-hour my sense of hospitality returned. They were after all strangers and it was a dark and stormy night. I really ought to offer the honours due to unfortunate travellers. In spite of the hut regulations. Bob might never find out. You never knew your luck.

'How about some soup and beans on toast. It's all I've left.'

'Okay', he said pleasantly. 'I'll give a hand. I have some brandy if you have three glasses.' He got a commendably large, matt-black flask out of his sack and poured three substantial shots. It was a very, very fine brandy indeed with a rich complex bouquet redolent of Flora and the country green. While I reconstituted some soup and heated up the beans, he cut the bread and made toast. We conversed easily and he dispelled my smouldering resentment. He had a civilised manner, spoke a curiously correct English with pleasant Scottish vowels and unblurred consonants with maybe a hint of an Australian type of vowel shift. He easily opened me out. He found out that my mother came from Deeside. His mother, he averred, came from Donside and his father from Ettrickdale in the Borders. Anyone who was anyone in the hut tonight seemed to have Aberdeenshire connections. From then on I noticed he developed a pleasant Aberdeenshire intonation with an occasional unforced use of Doric. 'I suppose Harry comes from Aberdeenshire too,' I said to fill a hole in the conversation. 'Yes, as a matter of fact, on his father's side he's from the Howe of Alford and his mother is from Caithness with Orcadian grandparents; they were neighbours of mine. Maggie is from one of the big hooes near Auchterless (she's supposed to be descended from the trumpeter of Fyvie – although it's not talked about in the family) and her father's from the Stewartry or maybe next door in Galloway. I can't remember which. So we are all a bit of a mixture.'

Michael went over to the bunk, shook the twitching Harry and said impatiently: 'Come on Harry snap out of it. Supper's ready.' He heaved Harry from the bunk and draped him over a bowl of soup and made him sip some brandy. He gradually cheered up and hoovered up his share of the soup and beans. My diagnosis about him must have been right – he had been having a hysterical episode. The number of correct diagnoses I have made in my professional life-time was beginning to approach double figures.

The rest of the evening passed very pleasantly as the seemingly bottomless bottle of aromatic brandy circulated. The pair of them worked for some international conglomerate. He wouldn't say which for 'security reasons' – you had to be careful – industrial espionage and all that. 'Economics is war by other means to paraphrase one of our directors,' said Michael. They were very well informed about international affairs with fascinating and very plausible stories about what was really happening in the world with an impressive historical perspective. I kept my end up as best I could but was completely out-classed by both of them. Their historical knowledge seemed encyclopaedic. They appeared to have met anyone who was anyone in the last couple of hundred years. Under the influence of the mellow, aromatic brandy we became more and more relaxed. Michael authenticated his Aberdeenshire connections by singing *The Burning of Auchindoun* and the original version of the *Jolly Beggar*. He gave an interesting first-hand account of how Byron picked up this ancient ballad

in some inn near Aboyne and respectabilised it into, *We'll go no more a-roving by the light of the moon.*

I tried to keep my end up by singing *The Soutar's Feast* but during the first verse I saw Harry and Mike exchanging glances. Harry then put his hand on my shoulder and said: 'Na, na, laddie. No' like that. Mair like this.' And he sang it authentically and what's more, in tune.

'Singin's no' your gift,' he said kindly.

'Pity Maggie isn't here, though,' he continued gloomily, 'She can do a really belligerent Eppie Morrie.

'Maggie, sing Eppie Morrie? With that accent?'

'She may have been to a boarding school but she never lost her roots,' said Harry with some asperity. 'All the modern gentry aren't wersh as dishwater. They're beginning to come back home, culturally speaking, that is. They're taking their time but they're getting there. Maggie writes songs herself. There's a bit of Jean Elliot and Carolina Oliphant in her. A bit of Eppie Morrie, too', he said looking rueful.

I could well see the resemblance with the last. A cross between Eppie Morrie and Ursula Cairnwhapple however attractive the packaging was a femme formidable indeed.

Michael stood up, shook his head sadly at Harry and said: 'If it hadn't been for yon carry on of yours we'd have had the lassies with us still and had a much better evening.'

I agreed, mentioning that the Storm Goddess had a thrilling voice and I'd love to have heard her singing *Fagail do'n Aite* again.

'Storm Goddess?' queried Harry.

'Yes, the girl who left with Maggie.' I then realised we hadn't even exchanged names. We'd been discussing much more important things.

Mike at this point rummaged in his pack and brought out some dried bananas. I'll make some *bananes brulés* for dessert he declared, grabbing the brandy bottle and a bag of sugar and moving off to the stove. Meanwhile, I chatted to the now completely-revived Harry who was explaining to me in fascinating detail about conversations with W. S. Bruce and some of the difficulties he had in organising the Scotia Expedition. He then told some stories about Raeburn and Naismith which included some reported speech. I presumed he had culled these from early Journals. Although I am a student of these volumes I couldn't place the articles. I must have missed them somehow. Over his shoulder I could see the dark profile of Michael back-lit by the flaring brandy as he bruléed his bananas. The brandy must have been well up the proof scale to make flames that size.

The bananas when they came were excellent. They were so good I ended by taking up my plate in both hands and licking it clean. I caught Michael looking at me quizzically but I felt too well-brandied to be embarrassed. As the conviviality progressed he gradually wove the following story into the conversation.

'I would like you to listen to this proposition, Since you are a doctor I can be quite direct and technical about it. Our pharmaceutical division has developed a system that can reverse the process of ageing. You don't believe me, of course, but let me explain. It's all quite logical. As you know the body is held together by a connective tissue called collagen. Most body components turn over their component molecules – collagen doesn't. Over the years the amount of it slowly increases and, worse still, changes chemically to become rigid and brittle. We accumulate the stuff round our blood vessels. The nutrition of peripheral tissue becomes diminished, an inner hand slowly strangles us. This gradual deterioration is known as ageing. My company has perfected a system which promotes the turnover of collagen. It removes the old stuff, replaces it with new springy, pliable, youthful material. The strangulation is undone and the nutrition of peripheral tissue increases. In short you become young again, but you retain the knowledge, experience and wisdom you have already acquired.'

I questioned him about the details of the enzymology and molecular dynamics underlying this hypothesis and it all seemed to hang together. I really enjoy these surrealistic conversations. I had just had one with the halliracket Storm Goddess when I agreed to join her on Point Five. I also remembered another one in a ritzy ski resort in the Alps when I found myself in a dinner party with some young millionaires. I got so carried away I thought I was one myself and seriously discussed joining a consortium to buy an enormous ocean racing yacht, chipping in my quarter million for the purchase and 50 grand annually for basic running expenses.

On another occasion years ago I once got a lift from a man who said he was a spiritualist who could foretell exactly the future. Consequently, he could drive without the usual precautions, overtaking on blind corners and so on. He proved his point. Nothing remotely near an accident happened during a hair-raising 50-mile drive. The present situation was to my mind based more firmly on reality than any of these. The discovery of a cure for ageing is much more likely than my becoming a millionaire or someone being able to predict the future exactly enough to risk his and everybody else's life on it many times in the course of a single drive or, alas, my being able to have a convincing go at Point Five Gully and shine in the eyes of the dangerously attractive Storm goddess, a *Belle Dame sans Merci* if ever there was one who shed unsatisfactory boyfriends like autumn leaves.

So I led him on. At the very least this was going to make a good story to tell later on round some fireside or maybe even (as it has turned out) as an article for the Journal. Mike was a good story-teller. He made the very valid point that the brain is capable of acquiring knowledge and skills for maybe a couple of hundred years or more if it could be kept in a physiologically young body. He pointed out that for many intelligent people it was the rate at which the brain can assimilate and process experience that limits us intellectually. For most of us it takes 60 years to complete our primary education. By then you've got over most of your hang-ups and are

beginning to be really educable. He went on about the new horizons of understanding that could be crossed, the joy of unhurried contemplation of interesting problems and the time to do things properly.

It is good policy in bizarre conversations like this to introduce a practical point to see how they wriggle out of it so I said: 'Mike, this technology is all pretty state-of-the-art stuff, yet you two seem to have been around a long time. You speak of David Hume, Adam Smith and Henry Dundas as if you knew them personally. If you did, how come you knew all this modern molecular biology before it was invented.'

'We've known how to do it for long enough, but now we know why it happens. In the old days we had found out empirically that a certain herbal regime is effective. Now we have isolated the active principles and can do it much better. It would be a disaster if it was generally available, as you can imagine. As it is we could corrupt anyone we choose, but we do not choose so to do. (He quoted here the first half of Shakespeare's Sonnet xciv – the one that begins: 'They that have the power to hurt and will do none'.) So we only consider as candidates people who have the intellectual and emotional self-control to cope with it. Most importantly, they must not be cursed with anything so boring and unoriginal as conventional ambition, still less with a coarsely competitive spirit or the desire to excel in public; all these defects carry with them the overwhelming need for status, honour, fame, recognition and all that sort of juvenilia. In our field, inconspicuousness is mandatory, as you can imagine. An off-beat, low-profile, late developer like you might be a suitable candidate.'

'Me off beat? Me a late developer? How come?'

'It's the way you behave. You're not averse to listening and learning and you reach your conclusions obliquely in a way that appeals to me. You also seem to be a case of only mild ambition, almost certainly curable. Besides when I saw you licking your plate, I knew that in spite of your white hair you hadn't quite yet made it as an adult – you may have some potential left.'

'Well, I'm going to do the dishes.' He said this as if to underline the matter-of-factness of the whole proposition. 'You can check with Harry here. He'll tell you about the disadvantages. He'll tell you why he tried to kill me today and ended up having a bubble in the bunk.'

'Well Harry you didn't look all that happy a while ago. What's it all about? What's the catch?'

'The catch is that Michael is the only one who knows how to do it: he runs the show; he makes the rules. Otherwise it's just as he said; you become physiologically young again. You feel good – physical and intellectual activities become an effortless joy again. What's on offer, mind you, is life not happiness; as everybody knows the two are different. You're not immune to the thousand natural shocks that flesh is heir to and all that. That burden has still to be borne. Also be quite clear about this, it's longevity we're talking about not immortality. We're dealing with the real physical world, not with metaphysics – that word makes me feel like reaching for

my revolver. Forget Mephistopheles. We wouldn't touch a character like Faust again with the longest pitchfork in the Howe of Alford. We couldna thole a' yon greetin and girnin and cairryin on. The mere thought of Faust made him turn to the Doric to express himself adequately.

Briefly, he explained about the obvious difficulties in outliving your friends and next of kin, the need to disappear and get a new identity every decade or so. They hadn't been back to Scotland since Patrick Geddes's time. They had been in Australia in recent years hence the Oz-type vowels. It was safe to return to Scotland now that everyone they had known before was 'safely dead' – a phrase that brought out a wry and weary smile. He was currently in love with Maggie but she was growing broody and wanted children and, moreover, was becoming a little suspicious that she was getting crowsfeet and he wasn't. She was starting the normal transformation from nymph into matriarch. Maggie was a good sort. He wanted Michael to invite her into the longevity club but the Rule was 'no broody females' – for very obvious reasons. Today, Harry said he'd been badly depressed and had thought of getting Mike to start leading the second rope on Orion and then threatening to pull him off if he didn't let Maggie join. 'You get these black, black, depressions,' he said. 'But you get over them too and I now realise that Mike is right. Maggie would complicate things hopelessly; she'd try to found a dynasty – imagine the complications over the years she'd try to turn the whole thing into a family business with herself as ruling matriarch. As for you, Mike has made you an offer, that's all. You'll have to do the following up and have a lot, and I mean a lot, of discussion before you are accepted. Meanwhile, these drams of brandy seem to have perked you up wonderfully.'

He said this last sentence raising his glass so the light could shine through it. Michael, meanwhile, had dried and stacked the dishes and had been outside to look at the weather. It was much better and there was a bit of a moon. He and Harry would go down now to abort any rescue preparations that Maggie had started up.

'Keeping this show on the road is not free from problems,' he said cheerfully and then with a kind smile: 'Fortunately, we don't need as much sleep as you oldies.'

They dressed up and as he left Michael gave me a card on which he'd written a telephone number. 'Give me a ring if you want to discuss things further.' We shook hands. Good firm handshakes from both of them. I realised that I actually liked these two odd-balls. I watched from the door as they bounded off into the moonlight as lithe and light as deer. At the bottom of the first slope Harry stopped for a moment and turned to give me a final friendly wave.

I returned to the hut. The door clicked shut behind me. I felt I was on the wrong side of it. I sat at the table in the lamplight all alone, solitary and by myself. (The repetition is necessary to convey the echoing emptiness pervading both me and the silent tomb-like hut.) Mike had left a last

brimming glass of brandy; he'd taken away the matt-black bottle, alas. The bouquet made me think of a flowery meadow burgeoning with life on a summer morning with maybe a background hint of earth after rain. The phone numbers of the Storm Goddess and the man who said he wasn't Mephistopheles lay in front of me. I hoped I'd have the sense never to ring either. Nevertheless, I put the two numbers in my pocketbook, in the slot, as it happened, that also held my Senior Citizen's Railcard where they made a succinct little trio.

Not so long ago life had been so simple, merely a matter of wandering on downhill until meeting with some more or less disagreeable terminal event to be borne with whatever dignity one was allowed – now the High Country and the Great Climbs were again on offer. None of this anguish would have happened, of course, if I had just obeyed the rules and kept the bloody door shut.

*This account is given as it happened. Someday I may get round to writing down the full, untelescoped story, including the sequel. This sort of knowledge, however, is not for everyone which is why it is appearing in the pages of an obscure mountaineering journal where few will find it. With any luck it will even escape the notice of Bob Richardson until he demits office.*

## RESURRECTION

It might have been part  
of a serrated pick  
from an early axe, the ragged notion  
of a rusted adze,  
broken and buried in frozen schist.  
Aschenbrenner awaiting resurrection.

But only lines and scrawls  
etched on to bone  
convey the bitten edge of death  
torqued within a frosted wall.  
Rationalised as sheep remains,  
level with my floating breath.

My pick twins in the cleft,  
meshing scarred edges,  
and aids the movement and wonder  
upward through the frost  
to a place of skulls  
and a shadow at the mirror.

Donald M. Orr.

## IN THE SHADOW OF GIANTS

By Simon Richardson

I KNEW something was up when Roger Webb remained coy about his whereabouts during the last few weeks of the 1994 winter season. My suspicions were confirmed when he came on the phone at the end of March and asked whether he could borrow a size-10 Hex. I offered him an 11, but no, it had to be a 10, and further questioning only brought a tantalising mention of an unclimbed overhanging corner-crack somewhere in the North West.

All was revealed the following week when Roger rang with news of a new route with Simon Steer on the north face of Quinag. 'Front face of Barrel Buttress . . . great soaring corner . . . must be Raeburn's original line . . . finished in the dark . . .'

'How was the overhanging crack?'

'Took the ramp to the left . . . but the crack looks brilliant . . . must go back . . . really futuristic . . . just up your street . . . we'll have to give it a try next winter . . .'

The 1995 New Year was cold and snowy, and it was impossible to ignore Roger's crack on Quinag. Roger was thinking along the same lines, and after an excited phone call, we agreed to attempt the route the very next day. I set off from Aberdeen on a bitterly cold January night, and two hours later I was knocking on Roger's front door in Inverness. I'd hardly set foot in the house when Roger handed me a steaming cup of coffee and sat me in front of the projector. The slides told the story. He'd been to Quinag six times the previous winter. Up Cooper's, down Y Gully, an ascent of Cave Gully, and then two attempts on Raeburn's route before success. Roger had saved the most important slide to last, and a picture full of black overhangs appeared on the screen. 'There's the crack' said Roger, pointing towards an evil-looking slit piercing the centre of the roofs. 'But it looks desperate,' I wailed. 'Don't worry, my lead,' said Roger firmly, as he turned off the projector.

Driving through Coigach at five next morning the drifts were piled high either side of the road, well above the height of the car. The prospect of difficult winter climbing with so much powder seemed a remote prospect. I suggested leaving Barrel Buttress for another day, and trying something shorter on Stac Pollaidh instead, but Roger was insistent. We were going to Quinag. Things felt a little better when we left the car and set off across the moor. The snow was drifted in the hollows, but it was quick going over the heather as we traversed under the east face of Sail Gharbh. Ice glistened all around, and as we turned the corner below the north face,

dawn broke revealing the steep profile of Barrel Buttress to our right. The lower section looked steep enough, but the upper section bulged in an unmistakable barrel shape. A great corner slashed through the left side of the buttress. Dauntingly steep, and totally compelling, I immediately understood why Roger had kept coming back.

We moved quickly up easy, mixed ground on the lower tier, and were in position at the base of the corner by eight. It was a beautiful morning with a spectacular view looking north towards Foinaven, and to the west the snowline was down to the sea. We were in luck, for a strong north wind the previous day had stripped off much of the loose snow, and the buttress was coated with névé and dribblings of ice. The corner soared above. It looked impossibly steep, but at its back there was a crack, and in winter, where there is a crack there is always hope.

Roger led off up to where the crack steepened, and placed the size-10 Hex. Above, the crack thinned, and then became blank although there was a hopeful patch of turf 3m higher. All around the rock overhung. Roger tentatively made another move, then promptly reversed it. 'I don't want to do this. I've been here too many times before. I'm coming down.'

There was a finality about Roger's statement which surprised me. It couldn't have come at a worse moment, with my confidence already at a low ebb. Stac Pollaidh would have been a far more sensible option. This climb was clearly going to be far too hard. I deliberately took my time racking the gear, and slowly climbed up to the Hex. It was a poor placement, and it rocked unreassuringly, pivoting on two corners in an icy crack. Eventually, I moved up as Roger had done, and managed to hang on long enough to place an angle just below where the crack faded. I came back down to rest. 'You can see why Raeburn went left up the ramp,' shouted up Roger. 'That's the way Simon and I went last year.'

Another try, but it was hopeless. The corner was far too steep and totally devoid of footholds. I could see how to make the moves, but I needed arms like an orang-utan. As I came back down to rest again, I spotted a line of holds leading out right. 'Where are you going?' inquired Roger as I started to move across the right wall.

'Just having a look.'

'It looks impossible from down here. How will you get back into the corner?'

'Just watch the rope will you.'

At the end of the traverse I was beginning to regret my impulsiveness. The peg runner that had been above me when I started the traverse was now a long way to my left. I was severely out of balance, and my strength was fading fast. In desperation, I lurched up a series of flat holds above and belly-flopped into a niche. Above there were some ominous-poised blocks, and gingerly I edged past them to gain the crack above. I pulled

up tentatively on good torques, and then hesitated. Some climbs you just don't deserve, and deep down I knew this was one, but the crack was better than it looked from below and much to my surprise I continued to move up. Eventually, the crack faded at the same level as a big platform in the corner. I began to cheer up. The pitch was surely in the bag if only I could traverse back left into the corner. A little higher I found a series of rounded holds leading back left. Protection was awkward, but after brushing off the loose snow, I teetered delicately left, crampons scratching on tiny edges to reach the ledge.

A wave of elation swept over me. Above the corner was steep, but clearly climbable. We were going to get up this route after all. I looked down the rope hanging in space to Roger a rope-length below. What an amazing pitch! Totally unlikely, spectacular and exposed. Surely this was a route for the 21st century.

Roger arrived on the ledge with a broad grin. Full of confidence, he pulled over a huge, jammed block above my head and dealt with the off-width crack above in style. The final pitch started with a brutal overhang followed by another chimney set in a fantastic position and we suddenly emerged on the top of the buttress in brilliant sunshine. Despite the short January day it was still early, and there was plenty of time to continue over the main summit, and reach the car in daylight.

Later that evening, back home in Aberdeen, the phone rang. It was Roger. 'Have you read the Area Guide?'

'No, I've only just got in.'

'Its got Raeburn's original description. Listen to this: "The first chimney . . . a narrow crack, overhanging and impossible . . . a ledge on the right is taken . . . large blocks of rock . . . none too secure . . . back into the chimney . . . large jammed block . . . entrance of the next chimney is a large overhang . . . climbing is sensational . . . rock excellent . . ."

There was little more to say. Our route of the 21st century was merely a winter ascent of the original line climbed by Raeburn, Mackay and Ling in 1906. Suitably humbled, I went to bed.

## NOT QUITE FOGGY TALK

By P. J. Biggar

Fool: If thou wert my fool, Nuncle, I'd have thee beaten for being old before thy time.

Lear: How's that?

Fool: Thou shouldst not have been old, till thou hadst been wise.

(*Lear I, iv, 38-42*).

MY DICTIONARY defines the term 'fogey' as 'a dull old fellow: a person with antiquated notions.' And it adds: 'Probably from *foggy* in the sense of moss-grown.'

There we were then, three old fogeys out for our annual spree of winter climbing, and resting our bones each night in the Smiddy at Dundonnell. Though we were old we were not without ambition. One of us had even come with a shopping list of things he thought might be done during the week. His list contained three items – the traverse of An Teallach, the ascent of Penguin Gully on Beinn Dearg and, for the end of the week when we meant to move on to Ben Nevis, Tower Ridge. It was a good list, and, to be fair to its author, he did say that the week would be well spent if even one thing on it was accomplished.

As it turned out it was, for, with much huffing and scuffling and pulling down of woolly bonnets, we traversed An Teallach on firm snow-ice, never even using the rope we had carried because we weren't sure we wouldn't need it. *And this is fogey-talk.*

Well satisfied we wandered, the next day, over a little hill and played on little crags, looked at rocks, gathered firewood, talked to the sheep and sat poking at the fire. Into the midst of this congenial old fogiedom came young Richard, a first-year student at a venerable place of learning. A gangling, gawky youth of some 18 summers and already, so we'd heard, a tyro on rock; he had come to continue his infant researches into the arcane delights of winter climbing. *This too is fogey talk.* He had long legs, a lop-sided grin, big feet, enthusiasm and plastic boots.

Preconceived notions about what might be done, which are no more than an airy nothing in the mind of the thinker, have a marked tendency to insinuate themselves into the actions of a group. The next item on the list was Penguin Gully. It might have been anything at all, but because it was what it was, we either chose to, or it was determined that we should, go to Gleann-na-Squaib the following day. Further, because I happened to have climbed with the young fellow before, we were to make one rope,

while Phil and Mike were to make the other. Having preconceived notions about what routes one might climb, especially in winter, is a mistake – it narrows the focus and herds the mentality. Age and experience, it seems, bring no immunity from this error. *More fogey talk.*

Each partnership went in a separate vehicle. This looked like common-sense, considering different possibilities for the end of the day, but herein also, perhaps, was a psychological error – two vehicles, two ropes, two partnerships. All of this breeds unspoken rivalry, and, as it so happened, the very breaching of the hostile barriers which bar the would-be climber from the long approach to Gleann-na-Squaib, reinforced this rivalry. The gate was open; the Forester's back was turned. Richard and I sped on and upwards in the little red van.

As we put on our boots at the top of the track where the pine woods end and the glen becomes suddenly stark and mountainous, we jokingly considered the possibility that the other two would have to walk. To our shame, the picture of our friends puffing up the track under heavy sacks was an object of merriment, and we were guiltily relieved when the sound of Mike's Jeep was heard. I fancy I know exactly the kind of conversation they had about us while driving up through the woods.

'We stopped and asked permission,' said Mike with self-conscious virtue. 'They said someone in a red Ford Escort went hammering past,' he added.

'We'll be all right though,' said Phil. 'They said they wouldn't lock up till we got down.' Actually, neither of these gentlemen is in a particularly strong position to criticise the unlawful incursions of others. There was the famous occasion when one of them was threatened with the wrath of the Procurator-Fiscal in Fort William for attempting to drive to the Dam on Ben Nevis, and the other has his lawless fits too, mainly with the Laird's salmon, but I was suitably chagrined and could only mutter something feeble about having to take these chances when one could.

Ignoring the querulousness of his companions, young Richard had set off up the track and the mutterings of the middle-aged men soon subsided as we made efforts, not to keep up, but just to keep him in sight. At our backs, out over Loch Broom, rain clouds were massing. The good, cold conditions of our An Teallach day had gone and it was plain that a thaw was beginning.

There is a point in the narrow glen where one has to cross the main burn to gain access to the crags. This crossing is often by a snow-bridge. On a good day one would hardly know it is a bridge, but today Richard put one of his big feet right through and the sound of rushing water below the snow was very loud. The omens were bad.

We foregathered by a huge boulder below the lower crag. I recalled sheltering here on a bitterly-cold day on my last visit. Then the track had

been glazed and all the cliffs sheeted in ice. My partner and I had considered Orangeman's Gully and had been repelled by its steepness, real or illusory, but we had gone to the other end of the doctrinal spectrum and climbed Fenian Gully – four rope lengths of hard frozen delight ending in sunshine by the snow covered dyke. Today was not like that. Rock faces were black and wet; ice-pitches were going from gloss to matt. Aurally too, the signs were not good: the hollow ricochet of falling ice heard above the drip and splatter. Up on Emerald Gully icicles were streaming, and The Reverend Ian Paisley's feet were composed not of clay but an avalanche cone. We did note that Orangeman's at least had no impending cornice above it. But all the signs were bad for climbing and we were subject to those feelings of uncertainty which beset the climber on a questionable day. No-one wanted to commit himself, so we wandered on up the valley hoping things would improve.

One of the items on the list was Penguin Gully, and towards the upper part of the glen we now turned. For no obvious reason, Phil got ahead at this point and Mike was not far behind him. A few minutes earlier we had agreed that we did not want to embark on Penguin as a rope of four. The approach of bad weather from the S.W. would not be long delayed. The route is long and the thought of reaching the top in dark and rain was not appealing. Things seemed to be sorting themselves out. As Richard came up to me, I asked if he fancied having a look at Orangeman's instead. He agreed, and I shouted and gestured to Mike who was by this time well ahead. I knew he didn't hear what I said, but I guessed that he realised that Richard and I would go to some other route, and he waved before going on.

Two cars, two ropes and now two routes. Here again that tiny maleficent sting of competition entered the sub-conscious . . .

'And what did you two do in the end?'

'Oh we got up Orangeman's.'

'Oh very good . . .'

Richard and I paused for a cup of tea from his splendid unbreakable flask before setting off up the lower slopes. We were glad that the irksomeness of indecision was over; pleased to be able to concentrate not on the difficult business of reasoning, but on the simple activity of climbing. We ignored the last sign – a sudden rise in temperature consequent on our choosing a route sheltered, as Penguin would not have been, from the chilly breeze now blowing up the glen in advance of the coming weather.

As I have learned to do, I prayed on the way up to the climb. It was just the usual prayer which asks for bread and forgiveness. My mind was calm and focused. I belayed by the cave at the foot of the climb and Richard set off up the slabs of the first pitch. I stood well away from the wall to avoid

falling water, and Richard, as he climbed, took pains to keep his mitts off the slushy surface of the ice. Neither of us was made aghast by the conditions in which we were climbing. In my case it can only be because I am the slave of bad habits. Richard could plead comparative ignorance. Together we took comfort in the fact that there was no cornice directly above us, our route ending in a shallow upper funnel or bowl.

For two pitches the gully twisted its way through steep rock by slab and snow slope. As I came to the top of the second pitch I could see a good chimney ahead; steep and divided vertically into two channels by a blade of rock. The left runnel looked the better, but I had run out of rope and looked for a belay. There was a well-sheltered bay under the right wall and out of the line of the chimney. Reaching well above me on the rather shattered wall I found a knob of solid-seeming rock sticking out from the surface. Behind it there was a narrow crack which accepted a small nut on a wire. I tied into this with the yellow rope, but did not judge it good enough, so I went through all the labour of placing a Deadman as well, in glutinous, wet, semi-icy material. I tied the pink rope to the Deadman. Shouts of youthful impatience drifted up from below: 'You can just wait you young mucker,' I muttered below my breath.

When the ropes were tight between me and both anchors, I brought him up. The last time I had climbed with young Richard, he had been a little hesitant when confronted by steep ice. Now the hesitation was gone. He placed a runner, a blade peg with extension, and moved confidently up the chimney. He was attacking the ice in calculating fashion and not pausing too long between each move. The top of the pitch, where the material thinned, proved a little troublesome, but he overcame the difficulty and, with a whoop, vanished from sight into easier ground. I began to relax and enjoy myself as the ropes ran out. At least we would have something to tell the others when we got back to the hut.

The ropes kept moving. The chimney was perhaps 40ft, and Richard had gone a fair way beyond that when a small fragment of compacted snow came smacking down the ice above me. Then a brick-sized lump fell, then several concrete blocks; everything darkened and, with a demolition roar the rest of the building plunged down the gully. In the splittings of seconds I had left I saw Richard's runner whisked from the rock. I screamed out: 'Now Hold!' and hunched myself down. The ropes were round my waist and hands.

As the massive downward pull came on me I heard a small click above my head as the nut settled down in its crack, and I saw out of the corner of an eye, the Deadman burrowing deeper into the slope. The next thing I really knew about was being lifted like a puppet from my feet and slapped carelessly, face first, against the rock wall. The ropes had been torn from my grasp. I was pinned tightly against the wall by the ropes, my

feet some inches from the snow. In sheer wonderment I cried out: 'It held! It held!' Then the realisation came to me that my partner was on the other end of the ropes – and he was not just my partner, he was my son.

Everything in me listened to the appalling silence. 'Lord have mercy! Christ have mercy!' I began to wriggle and struggle to free myself from the pressure of the ropes, and all the time I was listening to the silence below.

'Richard . . .' My voice sounded thin and hopeless.

'Richard! Are you all right?' Lunatic inquiry. How could he be all right? At that moment I'd have swapped not knowing for a chance of life.

My struggles at length got me out from behind the strapping of the ropes but I still couldn't move much because of the weight pulling me down. My mind began to devise schemes of escape. Which rope should I release? Could I free myself and claw my way down using the rope as a handrail? Could I shift the knots in any case? I had a knife . . . Another voice in me urged caution: you are shocked, it said; do nothing for a moment or two; things are bad, don't make them worse.

'Lord have mercy! Christ . . .' And the miraculous thing happened. Ever so slowly the tension on the ropes eased. There was motion, then, on the other end? And if motion . . . Life. With desperate eagerness I used the developing slack to move out from the bay in which I stood so that I could look down the route. A dark figure stood, framed by the dirty snow below the first pitch. At first I couldn't hear what he said, and had to ask him to repeat it. He was asking if I was all right! I wanted to weep for sheer relief, but I could not afford that luxury. I had to extricate myself and I also knew I could place no reliance on his assurances as to his condition, for he must be clinically shocked and could easily be suffering from concussion or internal injuries.

I shouted to him to untie so that I could use the ropes to abseil. The message seemed to take a long time to get through and that worried me, but in reality I think he acted quite quickly – my anxiety magnified the time. The brooding silence all around was broken only by the slight sounds I made as I arranged my getaway. Received wisdom said that a second avalanche was unlikely but with shock and fear working on me I didn't feel so sure.

The knot joining the yellow rope to the wire in the wall was utterly compacted. I had to untie from my waist and join the pink rope to my former waist loop which still trailed a figure of eight. The knots on the pink rope by contrast were relatively easy to undo. The yellow rope, it seemed must have taken almost all the force of the fall. When all was ready I took one last look at the place; I had no doubts about my anchor.

There was blood on the snow below the slabs of the first pitch, and the ropes ran out before I reached the bottom, but I slithered down the last few

feet. Richard and I, beyond a handshake, have not embraced for several years, but as I staggered down towards him I held out my arms. When we released each other I turned back towards the gully and said three words of thanks for our deliverance.

His nose was bloody but not bleeding and his limbs seemed sound. I felt him all over, but he complained of no serious pain. His pupils, of course, were widely dilated. Presently, we found that there was no blood in his urine. His helmet had only superficial damage, but one crampon had been snapped and one of the rear points was twisted through 90°. We tottered under the shelter of the buttress where it seemed best to talk and drink tea from his truly unbreakable flask, and in this way give complications time to show themselves. We estimated that he must have fallen some 200ft; nor had his fall been merely down the gully bed, for the route twists in and out of rock steps and it is probable that the avalanche came over these. The holding of the belay meant that he was dragged clear of the falling debris and not taken down into the cone. Of course, it was the easy-angled funnel at the top of the route which had avalanched – as I should have known it was likely to do in the prevailing conditions.

Retreating down the slopes we found his axe. As we paused I looked back at the cliffs: two dark little figures were kicking their way up an easy gully. Numbly, I registered that they were probably Mike and Phil. We could do nothing and turned away.

Down in Ullapool, Dr Stewart confirmed that there was no serious damage. A twisted knee, some abrasions of the chest and most interesting pink eyes for a few weeks were the worst of the physical effects for Richard. 'Get him back up there as soon as you can,' the kindly doctor said.

Back in the golden whisky-glow of the Smiddy the others listened to our tale. They had, in the end, attempted Fenian Gully, but had wisely given up after the first pitch, consoling themselves by ascending Inverlael Gully instead, in which the snow, though not good, was probably firmed by the breeze to which, like Penguin, that route is exposed. We showed them Richard's crampon and the knot in the yellow rope. Each had his turn at shifting it, none could. It took a blunt screwdriver and a vice to do that job. We tore the list up: none of us got to the Ben that year.

Everyone – my friends, the Doctor, Richard, the boy's mother and God himself it seemed, refused to judge. But as for me, I was wandering alone over Rois Bheinn on a sunny day in June, some three months later when I found myself quietly weeping and repeating over and over again: 'It held! It held!' Some writers will tell you that mountaineering is a sport. Do not believe them. Mountaineering is a sport only if life itself is one. And this is fogey talk, *and yet not quite*: some miles away, over in Torridon, Richard was fishing the hill-lochs with his girlfriend.

## TALES OF A TRUSTIE (SIC)\*

By David Hughes

MY GOD, it was steep and that was the path, or would have been the path, if there had been a path, which there wasn't, but there may be now but there wasn't then, so there it is, or there it was, and there we were, and it was steep, but we were now at the rock, and it was very steep, and can we go home now please.

So we sorted out the gear, such as it was – two full-weight, hairy, hawser-laid having-seen-much-better-days 120-ft bits of Viking, and a dozen even hairier slings. He did boast a peg hammer and a few assorted bits of mild steel – Chouinard and chrome moly were light years away.

Protection is the game, and with the rock overhanging in two planes and the ground overhanging as well it seemed a good idea. There was a lot of 'what if' discussion about coming off, but then leaders never came off, so after a couple of hours fiddling with jammed knots (usually knackerer my slings) off we went, or he went and in a bit he reached a peg and hammer (abandoned). I didn't have a hammer before, but now I did 'cos I'd to take the peg out, and I've still got them both. Never throw anything away – it might come in . . .

And so to the big lay back, which I loved, because in those days I was twice as strong and half the weight and I couldn't jam any better than I can now so I laybacked everything and it was easy, and so we (or I) landed at this grimacing belay on a peg which was slotted in behind a flake – no hammer required – it was loose. And as was our habit it was getting dark and so, by a long, rising featureless, leftward-trending ramp I fled into the gloom, runnerless as usual, and we pleasantly terraced our way down to the glen and the pub. It was shut. No extensions from MacNiven in those days. And we left it for a year. Half-way we had got.

Next year we got serious and camped at the bottom, and sorted out the gear beforehand. The ropes were the same, but he'd liberated a pair of PA's – I was still in Arvon's boots, and it was still steep.

I do believe I've heard that on big walls the second goes up effortlessly behind some mechanical gadget called a Jumar. We didn't have any of those but I was fed-up with this nasty overhanging bit at the beginning so I climbed up the rope and was belayed by the other – much quicker and easier – and after a bit and a layback we appeared at this flake again. And the same peg still rocked in the same slot, so I tied on and sat on my heels below it to keep it in tension, and put my anorak hood up (Blacks sailcloth – like armour plate) and suffered five hours of bombardment from assorted shittite and vegetation.

The mind goes blank under these circumstances, but I did eventually realise that, as usual, it was getting dark; nasty black clouds were gathering round us.

It's interesting watching lightning flash below you; and then: 'Can you tie two ropes together?'

'Yes, why?'

'I think we'd better ab off.' I think he said ab! So with two ropes tied and hung round this peg still loose I drew the short straw and vanished slowly into the glen – he worked on the basis that if the rope or my knots failed he could always climb off – bright lad that! Classic abseil, no modern gear, you did it slow.

And the bloody pub was shut again – it rained on the Sunday – but the pubs were shut anyway.

So, on the Monday, here we go again with the Jumar-alternative experience, and the peg's still there, and none of the chockstones have fallen out of the overhanging chimney, which was all nice and clean after Saturday.

I never really did remember much of the top pitch, but I find it difficult to equate with the book. Anyway we terraced pleasantly about teatime and scrambled down the hill, and after all these uppings and downings we called it Yo-Yo, and we went to the pub and it was open.

And the next day I was knackered and cried off and hitched back to the big city, but Smith went and found Marshall, or Elly, or whoever, and did something else and finally got chopped in the Pamirs; and I wish he could have had half the pints I've had on the strength of it.

\* (Editor's Note: it's difficult to comprehend that some 36 years – half a lifetime – separate the publication of this account from the first ascent of that great Glen Coe classic, Yo Yo. It is a magnificent line, overhanging in two planes, which, at least until Food Additives came in, could not be ignored by any young climber with ambition. The abandoned peg and hammer presumably belonged to Don Whillans, trying for an improbable ascent in the cold of winter. If only the pubs had improved as much over the intervening years as has the gear. By coincidence, before you ask, there are two authors with the same name in this issue.)

## THE BREEKS AFF A BUDDIE

By Hamish Brown

AS BIG laddies three of us (Jamie, Alec and me, Eck) once did an experiment to see just how *wet* wet could be on a Scottish hill day.

We had been on a bike-and-hike trip but the soaking came from a day climbing on the Cobbler, a day which began in benign-enough fashion but ended with right meteorological tantrums. We fought down off the hill through rain, hail and snow (in September!), gasping, our bodies bent against the storm as if suffering some gripping stomach complaint.

We were thankful to find our Blacks Pal-o-mine tent still standing beside the savage waters of Loch Restil and, as it was not really cold at that level, saturated ventile cags, football strips, string vests, breeks, ex-WD boots, everything in fact, was peeled off (as if we were well-washed fruit) and abandoned at the door. Inside the tent was hardly luxury even if Alex suggested we had every mod. con. with running water inside our abode. Next day we pedalled down the Rest and Be Thankful and got the train home to Paisley – beat.

On arrival we weighed our sodden bundles and, two days later, took everything off the pulley to be weighed again, dry. The difference was 10lb – a gallon of water – each. And we were but skinny laddies.

This really has nothing to do with our more recent escapade except that it was recalled by our being granted an equally-wet day with the same companions as victims. Though our clothing and camping gear may have improved over the 20-year gap it was suggested that our bulk had done likewise, so bearing a gallon of H<sub>2</sub>O each off Sgurr Thuilm into Glen Pean bothy was still a valid estimate. Struggling out of those clinging garments and seeing the sodden mass on the floor brought back the earlier memory.

We soon had a fire going and our wet things were hung up on bent fence wire and binder twine while socks lay on the stones like dead furry creatures. In minutes there was a grand steamy fug, distinctive and not unfamiliar to regular hillgoers, and we turned to brewing, at least the others did, for I took the chance of grabbing the central spot before the grate and held my breeches to the flames. They were soon steaming away.

The other two came and sat on big grey stones, one on each side of me, hugging their enamel mugs of tea and ‘enjoying’ what heat escaped from the flanks of my drying process. I reckoned a comment about selfishness just betrayed a regret at missing the priority in holding breeks to the blaze. Jamie sat in hairy long-johns and a Raith scarf and Alex in his old RAF pyjama bottoms.

Our breeches I may say were about the only new items we possessed. We’d obtained them from a shop in Rodney Street when through visiting the Botanic in Edinburgh.

At that period there had been debate over wearing jeans on the hill because of their bad chill effect when wet, but G. T., the shop owner, argued that it was the design of jeans, not the material itself, that was at fault, and produced breeches made of denim. We considered we were very 'with it'.

My denim pair steamed away as I held them before me, rotating them every now and then as my knuckles grew intolerably hot. Concentrating on them and trying to take my tea meant that it was the seat that usefully caught the most heat.

I'd just put my mug back on the mantelshelf when the other two rolled back on their shoogly seats utterly convulsed in laughter. (Jamie fell right over backwards.) Alex pointed. 'The steam!' he sobbed. 'Look at the steam!'

'Whit about the steam?' I demanded. My breeks were drying brawly.

I was told. 'It's no steam, Eck, it's smoke.'

'No, it's no,' added Jamie. 'They're on fire.'

They were right too and when I rushed out to bang and dowse the flaming breeches on the puddled path I could hear the other two inside the bothy yelling in glee.

'It's no funny,' I girmed on return but, as I stood there in my underpants and muddy bare feet, holding up breeks with two holes in the bottom you could have put your head through, I saw it was quite funny even if embarrassing for the victim. I began giggling too.

I'm not bad that way.

In fact, my giggles soon took on a hysteria of their own, in no way lessened when the others at last shut up and told me to do so too with: 'It's no that funny.'

'Is it no?' I choked. 'Is it no?'

'No!'

'Weel I ken it is. You see, they're no my breeks. They're yours, Jamie Calder!'

## GORAK SHEP: THE AMAZING CLIMBING DOG

By Chris Comerie

THE CLANKING of Yak bells, the conversation and shouts of men trekking, made him lift his head in startled arousal from his slumber beneath the clear blue sky and warm sun of a perfect day in the high mountains of Nepal. Another expedition was circumnavigating the dry and arid lake bed of Gorak Shep, the small hamlet high in the Sagamartha National Park on the trail to Everest. From these few isolated stone lodges within the sight of the dust bowl, which becomes a lake in wetter times, he was to take his name.

By the doggy standards of Nepal, he was in good nick. A sort of short-legged Border collie with shiny fur and bright, kind eyes. A cute customer by all accounts, attaching himself to any expedition he fancied in the knowledge that he would be well fed by the abundant amounts of food available. All his life he had lived in the shadow of the great white shimmering pyramid of Pumori at the head of the glacier.

'This British lot seem friendly. I think I'll tag along. I've always wanted to climb the mountain, stand on the top and look down on my village, and maybe even look into Tibet.'

So we acquired an expedition dog. We showed him kindness, fussed him and fed him, and in return he showed great loyalty, a loyalty which almost cost him his life. He slept outside my tent in the bitterly cold temperatures of the night, and licked my face in the mornings when I poked my head out of the flap. He never complained.

We had been working hard establishing our strategically-important Camp 1 at 6100m, or was it camp 2? Another had been established at the foot of the steep climbing, the fixed ropes clearly visible while one sat on our small platform terrace of stones we had constructed onto the hillside to pitch our tent. The journey from base camp was a long taxing walk at this altitude. With heavily-laden rucksacks we needed this extra stopover point, gear and food dump. The route we had put up wound its way through fairly steep snow and ice with the occasional step of rock thrown in for good measure. The last 100m before camp were spectacular. A twisting snow arete of cream topping with precipitous oblivion either side which one was able to sit astride at points, à cheval. Then a traverse across a very steep wall of snow just below the ridge crest with bum-twitching exposure, before finally reaching the small col projecting from the south-east face on which we established our camp.

Camp 1 had been established for a couple of days and we were back at base camp resting and loading the rucksacks with more gear. No one noticed Gorak Shep slip quietly into the night, following the scent and footsteps of two of the lads carrying their loads.

'This is easy. I don't know why these men carry all this equipment onto the hill. There's another tent over there. I wonder where I go from here?'

Further bounding and leaping over boulders and loose shale in a rising traverse above the tent, brought him into a couloir filled with snow which revealed the route onwards, and the start of the fixed ropes.

'Blimey, it looks a bit steep up there,' he mused as he took his first tentative steps into the steep snow. Firmly clasping his jaws around the rope he pulled and leapt, sinking his claws into the firm snow in a slow but deliberate motion upwards.

'Who needs crampons when you have a natural set on each paw. I feel sorry for those humans having to clamp all that steel into their feet. And they have only two!'

And so he went on ever upwards, hour after hour, leaping pulling scraping. A faint pungent odour of burning bone drifted across the still night air as his claws scabbled against the rock outcrops. His fear almost consumed him as he made the final leaps from bucket to bucket across the final exposed wall of névé. By now his commitment and loyalty to re-joining the men at the camp almost blinded him into losing his life, he was at his limit. One final push over the lip revealed the tent. The altitude and cold had now firmly taken a grip as he staggered over to the men and promptly collapsed.

At the appointed time the next morning the radio crackled into life, it was Simon Currin, the Everest expedition leader, who was ensconced in his pit at Camp 2 in the Western Cwm, talking to our team member veterinary surgeon, Mark Bryan, who by now had arrived at our camp.

*ccssh* – 'This is Everest expedition Camp 2 calling Pumori expedition. How high is your camp, Mark?'

*ccssh* – '6100m, but there's not enough air. I think you have moved out of your cocoon this morning and breathed it all in.'

*ccssh* – 'Not guilty. I have my own oxygen supply here.'

*ccssh* – 'We have a problem . . . a dog at Camp 1, and he's drunk all our bloody water. It took an hour to melt it.'

*ccssh* – 'A dog! You're kidding!'

*ccssh* – 'Yes, we'll have to see about getting it a permit. Have you got any dog food there in the cwm? . . .'

This bizarre conversation went on for some time, with the request to take up some food for the animal. We packed chapatis and hard-boiled eggs into our sacks for the next carry.

Gorak Shep was in a bad way. He had not the strength to stand up let alone climb down, although reversal of his epic was not possible, a fall to his death would have been inevitable had he the reserves to try. He was dying, and Mark had to consider the possibility of putting him down to end his misery. He could not imagine that he would allow himself to a rucksack for a ride down, but he tried, and to his amazement he allowed his limp body to be lowered into a sack back end first. The draw cords were then lightly

*Ama Dablam from Pokalde. Photo: Brian Findlay.*

*Ski ascent of Beinn Chaorach in the Luss Hills. Looking over the Firth of Clyde to Arran. Photo: Donald Bennet.*



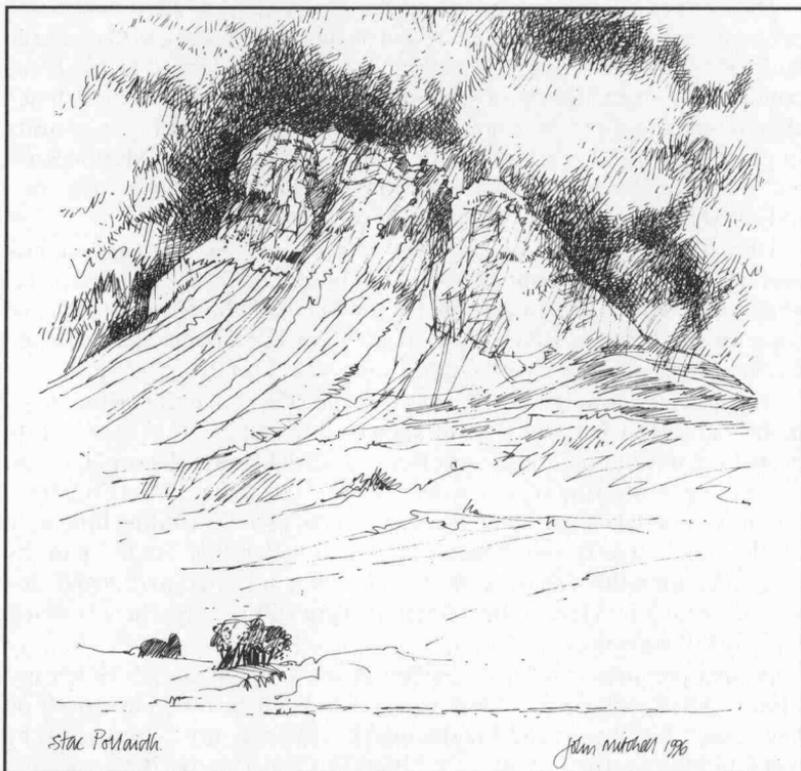


brought around his neck and the lid fastened down, leaving his head projecting. He sat quietly content as the abseiling and the down climbing descent took place. We have some wonderful photographs of this event, all with the magnificent backdrop of Everest and the Western Cwm.

By the time he had reached the foot of the fixed ropes he had made a full recovery, and on release from the sack, bounded around and licked our faces in appreciation. He sat and rested with us for a while until I made a move to begin my ascent. It was my turn to take supplies up to the camp. As I started to make my way Gorak Shep again began to follow. We had to forcibly make him go back to base camp with one of the lads.

On our return to base camp a few days later, he had gone.

We never saw Gorak Shep again. Maybe on reflection he thought his adventures were enough and retired to his home in the valleys, or maybe he joined another expedition to try for another first doggy ascent. We shall never know. Then again we may see him in the future. He never made the top, there was still a long way to go, but it was a good attempt. He boldly goes where no dog has ever been before. Life's full of surprises for Gorak Shep: The Amazing Climbing Dog.



'Down Shep!' Stray dog descending fixed ropes from Camp 1 at 6100m on S.E. Face of Pumori. Photo: Mark Bryan.

Mike Taylor approaching Rinders Bay, van Mijenfjorden down the Vallakra Glacier, Spitzbergen. Scheele Fjellet (1206m) in the distance. Photo: Bill Morrison.

## DELAYED CELEBRATION

By Ted Maden

I WAS sitting in the car in the Fort William car park that overlooks Loch Linnhe at the south-west end of town, only partly relaxing in the late afternoon sunshine, my attention on tomorrow's weather forecast. That morning I had driven up from the North of England for a short working visit to Glasgow University before continuing northwards for some hillwalking on the morrow. But which hills? It was early May, quite a bit of snow lay on the tops and a chilly north breeze was blowing. By a lucky quirk of atmospheric John Kettley's voice was coming through loud and clear on the car radio. '... Highlands ... fine morning, showers moving in from the north later.' Maybe the weather would hold for long enough for me to do something good. From the possibilities jostling in my mind one came to the fore. It would require more driving, so first I called in at the other end of town to fortify myself from British Rail's bill of fare.

Thus refreshed, I hastened on up the Great Glen to Drumnadrochit, across the moorland road to Beaully and on through Contin and Garve to an isolated inn in the wilds. It was 9p.m. and I much desired a few hours comfortable sleep. However, the innkeeper declined my request that I should hire a room for five hours and depart at 2a.m., alluding to security implications! There was nothing for it but to continue by Destitution Road and down to the start of the walk into Shenavall. A few parked cars indicated that there would probably be company there.

Tired though I was, the prospect of the walk in was just slightly preferable to that of spending the next few hours curled up on the back seat of the car. For food I had a great pile of sandwiches, plus a water bottle and some Isostar powder, but no stove. I had lightweight boots, a lightweight sleeping bag, karrimat, spare clothes and torch. I set off at 9.50p.m.

Daylight was turning to twilight as I reached the high point on the rough moorland track where the path to Shenavall branches off to the right. In deepening dusk I could make out Beinn a' Chlaidheimh looming distant and remote beyond the unseen trough of Strath na Sealga. As night fell the moon glimmered weakly behind a high layer of cloud, shedding little light on the moor. It was sometimes difficult to follow the muddy path by torchlight, until the way became obvious where it started to descend, and soon after midnight I was relieved to find Shenavall exactly where I had left it almost five years ago.

On that previous trip I had climbed Beinn a' Chlaidheimh as my last Munro. It had not been feasible to plan a champagne and bagpipes party on that distant hill, so instead I had hoped to celebrate my compleation by continuing around the circuit of the Six Wilderness Munros. But heavy rain

had commenced soon after my arrival at Shenavall and by morning the rivers were swollen. I had to settle for snatching the summit in the chilly downpour followed by a swift descent to the east before the rising waters of the Abhainn Loch an Nid cut off escape. I had been mentally preparing myself for a long detour round the head of Loch an Nid, but fortunately, I found a safe crossing below the loch where the stream was split by an islet. Even some of the lateral torrents on the way back to Shenavall required care. At Shenavall a recently-arrived large party of walkers provided a psychological boost for the walk out with the streams still high.

So now I was back for the Wilderness Six. But first, I needed a kip. Downstairs was full so I spread out on the floor of an upstairs room.

I arose at 5.15. One of the bothy occupants was outside answering a call of nature. We acknowledged each other silently as was appropriate for the hour. He returned to bed but I was soon on my way across the Abhainn Loch an Nid, which this time presented no difficulties, and onto the lower slopes of Beinn a' Chlaidheimh. I breakfasted briefly in the lee of a big boulder a few hundred feet up among some heather-covered ancient glacial debris. Orange rays of the early sun pierced a cloud ceiling and dramatically illuminated the slopes of Beinn Dearg Mor opposite. I continued up heather and between little sandstone terraces for longer than I expected until eventually striking the sharp summit ridge and continuing to the cairn. To the right the hillside plunged spectacularly into the depths of Gleann na Muice. The earlier shafts of sunlight had been replaced by a bleak greyness. Little caps of cloud were forming on the surrounding hills, and curtains of snowy looking precipitation were stealing in from the sea towards Loch na Sealga and An Teallach. John Kettley's weather was coming sooner than expected.

It arrived as I descended towards the complex col terrain that precedes Sgurr Ban. Beinn a' Chlaidheimh became immersed in cloud and softly falling snow. In the lonely hollow of Loch a' Bhrisidh two cormorants honked eerily. I was experiencing ebbing enthusiasm for continuing in deteriorating conditions, with the prospect of few views and possibly the chance of the odd thunderstorm. On the slope of Sgurr Ban these negative thoughts became overwhelming. I turned around and started descending towards the Abhainn Loch an Nid. I reached a viewpoint overlooking the glen and paused to inspect the best way of continuing down the slabby hillside to the river crossing of my previous visit. A sandwich seemed in order.

While I munched, a tiny chink of blue sky peeped through the clouds. It was about 9.30a.m. Most intending hillwalkers would only just have finished breakfast and would be looking forward to their day on the hill. What on earth was I doing, giving up so soon?

Like Dick Whittington I turned again, and followed my tracks back up snow patches to my previous high point, and then without hesitation on up

the great whaleback of Sgurr Ban. Another snow shower was approaching but I reckoned I would at least traverse Sgurr Ban before considering whether to quit.

The col between Sgurr Ban and Mullach Coire Mhic Fhearchair is a remote spot with long descents to wild glens on both sides. Although it was snowing again it seemed preferable now to continue up the Mullach and so gain the highest summit in the area. It was my third ascent of this hill. A few years previously I had scrambled up its spectacular east ridge on a perfect summer afternoon in a brisk push from Kinlochewe. Many years earlier, during a climbing trip to Carnmore, a friend (Peter Rowat) and I had set off on a day of doubtful weather to explore the wilderness, and had done a somewhat complex walk taking in Ruadh Stac Mor, Sgurr Ban and the Mullach. At the Mullach cairn we had noticed a curious buzzing which, there being no bees, Peter had tried to interpret as water seeping through the stones, until we simultaneously realized it was static electricity discharging and we ran down several hundred feet of hillside to safety. Although there had been no lightning, the memory of that experience may have contributed to my present unease about the weather. So on the Mullach's summit I was reassured to catch sight of another chink of blue sky through the clouds, and I resolved to head for the next objective – Beinn Tarsuinn.

In misty weather the terrain to the south and west of the Mullach can be confusing, and I was surprised to see a sketchy path skirting the flank of what I took to be Beinn Tarsuinn. A direct ascent of the hill was achieved in brisk time, and not until descending out of the mist on the other side did I realise that the mountain ahead was not A' Mhaighdean, which I had expected, but, indeed, Beinn Tarsuinn. I had been over Meall Garbh, an optional bump.

More surprises were in store. From my first Carnmore trip in pre-Beatles 1957 I had remembered Beinn Tarsuinn as a dull hill which did not then even score as a Munro (it having been promoted subsequently). But now after the summit I encountered an airy, crenellated scrambly ridge of which I had no recollection. The implications were dire. Had I previously not climbed Beinn Tarsuinn at all? Had I, therefore, been masquerading falsely as a Munroist? Would I be demoted five years down the list of compleaters? Fortunately, I was to be spared such ignominy. During my first few years of climbing I had kept a detailed diary, to which I referred after the present walk was over. My early ascent had been in bad weather, but the summit ridge was clearly recorded: '... quite sharp, pinnacles of Torridonian'. Honour was saved.

To return to the present, on the descent from Beinn Tarsuinn the weather was showing tentative signs of improving. A' Mhaighdean and Ruadh Stac Mor were clear, as was Slioch to the south across Lochan Fada. The clouds were no longer of leaden appearance and there was a definite hint of blue

to seawards. I paused for lunch in a convenient peat hag before continuing up A' Mhaighdean.

There was no doubt about my previously having climbed A' Mhaighdean from the spectacular Carnmore side. A photograph of the north-westerly prospect from the summit to Fionn Loch and Carnmore Crag adorns a wall at home. The south-eastern approach, in contrast, is up a gentle slope which gave no hint of what was in store until the upper slopes narrowed into an approach ridge towards the summit. On the Ruadh Stac Mor flank a snowbowl opened out. To the south was revealed a great drop to Gorm Loch Mor with its crumpled low retaining ridge and the cliffs of Beinn Lair beyond. And then the summit, the breathtaking view. The north-western cliffs plunged vertically away and the great expanse of the Fionn Loch country sprang instantly into sight. Fresh snow had fallen on the top, its gleam offsetting the depths below and the distances beyond.

I spent only a couple of minutes on the summit, but what a couple of minutes. Hunching my shoulders against the chilly north-westerly breeze, I tried to absorb all that the wonderful panorama afforded, from the nearby Torridonian cliffs which drop from the north-west ridge of A' Mhaighdean, to the Lewisian gneiss of Torr na h-Iolaire and Carnmore Crag and the gleaming expanse of loch stretching away into the distance. I took some photographs.

Then I turned and went down the south-east ridge to a point where the frozen slopes of the north-easterly snowbowl were sufficiently easy angled for walking. And so to the col before Ruadh Stac Mor, past a distinctively built-up bivvy cave which is mentioned in *Hamish's Mountain Walk*, and the pull up to Ruadh Stac, the final summit of the day. All the peaks were now clear. Beyond Shenavall, An Teallach caught the afternoon sun. Nearer, the great horseshoe of the day's walk was revealed. From the west ridge of Ruadh Stac I recognized the view across Fuar Loch and the Fionn Loch to Beinn Airigh Charr which forms the dustcover of *The Big Walks*.

Gleann na Muice with its side glens and several cliffs partly illuminated by the afternoon sunlight were magic. Some way down the glen I passed a herd of deer. At Larachantivore I began to meet other walkers and campers. I arrived back at Shenavall at 6.25p.m. and gratefully accepted a cup of tea from two of the previous night's occupants, who had been referring to me as 'the mystery visitor'. They were from York and had done the first three peaks of my round, then descending via the east ridge of the Mullach. We started the walk out together, but I gradually dropped behind in the wake of their superior fitness.

At Braemore Junction I phoned my partner to confirm my exit from the wilderness. Having no need of another 2a.m. start, I had no difficulty in finding overnight accommodation, at a different inn from the one I had tried the previous night.

## MARKETING THE MUNROS

By David Hughes

I'M SURE you can make money out of almost anything. I mean, who would have thought that you could make millions out of such basic commodities as water, electricity and gas? That's just the sort of question that Glaswegian entrepreneur, Sir Donald McBeinn, was asking himself when he first hit on the idea of marketing the Munros.

For many decades the Munros had been the domain of a few hardy hillwalkers, and they were virtually unknown outside of these circles. But the 1980s saw a gradual increase in their popularity, and McBeinn saw a window of opportunity and struck. And, of course, as they say, the rest is history.

McBeinn and his partner, Anna Keegach, are among the top 50 in terms of richest people in this country, and their financial success is entirely due to them taking an obscure obsession – namely bagging Munros – and turning it into a national pastime. The tale of their enterprise – one of money against the mountain and finance against the fell – is a story worth investigating, and I thus sought an interview with McBeinn.

We met on top of M21 on a typical blustery Highland day of sunshine and showers. I first of all asked him why he had changed all the names of the Munros. His reply was quite simple: 'I haven't changed the names of anything,' he said crisply. 'This is the 21st highest Munro, so it is called M21. Its Gaelic name becomes redundant. In any case, if you're going to market a product you can't have a list of unpronounceable names. This Munro that we are on now used to be called Sgurr nan Ceathreamhnan. Now where's the market in a name like that?'

I have to admit that he did have a point, and the public seem to find the absence of Gaelic names a lot easier. But the changes haven't stopped there. M21 boasts to be one of the most remote of all the Munros, yet its summit is only two miles' walk from the nearest 'Munro Centre', a place where cars may be parked, fast food is served and souvenirs purchased.

In a bid to make his mountains more accessible and therefore more popular, McBeinn built roads up remote valleys. In fact, all Munros are served by such centres, the most accessible hill being M1 where the summit plateau has been turned into a giant car park, with a revolving restaurant just yards from the summit satellite dish and computer terminal.

'Didn't a mountain top usually have a trig point or cairn?' I inquired.

'Summit cairns or trig points were a waste of time,' he pointed out. 'They served no other purpose but to mark the top of the hill. We had to market the actual summit in some way – give people an incentive to get there. All the Munros are linked by satellite to a Communications Headquarters. Weather sensors send information every 15 minutes. We've set up a Munro Hot Line where you can ring up and find out what the conditions are like on

the mountain of your choice – like if the top is covered in clag, temperature, wind speed and all that sort of thing. All the punter has to do is dial 0891 277 followed by the Munro number of his or her choice. It's a very popular service.'

Well, that explained the satellite dish, but the computer terminal? McBeinn continued. 'That was Anna's idea. The terminal serves two purposes. You know about the Munro books? Well we've produced an interactive CD-ROM package. When a punter gets to a summit they can punch in the details of their ascent and, assuming they have the appropriate modem, the information can be automatically downloaded on to their Personal Computer. The machine will even take a photo of you, which can then be superimposed on the images already on the CD-ROM.'

And the second purpose?

'Punters can play Munlotto. They purchase cards for £1 each at a Munro Centre. When they reach the summit, they can see if they've won by swiping the card through the computer. There's a 1 in 5 chance of winning, with a jackpot prize of £10 million available each week. The concept of climbing a mountain and then descending £10 million richer is fantastic. It gives the punter a real buzz. Great marketing tool . . .' McBeinn's voice trailed away as a 'punter', clearly out of breath and consumed with mounting tension and excitement, approached the summit terminal and swiped his card.

'You haven't won on this occasion,' droned a mechanical voice from the machine. 'Have a nice day, and better luck next time.' The mountaineer paused briefly to look at the view. 'Marvellous technology,' he enthused as he scrutinised the satellite dish. 'I've got an FRS 160 in my house, but this one here's at least 100 times more powerful. Marvellous technology.'

I ventured to ask him how many Munros he'd done this year.

'This is my 210th. It's good to bag these remote ones. The two-mile walk to the summit puts some people off, but I'm a bit of a connoisseur. Plus there's always a chance of becoming a millionaire when you reach the top. Not today though,' as he forlornly waved his ticket. 'Still, two pence of my £1 spent goes to charity, so it's a worthwhile cause.'

As the 'punter' departed, I quickly asked McBeinn what happened to the other 98p of a Munlotto ticket. 'We're in business. We've got overheads, running costs and tough competition. It's not all roses, you know.'

I pointed out that some people would argue that his developments had desecrated the Scottish countryside, leaving traffic jams where there was once wilderness.

'That's the price of popularity, I suppose,' he retorted. 'But you always get this sort of moaning from the left-wing Trotsky minority.'

Had success gone to his head? Not at all.

'The knighthood came as a bit of a shock actually, and a lot of people have said: 'Why don't you change the name from Munros to McBeinns?' It was a nice thought, but in this day and age you've got to preserve tradition haven't you?'

## SPIDERS AND CLIMBERS

By Isobel Baldwin

THE ROYAL Museum of Scotland has been fortunate in acquiring, during the past four years, a major collection of Scottish montane spiders. This has been made possible through the efforts and cooperation of hillwalkers, many of them members of the Scottish Mountaineering Club. The spiders have been incorporated into the research collections of the museum and are already proving to be a valuable scientific resource.

The idea for the project began – truth be told – as a result of watching Muriel Gray lead a camera crew over a concourse of Munros and thinking that they could increase their productivity no end by turning over a few stones and collecting some spiders. The idea stayed with me and, eventually, I wrote to Bill Brooker inquiring if he thought it feasible to ask hillwalkers for help in spider collecting. His response was very positive and as well as giving me details of the SMC he also suggested I place a notice in the relevant magazines as he was sure that the project would attract enough interested volunteers to make it worthwhile.

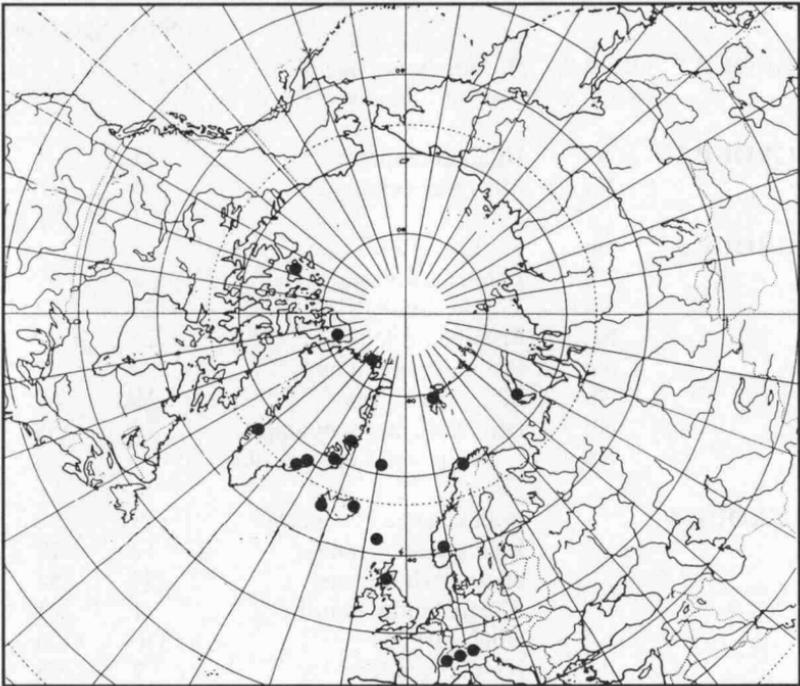
And worthwhile it has indeed turned out to be because you reach so many areas not noted for ease of access and where casual sampling throughout the year would otherwise be impossible. Coincidentally, sometime later I was to come across an article in the 1894 volume of the *Annals of the Society of Natural History* entitled *Spiders collected in the Neighbourhood of Aviemore*. In it was the following statement: ‘The specimen, I ought to say, was kindly brought to me by Mr Alex Robertson, a member of the Scottish Mountaineering Club.’ And 100 years later members of the Club are once again collecting spiders.

By the time the project was well underway there were 25 or so hillwalkers collecting regularly and sending their catches to me at the museum. Inevitably, there were some who expressed interest and to whom I sent collecting kits, but as I never heard from them again I can only trust that they did not break a leg or otherwise damage themselves in pursuit of their first spider. I should perhaps have warned them that they might have to turn over in excess of 50 stones to make their maiden catch.

Not only did I bid my volunteers to catch the spider, done by sucking it into a ‘pooter’ and then blowing it into a tube, I also required them to fulfil the equally-important task of completing a data slip noting habitat, altitude, grid reference and of course – the actual Munro. This they faithfully carried out enclosing the slip with the relevant tubes of spiders. Because it is essential that the spiders reach me in as fresh condition as possible the packets needed to be posted as soon as the collectors returned to ‘civilization’. After a fine and invigorating day this is not a great task

but, after a fairly foul and knackered one, it must have been something of a chore. I am pleased to relate that most Mondays and Tuesdays saw an In-Tray full of Jiffy bags containing some of Scotland's most important species, all of them alive and kicking and somewhat reluctant to leave their plastic tubes.

In the beginning, the prime aim of the project was to discover more about the distribution of those spiders that are restricted to high ground. The Highlands of Scotland are home to all species of British montane spider and, while some of them are also found in the North of England and in the Welsh mountains, it is in our own largely inaccessible territories that the scope for investigation into these native Arctic/Alpine-related spiders is greatest. It is said that temperature falls  $1^{\circ}\text{F}$  for each degree of latitude north of the equator, and that the same fall occurs for every 300ft rise in altitude: thus the fauna of mountain tops and Arctic regions are often compared, sharing as they do the same limiting factors of a low but narrow temperature range coupled with the exposure factor. (Bristowe 1927)



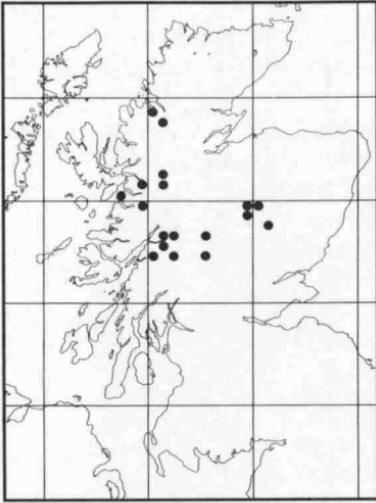
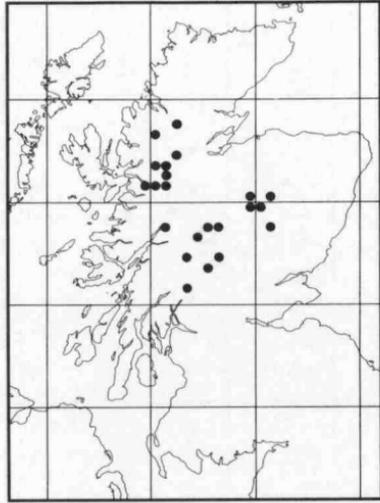
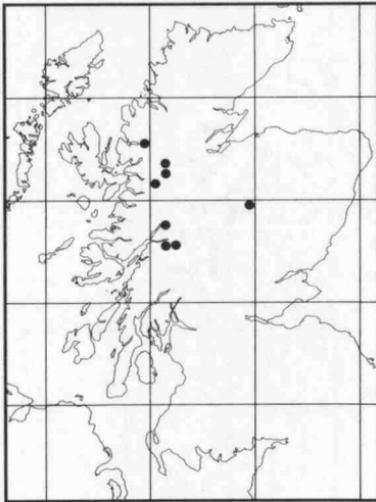
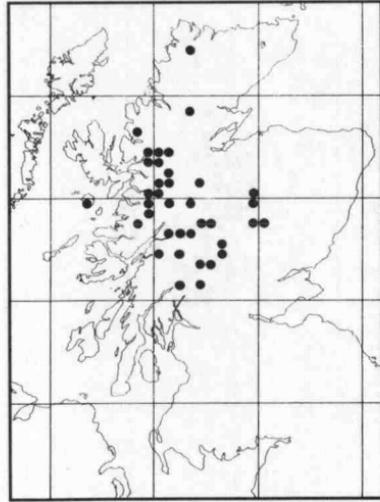
Distribution of *Meioneta nigripes* showing the relationship between arctic and alpine conditions.

The rarest, or most endangered, of British species are contained in the *Red Data Book* which is an annotated catalogue designed to protect both them and their habitat sites. Of the specimens collected (see table) two are mentioned in the RDB, *Arctosa alpigena* and *Rhaebothorax paetulus*. The wolf spider, *Arctosa alpigena* is large, chestnut coloured and exceedingly handsome and was found twice, once from a pre-recorded site and then again, most happily, from a new location. The tiny, black money spider, *Rhaebothorax paetulus* was found on Glas Maol, a new site for the species and new also to the Museum collections. Other less rare species are nevertheless recognized as Nationally Notable and 10 of these species have been found, occasionally in unexpectedly large numbers with some proving to be much more widespread than previous records have suggested. A further eight species already regarded as common and widely distributed were collected in sufficiently large numbers to show interesting features regarding their distribution, altitude preferences and biology.

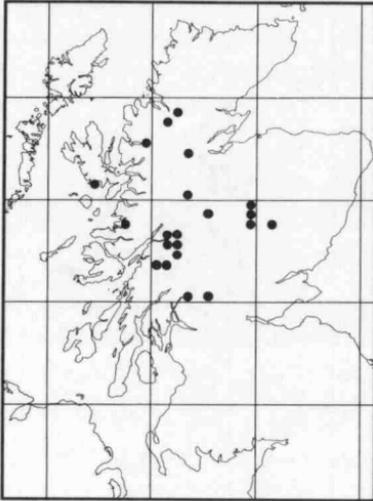
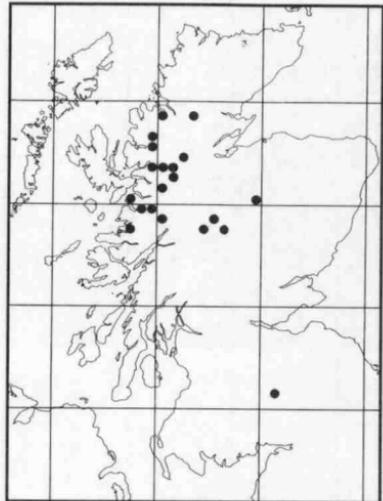
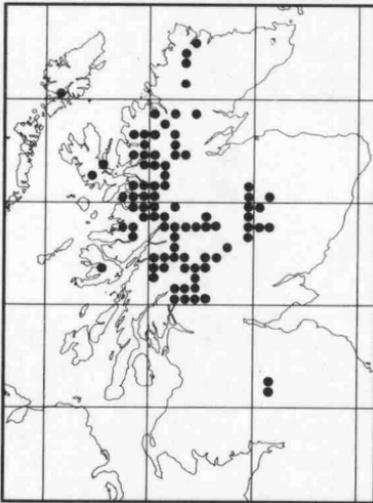
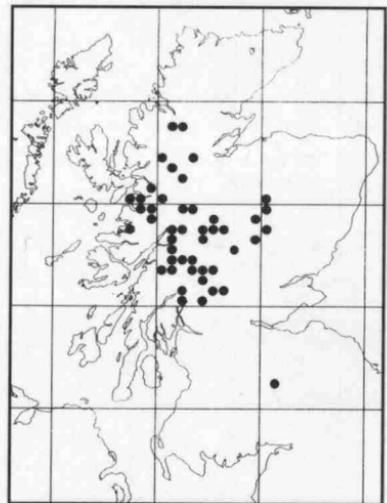
All of these species are listed below and various of them will be referred to again.

#### Captures of Montane Spiders 1992-95

			Sites	Specimens
<b>GROUP 1</b>	RDB 2	<i>Rhaebothorax paetulus</i>	1	1
	RDB3	<i>Arctosa alpigena</i>	3	4
<b>GROUP 2</b>	Na	<i>Hilaira nubigena</i>	1	1
	Na	<i>Macrargus carpenteri</i>	5	6
<b>GROUP 3</b>	Nb	<i>Pardosa trailli</i>	1	1
	Nb	<i>Entelecara errata</i>	23	32
	Nb	<i>Tiso aestivus</i>	27	37
	Nb	<i>Erigone tirolensis</i>	25	37
	Nb	<i>Halorates holmgreni</i>	9	11
	Nb	<i>Meioneta nigripes</i>	39	61
	Nb	<i>Lepthyphantes whymperi</i>	22	38
	Nb	<i>Lepthyphantes complicatus</i>	4	4
<b>GROUP 4</b>		<i>Walckenaera clavicornis</i>	8	8
		<i>Walckenaera capito</i>	12	12
		<i>Scotinotylus evansi</i>	34	54
		<i>Rhaebothorax morulus</i>	1	1
		<i>Hilaira frigida</i>	376	406
		<i>Meioneta gulosa</i>	7	8
		<i>Oreonetides vaginatus</i>	50	63
		<i>Lepthyphantes angulatus</i>	6	6
	<i>Porrhomma montanum</i>	9	11	

**Entelecara errata.****Erigone tirolensis.****Halorates holmgreni.****Meioneta nigripes.**

In addition to the 802 montane spiders contained in the 21 species listed, certain common and widespread non-montane species were also found on high ground. A total of 374 specimens representing 50 species of non-montane spiders were collected, the commonest being *Robertus lividus* and *Lepthyphantes zimmermanni*. These specimens tend to be rather non-specific regarding their habitat requirements and are also just as likely to be found at 300ft as at 3000ft, although at low altitudes they are found in

**Lephyphantès whymperi****Scotinotylus evansi.****Hilaira frigida.****Oreonetides vaginatus.**

greater numbers. All of these records, both the montane and non-montane species will in due course find their way on to the Spider Recording Scheme data base and will be published in a series of annotated distribution maps.

As the project developed other interesting factors began to make themselves apparent. For instance, a greater number of females than males were collected. The montane species were made up of 194 males and 594

females – more than three times as many overall, although the proportion of males to females varies from species to species. In *Meioneta nigripes* for example, females made up 43% of the total catch, in *Hilaira frigida* 75% and in *Scotinolytus evansi* 93%. There will be various reasons for this, but bearing in mind that 99% of the spiders caught are obtained by stone turning, the main cause is probably that males wander more than females and are simply 'not at home' when you call. They are probably out fulfilling their purpose in life – that of searching for mateable females.

We know that when pitfall traps are used as the collecting method, significantly more males than females are trapped because they wander and fall into them. Males are also probably faster on their feet and may be smarter at evading their pursuers and thus more difficult to catch. It is also possible that in certain species males are indeed much rarer than females as seems to be the case with *Entelecara errata* where relatively fewer males have been captured either by random collecting or by trapping.

Altitude also has an effect on species distribution with certain montane species occurring as low down as 650m and some of these are indeed present and more frequent on the lowland hills. These include the sub-montane species *Meioneta gulosa*, *Walckenaera capito*, *Walckenaera clavicornis*, *Scotinotylus evansi* and *Orenetides vaginatus* but as they are also upwardly mobile they can also be found at over 1000m. Other species such as *Arctosa alpigena*, *Erigone tirolensis*, *Lepthyphantes whymperi* and *Halorates holmgreni* only occur with any regularity at heights over 1000m and are seldom, if ever, found at lower altitudes.

For a variety of other reasons certain of the species merit special mention. These include the magnificent wolf spider *Arctosa alpigena* which was first discovered in 1872 from near Braemar by a man aptly named Traill, but was not seen again until Alexander Robertson of the aforesaid Scottish Mountaineering Club, found another on Cairntoul in 1893. The Cairngorms have produced two further records, once in 1914 and then again in 1979. The species was regarded as very rare and thought to be restricted to the Cairngorms but, in a trapping programme on Creag Meagaidh during 1983-5 a total of 211 specimens were captured and another trapping programme in the Cairngorms two years later produced 141 specimens. In 1987 the species was recorded for the first time from north of the Great Glen on Sgurr nan Clach Geala in the Fannichs. The first specimens to pass into my hands came in 1992, as a result of the present project, when two males and a female were collected from a new site north of the Great Glen on Sgurr nan Conbhairéan during May, and again in July when a single male was collected on Cairn Toul. Seven sites for this species are now known and where it does exist, it is likely to occur in large numbers and there are no doubt more locations where it is to be discovered.

Material housed in the museum research collections is often used to resolve differences between species and this has been the case with

*Entelecara errata* and *Hilaira frigida*. Adults of *Entelecara errata* (26 females and six males) have been collected during the project on 23 occasions at different sites from April to September. I recently lent the males to Jorg Wunderlich in Germany who, after examination of the specimens, informs me that this is identical to a species which occurs in Iceland named *E. media*. It is very satisfying to be able to supply specimens for taxonomic research in this way and your efforts have contributed towards the decision that the Icelandic and Scottish specimens, once thought to be different species, are identical. I also recently received and was able to fulfil a request from Michael Saaristo in Finland for Scottish specimens of *Hilaira frigida*, both males and females, again for taxonomic research. He was comparing specimens of this species from Greenland with those from Northern Europe and has concluded that in this instance, two species rather than one are involved. Isn't it nice to be helpful?

*Hilaira frigida* is the most common montane spider occurring in Britain and accounts for just more than half the total montane spiders collected in our survey with a single capture point often yielding several specimens. Although it is a well known species the data collected during the last three years suggests fresh evidence regarding its life history. Many of the adult females sent to me during early summer were gravid females full of eggs and a little later, by a happy accident, some were laying their eggs in the capture tubes while in the care of the postal service. During the subsequent weeks very few adults of either sex were captured, a fact which cannot solely be accounted for by the relatively fewer collecting visits. I think it reasonable to suggest that after mating and laying eggs the adults had died. The eggs laid by a female in early June were kept until the spiderlings emerged five weeks later. By mid-August sub-adult spiders were being captured and by mid-September newly-moulted adult males and females were found.

It has previously been proposed that *Hilaira frigida* takes two years to moult and become adult, but it now seems likely that this is all achieved within eight to 10 weeks, during the period of optimum weather conditions and good food resources. This new and very fat generation appears to overwinter protected beneath the snow (adult specimens have been sent to me during November and December) re-emerging in the spring as temperatures rise and the snow melts to begin the cycle again.

Finally, some words concerning the Spider Recording Scheme under whose aegis all records of your spiders will be incorporated into an atlas of distribution maps. In common with other recording schemes, spider species are recorded by 10km squares and consequently the catches from more than one top will appear in a single square. Thus, by its very nature, 'square bashing' masks the frequency of a species occurrence. However, each map will be annotated with notes on species rarity or commonality as well as details of habitat, distribution by altitude and seasons when adult.

So, all the information supplied by you will form an integral part of the Distribution Atlas and will increase everyone's awareness of this little known group.

The whole project has been a most interesting exercise, on a personal as well as a scientific level, and I am indeed grateful to all the participants. I am indebted to my spider colleague, Jim Stewart, who saved me on numerous occasions from being overwhelmed by identification backlogs and who diligently produced the 16-page computer printout; to Dot Hartley who produced the text, and to Liz Pilling who not only collected spiders, but wrote labels, checked references and proof-read the lists. I continue to work on spiders and look forward to the arrival of the 'Jiffy Bag' – for some time yet.

All that remains for me is to say once more: 'Mind How You Go.'

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## ESTIMATING TIME IN MOUNTAIN NAVIGATION

*(With particular reference to hillwalking in the Scottish mountains.)*

By Michael Götz

ESTIMATING time in hillwalking is an important ability – indeed it can be life-saving. Such an ability needs to be cultivated and practised, and it should be a simple, quick calculation. Hillwalking in Scotland frequently involves long hikes over flattish, boggy ground. This article concerns itself mainly with the ability to judge the time a walker needs to cover one particular section of a route by looking at the map.

There are several systems currently in use. The more accurate they promise to be, the more cumbersome their use. Naismith's Rule and Tranter's Variation of the same always requires distances to be first converted from metres (or, worse, from miles) on the landscape, to millimetres (or inches) on the map, a calculation which can become difficult in adverse conditions just when it is important to be quick, reliable and accurate. Matters are complicated by the fact that most walkers still think in miles, but are often obliged to calculate in kilometres.

For my modified rules I make the following assumptions:

1. Most hillwalkers in Scotland use O.S. maps at 1:50 000.
2. The average speed on flattish, intermittently boggy ground for a party of two-three walkers, mid-spring to mid-autumn, allowing for short stops, is no more than 3 km per hour.
3. Very often the walker will have to rely on his or her map to identify a route, as paths are frequently lacking.
4. Most compasses have a millimetre rule.

The well-established 'horizontal-vertical method' for estimating times ought to be used, which means that 'flattish' and 'steep' grounds are calculated in two different ways. This is how I propose to simplify the calculation:

1. Look at the map and decide whether the ground is 'flattish' or 'steep'.
2. On the sections with significant slope, the horizontal distance covered is ignored, and only the vertical height gain or loss is calculated. The average walker in Scotland covers one contour line in  $1\frac{1}{2}$  minutes.
3. On horizontal ground measure the distance to be covered in millimetres; this will be the time in minutes required to walk this distance.
4. Add both time estimates.

(Calculation: using a 1:50 000 map, 3km on the ground is proportionate to 60mm. At a pace of 3kmph, these 60mm are covered in one hour, or 60 minutes. One millimetre is covered in one minute.)

The walker should appreciate that this is a rough estimate only, and that adverse conditions in any form will add time. If the walking pace is slower or faster, the calculation however remains simple, and avoids transformation from 'map mm', to 'landscape metres', and vice-versa. The following example takes us through a variety of walking paces over flattish, boggy ground.

Example (1:50 000 map)

Pace (in km/h)	Time/map distance (in walking min. per 'map mm')	Calculation for a 20mm distance on map (in minutes)
2	1.5	$20 \times 1.5 = 30$
3	1.0	$20 \times 1 = 20$
4	0.75	$20 \times 0.75 = 15$

or, using a delightful mathematical *aide memoire*:

at 3 km/h: mm measured on map = minutes to walk.

at 2 km/h: mm measured on map times 3 divided by 2 = minutes to walk.

at 4 km/h: mm measured on map times 3 divided by 4 = minutes to walk.

It is obviously important that the walker retains the ability to convert distances measured on the map into real-term distances, but as a quick way to estimate walking times using the assumptions made above, this method is thought to be helpful.

## SCOTTISH HILL-NAMES – THE SCANDINAVIAN CONNECTION

By Peter Drummond

IN JULY 1995 our party of three reached the summit of North Iceland's highest mountain, Kerling. We laid claim, tongue perhaps in cheek, to its first Scottish winter ascent – in summer: or more accurately to the first summer ascent in winter conditions by Scots. The panorama on top brought to mind that Hymn-line about Greenland's icy mountains, give or take a few hundred miles west. For although it was the time of year of 23-hour daylight, being within the horizon of the Arctic Circle, a blizzard over the past three days had blanketed the top 1000m above the Lambi Hut, and ice axes were the order of the day.

The Lambi Hut looks like a B & Q garden hut held down by cables, but inside it seemed to expand Tardis-like to offer six comfy bunks, powerful stove for heating and cooking, and many mod cons. It also had a visitors' book which revealed an apparent dearth of peak-baggers in the Scottish mould. A mere handful of passers-by and hut residents had climbed Kerling at any time of year, strengthening our self-mocking claim.

But what does the name mean, I asked a couple from nearby Akureyri, doing a low-level circuit up the valley, who dropped into the hut for tea and a nip that afternoon after our return. The woman said: 'It is a word in our language for old woman.' Of course, we cried, as the bawbees dropped simultaneously, carlin. As in Carlin's Cairn, or as in the Gaels' Beinn a'Chailleach – the same word in Scots, the same meaning in Gaelic.

She continued: 'Kerling is a common name in our mountains, and sometimes there is a Kerl – her husband – nearby, usually smaller!' Our thoughts went to Glen Einich, with Am Bodach eyeballing A'Chailleach and she replying with a stony glare. We'd brought our own malt to Iceland to avoid the quadrupled price, and our guests were happy to accept another dram. What about Sultur, the sharp-pointed peak we looked north from Kerling down on to? Searching for the English word, she pointed at the stout pillars of the bunk beds. Another penny dropped, ringing up Suilven, sulr bheinn, the pillar mountain above Lochinver originally named by the Viking sailors plying the Sutherland (south land) coast.

We moved with them to the hut door to see them off; they were going down to ford the river. Above it rose two striking mountains, Kistu and Trollafjall. The former means exactly what kist does in Scots and what

Ciste Dubh in Glen Shiel indicates. The latter, almost identical in sound to Rum's Trollaval, is a common name in Iceland (and Norway) for a peak with rocky pinnacles which are likened to the trolls of legend.

But are the similarities of name mere coincidence? The Scandinavian and Scots languages share a common Germanic root which accounts for kerlings and kists. And clearly the movement of Viking peoples forged a connection – from south-west Norway to the British Isles in the 9th and 10th century, peopling the northern and western isles and the western seaboard. And also from both Norway and the Hebrides to settle Iceland from the 10th century. Quite a number of Scottish hill-names clearly contain Norse words, even if in Gaelicised form. And it may well be that certain concepts of names for hills travelled too. The Kerlings and Kerls of Iceland, the Carlins of south Scotland, the Cailleachs and Bodachs of Gaeldom, and the Old Man of Coniston in the Norse 'colony' of the Lakes, may share common intellectual ancestry.

The principal Norse mountain-word is, of course,  *fjall*  or  *fjell* , occurring throughout Iceland and Norway. It is recognisable in Scottish hill-names from Shetland (as in Scalla Field), Orkney (as in Vestra Fiold), Lewis (Mealisval), Harris (Husaval – literally house fell) and Rum (with its Allival and Askival). Farther south the word is fell, particularly in the Lakes (the Lakeland fells) but also in Scotland (Hart Fell and Goatfell) and the Isle of Man (whose Snaefell is spelled just as are Iceland's several versions of the same). Goatfell's first appearance on maps was as Keadefell in 1650, clearly from Geitefjall – there are Geitehyrggen and Geitnyken mountains in Norway and Iceland.

There are perhaps a dozen or so other Norse hill-words embedded in current hill-names in Scotland, with clear cousins in Iceland and Norway.  *Bjerg* , related to the German  *berg* , appears in the Beorgs of Skelberry in Shetland, and is almost certainly the root of the various berry hills in the Borders like Nutberry Hill.  *Brekka* , a slope, as in Iceland's Klettabrekka, is probably the root of Sutherland's Ben Klibreck ( *klif brekka* , slope at the cliff).  *Gnupr*  is the simple uncompounded root of Unst's The Neap and Foula's The Noup.  *Hlidr* , a slope, as in Iceland's Hlidarfjell is possibly the focus of the name Ben Lee on Skye: for while the Gaelic word  *liath* , grey, is of similar sound, most of Skye's names are Norse.  *Hog* , and  *haugr* , two of several Norse words meaning high or height, are found in Coll's Beinn Hogh and The Hoe in Pabbay, and probably in Shetland's Hoo Kame; this latter name incorporates the word  *kambr* , a crest or ridge, a common Icelandic hill-name element in hills like Kambsfell (also above our Lambi doss) – in Scotland the word kame is used for a sinuous glacial sand ridge, and also is found in hill-names like Kaim Hill above Largs, site of the battle where the Vikings' power was broken.

*Hnjukur* is not a word with much resonance in Scotland, although in Iceland it is widespread - our first summit of 1995 was Eirikshnjukur named after one of the ubiquitous Erics in their history - but it does appear in The Sneug on Foula. *Stakkr* and *stor* are two Norse words with a clear Scottish link; Storkletten (big rock) in Norway, Storhøvd (big hill) and Blastakkur (blue stack) in Iceland, are echoed in The Storr on Skye, Stac Pollaidh, Beinn Stack and the Stack of Glencoul, all on the western seaboard within sight of Viking seafarers, all with steep sides evoked by the name. *Varda* or *vardheld* meaning a cairn or watch hill appears as Ward Hill throughout Orkney, Shetland and the northern coast, and there may be a connection with the Gaelic faire, to watch, as in the Hill of Fare. It is no surprise to find a Vordufell in Iceland too.

Another Norse word frequently used in hill-names is *tunga*, a tongue, as in Iceland's Tungufjall, one of several; *Tunga* is a common hill-name in Norway too. Barra's Ben Tangaval, with its superfluous *ben*, is patently a Norse hill-name. Hills like Skye's Teanga Mor or Lochaber's Meall na Teanga reflect perhaps both a word and a concept crossing the language barrier into Gaelic.

Other concepts, apparently of Norse provenance, that appear to have influenced Hebridean hill-names, include references to the crow or raven, birds that frequently appear in Viking mythology - Lewis's Cracaval, Eriskay's Beinn Cracavaig, Iceland's Krakkhyrna, and the Solway's Criffel are part of a common flock. The references to ravens in Gaelic hill-names like Creag an Fhithich may well represent Norse influence on early Gaelic culture - most of the score of hills with *fhithich* names are west of the Great Glen or in Argyll. The colour blue is used throughout the world in hill-names, reflecting the appearance when seen from a distance, and in Gaelic we have Carn Gorm and others: Blaven or Blabheinn on Skye has probably this meaning, and relates to the several Blafjalls in Iceland and Norway.

Even more striking is the almost exact resemblance of two Scottish hill-names to their Norse cousins. Hecla on South Uist, one of the three highest hills there - and the other smaller Hecla on Mingulay - is clearly a Norse word with its Scandinavian letter k softened to the Gaelic c. Hekla in south Iceland is a major mountain with a history of powerful eruptions in historic time, and in Icelandic the word means a cowl, hood cloak or mantle either from its shape or from the cloud clinging to its top. Iceland's Hekla was originally called Hekluvell (in the 12th century), and in an old Norwegian history was referred to as Mons Casulae, cloak mountain in Latin. There is a Heklefjellet in Norway, which could be the ancestor of both names, but it is not impossible that the distinctive form of Hekla was taken by its Hebridean Viking namers to Iceland, since Iceland was largely colonised after the Hebrides. The Cuillin of Skye,

and the Cuillin of Rum, (both often anglicised into plural forms by the media) are clearly a generic name, both lying in islands with mainly Norse names. There is a range in south central Norway called Kiølen, undoubtedly the source both of the Hebridean and Icelandic versions (Iceland's Kiølen range lies north of Hekla). It has to be said that the choice of name is not geographically appropriate, in that the Scandinavian ancestors appear to be fairly undistinguished peaks – and are probably related to *kjøl*, keel of a boat – more like Grampian plateaux than the jagged *sgurrs* of these Inner Hebrides.

Our 1995 tour of Iceland's mountains ended on a high note on the massif of Herdubreid, an isolated giant of 1682m rising above the black lava deserts of the interior. The hut at the foot is only accessible for a short summer season, a long way down dirt roads and icy fords from Iceland's ring road. From the hut at the foot the summit is a 12-hour round trip, the main difficulty being the constant stonefall down the only access gully round the far side that breaks through its protective ring of cliffs. On top we found an Alpine-style metal box by the cairn, containing a rather damp visitors' book. We certainly claim the first Scottish ascent of 1995, there having been only three other entries before our date of mid-July – Germans, Austrians and Icelanders. Flicking through this book we noted that all climbs took place in the window between the summer solstice and the autumn equinox. But its name does not seem to have a Scottish connection or parallel, for Herdubreid means broad shoulders, a precise description of this steep-sided but plateau-topped giant. Elsewhere in Iceland there is, for example, a Skjallabreid, broad shield, and Snaebreid, broad snow. But broad is a very rare adjective in Scottish hill-names, the usual Gaelic words *leathann* or *reamhar* being used but rarely. Of course, Scottish hills of a broad shape are mainly in the east away from the influence of the Vikings and their language. Other broad, but steep-sided, Icelandic hills are often called the name Burfell, literally larder mountain. This dates from the days when, on farms, the larder was built slightly separately from the other buildings so that the warmth from fires, bodies and animals did not get to the stored butter and cheese.

Air travel can give a false impression of the compactness of the world. Barely an hour after seeing Hekla and the other Icelandic peaks disappearing on the port wing of the aircraft we were starting our descent towards Glasgow over the mountains of Harris, with Uist's Hecla just beyond on the starboard wing. The Viking sailors took longer, and suffered far more en route, but were surely the link between some of the hill-names between Norway, Iceland and Scotland, three sides of the then Viking triangle.

## A LIFE IN THE DAY OF . . .

By Ronnie Robb

*Thursday 29th September, 1994.*

THE DAY dawned dark and cold. Faint rustlings could be heard from the other tents a few feet away. Nylon fabrics hissed against each other and the gritty sound of barking coughs mixed with the odd muffled clank of aluminium kitchenware. Last-minute items were gathered and I emerged from the tent door fully clothed, rucksack 'loaded' and ready for the assault.

We all gathered in the mess tent in nervous anticipation of the summit push over the next three days. Everyone, that is except Angus. He incurred the wrath of Andy because he couldn't be bothered to get out of his pit and we didn't have enough radios for him to go up the ice fall unaccompanied. On this particular morning, the conversation was noticeably more stunted and efforts were concentrated on keeping warm.

Eventually, four of us set off up the icefall, me at the back, in silence with a sore head in the cold. The ice was good and the crampons bit in well. I reached 'The Dam' in record time, crossed the four bolted ladders and then kept a steady rhythm going all the way to Camp 1. I amazed myself by not losing ground between myself and Charlie – a few hundred metres ahead. I was fit! Finally, I climbed the last vertical section to reach the small plateau where our transit Camp 1(a) was positioned.

While John arranged loads for packing, my headache got worse and my cough had deteriorated to a retching. I was aware that none of this was good but it wasn't unusual in this cold, dry climate or at this altitude. During the short walk from Camp 1(a) to Camp 1, I started to become aware of a 'drag' sensation in my mouth, as if I had just been to the dentist and when I had caught up with Roddy and Charlie packing the spare oxygen cylinders, it was all I could do but to watch them.

Roddy left and began the intricate process of linking the crevasse bridges together which formed the route through the entrance to the Western Cwm. I stared at him, bemused, in a faint haze and wondered why my head felt separated from my body. My head turned slowly to Charlie and eventually I plucked up the courage to ask him if my speech was slurred? The shock hit me immediately. I had heard myself mumble incoherently. Charlie looked horrified and asked me to repeat myself. I knew before I opened my mouth that I couldn't say it properly. I tried, but the words just dribbled out.

Roddy had nearly disappeared from view but he returned to John's cries and the three of them examined me for other defects. I had no power or sensation in my left arm, I couldn't move my head, my left hand tingled, I had a speech impediment, a facial palsy and a general paralysis down the left side of my body. Basically I was stuffed.

Frantic confirmation with each other ensued along with Andy who had now arrived with Angus. I was left to console the realisation that I was not

at all well. Four of them were doctors and one a mountain sickness specialist. I was in the best possible care, but despite Charlie's reassurances I was dreadfully scared. Thoughts raced through my mind but my body laid dormant. My mind wanted to escape, enter another head and leave this useless shell. I already knew that this was cerebral oedema – but why me? Why now? Why is it that I could reach nearly 26,000ft the week before, but only now I get struck down with this debilitating illness? The purpose of The British Mount Everest Medical Expedition was to study such problems but I had no wish to be the prize guinea pig.

I kept thinking about who would explain it to my partner, and what it would be like to live with a retarded physical wreck? How would I get a wheelchair through the door of my office without banging my knuckles on the sides? Rational thought was colliding with the irrational and the more questions I asked myself, the more confused I became. Unconsciousness was beckoning and I began to see it as a release from the confusion but I was rudely awakened by John who shoved an oxygen mask to my face.

This sudden human contact was too much and at this point I burst into tears. John threw his arms around me, slapped my back and the two of us cried on each others shoulder. For his part he wanted to see me down safely but I did not want to be a burden in this dangerous place. Andy explained the process of getting down but it didn't sink in. More dexamethason was taken along with a litre of fluid and the oxygen level was cranked up.

I was led, without rucksack now, to the abseil ropes, ladders and tricky descents of the icefall guided by the four of them. Simon and Angus had gone on to Camp 2 where I should have been by now. The icefall was in a dreadful condition now after two months of post-monsoon weather and especially at this, the hottest part of the day. My glasses kept misting up with tears and the breath from the oxygen mask which made it difficult to see where my feet were going. Thankfully, these seemed to be the only body parts that were working. I blubbed the whole way down. Three years' work blown with three days to go. Delaying the summit push by becoming ill, endangering the others by forcing them through the icefall again and disappointing everyonewhot cares for me. My descent was truly a lonely one. It was my birthday in two days and this was not how I planned to spend it. Half-way down the icefall another group of 'rescuers' joined us. Alison (Hargreaves), Benoit (Chamoux) and our Sirdar, Kilu had come up to help. I found it humbling that these stars of the mountaineering world should come to assist me. Four hours later my walk was stronger and I marched into Base Camp followed by a Portuguese TV crew and an entourage of doctors. I could make myself understood with mumbles and much right-hand gesturing. One of the first of such actions was to shove the said right hand into a Portuguese camera lens and this, coupled with monosyllabic Celtic grunting made my intentions clear.

All the symptoms, including some amazing retinal haemorrhages, were of a 'Transient Ischemic Attack'. A 'stroke' to the layman, brought about

by High Altitude Cerebral Oedema. I had recovered because the correct drugs and procedures had been administered quickly. I was 'fortunate' to be surrounded by specialists in this quaint corner of medicine and I had lost a lot of altitude relatively quickly. However, the likelihood of a recurrence was high and the conclusion was for a helicopter evacuation at a much lower altitude down the Khumbu Valley.

This was promptly arranged for me the following morning from Pheriche. My tent was cleared, barrels and rucksack packed, oxygen bottles assembled, doctors to accompany me and reporting stations established. The expedition was ending for me, its conclusion was dictated by my physiology and all control was removed from me. In the space of a few hours I had been reduced from a fit, clear-thinking, high-altitude mountaineer with a high degree of shared responsibility to a physical nonentity with no control over my own destiny. I was the centre of much attention but I was rarely consulted and because speech was still difficult I couldn't even curse at those around making the decisions for me. I knew within myself that I was going to be OK but no amount of pleading to stay at least in Pheriche would persuade David or Andy.

The parting was extremely emotional. I blubbed away behind the oxygen mask, hugging and kissing everyone. The most emotional was with those who would likely reach the summit without me, my climbing mates. I had got very close to Alison and John and it was all I could do to tear myself away from them and saunter down the glacier away from Everest for good.

It was a long eight miles over difficult terrain but I was feeling strong now and still without a rucksack I marched on ahead of my medical escorts. I couldn't talk much or favour their company anyhow and I did not wish to share my emotional turmoil. We stopped briefly at Lobuche and passed a few people we had met during our two-month stay at Base Camp till eventually we arrived at Pheriche at 10pm. By this time I was hyper and despite the day's events was last to bed.

**Footnote:** The British Mount Everest Medical Expedition 1994 consisted of seven climbers: Dr. Simon Currin, Dr. Andrew Pollard, Dr. Charlie Hornsby, Ronnie Robb, Dr. John Sanders, Dr. Roddy Kirkwood and Angus Andrew. Alison Hargreaves was also attached to the expedition and shared our permit. The expedition was non-commercial and had no significant sponsor. It's probably the last of such expeditions to leave these shores.

Despite my own personal traumas, including being avalanched down The Lohtsc Face, it was an extremely successful expedition. More than 100,000 points of data were collected from more than 75 participants to the medical research work at Base Camp. Significant environmental research work was also carried out by a four strong team analysing human waste management in the Khumbu Valley.

Finally, at 12:05pm on 11th October, 1994, Charlie and Roddy made it to the summit, via the S. E. Ridge in dreadful weather conditions. Oxygen was only used from the South Col to summit and they were accompanied by two sherpas. In reaching the summit Charlie became the first SMC member to do so and Roddy, the second Scot. Sadly both of them had mislaid the St Andrews Cross that I had left them upon my departure. Lucky for me that it wasn't my prescription they lost!





## A FEW DAYS IN KINNAUR

By Graham E. Little

*THE FIRST ascent of Point 6553m (now called Rangrik Rang) via the north-east ridge, by a joint Indian-British expedition in June 1994. Eight members reached the summit. Prior to this ascent it was the highest unclimbed peak in the Kinnaur area of the Indian Himalaya.*

A SLEEK black chough flies by on singing wings. I crawl into the Gemini to sleep through the heat of the day but, interrupted by the noisy activity in the surrounding tents, manage only an intermittent doze. Jim Lowther fares better and I wake him for a brew and a snack in the early evening. We pack and leave the others to sleep on the col at 5775m at the foot of the north-east ridge.

We move under the pale light of a half moon. Lightning tongues flicker over the distant Gangotri, great thunderhead clouds building high over the mountains. The snow is of poor quality but is already forming a crust as the temperature drops. Belays are a good reason to stop for a rest rather than a genuine safety measure. Pitch after pitch up the great flank of the ridge we go, rhythmic kicking, breathless panting, legs aching, sweet sucking at every stance. The moon slips behind the ridge but our head torch halos guide us on, their yellow light warming the snow. Ten long pitches pass by in a kind of monotonous dream, each step like the last one, each pitch as the one before, yet every one of them unique. Pitch 11 is a traverse over strange, wind-sculptured snow. Pitch 12 gains a short knife-edged level snow arête. Jim sits astride it, ice axes thrust into the crest. It is nearly 2am and we are both too knackered to go on.

We cut a narrow shelf into the side of the arête and have a brew. A wind gets up and chills our body sweat. We decide to enlarge the ledge to pitch our tent. Even though the snow is soft, digging is tiring work at over 6000m. After much effort we hollow out enough room to squeeze the Gemini in with just one corner overhanging the void. Jim crawls in and crashes out. I linger, capturing the magic of a dawn that bursts around us. I ease in on the outward side of the tent, hoping that if he wakes Jim will not misinterpret my close embrace.

The rest of the team arrives in dribs and drabs during the middle of the day. The heat in our little tent becomes unbearable and the smell from Jim's boots nauseous. I squirm round and thrusting my head out of the tent watch the rest of the Brits hacking out tent platforms. The Indians are pitching their tent at another level spot slightly further up.

Jim and I have a debate over when we should start climbing. I favour another night time session but Jim, after talking to the rest, feels that we should all join forces and climb during the following day. Against my better judgment, I agree to go along with this.

After a full evening meal of soup, fish and noodles, I set my watch alarm for 2am, pop a couple of sleeping tablets and settle into my down cocoon.

I wake to the alarm but lie in warm inertia for another half hour before waking Jim. We have two brews and melt enough snow to fill our water bottles. Just as I emerge from our tent a stream of diarrhoea explodes from a bare arse protruding from the tent above us and splashes down the side of the arête. Jim and I rope up and, carefully avoiding the brown streak, start to climb.

We pass the Indians' tent with some signs of activity, then follow the arête past patches of shattered red quartzite to the start of a long, fairly level section. Chris Bonington and Jim Fotheringham are close behind us, others straggle behind them.

Looking along the arête, a summit, buttressed by a giant serac wall, seems encouragingly close but I'm convinced that it's not the true summit. We carry on pitching along the arête, the snow already deteriorating in the warming sun. The views are expansive and stunning, there is scarcely a breath of wind. At the end of the fairly level section the ground rears up into a short ice wall. I lead this with two good ice screw runners. The snow above the wall is knee deep and unstable. I flounder around, eventually uncovering a patch of ice which takes a bombproof drive-in. At Chris's suggestion we leave one of our ropes to assist the rest then plough on up more terrible snow. The true summit is now in sight but a long way off and each exhausting snow wading pitch seems to make little progress towards it. For a short while underlying ice allows decent belays but then we are back on to bottomless crud again, trailbreaking a mind over body exercise.

At last, acknowledging the futility of belaying, we move together, Jim powering ahead. Even following in his footsteps I have to work hard to prevent the linking rope from jerking tight. Suddenly, we are on the top, a wide, flat area with the odd rock outcrop. The mountains of the Himalaya are spread around us, a magnificent, uninterrupted, near cloudless panorama. The air is utterly still; a bee and then a butterfly sail past adding to the incongruity of the moment. Although I feel little elation I am pleased for the others, especially for Chris so close to his 60th birthday. Amazingly, we find a trickle of meltwater by an outcrop and set the stove purring, providing a chi stall for the arriving groups. We all blast off lots of film and then it is time to descend.

I morbidly reflect upon the outcome if a storm should catch us. The Himalayan Gods are kind and we make a weary, but safe, descent back down to the tents. Initially, I'm out in front and later at the tail end, retrieving the abseil ropes and gear then downclimbing. As we cross the level arête the sinking sun burnishes the snow, the brown mountains of Tibet soft on the northern horizon. My fatigued condition seems to heighten my appreciation of this incredibly beautiful evening and I sit outside the tent, bathed in golden light, feeling the elation that I should have experienced on the summit.

The descent of the mountain is mis-timed and I end up last on the fixed ropes crossing the icefield below the col. Stones and ice fragments strafe the

slope as I wait my turn. At the top of the last abseil a rock whirrs past as I hug in tight to the face. Another follows and scores a direct hit on my helmet. The impact knocks me off my stance. I hang on the fixed rope lapsing in and out of consciousness. Head ringing with the impact, I shout down but get no response. Only half in control, I abseil and fall down, struggling over a wide bergschrund, to slump on to the snow at the foot of the face. Chris, Prakash and another porter run over to assist me.

I stagger down the glacier, supported by Chris, with the two porters carrying double loads. Ahead of us rears the shapely wedge of Phawarang, around us ice slopes glisten in the slanting light; in my head the sound of the mountain sings.

We call the mountain Rangrik Rang after the Tibetan Gompa in the valley at its foot. It means 'God-made mountain'. On the walk out, as the path swings round into the Tirung Gad, I have one last chance to look back at our mountain but stride on down into the valley beyond.

### RETURN MOUNTAIN

He recognised the scarred hardware,  
a piton's beaten edge,  
grubby tape attached to krabs,  
opposite their gate.

Furred and twisted climbing rope,  
frozen coils of line,  
swollen hands in sodden gloves,  
multicoloured slings.

Felt the frosted fists that drove,  
cold iron through the ice,  
the hammer blows of winter trade,  
in Deep Cut Chimney's vice.

Down from the hidden coires,  
a slithering, stumbled flight,  
from Caucasian runnels far above,  
chalked against the white.

A face as raw as rhyolite  
from the coired winds attack,  
gazed out at this warm haven.  
The mirror sparkled back.

*Donald M. Orr.*

## NEW CLIMBS SECTION

ROUTES from the Outer Isles, Skye and Highland Outcrops (again!) have not been included due to the imminent appearance of the two guides. There have been many complaints about this practice in that the Journal is no longer a complete record of Scottish climbing, but space is limited. The concern is the possible loss of the original description. The opposite point of view is that there is no point in reproducing chunks of guidebook after its publication. The question is being considered before next year's Journal.

## NORTHERN HIGHLANDS

### SOUTH AND WEST (VOLUME ONE)

#### **DRUIM SHIONNACH, West Face:**

*Silver Edge* – 100m IV,5. A. Nisbet, G. Nisbet. 24th December, 1995.

A slightly easier route on the Silver Slab, but high in its grade. After the same start as Silver Slab winter (SMCJ, 1995; this route is renamed Silver Corner) up the right-hand chimney, a line working up left was taken to reach a prominent easy snow trough which bounds the upper silver slab on its left.

*Silver Slab* – 100m VI,7. B. Davison, A. Nisbet. 14th March, 1996.

A winter ascent close to the summer line. The route started in the left-hand chimney but pulled out steeply on to its right rib before moving back left to its top and joining Silver Edge. This was followed up left to its belay (35m). The line is now a fault central to the slab but on the right of the belay. It has a prominent small flake low down and leads up to a crack through a steep smooth girdling wall. Gain the fault by following Silver Edge for a few metres, then traversing right (thin). Climb the fault and the crack (nut for aid) and continue up on flakey ground until a ledge leads out left (45m). Easy to the top (20m).

#### **Creag Coire an t-Slugain:**

*Far Left Gully* – 100m I. D. Morrison. 2nd April, 1996.

The leftmost gully on the crag, left of and touched by Left Ridge. A difficult corniced exit.

**Note:** Well to the left of this route, about midway between the two main crags in the coire is a smaller west-facing crag with two gully lines. The left-hand gully, with a chokestone at mid height, was climbed by P. Grant and M. Lee on 24th March, 1996. Grade II, with a through route.

#### **AONACH AIR CHRITH, North-West Face:**

The slabby and larger right section of this face has three main groove systems right of the existing route, Mica Schist Special (which also follows a big groove on pitch 2). Each starts from a triangular bay and the rightmost is the deepest.

*Thin Groove Alley* – 250m IV,5. S. Ainsworth, A. Inglis, M.E. Moran, N. Veitch. 29th January, 1996. Takes a series of corners parallel and to the right of Mica Schist Special and forming the left-hand groove system. Start at the left toe of the main slab face just right of a brown rock scar and 20m right of Mica Schist Special. Climbed when lean; could be a grade easier when well-plated.

1. 50m. Climb the open groove with increasing difficulty, escaping left after 25m on to a ledge. Go up left again and back right to belays above the top of the groove.
2. 30m. Climb easily up and right into a big open book corner. Belay out right at a spike.
3. 30m. Climb the thin corner to a steep but easier exit.
4. 40m. Follow the continuation groove to belays at a terrace below the final slab wall of Mica Schist Special.
5. 50m. The continuation groove is the logical line but is Mica Schist Special. The big groove on the right is Get into the Groove. Between these two and 5m right of the belay is a shallow groove, the best independent line has been joined and crossed). Climb the groove to easier ground.
6. 50m. Easy to the top.

**Note:** On the third ascent by R. Brayshay, C. Milne and A. Nisbet in March, 1996 – in icier conditions – the groove of pitch 1 was climbed direct on ice, thin at times, grade IV,4, only one good runner. Pitch 2 and 3 were also combined.

*Get Into The Groove* – 250m IV,6. K. Burch, E. Herring, A. Nisbet. 23rd January, 1996. The middle groove system, about 25m left of the big right-hand one.

1. 35m. Climb the groove to below a 3m step into a clean-cut groove (if ice here, the route could reduce to III). Move out right to a flake.
2. 25m. Stand on the flake and step left awkwardly on to turf next to the groove. Continue up beside the groove to easier ground.
3. etc. 190m. Continue in the same line, ignoring the bigger groove on the right (Deep Freeze).

Variation: *Rib Start* – 50m III,4. R. Murray, A. Nisbet, G. Stockbridge. 22nd March, 1996. Starting up the rib on the right gives a better start when lean and reduces the whole route to Grade III. Start up the bigger groove on the right (Deep Freeze) but soon move left along the lower of two traverse lines to below a shallow chimney-slot (15m). Climb the left side of the slot (15m). Move right and up a turf slot to join the original route.

*(Dreaming of the) Deep Freeze* – 250m V,4. B. Davison, A. Nisbet. 13th March, 1996. Climbs the big right-hand groove. The start requires some consolidated snow/ice, for which it is graded, but on this occasion was slushy and serious.

*The Deerstalker* – 250m IV,4. E. Herring, A. Nisbet. 25th January, 1996.

Climbs the rib to the right of the big right-hand groove (Deep Freeze), then moves into it. From about 10m up the big groove (depending on build-up), traverse right to gain a steep line of turf which leads to a ledge below a smooth groove (50m). The smooth groove had no ice so an easier groove on the right was climbed (50m). Easier ground now led back left over the rib into the top part of Deep Freeze, which was followed to the top.

#### **Coire na Eirechanach (Map Ref 043 086):**

*Airy Icefall* – 120m IV,4. C. Kirk, M. Knowles, A. Jones, A. Nisbet. 17th March, 1996. Low down on the headwall of the coire is a slabby buttress with a prominent icefall. This route climbs the thickest ice, which forms from a slabby gully, down a wall, then down the centre of the main slab and finally over a short steep wall at the base. The first pitch was the crux with a strenuous start (4), then unprotected up the slab (40m, 3).

*Airy Corner* – 85m III. C. Kirk, M. Knowles, A. Jones, A. Nisbet. 17th March, 1996. The corner at the right side of the slab gave two long pitches on thinner ice. Could be easy with more snow.

**SGURR AN LOCHAIN, North-East Face:**

*Direct Evasion* – 150m IV,4. M. Welch, A. Britton, M. Grange, A. Lowry. 4th April, 1996.

Climbs the buttress right of the wide, easy gully. Start 20m left of the right slanting scooped ramp (SMCJ 1994) and climb slabs to a narrow well-defined gully (15m). Continue up to a steepening of the gully. Cross a wide ledge and up to a narrow cave. Climb out on the right wall and continue up steep ledges above to a wide belay ledge. Climb up via a wide notch directly above to an easing snow slope and the top.

**SGURR A' BHAC CHAOLAIS:**

*Mayfly* – 100m V,7. S. Allan, A. Nisbet. 27th December, 1995.

A line based on the summer route but staying just right of the crest throughout. The 'rising traverse left on a slab' was quit to climb direct up a pillar of wedged blocks into the corner of pitch 2 and the pull out right at its top (40m). A right-slanting turf ramp was then gained and followed to increasingly easy ground.

**THE SADDLE, Forcan Ridge:**

*Easter Buttress* – 100m IV,5. P. Franzen, A. Nisbet, M. Wight. 6th February, 1996.

Good technical crack pitches but one can walk off after pitch 1. Start on the left side of the toe at a large block. A short awkward corner and subsequent ramp leads to the crest, followed via a smooth slab to below a prominent crack on the right of the crest (35m). The crack was climbed to a platform just left of the crest (25m). An overhanging step ahead was passed on the left, then the final step taken by a turf groove on the right (40m).

**SGURR NAN SAIGHEAD, Coire na h-Uaighe:**

*Babylon Buttress* – 220m III,5. T. Archer, E. Ewing, P. Toniolo, S. Walter. 18th November, 1995.

Approximately follows the summer route. There is one very hard move off the third belay, and the final slabs can be climbed direct by twin torque cracks (again hard but only 5m before easy ground) or outflanked to the right by an easier groove. Possibly Grade IV.

**SGURR AN FHUARAIL:**

*One for the Road* – 130m II. J. Ashby, P. Thorogood, M. Welch.

The right hand frozen stream coming out of Coire na Cadha, bypassing a vertical section (not frozen). Altitude 400m, Map Ref 055 125 (also followed by New Routes Ed. and three others).

**CISTE DUBH, South-East Face:**

The face is well seen but distant from the A87 road. A deep gully, Grade I and climbed previously, splits the cliff into two halves. The left half is broken, the right provides the following routes.

*Kissed Ye Quick* – 70m II. A. Nisbet, G. Nisbet. 23rd December, 1995.

The left edge of the face, almost overlooking the gully, has a prominent turf groove, though not well seen from below. Near the top it splits into parallel turf grooves; the left was taken.

*The Mantleshelf* – 70m V,6. C. Constable, R. Hinde, A. Nisbet. 22nd February, 1996.

Climbs the crest on the right of the deep gully (and right of Kissed Ye Quick). Short but sustained. Start at its base and move out right to a turf line, followed to a flake (30m).

Return left to reach a turf ledge. Axe traverse the ledge left to a key foothold (crucial warthog in the ledge) and mantleshelf. Belay on huge flakes above (20m). Take the line of flakes diagonally right to finish (20m).

*The Undertaker* – 70m III.4. A. Nisbet, G. Nisbet. 23rd December, 1995.

The front face is split roughly into three by two parallel faults, almost shallow gullies and best seen from immediately below. Between them is a line of intermittent right-facing and leaning corners. This route climbs the right hand fault, initially easy, then a deep groove, and finishing by the right of two options, with a long step into the left as the final move (crux; a right finish perhaps easier).

### **MULLACH FRAOCH-CHOIRE, South-East Face:**

*Frayed at the Edges* – 150m II. A. Nisbet. 17th February, 1996.

The scrambling section on the south ridge has three buttresses on its east side. This takes the rightmost (northmost) buttress, with a tower and col towards the top. It finished immediately north of the trickiest section of ridge. Spoiled by an easy gully on the left leading to the col. The leftmost of the three buttresses was also climbed, starting by a short gully between two toes but petering out on to open slopes near the top.

### **SGURR NAN CONBHAIREAN:**

*East Ridge* – 200m to walking terrain II. P. Benaiges, C. Constable, R. Hinde, A. Nisbet. 18th February, 1996.

Start from the same snow bay as Ceannacroc Couloir but take a shallow gully on the left (initial icefall avoided on the right). Follow the gully to the crest on the left, which soon becomes scrambling, then a pleasant snow crest to the summit cairn. The gully has a longer right-hand fork, which looks good in better conditions.

### **North-East Face:**

*Misty Byway* – 200m III. S. Elworthy, R. Cross. 21st January, 1995.

Climb the obvious icefall at the left-hand side (lower end) of the face (50m). Continue up the groove above (50m). Traverse diagonally right on snow to the foot of a gully, followed to the ridge (70m, 30m).

*Fog Monster* – 200m V.5. A. Powell, M. Dickenson, N. Williams. 21st January, 1995.

Take the line 20m right of Misty Byway turning the ice column on the right (possible direct in more clement conditions) 50m. Step across the wall into the right hand groove and follow this (50m). Traverse right on snow as for Misty Byway (70m). Climb the obvious steep chimney in the buttress left of Misty Byway (40m).

*Crystal Couloir* – 120m II. J. Lyall, A. Nisbet. 26th January, 1996.

An easy slope slants up left from the cliff base above the lower section of the previous two routes, providing an escape from them. This route is a gully right of the upper section of Misty Byway. Climbed in cold but thin conditions, it provided a lot of ice, but might have much steep snow normally.

At the top right corner of the face are two prominent icefalls which form in shallow gullies. They were climbed during a big thaw when very little snow remained so may bank up and become easier (or even disappear) under heavy snow. On the day they offered continuous water ice (and water) and were possibly the only climbs in condition in the Northern Highlands.

*Icstasy* – 150m III. I. Appuhamy, A. Nisbet. 14th January, 1996.

The left icefall gave two long ice pitches, the first easier, the second steeper. A shorter third on frozen turf, then easy turf to the top (normally steep snow and cornice?).

*Liquid Gully* – I. Appuhamy, A. Nisbet. 14th January, 1996.

The right icefall. Easy-angled ice, then a short steep section leading to an ice runnel. Turf to finish out right on the north ridge.

#### **Lochan Uaine Buttress (NH 132 145):**

Approached by descending from the North ridge of Conbhairean south of the buttress. It is clearly seen in profile from the north east face of Conbhairean but most of it, including the steep section containing the following route, faces away (north east).

*Anne Frank's Chimney* – 90m IV,4. J. Llyall, A. Nisbet. 26th January, 1996.

About 10m from the left end of the steep section of face is a fault with sections of chimney high up. An initial steep step, then turf (45m). Chimney under a small chokestone (a distinctive feature seen from the route base, but small) and continue into a left-slanting steep upper fault (45m).

**SGURR NAN CEATHREAMHNAN (Glen Affric):** Technically, Northern Highlands Vol. 2, but approached from Loch Cluanie.

*Cross Stone Gully* – 100m II. M. Welch, I. Douglas, J. King, C. Trotter. 7th March, 1996.

Just below and 200m east of the summit on the south face of the mountain is a steep compact cliff. It holds this deep gully which is only visible from straight on. Climb up to a steepening capped by two crossed rock slabs. Climb this strenuously on the right, then continue up easier ground to the main ridge.

#### **LURG MHOR:**

*The Dreaded Lurgi* – 125m VS. A. Nisbet, G. Nisbet. 27th May, 1995.

Start about 5m left of Monar Magic at a distinctively red slab.

1. 30m 4c. Climb the slab, which slants left, and cross two small overlaps to belay below an obvious flange of rock which protrudes out from the main overlap.
2. 25m 4c. Move left and pull through a small overlap until level with the flange. Continue up and pull out right above the flange. Go up a slab and pull out right again.
3. 30m 4b. Move left and climb a clean raised slab.
4. 40m -. Easier slabs, blocks and vegetation leads to the top.

#### **MORUISG:**

*Moruisg Icefall* – 40m V,6. J.A. Sumner, P. Lester. 29th December, 1995.

The icefall is situated in a slot-gully in the north-west facing slope of Moruisg at MR 095 505. The top section of the icefall can be seen from the road.

1. 15m. Climb steep ice to gain a cave stance on the left of the main fall (peg in situ).
2. 25m. Move right and slightly down from the stance to climb a vague scoop in the steep ice wall. Peg in situ on the right at the top.

**Note:** on the second ascent on 27th March, 1996 by R. Brayshaw, C. Milne and A. Nisbet, when water was flowing down the original line, a line about 6m right was taken and the climb done in one pitch. Same grade but less sustained. The iced corner 10m farther right has been climbed by M.E. Moran and party at Grade IV.

#### **SGURR NA FEARTAIG, Coire na h-Eilde:**

The head of the coire has several waterfalls, marked on Sheet 25 at NH 030 454. Approach is by the stalker's path up the east side of Coire Leiridh from Lair. Very cold weather is required for a full freeze but it then offers a superb ice climbing venue. The biggest feature of the face is the main watercourse set in a gully - The Stonker. A wide steeper icefall to the left is more obvious, however, from the approach col and briefly visible from the A890 just east of Craig. Either side of the wide fall are thinner falls and leftmost of the set is an ice filled gully. Routes described right to left.

*The Wee Nipper* – 170m II. J. Lyall, A. Nisbet, M. Welch. 3rd February, 1996.

In the centre of the broken ground right of the main falls is a less steep ice gully. Its crux was a steep pitch towards the top.

*The Stonker* – 180m IV,5. J. Lyall, A. Nisbet, M. Welch. 3rd February, 1996.

The tremendous icefall that forms in the main stream bed right of the more visible icefalls. It drops into a small gorge so its full height is not immediately obvious. It gave four long ice pitches, continuous water ice between 50° and 70°, finishing through some huge ice umbrellas (crux). The first pitch in the gorge may be reluctant to form, particularly after wetter weather, but one can traverse in.

*High Flier* – 110m IV,4. M.E. Moran, A. Nisbet. 2nd February, 1996.

The thinner fall right of the wide fall (The Fast Lane). A low-angled initial pitch may bank out (25m). The fall then steepened to below a crest (20m). This was climbed direct (technical 5, but the second ascent took its left side, less steep but more sustained) – 35m. Then an easier section, followed by a steep finish out left. Initially soloed, but ice screw belays used throughout on second ascent.

*The Fast Lane* – 90m IV,4. M.E. Moran, A. Nisbet, G. Nisbet. 2nd February, 1996.

Very sustained – but never vertical – up a vague groove towards the right side of the wide fall. Ice screw runners will have to be placed on steep ground.

*The Big Dipper* – 90m V,5. M.E. Moran, A. Nisbet. 2nd February, 1996.

Two consecutive pillars on the left side of the wide fall led to a relatively easier middle section and a capping bulge (led in a 60m pitch). Easy-angled to finish.

*Aerial Runway* – 70m III. A. Nisbet. 8th February, 1996.

Start at the same place as The Big Dipper but take a big left-slanting ramp below Damoclean icicles, passing behind the largest (40m). The ice peters out into stepped mixed ground, climbed up and out right.

*Running on Empty* – 90m III,4. M.E. Moran, A. Nisbet. 2nd February, 1996. The left hand thinner fall has an impressively steep section low down which was passed by 70° ice on the left and a short bulge to gain a long easier-angled finish.

*The Ice Channel* – 80m III. A. Bull, M. Kinsey, M. Welch. 2nd February, 1996.

Forms in a gully as the leftmost main ice line. A steep entry leads to a long runnel of approx. 60° ice.

*In The Pink* – 160m II. J. Ashby, P. Thorogood, M. Welch. 30th January, 1996.

Left of the icefalls is a deep gully with a big step. The route lies between here and a north pointing spur at MR 035 453 and is fourth gully right of the spur.

*Willy Wonka* – 220m III. L. Atchison, R. Avis, S. Challoner, S. Potter, M. Welch. 8th February, 1996.

The gully left of In The Pink. Start up the narrow well-defined gully, then follow its right-trending fork up steepening ice steps to a wide ice fall. Take this direct to an easier left trending gully, then through mixed ground to the top.

### **Coire Leiridh:**

*Whites of Their Ice* – 85m IV,5. C. Kirk, M. Knowles, A. Jones, A. Nisbet. 18th March, 1996.

At the right end of the cliff is an icefall featuring a prominent icicle. The route takes a zig-zag line up ice ramps passing the icicle on the left and stepping on to its top (exposed crux) before moving up to a good thread belay on the left (40m). An easier second pitch followed an ice groove (45m).

### **SGURR RUADH:**

*Battersea Buttress* – 250m V,6. R. Brayshay, C. Milne, A. Nisbet. 24th March, 1996. Climbs the buttress right of Croydon Chimney. Start about 30m right of Croydon Chimney where an easy turfey ramp leads up right. Climb the ramp (30m), then work out left by a devious line on steep ground, always keeping right of a slabby right-facing corner (30m). Once through the steepest ground, climb up right to a big terrace (50m). There is a Grade I escape rightwards up a gully here. Instead, cross the gully leftwards and go up a turfey line on the buttress above (50m). Continue to the crest on the left and climb it steeply (25m), then to the top (25m).

### **FUAR THOLL, South-East Coire:**

*Butcher's Dog* – 80m II. B. Cowie, I. Gray. 26th March, 1994.

The route is situated approx. 200m below and left of the diagonal ramp which forms the lower left end of the South-east Face. It takes the obvious gully for 60m to a shallow terrace, then up a steeper gully for 20m to the top.

**Note:** the icefall between this route and the ramp has also been climbed at a similar grade: (Ed.).

### **AN RUADH STAC, East Face:**

*Left Icefall* – 90m II. C. Constable, R. Hinde, A. Nisbet. 21st February, 1996.

On the east face of the mountain, at MR approx. 925 482, is a recessed slabby area which forms twin icefalls. These looked good under cold snowless conditions but banked out considerably and this, the left one, was disappointing on the day.

### **MEALL NAN CEAPAIREAN, North Face:**

*Restful Buttress* – 200m II. P. Franzen, A. Nisbet, M. Wight. 7th February, 1996.

The steep central section of the face forms a nose cut horizontally and near its base by parallel ledges. Climb a short gully to reach the left end of the upper ledge. Traverse it to where it curves up at its right end, then take a left trending line to finish near the crest of the nose.

### **GLAS BHEINN:**

*Greenhorn Gully* – 190m IV,4. J. Ashby, P. Thorogood, M. Welch. 29th January, 1996.

A long north-facing gully seen high on the left from the Bealach a Glas-chnoic. Easy-angled ice terraces led to an obvious large ledge on the right (40m). The gully now steepened for two long pitches, with a short vertical crux low down, before narrowing and trending left. The finish was by broken and turfey ground out right.

### **SGURR A' CHAORACHAIN, Far North Buttresses:**

*Chocks Away* – 150m II. G. Bardsley, H. Davies, A. Nisbet. 25th February, 1996.

On the south side of the right-hand (northern) buttress (see SM CJ 1995), facing the descent depression, is this gully. All easy bar 15m of chokestone chimney, passing behind the first choke and outside the second.

*Very Y-Gully* – 220m III. G. Bardsley, H. Davies, A. Nisbet. 25th February, 1996.

The obvious gully on the east (facing Coire nan Arr) side of the same buttress. It splits into right and left gully finishes below a steep wall at the top. The very lowest shallow

section of gully was not climbed; a traverse from the left led to the deeper section. The two steepest steps were bypassed on the left, otherwise the gully was followed, finishing by the easier right branch.

### **BEINN DAMH:**

*Stirrup Gully* – 400m III. A. Nisbet. 20th March, 1996.

The long gully on the face north of the end of the north-east ridge of Beinn Damh summit, well seen on the walk-in. It forms the left edge of the steepest section of the face at MR 894 506. Despite lean conditions, the lower half had several short steep ice pitches leading to east snow in the top half.

*Moonloop* – 450m IV,5. J. Graham, N. Bullock. 30th December, 1995.

Follows a shallow narrow chimney starting some 100m right of Boundary Gully at MR 891 508. The chimney slants easily up left for 75m. Here it steepens and curves right over an ice bulge (25m), then up a sustained icefall (50m) and up the turf wall on the left to reach open slopes and rocky steps (included in length). The route forms ice readily in cold conditions.

### **LIATHACH, Coire Dubh Mor:**

**Note:** A variation to Salmon Leap taking a parallel icefall on the left of the middle section by R. Page and Y. Astier, VI,6, 29th March, 1995.

### **Coire na Caime:**

*West Face of the Dru* – 140m III,4. S. Ainsworth, A. Inglis, A. Nisbet, N. Veitch. 1st February, 1996.

As per title. Start below the steep lower tier, about 30m right of Dru Couloir, at the first easier break right of steep smooth walls. Step out right into a crackline leading to turf ledges. A sort awkward corner on the left gains a turf terrace 25m, (crux). Trend left to a shallow fault just right of the face's left bounding crest (45m). Climb the fault to the peak (20m, 50m).

### **Bell's Buttress:**

*Bell's Left Buttress* – IV,4. R. Brayshay, C. Milne, A. Nisbet. 25th March, 1996.

The last unclimbed buttress i.e. between Left Chimney and Cube's Chimney. The same start was used as for Bell's Buttress (SMCJ 1995 – renamed Bell's Right Buttress) i.e. the initial chimney of Last Orders followed by a (longer) traverse left to the buttress. A left-slanting line gained a higher terrace. A slabby corner on the left side of the buttress led to a flakey chimney and terrace above (45m). A short chimney on the right led to the easier upper section.

*Holy Ghost* – 150m III. C. Constable, R. Hinde, A. Nisbet. 20th February, 1996.

Climbs the buttress between Central and Right-Hand Trinity Gullies. Start on the left side of the buttress, next to the base of Central Trinity Gully. Traverse a ledge horizontally rightwards to the centre of the buttress, then go diagonally left to a barrier wall (50m). Pass this on the left and return right to a vague groove line. Follow the groove line for two pitches, then finish up the final crest over several small pinnacles.

*Trinity Arete* – 110m III,5. A. Nisbet, A. Partington. 3rd March, 1996.

Climbs the sharp-crested buttress between Left-Hand and Central Trinity Gullies. Very helpful and well protected when necessary. Starting at the very toe, the first pitch held a barrier wall climbed by a central thin crack (crux) and higher up a steep shallow corner (40m). The easier crest (50m) led to an overhanging rock nose passed by the first groove on the right (20m).

**Meall Dearg, North Face:**

*Icicle Gully* – 280m IV.4. G. Bardsley, H. Davies, A. Nisbet. 26th February, 1996.

H. Davies notes that North Flank is just left of the small watercourse, not right, and is quite good, perhaps Diff. if sticking to the crest overlooking the small watercourse, which is a left-slanting shallow gully widening with height. The shallow gully and two others to its right form a diverging set of three; this route is the central one. It is well-defined to half height, where it bends right and peters out on to mixed ground. The third pitch is the crux, involving 15m of 75° ice, so perhaps low in the grade.

*Spring Gully* – 300m II. A. Jago, A. Nisbet, S. Watts. 7th April, 1996.

The right-hand of the set of three contained several short ice pitches, one with a 5ft icicle from the lip of an umbrella (presumed to be very unusual). The gully combined well with the Northern Pinnacles in a circuit from Coire Mhic Nobuill car park.

**South Side, Coire Liath Mor:**

*The Potter's Apprentices* – 80m IV.4. M. Welch, M. Arkley. 24th February, 1996.

The following two routes are on the buttress with Spidean's Sting (see SMCJ 1995). This route goes up grooves right of centre of the buttress. It starts 5m right of a roof low on the buttress and about 30m right of Spidean's Sting. Climb the shallow gully direct, steeper than it looks, make delicate moves through a steep chimney to a terrace (45m). Trend right through steep mixed ground, finishing up a chimney (35m).

*Pottering About* – 70m II. M. Welch, M. Arkley. 24th February, 1996.

Climbs the icefall on the left of the buttress, finishing up corners. Start just right of the big Grade I.

**BEINN EIGHE, Coire Mhic Fhearchair, Far East Wall:**

*Hydroponicum* – 100m E1. J. Allott, A. Nisbet. 16th June, 1995.

Takes an improbable left slanting line through overhanging ground. Well enough protected but a touch exposed. Start about 20m right of Sundance.

1. 40m. Climb thickly turfed ledges leading up left to an apex below a short steep corner.
2. 25m 5a. Climb the corner and continue diagonally left on a ramp to belay below the last roof.
3. 35m 5a. Pass the roof on the left, close to the big right arete of Sundance and climb a crack/groove line to the top.

*The Root of all Evil* – 100m E2. J. Allott, A. Nisbet. 28th June, 1995.

Climbs the big left-facing corner on the wall just right of Sundance to join and finish up Hydroponicum. Typical Coire Mhic Fhearchair – sustained, overhanging, excellent holds and protection, but slow to dry. Start as for Sundance.

1. 30m. Climb the right slanting crack but break off right and belay under a smaller corner right of the big corner.
2. 20m 5b. Climb the smaller corner until obvious holds lead out to its left arete. Pull round the arete into the big corner just above its second roof. Climb the big corner until 3m below a big roof.
3. 15m 5c. Traverse left to a hidden crack and climb it (sustained) until a step out right gives a rest below the main roof system. Pull out right to belay as for Hydroponicum.
4. 35m 5a. Finish as for Hydroponicum.

*Fascist Groove Thang* – 105m E7. P. Thorburn, G. Latter. 26th June, 1995.

Climbs the wall left of Ling Dynasty. Start at the obvious groove 20m left of Birth of the Cool.

1. 45m 5b. Climb the groove, loose at first, past two ledges to belay on a slab or the inset ledge above.
2. 25m 6c. With a runner in the corner above, traverse right under a small overlap to a good hold. Move up left on to a ramp, then follow a hairline crack to a spike. Gain the right end of the overlap above and make difficult moves through a bulge into the base of a holdless groove (Fascist Groove). Continue with difficulty up and across the right wall of the Fascist Groove, moving up to belay below a large crack.
3. 35m 5c. Climb the steep crack until the angle eases, follow the left arete, then a crack to broken ground.

*Body Heat* – 90m E4. R. Campbell, P. Thorburn. 25th June, 1995.

Climbs the wall right of Sumo.

1. 35m 5a. Climb Sumo to a ledge. Traverse right, then straight up to belay at a pointed block.
2. 20m 6b. Climb above the block and follow ramps up right to a stopping place at large flat holds. Move slightly left on to a steep wall (RPs in thin horizontal crack), then straight up to a flake hold (good nut). A hard move leads to better holds and a hanging belay on the slabbier rock above.
3. 35m 5b. Follow a flake line above to an overlap. Move right and follow a shallow groove and wall to the top.

### **Eastern Ramparts:**

*Siege Tactics* – 110m E1. J. Allott, A. Nisbet. 24th June, 1995.

Takes a line parallel to Pale Rider and forming an X with Rampart Wall. The lower and left of the two square roofs above the Upper Girdle and mentioned in the description of Rampart Wall is a key locating feature. Start midway between Eastern Promise and Rampart Wall/Pale Rider; 10m left of a point below the square roof.

1. 40m 5c. Climb fairly directly to the Upper Girdle via a vague depression which is the right hand of several pale lines of smooth rock. One hard move stepping out right on to a small square orange slab; there may well be an alternative easier line.
2. 25m 5b. Climb directly up past the right end of the square roof to a good recessed ledge.
3. 35m 5a. Pull out above the ledge and take a slightly right trending line to belay below the chimney at the left end of the capping wall (close to Pale Rider).
4. 10m 4b. Climb the small tower just left of the chimney on huge holds.

### **Central Buttress, Quartzite Tier:**

*Porcine Connection* – 100m E1 5a. D. Rubens, C. Rubens. 26th July, 1995.

This started about 25m from the right edge of the buttress, below a corner-crack about 20m above. Trend up right to below a very prominent right-facing corner (25m). Climb delicately up into the corner and follow it (35m). Trend right via a crack to join Hamilton's Route.

**Note:** The corner described above is not the one described as dangerous in *The Generation Game* (SMCJ 1995), as it gave a very fine pitch. The fine direct version on the final tower has probably been ascended before as it is an obvious way to go.

### **Sail Mhor:**

*Sailing Buttress* – 200m to 'scrambling' III,4. A. Nisbet. 30th March, 1996.

Climbs the buttress left of Morrison's Gully to finish easily over the tower and upper crest of the buttress i.e. joining Lawson, Ling and Glover's Route. Pass the vertical wall at the base of the buttress by starting up Morrison's Gully and traversing left at the first

opportunity. A left-trending line was then taken to a pinnacle on a big terrace below a barrier wall. The terrace was then traversed right to near its end to find (with difficulty) the easiest line through the wall. Above the wall, the difficulty eased quickly.

**MEALL AN GHUIBHAIS, Lower North-East Flank: Allt Bhanamhoir Fall:**

This waterfall lies in an overhung alcove of crags at 370m just above the pine woods of the Nature Reserve (MR 978 655). It is approached direct up the side of the burn from the A832, and froze into an impressive icicle topped by a cluster of canopies after a week of continuous frost. There were other icefalls hereabouts. During the hind culling season (Nov. 1 to Feb. 15) climbers should first call the SNH ranger at Kinlochewe to check access as shooting is carried out on these slopes (Tel: 01445 760254 day, 01445 760244 evening).

*Bhanamhoir Fall* - 35m VI,6. S. Chadwick, M.E. Moran. 5th February, 1996. Climb 75° ice into a recess to the right of a free-standing section (peg and screw runners). Climb the pillar (thin and watery) up leftward into a niche, then battle through organ pipes and umbrellas to the top. To finish, either climb left out of the burn on a slab of ice spray or climb ice pitches a little higher in the burn.

**BEINN ALLIGIN, North Face of First Horn:**

*Depth Charge* - 130m VI,8. S. Chadwick, M.E. Moran. 20th February, 1996.

Climbs the headwall of the Horn which overhangs Deep South Gully. Fine situations and a tough finish. Climb Deep South to just past the narrows where the gully bends rightwards. Start at a corner ramp. Directly above, a black crack splits the final headwall; the route aims for this.

1. 55m. Climb iced corners and steep mixed ground, finishing by the left of two shallow chimneys; belay at a block. The pitch can be split at 20m.
2. 40m. Follow an icy gully above for 20m. Where it peters out traverse 10m right and go up a cul-de-sac to belay at the foot of the black crack.
3. 35m. Climb the left-slanting V-groove immediately left of the black crack to a ledge. Continue in the same line up a second overhanging groove to the top.

**Sgurr Mhor, North Face:**

*Curve Stone* - 350m II. S. Chadwick, S. Gorman. 10th March, 1996.

Left of centre on the face is a long shallow gully, initially left-trending, which ends on a shoulder of the NW ridge of Sgurr Mhor. An ice pitch leads into the gully. After another 150m, the line turns right and enters the icy narrows. Two pitches lead to the exit snows.

**SEANA MHEALLAN:**

*Hadrian's Wall* - 20m E1/2 5b. M. McLeod, C. Moody. 11th July, 1995.

Gain the top of the small pinnacle right of Skate (SMCJ 1995). Climb the crack on the right, moving over an overhang to finish up a short steep wall. The split grade is uncertainty (hot thundery weather).

**BEN DAMPH CRAG (SMCJ 1995):**

*Gem Find* - 25m VS 4b. T. Leggat, A. Nisbet. 24th May, 1995.

Start behind the big tree closest to the base of the left section. Pull out left on to a ledge at 2m. From its left end, gain and climb a shallow groove, then continue straight up to the top.

*Congregation* - 20m H. Severe. T. Leggat, A. Nisbet. 24th May, 1995.

The slab right of the prow section of cliff. Start at a small pine 5m up and climb as directly as possible, the difficulties soon easing.

**Note:** A. Nisbet notes that he repeated the existing routes (except Procession) and would have described the flake line of Crystal Horizon as straight up, not left to right. Maculate Slab was considered as 4c and Fiery Cross as VS 5a.

### DIABAIG:

*Continuation Route* - 55m VS. A. Andrew and party. 21st May, 1995.

Start to the left of Red Wall, at the foot of a large angled block below a rowan sapling. Climb past an overlap to the rowan (20m). A heather terrace leads to: climb the obvious slab trending rightwards to a grass ledge (10m, 4b). Walk up grassy slopes to the next buttress: an obvious corner and slabby face to the right of an overhang (15m). The obvious corner on big jugs (10m). Scramble to the summit.

### SLIOCH, Main Buttress:

*The Sea, The Sea* - 240m VI,7. R. Webb, N. Wilson. 24th March, 1996.

The large triangular face of Main Buttress is taken on the left by Skyline Highway. This route takes the easiest line up the hardest facet of this cliff, outflanking its steep upper section. From the right edge of the buttress, walk left from beneath the start of Skyline Highway until below a very obvious corner system about three-quarters of the way to the left-hand arete. Slightly right of this point, the overhanging lower wall is threaded by a turf line that runs about 15m up the cliff to end at a vertical wall. Start here.

1. 25m. Climb the turf line until stopped beneath an undercut blank corner. Traverse right on turf for 10m to another corner.
2. 20m. Climb the corner, partly on the left wall, until possible to step left (protection). Climb the wall above to gain a steep terrace.
3. 20m. The rock is overhanging above. Traverse easily right to a bay, identified by a small chimney on the left and a high fist-sized crack on the right.
4. 10m. Overcome the initial bulge to a ledge below the crack.
5. 20m. Climb the left wall before moving right to the crack; climb this to a ledge system.
6. 10m. Move right below overhangs to a prominent groove trending slightly left.
7. 15m. Gain the bottom of the groove from the left.
8. 40m. Climb the groove with increasing difficulty to gain the traverse line of Slioch Slimplan.
- 9,10. 80m. Ascend grooves with increasing ease to the top of the buttress.

### MEALL LOCHAN A' CHLEIRICH, Stone Valley Crag. (Sheet 19; GR 870 716):

Access - The crags lie to the south of the A832 west of Loch Maree. Follow the Poca Buidhe track for about 1km and the crags will be seen facing south-west on the craggy hillside of Meall Lochan a' Chleirich. The rock is gneiss similar to Diabaig, solid, clean and rough but slightly gritty on first ascent. It has a splendid outlook both to Baosbheinn and the sea. The crags are a suntrap and due to their hummocky formation, dry rapidly after rain. Due to the numerous crags of all shapes and sizes which form a rocky wall on the hillside, the name Stone Valley seemed appropriate. The various crags are described in relation to Stone Valley Crag.

### Rum Doodle Crag:

This lies several hundred metres left of Stone Valley Crag and is easily identified by the prominent arete which can be seen from the approach track.

*Rum Doodle Arete* - 35m H. Severe 4a\*. R. Brown, J.R. Mackenzi.e. 14th May, 1995. Start below the arete at a little groove to the left, gain the arete and follow the narrow edge directly, which is both bold and airy but with splendid friction. The last few metres are mossy and can be turned by a crack just to the left. Walk off at a ledge above or climb a straight-forward groove on the left.

*Trotter's Slab* – 40m V. Diff. A & G. Nisbet. 20th May, 1995.

Start 20m left of Rum Doodle Arete and follow the right edge of a smooth slab to move right and up a bigger pale slab.

### **Red Wall Crag:**

This is the steep wall left of Stone Valley Crag. The rock is more fissile but essentially sound.

*Flaming June* – 35m VS \*. R. Brown, J.R. Mackenzie. 11th June, 1995.

1. 30m 5a. The red wall lies on the left of the crag and is much steeper than it appears. Climb up to a small ledge at its right end. Continue to an obvious flange above, then traverse right to a ledge with small trees. Climb up the flake-crack and step left into a niche below a small roof, then step back right towards heather. Climb up and left into a well-positioned open corner to a ledge.

2. 5m. A short arete provides a pleasant finish.

### **Stone Valley Crag:**

This is the biggest and best crag, easily identified from the track by the silvery arete of Open Secret which lies down and left of the apparent summit crags. The base of the crag is a short steep wall with a short crack on the left, a central chock-stoned gully and some cracks on the right near a little tree. Above this wall the angle falls back into undulating steep slabs with a prominent water-washed groove right of centre.

Descent: Easiest by the open grassy gully on the left (facing). The central chock-stoned gully provides a Moderate ascent or descent to the upper crag and is useful if routes on the right wish to be reached rapidly. The routes are described left to right.

To the left of the silvery edge of the main slabs is a side wall of steep rock and a superlative pink slab, gained by a grassy gully.

*Cheesegrater Slab* – 10m VS 5a \*. J.R. Mackenzie, R. Brown. 10th March, 1996.

Below the following lines and forming an excellent approach to them is a small slab, climbed centrally.

*Hidden Agenda* – 25m VS 4c. R. Brown, J.R. Mackenzie. 11th June, 1995.

Left of the slab is a steep wall. Start in the corner on the left of the slab and trend up left, aiming for a slanting crack. Once at the crack, the climb finishes thinly by stepping left (crux). Rather bold.

*No Beef* – 18m E4 6b. R. McHardy, R. Brown. 24th March, 1996.

Start on top of the boulder left of Touch and Go and climb the wall to a ledge. Climb a shallow groove to a flat ledge, step right and up to an overhang with an undercut hold. Surmount the overhang to a groove and then make the bold crux moves diagonally left to finish by mantleshelves.

*Touch and Go* – 25m HVS 5a\*\*. J.R. Mackenzie, R. Brown. 11th June, 1995.

The obvious slab. Climb the slab's centre and step left to a shallow corner at three-quarters height, to gain the edge of the main slab above at a niche. Step right and finish up the crux of Open Secret.

*Open Secret* – 40m VS 4c\*\*. J.R. Mackenzie, R. Brown. 14th May, 1995.

Climb the short crack on the left of the lower wall and trend left to below the left edge (optional belay). Climb the crack to where it bends right. Now follow a thin snaking crack which trends left up the steep slabby headwall.

*Bald Eagle* – 55m E1\*\*\*. R. Brown, J.R. Mackenzie (alt). 11th June, 1995.

The seemingly bald slab between Open Secret and Stone Diary. The best route here, on peerless rock and much easier than would appear.

1. 15m. Climb the initial pitch of Open Secret to belay at the base of a 'musical' corner on the right.
2. 20m 5a/b. Climb the corner and at its top step left and climb a thin crack to its end. Climb straight up over the two small bulges above and belay on a small exposed stance below a thin crack.
3. 20m 5a/b. Climb the thin crack to its termination, then boldly attack the red slab above centrally, climbing straight over the wall at the top.

*Stone Diary* – 45m HVS\*. J.R. Mackenzie, R. Brown. 14th May, 1995.

Two splendid pitches on faultless rock. Start just left of the central chockstoned gully in the lower wall.

1. 20m 5a. Gain a plinth and climb the steep rib between the gully and a smooth pod. Step left above and friction up a fine slab.
2. 25m 5b. Step left and friction up a steepening scoop to gain holds up right (crux) and exit centrally below a crack that runs up the headwall slab. Climb the crack to the top.

*Inside Information* – 55m HVS\*. R. Brown, J.R. Mackenzie. 14th May, 1995.

1. 25m 5a. Climb the steep jamming crack on the right of the lower wall to exit by some blocks. Step left and climb an easy rib to avoid the heather, stepping right at the top to belay below the waterworn groove.

2. 20m 5a. Climb the excellent groove.
3. 10m 4c. Step left and climb a flake-crack to an awkward exit by a little corner.

*Melting Pot* – 50m E3\*. J.R. Mackenzie, R. Brown, G. Cullen. 24th June, 1995.

To the right of Inside Information is a steep buttress with a shield of rock on its left wall and a pair of thin cracks. The rock is uncharacteristically smooth. Start to the right of Inside Information at a rib to the right of a tree.

1. 20m 4c. Climb the wall and continue to step right to a ledge. Climb the short wall above and scramble up heather to the flake belay as for Inside Information.
2. 30m 6b. Step on to a ramp and climb the left crack to a sloping hold, move right and climb the right crack to the shield. Holds now begin and pleasant climbing leads to the top. Sustained to the shield with good protection but few holds.

*Divided Loyalty* – 30m H. Severe\*. R. Brown, J.R. Mackenzie. 10th March, 1996.

This route is most easily reached by scrambling up the central chockstoned gully and traversing right below the top pitch of Melting Pot to a narrow chimney. Climb into the chimney and up this to step left on to the front face. Continue up a slab and then a ramp on the right to the top on excellent rock, a fine pitch, much easier than it looks.

*Updraught* – 25m MVS 4b. J.R. Mackenzie, R. Brown. 10th March, 1996.

To the right of Divided Loyalty is a prominent corner. Climb the corner to where it eases, then step right on to the fine edge and follow this on rough rock to the top.

### **The Domes:**

Higher up above Stone Valley Crag is the apparent summit buttress which is two dome-like crags separated by a gully. Near the base of the left dome and 20m left of a big corner is a rightward-slanting thin red slab.

*The Thin Red Line* – 45m HVS 5a. A & G. Nisbet. 20th May, 1995.

The thin red slab was climbed on gritty rock to finish up more broken ground.

*Dome Corner* – 40m Severe. A & G. Nisbet. 20th May, 1995.

On the left wall of the gully and starting immediately at the top of the gully's steepest section, is a corner. Climb the corner until it becomes vegetated, then move on to the right arete.

**RAVEN'S CRAG, GAIRLOCH:**

*Shield Direct* – 40m VS 4c. S. Richardson, R. Webb. 21st May 1995.

A counter-diagonal to Badachro. Something of an eliminate, but good climbing nevertheless. Start 5m left of Badachro and climb the brown slabby wall crossing the crack of Badachro, then trend right to the base of the shield crossed by Hydro Hek. Climb this directly to the top.

*The Morning After* – 50m HVS. R. Webb, S. Richardson. 21st May, 1995.

The wall between Lonmore and Badachro.

1. 20m. Climb up to the tree belay of Lonmore by a short slab and walls to the left.
2. 30m 5a. Climb the wall directly behind the tree to finish at the same point as Badachro.

**GRUINARD CRAGS, Dome Crag:**

*Call of the Wild* – 50m E3 5c. M.E. Moran, M. Welch. 28th April, 1995.

Climbs the left-hand weakness of the central wall. From the ivy-filled recess pull over the roof to the right, and climb the impending wall to a resting ledge. Layback through the flaked roof above, and swing left to easier ground and belays (35m). Easy scrambling to the top (15m).

*Major Domo* – 50m E5. R. Anderson, C. Anderson. 3rd August, 1995.

The striking niched crackline-cum-groove provides a tremendous climb. Take plenty small wires.

1. 25m 6b. Climb the niched crackline to a ledge.
2. 25m 5b. An easy groove slants up left. Climb the buttress on the right via a central line which trends left and up to a ledge. Climb a juggy crack in the final short wall to reach a platform.

*Dead Calm* – 50m E6. R. Anderson, C. Anderson. 6th August, 1995.

The obvious discontinuous crackline in the centre of the wall provides a stunning route.

1. 30m 6b. Follow the line past a blankish section to an easing and continue up bulging rock above to easier ground where moves up, then left gain a large niche.
2. 20m 4c. Climb up rightwards and follow the best line to the top.

*The Missing Link* – 60m E1. A. Andrew, M.E. Moran. 26th May, 1995.

Follows the right edge of the central wall with a deviation into the recess to the right. Start 5m left of Grand Recess.

1. 20m 5b. Climb cracked blocks to the roof, and pull over to a handrail which leads right into the recess.
2. 25m 5b. Traverse out left on to the steep face and gain a crackline which leads to easier ground.
3. 15m. Pleasant scrambling to the top.

*Recess Corner* – 25m HVS 5a. A. Andrew, M.E. Moran. 26th May, 1995.

The black corner at the back of the recess makes an alternative finish to Grand Recess. Also climbed: a direct line up the lower tier to link with the second pitch of Silk Road.

*Edged Out* – 40m V. Diff. R. Anderson. 3rd August, 1995.

Just up the slope from Edgebiter is a smooth slab with a crack up its right side. Climb the crack to a ledge, step left and climb the blunt rib on rough rock with good holds.

**Note:** Several of the 1994 routes were repeated by M.E. Moran and their grades considered as follows: Paradise Regained E2 5b, Utopia HVS 5b, The Silk Road E2 6a, Grand Recess HVS 5b, Pink Streak VS 4c.

J.R. Mackenzie notes that he has reconsidered Paradise Regained as E2 5c.

Grand Recess: R. Anderson climbed directly up the steep crack of pitch 2 and ran it together with pitch 1 – 40m E1 5b.

### **The Apron:**

A pleasant apron of easy-angled slab on the next knoll/hummock to the north of Dome Crag (this lies on the other side of the wide descent 'gully' from Dome Crag). The slab reaches the ground in two tongues with an inverted V of heather and turf between them. *Smashy* – 50m V.Diff. R. & C. Anderson. 6th August, 1996.

Climbs the right-hand tongue which starts as a short pillar. The skyline block-type feature is climbed by a thin diagonal crack leading to easier angled ground and a common belay with Gneissy.

*Gneissy* – 50m Diff. C. & R. Anderson. 6th August, 1996.

A very pleasant route starting from the base of the left-hand tongue, climbing to a short corner on the skyline and continuing to a belay.

### **Dog Crag (MR Sheet 19, NG 958 893):**

This crag is reached by walking up the Inverianvie River from the main Gruinard Beach car park for 1km, then striking up the hillside on the NE side of the river. The crag lies directly below Dome Crag, just to the left of the stream which issues from the lochan. Descriptions have been written by J.S. Robinson in 1988 and the grades vary so much from those of R. Anderson (1995) that climbers are recommended to provide an independent opinion.

### **Chimney Crag:**

Presumably, the same as Creag Carn an Lochain Dubh. Certainly reached by walking up the Inverianvie River path past waterfalls and a gorge until it opens out into a meadow. The crag is above the footpath on the left and features a prominent chimney. *Glam Rock* – 20m E4 6a. R. & C. Anderson. 16th September, 1995.

The crackline just right of the chimney with moves out right to reach the wider upper crack.

*Grunge* – 20m E1/2 5b. R. & C. Anderson. 16th September, 1995.

The mossy open groove between the two cracklines on the left-hand portion of the crag.

### **Inverianvie Crag, The Bayview Wall:**

The following four routes lie on the upper wall (NG 955 896) of the knoll a short way south of the two slabby crags. The wall is seen in profile from the car park. There is quite a lot of rock under this knoll. A rising path from the car park leads up under the rock to the right side of the upper face (the path continues up rightwards to a stream draining from the boggy ground just west of Dome Crag). Traverse left beneath the upper wall and along past a huge wedged block to a ledge beneath a wall with a fine crack.

*Barrel of Fun* – 20m E3 5c. R. & C. Anderson. 3rd August, 1995.

Climbs the wall just right of the crack to much better rock and protection.

*Root Beer* – 20m E1/2 5b. C. & R. Anderson. 3rd August, 1995.

The obvious fine crack.

*Cask Conditioned* – 20m E1 5b. R. & C. Anderson. 3rd August, 1995.

The line just left of the crack and right of a heathery crack sporting a small tree. Climb to the roof and pull leftwards through this to the edge, then more easily to the top.

*Gneiss and Easy* – 20m HVS 5a. R. & C. Anderson. 3rd August, 1995.

The crackline up the wall just left of the heathery break provides a pleasant climb with a few awkward moves rightwards into the upper crack.

### **DUNDONNELL QUARTZITE CRAGS:**

The Dundonnell Quartzite crags form a long ridge of quartzite that stretch from GR 114 884 to 118 880, Sheet 19. Access is from the Badrallach road that leaves the A832 near Dundonnell house. The crags are most easily approached either side of the gorge that separates The Golden Wall, the farthest right and best crag, from the others on the left. The rock is Cambrian quartzite, essentially smooth and square-cut with a tendency towards brittleness. Though in essence sound, there are numerous loose blocks.

#### **Golden Wall Crag (118 880):**

The best of the crags and consists of a steep edge overlooking the gorge with an overhanging right wall. To the right the crag rounds the hillside and lessens in angle. *Silver Shadow* – 35m VS 4c. J.R. Mackenzie, R. Brown. 5th May, 1995.

This is the prominent edge facing the gorge. Start a few metres left of a wide heathery crack. Climb the slab and step right under a roof to climb a crack. Step left and climb the crack that splits two huge flakes and belay behind them (15m). Step right on to the wall and climb the crack, taking care of wedged blocks under a small overhang. Pull through the overhang and continue in the same line to the top (20m).

*The Golden Wall* – 25m E2 5c. J.R. Mackenzie, R. Brown (both led). 5th May, 1995. This is the striking orange wall to the right of Silver Shadow. Start by some cracks and then step right to creaky flakes. Continue to the right edge under the roof by a detached block. Traverse left to a prominent square block and continue up the wall in an exhilarating position, using the flexible flake, to exit up left at a skyline notch. An excellent route low in the grade.

*Old Faithful* – 20m V. Diff. R. Brown, J.R. Mackenzie. 5th May, 1995.

This is the chimney crack to the right of The Golden Wall.

*False Spring* – 35m VS 4c. G. Cullen, J.R. Mackenzie. 3rd March, 1996.

To the right of The Golden Wall is a rounded buttress that has seen some activity in the past. Its right hand edge is bounded by a rickety ridge and a tree and to its left is a fine clean slab left of a shallow corner. Climb the fine steepening slab past a crux bulge to a ledge above, possible belay, step left up a slab and exit up a rounded wall. A discreet cairn marks the start.

#### **CREAG BEINN NAM BAN (MR Sheet 19; 107 897):**

Access: Leave the A832 opposite An Teallach and take the Badralloch road to a large layby directly below the crag. The steep hillside is followed directly, turning crags to the right.

The crag forms a fine, sound, south-west facing, A-shaped slab of Torridonian sandstone approx. 50m high that is a natural sun trap. The crag is convex and has two distinctive shallow corners either side.

*Blockbuster* – 40m E1 5b\*\*. G. Cullen, J.R. Mackenzie. 6th April, 1996.

The left hand corner has a steep jamming crack. Follow this, step right on to a slab, then traverse right under an overhang. Surmount the overhang above a large block and follow the easier crack which runs up parallel with the apex of the A to the top. An excellent and strenuous route; very well protected.

*Long Distance Runner* – 45m E1 5a\*\*. J.R. Mackenzie, G. Cullen. 6th April, 1996.  
This varied and quite bold route takes the shallow corner which forms the right leg of the A. Start left of the corner above a bollard belay and climb the steep slab heading towards a short crack by the corner. Gain the corner and follow it to the top in an open position.

**CARN A' BHIORAIN, North-West Face:**

*Goat Falls* – 85m IV,4. M. Carroll, N. Kenworthy. 4th February, 1996.

MR 135 843. A frozen waterfall requiring a hard freeze. A prominent waterfall breaks through the north-eastern end of Coil a' Bhun crags (500m NE of Fain Falls).

Climb an iced slab (25m). Walk along the gully bottom for 25m. Climb another iced slab (20m) to a shelf and then the steep shelved icefall (45m). Exit left at the top.

**NORTHERN HIGHLANDS NORTH AND EAST  
(VOLUME TWO)**

**COIRE TOLL A' MHUIC, Sgurr na Muice, South-East Face:**

*Pipsqueak* – 75m II. J.R. Mackenzie, R. Weld. 11th February, 1996.

On the left side of the South-East Face near the exit of the descent couloir that runs behind the crags is a narrow icefall that lies at the same angle as the hillside, forming readily. Climb the escapable icefall direct over all the bulges, steepest at the top.

**Sgurr na Muice, North-East Face:**

*Three Little Pigs*. Direct Starts (SMCJ 1995). To the right of the icefall start are two left-slanting corners. These form easier alternatives, more in keeping with the rest of the route and can be used when the icefalls have not formed.

*Left Start* – 60m II/III. J.R. Mackenzie, G. Cullen. 28th January, 1996.

The better of the two starts held ice and frozen turf and steepens at the top.

*Right Start* – 50m II. J.R. Mackenzie, G. Cullen. 28th January, 1996.

Climbs the easier-angled slabby ramp to the right, mainly on frozen turf and a little ice.

**Note:** Three Little Pigs takes the open chimney well to the right of the following route, Tusker, and has a prominent block high up on the right skyline.

*Tusker* – 192m IV,5. J.R. Mackenzie, G. Cullen. 28th January, 1996.

Climb the initial icefall of Three Little Pigs to belay directly beneath a steep V-groove with a slabby side wall (50m). This is left of the easier chimney of Three Little Pigs. Gain the entrance of the V-groove and climb a very thin ice runnel up its back to below an overhang. A difficult right and upwards traverse then leads to the crest of the saddle (35m). Climb the scoop and crack right of a turf overhang over a bulge directly above to a small platform (7m, crux). Continue up the open chimney, trending slightly left near the top, to a superb cave (50m). Step right from the cave and climb a blocky chimney to the summit (50m). Well protected technical moves in a good situation.

*Pigsticker* – 230m IV,4. D.J. Broadhead, J.R. Mackenzie (alt.). 3rd February, 1996.

Take the left-hand couloir to the lower barrier. To the right of the two left-slanting grooves used as starts to Three Little Pigs, is a shorter right-slanting one, very near the right-hand end of the barrier wall. This pitch could be avoided more easily on the right,

but should not be missed. Climb the innocuous groove with considerable interest (25m). Continue easily up snow to below a wide icy gully/groove (25m). Climb the ice directly, then move right to the continuation (40m). Climb a steep chimney and then up to an overhanging rock wall. Move left under the overhanging wall and gain a thin turf groove on the left. Climb this to a small bay (40m). Climb the deceptive narrow V-groove above, sustained (25m). Climb the wider groove to a steep section up on the left (50m). Easily to the summit (25m). A fine sustained route giving good mixed climbing and climbed under thin but firm conditions.

*Pygmalion* – 175m IV,4. D.J. Broadhead, J.R. Mackenzie (alt.). 15th March, 1996.

To the immediate right of Pigsticker is a blunt arete. This has an easier lower continuation which bounds the bay containing The Wolf etc. but was not climbed and would extend the route by 60m or so. Climb the arete parallel to the first pitch of Pigsticker and belay as for that route (40m). Step right over the bounding edge and cross the next groove to the right, climb up the right wall to a square-cut recess and 'kickstep' up the right wall to a rib. Climb this for a move or two, then step delicately back left to the main groove and belay higher on the right (40m). Sidle left from the belay and mount a narrow turf strip to gain a prominent V-groove. Climb this (well protected, a superb pitch) – 20m. Above is a short, but wide, chimney, difficult to start. Climb this, stepping left to exit and continue up to belay on the right wall (25m). Step left and climb a wide crack with a perched chokestone and continue to the top (50m). An excellent and varied climb.

*Cracking Groove* – 160m IV,4. R. Weld, J.R. Mackenzie. 11th February, 1996.

To the right of The Wolf is a final icy groove that is bounded by an edge. Reach this by climbing the right hand of the two approach gullies and traversing right along the snow apron to the edge. The dead-end icy groove has a narrow subsidiary groove to its right. Climb up this subsidiary groove steeply to belays (30m, crux). Continue up the wider groove (50m). Continue in the same line (50m). Easily to the summit cairn (30m). A good first pitch followed by pleasant open climbing.

### **Surr na Fearstaig, South Top, East Face:**

*Sorcerer's Apprentice* – 165m V,5. J.R. Mackenzie, R. Weld. 13th February, 1996.

To the left of the original route, Sea Pink Gully, is a steep central buttress with easier groove lines to the left again. A prominent icefall bottoms the only break in the lower rocks. Climb moderate ice for 40m to the break. Climb the vertical ice funnel to reach turf, step left and curve back right to a recess (20m, crux). Follow a right-leaning ramp which bends back up left near a corner (45m). Continue up and left in an exposed position to near where the gangway ends (30m). Climb the break above to the top (30m). A difficult start leads to a natural line up the buttress in a fine position. More ice might lessen the difficulty.

### **GLENMARKSIE CRAG RIGHT (Sheet 26, GR 384 581):**

Approach: Park as for Glenmarksie Crag but since the crag lies to the right of the main crag and at the same level as Top Crag, go directly up the hillside to it. The crag is less obvious than the main crag but has some interesting lines, usually on good rock. Protection is a problem and RPs and small Rocks might be useful. A recent curiosity was the *in situ* sheep which had lived on the same ledge for four years; this recently took flight and jumped but survived and restricts its diet to coarse heather.

*Optical Illusion* – 25m E2. R. Brown, J.R. Mackenzie (alt). 2nd April, 1995.

Definitely the best route on the crag and the most varied of any route in the area, being

thin on the first pitch and juggy on the second. The route is possible in one pitch but would lose some of its character. Protection is very sketchy on pitch 1 but abundant on pitch 2.

1. 15m 5c. Roughly at the centre and directly below a small lonely tree is an overhanging green wall bottomed by clean grey slab with a guarding overhang. Surmount the overhang at some layaways and step right. Move up left and traverse left boldly below a small overlap and belay below the green wall.

2. 10m 4c. Climb the wall on the biggest holds imaginable to the tree.

#### **UPPER STRATHCONON, Allt Gleadhraich MR 274 510):**

*The Strathconon Experience – III/IV*. J.R. Mackenzie, G. Cullen. 29th December, 1995.

Due to the volume of water and low altitude, this requires a sustained hard frost to fully freeze (temperature maximum  $-17^{\circ}$  that day). The burn follows a steep-sided deep gorge for its lower section which provided four escalating ice pitches separated by flat but nerve-wracking iced pools. Much running water below the icefalls but superb ice which took ice screws readily. 15m, 20m, steeper 25m, crux 40m, top fall broad and taken centrally.

#### **CREAG GLAS, West Face:**

*Victory Crack – 70m E4*. J.R. Mackenzie, R. Brown. 20th August, 1995.

To the left of Salamander and at a higher level is a steep slabby wall split by a pair of cracks towards the right-hand end. The terrace below can be reached by climbing a chimney-corner or more easily the next corner left, then scrambling up a break in the wall. It is possible to scramble off left above the main pitch along a narrow ledge.

1. 25m 6a. Climb the left hand and steeper crack which is discontinuous, narrow and sustained but well protected.

2. 20m. Step right from the belay to gain and climb a crack that runs right of the roof forming a hidden corner.

3. 25m 4b. Climb up the broken slab behind the stance, reaching an unprotected, quartz-studded slab which is followed to below a curving crack left of the corner pitch of Salamander.

4. Scramble off leftwards or finish up Salamander's last two pitches.

*Spoils of War – 90m E2 5c*. R. Brown, J.R. Mackenzie. 4th November, 1995.

The very pronounced crack to the right of Victory Crack that lies to the left of Salamander slab. Start to the right of the crack to avoid heather and traverse left by a flake hold to the main crack. Climb the crack past a wide section to a little tree and step left to the crux section which is parallel and holdless but very well protected (45m 5c). Finish as for Victory Crack. The grade was uncertain due to damp rock.

**Note:** The pitch gradings for Salamander (SMCJ 1995) should be 4c 4c 5a (5b) 4c 4c.

#### **BEN WYVIS, Creag Coire na Feola:**

*Four Cornice Gully – 150m II*. J.R. Mackenzie, J. Finlay. 28th April, 1995.

Immediately left of The Snick and 250m left of the main crag is a deep gully. A small introductory pitch, then straight-forward snow led to the headwall composed of four cornices more than 35m. Might well be impossible mid-season.

#### **THE FANNAICHS, An Coileachan, Garbh Coire Mor:**

*Illusion Wall – 150m V*. Diff. A. Nisbet, G. Nisbet. 18th August, 1995.

Climbs the slabby left wall of the coire with occasional rock moves among the turf. The best feature of this featureless wall is a depression situated roughly centrally, access to

which is barred by steep smooth ground. The rib on the left of this depression has a small tree; the rib on the right provides this route. Scramble on to a right-rising terrace and go up it to start well right of the rib via a ramp which slants left to the crest. Follow the crest to the top.

*Winter* – IV,5. A. Nisbet, S. Richardson. 18th November, 1995.

By the summer route except that a deviation down left from the ramp was used to avoid a short slab on pitch 1. The short crux was a 5m wall when the crest was first reached.

*Flying Carpet* – 150m V,7. J. Allott, A. Nisbet. 9th December, 1995.

The rib on the left of the depression. Start from the bottom left of the terrace at the base of the depression (often thin ice on smooth slabs). Trend left on to the rib and up a corner to steep ground (35m). Trend back right on increasingly narrow turf ramps until next to the depression and climb a short vertical corner with a turf stripe, the flying carpet (strenuous bridging as the turf was not sufficiently solid to pull up on) –40m. The line continued just left of the depression, passing the solitary tree to big blocks (50m). The finish was a less steep turfy corner (25m).

#### **ARDMAIR, Big Roof, Side Wall:**

*Old Dog, New Tricks* – 20m E2 5c. A. Fyffe, J. Hepburn. 15th June, 1995.

Balancy climbing up the blunt arete right of Bolshie Ballerina. Climb that route to where it goes left round the edge and continue up the edge just right of the arete all the way.

#### **SULVEN, West Face:**

*Land and Freedom* – 145m V,7. R. Webb, N. Wilson. 23rd December, 1995.

The face is defined by the line of Western Approach Route on the right and is divided into three tiers. The difficulties are in the second tier. The route is highly recommended. Start at a right-slanting ramp in the middle of the lowest tier.

1. 20m. Climb the ramp and move right beneath an enormous block to belay.
2. 20m. Climb a short corner, exiting right to gain the first terrace. Continue to the foot of the main buttress.
3. 30m. Start at the second corner in from the right (small cairn as for Rose Route). This point can be reached avoiding the first two pitches by a long traverse from the right. Climb the corner, go left to a ledge, then back hard right to gain the crest of the buttress (obvious block). Gain the corner system right again and move up to belay at the base of a short chimney.
4. 25m. Climb the chimney, go straight up the corner above, exit right at the overhangs and up the corner above to gain the second terrace and easier ground.
5. Cross the terrace and go up a turfy groove to a large bay on a smaller terrace.
6. 15m. Traverse right along the terrace to below a 2m chimney.
7. 15m. Climb the chimney, move left and finish easily.

#### **QUINAG, The Western Cliffs:**

*Tenement Ridge* – IV,5. A. Nisbet, S. Richardson. 29th December, 1995.

The crest was generally followed but deviations left were occasionally forced.

*Drumbeg Tower* – 120m V,6. A. Nisbet, S. Richardson. 29th December, 1995.

Left of Tenement Ridge is a left-slanting gully with a short, narrow step (descent route, one abseil). Left again is another ridge which forms the right edge of the section of cliff with The Pillar of Assynt. The route started at a bay left of the ridge's base and below a big corner with overhangs. A turfy line was taken up from the bay and curving right

to join the ridge crest (50m). The crest was followed, initially with difficulty (30m), then easily (40m).

### **CLACH TOLL (NC 037 267):**

This is the well known curious geological feature, much photographed by postcard producers and the like. It is a wedge-shaped sandstone block that has slid about 50m down a slabby shelf into the sea. Aspect: East. Access: From Lochinver turn off left (west) along the B969 towards Stoer and follow this past Achmelvich to the tiny hamlet of Clach Toll. Drive through the camping and caravan site to the car park adjacent to the toilet block and little wooden information hut (6 miles/10 km). Approach: Cross the first beach and follow a path by old fence line south (500m/5min.).

*Slip Sliding Away* – 15m E3 6a\*\*. G. Latter, P. Thorburn. 22nd August, 1995.

The gradually widening crack just right of the left arete of the landward face. Approach a couple of hours either side of low tide. Climb a short groove to the left side of a large ledge (5a, 5m). The crack, on improving holds. Abseil descent from nut and sling left *in situ* at top of route.

### **REIFF, Pinnacle Area, 1st Geo:**

*Absent Friends* – 15m E5 6b\*\*. N. Clement. 11th May, 1995.

Traverse into the middle of the wall, as for A Walk Across the Rooftops, to an obvious hole. Move right up off a big undercut past two breaks to finish slightly left.

### **Black Rocks:**

*Cross-town Traffic* – 15m VS 4c. A. Fyffe, J. Hepburn. 24th May, 1995.

Takes a lower line parallel to the top of Barrel of Laughs. Start on the far side of the flat topped arete of Chillid Puds at a recess. Gain and follow the diagonal crack right then finish straight up the wider crack.

### **Seal Song Area:**

*The Mystic* – 15m E6 6b\*\*\*. N. Clement, G. Latter (both led). 18th May, 1995.

Spectacular climbing up the left arete of the south wall. Easily up the left side of the arete, then swing round right at the second roof and up to ledge. Pull out right and up to a good slot, then make hard moves up the arete to finish.

*Second Sight* – 15m E5 6b\*. N. Clement, G. Latter. 18th May, 1995.

The thin diagonal crack 3m right of the arete, starting just right of Modern Thinking. Up just right of the crack, with a long reach (crux) to a break level with the ledge on Modern Thinking. The crack above, on improving holds.

*An Faidh* – 15m E6 6c\*\*. N. Clement, G. Latter (both led). 14th May, 1995.

Fine sustained climbing up the wall midway between Modern Thinking and The Executioner. Start in the centre of the wall, right of a right-slanting ramp. Up to and climb the thin crack to good break. Move slightly left to the next break, left along this and up with difficulty (RP #3 1m above good sidepull) to better holds. Step right and easier up centre of wall.

*An Fiosaiche* – 15m E6 6b\*\*. N. Clement, G. Latter (both led). 14th May, 1995.

The right-hand line on the wall. As for An Faidh to the good break, then out rightwards to two good jugs (small friends and good skyhook). Make hard moves to stand on the top jug, then step left and more easily up centre of wall.

**The Leaning Block Cliffs:**

*The Quickening* – 18m E5 6a\*\*\*. G. Latter, A. Wren. 6th May, 1995.

A diagonal line across the grossly overhanging wall bounding the left side of the crag. Start beneath a prominent flake at 3m. Up on good breaks to reach an obvious line of holds and follow these rightwards to underneath the roof on the arete. Swing round and finish up the left edge of the slab. Well protected with friends.

**LOCH NAN CAORACH WATERFALL (MR 286 277):**

*Sirius Falls* – 200m II/III. M. Carroll, R. Bale, N. Kenworthy, J. Forder. 3rd February, 1996.

The waterfall on the opposite side of Abhainn an Loch Bhig to Eas a' Chual Aluinn. It seems to freeze more readily than Eas a' Chual Aluinn, and although almost as impressive a watercourse in summer, it freezes at an easier gradient. The fall is wide and there are many variations. Climb easy bulgy ice, starting on the right to a cave belay (60m). Negotiate a break in the hanging chandeliers (crux) and belay below steeper ice (50m). Take the steep pitch direct in the centre and belay at a large boulder (45m). Exit either left across a slab and up a chimney finishing on a steep wall or right up a narrow groove and across a slab leftwards (45m).

**SHEIGRA, The First Geo:**

*Steep for 5 Minutes* – 25m E6 6c\*\*. G. Latter. 1st July, 1995.

A direct line attacking the capping roof in the centre of the wall. Start directly under the roof. Up a grey ramp and rightwards through a niche to a brilliant incut pocket. Follow the vague crackline on good holds to the roof, and make some very powerful moves through this (small nuts) to a superb pocket and large jug in the break above. The short wall above leads to a superb finishing jug.

*Dying in Vein* – 25m E4 5c. G. Farquhar, C. Carolan. 30th June, 1995.

The steep orange quartz-veined wall between Blind Faith Direct and Road to Ruin. Climb up the line of a thin crackline trending rightwards to finish through the right hand side of the overhang (left of the pink groove of Blind Faith Direct). Steep climbing on good holds with adequate protection.

*Ape Escape* – 25m E5 6b\*. G. Latter. 6th July, 1995.

The thin seam 3m right of Monkey Man. The crux to reach the small roof is very powerful and reachy, and was protected by an escape on to Monkey Man to place a high runner. Above the roof, follow the left hand crack on good edges to a fine finishing jug.

*Here and Now* – 25m E5 6b\*\*\*. G. Latter, R. Campbell. 29th May, 1995.

Superb steep and strenuous climbing with reasonable protection. The right side of the south face has a shallow orange hanging groove at the top. Start up a prominent diagonal crack and move right to good undercuts and flake (also possible to climb direct to here, but runners in crack useful higher up) to gain a good hold just above. Move slightly left and up a flared crack with a hard move to gain a good flat hold (good nuts, including Walnut 10 or 9 on side). Move slightly left and up a further flared crack to good incuts, then right and layback sharp flakes to better holds and protection. More easily up the final groove to finish on superb holds.

*What the Pool Said (on Midsummer's Day)* – 30m E5 6a\*\*. G. Latter. 4th July, 1995.

Bold steady climbing up the right edge of the Inner Walls. Start on top of a boulder near the right edge. Up to a pocket (Rock 5) and move up leftwards past a further pocket to

good holds leading to a break level with a small roof on the left. Step right and up shallow grooves, then direct on good holds to pull on to a sloping ledge. Move up an easy slabby groove leftwards and finish up a jug-infested slab.

### **The Outer Walls:**

Farther right where the geo opens out at a large pool is an extensive overhanging wall, with a long-ledge system at the base. Approach can be made from the back of the geo at mid-tide, or by the approach for Shelob's Lair etc. In the centre is a stunning golden wall, with black-streaked cracks either side.

*The Sound of the Surf* – 25m E4 6a\*\*. G. Latter, R. Campbell. 27th May, 1995.

The left-hand crack system. Scramble up to the base from the left. Climb the crack with a hard section low down. Higher up, it is possible to bridge into the groove on the left. Pull over the capping roof direct at a good slot and finish on good holds.

*Looking for Atlantis* – 25m E5 6c\*\*\*. R. Campbell, G. Latter (both led). 27th May, 1995. Superb climbing up the black-streaked crack bounding the right side of the orange wall. From the right end of the ledge, move left and up to a large flat ledge, then up and left to the base of the crack. Up this to a steep thin crack in the headwall which leads with difficulty (crux) to a good fingerlock. Stand on the ledge and finish easily.

About 100m north towards the Second Geo is a perfect corner.

*Crackin' Corner* – 12m VS 4c\*\*\*. G. Latter, K. Martin. 4th July, 1995.

The short but perfectly-formed corner, with a parallel crack up the left wall.

About 50m farther on, just south of the start of the Second Geo, is a long platform about 10m above the sea. Approach from the right (south) and scramble down to reach the right end.

*Under the Pink* – 15m E1 5b\*\*\*. G. Latter. 4th July, 1995.

The shallow right-facing groove at the left end of the ledge leads to the right end of a long sloping ledge. Thin cracks in the arete above.

*In Between Days* – 15m VS 4c\*. G. Latter, K. Martin. 4th July, 1995.

The line between, following a blocky crack with a bouldery start.

*Above the Blue* – 15m E1 5b\*\*\*. G. Latter. 4th July, 1995.

The crack near the right arete leads to a good break, then easier up the superb shallow groove above.

*Glop* – 20m E2 5b\*\*. P. Thorburn, P. McNally. July, 1995.

Climb *Above the Blue* until a traverse can be made above the lip of the leaning arete. At a large pocket, move up and gain a slab and belays.

### **The Second Geo:**

*Wanderings* – 35m E2 5b\*\*\*. G. Latter. 2nd July, 1995.

Start up the same point as *May Tripper* to a good break. Traverse this diagonally rightwards to an obvious large pink juggy break. Move up then right and follow the right edge of the orange rock to better holds. More easily up a wide crack past a large spike to finish.

**Note:** Something similar may have been climbed before. As the wall seems climbable almost anywhere, described routes in the guide were rationalised to choose the best lines (Ed.).

*The Dark Flush* – 45m E2 5b\*\*\*. R. Campbell, G. Latter. 26th May, 1995.  
Start as for Exorcist, but continue traversing the entire lip of the roof to follow a line of huge pockets up the prominent wide black streak.

### **The North Geo:**

*Black Slabeth* – 20m E1 5b. P. Thorburn, P. McNally. 17th July, 1995.  
Climb the thin crack in the black slab at the back of the geo.

*Daehgar* – 20m E2 5a. P. Thorburn, P. McNally. 17th July, 1995.  
The slab right of Black Slabeth direct through overlaps, gained by a short crack on the right.

*Streamlined* – 15m VS 4c/5a. A. Nelson, S. Kennedy. May, 1995.  
There are two corners immediately to the left of The Ramp. This route climbs the slimmer left-hand corner. Climbed in heavy rain; the grade is uncertain.

*Ebony Corner* – 15m VS 4b. A. Fyffe, B. Fyffe. July, 1994.  
The larger right-hand corner, which is directly above the start of The Ramp. Climb the slab slightly left then back right to gain the thin crack which leads into the corner. At the top step right and finish up the larger corner.

### **AM BUACHAILLE, Coastal Cliff:**

Opposite the Am Buachaille stack there is a large cliff extending south towards a smaller squat stack. Its left edge is a prominent square-cut arete. Just right of the arete is a big groove.

*Dream of the Desert* – 90m E2. P. Nunn, M. Richardson. 27th May, 1984.

1. 40m 5a. Climb a big corner, passing a frightening wedged-block overhang.
2. 30m 4c. Go out right on to slabs and belay below a line of roofs.
3. 20m 5b. Climb the small roof (Friend *in situ*) and cracks above in an impressive situation.

**Note:** About 300m north of Cnoc an Staca is a steep south face with by an obvious crackline left of an area split by a groove and ledge system. The crack is *The Ome*. 35m, E2 5c. M. Boysen, R. Carrington, G. Birtles. May, 1987.

### **CREAG SHOMHAIRLE:**

*In Woods and Wild Places* – 55m E5\*. P. Thorburn, G. Latter. 25th August, 1995.

A line up the pillar on the right side of the crag, where the wall turns from west to south-west. Start by a slabby right-facing ramp beside a small rowan right of Dance of the Dead.

1. 30m 5b. Easily up past small rowan and slabby ramp to a left-slanting diagonal crack, then by a flaky crack past a large keyed in flake to a small groove. At the capping roof step right round a rib to belay on ledge.
2. 25m 6a. Traverse left above the lip of the roof to two good pockets. Make committing move up leftwards to a large rounded hold, and continue in the same direction with a further tricky section to good holds. Continue up cracks in the arete to belay on ledge. An abseil descent was made from a nut and carabiner, left *in situ*. 50m ropes just reach the ground.

### **The Pyramid:**

The following three pitches are all on the prominent undercut triangular-shaped buttress about 100m left of the right end of the cliff. The first three lines lead to a belay below

a slabby crack (VS) which gives access to a vegetated ramp. Abseil down this from a small tree.

*The Other Landscape* – 25m E3 5c. P. Thorburn, G. Latter. 26th August, 1995.

Start directly beneath the shallow right-facing groove at the left side of the crag. Pull over roof by a huge jug on the lip, and up groove to a good slot near the top. Move out rightwards heading for a horizontal break, then back left on undercuts to finish direct.

*The Shadow* – 25m E3 5c\*\*. P. Thorburn, G. Latter. 26th August, 1995.

Pull over by a jug near the cave like recess, and up the slightly left to a shallow left-facing groove. Up this and continue in the same line to the top. Bold and sustained, on superb rock.

*The Lost Glen* – 25m E3 5c\*. G. Latter, P. Thorburn. 26th August, 1995.

The prominent right to left crack across the buttress. Start just to the left, and up past good holds to gain crack. Follow this (good nut or friend in slot out left), moving left and up pegmatite vein to better holds in crack above. Finish up this.

*The Silver Bough* – 12m VS 4c\*\*. G. Latter, P. Thorburn. 26th August, 1995.

A convenient top pitch to the three preceding routes. Follow the crack in the slab and pull out right to a good flake, then by a line of good pockets past a break to top. Belay on tiny rowan. Abseil descent down easy-angled gully on right.

### **BEINN CEANNABEINNE (NC 420 643, Aspect: West) (28.9.95).**

A fine 40m sheet of Lewisian Gneiss, set at an angle of 80-85°. The crag is visible (and was first spotted) from the café in Durness.

Approach: Leave the A838 at a rough driveable track 400m SE of Smoo Cave Car Park. Drive 0.6km to park on the right just before gate. Continue following the track until about 100m after it starts to descend, and head up the hillside towards the crag (30min.).

Descent: Traverse diagonally right on the heathery slopes above and climb right into the top of an easy gully. If in doubt about the route, go higher up the slope to an easier descent.

*See the Arctic Bear* – 52m E1 5b\*\*\*. G. Latter, P. Thorburn. 28th August, 1995.

A brilliant full-length pitch, taking the big diagonal crack in the upper half of the wall. Start at a small right-facing groove formed by the curving arch. Up the groove to gain a small ledge on the arete. Move up to a break, then to two huge pockets (F #3.5 or 4). Move up right then back left to base of the crack. At the top pull left and up heather to belay at the bottom left of a huge leaning flake. A 50m rope doesn't reach, though it should be possible to move out right from the top of the crack to find a belay.

*Larger than Life* – 40m E5 6a\*\*. P. Thorburn, R. Campbell. July, 1995.

Bold run-out climbing taking a line through the centre of the curving overlap just left of the centre of the crag. Climb up the wall to gain break in overlap. Continue up and right to a big sidepull, then direct up wall left of water streak. Skyhooks useful, and 2 RP #3's required on top wall.

*Cranial Cavity* – 40m E2 5c\*. R. Campbell, P. Thorburn. July, 1995.

There are two huge flakes leaning against the base of the wall in the centre of the crag. (The lower one provides reasonable shelter during rain). Gain the short right-facing groove above the upper flake, and up this then its left rib. Finish up the shallow groove or its right wall, whichever line is drier.

**CAITHNESS SEA CLIFFS, Mid Clyth, The Stack Area:**

*The Fearful Void* – 20m E3 5c. S. Clark. 19th August, 1995.

Between Maelstrom and Raccoon Kicker. The striking thin crackline in the frontal part of the North Wall, with a rightward step above the second roof. Sustained and well protected on fine rock after the first few feet, which weep (but are climbable) in early season.

*Freak Power* – 7m E2 6a. S. Clark. 19th June, 1995.

Between Comedy of Thirst and John's Peel. A short technical line up the front of the Very Large Block. Take twin cracks through the slate band to a ledge, then step right and climb the next crack and wall to its right on to the top of the block.

**Latheronwheel, The Big Flat Wall:**

*Morning Tide* – 20m E1 5b. G.Latter, P.Thorburn. 24th August, 1995.

The wall left of The Other Landscape. From a belay in the cave, traverse left to a small thread runner and pull direct over the bulge (avoidable at 5a farther left) and straight up the wall. At the large ledge near the top, move left and finish up the short left-facing corner

**ORKNEY, Yesnaby, Qui Ayre Point:**

Situated about 200m north of the Castle of Yesnaby, a wall of compact sandstone 35m high projects west. A small cairn marks the site of some old quarried 'flag' workings. A few metres south-west is a short steep chimney for descent to the wave-cut platform. *Definitely Maybe* – 30m E2 5b. A. Park, N. Gilman, N. Kekus. 6th May, 1995.

From the bottom of the descent chimney walk 20m left along the wave-cut platform to beneath the first groove on the steep wall. The route starts up the groove for 5m before moving left on to a rib, then left again to climb the crack to the top.

*Handbags and Gladrags* – 30m E2 5b. N. Gilman, N. Kekus, A. Park. 6th May, 1995.

From the bottom of the descent chimney, walk right for 30m. The steep wall has a crescent overhang at 20m with a thin crack coming from its right-hand end. The route climbs the steep wall and open groove directly below the right-hand end of the overhang and takes the crack above to the top.

*Freeloader* – 30m E1 5b. N. Kekus, A. Park. 7th May, 1995.

Reached by abseil down the line. Situated 150m east of the descent chimney described above. A depression on top of the route and cairn 15m from the edge mark the location. From a small stance just above the sea, climb a left-facing corner for 10m, pull steeply up and right on to a wall with small pockets. Move right and finish up a shallow left-facing corner to the top.

**CAIRNGORMS**

**Errors in the new guide:** Escapologist as described is easier than VI,7, perhaps IV,6. Azalea Rib should be IV,5. The Sword of Damocles should have \*\*. There are definite opinions that The Ascent of Man and Flodden should be \*\*\*, and Flodden E6. Certainly, stars have been applied more meanly on Creag an Dubh Loch than Shelter Stone Crag. Some duplications in the graded list: score out Devil Dancer as a high VS and Windchill as a middle VS (both now HVS and correctly placed as such). The FWA of Epitome was by Fijalkowski and R.A. Smith, B. Sprunt made the second ascent.

**LOCHNAGAR, Sunset Buttress:**

*Quick Dash Crack* – 100m IV,5. B.S. Findlay, S. Richardson. 11th December, 1994.  
Start at the left side of the front face below a vegetated chimney/groove.

1. 25m. Climb the groove, past a chokestone to a good ledge.
2. 15m. Step left and climb the prominent wide crack on the left edge of the buttress to a stance.
- 3, 4. 60m. Continue up the crest of the buttress to the plateau.

*Perseverance Rib* – 80m III. C. Cartwright, S. Richardson. 7th January, 1996.

This rib is the best-defined feature between the Red Spout and The Cathedral and is characterised by gullies either side and a small tower in its lower half. Start 20m right of Red Spout and climb a gully to the left of the tower. Continue up the right side of the rib to the plateau.

**Sinister Buttress:**

*The Hacker* – 90m V,6. A. Nisbet, J. Preston. 10th January, 1995.

On the right side of Sinister Buttress is a prominent corner which bounds the right side of a smooth wall. The wall is split by a vertical fault, almost a shallow chimney, 3m left of the corner. Start up the fault until it peters out, then take a rising traverse left to gain a ramp which leads back right to belay above the wall (35m). Continue up the ramp to easy ground near the top of Gully Route (50m). Finish as for this route.

**Central Buttress:**

*Chevalier* – 110m V,7. S. Richardson, R. Webb (alt.). 4th February, 1995.

The narrow V-groove left of Centrist (only summarised in new guide).

1. 45m. Start at the foot of Central Buttress Direct and trend up and right to reach the foot of the groove. Enter it from the right with an unusual *a cheval* move (crux), and climb to where it eases.
2. 25m. Continue up the groove which parallels Centrist on the right. Belay in a snow bay.
3. 40m. Finish up the groove line left of Centrist, passing a steep turfy bulge at 10m. An easy snow trough (as for Centrist) then leads to the crest of Central Buttress below the pinnacles.

**Black Spout, Left Branch:**

*Chinook* – 80m IV,4. S. Richardson, J. Ashbridge. 10th December, 1995.

The broad rib to the right of A Slice of Ice.

1. 35m. Start directly below the gully face of the rib and climb a steep crack, at first slightly left then right, to reach a snow slope. Block belay.
2. 45m. The slabby wall above is cut by a prominent fault. Traverse left below this to reach a wide hanging crack on the very left side of the wall. Climb this, exit right at the top, and trend right up easy ground to the plateau.

*Early Bird* – 35m II. J. Ashbridge, S. Richardson. 5th November, 1995.

The well-defined gully left of Crumbling Cranny. Extremely short and banks out in full conditions. Has merit in forming ice readily, and is possibly the first route to come into condition on the cliff.

**West Buttress:**

*Black Velvet* – 120m V,7. S. Richardson, C. Cartwright. 4th February, 1996.

A direct line up the steep left crest of the lower section of Black Spout Buttress.

Worthwhile as a route in its own right, it can also be used as an alternative start to Black Spout Buttress. Start at the lowest point of the buttress, below a line of left facing grooves overlooking the Black Spout.

1. 25m. Climb the grooves, passing several steep steps, to where they finish at a good ledge.
2. 15m. The line now continues up the vertical corner above. Move up to the base of the corner, and climb it (crux) exiting left at the top to reach the crest.
3. 40m. Climb up easily at first, then continue just left of the crest along an obvious series of ramps. Climb a steep wall to reach the crest of the buttress.
4. 40m. Continue easily along the crest, and descend into the col as for Black Spout Buttress. From here, either descend down and left into the Black Spout, or continue up the ordinary route. (Climbing the two towers above the chimney pitch is more in keeping with the standard of the lower section).

### THE STUIC:

*The Stooee Chimney* – 90m IV,7. S. Richardson, G.Scott. 14th January, 1996.

This deep chimney is the most prominent feature to the right of the crest of the Stuic. Climb it for 25m to a roof beneath a huge bridged chockstone. Climb the right wall of the chimney on flakes and make a difficult exit (crux) on to the top of the chockstone. Continue up the chimney and finish up snow slopes to the top.

*Twilight Groove* – 90m III,4. S. Richardson. 19th November, 1995.

Start 15m left of The Stooee Chimney and climb a groove to a ledge. Pull over a bulge to enter a shallow left facing groove. Exit right at its top to finish on the right side of a small tower.

### CREAG AN DUBH LOCH, South-East Buttress:

*Souls on Fire* – 150m IV,5. G. Scott, S. Richardson. 2nd January, 1996.

A natural winter line up the right-facing prominent chimney gully to the right of Dogleg. Start 30m left of South East Buttress below a ramp which runs up right to left (South-East Buttress, Alt. Start).

- 1, 2. Follow the ramp to a terrace, then trend up and left over several short steps to a belay at the foot of the chimney.
3. Climb the chimney to its top.
4. 50m Continue up the V-groove above, step right at its top, and continue up easy ground to the top of the buttress.

### Central Slabs:

*Medusa* – 130m E1. W. Church, G.S. Strange. 1st July, 1995.

A climb on the lower slabs only. Start 5m right of Black Mamba at the left end of a low overlap.

1. 20m 5b. Climb a thin straight crack to the grass terrace.
2. 25m 4c. Walk right and climb pink cracks left of the deep fault of Vixen to reach a shallow bay.
3. 20m 4c. Trend up left following cracks to below the big overlap. Traverse left and step round on to Black Mamba.
4. 20m 4b. Climb pitch 3 of Black Mamba to a belay ledge.
5. 45m 5b. Follow a crack, bearing right to join Vixen below its V-groove. Continue as for Vixen to the terrace.

*Buddha* – 40m E7 6c. J. Lines. 31st August, 1995.

Climbs directly up the slabby wall below and right of Howff Dweller (new guide, p132).

Climb scoops in the centre of the slab, then move right to arrange protection in cracks. Gain twin converging cracks and climb them until they disappear. Make desperate moves out right to easier ground, then follow the easier cleaned corner and headwall (as for Howff Dweller) to finish. Low in the grade.

### **BROAD CAIRN BLUFFS, The Diamond Slab:**

*The Crowd* – 35m E4. N. Morrison, J. Duncan. 29th July, 1995.

Makes the best use of the rock left of Solitaire, independent on its first pitch but squeezed in on the upper slab.

1. 10m 6a. Ascend the obvious finger crack, with the help of the groove on the left, to a mean rockover into a niche. Follow the slab above to belay as for Solitaire.
2. 25m 5c. Follow an easy ramp left to the edge, then climb diagonally rightwards to gain the obvious left hand branch of the Solitaire crack system. Follow this to finish up the left arete. Bold to start.

### **EAGLES ROCK, Likely Story Slab:**

*Ripping Yarn* – 80m E1. J. Lines E. Mctavish. 31st August, 1995.

A direct line through A Likely Story, starting 5m right of it.

1. 30m 5a. Pad up a blank slab to holds, move up and right into a V-shaped notch and above this step left to the base of a smooth slab. Climb the slab via a line of small features until the angle eases. Step left to belay as for A Likely Story.
2. 50m 5a. Climb A Likely Story for 5m, then pull out left through a V-shaped notch. Climb the smooth slab direct to the curving overlap of Fraud Squad. Pull out left and climb the slab to finish up the final crack of A Likely Story.

### **JUANGORGE:**

*Grand Inquisitor* – 115m VII.7. S. Richardson, C. Cartwright. 23rd December, 1995.

A difficult mixed route up the previously unclimbed front face of the crag. The line follows the left-slanting series of cracks on the right side of the face. Pitches 2 to 4 are very sustained and become progressively bolder.

1. 20m As for Good Ship Venus pitch 1 to small patch of trees.
2. 20m Climb the strenuous crack-line above, passing several jammed flakes, and follow the thin, left-trending ramp to a stance just beyond the continuation of the crack system.
3. 15m Step back down and right into the crack system and climb this (first crux) to an easing below roofs.
4. 15m Move up and left into a slanting break through the roofs. Climb this (second crux – bold), then step up and right onto a slab. Cross this to reach a crack on the right and belay on the ledge above.
5. 45m Climb the vegetated cracks above, continually easing, to the top.

### **GLEN SHEE, Craig of Runavey:**

Three distinctive ribs are seen from the A93 a couple of miles short of Spittal of Glen Shee. Approach via Westerton of Runavey farm road. Map Ref 128 694.

*Central Rib* – 60m V. Diff. D.F. Lang. 18th June, 1995.

The most prominent and finest. Ascend the narrow rib to a heather clump below a V-gap. Straddle up this to easier ground. Continue to the final prow. Ascend to a loose spike, then move back left to climb the left side of the prow to the top beside a fallen larch tree.

*Western Rib* – 45m Severe. D.F. Lang. 18th June, 1995.

Looks scrappy. Ascend the broad rib to below a steep wall. Gain a ledge, then climb the slab on the right to easy ground. A crack in the wall proved just too hard.

*Eastern Rib* – 60m V. Diff. D.F. Lang. 18th June, 1995.

Go directly up the rib to a steepening. Climb this at its left side to emerge into saplings. Continue on the left to gain the crest of the rib and continue to the top.

**Craig of Runavey, Main Crag (MR 135 697):**

The main crag is to the east of the three ribs, beyond a stand of trees. Approach as before but continue on a track that runs well below the crag. The crag is split by a fierce gully and the following climb is to the left.

*Runavey Arete* – 25m H. Severe. D.F. Lang, A.C. Stead. 1st July, 1995.

Start where a stone dyke abutts the arete and climb to a pinnacle (crux). Gain the slab on the right and continue to the top.

*Trees Essential* – 50m VS. A.C. Stead, D.F. Lang. 1st July, 1995.

At the right-hand side of the crag is an overhanging dark wall with trees below it. This route takes the first line of weakness to the left of the dark wall. Climb the wall until a step right can be made on to a slab with two conspicuous lichen patches. Continue past a tree and surmount the wall on the left with the aid of a tree. Continue up the rib on the left (with care) to the top.

*Runavey Pinnacle* – 30m H. Severe. D.F. Lang, J. Fuchter. 23rd July, 1995.

Ascends a conspicuous pinnacle well seen on the approach. Start a few feet below Runavey Arete and climb behind a rowan tree to the foot of a wide crack. Ascend the frontal face of the pinnacle to its top. Surmount a short wall, move left and climb to belay at the top of a crazy rib. Good protection and climbing.

**BRAERIACH, Garbh Choire Mor:**

*Little Big Chimney* – 90m VI,7. C. Cartwright, S. Richardson. 21st January, 1996.

The prominent steep chimney on the right flank of Crown Buttress. A short route with a big feel! Start 40m up Great Gully below the chimney.

1. 25m Climb the lower chimney and back-and-foot up the smooth V-groove above to a cave stance.
2. 35m Move up and right onto the wall right of the cave. Climb up directly on steep turf (bold) to regain the chimney line above. Climb up to a second cave, step right, and struggle up the overhanging groove on the right (crux).
3. 30m Finish up the easy gully to the top.

**CREAGAN A' CHOIRE ETCHACHAN, The Bastion:**

The following full descriptions were only mentioned in the new Cairngorms guide. An earlier route, Bastion Cross, started as for Blinkered and finished near, or as for Bastion Rib. Diagrams provided.

*Bastion Rib* – 150m IV,4. G. Scott, M. Cadman (alt.). November, 1993.

Takes a line to the right of Bastion Wall (may be close – Ed.). Climb a series of icy grooves to belay on the right side of a slabby wall (70m). Traverse left across slabs (delicate) and after a short corner, climb a rib initially on the left then on the right. Belay above a short chimney (40m). Easier to the top via short walls and turf ledges (40m).

*Blinkered* – 155m IV,4. G. Scott, M. Pennlington (alt.). November, 1992.

An attempt to get on to the prominent rib of Blinker. Start just left of the start for Original Route, about 20m up from the foot of the buttress. Follow a line of grooves going up and left towards a prominent wall in the middle of the face (40m, 40m). Continue up the groove until forced right. Make a traverse right across a slab, then upwards by a corner,

then its left-hand rib – crux (35m). Traverse right over mixed ground and finish up a final corner system.

*Bastion Cross* – 150m IV. R. Renshaw, G.S. Strange. 29th January, 1977.

A winter climb between Original Route and Bastion Wall, made under powder-snow conditions. Start left of the lowest rocks and follow a left-trending line of weakness. This became impracticable after two pitches, so a rising left traverse was made before continuing more directly to the top.

*Not For The Home Boys* – 85m III. C. Smith, D. Grant, S. Murray. 10th December, 1995. Located on the separate buttress left of Quartzvein Edge and left of Foxy Groove. Start 15m up and left from the foot of Quartzvein Edge at a prominent icefall.

1. 45m. Climb the icefall trending left to reach a cul-de-sac. Make an awkward move left on to a pedestal which leads to a slim ice runnel. Climb the runnel exiting left on to rocks.

2. 15m. Directly above the belay is a small capped overhang. Bridge up and take the overhang direct.

3. 25m. The steep icefall above is climbed direct to a ledge at half height. Traverse left and finish up the ice bulge above.

#### **CARN ETCHACHAN:**

*Crystal Groove* – 100m IV,6. B. Davison, A. Nisbet. 5th April, 1996.

The big groove parallel and just left of the Diagonal Shelf; Crystal Maze uses its lower part. A small ramp between the Crystal Maze starts led left into the groove which was followed to an awkward finish on the left though a chimney-slot. Easy to the Terrace.

*Bastille* – B. Davison and A. Nisbet note a free winter ascent at VI,7 on 5th April, 1996.

#### **SHELTER STONE CRAG:**

**Note:** P. Thorburn and G. Latter climbed a variation to pitch 4 of The Needle. From halfway along the traverse, pull straight over the roof into a shallow hanging groove and up this with difficulty. E4 6b.

*Shelter from the Storm* – 110m V,7. A. Fyffe, I. Peter. 27th March, 1996.

Lies between Unknown Gully and Games of Chance. Start in the large snow bay as for Games of Chance.

1. 40m. Slant up and left via ledges, ramps and short corners to belay below a large pinkish slab.

2. 50m. Go diagonally left on a hanging slab into a short steep right-facing corner. Climb his corner (crux) on to an upper ramp and follow the obvious weaknesses to easier ground.

3. 20m. Move right and climb a ramp to finish.

#### **HELL'S LUM CRAG:**

Below Hell's Lum is a slabby diamond-shaped buttress, approx. 100m long and 40m high in its centre. Both ends taper into the hillside.

*Pluto* – 35m VS 4c. J. Lines. August, 1995.

Start at a white streak at the lowest point. Climb up to a left-facing corner and move right to a hairline crack. Climb the crack, which eases after 5m, and head for a right-facing corner at the top. Climb the corner and pull out left to finish.

*Cerberus* – 25m E1 5b. J. Lines. August, 1995.

Thirty metres from the right end of the buttress is a smooth black slab. The route climbs the crackline in the left side of the slab, gained from the right and easier after 15m.

*Firestone* – 25m E7 6c. J. Lines. August, 1995.

Climb the obvious pink waterworn streak directly up the black slab just right of Cerberus. Holdless and protectionless.

**Note:** J. Lines notes a 50m route starting as for Damien but continuing up to a glaciais at E2 5b.

*Two Little Devils* – 30m E1 5c. J. Lines, K. Crymble. 21st September, 1995.

Ten metres right of Escalator is a steep slab with a Y shaped crack system. Climb this to easier ground (superb gear). Climb the wide crack above to a glaciais.

*Highway to Hell* – 20m E2 5b. J. Lines. August, 1995.

At the far right end of Hell's Lum and 50m right of Escalator is a slabby right angled arete, climbed on its right side (bold).

### STAG ROCKS:

*Lost in the City* – 25m E2 5c. J. Lines, K. Crymble. 21st September, 1995.

Fifteen metres right of Cascade is a clean right angled corner (4m high). Climb this (technical crux); move up and right to gain curving layback flakes which bend leftwards and finish up a sentry box

*Truly, Madly, Chimbley* – 90m III. S. Frazer, J. Lyall, M. Twomey. 12th February, 1996.

This surprising climb lies on the left wall of the Y shaped gully right of Cascade. Start a short way up the gully below a large block (sometimes banked out).

1. 25m. Climb an icefall left of the block and move left into a bay below the chimney.
2. 25m. The back of the icy chimney is climbed until blocked by an overhang. Pull out on to the higher set of chokestones (a brilliant pitch for the grade).
3. 40m. Easy gully to the top.

### STAC AN FHARAIDH:

*Not Fade Away* – 120m V,6. S. Blagbrough, A. Fyffe. 14th February, 1996.

This lies between Rectangular Rib and Mack's Dilemma and follows a slabby corner left of the vertical wall forming the edge of the main slab. Start at the foot of Rectangular Rib.

1. 25m. Climb the shallow tapered chimney till the right wall can be climbed to a large block.
2. 45m. Climb the slabby corner line to an easing in angle.
3. 40m. Go up right to below the vertical wall and climb the corner via several short wide cracks to a huge block by a steepening.
4. 10m. From the toe of the block climb the short crack going up right and exit on the left of the capping block.

### COIRE AN t-SNEACHDA:

Saturation Point (new Cairngorms guide, vol 1, p35) had been previously climbed by D. Lockie, J.R. Mackenzie on 1st December, 1990.

### Fiacail Buttress:

*King of the Swingers* – 150m VI,7. A. Powell, R. Cross. 11th March, 1995.

A route which cuts through the start of Smokestack Lightning to finish up Fiacail Buttress. Start 8m right of the left-slanting gully on the lower buttress.

1. 25m. Climb steep double cracks (*in situ* wire), then traverse left to a large block belay.
2. 35m. Traverse 6m left and climb the right-slanting ramps and walls above the belay (stenuous), then head straight up to the crest of the buttress.
- 3, 4. 90m. Follow Fiacail Buttress to the top.

### **CREAG AN LETH-CHOIN:**

*K9* – 180m IV,4. A. Fyffe, B. Fyffe. 23rd March, 1996.

This route lies between Central and North Gullies and links a lower and upper icefall. Start midway between the two gullies and climb a wide icefall to where it narrows 6m below an overhanging wall. Traverse left across mixed ground to easier terrain and climb this up and left to the fine upper icefall which forms in a corner. Climb this to the top.

## **NORTH EAST OUTCROPS**

### **GLEN CLOVA, Juanjorge:**

*Time's Arrow* – 30m E5 6b. G. Farquhar, C. Carolan. 30th June, 1995.

The central line through the triangular niche in the centre of this immaculate granite wall. Start down and left of Roslin Riviera, below the niche. Move up, then step right to the base of a thin diagonal crack. Up this, passing a Lost Arrow. Make difficult moves (crux) through the niche to gain the crack sprouting from its apex. Continue up the sustained crack to join Roslin Riviera at its final moves. Sustained and well protected.

## **BEN NEVIS, AONACHS, CREAG MEAGHAIDH**

### **BEN NEVIS, The Little Brenva Face:**

*Cresta, Direct Start* – 70m IV. K. Wilson, N. Harper; J.R. Mackenzie, D. Lockie. 1st February, 1987.

Start left of Cresta at the base of the rocky spur and climb a steep ice pitch for 35m (crux). Continue up easier angled ice for a further 35m to reach the snow fields. This makes a more logical route when combined with the Direct Finish.

### **North-East Buttress, First Platform:**

*Newbigging's Route, Right-Hand Variation* – 60m V,6. D.F. Lang, A.C. Stead. 23rd March, 1996.

Start about 30m left of the groove of the Far Right Variation where a parallel groove slopes down to a short barrier wall. Climb a shallow groove with twin cracks to a ledge in the main groove. Climb this turfy groove to belay in a short corner (25m). Step left and climb the continuation groove on loose rock (2 aid pegs) to gain the base of a corner with a wide crack. Climb left of the crack to a belay (35m, junction with Newbigging's 80 Minute Route). Climb delicate grooves above, left then right for 30m to join the final groove of the Far Right Variation.

### **Minus Two Buttress:**

*Long Division* – 250m E1 5b. W. Hood, C. Moody. 20th August, 1995.

A good direct line up the buttress right of Subtraction.

1. 35m. Climb the rib right of Subtraction to belay below the bulge.
2. 35m 5b. Climb the bulge (just right of centre), then follow the obvious steep crack to a belay below the overhanging nose. The last part of the crack was grassy and avoided by a step left.

3. 30m 4b. Go left round the nose, then move right above it. Climb the rib past the right end of the roof to belay above.

4. 40m. Up trending rightwards towards the gully.

5. 50m 4b. Climb cracks left of Minus Two Gully.

6. 50m. Finish up.

Subtraction was repeated by the same party. They thought E1 4c, 5a, -, -, 5b, - and one star was enough (Long Division two stars).

### **Douglas Boulder:**

**Note:** Walking Through Fire (SMCJ 1995, p676) starts just left of Cutlass.

### **Secondary Tower Ridge:**

*Stringfellow* – 240m VI,6. C. Cartwright, S. Richardson. 11th March, 1996.

An outstanding mixed route up the crest of Pinnacle Buttress of the Tower. Sustained with exciting positions. The route is graded for helpful ice plating conditions, but it is also possible in more mixed conditions when it could be a grade harder (as on the first ascent). Pitches 2 and 3 follow the line of the summer 1902 route. Start 30m left of the icefall of Pinnacle Buttress Direct in a small snow bay, below a shallow gully.

1. 50m. Climb the gully, passing a steep section at half height to the terrace. Cross this to below the rake which cuts right to left through the lower part of the buttress.

2. 50m. Follow the rake to its right end. Pull through a short steep wall and continue easily to a cave belay.

3. 25m. Climb the shallow gully leading back left to a platform just left of the crest of the buttress.

4. 40m. From the right end of the platform, climb a short icy wall cut by a vertical crack, then move to the foot of steep twin grooves. Climb the right-hand groove, then move up to a block with a wide crack on its left side. Climb this and continue up the gully above to a large platform on the crest of the buttress. A difficult and sustained pitch.

5. 25m. Avoid the steep headwall above, by gaining the narrow ramp on the right side of the buttress. Take the right of two grooves, then step right and down at its top to gain a short gully on the right which leads to the crest.

6. 50m. Follow the easy angled crest to the foot of the Great Tower on Tower Ridge.

*Fatal Error* – 230m IV,4. G. Dudley, S. Richardson. 24th March, 1996.

A good mixed climb up the line of weakness on the left flank of Pinnacle Buttress of the Tower. The climbing is technically reasonable, but overall the route is a little intimidating for the grade. Start in the small snow bay below the gully of Stringfellow.

1, 2. 60m. Move up and left over flakes and snow and break through the short wall above which leads to easy mixed ground and the snow terrace. Belay below the prominent gully-line which runs up left of the steep central section of the buttress.

3. 40m. Climb a short icy slab to gain the gully and follow it for 35m to where it steepens, then move left along a short ramp to its top. Block belay.

4. 45m. Move awkwardly right along an upper ramp to gain the upper section of the gully. Climb this to its end, then traverse up and left below a smooth wall of slabs to reach the left edge of the buttress.

5. 35m. Follow the buttress edge to a snow platform.

6. 50m. Traverse easily left across snow to gain Tower Ridge about 30m below the Great Tower.

### **The Comb: Tower Face of the Comb:**

*Bell's Chimney: Variation* – 65m V,5. R. Everett, S. Richardson. 31st March, 1996.

This worthwhile variation follows an elegant line up the crest of the buttress. Possibly

climbed before. Start from the snow slope at the top of the crux pitch (pitch 3 in SMC Ben Nevis guide).

1. 40m Traverse horizontally right for 5m and climb the groove and chimney system on the crest of the buttress to a stance on the arete.
2. 25m Climb the arete (awkward) over a series of steep steps to where the angle eases and the original line comes in from the left.

### **South Trident Buttress:**

*South Flank Route* – 150m IV,4. A. Kimber, N. Hicking, C. Collin. 29th March, 1994. Immediately to the left of the steep rocks of the middle tier of South Trident buttress overlooking the approach to No. 4 Gully are some steep ice smears. Follow the steepest of these and snow slopes and chimneys above to the flat section on the crest of South Trident Buttress whose fine narrow shattered arete is followed to the top.

*Devastation* – 80m E1 5b. C. Moody, A. Nelson. 12th July, 1995.

The steep crack right of Pink Dream Maker. Fine varied climbing.

1. 40m 5b. Climb the corner right of Spartacus till it ends at the flake; move left to a niche above the overhang. Climb the steep crack above.
2. 40m 4b. On up.

### **Carn Dearg:**

*Red Rag, True Finish* – 50m E2. G. Muhlemann, S. Richardson. 20th August, 1995. An independent finish to Red Rag through the roofs to the left of Centurion. A spectacular outing, totally illogical but sensationally exposed. It can be used as an alternative finish to any of the routes which terminate on the Route II traverse. High in the grade, because of exposure and spaced protection, it is also slow to dry. Start at the end of Red Rag pitch 8 (Centurion pitch 5) on the Route II traverse.

1. 35m 5b/c. As for Centurion climb up to the overhang, surmount the first awkward bulge and step left onto the steep slab. Instead of climbing the flake above, traverse horizontally left for 15m above the lip of the roofs. Cross a groove (good runners) then step down into a niche. The crux follows. Step delicately up and left below a roof, exit left and then pull up into a hanging V-groove bounding a slab. Climb the slab to a belay under more roofs.
2. 15m 5b. Pull through the overhang on the left, and step left into a groove. Finish easily up the slab above.

### **AONACH MOR, Coire an Lochain, North-East Face:**

*The Wave* – 70m V,5. A. Clarke, M. Thompson. 11th January, 1995.

Takes a fairly direct line up the prow between The Betrayal and The Guardian.

1. 40m. Climb an icy groove over steps to a slabby left slanting turf groove, followed to a ledge.
2. 30m. Continue up leftwards below a steep rock wall to reach the right hand side of the small bay of The Betrayal. Gain the wide V-groove in the prow directly below a large cornice. Finish by a bulging rock wall right of the cornice.

*Homo Robusticus* — 60m VI,7. M. Garthwaite, A. Clarke. 31st December, 1994.

Climbs the crest of the barrel-shaped buttress approx. 20m right of Stirling Bridge. Start below an obvious wide crack at the toe. Cracks and steps lead to the wide crack. Exit left from the top of this to steep climbing over bulges. Easier to the cornice.

### **AONACH BEAG, West Face, Broken Axe Buttress:**

*Anaconda* – 160m V,7. J. Currie, S. Richardson. 3rd March, 1996.

This steep mixed route winds its way up the steep ground between Axeless and Aonacrack.

1. 20m. Climb the initial ramp of Aonacrack to below the ice pitch of Axeless.
2. 50m. Between the second pitches of Axeless and Aonacrack is a steep rib split by a wide crack. Start on the left side of the rib and climb up to the crack. Follow this (steep but good holds) to its top. Trend left on snowy slabs to gain the foot of the steep chimney which cuts through the centre of the headwall.
3. 20m. Climb the chimney pulling over a bulge at 10m (crux). Move up to a ledge and exit out left.
- 4, 5. 70m. Finish along the rocky ridge and snow arete as for Axeless.

*Viper Edge* – 160m IV,4. S. Richardson, J. Currie. 3rd March, 1996.

A worthwhile mixed line up the right edge of the buttress. Could be harder if the slabs at the top of pitch 1 are not iced. Start at the top right side of the small snow bay of Aonacrack.

1. 45m. Climb a short ramp slanting right, then take the discontinuous crack system above to gain icy slabs. Climb these, at first trending left then right, to gain a platform on the right edge of the buttress.
2. 35m. Continue up the gully system on the crest and finish directly up the final tower.
- 3, 4. 70m Finish along the rocky ridge and snow arete as for Axeless.

*Blind Faith* – 120m III. E. Ewing, T. Archer. 18th February, 1996.

Up and left of the deep gully defining the left edge of Broken Axe Buttress is a narrow buttress. Start up a chimney-groove with a small chockstone, and continue up the crest above, over several small steps, to reach the plateau.

#### **SGURR FINNISG-AIG, Allt na h-Aire Waterfall:**

*Smoking the White Owl* – 450m IV,5. M. Pescod, T. Barton, R. Haynes, S. Marsden, A. Dodd. 29th December, 1995.

The frozen waterfall (rare) is approached from the Nevis Range base station. Follow the forestry track to its crossing of the Allt nah-Aire and follow the right bank of the burn to MR 196 765 where the fence crosses the burn. It is easily possible to walk to pitch 2 at the start of the main difficulties. The best descent is via the top Gondola station and walking down the well-marked path. The climb provided steep sections and large stances, with protection and most belays on ice screws. The crux was the last pitch, up the centre of the steep headwall (50m). A slightly easier line on the left may have been possible.

*Incidental Fall* – 130m IV,4. S. Dring, J. Lyall. 1st February, 1996.

Left of the main (right-hand) waterfall is a diagonal descent line. Left of this were two thinner ice lines, the left-hand of which was climbed, finishing by two icicle steps (crux). **Note:** Glen Gloy (MR Sheet 41, 230 860). Three frozen stream courses were climbed at this location just above Glenfintaig Lodge. They were 50m-150m long and Grade III – climbed by K. Grindrod, J. Lyall, D. Till.

#### **CREAG MEAGAIH, Bellevue Buttress:**

*Eastern Wall* – 300m IV,4. R.G. Bell. J.W. Strange. January, 1994.

Start 10m left of Eastern Corner. Climb the wall direct, avoiding the corner up reasonably steep ice for 150m. Easy snow to the cornice.

#### **The Post Face:**

*Post Haste* – 100m IV,4. B. Drinkwater, S. Banks. 20th February, 1996.

The short multi-tiered icefall at the left end of the Post Face. Start 20m below the top of Easy Gully.

1. 50m. Climb the icefall and belay on a ledge to the left of an ice cave.
2. 10m. Traverse right below the cave (exposed) to easier ground.
3. 40m. Continue easily to the top.

### **The Inner Coire:**

*Pantomine* – 230m IV,4. J. Lyall, D. Williamson. 19th March, 1996.

Takes a line up the buttress left of The Wand. Start up the initial gully of The Sash, but break out left after 30m to climb a long corner. The corner ends at a long roof which is easily breached at its right end, before moves lead up left to easy slopes. Go straight up and climb a short steep ice pitch on the right wall of The Sash. At the top of the ice move right on a terrace to gain an open corner/groove, which is climbed on excellent turf (crux). Easy to the top.

### **Stob Poite Coire Ardair:**

*The Soldier's Song* – 160m II. I. McCulloch, M. Wood, M. Wood. 24th February, 1996.

Looking up from the lochan in Coire Ardair, the cliff on the south side of Stob Poite Coire Ardair has three main gully lines cutting the cliff near its highest point. The one to the right of the highest point weaves about slightly; this route is the central which is straight and falls just from the left of the highest point. It contained several steep but short ice pitches, the highlight being an ice cave after 90m.

**Note:** The ascenders find it difficult to believe it has not been climbed before, but there are no records.

### **BINNEIN SHUAS, The Fortress:**

*Wild Mountain Thyme* – 50m E5 6b. N. Craig, G. Latter (both led), R. Campbell. 29th July, 1995.

Right of the central roofs is a steep wall with three prominent cracks. This follows the left to right diagonal one. Go up an easy slab to the crack, and move along this to an undercut. Move up to better holds, then make a hard move back right which soon leads to easy ground. Finish up the vertical crack over the bulge, as for Bog Myrtle Trip.

*Bog Myrtle Trip* – 45m E4 6b. R. Campbell. 6th July, 1995.

The deep crack on the right side of the wall.

### **BEN ALDER, South Buttress of Garbh Choire (MR 504 710):**

In winter this 200m-high buttress is split by a prominent right-trending gully line (Raeburn's Gully) starting from a broad snow terrace. Easy broken ground, which can be climbed by a variety of lines, leads to the lower snow terrace. Above this in the centre of the crag is a higher but smaller snow terrace. Diagram provided.

*Raeburn's Gully* – 200m II. M. Bass, J. Clamp, S. Yearsley. 22nd March, 1996.

The prominent right-trending gully splitting the crag is climbed with a short steep step at half height. Above the step, the higher snow terrace leads off left. Continue up the gully to the top, passing a narrow left branch which remains unclimbed.

*Crabsticks* – 120m IV,5. M. Bass, J. Clamp, S. Yearsley. 23rd March, 1996.

This route takes the central corner system which splits the top section of the crag, and is reached by climbing the lower part of Raeburn's Gully to the higher snow terrace. Start 10m left of the gully continuation, and climb the steep left-facing corner in two pitches to a snow basin. An easier pitch up the continuation corner leads to broken ground below the summit. The route is probably based on the summer route Crabwalk.

*Left Gully* – 200m II. M. Bass, S. Yearsley. 9th March, 1996.

The prominent Reaburn's Gully forks almost immediately. Follow the square-cut left branch for three pitches, avoiding an ice choked crack on the first pitch by a detour out left. Continue to the summit by a right-trending turfy groove line.

*Eastern Ramp* – 200m III,4. M. Bass, S. Yearsley. 9th March, 1996.

Start in a short corner at the left edge of a sweep of slabs, 15m left of Raeburn's Gully. Climb the corner and groove above. Follow the ramp to the left of the buttress crest for three pitches over a series of short steep corners. At the top of the ramp, continue more easily rightwards to the summit.

### **Garbh Choire Beag:**

Right of Alderwand and at the right edge of the main section of cliff is a defined buttress, almost a ridge, with a gully either side and formed above a terrace about half height on the cliff.

*Left Gully* – 300m II. B. Davison, A. Nisbet. 9th March, 1996.

The gully left of the buttress was approached by a shallow gully to its left followed by a traverse right along the terrace. The easiest line naturally led to the top of the buttress and a break in the cornice.

*Never Ending Story* – 160m III. A. Findlay, A. Paul, G. Reilly; R. Hamilton, S. Kennedy. 9th March, 1996.

This route climbs the buttress, up an obvious open groove slanting leftwards. Climb the groove in two pitches to the left edge of the buttress. Continue up rightwards to below the final tower which can either be turned on the left by a steep crack (4) or more easily by a chimney on the right.

*Right Gully* – 300m I. B. Davison, A. Nisbet. 9th March, 1996. The gully on the right of the buttress was descended to the more broken lower half taken by a left trending line (looking down).

### **Enigmatic Buttress:**

*The Cross Spur* – 250m III. B. Davison, A. Nisbet. 9th March, 1996.

Close to the crest of the buttress and right of The Walker's Spur is a left-slanting slab ramp forming a chimney slot. The route started up this, reversed the 'move right' of The Walker's Spur and continued up left on a ramp which led to a steep section, climbed to reach the common easy ground on the top half of the buttress.

*The Central Couloir* – 250m IV,4. B. Davison, A. Nisbet. 9th March, 1996.

On the right of the crest is a bigger left slanting ramp, which was climbed to a barrier wall (50m). The more direct right continuation was gained by a turfy deviation on the right and led to the common easy ground.

### **MONADHLIATH, Carn Dearg, Loch Dubh Crag:**

*The Broken Link* – 165m III. D.F. Lang, N.W. Quinn. 4th February, 1996.

The route follows the frozen watercourse in a series of tiers and was climbed in four long pitches. Ice screws used for belays. The hillside was devoid of snow; some banking would occur under heavy snow.

### **CREAG DUBH:**

*Silk Road* – 100m III. T. Caine, J. Lyall, M. Twomey. February, 1995.

Starts in the gully below Silicosis and slants up leftwards on a continuous line of ice and some turf.

## GLEN COE

**BUACHAILLE ETIVE MOR:**

*Crowberry Gully, Centre Rib Finish* – IV,5. M. Robson, T. Ward. 9th March, 1996.  
From the stance at the foot of the left/right fork split, take the crack on the right of a chockstone leading to a groove. Continue past a large downward-pointing rock spike to belay in the right fork. Regain the right edge of the rib and climb up before traversing left on to the crest of the rib. Follow the crest to the top.

*Raven's Edge (Complete)* – 170m VIII,7. R. Anderson, R. Milne. 30th March, 1996.  
A complete ascent of the route taking in the 'open book' corner. Start at the foot of Raven's Gully.

1. 55m. Move right and climb a line of weakness just right of the edge overlooking Raven's Gully (the summer line takes this edge). Move left around a projecting rib and belay at the top of a shallow left-facing corner (summer route belays just above, 60m pitch, not 30m as in guide).

2. 15m. Move up left, then step down and follow a thin traverse line into the base of the corner (6m above the gully; summer line higher).

3. 35m. Climb to the roof, step down and traverse across the wall and then go back up left into the base of the 'open book' corner. Climb the corner and pull over on to a large shelf at its top.

4. 35m. Follow the corner above to its top and traverse left to the thread belay of the summer line, beneath the roof. Continue left around the edge to a cramped but better placed thread belay below the final pitch.

5. 30m. Move up left and climb the deep crack to a platform on the buttress crest.

6. A final short step.

**Note:** Pitches 2, 3 differ from the original ascent. Grade in doubt, perhaps VII,7.

**Creag A'Bhancair:**

*Tunnel Vision* – 30m E4 6a\*\*\*. G. Latter, P. Thorburn. 4th September, 1995.

Traverse the prominent break from the belays of Carnivore to The Risk Business. Fine positions and very well-protected. Climbed on sight.

*Symbiosis* – 25m E7/8 6b\*\*\*. P. Thorburn, D. Cuthbertson (both led). 11th September, 1995.

The shallow groove system right of Uncertain Emotions. Very serious in its lower half, sustained with difficult but sound protection above – a comprehensive selection of microwires required. Start below an undercut left-trending flakeline above a rocky ramp. Follow the undercuts, then move up (poor skyhook) to gain a poor bashed nut. Move up left, then back right to gain better protection in a flake. Traverse left to near Uncertain Emotions, then follow the faint crackline to the bulge guarding entry to a scoop. Gain this, then exit right and move up to follow Risk Business to its stance.

*Mistaken* – 35m E4 6a\*\*. R. Anderson, J. May. 30th August, 1995.

A very good and quite well protected pitch based around Curtairean Mairttheoil but, unlike that route, the result of extensive cleaning. Some 5m left of Twilight Zone is the weeping blackish rock that Curtairean climbs. Between the two is an area of clean white rock. Start at a large flat hold and boulder for 5m to holds and protection on the right. Continue to the bulge (Friend 2.5 on the right, sideways Rocks 6 & 1 in diagonal crack) and pull out rightwards to join Carnivore at a thin diagonal crack. Move up and right for 3m and where Twilight Zone continues in this direction, climb straight up to first one

set of big holds and then another (presumably squeezed in between Twilight and Curtairean). Pull up and climb through what was once an extensive area of moss, passing a small spike, not to be confused with the one mentioned in Twilight Zone farther right, to a ledge and belay on the left. Abseil off the tree, down the vegetated ramp.

### **GEARR AONACH, East Face:**

*Silver Surfer* – 40m IV,5. A. Clarke, R. Morrall, N. Gresham. 30th January, 1995.

The prominent icefall which can be seen from the shelf beneath the Mome Rath face. It essentially provides a direct finish to Rev. Ted's Gully. Start steeply on ice to gain the ice choked groove which is climbed with interest to the summit plateau.

### **West Face, Yosemite Wall (New Crag):**

The left wall of the crag is continuously overhanging, with a wide impregnable roof low down on its right side.

*A Sweet Disregard for the Truth* – 35m E6 6b\*\*. P. Thorburn, G. Latter (both red-pointed) 13th June, 1995.

Follows a direct line through a series of roofs in the centre. Start beneath a short right-facing groove at the left end of the long roof. Up easy slab and groove to break. Step left and pull up leftwards to good slot (R#9). Pull right and up to a good hold, then direct to good undercuts under the first roof. Undercut rightwards, then up to good jams. Step left to good holds at a large perched block, then either direct or leftwards to a good small ledge, then on good incut holds to incut ledge. Step right and more easily up right side of crack to nut and tree belay on cleaned ledge.

*(Battle My –) Glorious Youth* – 30m E5 6a\*. P. Thorburn, R. Campbell, N. Craig. 20th August, 1995.

There is a long thin groove on the right of the steep cliff; this is Boiling Point, gained by a traverse from the right. This route is the curving line of weakness left of Boiling Point. Make a difficult direct entry to the groove of that route (thread runner), traverse the break leftwards to a good rest, then climb a shallow groove system. Step left to gain and climb the right end of the overlap system, then follow the right facing groove to a block belay well back.

Boiling Point – 35m E4 6a\*. R. Anderson, C. Anderson, D. Cuthbertson. 25th June, 1995.

The slim groove in the wall which runs into a crackline just left of the arete. Direct entry to the groove is possible but prevented by very wet slabs beneath the bulge. Climb up to the right side of the arete, swing around left and traverse to the base of the groove. Climb the groove and the ensuing crack to reach the top of the crag.

*The Mystery Trend* – 25m E4 6a\*. P. Thorburn, G. Latter. 9th August, 1995.

The right arete. Scramble up easy slab to belay underneath the arete. Move up groove to gain and follow left slanting crack through low blocky overhang. A thin crack leads to the right side of the mid height roof. Traverse left under this and make difficult moves round arete. Continue up then right to easy ground.

*Three Tarp Shugs* – 35m E2 5b. P. Thorburn, G. Latter, P. McNally. 12th June, 1995.

The steep, cracked arete, right of the central alcove. Follow the arete with awkward moves to gain incut ledges. Move up and right to hollow flake, step left and up cracks to ledges. Walk right and abseil off trees.

**Avon Walls:**

The following routes start from the terrace above the lower walls, at its right end, just before it merges into the hillside at a shallow gully. The route start at a large tree, reached either by climbing Prelim or by going left and scrambling up right before traversing to it.

*Prelim* – 20m HVS 4b. Start along the terrace at the lowest rocks. This is just right of a mossy groove leading directly to the largest tree on the terrace above and left of a ramp slanting leftwards. Climb rough rock to a shallow scoop, pull out right to the edge of the slanting ramp and go up and left to the first runner and then the large tree.

*Higher Still* – 50m E1 5a. R. Anderson, C. Anderson, D. Cuthbertson. 1st July, 1995. From the tree, step left and climb a short wall to a ledge, step left and climb up, then left to a blocky crack. Move up and left, then straight up to better holds. A slim groove leads to the top of the wall, ledge and belay on the right, or continue up easy slabby ground to the top.

*Examination Result* – 50m E1 5a. R. Anderson, C. Anderson, J. George, D. Cuthbertson. 1st July, 1995.

From the tree, step left and climb a short wall to a ledge, step right, then climb up and stretch left around a bulge to good protection and holds. Pull into the base of a shallow groove, move up this a short way to better holds, junction with Higher Still, then step up right and climb directly to the top of the wall. Either belay on the ledge or up easy slabs to the top.

**AONACH DUBH, The Lower Walls:**

*Charlotte Anne* – 25m E4 6a\*\*. P. Thorburn, G. Latter. 12th June, 1995.

Follow the Direct Start to Lady Jane (Mr Bates), then direct up the wall heading for a shallow pale groove (3m left of tree). Gain the groove with a hard move, then boldly on better holds to finish.

**Weeping Walls:**

*Tricaptor* – 50m E4\*. P. Thorburn, G. Latter. 14th June, 1995.

Adding two new upper pitches, with the new second pitch now the crux. E3 5c for the lower pitch.

2. 20m 6a. Climb the shallow steepening groove directly behind tree to a hard pull left at the top to good holds. Belay on ledge above.

3. 30m 5a. The right-hand crack, then easy ground to top.

**Far Eastern Buttress:**

*Euro Star* – 85m V.6. P. Toniolo, S. Walter, T. Archer. 9th March, 1996.

Perhaps a variation on Orient Express, good when the latter is in poor condition. Start up the obvious groove (Eastern Slant) to a ledge. Traverse left along the ledge past the chimney of Orient Express and climb the wall left of the chimney to a very narrow turf ledge. Go right back across the chimney to a block and good thread. Right of this is a groove; climb it to the top finishing in the same place as Orient Express.

**North Face:**

*Repossessed* – 40m E5 6a\*\*\*. M. Crocker (unseeded) 30th June, 1995.

A sustained and superb pitch, following a direct line above the roof where Eldorado steps left. Follow the main pitch of Eldorado for 10m to the roof. Step right to an undercut and up wide crack to better holds. Continue more easily to the overhanging wall above

and up this to awkward sloping jugs (crux). A long reach gains better holds and easier ground leading to the long shelf.

**Note:** This description, grade and stars are from the second ascent by P. Thorburn and G. Latter on 8th August, 1995.

*Amazonia* – 325m V,5. A. Clarke, C. Smith. 7th February, 1996.

Superb varied ice and mixed, following a steep continuous fault line right of Mr Softee. The line is obscured for most of its length by a fin of rock. Long, cold snap and low snowline essential. The overhanging entry is avoided by a turfy ramp on the right (50m). Pitch 2 starts with a fragile ice pillar leading to a thick ice smear (45m). Rock and ice to pitch 4 (100m), where an escape can be made. Above, an awkward mixed groove leads to thin ice on pitch 6 with poor protection (80m). Pitch 7 provides entertaining moves around chockstones to finish on another terrace (50m). Abseil off trees and zig-zag down terraces rightwards, or continue up more broken ground to the girdling shelf; traverse right to Dinnertime Buttress.

*Conquistador* – 300m V,5. A. Clarke, L. Collier. 14th February, 1996.

After a long cold spell a narrow ice flow forms down the upper two thirds of the face, towards the right-hand side. Approach as for Dinnertime Buttress, then traverse along the second terrace on the face. The initial icefall was insufficiently formed; this was avoided by climbing turf on the left to join the ice flow above. Rambling ice to a steep iced corner (100m). This led steeply to another icefall (45m). Climb this and another runnel (50m). The flow continues to a terrace (40m). Above is a turfy groove. Traverse right and climb a steep iced groove and easy ground to the girdling shelf (65m).

### **STOB COIRE NAN LOCHAIN, Pinnacle Buttress:**

*The Struggler* – 60m V,7. A. Clarke, N. Gresham. 24th February, 1995.

A line based on the summer route *The Juggler*. The off-width crack in the steep arete right of Pinnacle Buttress Groove.

1. 25m. Climb the crack and a chimney to a pinnacle on the right. A superb pitch.
2. 35m. Opposite can be seen a slabby V-groove. Follow this to a high ledge; finish as for North-east Face, up the awkward chimney.

### **BIDEAN NAM BIAN, Church Door Buttress, West Face:**

*Lost Arrow* – 100m E3 6a\*\*\*. G. Latter, P. Thorburn. 10th August, 1995.

The crack and corner system up the left side of the clean face, left of Kingpin. Start at a block belay at left end of grassy ledge.

1. 25m 4c. Up groove and wide crack to belay on slab below small roof.
2. 35m 6a. Pull through crack in lower roof to slabby ledge beneath crack in right side of roof. Pull through this and up crack (crux) past old PR on left. Continue up the crack to a long sloping ledge on the right wall, where the crack narrows and bends. Pull out right to the edge of groove, and up midway between both to the easier groove. Thread and nut belay beneath main corner. A superb well-protected pitch on immaculate and very rough rock.
- 3 40m 5c. Climb the rib 3m right of the corner (good nut high in corner) and move back into the corner. Easily up this and traverse right under first roof and up flake to large capping roof. Undercut this right with a hard move pulling round the right edge of the flake to belay. Scramble up then left to summit screes.

*The Holy Grail* – 35m E5 6b\*\*. P. Thorburn, G. Latter. 8th August, 1995. A fine sustained pitch with good protection, between *The Lost Ark* and *Temple of Doom*.

Climb the prominent easy lower V-groove and the shallow white groove above to a roof. Pull out left to a good rest, then make hard moves up rightwards into the stepped upper groove, and up this to pull to belay as for Temple of Doom.

**STOB COIRE NAM BEITH, North Face, No. 2 Buttress:**

*Left Wall* – 150m IV.6. A. Nelson, A. Paul. 19th March, 1996.

Follows the general line of the summer route. Start at the left end of the grassy ramp of Centre Route. Climb the obvious corner above, then a steep groove to a V notch visible on the skyline. The notch forms a snow bay. Step right, then up to a chimney which is climbed to a block belay on the wide ledge at the top of the buttress.

**Note:** The line of Centre Route is wrongly shown in the Glen Coe Guide diagram. An ascent of Centre Route was received as a new route. A. Paul has provided a diagram of Left Wall and Centre Route.

*The Causeway* – 450m III. A. Findlay, S. Kennedy, A. Nelson. 24th March, 1996.

The dominant feature of this route is the spiral terrace which snakes leftwards round the upper part of the Sphinx buttress. Start in North-west Gully and climb into the gully running up the right side of The Pyramid. A traverse was made on to the buttress on the right along a ledge from about halfway up the gully. Climb the broken buttress to a snow arete overlooking Summit Gully on the right. Climb the snow arete and slopes above to a small buttress just right of the steep central cleft of Cleftweave. Climb the buttress on the right side to the top of the cleft. The spiral terrace can be seen on the left. From a large chockstone at the top of the cleft move left (crossing Cleftweave) on to the narrow terrace which is followed to the buttress edge. Fine positions. Climb an awkward cracked wall above and some further steps to the top of the Sphinx Buttress. A finish was made up the narrow upper pitch of Cleftweave on the right to the easier summit slopes.

**No. 4 Buttress:**

*Rolling Stone* – 55m E1 5b. S. Kennedy, A. Nelson. 10th June, 1995.

Climbs the fine slabby wall immediately left of Isis. Climb the initial groove of Isis for 15m to belay just above a small prominent roof. Traverse 3m left on to the slabby wall, then take a direct route up the wall via grooves and short walls to the top.

*Torquing Heads* – 75m Severe. S. Kennedy, A. Nelson. 10th June, 1995.

Takes a line right of Isis. The right-hand section of the buttress is undercut. Start in the gully on the right and break through the undercut section near the right end. Traverse hard left along a wide ledge for 30m below a prominent roof, then move up and slightly left to a belay (40m). Move back right just beyond a small chimney and follow a line of cracks to the top (35m).

**Upper Part of North Face:**

*Sunset Strip* – 90m HVS 5a. C. Grindley, S. Kennedy, A. Nelson. 28th June, 1995.

A prominent steep slab with a corner running up its left side can be seen on the buttress located high up the north face between the Left and Right Forks of North-west Gully (Right Fork leads to The Mummy). This route finds a way up the slab. Scramble up No. 4 Buttress beyond the Sphinx buttress on the right to enter North-west Gully just beyond the point where it forks. Climb the gully until about 20m beyond the fork. Start up a short gully which ends in a cul-de-sac below a cracked wall. Climb the deep cracks to the foot of the slab. Climb a small bulge and pull on to the bottom left of the slab. Take a diagonal line rightwards up the slab (45m). Continue directly up the slab to reach a roof which overlooks the slab. Pull steeply out left to reach easier ground (45m). Scramble to the summit. An old piece of hemp rope was found in the corner on the left side of the slab.

**West Buttress:**

The following routes lie on a prominent steep slabby buttress situated low down on the west buttress between the lower part of Summit Gully and the start of Adagio. All the routes offer good, generally well protected mixed climbing with the option of a straight-forward abseil descent allowing a number of routes to be done. Alternatively, continue up the easier upper ridge of Adagio or descend Summit Gully. Ideal when doubtful snow conditions prevail higher up.

*Voie Crombie* – 160m III,4. S. Kennedy, M. Thomson; R. Hamilton, A. Paul. 19th February, 1996.

Takes the open banana-shaped groove bounding the left side of the slabby buttress. Start in a recess and climb the groove in a long pitch to a wide ledge. Belay on the right at a large square block (The Junction) 50m. Exit the ledge at the left end and make awkward moves to reach an obvious snowy ramp leading to the left edge of the buttress. Climb up to a large block belay on the right (40m). Climb easily up rightwards across a snowy bay to reach a narrow chimney which leads to the easier upper part of the Adagio ridge (70m).

*Team Machine* – 90m IV,5. J. Grieve, P. Harrop, A. Paul; S. Kennedy, A. Nelson. 17th March, 1996.

The buttress just right of *Voie Crombie* is cut by an obvious chimney/groove. Either climb the initial chimney direct or the rib immediately to the left to reach the upper groove which is followed to the Junction belay (50m). Move left along the ledge and climb the initial awkward moves of *Voie Crombie* on to the snowy ledge. Instead of continuing left, climb steeply up right by a narrow ramp. Move right across a slab to reach a groove which is followed to a block belay (40m).

*The Gathering* – 95m IV,5. S. Kennedy, A. Paul, A. Nelson. 24th March, 1996.

Takes the slim hanging corner defining the right edge of the slabby buttress (not to be confused with a larger open corner just to the right). Start about 10m right of *Team Machine* and climb mixed ground up leftwards to a belay at the foot of the corner (10m). Climb the corner in one long pitch to the Junction. A good sustained pitch (45m). Climb a blocky wall on the right and traverse horizontally right to a groove which is followed to a ledge. Move back left over a short steepening to reach the block belay of *Team Machine* (40m).

**An t-Sron, East Face:**

A long, slabby, black streaked wall can be seen low down on the east face almost directly opposite Hidden Gully. The rock is waterwashed and mostly of excellent quality.

*Coco Leaf* – 70m VS 4b. C. Grindley, S. Kennedy. 15th June, 1995.

The lower section is defined on the right by a clean cut corner. Climb the corner for 18m until it starts to fade. Traverse left on to the slab to a grassy ledge and belay (40m). Above the ledge is a black groove. Climb the groove via a large flake to finish in a small recess (30m).

*Poppy Straw* – 70m HVS 4c/5a. C. Grindley, S. Kennedy. 23rd June, 1995.

The middle section of the lower slab contains a short, hanging corner. Gain the corner directly up the slab. Climb the corner until it peters out, then pull out right. Continue directly up the slab on excellent rock to belay at the right edge (right of a prominent overlap) 35m. Climb the groove running up the right edge of the slab for 10m. Traverse back left horizontally left for 8m by a fault line, then climb directly up to a prominent roof split by a crack. Surmount the roof by the crack and continue to the top (35m).





**North Face:**

*Blind* – 80m III. M. Duff, R. Nowack. 14th February, 1996.

About one-third height on the gorge section of An t-Sron North Face are three icefalls clearly seen from the road and which fall down the right wall. Access by abseil. This route climbs the lowest i.e. first reached.

**THE GORGE AREA, Allt-Doire Bheith:**

*Neeh* – 20m E1 5a\*. G. Latter, P. Thorburn, P. McNally. 9th June, 1995.

Right of The Smouldering is a cleaned slab and a very shallow left-facing groove. Up the slab or the easier groove, then the wall direct to good break. Direct above past another break to finish easily.

**Glen Coe Gorge:**

*The Sprinter* – 40m E2 5c. G. Latter, P. Thorburn. 10th June, 1995.

The broken crackline up the wall right of Chariots of Fire. Move up past a large pedestal to a ledge on the right. Up the crack above with a hard move to better jams, then more easily above. Belay far back on trees.

**Notes:** The following grading revisions are offered by G. Latter: Eldorado; Spacewalk; Le Monde all E4. Freak-Out E3 6a – not harder than The Lost Ark or White Hope.

**TRILLEACHAN SLABS:**

*The Lap of the Gods* – 160m E2. C. Stead, D.M. Jenkins. 6th August, 1995.

This route lies on the Upper Slabs and takes a direct line left of Monsoon, crossing Dan to finish to its right. Start at the central of the three right-facing corners.

1. 35m 5b. Climb the corner with a deviation right then left at mid height. Belay on the left 3m below the capping overlap.
2. 25m 5c. Climb the black slab on the left to the overlap, cross this using a flake and follow a fault to rock ledges leading right to a flake.
3. 45m 5a. Return left 5m to the fault line and climb this, a slim corner and its continuation groove to a large grass ledge on the right and poor belay (better to belay lower in the groove).
4. 30m 5a. Climb a groove and cross its right rib 5m below a big triangular roof and continue easily to a belay (this pitch just right of Dan).
5. 25m. Climb unpleasant heathery ground to belay below a headwall. To reach the abseil thread on the left-hand terrace, climb up and left on a ramp of mixed heather and rock and descend heather to a rock ledge leading left to more heather and a short descent to the terrace (*in situ* wire for last 6m), 50m.

**ARDGOUR, Garbh Bheinn:**

The route in (SMCJ 1995, p683) should be called Too Cold to be Bold.

**BEINN NA SEILG (Western Ardnamurchan), Cuillin Buttress:**

*Grigadale Groove* – 50m Severe. C. Stead. 21st August, 1995.

Start below a large green V-groove halfway up the right side of the buttress. Climb a wall, crack, and the groove.

**Hebrides Wall:**

*Cop Out* – 45m Severe. C. Stead. 21st August, 1995.

Just right of the crack of Identity Crisis (SMCJ 184, p298), three tiny ramps rise rightwards. Climb these and step round to a ledge on Faradh Dubh. Climb diagonally left, crossing an overlap to the top.

## SOUTHERN HIGHLANDS

### **BEN LAWERS, Creag nam Fitheach, Coire nan Cat:**

*Catalyst* – 95m V,6. G.E. Little, K. Howett. 4th February, 1996.

Start at the lowest point of the crag at a slabby toe left of an open easy groove (Cataract).

1. 40m. Climb turfy slabby rock to belay (warthog) just below the top of a turfy ramp.  
2. 15m. Move up, then ascend a short bare slab to below the long band of overhangs. Move right, then pull up left to merely vertical rock (crux) to gain a niche.

3. 40m. Climb an ice bulge just above the belay to gain a shallow groove. Ascend this, then progressively easier ground above to the top.

**Note:** may become a grade easier with better ice build-up.

### **BRIDGE OF ORCHY, Meall Buidhe, North-West Coire.**

*Eldritch* – 100m II. K.V. Crocket & B. Dullea (alt.). Winter 1994.

Uncomplicated open groove line left of Rock Scar Groove.

### **Beinn an Dothaidh, North-East Coire:**

*Spring Fever* – 115m III,4. G.E. Little, J. Lowther (alt). 2nd March, 1996.

Start at the lowest point of the wide buttress that lies below and to the left of Taxus (i.e. the very lowest point of the crag).

1. 25m. Climb straight up by the line of least resistance to belay below and just to the right of a distinctive wide slot.

2. 30m. Climb through the wide slot, then follow a right-trending groove to belay on a ledge steeply overlooking the snow slope that runs up into Taxus.

3. 40m. Ascend slabby vegetated ground to reach a small snowfield. Move up and right to belay at a wall just left of a bay.

4. 20m. Move right into the bay, then climb a short steep scoop to reach snow above. An easy left traverse at this point allows a descent or alternatively carry on climbing via broken ground for several hundred metres to reach the summit ridge.

*West Buttress, Direct Start* – 45m V,6. S. Richardson, R. Everett. 25th February, 1996.

The undercut wall bypassed by the initial ramp of West Buttress is cut by a prominent overhanging chimney. Climb this, stepping out right then back left to avoid an awkward section. Bridge past a roof at 25m to gain an easier deep continuation chimney and the original route above. A good pitch. Continuing in the fault line throughout when following the original line, results in a fine logical route.

*The Screaming* – 135m VIII,8. R. Everett, S. Richardson. 24th February, 1996.

A very steep mixed route taking the front face of the barrel shaped buttress of Pas de Deux. The route is sustained throughout, but the highlight is the compelling crackline in the final tower. Start at the foot of Cirrus, below an undercut ramp, 15m up and right of Pas de Deux.

1. 25m. Climb into a niche, then edge out left to below a short overhanging wall. Climb this to the ramp which leads to horizontal ledge. Move right along this for 5m to a thread belay on a large block. A steep pitch.

2. 40m. Climb the wall directly above the belay to a horizontal break (junction with Pas de Deux). Step right to gain a left slanting chimney-groove and follow this to a good ledge. Step left to a fine steep corner. Climb this to below the final tower, then step right to the spacious ledge of Pas de Deux.

3. 20m. The front face of the tower is split by a prominent crack. Gain a niche from the right and continue up the crack above. At its top, move right to a second niche then pull

through the overhanging slot to the top. This pitch continuously overhangs and is very strenuous – three axe rests taken on first ascent.

4. 50m. Continue up the straight-forward upper buttress to the top.

*Bête Noire* – 120m V.7. S. Richardson, R. Everett. 11th February, 1996 (complete ascent). (Pitch I previously climbed by S. Richardson and J. Currie, 27th January 1996) A direct line between Cirrus and Carte Blanche, with a spectacular and unlikely finish through the headwall. Start directly below the left-facing groove which cuts through the great slab of Carte Blanche.

1. 15m. Scramble up easy ground to the base of the slab.

2. 50m. Climb up directly on turf to reach the foot of the groove. Climb the lower section (common with Carte Blanche), and continue up the upper groove to a roof. Pull round this on the right and continue directly up the snow field above. Belay below the steep headwall about 10m left of the upper chimney of Carte Blanche.

3. 25m. Pull onto the ledge above, step left, then move right onto a ramp. Climb this up and right, then move across a hidden turfy break across the wall on the left to a steep exit. A good pitch.

4. 40m Finish up easy ground to the top.

### **Creag an Socach:**

*Deliverance* – VI.6. A. Powell, S. Elworthy. 29th January, 1995.

A direct variation to The Promised Land. Climb the steep turf wall, then instead of traversing left, climb the chimney followed by a left-trending open groove, then make a steep step left and move up to belay at the foot of the upper icefall.

**Note:** Messiah. The above party lassoed a large blunt block about 8m above the flake traverse and thereby did the route in two rather than three pitches without rope drag.

*To The Future* – 130m IV.5. C. Smith, S. Murray. 27th December, 1995.

Although the main difficulties of this route are confined to the first pitch, it provides excellent sport requiring a prolonged freeze to bring it into condition. Start at the extreme right-hand end of the main crags and about 50m below the terminal buttress. The icefall is climbed direct to a block belay (35m). An easy snow slope leads directly to the buttress above (50m). Climb the buttress via easy mixed ground on the left (45m).

### **BEINN IME, Fan Buttress:**

*Headfault* – 190m VII.7. R. Anderson, R. Milne. 29th January, 1995.

A direct line up the middle of the frontal face taking the central line through the headwall. Start beneath a slim corner/groove line just right of Ben's Fault.

1. 50m. Climb the cornerline and its easier middle section, then continue over another steepening to easy ground and belay beside a snow bay.

2. 50m. Step left and climb to gain a snowy fault slanting up right. Move up and out of the fault, around a small rock wall to climb a line of turf slanting leftwards up the wall above. Move right to belay just right of the central line through the headwall.

3. 45m. Step left and climb the fault to a shallow niche. Move up and across right to ledge beneath a wide flake crack. Climb the crack (large Hexes/Friends useful) and continue up the steep fault with sustained interest to easy ground. Move up right to find good cracks on a sidewall.

4. 45m. Step back down to climb a turfy runnel and short steps to then find the easiest line to the top.

### **BEINN NARNAIN, Summit Buttress:**

*The Twilight Zone* – 70m III. T. Archer, A. Dyke. November, 1993.

On the approach to Beinn Narnain or Creag Tharsuinn up Coire Sugach, there is an approximately diamond-shaped slab at the right hand end of the Summit Buttress. The climb goes straight up this, stepping left at the top to avoid the final overhang.

### **Cruach nam Miseag, North-East Face:**

*Hume's Buttress* – 200m III,4. T. Archer, E. Ewing. November, 1993.

To the right of the obvious central gully (now named Philosopher's Gully) is a wide buttress, climbed up a line of chimney faults. Start at the lowest part of the buttress in a chockstone-capped gully. Climb the gully and cross a snowfield to an overhanging chimney, outflanked on a turf ramp to the left. The unavoidable crux is above the chimney followed by easier pitches.

### **THE COBBLER, South Peak:**

*Nimlin's Direct Route* – IV,5. T. Archer, O. Prodan. 4th January, 1995.

Climbed close to the summer route, and recommended.

### **Ardgarten Face:**

*Ethereal* – 45m E6\*\*. P. Thorburn, R. Campbell. 21st June, 1995.

Steep bold climbing up the imposing scooped wall in the centre of the face.

1. 30m 6b. From a flake at the base of the wall, climb up, right then back left, to pocket (F #3). Move up left to shake out (Roller #4 and nuts in slot down left). Climb with difficulty up wall to gain top of ramp. Follow flakes up then right to belay.
2. 15m 4a. Direct up occasional rock to top.

*Sleeping Gas* – 30m E6 6b\*\*. P. Thorburn, I. Pitcairn. 17th September, 1995.

The centre of the scooped wall taken by Ethereal. Where that route moves out left, move out right to place a good nut and return. Move up (skyhook), then right, up and leftwards past two poor pegs (rest down and right before first peg – hard to clip). Continue direct reaching good runners, then the belay of Ethereal.

*Geb* – 35m E4 6a\*\*. G. Latter, P. Thorburn. 2nd June, 1995.

A left to right diagonal line across the slab. Start up Gladiator's Direct to the quartz band. Traverse this past two PRs, then up the vague crackline, as for Osiris, but continue rightwards to finish up the right side of the block.

*Ra* – 65m E4\*\*. G. Latter, P. Thorburn. 1st May, 1995.

A direct line up the left side of the slab. Quite bold and runout, despite the proliferation of pegs. Start down and right of Gladiator's Direct.

1. 35m 6a. Up past peg onto sloping ledge. Step left and up onto small ledge above (skyhooks 2ft above peg and out on right). Climb direct past three PRs to the rising traverse shelf on Gladiator's Direct. Arrange protection (thin crack out on left, or block on right) and climb directly up wall above on improving holds to belay ledge.
2. 30m 5c. Follow Gladiator's Groove, but where that route traverses left onto the ledges, climb directly by a vague crack to finish up the last few metres of that route.

### **North Peak:**

*Right-Angled Groove* – V,7. R. Anderson, R. Milne. 11th February, 1996.

From the foot of Club Crack squeeze through a fissure to emerge at the foot of the climb.

1. 25m. Climb the groove over a roof moving on to the edge near the top and continue to a large platform, belaying beneath a short flake crack.
2. 6m. Climb the flake crack and gain the top.

*Dalriada* – 40m E8 6c\*\*\*. G. Latter. 20th September, 1995.

Spectacular, very sustained climbing up the wildly undercut prow directly under the summit of the North Peak, with a very hard powerful crux. Start at the base of the arete, at the same point as Right-Angled Groove. Up the groove for 3m to ledge, then the flake crack above to two PRs. Move right round arete and up to superb thread. Straight up the thin finger crack and the arete past a poor PR to a good rest under the roof. Make very hard moves left and up to reach the prominent diagonal crack and a line of incut jugs which lead past more PRs to the final capping wall. Continue with interest past two small finger-pockets to pull out right to ledge. Scramble up ridge to belay just short of the summit. Redpointed (graded for an on-sight ascent).

*North Winds* – 30m E3 6a\*. P. Thorburn, G. Latter. 5th June, 1995.

Directly north of the summit lies a steep buttress split by a large groove and crack system (unclimbed). This route lies to the left. Start at a flake below the left edge of the buttress. Climb a shallow groove to a small overlap, step right and climb the wall to good breaks (crux). Move left to the arete and finish easily above.

### **The Sugar Walls:**

*Lumpy Custard* – 15m E1 5b\*\*. G. Latter, P. McNally. April, 1995.

The centre of the wall, between the arete and the corner. Start beneath a small flake, and follow a direct line to finish at a small notch in the top of the crag.

*A Crack in the Clouds* – 20m E3 6a\*\*\*. P. Thorburn, G. Latter. 16th September, 1995.

About 100m north of the Sugar Walls is a north-facing gully wall. (Chockstone Gully) containing a perfect hand-and-fist crack above a roof low down. Approach from above by cutting down diagonally left then back right to the base. Belay on the slab behind the route. Gain niche left of crack via large initial roof on good holds. Pull into the thin finger crack with difficulty and follow it on widening jams. Belay on boulder far back on right.

**Note:** T. Archer, E. Ewing, O. Prodan and P. Toniolo made the second ascent of Artgarten Wall at Grade III with an easier finish up a groove on the right to avoid the crux crack (graded 5).

### **BEN CRUACHAN, Drochaid Ghlas:**

*Into the Fire, Left-Hand Finish* – IV. D. Ritchie, I. Stevenson. 18th March, 1995.

Follow the original route to pitch 3, then continue trending up and left to finish up a chimney-groove and open fault to the top.

## **ARRAN**

### **BEINN NUIS, East Face:**

*Anvil Gully* – 50m III (impossible for the stout!). G.E. Little. 28th December, 1995.

The through-route can prove even more demanding when choked with snow.

*Gully 1* – 95m III. G.E. Little. 28th December, 1995.

After ascending the initial open groove, with one constriction, take the gully flanking the cyclopean wall on the left. At the top, step down on to a boulder jumble. Scramble over this to reach a bay below the final wall. Climb this by a thin chimney on the extreme left, exiting by a tight through route.

*Gully 2* – 95m II. G.E. Little. 28th December, 1995.

Climb the easy shallow gully to a point where a left traverse into Route 1 is possible.

Instead move right over a chockstone, then climb the thin gully to reach a boulder jumble. Squirm through this (several through routes) to reach a bay below the final wall. The gully continuation is blocked so take a groove and ledge to its left, then up to finish.

*The Strand* – 175m V,6. S. Kennedy, A. Nelson. 29th December, 1995.

This route follows a prominent rampline running across the lower part of the buttress between Gully 2 and Nuis Chimney. A good climb in a fine position. Start on the left near the crest of the buttress about 30m above the toe of the buttress. The most prominent of a number of ramplines which run across the face overlooking Nuis Chimney is climbed. The first pitch involves a thin slab and thereafter, a hard move round a block just beyond a corner (50m). Continue by a rising right traverse line aiming for the far right edge of the buttress just above a prominent overhung niche (close to Nuis Chimney). This pitch includes a difficult corner and some thin moves across a slab to reach the edge by a large block (50m). Climb directly upwards to reach an obvious ledge system below the steep headwall which runs rightwards into the upper reaches of Nuis Chimney (45m). Finish by the last pitch of Nuis Chimney by a through route (30m).

### **BEINN TARSUINN, Meadow Face:**

*Blundecral* – 115m E3\*\*. G.E. Little, K. Howett (alt.). 5th August, 1995.

This varied and interesting route climbs a line on the wall between Brobdingnag and Brachistochrone, taking the obvious break through the band of overhangs at the end of the long roof running left from Brachistochrone (gaining this point by scrambling up the groove to below the chimney, then traversing left).

1. 25m 4c. Climb a flake, then move right to an obvious groove (which runs parallel to the Brachistochrone chimney). Ascend the groove, then move left to belay at a pointed turf ledge.
2. 25m 5c. Follow the line of a thin diagonal crack up and left to a left-trending ramp which leads to the base of a right-facing corner. Climb this, then step left to grasp a huge (detached!) block/flake. From its top make a difficult slap right to gain a rock ramp.
3. 15m 5c. Climb the diagonal undercling to reach a hidden left-trending groove. Ascend this for 3m, then traverse back right across the wall to gain the obvious thin rock ramp. Move right to belay at a small turf ledge. A spectacular pitch.
4. 25m 5c. Climb the fine diagonal rock ramp above to step left on to a continuation ramp. Go up this to a knobbly vein on the wall above. Pull up on to a shelf and move left up this to gain the obvious flake-crack which is climbed to a ledge above. Belay on the right. A bold pitch.
5. 25m 4c (for the jump!). Walk right along the ledge until a *mauvais pas* is reached. Jump down on to a grass ledge and grab an enormous flake. Ascend this, then blocks, to belay on Brachistochrone (at the end of the difficult climbing on this route). Scramble up a grassy groove, then traverse off right clear of the crag.

### **A' CHIR, Coire Daingean:**

*Fat Man's Dilemma* – 85m VS. G.E. Little, D. Saddler. 29th April, 1995.

Start at the very lowest point of a thin chimney below the corner line of Giant's Staircase on the right side of the buttress.

1. 20m 4b. Scramble up to the base of the chimney, move left to an obvious flake, step up then climb to a vegetated ledge. Move right round an edge to belay.
2. 25m 4c. Move back left and climb to gain a big flake (not visible from below). Step up and left to move behind a semi-detached flake. Climb heathery rock to a juniper ledge.
3. 20m 4c. Traverse up and right on flakes until a step right across a groove on to a slab

allows a heathery ledge above to be gained. Scramble up and around to the right to gain and climb a deep crack which separates an enormous block from the rest of the crag. Belay on the flat top of this block.

4. 20m 4b. On the left is a distinctive horizontal spike. Pull up to this, move left then back right to crawl into a restricted through route behind a boulder (in common with Afterthought) and then to the top.

### **GLEN ROSA, South Slabs:**

*Blankist* – 110m HVS\*\*\*. G.E. Little, K. Howett. 20th August, 1995.

The best route on the slabs, taking a direct line up the centre on perfect rock. Start 10m right of Route 1.

1. 30m 4c. Climb straight up the holdless slab, immediately right of a black streak, to reach flakes. Ascend these to belay on a small gravelly ledge in a heather groove (this pitch shares the same line as Pussyfoot).

2. 25m 4b. Step left and climb straight up a line of perfect pockets, moving left to gain an obvious long thin downward-facing flake. Thin moves above this lead to a fine flake belay on the girdle line.

3. 45m 4b. Climb straight up a bare slab to gain and follow an obvious rib (overlooking a long corner to the right), then up on easier-angled slabs to a small rock ledge at the base of a short banana-shaped groove.

4. 10m. Easier climbing up broken slabs leads to the top.

*Long Hot Summer* – 115m HVS\*. G.E. Little, K. Howett. 20th August, 1995.

Start 15m to the right of Route 1 at a slight rib.

1. 30m 5a. Climb boldly up the slight rib, then continue up easier slabs and flakes to belay on a small gravelly ledge in a heather groove.

2. 45m 4a. Traverse right, then climb a brown slab, cross an overlap, to continue up slabs to reach a belay on a ledge on the right.

3. 30m 4c. Move left, climb a short tricky rib, then follow slabs leftwards to belay on a small rock ledge at the base of a short banana-shaped groove.

4. 10m. Easier climbing up broken slabs leads to the top.

### **COIRE NAN CEUM, Cuithe Mheadhonach:**

*Icarus* – 55m E5\*\*. K. Howett, G.E. Little. 22nd July, 1995.

Takes a sustained line on the wall between Ulysses and Achilles, moving left to the belay of the former, then tackles the headwall to the left of Ulysses. Start, as for Ulysses, 6m right of the vegetated crack.

1. 30m 6b. Trend right, bypassing the right end of a thin roof, to gain a slight right facing scoop and small ledge above (Ulysses goes up and left from here). Traverse hard right to gain big flat holds. From the top of these traverse slightly left then move up via a finger pocket to reach an undercling. Move left to an incipient flake, climb this, then make precarious moves over a bulge and up to reach a deep horizontal break. Traverse left strenuously to below twin flakes (Friend 0). Pull up to stand in the break, then teeter left to reach the left traverse leading to the bolt belay of Ulysses. Very sustained climbing.

2. 25m 6b. Climb up the flakes and cracks of Ulysses to a jug where that route traverses right. Traverse left to a big flake. Pull up, then ascend a line of small pockets in the wall above with desperation to a horizontal break. Finish straight up.

*Achilles* – 50m E5 6c\*\*\*. K. Howett, G.E. Little. 6th August, 1995.

A spectacular and excellent climb taking a fairly central line on the pale wall on the left side of the crag. The crux sequence is probably the hardest in Arran. The description is for the free variation of the route superseding the original line (which employed two

points of aid). A double set of small Friends is required to adequately protect this pitch. Start about 9m right of *Ulysses* at the highest point of the vegetated terrace. Climb the slabby wall to reach an easy left-facing flake system. From the top of this, a second and fragile flake is gained by difficult moves on the left. A long stretch allows a step up on to the toe of the flake, from where a bombproof Rock 9 (optional belay) can be placed in a short deep vertical crack. This crack curves left to become a horizontal break. Hand traverse this break until a step up can be made on to a higher break. Move right, then make desperate moves to gain a flat left-facing flake (crux). Pull over this to reach a horizontal break, then reach left to gain another flake edge. A horizontal crack, becoming a rail, runs out left. Follow it to reach the obvious crack and flake system which leads strenuously but more easily to the top.

*Spirits Colliding* – 60m HVS\*. G.E. Little, C. Woodrow. 4th August, 1995.

Well to the right of *Stoic*, as the crag bends round and decreases in height, there is a short chimney holding a large chockstone. This is the start of the route.

1. 15m 4c. Climb the deceptive little chimney, then scramble up grass to take a belay at the base of an open flake/groove in the wall above.

2. 20m 5a. Climb the flake/groove passing two clumps of grass to reach a huge hollow right-pointing flake. Traverse right to its point, move up to an undercling, then pull left on to a small rock ledge. Move slightly up and right to belay at the start of a grass ledge (this ledge is traversed by *Pompierre*).

3. 25m 5a. Move slightly right along the ledge, then traverse back left to enter a slim groove on the right flank of an obvious rib. Climb this until it becomes a crack, then make a difficult left exit on to a small rock ledge. Climb straight up to finish.

## LOWLAND OUTCROPS

### GLASGOW OUTCROPS, Loudon Hill, West Face:

*Messiah* – E2 5b. P. Brown. 12th April, 1995.

Go directly up the blunt arete which flanks the right side of *John's Last*. Start below a sharp in-cut V-niche. Continue straight up to the upper wall and climb the crack in the left end. Sustained.

*Hobbit Crack* – E1 5b. P. Brown. 12th April, 1995.

Start up *Cave Crack* to two-thirds height. Step right under the large block. Traverse right (under and around) the block. Strenuous placing gear.

*Leftover Crack* – HVS 5a. P. Brown. 3rd May, 1995.

From the ledge of *Young's Stairway* go directly up a thin diagonal crack using the arete on the left to start. Committing.

### Central Wall:

*The Vein* – VS 4c. P. Brown. 1995.

Gain the inset overhanging corner via *Jackdaw Chimney*. Follow the crack up on to the face.

*Lambchops* – VS 4b. P. Brown, J. McCulloch. 11th May, 1995.

To the immediate right of *Mij*. Start down 2m under the left end of the overhang. Go up to the overhang and turn it into a shallow corner.

### The Eastern Buttress:

*Painless* – A1. P. Brown. 25th April, 1995.

Follow the fault through the left end of the huge roof of *Suicide*. 3PA. Harder than the A1 to the right.

*Boulder Suicide* – E2 5b. P. Brown. 26th April, 1995.

Up and right around from Suicide (roof), an overhanging face on the left side of a large boulder. Straight up the centre of the face; turn the lip by a crack.

**THE GALLOWAY HILLS, Mullwharchar, The Tauchers, The Organ Pipes:**

*Phobos Mask* – 25m E4 5c. P. Brown. 1995.

The featured face left of Behind the Mask. Up grooves to some cracks high and right. Pull out left to gain the roof. Climb the crack above and exit left to finish.

*Yucatan* – 30m HVS 5b. P. Brown. 1995.

P. Brown considers Behind the Mask E2 5b. This route starts 15m right and 15m up broken ground from it at a deep, vegetated corner capped by a large block. Climb the corner and the cracks in the left wall. Turn the block on the left into a short groove leading to a terrace. Climb the rightmost of three grooves up to a large overhang and follow the crack above. Sustained.

*The Pagan* – 35m E1 5b. P. Brown. 1995.

10m right of Yucatan. Up a corner to a stance. Step right and up the left side of the arete, then right side. Step left to Yucatan's belay.

*The Throne* – 20m E1 5b. P. Brown. 1995.

At the far right end of the crag, to the right of Dungeon Master. Climb a slab up a corner. Protect the moves through the overhang by pockets on the wall above. Turn the overhang via the crack and break on the left. Finish up the slabby walls direct via finger pockets.

**Craigencallie, Main Wall:**

*The Heretic* – 20m E3 6a. P. Brown. 22nd June, 1995.

Start around the corner from the arete on the overhanging face. Climb the obvious finger crack. Layback left or right to gain the overhang and spike. Finish up the break on the left for good gear.

**DUMFRIES OUTCROPS, Clifton Crag, Dirl Chimney Area:**

*Monkey Business* – 12m E1 5a. S.J.H. Reid, J. Grinbegs. 26th May, 1995.

Start as for Dirl Chimney. Spectacular. Climb the corner crack on the right and fight up leftwards via brambles and dubious rock to a junction with Dirl Chimney. Fix a runner and traverse sensationally left via a hollow flake to pull round into the top section of Lemur. Leftwards to the top.

**The Main Area:**

*Moss Trooper* – 20m V. Diff. S.J.H. Reid, W. Phipps. 2nd June, 1995.

Good climbing despite a heavy coating of bryophytes. Start at the foot of The Esplanade. Traverse left 1m to a wide crack and climb this to a junction with The Esplanade. Go directly up the mossy wall to a roof. Traverse right to a short groove and climb this, moving left and up to a heather ledge. Finish up the shallow scoopy groove above.

*Pegasus, Direct Start* – 20m H. Severe. S.J.H. Reid, W. Phipps. 2nd June, 1995.

From the start of The Esplanade, climb directly to the left end of the slanting crack and finish as for the ordinary route.

**Twin Cracks Area:**

*Bullet* – 15m HVS 5a. S.J.H. Reid, W. Phipps. 2nd June, 1995.

Takes the thin crack up the right hand side of Revolver's Flake. Start as for Twin Cracks. Climb to the crack and struggle to its top. Avoid the tree on the right and continue more easily.

**Jugular Vein Buttress:**

*The Pinnacles* – 15m M. Severe. J. Grinbergs, S.J.H. Reid. 26th May, 1995.

At the left-hand side of the buttress is a series of blocky pinnacles. Climb the pinnacles to a steep wall. Surmount this via a spiky block.

*Essence of Giraffe* – 15m E1 5c. S.J.H. Reid, J. Grinbergs. 26th May, 1995.

Immediately right of *The Pinnacles* is a lichenous groove. Climb the groove to below the steep wall on *The Pinnacles*. Traverse rightwards under the overlap with a hard move to gain a foothold on the arete (tiny wires useful). An extraordinary move right gains a large block near the top of *The Slash*. Finish up this.

**CAMBUSBARRON QUARRY:**

*Cumacoma* – 20m E5 6b. G. Lennox, C. Adam. 12th June, 1995.

Right of *Visions of Monaco*, climb a small corner to a sloping ledge and up to a thin crack. Climb up to a break and traverse right to join *Big Country Dreams*.

*Rats up a Drainpipe* – 25m E3 5c. C. Adam, G. Lennox. 10th May, 1995.

The off-width chimney between *Quasi Pulls Through* and *Both Ends Burning*.

**CAMBUSBARRON WEST QUARRY:**

The *Accomplice* and *Left Crack* were second ascents of *The Assassin* and *Wrong Crack* (Journal error).

**WOLFCRAG QUARRY:**

*Snakebite* – 15m HVS 5a. C. Adam, G. Lennox, D. Parr. 22nd April, 1995.

Climb the groove immediately left of *Kalahari* to a small cave. Traverse right to the top peg of *Kalahari* and abseil off.

*Hair of the Dog* – 12m E3 6a. G. Lennox, C. Adam. 30th April, 1995.

A direct line up to and over the small roof below the bolt belay of *Thirty Frames a Second*. PR below roof.

*Seriously Silly* – 25m E3 5b. G. Lennox, C. Adam. 20th April, 1995.

A large edge is visible in the middle of the face 10m right of *Thirty Frames a Second*. Climb straight up this to a large roof and pull over its left side to loose ground above.

**ARTHUR'S SEAT, West Face of Lion's Haunch:**

*Excalibur* – 550ft III. H. Raeburn, W. Naismith (essence of). 8-9th February, 1996.

This grand outing gives perhaps the longest urban winter climb in Britain. Climbed at night to avoid alarming local subjects. A pen torch may be useful to examine deep cracks for runners but there is generally sufficient artificial light. Conditions had been freezing for several days giving reasonable turf placements but some snow cover had been stripped by the afternoon sun. Not often in condition. From the col between *Salisbury Crag* and *Arthur's Seat* proper (the *Lion's Haunch*), traverse along a path below the gully of the *Gutted Haddie* to a buttress about 200yds from the col. It is the rightmost of two or three spurs and lies directly above a small signpost. Gain access from a small wooden scree barrier. Turn the steepest part of the front of the buttress (a direct attempt on the rocks failed) on the right and follow turfgy grooves to a belay (90ft). Easy for half a pitch, then bear left to the skyline and gain a shallow gully on the prow of the buttress in a fine position to gain the top of the lower difficulties (150ft). Ascend slightly leftwards through gorse (animal tracks) to snow slopes and gain the final headwall at

Nose Chimney, which appears as a notch from below. The chimney does not hold much ice but gives a magnificent finish in a splendid position. A long stretch allows a belay from the summit indicator.

**FAST CASTLE SEA CLIFFS, The Souter, Main Fin Area:**

*Shades of Yellow* – 14m VS 4b. M. Robson, T. Ward. 3rd March, 1996.

On the NW face of the Main Fin. The crack and arete on the right (facing out) at the base of the descent gully, moving right at the top.

*Fluorescent Flake* – 9m E1 5b. M. Robson, T. Ward. 3rd March, 1996.

On the NW face of a small fin behind (NW of) Main Fin. The obvious line of flakes up the wall.

**Second Sight Fin, North-West Face:**

The following routes have been climbed on the previously unclimbed (?) NW face of the Second Sight Fin, which is accessible after low tide via ledges from the right. Routes described left to right. Diagram provided.

*The Sentry Box* – 10m HVS 5a. M. Robson, T. Ward. 10th March, 1996.

Climb a crack to a sentry box, then a right-slanting crack to mantelshelves and finish up a crack behind a big block on the right.

*Daytrippers* – 10m VS 4b. B. Ottewell, J. Vince. 10th March, 1996.

Climb twin cracks to finish up the corner on the right of the big block.

*Pot Bellied Sheep* – 10m VS 4b. B. Ottewell, J. Vince. 10th March, 1996.

Climb the next crack right, starting beside a small corner.

*The Pig Thing* – 10m Severe. J. Vince, B. Ottewell. 10th March, 1996.

The next crack to the right, starting at a wider crack.

*Splice the Mainbrace* – 12m HVS 5b. M. Robson, T. Ward. 10th March, 1996.

Start 4m left of the right arete. Climb direct to the first ledge and follow a crack to the left crack in the headwall.

*Severence* – 12m HVS 5b. M. Robson, T. Ward. 23rd March, 1996.

Start 1m left of the arete. Follow a crack, move right and follow the arete to gain the right crack in the headwall.

**Doll Fin:**

This is the small fin opposite the NW Face of the Second Sight Fin. The fin is accessible at low tide and a speedy ascent of the routes at the seaward end is required to avoid a wetting. The first two routes finish at the obvious terrace which is followed leftwards to descend. Diagram provided. Left to right.

*Flume* – 8m V. Diff. B. Ottewell, J. Vince. 10th March, 1996.

The crack at the left side of the slab.

*Plume* – 8m V. Diff. J. Vince, B. Ottewell. 10th March, 1996.

The next crack right.

*Spume* – 10m V. Diff. M. Robson, T. Ward. 10th March, 1996.

A leftward-slanting crack in the centre of the slab. Step right at the terrace and chimney a wide crack to the top. Reverse to the ledge to descend.

*Sea Spray* – 10m V. Diff. M. Robson, T. Ward. 23rd March, 1996.

The crack at the seaward end of the fin. Move left at the terrace and follow a wide crack to the top. Reverse to the terrace to descend.

## MISCELLANEOUS NOTES

**Derek Fabian reports on a Helicopter Lift-off:**— Douglas appeared fit and well. Tanned from skiing in the winter and the spring, and from his generally out-door life during the long hot summer of 1995, he failed to show at least 20 of his 84 years. A retired well-known photographer and contributor of illustrated articles to the *Scots Magazine*, he and his wife, Audrey, had been looking forward for a while to this few days away with Ewa and myself on *Mistress Malin*.

Douglas had never landed on the Treshnish Isles, and he suggested these as our goal. We knew, too, that they would be an excellent place for his splendid bird photography; especially with the weather set fine, if — in common with much of the summer — short of wind.

We boarded in the afternoon of August 17, in Loch Moidart, Douglas climbing from dinghy to boat-deck in as sprightly form as any of us, and soon we were under way (motor-sailing, regrettably) and heading westwards along the Ardnamurchan Peninsula. Once past the Point, and heading south, the slight wind was now on the nose and we motored the remaining 15 nautical miles to anchor off Lunga More.

Douglas had begun to feel unwell soon after we passed Ardnamurchan. He started to lose feeling and control in one arm. It was evening and he insisted on coming ashore, but sat in the warm sun while the three of us explored the island and its summit hill for an hour or so. Returning to the boat, across the bouldery shore and into the inflatable, was a tricky procedure with two of us helping him as his sight and his limb-control slowly failed him. The sea was a flat calm. Douglas began to be sick and, tucked up warm in his bunk once aboard, retched almost all night. \* We began to suspect a mild stroke, and by 6am next morning we were transmitting a PAN PAN MEDICO call on the VHF.

The Oban Coastguard responded instantly and, after briefly relaying medical information from a doctor in Oban, they had a helicopter despatched from Prestwick to lift off our patient. This is a report on the lift-off experience; a useful lesson on how the downdraft can create havoc, and — since Douglas has since completely recovered from his medically diagnosed mild stroke — perhaps a valuable description for others of what to expect.

With the helicopter (a Royal Naval Rescue Sea King) some 15 minutes away, the Coastguard relayed a message: could we get under way, leave the anchorage, and motor in more open water on a course say due south. And could we be sure the decks were as clear as possible. No problem: the sea was still a flat calm; shorts and T-shirts were all that we needed for garments that morning, even at 6.30am. Engine running smoothly. We towed our dinghy to keep the deck free (normally it would be lashed, inflated and inverted, between coach roof and mast). Clear from the anchorage we made a course, at some 3-4 knots, due south and relayed our new position from the GPS to the Coastguard.

The Sea King appeared (7am), made VHF contact and began to lower a winch man. The downdraft, some 35-40 knots of it, blew us sideways. The nearer the winch man was swung to the cockpit, the farther we were pushed away! More VHF contact — channel 67 — but now the colossal noise of the hovering chopper, plus that of our own engine, drowned almost every word emerging from the speaker even

turned to maximum volume. Some sound-proof earphones were needed. We had none; nor are any such on regular sale at chandlers we have since approached. Eventually, the helicopter drew away, hoisting up the winch man as it went, and then relayed through the Coastguard its request for *Mistress Malin* to be motored at her top speed (7 knots in that flat calm) and for us to be ready to receive a line - which was *not to be attached to the boat* repeat, *not to be attached to the boat!*

Minutes later the helicopter drew in again and a line carrying a weighted bag (of lead shot?) was dropped expertly into the cockpit and was used by us to draw in the winch man, and then by him, only seconds later, to draw in the doctor. Both were clad in heavy water-proof gear (the crew of *Mistress Malin* were now drenched by flying walls of spray) and were wearing sound-proof earphones, fitted with walkie-talkie microphones.

Much of this time was spent airborne by our inflatable dinghy, which - as the chopper then accelerated away - began to twirl like a kite at the end of its painter. The latter finally parted (at roughly its mid-point) and the dinghy came to rest some 100m away in dead, calm water, followed by both lifebuoys which were torn from their teflon-tape fastenings to the pushpit. Meanwhile, the forehatch - shut but not fastened down - blew open and was torn from its hinges, coming to rest, as the chopper drew away and the havoc subsided, with only one remaining, badly bent corner screw holding.

There wasn't a cloud in the sky. The sea was serenely blue. I had been told about downdraft, I mused. Why had I not been prepared? The doctor and Audrey were below attending to Douglas; measuring his blood pressure.

In the space of six or seven minutes we recovered the dinghy, lifebuoys and other odd items from the sea, and had everything, including rescued forehatch and dinghy, lashed fast on deck. The diagnosis below complete, Douglas was to be winched off to hospital; by now hardly conscious, he was manhandled into the cockpit where - with the helicopter coming in to hover overhead abaft the mast again - the swinging bag of shot was already being collected in by the helmsman. In no time the doctor was in the harness and hoisted aloft, and the empty harness drawn by the line back to the cockpit.

Then the turn of the winch man who, cradling to him the now unconscious Douglas (doubly harnessed and being protected as far as was possible from the wild walls of spray by Audrey and the skipper), shouted to us above the din and the chaos of the chopper to feed out the line. We saw why, when the helicopter drew away at speed - horizontally and vertically with the bundle of Douglas and winch man being hoisted in fast pursuit - and the 50m of roughly coiled line on the cockpit floor began snaking out at incredible speed; demon-like in its intent on taking with it, but for the quick reactions of helmsman and skipper, any instrument or fitting, including GPS antenna (torn from its cabling but not lost), that its snaking coils could snatch at - which included any of our limbs in its way.

Suddenly, all was silent; but at that moment we did not know that Douglas was to prove the fighter he is (he has amazed the medics by making a full recovery with no lasting effects - indeed, within 10 days he was planning his next expedition to wild untroubled places) and our thoughts then were with Audrey. We mused, too, on what all of that would have been like in gale-force winds and seas.

*\* Apparently vomiting is the means by which the body attempts to rid itself of excess fluid build-up following, for instance, a stroke.*

**LETTER TO THE EDITOR**

(Letter with a Norfolk Postmark.)

'Why have you walked up from Chamonix on a night like this?'

*Another dream falls.* More pub bull-shit fodder from the Alps. Ordeal climbing. Nice pegs, shame about the Face. Brick-it, frig-it, tick it. Chasing 20-year-old ego-feed from a time before the permafrost melted..

*The climber falls,* and hangs all upside down over the 800m drop, leg broken. He is suspended only by the tangle of crampon straps in our iced up lead ropes. Cliffhanging, Hollywood style. His fridge-sized belay block has collapsed above me after his partner has taken him off belay. A 10m fall on to our ropes. His crampons are off his boots but the ankle strap and heel piece of one has hooked in our ropes. His belay sling and rope have been severed in the fall by the large block. A lucky tangle away from a further 40m fall. His lonely axes remain hanging from the ice above the belay. Thirty metres above, Jean-Michel hangs impossibly from a snowy handhold, his other hand holding his rope, weighted with the tugging struggles of the dangling man. The ground is Scottish V, mixed, loose and poorly protected. He finds reserves of energy he never knew were there. The injured climber struggles, pulling our ropes, me screaming at him. Hanging in crampons from a poor belay, it is unlikely the belay can hold both men if JM is pulled off. We use our radio to call Chamonix. The injured team, a short wait from warmth, drink, food, safety; for us, impossible dreams for the next 36 hours. 'Gizza lift mate.'

*Rocks fall* as I brush away the snow, vainly searching for a runner. I torque the axe behind a loose flake, overhanging the belay. Hanging from the axe, crampons flailing madly on verglassed granite, I desperately excavate a snowy crack for a back-bone saving handjam. 'God bless you, Stanage.' Fifteen metres above the belay, with no runners, the rope locks solid, leaving me pumped and scared, in mid-move, transfixed. Helicopter blades liquidize the air below in my potential fall trajectory. 'I could end up on five routes at once,' I chuckle insanely. Below, an aspirant guide *in extremis* on the previous pitch, has clipped in to our slack rope and asked to be top-roped up. I fight gravity, I fight my arms, I fight my sac. Strength ebbs and the rope remains tight.

*Night falls* as I climb an ice pitch to the false promise of a bivvy ledge. In the dark now, a desperate jamming crack by headtorch, axes jamming, crampons scattering, sparks flying, no gear. Fighting 18 hours of fatigue. No way can we bivvy here. We do. A full moon. Avalanches derail their sadness down the face. Stars come out. An intensely-magic moment in all the stress. The strange quiet calm at the centre of it all. Months later I want this moment back. Junkie.

*Snow falls.* Much later, rain drums the bivvy bag. The fine weather has broken. A storm-ridden dawn, rocks soaking wet, the first snow flakes begin to fall. The storm hits. We have a final brew, massage feet, lace up Koflachs, sort out the chaotic tangle of frozen ropes and hardware to which we hung through the night. I start to reascend the now snow-covered rocks, my partner below soon lost in the swirling snow.

*I fall, much, much later, in the dark and rain, into the Couvercle Refuge, snow in my hair, tears of relief in my eyes. The guardian says: 'Why have you walked up from Chamonix on a night like this?'*

*Andrew Walker, NE Pillar Direct of the Droites, August 10-11, 1995.*

ROBIN CAMPBELL muses: What is it, and is it a Corbett?— There is precious little to excite the bagging impulse around the Raeburn Hut, so it might be worthwhile to consider the triple-topped hill north of Laggan village. Proceeding from west to east and north to south, the least top is a nameless 795m, the middle top (838m/2716ft) is called Beinn a'Chrasgain and the main top may be called Marg na Craige — the name appears on the 1:10000 map in the vicinity of the summit surveyed at 2736ft, which height corresponds to the 834m of the 1:50000. According to Iain MacLeod's Gaelic glossary in *Munro's Tables* 'marg' may be a black pudding, so this would certainly fit the case: 'a black pudding of stones' would do well as a name for any of the Monadh Liath. So far so good — a fair name and a satisfactory height. However, it should be said the name is written on the map as if it applied to the scruffy crags in the corrie north of the top rather than to the top itself.

The Marg is not in the table of Corbetts, but this seems hard luck, since the high route to higher ground crosses the confused watershed north of the 795m top some four miles distant at a height very close to the critical height of 2236ft. There is no ground survey height for the low point here, which lies between the 2225ft and 2250ft contours on the 1:10000 map. The 2250ft contour runs just south of a tiny puddle on the south side of the pass. Perhaps an outing with poles and clinometers would settle the question, but it may be that the hill should be given the benefit of the doubt. After all, bednights at the Hut are soon to be £5 each! I have climbed the Marg twice and I have to say that it is very dull work.

Robin N. Campbell.

**Terrorist, Sinister Buttress, Lochnagar:** Brian Findlay and Greg Strange report a free ascent (V, 6) on March 31, 1996 — 21 years to the day of the first ascent by the late Norman Keir.

### THE SCOTTISH MOUNTAINEERING TRUST 1995/96

FOLLOWING last year's high spending round the Trust this year had less funds available, but has managed to continue its publishing programme and make cash awards to the majority of organisations and individuals who applied and were deemed suitable recipients.

On the publications side, a fully-updated *Cairngorm Rock & Ice Climbs* was published in two volumes along with *Scottish Selected Winter Climbs*. In the District Guide series a revised *Islands of Scotland including Skye* was published.

Comment has been made that the requirements of the Inland Revenue referred to in last year's report — to see elements of education or science advancement present in any application for assistance — will prevent Trustees

from providing assistance to expeditions. It certainly has to be accepted that the world is not as large as it once was and the Trust does not therefore offer assistance for trips to what are now popular and easily accessible ranges by the very experienced. It is certainly not in the minds of Trustees, however, to abandon expedition sponsorship and all such applications considered by the Trust this year appear to have had little difficulty in satisfying the requirement.

As usual the Trust thanks all members of the Club who find the time in busy lives to serve as Trustees or officials. The present Trustees are D.F. Lang (chairman), D.C. Anderson, R.N. Campbell, J.Y.L. Hay, S. Kennedy, W.A. McNicol, D.C. Page, J. M. Shaw, D. Sommerville and N.M. Suess.

The following grants were awarded during the year. It should be noted that because the capital comprising the Sang Award has become too modest to provide meaningful income for assisting expeditions, it has been incorporated into the General Fund which in any event had been used to support Sang for a number of years. Intending applicants for expeditions, or indeed, any purpose should now initially apply to the Secretary of the Trust who will provide the appropriate application form.

J.R.R. Fowler.

#### ***General Grant Fund***

Grants paid	Jonathan Colville Trust	£768
	CD Rom for Journal Editor	£350
	Scottish Rights of Way Society	£1000
	Elizabeth Allan – Burn on the Hill	£1000
	M.C. of S. – core funding	£10,322
	Scottish Rights of Way Society	£1000
	National Trust for Scotland – field worker	£800
	Neil Skene – trip to Everest base camp	£50
Grants committed		£16,708

#### ***Footpath Fund***

Grants paid	John Muir Trust – field officer	£2000
	Scottish Natural Heritage – Stac Pollaidh	£7000
	Scottish Natural Heritage – Culag	£4250
	Scottish Natural Heritage – Ross-shire	£5992
	National Trust for Scotland – Glen Coe,	
	Goatfell, Ben Lomond & Torridon	£14,000
	Balmoral Estates – Lochnagar	£4464
Grants committed		£29,400

#### ***Snart Bequest***

Grants paid	Cairngorm weather station	£490
Grants committed	Dundonnell rescue team	£2000

#### ***Land Purchase Fund***

Grants paid		Nil
Grants committed	National Trust for Scotland – Mar Lodge	£20,000

## MUNRO MATTERS

By C.M. Huntley (Clerk of the List)

Listed below are the 146 additions to the Munroists List, giving the total number of reported Compleat Munroists as 1535. As always a keen interest is taken in how the rate of addition is progressing, and I can report that although we have the second highest number of additions, the rate of change is small. However, I am noticing an increase in the number of multiple rounds and these are given below.

Each entry lists the Munroist Number, Name, and date of Completion of the Munros, Top, Furths as appropriate.

Amendments give the addition of Tops and Furths, but only show the total number of rounds completed and the year of the latest round.

1390	George Galloway	1995 1995	1432	Karl Nelson	1995 1995
1391	John B Boyling	1994	1433	Elizabeth Skeoch	1995
1392	Hugh Inslay	1995	1434	Irvine J Skeoch	1995
1393	Ron Fosberry	1995	1435	Judy Middleton	1995
1394	George C Gilchrist	1995	1436	Alastair I F Barrie	1995
1395	A L McLaren	1995	1437	George Kincaid	1995
1396	Gordon Birnie	1995	1438	Arlie L Gilbert	1995
1397	Douglas R MacLeod	1995	1439	Martin Uppadine	1982
1398	George Page	1995 1995	1440	Paul Birrell	1995
1399	Ron Johnson	1995 1995	1441	Jim Bryce	1995
1400	Kate Potter	1995	1442	Isobel Gordon	1995
1401	Alan Bellis	1995	1443	Ruth Love	1995
1402	Graham W Beckett	1995	1444	Simon Love	1995
1403	Patrick J P Nelson	1995	1445	Pauline A Rooker	1995 1995
1404	Gordon Berry	1991 1991 1995	1446	John A Rooker	1995 1995
1405	Harry Hartley	1990 1990 1995	1447	Steve Singleton	1995
1406	Charles D M Black	1995	1448	Jonathon Whitehead	1995 1995
1407	Jacqueline Cummings	1995	1449	Arthur J Bennet*	1995
1408	Barry M Rose	1995	1450	Charlie Lodge	1995
1409	J B Murphy	1995	1451	Malcolm Lomas	1995
1410	David M Mollison	1995	1452	Eddie B Dealtry	1995 1995 1994
1411	Derek R L Borthwick	1995	1453	Patricia Manning	1995
1412	Bill Patullo	1995	1454	Thomas W Wright	1995
1413	Peter Goodwin	1995	1455	Jessie R Milne	1995
1414	Dominic Goodwin	1995	1456	William A Milne	1995
1415	Anne Hill	1995	1457	Michael Pratt	1995
1416	Martin E Hill	1995	1458	Patrick Callan	1995
1417	Gillian M Shirreffs	1995	1459	Bill Brennan	1995
1418	Richard C Shirreffs	1995	1460	Bryon D Evans	1995
1419	Donald W W Smith	1995	1461	Michael D Gillespie	1995
1420	Brian N Barron	1995	1462	John Coleman	1995
1421	John M D Anderson	1995	1463	David H Wolfson	1995
1422	Stephen A Glasper	1995	1464	Erik Bigland	1995
1423	Johan de Jong	1995 1995	1465	Lyn Tett	1995
1424	Stuart F Davidson	1995	1466	Ron Spark	1995 1995
1425	David Harrison-Hall	1995	1467	John C Brannan	1995
1426	Carlene A Hamilton	1995	1468	George Cruickshank	1995
1427	John D Hamilton	1995	1469	Maureen Daniel	1995 1995
1428	Nigel Murray	1995	1470	Richard L Daniel	1995 1995
1429	Bill E Parry	1995	1471	Iain Harkins	1995
1430	John W Houghton	1995	1472	Bill Cluckie	1995
1431	Linda J McColl**	1995 1995	1473	L Liney	1995

1474 Jim S Bramwell	1995	1505 Gordon Logan	1995
1475 Duncan W Borthwick	1995	1506 Peter Budd	1995
1476 Vonnie Scott	1995	1507 Graham M Hamilton	1995
1477 David Claymore	1995 1995	1508 Elizabeth Sudlow	1995
1478 Graham Hartson	1995 1995	1509 Michael Sudlow	1995
1479 Stephen Hartley	1994 1994	1510 Findlay L Swinton	1995
1480 Ian D Lauriston	1995	1511 Fred Siddaway	1995
1481 Murray Kelso	1995	1512 Neil H Martin	1995
1482 Victoria M L Doran	1995	1513 Joan S Lamb	1995 1995
1483 Iain Roberts	1993	1514 Richard Love	1995
1484 Linda Sillery	1995 1995	1515 Steven Copping	1995
1485 Neil D Ross	1995	1516 Hazel Batty	1995
1486 Graeme Ralph	1995	1517 Lynn Batty	1995
1487 Richard W Foster	1995	1518 R Martin Adams	1991
1488 R J Metcalfe	1995	1519 G D Pirie	1995
1489 John Lloyd	1995	1520 Colin Sinclair	1995
1490 Kathleen Mowbray	1995	1521 Elizabeth S Campbell	1995
1491 Jim Macdonald	1995	1522 Alastair Campbell	1995
1492 John P Ross	1995	1523 David Hughes	1995
1493 William D Nimmo	1995	1524 A N Bartlett	1996
1494 Judy Vallery	1995	1525 Keith Barker	1995 1995
1495 Tom Vallery	1995	1526 John Farrow	1995 1995
1496 James Martin	1994	1527 A H Blandy	1994
1497 Nancy Marsh	1995	1528 James White	1995
1498 Barrie Marsh	1995	1529 Richard R Cooper	1994
1499 Liz Campbell	1995	1530 K Malcolm Smith	1995
1500 A Smith	1995	1531 Douglas Wood	1995
1501 Roy Firth	1995	1532 Margaret Varley	1995 1995
1502 Malcolm Gray	1990 1994	1533 Graeme Morrison	1995
1503 Malcolm M MacRae	1995	1534 Steven Morrison	1995
1504 Fraser Gold	1995	1535 Keith Macrosson	1995

### AMENDMENTS

148 D Whalley	1995 x5	626 Bob Wilson	1988 1995
209 Pat Batty	1995 x2	775 Peter Malone	1990 1995
216 Jeremy J C Fenton	1995 1984 1982 x2	816 Rob H Woodall	1990 1995 1990
260 Jim Wyllie	1995 1992 x6 x3	992 Patrick Leahy	1991 1995
329 Donald Lamont	1995 x3	1044 Peter Bailey	1992 1995
375 Robert H MacDonald	1995 x5	1045 Steve Fallon	1995 x3
409 John Brewster	1995 x2	1160 Peter E Collins	1993 1994
514 Dave Purser	1995 x3	1283 Harry Blenkinsop	1994 1995
555 R Y Howie	1995 1992 1987 x6 x3	1287 Robert J Shapperd	1994 1995
626 Maurice Watson	1994 x2	1292 Julian Ridal	1994 1995

SMC and LSCC members are identified by \* and \*\* respectively.

## A YEAR OF CONTRASTS

Scotland has seen the hottest, driest summer for decades followed by the coldest start to the year that most will remember. I'm sure that all those lucky enough to have been out on the hills between Christmas and New Year will have photographs of the bluest skies imaginable for Scotland. Equally, in traditional style, just as we became accustomed to the conditions the inevitable thaw started and the clouds returned.

When the hot, dry conditions started in the summer few could have expected them to continue for so long. Archie Gilbert (1438) reports that when he completed on Beinn na Lap it was the first hill he had climbed without carrying wet weather gear. Peter Budd (1506) found that he had picked the first days of good weather after weeks of rain to ascend Ladhar Beinn for his last Munro, and Derek Borthwick (1411) simply picked his hottest day to ascend Meall Ghaordie. Derek comments that his choice of Meall Ghaordie was that it was the hill that gave him most pain after he broke his ankle on it a few years ago. Those not so lucky with conditions include George Page (1398) torrential rain, Graham Hamilton (1507) very wet, and Steven Copping (1515), biting spindrift.

### **Contrast of ages.**

The ages of compleat Munroists this year range from 11 to 70-year-olds. Congratulations to Hazel and Lynn Batty (1516 and 1517) aged 14 and 11 respectively who are now on the List before Lynn has even reach teenage years. I suspect that their mother Pat (206) may have had an influence on many of their hill plans. Lynn is certainly the youngest Munroist, and Hazel finds herself somewhere between the fourth and seventh youngest. I am unable to confirm the exact ages of some earlier 14-year-olds. Compare this to Elizabeth and Irvine Skeoch (1433/4) who have compleated at the age of 74, doing all 277 in their retirement years and entirely together.

### **Contrast the level of companionship on the rounds.**

Graham Beckett (1402) climbed all but two solo, and those two were only because he was on a leadership course at the time. A. Blandy (1527) climbed 90% alone, while slightly down the scale Murray Kelso (1481) climbed 75% alone. Almost everyone else has used a wide network of friends to accompany them. The Last One celebrations are usually convivial occasions, but Malcolm Macrae (1503) was disappointed not to have his family only a phone call away. From the summit of Ladhar Bheinn he used his mobile phone to contact home, only to find himself talking to his own voice on the answering machine. Compleating all the Munros on your own could mean that you miss out on much useful information. For example, if Ian Lauriston (1480) had not been accompanied by a party, including four Munroists, on his last Munro, he might never have known that he could register his compleation with the Clerk of the List.

*Munro matrimonialis* this year include 11 couples of whom the Marshs (1497/8), the Vallerys (1494/5), the Daniels (1469/70), the Skeochs (1433/4) and the Milnes (1455/6) can claim the distinction of *M. matrimonialis totalis*, having done all their Munros together. The Shirreffs (1417/8) have correctly ticked the

current List but believe that the earlier Tables are the true list. Therefore on An Teallach they completed by their List at 1pm on Bidean a Glas Thuil, but then continued to Sgurr Fiona to complete the revised List at 2pm. The Rookers (1445/6) think their round would have been a lot quicker if they had not discovered the Pyrenees and found that they too have a List of 3000 tops, in metres rather than feet.

Father and Son combinations include the Goodwins (1413/4), and the Morrisons (1533/4). The Morrisons started and finished together although from the letter it sounds as if they were nearly finished off together when lightning struck them on Maol Chean-dearg. Duncan Borthwick (1475) is following in his father W. D. Borthwick's steps (1015).

### **Contrasts in what to do next!**

Most mention more Tops and returns to old summits in better weather, while Linda Silley (1484) is rather more rash and declares that she and Norman Carrington (1245) are emigrating to New Zealand. Good luck with your new horizons and apologies to Norman for missing out his completion of the Tops in 1995. Richard Foster (1487) thinks he is about to start exploring the glens more and investigate some of the passes such as the Corrieyairack.

### **Contrasts in the First and Last One.**

With a possible choice of 277 First and then 276 Last Ones it is remarkable how many find themselves following the pattern of Ben Lomond first and then Ben More (Mull) last. For example, Bill Brennan (1459) and Jonathan Whitehead (1448) followed this pattern. The opposite applies to John Coleman (1462) who found himself on Mam Sodhail for his initiation to the hills, but he comments that he was insufficiently switched on to continue the traverse to Beinn Fionnlaidh. I'm assuming he was not alone on that first visit so at least he could blame his companions for their lack of foresight. James White (1528) picked a not uncommon Last One in Ben Nevis but his touch of originality was that he walked the last 50 metres in boots previously owned by the Rev. A. E. Robertson (1).

### **Contrast the Best and Worst days.**

By the time I receive a letter of registration most writers seem to have acquired an almost rose-tinted view of the hills. However, there is no disguising some epics. Ruth and Simon Love (1443 and 1444) described a very long day in the Cairngorms, stumbling back in the dark and eventually breaking into uncontrollable laughter as the downpour continued, and on another day the shock of Simon putting his feet through the cornice on Ben Wyvis and fortunately being held wedged by his shoulders. Another bad day must be walking up Gulvain and not continuing past the trig point to the true summit. How many reading this now are already cringing as they realise their mistake and need to pay another unplanned visit up Gleann Fionnlighe? One or two have mentioned their error so readers will not be alone.

### **Contrasts in the distance to get to the hills.**

This year we have the first Dutchman to Complete. Johan De Jong (1423) knew

nothing of the Highlands until a chance stop at a bookshop in Leatherhead when he came across *Hamish's Mountain Walk*. This obviously sparked sufficient interest that nine years later he was ascending Ben Chonzie for his 277th tick, accompanied by his wife who was on her first Scottish hill. Those that have much shorter distances to travel are Liz Campbell (1499) and Isobel Gordon (1442) who are residents of Aviemore, and there have been a considerable number from the Moray Firth area.

### **Contrasts in Publicity of Completion.**

Most anticipate a celebration on the top but Iain Harkins (1471) had far more publicity that he could ever have anticipated. As he reached the summit of Ben Nevis he came across *SMC Journal* Editor, Ken Crocket, being interviewed for a programme for Radio Scotland. This was too good a chance to miss for the reporter who must have assumed it had been staged managed.

### **Contrasts in delay of Reporting In.**

I estimate that most take between one week and two months to report, but this year I've had some extreme delays. M. Uppadine (1439) tried to register in 1982 but somehow seems to have been left off the List. He tried again in 1985 and had probably resigned himself to forever belonging to that safety net of number 277, the Unknown Munroist, when he came across my address. Malcolm Gray (1502) completed in 1990 but it was only when he joined a new club that his fellow members persuaded him that completions only count when you are on the List! No such delay for Alan Bellis (1401) who wrote on the same day as his final hill, and Charles Black who wrote the next day. They must have had their letters in the post before the soggy sandwiches and the 'empties' were out of their pack. I was intrigued to see that Patricia Manning's (1453) letter was postmarked Knoydart. Despite giving me much information of her mentors to the hills she does not say whether a Knoydart hill was her Last One. Perhaps the letter was posted shortly after reaching sea level from her 277th tick. Patricia mentions that although in her sixties, she and Mrs Carter (310) are embarking on a second round which will, with the present rate of ascent, take them into their nineties. Presumably, they will then start on the Corbetts.

### **Contrasts in the time taken.**

This year's range of time taken is from three years 11 months to nearly 50 years. Jonathan Whitehead (1448) takes the record for *Munro brevis* while the *Munro longus* include Arthur Bennet (1449), David Mollison (1410), Fraser Gold (1504), and Ron Fosberry (1393). David Mollison talks of his hill clothing in the 1940s being mustard gas decontamination suits which had alarmingly poor friction on any snow. Fraser, who began in 1940, describes his pleasure at finding a 'spring on Ben Lomond, which he had recalled from 1945 being beside the old route of the path and having a chained metal scoop for casual refreshment'. David Hughes (1523) could have quite easily completed in four years but he discovered the Alps and these proved a major distraction. When he did finally come to his Last Hill, his day started in Harris at 5.30am. Then via Skye, Mallaig and Lochaline he reached the summit of Ben More at 9.15pm to enjoy a magnificent

sunset. The round of Douglas MacLeod (1397) which took 25 years from start to finish, disguises the fact that in 1994 he actually did 270 Munros. This was part of a charity fund raising scheme and was done while being based in London. The routine he evolved was to leave his car in Inverness or Fort William and commute each weekend by the BR sleeper service.

### **The Amendments**

The Howies, Geraldine (260) and Robin (555), continue to lead the List as the most polymunroic couple, both completing their sixth round this year. Robert MacDonald (375) did not want to break a tradition of his and completed his fifth round on the same scene as his third and fourth completions – Beinn Fhionnlaidh. He's still teetotal on these occasions and was accompanied by one dog with four completions and a second with only three. Dave Purser (514) completed his plan of ticking all the hills in ascending order. This plan was first publicised in the Journal. He describes some excessive journeys caused by a single Munro coming between adjacent pairs. For example, Beinn Mheadhoin comes between Mam Sodhail and Carn Eighe.

### **The Corrections.**

Errors that have been corrected this year include Kevin Borman (1285) being listed as Borma and David Williams (1286) being listed as William. I suspect it is more than coincidence that adjacent names lost the last letters. Also Eric Drew (910) should have had his Completion of the Furths in the 1994 Journal. Sorry. A longer term error concerns Erlend Flett (152). In the 1981 Tables he was misrepresented as Erland, but by the latest edition Erland (still misspelt) was now given as his surname.

I'm afraid that a number of people were frustrated in their attempts to get themselves registered on the List by writing to some of the mountaineering organisations. Generally letters to our distributor, Cordee, do not reach me, while a few that were addressed to the Scottish Sports Council did get forwarded. Similarly, the Mountaineering Council of Scotland has been conscientious in their efforts to pass letters to me. Could all Munroists please note that the correct address for recording completions and amendments is given below. A SAE is appreciated and ensures a reply. I have given the benefit of doubt to all those omitting the steam proof SAE by assuming that they must have got my address from *The Munro Phenomena*, where it fails to mention SAE.

From July 1996 an A4 certificate will be returned to all those writing to inform me of their Completions. Please enclose a suitably-sized SAE if you wish your certificate. I appreciate that there may be some Munroists already on the List who would like to avail themselves of the certificate. They should write to me with a reference to their Munroist number. All Notification should be sent to Dr. C.M. Huntley, Old Medwyn, Spittal, Carnwath, Lanarkshire. ML11 8LY. Once registered Munroists can also legitimately purchase a tie and/or Brooch.

## SCOTTISH MOUNTAIN ACCIDENTS

### REGIONAL DISTRIBUTION

*(Geographical Divisions are those used in SMC District Guidebooks)*

REGION	CASUALTIES (of which fatalities are bracketed)				INCIDENTS							Animal Rescues	Non-Mountaineering Incidents
	Injuries	Exhaustion/Exposure Hypothermia, Hyperthermia	Illness	Total Casualties	Actual Rescues		Other Callouts						
Incidents with Casualties					Cragfast or weatherbound	Separated	Lost	Overdue or Benighted	False Alarms	Total Incidents			
<b>All Regions 1994</b>	<b>183</b> (35)	<b>29</b> (1)	<b>23</b> (8)	<b>235</b> (44)	<b>218</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>326</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>Northern Highlands</b>	<b>27</b> (5)	<b>1</b> -	<b>2</b> -	<b>30</b> (5)	<b>26</b>	-	<b>2</b>	-	<b>13</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>43</b>	-	<b>3</b>
<b>Western Highlands</b>	<b>14</b> (2)	<b>1</b> -	<b>3</b> (3)	<b>18</b> (5)	<b>18</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	-	<b>5</b>	-	<b>25</b>	-	-
<b>Ben Nevis</b>	<b>21</b> (3)	<b>10</b> -	<b>1</b> (1)	<b>32</b> (4)	<b>28</b>	<b>3</b>	-	-	<b>8</b>	-	<b>39</b>	-	-
<b>Glen Coe (Inc Buachaille)</b>	<b>20</b> (9)	<b>3</b> -	-	<b>23</b> (9)	<b>18</b>	<b>7</b>	-	-	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>29</b>	-	-
<b>Other Central Highlands</b>	<b>26</b> (4)	<b>4</b> -	<b>3</b> -	<b>33</b> (4)	<b>27</b>	-	<b>4</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Cairngorms</b>	<b>33</b> (6)	<b>8</b> -	<b>5</b> (4)	<b>51</b> (10)	<b>36</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>15</b>	-	<b>73</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Southern Highlands</b>	<b>20</b> (3)	<b>2</b> -	<b>4</b> (3)	<b>26</b> (6)	<b>26</b>	<b>3</b>	-	<b>1</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>44</b>	-	<b>8</b>
<b>Skye</b>	<b>6</b> (1)	<b>2</b> (1)	<b>1</b> -	<b>9</b> (2)	<b>8</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>20</b>	-	-
<b>Islands (other than Skye)</b>	<b>6</b> (2)	<b>1</b> -	<b>1</b> (1)	<b>8</b> (3)	<b>8</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>	-	<b>2</b>	-	<b>13</b>	-	-
<b>Southern Uplands</b>	<b>2</b> -	<b>3</b> (1)	-	<b>5</b> (1)	<b>3</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	-	<b>5</b>	-	<b>10</b>	-	<b>10</b>
<b>All Regions 1995</b>	<b>180</b> (35)	<b>35</b> (2)	<b>20</b> (12)	<b>235</b> (49)	<b>198</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>339</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>27</b>

## MOUNTAIN RESCUE COMMITTEE OF SCOTLAND

### Accident Reports 1995

Compiled by John Hinde

MANY thanks indeed to all for sending me such detailed reports. Again this year, for brevity, I have rarely mentioned the Police in the narratives, as they are always the responsible authority and involved in all rescues.

Again I have often found it difficult to categorise 'Non-mountaineering' and I have usually regarded all off-road activities (off-piste ski-ing, mountain biking, ATVs and trail biking in remote places, hill-loch fishing, stalking, shepherding, etc.) as mountaineering, often with added dangers!

I have not classified people as 'lost' unless they have indeed been found by rescuers called out for them. Some with navigational problems have found their own way out, and I have noted them as 'overdue or benighted' if teams have been alerted. Casualties with injuries, illnesses, exhaustion, hypothermia etc. have not also been classified as cragfast, separated, lost, overdue or benighted, although they may well have been some of these. Some cliff rescues have simply been classified as 'cragfast' until I get fuller details.

#### AVALANCHES:

Almost 60 years ago, when I was a very young mountaineer, I read an Everest expert who stated: 'Avalanches do not occur in Scotland.' With the confidence of that assurance I waded up some very questionable snow, but I soon learned better because one of my first rescues in Scotland was a casualty from an avalanche in Raeburn's Gully, Lochnagar. However, I still got caught out a couple of times, once culpably, fortunately without injury.

The number of 1995 avalanche victims is frightening, but with all the warnings we pump out, surely nobody is as naive as I was. According to me, the figures are:

Avalanche fatalities in 1995: 10 (in 4 incidents); avalanche non-fatal injuries: 22; totalling 32; and some may not have been reported. I wonder how many have walked away uninjured from slab avalanches during the year, probably more than 100.

So far during 1996 I have received reports of one avalanche fatality in Glencoe, one on Creag Meagaidh and one in the Lake District.

#### MOST COMMON CAUSES OF INJURIES

(including deaths which are shown in brackets)

Slips, trips, stumbles.....	113 (21)
Avalanches.....	32 (10)
Heart attacks.....	13 (12)
Fall over cornice.....	4 (2)

At least four call outs were caused by separation after people had gone through cornices and been uninjured.

## NORTHERN HIGHLANDS

- JANUARY 2 – Overdue because of deep snow on Liathach, two men (both 26) turned up just before midnight.
- JANUARY 4 – Seven people descending NE slopes of Meall a'Chrasgaidh, Fannichs, when two of them (both male 36, 29) were carried 100m down by a windslab avalanche. The younger had been struck on the head making him unconscious, but he had come round and walked to the road with bruises and leg ligament injuries. The older had a broken ankle and crushed L vertebra, needing airlift on a vacuum mattress. Dundonnell and Kinloss MRTs, RAF Sea King. 86.
- JANUARY 21 – A roped pair attempted to cut through a snow cornice to finish Poacher's Fall (180m Grade 5), Liathach. The cornice collapsed sweeping both to the corrie. One (m24) was buried from waist down with fractured ribs. The other man (27) was completely buried for more than two hours (fatal). Three others on a nearby route heard the avalanche, the second being knocked off, so they abseiled off. They were able to dig out the avalanched pair. Torridon and Kinloss MRTs carried them out because the helicopter could not operate in the severe weather. 413.
- FEBRUARY 10-11 – Someone reported man walking with crutches on the Rhidorroch track east of Ullapool. Dundonnell MRT traced him but he declined assistance and walked out next afternoon. 40.
- FEBRUARY 18-19 – A man reported that a couple had not returned from a climb on Liathach to their tent in Coire Mhic Nobuil and it had collapsed overnight under the weight of snow. Torridon MRT found them returning from Fuselage Gully. Benighted, they had snow-caved, but declined help and stayed on the hill. RAF Sea King and Dundonnell MRT also alerted. 53.
- FEBRUARY 21 – A man (56) and a woman (35) had carried on after 10 companions retreated from An Cabar of Ben Wyvis. In strong winds and near whiteout they got lost and went down to the wrong glen about 10km to the east. Dundonnell MRT, RAF Sea King. 32.
- FEBRUARY 26 – Descending the Horns of Alligin a path ranger from Gloucester tripped and fell 5m from one terrace to another, sustaining chest injuries. His companion went to phone. Torridon MRT, RAF Sea King. 100.
- MARCH 9 – Tired and delayed by deep snow walking to Coire Mhic Fhearchair of Beinn Eighe, a teacher (m47) and a nurse (f48) were found by Torridon MRT returning to Coire Dubh carpark. 16.
- MARCH 16 – Two men traversing Ben Wyvis were accidentally separated because one of them (65) strayed on to a cornice and fell 100m into Coire na Feola. He walked out unaided, suffering mild hypothermia, but his companion had alerted Dundonnell MRT and RAF Sea King. 88.
- MARCH 21-22 – Search by Assynt and Kinloss MRTs with SARDA for a woman, known to be depressed, missing on Ben Loyal after a car crash. Found by RAF Sea King. 98.
- MARCH 25 – Co-leading a party of 15 teenagers down An Cabar, Ben Wyvis, an instructor fell 16m down a snow slope sustaining cuts and bruises. He was not using an ice-axe or crampons. Dundonnell MRT, HMCG helicopter. 56.
- APRIL 15 – During a deer count on Ben Shieldaig, when out of sight of the other four in his party, a landowner (49) slipped on a mossy stone, falling into a gully and fracturing a lower leg. He failed to make a rendezvous but a sweep search by Torridon MRT and SARDA found him. Airlift by RAF Sea King. 76.
- APRIL 30 – Leading second pitch of South Rib, Stac Pollaidh, in the rain, a climber was killed by head injuries received in a fall, despite wearing a helmet. Dundonnell MRT, HMCG helicopter. 108.
- MAY 5 – Body of a woman found at the base of sea cliffs, Caithness.

- MAY 5 – Woman (34) went missing during a coastal walk, Caithness.
- MAY 16-20 – Assynt MRT and SARDA called out on 19 and 20 May to search moorland, coast and cliffs at Dunnet, Caithness for a woman (53) last seen on 16 May. No result. 84.
- MAY 22 – Walking a low, grassy area with her husband at Achnahaird Bay, north of Achiltibuie, a retired woman (74) slipped, causing three fractures of an ankle. HMCG and HMCG helicopter. 10.
- MAY 27 – Walker (m46) airlifted from near Loch a' Bhealaich (Ben Klibreck) with a broken ankle caused by a slip. 8.
- MAY 28 – Aultbea, Loch Ewe. HMCG helicopter transferred a cliff faller to Raigmore Hospital with suspected spinal injuries.
- MAY 30-31 – A woman legal secretary (46) and a male librarian (38) got benighted in mist. They had gone to climb A'Chioch of Sgurr a' Chaorachain, Applecross. Found on road at top of Bealach na Ba. Torridon MRT, RAF Sea King. 61.
- JUNE 1 – Descending the SE Ridge of Beinn Damh in mist and rain, a chemist (49) and his companion lost their bearings and went down the very steep, east side of the ridge. The chemist slipped on wet grass, falling 30m with fatal head injuries. Torridon MRT, RAF Sea King. 51.
- JUNE 1-2 – A couple climbing Cioch Nose (90m V.Diff.) Sgurr a' Chaorachain were reported overdue at 22.00. Torridon MRT were engaged on Beinn Damh but went to the top of A'Chioch in thick cloud at 0150, finding those reported plus another rope of three. 46.
- JUNE 4 – A group of four had descended the steepest part of the NW slopes of Meall a'Chrasgaidh, Fannich Forest, when a woman (50) stumbled and broke her ankle. Stretcher carry by Dundonnell MRT. 74.
- JUNE 9 – Walking out from Lochan Fearn, SW of Nedd village, Eddrachillis Bay, an angler (64) slipped and injured his leg. Stretchered 1km by Assynt MRT. 37.
- JUNE 22-23 – Three people were reported overdue from a two-day walk near Shenavall Bothy but walked out safe. Dundonnell MRT. 17.
- JULY 2 – Tending a sheep in difficulty on cliffs at Reiff, Achiltibuie, a crofter (56) slipped on rock, fell 5m and landed on his back on the rocky shore, suffering two fractures. Stretcher winched by HMCG and HMCG helicopter. 12.
- JULY 2 – Two women (64, 46) reported overdue on Coigach coast walk, Blughasary to Culnacraig, turned up safe. Dundonnell team. 6.
- JULY 14 – Descending Coire an Laoigh, Beinn Eighe, a consultant (45) slipped on scree and hurt a knee. His wife went for help but he got fed up waiting, walked to the road and thumbed a lift. HMCG helicopter lifted 6 Torridon MRT to search in low cloud. 38.
- JULY 15-16 – As the afternoon got colder and wetter and the cloud base got lower, two brothers (55, 46) decided to turn back, but the third brother wanted to carry on to the top of Beinn Dearg. He gave them a compass and a bearing to get to a well-used path. When the summit bagger got down his brothers were missing so he went back to search, in vain. They were found well by Dundonnell MRT and RAF Sea King ENE of Beinn Dearg, a remote area. 63.
- JULY 31 – Walker (m51) overdue on Ben Wyvis got down safely.
- AUGUST 20 – Motorcycling at the remote Loch a'Choir Mhoir (near the head of Strath Mulzie) the rider (25) hit a rock concealed by vegetation and broke his leg. Airlift by RAF Sea King. Assynt MRT. 35.
- AUGUST 21 – A hillwalker (48) scrambling up the Horns of Alligin pulled up on a rock which came away in his hand so he tumbled about 60m down steep ground. Winched (with rib and minor head and spine injuries) by RAF Sea King. Torridon MRT. 46.

- AUGUST 24 – An army captain (27) descending N from Beinn Dearg was about 200m below the summit when she slipped and injured an ankle. Dundonnell MRT stretchered her to below cloud base for airlift by RAF Sea King. 108.
- SEPTEMBER 23 – In darkness and bad weather HMCG helicopter failed trying to get a coastguard team to a walker fallen into a swollen river at Loch Torridon. Later dead on arrival.
- OCTOBER 7 – Assynt MRT was alerted when a doctor (24) was overdue from Suilven. He walked out safely. 1.
- OCTOBER 15-16 – Starting at 10.30 and climbing An Teallach in mist two men (22, 21) made two navigation errors which delayed them, so they got benighted without torches. Escorted by Dundonnell MRT. 21.
- OCTOBER 16-17 – Leading a military party in darkness on a small, rough peninsula SSW of Toscaig, Applecross, a marine officer (23) slipped on rocks falling 6m on to grass. It was suspected he had a spinal injury although most of the impact had been taken by his pack. RAF Sea King evacuation delayed by bad weather. 88.
- OCTOBER 28-29 – At 15.30 hours, and unequipped with navigation gear, torch, adequate clothing or bivouac bag, a novice walker (24) got left behind by her six colleagues at the bottom of the zig-zags 600m E of Stac Pollaidh summit. She tried to catch up with them but could not climb the scree. She descended and got lost heading NE into the wild area of Inverpolly Forest. Fortunately, the weather was good because she was benighted. Dundonnell MRT and SARDA searched all night. Assynt and Kinloss were alerted. She was found by RAF Sea King at 08.30, well, with no hypothermia. 655.
- OCTOBER 28-29 – Fresh from the above successful search, R.137 helicopter evacuated a woman casualty (51) from 2.3km ESE of Craig Youth Hostel. With her husband she had attempted to circumnavigate the base of Beinn Alligin. They had made navigation errors and at 22.00 she had been injured falling, unable to go on. Torridon MRT. 60.
- NOVEMBER 11-12 – After picking whelks and visiting a wreck a man (63) probably blacked out walking home (Cove, Lochewe). Found cold, wet and disorientated at 02.00 after an intensive search by Dundonnell MRT and HMCG helicopter 273.
- DECEMBER 3 – RAF Sea King scrambled to assist Air Ambulance with recovery of two casualties from hillside near Loch Glass, E. Ross. Casualties and two Air Ambulance paramedics winched and taken to Raigmore.
- DECEMBER 24 – Father and son (41, 15) were delayed by a mechanical failure to their 4WD vehicle in Strath Dionard, N of Foinaven. They sheltered in a fishing hut in a whiteout, but eventually got home on foot before midnight, after the blizzard. Assynt MRT and Police could not reach the incident because of roads blocked by snow and fallen power lines. 52.
- DECEMBER 30 – Ascending snow SW of the summit of Spidean Coire nan Clach (972m) of Beinn Eighe, an unroped party of three were avalanched on the open slope 50m below the summit. The snow broke away and they went down 80m, two men (34, 33) being injured. The third went for help and they were recovered by Torridon MRT and RAF Sea King. 40.

## WESTERN HIGHLANDS

- JANUARY 20 – Injured person Loch Hourn. HMCG.
- FEBRUARY 24 – A chef (42) walked via Coire Dhuinnid and Camas-Iuinie to Dornie. By taking a wrong path he got benighted but walked out unaided. Kintail MRT. 10.
- MARCH 26 – A publisher (31) slipped on North Ridge of Saileag (Meall a'Charra). She fell 65m into a concave snow gully with serious leg injuries. Kintail MRT, RAF Sea King. 78.

- APRIL 3 – Poorly equipped father and son (60, 13) were overdue climbing Sgurr Fhuaran (1068m) not having started until 14.15. Kintail MRT and SARDA met them coming down near the road. 7.
- APRIL 9 – Teacher (28) descending the path on Meallan Odhar (East Ridge of The Saddle) slipped on wet grass breaking his ankle. Airlifted by RAF Sea King despite low cloud. Kintail MRT. 60.
- MAY 7 – In a party of five descending from the ridge between Carn Eighe and Tom a'Choinich into Gleann nam Fiadh (Affric), a housewife (55) went over on an ankle fracturing it. Airlift by RAF Sea King as Dundonnell MRT reached Beauly 18.
- MAY 13 – Solo hillwalker (60) tripped and broke an ankle. Passing walkers alerted RAF Sea King which airlifted him from Kinbraeck Bothy, Glen Kingie. 10.
- MAY 26 – SSW Ridge Gleouraich at altitude 500m. A solo walker ascending the stalkers' path from Loch Quoich came upon the body of an industrial chemist (36) who had died from a medical abnormality. Remains stretched down by Police. 14.
- MAY 29 – Hillwalker (m37) overdue on Sgurr Choinnich (999m), Glen Carron, walked out unaided during search by Torrion MRT. 11.
- JUNE 9-10 – Israeli men (21, 19) separated to allow the older to complete gorge walking the course of Allt a'Chonais in Glenuaig, Achnashellach Forest. At 18.15 hours the younger reported his companion overdue. Torrion MRT searched the precipitous course of the burn, locating the body submerged at the foot of a waterfall about midnight. It was rope-hoisted from the gorge next day. Trainers had been worn. Death was due to multiple injuries and drowning. 124.
- JUNE 10 – In a party of four on An Sornach (i.e. 2.2km NE of Glen Affric Youth Hostel on the SSE Ridge of A Socach) a forestry contractor (49) died from a heart attack. Airlift by RAF Sea King. 19.
- JUNE 29 – Carn an Alltain Riabhach of Sgurr na Fearstaig, Strathconan Forest. Technician (30) in a party of 16 'stood on ice and slid down', (glissading?). He fell 60m breaking an ankle. Dundonnell MRT and RAF Sea King. 18.
- JULY 17-18 – Descending East Ridge Finger Gully, Sgurr an Fhuarain (Five Sisters) in mist were a woman (34) and her male companion. Going NE not far below the summit the companion fell first; a lump of turf gave way under his feet and he tumbled down the gully for 15m uninjured. She tried to scramble down, lost her footing and tumbled down the gully for 45m with fatal head injuries. Terrain was rough turf vegetation, boulders, scree and rocky ledges. Search for the woman was complicated because the companion insisted they had been descending Sgurr nan Saighead, but changed it on a later radio message to Sgurr na Moraich. Since they had started at Sgurr na Ciste Duibhe he obviously thought they had gone twice as far along the peaks as they actually achieved. The teams deduced it by computing time and distance. Glenelg, Kinloss and Kintail MRTs, SARDA, HMCG and RAF Sea Kings. 394.
- JULY 20 – Boy rescued with broken leg at Loch Hourm. HMCG.
- JULY 22 – Schoolboy (11) approaching Ardentigh Adventure Centre, Loch Nevis, fell down a heathery slope and cracked his head on a stone causing severe swelling. Mallaig Lifeboat, HMCG helicopter. 17.
- JULY 22 – Police successfully searched for a schoolboy (15) separated from his family on the path to Glomach Falls. They had wrongly thought he had returned ahead of them. 2.
- JULY 28 – Housewife (61) died of a heart attack walking near Athnamulloch at the head of Loch Affric. Air Ambulance evacuation. 2.
- AUGUST 5 – Kintail MRT called out for a plumber (34) overcome with heat exhaustion on Sgurr Fhuaran (Five Sisters). They found he was able to walk down with assistance. 28.

- AUGUST 15 – A German scout (16) with a badly sprained ankle was lifted by RAF Sea King from moors 4km NE of Erchless Castle, Strath Glass. With four others he had been heading N towards Contin. 9.
- AUGUST 19 – Trainee ranger (36) walking with backpack across grass slope 0.5km W of Portuairk, Ardnamurchan Peninsula, fell 10m into a gully, sustaining back and leg injuries. He crawled into the sea to reduce inflammation. His shouts for help were heard by passers-by four hours later. HM Aux CG, RN Sea King 19.
- SEPTEMBER 4-5 – Two couples (all 60s) got delayed because one man (68) had arthritic knees. They were walking on glen paths and over bealachs doing an anti clockwise circuit round the base of Beinn Fhada starting at Morvich. At Bealach an Sgairne the other man went to bring car closer but failed to return to group in dark so raised alarm. Group bivouacked then set out at first light. Found near foot of path by Kintail MRT. 8.
- SEPTEMBER 7 – Four people stranded at Mallaig. HMCG.
- OCTOBER 14-15 – Retired man (57) solo walking Five Sisters used mobile phone to contact his wife from two peaks, but decided to descend to Achmangart due to a failing battery. Other walkers advised him not to descend there. Later he stumbled and fell causing slight injury. He then got cragfast. He was found on the steep SW Face of Sgurr na Ciste Duibhe and winched by RAF Sea King. Glenelg, Kinloss, Kintail and Leuchars MRTs, SARDA. 420.
- OCTOBER 15 – On very steep rough ground in Coille Mhialairigh (opposite Eilean Rarsaidh on N shore Loch Horn) a woman (56) slipped and injured a leg. Stretchered down by Glenelg MRT. 10.
- NOVEMBER 22 – Missing shepherd at Kilchoan, Ardnamurchan. HMCG.

## BEN NEVIS

- JANUARY 5 – Demonstrating a controlled fall on Sheepfank Wall, Polldubh, a leader (26) received neck and skull fractures when three 'Friend' runners pulled out and he fell 6m. Ambulance paramedics and Lochaber MRT. 20.
- JANUARY 6 – When 8m up the first pitch of Zero Gully, the ice forming a ledge under the feet of the leader (27) broke away, causing him to fall and injure an ankle. Lochaber MRT, RAF Sea King. 19.
- JANUARY 25-26 – Retreating from Tower Ridge because of poor conditions, one of a pair slipped and was lowered by the other to a safe place. The alarm was raised at CIC Hut because the lowerer (25) got cragfast. He was rescued by Lochaber MRT and RAF Sea King. 130.
- FEBRUARY 2-4 – Two women students (23, 22) attempting Raeburn's Easy Route (250m Grade II) strayed into Glover's Chimney (140m III). They snowcaved for two nights. Kinloss, Leuchars and Lochaber MRTs, SARDA and RAF Sea King searched in atrocious weather till they were found with slight frostbite and hypothermia 150m from the top of Raeburn's Easy. 1628.
- FEBRUARY 7 – Descending near Coire Leis Abheil Posts unroped with his wife, a clerical officer (29) slipped and fell 180m to the corrie floor with leg injuries. RAF Sea King. Lochaber MRT. 16.
- FEBRUARY 11-14 – Student (22) leading Orion Face fell 100m from 50m above his second (m22). Despite head injuries he regained his second's belay. Both snowcaved for two nights. Second was airlifted out on third morning with frostbite and hypothermia. Leader was located and stretchered to Halfway Lochan in small hours of fourth day but was dead after airlift to Corpach. Lochaber and Kinloss MRTs. RAF Sea King. 571.
- FEBRUARY 17-18 – Students (m24, f23) overdue on Hadrian's Wall Direct, back safe. 2.

- FEBRUARY 18 - APRIL 13 – Descending SE Ridge of Nevis (CMD Arete) on a bearing of 138° during snowfall, an accountant (40) fell though a cornice into Coire Leis. His companion went back over the summit to get help. A night and day search by Kinloss and Lochaber MRTs, SARDA and RAF Sea King was called off due to deteriorating weather and extreme avalanche danger. Regular searches were carried out by the teams and Nevis Guides. An RAF SARDA dog had given an indication some way up the headwall of Coire Leis among avalanche debris. Several weeks later the same dog gave another indication lower down, a positive finding of the body which was presumed to have moved down with the sub-surface snow pack. 1382.
- FEBRUARY 18-19 – During the above search RAF Kinloss team found a confused and hypothermic man (39) on the Ben Track. He had spent an unplanned night on the mountain and got separated from his companion (38). The other man was found 200m away in a similar condition. Both were airlifted by RAF Sea King. 3.
- FEBRUARY 25-26 – Party of two overdue from The Curtain or Trident Buttress. Safe.
- MARCH 1 2 – Two men (28, 27) overdue on Observatory Ridge got down safely next day. Kinloss and Lochaber MRTs. RAF Sea King. 52.
- MARCH 18-19 – Descending the Ben into Coire Giubhsachan above Steall Ruins a builder (32) collapsed from exhaustion. One of his friends raised the alarm. RAF Sea King airlifted him to Belford Hospital where he was released. Lochaber MRT. 46.
- MARCH 25-26 – Two men (34, 30) got benighted on Observatory Ridge, but climbed through the night, descending the Ben Track next morning. 7.
- APRIL 18-19 – Delayed on Raeburn's Easy Route by a crampon loss two men (47, 25) tried to find No. 4 Gully for descent. They stayed in Summit Refuge overnight and were reported overdue at CIC Hut next morning but returned safe. Lochaber MRT, RAF Sea King. 38.
- MAY 14 – A rock climber (17) being bottom roped on a 5m climb at Dundee Buttress, Polldubh, fell at the top, dislodging the top belay and falling to the foot. She was stretchered down by Lochaber team with a fractured wrist and bruised side. 18.
- MAY 14 – Night/day winch by RAF Sea King of two cragfast climbers in Glen Nevis. Lochaber MRT.
- MAY 17 – Descending Nevis Gorge a walker (67) accompanied by his wife and daughter slipped on the path and fell 30m. He suffered serious head and chest injuries. Winched by RAF Sea King. Lochaber MRT. 71.
- MAY 18-19 – Solo climber (23) got benighted in Gardyloo Gully. He spent the night on Tower Scoop. Found by a Lochaber team member and escorted.
- MAY 22-24 – Solo hillwalker (19) was overdue from an ascent of the Ben by the normal route in slight cloud cover on May 22. Extensive crag and gully searches were carried out by Kinloss, Leuchars and Lochaber teams, SARDA, RAF and RN Sea Kings. Her body was found under crags and snow slopes in upper Coire Eoghainn on May 24. It is thought she went due south from the summit and fell 200m. 1092.
- MAY 28-29 – Descending Ben Track in rain and low cloud two competitors in a Three Peaks Challenge went into Five Finger Gully. The two men (43, 38) decided to stay the night. Next morning the elder went up to the Track for help because the younger was hypothermic. He met Lochaber team leader. Airlift RAF Sea King. 37.
- MAY 29 – Three male fell runners (48, 35, 14) intended to descend the Ben Track in a Three Peaks Challenge. Instead they went down Carn Mor Dearg Arete in cloud. The 35 year-old slipped and broke two fingers. Lochaber MRT met them at Aonach Mor Carpark. 3.
- JUNE 1 – The deceased (65) and his son, a doctor, climbed Ben by the track in four hours. After lunch break they had descended 400m when the father died of a heart attack. His son used a whistle to attract others, one of whom called RN Sea King and Lochaber MRT on mobile phone. 109.

- JUNE 24 – Taking part in Three Peaks Challenge, intending to hang glide off Ben summit for charity, a plumber (27) hesitated on take-off and went down a snow slope for 12m. He and the glider were cragfast on the very lip of Orion Direct. Two Leuchars MRT were on hand having completed a training climb, as was a Lochaber member. With others they effected First Aid to pilot, with recovery of him and the machine to the plateau. Suffering cuts, bruises and psychogenic shock he was lifted by RAF Sea King. 37.
- JULY 5 – Couple with an infant-in-arms descending Ben in rain and strong wind were reported because the child was cold and poorly clad. Lochaber MRT attended. 4.
- JULY 22 – Two incidents. Two men (43, 23) out of 80 participants in a charity sponsored walk up Ben, slipped, one going up, the other down, with slight leg injuries. Airlift by RAF Sea King. 8.
- JULY 22 – A leader (36) slipped climbing Vampire at Polldubh. She fell 6m breaking an ankle. Stretchered by Lochaber MRT.
- AUGUST 4 – Another mobile phone alert. One of 22 participants in a Twin Peaks Challenge slipped at Corner 4 of Nevis West Flank Zig-Zags (alt. 1000m) on the way up. Aged 41 he double fractured a leg. Winched off by R.137 (RAF Sea King). 9.
- AUGUST 5 – An engineer (32) twisted a knee slipping on a grass patch descending to floor of Coire Leis. He walked to below CIC Hut before a companion alerted rescuers with a mobile phone. He was walked to top Torlundy Carpark by Lochaber MRT. 20.
- AUGUST 5 – Retired man (66) descending Ben Track below SYHA junction collapsed with heat exhaustion. Stretchered to hospital by Lochaber MRT. He returned from summit via Coire Leis and CIC Hut. 14.
- AUGUST 15 – Descending Ben Track a doctor (50) slipped twisting a knee. He was airlifted from opposite top of No. 2 Gully by RAF Sea King. Lochaber MRT 14.
- AUGUST 21-22 – Two women (50, 17) reached summit despite taking seven hours because they were tired. Descending to Halfway Lochan they were too exhausted to go on, so husband of one went for help. Lochaber MRT stretchered older woman down (arthritis knees) while younger walked. Both released from hospital after check up. 61.
- SEPTEMBER 17 – A student (53) twisted his ankle, damaging a foot, descending the path down Nevis Gorge. Passers-by helped him to carpark. LMRT. 15.
- OCTOBER 21-22 – Four climbers (43, 37, 25, 24) were overdue from climbing Observatory Ridge. Underestimating the route, the four men sheltered overnight in Summit Refuge getting down to Youth Hostel at 09.30. Lochaber MRT. 6.
- OCTOBER 27 – Lifting her rucksack when bent over caused a stabbing pain in the back of a walker (17) at summit. Unable to walk she was stretchered to below cloud base (915m) by Lochaber MRT for airlift by RAF Sea King 87.
- OCTOBER 29-30 – Leaving Distillery at 11.00 to climb Tower Ridge unroped, two men (30, 29) got benighted at Tower Gap at 17.00. They descended 20m into a gully and dug a snow cave, although without food or bivouac gear. They continued the climb at first light. Airlifted uninjured from Halfway Lochan by RAF Sea King. Lochaber MRT. 37.
- NOVEMBER 14 – At about 800m altitude on the Ben Track a plant operator (27) got cramp in both his legs. Lochaber MRT and RN Sea King alerted by mobile phone. Released after treatment in hospital. 12.
- DECEMBER 22 – Student (21) fell 6m when a crampon broke on icy ground in Coire na Ciste. Rescue helicopter was in area and diverted to airlift him with broken L forearm and broken R wrist. 7.
- DECEMBER 28 – Two men (38, 21) overdue from Waterfall Gully, Carn Dearg Buttress returned to CIC Hut before midnight uninjured, delayed by poor ice condition. Lochaber MRT, RAF Sea King. 50.

## GLEN COE

(Including Buachaille Etive Mor)

- JANUARY 2 – Descending Great Gully of Buachaille Etive Mor, unroped, a teacher (35) tripped over his crampons, fell 6m with minor head bump and cut lip. Others raised alarm but he did not require Glencoe MRT, walking off unaided. 20.
- JANUARY 26 – Soloing Curved Ridge, Buachaille Etive Mor, a climber (37) was seen to fall 250m when a crampon worked loose during a traverse. He had skull, pelvic and arm injuries. JSMT used mobile phone. Winched by RN Sea King. Glencoe MRT. 30.
- FEBRUARY 5. Unroped, using crampons, on a traverse of Aonach Eagach, a student (25), tripped at Stob Coire Leith, with back and knee ligament injuries. His companion (see next incident) tried to get him down, then left him in his bivvy bag and went for help. Stretchered down by Glencoe MRT. 36.
- FEBRUARY 5 During the above stretcher carry, the companion (23) helped the team. Almost down at the road he tripped, breaking his leg.
- FEBRUARY 22-APRIL 2 – A research engineer (50), his son (18) and son's friend (m18) were engulfed in a big avalanche in Lagangarbh Corrie, Buachaille Etive Mor. With the engineer's wife they had walked into the floor of the corrie, not intending to go any higher. At 14.00 she had gone down and got worried when they did not rendezvous at 16.00 as arranged. That same night Glencoe MRT found a large amount of debris, which had come from the south down the main line of the corrie. While searching, members of the rescue team had been narrowly missed by a second large avalanche from the west wall of the corrie. SARDA searches, trenching and probing were carried out over the next three days by Glencoe, Kinloss and Leuchars MRTs and RAF Sea Kings. Snow depth was estimated as 20m which could not be reached with specially extended probes, even from trenches dug by the rescuers as deep as 6m with which the area was criss-crossed. Three bodies were recovered from a depth reduced by melt to 4m on April 2 after a further search by Kinloss and an indication by dog 'Inca'. 2513.
- FEBRUARY 25 Police alerted for a couple who were not on the hill.
- FEBRUARY 26-27 – Attempting No. 3 Gully on West Face, Aonach Dubh, two male doctors (24, 23) encountered deteriorating snow and weather conditions. They bivouacked and were helped off next day by Glencoe MRT, tired but uninjured. RAF Sea King recalled un-needed. 57.
- MARCH 4-8 – Three men (34, 30, 29) were reported overdue on March 7 in Manchester/Cheshire area. On March 4 they had been seen roped, climbing Curved Ridge, Buachaille Etive Mor. It is now thought they reached easy ground near the summit, unroped, then fell 300m when caught in a small slab avalanche. Glencoe MRT and SARDA found gear on surface of a small amount of debris. Probing found bodies. Stretchered to airlift by RN Sea King. 286.
- MARCH 19-20 – Glencoe MRT searched when an unattended vehicle was found in a layby. Police had a misleading route plan. Occupants found by RN Sea King, camping in a corrie of Bidean not requiring help. 24.
- APRIL 2-3 – Rope of three male students (23, 22, 20) overdue on Curved Ridge flashed headtorches. Assisted to easier ground by Glencoe MRT. 83.
- APRIL 9-10 – This could be classed as three separate incidents. Belgian school party of 18 was descending a snowfield high on Sgurr nam Fiannaich towards Loch Achtriochtan. Three students (m18, f17, f17) slipped, fell a short distance, stopping against rocks, and all injuring legs making them unable to walk. Stretchered down by a combined Glencoe and Lochaber team. RAF Sea King met bad weather and turned back. 242.

- MAY 8 – A woman (55) and a man (39) walked West Highland Way from White Corries to Alltnafeadh, then intended to go via Lairig Gartain to Glen Etive. By mistake they went up Coire na Tulaich on to Buachaille Etive Mor! Short of time they tried to get directly down into Glen Etive but got cragfast above Devil's Cauldron, The Chasm. Used mobile phone. Winched off, hypothermic, by RN Sea King. Glencoe MRT. 80.
- MAY 13 – In good weather a sales assistant (46) traversing Aonach Eagach with 17 other people, stepped on to a rock ledge which crumbled beneath her feet, at the Bad Step on Am Bodach. She was killed by a fall of 140m. RAF Sea King, low on fuel, went direct to winch her. Glencoe MRT. 60.
- JULY 2 – His helmet (seriously damaged) probably saved his life when a climber (37) fell from pitch 4 of The Chasm, Stob Dearg of Buachaille Etive Mor. A belay gave way and he fell 10m from rock, wet and slippery after a long dry spell. Leg injuries. Glencoe MRT, RAF Sea King. 37.
- JULY 19 – Trapped on the wrong side of a spate river in the Glencoe gorge, a school party on an award hike placed a cold student (17) in a tent to await rescue. She was stretchered across on a Tyrolean traverse by Glencoe MRT together with fellow students. 19.
- JULY 22 – Crossing Lairig Gartain and descending into Dalness, a computer consultant (54) fell into the burn. His wife went for help. A gamekeeper helped him down with minor injuries before Glencoe team arrived. 11.
- JULY 29 – With his family of six descending the usual path from Lost Valley in good weather, a walker (72) slipped on gravel, tumbled, striking a tree and falling into the gorge. Fatal. Glencoe MRT, RAF Sea King. 42.
- AUGUST 23 – Glencoe team extricated two women (21, 20) cragfast on D-Gully Buttress, Buachaille Etive Mor in mist. They had got there in error, intending to scramble up Curved Ridge. 65.
- AUGUST 25 – In rain, deceased (31) was leading a party of four walkers down an area of loose rock/scree from Stob na Broige of Buachaille Etive Mor into Lairig Gartain. In a wide gully a boulder measuring 1m rolled down and hit him on the head, knocking him 8m down the slope. Glencoe MRT, RAF Sea King. 38.
- SEPTEMBER 14 – Glencoe MRT were wrongly informed that a woman with a broken ankle was in Coire Gabhail. In fact, she had fallen on a grass slope near the main road lay-by. Difficult carry as she was rather overweight. 5.
- OCTOBER 3-4 – A rope of two men (27, 26) went off route at Central Chimney when climbing Central Buttress, Buachaille Etive Mor, ending up above D-Gully Buttress when light faded. They were cragfast not knowing the route. Assisted down by Glencoe MRT. Due to lowering cloud RAF helicopter could not help. 46.
- OCTOBER 21-22 – With no torch or other gear, a man (48) set out to traverse Aonach Eagach at 15.15 hours. Searches started at 22.00 after four hours of darkness. He turned up at 05.00 claiming to have done the ridge in the dark. Glencoe, Kinloss, SARDA, RAF Sea King. 190.
- DECEMBER 2-3 – Reaching Stob Coire nan Lochan summit at 13.30 hours, two men (34, 30) attempted four descent routes in rain and mist. They bivouacked when it got dark. GMRT found them descending unhurt. 100.
- DECEMBER 8-9 – Three men (27, 27, 24) intended to climb Curved Ridge by moonlight. The weather was good and freezing. They got lost and got into the foot of Crowberry Gully unable to find a safe route down. Their lights were seen by passers-by. Assisted down by Glencoe MRT. 45.
- DECEMBER 19 – An extremely ill-equipped pair of male novices (39, 30) attempted an E-W traverse of Aonach Eagach. There was ice about but they had poor clothing, no crampons or ice-axes. They gave up to await rescue midway between Meall Dearg

- and Stob Coire Leith and were winched out by RAF Sea King. Another group had raised alarm. Glencoe MRT. 60.
- DECEMBER 23 – Two males (40, 16) intended to climb Curved Ridge but got into Great Gully. Tired and cold they got cragfast on icy rock. Flashing headtorches alerted GMRT at 17.45 hours. The team got them off uninjured by 20.15. 40.
- DECEMBER 29 – With two companions unroped, a man attempted W-E traverse of Aonach Eagach. At the first Pinnacle he got cramp in legs. All three winched by RN Sea King. Glencoe MRT. 42.

## CAIRNGORMS

- DECEMBER 31, 1994 – Mountain biker (32) fell in Glen Ey, Braemar, sustaining an open ankle fracture. Police and Ambulance Service, RAF Sea King. 15.
- JANUARY 7, 1995 – A climber (25) broke a tibia and fibula when he slipped on Hell's Lum. Winched by RAF Sea King. Cairngorm MRT standby. 10.
- JANUARY 22 – Army captain fell through a cornice on Braeriach. He walked out via Lairig Ghru leaving a less-experienced companion on the summit. Before Cairngorm MRT started searching the missing person had walked out down Glen Einich. 2.
- JANUARY 23 – A deerstalker (53) collapsed and died on the east side of Duchray Hill, Glen Isla, during his work. Colleagues carried him from the hill before the arrival of Inverness Air Ambulance.
- JANUARY 31-FEBRUARY 1 – From a bivouac at Luibeg, on January, a walker (37) was delayed by deep snow in the Lairig Ghru, reaching Coylumbridge after midnight on February 1. Cairngorm MRT. 4.
- FEBRUARY 4 – In snow and ice near Ben Vrackie summit, a hillwalker (49) stepped on a boulder, going over on her ankle and breaking it. Tayside SARU and RAF Sea King. 15.
- FEBRUARY 11 – Two men were soloing Aladdin's Mirror Direct in Coire an-t' Sneachda. One (47) asked his companion (29) for a rope, and they continued. Older man fell off and pulled down the younger who was not well belayed. The younger was badly injured (head). Cairngorm and Leuchars MRTs, RAF Sea King. 88.
- FEBRUARY 11 – New snow on an icy base. Five men (aged 27 -18) were injured by a windslab avalanche on the Goat Track, Coire an-t' Sneachda. Four were seriously injured, with two critical. They were flown out by RAF Sea King in turbulent conditions. Leuchars, Cairngorm and Valley MRTs. 184.
- FEBRUARY 11 – Soloing Red Gully, a man (44) fell and injured an arm, ending up with the avalanche casualties from the above incident (at the same time).
- FEBRUARY 11 – The fourth incident of the same day in the same corrie. Two climbers overdue in The Runnel turned up safe.
- FEBRUARY 12 – Practising ice-axe braking with an inadequate run-out slope, a male student (20) got spine injuries from a steep drop into a burn NE of Chalamain Gap. Stretchered by Cairngorm MRT. 68.
- FEBRUARY 12 – Two men (51, 35) got separated when one stopped for a call of nature on The Stuic, Lochnagar. After searching for over two hours the older man used a mobile phone, so Grampian Police MRT checked likely descents. Both turned up safe. 3.
- FEBRUARY 14-15 – Experienced climber (29) fell 50m into Parallel B Gully when the snow slope collapsed while attempting to surmount the cornice on Parallel Buttress. His fall, down the other side of the ridge from his second man, was stopped by the rope so that his second was jerked up some 2m above his belay. The leader was able to tell his companion that his leg was badly damaged. He was securely tied off, then the

- second completed the climb and went for help. Recovery the same night was impossible due to blizzards in excess of 200km per hour. At 14.00 on 15th anchors were placed above the leader, but an abseiler found him to be dead. He was lowered into the corrie and evacuated by Snow cat. Aberdeen, Braemar and Leuchars MRTs, RAF Sea King. 1300.
- FEBRUARY 18 – Ice climb leader (19) tripped over a crampon on Backdoor Route, Lochnagar, spraining his ankle. Aberdeen and Braemar MRTs. 35.
- FEBRUARY 18 Party of five with poor navigation gear overdue on Broad Cairn found making their way off the hill by Aberdeen MRT. 6.
- FEBRUARY 18 – Four overdue on Lochnagar and Broad Cairn found by Aberdeen MRT. 45.
- FEBRUARY 18 – Pair overdue on Lochnagar found by Aberdeen MRT. 20.
- FEBRUARY 18 21 A pair of cross country skiers decided to separate on Glas Maol. One (44) carried on, compass navigating, and walking because of a broken ski. He had passed Cairn of Claise but returned to it, then got lost near the summit. He bivvied for three nights during some severe weather then walked back to near the A93 where he was spotted by RN Sea King helicopter. He sustained some frostbite. Later skis were found at a bivvy site near the summit of Druim Mor (961m) above Caenlochan Glen. Aberdeen, Braemar, Grampian, Leuchars and Tayside MRTs, SARDA, RAF and RN Sea Kings. 3644.
- FEBRUARY 21-22 – Three men were navigating in poor visibility between Cairn Toul and Stob Coire an t Saigdeir. Two walked through a cornice and fell a long way, but were uninjured in deep snow. Their companion went for help. They were found walking out by RAF Sea King. Aberdeen, Braemar, Grampian, Kinloss MRTs, SARDA. 198.
- FEBRUARY 22-23 – Two ski mountaineering brothers (30, 19) had their map blown away at Loch Avon. In bad weather they missed the Saddle, then missed Fords of Avon Bothy. They were found in a snowcave by RAF Sea King in Glasath, one of the heads of Water of Caiplich. Cairngorm MRT and SARDA. 45.
- FEBRUARY 23-24 – A party of four men (37-23) took nearly eight hours to climb Spiral Gully, Coire an-t'Sneachda. They got lost on the plateau on a clear night and descended Fiacail Ridge. Found by Cairngorm MRT. 70.
- FEBRUARY 25 A pair turned up safe after being overdue climbing Broken Gully, Coire an-t'Sneachda. Cairngorm MRT. 2.
- FEBRUARY 26 – Man (46) fell 10m at Red Craig, Glen Clova. Arm injury. Sea King.
- MARCH 4 Two instructors (f43, m33) and six students (f43, males 58, 45, 37, 36, 30) were practising ice-axe skills and crampon techniques a few metres from the top lip of Coire Laogh Mor, Cairngorm. A windslab avalanche swept them down, some over rocks, almost to the corrie floor. Fortunately, they wore helmets, but still had head and other injuries. Four were stretcher cases and four walking wounded. Two RAF Sea Kings could only evacuate from Ciste Car Park, and later from Aviemore because of deteriorating weather. Cairngorm, Glenmore and Kinloss MRTs, Avalanche Project staff, Cairngorm Ski Patrol. 85.
- MARCH 4 Ski mountaineering near Ben Maedui, a pair decided that the escape routes from Loch Avon over Cairngorm Plateau were too dangerous because of avalanche risk. They returned via Strath Nethy reaching Glenmore before midnight. Cairngorm MRT. 2.
- MARCH 4 - MAY 27 – Bodies of two well-equipped male climbers (both 22) with heavy climbing gear, wearing plastic boots and crampons, chipped out of an ice floe on Lochan Coire an Lochan, Cairn Lochan on May 27 were the pair missing since March 4. From the evidence of (1) a neck slung compass set at 35° (a reasonable bearing for coming off the plateau in the Twin Burns area); (2) both wearing head torches; (3) a

- rope stuffed in a sac as one would at the end of a hard route; (4) ice hammer and helmet found in sacs (only one ice-axe recovered); it would appear that the pair had climbed their chosen route (unknown), finished in the dark, and been avalanched on the west wall of the corrie as they navigated down. They may have been moved farther down on to the frozen loch by subsequent avalanche(s). Post mortems found death from avalanche asphyxiation. For 12 weeks extensive searches of the whole eastern area of the High Cairngorms had been carried out by Cairngorm MRT and by team members and others in their spare time. Official searches were by Aberdeen, Braemar, Cairngorm, Dundonnell, Glenmore, Kinloss, Leuchars, RAF Sea King, SARDA (Scottish, Lake District and Welsh) Official search and recovery person/ hours 3736.
- MARCH 6-7 – Couple lost hillwalking in Aviemore area. Safe. Cairngorm MRT. 2.
- MARCH 15 – Two bodies roped together (both m. aged 38, 26) were seen at 13.00, 15m below the foot of Parallel Buttress, Lochnagar lying on old avalanche debris. They had been spotted climbing well at 11.00 on Parallel B Gully on the snow ramp above the chimney. It is thought the leader slipped on steep snow/ice near the top of the climb. Friends said their intention had been to climb Parallel B and Eagle Ridge in one day. Braemar MRT. RAF Sea King.14.
- MARCH 15 – A mountain guide in crampons slipped and fell badly walking out of Coire an-t'Sneachda. Surprisingly his ankle was fractured despite wearing plastic double boots. Carry by Cairngorm team. 88.
- MARCH 16 – Using the rim of the main corrie of Lochnagar as a 'handrail' as they navigated east, a pair of male walkers (31, 29) lost sight of each other in mist and a snow flurry. While out of view the older one walked through the cornice and fell 150m into the corrie. He managed to climb back up through the cornice, but his companion, after searching for him with a GPS, alerted rescuers. Both walked out safely. Aberdeen and Braemar MRTs. 15.
- APRIL 2 – Climbing in Pass of Ballater a lead climber (20) placed three 'Rocks' as runners for two ropes. 18m up on an overhang his left hand slipped. All the runners pulled and he suffered compound ankle and finger fractures when he hit the ground. Despite a damaged helmet he escaped serious head injuries. Braemar MRT. 9.
- APRIL 22-23 – Flying over Fords of Avon Bothy, with rescue experts checking March 4 disappearance, R137 (Lossiemouth) spotted 'HELP' stamped in the snow. A walker (35) without proper gloves and gaiters had underestimated terrain and snow depth, taking 14 hours from Ryvoan. After a night in the bothy he tried to get back but more snow had fallen so he returned to shelter. Airlifted to an ambulance at Glenmore suffering mild hypothermia and, possibly TETANY brought on by distress, not frostbite as originally thought. 7.
- APRIL 23 Deep, wet snow and waterlogged ground delayed two men (79, 68) walking Auchallater to Loch Muick via Dubh Loch. Braemar, Grampian Police and Aberdeen MRTs. 31.
- MAY 1 2 Soloing Central Buttress, Lochnagar, a man (28) is presumed to have slipped on wet rock. Braemar MRT was informed next day and found his body at the bottom among boulders, with evidence on the buttress that he had fallen. There was snow on the approaches and gullies, but on May 1 the buttress had been in summer condition with wet rock in places. RAF Sea King. 87.
- MAY 1 – Climber (m28) with head injuries rescued by helicopter near Slains Castle cliffs, Cruden Bay, Peterhead. HMCg.
- MAY 5 – Cliff Rescue at Arbroath by HMCg.
- MAY 12 – Male climber (20) fell 5m to the ground when a belay came out while climbing The Trap, Craig a Bams, Dunkeld. Detained overnight for observation after concussion (although helmet was worn). Tayside Police MRT. 17.

- MAY 19 – After midnight, Braemar MRT used a rope winch system to stretcher hoist a drunk man (20) who was injured trying to cross River Cluanie at a gorge in the village. 16.
- MAY 24 – Cliff rescue by HMCG at Burghead.
- MAY 31 – Rock climber (m23) suffered head injuries at Cummingstown, Burghead, Morays. RAF Sea King.
- MAY 31-JUNE 1 – Search by RN Sea King and civilian MRT for mountain biker (m48) overdue in Dunkeld area.
- JUNE 1-2 – Injured by a 50m fall on snow in Coire Dhondail, a school teacher (26) tried to walk out, camping in Glen Einich. Next day she was evacuated by Police vehicle from the ford at Allt Ruigh na Sroine.
- JUNE 4-5 – Picked up very tired by Police near Derry Lodge, a father and son (43, 14) who had descended Ben Macdui in low cloud, going via the Shelter Stone in error. 2.
- JUNE 10 – Not far from the site of the Angus Sinclair Hut, a nurse (65) was airlifted by RAF Sea King. She became exhausted on Lairig Ghru Sponsored Walk, but recovered. 6.
- JUNE 11 – On a sponsored walk from Aviemore to Linn of Dee via Bynack More, an experienced walker (69) got nausea and dizziness at the Shelter Stone. He said it was due to a change of medicine for heart palpitations. Police gave him a lift from near Derry Lodge but he was better by then, declining medical help. 2.
- JUNE 13 – Cliff rescue at Cove, Aberdeen by HMCG.
- JUNE 18 – Braemar MRT lowered a dog to safety from an unstable, vegetative, rock ravine 5km WSW of Braemar. The dog had fallen 20m to a ledge 12m above the Corriemulzie Burn. 2.
- JUNE 21 – Man (37) overdue from three-day Cairngorm walk turned up OK. 1.
- JUNE 24 – Only two out of 750 walkers doing a sponsored walk from the Dee to the Spey had to be airlifted by RAF Sea King. A man (67) and a woman (60) were flown from Fords of Avon Bothy with heat exhaustion. 4.
- JUNE 27 – Experienced male walker (62) died of a heart attack at Rothiemurchus path junction, en route to Blair Atholl from Coylumbridge. He had insisted on continuing with a female companion carrying both packs. She initiated recovery using a mobile phone. Cairngorm MRT, RAF Sea King. 72.
- JUNE 27 – Cliff rescue of youth at Whittings Ness, Arbroath. HMCG.
- JULY 7 – Cliff rescue. Hopeman. HMCG.
- JULY 10 – Cliff rescue at Logie Head, Cullen by HMCG.
- JULY 23 – Cliff rescue. Auchmithie. HMCG.
- JULY 24 – Woman rescued by RAF Sea King from cliffs at Arbroath.
- AUGUST 8 – Descending SW slopes of Coire an Lochain, Cairngorm a walker (54) fractured her ankle. Evacuated by RAF Sea King to Raigmore. 8.
- AUGUST 11 – Cliff rescue. Covesea, Lossiemouth. HMCG.
- AUGUST 13 – Cliff rescue. Cullen. HMCG.
- AUGUST 17-18 – A roped pair of male climbers (36, 33) got cragfast at The Tower on Parallel Buttress, Lochnagar, having climbed three pitches in darkness. In the small hours they used camera flash to pinpoint position to rescuers at Meikle Pap Col. They had been climbing Parallel Gully B normally well within their capability, but a huge rockfall in May 1995 altered the climb; large detached rocks on the side walls and gully bed delaying them. They twice had to move left on to the buttress to decrease the objective dangers. Braemar MRT lowered one member from the summit plateau to drop a top rope to the cragfast pair. RAF Sea King on site left the rescue to the team. 71.

- AUGUST 24 – Three boys (all 16) cycling Minigaig Pass from Glen Bruar to Kingussie got benighted and bivouacked at 43/800890 exhausted. Next day they got to Drumguish via Gleann Chomraig, though easier glens were available if they had used good maps. Search by Cairngorm, Kinloss, Leuchars and Tayside MRTs, RAF Sea King. 92.
- AUGUST 27 – Mountain cyclist (31) carrying his bike up the track above Bachnagairn (head of Glen Clova) slipped and badly injured an ankle. Stretched down by Tayside MRT. 36.
- AUGUST 30 – Man (27) slipped descending Ben Macdui by Choire Mhor. Reported injured by member of party but others helped him over Lairig Ghru to Coylumbridge. Cairngorm MRT, RAF Sea King. 12.
- SEPTEMBER 26-27 – Kinloss team called out to search for a hillwalker (61) near Blair Atholl, but he turned up safe. 165.
- SEPTEMBER 27 – During snowfall on Sgoran Dubh Mor, a computer consultant (m40) was reported to be hypothermic. Flown out by RAF Sea King. 8.
- SEPTEMBER 29 – Reaching the summit of Beinn Iutharn Beag, an experienced walker (46) died from a heart attack. His companion used a mobile phone to get help. RAF Sea King. 14.
- OCTOBER 7 – Cliff rescue. Portknockie. HMCg.
- OCTOBER 11-12 – Two bar assistants (m23, f23) were separated from six colleagues in mist on the way to Ben Macdui. Completely lost they built a shelter from the winds at Fingers Ridge, Coire an-t'Sneachda. Walked out next day and found by a Cairngorm MRT and SARDA crag search. 216.
- OCTOBER 15-16 – Scotsman (30) and Scottish woman student (28) suffered from cold and wet after a night out 2km. west of Sandy Hillock. Intending to walk from Glen Doll to Glen Muick by Bachnagairn and return by the Capel Mouth track, they got benighted because of navigation difficulty and stayed put awaiting daylight. Found by RAF Sea King at 02.30. A strobe light was detected on night-vision goggles. Braemar and Tayside MRTs. 110.
- OCTOBER 28 – Braemar team started a search for a woman (60s) reported missing by her husband after they got separated crossing bogs, after they had missed the Fungle Track, Forest of Birse. She got out OK. 8.
- NOVEMBER 4 – Solo walker (35) died of natural causes 500m SE of the summit of Cairn Bannoch (1012m) . Braemar MRT, RAF Sea King. 15.
- NOVEMBER 12-13 – A party of five split up twice into two pairs and a single. A pair with maps reached Sgoran Dubh Mor, but the abandoned novice (51) was left on the ridge in mist with no navigation gear, torch, food or proper boots. It is thought he got down by Coire Ruigh na Sroine, taking eight hours and missing rescuers in the forest. Cairngorm MRT, SARDA.176.
- NOVEMBER 19 – RAF Sea King rescued injured shepherd after a fall in Glen Doll.
- NOVEMBER 19-21 – Braemar, Cairngorm, Kinloss and Leuchars MRTs, SARDA and RAF Sea King expended 846 person hours searching for a plumber (44) lost on the Western Cairngorms in mist and snow. He left his car at Achlean on Sunday, got lost on Carn Ban Mor it is thought, travelled SE across the Great Moss, down Glen Geusachan to Lairig Ghru on Monday, out to Coylumbridge uninjured on Tuesday. 846.
- NOVEMBER 25-27 – Cairngorm, Kinloss and SARDA alerted for a male pair (both 24) overdue from a two-day expedition to Macdui and Braeriach. They got lost in cloud on November 26 and bivouacked a second night. RAF Sea King started searching but they walked out. 32.

## SOUTHERN HIGHLANDS

- JANUARY 1 – Central Gully, Ben Ledi four males (31,16,15,14) going up a steep gully became cragfast at the top due to lack of experience and equipment. Found by Killin MRT and winched out by RN Sea King. 34.
- JANUARY 2 – Solo retired walker (63) slipped on ice on Conic Hill and broke his leg. Lomond MRT and Ambulance Service. 22.
- JANUARY 3 – Walking on The Cobbler a woman (31) slipped on ice and broke a leg. Carried down by Dumbarton Police MRT. 10.
- JANUARY 3 – One of four descending SE from Ben Lui slipped on a patch of ice after removing crampons. He (28) sprained ankle. Stretchered by Killin MRT. 72.
- JANUARY 8 – Descending Ben Challum with two companions David Ellis (55) died from a heart attack. Evacuated by Killin and Kinloss MRTs. 180.
- JANUARY 11 – Missing person. Connel. HMCG.
- JANUARY 12 – Easy Gully, E. Face, Beinn Ime. A man (28) in a party of two suffered pelvic and arm injuries in a channelled wet snow avalanche caused by a cornice collapse. Stretchered to base by Arrochar and Dumbarton Police teams then transferred by RN Sea King. 68.
- JANUARY 12-13 – After extensive searches by Killin, Leuchars, Lomond and Ochils MRTs, SARDA and RN Sea King the body of a solo hillwalker (61) was found at about 1000m altitude near the NE Ridge of Ben More, Crianlarich. Wearing light boots, and not carrying an ice-axe or wearing crampons, it appears he slipped and fell sustaining head injuries. He then seems to have made a shelter, but fell again, stopping on a snow slope among boulders, where he died from his injuries and hypothermia. Stretchered 300m to an airlift by the RN helicopter. 687.
- JANUARY 19 – Ochils MRT on stand-by for a solo walker of retirement age. Crossing the Ochils from Blackford heading for Tillicoultry, he turned up in Dollar, an error of about 4 km.
- JANUARY 21 – Well-equipped university hill-walkers got lost in a white-out on Creag Mhor summit at the head of Loch Lyon, and found by farmer in Glen Lochay. Killin and Leuchars MRTs. 41.
- JANUARY 22 – Two male students (23, 18) delayed by bizzard and deep snow on Sgiath Chuil, Glen Dochart. Killin MRT. 21.
- JANUARY 27 – Alva Glen search by Ochils MRT and SARDA for missing girl (11). 30.
- JANUARY 29 – Arrochar MRT stretchered woman (39) from near Narnain Boulder on The Cobbler after she suffered a leg injury from a slip on névé. Emergency call was from a mobile phone. 54.
- MARCH 4 – Walker (m25) overdue in Tillicoultry from a snow walk up Ben Cleugh. Ochils MRT. 16.
- MARCH 4-7 – Strathclyde Police MRT called out for a man (32) delayed on Beinn Achaladair by waist deep snow. He had intended to return on 6th. 21.
- APRIL 16 – Walker (29) going up Ben Venue slipped in mud, grabbed a fence and dislocated her shoulder. Lomond MRT, RN Sea King. 49.
- APRIL 16 – Ochils MRT called out for arm injury to boy (9) who had slipped on a wet path in Dollar Glen and fallen to the bottom of a ravine. 2.
- MAY 1 – Body of a heart attack victim (m49) found by walkers near the summit of Cruach Ardrain, Crianlarich. Killin MRT, RN Sea King. 21.
- MAY 3 – Rn Sea King airlifted walker (63) with slight head injuries who slipped down steep rock and grass descending NW down Ben Lui. He fell 10m. Strathclyde Police and Killin MRTs. 14.
- MAY 8 – Ochils MRT searched popular paths after a flare was seen. 8.

- MAY 12 – Boy (14) in a party of 10 descending north from Stob Coire Bhuidhe (Cruach Ardtrain) slipped on wet grass and suffered bruising. Carried down by Killin MRT. 18.
- MAY 23 – Crashed paraglider reported. False alarm. Ochils. 2.
- JUNE 18 – RAF Sea King lifted hillwalker (60) from Beinn Ghlas with suspected heart attack.
- JUNE 25 – RAF Sea King lifted woman with broken ankle from Schiehallion.
- JULY 7 – False alarm. Search by RN Sea King and Ochils MRT for a missing person. 70.
- JULY 29 – Greenock man (18) hyperventilated ascending North Ridge of Stob Binnoin. Evacuated to hospital with heat exhaustion by RAF Sea King, Killin and Leuchars MRTs. 24.
- JULY 30 – Parapenting from the top of 150m SW facing crags of Slackdhu (495m) in the Strathblane Hills, a man (31) soared for a very short time prior to his canopy collapsing. He was killed by falling among boulders. Lomond MRT, RN Sea King. 30.
- JULY 30 – A paraglider (28) was flying from Myreton Hill (378m), west of Alva. His canopy wingtip came out of an upward thermal so the 'chute partially collapsed. A controlled descent was possible to 8m but then he fell free sustaining spine and abdominal injuries. Ochils MRT, RAF Sea King. 28.
- AUGUST 8-9 – Scottish father (35) and son (9) were descending a path through woods in darkness after rock climbing on Ben A'n, Trossachs. Benighted without a torch they decided to stay put until first light. Killin MRT traced them and guided them down by 02.30. 8.
- AUGUST 12 – One of three inexperienced walkers attempting an expedition on Beinn Chabhair, a woman (29), became exhausted. She was rescued by Killin MRT and RN Sea King. 17.
- AUGUST 13 – A student (34) slipped on wet grass descending Silver Strand Footpath on Ben A'n breaking her ankle. Stretchered off by Killin MRT. 17.
- AUGUST 16 – Ochils MRT on stand-by for a person who left a route card but did not go on the hill.
- SEPTEMBER 8-9 – Solo walker (m25) seriously injured by a 60m fall down a crag on Ben Challum. Terrain was grass, rock and scree. Found by RN Sea King. Killin MRT. 53.
- SEPTEMBER 23-24 – Four boys, aged 13 to 19, attempted an ambitious expedition of 32 km. which included circuit of the base of Ben Lomond. Benighted in poor weather with inadequate footwear, clothing and gear they were found on route by Lomond MRT and SARDA. 92.
- SEPTEMBER 28 – Killin MRT and RN Sea King helped in the evacuation of a heart attack victim from the Glen Lyon slopes of Meall Garbh. The man (60) died during deerstalking. 40.
- OCTOBER 14-15 – Trying to walk round Loch Katrine two women (68, 65) and a man (65) got cragfast on the south shore near the east end of the loch. One was recovered by boat from the shoreline; other two from farther up by use of lights and ropes. Killin and Lomond MRTs, SARDA. 35.
- OCTOBER 15 – A walker (50) on Beinn Ghlas Nature Trail slipped on wet grass and injured his knee. Stretcher carry by Killin MRT. 4.
- OCTOBER 17 – A dentist (38) deerstalking in upper Coire Chroisg (West Corrie of Stuc a'Chroin) fell down a deep hole and strained his groin. Winched into RN Sea King. Killin MRT. 24.
- OCTOBER 19-20 – Trying to get from Ardeish Pier to Inversnaid by the West Highland Way, a man (39) failed to get past a rockfall at Rob Roy's Cave and turned back. Rescue boat, Lomond MRT, SARDA. 34.

- OCTOBER 21 – A barmaid (21) slipped on a wet path descending Ben Venue fracturing an ankle. She walked some way down aided by three companions, but was then stretchered by Lomond MRT and SARDA. 77.
- OCTOBER 22 – After crashing a car 2km. west of Aberfoyle, the confused driver (29) set off up the hill above Milton. His body was found by SARDA dog below a small cliff. Lomond MRT. Police helicopter. 118.
- OCTOBER 28 – Paper Caves Path, Clach Bheinn, Loch Eck. Mountain student (m14) made a high step up on path and knee 'popped' – probably subluxed patella. Stretchered by Benmore Centre. 18.
- NOVEMBER 19 – Couple (m45, f43) descending SSE Ridge, Beinn Dubhraig, Crianlarich. Woman got cragfast. Man went to help and also got stuck on wet rock with no torch. Used mobile phone to alert rescuers. Helped down by three other walkers. All airlifted safe by RAF Sea King. Killin MRT. 80.
- DECEMBER – Ochils MRT searched Dumyat (418m) near Stirling and found a fitted sheet carefully pegged out on the hilltop. It had caused local concern when spotted by road users. The area had been used by parapenters. 19.

### SKYE

- FEBRUARY 9 – After reaching the top of a snow gully on Bruach na Frith two women (both 26) descended it. When quarter of the way down, one slipped, collided with the other so that both fell 50m. The one who was knocked off sustained a broken leg. Airlifted by RAF Sea King. Skye MRT. 16.
- APRIL 2-3 – Four men (19-27) got lost trying to go over Sgurr Alasdair from Coir' a'Ghrunnda into Coire Lagan. They walked out next morning from a bivouac. Skye MRT. RAF Sea King. 51.
- MAY 6 – Scrambling on Sgurr Dubh Mor with five companions, a man (25) fell 10m when a large handhold broke away. He sustained a compound tibia/fibula fracture. Initial treatment by Kinloss MRT. Tension lower to a col and carry to below cloud by Kinloss and Skye MRTs. Airlift by RAF Sea King. Teams and companions evacuated from Coruisg by RNLI lifeboat. 376.
- MAY 6-8 – After climbing Fluted Buttress on the Coireachan Ruadh Face of Sgurr MhicCoinnich two men (30, 21) became cragfast because their ropes jammed while abseiling down the East (Coireachan Ruadh) Face of Sgurr Dearg, probably on or near O'Brien and Julian's Climb. Word came out from a boat that they were overdue at Coruisk Hut, thought to be climbing Fluted Buttress. They were not pin-pointed by Skye and Kinloss MRTs until after their second night out, despite whistle communications, because of bad visibility. Rescue was difficult and protracted in atrocious weather, including snowfall. Both suffered hypothermia. They were winched by RAF Sea King from the foot of the buttress after being lowered. The younger climber, who had inadequate clothing, died from cold during or after rescue. 722.
- MAY 26-27 – Main Ridge traverser travelled through the night, then attributed his overdue report as a misunderstanding. Leuchars and Skye MRTs, HMCG helicopter. 32.
- MAY 29 – A guided party of five separated from one of their number on the east slopes of Bla Bheinn South Peak. She (53) had decided not to continue, planning to meet them when they descended from the summit. Despite hours of searching in rain and mist they could not find her and called out Skye MRT. She was found and brought down before midnight. 72.
- JUNE 22-23 – A leader (48) fell 6m on Integrity (Sron na Ciche) injuring his leg. His second managed to help/pull him to the top of the climb. He managed to hobble into Coir' a'Ghrunnda then his colleague went for help. Skye MRT, RAF Sea King. 44.

- JUNE 29 – Man (31) climbed unroped to the top of the smaller of two pinnacles, Old Man of Storr, but got cragfast halfway down. Skye MRT safely lowered him 16m. 42.
- JULY 2 – A RAF Sea King scrambled for two hillwalkers missing near Sligachan was recalled when they were found safe.
- JULY 4-5 – On a day of good weather, a retired man (70) took the morning boat from Elgol to Coruisk, saying he would catch a later return boat, but he missed the 17.00 boat by 15 minutes and bivvied overnight. On July 5 there were flash floods, low cloud and strong wind. Boatman alerted rescuers and Mallaig Lifeboat was used to transport Skye MRT to Coruisk. 94.
- JULY 6-7 – When roped climbing on Sgurr Alasdair two males (45, 17) got lost in mist when they got separated from two others. They sheltered for the night and walked out when mist cleared next day. Skye MRT, RAF Sea King. 38.
- JULY 12 – Roped climbing on The Cioch a couple (both 21) misjudged the time required, having started at 13.45. In poorer weather they waited on a ledge from 22.00 to 04.00. They had started descent when spotted by Skye MRT. 37.
- JULY 13 – People on Sgurr nan Gillean reported hearing a large rockfall and a human cry. One said he saw a flare. Skye MRT and HMCG helicopter searched vainly. A recent rockfall was found. 'Flare' was thought to be rock shrapnel sparks. 93.
- JULY 18 – Seven tourists rescued at Loch na Beiste. HMCG.
- JULY 31 – A solo geology student (21) collecting or examining rocks on the seaward side of Ben Cleat, Elgol, fell into a gorge. Her body was found by RAF Sea King. Kinloss and Skye MRTs, SARDA. 108.
- AUGUST 1 – Suffering asthma during a walk in Glen Sligachan, a schoolboy (15) was unable to continue. RAF Sea King evacuation. 8.
- AUGUST 30 – A climbing instructor (32) fell 12m (back injuries) when a handhold failed as he was leading The Needle, The Storr. Two of his three running belays pulled out so he fell to the ground. Skye MRT, HMCG helicopter. 35.
- SEPTEMBER 8 – Two people stranded at Kilt Rock. HMCG.
- SEPTEMBER 24 – Standing at the base of The Needle, Quirang, a woman (63) was hit by rockfall and sustained leg injuries. Skye MRT, HMCG and HMCG helicopter. 36.
- OCTOBER 7-8 – Overdue on the Cuillin Ridge Traverse in storm force winds, two climbers (41, 40) completed the ridge after a bivouac. Skye MRT, RAF Sea King. 132.

## ISLANDS OTHER THAN SKYE

- FEBRUARY 10-APRIL 7 – A Glasgow student (18) had been missing since early February but there was no confirmation of his being on Arran. His body lay in a gully near the northern part of A'Chir Ridge covered in snow until after the melt. He had sustained multiple injuries and was found on April 6. Stretcher carried overnight by Arran MRT. 231.
- APRIL 15 – Walking with her husband on a steep hillside east of Marvig village, Lewis, a woman (58) slipped on rock and broke an ankle. Airlifted to Stornoway by HMCG helicopter.
- APRIL 16 – One of six hillwalkers (47) slipped on a path in Glen Sannox, Arran, in rain and mist injuring an arm. He walked off. Arran MRT involved. 24.
- MAY 4 – A male fell runner competing in the Western Isles Challenge was descending NW from Clisham, North Harris. When 250m down from the summit he was seen to dislodge a large boulder which struck him on the head. Airlifted by HMCG helicopter to Stornoway where a minor scalp wound was sewn.

- MAY 9 – Walking on Askival, Rum, two people agreed to separate and rendezvous later. One got worried when they missed each other and alerted rescuers. HMCG helicopter found the other (f29) safe at the rendezvous.
- MAY 24 – South Harris. HMCG helicopter evacuated a walker with a fatal heart attack from Toe Head to Stornoway, Lewis.
- MAY 28 – Trying to retrieve a child's shoe a father of three fell through a cliffside hole as his family looked on. Scolpaig, North Uist. Fatal. HMCG helicopter evacuation.
- MAY 28 – Crossing a ridge near Dibidil, Rum, a walker (49) slipped, falling 3m and fracturing hand bones. HMCG helicopter.
- JUNE 8 – With inadequate gear and food, a solo walker (29) hoped to get from Kinloch Castle, Rum, to Dibidil and back. He was found, exhausted, by ground searchers before midnight at a bothy at Harris. HMCG helicopter. 4.
- JULY 4 – Missing boy, Raasay. HMCG.
- JULY 7 – Missing male walker on South Uist turned up safe before arrival of HMCG helicopter for search.
- AUGUST 28 – Cliff rescue, Easdale. HMCG.
- SEPTEMBER 25 – Cliff rescue, Mull. HMCG.

### SOUTHERN UPLANDS

- MARCH 5-6 – North Corrie of White Coomb (822m), NE of Moffat. A solo hillwalker (49) from Galashiels died of hypothermia buried in a self-triggered avalanche at about 700m. He was swept down 60m. It was reported as an open slope windslab, of wet snow with a cornice collapse during thaw conditions. He was found by a SARDA dog. RAF Sea King, Moffat HRU, Borders SARU, Tweed Valley MRT. 763.
- MARCH 21 – Man (29) out for a walk from near the start of the Pennine Way at Kirk Yetholm, got lost and benighted. Turned up at Mounthooly Farm, Collee Glen, which is over the Border. Borders SARU. 38.
- MARCH 24-25 – Galloway MRT were lifted by RN Sea King to The Merrick summit. They found the two local men on the west shore of Loch Enoch. One had a bruised arm. All airlifted. SARDA used. 143.
- APRIL 22-23 – Borders SARU on stand-by for expedition group of six. Walking from Reddesdale on Pennine Way they failed to reach Blindburn on River Coquet (England) camping 40min. short of their rendezvous. 10.
- MAY 12-13 – Tweed Valley MRT, Borders SARU, and SARDA searched the Pentland Hills and Edinburgh Friday evening and Saturday for a local, retired man (80), with unseasonal snow underfoot. He was not found. 1228.
- MAY 13 – One of two climbers on North Berwick crags got stuck on a ledge after a short fall. He was rescued by Fire Service. Tweed Valley MRT called out. 24.
- MAY 31-JUNE 1 – Four women (18-20) on an award expedition failed to reach White Laggan Bothy, Loch Dee. Found by RN Sea King next morning on the path south of the bothy, 3km walk from it. They were safe and carried on with the hike. Galloway MRT and SARDA. 24.
- JUNE 4 – Borders SARU called out for a child (8) lost in mist on Woden Law (424m hill 2km from English border). The child belonging to neighbours, had become separated from a couple with two children. Found safe by local farmers using motor cycles. 9.
- JUNE 22-23 – Man (65) overdue walking S. Upland Way from Dalry to Glen Trool and then on to Newton Stewart, about 50km in very hot weather. Galloway MRT and helicopter on stand-by. 15.
- JULY 1 – Walker from Burnmouth flown to Melrose Hospital by RAF Sea King.

## NON-MOUNTAINEERING

- JANUARY 25 – Northern Highlands gunshot victim transported from Ben Aliskey to Wick by RAF Sea King. Dead on arrival. 10.
- FEBRUARY 18 – Search of wet forest for butcher (19) who wandered off after a car was badly damaged and he was thought to be injured. Lomond MRT, SARDA. 4.
- FEBRUARY 18-APRIL 8 – Search of Loch Lomond by ROSPA rescue boat, divers, Lomond MRT, SARDA, RN Sea King. An angler's boat was found overturned north of Balmaha. William Ballantyne (45) found dead south of Balmaha by Police helicopter. Alistair McQuilkie (37) found dead by canoeist on Inchfad on April 8 (water level lower). 1152.
- FEBRUARY 21 – SARDA and Moffat HRU searched woodlands around a village in Langholm area for a woman who later returned home. 9.
- APRIL 14 – Cairngorm MRT, SARDA and RAF Sea King searched for a woman (42) said to be depressed, missing from a guest house near Lagganbridge. Gone for a short walk she had probably road-walked 10km and was found near a dam at Glen Shirra. 54.
- MAY 5 – Leuchars MRT diverted from Arran exercise for PLM Squirrel helicopter crash near Lochgilphead. Pilot was killed, the only person on board. Crash dealt with by RN Sea King, HMS Gannet.
- MAY 6-7 – Search for girl (15) missing from home. Safe. Moffat MRT. 24.
- MAY 17 – Police dogs, RAF Sea King and Leuchars MRT searched lochs and forest for a missing patient from Stratheden Hospital, Fife. Safe. 62.
- MAY 21 – Southern Highlands. Woman (66) slipped on grass near her home and fell 10m to the bed of a small gorge. Fatal. Killin MRT. 9.
- JUNE 23 – Leuchars MRT treated an injured (later fatal) motor-cyclist near Loch Laggan, providing oxygen, stretcher and special gear. 5.
- JUNE 30 – Woman (39) missing from hospital at Melrose. Located safe same night. Tweed Valley MRT and Borders SARU. 36.
- JULY 2 – Kinloss MRT treated three casualties from a collision 8km east of Inverness. The driver of the other car was dead. 6.
- JULY 9-10 – SARDA searched in Ochils for a runaway youth (16) later reported safe. 13.
- JULY 30 – Kinloss team treated a motor-cyclist and his young son (pillion) injured in involvement with a pick-up truck 1.5 km. N. of Contin. 12.
- JULY 31 – Tweed Valley team, and SARDA, searched banks of River Tweed for a boy (8) who disappeared while swimming in a pool. Body resurfaced in the pool later. 8.
- AUGUST 29 – Tweed Valley MRT and SARDA called out to search for a male missing after a road accident. 15.
- SEPTEMBER 4 – Border SARU searched River Tweed for an elderly patient later found safe. 17.
- SEPTEMBER 23-28 – Leuchars MRT and RAF Sea King searched open ground and quarries in Charlestown area of Dunfermline for a missing man (84). Not found. 152.
- OCTOBER 11 – Tweed Valley MRT and SARDA searched paths and forest at Innerleithen for a disturbed youth (m17) later found safe. 16.
- OCTOBER 22 – Tweed Valley MRT and SARDA called out for a person missing from hospital. She was found safe by Police. 20.
- OCTOBER 24-26 – SARDA and RAF helicopter searched Cromdale Hills near Lynebreck for a diabetic (59). Cairngorm MRT called out. Patient found in Inverness. 6.
- NOVEMBER 25-26 – Search of Bridge of Orchy area by Leuchars MRT, HMCG helicopter and SARDA for a manager (m27) after a car crash. Not found. 147.
- DECEMBER 8-17 – Full searches by Braemar MRT found a man (36) dead from chest injuries behind a fishing hut on River Deveron near Huntly Castle. 257.

## IN MEMORIAM

**Tribute to W.H. (Bill) MURRAY, OBE  
j. 1945, Honorary President.**

Spoken at his funeral by Donald McIntyre, March 26, 1996.

There is a region of heart's desire  
free for the hand that wills;  
land of the shadow and haunted spire,  
land of the silvery glacier fire,  
land of the cloud and the starry choir  
magical land of hills;  
loud with the crying of winds and streams,  
thronged with the fancies and fears of dreams.

There are perils of knightly zest  
fit for the warrior's craft;  
pitiless giants with rock-bound crest,  
mystical wells for the midnight rest,  
ice-crowned castles and halls, to test  
steel with the ashen shaft;  
realms to be won by the well-swung blow,  
rest to be earned from the yielding foe.

All that the wanderer's heart can crave,  
life lived thrice for the lending,  
hermit's vigil in dreamlit cave,  
gleams of the vision that Merlin gave,  
comrades till death, and a wind-swept grave,  
joy of the journey's ending:—  
Ye who have climbed to the great white veil,  
*Heard ye the chant? Saw ye the Grail?*

(These stanzas are from *Knight Errantry in Collected Poems of Geoffrey Winthrop Young*, published by Methuen & Co. Ltd, London, 1936. The poem has 10 stanzas, of which these are numbers 7, 8, & 10. Bill used stanzas 7, 8, 9, & 10 preceding the Acknowledgements in *Mountaineering in Scotland* and he acknowledged Mr Geoffrey Winthrop Young's permission to reprint them.

GWY was born in 1876 and died in 1958. He was 'one of the greatest mountaineers that Britain has produced'. He lost a leg in the First World War.

Bill introduced me to GWY's poetry, which have had a profound influence on me. Although the *Collected Poems of Geoffrey Winthrop Young* was out of print, I wrote to the publisher and was fortunate in acquiring two copies. I once met GWY at an SMC meeting in Edinburgh.

I still have copies of two other GWY books: *Mountain Craft* (1920) which was my textbook, and *On High Hills* (1927). My copy of *The Grace of Forgetting* (GWY's autobiography) I gave to Bill.)

A photograph, signed W.H. Murray, had a special place in my Father's study: it was the bearded, somewhat ascetic face of an Elder in my Father's congregation. I gave Bill that picture, of his Grandfather, after whom Bill was named.

I have several photographs of Bill, including his passport photograph dated June 47 – it was for his first post-War expedition to the Alps. One, with the hood of his anorak over his head, reminds me that Bill spent time at a Benedictine monastery. I met Bill at the JMCS meet at Kingshouse in 45, a few months after his release from Prisoner-of-War camp. I immediately started climbing with him on weekends through the great winters of 46 and 47. Bill waited for me at Queen Street station with his old Morris eight and gave me a camp-bed at his mother's house, which was then Bill's home. When Bill and his mother moved to Loch Goil, my sister stood in for me and scrubbed the floors. Unfortunately, the water came through between the floorboards to the rooms below. Bill was 10 years older than me, and was like an older brother – or like a kindly master with a novice. I was keen to learn, and he to teach. His smiles at my struggles and enthusiasms come through whenever he writes about our comradeship. Of our week in Glen Affric, before the dam was built, he wrote: 'Having no plates we ate straight out of the pot, keeping pace with each other in spoonfuls. In its detail this way of feeding gives illuminated glimpses into a man's character. A valuable essay could be written on the subject, with a long and learned title.'

*O death, where is thy sting? O grave, thy victory?*

In the summer of 47 I went to Switzerland to spend a year studying Alpine tectonics. On the point of leaving, I learned that Bill was in hospital after a serious accident in the French Alps. I flew from Edinburgh to Basel and made my tortuous way to Gap, where I found Bill and Michael Ward still in blood-soaked clothes. They had been climbing with John Barford on the Ailefroide when they were struck by falling rocks. Bill and Michael had fractured skulls. Michael – with whom I had climbed on Nevis – had no idea who I was. John Barford was dead.

When I visited Bill four years ago in the Vale of Leven hospital, he was gravely ill. He had little strength to speak, but he told me he was going to die. Indeed the doctors thought this very likely. Bill looked on death, and indeed on every eventuality, with a quite extraordinary composure. He knew no fear.

Sitting in a slit-trench at dusk waiting to be overrun by the 15th Panzer Division, Bill systematically destroyed everything of use to the enemy. He came across an address book: every name in it was the name of a mountaineer. He reflected on how much he had learned from these men, and been given by them, and thought how little he had been able to give in return.

Bill wouldn't want us to mourn for him! As an experienced mystic, he was confident that through death he would arrive at a higher level of perception and adoration.

*Integer vitae scelerisque purus*

The man whose way of life is characterised by moral integrity, and whose heart is pure, needs not the weapons of lesser mortals . . .

Bill exemplified the truth of Horace's words. He trained himself to develop Purity, Fearlessness, Truthfulness, Selflessness, Humility, and Love of all fellow creatures. Again and again Bill advised us that: 'Our search for beauty on the mountain has to be a conscious one. . . . Wings do not grow of their own accord.'

Describing his first ascent – the Cobbler – he wrote: 'The rock had beauty in it. Always before I had thought of rock as a dull mass. But this rock was the living rock,

pale grey and clean as the air itself, with streaks of shiny mica and white crystals of quartz. It was a joy to handle such rock and feel the coarse grain under the fingers. . . . From that day I became a mountaineer.'

Bill knew that I, too, loved rock. Of one of the many climbs we made while Bill was writing the *Rock Climbing Guide to Glencoe*, he said: 'I looked up and confess to a twinge of conscience at encouraging McIntyre to face as leader the dire troubles in front. But I need not have worried. He is a geologist. Rock in any shape or form, at whatever angle, is the delight of his heart. . . . If he were ever about to fall off an overhang he would, just before parting company with the rock, draw his tongue over the surface to bring out the colour. I have observed him do this at other times and feel quite confident he would do it then.'

A fellow Prisoner-of-War encouraged Bill in meditation, which Bill continued to practice for the rest of his life. He also contributed two breath-taking articles to the Journal: *The Evidence of Things not Seen* in 1946 and *The Approach Route to Beauty* in 1948.

'May it not be possible,' he wrote, 'by some practical method to help one's mind to grow in awareness of beauty, to develop that faculty of perception which we frustrate and stunt if we do not exercise? The answer is that growth may be given to the spiritual faculty as simply as growth and health are given to the body – by awakening it from slumber, and providing nourishment and then by giving hard exercise. In this work there is no static position; one goes on, or one drops back. Therefore, and above all – persist.'

My mind fills with memories of being on mountains with Bill. A storm on the Matterhorn, and climbing SC Gully (joined by Tilman) were notable occasions. Another classic climb was Crowberry Gully jointly with Bill Murray and Bill MacKenzie. But there were two supreme days – or rather nights. The first was a winter camp on the summit of Bidean nam Bian, when on a moonlit night we found ourselves above the clouds.

. . . at my feet  
 Rested a silent sea of hoary mist.  
 A hundred hills their dusky backs upheaved  
 All over this still ocean and beyond,  
 Far, far beyond, the solid vapours stretched,  
 In headlands, tongues, and promontory shapes,  
 into the main Atlantic.

Are not the mountains, waves and skies a part  
 Of me and of my soul, as I of them?  
 (Lord Byron *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage* 3:75)

#### *Night and Morning on the Mountains*

'The most acutely difficult expedition to achieve on mountains in this country', Bill wrote, 'is a moonlight climb in winter. . . . The problem is to combine leisure with a full moon, a hard frost, and a clear sky. . . . Success needs patience, long and persistent patience. . . . But at last the record frost of February 47 brought the long-sought opportunity.'

In *Undiscovered Scotland* Bill described how we traversed the Aonach Eagach ridge from east to west, then from west to east, and waited on the summit of Meall

Dearg for the dawn. For Bill 'corrie and mountain are the natural altars of the earth, to be used as such before one goes'.

I was privileged to share the experience with him. Wearing our padded flying suits, we sat down facing east. 'We fell still. We drove from our heads every thought of self and simply observed the scene detachedly, allowing it, and nothing else, to flow into us.'

'We knew, as surely as men know anything on earth, that the implacable hunter had drawn close. . . . One's ear caught the ringing of His footstep; and one's eye, *gleams like the flashing of a shield.*'

In *The Evidence of Things not Seen*, Bill wrote: 'Unlike the Lady of Shalott I failed to break the spell and gaze straight upon the ultimate reality; yet the hills that night were big with it; its signs unmistakable. It is this that mountaineers style *the mystery of hills*. Put more broadly, it is the mystery of the universe, where the forms of man or mountain may be likened to veils that reveal its being and yet mask the true essence.'

'Something in that night cried out to us: that the world was full of a Divine splendour, which must be sought within oneself before it might be found without: that our task was to see and know. From the deeps of the earth to the uttermost star above, the whole creation had throbbled with a full and new life; its music one song of honour to the beautiful; its Word, *Holy, holy, holy, Lord God of hosts, heaven and earth are full of Thy glory . . .*'

'Sunrise opened the final movement. . . . The act of adoration had begun, for this was the sun's hour of morning song. In that we shared; for we could say to ourselves: *We had stood as sure stars stand, and moved as the moon moves, loving the world.*'

The world is charged with the grandeur of God.  
It will flame out, like shining from shook foil;  
(Gerard Manley Hopkins *God's Grandeur*)

'We had set out in search for adventure and we had found beauty. Thus we had found them both in their fuller sense; for in the architecture of hill and sky, as in great art and music, there is an everlasting harmony with which our own being had this night been made one. What more may we fairly ask of mountains?'

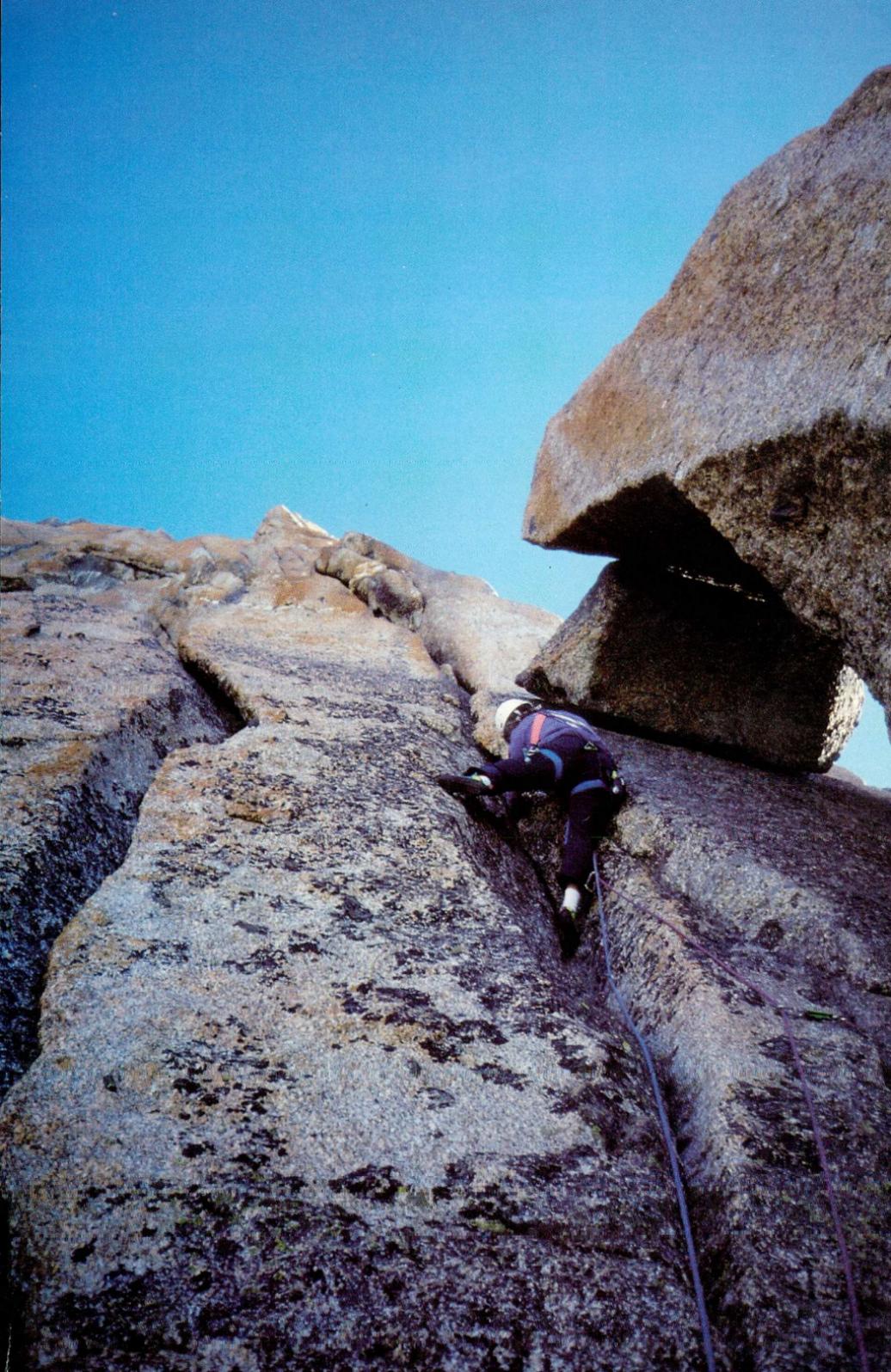
'The truth is that in getting to know mountains a man gets to know himself. That is why men truly live when they climb.'

Bill concluded this account with these words: 'We came down in the forenoon to a point about a thousand feet above the Glencoe road. We found a patch of sun-bathed turf, on which we curled up side by side. There kept running through my head, between waking and sleeping, a recently read verse:'

Thou shouldst die as he dies,  
For whom none sheddeth tears;  
Filling thine eyes  
And fulfilling thine ears  
With the brilliance . . . the bloom  
and the beauty . . .

This is *precisely* what Bill Murray did. And it's his wish for us.

Donald McIntyre.





I REMEMBER well my first climb with Bill Murray. It was in June in the mid-30s. Rob Anderson and I were at the Sutherlands' hostel at Glen Brittle, drying out after a wet walk from Sligachan when two others appeared equally soaked. They were Bill and Ross Higgins. Next morning the weather relented, so, Ross not wishing to climb, we invited Bill to come on our rope. This should merit an exclamation mark since in future climbs he was usually in the lead. It was a day to remember, a scorcher, but brilliantly clear. It was also our first day in the Cuillin. We went up Sgurr Alasdair, by the N. Buttress, along the ridge, over the Inaccessible and down with the sun. All the time Bill climbed as though born to it.

Bill's enthusiasm and climbing ability developed rapidly. So did a feeling or opinion in the JMCS, interesting to think of now, that our seniors in the SMC were becoming fuddy-duddies, somehow standing in the way of progress and censuring parties who returned from hard ice-climbs long after dark. At the centre of this movement was the notorious quartet, Murray, MacKenzie, MacAlpine and Dunn. During this period they pioneered many hard routes and first winter ascents.

JMCS monthly meetings in Glasgow in those days tended to end in vigorous discussion. Bill, a most eloquent speaker, was not interrupted during the silences in his well-ordered discourse. There was some puckish humour inevitable with people like Archie MacAlpine around. Once, in the general talk before a club dinner, Bill was in earnest discussion, menu card held behind him, Archie slipped round and put a match to it, Bill wheeled round, for a moment speechless. Bill did not become so involved with technique or with one area to the exclusion of exploring and delighting in the varied ranges in Scotland. And contrary to the opinion that his pre-war climbs were the pinnacle of his climbing achievement, it was more a range that maintained its height well into the Fifties, from the Alps to Everest.

Possibly the best climb we had together was in the narrow confines of SC Gully, that spectacular ice-route on Stob Coire nan Lochan. Oddly, perhaps my chief recollection is of standing for an infinity of time on steep ice hemmed between vertical walls which stretched above to meet the same infinity. I watched Bill cutting the classic way. First a horizontal line with the pick, then downward blows with pick or adze to clear out a neat triangle, the trick being to alter the blows to the toughness or fragility of the ice. Soon he was cutting hand holds too, as the surface steepened in swelling bulges, slowly he disappeared from sight, the rope followed, chips of ice rattled down. That one pitch took him nearly two hours of unremitting care and effort.

It seems unnecessary to relate the stories of Bill's doings already told so brilliantly in his first two books. So turn to the man himself and read, or re-read, the living epics of one of the finest mountaineers of his time. But there is one other incident I must recall. It happened on Uja Tirche, in Garhwal. There were four of us, Bill, Tom MacKinnon, Tom Weir and myself. We were on a tiny spur overlooking an ice-chute which narrowed steeply to the corniced apex of two ridges. We were descending from the summit and had taken off our crampons as the snow was soft and balling up, and we now had to cross the slope. Bill tested the ice and found it wet and brittle, again crampons were a hazard. He carried on cutting steps, large and tiring. The afternoon was wearing on but the thin veil of mist had cleared revealing an incredible sight of light and depth of bottomless dusk, Kamet dominated the north, a white spearhead, with the nearer ridges of Tibet merging into the distant plateau.

*Climbers at the top of Fiachail A' Choire Chais, Cairngorm. Photo: Jas Hepburn.*

*Charlie Hornsby and Roddy Kirkwood on the summit of Everest during the 1994 British Mount Everest Medical Expedition. Photo: Hornsby Collection.*

After a while he came back and the rest of us each did a stint, then Bill went out again cutting, cutting, against the increasing drag of about 200ft of rope. When he finally stepped on to the faraway ridge we felt a share in his relief. By the time the last man had crossed, using a sling with a karabiner sliding along the rope the stars were out and the last light almost gone.

That effort of Bill's in closing the long arc of steps must have been one of the finest feats of icemanship up to that time in the Himalaya.

D. Scott.

I FIRST met Bill Murray in either 1932 or 1933 when we both worked in the same Union Bank of Scotland Office in Glasgow, although in different departments. He was younger than I by five or six years and for the next two years we remained on nodding terms only.

I was surprised when he turned up at one of the training meets run by the JMCS. It happened to be at Arrochar and I remember saying to him 'What brings you here?', and his reply that he had just joined the Club and wanted to learn how to climb. To which I replied that he would go with Tom MacKinnon. And so things moved on.

At an Easter Meet based at Kinlochleven, on the first day of which Tom and me went over all the Mamores starting off from Fort William, we were met on our arrival at Kinlochleven by Kenneth Dunn who had a marvellous piece of news. All our travel problems were now solved. The club had a new member, who turned out to be Bill's brother-in-law, Archie MacAlpine, the owner of a car.

Everything changed after that and a foursome was born. Our progress together from then on was to climb, in summer particularly, every route in Glencoe and Nevis, especially Rubicon Wall. Bill became very good indeed, bags of determination and a great companion. Some of our routes were new. This was but the prelude. Bill and me began to see other possibilities such as how the classic routes could be attempted in winter conditions when the mountains were plastered in snow and ice and were at their most beautiful, and on this we embarked despite heavy criticism by the SMC Committee of the time for what we were doing. This in no way deterred us.

Our winter climbs in Glencoe – Garrick's Shelf, Crowberry Gully, Deep-Cut Chimney on Stob Coire Nam Beith; on Nevis – Tower Ridge, Observatory Ridge and North-East Buttress, Comb Gully, Observatory Ridge again (J.H.B. Bell, Bill and me) in wonderful conditions at the beginning of May when at the day's end the moon rose on one side and the sun set on the other. Bell observed afterwards to me – 'there is one thing – it will never be popular in the SMC.' It was the beginning of progress!!

This progress included quite a few advances in equipment with head torches, short ice-axes (adapted from a slater's hammer, the idea of Bill Bennet, who ran a slater/plumber business in Partick, Glasgow), slings, karabiner (frowned on at the time), boots from Lawrie (the best at the time), windproof outer clothing.

I often speculate as to what would have emerged had not the war intervened. After the war, Bill joined the SMC and soon became involved with the Glencoe Rock Climbing Guidebook, with the assistance of several of his friends in checking

out. We were also active in the acquisition of Lagangarbh, another idea which was not viewed enthusiastically by the Committee of that time, but which prevailed. Much has been written by Bill himself about specific matters and others will contribute to their own view of his achievements.

For me, there is a great gap in the departure of a friend of more than 60 years, one with whom I do not believe I ever had a fundamental altercation, and with whom I could discuss our commonly-held view that mountains were part of our lives, and mountaineering a way of life and not a sport. In his later life, he expressed to me one great regret – that he had not learned to ski and thus enjoy the mountain scene from a different angle.

My profound sympathy goes out to his wife, Anne.

He leaves very pleasant memories.

W.M. MacKenzie.

### **Bill Murray's work in mountain conservation**

'Choice words, and measured phrase, above the reach

Of ordinary men . . .'

Wordsworth, *Resolution and Independence*.

BILL MURRAY stands alongside James Bryce and Frank Fraser Darling in the pantheon of Scottish conservation. He made a major contribution to the protection of Highland landscape through his writing, through his work in voluntary and official bodies, but also through the inspiration he provided by his writing and his example. This may yet prove to be his greatest legacy to Scotland.

Bill's commitment to mountain landscape of course is self-evident, if latent, in his earliest mountain writing – though it is intriguing to note that as a fiery young tiger in the 1930s, he felt no qualms over the impact of the new Glen Coe road, a source of huge dismay to older and more Salvationist observers. The transcendental vision of *Mountaineering in Scotland* and *Undiscovered Scotland* has come to colour many of our attitudes to our mountain landscapes in the same way as it has informed our view of Scottish climbing. But it was not until 1960, when the National Trust for Scotland in an inspired moment commissioned Bill to undertake the survey ultimately published as *Highland Landscape*, that he was brought up sharp against the need to protect these landscapes against the further ravages of hydro development and afforestation. The authority and conviction of that book (the more remarkable because, as Bill admitted, the fieldwork was carried out over a period of six weeks' camping in filthy weather, doubling as a honeymoon) has ensured that its impact, modest at first, has been long-lasting and pervasive. *Highland Landscape*, published in 1962, provided much of the basis for our current, still inadequate, system of landscape protection through the designation of National Scenic Areas. Its superb characterisations of our diverse topography, often close in quality to blank verse, are endlessly quoted in area studies such as that from the recent Cairngorms Working Party, proving – if proof were needed – that no-one has yet improved on them. As with the writings of Sir Walter Scott, Bill's articulation of the essential qualities of Highland landscape has permanently enhanced our perceptions.

After *Highland Landscape*, Bill had a long relationship with NTS as the Trust's mountain adviser. Ultimately, however, he found his position increasingly untenable with successive conflicts over the interpretation of Unna's instructions and related matters; he finally resigned from the post in 1982. I cherish a memory from one of an apparently endless and inconclusive series of meetings in Glen Coe with the Trust in the Seventies and Eighties to discuss Those Bridges, when (the rest of the group having dwindled, distantly debating, into the Hidden Valley) Bill and I rested companionably on a knoll above the Coire Gabhail gorge. In reminiscent vein Bill described how in the Thirties he and JMCS friends would cross the river below Coire nan Lochan, boulder-hopping under heavy packs. 'I was good at it,' he said; 'The others quite often fell in.' This with his most endearing wry grin, abashed at his own small vanity. With Bill you had to wait patiently for such moments, but you waited willingly.

Bill became actively involved in countryside conservation and its politics in the later 1960s. As a result of the Countryside in 1970 Conference (in which Bob Grieve and Tom Weir played a major part within the Scottish Study Group) the Countryside Commission for Scotland was established in late 1967. Bill was appointed as one of the founding Commissioners, serving three terms from 1968 to 1980, a stint in which he was exceeded only by Duncan Ross. Over the years the Commission involved Bill in a huge amount of unpaid work, and much tedious time-consuming travel across the grain of the country from Loch Goil to monthly meetings at Perth.

To his credit, Bill was no politician. He probably lacked even the guile to be a reasonably effective committee operator, finding it difficult to make common cause with fellow Commissioners of very disparate interests to form or join any kind of power bloc. A man always as precise in his own utterances as in his carefully crafted writing – indeed, sometimes meticulous to a fault in that regard – Bill found it hard to thole the less-inhibited approach of 'commissioners who had no intimate knowledge of the countryside . . . whose awareness was strictly confined, – yet who could all express strongly confident opinions on subjects of which they were quite profoundly ignorant'. Unfortunately, that capacity remains virtually one of the prime criteria for membership of public bodies. Bill's own standards of judgment and integrity were of the very highest, while pretension was entirely absent from his character. Usually humorously tolerant of human foibles, he was scathing of what he saw as arrogance, wilful ignorance, underhand dealing, or naked selfishness.

What Bill did bring to the Commission was his total commitment to mountain recreation and mountain landscape, a field knowledge of Scotland virtually unmatched (especially in the early days) by staff or other members, and quiet authority. The Commission was to draw heavily on these assets when it formulated its system of scenery protection in *Scotland's Scenic Heritage* in 1978. After a valiant but ultimately unsuccessful struggle to pioneer a system of objective landscape classification, Commission staff fell back on a largely subjective evaluation in which their debt to *Highland Landscape* is often self-evident.

However, both Bill and the Commission were sorely tested by the furious wrangle which erupted over the Coruisk track and bridges only a few months into the life of the CCS (for younger members of the Club, the fullest published

account of this seminal event can be found in (*SMCJXXIX*, 111-120). I know that Bill himself agonised as to whether or not he should have resigned from the Commission over its inept and unpropitious handling of this first key issue. He had strongly advocated the protection of wild country for its own sake (at that time a novel concept in Scotland) as one of the key roles for the new Commission in a powerful personal credo which he published in the *Scots Magazine* at the time of the CCS's creation. He put a huge amount of work into resisting both the initial proposals to build the track and bridges, and subsequent plans to bring the track into a usable state and to replace the bridge at Scavaig after it was destroyed by a 'storm'.

At almost the same time as he became a Commissioner, Bill became Chairman of the Scottish Countryside Activities Council. SCAC originated in a conference convened by the Ramblers' Association in 1967 to assemble recreation interest groups to advance their cause with the new CCS. It drew on a wide range of countryside interests, especially from the West of Scotland grass-roots of rambling and cycling, youth hostelling and camping, but also from the senior climbing clubs. Recognising the crucial role of strength in diversity, Bill fostered and directed SCAC from 1968 to 1982 with understated authority and sagacity. He commanded immense respect and affection from the members. SCAC was never intended as a radical lobbying force – the varied interests of its member organisations have always acted as a constraint on the more exuberant factions – but it became, and has survived as, a useful consultative and representative forum, a respected moderate voice. Under Bill's chairmanship SCAC actively promoted the conservation of wild land in Scotland, drew on Adam Watson's survey work on bulldozed tracks in the Cairngorms to badger CCS and the Scottish Office into limiting further damage, led the campaign against the Grampian Way long distance footpath proposal, and carried out useful surveys on topics ranging from rights of way in Central Scotland to camping and caravanning problems in the Highlands.

I suspect that Bill derived minimal enjoyment from his long involvement in Commissions, Councils and Committees – he chaired about 100 SCAC meetings in all – but he probably regarded them as a necessary evil to which concerned individuals must contribute time and mental energy, which in his case might have been more profitably directed to writing. He conducted meetings of SCAC Council with his invariable courtesy, gravity and careful expression, but in Executive meetings he would occasionally come out with flashes of the puckish humour that he kept for comfortable company – humour as dry, as smooth, as the finest *fino muy seco*. When in 1981 SCAC aligned itself with the Mountaineering Council of Scotland and other conservation bodies against the Lurcher's Gully proposals for ski development at Cairn Gorm, Bill gave evidence at the Public Inquiry in Kingussie. Diffident as he was, he manifestly did not relish any part of that experience, but the sincerity and passion of his evidence clearly carried much weight with the Reporter.

In his seventieth year, Bill appeared to resolve to shed most of these larger and more demanding commitments. His handing over of the mantle of SCAC in 1982 was implemented with characteristic decision and directness. Having decided it was time to go, he assiduously phoned round all the member bodies, informed

them that he was retiring, and gave them a firm directive that I would succeed him. Then he told me. By way of revenge I persuaded a very willing SCAC to create the role of Honorary President for him, and picked his brains mercilessly for years thereafter.

However, Bill also took on a great fistful of other roles. He was President of the Scottish Area of the Ramblers' Association from 1966 to 1982. Having identified (with Donald Bennet, Sandy Cousins and others) the need after the Coruisk fiasco to reform the doddering Association of Scottish Climbing Clubs as the Mountaineering Council of Scotland, he served a term as the second President of MCS (1972-75). He said himself that it seemed appropriate that he should follow Bill MacKenzie in the role, though he did not anticipate the enjoyment he had derived from following Bill in earlier days. He was a founder member of the Friends of Loch Lomond when that group was set up in 1978, and served on its Council until 1988. The Friends' Newsletter for Autumn 1992 includes a nostalgic panegyric on 'The old Loch Lomond road' which shows to perfection the Murray capacity, undimmed by age, to blend acute perception of landscape with vivid and precise expression. In such writing he forces us to recognise that which we had seen, but never truly perceived.

Even in his seventies Bill lent his support to the new bodies that sprang up to pursue the vision he had articulated for the protection of wild country. He took an advisory role in the formation of the Scottish Wild Land Group in 1982. He was a founding trustee of the John Muir Trust (1984-86), helping to provide the Trust with the springboard of solid credibility from which it has gone on to achieve great things within a remarkably short time span. He was a Patron of the Scottish Council for National Parks from its reconstitution in December 1990. In all these roles he not only gave freely of his time and experience, but contributed inspirational articles for newsletters and campaigning publications. The last of these, a foreword for a booklet on Scotland's mountains for Scottish Wildlife and Country-side Link written only a few days before he died, is a fitting epitome of his view of the relationship between climbing and conservation.

In his concern for the protection of mountain landscape and wild land, Bill Murray has exerted a powerful influence that has extended well beyond Scotland. US Vice-President Al Gore, in his highly-regarded conservation treatise *Earth in the Balance*, quotes Bill with obvious respect and admiration. The inspirational quality of Bill's writing, with its flame-like intensity and clarity, is such that in future years he may well be recognised and esteemed more in that conservation role even than for his contribution to mountaineering.

In our age of flexible morality and uncertain conviction, Bill Murray came closer than anyone I have known to the model of a man *sans peur et sans reproche*. On casual acquaintance he could appear distant, but to those to whom he extended his friendship he showed absolute loyalty, infinite kindness, and touches of wicked humour. We who had the privilege of knowing and working with him over many years strive to emulate and to carry forward the quietly passionate commitment of this most humane of mountain conservationists.

R. Aitken.

**PROFESSOR SIR ROBERT GRIEVE j. 1944**

ALL OF US have to die, and the last thing an active climber wants is to be the oldest occupant in a geriatric nursing home. My memories of Bob are of a tall athletic man who accepted every challenge life threw at him, whether it was a hard crux on a summer or winter mountain, or a difficult political decision that would expose him to success or failure.

I took the photograph that accompanies these words after he had led three hard routes in Ardgour, all of them first ascents. He was a Grandfather then, yet he was climbing better than I had ever seen him. The date was 1963. In the past 15 years he had travelled the world, refusing tempting offers of work, because as a Town and Country Planner he felt his destiny was in Scotland.

In 1965, when he was President of our Club, I remember him arriving so late at night I knew it couldn't be a social call. It was to speak aloud his troubled thoughts to a friend. The gist of it was, that having resigned his job as Chief Planning Officer in the Scottish Office in order to occupy the first Chair of Town and Regional Planning in Glasgow University, he had been invited by the Scottish Secretary to move to Inverness and be Chairman of the Highlands and Islands Development Board for five years.

Bob's level headed wife, May, had advised him to make the move in case they appointed somebody worse. I recalled Bob telling me that when he got married in the mid 1930s they set off from Glasgow on a tandem on their honeymoon, and in three weeks covered 650 miles. Northward of Garve many of the roads had grass growing down the middle. During that trip, because the back wheel collapsed under the weight of their camping gear, he had to rebuild it twice.

At the SMC centenary dinner, held in the banqueting hall of Blair Castle, in the spring of 1989, Bob in proposing the toast to the Club, recalled the time of the depression, the discovery of the mountains by working class folk like himself, and the camaraderie of the interesting characters you met who were addicted to the hills. At that time the Cuillin had the magnetism of the Himalaya. As for the SMC, he said he had once thought of it as a bunch of stuffy old gentlemen. (That provoked a good laugh and approving cries of 'Here! Here!')

Yes, the age structure of the Club is a lot younger now. But Bob recalled his reverence on meeting the old pioneers who had opened up the mountain ways; A.E. Robertson whom he visited frequently in Morningside before his death; Percy Unna who enlivened every AGM by his wit and good sense; Sandy Harrison who died last year after 70 years of membership; Willie Ling and George Glover, explorers of the far northern cliffs, and Stuart Jack who always sang the Club Song with quavering emotion – grand old men.

I've just been rereading Bob's article, *A Great Day*, in the Club's volume *A Century of Scottish Mountaineering*. It was wartime and he was on holiday with his wife and young family at Pirnmill. He had arranged to meet Hamish Hamilton in Glen Rosa for an attempt to climb the Rosa Pinnacle by the South Ridge Direct. Without transport Bob had to be up early and batter across the hills more or less in a straight line, and a happy moment it was when they met.

They achieved what they had set out to do, and with minimum detail, Bob conveys the exhilaration of the climb; but while Hamish had only to jog down for dinner at the hotel, Bob himself had to fight his way back over ridges and glens in

a rising gale that drained his remaining strength. Seventeen hours from leaving the cottage in early morning he reached the door at 11.30pm.

He ends his story thus: 'My wife at the fire turned to the opening door with a degree of apprehension warranted by the hour, and the place. She looked at my face and then at my clothes. "Did you have a good day of it?" she asked. I found my lips stiff and reluctant. "A great day," they said. But I was thinking – as so many times before and so often since – of the difference between the black jolting hostility of the mountains at night, of the intractability of boulders, peat hags and rivers, and the warm, lighted comfortable precision of a human dwelling.'

Bob reckoned that he owed pretty well everything he had become in life to the great outdoors: mountaineering, canoeing, skiing. The huge gathering of colleagues and friends filling St. Giles Cathedral on December 16 for the Memorial Service, spoke volumes on the impact Professor Sir Robert Grieve had made on all who ever associated with him – the twinkling eyes, and the humour he brought to bear on any subject, often with an appropriate aphorism snatched from his exceptional memory and wide reading.

T. Weir.

TO THE above excellent account I would like to add a few remarks on the Grieve of the late 1940s to mid-1950s, a period when his contribution to the society of Edinburgh climbers was probably maximal – at weekends as an SMC member on the JMCS bus and on Thursday evenings at Daddy Milne's bar in Hanover Street. He more than anyone provided the sheer joy of those get togethers.

Others contributed their own sense of humour and of practical fun, uproarious or thrawn, but yon tall beaming Bob with his round, bright eyes and spectacles radiated a whole midsummer of personal accomplishments, a selfless warmth of delight that melted nearly every heart, and even won grudging admiration from the one or two staunch Defenders of the Dour, who professed to disapprove (when anyone was looking) such 'blarney'.

It played about all he said, illuminated his marvellous stories; and few could resist its blandishments, least of all the owner of it who, after a particularly outrageous triumph, would lean back, drain his malt, and suck his moustache with the quizzical satisfaction of a large benign tom cat. But – and this is the extraordinary thing – it was never cattish, never malicious, but was powered by a most generous and sympathetic Humanity. And though charm lubricated all he said and did, its flowing was unconscious (even if sometimes unashamedly indulged in!) and weighted by a questing intelligence and basic gravity that saw him through the most (to us) dispiriting places of work to eventual high public success.

Daddy Milne's, however, rather than the political corridors, witnessed his finest performances; there he acted his stories superbly, without self-consciousness. The whole room, not just our fireside, fell silent, agape, as he stalked a stag (so many were gamekeeper tales) on hands and knees round chairs, beneath tables, with a continuous carefully whispered narrative in the best JMCS Gaelic; when the climax was reached, an audible gasp broke out, and the audience stamped and shouted applause. Bob, flushed and brow-mopping, resumed his seat, happy at causing such happiness.

He had a sweet Irish-tenor voice and when the Welshmen (they were miners then) filled Daddy Milne's after Murrayfield he would captivate them with songs

from the Gaelic, along with Dick Broom's deep-voiced offerings of *Gleann a' Chaolais* and suchlike: so that pausing between their flawless harmonies of *Cwm Rhondda* or *Cyfri 'r Geifr* some silicotic pensioner of them would lean and whisper 'Duw, we may have the voices, boy, but you have the bloody TIWNS!' This JMCS-Gaelic propensity of Grieve – always (like his name-sake) a Heroic-Romantic – exhibited itself as memorably-spurious Fingalian Lays featuring various legendary SMC members in due translational garb: A.E. Robertson, for example, appearing as the Greatest Eater-of-Bens of them all.

After closing time we would engage, at the kerb, that famous Hanover St. One-Man-Band to play alternately Orange and Green - *Dolly's Brae* or *Kevin Barry* - while passers-by cheered, or not; those were primitive days. There often followed Serious Discussion at the Mound before dispersal, during which Bob eagerly opened safety valves and lamented his role as a Non-Directional Superfluous Man approaching the Male Menopause, bewailing somewhat unconvincingly his Romantic Fate while, say, MacIennan or Hewit, Ritchie or Russell slapped him down with mercilessly ribald Common Sense. The streets were otherwise quite silent then, at eleven o'clock. Primitive Days.

Of course, he survived to wield, by the skills of his richly-varied character, considerable power in – usually – the right places. But when he had achieved (that I am certain he truly considered) his most cherished promotion, the Presidency of the SMC, he would often return, in thoughtful talk, to those Ambrosian Nights at Daddy Milne's, those herb-smokingly hilarious trips on the JMCS bus (cf. SM CJ xxvii, 153, 1961), and behind all this to evenings of descent from the summit, when he would kneel at some burn to slake his thirst before rising and delivering a mock-elegiac salute to his mountain. Mock? There was no mockery in the man. Let us finish with a translation by MacKechnie from the old Gaelic poem A' *Chomhachag*, so much a part of his (and our) heritage.

It was a long unbroken companionship between the water  
and me, the sap of the great hills without drunkenness;  
and I drinking it without stopping.

G.J.F. Dutton.

### ALEX SMALL j. 1945

CLIMBERS come in all shapes and sizes. Talking about his frailty of gait, Alex Small explained it this way: 'The thing to remember is that I had polio and therefore couldn't take part in team games, and I was distinguished through most of my youth by the fact that I wore bandages on both knees as I was constantly falling. But at the age of 15 or thereabouts I found I could walk reasonably well and far. And then I found this book by T.C.F. Brotchie with the walks you could do from the tram termini round about Glasgow. And having done a whole lot of these I found myself on the Campsies and there to my astonishment I saw three gentlemen tied together with a rope, climbing a piece of rock.'

I was not one of these gentlemen, but in 1932 or early 1933, it was below Slack Dhu, the biggest escarpment of terraced basalt on the Campsies, I first came upon Alex Small, seated at a wee fire, a sketch-pad in one hand, busily drawing with the other to capture the scene before him. Round the fire were the Clydebank boys, early explorers of the crags who had yet to form themselves into the Creagh Dhu

Club. My pal, Matt Forrester, and I were in competition with them and drew for the first ascent of Coffin Gully, a horrible place.

That day, though, we were not carrying a rope, content to do an easier route to the right of the gully, and when Alex Small asked if he could join us we nodded assent, unaware of his handicap. On the awkward approach by screes and boulders we were wondering if we were wise, his balance was so poor. But once on the rocks, Matt ahead and me close behind Alex, he needed only advice and a helping hand occasionally.

We marvelled at his guts, while thinking that with his obvious physical handicap it was unlikely he would ever be a confident climber. How wrong we were. Before long he had joined the Tricouni Club and the JMCS, regularly attending meets and taking on hard climbs. In 1986, when I was President of the SMC I had the pleasure of being at a celebratory dinner in Kingshouse to commemorate the most notable ascent of 1936, the climbing of Agag's Groove on Buachaille Etive Mor.

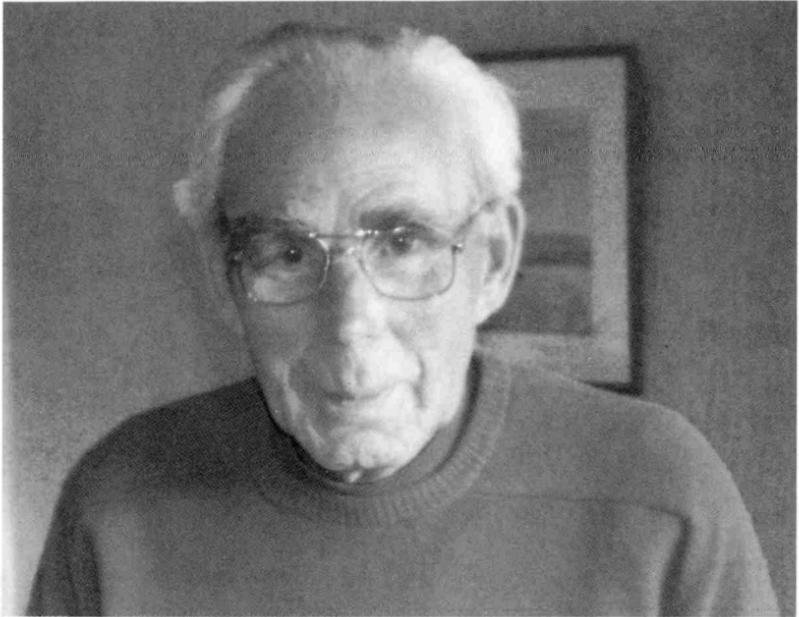
On August 16 that year two parties, three in each, were in competition on the sheer wall, thought to be impossible by the fathers of the Club. On Curved Ridge witnesses had gathered to watch; one of them Bill Murray with his camera. Of the climb he wrote: 'No photograph can convey its sensational aspect as we watched from below: on no short climb (360ft) have I seen a bolder lead.'

The six climbers were all members of the JMCS. Alex was in the party that got there first, roped up, donned sandshoes, and with Hamish Hamilton leading, Alex Anderson middle man, and Alex last, they were on their way. Hamish made history, too, by losing a sandshoe on the way up, and as Alex put it: '... added to his numerous distinctions by making the first hopping descent of the Curved ridge on a solitary rubber shoe.' MacKenzie, Dunn and McAlpine were the second party.

Four of the six who did the climb on that day 55 years earlier were at the dinner table, and the banter was good when the Principal Toast to Agag's Groove was made, the keynote being nostalgia for the good old unsophisticated days before mechanical devices crept in to make climbing safer. Hamish said: 'Ironmongery was frowned upon. If you carried a piton with you, you were regarded as a softie. I think free climbing has much more to offer than the present mechanised approach, but then I'm one of the older school and this is understandable.'

Alex said: 'It was literally free climbing, no slings, nothing. You knew if you came off it was going to be quite rough. The Journal for 1938 reports Alex's exploration of Fracture Route with Jim Wood in August, and a fortnight later climbing it throughout with Hamish Hamilton. In September, again with Jim Wood, he opened up Helical Route, describing it '... as earnest and energetic with open, varied climbing and splendid situations, although original only in its middle section'. Hyphen Rib he thought worth following '... for its interesting moments'.

By the time he did these routes he was using the Crowberry Direct as a route of descent from the Crowberry Tower. One of his most memorable descents, though, occurred on November 27, 1938 on Stob Choire Odhair below the summit on a 45° snow slope which avalanched and carried Jim Wood and Alex down 300ft to 400ft, Wood breaking his ankle, and Alex, with typical understatement, describes their return to Blackmount Lodge as 'difficult and trying'. He brings out a good point, that in the event of injury to the lower leg the boot should not be removed but tied tightly in place. 'By doing so it was possible to proceed, carrying almost normal weight on a fractured tibia.' Alex does not mention his own leg injury, nor did this second affliction dent his enthusiasm for winter climbing.



GILBERT LITTLE. *Photo: Don Green.*



GEORGE PEAT. *Photo: A.H. Hendry.*



ALEX SMALL on Beinn Ghlas. *Photo: Donald Bennet.*



ADAM WATSON. *Photo: Tom Weir.*

The two page *In Memoriam* notice of the death of Hamish Hamilton was written by Alex Small and Bob Grieve. (SMCJ 1991). Bob described Hamish as the most courageous man he had ever climbed with. I think most who climbed with Alex would apply the same accolade to the disadvantaged, but ever cheerful, Alex in his active years. Sadness entered his life latterly.

Not until I was raking for photographs did I find one, showing Bob and Alex on top of the Douglas Boulder. It was there on Ben Nevis that Alex proposed to Celia, a school teacher, as was Alex, and jointly after marriage they staffed Tarbet Primary School. At weekends it was open house to their climbing friends.

T. Weir.

ALEX SMALL WAS one of the great characters of the Club during his 50 years of membership. Despite the severe physical handicap which dogged him all his life, he had an unquenchable courage and enthusiasm for the mountains, and a rare sense of humour. The hospitality, which he and Cis gave to climbers at the schoolhouse in Tarbet during his years as headmaster there, was legendary.

The highlight of his climbing career, the first ascent of Agag's Groove, is part of Scottish climbing history. He kept going for many years after that, but at an ever slower pace. The pleasure of a day out with Alex had to be weighed against the probability of benightment, particularly in winter.

In addition to his Presidency of the Club, Alex was President of the Mountaineering Council of Scotland from 1976 to 1978. He was a dedicated member of the Club who filled many lesser, but no less demanding, roles: as custodian of Lagangarbh in the years when the juvenile delinquents were still active; as Convener of the Western District Committee when he had the responsibility of finding speakers to entertain the Glasgow audiences; and as Editor of District Guidebooks for which he had the task of extracting manuscripts from reluctant authors, which might be likened to getting blood out of a stone. All these roles he carried out with his customary good humour.

His unfailing cheerfulness and friendship were an inspiration to all who knew him, and for that we will remember him.

D. Bennet.

### ADAM WATSON Sen. j. 1956

ADAM WATSON SEN. was born in May 1895 at Mains of Philorth near Fraserburgh and died seven weeks before his 100th birthday in hospital after a short illness.

On discharge from the Royal Artillery at the end of World War I he set up as a solicitor in Turriff where he became Town Clerk.

It was his schoolboy son with a passion to know all about the Cairngorms who started him hillwalking at the age of 50, putting his car at his disposal, driving him to the hills, sharing his days on foot and on cross-country skis. In 1951 he was in the Jotunheim with young Adam, Tom Weir and Douglas Scott. In the Fifties he climbed with Patey and others on the sea cliffs of the North East and in the Cairngorms. In the mid-Fifties he had a number of further trips to Norway climbing in the Jotunheim with the Norsake Tindeklub, in Romsdal with Arne Randers Iken, in Lofoten with Svolvaer climbers and alone in the mountains of Lyngen and Dovre Fjell.

He was a member of the Inverarnan fraternity in its heyday immortalised in a couple of lines in Patey's version of the Club Song:

*All the Bergkameraden will return to Inverarnan  
Descending from the mountains through the snow.*

Inverarnan in the Forties and Fifties was a Temperance Hotel run by the Girvan family. Nevertheless, it offered unbelievable hospitality to mountaineers and its New Year parties were legendary. The Bergkameraden included Rob Anderson, Bob Grieve, Hamish Hamilton, Bill MacKenzie, George Roger, Douglas Scott, Tom Weir and others. On that side of the country he climbed the good winter routes of those days. On the other side of Scotland as well as climbing he made many, many ski mountaineering expeditions often alone but also with the eastern equivalent of the Bergkameraden: his son, Mike Taylor, Bill Brooker, David Grieve and Derek Pyper.

Adam was a strong, all-round mountaineer, out in all weathers summer and winter at an age when most mountaineers are operating from an arm chair. Although never a leader of hard rock he could follow up to severe standard. As for ski-touring he gave it up, reluctantly, when he was 89.

Tom Weir recalls: 'What springs immediately to mind about Old Adam was his willingness to fall into line with anything you proposed and his generosity when it came to putting your interests before his. As for food his rucksack was well-stocked with goodies from the hotel where he lodged. Often enough he would meet me off the train, pick up Young Adam at his digs, drive to Braemar and then on up to Bob Scott's at Luibeg where we were always welcome. On one occasion we arrived at Bob's cottage in the wee sma' hours having driven through a blizzard until abandoning the car on the blocked private road.

We then had to pole the final miles on skis. This would be in the Fifties, notable for hard, snowy winters. This period was ideal for ski touring if you could get your car to the hills (in those days snow clearing was less efficient than it is now) and no one was bolder than Adam who made the most of every day.

He was tall with an upright bearing and clean shaven. There was a time when he looked younger than his white haired son. Sorrowfully, I heard of his death from bronchopneumonia. I thought he would reach the century.'

I.H.M. Smart and T. Weir.

### GILBERT LITTLE, CBE, j. 1958

IN AN appreciation at the funeral in Perth, a former colleague declared that he was Little in name only, a view which would be shared by those who climbed with Gibby.

He came fairly late to mountaineering, while living in Dundee, but after joining the Grampian Club quickly became both ultramontane and salvationist, though he would probably have denied both descriptions. He just enjoyed being on and among hills and in the company of kindred spirits.

Gibby suffered multiple injuries in a fall of more than 100ft on Crystal Ridge, Coire Sputan Dearg, in 1954. This brought a pause in his rock climbing, but he was more annoyed by having to withdraw from the Grampian Club's Alpine Meet that year.

He was soon back on the hill and climbing with the verve which he had shown before the accident. While ever helpful to others in gaining their Munros, he was

what might be termed a reluctant bagger himself. He was persuaded to the completion of the Munros and Tops in the presence of 22 witnesses on Stob Coire Dhuibh above Loch Laggan in 1974. He had joined the SMC in 1958 and served on the Committee 1959-63.

By profession a water engineer, Gilbert Little's early career was with the Metropolitan Water Board with whom he served throughout the London blitz. After the war he moved to Aberdeen. Then from 1947 to 1961 he was water engineer for Dundee. From 1961 to his retirement in 1975 he was engineer/manager of the Lower Clyde Water Board.

No respecter of rank or dignity, he ruffled many feathers but made few, if any, lasting enemies and had a wide circle of friends of high and low degree.

Football enthusiast, malt-whisky connoisseur and collector, skilled gardener, photographer and the most generous of hosts, Gibby enjoyed a full life. It was shared with his wife, May, and continued into their retirement years in Comrie.

That life might well be summed up in the words of an SMC acquaintance, who in describing Gibby's driving to a fellow member in the Kingshouse bar, said it was 'con brio . . .'

D. Green.

### GEORGE PEAT, OBE, j. 1936

THERE is in the CC Journal of 1959 the following quotation from Colin Kirkus: 'All it is necessary to know about mountaineering is that we want to be in the right place at the right time with the right companion.'

Some of our older members must feel that George was the right companion. George started climbing after graduation. He was an athlete and competed in decathlons. This interest led to his being a judge at the Highland Games in Edinburgh and the Olympic Games in London. In 1938 he soloed the Cuillin Main Ridge and he was an early Munroist (28 \*G. Peat 1957,-,-). In completing the Munros he took his car to places thought impossible and used roads which were later flooded.

He first went to the Alps in 1957 and 1958 and encountered bad weather which did not put him off. In 1959 the weather was better and on that occasion there were four SMC Georges climbing together (Peat, Ritchie, Roger and Freeman). This was probably the occasion referred to in Campbell's article in SMCJ 1971, xix, 351-355. When these four gentlemen left an Alpine hut someone said in a penetrating English accent: 'If there is one thing I'm sure of, it's that these four old gentlemen won't get up the Dent d'Herens.' And somebody answered darkly from the corner: 'Dinnae be too sure o' that. They're in the SMC.' They got up of course.

In subsequent summers he climbed in Switzerland - Valais, Bernina, Bregaglia, Oberland and Glarnerland. Then he made summer visits to the Dauphiné - a happy time but for the beginning of his eye trouble. His last mountain was the Dom in 1975 after he had retired as Convenor of Ross County. In 1976 he was growing blind. For years he did a daily round of seven miles near his home with a 'Seeing Eye' dog. His courage carried him through operations to remove his eyes. We were good friends for 54 years. We enjoyed many companionable silences. He did not let his love of golf intrude too much. He served the Club as the first Custodian of the Ling Hut. I only hope his memories of his climbing days sustained him through the 17 years of his blindness.

A.H. Hendry.

**JIM ANTON j. 1929**

MOST of Jim Anton's contemporaries have long gone and it falls to me, as one who knew him in his later years, to record his contribution to the Club and to pay my own tribute.

Jim spent a major part of his working life as a National Park warden in New Zealand. On retirement, he returned to Scotland and settled at Contin where he spent the rest of his life at his cottage, Sandpipers. He had a part time post as a water bailiff and enjoyed a quiet, but active, life until invited to be custodian of the Ling Hut.

Jim was 75 at the time, so obviously, old age is no protection from a Huts Convener who urgently needs a new custodian and has noticed that you live only 40 miles down the road from the hut. As a custodian myself, he had my sympathy.

This was when I first met Jim and went to many of his work parties over the next seven years. He was a lively and interesting character, and despite a generation gap, we got on well. Jim was very conscientious and did a lot of hard work at Ling on his own.

Inevitably, advancing years slowed him down and when into his 80s he found the task too much and stood down.

I would like to record my admiration for a perfect gentlemen from a different generation and the Club's indebtedness to a good servant.

G. Peet.

**MARK 'Cheeky' SINCLAIR j. 1987**

I HEARD it on the radio: 'Two climbers killed on Parallel B Gully, Lochnagar.' Never for a minute did I believe it would be Mark and Neil. This winter has been so hard, so many callouts, we had just been talking about this two days previous in his mountaineering shop.

Mark joined the Royal Air Force Kinloss Mountain Rescue Team in the mid-1970s. He was superbly fit and on his first day on the hill bombed everybody into the deck. It was the usual Fort William party that night and we staggered back, had two hours sleep and then dragged him round the 12 Mamores Munros. He lost a bit of his cheekiness on that long day, but gained a nickname 'Cheeky'.

He quickly became a very competent mountaineer, specialising in winter mountaineering. Kinloss is ideally situated for the far north-west of Scotland, where he did a lot of new middle grade winter routes on Beinn Dearg, Liathach, Seana Braigh and An Teallach. In these days it was *en vogue* not to report your new routes, unlike nowadays.

Cheeky started to grow up as any mountaineer can because we are all children at heart, and soon became a party leader and a winter leader. On his first annual winter course as an instructor, which was held in the Cairngorms, I arrived late and Cheeky was sporting a black eye and missing two bottom teeth. The Royal Air Force Mountain Rescue Team's have a tremendous rivalry and in these days it was as bad as Celtic and Rangers. Cheeky had said something in his usual arrogant way to a young Leuchars troop, who then battered him for his cheek.

Next day he took the same young troop up one of the classic routes in Hell's Lum in the Cairngorms in wild conditions when the rest of us were hiding doing

techniques. He got off late at night having dragged the young troop across the plateau in a typical Cairngorm blizzard. His honour regained, they then sorted out their problem in the pub and became good friends.

In the early 1980s his climbing and his ability had gone beyond any of the current team and he was climbing regularly on the Ben doing many of the classic routes such as Orion Face Direct, Point Five, Galactic Hitch-hiker, Zero Gully, all solo. This was 1980, such is the measure of the man.

He travelled abroad to the usual places courtesy of the services: the Alps, the Himalayas, Peru and Canada, but his main love was winter climbing. In 1982 he was a member of a six-man expedition to climb Canadian ice. During this trip he did 30 routes including many British first ascents and including a few new routes. As the weakest member of this group I was having my usual epics, but after the first few days, Cheeky took me for a week which was the best week's climbing I have ever had. Most of the routes we did were nearly 1000ft long which were descended by abseiling and fairly serious down-climbing. Cheeky constantly proved his competence as a mountaineer, always looking after us all and soloing around, putting in protection, giving us confidence and help pushing our standards, and keeping us all safe.

But it wasn't just the climbing that mattered, the social scene was incredible. As we climbed Monday to Friday we took the weekends off and the parties were all weekend, without a doubt this group of unknown Scottish climbers out-drunk, out-talked and out-climbed some of Canada's top climbers. Mark was in his element in the alpine club hut library in Canmore, surrounded by thousands of books on mountaineering with a good dram and telling tales. This is what it is all about, glorious days.

He followed this trip up with a four-day visit to Kenya where he climbed the Diamond Couloir by the direct route, up and down to the summit in 24 hrs and back in Scotland without time to post his cards.

Lately, his heart was in North America and many of his recent adventures were in Alaska where he went to climb on some of the most remotest and magnificent peaks in the world. He loved the similarity to Scotland and to his love of winter climbing.

Cheeky was a very proud member of the SMC, dressed in his kilt with a good dram in his hand, he was very nationalistic and enjoyed the annual dinner in Fort William. Again he was in his element talking mountains. He was always getting the Mickey taken out of him, especially by Neil. Further embarrassment came on a trip to the CIC Hut when Neil and myself full of whisky danced on the table. Neil told Cheeky he had carved his name on the table, Cheeky walked out of the hut in disgust, it was all a joke.

Cheeky met Libby 10 years ago and they met fittingly in Clive Rowland's climbing shop in Elgin. It was the happiest I'd ever seen him. Libby was already a mountaineer with Moray Mountaineering Club and her family love the mountains and the outdoors. Mark and Libby went everywhere all over Scotland climbing and walking and the photos all over the house express the deep love they have for each other and the mountains. Libby gave him freedom to climb and do whatever he wanted, and as selfish as we mountaineers are, she never stopped him doing anything. They set up Moray Mountain Sports in Forres, and soon had a steady business where local climbers could meet, have a coffee and talk climbing. He would regularly spend time with the many young people who came in and give them

the benefit of his vast experience. He would regularly take people out, old and young alike and how many people in this area here have gained from his experience? Even his mother-in-law, aged 65, has 17 Munros to do, and did the Inaccessible Pinnacle in Skye on an awful day recently with him. His love for mountaineering was infectious and the history of Scottish mountaineering, especially in winter in the Cairngorms was his forte. He met Neil through the shop and they developed into a very formidable partnership. This was a partnership of youth and experience that climbed some of Scotland's hardest classic routes and put up a few new ones.

Cheeky could be arrogant, selfish, competitive and moody, but he could also be very kind-hearted and took many of us in including myself during times of personal trouble saying: 'Stay as long as you like, no problem.' That was the other side of him.

His dad started him off walking and climbing round the Arrochar/Loch Lomond area and he was always vanishing a bit farther each time. This must have been where he got his love for the mountains. He had a great passion for life and he loved children as Libby's nieces and nephews will tell you, like most mountaineers he was still a child at heart. He had 10 years of sports that he excelled in, but his passions was mountains and mountaineering and he developed into a tremendously safe and caring mountaineer. We have lost an outstanding friend and one of life's great characters but I feel he is still there watching, laughing and telling us how hard it was when he did that route or hill always in worse conditions. He is always watching our epics, we will all miss you and we will all take care of Libby and the family. Thanks for the memories.

D. Whalley (Heavy).

'Better to be a tiger for a day than a sheep for a lifetime.' Inscription on memorial plaque for Alex MacIntyre (killed in the Himalayas, 1982).

### JAMES G. MESSER j. 1974

JIM MESSER was a lad o' pairts. His talent in diverse fields always shone through. When he was starting to climb with friends from the Dental School in Glasgow he would arrive with interesting gear. 'Where did you get your ice axe, Jim.'

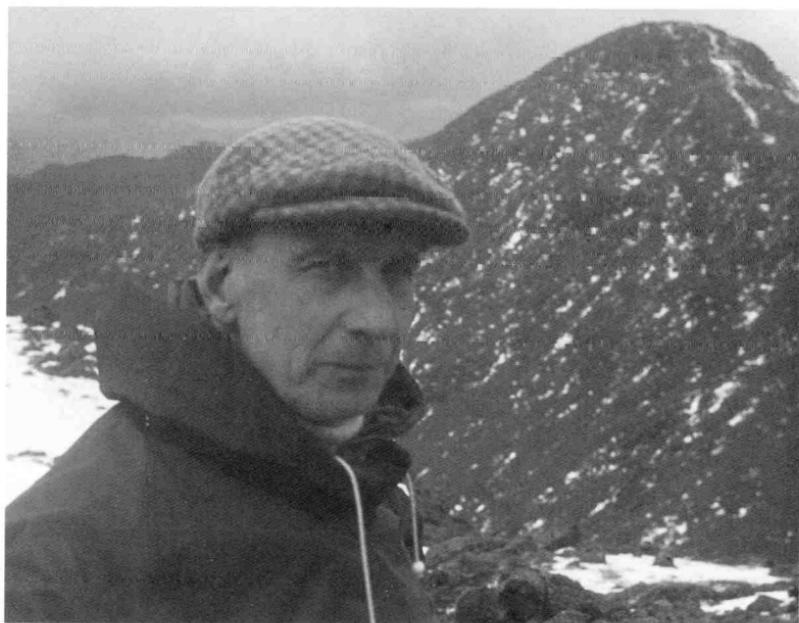
'I made it'. The axe head, like his crampons, he had forged himself and had carved the heft. His music career started in school when he made his own guitar.

He hailed from Ayrshire and Arran was one of his climbing haunts. I remember being with him on JMCS meets to Arran in the Sixties. The weather seemed to be always fair for these events. We would hire bikes, camp at the turn of Glen Rosa and head up to the crags. In the evening we would nip down to Fisher's bar and return in the dark, not always without incident.

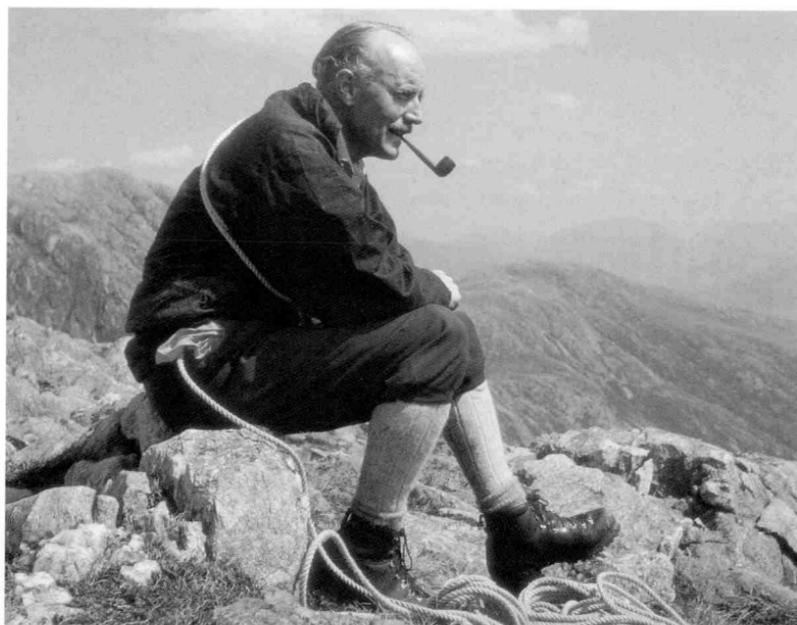
He graduated as a dentist in 1964 and joined the JMCS about that time. An early appointment which was to have a fundamental effect on his life was with the International Grenfell Association in Labrador. This is an organisation which provides health care to the remote communities of Labrador. Jim was struck by the atmosphere of the wild country in which he worked. This was a short appointment but he returned for two years 1967-69 and finally settled there in 1976, from 1978 onwards as Director of Dental Services. He did important work in the development of methods for preventing tooth decay in the Labrador communities and was



LEN LOVAT on Central Buttress, Buachaille Etive Mor. *Photo: Tom Weir.*



BILL MURRAY. *Photo: Bill MacKenzie.*



BOB GRIEVE on Garbh Bheinn. *Photo: Tom Weir.*

awarded a doctorate by Glasgow University in 1992 for a thesis on this subject. He met his wife, Ruth, in Labrador (she was a nurse with the Grenfell Association).

In June 1969 we visited Ruth and Jim in Northwest River on Melville Inlet. Barbara and I with Eric Henry joined Jim in a trip to the Mealey Mountains which lie to the South of Melville Inlet. We chartered a de Havilland Beaver floatplane to take us to a high lake and spent an enjoyable week exploring the Cairngorm-like mountains. We named some of the local features and if anyone wants to know why Beartooth Mountain is so called I can explain. We found a tooth on the summit. It is a bit small for a bear but we did find fresh bear tracks nearby. Maybe it was from a deer which had been eaten by a bear. The shape of the mountain resembles a big molar and what would be more appropriate name for a dentist to devise. The last time Jim visited us before he died, he presented us with the tooth and we now show it to our friends and tell them that there must be few people who can point to an *objet d'art* in their living room after which a mountain is named.

Although Jim's work as a dentist was mainly in conservation – he lectured in conservative dentistry at Glasgow for seven years – he was also a skilled surgeon, taking on difficult work in recreating smashed jaws for accident victims. His skill with his hands was much admired by his colleagues. This was reflected in his work as an artist. Many of us cherish our original Messer watercolours; his paintings were often shown in Nevisport shops and they can be seen in the Postgraduate Centre at Glasgow University. He was well known in Labrador as an artist. Also he was a very good musician. He played jazz clarinet and saxophone and in later years did excellent work as the director of an air cadet squadron band in St. Anthony.

In the parts of Labrador where Jim lived and worked the opportunities for mountaineering are somewhat limited but he would seek out crags for summer and winter visits, the latter being approached by snowmobile.

Throughout his time in Labrador he felt a strong attraction pulling him back to Scotland. He returned regularly; sometimes for longer sabbatical leaves. On one of these visits I remember climbing the Stob Ghabhar Couloir with Jim and Andrew James, emerging onto the ridge to face the setting sun on a crisp winter evening.

Jim had cancer diagnosed in July 1995 and he died in September of that year. His contribution to society was positive in many ways and his family, his friends, and the people of the communities of Labrador have good reason to mourn his passing.

I. MacLeod.

### **SHERIFF LEONARD SCOTT LOVAT, d. April 21, 1996, aged 69.**

IT IS A SAD coincidence that the death of Bill Murray should be followed by that of Len Lovat one month later. The coincidence is that Bill Murray's *Rock Climbs in Glen Coe and Ardgour*, published in 1949, was updated 10 years later by Len. The number of routes had doubled in that time so the Buachaille had a volume to itself, the remainder required a second volume.

Len began his rich climbing career with the Glasgow University MC, and when he first climbed Buachaille, he found it to be his natural habitat. When he had his 60th birthday on July 1986, he wrote in the Journal: 'Where else, therefore to celebrate it than on the rocks of the Buachaille with Tom Weir, climbing companion of a lifetime . . . our pleasure on the Buachaille remained undiminished.'

Eleven years older than Len, I felt young again in his exuberant company and it was Len's enthusiasm that so whetted my own shrinking appetite that I felt I had been given a new lease of life. As he put it: 'We moved light-footed on long runouts of 120ft medium nylon rope in the belief that the leader would not fall. At that time in the late 1950s free climbing was not so different from the previous 25 years, but a new breed of younger climbers were appearing, and using a proliferation of equipment offering protection on hard rock and ice.'

Len was at home on high-angle ice before front-point crampons came into fashion, repeating the classics of Nevis and Glen Coe in vibrans and using a wooden-shafted ice-axe. Our biggest day on Nevis was in 1954, from a tent in the glen reaching the foot of Tower Ridge and starting up Observatory Ridge while hut occupants were still in their beds, climbing it, descending Tower Ridge, then by Slingsby's Chimney and the North East Buttress to the summit.

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

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

As for his work as a Sheriff, he told me that no matter how rotten he may have been feeling, he came to life whenever he put on his gown and wig, symbols of the law. He loved the stage setting, the drama, and the actors. I've never been to a Jury Trial, so never realised it had a funny side, though he had to maintain a lugubrious visage. Regaling me with the court proceedings, he used his marvellous gift of mimicry to play the part of the accused, his defending lawyer, witnesses, and his solemn self as judge. His acerbic wit was relished by journalists, and the Sheriff Lovat got much honourable mention in the Press.

It was ligament injuries, caused by falling down a stair while carrying a piece of soiled baby linen, that was his first set-back, then bowel complications, which combination forced him to go easy on the mountains. Now he turned to ornithological ploys with me, and did the occasional rock climb, too occasional though to maintain his old standard. Then came the mortal blow, of a brain disorder affecting his memory, and forcing him to accept retirement. Alas, the disease intensified and he had to go into care.

The hundreds who attended the Requiem Mass in St. Aloysius Chapel, Garnethill, Glasgow, included many of his old climbing friends. An honest and deeply religious man, he had reached his tapmost elevation.

T. Weir.

**J. R. Marshall continues:** We attended Len's funeral mass, where he lay in state, mid the splendour of St. Aloysius's grand interior, swathed in the empathy of congregation, choir and a host of priests, eulogising on the man and his great contributions to the civic, social and ecumenical aspects of a conscientious life.

It was the kind of send off we don't see much of in the climbing community and I was impressed, having no idea of his high post mountaineering station in life, yet instantly recognising in the impassioned accounts of this later life, our Len, the solemn face that could flash into life with fun, the great command of language used to telling effect and always the touching kindness he could show others.

However, it's not the senior Len I wish to commemorate but the long-legged, gangling guy with that gentle face set behind a magnificent West Highland nose, the guy who was such fun to be with back in the Fifties.

I can see him now, seemingly always in a salt-and-pepper jersey, cloth cap and huge boots, holding court in Lagangarbh, for he dominated the active contingent of the Glasgow SMC, and having shouldered the task of updating Murray's Glen Coe guide, he was forever exploring obscure ways and encouraging or directing his entourage to similar endeavour.

Archie, George and I as regulars from the East naturally gravitated into his company to do many memorable routes, which then and now remain as signal points in our mountain memories.

Of these I recall a sunny ascent of the Chasm; gully climbing was quite popular then probably because they could be sociable and it was very pleasant to soak in the warm sun, parked on water washed boulders, engrossed in conversation whilst somebody led the sharp end up the next stint, often completely forgotten by the debaters.

On this occasion however, once in the Cauldron we decided to use the direct exit, which was terrific but for the icy deluge pulsing over the upper chocks, I exited blue with cold to the pleasure of sun baked rock, so stripped off, wrung out my gear and redressed to bring Archie up. I was near to dry when Len forged through, his jersey growing longer and more voluminous till he floundered onto the warm rocks like a landed salmon, in a welter of water and explosion of hilarity at the completion of such a splendid climb.

Then there was the Dalness Chasm, that trip was like a school picnic till we got to the Barrier pitch. Archie, Boston and I went for the back wall but Len, ever considerate went by the left wall to give me some protection but thereby committing himself and Tommy to a most unpleasant vegetative traverse to regain the line.

The climb above faded out of expectations but, of course, the company and crack made the day.

One of the most memorable of all however, was when Len invited Archie and I to join him for a winter ascent of his summer line Scabbard, in Coire nan Lochan. We accepted with enthusiasm and charged off into the coire to assemble on the ledge under the main corner where Len and I babbled away while Archie, the anchor man, organised the belay and made sure we did as we should.

The crack and slab were in atrocious condition, verglased and unfriendly, Len

naturally in the lead progressed laboriously, two feet up, one back down, whilst I helped sustain his advances, providing my axe head as his occasional stance for a fresh launch and an endless stream of vocal support as he battled on into the niche where in desperation he banged in a peg.

Len was impressed by its security. I was, to say the least, sceptical. No matter I was hauled up to crouch in dependence on this suspect peg and induced to act as a ladder for the now fired up Len, who stepped up off my shoulders and struggled to another serious move, where he resorted to a long peg vertically into the moss to safeguard the final passage, expressing doubts as to its worth as he stormed up the now easy groove above.

Archie and I followed, being near to knackered getting the long peg out of the tenacious moss but enthralled by the superb climb the big man had shared with us.

Len was without question a very competent climber who thoroughly enjoyed exploring the glens to clarify old routes, inevitably to make many new ways. It is little realised that he made more than 50 good new ascents in diverse areas across the Scottish Highlands.

We had some fine seasons in the Alps, during which I grew to understand and respect him even more for his ability to handle difficult situations and people with humanity and understanding (after all I must have been a bit of a handful at times).

One case which illustrates this side of Lovat was when he and Patey were charging up the N.E. Face of the Pain de Sucre when they realised the two climbers following their steps far below, were the same two who had asked earlier how to get on to the Ryan Lochmatter. They tried to advise them of their mistake, without success, then pressed on to beat the sun. Suddenly, the two below were careering down the ice runnels to disappear over the rimaye in a horrifying fall. I think if it had been Patey or I, we would have rattled up the climb and alerted a rescue at the cable station. However, Len insisted they descend to help these men, where it was found they had, fortunately, fallen into a crevasse on either side of a snow bridge to be saved by the rope, amazingly to escape major injury. So the valiant rescuers helped recover the unfortunates and chaperone them down to the organised recovery service and safety.

Typically, Len instead of bearing them a grudge, insisted we visit the one remaining in dock to wish him well, he was massively bruised but otherwise nothing more serious than a hugely swollen head which looked like an old leather football, with seeping slits instead of the normal orifices.

Insulation from the reality of mountain experience is the paradox of today's climber; imagine never having been soaked to the skin, near frozen to death or no security and no rescue organisation to pluck one from certain fate, yet these were all vital elements in the forging of men like Lovat (old fools have protested thus for ages). He was a great companion, specially remembered for his folk and Spanish Civil War songs rendered around the camp fire or his full blooded arias reverberating around the Dolomitic spires.

Buachaille Etive Mor was his special home, he celebrated his 60th birthday there in fond reunion with his old stomping ground, it would have been fitting to repeat the visit a decade on, but sadly, events dictated otherwise when he succumbed to his illness a few days prior to his 70th birthday.

I FIRST MET Len in Greenland in 1958 on the seminal Expedition to the Staunings led by the redoubtable Professor Slessler.

As someone said at the time when you take Len on a trip you take half of Scotland. This referred to his ability to mimic in a humorous, but nevertheless kindly way, the voice and character of so many different types of people from mighty Advocates and their Criminal Adversaries to the doucest member of this Club – all provided rich material for his gift. Len was in the centre of the Scottish intellectual tradition, a Cockburn of this century with a fund of legal stories from Braxfield to the present day, widely read in European prose and poetry, a believer in Scotland yet internationally-minded. Catholic in mind as well as religion, he could quote as easily and unpretentiously from George Campbell Hay as from William Shakespeare and sing with equal authenticity *The Bonnie Earl o' Moray* and *La Banda Rossa*.

He was also a bold and well-controlled performer on rock and a thoughtful contributor to the metaphysics of the irreversible move. In Greenland he made some intrepid first ascents. I had the impression, however, that he was so responsive to the immense beauty of the place that he found it difficult to concentrate monomaniacally on climbing alone. This, of course, is one of the problems encountered in Greenland by sensitive people. None of the Club had the misfortune to appear before him when he was Sheriff of Lanark which is just as well because the sentence would have been exemplary and delivered with salt.

I.H.M. Smart.

### KEVIN WILSON j. 1986

KEVIN WILSON died untimely on Maundy Thursday 1996. He was pushed off the final raise to plateau by a snowslip at the top of Pumpkin. His partner that day, Richard Harrison, luckily got away with sprained ankles. Creag Meagaidh was held in high esteem by Kevin despite or because of various incidents that took place there. January 1986, a dire retreat off Ritchie's, March 1988 avalanched out of Raeburns from just below Smith's nearly to the howff, climbing the Wand while cornices from Diadem to the window collapsed at random and the perennial sport, locate the Window in the Whiteout.

Kevin got into the SMC in 1986 (no one from Yorkshire joins, they only ever 'get in') and I reckon he was one of the most active members until his death. His life revolved around mountaineering and his mountaineering revolved around Scottish winter climbing. Even trips to Nepal were classed as training for Scotland.

Consider his year. Spring – rock climbing and a trip to Skye or Arran before the midges attain optimum density, maybe a bit of Mediterranean sunshine provided there was climbing or mountain walks. Summer – a trip to the Alps and some extended hill walking. He did the West Highland Way last June with his wife, Julie, and his son, Daniel, who was 13 on Easter Monday. Autumn – would be either Nepal or wet bothy trips to places I had never heard of and Munros I had only ever seen as names on the list, plus some back-end scratting about in the

Lakes. Then the Dinners looming up, he always wanted to do a route before hand and most years he got up something. Get through the festivities with a trip to the Lakes or spend it at his cottage at Upper Auchintore, Fort Bill. Then the real thing. Short days, blowing a hoolly and poor conditions but so keen he was always out. As the days lengthened and real ice appeared he was in Scotland plugging away, fully fit and brimming with confidence then it gets warm and all too soon the season's over. Kevin did Central Gully this year which was his 50th different route on the Ben. That includes most everything classic, bar the modern desperates. One night in the summit shelter after Tower Ridge in 1979 was enough. An experience he strove mightily to avoid repeating. Mind he was a good man for a night out, him and Pete Boyle spent a night out on the Eiger and Kevin and I sat like two warehouse pigeons for a 12 hours on Kongde Ri in 1988.

He didn't think much to the bivy camps we had on Terseringma either. Sat at bivy one, half in the tent he got bricked. Thought he was OK, set off up the ropes a couple of hours later, on a vertical section and working hard he passed out. The self rescue was successful but he called it a draw so did not get the summit. Then there was the time Clothier bricked him from the first pitch of Point Five. Kevin retired hurt, I joined Clothier and Cartwright. Two months later on Indicator Wall, Clothier bricked his lad Neil . . . and wanted to join Kevin and I. We agreed but were adamant he would not be allowed above us. Somehow he outwitted us and led the last pitch and yes, he bricked us both but only scrapped us bark. By 1986 Kevin had 10 Alpine seasons under his belt and always climbed at an Alpine pace. If he was going any slower you knew it was hard.

He was the common denominator of the York winter team. He rang round, we met at his house and exploited his hospitality once he bought Heather Bothy up at Fort Bill. We were all much put out when he let it to Alan Kimber for a full winter then started letting it all year round. Where were we supposed to stay ?

We did four trips to Nepal together, great mountaineering. In 1988 we flew to Kathmandu knowing nothing, but what Kevin gleaned from the Lonely Planet Guide. None of the agents in Kat wanted to know about a party of two so we ended up with a very dodgy agent but an excellent Sirdar, Angrita Sherpa. He got us organised and we obtained a permit for Kongderi (6187m), we walked into Namche Bazar, down and across the river, up through the forest, found a base camp for a crack at it. We spent a couple of days acclimatising, took a paddle up the glacier, bivied and at it. All went well, good mixed route and on the summit about an hour before dark. We started abbing down looking for a ledge, nowt doing. So bivied on a sloping shelf all but hanging off the ice screws and no sleeping bags. Fourteen abbs the next morning to get back on the glacier, one rope was cut by stonefall on abb number four and deteriorated steadily every time it went through the figure eight. We did not have enough kit to do shorter abbs. Angrita had baked us a chocolate cake but we were too knackered to eat it that night. We went back to Namche and to a walk up to Pangpoche and Ama Dablam base camp. Having seen Ama Dablam we wanted to climb it.

The trip's official title was 'The British Ama Dablam Expedition 1990' but it could well have been York Mountaineering Club back-end meet (organiser Kevin Wilson) as all the members were from the York area. Another good trip with four out of six on the summit including Kevin.

1992 was just Kevin and myself fired up for Shingu Chuli from the south. We arrived in Kat but our gear didn't. It was coming on the next PIA, flight, PK 268 which went down short of Kat. A very sobering experience as we were waiting with the friends and relatives of the victims. We only lost our gear. Options were various but choice obvious, try and rake some gear together and carry on. We spent three days buying, hiring, borrowing gear then a flight to Pokhara. Angrita went in a taxi with the kit. He hired porters and another taxi to Dhampus where the Annapurna trail starts. Good walk into Machapuchare base camp from where we started prospecting for a way into our valley, not obvious, local knowledge essential. We hired three local boys to carry the gear in so they showed us the way and very devious it was too. That put us in a cave with the Manx Mice, and the local lads away down. We lugged everything up to where we needed to be, got up the icefall and glacier to just below the face and our intended line, then it snowed, a lot. Kevin and I froze in our cotton vests for a couple of days and reviewing the situation decided to go up and try and retrieve the gear we had cached and then go down. Next morning after much burning of juniper, Kevin, Angrita and I went up and eventually located and brought down the kit. We all dropped into crevasses at some point. We packed next day and carried down the day after. A good trip but no summit.

Kevin wanted to do something a bit different so before we left Kat we made an application for a permit for Gaurishankar which had not been climbed on for years. We eventually got the permit for the back-end of 1994 but could not get the brass or the climbers together. 1995 it came right and away we went with the three SMC members in a team of seven.

A hard trip. Bad weather early on, stonefall and no decent camps meant we only made it up Terzeringma (6333m) which is a subsidiary peak of Gaurishankar before running out of steam. We did however, come out of the Rolwaling over the Trashi Labtsa pass into the Khumbu (Everest region). We all agreed that was one of the best mountaineering jaunts ever. We had made a good decision leaving Gaurishankar as about 10 days later there was once-in-100-year snowfall which I understand eventually took 80 lives throughout the Himalaya. We would have been well extended on the ridge between Tierseringina and the south summit of Gaurishankar (2.5km long and all above 20,000ft).

Then there were the work parties, Kevin being a plumber and a gas fitter he had done a fair bit of work in the CIC. Initially, to curry favour with the old governor but after fitting the new stove he became almost possessive as the new patron.

Kevin had started taking Daniel climbing last year. One of their first routes together was Curved Ridge on the Buachaille. Julie wants Daniel to carry on with the climbing which is an indication of her attitude and lets all hope Daniel 'gets in' in the fullness of time. If he develops half of Kevin's enthusiasm and commitment he will be among the right sort. They both supported Leeds United and Kevin had a annual bet with Geoff Allman, £10, on who would be farthest up the league! Leeds or Man. United. Kevin even thought he had a chance of winning this season but as it turned out it does not look like Geoff will collect unless there is something in the will.

He was a great companion on the hill, as reticent to speak as the best of the old timers, a good man for telling the tale while supping his ale. I've never seen him

rattled, he always wanted a window open and now again complained about his back. At his wake the phrase we all associated with him was: 'Bye I'm sweating like a bastard.' He was a great exponent of another Yorkshire maxim.

See all, hear all, say now't  
 Eat all, sup all, pay now't  
 And if thee ever does out for now't  
*Do it for thee sen.*

Or maybe that was just the SMC rubbing off on him.

We all draw on the bounty of the Scottish hills, the challenge, the pleasure, the vigour, but think on, occasionally a toll is levied. Kevin paid the toll.

Nick Harper.

### H. ADAMS CARTER

'AD' CARTER, the long-time editor of the American Alpine Journal died in March 1995. In 1983 he graced our annual dinner in Glasgow with (and I quote the scribe of the day, Geoff Cohen) 'an outstanding lecture and slide show' of his expedition to Nanda Devi, 46 years after the first ascent of which he was the organiser. On this occasion Willi Unsoeld's daughter Nanda Devi Unsoeld tragically died, and as GC noted 'the sensitivity of Ad's account was remarkable . . . and left his audience inspired and moved.'

Ad was a mountaineer in the heroic style, yet tolerant of the new trends. He had a delicious sense of humour and a natural kindness. Born and bred in New England he took in his first peak at the age of five and his last a few days before his death at the age of 80. Fitted out with two new hip joints in his later years, he continued to rock climb and ski. He died quite suddenly one lunchtime, at home. As his wife, Anne, said 'Ad was always lucky'. His contribution to mountaineering has been enormous. By 20 he had climbed all over the Swiss alps. On the National Geographic's Yukon expedition (1935) he made the first crossing of the St. Elias range. In 1937 he was a member of the US Olympic ski team. He participated in 18 expeditions to Peru making many first ascents and introducing numerous young people to the joys of high altitude expeditioning. In 1970 he ran a relief expedition after the great earthquake on the eastern slope of the Cordillera Blanca.

He edited the AAJ continuously from 1960, and was just finishing the proofs of his 36th journal the day he died. He brought it to the point where it was the most important annual in mountaineering. His correspondence was enormous. Every inquiry received a reply; thus he knew everyone in mountaineering. No-one passed by Boston Airport, but he met them, dined them, climbed with them, either at his home in the suburb of Milton or at his family home near Mount Washington. We are privileged that he shared a few moments of his busy life with the SMC.

Malcolm Slesser.

## PROCEEDINGS OF THE CLUB

### New members

The following nine new members were admitted and welcomed to the Club in 1995-96.

John Ashbridge (34), Geophysicist, Methlick, Aberdeenshire.

John Bickerdike (47), Chartered Civil Engineer, Largs, Ayrshire.

Graham Dudley (38), Geologist, Fintray, Aberdeenshire.

Brian Dullea (32), Doctor of Medicine, Clackmannan.

Andrew Huntington (24), Dentist, Edinburgh.

Julian Lines (26), Geologist, Aviemore.

Geoff Lowe (39), Social Worker, Inverness.

William Stephenson (34), Consultant Engineer, Aberdeen.

Neil Stevenson (21), Student, Glasgow.

### EASTER MEET – TOMDOUN HOTEL

This gathering of the Club has declined in popularity of late due largely to the deplorable weather experienced at Easter in the last few years. However, the appointment of a new Meets Secretary with clearly greater influence in such matters changed things at a stroke and those present enjoyed for three days the best of Scotland at its wonderful best. The occasion was thus restored to something of the status of Easter meets past.

The organisation even extended to engaging the hotel boats which were used by all with great enthusiasm to access those remote hills at the west end of Loch Quoich taking out the loch-side slog and avoiding the perils of Scott Johnstone's 'notoriously difficult' Abhainn Chosaidh – reduced on this occasion to a sluggish stream.

Disasters were few. One member temporarily lost his wife in the forests while hastening back to the hotel for the Saturday dinner (commendable) and the Secretary grounded the entire fleet on an island in Loch Quoich attempting a short cut to the far end of the loch (lamentable).

This is not a climbing area but no true mountaineer could fail to have appreciated the superb walking conditions of dry underfoot, firm snow over 600m and shimmering blue skies with wonderful visibility. Hills ascended included Ben Aden, Sgurr a' Coire-bheithe, Sgurr nan Eugallt, Sgurr an Fhuarain, Sgurr na Ciche, Garbh Cioch Mhor, Sgurr nan Coireachan, Gairich, Sgurr Mor, Sgurr a' Mhaoraich, Gleouraich and Spidean Mialach.

Those present included the President R.N. Campbell, R. Allen, D.A. Bearhop, G.T.B. Chisholm, G. Cohen, A.G. Cousins, T.B. Fleming, J.R.R. Fowler, G.S. Johnstone, P.F. Macdonald, G. Macnair, W.M.S. Myles, R.J.C. Robb, M. Slessor, I.H.M. Smart, A.A. Thrippleton, O. Turnbull (Meet Secretary) and W. Wallace. The guests were D. Allan, S. Allen and I. Cumming.

J.R.R. Fowler.

### CIC MEETS

Another winter of generally poor climbing conditions in the west made its impact on the meets at CIC. Of the seven arranged meets, two had no recorded attendance and the largest attendance on the others was 13. Won't do chaps – use it or lose it (you could always scrub the floor).

For most of the winter there was very little ice (except on the path) and a lot of unconsolidated snow. When things did improve, both the lower and the upper routes suffered from lack of ice. Many routes did not form at all – for example, the Minus Gullies, the Psychedelic Wall area and The Curtain. On the other hand, an unusual lack of cornices allowed ascents of the rarely-climbed Winter Chimneys at the beginning of April. When some sort of conditions did finally arrive at the beginning of March, members' activity verged on the frenzied with the few classics that were in any sort of condition receiving multiple ascents.

The continuing lack of car parking facilities is causing difficulties and it is worth noting that there is local agitation in support of providing a car park for climbers' use. Whether or not anything will come of this remains to be seen. In the meantime, it should be noted that parking on the grass verge of the main road is viewed with disfavour by the local constabulary.

R.T. Richardson.

### The One-Hundredth and Sixth AGM and Dinner 1995

Milton Hotels' offer to host our Dinner in the Milton Lodge – the twin *gulag*-type property near the distillery – was declined and the Club returned to the Alexandra for the third and probably last time for the present. The afternoon function took the form of a lecture by Vic Saunders who surprised the company by inviting people to leave – those who had been unsuccessful in obtaining the goggles necessary to watch his stereo slide presentation to full effect. This was no mere climbing slide-show but an examination of the architecture and space of India and Nepal – both concepts dramatised by the slide format. A quick change to party clothes and back to the hard chairs in the hall for the annual meeting. This was, by the standard of recent years, a dull affair with the President bringing the meeting to a close in a record 45 minutes. Bob Richardson was thanked for his long service at the CIC, Donald McIntyre was thanked for reorganising the archives and Donald Bennet and Bill Runciman were thanked for their work on the Concordat on access. All this appreciation left only the poor old Trust as the outlet for aggression and paranoia and it was, I think, eventually agreed that a Trust report might be included in the formal business as a courtesy to the Club. The future role of the Publications Company would also be examined.

And so on to the cramped surroundings of the dining room where choux swans floated once more in puddles of raspberry coulis. The President spoke (and sang) eloquently in a balanced speech welcoming new members, remembering those who had passed on and reflecting sadly on his inability to effect change through the transience of his office which he likened to clinging to Bill Murray's 'mere rugosity' in comparison with those appointed officials who can weather Presidential storms on the comfortable ledges and wide terraces of their offices. A period of Irish blarney followed as Phil Gribbon introduced our guests, who like the members, were uncertain if they had been insulted or praised. Some splendid and innovative piping was provided by Iain Macleod followed by the customary vocals from Curly Ross.

So where to next year? It looks likely to be Strathpeffer.

J.R.R. Fowler.

## JMCS REPORTS

**London Section:**— An active core of 30 can be inaccurately inflated to 60 paid-up members by including the senile and infirm, err . . . sorry, respected club elders and the inevitable unenviable fatties on The Committee. Biggest mistakes of 1995 included: Handing the circular over to the cognitively disparate Nigel the Mad, and allowing Tony Buj and Steve Senior to breath fresh air in to the meets programme. The latter resulted in a February meet at that noted ice-climbing centre, the Roaches. Sloth was a bastard in Footfangs . . . Rod Kleckham (token authentic Scot) replaced the long-serving but not very high-standing Peter Whitechurch as hut bookings person and general hypocritical castigatior of visiting University Mountaineering Clubs. By far the worst errors of the committee was letting in new members like Trevor Milner, Geoff the Postie, Huw Perkins, Chris Combrie and Tim Brew.

The Club meets remained a rich collage of disparate and apparently unreconcilable personality defects: knives flying, bodies falling, couches bouncing. About 13 well-attended official Club meets were held, plus many more impromptu (and subsequently disowned) crash-and-burn affairs after, or instead of, work. This included a well-organised and attended (but ultimately boring) Club dinner at the Tyn Y Coed in Snowdonia. The more youthful age profile of the Section (i.e. now includes members under 60) prompts a rethink for this event in 1996. Scotland featured highly in official and unofficial activities. The former included the well-attended 'Cesspit Meet' with the Glasgow Section and a Spring idyll on Arran. It also included Fryers' post-Parallel B game of 'Hunt the rucksack' in a white-out.

Exotica: Members climbed in Yosemite and at Tuolumne Meadows in the US, with accidental (honest!) 'trundle of the year' award going to Team Jordan/Walker off the Nose of El Capitan. In the European Alps, ascents included the Droites North-East Spur Direct, the Hironnelles Spur on the Grandes Jorasses, and a new Piola classic on the Petit Jorasses. At the Wendenstock members climbed the modern classics of Sonnenkonig and Aureois, and two different teams visited the *Mirroir d' Argentine* and the Dolomites.

Several trips were made to the Himalaya, including Chris Combrie to Everest, Gavin Jordan to the Karakoram and Hugh Jordan to Nepal. Other hardened mountaineers visited the Picos d' Europa, Spain, Norway, Lundy and Corsica. Plans for 1996 include trips to Alaska, Nepal, Lundy, Yosemite and the Alps.

An increase in harder rock climbing grades was observed drunkenly from a distance through the summer heat haze. Ascents such as *The Axe* and *Midsummer Night's Dream* by the likes of Perkins, Fryer and Applegate causing much fear and loathing by less-gifted seconds. In addition, there was an increase in memberless members climbing in the HVS/E1 category, notably Hartshon and Blake, who also exported their skills and questionable standards of personal hygiene to Norway. The egocentricities of desk-bound male psyches led to many insane soloing escapades, with Millstone, Cloggy and Gogarth providing the full range of disappointingly hard-landing options. Watching Perkins's *Kama Sutra*-like contortions trying to belatedly change in to his harness halfway up a 6b gritstone horror was particularly interesting. The heat wave meant Gogarth featured highly in soloing and traversing escapades, with a particularly memorable interface with the Irish Sea after a plummet off the first belay of Pentothol. The climber on the pitch below seemed quite surprised as we went past.

Off the crags the membership left its usual assortment of marks, scratches, splashes, stains and craters on a range of roadside crash barriers, river boulders, harbour jetties, lane hedges, roundabouts, carpets etc. Memories are varied: burbling Italian V twins; seeing a Friday night light burning in the window at Glanafon; a Cloggy-side bivvy complete with slug butties; that 100th route at Gogarath; Big Steve hitting Nigel the Mad with a couch (!); seven bike crashes in as many months, including two at the same roundabout by the same person.

*President:* Andrew Walker, 1 Hancock Court, Main Road, Bamford, Derbyshire S30 2AY Tel.: 01433 651707. *Hut bookings:* Glanafon, Snowdonia – Rod Kleckham, 129 Weydon Hill Road, Farnham, Surrey GU9 8NZ. *Secretary:* Steve Gladstone, 36 Meadow Close, Hockley Heath, Solihull, B94 6PG.

Andrew Walker.

**Edinburgh Section:**– Membership remained healthy during the year at approximately 70 members and welcomed the arrival of six new members. A majority of the Club members maintained an active interest in mountaineering pursuits throughout the year. Twenty weekend meets were arranged during the summer and winter months. Traditional evening midweek climbing was enjoyed, weather permitting, around the central belt and beyond – proving to be popular with those attending.

The Shelter Stone, in June, was perhaps the most popular and successful meet of the year – 15 members were to be found on various hillsides, crags and contortions around the Loch A'an basin. Other venues included Skye, Torridon, Ben Nevis, Glen Coe and the Lake District.

On the international front, the section was well represented across the continents. Europe proved popular once again with several parties making climbing trips to France, Austria and Switzerland in the course of the year. Interest in Norway saw a resurgence during the summer months with three groups making various 2000m ascents in the Jotunheimen and Hurrungane areas. Farther afield, our regular Asian rock-rat visited Ao-Phra-Naang in the Krabi region of Thailand during the Spring. Another member, while working (holidaying) in Nepal on his medical elective, visited the Khumba region and the Everest base camp, ascending Kalo Pattar (5500m). South America was also visited by one member with two fellow SMC members during a month-long visit of the Cordillera Vilcabamba and Cordillera Blanca regions of Peru.

The section's two huts, the Smiddy at Dundonnell and Jock's Spot at Newtonmore, continue to be popular mountaineering bases, much to the credit and effort of the hut custodians. On a lighter note, the only complaints to date with respect to last year's roof improvements at Jock's Spot is that several members have noted lost sleep due to the increased natural lighting – on the other hand more people should miss the rafters!

Officials elected: *President*, F. Van-Wijck; *Hon-President*, J. Fowler; *Vice-President*, K. Holden; *Hon-Vice-President*, N. Suess; *Treasurer*, C. Stupart; *Secretary*, R. Sinclair, 11B Fettes Row, Edinburgh, EH3 6SE; *Smiddy Custodian*, F. Fotheringham, Tigh na Sith, Braes, Ullapool; *Jock's Spot Custodian*, A. Borthwick, 2 Aytoun Grove, Dunfermline; *Committee:* D. Buchanan, N. Cruden, C. Eilbeck, B. Finlayson and S. Holden.

R. Sinclair.

**Perth Mountaineering Club (JMCS, Perth Section):** While the Club's mixed membership has remained at a similar level for the last couple of years (around 80, including honorary members), there are now plenty of introductory members who will, hopefully, swell the ranks.

The club held 15 official weekend meets last year, augmented by summer evening climbing and barbecue meets, winter climbing wall trips, slide evenings and lectures. Our first 'foreign' meet for a while was held in Donegal and provided a wide range of activities from scuba diving and climbing to hillwalking, sunbathing and scree-running at 26 weeks' pregnant. (This last activity being limited to relatively recent members of the Club.)

It was the turn of the Perth Section to arrange the Whole Club AGM and dinner for the JMCS. These were held at the Glen Clova Hotel happily coinciding with the Glen Clova Beer festival. The main result of the AGM being continued male-only ownership of the JMCS – bah! humbug! etc.

Our own dinner was held at the Sligachan Hotel in Skye, addressed by Hugh Evans – an expatriate guide there. Thanks Hugh.

The Club also participated in the Mountain Mind Quiz this year – having the misfortune to win. Consequently, next year's event will (provisionally) be held at the Perth Civil Service Club on Wednesday night, March 12 next year.

If you want any information about the Club, or the Section, feel free to call me on 01738 828058, but please hurry – I am currently trying to prepare a case for replacement on grounds of diminished competence.

The following officials were elected: *Hon. President*, Donald McIntyre; *President*, Chris Bond; *Hon. Vice-President*, Robin Campbell; *Vice-President*, Mel Crowther; *Secretary*, Antony Lole; *Treasurer*, Tom Rix; *Auditor*, John Rodger; *Newsletter Editor*, Mel Crowther; *Meets Secretary*, Grahame Nicoll; *Committee*, Iain Robertson, Ray Lee, Linda Beaton and Allan Vaughan.

Andy Lole.

**Glasgow Section:-** 1995 was a year of steady consolidation for the Section with an encouraging increase in the numbers attending the regular meets. A total of 22 meets were held in Scotland and a number of informal meets abroad. As usual most members were also active on the hills outwith organised meets.

The early part of the year was characterised by the lack of snow early in the season, followed by too much snow later on. Combined with the lack of the usual freeze-thaw cycle this resulted in few winter routes for most members, however, for some this was compensated for by the excellent ski-mountaineering available for much of the winter.

The good summer weather during 1995 encouraged a number of people onto the rock and many good weekends were enjoyed. The weekend meet to Elphin in early May proved memorable with many members enjoying sun-drenched rock at Reiff and warm hill days with excellent visibility. Other memorable meets occurred on Arran in early June, the Cobbler on midsummer night, including what may be the first didgereedoo recital on the summit, a visit to the North-west to climb the Old Man of Stoer, and a weekend meet to Beinn a' Bhuid in late June. All of these meets coincided with warm sunny weather and a host of classics were climbed.

Unfortunately, our trips to the Hebrides this year were not blessed with similar weather and two trips to Skye, in May and July, were met with the usual Skye

downpour. However, the most memorable island trip of the year occurred on the Glasgow September weekend on Rum, when 11 members were stranded for an extra day on the island due to high winds causing the ferry to be cancelled. Luckily CalMac bowed to the onslaught of phone calls from the only phone box on the island and laid on a special sailing the following day.

Despite the good weather at home, many members headed abroad and once again America proved a great attraction. Routes in Colorado (Longs Peak, Eldorado Canyon and Rocky Mountain National Park), California (Yosemite Valley and Tuolumne Meadows), and Wyoming (Wind River Range and the Tetons) of varying difficulty were ascended. Europe also featured on the list of attractions with the Alps, Spain, and the Czech Republic being the main destinations.

Section membership, with three new members during the year, is currently steady at 85, of whom 20 are life members.

At the AGM in November the following officials were elected: *Hon. Member*, W.H. Murray; *Hon. President*, Benny Swan; *Hon. Vice-President*, Neil Craig; *President*, Peter Cairns; *Vice-President*, Andrew Sommerville; *Secretary*, Donald Ballance, 1/R 11 Airlie Street, Hyndland, Glasgow, G12 8QQ, (Tel: 0141 357 3073, Email: D.Ballance@mech.gla.ac.uk) URL="http://www.mech.gla.ac.uk/JMCS/"; *Treasurer*, Andrew Sommerville; *Coruisk Hut Custodian*, Sandy Donald, 15 Smeaton Avenue, Torrance, Stirlingshire, G64 4BG, (Tel: 01360 622541); *Committee*: Iain Cumming, David MacDonald, Neil Marshall, Alasdair Reid, Ian Thomson.

Donald Ballance.

**Lochaber Section:**— Over the last year membership has remained virtually the same at around 50, including two Honorary Members. Most members are active on the hill and a few just enjoy the gathering at the annual dinner.

Several meets were held throughout the year with varying attendances, the most popular being Inver Cottage, Achnasheen, and an old favourite, Ling hut, Torridon. In the summer most members were content to do their own thing. During the very hot spell, many took advantage of the cooler evening with a lot of activity on the Polldubh crags.

The Section meets informally in the Nevis Bank Hotel on Thursday evenings and last year there were three slide shows which provided good entertainment.

Throughout the year the Section's hut at Steall, Glen Nevis was well used, with most weekends being booked up. The new porch-come-drying-room is nearing completion and a plinth was laid for a compound to house large Calor gas bottles, to eventually do away with the small butane bottles inside the hut. Materials are now being gathered to renew the roofing.

At the end of October the annual dinner was held at the Ocean View Hotel, near Aultbea with around 40 members and guests in attendance.

Officials elected were: *President*, I. Donaldson; *Hon. President*, W. Munroe; *Vice-President*, I. Walker; *Hon. Members*, B. Bissell, D. Scott; *Treasurer*, G. Bruce; *Secretary*, K. Foggo, 19 Abrach Road, Inverloch, Fort William. (Tel: 706299). *Hut Custodian*, J. Mathieson, 43 Drumfada Terrace, Corpach, Fort William. (Tel: 772599).

K. Foggo.

## SMC AND JMCS ABROAD

### Europe

#### Rounding Ireland in *Mistress Malin* 1995

DEREK FABIAN and EWA MAYDELL report: A circumnavigation of Ireland had been floating around in our thoughts of summer cruises for some years, but with never enough time in hand to do justice to the splendid anchorages and scenery of Ireland's west coast. However, the skipper's retirement a year ago, and the exchange of our GRP Vertue *Malindara* for a Swedish wooden Fantasi 31, *Mistress*, which we sailed then from Goteborg to Scotland's west coast via Shetland, Orkney and Cape Wrath, gave us both the time and the greater comfort of a larger boat. This is not to mention the persistent northerly winds at the beginning of June this year which prevented a north-bound alternative (and will now keep for another year). On June 6 the crew had mustered at our base in Loch Moidart: Robin Chalmers who had sailed with us from Sweden in 1994, John Grigor from New Zealand, Derek as skipper and his wife Ewa as deck hand and galley slave. A 'day or two' of work became nearly a week when it blew up and near gale-force northerlies prevented us at times from even boarding *Mistress Malin*, pounding the seas at her mooring off the Loch's south shore

It was June 12 before we set sail, to round Ardnamurchan in the evening and to reach the shelter of Tobermory where – having discovered in Loch Moidart that we had a battery charging problem – we diagnosed a faulty alternator. Failing the next day to find a replacement we devised, with a temporarily installed isolating switch, a doubling up of the 'domestic' batteries into the dyno-charging circuit of the engine battery. Much of this second day was lost. But who minds, in picturesque and sun-bathed Tobermory? Thus we sailed in the evening light only as far as Salen in the Sound of Mull for the night. However, on June 14 a 56-mile sail took us to West Loch Tarbert on Jura; the inner loch, with its spectacular raised beaches had been a favourite haunt in many past years.

With another early start on June 15 we caught the S running tide through the Sound of Islay and, the wind now also astern, we quickly covered the distance along this narrow channel. Almost before we knew, *Mistress Malin* was passing the Point MacArthur Light and was heading out into the wide Sound of Jura. The wind freshening, Gigha and then the full length of the Mull of Kintyre Peninsula were soon left abeam; gusts reaching Force Seven made for an exhilarating, if cold and wet, passage across the North Channel to shelter in Carnlough. We found the tall ship *Lord Nelson* to be lying at anchor, just outside the small fishing harbour where we tied up for the night. Finding a pub open after a late dinner was not easy, but eventually we had our first tastes of Guinness, pub live music and Ireland.

June 16: Coastal passage to Belfast Loch, in calmer seas and light winds. We tied up at the Carickfergus Marina, by the Yacht Clubhouse. Too late again to seek out entertainment in the town but the clubhouse restaurant, The Wind Rose, was welcoming and well-stocked with food and drink. Then, the 17th: a day in Belfast. Bus to the city centre, a long walk-around, a visit to the Ulster Museum, lunch (more Guinness), and some land navigation to seek out the Sculpture Park, which we found to be hardly improved by a number of eccentric sculptures.

June 18: A brisk 63-mile sail south-bound in the Irish Sea took us to

Carlingfordlough. Just before we reached its entrance a strange, unmarked but naval looking vessel, lying at anchor and yet flying no flag, caught our attention and John at the helm – and well up on military airborne and seaborne vessels but unfamiliar with this one – steered us close to it for him to photograph. This prompted an immediate reaction: an inflatable was launched, manned by six marines of huge stature and clad in khaki diving gear. They sped after *Mistress Malin*. We were interrogated politely but sternly and informed that they were a Coastguard vessel on special duty, wishing ‘to keep a low profile’. This, after all, was the border between Ulster and the Republic, we mused – feeling distinctly bemused.

And so into Carlingfordlough, to drop anchor off Greencastle. But the harbour master, when we paid a shore visit to the castle, reported the holding to be poor and suggested in view of a southerly-gale forecast that we should pick up one of his moorings. We did, and later found the unmarked coastguard vessel on a mooring nearby; but no strong wind materialised.

June 19: Today Drew Sommerville was due to join us, as fifth member of crew, overlapping for one week with Robin. Dublin, or more precisely the Howth Marina, north of Dunlagraire, was to be the rendezvous – which we reached with unusually plenty time to spare. The marina entrance has ‘truly Irish’ markings which fail to indicate the shallow water at one end of a sea breakwater and, having radioed ahead to be allocated a berth by the harbour master, we spotted now both the berth number and Drew already there beckoning us on, just 50m from that end of the breakwater wall. Almost disbelieving the Seafarer as the depth indicated dropped relentlessly, we grounded; fortunately only a mud bank, but there were rocks too and tide was at dead low springs. The harbourmaster, who admitted later to having been distracted as we entered and having therefore not radioed his customary warning to visiting yachts, had the club launch racing around the other end of the sea wall in less than a minute and insisting on passing us a line – just as we, with our own engine, were slowly extracting ourselves from this embarrassing predicament – and then towing us first sharply into unseen rocks before finding deeper water. Thank heavens for *Mistress Malin*'s cast iron long keel! But why cannot that customary radio warning be replaced by a clearer marking (or a mention made in the Irish W Coast pilot)? There must be other visitors occasionally arriving at low springs.

Howth we found is so quiet in the evening that it is almost impossible to eat out. But there was one busy restaurant, The Casa Pasta, where tasty (pasta) dishes were more than tempting for a hungry relieved crew. There appeared, too, to be several parties – to all of which we duly received friendly invitations simultaneously; and so once more the Guinness flowed.

June 20: What better than a day to see Dublin? Its unusually interesting museum, with an amazing collection of (well displayed) Celtic artifacts. A bus tour of the city centre was also impressive, and we finished the day with a very Irish experience: a musical pub crawl led by two professional fiddlers, touring interesting pubs with their commentary on history of the city and the origins of Irish folk music, not to mention their delightful musical recitals – which gradually lost that professional precision with the pints of Guinness put away at every stop. It was a merry crew that returned by train to *Mistress Malin* that night, ready for what proved to be an uneventful 46-mile passage motoring the next day, June 21, to Arklow.

June 22: From Arklow, rounding Tuskar and South Rock in a brisk easterly, to

reach Dunmore East by evening. We rafted up alongside one of the many fishing boats in the busy, smelly, tiny harbour; and later gratefully accepted, in the welcoming and ever-friendly local yacht club, the offer of a mooring for the night in the yacht club marina. A splendid dinner that evening; one of Ewa's never-failing scrumptious meals aboard which included 'home baked' pizzas, and bread produced almost daily in the ship's oven.

June 23: Short 24-mile passage from Dunmore East to Dungarven. The entrance to the land-locked river harbour there is tricky; an extensive shallow sandy bay has a dredged channel described in the Irish coastal pilot as being clearly buoyed. We could see no buoys beyond the starting large red can buoy! Proceeding slowly, though still under sail, with the sandy bottom barely inches below our keel we received a call on the VHF from a friendly motor craft who, failing to identify his vessel – and there were dozens crisscrossing the bay – instructed us to turn back and follow him in. We never did work out which boat had radioed, but rapidly dropped sail, as our Seafarer had made it increasingly clear we would need to, and turned about to motor almost as far back as the can buoy before we could detect with the glasses a line of thin marker poles floating in a blue haze – far apart and virtually invisible in the bright sun – which indeed turned out to mark the long narrow channel leading to the river inner harbour.

With *Mistress Malin* safely tied up and drying out in the mud at a pontoon alongside the tidal river wall, we learned – in response to our comment to a helpful harbour attendant that the way in was a trifle 'unclear' – that the buoys had been removed the previous year, to be replaced in time by up-to-date buoyage. Meanwhile, many visitors had been running aground. The floating perches were few and were temporary.

With the tide ebbing *Mistress Malin* was soon heeling at 30° to normal, making life aboard anything but normal. Good reason to sample the splendid local seafood, Guinness and Prawer Whiskey. Plans were laid for the next day which had been assigned to sampling the local hills – the Knockneal Mountains.

June 24: We were tipped from our bunks to an early breakfast as the tide settled us into the mud once more. A taxi was procured to take us to a convenient starting point. We would hitch-hike back for a departure before the evening ebb. With a Blue Peter pennant flying aloft, three of the party, having slightly mis-read the map while completing a traverse of hills, made it back aboard with just 15 minutes to spare before we would be fast in the mud again. We retraced the channel at speed, with both river current and fast ebbing tide astern; but wind in the bay was ahead, making for spectacularly confused seas until we reached open ocean where, heading eastwards along Ireland's southern coast, the wind now fell astern.

We made Ballycotton harbour long before the sun was set. Once rafted up – on a Saturday night – to one of the many fishing boats we felt guaranteed a good night's sleep and leisurely morning. Not so: the swell set in and adjustments to mooring warps of the inside craft needed constant attention to prevent the outer craft of the broad crowded rafts from riding into one another; and *Mistress Malin* had the bowsprit of a handsome and vintage German cutter just two metres, at times much less, from her stern.

Then in the morning June 25 we fared no better: one inside fishing boat wished to put to sea; the whole of three broad rafts had to be reorganised, and the cutter we learned had its engine in need of repair. Another of the fishing boats was lined up to tow it to Kinsale. To cap the scene, a mooring marker buoy, dragged below the

surface by one manoeuvring boat the previous evening, then lodged its 25mm thick ground warp around our propeller. No way could we dislodge this shackle; the water in the tiny harbour being opaque with silt and oil, even a dive overboard failed to achieve anything. We resorted to our sturdy propeller mounted 'stripper'. It did the trick, but the 'Ferodo' lining of our gearbox forward clutch cone took a toll, of which we were made just aware on engaging forward gear for the remaining three weeks of the voyage.

Meanwhile, we gratefully put to sea without breakfast, heading for Kinsale. It was well after mid-morning. And already a memorable day for Robin's last on this cruise. We found a berth near the Kinsale Yacht Club. It was the Sunday of the Fastnet Race finish but the prize giving was over and the clubhouse deserted. However, the bar was open for Guinness and showers.

June 26: Robin disembarked (with some sadness for all) after being hoisted to the masthead for some chore, or was it photography. The day was lost to maintenance, and repairs to the heads. Diesel was to hand on the quay, but its pump too gave up and we had to wait for its repair, which gave time for Derek to hitch a lift 12 miles to a yard up river where parts for the heads pump were found (salvaged from a 'derelict'). By way of consolation for these delays we dined at a Pub called The 1601, the year of a Battle of Kinsale. Our evening ended in huge style with live music and songs accompanied by violin and melodeon. Friendly atmosphere and great fun.

June 27: To Bantry Bay with a detour, in the fine weather, to take in the Fastnet rock at close hand. The Rock had the last laugh, for on the return to our track, near Sheep's head, a sudden squall had us furling the genoa and reefing the main – not to mention our becoming soaked to the skin. In Bantry Bay we dropped anchor in a magical spot at the foot of Hungry Hill. It was the Skipper's birthday and a special dinner aboard soon satisfied the hungry crew; then plans were laid for another day of hill-walking. Thus June 28 was spent in traversing Hungry Hill, in near-tropical weather. Then a swim in the warm seas of the bay was followed by a visit to one of the smaller islands where dozens of sea birds were nesting. The terns were hatching and became noisily worried by our visit, and by the danger to their untidy gravel nests, containing one to three green-spotted eggs.

June 29: To Dingle Bay (64 nautical miles), diverting to examine the famous Skelligs at close hand. The Great Skellig, or St. Michael, has an historic monastery and can be visited by chartered ferry while the Little Skellig, brilliant white with guano, is the largest gannetry in Ireland. The air was filled with a snow-storm of screaming gannets. And then in Dingle Bay we were entertained by Fungi the local dedicated dolphin with his large following of tourists in chartered boats from Dingle Harbour.

June 30: An early start, but Fungi appeared to be on duty 24 hours a day. We met him as we departed Dingle Bay, at 0530h. This time we had him to ourselves. Shortly afterwards we were in thick fog. Bad news because we were heading for Blasket Sound, a difficult narrow passage between Blasket Island and the mainland. The tide would be against us despite our early start and could be flowing at four knots; moreover, Blasket Island produces a magnetic anomaly. But we felt confident of our GPS; until, that is, we were in the sound with zero visibility and compass rendered useless, and found our distance to first waypoint increasing when steering towards it.

This was compounded by our Navstar software having a 'bug' that causes it to

signal bearings of 360-369 when it means 000-009; a signal that the cockpit Navdata repeater refuses to accept, causing it to show a bearing to the previous waypoint while indicating the new waypoint. And much of the passage through the sound is just east of north. Graphics to the rescue: now we found the value of the Navstar plot-mode, creeping from waypoint to waypoint, along the plotted track on the GPS screen (gone were our doubts about the usefulness even superfluousness? of this mode of navigation). An experience to be remembered! We cleared the fog at Sibyl Head and with the wind abeam reached for the River Shannon, dropping anchor at 18.00h off Carrigaholt Castle; a perfect setting for farewell dinner aboard for John.

July 1: An early start for John, whose leave was at its end. He disembarked, to hitch and bus to Dublin from where he had a flight booked. The remaining crew of three set sail for the 50-mile passage to the Aran Islands and were soon being entertained by a school of dolphins dancing around the bow wave. Entering Kilronan Harbour we turned into the wind and motored the final mile. Suspicious engine noises (water boiling in the exhaust), rising engine temperature and finally, as we dropped anchor, ominous fumes from the engine compartment, heralded a water-cooling fault.

Investigation revealed a split in the exhaust hose between silencer and engine; while overheating had caused failure of another water hose and potential failure of a fuel line! Our water pump appeared to be working, so the cause was still a mystery. By astounding good fortune – it being a Sunday morning July 2 – the only other boat in the harbour, *Squirrel*, was crewed by a marine engineer Adrian Blyth, and his wife, from Galway. Adrian was able to help with sections of excess hose taken from *Squirrel's* engine, but the root cause of the overheating remained to be diagnosed.

A visit ashore in the afternoon showed Kilronan to be swamped with tourists from the mainland, many on rented bikes. Cycling is the best form of travel in the Aran Islands but there is a limit to the number of cyclists its narrow roads can accommodate. We noted tourist shops, full of sweaters similar to Scottish Aran knitwear, and other attractions reminiscent of the Cumbraes. Returning aboard we weighed anchor for Clifden, hoping to round Slyne Head before the strong winds forecast turned northerly. But just 20 minutes of motoring due west into the wind after clearing Killeany Bay revealed a still overheating engine, plus now a slight Diesel seepage.

*Mistress Malin* was turned about and the sails set for what became a superb sail with following wind to Galway; made the more entertaining by our passing a splendid fleet of West Coast Hookers, participants in the annual Galway to Kilronan race. We headed for New Harbour and the Galway Bay Sailing Club marina, and anchored off the clubhouse close to where *Squirrel* was moored. A phone call enlisted the help of Adrian in the morning for a lift into Galway to locate a replacement fuel hose.

Its installation failed to stem the diesel seepage but a visit from Adrian, and a dram or two before dinner on July 3, led to the discovery of a superfluous bleed-screw in the fuel line, sealed in by the engine's 22-year-old paintwork and now loosened by the overheating. Meanwhile, the westerly was increasing to gale force and our enforced delay was proving timely; though it took much of another day before the 'mystery' was traced to an unusual water impeller failure (its central core had become detached and engaged only intermittently at low engine revs). The remainder of that day and the whole of the next July 5 we were gale bound,

remarkably sheltered although New Harbour appears open to the west. A sight-seeing visit made now to Galway was entertaining. Among other interests were the wooden sculptures on the paved side-walks of the large Corrib River, flowing through the centre of the city, from whose banks many fishermen cast their lines endlessly, unperturbed by pedestrians and cyclists.

July 6: By afternoon the gale had begun to abate and we set reduced sail for the Aran Islands once more, but this time to Portmurry on Inishmore the largest island of the group. A beautiful bay with a semicircle of golden sand. We landed and strolled to a prehistoric fort Dun Angus, built on the edge of a 500ft cliff, whose constant erosion by the sea endangers both the fort and the related archeological dig. Our day finished with a must for the Aran islands, sampling the local speciality at a seafood restaurant.

July 7: The weather was fine, the wind westerly and we made 57 miles broad reaching round Slyne Head and then High Island to reach Killary Bay, a long fiord-like inlet between hills, reminiscent of Ronas Voe in Shetland. Not many anchorages, and our choice was five miles from the entrance, a tiny village on the north shore, Bundoragha, where the hills and a salmon river come down to the sea. The former were the menfolk's objective for the next day, July 8, while Ewa planned a provisioning trip, three miles by dinghy, to Leenan village at the tip of the inlet. Thus Drew and Derek did the horseshoe of hills including Mweetrea (sounds African) in warm swirling mists, welcoming the westerly breeze, while Ewa became duly soaked rowing with wind opposing tide, and returning using the outboard against wind and swell.

July 8: The final day of Drew's leave, and so an early (0545h) start for the long 67-mile coastal passage to Broadhaven, passing Clare Island, Achill Head, a string of islands west of the Mullet peninsula, and finally rounding Erris Head at the northern tip of this peninsula; much of it, regrettably, motoring. Spectacular cliff scenery, especially Achill Head. Dropping anchor off the Coastguard slipway, we met Roger Aldcock from Cornwall, unemployed and so single-handling his South Coaster, *Hershel*, around Ireland, rebuilding her as he went. Ashore, to procure a taxi for Drew's departure in the morning; and another farewell dinner aboard, with fresh prawns from the fishing catch ashore.

It blew up again the following day, July 10, and soon after Drew had disappeared, with Roger sharing his ride to Belmullet to seek a parcel (a part for his engine) at the post office, the crew of *Mistress Malin*, now just two, had to seek shelter from a rising southeasterly by crossing to the far side of Broadhaven Bay followed later by *Hershel* on Roger's return. By then the wind was a screaming Force 7-8, and we had to stand by to go to Roger's rescue – communicating with him by VHF – as *Hershel* limped across painfully slowly (clutch slipping) to the sheltered side of the bay. Here we sat out the gale until late afternoon; and then made a landing to find that a store, reported to be 3km from the shore, was an 8km walk each way.

July 11: Some of the most exciting sailing of the cruise was to come, including this day on which the light southerly freshened steadily to Force 5-6 and with it astern we covered 69 nautical miles from Broadhaven (departing 0625h) past Dunmore Head and the magnificent Stags, across Donegal Bay and around Rossan Point to reach Boylagh Bay and drop anchor in the crystal clear water of wonderful Church Pool. A memorable passage; all adjectives well justified. There followed a leisurely morning, July 12, ashore waiting for the tide stream to turn northwards and take us in lighter winds a gentle but intricate nine-mile inner passage through

lurking skerries to Aranmore, or Aran Island. Yet another 'Aran', also famous for its sheep and aran sweaters.

July 13: A day in which the sailing was good and the goal for the day, rounding Bloody Foreland, became almost secondary to deciding the destination for the day; the latter kept moving in the way that destinations do when one's craft is covering the distance. And *Mistress Malin* seemed intent on reaching as close as is feasible to Malin Village at the head of the notorious drying Trawbreaga Bay, just SW of Malin Head. We had a high spring tide and the right timing to make this possible, but the pilot warns that sailing craft entering across the breaking sand bar at the entrance may find they have to remain in the bay for longer than intended; there is only one deep enough pool for anchoring, well in on the S shore, but the tidal rip is fierce. We weighed up the conditions; they appeared perfect. And when would that chance come again? But what the pilot fails to say is that the sand bar at the entrance, and the sandy river banks, are constantly shifting. This we began to suspect was so from our now-trusted Seafarer readings, and was confirmed by a local family who visited us from the far shore as we dropped anchor. They had watched as we grounded for a while on a sand bank (with gladly, and by design, plenty of still-rising tide to go) before reaching with much relief the isolated deep pool. All too isolated, as we found later, for it proved impossible to reach the far shore by dinghy in the ebb tide race; thus Malin Village remained un-visited by *Mistress Malin's* joint-owner crew. The local family also reported that Trawbreaga Bay has on average one visiting yacht approximately every five years. It was with their sketch of where the sand bar at the entrance now lay (the pilot was written in 1991) that we were to make our escape safely on the still-rising flood tide in the morning.

July 14: With a 0730h start we made a tense exit from Trawbreaga Bay and headed north around Malin Head and Inishtrahul Island: then NE for Islay, planning to reach Bowmore in Loch Indaal by early afternoon. Not to be so: the notoriously fickle tides in that section of the North Channel took over and with the wind dropping away we motored endlessly at full throttle, making at times only one-two knots in the direction of the Rins of Islay and yet seven knots through the water. And the pilot warns that . . . 'it is not unknown' . . . in some conditions . . . 'for the S-going tidal stream to run for as long as 11 hours'. For seven hours in the tide race the sea was an oily calm but for those sinister tidal vortexes that seem to detach the helm from the keel. Eventually, we dropped anchor off the Bowmore distillery at 1950h. The 40-mile passage had taken more than 12 hours. The town was quiet by the time we made it ashore after a meal; but we procured a bottle of Bowmore malt at a mini-supermarket to celebrate a return to Scotland.

July 15: A further shore visit and then it was too late to catch the north going stream in the Sound of Islay, so we headed for Gigha, crossing our southbound track from Loch Moidart of five weeks ago to the day. In the bay at Ardmish on the E side of Gigha, for the first time since Kinsale we found ourselves among more than two or three boats at anchor. Yachts from around The Mull were rafted up three to a mooring and their numbers increased all evening to a count of 60 or 70.

July 16: A short passage, 33 miles of mostly motoring, through the Sound of Islay to Oronsay. We dropped anchor with plenty of time to roam ashore. The island has changed but little over the years; but the Priory of St. Columba is now ordered and well maintained by a resident keeper. Built on the site of a former Celtic monastery,

it is probably the most important ecclesiastic antiquity in the Scottish islands next to the abbey on Iona.

July 17: The wind was light and we made a late (1045h) start for the Treshnish Islands, heading northwards through the Sound of Iona. But the wind increased to Force 5 and 6 from the SW and big seas to the west of Mull caused us to abandon thoughts in the late afternoon of a Treshnish anchorage; so with a broad reach around the Point of Ardnamurchan, we continued – through a magnificent and classic sunset evening – to *Mistress Malin's* home base in Loch Moidart where we picked up her mooring at 2330h. This is a loch whose intricate entrance one would not recommend in the dark, but with 23 years of accumulated 'local knowledge' we had no problem. A fitting finale to a five-week cruise in which we logged a total of 1266 nautical miles, with some 490 of these either motoring or motor-sailing (in a summer of generally light, but at times contrary and strong winds).

*(Log awarded the Clyde Cruising Club Donald McNamara Trophy).*

### **The 1995 Yachting Meet on the Scientific Research Ship (Irish style) *Mistress Malin.***

Drew Somerville writes:-

The Skipper was on his engine  
Changing the diesel filter  
The rest of the crew were lounging about  
Slightly out of kilter.

The 1st Mate Ewa, she's quite a diva  
Was cooking an elegant stew  
The rest of the crew were hungry as hell  
And stuffing the cruising chute clew.

The 2nd Mate Robin, the GPS boffin  
Was plotting another course  
But his own true flair  
Was the Bosun's Chair  
And Lazy Jacks way up aloft.

Kiwi Grigor, the crew's trick cyclist  
Was really quite off-pist  
The hospitable Irish all flew past  
And left him pretty aghast.

That Rasds chap, he joined the ship  
At Howth Marina fair  
He kipt in t'focslle with Robin the Mate  
Who could ask for anything mair?

We by-passed the Wicklow Mountains – too good a wind, too near civilisation (Dublin), no interesting anchorages, the Skipper wanted to sail on – I don't know, I vos only obeying orders.

Third stop (on the right) was Dungarvan, a tricky little port that played hard to get with a dearth of buoys, but with true Irish hospitality the day was saved when a wee motor boat called us up on Channel 16 and urged us to follow him in, thus avoiding some potentially embarrassing sandbanks. There was further scientific research that evening as we planned the following day's mountaineering. The Comeragh Mountains were approached (by taxi), the Skipper had invested in a brand new 1/50,000 Irish OS map of the area, so we all knew where we were until he and the 1st Mate left us on our own with a mere 1/250,000. The three mapless ones collect a marvellous coire with green lochan but found the Irish miles a bit long until the penny dropped – they had gone a ridge to far – damn all small scale maps. Not to worry, they may not have been able to hitch a lift or call a taxi but Irish hospitality in the form of an old Republican got them back to harbour before the Blue Peter sailed into the distance.

The 2nd Mate jumped ship at Kinsale, and then there were four to enjoy a good pub meal in the '1601' and entertainment by melodian Dan O'Boyle, as well as carrying on with our serious scientific research.

Having got the loo into better shape, and more watertight, the 1st Mate allowed us a long sail – by Galley Head, Cape Clear, Fastnet, Mizzen Head, Three Castle Head and Sheep's Head to Adrigole Harbour, a truly idyllic anchorage and ideally situated for a god horseshoe round of the Caha Mountains. Hungry Hill may not be a Munro but it had its own challenges as we navigated our way between grassy ramps looking for weaknesses in the strata. In spite of (heat) haze there were great views of Bantry Bay, the Kenmare River (really a fjord) and the rest of the Caha range. Adrigole Mountain is only half the height of its big brother Hungry Hill, but it still entertained us as we fought our way to the wee grocers to regale ourselves with 7UP and choc ices.

It's another perfect morning as we head farther clockwise round Erin's fair isle to take in The Skelligs, Little Skellig being the largest gannetry in Ireland with lots of guano to prove it while big brother Skellig Michael, with nae guano, is an ancient monastic site: but there's no time for culture, we have a date with Fungi the Dingle dolphin and a last Irish meal for our antipodean warrior, John. We don't allow him to jump ship at Dingle, he had to suffer a bit more before being allowed to escape – read on. There was an interesting sunrise the following morning, a harbinger of fog. The brave crew are not disheartened, they've got GPS after all, but Blasket Sound has a magnetic anomaly, and then Murphy's Law comes into force – there is a slight glitch in the GPS repeater system highlighted when Rasds has to ask where north is! He is instantly promoted to Lookout while greater seamen than he have a serious scientific discussion on what the hell to do with visibility at about 50m and (apparently) no navigational aids available – will the Skipper buy radar next? Comes the cool mid-European accents of the 1st Mate: 'Vy don' ve use de graffiks?' The aforementioned graphics were a whim of the Skipper when he was investing in his GPS – it would entertain the Grandchildren! To cut a long story sideways graphics save the day and when the sun peeps through the mist it's in the right place.

We have to draw a veil over the next few days – engine trouble and contrary winds. A week after the Caha Mountains we sail into a superb fjord – Killary Harbour – just below the Mweelrea Mountains. Saturday and the weather is starting to break but the Skipper and Rasds have a great day doing the Mweelrea horseshoe.

Rasds' three-week pass is running out fast and we're on the edge of nowhere but

a spanking wind drives the *Mistress Malin* at speeds up to 7 knots and we reach Broad Haven at the south west edge of Sligo Bay where Rasds jumps ship (and then there were two) with every hope of reaching Glasgow the same day – fond hope, but that's another saga.

For the complete sailing saga you are referred to the *CCC Journal*.

As regards the mountaineering we are proud to record that no Irish Munros were bagged but three great days were enjoyed on the hill.

As to the extremely serious scientific research it was proved beyond any shadow of a doubt that the farther South you go, the better the Guinness.

SIMON RICHARDSON reports:— At the end of July, Chris Cartwright and I visited Chamonix and spent two weeks climbing in the Mont Blanc range. The first route on the sports plan was the Pilastro del Sorriso on the East Face of Monte Gruetta above the Italian Val Ferret. This intriguing rock wall had fascinated me for nearly 15 years, but it is rarely climbed due to a long approach up the chaotic Gruetta glacier. Fortunately, heavy snowfall the previous spring rendered the crevasses passable, although the huge gaping bergschrund gave Chris an interesting mixed pitch. Once established on the wall, the climbing was sustained and enjoyable, although the route-finding kept us guessing all the way to the top. We were unable to climb the aid pitch at two thirds height, so were forced to find an alternative line, and in doing so made an unwitting first free ascent of the route.

The Aiguille du Jardin was the next mountain on the agenda. The weather forecast was unsettled, so we went up to the Couvercle Hut to wait for things to improve. Needless to say, the predicted storm never arrived, so we spent a sunny morning climbing a modern rock route on the Pinnacles du Moine. Extreme incompetence, meant that we only realised that we were climbing the wrong mountain when we reached the summit with two pitches still to go on the topo!

Impatient to get to grips with the high mountains, we set off next morning for the Aiguille du Jardin, and the perfect orange granite of its South Pillar. The only existing route took a line up the left edge, but we were tempted by the line of cracks leading into the prominent corner on its right arête. Ten pitches of sustained rock climbing took us to the top of the pillar by mid afternoon when the long overdue storm arrived.

It flashed and boomed just enough to frighten us, but fortunately it didn't put down much fresh snow. Next morning, after four pitches of mixed climbing, we reached the summit and joined the Jardin Ridge. Two hours of classic mountaineering took us over the Grande Rocheuse to the Aiguille Verte – a really enjoyable way to pick off three 4000m peaks. We descended a snowy Moine Ridge and reached the Couvercle just in time for a welcome dinner.

After a route on the Aiguille du Praz Torrent in the Aiguilles Rouges, it was time for our *grande finale*, a direct ascent of the South Pillar of Frêne. Circumstances conspired against us at this point. The weather forecast was poor, and Chris's wallet and passport were stolen. Having come here three years in a row with this objective in mind, I wasn't going to be put off easily however, so after a rushed visit to the British Consulate in Geneva, we set off for the tiny Eccles bivouac hut high on the south side of Mont Blanc.

Our gamble with the weather paid off, for two days later we were 200m up the pillar, eyeing up the imposing central section, which was etched out against a

crystal blue sky. Previous ascents had avoided this by traversing left, and climbing the gully to the left of the pillar, but our proposed line took the central chimney which cut through the bulging crest. Overhanging and draped in icicles, it would not have been out of place on a cold November day on Lochnagar. Five absorbing pitches led to a series of easier cracks and grooves. The weather was still perfect, so we bivouacked about 100m below Mont Blanc de Courmayeur. Next morning, two hours of ridge-bashing took us to the summit of Mont Blanc, and the realisation of a cherished dream.

To complete the high mountain experience, we traversed Mont Maudit and Mont Blanc du Tacul, before crossing the Vallee Blanche and taking the cable car down to Italy. All that now remained was to take a taxi to retrieve the car from Val Veni, drive back through the tunnel, and thank the weather for smiling so kindly on us during our short stay.

### **Adventure Climbing in the South West**

James Hotchkis reports:- In September 1995 Stan Pearson, myself, Grahame Nicoll and Mel Crowther climbed on the sea cliffs in the south west tip of England, in weather reminiscent of France in the spring and at a time when the heatwave in Scotland had ended some weeks before. Narrow hedged country lanes, Cornish pasties and a limitless selection of beer in country pubs was so unlike Scotland that we felt as though we were abroad.

The granite and greenstone cliffs on Cornwall's north coast offered magnificent climbing. Unlike the continent there were no bolts. Frequently we abseiled down to sea ledges and climbed back out. The climbing was wholly different from Scotland but, with the vagaries of the sea, tides and freak waves, just as exciting. We climbed many of the classic routes at Bosigran such as Suicide Wall, Bow Wall, Little Brown Jug, Anvil Chorus, Paragon and Variety Show. On the north Cornwall coast desolate moors, with 4,000 year old hedges (complete with preservation orders!), speckled with ancient disused tin mines stretched to the edge of the sea cliffs. A sense of history pervades the area. Bow Wall is still something of a test-piece, nearly 30 years after Joe Brown led the first pitch.

The rock at Bosigran and surrounding crags such as Chair Ladder, the Great Zawn and Carn Gloose was tough and reliable with generally solid protection. On Carn Gloose, Astral Stroll gave an excellent four pitch E1, traversing low across the sea and then up through bands of overhangs above a huge cave mouth. There was no-one else on the crag, our company being the sea birds and the crashing waves. Variety Show in the Great Zawn also deserves a mention. An abseil into the Zawn lands one on sea ledges which are splashed with spray. The crux crack line of the climb was a vertical 90 foot pitch; it involved laybacking and jamming in a spectacular position, high above the waves.

We also climbed at the Lizzard, Berry Head and Avon Gorge. Moonraker gave an exciting limestone excursion, particularly in view of our very late start for the traverse around the back of the cave to the start of the climb. If one ignores the guide book recommendation of completing the traverse within two hours each side of low tide one risks not only getting one's feet wet, but also falling into the sea. Try swimming with your climbing gear!

Either before Scotland comes into season or in the autumn Cornwall is a superb location; adventure climbing at its best.

## Himalaya

### British Nanga Parbat Expedition 1995

SANDY ALLAN reports: Sandy Allan and Rick Allen (both SMC) accompanied Voytec Kurtica (Poland) and Andrew Lock (Australia) on an expedition to the unclimbed Mazino Ridge of Nanga Parbat (26,600ft) in Pakistan. The Alpine-style expedition was led by Doug Scott who has tried the route twice previously. The proposed route starts close to the Mazino Gap and takes a line to the ridge and then along the ridge at an average height of 23,000ft (approx.) for several days, where it meets the Schell Route and from there to the summit.

The group flew to Islamabad and drove to Skardu. From there mountain bikes supplied by Raleigh Bicycles were used to traverse the Deosai Plain to the road junction leading to the village of Tarishing from where porters were hired and the three-day walk to base camp began.

Several forays were made on the route but the team had to descend on several occasions due to bad weather conditions. Eventually, after a concentrated eight-day push the team reached 23,000ft and part way over the ridge but were turned back by bad weather on the corniced knife-edged ridge which made the progress and retreat very awkward.

The climbers arrived at base camp at the end of July in bad weather, missing the good weather which gave Alan Hinkes and company good weather for their ascent of K2. Thereafter the unusually heavy monsoon affected climbing most high-altitude climbing in the area.

The expedition received grants from the Mount Everest Foundation and British Mountaineering Council. The climbers would also like to thank Berghaus, Mountain Equipment, Lyon Equipment and many others for their assistance in supplying equipment.

The expedition was also used as a vehicle to raise funds for Scottish European Aid and Children in Crisis.

## Morocco

### Anti-Atlas

HAMISH BROWN reports: In the autumn of 1995 Hamish Brown and party raided south from Taliouine, (south of the Toubkal/Sirwa massifs) to climb Jbel Iguiguil (2323m), an easy enough venture but rewarding years of mystery over a hill big enough to show a snow summit on distant horizons when motoring in the Souss. Jbel Aklim, at 2528m is the highest of the Anti-Atlas summits and the Jbel Kest range (highest 2359m) near Tafraoute are the best-known. Jbel M'Quorn (2344m) and other isolated peaks also offer good sport. Being far to the south this is a range offering plenty of trekking and climbing in both the winter into spring season and in late autumn. Hamish can offer fuller information, maps, etc., to the area, and elsewhere in the Atlas.

## REVIEWS

**Cairngorms Vol. 1 and 2:**— (Scottish Mountaineering Trust, 1995. £11.95 each. ISBN 0-907521-45-2 and 0-907521-46-0).

Thanks must go to Allen Fyffe and Andrew Nisbet, as well as numerous contributors for what by and large are very good guidebooks. Their intimate knowledge of the Cairngorms and enthusiasm for the area is evident – various anecdotes, helpful tips and points of interest are well expressed, The grades given are as a result of a consensus and the consultation exercises have paid off. The continued introduction of a two-tier winter grading system is generally well implemented and is welcomed by most activists.

Guidebook writing can be a hazardous task – you are walking into the firing range and, inevitably are going to be sniped at. I would shoot on a few points.

There are a few errors which should not have made it to print. For example, Vertigo Wall in winter is described as ‘an outstanding truly mixed route.’ Howff-Dweller takes a right-facing not left-facing corner. A route on the diamond slab is inexplicably omitted. Some anomalies occur in the graded list. For instance, Stone Bastion appears at the bottom of the E5s in Vol. 2, but (more realistically) appears in the middle of the E4s in Vol. 1. These are hardly major errors but they don’t contribute to what is otherwise a very professional end product.

I would be critical of the photographs. The balance is good, i.e. summer-winter, historic-aesthetic, harder routes-easier routes, but several of them have been published before. While some are excellent and inspirational, some are disappointing and mediocre – pictures you wouldn’t even show at your local slide night far less publish for the nation to view. The picture of Steeple, for example, does nothing to portray one of Britain’s finest and most satisfying mountain routes – it could have been taken on a 15ft outcrop. The reproduction of some slides is also suspect – yours truly does not have black hair! The picture of Yeti on the back cover of Vol. 2, of the climber front pointing his rope, is not of Chris Forrest (he took the photo) but is the grand master of Scottish winter climbing himself, Andy Nisbet. The front cover of this volume – of the big raking systems on Central Gully Wall – is disappointing. The routes farther left are much more photogenic and could have provided a much more inspiring picture.

The starring system seems to have been taken on rather half-heartedly with harder winter routes being unstarred. It is also iniquitous on some counts. I don’t think that saying the Dubh Loch is a great crag so we will be harsh with stars is fair. It is also inconsistent because the same ideal hasn’t been imposed on the Shelter Stone Crag where routes are generally starred (mostly with due cause, although a few climbs could have shed a star).

Routes like Bombadillo, The Israelite, Perilous Journey, The Wicker Man and The Improbability Drive would get three stars if they were on other cliffs but only get one star here. Flodden would surely fulfil any criteria imposed for a three-star route. Solitaire at Broad Cairn bluffs – while being a good route – is relatively minor compared to titanic adventures such as Sword of Damocles, The Bedouin, Dragonslayer, Groanmaker, The Shetlander or Web of Weird/Hybrid Vigour, yet it receives two stars, these routes, unbelievably, receive none. Did the authors think that those who have done these lines lack the integrity to accurately rate their quality?

I'm quite happy with the relative trickle of climbers visiting the mighty Dubh Loch but it would be good to see a few more souls savouring the experiences on offer – some more stars to encourage people wouldn't have gone amiss.

The guides seem a bit expensive to me (no jokes about grippy Aberdonians please). Maybe the deadline for printing could have been extended to allow for the brilliant summer weather when people were obviously active in new-routing. As a result we have some routes stuck in on a page by themselves and other routes, including two E7s have not made it to print. This is a shame considering the length of time we will probably have to wait for further Cairngorm editions. Less haste in the guidebook production would have paid off.

Having said all this, I recommend these guidebooks as essential items for the bookshelves of anyone interested in doing brilliant mountain routes in the Cairngorms.

Wilson Moir.

**Magic Mountains:-** Rennie McOwan. (Mainstream Publishing, 1996. £14.99, ISBN 1-85158-707-1).

Our present home has a toehold on one of the hills making up the Ochils. The blurb on the book jacket tells me that the author was brought up at the foot of the Ochils. Our hill has, by repute, a ghost, but one not included in McOwan's book. This is not surprising, as almost every bump, hollow, Glen, village has a ghost, or ghostly story attached to it. The ensuing volume of complete Scottish ghost stories would be unbindable.

Rennie McOwan has, in this book of 160 pages and 28 short chapters; collected stories of hauntings; sightings; sounds and ambience, some well known, some less so. There is no index; it is not a scholarly book in that sense, but it has tales worth reading and re-telling, preferably before the dull red glow of a bothy fire.

Rennie expresses surprise that bothies should be so often mentioned in tales of ghosts. I'm not. It may be that those who stay there are often in a strange (to them) environment. Brought up in the noisy cities they look to the hills and moors for an escape. Tired after a long walk they are suddenly enclosed by the smoky dark walls of some lonely bothy, the only sounds the strange, unearthly wailings of some coastal bird, or the unclear mummings of a nearby burn. The noisy stove quiets for the last time that evening and the silence rushes in under the door. They fall asleep at last, perhaps lulled into Lethe by a wee dram, only to be rudely awakened by the crash of the bothy door, footsteps next door, and the hairs on the back of their necks prickling upwards. (I had this last phenomenon as a young boy - it does happen given sufficient terror!) Complete the tale yourself.

My only bothy 'experience' was in that archetypical venue Ben Alder Cottage. Sleeping with head just above the wooden floor, as is one's practice, sleep was ruined by mice who all night long, it seemed, rolled huge boulders noisily up and down under the floor. It's not that I'm a disbeliever in tales of hauntings, it's just that I've never had any experiences sufficiently weird to stretch my normal beliefs. I'm in good company of course. I discount most stories that have happened to those physically or mentally stretched beyond the normal – the mind begins to fill in the gaps when the body is exhausted. I also discount most stories where there is even the slightest whiff of money, or sensationalism. Recent sightings of railway barriers in the Cairngorms might just be such an example.

The author does mention a fairy circle he once knew on 'our' hill, one formed by the action of frost and time on a grassy hollow. But now a track has been dug out of the hillside and in the building of it the fairy circle has gone, the spell has been broken. Mood is everything. One of the colour photographs in this book is in the fine pine forest of Glen Derry. McOwan has cleverly included an elfin like figure in the mid distance, one with a red hat and long, white beard. Looks awfully like Adam Watson Jun. in fact. But if you didn't know, you might think it was an elf, or dwarf, or Hobbit, and so the mood would be set. We want to believe, but can't.

It is important to try and record the legends, and McOwan has made a fair stab at doing just that. But we need a bit more than conjecture, and rumour and local gossip and fine old Gaelic stories told over countless peaty reeks. And until that happens, all we have is a collection of iffy tales handed down, or a boisterous set of active mice under a bothy floor, or a sudden gust of katabatic wind slamming shut the bothy door.

And, oh but I'll have to go, there's someone knocking at the door . . .

Ken Crocket.

**Burn On The Hill – The Story of the First 'Compleat Munroist':** – Elizabeth Allan (Bidean Books, 1995, 184 pps, £17.80).

If your book collection includes a fair number of Weir's, Murray's, Gordon's, Watson's, Brown's, Humble's, McNally's, Perry's and Firsoff's, then buy this book and enjoy both its content and possession, for it will complement and enhance your hill library. For your money you will get a fascinating insight into the life and times of the Rev. A.R.G. (Ronnie) Burn, a life member of the SMC who tramped the Scottish hills and glens between 1914 and 1927; 'compleating' both Munros and Tops (558 in total) by July 20, 1923.

Ronnie Burn followed on the heels of his fellow cleric, the Rev. A.E. Robertson, albeit some 22 years later, but was the first Munroist (of two) to also scale the Tops; a feat repeated only six times before the early 1950s. (I have the impression that, if Ronnie Burn had enjoyed AER's financial status and long holidays, he might well have become the first person to complete the Munros in one continuous circuit; for he undoubtedly had the passion and stamina. Sorry, Hamish.)

But back to the conception of the book which, in itself, is a fascinating story. About 22 years ago, a London book-collector, G.H. Wright, purchased 10, small clothbound notebooks for 'a trifling sum' which turned out to be the personal diaries of Ronnie Burn, and his visits to the Scottish hills. The books gathered dust until, in 1986, Wright saw Adam Watson's TV documentary on *The Cairngorms*, and was motivated to write to the presenter to make further inquiries about the books and their author, and to obtain advice on a suitable Scottish institution to which they could be gifted. (They now reside in King's College Library, Archives Department, University of Aberdeen).

Watson showed the diaries to Elizabeth Allan, his co-author of the classic work *The Place Names of Upper Deeside*, and she decided they must be published in book form, as a valuable record of Highland country life and social ways of the time which, essentially, were late Victorian in nature, and in terminal decline.

While Allan set about editing, and writing the work, Adam Watson gave us a fascinating foretaste of what was to come, in a diary extract in issue No. 181 of the Journal (1990, pages 400 to 402) – which relates to the New Year Meet in 1918-19, when Ronnie spent four days in the company of Harold Raeburn, then 53

compared to his 31 years. Unfortunately, Adam's discerning contribution is not reflected in Allan's editing, for this passage is relegated to just over one page in the book. (I do wonder if we might not have had an even more enjoyable work if Watson had cooperated with Allan, particularly in the selection of passages relating to Club history, or interesting routes).

No photograph of Ronnie Burn has come to light yet, although we understand he was of short build with a pronounced hunchback, and a somewhat shabby appearance. The majority of keepers, shepherds and estate workers, and their long suffering wives, extended what hospitality they could afford – and freely shared much valuable information on routes, local history and place-names – so it must have been particularly galling for them to have Ronnie haggle over the 'B&B' rate for the night; one of his less endearing habits.

He could, however, be very generous within his limited means: lending his treasured Shearer's Ben Nevis Panorama to Miss Grant, cook at Corroul Lodge, then buying her a new copy at Fort William. And he left £50 in his will to Katie Scott, daughter of the Scotts at Altbeith, Glen Afric, whom he first met when she was a shy 13-year old. Katie's first impression of Ronnie was that 'he looked like the mountain troll in the fairy tale.'

Much of Burn's life was filled with hardship and sadness, which Allan handles in a most sensitive manner. His nadir came in the mid-1930s when, after redundancy and death of his father, he was reduced to living in a working mens' hostel in Edinburgh. Fortunately, in 1938, he obtained a job with the Oxford University Press, as a Greek and Latin proof-reader, and this lasted until 1967 – well past normal retirement age. In addition to his beloved hills, Ronnie also had a passion for books – several thousand of them, of which 500 shared his tiny office at the OUP.

Ronnie's books must have been a great comfort in his later life, but it is sad to think that his tenure of the hills occupied so short a part of such a long life. But how he enjoyed those hill days, even if the very occasional companion did not. Speed and distance, allied to a stamina bordering on the stubborn, produced some mind blowing periods of activity, without, on many occasions, the benefit of rest days. In the three days from July 6-8, 1923, Ronnie knocked off 35 Munros and Tops in the Cairngorms, and 12 days later, his odyssey was completed.

This is a good book for long, wet, winter nights (or long, wet, summer evenings) when, equipped with a few OS sheets, Moir's *Scottish Hills Tracks* and a dram, one can relive some of Ronnie's more ambitious expeditions and reflect on how much the man valued the hills and hill people of Scotland. Because the book is based on personal diaries, we are able to savour a completely spontaneous, non commercial and passionate celebration of the hill scene of the period.

The book is, in my opinion, the second-best Munro-related title yet, the honours still going to *Hamish's Mountain Walk*.

I feel Burn would have appreciated Brown's writings and attitude to the hills. Perhaps, too, Burn would have met his match in terms of Brown's fleetness of foot. 'C'mon Ronnie, let's bag those two before supper.'

While reading the book for the first time, I thought that Ronnie Burn was, perhaps, just a little daft. An uncharitable thought perhaps I felt, but one which lingered with me until I read Rennie McOwan's obituary to W.H. Murray, wherein he recalled Murray's dictum that 'the human race is composed of just two species: those who climb and those who don't, the daft and the sober'. But 'daft' to Bill

Murray meant, in the old Scots sense, 'unreasonably happy'. Ronnie Burn was, surely, exceptionally daft.

Criticisms of the book? Yes, a few. An index would be helpful. Also, it is, or has been, difficult to obtain – I got my first sighting in Thin's at Aviemore this Easter, six months after publication. (My own copy, which is numbered 274 of, I believe, 2000 copies, was obtained direct from the publisher, post free).

And, finally, the book's sub-title: 'The Story of the *first* Compleat Munroist'. Unless Elizabeth Allan is trying to be controversial, I feel it is misleading and inaccurate. If you 'compleat' you have done the Munros, and enter the Hall of Fame. The achievement is not conditional on bagging the Tops as well.

Elizabeth should have clarified the position in her first chapter, and put the Revs Robertson's and Burn's respective feats into a proper historical context and relationship. This would not, in any way, have diminished enjoyment of the work, or respect for Ronnie Burn.

Maybe, of course, she is not convinced that AER did actually compleat?

Ian Hamilton.

**Footnote:** If you do purchase and enjoy this book, and like reading about life in Scotland's remote places and Highland deer forests, then I recommend two other titles from Bidean Books: *Isolation Shepherd* by Iain R Thomson, and *Memoirs of William Collie - a 19th Century Deerstalker*. The former is available in paperback, the latter in hardback from the publisher (but a bit pricey at £20.00). Contact Iain MacKay, Bidean Books, Torgormack, Beauly, Inverness-shire.

**Landmarks – An Exploration of Great Rocks:**– David Craig. (Jonathan Cape, £20.00, 334pp. ISBN 0-224-03510-x).

David Craig's earlier book about rock climbing, *Native Stones*, contained some of the best and most evocative descriptions of rock-climbing experience I have ever read. *Landmarks* is not centred on climbing but on the rocks themselves, particularly on those which are prominent features of the landscape, but the descriptive quality of the writing is as high as ever.

A subject as wide as this must inevitably be done selectively but the geographical coverage is extensive, beginning with some of the canyons and mesas of the American West, moving through Australia, Southern Africa and the Pillars of Hercules to Greece and Turkey, taking in Maccu Pichu in Peru and homing in on the British Isles. Similarly, the aspects discussed are multilateral: physical structure and geology, fauna and flora, cultural, historical and spiritual elements as illustrated by rock paintings and other evidence, are all considered in appropriately differing degrees of scale and intensity. Obviously, there is much more to be said about Uluru (Ayer's Rock) than The Woman Stone on Ben Avon, but it is a pleasant experience to enlarge the understanding of places and features that you thought you already knew fairly well. David Craig is an explorer of landscapes in various dimensions, chronological as well as aesthetic and physical, and his command of language enables him to convey his feelings and experiences convincingly.

Being written by an enthusiastic rock-climber, the descriptions contain a good deal of detail, with a clarity of style which allows the reader to accompany the author not only on the visit but on the ascent itself wherever relevant. I have been to a number of the places featured in this book and my memories have been

supplemented. Others which I have wanted to visit but never managed to reach I have been able to experience vicariously through these pages.

There are 16 pages containing 17 colour and 14 monochrome illustrations, and a dozen more of bibliographic notes and references. This is a travel book, but a very unusual one, and quite fascinating to anyone with an addiction to rocky landscapes.

W.D. Brooker.

### **Mountain Bothies Association Journal 1995.**

This issue benefits from the new technology, with striking photographs on the front and back covers. It tells of the problems stemming from the growth of the outdoor industry. The days of the brother and sisterhood of the hills when you could belong to a peacefully romantic coterie are passing. The bothy-using people served by this excellent association are becoming too numerous and too careless. The size of the problem is steadily becoming too great for the programme of maintenance to be run by part-time dedicated romantics. There are mysterious internal tensions. There is a lot of good writing about present and future problems of bothies and bothying. An attempt is being made to return to the oral tradition so that only the right kind of user will acquire details of the location of bothies. We can only wish them luck.

There are good articles on certain bothies and a crossword puzzle. This year's Journal is recommended reading

The prevailing flavour of *Weltschmerz*, however, is expressed on the last page in the last lines of a poem by Hamish Brown:

'Even the bothy book  
(Full of obscenities)  
Cannot stop the tide and the wind.'

I.H.M. Smart.

**Himalaya Alpine-Style:-- The most challenging routes on the highest peaks:** Andy Fanshawe and Stephen Venables (Hodder and Stoughton, 191 pp., abundant photographs, line drawings and maps. £35. ISBN 0 340 64931 3.)

This remarkable book should have appeared for Christmas 1995 but as some aspects of the production were deemed unsatisfactory by the authors, publication was held over and the book did not appear until March of this year. This respect for standards is embodied throughout the book. The book presents the story of 40 ascents on major peaks across the Himalayan chain from Rakaposhi to Kanchenjunga performed by small self-contained parties. The adaptation of Alpine-style climbing to the greater order of immensity of the Himalayas is an inspiring story. It is an achievement brought about by a small international elite. One can only have respect for those with the skill and confidence and iron nerve to take on these intimidating lines.

Although in 'coffee table' format the book transcends that classification as a butterfly transcends its chrysalis. The photographs are varied, informative and big enough (thanks to the double spreads of the coffee table size) to give some impression of the vast scale of the Himalaya. There are plenty of action shots. All are taken and reproduced with care and artistry. They range from the frankly dramatic and intimidating to the homely and even gallus. For example, one photograph shows a nonchalant figure standing on a narrow summit with a

cellphone in his hand. The caption reads: 'Lucas radios the girlfriend at base camp from the central summit of Annapurna.' Such *sang froid* on a mountain that has killed so many! Since the participants in this extreme game know full well the penalties of bad luck or misjudgment this aspect is taken as read and not dwelt on in the text: as the authors make clear they are primarily producing a book for climbers who do not have to be reminded that there is always a bullet in the empty revolver.

The writing is clear, concise, has a feel for history and is salted with understated humour. The maps and line diagrams are succinct and show a classical attention to combining clarity with economy. This book will appeal alike to the participating elite, to those who aspire and to those of us who can only climb at this standard in our minds. The book will be a classic. All connected with its production deserve our congratulations. A point of local interest is that the impressive photograph on the front jacket shows Hamish Irvine approaching the South-west summit of Chogolisa; another is that one author, Andy Fanshawe, was killed in a climbing accident, not in the Himalaya but here in Scotland on Patey's dark Lochnagar.

Iain Smart.

**Over the Himalaya:**— Koichiro Ohmori (Diadem Books, 44 double spread uncaptioned photographs with separate keys. £25. ISBN 0-906371-15-5).

This is another book prepared with care and attention and, one must say, love. It consists entirely of aerial photographs of the Nepal Himalaya made from a single-engined aircraft, a Pilatus Porter PC-6. The double spreads of the 'coffee table' format show crisply-detailed, beautifully-reproduced photographs of major mountains and mountain complexes in seven different regions of Nepal, all taken, for obvious reasons, in very good weather. The uniformly high standard of the photographs is however, overwhelming; there is, unfortunately, a limit to the number of perfect views that the mind can absorb. Nevertheless, this book is a desirable acquisition if you are condemned to modern wage slavery in a ruthlessly-competitive economy. You can almost bodily enter these pictures and embark on a vicarious Walter Mitty ascent by a bold route of your own choosing. The faraway look in your eyes may make your employer wonder if he is extracting the maximum amount of work from you and he may think of replacing you with a less distracted android – but nothing in life is without risk. The photographs with their crisp delineation of detail will be particularly valuable for real-world mountaineers who are planning routes on any of the mountains illustrated. The photographs are not cluttered with captions. Identification of topographic features is given in small-scale reproductions at the end where technical details of the photography are also supplied. The text is minimal but as excellent and crisp as the photographs. It includes a brief, readable synopsis of Himalayan geology by Yugo Ono. As a pilot, or rather an ex-pilot, and a timid one at that, I particularly enjoyed, if fearfully, the section on *Flying over the Himalaya*. '... the plane fell 3000m emerging from the turbulence just above a glacier. . . the view – during the descent – rapidly alternated between sky and valley. My light-meter floated in front of my face. Several hundred pieces of candy that had been in a box floated throughout the cabin'. Experiencing this book and the previously reviewed *Himalaya Alpine-style* makes me slightly dissatisfied with spending my life as a time-serving mediocrity. But then, given my genetic make-up, I really had no choice.

Iain Smart.

**Scottish Winter Climbs:**— Compiled by Andrew Nisbet and Rab Anderson. (Scottish Mountaineering Trust, 1996. £16.95. ISBN 0-907521-47-9).

To me the title of this book evoked some nostalgic thoughts of bleak and sometimes glorious Highland days in the early 1980s when I too compiled a winter-climbing guide to the Scottish mountain's, coincidentally called *Scottish Climbs*. In that work I was assisted by the graphic hand of Graeme Hunter (and other members of the Club) even though the icy tome was for 'Constable' who dared to embark on the sacred slopes of guidebook publishing. Anyhow, that was way back in 1982 and a lot of snow has fallen and thawed since then and the tools of the trade have changed too. The business end of ice axes have drooped, then tried to rise again in what has ignominiously been called the 'banana' pick.

One of the criticisms of a 'selected' guide is that it often appears to deliberately omit good routes; but a good route, like an Old Master is often in the eye of the beholder. In other words, a selected climbs compiler can seldom win. However, this *Scottish Winter Climbs* has a good and varied selection of routes, covering the principal areas of Scottish winter activity, even the humble and generally snow-free Cobbler gets well-deserved attention. A peppering of colour pics adds allure, depicting adrenaline-stirring idyllic scenes. But we all know the truth behind blue-sky pics. Winter climbing is a game of hide-and-peek, when your objective is often obscured by cloud or blizzard and you are vainly looking for it.

The alternative is often a waiting game for 'conditions' or the overnight abortive journey to be greeted with horizontal rain which abandoned the eastern Atlantic in undue haste to catch the weekend climber on Saturday or Sunday morning. We all know that we winter climb for those magical moments when things drop into place. Scotland is a great place to be high on a crisp morning, when the klunk of the ice hammer and the rasp of sharp crampons bite the still air. And it's cheap — the guide I mean — after all, being selective you get one for the price of six. Some of my friends from the other side of the Wall will ungraciously say that it should go a bomb in Aberdeen.

The introduction makes sense and there are useful hints for the uninitiated. The two-tier grading system gives a good, overall assessment for a given route, but of course, Mother Nature always has her say in winter.

*Scottish Winter Climbs* can be summed up as a useful companion with a good selection of routes.

Hamish MacInnes.

**Mountain Footfalls:**— Ian Mitchell. (Mercat Press. 1996 £8.99. ISBN 1-873644-53-1.)

Those who, like me, have enjoyed reading previous books co-authored by Ian Mitchell, will find within this book more bothy bletcher washed down with a guid song and a few drams. Here are more humorous tales of the antics of the author and his friends as they progress from one bothy to another, mixing with different folk of the hills. The book also goes further by enlarging the idea of exploring the hills and bothies of today's Scotland. It introduces alongside each humorous tale historical information about the glens, their past inhabitants, crofters and early mountain pioneers. These snippets of recent history come from the late 19th and early part of this century, and put intriguing real-life flesh on the landscape and deserted half-ruins seen today.

The author draws some parallels between the past and present power of

landholders and estates by showing in snapshots the background to the modern hills. More variety is added to the book by the use of some excellent black-and-white scraperboard drawings by Ross Gillespie and by the format of the book, taking the reader through some of the traditional calendar festivities. A cold and wet January and a Burns Supper to Midsummer, Guy Fawkes, and, of course, Hogmanay and 'should auld acquaintance be forgot'.

Ian Mitchell has tried successfully to throw a spotlight on a few pieces of the history of Scotland's landscape, so that 'we should not forget'. He also keeps the reader smiling at the modern day's characters within.

Malcolm Simmonds.

**The Game of Mountain and Chance:**— Anne Sauvy. (1995. Bâton Wicks. £8.99. ISBN 1-898573-15-8.)

This paperback edition is the first in English, the book having been published first in France, in 1985. We can only surmise that the gap was due to her talents as a writer of short stories going unrecognised, at least in this increasingly xenophobic island, until her collection *Flammes de Pierre* ignited sufficient interest. But, of course, publishers are in deep financial trouble. Witness the smaller number of book reviews in this Journal; we normally review what we are sent. This year, like last summer, a drought has all but dried up the burn. Sometimes we are now sent a Press Release asking us if we wish to review such-and-such a book. Increasingly, we are not even asked. Sometimes an enthusiast, such as the redoubtable IHMS, reviews books we have not been sent, a sort of freebie if you like.

What the publishers may care to consider is the quality of the reader of these reviews. I would argue that with the SMC Journal they could be pressing the right button, the one marked 'Q' for quality. We may have fewer readers than some of the other publications they fire off review copies at, but our readers are almost certainly far more committed. End of plea, and thanks for this review copy, which, as with all other books sent here for review, go to the Club Library. I should remind readers that anyone may refer to this Library, with prior arrangement with the Librarian.

However, I enjoyed the short stories here too much. That is, I found myself tearing through the stories impatient to get at the next one. Just like a walk over a hill on a good day the reader here must set a proper pace. Ration yourself. Book a spot in your diary: 'Thursday pm, bed-time story, one from Sauvy's latest collection.'

It could be the one about how the Ice Fairy and the Snow Fairy, being somewhat pissed off with the shenanigans of the Rock Fairy messing up their glaciers decide to pay a visit on the old bag. You'd think the Ice Fairy would be a glittering creature of transient beauty, sparkling, translucent etc. right? Wrong. She's another old hag, just like her crony the Snow Fairy. So would you be after too long in the high Alps. The problem reviewing a book with short stories such as this one is that I cannot spoil them for you by revealing the endings. Suffice to say that the ending of the Ice Fairy, as with many of the other delightful and clever stories here, is just right.

There are 16 short stories, ranging in style from the truly ridiculous, to science fiction, to a true and haunting love story. To come across one such story in a club journal would be a delight; to find this collection would be to risk an overdose of happy reading. Buy, beg, borrow the book and forget to return it. And every night, before your eyes droop with sleep, ration yourself very strictly to one story only.

Ken Crocket.

**3000 PLUS – The Munros:**– (Gordon D. Henderson. £7.95. ISBN 0-9527381-0-4.)

This is the fourth edition of Henderson's Munros Map. It is in colour now, with lists of the summits, and allows the Munroically affected to do their thing in their leafy suburban living rooms (see reviews of TACit Press books) with felt-tip pens, sticky labels etc. etc. etc. What Mr Henderson does not mention, perhaps due to some minor and no doubt passing embarrassment, is that the previous editions were published with the deep involvement of the SMC and Trust. Knowing that the map was going out of print, we naturally communicated with the author, but received a deep and long-lasting silence. Now we know why. For a deep and searching review of the map, by those who wield a more powerful laser, I could do no better than commend the interested to the April/May issue of *The Angry Corrie*.

I have a copy of one of the older editions, which never made it to a wall. I feel that the new edition, like the price, has become a tad bloated, but then these things tend to have a natural progression. Each copy sold donates 50p to the Mountain Rescue Committee of Scotland. The new map will no doubt sell, but I can't help feel that somehow the balance, the karma, has been tilted. I prefer something smaller, more simple, more – functional. This, as with some other areas of the Munro Phenomenon, takes it into more serious ground. Some of the author's decisions are going to raise eyebrows – Gaelic names for the hills for example. You won't be doing Ben Vorlich here, you'll find a Ben Mhur 'laig. Markings of selected bothies. The bothies need to be hidden and kept secret, not put on a map. And no advice on how to find out about the bothies anyway, so why tempt the tired walker with a potentially (as some of them are) locked bothy?

The Mountain Rescue Posts are marked, but again I'm not sure why. If you stagger off the Ochils with a need for help don't bother knocking on the door of the Scout hall in Menstrie, it will probably be locked except on Scout nights. Give me colour, but make it red in a glass with French bread and cheese. The map, as it acknowledges at the foot, is based on information in *Munros Tables*, published by the Scottish Mountaineering Trust. The cheeky chap.

**The Grahams and the New Donalds:**– (TACit Press, Alan Dawson, £1.70, ISBN 0-9522680-2-7).

**The Murdos:**– (TACit Press, Alan Dawson, £1.70, ISBN 0-9522680-3-5).

Both of these booklets have 20 pages and provide basic, if well laid out, lists of their respective groups. To risk repetition; Grahams are Scottish hills between 2000ft and 2499ft, New Donalds are Scottish Lowland hills over 2000ft, and Murdos are Scottish hills of 3000ft with 30m drop (eh? feet and metres mixed?).

As one who over the years has done his fair share of Munros and other hills, but can easily resist the dubious charm of Munro-completion, these lists somewhat bemuse. But I can see their use. I mean, if you collect stamps you should do it right, sticky hinges, books, stamp fairs, small ads, clandestine and furtive meetings in leafy suburban living rooms with sticky hands. The triumph of the long sought after stamp, the completion of another section, the stamp in better condition to replace the old, the excitement of the hunt. Just don't let it take over your life. Look at poor old Murdo Munro. At least he has tempered the obsession with two simple messages, printed on the back cover of the Murdos. 'You are allowed to climb hills not listed in this book.' And, 'You don't have to climb a hill just because it's listed here.' Out of the hothouse that produces the *Angry Corrie*, Scotland's only fanzine devoted to the Munro sub-culture, 10% of the cover price is donated to the John Muir Trust. Need I say more?

Ken Crocket.

## Journals of Kindred Clubs

*The American Alpine Club Journal, 1995. Editor H. Adams Carter.*

This is the most impressive club journal I have read: 410 pages, about 90 photographs, 18 in colour; 17 full articles, 203 pages of Climbs and Expeditions and then Book Reviews, Club Activities, Obituaries etc.

Most of the general articles are about North America with the remainder in the Himalayas. Some of the climbing sounds incredibly hard and committing, e.g. N. Face of Mount Hunter, *Deprivation*, 2000 vertical metres, up and down in 72 hours, 90 pitches of thin ice, totally psychotic mixed climbing, two 95° cruxes and the ice was black hard and evil, . . . that is the future of Alaskan climbing. At the other end of extreme climbing is *Octopussy* a frozen waterfall near Vail providing some of the most unlikely ice climbing photographs. Grade M8 : 'Figure-four resting positions in ice climbing gear, . . . turned upside down and threaded my left leg over my right elbow, wedging the toe of my boot under the rock roof . . .

Not all are like this and some are general or historical articles of straightforward interest. All are well written without the pretentious style of some US Clubs.

The Climbs and Expeditions section is extensive, even to the extent of including the 1995 SMC Staunings Alps Expedition which Adams Carter had heard about from some source unknown, perhaps the Danish Polar Centre, and wrote requesting a report. If they regularly go to this degree of searching, past journals should be one of the better sources of information on Arctic climbing.

This is the last of 35 AAC journals to be edited by H. Adams Carter who died in April 1995 as it was being printed. It is a worthy epitaph.

Ian Angell.

*Canadian Alpine Journal (1993-5).*

We of the SMC could perhaps take a leaf from the CAJ. In the past five to six years the Canadian Alpine Journal has been transformed from a slightly dreary annual booklet – of similar size and format to our own journal – to a splendidly illustrated modern-style publication. Before this transformation, and again like the SMC journal, it was full of excellent writing and material but poorly presented.

Printed now on glossy quarto-size paper, the 1993-5 issues feature reports of several significant Himalayan expeditions, plus a string of interesting articles. The latter range, in 1993, from *Guided Fantasy* by Gerry Kent, a client's view of being led up the North face of Mt. Temple in the Rockies, to a cautionary tale by Maurice de St. Jorre, describing his skiing companion's 30m fall into a crevasse – and successful climb out – during a week-long ski trip in the BC Caribou range near Mt. Robson. While in 1995, they include *Sea of Vapours*, thought and visions during the climbing of three frozen waterfalls, one of them with that name, on Mt. Rundie, and two separate reports by Eric Trouillet and Markus Kellerhals on extensive climbing in the Stikine region of the Coast Range mountains, on the Alaska-BC border; of general mountaineering interest, but especially interesting, perhaps to some of us in the SMC and JMCS who made an early expedition to there with MEF funding in 1965.

The articles are splendidly illustrated with black-and-white photographs, using colour regrettably only for jacket photographs; which is where the SMC Journal would handsomely win out. The photography is particularly fine – as one might expect – in the illustrations accompanying reports on the Himalayan expeditions. Of these, there are no less than three in 1993 alone, all to Nepal: *Janu* (as the French christened Kumbhakarna) in the Kangchenjunga region, by Bill Durtler and Rob Driscoll; *Ama Dablam*, . . . *The Clean Way*, by Kobus Barnard; and *Manaslu, A Lightning Sky*, by Geoff Powter, in the Nepalese range near to the Tibetan Plateau. These reports make good reference articles for would-be climbers of these mountain ranges, as well as interesting reading in themselves. Similarly the so-nearly successful attempt by a Canadian team to reach the summit of Everest without oxygen in 1995, from the Chinese side using the classic North Col Route, is well written up by John McIssac.

Several articles too will become good reference material for those who may have their sights on the Canadian mountains: we sometimes need reminding that there are nearly 1000 miles and four further distinct mountain ranges between the Rockies, which border the Provinces of Alberta and British Columbia, and BC's Pacific West Coast. Vast territories to explore, and the superb north ice-face of Kates Needle (Ken Bryan and Norrie Harthill, on our Scottish expedition in 1965, did the west ridge) still unclimbed! Eric Trouillet's article features a splendid photograph of this north face, by Bob Enangonio. Plenty here for climbers of the SMC, and its editorial board, to note!

Derek Fabian.

*On The Veg:— Etchachan Climbing Club Journal 1995.*

They all thought it was to be a trilogy for the 1970s, but no, out of the blue appears this, the latest offering from those misfit reprobates on the North-east coast, near Cove. They say good things are worth waiting for, so after a gap of 16 years is this latest edition with its snappy 1990s title worth its £2 price tag?

For a club with fewer than 40 members (no one really knows for sure) the quality and standard of the seven climbing articles is very high and provide a first-class read; these are interspersed with humorous cartoons of club members – old and new.

The article by Wilson Moir I particularly liked. Based on extracts from his diaries, it provides us with an insight to his thought and feelings on the day. His description of a solo ascent of The Needle left me with sweaty palms and gasping for breath.

For so small a club to have produced such an excellent publication is to be commended; perhaps therein lies a lesson for ourselves to consider putting pen to paper and contribute to our own Journal.

Brian S. Findlay.

**Also received:** *Bernina and Bregaglia. Selected Climbs.* By Lindsay Griffin. (Alpine Club Guide Books. 1995. ISBN 0-900523-60-3, 475pp, many illus.)

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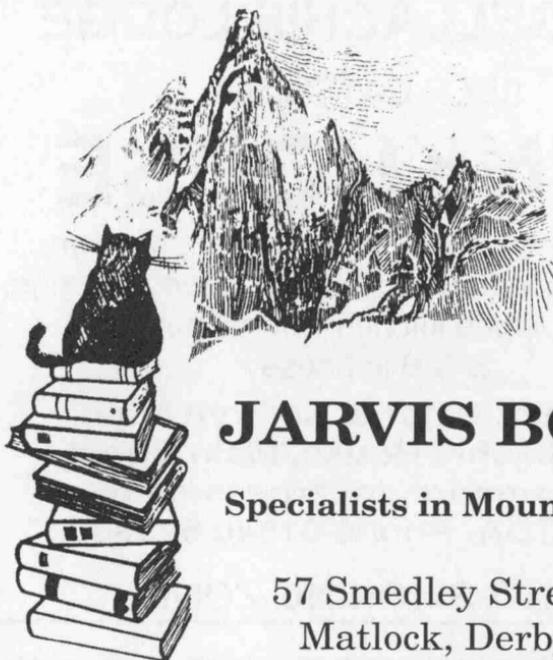
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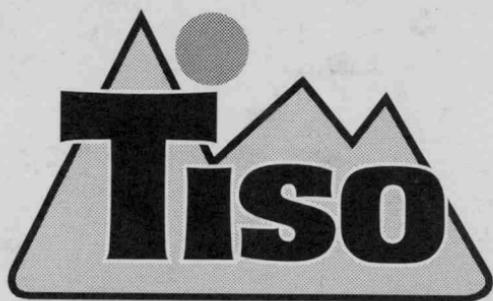
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