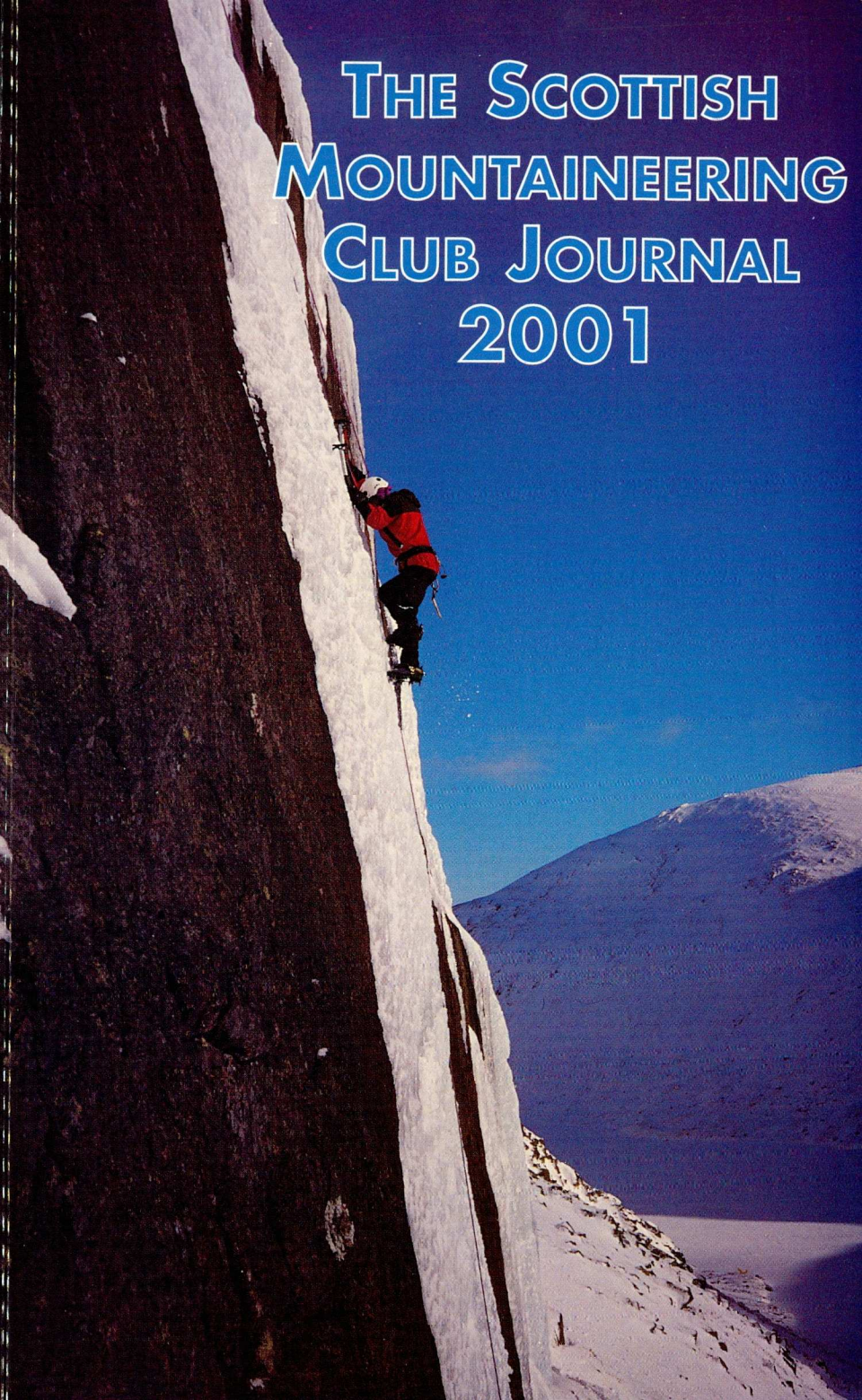


THE SCOTTISH MOUNTAINEERING CLUB JOURNAL 2001



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EDITED BY CHARLES J. ORR

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OLD MAN OF-STOER
PHOTOGRAPH - EDDIE WEIR



THE SCOTTISH MOUNTAINEERING CLUB JOURNAL

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EDITORIAL

ON ASSUMING this august chair I am minded to take the opportunity of indulging myself in an Editorial. (I tried using the Dutton/Campbell 'we' but found it rather troublesome and, at the start of yet another Century, perhaps a shade anachronistic).

I am sure that you will soon realise as you peruse these pages that this year's Journal has a distinct flavour of maturity about it, by which I mean, of course, the maturity of the contributors (with one notable exception) and their subject matter rather than any traits that I myself might or might not display. I make no apologies for this and can only say that I would have welcomed the opportunity to read contributions from the younger members of the Club but unfortunately, these were, in the main, not forthcoming.

It has been suggested that I could go some way to improving this situation by making the 2002 Journal an under-35s issue. This approach undoubtedly has its merits but, judging by recent experience, while such a number might not be quite as thin as that apocryphal work *Famous Victories Of The Swiss Navy*, it would in all probability, run it a close second.

I am well aware from perusal of the Glossies and the various On-Line sites now in vogue, that some of our younger (and even not so young) members are at the cutting edge of Scottish winter climbing and as your Editor, I feel that my task is sorely hampered when I am denied the opportunity to translate this rich seam into the pages of the Journal. It may be fairly argued that it is part of my remit to attract such contributions and indeed I do intend to be pro-active in securing a strong and varied content for future issues.

However, I also feel strongly that those who are performing at this level owe it to the Club and to the literary traditions of the Journal to record, for this and future generations, these major advances other than simply in the bare bones of the ever burgeoning *New Climbs*. After all, where would we be now if W. H. M. had been content to record only the technicalities of his routes in *New Climbs* and nothing more? This becomes especially important when one takes into consideration the somewhat ephemeral nature of the favoured Glossy Magazines and sundry Dot Commery. Besides which, how can one take seriously anything written on a web-site

where our esteemed President lurks under the soubriquet of 'Canny Ken Crocket'!

I look forward to having the opportunity to discuss these matters with the 'Young Tigers' at this year's official Dinner, and please gentlemen, do try to bear in mind that, in the words of Dr. Patey: "The Grand Old Men of Tomorrow were the Tigers of Yesterday." (well, at least some of them anyway!).

This leads us on to the matter of SMC and JMCS Abroad. It has long been the case that this area of the Journal has been in decline not, I would stress through any wielding of the editorial pen but simply due to a marked reticence on behalf of those qualified to contribute, that is all members of said bodies having access to a passport. This may perhaps be because, in this brave new world, trips abroad have become commonplace rather than exceptional. What must be borne in mind, however, is, that while we perhaps don't want to hear of the proceedings of the Karaoke Bar, Main Street, Chamonix, neither should an ascent of Mont Blanc by the 'Voie Normale' be discounted simply because it is not a tale of TD.suppering do. It has long been established that this Club caters for the Salvationist as well as the Ultramontane and if this section of the Journal were to be reserved for ascents of the order of The American Direct on The Drus and above I would suggest that it would be very scanty indeed. Having said that, there are members doing things of the highest order abroad and one such told me that this was the first time the Journal had shown an interest in his exploits, by which I think he meant he had never been directly asked to write before. Please gentlemen, and ladies, take this as being notice that the Journal is open to all and please, don't wait 15 years to be asked.

Gripping already and he's only just arrived, well I suppose I am – wonderful things editorials. Now I know why they appear rarely in these pages, the members just wouldn't put up with it. However, I give you my assurance that any apparent gripes I may have or cajoling I might do, or appear to do, will be but with one intention only and that is to secure a future for our Journal which is, as one of my predecessors Professor Dutton put it, a Journal: "Unique in offering a continuous overall view of the sport as practised in Scotland." It was that other, perhaps lesser known poet T. S. Eliot who said: "We should be aware not only of the pastness of the past but of its presence." And in this issue I feel that that dictum has been more than followed. It is, however, our present with which I, as 'Editor the 15th', am directly concerned, that present which will be the past of future readers. I firmly believe that we have a duty to ensure that our time scratching about among these timeless hills is as well and as entertainingly recorded as was our predecessors' and I look forward to working with you all to secure that end and, by so doing, ensure that the *Scottish Mountaineering Club Journal* maintains its place at the very forefront of mountaineering literature.

14th!

A CORPORATION OF GUIDES

By Mick Tighe

IT WAS the spring of 1889 and the MacBraynes steamer from Oban slipped gently into Portree Harbour with its cargo of early-season tourists scattered thinly along the upper deck. Among them was a wily looking man in city attire, a weather eye keenly trained pier-wards where he soon espied the object of his ocular peregrinations; a lean, swarthy looking man with sun-bleached jacket, waistcoat and plus-fours atop a set of newly-nailed boots, his sun-tanned cheeks showing clearly above a fine white beard which paled beneath a set of clear blue eyes.

The 'gentleman' was Clinton Dent of the Alpine Club and to meet him from the local 'Corporation of Guides' was John McKenzie of Sconser, a man widely regarded as the 'father' of British Mountain Guides. Dent's 'Corporation of Guides' was a rather dubious appellation gleaned more from the guiding conclaves of the Alps than the realities of Skye, but the renowned SMC stalwart Dr. J. H. B. Bell's comments 48 years later (SMCJ Vol. 21 1937) suffered no such ambiguity: "We have no body of professional guides in Scotland, nor, let us hope, is such a body likely to arise."

Bell was no doubt aware of John McKenzie's prowess as a guide as the following appeared in his book, *A Progress in Mountaineering*, just a few years later. "John McKenzie of Sconser, a Highlander of the old school and almost the only Scottish professional mountain guide." So, was it a Corporation? Has there ever been a Body? Or have a group of disparate individuals been taking folk out on Scotland's mountains over the years without let or hindrance?

With these questions in mind, and with a new millennium having recently dawned, now might be a good time to look at the evidence, anecdotal and literal; though before progressing further a definition of 'guide' may be required, the simplest application seeming to be 'those who take payment for instructing, and leading the way in the mountains'. Whether they are qualified, or indeed competent to do so, is perhaps best left for the reader to decide.

That guides have been around since time began there is no doubt, most of the early ones being employed as scouts, or route finders, for the various armies that have battled their way across Scotland's rugged landscape over aeons of time.

"T'was I that led the Highland Host through wild Lochaber's snows. What time the plaided clans came down, to battle with Montrose," wrote the celebrated Gaelic poet and 'guide' Lain Loin in connection with the Battle of Inverlochy in 1645. There were, of course, many thousands of

military guides, or scouts, over the centuries though it's to the mountains that we must now turn our attention.

Tourism was the biggest influence on mountain guiding in the early days (as indeed it is today) and almost every hotel in the mountainous areas of Scotland had a band of guides. Interestingly, hotels advertising in early SMC Journals rarely mentioned the availability of guides, obviously thinking the members didn't need them, though elsewhere in the various gazetteers, among the portmanteaus, gout remedies and hydropathic therapies, guides are readily available. In 1880 the Tarbet Hotel offered guides to Ben Lomond, while Balloch Hotel gave permission to visit 'Mount Misery'(?). Meanwhile, you could get a 'Cameron Man' in the Alexandra Hotel, Fort William to take you up Ben Nevis for a 'negotiable fee'!

As there was little in the way of usable maps until the late 1800s guides could well have been described as human maps, and for many parts of Scotland they would also have acted as interpreter, needing to be bilingual. Bridges and footpaths were few and far between so, although these guides lacked the mountaineering skills of the modern era, fording, route finding and a variety of other skills were required. Many early expeditions were conducted on horseback of course, for some, if not all, of the journey, so guides would often be pony men too.

A Captain Burt – based in Inverness after the '45 – took to 'excursions' where he often carried "a quart bottle of brandy for my man and the guide", and had "Occasion to make a progress of about six or seven Miles among the Mountains – for this reason, about two miles from hence, I hired a Guide, and agreed with him for six-pence to attend the whole Day".

"This poor man went barefoot," and so impressed with him was Captain Burt that he increased his wages to a shilling – reducing the guide to his knees in praise of his benefactor. Burt was obviously an honourable man as most officers of the Seider Roy (Redcoats) so soon after Culloden would perhaps have been happier occupied burning the poor peasant's house down than paying him as a guide!

Though it vied with Ben Macdui for many a long year as the highest eminence in the land, Ben Nevis was eventually established as Britain's number one mountain, and as such attracted its share of tourists. An early ascent was made by John McCulloch FRS, mineralogical and geological surveyor to the Trigonometrical Survey. On an August day in the early 1820s he was on Ben Nevis "with what is common only called a guide; a lad who had volunteered his services". McCulloch it seems had a rather low opinion of guides deeming them "generally, either useless or mischievous – and when my guide found himself in a whirlwind of fog and snow, so thick we could scarcely see each other ... he began to cry, the unhappy animal, vowed that if he ever lived to get home, he would never

guide a gentleman again. He would even surrender his five shillings, if I would show him the way down the hill". They managed to get down to the Glen Nevis road eventually though by this time the boy's "kilt was thoroughly cooled".

One Archibald Young, late HM Inspector of Salmon Fisheries, took to sailing in the late 1890s and having decided on an ascent of Ben Nevis from his boat, hired, for 10 shillings, Alexander Macrae as his guide "an ill-put-together, queer looking Celt, but a capital walker, and quite a character as, indeed might easily have been divined from the roguish twinkle of his quick black eyes". Archibald later discerned that "the guide drank like a fish and smoked liked a steam-engine", though their ascent was successful despite large amounts of grog and cigars.

An even earlier ascent of Ben Nevis was made by the Rev. James Bailey, vicar of Otley, Yorkshire, in 1787. His entourage included a Mr Kayne, along with Lieut. Walker, then stationed at Fort William, three Highland guides, and a detachment of soldiers from Fort William "to carry liquors and provisions" – two sergeants and three privates of the Royal Fusiliers. Staring at 6am by way of Glen Nevis the party was soon "using hands and knees to make progress", eventually coming to "a succession of rock-shelves which required combined tactics and the use of a rope and grapnel"! Towards the summit a soldier fell down insensible and apparently lifeless, but it was found he'd "only been making too free with the rum".

They reached the top, however, and made a rapid retreat, being obliged for the most part to slide on their haunches.

Ben Nevis wasn't the only object of tourists' desires. "Dugald McAlister was a guiding personage on Arran", according to McCulloch – circa 1819. He did "recently attend a noted dignitary with a large wig" to the top of Goat Fell treating him as "so much goat's hair and pomatum deserved".

A Colonel Hawker took a guide up Ben Lomond in November 1812 when the last half mile was travelled "in perfect misery and imminent danger. We were literally obliged to take knives and to cut footsteps in the frozen snow". Ice-axes were, of course, yet to be invented.

Though they were never incorporated in any way there was a core, if not Corps, of guides operating in the Grampians during these early years. Robert Grant of Dulnain Bridge, head-keeper at Muckrach Estate, often took shooting guests up Cairngorm – travelling in pony traps part of the way, and calling in at Glenmore Lodge on return for "refreshments".

It was the other side of the Cairngorms that saw the bulk of guiding activity however – helped not a little during her reign, by Queen Victoria. Indeed the Queen herself used guides in addition to her own gillies on many occasions. Prominent among these was Charles Stewart (worth employing for his name alone) who "walked wonderfully" according to

her highness and was consequently retained for several 'Expeditions' including the famous 'Third' (October 1861) through Glen Feshie. Bowman and old John Gordon were guides for the monarch's first ascent of Lochnagar when they were certainly needed for the summit was shrouded in mist. The Queen later recorded the retreat in her journals. "We set off on our way downwards, the wind blowing a hurricane and the mist being like rain, and everything quite dark with it. Bowman and McDonald, who preceded us, looked like ghosts."

Another retained by the Queen, and widely regarded as *the* mountain guide in Upper Deeside was George McHardy of Croftmuicken. For a large portion of the 19th century George conducted parties around the Deeside mountains, often crossing via various routes to Speyside with his 'gentlemen' and a string of Highland ponies. James Downie of Tomintoul followed ably in George's footsteps and soon became Braemar's own professional mountain guide with tales of his exploits passing into legend – non more so than when William Gladstone, Prime Minister of the day, sought a mild diversion from attending Victoria at Balmoral. The Pools of Dee were his desire and James led the way up the Lairig Ghru. Try as he might however, Gladstone could not be persuaded to go the extra mile to view the panorama of Speyside to the west. Downie never forgave Gladstone this misdemeanour, as to him the view from the summit of the Lairig Ghru was the main reason for being there.

Though operating on opposite sides of the country and almost certainly never meeting, Downie and John McKenzie in Skye were contemporaries in almost every way. Born in 1857, McKenzie was a crofter from Sconser, oldest of three brothers and two sisters, and like Downie he soon added mountain guiding to his repertoire of skills having first started at the Sligachan Hotel as a fishing gillie, fishing the many rushing streams that tumble from the dark gabbro heights of the Cuillin into the sea green lochs below. Unlike just about every guide before him however, McKenzie learned how to rock climb and use a rope, skills that set him apart from the pack and gained him the title of the first true Mountain Guide. These climbing skills were no doubt learned from Alpine Club men like Clinton Dent; from SMC members who shared his rope; the Pilkingtons who took him on the first ascent of the Inaccessible Pinnacle, but above all from a man who was to become McKenzie's lifelong friend, even though they were at the opposite end of the social spectrum – Professor Norman Collie. According to Collie, McKenzie "as a companion on a long summer day – was perfect. Always cheerful, keenly alive to everything – the wild birds, the fish in the rivers, the deer on the hillside, and all natural things". Together, summer after summer they roamed the Cuillin, pioneering many a new route, one of the most notable being the discovery of the Cioch. It wasn't perhaps unusual for Collie to heap praise on his guide and

companion, but similar accolades came for a rather unusual source. "Of the Sligachan Gillies, none is more famous than John McKenzie, the keen-eyed, sure-footed hero of many a hazardous climb. In ordinary cases, you deplore the necessity for taking a man, as a nuisance with which you would fain dispense. But when John McKenzie is the man in question you welcome the prospect of a day's enhanced pleasure. Often it has been my good fortune to enjoy his companionship on long tramps over the hills, where the right track is both difficult to find and keep. A more delightful companion it would be impossible to have, or one whom it is more interesting to question concerning anything about the Coolin. Such is the universal tribute paid to John McKenzie by all who have any occasion to maintain Sligachan as climbing centre."

High praise indeed, coming from a lady who would probably be considered as somewhat of a feminist even by today's standards. The words are from *Wanderings in the Western Highlands and Islands* by Miss M. E. M. Donaldson, and are by no means unique in their praise of Britain's first true mountain guide.

A successor to McKenzie on the Scottish guiding scene is hard to find; though still a fit, active man after the First World War, the Golden Era was past with many of his clientele having been slaughtered on the battlefields of France. Sligachan was a quieter place now and Caledonia's hills fell silent for a while. McKenzie died in 1933 and a grieving Collie nine years later having climbed little in the last decades of his life. Uniquely, for two mountaineers from such different social backgrounds they lie side by side in the little graveyard at Struan in Skye, and hardy the man who views their graves without contemplating a tear.

As with most stories of evolution, however, as one thing wanes, another waxes, and so it was that even as McKenzie was being laid in his grave a new guiding star was rising in the east – though for the moment the apprenticeship was only being served, the following:

"Being the beginning of numerous excursions and climbing expeditions among the Hills and Mountains."

"Jan. 1. Spent the New Year in the proper manner at Sheil Bothy in Glen Isla in the company of T. Harley and J. Chalmers. Plenty of soft snow."

"Jan. 28. Climbed Ben y Gloe with Chalmers, Gunny, & Davidson saw Spectre of the Brocken."

"April 1. Climbed Glas Thulachan alone. Discovered raven's nest, saw birds, also two peregrines and an eagle. Corrie Thulachan was well plastered with snow and ice."

"Aug 12. All-nighter to Inverey then met Chalmers and Blyth then to Derry Lodge & Glen Lui Beg to Goire Sputan Dearg and summit of Ben

Muich Dhui then descent to shoulder and climb to summit of Derry Gairngorm and down to Glen Derry and home.”

“Sept 30. All-nighter with Cubby to Dalwhinnie, then over Corrieyarrick to Fort Augustus, then Loch Ness to Inverness & to Aviemore.”

“Oct 1. Aviemore to Granton on Spey to Tomintoul to Braemar and home by Devils Elbow.”

“Oct 13. Weekend to Glova and Lochnagar by Gapel path, to Loch Muick, to summit, and return by Loch Dubh and Bachnagairn to Glova, showers of snow and sleet on hills all day.”

They are but a few extracts from the 1934 diary of George Dwyer a young Dundee lad with obvious enthusiasm for the hills, an enthusiasm that becomes more apparent when one notes that the above excursions were conducted on a bicycle! The Dwyer family moved to Birmingham in the late 1930s, ultimately depriving, geographically at least, Scotland of one of its finest guides. George joined the RAF, spending most of the war in the Lake District on Mountain Rescue duties – but with plenty of time to indulge his first love of rock climbing. After the war, George – now known by all and sundry as Scottie – became one of Britain’s first officially accredited Mountain Guides, and while his home and guiding business, were in North Wales, his Scottish forays were many.

The coming of the Second World War created another hiatus in mountaineering evolution, though, surprisingly, using our original definition of ‘guide’, hundreds of climbers and skiers, unwittingly perhaps, became instructors/guides in the military – often overnight. The 52nd Lowland Division got promoted metaphorically if not officially, to a Highland Division for a large part of the Second World War being based for long time in the Highlands, particularly around Aviemore. Mountain Training required instructors and it was to the hill men of the 1930s that the military turned. The SMC’s very own Syd Scroggie became an instructor with the Lovat Scouts and was parcelled off to Wales to teach his new charges how to rock climb, and later while training in the Canadian Rockies in 1943, guided his whole troop of Scouts up 12,000ft. Mount Columbia – the first winter ascent. Skier Frank Sutton reported to his adjutant one morning and was informed that he was now a ski instructor and subsequently guided many parties around the Cairngorms.

After the war as George (Scottie) Dwyer was beginning his new life as a guide in North Wales his native Angus Glens were not deserted, a new guiding light was in the ascendancy. Davie Glen was born at Duntrune, Angus, in 1909, spending his early days as a ‘lad o’ pairts’. In reply to a question by a *Daily Mail* reporter in 1959 about his early life, he said: “Dry stane dyker, farm worker, quarryman, road builder, hydro scheme worker, there’s no’ much I havnae turned my hand to. My father was

killed with the Black Watch in 1917. My mother was a farm worker. So I had to learn how to make a living. I got my first feeing at 14 on a dairy farm – £18 for the half-year with board and a bothy to sleep in.”

But it was the hills that really stirred Davie’s blood and the 1950s saw him living in a railway carriage at Tealing, north of Dundee, just a short motor-bike ride from his beloved Glen Clova. Painting, writing and poetry were other loves and to this he added diddling (mouth music) and lying, a skill of which he was very proud. Davie guided lots of groups on the hills, though he doesn’t seem to have made a profession of it. He was very keen to introduce young folk to the joy of the hill, and was perhaps seen more as mentor than guide. In the Fifties he led several of the Carn Dearg Club’s annual summer outings to the summit of Lochnagar to watch the sunrise, a mammoth event with up to 600 participants. Davie Glen will perhaps be better remembered for his involvement in mountain rescue and for his long flowing beard than as a mountain guide, though one thing is sure, those who met him will never forget him.

With memories of war fading the 1950s and 1960s once again saw an increase of activity on Scotland’s mountains, and inevitably guides were more and more on the scene. W. W. Naismith had once referred to raiders from south of the Border as the “genus pock-puddin” and once again those of a similar ilk stole the day, with the first guides officially licensed to work in Scotland being of the pock-puddin race and worse still, one was a woman! The English-based British Mountaineering Council (BMC) Guides didn’t have it all their own way however, the ‘genus haggii’ had set up the Association of Scottish Climbing Clubs (ASCC), a little known organisation in which the prime movers seem to have been the late W. H. Murray and Donald Duff, surgeon at the Belford Hospital in Fort William. Having already assessed Johnny Lees, an ex RAF man, as being “capable of leading snow and ice climbs, winter rock climbs and general mountaineering expeditions under winter conditions in Scotland” in 1957, the ASCC’s attentions now turned to Gwen Moffat, Britain’s first accredited female Mountain Guide. W. H. Murray was to be the assessor, but got lost in a snowdrift *en route* and the task fell to a young Tom Weir. Gwen Moffat takes up the story. “I had been given North-West Gully on Stob Coire nam Beith. I had indignantly rejected Broad Gully when it had been suggested, and instead, in mist and with a poor guide book illustration, took my examiners up the wrong gully. Johnnie had to come up and lead the crux. It was a complete fiasco. We were late on the summit, no one had torches except Johnnie and me, one of the examiners lost her axe (and control) glissading, and I, coming down last, tripped over it and gashed my thigh. I was reprimanded sharply by Tom Weir, which was turning the screw.” Gwen did, in fact, get her certificate, but it was for walking expeditions in winter, rather than climbing.

The Scots got their act together on the guiding front early in 1961 with the formation of the Glencoe School of Winter Climbing (GSWC), a joint production by Hamish McInnes and the SYHA that cast a glittering array of Scottish stars over the years – Jim McCartney, Allen Fyffe, Kenny Spence, ‘Big’ Ian Nicholson, John Hardie, Davie ‘the black’ Crabbe, John Grieve and the ‘Old Fox’, Hamish himself. There were some powerful pock-puddins too – Boysen, Knowles, Nunn, the South African Rusty Baillie, and Pete Thomas who later led the Skye Rescue Team and guided in the Cuillin.

Ian Clough was demobbed from the RAF in the mid 1960s, married Nikki, and lived in a tent for a while at the Meeting of the Three Waters before getting a house in Glencoe Village. He teamed up with McInnes to run the winter courses and ran his own summer and Alpine courses. Sadly, Ian Clough died on Annapurna in 1970, Nikki remarried, but died of cancer some years later. The Glencoe School has survived in various guises to the present day, though nothing has matched the heady days of the 1960s.

The core of Scottish guides was now pretty well established in number if not in Corporation, and this was reinforced when another cast of star-studded Scots headed for the Lake District in 1973 looking for their BMC Mountain Guides Carnet – John Cunningham, Allen Fyffe, Fred Harper and Steve Mitchell all passed with flying colours becoming the first Scots to be officially tested and accredited with a Mountain Guides Carnet.

Though qualifying under the auspices of the BMC in England, guides at this time were licensed to work nation-wide even though the winter element of the assessment was virtually non-existent. In 1978, however, the British Mountain Guides became an autonomous body and were accepted into the International Union of Mountain Guides. Along with skiing and Alpine assessment a full week’s winter training and a further week’s assessment in Scotland is now an integral part of the course, and the Scottish Winter assessment is widely regarded as a major stepping stone on the road to becoming a Mountain Guide.

The 2001 British Mountain Guides Directory lists 169 Guides, 36 of whom are domiciled north of the Border, and, interestingly, a big percentage of those living outwith the UK, mostly in Chamonix are Scots.

It appears then that, in the light of the foregoing, Dr. Bell’s comment on the body of professional guides in Scotland does seem somewhat erroneous both in the past and at present. The body has it seems definitely arisen, and, having done so, looks likely to continue for some time to come.

This article would not have happened without the following folk offering their considerable knowledge to my scribblings – Dr. Adam Watson, John Duff, Dr. Chris Robinson, Tom Weir, Allen Fyffe, David Murray, Hamish McInnes and Gwen Moffat. Thanks to them all. If there’s more information on mountain guiding out there, I’d be pleased to hear about it

CENTURION SOLO ON TWO CHEESEBURGERS

By Alan Mullin

Two cheeseburgers for 99p! What a bargain! This was my fuel for the hill. The Macdonalds in Fort William was a cheap, but effective, way of fuelling up for the walk up to Carn Dearg. I arrived at Torlundy Car Park around 11pm and no sooner had I got ready than the police arrived at the car park. "Hello," said the officer, "have you seen two American climbers up there by any chance?" he asked.

"Sorry, but I am just going up the hill." This guy seemed genuinely interested in me and asked what made me want to go up there alone and solo. "Well," I replied, tongue in cheek. "I have no friends and no one wants to climb with me so soloing is the only way."

"Judging by your objective I am not surprised you have no friends," replied the officer, but this was friendly. He laughed before asking me to keep an eye out for them and wished me the best of luck.

I had the mother of all sacks and this time it felt no easier than the last walk in seven days before, in fact, I could swear it was heavier. "Probably the bivi bag that did it." I said to myself, and struggled on upwards. It was around 1.30 in the morning when I saw the lights of the head torches. "Petzl Tikkas," I said to myself remembering a joke about Indian food and the exotic names for head torches these days that I had with some climbers I had met in Chamonix a few weeks before.

The American twang was unmistakable. "Are you the two American guys?" I asked when we met.

"Yeah dude, that's us," they replied.

"The police are looking for you, your landlady has reported you overdue."

"Thanks," they said and told me they would notify the police when they got down.

"Well, see you later," and off I went, thankful for the excuse to stop and rest my aching shoulders.

It was a windless night and for that I was grateful. During my first visit to Centurion just after New Year I had battled up here, compass in hand, and full mountain clothing trying to find the CIC hut in a horrendous blizzard. On that first occasion poor planning and a crap bivi below the start of the route saw me fail at the top of pitch two the following night. A failed head torch and no spare batteries saw me 10ft. above my last gear trying desperately to light my lighter and sort out the 'soloist'. Panic had almost taken over. Stood on a hold 3cm big with aching arms and no way

to see my gear. "Never mind, put some in." I resolved that situation by praying as I jumped off only to go about 25ft. past my last gear and rappel leaving about four runners that I had gone past. "Ah well," I thought, "at least you won't have to put them in again," and home I went, but with a different strategy in mind for my next attempt.

Well, here I was again my third and no doubt final attempt as the route was just wearing me down mentally and physically. I arrived at the foot of the route to find my rope still intact on the cliff. During my second attempt a week previously I had done much better. A good sleep and food under the boulder below Sassenach, plus my new head torch with batteries for three days, meant I was fit and mentally ready for this attempt, or so I thought. Having managed to free climb the first and second pitch with the help of my *in situ* gear I got ready for the third pitch. Having not used any pegs on the first attempt I assumed I did not really need any for the entire route. That was my first mistake, my second was thinking that the 4c traverse out from pitch two would be easy. Well there I was at full extension on this 4c wall with no gear and committed halfway across. A hammered-in specter hook was all I could manage in this position and finally two hours later I had done it. This was when the lack of pegs kicked in, above were easy grooves but the compact rock meant pegs were crucial as soloing leaves no room for mistakes and falling even on to the best gear should be avoided.

Here I was 30ft. above gear and no prospect of it, a copperhead went in and poor it was, but it was that or nothing. I calmed down and focused, I looked above at pitch four. "No way is it up there," I thought. All I could see was a horrendous overhanging crack and blank wall, or so I thought. A quick look at the barometer. Shit, the pressure is dropping and the wind is picking up, no pegs and the onset of grim weather. "Bugger that," I thought, "It's almost dark and I am knackered."

So it was with great fear I lowered from the copperhead. Halfway down the third pitch the head ripped. Luckily, my axe was in turf and down climbing was now the only way. I reach better gear clip in and pull the rope down, re-clip to the good stuff and go down to the top of pitch two. This is when my third and final mistake almost cost me my life. I pulled the rope down and the free end went into a tangle and got stuck in a crack 30m down the second pitch. "Shit!" This is not my lucky day. At the top of pitch two I had the worst belay anchors imaginable. A crap rusty small leeper peg, a double 00 friend, and a very small lost arrow in poor rock. I laughed to myself and thought they would at least take my body weight.

I decided I would have to rappel on this gear as there was nothing else to do.

I pulled my sack on, stuffed the gear in it and put my belay plate through the single strand of rope. I started down and all was well until about 20m

down I felt this sickening jerk, and suddenly, I was out of control. My prussic had melted off as I shot down the rope, the weight of the sack helping me on my way. I grabbed the rope. Burning through my gloves my hands are screaming with pain but I manage to stop. Heart pounding and burning hands I find a foothold and gather my thoughts. Why I did not put some more gear in and clip the rope into it I will never know. Once again I weighted the rope and rappelled very quickly, I free the tangled knot, and now I can reach the ground. Shit, the pain is intense and I can't think, damn why did I not make a better belay? In truth I couldn't have as the gear needed was not with me so I had to make do, or did I? Anyway I am wasted and can only think of going home. I leave the rope there as I do not have the courage to jummar on it as I realise something up on the belay has failed and my hands are too wrecked even to deal with getting my crampons off. I tie the free end off to the bottom of the cliff. "Bloody Hell Alan, you could have got chopped there big time." So once again it was the long walk out, albeit a rope lighter.

So here I was again. "Third time lucky," I thought. The rope I left was covered in swathes of ice and looked like the kind of magic rope they use for the Indian rope trick, reaching straight up into the darkness above. My plan was different this time. Instead of sleeping there at the bottom I would bivi on the route. I had brought one super light 8mm rope, about 35m to cut down on weight, along with a shorter 20m rope. I would leap frog the two ropes meaning more distance and less hassle. And, of course, with me were my eight pegs, for comfort you see. I climbed the first pitch as it was familiar terrain and knowledge of all the gear meant that this was over fairly soon. I had to get pitch two out of the way again and no gear on it to help this time. My *in situ* rope arched away behind me as there was no way it could be trusted until the belay had been repaired safely. It took me about three hours for this pitch having creamed off its secrets on my other attempts. The crux is the top 10m and I climb them calmly as I know the moves and the build up of snow ice is perfect for the mantel at the very top. I stand up to see that the 00 friend has ripped out and the leeper peg is in a bad way too, luckily the side runner was looking more solid, albeit in shite rock. I sort out the belay with the addition of a Rockcentric and a knifeblade. I go through the usual procedure rappel down and back clip, occasionally tying the rope off to keep weight from the main anchors.

Sitting on the rock ledge at the top of pitch one, I make a brew. This was my other strategy – keep fluids down and get physiological comfort from a hot drink. A friend I know from the climbing wall stops at the bottom to talk to me, he tells me he watched me leading the second pitch and perhaps I could start to think about paying rent for occupying my ledge, we have a laugh and I tell him it's my last attempt as I can't keep this motivation

level much longer for such a hard route. I think of asking him where pitch four goes but do not want to embarrass myself, as here am I on the mighty Centurion in winter and I don't know where the fourth pitch goes. I return to my brew and a cigarette and contemplate the rest of the climb.

I attach my jumar and start up, this is the quickest way to second, as I go up and down the rope a total of three times for every pitch it is necessary to conserve strength and minimize time. I reach the belay and attach myself to the rope for the third pitch, the hook is still in, as I could not get it out, at least that's solid I thought. I climb the wall and start on the upper grooves. I reach the top of pitch three and tie the rope off.

I do all my stuff and re-jumar to get back to the belay on top of pitch three. This time I continue up pitch four, the weather's cool, the pressure is stable, and I feel good. I stand under the overhanging crack described in the guide but cannot seem to see where to go. I climb the wall left of the overhang it is very strenuous but there are good hooks for my tools and I manage to put a super lost arrow in. Several falls later I stand below the wall despondent. I cannot seem to get this right. "Out left says the description," but I cannot get there. I am really pissed off. I look at the overhanging crack wide at the bottom but narrower at the top. "OK, that's it, go for that." I climb back up the wall and make awkward moves up right. I get a shoulder jam and back and foot heel rest. No gear apart from my lost arrow way out to my left, and I am super extended. I put my tool on a large chockstone at the top of the overhang and smile. I pull on it and it moves, calm and focus. OK move the tool farther right to a crack and crank hard on it, lock off, lift the left tool and thunk into turf, pull over and I'm there, stood on a sloping slab. I continue up a shallow corner before I can get some bomber gear and pull out left on to the top of the original pitch. That was dangerous but it does not scare me these days and I seem more focused than ever before.

I do all the shit again and now I am back to the belay at the top of pitch four.

I am feeling tired now and my sack's hurting every time I jumar with it. I decide to wear my sack for this lead, as I am sure it is the last of the hardest pitches and the last pitch of Centurion before joining Route II. It is the scariest pitch yet. Not much gear and the cracks are full of ice but there is more turf and each time I reach it I know I am safe. I reach the end of the rope having used up a mere three runners on the entire 40m pitch. I tie the rope off to the belay and put on my other rope and carry on up to reach the bivi site. I decide I can get the rope from pitch five after my bivi, as I have on my other short rope to keep me tied in. I settle down and make my two hot chocolates. I feel content, it's not a bad night, and I go to sleep. I am aware of the patter of rain on the bivi bag. The rain does not seem too bad and there was no forecast for it so I am sure it's just a passing

shower. I fall asleep again and next time I wake up, I am going to panic. It is 1am and there's a rainstorm with its severe ferociousness pounding me into submission. My sleeping bag's soaking as I am directly under a run off for the rain, it is pissing down my rope into my bag and I can feel a pool of water forming inside it. I am absolutely freezing and can't stop shaking. I am aware of Voices and Music but also aware that this is impossible. I realise I have mild hypothermia and that these are the first warning signs of it. After six hours sitting here I am going to have to get moving and I know it is now or never. I cannot retreat as I have come too far and up seems the best way to safety, so I get up soaking wet from head to toe. I put my outer boots on with that horrible squelching noise and put my stuff away. I rappel to the belay at the top of pitch five. I decide to leave my rope on pitch five and don't even bother to get my best gear out as I am having trouble with my basic co-ordination and am beginning to forget how to climb altogether.

I move up the ledge system to the edge of the buttress. I can't see a bloody thing and am not sure where to go having never climbed on this cliff. I was wishing I had taken the advice of friends and checked the route out in summer but my stubbornness to on sight it had limited me to going up the line of least resistance. I know it's about 60m to easy ground and the finish of the route. I follow a steep, but helpful, snowy groove on the edge of the buttress, short fixing and soloing most of this section I reach what I believe is the end of the route but there is still a lot of scrambling/easy climbing to do. I am super wrecked and can barely move. I struggle upwards through the darkness and swirling mist and I am now not even tied in and parts here and there look like they have big drops either side of them, is it the mist or just me? I don't know. I finally reach the snowfield that leads around the top of the plateau. I collapse in a heap and start to slowly warm up. I feel nothing, no excitement, no elation. So here I am again so used to this feeling of nothing and I have just done something incredibly fierce. I reassure myself that that will come later and I start round, compass in hand, looking for No. 5 gully.

I did this route and left my rope and a lot of gear on the fifth pitch. Some might say this is a disregard for the mountain. However, when hypothermia sets in the only issue is not whether or not you leave the route nice and clean but can you safely extract yourself from the cliff without calling out the mountain rescue team, and in the process cost the taxpayer much more money than you could ever lose leaving a rope and some gear on the mountain. I had a mobile phone on this occasion but the overwhelming desire to rely on myself meant that only a truly horrific accident would warrant me calling them out. As I proved you can push yourself to the limit as long as you have the will and desire to rely on your own judgment and ability.

THE LONELY MAN

By P. J. Biggar

WHEN they came to the island, the mountains were obscured by masses of dense cloud. Hill fog hung about the narrow roads, creeping among the pine trees and swirling in tendrils about the deserted settlements.

Sitting hunched up in the car while his companion drove, O'Dwyer wondered why he had consented to come on this trip. He felt low in himself. Prospects were bleak. His business was in a parlous condition. Relationships were creaking under the strain. Tiff, he sensed, had been glad to see him go. He began to suspect she might be glad to see him go permanently.

Reddle's sharp Yorkshire voice cut across his reflections.

"It's all this high pressure that's doing it."

"Doing what?"

The older man's thick hand briefly indicated the lowering cloud base.

"And yet," he said, "there's a lot of snow up there. I can sense it. We might be lucky." Like his voice, his features were chiselled and clear cut; the lines round his mouth showed age and determination. It was not for no reason that he had kept climbing long after other men had stopped.

O'Dwyer grunted non-committally. Secretly, he hoped it would rain and blow, obliterating the need to climb. His thoughts drifted off into regions of anxiety and doubt. Had Tiff been trying to tell him something just before Reddle turned up? Was she seeing someone else? Why was she so cold, so distant? She could have come on this trip if she'd wanted to; leave was available. Reddle, who had always liked her, had hinted that they'd enjoy her company, but she hadn't been interested. Perhaps he should phone and have it out with her? Perhaps she too was just worried about the future?

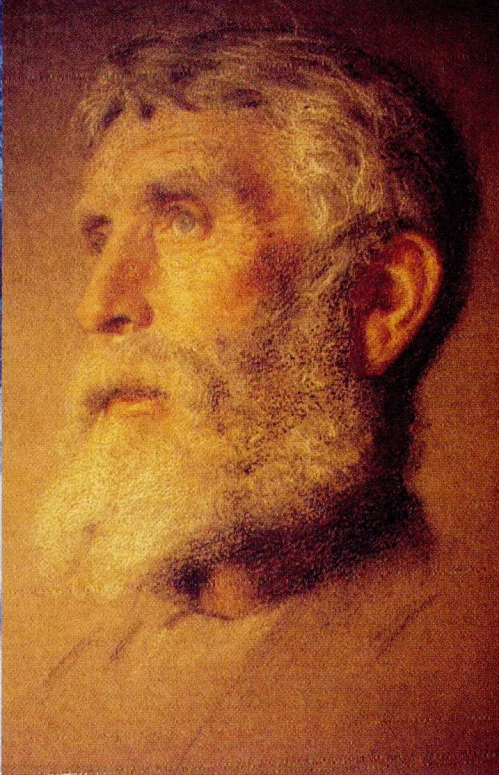
For certain the business would fold unless there was an upturn soon. They'd have to sell the house and move. The children would have to be uprooted from their schools. It was a bad time to shift, exams were just around the corner.

Animals moved away from the road at the car's approach, vanishing quickly in the mirk. When they reached the village it was growing dark.

To O'Dwyer's horror there was a large, noisy party of students staying in the hut. "Didn't I tell you?" Reddle's eyes were glinting wickedly at his companion's discomfiture. "They're only staying a couple of nights. Just as well we brought mats, we'll probably have to sleep on't floor."

O'Dwyer was inwardly fuming and slammed down his rucksack in the cluttered lobby. This bedlam was about the last straw. It was bad enough trying to get to sleep in relative peace before climbing, but this would make it just about impossible. Sensing his anger, Reddle made a concession.

Top left: Jonathan Preston. Top right: John McKenzie. Bottom left: George (Scottie) Dwyer. Bottom right: Davie Glen.





"P'raps we should go for't pint, now? Let them cook and settle down a bit?"

There was a log fire in the spacious residents lounge of the hotel. The barmaid had long red hair and smiled pleasantly as she poured the beer. O'Dwyer got the drinks and then went to hunt for the phone. He was blundering about in a small maze of corridors when he bumped into the barmaid who was also doubling as receptionist. First, on a misapprehension, she sent him to the Gents, but then smilingly realising her mistake she pointed out the phone booth. It was a long time before Martin answered.

"Is Mum in?"

"No. She went out after lunch and she's not back yet."

O'Dwyer thought he could detect an edge of discomfort, almost guilt, in his eldest son's voice.

"OK, Marty," he said gently. "Just tell her we got here all right and the weather's crap."

As he put the receiver down he felt loneliness welling up inside him. There was no reason to suspect anything, but doubts and questions went wriggling through him like worms. As he walked back through the foyer the barmaid looked up from the receptionist's computer and asked if everything was all right. He managed a half smile.

"Did I look that bad?"

"A bit strained."

"It's just family problems."

"Nothing serious I hope?"

"I hope not too."

"If we can take messages for you, don't hesitate to ask."

"That's really very kind."

"Not at all," she said and added, "there's nothing worse than being worried when you're supposed to be enjoying yourself."

Despite his habitual caution with strangers, O'Dwyer paused to nod and smile his appreciation.

Back in the lounge Reddle was deep in the guidebook. He didn't seem to notice his companion's distraction and plunged into a long lecture on some obscure literature course he'd started going to in his retirement.

For several days the big mountains sulked under impenetrable cloud. Occasionally, at the end of the day, a ridge or a buttress and a high snowfield would appear, tantalisingly, from behind the screen and then just as quickly vanish again. Across the rough track from the hut, the cattle stood ankle deep in mud eating straw from a metal feeder. Crows came down for scraps thrown by the climbers. O'Dwyer remembered summer holidays there: the touch of warm, rough rock, blue skies and bathing in green pools. He shuddered. Why on earth come in winter?

They walked round lesser hills for the most part in dreary silence. One day they disturbed five ptarmigan still in full winter plumage. On the bare

black hillside they looked naked and vulnerable as they stole away into the mist.

Presently, the students left. Despite his earlier annoyance, O'Dwyer missed the noisy banter and confusion. Now the hut was eerily silent. Reddle talked from time to time but communicated very little. O'Dwyer felt his own voice grow thin and hollow as he made polite responses. He had climbed with Reddle for more than 20 years but had never realised how self-centred he was. Perhaps it's true what they say, he thought, one's worse characteristics become more pronounced with age?

Back in the hotel each evening as they drank the ritual pints to celebrate the day's activities, O'Dwyer made several more attempts to phone his wife, but only got the children. He tried to read between the lines of what they told him, but was too considerate to embarrass them with direct questions. The barmaid continued to look kindly on him with her pretty green eyes. Her name was Angela, he discovered, a New Zealander working her way round the old world. She was here for the winter but was due to leave in the spring.

"There's no sign of this high ending," said Reddle as they watched the forecast in the bar. "I think if we're going to do this route at all we should just go for it."

When they got back to the hut, O'Dwyer lit the stove and Reddle sat by it immersed in a climbing magazine. Returning to the kitchen O'Dwyer cleaned the potatoes and put them on to boil. Then he set about packing his sack for the morning. He packed the rope and a reasonable quantity of gear; it would save time if he carried most of the weight. Reddle was strong for his age but there was no doubt that the years were slowing him down. O'Dwyer admired him for keeping going but felt the pressure of the extra work it entailed. He himself was no longer a young man.

In the scanty early morning light as they drove back up the valley, light rain was spattering the windscreen. Great banks of cloud were building up out at sea beyond the sodden moorland. Clouds were tumbling and rolling about the upper slopes of the mountain, obscuring the sharply toothed arête they wished to climb. The rock was black and bare and the snowfields had a drawn and shrinking look. O'Dwyer felt no desire to quit the comfort of his seat in the car.

"This day's no better than the rest," he said bleakly.

"At least it's no worse." Reddle was hardly listening.

"Surely there's a front coming in?"

"No. The glass is still too high for that." He pulled the car into the parking place beside the old bridge.

"I'm undecided," said O'Dwyer. "It seems no better than any other day. Where's the justification?" But Reddle had already opened the tailgate and was fumbling with his boots.

Despite reasonable paths, the approach over the moor seemed interminable. Occasionally, across the valley, the cloud parted to reveal a

chaos of shattered pinnacles, then it shut again like a trap door and they were left marching solemnly on towards obscurity. The rain never quite came to anything, but no more did the cloud lift to dispel the gloom that preyed on O'Dwyer's spirits.

"What on earth am I doing this for?" The thought formulated itself consciously as he followed Reddle's determined steps. Of course, he didn't want to let his old friend down. Despite his negative feelings towards his companion which were exaggerated by his personal anxieties, he knew that Reddle had stuck to him as a companion for a long time. Perhaps his strong Yorkshire soul felt able, in his presence, to display what weakness it contained. Reddle could sometimes acknowledge to him, and perhaps not to many other people, that his grip on the climbing life was growing tenuous. For this small amount of confidence from another human being, like a small drop of whisky in a mug of tea, O'Dwyer felt grateful. But it wasn't just out of personal loyalty that he kept moving upwards.

Below the lowest rocks of the arête they sat down under a black, dripping wall to eat and drink. As O'Dwyer had carried most of the heavy equipment Reddle had brought a flask. Now, hesitatingly, he poured half a small cup and handed it to O'Dwyer. A shower broke about them and two ravens flew past, their sharp calls dulled by the sound of rushing water in the deep gorge which drained the coire. Reddle had said they should stop and think, as if belatedly aware that the weather was no better, but scarcely any conversation took place and sullenly they took up their burdens and moved upwards.

The first tongue of snow licking down from the gully which led onto the arête, gave some encouragement. Though wet and heavy it was hard enough to bear their weight. O'Dwyer went in front and kicked steps. His rhythm was good, it always was on snow, and they made steady progress up into the mist.

Shattered ribs of black rock came down into the snow and the best route was not always easy to find. In places too, where snow met rock, there were ominous cracks and the sound of gushing water below. They scrambled past these as fast as they could, at length gaining a broad upper couloir.

Looking up from the task, sweat running into his eyes, O'Dwyer could see that the obvious exit from the couloir they were climbing was blocked. There was a narrow channel, but it contained two enormous chockstones. It didn't look hopeful but he wondered if they might be able to squeeze through underneath them. Reddle, surveying the situation critically from behind, tried a different solution. He contrived to step from the snow onto the rock rib on the left.

"We can get out this way," he grunted.

Feeling the extra weight in his sack as he made the rock moves, O'Dwyer followed the older man. Sure enough, beyond the constriction another gully continued unbroken to the col. Reddle crouched by the wall getting

something from his sack. Nothing was said. O'Dwyer hesitated then took up his role as step kicker once more. His companion had done just enough to solve the problem.

When they reached the crest of the ridge the climbing, though not difficult, became exposed. As the angle eased, Reddle had gone ahead.

"Should we rope up?" O'Dwyer called up to him. He would have been glad to get the weight of the rope off his back. Reddle paused and looked down.

"Oh, I don't think so," he said. "There's no need."

O'Dwyer felt a spurt of anger as he kicked on up the sugary slopes. He caught up with Reddle at a pile of boulders. Snow ramps disappeared into the cloud ahead. He was putting on his crampons.

"No point in carrying these."

"There's not much point in my carrying all this bloody lot either," said O'Dwyer dumping his sack viciously in the snow. He had meant the remark to be taken lightly but his anger showed through.

"I suppose that's true," said Reddle enigmatically and went on working at his straps. Like most of his gear his crampons were worn out, but he wouldn't replace them. They fell off periodically at awkward moments.

Anger fuelled O'Dwyer's movements and he had his own crampons on quickly. Taking up his sack without further comment he addressed the slopes ahead. The route wound tortuously on, always on wet, but reasonably firm snow. There was almost nothing to see.

Despite his dark mood and his anger at his partner's seeming insensitivity, O'Dwyer felt a certain exultation in the continuous upward movement.

Some people claimed they climbed for the views: today would not have done for them, he thought. There was no view, only soggy snow and wet, black rock. He knew he didn't climb for the view. Views he found utterly unmemorable. Not, of course, that there was not a certain transient pleasure in them at the time, but that had nothing to do with motivation. Nor, again, was he insensitive to the atmosphere of certain places in the hills. Glencoe and the Ogwen valley had the kind of atmosphere which drew him back, a very special mountain atmosphere. And wind-browned grass sticking through the snow above Loch Morlich always suggested the Gorms. But as he grew older he knew, in himself, why he climbed.

The way ahead took them out on the right side of the crest, sheltered for the moment from the showers which were wafting light, semi-frozen rain across the ridge. Presently, the ground steepened and a short traverse under a small rock wall brought them to a sharp snow arête which led across the tops of twin gullies to gain steeper ground beyond.

O'Dwyer took off his sack gingerly, for suddenly, he was aware of steep slopes plunging down on either side. He slipped his axe through the lifting loop of his pack and sank the shaft deep into the snow. He could feel his legs start to tremble.

"We should rope up," he told Reddle who had just appeared below him.

"Aye, all right. That next bit's got some ice on it."

Fumbling in his sack, O'Dwyer brought out his old pink rope. He did so very carefully so as not to dislodge any of the bits of climbing gear clustered around it. The shower was intensifying, adding a layer of discomfort to the feeling of insecurity. Cautiously, he released the doubled coils and passed the ends down to Reddle. Unclipping frozen buckles with torn gloves he released his hammer-axe and drove the shaft into the snow. He festooned it with slings, pegs and nuts.

"You'll have to pass me summat t'belay with." Reddle had now kicked himself a platform and sorted out the rope. He threw a coil up to O'Dwyer who, in turn, put a sling on the end of a tool and passed it down to him. Foolishly, he put the other slings and the bandolier round his neck before putting his sack on and had to take it off again to rectify the error. He heard Reddle cough below. O'Dwyer's gloves were thin and old as well as torn and he scrabbled in the bag once more to find his mitts. He passed Reddle the rope; the other grunted and he set off.

The arête was sensational but easy. Cautiously, O'Dwyer edged along the crest. At least he was now in the shelter of the rocks which formed the left flank of the open scoop leading to the tower. Near at hand was a minor steepening with vestiges of ice fringing the bare rock. O'Dwyer placed a large nut in a good crack and moved up. Axes stuck satisfyingly in icy snow.

After days spent trudging round misty hillsides locked in his own thoughts, O'Dwyer's mind was relieved to escape into concentration on technical problems.

Below the next steepening was another good crack. Pleased that he had not given it to Reddle for the main belay, he placed his cherished Moac, clipped it and looked up. Disinterestedly, he recorded the fact that it was now snowing, large wet flakes adhering briefly to the rock.

Directly above was a crack between two jammed boulders, but it was narrow and the ice it contained was fractured. To the left was a broader runnel containing at first snow, then brittle, rotten looking water-ice. In fact, the ice had shrunk away from the retaining rock wall, leaving a row of wet, slimy rock ledges like carious teeth protruding from receding gums. With anxious delicacy he placed cramponed feet on the rock and made progress that way. His axes dangled, clonking like dolorous bells.

As he climbed, the holds grew more precarious and water seeped into his mitts chilling his hands. He would have liked more protection, but gentle pressure applied to a promising spike revealed that it was loose. There was nothing else. He didn't look down.

The next move invited him to place the front points of his crampons on a small rock hold. Again he looked for protection, but brittle ice covered the rock to his right and to the left the dripping wall was blank. Sensation was draining from his hands but sweat was running from under his arms.

He got his left points onto the rock and pressed ever so gently.

"Got to trust it!" he gritted to himself.

His hands found some edges in the rock from which he could lay-away. To the right, just in reach, was a sloping shelf, partially ice covered. If he could get a foot on it.

Relief welled up inside him as the hot-aches tore at his hands. "That weren't a bad lead," said Reddle grudgingly. He took the bandolier and moved steadily on. O'Dwyer saw him reach the top of the pinnacle and heard him exclaim at what he found. Quickly, he followed Reddle's steps and soon he too was gazing down the deep gash into which they must abseil. Reddle was busying himself with preparations. O'Dwyer, drained by his lead, slumped against a rock and peered vacantly into the abyss.

The sleet was easing a little, but everything was still covered by gently moving vapour which distorted angle and distance. At times he could see what looked like a ledge below them, then the cloud would clear a little more and he could see the top of a gully plunging away from a notch below the ledge.

"This is interesting."

O'Dwyer could sense the tension in Reddle's understatement. He had rigged the abseil and was preparing to descend.

"Will it reach?"

"We'll soon find out."

Despite himself, O'Dwyer smiled. Whatever else, the old man had courage.

Because of the overhang Reddle was soon out of sight. O'Dwyer heard his nervous cough and the scratching of his crampons. Nervously, he watched the pull of the ropes on the anchors. Waiting to abseil was worse than waiting to climb.

The mist enfolded him. Even the other side of the gap was invisible. Presently, he would have to launch himself into the unknown to follow a companion with whom he felt deeply disgruntled. He didn't know why Reddle still climbed with him; what did they have in common? Perhaps no one else would climb with him? Perhaps, he thought, I'm just the sort of person other people take advantage of when it suits them? This thought seemed to strike home. His colleagues, the firm's clients, his friends and relations, the children... Tiff? Everyone he knew seemed to suck the blood from him, but what did they give in return?

"I'm safe!" Reddle's shout from below called him back to the world of action. The rope came loose and he clipped the slender pink strands into his plate. The garish yellow sling seemed a ridiculously weak device on which to hang a life.

"Bit like marriage vows," he muttered to himself and stepped backwards.

The rope gave out a little above an icy ledge and the last few feet had to be down-climbed precariously. Reddle appeared from behind a corner.

"Have you got rope?"

"No, bugger it! I was too busy getting down."

Angrily, O'Dwyer climbed up again and got hold of an end. He pulled. The rope stretched but nothing happened. He pulled again, harder.

"It's bloody stuck!"

They tried all they knew but the rope was immovable. Exhaustedly, they looked at each other. Time was against them.

"We could go on."

Reddle looked into the mist.

"Nay, that's steep mixed ground. We'd best go down from't col." Wearily, O'Dwyer followed in his steps. Failure on a route he hadn't even wanted to start stoked the fire already burning in him. When at length they paused by a dripping wall his anger and misery broke in violent waves around his partner. Once he had started he couldn't stop. It was like corrupted matter bursting from some deep abscess. The venting left him pale and shaking. He turned away and glared into the darkening sky. Reddle went on packing equipment into his sack. You couldn't even tell if he'd been listening.

They returned slowly over the moor. O'Dwyer, feeling the first stirrings of remorse at his outburst, lagged behind. Just once Reddle paused by a big rock.

"What's the name of that lass in *King Lear*?" He said quite unexpectedly.

"Cordelia?"

"Aye, that's it. We've been studying that on that course I was telling you about. She can't communicate, that's her problem." He took up his bag and walked on.

After dumping their gear in the car, they went for a pint. Angela the pretty barmaid was sitting in Reception. She touched O'Dwyer's sleeve as they made for the bar.

"Your wife phoned. She'd like you to call back as soon as possible."

Like a man under sentence of death, O'Dwyer headed for the phone booth. He hadn't thought the day could get any worse, now he knew it could.

But when he eventually made it to where Reddle was slumped wearily in a chair by the fire, he was like a man transformed. It wasn't what she'd said but the way she'd said it, and she was coming up tomorrow to finish the trip with them. Tiff had been his real worry, as long as she still wanted to be with him he knew they could cope with all the other problems. She just hadn't been able to communicate.

O'Dwyer looked at the haggard features of the old friend who had understood his wife better than he had and felt disgusted by his own egocentricity.

"Look, George," he said, "I must apologise for what I said to you. I'm really very sorry, it wasn't your fault. I've been under a bit of pressure lately and you got the brunt of it."

"That's all right, lad," said Reddle, lowering the paper he'd borrowed and smiling his strange smile. "I'd get you a drink, but I've left my wallet in the hut."

RIDICULOUS THINGS LIKE THESE REALLY HAPPENED THEN

By G. J. F. Dutton

I DON'T really relish adding to the slippery pile of senile reminiscence; yet some of it – just look through the back numbers of this Journal – can interest future members or readers, and there is always the 'Now it can be told' element as a pinch of pepper.

The heap is divisible into (a) brassy personal reminiscence (I mind, ken, when I wis... etc.); (b) brazen technical reminiscence (I mind, ken, when trikes wis aa the thing... etc.); (c) silken reminiscence of others in guileless youth or unguarded maturity (of which I shall risk no examples just now).

Personally, I mind all three; but, until the Journal manages to banish the more trivial 70% of its hypertrophied New Climbs section (except for the necessary canonisation of climbs, climbers, location, length and grade) over to a website – until then, it fortunately, does not possess enough paper to mop up the communicatory incontinence of geriatrics; and so I am limited for space.

I'll stick with three, pre-SMC, memorisings of (a); with some (b) and (c) looking in if passing. Now, I have been accused – in spite of being only a helpless Narrator, not a Participant – of converting 'real' Scottish climbing episodes into what are known as 'Doctor stories' by shameless exaggeration or, perish the thought, sheer invention. So, I duly recount these three really real episodes which could scarcely be turned into Doctor stories even by the most unscrupulous: for they seem too improbable. Yet, as we shall see, each unlikely happening was highly likely, under the circumstances.

Go back to the winter of 1946-47. A very severe winter, snow and hard frost staying week after week. Up north it was no doubt marvellous, but roads were blocked and petrol rationed. Even reaching the Pentlands was difficult. We seemed to be stuck in Edinburgh. But Edinburgh possesses, within itself, fine rockclimbing on Salisbury Crags. What were *they* like?

Views from the No. 6 tram, on the way to classes, embraced a determinedly Alpine Arthur's Seat. And the Crags looked interesting...

They were. I visited them the next Sunday, but rather late, for the indefatigable Gordon Parish was already active, with other members of the EUMC. Parish is as meticulous in his diaries as in providing refreshment for his guests (however boring the occasion – see *chez Café Grande Corniche*, below) and most of the following facts (facts!) are from the entries he kindly lent me (otherwise I might have had to dream them up from memory).

The previous Sunday, February 16, Allon (not Allan) Liver had tried Cat Nick on the Craggs, but found snow in the lower part of this 100ft. gully-chimney too soft, and retreated. One night the next week John Berkeley, Iain Smart and Jean Bainton had walked by moon-light and torch-light along the top of the Craggs. Berkeley, at the end of a rope, crept out on a cornice above Cat Nick and poked near its inner edge, to make a hole for climbing down; this he achieved when he suddenly shot through the cornice and dropped 10ft. on to a fortunate ledge below. Hauled up again, he thoughtfully retired.

Sunday 23 was bright and sunny, freezing hard after still more snow. Liver and Parish began at the foot of Cat Nick at 9.55 am. Nearly all the north face of the Craggs was plastered, with 4ft. to 6ft. of cornice in most places, much more above Cat Nick. Liver led the lower part, none too easy with a foot of new powder snow on hard *névé*. When he'd climbed some 30ft., the three who had made the First Hole arrived and found themselves pipped for a First Winter Ascent; they tried the nearby Recess Route, but its steep upper rocks defended the overhung cornice too well, and they came down again.

Meanwhile, at Cat Nick, Liver and Parish wedged themselves below the upper chimney and 'reviewed the situation'. Berkeley's cornice hole, by then partly refilled, appeared well out in the overhang about 4ft. from the foot of the chimney. Parish estimated the total overhang to be 12ft. from the rock edge, of thickness 6ft. or so, in successive iron-hard laminations. He then began his boring, knee-jammed in the chimney, and cut diagonally up right; the passageway from the chimney top was 10ft. long, but as cornice covered most of the chimney, the tunnel actually totalled some 15ft. He let Liver break out at 11.45 and take the picture of an emergent Parishian head grinning sunlit at the end of a rope in the centre of the summit snow. I had joined him by then, and followed the icy and suffocating 15ft. crawl – over nothing – up to daylight. I had supped hot soup with him the winter before in his tunnel through the cornice of No. 4 Gully on Nevis, and thought no burrowing of his after that could surprise me. This time also I expect soup was served, but only remember now a still more remarkable thing: from the dark I burst out into dazzling sunlight on a pure white field of snow, backed by sharp red rocks; with, in front, beyond an airy gap, scenery as of snowclad roofs, turrets and pinnacles, fretting a blue Arctic sky; and below that, a slow and dutiful procession of tramcars, packed with kirk-gaun bourgeoisie; their rattles echoed faintly through the silence. Yes, a memorable panorama. That's why I forget if we had soup.

Berkeley's party then ascended our route. The inexhaustible Parish roped off and crossed to the Cat Nick Arête, with snow low down and a 10ft. cornice above; snow was softer than in the Cat Nick and he dug a more exiguous passage, being helped out by Berkeley – back from Cat Nick – just as part of the cornice gave way: not however damaging this 'Third

Hole'. His diary records: 'A terrific day, equal to any snow climb I have had on Nevis – and without the hassle of getting there!'

The cornice and tunnels remained for many weeks, and their repeated climbing and descent incurred yo-yo fascination, especially by night. Once we noted dog prints sniffing round hole No. 2, nearer and nearer, then – inevitably – vanishing in a frantic scrape downwards; paws ruefully reprinted themselves as limps on the lower snow by Radical Road.

While some of us were hacking snow tunnels, others just round the corner were disporting rubber-soled on warm dry sun-facing basalt in Little Quarry; which we visited immediately afterwards, to finish off a day only possible in Edinburgh and never repeated; one simply too improbable to make up.

[A snowy climb of Cat Nick had occurred before, but not so undeniably hibernal. Inglis Clark describes a difficult and dangerously axeless and gloveless combined-tactics ascent in powder snow, where one climber briefly fainted (*SMCJ* iv, 303, 1897); but ours were real Winter Ascents...]

The second Improbable is in minor key, dated February 1951, when Slessor and I, out for an easy weekend, were to wander up Beinn Dubhcaraig and Beinn Oss, meeting at Tyndrum, I from a JMCS bus, he from a Glasgow train. After spending a dark freezing hour or so at the station, among snatches of desultory platform Gaelic (economic cleansing was not yet complete), I watched the Glasgow train pull in; and out – Slessorless. He had presumably missed his connection, a not unknown occurrence.

I decided just to go on slowly up the Coninish track. Always resourceful, he might appear later. We had decided to camp high up above that track.

There was a difficulty, for he was to bring tent, Primus and suchlike. I had only a sleeping bag cover, the cheapest and worst ex-Army one – thin rubber beneath, thinner cotton above – and a sleeping bag, one of Black's own cheapest and worst. The JMCS bus knew it as the Prince of Wales model, possessing three feathers. Certainly, it afforded no warmth; but did cool you pleasantly on a hot August evening. In winter, damp and clingy even when dry, it chilled you to the marrow and back again.

A clear windless frosty night, with deep hard snow at the main road. Not far from Coninish, I decided to bivouac, Slessor or no Slessor. Unlikely to sleep, I should hear him crackling up the track. I chose a flattish, only slightly corrugated, sheet of frozen snow, stretched out the cover, laid the bag on top, twiddled it to redistribute the feather(s); pulled off boots; and – a precaution I observed for all winter camping then, though more usually in a tent – slipped on pyjama breeks and buttoned up a pyjama jacket over anorak, battledress and sundry hairy and odoriferous woollen accompaniments. (Pyjamas have a high warmth to weight ratio out of the wind). Plus a thick balaclava, gloves and leather mittens.

I suppose I snuggled down (an exhausting process, akin to boring a

cornice) and my diary records 'a surprisingly warm night – when awake'. I was often awake, counting recalcitry digits. Above me, black sparkling sky; around me, vast white crag-moustached domes. But no sound, sight or smell of Slessor.

About dawn I must have dozed off, for I woke to tuggings, hot breath and snorts. Slessor? I dragged out a hand and met hairy flanks, blinked and saw by the faint eastern light beady eyes, wet nose, flashes of teeth. Surely not Slessor? Maybe... Then, a howl, a furious yapping, from two sides. Certainly not Slessor.

As my horizontal posture invited unseemly intimacy, if not attack, from these possible wolves (conserved from the late Post-Glacial?) or more likely sheepdogs, I convulsed myself out of the strait-jacketing bag and faced my now frantic assailants; yowls and barkings were incessant, fury mounting – what were pyjamas doing on their territory? Then I remembered my 'breakfast' – a packet of jammy pieces in the rucksack serving as pillow – and broke them up and flung them to the ravenous hounds, each fragment farther off than the last, to lure away those snarls and teeth.

Improbable, maybe, to recount. But even more improbable if you had been tramping sleepily all night up a vast expanse of frozen snow high in the Central Highlands; hearing ahead, distant barking; and seeing before you suddenly over a slippery rise in the ground a figure dancing about in balaclava, socks and pyjamas and scattering things before two similarly leaping dogs. All under a calm hemisphere of starlit sky with a hint of dawn breaking behind Fiarach.

Slessor, however, was not there to enjoy this; and I was anxiously splitting off the last frozen crust when a whistle pierced out of the half-light and, after a deft catch of that crust and a scornful backward glance, the creatures wheeled around and leapt a dyke; no more to be seen, or heard.

What else? Just a fine day for fine little hills. I continued crisping tricounis up Beinn Dubhcraig. Later, below Beinn Oss, I stood and watched my companion-to-be – who had reached Glen Falloch the previous night – toiling from the south up the Ewig Schneefeld of the Ossgletscher. He, of course, could scarcely believe my story.

But to prove it, I still have his fine photograph of Beinn Lui, taken on that very day.

The third Improbable is a little more major. There had been nothing like it at that particular site since the last Tertiary volcano knocked its ash out and bedded down.

Well then, in autumn 1947 some EUMC members (they are always cropping up, I fear), decided to storm the island fortress of Rum. It was then in the last throes of ownership by the Bullough family and still jealously guarded from interlopers, especially climbers (although apparently Lady Bullough, the sole summer resident of the family, was graciously pleased to consider occasional access for a few neatly-trimmed

sprouts of the Establishment – a role now taken over by the SNH); but it was more fun to Raid the place as in days of old.

We disembarked from the legendary Captain ‘Squeaky’ Robertson and his legendary MacBrayne steamer *Lochmor* on to the jetty at Canna. Thence we were smuggled, with a huge pile of food and equipment, by the crafty islander McIsaac in his small motorised sailing boat, to be unloaded at the nearest suitable part of the enemy coast for such landing craft, Guirdil Bay at the north-west of the island.

We cached some food there and crossed to Harris. Below us, stark in seedy nobility, was the pillared and pedimented Doric mausoleum, housing the remains of those fat-cat Lancashire bobbin-manufacturers. I think there were a couple of big table-topped stone sarcophagi down there in shelter from the drizzle, and they provided a welcome excuse to stretch out and drum up our first meal. As Lady Bullough was believed to visit fairly regularly and gaze westward across her husband’s bones, we carefully tidied away crumbs and crisp packets: the decent thing, even for an Occupying Force. (Though two Primus pricklers were accidentally left behind above Sir George, and may have occasioned some anxiety).

We camped farther south, above the coast by the Amhuinn Fiachannis, and from there recorded many climbs of varied difficulty but unvarying delight, on flatteringly adhesive rock; (no problems with the New Climbs section in those days. *Hon. Ed.*) and traversed the Main Ridge.

This was not just a climbing expedition but, as gazetted, an Invasion and, many of us being ex-Service, it was planned with military thoroughness. Consequently, most of the Supporting Projects dissolved among our prudent consignments of whisky and gin. Naval Support was not forthcoming, because both canoes had apparently leaked or capsized back at Arisaig, and the great Final Triumphal March down upon and through Kinloch, parading before the Schloss itself, had to be abandoned because our Air Support, featuring ex-Squadron Leader Johnny Willsher and a Friend, in the Friend’s Tiger Moth (or suchlike), had pranged on a practice take-off somewhere in Argyll, wrecking itself and the chamberpots that were to have floated down over the besieged, carrying various unconventional objects and exhortations. And Air Power is decisive nowadays, our ex-Colonel Johnny Blower reckoned, pouring out another for us all.

Much desultory discussion and wiping of lips... We had to mark our visit in some way, preferably dramatic enough to strike fear into the inhabitants, though not into the mainland police. Rum’s own natural heritage helped. Its cliffs can be monstrous and Dantean, tiers of 1000ft. immensity. South-east of our camp their scenery became surreal; between Rudha Sgor an Suidhe and Inbhir Ghil, we discovered a vast cauldron scooped in the cliff-face, some 50yds. in diameter and piled with centuries, millenia, of flotsam, driven into it over its seaward barrier. We trod this creaking graveyard, an underfoot mélange of inextricably entangled

driftwood descending to invisible depths and the gurgling of buried water. Above it, sheer cliff backed on the 1607ft. of Ruinsival, and partially enclosed either side; in front, the unseen Atlantic boomed and sucked. A ready-made theatre for our Finale.

That evening, we carried down all our old cans, boxes, paper and spare kerosene. The vast hoard of timber was bone dry.

We waited for dark and tossed in a few matches.

Then hastily retreated to ledge after ledge, higher and higher above the blossoming roar as flames took hold. A great unseen blow-hole opened seaward. It sucked in a gale that drove boiling fire high up the cliff behind, and spiralled sparks and blood-red smoke hundreds of feet above us. We had created a blast furnace...

It lasted for hours. We lay and watched. Deeper and deeper crashed the white-hot debris; higher and higher climbed the erupting fire; lurid smoke billowed over the very crest of Ruinsival. Aye, it was great. Silhouetted against this inferno I paced the perimeter piping – though on a chanter only, not the full set, and largely unheard above the bellow of fire – but it threaded the occasional hush whenever flames drew breath, and was ample Romantic accompaniment for an entranced audience.

We stayed until dawn drizzled greyly into the charred and empty cavern, where ashes floated on the uncovered water. We had all been silent, and much moved. Two of us got engaged on the strength of it.

Such was our volcano on Rum.

As McIsaac pootered inshore, we awaited his Terror and Awe, or at least surprise. He had seen a Glow. Oh yes, there was a Glow. But someone – he glared at Smart and Slessor – ‘had cracked this cabin window with his boot on the way here’. And he wouldn’t take us off until the cost had been ‘adchusted’.



PLUS ÇA CHANGE

By Nigel Suess

THE Club has set standards of climbing prowess the attainment of which is to be expected of applicants for membership. These standards are occasionally changed by our committee and I believe that currently winter leading Grade IV, summer leading VS and 50 Munros are the measure. The changes have been, in effect, a ratcheting-up to reflect improvements in equipment and technique. Not all members maintain their climbing over such a spectrum beyond their first few years in the Club. Some justification may be given by *anno domini*, but often we gravitate towards an area of particular personal appeal such as warm rock in Spain or wet Corbetts in Sutherland. Should we worry about this?

Amuse yourselves with the thought of a committee dictat that membership should become a renewable lease requiring annual payment of Grade IV ice, VS rock and so many Munros for the under-40s, reducing by a scale to a summer ascent of Arthur's Seat from Dunsapie Loch for the over 80s. The Club's medical men could permit exemptions in certain circumstances. Fortunately, the AGM would never sanction such an outrage and some of our officers might be embarrassed, so it probably will not be on the Agenda. We shall remain the 'happy few'.

Such is the state of things at the turn of the millennium. Now, I invite you to imagine how things might stand in 2050. Based on the longevity of our members (those who do not succumb to the dodgy belay) some of you may still be around. The majority of us, who will have slipped into the crevasse from which there is no rescue, do not envy you. At this point I shall adopt that pseudo-scientific approach much loved by this Journal. I am sure that such a well-educated membership needs no mathematical explanation of exponential growth. However, one feature of the exponential growth of a qualified set is that the cumulative total and the annual recruitment both grow exponentially. I refer, of course, to that branch of number theory, *munrosis incrementalis*, graphically illustrated by the President in Campbell's *Munroist's Companion*. You can study the Tables and see that the last year blessed by no Completions was 1950, a good base year for looking ahead to 2050. In 1950 the number of Munroists (admitting the offence) stood at 15. The *SMCJ 2000* gave a total of 2307 and annual Completions of 241. Over these 50 years the compound annual growth rate in total Completions is 10.6% and in annual Completions it is 11.6% (notionally attributing one as our base).

I have talked to closet and full-frontal Munroists about this. One summarised the growth as a fashion which she did not expect to persist indefinitely. However, a closer look at the growth suggests that the fashion is very persistent, like men wearing trousers rather than hose. Take the year 1970, for example, when the total reached three figures. The total had been growing for 20 years at an average compound rate of 10% and would grow for the next 30 years at an average compound rate of 11%. Even in 1970 the observation that ‘bagging’ was a fashion could have been made.

The second comment that I have often heard is that “it cannot go on”. Well, what if it does? In the *SMCJ 2050* we would have to record 58,000 new Completions. That number seems as unbelievable today as 241 new Completions would have seemed in 1950. Fortunately, the Journal Editor will long since have relegated the list to a fact-bin, sorry, website. In passing, some may wish to see other exponential material in the Journal treated similarly. But, how unrealistic are such projections? Such a level of Completion would still be less than 10% of the UK population in a one-year cohort. Also, there are German, French and especially Dutch walkers prepared to take on the challenge. The Dutch love our more corrugated topography and, I suspect, choose to Compleat on Stob Poite Coire Ardair

It is in the realm of winter routes that the greatest change may occur. This is being written during a cold settled spell of January high pressure. The infrequency of such spells in recent years is evidence of a phenomenon generally known as global warming, but manifesting itself in the Highlands by milder and perhaps windier winters, on average. It seems that most snowfalls now result from Atlantic weather and so lower hills in the East, such as Glen Clova, are rarely in condition. Edinburgh residents do not often have to dig out their cars. When we get a dump of snow, it is all too often followed by a sudden change of wind direction giving rapid thaw, not by a winter high giving consolidation or by slow thaw-freeze. Since 1° is roughly 150m in lapse rate, one can see that a 2° rise by 2050 would raise the already ephemeral conditions at The Curtain to Smith’s Route. Higher than that, there is a lack of good winter routes for aspirant members. Combine the diminishing frequency of good routes in good conditions with exponential growth and the queuing problem will be acute. In the mid-1990s I did two of our classic routes, Crowberry Gully and Tower Ridge, midweek hoping to avoid the crowds. Actually, one only avoids the worst crowds. Tower Ridge involved four hours of queuing and a nocturnal descent to Glen Nevis. By 2050, the CIC International Hut (with the Richardson Memorial jacuzzi) will be regularly occupied by dozens of Chinese, Iranian and Brazilian mountaineers seeking to hit the short period when the Point is there.

You can be confident that no early start from the car park will be worth it.

How then will our prospective new members gain their winter ascents? The Leith Tiso Ice Tower will utilise a converted cold store with a 100m raised roof and hydraulically-adjusted panels to permit ice (not polystyrene) climbing at all angles from 85° (for top-roping kiddies) to overhanging by 20°. There will be free climbing as well as top-roping and periodically spindrift avalanches will be released, with gales and sudden thaws to add to the excitement. Robotically-constructed features such as the third pitch of Point Five and the crux move on Zero will have been engineered to be better than the slushy reality. Only masochists will carry 20kg packs up the Alt a' Mhuilinn when one can experience the identical climb after a No. 10 bus ride. The 2045 Euro grade E.IX.b7 will specify sustained vertical ice with sections of an average 10m overhanging by 15° minimum. The Club will permit applicant members to list their *al fresco* routes but, in view of the variability in conditions, the Committee will place less weight on such eccentric behaviour. Virtual reality ascents, which the Editor has forecast, will however, be inadmissible.

Fortunately, wet rock dries fairly quickly and global warming should allow many of our classic rock routes to be enjoyed, despite the polish imparted by the thousands of GM-rubber soles (a gene for stickiness). While queuing on Centurion, one will be distracted by the frequent helicopter flights to "see the mighty Ben", only 750 euros from Fort William. There are those outwith Scotland who hold that our rock routes rank lower in appeal than the Munros and ice routes. When week-ending in Baffin Island is affordable, only our honeypots will be mobbed (Agag's Motorway and the Macleod Ridge on Skye).

So far, we have barely suffered the influence of the legislator on our sport. We are all aware that competing pressures on the hills will force decisions from above (Holyrood). Soon, we may get our first National Park. In due course we shall enjoy 'The John Muir Nevis Park', 'The Percy Unna Glencoe Park' and 'The Norman Collie Skye Park'. In return for the 'gift' of our own mountains, legislators will exact a price. In the US permits are used on popular routes.

By 2050 we shall certainly need permits for all our popular mountains. Freedom to roam will be freedom with responsibility. The voluntary MR teams will have buckled under the strain long before 2050. RAF choppers cannot indefinitely remove from the hills those foolish enough to overestimate their ability. We shall see graded permits and penalties for rescue from unapproved routes, whether walking or climbing. Do not think that the present spectacle of 400 cars parked between the Kingshouse and the Clachaig on a good day can continue much longer. The solution will be the revival of the bus meet

So, in one respect, 2050 will be a bit like 1950. It will not be like 2000.

Easter 2001: Derek Pyper and Jas Hepburn ski touring round Coire Bhrochain, Braeriach. Photo: Niall Ritchie.





THE SMC HUTS – A RECENT HISTORY

By **Jim Crawford**

LAST year when I read through the Journal I was struck by the absence of information about the new Naismith Hut and its genesis. This splendid asset to the Club merited only a photograph taken from its doorway and a comment in the AGM report about the excellent catering arranged by John Fuller at the opening ceremony. It brought to mind the almost total neglect within the Club record of the work undertaken by so many members to bring the Club huts to their present number and condition. This article is an attempt to redress some of that neglect but can only be a partial attempt because of the size of the subject and the length of time that has passed since the Club ventured into property development.

I became involved in the organisation and operation of SMC huts 27 years ago. Some friends and I were near fixtures in the Members' Room that was a homely, albeit grubby feature of Lagangarbh prior to a reconstruction in 1973-4. We were much aggrieved by the loss of our howff and petulantly avoided the work parties that laboured for many weeks on a long overdue upgrade. In due course we returned to criticise the changes and were appalled by the amount of discarded rubbish. The work parties had run out of steam in the final stages and left George Wilkinson, the custodian, with no support for a clean-up. Mounds of waste and bed frames littered the surroundings, and eventually, spurred us into self-righteous action. A bonfire got rid of the consumables. Old cast-iron bunks and other metallic junk went into a large rubbish skip that the District Council provided at the lay-by in those days. The Council workers who emptied the skip probably blamed the owners of Allt na Feidh for the scrap iron and rubbish that filled it week after week for a month or so. A couple of mattress frames were dug into the sloping bank alongside the path as reinforcement and can still be detected there. Later the same year, awakened consciences took Bob Richardson and me to the CIC where the hut needed repointing and other work. From that seed grew an involvement, that has lasted to the present for both of us. I took over from George as custodian at Lagangarbh and, with Bob, joined the huts sub-committee.

It was an interesting time. Prior to about 1970, hut usage didn't justify major investment. I vaguely recall that the account book for Lagangarbh showed an annual income of about £180 a year when George Wilkinson became custodian. By the time I joined the huts sub-committee in 1974 there was a rising demand for places and better facilities. Bill Young as convenor and Gerry Peet as custodian of the CIC were providing the dynamic force behind the drive for improvement and expansion to meet this demand. Their enthusiasm took the Club into a period of hut

The CIC gas lift. Photo: Niall Ritchie.

The Ling gas float with Dave McGimpsey and Roger Webb. Photo: Hamish Irvine.

reconstruction and new building that has lasted for 30 years and looks to continue well into the future.

I sometimes wonder about the motivation of the SMC in acquiring huts prior to the explosion of interest in hill walking and climbing that occurred in the Seventies. The CIC in 1929 had the emotive association of a memorial, not just to Charles Inglis Clark, but to other members who had been directly and indirectly overwhelmed by the First War. I doubt, however, if a hut would have been opened there or anywhere else without the financial support of the Inglis Clark family. Bob Elton's account of the early years, in *SMCJ* 1979, indicated that it was little used at first. By 1939 the Club was 50 years old but the CIC remained its sole possession. Perhaps the remoteness of most climbing areas from central Scotland, the scanty numbers involved and a membership that could afford to use hotels inhibited a need for huts. It's striking when compared with the attitude of English clubs to huts in the Lake District and North Wales – areas without the access problems that arise from Scotland's dispersed climbing areas. There appears to be a timidity here that is echoed in the SMC guidebooks for the period, but that's a subject for an article by someone else.

I believe that Lagangarbh was acquired in 1946 with something of the same concept in mind as the CIC, a form of memorial to members lost in the Second War. Unlike the purpose-built and wholly-owned CIC, the hut was leased from the National Trust. The amount of reconstruction it received was fairly basic and it retained the character of the shepherd's cottage it once had been. Glencoe was an obvious choice for a hut because of the association with Unna and its purchase for the Trust. The main developments in the 25 years up to George Wilkinson's reconstruction were provision of an electricity supply, a very basic toilet and sewage system and an inadequate water supply from the bog behind the hut. Dougal Haston is blamed for perpetrating a hideous decor on the place involving brown painted hardboard and that was the condition in which I first came to know it in the Sixties.

The next acquisition was the Ling Hut in Glen Torridon in 1955. This was barely a step up from a bothy and possessed few comforts. Its lease offered no security of tenure and for many years there was a reluctance to invest money or effort in the place.

All the huts originally relied on coal and paraffin for lighting, cooking and heating, with the consequent squalor that went with these dirty fuels. It was probably custodians rather than users who pressed for cleaner energy sources. It's easy to forget how recently we tolerated homes without central heating and showers, where coal fires were commonplace and where electricity only became a widespread replacement for coal gas after the war.

Lagangarbh was the simplest to deal with as an electricity supply could readily be run from the main road. There was criticism of the poles and this still surfaces from time to time but an underground supply was

unthinkably expensive and the river an obstacle. Calor gas provided an obvious answer at the other huts but transporting cylinders added to the problems already faced for coal and paraffin. Pony supply to the CIC was eventually replaced by a snowcat that couldn't make the final rise to the hut so cylinders had to be carried on a stretcher by hut users, over the last half-mile from their dump, a major handicap for single occupants! Roger Robb dealt with the problem at Ling by floating the cylinders across the lochan and then dragging them up the burn. A few inches of water provided sufficient buoyancy to make this feasible but it still required a sizeable work party and remained the solution for many years. The eventual answer was helicopters and, despite the expense, these have been the method used for replenishment and major work at both CIC and Ling, for much of the past 30 years. Recently, though, Ling has returned to the float-and-drag method. Hamish Irvine obviously has lots of friends.

Water supplies were and remain the weak point in most huts. Raeburn, Ling and Lagangarbh have inadequate heads and require pump assistance. Most are prone to freezing in cold weather. These problems complicate water systems in huts and are the main cause of complaint from users, generally because they increase the likelihood of maloperation.

Murphy's law dominates the use of huts and is a primary influence on upgrades. If it is possible for hut equipment and systems to fail through abuse and stupidity then climbers will find a way to demonstrate this. Custodians usually end up cynical and older than their years after dealing with the unthinking and uncaring who make up a tiny percentage of hut users but have an effect out of all proportion to their numbers.

The CIC in its prime position came under the greatest pressure from such users. For a time in the Fifties and Sixties the hard men of the Scottish climbing scene tried to treat it as their fiefdom and a succession of convenors and custodians fought a battle with the barbarians to restore and maintain order. There was a danger of the hut being treated as an open howff and only under Gerry Peet could it be said that the Club fully restored control. The battle had a lingering effect and is directly responsible for the ruthless approach to management of the CIC adopted by Gerry and his successors because the barbarians are still at the gate. When Gerry indicated a wish to retire as custodian, Malcolm Slessor asked: "Are we training a bastard?" (Could it possibly be that he had a premonition? Ed.)

Endemic damp in the CIC, exacerbated by the condensation output from the use of gas, led to fairly frequent internal rebuilding and refitting. Sentimentalists regretted the passing of the coal-fired stove that had kept the hut fairly dry but, apart from its inefficiency, it was a fire hazard that wouldn't be tolerated nowadays. As the sole source of heat before the first drying room was built when gas was installed, it was often festooned with wet gear that was allowed to toast to the point of combustion. On one occasion when new fire resistant mattresses were installed the old mattresses were piled up against a boulder outside the hut, to be burned.

Within a minute of putting a match to them there was an unapproachable inferno accompanied by poisonous black fumes. The heat was so extreme that it cracked windows in the hut. It was a lesson that everyone present never forgot.

The next project after Lagangarbh was the extension to the CIC in 1974 by construction of the present porch. This was intended to keep climbing gear out of the hut and improve drying facilities. The earlier drying room was located by the entrance door and good fortune spared the Club a tragedy. A fire there would have blocked the only way out in the days before the internal escape window was installed. When the old drying room was dismantled it was found that the base supporting the gas ring that provided the heat had been converted to carbon. It may have been on the same occasion that Gerry discovered a ring of matches surrounding the burner – obviously left to dry and then forgotten by some moron. The work party that cleared the site, dug and laid the foundations on a magnificent June weekend, was one of the largest. A squad of navvies couldn't have accomplished more in one day and no one had the strength left on Sunday to take advantage of the best weather and rock climbing conditions that I have seen on the Ben. The rest of the construction and finishing work extended into the autumn and used up the entire supply of available labour so that for weekend after weekend it was reduced to a core of about three until a final finishing spurt on a wet September day that is recorded in a photograph in *SMCJ* 1975.

After the CIC, attention returned to Lagangarbh. Previous work had concentrated on the interior but the roof was in need of repair and the wooden lean-to that housed the toilet facility had fallen into an advanced state of decay. The latter was replaced by an extension constructed from heavy-density breeze blocks. We attempted to short circuit the burden of carrying these from the track by driving a lorry across the river which was broader in those days before the Army changed its course and character by embanking it with groynes and at the same time wrecked the track with their heavy transport. The lorry bogged down and had to be dug out. At the end of a long day spent carrying the blocks and timber to the hut we went to the Kingshouse where I ordered a pint of cider, drank something less than half of it, stood up, announced that I was drunk and then fell over comatose.

Looking back to those days when work parties were the norm for all the rebuilding, renovation and supply undertaken on huts, one person stands out in the memory. The late Bill Bennet was a quiet, unassuming man whose knowledge of roofing, slating and plumbing was applied to each of the huts and the rest of us learned a range of practical skills that served us well as house-owners. At Lagangarbh much of the roof was replaced and reslated, a much needed fire door was fitted by breaking through the upper wall and a new roof was put on the barn. At the Ling we undertook slating and bargeboard replacement and installed a new plumbing system. At the

CIC the extension was roofed and the hut refurbished. Without Bill Bennet and Gerry Peet, few of those involved in work parties would have had the confidence to tackle the work that we eventually approached without any qualms. One day, while working on the roof at Lagangarbh, some elderly, Edinburgh based SMC members of the old school came past and stopped for a chat. It became evident that they thought we were tradesmen employed by the Club. It was amusing to note their surprise on discovering that there were members who could undertake such work.

The worst job at Lagangarbh was emptying the septic tank. This was in the traditional form of a deep concrete pit, buried in the bog. It never functioned properly and when it eventually filled with solids, these had to be emptied by removing the concrete slabs that covered it and dropping in a bucket on the end of a rope. The contents (something like four cubic metres) were carried well away from the hut to be spread out over the moor. There were few volunteers for the job. I did it once with Bob Richardson's help and assisted Dave Dawson another time when he was custodian. He came within a hair's breadth of falling into the tank. I remember the look of shock on his face as he teetered on the edge and just managed to recover his balance. Fate has a way of dealing with those who elude its grasp. Years later Dave ran across a road in Timbuktu to evade traffic and fell headlong into a ripe sewage ditch. On another occasion Bob and I were clearing the outlet ditch from the tank. This became overgrown yearly due to the plentiful supply of nutrients. The run-off was supposed to be a clear harmless liquid but we hadn't realised that there was a back-up behind the outlet pipe. As we cleared the last bit there was an explosion and a torrent of liquid sewage spewed into the ditch and down to the river. We tried in vain to stem the flow. In minutes the river was deep green for several hundred yards and we had visions of wiping out Jacksonville and every camper down to Loch Etive. That septic tank is long gone and the sewage facilities at Lagangarbh are now as good as regulations demand.

All the available energy in the Club in the Seventies was devoted to improving the standard of existing huts. There was no stimulus for expansion into new areas although Skidmore conducted a campaign for an Arran hut but got little support, even from his friends. By the Eighties there was loud pressure for a hut in the Cairngorms and a search began that extended over several years and involved a variety of people. I don't remember much enthusiasm in the huts sub-committee where 10 years of fairly continuous upgrading work had exhausted the supply of willing helpers. Some cottages were explored in and about Glen Feshie, but eventually, a decision was made to purchase one near Dalwhinnie, known then as Halfway. It was no longer occupied and in poor condition, something confirmed by survey. The original aim to refurbish the existing structure was abandoned and a commitment made to demolish it and build a new cottage to be funded by a loan from the SMT. This was to be built

by professionals and outfitted by Club members, a decision that must have been regretted many times by Gerry Peet, the convenor, and Bill Duncan, the custodian. The outfitting became a marathon slog that lasted months for the three or four regulars who brought it to completion late in 1988. Those work parties were just about the end of the old ways for carrying out major work using Club members. The well of goodwill had run dry. Individual custodians can still rely on members and friends for routine upkeep tasks such as painting, but the usual approach now is to leave major work to professionals. Growth of hut income makes this possible and it is, overall, the most economic approach but it has to be admitted that something of the old camaraderie has gone with the passing of big work parties. The gas lift on the Ben retains something of the flavour of the old days but that work party is popular because of the opportunity to ride in a helicopter.

I question if the Club's investment in the Raeburn has paid off. It is the least used of our huts and if it were a commercial enterprise it would have been abandoned long ago. It may be the setting. The distant outlook to the north-west is pleasant but the immediate surroundings of the hut are a bit dull and can only get worse as the surrounding forests grow. It lacks the romantic sense of off-road isolation that even Ling possesses, or the compensating convenience of location close to any of the climbing and walking areas that its users aim for. It is an excellent facility in the wrong place. One thing in its favour from a custodian's point of view is that university and other problem clubs avoid it and it has been fairly free from user-originated problems.

From the late Seventies on, the sub-committee changed its policy towards Ling and invested heavily in improvements to make it more comfortable. Before then, work was confined to keeping it wind and watertight. The lease included a requirement to maintain the access path, and one Sunday, while repairing the bridge a work party was harangued by the Free Kirk minister from Applecross for desecrating his Sabbath. An attempt was made to provide work parties for Ling by combining the twice-yearly sub-committee meeting with work on the hut. It was a successful approach for a year or two but tried the patience of Club officials who had to attend the meeting and the main committee meeting somewhere else the following weekend. Current practice has the sub-committee meeting on the same day and prior to the main committee. Meetings alternate between Raeburn and Lagangarbh.

Although Ling custodians have steadily transformed the hut over the past 30 years, it will never receive the wholesale reconstruction that has been applied to Lagangarbh unless the conditions of lease are altered to our advantage. To date, the estate has indicated that it has no plans to evict us but is unwilling to provide a long-term lease that would justify a major upgrade.

The Nineties saw Lagangarbh reconstructed for the fourth time in 30 years; Dave Dawson had carried out an internal rebuild after the work on the exterior and the toilet done in my time. Some of the deficiencies in materials used in earlier rebuilds had been emphasised when Neil Quinn fell through a floor weakened by damp. The work, for which Curly Ross and Benny Swan were responsible, included reroofing, a complete internal refit and a rebuild of the extension, which had never been a success. The interior of the hut today retains very little of the original.

From the mid-Nineties, members keen to have a North-west hut harassed the subcommittee. The growth of rock climbing in that area, coupled with an increasing number of members north of the Great Glen and the great improvement in road links since the 1960s, coincided with the existence of the Ayscough bequest. The latter needed an outlet and that was provided by the North-west hut. Like the Raeburn Hut it had a long drawn-out gestation but the wait has been worth it. The Naismith hut opened in early 2000 and is a gem, both in itself and in its setting. It is hard to see how it can be anything other than a success with SMC members and other hut users in the years to come. This hut has been reconstructed and outfitted by a professional builder with only a minimal Club involvement. Like the Raeburn, the Naismith's design is the work of Dougie Niven but it has a cosiness that the Raeburn lacks.

In recent years attention returned to the CIC. The sub-committee had long been conscious of the hut's impact on the environment of the Ben, arising from its users and the hordes that make it a waypoint. The 70 or so gas cylinders that accumulated over time to meet a two-year replenishment cycle were an eyesore and potential hazard. Developments at the hut in recent years and for the near future had two aims. Firstly, to greatly reduce the number of cylinders and house them in a less obtrusive spot and, secondly, to deal with faecal waste derived from hut users. The first aim has been largely achieved, at increased running cost, by moving to a shorter replenishment cycle and by storing the reduced number of cylinders in a less conspicuous position. There was also an aim to reduce the amount of gas being used in the hut by generating electricity that would take over the lighting and other services and provide heat to reduce condensation. The difficulty to be faced was the method of generating electricity. Power cables were a non-starter on cost and environmental grounds. A hydro scheme was proposed but the problems associated with the range of water conditions to be coped with could not be solved in a suitably small-scale facility. The present solution, which uses a wind-powered generator, aroused considerable hostility and the scheme was accepted by the Club on a trial basis only. If it survives the hostility and proves to be effective over time then the power generated can also be used to run a waste management facility for hut users. This will recycle toilet waste under the range of climatic extremes encountered on the Ben. The proposal is also

the cause of objections, arising from the cost involved. There is, in addition, growing pressure on the Club to make provision for the waste deposited near the hut by passers-by. Some members take the view that this is not the Club's problem, but without the presence of the hut it would not be a problem at all so we cannot close our ears to criticism. These issues will remain the most pressing and contentious to be addressed by the sub-committee and the Club in coming years. It's worth recording that regular tests on the water supply at the CIC and other huts have never indicated any contamination above EEC standards and much of the concern is on aesthetic grounds. It should also be noted that sheep and deer make their contribution too.

The policy of the sub-committee is continuous improvement to the huts using the income from charges. At one time, hut income was used to subsidise membership fees but that ended long ago. The only benefit that members receive is free use and a guaranteed number of places in each hut at all times. On occasions the allocation is too small but this is a fairly infrequent occurrence. If use by members increased then the allocation would be raised. Income derived from hut users is devoted to upkeep and development, apart from a proportion set aside for a contingency fund to cover any major and unforeseen costs. It is the fees paid by non-members that maintain the huts so we have a duty to provide value for money and to treat these users with respect. We have moved away from the Spartan facilities that were once acceptable, but the intention is not to provide luxurious accommodation for its own sake. A high standard of finish aims at reducing maintenance and increasing durability and ease of cleaning. Provision of showers is a debatable area. My own view is anti, as they tend to become grot holes. The acid test for any hut facility is the one that applied to the old chemical toilet at the CIC. Ask yourself if you would use it (or clean it!).

As we come to the end of the current upgrading cycle we may accumulate more money in the hut fund than can be used if the protests of critics keep major expenditure on the CIC on hold. When income is accumulated at too high a rate, hut dues can be retained at current levels for a longer period as has been done in the past in similar circumstances. For many years Youth Hostel charges were used as a rough benchmark in setting rates. The present levels are usually determined by the Treasurer's judgment of whether current and future income will match custodians' predictions of expenditure for the next year or two.

The most recent development at huts is a change to the locks that provides dedicated keys for each hut but a master key can be purchased by members that gives access to all huts. This means that hut users who purchase keys can make a considerable saving, apart from the convenience. The former key at Raeburn cost £16 alone.

Criticism of SMC policy on huts that is levelled at us by individuals

outside the Club, or uninformed parts of the outdoor media, is unjustified when one considers that our policy makes huts available to users with few restrictions other than the need to treat them in a civilised manner. Ignorance and malice from these quarters can be tolerated and the most vocal are not regular hut users. It is harder for those most closely associated with running the CIC to absorb criticism from our own members, even when it is well intentioned. Only those directly responsible for meeting the huge demand for places at the CIC – from Gerry Peet, through Bob Richardson to Robin Clothier – can appreciate the problems involved in maintaining this facility in an acceptable state for users while addressing the environmental problems caused by its presence in a sensitive area. If we have failed to achieve a satisfactory balance between these considerations, it is not for the want of imagination or effort.

There is still a view among members that the sub-committee's unwillingness to allow access to the huts by casual visitors reflects badly on the SMC and indeed many critics have used it against us. The policy is the result of direct experience, especially at the CIC. It would be much more pleasant for everyone if we could offer this kind of hospitality, but numbers and the high incidence of theft makes it impossible. Among my list of things I wish were different, such as no nuclear weapons and no Phillips screws, I would include the discovery that Ben Nevis was the second highest mountain in Britain.

In looking back over work on our huts during the past 30 years I have concentrated on my direct experience. Outstanding work by custodians and others that took place outside my ken has received little or no coverage. It would require a much lengthier account than this one to give everyone due credit. The SMC has been fortunate in the convenors, custodians, sub-committee members and participants in work parties who have toiled on its behalf through more than 70 years of hut ownership. The periods of service of some convenors and custodians are very impressive, particularly for the CIC, which is the most difficult of the huts to maintain.

If criticism from the wider Club has seemed at times to be gratuitous and unfair, those involved with huts have to remember that no one was forced to undertake the work. Criticism is a necessary safeguard for the overall interests of the whole Club. However, a criticism that might be levelled at the wider Club in reply is regret that so few members take advantage of the facilities offered by the huts for convenient and comfortable access to our mountains.

We may have reached the final limit in hut ownership now but I doubt it. There are still areas where access to the hills would benefit from an SMC hut, both for members and the whole body of climbers and walkers that we also serve. Restrictions on wild camping are spreading and many climbers have an innate dislike of organised campsites. Skidmore may yet get his Arran hut before he becomes too old to take advantage of it.

THE GREAT BEAST

By Hamish McInnes

“Do what thou wilt shall be the whole of the law.”

THERE have been some great characters in the climbing world, but none approach the notoriety of Aleister Crowley. He had a long association with Scotland and in 1889 he bought Boleskine House overlooking Loch Ness with two acres of land after scouring the length and breadth of Britain for a retreat suitable for his unusual tastes and rituals. He wasn't labelled The Great Beast for nothing! Later Boleskine was to have another well known owner, Jimmy Page of Led Zeppelin, who together with the Beatles was an admirer of Aleister the 'magician'.

Like most climbers of my era I had heard of Crowley and the accounts of his deeds, I assumed, were exaggerated. It was only when I was recording an interview with Dr. Tom Longstaff in Achiltibuie that I had a first-hand account of the man. Tom obviously didn't have much time for him. They had returned from separate expeditions on board ship from the Indian sub-continent and at dinner Crowley was flamboyantly dressed in Highland regalia with a white silk shirt. Next night Crowley's evening attire was the same and Tom asked him pointedly if he was wearing the same white shirt as on the previous evening. Aleister protested that he wasn't.

“The man was an impostor,” Tom told me.

However, my literary encounter with 'The Great Beast 666' was on a Himalayan expedition, where I devoured his book, which he modestly described as the autobiography of a saint. The voluminous paperback had been dismembered, with a well-thumbed chapter left at each camp on the mountain – inspiration to gain altitude if you were a Crowleyite?

Young Aleister's first hands-on contact with Scottish mountains was in April 1892 when, with his mother, he went to stay at Sligachan Hotel on the doorstep of the Cuillin. Alick, as he was originally called, knew zilch about climbing. For six years the famous Professor Norman Collie had been using the hotel as a base for his Cuillin peregrinations and he was there. Also at Sligachan on that occasion was Sir Joseph Lister of antiseptic fame, a keen mountaineer. He was so impressed by young Alick's enthusiasm for mountains that he suggested that next day the 16-year-old should accompany a bunch of climbers – Baron Lister's pals – on an ascent of Pinnacle Ridge of Sgurr nan Gilleann, a peak appropriately named in Gaelic, 'The Peak of the Young Men'. That was a 'jump start' for the youthful Aleister and he became as addicted to mountaineering as he later became addicted to morphine. He was destined to become the most controversial climber of the Edwardian era.

In his late teens, after his Skye vacation, he was shuttled from one public school to another and ended up in Eastbourne, where as a young, but celebrated, chess player, he wrote a local chess column for the *Eastbourne Gazette*. Nearby were the dangerous cliffs of Beachy Head which was to be his klettergarten. Here, as well as in Wales and in the Lakes he pioneered new routes, some of which can still be found in guidebooks today.

His first alpine trip was in 1896 – to the Bernese Oberland. He was studying at Trinity College, Cambridge at the time and accompanied one of the tutors, Morris Travers, the famous chemist and a mate of Collie's. Aleister had considerable respect for Travers, who as well as being a competent mountaineer, was popular with his female students. They made the first guideless traverse of the Monch and the first traverse of the Aiguilles Rouges. Travers, a strong man, must have been an understanding tutor of 666 for he allowed Aleister, who was wearing crampons, to stand on his shoulders for 40 minutes as he acted as a human bridge across a crevasse while Aleister cut steps in the ice above. The two men had obviously a successful partnership and it may have blossomed further had it not been for Travers's success in chemistry, for in 1890 he discovered neon, xenon and krypton – exit their embryo plans for the Himalaya.

Aleister's next mountaineering contact of importance was when he met Oscar Eckenstein at the Wastdale Hotel in Cumberland. Eckenstein was even more of a maverick than Crowley, but they had similar mathematical brains. In fact, Oscar was a mathematician and he was to become the young man's mentor. Eckenstein, as well as developing the crampon from its primitive concept, taught Aleister to glissade as they called it. In fact, it was the 'modern' technique of self-arrest on steep snow slopes. Oscar was a formidable mountaineer, but didn't conform to the dictates of the then all powerful Alpine Club.

Later Crowley was to write in his *Diary of a Drug Fiend* of Eckenstein, one of the few people he ever respected. "I had the great fortune to be adopted by this man; he taught me how to climb; in particular how to glissade. He made me start down the slope from all kinds of complicated positions; head first and so on; and I had to let myself slide without attempting to save myself until he gave the word, and then I had to recover myself and finish, either sitting or standing, as he chose, to swerve or stop, while he counted five. And he gave me progressively dangerous exercises. Of course, this sounds all rather obvious, but as a matter of fact, he was the only man who had learnt and who taught to glissade in this thorough way..."

On one occasion in the Alps, Tom Longstaff watched Aleister climb an ice fall "just for a promenade – probably the first and perhaps the only time this mad, dangerous and difficult route had been taken..."

In 1902, Crowley and Eckenstein fulfilled their ambition in tackling K2. Crowley who should have been founder of a book of unusual records, reached, "a world record height for a poet of 20,000ft.". His verse was of questionable merit. He also claimed a world altitude record for someone suffering from malaria!

The next major expedition, of which he was leader, was to Kangchenjunga in 1905. This time Eckenstein couldn't make it, which probably spelled disaster for his young understudy. He was one of the few people Crowley respected and listened to.

One of the members of this expedition was Jacot Guillarmod, who had been with him on the K2 trip. They fell out, for Crowley behaved abominably. At 21,000ft., Guillarmod and two other climbers plus three porters decided to retreat to Camp 3. Aleister decided to stay where he was at Camp 5. Later, he wrote that he had warned them not to descend as he had a premonition of disaster. On the descent one of the porters slipped, pulling off four of the others which started a large avalanche. Another expedition member, Charles Reymond, who had also decided to stay at Camp 5 in another tent, dashed down to help the avalanched party. Aleister stayed where he was and went down the next morning. Afterwards, he claimed to have heard ghostly voices in the region of Camp 4 (they were still digging for the bodies) but he claimed he didn't see them, though they saw him! He carried on down the mountain and next met up with the furious survivors of the expedition in Darjeeling.

Aleister Crowley's career went into decline after the fateful Kangchenjunga tragedy spiralling into a freefall of excesses, black magic, sexual depravity, secret temples and drugs. He was a man of great potential who took several wrong turnings. Somerset Maugham was an admirer and 'Oliver Haddo' in Maugham's *Magician* is a thinly-disguised Crowley.

"Do what thy wilt shall be the whole of the law," was the watchword of The Great Beast. It was a quote which later was to become fashionable in the freedom of the 1960s. Aleister Crowley died in Hastings in 1947 a broken man.

AN examination of the records at the National Library in Edinburgh shows that Crowley's application to join the Scottish Mountaineering Club dated September 24, 1894 was sponsored by none other than A. E. Maylard. Well, how was he to know. Having said that, quite clearly a man who would, or indeed was of such calibre that he could be reasonably suspected of wearing a white shirt two days running was only one short step away from drug abuse and sexual depravity. For anyone interested to read more of Crowley see his own article (SMCJ Vol. III. P.288), *Chalk Climbing On Beachy Head*.

We have also heard tell that our own R. N. Campbell is, if not a disciple, then at least an admirer of Crowley and all his works. Not surprising? You might think that but we couldn't possibly comment. (*Hon. Ed.*)

THE WAY THINGS WERE . . .

By Derek Pyper

SOMEHOW we knew this winter was going to be different. The signs came at the back end of 1962 with reports of storms wreaking havoc on the Continent – the worst in living memory they said. It quickly became our turn and the North East of Scotland was subjected to days of fierce gales and blizzards. It was the first time anyone in Aberdeen could recall the necessity for trawl skippers to move their vessels into the more sheltered Upper Dock.

Headlines of gloom abounded: *Snow chaos in the North East, Crew winched from battered trawler, Blizzard from Hell* – never understood that one. We were unashamedly rubbing our hands with glee – surely this would be a special winter for climbing.

It had also occurred to me that the approaching winter might be extraordinary, not just for climbers, but for the whole planet.

John F. Kennedy had just blockaded Cuba and the Russian Fleet was sailing for a confrontation. The threat of all-out nuclear war loomed very large. If only they could delay throwing the things about until end of the winter!

It was certainly a troubled time – the Chinese were starting to make their presence felt; there was fighting in the Congo; the Berlin situation was deteriorating; nuclear devices were being tested in the Pacific far too often for comfort, but there is always a silver lining – we got an extra half-hour's drinking time. Then the authorities excelled themselves by allowing – for the first time – hotel bars to open on a Sunday. Gone was the bizarre situation where it was compulsory to sign your name in an hotel's *bona fide* travellers' book before being served. It was nothing unusual to have a Sunday pint in the company of Donald Duck, Goofy and numerous Mickey Mice.

Half-an-hour may not seem long but it made the world of difference to us. It meant that after sitting in a refrigerated Deeside bus for three hours, which arrived in Braemar with irritating punctuality 10 minutes after the pub shut at 9.30, we now had at least 20 minutes to psyche ourselves up for the long trudge to Bob Scott's Luibeg bothy.

Despite the fact that no one in our group owned a car – which precluded trips furth of Deeside – we nonetheless recognised that we were very fortunate in having a bus service which gave access to some magnificent climbing areas. We had the choice of climbing on Lochnagar from the Gelder Shiel; Beinn a' Bhuird from the howffs in Glen Slugain; Creag a' Choire Etchachan, Coire Sputan Dearg from Luibeg or the Hutchison Hut,

and Braeriach, again from Luibeg, or Corrou Bothy. On occasions we would climb in the Northern Corries of Cairngorm after having tramped from the Coire Etchachan hut – they were long days. It became the norm for us to run out of daylight after only having climbed the first pitch.

I can just about hear: “Tut, Tut,” from today’s instructors and sophisticated rescue teams, but climbing for us at weekends was delicious freedom from the town and work place. Climbing manuals – if they existed – would not have interested us; instructors and rescue people were thin on the ground; we knew none, and even if we had crossed paths any proffered advice would have provided some mild amusement.

In this insular environment we encountered few climbers from the south; probably because the Glen Shee road was always blocked, but this all changed once the skiing started.

Lochnagar was our favourite place because of the bothy in Glen Gelder. It only took an hour of brisk walking from the road and there was a good chance we would have the place to ourselves. In winter, it was not a popular place: there was no fire, and occasionally water would come through the wall below the window, cross the cobbled floor, and out the door. Sometimes a hard frost prevented its exit. In the days before camping mats the cobbles made for aching bones in the morning. Of course, this was all grist to the mill – if we could survive in Gelder, future benightments held no terror.

So, a few weeks after the New Year, it was to this lonely circle of trees that Jim McArtney and myself were headed one cold and frosty Friday night. We stepped off the bus into the snow and hoisted on our rucksacks with Mac Smith’s incredulous voice ringing in our ears: “Ye’re nae gaun up tae ’at cauld hole Gelder?”

We replied saying that Lochnagar would be in great nick, and – just before the bus moved off – that we had heard the Army had been at the bothy and had left piles of tinned food. This was just a wind-up for we had heard no such thing. We fully expected a scramble for the door because finding Army tins at a bothy was a real boon. If buried nearby they could sustain a couple of climbers for a number of weekends, depending on the haul. I well remember a bunch of us arriving in Braemar where it was rumoured that the Army had been exercising at Etchachan. Immediately, all plans of climbing elsewhere were abandoned and it was hell for leather to the Hutchison Hut.

So, there we were, watching the rear lights of the Strachan’s bus disappear round the corner – our last chance of a pint and a warm fire. After half-an-hour, thoughts of that nonsense were dismissed when we saw the North-east Corrie bathed in moonlight and looking so near. It was really plastered – no black bits showing through. It always seems a quick walk-in when the cliffs can be viewed in such splendour.

Good, just as we thought, the hook was firmly in its place – no one in the stable. It would have spoiled the night if there had been others present.

Gelder is a strange place – some think it is haunted – with the two buildings in a circle of tall pines set in the middle of a vast moor. The house is always locked except when the Royals finish their day's shoot and use it for a brew-up. It was on one such day that Mike Rennie and Mike Forbes returned to the bothy – after their first ascent of Crypt – to find a great clutter of Land-Rovers and a huge stag lying very dead on the grass. They had never been so close to a beast before and were admiring it when this woman in a headscarf came round the side of house and asked them if they had been climbing and if they were staying the night at the stable. They told her they had been rock-climbing and were off down the glen to catch the bus to attend the Braemar dancing.

“You must be tired after your climb, if you wait a few minutes I will get my husband to drive you down to Crathie,” said the Queen.

The two Mikes were soon ensconced in the front seat of the Rover, with a very grumpy Duke, leading a convoy of shooters, and soldiers who had been on gillie duty. Rennie tried to engage his chauffeur in light conversation, but his high and mighty was having none of it and was extremely rude. The lads must have noticed the thumb mark on his head! In the Fife Arms that night Rennie, who was well known for having abrasive encounters, said: “If the sodgers hidnae been there I wid have belted him.”

So, Jim and I, before nodding off into a dreamy world with Bridget Bardot and Sophia Loren, we had given some thought as to what we would climb next day, but as usual, we decided that the Corrie was the best place for choosing a route. Anything can happen before the sun does its twirly. At Gelder you don't have to go outside to know that the weather has changed – the sough of the wind through the tall trees tells you all you need to know.

Bloody hell! After such a great night. We stayed in our bags, but the cobbles ensured that a long lie was out of the question. Jim had a look outside and said: “The hill is covered in cloud...it looks like it might snow...it's starting to blow a hooley...but apart from that it's a fine enough day!” That tells you nothing. You have to get up and see for yourself, even just to argue about it.

He was right, it wasn't bad enough to stay at the bothy, but not good enough to be ambitious.

I started the fry-up. A couple of years previous this would have been McArtney's job when he was Davie Reid and myself's Deeita (do it all). The Creag Dhu had their Black Boys – we had our Deeitas. One morning at Luibeg he was told to prepare breakfast while we went outside to see what the weather was doing. A few moments' later he joined us. He only

remembered his responsibility when there was a loud bellow from the bothy and the door opened discharging a cloud of smoke and revealing a figure in underpants trying to get some distance between himself and a hot dixie of charred sausage, bacon and eggs.

Jim, I think, learned from his father, who worked in the shipyards, where they used to say: "If you don't like a job make an arse of it and they'll never ask you again." It certainly worked as far as we were concerned.

Greased up and geared up we set out for the corrie. We always found it difficult getting going after a fry-up, but comforted in the thought that it would sustain us for a good part of the day. Porridge, on the other hand, lasted about five minutes which, I suppose, was still close enough to the bothy to turn back for something more substantial!

Part of the enjoyment of climbing in those days was the unsophisticated gear. I wore Army moleskin trousers cut into breeches – Jim preferred Army riding-type breeches; pullovers that our mothers had knitted, and we both wore U.S. Army boots which I had nailed with Swiss tricounis to our own patterns. We didn't have gaiters. I had an aunt who made kilts and I got long off-cuts of 3-inch tartan which I wrapped round my ankles and legs. Sometimes on the middle of a pitch the safety pin came out and I would reach a stance with a tartan trail. Ex-war department ice axes were the most common unless you had visited the Alps and acquired an Austrian Aschenbrenner or a French Charlet. We considered crampons were fine for the Alps but a waste of time in the Cairngorms.

The walk up to the corrie usually gives an inkling of what the conditions on the cliff are going to be like – today was no different. Great walking up bone-hard snow at the start, but higher up, we met with big drifts of powder snow. So, one thing was plain to us, it was a buttress day, keep out of the gullies.

We had done almost all of the existing summer routes and quite a number of them in winter but we hadn't done Eagle Ridge or Shadow Buttress B in winter. The weather didn't seem to be getting any worse, but then again sometimes the corrie is very sheltered with the wind blowing over the top.

It was now midday and Eagle Ridge could take a while, and anyway, I had always dreamed of doing it on a perfect sunny day. (I did eventually climb it, but never got my sunny day!). So Shadow B it was.

We didn't know anyone who had climbed it in winter apart from the first party of Tom Patey and Alan Will and they had dispensed with the 650ft. in about an hour and a half. I knew Patey could move fast, and they were blessed with perfect snow, but on looking up I reckoned it would take us about two hours just to get over the first steep 200ft.

On reaching the rocks at the side of Douglas Gibson's Gully we could see there was no chance of a short excursion to the top. From below it had





looked so different, but closer inspection revealed hard snow in the grooves and ledges but an inch coating of fog crystals on the rock – not enough to stand on but enough to hide any holds.

In the guide book a reason given for Patey's fast time was "the party's thorough knowledge of the route in summer". Well I had climbed the route twice and could claim to have more than a little knowledge of it, but that was cold comfort in these conditions.

Off went Jim eager to get to grips with whatever presented itself. Hacking, kicking and scrabbling his way up the first grooves was not a pretty sight – style, he cared not a jot. I once told him that there were so many sparks coming from his nailed boots that the climb was in danger of losing its winter status.

I liked climbing with McArtney – he didn't hang around: not the up one minute, down the next; a dither here and a teeter there; no tentative outstretched leg with a foot at the end of it that knows there is nothing at all there to put a toe on; none of this caressing-the-rock nonsense, just honest-to-goodness progress.

"Hey min, up ye come," drifted down from his perch about 150ft. up. I had shouted a few minutes before that he had only about 10ft. of rope left but he seemed not to notice until no more rope was forthcoming, got the message and found a belay. After a slow start I began to get some rhythm into my movements and started to enjoy the typical Lochnagar climbing; jamming feet in the grooves and pulling up on the rounded edges. On this sort of ground I find the axe more of a hindrance, so into the waistline it goes – besides everything has been cut or brushed away by the leader. It also saves time.

I reached the belay – if that's what it was – got the axe out of the waistline and climbed past. It seemed to be a lot steeper here with great smooth slabs on the right overlooking the gully giving two-dimensional exposure. I followed a crack which was choked with good hard snow ice – perfect for fashioning great jugs and soon reached the two small pinnacles, about 60ft. above Jim. I thought about carrying on, but I remembered his 'belay' – a flake which was probably loose in summer but was now frosted into the turf. My suspicions were confirmed when I shouted for him to come up for he left his ledge with indecent haste – he would normally have sat tight and told me I still had 100ft. of rope.

The Lochnagar cliffs must rival any other in Scotland for the best view while sitting at a belay. The mist might be swirling around above you but often the lesser hills of Deeside are clear and pink with the afternoon sun. The eye can rove from hill to hill but always seems to settle on the Gelder Shiel – a black oasis in a big white desert – before appraising the cliff and tracing the routes. This is real Patey country with his legacy of new rock and winter routes, and a girdle traverse. He was a keen lad and different.

One weekend Big Stan Long (he was big – 6ft. 6ins.) decided that his old climbing trousers had been trousers a long time; climbed up onto the roof of the Gelder Shiel, and ceremoniously tied them to the chimney to give them a right Royal send off. Alas, it was not to be. Tom arrived at the bothy the next weekend, and in passing, admired the garment. Up he went, fetched down the trousers, discarded his own, donned his new-won prize and made a bee-line for the Corrie. They don't make them like that any more – and I'm not talking about the trousers. Mac'Smith used to call him 'The Machine'.

"Tak' in the slack," interrupted my reverie. Jim was just a few feet below me and between moves was looking at what was above the belay. When he reached my stance he realised why I had stopped.

Above the left-hand tooth of rock is a wall which I remembered as a friction move left to grab a flake and a line of good holds to gain the foot of a groove. I stood on top of the little pinnacle and scraped some of the hard snow and crystals for a foothold which I hoped would hold long enough to move up and left to the flake. Each time I tried I was completely out of balance so I got Jim to adjust his belay and climb up a few feet to give me a bit of tension. It was all I needed and after couple of scrabbling heart-in-the-mouth moves I got the flake, but then had to transfer the axe to my left hand in order to clear the snow off the rest of the holds. This is a particularly exhausting exercise if you are right-handed, especially when there is nothing much for the feet.

Eventually, I gained the groove and decided to stop at the first available belay. I knew that there was a belay at the top of this steep section where I could stop but maybe I wouldn't find it. After a few feet up the groove I spotted a snow-filled crack and scraped it clean. Yes, this was just perfect for the secret weapon – a 10-inch ring spike. I thumped this in, with the slater's hammer, right up to the hilt and reckoned it would hold McCartney's beer gut – no bother at all.

So, it was his turn at scramble! The trouble for him was that my thrashing about had left most of the slab devoid of snow. I was itching to give him a tight rope, but our Jimmer was made of stern stuff and after a couple of quicksteps – that would have had the local whirlybirds at Braemar's Auchindryne Hall on a Saturday in raptures – he grasped the flake and nipped across to the groove and soon reached me with a grin and said: "You thought I was going to ask for a pull on the rope."

"Never crossed my mind." Liar, liar, you're bum's on fire.

He admired the belay and said: "That's yon peg that we got in Parallel B in the summer." He was right. He moved off up and I sat and recalled how I got the peg.

A couple of winters previous, on quite a bad day, I came into the corrie and saw a pair retreating from Parallel B. Our paths crossed and it was the

Edinburgh climbers, Robin Smith and George Ritchie, who had been trying to claim the second winter ascent but had been beaten by spindrift. Robin wasn't very happy at having to come down, and to add insult to injury, was forced to leave his new ringspike. Volunteering this information was rather naive, I thought. He maybe forgot I was an Aberdonian. So, a few months' later Jim and I made a date with Parallel B, and what do you know? Here it was, sticking out from the left wall of the big chimney (no chimney now). It lifted straight out without the slightest resistance – I never got the chance to tell Smith that.

Another roar from Jim took me back to the present and on up to join him. It had taken almost two hours to get up the steep part. Patey/Will's one-and-a-half hours was beginning to prey on our minds. But at least we were on fairly easy ground now and might reach the top in a respectable time. Fat chance!

Through the gloom and mist of the late afternoon we managed to move together for sections, but had to take belays for one or two awkward steps. The higher we got we became aware of something that could seriously damage our chances of a pint in the Fife that night – the cornice. The nearer we got the worse it looked.

We took the usual useless ice-axe belay and I started to cut my way through. It was going to be a tunnel job. I got up about 20ft.; seemed to be going into the very bowls of the mountain; got extremely nackered, so came down. Besides, Jim had started singing and the only way to get him to cease was to get him climbing and short of breath.

His voice defied description except possibly to say that it made a didgeridoo sound melodic. When he was at primary school it was the turn of his class to sing at the annual concert. During the rehearsal his tortured tones had such a disheartening affect on all present that the music teacher suggested to little James that on the big night it would be better if he mimed. He thought that was a great wheeze, but after the concert, when his mother found out, she was furious – felt that somehow she had been cheated.

After a quick change-over off he went and I knew that he wouldn't have too far to go after my high point, and also there was probably no way he would come back down anyway – he was a strong lad of shipyard stock.

The rope ran out quickly at first, then stopped when he had to start tunnelling for himself. I settled in for a long wait. After what seemed like an hour the rope started snaking out. Good, he had reached the windy plateau. This is the point where you don't know what to do. You can't hear a thing. You can't start climbing in case he's not ready and you slip and pull him down. He is more than likely yelling his head off for you get a move on. But somehow, you know when its time to go as the rope begins

to pull you up and you can't bend down to get the axe; but it's being pulled up as well, so off you go, hoping you've guessed right.

It was dark when I reached out of the hole and did a mantelshelf onto the plateau. The climb had taken all of four hours. The first ascent of one-and-a-half hours seemed like a joke – a bad one. But, no matter, there was still the faintest chance of that pint. Off we went counting the gullies until we passed the Black Spout and scampered down the North-east Arête. Then across the moor cursing when we fell down holes and giggling when we rolled in the drifts. At Gelder, a quick mouthful of last night's cold corn beef hash and down the road to intercept the bus for the Promised Land – Braemar.

Into the pub we went. There they were, the usual beery faces looking up in anticipation of someone fresh to take the piss out of. Later, at closing time one of the old guard asked us what we done, and on telling him Shadow Buttress B, there was a murmur of: "Very good." But then Mac Smith, who knows how to hurt a man's feelings, said: "Ah, but foo lang did ye tak'?"

"Four hours," I said.

For the second time in 24 hours we were the respondents of his incredulous voice accompanied by a gaze of withering intensity: "Four hours? Patey did it in . . ."

"Yeh, yeh, yeh," and we disappeared in the direction of a pigshed called Vermin Villa and crashed out just as happy as the pigs among . . .

SPECTRE ON AN-TELLACH

It came as a surprise above
louring, leaden clouds
breaking into sunshine, filtering,
falling through light mists.

This was no religious revelation
spectacular yes, special, fleeting
but my own shadow nevertheless
cast ephemerally out and below my rocky stance.

My only view of the Broken Spectre
in a lifetime of summits left as quickly
as it arrived to reveal sun-lit white cottages
studded like diamonds on the bays and inlets far
below.

Gair Swanson

THE ARRAN MURDER OF 1889

By Robin N. Campbell

THE year of 1889 embraced the initiation and foundation of our Club, an organisation devoted to the offence of trespass. It was also a vintage year for the crime of murder. It was the year of Jack the Ripper's seventh and last murder in London (July 18), the year that the poisoner Mrs Maybrick was brought to trial in Liverpool (July 26), and it was the year of the 'Arran Murder'. Two men – John Laurie and Edwin Rose – went up Goatfell on July 15, and only one – Laurie – came down. Rose's badly mutilated body was found three weeks later hidden below a large boulder in Coire nam Fuaran on the south side of Glen Sannox, by which time Laurie had guiltily fled from Glasgow. Laurie was apprehended and charged that he "did assault Rose, and did throw him down, and did beat him, and did murder him". He was subsequently tried and convicted in November. So far as I know, this is the only case of murder in our mountains to go to trial since recreational mountaineering began.

The case was widely reported at the time, and excited enormous public interest before and after the trial. Even the adherents of the newly-formed SMC took note. Fraser Campbell, writing in the *Journal* of 1890, described a visit to Arran "on a Sunday" in July 1889, in the company of W. R. Lester.¹ The party made an anti-clockwise round of Glen Sannox. Reaching Mullach Buidhe, Campbell remarked: "As we looked down its rocky sides in Glen Sannox, we little recked of the horrid drama of which it was soon to be the scene – the ill-fated tourist, Mr Rose, having met his death there within 24 hours of our ascent."

So Campbell and Lester passed above the murder site on July 14, just missing their chance to provide that forensic rarity – a witness to a mountain murder. For murder is never easier than in the mountains: a little push, gravity amply supplies the violent force, and who is to know, unless there is someone to see? Another early mountaineer, A. E. Robertson, noted in his diary for August 1889 that he mistook an Inspector of Schools from Edinburgh – no doubt a repulsive and menacing figure – for the unapprehended Arran murderer, simply because the Inspector suggested joining forces with Robertson and his friend for an ascent of Ben Cruachan.²

Despite this proof of strong interest in the case from mountaineers, no expert witness from our ranks was called to the trial. However, there are some aspects of the case in which such expert advice would have been useful, particularly perhaps to the defence. I began reading about the case some years ago, when I was preparing the plot of a Sherlock Holmes

pastiche, and thinking about the likely conduct of a murderer-by-pushing in the aftermath of the fateful shove.³ Although this was not how Laurie was charged, some of those who have written about the case subsequently have supposed that if Laurie murdered Rose, he did so by pushing him over a crag.⁴ On a visit to Arran at Easter a few years ago, I located the place where Rose's body was found, took photographs, and explored the surrounding ground. Since that time, I have talked about the case to mountaineering audiences, exciting a degree of interest, particularly among hillwalkers. For that reason, and to satisfy our new Editor, I offer a compressed account of the case here, together with a discussion of points of mountaineering interest and some other specific issues surrounding the trial and its verdict which have not been discussed elsewhere. Any reader whose interest is pricked should put flesh on the skeleton presented here by reading the books identified in notes 4 and 5.

A Diary of the Case

The facts of the case are as follows:⁵

Saturday, July 6: John Watson Laurie, 25 years old, a Coatbridge pattern-maker (mould-maker) employed at the Atlas Engineering Works in Springburn, leaves Glasgow and goes on holiday to Port Bannatyne, Bute, residing at the guesthouse of Mrs Currie of Iona Place under the alias of 'John Annandale'.

Friday, July 12: Laurie goes on a day trip to Arran on the *Ivanhoe*. On board, he meets Edwin Robert Rose, 32 years old – a builder's clerk from London, and Rose's holiday acquaintances Francis Mickel and William Thom, both of Linlithgow. All three are resident at the Glenburn Hydropathic Hotel in Rothesay. Laurie mentions his new acquaintance by name to a friend, James Gillon Aitken, who is also on the ferry. Laurie books accommodation for a week with a Mrs Walker, at Invercloy in Brodick, then returns to Rothesay to spend the evening with his new friends at the Hydropathic.

Saturday, July 13: Laurie, Mickel, Rose and Thom sail from Rothesay to Brodick. Rose will share Laurie's accommodation (and bed). All four take tea at Corrie in the residence of a friend of Thom's, Andrew Francis Craig Gilmour (medical student) of Linlithgow. Mickel and Thom had probably hoped to stay there, but eventually, they find lodging on a friend's yacht.

Sunday, July 14: Laurie and Rose walk in Glen Rosa.

Monday, July 15: Laurie and Rose spend most of the day with Mickel and Thom. The latter pair then leave on the 3.30 ferry. Laurie and Rose climb Goatfell and are seen on the summit by five witnesses, for the last time around 6.20. Laurie is seen by a shepherd crossing a field from the Sannox

graveyard to the Corrie road "between 9 and 9.30", but this evidence is firmly contradicted by two witnesses at the trial. So Laurie is next securely identified in the bar of Corrie Hotel just before 10pm. He drinks there briefly, then leaves on foot presumably for Brodick.

Tuesday, July 16: Laurie is identified on the 7am ferry and train to Greenock by A. F. C. Gilmour (see above). At 11am Mrs Walker goes to rouse her sleeping tenants and finds the outhouse empty apart from a few worthless items. She writes off her unpaid bill to experience. Laurie continues to Glasgow and his rooms in North Frederick Street, before making his way back to Port Bannatyne later in the day. A striped jacket known to belong to Rose is identified by people at Iona Place as being in Laurie's possession.

Thursday, July 18: Rose becomes overdue at home.

Saturday, July 20: Laurie leaves Bute, without paying his bill (!), and returns to his Glasgow lodgings in North Frederick Street. Throughout this period in Bute and Arran Laurie has maintained his alias as 'Annandale'.

Monday, July 22: The Rose family instigate inquiries at Rothesay.

Saturday, July 27: Brother Benjamin Rose arrives at Brodick.

Sunday, July 28: A general hue and cry is raised. Search parties are out on Goatfell. "Two hundred stalwart men mustered at the Kennels, Brodick Castle grounds. One party proceeded northwards (by Corrie to Glen Sannox), the centre party followed the normal tourist path and the third party proceeded westwards. After marching for an hour the central division were thrown out like a line of skirmishers and ascended the face of the hill. This division met the western division at the top of Goatfell enveloped in mist. After an hour the fog lifted, and from the top of the mountain a marvellously distinct view was obtained of all the ravines and gullies of Goatfell. Glasses were brought to bear in every direction but nothing like the form of a dead body could be described. Some parts of the mountainside looked as if they had been visited by man for the first time. With the sweat running down their brows the men passed from crag to crag, sometimes sliding, sometimes as if descending a stair. The utmost consternation prevailed among the sheep and partridges. Rabbits were plentiful and the dogs made strenuous but futile efforts to come to close quarters. Deer were also to be seen and one gentleman killed a beautifully marked adder about 18ins. long and 2ins. circumference at the thickest part. When approaching the peak of Goatfell the climbing was not only arduous but attended with great danger. Every overhanging cliff was scaled as far as possible, the ordinary and less dangerous paths being neglected as not likely places in which to find the body."⁶

Wednesday, July 31: Laurie is confronted by J. G. Aitken (see above) in Hope Street, Glasgow, who asks him what he knows about the disappearance of Rose. Laurie says Rose returned with him and proceeded to Leeds. But Aitken threatens to go to the police with the information that 'Annandale' is Laurie. Laurie tells work colleagues that he is leaving Glasgow for a new position in Leith. Instead, he sells his tools for 25 shillings and flees, but pays his bill this time. He begins a month of wandering between Liverpool, Dublin and Aberdeen. Aitken alerts the Glasgow police.

Sunday, August 4: After a week of searches, a body is discovered in Coire nam Fuaran, secreted face down under a boulder 600ft.-700ft. directly below the lower of the two cols between North Goatfell and Mullach Buidhe. The cavity below the boulder is concealed by a man-made wall of 42 stones, one weighing "a hundredweight and a half". These are removed by the police and volunteers. The body has massive damage to the head and face (the skull is in 8-9 pieces, with brain and soft tissues of head and face decayed or eaten away), a broken shoulder, upper vertebrae detached, broken ribs and a buttock wound (principal injuries all on left side). Damage to clothing is evident only around the sites of the shoulder and buttock wounds. There is no other damage to limbs or hands and no signs of extensive bleeding. The 'skirt' of the coat is turned back and pulled up around the head. The body is identified (by means of the clothing) as Rose. It is examined on the hill around 9pm by Andrew Gilmour MD, on holiday at Corrie, and brought down to Corrie Hotel. Nothing is found in Rose's pockets. Various other objects possibly belonging to Rose, are found in the gully above the boulder. Moving up the gully these are a stick, a torn waterproof coat, a knife, a button, a pencil, and a cap, folded over, with a stone on top and lying in the stream bed.

Monday, August 5: Gilmour and Fullarton (Lamlash MD) examine Rose and conclude that death occurred as a result of many violent blows to the head, delivered by a boulder. Rose is buried in late afternoon in Sannox.

Tuesday, August 6: Laurie is identified in Liverpool.

Saturday, August 10: Laurie writes to the *North British Daily Mail* postmarked from Liverpool. He implies that it is his intention to commit suicide. He states that Rose and he "went to the top of Goatfell, where I left him in the company of two men who came from Lochranza and were going to Brodick. I went down to Corrie and met some friends and we afterwards visited the Hotel where we met several of the gentlemen who were camping out and I left for Brodick about ten. I could easily prove that what I say is true, but I decline to bring the names of my

friends into this disgraceful affair. So will content myself by wishing them a last adieu.”

Tuesday, August 27: Laurie writes to the *Glasgow Herald*. The letter is a rambling series of denials and adds no useful information.

Tuesday, September 3: Laurie is apprehended in a wood outside Hamilton. When arrest is imminent, he cuts his throat with an open razor, unsuccessfully. “I robbed the man,” he says, “but I did not murder him.”

Friday, September 27: The Crown orders exhumation of Rose for examination of the chest and abdominal cavities. These had been neglected in the original examination. Nothing is found in the chest cavity. But the liver and other abdominal organs are in reasonable condition. The examination is carried out by Henry Littlejohn (Edinburgh Police Surgeon) and the aforementioned Fullarton.

Friday, November 8: The first day of the trial. Prosecuting is Solicitor-General M. T. Stormonth Darling, assisted by Graham Murray and Dugald McKechnie. Defending is Dean of Faculty of Advocates J. B. Balfour, assisted by C. Scott Dickson. Presiding is The Lord Justice-Clerk Lord Kingsburgh (J. H. A. Macdonald, eventual author of a standard work on Criminal Law). Crown witnesses are heard all day in a bizarre order. All the Arran witnesses are taken early, presumably so that they can catch the last Saturday ferries. Then the medical witnesses Gilmour, Fullarton and Littlejohn give their evidence: they are pushed hard by the defence to justify their theory of cause of injuries against the defence’s theory that the injuries were caused by a fall. Last come the London witnesses, mostly identifying items belonging to Rose. At the close of proceedings Lord Kingsburgh insists that the trial must be concluded on Saturday.

Saturday, November 9: The second day of the trial. More Crown witnesses are heard. Eighty-six Crown witnesses were summoned to the trial, and 53 of them gave evidence!⁷ Although the Crown succeeds in showing that Laurie was in possession of several articles of Rose’s after leaving Arran, they fail to show that he took anything that Rose had with him on the hill. Defence witnesses are then heard. Thirteen defence witnesses were summoned, and seven gave evidence. Most of the defence’s time is taken up with medical evidence establishing (a) that Laurie’s injuries were consistent with falling backwards over one of the suitable crags on to his head, and (b) that they were inconsistent with receiving a series of violent blows (with a non-existent weapon). This evidence is exceedingly impressive. The principal witness, Patrick Heron Watson – Surgeon to the Queen in Scotland – describes startling experiments in which corpses are dropped down stairwells sustaining injuries similar to Rose’s, and others in which skulls are successfully smashed only by wedging them into the corners of rooms and setting to work with a heavy hammer!

Summings-up by the advocates are followed by the Judge's Instruction. The verdict (majority of one in a jury of 15) for Guilty is delivered about 10.30pm after 45 minutes deliberation. According to later petitions, the seven dissenting jurors preferred a Not Proven verdict. Lord Kingsburgh sentences Laurie "that you be removed to the prison of Edinburgh, and thence transferred to the prison of Greenock, in the precincts of which prison you will be hanged by the neck between the hours of eight and ten in the forenoon of November 30. This I pronounce for doom, and may the Lord have mercy on your soul." Laurie turns around in the dock and addresses the crowded benches: "Ladies and gentlemen, I am innocent of this charge."

Friday, November 29: Following vigorous public protest and petition, Laurie's sentence is reduced by the Scottish Secretary to life, on what amount to psychiatric grounds.

October 4, 1930: Laurie dies in Perth Prison, in the Lunatic Division. For many years prior to death, he had been a trusted prisoner and allowed the freedom of Perth during the day.

The Crown and Defence Theories

These are the bare facts of a complex case. The complexity arises particularly from the fact that the evidence against Laurie is entirely circumstantial. That is, there is no direct evidence (e.g. a witness, blood on Laurie's clothing, a murder weapon) that Laurie – or indeed anyone – had assaulted Rose. Nor was the Crown able to secure any worthwhile motive for murder, not even robbery of the body, since no item found in Laurie's possession was shown to have been carried by Rose on the ascent of Goatfell, and since Rose and Laurie were to all appearances on the best of terms. Even when last seen together on Goatfell summit, they were chatting together in a friendly manner. On the contrary, arising from a sub-plot mentioned in Laurie's letter of August 10, Laurie had a decent motive to murder someone else – a Coatbridge schoolteacher who was on holiday in Bute at the time with Laurie's former girlfriend of long standing, and despite Laurie's statement in the letter that it was "to watch her audacious behaviour" that he went to Bute, there is no evidence that Laurie as much as said "Boo!" to this enemy.

Worse still, the Crown could not even show that the two men descended the mountain together or even by the same route, for the evidence of the only witness placing Laurie in Glen Sannox was contradicted by two women whom the witness was with at the time of the supposed sighting of Laurie. Worst of all, Rose's injuries did not point convincingly to battery. Indeed, the defence produced distinguished medical witnesses who presented impressive arguments that the injuries were perfectly consistent

with a fall, and inconsistent with battery. So the medical evidence simply fails to establish that Rose died by violence. In any murder trial, one would expect to see the Crown establish the manner of death of the victim, and a motive, the indicated means and an opportunity for the accused to kill him. Here not one of these key elements of evidence was securely established.

Yet Laurie left Arran without making inquiries about Rose, and took away some of Rose's possessions. Why would he do that, if he didn't know that Rose was dead? It is not easy to think of convincing alternative explanations, and the defence offered none. And then, as soon as it became obvious that he would be identified as 'Annandale', he fled to Liverpool, concealing his destination with lies. This conduct suggesting knowledge of death and later conduct displaying guilt was emphasized by both Crown and Judge and it may have been a potent factor for the Jury. But, again, Laurie's behaviour is exactly what one would expect from someone who made off with the possessions of a man killed in an accident. That is, it does not point clearly to murder rather than theft, albeit a particularly callous and odious theft.

Reasonable men such as are presumed to compose juries should therefore reach the conclusions that Laurie was present when Rose died, and that Rose died as a result of injuries sustained in a fall. But the Crown did not prepare the fallback position that Laurie may have caused Rose to fall by tripping or pushing him, but stuck to the unlikely theory that he had beaten him to death with a rock. Likewise, the defence might have argued that Laurie had merely (and meanly) robbed Rose's corpse following an accident, but chose instead (apparently on Laurie's instructions) to argue that the two men had descended by independent routes. But, if Laurie descended independently, what was he doing between 6.20pm at the top of Goatfell and 10pm in the Corrie Hotel? Although Laurie stated in his letter that he was with friends in Corrie, no evidence was produced to support this statement. So the unfortunate jurors, pressed for time by the impatient Judge, were obliged to decide between two implausible and unsupported accounts of Rose's death.

The Third Theory

Perhaps, then, the facts favour a third theory that the two men descended together, that Rose fell to his death in the gully, and that Laurie robbed the body and hid it. Much the same conclusion is reached by Jack House (see note 4), whose opinion is that a verdict of Not Proven ought to have been returned. But there are still some difficulties with this account. If he hid the body to avoid or delay discovery, why did he not also hide or remove the various objects belonging to Rose found scattered about the gully, two

of them – a stick and a torn waterproof – within a few yards of the Boulder? Rather ridiculously, the Crown, and rather naughtily, the Judge both suggest that these objects were on the contrary scattered about the gully by Laurie so as to suggest that Rose fell. Surely, this argument depends on the far-fetched assumption that Laurie took this action in order to prepare his defence! The other difficulties have to do with time and route. Was there time enough for Laurie to put the body under the boulder and conceal it with a wall? And what circumstances led them to return to Brodick from Goatfell so late in the evening by this very circuitous route, which was bound to add a clear two hours to their journey time, when they might have either gone down the Brodick path, or gone straight down to Corrie by another well-known and quick route? Before considering these difficulties, it is necessary to consider the nature of the ground between Goatfell summit, the descent gully and the Boulder.

The North Ridge of Goatfell begins with a steeply-descending rocky section and continues to North Goatfell over a series of awkward rocky tors. However, these may be by-passed on sheep tracks to the east or west. If passed on the east, it is then possible to make a descending traverse across easy ground to the col between North Goatfell and Malloch Buidhe above the gully. The gully is best descended after the steep initial section by following ledges diagonally to the right (east) side away from the gully bed, then returning by a second series of leftward diagonal ledges to reach the gully below all difficulties and just above the Boulder. Descent of the gully itself or of its left (west) bank is dangerous and difficult; descent of the right bank is awkwardly steep and rocky and brings a sizable crag – referred to in the trial as the ‘32-foot drop’ – into play. This is a serious hazard, topped by smooth convex slabs and the landing area is the usual scree of large boulders. The ground below this crag is, however, still steep and it is quite likely that someone falling would continue to roll down the gully towards the Boulder. So there is no difficulty here for the defence theory that Rose may have fallen down this crag, and also such a fall might have brought him down the gully to a point quite close to the Boulder.

The Boulder is a long thin slab, lying parallel to the course of the gully, firmly embedded on the right (west) side and sloping slightly downhill. The left side is open, but the space below the Boulder, floored with heathery turf, is very cramped; there is just enough room for one person to lie flat, with very little headroom. However, these are present conditions: it must be considered whether or not the Boulder had been used as a shelter or ‘howff’, in which case the floor would have been cleared to subsoil, providing a little more room. Unfortunately, the police evidence gives no indication whether the ‘wall of 42 stones’ was newly-built, or whether Laurie or whoever had simply added rocks to an older foundation. There

are several confusing reports of the nature of the enclosing wall given at the trial. The most detailed comes from Francis Logan, the fisherman who found the body, and in his evidence it is clearly a wall that is described. "There was a dyke built in front of the boulder so as to close up the opening . . . with pieces of turf between the stones."⁸ This is exactly what would be expected of a howff, which must be made windproof, whereas a structure made only to conceal a body might well neglect such comforts.

Of course, the theory of the Crown was that the bizarre and circuitous descent route was chosen by Laurie because he had already decided to do away with Rose, and wanted a quiet place away from prying eyes. But the circumstances allow a different explanation, needing no assumptions of bad faith. When Laurie and Rose were on top of Goatfell the weather was by no means perfect. There had been two heavy showers as the three parties approached the summit and one of the witnesses said that mist filled Glen Rosa. According to the five other climbers, Laurie and Rose didn't follow them down the east ridge. It seems likely, then, that they proceeded along the rocky ridge towards North Goatfell with a view to turning east down the easy slopes leading to Corrie. It is most unlikely – in late evening and with midgets probably already at work – that they would plan to descend via the Saddle or by any other route involving descent to Glen Sannox, committing themselves to a lengthy return journey in darkness. So the descent by the steep gully into Coire nam Fuaran looks very like a navigation error, perhaps caused by mist. If they followed the ridge to North Goatfell for some way before turning off to the east, it would be perfectly possible in misty conditions to stray too far left and end up at the col above the gully. It is very unfortunate that the trial evidence didn't go into the question of weather conditions, particularly visibility, more thoroughly. For, aside from the question of explaining the route taken, visibility affects speed, and time is of crucial importance in assessing what might or might not have happened in Coire nam Fuaran.

Assuming good visibility and good knowledge of the complicated terrain, the Boulder can be reached in half-an-hour from Goatfell summit. But false moves in mist on the tricky ridge between Goatfell and North Goatfell, or in the descent gully (these would be likely even in clear weather) could add to this considerably. The next definite sighting of Laurie is 'just before 10pm' in the Corrie Hotel. From the Boulder to the Hotel is about $3\frac{1}{2}$ miles, so the police estimate (given by Sergeant Munro) of 1 hour 40 minutes seems about right. Therefore Laurie had to leave the Boulder at 8.15 or thereby, having reached it by 6.50 at the earliest. He had then a maximum of 1 hour 25 minutes to pull or roll Rose down to the Boulder (assuming Rose fell) and wall him in. The time appears tight, and any lingering on the summit, dithering on the ridge or in the gully would seem

to make it too tight. But if the Boulder was already a howff, then the problems concerning time become less severe. Laurie would only have had to push Rose into the howff feet first (this would also explain the fact that Rose's jacket was turned back over his head) and add a few stones to 'close the howff door'. So the third theory that Laurie and Rose descended the gully together, Rose fell and died, and Laurie robbed the body and hid it, is considerably assisted by these mountaineering considerations.

The Linlithgow Factor

The Crown's theory depended principally on Dr. Andrew Gilmour's evidence that Rose's injuries could only have been caused by violent blows to the head delivered by a stone used as weapon. Gilmour was Provost and Sheriff of Linlithgow for 19 years, and Master of St. Michael's Lodge – in a word, King of Linlithgow. According to his evidence, "in the month of July I was staying as a summer visitor in Arran". Rose had made friends with two men from Linlithgow, Francis Mickel and William Thom, and after Laurie and Rose arrived in Brodick on Saturday, July 13, they spent most of their time with Mickel and Thom. In particular, on the Saturday afternoon all four paid a visit for tea to Andrew Francis Craig Gilmour, another Linlithgow man resident at Corrie. Now, astonishing as it might appear, there is nothing in the trial report to tell us that this Gilmour was the son of Andrew Gilmour.⁹ But he most certainly was, and so it is more than likely that Gilmour Senior met Laurie and Rose on the 13th, and absolutely certain that Dr. Gilmour had the benefit of his son's, Mickel's and Thom's opinions regarding Rose and Laurie before he was called to examine the body. The trial record tells us nothing about Gilmour Junior's opinions, although he gave evidence about Laurie's journey from Brodick to Glasgow on the 16th. But Francis Mickel made his negative opinions of Laurie clear at the trial and claimed that he had warned Rose against him and advised him not to climb Goatfell with him. These opinions appeared to be based on nothing more than that Laurie was "silent and uncommunicative": as the Defence pointed out, there was ample evidence that Laurie was suffering from toothache, which would have rendered the most amiable soul 'silent and uncommunicative'. Now, although the Crown made use of Mickel's evidence to blacken the character of Laurie, the Defence – had it decided to explore this Linlithgow factor – might equally have used it to suggest a source of prejudice in the mind of the medical examiner! My own view of the matter is that, long before the discovery of the body, Dr. Gilmour had formed the appalling conclusion that he and his fine son had entertained a murderer and his victim to tea, and then used his considerable influence to make sure that nothing of this emerged at the trial.

The Curious Incident of the Folded Cap

One of the many objects discovered in the gully was a cap (Label No. 3 in the list of Productions). This was found high in the gully, well above the '32-foot drop' just below a '19-foot drop' on the west side of the stream. The finder, Angus Logan, quarryman, described it as follows: "It was folded in four, with a stone about 6 inches square and 3 inches thick, and 7lb. or 8lb. in weight, lying on the top of it. The cap was in water, there being a small stream of about 3 inches."¹⁰ The cap was identified by John Silverman, Rose's tailor, as belonging to Rose.

The Crown and the Judge both made much of this cap. In summing up, the Crown suggested that the position of the cap disposed of the theory that Rose had fallen over the '32-foot drop'.¹¹ The Judge, it will be remembered, suggested that Laurie may have deliberately scattered Rose's possessions about the gully "so that if the body should ever be found it might appear as if he had fallen over a precipice", and then observed that the cap had evidently been deliberately placed where it was found.¹²

But if one pauses to consider the question: "Why would anyone fold a cap in four, put it in the bed of a stream, and place a heavy stone on it?", it is obvious that we are faced here with an inexplicable fact, or rather a fact which admits of a myriad of explanations, all highly improbable. Perhaps Rose stopped on the way down the gully for a rest, removed his cap, put it down in the stream-bed, then dry, and put a stone on it to stop it rolling away. Leaving, he then forgot it. Or perhaps someone climbing the gully in late July picked up the cap lower down and then, thinking better of this minor act of theft, placed it as found. Perhaps – the Judge's theory – Laurie, having killed Rose beside the Boulder and buried him, climbed 300ft. up the gully to put the cap there to suggest a fall, and then so forgot this plan as to put a heavy stone on top of it! So the curiously-positioned cap is a complete red herring. It is a fact which points in no particular direction, since there is no explanation of it that makes any great amount of sense.

Final Thoughts

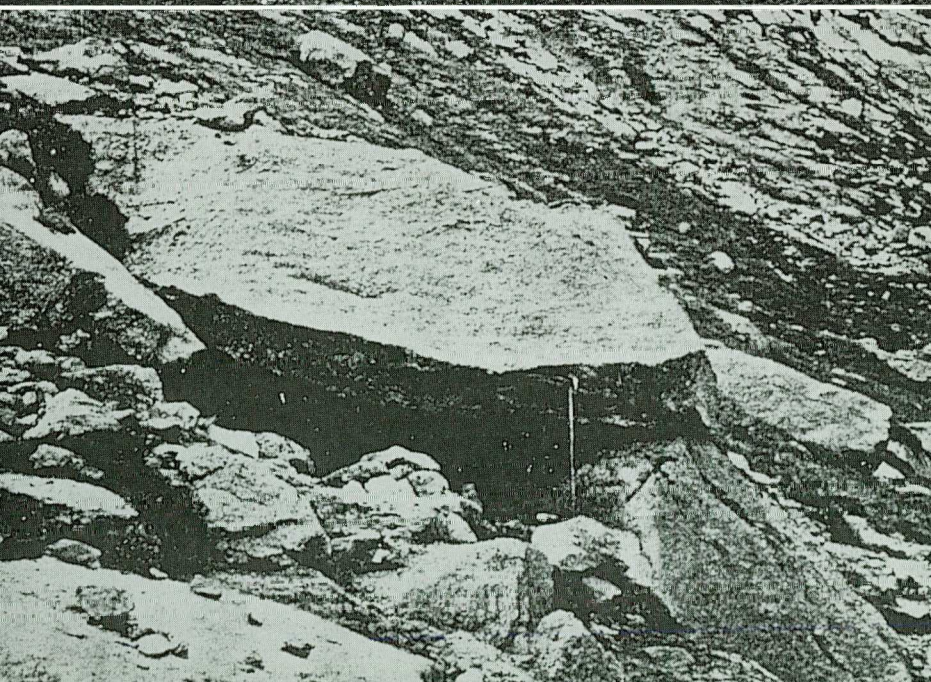
What seems to me crucial about the case is that not one of the key elements of a murder was established: the death was not shown to be homicide, but might well have been accidental; Laurie could not be put at the scene of the crime, if crime it was; no motive other than petty theft was suggested, and none was established; no murder weapon was found. Unless there was witness evidence, now lost or mislaid, which helped to establish some of these elements, and bearing in mind the plausibility of the third theory discussed above, Laurie should surely have been simply found Not Guilty. The Judge's breakneck approach to timing and his somewhat biased

Instruction would nowadays have resulted in a successful appeal against conviction, but such appeals were not allowed in the High Court until 1926. Perhaps, too, if Laurie had been additionally charged with Theft – as he should have been – the Jury would have found him Guilty on that charge but would have adjudged the murder charge Not Proven.

So it may be that the stain of murder should not have been applied to our gentle recreation. But that it was so applied provides the present-day climbing visitor to Arran with interesting opportunities. Mrs Walker's shed in Invercloy, Rose's grave at Sannox (marked by a boulder!) and the fateful gully and Boulder grave are easy destinations for a wet day, and rich with morbid associations. For the very hardy, a bivouac in the Boulder would provide a memorable conclusion to this novel excursion!

References and notes:

1. *SMCJ* 1890, I, 31. 'The Glen Sannox Hills'
2. See my *The Munroist's Companion*, p.49, for details.
3. See 'The Dreadful Business of the Abernethy Brothers', *SMCJ* 1995, XXXV, 604-615.
4. Notably Jack House, in *Murder Not Proven?*, 1984, Penguin Books.
5. Unfortunately there is no official published transcript of the trial. I have relied heavily on William Roughead's detailed record *The Trial of John Watson Laurie*. Wm Hodge & Sons, 1932, supplemented by later accounts and by contemporary newspapers, especially *The Buteman & Advertiser*. Roughead attended the trial as a young man, and gave an earlier briefer account of it in his *Twelve Scots Trials*, published in 1913 and recently reprinted by Mercat Press.
6. From *The Buteman*, 10-8-89, p. 3. Needless to say, this posse found nothing!
7. Actually, that only 53 gave evidence is by no means certain. The trial record in Roughead's book is conceded to be imperfect, and certain remarks in the closing speeches refer to witnesses whose testimony is absent from Roughead's transcript. So it may be that some of the missing 33 witnesses provided evidence after all.
8. Roughead 1932, p. 91
9. See A. Eddington & W.T. Pike. *Edinburgh and the Lothians* at the opening of the 20th Century. Brighton, 1904. A modern reprint (Peter Bell, 1983) is titled *A Dictionary of Edwardian Biography: Edinburgh and the Lothians*.
10. Roughead 1932, p. 96
11. Roughead's report (*ibid.*, p. 197) is not very intelligible: "But what very definitely disposes of this [the idea that Rose fell at the 32-foot drop - RNC] is, that it was at a point 40 yards below [the place] that the cap of the deceased was found. [There must be a typo here, as indicated, since the cap was found 40 yards above the 32-foot drop]. I do not think that anyone can doubt that the position of the cap had something to do with this [with what?] - everything to do with it, in fact. It was put in the position in which it was found by a human hand, in a place where it was difficult to reach from below. Then, as regards the other drop, the 19-feet one, which is certainly above where the cap was found, it so happens that at the upper edge of it there is a comparatively flat stone. It does not have a sloping top, and thus it does not satisfy the essential condition of Dr. Heron Watson's theory [that there was a fall]."
12. *Ibid.*, p.22





PARTNERS

By N. F. Christie.

"OFF hill climbing again then Hugh?"

"Yes indeed", he replied wearily, waiting for the inevitable *bon mot* to fall from Mr McNiven's lips.

"Be careful with that pickaxe of yours, you'll take someone's eye out! Anyone one would think you were away to climb Everest, he-he!"

Hugh grinned weakly back at his boss, hoping this was the end of the ritual exchange. Unfortunately, McNiven seemed to be warming to his theme.

"I used to get up to a bit of that sort of nonsense when I was a youngster, rambles in the Campsies and all that. Bit old for it now though, stick to golf these days, and the FP 4ths of course. Surely its about time you gave up gallivanting about at the weekends as well? You could have prospects with the firm if you settled down a bit, you know. What was that girl's name, the one you brought along to the Christmas do, does she not try to keep you indoors?"

"She's called Heather, but I'm afraid we're not really seeing each other any more."

"Oh well, plenty more fish eh, not a bad chassis on her though, if you don't mind my saying so." McNiven leered horribly. "Did I ever tell you about this floozy I met in Jo'burg when I was on the Old Farts tour the other year?"

A few minutes later, having extricated himself, Hugh was grappling with the Spitfire's distributor cap in the office car park, brogues skittering on the frost as he contorted himself under the bonnet. Why don't I have a Vauxhall bloody Vectra? he muttered to himself. His car somehow reflected his relationships with women, he mused. They found the Triumph amusing, retro, even cute, and were often quite happy to come along for a wee jaunt, out to Craigmore and the Carbeth of a summer's evening or similar. They generally declined to come on board for a long haul, however, and if pressed would say apologetically that it was unsafe, not a very comfortable ride, leaked oil from the sump... Hugh decided he was stretching the metaphor a little and gave it up.

He could see Dave silhouetted by the passing traffic before he reached him, where he stood waiting at Kirklee lights. His sack lay between his feet which were placed apart in a boxer's stance. The set of his jaw suggested that he was trying to stare out the passing commuters.

Hardy wee bastard, thought Hugh with amusement.

The first time he had met him was at a party somewhere near the Park Bar, one of those all-back-to-mine affairs where anything or nothing can

happen. Finding the bathroom cluttered with a gaggle of be-flared art students passing a rather pitiful soggy joint among themselves and peering out of the window, he had squeezed past them to see what enthralled them. He was intrigued by the sight of a youth performing a classic abseil down the side of the tenement, his rope secured round the base of the lavatory which creaked ominously. Sadly, his dress of Stone Roses tee-shirt and threadbare cords seemed to be inadequate for his descent.

“Me bloody knackersack!” he moaned in a rich Lancashire accent, attempting to relieve the pressure by contortions as his audience watched agog and scratched their sideburns.

They had fallen into conversation once Dave had returned upstairs and recovered himself. As Hugh learned, his initial impression of a raucous exhibitionist had been mistaken. Abseiling out of a window was more a manifestation of Dave’s quiet, almost stubborn, determination once roused than a form of showing-off (he was naturally shy and reserved, even in drink).

“‘E said I were a bloody nancy, I weren’t ‘aving ‘im say owt like that, ‘is bird were right pretty too,” he explained enigmatically.

A week later they arranged to go to Dumbarton in the evening, the September equinox not quite past. Dave led Stonefall Crack and Windjammer phlegmatically, pausing only briefly after he had dropped the nut intended to protect the crux, pronouncing his habitual caveat at such moments: “I’m not right ‘appy about this,” before continuing to the top without apparent hesitation. Whilst Hugh sat smoking in the sunset on top of Boulder H, Dave worked his way about some of the problems, grunting occasionally as he let his short legs dangle, locked off on one arm, before sudden rain began and they ran for home.

AS A schoolboy, before his first forays into real climbing, Hugh had been fascinated by the whole idea of mountaineering. Bookish by disposition, he had devoured its literature avidly, working his way through the corner of the school library devoted to the subject. Red bound SMC guidebooks, formulaic accounts of Himalayan sieges, Another of Hamish’s Lengthy Walks and more had all passed through his hands, but none of them had ever fully described the wonder he felt at the photographs they contained. Eventually, he lavished a prize book-token on an omnibus edition of W. H. Murray and had a moment of epiphany. Besides the vivid descriptions and gripping accounts of first ascents, what intrigued him most were Murray’s band of companions, MacKenzie, MacAlpine, and Dunn. In Hugh’s youthful imagination they seemed the ideal climbing companions, courageous, courteous, and resolute, if rather shadowy figures. Nowadays, reading between the lines, it was possible to theorise that all was not as idyllic as it seemed. For example, why was Dunn such an inveterate late

riser? And what about the fabled CIC contretemps where MacKenzie and MacAlpine had almost come to blows over the porridge? Perhaps the most vexing question, however, was whether the team were actually blessed with Christian names.

In the course of his climbing career, Hugh felt that perhaps he had always subconsciously measured his various partners against Murray's companions. At first he had climbed with school friends, who had gradually lost interest, or moved to Swindon to work as production engineers, or both. At university, he had been repelled by the militant vegetarianism of the mountaineering club, but had formed brief alliances with a variety of likely candidates. Some had been too keen for him, some scarcely keen at all, and some simply off his wavelength.

He remembered going for a weekend to Aviemore with Andy from Inverurie, owner of an ageing Citroen (probably his main attraction), who had been afflicted sorely by the parsimony of his race. When he was dropped off, Hugh offered £15 for fuel, which was declined.

"I've nae worked oot the total taking into account the wee bottlie o' clutch fluid and een o' that tax-disc holders fae the garage." He had not actually sent him an invoice, but this was probably only for want of a VAT number.

A series of outings with Ali the oilman of Inverkeithing had ceased after they had disagreed over where enthusiasm crossed the line to insanity. Slogging into the corrie of Lochnagar through thigh deep snow, with more falling gently, conditions had seemed poor to say the least, yet Hugh's companion had remained set on Douglas-Gibson, eventually dissuaded only by the impossibility of swimming up the gully and a small powder avalanche down his neck. Hugh was already switching off and contemplating lunch in the Barrel, when his partner turned his attention to Eagle Ridge. Without waiting to discuss the matter, Ali began floundering up the first pitch as Hugh watched aghast and unbelayed, secretly relieved when his companion fell 15ft. up to land in a heap at his feet in the waist deep powder.

He had come across a couple of Dunns in his time, perhaps the most memorable being an old Lorretonian he had climbed with on the Cove sea cliffs from time to time. A bloody nice bloke and devoted to the code of the gentleman amateur, Archie was a strong, if idle, climber. Tiring of waiting fruitlessly to meet him at the Number 13 bus stop at Bridge Street, Hugh had taken to going round to his flat to wake him and pack his bag, occasionally finding him slumped on his bed still in kebab-stained cricket whites (his other physical recreation). One fine June weekend after the exams, he inexplicably agreed to an expedition to Beinn a' Bhuid, not famed as a roadside crag. Already flagging as they reached Slugain Lodge, it transpired that a confusion had arisen in his simple mind between Beinn

a' Bhuird and Bennachie. They had climbed the magnificent Squareface in the setting sun and arrived back in Aberdeen in time for the first hot rowies of the day at Thain's Bakery. After the eventual and inevitable termination of his studies (for chronic non-attendance), Archie's father had compelled him to rouse himself for long enough to take a commission in the Argylls. They had lost touch in time, but Hugh felt confident that Archie had swiftly returned to type and was even now slumbering gently in an anteroom in Sennelager.

Honesty compelled Hugh to admit that fear played a part in his aversion to soloing, but the antisocial nature of the practice was not irrelevant either. In more leisurely times, short of a partner to climb with, he had set off on hillwalking trips by himself for three or four days at a time. The scenery could be magnificent and weather superlative, but it never felt quite satisfactory without others to appreciate the views with, or even just to swap filthy jokes with. One of his early partners had felt differently and had been inclined to hold forth on the purity of climbing without ropes, unfettered by the psychological crutches of the coward etcetera. He had even practised what he preached to some extent, making solo ascents of Agag's Groove, a variety of other V. Diffs, and even Nijinsky at Auchinstarry (after lengthy top-roping). However, his soloing and indeed climbing career had ended abruptly after an attempt to solo a route on the North Face Triangle of Mont Blanc du Tacul. Fiddling with his sunglasses as he stepped out of the Midi station, he had tripped on a gaiter strap and taken a spectacular header, fortunately to the right. Unscathed apart from a broken ankle, he had returned to Chamonix in less than two hours in the care of the PGHM. Hugh had been at a wedding in Haddington at the time but heard the full story from others who had observed this spectacular shortcut to the Vallée Blanche. Apparently, the would-be Rebuffat had quietly sold his gear a few months later.

'Indoor climbing' was of little interest to Hugh, partly because he was no good at it. When he was younger he had believed that climbing was largely a matter of practice, strength and fitness. To this end he had attempted to follow some of the dicta of Ron Fawcett and other gurus and spent evenings at the Kelvin Hall and the Finnieston railway walls laboriously working his way back and forth on straining fingertips, coated in a thin film of perspiration and magnesium carbonate. In time, his attitude changed to the more predeterminist view that any amount of training and fitness would never compensate adequately for lack of natural talent and the pale yellow streak he knew to be within himself. The shift in his attitude towards training for climbing had coincided with the emergence of an enthusiasm for heavy drinking which had itself waned but which was arguably still predominant among his leisure interests. Salvationist rather than Ultramontane in outlook, he now knew that he would never climb

E6, F8a+, B8, Font 7c, V9, M10, WI5 or any of the other baffling numbers that were bandied about in climbing magazines these days. Something long and easy in Glencoe followed by something long and cool in the Kingshouse was more the kind of thing his climbing ambitions, such as they were, ran to. HVS on a good day and slack V on a tight rope were about his limits.

Disparities in enthusiasm, ambition or skill were the reason why most of his climbing partnerships had ended. Even now he knew that Dave was too good for him and improving steadily. Soon the time would come when he would be unable to follow his lead, without prussik loops at any rate, and he knew from experience that there was not much future after that happened. It was a shame because they got on well, better than Hugh had expected given that their partnership had began as one of expediency. A few good routes had been bagged, a few epics shared, and quite a few evenings spent engaged in verbal mountaineering in various bars. Ultimately, that was probably as much as could be hoped for in a climbing companion, rather than the almost mystical fellowship sometimes alluded to in Murray's writings.

HUGH struggled with sleep as the Spitfire wound its way back down Loch Lomond on Sunday evening. The back end began to drift out a little on the sharp bend after Ardlui and he tried to wake himself. It had been a fine weekend, one of the best for a while. No wobblers, a respectable hangover this morning, two good routes in the bag and a touch of sunburn for good measure. A pint in the Climbers' bar had sealed it and now Dave was snoring softly in the passenger seat dreaming perhaps of the thunk of a pick into névé and an amber sun sinking slowly behind Rhum. Hugh looked forward again and smiled to no one but himself. The week sprawled ahead like a muddy trench full of the enemy in grey wool.

FLIGHT OF THE EARTHWALKER

Sticky Spanish rubber edged creepingly on shining mica nodules, forearms achingly braced, fingers opening under the strain.

In your minds eye you are over and safe but reality has closed the Fear Barrier solid, tangible, touchable you know it well.

Today, alone and ropeless, the consequences are greater, final and from somewhere deep in the recesses of your mind you feel the relief as you turn and breast off into the void, swooping and soaring with the Raven from behind whose eyes you see an earthwalker reach high and step gracefully across the crux.

Charles J. Orr.

REGARDING WHO CLIMBED WHAT AND WHEN

By Mike Jacob

IN *Hands of a Climber*¹ by Steve Dean is the claim that Graham McPhee² had climbed The Long Climb on Saturday, April 11, 1936, finishing at 9pm. in a typical Nevis blizzard. The source of this information is not given; although Dean appears to have had access to McPhee's diaries they are not specifically mentioned in the Acknowledgements.

It is often very difficult, and this is an observation that applies to all biographies, to separate historical fact, supported by archival material, from anecdotal information which may have become coloured at each repetition, with a slight exaggeration here, a mis-remembered detail there. We all tend to do it, if we have any imagination. Journalists and politicians take it a stage further, giving opinions as though they are facts, so that the unquestioning punter accepts them as such.³

It is not my intention to re-review⁴ the book, which I thoroughly recommend for capturing the atmosphere of the period⁵, in this case predominantly in North Wales. More relevantly for historians of Scottish mountaineering, Dean makes the comment that "in view of the conditions that can be inferred, McPhee's ascent must have very nearly pre-dated Marshall and Smith's first winter ascent by 25 years".

Although Dean has confused Marshall and Smith's famous Orion Direct with the line of The Long Climb, could it possibly be true that McPhee ascended the face in winter conditions?

I have, therefore, examined the relevant entries in the CIC logbook⁶ but, to set the scene, it is necessary to go back several years to 1925, when J. H. B. Bell and Frank Smythe retreated from Tower Ridge. Then, and again in June 1932, Bell recognised that in his search for the longest rock-climb in Britain "that this exciting, new rock-climb must start from near the foot of a formidable gully⁷ which separates the Observatory Ridge from the slabby face of the North-East Buttress".⁸

He was, of course, looking at the Orion Face as he later called it.

He considered that an ascent to a snowfield about halfway up the face of the cliff – the Basin – was feasible but had no early opportunity to attempt it himself. However, in 1934, Sandy Wedderburn, with two Yugoslavian mountaineering guests, following Bell's suggestion, climbed what became known as Slav Route, in a storm and using two pitons. This route, however, did not tackle the highest section of the cliff or include the Basin but was on a line close to, and parallel with, Zero Gully.

An attempt to reach the Basin was made by Bell and Violet Roy⁹ in July 1935, starting slightly lower down than for Slav Route and about 20

yards to the left. Climbing in 'stockings' and running out nearly 100ft. of rope on smooth rock, Bell remarks that, farther up, on the Great Slab Rib, the climbing reminded him of Eagle's Nest Ridge on Great Gable¹⁰ but was longer and more difficult. The Basin was eventually reached and an indirect way found to the crest of North-East Buttress.

Bell, however, was not satisfied that he had solved all of the most interesting problems, particularly straightening the line up the rib from the northern rampart of the Basin and of finding a more direct way to the top of North-East Buttress.

So it was with this record behind him that Bell and Colin Allan, one of his regular climbing partners, set out on April 4, 1936 "making for the steep gully between Observatory Ridge and North-East Buttress".¹¹

This entry is significant. There is no indication that Bell and Allan were attempting a winter ascent of his 1935 route on Orion Face; rather, that they intended to attempt Zero Gully. Also, on this day, Bell carried a clinometer, presumably with the intention of trying to measure the angles of the various Zero Gully pitches which he realised were difficult to judge objectively. Bell describes "an icicle draped wall on the right" and "rocks with frozen moss" with "steep and slabby rocks on the left" in the log-book.

This description suggests insufficient build-up of snow-ice suitable for step-cutting. Climbing, then, on rocks to the left of Zero Gully, Bell mentions the "piton of Wedderburn's climb...this was later removed".

Bell and Allan eventually managed to traverse into Zero Gully after what sounds like a prolonged struggle. The clinometer was used – "the average inclination of the gully was 56° for a very long way. This is a very steep gradient indeed for Scottish snow".¹²

It seems that Bell and Allan had an arduous and long day and Bell finishes his entry with "...the hardest winter climb we had ever done".

Bell's entry in the log-book is unusual in that it appears to have been written on a separate piece of paper and then stuck onto the page, perhaps over an earlier entry? If so, did this earlier entry contain a claim to have largely climbed Zero Gully? It would seem that Bell and Allan were set on gaining access to the unclimbed Zero Gully rather than on trying to follow Slav Route to the summit, which in itself would have been a remarkable first winter ascent. However, this is not the issue that I set out to investigate.

A week later, an entry in the log-book for Friday, April 10, 1936 (Easter, I believe) records the arrival of several SMC members, including Graham McPhee. He had travelled to Fort William from Liverpool where he was a dental surgeon. As on many other trips, he was accompanied by his good friend, Colin Kirkus, although the latter chose to camp at Lochan Meall an t-Suidhe. On that Friday, McPhee and G. C. Williams ascended the

1931 Route on Secondary Tower Ridge, commenting that it was too easy to be graded V. Diff. Clearly, then, it was in rock-climbing condition but later that day McPhee soloed S. Gully of Creag Coire na Ciste – another first ascent – so there must have been a reasonable snow cover at that higher level.

On Saturday, 11 April, McPhee and Williams “set out to do the climb described by Bell on p. 63 of this book (ie. the CIC log-book). We found traces of Bell’s steps leading up to the highest part of the snow cone at the foot of the gully. Here the steps led on to the rocks on the left, and from Bell’s description and the recent scratches on the rock it was clear that he followed the Slav Route up the rocks on the left or east wall of the gully which here presented its steepest part. We saw where the footsteps re-entered the gully, after climbing the Slav Route for about 700ft. The two icefalls mentioned by Bell were surmounted just before a blizzard started to blow. In a short time new snow began to pour down the gully, and the final and fortunately now short portion was negotiated with difficulty to reach the summit at a late hour. By careful compass readings we were able to locate the top of No. 3 Gully but even here the blizzard made the descent difficult owing to the blinding snow. The central (and difficult) portion of the gully between Observatory Ridge and North-East Buttress is thus apparently as yet unclimbed – and looks unclimable.”

It is absolutely clear, then, that McPhee and Williams did not climb Bell’s 1935 Orion Face Route but that they followed the Slav Route/Zero Gully line. McPhee, who was busy preparing the 1936 SMC guide-book, was presumably checking out what would have sounded like a new winter route (which, indeed, it was, although subsequently superseded these days). It wasn’t until 1940 that Bell, climbing first with John Wilson in June and then George Dwyer in August, solved the earlier problems of his 1935 route – “...we thought that we were justified in calling it The Long Climb...”

Having clarified the position regarding who climbed what and when, I was puzzled by the brevity of McPhee’s further entries for that weekend.

On the following day – Sunday 12 – McPhee and party, did not leave the hut until 2pm. They “ascended Gardyloo Gully by a groove on right of the jammed boulder, the through route was completely blocked. Perfect views from the summit where we remained till nearly 7pm. Descended No. 3 Gully”.

Upon their return to the hut, McPhee discovered that two of the SMCparty “...Hemming and McAllum had meanwhile helped four victims of a stonefall below the Garadh na Ciste to reach the hut”.

This entry seems rather perfunctory since the accident was quite a serious one and the fate of at least one of the victims would have caused McPhee some anxiety, for it was none other than Colin Kirkus. It is not clear whether this was Kirkus’s first return visit to the Ben since the tragic accident on

the Castle in 1934 when Maurice Linnell was killed,¹³ but Kirkus didn't have much luck on Ben Nevis. Neither did his cousin, Wilfrid Noyce,¹⁴ who apparently broke a leg on the mountain in 1939.

The activities for Monday 13, April aren't recorded in the hut book although McPhee had a busy day caring for the most injured victim, Alfred Wood (another of McPhee's climbing companions) and helping to take him, on a stormy afternoon and using a pony, to hospital in Fort William. McPhee returned to the hut that evening. Most people would have had enough of Ben Nevis by this time especially No. 3 Gully, but the next day McPhee, partnered by a different accomplice "ascended No. 3 Gully to the summit of Ben Nevis in a blizzard. Had to cut steps going up. Descended same way and set out for Fort William 12.15pm".

Perhaps McPhee's failure to mention the names of the casualties relates to the fact that, after Linnell's death, Kirkus had come in for a certain amount of criticism from the climbing 'Establishment'. The Rucksack Club's Accident Sub-Committee decided that the rope run-out on the final pitch was too long, and the accident had been the subject of inaccurate and sensational Press reports. In addition, Kirkus, having been greatly disappointed to have been excluded from the 1933 Everest Expedition,¹⁵ and also left out of the expedition planned for 1936¹⁶ might, perhaps, have had hopes of a late call-up in the event of illness to another team member. Obviously, McPhee would have wanted to protect his friend from any further adverse publicity.

In conclusion, I cannot believe that McPhee, with his intimate knowledge of Ben Nevis, could have ever made the claim ascribed to him by Dean. Rather, it is probable that Dean has confused the various intricacies of The Ben.¹⁷

"Tis true; there's magic in the web of it." (Shakespeare).

References and notes:

1. *Hands Of A Climber – A Life Of Colin Kirkus* by S. Dean. Published by the Ernest Press 1993.
2. G. Graham McPhee (this is how he wrote his name although guidebook editors, over the years, have referred to him as G. G. Macphee) was an extraordinary man – a real driving-force in British climbing. Son of a Glasgow doctor, he enlisted in 1915 at age 17 and for four years served as an officer in the Highland Light Infantry and as a pilot in the Royal Flying Corps, spending nine months as a prisoner-of-war. He qualified as a doctor in 1924. As well as being President of the SMC from 1952-54 he was also a member of the Rucksack Club and held offices in the Fell and Rock Climbing Club, the Alpine Club and the British Mountaineering Council. McPhee trained assiduously and regularly visited Liverpool's Adelphi Hotel to make use of the gymnasium and swimming-pool, a practice also adopted by Menlove Edwards. Perhaps best known in Scotland for his association with Ben Nevis, McPhee was also involved in famous first ascents of rock climbs in the Lake District (eg. the remarkable Deer Bield Crack, HVS, in February 1930 with A. T. Hargreaves and Gimmer Crack, VS, in 1928) and North Wales (eg. Great Slab, VS on Clogwynn Du'r Arddu's West Buttress with Colin Kirkus in June 1930). McPhee died in 1963 while solo climbing on Mount Teide in the Canaries.
3. A good example is the use by Dean of Kirkus's description of Prof. Turnbull's (uncle of our Hon. Meets Secretary) fall from Longland's Climb on Cloggy. Kirkus was not actually there at the

time and his account, which has become the accepted version of events, although correct in essence is not accurate in detail, according to my uncle, who was there at the time and who is the only surviving witness to the event. Kirkus would have heard a second-hand, perhaps sensationalised, story which he then repeated. It is quite possible that I may have fallen into this trap myself for it has been impractical to check every detail for this article, although I have tried to give source material.

4. See *SMCJ* 1994, p.564, for a review by David H. Jones. This review gives but a hint of the taste so, to savour the full meal, read the book for yourself.

5. Rockclimbing in North Wales, particularly on Clogwyn Du'r Arddu, in the early 1930s, saw a surge in new routes and a rise in standards, perhaps similar to the effect that the Creag Dhu had in Glencoe after the Second World War. Leading protagonists were Jack Longland, A. B. Hargreaves, Graham McPhee, Menlove Edwards, Maurice Linnel and Colin Kirkus. The influence of this small world was far-reaching among young climbers of the period.

6. SMC archives, National Library of Scotland.

7. This gully, then unclimbed, continuing the nomenclature of the Nevis gullies, was named Zero Gully by Bell.

8. *A Progress In Mountaineering*, by J. H. B. Bell.

9. Miss Violet Roy was described by Bell as "an excellent rock climber, well balanced and light". They were both members of the Grampian Club.

10. Eagle's Nest Ridge Direct was Britain's first VS when climbed in April, 1892 by G. A. Solly, W. C. Shingsby and party. Solly, it may be remembered, was with J. N. Collie and J. Collier on the first winter ascent of Tower Ridge in March 1894, while Slingsby seems to have chimneys throughout the country named after him, including the one on North-East Buttress. Eagle's Nest Ridge is still graded VS, albeit at a milder level and is considered a serious route because of its scarcity of protection.

11. CIC log-book entry, p.63. Most reports in the log-book at that time were in pen rather than pencil. In those pre-ballpoint days did climbers carry their own fountain pens and ink to the hut? Different colours of inks and thicknesses of letter-strokes would suggest that this was so!

12. *A Progress In Mountaineering*, chapter 7.

13. This accident is comprehensively described in *The Black Cloud*, by Ian Thomson. Kirkus received serious head injuries and remained in the Belford Hospital for nearly three weeks and it was several more weeks before he was able to return to work. Maurice Linnel was buried in the small cemetery in Glen Nevis.

14. Noyce was taught to climb by Kirkus, who was his senior by a few years. He describes in his book *Mountains and Men* how Kirkus gave him "a lesson in rhythm". In 1937, Noyce, climbing with Menlove Edwards, was seriously injured in a fall from Mickledore Grooves on Scafell's East Buttress. This delicate and very exposed VS route was first climbed in the damp, entirely unprotected, by Kirkus and Ivan Waller, who later joined the SMC. Noyce fell about 200ft. with two strands of rope parting just as he touched down on the ground. He later went on to become a Himalayan mountaineer of repute and, as is well known, died with Robin Smith in the Pamirs in 1963.

15. Walt Unsworth writes: "The climbers came from the same class that had traditionally provided the membership of the Alpine Club for three-quarters of a century; the well-to-do middle classes, with a background of Oxbridge and a decent sprinkling of Army officers...it is doubtful whether the Committee even knew there existed a body of climbers whose horizons were the bleak moors around Sheffield rather than the Georgian porticos of South Audley Street..." Similarly, Jim Perrin, in his book *Menlove*, writes: "The northern office worker Kirkus was beyond the pale; the Charterhouse and Cambridge colonial who was his cousin perfectly acceptable."

16. Kirkus had shown his ability at altitude in the 1933 Gangotri Expedition which also included Charles Warren. Warren was chosen as the 1936 Everest Expedition doctor. John Hunt was also chosen although he didn't, in the end, take part because he failed the medical examination. However, his "excellent service record" was clearly considered more important than Kirkus's climbing record. In Everest matters, the day of the 'working-man' had not yet arrived.

17. An easy enough mistake. Indeed, one that I have made myself.

MITRE RIDGE IN WINTER

By Bill Brooker

THE Mitre Ridge in the Garbh Choire of Beinn a' Bhuird is one of the most distinctive rock buttresses in the Cairngorms. Unusually, before it was climbed it had been named, by J. A. Parker to whom it resembled a bishop's mitre when viewed from the corrie floor. In a 1923 SMC Journal article he illustrated and described the ridge following an investigation a couple of years earlier. Attracted by this, A. G. Hutchison and A. J. Rusk reconnoitred and attempted the Mitre Ridge in 1930. They did not get up but Rusk took the fine photograph of its western aspect which was to inspire others to visit the Garbh Choire and the Mitre Ridge, especially after being republished in the SMC guidebook, *The Cairngorms*. In September 1933 the ridge was climbed by Aberdeen climbers Charles Ludwig and D. J. Dawson, an ascent reported in the Aberdeen Press, unusual for the days when newspapers rarely mentioned mountain activities unless a fatality was involved. However, the first ascent of Mitre Ridge had actually taken place two months earlier when a party of five Cambridge University climbers, drawn by Parker's article and Rusk's photograph, made a long-planned visit to the eastern Cairngorms and blessed by fine weather, climbed the Mitre Ridge by two separate routes. Wedderburn, Baird and Leslie ascended what was called the Direct Route while Cumming and Crofton followed the prominent steep groove on the west wall to make the route which bears their names. The Direct began with a long, slabby groove which proved to be the hardest pitch and is often omitted, as it was by Ludwig and Dawson.

In terms of the Cairngorms these Mitre Ridge climbs were ahead of their time and it was 10 years before comparable steep rock ascents were to be made in the area. Over the years Mitre Ridge has seen a number of additional routes, particularly on the west face where harder climbs have been made on the clean open faces between the main groove lines. Additionally, Mitre Ridge Direct takes a crestal line to straighten out the original Direct Route.

In the late 1940s when I began rock climbing The Mitre Ridge had still had few ascents and these were generally by the original Direct Route leaving out the initial groove. This pitch seemed to generate adventurous experiences, or it may be that the relatively remote location of the Mitre Ridge gave its ascent a sense of urgency with a need to save time wherever possible. These characteristics together with its dramatic rock architecture gave it a reputation and seriousness above what one might expect from its

rock climbing grade. Opportunities to reach and ascend it in good conditions were not very frequent and it was seen as something of a prize among the small number of climbers operating in the Cairngorms at that time.

By the early 1950s the surge in exploration of Cairngorm granite was well under way and an aspect of particular appeal to Aberdeen climbers was the ascent of rock buttresses and ridges in winter conditions. A number of routes on Lochnagar and the Cairngorms previously done as summer climbs had had winter ascents and the style of grading winter routes using the 1-5 (and then some! Ed.) numerical system in use today had yet to evolve. It was usual for winter ascents not to be graded at all, or reference to difficulty made by the usual notation of Easy to Very Severe. However, this was already being regarded as unsatisfactory for winter conditions and ascents on Lochnagar began to receive numerical grades in the 1956 Journal, although the system was not fully explained until the emergence of the SMC Climbers' Guides to *The Cairngorms Area* some years later.

During the 1953 Easter vacation I went to Fort William and the CIC Hut with fellow students Tom Patey and Mike Taylor. Our planned attempt on the Great Buttress of Cam Dearg foundered when the weather broke, and we settled for a rather unsatisfactory ascent of North Trident in fresh snow. In search of better conditions we rode our motor-bikes northward, arriving at Stromeferry to find the ferry boat had already made its last crossing for the day. Some friendly forestry workers invited us to stay overnight in their nearby bothy. This proved a memorable occasion because one of them had a piano-accordion. Tom Patey's musical expertise at that time was deployed on the piano at home and merely on the harmonica when away climbing. Here he tried his hand on the accordion and took to it so well that his enthusiasm was aroused and many were to enjoy his talents in the years ahead. We went on to Loch Kishorn, staying in the barn at House of Russel farm and exploring the series of great unclimbed buttresses beyond the Cioch of Sgurr a' Chaorachain, Applecross.

The first day was good and yielded an interesting 1000ft. buttress we called Jupiter. The second was poor and our climb on the fourth buttress was only half the height and made unpleasant by sleet falling on slush. On the third day the weather was even worse and on the fourth we returned to Aberdeen through heavy snowstorms. These snowfalls were widespread and gave a good cover on the high corries including those of the Cairngorms. In a week this snow had settled into good winter climbing conditions which linked with the generous daylight hours of April to turn thoughts to the attractions of a winter ascent of Mitre Ridge. The university term was about to start and it was impracticable to devote a whole weekend to the project. Other commitments meant postponement for a week. Mike Taylor was unable to join us but I spent the following Saturday afternoon

ensuring that my venerable motorcycle was in reliable running order and early on the Sunday morning collected Tom and headed up Deeside to Invercauld.

By the time we left the bike at the end of the estate road it was 9.30am and the Mitre Ridge was still eight miles away. There was no time to spare so we set off at a good pace up the Slugain, past the ruined Lodge, over into the upper Quoich where we were anxiously able to inspect snow conditions in the eastern corries of Beinn a' Bhuid. They looked promising, with abundant snow on every ledge and recess but with bare granite showing through on steep rock faces. The weather was clear although not sunny except for occasional spells. It was very cold but with little wind. In other words, conditions were excellent for our purpose and we pressed on over patches of snow past the great boulder of Clach a Chleirich and on up the last mile of the Quoich headstream to the Sneck.

From here we could look across the inner slopes of the Garbh Choire to our objective. It seemed very near although it was still three quarters of a mile away. It was now after midday so we cantered carefully downward and across slopes of firm snow to reach the foot of the Ridge in another half-hour or so. On closer view we found that there was more snow than we had expected, with less bare rock exposed and fresh powder plastered on packed old snow on north and west facing features. Tom remembered the big initial groove of the Direct Route all too well from a summer ascent a couple of years before and we set off up the easier alternative start without delay. All went easily for two pitches and I had belayed on a ledge allowing Tom to pass and begin the next. This involved a traverse to the right above the head of an open chimney choked with snow. The key to a fairly straight-forward move was a rounded ear of rock about the size of a big ashet. I watched from about 10ft. away as Tom reached out, tested it carefully and swung on it. There was a crack as it snapped off and I braced the rope round my waist as he fell downward. I crouched awaiting the shock but it came merely as a gentle tug. He had plunged into the soft snow packing the little gully beneath and had only fallen about 15ft. Remarkably, he still had his ice axe. We both had shortened axes with straight picks but when climbing I always kept mine on a sliding wrist sling as it avoided the risk of the axe being dropped when rock climbing or dislodged if the pick came free when placed alongside to allow both hands to be used on holds. Tom never used a sling and was thus able to use his axe left-handed on occasion. He was the only 'slingless wonder' with whom I climbed hard mixed routes that I never saw drop his axe at some point or other.

At the higher standards of climbing and protection obtaining nowadays falls may well be more frequent and sometimes even inevitable but in the Scottish climbing world of the early 1950s leader falls were very rare

indeed and usually had serious results. Tom was unhurt, but not surprisingly he was badly shaken, to the extent that he said: "You had better lead from now on." We had been leading through with the unspoken understanding that if I found anything too difficult Tom would probably manage it. I went ahead and soon came to the first problem. This was a deep cut narrow chimney 40ft. high. It was smothered with snow and I soon found that when I tried to kick a step this was backed by ice which also smeared the walls of the cleft. My attempts to progress by wedging the body only succeeded in covering me with powder snow. The chimney bulged above while I slithered helplessly and began to feel isolated and lonely as Tom was out of sight and sound around the corner. The situation required some lateral thinking so I cleared away snow to reveal holds at the side allowing me to move upward until I could exit right to reach a wide crack. A shallow trough led up to a little col forming a shoulder of the buttress 40ft. higher.

We were now on a crestal platform beneath a short vertical wall of bare rock. Here on the crest there was less powder although cracks and ledges were still well filled with more coherent snow. Above the wall there seemed to be a ledge over which loomed the first of the three towers which crown the Mitre Ridge. The slabby rocks leading to it were seamed by a line of weakness slanting from the right but reaching the start of this was the problem. Both of us had done the ridge in summer conditions and vaguely recalled an awkward right traverse from our platform. I tried this a couple of times but didn't fancy it so used another solution to gain the ledge.

In Aberdeen we were still very traditional, even old fashioned, in our rock climbing style and were quite ready to use combined tactics in the manner of distinguished predecessors like Raeburn and Ling. Like them we still climbed in nailed boots which made this technique reasonably acceptable to the winter climber being trodden underfoot, even though the tricounis we used were harsher than the clinkers of yesteryear. Combined tactics can be an insecure business if anything goes wrong so I inserted a piton as a main belay (a surety not available to the patriarchs) and called Tom up to climb over me and reach the ledge. I braced myself and he stepped from knee to shoulder to the nape of my neck and with his scrabbling boot getting a final steady from my up stretched hand he was up the short wall. Another 60ft. or so of still steep but easier climbing led to a ledge at the foot of an inset vertical corner where he planted another piton belay and brought me up to join him. Our situation was now very fine, high on the buttress crest with the first Tower close above.

We knew it could be gained if we were able to reach a wide ledge about 20ft. higher. The inset corner was the obvious way to do this but its wintry garb of ice and powder snow made it seem very inhospitable. A quick glance was enough to make me seek an alternative. Slabs invited a traverse left and I carefully began kicking away snow to seek holds underneath.

This allowed movement to where a break in the wall offered a means of ascent toward the wide ledge. The break was really a kind of shallow chimney, at least 20ft. high and very steep. However, my axe cleared away snow and ice to reveal small flakes of rock and pockets of frozen turf which allowed progress. It proved to be the hardest pitch of our climb and demanded concentration to the point where the entire outside world was shut off from my consciousness. There was only me, this steep iced rock, the need for precise and careful placing of tricouni nail edges whenever a move was made, and the dry throat which I always developed in such situations. Gradually, I rose to the top and in one final move I was on the big ledge, feeling jubilant about our prospects. The ledge sloped gently up into a corner recessed into the upper rocks of the first tower. Its right containing wall impended but the left had a break which offered opportunity of reaching a system of ledges and short corners leading to the crest. I moved on, clearing snow and cutting holds in turf where practicable. The vertical risers were difficult but I was able to connect several small ledges and corners until a last rift took me to the neck behind the Tower. Here Tom swiftly joined me and we scanned the next section.

It was now after 4pm but the day had brightened up, and the light looked as if it would be good for a long time yet. Ahead of us lay the second Tower. There are three ways; Bell's Variation on its very exposed west face, a direct line by a short, but very steep, crack, and the easiest option of turning the Tower on its left corner. The appearance of the approaches to all three, smothered in white was quite enough make us seek another solution. This was to involve an exhilarating traverse across a plastered slab until I was able to climb back to the right by sundry ledge-corners to gain the crest of the Tower. The crenellations along this crest had been partly bared of snow so that south and east-facing surfaces were clean rock while those on the west and north remained deeply covered as did hollows and ledges. However, the day was fine, the sun was shining on the upper flank of Ben Avon above the outer Garbh Choire and the climb was in the bag. I called Tom up from his perch below the Tower. He swiftly responded and romped up past me toward the last step up of the ridge. All difficulties were now past and we were soon on the plateau shaking hands and coiling the rope.

Memories of the return journey are dim but my diary contains: "Mitre Ridge... four-and-a-quarter hrs... marvellous... back late."

In April, Summer Time was operating so we would not have needed torches to reach the foot of the Slugain and my motorbike, but it would have been fairly late by the time we got back to Aberdeen and Tom late indeed after his additional journey of more than an hour on the last bus to his home at Ellon. We were tired, but it had been as they say: "A Great Day"

SHIEL TO SHIEL REVISITED

By Ronald Turnbull

SOME things don't change: the feeling you get as you walk under the high concrete at Glenfinnan with 14 Munros hovering in your head. Others do. In 1926 Goggs, Goggs and Russell received from the Meet Secretary a fine map and detailed list of lodgings promising the hospitality of Glendessarry Farm and the Lodge at Kinlochquoich. In 2000 I received from the Meet Secretary a photocopy of Goggs, Goggs and Russell.

Quite an inciting photocopy, in fact. Has the fushionless Scot become so pampered and effeminate that the fear of arriving somewhat wet and without an absolutely complete change of raiment paralyses his initiative? Does the modern young man of 1926 fail to appreciate the joys of becoming totally miserable over Munros?

So: an historical re-enactment. But with certain concessions to modern conditions. Kinlochquoich no longer offers unlimited hot water, and indeed now lies underneath several fathoms of cold. I would update further by including new mountains – Garbh Chioch Mhor (elevated 1984), Sgurr na Carnach (brand new 1997 hill) – and a moiety of Corbetts (invented in 1952, the year after me), but the route could gather the most modern of them all, 1997's Buidhe Bheinn above Loch Hourn. And to demonstrate that progress does, indeed, progress, I would exploit new and updated ways of achieving misery on the hill: the bivvybag (invented by Robert Louis Stevenson 1878 but not in general use in Scotland before the 1980s) and the bothy (1960s).

Back in 1926 trains left at 4am but that won't do for us fushionless, so the soonest I could get to Glenfinnan was five in the afternoon. The snowline and the cloudline gradually rose as we headed west, and once under the high concrete and up the track I decided to do Thuilm anyway. Whereupon the cloud came down again.

Going hard from my late start, I reached the summit in just three hours and was rather pleased with myself. But the 1926 party, not hurrying and taking time to spot snow buntings and the tracks of a cat, was a mere 10 minutes slower. Let's not make any direct comparisons of pampered effeminacy.

Hardish snow on Thuilm's north ridge, with a rather large rucksack, a slightly steep slope, and not enough daylight left to find a different way – and I'd sent my crampons on ahead to save weight. Reassuringly, and historically, I cut myself a couple of steps on the way down. Goggs and Goggs were casting about for a thrilling glissade... Despite the fact that the adze on the modern axe is mere historic ornament, the modern axe is rather good at cutting steps – it's deliciously light, and has that rubber-





sleeved shaft. I revisited mentally the wise young man in Tiso's the time it came to replace the hickory-shafted Stubai. Ever-shorter was I urged. "But if I was really pretending to be a hard ice man, wouldn't I need one of those slater's pick things as well?" He rehearsed me a scenario of deepish soft snow on top of really rather hard snow and then falling over – reduced leverage, you see. I didn't. But next time, I'll bring up the subject of cutting steps downhill. Ha!

Below the cloud, the moon was rising over a landscape of mostly rock with small waterfalls. At the head of Glen Pean was a dirty orange sunset, and below in the blackness a small square of the same orange: someone was in the bothy and they'd lit the fire. It turned out to be the bothy man himself. To bothy men us outdoor writers are the enemy: we tell people about bothies and the people come and sleep in them. But he gave me a nice cup of tea and we disagreed pleasantly about the exact amount of respect to be shown to stalking signs.

When you come off the Corbett and reach the standard baggers' path over Coireachain it's like when the mist rises. You relax, stop thinking and stride out. No Munro-baggers' paths, no Mars bars – as well as absorbent tweed, overweight boots, and sacks with bad straps – is why it all wasn't as easy as this in '26. It's still got that antique feel across Beinn Aden, where what's not bare rock is swamp. Corbett-bagging leads over shapeless hummocks, but Aden isn't one of them. A rocky ridge runs down eastwards, just right for Kinlochquoich, if Kinlochquoich had still existed.

There were quite a lot of deer along the stalkers' path and even, as the light faded, a human being. I dropped to Barrisdale, meeting several more humans and finding to my dismay that there is a charge of £2 for the use of its rickety platform and light switches. This wasn't going to help me to reproduce the expenses (£3.1/6d) of 1926.

Another special feature of the modern axe is the little hole through the top of the shaft. This lets you hang it from a nail at eye-level, where it becomes invisible, and after half-an-hour along Loch Hourn you have to go back and get it. And so experience the Hournside path both in silvery pre-dawn and then again under the fresh sun.

Buidhe Bheinn and Sgurr a' Bhac Chaolais are both marked at 885m, and the 122m drop between them is sub-Corbital. Contemporary bagging refuses to face up to the Unknown, which is why the SMC considers Buidhe and Bhac to be both Corbetts (in which case why not the twin tops of Carn Liath Balmoral, eh?) while the Dawson table arbitrarily chooses Sgurr Bhac. Buidhe was the higher in 1926, back when Corbetts weren't invented. Since its 1997 re-elevation a very small path has formed along the nice ridge that leads to the beginning of the South Cluanies. Where, to the delight of baggers of every century, there are seven whole Munros.

Chris Cartwright on Magic Bow, Sgurr an F hìdhleir, climbed with Simon Richardson in a 22-hour single push. Photo: Simon Richardson.

Seventy-four years ahead of me, they dropped their strapping sacks and ran, in their great hobnailers, to grab the western tops. And 27 minutes from col to Doire Leathan, and another 30 to Sgurr an Lochain. Sir Hugh Munro had told it to Goggs himself: for peak-bagging purposes, the Cluanie Inn is the best centre in Scotland. Elsewhere you can get seven in a day – horseshoe Ben Lawers, or pimplebag the Lochnagar plateau – but only here are the seven linked by high narrow ridges and rocky cols. Perhaps Sir Hugh overdid it in fulfilment of his apothegm – neither Craig a' Mhaim nor Saileag on the other side is convincingly Munroian. But if his strategy was to keep us up on the high ridges from first light until too late for supper, his idea was a good one. And I speak as one who came down to Cluanie at 8:35pm and they wouldn't give me a bar meal!

Maybe the Cluanie was trying to help me hit off the historic expenses. But even its cold beef sandwich overran the remaining £1. 1/6. Its soup was the only hot food of the trip, and not particularly hot at that. I spurned the Cluanie and crept into Glenshiel Forest. There I found deep squishy moss below sheltering pines, and half the hotel staff spurning the hotel's staff quarters in favour of tent, beer and bonfire. Like all staff in Scotland they were young people of the Rest of the World. I got from them a phrase of Spanish: *me e perdido*. That'll come in handy in the Picos de Europa.

Am Bathach is sharpish grass, but overawed by bigger and better all around. Pleasant enough as a way of setting out for the bigger and better, but a strong advertisement for not leaving the Corbetts till last (Bathach on its own from Cluanie – what a dreary three hours). It now has the size of path the Five Sisters had in '26.

Now we see the point of the big rucksack: three Brothers, Five Sisters, and no messing about with cars afterwards. There's some wind, and a few sharp showers. Sunlight picks out the odd distant peak and even, for one brief moment, the bit I'm on myself. Some people have found kickable snow in a gully up to Sgurr a' Bhealaich Dheirg.

Goggs, Goggs and Russell ran out of time at this point, and have to make the horrid drop to Glen Shiel. Back in Glenshiel Forest I didn't waste the first four hours of daylight waiting for breakfast, so I've time to do the lot. On Sgurr Fhuaran a special treat: the treading of a Munro I haven't previously been on. And an eagle soared above the final Sister.

That's it. A walk from Loch Shiel to Glen Shiel. Skye sticks up out of the sea, the sun sinks into Loch Duich, and coming down a strange way to no car park I almost trod on a stag. Russell himself was at the dinner, reminiscing of when mere peakbagging could get you into the Club.

Some things change, some stay the same. Count 1000ft. up as an extra 1½ miles and my speed over the hill was 2.4mph. In 1926, their speed over the hill, by the same rule, came out at 2.4mph. Next time, I'll try it in tweeds and evocative hobnailers.

THE PATH

By Ken Crocket

IT WAS, I thought, vaguely recalling a book from schooldays, the best of times and the worst of times. There was a rhythm to the old words by Dickens that matched our erratic progress up the Nevis path. Sydney Carton to the gallows. I would manage a few steps before a gust of wind forced a balanced pause. I would look at the lie of the slope, judge the tormenting gale, then manage another few steps before juddering to a halt again. The walk up to the CIC Hut, and it's weather, was often the worst aspect of the weekend. The best was a tired satisfaction in the hut, relaxing after a route. It was a time hard-earned, and all the richer for it.

I could see my climbing partner, John, out of the corner of my eye, similarly engaged in the energy-sapping dance. It had been a case of waterproofs on at the car park and a start to the usual mental games that eventually led me to the door of the hut. I found that if I could hook into a good line of thought it was worth 50m or more of progress without seeming to notice the physical effort involved. The mind dissociating itself from the body I guess. A complete contrast to the process involved in hard rock climbing. Cutting the pain lines, stepping up the song lines. The Aborigines of Australia might have something there, but not in this wretched valley. The snow would wipe out all the landmarks for a start.

For the initial years music had been a great help in surviving the walk up on black, storm-ridden Friday nights. When I had been younger and faster, Bach had worked wonders. A quick blast of a Brandenburg or two before leaving home and the driving, rhythmic brilliance had stayed in my head for the walk, my secret weapon for keeping the Bog Monster at bay. Mozart had fed the same neural pathways, though more gently. I never shared this technique; everyone had their own methods, and some would have laughed at mine, so I kept it in my head – shuttered.

The first section to the dam was over quickly enough, sweating mightily through the sheltering trees. I always liked to see the small outcrops of rock at this point, where the path of the burn, almost dried up by the dam, was graven deep. The dam was passed in the rising gale, facing the now open glen. Tonight there was no tinkling music from the burn, no voices from the past. There was a moon somewhere above, but thick-pressing clouds heavy with snow barred any view. I could count on one hand the number of ascents made with a full moon and a clear sky.

In the late Eighties there had been one such night, probably never to be repeated, with a full moon and a hard frost, a calm, clear night. Meteors raked the starry backdrop, while under the moonflare foxes barked. I had

burst into absurd song at several points, so glorious a sight it had been. Tonight was more typical. For a moment the cover thinned, and though no moon shone out, the ambient light level rose slightly. There was an adagio in a Mozart piano concerto like that, where the overall sadness lifted for a moment only to return. The cloud thickened again, the moment passed, and with it the memory.

We move laboriously between the mud and the sky. It could be a crude analogy for life. Climbing, or whatever your chosen game is, raises you out of the mud for a while, even if you have to plough through acres of the stuff to reach your chosen goal. On special occasions, if we worked at it for long enough, we might be allowed a glimpse of something higher. My boot skidded on the first icy patch of the night, and a bruised hip brought me crashing back to reality on the hard path. John loomed up above me. We were now past the small campsite by the burn, approaching the large flat area below the first rise. As a young climber, full of enthusiasm, I had taken the upper sections of the glen in my stride, but now the higher I went, the harder it got. Life again.

"I'm OK," I grunted, in reply to John's query, "but I could do with some calories."

We huddled at the side of the path, looking down to the partly frozen river. Amazingly, some sheep were rooting around on the bank below, barely visible, white on white. Another wave of snow swept in as we unwrapped some boiled sweets. The snow had begun to build up on our Dachstein mitts – free insulation. It was becoming more difficult to look into the blizzard, and our world had shrunk into an alien landscape of rock, snow and ice, a circle of about 10m wide. Fingers chilled quickly before being thrust back into their woollen casts. I had still found nothing to beat this ancient material, provided by these ancient creatures grubbing about before us. Amazing what millions of years of evolution could bring. Humbled, we heaved ourselves upright again and faced the blizzard.

There is a fine balance between control and panic. This walk was becoming more like a hard route with every metre of height gained. The fear of not reaching the hut – being beaten to the ground by the wind – was beginning to test our mental defences. At this point such a result was more of a great irritation than a potential ordeal. Later, of course, if defeat genuinely loomed, the rules would change, and real decisions might have to be made. We were on the first rise after the flat section, a snaking ridge of barely covered rocks up which we rocked from side to side in the booming gale. The next hour could be interesting, I thought, with a climber's understatement.

The path now crossed the slope up and right at a gentle angle. It was well-defined here, which made a change, and I remembered descending it one Sunday afternoon when a heavy thaw had left it a continuous ribbon

of slush; snow and ice blocking easy drainage. Tonight it was just discernable through the flying snow, a gently curving arc of white on white. Everything was white now, except where the headtorch beam caressed the ground, a yellow ellipse restlessly searching for what? My back was beginning to ache now, and I slid my hands between the sac and my back to ease the pressure for a while.

John closed up as the path turned to the left, breasting the slope and heading straight up the Allt a'Mhuilinn again. There was a rounded rock on the left, against which, more years ago than I cared to remember, I had rested on my first trip to a club meet. An older member had stopped there also and said hello. Too shy then to open up, I had replied with a hello too, a ridiculous answer to which the ancient (probably the same age as me now I thought with a smile) had come straight out and asked for my name, somewhat irritated. The old boy was probably at home now, sensibly comfortable in an armchair or bed. He might even be dead, though members often seemed to go on for ever. I stopped again at this rock and, head bowed before the blizzard, waited for John.

Though I seldom thought of climbs while going up to the hut, possibly some unconscious form of superstition, my mind did range over the climbing years I had experienced, including the various partners I had linked up with. Most were still active, to varying degrees, though family responsibilities had slowed down their climbing considerably. One of them, Alan, had gone on to do greater things, and was even now, I had noticed on the Internet, guiding in the Himalayas. But at some time or other, just like the ancient I had encountered on my first meet, they had all walked this path.

"What do you think John? The worst bit is probably ahead!"

"I'm still game – let's keep going. Half-an-hour could see us safe unless we drift off course."

John had to shout out his reply, as the wind rose to a shriek. Ahead lay an innocuous gently-sloping plain of low ridges; heather and grass-covered in summer, plastered white now and featureless. Five minutes of staggering progress, with steeper slopes to our left, led to the shallow trough of a burn. This we crossed to gain the farther bank, and so to the exposed, sloping plain beyond. On a sunny afternoon, late in the season, this was descended in minutes. Tonight it was probably going to make or break us.

With the wind almost face on, it was painful to look up, so that a quick glance through snowed-up eyebrows and a general sense of slope became the technique of position sense. The vision of a pilot's artificial horizon flashed into my head – but here dangerous memory was used as an extra sense. At least, going too far to the right would become rapidly obvious, with a rapid descent into the Allt a'Mhuilinn. Continuing up and slightly right usually worked, the path funnelling into the narrows just before the

hut. This was also the frustrating point when any light coming from the hut disappeared behind a rocky bluff at the left side of the narrows entrance. Many parties, including myself, had gone too far left on a bad night, passing the dark hut unseen and wandering towards Coire Leis before realising something was wrong.

I looked up again, hoping to see an encouraging twinkle from the hut. There had been several cars at the foot of the hill, none of which I recognised. A sudden gust of wind beat me to my knees – it was either that or be blown over. I crouched on all fours, steadying against the gale before lurching off again. John was at my side, making it easier to maintain contact. In bad weather, the low ridges of rock continually forced one uphill to the left, with the true route aiming slightly right. It was like riding a bicycle leaning over all the while.

Surely, it couldn't be much farther to the narrows? If we made it there we could make it to the hut. There was certainly no shelter here – we were in the open and committed. Despite the roar of the wind, I felt my heart rate increase. There was always a nagging doubt as to one's exact location on such a bad night. Many years ago – in summer – we had actually walked past the hut in the rain and mist, it looking like another black rock in the darkness. Missing our target then had been a small irritation, tonight was more serious. Thin wisps of panic were edging closer, looking for an opening.

Suddenly, through the blinding flakes of snow, we saw a dull, yellow light. It was down and to the right and couldn't have been the hut. That was surely too far away and anyway should have been out of sight, so it must be another climber. No tracks had been visible to us, but in any case the snow was now drifting so badly that any footsteps were being covered in minutes.

We staggered over the slopes, suddenly uplifted by this absurd little beacon, much as a storm-battered sailor spotting the harbour light. As we approached closer, we saw a solitary figure standing back against the low line of rocks which marked the entrance to the narrowing. The burn ran past the hut, then down through a shallow gorge, with the path walking over the boulders of the burn for a stretch. We had been too high and to the left, fighting up the water-scattered boulders on the slopes of Carn Mor Dearg. As we approached the figure, the gale raised itself another notch and waves of snow billowed about. Just as suddenly, we gained the slight shelter afforded by the rocks and joined the climber.

There was something familiar about the figure, and as my headtorch weakly lit up his hood-enclosed head, I saw with surprise and pleasure that it was Alan, my old climbing partner.

"Hi guys," he said, as though we had just met in a supermarket, "thought I'd see you here."

"But you're supposed to be in the Himalaya!" I stuttered out, face numb with cold.

"Well, you know this hill, just couldn't stay away! Anyway, now that you've found the way again you had better crack on – five minutes and you'll be safe in the hut. I'll stay on a bit longer in case anyone else appears. This is the difficult bit for navigation, as you know too well! I can easily make it down the hill with the wind at my back."

We protested that it was too wild for him to risk further exposure, but from past experience I knew that arguing with someone as stubborn as Alan was a waste of time. It was no place to argue anyway, so we agreed to push on and contact him later via e-mail.

As we clawed our way into the gorge, facing the gale for what we knew would be the last, short stretch, we looked back. Alan raised a gloved hand, then looked down the glen, his torch shining its welcome beacon for any other lost souls. As we crossed the ice-covered burn and stumbled up the last few feet to the hut, I thought there had been something different about him, more than his usual air of confidence, a sort of calmness.

We finally staggered up the last, wretched steepness before the hut. It's shutters were closed, though a sliver of light ebbed through the gaps. The door was unbolted and we entered its sanctum to collapse on the wooden benches inside the extension.

There were several climbers comfortably settled inside, having come up several hours before. In climbing, with Scottish weather, timing is everything, one afternoon I had taken a ridiculous six hours to reach the hut; later parties, in better weather that same night, had remarked on how wandering the tracks had been! They had seen nothing of Alan, but perhaps he had bypassed the hut, preferring to go straight down the hill. We slowly began to recover our senses, finding bunks, shelf space, dry clothing, hot tea. The weekend turned out to be better than we had anticipated, and we eventually walked down on the Sunday, tired but content, with several classic routes notched up.

It was not until I reached home that I received the bad news. My old friend Alan was dead. That bit sank in, just, with the mixture of disbelief and regret such news impacts with. But then the secondary shock hit me. You remember that bad year in the Himalaya? The one with a sudden, high snowfall which killed many climbers and natives? Alan had been caught high up on a hard peak, guiding some clients. Coming down, he had waited at the hard section until it was dark, until it was too late to save either himself or the party above him. Survivors from that peak spoke of his completely unselfish behaviour, of his going against the modern trend of 'every climber for himself'. Somehow, it didn't surprise me.

I have never told this story until now. I've also never gone up the old Ben again since that night. Could you?

NEW CLIMBS SECTION

OUTER ISLES

LEWIS SEA CLIFFS, The Veinous Wall:

The route Veinous Trap (HVS 5a) is noted in the 1998 *SMCJ* as being located 500m to the NE of the Painted Geo at NB 0102 3341 and being well seen from the top of the Painted Wall. It is located on a small cliff with a distinctive diagonal pink quartz vein on it and having one route on it. The Veinous Wall seems a suitable name. To the right of The Veinous Wall is an easy-angled black slab rising out of the sea, steepening slightly towards its top and forming a prominent corner with the Veinous Wall. Approached via the right side where an easy descent leads down a ramp southwards, then back beneath the upper slabby black wall which caps the lower slab.

Seething – 20m V. Diff. *. R. and C. Anderson. 10th July, 2000.

Some 5m right of the slimy wet corner at the left end of the slab is a shallow corner/groove leading around the right side of a blocky feature, then go direct to a large block feature on the top.

Tempest – 18m V. Diff./Severe *. R. and C. Anderson. 10th July, 2000.

Just right of *Seething* and slightly higher up the access ramp is an obvious groove. Climb this to the top, passing two horizontal breaks on the final short headwall.

Painted Geo, Painted Wall Lower Left-hand (The Friendly Wall) (G.P.S. NB 00603 33349):

This south-facing wall lies to the left of the main Painted Wall at a lower level. Access is by walking across the top of the Painted Wall and scrambling down to the neck, then up the other side and down slabs to the top of the wall. There is an obvious depression/step towards the centre of the clifftop separating the wall into two distinct parts, a seaward wall affected by the tide and a more sheltered landward wall not affected by the tide. There are two existing routes on the Seaward Wall (*SMCJ* 1998) Swell Time (E1 5b) and Isle Be Back (E1 5b) and three on the Landward Wall: Crimp Cocktail (E2 5c), Callum's Grasp (HVS 5a) and Named by Proxy (HVS 5b). This is also the wall that The Seventh Wave (*SMCJ* 1997) traverses in two pitches (HVS 5a 5a). There are a number of lines and although they do suffer from being close to each other, the climbing is good. The easiest way to the base of the wall is to abseil in.

The Landward Wall:

A Stretch in Time – 20m E2/3 5c **. R. and C. Anderson. 3rd July, 2000.

The crackline between Callums Grasp and Named by Proxy. It is assumed that the latter route climbs to beneath the left side of the small roof nearly halfway up the crag, then moves up right to it and around its right side to climb the crackline above. Start as for this route beneath the small roof, then climb the left-slanting crackline through the left side of the roof (the most obvious feature from the opposite side of the Geo). At the junction with Callums Grasp (just before the route/crackline joins Crimp Cocktail at the overhang), climb the crackline to the left of that route's flakeline which is immediately right of the edge.

Fangs For the Memory – 20m VS 4c **. R. and C. Anderson. 2nd July, 2000.

The crackline which runs up the wall to pass the right side of the small roof, immediately right of Named By Proxy but independent from it, just! Climb up on to two upward pointing fangs of rock at the base of the crack, pull over a minute overlap and continue up the crack to finish directly just left of a series of shallow left-facing grooves.

Torn Away – 20m E1 5b **. R. and C. Anderson. 2nd July, 2000.

The obvious left-facing corner/grooveline in the centre of the wall, starting a short way above where the ramp at the base of the wall rises up rightwards. Climb a crackline to the base of the corner, step left, make a stretchy move up and go back right to finish up the corner.

High Fidelity – 20m E2 5b **. R. and C. Anderson. 2nd July, 2000.

The crackline immediately right of City Sprinter. Move up the ramp to the base of the crackline and climb this up a shallow left-facing groove, stepping right on to the edge and continuing above by a crack and stepping left to go over the capping roof by a thin crack.

The ramp beneath the wall now levels out after the step and there are another three routes off the flat ledge here. As with the other routes, all are a bit close together but the climbing is good and the aspect is sunny and friendly, although arranging the gear can be a bit more awkward than the actual climbing.

Northern Rock – 15m E2 5b *. R. and C. Anderson. 8th July, 2000.

The leftmost line starting from the left end of the ledge. Climb the line immediately to the right of High Fidelity. A flat-topped hold close to the edge provides a spike runner. Gain the slanting ramp above, then climb the crack and wall just to its right, left of a short corner.

Friends Provident – 15m E3 5c **. R. and C. Anderson. 8th July, 2000.

The central line. Climb thin cracks, step up right to the left end of a tiny overlap and gain the sloping ramp. Step up right, then climb the wall and cracks just right of a short corner.

Standard Life – 15m E2 5b *. R. and C. Anderson. 8th July, 2000.

The rightmost line, just before the edge where the ledge steps down. A groove leading into a short flared chimney bounds the line to the right. Just right of this is the easy angled right edge of the crag which looks about Diff./V. Diff. Climb thin cracks up and right towards the edge overlooking the groove, then pull back left and gain the top of the sloping ramp. Finish up slabby rock.

Painted Wall, The Black Wall:

This is the tar black north-facing wall that drops into the sea at the entrance into the geo, well viewed from the seaward end of the top of the Painted Wall. The wall is split into two sections by a crack/chimney-fault. The smaller left-hand section lies below the scrambly descent down the grassy gully used to access the Painted Wall on foot and above the tidal narrows where there is a large ledge below a triangular wall left of the fault. The bigger right-hand section, right of the fault contains the

route Blackfoot and drops directly into the sea, although at low tide a ledge below Blackfoot can sometimes be free of water. The routes can be affected by salt spray when they become greasy and harder. When dry the rock is excellent and tacky.

The crack/chimney-fault splitting the two sections has been climbed (*SMCJ* 1998) Rub Down (V. Diff.), with Bristles Arête (Diff.) to its left and Stripper (S) climbing up it and out right. Two routes lie on the wall to the left of Rub Down. Either scramble to the base of these, or abseil down the line of Rub Down.

Arrival – 30m VS 4c. R. and C. Anderson. 1st July, 2000.

This lies up the middle of the triangular mass of rock, just right of a rounded boulder in a pool on the ledge. Climb steeply up a shallow groove/flange to flaky holds' ledges, then gain a thin crack and climb this and the shallow groove to its right to a wider short crack leading to easy ground.

Rust In Time – 30m HS 4b *. R. and C. Anderson. 1st July, 2000.

Just right of Arrival are some shallow grooves, then a rusty coloured wall above the highest part of the ledge formed by a pointed 'boulder' feature. Start on top of this feature, climb to a spike and continue straight up good rock to easier ground leading to the top.

The following routes start from a belay at the foot of the crack/fault of Rub Down and climb lines to its right, left of the obvious crack of Black Foot.

Black Rushin' – 40m E1/2 5b *. R. and C. Anderson. 3rd July, 2000.

From a belay at the right end of the ledge below the fault, step down and move right to a short flake crack. Climb this to a nest of holds and a spike runner, then gain the ledge above. Climb the clean-cut groove just above and follow the obvious continuation line up right, then back left to finish. A less bold variation for greasy conditions steps left from the ledge and moves up to good holds to gain a flake crack (assumed to be the line of Stripper) leading back rightwards to above the clean-cut corner.

Black Rain – 40m E2 5b **. R. and C. Anderson. 3rd July, 2000.

The prominent right slanting groove line left of Black Foot. Start as for Black Rushin' and from the short flake crack, swing right into a groove and climb this passing the right end of the ledge in the middle of that route. Continue up the groove to finish up the easier quartz crackline.

The next routes lie on the right side of the wall right of the crack of Black Foot and are accessed by abseiling directly to a ledge at their foot. The first three routes share the same obvious belay ledge below a big left-slanting pink quartz streak and wide crack, well seen from the opposite side of the Geo and easily found from above when viewed down the groove of Slim Chance.

Vein Hope – 40m E2 5c **. R. and C. Anderson. 6th July, 2000.

The wide crack and left-slanting quartz seam which runs into the centre of the wall. Gain then climb the wide crack and continue up the left-slanting line to the top. The wide section of the crack takes a Friend#6 but this is not essential.

Feint Chance – 40m E2 5b **. R. and C. Anderson. 6th July, 2000.

Gain the recess beneath the wide crack on Vein Hope, then pull out right and move up to ledges beside Jet Stream. Step left and climb the abseil corner/groove to the top.

Long Shot – 40m E1 5b **. R. and C. Anderson. 3rd July, 2000.

Move to the right end of the ledge, then up around the edge to climb the fine wall just right of the quartz seam to ledges. Climb a short groove and pull out right on to a shelf, then climb the crack through the wide groove above, moving left on to a shelf and finishing on a higher shelf.

Wide-open – 40m E1 5b. R. and C. Anderson. 6th July, 2000.

The obvious V-groove in the right side of the wall. Abseil along the top, then down to good ledges in a recess beneath a wide crack below the groove. Step up left and climb around into the groove and follow this past ledges, up a steeper section and on up to easier ground leading to the top.

Aurora Geo, Cioch Wall:

Poultry in Motion – 20m E1/2 5b **. M. Dale, M. Bock. 30th May, 2000.

Start at the bottom of Chicken Run and climb the slim ramp on the right. Continue up the thin crack above and over a bulge to the top.

Magic Geo (NB 0015 3290):

The best and probably the safest way to access the majority of the routes here is to walk south beyond the main West Face to a flat platform on the west-facing cliff edge, directly opposite the platform beneath The Red Wall on the opposite side of the Geo where the open sea is. This platform lies above a west-facing, slabby black wall 'The Black Wall' right of the main West Face whose base is well above the sea and from where an easy sloping ramp descends to the base of the Geo. An abseil of 30m reaches the base of this wall. At the left-hand side of the wall is a corner crack, then an arête to the left of which are two quartz chimney cracks which from the guide are possibly the chimney cracks of Solitary Chimneys although they look harder than Diff and unappealing to descend. Left of these is another right-facing right-angled corner crack, then a fine, narrow wall with a prominent, overhanging left arête before the crag turns the edge to the main West Face.

Island Life – 25m VS 5a **. R. and C. Anderson. 12th July, 2000.

This takes the obvious right-angled corner crack to the right of the fine looking overhanging arête at the right end of the main West Face. From the base of The Black Wall scramble up leftwards and along the large, tapering shelf to belay at the foot of the corner. Climb the corner.

Skua – 30m VS 4c. R. and C. Anderson. 11th July, 2000.

The right-facing corner-crack right of Island Life runs up the left side of the Black Wall.

The Black Wall:

Pomarine – 30m E2 5b *. R. and C. Anderson. 10th July, 2000.

Start directly below the short exit corner in the centre of The Black Wall. Climb up

left to the base of the corner of Skua, then move up and gain a break which slants rightwards across the wall. Make a few moves along the break and stand on it to gain holds and pull onto the slabby wall to gain the base of a short groove. Climb the groove and continue to finish up the short exit corner.

Bonxie – 30m E3 5c/6a **. R. and C. Anderson. 10th July, 2000.

Start towards the right side of The Black Wall, below a thin crackline just left of a prominent shattered crackline at a water trough on the ledge. A steep start off undercuts gains the thin crackline which is followed to a finish up the corner of Pomarine.

Blackladder Crack – 30m E1/2 5b *. R. and C. Anderson. 11th July, 2000.

The prominent shattered crackline running up the rightside of the main part of The Black Wall, has an awkward start.

To the right of this area and coming out of the sea is an obvious edge to the left of which is a north-facing mitre-shaped wall 'Mitre Wall', with three prominent cracks running up it. The central crack is The Black Crack (Guide p81) and an abseil down the open groove running left of and beneath this reaches ledges just above the waterline. It is relatively easy to traverse rightwards to these ledges after descending from the ledge at the base of The Black Wall.

Mitre Wall:

Last Orders – 40m HVS 5a *. R. and C. Anderson. 14th July, 2000.

The left-hand of the three cracks on the mitre-shaped Wall. Start from ledges at the foot of a corner left of the main corner running hard up beneath the cracks. Climb the corner and move up quartzzy rock into the main corner and climb the cracks left of the central Black Crack.

The Black Crack – 40m E1 5a ** (1970s).

Start from small ledges just above the waterline at the foot of the wide groove at the foot of the mitre-shaped wall. Climb the groove to the base of the main central crack, then climb this to the top.

The Hooded Claw – 40m E2/3 5c **. R. and C. Anderson. 11th July, 2000.

Start from the ledges just above the waterline as for The Black Crack. Step up right on to the rib and climb to the base of the prominent but blind right-hand crack. Traverse hard right into the obvious V-shaped hooded recess/groove on the arête. Climb the groove, step right to pull up and go back left to climb the arête in a stunning position to the top.

NOTE: It would appear that A Night at the Opera belays on small ledges at the foot of a corner in the arête some 6m right of and slightly lower than the belay for the routes on the Mitre Wall. The corner is climbed and the route then takes a line to the right of the arête to finish up it. The HVS mentioned on p81 of the guide would appear to take the big groove to the right of the arête and looks like a fine climb.

The East Face:

Notes from R. Anderson: *In the Pink* – E1 5b ** (guide page 80) is barely worth one star. The upper groove seeps and the rock is not great. The overhung corner

mentioned in the description at the start is no longer identifiable and appears to have been obliterated by the sea. At the base of the Geo, just where it narrows at the back opposite Queens Freebie is an obvious crack. Climb the crack to reach the ramp mentioned in the original description at the large pink quartz band. This is at least E2 5b, a bit greasy and care has to be taken with protection.

Atlantic Crossing Area:

Transatlantic Fright – 25m E4 6a. K. Magog, S. Crowe. 19th June, 2000.

Climb the crack in the headwall right of NW Passage. The wall is gained by scrambling up to a pinnacle below the crack (loose rock). Trend up and left from the belay to a small overlap. Pull over this to a rest in a niche. Move left to gain the base of the crack and follow this to the top.

Waiting for the Crossing – 45m V. Diff. **. R. Pettner, J. Ison. 2nd June, 2000.

Takes the obvious flake-groove on the left-hand side of the wall, about half way down the scree to Transatlantic Crossing (on the left as you descend). Follow the groove and arête above (looks about VS).

Seal Bay:

The Bungling Trundler – 70m HVS **. R. Pettner, J. Ison. 2nd June, 2000.

Takes the easiest line through the roofs at the back of Seal Bay. Approach via the easy slabs and traverse from the seaward side of Photographer's Corner. Start directly below the two notches in the line of roofs half way up.

1. 45m 5a. Step on to a hanging nose and follow walls left of the corners to the two notches in the roof. Balance into the right-hand groove (crux) and on to the slab above to reach a ledge.

2. 35m. Go up and right to the obvious flake by black crystals. Follow this and a flake above to the top of Sunset Ridge.

Rubh an Taroin:

Kanga-Rubh – 30m HVS 5a *. R. and C. Anderson. 2nd July, 2000.

This route lies just to the right (north) of the southernmost tip of the Rubh an Taroin headland. It is easily seen from the road, which it faces, as a right-facing black corner/groove cutting through a bulge just left of a deep recessed chimney before the easy red coloured slabs. Descend by scrambling down the easy angled blocky groove to the southernmost tip and making a short abseil and stepping across a rift to a wave washed platform (it is possible to scramble down all the way – going left (west) around the tip takes one into an impressive overhung Geo). From the platform step down into the rift, bridge across it, then climb steeply up the obvious line leading into the black groove which is followed over the bulge and up the reddish coloured quartz groove/crack to belay by a large boulder.

Ard Uig Area, Geodha Caol :

Suenos de Piedra y Mar – 40m HVS 5a *. S. Wrigley, M. Dale. 3rd June, 2000.

Approach as for Into the Sea. Climb the obvious corner to the left of the thin crack of Into the Sea to just below the big roof where a tricky move left can be made to the arête. Continue more easily up the slab and its right arête above to the top.

Blackslip Way – V. Diff. ***. S. Wrigley, M. Dale. 3rd June, 2000.

From the top of Into the Sea, the geo to the west can be accessed down a narrow

ramp sloping down to the north. From the left-hand end of the descent ramp where it opens out into large ledges, climb stepped corners until below the final leaning flake-crack. Here a black ramp leads back right to the top of the cliff. Climb this with a tricky section up the overhanging step half way up.

Rabbit Walls area (SMCJ 1999, p67):

Abseil approach as before, several hours either side of low tide although a big swell can make it exciting!

Solomon Brown – 15m HVS 4c *. K. Archer, C. Archer. 29th May, 2000.

From the abseil scramble left (facing out) to sea level ledges at the end of the promontory. The route climbs the centre of the prominent slab. Climb the lower slab to the break, follow the corner at the base of the steeper central section, then trend left before moving back right again to the second break. Place your last runners and climb the scoop before trending left to finish.

The Road to Vindaloo – 15m VS 4c. K. Archer, C. Archer. 31st May, 2000.

From the abseil walk right, around a short 'bad step' to the base of a prominent slabby rib, well seen from the abseil. From the base of the rib climb the scoop trending right to gain the arête. Follow this and the final wall to the top.

Absent Friends – 18m E1 5b **. K. Archer, C. Archer. 2nd June, 2000.

The superb slabby corner starting near the bottom of the abseil. Follow the corner to gain a hanging slab. Go up this to an overlap, move up and follow a second slab to the final steep corner and technical finish.

LINGEIGH:

This very small island lies off the north-west tip of Pabbay.

Geigh Geo:

A deep slot, 50m high, with a south-facing wall (The Front Side) of clean grey gneiss with a series of ledges along its entire length, at barnacle level and above. The north facing wall (The Back Side) drops vertically into the sea. Access to both walls is by abseil.

The Front Side:

Abseil 30m from a small step in the cliff rim about two-thirds towards the sea to gain the low ledges. These can be traversed under most states of the tide towards the back of the geo. If the swell prevents access along the ledges then direct abseil at any point is possible. The routes are described from right to left and can be easily viewed from the other side of the geo.

It's a Geigh Day – 50m VS 4c. T. Stephenson, N. Pamment. 13th May, 2000.

Start on an orange ledge 5m left of the gully bordering the wall in the back of the geo. Climb a fairly continuous groove line trending slightly right. At its top, step left and climb diagonally left through a bulge to finish.

In the Beginning – 55m VS 4b. G. E. Little, K. Howett. 13th May, 2000.

Climbs a series of intermittent left-facing corners. Start from the left end of the orange ledge.

1. 45m 4b. Climb up into the first open-book corner. Continue up the left wall into continuing corners above a steepening until a pull out right at the top gains a big ledge.
2. 10m 4a. Climb the vertical wall with an overhanging lip on the left to the top.

Feeling for Fish – 50m E2 5b. K. Howett, G. E. Little. 13th May, 2000.

Climbs a line through the blanker sections of rock to the left of In the Beginning. To the left of the orange ledge is a black ledge sloping from the right down left into the sea. Start from its highest point. Climb directly up the black wall moving slightly right to gain a smaller ledge above. Follow this ledge left for 2m to gain a thin vertical flake in the wall above. From the top of the flake climb diagonally right through a slight scoop (bold) to gain big flakes. Move left slightly, then climb direct to under an isolated overlap. Pull through direct and follow a shallow left-facing corner to the top.

Cautious Caress – 50m E3 5b. K. Howett, G. E. Little. 14th May, 2000.

Climbs the left-hand side of the more blank area of rock. Start near the base of the black sloping ledge. Climb an easy slim groove. At its top pull out on to the blank-looking wall. Go up this boldly to better holds, then up and left to a glacis which leads rightwards to a slight corner (just right of a conspicuous jutting roof). Go up this shallow corner and pull over the roof above direct into a slight left-facing groove to the top.

The Lingham – 50m HVS 5a. G. E. Little, K. Howett. 14th May, 2000.

Climbs a line bounding the left side of the smooth section of Cautious Caress. Start just left of the base of the black sloping ledge, just round an arête. Up a disjointed groove, leading slightly left to bypass a roof. Go up the wall leftwards on to a big ledge. Pull up into a huge open corner/recess. Exit up into a glacis under a roof and follow this rightwards. Near its top, pull up to a small roof (the conspicuous jutting roof lies to the right). Climb a tiny corner above the roof leading to easy slabs.

The Yoni Way – 50m HVS 5a. N. Pamment, T. Stephenson. 14th May, 2000.

Start up The Lingham to the big ledge. Climb up the huge open corner/recess. Pull out left at its top. Climb left around a conspicuous huge finger of rock into a recess. Climb direct up the bulging wall above and then easier rocks to the top.

Taco Wall – 50m E2 5c. T. Stephenson, N. Pamment. 14th May, 2000.

Climbs a parallel line up the wall left of The Yoni Way. From the barnacle ledges left of the base of the sloping black ledge, climb an easy groove leading to the extreme left end of the big ledge. Climb up an open corner line until a big horizontal flake is reached (an easy orange quartz intrusion branches off here diagonally leftwards). Place a runner high on the right above the flake, then step back down and climb the wall right of the quartz diagonally leftwards past a good boss and boldly upwards on improving holds.

Left of these routes the wall changes character. It diminishes in height a little and is split into four clean-cut open-book corners sitting above a smooth featureless slab.

Legs Wide Shut – 30m E3 6a. K. Howett, G. E. Little. 14th May, 2000.

Climbs a line up the right side of the smoother section. Start on barnacle ledges

directly below the right-hand corner. Climb up on to a small hanging ledge in the smooth slab. Gain jugs up and right and pull up and leftwards to step into the hanging corner. Go up this to small ledges. Follow the right slanting crack to the capping roof. Pull out leftwards on to a jug and climb the bald slab above to easier ground.

Silk and Stubble – 30m E3 5c. K. Howett, G. E. Little. 14th May, 2000.

In the centre of the smooth slab is a fine diagonal flake emanating from a raised pointed, ledge. From the top of the flake climb the blank slab to better holds in steeper rock in a small corner. Step left to a big hold on the left arête and climb the slabby groove round the arête to its top. Make a move up to the roof, then hand traverse the lip to better holds on the left to pull over. Take a knobbly crack through the next roof and more easily to the top.

The Eternal Wetness of Being – 35m E2 5b. K. Howett, G. E. Little. 15th May, 2000.

Climbs the larger, left-central corner. Start on good ledges just above the barnacles below the left-hand hanging corner. Climb up easily left to a ledge. Make awkward moves directly up the blank wall to pull on to the big ledge below the left-hand corner. Hand traverse right on to another ledge below the central corner. Go up the sustained corner to a roof. Pull over direct and follow a big flake rightwards up easy slabs. Pull over the final steepening.

Straight Story – 30m VS 4c. G. E. Little, K. Howett. 14th May, 2000.

Climbs the left bounding arête of the smooth section. Start as for *Eternal Wetness of Being*. Pull up left on to the ledge. Swing out left on to the edge. Follow the edge keeping on the left side to gain a natural ramp-line leading diagonally right to finish.

Farther leftwards towards the seaward end is an obvious featured slab bounded on the left by a corner and with a leaning headwall above.

End of the Affair – 30m Severe. G. E. Little, K. Howett. 15th May, 2000.

Climb the corner bounding the slab, then the slab itself to finish through the upper bulging wall via a slight groove on its left side.

The Back Side:

The north-facing wall of the geo. The western section is more broken and is split by a huge ledge at half height which runs into the geo, narrowing to end at the top of a left-facing orange corner that emanates from shattered ledges about 10m above the sea. These ledges (speckled orange) continue leftwards to end in the centre of the geo. The main face lies above the speckled ledges and to the left. It is characterised by a right to left diagonal roof, a smaller one above it and a diagonal crack above that. Left of this the wall steepens with a big recess in the centre and a vertical crack left again. Access to the routes is by abseil on to the orange speckled ledges.

Timely Withdrawal – 30m HVS 5a. K. Howett, G. E. Little. 15th May, 2000.

From the centre of the ledges, climb up steep rock to gain the left end of a sloping ledge. Pull on to the ledge which leads right to the base of an orange speckled groove. Go up this (steep) to big ledges. Take the cracks in the upper wall to finish.

Grope Boy – 30m HVS 5a. N. Pamment, T. Stephenson. 14th May, 2000.

Start as for Timely Withdrawal. Climb up the wall to just below the sloping ledge. Follow a diagonal crack under an overlap leading left to a vertical broken crack which leads to the base of a steep right-facing flake-corner. Follow this up and right, then a ramp out left to a recess. Pull out right from here up the bulging wall, then a zig-zag flake to the top.

The Dark Side of the Prune – 45m E1 5b. G. E. Little, K. Howett. 14th May, 2000. Start as for Timely Withdrawal up to the base of the flake-corner. A deep diagonal crack springs out left from here. Follow it (very steep) and the ramp beyond. Climb the wall to pull into another left diagonal crack above the bulge. Follow this (still steep) and the wall above rightwards to the top.

Geigh Geo Headland:

The west end of The Back Side forms a prominent headland dropping vertically on to a huge wave-washed rock platform. The platform can be gained either by a scramble or a 30m abseil, 100m south of the point. The next route climbs the arête of the headland.

The Edge of Time – 30m E1 5b. T. Stephenson, N. Pamment. 15th May, 2000.

Start immediately left of a square cave. Traverse the slab leftwards to gain the arête. Climb direct up this past a bulge to an airy finish.

Linneaus Geo:

This small geo at the south-east end of the island offers a sheltered alternative venue when the winds are from the west. The north-facing side of the geo is very steep grass with nesting birds on ledges. The south-facing wall is steep clean rock. Huge boulders sit in its base and it is non-tidal. The main features are a higher, overhanging wall on the left with a conspicuous corner in the upper half and a deep black chimney separating this wall from a shorter black wall which leads into the sea. Access is by abseil down the central chimney. It is also useful to extend a spare rope from the abseil for belays above the Black Wall. Routes are described left to right.

Caught Napping – 40m E4 6a. K. Howett, G. E. Little. 15th May, 2000.

Climbs the left-hand wall into the hanging corner. Start below a central groove (to the right of a more slabby-looking groove). Go up the steep groove and step left into a short corner when it peters out. From the top of this exit out right on to a small overhung ledge and a deep groove/slot. Awkward moves up this lead on to a good ledge. Climb up the wall and enter the perfect finger crack in the corner above. Finish out left at the top.

Black Passage – 30m E1 5a. T. Stephenson, N. Pamment. 15th May, 2000.

Climbs the amazing chimney separating the two walls. Stuffed full of black disintegrating dolerite; bridging is best.

May Fly – 30m E3 5b. T. Stephenson, K. Howett, G. E. Little. 15th May, 2000.

Climbs the centre of the black wall right of the chimney. Start off the highest of the boulders leaning against the wall. Up a left-trending flake and up into a slight recess on the left below bulging rock. Climb boldly right and up through the bulge on improving holds. Continue more easily to the top.

Clap the Phoca – 30m HVS 5a. T. Stephenson, N. Pamment. 15th May, 2000.
Excellent sustained climbing up the right side of the black wall. Start off the farthest boulder leaning against the wall. Step rightwards on to the wall and up to a diddy ledge. Climb direct into an open corner. Finish direct to the top.

The Phoca Boulder:

In the base of the geo is an enormous boulder. The north and east faces offer clean rock and good solos at about Severe (10m).

PABBAY, Hoofers Zawn:

Fracture Clinic – 35m E3 5b. K. Howett, A. Todd. 15th May, 1998.

In the left wall of Squeeze Job is a fine crack system. Climb directly into the cracks by bold climbing up the lower wall. Follow the cracks with decreasing difficulty to a recess. Pull out of this on to easy ground.

Buckets for Breakfast – 40m HVS 4c. P. Gibson, L. Wright. 2000.

Climb the right side of the ramp to a notch and belay on the large ledge above. Overhead is a large curving roof. Cross this at its widest point on big holds, then pull out to finish up a short wall on small holds. Great position.

Harry Hooper – 35m E2 5c *. R. Campbell, G. Latter (on-sight). 16th May, 2000.

Finely situated climbing up the hanging crack in the arête above the drooping beak-like overhang at the left end. Easily up to the arête, then pull round right and up the crack to belay on the slab above (avoid rope drag). Finish more easily

Hooper's Headland (The Box):

The following routes lie in a square-cut recess about 50m north of the descent into Hooper's Geo, just west of the tip of the headland. Descent to the routes is via abseil down the overhanging right-hand side wall of the recess to a commodious ledge in the base. However, the first route is gained by a scramble down easy rocks to the east of the headland and traversing around the headland just above high tide level.

Midget Gem – 10m Diff. P. Drew, I. Lewis. 9th August, 1999.

Climbs the easy corner to the left of the recess.

Just a Tick – 20m H. Severe 4b. P. Drew, I. Lewis. 9th August, 1999.

Belay at the left end of the ledge in the base of the recess. Traverse 3m left to the left arête. Climb this to the big capping roof. Turn this on the left with difficulty to reach the top.

Riff-Raff-Roof – 20m HVS 5b. P. Drew, I. Lewis. 9th August, 1999.

Start at the left end of the ledge. Climb directly up to the obvious niche in the roof above. Pull over the roof at the niche with difficulty and continue direct up the wall above.

Allanish Wall:

There are two routes on the slab immediately south of Zen and the Art of Corncraick Management. The slab is split into two distinct sections, the northerly one being steeper than the southerly one with a prominent gulch between them. Both slabs drop cleanly into the sea and take the biggest sea swells going.

The Cruel Sea – 30m VS 4c. A. Todd, K. Howett. 14th May, 1998.

Abseil down the northerly slab about 10m south of the corner of Zen, immediately south of a small deep chimney, to a long slim ledge just above the sea. Climb a thin crack rising from the left end of the ledge into a recess and then on to a horizontal break above. Go up to a flake in the steeper wall above to gain a ledge and climb the cracked wall above on to a glacia and so to the top.

Ripple Slab – 30m Severe. K. Howett, A. Todd. 14th May, 1998.

Climbs the southerly slab starting from the obvious good ledge on the lower lip of the slabs. Climb direct up the slab via a thin crack then small flakes on the right through a steepening and easily to the top.

The Arch:

The Child of the Sea – 100m E5. S. Chinnery, T. Bridgeland. July, 1998.

Climbs the awesome arête of the wall left of the abseil corner. Start from a 100m abseil from a short boulder choked gully directly down the face just to the right of the arête to a hanging stance directly below the overhanging arête (just above barnacle level and 3m left of a large chimney pod). Climbed with a rest point on the crux.

1. 30m 6b. Climb steeply up a groove on the right for 8m until a hard traverse left for 2m gains the base of a hanging flake on the arête (crux). More easily up steep flakes and shallow corners to gain the bottom of an obvious scoop.

2. 35m 6a. Follow the rightward trending overhanging groove above on large rounded holds, passing spikes, to join Sturm und Drang. Follow this rightwards through a roof to gain a bottomless corner and continue up this.

3. 35m 5a. Continue up lichenous covered walls and cracks just right of the arête.

Banded Geo:

No Midge My Arse – 20m E5 6b. I. Lewis, P. Drew. 7th August, 1999.

Climbs the overhanging corner 5m right of The 36th Chamber. Exit left under the capping roof. Some friable rock.

Chocarockaholic – 65m E2. K. Howett, G. Nicoll. 16th May, 1998.

Climbs a spectacular line through the brown walls above the boulders in the geo, the most striking feature being a left to right diagonal crack in the lower wall. Belay on the traverse ledges at the turn of the wall just past the boulders.

1. 40m 5a. Pull steeply up the stepped rib to a horizontal break. Go up a smaller diagonal crack trending right up the wall above to meet the main diagonal crack at its right end. Climb the wall above rightwards to gain a small ledge that leads left to a shattered ledge beside luminous green moss / grass. Poor micro-nut belay.

2. 25m 5b. Pull up a steep groove containing flakes and blocks directly above the grass to enter a large slabby corner whose right wall is multi-coloured. Trend left across the slab to gain the arête and climb it to under a roof. Directly above hangs a ramp. Gain this and follow it to the top.

Alternative Start: Fools Rush Out – 30m E1 5b. P. Thorburn, R. Campbell. 26th May, 1998.

Takes a different line to the first stance at the shattered ledge. Start below the left end of big right diagonal cracks. Follow the cracks across the brown wall to a thin break. Climb the thin flake above and left till below the roofs, then traverse right to gain the belay. See *SMCJ* 1999.

Alternative Finish: Flight of the Wibble-Wibble Bird – 30m E2 5c. S. Chinnery, T. Bridgeland. July, 1998.

From the large slabby corner above the roof on pitch 2, traverse rightwards in an exposed position across several grooves above a huge roof to gain the arête. Finish up a slab above.

The following routes are located on the main wall itself and are best accessed at low tide by traversing in from the back of the geo (VS from the large corner).

Strawberry Jellyfish – 55m E2. S. Chinnery, T. Bridgeland. July, 1998.

Climbs the prominent forked cracks above the left end of the long low ledge and gains a groove left of a prominent hanging nose above.

1. 30m 5b. Climb the forked crack, then traverse left above the lip of the first overhang for 2m. Move up and then pull left under the nose (crux) to gain a groove. Climb this to belay in a large niche below a broken groove.

2. 25m 4c. Swing out right and climb the wall above on crozzly holds.

Archipelago – 50m E3. T. Bridgeland, S. Chinnery. July, 1998.

Takes a line up a brown streak 5m right of the forked crack of Strawberry Jellyfish.

1. 25m 5c. Climb steeply up a vague crackline on big juggy holds until it is possible to pull leftwards on to a small basalt ledge. Continue leftwards up the slabby wall above to an overlap, pull over this into a corner and traverse left on to a large rounded arête.

2. 25m 5b. Climb up over a steep bulge on large black rounded holds and turn the next roof by traversing right and then back left (direct line inadvisable due to large perched block). Finish up a juggy wall.

Endolphin Rush (SMCJ 1998), *Alternative Finish: Blue* – 30m 5b. S. Chinnery, O. Metherell. July, 1998.

Go up and right into an L-shaped roof, left of a massive downward pointing flake. Climb direct through the corner of the L-shaped roof to large holds under the next roof. Traverse left to the arête and up easy orange lichen-covered rock bearing right near the top.

Fuhrer of the Sausage People – 60m E3 *. I. Taylor, T. Fryer. 14th May, 2000. Start as for Spring Squill.

1. 30m 5c. Go steeply up and left to easier ground, then follow flakes leftwards to beneath small overlaps. Pull through these and continue up and left to hanging belay left of the massive downward pointing flake of Endolphin Rush *Alternative Finish*.

2. 30m 5c. Go back right and climb the awkward crack right of the flake to gain a circular depression. Pull through the overhang and finish as for Spring Squill.

Stealing A Seal's Gaze – 65m E1. K. Howett, A. Todd. 15th May, 1998.

Start as for Spring Squill.

1. 35m 5a. Follow Spring Squill up flakes to the steep wall. Move up and right across a black pegmatite band to under a small isolated overlap. Step right under it and pull over. Climb direct then slightly right into the top of a shallow groove (junction with Oh No! Norman's in Reverse).

2. 30m 5b. Climb out left to a thin crack leading to a quartz band. Move left and up and left into a depression (above and right of that on Spring Squill) below the widest part of the roofs above. Pull out left through the roof and follow a discontinuous crack to the top.

Rubha Greotach, The Galley:

Jesus Made Me Stumpy – 25m VS 4c. T. Carruthers, P. Trower. August, 1998. Climbs the arête to the left of The Complete Works. Start up that route following the corner to a black band. Traverse hard left round the arête and climb a slim groove roughly in the arête itself, passing the roof near the top on its right side and following cracks up a slab to the top.

Yob and Yag Go Climbing Part 1 – 25m E1 5b. A. McSherry, M. Howard. May, 1998.

Climbs an obvious large undercut corner left of The Complete Works. Start up that route and follow Jesus Made Me Stumpy round the arête and continue along the lip of the wall into the corner. Go up this to the roof. Traverse left under this into another corner leading to the top.

Variation: Birthday Balloons – 25m HVS 4c. P. Gibson, L. Wright. 2000.

From the arête climb diagonally up and left across the grey wall into the corner. Climb this, going left past the roof.

Rubha Greotach, The Poop Deck:

Big Al (looks better on a face than Ray-bans) – 30m E2 5c. A. McSherry, M. Howard. 27th August, 1999.

Climbs the wall between The Stowaway corner and Corncrakes for Breakfast. Start up The Stowaway and then up the wall direct to finish just right of an isolated roof near the top.

Pink Wall:

The Bonxie – 75m E6 ***. G. Latter, R. Campbell, M. Davies (ground-up). 15th May, 2000.

The long continuous crack system up the wall left of the hanging corner of I Suppose a Cormorant's... Sustained and very well protected. Start 8m left of that route, beneath a short vertical crack.

1. 25m 6b. Climb the crack and traverse left along rounded break to the main crack system. Make a long reach past a good undercut to a big jug, and continue up the crack, which soon forms twin deep cracks. Continue up these, and a third crack higher up, to take a hanging belay at an obvious break beneath the pegmatite band.
2. 50m 6b. Layback the central of three flared cracks above and pull out left to a jug. Move right up a short diagonal crack with difficulty to undercuts. Pull through these to gain good flakes leading up left (as for I Suppose a Cormorant's...) and finish up this.

NOTE: Second ascents of I Suppose a Cormorant's out of the Question then? (E5 6a,6b,5c ***) by G. Latter, M. Davies, R. Campbell and The Ancient Mariners (E5 6a,5a ***) by N. and P. Craig.

Tickled Pink – 100m E2. L. McGinley, M. Pointon, T. Leppert. June, 1999.

Climbs the line of the central fault. Start just below a slight gully which leads up to the upper ledge and cracked block of Raiders of the Lost Auk.

1. 20m 5a. Climb steeply up cracks to the right end of a large ledge. Walk left for 10m to belay at the right-hand side of the obvious fault-line.
2. 40m 5b. Step left and climb a crack for 10m. Step right into the fault-line and follow it over several bulges to belay by a block.
3. 40m 5a. Continue straight up over a huge block to reach a good ledge. Climb the flake-crack off this to the top.

Where Seagulls Dare – 90m E3. L. McGinley, M. Pointon, T. Leppert. June, 1999. Climbs a line just right of Tickled Pink. Start as for that route.

1. 10m 5a. Go up the steep cracks of Tickled Pink to the big ledge.
2. 40m 5c. Pull over the bulge directly above to gain a soaring crack-line which leads to a ledge. A truly magnificent experience!
3. 40m 5b. Trend up and left over some overlaps to reach the flake-crack of Tickled Pink. Follow this to the top.

The Pink Wall, Lower Tier:

Both routes lead to the terrace beneath the main cliff. It is also possible to traverse right and gain the top two pitches of U-ei.

Oi – 55m E3 5c,5b **. R. Campbell, G. Latter, M. Davies (on-sight). 14th May, 2000.

Follows a line of cracks and grooves up the left edge of the open recess. Start beneath an obvious crack at the left end of the platform. Climb the crack, stepping right to a good ledge. Continue up the crack-line, pulling out left of a steep jam-crack in a short groove higher up with difficulty to take a belay in a small recess. Move out right then up past a flake to gain the right end of the platform beneath the main wall.

E-up – 50m E2 *. T. Fryer, I. Taylor (on-sight). 15th May, 2000.

Start round the arête from *Oi*, beneath a right-facing corner on the front face.

- 1 20m 5c. Climb steep corner and groove above to belay below a roof.
- 2 30m 5c. Swing right round small arête and make strenuous moves through roof to a ledge. Go up flake leftwards to vertical crack and climb this, easier to belay on large platform below the main crag.

The Bay Area:

This is a small bay of rock on the tip of the headland that forms the east side of Shags Geo. Access to it is by a short abseil from a large block sitting near the base of a rocky rake just east of the tip of the headland, to land at the west end of the crescent shaped cove. It is also possible to scramble down at about Diff. standard (at the far right of the cove, looking out). The base of the cove is a huge rock slab dipping into the sea at the eastern end. Routes are described left to right.

Stoney Middleton Lip – 20m E2 6a. T. Carruthers, S. Tyson. June, 2000.

Start up Honorary Curbar. Climb quickly through the bulge to undercuts below the next roof. Reach over for a set of Biffo Ears above the roof and pull left into a cool little groove made of cinder toffee. Digest this at leisure. Steep, but very good gear.

Honorary Curbar – 20m E1 5c. T. Carruthers, T. Stevenson. 28th May, 1998.

Climbs a line left of the abseil. Start below a crack. Boulder up through a bulge and move out right and up a black groove.

Rum, Sodomy and the Lash – 20m E3 5c. T. Carruthers, T. Stevenson. 26th May, 1998.

Five metres right of the abseil is a left-facing bulging groove. Climb the groove into a corner. Finish via the short corner above.

Dogs of Law – 20m E4 6a. M. Boyer, K. Howett. 28th August, 1999.

Climbs a shallow, clean-cut corner in the wall between Rum, Sodomy and the Lash and the large corner of The Roaring Forties. Go up the steep entry into the shallow corner. Go up its right wall to bulging rock. Undercling right and gain a ledge on the right arête. Pull up left into a niche below a roof. Make tenuous moves left around the arête into a hanging groove and so to a ledge. Finish up the easy wall.

The Roaring 40s – 25m E4 6a. T. Stevenson, T. Carruthers. 28th May, 1998.

Climb the obvious right-facing corner to a long capping roof. Pull out left to the arête (crux) in a fine position and cruise dreamily up the juggy wall.

The centre of the cove is characterised by a continuous band of roofs at half height and a shallow cave undercutting it. The most conspicuous line is that of a pink vein slicing through the left side of the roof.

The Herbrudean – 20m E5 6a. P. Tanton, R. Kirby. 28th August, 1999.

Climbs across the pegmatite vein. Start in the short corner right of The Roaring Forties. Go up the corner by difficult bridging to gain a ledge under the roof. Traverse hard right to gain the pink vein and huge threads under the right end of the roof. Climb the vein, really steep, and the easier wall above to the right of a corner to the top.

Jesus Don't Want me as a Shelf Stacker – 20m E1 5b. R. Campbell, M. Davies. May, 1999.

The obvious corner near the right side of the cove. Pull up through a small roof and a bulge to gain a ledge with difficulty. Climb up into the perfect corner above to finish.

Sea An-enema – 20m E1 5b. R. Strube, T. Carruthers. 28th August, 1999.

Start as for the corner through the first roof. Climb across the wall rightwards to a downward-pointing flake. Go up and left into a recess under a capping roof and pull direct through via a flake crack leading to the top.

Starboard Grooves – 20m VS. T. Carruthers, T. Stevenson. 26th May, 1998.

This takes a series of grooves in the arête at the eastern end of the cove. Scramble rightwards to a ledge above the platform. Move up and step immediately left round the rib. Haul joyously up grooves to the top.

Rubha Charnain, Small Buoys Geo:

Wildlife on Two – 15m VS 4b. A. Todd, K. Howett. 14th May, 1998.

The central, shallow groove right of First Groove.

Easy Over – 20m HVS 5b. K. Howett, A. Todd. 14th May, 1998.

Climbs the blunt rib right of Deceptive Corner (the rib separating the two walls of

the face). Start in the base of Deceptive Corner and traverse out right on to the rib. Climb up the slabby section to the bulges near the top and take the obvious fat flake out right to reach a small horizontal black seam in the bulge. Step left in the seam to pull with difficulty on to the final slab.

The following two routes climb the easier angled right-hand section of the slab. Abseil descent.

Left-hand Crack – 20m V. Diff. A. Todd, A. Vaughn. 16th May, 1998.

Start at the obvious large tidal ledge. Follow the left-hand crack to a ledge. Step left and climb the blunt arête to the top.

Right-hand Crack – 20m Diff. A. Todd, A. Vaughn. 16th May, 1998.

Climb the obvious crack.

Rubha Charnain, Evening Wall:

Beach Bums – 10m VS 4c. K. Howett. 26th August, 1999.

The right-facing corner above the twin black holes near the left-hand side of the wall, leading to a roof near the top. Take a step right under this then pull through in the centre and take a rounded finish.

The Loneliness of the Long Distance Tokker – 10m HVS 5a. K. Howett. 26th August, 1999.

The shallow groove above the black hole right of Late. Go up the groove to an obvious hold. Pass the small isolated roof on the left to a flake in another smaller black band. Continue direct up the wall through a horizontal break to the top.

Lazybeds – 10m Severe. K. Howett. 26th August, 1999.

Climbs a conspicuous thin flake crack between Tokker and Early. Go up the flake to ledges. Take the continuation crack directly above and to the right of the isolated roof of Tokker to gain the top.

Dice Onions or Die – 10m HVS 5a. K. Howett. 26th August, 1999.

The prominent diagonal crack of Far from the Funicular in its entirety, through which Far From the Funicular climbs.

Sand Flies – 10m HVS 5a.. K. Howett. 26th August, 1999.

Start up the crack of Dice Onions or Die. Climb the vertical start to the crack to a small roof. Pull over via a shallow flake, then up and left to a thin rounded crack in the slab. Follow this to a break (or step left and up a black scoop, easier), then step left and up the slab via a sharp flake crack to a rounded finish.

Serious Mooching – 10m VS 4c. K. Howett. 26th August, 1999.

Climbs a final line on the right of the crag as it drops into the sea. Start right of the crack of Dice Onions or Die and climb the wall to gain a small ledge. Go up a smooth scoop to a horizontal break with a slight overlap. Pull over direct and go up to a diagonal break. Step slightly left and go up a bald easy-angled slab.

The Galley:

Birthday Balloons – 30m HVS 4c *. P. Gibson, L. Wright. 13th May, 2000.

Left of The Complete Works is a severely undercut grey wall, with a bottomless

corner capped by a large roof left again. Ascend The Complete Works for 5m until an obvious sloping foothold on the left arête can be reached. Traverse left round the arête and climb diagonally up and left across the grey wall into the corner. Climb this, going left past the roof.

The Poop Deck:

Don't Fool Yourself Girl – 25m E4 6b *. R. Campbell, G. Latter. 13th May, 2000. The shorter rightmost crack, climbed with difficult moves near its top to a good ledge. Break left through the roof and finish more easily up the headwall.

MINGULAY, Dun Mingulay:

Name Unknown – 100m E3 6a. K. Magog, S. Crowe(?) , 22nd May, 2000.

A direct route up the wall above the initial groove of Voyage of Faith (guidebook, p134). First pitch as for Voyage of Faith.

1. 25m 5b. Ascend the short square cut corner to a small ledge at the base of an open groove. Climb the groove and step left to belay.

2. 45m 6a. Pull out right then trending back left to climb the smooth wall directly above the initial groove. Trend right to gain and follow the groove then step right to a small ledge below the left end of the large roof. Powerful moves lead through the left edge of the roofs. Step right and up to belay. (This pitch was split on the first ascent.)

3. 30m 5a. Continue more or less directly to the top.

Notes from G. Latter:

Second ascent of Big Kenneth (E5 6a,6a,6a ***) by G. Latter and R. Campbell.

Second free ascent of Rory Rum the Story Man (E5 6a,6a,5a ***) by N. and P. Craig.

Sula (E2 5b,5b,4b ***) and The Silkie (E3 4c,6a,5b,4a ***) had many repeats, also second ascents of Sirens (E3 5c,5c,5c ***) with a more direct line through both roofs (Latter and Campbell) and Les Voyageurs (E3 4b,5b,5c,5b ***) by Taylor and Fryer.

The Black Wall (M.R. NL 546 822):

This is a south-east facing cliff on the Dun Mingulay peninsula, overlooking the inlet of Sloc Dubh an Duine. It can be viewed from Ban-nish promontory opposite.

About six routes were climbed on this cliff by K. Howett and party during May, 2000.

A Thousand Eyes – 70m E4. K. Magog, S. Crowe (alt.). 22nd May, 2000.

Towards the top of the crag at the right side is a prominent roof and 30m below this is a prominent large ledge. This route climbs to the right edge of the half height ledge and crosses the large roof at the left edge.

1. 35m 5b. A giants staircase leads up to a small ledge. Step right, then hard moves up lead to the right edge of the largest ledge.

2. 35m 5c. A wandering line weaves more or less directly for a groove below the left edge of the large roof. Step up and left from the right edge of the ledge to weave through smooth shallow grooves, then move up and left to the prominent groove. Pulling over the roof is on surprisingly good holds.

Kev's Route – 35m E2 5c. K. Howett. May, 2000.

Sharing the first pitch with A Thousand Eyes, this route continues from the right

edge of the half height ledge and climbs the corners to cross the roof at the right-hand side.

Hidden Wall:

A superb pink wall emanating from the sea. It lies just east of the point. Access it from the top of the point by taking an easy scramble descent eastwards down to a large platform running eastwards. Halfway along the platform descend a series of short corners back westwards to a ledge about 5m above the sea and overlooking the wall. Abseil on to wave-washed ledges and rush across to a small elevated ledge under the wall. Calm seas essential.

The Gull Who Shagged Me – 25m E3 5c. D. Towse, G. Huxter, D. Turnbull. 26th May, 2000.

Take a rising traverse left on flakes until it is possible to climb back right. A short wall provides the crux to gain a down-pointing spike and a ledge. Finish direct above. Excellent position.

Whiplash – 25m E4 6b. G. Huxter, D. Towse, D. Turnbull. 26th May, 2000.

Take the gently overhanging crack directly above the small ledge and the corner above it to a ledge. Move leftwards and finish up a final steep wall.

The Geirum Walls, The Platform Wall:

At the western end of the wall near the point. Access by an easy descent from the very point itself.

Crooked Thumb – 10m VS. M. Tighe, H. Robertson. 24th April, 2000.

Start under an isolated roof at 4m. Climb the fierce roof and the wall above via a crack.

Corner and Slab – 10m VS 4c. K. Tighe, E. Knudson. 24th April, 2000.

Climb the steep lower wall below and left of the hanging corner to gain the easier slab above.

Lunar Pull – 10m VS 5a. M. Robson, F. Bennet, D. Godfrey. 18th September, 1998.

The excellent left-facing hanging corner climbed direct through the steep lower wall and roof.

Pocket Wall – 10m E1 5b. M. Tighe, E. Knudson. 24th April, 2000.

To the right of the hanging corner. Climb the lower wall on big holds to the horizontal break, then pockets up the wall to the top. [The relationship to The Abyss... is unclear].

The Abyss of Numbers – E2 5c. D. Godfrey, M. Robson, F. Bennet. 18th September, 1998.

Just right of the arête is an obvious vertical crack. Gain the crack through the guarding roof and follow it to its end. Finish direct on to a sloping ledge.

Variation: Hopalong Howett – 5c. K. Howett, D. Turnbull. 26th May, 2000.

Move up and left from the end of the crack to an obvious jug near the arête and lob off!

Let Things Go – 10m E2 5b. F. Bennet, D. Godfrey, M. Robson. 18th September, 1998.

Start where the platform narrows. Follow the large flake rightwards to a crack through the overlap. Continue up the crack to the top.

Obvious Crack – 10m E3 5c. D. Turnbull, K. Howett. 22nd May, 2000.

Near the west end of the platform, just as it merges into the roofs take a belay under a hanging ledge in the guarding roof. Pull over the roof on to the ledge and into a hanging right-facing groove / flake. Up this then traverse left and up to holds leading back right to gain a phallic looking downward pointing projection. Pass this to gain a big break. Pull out direct into a scoop (hidden jug) to finish.

The Geirum Main Wall:

Horizontal Hamish – 10m E1 5b. M. Tighe, H. Robertson, Y. Colwell. 25.4.2000)

Climbs a line just left of the 45° roof. Take a horizontal flake below and left of the roof to gain an upright position with difficulty into a left-facing groove. Climb the groove to the top.

Seriously Twitching – 10m VS 4c. J. Horrocks, C. Birmelin. 13th May, 1999.

Just right of the 45° roof is a left-facing corner. Climb the corner, pulling out right in an exciting and strenuous position on big holds.

The Singing Seal – 10m E1 5a. J. Horrocks, C. Birmelin. 13th May, 1999.

Start at a small broken niche left of the bigger niche of Screaming Seal. Climb the left hand side of the cracks to a good ledge. Traverse 2m right and pull over the steep headwall.

Un-named – 10m VS 4c. H. Harris, L. Beck. 22nd May, 2000.

Start 2m left of the corner of After The Basking Shark and climb directly up the wall to finish over the capping roof on good holds.

Beagles Above the Shithouse – 10m VS 4b. T. Carruthers, C. Boulton. 31st May, 1999.

Climb the arête left of Eagles Above the Lighthouse from its lowest point.

The Old Man and the Sea – 10m E1 5b. C. Boulton, T. Carruthers. 31st May, 1999.

Climb the wall immediately right of the corner of Crisis of Confidence direct via a horizontal break.

The Crack That Tim Forgot – 10m E2 5b. T. Carruthers, C. Boulton. 31st May, 1999.

Immediately right of Seriously Twitching is a short tapering slab. Climb this and the thin crack above to the top horizontal break. Step right and finish in a shallow V-groove. Surprisingly strenuous.

Stanage by the Sea – 10m Severe. T. Carruthers, C. Boulton. 31st May, 1999.

Start up the groove and corner of Crisis of Confidence for 3m. Step left on to the face and climb a small crack to the top.

Super Crack – 10m E1 5b. D. Turnbull, K. Howett. 22nd May, 2000.

Start midway between the two 'Bad Steps' in the platform. Climb up the lower bulges to a short, fat, left-facing flake. Pull out the top to a good horizontal. Step slightly left and up a good crack on to a ledge. Go up the final wall.

Wise Crack – 10m E1 5b. K. Howett, D. Turnbull. 22nd May, 2000.

Start immediately before the second 'Bad Step'. Pull up on to an overhung ledge and gain a fat flake in the wall above. Gain a further flake up and right, then exit on to the ledge above via a short vertical crack.

Under the Broadwalk – 10m E2 5c. C. Fowler, K. Tighe. 3rd May, 1997.

Start between a slim corner and the arête at the right hand end of the wall (Evening Sun). Hard moves lead to good horizontal breaks and a ledge. Finish easily up the left slanting flake crack.

On The Beach – 15m E1 5c. C. Fowler, K. Tighe. 3rd May, 1997.

Around the arête to the right. Climb the wall by a thin crack and then a wide crack.

Hawaiian Tropic – 15m VS 4c. C. Fowler, K. Tighe. 3rd May, 1997.

Climb the big right-facing corner.

Water Babies – 15m E2 5c. C. Fowler, K. Tighe. 3rd May, 1997.

Right of the corner, climb a shallow groove. Go left on to jugs on the left rib. Climb direct by breaks to a sensational finish through the roof above by the left and most obvious crack line.

Mary Doune – 15m E1 5b. C. Fowler, K. Tighe. 3rd May, 1997.

The vertical rounded crack and roof above.

The Sirens of Mingulay – 12m E2. C. Fowler, K. Tighe. 3rd May, 1997.

Just left of the deep cave (climbed by Calling Seal), climb over a bulge and up a steep left-facing corner to gain a ledge. Short thin cracks up the face above lead to the top.

Fringe Elements – 20m VS 4c. M. Tighe, H. Robertson, Y. Colwell. 25th April, 2000.

A line traversing the lip of the cave to the right of Calling Seal. Start off the pillar and climb up the wall, then right across the lip of the roof until an easy wall leads to the top.

Rubha Liath, The Point:

The following routes are accessed by abseil as for Rubha Soul and all lie to the right of that route. Start from ledges at the base of the headland.

Flyaway – 35m VS. M. and K. Tighe, J. McClenaghan, G. Leckie, J. Cargill. 3rd May, 2000.

From a big hole, traverse right past the obvious huge chimney along the steeper sea-level rocks to the base of the second more slabby corner. Climb this and easy rocks above to the top.

Crack nan Euan – 35m VS. M. and K. Tighe, J. McClenaghan, G. Leckie, J. Cargill. 3rd May, 2000.

From the big hole, traverse right past the chimney and climb into the superb clean crack and corner forming the right side of the pillar, finishing in a wide open easy corner.

Eaglesea – 35m VS. M. and K. Tighe, J. McClenaghan, G. Leckie, J. Cargill. 3rd May, 2000.

Climb the inset chimney and the easier corner of the last route above to the top.

Soul Sister – 35m E4. K. Howett, J. Horrocks. 15th May, 1999.

Climbs a line up the very edge of the point itself (the junction between the point and Seal Song Wall). In the very edge is a short hanging groove. Start from the ledges at the base below the arête.

1. 25m 6a. Climb the easy lower wall to a ledge. Pull into the hanging groove and struggle up it and out the top before exiting leftwards above the abyss to gain a ledge and corner. Up the corner to a big ledge below the capping roof.

2. 10m 5a. Climb into the hanging groove in the left side of the roof above to finish.

Seal Song Wall:

The following routes are concentrated around a large left-facing corner about half way along the wall. The first are gained by abseiling down an off-width chimney to the right (looking in) of the corner, to gain large ledges 5m above the sea.

Sun-Dew – 45m E1 5b. G. Huxter, D. Towse. 10th May, 1999.

Climb the line of the right arête of the off-width chimney with continual interest. Climb the upper wall slightly right, then direct.

Swell-Time – 45m E3. K. Howett, H. Harris. 10th May, 1999.

Climbs the smooth looking wall left of the off-width chimney. From the base of the chimney, yard out leftwards across the small roof barring access to the wall to pull over on jugs. Climb direct through two horizontal breaks to easier ground. Then climb direct through a slight roofed prow and on to the top.

The next routes are accessed by abseiling down the Corner itself.

Surfs-Up – 50m E2. H. Harris, K. Howett. 10th May, 1999.

Start from the sea-washed ledge at the bottom of the corner line (calm seas preferable).

1. 15m 5a. Traverse right on slippery rock into a hanging corner. At its top exit out right to a small ledge.

2. 35m 5b. Pull through the roof directly above via a shallow corner to gain a horizontal break. Step right and up a flake until possible to gain a slim hanging groove on the left. Up this to easier ground leading to the abseil point.

Mingin' in the Rain – 50m E3. H. Harris, K. Howett. 9th May, 1999.

Climbs a line just right of the Corner. Start as for Surfs-Up.

1. 15m 5a. Take the obvious traverse line out right as for Surfs-Up to the base of a hanging corner. Pull into this and exit it out left under a roof to an airy ledge on the arête of the Corner.

2. 35m 5c. Pull into the slim groove directly above and follow it past a small ledge (sparsely protected) to easier ground. Trend up and right, then back left to the abseil point.

Durdle Huxter – 45m E2. D. Towse, G. Huxter. 9th May, 1999.

Climbs the large Corner.

1. 10m 4c. From the small sea level ledge climb the tapering corner direct to then step out right to bypass the roof and gain the main corner-line. Belay on a good ledge just over the roof.

2. 35m 5b. Go up the corner with the deep crack in the right wall to a roof. Traverse right into a groove and up this to finish.

Seventh Heaven – 55m E3. K. Howett, J. Horrocks. 15th May, 1999.

An excellent route with a technical crux in a space-walking position. Start from the small ledge in the base of the corner as for Far From the Dogging Crowd, down and right (looking in) of The Power of the Sea.

1. 10m 5b. From the ledge climb the corner which arches leftwards to meet the right end of the luminous green ledges

2. 30m 6a. From the extreme right end of the ledges climb a slim tapering corner to reach a good undercut in an overlap. Swing immediately out right around the arête into another overhanging corner. Up this more easily to the mid-way ledges to belay below the abseil corner. The initial corner can be climbed direct to the same point at E3 5c when dry.

3. 15m 5b. A big corner lies above [Far From the Dogging Crowd?]. Ocean Wrath climbs cracks in its right wall. Climb the left arête of the corner via a tapering shallow groove in an excellent position to a rounded finish.

The following route climbs a line in the back of the geo and can be accessed by descending steep slabs on the opposite side of the geo (above and left – looking out – of the North Wall) until it is possible to traverse into the back of the geo about 20m above water level.

Party Later Alligator – 15m E1. D. Towse, G. Huxter. 8th May, 1999.

Climbs the junction between the main wall and the diamond-shaped back wall.

1. 5m 4c. Traverse a big bird infested ledge. From its end climb up a flake to a niche in the corner.

2. 10m 5b. Climb the groove rightwards then back left up a diagonal corner.

Seal Song Geo, North Wall:

Gneiss Helmet – 40m E3. H. Harris, K. Howett. 13th May, 1999.

Climbs a natural diagonal line from right to left under the roofs starting from the base of the corner of Delayed Reaction. Take a belay just down and left of the corner on the base of the black slab.

1. 30m 4b. Take a diagonal line leftwards across the slab to the blunt arête under the left side of the biggest part of the roof to take a belay in a small alcove 2m below the level of the roofs.

2. 10m 6a. Step up and take a diagonal pink quartz ramp leftwards under the capping overhanging wall to an impasse just before a bottomless groove. Pull steeply through a small roof into a hanging niche under a bigger capping roof. Skitter left to escape.

Dun Mingulay, Sloc dubh an Duine:

The black wall on the east side of the headland. Abseil directly down the centre of the cleanest section on to a huge sloping ledge extending from the back of the geo.

Playing with the Aukestra – 85m E1. H. Harris, L. Beck. 24th May, 2000.

Climbs a line up corners to the right of the silvery slab. Start in the bay / open corner in the right end of the platform, just before a narrowing (the corner contains some vegetation at its base).

1. 30m 5a. Climb the right side of the bay / corner for 20m where ledges run out right. Climb direct for 10m to a belay in a small bay.
2. 15m 5a. Traverse horizontally right for 8m to a slim black pillar. Climb this for 2m and move up left to a traverse line back left into another small bay.
3. 40m 5a. Climb the groove above the belay to reach a hanging slab. Up this and then grooves above and slightly left to finish

The Googlie Birdie – 80m E3. K. Howett, D. Towse. 24th May, 2000.

Climbs the upper wall near the conspicuous hole. Just below and to the left of the midway ledge is a horizontal slot with nesting birds. Start directly below the slot at a rightward trending staircase.

1. 35m 5b. Follow the staircase to a narrow ledge. Step right 2m and pull through the bulge via a weakness / groove, to gain a small ledge. Follow a right-trending corner to gain the midway ledge. Belay directly below the hole and a hanging corner below it.
2. 30m 5c. Pull up on to a hanging flake and then enter a short corner. Step right into the excellent corner crack leading towards the hole. At its top pull out horizontally left using a series of big pockets to reach jugs in the base of a slight groove. Follow the groove diagonally right to a shallow corner. Step right above the hole into another corner and up this to a small ledge below a hanging flake.
3. 15m 5c. Pass the hanging flake and up to under the roof. Step right and pull through leftwards past a projecting block under the lip. Pull leftwards into an easy deep finishing corner.

Sneaky Puffin – 80m HVS. R. Mackenzie, T. Sweeney. 23rd May, 2000.

Start in the centre of the wall roughly 5m left of the left end of the capping roofs and directly below a small left-facing corner containing a yardarm about 15m up.

1. 35m 4c. Climb up easy ledges into the right-facing corner. Once past the yardarm, climb up and right on to the midway ledge.
2. 45m 5b. Climb flakes out left and gain a precarious block. Move right and climb a hanging groove to ledges (just left of the right-facing groove on the second pitch of The Day of a Thousand Eyes). Finish out left of the roof (crux).

Ye Old Hob Nailers – 80m E3. K. Howett, D. Towse. 23rd May, 2000.

Climbs a line up the pillar, taking the striking flake-corner in the right edge. Start directly under the flake-groove just left of a small roof 1m above the platform. The first pitch is serious and the second spectacular.

1. 30m 5b. Climb up steep ledged rock just left of the low roof until under the centre of a noticeably smoother area of grey rock. Climb this boldly up and right to a left-pointing spike. Continue direct, then through a weakness in the bulge above to a ledge under the base of the pillar. Step right to a good belay under a roof beneath the line of the flake-corner.

2. 50m 5c. Up through the bulging wall into the flake-corner. Follow this to jugs at its top. Above are two hanging corners. Climb with difficulty into the smaller left-hand one. Exit this direct and take the easiest line diagonally leftwards on to a big ledge below a final steep wall. Climb this leftwards passing under an unstable looking block on the lip of the cliff.

Immaculate Crack – 80m E1. D. Turnbull, G. Huxter. 23rd May, 2000.

Climbs a line up the disjointed corners defining the left side of the pillar. Start near the left end of the platform, just before the gulch.

1. 35m 4c. Climb diagonally left up the lower wall, via multiple ledges, heading for a huge block on the midway ledges.
2. 30m 5b. From the block move up and right to climb a series of slim grooves (immaculate), then make a tricky move right and climb a left-facing corner to a ledge.
3. 15m 4c. Move right and up ledges to the top out left of the unstable-looking block.

Cloth Toucher – 80m E1. R. Mackenzie, T. Sweeney. 24th May, 2000.

Climbs a line close to Immaculate Crack. Start as for that route.

1. 35m 4c. Climb up to the block of Immaculate Crack, then continue up and right to a large ledge.
2. 30m 5b. A rising right traverse past the first corner, over an area of quartz feldspar gains entry to a hanging corner. Climb this to a ledge.
3. 15m 4c. Finish directly up the wall to exit by the unstable-looking block.

Dun Mingulay, Sron an Duin:

Yob and Yag Go Climbing Part 3 – 50m E1. A. McSherry, M. Howard. August, 1998.

Start at the undercut base of the wall below the starting ledge of Fifteen Fathoms of Fear.

1. 25m 5a. Climb through the bulging wall to join Fifteen Fathoms. Climb to a good flake then traverse left 5m to enter a groove. Climb this to a belay.
 2. 25m 5b. Traverse left for 5m to a wide crack in a slim corner and finish up this.
- Alternative Finish* – 5b. Traverse right from the belay to a crack in a slight arête and finish up this.

Dunne Slimmin' 70m E2. R. Kirby, P. Tanton. 7th June, 2000.

Start as for Dun Moaning at an alcove.

1. 25m 5b. Follow this route over the bulge then go left until about 5m from the first belay of Dun Moaning. Move up here to a ledge up and right to belay.
- 45m 5b. Move up left up an obvious right-facing groove to a very obvious break 5m below roofs. Traverse right for 8m until below the right hand side of the roofs. Climb steeply up a crack to a large thread and pull left over the roof (Dun Moaning is about 7m to the right). Climb up and left to the abseil point.

Sirens – 115m E4. H. Harris, K. Howett. 28th May, 1998.

Climbs a line between Paranoia and The Silkie. Start as for The Silkie.

1. 40m 5c. Climb the groove of The Silkie till it fades, then step right and climb up to gain an obvious recess under an isolated roof. Take a traverse line rightwards with continual interest to gain a distinctive projecting block (junction with Paranoia). Belay just above, below the roof.

2. 25m 6a. Follow the crack below the roof leftwards to pull through the slight break with difficulty. Follow flakes up and right to beneath a further roof and traverse left under it into a small corner which leads to a good ledge under another bigger roof on the right.

3. 50m 5b. Pull through the left side of the roof via a spectacular flake. Follow the jug-rich wall to the top.

Call of the Sea – 100m E4. K. Howett, H. Harris. 14th May, 1999.

A direct line between The Silkie and Sirens. This gives highly enjoyable and surprising climbing up apparently desperate ground. One of the best single pitches here. Start as for Sirens.

1. 45m 5c. Climb Sirens up to the small roof before the traverse right. Move 2m along the traverse to below a small but obvious flake in the lip of the bulge above. Pull over and reach quartz underclings under the bulges above. Climb directly over this bulge to gain more underclings under another bulge. Follow them right then up to gain a jug-rail under a diagonal roof (the extension of Sirens pitch 2 roof). Follow the rail leftwards to where the roof recedes and pull over on to the slab above. Climb up into a slight shallow corner then up and left to a belay in a big horizontal break, 3m below roofs.

2. 55m 5b. Climb direct through the roofs above via the left end of the block roof of Sirens (which climbs through via the obvious flake to the right) then direct to the top.

The Silk Route – 110m E3. H. Harris, K. Howett. 11th May, 1999.

This fills a gap between Sula and The Hurried Path. Start in the open-book bay in the centre of the wall.

1. 20m. Climb the slim groove in the right wall of the bay and pull on to the wall above. Climb up to the base of an obvious short flake (junction with Sula).

2. 35m 5c. Up the flake then step right into the base of a short corner containing a square block spike. Pull out the top and step right in a horizontal break. Climb up left into a hanging quartz groove (the left-most of two) and exit this out left to gain a small jutting prow with a sloping ledge on top. Climb the wall above the ledge up and right via small flakes to step left at a small horizontal break. Up and left to attain a horizontal band of quartz and black diorite under bulges. Belay on a big flake to the left.

3. 55m 5b. Traverse horizontally right along the black band to an obvious big hold (the 'nose' of rock above the overlap of Sula pitch 2 lies just to the right). Pull up to an undercling flake then up to the big roofs. Pull through direct via a weakness of big flakes (just left of Sula) to the excellent juggy upper overhanging wall leading to the top.

The Hurried Path – 115m E3. K. Howett, H. Harris. 29th May, 1998.

A fairly direct line up the wall between Sula and Voyage, taking the steepest part of the central wall. Start midway between the two, at the left edge of the square bay at the base of the cliff.

1. 45m 5b. Gain, then follow the easy left-trending shallow groove and where it fades climb a crack in a rib to below an overlap. Traverse left under the overlap and enter a quartz niche on its immediate left. Exit right and climb up to gain an obvious 'fat' flake in the steeper wall above. Belay on small foot-ledges at its top.

2. 20m 5b. Climb up and slightly right into a small groove leading to horizontal breaks under roofs. These lead rightwards until a step up can be made into a shallow cave under the large overhang. Belay at the right side of the cave.
3. 50m 5c. Pull directly through the roof via an obvious quartz flake. Step right and surmount the bulge above to easier ground. Follow the steep but juggy wall diagonally left to the top.

Arnamol Point:

This is the long wall facing west opposite the Arnamol Stack (M.R. 547 828). This wall is only really visible from Dun Mingulay. Access is by abseil off the promontory from a large block about mid-way along the face, on to a huge ledge/platform running below the crag and about 10m above the water. Towards the left end of the ledge, near the end of the promontory, is a prominent overhanging buttress formed by groove/corner systems on either side. The routes are concentrated around this section of the cliff.

A ledge system cuts the wall at mid-height at this point. To the right of the buttress the most obvious feature is a clean-cut corner containing a roof lying above the half-way ledges.

The Wretched Gull – 75m E1. K. Magog, S. Crowe. 26th May, 2000.

About 20m right of the normal abseil is the prominent left-facing corner that sweeps up to become a stepped roof. Immediately right is a pillar.

1. 45m 5b. Start at the right edge of this and follow cracks over roofs up the face of the pillar to a good ledge.
2. 30m 4c. Continue directly up the wall above to a large ledge just below the top. Escape left on to a grass bay or continue direct for a further 5m.

Arnamol Magic – E2 5b. H. Harris, L. Beck. 26th May, 2000.

Tackles the wall just right of Lament to the Abyss.

Kraken's Gullet – 85m E2. K. Howett, T. Catterall. 25th May, 2000.

Climbs the right-hand groove line through the roofs in the centre of the buttress. Easier than it looks and spectacular on the second pitch.

1. 35m 5b. Climb an overhanging arête to the roof. Pull left into the hanging left-facing corner above the roof and follow it and a short wall to a small ledge. Climb the steep wall above by a thin vertical crack just on the left to a belay on the midway ledge.
2. 35m 5b. Step left round a nose of rock and climb diagonally left across the steep, sensational upper wall to the left edge and enter a final easy corner leading to a big ledge.
3. 15m 5a. Climb direct up the wall off the left end of the ledge (5m left of the central corner) to finish up a clean grey buttress via a vertical slot.

Pass the Razor Bill – 90m E3. K. Magog, S. Crowe. 26th May, 2000.

1. 40m 5c. Follow the left-trending scoop to a junction with Arnamol Instincts. Pull through the roof as for Arnamol Instincts, then step left on to the lip of the roof before moves up lead to the corner/flake above. Continue up crossing a small ledge (possible stance) to the large ledge above.

2. 45m 5b. Continue more or less direct, taking care to avoid fulmar ledges! (crossing Krakens Gullet?).
3. 5m 4c. Finish direct.

Arnumul Instincts – 85m E3. K. Howett, H. Harris. 28th May, 1998.

Climbs the main left-hand line in the centre of the buttress below a prominent double roof, just left of Kraken's Gullet.

1. 35m 5c. Climb a steep lower wall to a ledge, then a thin crack running vertically to the roof. Pull over into the short right-facing corner below the larger roof. Pull out directly on jugs. Easier climbing leads into a large left-facing corner capped by another roof. Pull out strenuously right and climb more easily to the mid-way ledge.
2. 50m 5a. Climb the steep shallow corner above to reach broken ground (care with large poised blocks).

Arnumul Point (unsure about duplication with above, but they predate):

The Magic Sea Spout – 90m E1. F. Bennet, M. Robson, T. Ward. 17th September, 1998.

This fine line takes the left-slanting crack and groove system that marks the left side of the main buttress (the right side being marked by Lament To The Abyss).

1. 5b. Climb cracks to an obvious hanging sentry box/chimney that splits the roof above a massive horizontal break. Move up through the sentry box and continue to a large ledge.
2. 4c. Follow cracks in the corner above through a small overhang, continue up the easy chimney above and where it ends take the left-slanting crack line to the top.

Marvo the Magician – 90m E2 5b. D. Godfrey, K. Clarke. 17th September, 1998.

1. 35m. Start at an obvious black niche/groove. Climb the groove until it bends left and breaks out right on to a steep slab/wall. Trend rightwards to a niche and climb this to a stance above.
2. 15m. Traverse left and climb a crack with hard move low down. Trend rightwards to a good stance.
3. 40m. Climb the superb crack/corner system on positive holds and good jams to finish over a shattered band above.

Black Geo:

Cod Philosophy – 55m Severe. F. Bennet, T. Ward, M. Robson. 15th September, 1998.

This is left of Depth Charge etc. Start from a good ledge above sea level and 10m right of the chimney at the left side of the face.

1. 35m. Climb a system of superb flake cracks and corners to a large ledge in the obvious rake that splits the left side of this face.
2. 20m. Continue direct to the top.

A Simple Twist of Fate – 55m Severe. D. Godfrey, K. Clarke. 15th September, 1998.

Start at the right end of the ledge system at the base of the previous route.

1. Climb grooves to join the rake right of Cod Philosophy.
2. Continue direct to the top.

Guarsay Mor, Cobweb Wall:

The wall in the south west tip of Guarsay Mor composed of conspicuous web-like

veins of pink rock lying both under the huge capping roofs and above the sea, under a series of lower roofs. Access to the base is difficult due to the roofs as abseiling directly over them leaves you 10m out to sea. The easiest access is to abseil from near the tip 50m down easy rock on to a ledge system at the extreme south west tip of the headland and directly opposite a cave on the north side of Lianamul stack. Take a further 80m abseil (mostly free) over overhangs to gain a belay at sea level beneath bulging pink walls.

Cuan a' Bochan – 130m E1. M. and K. Tighe, J. Cargill, J. McClenaghan, G. Leckie. 2nd May, 2000.

This tackles the pink-veined wall and the lower right-hand overhangs.

1. 35m 5a. From a small ledge below a small overhang, go left for 8m into a recessed groove. Climb this to reach another shallow groove in wonderful pink rock. Go up and slightly left over gently bulging pink and black rock on fabulous jugs and pockets to belay below a small overhang 20m below the main line of roofs.

2. 45m 5b. Go up and right under the small overhang, then bulging rock above leading to a break in the large roofs above. Pull through these and climb a pleasant ramp back to the first ledge.

3. 50m 4a. Pleasant, easy though fragile, rocks lead to the top.

The South Pillar:

The huge wall to the north of Cobweb Wall continues until it turns into the semi-circular bay of 'The Arena'. The following routes are found on the pillar formed between the two (near the established route, Stugeron). Access by a 100m abseil to sloping ledges at high water mark is possible, from a square-shaped stone that lies 50m back from the cliff edge near a series of tiny weed-filled lochans.

Mayday – 100m E1. M. and K. Tighe, J. Cargill, J. McClenaghan, G. Leckie. 1st May, 2000.

1. 20m 5b. From the sloping ledges, go left (looking in) to a fine-looking, smooth grey wall. Climb the wall via small flakes to reach a fine grooved belay ledge on the left in an airy position.

2. 45m 4c. Go up and right from the belay and into a groove for a few meters, before moving back left slightly to follow a system of grooves and bulges to a big ledge below an impressive open corner with a grey left wall.

3. 35m 4c. Climb the corner and a small overhang direct to the top.

Fisherman's Blues – 110m HVS. M. Tighe, H. Robertson, M. Horlick. 27th April, 2000.

Access as for Mayday to the sloping ledges.

1. 35m 4c. Follow a system of shallow grooves diagonally rightwards before climbing straight up to a big ledge one third up the cliff.

2. 35m 5a. Go steeply up excellent rock for a few metres before going diagonally right again to pull through an area of pink, bulging rock on good jugs. Go diagonally right again to belay on the only guano covered rock hereabouts.

3. 45m 5a. A vertical 4m crack leads to an 8m left-facing corner. More cracks in the grey, gently overhanging wall above lead to easier ground and the top.

The Arena:

An area in the back of a bay containing a sea cave. On the top of the cliff, at the back

of the semi-circular bay are the remains of a very old boundary wall. Abseil from here to ledges at sea level.

The Breach – 100m HVS. M. and K. Tighe, J McClenaghan, J. Cargill. 4th May, 2000.

1. 30m 4a. From the ledge follow the central fault trending slightly rightwards to the big guano covered ledge system at about one third height.
2. 30m 5a. Pull through the overhang and bulging wall above on the best jugs known to mankind. Now follow a right-trending fault to reach the right side of a big ledge below the final wall.
3. 40m 5a. The fault line continues above, but is overhanging and wet, so climb pleasantly up a little wall and pull into a grey groove and climb well sculptured rock above leading to the top.

Cuan a' Cheo – 95m HVS. M. and K. Tighe, G. Leckie, J. Cargill, J. McClanaghan. 5th May, 2000.

This climbs the grey wall just right of the big sea cave.

1. 40m 5a. A short grey groove just above the tide-line starts the proceedings. A route finder's dream follows as one weaves a way up the wall to a small ledge and belay below a pale groove.
2. 15m 4a. Climb the pale grey groove to a bigger ledge.
3. 40m 4c. Amble off up the broken fault line, up and left or, better, pull through the overhangs on the right and jug away up the sculptured rock above.

Arch Angel – 100m HVS. M. and K. Tighe, J. McClenaghan, J. Cargill, G. Leckie. 6th May, 2000.

This takes a line crossing Cuan a' Cheo leftwards towards the right-hand side of the big sea cave. Start from the guano ledge at one third height.

1. 30m 5a. Trace a slight fault line going diagonally leftwards from the ledge towards the lip of the sea cave. Follow this line crossing Cuan a' Cheo to belay on the first available ledge.
2. 30m 5a. A walk on the wild side leftwards across the roof of the cave leads to a fantastic ledge in 'space' below a fault/groove line.
3. 40m 4b. Follow the fault line and pink and black wall above directly to the top.

Mingulay – The Great Arch

Above and left of the huge sea cave is a big arch with a colony of birds inhabiting the back of it. To the north of this arch, an easy grassy descent ramp leading to a short V. Diff. wall gives access to a sloping ledge. This runs down into the sea on the north side of the arch, culminating in a small deep geo slot at the base. The following routes are around this arch. It is possible to down climb to the base with care, and with only one short section of steep wall at V. Diff. standard. Routes are described right to left (looking in).

The Arch Deacon (see SMCJ 1998).

McCall of the Wild (see SMCJ 1998).

Razorbill Roofs – 65m E1. R. Mackenzie, T. Sweeney. 25th May, 2000.

Descend as for Call of the Wild to take a belay at the top of the small inlet that lies at the base of the access ramp.

1. 30m 5b. Climb a groove to the roof above. Traverse on undercuts 2m rightwards and surmount the roof. Trend easily rightwards to a larger roof and take a wonderfully exposed hanging stance under it.
2. 35m 4b. Exciting moves directly over the roof on jugs is followed by easy but wild-looking wall to the next roof. Tackle this directly, again on jugs, to reach a ledge near the top.

Two Men in a Boat – 75m V. Diff. C. Fowler, S. McNeil. 2nd May, 1997.

This is the line of the descent – the big easy corner/ramp system leading up and left across the face (the most prominent feature on this section of crag).

The following routes climb the wall left of the descent ramp/corner. Start from a good stance at the base of a right facing corner below a nice wall of grey rock. Approach by abseil.

Blood on the Rocks – 75m VS. K. Tighe, Y. Colwell. 2nd May, 2000.

Climb a line up the grey wall just left of the easy ramp/corner.

The Fowler – 75m Severe. C. Fowler, S. McNeil, K. Tighe. 2nd May, 1997.

1. 35m 4c. Move up and right to a seam. Up this and over a bulge to easy ground. Follow a crack up to a good ledge.
2. 50m. Easy climbing on good rock with big holds leads back to the abseil point.

Thin Man – 75m Severe. C. Fowler, S. McNeil, K. Tighe. 2nd May, 1997.

1. 35m 4c. From the stance, move down and right to gain a crack system. Climb this and the face above, just left of a conspicuous arête, to gain the same ledge as the previous route.
2. 50m. Climb easy rocks to the top.

Creag Dhearg:

This crag forms the back-wall of Bay Analepp in the north west of the island. The top of the crag lies at 500ft. above sea level. The lower sections are steep but grotty and bird infested, however, the upper 60m wall offers excellent quality gneiss. There are two facets to the wall, a steep and impressive left-hand wall and a right-hand wall. The left-hand wall's main feature is a central yellow streak. Access to the left-hand wall is by abseil down the north edge of the wall, down a gully with a brown retaining wall, to reach a good ledge below the left arête of the wall.

The Left Wall:

All routes start from the ledge below the left arête.

The Scream – 55m E6/7 6b. S. Crowe, K. Magog. 25th May, 2000.

Follows the pink intrusion just right of the arête. Start off the ledge. Pull out right from the belay and make a rising traverse to an obvious wide pink slot. Continue to the obvious ledge. Step up and left to arrange good protection. Step back right and make a hard move directly to good undercuts below the hanging groove. Pull into the groove and follow improving flakes to a semi-rest and good protection. A long reach directly up above the flake should lead to a line of holds that lead left and down to the arête, continue more easily but take great care with hollow blocks to top.

Dream the Dhearg Goch – 55m E6. G. Huxter, D. Towse. 13th May, 1999.

Climbs the superb shield of rock via a tenuous line just left of the yellow streak.

1. 20m 6a. Pull out right from the belay and climb to an obvious wide pink slot. Traverse right 2m, then back up left to the obvious ledge. Traverse this delicately right to a flake and hanging belay.

2. 25m 6b. Climb the pink cracked vein above the belay, trending rightwards as it steepens and pull out on to a wide ledge.

3. 15m 6a. Climb the steep wall above just right of the belay towards another pink vein in the roof at the top. Traverse left 2m to an interesting exit.

Variations on a Dream – 65m E5. K. Magog, S. Crowe. 24th May, 2000.

The first pitch follows *Dream the Dhearg Goch* then a rightwards traverse crossing *Ocean Voyeur* to continue up right-hand groove. Start off the ledge.

1. 20m 6a. Pull out right from the belay and climb to an obvious wide pink slot. Continue to the obvious ledge and hanging belay.

2. 25m 6a. Traverse rightwards along the ledge until directly beneath the black groove right of the flakes on *Ocean Voyeur*. Thin moves gain the groove. Follow this with increasing difficulty until it is possible to reach right to good ledge. Move up to belay above the groove to protect second, please!

3. 20m 5b. Trend up and left to top.

Ocean Voyeur – 65m E5. K. Howett, H. Harris. 12th May, 1999.

Climbs a line of least resistance up the centre of the pale sheet of the left-hand wall, just right of the yellow streak.

1. 20m 5b. Pull out right from the belay ledge on to the wall and follow the obvious line traversing rightwards across the lip of the undercut wall, passing a short left-facing corner to climb a flake beyond to a ledge. Awkward belay near the left end.

2. 25m 6a. Go up left off the ledge to gain a smaller ledge above bulging rock. Climb excellent flakes direct up the pale wall to gain a diagonal crack leading right. Follow this into a short black open groove. Struggle all the way up this with a hard exit on to sloping ledges above.

3. 20m 5b. Follow the left-facing groove to a small ledge. Pull up left on to another ledge and exit in a wild position out left in space to finish.

The Right Wall:

All the routes start from the good ledge which sits at the base of the wall. Beneath the ledge the wall is undercut and rotten. Only masochists need go lower.

The Horror Beneath – 40m E1 5b. D. Turnbull, G. Huxter. 24th May, 2000.

From the left end of the ledge, climb a perfect right-facing flake, then move right and back left to finish up twin ledges.

Big Chief Turning Bull – 40m E4 6a. D. Turnbull, G. Huxter. 25th May, 2000.

Climb from the right edge of the ledge to a wide flake. From this go up and left to a ledge in the centre of the wall. Go up a slim right-facing groove and swing right into a slim left-facing groove at a small ledge (crux). Traverse 5m right and finish direct on jugs.

Fulmar Squaw – 45m E3 5c. G. Huxter, D. Turnbull. 25th May, 2000.

From the right edge of the ledge climb to the wide flake. Continue up to beneath

a hanging right-facing flake. Move up and left, then direct to the top. Jugs and overhanging all the way!

The Red Bouy:

Just off the north-west tip of the island lies another large sea stack named The Red Bouy. Just to its east is a smaller and more defined stack of more interest to climbers. Access is by swimming or by boat.

Sea Horse – 10m VS 4c. M. and K. Tighe, K. and Y. Colewell, H. Robertson, E. Knudson. 28th April, 2000.

From a reasonable ledge on the south side of the stack, climb the wall into two short right-facing corners.

Geo an Droma:

On the pink-streaked wall:

Raining Puffins – 10m E2 5b. R. Mackenzie, T. Sweeney. 26th May, 2000.

Start as for Peata Ruadli. Climb the right wall via a flake to the small roof. Exit out right.

Machashaw – 10m Severe. R. Mackenzie. 26th May, 2000.

The chimney on the end of the point, right of the pink streak.

Carry on Corner – 10m Severe. T. Sweeney. 26th May, 2000)

The corner right of the chimney.

Rectal Irrigation – 10m E1 5b. R. Mackenzie. 26th May, 2000.

The left arête on the flat wall on the end of the south-west facing wall.

Rubh 'an Droma (M.R. 571 833):

The following routes are on the small but sheltered crags at the east side of the island and may provide some entertainment if it's too wild on the west.

Just Like a Woman – 20m E2 5b. D. Godfrey, M. Robson. 16th September, 1998.

This tackles the fine right to left-slanting crackline in the north wall of the narrow geo. Abseil to a foot ledge at the base of the wall (covered at high tide) and then climb the crack.

The following three short routes were found on the pleasant slabby wall that faces out to sea from the end of this geo.

Barely Alive Clive is Missing – 11m V. Diff. D. Godfrey, K. Clarke. 16th September, 1998.

The left side of the slab.

Cirrus – 11m V. Diff. M. Robson, T. Ward. 16th September, 1998.

The shallow corner/crack up the centre of the slab.

Little Corner – 9m V. Diff. T. Ward, M. Robson. 16th September, 1998.

The excellent left-facing corner right of the chimney at the right side of the slab.

NOTE: It is not sure how the following routes by S. Campbell, J. Walker and N. Wilson relate to others.

Guarsay Mor:

Man Overboard – 45m HVS 5a *. S. Campbell, N. Wilson, J. Walker. August, 2000.

Start: as for Port Pillar.

1. 25m. Traverse left for 3m, then climb straight up to sloping ledge on the left. Continue up, trending right to a large ledge. Go up the wall above to a corner left of Port Pillar.
2. 20m. Go easily to the top.

West Face of Guarsay Mor:

The following three routes lie on the pillar to the right of Save our Soles (*SMCJ* 1999, p70). Access is by abseil from a prominent rectangular block 20m back from the edge and about 100m south of the northmost extremity of Guarsay Mor.

Entebbe Sailing Club – 60m VS 4c, 4a *. J. Walker, S. Campbell, N. Wilson. August, 2000.

Climbs the pillar to the right of Save Our Soles. Start on a large sloping ledge to the left of a steep ramp with a prominent rectangular sentry-box near the bottom.

1. 25m 4c. Traverse left to cracks 3m right of the arête. Trend left up these to a good triangular ledge.
2. 35m 4a. Climb discontinuous left-facing corners to the top.

The Grass is Singing – 60m HVS **. S. Campbell, N. Wilson, J. Walker. August, 2000.

Start as for Entebbe Sailing Club.

1. 30m 5a. Climb directly up following a vague line of cracks to the right of a curving roof to a ledge. Move left to a short, steep crack splitting a blank wall. Exit right at the top and continue directly up to good threads.
2. 30m 4a. Finish directly up juggy rock in a fine position.

Hoon Bird – 60m Severe *. N. Wilson, J. Walker, S. Campbell. August, 2000.

Start as for Entebbe Sailing Club.

1. 25m. Step right and climb the seaward face of the ramp. Continue up a blunt grey rib via cracks to a ledge.
2. 35m. Go easily to the top in the same line.

Rubha Liath, Seal Song Geo, North Wall:

Approach: Abseil from a large block on the top tier of rock left of Fergus Sings the Blues to a ledge above the sea.

Guano no dae that? – 45m Severe. N. Wilson, J. Walker, S. Campbell. August, 2000.

1. 25m. Climb the wall to the left of the arête to guano-rich ledges (guilliemots permitting).
2. 20m. Finish easily (fulmars permitting).

Rubha Liath, South West Face:

The End – 30m VS 4c **. N. Wilson, S. Campbell, J. Walker. August, 2000.

Start at the belay ledge as for Rubha Soul. Climb the obvious bomb-bay chimney/groove directly above the stance, exiting right at the top. Finish easily.

To the Lighthouse – 30m VS 4c **. S. Campbell, J. Walker, N. Wilson. August, 2000.

Start as above. Traverse up and right towards the eponymous beacon to gain slim ledges at bottom of a hidden right-facing corner. Go up this in a fine position to ledges and easily to the top.

Rubh' an Droma, South Face:

The Mad Professor – 18m E2 6a **. J. Walker, N. Wilson, S. Campbell. August, 2000.

Start as for The Waiting Game. From the right end of the ledge, traverse hard right to gain a prominent quartz hold on an undercut wall. Hard moves up gain good underclings. Climb a left-trending groove above to a small roof and exit awkwardly right on to a sloping ledge. Finish up a short groove above. Excellent technical climbing.

Variation: 5c. From the starting ledge, move up and right via a groove to gain the quartz hold as a foothold.

Rubh' an Droma, East Face:

Calm at Sunset, Calm at Dawn – 15m E1 5a **. S. Campbell, J. Walker, N. Wilson. August, 2000.

Start by a scramble down to a ledge below an undercut chimney right of Duibheaneach.

Step down and left and across the base of the chimney. Surmount an overlap to the right of Duibheaneach to gain a left-slanting crackline. Move slightly up and traverse right to a good foothold on the arête. Climb cracks to a slight overlap and finish directly up a quartz/feldspar vein above, just left of the arête bounding the chimney.

BERNERAY, Creag na Beiste:

Alien Slayer – 170m E5. H. Harris, K. Howett. 26th May, 1998.

Climbs a magnificent natural line up the centre of the face. Start from the recess.

1. 20m 5b. Follow a rising ramp out right from the recess and climb the cracked overhanging rib just before the ramp fades. Follow the rib slightly on its right to a large block belay.

2. 40m 6a. Traverse out right below the level of the top of the block across the blank-looking wall to easy ground that leads back left to the base of a slim green corner. Climb the corner to its top and make hard moves left into a ramp line that leads diagonally up left across the face to gain a hanging belay in a slight depression about 3m below a prominent horizontal band of black Biotite.

3. 35m 6a. Climb up and left across the Biotite into a conspicuous short corner capped by a projecting roof. Make a move up into a traverse line leading right until it is possible to pull into a very shallow groove. Climb this with continuous difficulty to gain the first big terrace system. Belay over to the right below a large corner.

4. 40m 5b. Climb a flake into a recess below and left of the corner. Exit strenuously out right into the slabby corner which leads to the second big terrace. Traverse the sloping black ledge rightwards under the overhanging upper tier to belay below a hanging corner.

5. 35m 5c. Climb on to a block just right of the corner and make awkward moves left into the corner. Follow it more easily to its capping roof and exit left to finish.

The following route climbs a line up the right-hand side. Take the normal abseil to the first terrace (second looking down). Traverse right (looking in) until below a jutting buttress with a roof. Redirect the abseil from here down over the rectangular roof and down to a small foot ledge just above the black/green band.

The Beastings – 175m E4. M. Boyer, K. Howett. 23rd August, 1999.

Climbs a direct line up the wall to the left side of the rectangular roof and then up the jutting buttress above.

1. 35m 5b. Climb a short groove to a ledge. Traverse hard left to a slight arête and up this to good cracks. Go up and right to gain a good handrail flake leading up and left into a vertical crack. This leads into an obvious shallow corner. At its top traverse hard right, initially hard, to gain ledges and a belay.

2. 50m 5c. Follow the natural curving slab up and left until moves up the wall from its end gains an undercling flake. This leads up right to a small ledge below vertical cracks leading to the left end of the roof. Up these to the roof and climb into and follow the shallow corner above for about 8m until good holds round the right arête allow an escape up the wall to a ledge in the base of a left-facing corner.

3. 15m 4c. Climb up the corner, then the ochre-coloured wall via a thin crack to the good ledge and belay about 3m below the jutting buttress (the abseil belay).

4. 25m 5c. Climb up to guano ledges under the buttress. Pull through the lower bulge via the obvious crack into a short corner under the roof. Pull out left and up into another corner under another roof. Traverse right around the arête to gain a slab. Up the wall above to a good ledge. Very strenuous.

5. 50m 5b. Climb up to a big ledge. Up a corner and exit out right to a further ledge below the headwall. Move up to below the base of a right-facing corner with a deep crack in the back. Step right steeply into a subsidiary groove. Follow this, steep, and the general line of the corner to the top.

Sotan Head, Puffin Buttress:

Puffin Pantry – 55m E3. H. Harris, K. Howett. 24th May, 1998.

Start as for Huffin and Puffin.

1. 20m 5c. Climb the crux of that route up the twin cracks to the left end of the roof. Pull directly into the corner above then immediately pull out right to gain a short slabby groove left of the arête. Belay at its top.

2. 35m 5c. Climb up slightly leftwards to gain a sloping ledge. Climb the prominent crackline up the overhanging wall into a corner. This leads to a roof which is climbed direct to finish.

Barra Head, Ocean Wall (Aird Cholla):

A large terrace at the base can be reached by a scramble from the east. The main interest centres on the lower wall of excellent one pitch groove and cracklines. Routes are described from left to right with the first route starting from a lower ledge reached by an easy scramble down and left.

Giant McAskill – 45m VS 4c. C. Fowler, S. McNeil, K. Tighe. 1st May, 1997. Starts in the second left-facing corner down and left from the main terrace. Climb the corner over a bulge directly to the big ledge at the top.

Big Jamie – 30m HVS 5a. M. Tighe, C. Fowler, K. Tighe. 1st May, 1997. Starting from the centre of the main terrace, climb the conspicuous left-facing corner (which gets wide!). The crux involves a pull over a small roof.

All the way from America – 30m HVS 5a. C. Fowler, M. Tighe, K. Tighe. 1st May, 1997.

The most prominent left-facing corner system.

A Rotting Sea – 30m VS 4c. C. Fowler, K. Tighe, M. Tighe. 1st May, 1997. Just right of the most prominent corner system, climb another smaller corner and the face above to reach a finger crack in a small left-facing corner.

Sea Children – 30m VS 4c. M. Tighe, C. Fowler, K. Tighe. 1st May, 1997. Climb small corners and walls towards the right side of the face.

The Giant's Pipes:

The following routes are centred around the right arête. Abseil from the rounded top of the arête itself, down the wall to the base of the small corner at the bottom of the arête.

Piping Up – 80m E1. M. Boyer, K. Howett. 22nd August, 1999.

Climbs a corner-line just left of the arête.

1. 20m 5a. Climb the corner till it is possible to traverse out right to gain small ledges near the arête.

2. 35m 5b. Climb the immaculate corner to a small ledge at a horizontal quartz band. Climb directly up into a bomb-bay groove and exit above to a ledge. Follow cracks above to gain a ledge on top of a pedestal. Step right and gain a better ledge in a corner some 5m below the roofs.

3. 25m 4c. Climb up left to under the roof. Traverse left on the fault through it to an arête. Up to the left end of another roof and pass it to gain cracks up the headwall.

Imagine This – 85m E2. K. Howett, M. Boyer. 24th August, 1999.

Takes a pleasing natural line of grooves in the slight arête left of Piping Up and leading to the left end of the upper roofs. From the base of the former route either pendulum left to a belay below the groove or climb easily to the same spot.

1. 30m 5b. Climb the groove to a small ledge. Climb the continuation groove till level with huge flakes in the right wall. Traverse these right to the arête and take a semi-hanging belay.

2. 30m 5b. Step back left into the continuation groove and climb it till it fades. Head up and right passing beneath a grey recess to gain a further short corner. Up this and exit out left on to a small black ledge 5m below the roof.

3. 25m 5b. Go up the groove above the belay to the roof. Step left round it into a left-diagonal crack leading into a hanging right-facing slim corner. Go up this, then direct to the top.

Barra Sounds – 90m E2. K. Howett, M. Boyer. 24th August, 1999.

Climbs the next corner system to the left, leading into the large right-facing corner

in the upper half. Abseil as for Piping Up, to the base of the wall. Traverse across the slabby wall beneath Imagine This and climb cracks up to a small projecting ledge below the well defined groove.

1. 50m 5b. Climb the deep groove until a black biotite band is reached. Exit out right to a small ledge near the arête. Up the wall to enter a further more defined groove. Follow this to its end as the rock steepens and exit out right to guano ledges 3m below the upper corner.
2. 40m 4b. Climb into and up the big open corner to the top.

The following routes climb either side of the deep vertical recess. Gain the corners leading into the recess by abseiling from huge blocks at the top.

The Book Before The Trial – 90m E3. A. McSherry, M. Howard. 24th August, 1999. Climbs the right side of the deep recess. Start at a large ledge at the base of a perfect square-cut corner below the line.

1. 50m 6a. Climb the stunning corner with difficulty to a bulge of biotite. Traverse out right to the arête and continue up left into an open groove passing a couple of small ledges to belay on a pink quartz ledge.
2. 40m 5b. The horrendous-looking corner crack above succumbs to aggressive laybacking to reach a roof where it all becomes pear-shaped. Traverse the wall leftwards into the left-hand side of the recess and follow this through a cave behind a huge detached block and easy ground to the top.

Victims of Circumstance – 90m E1. M. Howard, A. McSherry. 25th August, 1999. Climbs the left-hand side of the vertical recess. Start from small ledges in the base of the corner directly below the line.

1. 40m 5b. Climb the corner and a slight chimney through a roof to exit right on to commodious ledges.
2. 50m 5a. Climb the main left-hand corner of the recess, through a cave and then more easily to the top.

Stolen Moments – 100m E3. H. Harris K. Howett. 25th May, 1998.

Climbs a groove line to the left of Barra Head Games, on the very edge of the wall after climbing the first pitch of that route from the small ledge at the base of the wall.

1. 25m 5b. Climb the first pitch of Barra Head Games to the belay on the arête.
2. 25m 5c. Climb the crux of Barra Head Games into the short corner. At the first small roof traverse left across an overhanging wall to enter the base of a hanging corner in a spectacular position. Climb this until it fades and pull up and left on to a glacié in the base of a larger corner.
3. 50m 5b. Climb the corner and pull round the roof on the right. Move back left above this then up into the continuation corner above. Climb this past a thin section to climb out rightwards into another groove above then the wall leads to the top.

SHIANT ISLANDS, Garbh Eilean, Toll a' Roimh (M.R. 421 986):

West of the arch are two wide chimneys near sea level.

The Blue Boys – 40m VS 4c **. C. Moody, R. Watson. 24th August, 2000.

Abseil from blocks to sea level at the west chimney. Climb the corner-crack just right (west). Dead puffins removed on abseil.

Tam a Shianta – 35m VS 4c *. C. Moody, R. Watson. 24th August, 2000.
Climb the crack just east of the same chimney. Abseil from a sling round a bollard and a Friend#4 farther back (beside the lochan) to a ledge above the sea.

RUM, Trallval, Harris Buttress:

NOTE: A. Nisbet notes after an accidental ascent that the 'wide open chimney' of Archangel Route is 5m right of Guillotine, not 13m, and the two routes start very close (but diverge). The 'broad ledge' is more like a right-rising ramp. The route might be the best V. Diff. in Rum? Also, Central Rib was thought to be VS 4b (old notes from April, 1974).

Longship Crag:

Total Carnage – 30m E3 6a. L. Johnson, F. Bennet April, 2000.
A crackline on the right side of the arête just right of Cruise Control.

Laurevil – 30m E1 5b. F. Bennet, L. Johnson. April, 2000.

The obvious niche and cracked roof just right of Total Carnage and just left of Vanishing Point.

CANNA:

NOTE: A. Nisbet climbed a route on the largest dolerite crag facing the pier (M.R. 273 058). The route (10m, Severe) climbed the rightmost line on the high section of crag, a shallow chimney-groove with cracks on both sides.

MULL, Creag Liath:

Room Service – 12m HVS 5a *. W. Hood, C. Moody. 30th March, 2000.
The wide corner-crack at the left end of the crag.

Ash Rib – 12m VS 4c *. C. Moody. 21st April, 2000.

The rib just right has an awkward start.

Wull's Exam Fiasco – 16m HVS 5a *. The wide crack 4m left of Sloe Worm has a bulge to start. Step right near the top and finish up a smaller crack. A Friend#6 is handy.

Balmeanach:

Welly Stealing Sgiathanachs – 15m HVS 5a. C. Moody, I. McKinnon. 29th August, 2000.

The crack in the scoop right of Milanda Shelf with a finish on small tree holds.

Raven's Crag (M.R. 433 303):

Mull of Kintyre – 30m E2 5b **. C. Moody, C. Grindley. 30th July, 2000.

The blunt rib right of Raven Rib. Start at the right side, move up left on horizontal breaks, then step right to gain the crack (poorly protected before the crack). Climb the crack to a ledge, then over blocks and climb the right side of the flake to easier ground.

Sleep Deprivation – 25m VS 4b *. C. Moody, C. Black. 3rd May, 2000.

The crack on the right of Charger the Tiger. The start is a bit bold.

Pleasant Surprise – 25m Severe *. C. Moody, C. Black. 3rd May, 2000.
The wide crack right again.

Golden Rod – 25m E1 5b *. C. Moody, C. Grindley. 3rd May, 2000.
Climb up to the overhang, then make strenuous well protected moves up. Continue up the crack in the slabby wall.

Unnamed – 20m HVS 5a *. C. Moody, C. Black. 4th July, 2000.
Right is a grassy crack. Climb the crack right of it with a hard start.

Grooved Arête – 20m E1 5a **. C. Moody, C. Black. 4th July, 2000.
Good steep climbing with spaced protection.

Primrose Crack – 20m HVS 5a **. C. Moody, C. Black. 3rd May, 2000.
The crack right of Grooved Arête.

Cracked Buttress – 16m VS 4c *. C. Moody, C. Black. 4th July, 2000.
Right of Primrose Crack is a grassy crack, then a cracked buttress, which is the route.

Scoor, The Slab:

Thick Head – 25m E2 5b. C. King, R. Kenyon. 17th August, 1997.
Start just left of Turnstone and climb directly up cracklines, initially awkward, and then with a final flurry of difficulty.

Dune Wall:

The Undertaker's Gone Bananas – 10m HVS 5a. R. Kenyon. 31st May, 2000.
Start as for Dunechough and climb directly up to a corner crack. Continue up this, then overcome a small overlap to gain the crack in the wall. Finish up the wall.

Friendly Wave – 7m Mild VS. A. Heron, R. Kenyon. 28th May, 2000.
On the right of the buttress is a broken, wavey wall with an obvious crack which gobbles up Friends. Climb this crack.

Matter of Trust – 7m VS 4c. R. Kenyon. 31st May, 2000.
The right of the main buttress and slightly lower is a shorter wall. Start below an obvious flake and move up right to a small ledge. Reach up to good holds and swarm up the wall to the top.

Ardtun:

Dangleberry Half-Life – 15m E1 5a/b. C. Moody, W. Hood. 29th March, 2000.
Right of Atomkraft are some hairline cracks. This route takes a wider finger crack to the right again.

Hot Stuff – 15m HVS 5a. A. Nisbet, C. Moody. 26th July, 2000.
The second crack right of Dangleberry.

The Yellow Block:

Midge Shirt – HVS 5a *. C. Moody, A. Malloy, C. Black. 5th September, 2000.
The west-facing corner-crack under the willow bushes.

The Edge of Madness – HVS 5a *. C. Moody, A. Malloy, C. Black. 5th September, 2000.

The crack to the right. There is a small bettered rowan at the top.

The Green Hill:

Unnamed – 8m VS 4c *. C. Moody, C. Grindley, I. McKinnon. 30th August, 2000.
The second crack left of No Jacket Required.

No Pyjamas Required – 8m VS 4b *. C. Moody. 2nd October, 2000.

The crack left of No Jacket Required.

Erraid, Upper Tier:

Pharos – 8m E2 5c *. G. Latter (on-sight). 26th August, 2000.

The widening crack just right of Misunderstanding.

Nite Lites – 10m E1 5b/c **. C. Moody, C. Grindley, S. Porteous. 29th July, 2000.

The crack right of Covenant.

Catriona – 10m E4 6b **. G. Latter. 26th August, 2000.

The fading cracks in the wall just right of A Helping Hand. Climb up to a ledge from the right, then cracks to a horizontal break and good Friends. Continue straight up past a flange to a rounded finish.

The Merry Men – 8m HVS 5a *. G. Latter. 26th August, 2000.

Towards the right end of the crag is a prominent roofed recess. Climb the crack up the right wall.

JURA, Carraig Mhor:

The crag is a triangular wall near the north tip of Jura at M.R. 696 015, approached by boat and 2km walk.

Jurassic Nipple – 60m VS 5a. B. Brierly, P. Thorne. 16th July, 2000.

Climb the right-hand arête of the wall in three pitches. Some loose blocks but a fine sense of remoteness.

ISLAY, Dun Bheolain/Dun Nighean:

A black and vertical sea cliff has two lesser companions in the form of 'duns' with west-facing crags of flaky phylitic schist. A more attractive proposition is the geo immediately south of the duns. All routes soloed by J. R. Mackenzie on 21st July, 2000.

Approach via the B8017 to limited parking at Saligo Bay. Cycle or walk to Smaull Farm, then continue over machair to below the steep grass slopes of the duns. The geo is down and left.

The Geo (M.R. 210 689, Sheet 60):

This tidal inlet has a short vertical 10m left wall and a longer slabby right wall.

Left Wall: The routes are described from right to left. The rock is black, incut and sound, easier than it looks.

Boulder Wall – Mild VS 4b *.

Start at the big boulder blocking the geo and climb the fine wall direct to the top.

*Quartz Seam Traverse – Severe **.

Start 5m left of the boulder and climb up, then diagonally right past the quartz seam.

Little Miss Snappy – Mild VS 4b.

Start left of Quartz Seam Traverse at a bleached plank. Go straight up over the bulge and the top.

Nighean's Delight – VS 5b.

Left of Little Miss Snappy is a bulge. Climb over this and straight up to the top past plants.

The right wall is an undulating slab of good smooth rock.

*Maiden's Slab – 40m Mild VS 4b **.

Start below the left end of the roof and climb up to and through it at a small corner. Climb the delightful slab on the left past horizontal breaks and up a steeper headwall and more slabs to grass. Traverse off right and down to the base.

The Duns:

Best reached by traversing steep smooth grass above Maiden's slab leftwards to level ground. The small dun is immediately in front of the big dun.

Small Dun:

The west face is vertical or gently overhanging and not encouraging.

I Dun It – 20m V. Diff.

Start below a vertical crack near the right edge and follow big suspect holds to the top.

Big Dun:

Its west face is of the same flaky rock as the small dun but much sounder around the big corner on the right which provides the following reasonable route.

Dun Mor Corner – 30m M. Severe.

Climb the corner and the overhanging crack and flake to exit on to a ledge (crux). Continue up, then right to scramble up the edge to finish.

The climbing on the Barra islands is rapidly gaining a reputation as one of the pre-eminent venues in Scotland and the number of climbs now exceed 430. Island addict, Kevin Howett has been trying to keep track of proceedings and has compiled a history of the main developments. This is too long to reproduce here, but can be found on his website at: www.rockart-scotland.com.

Kevin is writing the Barra Islands section for the new edition of the *Skye and the Hebrides* guide and anyone having climbed routes not mentioned in the Journal should contact him with full details (and crag photos/sketches to help identify lines), preferably by e-mail at rockart@tesco.net or at Buddleia Cottage, Gwydyr Road, Crieff, Perthshire PH7 4BS.

SKYE

GLEN SLIGACHAN CRAGS, Low Crag (M.R. 480 259):

This crag was opened up by members of Oxford University Mountaineering Club in April 2000. The crag lies at 300m on the eastern slopes of Sgurr Nan Gilleann, about 1km north of Glen Sligachan Buttress. Approach via the tourist path to Coire Riabhach, before turning left (east) to traverse around the bottom of the crag (about 1½ hrs). The crag offers excellent quality climbs of all grades, dries quickly after rain, and remains in condition when most of Skye's higher crags are wet, snowy, or in the cloud. The good climbing is found in three distinct areas.

Panoramix Wall:

This is the first area reached, an impressive 60m wall of sound gabbro cut by several diagonal basalt dykes. The climbing is generally very technical, and not particularly strenuous, but protection can be difficult to arrange. Descent from the top of the crag is not difficult either way, but the left (southern) route is more convenient and drier.

April Crack – 45m H. Severe *. K. Wigmore, S. Broadbent. 8th April, 2000.

An enjoyable climb which picks the easiest line up the left side of Panoramix Wall. Holds are reassuringly large, and protection is very good.

1. 25m 4b Start at the obvious crack which runs right up the left-hand part of the wall. After a few metres, a short hand traverse gives access to a dirty ledge, and the steeper part of the crack above (excellent holds) leading to a large ledge (The Haven).

2. 20m Climb easily up the prominent slab heading left from the Haven to a short steep crack, climbed directly.

April Crack Direct – 55m HVS **. S. Broadbent, K. Wigmore. 6th April, 2000.

A fine natural line up superbly steep ground. The difficult section is short and well protected, but strenuous.

1. 25m 4b Climb the first pitch of April Crack to the Haven.

2. 30m 4c Climb the wall to the left of the crack for a short way, until a step right can be made back into the crack. This is followed steeply on poor holds and jams to easier ground above.

Grand National – 30m Severe ***. S. Broadbent, H. Jenkins. 8th April, 2000.

A remarkable pitch, following the basalt dyke from the Haven right across the centre of Panoramix Wall. The hardest moves are at the start, but as height is gained the exposure becomes sensational. Protection is very difficult to find, but the climbing is no harder than V. Diff standard.

1. Reach the Haven by following another route, such as April Crack.

2. 30m Step down and right from the Haven to reach excellent holds for a pull through steep ground. This gains the basalt, and an amazing ledge running up and right. Walk along this, with good hand holds, past a quartz vein to a short shallow groove. Climb up this groove, and then continue traversing right, this time on gabbro, to the right hand side of the crag.

Electric Mainline – 65m E5 ***. H. Jenkins, S. Broadbent. 8th April, 2000.

A brilliant route, taking a logical line up the steep central wall, the final section requiring a committed approach. Pegs placed on abseil.

1. 35m 5c Start up a line of holds leading up to the left of a small overhang. Climb straight up to a diagonal break from where difficult moves lead past two vertical cracks and through a basalt dyke to a rest ledge and peg runner. From here, the obvious ramp is followed leftwards to a patch of grass below the left-hand end of the central overhang (Friend#3), which is surmounted with surprising ease. Easy climbing then leads left to the Haven.

2. 30m 6a A magnificent pitch. Step down and right, and pull through steep ground on excellent holds (as for Grand National). Move right along the obvious basalt dyke as far as a prominent corner with white quartz. This is climbed to a small ledge and tied-off peg runner. The blank wall above forms the crux of the route, and is protected by a poor peg on the right-hand side. Climb the wall on small holds until the angle relents. The climbing remains interesting but with no protection, taking the final wall direct to finish at the highest point of the crag.

Huw's Original – 35m E3 5c. H. Jenkins. 6th April, 2000.

This was the original attempt at the line which was to eventually become Electric Mainline. The protection is very poor, and the climb is forced right to avoid more difficult ground. Recorded here largely for historical interest. Follow Electric Mainline to the rest ledge. From here, traverse right below the central overhang (no protection) to finish high on the extreme right of the crag.

I'd Rather be Wet than Sorry – 45m V. Diff. K. Wigmore, A. Baugh. 6th April, 2000.

A rather damp climb which skirts around the side of the impressively steep wall. Start up the diagonal slab in the lower right corner of Panoramix Wall, below the small overhang. This is followed up to the edge of the crag, on first loose, then wet rock. Finish easily up around the side of the crag.

Panoramix Left Hand:

About 30m to the left (south) of April Crack is a short wall with an overlap at half height. The right-hand part of this wall tends to remain wet, but may dry out in a prolonged dry spell. Farther left, however, the rock is clean and dry.

Iffley Dreams – 25m E2 5c **. H. Jenkins, A. Baugh. 8th April, 2000.

A good technical wall climb, with a bold top section. Climb directly to the obvious hanging flake. Move left to pull through the overlap above to reach a small ledge. Finish directly up the wall above.

Note: An alternative finish which trends right from above the overlap has also been climbed, and found to be slightly easier.

Adrian's Wall – 20m E2 5b ***. A. Baugh, K. Wigmore. 8th April, 2000.

Another good bold route, this time gaining and following the zig-zag arête at the left-hand end of the wall. Start to the left of two hairline cracks directly below the arête. Thin moves and sloping breaks lead to the first protection at 11m, after the main difficulties have been passed. Climb a shallow scoop to the arête on the left, and follow this more easily in an airy position to a belay at the top.

Spaceman's Slab Area:

Continue walking left (south) from Panoramix Left Hand, until a huge gabbro slab is encountered. This holds a number of very fine, bold slab routes with very little protection but excellent friction. Descent is an easy walk to the left (south) of the slabs.

Ground Control to Major Tom – 45m VS 4b *. A. Baugh, K. Wigmore. 6th April, 2000.

A good climb up the left-hand part of the huge slabs, encountering a wide variety of rock types. Protection is sparse but adequate. Climb straight up over three distinct bulges to the left of Spaceman's Slab to a large block.

Spaceman's Slab – 45m HVS **. A. Baugh, H. Jenkins. 6th April, 2000.

The original route up the slabs provides interesting bold climbing. From a weakness in the initial bulge, climb the centre of the slab to a basalt dyke below another bulge at about 25m. Climb on through the bulge to easy ground above.

Apollo 13 – 35m E1. A. Baugh, K. Wigmore. 8th April, 2000.

A poorly protected route which weaves its way around the overlaps on poor rock on the right-hand side of the slabs. The route was originally climbed in two pitches, but it would be possible to combine these.

1. 25m 4c Climb thinly to a good jug and the slab above (crux). Follow the slab up and rightwards past more overlaps, trending left below the final, largest and loosest one to reach a large niche.

2. 10m 4c Climb up and right from the niche to finish up a short roof crack.

The Black Wall (M.R. 481 252):

This crag is on the east shoulder of Sgurr nan Gilleann, and is shown in the diagram in the new *Scramblers Guide* (p95, right of route 39). At its left side is an enormous tower. To the right of this is a massive black wall 50m high and 70m wide. Above this the crag is more broken.

Black Magic – 40m HVS 5b ***. G. Andrew, D. Morrison. 3rd August, 2000.

This climbs the impressive crack on the right side of the wall, possibly E1. Climb easily to the foot of the crack. Climb the excellent crack to a big ledge (sustained). Easier climbing (60m) leads to easy ground. Descent is a gully to the right; a trap fault in its true right side leads down a ramp to the foot of the wall.

SGURR NAN GILLEAN, Coire a' Bhasteir, West Face of Third Pinnacle:

Glass Alley – 115m IV,6. J. Allott, M. Moran. 13th January, 2001.

Climbs the obvious chimney on the front face just right of centre above the lower slopes of 3/4 Gully.

1. 10m Climb ramps to the foot of the chimney.

2. 45m Climb the chimney direct (ancient peg found at half-height?) with committing exit moves.

3. 60m Follow a groove on the right to easy snows and the crest of the ridge 40m below the top of the Third Pinnacle.

Coire Riabhach, Sligachan Face of the First Pinnacle:

The Sickie – 330m III *. S. Broadbent, K. Wigmore. 3rd April, 2000.

A fine natural line forming an obvious sickle shape when viewed from Sligachan.

The climb takes the obvious buttress on the left of Black Chimney, finishing on the scree terrace which separates this face into two tiers. Start in Coire Riabhach, by picking out a prominent snow ledge in the centre of the face, with a snowy ramp leading up to the right-hand end of it. The blade of the sickle, which is the buttress left of Black Chimney, curves up from the left-hand end of this ledge.

1. 45m Start over a short rock step, and climb easily up the snowy ramp. A second rock step may provide a short ice pitch.
2. 50m Continue up slabs to reach the prominent broad snow ledge.
3. 50m Traverse easily along the ledge to a huge block belay at the foot of Black Chimney.
4. 45m This pitch is the start of the 'blade' buttress. Follow a minor gully to the left of Black Chimney until the angle eases (belay in Black Chimney).
5. 25m Move left and climb up the blunt arête on the left of Black Chimney to a small ledge.
6. 25m Move right into a narrow groove which is climbed to a chimney in easier ground.
7. 30m Pull out of the top of the chimney, and follow an easy ramp leading up to a spectacular overhung ledge.
8. 30m Crawl left from the belay and climb up across a slab to enter a narrow groove above (crux). This is followed more easily to a belay on the right below a broad scree gully.
9. 30m Finish up the frozen scree gully to the main scree terrace.

COIR' A' MHADAIDH:

Central Buttress, Right-Hand Groove – 120m III,4. P. J. Biggar, B. G. Hard. 25th February, 2001.

Climb the first 100m of Central Buttress. At the start of the 'steeper central section', the original route goes up a deep cleft. This was tried but is harder than this route and seemed undergraded except for the fattest conditions. Below and to the right of the cleft is an obvious slanting groove. Gain access to this (crux) and climb the groove, a slabby section and an icy ramp to finish.

SRON NA CICHE, Cioch Slab:

NOTE: A route description was received for Arrow Route Direct (Severe 4a), starting at the point where Arrow Route starts and climbing the slab directly to the top. J. R. Mackenzie has climbed this line before, also a line a few metres left of Slab Corner (VS), but does not claim a first ascent.

***Sternum* – 80m HVS 5a/b. D. Gardner, G. Holden. May, 1979.**

The route lies on the narrow buttress left of Crack of Doom (climbed in error for Rib of Doom, which was later done). Start from the terrace at the foot of Rib of Doom.

1. 40m 4c/5a Go up this for 6m, then move out left round an edge and follow a thin crack, at first near the edge but trending increasingly leftwards, to reach a platform under a steep wall.
2. 20m 5a/b Climb the wall, swing left to gain a dyke and continue to a small niche. Move out right and climb cracks up and right to a ledge.
3. 20m 4b Step right and climb a cracked wall to the glaci. Traverse right to the top of Crack of Doom.

MAD BURN BUTTRESS:

Midge-a-mad-tosis – 105m HVS. J. Buckley, N. Hunt, H. Richards, D. Bradburn. July, 1999.

Dries much faster than Mayday. Start 7m left of Mayday below a hanging block.

1. 20m 5a Mantelshelf on to the block and go up to a left-trending ramp line. Move left using a thin crack, then right to belay on Mayday.

2. 45m 4b Go up the corner for 3m, then strike leftwards up a slab. Continue trending leftward on slabs and go up a gangway to a large grassy ledge.

3. 40m 5a Step left into a groove and cross Mayday. Continue direct towards a shallow right-facing corner. From the base of the corner, step right to gain and finish up cracks.

BLAVEN, East Face, Main Wall:

The Whip – 55m H. Severe *. B. Bridgens, A. Hunt. 1st July, 2000.

Start at the left edge (the lowest point) of the Main Wall at the bottom of an obvious left-slanting hanging slab. This is right of the 'subsidiary prow' and left of Loss Leader.

1. 45m 4b Move up and step left on to the hanging slab. Follow the right edge of the slab until the slab widens and then moves up and left gain a basalt pavement. This leads to the top of the slab.

2. 10m Go straight up easy ground to the top.

ELGOL, Suidhe Biorach:

Lookout – 25m VS 4c. G. Muhlemann, M. Robson. 22nd May, 2000.

Takes a line up the arête between Plenty of Onomatopoeia and Rusty Old Wire. Start just left of the arête and climb direct to the top.

SUISNISH, Suisnish Pillar (M.R. 599 156):

Four kilometres south of Camus Malag, near the old settlement of Suisnish and below the broken buttresses of Carn Dearg is a prominent headland. It consists of a volcanic outcrop that has weathered to produce a crazy-paved slab and free-standing pillar that rise from the rocky beach. The rock is a very rough Olivine-Diorite? and dries very quickly. The first two routes climb the main slab which is 35m high and can be climbed almost anywhere.

Coffee Capers – 36m Severe *. D. McAulay, S. Todd, D. McIntyre. 14th October, 1999.

The left side of the main slab (back to the sea), starting at a black streak and taking a direct line on good rock.

Afternoon Tea – 36m V. Diff. D. McAulay, S. Todd, D. McIntyre. 14th October, 1999.

To the right of the pillar is a clean area of perfect cracked slabs. Go up this to reach a grassy and blocky ledge. Continue via a broken arête or a slab on the left.

The next routes all climb the pillar, being described from left to right:

Eiggbound – 20m H. Severe 4b. D. McAulay, T. Monnery. 7th August, 2000.

The obvious leftward-leaning crack/corner that leads up behind the pillar. Climb this to the saddle, then continue around the left side of the summit block to the top.

The overhanging continuation crack on the back of the summit block still awaits an ascent.

Rhum Crossing - 15m VS 4c *. D. McAulay (unsec.). 20th July, 2000.

Climb Eggbound to half height. Follow the horizontal break right to a good ledge, then continue easily up the slab to the top. The lower horizontal has also been climbed at 4b (T. Monnery, D. McAulay, 7th August, 2000).

Fighter Pilot - 20m HVS 5a/b **. D. McAulay, T. Walmsley. 27th July, 2000.

Climb the large, detached block in the centre of the seaward face. Make a committing move right using a downward-pointing flake into a small groove/niche below the left end of an overhang. Move up left and then back right above the overhang (good small cams). Continue direct to the upper slab and follow a crack to the top.

Dolphin Friendly - 20m HVS 5a **. D. McAulay, T. Walmsley. 27th July, 2000.

Bridge the wide chimney on the right of centre on the pillar (for 5m) before committing to the left wall using a big jug for the right hand. An interesting couple of moves gain a flat ledge which is followed left to gain a wide crack and horizontal break. Go up these more easily and follow the arête to the top.

Traditional Breakfast - 20m V. Diff. D. McAulay, J. Kentish. 20th July, 2000.

On the right side of the pillar a grassy ramp leads to the saddle between the pillar and the main slab. Walk up this or better climb the clean slab to the right, then step left to gain the saddle. Climb a left-slanting handrail to gain the summit block just below the top.

NEIST, Green Lady Area:

Double Exposure - E3 5c **. W. Gordon Canning, R. Lupton, L. Gordon Canning. 8th July, 2000.

Start just left of Potato Picker Fingers (SMCJ 2000). Follow a steep thin vertical crack and trend right to a niche. Swing left and follow a left-diagonal crack to the top.

The Sleeper - 30m VS 5a **. N. Bassnett, R. Brown, A. Holden. 6th May, 2000.

Starting on the arête right of New Order, climb the obvious S-shaped crack, taking the leftwards traverse high.

Truck-driving Man - 25m H. Severe 4b *. A. Holden, N. Bassnett. 6th May, 2000.

Start 2m right of The Sleeper. Climb a groove to a ledge at 5m. Move up into an open-book corner. Step left on to a flake, then climb the arête above direct.

The 'Less-than-Great Slab' 20m left of New Order has a left-facing corner on its left edge.

Hollow Horn - 25m E1 5b. R. Brown, N. Bassnett, A. Holden. 18th February, 2001.

Climb the slab, then the corner to the dominant roof. Pull right, then quickstep farther right to a wide crack. The sloping ledge above gives way to a shallow 'easier than it looks' corner and a finishing mantel on to a grassy bank.

Green Garter – 20m HVS 5a. A. Holden, R. Brown. 18th February, 2001.

Start 5m right of Hollow Horn at the centre of the slab below a left-facing hanging corner with three bulges. Ascend the slab pleasantly to the bottom of the corner. Climb the corner past the bulges taking care with a jammed flake on the slab on the left. At the top of the corner below a roof, traverse left across the slab to a sloping ledge. Finish up the corner on the left as for Hollow Horn. The inviting direct finish up twin cracks is unfortunately very unstable at the top.

Immediately left of Thousand Island (SMCJ 2000) is a vertical wide crack which holds a succession of overlaps.

Right-Hand Man – 40m VS 4c. M. Hudson, P. Arden. 20th February, 2000.

Follow offwidths past a series of overlaps. The right-hand performs a unique manoeuvre. An old-fashioned struggle.

Two metres left and downhill from Right-hand Man is a tall chimney crack with a jutting block 5m up, bounded on the left by a smooth wall.

Billionaire – 40m HVS 5b *. M. Hudson, A. Holden, P. Arden. 8th May, 1999.

Climb the crack past a bottomless chimney at half height. Continue direct past two more problematic bulges.

Financial Sector:

B.C.C.I. – 25m E2 5b/c **. C. Moody, L. Gordon Canning, C. Grindley. 3rd September, 2000.

Start just left of Fat Cats. Climb an awkward bulge, then follow a steep ramp up left.

The Lower Crag:

Turn left at the foot of the descent gully for the first route.

Whatever – 16m HVS 5a. D. Brown (solo). 30th May, 1999.

A line 5m to the right of Smeg. Good climbing on the lower cracks leads to a looser and easier finish.

The Lower Crag, Destitution Point:

Coitus Reservatus – 20m Severe 4a *. G. Latter, S. Casey. 6th June, 2000.

Round right of the clean slab of Man of Straw, the wall extending into the back of the geo becomes more broken. Climb easily over steps to beneath twin grooves in the upper half. Climb the rightmost one, finishing slightly right.

The Lower Crag, Poverty Point:

Lighter Fuel – 25m E1 5b *. C. Moody, C. Grindley. 21st October, 2000.

Climb a left-slanting crack just left of Recovery Day. At the top move right past a bulge and continue up trying to avoid other routes or finish up Recovery Day.

Yellow Walls:

Ten Bob Trip – 45m E1 *. A. Holden, M. Hudson. 10th October, 1999.

A strenuous and exposed excursion up and across the yellow wall left of Barabbas (SMCJ 2000). Start 2m left of the Barabbas groove below a steep crack.

1. 10m 5b Climb the crack strenuously to the large ledge of Questionnaire.

2. 22m 5a Climb the arête above for several metres until possible to traverse right across the face to a crack. Climb this to a sloping ledge in common with Questionnaire and climb its earthy corner above to finish.

Questionnaire – 50m VS 5a *. M. Hudson, A. Holden. 10th October, 1999.

The sharp-edged hanging chimney high on the cliff several metres left of Barabbas. Short-lived difficulties but rather spooky. Start 3m down and left of the Ten Bob start at a blocky corner. Climb this to a large shattered ledge, move right and continue easily up the arête. Tackle the chimney above and emerge on a sloping ledge. Move right again and finish up a rather worrying earthy corner shared with Ten Bob.

New Seafront Area (may have another name, Ed.):

The next routes are to be found on the other side of the impassable zawn. They are more difficult to approach: a scramble descent (Diff) can be made to this area down a blocky north-facing guano-filled gully 30m north of the zawn. Abseil option from a block at the top of the same gully. The line of the abseil is roughly the line of Kickabout. As for the Yellow Walls, this area is home to shag and fulmar colonies, and climbing should be avoided during the nesting season (March-August incl.)

NOTE: M. Hudson has renamed Zawn Ridge (*SMCJ* 2000) as Blizzard Ridge.

Ten metres left or north of Blizzard Ridge is an impressive overhanging wall. The next route climbs a line of weakness in its left-hand side marked by a triangular pod at 3m.

The Decider – 35m E1 **. M. Hudson, P. Arden. 19th February, 2000.

1. 20m 5b Climb the overhanging and bouldery start past the triangular niche to get back in balance at 5m. Continue up the steep chimney and swing right through a blocky gap to ledges.

2. 15m 4b Move right and climb the inviting slab. Finish over a short tower to the ridge.

Immediately left of *The Decider* is a chimney marking the left-hand end of the wall.

Cloudspotter – 30m Severe. M. Hudson, A. Hutt. 28th December, 1999.

Jam up the steep cleft to the midway ledge shared with *Decider*. Finish on looser ground.

Twenty-five metres left is a protruding tower with an obvious beak of rock on top. The next line climbs a straight crack up to the beak, ducking out of the final overhang. The line of this route is a useful abseil approach to the area.

Kickabout – 20m VS 4c. M. Hudson, A. Holden. 28th December, 1999.

Start from substantially higher platforms directly below the beak. Follow the cracks pleasantly to the overhang and hand traverse right into the gully.

Moving 25m left again and rounding a projecting buttress, a small bay is flanked at each end by a prominent tower. The first or southerly tower holds a striking corner finishing steeply up the tower.

Male Emotional Illiteracy – 20m HVS 5b *. A. Holden, M. Valentine. 21st February, 2000.

Climb the crack to ledges at three-quarters height. Finish directly, steeply, strenuously. Scramble to the top.

Sofa – 30m Severe 4b. M. Hudson, A. Hutt. 10th December, 2000.

Takes a pleasant enough line up the back of the bay between the twin towers. Start at sea level at an angled corner.

1. 10m 4b Climb the corner and a steep layback flake crack above to good ledges at 10 m.
2. 20m 4a Step left and climb the chimney-corner bounding the left end of the smooth wall. Belay or continue carefully up a loose groove above.

Box of Rain – 20m VS 4c. A. Holden, M. Hudson. 29th December, 1999.

Five metres right again, the bay is bounded by a second tower, split by a steep chimney which provides a grim but worthy outing.

The next route lies about 20m left of Box of Rain. Traverse along at sea level past an awkward step to a wall. On the right of this is a groove. Start here.

Primavera – 40m HVS 5a *. A. Holden, N. Bassnett, R. Brown. 17th February, 2001.

Climb the groove for 10m to an overlap. Move up and left on to a steep slab. Climb this to better holds. Finish directly up easier but sometimes suspect rock. An extra rope is useful for the belay.

Very New Seafront Area:

On the same sea-cliff and 200m-300m north lie a couple of enjoyable routes that are difficult to identify from above. The area is 100m south of the stone wall which runs up to the base of the upper crag, as mentioned in the guide. A tricky sea-level traverse to the area can be made at low tide and with calm sea only. An abseil approach is from two pieces of iron bedstead and some excavated blocks on the clifftop. The bedsteads can be located from afar by a low wooden post right beside them on the cliff edge. The abseil takes you down a gully or the face of a pillar: the two Portrait lines.

Skylarking – 20m VS. M. Hudson, A. Hutt, M. Price. 9th February, 2001.

Traverse 30m south (or right) from the gully along the sea-level terrace until progress is barred by a squat tower.

1. 10m 4c Starting at high tide level, climb the front of the tower to a spacious ledge. The slabby overlap provides the difficulty.
2. 10m - A straight-forward crack directly above the stance leads to a clean finish.

The pillar face below the abseil gives first-rate delicate face climbing.

Portrait Pillar – 25m HVS 4c **. M. Hudson, P. Arden. 21st February, 2000.

Climb the centre of the pillar. Absorbing moves and barely sufficient protection lead to blockier ledges at 20m. Finish direct.

Immediately left of the pillar is a blocky gully which provides a decent exit route.

Portrait Gully – 25m Severe. M. Hudson, P. Arden. 21st February, 2000.

Follow the gully, straying occasionally onto the right-hand rib.

The Ramp:

A Type of Cooker – 30m E1 5b *. A. Hart, C. Grindley, C. Moody. 2nd September, 2000.

Start 2m left of Curving Crack. Climb a thin corner, then use the crack left of the corner and sprauchle on to a sloping shelf. Continue up and right to the top.

Cumhann Geodha:

Low Potential - 15m H. Severe. S. Buchanan, T. Johnston. 23rd May, 1998.

From the end of the ledge to the left of The Old Warden, step left and climb the arête with little protection before taking a rightwards rising traverse to the top.

Quantum Tunnelling - 15m Hard Very Skinny. S. Buchanan (unsec.). 23rd May, 1998..

This line takes the inside of the chockstoned chimney on the right edge of the ledge. Squirm upwards, from the base of the chimney. Remove jacket, extraneous protection and helmet as the chimney narrows before arriving in daylight and climbing easier ground to the top. Not recommended for those with more than a 30ins. waist, claustrophobia or new lycra.

TROTTERNISH, The Quiraing:

Caduta Massi - 100m VS. M. Hudson, A. Holden. 11th June, 2000.

This expedition follows a protruding white dyke uphill to finish in a fine position on the western summit of the Prison. A fun way to learn that there is no climbable rock in the Quiraing. One single dyke, 4-5ft across, protrudes from the hillside in five jagged pinnacles. This feature is clearly visible in profile from the car park at the bealach as a series of jagged steps on the lower southern skyline of the Quiraing. Take the Staffin/Uig road and park at the pass as for the normal Quiraing footpath. Approach by this path, and on reaching the feature on the right or south known as the Prison (20-30min) drop southwards down slopes to the base of the first pinnacle, a impressive vertical fin of white rock.

The first pinnacle is a striking feature about 30m high and 1m-2m wide, vertical to start, and the meat of the expedition. (Purists will want to start by bouldering two lower pinnacles.) The climbing is not above 4b-c but the flakey rock and unreliable protection need a steady approach. The subsequent pinnacles are often boulderable and only pinnacle three presents any real difficulty. Each pinnacle can be tackled as a separate pitch, and the final belay is taken on top of the Prison in a dramatic spot looking back down onto the main footpath up to the Quiraing.

STAFFIN, Sgeir Bhan (Staffin Slip North):

The next line climbs an impressive crack 5m left of Mr Scratchy (*SMCJ* 2000).

Savage Son - 40m E3 5c *. D. Brown R. Brown, N. Bassnett. 29th May, 1999.

An impressive crack system which steepens at two-thirds height. Sustained and strenuous climbing on this section leads to easier ground above - move rightwards with care at the easier-angled ledge system at the top.

FLODIGARRY, South Tunnel Buttress:

Raining Men - 45m VS **. S. Broadbent, K. Wigmore. 5th April, 2000.

An exciting route following a line up cracks close to the arête right of Lucy in the Sky. Approach by abseiling down the arête which bounds the right-hand side of the south face (several stakes in place). A good semi-hanging belay can then be arranged at the bottom of a prominent crack on the south face, just above the wave splashed rocks below.

1. 25m 4c Climb up the excellent jamming crack until a good ledge is reached. The open groove above is climbed with less difficulty to a belay ledge (take care with loose blocks here).

2. 20m 4b Traverse left over a huge loose block to the pedestal flake on Spantastic pitch 2. From here, finish as for Spantastic up and left through the break in the upper overhangs.

Note: The route must have a lot in common with Captain Mainwaring (*SMCJ* 1998) and is rumoured to have been climbed before by W. Jeffrey.

Rude Awakening – 20m HVS 5a *. H. Jenkins, A. Baugh. 5th April, 2000.

An interesting route which climbs the stumpy sea stack in the bay next to South Tunnel Buttress. Approach by scrambling easily down the south side of the small bay, facing the south face of the stack. This route follows the obvious crackline leading to the highest point of the stack. Gaining the start of the crack is only possible at low tide, then pull right into a small niche. Leave this strenuously (crux) and continue more easily. Finish by pulling directly over the large block to land on the very top of the stack (abseil descent).

RUBHA HUNISH:

NOTE: The route named as Questionnaire (*SMCJ* 2000, p345) should be renamed as Metronome.

GRESHORNISH:

The Vibrator – 15m VSL (Very Severely Loose). M. Robson, G. Muhlemann, S. Richardson. 28th May, 2000.

This small, but shapely, sea stack consists of a slender finger of basalt in the small bay at NG 335551. Abseil down the cliff and scramble up to the base of the stack. Step left onto the landward face and climb steps and then a crack to the top. The stack is well named. Ask you partner to tap the base of the stack while you sit on top.

NORTHERN HIGHLANDS SOUTH AND WEST (VOLUME ONE)

THE SADDLE, Forcan Ridge, South Side:

Millenium Chimney – 130m III,5. D. Joy, S. Naylor, A. Nisbet. 1st January, 2001. A prominent chimney in the centre of the first and lowest buttress on the south-east side of the Forcan Ridge, doglegging left below a roof and often with ice on the slab below the roof. Climb the chimney and its dogleg left to traverse left to a ledge (30m). Continue up the chimney-groove and over an overhang at the top (20m). Finish more easily (45m, 35m).

A' CHRALAIG, Lochan na Cralaig:

The crag lies above the lochan at M.R. 094 156. Left of centre is a right-slanting easy gully with a short step low down and used for descent. Right of this is a steep buttress with a distinctive S-shaped wide crack in a smooth wall on its right-hand side. Right again is an easier angled buttress which curves up left.

Curly Gully – 120m III. D. McGimpsey, A. Nisbet. 16th January, 2001.

The gully right of the buttress with the S-shaped crack, finishing by the gully continuation on the left.

Curled Buttress – 120m III,4. D. McGimpsey, A. Nisbet. 16th January, 2001.
The easier angled curving buttress. Start by a steep chimney just left of its base. This leads to an easier upper section.

BEINN FHADA, Sgurr a' Choire Ghairbh NE Face:

Summit Central Buttress – 200m III. D. McGimpsey. 29th January, 2001.
Climbs the buttress between Left-Hand and Right-Hand Gullies. Start in Left-Hand Gully below where it narrows and traverse on to the centre of the buttress. Climb the buttress until it narrows and traverse left (just below a short left-facing corner) into a large right-trending fault. Follow this, easy at first, then over a step. Continue up the line which eventually becomes a shelf overlooking Right-Hand Gully. A hard slabby step gains the top of the buttress (but it is easier to gain the Right Gully top).

BIOD AN FHITHICH:

Ginger's Gully – Severe. A. C. Cain, D. Lewis. 1974.

This took the vegetated gully/corner line bounding the main face on its left. It contained an eagle's nest in 1974.

Bionic – 30m E3, two rest points ***. A. Nisbet, D. McGimpsey. 25th August, 2000.

A spectacular and sustained route up an overhanging stepped corner at the left end of the main face. Much steeper than it looks. Initially quite bold but well protected in the corner. Two rest points were used high in the corner but seconded free (E4 free?).

1. 10m 4c. The initial corner is black and vegetated so climb the rib on its left to a good ledge.
2. 20m 6a. Move out left and climb the wall left of the corner before moving back into the corner. Make a hard move up over an overhang, then pull up left to jugs. Return to the corner and climb it to a block. Abseil from an 8ft. sling round the block (*in situ*, but may blow off); reaching easy ground on the left would be about 4c but involve much gardening.

Biosynthesis – 110m HVS *. A. Mullin, A. Nisbet. September, 1998.

Cleaner left-hand variations to Biodirect but with some unprotected 4c. Start at a small groove which forms the first reasonable break in the overhanging lower section of cliff as one moves right up the rake.

1. 50m 4c. Climb up to the heather at the base of the groove. Step up left and make a short traverse along the lip of the overhang until better holds (but no runners) lead up left to a ledge. Climb fairly directly up a vague rib (a similar one farther right is the original route) to a small grass ledge.
2. 25m 4c. Go directly up over a small bulge to the recess below the corner.
3. 35m 4c. Step left and climb the rib left of the corner to finish up the final tower direct.

Biodirect – 110m VS *. C. Rowland, A. C. Cain (alt.). 5th May, 1974.

A direct line on fairly clean rock with positive holds but not many runners. The line is open to variation in the middle (i.e. follow your nose). Start as for Biosynthesis at the first reasonable break in the overhanging lower section of cliff as one moves right up the rake.

1. 45m 4c. Climb up into the heather-filled groove and step right near its top. Climb up, then slightly left and straight up to a small grass ledge.
2. 30m 4a. Go up into a slight corner which leads, trending slightly left, to a recess below a corner which is the only distinct feature in the upper half of the cliff.
3. 35m 4c. Go diagonally right across a slab below the corner (the corner is Hump) and step delicately into a shallow groove parallel with it. Go up this for a few feet, then trend slightly left to a heather terrace below a final tower on the left. Go up the final tower on its right side to the top.

NOTE: Hump is considered H. Severe 4a **, not V. Diff.

Intro One and Two – 60m VS/Severe. A. C. Cain, N. Cain. February, 1974 (precise line uncertain). Two routes as described by A. Mullin, A. Nisbet. 27th July, 1999. There is a subsidiary buttress below the right side of the main face and formed below the terrace. The buttress has a left-facing corner on its crest.

1. VS 4b. Climb the corner, then move out on to an undercut slab on its left and up its outside edge to finish up two slabs separated by heather.
2. Severe. Climb the rib right of the corner and continue up the two slabs keeping right of Intro One.

MAOILE LUNNDAIDH, Toll a' Choin:

Mica Ridge – II. D. McGimpsey, A. Nisbet. 16th December, 2000.
By the summer route.

Spiral Search – 120m IV,5. D. McGimpsey, A. Nisbet. 16th December, 2000.
A diagonal line of weakness across the very steep buttress well left of Mica Ridge. Start at the bottom left corner of the buttress and trend right, generally with awkward moves up and easy moves right. There was some ice and the crux, gaining a slab above a short wall to reach an easy ramp on pitch 2, probably requires some.

FUAR THOLL, North-East Flanks:

Spare Rib – 210m III,4. D. Joy, S. Naylor, A. Nisbet. 31st December, 2000.
The crest of the rib between the left and central parallel gullies, the crest being near the central gully. Start left of the crest and slant up right to join it. Follow the crest or close to it with one short technical but well cracked section to the final tier. This is easiest on the left but a fine twin-cracked chimney-groove just right of the crest gave a good finish.

Mainreachan Buttress:

Hanging Imminent – 160m IV,6. H. Burrows-Smith, J. Lyall. 16th January, 2001.
Climbs the left-hand of the three corners on the NE face of the buttress. Climb a steep icy crack (crux, easier with more ice) and follow the corner/ramp to the terrace. Continue to the left end of the upper tier and climb up right by a groove and ledges to the top.

SGORR RUADH:

Splintery Edge – III,4. D. McGimpsey, A. Nisbet. 6th January, 2001.
By the summer route. The top part obviously coincides with Ruadh Awakening.

Pit Bull Polka – 65m VI,7. D. McGimpsey, A. Nisbet. 6th January, 2001.

A steep line on the left wall of upper North Gully, above the Splintery Edge initial gully. The line takes a shallow groove on a slight crest between two big overhangs. Start about 40m above Splintery Edge and below the upper overhang. Take a line leading diagonally left, including an awkward move left round a bulge to the base of the groove. Climb the steep groove (crux) until flakes and blocks lead left to a good ledge (35m). Climb a ramp with a wide crack up left to a slight crest. Finish up a turfey groove and snow (30m).

BEINN BHAN, Coire na Feola:

Winklepicker – 150m IV,4. D. McGimpsey, A. Nisbet. 28th February, 2001.

On the broken ground on the left side of the corrie, before reaching Suspense Buttress, are two icefalls which are particularly prominent in cold conditions with little snow (for which they are described). This is the left icefall which flows over several tiers, the lowest being a narrow partially hidden groove and the crux being two steep walls of ice, always prominent.

Musselman – 100m IV,5. D. McGimpsey, A. Nisbet. 28th February, 2001.

The right icefall which flows down a shallow right-slanting gully with a steep exit which forms a wide groove of ice (with awkward ice umbrellas on the first ascent but could perhaps be Grade III,4). The lower pitches of low-angled ice can bank out. The start can be reached easily from the top of Unnamed by making a descending traverse. The next gully farther in to the corrie is an easy descent (about Grade I).

Bounty Hunter – 170m IV,5. D. McGimpsey, A. Nisbet. 28th February, 2001.

A sustained mixed route up a central line on Suspense Buttress. The lower rock band is breached by a right-slanting line of weakness. Start on the left side of the central subsidiary buttress, down right from The Acid Queen. Climb turf to gain the base of the diagonal line and walk a few metres right (10m). Go up, then traverse left to reach the diagonal line above its initial steep section. Follow it to a ledge (30m). Continue up the line and finish on its right to reach the terrace above (40m). Suspense Buttress traverses this terrace. Move right and climb a long V-groove (40m). Two short walls and a steep flakey groove just left of the crest lead to the start of the final horizontal arête (50m).

Cliffhanger – 170m V,6. D. McGimpsey, A. Nisbet. 2nd March, 2001.

A mixed route featuring a prominent chimney-crack high on the left side of the right recess of Suspense Buttress (high in the grade). Start at the back of the right recess and traverse a ledge leftwards (10m). Move up and left to climb a short cracked corner (left of a spikey rib) which gains the base of the chimney-crack. Step into the crack from the right and climb it to a ledge. Climb an exposed flake on the arête on the right to gain the terrace (50m). Traverse easily right to the left-hand of two grooves which lie above the recess. Climb the left-hand of these grooves to a ledge (30m). Continue up the groove to the crest, joined by Suspense Rib (40m). Finish up the crest (40m).

Suspense Buttress Direct – 175m IV,5. J. Ashby, L. Sell-Blackaby, M. Moran. 5th February, 2001.

A much better way of doing Suspense Buttress, keeping close to the crest, which runs parallel to Suspense Gully.

1. 50m. Start at the base of the right recess of Suspense Buttress. Go diagonally right to reach the crest next to Suspense Gully and follow it to a terrace. (The original route now makes an exposed traverse left above the recess.)
2. 40m. Go up the crest and climb a steep tier in the front face diagonally from right to left.
3. 45m. Traverse 15m left on a steep terrace until a slim groove allows the next tier to be surmounted; belay at the next break 10m higher (more direct versions will be considerably harder).
4. 45m. Climb an attractive corner line in the final tier to the top

A Phoit, Frontal East Face:

White Bhan Man – 170m V,5. G. Eittle, J. Lyall. 5th March, 1998.

The left-hand side of the face offers a series of short corners and grooves trending leftwards near the top. Start at a large block at the left side of the face.

1. 40m. Move up a little chimney on the right to walk along to another chimney. Above this, ascend to a steep wall.
2. 35m. Traverse left into and climb a big corner to exit right and go up the easier fault above to a big chimney.
3. 35m. Climb the chimney, then traverse up left below the very steep continuation. Keep moving left to rock ledges.
4. 40m. Step back right into the groove line on thin ice. Ascend to the next fault above, turning a roof on the left to reach the final tier.
5. Climb a thin leftwards corner into an obvious slot to finish.

Gingerbread – 170m V,6. G. Eittle, I. Taylor. 28th December, 2000.

This sustained mixed climb heads for and ascends the left-facing corner line half way up the cliff's most continuous section. Approximating the summer line.

1. 20m. Go easily up a leftwards fault to ledges.
2. 35m. Short walls lead up and right to a hidden corner, climbed to a big terrace and a rock rib on the right.
3. 35m. Ascend the right side of the rib to steep walls. Climb direct to the base of the corner line above.
4. 20m. Climb corners to belay on the right.
5. 20m. Go up the next corner line.
6. 40m. Step right and climb a final corner line to an easing.

Bhantasia – 200m VI,6. G. Eittle, M. Garthwaite. 9th January, 1997.

This route ascends the central fault line of left-facing corners, then the steep face.

1. 50m. Follow the iced fault line up left to a large ledge and a thread on the left.
2. 40m. Climb an iced groove just left of the main corner to easier ground and a tree below the main left-facing corner which bounds the central slabs.
3. 25m. Ascend the icy corner to an excellent thread.
4. 45m. Move up and right to follow ensuing walls and cracks to a rocky rib.
5. 40m. Easy ground leads to the final tier. Climb direct up good cracks.

Beinn Bhan Grooves – 140m IV,5. G. Eittle, J. Preston. 20th January, 1998.

At the far right-hand end of this east face, there is a large open corner system, topped by an obvious flake-crack.

1. 45m. Climb an easy leftwards groove system into the base of the corner line.

2. 25m. Climb the corner line up a wide crack.
3. 30m. Continue up several icy bulges.
4. 40m. Finish up a flake-crack through two tiers.

Coire an Fhamhair:

Impending Doom – 150m VI,6. E. Tressidur, A. Anderson. 9th February, 2001.
A steep and fairly thin icefall on the crest of the buttress right of Der Rise and Shine. The icefall was climbed for two pitches leading into a shallow gully, then trending left over easy mixed ground to join Der Rise and Shine high up.

NOTE: A thicker icefall to the right was also climbed at IV,4 and assumed to be The Dwarf Icefall.

Coire Toll a' Bhein:

Insufficient Evidence – 300m V,6. D. McGimpsey, A. Nisbet. 30th December, 2000.

It is unsure how this relates to Indecent Exposure so a separate description is given. Climb a shallow chimney on the face left of the crest of the pinnacled ridge to a shoulder on the ridge. Climb short chimneys up steps on the ridge crest to reach a barrier wall (old peg). Descend 10m right, then traverse a ledge leftwards for about 15m. Take a line back left up steep flakey ground (crux) to finish up a corner (which had been passed on the traverse) leading to a platform on the crest. Climb an awkward wall to the top of the pinnacle. Descend slightly along a sharp arête to the col. Climb an awkward wall, then finish more easily up the crest.

BEN DAMPH FOREST, Kinlochdamp Crag (Creag na Saobhaidhe):

Command and Conquer – 35m E3. M. Moran, D. Ross, M. Welch. 10th May, 2000.
Climbs the stepped and overhanging arête on the right edge of the leaning upper wall. Spectacular, but largely well-protected. Start 5m right of the chimney of Sleeping Dog Climb at a corner formed by a large detached block

1. 18m 5c. Climb the corner and bulging groove above, moving slightly left to gain the halfway ledge.
2. 17m 6a. Move up blocks on the left, then layback right on to the prow and pull directly over the large roof to gain a break. Move 3m left to a finishing groove.

BEINN DAMPH:

Calluna – 450m IV,5. A. Foster, J. Gibb, A. Nisbet (Right Finish). 8th February, 2001.

Left Finish – D. McGimpsey, A. Nisbet. 4th March, 2001.

A big gully which appears to end in a steep wall halfway up the face. Its ice is hidden even when climbing the lower gully but if the first ice pitch is formed, then it should be in condition. Climb the gully, easy at first, then a 15m ice pitch leading to an overhang. A thinly iced corner just to the right was climbed to below the steep wall and the split in finishes.

Right Finish: Traverse right to an apparent line of weakness leading on up. This was climbed, zig-zagging around to find the easiest route through turfey walls and finally finishing up the last chimney on the crest of Erica's Ridge. The thinly iced corner is the crux; the whole route might be Grade III in prime condition.

Left Finish: The direct and much better finish provides a long and steep ice pitch for the grade. Traverse left below the steep wall into a hidden icy groove and climb

this to easier ground. Follow the shallower gully system to the top, with a couple of bulges passed on the left.

LIATHACH, Coire Dubh Mor:

Penelope Pitstop – 300m IV,5. D. Amos, E. Gillespie, A. Nisbet. 11th February, 2001.

The right side of the buttress between West Gully and Spidean Way (the left side is easy). Climb the icefall which forms centrally in the lowest tier and up the terrace above (45m). Move left and climb a short icefall, then go 10m left and up two grooves with a left step (50m). Gain the big terrace above and traverse right to near the right edge of the buttress. Climb tricky walls on this crest, then two easier pitches up the crest leading to easy snow slopes.

Coire na Caime:

Titanium Buttress – 200m III. B. R. Shackleton, W. Jeffrey, N. Tilston. 27th March, 1999.

Go up snow to the start of Titanium Gully. Climb the buttress to the left in 2 pitches to reach snow and climb up to where Titanium Gully goes through the next buttress. Cross to the right and trend up right on snow to a gully which is sheltered by a rock buttress to its left. Climb the gully and belay on the left before the crest above is reached. Make a traverse right on to the buttress and then up to reach the snow slopes above in two pitches.

Meall Dearg, North Face:

Didi Buttress – 250m III. A. Nisbet. 30th March, 2001.

The buttress between the two well-defined gullies at this end of the face and above the start of the ramps of North Buttress. Start at the lowest point of the buttress, close to Gully Obscura. Climb a groove system to a steep band. Traverse right along a ledge to where the steep band is less steep and climb shallow grooves to its top. Traverse back left to the original groove and follow it to a steep tier near the top. Move right to a crest and zig-zag up to the crest of Meall Dearg.

Nanda Gully – 250m III,5. P. Faulkner, B. Mason, A. Nisbet. 29th January, 2001.

A long and fairly well defined gully right of Gully Obscura and crossing the two diagonal shelves. The first pitch is usually insufficiently iced so start by climbing a turfy groove 10m to the left to reach the first shelf. Cross this, gain the gully and follow it throughout, all straight-forward except for a short vertical pitch which was passed by climbing the corner on its immediate left (although the pitch itself might have been easier). The gully continues to the crest of Meall Dearg.

North Ridge – IV,5. D. McGimpsey, A. Nisbet. 19th December, 2000.

Start in the middle of the north face, just left of a small left-slanting watercourse which widens with height, and climb a narrow left-slanting blunt ridge through several tiers. Previously called North Flank and described in the guide as being right of the watercourse. A pleasant route in winter keeping to the crest as closely as possible. The third tier is the crux, with some thin moves.

BEINN EIGHE, Coire Mhic Fhearchair, Far East Wall:

The Sting Direct – 90m E1. T. Rankin, G. Robertson, J. Currie. 23rd June, 2000.

1. 45m 5c. Take the obvious crackline starting a little way up the lower groove and follow it all the way to the top of the huge flake on pitch 2.
2. 45m 5b. Follow the normal route initially (pitch 2), then grooves directly to the top (i.e. left of the final chimney).

Sunscreen – 110m E5. T. Rankin, G. Robertson (on sight). 23rd June, 2000.

This excellent varied route takes a direct line based on the wall and slight hanging groove left of Moonshine. Not as well protected as other routes hereabouts. Start at the base of the groove of The Sting.

1. 35m 6a. Climb directly up through a bulging nose to a depression in the centre of the wall. Follow the obvious line trending slightly right on dwindling holds until a scary step up gains better holds leading directly to the horizontal fault. Pull left through the overhang to small ledges.
2. 25m 6b. Climb up left across twin grooves to gain the arête forming the right edge of a deep groove (The Sting). Move delicately up, then make a desperate move back right to better holds at the base of a slim hanging groove. Climb the strenuous groove until a standing position can be gained on a jug on the right arête. Continue straight up for 10m (common with Moonshine), then pull left into a niche under the huge roof and belay on the left.
3. 50m 5b. Step left round the edge into a corner, then up this to a swing back right on to the face. Climb straight up past a small niche and continue up the fine wall to easy ground and the top.

Eastern Ramparts:

Cornice Groove – VI,7. A. Nisbet, J. Preston. 21st November, 2000.
A combination of ice and mixed climbing up the icy groove.

Fairytale Groove – VII,8. B. Fyffe, E. Tressidur. 25th March, 2001.

Follow the summer line into and up the wide crack above the roofed recess for about 6m. The main groove moves left here but go right up cracks for 15m to a big ledge. Move right to a rib and finish up this easier blocky rib to reach East Buttress.

Central Buttress:

NOTE: A route description has been received on the lower tier quartzite of Central Buttress. How it coincides with existing routes (like The Porcine Connection) is unsure as yet.

West Buttress:

Flying Fortress – 50m V,7. A. Nisbet, J. Preston. 15th November, 2000.
By the summer route.

Sail Mhor:

Overkill – V,7. D. McGimpsey, A. Nisbet. 27th December, 2000.

A much better route in winter, up a fine exposed face with a couple of short hard sections, well protected. Traverse in from No. 2 Gully (now named Jenga) along an easy but narrow grass ledge. From here, climb as for the summer line until after the sharp corner. The natural winter line then goes slightly right and back left.

The Darkness Beckons – 215m VII,7. C. Dale, M. Moran. 29th January, 2001.

Imposing tiered sandstone cliffs form a continuous wall down and left of No. 2

Gully (Jenga). The following route is based on a big left-facing corner line starting near the top of the lower couloir. Start where Jenga turns left, 30m below its first main pitch.

1. 17m. Make a delicate traverse left to gain the corner (a direct start might be recommended).
2. 18m. Sustained climbing up the corner; swing left at the top to below the continuing cleft.
3. 20m. Go up the V-wedge corner, then escape right 5m along an exposed ledge to a block.
4. 30m. Go 5m right and climb a fine chimney in a detached pillar to a terrace; traverse 10m left to a cracked block back in the corner line.
5. 25m. Enter the innocuous groove on the left and struggle up it to a larger terrace; traverse 10m left to below a break in the next tier.
6. 55m. Climb the break to easier snows below the next tier.
7. 50m. Go up the left side of the tier to gain easier ground; 200m of easy climbing to the summit of Sail Mhor.

Creag Mhor (Independent Pineapple Cliff):

Thin Man's Ridge – V,7. N. Johnson, D. McGimpsey. 17th December, 2000.

By the summer route except that the final 5m wall was passed by a chimney on its immediate left.

Pineapple Sunday – 100m E2 5b **. D. McGimpsey, A. Nisbet. 23rd July, 2000. Climbs the outside face of the Independent Pineapple to provide spectacular situations. Start at the foot of Chockstone Gully about 5m out from the chockstone.

1. 45m 5b. Climb a steep crack leading over a bulge (crux) into a groove. Move left to a ledge and immediately back into the groove. Trend right up the wall until above the chockstone, then climb straight up walls left of a big crack to a ledge below the right-hand of two cracks in the face of the pinnacle. The protection is good but strenuous to place.
2. 35m 5a. Move into the left-hand crack and climb it until it ends. Return to the right-hand crack and climb its continuation to near the pinnacle top until a step on to the right arête leads to a juggy finish up the pinnacle.
3. 20m 5b. Climb the steep wall behind the pinnacle to finish up a groove (left of the clearly easier finish to Pineapple Chimney and also left of a corner).

Pineapple Chimney – VI,7. A. Nisbet, J. Preston. 17th December, 2000.

By the summer route except that the outside of the chimney was climbed to the top of the Pineapple (the summer route made a subterranean traverse through to the opposite side, then gained the top from there).

BEINN DEARG, Coire Beag:

Red Dwarf – 100m IV,6. D. McGimpsey, A. Nisbet. 27th January, 2001.

A short but well cracked ridge at Map Ref 907 609 and climbed in five short pitches. Start just left of the toe and go easily up right on to the crest. Climb a right-slanting ramp (steeper than it looks) leading to a terrace. Cross this and pass a steep wall by going left and back right. Climb a well cracked slabby wall on the right, then finish by two short walls with good cracks.

Choire Mhoir:

At the top of this corrie is a triangular buttress.

Red Rag – 110m VII,7. R. Webb, N. Wilson. December, 2000.

This climbs the extremely obvious and steep groove that descends from the apex of the crag. A 5-star route.

Red Chimneys – 120m VI,6. R. Webb, M. Hind. January, 2001.

Start from the lowest point of the crag, down and right of Red Rag at a deceptively steep chimney/crack. Climb this to a ledge and move right to an obvious chimney, climbed to a higher ledge below a smooth corner. Climb the right arête of the corner to gain the base of a wicked offwidth/layback/ice smear. Grovel horribly up to a welcome ledge. Climb straight up to reach a really vicious narrow chimney. Either squeeze up painfully or take the outside option (bold) to finish.

BEINN ALLIGIN, Coire nan Laogh:

High on the left side of Coire nan Laogh are three parallel icefalls at M.R. 858 596 and altitude about 750m. These were climbed by J. Preston, B. Clarke and M. Weldon on 11th February, 2001. Each had a direct entry pitch of 35m Grade II followed by the main icefall. Descent from the right two was by abseil down the right icefall but the left icefall continued for 10m as an ice umbrella and a 100m traverse right regained the corrie base. An alternative is a Grade I continuation of the right icefall. The grades were (left to right): 45m IV,5, 35m III, 35m IV,4.

TORRIDON SANDSTONE CRAGS, Creag na Botaigeann (M.R. 928 533):

A line of crags overlooking the Abhainn Thrail and situated behind (south of) Seana Mheallan has two fine walls. A visit can be combined with one of the crags on Seana Mheallan.

Approach: Park just inside a track which leads from immediately south of the bridge across the River Torridon at M.R. 903 550. The track leads to a new house. Follow it and a stalkers path along the banks of the Abhainn Thrail until steep heather leads to the crag. When high, the river below the crag can be crossed using an unusual barrier construction. 1½ hours.

Lammergeier – 35m E2 5b **. D. McGimpsey, A. Nisbet. 29th July, 2000.

In the centre of the cliff is a large steep wall. This route climbs the central groove on the wall, sustained but well protected. Start at the top of a heather bay below the centre of the wall (overlooked by birch trees on the left). Climb steep heather to reach a crackline in the shallow groove. Climb the shallow groove to reach a block roof. Pass this on the left to finish up the deeper groove which slants slightly left.

Tjasa – 40m E3 6a **. D. McGimpsey, A. Nisbet. 30th July, 2000.

Climbs the pink right side of the wall, facing slightly more west. The pink is perfect water-washed rock providing a superb finish, but slow to dry. Start as for *Lammergeier*.

1. 20m 5a. Climb the heather to the crackline. Traverse 5m right on heather and climb a corner, then go diagonally right to a ledge just short of a big grassy ledge.
2. 20m 6a. Go on to the big grassy ledge and climb a tricky corner at its near (left) end. Go up slabbier ground to gain and climb an overhanging crack leading to the top.

The Bolting Block:

A huge cubic block at the right end of the cliff has three fine cracklines in its clean smooth right-hand face, the left two being visible from a distance. The three routes have a common start, at the right end of a low roof which is at the base of the right-hand face, gained by a scramble up grass and heather (or abseil from the top).

Phantom Fencer – 35m E2 5c **. D. McGimpsey, A. Nisbet. 30th July, 2000.
Climbs the left-hand crack in a superb situation, although the crack itself is only 5a. Climb on to a ledge with trees on the right. Step left on to the lip of the roof and climb a crack (crux). Go up and slightly left to reach a bulging band. Climb through this by a crack on the right of a large block, then swing left to climb to a small tree. Traverse left to a small ledge on the arête. Climb the fine left crack to the top.

Two Bolts and Some Bailer Twine – 30m E2 5c **. M. McLeod, C. Moody, R. Watson. 6th May, 1995.

Originally climbed avoiding the hard initial crack on the right (then E1 5b) but better starting as for Phantom Fencer to the small tree. Climb the finger crack which runs up from the tree to the top.

Dhanakosa – 30m E5 6a **. I. Taylor (unseeded). 9th May, 1996.

Climbs the thin crack right of Two Bolts, bold and committing. Start up the initial crack as for Unnamed/Two Bolts, then climb direct to blocks. Climb the thin crack initially via pockets right of the crack to gain the overlap. Pull over the overlap and follow the continuation crack to the top.

Seana Mheallan:

Thunderbird – 30m E3 6a **. D. Cuthbertson, J. George. 25th June, 2000.

Start as for Sandpiper. Climb the crack which trends left into the corner of The Torridonian. Go up this for a few metres and take the flying hand traverse out towards the left arête. Fortunately, initiating the first moves provides the crux. At the arête, step left and follow a short crack in a good position to easier ground.

Western Sector:

Skye and Lochalsh against Trugs - 15m HVS 5a *. C. Moody, C. Grindley. 16th July, 2000.

The right-slanting crack right of Fleeced.

Outswinger – 15m E2 5c *. D. McGimpsey, A. Nisbet. 15th July, 2000.

Climbs a corner with two stepped roofs on the left side of the fine steep wall which lies to the right of Flaky. Start at the dirty corner beside Flaky and pull up right into the start of the stepped corner. Follow it round the roofs and up to the top.

Quartz Warts – 20m Severe *. C. Moody, C. Grindley. 16th July, 2000.

A right-slanting crack left of Off with her Head.

DIABAIG, Peninsula Crag, Ugly Wall:

A Mugs Game – 20m HVS 5a. D. McGimpsey, A. Nisbet. 28th July, 2000.

A straight up line through the start of Ugly Mug. Start 2m right of the pile of blocks and climb direct over a bulge, then a second bulge (common to Ugly Mug) into the triangular niche. Exit the niche leftwards along a small ramp to finish more easily.

Handsome Hog – 20m E3 5c **. D. McGimpsey, A. Nisbet. 28th July, 2000.

A strenuous direct line with reasonable protection up the highest and steepest part of the wall. Start at the left side of a black wedge of rock under the lowest overhang (about 5m left of Ugly Wall). Pull through the overhang, then move 2m right along a handrail and pull leftwards through the next overhang. Climb up past a knob of rock to a cramped rest. Pull through the next overhang and reach into a small V-niche. Finish direct through more overhangs.

Pretty Crag:

Pretty Midgie – 10m E1 5b. J. Currie, T. Rankin. 22nd July, 2000.

The right-hand crackline gives a sustained route.

Crofters Crag:

Bleeding the Cow – 15m HVS 4c. G. Robertson. 22nd July, 2000.

The left-hand end of a small overhanging wall at the left end of the crag, climbed on excellent holds. Serious.

The Act – 15m E1 5a. G. Robertson. 22nd July, 2000.

Right of Bleeding the Cow is a little left-trending groove over a bulge, then trending right to the top.

Right of Tenure – 20m H.Severe. G. Robertson. 22nd July, 2000.

The obvious corner left of 8-Ace, swinging right below the unappealing final overhanging section.

Diabaig Tiger – 20m E3 6a. T. Rankin, J. Currie, G. Robertson. 22nd July, 2000.

The corner and crackline right of Applecross Jam provides another excellent route. Finish up the left-hand slanting crack.

Rolling Wall:

Aquamarine – 25m E3 6a ***. R. Durran (unseconded). 14th May, 2000.

The obvious right-hand crack on the wall. Start easily, then swing through the bulge strenuously from the right to gain the crack, which is sustained to easier ground.

The Orange Wall:

Mustn't Grumble – 10m VS 5a. R. Simpson, B. Watson. 30th April, 2000.

Start at a Y-shaped crack. Follow the left-slanting crack through a bulging slab. Step left and finish up another cracked bulge. Well protected. (This may be a variation of Ewar Woowar?).

Loch a' Bhealaich Crag (M.R. 800 584):

A crag above the stream just below the outflow of Loch a' Bhealaich Mhoir (there is no crag symbol on the 1:50000 map). The crag has a large overhanging wall at its top right side.

Parasol – 35m E1 5b *. D. McGimpsey, A. Nisbet. 1st September, 2000.

This route climbs the pillar on the left side of the crag, with an overhanging downward-pointing toe. The hard sections are well protected. Climb a groove which curves up left of the toe to reach a capping roof. Swing right and traverse right

to reach the crest. Climb the flat-fronted crest to a tree growing out of a horizontal crack. Go right, then up on to a sloping ledge. Finish slightly leftwards to a belay 5m below the top (it is easy to the top but there is no belay).

SLIOCH:

The Way Forward – 250m II. V. Chelton, N. Johnson, D. McGimpsey, S. Mearns. 28th January, 2001.

Follows the rocky front of the gently-angled buttress right of Main Buttress. The lowest rocky tier was climbed by the easiest line just right of centre (short technical 4 moves initially) but can be avoided. Continue up the front through a steepening at half height by turf grooves just to the left of centre to reach a level rocky ridge leading to the top of Easy Gully.

Winter Buttress – V,6. N. Wilson, R. Webb. 15th April, 2000.

A winter version of Main Buttress. Find the bottom left-hand corner of the main buttress, move up an easy gully for about 25m past an overhanging wall on the left, to reach an obvious turf ramp.

1. 25m. Climb the steepening ramp to reach the right-hand end of a large ledge.
2. 30m. Move to the centre of the ledge and climb grooves to reach a steep terrace, move left to the skyline.
3. 150m. Climb progressively easier grooves in the buttress edge to reach the col at the top.

MEALL A' GHIUBHAS, The Great Red Slab:

Pawn Broker – 120m V. Diff. A. Nisbet. 9th October, 2000.

A scrappy line up the left edge of the main slab.

Lonesome Pine – 120m V. Diff *. A. Nisbet. 20th October, 2000.

A line up the centre of the slab via a large area of clean red smooth slab.

NOTE: The Great Red Slab (*SMCJ* 2000, p354) is a variation start to Great Expectations, only about 10m being separate. Another variation, up a corner to the left in the middle section, was climbed by A. Nisbet.

Allt Bhanamhoir Area:

Falls of Bhanamhoir, Resignation Variation – 45m IV,4. N. Johnson, V. Chelton, B. Timms. 10th February, 2001.

Climbs the right-hand wall of the very steep main pitch. On this occasion the main fall did not form a complete column, incredibly spectacular none the less. Climb a steep initial section, then move right on to a heathery wall which formed a thick icefall. Return back into the main small gorge above.

On the Skyline – 90m IV,5. N. Johnson, V. Chelton, B. Timms. 10th February, 2001.

Climbs the icefall draining from the obvious cleft on the skyline above and left of the falls of Bhanamoir (M.R. 980 653). Consists of two pitches of good ice, the second having a 20m vertical step.

STONE VALLEY CRAGS, Playtime Wall Area:

The next four micro routes are left of Playtime Wall and climbed by J. Preston in October, 1999 while the last two are right of it.

1. 10m 5a. The first line right of broken ground at the left end of the crag and 12m left of Playtime Wall. Go up to a triangular ledge sprouting a sprig of heather, then up the mossy crack above.
2. 10m 5a. An obvious wide mossy crack is harder than it looks.
3. 10m 5b. A thin crackline with painful pockets climbed direct.
4. 10m 5a. Go up to a ledge, then up and swing left.

School's Out – 15m E4 6b. R. Anderson. 7th May, 2000.

Right of Playtime Wall is a smooth area of rock with an obvious brown streak running down it. Move up a thin crack and reach holds out on the left in the brown streak, then climb the cracks to the top.

Primary Care – 15m VS 4c. R. and C. Anderson. 7th May, 2000.

The cracks just right of School's Out.

BAOSBHEINN, Creag an Fhithich, North-West Face:**M.R. 857 676 NW-facing Cliff Base 550m**

The triangular face that overlooks Gairloch has a very open aspect and is the result of a huge landslide in post-glacial times, as per the great Beinn Alligin gash (*SMCJ* 1988). Below and left of this landslide is a steep cliff which provides some good icefall climbing in cold weather. The icefalls end on a terrace. From here, either traverse left along the terrace to a belay on the crest. Continue up and right on turf steps until an easy ridge is reached leading to the top (100m), or traverse right along the terrace to the left side of the landslide (60m) and a quick descent (both options are Grade II).

Scalagwag – 100m V,6. D. McGimpsey, A. Nisbet. 3rd March, 2001.

The leftmost icefall, which features a prominent column forming over an overhang. Climb ice to the base of the column (rock runners high on right). Step left on to the column and climb it to a terrace (30m). Cross the terrace (20m) and climb the continuation icefall via a steep ramp. Go slightly left and finish up a vertical corner to the upper terrace (50m).

Beachcomber – 95m V,5. V. Chelton, N. Johnson, D. McGimpsey. 8th February, 2001.

A central line. Start up and right where the ice is more extensive.

1. 40m. Go up easy iced slabs to an icy corner-chimney. Climb this to a small snowy bay.
2. 55m. Continue up the line of steep icy corners above to a terrace (pitch could be split).

Right Icefall – 60m IV,5. D. McGimpsey, A. Nisbet. 3rd March, 2001.

The rightmost ice line. An iced groove at the start was incomplete but can form, so the route was started by traversing in from the right. Climb the rightmost icy groove, then move left to climb steep ice to the terrace.

North-West Ridge – 150m to scrambling II. D. McGimpsey. 8th February, 2001. The attractive-looking ridge on the right of the landslip and starting at M.R. 855 675 has a disappointing upper half.

RAVEN'S CRAG, Fruity Crag:

Blaeberry – 10m H. Severe 4b. A. Nisbet. 9th October, 2000.

Right of Paw-paw are two flake-corners facing each other with a white speckled wall between them. Climb the wall, starting at its right edge and finishing in the centre.

NOTE: (From M. Hind):

J. Findlay and myself either led or soloed about 17 routes on Fruity Crag, Vegie Crag and two other crags in May 1995 therefore predating those for 1998. It appears that we climbed Banana, Kiwi, Starfruit, Pineapple and Paw-Paw as well as two others on Fruity Crag. Passion Fruit was not climbed but looked as if it had been cleaned for climbing. On Vegie Crag, Neep, Swede, Sweet Potato and Turnip were climbed as well as another three lines, providing good soloing with very soft landings. Towards the north down into the gully we climbed on a crag of about 30m in height. I soloed a line on the left in wellies hence Wellie Crag while Justin did something on the right (around H. Severe?). Above this crag another line was soloed.

Lochan Fuar Crag (M.R. 800 709):

A gneiss outcrop close to the path which leads to Ravens Crag. Continue past Raven's Crag until Lochan Fuar is reached. The crag has an obvious overhang which runs its whole length at half height.

Hungover – 10m VS 4c. T. Doe, A. Brooks. 17th October, 1999.

Start slightly left of centre and climb a slab to the overhang. Pull through and step left.

Loch Braigh Horrisdale Crag (M.R. 802 703):

Continue farther along the path to Loch Braigh Horrisdale. The gneiss crag is situated 100m past the steep bridge crossing the burn. It has an obvious off-width corner-crack formed by a massive detached block.

Burke and Hair – 15m Severe. A. Brookes, T. Doe. 17th October, 1999.

Start directly below the corner-crack. Climb past a holly bush and ascend the crack.

Evil-hearted Ewe – 15m E1 5b. T. Doe, A. Brooks. 17th October, 1999.

A sustained pitch which climbs the right edge of the detached block, offering bold climbing on scary rock. Start right of Burke and Hair below the obvious flakes.

AN GROBAN, Flowerdale Bastion (M.R. NG 843 745):

At the very top of Flowerdale, to the left of the river, stands this steep two-tiered crag. The Lower Wall is much the more amenable, but the upper crag is vertical to slightly overhanging for 30m, with substantial roofs adding to its defences. The upper crag (The Bastion) possesses some very impressive unclimbed lines. The rock is gneiss, exposed along the bedding plane, which creates flaky, juggy holds

in places, but also areas of less sound rock, with some calcification. The two tiers are well separated, with a spacious terrace below The Bastion, equipped with a wonderful view and capacious flat luncheon stone.

Approach: From the main road (no cars allowed on the road to Flowerdale Mains), take the signposted way to Flowerdale Waterfall, continue over a stile and by a rough track over the meadows to the top of the glen. About 1hr.

Descent: On the left for both tiers.

The Scaling Ladder – 30m VS *. D.S.B. Wright, J.R. Mackenzie. 16th June, 2000. A pleasant route on mainly good rock. Just left of the lowest rocks on the Lower Wall is a tree. This climb starts up the rib to its right.

1. 20m 5a. The rib leads to a ledge. Go right along this to an undercut crack, up and by a delicate move left, gain easier ground and a ledge.

2. 10m 4b. Go straight up rough slabs to finish direct by a small crack.

Ballista – 30m VS 4c. J. R. Mackenzie, D. S. B. Wright. 16th June, 2000.

To the right of The Scaling Ladder is a leftward-facing crack. Climb this, then continue by thin cracks on excellent rock slightly rightwards to small walls and belay at the top of the tier.

Bastionard – 35m E2 5b **. J. R. Mackenzie, D. S. B. Wright. 16th June, 2000.

This climb takes the easiest line on the main part of The Bastion. It was cleaned on abseil but a few doubtful holds remain. Protection is mainly good, although strenuous to place. Start at the third nest of large spikes rightwards from the huge unclimbed dièdre. Climb the crack, keeping right where it twins, steeply up to a projecting block and hands-off rest below the crux. Continue up the crack into a left-facing groove, when a step right at 25m leads to easier ground. Go up to a ledge and belay well back. Steep and sustained.

GAIRLOCH CRAGS, Rubha Reidh:

A small inlet at the north end of the lighthouse car park has some non-tidal buttresses. The first steep small wall on the right, after the descent gives:

Chicken Run – 14m E1 5c. N. Bassnett, R. Brown. 26th October, 1999.

The finger width crack left of centre.

LOCH TOLLAIDH, Band Zero:

Closest to the road, these smaller crags are nevertheless worthwhile, with mainly excellent rock.

Strongbow – 20m VS 4c. G. Ettle, D. S. B. Wright. 24th June, 2000.

This is the left-hand of twin curving cracks seen on the leftmost crag of the band. It is climbed on good rock and protection.

Unnamed – 20m H. Severe 4b. P. Tattersall, J. Buchanan. 29th June, 2000.

The right-hand crack.

The Dreamcoat – 20m HVS 5a. G. Ettle, D. S. B. Wright. 24th June, 2000.

This takes the next main crag to the right, with excellent red rock on the lower part

and more lichenous grey rock above. Start up a crack, then make delicate moves left in to the middle of the wall. The upper slab is easier, but unprotected.

The Ewe Walls:

Incisor – 30m HVS 5a *. T. Doe, A. Tooth. 23rd September, 2000.

Climbs the arête and overhanging corner to the left of Ewereka. Start directly below the overhanging corner. Pull through the overhang and into the cracked corner.

New Horizons – 15m VS 4c. T. Doe, A. Tooth. 23rd September, 2000.

Start 20m to the right of Ewereka below an obvious grass-choked corner. Climb directly towards the base of the corner, step left into a triangular niche and take the overhanging groove line above.

Fraggle Rock:

Welcome Home – E3 5c. P. Tattersall. 2000.

A crackline just left of Joyful Departure.

They Think it's all Overhang – 25m HVS 5a. J. and D. Preston. 29th April, 2000.

Start 4m right of the red intrusion of Waldorf, beneath an overhang. Climb straight up to the overhang and through it leftwards on good holds. Finish direct via a left-facing corner.

The Bulge – 20m HVS 5a. J. and D. Preston. 30th May, 1999.

Start about 4m left of Cookie Monster. Climb up to a small niche, then steeply over the bulge on good holds. Finish direct via grooves, cracks and ribs.

The Cloiche Wall:

Unnamed – 25m Mild VS 4b. G. Ettle, J. Lyall. May, 1999.

To the left of Someone Else's Dream is a curving pillar. Climb an obvious cracked groove, trending up right to a difficult move right into finishing cracks in the upper pillar.

Upper Tier, Fetish Crag:

Left of the more obvious Red Dwarf (well seen from the car park as a small slab of bright red rock split into two parts by a central crack) is an area of steep walls and overhangs.

Viagra Falls – 25m E1 5b. P. Tattersall and J. Buchanan. June, 2000.

The most obvious line on the right of the crag.

Brewer's Droop – 25m E2 5b. P. Tattersall, J. Buchanan. June, 2000.

Left of Viagra Falls, the prominent left-trending crack.

Stiff Egg White – 25m E2 5c. P. Tattersall, A. Katzenmeier, C. Meek. June, 2000.

Left again, a direct line up the wall and roof.

Buttock Buttress:

Yabbandit – 20m VS 5a. G. Ettle, D. S. B. Wright. 3rd May, 2000.

Climbs a steep 6m wall on the right cheek of the buttress, finishing easily up slabs and exiting left.

Hidden Crag (The Troll Wall):

There is a smaller crag to the left of the main wall.

Tasty Little Number – 20m HVS 5a. P. Tattersall, J. Buchanan. 12th May, 2000.
The wall at the left-hand end of the smaller crag.

Mother Earth – 20m E1 5b. P. Tattersall, J. Buchanan. 12th May, 2000.
A groove and flake-line to the right of the previous route.

Bradán – 20m HVS 5a. C. Meek. 2000.
The left-hand of twin crack-lines 1m apart, right of Mother Earth.

Breac – 20m HVS 5a. C. Meek. 2000.
The right-hand crack.

Unnamed – 20m VS 4c. P. Tattersall, J. Buchanan. 2000.
To the left of the toe of the smaller buttress, a slab leads to the highest point.

Unnamed – 20m HVS 5a. P. Tattersall, J. Buchanan. 2000.
From the toe of the buttress, this line makes use of all available rock, finishing at the same point as the previous route.

Social Club – 35m E2 5b. P. Tattersall, L.N. Hughes. August, 2000.
Just right of the left edge of the main crag, a short flake leads to a shallow scoop, a wall and then easier climbing.

Unnamed – 35m E4 5c **. P. Thorburn, J. Preston. 3rd May, 2000.
Climbs the wall to the left of Water Lily. Hard at the start, with an easier but sparsely protected wall to finish.

Inlet Wall:

This is the impressive crag situated at the head of the inlet on the shore of the loch.
The one existing route takes an unlikely-looking line for the grade up wild terrain.

Lifeline – 30m E3 5c ***. P. Tattersall, C. Meek. 23rd August, 2000.
The route follows the obvious crackline, with a cleaned ledge part-way up. One of the best routes at Loch Tollaidh.

Wee Lochan Crag:

Second Charge Direct – E2 5c. J. Preston, D. McGimpsey. 23rd April, 2000.
Climb direct from the overlap to the top.

Vote Wigley – 15m E1 5b. D. McGimpsey, J. Preston. 23rd April, 2000.
Climb the folded strata on the wall 4m right of Fourth Dimension.

Underneath the Arches – 15m Mild VS 4b. J. Preston, D. McGimpsey. 23rd April, 2000.

Start at the left end of a curving overlap which is right of Dave's Route. Move up and right underneath the overlap to its end, then finish direct. Climbing direct to the right end of the overlap is the same grade.

Pullover – 15m VS 5a. J.Preston, D.McGimpsey. 23rd April, 2000.

On the right is a small arch with black seepage underneath. Make reachy moves on good jugs through the roofed arch. Follow flakes leftwards to finish direct.

GRUINARD CRAGS, The Beach Wall:

This is the black wall at the far end of the main beach to the north of the car park. There are two steeper areas of rock with the left-hand section forming a flat-fronted tower with a crack up its centre just before the crag turns into a grassy bay.

Unnamed – 20m E3 5c **. F. Fotheringham, I. Brodie. 1998.

The crack in the front face of the tower, climbed direct and finishing left of the capping block.

Unnamed – 20m E2 5b. L. Hughes, A. Cunningham. 1998.

The thinner line about 3m right of Unnamed above. Serious, loose rock.

Unnamed – 20m HVS 4c *. A. Cunningham, L. Hughes. 1998.

An attractive line up the slabbier front face of the right section of the crag, a bit intimidating but low in the grade. The best line starts up the plaque on the right to a break with hollow blocks, then continues trending leftwards to the highest point at the top.

Roadside Wall:

This is the reddish brown wall that lies just above the road down and to the left of Gruinard Crag. It is well seen when driving up the hill northwards from the car park. Routes descriptions on request by e-mail.

Post Crag: M.R. 955 905 WNW-facing Cliff Base 80m:

This small but well formed crag of solid gneiss 5 minutes from the road. Park at a hidden layby just north of the crest of the hill and beside a gate on the west side. The crag is nearer the car park on the opposite side of the road. The crag has a shorter pocketed wall on the left of a central orange smooth wall with characteristic breaks. To the right of this is a smooth slab with a pronounced left-slanting crackline near its right-hand end. Routes are described from right to left.

Billet Dubh – 15m HVS 5a *. J. R. Mackenzie, D. S. B. Wright. 26th June, 2000.

The pronounced crackline in the slab. An awkward start leads to the crack.

Hate Mail – 15m E3 5c *. J. R. Mackenzie, D. S. B. Wright. 26th June, 2000.

Up the centre of the slab to the left of Billet Dubh, with a letterbox low down. Start below it and stand on the letterbox (vital HB offset#5 above). Continue delicately up using a triangular slot, then follow the broken crack to juggier rock at the top. Very thin in places.

P1 – 12m E4 6a ***. L. N. Hughes, D. S. B. Wright. 31st August, 2000.

The immaculate central wall of orange gneiss is both bold and technical, possibly high in the grade. Cleaned on abseil.

Bog Meadow Wall (M.R. 938 904):

This lies behind Post Crag and can be approached from the parking spot for that crag

by going through the gate on the opposite side of the road and continuing up the shallow valley to break out right at the top to higher ground, then continuing for about 200m to the line of crags overlooking a flat, boggy meadow. The same line of crags can be reached from the normal 'beach car park' by contouring the hillside as for the Gruinard Crag approach and before that crag is reached breaking out left to reach the boggy meadow. Bog Meadow Wall is the obvious steep crag at the northern end. When the sun comes around onto the crag at around 4pm it is transformed into a wonderful orange colour.

Summer Breeze - E5/6 6b ***. R. Anderson. 30th July, 2000.

A superb climb up the central bottomless crack which starts just to the right of an obvious slanting overlap. Climb to ledges below the crack and move up to a horizontal break. Directly above is a 'plaque' – a thin crack in the left side of this takes a Black Diamond Stopper#3 (or an RP#3), just above this is a Camalot#0.1. Make a move up past these and blindly/awkwardly place a Black Diamond Stopper#2 with a Black Diamond Swedge#2 (or RP#2) just above at the top of the crack. Hard moves past these gain a hold (PR) from where harder moves gain the crack. Climb the crack with interest to the top.

Is it OK for people to come here without you Rab or do you need to hold their hand? (Hon. Ed.)

Last Tango – E2/3 5c *. R. Anderson. 30th July, 2000.

The obvious C-shaped crack up the right side of the central part of the wall. Climb to a holly tree, step up left on to a block and make a couple of scruffy moves to the base of the crack. Climb the fine crack to its top, pull out right, then step up left on to a ledge and follow slabs up left to a belay.

Inveranvie Crag, Optic Wall:

Tuppenny Tipple – 20m VS 4b. D. S. B. Wright, D. Willis. 28th March, 2000.

About 10m right of Chokestone Gully, there is a rib with a dirty crack on its right. Go up, using the rib and the crack, to better protection and a traverse right below a ledge, to finish just left of Slippery Nipple.

Gill – 25m Severe 4a. G. Ettle, D. S. B. Wright. 11th May, 2000.

There is a short left-facing corner 10m right of The Parting Glass. Go up this, moving to an edge, then go up right on good rock to finish.

Synoptical – 20m VS 4b. D. S. B. Wright, G. Ettle. 11th May, 2000.

A few metres right of Gill is a large block. Start on this, using a right-curving crack, but go directly up left on better rock to a thin crack, finishing at a large bollard.

Double Vision – 20m VS 4c. G. Ettle, D. S. B. Wright. 11th May, 2000.

Starting at the same point as The Dundee Dram, go straight up, then left with some dubious holds, to a groove and good rock to finish.

Gruinard Upper Crag:

Unnamed – 25m E3 5c. P. Thorburn, G. Ettle. 30th April, 2000.

This route lies to the left of the main Upper Crag, about 100m ascending, then

descending to the bottom of a long right-slanting narrow pillar. Starting from a short rightwards diagonal crack, go direct to a small flake. Traverse down right to a shallow groove line. Climb this (crux) to a left-trending line of better holds.

Gunslinger – 25m E2 5b. G. Ettle, J. Preston, D. McGimpsey, P. Thorburn. 30th April, 2000.

Climbs up to and over the protruding tongue of rock between The Big C and Red John.

Dog Crag:

Pig Monkey Bird – 30m E2 5b. P. Tattersall, A. Katzenmeier. 2000.

Takes the wall right of Inverianvie Corner, finishing up the obvious flake.

Dome Crag:

Ducks with Attitude – 55m E2 *. R. and C. Anderson. 6th May, 2000.

A much better line than its appearance might suggest. Start immediately in front of the pointed block.

1. 20m 5c. Climb carefully past a wedged block, then cross a slab to climb a crack up the left side of a short smooth rib and continue to the base of the obvious short corner. Climb the corner and its left wall.

2. 30m 4c. Cracks in the rib lead to more pleasant rock and the top.

Goat Crag:

Several routes have been climbed here, mostly by P. Tattersall and L. N. Hughes. A copy of the descriptions of new and old routes will be e-mailed to anyone on request.

Jetty Buttress:

Radio Gnome – E3 5c. P. Tattersall, A. Katzenmeier. 2000.

The wall left of Right Charlie.

Carn Goraig:

Slideline – 15m E3/4 6a *. R. and C. Anderson. 13th May, 2000.

To the right of Whoopers is a shallow depression and short crack. Omitting a side runner in Whoopers gives the E4 grade. Climb the scoop and crack where a hold on the left may be useful.

Thunderhead – 90m E3 ***. J. R. Mackenzie, D. S. B. Wright. 31st May, 2000.

A very direct and continuous line on clean rock throughout. It aims for the break at the left end of Olden Glory's hand traverse. The start lies to the left of the lower tier on a heather rake reached by a short crack. The base of a clean rib is marked by a large boulder thread on its left and twin trees to its right. A small roof is visible some way up the rib.

1. 30m 4b. Climb the rib to the right of the roof and continue on excellent rock to deep cracks at the extreme left end of the upper terrace.

2. 40m 5c. Climb straight up to a cleaned ledge, step up left and climb the wall on spaced holds to step right below black cracks. Climb these to the crux and an easing above. Continue straight up and into a smooth scoop with an out-of-reach crack.

Climb this and up the cracked wall above to below the final easy slab. One of the best pitches on these crags.

3. 20m. Scramble up the pleasant slabs.

Crusader – 70m HVS 5a *. J. R. Mackenzie, D. S. B. Wright. 18th June, 2000.

A good balanced climb with pleasant climbing on superb rock. Start at the same boulder thread as for Thunderhead.

1. 25m 5a. Climb a nose, then diagonally left past the roof to go up slabs to the same belay.

2. 45m 5a. Climb up to a left-trending ramp and climb the crack, stepping right on to an inset slab and up to a heathery chimney. Climb the wall above on the right to the top.

Climbing with Heather – 25m HVS 5a. J. R. Mackenzie, D. S. B. Wright. 18th June, 2000.

This lies on the wall above the descent ramp. Continue down the ramp to a chockstone and belay. Climb the overhung scoop and crack above to a steep slabby wall and a heathery crack which is climbed to a heathery ledge. Clean rock above leads to a massive flake and the fine rib which is climbed centrally to the top. Potentially good given a prune.

Carn nam Buailtean:

Several more routes have been added – details by e-mail on request.

MUNGASDALE CRAG: M.R. 969 928 SW-facing Cliff Base 110m:

There are 23 routes up to 15m on this crag, mostly hard and fingery. Contact topo@tul-fhirinn.com or Jim Buchanan at the Bridge Cottage Coffee Shop, Poolewe for a topo.

Creag Beinn nam Ban:

Some of the routes previously reported had been climbed by J. Robinson and D. Neville in 1990/1991, often by a different line and with a lower grade. Again, details available by e-mail.

Bandit Country – 40m E2 5b *. D. McGimpsey, A. Nisbet. 2nd July, 2000.

Sustained but with adequate protection. Right of Blockbuster is a shallow mossy groove with its right wall leading to an arête, the route. Start up a small juggy arête leading to the main arête. Climb it fairly directly (the best line, like the protection, needs finding) to join and finish up the slab of Wendy House.

CARNMORE CRAG:

Fian Grooves – 110m E3. T. Rankin, G. Robertson (on sight). 4th June, 2000.

A superb route based on the bulging arête immediately left of Green Corner. Start as for that route.

1. 45m 5c. Go left into an obvious clean groove and follow this to an overhang. Swing out left along a handrail and pull round the left end of the overhang into another groove. Move up the wall on the left, then back right to a crack which is followed to an awkward mantelshelf. Continue straight up the crest to the base of the corner. A fantastic pitch.

2. 20m 4b. Climb the corner with surprising ease to a terrace and junction with Green Corner.
3. 20m 5c. Above is a shallow leaning groove. Gain this from the left, then follow it to step left to belay.
4. 25m 5a. Go directly across a ramp behind to enter and climb a constricted groove to easier ground.

Dragon: Following the request for opinions of its grade, HVS outnumbered E1, but not by much.

Firecracker – 70m E4. T. Rankin, G. Robertson (on sight). 5th June, 2000.

Another fine route with a strenuous first pitch taking the obvious crackline immediately right of and parallel to Crackers. Start at a huge block.

1. 20m 6a. Climb a steep jam crack on the front of the block to the base of the crack proper, then forge up this to an evil stretch (crux).
2. 50m 5c. Continue directly up the groove over a bulge to easier ground below a scoop. Pull up left into the scoop, then continue steeply trending slightly right to the top.

CARNAN BAN, Maiden Buttress:

Eastern Wall – 50m E1. M. Litterick, B. R. Shackleton. 24th May, 1994.

Start from a grassy bay on the SE side of the buttress.

1. 5a. Climb the dark wall towards overlapping rock tiles and a belay to the left of a prominent hanging water stained groove (seen from below as the main feature of the route).
2. 5b. Step right from the belay to reach the foot of the steep groove. Climb the groove and exit with difficulty (crux) on to clean compact rock, leading with continuing interest to the top of the buttress.

FISHERFIELD FOREST, Na Bearta Buttress:

The following two routes are on the slabby wall which forms the upper tier of the left section of the cliff.

My Fair Lady – 70m Severe. A. Nisbet. 7th May, 2000.

This would make a logical finish to Wallflower but was climbed in its own right. Start near the right end of the wall. Climb a short corner, then cracks in the slabby wall until the slab angle eases on the left and a left-trending line was taken below a heather patch into the centre of the wall. Here are cracklines either side of a central scoop. Climb the crack left of the scoop to the top.

Crucifer – 60m H. Severe 4b. A. Nisbet. 7th May, 2000.

A route up cracks towards the left end of the wall. Moving left from My Fair Lady the base of the wall is crackless until just past a long roof where there is a deep wide crack. Climb this crack until it becomes heathery, then make a thin traverse left into another crack. Climb this for about 10m until possible to return right to a crack (which may not be the original). Climb this until it bends away left, then finish up pleasant ribs.

AN TEALLACH, A'Ghlas Thuill:

Forbidden Gully – 250m V,7. D. McGimpsey, A. Nisbet. 24th March, 2001.

The gully between Minor Rib and Miniscule Rib. Climb low-angled ice pitch and easier snow to fork (as for Miniscule Rib) – 70m. Take the left fork over a bulge

to another branch. The left branch ends in an overhang. Climb the right branch, a chimney-corner to its top (50m). Traverse left back to the left branch above its overhang. Climb a flared chimney (1PA, but has been seen fully iced), then snow to another difficult bulge, over this and more snow until you can move out left to easier ground (50m). Finish easily (this is the optional final gully of Minor Rib).

Toll an Lochain

NOTE: A variation start to 1978 Face Route by D. Gardner, E. Lynch in February, 1994. The start climbed a central icefall leading directly into the triangular snowfield (Grade III to V depending on the build-up). They then followed the gully of 1978 Face Route all the way to the top but this has been climbed before (by M. Moran and party around 1990, possibly others).

Sail Liath:

Mauna Kea – 400m IV,4. A. Nisbet. 1st March, 2001.

A ramble based on a chimney on the left side of the central buttress of Sail Liath, but never actually climbing in the chimney. A big rockfall swept the lower chimney in November, 2000 and discouraged its ascent. Start up a ramp from the next bay to the right. Traverse left immediately above the rockfall scar into the chimney line. Continue the traverse, slightly descending, until going up to a barrier wall. Climb this with difficulty by a slight groove, then go up to the next barrier wall. This is easier and climbed by the first break left of the chimney to gain a terrace. Traverse the terrace rightwards, slightly rising to join and continue traversing as for The Forger.

Counterfeit Groove – 170m III,4. D. McGimpsey, A. Nisbet. 7th January, 2001. Climbs a wide but shallow groove in the buttress right of The Forger. Start up and right of the big ramp of The Forger and climb the groove, or the turfy ground left of it, always trending generally left, to reach a steep capping wall. Climb this by a steep groove on the right to easy slopes on the big ramp which leads up past the three chimneys.

Kumbh Mela – 130m V,6. D. McGimpsey, A. Nisbet. 7th January, 2001.

The left-hand and highest of the three chimneys in the right-hand buttress, the central chimney being Sulphur Gully. Much deeper, longer and more impressive than it looks. Start at the same place as Sulphur Gully but go left up a ramp to reach the chimney. An initial chokestone was the crux, climbed on the left wall and probably 7, but would become quite easy with a big build-up. Thereafter it was deep and a good chimneying width.

Anvil Chorus – 150m VI,6 **. J. Lyall, J. Preston. 19th December, 2000.

A harder companion to Sandeman's Pinnacle (which has been regraded V,6), following the obvious straight left-slanting line. Warthogs or other turf protection is comforting.

1. 50m. Climb 15m up the first pitch of Sandeman's Pinnacle before stepping left, then up to climb a corner (crux). Continue up the same line to a small ledge.
2. 30m. Follow this turfy line to a thin slabby exit on to a ledge system.
3. 50m. Continue by the same line until overlooking Bottomless Chimney, then up awkward ground close to the crest.
4. 20m. Follow the edge to easy slopes.

Monumental Chimney – 115m V,7 **. J. Lyall, J. Preston. 15th December, 2000.

The steep deep chokestoned chimney at the top right side of Forgotten Face.

1. 60m. Climb a smooth corner on thin ice, then go up an easy gully to the chimney.
2. 20m. Go deep into the chimney and up to jammed blocks. Cut loose under these to gain the hanging chimney which is followed by a tight squeeze and awkward bulge to a ledge.
3. Follow the bulging fault and gully to the top.

Elemental Gully – 100m III. J. Lyall. 18th January, 2001.

Follow the first 50m of Monumental Chimney, then climb a gully on the right. Later climbed by A. Nisbet on 1st March in excellent conditions at Grade II.

CORRIESHALLOCH GORGE:

The shortest walk in Scotland, and downhill! (a brave claim – Hon. Ed.)

Orpheus – 45m VI,6. R. Webb, I. Innes. January, 2001.

From the westbound car park walk down to the viewpoint, over the downstream fence about 3m and abseil off a tree. You should be abbing over an icicle. Descend to a large block about 5m above the river and on the downstream side of the ice. Above is a hanging icicle. Cross diagonally up right to reach an ice/rock groove, go up this to it's end, arrange gear and step gently on to the hanging ice, shut your eyes and go for the top.

NOTE: On the first ascent Ian Innes, who was seconding, forgot to be gentle. The entire icicle detached, with Ian attached, to the alarm of spectators on the bridge. Rescue was only avoided by vigorous and aggressive diplomacy with the audience. Fortunately, Ian prussiked faster than Mr Disapproving could get a signal on his mobile phone. The gorge offers tremendous potential for short desperates (like Ian!), possibly 20+ routes.

Editor's note: Other easier lines have been led, some in January, 2001 and some in the past.

NORTHERN HIGHLANDS NORTH AND EAST (VOLUME TWO)

SGURR NA LAPAICH, Sgurr nan Clachan Geala:

Lap Dance – 60m VI,7. B. Davison, D. McGimpsey. 18th February, 2001.

Fine sustained climbing up thinly-iced corners and grooves. Start approx. 30m up and right from Lap of the Gods (*SMCJ* 1998) at a large left-facing corner.

1. 35m. Climb the corner to a sloping ledge approx. halfway up the face. Gain a steep V-groove on the right, follow it into a small bay and exit via a short corner onto a huge flake.
2. 25m. Immediately above is a steep corner. Climb this to easier turfy ground and then snow. Traverse off right or continue upwards for another pitch to join the top of Lapland Buttress.

Second Lap – 45m III. D. Allan, D. McGimpsey, J. Preston. 21st February, 2001.

Near the right-hand end of the crag is a short icy square-cut chimney. Climb this and continue in the same line above.

GLENMARKSIE CRAG:

NOTE: An important hold has broken off Deimos and the route is now E3 6a.

Strathconon notes from M. Hind:

Scoop Crag: Brass Monkey is not E3 6a but E3 5c and R. Scott who upgraded, did not second the route.

Gabbro Slab: The Rake should be called Promenade at about Severe 4a, and Promenade was originally called Two Step.

CREAG GHLAS, West Face:

Prix Choc – 20m E2 5c. D. McGimpsey, A. Nisbet. 3rd September, 2000.

The slab left of Super Discount holds another two cracks (really there are four parallel and quite close). Climb straight up to and follow the right of these two (third from the right).

Note: Super Discount itself has been repeated, the grade confirmed and worth a star.

Garibaldi – 40m E3. D. McGimpsey, A. Nisbet. 29th August, 2000.

The crack close on the left of Spoils of War provides some very thin moves. Slightly spoilt by its close proximity to Spoils of War, but it feels separate on the crux section.

1. 15m 4b/6a Climb Peak Freen's Trotskyite Selection; either traverse in from the left to omit the boulder problem start (4b) or climb it from the base (at least 6a).
2. 25m 6a Climb the thin crack, well protected with several small cams, Friend#0 and smaller.

NOTE: Several opinions have Victory Crack at E3 6a, Spoils of War at E1 5b, Chameleon at E1 5b, Glass Slipper at VS 4c, Moon Safari at E2 5b but no complaints about the high quality.

Hall of Mirrors is hard E1 or easy E2 and perhaps the best of all. It is recognised that the climbs were done immediately after cleaning, often with loose earth present, and have subsequently become easier.

Toad Hall – 145m E2 5b. D. McGimpsey, A. and G. Nisbet. 3rd September, 2000. Start at the same place as The Lizard. The first pitch offers increasingly fine climbing.

1. 45m 5b Step up right on to a higher ledge, then climb next to the right bounding wall of the rib and up a short step to heather. Step left immediately on to the bounding wall and climb this, initially close to heather but soon diverging into a crackline about a metre from the arête. Follow this, sometimes using the crack to the right, to gain the arête where the Loop Variation reaches it. Follow the arête (crux, similar to the Loop Variation but with five runners in the crack to the right) to the ledge.
2. 20m 4c Climb the right edge of the main slab (as for The Lizard, before it moves right), then continue on the main slab trending left before returning back right to the top of the slab.
3. 20m Scramble up left to a big flake at the foot of the next slab.
4. 20m 5b. Go 5m farther left to gain and climb a right-slanting crack to a terrace (an initial runner high on the left is recommended).
5. 40m 4b Climb a line of flakes up the next wall. Go left to a big flake at the base of the final blocky wall. Stand on it and climb the wall above.

SGURR NA MUICE, North-East Face:

Sows Ear – 155m III. R. Weld, J. R. Mackenzie. 20th February, 2001.

This is the square-cut gully to the left of Piglet. Climb the gully to a small blockage, taken on the right wall and continue up to a big chockstone (45m). Climb the crux chockstone and continue to below a chimney-groove (35m). Climb the chimney-groove to arrive below a slabby icefall. Climb the icefall or the dog-leg to its right which borders a buttress to arrive at a pointed block and belay above (40m). Continue up left of the buttress on either snow or ice to the top (35m). Probably easily banked out, this climb is best under lean, well frozen conditions and is graded for such.

Direct Start – 30m II/III. J. R. Mackenzie, R. Weld (both solo). 20th February, 2001.

To the left of the lower rock barrier is an icefall, easily formed, that goes up a groove, then a slab to below the starts of Sows Ear, Piglet and Swine Groove.

Slaughterhouse Blues – 165m V,6 *. R. Biggar, J. R. Mackenzie (alt.). 9th January, 2001.

This good route lies in the deep bay to the right of The Wolf etc. which contains a slabby wall on the left and two groove lines to the right. This route takes the right-hand groove. Best approached from directly below via a shallow couloir to the right of the right-hand one used to gain the bays to the left. Climbed under poor snow but good turf, it should be easier under consolidated conditions.

Climb the right-hand groove with sustained interest, good but fiddley protection, to a little cave above (35m, crux). Continue in the same line up a turfy chimney and more open ground (40m). The line taken was a left-facing corner up left to a capping bulge rather than an easier direct option (40m). Continue up easier ground to just below the top (50m). The summit cairn is 20m above.

SGURR NA FEARSTAIG, South Top, East Face:

Flower of Scotland – 170m IV,5 **. J. R. Mackenzie, R. Richard. 14th January, 2001.

This is the left-hand of the two gullies which lie on the left side of the main face with a thin streak between them at half height. The gully can be identified by a narrow slot and a chimney higher up at about half height. Start either as for Snowdrop or to the left up mixed ground and ice to a corner below and left of the narrow slot (50m). Move up into the slot and exit up the entertaining right wall (20m). Continue up above to the next chimney and climb it to another overhanging chockstone with a difficult landing. Continue up big flakes and move left around another chockstone (30m, a great pitch). Continue up over a minor bump and an easy finish to the top (70m). Climbed under ideal thin but well frozen conditions.

The Sorcerer – 165m IV,5 ***. J. R. Mackenzie, R. Biggar. 17th January, 2001.

The route of the crag taking the big central corner direct. Ideal conditions; the turf was well frozen and the icefall accommodating. A fine route with excellent protection and belays, highly recommended. Climb the lower icefall to just right of the steep section (40m, this is sometimes covered). Climb the ice runnel and steep turf, stepping right, then left around a bulge to continue up the right-trending ramp to a recess (35m). Continue up turf and ice to the base of the chockstone guarding

the top corner (30m). Climb the interesting chockstone to continue up the corner to a chockstone just below the crux, a right-leaning corner (20m). Climb the well protected corner-crack with a traditional crawl through the hole above (15m). There is a choice of three exits; an easy traverse off left, a central steep wall or a turfy traverse off right. The central wall was taken (25m).

Right-Centre Fork – 60m III *. J. R. Mackenzie. 17th January, 2001.

To the right of Left-Centre Fork is a narrow groove, well iced but with a big capping cornice, outflanked by the arête on the left.

BEN WYVIS, Creag Coire na Feola:

Unnamed – 180m V,5. C. Cartwright, S. Richardson. 7th January, 2001.

A turfy mixed climb up the rib to the left of Walking on Air.

1. 20m Climb the groove 10m left of Walking on Air to an easing where the groove splits into twin chimneys. Move right to below the right-hand chimney.
2. 40m Climb the chimney, exit left and surmount the steep wall above using a 3m hanging icicle (a prominent feature from below) and a short ramp. Step right and continue up the steep groove above and climb steep turf to a terrace.
3. 40m Turn the wall on the right and continue up turfy mixed ground for 30m.
4. 50m Move left and climb up to an icy groove which leads to the final snow slopes.
5. 30m Snow slopes lead to the top.

True Blue – 210m IV,5 **. J. R. Mackenzie, R. Weld. 18th February, 2001.

To the right of Walking on Air is a concave icefall. Climb this, vertical at the top, to a stance immediately above (35m, crux). Follow snow easily to opposite a blue icefall on the left. This can extend for a considerable distance and leads up to a narrow blue hose above (40m). Climb the excellent icefall direct to the upper hose which has a hanging icicle to its right (50m). Step left past the icicle and climb the blue hose to exit on to the upper snowfield (35m). Go straight up the snow to the top (50m). Some excellent ice climbing, not apparent from below. This line makes the most of the ground right of Walking on Air though it is possible to escape directly up to the right after the initial pitch.

FANNICHS, An Coileachan, Garbh Coire Mor:

Al Capone – 170m V,6. D. McGimpsey, A. Nisbet. 13th January, 2001.

A fairly direct line up the face between the two depressions in the left wall of the corrie, passing just right of a large rockfall scar. After a tricky wall at the base, climb a crack and corner line direct to the right end of a ledge above the rockfall scar (40m). Go to the left end of the ledge and climb over two large flakes. Return right up a ramp to below a wall which is just right of the belay (20m). Step left into a shallow corner in the wall and make a hard move to reach turf. Continue up to easier ground (20m). Finish up the easier ground trending slightly left (80m).

Sarsaparilla – 240m V,4. D. McGimpsey, A. Nisbet. 19th January, 2001.

A line based on the groove high in the centre of the buttress between Burdock and Dandelion (i.e. left of Turf Accountant). Limited rock protection; take warthogs or hooks. Start roughly centrally and some 20m up and right of the lowest point of the buttress. Take a line of weakness leading diagonally left, then go straight up to steeper ground (50m). Climb a small icefall through a steep wall to a niche, then

traverse right and rise right to the base of the central groove (50m). Climb the groove (ice) until the natural line leads out left (40m). Climb up and return right into the main groove (30m). Finish easily up this (70m).

On yer Bike – 200m VI,7 **. E. Brunskill, D. Morris. 3rd February, 2001.

This brilliant route follows an intricate and logical line up the crest of the buttress which forms the left wall of Dandelion (i.e. right of Turf Accountant). The route is sustained, continually exposed and generally well protected with superb belays.

1. 35m Start at the bottom right edge of the buttress and climb directly up the crest to the terrace below the first rock band.

2. 30m Traverse rightwards to the end of the terrace and climb for about 5m up a right-trending ramp (overlooking Dandelion) round the rock band. Up and left is a steep cracked wall. Step up onto a pedestal and climb the wall. At its top pull out left onto a ledge on the crest of the buttress and traverse this leftwards for 4m until below a large flake crack. Climb the crack into a small recess and belay.

3. 50m Traverse left along the top of the flake and up a groove. Climb straight up the crest of the buttress to another smaller rock band. Climb the rock band directly up a steep flaky wall (bold). Continue up to a terrace below another large rock band and traverse right to the edge of the buttress to a good thread below a large block (overlooking Dandelion).

4. 30m Climb up on to the block and climb the steep wall above by turfy ledges into a fine blocky corner line. Climb this to its top.

5 & 6. 55m Climb up and left into an obvious open groove and follow this to the top.

BEINN DEARG, Cadha Dearg:

Vigilante – 280m III,4. D. McGimpsey, A. Nisbet. 12th January, 2001.

The crest of the buttress lying close on the right of Geddes's Gully. A good line but the climbing is undistinguished. Start up mixed ground just left of the first pitch of Geddes's Gully, then traverse right immediately above it on to the buttress. Follow the crest picking the turfiest line with a tricky step just above half height until a ramp leads rightwards to a finish on the right.

Coire Ghranda:

Tickled Rib – 150m VI,7. J. Currie, G. Robertson. 13th January, 2001.

This fine, sustained climb takes the grooved rib immediately right of Traumatic Interference and should become technically easier with more ice. Start up and right of the lowest rocks at a mini-ramp leading onto the crest. Move on to the crest and climb directly to the base of the obvious groove (30m). Climb the groove, with a tricky offwidth, and continue up a smaller groove to a ledge below an overhanging wall (35m). Traverse the ledge rightwards then pull up using a weird horizontal tooth. Step right, then follow grooves up to a belay beneath more overhanging walls (25m). Take the obvious traverse out left to an airy perch on the crest (10m). Climb up and left into the obvious icy corner (crux) and follow this to a good ledge (20m). Turn the final step on the left and continue easily to the top (30m)

The West Buttress:

Ice Hose Right-Hand Finish – 350m VI,6. J. Currie, G. Robertson, P. Robertson. 14th January, 2001.

Above the main icefall of the Ice Hose the gully forks and the right branch leads to a narrow ice cascade falling from a cul-de-sac. On this ascent, an icicle hung down to the right of the pillar, allowing the upper groove to be gained, and providing a fitting finale. Follow Ice Hose to the top of the icefall, then take the right branch up into the cul-de-sac (220m). Climb the cascade to its top, then transfer to the icicle which leads into the groove. Climb this to a broad belay on the right (30m). Continue up over an icy step to a junction with Silken Ladder and follow this to the top (100m).

BEN MOR COIGACH:

Consolation Gully – 250m III. C. Cartwright, S. Richardson. 8th March, 1998. The well-defined right-slanting gully at the right end of the north face of the mountain (300m east of the Ben Mor Coigach-Sgurr an Fhìdhleir col at M.R. NC 098052). Climb the gully over several steep sections to a bifurcation. Take the right branch to the top.

Sgurr an Fhìdhleir:

Magic Bow Wall – 290m VIII,8. C. Cartwright, S. Richardson. 30th December, 2000.

A winter version of Magic Bow. Long and sustained with difficult route finding. The corner is a natural drainage line and requires an exceptional period of cold weather to be fully frozen.

1 to 3. 100m Either climb straight up grooves and slabs to reach the foot of the right-facing corner, or approach from the left via a system of terraces.

4. 20m Climb the corner and exit up and left on thin turf to reach a good ledge.

5. 20m Climb the steep corner-crack above to reach a small ledge.

6. 30m Continue up the corner-crack to a good ledge. The summer route goes right from here. Instead continue up the corner-line on steep turf to reach a small stance.

7. 30m Traverse along the narrow exposed terrace on the right, passing a blank section, to where the terrace widens.

8. 20m Break through the wall above using a left-facing groove and flake to reach another terrace.

9. 20m Step right and cross an overhanging groove to reach a good platform.

10. 30m Climb the wall above by taking a steep vegetated groove which trends back left. Climb straight up on small holds and exit onto a slabby stance below the steep final corner and vegetated groove of Fidelio taken by the original Nose Winter Route. Continue up the final groove of the Nose Original Route (40m) to reach the top of the steep section of the Nose, then climb the crest of the Fhìdhleir in three pitches to the summit.

Direct Nose Route, Variation – VI,7. J. Cartwright, M. Prezelj. 26th February, 2001.

Follow the Direct Nose Route for four pitches. Instead of climbing the corner above, trend right into a slanting corner. Climb this until a tricky move round a corner/bulge leads to a turf ramp (20m). Move up and left until below a short steep wall which is climbed on good torques and turf. Continue up the turf fault line above, passing a small roof on the right (35m). Continue up the line of least resistance for 20m until a thread runner protects reachy moves into a turf ledge below a short chimney (30m). Climb the chimney to easy ground and the top (25m).

CUL MOR:

Easy Gully – II. C. Cartwright, M. Hind, R. Webb. January, 2001.

The obvious easy gully left of The Cul.

Cul Cats – 160m VII,6 *. J. Lyall, R. Webb. 27th December, 2000.

A direct line up the back wall, starting halfway between Easy Gully and The Cul.

1. 40m Climb a vegetated trough (the easiest looking line) which slants slightly rightwards.

2. 35m Follow a snaking line up left to a terrace.

3. 25m Go up towards the steepest upper rocks by a fault leading to a triangular roof, but move right before this to a ledge and belay.

4. 45m Climb a shallow chimney-crack just right of the upper prow (crux) and belay overlooking The Cul.

5. 15m Climb the edge and gully above.

STAC POLLAIDH, No.1 (West) Buttress:

Silicone Soul – 90m IV,6. D. Morris, E. Brunskill. 10th February, 2001.

This good little climb takes a direct line up the West Face of West Buttress and has two fine technical pitches. Approximately 30m left and level with the top of Bairds Pinnacle is a ledge system which leads left to a terrace and eventually to the bottom of the cliffs and the approach path (from the North). Start about 5m left from the right edge of the ledge below a small corner capped by a V-shaped notch.

1. 30m Climb up the corner and into the notch. Continue up and left to reach a steep capped V-groove. Climb the sustained groove and pull up right onto a slabby groove. Climb the slabby groove on tufts to the large terrace.

2. 30m Directly up from the terrace an obvious small square chimney can be seen halfway up the next steep buttress wall. Walk easily up the terrace to below the buttress wall.

3. 30m Climb a slabby groove which leads up and right to the foot of the square chimney. Climb the awkward chimney and pull out right on to a ledge below a large flake crack formed by a huge block. Climb the flake crack and pull out onto the top of the block. Climb the cracked wall above to the summit.

North Side:

The Ghost Road – 40m HVS 5a. J. Kilner, R. Pillinger, P. Kilner. 14th June, 1999.

The climb lies on the north side of the mountain, at the right (west) side of a gully which forms the end of the cliffs which have curved round the west end of the mountain. The gully is the opposite side to the gully between Nos.1 & 2 Buttresses and its top is just east of the awkward step on the summit ridge, from where it can be descended. Scramble up the gully to the foot of a prominent inset slab with an overhanging wall to its left. Climb the slab using its left corner. A good pitch but with poor protection (in the corner). The summit ridge and cairn are a short distance above.

Polly Fumé – 50m III. J. Irving, K. Irving, G. Allan. 30th December, 2000.

The slab right of The Ghost Road, climbed by the line of maximum turf. There is no rock gear. Also climbed in summer 2000 by A. Nisbet at about Severe.

North-West Corner – 115m IV,5 **. H. Burrows-Smith, J. Lyall. 30th December, 2000.

Good climbing up the northerly edge of West Buttress, close to the summer line.

1. 40m Start just right of the gully and climb up close to the edge, with a short chimney leading to a block on the left.
2. 30m Move right and up towards a steep smooth corner. Go right around the rib just below the corner, then up a wide crack and groove to a corner.
3. 45m Climb a turfey crack on the right and continue straight up by a line close to the right edge.

REIFF, Black Rocks:

Great Black Back Direct – 20m E3 5c *. G. Latter, L. Gordon Canning. 31st August, 2000.

The arête climbed direct without escaping into the corner on the left. Very eliminate. Place protection in the initial break by bridging up the boulder, then ascend the initial arête and follow it, finishing out right over the bulge on good holds.

Pooh Cliff:

Pooh Sticks – E2 6a. T. Whitaker, M. Robson. 25th July, 2000.

Climbs the centre of the wall between Roo and Eeyore. Climb up and leftwards to an obvious hole on Roo. Step back right to a good hold in the centre of the wall. Finish straight up.

Rubha Coigeach, Black Magic Bay:

Rusty – 20m VS 4c. G. Muhlemann, M. Robson. 7th August, 2000.

Takes a route up the slabby wall right of The Comeback (guide p213). Start at the entrance of The Black Chimney and climb the wall to a belay on the large ledge. Move left and climb the edge of the large flake/block to the top.

Spaced Out Rockers Cliff:

A rewritten and regraded description, as climbed by G. Latter, D. Hollinger on 21st August, 2000:

Spaced Out Rockers on the Road to Oblivion – 65m E4 ****.

A stunning right to left diagonal line across the big undercut wall, giving the longest and best route on the peninsula. Start at a big roofed recess just left of the right edge of the wall, gained from the west face by soloing leftwards round ledges.

1. 20m 5c Traverse horizontally left until below the left end of a ledge system. Make hard moves up to gain the ledge, and belay at the right end.
2. 45m 5c Go to the left end of the ledge and up to a prominent handrail, and follow this until possible to gain a higher handrail, which cuts through an obvious niche to finish in the corner. Nut belay at top of the corner, or 15m farther back. A 'Yosemite big wall' rack of cams from 1- 4, (mainly #1½ – #3) will be found more than useful.

The following routes are tidal, accessible from mid-tide onwards.

Headlong – 35m E4 5c ***. G. Latter, D. Hollinger (on-sight). 21st August, 2000. Excellent sustained climbing heading for the prominent hanging groove high up in the centre of the cliff. Start 10m right of the blunt slabby arête beneath the right end of the big roof. Climb straight up to a left-slanting crack and follow this left to small

ledge beneath a flake. Follow this, then slightly right up the shallow ramp to an apparent impasse. Climb steeply straight up the wall on hidden holds, then traverse left along the excellent break of Spaced Out Rockers to a good rest in the base of the final groove. Climb this more easily to finish. Stake belay immediately above.

Culach – 30m E4 6a ***. G. Latter. 1st September, 2000.

Spectacular climbing up the hanging flake system in the centre of the cliff. Start immediately beneath the flake system. Climb steadily up to protection in the first break at 5m, then up and follow the groove/flakes, climbing on good holds steeply up the edge to a good rest beneath the break of Spaced Out Rockers. Make bold moves straight up to good ledges (birdy) and continue to large ledge near top. Climbs straight up, with a long reach to the final break. Finish slightly left, past a good undercut flake.

The Leaning Block Cliffs:

Monster Trundle – 15m HVS 5a. G. Latter, L. Gordon Canning. 1st September, 2000.

The leftmost of the two left-slanting faults on the west facing wall (just right of Waigwa). The rock is not quite as good as the neighbouring routes.

Amphitheatre Bay:

Graculus – 25m E2 5c *. D. Hollinger, G. Latter. 21st August, 2000.

A fine right-trending line up the obvious ramp on the right side of the wall. Climb direct to near the left side of the ramp, and follow this, stepping up right past a good undercut flange. Finish more easily above.

BREABAG:

Breabag Icefall – 60m IV,5. D. Allan, D. McGimpsey, A. Nisbet. 15th January, 2001.

The icefall formed where a stream flows into Glas Choire Mor from two lochans at M.R. 296 170. The ice forms largely in a groove but there is a short steep section. Requires cold weather.

INCHNADAMPH LIMESTONE CRAGS (M.R. 250 203):

A 2km long line of Cambrian limestone lies south of the Inchnadamph Hotel. They are about 10 to 15 minutes from the A837 and convenient laybys exist at intervals. The Cambrian Blue is basically quite sound, as witnessed by the lack of scree, but flat ledges are sometimes covered in loose blocks, easily cleared. Not all the rock is stable, especially in some areas and optimistic caution is advised. The limestone at its best is grey or whiteish, with excellent friction and at its worst, yellow. Smoo Cave excepted, the crags provide the only limestone climbing in the Highlands. All the routes unless specifically mentioned were led on sight.

Layout: A long mural vertical wall, horizontally banded in grey and white with a wealth of features. The limestone runs to flat or incut holds and provides sustained strenuous climbing usually well protected by nuts and cams. There are three tiers separated by grass terraces. The lower tier is short, broken and black. The second tier is the best, longest and merges with the top tier in places to give two pitch routes. The third tier is much less sound than the second but where it merges it improves.

The exposure is well pronounced as the routes start from an already exposed position. It is strongly advisable for the second to find adequate belays to prevent both of you rolling down a long slope! The crag is most easily split into natural sectors; Central, being the area between the rusty waterfall and the deepgully to the left, Right-hand, being the area between the waterfall and the southern coire, Left-hand, being the area between the deep gully and the northern coire and the Southern and Northern coiries, the former shallow and the latter much deeper. To the left of the Northern coire the crags continue around to the Inchnadamph Hotel, the Far left sector.

Descents: For routes at the far right of the Right-Hand Sector a long sling and carabiner is around a convenient plinth. For routes reaching the top, it is quickest to go to the right (south) hand-end where a short scramble down animal tracks leads to the grass and a traverse back to below the second tier. For routes based nearer the northern end, it is possible to descend animal tracks down the back of the northern coire. Other descents will be described as necessary.

Routes are described from right to left, starting in the Southern Coire.

Southern Coire: The farthest right of the crags where there is no lower tier. This shallow coire has a limited amount of rock centred around a dark grey slabby wall where the middle and upper crags join by a small tree. Another slender tree lies to the right. A narrow band of shale lies in the lower reaches of the top band and care should be taken.

Calcium Sleuth – 40m E1 5b. A. Nisbet and J. R. Mackenzie. 6th October, 2000. The grey slabby wall has a central groove. Start up broken rocks low on the right of this and climb a smooth plaque to a narrow ledge below the grey wall. A thin crack right of the central groove is climbed direct, crux, to below a small tree. Climb past the tree and the thin shale band to better rock and directly up the steep wall to finish. Some good but not sustained climbing.

Right-hand Sector: This is to the right of the rusty waterfall and the routes start at the right end of the wall before it curves into the Southern Coire. All the routes are most easily reached by skirting the lower tier to the right to arrive at a pleasant grass belvedere left of a large tree, a prominent landmark, and below a vertical crack. Routes further left can be reached by following the exposed track below the crag. The rock is solid here and routes are described right to left. The initial few routes include character forming grass to below the top tier. The few routes on the top tier above this sector are included in the descriptions.

Limestone Jam – 25m VS 4c. J. R. Mackenzie, R. Brown. 29th August, 2000. The vertical crack above the Belvedere. Surmount the initial roof on huge holds to arrive at the crack which is kindly to hands and gear. Arrive at a little ledge below steep grass which is climbed (root runner) to a plinth belay below the top tier. Well protected jamming with a great start.

Heavy Metal Runner – 25m VS 4c *. R. Brown, J. R. Mackenzie. 29th August, 2000.

A rusty 'Leeper' peg found at three-quarters height on this route, though the original ascent may have used the lower section of Limestone Jam or the rock in between. Start left of the crack of Limestone Jam at a shallow curving groove. Climb up then step right into the groove and climb straight up the right edge of this, past the peg and then over the overhangs above, bold and not well protected. Finish up the grass to the plinth. Good if rather precarious climbing.

A shallow ivy-filled corner lies to the left and left again the crag becomes much more impressive forming a vertical mural wall undercut by numerous overhangs. The next route starts left of the edge formed by the corner at a little jutting overhang.

Northern Meeting – 30m HVS 5a **. J. R. Mackenzie, R. Brown. 29th August, 2000.

Start immediately right of the small jutting overhang, step onto it and climb the strenuous wall on good hidden holds to below a dark wall. Step right onto the edge and climb the groove and up to the top overhang, avoiding a loose flake below it. Bridge past the overhang in a sensational position. A shorter section of grass leads to good belays in the crack above. Abseil descent. Well protected, on good rock and very exposed being much more reasonable than appearances would suggest.

Limestone Addict – 30m E1 5b **. J. R. Mackenzie, R. Brown. 29th September, 2000.

A short distance left is an overhung groove. Climb up to the roof and step right onto the bulging wall. Climb this straight up strenuously on good holds and gear to arrive at the top overhangs left of Northern Meeting and pull through this to climb the grass slope easily via cut steps and belays above. Abseil descent. A slightly harder companion to Northern Meeting on excellent rock with great exposure.

Old Crumbly Buttress – 20m V. Diff. R. Brown, J. R. Mackenzie. 29th August, 2000.

A poor route up the top tier above the last routes. A possible finish to the routes above if the abseil does not appeal. An insecure wander either climbing the corner above the belays or the groove to the left. Both lead to a brown gritty band of rock where holds are optional. More normal limestone leads to the top and good belays.

Well to the left of Limestone Addict is a cave and area of yellow overhangs, Owl Cave. Where these features end is a steep grey wall of sound rock just past a loose flake. A small tree lies above in a niche.

Plum 2000 – 45m VS 4c *. R. Brown, J. R. Mackenzie. 29th September, 2000.

Left of the loose flake is a slabby start to the wall with a loose tree root a few metres up. A low thread belay lies 3m left of the start of this route. Climb straight up to the root then climb the dark grey wall above parallel to a short grassy groove on the right that leads to the tree. The fine wall continues to an overhang. Step left then back right and up the steeper head wall on generous holds. The good climbing now finishes and a further 20m of easy rock leads to the top. A formidable looking line that is easier than expected.

Central Sector: This is visually the most impressive section and about half-way along the frontal length where the crags curve into a shallow bay with pronounced

corner lines on the left and a rusty waterfall to the right. It is bounded by the deep gully on the left. It can be approached directly on steep grass or by traversing in from either end below the second tier.

Cambrian Blue – 50m VS 4c *. J. R. Mackenzie, M. Slessor. 14th May, 2000.

The climb takes the fine grey slab and wall above to the right of a big vertical corner containing a tiny tree and overhangs and left of the rusty waterfall. Start to the right of a short shallow corner and climb the wall to a small roof. Climb this on the left and straight up to a small tree. Climb the delectable and perfect grey slab centrally, quite bold, and belay in a stoney recess in the main corner, 25m 4c, thread belays. Climb the grey overhang to the right of the stance and avoid the stone chute on the left by taking the wall above centrally at its most interesting, 25m 4b.

Acid Rock – 30m HVS 5a. A. Nisbet, J. R. Mackenzie, R. Brown. 6th October, 2000.

The wall and groove left of the big vertical corner that runs from top to bottom. Start left of the edge of the corner and climb a steep wall, crux, to then traverse right to the edge. Climb the easier and looser groove all the way to the top. A further 25m of scrambling remain to the plateau. A fine line that gives pleasant climbing though care is still needed in the groove..

Left-hand Sector: This is the area left of the gully which eventually leads to the Northern Coire. The initial area of rock is high but the crag height diminishes leftwards where a terrace begins to create a middle and upper tier.

Stone Age Traveller – 25m HVS 5a *. J. R. Mackenzie, A. Nisbet. 6th October, 2000.

Left of the deep gully, a vertically grooved wall has an inset grass plinth to its left. Scramble up to the plinth and belay. Above is a shallow bottomless corner with a small tree. Climb into the corner from below to the tree. Climb past this and continue up steep rock to a grey smooth wall below a small overhang. Climb the delicate wall to the overhang and step left onto pleasant grey rock to finish, good belays above. Scrambling remains to the top. A fine direct line with some strenuous moves lower down.

Ancestral Vices – 20m VS 4c. R. Brown, J. R. Mackenzie. 29th September, 2000.

Left of the grooved walls, a left and right facing corner enclose a smooth wall capped by yellow overhangs. This route starts just right of the right facing corner. Climb the initial wall for a few metres then traverse left across the loose corner and its retaining wall to the edge. Above is a white wall. Climb this good wall as near a thin crack as possible, passing a small tree en route. Belays above. A further 30m of easy grass and easy sound rock remain to the top.

Northern Coire: About 400m farther north the northerly coire bites into the line of crags. The backwall has grey and solid slabs below a looser but still adequate headwall.

Old Dog, New Tricks – 70m VS 4b. M. Slessor, J. R. Mackenzie. 14th May, 2000.

A clean cut slab lies to the right of a line of slabs with third-height overhangs. Start at the lowest point.

1. 25m 4a Climb the slab partially via the grassy crack to a stance below the headwall.
2. 45m 4b Move right and climb the wall at its steepest point, taking a crack split overhang on excellent jugs, to finish on looser ground climbing past a gigantic thread 'bridge'.

Variation: Pitch 1 is vastly improved by climbing the slab to the right of the grassy crack on balance holds and tiny threads, 5a.

LOCHINVER, Creag an Loch Dubh (M.R. 075 242):

The right-hand side of the crag rises straight from the water of Loch Dubh. Take the Achmelvich road from the B869, and after about 1km, turn left down a narrow road. Park at the road end and reach the crag by an arduous 30 second downhill walk to an idyllic picnic/swimming spot (midges permitting). West-facing; seems to dry quickly.

Fisherman's Friend – 35m HVS 5a. M. Harris, D. J. Ballance, M. M. Ballance. 4th June, 2000.

An enjoyable route, but take care not to drop any gear. The presence of an old piton suggests that part of the route has probably been climbed before. Start on the loch shore and make an ascending rightward traverse above the water on the obvious line to the second of two thin left-slanting diagonal cracks (ancient-looking peg). Follow the crack for about 12m to a horizontal break. Move left in a wider crack, and pull right on to the headwall which is climbed directly to its apex.

Wicked Water Witch – 30m E1 5b. M. Harris, D. J. Ballance, M. M. Ballance. 8th August, 2000.

Takes the first left-slanting thin crack. Follow *Fisherman's Friend* to the crack, which gives good sustained climbing to a heathery break. Zig zag up easier ledges to the top.

Loch Dubh Slabs (M.R. 075 239):

These are clearly seen across the loch from the picnic site, and can be reached directly from the top of Creag an Loch Dubh in about 15 mins. A longer but more pleasant approach takes the footpath towards Lochinver, and strikes across the moor to the top of the crag (25 minutes). North-West facing.

Tease and Seize – 30m E1 5b. M. Harris, D. J. Ballance, M. M. Ballance. 11th August, 2000.

Climbs discontinuous cracks close to the left arête of the main slab. Start beneath the arête and move up 3m to a small overlap. Tricky moves diagonally right, then left lead to the base of a grassy crackline slanting left to the arête. Climb up on good holds keeping right of the grassy crack to a blanker section. Go up this to a small overlap (crux), then move right and up to an easier crack. Follow this to finish on the arête.

Invisible Scribble – 30m HVS 5a. M. Harris, D. J. Ballance, M. M. Ballance. 11th August, 2000. The route takes some drainage and would benefit from a bit more cleaning. Takes the prominent right-slanting crack in brownish rock some 8m right of the arête. Start beneath the crack, and climb awkwardly up past a small ramp to

protection and better holds leading to the crack. Follow the crack until it fades, then go straight up to a heather ledge from which a final slab leads to the top.

QUINAG, The Western Cliffs:

Stanley Laurel Grooves – 180m IV,4. D. McGimpsey, A. Nisbet. 29th December, 2000.

A line of prominent V-grooves starting near the bottom of the left wall of the bay. Two pitches up the grooves was followed by a traverse out left to the crest because a distinctive third groove wasn't frozen. Two easier pitches led to the top.

Hornpipe – 140m IV,4. D. McGimpsey, A. Nisbet. 29th December, 2000.

The buttress between The Wind Pipe and The Waste Pipe. Start at the centre of the base and climb a groove to a heather terrace (50m). Continue over a bulge and more heather (45m). Climb a fine chimney-corner on the left to easier ground (45m).

Windy Ridge – 150m VS 4b. A. Nisbet. 1st October, 2000.

The ridge left of The Wind Pipe. Mixed heather and rock leads to a sharp upper arête overlooking The Wind Pipe. Access to the arête is blocked by an overhang. Move about 6m left of the crest and pull through the overhang (bold) just right of a small dirty corner to gain slabs. Trend right to regain the arête and follow it to easier ground.

Barrel Buttress:

Grouse – VI,7. B. Davison, D. McGimpsey, A. Nisbet. 9th February, 2001.

Close to the summer line but maximising the vegetation with a start up a left-slanting groove for 5m followed by a traverse right, a move right and back left after about 10m and following the vegetated section to its top rather than the left arête.

Sail Gorm:

The climb is located on the north-facing slopes of Meall Gorm and best approached from the bridge on the B869 about a mile west of its leaving the A894. The approach is perhaps not as bad as it looks from the road as rough ground is interspersed by more level sections. The crag is long and sprawling and this climb lies to the right of an obvious fan-shaped gully at the left end of the crag.

Fan Gully Buttress – 200m II. P. J. Biggar, B. G. Hard. 15th January, 2001.

On this ascent the pitch which drops from the narrows of the fan had no ice and was avoided on the right to gain the upper gully (the route would be better but a grade harder if present). This is bounded on the right by a steep but broken arête. Climb a chimney (loose) and a further three pitches over short steeper sections until the rocks merge into easy ground leading to the plateau.

ALLADALE, An Socach:

The Alladale Pillar – 200m VI,6. D. Allan, G. Cumming, D. McGimpsey, A. Nisbet. 18th January, 2001.

In the centre of the cliff below the summit of An Socach and left of Summit Gully, roughly at M.R. 380 869, is a shallow gully which can form an impressive ice line. It is slow to form because of a large overhang at 50m down which a 10m pencil of ice must form. This was initially a nest of icicles but the ice thickened with height, although never thick enough for ice screws. The remainder of the route was 60°-70° ice with two separate finishes taken by different pairs.

The Gimp – 110m V,6. D. J.Allan, D. McGimpsey. 21st January, 2001.
The thinner icefall approx. 100m up and left of The Alladale Pillar. The top pitch is easier turf.

Lochan Pollaig Crag (M.R. 388 871):

Radius Gully, Index Finish – 250m IV,5 *. D. Allan, D. McGimpsey. 20th January, 2001.

An ice-filled gully on the crag above Lochan Pollaig. Mostly grade II/III to a fork. This is the steeper finish.

Radius Gully, Thumb Finish – 250m III *. D. Allan. 25th January, 2001.
The easier finish.

BEN KLIBRECK, Creag an Lochain, NE Face:

Chockstone Cleft – 180m IV,5 *. D. Allan, D. McGimpsey. 30th January, 2001.
The left branch of the Y-shaped cleft (right branch is Crampon Cleft).

The Breck Variation – 40m IV,5 *. D. McGimpsey, D. Moy. 31st January, 2001.
The original route (SMCJ 1997) climbed the steep icy left wall of the gully immediately after pitch 1 (should be regraded IV,4?). Instead, continue up the gully to the back of the cave, a huge ice umbrella formed over a slot in the left-hand side of the cave's roof. Climb ice for a few steep moves until possible to squeeze through the slot and step on to the lip of the umbrella. Go up this to the easier upper gully. Short but impressive for the grade, rarely formed.

CREAG AN SGRIODAIN (Loch More):

Indian Summer – 75m VS 4b *. R. Brown, J. R. Mackenzie (alt.). 6th August, 2000.
To the left of the pronounced silvery rib of Friends Essential is a uniform slab split by heather ledges. Some good climbing almost entirely unprotected on the first pitch. Start centrally.

1. 45m 4b Climb the slab direct over a break in the first heather ledge and up to a bigger one above. Move up a gangway of rock avoiding the heather to the next slab. Climb this fine feature direct to the steeper headwall. Climb this on the left where it gets steeper. Traverse left to some trees for a belay.

2. 25m 4b Traverse back right to the centre of a much steeper wall and climb this on good holds to a grassy exit.

Essential Friends – 25m HVS 5b. J. R. Mackenzie, R. Brown. 6th August, 2000.
A direct start to Friends Essential up the prominent scoop. Easier for the tall. Go easily up to a heather patch below the scoop. Bridge the scoop, then step right (crux) to the right edge. Climb up left to a lesser scoop and climb the wall to arrive on the edge. Climb this to join the normal route.

MEALL AN LEITREACH (M.R. 346 335):

Low down on the NE flank of this hill at approx 300m, a long outcrop of schist offers some short ice lines readily accessible from the A838. Approach via the fire-break in the plantation starting at M.R. 352 336. The routes described were climbed by D. Allan, B. Davison, D. McGimpsey on 10th February, 2001.

Leitrich Falls – 60m III.

Follows the line of the burn draining down the firebreak approach. five or six icy steps separated by walking.

The Slant – 60m III,4.

Approx. 300m right is a large slanting corner with a leaning left wall. A steep step, then easier to the top.

The Brown Streak - 40m IV,5.

100m farther right is this impressive icefall, the line of the crag.

Cold Streak – 60m III,5. B. Davison (solo).

A short ice line farther right again.

The Woodend Burn – IV,6. A. Todd, D. Allan. 3rd March, 2001.

The stream directly above the north end of the fir wood. The first pitch was the crux, followed by a short step and a second short ice pitch.

BEN STACK:

Some routes have been climbed on the crag mentioned in the guide (M.R. 285 416). The name Clough's Crag is suggested. The main feature is a big right-angled corner with a smaller corner to its left.

*The Groove – 25m HVS 5a **. I. Clough, J. M. Alexander 22nd June, 1958 (A2).*

FFA: M. Tighe, B. Newton and party June, 1989.

The smaller corner, with a prominent rusty peg, on the left of the big corner. Pull out right near the top to avoid vegetation and finish as for Cracked Slab.

*Cracked Slab, Direct Start – 25m H. Severe 4b (1989) **

M. Tighe, B. Newton and party June, 1989

Start at the base of the slab and climb a corner and thin crack to join the original route.

Ahoy – 25m HVS 5a. M. Tighe, B. Newton and party. June, 1989.

From the base of the big corner, move out right to a pinnacle-block below the overhanging right wall of the corner. Climb a diagonal line up right to the arête (strenuous). Make an awkward step up and climb a wall on the right.

*Lone Ranger – 30m VS 4c *. A. Nisbet (unsec.). 30th June, 2000.*

The buttress to the right of the corner has an overhanging wall at its base; this and the following two routes climb its slabby face. Start immediately left of the toe of the buttress and pull out right on to a small nose on the crest immediately above the overhang. Continue up near the crest to a heather ramp. Go up this to a long block. Climb a thin crack above trending left and continue up slabs to the top.

NOTE: On the NE side of Ben Stack directly above the road into Lochstack Lodge are three rocky clefts on the hillside, the northmost of many clefts. The route climbed the central and shallowest of the clefts. 50m, III and climbed by A. Todd and D. Allan on 3rd March, 2001. The burn below, if frozen, gives a long and interesting approach to this.

SCOURIE CRAG (NC 167 441 Altitude: 70m Aspect: W):

A short steep outcrop, clearly visible in profile when driving north on the A894 just beyond Scourie. The lower overhanging rock is black, shattered and sharp, the upper the more usual ubiquitous well-weathered gneiss.

Access: Park on the verge on the south side of the road 200m farther east.

Approach: Walk back along the road, then follow a line of telegraph poles up to the base. Five minutes.

Descent: Traverse right 100m and down broken ground.

Sare Fingers – 20m E3 6a *. G. Latter (on-sight). 4th July, 2000.

The short steep crack on the left side of the wall, finishing more easily up the fine upper crack beyond a bulge.

Sare Heid – 20m E4 6a *. G. Latter (on-sight). 4th July, 2000.

The hanging crack 10m farther right. Climb on good holds up the right edge of the recess, then pull into the crack and follow it, it soon relents. Continue more easily on excellent rough gneiss, pulling over a small roof just short of the top.

RHICONICH CRAG (NC 259 520):

A 35m crag of perfect crystalline gneiss five minutes from the road, claimed as probably the finest nearest roadside crag in Scotland!

Access: Park in front of a building on the bend (a wide truck area – owners say park here) just north of Rhiconich/Kinlochbervie junction on the A838. Ascend the hillside opposite to crest a rise and find the crag (the second crag immediately behind the hotel) – five minutes or less. All the routes are excellent.

From left to right:

Short But Beautiful – 40m HVS **. B. Birkett, H. Lancashire (alt.). 22nd August, 2000.

1. 20m. 5a Climb a slabby gangway right of a deep chimney to a shelf on the edge. Move up and right into a steep crack and follow it direct round a small overlap to a ledge.

2. 20m. 5a Step left and climb the wall direct left of the chimney-groove. Pass a large detached block and continue easily.

The next three routes start at the same point but diverge.

Holly Tree Crack – 35m E1 **. B. Birkett, D. Allan. 21st August, 2000.

1. 20m. 5a Follow the obvious diagonal crackline leftwards up the crag to reach the large ledge.

2. 15m. 5b Climb the chimney crack, passing a holly, to easier ground.

Black Gold – 35m E3 6a ****. H. Lancashire, B. Birkett. 22nd August, 2000.

1. 35m. 6a Well protected brilliant climbing directly up the black streak then straight through a bulge above. Start by the diagonal crack. Keep right of grass ledges and follow the streak directly, passing two obvious pockets, to a second ledge. Move up thin cracks, rock right and step up (crux), then continue in same line to enter the diagonal chimney awkwardly. Stand up and attack the steep crack to a thrilling finish. Continue direct on great holds to a heather ledge and belays.

The Road North – 35m E2 5c ****. B. Birkett, D. Allan. 21st August, 2000.

1. 35m. 5c. Sustained and quite bold climbing. Start at the centre of the crag below

the obvious diagonal crack. Pull up right by a flake and up to the first overlap. Climb through this and up to a triangular niche in the next little overlap. Stand above this, then pull over next overlap on to the slab above to gain a vague crack. Climb directly up the slab and the cracks above to a heather ledge.

The last two routes are on the smaller right-hand end of the crag.

Gneiss Too – 18m VS 4c ***. D. Allan, B. Birkett. 21st August, 2000.

Step up right from a block and move left across the slabby wall to gain a crack and flake. Climb the flake, pull up and move right and up to finish.

Gneiss Yin – 18m Severe ***. D. Allan and partner. 2000.

Climb the wall to a hanging corner. Go up corner and pull out right taking care with precariously balanced blocks. Stand on a block and finish up right.

CREAG AN FHITHICH (NC 258 538 Altitude: 80m Aspect: NW-W):

Three separate good sections of rock on the dome-shaped hill looking down Loch Inchard. Much better than it appears from the road, composed of the usual impeccable gneiss.

Access: Leave the A838 at Rhiconich and follow the B801 north for 1.1 miles/1.8km to park on the right (east), on the south side of the old bridge at the south end of Achriesgill.

Approach: Head up the hill to the crags. 5-10 minutes.

Ruby Wall:

About 100m farther up the hill to the right is a fine steep ruby-coloured wall with a very distinctive band of black striated gneiss in the centre.

Descent: Abseil (sling and maillon *in situ*) from a small rowan above the centre of the crag.

The Swirl – 35m E3 5c ***. G. Latter. 4th July, 2000.

Climb large pockets just left of the black swirl to better protection beneath a small roof. Step right, then left on to a ledge over the roof, and finish up the cracked wall on immaculate compact pocketed rock.

Russet Wall:

Continuing farther right up the hillside for a little less than 100m is an excellent compact wall, well endowed with letter box slots & pockets.

Descent: Traverse right across heather and down the right edge of the crags.

Dragonfly – 25m VS 4c **. G. Latter, A. Warner. 4th July, 2000.

Climb directly up the wall at the left side to break through the final bulge past a couple of flakes.

Horseshit – 25m VS 4c **. G. Latter, A. Warner. 4th July, 2000.

Start beneath the hanging crack towards the right side of the wall. Climb up and move left along diagonal break for a few metres. Follow the crack to finish up a layback flake, pulling on to an easy slab above.

A couple of hundred metres up the hillside to the right is a fine, pink, slabby, pocketed wall directly above a prominent boulder. Various routes from V. Diff -

VS from 8m-12m. The immaculate hanging finger-crack in the slab a short way farther right gives an excellent 9m Severe 4a.

SHEIGRA, Second Geo:

The Black Edge – 35m E3 5c **. G. Latter, A. Warner. 2nd July, 2000.

Start at the belay ledge at the base of Shark Crack. Move up leftwards to the Black Pedestal, then step right and climb the edge on pockets, past a good vertical slot until forced to pull round the edge. Finish as for Lucifer's Link, stepping right to finish up the edge.

NOTE: M. Gear thought Dark Angel should be E2 5a 5c *** (not HVS 5b) and best split into two pitches, with a big ledge after 20m. Blood Lust Direct grade and quality confirmed, Fingers grade confirmed, quality two stars.

SANDWOOD BAY CRAGS:

A collection of wonderfully situated crags of immaculate water washed gneiss rising from the beach.

Crag 1 (NC 225 657 Aspect: SW & NW):

An excellent bouldering wall, with potential for routes up to 15m high. Clear of the water from about mid-tide onwards, with the vertical NW-facing wall clear a bit longer. There is also a fine ruby-coloured mini geo with an excellent 3-4m vertical walls just before the next crag.

Crag 2 (NC 229 656 Aspect: W):

Continue round the first promontory for 200m. A fine tidal crag, with a steep 40m slab at the right end, dwindling and steepening leftwards to about 15-20m. The routes at the left end are clear of the water one hour either side of low tide, those on the right for about four hours.

Descent: Abseil descent from the belays was used to regain the beach, scrambling across broken ground at the top of all the routes. Alternatively, walk a long way right from the top of Marram and descend grass and the small rocky promontory.

Marram – 60m V. Diff ***. G. Latter, A. Warner. 3rd July, 2000.

Start beneath large flakes near the right side of the large slab.

1 35m. Climb the flakes and obvious vertical crack and continue steeply directly on good holds to belay on large ledge.

2 25m. Scramble directly over short walls and ledges.

Rose Root – 35m VS 5a **. G. Latter, A. Warner. 3rd July, 2000.

Climbs a line up the left side of the slab, aiming for the steepest areas of rock. Follow a line heading for a short bulging finger-crack in the upper left edge, and climb this to belay on a large ledge. Finish as for Marram.

Continuing left, the base is guarded by barnacles and green slime for the first 3m. The following two routes both share a common start, up a tiny left-facing corner.

Wild Wood – 15m E2 5c **. G. Latter, A. Warner. 3rd July, 2000.

Negotiate the start and pull up right to good holds. Continue directly on good holds.

Sandal Wood – 15m VS 5b *. G. Latter, A. Warner. 3rd July, 2000.

The prominent left-slanting diagonal crack, after the problematic entry. Can also be gained by starting farther left.

Driftwood – 15m E2 5c **. G. Latter. 3rd July, 2000.

Twenty metres farther left is a fine looking pink wall with a steep bulge low down. Negotiate the start and make difficult moves over the bulge to finish more easily up the wall.

The following two routes lie above a large pool. Ledges at 6m were gained by abseil from the rightmost of three large blocks at the top, but could also be gained quite easily by a right slanting line from the broken ridge bounding the left edge of the crag.

Thrift – 12m HS 4b **. G. Latter, A. Warner. 3rd July, 2000.

The prominent crack up the pink wall, a few metres left of an easy open black corner.

Sea Pink – 12m Severe 4a **. G. Latter, A. Warner. 3rd July, 2000.

Cracks up the left edge, finishing up the arête to step round the left side of the large boulder.

FOINAVEN, First Dionard Buttress:

Regeneration – 200m E6 **. R. Campbell, G. Latter (ground up). 3rd June, 2000.

A well protected line at the lower limit of its grade that follows a spectacular overhanging crackline, then the main groove system left of Millenium. Start directly beneath a prominent roof crack in the right wall of the open groove 10m down left of the fault of Millennium.

1. 30m. 6b Climb straight up rock and unpleasant heather to gain the base of the crack. Climb this with increasing difficulty beyond a hanging block (Friend#3^{1/2}) to belay in a groove just round the lip.

2. 40m. 5c Continue up the groove, moving out left into another groove. Trend up left beneath a further roof to easier ground, and head up rightwards to traverse left along large flakes to beneath a crack in an overhanging wall some 10m left of the “flying ramp” on Millenium.

3. 25m. 6b Climb into the crack with difficulty and continue to where a bulge blocks access into a leaning groove. From twin cracks on the right, step left round a rib into an open groove and follow the spectacular leaning groove rightwards to belay above the lip.

4. & 5. 90m. 5c,- Climb straight up the thin crack and the slab above, trending slightly right to finish up the final fault of Millennium, reaching a terrace.

Descent (Diff.): Follow the grassy terrace round to the right and before it runs out, down climb to the cliff base.

CAITHNESS, LATHERONWHEEL, Pinnacle Area:

The landward side of the inlet holding four stacks consists of a steep wall, increasing in height from the access point at the back of the bay. The wall holds some loose rock and all the routes were pre-cleaned on abseil. Belays are on a fence well back from the top of the wall. The routes are described from south to north.

Snow Way Jose - 10m VS 4c. S. Muir, G. E. Little. 27th February, 1999.

Start below a distinctive block roof a short distance north of the southern end of the wall. Climb the steep wall to under the roof, turn it on the left, then enter an open groove to finish.

Monica Lewinsky - 15m HVS 5a. G. E. Little, S. Muir. 27th February, 1999.

Start just right of the obvious low triangular roof. Climb a crack and groove to reach the base of a distinctive clean corner. Climb the corner to a roof, pull out right, then up to finish. Loose but rather enjoyable!

Zippergate - 15m E1 5b. S. Muir, G. E. Little. 27th February, 1999.

Start 2m right of the previous route. Climb a rib to the left end of a wide roof. Move right and power over the roof on good holds, then finish straight up.

Farther north, nearly opposite the landmost stack, a section of wall holding two cracks stands proud of the cliff line.

Double Jeopardy - 20m E1 5b. G. E. Little, S. Muir. 27th February, 1999.

Start at the foot of the left-hand crack. Move up for a couple of metres, then step right on to the wall between the two cracks. Climb straight up, crossing a horizontal break, with an awkward move left to finish.

CAIRNGORMS

LOCHNAGAR: Southern Sector:

Lunar Eclipse - 90m. II/III. P. Mather, S. Muir, H. Watson.

To the right of Jason's Groove is a shallow gully, followed by a broad slabby wall. The right-hand side of the slab is defined by a short deep gully. The route starts at the base of this gully. Maybe grade II with more consolidated snow.

1. 35m. Climb a leftward rising ramp to the middle of the slab. Climb two shallow corners and belay on the right of a steep wall.

2. 40m. Traverse left below the wall on steep snow until it is possible to climb up into the upper gully to a cracked block below the cornice. (Note: it looked quite feasible to go straight up behind the belay).

3. 15m. Climb the final slope to the cornice.

Central Buttress:

Central Buttress Direct, Powder Variation (to pitch 1) - 40m. V,6. T. Rankin, M. Reed. 16th December, 1999.

A shallow groove just right of and parallel to the main corner. Gain it from below the main corner and regain the normal line by straddling a large block.

Shadow Buttress Group:

Shady Grove Road - 110m. VII,6 (?). G. Robertson, J. Currie. 16th April, 2001. This climb follows the slim groove and rib springing up left from the narrows of Douglas Gibson Gully (immediately right of Penumbra). It is rarely in condition and serious. Start left of the small ice pitch in the DG narrows.

1. 50m. Trend up and slightly left over balancy mixed ground to the base of the groove proper. Pull into the groove and continue on thin ice to where protection can be found on the right wall.

2. 40m. Move up the groove to where it abuts the rib. Swing left into another small groove and climb this to a large block.

3. 20m. Climb up to the plateau.

Tough-Brown Face:

NOTE: A very large rockfall from Parallel Gully B rightwards has converted the gully into a right-facing corner, removed all vestiges of Nymph, Psyche and Sylph, and removed the ramp (second corner) of Crypt. The routes farther right are unaffected.

Black Spout Pinnacle:

Pinnacle Gully One, Variation Start – 25m. IV,4. D. F. Lang, Q. T. Crichton. 17th March, 2001.

Start at an exposed rock wall directly opposite Backdoor Route. Ascend a narrow shelf and continue in the same groove line to just above the cave. Well protected

West Buttress:

South-West Passage – 140m. III. B. S. Findlay, G. S. Strange. 14th January, 2001.

A natural winter route starting at the foot of Causeway Rib and joining Western Slant just below its junction with Black Spout Buttress. Climb the first pitch of West End, then continue up left below the crux of Isis to gain Western Slant through a prominent V-slot.

The Staic:

Morning Has Broken – 70m. V,6. C. Cartwright, S. Richardson. 5th November, 2000.

The buttress to the right of New Boot Groove is defined by a right-facing corner in its upper half.

1. 30m. Climb mixed ground via short steps to reach the foot of the corner.

2. 40m. Climb the corner and exit left at its top. Continue more easily to the top. An excellent pitch.

House of Cards – 60m. V,6. S. Richardson, C. Cartwright. 5th November, 2000.

The steep squat buttress to the left of Slot Buttress.

1. 30m. Start up a short easy groove to gain the foot of a steep crack cutting through a vertical wall on the front face of the buttress. Climb the crack and exit right at its top to gain a large flat platform.

2. 30m. From the top of the rib bounding the left side of the platform, step left and surmount the steep wall above to gain easy ground and the top.

Cnapan Nathraichean, Lower Western Slabs:

Unnamed – 100m. V,5. C. Cartwright S. Richardson. 21st January, 2001.

A mixed line up the centre of crag. Start 5m left of The Plaid below a 10m-high sentry box.

1. 30m. Climb up the right side of the sentry box and exit right round a large flake-rib to a ledge. Climb up past a small tree to a second ledge and tree.

2. 30m. Climb the shield of rock immediately behind the belay via a thin crack and exit on to a sloping ledge. Step right to gain a vegetated fault and follow this past a rock crevasse on the right to a ledge.

3. 40m. Climb the series of wide cracks directly above the stance and finish via thinly iced slabs just left of the final icefall of The Plaid.

Broad Cairn Bluffs:

Slugs and Snails and Puppy Dog's Tails – 60m. VS. S. Richardson, J. C. Wilkinson. 17th June, 2000.

A vegetated climb up the wall left of the Diamond Slab. Start 10m right of The Only Game in Town below cracks in the right side of the wall.

1. 25m. 4b Climb the cracks and scramble up vegetation to a rowan tree.
2. 35m. 4b Climb the short steep wall behind the tree and finish up the V-groove above.

EAGLES ROCK, A Likely Story Slab:

Fraud Squad, Direct Start – E3 5c. J. Lines, C. Ord. 12th July, 2000.

After climbing direct to the first overlap, pull straight over and go direct up the centre of the rippled scoop. Continue direct to the belay. Bold.

NOTE: Abstention – There seems to have been a rockfall under the huge nose making it unattractive to move right. On an ascent in January, 2001, G.S. Strange and R. Ross continued up the icefall and broke out right above the nose to gain and follow a wide crack to the top. Good climbing.

CREAG AN DUBH LOCH, Central Gully Wall:

Four Corners Route – P. Benson and G. Robertson climbed a direct start at VI,8 in January, 2001.

Glen Clova Notes: N. Quinn and Q. T. Crichton made the FWA of B Gully Buttress (Corrie Fee) on 15th November, 1965. The date for the first (and only known) ascent of Slanting Gully Direct on the North Wall of Corrie Fee by F. Old, N. W. Quinn and J. Howe was 30th December, 1962. N. W. Quinn and others had climbed Pinnacle Ridge in the 1960s so the ascent in SMCJ 2000, p379 was not the first.

GLEN PROSEN, South Craig:

Summit Gully – 140m. III,5. B. S. Findlay, G. S. Strange. 25th February, 2001. The shallow gully left of a steep lower band on the NE Face. It leads to a small buttress below the plateau. Climb the gully via a 20m ice pitch to below a large roof. Turn this on the right, then go up and left to a steep corner. Go up this (crux) and continue to the cornice.

GLEN CALLATER, Coire Kander:

Bastion Direct – 200m. V,4. S. Richardson, G. Betenia. 25th February, 2001. A prominent icefall runs down the steep central section of the buttress. Start just left of The Bastion and climb the icefall in two long pitches to below the final headwall. Follow a ramp up and left, traverse left and continue up mixed ground to the top.

Creag an Fhleisdeir:

Bonspiel – 100m. III. A. Hubbard, J. Lyall, I. Murray. 21st January, 2001. Start at the foot of Central Slabs Cleft and climb out right by an icy wall and ramp. Follow icy slabs up left to a thin traverse left overlooking the cleft, then continue up by the most continuous ice.

BEINN BHROTAIN, Fingal's Buttress:

Jackknife – 130m. III,4. S. Richardson, C. Cartwright. 12th November, 2000.

The right side of Fingal's Buttress is cut by a left-slanting fault-line. Start 5m right of Tiered Cracks.

1. 25m. Climb easily up to a short right-facing corner. Climb this and continue up a ramp to easier ground.
2. 45m. Move right for 5m to gain the left-slanting fault. Follow this to the top of the steep section of Tiered Cracks.
- 3 and 4. 60m. Continue up the crest of the steepening buttress to the top.

BEINN A' BHUIRD, Coire na Ciche:

NOTE: The Slugging Match (*SMCJ* 2000) had previously been climbed by B. S. Findlay and G. S. Strange on 11th February, 1995.

Coire an Dubh Lochain:

Tail-end Corner – 100m. III. B. Davison, D. McGimpsey, A. Nisbet. 19th November, 2000.

The corner bounding the right edge of the section of slabby ribs (Tail-end Slabs), climbed on semi-consolidated snow.

Bloodsport – 100m. VI,7. G. Robertson, T. Rankin. 15th April, 2000.

A good winter line with some excellent steep climbing, just right of Bloodhound Buttress. Start a few metres right of the rock arch below twin cracks leading up to and through a small roof.

1. 20m Climb the twin cracks over the roof to a platform. Move up, then swing right into a niche below a steep groove.
2. 30m Climb the groove, then a right-trending corner to a junction with Bloodhound Buttress.
3. 50m Finish up Bloodhound Buttress.

BEN AVON, Slochd Mor, Creag na-h-Iolair (MR 128 025):

A fine wee west-facing granite edge up to 15m high, on superbly featured coarse rock with a gritty friable surface. Nearly an hour's walk from the Ponyman's Hut by the River Avon - unlikely to be visited considering closeness to Mitre Ridge. The lower tiers might just offer some climbing, but these routes are on the uppermost tier. Descents are the obvious slopes and scrambles between the buttresses. The routes were climbed by N. Everett and R. Goodier in October, 1999. From left to right:

1. An unclimbed but loose-looking buttress arête (not too hard).
2. An unclimbed off-width corner crack (E1??).
3. Unclimbed, a stunning, very steep 12m crack (E4??)
4. *Eagle Crack* – 15m H. Severe. A steep start, then a corner crack.
5. *The Beach* – 15m VS 4c+. An excellent curving groove just left of an arête, then a cracked slab to the ledge and finish of The Nose.
5. The arête direct unclimbed – looks superb (E3??).
6. *The Nose of A'an* – 15m V. Diff. 4a. The 6m nose below a corner, via it's left-hand side (hard start). Make an exposed step to a crack left of the corner, followed to a ledge with blocks. A steep finish on scary flakes.

7. Well to the right is a 5m overhanging forked lightning crack (not climbed), farther still a short Moderate chimney-gully, just left of:

8. *Talons* – 8m VS 4c. A shallow crack in a groove, gained from the left past a bulging start.

BRAERIACH, Garbh Coire Mor:

NOTE: The Fiery Groove (*SMCJ* 2000) is the same as Forked Lightning Route (guide p194)

COIRE SPUTAN DEARG:

Grey Slab – A free winter ascent by J. Currie and P. Benson with no change in grade on 7th January, 2001.

Wee Heavy – VI,7. D. McGimpsey, A. Nisbet. 12th November, 2000.

By the summer route. A peg was used for aid on the summer crux moves (pitch 2, possibly 5a, not 4b).

CARN ETCHACHAN, Loch Etchachan Crags:

Unnamed – 120m IV,5 *. H. Burrows-Smith, J. Lyall. 5th January, 2001.

Takes a left-slanting line out of Lochside Chimney. Start as for Lochside Chimney but pull out left at the first bulge. Follow this initially narrow line for 100m to a big ledge, then climb a groove up the top wall on the right.

NOTE: J. Lyall thinks Lochside Chimney is better than the guide implies.

Balaam's Donkey – 130m III *. S. Carter, C. Ensoll, C. Reilly, C. Ross. 8th January, 2001.

Climbs a shallow gully line starting 15m left of Lochside Chimney and finishing at the same place as Unnamed above.

The Lower Cliff, Main Face:

Far East – 120m V,5. A. Nisbet, J. Preston. 2nd November, 2000.

Climbs a parallel fault line on the left of Eastern Approach Route, and a better choice under powder. Start at the foot of Eastern Approach Route and climb up left to the second and easier angled corner line (10m). Climb this cracked corner, then move right and climb the fault to a smooth slab. Pass this by a chimney on the left and return to the fault (50m). Continue up the fault, becoming steeper and passing to the right of a large block forming a roof (50m). Move up to a vertical corner, then traverse right to climb a step overlooking Eastern Approach Route. Return left to easy ground (10m).

Upper Tier:

Anaconda – 110m VI,7. G. Ettle, J. Preston. 20th February, 2001.

Climbs the wall between Pagan Slit and Red Garter. Well protected. Start just right of Pagan at a toe of rock.

1. 25m. Ascend the crack for 15m to a bulge, move up, then right to a ledge.

2. 25m. Step left and go up easier turf to the steep cracked pillar on the right. Climb this moving left to easier ground and a quartz corner.

3. 60m. Climb the iced corner, then the wall above directly to join easier ground (possible belay).

NOTES: *Time Traveller* – Repeated by G. Ettle, M. Garthwaite, VII,7 ***.

Boa - Climbed free by G. Ettle, J. Preston in January, 2001 at VI,6.

Hairpin Loop – Repeated by G. Ettle, rubbish route.

Nom de Plume – Received another ascent and the grade VI,6 agreed. On the second ascent by G. Ettle and M. Garthwaite, a different final pitch was climbed. From the platform move right and climb a shallow groove in a wall with a hard bold start. Possibly the final pitch of Snakebite summer, about V,7.

SHELTER STONE CRAG:

NOTE: G. Ettle repeated Imposter, VI,6 maybe VI,7 ***. The wall pitch is as good as any in Scotland.

G. Ettle and S. Koch climbed Citadel Winter Variation free at VI,7.

Garbh Uisge Crag:

Walkabout - 100m. IV,5. S. Blagbrough, J. Fincham. 20th January, 2001.

Climbs the leftmost rib overlooking Pinnacle Gully. Follow a groove, trending left at the top to gain a pinnacle and cleft (35m). Climb a steep turfy groove above to gain a large ledge (25m). Move up and left to climb over a block into a capped corner and then up to a ledge. Go 5m left along the ledge and climb a flake-crack to easier ground (40m). It is possible to escape up and right after the second pitch.

Crystal Crack – 120m III,4. D. McGimpsey, A. Nisbet. 5th November, 2000.

Climbs the left side of the wide buttress between Garbh Gully and Quartz Gully. Climb easily to a steep wall. Move right and back left to a bay below two parallel grooves, well seen from the cliff base. Climb the left-hand groove to easy ground.

The Worm – 110m III,5. D. McGimpsey, A. Nisbet. 5th November, 2000.

Climbs the right side of the buttress. Start from the base of Quartz Gully, move left on to the buttress and climb easily to a barrier wall. Swing left into a short V-slot, then move awkwardly right up a short ramp to a bay. Continue right and finish up iced slabs.

GARBH UISGE CRAG, Waterfall Wall (M.R. 998 015):

The crag is the slabby west wall of the waterfalls of the Garbh Uisge. The lower section rises from the stream and the upper slabs gradually ease in angle. The right side of the main slab is cut by a big roof. To reach the starts, walk up the west bank of the river to a large boulder in the river where walking ends. The routes give unusual and atmospheric climbing.

Fluid Dynamics – 75m E1. A. Fyffe, D. Howard-Jones. 22nd August, 2000.

An unbalanced route which breaks through the big roof which dominates the right side of the crag. Start where it is no longer possible to walk up below the cliff.

1. 25m. Climb the right-facing corners and ribs to belay on the slab below the big roof.

2. 50m. Move left then through the roof by the obvious left facing corner. Continue up the cracks in the slabs above.

Turbulence – 70m VS *. J. Lines (on sight solo). 16 August, 2000.

Start from the boulder.

1. 30m 5a. Move up into the base of the left-hand of two right-facing corners. Pull left around its rib and cross a clean pink slab (crux, intricate but surprisingly well protected) to gain a shattered, vegetated corner. Go left round this and cross a black slab to gain another corner. Step down to water level and move left and up to a black quartz vein. Hanging belay

2. 40m 4c. Climb the black quartz up and through a roof, then climb cracks in a slab and move up to a right facing corner/overlap. Pull left and continue up cracks and finish more easily

An alternative is climb the first pitch to above the roof on pitch 2 and belay there.

White Water – 70m HVS *. J. Lines (on sight solo). 16th August, 2000.

1. 30m 5a. As above.

2. 40m 5a. Move left from the belay into twin deep cracks (or belay higher in these cracks). Move up these until an awkward pull left gains a slot in the pink slab on the left. Continue up the pink cracked slab and quartz vein to easier ground.

Calm Seas – 45m V. Diff. A. Fyffe, R. Goolden. 30th August, 2000.

The east side of the stream is defined by a rock rib at the top of which it is possible to gain the cliff direct by a deep crack. Step over the water and go diagonally right to corner (possible belay). Move right above the steeper section and climb the slab by the quartz vein, easy but poorly protected.

HELL'S LUM CRAG, The Grey Buttress:

The reported winter ascent of The Exorcist (*SMCJ* 1999) turns out to be a line starting as for Evil Spirits but pulling out right from the roof (Evil Spirits traverses left from the roof) and soon joining Hell's Lump. This is a line climbed by Brian Findlay and Greg Strange and shown in the photo in *SMCJ* 1996, mistakenly captioned as The Exorcist. A summer ascent was as follows:

Evil Spirits, Right-Hand Finish – HVS 5a. G. Ettle, P. Thorburn. June, 1998.

Climb the main pitch to the upper roof, move right and climb slabby ground above.

Unleashing Hell – E3 6a. P. Thorburn, G. Ettle. June, 1998.

Start up Evil Spirits main pitch but move left to enter a slim groove line which heads up towards The Exorcist. Go over a capping bulge to finish up The Exorcist.

Hells Lump Direct – VI,7. G. Ettle, S. Koch. March, 2001.

To the right of the summer line, a crack runs directly up to join the big square roof on pitch 2.

The Serpent – 30m E3 5c. J. Lines (on sight solo). 2nd July, 2000.

The slabby rib starting left of the first pitch of Lion of Judah and climbed on its right-hand side. A large cam as a side runner in Lion of Judah will reduce the grade.

STAG ROCKS:

The Accidental Tourist – 100m. III,5. A. Fyffe, I. Peter. 27th January, 2001.

An undistinguished route up the crest of the narrow scrappy buttress on the left of

the Y-shaped gully descent to The Stag Routes and left of Truly, Madly, Chimbley. Start in a snow bay just on the right of the lowest rocks.

1. 25m. Climb up and left to belay by a diagonal rock wall.
2. 25m. Climb the groove on the left, half way, step left onto a ledge and go left then up by some blocks to the next terrace.
3. 50m. Climb the obvious left facing corner with a defined right wall to above some blocks and gain the crest by a short, steep fault (crux). Finish easily.

Crocodile Rock – 65m HVS. J. Lyall, E. Pirie. 26th June, 2000.

1. 25m. 4c Start up Purge and after 10m climb the left wall by flakes and cracks to a ledge.
2. 40m. 5a Go up and break rightwards between overlaps (crux), then go straight up to a prominent wide crack in the headwall. Reach this and go left to the top.

Final Selection Direct – 45m. V. Diff. **. G. Latter, S. Evans. 5th August, 2000. The arête followed more direct by stepping right from the base of the initial groove, finishing steeply on good holds over the small overlap above the belay ledge.

THE SADDLE SLABS (MR 014 037):

These are the slabs on Cairngorm facing ESE and facing The Saddle. In general the slabs are at a shallow angle but at the right end they steepen briefly to provide the slab climber with some interest (although no protection).

The Flame – 30m E3 5c. J. Lines (on sight solo). 16th August, 2000.

The obvious pink streak up the steepest section of slab. Climb the left edge of the streak (the middle was wet, but looked easier).

Hawkweed – 30m E1 5a. J. Lines (on sight solo). 16th August, 2000.

Climb the pinkish slab about 8m left of The Flame to some flake holds at about 10m. Easier above.

COIRE AN t-SNEACHDA, Aladdin's Buttress:

NOTE: Good evidence now suggests that The Celtic Edge (*SMCJ* 2000, p385) climbed the first two pitches of Edgewood, then reversed The Flying Doctors to finish up Doctor's Choice.

Fiacaill Buttress:

A. Mullin and S. Paget repeated Jailbreak under powder on 4th November, 2000 and thought it VIII,7 due to precarious climbing with very poor protection. It was later repeated with some ice and the grade thought correct.

COIRE AN LOCHAIN, No. 2 Buttress:

NOTE: A. Mullin and S. Paget repeated Inquisition and, with some helpful ice, thought VII,7 was the grade on the day.

No. 3 Buttress:

NOTE: New Age Traveller and Vagrant are winter and summer ascents of the same line, despite different descriptions in the guide.

After Dark – 80m VII,7 A. Mullin (backrope solo). 21st December, 2000.

This inconspicuous route provides an excellent second pitch which is steep exposed and very worthwhile. Start a few feet left of the Migrant groove at a prominent rib with an obvious groove running up its middle.

1. 30m. Climb the groove up the rib until its conclusion (this is an alternative start to Ewen Buttress Direct, then going left) where a move right leads to an easy groove (New Age Traveller) and continue to reach an obvious big ledge below a steep slabby wall.

2. 50m. Traverse right on ledges until a step right can be made to reach the base of an obvious fierce-looking corner. Climb the corner with a difficult mantelshelf move right on to a small exposed ledge. Traverse right and climb an obvious groove directly below an overhanging wall; this allows foot ledges to be gained and a traverse right to reach a second overhanging groove. Climb this groove to reach a ledge common with the Migrant and finish up this.

NOTE: might be VII,8.

NOTE: A. Mullin notes a backrope solo ascent of Migrant Direct in icy conditions providing sustained climbing with poor protection. Thought to be VIII,7 on the day even with two yo-yo's. A. Nisbet agrees that with less ice, it would likely be technical 8, so the route at VII,7 must be undergraded.

Happy Tyroleans – 60m. VII,9. F. Schranz, H. Zak, E. Netzer. 1st March 2001.

This technical route takes the overhanging wall right of The Vicar. Start 5m right of The Demon below a prominent right facing corner with a small roof about 10m up the wall forming the start of the difficulties. This is the right-hand of two corner lines which run up the overhanging wall. There is a prominent ramp running from left to right below the base of this wall and the start is at the far right hand end of this. The route is easily identified by the prominent overlapping roofs forming the top of the first pitch.

1. 30m. Climb the shallow right-facing corner up the steep wall above to reach the prominent small roof with a gap behind it. Pull through the roof on the right-hand side and continue up the corner above to below a second prominent roof with a corner-crack running up its right-hand side. Climb through the roof using the corner-crack which now diminishes and becomes a thin crack up a steep bulging wall. Continue through the bulging wall via the crack and follow it to its end before making a hard exit onto an obvious turfey ledge out left and belay in a niche slightly higher up.

2. 30m. Directly above the belay is an obvious groove which is the natural fault up the slightly bulging wall above. Follow this turfey crack/groove to the top of the headwall and a series of blocky steps which lead to easy ground.

NOTE: Climbed redpoint style (leashless). A hex and nut previously *in situ* remain on the route but pegs placed on the lead have been removed. A later attempt on sight by D. Macleod nearly succeeded and thought the grade would be IX,9.

The Demon Direct – 60m. IX,9. A. Mullin, S. Paget. 18th March, 2001

This strenuous and technically sustained route takes the crack and left-facing corner up the overhanging wall right of the summer line of The Demon. Start a few feet right of the Demon below an obvious slabby ramp trending left to right which bars access to the crack/corner.

1. 30m. Climb up to the left side of the ramp, move up right on the ramp and use

a flake on it to arrange side runners (loose!). The crack is now on the left; climb this boldly to reach the base of the left-facing corner (peg runner). Continue up the corner which ends at a small roof (peg runner on lip). Climb through the roof strenuously to gain an awkward niche and move out right from here to gain a ledge. 2. 30m. Directly above the belay is an obvious fault line which is The Demon's crack system. Climb this boldly to reach easier ground and a choice of finishes leading to the top.

NOTE: The route was climbed ground up on the fifth attempt with the gear being placed on lead with the exception of the two peg runners placed on previous attempts and left in situ. These were used on the final ascent and left in situ in order to facilitate an on-sight ascent. The route was climbed ground up on every previous attempt.

No. 4 BUTTRESS:

NOTE: G. Robertson and J. Currie made a possible third ascent of Torquing Heads and thought the grade VI,8.

NORTH EAST OUCROPS

Large numbers of routes have been climbed in this area. Since the new guide is imminent, no routes are described in this section.

HIGHLAND OUTCROPS

MALLAIG CRAGS, Ardnish Peninsula, Paradise Walls (Highland Outcrops, p354):

The Paradise Walls have been separately named as follows:

The Main Face:

The face (containing Lost Rib, Interlude and Forbidden Fruit) is bounded on the left by a steep grassy gully. A distinctive orange coloured groove lies in the arête overlooking this gully. A smooth wall extends farther right and lower down the hillside and right again is the main area of slabs with a very distinctive rounded rib and groove which looks like a scoured runnel. Routes are described left to right.

Tango in the Night – 20m HVS 5b. S. Muir, K. Kelly. 1999.

Climb the arête and orange groove in the left edge of the wall. Scramble up the steep grassy gully to beneath the groove. Start up the left arête on good holds until possible to move into the groove at mid height. Follow it with poor protection to finish up the arête at the top.

Fanta Wall – 25m E1 5b. K. Howett, D. Richardson. 30th April, 2000.

Start slightly lower and right of the orange groove at a flat rock ledge under the wall. Climb the wall immediately right of the arête to the ledge and block belay. Scramble up to escape.

Beach Wall:

This is the name now given to the excellent wall separated from the main wall

containing Puffing and Padding. It starts off small in stature but gains height quickly. It is seamed by strong natural crack-lines and the rock is excellent.

Pure Shore – 20m E2 5b. K. Howett, S. Muir. 31st April, 2000.

The first large wall behind the first silver birch tree. Climb a vertical flake which peters out at half height. Make hard moves up and right to gain a small sloping ledge. Follow this right into a short left-facing corner which leads to a further ledge. Follow the crack above to finish.

Palm Tree and a Prayer – 25m E2 5c. S. Muir, K. Howett, D. Richardson. 31st April, 2000.

The next route is Puffing and Padding (in the guide). To the right of Puffing and Padding is a large block at the base of the crag. Climb the crack behind the block to beneath a heather clump. Make hard moves left and up to a shelf. Stand on this and climb the right arête of the wall by a tricky mantelshelf move and the slab leading leftwards to finish.

Cockles and Muscles – 25m E1 5b. S. Muir, K. Howett, D. Richardson. 31st April, 2000.

Near the right end of the wall, behind a big tree is a steep flake crack leading to broken area of rock. A hard start up the overhanging crack and the wall leads into a corner. Up this to a ledge below another bigger corner. Exit this and gain the flying ramp out on the left leading left under the steep headwall to finish.

ARISAIG, Druimindarroch Crag (M.R. 690 843):

Approach: Park at or near the boathouse at Druimindarroch (Map Ref 686 844) and walk across the end of the bay to Prince Charlie's Cave (5-10 minutes). Turn right down to the shore, (or left for some potential steeper routes). The crag is at the west end of the large pebble beach below Arisaig House Hotel and is located where the pebbles meet the grass and is characterised by a narrow slab facing the sea and a wall facing the beach/grass.

Ewe Two – 18m HVS 5b. D. Collier, J. Hartley. 30th July, 2000.

Start at a vertical wall just left of an overhanging block and below the start of a rightward-slanting crackline. Climb a few feet to the start of the crack and follow this up and rightwards to a small birch tree. Traverse left (crux) under a small overlap to reach the edge of the slab and easy climbing to the top.

NOTE: D. Collier notes that on p135 of *Highland Outcrops*, it gives Charlie's Crag a map reference of 715 859 which doesn't seem to fit the description of starting at Prince Charlie's Cairn (721 844). Starting from where the road crosses Beasdale Burn at 715 852 would seem more sensible (if the crag reference is correct).

BRIN ROCK:

Weird Wall – 25m E3 5c. P. Donnithorne, E. Alsford. 4th May, 2000.

Start about 6m left of Gold Digger at a steep crack. Struggle up this to a ledge, move up and right, then wobble up a groove to the unsound flake on Gold Digger. Move left and up a short thin crack, then flop on to a sloping shelf. Step left and teeter up the slab to the top.

TYNRICH SLABS, Upper Crag (M.R. 632 274, SE-facing, Cliff Base 370m):

From the RSPB car park for Loch Ruthven, follow a path up towards Stac Gorm and up its summit crest until the biggest crag (Frank Sinatra Walls) is seen and a traverse leads to the base of the cliff (20 minutes, 5 minutes from the top of Tynrich Slabs). The crag lies on the upper side of a valley which runs westwards from the top of Tynrich Slabs towards Stac Gorm summit.

Frank Sinatra Walls:

The highest crag has a large central recess.

Unnamed - 20m E3/4 6a??. R. McAllister. April, 1999.

Climbs the steep wall just left of the central recess, moving out right, then back left to a scoop, then straight up slabs to finish.

My Way - 20m E3 5c **. P. Thorburn, D. McGimpsey, R. McAllister, A. Fraser. 20th September, 1998.

Start below the recess, then climb up to its top left-hand side. Pull out left on to a ledge, then finish up the slabby wall above.

Vagabond Shoes - 20m E1 5b **. A. Fraser, R. McAllister, D. McGimpsey. 20th September, 1998.

Start below the recess. Climb a ramp up and right, then step right into a smaller recess. Pull on a large worrying flake to reach an excellent flake-crack which leads to the top.

Let's be Frank - 20m E4 6a **. R. McAllister, D. McGimpsey. October, 1998.

Start 10m right of the central recess at the lowest point of the wall where there is a steep crack right of a curving roof. Go up this, then climb a short groove on the left to the top of a flake. Place crucial small RP's and HB's, then climb intricately up and left to good holds. Continue to a bulge, cross this and exit up a blank flake to a ledge. Finish up the slab above.

Frank's in a Trance - 25m E4 6a **. D. McGimpsey, R. McAllister. October, 1998.

Climb the steep crack (as for *Let's be Frank*), then continue up to a bulging wall. Traverse out right to reach a diagonal crack. Follow this up and right through bulges to a small ledge. Step left on to the slab and traverse across it, then up to a horizontal break (very serious but only 5a/b). Finish up the right-hand cleaned streak.

Fence Crag:

To the right of the Frank Sinatra Walls is a fence. A heather ramp leads up and right from the fence. Above the ramp is this wall which has a large boulder on top.

Stolen Goods - 10m HVS 5a. J. Lyall, S. Atkinson. 1990.

An open left-slanting chimney-groove. Climb this and move out left to finish up the rib.

The Fence - 12m E1 5a *. J. Lyall, N. Nolan. September, 1993.

Climb the left edge of the wall to the right of the chimney-groove. Climb just right of the arête, then reach out right to a flake. Finish straight up. The original ascent climbed the left edge of the wall throughout (E2 5b).

Ole Red Eyes – 10m VS 5a. D. McGimpsey, R. McAllister. 29th September, 1998.
A crack just to the right.

High Green Crag:

A wall 100m west and uphill, on the right side of the valley and just below the summit of Stac Gorm. The right side of the wall is green rock and has a large flake close against it. Fifteen metres left of the large flake is an overhanging section at the base.

Rainbow High – 12m HVS 5b. J. Lyall. 1990.

Follow a left-slanting crack which leads above the overhanging section until a vertical crack gives a steep finish.

Bright September – 10m Mild VS 4b. J. Lyall, N. Nolan. September, 1993.
Right of Rainbow High is this layback flake leading out of a recess.

Ole Blue Eyes – 10m HVS 5a. D. McGimpsey. October, 1998.

Gain the top of the large flake, then step left and go up into a small V-recess. Hand traverse out right to finish.

Beyul – 10m VS 5a *. J. Lyall, N. Nolan. September, 1993.

Just right of the large flake is a thin flake on the wall. Climb the crack up the right side of the flake to its top. Make a hard move right to a parallel crack and finish up a shallow corner.

A route has also been climbed moving right from the top of the large flake to finish at the top of Beyul (H. Severe).

NOTE: The routes in SM CJ 1998 and described as Skyline Slabs are on the right side of High Slab (Highland Outcrops p165).

CONAGLEANN:

Croak – 25m E1 5b *. M. Hind, G. Lowe. 1998. (also G. Latter on 2nd August, 2000.)

The blunt rib up the centre of the front face. Start beneath a short steep crack 3m left of Toad's Arête. Climb the flake crack and trend slightly left and follow the rib steeply to gain a good right-slanting flake crack which leads to a belay in a small recess on the arête. Either traverse right to the in situ nut at the top of The Falcon, or finish up the upper (lichenous) slab of Toad's Arête (about HVS 5a).

The Falcon – 25m E2 5b *. G. Latter, S. Roberts (on-sight). 2nd August, 2000.

The impressive right-facing flake up the centre of the orange scooped wall at the right side of the crag. On the first ascent the prominent upper section of the flake was gained via the wall on the right (loose rock near the base of the flake). This was removed on abseil, and a direct ascent would be more logical. Gain a ledge on the right wall of the flake and go up until an obvious traverse line leading left into the top of the flake. Traverse left using a good spike to a small ledge, and continue leftwards to a cleaned ledge. Climb straight up on good flakes, then more easily up the edge of the slab. Trend right on ledges to an in situ nut and krab in a large flake. Abseil off.

ASHIE FORT:

Firecracker – 10m E3 6a/b. S.Clark (unsec). 8th June, 2000.

The right-hand of the twin cracks just right of Website (climbed in error for Flutterbye to China).

INVERFARIGAIG:

Black Silk – 12m E8 6c/7a. P. Edwards (headpointed). 22nd October, 1999.

Head for Inverfarigaig from Errogie (B862). Park 100m past a small bridge and the small buttress is above in the trees. The route is on a 35 degree overhanging wall with marginal gear.

CREAG DUBH, Bedtime Buttress, The Upper Tier:

Nightlife – 40m V,5 *. J. Lyall, D. Turner, B. Watson. 7th February, 2001.

Climbs the left-slanting fault left of First Offence. A pillar of ice leads to the fault and a tree, then icy slabs on the left.

Bedtime Gully – II/III.

The stream/gully on the right side of Bedtime Buttress gives one ice pitch. Climbed many times.

Little Rock:

Which Orifice? – 15m E4 6b *. G. Latter, D. Hollinger. 1st August, 2000.

Another good sustained workout, though close to Heather Wall in the central section. Start 2m right of Heather Wall, beneath a couple of prominent quartz slots. Climb past these and place a small cam in the short vertical slot above. Make hard moves to gain a large incut plaque directly above, then climb straight up until a step right at a good thin horizontal break leads to some sloping holds to finish past a cracked block.

Lower Waterfall Wall:

Jade – 30m V,5 *. J. Lyall, D. Turner, B. Watson. 5th February, 2001.

Close to the summer line. Climb a steep stepped groove on the left edge of the wall to a niche below the overhanging prow. Move up left and climb an ice pillar to the top. Left of Jade is a short iced slab (Grade III) climbed many times.

Sprawl Wall:

The Meejies – 14m E5 6a **. G. Latter, L. Hughes. 10th August, 2000.

A direct line up the centre of the wall, just right of Yes! Yes! Climb easily up the crack into the niche, then up to the obvious handrail. Gain a standing position on this, then continue with good protection to finish on good holds. Finish up any of the routes above.

LAGGAN, Creagan Soilleir, Right-Hand Crag, Middle Tier:

Midget Gem – 10m E4 6a. J. Lines, D. McGimpsey, B. Davison. 11th August, 2000.

A right-slanting crack in the wall just left of the corner (The Coroner) and its arête, finishing straight up.

Bijou – 10m E5 6a. J. Lines, D. McGimpsey, B. Davison, A. Nisbet. 11th August, 2000.

The arête left of the corner becomes increasingly thin. There are cams in a break in the wall left of the arête at half height.

Liquorice Wall – 10m E1 5c. J. Lines. early August, 2000.

A thin crack in the wall 3m right of the corner.

Upper Tier:

The Gods – 25m HVS 5a. B. Davison, A. Nisbet. 11th August, 2000.

A right to left rising traverse line below a roof system. Move up left near the end, then back right to trees (abseil descent).

DUNKELD, Polney Crag:

New Star – 40m VS. R. Strachan, K. Strachan. September, 1996.

1. 25m Climb the left-facing corner to the right of Katie Morag's First Steps to reach the right side of the large flake. Traverse left under the flake and up to where Kestrel Crack joins. Continue up the flake to a slab, then into the bay.

2. 15m 5a Trend right up to an imposing tower/arête. Climb the tower by a cleft just right of centre (this may be Variation Finish 1 of Kestrel Crack).

SMA' GLEN (PERTSHIRE):

This is the section of Glen Artney, which is bisected by the road from Crieff to Aberfeldy. The Sma' Glen has a scattering of outcrops on either side which probably have looked too scrappy or too small for any climbing interest. However, there are some clean and interesting pieces of rock, which have given some surprisingly good climbs. They are well worth a visit of an evening for bored locals.

The Newton Spur (M.R. 893 316):

This is the spur of hillside that juts into the glen from the east and ends at the bridge where the road heads out of the glen on its way north. It forms the northern boundary of the Sma' Glen. Newton is the small farm in the glen at this point. Best access to the crags is to park at a small lay-by on the north side of the spur. Enter the small col. that cuts the spur, then head up the hillside leftwards past a prominent lone Rowan tree growing from a small outcrop, then drop down to the south side of the spur. This should allow you to contour slightly left to the base of Pack Buttress. If you continue further up the spur past a very prominent large glacial erratic boulder and gain a slight col at the top of the spur, a short descent down the south side reaches Flat-line Wall.

Pack Buttress:

One of the bigger and steeper walls. Consists of a prominent left diagonal stepped corner. The wall to its left is undercut. Right of this is an open-book corner with a vertical right wall. Unfortunately this section of the crag is composed of thousands of stacked flakes of dubious stability. 20m to the right is a slender pillar with a cave at the base. Right again is another slender pillar. The buttresses continue rightwards and up the hillside to culminate at a short but overhanging wall.

Shuffle and be Damned – 8m E3 5b. K. Howett, A. Todd. 19th July, 1997.

The shallow hanging scoop up the centre of the wall. Climb through the roof via the obvious slot to the right of the previous route onto a big flake. Pull up and left into a scoop and then direct to the top. Serious upper section.

Slight of Hand – 10m E3 5b. K. Howett, S. Muir. 28th July, 1999.

The shallow rounded groove formed by a conspicuous hanging block in the arête to the left of The Bad Book. Steep start with some loose holds, success requires a delicate approach and a cool head.

The Bad Book – 8m E1 5c. K. Howett, A. Todd 19th July, 1997.

Climb the open-book corner.

The House of Cards – 8m E2 5c *. K. Howett, L. Hughes 17th April, 1997.

Climbs the right wall of the open-book corner via the obvious central weakness. Crux at the top.

The Player – 10m E2 5b. L. Hughes, G. Nicoll (on-sight). 14th April, 1997.

Climbs the centre of the slender pillar above the small cave. Go up the slabby rib on the right of the cave to a large flake then step left onto the lip of the roof. Up the centre of the wall past the central break with a very long reach up the fine wall above.

Buzzards Base – 10m HVS 5a. A. Todd, K. Howett (on-sight). 14th April, 1997.

Start as for The Player up the slabby rib to a large old nest. Finish up large holds on the left of the deep chimney above.

The Dummy – 8m HVS 5a. G. Nicoll, L. Hughes (on-sight). 14th July, 1997.

Climbs the right edge of the slender buttress right of that taken by Buzzards Base.

To the right of this buttress the line of the crags turns up the hillside. Beyond the initial broken rocks is a conspicuous recessed wall with a slim corner up its centre and its right side forming an arête.

Tea Total – 8m HVS 5a. L. Hughes, T. Leggeat (on-sight). July, 1997.

Climb the arête on large flakes, some a bit hollow. Climbed in the dark to avoid the pub.

Farther right again is another small overhanging buttress above large boulders containing the following.

Queen of Tarts – 8m H. Severe 4a. S. Muir, A. Baird (on-sight). July, 2000.

The diagonal right to left shallow groove-line cutting across the left side of the buttress.

Crinkle-cut Gripps – 8m HVS 4c. K. Howett, A. Todd (on-sight). 14th April, 1997.

Climb the centre of the overhanging wall right of the previous route via flakes. Poorly protected but juggy.

The Sentinel:

This wee crag sits on its own, in the same general line beyond the last of the buttresses of Pack Buttress, almost on the skyline of the spur. It consists of a slender pillar of clean rock, tapering towards the top. The main feature is an open groove bounding the left side containing a small tree. Large boulders litter the base.

Pick-Locking the Chastity Belt – 8m E1 5a. L. Hughes, K. Howett. 11th April, 1997.
Climb from the lowest point directly up the centre of the buttress finishing past a flat spike.

Midnight Pass – 8m VS 4c. K. Howett, A. Armstrong. 5th May, 2000.
The hanging niche to the right of Chastity Belt gained from the right.

Slipped in Quick – 5m H. Severe 4a. K. Howett (solo). Sept, 1999.
The quartz studded scoop to the right. Pull into the scoop and climb direct up the steep wall to the top.

Fiddlers in the Dark – 5m 5b. K. Howett (solo). Sept, 1999.
A boulder problem up the series of thin cracks in the right edge.

Rowan Rib:

A distinctive rounded rib sitting above a tree and with a fallen tree at its top. It lies below and right of Pack Wall.

Comet Skies – 8m E2 5c **. K. Howett, A. Todd. 10th April, 1997.
Climbs the superb thin flake-crack up the centre of the rib. Start by pulling through the guarding roof and pull strenuously to the flake. Continue with less trouble.

Flat-line Wall:

The farthest east (highest up the hillside) of the set of crags on the 'Newton Spur'. A smooth vertical wall with a distinctive crack. The rock is perfect and the climbing excellent. Climbs described left to right.

The Next Life – 10m HVS 5a. K. Howett, A. Todd. 18th July, 1999.
Climbs the well defined corner at the left end of the wall. Well protected and enjoyable.

Dicky Ticker – 10m E2 5b. K. Howett, A. Todd (on-sight). 1997.
The wall between the corner and the crack, climbing the rounded rib at the top. Avoid the temptation to place protection in the crack of Ouzels of Fun.

Ouzels of Fun – 10m E1 5b. K. Howett, A. Todd (on-sight). 14th April, 1997.
Climb the excellent vertical crack with continual interest and good protection. When the crack fades make a move to a good jug in a small recess and exit with difficulty out right.

Dead Bopp – 10m E2 5b. K. Howett, L. Hughes (on-sight). 11th April, 1997.
Climbs the slight rib immediately right of the crack. Start by a thin move to reach the initial horizontal break. Up the thin flake above to the top break. Pull up to and finish in the ramp on the right.

The Scoop – 10m E1 5b. K. Howett, A. Todd (on-sight). 8th April, 1997.
The obvious blackened diagonal scoop to the right. Finish direct.

Missing a Beat – 8m E2 5c. K. Howett, S. Muir (on-sight). 21st June, 1999.
Climbs the slight rib immediately right of The Scoop, following a very shallow depression in the centre of the rib. Start below the rib. Up to a good horizontal break.

Dave McGimpsey on FWA of Scalaywag V.6, Baosbheinn. Photo: Andy Nisbet.





Pull into the shallow depression on small sharp holds and climb it via a tiny diagonal crack and thin flake to good jugs near the top. Exit direct.

Triple Bypass – 12m E2 5b. K. Howett, A. Todd (on-sight). 18th July, 1999.

Climbs a natural diagonal line from right to left across the blankest section of the wall. Start as for Missing a Beat. Pull up to the tiny diagonal crack in the shallow depression and immediately swing out left into The Scoop. Make a move up this to the first horizontal break-line. Step down and left to gain the obvious horizontal crack across the blanker rib of Dead Bop which leads left into the vertical crack of Ouzels of Fun. Climb up this to a jug in the base of the final small recess and exit out left.

Defibrillator – 5m VS 4c. S. Muir, K. Howett. 21st June, 1999.

Climbs the obvious deep left to right diagonal crack to the right of Missing a Beat. Start just right of the very base of the crack, follow it to gain holds on the lip of the wall and step right to pull over.

Unnamed – 8m VS 4c. A. Todd, K. Howett (on-sight). 18th July, 1999.

Climbs an obvious right to left diagonal break-line at the right hand side of the wall cutting across Un-named. Start near the right side of the wall below a well defined diagonal crack forming the beginnings of the break-line. Climb up the crack into Unnamed. Up this to good holds leading out left into the top of The Scoop and finish out direct as for that route.

Ant Buttress:

Not strictly part of the Newton Spur but on the hillside further south towards Flintlock Wall. This whole hillside is covered in small bits of rock, strangely formed into vertical ribs running the full length of the hillside. This crag is the lowest of these outcrops and the furthest left. It is best approached by following the north bank of the river from the Newton Bridge, through the field and then up steep ground and scree to the crag. It is composed of a scrappy left side, a longer central buttress and a smooth, steep but small wall on the right. There are small trees about the crag.

Flick's Revenge – 20m Severe 4b. S. Muir, K. Howett. 21st June, 1999.

From the very toe of the buttress climb the steep lower wall by the line of a crack onto easier ground leading up to large blocks. Stand on these, then enter the hanging slabby corner above. Exit this left along a dirty fissure.

Flintlock Wall (M.R. 899 305):

This is the buttress which contains the prominent flying arête on the east side of the glen about 2km south of the Newton Spur. It stands alone on the hillside just past a spur of the hill that encloses the south side of the Sma' Glen itself. The buttress consists of a broken area of rock on the left composed of a huge easy angled slab on the far left, a lower wall leading to a large tree infested bay with a large roof above and a black slab above that leading to the top. On the right of this is a steep side wall facing down the glen which extends up the hillside. The Upper part of the side wall forms a conspicuous corner with a buttress that projects out as an impressive flying arête. The base of the crag at this point is guarded by broken rocks. An easy grass rake below the side wall extends up to below the arête and is used for access to the arête.

Jon Taylor on the summit of Low Peak, Mount Cook before the eventful descent. Photo: Colin Duncan. The injured Colin Duncan and the NZ Search and Rescue Team after the avalanche. Photo: Jon Taylor.

The crag is used by several species of nesting bird and should be avoided until the end of July.

The Rustler – 20m HVS 5a. A. Todd, K. Howett. 24th August, 1997.

Climbs the fine corner at the junction between the sidewall and the buttress containing the flying arête.

Bright Spark – 18m E4 6a. K. Howett, L. Hughes. 10th September, 1997.

There is a large buzzard's nest in the centre of the wall to the right of the corner. Right again is the flying arête. This route climbs a line up the wall between the nest and the arête. Start at a small grass bay below the nest accessed from the top right of the grass rake. Step out to the right arête and gain a good diagonal crack leading up and left to under the start of the flying arête. Pull right onto the slab and arrange protection then swing wildly out left onto the arête. Go up this, over the bulge into a shallow groove. Climb this and a continuation groove directly above a small overlap to the top.

Ignition – 20m E1 5b *. K. Howett, A. Todd (on-sight). 24th August, 1997.

Follows the junction between the overhanging wall of the flying arête and the slab. Start as for Bright Spark onto the slab. Traverse up and right to climb a steep flake under the overhanging wall all the way to the top.

Damp Squib – 15m E1 5a. K. Howett, A. Todd (on-sight). 31st August, 1997.

Follows a line up a slim groove in the slabby wall to the right of Ignition. Start down and right of the arête on a horizontal grass ledge gained either from below or from over on the right. Belay in a recess 3m right of the base of the wall. Move up and left to below the impending wall. Pull over at an obvious weakness and a jug in the lip onto the slab (down and right of the start of the flake of Ignition). Move up and right to gain the base of a slim hanging groove. Stand in it and swing immediately right and climb the right side of the groove's arête to finish. Thread and nut belay at the top.

GLEN OGLE:

Arms Limitation – 17m F7b ***. M. Garthwaite. 15th August, 1999.

One of the best routes in the Glen, may be harder for the vertically challenged. The route lies on a crag up and right of the Galleon sector. Walk past the Galleon until the band of crags runs out and the crag can be seen up the hill on the left (about 10min from the Galleon). The route climbs the stunning arête that forms the right side of the crag.

Creag nan Cuileann:

Up to Scratch – E4/5 6a/b. S. Crowe, K. Magog. 3rd June, 2000.

Start just left of The Bigger They Fall. Pull through the roof past the holly. Finish as for The Harder they Come. (Would be route number 2a as per *Climber*, June 2000).

GLEN LEDNOCK, Creag na h-Iolaire:

Ash Rib – 10m V. Diff. B. R. Shackleton, A. Morrison. 14th July, 1999.

The route climbs the pale green rib between the two rowan trees to the right of low wall. Go up blocks, then step right to reach a grassy corner. Continue up this corner and finish near a small solitary ash tree.

BEN NEVIS, AONACHS, CREAG MEAGHAIDH

Routes due to appear in the new guide have not been included, apart from a few (due to lack of space).

BEN NEVIS, Carn Dearg:

Centurion: A. Mullin made a free winter ascent, rope solo on 16th-17th February, 2001, eliminating the rest point on Pitch 2 due to previous knowledge gained on two earlier attempts.

This route was considered as solid grade VIII and the quality of the mixed climbing is up there with the Needle and Steeple. The following variation to pitch 4 was made:

Continue up the corner line and go up to below the wide overhanging crack (as described in summer). Climb the wall left of this until one can get into the overhanging crack higher up; climb through the overhang and continue in a corner until a wild swing out left gains the arête of the summer pitch. The rock at the top of the overhang is dangerously loose so great care is required when pulling through the overhang.

WESTERN HIGHLANDS, Sgurr na ba Glaise, Coire a' Bhuiridh (above Lochailort):

The Serpent – 300m II/III. M. Litterick, B. R. Shackleton, A. Roscoe. 3rd January, 1996.

The route climbs the north-facing headwall of the corrie by a frozen watercourse and an upper snow ramp to finish at the summit cairn. A number of alternative exits can probably be followed. The lower part of the route is easy-angled on water ice but a steeper section at half height probably merits Grade III.

CREAG MEAGHAIDH, The Post Face:

North Post, Right-Hand Finish – 150m IV,4. S. Reid, C. Wells. 27th March, 2001. A good alternative finish when the original and direct finishes are not in condition. Quite bold. Start from the belay just right of the start of the direct finish. Move 8m to the right along the Post Horn Gallop ledge and climb up to a line of weakness in the upper wall. This is followed on ice smears and turf, trending slightly leftwards, to a wide snow shelf (50m). Traverse back leftwards along this until a shallow gully is revealed. Climb this to a good spike on the left (100m). Easy ground leads to the plateau.

CARN LIATH (near Creag Meagaidh), Coire nan Gall:

Original Route – 30m Diff. B. Sparham, D. Davis. June, 2000.

Follows the right edge of the Room to Roam slab, loosely following its arete to finish up the last pitch of Room to Roam (crux through a small overhang at the very top).

The Mighty Willow – 125m VI,5. D. Davis, B. Sparham. 17th December, 2000.

The corner line up the left side of the back wall of the corrie. May not often be in condition due to its south-facing aspect, but in good conditions could be a good Grade III. On this ascent, most of the face was snow covered with a thin veneer of ice low down.

1. 50m Follow thin ice up the corner until it ran out after 20m. Difficult moves past a wee willow (now sadly diminished) gained snow loosely attached to the slab. This was climbed to reach the base of the upper corner.
2. Climb up snow barely attached to a featureless slab.
3. Quit the corner at a large block and head up the left edge to finish.

BEINN A' CLACHAIR, Coire Mor Clachair:

The Tower – 150m II. N. Anderson. 12th March, 1999.

On the far right-hand side of the coire at the back is a thin tall buttress, eiffel tower shaped, amongst the nondescript broken ground. The buttress has three 'legs' lower down which merge after 30m into one. Climb the left leg and then follow mixed route to the top.

CREAG DHUBH (Loch Ericht):

Tutti-Frutti – 40m IV.5. S. Frazer, J. Lyall, M. Twomey. 13th February, 2001.
The short steep icefall 15m right of Ice Cream.

GLEN COE

The new Glen Coe guide should be published soon, so due to lack of space and with apologies, this year's new routes have not been included. In case of omissions, first ascensionists are advised to check their routes are in the guide.

SOUTHERN HIGHLANDS

BEN VORLICH CRAGS, Bottom Buttress:

This lies immediately below Cranium Crag (*SMCJ* 1999).

Knickers – 20m E4 6a **. M. Garthwaite, R. Anderson. 31st July, 1999.

Start at a crack leading into an overhung niche on the left-hand side of the main front face of the crag. Climb the crack, then pull out of the niche to a break. Climb the wall and vague crack above until forced out left on to the arête. Climb the arête and wall on the right to the top.

Pants – 20m E1 5a. R. Anderson, M. Garthwaite. 31st July, 1999.

A scrappy route that climbs the buttress 6m to the left of Knickers. Start at the toe of the buttress and move diagonally up and left to a stopping place. Step right and climb straight up following the easy line to the top.

Summit Crag:

This is the crag that lies about 100m south-west from the summit itself. An obvious wide crack splits the crag left of centre, to the right of which is a thin disjointed crackline up the slab. A route by M. Garthwaite climbs the thin disjointed crackline at E3 5b.

Summit Fever – 20m E1 5b *. R. Anderson, M. Garthwaite. 27th August, 2000.

At the left-hand end of the frontal wall is an obvious stepped groove/cornerline. Climb the groove to a ledge, then transfer awkwardly up right to finish up the continuation groove/corner.

GLEN CROE, Upper Crag:

Love Buzz – 15m E7 6b **. D. MacLeod (unsec.). 13th July, 1999.

A serious direct start to Marabou Stork Nightmares with no protection until past the crux. Start below a small scooped groove below the traverse of Marabou. Climb the groove with increasing difficulty and move right at its top. A hard sequence moving right on small edges and pockets leads to the jug on Marabou. Finish up this route.

Patience In Spades – 10m VS 5a. D. MacLeod, P. McGowan. July, 1999.

This short but pleasant route climbs the smooth slab left of Quartz Slab, moving rightwards at the top.

THE COBBLER, South Peak:

Grossen Zinnen – VI,7 *. D. MacLeod, R. McGhee. 30th January, 2001.

Follow the summer line; pitches 3 and 4 can be run together. The crux is hard but short-lived and well protected

Cerebration – 105m VI,7 *. D. MacLeod, R. McGhee. 24th December, 2000.

Start just left of Gibber Crack below a tiny left-facing corner. Follow the corner for 5m, then use a thin diagonal crack to traverse left across the open slab to gain a turf fault (bold and difficult). Follow the fault to easy ground and trend left to the thread belay on North Wall

Traverse. Climb this past the base of North Wall Groove to a flake below the centre of the large wall above. Climb the centre of the excellent wall direct via thin vertical cracks to the top.

The Brack:

Charlie's Crack – 40m IV,5 *. R. Anderson, R. Milne. 28th January, 2000.

A direct line up the obvious fault/wide crack in the front of the buttress containing Inglis Clark Arête, the original route (at one time graded II, then upgraded to III), which zig-zags around finding the easiest line. Climb the crack and continuation chimney and pull over the top to a thread belay on a huge boulder. Either walk off left, or continue up the easiest line to the top in three pitches or so.

Right Charlie – 40m VI,7. R. Anderson, R. Milne. 28th January, 2000.

A short eliminate immediately to the right of Charlies Crack. Start at the base of an open corner on the right side of the buttress. Climb the corner to its top and a junction with the fault of Charlies Fault, then step right and climb with difficulty for a short way to reach a ledge. Continue up a steepening to reach the thread belay of Charlies Fault. Either walk off left, or continue up Inglis Clark arête to the top in three pitches or so.

STOB GHABHAR, NE Coire:

Capricorn – 120m IV,4. S. Kennedy, M. Shaw. 24th February, 2001.

A winter ascent of the summer route up the right-bounding rib of the Upper Couloir. Climb the broad lower buttress to reach the knife edge ridge. Follow the ridge in a fine position to join the top of the Upper Couloir Keyhole. Easier slopes lead up and right to finish.

MEALL BUIDHE, North-West Corrie:

Sixth Sense – 170m IV,4. M. Litterick, B. R. Shackleton. 23rd January, 1994.

The route follows three successive icefalls thereby providing a direct line up the buttress crossed by Second Sight. Start at the icefall to the left of the start of Second Sight.

Climb this and cross the ramp line of Second Sight to the foot of a second icefall/groove. Above this, the route follows the right hand of three icefalls to exit near the top. Alternative finishes should be possible by either of the two other icefalls.

NOTE: The route was repeated by B. Davison and D. Wilkinson on 14th January, 2001.

Late Departures – 50m III. B. Davison. 14th January, 2001.

At the right-hand end of the crag, about 50m past Spirit Level, is the first and most substantial of three corner/gully lines. Climb the corner to exit on easy snow (50m). The other two gullies are short (20m) Grade II.

BEN UDLAIDH:

Soft Shell – 100m V,5. D. MacLeod, K. Crocket. 27th January, 2001.

Start at a small cave down and right of the entrance to Zig Zag Gully. Climb directly up the broken buttress for two pitches to a spacious ledge below the vertical headwall. Climb a steep ice wall on the right margin of the vertical wall to the top.

Tick Tock – 125m V,5. R. Renwick, C. Pettigrew. 30th December, 2000.

Climbs the detached buttress to the left of Quartzvein Scoop. Start just below and 15m to the left of Quartzvein Scoop.

1. 35m. Climb a small ramp leftwards for 10m, then trend right up a frozen turf wall. Continue to a fissure cave and snow bay.

2. 40m. Continue left starting up a huge detached block over a series of mixed turf and ice to the top of the buttress below a steep wall.

3. 10m. Climb a steep ice wall on the right direct to below overhangs.

4. 40m. Traverse 5m left; step down before going up a steep corner. Continue up steep ice flows above and exit through the cornice.

Cut It – 100m IV,4 **. D. MacLeod. 28th January, 1998.

This route cuts through the impressive positions of the steep black wall using the big diagonal ledge running up and right. Start at Captain Hook. Gain and follow the ramp to a belay at the icicle of Cut Throat. Continue rightwards to the end of the ledge and finish up the excellent top section of The Croc.

Incisor – 75m VI,6 *. D. MacLeod, P. McGowan. 18th January, 2001.

This route climbs the obvious stepped corner left of Cut Throat. Climb the technical corner to a ledge. Either climb steep ice directly above (rarely formed) or gain the next ledge by a rightward detour. Move left to below a steep ice pillar right of Captain Hook. Climb the pillar and easier ground above to the top.

Blitz – 45m V,6 **. D. MacLeod (unsec.). 28th January, 2001.

This route climbs the steep buttress left of the upper part of Central Gully. Start near the right of the buttress below an obvious left slanting fault running the height of the buttress. Follow the fault line through a roof (crux) and continue past another awkward bulge to the top. Good mixed climbing.

Spirito de Punto – 90m IV,6 *. D. MacLeod, A. Weir. 1st February, 1998.

Start below a fault in the vertical wall left of the start of South Gully of the Black Wall. Climb the fault to a wide ledge and follow a crack in the next wall above over an overlap to join and finish up The Cramp.

Mustang Sally – 90m IV,4 **. D. MacLeod, A. Weir. 1st March, 1998.

This good turf line climbs the big buttress right of Green Eyes. Follow a corner system in the left side of the buttress in two pitches which leads to the easier final slopes.

Coire Ghamhnain (M.R. 285 335):

John Wayne – 35m III/IV. J. A. Sumner, W. Kennan. 18th January, 2001.

Takes the second and most prominent of the initial icefalls high up on the right-hand side of the north-east-facing Coire Ghamhnain (the coire just east of Beinn Udlaidh).

1. 20m. Climb steep ice just left of a cave to easier angled ice.

2. 15m. Climb an ice ramp up left.

MEALL NAN TARMACHAN, Creag an Lochain (M.R. 591 402 to 590 410):

R. Simpson and G. E. Little have been climbing on the crag separately and have both done many of the routes. The buttress names are from Simpson.

This crag lies 500m north of Arrow Buttress and holds the routes Turf Accountant and Tote Gully. The main face is 600m long and 200m high and is characterised by the following features (from left to right):

An Innean (The Anvil): A shapely buttress with a steep triangular base immediately below the summit.

Coire nan Easan: The hanging corrie with its distinctive waterfalls.

An Caisteal: The square tower on top of the ridge defining Coire nan Easan on the right.

Y Gully: Drains the central mass of lower angled broken ground to the right of An Caisteal.

Coire Tuath (North Coire): The northerly section of the face drained by a big right-facing corner.

South Gully – 150m I/II. M. Thewlis. 13th January, 2001.

A snow climb with icy sections and no cornice. It lies just left of Summit Gully.

Summit Gully – 150m II. D. Dyth, R. Simpson (alt.). December, 1999.

A well-defined narrow gully bounding An Innean on the left. Easy ice leads to a steeper pitch on the right to outflank the cornice.

An Innean:

Blanche – 180m IV. D. F. Lang, R. Simpson (alt.). 20th January, 2001.

A direct line up the left flank of the Anvil via the conspicuous long icefall.

1. 45m. From a small snow bay, climb directly over a series of walls to a 6m ice frieze at 25m. Climb this (crux) and continue to the icefall in the middle of the face.

2. 45m. Climb the ice. A classic pitch.

3. 90m. Two pitches of easier mixed climbing lead to a turf headwall.

Turf Accountant – A shallow groove and chimney up the left side of the base of the Anvil.

Home Front—190m IV,4. G. E. Little, R. McBain, J. Lowther. 19th February, 2000. A roughly triangular buttress lies to the left of Tote Gully. A dog-legged fault lies to the right of centre of this buttress (and to the left of the turfy ramp that ends in an impasse). The fault forms the general line of the serious, poorly protected first pitch.

1. 50m. Start to the left of the dog-legged fault and climb a turfy slab to steepening ground. Traverse right into the bend of the fault and climb the right-trending ramp to an edge. Climb straight up a steep vegetated groove to a crumbly flake.
2. 50m. Follow a ramp up and left, then climb straight up to cracked blocks. Continue straight up to easy ground (no obvious belay).
- 3,4. 90m. Easy snow and broken ground leads to the top.

Coire nan Easan:

Tote Gully—The twisting groove and open corner which defines An Innean on the right.

Fragile Fall/Cloven Buttress—180m IV,5. G. Penny, R. Simpson (alt.). January, 1999.

Three ice smears lie to the right of Tote Gully. The most continuous ice below the hanging coire is usually the central fall.

1. 45m. Climb the icefall from left to right, with perhaps an overhanging exit.
2. 75m. Snow slopes lead to a bay below a cleft in the upper buttress.
3. 60m. Gain a V-groove, climb it and exit right on to a steep rib. Follow the crest to the top.

Odds are Even—150m IV,3. G. E. Little. 15th January, 2000.

This route climbs the right-hand icefall, then crosses the basin (and the previous route) to finish up the wide fan-shaped ice gully in the upper buttress.

Odds in Favour—120m III *. G. E. Little. 15th January, 2000.

Above and to the right of the three ice smears lies an obvious thin chimney/gully system. It is flanked on the right by a 'blank' vertical wall. The lower part of this wall is broken by a turfy fault. Climb the fault to a slight bay on the front face of the buttress. A long turfy groove runs up from the bay. Follow it (fairly close to the edge of the 'blank' wall), then finish up the snow slope above.

An Caisteal:

Ground Force—160m III,4 *. R. McBain, G. E. Little, J. Lowther (alt.). 19th February, 2000.

A satisfying route tackling the front face of the buttress flanked (on its left) by the 'blank' vertical wall. It follows the distinctive right-trending groove/gully system.

1. 30m. Climb the open groove to under a roof on the left.
2. 50m. Ascend the open gully to a cave-like constriction. Move right, then step up on to an exposed edge. Climb the short hidden ice chimney above to exit on to a wide shelf.
3. 50m. Climb the wide icy scoop in the wall above and mixed ground beyond.
4. 30m. Easy snow leads to the top.

NOTE: Simpson started from the very toe of the buttress.

Y Gully – 200m (vertical) II/III. Unknown party. January, 1999.

The most satisfying line up the wide broken face between An Caisteal and Coire Tuath.

1. Follow a small frozen stream into the right-facing corner which usually provides some ice pitches. At half height the right branch snakes through broken rocks to the right.

2. The left branch defines the tower of An Caisteal and contains a steep pitch of about 20m near the top.

Coire Tuath:

The Long Goodbye – 200m (vertical) II. R. Simpson, M. Thewlis (alt.). December, 1998.

1. A big right-facing corner defined by a very steep wall cuts back leftwards into the upper coire.

2. Exit by a twisting gully in the top left of the coire.

The summit of Meall nan Tarmachan lies 1.5 km SSE of the summit of Creag an Lochain, and looks very fine from this angle. The blunt east face of the ridge rising above the Tairbh Uisge (Uisge an tairbh) provides a sporting route to the summit via steep snow, ice smears and broken ribs.

Cam Chreag:

The most southerly section of Cam Chreag is a distinctive isolated dome with short cliffs on both its north and south flanks. Those on the south flank hold the following route.

Low Pressure – 60m III,4. G. E. Little, S. Muir (alt.). 26th February, 2000.

At the foot of the crag is a small cave. Start 5m below it.

1. 35m. Follow a snow ramp (just below a line of overhangs) to a slot in a rock barrier. Pull through this (crux), then continue straight up to a slight bay in the final short wall.

2. 25m. Pull out of the bay, then continue on easy snow to the top.

Carlin's Buttress:

On the Wagon – 100m IV,4. D. Crawford, E. W. Brunskill. 20th January, 2001.

This route climbs the narrow buttress which forms the left wall of the groove line of Oochahoarye. An excellent and varied route with a wild crux.

1. 30m. Start at the foot of the buttress at an obvious overhung recess. Climb through the recess and continue up the buttress to another recess where the buttress starts to steepen.

2. 25m. Climb up and right following the obvious shallow groove system to an impasse overlooking Oochahoarye. The impasse is now avoided by a spectacular traverse left along the obvious hand and foot rail (crux). After the traverse climb up and left to a small recess.

3. 35m. Continue up the buttress trending left then right up a shallow groove line passing a flake crack to reach easy ground and the top.

Little Gully – 50m II *. G. E. Little. 23rd January, 2000.

On the upper right edge of Carlin's Buttress lies a thin shallow chimney-gully,

easily accessed from the ridge above via snow ramps further right. It gives a delightful long pitch at the upper limit of its grade.

NOTE: S. Burns notes that the route One for the Road, climbed with S. Burns in 1997 should be Grade II (originally climbed in lean conditions).

Creag na Cailleach:

The Ramp – 100m II *. G. E. Little. 23rd January, 2000.

This enjoyable snow climb lies near the right-hand end of the crag and from a distance has the appearance of a short gully. Start at the left-hand edge of the very steep rock wall that faces the upper corrie. A distinctive ramp runs out right defining the top of the steep wall. Follow it past a constriction to a bay. Climb straight up by a shallow groove and easier ground above.

Great Gully – 140m IV,4. Probable 2nd ascent by G. E. Little, K. Howett, 13th January, 2001. (First ascent in 1902!).

This somewhat inappropriately named line (more of an open groove system) is the most obvious feature on the front face of the crag and is bounded on the right by a steep rib. Start directly below the groove.

1. 40m. Climb slabby vegetated ground to the foot of the groove.
2. 55m. Climb the ice-filled groove to exit on to a ledge (running out left). Make steep awkward moves to enter the continuation groove and climb it to enter a short chimney. Exit the chimney, then traverse left and up to a wide crack on a turfy ramp.
3. 45m. Continue straight up to reach easier ground leading to the top.

For Whom the Bell Tolls – 130m IV,4. G. E. Little. 20th January, 2001.

This deceptive line lies about 25m to the left of and roughly parallel to Great Gully. Its most distinctive feature is a wide ice-filled slot about 25m above the foot of the crag. Start directly below the ice-filled slot. Climb up to it, then surmount steep ice to gain the lower diagonal rake. Continue straight up to icicles at a weakness in the rock barrier above. Gain a little ramp, then traverse left and up to gain easier ground. Trend slightly right to reach the upper diagonal rake at the foot of a shallow groove. Follow this to the top.

The Easy Way – 120m II. G. E. Little. 20th January, 2001.

Start 25m to the right of the obvious undercut flying buttress on the left side of the crag. Ascend to gain an easy-angled, right-trending groove/ramp, flanked on the left by a steep smooth slab. Follow this with just a couple of awkward moves to gain easy ground. Continue easily to the junction of the two diagonal rakes. An open gully is followed from this point leading directly to easier slopes above.

Momento Mori – 60m IV,5 **. G. E. Little, K. Howett (alt.). 13th January, 2001. Near the left-hand side of the crag lies a clean undercut flying buttress. It abuts slabs on the right forming an open corner.

1. 30m. Climb into the slabby corner from the right, then follow it with interest to exit on to a turf ledge.
2. 30m. Traverse right to enter and climb a hidden, left-trending groove leading to a ledge. Surmount the vertical ice formations above to reach easier ground. Descend by traversing off left over broken ground.

ARRAN

BEINN TARSUINN, Consolation Tor:

Draugen – 50m VS 4c. M. Robson, T. Ward. 9th May, 2000.

Good well protected climbing up the wall left of Tarsuinn Chimney No.1. Start 1m left of the big chimney and climb straight up the wall for 35m to belay on a grass ledge in a bay (strenuous 4c). Exit the bay to the right.

CIR MHOR, Rosa Pinnacle, Lower East Face:

M. Gear notes an ascent of Squids and Elephants (guide p82, E1 5b)/Ariel's Arête (*SMCJ* 1998) and thinks they are the same route, with the grade being top end E1 5b. The initial 15m was scrambling and the route climbed from a belay after this.

LOWLAND OUTCROPS

GLASGOW OUTCROPS, Dumbarton Rock:

Friends in High Places – 35m E5 6a *. D. MacLeod (unsec). 2nd February, 1998. This technical route climbs the wall right of The Unforgiven. Start below an overhanging rib just left of Benny's Route and climb this to a large bulge. Continue directly past overlaps to a good hold. Climb slightly rightwards over a bulge (crux) and move right to a rest. Traverse right to gain and finish up easy grooves.

Fatso – 30m E4 5c *. D. MacLeod (unsec). 3rd June, 1998.

This bold route climbs the wall right of Longbow. Start as for Fever Pitch and follow it for 10m to a horizontal. Traverse right and move diagonally up to the obvious right-pointing spike. Stand on this (assortment of gear), then traverse left and then up across the wall to gain the base of a ramp slanting up right. Finish easily up this.

Knees and Toes, Knees and Toes – 40m E4 5c. D. MacLeod, R. Ewan. July, 1998. Start at the foot of Natural Born Drillers. Traverse horizontally right across the wall to a tiny niche (Friend). Climb the overhanging wall directly above to where it steepens (Friend 5 useful), move right to the arête and climb this to a slab. Traverse left past a large loose block to reach the base of an overhanging corner. Continue up the corner to gain easy grooves which lead to the top.

Dumb and Dumber – 20m E7 6c **. D. MacLeod (unsec). 15th June, 1999.

A short route but serious and very thin. Start just right of Chemin De Fer and climb the easy slab to reach an obvious perched block below the smooth black wall. Stand on the block (crucial wire at hip height in the small corner to the left). Take a deep breath, then climb the desperate wall direct with very thin moves to reach the flake of Rock of Ages. Finish up this.

Still Going – 12m VS 4c. D. MacLeod, P. McGowan. July, 1998.

This route climbs the bulging wall between Pinky and Perky.

Nagilation – 4m E6 6b **. D. MacLeod. June, 1998.

This short but terrifying route climbs the intimidating leaning wall right of Pendulum above an horrific landing. Start near the right edge of the wall, standing on the razor sharp boulder. Gain a fin shaped hold and use this to make a dynamic journey to the top of the boulder.

Dunglas:

Don't Wake up Now! – 18m E5 5c *. D. MacLeod. 25th July, 1998.

An unusual and dangerous route, the first to climb the lower of two prominent black overhangs on the crag's front face. Start near the left end of the lower overhanging face. Climb the steep wall to reach a large detached block. Traverse right along this then move up the bulge above. Make a long and blind reach through this (crux) and finish more easily. The rock requires care.

Dream Delirious – 18m E5 5c *. D. MacLeod. August, 1998.

This route climbs the centre of the lower black wall. A dangerous solo with some suspect rock. Start right of *Don't Wake Up Now* at a cave. Climb the wall direct to a good rest in a niche at half height. Continue with increasing steepness and pull through the roof on large holds in an exposed and serious position. Continue more easily to finish on the grass ledge.

Craigmore:

Craig's Wall – 12m E7 6c ***. D. MacLeod. 18th May, 1997.

This hard top rope problem has finally been lead to give an excellent route. Climb the wall to the good hold and place an assortment of small RP's. Move slightly left, then climb the desperate wall boldly to the top.

Auchinstarry:

Shiny Happy People – 15m E3 6a **. D. MacLeod, S. Patterson. August, 1999.

This climb takes a line up the slab and arête above the belay of *Power Play*. Start at the *Power Play* belay. Pull over the bulge above using a borehole and undercut (crux; Friend #3^{1/2}). Continue directly up the slab and arête to the top with small RPs for protection.

The Javelin – 15m E2 5c **. D. MacLeod, S. Patterson. August, 1999.

This line takes the obvious arête above *The Replicant*. Approach the arête via the groove on the left. Span right to the arête and make a curious move to step around on to the front face using a footledge. Finish up the arête.

Glasgow No More – 15m VS 5a. S. Patterson, R. Fraser, D. MacLeod. August, 1999.

This route takes the groove left of *The Replicant*, moving right at an overlap to finish.

Deep Throat – 20m E5 6a *. D. MacLeod, S. Patterson. August, 1999.

A lead of the route *Deep Throat Revived*, the first since it was altered by rock fall.

THE GALLOWAY HILLS, Corwar (M.R 483 705):

This small but steep crag of compact granite (pronounced Corvar, near Newton Stewart) has a beautiful outlook south-east over Bargaly Glen. It is fast to dry, catches plenty of afternoon sun and is quick to approach. The crag was discovered hiding in the trees by the local forest manager in spring 1997 and liberated from the dense forest that summer: hopefully the small clearing between the crag and the forest road will be allowed to remain. The rock is rough, sound and continuously steep. Protection can be tricky on some of the harder routes and a good selection of small camming devices is recommended.

Access is from the A712. Turn off the A75 onto the A712 before Newton Stewart and drive 4½ miles up the road to the forest road turn-off signposted 'Corwar and Dallash'. Follow this forest road down the hill, take the left turn at the bottom and then turn left at the next two forked junctions. 100m beyond the last junction the crag can be seen up through recently felled trees on the left, about a minutes walk from the forest road. Total walk from the A712 is about 25 minutes. A faster but more difficult approach can be made in about 10 minutes by contouring the hillside through the trees from the car park at Glen of the Bar (Map Ref 479 707). The most obvious feature of the crag is the shallow chimney/groove near the left-hand end of the main face taken by Bigger Than Tigger. Further right, the obvious right to left-slanting break, passing a smooth black niche (which at the time of writing contains a small birch sapling), is taken by Ruta Aurelio. The lengths given are the route lengths; good tree belays lie about 10m beyond the top of the climbs. Routes are described from left to right.

Pinus Worship – 30m V. Diff *. C. Hossack, J. Biggar (alt). 20th May, 1998.

Good but contrived climbing, taking a route up the left-hand end of the crag. Climb the rib on left side of the slab beneath the obvious overhang left of Bigger Than Tigger, then the left wall of the overhang itself, finishing on an excellent hold. Climb the slab above (possible belay), move right and climb the blunt rib above on good holds.

Bigger Than Tigger – 20m Severe *. J. Biggar, A. Owen. 13th May, 1998.

Climb the obvious chimney/groove near the left hand end of the crag, stepping left at the top to finish up the steep wall above on excellent holds.

Alpamayo No More – 25m VS 4c *. J. Biggar, S.J.H. Reid, D. Aurelio. 20th October, 1999.

Start up the groove of Bigger Than Tigger for 5m, then step out right. Climb the wall above, via a shallow cave, straight to the top, passing right of two small trees.

Direct Start – E1 5b. S.J.H. Reid, J. Biggar. 3rd May, 2000.

Climb the steep wall just right of Bigger Than Tigger to join the ordinary route.

The Prune – 30m VS 4c **. J. Biggar, L. Biggar, L. Cannon. 21st June, 1998.

An excellent sustained route. Start up the groove of Bigger Than Tigger for 5m, then follow the diagonal crackline out rightwards across the face for about 5m to join the Peach. Either finish up the shallow groove of the Peach directly above, or, better, make one move up and continue rightwards to the dark blocky scoop on the right and then move back up a left-slanting ramp (finish of Ruta Aurelio) to the top.

The Peach – 25m HVS/E1 5a/b **. J. Biggar, C. Hossack. 17th October, 1999.

A climb with a definite crux! Start at the stump 5m right of Bigger Than Tigger. Climb directly up the wall until it eases and move up slightly right to a shallow groove and finish up this. The crux is low down, now protected by a peg runner. For those under 5ft10 however, the crux is clipping the peg and is E1 5b.

Variation, FRCC Finish – 4c **. S.J.H. Reid, R. Kenyon, D. Staton. 30th April, 2000.

Artificial but excellent climbing. From above the peg, move up and left into the shallow cave on Alpamayo No More. Leave this on the right and climb directly up the wall above on excellent holds.

Plum Line – 30m E2 5b ***. S.J.H. Reid, J. Biggar. 10th November, 1999.

A direct line up the highest section of the crag taking in the obvious short open pink groove/scoop at half height. Superb but bold in places. Start at the lowest rocks and climb the slabs above until stopped by a smooth bulge. Move left and up (poor peg runners) and make a difficult mantelshelf into the pink groove above (good wire low on right). Climb out of the groove on the right and make a long reach to gain easier ground. Move 1m up the leftwards-slanting ramp (Ruta Aurelio) and then step right onto the bulging headwall and climb this directly to the top.

Corwar Wall – 22m HVS 5a ***. S.J.H. Reid, J. Biggar. 10th November, 1999.

An excellent and well protected route with an exciting finish, taking the easiest line up this part of the crag. Start near the left-hand end of a narrow vegetated ledge directly beneath the smooth black niche containing a small birch sapling. Climb up a short blocky corner and move right to, and up over, a small overhang, then climb up to the left-slanting break of Ruta Aurelio. Follow this up left to just before the smooth niche containing the sapling, lunge upwards for a jug and hand-traverse back rightwards until it is possible to move up to easy slabs.

Nutcase – 22m E2 5b *. S.J.H. Reid, J. Biggar. 3rd May, 2000.

Good, bold climbing directly up the wall between Corwar Wall and Tutti Frutti. Start at the right-hand end of the grass ledge, 3m right of Corwar Wall and directly under the point of the 'V' formed where the left and right-slanting overlaps meet. Climb a slim fault to a ledge and junction with Corwar Wall. Pull directly over the overhang above, 1m to the right of Corwar Wall, and go up to a dubious block under the overlap. Move on to this from the left, place your last gear, and climb straight to the top.

Tutti Frutti – 22m E1 5b **. S.J.H. Reid, J. Biggar. 3rd May, 2000.

The obvious right-slanting fault provides a good route. Start 2m right of Nutcase and 2 metres left of the stump at the right end of the crag. Climb straight up the wall to a short, shallow groove and up this to the dubious block under the overlap. Follow the rightward-slanting overlap to a thin crack and climb this to the top.

The Harvesters – 20m E4 5c. D. Armstrong, M. Hetherington. 3rd September, 2000.

Bold climbing up the wall to gain the thin crackline right of Tutti Frutti. Start at the large tree stump near the right-hand end of the crag. Go straight up the wall to a small overlap. Move up to a sloping foothold then straight up the wall above to a good hold. Climb the short rib and crack above, right of the top crack of Tutti Frutti, to gain the slab above. Finish more easily.

Ruta Aurelio – 35m E1 5b **. S.J.H. Reid, J. Biggar, D. Aurelio. 20th October, 1999.

A good climb taking the obvious right to left-rising traverse in its entirety. The crux is short and well protected. Start 2m right of the big stump at the right hand end of the crag. Make a bold rising traverse up to the break and follow this to the smooth niche with the birch sapling. Cross the blank slab just left of the small birch (crux) to a dark blocky niche and an easy finish up the leftwards-slanting ramp.

The Midge – 8m HVS 5a. J. Biggar, S.J.H. Reid. 3rd May, 2000.

A midget climb, making the best of the rock on the far right of the crag. Start as for

Ruta Aurelio. Climb directly up the wall to a good nut in a short crack. Traverse 3m horizontally right and move boldly to the top.

Farther up the glen (200m), and visible from the forest road, is a beautiful 5m slab of granite which gives some good bouldering.

Dungeon Hill, Cooran Buttress:

Hell Freezes Over – 116m IV,5. A. Fraser, I. Magill. 21st January, 2001.

Totally obscure, a classic and compelling winter climb. Rarely in condition, requiring at least one weeks hard freeze for the turf, followed by snow. It is based loosely on the summer line of Roriam, taking the large vegetated fault immediately to the left of the slabs of Highway Man. Start at the lowest point of the crag. Scramble up an easy right-facing corner to where the fault steepens. Move left on to a large ledge (7m). Climb a rock wall 4m left of the corner with difficulty, then move right across turf to regain the corner. Follow this over bulges to an alcove (25m). Go up and over a chockstone to where the gully forks. Take the right fork to a terrace (30m). Two metres right of the top of the preceding gully (10m right of an obvious detached leaning block) climb the line of maximum turf and continue to the foot of the headwall, belaying beneath fluted cracks of the top pitch of Monkey Puzzle (27m). Climb a turf groove 2m right of the fluted cracks to a steepening, traverse 2m left and finish up the top cracks of Monkey Puzzle (crux). Easier to the top (27m).

NOTE: An earlier ascent of The Dow Spout (as mentioned in SMCJ 2000, p409), has been claimed by S. Mortlock and J. Lawrence on 1st January, 1997 at the same grade and when conditions were excellent.

MOFFAT AREA:

Dob's Linn, Waterfall Direct – 50m III/IV. J. Lawrence, S. Mortlock, C. Barr. 30th December, 2000.

There was an initial 3m ice bollard from the first pool, then the first fall which is about 20m and up a mossy 80 degree slab/wall. This was still flowing in the centre but had built up ice for 2m either side, formed into a mixture of mushrooms and jug-like features. More scrambling led to the second main fall, around 15m of steep ice, then 10m easier angled.

This was less well frozen with the central 2m being flowing but a good metre of 6 inch thick ice on either side.

Raven Craig (M.R. 144 137):

Shortfall Gully – 180m II. G.E. Little. 31st December, 2000.

This obvious shallow gully lies on the left side of Raven Craig where this broken crag is at its highest. The gully is mostly easy-angled and a natural drainage line. Near its foot the stream cascades down over steep rocks forming a 35m icefall. Climb the icefall into the gully above (crux). Easy angled snow is then followed until the gully opens out. A short ice step on the left wall (the drainage line) gives access to easy ground above - a distinctive rock pinnacle lies to the right. Alternatively, continue up the open gully to curve left above the rock pinnacle.

Firthhope Falls – 120m II *. G.E. Little. 31st December, 2000 (but no doubt climbed before).

M.R. 153 146. This atmospheric route climbs a series of frozen waterfalls up the

bed of Firthhope Burn (the easterly tributary of Carrifran Burn). Start the climb by entering a little gorge. The climbing finishes near the junction of Firthhope Burn and Little Firthhope Burn on the west flanks of White Coomb.

THE DUMFRIES OUTCROPS, Clifton Crag, The Twin Cracks Area:

Clifton Pinnacle – 15m VS 4b. S.J.H. Reid, C. Read. 16th April, 2000.

A disappointing route. The large detached flake to the right of Twin Cracks is climbed either by its left or right arête/chimney (the crux is avoiding the gorse bush on the latter) or by the chimney on its left (easier). Continue up the wall above on dubious rock.

THE SOUTH-WEST SEA CLIFFS, MEIKLE ROSS, Limehouse Blues Cliff:

This crag is very vegetated at present (August 2000). The following route was climbed as a cleaner, although loose, alternative to Exit Groove. Only recommended in emergencies.

Exit Arête – 15m V.Diff. M. Whitaker, P. Cocks. 22nd August, 2000.

The edge of the grooved arête to the left of Exit Groove. Finish out right.

The Red Slab:

Born to Boogie – 25m E1 5a. M. Whitaker, I. Weir. 11th August, 2000.

Climbs the blank-looking slab just left of Dolce Vita. Start below the centre of the jagged overlaps and climb into a small sentry-box/niche. Pull out leftwards on to an obvious large foothold, step up, then make thin moves back right to a thin crack and incut holds. Continue straight up, with poor protection, to a horizontal break (good Friend protection), before the final wall leads to the shattered scoop at the end of Dolce Vita/Scared to Dance. A belay rope pre-fixed to the fence is recommended.

Shake, Rattle & Roll – 25m E1 5a. M. Whitaker, I. Weir. 29th May, 2000.

Start just left of Born to Boogie, at the right side of the Grand Central Couloir. Climb up to the overlap, where it forms a curved arch. Move up its left side as far as a thin diagonal crack, then pull back right on to the left edge of the smooth slab. Follow a thin crack up the rounded rib to a resting place out left, then step back right into a groove. Go up this, passing a vegetated ledge, to a horizontal break (good Friend protection). Continue up the easier but bold wall to the shattered scoop at the end of Scared to Dance, etc.

Old Zawn Slab (M.R. 645 435):

This short but clean slab can be reached by a scramble down a gully to the right (facing out) at low to mid-tide, or as mentioned in the guide (p177), by abseil. The existing 3 routes have been increased to 9, described from right to left.

Nursery End – 10m V.Diff. J. Bolton, P. Cocks, M. Whitaker. 24th July, 2000.

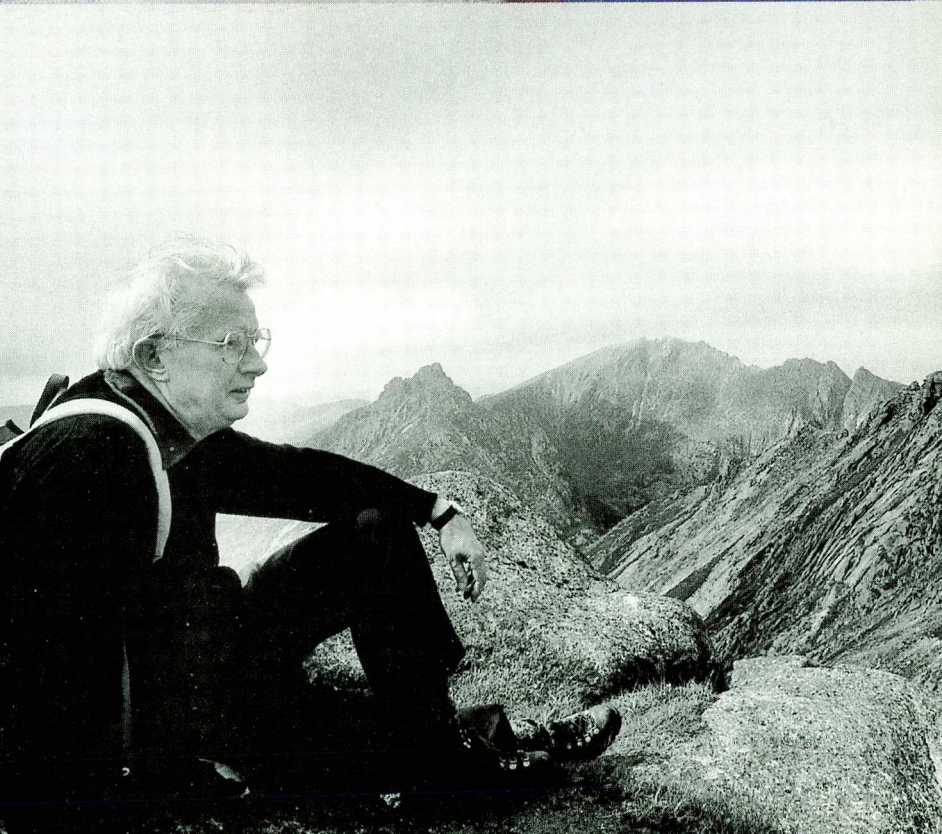
The corner at the right end of the slab, as far as the horizontal break. Traverse left to the ledge to avoid vertical choss above.

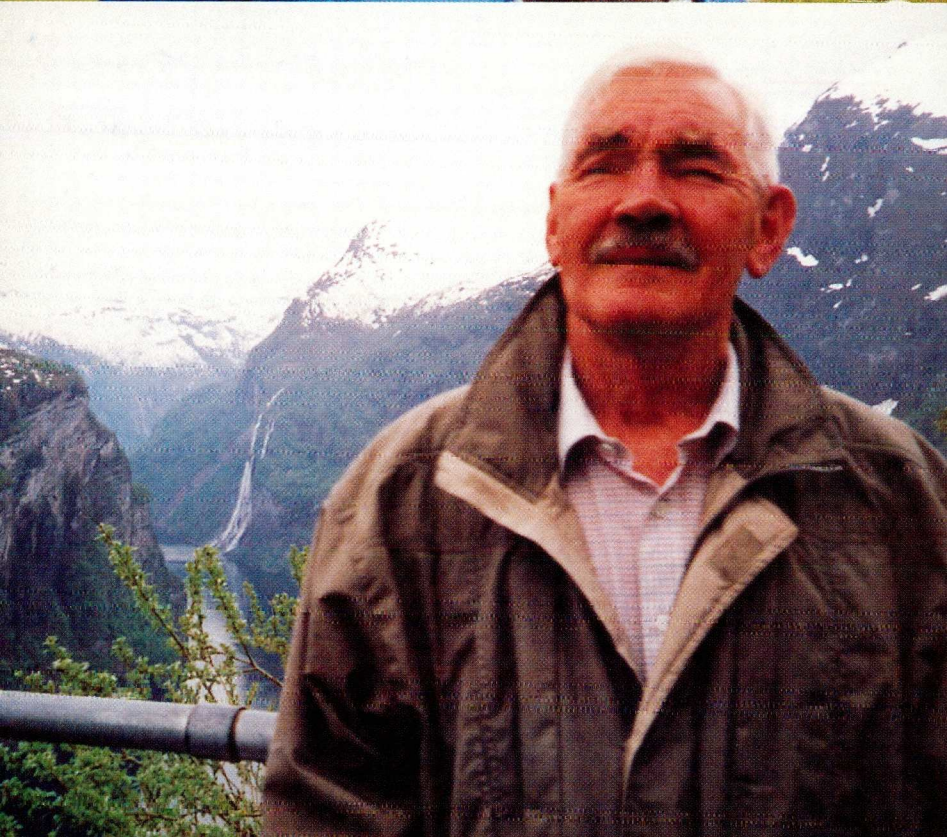
Silly Mid-On – 10m V. Diff. M. Whitaker, J. Bolton, P. Cocks. 24th July, 2000.

One metre left, a diagonal crack slants up from right to left. Climb up to the start of this, but continue straight up to the left end of the horizontal break on Nursery End.

Fred Harper. Photo: Iain Peter.

Alastair Hetherington. Photo: Denis Thorpe.





Silly Mid-Off – 10m Severe. M. Whitaker, J. Bolton, P. Cocks. 24th July, 2000.
One metre farther left, thin twin cracks are followed until they intersect the diagonal crack. Finish straight up.

Mid-Wicket – 13m HVS 4c *. M. Whitaker, J. Bolton, P. Cocks. 24th July, 2000.
Between Grapeshot and Old Zawn, a thin crack-line leads to the middle of the overlap. Finish straight over.

The Slips – 10m HVS 5a. M. Whitaker, J. Bolton. 24th July, 2000.
The left side of the slab has a horizontal crack at half height forming a tiny overlap. Starting 1m left of Evens, climb up to the right end of the horizontal crack, and finish direct.

Left of the slab is a deep gully (the scramble descent at lowish tide). The left wall of the bay consists of some steep black walls reminiscent of parts of Gogarth, separated by a ramp sloping up from right to left.

A Wee Cracker – 15m VS 4c **. M. Whitaker, P. Cocks. 24th July, 2000.
The black wall below the ramp is split by a right-to-left slanting flake crack. At low to mid-tide, step across the inlet to climb the flake crack to the break, then finish more easily up the arête above.

PORTOBELLO, Slab Bay:

One Green Bottle – 10m V.Diff. M. Whitaker, I. Weir, P. Cocks. 15th August, 2000.
The corner to the left of Grim Reefer, on the north side of the cove.

On the south side of the cove is a wide, low wall overlooking the gully that leads down to the base of The Man from Del Monte/Changeling. It contains an obvious diagonal fault line rising leftwards from the right hand end of the crag.

A Dream of White Helmets – 23m VS 4b *. M. Whitaker, P. Cocks, I. Weir. 15th August, 2000.

Start at a bracket at the right end of the fault. Difficult initial moves lead to an easier section where a good small foot ledge appears. Where this peters out, continue with interest until the little overlap ends at a shallow scoop. Move up and across to the corner below dubious blocks, and pull out over these to finish up steep grass.

The Main Cliff:

Flaked Halibut – 15m Severe. M. Whitaker, P. Cocks. 27th May, 2000.
The wall to the right of Cockle Sucker is characterised by a series of flakes and cracks. It has some convenient ledges near its base that can be reached easily by abseil. From the ledges, traverse right and slightly down to reach the right arête of the wall, and follow the prominent flake crack up the arête to the top.

Herring Aid – 15m Severe. M. Whitaker, P. Cocks. 27th May, 2000.
The obvious flake cracks directly above the belay ledge, just right of Cockle Sucker.

The Prawnbroker – 15m VS 4c. A. Fraser, I. Magill. 19th May, 2000.
Start as for Happy Man and climb the wall to the right until near the right arête, then finish by cutting back right.

Victor Russell.

Bill Myles. Photo: John Fowler Collection.

Shark Fin Bay:

Mussels from Brussels – 15m VS 4c. A. Fraser, I. Magill. 30th May, 2000.

To the right of Basking up the Wrong Tree are steep parallel cracks. Climb these to the ledge. Start up the arête above, then climb the wall just to the right to the top. Worthwhile.

NOTE: The upper ridge to exit the routes in Shark Fin Bay is Diff. Climbing round its left edge is Severe 4a, gives better climbing and is slightly more bird-free in the nesting season.

The U-Boat Pen:

Lurchin' with the Urchins – 15m H. Severe 4b. M. Whitaker, P. Cocks. 27th May, 2000.

Climbs the obvious undercut crack, corner and slab to the right of Feeling the Pinch. Much better than it looks.

Doon the Watter – 15m VS 4c. A. Fraser, I. Magill, R. Rankin, R. McAllister. 27th August, 2000.

Start as for The Ducking Stool but climb straight up the corner above. At its end, move left on to the wall and go up this to the top.

Cracked Block Bay:

NOTE: Man Shot by Shed (SMCJ 2000) is Carrycots of Fire (SMCJ 1997).

KILN O' THE FUFFOCK:

Between the slabs of Sea Fowl and Dave's Slab are a deep gully and some clean rocky ledges, reached by abseil. The next route lies left of the deep gully, on the right wall of the Sea Fowl slab.

Fuffocking Contortions – 10m VS 4c *. M. Whitaker, P. Cocks. 20th August, 2000. A deceptive climb that looks about Diff. at first glance. Start by falling across the deep gully cleft and pulling into a short groove at the start of an overhung, left-trending ramp. Ignore the latter and swing awkwardly right across two ribs to the base of the corner, which is entered by more inelegant moves. Step up right, enter the slot, and crawl back left to finish at the top of the corner. A memorable experience.

Dave's Slab is assumed to follow the crack up the centre of the slab. The following provides an alternative.

Zari's Slant – 10m V. Diff. M. Whitaker, I. Weir, P. Cocks. 20th August, 2000. A crack slants up the slab from the left edge, to finish just right of Dave's Slab.

MONEY HEAD, The Bear Pit:

High Finance – 10m VS 4c *. M. Whitaker, P. Cocks. 26th May, 2000.

Left of Bolivars there is an obvious triangular niche 5m up the crag. Start below the left end of this and climb easy rock, before harder moves gain the niche. Pull out on to the left edge, and move up to a prominent jug. Sprint up the steep rock above on good holds, moving slightly rightwards to finish.

The Cioch Area:

Martin's Bank – 17m VS 4c *. M. Whitaker, J. Bolton, P. Cocks. 26th July, 2000.
Start up and right of Pot of Gold. Climb a short nose to overcome the initial bulge, then move right and follow the obvious slotted corner at the right end of the slab until under the right end of the overlap. Pull up right, then move back left, and finish up a short hanging corner.

Loan Shark – 20m Severe. M. Whitaker, J. Bolton, P. Cocks. 26th July, 2000.
Start below and just left of Rainbow's End. Climb over the initial bulge and up easy slabs to an obvious break in the overlap that defines the left edge of the Pot of Gold slab. Pull through on mega-jugs, then move left to climb the left arête, to finish up a short hanging corner.

LAGGANTULLACH, The Island Walls:

Jellyfish Jive – 10m H. Severe 4b. M. Whitaker, P. Cocks. 27th April, 1999.
The wall left of Bouillabaisse, via a flake and ledge. Finish up the cracked wall above.

CRAMMAG HEAD, The Lighthouse Walls:

Anniversary Outing – 10m Diff. *. S. J. H. Reid, J. E. Reid. 20th September, 2000.
The obvious large groove with roofs just left of Shining Path.

20 – 10m Diff. *. J. E. Reid, S. J. H. Reid. 20th September, 2000.
Start from the platform just right of the descent gully and a metre left of Anniversary Outing. Climb up into the shallow groove in the arête and straight up to the top on superb holds.

Little Flasher – 10m VS 4b. M. Whitaker, I. Weir. 12th August, 1999.
Climbs the right arête of the black slab, right of Poisoned Ocean, and just left of a shallow gully. Climb over a bulge on large quartz holds, then follow the left side of the arête thinly, to finish pleasantly across the right-hand end of the line of overhangs on good holds.

Viking Zawn:

Up Helly Aa – 20m HVS 5a **. A. Fraser, I. Magill. 15th April, 2000.
A tremendous and varied route with some unusual climbing. Start as for Funeral pyre, which climbs the left side of a niche. This route climbs the right side of the niche past a small overlap (2m left of a wide crack). Continue more easily to gain the foot of a right-curving overlap. Follow under the overlap to its top. Gain the crack which springs from the end of the overlap with difficulty.

Slockmill Pinnacle (M.R. 0938 3377):

The southern end of the Crammag Head headland is defined by a bay containing a peninsula, marked as Sloucheen Slunk on the 1: 25,000 map. 200 metres south-east of this are a number of small crags, and a fine pinnacle of greywacke with a slabby west face and an impressively steep south face. The base of the west face can be reached by a short scramble just to the north. It is split by a crack/groove in the shape of an inverted-Y.

Custer – 20m Diff **. M. Whitaker, P. Cocks. 2nd August, 2000.
This fine route climbs the arête to the right of the inverted-Y. Start at the foot of the

right leg. Step up on to a prominent foothold, and move right on to the arête. Follow it delicately to finish up the last few feet of the inverted-Y. Abseil descent.

Eldora – 20m Diff. M. Whitaker, P. Cocks. 2nd August, 2000.

The inverted-Y, with a start up the left leg. Abseil descent.

Old Ted – 20m Severe **. M. Whitaker, P. Cocks. 2nd August, 2000.

Another fine route. The slab left of Eldora has a sloping crack leading up towards an overhang. Climb the crack and pull over the overhang by a move to the right to finish up the lichenous slab above. Abseil descent.

Just to the left (north) of the Slockmill Pinnacle is a short steep slab of granite, with a prominent black crystalline hold, and short slanting crack at half-height.

Big Sandy – 15m Severe **. M. Whitaker, P. Cocks. 2nd August, 2000.

Another excellent little route. Climb the slab, following holds just left of the crack, to reach a line of holds trending right where the slab steepens to a wall. Pull up to a ledge and finish back left.

Zawn Off Shotgun (M.R. 0935 3378):

North of the Slockmill Pinnacle area is an inlet with a fine SE-facing slab of pink granite on its north side – The Pink Slab. Two rocky islands just offshore provide another useful landmark. A narrow ledge slants across the base of the slab, and can be reached by abseil. A line of cracks runs up the left edge of the slab.

Firearms Certificate – 17m V.Diff. I. Weir, P. Cocks, M. Whitaker. 18th August, 2000.

This follows the line of cracks, starting from a large ledge with an in-situ pool.

Wi-ped Biped – 18m VS 4c *. M. Whitaker, P. Cocks. 2nd August, 2000.

Climb the slab with relative ease a metre or so right of the line of cracks, via a number of horizontal breaks affording good holds and protection. The final section, up a thin bayonet-shaped crack, is much harder, and ends with delicate moves left to the top of the crack system.

The Barricades of Heaven – 12m HVS 5a ***. M. Whitaker, I. Weir, P. Cocks. 18th August, 2000.

From the centre of the slanting ledge climb direct to a thin crack in the final smooth section. Follow this, a vague pocket on the left containing hidden delights and providing the key to the barricades.

Suntrap Slab (M.R. 0940 3373):

Just south of Slockmill Pinnacle is a slabby line of cliffs facing west. Towards the seaward end there are some ledges at the base which can be reached by a scramble to seaward, or more conveniently by abseil. The main features of the crag are a wide crack slanting up from the left, with adjacent slanting slabs and overlaps. They are described from left to right.

Baked Potato – 20m Diff. I. Weir, M. Whitaker, P. Cocks. 18th August, 2000.

From the ledges move left to climb the ridge that defines the left edge of the overlapping slab. Finish up a slab on the left.

Fried – 20m Severe. M. Whitaker, P. Cocks, I. Weir. 18th August, 2000.

Climb easily up to the overlap, pull leftwards through this past a prominent spike, then move back right to follow the overlap to a prominent hold. Finish up the slab above via a thin crack.

Boiling – 20m H. Severe 4b. M. Whitaker, I. Weir, P. Cocks. 18th August, 2000. Start up *Fried*, but take the hanging slab beneath the overlap to reach the overhang. Pull over and follow the overlap above rightwards to the top.

Char Grilled – 20m V.Diff. I. Weir, M. Whitaker. 18th August, 2000.

The buttress to the right of the wide slanting crack. Care with friable rock is needed near the top.

Done to a Turn – 20m H. Severe 4b. M. Whitaker, I. Weir. 18th August, 2000.

Follow the slabby ramp on the right and finish up the steep headwall on the left.

MULL OF GALLOWAY, Carrickcorie (M.R. 142 304).

This collection of crags is situated on the Mull of Galloway, south of West Tarbet Bay. The Main Cliff is 400 metres west of Kennedy's Cairn, and was nick-named Misprint Pint for some time before an O.S. map revealed the crag's true name. Many of the route names are on the theme of a misprint. The crag is of generally good quality greywacke, and gives well-protected routes with positive holds. It is little affected by the tides, nor does it attract nesting seabirds. It enjoys sunshine from late morning until sunset, and is an excellent crag for the low to mid-grade climber.

South of West Tarbet Bay crag (140308) are two major inlets, the second one containing a low island (when the tide is in) and a steep black north-facing wall on its south side. This black crag is the start of Carrickcorie North Crag. Just south of this are some grassy depressions in the cliff-top, just before the fence heads off south-east. Sacks can be left in the second hollow, and from here the final wide curving crack of An Arm and a Leg is compellingly obvious on the left (facing out). To reach the Main Cliff, an easy scramble down to non-tidal ledges is available to the right (facing out), or a straightforward abseil can be arranged down Old Whippersnappers. The latter is preferable at high tide in rough seas, when sections of the non-tidal ledges can be spray-lashed.

A long narrow zawn defines the southern end of the Main Cliff. South of this, a long promontory marks the start of Carrickcorie South Crag.

Carrickcorie North Crag (M.R. 1420 3050):

The Main Crag is defined on its left (facing in) by a watercourse dropping into a zawn just north of the easy way down (see Main Crag). The North crag stretches from this watercourse north to the large bay passed on the approach route, and includes the black north-facing crag mentioned. An easy way down can be found adjacent to the watercourse, which accesses the right side of the cliff at all states of the tide (as far as Marvin), and as far as Astrofest in calm seas and lowish tide. Otherwise, abseils are available. The rock is not as good on this crag as on the Main Cliff, and many of the routes have an alpine feel to them. Routes are described from right to left. The easy way down starts as a ramp and becomes a slab angling right (facing out) into the first bay. Above this slab is a rounded rib split by a steep crack with a collection of pockets on its right side.

Slartibartfast – 15m V.Diff *. M. Whitaker, I. Weir, P. Cocks. 16th August, 2000. Climb the steep crack on good holds, and continue up the fine arête.

Zaphod Beeblebrox – 20m V.Diff *. M. Whitaker, I. Weir, P. Cocks. 16th August, 2000.

Start in the gully that forms the left edge of the descent slab. Climb the slab to reach a prominent thin crack that slants up right. Follow this, and continue up the slab a metre left of the arête.

Marvin – 16m V.Diff. M. Whitaker, I. Weir, P. Cocks. 16th August, 2000.

The arête that defines the first bay on the left, reached by a short groove and crack on the right.

Left of Marvin is a chimney/gully. The next route climbs the ridge to its left.

Constellation Prize – 22m Severe. M. Whitaker, P. Cocks. 16th August, 2000.

Start on the left edge of the arête, sea permitting, or with more difficulty up the groove to the right, to reach a ledge below a wide crack. Bridge up and pull round the left side of the arête to reach a larger ledge, and continue to the top past some doubtful blocks.

Past another deep gully and slabby ridge the crag changes aspect, facing north. After an easy-angled corner above a large ledge, it becomes less accessible, dropping straight into a short zawn. Below the easy-angled corner is a short gully. The next two routes start here.

Hyperspatial By-Pass – 25m V.Diff. M. Whitaker, I. Weir, P. Cocks. 16th August, 2000.

Follow the rib that defines the black north-facing crag on its right. Good positions but care required with the rock near the top.

Astrofest – 26m HVS 4c *. M. Whitaker, P. Cocks. 1st August, 2000.

Climbs the right side of the black north-facing crag. Start in the gully, overlooking the zawn. A line of large flakes is reached by traversing left from the gully. These lead enticingly upward, gradually getting smaller, while the crag gets steeper, until they expire a few metres below a short, hanging layback crack. Fortunately the angle eases at this point. Reach the crack and pull exultantly over the bulge to reach a grassy ledge. Continue carefully up left to the cliff-top.

Carrickcorie Main Cliff (M.R. 1425 3045, Misprint Pint):

Defined in the north by a zawn and watercourse just north of the easy way down, and to the south by a long thin zawn with an even longer promontory to its south. Whilst the character of the rock means that the crag is eminently climbable virtually anywhere, there are many strong lines, and the crag is one of the finest in Galloway for the low to mid-grade climber.

The easy way down follows a ramp first rightwards and then back left (facing out) to reach the foot of an easy-angled buttress containing two shallow corners. Routes are described from left to right.

Not a Fiend in the World – 10m V.Diff. J. Bolton, P. Cocks, M. Whitaker. 30th May, 2000.

This takes the left-hand of the two shallow corners.

Hula in a Brass Skirt – 10m V.Diff. J. Bolton, P. Cocks. 30th May, 2000.

Right of Not a Fiend... is a short groove with a smooth left wall. Start here, and climb the crack in its right wall, continuing up the cracked buttress above.

I'm Sorry, I Haven't A Cleugh – 10m H. Severe 4a. M. Whitaker, P. Cocks. 1st August, 2000.

A deceptively difficult route that climbs the stepped groove with an overhang on the left wall of the shallow corner of Weigh Out. Layback moves are the cleugh.

Weigh Out – 10m Diff. M. Whitaker, P. Cocks. 2nd June, 2000.

The right-hand of the two shallow corners.

Happy as a Sand Martin – 10m V.Diff. *. M. Whitaker. 30th May, 2000.

The buttress to the right, following some shallow grooves.

The crag now steepens up and curves round to face south, with a pronounced bulge at half-height. The left end of the bulge forms an overhung niche, with a dog-leg crack to its left.

No Tern Unstoned – 15m VS 4b. M. Whitaker. 2nd June, 2000.

Start up a thin flake in the slab, which leads to the dog-leg crack. Climb this, with an awkward move at the top.

Still Waiting for a Bolt Hole – 15m H. Severe 4b. M. Whitaker. 2nd June, 2000.

Start in a corner just right of No Tern Unstoned. Climb easily to the bulge, and pull over this awkwardly on big spikes to move rightwards into the niche. Escape to a good ledge on the right, and continue up another bulge to the top.

The bulging wall to the right contains a number of crack lines, including two left-facing flakes, before terminating in a clean-cut corner behind a twin-headed projection in the non-tidal ledges.

Oook – 15m HVS 5a. M. Whitaker. 30th May, 2000

This takes the right-hand flake through the bulge. Climb easy rock to get stood on some short pinnacles below the bulge. Pull through on excellent handholds to a slab, step back left and take the second bulge direct (crux) on reasonable holds, just right of an easy groove.

Old Whippersnappers – 15m Severe *. M. Whitaker, I. Weir, J. Bolton, P. Cocks.

(A team with a combined age of 207, presumably why the date was forgotten - Ed). The clean-cut corner provides an excellent route, with a good move over a small overhang, and a convenient block belay at its top.

From behind the twin-headed projection the non-tidal ledges drop down into a recess overlooked by a wide, overhanging crack. Right of this is an inverted-V corner with a slot at its top.

Gun Slot Wounds – 20m H. Severe 4a. M. Whitaker, I. Weir. 30th May, 2000.
Climb the inverted corner, and pull painfully through the slot on a very sharp-edged pocket. Continue up the crack above.

To the right of *Gun Slot Wounds* is a fine projecting buttress giving two of the best routes on the crag. The streaks of green weed on the ledge at the base are an obvious landmark.

Anemone Action – 20m VS 4c **. M. Whitaker, J. Bolton, P. Cocks. 30th May, 2000.

Start up the left edge to a ledge, then follow the shallow groove to a good foothold on the arête. A crack above contains hidden delights. Finish just right of *Gun Slot Wounds*. Superb delicate climbing with excellent protection.

Ruddy'ard Kipperling – 20m VS 4c **. M. Whitaker, P. Cocks. 28th May, 2000.
Start up the right edge to a ledge, then follow the striated crack line near the right edge.

The crag falls back to form a rocky bay with a drainage line in the left corner. On the right another buttress projects forward, with the stunning curving crack of *An Arm and a Leg* starting halfway up its left flank, overlooking the rocky bay.

Outer Limpets – 22m Severe. M. Whitaker, P. Cocks. 29th July, 2000.
Takes a central line up the rocky bay, keeping just to the right of the drainage line.

A Pint and a Fag – 20m H. Severe 4b. M. Whitaker. 2nd June, 2000.
Start in the second corner left of the arête of the buttress. Follow the right corner of the rocky bay on flake holds and bridging to a short chimney-slot. Exit this on the left.

A Load of Pollacks – 20m VS 4c. M. Whitaker, P. Cocks. 29th July, 2000.
Follow *A Pint and a Fag* for about 8m, then break out right to reach the easier ramp line immediately below the top crack of *An Arm and a Leg*.

An Arm and a Leg – 20m E1 5a ***. M. Whitaker, I. Weir. 30th May, 2000.
A route that named itself, but does not need a wedging technique to climb it. A classic route that can be escaped at half height, but not once the climber commits to the crux section. Start just left of the arête, and right of *A Pint and a Fag*. Climb the shallow corner and continue up the thin flake crack on the arête to pull round right on to a big ledge at the start of an easy ramp. Move up into the wide crack above, then make bold and committing moves up this, via a handy flake out right, to reach the safety of a big block where the crack curves over into the horizontal. Finish straight up.

The right side of *An Arm and a Leg* buttress forms the left wall of a large corner split by a chimney-crack. The next three routes take lines up its slabby face, and all start at the foot of the chimney-crack.

The Hissing of Summer Prawns – 22m H. Severe 4b *. M. Whitaker, P. Cocks. 29th July, 2000.

Start up the corner but traverse left after 2m to a groove system. Follow this, and the more clean-cut groove above, to a ledge on the right below the capping overhang. Clear this by moves to the left, to finish at the top of An Arm and a Leg.

A Plaiice in the Sun – 22m H. Severe 4a. M. Whitaker, P. Cocks. 29th July, 2000. Start as for Hissing, but pull over the bulge to the right of that route's groove system, and follow the slab above directly to the ledge below the final overhang. Pull sensationally through this on a large wedged block.

Any Corona Left? – 22m V. Diff. M. Whitaker, P. Cocks. 1st August, 2000. Follow the chimney-crack for 5m, then move left on to the slab to climb it easily to meet the final section of the chimney-crack again, after it has curved up leftwards. Finish steeply and carefully up the break above.

Coroner Wright – 22m V. Diff. M. Whitaker, P. Cocks. 29th July, 2000. Climb the chimney-crack direct to the point where it curves leftwards. Move right on the slab, and back left on a good foothold, to clear the bulging finish.

The right wall of the large corner forms the left face of another fine projecting buttress, characterised by a slim right-facing corner in its lower half, and a zigzag crack towards the top. Three good routes climb this face.

On Porpoise – 20m VS 4b. M. Whitaker, P. Cocks. 29th July, 2000. Climb the rib on the left of the slim corner, moving left and up to the overhang where it is split by a short quartz crack. Pull over here, and finish up the deceptively awkward corner above.

Flounders of the Baskervilles – 20m HVS 5a **. M. Whitaker, P. Cocks. 29th July, 2000.

Climb the slim corner to the overhang. Pull over rightwards on excellent holds, then continue up rounded ledges to the base of the final wall. Climb this with difficulty 1m right of the final corner of On Porpoise.

Cod Moves in Mysterious Waves – 20m VS 4c **. M. Whitaker, I. Weir, P. Cocks. 30th May, 2000.

This more or less follows the line of the zigzag crack. Climb a shallow corner to the right of Flounders..., move right to a ledge then up and left to a bigger ledge just left of the crack. Make fingery moves back right over the next steep wall, then move right below the diagonal crack to finish steeply just left of the arête.

The buttress continues with some impressive flake cracks on its right wall, then forms a right-facing right-angled corner. The rock is slightly suspect on this part of the crag.

Enema Territory – 22m HVS *. M. Whitaker, I. Weir, P. Cocks. 21st August, 2000. Start just right of the buttress edge, below a crack in a shallow corner.

1. 6m 4a Climb the crack to the big ledge at the foot of the corner.
2. 16m 4c On the left wall of the corner are three flake cracks. Climb the right-hand, and least clearly defined, one. Excellent climbing on very sharp flakes, which should become safer with traffic.

Friends on the Right, Enemas on the Left – 22m Severe. M. Whitaker, P. Cocks. 28th May, 2000.

Scramble easily to the foot of the corner (or climb pitch 1 of Enema Territory), then bridge pleasantly up it, taking care with the rock in places.

The right wall of Friends has a chimney in its lower half near its right side. Beyond this is an arête, and the narrow zawn that terminates this section of the crag.

Absolute Crab – 25m VS 4c. M. Whitaker, P. Cocks. 1st August, 2000.

Start in the chimney and bridge up its left side to a ledge on the left below a section of very friable-looking rock. Step back right on good rock, and climb up steeply on big holds to the overhang. Claw over this using a pincer movement, then scuttle sideways up a series of walls and ledges, trending left.

Awkward Bustard – 25m H. Severe 4b. M. Whitaker, P. Cocks. 2nd June, 2000.

This starts at the base of the chimney, and climbs the right arête with much greater delicacy and difficulty than would appear from below. Where the rock deteriorates under the overhang, move left and continue up into a large niche. Go up this, moving left near the top to finish up a crack.

Carrickcorie South Crag (M.R. 1427 3039):

South of the narrow zawn and rocky promontory that define the Main Cliff is a west-facing cliff characterised by three ridges, with two steep walls in between. Ledges at the base can be reached by abseil. The rocky promontory forms a spur of the left-most ridge (facing in). Routes are described from left to right.

Ridgeard Corie – 28m V.Diff*. M. Whitaker, I. Weir, P. Cocks. 21st August, 2000.

A route of Carrickter! The left-most ridge starts steeply, eases to a slab, followed by a level section and a final steep wall. A mini-Alpine classic.

The back wall of the bay right of Ridgeard Corie has two prominent grooves in its top half, and a distinct prow to the right. The next route gains the left groove with greater difficulty than expected.

A Different Kettle of Fish – 20m HVS 5a *. M. Whitaker, P. Cocks. 21st August, 2000.

There is an obvious niche at the base of the wall. Start just left of this and climb up to some prominent spikes. Stand on these, then step right and up to a cruel but welcome hand-jam. Pull right with difficulty into a recess, then finish more easily up the left-hand groove.

Castor Oil and Pollacks – 20m H. Severe 4a. M. Whitaker, P. Cocks. 21st August, 2000.

Right of the niche at the base of the wall, a crack slants steeply up to the right side of the prow. Follow this for 5m, then move left on to an overhung slab that leads left to the base of the right-hand groove. Bridge up this to finish.

Labrax, Right-Hand Slab (SMCJ 1999, p157):

Elegance – 13m E6 6b (maybe harder) **. J. Lines (unsec.). 19th September, 2000.

Start 2m right of the left arête, where a horizontal line of fingerholds leads left into the centre. Follow a micro-thin crack up the centre (thin, sustained and hard to stop and place small RP's) until a foothold rest can be gained on the right. Step up to gain a horizontal break (shallow Friend# $\frac{1}{2}$ on the left). Step left and go direct up the centre to the top. Cleaned on abseil, but led placing gear on lead.

A pinnacle sticking out of the beach lies 50m south of the slabs.

Reach or Beach – 8m E2 5c *. J. Lines (on sight solo). 22nd September, 2000.

Climb the overhanging NE arête on the right side via obvious holds.

CENTRAL OUTCROPS, Cambusbarron Quarry:

Blockbuster – 30m VS 4c. D. MacLeod, S. Patterson. June, 1998.

This route climbs the high wall round to the right of Anabolic Steroids. The route is well protected with exciting moves on a huge detached block.

In Hiding – 10m E3 5c. D. MacLeod. June, 1998.

This is the first route on the shady right hand side of the quarry, taking the smooth, mossy slab in the trees. Start just right of a large tree up against the face at cleaned edges. Climb the thin slab, moving right at the top to a loose finish. May need another clean.

Cambusbarron West Quarry:

Eastering Home – 10m VS 5a. I. McCabe, J. Shanks. 16th April, 2001.

Three metres left of the undercut buttress taken by Mutant Crocodiles and Queer Uncle Henry (ie. about 10m left of Cha) is a cracked wall. Climb the prominent central crack with a tricky move at half-height. Finish by the easy but loose corner above.

Scales of Injustice – F7B+. M. Somerville, Si o'Conner. 2000.

About 10m left of Production Line is this quite sustained and difficult slab. 5 bolts to the belay. Bolted due to lack of gear, distance from other routes and style of climbing.

Miss Po – E1/E2 5b/c. M. Somerville, Si o'Conner. 2000.

Climbs the technical right-facing corner to the right of Force 8/Jason's Dilemma.

FIFE, Rosyth Quarry:

Master Fwap – 15m E1 5b. S. Templeman. 13th July, 2000.

Takes the hanging arête between Heathy and Cathy. One runner was placed in a triangular niche just above the overhang on the left, on Heathy. This niche was used to gain the arête and good holds. The arête requires concentration and balance, and if you fall off you'd better be able to levitate.

The Hawcraig:

The Dreeeping Beak – E1 5b/c. J.P. Dyble (unsec). 21st April, 2000.

Start to the left of Destiny Groove on the quartz wall. Climb directly up to the porthole to the left of Destiny Groove. Step right under the overhanging nose to the left of Urmi (Friend#+). Pull directly over the nose and wobble upwards to finish directly at the bolt.

MISCELLANEOUS NOTES

The W. H. Murray Literary Prize.

As a tribute to the late Bill Murray, whose mountain and environment writings have been an inspiration to many a budding mountaineer, the SMC have set up a modest writing prize, to be run through the pages of the Journal. The basic rules are set out below, and will be re-printed each year. The prize is run with a deadline, as is normal, of the end of January each year. So assuming you are reading this in early July, you have, for the next issue, six months in which to set the pencil, pen or word processor on fire.

The Rules:

1. There shall be a competition for the best entry on Scottish Mountaineering published in the *Scottish Mountaineering Club Journal*. The competition shall be called the 'W. H. Murray Literary Prize', hereafter called the 'Prize.'
2. The judging panel shall consist of, in the first instance, the following: The current Editor of the *SMC Journal*; The current President of the SMC; and two or three lay members, who may be drawn from the membership of the SMC. The lay members of the panel will sit for three years after which they will be replaced.
3. If, in the view of the panel, there is in any year no entries suitable for the Prize, then there shall be no award that year.
4. Entries shall be writing on the general theme of 'Scottish Mountaineering', and may be prose articles of up to approximately 5000 words in length, or shorter verse. Entries may be fictional.
5. Panel members may not enter for the competition during the period of their membership.
6. Entries must be of original, previously unpublished material. Entries should be submitted to the Editor of the *SMC Journal* before the end of January for consideration that year. Lengthy contributions are preferably word-processed and submitted either on 3.5" PC disk or sent via e-mail. (See Office Bearers page at end of this Journal for address etc.) Any contributor to the SMC Journal is entitled to exclude their material from consideration of the Prize and should so notify the Editor of this wish in advance.
7. The prize will be a cheque for the amount £250.
8. Contributors may make different submissions in different years.
9. The decision of the panel is final.
10. Any winning entry will be announced in the *SMC Journal* and will be published in the *SMC Journal* and on the SMC Web site. Thereafter, authors retain copyright.

The W. H. Murray Literary Prize (2001).

I am delighted to welcome two new members onto this year's panel. Firstly, securing the services of Terry Gifford, organiser of the International Festival of Mountaineering Literature was not easy and I am very grateful that he found time to come aboard in what must be a very busy schedule. I am sure that the link will be of benefit both to the club and to the Festival.

The appointment of club member, Ann MacDonald, to the panel will bring what I feel is an important female perspective to our deliberations and, it is hoped, serve to encourage what will be an historic occasion, the first Journal contribution from a female member. The other two members of the panel are, of course, myself and Ken Crocket who sit by dint of our respective offices.

The winner of this year's W. H. Murray Literary Prize is a young man who seems to have an innate ability to court controversy. He has been described as the *enfant terrible* of Scottish Climbing and is no stranger to criticism from within the climbing community. Love him or hate him, it cannot be denied that what he does is at the cutting edge of our game and requires skill, passion, commitment and a mental toughness that most of us cannot even begin to imagine. Reading his winning entry *Centurion Solo On Two Cheeseburgers* might give the reader some sort of insight into what is required to perform at this level. Technical ability, fitness, judgment and yes, sometimes mistakes, are there for all to see, but these attributes are not in themselves enough. Alan Mullin makes no big deal of the psychology of climbing at this level but the signals are there if you want to see them, signals which confirm that the most important area in his particular version of the game is what goes on in the space between his ears, the mental game.

'Stay calm, focus' is his mantra and it is that ability to calmly stare down his fear that ensured his success, hypothermic and alone during a storm on the upper pitches of Centurion in winter, a climb which most of us would be more than happy to add to our summer list. I very much hope that the Journal will be hearing more from Alan and his contemporaries in the future.

Other articles that attracted the judges' attention were Geoff Dutton's mildly satirical reminder that *Ridiculous Things Like These Really Happened Then*. "Made me laugh out loud, it is both within, whilst at the same time gently satirising the SMC 'style'." Terry Gifford had this to say of Bill Brooker's *Mitre Ridge In Winter* recording the first ascent with Tom Patey in 1953. "An important historical record, well narrated with vitality, accuracy and vividness." Niall Christie's *Partners* was a well turned tale examining in a humorous way the hunt for the perfect climbing partner. "It was fiction as far as there ever can be such a beast but I felt that in writing about Dumbarton Rock, he knew too much about 'Stonefall Crack' and sitting on top of 'Boulder H' simply to have read it in a book."

Congratulations again to Alan Mullin, and for the rest, and all the other budding authors out there, there's always next year. The winning article, as well as appearing in this year's Journal, can also be read in full on the SMC Website.

Charlie J. Orr.

Canoeing and climbing in Ireland

By Stan Pearson

FRIDAY night and the car's loaded full of anticipation and heading west. This is a return trip to one of the more remote parts of the Irish coast. The weather has been unsettled but the sun is now shining and a good weekend is in prospect. Age and other commitments restrict access to the crags and the grades, so a bit of invention is now needed for excitement rather than just collecting the E points; for me this means joint climbing and canoeing trips. It's easier to manage a weekend these days than a few weeks in the big hills.

Ireland has a relaxed climbing scene influenced by modest numbers and the weather. There are still plenty of pockets of unexplored rock. A fruitful area of exploration is a number of islands off the west coast. This has already yielded some rich prizes such as the Isle of Gola, but the map suggests other spots offer potential for an incomer.

A prospecting canoe trip revealed significant crags on the south-west coast of Inishkea. These islands are situated about a third of the way down the west coast. This area is rich in history. Apart from whaling and piracy it is also known as the first spot to catch whatever weather arrives from the Atlantic. The weather station reports from here delayed the Normandy landings. This is where we are headed.

I've tempted Ian over from Scotland with tales of sandy beaches, pleasant paddling and lots of virgin rock. It always sounds a nice idea to combine canoeing and climbing in remote places but there are a few practical issues. Saturday morning and we are looking out over white caps on a lively sea to the island some six kilometres away. It was blowing hard last night and, although forecast to ease, still seems pretty strong. Having driven the five hours from Dublin, booked a day off work and for Ian jumped on a plane and borrowed a boat, there is never any doubt about the decision but we make the pretence of a debate concluding: "We'll load the boats and have a look." Full exploratory climbing gear and three days' water adds a big weight to the canoes and it's two monsters we carry down the short sandy beach to meet the surf. I'm hoping the weight will keep my boat low in the water and reduce the impact of a side-on wind.

Morning surf generates the usual buzz but once out of the immediate shelter of the bay my boat feels unwieldy and unresponsive. I always find the first 15 minutes or so on the water odd. A bit like skiing as you adapt to an unnatural form of locomotion. I'm in a big tub as waves slap on to me broadside and 15 minutes of wallowing get us past the first islands. Away from the small isles the water deepens and becomes more predictable. A big grey swell rolls in from 10 o'clock. It rides under the boat, occasionally breaks over it but mostly just pushes against where we want to go. The islands are clearly visible and we can judge progress from Dunvillaun More to the south but it's painfully slow into the wind. We settle to a rhythm keeping within shouting distance and easy sight. For me this means about 30 strokes before easing a little and then hitting another 30. We are comfortable, warm and have both been in bigger seas but this is hard work. Every stroke is an effort pushing the paddle blades against the wind but at least it's regular and only occasionally tries to snatch the paddle from your grip. A fishing boat passes a quarter-of-a-mile to the north going in the opposite direction but it keeps disappearing in the swell and we feel small.

I concentrate on trying to sustain an even stoke. A big wave breaks over me

drenching me, the boat responds easily as I brace and I am pleased at still being relaxed and able to keep the steady motion of paddling. Any time I get the sea in the face, despite knowing it's salty, the taste always takes me by surprise.

The sea is not intimidating but progress is a grind, a bit like crossing the Gorms plateau in a white out. Eventually, a lot of effort brings us to the southern bay of the island where at least 20 seals and a local lobster boat check us out. This crossing would normally be about an hour to an hour-and-a-half of steady paddling instead it has taken two-and-a-half hours of real effort. However, a sandy beach and lunch beckons – hot soup and big salami and tomato sandwiches. Sunshine graces the isle and we leisurely unpack the boats, shoulder climbing gear and set off for a little exploration.

The southern end of the island abounds in rock with cliffs up to about 60m and most of it excellent Lewisian gneiss. Much of the cliffs are broken and stepped with ledges or offer featureless overhangs. The more slabby parts are also covered in black lichen that reduces friction. However, on the previous visit there were enough clean steep walls to offer some good sport. But the attractive walls spotted on my last visit in calm seas are now engulfed in swell and surf, pounding on to the rocks and bursting skyward for 20m. The calm conditions that allowed seaside exploration before have been replaced by a big Atlantic swell that surges into the zawns in spectacular fashion.

Despite these constraints we do find a few walls of immaculate rock offering 20m-30m routes up improbable walls at VS to HVS.

Access is by fairly straight-forward abs to comfortable ledges. A number of corners and walls succumb to our efforts, the best being a vertical face that from below seems to offer no holds. In reality, the 30m are gained at about EI by lots of fantastic hidden finger jugs just where you need them. The clifftop reveals a great vista along the Irish west coast. To the south is Achill Island and the most Scottish-looking scenery I have seen here. We still have the most southerly aspect to explore on Sunday when, hopefully, the swell has subsided and with no canoeing in prospect our arms might be fresh enough to attempt some of the steeper lines. As predicted the weather has cleared, the wind dropped and the sea to the east has subsided – what a pleasant spot. We retire to bed with a few lines in the bag and the journey justified.

Sunday dawns wet. That sort of wet rain you only seem to get on the west coast, like the air cannot hold any more moisture and it soaks you within minutes. The sort of wet where it's tempting to wear the wetsuit just to go for a walk. This is the sort of wet you feel if you clenched your fist you would ring moisture from the air. All in all – wet. We go and have a look anyway. Perseverance reveals a few possibilities and some fantastic seascapes. We are mesmerised by a big breaker that forms a perfect tube before smashing into the tip of the island and surging up a zawn we have climbed down into. Every time it does this, a white foaming mass surges towards us but dissipates metres from our feet in froth and fury. It's hypnotic and we can marvel at its power from the safety of the land. However, it rules out any climbing here despite some promising lines. Every now and then we just have to glance to the eastern shore to convince ourselves nothing like this is happening on our passage home.

A zawn to the north reveals what we are after, steep, clean, grey walls with soaring crack lines and a good ledge just above the surf. This yields five routes on perfect rough rock, despite the rain. The routes are VS to EI with an escape route

of severe and some hopeful-looking lines at between E2 and E3 that we don't attempt. Fine cracks and steep walls that are, thankfully, not too strenuous or too bold need no cleaning. The lines are clear, the wall just off vertical and the climbing interesting, but friendly enough, that we make progress. The rain eases a bit and the fun rises. This wall is protected from the surf by a small islet at the mouth of the zawn but the approaching tide makes the abseil gradually more intimidating as our ledge succumbs to the swell. This is a perfect vantage spot to watch the approaching surf but I'm glad to be tied onto a rope from above the water rather than be in it in a little fibreglass canoe. In fact, despite the memory of sitting in this place a few weeks ago it seems inconceivable to be on the water now. Current conditions would just smash anything to bits. You can never quite escape the knowledge that we have to get off this island at the end of the weekend. Rain, incoming tide and the need for food bring us back to the tent and a sumptuous feed. You can see why whisky distilling and drinking became popular in this part of the world. We partake of local traditions before tired limbs drift off to sleep to the sound of the seals in the bay and rain on the tent.

Monday morning dawns early, grey and wet. We need to get Ian back to Dublin for a flight. Although there is only half-a-mile visibility there is not much wind and we are on the water and heading into the murk on a compass bearing by 7.30. We are greeted by a friendly following sea that makes the crossing straight-forward but the tension doesn't ease until we sight the peninsula an hour later. We hit land just as the downpour starts. A few kids on the beach seem impervious to such weather and help us throw the gear in the car. These are the only people we have seen since the lobster boat.

Another great weekend in the bag.

Hogmanay 2000: A personal look back to the year and the final day.

By Brian Shackleton

IT WAS December 31, the final day of 2000. It had been a memorable year for me from both the skiing and mountaineering point of view. There had been a March visit to Spokane with skiing at resorts in Idaho, Montana and across the Canadian border in British Columbia. On returning home, visits to the CIC on the Ben and to Ling Hut in Torridon had been followed by early summer trips for long hillwalks in the Islands and the North West. As usual, summer rock climbing in Scotland was often weather affected but there had been some special days on Garbh Bheinn, Ardnamurchan and Glencoe when rock was warm to the touch and the sun shone from a clear blue sky. Summer had eventually faded into autumn, but for me there had been lots more to look forward to with a November trip to the Vinson Massif in Antarctica. The long journey south occupied a longer time than planned but had ultimately been successful with the ascent of the highest point on the most southerly continent. The trip to Antarctica would remain in my memory as far more than a journey to a new location to climb another mountain, but rather as a pilgrimage to the place I had read about in books describing Ernest Shackleton's journeys of exploration.

By the time I returned to Scotland, snow had fallen, winter had arrived and less than three weeks of the old year remained. An ascent of the Sron na Lairig ridge in Glencoe the week before Christmas and some wintry days on nearby Corbetts during the snowy spell between Christmas and New Year whetted my appetite for

the winter climbing prospects ahead. Over the New Year holiday period we were based on the shores of Loch Awe within an hour's drive of many good areas so there was considerable discussion the night before as to what was best for a day out on Hogmanay. The final choice was for Beinn Udlaidh since this was closest at hand, offered a short approach to the climbs, and with a poor afternoon forecast, a relatively easy retreat.

Many of the year's memories occupied me as I walked into Beinn Udlaidh that morning and the time passed easily despite the weight of a winter sack. More than 20 other cars were parked at the roadside and once we were in the corrie, it was clear that on most of the ice climbs that had formed, there was at least one party already at work. The wind was rising too, indicating that the forecast deterioration in the weather seemed to be arriving sooner rather than later. Our party of four closed in on the crags and found shelter behind one of the large corrie boulders to have a bite and decide what to do. Since Valerie and Steve were concerned that the easier routes could be avalanche prone, they indicated that they would probably settle for a circuit of the corrie taking in the summit cairn and make their own way to Bridge of Orchy afterwards. This left Mark and myself to make our route choice. From our vantage point in the corrie, the main area around Quartzvein Scoop offered the best-looking ice and indeed the party on that route appeared to be moving up steadily.

We headed up taking in a detour to inspect the attractive looking South Gully of the Black Wall, before traversing to the foot of Quartzvein Scoop. Here we met a pair of climbers who had abandoned Zig Zag Gully, the Grade II to the left. Their retreat had been due to insufficient ice and they were about to head back down after a brief stop to munch their sandwiches. Up on Quartzvein Scoop, the party we had seen earlier had topped out but a second party were on the main icefall pitch. Since the ice appeared to be well formed with the promise of good protection under the steeper and narrower upper section, we geared up and awaited our turn.

Mark headed up from the belay climbing the steep ice steadily and confidently. The ice was not of uniform consistency and needed some care when moving up the steeper sections or placing protection. Nevertheless, he was enjoying the sharp precision of his newly-acquired axes, although he had to keep his head down from time to time to avoid the bits of ice coming down from the party above. Meanwhile, at the foot of the icefall, I was well protected to the left being sheltered beneath a small roof which deflected most of the falling ice, so patiently waited my turn. After a considerable wait, a shout and the well-accustomed tug came on the rope and I moved off. It was good to be on steep ice again but I regretted not sharpening my own axes to help me on the hard and sometimes brittle ice. Above the narrow upper section of the icefall, Mark was safely secured in a cave on the right and announced that he had decided to wait to allow the previous occupant to clear the belay before bringing me up.

The way ahead led up to the left, onto a left trending ramp and then, presumably, to the top of the route. We agreed that with a possibly awkward cornice, a belay should be sought before such a hazard. This would allow the rope to be run out over the cornice exit comfortably with sufficient rope to reach the easy ground well back from the edge. I set off from the security of the cave, and having placed an ice screw, headed up on to the ramp. The conditions here were deteriorating rapidly and away from the shelter of the cave, there was a whirlwind of spindrift everywhere and snow building up around me at an alarming rate. Each step upwards required a lot of snow to be swept off to find the secure snow ice beneath and I became ever more

aware of the precarious position I was in. Ahead, I made out a lump in the snow and once there, thankfully, drove a warthog into turf adjacent to the buried rock. This gave me the confidence to continue up and I spotted the signs of another rock a farther few feet away. I was starting to explore the ground around the rock with my right axe with a view to putting in further protection, when with a low muffled sound, everything seemed to start moving around me.

For several seconds, snow poured everywhere, and thinking I had been swept away, I waited for the thump of being brought to rest by the rope or of hitting something on the way falling back down the route. There was nothing however, and as the snow cleared around me, I found I was hanging by my left axe a short distance beneath my rock. I had clearly brought the upper snow slope down on top of me by probing around the rock and had been saved by my left axe which I had instinctively driven in a few seconds before. As I tried to regain my stance, I realised that my left foot was not obeying commands and was incapable of taking any weight after the front points were driven in. It was now essential that I make myself safe by securing some sort of belay since my ankle was clearly damaged in some way. I found that by kicking in with my right foot and then shuffling up onto the heel of my left foot, I could regain some security beside the rock and set to work on the belay. Two driven warthogs plus a driven axe and I prepared to bring Mark up.

The spindrift relented a little as Mark approached the warthog placement at the first rock and I warned him of my predicament. The look of disbelief coupled with possible irritation at the time he had waited, changed to one reflecting the seriousness of our position. He had seen the avalanche come down from the security of the cave and had thought initially I might have been completely swept off. During the time that the avalanche had taken to pass, the cave had gone quite dark as if a great dark curtain had been draped across it but he had been relieved when light was restored that the rope still curved upwards onto the ramp. He now removed the warthog and without questioning my assertions that the belay was secure, moved below and to the left of where I was belayed. Here the snow appeared less steep and we hoped an exit could be made without further incident. After placing another warthog drive-in, he moved cautiously on to the unconsolidated snow above. Gradually, I paid out the ropes as Mark edged towards safety until he finally disappeared from view onto the open hillside above.

The ropes ran out quickly as a belay was reached and the muffled call to follow came down through the storm. The belay I had constructed with the warthogs was reassuringly difficult to remove and I set off towards the top. The ropes dug into the snow as I moved up the unconsolidated snow and frequently I had to flick them clear to enable Mark to take in and protect my own slow progress. Finally, I was over the top and safe at the belay. By now it was nearly dark, there was a full bore storm in progress and our problems were clearly far from over.

We packed away the gear plus one of the ropes and decided on a traverse to clear the crags followed by a descent of what should be a straight-forward ridge. This would bring us down to near the edge of the forest from where we would have to find the track back to the road. We kept a short rope between us for most of the descent and on a number of occasions were glad of its security, as benign looking snow slopes beneath us proved to be unstable traps, forcing us to take long detours. Progress over rough ground and boulders was slow as I hobbled along with the help of my ski poles but on easier gentle slopes I could almost keep up a respectable pace. During breaks in the storm it was possible to see some of the ground ahead and

periodically we checked our position on the map. Finally, we reached the lower section of the ridge and could make out the forest edge, an isolated cottage and far beyond the line of the glen. We removed our crampons and harnesses, packed them away and enjoyed a few minutes rest during which we had something to eat and drink to prepare ourselves for the next section.

This part of the descent proved the worst for both of us. After following the fence at the forest edge for what seemed an eternity, sometimes up to our waists in new snow, the fence then headed back up the hillside. The snow became even deeper and we decided to turn back on our tracks. We then crossed the fence into the forest plantation which at this point was relatively open but crossed by many furrows and ditches hidden by the blanket of snow. Eventually, we made our way down a firebreak and after a further traverse through the trees recognised the burn coming down from the corrie. After crossing to the other side we were able to find the track leading down to the farm and the road beyond. The descent had taken three-and-a-half hours but it had been completed without incident and as far as I could tell without further damage to my ankle.

All the other cars had gone and there was no sign of the others waiting for us at the roadside. A note at the car advised us they had taken a lift to Bridge of Orchy and would see us there. To help us, they had already put on the snow chains so the final return leg of our journey began. At Bridge of Orchy, there were no signs of life but a note on the closed door directed us to Tyndrum and a successful rendezvous with Valerie and Steve who were relieved to see us, particularly when we gave them our account of the day. They had wisely decided against doing a climb and had completed the circuit of the corrie as planned. They also confirmed the rapid deterioration in the conditions as they started to descend in the afternoon presumably coincident with the time we had run into difficulties on the upper part of our route. We all headed back to Loch Awe to celebrate the end of the old year and welcome in the new.

I was again left with my memories as I sipped a dram after the bells heralded in the New Year. The final piece of my year 2000 jigsaw was indeed in place but not as I had ever intended. The last day of the year would also determine what I would be able to do in the weeks and months ahead. Two days later, my ankle showed no signs of improvement and a visit to Vale of Leven followed by a second visit to Paisley Royal Alexandra Hospital confirmed my suspicions of a ruptured Achilles tendon. The New Year would start with 10 weeks in plaster and a long period of recuperation.

A game of chance

By Adam Kassyk

HOW dangerous is winter climbing in Scotland? Just how much of a risk are we taking when we go winter climbing? Serious questions, but surely no rational and responsible person can consider the accident statistics every winter and then avoid these questions. To assume that accidents only happen to novices or incompetents, or that they are unavoidable risks which it is best not to think about, is itself an irresponsibility.

Unfortunately, there seems to have been very little consideration of these questions, in the pages of the Journal or elsewhere. What little discussion there has been about risk in mountaineering, in Scotland or elsewhere, has been largely theoretical and hence speculative. There has been little or no discussion of any

evidence that might help me, or any other climber, come to a view about how much risk is actually involved in our sport, and whether this level of risk is justifiable.

The accident statistics reported in the Journal make harrowing reading. The data shows that 127 people were killed in winter conditions on the Scottish hills over the last 10 years, and of these nearly half – 60 – were engaged in climbing activities (including approaching or descending from climbs). These figures, of course, need to be placed in the context of the numbers of people going into the hills, but they do present a dilemma for any rational person. Detailed analysis of the accident data would certainly cast some light on these questions, but is beyond my resources. However, there is another source of data which can be used to analyse the risks involved – personal experience. What can be learned from a structured analysis of one's own climbing experience? Can some plausible hypotheses about risk be derived from such analysis?

The concept of a 'risk event' may be proposed as a means to structure personal experience. A risk event may be (loosely) defined as 'a situation where the climber's control of the situation is diminished to such an extent that there is a possibility of harm'. This definition could probably be improved upon, but the examples below should illustrate the concept clearly enough. The notion of a risk event is based on the following reasoning. You can hypothesize that there are times or situations on a climbing day where there is no risk of harm present. Now some people might argue that there is always a degree of risk present, but I would counter that if this is negligible, or if the actual harm that might result is slight, then it can be discounted. The point being, that a risk event is a situation where there is a risk of harm present. In this way we can divide climbing situations, or days on the hill, into those where risk is present, and those where it is absent.

From a total of 145 days out climbing over 19 winters, I have identified the following risk events from my experience, in chronological order starting with the earliest event.

1. A fall from a short ice pitch, due to a combination of inexperience, poor technique and poor quality ice.

2. A passage on a solo ascent of an ice climb, where the ice thinned to give a very precarious and worrying move above a big drop.

3. An ascent of a snow climb in very heavy unconsolidated snow conditions there must have been a significant avalanche risk, of which we were blissfully unaware.

4. A section of partly consolidated snow collapsed while a long way above runners on a mixed pitch and created a very anxious moment until I was able to climb past the bare section – due to misjudgment of the conditions as there was a noticeable thaw in progress.

5. Getting over-extended on a long ice pitch, in thaw conditions, with no runners and a poor belay – a painful example of misjudgment of both the condition of the climb and my own abilities.

6. Climbing too close to my limit on steep ice with no runners or belay, due to tiredness at the top of a long climb.

7. Caught in storm force winds high on a climb; escape was only achieved by the fortuitous possibility of direct descent without topping out onto the plateau – the severity of the storm had not been indicated in the forecast.

8. Committed to a long ascent up slopes of deep unconsolidated snow above a gully climb – we were aware of the potential avalanche risk but unable to do much to avoid it.

9. Encountering a 10m section at the top of a long gully pitch which was composed

of unconsolidated powder at an angle of 70°-80°; this gave extremely precarious climbing with a serious fall potential – snow conditions lower down and elsewhere on the mountain were very well consolidated and there had been no indication of poor quality snow anywhere else.

10. Gaining the plateau at the top of a climb involved a few metres up a steep snow slope that was very precarious due to a combination of unconsolidated snow and rapid onset of an intense thaw; there was no belay or protection at this point in the climb – the thaw had been forecast but had come in more quickly and intensely than anticipated.

11. One axe pulled out and both crampons came off while crossing a short ice bulge, the one axe that stayed in stopped me falling a very long way as the last protection was 25m below – conditions were relatively good and the ice could not be particularly faulted.

12. A stone fall released by a climber above me on a mixed climb narrowly missed me; I was on relatively easy ground without any protection and a fall would have resulted in hitting lots of ledges on the way down – the very obvious risk posed by climbers above you.

What can be gleaned from this data? Risk events occurred on 12 occasions out of 145 days on the hill. This may be expressed in simple terms as a rate of 8.3%, and this figure may be considered as a proxy for exposure to what I at least might consider to be a personally unacceptable level of risk. On reflection, the figure seems uncomfortably high. This level of risk has not been static over the 19 winters concerned. The first five events occurred in the first six years of my climbing experience. Assuming that inexperience involves a higher level of risk, these may be discounted to give a rate of 4.8% over the remaining 13 years. Even this rate still seems uncomfortably high. Closer analysis shows that five events occurred in a three-year period (1993-1995), out of 34 days on the hill in those winters. This equates to a rate of 14.7% over those three years. Perhaps significantly, those three winters also had the highest totals of winter fatalities (climbing and walking) of the last 10 years. Coincidence? Or perhaps in years of particularly heavy snow conditions the risks do increase. To my great relief, the rate of risk has reduced somewhat over the last few years. A case of older and wiser, perhaps...?

Looking in more detail at the circumstances of each risk event, the predominant factor, in eight out of 12 cases, is the poor quality of the snow and ice. In a ninth case it was a contributory factor, in that better quality ice would have enabled some security to be found. Avalanche risk accounted for two cases, though this may well be an under-estimate. Geographical location indicates a degree of concentration on Ben Nevis (four cases) and Creag Meaghaidh (three cases). However, this may well reflect the fact that I have climbed relatively more frequently in these areas, and random variation in a small sample size.

A risk event does not constitute an accident (at least in the narrow medical sense of the word; it certainly is an accident of chance). In fact, only one of these events (the very first) resulted in any actual harm – a broken ankle. However, it can be hypothesized that a higher incidence of risk events will be directly related to the higher probability of an accident, averaged out over a sufficient number of cases. Many accidents appear to be the result of a number of factors, and it may be argued that the risk event constitutes the first or second of these factors. In most of the cases described there was more than one factor at play, and one more chance occurrence would have tipped an already much-reduced safety margin into an accident. This conclusion would probably need to be tested against some actual case studies (if

these could be reasonably achieved). So how do you reduce the number of risk events you might experience?

It seems to me that there are three ways in which I can modify my risk-taking behaviour on the basis of this data. First, the part played by poor quality snow and ice conditions in the cases noted above is striking. It seems that a good rule would be to stick to mixed climbing unless the snow and ice conditions are particularly good. At least rock is a more stable and predictable medium than the fickle nature of Scottish snow and ice. Secondly, route choice is absolutely crucial. Being in the wrong place at the wrong time accounted for eight of the 12 events noted, in the sense that evidence was available to indicate a different choice of objective on the day. Only events 6, 7, 9 and 11 could be considered as unpredictable or unavoidable. Better judgment could have ensured a safer choice of objective on the day. A third measure would be to avoid wherever possible soloing on easy ground, and increase security by moving together with runners on the rope, given the potential threats from both avalanches and collapsing snow and ice.

These conclusions are supported by some initial analysis of the accident statistics noted above. More than one quarter of climbing fatalities (27%) were the result of avalanches and cornice collapse. Of those fatal accidents which occurred while on a climb, a very high proportion (76%) did so on pure snow and ice routes rather than buttresses or mixed climbs. While this may reflect in part the greater popularity of the former climbs, it lends support to my conclusion. Moreover, the majority of accidents recorded on mixed climbs were on traditional routes such as the Aonach Eagach or North East Buttress, rather than on snowed-up rock climbs. And 10% of fatalities occurred to solo climbers – surely a much higher proportion than the numbers of solo ascents being made.

This analysis of risk is a very personal one, and obviously has limitations. It relies heavily on recollection and subjective judgment. My interpretation of what constitutes a risk event may well be open to question. Other people will probably perceive risk quite differently and it is difficult to judge how similar to the average my experience might be. My sample size is relatively small, and it would certainly be interesting to compare experience with others, especially to test my initial conclusions against more data. More importantly, my approach probably under-estimates a number of risks. It is likely that I have under-estimated risk events due to avalanche danger, due to a lack of awareness at the time. Even more importantly, the analysis does not tell us anything about the risks of the 'simple slip'. A quarter of the climbing fatalities occurred, not on the climbs, but on the approach and even more so on the descent, and a significant proportion of these involved a slip or stumble on steep snow. I would welcome other views on the value of this approach.

The concept of a risk event also raises questions about the nature and role of risk. Perhaps some would maintain that risk is a necessary part of the climbing experience, and climbing would have a lesser appeal without the occasional narrow escape. I have vivid recollections of all these events, but I would not count any of them as desirable experiences, although they do have some value as learning experiences. Maybe, though, this simply reflects a changing attitude that has more to do with approaching middle age and family responsibilities...

Reflecting further on these risk events, and the level of risk I (and my companions) have accepted in the past, it seems that perhaps Scottish winter climbing does not have a particularly well developed safety ethic. When I started climbing, in the 1970s, the principal safety advice that I was given in winter was to carry a sleeping bag and a plastic bivvy bag, and to learn how to self arrest. These measures are, of

course, very important, but in my experience over the years risk minimization has rarely been the explicit factor in determining the day's objectives. The concept of climbing 'conditions' has often seemed to be more about the existence of climbable ice on the steeper sections of a route, than the safety of the snow on the easier sections or the approach or descent.

Scottish winter climbing lacks the kind of conventions which are commonplace in the Alps – the expectation that you should start and finish early; that whole sections of mountainside are out of bounds because of stonefall or icefall, and that you should always be roped on a snow-covered glacier. Such conventions cannot guarantee safety, but they exist to improve the odds in the climber's favour. However, it seems that, in Scotland, similar kinds of defensive behaviour are not commonplace. Only very recently, with the increasing emphasis being given to avalanche safety, has an explicitly defensive approach started to be advocated. There is perhaps a good case to be made for a defensive approach to be extended to all risks, not just with regard to avalanches. It should be a principal factor with regard to route choice, and perhaps guidebooks should make much more of this point. Certainly, the identification in guidebooks of accident 'hot spots' – particularly frequent avalanche sites – is a useful move in this direction.

Risk, is after all, a matter of chance. The real challenge is to play fate at the game of chance – and win. The risk can never be reduced to zero, but perhaps, on the basis of the evidence discussed here, the odds can be improved in the climber's favour while still retaining a healthy degree of challenge and commitment.

Pushing the boat out

By Iain Smart

ONE of the problems of being a slow thinker is that you are still trying to figure out what really happened in adventures that took place decades ago in your early life. This is why I am telling you here about an event that occurred in 1969 on an expedition to East Greenland, a general account of which has already appeared in the *Journal* (*SMCJ*, xxix, 161, 1970).

Although it happened in Scoresby Sound a long time ago a particular episode from that journey keeps resurfacing as a troubling memory. I hope I shall be able to articulate my problem in the next few paragraphs so that with your help I can exorcise the memory that lingers on and hang it up tidily on a hook at the back of the cupboard of past events never to trouble me again.

Scoresby Sound, as everybody knows by now, is the entrance to a great system of branching fjords on the east coast of Greenland. It is pretty near the end of the world. At the place we crossed the Sound is 25 miles wide, twice the breadth of the Minch from Uig to Scalpay. The weather at the time was gloomy. The distant southern shore was described in our reference book as the 'inhospitable' Volquart Boon's Coast. Far away we could see its black mountains striped with grey snow following this description to the letter. The black sea between us and this uninviting destination was strewn with ice floes moving with the tide, grey in the gloomy light. It was also raining.

The weather had been like this for a day or two. We were getting nowhere. We were short of time. Something had to be done – soon. We had to push the boat out and, of course, we did. The feature I find so bizarre about the whole enterprise was that the four of us were family breadwinners and parents of a number of young

children. At home we had good secure, interesting jobs and very adequate life styles. Why were we motivated to launch ourselves into this completely unnecessary and risky exercise? Why were we actually paying to be here? No law nor duty drove us to this desolate part of the earth's surface. Where was the boundary between constructive boldness and destructive folly?

We set off across these intimidating waters in a 16ft. clinker-built wooden boat towing a 10ft. inflatable, the kind without floor boards that shoogled like a jelly. The leader of this powerful argosy was, of course, Malcolm Slessor, a man who can assess risk realistically and make bold, yet competent decisions. The expedition was his concept and he had done most of the organisation. It was no easy task in those days to assemble such a lot of equipment at such a remote spot. We were, by the way, on our way to make the ascent of Mount Mikkelsen which lay some 150 miles to the south. At that time it was the highest unclimbed peak in Greenland and we were under the impression that we would gain some kind of merit if we climbed it.

So we threaded our way through the floes. Halfway across the wind really got up and grey horses charged across our path and jumped occasionally into the boats. Now comes the interesting bit. Ice floes are, in fact, miniature continents. They have a coastline with harbours and an interior of mountains and rivers. It was deemed necessary to seek haven in one of these. Remarkably, within a harbour the size of a drawing room on the lee side of an acre-sized floe all was calm. We unloaded the boats, pulled them up on the ice and pitched our tents using pitons for pegs, being careful to return half our supplies and equipment to the boats in case the floe should undergo a sudden catastrophic fracture and we had to abandon it with all speed.

Malcolm and Carlos exuded confidence, they knew all about this from years of experience. The crew was impressed and relaxed in the presence of such manifest competence. Later, it transpired that neither had actually camped before on an icefloe in a wild sea. Their *savoir-faire* was based on book-learning and the intuitive understanding that the floes were big and massive enough to support the comparatively small mass of men and equipment that we imposed on their tonnes and tonnes of frozen water. We were safe even if we were mere passengers moving to the destination of the icefloe wherever that was. We brewed up in the tent, dosed intermittently and in between times read books and engaged in urbane conversation. I remember at one stage we were trying to figure out how Avogadro arrived at the exact number of molecules in a mole of gas, at another what was the precise psychological correlate of the subjunctive mood.

In the end everything gets boring even being the frightened guests of a sullen icefloe in a wild sea 10 miles from land while engaging in bizarrely intellectual conversation. So we set off once more towards the Inhospitable Volquart Boon's Coast. The pack thickened. The rain got heavier. The icefloes, gripped by the tide, were proceeding out to sea at a rate of several knots. We had not the power to beat the system so we entered a harbour on a massive continental floe. It had its own miniature mountain ranges with rivers of meltwater flowing down through flood plains and grand canyons to the sea.

The trouble was this big floe was jostled by smaller floes and was continentally-drifting out into the wild East Greenland Sea. We had to get off and only just made it to more open water before the smaller floes ground against each other like zip-fasteners behind us. If we had stayed with the big floe we might have made one

of the great journeys of the decade because in the wide sea outside Scoresby Sound it would have entered the East Greenland current which proceeds southward at six to eight knots. We might have made it to Cape Farewell in more senses than one. Maybe we lacked something; maybe like J. Alfred Prufrock we had seen the moment of our greatness flicker, we had heard the eternal footman hold our coat and snicker – in short we were afraid.

Be that as it may, the next frightening thing that happened was when we tried to break through the barrier of pack ice to reach the Inhospitable Volquart Boon's Coast before we were swept out to sea. We entered a lead. After half-a-mile it ended. On our retreat we found a 50m high iceberg had drifted across our return path. Under the effects of wind and tide and the laws of its own buoyancy it began to teeter and metronome across our line of retreat. In its own slow heaving time the berg worked out the possibilities for its future and for ours. Fortunately, its centre of gravity remained lower than its grim sense of humour and it remained upright.

In the end we reached the Inhospitable Volquart Boon's Coast and proceeded for a 100 miles farther south along the steep ice-packed rocky shore of the 'sinister' Blossenville Coast – our reference book always chose the most chillingly appropriate adjectives. We climbed a few mountains but ice, ice and more ice prevented us from getting anywhere near the really big one we intended.

But that is all by way of being the *mise en scene*. What I wanted to discuss with you was the wild exhilaration you get when you push out the boat into the unknown, when you make the irreversible decision to go on. Once you make it you are possessed by a wild, fearful delight, a deep exhilarating satisfaction, a feeling of optimistic dread, a perverse sense of fulfilment in presenting your intellectual, emotional and physical endowment for an examination of unknown content by an examiner who is indifferent to your success or failure and who allows no resits. If you fail you are, of course, edited out of the book of life.

Nevertheless, at the actual time you would rather be there with all its irrational, unnecessary danger than walking under the stars with a dusky beauty with fireflies in her hair along some moonlit tropic beach towards your reward under a palm tree. In saner moments I often wonder why I didn't choose that option instead of ending up on the grim shores of the Inhospitable Volquart Boon's Coast and its equally minatory southern extension the Sinister Blossenville Shore. It's too late now of course. However, if I ever get the chance in some future incarnation I am going to go for the dusky maiden with fireflies in her blue-black hair and the aroma of cloves and cinnamon on her breath with, maybe, even a touch of vanilla.

Meanwhile, back at the problem we are dealing with in the here and now of the present incarnation, I believe the sort of behaviour I am describing is the result of the way our brains are configured. They seem to like exploring the edge of their envelope of possibilities. Some of us have worse brains than others in this respect. We are not content to bask comfortably in the middle of our span of capabilities. We have to find out our physical and mental limits. In biological terms this behaviour no doubt has survival value. The species is merely using individuals as expendable probes to find the boundaries of its range. The individual thinks he is being bold and enterprising because he thinks that he is making voluntary decisions and is unaware that he is being used by the lump of jelly in his head which in its turn is being used by the species to discover the limits of its physical and conceptual possibilities. Life has to send out emissaries. Those who do not return supply important negative feedback; they tell where the dead ends are.

At the risk of embarrassing you can I end by quoting a few lines from Yeats which rationalise the mental state of those embarking voluntarily on missions where the outcome is in doubt:

*I balanced all, brought all to mind,
The years to come seemed waste of breath,
A waste of breath the years behind
In balance with this life, this death.*

There, now I have got that out of my system. Thank you for your help. The species can now get on as best it can without me. I'm off to buy a ticket on a slow boat to some island in the sun to explore a more delightful mystery, one redolent of cloves and cinnamon with a touch of vanilla and lit by fireflies glowing among lustrous, blue-black tresses.

High hopes

New Zealander John Taylor sends us this note on his Mount Cook epic with a Scottish visitor.

Colin lay in his bed in Timaru Hospital south of Christchurch looking rather the worse for wear, black eyes, swollen nose, stretched knee ligaments and a bruised spleen. What should have been the holiday of a lifetime had been abruptly halted while climbing in New Zealand's premier alpine region. As the local partnering him I have been asked, with Colin's permission, to tell the story.

The Southern Alps of New Zealand form the backbone of the South Island. Lying in the path of the prevailing westerlies, known to mariners as 'The Roaring Forties'. These ranges receive heavy precipitation which results in luxuriant temperate rain forests on western slopes and extensive glaciation. There are nearly 30 peaks over 10,000ft, with mighty Mount Cook, Aoraki, 'The Cloud Piercer' to the Maori, at 12,300ft., with its mile-long summit ridge, the highest of all. Mountaineers from all over the world come to add this to their tick list. Patience, time and perhaps a little luck are required to succeed here, as the weather, while not exactly Patagonian, can be the major frustration and cause of failure. Depressions spawned around 60° south off Antarctica, with their associated cold fronts regularly sweep across the Alps. The harbingers of the front are the high cirrus clouds and strong north-west winds producing lenticulars, known locally as hogsbacks, over the mountains. As the front passes, the wind backs to the south-west, the temperature drops off and the rain turns to snow as cold air is dragged up from the Icy Continent. If some high pressure lies behind the front, and not another front! The wind backs further and generally, fine weather ensues.

It was just such a weather pattern that found us in mid-December, the austral summer, driving up to Mount Cook Village nestled at 2500ft. 10,000ft. below the summit. Fresh snow had fallen to 5000ft. or so, making the whole panorama of icy peaks, visible for miles, even more delightful to any mountain lover. "Jeez, it's big isn't it!" exclaimed Colin, to which there was no answer, just a knowing glow of pride that New Zealand's mountains rank alongside the world's greatest ranges.

Having climbed several routes on Cook I wasn't keen to repeat any of them, yet wanted to give Colin a memorable tour of the mountain, so I suggested we climb the Hooker (west) Face, traverse over the High Peak and descent the Linda Glacier

to the Grand Plateau on the eastern side. Most parties would start this route from the Empress Hut situated at 8000ft. at the head of the Hooker Glacier which is a long haul from the Village in one day. However, recent rockfall threatened the hut, debris coming to within 200ft. The face can also be climbed from the Gardiner Hut sited on Pudding Rock at about 5000ft., halfway up The Hooker Glacier although, because of its lower altitude it involves a longer summit day. My thoughts were to bowl around the terminal lake, up the moraine, up the white ice, bypass the icefall, have a wee breather at Gardiner before going a little higher and bivvying, thus making the following climbing day a little easier. Colin, however, found that the 'walk in' to Gardiner was a little more than he bargained for and we decided to stay the night, grab a few hours rest, rise at midnight and sally forth leaving the bivvy gear behind in order to travel faster – the plan being to return in the evening. Two other parties arrived later, one planning on going to the Empress the next day, the other, a guided party, intending to climb the North-West Couloir to the Low Peak, traverse the Middle Peak, over the High Peak and down the Linda.

The alarm woke us at midnight, no warden nonsense here as in Europe; you make the decisions, and we were out the door an hour later, beating the freeze. I plugged steps for hours with the guided party trailing in our wake. The fresh snow of the most recent of several fronts dramatically slowed progress, so that by first light we weren't even at the foot of the North West Couloir, the lower part of which we had to ascend to access our route. Nine in the morning saw us on a shoulder of snow, pulling on extra clothes while eyeing up our route. A strong cold south-easterly wind pluming snow off the summit giving us food for thought. We saw that we would have to descend several hundred feet and plug across the Upper Empress Shelf underneath some ice cliffs. In view of the relatively late hour, snow conditions, wind and ice cliffs we decided to traverse back into the North West Couloir and bag the Low Peak, the intention being to come back via another route for the High Peak. A few short mixed pitches led back in and to the top of the Couloir, overtaking the guided party. It's all very friendly here, none of that bad manners stuff you sometimes find in the European Alps. We steadily cramponed our way up the seemingly endless icy West Ridge to the Low Peak, into the full force of the south-easterly gale. Three o' clock, big smiles, handshakes and photographs before preparing for the descent. The Low Peak at 11,800ft. is the apex of the South Face, South Ridge and West Ridge.

The descent of the West Ridge to the top of the North West Couloir requires care as it becomes rocky, forcing a short detour onto the icy South Face. It's treacherous here, a thin layer of snow on top of very hard 50° ice. I knew what it was like from a previous ascent of the Face. It demands respect. We shortened the rope to about 15ft. and began wandering down from Low Peak, all going smoothly until we had to make our little detour where Colin began backing down, the rope tight between us and my axes solidly planted. Without warning, not really expecting anything, Colin slipped and fell. In that split second that it takes for an adventure to become a nightmare I saw my own death. I had thoughts of the axes pulling out as Colin's weight pulled me off and had visions of cartwheeling, conscious, 3000ft. down the South Face. Our luck and my axes held when the strain came onto my waist. The Grim Reaper's scythe had missed our head by inches. Hearts pumping as we negotiated ourselves onto safe ground and shelved any further thoughts of down-climbing the rocky ridge, electing instead to make three abseils into the Couloir where we unroped. A long 1500ft. descent down the Couloir mainly backing down

onto the easier ground of the glacier was all that then remained. The snow was heavy but seemed stable enough so we began down-climbing. I pulled ahead of Colin who (perhaps not surprisingly Ed.) had to attend to a call of nature and I was a lot lower near the bottom of the Couloir where a large crevasse forced a detour out to the true left, when suddenly, I heard a roar which I knew from experience was an avalanche. I looked up at the same instant to see the snow and ice debris come hurtling round the rocky corner which sheltered me. I leapt farther into its protection as it thundered past, the wind and flying snow blasting me. I took a few deep breaths and thought: "What a day, Colin must have set it off," and then I looked down. To my horror, several hundred feet below I saw my mate lying inert at the end of the debris, having been carried right over the crevasse and onto the glacier. "He's dead," was my first thought. I watched and waited for a few moments to regain my composure when thankfully I saw him sit up. He was alive! I nipped out of my shelter and rapidly began down-climbing, my senses on full alert. I reached the crevasse and still in the lee of some rocks, saw my proposed descent route swept by further avalanches caused by snow melting off the rocks above, small slides but potentially serious. It was probably some such event or a falling rock that had precipitated the bigger one that had caught Colin. Still using the rock for cover as much as possible I ran the gauntlet and it was with relief that I reached the comparative safety of the glacier.

Colin had by this time got up and limped away from the avalanche debris and when I reached him it was obvious that he was badly shaken. He thought that because of the pain in his side his ribs might be broken and his face was severely bruised and swollen. The little blood vessels in the whites of his eyes had haemorrhaged giving him a Vampire like look! "Mate! You okay? Where's your camera? Give me your camera mate, this will make the BEST photo of the trip, and I began taking photos of Colin and of the avalanche path. I can be a cold-hearted bastard at times. The dirty deed done, I next had to comb the debris looking for the plastic shell and crampon off Colin's right boot which along with his sunglasses, hammer and gloves had been ripped off during his wild tumbling ride. Unfortunately, despite a thorough search among the concrete-like blocks of compressed snow and ice I found only the hammer.

It appeared that both his knees had been badly wrenched which made it doubly awkward and painful for Colin to begin the arduous journey back to Gardiner. I short-roped him and he bumslid and hobbled slowly downwards. When the going gets tough, the tough get going eh? I estimated at least six hours back to the hut at this rate, well into the night. The guided party, who had also only ascended the Low Peak and were now descending totally unaware of our adventures, were way up at the top of the Couloir. We reasoned that we could expect help from them later. We slowly made our way down for about an hour when the silence was suddenly broken by the clatter of a helicopter flying low over our heads. Despite my confusion at seeing a chopper here in a no-fly zone late in the evening, with it's occupants wearing identical helmets peering out of the windows, I gave it little thought. We were just thankful for their appearance, here was our salvation. I mimed a broken leg to convince them of our plight, so that they would know we were in trouble. They circled once or twice then flew off back towards the Village. "No worries mate, we'll be out of here soon," I told Colin as we settled down to wait.

Half an hour or so before dark the helicopter returned with two SAR (Search and Rescue) members straddling a stretcher suspended by a strap from the underside of

the machine. With great expertise the pilot lowered his cargo onto the snow close to us. "G'day Jon!" says one of the SAR boys. Taken aback it took me a second or two to realise I knew one of our rescuers. "G'day Doug, how's it going?" It's a small world is New Zealand. With practised skill they determined what best to do for Colin and soon had him strapped into the stretcher. The chopper, which had been hovering nearby, returned when called and Colin and one of the SAR were whisked away to a flat spot farther up the glacier. This gave me a little time to talk to Doug. "Thought we were looking for two bodies mate, it's always a good result when we pick up survivors." He explained that two climbers heading back from the Empress Hut had seen the avalanche, seen two climbers in the Couloir before it and none afterwards. They then raced over to Gardiner, alerted DOC (Department of Conservation) and the police and things got moving from there. A stroke of luck for us. Doug got me into the harness required for the lift by the chopper which soon returned for us and although it was only brief it was certainly a different way of experiencing the Alps, swinging and spinning like a rag doll suspended below the helicopter flying through the cool evening air. As soon as we had disconnected ourselves, the chopper settled and the stretcher with Colin, myself and the SAR team got quickly in for the short twilight flight back to the Village. Cotton wool clouds tumbled gently over Baker Saddle, the ghostly blue peaks of the Alps holding back the carpet of clouds to the west as the last yellow rays of light sank into the Tasman Sea. It was with a pang of regret that I realised that Colin couldn't see all this beauty and that his climbing holiday was at an end.

Postscript: About six months later I spent a week with a nearly fully recovered Colin enjoying some delightful rockclimbing in that northern 'God's Own,' Scotland. In Glencoe, Ben Nevis, Torridon and Reiff. And the photos? Well they were the best of the lot after all.

Once and future dreams

By Robin N. Campbell

THINGS fall apart, as the poet said. In my case it was first of all the back, knackered by some pointless gardening exertions when I'd just passed 40. Then lately, a tiresome form of rheumatism, usually reserved for older parties. I couldn't now get up a V. Diff., or anything that included a chimney or a mantelshelf, or even a fireplace. So what once were goals, of diminishing probability certainly, have now become mere old man's fantasies, and thought of them no longer causes activity or enthusiasm but only disappointment and regret.

The first was Cir Mhor's North-east Face. A tough place to go to, requiring a base at Sannox, or a very long walk from Glen Rosa. Then it's cool and dark all day, and the rocks, poor in quality and rich in grass, are usually wet. But the face has a noble appearance and sufficient size to give it a definite grandeur, found elsewhere here only on Skye or Ben Nevis.

It was popular with our pioneers. The two Willies, Naismith and Douglas, both poked around to little effect, assisted by James Maclay and Gilbert Thomson. But Douglas took a terrific photograph of it from Ceum na Caillich in 1894. Thomson published a diagram based on this photograph (drawn by Naismith) and described the great labour of hauling up the enormous camera.¹ No doubt this helped John Bell to complete his wonderful portmanteau route of B-C Rib, Bow Window Cave and

Bell's Groove, so well described in Chapter 15 of Bill Murray's *Mountaineering in Scotland*.²

I stumbled on this photograph in the early days of my work as apprentice to Geoff Dutton and it has haunted me ever since. Although the Lower Face below A Gully is as badly undercut as the West Buttress of Clogwyn du'r Arddu, one can see perhaps a line or two up it, then across the gully there is a breathtaking scimitar groove up to a higher terrace, then a right traverse onto and up a beautiful cuneiform ridge to finish on the shoulder of the peak. Neil MacNiven and I found a reasonable route up the Lower Face in 1961. We called it Nor'easter Slabs. This was once 'a fascinating route' (W. M. M. Wallace) but is now 'Not recommended' (G. E. Little)! Paul Brian and I struggled to find the 'scimitar' groove in 1965, but succeeded only in getting lost. My last effort was around 1971, when Les Brown and I tried to get off the ground on a more promising line on the Lower Face, and failed. Les found the place utterly detestable and the granite rocks unfathomable. In the meantime, Ian Rowe had seen the photograph and enjoyed a two-day ascent of Silo, an intrepid ascent which included the final pitches of the cuneiform ridge. Unfortunately, everything below this was as appalling as the name suggests.

The second was Ossian's Cave. Again, an old photograph, this one by George Abraham, first sparked the idea. Actually, ideas. For two routes claimed attention. The left-hand wall was a project for many and even acquired a name before its ascent: Abortion Wall, I'm not sure quite why. Dave Bathgate and Arthur Ewing eventually climbed it, but copped out and called it Flip-out. But it was the right-hand rib – steep, white and flaky – that was the subject of my daydreams. Climb it, then traverse left along a crack above the roof of the cave to reach the corner-crack that soars from its apex. The North Face Girdle crossed the base of the rib, and on the first traverse in 1962 I saw that the rib would be possible. Then Dougal Haston and I climbed the rib in 1963 on a cold October day and flinched away from the traverse, going awkwardly right instead across the rib into easy ground. We named it Kuf, a curse spelled backwards, to express our feelings. Haston shared the dream, and worked it into his daft novel *Calculated Risk*. But neither one of us felt brave enough to go back there.

The third dream came the closest. No photograph this time, but a thing I looked at again and again when I took my morning pee outside the CIC Hut – a place which I used to enjoy visiting before we Disneyfied it with white paint, orange gas and black wind. The Comb had routes on either flank, but steep ribs defined a beguiling line of corners right up the middle of the thing. Unfortunately, a vertical band 200ft. high spans the crag below these corners and bars access to them. Or it used to do. Now some villain has made his way across the deep crack defining the upper edge of the band from the left – with a little help from enormous friends. But the vertical band relents a little at the left side and this break is approached by a long curving groove reaching right to the bottom of the crag. My scheme was to climb this groove to a point about 50ft. below the broad ledge at the base of the Tower Face route, then break right and up across the band, which is not too steep just there, and into the upper groove line.

I had a look at it in 1970 with Fred Harper. I'd decided to worry about the bottom groove later and to test the barrier pitch across the band first. So we began at the broad halfway ledge and dropped down for a belay. I got on to the band pitch OK and managed a few moves, but it was obviously going to be a long back and forth struggle at best and Fred absolutely hated the place. It's got this creepy problem: each move that you make to the right sharply increases the amount of vertical band

below you, so that after an irreversible move you're looking at an endless abseil to get off. Besides, Fred was desperate to climb Centurion instead, so we gave up and went off to embellish his CV.

In 1972 I went back there with Jimmy Marshall and tried to get into the bottom groove, which is miserable-looking at its base. I had the idea that if I could get up a subsidiary groove to the left I could traverse, or perhaps tension-traverse across to the main groove. I got up the subsidiary groove all right with a bit of a heave, but only into a very nasty dead end. You can still find a 30-year-old sling there, I'm sure. So we scrambled around the side up to the big ledge and Jimmy belayed just below it, while I descended to the break in the band and plugged away back and forth. I very nearly had it, but just couldn't make the key move. The best I ever did at the sharp end was about 5b, so nowadays it should be a pushover. Jimmy didn't like the look of the place any better than Fred, and passed. His idea – shame on him – was to peg across the top-edge crack with monster bongs or wedges, just like naughty Mr Cave.

These three dreams are still intact, waiting for someone else to fulfil them, nearly 40 years on. Perhaps we shouldn't find this so surprising. After all, in the 1890s attempts were made to climb Centurion and on Trilleachan Slabs (most likely) the line of Hammer. And 60 years went by before these dreams became reality. It is a comfort in this breakneck age, that some things come together slowly.

1. See 'Cir Mhor', SMCJ 1894, iii, 212ff.

2. Our current guidebook annotates the route as 'an impressive lead by the good Dr. Bell', repeating a mistake still made far too often. John H. Bell, a Glasgow engineer, flourished long before Dr. James Horst Brunnerman Bell, and was a much better climber. It is his great misfortune to have been systematically mistaken for his 1930s Doppelgänger by the clods who edit our Journal and Guidebooks.

The unspoken menace

By H. M. Brown

YEARS ago, camping with a school party in Skye (where the midges are flying piranhas) I had one chuckle on this very un-funny subject. A boy, scrambling into his tent, nearly placed a knee on a butterwort growing in the entrance. His mate yelled out: "Dinna bash yon! It eats midges."

Butterworts are an early-warning system in fact. They seem to crawl out of the wet world of spring like straying starfish, tiny yellow stars, which, when full-grown, lay out sticky leaves to trap midges from which they obtain sustenance. The delicate sundews likewise find midges edible. These are not an endangered flower species. They are the only living creature who might have a good word to say about midges.

A century or two ago, in the days of extreme religious bigotry, persecution and war, a minister who was forced on a congregation in the North West Highlands against the wishes of the local people, was grabbed by the mob, stripped and tied to a tree – and left to the midges. I don't suppose he'd be singing their praises.

My first encounter with midges was as a young teenager biking and hiking over a summer in the north. Coming down to Kylesku I took shelter with the roadmen who were tarring the road (now replaced by a graceful bridge) in a canvas-covered hut where a peat fire and strong tobacco were also used in self-defence. Their contract allowed time off when the midges were extra bad. They laughed at my round tin of protective cream. Remember DIMP?

Somebody at that period, just after the war, received a grant to research all about midges and find a way of countering their seasonal menace. I rather think they failed. Have we advanced at all I wonder since the days of applying oil of citronella? Apart from emigration nothing seems to work. Have historians considered that midges rather than sheep are responsible for the Highland Clearances?

To be serious, I wonder if the Clearances have had an effect on the midge population. In all my reading of historical accounts I've found few mentions of the menace. Burt, who was involved in road-building in the Highlands in the 18th century and whose letters home to England fill two volumes, says little. Bonnie Prince Charlie in his wanderings after Culloden certainly had a few unpleasant encounters and there's an early imprecation recorded that wishes the curse of 'midges and the Campbells' on an enemy. But one would expect much, much more if they were as bad as they can be today. Perhaps there is a connection between the land degradation that has gone on since people (and their farming) were removed. Research is still needed.

One of my school parties was dropped off in Glen Etive when a strong wind was blowing and we pitched our tents in the shelter of the *Rhododendron ponticum* that is taking over that glen. Then the wind dropped in the middle of the night and we fought a losing battle against the midges that swarmed out of the jungle. Everything (including iodine) was smeared on faces and hands in the hope of protection but with no effect. I can recall spoonfuls of porridge turning grey with a midge coating between plate and mouth. We fled over a high pass (reversing an escape route from the massacre of Glen Coe) to the sanctuary of the youth hostel. They took some persuading before allowing us in, being sure our yellow faces indicated some dire infectious disease.

We had another camp on Mull where our tents stood on a breezy knoll by a deep gorge.

The gash of the gorge made an area of still air and in it the midges clouded the evening light, millions of them, blood-thirsty millions. We shuddered at the thought of the wind dropping. You could thrust an arm into this porridge of midges and instantly, it was furred over with the devils; withdraw the arm and they rapidly blew off. The boys were quite aware of the height of Mull's Ben More (or Ben Nevis) so took no comfort in a quote that midges did not like strong sunshine or strong wind, and are never found above 10,000ft., nor did they react to the factual, rather than sexist, statement that it is only the female of *Culicoides impunctatus* that bites.

To be accurate they are not biting, they are stabbing and sawing with chain-saw efficiency. Look at a midge through a strong magnifier and this creature, the size of a pinhead, is seen to have a very efficient mouth which can first saw into the epidermis and then form a tube to suck out the blood. That's when we notice them and take evasive action. Scientists, in the interests of research have allowed their biting to continue – 3000 bites an hour is the going rate.

Sometime in May their presence becomes noted again. Out come the female survivors from hibernation to lay eggs. Their progeny, however, require blood before laying so, from about the third week in May, through to the killing autumn frosts, endless generations of the cannibals are with us. They enjoy a six-month open season on humans. If you think Scotland is bad, let me mention Iceland's position – and I am not joking.

When I saw grazing Icelandic cows belted with trusses to hold up their udders I questioned a farmer to find the reason. It was midges. Icelandic midges live and die in such numbers that all through summer successive layers fertilise the pastures with the nitrogen-rich dead. The cows eat the resulting lush grass – so their udders distend and have to be held off the ground by trusses!

Maybe we should have more cattle in the glens (as once there were of course) and, is this linked to there being few or no midges once out of the Highlands into the agriculturally rich Lowlands of Scotland? There are still more questions than answers. In the dreadful summer past I asked questions enough, on one occasion about my own sanity. I got caught.

After supper one night I set off into the hills above Kinlochhourn (the loch of Hell) hoping to camp high in order to climb a hill and take some photographs and still be down again to meet someone at 10 o'clock. The track up has been described as the steepest in Scotland and an hour later, at the top, I was wringing with sweat. Even a pause was lethal: the midges were man-eaters. I struggled on over the moor with a dedicated rain adding to the misery. Pitching was a nightmare.

The car-safe tourist never experiences anything like this. Imagine a fine spray in a shower then change every tiny droplet into a midge. There is even a tactile similarity. I itched and swiped and ran away again and again. Even when the tent was pitched they swarmed in. I lit a coil (intended for outdoors) so gagged and sweated in my coffin, the tiny tent not even allowing me to sit up. The night would be a long, unpleasant, survival exercise, so practising what I preach, that hill doings should be fun (and not just in retrospect), I fled. Perhaps it took two minutes to strike the tent. By then arms and legs were corrugated with the lumps of hundreds of bites.

I just made it back to my camping car in the last light. My camping car is midge-proof, at least it is now, for the mosquito netting for the ventilators which came with it originally had to be replaced with a finer mesh. On its first meeting with midges I'd watched in horror as the mighty midgets struggled through the netting, thirsting for my blood. It was like something out of Hitchcock – *The Birds?* The tourist is not given a health warning about midges. The glossy package only shows perfection as a rule. Midges remain an unspoken menace whereas midge-warnings should be broadcast like pollen counts. And, as if midges were not enough, there are the clegs (horseflies) and the ticks. We have a somewhat flawed perfection.

Deer, cattle and horses suffer from midges too. More surprisingly so do some caterpillars, butterflies, moths and dragonflies and one eastern species takes its meal from blood-satiated mosquitoes. The males remain vegetarian, their food coming from nectar and plant juices. There are about 34 species of biting midge in Scotland (world-wide there are 900!) but the worst is our enemy *C. impunctatus*. The first published study dates to 1713, the work of an Essex minister, who declared the devils were endued with spears. Anyone wanting to know more about midges (on the 'know thine enemy' theory) should find a copy of George Hendry's *Midges in Scotland*, AUP 1989. It was a minor best seller. Do you wonder why?

As I started with a Skye camp story, I'll finish with another. We were entombed in our tents while the midge hordes whined without. Obviously, the tents were not midge-proof for I heard a plaintive voice ask: "Whit can ah dae? Whit can ah dae? The midges is drivin me daft," to which came a calm suggestion: "Och Jock, open the door an let them oot."

THE BOHUNTIN TREASURES

MANY of our readers will be aware of the rather short-lived Scottish Mountaineering Museum that was, for a time, housed next to the White Corries Chair Lift in Glencoe. Fewer, I suspect, will know that the finest collection of mountaineering artefacts anywhere in the country, is to be found at the home of Mick Tighe author of this issue's article on the history of guiding in Scotland.

On visiting Mick in early January this year at his home at Bohuntin, Roybridge to research that article, I was taken into a spacious stone built outhouse to, as he put it: "Have a quick look at this." What I found was a virtual Aladdin's cave of climbing history.

The first item that takes your eye, as you climb the stairs to the spacious loft, is the pale green/grey oxygen cylinders strapped to an alloy frame. You know you've seen them somewhere before but it's only when Mick explains that they are the original oxygen cylinders from the successful 1953 Everest expedition that the penny drops and you see again the grainy newsreels of Hillary and Tenzing as they set off on their final push. This particular set was used by Mike Westmacott.

Other prize exhibits include a set of prototype ice-daggers used by John Cunningham, and Tom Patey's peg hammer which he had with him the day he died in an abseiling accident on The Maiden sea stack off the Sutherland coast. Mick also showed me a home-made ice-axe apparently fashioned in John Brown's shipyard on the Clyde, rather wobbly it has to be said, but enthusiasm, drive and the quest for adventure are written all over it. Still on axes, and there are many, we all know that Chouinard and McInnes are accredited with bringing us the short axes and hammers which heralded the ice climbing revolution of the early Seventies. Mick however throws a bit of a spanner in the works when he produces a very short axe with a drooped pick which he dates from as far back as the early 1900s! (With the right marketing man things could have been so different!)

I was left, like a wee laddie in a toy shop, to browse freely through everything from snowshoes and sledges to the forerunner of modern protection, drilled-out engineering nuts threaded onto rope slings. However, Mick soon interrupted my wanderings through climbing history and, with a twinkle in his eye, asked me if it was correct that: "You lot use Raeburn's axe as some sort of presidential insignia?" When I replied in the affirmative he handed me an altimeter encased in brass and leather with the name – Ah you're ahead of me, 'H. Raeburn' embossed thereon. "It really would have to be an offer I couldn't refuse," he said with a smile as he quickly regained possession of this treasure and I got the distinct impression that if this item ever disappears the Roybridge 'Flying Squad' will be handed the SMC members list and told to get on with it!

This is a truly wonderful collection and as Mick told me: "Stuff just keeps arriving." He is very aware of the importance of this archive and would ideally like to see it properly catalogued and displayed in a suitable location with public access. This, however, takes time and Mick is not quite ready to hang up his boots just yet, on a wall, in a display case or anywhere else.

Charlie J. Orr.

Editor's note: It is my intention to keep in touch with developments here and I hope to do a fuller article on this collection at some time in the future.

A mountaineer's guide to the Roscoe Bjerge:

The delectable Arctic playground

By Malcolm Slessor

IN THE old days an explorer could give names of his own choosing to geographical features. I well remember Iain Smart, then a lowly lecturer, naming some cape on the East Greenland coast 'Dundee promotions board point', which no doubt featured prominently in the expedition report and was channelled to the right body. Now that Greenland is independent, none of that is possible.

In 1822 the whaling captain, William Scoresby, had no such problems. He named the huge fjord on the East Greenland coast at 70°N after himself (now Kangertitivaq), and the coast to the north after his home port, Liverpool. The jagged peaks inland he called after his patron, Roscoe. In this century Danish surveyors made a remarkably good 1:250,000 map of these wonderful hills, and added Danish names to the principal tops and glaciers. The purpose of this article is to help the visiting mountaineer to know what has been done and to get around, and to this end I have invented a few new names that will never appear on an official Greenland map. New names given in italics in this article are indicated on the map in full or by the abbreviations noted in this text.

The Roscoe Bjerge are a delectable group of red granite spires lying between 70° 30'N and 70° 50'N set among modest glaciers that run down to the Arctic Ocean. However, the mountaineering interest is restricted to a mere 10 km north to south. These only are described here and appear on the larger scale of the two maps. The highest peak, Tvillingerne (the twins) (TV) 1430m was first ascended in August 1972 by myself and Peter Mould of the Climbers Club from the east by a 600m ridge of impeccable rock (AD). This rose from an unnamed glacier, which flowed south to join the Aage Neilsens Glacier. So let's now call it the *South Nielsens Glacier*. In April 1997 our base camp was on the north side of the Hans Glacier (sometimes called the Heks disagreement in the surveyor's camp?) at 500m, below the massif of the Korsbjerg, 1400m (K). This glacier bifurcates at about 400m to an unnamed branch logically to be called the *South Hans Glacier*. At its entrance to the north is a bristly summit, whose delicate summit block remains inviolate, and the peak therefore unnamed.

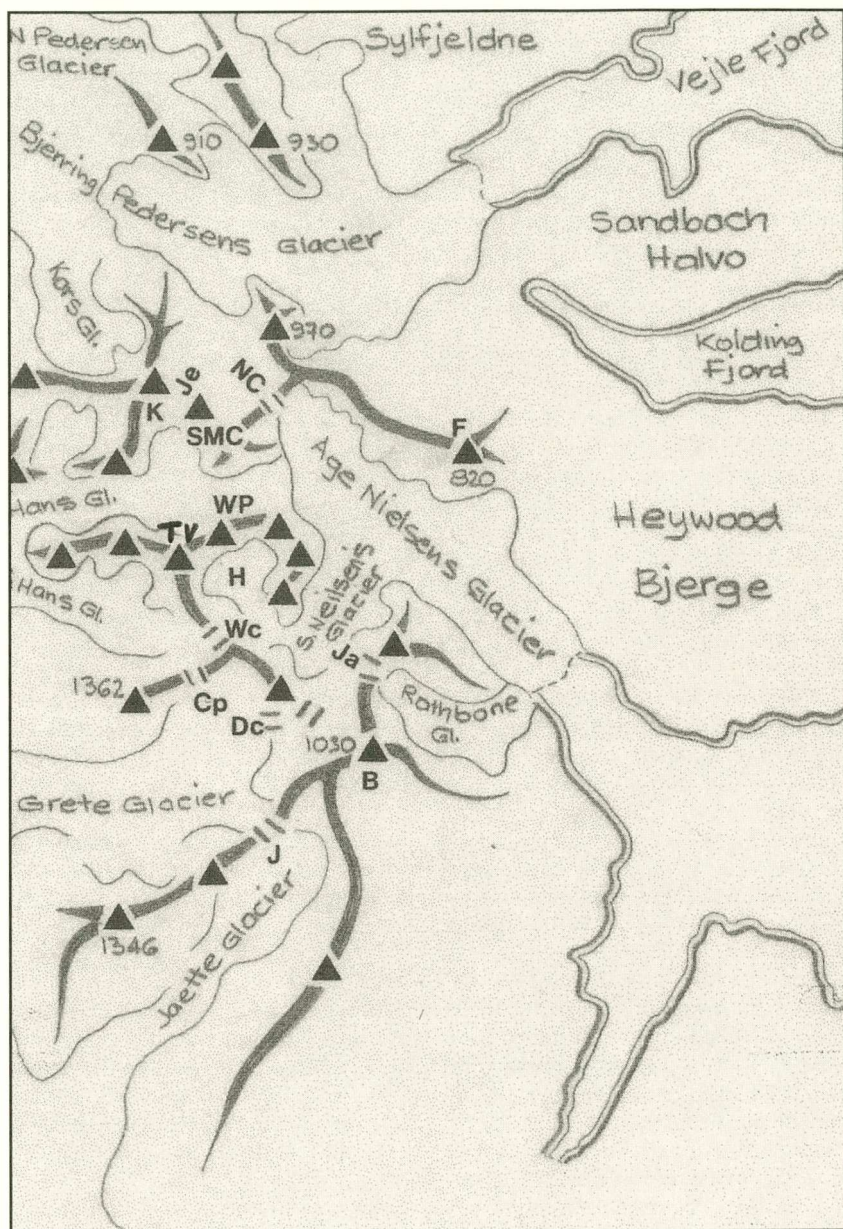
Tvillingerne lies at the head of the South Hans. A glacier 2 km to the north-east leads to a steep snow col *West col*, (Wc) from which a scramble leads to the summit tower. First winter ascent by Charlie Orr, Allan Petit and Gerry Rooney, 1997. Lying north of *West col* is a glacier bay and rock cirque explored by the 1997 SMC party. It is easily gained from the *South Nielsens* by a modest icefall. Let's call it the *Hidden Glacier* (H), as it curls out of sight from below. From Hidden glacier a steep couloir rises to *West col*.

If one continues up the *South Hans* one reaches a narrow defile at about 600m bounded by the south ridge of Tvillingerne and the north ridge of point 1362m. This col, which leads to the Grete Glacier, came to be known as the *Col de Pisse* (Cp).

The main Hans Glacier rises gently from the tundra that girds the shores of Hurry Fjord on the east side of this range. Ascending the glacier, there are two bays one each to east and west of Point 1060m (ascended). The first leads eventually to a col that drops down (skiable) to the middle reaches of the Bjerring Pedersens Glacier. The upper bay leads to a large snow field, whose steep (but skiable) east flank rises to the massif of Korsbjerg (K), 1400m. The accompanying photo was taken from close to that summit, looking south.



Roscoe Bjerge.



Large-scale of inset on opposite page.

If one continues up the Hans one reaches a broad easy col (*Hans Col*) with an entrancing view beyond to the distant arctic pack ice. A short easy icefall links it with the Aage Neilsens Glacier. In between, however, and not apparent on the 1:250,000 map is an impressive bay rising to *Jeanette's Col* (J), distinguished by a steep massif tower to the north-east. From here a spiky ridge bounds the east side of the bay. Its highest point was first climbed by the 1997 SMC expedition from the north (see the S-couloir below). The Pedersens Glacier side of *Jeanette's* is a steep highly-crevassed ice-fall. It is probably skiable by a skilled party.

Retreating 100 m lower into the bay, a steep couloir on the west brings one on to the top of the Korsbjerg massif. The photo, looking south, depicts its gentle culmination. The peak on the left-hand side *Windy Peak*, (WP) was climbed from the *Hans Col* which lies out of view below the foreground rock spire. Also in this picture on the extreme left is the west ridge of Twillingerne beyond the *West Col* (WC).

Neilsens Col (NC) between Bjerring Pedersens and the Aage Neilsens is broad and smooth, with steep rock walls to either side. A snow slope rises to the south to a 600m face, penetrated by an S-shaped couloir, The S-couloir. Its ascent is simply a long tramp in winter, but the view seawards is quite incredible. The summit is easily gained from here. It is just a shade lower than Korsbjerg. It had no name and deserves one. What about *SMC Peak*? (SMC).

Having crossed the *Nielsens Col* (N) we placed a camp on the Aage Neilsens just to the south of point 820m. We all managed to squeeze onto that narrow summit, hence the name *Friendship Peak*. (F) Fabulous viewpoint. Its east face is sheer for about 700m

A descent of the Aage Neilsens to the sea at Gletscherbugt allows one to cross the icefront southwards on sea-ice to gain a glacier rising first south-west then west. One might call it *Rathbone Glacier* as the view of this island dominates the scene. At its head is an easy col *Jane's Col* (Ja) that drops down to the *South Neilsens*. Fine rocks on all sides.

On the west side, the range descends into gentle tundra (mosquito-infested in summer), leading to the eastern shores of Hurry Fjord, 5km wide, where on the west side lies Constable Point, an air strip where one may hire a helicopter. There are services here such as food, bed and telephone together with jet fuel (useable in Primus stoves).

Opposite Constable Point at 70° 45'N Sodal (valley of lochs) rises to a snow plateau: the source of the Bjerring Pederson Glacier that flows east to the Liverpool Coast at Vejle Fjord. Our camp at 600m was below a steep, red peak, Point 810m *Base Peak*. This was easily climbed by following the glaciers on either side to an easy col. However, a direct ascent would make a good climb. To the north lie several undistinguished summits gained by the gentle *North Pedersens Glacier* (NP). A more worthy summit, separated by a very deep valley to the north is Point 1282m, ascended by Espen and Heidi Nordahl: *Norwegian Peak*.

From *Base Peak* and our camp we could see Korsbjerg 4km across the Pedersens. In superb surroundings the glacier curves eastward, then south to its impressive north wall. It is breached in one place by a 300m ice couloir (Slessor Couloir, II,) climbed by our party. It would seem sensible to call this the *Kors Glacier*. Much rock-climbing is possible in this arena.

All around this area there are delectable rock faces, offering routes of 300-500m, ending often in improbably narrow summits

Turning south now, the *South Neilsens* and the Grete Glaciers meet at a col at

about 700m, that we called *Desperation Col* (DC) on account of the exhausted state of one member of the party. Due south of the *South Nielsens* is a col joining it to the Jaette Glacier. Above and to the east rises Point 1030m, *Bill's Peak*. (B). The head of the Grete is a superb situation with blades of rock filling the northern horizon like some gigantic comb. There is a convenient, but windy, platform just to its south-west, which we aptly called Cold Comfort Camp.

The Grete is linked to the Jaette by the straight-forward *Jaette Col* (JC). To its south lies Kaernphojen, 1200m, ascended (1999) by various couloirs from the east, but offering a high vertical west face – poor rock here. On the east side of the Jaette lies Trefoden. It made an interesting steep ski descent.

The Jaette leads down gently southwards to Scoresby Sund, and with a further 3-4 hours walk, to the Inuit settlement previously of that name but now known as Ittoqqortoormiit, where every imaginable luxury is to be had.

The Roscoe Bjerge offers delightful rockclimbing in summer and superb ski mountaineering in spring. Skis are essential in spring, and useful in summer. Access is by air (scheduled or personal charter) from Iceland via Constable Point. Call Nonitravel: nonnitra@est.is. One can air freight foods and equipment in advance. Map: Scoresbysund 1:250,000: printed in Denmark by Laursen Tonder.

The 14th International Festival of Mountaineering Literature

By Charlie J. Orr

The 14th International Festival of Mountaineering Literature organised by climber, writer, academic and all round good guy, Terry Gifford, was held as usual at the Bretton Hall campus of Leeds University in November last year. The title that Terry chose for the Festival was 'O Canada' with suitable apologies being made to the Sixties pop icon Joni Mitchell.

I am aware that only a select handful of readers of this Journal (Robin Campbell and myself, any more out there?) have ventured across the Border to attend this annual bash of the mountaineering literati. So, what's it like? Well firstly, it's very well attended and with 300 or so arriving in the auditorium one can spend an interesting half-hour or so putting faces to names that you've only read in the past. Mainstays of that Seventies Bible, *The Games Climbers Play*, Harold Drasdo and Ian McNaught-Davis were there as was the editor of that revered work, and many such since, Ken Wilson, along with many other 'names' and that was just in the audience.

Why 'O Canada'? Well mainly because Canadian climber and writer Chic Scott was the Festival's star turn using it as a platform to launch his book, *Pushing The Limits: The Story of Canadian Mountaineering*. Chic's illustrated talk focussed on the British/Scottish contribution to the climbing history of Canada from Norman Collie to Doug Scott taking in Ian Rowe, Bugs McKeith and many others on the way.

The Festival is the venue for announcing the winner of the annual Boardman/Tasker award in memory of Pete Boardman and Joe Tasker and this year the award was announced by the chairman of the judging panel – poet, climber and mother Kathleen Jamie, who is herself no stranger to literary accolades. In declaring the husband and wife team of Peter and Leni Gillman this year's winners for their ground-breaking work on the life of George Leigh Mallory, *The Wildest Dream*, Jamie had much to say on the 'Inner lives' of climbers which was very pertinent to the way the Gillmans had handled their subject.

In the staged interview that followed Graham Hoyland, great grandson of Howard

Somerville and the driving force behind the recent expedition which found Mallory's body, spoke with the authors about their research and aims in writing the book. It was obvious that this was no jumping on the sensationalist bandwagon but a subtle and thoughtful examination of the man, his dreams, his passions, in short his 'inner life.' During their exhaustive research the Gillmans unearthed letters confirming that their subject had had a homosexual affair while at Cambridge and the fact that this was not sensationalised but sensitively treated as simply yet another facet of that 'inner life' bears testimony to this. They even took time to stress that the homo-erotic image of Mallory on the front cover of the American edition and now on the British paper back was a decision made by the publishers and not by themselves.

The Canadian theme was continued by Sid Marty, the very epitome of a 'Mountain Man,' big and hairy, but surprisingly sensitive as writer, singer, poet and humorist. He gave readings from his latest poetry collection, *Sky Humour*, and his award-winning short stories, *Switchbacks*, which took the award for Mountaineering Literature at the Banff Mountain Book Festival.

Al Alvarez, yet another face from *The Games Climbers Play* gave us his take on Cherry-Garrard's *The Worst Journey In The World* as a great work of literature. In an extremely laid-back style, bordering at times on that of a stand-up comic, he recounted the rigours of Antarctic adventure, concluding with a statement that we all probably identify with at some level or other, that adventures such as these are undertaken not so much "because they are there, but because we are here". Here in the hustle and bustle, the pressures of day-to-day living. If the Antarctic or climbing or similar activity formed an escape hatch in the relative peace and calm of Cherry-Garrard's day how much more apt is the analogy today?

Steve Bell must have been expecting more than he got in the way of controversy when he talked on his book, *The Seven Summits*, and his personal involvement in the ultimate 'tick list' of the highest mountains on the seven continents of the world. The audience was surprisingly quiet on the issues this raises and even his rather casual, perhaps bordering on the callous, reference to the body of Hannelore Schmatz which lies high on Everest as being "a commonly seen feature on the mountain" failed to prompt discussion.

Tony Smythe who has worked with Ken Wilson at Baton Wicks to produce the omnibus, *Frank Smythe – The Six Alpine/Himalayan Climbing Books*, gave the audience an insight into his own 'inner life' when he talked of what would now probably be called the 'dysfunctional relationship' he had with his father because of his putting climbing before his wife and family.

One of the high notes of the day didn't involve literature at all. During a break in the proceedings the audience had the opportunity to view a well-presented exhibition of chalk drawings by John Coulton – *The Mountain Seen*. Covering subjects from the Lakes to the Himalaya by way of Scotland one would hope that he did a brisk trade in these excellent works which he offered for sale both in print and original form.

This is by no means a full account of proceedings at the Festival, but hopefully, it gives a flavour of what it's all about. Now in its 15th year, the success of the formula speaks for itself and the arrangements for the 2001 version are well under way.

Note: I am delighted at having been able to secure the services of Terry Gifford as one of the judges for the annual W. H. Murray Literary Prize. He was involved in this year's judgment and I am very appreciative of his finding time to undertake this work in what must be a busy schedule. (*Hon. Ed.*)

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Dear Editor,

I AM writing this letter in the hope that you will, with consideration to the respect of freedom of speech, print it for anyone who is interested in the style of new winter route recording to read.

I, as people will know, have climbed some of the more modern mixed routes in Scotland and when recording routes have always made an effort to be honest and clear about how and what style etc. was used when climbing these routes. The focus of this letter lies with the somewhat jaded state of Scottish winter new route recording. This is not a put-down, just a plain truth which some may well wish to avoid. I have noticed in my short career, with increasing regularity, the low standard applied to the recording of certain new winter routes. A prime example of this can be seen in the route description for the route Mort IX.9 on Lochnagar, which I believe is the most serious mixed route in Scotland. I have climbed the first and second pitches and most of the third. I also have an excellent knowledge of this route and the unfair way in which it has been recorded. Certain facts which would prove to be very important to any potential ascensionist have been blatantly omitted.

During my attempt on Mort there were two pieces of *in situ* gear above the roof on the second pitch. These were clipped by me and made some difference to the difficulty of the route. Also higher up on this second pitch an extremely important piece of gear was placed on the lead by myself. It was a hex hammered in so hard my second could not remove it when following the pitch. I asked my second not to remove the two pieces above the roof as they were already there and, having clipped them, I felt I had no right to remove them. As for the third piece, it was placed above a very serious run-out and my second could not physically remove it even on a tight rope. After roughly 30 minutes of trying to remove it he left it in place. I find it hard to believe it fell out of it's own accord or was not there when your New Routes Editor Andy Nisbet climbed it seven days later, as he himself claims.

On the third pitch, three pieces were left *in situ* two of which were placed by myself on the lead and the two pieces placed high on this pitch were not easily placed. The New Routes Editor's ascent was a mere seven days later and he and his partner used the gear on their successful ascent, which would not have been a problem had they not then omitted to mention even one of these pieces in their route description. I find it very disheartening that out of six pieces of *in situ* gear on a route of this stature and seriousness, nothing was said. This is not to mention the fact that the Editor fell on to the highest runner on the third pitch; lowered down to the belay at the bottom of that pitch, and then let his partner take over the lead! (pulling through the rope I assume!) At least a note would have been in order but nothing not a line. The Editor even goes as far as implying that a climber has gone on to the most serious route in Scotland in the intervening seven days and removed the *in situ* gear on the second pitch but not the third. Please! Also, having spoken to the climber in question, I know his attempt was several seasons earlier and that he had not gone back near it since.

This brings me back to my own route recording. Everything that is of any

importance is recorded by me from the falls I take to the yo-yos used and yet I'm berated for this style, which in truth I do not mind as at least I am being honest. I climbed a route to the right of Mort called Rolling Thunder and this somewhat serious route has roughly half-a-page of information in New Climbs, from the number of falls to the practising of some moves on a tight rope, whereas Mort has roughly two lines and is the most serious route I have ever been on. For example, a fall high on the crux would result in serious injury or even death. The point is that routes of this nature must be recorded honestly if we are to have any kind of progression in winter climbing styles and ethics.

I think it would be beneficial to Scottish winter climbing and the future of routes to at least have some guidelines to help with route recording. In the future, where style becomes more important due to our limited resources, we can no longer invent but only refine and that is progress. We certainly will not see any progress until honest recording of routes triumphs and the old days are firmly left behind.

I realise that what I have to say might not be to everyone's taste but at least I will make the effort to say something instead of letting it slip and see Scottish winter climbing become just another egotistical competition where honesty takes second place to kudos. I must also make it clear that the ascent of Mort is a very impressive achievement in the mental progression of hard winter climbing and that cannot be taken away from the ascensionists, however, the lack of details has caused some concern among other climbers not just myself.

Hopefully, the answers to these questions will put an end to all the speculation of just how Mort was climbed.

Alan Mullin.

Dear Editor,

ALAN MULLIN in his letter raises concern over the reporting of new routes and particularly the reporting of one, Mort, a summer rock route that was climbed for the first time in winter by myself, Andy Nisbet and Dave McGimpsey on Saturday, January 15, 2000. Alan had tried this route previously and states on several occasions that there were only seven days between the two attempts. Alan's attempt with Guy Robertson occurred on December 6, 1999 a full month before with the Christmas and New Year holiday period in between and some excellent conditions on Lochnagar for the first two weeks of January.

Alan takes particular exception to the two-line entry for the route in the new routes section of last year's Journal. Such entries are common, indeed almost traditional in Scotland. The original description for Centurion (*SMCJ* 1986) is four lines and gives similar details to Mort. The original description for Guerdon Grooves (*SMCJ* 1984) is less than a line.

Towards the end of his letter he makes a plea for guidelines for the recording of new routes. The description given (written by Andy) is admittedly brief, but is factual, recording the date, suggested grade (IX,9) and allowing the route to be found by those with a knowledge of the cliff or a current guide. The description as it stands in the Journal informs people to go to the left of the rib on pitch two. This is the critical key to doing the route in winter. The seriousness of the route may be

gauged from the grade. The description refrains from over-emotive sentiment which may be added in a lengthier description if necessary when the next edition of the guide is published.

The two previous attempts on the line by Andy and myself had been mentioned in the history section of the current Cairngorms guide. An article published in *High* (January 2001), which Alan is evidently aware of, gave a brief history of these two attempts and acknowledges others that were known about at the time, as well as a fairly lengthy description of the actual ascent itself.

At this level of climbing anyone wishing to repeat such routes from the Journal has very probably gained knowledge of them from others, possibly even the first ascentionist. Alan had gained considerable information on the line prior to his attempt, having carefully studied the cliff through binoculars and thoroughly interrogated both myself and Andy about the route over previous years.

While I agree we should not omit significant details that would prevent a subsequent on-sight ascent being undertaken, e.g. none reporting of tension move, rests etc. or the removal of critical *in situ* protection, this was not the case in this instance. The ascent went smoothly and without incident, bar two falls by Andy on the final pitch. Inclusion of information on the two falls would be unnecessary to an on-sight ascent as would information about the *in situ* gear. It would be possible to place all the protection on lead without recourse to axe rests, as indeed this ascent and the attempt in 1992 proved, the *in situ* gear present on the route was therefore not mentioned in the Journal description.

Alan mentions several pieces of *in situ* gear, specifically 'an extremely important piece' higher up the second pitch. This piece of gear was not found by myself or Andy and Dave during our ascent of Mort, it may no longer be there or has been covered by snow/ice – whichever, it played no part in our ascent.

Of the six pieces of *in situ* gear mentioned by Alan it would appear the majority are the legacy of his attempt. I accept I am responsible for one piece at the base of the rib (left during my retreat in 1992) which Alan has extended with a sling. The absence of the two pegs on the third pitch pose more of a mystery and leave the crux section less well protected, though as our ascent proved, it is possible without them. All of the *in situ* gear I used on the route could have been placed by me on lead, much of it is next to no-hands rests. If the *in situ* gear detracts from the ascent it is more of an indictment of those that place and leave it there when it is not necessary, I can only be blamed for one piece.

Since the ascent of Mort, Alan has talked to Andy about the *in situ* runners but clearly doesn't believe the fact that they were of no great advantage and so were not mentioned in the Journal description. This is maybe why he has persisted in spreading rumours and is now writing letters to the Journal.

I whole-heartedly agree that we should be honest about the style in which routes are climbed and have always tried to be so, the *High* article probably contained more information than is normally recorded about an ascent.

I hope this letter will satisfy Alan's curiosity and he will resist spreading further rumours and innuendo about the *in situ* protection used and the ascent of Mort. If not, I will have to agree with him again, that honesty is taking second place – but to his ego.

Brian Davison.

1985 New Climbs – 9 pages

Dear Editor,

I DO NOT profess to be a technical rock-climber nor do I perform on snow and ice other than at the level of general winter mountaineering. I enjoy the mountains of Scotland in all seasons and have for many years been an avid reader of your club's Journal.

In 1985, when I first started reading the Journal, the section given over to the recording of 'New Climbs' took up all of nine pages. I have watched it rise in annual increments ever since, until the Millennium edition, sporting an incredible 43 double-sided pages, incited me to put pen to paper.

Now, given that I am not a technical climber, I would have to admit to a slight bias, in that these matters do not interest me greatly. Having said that, I find it difficult to imagine that recording the technicalities of 8m of rock in the Outer Hebrides, or anywhere else for that matter, and another 8m six feet to the right and left of that, would hold much interest for anyone but those seeing their names in print in that issue. What happened to the spirit of exploration for goodness sake!

That so much space can be used in this way, at the expense of the excellent and evocative writing, which is so much a hallmark of your publication, calls for comment.

I note with interest that K. V. Crocket, who has been Editor since I started reading your Journal is passing on the reins. What better time than now, for the incoming Editor to grasp the nettle and reduce this burgeoning 'cuckoo' in an otherwise exemplary nest, to more manageable, and perhaps as important, more meaningful proportions.

Peter Stilgga.

2001 New Climbs – 140 pages

IS IT just me or does 140 pages of a 300-page journal dedicated to New Climbs seem to be overdoing things slightly. When one compares this to the 87 pages given over to what I trust are interesting articles and fiction, I would suggest that an imbalance seems evident. I have, as have my predecessors, inherited what is essentially a literary journal and I have no wish to be at the helm as it descends to a level where it becomes little more than an annual guidebook.

Having said that, I do recognise that the Scottish Mountaineering Club is the 'Keeper of the Keys' as far as the recording and archiving of Scottish climbs is concerned and that it is important, for a number of reasons, that we remain so. How then do we achieve a balance?

A separate supplement and/or expanded use of 'web' technology on our excellent Internet site are two ideas that come readily to mind, I am sure there are others. I would appreciate comments from the membership, firstly to confirm that my judgment of this matter is a sound one, and secondly, to try and find a way forward or perhaps in this case backward!

Charlie J. Orr.

THE SCOTTISH MOUNTAINEERING TRUST – 2000-2001

TRUSTEES met on July 27, 2000, November 9, 2000 and March 1, 2001.

During the course of these meetings support was given to the Jonathan Conville Memorial Trust Winter Course 2000 -2001; the Clachnaben Path Trust; the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds – Lichens/Hawkweeds Survey; Glasgow University Mountaineering Club Peru 2000; the Footpath Trust – path maintenance at Loch Gainemach; the John Muir Trust – the purchase of Ben Nevis, and the Shiehallion Appeal Footpath Project; the SMC Journal Editor – computer; the National Trust for Scotland – Beinn Ghlas footpath; Scottish Winter Lofoten Expedition (Pete Benson) 2001, and the Mountaineering Council for Scotland – support for the Access and Conservation Officer.

After careful consideration and having regard to projected income the Trust's grant to the Mountaineering Council for Scotland for the next three years is now £5000 per annum.

During the year the Trust produced a leaflet for distribution to the public, a copy of which was included in a SMC newsletter.

The Trust received a generous donation of £5000 from The James and Patricia Hamilton Charitable Trust in April 2000.

The present Directors of the Publications Co. are T. B. Fleming (Chairman), R. K Bott (appointed on April 1, 2001), K. V Crocket, P. W. F. Gribbon, (A. Kassyk retired by rotation on March 31, 2001) and T. Prentice (Publications Manager). D. C. Anderson attends Board Meetings in an advisory capacity as the Convenor of the Publications Sub-Committee.

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The following grants have committed by the Trustees.

General Grant Fund

Jonathan Conville Winter Courses 2000/2001	£840
Royal Society for the Protection of Birds – Lichens/Hawkweeds survey	£500
Glasgow Mountaineering Club Peru 2000	£150
John Muir Trust – Purchase of Ben Nevis	£5000
SMC Journal Editor – computer	£638
Scottish Winter Lofoten Expedition 2001	£300
Mountaineering Council of Scotland for three years each year	£5000

Footpath Fund

Clachnaben Path Trust	£2500
Footpath Trust – maintenance at Loch Gainemach for three years each year	£100
John Muir Trust – Shiehallion Appeal Footpath Project	£10,000
National Trust for Scotland – Beinn Ghlass footpath	£2000

James D. Hotchkis, Trust Secretary.

MUNRO MATTERS

By C. M. Huntley (Clerk of the List)

The new additions to the List of Munroists and amendments follow. The columns used are Munroist's number, name, year of Munros, Tops and Furths. *SMC member.

**LSCC member.

2308	Simon Waddicor	1997	2359	Derek J. Cran	2000	2000
2309	David T. Barrett	2000	2360	Alan M. Dunworth	2000	
2310	Rob Smith	2000	1996 2361	Colin P. Dodd	2000	2000
2311	George Barry	1999	2362	Fiona W. Douglas	1999	
2312	Mark Thomson	2000	2363	Ann Waters	2000	
2313	Malcolm Watson	2000	2000 2364	Keith Waters	2000	
2314	Duncan D. Francey	2000	2365	Janis Whyte	2000	
2315	George Thompson	2000	2366	John Dargie	2000	
2316	Stan Loneskie	2000	2367	John H. Lyne	2000	
2317	Clive Horsfield	1999	2368	Pete Serres	2000	
2318	Ron Forsyth	2000	2369	Dave Chaffey	1994	
2319	C. Andrew Larkins	2000	2370	Ross McCallum	2000	
2320	Paul A. Turek	2000	2371	Graeme Crowe	2000	
2321	Adam J. Turek	2000	2372	Andrew Brookes	2000	
2322	Ruth Ubysz	2000	2373	David M. Raw	2000	
2323	Dave Roberts	2000	2374	Neil A. Findlay	2000	
2324	Steve Burns	2000	2375	Ian S. Leslie	2000	
2325	Gordon A. Roy	2000	2376	Brian Kitching	2000	
2326	Grant Forbes	1999	2377	K. Clark	2000	
2327	Michael T. Taylor	2000	2378	Edith Wilson	2000	
2328	Jan Lawen	2000	2379	Geoffrey Wilson	2000	
2329	Hugh W. Tasker	2000	2380	Sara A. Chapple	2000	
2330	Tony Tideswell	2000	2381	Ian K. Chapple	2000	
2331	Brian Taylor	2000	2382	Sue Cullen	2000	
2332	Ian Holloway	2000	2383	Matthew Davis	2000	
2333	Angus Campbell	2000	2384	David Short	1999	
2334	David A. Johnstone	2000	2385	Marion Collingwood	2000	
2335	Alan E. Donaldson	2000	2386	Duncan Collingwood	2000	
2336	Rachel Hardy	2000	2387	Machiel Rosenbrand	2000	
2337	John Birtwistle	2000	2388	Iain Rudkin	2000	
2338	Susan J. Rees	2000	2389	Robert Jackson	2000	
2339	William C. Rees	2000	2390	Colin Scott	2000	
2340	William Bates	2000	2391	Raymond S. Woodcock	2000	
2341	Ralph Henderson	2000	2392	Jeffrey Blakeley	2000	
2342	Anthony P. Weetman	2000	2393	Dale Allan	2000	
2343	Haydn Kingston	2000	2394	Annemarie Rutherford	2000	
2344	Ian Baines	2000	2395	Stephen G. Goodyear	2000	
2345	Graham Phillips	2000	2000 2396	Andrew J. Rankin	2000	
2346	David Allison	2000	2397	Edith Anne Ross	2000	
2347	Robert A. Fraser	2000	2398	Keith Griffiths	2000	
2348	Steven Warren	1999	2399	Tom Whalen	2000	
2349	Fiona Wild	2000	2400	Martin C. K. Bloomfield	2000	
2350	*Roger Wild	2000	2401	Peter A. Davidson	2000	
2351	Brian Maguire	2000	2402	G. Dennis Gower	2000	
2352	Roger G. Watson	2000	2403	Adrian Simpson	2000	
2353	John R. Lindsay	2000	2404	Peter S. Dewar	2000	
2354	George N. Thomson	2000	2405	Christopher Carey	2000	
2355	George D. Smith	1995	2000 2406	David Gillard	2000	
2356	Barry Brown	2000	2407	Terry Bolger	2000	
2357	Maxwell Craig	2000	2408	Donald Barnett	2000	
2358	Brian Davey	2000	2409	Alan Cutts	2000	

2410	Alan Castle	2000		2467	Alaisdair Rodgers	2000	
2411	Gordon C. Stewart	2000		2468	Mike Thewlis	2000	
2412	Dave Windle	2000		2469	Jean Benn	2000	
2413	Richard M. Christie	2000		2470	Sarah Nelson	2000	
2414	Chris Crocker	2000	2000 1992	2471	William H. Cooke	2000	2000
2415	Ian Cuthill	2000		2472	Jim Weir	2000	
2416	Henry Gillett	2000		2473	Neil Woodhead	2000	
2417	James Hughes	2000	1999	2474	Gordon Stewart	1988 2000	
2418	Mark J. Langrish	2000				2000	
2419	Richard M. Williams	2000		2475	Alan Sewell	2000	
2420	Edward J. Deighan	2000		2476	Graham J. Cooper	2000	
2421	Allan Corbett	2000		2477	Jenny Cruickshank	2000	
2422	David K. McDonald	2000		2478	David I. Holmes	2000	
2423	John Cattell	2000		2579	John E. Sim	2000	
2424	Robert M. Elder	2000		2480	Y. Pam Taylor	2000	1990
2425	David Bell	2000		2481	Judith McIntyre	2000	
2426	Iain B. Shaw	2000		2482	Margaret Laing	2000	
2427	Andrew Shaw	2000		2483	Christine Dawson	2000	
2428	David West	2000		2484	Stuart W. MacGill	2000	
2429	Graham C. Kelly	2000		2485	Barry Fraser	2000	
2430	Jim Campbell	2000		2486	Christopher Black	2000	
2431	Carl Emery	2000	2000	2487	Roderick MacDonald	2000	
2432	Brian Kerslake	2000		2488	Gordon Mullan	1996	
2433	Alan Rowan	2000		2489	Lesley C. Pyper	2000	
2434	Peter A. Wright	2000		2490	J. L. Addy	2000	
2435	Robert A. Creswell	2000		2491	Bob Shanks	2000	
2436	Geoff Barnett	2000		2492	Nicola Howarth	2000	
2437	Stewart Wragg	1999		2493	Colin Gordon	2000	
2438	Morag Barclay	2000		2494	**Rhona B. I. Fraser	1984 1995 1997	
2439	P. B. Wilmot	2000				1994	
2440	John F. Rutherford	2000				2000	
2441	Ann Quirk	2000		2495	David A. Watson	2000	
2442	John MacLean	2000		2496	Douglas Stuart	2000	
2443	Margaret C. O'Neill	2000		2497	Allan Pearks	2000	
2444	Peter A. Haigh	2000	2000 2000	2498	Philip Howe	2000	
2445	Barbara Dunn	2000		2499	Andrew D. Cunningham	2000	
2446	S. George Dunn	2000		2500	David F. Brown	2000	
2447	Joyce Kettles	2000	2000	2501	Niel Craig	1997	
2448	Joyce McCraw	2000		2502	Martin Forster	2000	
2449	John MacLeod	2000		2503	Grahame Downer	2000	
2450	Mary-Lucy More	2000	2000	2504	Isabella Fraser	2000	
2451	David More	2000	2000	2505	Roy Turnbull	2000	
2452	Neil J. Lang	2000		2506	Walter C. McArthur	2000	
2453	Mhairi A. Barr	2000		2507	Andy McGowan	2000	
2454	Mary Webster	2000		2508	Bob M. Taylor	2000	
2455	Tony S. Harrison	2000		2509	Margaret Laidlaw	1999	
2456	John Steele	2000	1996	2510	David Stone	1999	
2457	Ronnie Gall	2000		2511	George Hall	2000	
2458	Garrow McLaren	2000		2512	Anthony Pilling	2000	
2459	Alex B. Nelson	2000		2513	Charles W. Alexander	1984 1984	
2460	Eva Howat	2000		2514	Ken Downie	2000	
2461	Karen Rutherford	2000		2515	John F. Gillespie	1998	
2462	Elizabeth Reid	2000		2516	Neville W. Tandy	2000	
2463	Martin Likeman	2000		2517	J. Hipwood	2000	
2464	Archie S. Tollin	2000		2518	John Croxford	2000	
2465	David Gray	2000		2519	Karen Beattie	2000	
2466	Hazel Rodgers	2000		2520	John W. M. Murdoch	2000	

AMENDMENTS

The following have added to their entries on the List. Each Munroist's record is shown in full. The columns refer to Number, Name, Munros, Tops and Furths.

164	Nigel Hawkins	1978					1994
		1984					1995
206	I. H. Chuter	1980					1996
		2000					1997
262	*Roger J.C. Robb	1981					1998
		2000					1999
290	Kenneth J. MacIver	1982					2000
		2000		1287	Robert J. Shapperd	1994	2000 1995
364	Brian Dick	1984			1299	Michael McLaggan	1994 1997
		1992					2000
		2000		1351	Margaret Beattie	1994	
385	John Peacegood	1980	2000			2000	
391	Brenda D. Griffin	1985	1989 2000	1397	Douglas R. MacLeod	1995	1997 1998
		1994				2000	
392	Mervyn Griffin	1985	1989 2000	1439	Martin Uppadine	1982	
		1994				2000	
462	Roger Booth	1986	1996 1993	1527	Adrian H. Blandy	1994	2000
		2000				1997	
464	J. G. Cooney	1986	1986 1986			2000	
		1999	1999 1999	1660	John Kirkham	1996	1998 2000
471	Francis H. Scott	1986	1986 1986	1722	John Newman	1997	1999 2000
		2000	2000 2000	1781	John Goodman	1997	2000
508	David Alexander	1986		1801	Lindsay Boyd	1997	
		2000				2000	
889	Adrienne Simcock	1991	1996	1836	Wendy Dodds	1997	2000
890	Peter Simcock	1991	1997	1940	Andrew L. Smith	1998	2000
954	Robert B. Gunn	1991	1991 2000	2019	Norman Veitch	1998	2000
959	Mike Dixon	1991	2000	2034	Kenneth J. Mason	1998	
1040	James Gordon	1992	1994			2000	
		1996		2089	Oliver Overstall	1999	2000
		1998		2135	Peter J.C. Wooley	1999	2000
		2000		2144	John Crowder	1999	2000
1045	Steve Fallon	1992	1993	2355	George D. Smith	1995	2000

THIS year I have had the pleasure of adding a further 213 names to the List of Munroists. Most completed in 2000 and were reporting the successful first round with a much smaller number including the Tops at the same time. The comments below are a small extract from the wealth of experiences and tales described in the letters I have received.

As we all know, climbing the Munros is no longer the obscure, almost unknown pleasure taken up by a select band of the population, whose work colleagues only know that at weekends they are often 'away'. Now, a combination of guidebooks, TV programmes and regular radio spots, ensures the interest is well advertised, if not understood. In addition, I mentioned a few years ago coming across a flyer, advertising a board game 'Munro Mania' by the Chaffey's. They are obviously not couch potatoes as Dave Chaffey (2369) has now added the reality game to his credentials, and I see on their latest flyer that his wife is on 248.

The international element continues and the popularity of the hills knows no political boundaries. Jan Lawen (2328) has managed to complete his round from Germany, although he did have a head start by staying in Edinburgh for a few years, while Machiel Rosenbrand (2387) has managed the entire set from his home in the Netherlands. However, I suspect that the world of Microsoft and Bill Gates has yet to hear of the

Munros, as Ann Waters (2363) notes that the Microsoft spell checker still rejects Munros and offers 'Moonrise'. This she points out has not been entirely inappropriate on some of her longer walks and late finishes.

With the List now numbering more than 2500 names I would have expected that we would have a considerable number of same-name entries. However, to date most are distinguishable, although when I received a letter from a second Gordon Stewart (2411 and 2474) only a few months apart, I was glad to find that one of them had a middle initial to use. Perhaps one day we'll move onto offering the option of using unique nicknames or even e-mail addresses. This year I did nearly introduce a duplication when Alan Peacegood (385) wrote to me. He had just been in Eire to add the Furths to his personal tally and met another Munroist during his travels. The outcome of the meeting was that Alan was provided with my address and he wrote to report a compleation of Munros in 1980 and Furths in 2000. However, I noticed that there was already an A. Peacegood on the List from 1980, and Alan and I have come to the conclusion that this is almost certainly him. To his knowledge there are very few Peacegoods around and the chance of a coincidence is too small.

Most writers include a mention of their final Munro party and I was intrigued to think of Ken Downie's (2514) friend carrying a small bottle of champagne around the Skye ridge for five days hoping that each day they were finally going to reach the Last One. Others choose to mention the range of food that accompanied their early trips but few can be as unappetising as Niel Craig (2501) had to suffer, when on an extended New Year trip to various bothies. His group were taking it in turns to provide the evening meal and after one long day out the duty cook produced, with a rather nervous grin, a single turnip to be shared among five. It's apparently a tale the offender is not allowed to forget.

Minor typing and reading errors are getting corrected each year and I would ask that you try to print the name you'd like to go onto the List.

The appeal of doing the Munros your own way still appeals to many. Keith Griffiths (2398) wants to try and bag a hill on each calender day of the year, while John Sim (2479) had a much simpler desire and that was to have a beer at the end of each day out, although that is not an unknown expectation by any means!

Among the List of new names are two particularly young Munroists. To most people the feat of Iain Rudkin (2388) compleating aged 19 years 11 months would be unusual, but this is rather overshadowed by Adam Turek (2321) who was only 15 years. At the other end of the life scale I should mention John Lyne (2367), Dennis Gower (2402) and Archie Tollin (2464) who are all in their 70s.

The shortest round of the year belongs to Colin Gordon (2493). Born in Scotland, but now resident in Australia, he embarked on a plan to carry out a continuous round. The initial start at the end of March was aborted, but he restarted in April and was on his final Munro only five-and-a-half months later. From his reading of previous Journals he believes he is the 18th person to compleat a round within 12 months. To finish, Colin recounted the following tale. "One of the strangest things that happened to me was very close to the end of my journey, when I returned to the end of the road in Glen Dessary after doing Sgurr Mor. I had already experienced my first Broken Spectre near the summit and I came across a man sitting on the grass at the side of the road. He was wearing a very old-fashioned highland outfit which included a plaid over his shoulder. Beside him lay a claymore, a targe and a musket. When I spoke to him he replied: 'Sorry my English not good.' He turned out to be from Brittany and was a medieval costume maker by trade. A self-confessed Ecosseophile, he was walking from Glen Shiel to Glen Finnan, and presumably, sleeping in his plaid as he was carrying only a small satchel. He was also carrying a pair of small home-made instep crampons to stop him slipping

on the peat in his very wet home-made brogues. Ironically, he was sitting at the road head as he'd twisted his knee and was awaiting a taxi which, sure enough, appeared a short while later. All very unusual."

I can with confidence let the numbers in the Amendments section speak for themselves and most readers will be impressed by the volume of hill walking that some of the Munro-bagging fraternity manage to do. A few when writing to record an amendment, make a gentle offer of apology for the extended time between Munros to Tops or time to a second round etc. (not that I know of any rules)! However, for novel excuses few could match Nigel Hawkins (164) who said that he finds he is more often buying hills than walking in them as a result of his role in the John Muir Trust.

Those wishing to add their names to the List of Compleat Munroists should write to the Clerk at the address below. There is no formal registration form but a letter from the prospective Munroist giving a few details of experiences, time taken on the round and age would be appreciated. Once registered, Munroists can claim a tie and/or brooch. A colour A4 certificate is also available to mark the Completion so please enclose an A4 sae.

After eight years of being Clerk of the List I am handing over the role to Dave Kirk. Thank you to all those who have made the job so interesting and I can, with some pleasure, record that during my tenure of office 60% of the List has been added. Hopefully, with more time on my hands, I will get my name into the Amendments.

All future correspondence should now be sent to Dave Kirk, Greenhowe Farmhouse, Banchory-Devenick, AB12 5YJ. It is recognised that I will no doubt be forwarding letters to Dave for years to come. Similarly, Bill Brooker (my predecessor) has been forwarding letters to me for the last eight years.

The entire List of Munroists is accessible on the Club's website at www.smc.org.uk and this should include all the Multiple Rounds, Tops and Furths. If you spot any omissions please inform Dave Kirk. A search facility has just been added to the site, making it easy to find any name and last year, the SMC webmaster added the facility to enable viewing of photographic records linked to your name. If you have any prints, slides or digital photographs that you would like linked to your name please send them to the Clerk.

Something to mark your success on the Corbetts?

In last year's Journal I mentioned that the SMC would be pleased to mark the successful round of the Corbetts with a certificate. This is similar to the Munroist's certificate and it is intended that any rounds of Corbetts will be included in the Munroist's website entry. If any readers feel they are entitled to a certificate please write to the new Clerk of the List. Recently, a comprehensive List has been researched by Dave Hewitt and James Lamb and is now published by TACit Press. Readers may wish to contact Dave for his publication of Corbett Tops and Corbetteers at TACit Press, 2 Abbey Road Place, Stirling FK8 1LN. (£4.20 inc p&p).

During the year the following have written to me to record rounds of the Corbetts. The columns given are Munro Number, Name and Corbetts.

55	Iain A. Robertson	1986	392	Mervyn Griffin	2000
107	*Andrew Nisbet	2000	634	Bill Miller	1992
205	Tom Rix	1994	1613	Gillian Nisbet	2000
336	Stephen T. Ramsden	1993	2474	Gordon Stewart	2000
		1999	2494	Rhona B. I. Fraser	1990
391	Brenda D. Griffin	2000			1998

SCOTTISH MOUNTAIN ACCIDENTS 2000

REGIONAL DISTRIBUTION

(Geographical Divisions are those used in SMC District Guidebooks)

REGION	CASUALTIES (of which fatalities are bracketed)				INCIDENTS								
					Actual Rescues		Other Callouts						
	Injuries	Exhaustion/Exposure Hypothermia, Hyperthermia	Illness	Total Casualties	Incidents with Casualties	Cragfast or weatherbound	Separated	Lost	Overdue or Benighted	False Alarms or Hoaxes	Total Incidents	Animal Rescues	Non-Mountaineering Incidents
Northern Highlands	9 (1)	– –	2 –	11 (1)	10	–	–	5	4	–	19	–	1
Western Highlands	8 (1)	3 –	1 –	12 (1)	11	1	–	–	3	2	17	–	–
Ben Nevis	22 (7)	10 –	3 (1)	35 (8)	31	3	–	1	–	5	40	–	–
Glen Coe (Inc Buachaille)	16 (3)	1 –	1 (1)	18 (4)	16	7	–	–	2	2	27	–	–
Other Central Highlands	22 (3)	1 –	4 (1)	27 (4)	27	3	2	1	7	2	42	–	–
Cairngorms	41 (5)	5 –	8 (1)	54 (6)	49	1	2	11	16	3	82	–	1
Southern Highlands	30 (5)	5 (1)	3 (3)	38 (9)	37	1	2	6	5	2	53	–	9
Skye	9 (1)	– –	2 (1)	11 (2)	11	3	–	–	–	1	15	–	–
Islands (other than Skye)	12 (2)	– –	– –	12 (2)	12	2	–	–	2	–	16	1	1
Southern Uplands	3 (1)	12 –	5 (4)	20 (5)	13	–	–	3	6	2	24	–	18
All Regions Totals 2000	172 (29)	37 (1)	29 (12)	238 (42)	217	21	6	27	45	19	335	1	30
Previous year Totals 1999	169 (22)	33 (3)	19 (6)	221 (31)	204	35	6	24	50	14	333	3	35

MOUNTAIN RESCUE COMMITTEE OF SCOTLAND

SCOTTISH MOUNTAIN ACCIDENTS 2000

Compiled by John Hinde

Police have not been mentioned in all incidents, but have been concerned in all as theirs' is the responsibility.

NORTHERN HIGHLANDS

- JANUARY 28-29** – Experienced walker (77) was overdue from Cona' Mheall (Beinn Dearg area). He returned to his car at the head of Loch Glascarnoch in the small hours, drove to the back of Alltguish Inn and slept in the car not wanting to disturb anyone. Dundonnell MRT had already been called out. 7.
- FEBRUARY 3** – Female (48) descending Spidean a' Choire Leith, Liathach, with two companions slipped and slid off ridge, falling 200m into Coire Dubh Mor. She was fatally injured. Kinloss and Torridon MRTs, RAF Sea King helicopter and SARDA dog. Found by Dog Pete on east side of corrie. 232.
- FEBRUARY 1** – Gales and snow correctly forecast. Two men aged about 20s 'probably' went to Fannaichs. Dundonnell MRT stood by when they were overdue. Subjects were blown off Sgurr Mor in wrong direction to Loch a' Bhraoin then walked out by Destitution Road to Braemore Junction where they phoned. 3.
- FEBRUARY 22** – Man (45) and woman (39) attempted to reach Sgurr Mor in deep wet snow with a strong possibility of avalanche conditions. They got beyond Beinn Liath Mhor Fannaich then were overdue walking out via Loch Li (which is not the best way off). Dundonnell MRT called out. 10.
- MAY 14-15** – Party of three on Conival had only one rucksack between them. A novice male (51) separated from his two experienced companions and got lost with no map, compass, food or spare clothes. He walked out to Unapool, having seen houses from above Loch Glencoul which he thought was Loch Assynt. Searchers were Assynt and Kinloss MRTs, six SARDA dogs, RAF and HMCG helicopters. 628.
- MAY 20** – Party of three on summit of Beinn Liath Mhor in good weather. Casualty (45) climbed a small cairn to take a photograph. He slipped and broke his wrist; then contacted police by mobile phone. RAF Sea King on exercise in the area lifted him to Broadford Hospital. Torridon MRT. 15.
- MAY 22** – A party of four completed the climb of Cioch Nose, on A' Chioch of Sgurr a' Chaorachain, Applecross. Going towards the top of Bealach na Ba one of them, a female (49), slipped negotiating a rocky step and sustained a serious head injury (helmet carried). She was helped to M.R. 795427 where colleagues raised the alarm. Airlift by HMCG helicopter. 11.
- MAY 31-June 1** – Leaving Coire Mhic Nobuill Car Park, Torridon at 13.30 for a 15km walk to north of Beinn Alligin, four walkers (m68, m67, f66, f55) got lost near Loch Toll nam Biast at 20.50. Mobile phone alerted Torridon MRT and HMCG helicopter. In rain and strong wind they were found by air search eight hours later, cold and tired but otherwise OK, about 4 km west of where they had phoned from. 46.
- JULY 4-5** – Lost in mist descending Tom a' Choinnich, Ben Wyvis, two male birdwatchers (70, 45) used mobile phone. They were found OK by Dundonnell MRT next morning in a sheltered hollow out of phone contact (left on 'divert' after initial call). 200.
- JULY 12-13** – Walking Am Fasarinen Pinnacles of Liathach, schoolboy (15) stumbled and sprained an ankle. One of those who went off to raise alarm borrowed a mobile

phone from other walkers. Torridon MRT lifted by RAF R137 to 450m then climbed to casualty. Stretchered him down overnight to below cloudbase for airlift. 210.

JULY 19 – German Venture Scout (f16) slipped on Corriehallie/Achneigie track. Heavy rucksack probably contributed to slip or inability to protect her head from injury. Comrades gave wrong track name when they ran back. They said it was Shenavall (inaccessible to heavy FWD vehicle) so RAF Sea King used. Dundonnell MRT. 15.

JULY 24 – Four were walking on 'tourist' type path at about 450m on south slopes of Stac Pollaidh. A rock fell on the leg of a man (28) causing an open fracture. It then toppled on to another man (20) causing a slight head injury. Evacuation to hospital by RAF Sea King and Dundonnell MRT. Alarm was raised by mobile phone carried by nearby path workers. 34.

JULY 30 – Family of a man (55) tried to assist him when he slipped and sprained an ankle on north slopes of Ruadh-stac Mor, Beinn Eighe. They had been walking the path from Grudie Bridge to Loch Coire Mhic Fhearchair and realised they would need help. Torridon MRT stretchered him off. 77.

AUGUST 7 – Lone walker (49), in mist without map and compass, decided against descending 'The Horns' from Sgurr Mhor, the summit of Beinn Alligin, so she returned to Tom na Gruagaich but got lost near its summit. She used mobile phone and was directed by calls from Torridon MRT to the summit of 'Tom' and asked to stay there. She got cold and wet but rescue went according to plan and she was fine when aided down by the team. SARDA called out. 41.

AUGUST 7-8 – Solo walker (49) left fishing party at Loch Dionard to walk back to Gualin Lodge over Foinaven. She had no food, no map and no compass. Lost in mist she was found by Assynt MRT walking out on Dionard track next morning wet but uninjured. Kinloss MRT, HMCG helicopter and SARDA also involved. 419.

SEPTEMBER 4-5 – Walker (41) with ambitious plan was delayed by migraine on the ridge of Liathach. This led to benightment without a torch and a slow incorrect descent. He was found next morning by Torridon and Kinloss MRTs. RAF Sea King and SARDA involved. 127.

SEPTEMBER 25 – Man (33) collapsed with a seizure when returning from a day deer stalking at Loch Coire Chaorachain, Dundonnell. Gamekeeper raised the alarm and he was airlifted by RAF Sea King. He made a full recovery in Raigmore Hospital and discharged himself. Dundonnell MRT. 14.

WESTERN HIGHLANDS

FEBRUARY 2 – Wearing crampons ascending rock, ice and snow near the top of Forcan Ridge, The Saddle, ridge-walker (29) slipped and fell several hundred metres sustaining a fatal head injury. He was a member of a party of seven in two unroped groups. Kintail MRT and RAF Sea King helicopter. 36.

FEBRUARY 14-15 – Leading group of 12 through Mam na Cloich-Airde (pass) westwards to Sourlies Bothy at the head of Loch Nevis, man (56) slipped on wet rock 1km east of the bothy. With damaged knee ligaments he was taken to Sourlies and stayed overnight. Companions alerted RAF Sea King next day and he was airlifted. 29.

APRIL 13-14 – False alarm. Limited precautionary search by Kintail MRT and RAF Sea King for man thought to have visited Falls of Glomach from Cannich Youth Hostel. Accommodation had been booked but he did not return. 41.

APRIL 29-30 – Search organised by Dundonnell MRT for overdue man (34) who had separated on Sgurr na Lapaich (Loch Mullardoch) to climb An Riabhachan. It had

clagged up overnight and he had left his torch in his tent. He turned up at 04.00. 10.

MAY 28 – Descending west slopes of Sron a Choire Gairbh, Loch Lochy, man (59) slipped on steep, wet moss/grass and fell 45m. It was misty and snowing. Friend went for help and he was airlifted by RAF R137 to Belford Hospital suffering dislocated shoulder, hand fracture, bruised ribs, cut leg and head needing numerous stitches. 12.

JUNE 17 – Mobile phone alerted Leuchars MRT on exercise in the area and RAF helicopter when a man (31) slipped on wet rock. R137 could not reach him due to low cloud, so team was dropped at 360m, climbed to east summit of Lurg Mhor (south of head of Loch Monar). Casualty, with a painful shoulder dislocation, and friend were found using whistles, then aided to below cloud base for airlift. Kintail on standby. 45.

JUNE 29 – Schoolgirl (16) in a party of 22 crossing rough pass (Mam na Cloiche Airde) to Sourlies Bothy at the head of Loch Nevis slipped and tore knee ligaments. Airlift from 200m altitude by RAF Sea King and Lochaber MRT. 18.

JULY 28 – Female (28) got cragfast descending scree on Creag nan Damh, South Cluanie Ridge. She was left by companion who went for help. Kintail MRT on hill called RAF Sea King. She was found and winched aboard. 30.

AUGUST 3 – Experienced hillwalker (62) slipped on vegetation and twisted an ankle descending ESE Ridge Sgurr na Lapaich (Loch Mullardoch) at 900m. Mobile phone used. R137 could not reach him in cloud so MRT used two-man chair to get him below cloud base for airlift. Model of co-operation between Dundonnell and RAF Sea King working together in rolling mist. 80.

OCTOBER 2 – Glenelg and Kintail MRTs with SARDA dogs searched for a missing person (38). He was found by a MRT member lying in bracken about 500m from his home, on Boc Beag, above An Leth-allt, Loch Duich. He was cold and withdrawn. HMCG helicopter. 90.

OCTOBER 17-18 – Two female members of a family (47, 11) suffered exhaustion. With father they had walked to the head of Glen Arnisdale then tried to return west along the north shore of Loch Hourn, a very demanding route especially as they were hampered by heavy rain and strong winds. Father left them, went on to Arnisdale and returned with three Glenelg MRT in a boat to collect them. 28.

OCTOBER 23 – False alarm. At 19.15 lights were reported on hill 2km west of Cluanie Inn (A87 Glen Shiel road). Kintail MRT concluded that lights were from descending climbers or forestry vehicles working there, and that no-one was in trouble. 14.

OCTOBER 31-November 1 – Temporary warden (50s) at Craig Bunkhouse, Glencarron, had been hillwalking. Cycling home down the Glen a'Chonais forestry track he fell off his bike and broke his leg. Unable to move, he put on all his clothes, splinted his leg with ski poles and climbed into his bivvy bag. His route card and non-return alerted Torridon MRT. 24.

NOVEMBER 11 – A Dutch pair (f35, m33) got benighted on SE slopes of Sgurr an t-Searraich, about 2km east of Shiel Bridge. They used mobile phone at 17.55 and were airlifted by RAF R137 Sea King and Glenelg MRT. 30.

DECEMBER 31, 2000-January 16, 2001 – Very well equipped (except that she had no crampons) hill walker (21) walked from Applecross to Glen Affric in good weather with little precipitation but sub zero temperatures. Although this was her first Scottish winter experience she normally spent half the year in the hills, about six days at a time only coming 'out' for food supplies and recharged phone batteries. Her mother was concerned about her mental state. Dundonnell MRT got her relating to people and she was persuaded to join a friend outwith the area. 32.

BEN NEVIS

- JANUARY 11-13.**— Three people attempted the ascent by the track in strong wind and falling snow. Near the summit, one of them, a man (42) slipped and was seen to fall 400m before he went out of sight. A large search followed by Lochaber, Kinloss and Leuchars MRTs with eight SARDA dogs. At 13.00 on third day his body was found at about 500m in Coire Eoghainn during a sweep and dog search. The inexperienced victim had been poorly equipped. 1489.
- FEBRUARY 11** — After climbing Tower Ridge three men (53, 27, 27) got lost and benighted in summit plateau whiteout. Batteries of one torch failed and another flickered. They bedded down in their group shelter but this tore in the strong wind. They spent the night in a small hole they dug in soft snow, but were still exposed to the wind. At 06.30 they started down Red Burn and were found and aided by Lochaber MRT. All received frostbite treatment at Belford Hospital. RAF Sea King helicopter was involved but they had already been found. 60.
- FEBRUARY 19** — Phone call from CIC Hut that drunk man was walking down. When Lochaber MRT found him on path below hut he appeared OK, alert, capable and well equipped saying he did not need rescuing. He may have been in first stages of hypothermia in the hut. 6.
- MARCH 4** — In good, freezing weather, a party of three went from Achintee to top of No. 4 Gully. Man (49) roped up to abseil post and checked the cornice. It gave way. He fell 3m on the rope. Climbing out (presumably he had untied) the cornice again collapsed. He fell 150m to the bottom with snow breaking his fall. Recovered by Lochaber MRT and RAF Sea King. Belford Hospital diagnosed him uninjured but he was detained overnight for observation. 74.
- MARCH 4** — Man (30) intended to climb Green Gully unroped with two Americans he met at CIC Hut. He went in front practically all the way up. Just below the top one of his companions went up over the cornice ahead of him. The casualty went next, but on reaching the lip he suddenly fell backwards down Green Gully then out of sight. Alarm was raised. RAF R137 Sea King was in the vicinity. With Lochaber MRT aboard casualty was found 100m below foot of Green Gully and was lifted to Belford Hospital. Injuries were fatal. 29.
- MARCH 5-6** — After completing two days walking/climbing with a companion in Ben Nevis area, staying overnight in survival bags, outdoor instructor (39) was seen getting into her survival bag at 22.30 in strong wind and rain. They were in Antler Gully area near zig-zags of the track, mostly below the snowline. At 06.00 hours the deceased was found by her companion about 100m below where she had slept. She had a severe scalp injury and no vital signs. Evacuation to Belford by Lochaber MRT and RAF Sea King was completed by 11.00. 98.
- MARCH 16-17** — With four companions descending West Face of Carn Dearg NW (Ben Nevis) in mist, a man (31) crossed a patch of hard snow. He slipped and slid 150m into rocks fracturing his pelvis and sustaining leg injuries. Rescued by Lochaber MRT and RN helicopter airlift to Belford Hospital, later transferred to Raigmore. 158.
- MARCH 2** — Man (34) climbed an ice pitch of Garadh Gully with three other people. Having joined up with the person belaying he continued to climb up the gully. When 30m above the belay stance he fell, sliding past the other three down the ice pitch and down into the narrow bergschrund in which he jammed. The three abseiled and alerted police by CIC Hut radio. One climbed down to see the casualty but assumed him dead. Kinloss and Lochaber MRTs hoisted him from the bergschrund with difficulty. He was winched by RAF Sea King to Belford where he was pronounced dead. 130.

- APRIL 6 – Leading 2nd pitch Point 5 Gully man (24) fell 30m sustaining minor injuries to elbow, ribs and chin. His axes and runners had pulled out of thawing ice. He got down to CIC Hut to radio alarm. RN helicopter and Lochaber MRT. 30.
- APRIL 16 – Three men (20, 20, 19) inexperienced in ice climbing got benighted in good weather at 21.30 hours on Tower Ridge. Deciding they could not complete the climb, they mobile phoned police and were airlifted by RAF. Lochaber MRT. 32.
- APRIL 22-23 – Six men, all ill-equipped and ill-shod, started a walk up Coire Eoghainn at 17.30. As night fell five turned back but one, (23), continued to summit. He was met by hail and snow falling on snow and ice in a strong wind and darkness. Lochaber MRT and SARDA retraced his route, found him and escorted him down just after midnight. 15.
- MAY 9 – False alarm. Walker descending track reported cries of help at 18.45 hours. Search by Lochaber MRT and RAF Sea King found nothing. 28.
- MAY 10 – Wife (53) descending track in good weather stumbled injuring knee. She managed to reach Red Burn but could not continue. Husband used mobile phone. Lochaber MRT stretchered her down. 20.
- MAY 13 – After reaching summit of Carn Dearg NW two climbers were descending solo on north side. Male (41) was holding on to a rock which gave way. He fell 6m sustaining head cut and back injury. Companion aided him to CIC Hut then he was airlifted by RAF Sea King and Lochaber MRT. 18.
- MAY 13 – Charity walk aided by Lochaber MRT. Male (29) descending track stumbled injuring leg. Airlift by RAF. 9.
- MAY 13 – Charity walk aided by Lochaber MRT. Male (25) descending track was violently sick due to dehydration. Airlifted by same helicopter as in above incident. 9.
- MAY 17-18 – Starting on the Ben at 07.00 man (28) removed his boots and socks at Halfway Lochan because his feet were blistered. He then walked to the summit plateau barefoot taking 13 hours for whole ascent. Descending he passed several groups who, against his wishes, contacted emergency services. Two members of Lochaber MRT attended and casualty was walked down at 07.30 suffering slight injury and having taken over 24 hours. Weather had been freezing with strong wind and mist. 10
- MAY 19 – Descending the track, man (39) lost his footing on a loose stone and broke a leg. Party used mobile phone and he was lifted from 300m beyond Halfway Lochan by RAF Sea King and Lochaber MRT. Good weather. 30.
- MAY 28 – Although in a party of four, deceased (61) was walking alone up the track at his own pace in rain and mist. He collapsed near the highest zig-zag. He was found by a friend coming after him. The friend, assisted by other walkers, applied CPR, but the patient had suffered a heart attack and did not recover consciousness. His body was recovered by Lochaber MRT and RAF R137 Sea King. 84.
- MAY 28 – Four climbed Ben by the track. Weather was low cloud, strong winds, sleet/snow showers. Descending, at plateau edge, man (27) got cramp in both legs. Companions helped and began carrying him, but he was too heavy. Party called Lochaber MRT by mobile phone. Team was on the mountain on rescue (above). Patient was walked down to Halfway Lochan, then lifted by R137 to Belford Hospital, and discharged without treatment. 4.
- JUNE 3 – Woman (42) suffered forehead and top of head cuts requiring 35 stitches when she stumbled in loose scree, falling 20m, when descending the track (just where the path bends round the South Ridge of Meall an t-Suidhe) Companions contacted Lochaber MRT and she was airlifted by RN R177 Sea King. 26.

- JUNE 5 – Fatal head injuries were sustained by man (71) when he fell from the Steall Track into Nevis Gorge. He wore training shoes, had little experience, and was not equipped for mountain walking. Lochaber MRT.
- JUNE 30 – Ill-equipped, wearing fashion shoes, carrying no food and just a small bottle of water, man (35) reached summit. On descent he got severe cramps in both legs. Other parties called rescuers. Stretchered by Lochaber MRT from above second aluminium bridge to Belford Hospital for re-hydration. 25.
- JULY 3 – Three women attempted track in perfect conditions. Throughout the walk, casualty (27) became increasingly frightened due to her fear of heights. At over 1000m she could not continue. All three were airlifted by RAF Sea King and Lochaber MRT. 24.
- JULY 7 – False alarm. Person reported male with leg injury about 45 minutes' walk up the track. Member of Lochaber MRT walked to Halfway Lochan but could find no-one injured. It seems likely he got down without help. 5.
- JULY 16 – False alarm. Husband had gone ahead of his wife (50) up the track because she found his pace too fast. In good weather they both reached the summit and descended without seeing each other, one probably having deviated from the agreed route. He reported her missing at 15.30 but she turned up OK at Achintee Farm at 18.30 having taken 9.5 hours, a reasonably normal time. Lochaber MRT. 6.
- AUGUST 14-15 – Navigation error in rain and mist from the summit landed a man (50) and step-daughter (20) in Five Finger Gully. They tried to retrace steps but they were stranded on a ledge overnight and reported overdue at 22.00. At first light a search by Kinloss and Lochaber MRTs, SARDA and 2 RAF helicopters started. The man managed to get down and reported the ledge where his step-daughter was. She was winched out at 13.00 to Belford Hospital and treated for mild hypothermia and dehydration. 142.
- AUGUST 16 – Three of a family were ascending the Ben just above Halfway Lochan when the woman (55) stopped and took her nylon 'waterproof' jacket out of her rucksack and forgot to repack it. Rain turned to sleet/snow as they continued up. Wearing only shorts, T-shirt and sweatshirt she got to the top with the others but suffered mild hypothermia. Descending they got to 200m above Halfway Lochan but she could go no farther. She was airlifted to Belford Hospital by HMCG helicopter and Lochaber MRT. 34.
- AUGUST 26 – Descending upper zig-zags of track in mist and rain, schoolgirl (16) in trainers, slipped, twisting ankle. She was aided down by Lochaber MRT. 27.
- AUGUST 26 – Two men were climbing Tower Ridge unroped in mist and rain. One (28) got cragfast just below the Little Tower because of the wet and slippery rock. The other man was above and unable to climb back down to help. He continued up till he met other climbers. He used their mobile phone to contact emergency services. Thirteen Lochaber MRT members were airlifted to the scene by RAF Sea King. They found the uninjured cragfast person and escorted him off the mountain. 72.
- AUGUST 28 – Female (17) was just below Halfway Lochan descending the track when she slipped and fractured an ankle. Stretchered to Belford Hospital by Lochaber MRT and detained overnight. 45.
- AUGUST 29 – False alarm. Man (36) reported that at 14.30 when standing on Tower Ridge he heard rocks fall, then a man scream. He believed the noise came from the area of No. 3 Gully. Lochaber MRT searched with the help of RAF R137 helicopter. Climbers were spoken to, who said they had been there in the afternoon, and that they had pushed off loose rocks, but that they had shouted prior to trundling. 36.

- SEPTEMBER 13 – Man (24) was descending in good weather with three companions. Just above Halfway Lochan he slipped on scree and went over his ankle suffering a minor injury. Lochaber MRT was alerted. Aided by PDG Helicopters of Dalcross the casualty was brought down. 34.
- SEPTEMBER 23-24 – Group of four left Glen Nevis at 09.00 and reached the summit eight hours later. Descending, a man (79) lost his sense of balance and was having difficulty focusing on the route down. He was left with two girls aged 13 and 9. The fourth member went down and raised the alarm. Lochaber MRT and RAF R137 Sea King recovered the three in the dark from the first bend of the track above Red Burn. 80.
- SEPTEMBER 30 – Couple having started at 11.30 reached summit at 16.30. Wife (39) slipped descending zig-zags in good weather and damaged her knee. With her husband she managed to descend to 850m. He blew a whistle and alerted others when she could not go on. Lochaber MRT aided her down in the dark reaching Belford Hospital by 23.30. 35.
- NOVEMBER 19-20 – Lost descending track, three male students (21, 21, 20) got cragfast in Five Finger Gully. Rescuers were alerted by mobile phone which then failed. A long search by Leuchars and Lochaber MRTs and SARDA. Airlifted by RAF Sea King. 460
- DECEMBER 2 – Man (49) died from head injuries. In good weather but freezing conditions he fell 100m from Nevis slopes of Carn Mor Dearg arête. He was wearing crampons and had seven companions. Lochaber MRT and RN Sea King. 73.
- DECEMBER 28 – False alarm. Two people reported sliding down steep scree on Meall an t-Suidhe got down to road OK. Lochaber MRT. 2.
- DECEMBER 31 – Solo walker (55) was blown off when descending track. Snow was falling at the time. He fell 50m tumbling and sustaining fatal head injuries, coming to rest beside the Red Burn. Passers-by monitored vital signs which got weaker. Stretchered off by Lochaber MRT. 78.
- DECEMBER 31, 2000-January 1, 2001 – Having climbed No. 2 Gully, a pair met strong winds and white-out on the plateau. They successfully abseiled back down the gully. Coming out from the foot of the gully one of them (17) fell off a small rock band causing bruising. The other man (19) fell 5m, then slid 10m sustaining a femur fracture. Stretchered by Lochaber MRT and airlifted by HMS Gannet helicopter to Belford at 02.00. 218.

GLEN COE

- JANUARY 18 – A party of five climbed Stob Coire nam Beith being assessed in practising ice-axe and cramponing skills. At 15.00 descent of Summit Gully started. On reaching the top of Cave Pitch (high up in the gully) the party decided to traverse around the pitch. An unroped climber (35) snagged a crampon in her gaiter and overbalanced. Despite her efforts to ice-axe brake she fell 400m down the gully, landing in heather, sustaining head and back injuries. Airlift by RAF Sea King to Belford Hospital then transferred to Glasgow Southern General. Glencoe MRT. 49.
- JANUARY 26-27 – During a roped descent of Buachaille Etive Mor in the Crowberry area two men (24, 23) got benighted and cragfast in Crowberry Basin. Their torch beam was seen by a passing motorist. They requested help when loudhailed by Glencoe MRT. One of the team led them, unhurt, to roadside. 10.
- FEBRUARY 13 – Abseiler (59) fell 180m down a gully into soft snow, sustaining head and chest abrasions and bruising. His looped rope came away from rock abseil

point on the Bad Step, Am Bodach, Aonach Eagach. Another climber saw the fall and used a mobile phone. Casualty aided by his son, vac matted and stretchered by RAF Sea King, using neck splint, oxygen and rewarming aids. Glencoe, Kinloss and Leuchars MRTs. 59.

FEBRUARY 19 – Party of four headed up Coire nan Lochan footpath to climb a basic route. On reaching an altitude of approximately 250m higher than the River Coe footbridge one of them, a man (42) collapsed and died of a heart attack. A doctor in the party vainly attempted CPR for 30 minutes. Evacuated by Glencoe MRT and RN Sea King. 38.

FEBRUARY 21-22 – Three experienced climbers overdue on Buachaille Etive Mor after midnight. Glencoe MRT leader, using night vision goggles from Alltnafeadh, detected them all descending. Two had gone back into a gully to search for lost ice-axes. 5.

FEBRUARY 23 – Man (32) and woman (25) bivvied on Stob Coire nan Lochan summit due to gale and falling snow, contacting companions to say they would be OK. Contacted police at 05.00 feeling effects of deteriorating weather. Leader of Glencoe MRT spoke to the man giving advice, then again at 0800, attended to watch both descend safely. Full team callout not required. 6.

MARCH 4 – Leading North Buttress, Buachaille Etive Mor, man (38) had placements for both axes, but when looking for footholds the snow gave way. He fell backwards and a belay below him failed, so he fell 20m before being stopped by the rope, sustaining spine and leg injuries. A nearby party raised the alarm by mobile phone. They had been delayed by the number of climbers on the same route. It was windy with falling snow causing difficult footing for crampons. Cliff lower and stretcher carry by Glencoe MRT. Airlift by RAF Sea King. 127.

MARCH 6 – In mist, rain and falling snow on Pap of Glencoe, man (27) phoned 999 saying he was cragfast near summit after losing his bearings. He also expressed concern for his companion as they had become separated during the walk. Glencoe MRT found companion making her own way off the hill. Caller was then found and assisted down. He had a GPS in operation which helped in finding his position. 76.

MARCH 11 – Descending Bidean nam Bian towards Stob Coire nan Lochan, then Lost Valley, walker (36) slipped on snow and ice-axe braked. His crampon dug in causing a twisted knee. His companions put on an elastic bandage. He did not want rescuers called out saying he would get down with help from companions, but progress was slow. One did go ahead and told police, so Glencoe MRT monitored the evacuation. He declined medical attention. 8.

APRIL 20 – To avoid a snow slope in the corrie a party of nine descended scree on a rock buttress to the west of Coire na Tulaich, Buachaille Etive Mor. Man (52) not carrying crampons, got cragfast on a rock outcrop. Witness advised him to go back up and another way down would be found for him. He then heard a scrambling sound and saw the casualty fall past him. He fell 45m sustaining a large scalp gash, spine and abdominal injuries. A red flare was fired which was seen from the road and reported. Rescue by Glencoe MRT and RN helicopter. 52.

APRIL 2 – Two roped pairs were climbing Crowberry Ridge, Buachaille Etive Mor. The first pair were near the top of climb, traversed out of sight and heard a loud crash. They shouted to their friends but got no response. Another climber, farther up on an overlooking rock face, contacted emergency services on a mobile phone. Glencoe MRT and R177 (RN Sea King) attended. Bodies of the second pair (both men 34, 28) were found by air search at the foot of Crowberry Gully

having fallen 120m. Rope was attached to one and it was thought a rock belay may have given way. There was rain in calm conditions. 126.

MAY 7 – In sunny weather two sisters (no crampons and ice-axes) and a male companion climbed snow at the rear of the Lost Valley to reach the main ridge of Bidean nam Bian (at Bealach Dearg?), then decided to descend. Younger sister (22) went down the snow first, facing in and going between rock outcrops. Elder sister (37) followed directly behind but slipped. The younger caught her but the momentum was too much so both fell 100m stopping among rocks. The elder was killed. The younger sustained facial injuries. Companion raised the alarm and rescue was by Glencoe MRT, RAF and RN helicopters. 66.

MAY 13-14 – Alarm raised from walker's home. He (52) was reported the morning after being overdue from Sgor na h-Ulaidh and found that evening at The Gorge, Glencoe, on A82 having been contacted by mobile phone. It seems he climbed Beinn Maol Chaluim (Bidean nam Bian), descended Gleann Fhaolain by mistake into Glen Etive, then walked 20km of minor and main roads to where he was found suffering some heat trauma. Glencoe and Leuchars MRTs, SARDA, RAF and RN helicopters. 268.

MAY 29-June 2 – False alarm. Search was made for a nurse (53) believed to be missing from her tent. She had been touring with relatives from the same site but staying in another tent. She returned OK. Glencoe and Leuchars MRTs, RAF Sea King. 56.

JULY 14-15 – Schoolgirl (14) told her mother she was going to walk to the foot of Clachaig Gully. About 21.30 her mother could not see her but could hear her voice. Glencoe MRT located her to the east of the gully at 250m. She was walked down about midnight suffering slight cuts and bruises from a fall. 34.

AUGUST 12-13 – After E-W traverse of Aonach Eagach walker (43) slipped descending Clachaig Gully West injuring ankle and knee. Companions alerted rescuers at 23.30. Stretchered down by Glencoe MRT by 01.45 hours. Released from Belford Hospital after treatment for slight knee and shoulder injuries. 38.

AUGUST 24 – Two men (42, 22) got lost in mist just east of Stob Coire Leith summit when traversing Aonach Eagach westwards. They strayed off ridge and got cragfast trying to regain it. The younger alerted Glencoe MRT by mobile phone but could not sustain contact because his batteries ran out. Team found them fatigued but uninjured by a sweep/crag search of the ridge. RAF Sea King airlift in falling darkness. 59.

AUGUST 24 – Glencoe MRT called out by his companion to aid a walker (69) descending from Aonach Eagach to Loch Achtriochtan. He had aggravated an old ankle injury but got down at 22.30 before team arrived. 4.

AUGUST 27 – One in a party of 16 crossing Aonach Eagach pinnacles westwards, a woman (49) fell 20m breaking ribs and sustaining head cuts and bruises. She was winched by RAF Sea King and Glencoe MRT. 44.

SEPTEMBER 1-2 – False alarm. Walker (46) did not return to National Trust Campsite from Bidean nam Bian. He camped elsewhere and traversed Aonach Eagach. Glencoe MRT, RAF helicopter and SARDA searched till he was found in Clachaig Inn at 19.20 on second day. 105.

SEPTEMBER 4 – Four novices (males 28, 24, 23, female 21) set off at 13.00 to traverse Aonach Eagach W to E. They got tired after about three-quarters of the route and tried to descend to the A82 from the pinnacles. Cragfast at 19.45 they mobile phoned and were escorted off by Glencoe MRT reaching the road at 22.15 hours uninjured. 33.

SEPTEMBER 12 – Descending solo from summit of Bidean nam Bian in mist a man

- (34) got lost and cragfast on west-facing slopes of An t-Sron. He used a mobile phone and was escorted off by Glencoe MRT. 52.
- SEPTEMBER 19 – Negotiating the Lost Valley track, not far south of River Coe, woman (53) slipped on wet, muddy rock fracturing an ankle. She was winched by RN Sea King and Glencoe MRT and airlifted to Belford Hospital. 26.
- OCTOBER 21 – Stumbling at the pinnacles of Aonach Eagach and falling 10m a man (28) got cuts and bruises and a sprained ankle. Rescued by Glencoe MRT and RN Sea King. Released after treatment at Belford Hospital, Fort William. 34.
- DECEMBER 17-18 – Starting Aonach Eagach traverse at 09.00 four men (all about 27) got benighted at 15.00 midway between Meall Dearg and Stob Coire Leith. They decided to escape southwards which involved abseiling. One of them fell 10m when a rock flake abseil point failed; he sustained a slight limb injury, cuts and bruises. The rope had been lost so that all four were cragfast near the Ramp. Mobile phone was used. It was snowing and dark so airlift was not possible although RN Sea King attended. Glencoe MRT went up and assisted them down to the road by 01.00. 133.
- DECEMBER 23-24 – At 10.30 two men (45, 24) left the A82 to climb Boomerang Gully, Stob Coire nan Lochan, in calm, freezing weather. It proved more difficult than expected. Daylight faded and they downclimbed. They discarded gear and tried to get down the corrie. The partner of the older man (who was a novice under instruction) raised the alarm. Glencoe MRT found them halfway down the corrie and escorted them. RAFR137 was scrambled but aborted *en route*. SARDA also called. 72.
- DECEMBER 29-30 – Attempting Great Gully, Buachaille Etive Mor, a party of three (f34, m30, m30) got cragfast. One of them had no crampons. They summoned aid by mobile phone and flashing torches. The weather was calm, freezing, and there had been snowfall. They were brought down by 01.30 by Glencoe MRT. No helicopter required. 90.

OTHER CENTRAL HIGHLANDS

- JANUARY 8 – Walking with two companions on the plateau between the North and Centre Peaks of Beinn a' Chaorainn (Loch Laggan) a man (31) fell through the cornice. He fell 50m into soft snow and he was unhurt. He tried to climb out up through the cornice but it was too steep so he made his own way off the hill to the main A86 road. Lochaber MRT and RN Sea King helicopter. 38. N.B. The cornice he fell through is about 800m north of the notorious cornice that everyone falls through.
- JANUARY 15 – Climber (34) fell 12m, breaking his ankle, on Centre Post having failed to get good ice-axe placements. Companion used mobile phone and, with other climbers, lowered casualty to good winching position. RAF helicopter scrambled to Creag Meagaidh and picked up one Lochaber MRT member at Aberarder. Casualty was not in great distress and was therefore double strop lifted to the aircraft. 13.
- JANUARY 16 – Three walkers on a summit in Meall a'Bhuiridh area (probably Creise) watched, from a distance of about 20m, a paraglider attempting to take off. A sudden wind gust inflated the canopy causing the glider to be thrown back with full impact into the walkers. One of them (29), was thrown on to rocks causing a femur fracture. White Corries Ski Patrol reached him using a Groomer machine, and he was stretchered out by ski lifts/chairs. 10.
- JANUARY 23 – Ski-tow operator near summit of Meall a'Bhuiridh was trapped in machinery by both legs with an arm also crushed. RAF Sea King flew Glencoe

MRT, Fort William medical team and firemen to casualty. Helicopter gear used: fluid replenishment, oxygen, rewarming aids, stretcher. Casualty and medical team airlifted to Belford Hospital then to Raigmore, Inverness. 24.

JANUARY 23-24 – Climber (27) leading Centre Post, Creag Meagaidh got cragfast at about 17.30 hours. He was about halfway up the climb and about 15m above his last protection. He hammered his left axe in and clipped in to it. His second (m36) alerted passing climbers by torch flashes and whistle blasts. Lochaber MRT flown by RAF Sea King to a point above the climbers. One member lowered on two 150m ropes reached the leader and helped him down. Both climbers and MRT then airlifted. 168.

FEBRUARY 19 – Woman (60) ascending from Loch Ossian by Meall Nathrach Mor to Sgor Choinnich collapsed. She was lifted by HMS Gannet helicopter to Belford and found to be slightly dehydrated. Epilepsy was suspected as the reason for her collapse. 11.

FEBRUARY 20 – Climber slipped, or perhaps was avalanched, when descending after a climb on Beinn Udlaidh in Coire Daimh. He was found by a passer-by and a doctor was also on the scene. Although he attempted to self-evacuate he had sustained spinal fractures; broken ribs, haemothorax and bruised lungs; open elbow fracture and facial cuts. Arrochar and Strathclyde Police MRTs were called. RAF Sea King landed and evacuated casualty. Those left on the hill after dark (eight) were escorted down by MRTs. 54.

FEBRUARY 21 – Sron a'Choire, Creag Meagaidh. During descent, man (34) snapped ski off when it caught on a rock or something similar. Consequent fall fractured his leg. Companion raised alarm. Winched by RN Sea King and Lochaber MRT. 49.

FEBRUARY 22-23 – Two walkers (55, 46) were separated from their companion (48) at a height of 600m descending Meall Cian Dearg (5 km SSW of Tulloch Station, Glen Spean). When with them, he had fallen through a cornice and slid 100m out of their view. He slightly injured his head but got down to the phone kiosk at Fersit. Meantime, the other two men were stranded because he had the map. They bedded down for the night at 16.15 hours and were rescued by Lochaber MRT and R137 RAF helicopter at 05.00 hours. It is interesting that the same man had fallen about 10m through another cornice earlier the same day, but had climbed out uninjured. 62.

MARCH 4-5 – Reaching the summit of Beinn a'Chlachair in mist, two men (48, 37) decided to retrace down the East Ridge, but their bearing was 180° out and they continued west, then east over the pass of An Lairig. When it got dark they sheltered in a snow bank. They were found by RN Sea King near Ben Alder Lodge, Loch Ericht, about 10 km from where they left their bikes on the north side of the mountain. Cairngorm and Kinloss MRTs, six SARDA dogs. Because of fine weather when pair set out, rescuers were more concerned that they had been avalanched. Therefore the search was initially concentrated in high-risk areas. 316.

MARCH 7 – Pair left Kinlochleven at 13.00 hours and walked to north shore of Loch Eilde Mor where they separated. Woman descended to Kinlochleven to drive to Glen Nevis to pick him up. He (26) estimated walk via Coire an Lochain and pass between Sgurr Eilde Mor and Sgurr Eilde Beag would take two hours. It got dark and he had no torch. Glencoe and Lochaber teams searched from opposite ends. He was found by LMRT in Steall Meadow after 23.00 hours. 14.

MARCH 25 – Man (41), one of a party of four descending Glen Ceitlin to Glen Etive, slipped on wet vegetation, injuring his leg. Stretchered out by Glencoe MRT. 65.

- MAY 15 – Solo walker (65) suffered a fatal heart attack on summit of Stob Ban, Grey Corries at about 13.30. A passer-by found him. This was reported by telephone at 16.12 hours. He was recovered in excellent weather by RAF R137 helicopter and Lochaber MRT. 25.
- JUNE 3 – Five experienced friends set out to walk the Mamores for charity. The weather was good. One (26) went ahead on North Ridge of An Gearanach and was out of sight. His screams were heard by his brother who was nearest. He had fallen 60m suffering serious head injuries. Lochaber MRT and RAF Sea King alerted by mobile phone for airlift. 86.
- JUNE 16 – Wearing shoes, a man (29) was climbing down into the Monessie Gorge, Glen Spean, to go swimming. He intended to jump on to a rock but slipped, hitting a rock face and sustaining head, arm and leg injuries. His companion alerted Lochaber MRT. He was fitted with a neck splint and extracted from the gorge by stretcher. 37.
- JUNE 18 – Climbing on Binnein Shuas, Loch Laggan, a woman (25) slipped and fell 3m sustaining leg bruising. She was arrested by the rope, managed to complete the climb, but then could not walk out. Kinloss MRT was called out by mobile phone. She was evacuated by RAF Land-Rover. 5.
- JUNE 21 – A girl and her father were walking at the foot of Steall Waterfall, Glen Nevis. Daughter heard a noise and looked up at the waterfall. She saw an object fall. On seeing it hit the waterfall she saw that the water was bloodstained. She and her father searched and found the deceased, a man (28), within a deep rock pool at the foot of the waterfall. He was stretchered down Nevis Gorge by Lochaber MRT. 25.
- JUNE 28 – Two retired men intended to walk across Mamores to Kinlochleven then return via Upper Glen Nevis. On W to E traverse of main ridge of Na Gruagaichean one of them (60) collapsed due to exhaustion and dehydration. Companion mobile phoned. Airlift to hospital (detained overnight) by RAF Sea King and Glencoe MRT. 41.
- JULY 5-6 – Man (32) overdue after separation from his companions on Stob Ban (Mamores). He took the wrong route and was unable to regain it before weather change and darkness caused him to spend the night out. Lochaber MRT informed and called out next morning shortly before he walked in. 13.
- JULY 12, 2000-January 5, 2001 – Searches by Arrochar and Strathclyde Police MRTs, SARDA and Police helicopter on 14-19 July failed to find a Dublin man (32) missing from a religious retreat in Glen Orchy. On January 3, two climbers setting out to climb Black Shoot on SE Ridge, Beinn Eunaich found a rucksack. Strathclyde MRT found and recovered the remains of the missing man on January 5. 702.
- JULY 16 – Ascending near Ben Starav summit by the ridge of Stob Coire Dheirg a man (65) in a party of eight slipped and fell about 10m down rocks. Someone from another party used a mobile phone. Airlift by RN Sea King and Glencoe MRT. Suffering a broken ankle and wounds to head, arms and legs he was detained overnight in Belford Hospital. 48.
- JULY 18 – On a three-day hillwalking expedition from an outdoor centre, schoolgirl (16) collapsed from hypoglycaemia in Glen Chaorainn, SE of Beinn Teallach (Glen Spean). In good weather she was airlifted by RAF Sea King and Lochaber MRT and detained overnight in Belford Hospital. 24.
- AUGUST 5-6 – Mountain biking on Loch Chiarain path, 0.7km north of Blackwater Reservoir, schoolboy (15) sprained an ankle. Calm weather with rain. Lifted by Heli Med and Glencoe MRT to Raigmore, Inverness. 108.

- AUGUST 21 – False alarm. In good weather a Dutch walker reported distress calls heard on Na Gruagaichean, Mamores. Glencoe MRT searched and found nothing. Crofters were gathering sheep in that area and calling out to their dogs. 13.
- AUGUST 23 – False Alarm. Person reported that while at Steall Waterfall, Glen Nevis, a rucksack fell 100m to ground beside him. Rucksack fell in middle of waterfall. Lochaber MRT carried out a negative search for the owner of the rucksack. 28.
- AUGUST 23-24 – Glencoe MRT on standby for man (45) under the influence of alcohol, dressed in T-shirt, jeans and casual shoes, last seen by workmen crossing Blackwater Dam heading for wild country. Apprehended by police for his own safety about midnight. He had a slight hip injury from falling down a hole. 26.
- AUGUST 30 – Solo walker, a man (41) slipped on wet scree in Coire Giubhsachan on SW Slopes of Aonach Mor. He fell 6m and hit his head on a boulder. His shouts were heard by another walker who put the casualty into a bivvy bag and went for help. Airlifted by Lochaber MRT and RAF Sea King and treated at Belford with four stitches to scalp, cracked vertebra and bruising to back. 63.
- SEPTEMBER 16 – In rain a teacher (53) in a party of three slipped and injured her leg on NE Ridge of Beinn a'Chlachair. Cairngorm MRT called out. Airlift by RAF R137 Sea King. 52.
- SEPTEMBER 16-17 – On a three-day expedition through glens in Loch Treig and Loch Eilde Mor area seven schoolgirls (aged 15-17) navigated incorrectly on first day, and so were missed by the organisers despite reaching their final designated camp site on second day. Located by Lochaber MRT and RN Sea King. 24.
- SEPTEMBER 23-24 – Man (57) separated from six companions at 15.00 descending SW Ridge, Beinn a'Chlachair, saying they were going the wrong way. They got back to start point, waited, then reported him overdue at 20.40. Search by Kinloss, Leuchars and Lochaber MRTs, SARDA and RAF Sea King on September 24. Phone call at 18.30 on 24th saying he camped overnight then hitch-hiked and used public transport to get home. 469.
- SEPTEMBER 24 – Two walkers traversed Sgurr a'Mhaim and Devil's Ridge to Sgurr an Iubhair, took a bearing but thought they had gone wrong. They retraced then got into a different glen. They got to top of Steall Waterfall and tried to descend. One (32) got frightened and cragfast. Her companion left the area and raised alarm. She was assisted by Lochaber MRT. 26.
- OCTOBER 7 – Trying to get from An Gearanach to Stob Coire a'Chairn, man (40) and woman (26) descended Coire a'Mhail to top of Steall Waterfall where they got cragfast. Winched out by RAF Sea King and Lochaber MRT. 41.
- OCTOBER 14-15 – Retired man (58) not well equipped for the walk, estimated six hours to complete Ring of Steall and set out at 11.30. He had a minor fall during the walk suffering abrasions. He carried on, taking the wrong route on possibly the fourth Munro. Benighted, he spent the night on the hill and met other walkers at 07.30. Picked up by RAF Sea King which had been sweeping the area. Lochaber MRT. 74.
- OCTOBER 19 – Schoolgirl (12) had fallen down a loft ladder at the remote bothy of Kinlocheteive injuring her leg. Accompanied by her mother, late at night in the rain, she was stretchered out to road by Glencoe MRT. 37.
- NOVEMBER 5 – On the summit ridge of Beinn Fhionnlaidh, about 400m NE of the trig. point, a man (47) suffered a heart attack. Friend used a mobile phone and he was airlifted to Belford Hospital and detained. RAF R137 and Glencoe MRT. 20.
- NOVEMBER 25-26 – Four walkers left Kinlochleven at 09.30 attempting Binnein

Mor via Coire an Lochain. At 15.30 in failing light and falling snow they became separated into two pairs (m43, m43) and (f54, f43). By good fortune they met up three hours later and slowly retraced steps. They were found by Glencoe MRT Land-Rover on the track just below Loch Eilde Mor and taken down OK about midnight. 45.

DECEMBER 26-27 – Search by Lochaber MRT and HMCg helicopter for a fell runner (33) overdue from a planned 6km circular run in Glen Gloy. He missed a turning on the track and went north over rough snow/ice terrain eventually gaining A82 at Aberchalder Forest in the Great Glen, a journey of at least 22km. Team stood down at 01.30. 152.

DECEMBER 30-31 – Report of lights and shouts from foot of South Post, Creag Meagaidh, and a report of two overdue male climbers (36, 33), occasioned calling out Lochaber MRT and RAF Sea King. The pair got down to Aberarder OK having been delayed by a less-experienced climber and shouting a lot. The shouts had been heard on the wind and reported. 89.

DECEMBER 31, 2000-January 1, 2001 – At 07.30, man (55), left his car at Corriechoillie, Spean Bridge to visit a cairn erected, in memory of the death of a friend, about 1km east of Staoineag Bothy. The return distance is 30km. Weather was good at first, but he lost his map in a blizzard and bedded down for the night at Creaguaineach Lodge at the head of Loch Treig. His wife reported him missing that evening but could not describe an accurate route. His car was found at 22.30. Lochaber MRT and RN Sea King did a vain search before midnight. He was found at 08.00 by Kinloss MRT and RN helicopter returning north over the pass (Lairig Leacach). 192.

CAIRNGORMS

1999 Late reports: FEBRUARY 13 – Two members of Braemar MRT came on a walker (59) at Cac Carn Mor and escorted her down to highest point of 4x4 track on Lochnagar. She had torn muscles or ankle ligaments. 4.

MARCH 7-8 – Pair (f22, m21) failed to get over the cornice on Central Buttress of Lochnagar. Cragfast in darkness they waited for rescue. MRT member was lowered to them and led them to plateau. Aberdeen and Braemar MRTs, RAF Sea King. 250.

MAY 24, 1999 – Coast-to-coast walker (40) broke an ankle descending from Lochnagar summit to Glas-allt Shiel. His companion aided him down to Loch Muick 4x4 track then went to Spittal of Glenmuick to telephone. Braemar MRT. 10.

JUNE 5 – Schoolgirl (13) injured an ankle stumbling on a rough, wet path at Luibeg Bridge attempting multi-day Cairngorms crossing from Linn of Dee in a group of 20. Aided by three adults to Derry Lodge then evacuated by Grampian Police MRT to Braemar where she declined medical attention. 2.

JUNE 5 – Woman (38) involved in a sponsored walk from Glen Doll with 150 others, suffered from an old injury to an ankle ligament. She was transported by Grampian Police from the head of Lock Muick to Spittal of Glenmuick. 3.

JULY 25 – Walker (32) tripped near the top of Devil's Point pulling ankle ligaments. She had a history of similar symptoms. One friend went for Braemar MRT and her other six companions aided her slowly down to Corrou Bothy and Luibeg. Two team members helped her to a vehicle at the end of the 4x4 track. 7.

NOVEMBER 7 – In good weather a man (43) joined an abseiling group at Braedownie Quarry. On his third descent of the quarry face he declined the use of a helmet, and fell 18m (cause unknown) sustaining fatal injuries. Police and Ambulance Service. 6.

DECEMBER 27-28 – Loose snow on ice caused retreat of two men (32, 23) from a Grade II climb left of the waterfall on Eagles Rock. Overdue, they were found by RAF Sea King walking out on the Dubh Loch path in the small hours. Aberdeen and Braemar MRTs. 82.

2000: JANUARY 2-3 – Pair (f35, m42) with one hour of daylight left attempted to return from Fords of Avon via Lairig an Laoigh track to Glenmore (which had not been their outward route). They only had one torch, the batteries of which went flat. Rather than navigate by compass they chose to follow tracks of their friends who had done a reciprocal route. Soon they lost the footprints in the snow. Winds rose to 130km/hour gusts with heavy squalls of sleet and snow. They had deviated down Glasath towards Water of Caiplich. Wet, miserable and cold, with no bivvy bags and little spare clothing or food they survived the night in some form of igloo, then headed back towards Fords of Avon. Friends had got back to Glenmore and raised alarm before midnight, but helicopter could not operate at night in such conditions. Found OK by air search in Glasath at 11.00. Cairngorm, Kinloss MRTs, RAF Sea King and SARDA. 236. N.B. There was two hypothermia fatalities near here on April 10, 1960. Nigel Milne died near Bynack More. His friend, Janet McBain, probably thinking she was heading towards Glenmore safety and help for Nigel, carried on for several kilometres farther than him. Tragically, she was heading towards Water of Caiplich. His body was recovered, but her's was not found till many weeks later by her brother after regular searching.

JANUARY 6 – Hillwalker (47) had an ankle injury at Loch nan Eun, Beinn Iutharn Mhor, Glenshee. Her companion raised the alarm giving correct grid reference. Casualty had no torch or bivvy bag. RAF Sea King found her by using white light and night vision goggles on a slow-speed search, back-tracking along the informant's single line of footprints in the snow. Tayside Police MRT. 12.

JANUARY 14 – Pair of male Nordic skiers doing Macdui, Cairn Toul, Carn Ban Mor were reported slightly overdue. Cairngorm MRT took no action. They turned up 90 minutes late.

JANUARY 15 – Two walkers reported overdue at 19.20 from an expedition including a night in Corrou Bothy, supposed to be returning to Glenmore YH where they had booked and paid for accommodation. Cairngorm MRT declined to search till their car was located. They turned up at Braemar YH at 22.20.

JANUARY 22 – Leader (47) fell off from near top of Wavelength, Coire an t-Sneachda. A belay failed so he pulled off his second (51) and both men fell to the foot of the climb. Fall was witnessed by two Glenmore staff with radio who were instructing nearby. Stretchers from rescue box were used to take casualties below cloud. Second was lifted by RAF R137 helicopter but was dead on arrival at Raigmore. Leader with badly broken ankle was stretchered to car park in Coire Cas, then by ambulance to Raigmore for operation. Cairngorm MRT. 110.

JANUARY 22 – Douglas Gibson Gully, Lochnagar. Two ropes of two climbers were ascending the gully when the accident occurred to the first pair. The survivor (33) led up from a small cave in which the now deceased (40) was belayed to a small angle piton and also tied to two other anchors in the rock wall. After placing a running belay, the survivor moved up beyond it. However, the runner became dislodged and was seen to slide down one of the two ropes. A while later the survivor was seen to fall down the steep upper rock wall and fall into the gully bed near the second pair of climbers, then continued falling down the gully. One of the second pair looked up and witnessed the now deceased being catapulted from his stance into the air. The falling climbers did not collide with the second pair, nor did their ropes become entangled with them. The now deceased was

found on the snow slope, just above the boulder field, and showed no vital signs despite resuscitation attempts by other climbers. He was evacuated by RAF Sea King R137. The survivor had tried to walk off and he was found by Braemar MRT on the 4x4 track suffering from a fractured shoulder and extensive bruising to his face, legs and body. It is thought the accident pair had intended to climb Parallel Gully A. From the First Aid Post they could not see the base of the cliffs, and they had navigated on a compass bearing in poor visibility ending up, mistakenly, in the bottom of Douglas Gibson Gully. Grampian Police, RAF Leeming and RAF Leuchars MRTs. 166.

JANUARY 23-24 – Two men (33, 28) told landlady they intended to climb Hell's Lum, but went to Coire an Lochain instead and climbed Savage Slit. They left bivvy and navigation gear at foot of route, but decided their abseil point at the top was not safe. They tried to find The Couloir to descend, but one fell a little way through a cornice in poor visibility. The other took the lead and did the same. They then spent the night on the plateau but had no bivvy gear. Next day they got down to their sacks, and were spotted by Rescue 137 at 11.00 and airlifted. Braemar, Cairngorm, Kinloss MRTs and SARDA. Hill walking incident (when lost). 309.

JANUARY 23-24 – Man (41) and woman (34) climbed Invernookie on Fiacail Buttress, Coire an t-Sneachda, but route was very busy and they finished in the dark at 16.30. They had planned to go down Fiacail Ridge but followed voices up it. Lost sight of other climbers around top of Goat Track, so cautiously bivvied, but without gear. Found by Cairngorm MRT walking round coire rim next day. They walked off themselves but complained of cold hands. Police were to get a doctor to check them. Braemar and Kinloss MRTs, SARDA and RAF Sea King. Hill walking incident (when lost). 309.

JANUARY 25-26 – Party on winter-skills course camping at Shelter Stone went for an early evening walk without ice-axes or crampons. One (38) slipped injuring his leg and chest. Four walked out by Loch Avon and Strath Nethy to Glenmore. Two lifted by RAF Sea King. 10.

FEBRUARY 11 – Casualty (61) walking down Fiacail a'Choire Chais, after completing The Runnel, was blown over by a wind gust. He dislocated his shoulder and was aided from the hill by two companions. He was released from Raigmore Hospital after a day of observation.

FEBRUARY 12 – A party of five were on a winter-skills expedition in a vast amount of snow on steep east-facing slopes 600m north of Cnap Coire na Spreidhe (a top of Cairn Gorm). At 16.30 the party leader (46) fell through a cornice landing 100m below with slight head injuries and bruising. Another male instructor (20) tried to get down to him but fell through another cornice at a different place with similar injuries. Both wore helmets. Other two went towards Cairn Gorm to raise the alarm while the fallen leader had contacted Glenmore Lodge by mobile phone. When the Lodge party arrived the casualties had slowly walked off to Coire na Ciste where Cairngorm MRT aided them down at 21.00. 115.

FEBRUARY 12 – Man on a winter-skills course fell in Coire an t-Sneachda and injured his ankle. Ogwen Valley MRT were training in the corrie and took him to Coire Cas. He was taken on a 'piste basher' to the car park where he hopped off the stretcher and disappeared, but he was with an East Anglia group. 1.

FEBRUARY 13 – Party of 10 split into three smaller groups ascending Fiacail a' Coire an t-Sneachda (Fiacail Ridge). Male (18) tripped over crampons when somewhere above Bellhaven. He fell more than 80m very steeply and about 200m in all into Coire an t-Sneachda. He landed in soft snow and suffered a bruised

shoulder and a knock on the head. Cairngorm MRT and RAF Sea King airlift. 14.

FEBRUARY 16 – Party of three climbing The Chancer on Hell's Lum Crag. Man (56) fell 10m injuring an ankle. Glenmore Lodge and Cairngorm MRTs, RAF Sea King. 36.

FEBRUARY 20 – Party of three near top of Forty Thieves, Coire an t-Sneachda. Slab of snow and ice gave way carrying one man (36) 60m down slope injuring his ankle. He managed to stop on a ledge above a vertical rock and ice face. Failure to stop in the avalanche would probably have caused more serious injuries. Cairngorm MRT were near the site and lowered him, then stretchered him to ambulance in Coire Cas. 64.

FEBRUARY 24 – Rope of three were climbing in Aladdin's Couloir area of Coire an t-Sneachda. One slipped and pulled other two off. All three slid 150m causing dislocated shoulder for man (35). Self-evacuation to Raigmore Hospital.

FEBRUARY 24 – Party of six in Left-Hand Branch of the Black Spout, Lochnagar. Two roped pairs were each accompanied by a soloing instructor. Top group just under the cornice was missed by a windslab avalanche which came from the right side of the gully headwall. Other group of three, two ropes lengths below, was swept down, round the corner into the main gully, and stopped in snow at the bottom of the crag. One man (30) had ankle and shoulder strains. However, bottom group thought the other group (which had meantime gained the plateau) might be buried, so a passer-by was used to phone services. It had been freezing but not snowing when the avalanche occurred. Stretchered by Braemar and Grampian Police. Aberdeen and SARDA stood down at Ballater. Kinloss and RAF helicopter unable to reach site in bad weather. 229.

MARCH 4-5 – Lost in a white-out on Fiacail a'Choire Chais, Cairngorm, two men (25, 22) dug a snowhole for shelter and phoned a friend who alerted police at 19.55. Thought to be in Coire an t-Sneachda they were found by Cairngorm MRT on the ridge. Escorted off uninjured. 109.

MARCH 8 – Man used mobile to say his friend, man (22), had taken a fit in Coire an t-Sneachda. RAF Sea King attended, but he had recovered and walked out. Cairngorm standby. 11.

MARCH 18 – His companion phoned police when a walker (30) stumbled and dislocated his shoulder near Derry Lodge (pay phone). Stretchered to ambulance by Braemar MRT. 7.

APRIL 13 – On a steepish woodland path near Braemar (SW Slopes of Creag Choinnich) with Girl Guides, woman (66) slipped on a wet tree root, breaking an ankle. Stretchered by Grampian Police and Braemar MRT. 6.

APRIL 16 – Descending the back of Corrie Fee, Glen Doll by the traditional route (rough path) woman slipped and broke her leg. Tayside teams called out. Airlift by RAF. 42.

APRIL 22 – Walker (43) twisted his knee 40 minutes out on Coire an t-Sneachda path. When they contacted the emergency services by phone his companions were advised to splint the knee. They did this and casualty was able to walk out with aid. Cairngorm MRT and RAF R137 helicopter on standby. 3.

APRIL 23 – Just above the tree line on Carn Crom, near Derry Lodge, walker (45) stumbled on grass sustaining a double fracture of an ankle. Braemar MRT. RAF airlift. 12.

APRIL 23 – Walker (44) descending to Corrour Bothy from Ben Macdui slipped and sprained his ankle on steep heather. Able to walk a bit he got to Luibeg Bridge but then friend had to mobile phone for help. RAF R137 Sea King was still on above task and was diverted to airlift him to Glenmore Lodge. 9.

- APRIL 25-26 – Two men (28, 26) carried on east along the plateau edge of the Cairn Gorm Northern Corries after their three friends turned back in poor weather. They had GPS and ordinary compasses but only one map. When the map blew away they got lost and went south to Loch Avon. They contacted friends on mobile at 16.00, but at 19.00 dialled 999 when on SW Ridge A'Choinneach. Cairngorm MRT suggested a bearing for them to get down into Strath Nethy where they dug into snow behind boulders. Twenty-two team members with three SARDA were out for nine hours and got them out uninjured. 236.
- APRIL 26 – Solo walker (41) camping for three nights near Corrour Bothy tried to return to Speyside but got into difficulties in chest-deep snow near Pools of Dee. He dialled 999 on mobile at 11.00. Helicopter could not be used in poor visibility. Cairngorm MRT went into Lairig Ghru and met him near site of demolished Sinclair Hut, escorting him to Aviemore by 16.00. He had under-estimated snow for the time of year and was extremely pleased to see the rescuers. 48.
- MAY 15 – False alarm. Walker on summit of Sgor Gaoith in mist reported hearing three whistles. Nobody missing so Cairngorm MRT advised no action..
- MAY 21– Elderly couple walking between Geldie Lodge and Linn of Dee. Male suffered leg injury. Braemar MRT met ranger who had rescued them.
- MAY 21-22 – Grampian Police MRT checked mountain bothies for man (55) suffering mental illness. He was traced at Gelder Shiel, Lochnagar. 7.
- MAY 27 – Separation caused an unnecessary call-out. Missing woman (64) left son and daughter-in-law in Lairig Ghru near Corrour. They were climbing Devil's Point and other Munros while she crossed Lairig to meet at Sinclair site. She encountered atrocious weather at the boulder field, met a couple, turned round and went south with them to Linn o' Dee. They drove her to Aviemore but did not call police. Meanwhile, her previous companions had reached Sinclair, waited till 19.00 then raised the alarm. Cairngorm MRT. 45.
- MAY 27-28 – Inexperienced and ill-equipped man (41) and woman (37) went for a day walk in Cairn o' Clais and Carn an Tuirc area. Lost, they reached Glen Isla unhurt 22 hours later, after a bad-weather night. Braemar, Tayside Police and Tayside MRTs, SARDA, RAF Sea King and Kinloss team alerted but not deployed. 101.
- JUNE 2 – Braemar MRT used 4x4 vehicle to convey walker (49) and ambulance crew 3km from Glen Luibeg to Derry Lodge. The casualty had irregular heartbeats which crew had returned to normal rhythm using defibrillator. He was detained in Aberdeen RI. 6.
- JUNE 12 – Walker (77) strained knee descending Glas Allt Path, Lochnagar. His companion went to Spittal of Muick as mobile phones do not work at head of loch. Stetchered by Braemar MRT. 33.
- JUNE 15 – Engineer (57) slipped on a snow patch in Coire an Lochan, Cairngorm, falling 10m and lacerating his head. First Aid by family members and Cairngorm Ranger Service. Airlift by RAF Sea King to Raigmore where he was detained overnight. 10.
- JUNE 17 – Delayed in good weather by other climbers at foot of Eagle Ridge, a rope of two men (33, 29) were only a short time late returning to Glen Muick. Grampian Police MRT had just arrived. RAF Sea King flight cancelled *en route*. 4.
- JUNE 18 – Halfway up a climb on Creag an Dubh Loch: on the scramble pitch 5 of Black Mamba the leader (26) of one of two roped pairs slipped. As she climbed over a boulder she fell forward, put out her hands to break her fall and dislocated a shoulder. One companion stayed with her; the other two climbed an easier route to the top and used a mobile phone. Winchman of RAF Sea King lowered to her,

then she was airlifted with her companion. Braemar and Grampian Police MRTs. 79.

JUNE 19 – Retired man (84) walking with family to west of Quoich Water near Linn o' Quoich, Braemar stumbled on path and fell down a grassy slope lacerating the back of his head, with other minor cuts and bruises. Evacuated by Braemar MRT members working on Mar Lodge Estate. 4.

JUNE 24 – Lairig Ghru sponsored walker (59) had slipped and jarred her knee on starting. She was incapacitated by the time she reached Pools of Dee. Stretchered down to below cloud base by Cairngorm MRT then airlifted by RAF Sea King to Glenmore. 42.

JUNE 24 – Woman casualty was exhausted and had damaged ligament on Lairig Ghru walk. Evacuated from site of Sinclair Hut by Cairngorm MRT and RAF Sea King. 8.

JUNE 29-30 – Roped male pair (27, 22) overdue from Eagle Ridge, Lochnagar. They had route-finding problems, eventually abseiling from the Sentry Box pitch, walking out to the car park at 00.30. Grampian Police MRT. 2.

JULY 3 – Lochnagar area, on track between Conachcraig and Little Conachcraig, woman (46) one of two supervising seven girls on award expedition, stumbled when descending. The weight of her rucksack caused her to fall head first, striking the top/front of her head on a small stone. Land-Rover summoned by mobile phone took her to Aboyne Hospital where 22 stitches were inserted in a scalp wound. Grampian Police MRT. 3.

JULY 3 – Descending Rowantree Path from Maiden Causeway on Mither Tap, Bennachie, walker (62) slipped and broke her ankle. Airlift by RAF Sea King to nearby hotel, then by ambulance to Aberdeen. Good weather. Grampian Police. 8.

JULY 8 – Separated pair had split up by mistake in mist on Ben Macdui. The only one with a map had got back to Coire Cas by 17.00 when he phoned police. Cairngorm MRT took no action. Missing man turned up at 17.35. He had descended to Lairig Ghru and met a CMRT member walking from Braemar to Aviemore.

JULY 15-16 – Leaving Glen Clova at 13.45 to reach Loch Muick and return, walker (45) with no map and compass was overdue. Aberdeen, Braemar and Tayside MRTs searched. He was found OK about noon next day by RAF Sea King on Jock's Road, west of normal route. 28.

JULY 20 – Pass of Ballater West Section, Top Tier. Double-roped pair climbing ungraded and unnamed route at the eastern end. When 6m from top of route, leader dislocated his knee. Braemar MRT, alerted by mobile phone, used entonox and vacuum mattress and lowered him horizontally on a MacInnes stretcher 100m from the ledge to the bottom of the crag. 25.

JULY 22-23 – Man (44) phoned from Macdui summit at 18.15 giving ETA four hours later. Anxious wife phoned from Coire Cas at 22.45. Cairngorm MRT suggested she drive down ski road to meet him. He turned up on road at 23.05.

JULY 25 – Walker (28) on Macdui underestimated time needed due to mist. Grampian Police MRT. 4.

JULY 26 – Due to poor fitness, father (56) and son (14) were overdue at Spittal of Glenmuick from Lochnagar summit. Turned up tired at 22.00. Grampian Police MRT. 2.

JULY 27 – Angina sufferer (73) sat down to take a break when walking near Glasallt-Shiel. He fainted but managed to walk to ambulance. Braemar MRT. 4.

AUGUST 3 – Walker overdue between Glas Maol and Tom Buidhe. He turned up OK. Braemar. 11.

AUGUST 3 – Multi-day walker (44) arranged to mobile phone his mother every day. She informed Grampian Police MRT that he had not done so for two days. Police consulted his route (Sugar Bowl/Lairig Ghru/Glen Derry/Ben Macdui) and predicted when his signal would come through off summit plateau. He phoned 15 minutes before forecast. 3.

AUGUST 5 – A motorist on the B974 reported five young females (15, 13, 13, 10, 10) had gone off from Cairn o' Mount in wrong direction to reach their camp at Spittal of Dye. They turned up OK. Grampian Police MRT. 2.

AUGUST 11 – Schoolgirl (14) suffered pollen hypersensitivity at Luibeg Bridge, Carn a'Mhaim. Both air ambulance and RAF helicopters involved. Grampian Police MRT. 8.

AUGUST 18 – Craig a Barns, Dunkeld. Man (23) leading Twisted Rib on Polney Crag slipped on wet rock, fell 30m to ground, sustaining head injuries, despite wearing a helmet, and fracturing his arm. The climb had been started in dry conditions but it rained before climb was completed. Tayside Police MRT. 21.

SEPTEMBER 9-10 – Two men (both 25) climbing Grey Man's Crack in Coire Sputan Dearg, Ben Macdui, were delayed by ropes jamming on the penultimate pitch. They got to top at 21.00 but not having a torch delayed them further. One of two friends on another climb waited for them to help with his torch. The other went down, alerting police at 03.00. They were found at Derry Lodge and cycled out from there. 27.

SEPTEMBER 17-19 – Aberdeen, Braemar, Grampian Police and Kinloss MRTs, SARDA and RAF helicopter searched around Cairn o' Mount for a missing falconer (32). He was part of a team of falconers working in Glen Dye Estate. He lost his bird at 15.00 hours and followed it using a locator beacon. However, he was not prepared for the navigation or the rain and mist on Thorter Hill. He found the bird at 19.00 but he was lost. He walked towards house lights till 03.00 when he found a sheep shed on a farm. Not wishing to disturb occupants he did not knock on door till 07.00. 194.

SEPTEMBER 29-30 – In calm weather two men (57, 49) got benighted in mist at Glas Maol Trig. Point. Although they had map and compass they were unwilling to navigate off and used a mobile phone. Tayside Police MRT drove 4x4 vehicle on to summit and got them down unharmed. 18.

OCTOBER 5 – Pair (f 59, m54) separated on Lochnagar path, then missed each other among boulders when one sheltered from a sleet shower. She turned up at Glen Muick after man reported her overdue. Braemar and Grampian Police MRTs assembled. 5.

OCTOBER 14 – Separating on Bynack More for one man (29) to do some rock climbing while the other (also 29) returned slowly to The Saddle which they named as their rendezvous, did not work out. Casualty failed to find The Saddle. He panicked, ran around and twisted his ankle in a hole. He phoned police via mobile operator and they were both airlifted by RAF, the casualty from near A'Choinneach. Cairngorm MRT. 36.

OCTOBER 18 – Male hillwalker, one of five at Chalamain Gap, Cairn Gorm, collapsed. Rescuers alerted by mobile phone. One of 2 RAF Puma helicopters in area lifted him to Raigmore where he was dead on arrival. Suspected heart attack. 8.

OCTOBER 28-29 – Poorly clad and without compasses, torches or whistles, two mountain novices (24, 23) got lost when they climbed Ben Macdui via Sron Riach. Their only map had no cover and disintegrated in storm winds. Their planned descent was by Derry Cairngorm which they stated they reached about

18.00. At 18.45 both men were back on Macdui summit. Knowing they were lost they sat out the night in the remains of the Sappers Bothy until 07.30 hours next day. When they set off they quickly separated due to one suffering life-threatening hypothermia. The other twice tried to navigate from Macdui summit using the mountain indicator. They were found by Braemar MRT two hours later: one near Loch Etchachan, the other nearer Macdui summit (later stretchered). Both made a full recovery. Aberdeen, Braemar, Cairngorm, Grampian Police and Kinloss MRTs, six SARDA dogs, two RAF Sea Kings (airlift from as far up Glen Derry as safe). One burn was more than 2m deep in spate. Wind speeds of 209km/hr had been recorded on Cairn Gorm summit. 1120.

OCTOBER 29-30 – Woman (58) got tired and was left on the path to Beinn Dearg, Blair Atholl, while the rest of the party went on to the summit. She rested then tried to catch the others up but lost the path in mist. She walked for two hours then stopped at the head of Glen Diridh, 2.3km SE of summit. Teams were able to converse with her for a short time by mobile phone. She was found by RAF Sea King next day and left Raigmore Hospital after treatment for mild hypothermia. Both Tayside MRTs and SARDA. 286.

NOVEMBER 4 – Male fell in Coire an Lochain, Cairn Gorm. Climbing Andromeda he broke an ankle. Pair abseiled to foot of climb and used a mobile phone. Varying height of cloud base caused RAF Sea King to ask Cairngorm MRT to help, but slight weather improvement allowed winching. 30.

NOVEMBER 19-20 – Two males (26, 22) spent a few hours wandering on Cairn Gorm plateau after finishing Postern, Shelter Stone Crag, in darkness. Met at Coire Cas car park by Cairngorm MRT. It was thought they were on Hell's Lum; nothing would have been done till morning if it was known they were so far away. 30.

NOVEMBER 20 – Man (71) volunteered for a deer count on Tulloch Hill, Nethy Bridge. He got disoriented at about 350m due to strong wind, rain and poor visibility. RAF Sea King was alerted at 17.37 and traced him OK. 13.

DECEMBER 15 – Cairngorm MRT alerted for man and woman overdue at Rothiemurchus Lodge from Ben Macdui. They turned up 40 minutes before team intended to move, having been delayed by lack of ice axes and crampons, and wearing bendy boots on névé.

DECEMBER 16 – Man (25) sustained compound fibula fracture at noon in Coire an t-Sneachda, Cairn Gorm. When practising ice-axe braking the pick of his axe had struck rock and failed to slow him, so he slid 100m into rocks. Winched by RAF Lossiemouth helicopter and Cairngorm MRT. 12.

DECEMBER 27 – Fatal fall in B Gully, Corrie Fee, Mayar, Glen Clova. Unroped man (34) fell with no helmet and died from head injuries. It his thought his axe pulled out of ice near the top of the gully and he could not brake his fall. Companion completed climb then saw deceased 60m below point of fall. Body traced by Leuchars MRT and recovered by RAF Sea King. Both Tayside MRTs and SARDA called out. 143.

DECEMBER 28 – False alarm. When Coire an t-Sneachda was busy a large windslab avalanche was reported near Jacob's Ladder at about 13.00. It had not been seen going off and no shouts were heard. Cairngorm MRT declined to react, but as there was some pressure from worried people two SARDA dogs and RAF Sea King searched. 16.

DECEMBER 28 – Male (17) disoriented on snow slopes above and west of The Saddle, Strath Nethy, used mobile phone and got advice and a bearing from Glenmore Lodge staff. He walked out safely being met by a SARDA trained Northern Constabulary officer. 8.

SOUTHERN HIGHLANDS

- JANUARY 9 – Walker (26) on South Ridge of An Caisteal slipped on snow, landing on his ice axe which embedded in his arm. Rescue by RN Sea King and Killin MRT. No crampons. 50.
- JANUARY 20 – Party of four was descending north and north-east on Ben Lawers for Lochan nan Cat. In good, but freezing, weather, conditions underfoot varied between snow, ice and verglas. Two slipped, falling 75m. They were taken by RAF Lossiemouth Sea King and Kinloss MRT to Stirling Hospital, but the injuries of one caused transfer to Glasgow. Casualty details are not available, except that both wore lightweight walking boots and did not wear or carry crampons and ice axes. Taypol SARU involved. 18.
- JANUARY 22 – On very steep snow and ice on the NE Shoulder of Ben More, without ice axe or crampons, man (25) slipped and fell 30m. He suffered facial injuries, abrasions and mild hypothermia. Rescue by RN Sea King (HMS Gannet) and Killin MRT. Discharged from Glasgow Southern General Hospital later that evening. 18.
- JANUARY 22 – Two men (52, 43) set off too late to reach Ben Vane summit (Loch Lubnaig Ben Vane). Return took longer and they got lost in the dark. Found by Central Police heading for their car. 5.
- JANUARY 25 – North slopes of Beinn Dorain. Man (37) in party of three tripped on snow breaking a leg. RAF Sea King picked up Kinloss MRT, managed to get above cloud and saw lights through cloud tops. Kinloss and stretcher deployed. Helicopter returned with Strathclyde Police MRT. By then stretchered casualty was below cloud for airlift. Arrochar MRT and SARDA involved. 44.
- JANUARY 25 – Man (47) reached Stuc a' Chroin summit alone at 11.30 and attempted descent north on very steep, icy ground with crampons. He fell 120m with serious head injuries (no helmet). Reported missing at 19.00 he was located at 20.30 by Killin MRT using quad bikes to get to the accident. By then he also had hypothermia. RAF Sea King (from Corpach refuelling point after above rescue) winched casualty in MRT stretcher. Although ambulance lights could be seen at Stirling Hospital helicopter could not land in fog, so casualty was landed at Stirling Castle clear of fog. Taypol SARU. Fatal. 110.
- FEBRUARY 19-20 – False alarm five walkers reported a woman screaming for help in the NE Coire of Beinn Achaladair, Bridge of Orchy. Full moon search in calm weather revealed nothing. No-one was missing. Arrochar and Strathclyde Police MRTs, SARDA, RAF Sea King. 88.
- FEBRUARY 20 – Walking with two companions on Ben Ledi in snow and good weather, man (50) suffered a fatal heart attack when half-an-hour from his car. Stretcher carry by Killin MRT. 18.
- FEBRUARY 26 – Taypol SARU call-out for male avalanched on Ben Lawers cancelled. Turned up safe.
- MARCH 19-20 – Pair of overdue walkers (m27, f40) were located by Water Board staff at 02.40 cragfast above Loch Katrine. Killin MRT were taken to the location – in Goblin's Cave area – by boat. The two were secured to a safety rope and guided down without injury. They were poorly equipped for the route, the woman wearing town shoes. 13.
- APRIL 1-2 – Missing woman (83) went out to walk her dog in the hills behind Rosneath, Argyll (peninsula north of Kilcreggan). Disoriented she walked about in the forest for several hours till she got to a house for help. Strathclyde Police MRT search. 42.

- APRIL 2 – Walker (55) separated from a group of 12 taking a short-cut away from a track in Ardgartan Forest. He was not found despite a search by another party so Arrochar MRT was called out. He turned up OK. 4.
- APRIL 6-8 – On April 6, 2000 deceased (21) was involved in a road accident on A873 near Port of Menteith. He then ran off and was subsequently found dead possibly from hypothermia, by SARDA dog, Mac, at the northern end of Flanders Moss. Due to the difficult terrain, Killin MRT was called to recover the body, which was done by stretcher carry. RAF Sea King involved. 32.
- APRIL 21-22 – Overdue hill walker (24) with no navigation gear separated from his friend on Beinn Chabhair, Loch Lomond. Lost in rain and mist he walked off safe and well next morning. Killin MRT searched from 23.30 to 01.30. 10.
- APRIL 22 – Paraglider (47) in the Ochil Hills landed awkwardly near The Myretoun, Menstrie, fracturing a vertebra. Evacuated by Ambulance Service. Ochils MRT attended. 18.
- APRIL 23 – Walker (53) collapsed on Ben Vane, just above Ballimore, Loch Lubnaig. One went for help, while the other two members of his party carried out CPR until arrival of paramedics. Killin MRT called out along with RN Sea King from HMS Gannet. He was unable to be revived from his heart condition and was airlifted. 59.
- MAY 1 – Woman (42) slipped on the Ledard Burn Path of Ben Venue in good weather breaking her leg. Rescue by Killin MRT and RN Sea King. 43.
- MAY 13 – Arrochar MRT called out to supplement Strathclyde Police MRT. Schoolboy (14) slipped climbing out of gorge of Aldonwick Burn just above Rhu, sustaining slight leg and back injuries. Stretchered up bank, then through fields. Discharged next day. 38.
- MAY 21 – On the north-east lopes of Ben Vorlich (Ardlui) at 250m, man (69) slipped on wet grass in good weather, injuring leg. He wore three-quarter shank boots and carried ski poles. Rescue by police helicopter, Arrochar and Strathclyde Police MRTs. 50.
- JULY 6 – Descending ‘The Bowl’ of Stuc a’Chroin (corrie to the west between that mountain and Ben Vorlich) a man (22) jogged down, slipped and fractured a tibia and fibula. He was winched out by RN Sea King. Killin MRT. 26.
- JULY 6-8 – Leuchars, Lomond, Killin and Kinloss MRTs, RN and police helicopters, SARDA, searched hills to north of Loch Katrine for seven Armenian asylum seekers with a baby. Found by police some days later. 1284.
- JULY 7 – During Loch Katrine search Lomond MRT called out for female walker with broken ankle on Ben Lomond Tourist Path. Airlift to Glasgow by RAF helicopter. 8.
- JULY 8 – Descending south from Ben Ledi, walker (39) tripped over a small boulder, breaking her leg. Treated with Frac Pack and stretchered down by Killin MRT. 16.
- JULY 13 – Climber at the Whangie, climbed beyond a running belay, fell 6m and injured his back. First Aid and airlift by HMS Gannet helicopter and Lomond MRT. 19.
- JULY 17 – Zig-zags below Gannell Path on Wester Kirk Craigs, Tillicoultry. Man (72) wearing inappropriate footwear on steep grass/path had slipped. Companion of casualty used mobile phone to alert police. Fall caused two broken ribs, multiple cuts and bruises. Paramedics did First Aid and Ochils MRT stretchered him to RAF Sea King. 33.
- JULY 18-19 – Night search of heavily-wooded grounds of a Dumbarton nursing home had failed to find an Alzheimer’s patient (70). She was found next

- morning, having fallen and broken her arm by SARDA dog and Strathclyde Police MRT and treated at Vale of Leven Hospital. Police helicopter. 13.
- JULY 21 – Four women and a child (39,35, 25, 22, 10) took path around Loch Katrine. When path stopped they thought they could continue along the side of Ben Venue. When lost they used mobile phone and were told to go down to foreshore, whence they were uplifted by inflatable dinghy. Killin MRT. 1.
- JULY 31 – False alarm. Members of public reported flashing lights after midnight on Wood Hill above Tillicoultry Quarry. Ochils MRT on standby while police inquiries established that a father and children were camping there. 10.
- AUGUST 2 – Boy killed by fall at Faskally Linn, Pitlochry. Evacuated by Heli Med.
- AUGUST 5 – Man (26) on Ben Vorlich, Loch Earn had phoned to say he was cancelling Stuc a'Chroin ascent due to mist. When he got overdue, local knowledge suggested he would be in Glen Ample. Phone signal was returned at 20.00 and he was found by police in Glen Ample with no map, compass or torch. Killin MRT standby. 8.
- AUGUST 13 – Meall Garbh, Tarmachan Ridge. Walker (45) slipped on steep rock and grass breaking her arm and sustaining minor head injuries. Her companion waved to other walkers who used mobile phone. Airlift by RN Sea King and Killin MRT. 47.
- AUGUST 16 - DECEMBER 17 – Tayside MRT, Taypol SARU and SARDA searched Allt Bail a' Mhuilinn area of Tarmachan Ridge for a missing person (26). His car had been found on the minor road 2km north of Lochan na Lairige (Ben Lawers). Search was called off due to lack of information. Four months later a climber found his skeletal remains, with training shoes and not equipped for hillwalking, in frozen ground at the foot of the SW facing crags of Creag na Caillich, Tarmachan Ridge. On Sunday 17, December 2000 under police supervision he was placed in a body bag and stretchered by Killin MRT to a hearse. 337.
- AUGUST 19 – Scottish Ambulance helicopter lifted male walker (53) with heart condition and heat trauma from Ben A'n, Trossachs. Lomond MRT stood down *en route*. Good weather.
- AUGUST 19 – See previous incident. Another male member (30) of the same party of six walkers had a twisted ankle. Stretchered by Killin MRT he declined medical attention. 14.
- SEPTEMBER 1 – Mountain bikers (females 40, 40 and boy 14) without maps or compasses got lost in dark at Loch Ordie, Dunkeld and used mobile phone. Found by Tayside Police MRT using 4WD vehicle. 4.
- SEPTEMBER 9 – Dutch tourist (28) injured her head and shoulder by fall on West Highland Way near Inversnaid. Rescued by six organisations working together: Air Ambulance, Ambulance, Lomond MRT, Lomond Ranger Service, Luss Rescue Boat, Police. 61.
- SEPTEMBER 9-10 – Man and woman with three boys (9, 7, 5) under-estimated time needed to climb Beinn Narnain. They got down just as Arrochar and Strathclyde Police MRTs, SARDA and helicopter assembled. 2.
- SEPTEMBER 10 – Man (62) fell in Ochil Hills. Injured man's companion alerted Ambulance Service by mobile phone. RN Sea King lifted patient to Stirling Royal Infirmary. Ochils MRT and Police. 10.
- SEPTEMBER 11-12 – Man (72) tending sheep at Tayinloan, Kintyre, got lost in dark, strong wind and rain. He turned up next morning at other side of peninsula. Arrochar and Strathclyde Police MRTs. 56.
- SEPTEMBER 19 – Couple jumped in lower Glen Turret near Falls of Turret, Crieff.

Male was killed and female sustained multiple injuries. Fire Brigade and Ambulance Service.

OCTOBER 9 – Deerstalker (50) wearing Wellington boots fell 20-30m on Cnap na Criche (515m peak just north of Loch Sloy). Striking a large tree caused fatal head and facial injuries. Oilskin clothing sliding over wet grass probably increased the speed of his fall. Stretcher carry in darkness by Arrochar and Strathclyde Police MRTs. 39.

OCTOBER 9 – Ghillie (54) left by stalker to move two stags by Argocat at Allt Duin Chroisg, Glen Lochay. He got bogged down in the dark by heavy rain, swollen burns and darkness. Stalker and Killin MRT found the ghillie and the ATV, then helped him down. 44.

OCTOBER 21 – Arrochar and Strathclyde Police MRTs and police helicopter were called out for five students overdue from hillwalking at Ardgarten, Loch Long. They turned up as teams assembled.

NOVEMBER 2 – Hillwalker broke his leg on Beinn Achaladair, Bridge of Orchy. He was evacuated by Rescue 177 Sea King from HMS Gannet while Strathclyde Police and Arrochar MRTs were *en route* to the incident. Good weather. 30.

NOVEMBER 4 – Ascending Beinn Chaorach (713m) in the Luss Hills woman (34) slipped or stumbled, dislocating her knee cap. She was stretchered down by Arrochar and Strathclyde Police MRTs. 24.

NOVEMBER 4 – Experienced hillwalker (60) descending Bank Hill to Castle Campbell, Dollar, slipped on steep slippery path, breaking her leg. Splinted under entonox and stretchered by Ochils MRT. 28.

NOVEMBER 11 – Shepherd (30) was seen about 15.00 gathering sheep on Creag Mhor, about 5 km west of Killin at 530m. Killin MRT, recalled from a night SAR exercise, found him at 19.30 hours near Corrycharmaig Burn, disoriented and hypothermic. He had descended 350m and was about 2.2 km from where he had been seen. He was provided with warm clothing and transport and needed no further medical help. 23.

NOVEMBER 16 – At 16.30 walker (m65) stumbled descending NE slopes of Beinn Dubhchraig, Crianlarich, causing probable ankle fracture. Party of three had no torch but used mobile phone and GPS to pass location to police. Grid reference had numbers transposed which caused Strathclyde Police and Arrochar MRTs to be called out (Glen Lochy) and later Killin MRT for local knowledge. Vehicles drove to within 500m of casualty who was stretchered off by 20.00. 85.

NOVEMBER 19 – Man (54) in a party of three suffered a fatal heart attack at the source of Finlas Water at 600m in the Luss Hills. He was airlifted by RN Sea King to Vale of Leven Hospital and was dead on arrival. Strathclyde Police MRT. 16.

NOVEMBER 25 – Man (41) in a party of four climbing Beinn Each and Stuc a' Chroin complained of chest pains and thigh cramp. He then became hypothermic so one went for help. Rescued by Killin MRT by Land-Rover to Glenample Farm. 3.

NOVEMBER 26-27 – Couple overdue on Ben Chonzie were safe and well. Tayside Police MRT.

DECEMBER 24 – Just south of the summit of Cruach Ardrain on the normal route, the terrain was ice under a snow layer. One (44) of a party of eight walkers slipped and fractured his ankle. Another used mobile phone. Due to difficulty of route, RAF Sea King was used with Killin MRT. 70.

DECEMBER 27 – Experienced walker (61) descending icy Cononish track from Ben Lui to Tyndrum in darkness slipped, went over on his ankle and fractured it. One of his companions went for help. Killin MRT used Land-Rover to get him to ambulance. 10.

SKYE

- APRIL 14 – Man and wife (41,43) with their children (f13, f11, m7) followed a path on The Prison, Quiraing. Parents got concerned for the children's safety because the path was discontinuous due to erosion. They raised alarm and all were airlifted by HMCG. 35.
- MAY 8 – A man (70) fractured a wrist and severely bruised his pelvis, with other cuts and bruises when he tripped or stumbled on loose gravel descending Sgurr nan Eag down Coire a'Ghrunnda. One of his five friends went down to raise the alarm. He was winched by RAF Sea King and Skye MRT. 17.
- MAY 9 – Friend went to look for man (43) overdue from the hill. He found him on Beinn Bhoidheach, The Braes, unconscious from a suspected drug overdose. Airlift to Broadford by Skye MRT and HMCG helicopter. 14.
- MAY 10 – At 12.00 the casualty, a solo walker (42) was on the top ridge of The Storr in good weather when he slipped/tripped and fell 45m to the base of the area known as The Pinnacle. At 15.00 he was found by walkers who tried to walk him off. This proved impracticable, so police were alerted. Skye MRT and HMCG helicopter airlifted him to Stornoway Hospital. He was later transferred to Aberdeen with two broken vertebrae in back and neck, fracture in hand, bruising and abrasions. 16.
- MAY 29 – Cragfast man (22) on Window Buttress, Sgurr Dearg in good weather alerted passers-by to his difficulties who then contacted police. Skye MRT rescued him by rope and assisted self-evacuation. 20.
- MAY 29 – Undertaking Main Ridge traverse Kinloss MRT met a pair of climbers, one was a male with a sprained ankle. HMCG helicopter at 17.45 hours lifted both to Sligachan. 16.
- JUNE 21 – Man (59) climbing near the top of Sgurr nan Each in the Blaven group in calm, dry weather with some mist. The now deceased, along with a companion, had been climbing up an almost vertical slab. They were about 8m apart (presumably at roughly the same height). Upon reaching the top of the 5m-high slab, the deceased dislodged a large boulder causing him to fall backwards, impacting the rear of his head onto another rock slab about 5m below. He was not wearing a helmet. After the initial impact, the deceased travelled downwards on his back, bouncing off numerous other rocks for a distance of approximately 30m, coming to rest with his head downhill on a large rock slab. The companion provided First Aid and thereafter left to raise the alarm. Skye MRT and RAF Sea King helicopter R137. 54.
- JUNE 25 – Three men were walking up Bruach na Frithe in good weather. About 100m from the top the leading man dislodged a rock with his foot which rolled towards the other two. One (30) did not have time to get out of the way. The rock cut his lip (three stitches), dislocated his shoulder and caused bruising. He was airlifted to Broadford Hospital, by HMCG helicopter and Skye MRT, where he was detained overnight. 4.
- JULY 3-7 – False alarm. Concern had been expressed for a missing person who, well-equipped, had been walking and camping around Camasunary and Coruisk and was traced safe and well. Skye MRT, RAF Sea King. 25.
- AUGUST 3 – Kinloss MRT and Skye team leader in RAFR137 helicopter lifted fallen climber and his partner from Coire Lagan suffering arm and lower leg injuries. 20.
- AUGUST 21 – Well-equipped solo walker (62) died of a heart attack on Sgurr nan Gilleann Tourist Route 100m below the summit. A passer-by found him with no vital signs slumped in a sitting position. Mobile phone alerted police, Skye MRT

and RAF Sea King which airlifted him to Broadford Hospital. 49.

AUGUST 26 – Having climbed Sgurr a' Mhadaidh from Loch Coruisk two men (33, 32) got cragfast at start of descent when thick mist closed in with heavy rain. Skye MRT, alerted by mobile phone, escorted pair off the mountain without incident or injury. 50.

AUGUST 30 – Party of six was near Loch Coire Lagan in good weather. Man (27) lost his footing and fell 2m cutting his arm. He couldn't move his leg. Four companions descended to campsite and alerted Skye MRT and RAF Sea King. He was airlifted to Broadford Hospital and discharged after treatment for a cut arm. 14.

SEPTEMBER 4-5 – Climbers on a nearby hill heard shouts for help from the ridge of Sgurr nan Gobhar (Sgurr na Banachdich). Skye MRT searched and found lone male (18) with injured knee. He was stretched down part way, for airlift by RAF Sea King to Broadford. Rain and strong wind. 163.

SEPTEMBER 10 – Wife (40) fell and broke a foot bone walking on Oronsay, an islet off Ullinish Point at the mouth of Loch Harport. She was with her husband; both being well-equipped and experienced hill walkers. Unable to move and with tide rushing in to cut them off from Skye mainland HMCG helicopter was tasked to uplift them. Skye MRT and Police. 10.

SOUTHERN UPLANDS

1999 Late report: DECEMBER 5 – Tweed Valley MRT called out for woman hill walker with suspected broken ankle in the Pentland Hills. 10.

2000: JANUARY 21 – Body of overdue man (50s) found on hill near Carter Bar by RAF Boulmer Sea King. He suffered a suspected heart attack. Border SARU and SARDA *en route*.

APRIL 12 – Three SARDA dogs called out at 18.00 and Galloway MRT searched Palnure Burn area, near Newton Stewart, for boy (15) with learning difficulties. Police found he had returned home but carer had not reported it.

APRIL 23 – Walker broke his leg descending from Loch Enoch (east of The Merrick) to Culsharg Bothy. He used mobile phone and was airlifted by RN Sea King. Galloway MRT and two SARDA dogs recalled *en route*.

MAY 7 – Tweed Valley MRT called out to search for young woman lost in Glentress Forest, Moorfoot Hills, Peebles. She walked out aided only by mobile phone directions. 1.

JUNE 5-9 – Border SARU, Moffat, other MRTs and SARDA searched Eskdalemuir forests and open hills for two days, finding no trace of missing male (70s), who turned up safe two days later having been disoriented in forest. 361.

AUGUST 20-21 – Tweed Valley MRT and SARDA called out to find French tourist overdue from Melrose Youth Hostel. Hosteller turned up OK before teams deployed. 9.

AUGUST 20-21 – Woman reported husband and six children overdue at nightfall. They had gone up The Merrick from Glen Trool. Wife had a mobile phone message that they were safe and sheltering in trees. Galloway MRT found them at the foot of Benyellary near Culsharg Bothy. They had no compass, map, walking boots or torches. Children were treated for shock and cold. Two SARDA dogs were *en route*. 16.

SEPTEMBER 9 – Walking party used mobile to report person on Broad Law with back injury. Tweed Valley MRT found it to be an old injury inflamed by a slip. Subject was able to walk down as team arrived. SARDA called out. 8.

- SEPTEMBER 10 – Moffat MRT and SARDA recalled *en route* to search for a man (86) overdue from a sponsored walk in Mabie Forest near Dumfries. Found by another walker. 15.
- SEPTEMBER 12 – False alarm. Tweed Valley MRT, SARDA dogs and helicopter searched when distress cries were reported in Ettrick Valley. A working farmer was running a dog called 'Kelp'. 80.
- SEPTEMBER 23 – Moffat MRT providing safety cover for annual hill race at Broughton escorted three exhausted runners off the hill and drove them to base. 3.
- OCTOBER 11 – Army officer did extra training exercise along border about 10km SE of The Cheviot. Lost overnight he got separated from a small group. Search by services and RAF MRT. Found OK by RAF helicopter before Border SARU got deployed.
- OCTOBER 16 – Tweed Valley MRT alerted when man (67) walking dogs in Glentress Forest, Moorfoot Hills, was overdue. Lost, he was two hours late meeting his wife. He was found by forest rangers well off his planned route. 1.
- OCTOBER 20-21 – Leuchars and Tweed Valley MRTs, RAF and Strathclyde helicopters called out to search for a boy (16) who had been last seen by friends, after a party at a farm house, wandering into the Lammermuir Hills. He was found dead by RAF Boulmer helicopter, then stretchered from moors by Border SARU after CID and medical formalities. 231.
- OCTOBER 28 – False alarm. Moffat MRT stood by while police made inquiries about a car parked at Grey Mare's Tail five hours after dark when very stormy and wet. Solo hillwalker returned for car unaided. 44.
- OCTOBER 31-NOVEMBER 1 – Police were notified that clothes had been found on Potholm Hill, Langholm. Inquiries revealed that the deceased (63) was missing from her home. She had walked over the hill naked before slipping down the hillside suffering abrasions. Moffat MRT and SARDA searched for her. She was found by RN Sea King from HMS Gannet. She appeared to have been dead for some time. 124.
- NOVEMBER 25 – Boy (15) separated from a large party walking the Lammermuir Hills. He got down OK. Tweed Valley MRT alerted by mobile phone.

NON-MOUNTAINEERING

1999 Late Report: AUGUST 4 – Injured rider (39) was with another 10 clients and the leader of a horse trek from Upper Glen Quoich to Mar Lodge when her horse tripped and fell forward. The mount up-ended; the rider was thrown violently forward, breaking her collar bone, with the horse landing on top of her. The horse was helped to its feet, which freed the rider. Braemar MRT fitted neck brace and back brace and casualty was helicoptered out. 19.

2000: JANUARY 12 – Mountain biker (22) separated from her two friends at 14.00 at the foot of Beinn a' Bhuid and went on up Quoich Water Track, Braemar. When it got dark she mobile phoned Grampian Police MRT as she thought she was lost. Found on the same track. 4.

JANUARY 16-17 – Border SARU, Tweed Valley MRT and SARDA searched Scottish side of Carter Bar after a freezing night. Casualty (30s) left suicide note. He was found hiding in woodland by English teams. Deeply hypothermic he was airlifted to hospital by Northumbria Air Ambulance. 40.

JANUARY 19 – Moffat MRT searched heavily-wooded hillside for man (31). His

body was found hanging 5m up a tree at Type Knowes near Greenhillstairs. After police photographed him, remains were lowered and stretchered to road. 118.

FEBRUARY 15 – Lochaber MRT alerted for canoeist (22) in River Kiachnish at Blarmachfoldach, Fort William. Running a drop he flipped his boat wedging its tail in rocks. Getting out of the canoe he fell, striking his head on rocks and sustaining minor injuries. Airlifted to Belford by RN Sea King in the area. 14.

FEBRUARY 25-26 – Strathclyde Police MRT searched remote forested hills (Clanmore Forest near Pinwherry, Ayr) for a suicidal man (31) possessing a shotgun. Missing for 29 hours and 3km from his abandoned vehicle he shot himself dead when approached by a friend, the local farmer. 132.

APRIL 22 – Walker/angler (33) with two others had been separated from them for 1 hour 45 minutes. The three had walked to a lochan in Glen Etive 5 km upstream from Loch Etive. About 14.00 the other two had left him to fish the small lochan. They walked farther down Glen Etive. When they returned they found him lying face down in the lochan, near where he had been fishing from the edge. His face and lips were blue. Despite CPR and later defibrillation he did not regain consciousness. It is thought an epileptic seizure had caused his fall into the lochan. Stretchered to road by Glencoe MRT. 21.

MAY 8-10 – Angler (64) fishing with two friends at Kinlochbeoraid, 8 km NW of Glenfinnan, turned to walk back to his tent, slipped on shoreline rock injuring his ankle. Next day injury worsened so friend went to Fort William. Lochaber team called but not deployed. Airlift by RAF R137. 24.

MAY 28-29 – Large search on Rannoch Moor for missing fisherman (76). Parked at Loch na h' Achlaise three anglers meant to walk to Dubh Lochan for fishing. Two turned back because of the rough going. Missing angler carried on but twisted his knee in a fall and got lost. He could only walk in three minute' spells then had to rest. RAF and RN Sea Kings on search; Strathclyde Police helicopter found him, mildly hypothermic at 18.33 on second day. Arrochar, Glencoe, Kinloss, Leuchars, Strathclyde Police MRTs and SARDA. 929.

JULY 7-8 – Patient (82) missing from a nursing home near Ecclefechan was found by Moffat MRT in a field 1 km distant. She was cold, wet and confused but otherwise OK. Three SARDA dogs used. 30.

JULY 21 – Man calling police by mobile phone threatening suicide near Gattonside Farm, Melrose. Tweed Valley MRT had just started search when he agreed to seek further medical help. SARDA called out. 18.

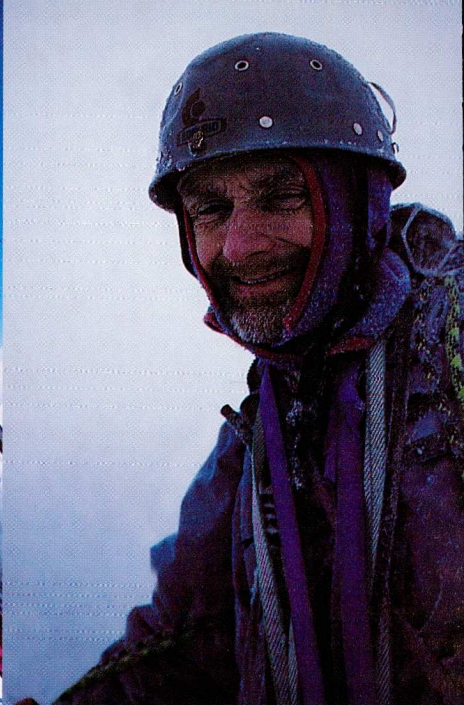
JULY 24 – Black Spout, Pitlochry (a waterfall near waymarked walks through the woods north of the town). Boys crossing Edradour Burn; one (15) fell, was swept down the waterfall and sustained a compound fracture to an arm. RAF helicopter. Tappol SARU. 6.

JULY 24 – The Deil's Heid, Arbroath sea cliffs. Woman fell (fatality). RAF helicopter and Lifeboat.

AUGUST 3 – Woman (35) suffering depression was seen entering woods on Glentanar Estate. She was found comatose on Belrorie Hill, roused and airlifted to hospital. Braemar MRT, SARDA, RAF Sea King. 49.

AUGUST 4-5 – As darkness fell a reliable witness reported distress calls from ridge on north side of Glen Tromie, Kingussie above Lynaberack Lodge. The shouting stopped at 23.00. Cairngorm MRT traced the route over to Ruthven and found a man shouting above Gordonhall Farm. He was safe and well but a bit confused on interview. He was not a hill walker. 10.





AUGUST 8 – Cairngorm MRT asked to assist ambulance crew who were unable to reach a woman with a broken femur. She had fallen off her horse about 3 km off road on Alvie Estate. Estate workers with estate vehicle carried out the rescue.

AUGUST 10 – Braedownie, Glen Clova. Man fell, or jumped. Fatality.

AUGUST 12 – Arran animal rescue. Highland cow lowered by ropes and slings from the foot of a cliff down scree to the main Arran road by MRT. Uninjured.

OCTOBER 14-15 – Boy (3) wearing fleece, denim jacket and Wellingtons, separated from his mother, who was busy strapping his younger sister into her car seat at Falls of Shin Forest Walks, 8km NNW of Bonar Bridge. He wandered 1km hunting dinosaurs, then bedded down for the night in a sheltered place. The weather was dry and calm but temperatures lowered during the night. Overnight searches were carried out by Assynt, Leuchars and Kinloss MRTs and Fire Brigade. HMCG and RAF helicopters were involved together with 300 local volunteers. He was found next morning in a very thick tangle of undergrowth and windblown branches by a SARDA dog. Cold but undaunted he had fought off many dinosaurs! 1070.

OCTOBER 20 – Counting deer with a party in Abernethy Forest, man (70) went missing. He was found uninjured by RAF Sea King. Cairngorm MRT. 44.

NOVEMBER 4 – Male (16) with others was gathering sheep on Rubha Bolum, a promontory SE of Beinn Mhor on the east coast of South Uist. He sustained an injury and was overcome with abdominal pain. He was airlifted to hospital by HMCG helicopter and detained. 21.

NOVEMBER 11 – Border SARU stood down *en route* to search for boy (11) separated from a youth group in Dunbar area. 14.

NOVEMBER 13-14 – Woman (78) missing in Minigaff, Newton Stewart. Galloway MRT searched banks of the River Cree and the Penkiln Burn on first evening, then found her slightly hypothermic next day. Freezing temperatures. 46.

DECEMBER 10 – Woman (45) fractured a tibia when with two friends. Reaching up to cut holly from a tree she tripped and fell. She was 400m from vehicle access on Meall a' Bhuachaille above Glenmore Lodge. Lifted to Glenmore by RAF Sea King on exercise in the area. 8.

DECEMBER 19 – Still missing is a man (40) from a stalking group at Glenaladale, Loch Shiel (10km SW of Glenfinnan). He was sharing the bothy with two companions. The location is extremely remote of access except by boat. Equipped with breathable waterproofs and adequate boots he left the bothy at 22.00 intending to walk to a nearby location for a smoke. The others went to bed and did not know he was still outside till next morning. Extensive searches by Lochaber and Kinloss MRTs, RAF and HMCG helicopters, SARDA and Northern Constabulary search dog teams, and CSP diving team, have failed to find him. 1083.

DECEMBER 30 – Group of six were sledging and snowboarding on Caen Hill, Helmsdale, Sutherland. Woman (22) fell off her sledge breaking a tibia and fibula. Friend walked out to phone. Airlifted to Raigmore by RAF Sea King. 20.

DECEMBER 31 – Cairngorm MRT called out to search Glenlivet village for lightly-clad woman (30s) in freezing snowstorm. She was found by police. 8.

During the year Border SARU attended six local rideout festivals. Three female casualties (31, 13, 8) suffering concussion, broken arm and broken clavicle were treated.

Everest conquerors – Sandy Allan (left) on the summit (2001). Photo: Sandy Allan Collection. Rick Allen (2000). Photo: Simon Richardson.

Jim Sparks of Colorado descending the Yellow Band on Everest. Photo: Sandy Allan Collection.

IN MEMORIAM

VICTOR RUSSELL j. 1946

IT MIGHT truly be said that Victor Russell was a member of an SMC dynasty. The youngest son of Arthur W. Russell, who was in the party that made the first recorded traverse of the Aonach Eagach in 1895, Victor was one of three Russell brothers to join the Club, the others being Colin and George. Between them those four family members have compiled an extraordinary total duration of Club membership approaching 240 years.

Victor was born the day before the Armistice in the First World War – hence his name. He was educated at Harrow and at Cambridge, where he studied Mechanical Sciences and extended his Scottish hill experience into rock climbing with the CUMC in Wales, the Lakes, and Skye. On graduating in 1940 he joined the Royal Engineers as a surveyor, attaining the rank of Captain. In 1944 he volunteered for service in Antarctica on Operation Tabarin (reputedly named, in anticipation of the Polar winter, after a notoriously dark nightclub in pre-war Paris).

The purposes of this venture – J. M. Wordie was one of its directors – are still veiled in some degree of secrecy and improbability: it was apparently intended partly to maintain a British territorial claim, but also to prevent possible German use of former whaling stations and research bases to support U-boats or surface raiders. Tabarin was to develop into the Falkland Islands Dependency Survey and ultimately the British Antarctic Survey. In three seasons South, carrying out wide-ranging exploratory survey work around Graham Land in often arduous conditions, Victor gained the Polar Medal and Bar, awards not lightly given. I never heard him enlarge on these activities, except to reveal a vested interest in global warming: “There’s a glacier named after me on the Antarctic Peninsula,” he told me once, with his characteristic chuckle: “A very small glacier – probably gone by now.” Victor was always a modest man. Later, I learned that the Russell Glacier is an enormous double icefield draining down either flank of the Peninsula.

On his return from the South, Victor joined the Alpine Club’s 1948 post-war training meet at Kleine Scheidegg, and relished some good climbs on the big Oberland peaks, including the Nollen on the Mönch North Face (“But only behind guides, of course”, he insisted). I suspect that was the zenith of his climbing; his prime mountain interest thereafter was in skiing, which he had already discovered pre-war. He headed off to hotter climes in North Africa and the Middle East for a career as a surveyor and senior manager with the Iraq Petroleum Co., in the course of which he set up a ski club and opened a hut in the mountains of Lebanon. After a decade in the company’s London HQ, he retired in 1974 to his ‘croft’ near Feshiebridge, where he and Helen kept a very hospitable open house. From there he took an active part in ski-ing and the management of racing on Cairn Gorm, and in the activities of the local church.

But as befitted the son of the first law officer of the National Trust for Scotland who played a major part in acquiring Glen Coe and Dalness for the Trust and the nation, Victor also took an increasingly active role in conservation work. He was a long-standing supporter of the Badenoch and Strathspey Conservation Group, the Scottish Countryside Activities Council, the Association for the Protection of Rural Scotland, and a number of other bodies, uncomplainingly trailing up and down to a multiplicity of meetings in the Central Belt. He became President of BSCG and Honorary Vice-President of SCAC.

For five minutes after first meeting Victor, one could not but be struck by his

accent, of a type too often associated in Scotland with patrician pomposity and condescension; but as we discovered very quickly, he was wholly innocent of either vice. He was a genuinely nice man who won respect and warm friendship from all sorts of folk. His endearing habit of bringing a packet of biscuits or a jar of boiled sweets to meetings epitomised his thoughtfulness and informality. Nevertheless, he made good use of that ripe accent and family reputation to lobby landowners and agency staffs, and to beard lions like Dulverton in his Glenfeshie den; in those settings Victor's upper-crust style concealed a dauntless campaigner, a stalwart of the battle for Lurcher's Gully.

Victor's Christian conviction and cheerfulness never failed him. Having received a terminal prognosis in the autumn of last year, he went home and enjoyed a good walk round Loch an Eilean. Back in 1944, when Victor turned up as a youthful guest at the SMC New Year Meet at Crianlarich, thinly-attended mainly by the old stagers, Stuart Jack described him as "full of beans and very welcome". Despite nagging ill-health, that was still true of him 50 years on. It is a fitting epitaph for a man who commanded immense affection.

Robert Aiken.

FRED HARPER j. 1965

FRED HARPER was a leading figure in the fields of mountaineering and ski-mountaineering instruction and guiding. He died last July aged 62 after contracting kidney cancer just over a year before. He was much loved and highly respected and his loss will be mourned by all associated with these recreations.

Fred, the son of a well-known Galloway seedsman, was brought up in Stranraer and educated at Edinburgh Academy. After National Service with the Navy he studied Sociology at Edinburgh University in the early Sixties and climbed with the Edinburgh Squirrels. Along with their strongest climber, Brian Robertson, Fred made first ascents of the great Centre Post of Creag Meagaidh and of King Kong on the Carn Dearg Buttress of Ben Nevis (see *SMCJ*, 1965, xxviii, 103ff). He also made many new climbs on the imposing crags of Creag Dubh near Newtonmore, and participated in some impressive climbs in the Dolomites with fellow-Squirrels Robertson, Dave Bathgate and Arthur Ewing, notably the Klaus Werner Weg on the Punta Emma (see *SMCJ*, 1967, xxviii, 280ff). In the main Alps he made an early ascent of the Voie Britannique on the Blaitière with Bathgate. He also led a successful expedition to Ali Ratni Tibba in the Kulu Himalaya in 1969. He joined the Club in 1965 (proposed by Robertson and supported by Graham Tiso and Dougal Haston) and began a career as a professional instructor with posts at the Benmore Outdoor Centre (Dunoon), the North-West Outward Bound School in Oregon and at Marlborough College.

In 1970, Fred became Deputy Principal under Eric Langmuir at Glenmore Lodge, and later in the year he took over as Principal when Langmuir moved to a post in Edinburgh. He remained in the post until 1986. At the start of his office, Glenmore like other such centres carried only a small permanent staff and made use of voluntary staff to cope with the greater numbers using the centre in the summer season. However, the process of professionalization of instruction – which was already taking place – was hurried forward following the tragic loss of five schoolchildren in a dreadful accident in November 1971. This group, from Edinburgh's Ainslie Park School and based at Lagganlia Outdoor Centre in Glenfeshie, had perished in a fierce storm on the Cairngorm plateau. After a late start from the top chairlift station, they failed to find the Curran Bothy at the head

of the Feith Buidhe, which was buried beneath the snow. Fred was heavily involved in giving evidence to the subsequent Fatal Accident Inquiry. The reverberations of this accident and the subsequent inquiry continue to the present day.

Fred had to cope with the associated difficulties of an increased permanent staff at Glenmore and a fall-off in the demand for outdoor instruction from schools worried about danger and liability. The buildings and other facilities at Glenmore, always unsatisfactory, had to be upgraded and extended. That Glenmore Lodge survives and thrives is largely due to Fred's wise and careful management through the 1970s and early 1980s. It is also mainly on account of Fred's advice that the dangerous high-level bothies (Curran, St. Valery and Jean's Hut) were removed from the Cairngorm plateau. Intended as emergency refuges, these had become instead the target for planned visits, and when these bothies could not be found disaster was never far away. Fred realized – having studied Harold Drasdo's penetrating essay *Margins of Safety* – that climbers were often apt to take a safety benefit and convert it into a performance benefit, thus nullifying its purpose.

Among many innovations on the instructional side at Glenmore, Fred began Alpine training courses using Lodge staff and British guides. This was a particular enthusiasm of his, since he retained a sharp memory of his first Alpine season with Eddie Cairns. Both blundering novices, they took two days to reach the Requin Hut and needed several points of aid to achieve a path to it! On the following day Cairns suffered a very avoidable fall off-route and once Fred had lowered him back to the Hut, a kindly American climber 'took their packs down to Chamonix for them' and was seen no more – the end of a very short and nasty Alpine season! For Glenmore, Fred's early death piles sadness on sadness: other senior staff who have died young include John Cunningham, Duncan Ross and Roger O'Donovan, the latter two likewise victims of cancer.

Fred played a full part in the rapid growth of the Association of British Mountain Guides through the 1970s and 1980s and became their President in the late 1980s. After leaving the Lodge he embarked on a career as a full-time guide based in the French Alps but working around the world, with courses and with private clients. There was deep resentment amongst the Mont Blanc guides towards British guides 'working their territory' and Fred played a major part in negotiating more satisfactory arrangements with them and with the international body of guides, the UIAGM.

Throughout his working life, Fred sought to achieve a satisfactory balance between the need for safe guidance and the adventurous purposes of climbing and ski-mountaineering. His approach was based on the idea that, although one might and perhaps should propose principles for safe instruction and guiding, these could never be more than rules of thumb and that 'the right thing to do' depended as much on the judgment and experience of the guide, the state of the party and of the mountain.

Fred shifted his base from Argentière to Kingussie a few years ago and had just begun to renew his links with climbing and climbers here when illness overtook him. His loss is particularly to be regretted since, unlike many guides, he retained the amateur spirit and enthusiasm essential for accurate judgment of mountaineering issues, and at the same time enjoyed a background of experience and wide practical knowledge which added potent authority to such judgments.

He is survived by his wife, Sue, sons Angus and Peter by his first wife Marjorie Ann, and his two brothers Brian and Colin.

Robin N. Campbell

ALASTAIR HETHERINGTON j. 1950

ALASTAIR HETHERINGTON died in October 1999. The son of a distinguished and much-loved Principal of Glasgow University, Alastair discovered the Scottish hills as a schoolboy. He was given to long stravaigings across the Southern and Central Highlands, sometimes with friends from school or the JMCS but often alone, until the War got in the way. His military career included some scarifying experiences as an officer in armoured units during the advance from Normandy into Belgium in 1944, and culminated in a year in Hamburg as editorial controller on the newly-established *Die Welt*.

Once demobbed, Alastair came back to Scotland for five years on the staff of the *Glasgow Herald*. During that time he was again very active on the Scottish hills; he joined the SMC in 1950, proposed by Graham MacPhee, and was a regular attendee at Club meets. However, once he moved south to the *Guardian*, first in Manchester and latterly in London, his scope for getting to the hills and taking part in Club affairs was much reduced. Nevertheless, he remained a life-long inveterate hill-goer, with family holidays usually being spent walking in the Lakes or in Arran. He took the chance of a stint as a Commonwealth student at Princeton in 1952-3 to tackle a variety of mountains across the US from New England to California. Away from the hills he brought a sharp outdoor asceticism into the incorrigibly bloated and bibulous London journalistic scene; stories abound of him requiring staff to join him in brisk walks at lunchtime, irrespective of the weather, rather than retreating to some overheated pub.

Professionally, Alastair made his name when, almost as his first act as Editor of the *Guardian* in 1956, he took a courageous principled stance against Britain's post-Imperialist armed intervention in the Suez crisis, and held it tenaciously in the face of intense and often vituperative criticism. He went on to be acclaimed as one of the greatest British newspaper editors of the 20th century. He returned to Scotland in 1975 to be Controller of BBC Radio Scotland; manager of Radio Highland in Inverness, and then professor of media studies at Stirling University.

After 1975 Alastair spent much time in Arran, of which he had been a passionate devotee since boyhood. He compiled a walker's guide to the island, and contributed an enthusiastic essay on the Pirnmill Hills to the Diadem tome, *Wild Walks*. He required almost every visitor to his retreat at High Corrie, however physically ill-equipped for the venture, to follow him up Goatfell, feeding them on the way his characteristic sandwiches of marmalade with Brie or Stilton.

In the 1980s he took on several active roles reflecting his commitment to conservation of the Scottish hills: as an elected member of the Council of the National Trust for Scotland, a Trustee of the nascent John Muir Trust, and a Council member of the revived Scottish Council for National Parks. As far back as 1955 he had contributed a note to the Journal on the designation of the Cairngorms as a National Nature Reserve, which had raised real fears of restriction on walkers and climbers, while in 1968 he was one of those who publicly opposed the construction of the Coruisk track and bridges.

Alastair was a modest man who carried his distinction lightly; typically, when he filled in one of my 'Wilderness' research questionnaires in the early 1970s, he gave his profession simply as 'Journalist'. His contributions to discussion in meetings of the JMT and SCNP were never assertive but always quietly incisive. His enduring love for Scotland's hills was a fundamental underpinning for his life and work.

Robert Aiken

MAURICE COOKE J. 1938

MAURICE COOKE was a respected and much-loved master at the Edinburgh Academy for virtually his entire professional career. The only interruption was the Second World War, in which Cooke served with the Royal Scots. At the Academy, he was on the staff for 38 years and was senior master for the last three years before his retirement in 1969. He taught history in a committed, but always, deeply enthusiastic and informed manner.

Maurice Herbert Cooke was born in the Menabilly Estate in Cornwall (the property was the setting of the famous *du Maurier* novel), where his father was factor. After Lancing College, Cooke went up to Keble College, Oxford, to gain honours in Modern History.

He was then offered a post at the Edinburgh Academy and travelled north, obviously, not well versed in the subtleties of the Scottish way with words. On his first day, a class dissolved into titters when Cooke unfortunately pronounced one of the school's division as COCK-burn.

Maurice Cooke was a fast learner, however, and he not only mastered the traditions and practices of Scotland but became of one its greatest champions through his love of the hills and outdoors. In those days, masters had to assume extra teaching classes and somehow (probably because he was new) Cooke landed up with English and book-keeping. One respected Edinburgh accountant remembers those classes with much affection. "Good straight-forward stuff," he recalled. "Nothing too taxing for us or him."

His nickname from that time, which remained throughout his time, was Hubba Cooke. The origin has long since been forgotten.

On the outbreak of hostilities in the Second World War, he joined the Royal Scots and landed in Normandy, leading B Company through north France into Belgium. It was there that he won his Military Cross for stoutly defending a strategically important ridge against repeated German attacks.

His position was particularly vulnerable as the anti-tank guns could not get across an exposed canal. Worse followed as the forward observation posts were cut off. Cooke calmly went forward to assume their positions and directed a counter-attack. The citation for his Military Cross spoke of his "outstanding calm and masterful manner" and there is little doubt that the successful outcome was attributable to his bravery and foresight. He was demobbed with the rank of major.

He returned to the Academy in 1945 and, not unnaturally, was put in charge of the CCF – apart from his teaching duties. His passion for military affairs ensured that the Academy's CCF improved immeasurably. On retiring from the position of senior officer he introduced to the school (one of the first in Scotland to do so) the Duke of Edinburgh's Award Scheme.

Cooke devoted much of his time and energies to the Scheme. He was a member of Lord Hunt's committee and thereby had much input into its original shaping and direction. As the Academy's leader, he introduced generations of boys to the thrills of mountaineering. A skilled practitioner himself, he imparted his passion for the sport with infectious enthusiasm. He drove boys at dawn to the Pentlands or the Cairngorms in a battered, but serviceable, van and then showed them those terrifying rocks. His own experience helped to allay (some of) their fears, however,

and boys made climbs of which they never thought themselves capable. Until late in life he remained an active member of the Scottish Mountaineering Club and the Alpine Club.

After his retirement from the Academy he stayed in Edinburgh for 20 years before moving south to live with a niece. He never married and his niece survives him.

Alasdair Steven.

WILLIAM M. S. MYLES j. 1980

BILL MYLES died on March 26, 2001 at the over-early age of 74. He had been enjoying a short holiday in Pitlochry with his wife and died peacefully in his sleep.

Bill was born in the capital, and apart from military service with the Royal Scots Greys, remained there throughout his life. Having left school early to commence an apprenticeship as a brush maker, he eventually started his own business of wholesale ironmongers and the firm of Myles Bros. continues to flourish in the East of Scotland in the capable hands of his sons. In business circles Bill was prominent – a ‘man of affairs’ – with executive involvement in the Royal Scots Club, the National Trust for Scotland, the local Community Council, the Edinburgh Rotary Club, St. Columba’s Hospice and Drumsheugh Baths Club, to name but a few. He was also an active elder of Palmerston Place Church.

Mountaineering, however, was his greatest love and he was proud of his membership of the Edinburgh JMCS and the SMC. Shrapnel damage to his knees prevented any aspirations of being a technical climber but he was a great trampler of the hills and completed in 1975. He introduced many beginners to the outdoors and the Bill Myles ‘crocodile’ was a common sight on many JMCS meets and invaluable for conducting sweep searches for the mist-shrouded cairn on some summit plateau.

He was also an early Secretary of the Mountaineering Council of Scotland and organised their first winter skills training courses at Glenmore Lodge.

The Eastern District could not have had a better Convener and the monthly lunch took on a new elegance when for a short time it was held in the offices of the Royal Scots Club in Abercromby Place. His contacts within the University of Edinburgh found the Eastern District its venue for monthly lectures in the Pollock Halls and his long association with the National Trust for Scotland secured the present home for our library in Hutchesons’ Hall in Glasgow.

Many soon came to realise that you did not under-estimate Bill Myles, for although his manner was slow and measured with little whispered confidences, he possessed the sharpest of minds. He will be remembered by his friends as the greatest of characters, famed for his stories which could last for several car journeys and also for his technical ineptitude as on the occasion of the recent yacht meet when he tipped the boat’s cutlery over the side with the dish water. I remember having to wake the ghillie in Glen Pean to borrow a car battery, which then had to be carried miles down the glen to start Bill’s car after he left the lights on. And then there was his infernal pipe, guaranteed to clear any enclosed space.

We have lost a stalwart member and extend our sympathies to his wife, Margaret and to his family.

J. R. R. Fowler.

PROCEEDINGS OF THE CLUB

New members

Ann MacDonald, (33), Housing Association Director, Glasgow

Michael R. Harvey, (36), Analyst, Glasgow

Stephen J.H. Reid, (47), Shop Proprietor, Keswick

The One-Hundreth-and-Eleventh AGM and Dinner

THE event kicked off with the usual afternoon slide show given by our own Rick Allen who described his recent ascents in the Himalayas culminating with the 'big one' in May 2000. By contrast, the AGM was a low-profile affair with no real issues to excite or interest the 120 or so who attended.

Dinner followed – well up on the Alexandra's customary standard with Gordon Ross in particularly good form with the Club song and a selection of other numbers. The President delivered his parting speech in his usual measured style; John Peden delivered his in much too polite a style and our principal guest, Ian McNaught-Davis, delivered a brilliant speech (about God only knows what) in a style all his own.

What may not be known is that Mac put in an impressive effort to attend having flown from Lausanne to Glasgow that day. He then drove to the Fort, ate the food, delivered the speech, partied until 3am, breakfasted at 7am and drove back to Glasgow to fly to Paris. A fair effort all round and expenses waived. Very much our sort of guest!

Ken Crocket succeeded to the Presidency, with all due modesty, in the footsteps of Bryan Fleming and expressed the customary hopes for the future of the Club.

And what of 2001? The significantly lower attendance this year is an issue that must be addressed and perhaps the whole format of the Dinner requires to be reviewed. The table plan system certainly seems outmoded and works against those preferring their day on the hill. Extensive research has failed to come up with many (any) suitable alternative venues so it's Fort William again on December 1, but this time to the revamped Milton Hotel complete with its Moorish arches and leisure club. At least your party frock won't get wet on your way to the AGM.

J. R. R. Fowler.

SKI MOUNTAINEERING MEET, 2001

THE first thing that greeted members and their guests on arrival at the Raeburn Hut for the annual Colwyn Jones Birthday Bash was the ominous presence of the two big green plastic watering cans on the kitchen floor which, as regular hut users will recognise, is the coded sign to visitors that the water supply is frozen. So that first evening, as the 15 SMC plunkers (Cockney slang anyone?) and their guests arrived in dribs and drabs, was spent by most bemoaning that fact, while some made a first acquaintance with the route to the watering hole at the burn across the road.

The following morning most were up and away at the crack of dawn with talk of Creag Meagaidh and the Post Face much in the air, it having been decided that perhaps conditions were more favourable to climbing rather than skiing. Slessor, Smart, Orr and Bott however lay late. The latter two, although raring to go, doing so purely in deference to their elders you understand. This gave Orr an erstwhile

member of the Criminal Investigation Department of Edinburgh's finest the opportunity to ponder on the mystery of the frozen water supply, for mystery it indeed was, as one couldn't help noticing the noise from the gushing burn across the road and feel in the ambient temperature, an almost overwhelming desire to don shorts. With valued assistance from deputies Slesser and Bott, Smart remaining at base reading last month's newspapers, the arcane workings of the settling tanks were investigated and found to be bone dry. This gave the breakthrough the inquiry team needed and it was eventually discovered by Deputy Slesser, acting entirely on his own initiative, that a junction piece of the supply pipe had been unscrewed some 100 yards upstream of the tanks. Sabotage? Or simply some previous occupants failing to rejoin same after their own investigations at a time when the supply really was frozen. Inquiries are continuing.

The dawn patrol, for one reason and another, mainly the 40-plus cars in the car park at 9.00am, by passed Creag Meagaidh and took uplift to the top of Aonach Mor (and not one of them a day over 70!). Skiing down to the cliffs of the East Face Colwyn Jones, Ann MacDonald and Colin Read climbed Tunnel Vision III, while John Bickerdike and Donald Balance climbed Temperance Union Blues. The party then skied in icy conditions to the top of Aonach Beag and returned via the pistes.

The water supply investigation team and their base camp manager after much driving around in search of snow settled for a quick ascent of the east Drumochter hills, later taking great delight in informing their fellows that they had managed to don skis less than 500 yards from the car. An exciting if narrow descent was enjoyed down the obvious gully opposite the junction of the Dalwhinnie Road with the A9.

Gordon and Susan McKenzie had travelled to Glen Feshie in search of good snow, any snow and made an ascent of Carn Ban Mor and Sgor Gaoith.

Later that night, the birthday celebrations got into full swing (he must enjoy it or, being organiser, he would change the date!) when Anne MacDonald produced a birthday cake, well a Christmas cake really, she does spoil that boy. A convivial evening was enjoyed by all including a display of the latest in gaiters by Dave Kirk. These could only be described as partially 'fishnet' and when this adjective was applied to them Dave was quick to inform us that they belonged to his wife, Liz. Yes that old one. Needless to say in the heady atmosphere brought about by the sampling of a fair cross section of the country's malts both Mainland and Island (Bott was roundly castigated for producing Grouse!) someone who shall remain nameless felt it incumbent upon himself to put one of the said gaiters to a use which the manufacturers had, rightly, not felt the need to anticipate. It was perhaps a happy coincidence that the alleged owner of this 'must have' innovation was upstairs sound asleep at the time. Dave's only problem now being to ensure that he gets to his copy of the Journal before she does.

On the Sunday, Slesser, Orr and Bott made an exciting ascent of Stob Coire Claurigh from Spean Bridge taking the car past Corriechoille farm right up to the tree line at about 300m. Skis were worn for all but the last 200ft. or so where, due to icing and a high wind, it was thought wiser to resort to ice axe and crampons, at least by those who had them, but that's another story. An even more exciting descent was made down the very steep and icy 'Bott variation' on the south ridge after which time out was taken to watch the flight of a Golden Eagle around the summit snows and to celebrate being alive. Skins were again donned for a short ascent onto the ridge of Coire na Ceannain and after a testing icy traverse (one knows not to fall when you see Professor Slesser looking anxious!) a return was made on ever-diminishing snows to the car.

The Aonach Mor party of the day before plouted about in Drumochter with the exception of the birthday boy who, carrying out training duties with the Mountain Rescue Team in the Northern Corries, spent the day being lowered in a stretcher from the Fiacal Ridge.

A grand meet even although, on this occasion, the snow Gods were not particularly kind.

Note: The CIC Ski meet scheduled for early March fell victim to the Foot and Mouth epidemic and I believe that the collective sigh of relief from the less skilled members of our band who had foolishly signed up to go could be clearly heard throughout the land. I even heard tell that such was the level of anxiety among some that wills had been prepared! The big question now is how will they/we get out of it next year?

Charlie J. Orr.

JMCS REPORTS

Edinburgh Section: As is tradition in JMCS reports, I will start with the current membership levels. The Section continues to increase in size, having 103 members, including 22 aspirants at the beginning of 2001.

As usual, the mountaineering activities of members during the past year have been extremely varied. As well as the usual hillwalking, rock-climbing and winter climbing, the club continued its traditions of ski-mountaineering, (both Nordic and Alpine) and mountain-biking, with many more people taking part in the former.

The usual Wednesday night Heriot-Watt climbing wall meet has been complemented by a meet for the keen at Alien Rock on Mondays. During the summer months a varied calendar of mid-week meets to crags from Dunkeld to Bowden Doors was organised in addition to the normal trips to Traprain Law and Aberdour. It was noted that both of these locations are looking a bit the worse for wear from too much climbing, a bit like some of the members! Traprain seems more polished and Aberdour looser – the older members recall.

The year opened in style with Hogmanay meets to Jock's and the Smiddy. Meets during the winter from the CIC and our own huts in Newtonmore and Dundonell resulted in a number of good winter ascents varying from Tower Ridge and Smith's Route on the Ben to Over Sixties Icefall on Liathach. An alternative to the Ling Hut meet in March was a ski-mountaineering trip to Ben Alder Cottage. This involved 30 miles of skiing and a couple of Munros on the way. A meet at the Smiddy in May was noted for great climbing at Gruinard Bay and other lesser known crags in the area. The Shelterstone meet in June was (strangely enough Ed.) located variously at Aberdour, Skye, Glen Nevis and Glencoe, with members staying at Jock's. The Glen Coe meet was the nearest to being accurately located, with ascents of Hiccup, Bottleneck Chimney and Nirvana among many others.

The Club trips abroad were as diverse as ever, ranging from trips to Spain to expeditions in the Himalaya. At the beginning of the year ice climbing in Canada, Chamonix and Italy, along with ski-mountaineering in the Alps, were the preferred activities. By Easter these had been replaced by hot-rocking in Spain (which is becoming an increasingly popular destination for the sun-starved rock athletes of the Club) and bouldering at Fontainbleau. Members met in Chamonix and the Ecrins during July for some Alpinism, completing a number of routes from the Gervasutti Couloir on the Tour Ronde and the Chere Couloir, to the Aiguille L'm and the Aiguille de Perseverance. Other members were to found in Ladakh, Arolla and Trondheim.

The annual dinner took place at the Onich Hotel this year during some slushy

weather in November. A very good night was had by all, despite the early closing of the bar at midnight! The lack of alcohol failed to improve the pool playing abilities of the participants.

The huts continue to go from strength to strength in terms of facilities. Jock's Spot at Newtonmore has been renovated and now sleeps 12 downstairs. The kitchen in the Smiddy at Dundonell is now complete thanks to Fraser Fotheringham and the SMT and now rivals many people's homes.

The joint Eastern Section SMC/JMCS slide nights continue to be excellent events with speakers talking on many different mountaineering topics from ski-mountaineering in Alaska to aid climbing in Yosemite. These events take place at 7.30pm on the second Tuesday of the month from October to March at the

Pollock Halls, Edinburgh.

Officials elected were: *Hon. President*, John Fowler; *Hon. Vice-President*, Alan Smith; *President*, Stuart Buchanan; *Vice-President*, Brian Donaldson; *Treasurer*, Charles Stupart; *Secretary*, Euan Grieve, 7 Lawers Square, Penicuik, (euan@eh11.freemove.co.uk); *Membership Secretary*, Douglas Hall, *Smiddy Custodian*, Alex Dunn, 4 King's Cramond, Edinburgh; *Jock's Spot Custodian*, Ali Borthwick, 2 Aytoun Grove, Dunfermline.

Ordinary Members, Beryl Leatherland, Ruth McArthur, Patrick Winter, Stuart Buchanan.

London Section: My unruly generation of the Section are now spawning brats and complaining about the bad behaviour from the unruly youths; the 'elders' are relinquishing their podiums and hitting second childhood; and the current 'youths and youthesses' are burning me off on (and to) the crag. The cycle turns. Membership is pretty steady (unlike some of the leading) at 60, with most of the natural wastage occurring late at night in Bethesda. Meets attendances have ranged from six (cagoule clad desperados) to more than 35 at the ever-popular winter gatherings.

Scotland remains a focus in the form of well-attended core meets and regular informal (i.e. squalid) trips, the latter including some esoteric dossing in public toilets and concrete culverts. Large winter gatherings were held at Feshiebridge and Glencoe (twice), supplemented by fine spring weather on the Cobbler. Sea stacks, riverbeds and piste-fences took the usual batterings, and included ascents of Am Buchaille, A'Chailleach and Am Bodach. Congratulations to John Steele for completing his Munros. Some splendid scorching stravaing took place based in bothies in Sutherland, Glenelg, the Cairngorms, Knoydart and Shelter Stone (summer and winter).

Other successful climbing meets included Gatescarth (Buttermere), the Bowderstone (Borrowdale), and the Three Stags Head in the Peak. It says something about enthusiasm that folk even turned up for a wet autumn weekend in distant Pembroke. Our Cloggy meet basked in sun, a 'Butlins' feel being added with the inflatable dingy carried up by Charlie, Jo and Emma, and a few dips in the black pond. A work meet resulted in the usual good weather with the inevitable consequences in terms of hut maintenance. The dinner still remains firmly in North Wales, probably along with several members' stomach linings.

It is impossible to cover all the overseas mountaineering trips, as impervious individuals cash in on cheap airfares. Yosemite's rules and regulations were severely tested in between ascents of the Salathe Wall, The Nose (in a day), Mescalito, Zodiac, Half Dome NW Face, and the West and East Buttresses of El

Capitan. Sunny overseas rock was also found at Wadi Rum, Tulomene Meadows, the Owens River, Buttermilks, the Val di Mello, around Chamonix, and in Spain, among other places. Richard Jewel followed a hyperactive trip to Yosemite with a second ascent of Tupilak and several first ascents elsewhere in Greenland. Chris Comrie followed up his and Gordon Dalgarno's Kachengunga adventure with a snow-filled trip to Chamalang.

Other mountain-denuding activities persist, with alpine ski-ing trips, and several 'religious experiences' revolving around (and in) Highland river hydraulics. Tilmanesque sailing tendencies continue: tiny objects as difficult to locate as Iceland, Ireland, Scotland and the Isle of Man were all successfully found (not always in the right order) – Nigel Charlesworth, Roy Hibbert and Peter Stokes being the ever-tolerant and observant skippers (cough cough).

The year 2000 gave us a web site, an e-mail discussion group and a regular circular from Tim Brew. It also gave us back John Steele, returned from abroad to quickly finish off his Highland ticking and become a long-deserved life member. Tim Fryer, one of the sections keenest and most able 'members', is still recovering from a serious road accident last year. Mate, we've missed your motivation and steady head on the white stuff. Steve Gladstone earned a well-deserved escape from his long (suffering) run as Secretary. This year already promises many adventures at home and abroad. Challenges remain in the form of developing better links with the other Sections, developing the hut in North Wales and the ever-present problem of such a diverse geographic spread of members.

Officials elected were: *President*, Roy Hibbert; *Vice-President*, Marcus Harvey; *Secretary*, Chris Bashforth; *Treasurer and Membership*, Dave Hughes, 9 St. Anthony's Road, Leeds. *Hut Custodian (Glanafon, Bethesda)*, Rod Kleckham. Web site: Andrew.walker@freeuk.com

Past, present and future doings can be found on the Section Web site at <http://is.unn.ac.uk/staff/ilaw2/jmcsweb>

Andrew Walker.

Glasgow Section:– The club currently has 101 members. There are 26 Life Members and eight female members.

Twenty-five meets took place in the usual areas all over Scotland. The work meet in the club hut in Coruisk, Skye, continues to be productive as improvements are nearly completed including installation of the new gas stove.

The important events of the year were the 75th Anniversary trip to Corsica at Easter; the 75th Anniversary Narnain Boulder Meet; David Lawson's last Munro in Knoydart, and the 75th Anniversary Dinner.

In Corsica, seven people had the mountains to themselves and enjoyed scaling snowy/icy peaked mountains between 2500m and 3000m in good conditions.

Members climbing abroad this year included Ann McDonald, Colwyn Jones and Crawford Kilpatrick in the Swiss Alps; Scott Stewart in Australia, New Zealand and US; P. Stewart Orr in the Karakoram; Vicky Stewart in the Italian Alps, and Andy Sommerville in the Himalaya.

Officials elected: *President*, Dave Eaton; *Vice-President*, Alex Haddow; *Hon. President*, Andrew Sommerville; *Hon. Vice-President*, David Lawson; *Treasurer*, Andrew Sommerville; *Secretary*, Vicky Stewart; *Meets Secretary*, David Lawson; *Coruisk Hut Bookings*, Alan Dunn; *Coruisk Hut Custodian*, Alex Haddow.

Vicky Stewart.

SMC AND JMCS ABROAD

Antarctica

BRIAN SHAKLETON reports: During November I took part in an expedition to the world's most southerly continent to climb the Vinson Massif in the Ellsworth Mountains, at 16,067ft. (4897m), the highest point on the continent. The expedition I joined was one of a series during 2000 and the idea of Gavin Bate from Northern Ireland, aiming at climbing all the Seven Summits, the highest points on each of the world's seven continents, within the year. The conquest of all Seven Summits has become a particular challenge for some mountaineers and up to mid-1999, around 65 have completed this ultimate tick list! My own motives for joining the trip were more simple. I wished to see the continent visited by Ernest Shackleton, Scott and Amundson, about which I had read so much as a boy. I also wanted to climb a high mountain in what would be for me a new setting.

The expedition to Vinson was led by John Barry and included Andy Salter who along with John and Polly Murray from Perth had successfully climbed Everest earlier in the year. Two of John's friends from the 1993 Everest expedition, Peter Earl and Sandy Scott also joined the Vinson trip along with Robert Devereux who had climbed on Mt. McKinlay on another one of John's trips. On November 6 we met in Paris for the overnight flight to Santiago, joining up with Peter in Buenos Aires where the plane stopped for refuelling. A change at Santiago to the local carrier, Lan Chile, took us on to Punta Arenas which was to be the jumping-off point for Antarctica.

The majority of the expeditions heading for the South Pole or to climb Vinson now use the infrastructure of ANI (Adventure Network International) to fly from Punta Arenas to the ANI base at Patriot Hills where a blue ice glacier runway enables an ANI Hercules aircraft to set down after the six-hour flight from Punta Arenas. The Hercules flights to Patriot Hills are dependent on the right conditions on the ice runway. Too little wind and the snow can be too deep to land without damage to the undercarriage, too much wind across the runway and again the aircraft cannot land safely.

We were due to fly south with ANI on November 9, but were delayed until November 18. As well as exploring Punta and its surrounding countryside during our wait, we also took a bus up to Puerto Natales and a two-day trip into the Torres del Paine National Park to see some of the most spectacular mountain scenery in the world. Although the weather can be windy and wet in Patagonia for long periods, we were fortunate to have blue sky and fantastic views of the snowy summits above sheer walls of granite more than 1000m high. The park around the base of the Torres was also well worth the short visit to see glaciers from the Patagonian Icecap reaching down to near sea level and an interesting variety of flora and fauna.

Our flight south was by the Russian Ilyushin aircraft which ANI had chartered to help with the freighting of fuel and cargo, since the conditions for landing the ANI Hercules remained unsuitable. The converted military jet transport made the trip in just more than four hours compared to more than six hours as would be expected in the 'Herc'. Along with 20 others, we sat on wooden bench seats without seatbelts along the walls of the aircraft, with a vast pile of cargo in the centre and what we suspected were highly inflammable containers of fuel at the back for stock piling at Patriot Hills. Once down on the ice at Patriot Hills, we only had a one-hour

wait while our equipment was transferred to a Twin Otter fitted with skis for the short one-hour flight to the Branscomb Glacier in the Ellsworth Mountains and the site of the Vinson Base Camp. We were not alone, however, since a couple of hours later a Korean team along with a Singaporean and two guides from ANI also flew in from Patriot Hills.

The route up Vinson is well established. From the Base Camp at 7200ft., the upper Branscomb glacier is followed towards Vinson and Camp 1 at around 8500ft. The route then swings left to a narrow valley at around 9500ft. where Camp 2 is established. We moved up the glacier as two ropes of three pulling sledges with our supply of fuel, food and equipment finding the going slow in the cold thin air. Although the air temperature was -10°C , there was little wind and in the sun it was comfortable enough to dispense with a hat and thick outer clothing. Once the sun went behind Vinson, however, the temperature plummeted to -25°C and it was necessary to take shelter in the tents and the warmth of a good sleeping bag and numerous hot brews. In Antarctica it is light all the time in the summer months, so the sun's disappearance behind Vinson dictated which part of the day was regarded as night and was to be spent inside the tents. Getting going in the morning was therefore slow and only when the sun reached the tents was it possible to prepare breakfast and get under way.

To reach Camp 3, 'High Camp', we ascended the narrow valley and then climbed the 2000ft. headwall at its end to reach the col at more than 12,000ft. between Mt. Shin and the Vinson summit plateau. We left the sledges just above Camp 2 before the steep pull up the headwall threatened by seracs to the right. Towards the top of the wall and out of danger from the seracs, the view opened out but the wind also got up and made the going unpleasantly slow. It was a relief to escape the wind at the right side of the col and the site of the camp beneath the slopes reaching up towards Vinson's summit plateau. Before the tents could be erected and occupied we first had to level the site and then build a wall to protect the two tents from the wind which could otherwise flatten them and spell disaster in the event of a storm. At this point I regretted having to remove my outer gloves to free one of the side straps of my sac since, in a matter of a few seconds, my hands were frozen and I had to spend a considerable time thawing them out once I was inside the tent. Although very cold again, once the tents were in shade, there was little wind and we had a comfortable night's rest before our summit day.

Summit day on November 22 started at 10.30 and a brew alongside Andy and Sandy with whom I was sharing a tent. The day outside the tent was perfect with a clear blue sky, no wind and unlimited visibility. We finally left High Camp at 1.30pm and in our two ropes of three, gradually moved up onto the summit plateau and into a shallow upper valley leading to the summit point of Vinson. In the clear air, the distance was much farther than it looked and progress became slow with the increasing effects of altitude. After a halt at 15,000ft. to take in fluid as well as take in the view, we started up the final part of the climb taking a steep rising traverse leading onto the left hand ridge of Vinson's highest point. Out of the sun and exposed to the wind once more, the steep slope was a challenge to our less-experienced climbers and at one point there was some doubt whether everyone would make it. Back into the sun and on easier ground again, we re-grouped and reached the 16,067ft. summit at 10.30pm, nine hours from High Camp.

The view from the summit must be one of the finest on earth with snow and ice stretching as far as the eye can see and worth all the effort of getting there. The size

of the Antarctic continent is breathtaking when seen from Vinson and its vastness is only hinted at by the unbroken sweep of the horizon to the south. It was indeed a privilege to join a group of only 500 or so climbers to have climbed Vinson since its first ascent in 1966.

Our descent to High Camp was completed in three hours and we rested there overnight before completing the descent from 12,000ft. to Base Camp at 7200ft. the following day. I particularly enjoyed the descent since I was the only one of the group to have taken skis up to Camp 2. I was able to take full advantage of the perfect snow between Camp 1 and Base Camp, stopping from time to time to take in the view in solitude and utter silence. To have stood alone in such surroundings was a unique and very special experience which stirred the soul.

As with our flight in, our return flight was far from straight-forward. We were stranded at Vinson Base Camp for 10 days due to the Twin Otter aircraft being grounded 600 miles away in poor visibility. Our own weather pattern settled into a cycle of two fine days followed by two days of mist and light snow. Most of the team spent the time reading with occasional forays around the camp on foot or skis but never too far in case the plane arrived. Finally, on December 3, the Twin Otter arrived to fly us back to Patriot Hills where we spent a further three days before the flight back to Punta Arenas – this time in the Hercules. Two days later, I was back in Edinburgh after a trip to Antarctica that I will never forget.

Pakistan

HAMISH IRVINE reports: Alan Smith, Hamish Irvine and Anders Jacobsen (Sweden) spent four weeks in the Gilgit area. The first foray was a trek north and west from Naltar. It had been hoped to climb some smallish mountain, perhaps Sentinel, on the way but heavy rain and snow, together with mixed reactions to the altitude meant this outing was limited to a traverse of the Phakor pass and a descent to the villages of Phakor and Chatorkand in the Ishkoman valley. Both sides of the pass are interesting but very different. The Naltar side is broad with lush grazings and wooded areas; towards Phakor lies a steep-sided valley with a violent river in its base and impressive man-made trails built onto its flanks. In Phakor, our attempts to hire transport led to us being dined, wined (well, almost) and put up overnight by a local family before a jeep ride back to Gilgit.

Our next trip, to the modest, but accessible, peaks of Phekar and Mirshikar, north of Diran and Rakaposhi, was foiled by awful weather. The rains managed both to wash us out and to contaminate our water supplies, leading to predictable stomach problems for three disappointed climbers.

Eventually, moving north to the Murkhun valley, we found better weather, a new jeep road and willing porters. With these helpful factors we easily reached an attractive camp site just above Pariar. There are several small peaks here, just on the 6000m limit of Pakistan's trekking peaks, which can be ascended without the complications of a liaison officer, peak fee etc. High daytime temperatures meant the snow rapidly became soft, so an ascent of Tupopdan was made over three days, climbing largely in the dark. This attractive mountain was climbed from the north on snow and ice, by a route which had obviously been climbed before – strands of old fixed rope on a very rotten rognon also showed how the snows have receded in recent years.

Alaska 2000 – Little Switzerland

BRIAN DAVISON reports: From May 1-31, British climbers, Brian Davison, Lindsay Griffin and Brian Griffiths, visited the previously unnamed glacier to the south-east of the Crown Jewel (2362m) (now proposed as the East Fork of the Crown). The latter lies at the southern head of the Pika Glacier in an area approximately 25km south of McKinley commonly referred to as Little Switzerland. The team made a total of 14 probable first ascents, including 12 of previously unclimbed peaks.

The climbers originally hoped that at this time of year they might find ephemeral ice lines in south-facing couloirs, but very heavy snowfall a few weeks prior to their arrival had left the spiky granite peaks, that characterise the area, very well-plastered. Deep, and worrying, unconsolidated snow leading to narrow, Peruvian-type ridges was the norm, though there were sections of enjoyable 'Scottish mixed' ground on some of the routes. Due to remarkably settled and sunny weather for a good portion of the time, the best conditions occurred on south-facing slopes around dawn. However, all three climbers felt that, overall, the conditions were consistently the worst they had experienced anywhere. The weather in Little Switzerland during May was much less cold and harsh than on the bigger mountains to the north. Temperatures fell as low as -20°C early in the month but towards the end were considerably higher. During several periods of poor weather in the latter half of May they barely dropped below freezing.

From a base camp on the East Fork the team climbed the following:

The South Couloir of Gendarme 7300ft. followed by a traverse to, then ascent of, the East Ridge of the Crown Jewel; the South Couloir to the West Ridge of the Crown Jewel; the three Witches' Hats; the South Couloir and East Ridge to the base of the final 3m monolith of the Tiara's East Summit; the South Couloir to South West Ridge of Your Highness; the North Summit of the Coronet via the South-east Flank and a descent by the East Couloir below Pt. Pico, which was also ascended via its East Couloir. From a temporary camp on the southerly Dix Glacier various easier peaks closer to the Kahiltna Glacier were climbed together with the fine trio of Deception, Arrowhead and Misty Peaks above the Brume Glacier (south east of the Dix).

Selling Out

RICK ALLEN reports: NICK was very cagey about his plans for the spring of 1985 but we came to know one another well on the south face of Ganesh II, as you do on a 12-day, alpine style push, and details of the Everest trip gradually emerged. Mal Duff had secured sponsorship from Pilkingtons to lead an expedition to the North East Ridge, scene of the disappearance of Joe Tasker and Pete Boardman just two years earlier. Probably, on the strength of still being on speaking terms with Nick from the previous autumn, I was invited to join this predominantly Scottish team including Sandy Allan, Andy Nisbet, Bob Barton and Allen Fyfe. We cast ourselves as heirs to the torch of British Himalayan climbing laid down by Pete and Joe. However, our film-maker for the trip, Kurt Diemberger, had more experience of really big mountains than the rest of the team put together and we were gloriously unsuccessful. We learned a lot.

Two years later, Nick, Sandy and I went back to the North East Ridge with Doug and Mike Scott, Steve Sustad and Robert Schauer for another attempt. We learned a lot more, although this time at the cost of the life of one of our sherpa cooks who died in an avalanche below advanced base camp. Other, predominantly British,

Lhotse and Everest. Photo: Rick Allen.

Pregar (left) and its larger neighbour, Karun Koh, Murkham Valley, Pakistan. Photo: Hamish Irvine.





expeditions tilted at this 'last great problem' until it was murdered with fixed rope by the Japanese in the mid 1990s.

Conscious of the risk of becoming narrow in my focus, I left Everest alone and sought out other challenges in the greater Himalaya, sometimes with Doug and sometimes with Russian and Polish climbers. This coincided with a fundamental shift in the nature of big mountain climbing. The standard routes on many of the 8000's became recognised as legitimate objectives for commercial expeditions, literally 'trade routes', peak fees soared in line with this trend and sponsorship almost vanished for the remaining amateurs.

After the death of my wife, Alison, in 1999 I sought an opportunity to get away on a long expedition and contacted Henry, another Edinburgh-based, long-standing acquaintance and Everest impresario. It turned out that he just happened to need someone with 20 years experience of the Himalaya to 'be there' in the pre-monsoon season of 2000 for his less-experienced clients.

In April I was walking back up the Khumbu, last visited 14 years previously with Sandy on our way to Pumori. Expecting to be disappointed, I was thrilled at how beautiful it still was, more well built stone houses and tea shops but no more litter, no more people and many of the same old friends.

The Himalayan Guides tents were set among the rubble of the Khumbu Glacier, sharing this giant natural quarry with 18 other teams. This was clearly not to be a wilderness experience but would demand social skills of the highest order, as well as some basic mountaineering aptitude. The physical challenges of Everest by any route are still considerable. Key requirements are an ability to acclimatise to altitude, endure intense heat (the Western Cwm acts like a solar reflecting dish with you at the focus) and keep on putting one foot in front of the other for hours. Psychologically, the icefall requires that you close your imagination to objective dangers for a few hours and boredom is a real danger for the hyper-active, achiever types. Unfortunately, some of those lured or driven to attempt Everest are the least willing or able to behave considerately towards others, let alone become real team players. Four out of our 12 clients left the trip early.

The social cauldron of base camp provided much of the entertainment and sheer fun as well as sources of conflict. It was a privilege to celebrate the first Pakistani ascent with Nazir Sabir and the success of my Russian friends on Lhotse. The leaving party of the Adventure Consultants team brought us together around the stone table/dance floor with Polly Murray who had just become the first Scots girl to summit, John Barry and Peter Habeler.

In breaks from this social whirl we were making progress up the mountain. The ropes and ladders of the icefall were fixed and maintained by a group of sherpas paid for jointly by all of the teams. Camp I at the lip of the icefall is just an acclimatisation transit point and we were soon able to move straight through to camp II, halfway up the Western Cwm. The sherpas fixed ropes and established the camps in advance so that our clients just had their personal gear to carry. Camp III, situated on ledges hacked out of the ice on the Lhotse face at 7300m started to feel more like a mountain bivouac. From here, most people start to use bottled oxygen to cross the yellow band and climb onto the Geneva Spur which leads around to the South Col. I had always harboured the ambition to make the ascent without oxygen but if I was to be of any help to the clients that was not an option. I would be at great risk of becoming a liability to the group.

We reached the South Col for the first time on May 11 and spent a day recovering and trying to encourage the sherpas into a summit attempt. No-one had yet reached

the summit from the South that season and we needed their help to carry oxygen bottles to the balcony and fix rope above there towards the South summit. After much delay we set off at about 11.30 at night in bitter cold but towards the top of the snow couloir above the col about two hours later the sherpas announced that they had cold feet and began to descend. For one wild moment Dick, a pilot from Colorado, and I weighed up our chances of going for it without rope or oxygen but common sense and my obligations to the team prevailed and we all returned to the Col.

Our clients felt badly let down but I began to understand the sherpas' attitudes. They had never climbed with me and had no particular reason to have confidence in me. They knew their own limitations at pushing out the route better than I did. Nevertheless, two long weeks passed and many others had their day before we were to get another chance. Polly and John were successful, Byron from Calgary, Nazir from Pakistan, Christine with Mountain Madness in Seattle and local hero Babu Chiri in a record time of under 16 hours from base camp. As we made our way back up to Camp III my Australian companion Andrew Lock reached the summit with his client. Sandy Allan was also on the hill, heading for Lhotse with Kathy O'Dowd. We had less than a week to go before our permit would expire and the icefall ladders would be stripped away.

At the South Col we passed just a few hours brewing and testing oxygen regulators before gearing up and emerging into the clear night air. This time the sherpas did not hesitate and we were away by 10.30. Almost immediately Mike and Kristy from Seattle started to have problems with their oxygen sets. I swapped masks with Mike and carried on to the top of the ice field to wait for them. Minutes ticked by and they did not catch up. I called on the radio and discovered that they had descended to the tents at the Col.

The Russian Air Force oxygen regulators seem to be particularly vulnerable to freezing up and in those early hours four of our team had problems with their sets and were forced to descend. Reluctantly, I decided that I could do nothing more to help Mike and Kristy and set off in pursuit of the rest of the team, by now faint headtorch dots above me. In the dark and wearing oxygen masks it was almost impossible to distinguish who was who. Michael Down from British Columbia was making steady progress up the fixed ropes crossing mixed ground which led to the snowy ramp leading right up to the balcony on the ridge. Patrick Kenny, a guide from Utah who was sharing the leadership responsibilities with me, was breaking trail through knee-deep snow up the ramp. Dick from Colorado took over and then I carried on to the balcony. Here the sherpas dropped the spare four litre oxygen bottles and most of our group swapped to a fresh bottle. I was using a single, seven-litre cylinder for the whole day which was heavier but avoided the problems of changing cylinders.

The sky began to lighten as I continued up the ridge towards the point where it steepens up to the South summit. The teams that had preceded us had left little to chance, the trail of fixed rope was virtually continuous. I was looking down on Makalu now, over my shoulder to the south-west and just catching the pink hues of dawn. Across on Lhotse, the head torches of Sandy and Kathy were visible in the summit couloir. I turned the flow of oxygen down to conserve it when I stopped for a drink but forgot to re-open the regulator. For a few minutes I wondered why I had slowed to a crawl and Dick caught up. Back on two litres a minute and I was able to move steadily again. At the South summit we stopped for another drink and I began the short, steep descent towards the corniced ridge that curved up to the

Hilary Step. This famous crux had loomed large in the imagination but proved amenable to bridging up a semi-chimney between rock and snow and then moving around leftwards. It would be Grade II/III at home and was adorned with plenty of rope in various stages of wear. The ridge continued at an easier angle and I was overtaken with emotion as the summit came into view. At my feet lay the crest of the North East Ridge, winding up from Tibet from where this adventure had begun 15 years earlier. I thanked God for the chance to make it this time and at 6.25 I stood on the top and wept.

Clouds were piling in quickly in the early morning and I was just able to complete a sequence of panoramic shots before the horizon vanished and I simultaneously lost all feeling in my hands. Dick arrived on the summit and was soon followed by Patrick but they had missed the view. We hugged and stood for a few minutes before beginning the descent. The wind suddenly became noticeable, my glasses iced over and I stumbled along the fixed ropes blindly for a few minutes. The others thought that I was losing it and opened up my oxygen regulator but pulling on a pair of goggles restored my vision and I was able to continue. Below the Hilary Step we passed Michael, Tim and Mingma, all going strong. Below the South summit Dragan from Serbia was still moving up, slow but determined. All of them reached the summit successfully although Dragan ran out of oxygen, becoming delirious on the descent and Henry and a sherpa went up towards the balcony to help him down. By 10.00 I was back at the South Col where I gulped down fluid and gathered up my kit. A very long and hot descent across the yellow band and the Lhotse face took me to Camp III where I made endless brews to try to re-hydrate. By supper time I was in Camp II where the sherpas brought me tea and food until sleep took over. Sandy and Kathy reached the summit of Lhotse on the same day.

Back home I unashamedly revelled for a few weeks in the joy of my friends and the interest of the local Press. A few months later, I spoke to Doug on the phone.

"Well done on Everest, kid", he said.

"I didn't call you to tell you," I said, "because I knew that you would think that I had sold out."

"Well you did, kid," he said.

Spain

GREG STRANGE reports:— During the first week of April 2001 I was the senior member of an Etchachan Club group which took time out from foot and mouth restrictions and a prolonged Scottish winter to spend a week climbing on Spanish limestone.

We rented a three-storey villa on the outskirts of Finistrat, a small rural community about six miles inland from Benidorm on the Costa Blanca. The village is dominated by the South Face of the 1410m Puig Campana where we would have climbed had it not been for the unseasonably high temperatures of up to 30°C. Although we visited a variety of inland crags most of our time was spent in the superb, highly-developed Sella valley and the more remote hilltop venue of Forada. As a first-timer to this form of winter diversion I can thoroughly recommend it.

Particularly memorable for me was the multi-pitch 'Tanit' on Pared de Rosalia at Sella; watching Wilson Moir flash the appropriately named 'Musculman' on the Sector Superheroes at Forada, and the homely fare of the Bar Maria in the village of Sella.

The group comprised Paul Allen, Wilson Moir, Neil Morrison, Greg Strange, (all SMC), Mark Atkins, Dave Gillan and John Wilson.

REVIEWS

Herman Buhl – Climbing without Compromise:– Reinhold Messner and Horst Hofler. (Bâton Wicks 2001. 204pp. £16.99, ISBN 1-898573-48-4).

After many years of frustration and failure, climbers finally started getting to the top of the world's highest peaks during the 1950s. The heroic trials and tribulations of the French on Annapurna and the teamwork and military planning of the British Commonwealth on Everest captured the imagination of people all over the world, but it was the audacious solo epic of the Austrian, Herman Buhl, on Nanga Parbat in 1953 which provided an inspiration to generations of mountaineers. Returning to the Karakoram in 1957, Buhl made the first ascent of Broad Peak with three companions. This was the first major peak to be climbed 'alpine style', confirming his reputation as he also became the first person to make the first ascent of two 8000m peaks. Tragically, a few days later, Buhl disappeared over a cornice on the descent from an attempt on Chogolisa with Kurt Diemberger.

Back in July 1975, the youthful reviewer, a member of the Edinburgh University Hindu Raj Expedition, was waiting in a bank in Rawalpindi when another European walked in. Noting his dress and demeanour, I blithely asked: "Are you a mountaineer too?"

"Yes," came the cheerful reply, brief and to the point. "We go to climb Hidden Peak. Just two of us."

Sure enough, a few weeks later, Reinhold Messner carried forward Hermann Buhl's ideals with a bold 'alpine style' ascent of Gasherbrum I in the company of Peter Habler.

Meanwhile, having climbed and named a few lower peaks, Dave Page and I set off at dawn from a high bivouac, heading for our main objective, Thui I. Moving well, we were crossing a broad snow shoulder when Dave suddenly disappeared into an enormous hidden crevasse. Fortunately, the rope held and he was able to extricate himself, albeit slowly. When we finally reached safer ground Dave was happy to sit and warm up again in the sun, urging me to press on alone, which I did. As the time ticked by, the inner signals urging prudence gradually grew stronger. I can still clearly remember, having finally decided to turn back, stopping to photograph our goal, so near yet so far away, and thinking to myself: "Herman Buhl would have kept going to the top."

Why, all these years later, does such an accomplished mountaineer as Messner feel the need to revisit this early influence, almost half-a-century after his death, and why should those of us less accomplished want to know any more about him? Buhl's 1954 autobiography, *Nanga Parbat Pilgrimage – The Lonely Challenge*, became a source of inspiration to many climbers. First published in English in 1956, by the 1970s second-hand copies were reported to be changing hands for ridiculous sums. Hodder and Stoughton brought out a paperback reprint in 1981, which I duly bought and read. My initial impression, noted in my 'Reading List' of the time, was a bit disappointing. "A long autobiography, in places a bit tedious, but some very stirring stuff too." When the Editor asked me to take on this review I tracked down my copy to read again. All these years later, second time around, I enjoyed every page, but Messner and Hofler suggest that much of Buhl's original text was altered by his editor, Kurt Maix, losing the true nature of his drive, judgment and forward-looking ambitions.

Hermann Buhl – Climbing without Compromise is their attempt to present a more balanced picture of the legend.

Another reference to my current 'Reading List' reminds me that Chris Bonington, John Cunningham, Alison Hargreaves and Eric Shipton have all been subjects of what seems to have become, if not quite an avalanche, certainly a steady stream of new biographies of distinguished climbers that I have read in the past couple of years. While I certainly enjoyed them, and look forward to more, I would be the first to admit that inevitably, this genre suffers from a rather rigid predictability. Childhood; early influences; great achievements; twilight years, and death. It is difficult to break away from the natural cycle of life in any biography but Messner and Hofler take a refreshingly different approach to their subject in both style and layout.

This book is set out in four sections, plus appendices. The first section, *Introduction: Who was Herman Buhl?* is made up of four short essays, starting with Messner's contribution, *A Man Driven*. Focusing first on Buhl's influence on his own personal climbing career, he quickly moves on to the subject of risk. From the unique perspective of his own achievements, he spells out some powerful messages about climbing at the leading edge of the sport. After paying tribute to a list of those he considers to be the best climbers who have died on the world's mountains, he declares that "to come back alive means everything". His disturbing conclusion is that "the bundle of energy that was Buhl was not destined for a long life".

While Messner needs no introduction, Horst Hofler is described as "mountaineering journalist, archivist and climber", and presumably, did most of the research. His contribution *Climbing Was the Essence of Buhl's Life* confirms Buhl as a personal hero, and gives a brief chronological biography. For some reason this is written, rather disconcertingly, in the present tense. Kriemhild Lornsen-Buhl, eldest of his three daughters, describes *What Kind of Father Was Buhl*. Since she was not quite six years old when he disappeared, this is a short contribution, as is climbing partner and family friend Luis Vigl's *How I Experienced Buhl*. Both portray him as warm and caring to his family and friends.

The next three sections, which make up the bulk of the book, are made up of a mixture of diary extracts and climbing magazine and club journal articles written by Buhl. From 1940 onwards he established his reputation on hard rock routes in the Eastern Alps and went on to repeat a number of significant routes in the Western Alps, including some of the famous North Faces. Many of these were climbed solo but he clearly enjoyed getting his experiences down on paper and sharing them with others. All the material is neatly linked with brief commentaries and makes for very absorbing reading. One trait of Buhl's which shines through is his honesty. From his early diary jottings through to the more polished accounts there is the impression that he was always trying to 'tell it like it really was'. This was to get him into difficulties when he became embroiled in the politics of big expeditions, particularly with masters of manipulation such as Karl Herrligkoffer, organiser of the Austro-German Nanga Parbat Expedition. However, this honesty adds to the appeal of Buhl's writing and I enjoyed his attention to detail, even though some of it may be considered trivial.

My brief involvement last year with the SMC District Guidebooks Subcommittee made me aware, for the first time, of the importance of layout in

publications. Readers who appreciate that sort of thing will find much to admire here. Broad margins on each page have been used to display a large number of original black-and-white photographs which help give a feel for the period, though some of the group photos require the aid of a magnifier to pick out much detail. Interspersed with these illustrations are quotations from Buhl and a number of contemporary and modern commentators. There are also a number of excellent colour plates.

Herman Buhl will always stand out as an important figure in the history of mountaineering and *Climbing without Compromise* is an excellent opportunity to glimpse the man behind the myth and share some of his inspirational enthusiasm.

David Broadhead.

Siegfried Herford: an Edwardian rock climber:—Keith Treacher. (Ernest Press 2000; 168pp hardback, black and white photographs, £16.95. ISBN 0-948153-52-0. £16.95).

Herford is remembered principally for his part in the first ascent of Scafell's Central Buttress, and for his untimely death at the age of 24 in the First World War. His climbing career was brief – he was only 22 when the war broke out – but at the time of his death he was already considered to be the best rock climber in Britain. He was blessed, not only with a tremendous physical ability, but also a fine sense of judgment and mental control which allowed him to venture safely into daunting territory. As well as a number of significant first ascents, he climbed many of the hardest routes of his day (notably the second ascent of Botterill's Slab). Central Buttress emerges as a truly modern first ascent, climbed in stages over many attempts, and of course, using aid. It was clearly as much of a psychological breakthrough as a technical one. Climbing had not long moved out of the gully and chimney era, and CB shares its vertical 300ft. with a clutch of middle extremes these days. One thinks of Indian Face perhaps as a parallel contemporary achievement. Without doubt he would have had a revolutionary impact on the mountaineering scene had he lived.

Keith Treacher's meticulous research pays full tribute to Herford's mountaineering legacy. There is also a full and, at times, intriguing account of Herford's climbing circle – in his brief career he met and climbed with many of the leading mountaineers of his day, including Winthrop Young and the Abraham brothers. The difficulties of travel in those days are well described, too. On his one trip to Scotland in 1912 it took Herford the best part of a week to travel from Manchester to Glen Brittle, with an unscheduled diversion onto the Crowberry Ridge while awaiting a missed train at Bridge of Orchy.

The author brings to life the remarkable character behind these bare facts. Treacher has obtained access to a remarkable amount of material, particularly family letters, and is able to provide a very detailed account of Herford's childhood, family background and schooling. This adds interest and insight to the climbing history which draws heavily on published journal articles. As a result there is a good balance between the assessment of Herford as a climber, and of his wider personality and social circumstances. The reader is left with a very poignant sense of who he was, and what he might have been.

Adam Kassyk.

Travail So Gladly Spent:—Tom Price. (Ernest Press, 2000, 279pp., £17.50. ISBN 0-948513-56-3)

From South Georgia to Lesotho, Tom Price has spent most of his 80-something years seeking adventure and finding it. This is an account of his life in the truest sense where he looks at the events and learns from them.

I had the great good fortune to work in Outward Bound in the Lake District when Tom was Director of the School. Funny thing Outward Bound. Inspired by Kurt Hahn a German Jew and refugee from Hitler, it often appeared to critics to be a union between Victorian self-improvement and German regimentation. Cold showers in the morning and driving unwilling youths over the mountains for afters. What saved it from this were the instructors who were largely there to live in the mountains and climb. Mostly, they had the characteristics that go with the sport – easy-going natures and a distaste for authority. As Director, Tom had these attributes in great measure and in his account of his tenure of the post, the tension between his anarchistic nature and the demands of leadership in a dangerous environment shines through. He nurtured a spirit of compassion and concern for the students and helped to build in them an enduring self-esteem and confidence which can come from successful challenges in the outdoors. The book gives great insight into the problems which face the outdoor educationalists and also, through Tom's period as president of the British Mountaineering Council, an insider's view of the politics of mountaineering.

But if that was the sum total of the book, it would be worthy, but dry. What makes it a cracking read is the flow of anecdotes from a mountaineer's life. Nine months in South Georgia with John Cunningham climbing and mapping; a climb on the Zinal Rothorn and meeting with "a tough young Edinburgh climber called Bill Wallace"; epics on Pillar; a big fall on Dow Crag; a hairy abseil on the Grepon; with Graham MacPhee on Nevis in 1938; with the Creagh Dhu in the Lakes; a trek through the Maluti Mountains of Lesotho; a canoe expedition down the Thelon river in the North West Territories, and countless others. Sometimes the tale could be told at greater length but it is always told with humour, humility and vividness. I thoroughly recommend this book.

Robin Shaw.

Extreme Rock and Ice, 25 of the World's Great Climbs:—Garth Hattingh, (New Holland, 2000, ISBN 0-898867-87-8)

This handsome, large-format book describes 25 extreme rock and ice climbs from around the world. The selection ranges from crag climbs in Australia to the massive South Face of Lhotse in Nepal and includes landmark ascents such as the Golden Pillar of Spantik and the Slovenian Route on Cerro Torre. The book is well laid out, the photo reproduction is first class, but somehow the overall package left me a little cold.

There's no question that the climbs are difficult and a reflection of the development of mountaineering over the last 20 years and the state of play today. The problem is that anyone who has kept up to date with events through the British and American climbing magazines will have seen most of this before. And I mean seen, as I came across few images that I hadn't come across elsewhere. The climbing Press has to work with material that is immediately available to hand of course, but a book presents a real opportunity to dig a bit deeper and with the benefit of

hindsight unearth the real key climbs and events. Quite simply, when reading through *Extreme Rock and Ice*, you begin to realise the key route selection criteria was good, easily-available photographic material.

Take a look at the three climbs selected from Britain. No-one would argue that Indian Face on Cloggy justifies inclusion as a very difficult and influential climb. But one has to question whether Martin Crocker's solo traverse of the Ogmore Cliffs and the Great White Fright on the Dover sea cliffs really capture the key events in British mountaineering over the last 20 years. I suspect the stunning sea cliff shots of Martin deep water soloing and the unusual chalk climbing shots using axes and crampons justified these routes' selection.

Given the above, it's unsurprising that no Scottish routes feature in the book. To be fair the introduction does acknowledge the unique nature of Scottish winter climbing, but I suspect that good photos were not at hand. A chapter on European modern mixed climbing is included, and a comparison with the Continental bolt-protected and pre-practised style with the ground-up and on-sight Scottish ethic would have made a fine contrast.

If you haven't kept in touch with modern climbing, take a look at this book because you'll be wowed by the photos and probably surprised at what it takes to climb routes at the cutting edge. If you've kept your eye on recent world mountaineering events however, save your pennies and put the money towards the *American Alpine Journal* where you will be truly inspired and get a fairer reflection on the state of play in world mountaineering today.

Simon Richardson.

Voices from the Summit: The World's Great Mountaineers on the Future of Climbing:— Edited by Bernadette McDonald and John Amatt. (National Geographic Adventure Press. 2000, 256pp., illust.) \$30, ISBN 0-7922-7958-1).

This handsome volume has the footer title *Celebrating 25 Years of the Banff Mountain Film Festival*, and has employed the various and varied writing talents and experiences of 32 prominent mountaineers from around the globe. They have each written about their own niches, many concentrating on the history of that niche, whether rock, ice, Alpinism or the bigger ranges. Some have attempted a look at the future, though understandably, this is difficult to predict without the mythical ball of crystal.

Each essay by the mountaineer is prefaced by a fine portrait taken by Craig Richards, and it is quite stunning to turn a page and be faced, for example, by the perfect teeth and fresh eyes of Kitty Calhoun. There are other, sometimes more grizzled faces to examine of course, including Messner, Hillary, Cassin, Heckmair and, inevitably enough, old 'Boring Chin Snot' himself, batting for er, Britain.

The book, in fact, could be treated as two, one as text and message, and one as portrait and person. Diemberger the dodgy is there, and it is interesting that his alone is the only portrait in which the sitter is not looking at the camera. Perhaps the photographer saw something in Diemberger which settled the choice of negative to use.

To finish on the photographic theme, a section at the back provides an abbreviated history of the Banff Festival, and is complete with some fascinating photographs, though on a much smaller scale than the main portraits. A glossary is there for those non-mountaineers who bought the book by accident and stayed to read it.

It is outwith the scope of this review to dive into the essays in any depth; there is much to enjoy and much to think on. Ed Douglas, for example, provides an interesting alternative social history of climbing in the Thatcher regime, and even records his appreciation of her (unknowing) help in the advancement of climbing, when so many unemployment figures were the result of a magic witch's brew rather than hard facts.

From many a northern gulag climbers poured forth, money in their pockets courtesy of the Enterprise Allowance Scheme, which paid them £40 a week instead of the £25 a week unemployment benefit – as long as they claimed to be setting themselves up in business. One did this for a year then went back to the lower rate on the dole. (And as an aside if not broadside at this destructive period in Britain's history, one began to loathe the very word 'Enterprise' so much that it somehow did not come as any great shock when the unfortunate ferry with the same word in its name sank leaving harbour.)

This book is a fine achievement, with many of the great within its pages reading well. There are inspirational stories, as there should be, and cautionary tales too. I'll finish with a pithy quote from the late Alex Lowe (not a contributor, but quoted by one): "The best climber in the world is the one having the most fun."

Ken Crocket.

The Wildest Dream, Mallory – His Life and Conflicting Passions:— Peter and Leni Gillman. (Headline 2000. £18.99, paperback £7.99. ISBN 074727150X).

Peter and Leni Gillman have produced a magnificent portrait of a fascinating man. Mallory was far from being the one-dimensional character obsessed by Everest that popular imagination has conjured. In fact, the first two-thirds of the book are devoted to describing and unravelling the no-less-interesting early years of George Leigh Mallory's life.

From school at Winchester he went on to Oxford where his intellect, radical political ideas and good looks led him into the fringes of the Bloomsbury set and the company of many of those shaping the intellectual life of pre-war Britain. The activities at the Pen-y-Pass meets hosted by Winthrop Young reveal the boldness and the athleticism of Mallory which became characteristic of his climbing.

His romantic encounters are described honestly, but sensitively. His whirlwind courtship and marriage to Ruth at the outbreak of the Great War and his letters while serving with the artillery in France show a very poetic and romantic side to this man of action.

Mallory's adjustment to civilian life as a master at Charterhouse was interrupted by the call to join the 1922 expedition to Everest, which led inexorably to a subsequent attempt the following year and the final, fatal 1924 expedition. The politics and rancour which surrounded these expeditions are set in sharp contrast to the blend of ambition, romance and duty which drew George back to the world's highest mountain.

Read this biography, not just for the climbing but also for a vivid image of a part of British society in the early 20th century and to appreciate an athletic man of ideas and passions who found his ultimate means of expression in mountaineering.

Rick Allen.

Editor's reviews

Lionel Terray – *Conquistadors of the Useless*, foreword by David Roberts:– (Bâton Wicks, 2001. 370pp., £10.99 paperback) ISBN 1-898573-38-7).

“I have given my whole life to the mountains. Born at the foot of the Alps, I have been a ski champion, a professional guide, an amateur of the greatest climbs in the Alps and a member of eight expeditions to the Andes and the Himalayas. If the word has any meaning at all, I am a mountaineer.”

Many of us will recall the opening words of Lionel Terray in his autobiography, *Conquistadors of the Useless*, first published in France in 1961 as *Le Conquerants de l'inutile* and making its debut in English two years later. Now, thanks to Ken Wilson and his team at Baton Wicks this central work of mountaineering literature has been brought to a whole new generation.

Lionel Terray was the central figure in post-war climbing in France, an early repeater of the Alpine north faces and an innovative expeditioner who played a key role during the first ascents of Annapurna (1950) and Makalu (1955). Terray, born in Grenoble in 1921, made his first climbs in 1933. During the war he lived in Chamonix and formed a climbing partnership with Gaston Rebuffat. Following liberation in 1944 he served with the mountain troops for eight months on the borders of Nazi-occupied Italy.

In 1947, Terray partnered Louis Lachenal on the notable second ascent of the Eiger Nordwand.

Such successes were valued in France after a period of national setbacks and it was against this background that Maurice Herzog's Annapurna bid took place with Terray, Rebuffat and Lachenal all involved. This was the first 8000m peak to be climbed but the ascent was bought at great physical cost.

Terray continued to pursue the expedition path and trips to Fitzroy, Makulu, the Andes, Jannu and Mount Huntington in Alaska followed with Guido Magnone, Jean Couzy, Jean Franco and others. Terray also starred in the film, *Les Etoiles de Midi*, which featured the Grand Capucin's east face, a pointer to the 'Big Wall' period that was soon to follow. Thus Terray seemed at the centre of every major new initiative of his era. *Conquistadors of the Useless* captures the energy of an optimistic world shaking off the restraints of war and austerity. Terray's death in 1965 in a puzzling climbing accident in the Vercours robbed mountaineering of one of its most colourful personalities. This new edition of his book is sure to inspire today's climbers with the irresistible passion of his mountaineering.

Frank Smythe: *The Six Alpine/Himalyan Climbing Books*:– (Bâton Wicks, 2000, 944pp, £18.99. ISBN 1-898573-37-9).

This latest omnibus edition from the Wilson stable takes its place beside its forerunners in the genre – H. W. Tilman, Eric Shipton, Kurt Diemberger and John Muir. One is tempted to say there is nothing new here for a reviewer to talk about but that is not the case. There is a wealth of new material, essays, maps, photographs and footnotes which expand and add depth to these well known narratives.

What will also be of interest to members of this club is Smythe's association with our predecessors, Bell and MacPhee in particular. "One hot afternoon in July, 1922, Dr. J. H. B. Bell of Auchtermuchty, Fife and I sat outside the Poste Hotel in the little town of Klausen (now called Chiusa) languidly sipping the warm red wine of South Tirol."

This was prior to a climb on the Langkofel in the Dolomites with our 'editor in waiting'. Our man's enthusiasm obviously gave Smythe some pause for thought. "Bell went ahead at a great pace. He is always in good rock climbing form. "In this particular instance we had not proceeded far before I insisted that we should don the rope." It seems, that for our subject at least, it was a rather fraught day as the good Doctor later dislodged a stone which: "Instead of braining me, merely grazed the back of my head."

In the article in which he climbs with MacPhee the party is likewise not blessed with success other than that of escaping with their lives.

"At 9.00am, 10th August, 1927, Dr. G. Graham MacPhee and I swung on weighty rucksacks and stepped out along the dusty road from Courmayeur to the Val Veni. We were bound for a traverse of Mont Blanc by the Peuterey Ridge from the Breche des Dames Anglaises. This great traverse, which is one of the longest climbs in the Alps, had been accomplished for the first time in its entirety by Herren Obersteiner and Schneider of Graz, Austria but 10 days previously and repeated on 4th August by Herr von Kehl with two Grindelwald guides and a Courmayeur porter."

Two parties on a major new route within 10 days of the first ascent. Anyone who thought the spirit of competition in climbing was something new can think again. A major storm and retreat ensued which found them reaching the Gamba Hut some 36 hours after starting out. It says much about the times and indeed the manners of our members that during all this time spent *in extremis* the only time, "MacPhee was startled out of his usual equanimity", was when Smythe, complaining about the weight of the sacks, "to give weight to the assertion seized a large and unnecessary lump of cheese and hurled it viciously down the slope into the bergschrund".

MacPhee, he recalls: "Reproached me bitterly for the deed."

Smythe has often been criticised for being spiritual and over-romantic in his writings but I would argue that he was a man of his time and should be read as such. I would also suggest that much of modern mountaineering literature might benefit from a good sprinkling of these very ingredients.

The Himalayan Journal, Vol. 56, 2000.

A fine selection of writing from sources as diverse as Ed Douglas to George Band and many points in between.

Douglas's contribution, *The Morality Of Risk* has as its focus the moral debate which followed on from the death of Alison Hargreaves on K2. "A debate which only this cautious, risk-eliminating, morality-obsessed century would, or could, entertain."

Mick Fowler recounts an obviously desperate first ascent of Arwa Tower in the

Garwhal Himalaya with his usual *sang froid*. "I hung forlornly in a shallow scoop of powdery snow. Steve had somehow managed to excavate a better looking ledge and set about preparing lukewarm baby food. There was a time when I would have been deeply concerned at the onset of bad weather but years of doing this kind of thing have changed the old feeling of rising panic to one of resigned acceptance."

The usual expedition reports and other expanded 'expedition' essays provide an invaluable resource for those of us with Himalayan ambitions. The one criticism of this Journal, which seems justified, is the relatively poor quality of the photographic content. The cover is fine, perhaps even on a par with our own! But the interior selection is disappointing, especially given the theatre of operation.

Fontainebleau Climbs:— Jo and Francoise Montchausse, translated by Sue Harper (Bâton Wicks, 2001. 239pp, ISBN 1-898573-49-2. £15.99.

Whether or not you intend going to 'Bleau to climb you should have a look at this book when you're browsing. It's a superbly finished full-coloured guide to the area with quality photographs that wouldn't be out of place in something of the 'coffee table' genre. The text is also excellently worked around diagrams of the various 'routes' through the forest linking together problems of the same grade and is much, much more than the 'move up and left to a sharp finger pocket' variety that we've become used to.

Here we are given a bit of history; a bit of psychology; a bit of nature study; in short, the book is interesting as well as informative. That the publishers can produce this at the price they have is a wonder in itself but I can only assume that they are helped in this by the size of the potential market. The only problem I foresee is that, arriving in the forest you may find yourself spending the afternoon drinking wine atop some sun kissed boulder, engrossed in reading rather than climbing. Problem?

The Climbers Handbook: Garth Hattingh, (New Holland, 157pp, ISBN 1 85974 6748, £21.95).

For those of us of a certain age it can be said that this 'how to do it' is as far removed from the black and white blandness of that bible of bygone days, Ron James's *Rockface* as is e-mail from quill pen.

This large format colour extravaganza, which approaches the coffee table genre in its lavishness if not in its intention, is blessed by a foreword from Sir Chris himself, in which, talking of sport climbing, he says: "I believe passionately that it should be kept off the traditional crags. Bolt protected climbing is a pale imitation of the real thing, for it is the presence of risk that is the fundamental basis of the attraction of climbing."

While agreeing entirely with his sentiments, the words Genie and Bottle do tend to spring to mind. What we have here is not simply a straight-forward ABC of climbing, and while covering the basics extremely well, it also deals thoughtfully with matters like the historical dimension, environmental issues and the psychological aspect of the game, all in glorious technicolour – of course. This book is the latest, and undoubtedly, the finest of its genre and you might argue that at £21.95 it would have to be.

Journals of Kindred Clubs

Etchachan Club Journal. No. 21, 2001.

I count myself honoured to have been invited to that inner sanctum of the Etchachan Club the 'Blue Lamp' pub in Aberdeen. The occasion? Tuesday night slide show. Why me? I was in Aberdeen in connection with my new role as editor of the Scottish Mountaineering Club Journal and was deemed suitable to sample the arcane mysteries of 'The Lampie' by long-time member Derek Pyper.

It is said that great and momentous things often happen in smoke-filled rooms and while the slide show was excellent it was the gathering itself which was momentous. This small club has a history going back to 1938 which encompasses such names as Brooker and Patey who were doing the business way back, to the present when it is Simon Richardson, Guy Robertson, Jason Currie, Pete Benson and others who are at the cutting edge. And during all that time the monthly pub night has been, and continues to be, at the centre of things. It is there midst the ambience of the sticky carpets and the nicotine stained walls that the great climbing plans of the North East are hatched and, as we know, more often than not brought to fruition.

Any one who needs persuading of this need look no farther than an insert in this issue in which Editor, John Wilson, tells us: "My anonymous collators have compiled a list of Cairngorm summer and winter routes of the past 25 years that in some way were significant and involved Etchachan Club members." The list stretches from routes like Cumming-Crofton VI,6 in 1977 through White Magic VII, 7 in 1985 to modern horror shows like Redemption VIII,7 on Lochnagar. That there are around 30 names on this list, many of which are very much on active service at the front today, speaks volumes of the health and strength of this club.

In this small 44pp booklet one can find quality articles, some of which I wish I had had first bite at. I do, however, understand that club loyalty must come first and anyway, our Treasurer has not yet come to terms with the idea of a slush fund being made available, in these days of glossy mags and dot commery, to enable me to bribe prospective contributors.

One such article is Guy Robertson's *Against the Grade* in which he articulates what all of us involved in Scottish winter climbing already know, that it is impossible to grade winter climbing in any meaningful way other than in general terms. His conclusion that "the Scottish winter grading system should never have been changed. Its extension and modification has served no other purpose than to open up a useless Pandora's Box of futile and meaningless comparisons between our own routes and those of our counterparts in other countries", will no doubt attract comment, perhaps even from our own New Routes Editor who Robertson has elevated in the social scale by dubbing him "Sir Andrew Nisbet the 8th (Grade)". Sir Andrew is, it has to be said, also a prolific member of the Etchachan Club.

Simon Richardson makes *An Admission*. Recounting an early winter repeat of the Cumming-Crofton with Robin Clothier in 1986 when, finishing rather later than expected he noticed a lone figure waving from a distance as they topped out on the plateau. Some weeks later he was visiting Aberdeen when he too was taken into the inner sanctum, this time by Rick Allen of Everest. It was, however, as he tells us, "before the Blue Lamp days and the meeting was held somewhere in the University. Chris Forrest was showing slides of his solo ascent on Mandarin Buttress and when showing one taken of the Mitre Ridge after topping out from his climb, he pointed

to two little black dots silhouetted on the crest: 'Look at those guys on the Cumming-Crofton. They were really slow and it was getting late. Does anybody know who they were?' Fifteen years on, I guess it's time to own up."

This is an excellent wee journal, it does the Etchachan Club proud and is well worth the price of a pint that it would cost you to buy from John Wilson, 34 Charleston Way, Cove Bay, Aberdeen, AB 12 3FA.

Charlie Orr.

American Alpine Journal, Vol. 42, 2000.

This journal is always the snapshot of contemporary climbing. Its summary of climbs and the comments surrounding them is like an annual blood-pressure check of world-wide climbing. From reading this year's journal, the formula for world-class climbing is simple – find a big, snowy rock tower and climb it in fine alpine style. That encapsulates most of the featured routes, which in turn encapsulate climbing in 1999/2000. The style, challenge and excitement seems to be identical whether one climbs in Alaska, the Trango Glacier, Patagonia or Greenland. If you are interested in this style of climbing, the articles here provide an excellent overview of what you are getting into.

But the lead article outlines the most bold style of all, Thomas Humar soling the gigantic south face of Dhaulagiri. Many small teams wouldn't consider such a direct line, but he did it, although with a traverse off the face to clear a rock band and then back on again. It must have been the lucky shoe from his infant son that he carried. Reflecting an issue of current debate, he exited the face 150m below the summit, but elected to descend immediately rather than tick the top. As he says in an interview: "The summit would have been the cherry on the cake. And also in the end, the face or the summit is not so important. The main goal is coming back home and dreaming on."

I'll bet he didn't get the T-shirt either. I find it reassuring when such standard setters stress the importance of coming back alive taking precedence over the summit at any cost.

This leads to another interesting article, the impact of using supplemental oxygen on whether one survives the descent of Everest or K2 after summiting. Again, the issue is safety and surviving, rather than style. The answer is that it does make a difference. For Everest, 3% of climbers die on the descent if using supplemental oxygen, but 8.3% of those who do not use it. On K2 the difference is worse. Of teams who used supplemental oxygen, there are no deaths. But teams who did not use supplemental oxygen, one-third have at least one death! As Humar said: "The main goal is coming back home and dreaming on."

There were two good innovations in this year's AAJ. First, all main articles now have a photo of the author. A small change, but it is nice to know what some of the leading climbers look like, and how young some of them look.

The second is an article which contains three views of commercialisation and modern climbing. The problem is how to fund your climbing trips, or just your climbing. With a growing outdoor equipment supply industry and higher costs of climbing – should one be poor and suffer or take the gear and write the articles? The Internet, in particular, has brought about a new dimension of expedition reporting and sponsorship. The article brings together several views on this issue. And you thought the hard choice was whether to tick the summit or not!

That's the AAJ and that is climbing in 2000.

Rob Milne.

Perth Mountaineering Club – Millennium Journal, March 2000

This journal, produced in recognition of the significance of the millennium, records something of the Perth Mountaineering Club members' individual, and joint, experience in the mountains since the club began. The Club proper originated in 1929, when an offshoot of the Edinburgh JMCS was formed that developed into the Perth Section of the JMCS, *aka* the Perth Mountaineering Club. However, Robin Campbell (yes, the same) in his article, *Salix Herbacea Floreat!*, argues that its origins could be considered to go back as far as 1875 and the Mountaineering Section of the Perthshire Society for Natural Science. (Typically, Campbell's imagination appears to have been captured by the arcane office-bearers and rituals of this group, attributes that, unfortunately, do not appear to have been passed to their descendants in the PMC. Oh, to meet a Cairn Master and Bard at the top of a hill!)

The PMC proper includes some distinguished names in its history, with Alistair Cram being a founding member. Chris Rudie, another founder, died as recently as 1999, severing a remarkable link of 70 years to the beginnings of the Club. An Easter 1930 photo of a group outside the CIC shows many of the Club's founders. A hardy bunch of rogues they look, dressed in motley clothing that must have added considerably to the challenge of winter climbing on the Ben.

The first few articles reminisce on the late 1940s, 1950s and 1960s, back to the days when the Scottish hills were farther away and harder to get to, when a bus was the most common mode of transport as well as an important element in the social fabric of a weekend. Donald McIntyre, distinguished member of both PMC and SMC, recalls days spent just after the end of the Second World War with other well-known names, including Dunn, McKenzie, Murray, Parish and Slessor. Photos of cars outside an intact Derry Lodge in the 1960s, and one of the legendary Bob Scott enjoying a PMC meet in the Lodge, will stir memories of many elder mountaineers.

The Journal includes articles on Scandinavian ski-tours, the pleasures of the Donegal hills, an attempt (regrettably failed) on Aconcagua by Grahame and Mel Nicoll, but in the main is of club days spent on the Scottish hills. Through all the articles the enjoyment and companionship the writers feel for the mountains and their fellow club members is obvious. There are also more general articles, amusing fictions (one of which had your reviewer's fingertips sweating until he realised he had been fooled) and for a journal of this size quite a large number of poems (of which Tom Rix in particular contributed many). Women are quite well-represented, with the Club President, all the editors and many of the contributors being female (all states of affairs we in the 'senior' club seem to be quite some way off).

PMC members will buy this journal to read things written by and of friends, but the difficult thing for publications such as this, where the events described are relatively low key, is making it interesting for non-members. Not for them accounts of near-death experience – or worse – high on some Himalayan peak, or of bold ascents of difficult routes, where producing interesting matter is so much more easily achieved. No, they have as raw material events similar to those experienced by the vast bulk of would-be purchasers. This makes it easier perhaps to gain a reader's attention, but harder to keep it. All in all, I think the PMC have done a reasonable job. Club members will definitely get the most out of it, but other readers will also find something to interest them. However, for a club where only half the membership still works full-time, it might be considered only natural that it is probably the more mature reader who will find most.

Bob Duncan.

Also Received

The Enchanted Mountains: A Quest in the Pyrenees:—Robin Fedden, (The Ernest Press, 2000, 142pp, hardback, £15.99, ISBN-0 948153 55 5).

This is a reprint which, as the author's preface tells us, "is not primarily about mountaineering", perhaps owing more to the 'travel' genre. Combining three journeys through the Spanish Pyrenees from 1953-1957, it looks at the people and places as well as 'The Enchanted Mountains' themselves and portrays mountain life at a slower and more reflective pace than the present.

On the Trail of Queen Victoria in the Highlands:—Ian R. Mitchell, (Luath Press, 2000, 138pp, paperback, £7.99, ISBN -0 946487 79 0).

This book was commissioned as one of the Luath Press 'On The Trail Of' series and, had it remained as simply that, I have no doubt it would appeal to the market at which it is aimed, having good maps and route descriptions of the various walks/climbs it describes, as well as the added historical element.

However, as one comes to expect when reading Mr Mitchell's work, his readers are asked to wade through the 'Marxist' baggage he insists on carrying around with him, beliefs which perhaps have their genesis in well structured ideas like: "In my youth I dreamed of leading Red Army detachments against counter revolutionaries in Upper Deeside."

This has the tendency to leave one somewhat irritated to say the least. Add to this the fact that he chooses throughout the book to refer to his subject as 'Vikki'. "I have adopted a pet name for Victoria in this work," and the irritation moves on to a new level. One doesn't have to be, as Mr Mitchell suggests, a monarchist to be annoyed by this, only to have some pretension, however modest, to being a grown-up.

Trekking and Climbing in Nepal:—Steve Razzetti, (New Holland, 2000, 176pp, paperback, £13.99, ISBN -1 85974 409 5).

The author has been travelling in Nepal, exploring and leading commercial expeditions for the last 15 years. He has produced here a book of 25 'Adventure Treks' in the area which is a 'must have' for anyone considering a trip to the region. Not only are the treks mapped and discussed in great detail, there is also a wealth of information historical, cultural and technical within its pages. The many excellent colour photographs add to its attraction and give the prospective traveller, or indeed the armchair reader, a valuable insight into this superb environment. The fact that Victor Saunders, internationally respected climber, Alpine guide and past winner of the Boardman-Tasker prize has acted as climbing consultant on the book serves to enhance its authority.

The Sheilings and Drove Ways of Loch Lomondside:—John Mitchell. (John Jamieson Munro Trust, 2000, 31pp, paperback, £2.95).

This booklet looks at the history of the cattle drovers around Drymen and the Loch Lomond area. Black and white photographs enhance an interesting text. Available from Sheila Miller, Stirling Council Library Service, Borrowmeadow Road, Stirling FK7 7TN.

Loch Lomondside:—John Mitchell. (Harper Collins, 2001, paperback, 214pp, ISBN 000 2201 46 1, £19.99)

The most recent title in the 'New Naturalist' series describing in great detail the topography and economic development of Loch Lomondside, including forestry, agriculture, water storage and supply, but above all, its natural history and the long struggle for the conservation of the area's wild places.

Morning light on Shivling with Meru behind on the right, Garhwal Himalaya, India. Photo: Tom Prentice. Castleton Tower (right) and the rectory with the Lasal mountains behind – Moab, Utah. Photo: Tom Prentice.





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Articles for the Journal should be submitted before the end of January for consideration for the following issue. Lengthy contributions are preferably typed, double-spaced, on one side only, and with ample margins (minimum 30mm). Articles may be accepted on floppy disk, IBM compatible (contact Editor beforehand), or by e-mail. The Editor welcomes material from both members and non-members, with priority being given to articles of Scottish Mountaineering content. Photographs are also welcome, and should be good quality colour slides. All textual material should be sent to the Editor, address and e-mail as above. Photographic material should be sent direct to the Editor of Photographs, address as above.

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Casper Venter approaching the summit of Nil Kanth on the FA of the West Ridge. Chaukamba (7100m) in the background. Photo: Andy Nisbet.

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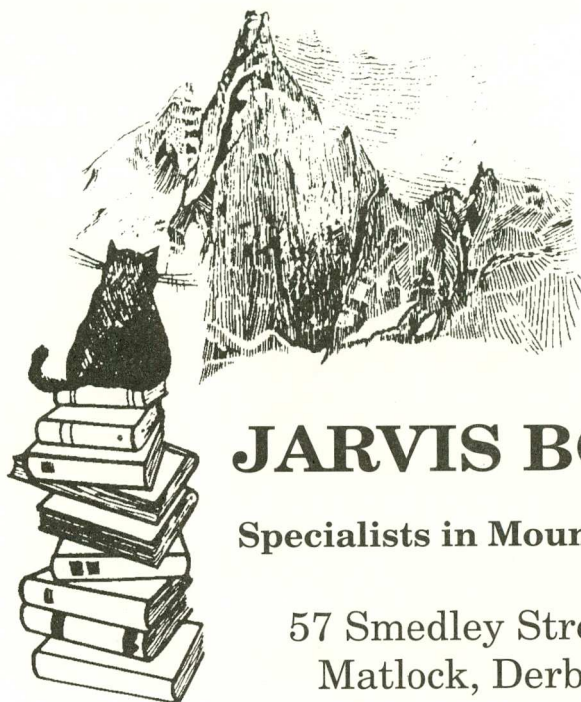
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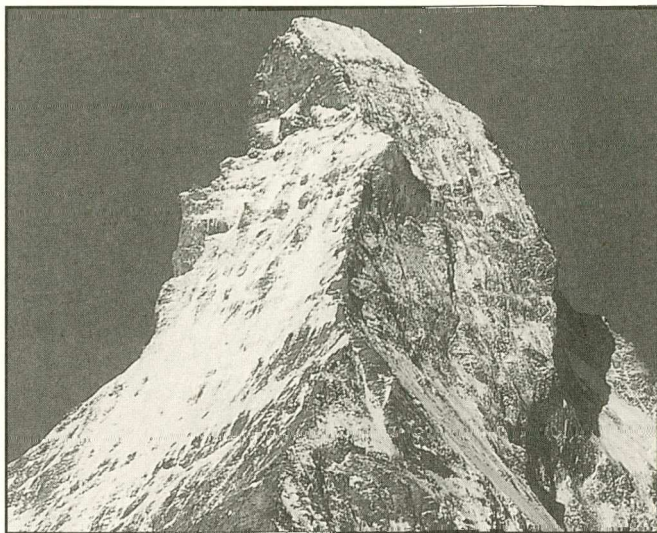
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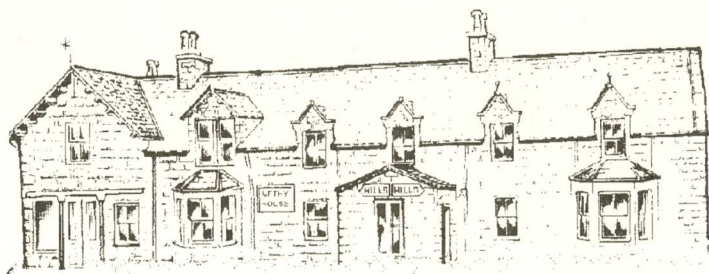
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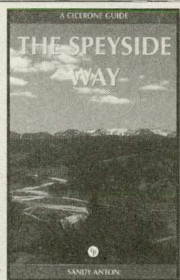
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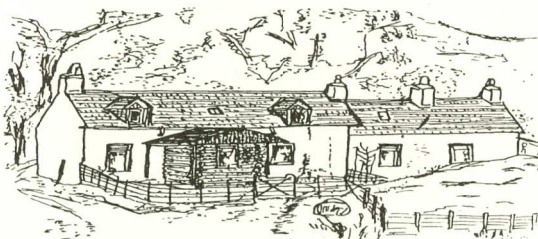
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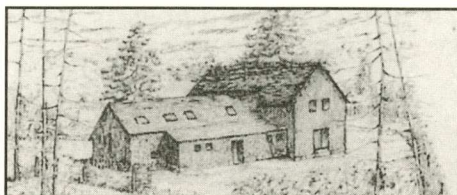
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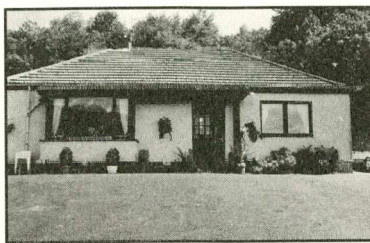
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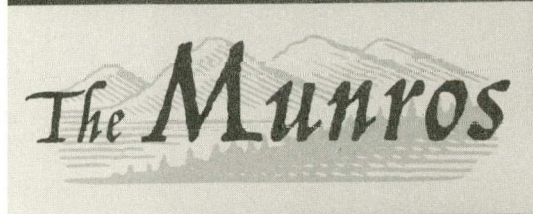



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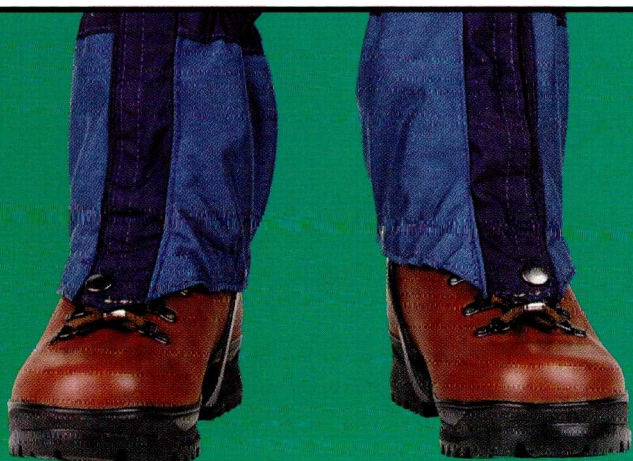
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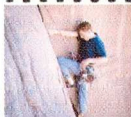
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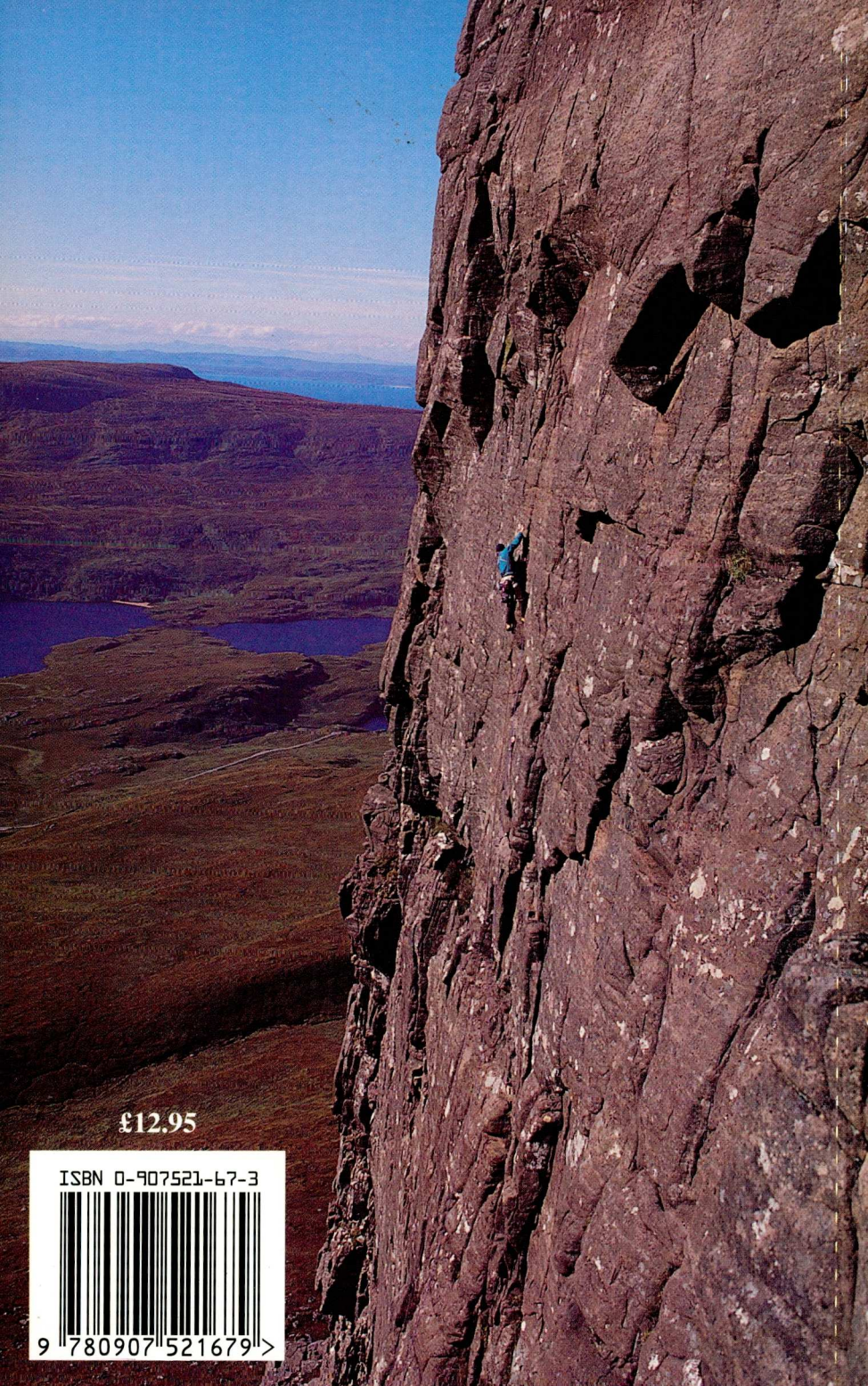
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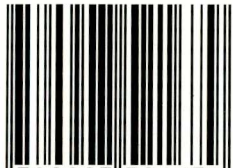
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