

THE SCOTTISH
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SEVEN SHILLINGS AND SIXPENCE

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The cause of it all. The Main Ridge from Sgùrr nan Gillean.

(T. Patey)

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THE FIRST WINTER TRAVERSE OF THE CULLIN RIDGE

By Tom Patey

It was a frosty moonlit night in February this year, and snow lay deep on the hills around the head of Loch Broom. I had just finished my evening's work when the phone rang. Anticipating a late-night visit, I lifted the receiver with weary resignation.

'Hello there! Is that you, Tom?' said a familiar voice. 'I was thinking of pushing over to Skye to-night for a look at the Ridge. Naturally, I thought you might like to come along.'

The enthusiasm crackling along the line soon left no doubt as to the voice. Who else but Hamish MacInnes would phone at this hour with such a preposterous suggestion?

'It's great to hear from you again, Hamish,' I replied cautiously. 'Could I perhaps phone you back in an hour? I would need to make a few trifling arrangements, you know.'

'Of course, of course,' he conceded magnanimously. 'Perhaps an hour would be sufficient, and if I haven't heard from you by then, I'll just set off.' Sixty-five minutes later I rang him up. 'Hello again, Tom, I thought it might be you,' he bellowed cheerfully, 'you're just in time. We're about to leave.'

'We!—Who is we?' I asked suspiciously.

'Davie Crabb and myself, who else? Didn't I tell you? Oh, of course, you wouldn't know. Well, when you didn't phone back I asked him to come instead. It's unfortunate that you've got everything fixed up.' His voice took on a sententious tone. 'Three is a bad number for the Ridge—far too slow and they eat too much. Why don't you find a fourth? Anyway I can't stop to talk now. See you to-night at Sligachan? The last ferry from Kyle leaves in three hours, so you might just make it, if you hurry.'

I swore violently as the line went dead. My mind went back

to the occasion several years ago when I had received a postcard which briefly announced, 'Meet me at Molde on 25th June at 3 P.M.' Molde is a tiny place somewhere up a Norwegian fjord. I already knew of Hamish's violent fits of enthusiasm, so I had thought of phoning him at his home in Glencoe on the appointed day and announcing my arrival in Molde. I had abandoned the idea. He would have commiserated briefly and then asked about the snow conditions. . . .

I remembered, too, the scraps of information scattered haphazardly through Hamish's letters, that had a simplicity often shattering in its impact—viz.: 'If you receive no reply to your next letter you will know that I have gone up the Amazon in search of a new species of long-tailed monkey. It promises to be a really interesting project.'

It was eight years since our last climb. That was a red-letter day in February 1957 when with Graeme Nicol of Aberdeen we made the first winter ascent of Zero Gully on Ben Nevis, at that time the most difficult winter route on the mountain (*S.M.C.J.* (1958)). It is curious why we had never joined forces again.

My annoyance at MacInnes' premature departure for Skye was eased next day by the news that he had stuck in a snowdrift near Cluanie and retreated to Glencoe to carry out essential repairs on his car.

Meanwhile I had been phoning up various likely partners. Eric Langmuir, the Warden at Glenmore Lodge, was immediately enthusiastic. Eric was an old friend and a very experienced Alpinist. It so happened that another mutual climbing acquaintance, Graham Tiso, was visiting the Lodge when I phoned so that he too became entangled in the plans.

The same evening a small wiry individual wearing a climbers' safety-helmet arrived at our door looking for a 'doss.' It was none other than Brian Robertson. He had hitch-hiked from Fort William in a fish lorry and wore the keenly expectant look of a man who has wandered many days in the desert and suddenly stumbled upon an oasis. His arrival could scarcely be better timed.

The following evening found us at Sligachan. We had chosen to attempt the Ridge Traverse from the North because this would enable us to abseil several sections where the reverse direction would involve very severe ice-climbing. Langmuir and Tiso had left immediately on receiving our S.O.S. Tiso's van was piled high with every possible and impossible item of climbing equipment.



Roman numerals indicate approximate degree of difficulty, graded as I to V in the *Cairngorms* guide-books, in *true optimum winter conditions*. A, approximate scene of the *Affaire Tiso*; B, bivouac Langmuir-Tiso; C, bivouac Patey-Robertson; D, bivouac Moriarty-Tiso; E, bivouac MacInnes-Crabb-Patey-Robertson; F, route of supply team and dogs; G, where sacks were jettisoned; H, where sacks were recovered; X_{1,2,3} here Robertson was sick; Y, Crabb loses half a crampon; Z, the MacInnes rope trick; Z₁, the 2000-ft. glissade. Circled numbers indicate abseil points: on S. to N. traverse each would indicate III to IV difficulty. EQUIPMENT NOTES: (i) At least one member used a MacInnes Ice Axe. (ii) Many articles of Tiso equipment were thoroughly tested. (iii) Dogs appeared by kind permission of H. MacInnes. (iv) Robertson reports 'loss or theft' of one piton.

We phoned MacInnes in Glencoe and told him snow conditions appeared excellent and we would be starting at dawn. If he hurried he could just catch the late night ferry. It says a lot for his superb sang-froid that he was able to accept this information with no show of emotion and to inform us in a detached tone of voice that he would be unable to leave for several days due to previous commitments. On the other hand, he could well have been clairvoyant.

I had already made one attempt on the winter traverse of the Main Ridge, and I knew of at least a dozen others, including six made by Hamish himself with different companions.

It was three years almost to the day since my own visit. On that occasion Richard Brooke and I arrived in Skye together with the worst blizzard of the winter. Between Sligachan and Glenbrittle our car stuck in a snowdrift. There was a dance on that night and we were joined by several carloads of frustrated merrymakers. This was fortunate because we soon found ourselves at a hastily arranged Ceilidh in the kitchen of the nearest croft.

Next day we staggered to Glenbrittle through two feet of newly fallen snow. Getting from there to the summit of Garsbheinn, the southernmost point of the ridge, was even more harrowing. In summer this is an easy three-hour walk. It provided us with six hours of undiluted misery floundering in snow seldom less than thigh-deep. On the ridge itself we were due for further disillusionment. Throughout its entire length the Cuillin Main Ridge had been stripped of every particle of snow by the westerly gales. It was, in fact, the only area of bare ground in Skye. There was no point in tackling it under what amounted to summer conditions.

We could have completed the climb in less than twelve hours from end to end, but we would seldom have had to cut steps and there was no advantage in wearing crampons. We found the harder pitches little more difficult than in summer. Our retreat disappointed the locals, for whom the Winter Traverse had become something of an out-of-season attraction when so many rival groups of climbers were vying with each other for the honour of being the first.

I was rather disillusioned by this visit. It began to look as if the Cuillins, because of their proximity to the warmer Atlantic, seldom if ever come into condition for winter climbing. The essential ingredients for success appear to be a heavy snowfall without an accompanying wind and followed successively by a quick thaw and an equally rapid freeze. A further essential is that the weather must remain favourable for at least two days. All these conditions



(T. Paley)

Robertson embraces the Gendarme, who remained unmoved.



(H. MacInnes)

The perfection of Scottish winter climbing. Crabb and the Ridge.

seldom concur during the course of a Skye winter. It is hardly surprising that I had had to wait three full years, after my first attempt, before returning to the fray.

On this occasion, as events were soon to prove, it was the climbers and not the Cuillins who were out of condition. In direct contrast to my previous visit there was no snow at all below the 2000-foot contour but above this level the fantastic jagged skyline of the main ridge was crusted as white as a Christmas cake. The conditions were perfect—iron-hard nevé, ideally suited to front-point cramponing. We intended to carry two ice-axes per man. An ice-pick in either hand as additional points of contact would serve to narrow down any element of risk involved, since we planned to climb unroped for most if not all of the way along the ridge. Without twelve-point crampons we would have needed to cut thousands of steps and might easily have spent the better part of a week on the climb.

Because of an unduly late start we did not reach our first objective, the top of Sgùrr nan Gillean, until midday. All four of us carried heavy rucksacks full of bivouac equipment.

We traded valour for discretion by ignoring the challenge of the direct route *via* the Pinnacle Ridge—a jagged crescendo of glistening ice-towers Himalayan in its unaccustomed winter garb. Instead we climbed the Tourist Route which spirals up the back of the mountain. This was a much longer approach and I am not convinced that we saved ourselves any time.

Near the top we were suddenly enveloped in dense cloud that had been building up over the Sound of Sleat all morning. Big flakes of snow began to fall—sporadically, but with ominous insistence. We began the tricky descent of the West Ridge believing that the weather was going to deteriorate further and any subsequent effort would be merely a formal concession to the occasion, calculated to save face on our return to Sligachan. Consequently there was little urgency and we indulged our fancy by finishing off the delicacies which were to have soothed our bivouac.

Soon we came to where the ridge narrowed in a jagged sword-blade of gabbro. Here we were forced to rope up. Half-way along the icy tightrope the snow-encrusted Gendarme held us up for half an hour. Eventually we discovered that a doubled rope reached the snowfield below on the north side. It was then simple to by-pass the Gendarme by an abseil and an easy horizontal traverse, regaining the Ridge at the next col.

Here, Robertson and I reverted to climbing solo. Langmuir and Tiso had roped up at the start and were already far behind. Although we sympathised with their conscientious approach we

considered that the traverse would take three or four days if we were ruled by traditional precepts. We had only enough food for two days and in any case only a rabid optimist could expect Skye weather to remain fine any longer than that. The first instruction in the climbing manual is to 'climb as if the rope wasn't there.' We had no need for pretence. Anyone who has made a regular practice of climbing solo over a period of years must of necessity be a competent climber. If such was not the case, he would be dead. Nature has effective methods of eliminating the unreliable individualist. I am not making a case for solo climbing—merely pointing out that most solo climbers are not the unprincipled fanatics that some authorities claim but are essentially dependable and well-adjusted companions.

Time was once again important. As if to mock us, the cloud barrier had dispersed and the afternoon sun lit up a dazzling panorama of snow-capped peaks from Ben Nevis to Torridonia. There was no longer any possible justification for giving up.

A long abseil from the top of the next peak landed us on the Bhàsteir Tooth—a clean-cut prow of black rock starkly outlined against the universal snow blanket.

Descending the Coruisk side of the Tooth we eventually reached a point where a 300-foot rope, doubled through a piton of doubtful integrity, just reached the foot of the cliff. The abseil was largely free and because of a slight bulge half-way down we could not verify that the rope in fact reached the bottom. I offered Robertson the privilege of the lead. Some time after he had disappeared from sight, the rope suddenly went slack. As there was no simultaneous scream I gathered he had reached the bottom under control.

The Ridge was now easy for a long way. The other two had just arrived at the top of the Tooth but we decided not to wait for them as we intended to stop at least an hour before dark, to prepare a communal bivouac. This would let them catch up.

Only now had we begun to move at a respectable pace, as muscles became attuned to the rhythm of front-point cramponing. A quick stab with the crampon, a punch with the ice-axe spike—right foot—right hand—left foot—left hand—so on it went, hands and feet working like pistons, pricking out a thread-like tattoo-line across the glistening névé. We could count from memory the rock holds we had used since Sgùrr nan Gilleán. These were the climbing conditions which one dreams about, but in practice seldom encounters. In sixteen years' winter climbing in Scotland I have never found better. The creaking of crampon points was sweet music to the ear.

Two hours later we came upon a perfect site for the bivouac—a curving snow wreath directly below the west peak of Bidein Druim nan Ramh. To-night there was the merest breath of wind, but no sooner had the sun sunk behind the Hebrides than it became so cold that we were forced to excavate a 3-foot deep trench, wide and long enough to accommodate the four of us.

We were so preoccupied that it was dark before we realised the second string was considerably overdue.

‘A bit odd,’ I ventured after a long silence. ‘When did you see them last?’

‘Not since the Tooth,’ Robertson confessed. ‘You don’t suppose there was any particular reason for all that shouting about an hour ago?’

‘I could only just hear it,’ I said, ‘so it could hardly have been anything too drastic.’

‘On the other hand that sound must have carried quite a distance,’ commented Robertson gloomily. ‘At least two miles, I’d say at a guess.’

I had been thinking the same thing, but had not wanted to say so.

‘Anyhow,’ I remarked with a feeble attempt at optimism, ‘they must have bivouacked by now because its so dark they wouldn’t be able to see their own feet, far less climb. In any case I haven’t heard any shouting for a long time.’

‘There may be a very good reason for that,’ he observed dryly. ‘It’s a bit of a bind, after digging such a flaming big hole. . . . Still, you never know—it might make a fabulous grave for Tiso. . . . Perhaps he’s gone and hanged himself,’ he suggested brightly.

Robertson must have the Second Sight.

The next time I opened my eyes it was broad daylight and the sun must have been up for over an hour. Once again the weather was beyond reproach. I levered myself out of my ice-encrusted cocoon and peered blearily over the rim of the snow-hole. Our bivouac site commanded a view of the whole ridge back to the Tooth. It was as empty as the back row of a cinema during the National Anthem.

With a resigned gesture I switched off the torch, a pathetic little beacon that had shone bravely but to no avail throughout the night. ‘I’m afraid that’s it,’ I remarked tonelessly. ‘I suppose we ought to go back and look.’

Robertson was visibly depressed. ‘Remember that bit in Gervasutti’s book where the German fell off the overhang for the third time? What did Gervasutti say? “Though my heart was

near to breaking I let him down." You can understand how he felt,' he said bitterly.

We split up, Brian retracing our tracks along the crest of the Ridge while I descended into the western corrie to search the base of the cliffs. It pays to be realistic on these occasions.

About an hour later the corrie resounded to a volley of oaths.

'What are you doing down there?'

'I—am—looking—for—your—dead—bodies,' I replied spitefully, giving every syllable its last ounce of venom.

'Sorry—can't make out a word you're saying. Why—is—Brian—up—here? Did—you—fall—off?'

I gave up and sat down on the snow in an attitude of despair. Getting no further reply to their shouts they all eventually descended the corrie.

It was an exotic story. Told against the background of a cloudless sky and the Cuillin Ridge in unique winter conditions, it sounded like a bad joke.

The trouble began because Tiso was too conscientious. Having abseiled down from the Tooth and thus tested the piton to most people's satisfaction (he was the heaviest member of the party) he took an extra precaution. He knotted a loop on the double rope, stepped into it and swung with his full weight on the rope. This would have been all right if it had not been for three significant factors. The rope had reached him at a slight angle; the slope fell away at a slight angle; and he was wearing crampons. When his gyrations ceased he found himself 5 feet off the ground with one crampon entangled in the loop. In an effort to free it he turned upside down. . . .

He was now hanging by one foot with his head caressing the snow. It was a unique and quite irreversible position. Physiologists have stated that a man hanging freely in space from a rope around his waist expires from suffocation in somewhat less than twenty minutes. (I can't imagine how they arrived at this hypothesis.) Probably no one has calculated the life-span of a man hanging from one foot, but it is reasonable to assume that his condition will steadily deteriorate. Hence it was not surprising that Tiso's initial distress signals had carried a distance of two miles.

Up above, Langmuir was in an unenviable position. It was obvious that some stirring drama was being enacted at the foot of the cliff, but the bulge concealed it from view and also distorted Tiso's colourful commentary. There was only one way to find out. This was to descend the fixed rope which was stretched taut as a guitar string. He had no spare rope to rig an abseil and it would

have been suicidal to try to climb down without protection. He used the only safety device available—a thin nylon sling which he attached to the main rope by a Prussik knot. Every time he adjusted the knot to a lower position, his other hand clutching the rope had to take his full body weight. Where the rope ran over a projection, the situation became even more hazardous. His downward vista centred round the upturned sole of a Tiso Special Climbing Boot, behind which he could see the congested features of the leading Scottish distributor.

Half an hour later, his herculean task accomplished, he unhooked the unfortunate Tiso with a flick of the ice-axe and both collapsed on the snow in utter exhaustion.

Not surprisingly, they had been unable to get much further along the Ridge before darkness forced them to bivouac.

We had been prepared to be critical. Instead we had to admit that they had done extraordinarily well to extricate themselves from a nightmarish situation. It could have happened to any of us and in retrospect had its lighter moments, but at the time the outcome could have been serious.

So ended our first Cuillin adventure. I might not have been so despondent had I known that we would be returning to Sligachan before the week was out.

I phoned MacInnes, as I had promised, with the news of our defeat.

‘So you didn’t get up,’ he remarked before I had even spoken.

‘How on earth did you know that?’

‘Well I heard that conditions were almost spring-like, so I knew you wouldn’t bother pushing on with it. Quite right. It would have been daylight robbery to claim a first winter ascent.’

‘What do you know about it?’ I replied huffily. ‘You weren’t even there.’

‘Ah, you forget that a friend of mine, Peter Thomas, lives at Glenbrittle,’ said Hamish in his ‘matter-of-fact’ voice.

I returned the gauntlet. ‘If that’s what you think, go over and see yourself.’

‘All right,’ he said thoughtfully. ‘I think I will. I’ll find Davie Crabb and we’ll be on the road in an hour. See you at Sligachan. . . .’

From the road outside the Hotel, MacInnes was prepared to admit he was wrong. That was about all he was prepared to concede. ‘Tom—this idea of yours of getting Peter Thomas to

carry the bivvy gear up to Sgùrr na Banachdich is all very well, but Davie and I have been thinking and we reckon it's cheating. You know, of course, what everyone will say?' he added darkly.

'You think it's cheating? Well, look at it this way—I've already carried a heavy rucksack as far as Bidein and that's almost as far as Banachdich. I'm damned if I'm going to do it twice in a week merely to keep the records straight. I want to enjoy the climb—so does Brian. If we happen to find a couple of rucksacks on top of Sgùrr na Banachdich just before dusk we shall accept their existence as an Act of God and put them to good use. Peter Thomas is agreeable?'

'Oh yes, he is quite willing to help out but wonders if you are happy about the ethics of the thing.'

'Overjoyed,' I said, 'and so will you be when we take your packs off you after you've collapsed with exhaustion. . . .'

Once more we stood at the top of the abseil from the Bhàsteir Tooth. The weather was perfect, the snow beyond reproach—only the time of day differed from the last visit. It was merely 11 a.m. Our rapid progress was due to two factors. We had our own recently made tracks to guide us. There was also a hint of rivalry between the two pairs of climbers—the merest suggestion, but sufficient to cause a gradual and insidious acceleration in the combined speed of the party. All the way from Sligachan we had been forced to put up with MacInnes's Lifemanship gambits. He appears to be entirely unaware of his talents in this particular field, so that his comments are usually unanswerable.

'That was a tricky bit, eh, Davie? The boys made it look quite easy! It only shows how carrying a pack can upset your equilibrium. Makes an easy pitch into a very severe.'

Or again . . .

'Please don't let us hold you up, lads!' He was hammering along like a steam engine at the time. 'It's going to be a terrible cold night for you if you don't reach Banachdich to-night. I know quite well you're both keen to get ahead.' We were in fact finding considerable difficulty in keeping up but we had a measure of excuse for our poor showing. MacInnes and Crabb had gone religiously to bed at 9 p.m. the previous evening. Robertson and I had stayed up until 2 a.m. at a Ceilidh, exchanging stories with mine host, John MacLellan, former Scottish Champion Athlete of the Heavy events. Several other convivial Sgiathanachs had joined the group around the fire. An accordian, a mouth-organ, a tape-recorder and a bottle of whisky were ideal ingredients for an

impromptu Ceilidh. The whisky circulated briskly. I am not hang-over-prone—Robertson unhappily is. He had been unable to resist the fiery *creulair* and the temptation of getting something for nothing. We had got up at five, roused by an alarm clock. We could have slept till midday and it was a long, long time before I could convince myself that we had slept at all. On the way up the mountain Robertson had been stopping every half-mile to be sick, and I imagined he might give Sgùrr nan Gillean a miss since he had climbed it only a few days before. I soloed up the gully leading to the final col on the Pinnacle Ridge and then made my way with some difficulty up the most direct route to the top, being forced to cut steps for the last 400 feet. Despite this I arrived a little in front of MacInnes and Crabb who had climbed the West Ridge, finding the Gendarme tricky.

The four of us were climbing unroped and Robertson and I were ahead of the others by about ten minutes when we reached the crucial abseil, the scene of Tiso's solitary penance. History almost repeated itself. I was half-way down the aerial section when a freak knot appeared on the rope below me. Next minute it had jammed squarely against the karabiner at my waist and I was left spinning round and round on the rope like a frustrated marionette. Desperate situations call for desperate measures: I eventually solved the problem by hammering the knot through the karabiner with my ice-axe. Surprisingly the rope was undamaged.

It was only when we were about to retrieve the abseil that I realised that the knot was on the 'wrong' half of the doubled rope. Sure enough, it jammed again in the eye of the abseil piton. There was no easy solution this time. We would just have to wait for MacInnes and Crabb to free it.

Then I noticed they were preparing to abseil down an altogether different part of the wall somewhere in the neighbourhood of Naismith's Route.

'Climb down a bit this way. That's the wrong route,' I called up persuasively.

'It looks O.K. to us,' said Hamish, 'and will save five minutes in any case.'

'You realise that if the rope's only 150 feet long, it won't reach the bottom?'

'Of course it will. I happened to measure this pitch last summer. It is exactly 135 feet from top to bottom.'

MacInnes has such an impressive array of facts and figures at his fingertips that one occasionally doubts their authenticity. However, his voice carries such conviction that one hesitates to argue.

‘Actually it would help us if you could come down the same way; our rope is jammed, and you could chuck it down to us.’ I felt like the small boy who asks for his ball back from the next-door garden.

The practised Lifeman never exploits such an obvious confession of failure. Instead he pretends to ignore it altogether, although his face shows that he has had to make a conscious effort to do so.

‘Pity about that,’ remarked Hamish, in an abstract way as he handed us a neatly coiled rope. ‘We must have lost at least ten minutes on that little mishap. Can’t be helped, of course. These things do happen.’

We mumbled our apologies and offered to take our turn of carrying the packs.

‘I’m feeling fine,’ said MacInnes, who indeed looked it. ‘How about you, Davie?’

‘Never felt better,’ replied that stalwart with his usual loyalty.

‘Thanks all the same, Tom,’ the gallant hero continued, ‘but you have to get to Banachdich for 4 o’clock and we’ll manage to struggle along.’

I was beginning to question which pair of us was labouring under the bigger handicap. Without rucksacks we should have been half as fast again as they were, but with Hamish in his usual superb physical condition this was an impossibility.

I must admit too that we were dismayed to discover how effortlessly Davie Crabb was keeping pace with MacInnes. For a man who had only recently entered the limelight he was making light of snow and ice problems that would have caused most veteran Alpinists to demand the protection of a rope. I had always understood that although reigning tigers might surpass their elders on short routes of extreme technical severity they lacked experience to move fast and competently over average difficulty. I was now finding out, like many others, that this is another myth as ridiculous as the tale that our modern climber only betters the achievements of his forefathers by excessive use of pitons and slings. In climbing, as in any other competitive sport (which climbing most certainly is), a man’s ability and achievements must only be measured against the yard-stick of his contemporaries.

We passed the site of our previous bivouac shortly after midday, a much-improved performance. At the top of the snow gully between the Central and West Peaks of Bidein we grappled with our first pitch of actual rock climbing. Even so the vital holds were hidden under blue ice and had to be bared with the axe. Although merely a ‘muscle-loosener’ in summer this was now a pitch of

severe standard. Having duly appropriated the Central Peak we abseiled back to the col, passing the other pair on the way up.

From here to Sgùrr a'Mhadaidh was no more than a walk. That is to say, you could have fallen and escaped with your life. This could not be said of any other part of the Cuillin Ridge in the conditions we found it. There was a sufficient depth of iron-hard snow on most of the ledges to incorporate them into the uniformly steep slopes which fell away from the Ridge—itself a tortuous knife-edge of snow. We could never hope to find more perfect climbing conditions.

Two successive abseils from the twin towers of Sgùrr a'Mhadaidh launched us upon the long middle section of the Ridge Traverse which leads successively over the summits of Sgùrr a' Ghreadaidh and Sgùrr na Banachdich. Here are no outstanding rock problems, but in winter a steady succession of minor difficulties which would greatly reduce the pace of a roped party. Fast progress on this part of the Ridge is absolutely essential if one is to complete the traverse in two days. Indeed if a climber has not the confidence and experience to cope with this section unroped he would be ill-advised to attempt the Ridge Traverse.

There are climbers who advocate moving together, carrying coils, on this kind of terrain. My own view is that in these circumstances the rope is rather a hindrance and a hazard than a means of protection: if no belays are taken then any protection is largely illusory. Quite apart from this, very few climbers climb with the same margin of safety if they are clutching a coil of rope in one hand.

Although now enveloped in mist the party continued to advance in loose order. Robertson was still vomiting periodically, about twenty minutes behind me. I could gauge his progress from the occasional sounds of ice-axe or crampon. At least half an hour behind him were MacInnes and Crabb. Why they were no longer challenging was not obvious. Later it transpired that a most disastrous thing had happened. Davie Crabb had broken a crampon. For a time, MacInnes even considered abandoning the attempt. In effect, Crabb was climbing with one foot and a heel, the toe of his unprotected vibram-soled boot stubbing uselessly against the glassy surface. He roped up behind MacInnes.

I knew nothing of this and by the time I reached Sgùrr na Banachdich sounds of pursuit had long since faded. Visibility was down to ten yards and I was aware of a gnawing doubt whether we would ever be re-united with that all-important rucksack containing the bivouac gear and food rations for the next twenty-four

hours. Supposing Peter Thomas had left it at the wrong place? We had only an hour of daylight to seek our salvation.

Suddenly and quite unexpectedly I came upon the tracks of a dog. A few yards further were more dog tracks and a trail of clearly defined footprints leading towards the summit of Banachdich. I heaved a profound sigh of relief.

The supply party—consisting of Catherine MacInnes, Peter Thomas, and Hamish's two Alsatian dogs—had passed this way an hour earlier. A few more steps and I came upon the rucksack, neatly stacked against the summit cairn. It was a poignant moment.

Here, too, was a cryptic message scratched on the snow which read, 'A I MET.' I decided that MET must be Peter Thomas's initials. Perhaps he preferred to be called Peter just in order to be complicated (some people do). In that case A I would be a symbol of self-congratulation, like patting oneself on the back. Why shouldn't he congratulate himself on his hard work—perhaps nobody else would? It seemed a logical explanation. Only afterwards did we discover the significance of this message left by Catherine MacInnes for her unpredictable spouse. De-coded it meant 'Weather forecast—continuing fine.' Characteristically, he was no wiser than we were.

As I had not seen anyone for several hours I was quite relieved when Robertson appeared about twenty minutes later. By this time I had discovered a well-protected ledge for a bivouac and half an hour later when the other pair dropped in we had already excavated a level platform capable of holding four in some discomfort.

'It looks a bit cramped,' MacInnes remarked critically. 'I rather fancy digging a snow hole. How about you, Davie? It would be good practice if nothing else.'

I waited with interest to see if Hamish intended to carry out such a prodigious threat. In the end he settled for another smaller ledge a few feet to the side.

A vague element of insularity still coloured the remarks that wafted across the icy no-man's land between the rival bivouacs.

'This is excellent soup, Davie. What's it called?'

'What's after the baked beans, Brian?'

'I don't know whether I *could* eat any more if I tried!'

'This is a palace!!'

'I could live here quite happily for a week!!!'

'I reckon the packs were worth the effort. Makes you sort of feel that you have earned it all.'

'That was a great idea getting the packs sent up. Organisation!—Pity we had to stop!—I could have gone on for hours!' Etc., etc.

In fact, the organisation was far from perfect. We had assembled the contents of Peter Thomas's rucksack in a hurry on our return from the Ceilidh. Our choice showed little discrimination and a lack of consideration for our porter's feelings. Catherine MacInnes told us later that he had eventually opened the rucksack out of curiosity and asked with disgust, 'Is this a bivouac or a birthday party?' There was some truth in his complaint. The contents included three packets of margarine, a large tin of salt and a half-gallon can of water.

We had selected a fine vantage point for our bivouac. Anchored by ropes and pitons, and secure in the warmth of duvets and sleeping bags, we could pass away the evening by identifying the numerous lighthouses off the west coast of Skye. Nearer at hand the lights of Glenbrittle beckoned like a friendly beacon. How easy and pleasant it would be to glissade down the long slopes of Banachdich! In an hour we could be sitting by a warm fire. In the morning if we rose early we could be back on the top by dawn and nobody would know we had deserted our posts. . . .

At some unearthly hour I was awakened by a light fall of snow and the dawn ushered in a cheerless morning. Grey tentacles of mist clung to every cranny on the Ridge and fresh hoar-frost covered the rocks. It had been one of the coldest nights of the winter. Although I had fallen asleep in comparative luxury, I awoke in misery. Condensation inside the polythene bivvy-bag had soaked inexorably through sleeping bag, duvet and trousers. As soon as I got up, my clothes became as stiff as cardboard. Then the primus refused to work in the cold and we had to borrow Hamish's butane stove. It was almost 9 o'clock before we finally got under way. We climbed with the agility of four knights in full armour.

Fortunately it was an easy start to the day. At the col between Banachdich and Sgùrr Dearg we jettisoned all the spare rations and bivouac gear. MacInnes, ever cautious, placed his rucksack under a prominent boulder: I slung my own with utter contempt in the direction of Glenbrittle and watched with gay abandon as it finally disappeared from view, 1500 feet below, in one final gigantic arc. Robertson followed suit, although with mixed emotions. It was the first time he had wilfully abandoned his precious iron-mongery and there was a nostalgic look in his eyes. (Both rucksacks were recovered intact the following morning, less than an hour's walk away from Glenbrittle.)

We now had to keep our first appointment of the day. The Inaccessible Pinnacle of Sgùrr Dearg was an unpleasant customer to meet so early in the morning. Easily the most impressive summit

pinnacle in Britain, it is considerably more intimidating in mid-winter. We began by examining the north end of the Pinnacle—the so-called 'Short Side.' It was plated from top to bottom with black ice. The ascent can be quite awkward on a wet day in summer, yet Hamish was confident that he could force a way up even in these conditions.

It promised to be a long teathy struggle, and I do not enjoy watching life-and-death drama for the same reason that I would not pay to watch circus acrobats: I become too personally involved. Consequently, I left the other two spectating and walked round towards the other end of the Pinnacle. Suddenly, I had an impulse to investigate the 'Long Side.' Although reputedly a much easier climb than its counterpart, it is at least twice the length and might now present similar technical difficulties, for the angles of both routes are roughly comparable. After fifty feet of climbing, undertaken purely for reconnaissance, I became unpleasantly aware that I was now committed to the climb. After 100 feet, I would have given a great deal for rope protection and a belay. There was little time to cut extra holds. The very edge of the arête had been denuded of snow by the sun, but even so there was less than half the summer quota of holds. When I came to the short vertical step where one usually pauses before stepping up on to a rather thin bracket, I decided that it was time to enlist Robertson's assistance. Unfortunately he was out of sight and apparently beyond recall because nobody appeared to investigate my shouts. There was no sense in hanging on indefinitely for a last-minute reprieve, so I chose to continue while I still had some strength. As so often, no sooner had I made this resolution, when everything suddenly clicked. Crampon points bit tenaciously into thin wafers of water-ice, woollen gloves clamped down firmly on rounded verglassed holds and before I even had time to consider the penalties of failure, I was already over the difficulty and scrambling up the last few feet to the top. Total time for the ascent—ten minutes—Standard—a good Severe—and I had to suppress an urge to dramatise my sudden appearance on the top of the Pinnacle. It was gratifyingly effective nevertheless, as MacInnes was at grips with the 'bad step' and in a position to appreciate a top-rope. (Although, knowing Hamish, he would obviously have fought his way up in time.)

I pulled up an extra length of rope from the base of the Pinnacle and belayed MacInnes from one rope, leaving the second for use as a handrail.

'This fixed rope isn't much good, Tom. It will swing clean off the rock. Can't you flick it across to your left?'

‘All right, I’ll do that,’ I said, ‘but I’ll have to let go your rope. O.K.?’

‘No! Not on your life. I’m relying on this rope for support.’ Most odd, I thought. I am obviously belaying him with the wrong rope. By ordinary standards, Hamish ought to be in mid-air.

After jugglery, we had a second rope secured top and bottom, and the rest of the party made free use of it to clamber up and down the Pinnacle. (We were not to know that merely forty-eight hours later the second victorious pair to complete the Traverse of the Cuillin Ridge would be persuaded by our tracks into tackling the Short Side of the Pinnacle. One was the indefatigable Tiso: the other the formidable J. Moriarty, the Not-So-Gentle-Giant, ‘Big Elly’ himself. This was a sterling performance as our quartet would be the first to confirm.)

The first of the two redoubtable strong-points of the Cuillin Ridge had been out-mancœuvred and overcome. Now only the Thearlaich-Dubh Gap remained. The early morning mists were dispersing rapidly, the sun shone on a dazzling landscape and for the first time we dared to contemplate success. If the weather was not going to stop us nothing else would.

We glissaded down the long snow chutes of An Stac and climbed the twisting aerial stairway to Sgùrr MhicCoinnich. From the summit eyrie, one after another we spun down the 150-foot abseil which hung clear of the cliff like a spider’s thread. So on to Sgùrr Thearlaich by a left-flanking traverse on 100 yards of creaking snow that threatened to avalanche but held firm. At the top of the Great Stone Shoot we turned aside to pay homage to Sgùrr Alasdair and a magnificent viewpoint.

We were all impatient to come to grips with the last difficulty on the Ridge—the Thearlaich-Dubh Gap. It needed only a few seconds’ inspection to confirm that its ascent under present conditions would be exceptionally ‘thin’—corresponding to a summer grading of ‘Very Severe’ and rating high in that category. An evil veneer of ice obscured every wrinkle on the wall. Without crampons any ascent would have been out of the question, but where were there big enough incuts to support the front points of a crampon? I did not fancy peeling off backwards. Someone did this some years ago and paid for it with his life. A glance at the jagged boulders which lined the floor of the Gap recalled this incident.

Moriarty and Tiso must have come to the same conclusion two days later. Although they had already dealt with the difficult ‘Short Side’ of the Inaccessible Pinnacle they failed to climb out

of the Gap and had to abseil all the way down to the corrie floor, only regaining the Ridge after a slight detour.

We were most reluctant to take this diversion from a Ridge Traverse. Robertson therefore prepared to hurl himself at the last hurdle in a fervour of martyrdom.

At that moment MacInnes, who had yet to descend into the Gap, made a novel suggestion. 'If you just hold it a minute, lads,' he shouted, 'I might manage to get a rope over to the other side.'

Surely, I thought, someone would have discovered this solution long ago, if it in fact existed?

However, there are few who can rival Hamish's flair for improvisation. 'The fact is, I've been here investigating in the summer,' he confessed (familiar phrase, I thought) 'and there's a pointed rock on the other side that will take a direct pull from below, supposing I get the rope to lie behind it.'

With the very first cast his rope wrapped itself neatly round a projection at the top of the wall. Most men would have sweated blood and tears to achieve this. Only one thing troubled me. It was obviously not the same projection that Hamish had aimed at.

'How do you know this rope is safe, Hamish?'

'I don't,' he replied in his abstract way.

'Well, how are we to find out whether it's safe, if you can't tell us from up there?'

MacInnes was the model of patience. 'Try climbing up the rope,' he remarked encouragingly. 'I'll be most surprised if it comes away.'

'You won't be the only one,' I thought.

Now followed the Moment of Truth, beloved of mountaineering chroniclers—the Throw of the Dice that was the difference between success and utter disaster. Even if the whole of my past life did not flash across my subconscious mind as is supposed to happen on these occasions, I still remember the enormous relief when I pulled myself over the top to find the rope securely jammed. We had broken the Last Barrier. Success was assured.

One abseil remained. Then we coiled up the rope for the last time and each of us wandered silently and independently along the final mile of scree-speckled Ridge to Garsbheinn, the final outpost of the Ridge. Beyond lay the blue Atlantic, warm and inviting in the afternoon sun. Down there by the shore a different world awaited us—a world of colour and contrast. In one searing whooping glissade of 2000 feet we returned to it. It was indeed good to be back. Our two-day journey in the winter Cuillin and the twelve-hour 'tarantella on ice' when crampon tips and ice-axe

(Top) Patey behind, Robertson, Crabb and, in front,
one of THOSE axes.

(Bottom) The rewards of virtue: MacInnes and his soup.

(Photos: H. MacInnes)





(D. Bennet)

Slesser conquistadorial. Up for inspection are the Nevado Cancan (c. 18,000 ft.) and Chainapuerto (c. 18,700 ft.) on the right.

spike were our only contacts with tangible reality, now all seemed a strange and wonderful fantasy.

A little older in wisdom, a little younger in spirit, we marched back over the moors to Glenbrittle. Down there in Cuillin Cottage, Mrs Campbell would be waiting for us with supper. It was a long-standing invitation that we fully intended to keep. . . .

There are many ultimates in mountaineering and every generation finds its own Last Problem. The five others who shared the first winter Traverse of the Cuillin Ridge probably feel the same way as I do. There are many harder and more exacting routes, and many more still to be explored, yet I feel confident that the Winter Traverse of the Main Ridge will always retain its place as the greatest single adventure in British Mountaineering.

It would be presumptuous to be conceited about the success of our own exploit. We can only be grateful that we were lucky to find this superb climb in superb winter conditions. If any individual honours are awarded then they should go to Davie Crabb and Brian Robertson who completed the Ridge on half a crampon and half a stomach respectively, thereby revealing—in Hamish's own phraseology—'a determination that is truly Scots.'

MINUS THREE IN SUMMER

By J. R. Marshall

'SIXTY-FOUR was beginning to be unbearable, every week-end had, with depressing consistency, been chosen at its wettest, and here we were again 'socking' our way up some gash route of old Bell's, in the slash of a Scottish summer.

High above, George Ritchie committed himself to a brown bulge and enormous jugs, and my mindings wandered across the way to the Minus Three Gully. Smith and I had climbed it several icicles ago and the big cave had threatened to be hard, if tried in summer; a tugging rope drew me from my reverie, but the germ of an idea stuck; if it lashed down again to-morrow we would climb that gully.

Overnight the hut became unbearably crowded with two fellow-climbers; and we were moved to an early exit the next morning, into an unhealthy downpour, making a bee-line for the Minus face.

Grumbling round the foot of the Douglas Boulder, we were overtaken by an unaccustomed brightness, then unbelievably by

sunlight which helped us greatly to find our climb. Thereafter while gazing upon our water course, the instant-grey took over and put an owl-like stare to the yellow fevered face of old Ritchie.

After the psychological knot-tightening, sling-draping, fidgeting, and foot-hopping at the outset, we splashed up the gully for some length without any trouble, to the foot of a slabby groove which looked hard. Ritchie took over, slid up to a bulge, spoke to it, went through all the emotions and then came down for a conversation with himself. The spectacle had been great, water poured from the seat of his breeks, by discourtesy of the gully, not incontinence. Still, his tiny feet and powerful backbone had flayed a lot of the slime away.

Up I went in his place, a few feet higher than he had, to the foot of the bulge and stopped; from here there were three possibilities, a clean slab corner on the left with about an inch of surface water; a right forking, bulging crack; or back down! The latter perhaps quicker than intended, in fact it appeared that it might be the only way back, so fear compelled a fast hunt for protection.

Easier said than done, several unlikely runners were arranged, then a tremulous descent effected, pride and tradition began to assert themselves; it didn't look half as difficult from down here. Come on, up the old S.M.C. jazz, then that familiar feeling emerges, when you're moving up but your innards are sinking down! Back up at the bulge, what am I doing back here? Then everish fingers find a superb runner, what joy! A long confident stance on slings, and an intimate study of the problem, produces a sling over a spike high on the right wall, alas too far out to be any use. Athletics up and down on the fabulous runner engender enthusiasm. Am I a young old man, or perhaps an old young man? The crack on the right is to be the way, with gasping warnings to the grey old man below, the crack is entered, what a thrutch! socks are thrashing about, knees rammed survivally into the crack, and gains upward secured by fingery sprags inside, the whole jumble of fright only a yard away from any 'God save all here' runner. Suddenly one of these wee sprags breaks, and I am leaning out backwards on knees, hands slipping green from the bowels of the crack, a backward snatch finds the cowardly provident right-wall sling, enabling the thrust back into the crack and a grunting progression to stand established in what is now a chimney.

Swooning from an excess of adrenalin, the next section is carefully studied; it apparently embraces all the horrors typical of wet Nevis grooves. Mind blinds were pulled, the groove

launched upon and slathered over in a mental anguish to terra firma and babble mania. Ritchie then upset my ego inequilibrium by getting up without falling off and we dragged ourselves up to the great cave pitch above. Beneath us had been quite easy in winter!

The shivers set in, knees knocked and it couldn't be said whether it was cold or fright. Tentatives up a slab to the outer edge of the cave wouldn't give way, the will poured back down the rope under a curtain of water. It was a pretty corny climb anyhow, you could go left on to old Bell's route and run down to the hut, it would be nicely warm and safe there. Once more the club image loomed large, gutless we were, not from the same mould as the knickerbockerers. Try again and this time, emboldened by a fine runner on a loose spike 'definitely gutless,' a great line was forced, as the knickerbockerers were wont to say, leftwards and over the watery bulge in a welter of flagging flesh.

That one baffled Ritchie for a bit, I think he was numbing upstairs. Now some warmth returned and delightfully undemanding climbing led over the winter crux on to a shambles of chimneys, grass and stones to the crest of North East Buttress and dryish rocks. Blue-lipped babbling rolled down the rocks of Nevis pursued by the remains of yet another lot of tattered socks. Definitely the mokest wettest week-end of the summer.

THE SCOTTISH ANDEAN EXPEDITION

(1) THE SACRED MOUNTAINS

By Donald Bennet

FOR the fourth time in four days I braced myself slightly as a concrete runway flashed past the cabin window and then gradually dropped downwards. Almost at once everything outside was blotted out as Faucett Airlines' DC-4 climbed into the blanket of fog and cloud that hangs low over Lima during July and August. Only the roar of four engines at full power and the steady popping of cardrums told us we were climbing and would soon emerge into blue skies, with the sun rising over the mountains to the east.

The DC-4 boasts no such amenity as a pressurised cabin, and as it climbed to 20,000 feet to cross the mountains we were instructed in the use of our oxygen tubes. Thinking this would be a useful opportunity to start acclimatising I put mine aside, but the

stewardess was unimpressed; the tube was placed firmly between my lips and I was told to sit quietly and breathe deeply. For an hour we were treated to a grandstand view of the Andes as we flew past Pumasillo and Salcantay, before dropping down over rounded brown hills to the city of Cuzco.

The sudden transition from fog and cloud at sea-level to brilliant sunshine and cloudless skies at 12,000 feet was a wonderful change, but one had to get used to it. Bill MacKenzie and I retired to the Hotel Rosedal to acclimatise in comfort, while the others, who had preceded us to Cuzco by a few days, sorted the stores. Ken Bryan had in fact been in Cuzco for a week and had made so many useful contacts that our onward progress and comfort were ensured: an army Jeep to transport us forty miles northwards to the village of Calca and an invitation to use the Hacienda Urco there as our base.

The following day we drove across bare rolling hills to the Vilcanota River and followed it for twenty miles to Calca and the Hacienda Urco. We were now in the very heart of the old Inca Empire, and everywhere one could see the enduring works of that once-great people. In the Vilcanota valley terraced fields, irrigation channels and fortresses perched on steep hillsides are the visible remains of the Sacred Valley of the Incas, and the mountains we saw rising ahead of us beyond Calca were the Sacred Mountains. They were our first objective.

At the Hacienda Urco we took stock of our situation. The Quebrada Cancha Cancha, up which our first moves would be made, was only four miles away, and Alfy Bell, the manager of the hacienda, was willing to hire burros to carry our equipment. We were still without our leader, Malcolm Slessor, who was due to arrive with Jock Anderson in a week; in the meanwhile we muddled along without him. Bryan, who had read all the journals and studied all the maps, knew where we were going and what we had to climb.

‘Up the Cancha Cancha valley to its head, and there you are, Sirijuaní on the left, Chainapuerto on the right. Two of the finest unclimbed peaks in the Andes. We just climb them.’

Norman Tennent cooked great meals to prepare us for the efforts that lay ahead. One might have thought that having just released himself from his Highland hotel he would have eschewed the pots and Primus stoves, but on the contrary he almost monopolised them.

‘Is that one of your specialities, Norman?’

‘Yes; but maybe you’d prefer a tin of corned beef from Aberdeen.’

Each one of us had some vital contribution to make to the expedition. Rab Brooks played the guitar and was the perfect mountain minstrel; he was also a great rock-climber. Robin Chalmers, our man from the B.B.C., with his cine camera, was one to be respected; soon we would be cutting steps and hammering pitons to the whirr of his camera, for the benefit of viewers at home. The two girls, Evelyn McNicol and Betty Stark had been together in the Himalayas in 1955. Evelyn was our doctor, and Betty, the only fluent Spanish speaker, our interpreter. Already she had worked wonders in the customs shed in Lima. The only worried-looking man at this point was McKenzie, our treasurer, and this was hardly surprising for the expedition which had been launched barely a week ago was already heading straight for the rocks, financially. Something to do with agent's fees and a customs bond in Lima; but anyway we'd spent over half our funds already and hadn't set foot on a mountain. The sooner we did the better.

Two days later, on 7th July, we reached the head of the Quebrada Cancha Cancha and camped at 14,000 feet. It had been two back-breaking days up the narrow trail through cacti and thorn bushes, hoisting our own packs, not so much to get fit but because there were too few burros to carry them for us. Now at last we could straighten our backs and look at the mountains. Chainapuerto was a long way away to the east, beyond an intervening ridge and a horribly fractured glacier, but the mountain itself was *prima*; just a steep cone of ice. A great climb for fit climbers, but we weren't fit, yet. Sirijuaní, on the other hand, rose straight from our tents for 4500 feet, a huge pillar of rock with little glaciers round its base and a pointed ice-cap on top. It would not be easy; but it would be quick, we hoped.

It was quick. A morning's stroll took us up moraine and a steep little glacier to the last level ledges of the north-east ridge. Here six of us squeezed into two tents, one of them designed for the narrower ledges of the Eigerwand and correspondingly uncomfortable. Bryan and Tennent pressed on for a few hundred feet but didn't like what they saw. The north-east ridge was out; we could take our pick between the north face and the east face.

A ballot next morning gave the east face two votes and the north face four, so we went our separate ways. When Evelyn and I reached the starting ledges of the north face Tennent and Chalmers were a hundred feet up and dislodging great lumps of the mountain. As I scabbled up the first ten feet a warning shot sliced the air in front of my nose, so I scabbled down again. This was no climb for two parties one above the other, and as Tennent was on the only

good-looking line we left him and Chalmers to their ploys, and back at camp watched the fun in comfort.

Meanwhile back on the east face Bryan and Brooks were bounding up unroped. Yesterday afternoon, in shadow, this face had seemed impressive, almost forbidding, with its white spider of snow half-way up. Now, with the morning sun shining warmly on it, it was quite different. The rocks, no longer dark and blank, were broken by ledges and gullies which, judging by the rate at which they were being climbed, were not too difficult. By midday our companions had climbed 2000 feet and were at the bottom of the ice-cap; another half-hour would see them at the top. An hour later they were only half-way up that last 500 feet of ice, which must have been steeper and harder than it looked. I lay back and watched. Suddenly on the northern skyline two more figures appeared, Tennent and Chalmers, almost up the rocks and moving slowly on to the ice. No wonder they were moving slowly, for they had come up more than 18,000 feet in a week. One by one the four reached the top, rested for a few minutes, and started off down. The sun had long since left our camp and it was bitterly cold. A few hours later I woke to hear the crunch of boots on rock and a cheerful shout; they were back.

Sightings of Chainapuerto from the top of Sirijuani were discouraging. That glacier was most hideously contorted, a hundred thousand tottering seracs. Intuition, or wishful thinking, told us to go round to the other (east) side and look from there. This way we could also send a reception committee to greet Slesser and Anderson at Cuzco. Back at Urco a shock was in store; McKenzie had gone. Dogged by injuries sustained on Ben Nevis and at the Bank of Scotland, he had found the climb up towards Sirijuani hard and painful; now he had decided to return home for fear that he would be a handicap to the rest of us. It must have been a hard decision for him, and it was certainly a great loss for us.

Slesser and Anderson celebrated their arrival with a vigorous reconnaissance on the hills north-east of Urco to have a look at Chainapuerto. They brought back a favourable report of the approach to the mountains, up the Quebrada Huaccanhuayco, but Chainapuerto was partly hidden by Saguasiray (the highest mountain of the group, and no longer a virgin). Next morning we rounded up the burros, loaded on another week's food and padded off up the trail to the eastern corries of Saguasiray.

For those who were fit these mountain walks were sheer pleasure. The trail up the Huaccanhuayco led through fields where the Indians were harvesting potatoes and preparing for the next maize

crop with their foot-ploughs, singing tuneless but rhythmic dirges. A few miles up the valley we came into open treeless country, but even on the steep hillsides the Indians were toiling in the brown patches that were potato fields. Up there at 12,000 or 13,000 feet were the last little collections of dark stone huts. The smoke seeped upwards through blackened thatch roofs, and at our approach little dogs barked furiously and children ran indoors. In the high pastures beyond grazed herds of alpacas, watched by a few women and children. By evening we reached the head of the valley and camped in a corrie walled in by Saguasiray's north-east ridge. Beyond that ridge was Chainapuerto.

A hard day's work was spent hauling big loads of food and tents up to an eyrie just below the ridge at about 16,000 feet. The weather was great, the sun shining every day from 6 a.m. to 6 p.m.; but the nights were long and cold. Next morning the push was on again as we climbed the steep ice arête above our eyrie, whacking great steps in the fretted ice, for this was to be our trade route for the next few days. In a couple of hours we reached the ridge and beyond it was the mountain we had come to climb—Chainapuerto. From the airy top of a little peak, christened the Punta Urco, we traced out possible routes to the mountain up its eastern glacier. It would be a long climb, descending at first towards the centre of the glacier, and then climbing upwards through a maze of seracs and crevasses below a pyramidal snow peak, probably the Nevado Cancan, to the foot of the south-east ridge of Chainapuerto.

The big day was 16th July and for once we abandoned our principle of not moving out of our sleeping bags before the sun warmed up. Thanks to Bryan we arrived on the ridge several hundred feet above our camp by nine o'clock. He and I were the leading rope, with Tennent and Chalmers following to film the climb and give moral support. We ran down easy snowfields towards the centre of the glacier and started grinding upwards, avoiding most of the crevasses by a steep snow gully. Eastwards over the Madre de Dios jungles clouds were piling high and bearing down on us; it looked as if the weather was breaking and it could hardly have done so on a worse day. Meanwhile Bryan led us unerringly to the foot of the Nevado Cancan, and we began to feel that this was going to be our day. Evil powder snow held us up for the next few hundred yards through the crevasses guarding Chainapuerto, and we crossed the rimaye on to the south-east ridge. Suddenly we noticed the weather. Icy streamers of mist blew across the ridge above us and blotted out the sun; to the east

a wall of cloud was blowing in, enveloping the mountain. An icy cold gripped us.

The summit of Chainapuerto was about 800 feet above us now, at the top of that corniced ridge, and the fight was on, not only with mountain and weather, but with the old enemy, time. Three p.m. was the limit if we were to avoid a night out; two hours to go. Traversing fifteen feet below the crest to avoid the cornice, we hacked a line of steps upwards. One rope's length. Two. Three. Bryan was above me and fighting in a steep gully of powder snow, hardly able to move up and liable to slide down at any moment. I pushed my axe into the snow further and gripped the rope tighter. At last he was up on firm ice, but despite his exertions completely numb in legs and arms. Then I was in the lead and the ridge seemed to be relenting; the summit must be getting close, but in the cloud I could see nothing ahead. Two more pitches and the ridge was level; we climbed cautiously along below the cornice. Suddenly the top appeared through the mist, a great mushroom of snow about fifty feet above us and fifty yards away, but between us and it the cornices curled wickedly over space. I cut a few steps onwards, but knew we had come far enough for that day; it was long after three and it might take another hour for those last two pitches. I looked back at Bryan and said nothing. He shook his head. We turned down.

Three hours later we climbed slowly down the ice arête above camp; we were glad of the big line of steps we had cut the day before, big enough to see in the gloom. Below us the candles in one of the orange tents gave a warm, hospitable glow. A shout brought a cheerful reply, and Slessor was on his way up to meet us. It was good to be back.

Next morning we debated what to climb, but neither Ken nor I wanted to go all the way back to Chainapuerto for the last fifty feet. He and Evelyn McNicol climbed a fluted snow peak close to our camp, about 17,000 feet, and named it the Punta Erica, while Slessor, Anderson and I retraced our steps of yesterday and climbed the Nevado Cancan; both straightforward climbs. By midday the clouds had blown in again, and the outriders of the storm hit us; that afternoon we struck camp and headed downwards—to Urco.

(2) INTERLUDE ON VERONICA

By Donald Bennet

A WEEK after the Chainapuerto episode we were thirty miles downriver from Urco, gazing upwards from the back of Alfy Bell's open truck, searching for a glimpse of a great mountain—the Veronica. It had been a week of indecision, as the mountains we had hoped to climb had disappeared, or more likely were not where we thought they were. Then one day the clouds rolled back and we saw Veronica, 20,000 feet high and climbed once before by Terray and Company in 1956. One look was enough to call forth superlatives; she was the mountain for us.

Now we were back with all the gear for a big climb, but Veronica was hiding up there in the clouds, and we could not decide where to attack—straight up the front from the Urubamba River, or round the back from the north-east where the Peruvian Army was driving a road through the mountains.

We settled for a frontal attack up the south ridge, but on the following day we were sharply rebuffed, sharply we found to our cost as we tried to push our way up through thorn and cactus. We had been assured by the locals that there was a trail up the quebrada, and indeed there was, for the first two miles; then it disappeared into the bush. Our guide had looked at the bush, and looked at us. 'No es posible.' And he was right; nor could we find any other way that was possible for burros, so we were back where we started.

Next afternoon, by dint of some hitch-hiking, and gentle bribery, we found ourselves on the east side of Veronica rumbling in a truck up the new road destined to lead into the rich province of Quillabamba, if it isn't washed away before then. At the Peruvian Army's construction camp (reminiscent of the N.S.H.E.B. in its heyday) our driver, pretending shortage of petrol, turned us out into a storm of sleet and rain. We ran to the camp for shelter and the sergeant directed us to an empty hut, a thing of wooden slats and corrugated iron, cold, draughty, but dry. It was a bit of luck—the first heavy rain and we had a roof over our heads. As Alfy Bell was wont to tell us, 'You boys have the luck of Dan Murphy.'

Two days later the rain hammering on the roof and wind howling through the gaps in the walls abated sufficiently, and in feeble sunshine, and after much back-packing, we camped five miles up

the Quebrada Cosnariti, a north-eastern corrie of Veronica. Two days' storm had dumped fifteen inches of fresh snow on the mountains, and an element of discomfort crept into our life. The following morning Slesser deployed his men (and women) around the northern parts of Veronica to look for a likely route. Bryan, Chalmers and I were detailed off for a steep and broken glacier at the head of the corrie, but as we neared the snout a large mass of ice peeled off and rumbled down the line of approach. We decided that this was not a good route.

Meanwhile Slesser and Tennent climbed up the north ridge of the mountain for some way distance without any trouble, and that evening were eager for a big push up there. Admittedly, they had only reached the beginning of the difficulties, and some of us had seen the upper part of the ridge and were under no illusions about the future up above; but there was no alternative, so the north ridge it was. Next day a big carry up to almost 16,000 feet on the ridge put Slesser, Tennent, Brooks and Anderson in good position for three days' climbing. Bryan went on up the ridge and I thought he was going to climb the mountain by himself, but he returned in an hour or so. 'It gets difficult higher up,' was his laconic remark as he and I shouldered our empty sacks and moved off downhill.

As readers of this *Journal* will know, when Slesser and Tennent get together on a climb anything is liable to happen, and this one was true to form. Several hundred feet above their camp the first big gendarme reared its ugly head, and a traverse across its base was assayed. In due course Slesser achieved this, but no one felt inclined to follow. The following day the traverse was repeated, but in the general confusion the leader's crampons and the ice pitons were forgotten, and with only three-quarters of the party fit, the pace up a steep ice face, belayless, became slower and slower until it was obvious that there was no hope of reaching the top in the two days available.

Meanwhile the rest of us moved eastwards to the foot of Huacratanca, an attractive ridge about 18,000 feet high. Here for two days we whacked our way up ice-falls, glaciers and ridges for the benefit of Chalmers and his camera, and eventually reached the north summit of the mountain; probably a second ascent. With the weather once again perfect we revelled in these few days on the shining snow ridges, carved by wind into graceful curves and thin corniced edges. Making the most of my last day in the Andes, Ken and I raced over the twin peaks of Chucullani, an easy little mountain, and that evening we all converged on the army camp.

An hour later, thanks to some fast talking by Slesser and Betty Stark (not forgetting Dan Murphy), we were once again in the situation that was more typical than any other: perched in an open truck, bumping along the dusty roads of the Amazon head-valleys, and singing lustily.

(3) YERUPAJA

By **Kenneth Bryan**

‘We must have one principal objective.’

‘Yes.’

‘It must be of sufficient interest to catch the public eye.’

‘Yes.’

‘Yerupaja seems perfect.’

‘Yes.’

‘Third highest mountain in the Americas and the snows of the East Face form the True Source of the Amazon. That should be a good selling point.’

‘Yes.’

‘And the first ascent of the magnificent East Ridge. What a superb mountaineering challenge!’

‘Yes.’

‘Are you interested?’

‘Yes.’

I was easily persuaded.

We left the town of Chiquian and for three days wandered with our donkeys by trout-filled streams, through thickets of flowering shrubs, along deep valleys where the prickly, ever present, cactus encroached on small fields of green and golden barley, over steep passes cutting between high limestone peaks, across lonely alps where herds of sheep grazed on the dry yellow puna grass, and finally below the ice-draped towers of the Cordillera Huayhuash.

Now, below us, lay Carua Kocha, the reputed source of the Amazon, its turquoise waters dotted with wildfowl. In the marshy pastures beyond were small gaggles of white geese and restless flocks of dark glossy ibis. Behind them lay Yerupaja, thrusting up from the flat grassy alp with astonishing abruptness. Eight thousand feet above, ragged streamers of cloud broke over the summit. A summit supported by three massive ridges. The South and North ridges, in their upper sections, rising gently to

the summit but the East dropping away from the apex in a long, wicked-looking ice ridge, sheared off at the end by a 4000-foot face bounded on either side by bald rock buttresses. Up one of these our route must lie. Below the buttresses a broken glacier groaned under its weight of disintegrating ice. Indeed, a superb mountaineering challenge.

We set up base at the foot of the mountain and proclaimed the following day one of rest.

There were only sixteen days available, and to utilise them to the best advantage Slesser had prepared a detailed plan of attack. This 'flight plan' was pinned up in our mess and we all examined it. Basically the idea was that we all would have our fair share of load-carrying but that each person would be responsible for making the actual route on some part of the ascent. Thus everybody should participate in the final success, if there was one. However, I was to quickly blot my copy-book.

I have always been a lover of sleep but 'resting' I find irritating. Thus, on our official rest day, I climbed up to the proposed site for Camp I, overlooking the fact that it was not my bit of mountain. The black looks I received from the rightful owners, on my return, made it clear that such poaching was not to be tolerated. In any case, surely I realised that the object of a rest day was to rest. The West Highlands, I thought.

Three days later Camp I was established and well-provisioned. Already Slesser and Brooks, together with Tennent and Chalmers, had spent two days of arduous rock climbing in an attempt to establish a route to the base of the main buttress, where it was proposed to place Camp II.

Their route had lain across the largely overhanging face of a 500-foot rognon. At only one point on the face was it practical to make a traverse and at only one point on the traverse was it possible to cut through the impending wall above. This was by a line of chimneys which brought them out near the upper edge of the ice-fall guarding the foot of the buttress. It was only after careful preparation and fixing of ropes that they were to discover further progress on to the glacier to be too dangerous.

The weather had by now broken and each day dark grey banks of cloud rolled in from the east and the fly-sheets of our tents sagged under the weight of fresh snow. Despite these unfavourable conditions, Slesser and Brooks succeeded in finding an alternative route lying far to the left of our original line. It would mean reaching the upper ice ridge by way of the left-hand buttress, a pretty formidable thought, but at least it solved the immediate problem.

The new route lay on glacier nearly the whole way and the following day we were able to establish Camp II without much difficulty.

At a little under 17,000 feet, Camp II was wonderfully situated on a high ice shelf overlooking the rest of the glacier. Below us, to the east, olive hills rolled away as far as the eye could see. Somewhere beyond lay the moist green jungles of the Amazon basin. Immediately out the door of our tent the scene was dominated by Jirishanca, surely among the world's most magnificent and imposing mountains. From Camp II it appeared a great complicated tower of ice and rock and really did look impossible.

Anderson and I had been left at the camp to make further progress and peg a route over a small subsidiary peak of around 19,000 feet. to the col below the left-hand buttress. Our first efforts were concentrated on the right flank of the peak, where we hoped a long traverse would land us on the col. As usual, mist was making route-finding extremely difficult. Only through the very occasional chink in the cloud could we see where we were heading. As we gained height we found ourselves cutting across a steep exposed slope of nevé, carved out by wind and avalanches into a series of channels about three feet deep. It was awkward ground on which to make progress and appeared potentially dangerous. This was confirmed when, through a break in the mist, we could see large seracs threatening the route. We decided to abandon our line of attack and traverse to another line up the peak which had been suggested by Slessor and Brooks. To reach this we did a hair-raising climb across a steep face of disintegrating rubble. The snow was now falling steadily. Leaving fixed ropes as we went, we abseiled down the lower section of the route, cached our surplus equipment at the foot of the lowest pitch, and were back at camp just before dark.

The best time to climb in the Cordillera Huayhuash is during June and July, and in coming at the end of August we realised we were taking a gamble with the weather. However, filled with our usual enthusiasm, we had not taken this very seriously. The fact that all the other expeditions that year had left before we arrived was merely considered (if we considered it at all) as being advantageous, in that we could have the mountains entirely to ourselves. As we lay in our tent for the next three days, becoming slowly buried in snow, we had ample time to reconsider the matter.

The time was whiled away in long rambling conversations, philosophical and otherwise, and mostly otherwise. Books were read, beverages were brewed and finally, to avert boredom, a

chess set was created from an assortment of Rowntree's fruit gums and laxative pills. On the second day Anderson felt ill and descended to Camp I. Tennent took his place.

Another abortive attempt was made on the subsidiary peak, but had to be abandoned as a minor blizzard swept across the snow-covered rocks. Slessor came up to Camp II with Chalmers and while they were being fed on a Tennentian creation, concocted from dried bananas and fried bacon, it was agreed that we should abandon the mountain for a few days, in case the weather cleared and the snow consolidated.

Base was a pleasant contrast. People occupied themselves as best suited their temperaments. Some washed, others lay in the sun reading, while another group (guess who—ED.) decided that to eat trout caught in the source of the Amazon would provide an excellent lifemanship gambit. To this end a fishing party was organised, using the best technique—bent pins and bits of cheese. However, the fish proved to be more discriminating than we had anticipated. Nevertheless we persuaded a local inhabitant by the name of Selso to catch them for us, in return for tinned food. By good fortune, on the evening when the first catch of trout arrived, only Chalmers and I were at base. We easily persuaded ourselves that trout would not keep and by the next morning lay happily replete, with twenty-one trout inside us.

Walking over the lower hills near the camp, I came across Siulakocha, a small aquamarine lake among cliffs and glaciers. It was yet another 'true source' of the Amazon. In fact, it was a truer 'true source' than Caruakocha into which its waters ultimately drained. Of course not being fed by the snows of Yerupaja rather ruled it out as far as we were concerned. . . .

While I was at Siulakocha the mist cleared from the upper parts of Yerupaja and revealed for the first time the final ice arêtes of the East Ridge. I was taken aback. This final ridge appeared of staggering length and ferocity. Any cherished hope that we might climb it in the time remaining to us dissolved. Though disillusioned and disappointed, I knew that even given perfect conditions and unlimited time we would be hard put to make much impression on that ridge. I looked for an alternative route that could still utilise the camps and provisions placed with so much effort on the mountain. There appeared to be only one possibility; a long traverse left from Camp II to a point from which it might be possible to gain the crest of the South Ridge. Once on the South Ridge the route to the summit should be possible (the American ascent followed the final section of the South Ridge). I was not

very confident that this alternative would be practical, but it seemed to give us the only chance of saving anything.

When I returned to the camp to tell the others I was, like the prophet of doom, given a cold reception. Slesser, who had devoted the most time and thought to the ascent of the East Ridge, was naturally very reluctant to accept my analysis. Feeling rather frustrated, I persuaded some to go back that afternoon and see for themselves. Even after this, Slesser was inclined to regard my attitude as defeatist. I, on the other hand, felt there was little to be gained by pressing a difficult and dangerous route unless we were convinced that there was at least the possibility of success. If the trip was not to end in failure and anticlimax, I was convinced we must utilise the little time at our disposal to best advantage and make our objective the summit of the mountain by the most practical route available. Slesser pointed out that he had seen my proposed alternative route and that the traverse from Camp II to the South Ridge was threatened the whole way by giant seracs. I by now felt a little pig-headed and was not entirely convinced. Eventually we agreed to differ and as Slesser and some of the others had obviously set their hearts on the East Ridge or nothing, I had to agree and give them what support I could.

The following evening we were back at Camp II. During our three days at base the weather had only slightly improved. After sunny mornings we had thunderstorms with heavy snow or rain. Conditions on the mountain were much as we had left them.

There were now four of us at Camp II; Slesser, Tennent, Chalmers and myself. The next day the first two would make a further attempt to traverse the subsidiary peak and reach the col below the main buttress. This time they were to try the extreme left-hand ridge of the small peak. As there was little advantage in two parties trying the same line and no point yet in carrying payloads, Chalmers and I would have a closer look at my proposed route to the South Ridge.

As we set out the following morning, the weather was its usual misty self and visibility was often only a few yards. The snow varied from hard nevé to waist-deep, exhausting powder. For a large part of the way both parties followed the same route and we eventually reached an overhanging rock wall which cut across the steep snow ridge we had been ascending. It barred the route to the upper part of the subsidiary peak.

At this point Chalmers and I started our traverse, leaving the others tentatively banging pitons into the wall. After a sharp descent we rounded a corner to find ourselves on a steep exposed

slope of soft snow. We had hoped that once round the corner we would find out what lay beyond; provided, of course, that there was a clearance in the mist. But there was no clearance and we never did find out. However, the climbing was absorbing.

Using belays below the rock wall we traversed the dangerous slope to a point where we could round its flank and head straight up. Precariously balanced on an icy outcrop of rock, I belayed Robin as best I could. He was cutting a ladder of steps up the steep *nevé* slope above me after a full rope's length he had vanished in the mist. I joined him and pressed on. By now it was snowing steadily. As I gained height the angle of the slope eased but the snow became softer and deeper. The last half-hour was spent on a slope of no more than thirty degrees; I had made only one rope's length, over my waist in powder snow. I gave up and we started back.

At my highest point I had a fleeting glimpse through the mist and saw that we were on the edge of a snow basin, the upper edge of which, I reckoned, must be immediately below the col the others were heading for. According to my altimeter, we were just over 18,000 feet.

As we retraced our route it was snowing heavily and turned into quite a respectable blizzard. Cascades of powder snow poured off the rocks and we were often almost smothered by minor avalanches.

When we eventually reached camp we heard that our companions had decided that the initial section, at least, of the rock wall would have to be engineered. They were going back the following day with the necessary ironmongery. That morning Rab had come up alone from Camp I and was delighted at the prospect of some good artificial climbing. He was the party's acknowledged expert.

By now all had to admit that, weatherwise, the climbing season in the Huayhuash was indeed at an end. No one any longer harboured the hope that we could still climb Yerupaja, no matter what route was taken. Slessor, Brooks and Tennent decided that, if nothing else, they were going to climb the small peak.

The next morning, as Chalmers and I started to evacuate Camp II, they set off jingling, prepared for all technical difficulties. As we heard later, they were hounded by minor misfortunes which foiled a very fine attempt. On the way up to the rock wall, Tennent lost a crampon. On the wall itself, Rab did a spectacular piece of climbing and they soon found themselves on the upper ridges of the peak. Here Slessor broke his ice-axe and this, together with Norman's lost crampon, made life rather awkward. The outcome



Easy going to the summit of Huacratanca. (*D. Bennet*)



was finally settled by one of the squally blizzards that now regularly swept the mountain.

Nine days later at least one member of the party was back in Scotland, wondering what the weather in Skye would be like at the September week-end. The rest of us drifted back home in ones and twos, perhaps with a slight feeling of regret that we did not succeed in climbing Yerupaja. But it *had* been 'a superb mountaineering challenge' and there were still many years ahead.

A CLIMB CALLED 'KING KONG'

By B. W. Robertson

It rained in Glencoe that Saturday afternoon, as Dave Bathgate and I splashed our way up Carnivore in big boots and cagoules. While we were finishing off the last pitch, beams of sunlight broke through the dark grey clouds, over the pass of Glencoe, and illuminated the wet mountain sides.

After tea, it was time for the pub. A convoy of cars pulled out of the Dray's car park, in good order, filled with the lads in red. As we sped our way down to the Kinghouse, Fred Harper and I decided that a visit to Ben Nevis the coming week would be profitable to us. I told Fred that, for the last year, I had been studying a new line on Càrn Dearg, a line threading between Centurion and the Bat.

Harper and I arrived at the Fort on Monday afternoon, and headed straight for the Italian café and some hot bridies. Then we headed for Woolies to buy goodies for the week and, with bulging packs, we left the Big Smoke for the hills.

The next hour and a half was spent in black mud on the path up the Allt a'Mhuillin to the hut. Eventually, we reached the C.I.C., craving for a brew and some food. In the sunshine we sat stripped to the waist, soaking up the sun, and dookin' biscuits in our tea. Above us, Càrn Dearg was in superb condition, except for the characteristic black slime dribbling down the slab below the meadow on Route II. (Forget-me-nots grow there in summer.)

It was late afternoon when we tottered up the hill to Càrn Dearg; the gear was dumped near the start of Centurion. Looking up at the great overhanging slab, the start I had in mind for the new route was bleeding slime from its cracks. As that was out, the alternative was the first pitch of Centurion. Taking a few slings round my neck, I hurried up the pitch in my ragged size four P.A.'s

to the large block belay, fifty feet above the ground. Harper followed, littered with our equipment for war.

He handed me the gear and shooed me off along the slabs on the right. These slabs are like the lower cut of a V-shaped notch, hacked in an overhanging wall by a giant axe; the left side of this 'V' starts from Centurion and runs slightly upwards, rightwards for a hundred feet. There is a lower groove, but that's mucky. A slip on this pitch would leave a screaming individual, dangling from the rope, begging for mercy from the Almighty. Knowing that I was not on good terms with the Almighty, I moved very carefully. Using imaginary footholds, I advanced along the slabs, stopping every two or three feet to fix a runner. Just as Harper was out of sight, I came to a vertical ten-foot drop on the slab and, below that, space. With a dubious channel-peg above me, I slowly descended, keeping my eyes firmly fixed on the peg. In this way, I reckoned that I could choose my type of dive if the peg came out. On reaching the lower slab, I grabbed for a spike on the right, fixed a jammed-nut runner, and continued to a peg belay, near the end of the slab.

Meanwhile, back at the O.K. Corral, Harper was letting forth blood-curdling screams to some tourists on the path. Now I was quite sure that the peg I had used to descend that ten-foot drop would never hold Fred's weight: the camera was made ready. He wandered along the ramp, muttering some nonsense about this being the hardest he had been on, and took hold of the peg. With my right hand, I lifted the camera to my eyes, finger on the button, and the double rope draped over my wrist. However, there was no ping of the peg, no gasp of surprise, no hum of a falling body, nothing. Harper was safely down, embracing the spike on the right.

It was now eight o'clock, and, while Fred rolled himself a fag, I busied myself in preparing the abseil off the big belay peg. A final whoop, and I disappeared off the ramp into the night, heading for the safe terra firma, and followed by the screaming Lord Sutch.

We sat at the table in the candlelight (nothing works in the C.I.C. hut), consuming pints of tea and watching every movement of two well-built birds belonging to two Englishmen staying at the hut. They were prancing about after their men, jumping at any request, while the lads rested after their hard day's climbing. It is a great pity that some of the auld men in the S.M.C. did not catch on to this idea, instead of wasting good *Journal* space arguing about whether the women should or should not be allowed into Lagangarbh.

Next morning, the judgment day dawned warm and clear. The traverse was done in half the time, with no peels. All of the gear was taken out except the channel, whose head was battered into pulp, but still usable for any future descents. On the next pitch, my sleeve came into use clearing lichen off the holds. Above this open corner runs the third pitch of the Bat, parallel to the previous traverse. Having climbed the Bat a few months before with another Squirrel, wee George Anderson, I was very familiar with this area of the buttress. From the Bat block belay, I moved down over a smooth slab to a small ledge near the big loose block, and hammered in a big rusty leaf-type peg for a belay. No taking a chance with that tottering hunk of junk beside me. In a short time, Fred was beside me. From our perch, we had good fun watching the two 'Englanders' from the hut fighting it out with the wet corner of Centurion in P.A.'s.

All fun must come to an end, there's work to be done, slabs to be climbed, overhangs to be surmounted, and falls to be had for the glory of the team. Laden down with bought, borrowed and stolen gear, I advanced over a thin slab below a series of big, horrible overlaps, fixing psychological runners on the way. After a strenuous pull-up over the first overlap, and a trying rightward traverse, I spotted a chock-stone high up on the right. Being a bit on the small side, I was too wee to reach it, at least not from my position. Move up the rock, you coward, provide some entertainment for the boys. With my eyes firmly fixed on the sky, my teeth firmly pressed together, I prepared my body for a peel as I moved up. My forefinger managed to hook itself round the stone, then, after many miserable attempts, I threaded a baby-nylon for a runner. Groping about with my right hand, I found a crack somewhere up on the right, then I managed to get my right P.A. foot flat on the upper slab, and had a wee peek above. It looked all right, so I pulled myself up on to the slab. Now it's all or nothing.

Down below, I could see Harper; his body was curled up into a ball, trying to offer as little resistance to the cold wind as possible; a little black fag hanging from his lower lip still showed a spark of life, in spite of the wind. On the rock, level with my head, I could see two little holds, and I thought that, if I could stand on them, I would be able to rest. As soon as I did stand on these holds, the upper part of my body was pushed out from the rock—the rock was overhanging. I had the sneaky feeling that I was going to make a rapid departure from the rock. One finger, jammed in a bit of muck level with my waist, kept all my ten stone in contact

with the rock, and it was failing fast. Somehow, I wangled an ace into a crack. Just as the rope was clipped in, my trusty forefinger gave up the ghost, and left its muck. Hanging from the peg, I suddenly felt very tired. I had fought forty feet in three hours, and it looked harder ahead. I shouted down to Fred if he fancied a brew. This made Fred very happy, as he had been sitting on the slab, taking the full blast of that cold wind, for three hours.

Leaving all the gear on the cliff, Harper lowered me down to him. A free abseil from the belay led to our boots and goodies at the bottom.

When we had rubbed our cramped feet back to life, we ran down to the hut in a few minutes, leaving Càrn Dearg still victorious after a two-day siege.

Another superb day dawned; what fantastic luck. . . . Harper and I arrived at the start with two of our friends, hoods from the Glasgow Etive Club—Jimmy (Weed) Graham, and Drew Campbell. For some reason, Harper did not want to come on the climb, but Weed did, so up we went. We took a short cut over the Bat to our own personal hanging garden of slings. It did not take me very long to reach yesterday's baling-out point. Above, the slabs still looked bare of holds, but with a good supply of slings draped over my neck, with assorted nuts attached to them, I felt a bit better. As I clanked my way over the slab, the roof of my mouth dried with fright as the distance grew between me and the last runner. At last, a big jammed-nut was poked into a crack below a big bad bulge; looking about, a scoop and a small ledge came into view fifteen feet on my right. Spread-eagled against the rock, I managed to place my fingers round a small flake, and swung across the ledge. A huge channel was buried in a crack behind me, for a belay.

After a long while, during which curses, groans and squawks were heard from below, Weed appeared, shouting obscenities to me regarding the severity of the pitch. Giggles and verses of the Twenty-first Psalm were heard from two oafs lying on the grass on the ground—Harper and Campbell—as they watched our antics. When Weed was firmly laced on to the rock, I followed a line up left over a prominent boomerang overlap, making for a vertical crack, only to be stopped by yet another overlap. This overlap was big. Fixing a great many jammed-nut runners below the overlap, I stood up on my tiptoes, got hold of a beautiful jug, and pulled up, mantleshelved on to the jug, and moved right to a ledge below the vertical crack.

Down below, Graham spent several minutes hitting the belay peg back and forwards without making any impression on it, so it was left behind to the mercy of the lads doing the second ascent. If they have a medium sledge-hammer handy, they might get it. The young, blond, blue-eyed beetle appeared below me, running up the pitch (he would have done well in the Third Reich) and, with a few more grunts and moans, he was by my side. Near the top of the vertical crack, a rightward traverse led to the top of 'The Prow of the Bat' (unclimbed) from there over a bulging arête to a peg belay.

We were now half-way up the buttress. The difficulties should ease off; at least, the Bat does. A 130 feet of rope was run out on the next pitch, climbing over four thin slabs, surmounting three big overlaps, and ending up on a grass ledge with a manky peg belay. On the first overlap, a freak sleet shower added to the interest. Weed led the next pitch to a block belay, below a big wall, capped by a small roof. After many futile attempts on the overhanging wall, I reached a point below the roof where I could fix a jammed-nut and stand on an etrier fixed on the sling; this enabled me to throw a sling over a flake high above me, and in this way I moved over the roof. Easy slab climbing led to a stance and peg belay below yet another overhanging wall.

By now we were tired, and my right hand was covered in blood after it got stuck in a crack somewhere down below, messing up Weed's new white nylon slings. Climbing got easy after the overhanging wall, and the thought of a brew and the sight of a bird spurred us on to climb faster. In a short while, I reached a big ledge with the cairn of Route II. When Weed arrived the gear was divided out, and we separated for the last couple of hundred feet until we could make the scree traverse into Number Five Gully, and so down to the hut.

Later on that night, while the group played poker, I wrote out the description of the route into the hut book, and, adding the pitches together, the height came to 1020 feet. Twenty whole feet more than the Bat, harder and more serious. The direct start will be really hard when it is climbed, and the roof pitch near the top will go free, but that will have to wait until next year, as the nights are drawing in while I write this, the crampons and the ice-axe are being taken out of the drawer for sharpening, and the epics will be there in some far-off cold ice-gully this winter.

EDITOR'S NOTE.—The author of the above is of that latest generation of Scottish climbers whose appearance has relegated to the heather the ageing Campbell, Moriarty, Stenhouse *et al.*, there to join old Marshall, antique

Ritchie and the rest of the Ancients, Salvationist shreds of an Ultramontane past who nevertheless must be preserved in the spirit of the Club, traditionally and Presidentially embalmed, white-washed, plastered or, in some cases, simply stuffed. To keep in touch, then, two explanatory notes may be useful. *The lads in red* are the Squirrels, described in a previous issue (*S.M.C.J.*, xxviii (1964), 45). *Birds*, earnestly watched or sought for in this narrative, are not those that trip and pipe across our Scottish Fields, but those that assist, or give promise of so doing, a certain type of mountaineer in urgent need of a physiological belay.

FIRST ASCENT OF THE CURTAIN

By D. Bathgate

THE Curtain hangs out on the south side of Càrn Dearg Buttress. This 310-foot tall ice problem roughly follows the line of Mourning Slab, a summer route put up by Ian Clough. I would be the first to admit to the purist that this is not a classic line leading to a ridge or summit, but it is a dominant winter feature of Ben Nevis, and named long before anyone thought of climbing it. Surmounting those steep ice walls and bulges would be a test of technique and fitness; it was a climb worth trying.

One Sunday morning Ronnie Marshall and I had the C.I.C. pad all to ourselves and being kipping kings we didn't 'de-pit' until guilt and Mother Nature forced us. Crampons on at the hut, full of the joys, we shot off up the hill. Marshall had to shoot back down again to get the rope; an article of equipment which at least one member of the party should possess when climbing. From the Allt a' Mhuillin the Curtain looks incredibly steep but it would be almost impossible for such a big build-up of ice to adhere vertically (in this country). I have great difficulty estimating the severity of ice pitches. From a distance they look desperate, close up they seem fine; but the only sure way of finding out is to climb the things. A point for the book is that 70° ice often feels like 90° once you're on it. We rested at a place where we could see the whole ice-fall in detail and tried to work out the line of least resistance.

One rope-length up a reasonably angled slab keeping close to the projecting right wall. Traverse left, then up over a bulge and back right. Straight up a steep, shallow, ice scoop, then a long rising leftward traverse to a possible rock ledge. A further section of almost vertical ice then easier stuff to the top. High winds and a constant

spray of spindrift were the main reasons for my retreat after climbing only 70 feet of the first pitch. We had to content ourselves with a swim up No. 5 Gully and a walk over the plateau to the summit which, of course, misted over just as we arrived. A strange phenomenon encountered was the eighteen-inch-high footprints caused by the thaw and a strong wind whipping the powder from around the compressed snow. When we arrived back at the hut dozens of people were milling about. Fit Fell-and-Rock men, rough Rock-and-Ice men, fellows from the R.A.F., etc. 'Where 'ave y' been, Mac?' they asked. 'Oh, just for a wee walk up No. 5,' we replied, but, alas, we knew that the only set of steps in the corrie led straight to the Curtain. Our only hope was that the weather would keep them off it until we returned next week-end.

Jim Renny, Ian McEacheran and I discovered Jock Knight duvet-dossing in his car, outside the Jacobite Bar in Fort William. Jock was fresh from the Ben that morning and assured us that conditions up there were bad but if we twisted his arm a little he might consider joining us. An hour and a half later we squeezed our way into a packed C.I.C. hut. Crowds are a good thing when they force an early start to stake a claim. So the alarm sang off at 6.30 a.m. Breakfast and gear were packed away by seven and it was a beautiful morning, crisp and clear; just about everything on the Ben would be in condition. The rest knew what I wanted to do but, curiously, it must be said aloud before it becomes official. 'Fancy a look at the Curtain, Jock?' 'No harm in looking.' Jock Knight seldom shows his feelings, but that reply meant he was in earnest. We followed the old trail up to the Buttress and, for a belay, I battered the same peg into the same crack I'd used last Sunday. Next we played 'which hand is the crack-tack in' for first lead and Knight won. The old steps were still there and just required excavation, much to the leader's disgust, but the pitch was 150 feet long and he did generate a little heat before belaying in a fabulous ice-cave refrigerator at the top of the slab. There was about four inches of reasonable ice on the slab and the angle was between 45 and 50 degrees. At about 100 feet he had placed a Simond Ace runner in the only visible crack on the right wall but it wouldn't have held an orange peel let alone Jock. I left him grinning in his grotto and began a leftward traverse below the icicles forming the cave. At the shortest point I surmounted the steep part, fixed an ice screw, and then traversed back across the centre of the ice to about twenty feet above the belay. What tremendous hard ice, smooth and feet thick! Here I placed my second Salewa screw. It would have

stopped a stampede. (The only fault I can find with the Salewa screw is that the hole through the centre of the screw tends to get blocked with ice. The screw cannot be used until the ice is cleared and it is wise to carry a piece of wire or something for this purpose.) Twenty feet above me rose a great barrier of vertical ice, tapering and decreasing slightly in angle towards the left, where it met the rock. The intervening twenty feet of 80° ice had to be climbed before I could see if a leftward traverse to the rock was possible. Moving up into new footholds, I noticed something wrong with my right crampon. I looked down and, with the adze of my axe, just caught the front half as it slipped off. I took off the other half and clipped both pieces into a karabiner. When reversing on steep ice it's comforting to know that groping boots will slip into well-placed jugs. It's no use scraping your way up an ice pitch to make fast time: sooner or later you'll have to reverse one. . . . Safe at the belay I tied the broken crampon together and strapped it on, hoping it would hold. Back on the ice and cutting up the steep section, I had to form holds that I could hang on to for as long as possible with one hand; there could be no tension assistance, for I had taken a zig-zag line. After making the normal incut hold, I chipped the sides away, leaving a mound of ice, like half a tennis ball, sticking up in the middle of the hold. Fingers could then spread and the thumb grip. Such a hold is possible only on the hardest ice. I fixed a third screw at the beginning of the leftward traverse. I cut a handhold, then a foothold big enough for both feet; step across with the left foot, then cut another hand and foothold; bring the right foot across beside the left, then put the left foot in the last hold. Begin again. My left arm was as strong as a wet newspaper by the time I reached the rock ledge 25 feet away, with its sound rock peg. When my companion arrived he looked at the, near vertical, 30-foot ice wall above, and groaned. I handed the gear to him with pleasure. There was a half-inch space between the ice and the rock and he sent great chunks spinning down with the first blows of the axe. Working on more solid material he gained a few feet and fixed a screw above his head. With tension from the rope he carved a little way up and placed another screw. What an education it is to watch Jock Knight climbing on ice! Always in balance, from his perfect placing of holds, he doesn't waste an axe blow. Only practice and concentration can produce an effortless technique like his. One more screw and he was up. 'What's it like from there?' I enquired. 'A piece of cake; give me half an hour.' Three-quarters of an hour later I was standing at his axe belay on the snow ramp running from

No. 5 Gully to the top of Càrn Dearg Buttress. It was 2.30 p.m. We had made the climb in six and a half hours, a much faster time than we had anticipated. The weather was superb, not much wind and perfect visibility. We could see black Bugs, fresh from Glover's Chimney, emerge on to the crest of Tower Ridge. Another two were fighting it out on the Italian Climb. More poured down the corrie, destined for the hut. Although we would have liked to stay, the call of the kettle overpowered us, and we ran down to the hut to join the brew queue.

[The Squirrels again! Regrettably, photographs of this climb were too indistinct for reproduction.—HON. EDITOR.]

NEW CLIMBS

ARRAN

Goatfell: Rosa Slabs.—*Guttersnipe*. 500 ft. Very Severe. G. Anderson & A. McKeith. 20th June 1964.

The route goes up the belt of slabs on the top left of the Rosa Slabs between Evening Traverse and Zig Zag. The first 250 ft. is rather mossy, and the harder part of the climb, the final 250 ft., provides good clean climbing.

Starts about 100 yds. up the second terrace where the overlaps look more amenable to attack.

Climb a slab and overlap at 20 ft., then move up left into a mossy corner, climbing up right over another overlap at the top (crux) to a small stance; 70 ft. Go diagonally right across a mossy slab to a crack, then straight up to a heather ledge and belay; 100 ft. Eighty feet above belay, traverse horizontally right above an overlap, then up to a heather terrace. Climb quartz band diagonally up (arrow) across a grassy corner to an eye-hole belay on a steep edge; 120 ft. Straight up to belay below the break in the overlap on Zig Zag; 50 ft. Walk left along the slab below the overlap then over it at 50 ft. and up left to finish; 80 ft.

This route is a logical sequel to Angel's Pavement and Fool's Causeway. These three routes seem to provide the best climbing on the Rosa Slabs. They are on the cleanest rock, whereas Evening Traverse and Zig Zag, though longer, tend to follow the grassy breaks between the best of the slabs.

—*Trundle*. 440 ft. Hard Severe. W. Bailey & R. Whyte. 1st April 1964.

Starts 40 ft. to the left of the lowest point of the slabs (arrow).

Climb up into a scoop, step right for a few feet, then climb to the foot of embryo cracks, which are followed steeply up left to a prominent flake

on the left ; 100 ft., peg belay. Continue up a few feet, then traverse right to unusual thread runner on the edge. Climb up, bearing slightly left, by a crack which fades out, climb up over bulges and upper slabs to peg belay on heather ledge ; 100 ft. Make an ascending traverse to gain a mossy diedre ; layback up this all the way, or move rightwards at 60 ft. on to a slab and climb crack to block belay ; 120 ft. Step rightwards for 15 ft. on ledges, then by slabs above trending rightwards past a large knob until the slabs merge with the hillside ; 120 ft.

Goatfell : South Slabs.—*Dog Leg*. 430 ft. Very Severe. J. R. Brumfitt & A. McKeith, alternate leads. 21st June 1964.

Starts left of Blank (*S.M.C.J.* (1964), xxviii, 34) beside cairn at the foot of Route I.

Climb slab to a crack in a small overlap at 20 ft., surmount this and continue to a corner. Move up, then step left into another shallow corner (crux), then straight up to peg belay on Blank ; 130 ft. Follow Blank into the steepening scoop, then move out and up left to follow line of holds to belay in corner ; 150 ft. Continue up corner or rib on left to easier upper slab ; 150 ft.

—*Pussyfoot*. 350 ft. Very Severe. D. Bathgate & J. Renny. 21st June 1964.

Starts at an arrow marked P.F. to the right of Blank.

Climb straight up the slab, avoiding a grassy recess on the right at 100 ft. ; 150 ft. Continue up over the lap to a flake belay below the large corner ; 50 ft. Climb 10 ft. right of the corner up to diagonal cracks ; piton runner. Climb the most obvious crack and continue by the slab to finish ; 150 ft.

Tòrr Nead an Eoin : Grey Slabs.—*Grey Wall*. 170 ft. Severe. A. Pearson, R. E. Nunns & P. B. Pearson.

The slabs lie approximately 300 yds. up the valley and about one and a half miles south-east of Lochranza.

Starts on the lowest and steepest part of the slab.

Climb to prominent overhang, then move left (crux) and follow shallow groove to grass terrace ; 60 ft. Continue directly by a series of mantle-shelves to a thread belay ; 110 ft.

Cir Mhòr : Rosa Pinnacle.—*Anvil, Recess start*. 130 ft. Very Severe. W. Skidmore, J. Crawford & J. Madden (G.M.C.). 16th July 1964.

Some 40 ft. downhill from Anvil, a gritty ledge leads horizontally across the front of the South Ridge above the introductory slabs. A short distance along the ledge is a standing block and an open groove running up leftwards. The most prominent feature of the climb is a huge inverted V-shaped recess on the second pitch.

Climb the open groove to its end at a stance and spike belay ; 50ft. Pull round left, gain the slab above and climb up until possible to move

hard right to bottom of flake lodged beneath the right wall of the recess. Climb the flake ; from it, step left to the opposite wall and gain slab above by strenuous pull-up on high hold (sustained climbing to this point). More easily now, by a crack on the right and over a grass clump, then move left to gain the low thread belay of Anvil ; 80 ft. The route can be finished up Anvil, or an easy rock shelf followed rightwards leads to foot of the Y cracks of the South Ridge Direct.

Cir Mhòr: Prospero's Peril.—*Variation.* 115 ft. C. Berlie & W. Gibson (Kyle M.C.). August 1964.

From the spike belay of pitch 4 climb to the right-angled corner of pitch 5, break left to the buttress edge by a layback crack until a delicate and exposed move upwards is made on to the crest of the buttress. A slab then brings one to a grass patch and belay left of, and above, the little chimney of pitch 6.

SKYE

Sgùrr a' Mhadaidh.—*Goliath Buttress.* 1200 ft. Very Severe. J. Harwood & D. W. Robbins. 21st & 27th August 1964.

This is the buttress immediately left of the Amphitheatre, bounded on its right by Sanguinary Cracks. The route takes the easiest line up the centre of the buttress. Starts beneath a crack at the left end of the block overhangs guarding the base of the crag, and above 60 ft. of scrambling.

Climb slabs to foot of crack, which is followed to stance in niche under large overlap ; 130 ft., piton belay. Step left on to a rib, and continue straight up to block belay ; 90 ft. Continue up fault (double crack line) to a large overhang, then traverse 20 ft. to stance on right edge of buttress ; 120 ft. Climb up a large terrace, 80 ft. The line of overhangs above is broken in the centre by a trap dyke ; climb up to a ledge beneath this ; piton belay, 70 ft. Surmount the overhanging trap dyke, using 1 piton to leave, and continue to a good ledge ; 60 ft. Move up to large block perched on slab, cross block to very steep wall on its left and climb this on large holds to a terrace ; 100 ft. Easier climbing leads in 200 ft. to join North West Buttress, which is followed for 300 ft. to the summit.

Sròn na Ciche: Eastern Buttress (West Wall).—*Shangri La.* 440 ft. Severe. I. S. Clough & A. Nicholls. 20th June 1964.

Start from Eastern Gully some 80 ft. above the Terrace, at the foot of a continuous line of grooves, well seen from the Cioch.

Climb the groove parallel with Eastern Gully to a belay below an overhanging crack ; 120 ft. Climb the crack, or more easily by the left wall to a ledge, then by an awkward wall and shallow chimney to block belays below an overhang ; 80 ft. Climb the groove for some 50 ft., avoid the final overhang by the right, then move back left to piton belay below the next groove, 110 ft. Climb the groove, 60 ft. Continue by the overhanging corner above (as for Boreas Grooves) ; 70 ft.

—*Searcher*. 330 ft.

Very Difficult. I. S. Clough & A. Nicholls. 27th June 1964.

Starts from the same point as Shangri La and goes by a line of grooves to the left of that route.

Climb up into a groove on the left, to a ledge and large spike, avoid the vertical groove above by a wall on the left, then follow a ledge back right to a large block belay under the continuation of the groove ; 130 ft. Follow the grooves rightwards to belay on a ledge near the corner of Shangri La's fourth pitch ; 140 ft. Climb groove above, first in the corner then by a crack on the left, to leave near the finish of Chimney Route.

Sròn na Cìche : Western Buttress.—*Diamond Slab, Direct Finish*. 240 ft. Very Severe. J. Harwood & P. Thomas. 12th August 1964.

From the belay at the top of pitch 3, continue directly up instead of traversing right. At 90 ft. traverse beneath an overhang and across a wall on its right to a grass ledge ; piton belay, 120 ft. Continue along the ledge for 20 ft. to a trap dyke and follow this to a junction with West Central Gully and Arête.

Sgùrr Sgùmain : Western Buttress, Sunset Slab.—*Yellow Groove Continuation*. 300 ft. Hard Severe. I. S. Clough, M. Battle & B. Fein. 30th June 1964.

The first 100 ft. are as for the Direct Exit (*S.M.C.J.* (1959), xxvi, 391). Break off the original route some 30 ft. along the 140-foot easy traverse of the fourth pitch (arrow).

Climb up 60 ft. to a corner beneath an overhanging crack ; belay. Avoid the crack by the wall on the left to gain a ledge and large flake belay beneath the next overhanging crack ; 20 ft. Climb the crack with a sling to large ledge ; 20 ft. Climb a slab, then round a corner, climb a steep groove (piton) and move left beneath an overhang to stance and belays below a big corner with vertical, yellow-tinted, left wall ; 50 ft. Climb rightwards to stance and spike belays on the arête ; 40 ft. Climb the arête until, beneath the top, a move rightwards for 20 ft. is made until a slab can be climbed to a scree ledge beneath another corner ; belay, 100 ft. Climb the corner to easy scrambling ; 25 ft.

Sgùrr Dearg : Inaccessible Pinnacle, South Face.—*Varicose*. 100 ft. Very Severe. J. Harwood. 11th August 1964.

The route lies up the left-hand side of the South Face. Starts at the right-hand end of the overhangs, by white marks on rock.

Climb up to overhang, surmount on good holds and continue to ledge with perched block. Climb wall above direct to summit.

Caisteal a' Garbh Choire : South East Face.—*Lumps*. 150 ft. Very Difficult. A. McKeith. July 1963.

The climb goes directly up this face, using lumps of rock sticking from an otherwise smooth wall.

Sgùrr na h-Uamha.—(*Not named.*) 400 ft. Very Difficult. A. Williams & C. Read. Summer 1964.

At the northern end of the main face, there is another buttress separated from the main face by a prominent gully.

Climb the gully for 250 ft. then follow the left branch, going first by a chimney, then several jammed blocks, followed by rather loose rock, to finish just north of the summit.

NORTHERN HIGHLANDS

Foinaven.—*Fishmonger.* 750 ft. Severe. W. D. Fraser & P. N. L. Tranter. 12th September 1964.

The obvious chimney to the right of the 'nose' (*sic*) of Lord Reay's Seat, indicates the general line. A fine climb following a natural fault directly up the cliff to finish at the summit.

Climb up the chimney to a small wet overhang, to piton belay on good platform to left; 80 ft. Traverse left 10 ft., then delicately back to right for 20 ft., gaining the chimney above an overhang. Climb walls and cracks up to the right for 50 ft., to large platform. The line of the chimney continues a little to the left as a very steep broken wall. This defeated the party, so a big ledge was traversed for 60 ft. rightwards to another chimney groove; piton belay. Climb the groove to scree and belay; 80 ft. Climb the obvious chimney (loose) to a grassy ledge and belay; 120 ft. The final tower rises above, split by an obvious chimney. Climb awkward rocks for 30 ft., to gain the chimney; peg belay. Traverse 10 ft. to the right, then climb a 25-ft. crack (*crux*) which lies between a detached pillar and the main cliff. Traverse hard left for 20 ft. to regain chimney left of the nose. Climb a right-angled corner with a crack to belay; 30 ft. Moderate rocks follow narrow summit arête to a gap; crossing is Very Difficult; belay above. Easy scrambling leads to the top of Lord Reay's Seat.

Stac Polly: Main Summit, South Face.—*Jack the Ripper.* 370 ft. Very Severe. M. G. Anderson & G. Mair. 26th August 1964.

Follows the obvious rib between the South-west and South-east Faces. Starts 2 yds. left of a cairn at the foot of the rib, under an obvious layback crack.

Climb the wall on the left of the buttress, then the crack, followed by another and wider crack trending rightwards to belay behind a flake; 60 ft. Move up loose wall on left to twin cracks and climb left-hand crack to an amphitheatre and giant flake; belay, 60 ft. Climb the rightmost of the three ribs above. This is the sustained *crux* (two protective pitons used); 120 ft., belay. Climb crack above belay for a few feet until an obvious traverse left leads into the chimney gully; follow this to large ledge; 100 ft., poor belay. Do not climb wall to top but traverse right (exposed and rather sensational) then by crack to top; 30 ft., belay beside the summit cairn.

Ben Klibreck.—*Eyrie*. 400 ft. Difficult. H. M. Brown & M. Barnes (B.F.M.C.). 3rd October 1964.

The road from Lairg to Altnahara passes west of Ben Klibreck and from there the west buttress is visible. It is split at the foot by a prominent gully, which was the line taken by J. H. B. Bell in 1933. This route starts at the lowest rocks to the right, beside the big shallow gully right of the buttress. It gives fine airy climbing, difficult and steep at the start. [The real interest lay round a corner, in an eagle's eyrie ! Fortunately it was October.]

Glen na Muice (Strath na Sheallag), Junction Buttress.—*Rightward Slant*. 400 ft. Very Difficult. G. A. Watt & G. W. Jack (both Lairig Club). 10th April 1964.

An obvious line slanting from left to right diagonally up the West face (or Glen na Muice Beag side) of Junction Buttress.

The climb starts about 120 ft. right of the corner of the buttress (cairn). At first up a steep crack on adequate holds, then up steep heather ; negotiate two short chimneys and move left to tree belay (80 ft.) ; climb vegetated groove on right to heather ledge and dubious flake belay (70 ft.) ; step right round nose to another ledge ; steep chimney on the left of the ledge appears feasible, but the route followed goes up steeply on the right ; the initial heave on to a sloping slab may prove awkward, and is followed by 20 ft. of steep climbing (crux), then easier rock to the foot of another groove (stance and piton belay ; 70 ft.) ; follow this groove up under a conspicuous overhang, pass it on right, and continue up to broad rock platform (100 ft.) ; thence variously up easier rock to the top (80 ft.).

CENTRAL HIGHLANDS

Creag Meaghaidh.—*The North Pillar* (FIRST SEMI-WINTER ASCENT). 1500 ft. Grade IV. A. McKeith & G. Warburton. 13th March 1965.

The buttress was climbed under semi-winter conditions, quite directly, by heather, moss, rock, snow and ice. The central 500 ft. was sustained at a high angle and very exposed, each pitch becoming increasingly difficult. Under a heavy plating of snow and ice it would be a fine climb of a high standard.

This climb lies on 'C' Buttress between the Centre and North Posts.

Creag Dubh (Newtonmore).—*Tip Off*. 180 ft. Very Severe. D. Bathgate & I. McEacheran. March 1965.

Starts 100 yds. right of the waterfall, lying at the left end of the crag beneath a very obvious line.

Climb an awkward corner ; 50 ft. Move up below the overhang, then up a corner into a slanting dièdre. When stopped by overhang, move left on to a flat ledge, climb a vertical corner on to a perched block (obvious from below) then move up right on the overhanging wall ; piton runner, 120 ft. (Variation : from the perched block go left up overhung groove.)

BEN NEVIS

Càrn Dearg: Càrn Dearg Buttress.—*King Kong*. 1020 ft. Very Severe. B. W. Robertson, F. Harper & J. Graham. 1st & 2nd September 1964.

(1) As for Centurion (50 ft.). (2) Take the steep slab groove on the right of the belay. At 20 ft. rope down to lower slab (10 ft.), move right, pass a spike and climb up to a cracked slab and on to a peg belay near the end of the slab, below an open corner (70 ft. ; 3 pegs). (3) Climb the open corner (1 peg) to a sloping slab, mantleshelf on to it and go up to a corner (this corner is just below the triangular slab on the 3rd pitch of the Bat), descend down left, climb up to the block belay on the Bat and descend down to the big loose block to a peg belay (110 ft. ; 1 peg). (4) Climb up left over a slab to a jug on the first overlap, climb this and traverse right to a crack with a chockstone on the second overlap. Climb this to a smooth slab, descend down right then up to a small ledge at the foot of a smooth groove, Move slightly left and up, moving slightly right to a point just below a bulge, swing right into a scoop to a peg belay (90 ft. ; 4 pegs). (5) Take the line left, then up to an enormous overlap, climb an 8-ft. overlap just to the right, then traverse right to a sloping ledge below a vertical crack. Climb the crack for 15 ft. to a small ledge and peg belay (60 ft.). (6) Climb the crack to an easy rightward traverse. At the end of the traverse move up an arête then slightly left to a smooth slab and peg belay (90 ft.). This is just to the left of the belay at the top of the 100-ft. corner on the Bat. (7) Traverse left over a slab to a wide crack, climb the crack to a small overlap, climb the overlap and continue the crack in the upper slab to a large overlap (peg below), take the overlap direct to a slab above, climb up, then slightly right to a crack with a wedge on a large overlap. Take the overlap direct to the slab above. Again, take an easy broken overlap direct, move left and up to a small grassy ledge with a peg belay at the right end (130 ft. ; 1 peg, 1 wedge). (8) An easy climb over a basin with grass and some rocks to a vertical wall, traverse left and up to a block belay below an overhanging wall, capped by a small roof, 60 ft. (9) Climb the overhanging wall by a crack then use two slings to overcome the roof, above, move left then up a slab corner (heading for an enormous roof) to a peg belay below an overhanging corner (130 ft. ; 1 wedge). (10) Climb the overhanging corner, swing across to a spike (loose block on the right), move left then straight up to a spike and good stance (130 ft.). (11) Move slightly right then up to a grassy groove, move left and up to cairn at the top (100 ft.).

A climb equal if not harder in severity than the Bat, but more sustained and with fine situations. Pitches 2, 3 and 4 thread through overhanging walls and a fall would result in either 'prusiking' or being lowered to the ground. A peg was left at the top of the 10-ft. descent on the second pitch, as were the belay pegs for pitches 3 and 4.

For account of first ascent see earlier in this issue.

—*Mourning Slab.* (FIRST WINTER ASCENT.) 350 ft. Very Severe. J. Knight & D. Bathgate. February 1965.

This route (see *S.M.C.J.* (1963), xxvii, 377) becomes each winter a great cataract of ice now known as the 'Curtain.'

Climb, on ice, the great introductory slab to a stance and piton belay beneath the final ice wall. Climb this near its left edge, using pitons, etc., to gain the easy slopes of Ledge Route. The route provides very hard ice climbing and compares favourably with some of the harder winter ascents on the mountain (see article in this issue).

Minus Two Buttress.—*Left-hand Route, Direct Start.* 200 ft. Very Severe. I. Clough, D. G. Roberts, G. Grandison & D. Miller. 1st June 1963.

The route follows the groove leading up the left edge to join the left crux of the normal route.

Start at the left edge and scramble up into the corner. The main corner is normally wet, so move out left and climb a (V) groove, and exit left to a stance. Move up, then go right, back into the main groove, to thread belay in corner. Climb the slab, then work rightwards over the overhang to gain the crux groove of the original route.

Minus Three Gully.—520 ft. Very Severe. J. R. Marshall & G. J. Ritchie. July 1964.

Climb the bed of the gully to the foot of a steep groove pitch, 75 ft. Follow the groove for 20 ft., surmount a rightward-forking, slightly overhanging crack, continue in the crack until the rib on the left can be gained; easier climbing leads into a large cave, 65 ft. From the back of the cave, traverse left, then go steeply up to follow the gully bed; 90 ft. Cracks in the left wall lead to a slabby rib which is followed to a short groove leading to a stance in the gully bed; 90 ft. Continue by easier chimneys to crest of North East Buttress; 200 ft. (See article in this issue.)

North East Buttress.—*Green Hollows Route.* (FIRST WINTER ASCENT.) 700 ft. J. R. Marshall & J. Moriarty. February 1965.

The climbing was sustained, in the form of thinly iced grooves (rather delicate) to the 'Green Hollow,' which was snow-filled and provided easier climbing to the final arête. The climb was at least Severe and the time taken was four hours.

South Trident Buttress.—350 ft. Very Severe. J. R. Marshall, R. Marshall & A. Wightman. June 1964.

The route is on the south face of the middle tier of the buttress. Look for a triple-tiered corner rising steeply leftwards across the face, and lying some 50 ft. right of an obvious flake chimney.

Scramble from the ledge to the foot of the corner; 75 ft. Climb the corner by cracks in three pitches (50, 30 and 70 ft.) to gain an easy slab. Continue directly above by the continuation of the crack and a large flake to gain the crest of the buttress below the final tier; 100 ft.

Tower Ridge.—*East Flank.* 750 ft. Very Severe. Seven hours. J. R. Marshall, R. Campbell & R. Holt. February 1965.

To the right of the Italian Climb can be seen, in winter, a line of snow- and ice-filled grooves.

Start about 100 ft. right of the Italian Climb, traverse, rising left, for 100 ft., climb into an ice groove on the right which leads in 40 ft. to a ledge leading horizontally across a steep wall on the right, and traverse this (piton runners) to reach a small gully (110 ft.). From the top of the small gully move out right and make a rising traverse on steep rock and ice to gain a stance below another steep ice wall; 100 ft. Climb the ice to gain a snow gully above; continue up the gully to a steep rock buttress; 250 ft. Follow the easy snow shelf rightwards to reach the top of Broad Gully; 200 ft. Finish down Broad Gully or up the Tower Ridge.

CAIRNGORMS

Ben Macdhui: Grey Man's Crag.—*Girdle Traverse.* 500 ft. Severe. B. T. Lawrie & D. Mercer (Etchachan C.). 13th July 1964.

Starts a few feet up Anchor Gully, where an obvious sloping ledge goes on to the face.

Climb by cracks from the near end of the ledge for 8 ft., then climb diagonally left in two pitches; 180 ft. Belay on edge of Ardath Chimney. Cross the chimney to small ledge, traverse left into layback corner then climb up left to the edge overlooking Grey Slab. Go up edge to stance, then climb horizontally across a wall for 30 ft. to belay on Lucifer Route, before its crux. Step into Pilgrim's Groove, then leave it by moving up left to a steep ledge, which in turn leads to a prominent chimney. Climb the chimney to overhangs, then swing out left on a flake to gain a rib, which is climbed to finish.

Ben MacDhui: Creagan a'Choire Etchachan.—*Djibangi.* (FIRST WINTER ASCENT.) 500 ft. Grade V. Six and a half hours. J. McCartney & W. J. Barclay (Etchachan Club). 31st January 1965.

Sustained climbing on unconsolidated snow overlying thin ice.

The ascent was made directly into the dièdre, by two pitches up iced slabs. The dièdre was well built up but gave a very hard exit. Above, steep snow led to a high-angled slab, covered with verglas (100 ft., Very Severe). Straightforward to plateau thereafter. Piton belays were used throughout.

—*The Talisman.* (FIRST WINTER ASCENT.) Grade V. Six and a half hours. K. A. Grassick & J. Light. 14th March 1965.

The route was climbed under difficult wet snow and ice conditions. The hardest pitch was the 50-ft. traverse to reach the Left Corridor edge. The summer crux's overhanging corner was climbed with a piton high in the corner. The final 120 ft. was passed on the left by a difficult open ice chimney.

Ben MacDhui: Cairn Etchachan.—*Castle Gully.* (FIRST WINTER ASCENT.) Grade III. Three hours. K. A. Grassick & D. Burnett. 5th January 1964.

The ascent was made on hard snow and ice. The crux pitch was the summer one, covered by thick ice; this was followed by a steep 200-ft. ridge of hard snow.

Braeriach: Garbh Choire Dhaidh.—*The Great Rift.* (FIRST WINTER ASCENT.) 450 ft. Grade IV (High). A. G. Nicol & J. Light (Lairig Club). 21st February 1965.

Conditions offered hard snow over snow-ice at first, modified by thaw as the day progressed. On the upper part steep snow-ice involved the rocks left of the rift proper. Difficulties were sustained, needing continuous cutting; possibly a heavy 'back-up' of snow would lessen difficulties, particularly in the lower section of the gully.

The gully was climbed without particular difficulty to the first cave-pitch; this was taken directly (a turning movement on the left appeared possible). The 'Great Cave' was turned on the left by a traverse out on slabs, possibly beyond the 'short steep wall' of the summer description, followed by an awkward move on to a higher series of ice-covered slabs which permitted a return to the rift above the 'Great Cave.' The next pitch was taken directly to a belay approximately 30 ft. below a chimney pitch, probably the 'narrow chimney' of the *Guide* description. An upward and leftward traverse attained the uniformly steep snow-ice covered slabs bounding the rift on the left and these were climbed directly for 100 ft. until the angle eased off. A final run-out on steep snow led without difficulty to the plateau in some 80 ft.

—*Slab and Groove.* (FIRST WINTER ASCENT.) Grade I. O. J. Ludlow, J. J. Light & D. K. Mardon. 7th January 1964.

There was a comparatively poor build-up of old hard snow. The climb presented a long and interesting ascent; there was a bergschrund at the foot and a 45-degree slope, steepening higher up, finishing with very little cornice (though the route usually carries a heavy one).

—*Billabong.* 450 ft. Hard Severe. J. C. Innes, M. Higgins, A. J. D. Smith & D. W. Duncan.

This is the leftmost prominent dièdre on the 'main face,' left of the Culvert.

Start at arrow and cairn, up pleasant greenish slabs to a perch below dièdre. The next pitch (crux) provides excellent sustained climbing: climb short, steep wall above (often wet) to narrow ledge, then directly over bulge into steep crack which develops into a fault; follow this to a comfortable platform; 120 ft. Continue up, 20 ft., then move right, up easier rock leading to the plateau in 200 ft.

—*Helicon Rib*. (FIRST WINTER ASCENT.) Grade III. Three hours. D. C. Duncan & A. J. D. Smith. March 1964.

The summer route was followed throughout. No special difficulties.

Braeriach: Garbh Choire Mhòr.—*Solo Gully*. (FIRST WINTER ASCENT.) Grade I. J. J. Light & O. J. Ludlow. 8th January 1964.

There was a comparatively poor build-up of old hard snow. The gully was straightforward and of a 45-degree slope. There was unusually little cornice.

—*Bunting's Gully Wall*. (FIRST WINTER ASCENT.) Grade III. J. J. Light & O. J. Ludlow. 9th January 1964.

A good climb with a sustained upper pitch.

Start up Bunting's Gully, take the left branch and about 50 ft. below the great overhang, go right to the bottom of a series of small slabby buttresses. Move up, then diagonally right for 60 ft., then up 10 ft. near the crest and traverse back left into an upper gully. This is a 90-ft. run-out with much snow-ice. Climb up the gully and turn the cornice (on this ascent, by the left).

Creagh an Dubh Loch.—*Waterkelpie Wall, Direct start*. 300 ft. Very Severe. D. Mercer & J. McCartney (Etchachan Club). 2nd August 1964.

Starts at a small rock bay directly below the red wall of Waterkelpie Wall (arrow).

Climb an indefinite corner until it steepens, then move left to a slab. Climb this to below a vertical wall, surmount a corner slightly to the left, then go by the slab above to another wall. Climb this by a vertical corner (1 piton) and continue up the slab above to a short wall ending at a terrace. A line of cracks straight above leads directly to the foot of the Red Wall; these should be possible, but in the wet a line further right was taken.

—*Dinosaur*. 1200 ft. Very Severe. J. W. Stenhouse & B. T. Lawrie (Etchachan Club). 25th July 1964.

The climb goes up the 'magnificent sweep of polished slab interrupted by overhangs' between Labyrinth Edge and Theseus Grooves. The rock was clean and sound throughout.

Start at lowest point of slabs and climb to grass ledge; 60 ft. Continue up crack above for 130 ft. Move right, climb overlap and slab above, traverse left to good stance and belay directly above lower crack; 100 ft. Climb corner above for 30 ft., move left across slab to rib, climb this and enter a gully on the right which is climbed in two pitches, to emerge at the bottom of the 'sea of polished slabs.' Start left of obvious corner at right-hand edge of slab and climb first by crack then by slab to good stance and belay, 80 ft. From right edge of ledge go up slab for 30 ft. then traverse right to overlap, climb this for 30 ft. to exit on slab above belay. Move right to vertical grass crack and climb this with the aid of one peg and move

right to belay. Climb corner above to grassy bay and belay below large roof. Make a descending traverse left on grass and finish by last pitch of Labyrinth Edge. Peg belays and runners were required.

—*False Gully.* (FIRST WINTER ASCENT.) Grade IV. Six hours. K. A. Grassick, W. James & J. N. Taylor. 19th December 1964.

The difficulties were concentrated in the middle 200 ft., with ice and powdered snow. The summer crux chimney was the hardest pitch; the left edge was gained on rope tension from a piton within the chimney. (Iced walls prevented the normal lasso technique which solves the summer exit from the chimney.)

Cairngorm: Coire an Lochan.—*Crow's Nest Route.* 300 ft. Difficult. R. D. B. Stewart (J.M.C.S.), David Lyon & D. L. Easson. 7th August 1964.

Ascend the Couloir until the left branch requires roped climbing. Traverse left to a 20-ft. wall, belay. Continue for 40 ft. to an obvious chimney; climb this, then traverse left above the chimney for 40 ft. and climb a 20-ft. wall. Continue left and up to a level platform; on by two corners to the top; 50 ft.

Cairngorm: Coire an t-Sneachda.—(*Unnamed.*) (FIRST WINTER ASCENT.) 400 ft. Grade IV. Five hours. J. Knight & M. Harcus. February 1965.

At the start of Aladdin's Mirror; a line leading straight up the buttress. There were three steep pitches, the third of which was climbed with a peg and sling on the left.

GLENCOE

Aonach Dubh: East Face.—*Shiver.* 550 ft. (At least) Severe. Four hours. J. Knight & M. Harcus. January 1965.

To the left of Archer Ridge is a large ice-fall. Start directly beneath this at the lowest rock.

Climb 300 ft. to the upper section. Continue by 30 ft. of Quiver, then traverse 30 ft. left to the centre of an ice-fall. Climb this directly to the top; 250 ft.

Aonach Dubh, West Face.—*The Screen.* 450 ft. Very Severe. D. Bathgate & J. Brumfitt. February 1965.

Follows the obvious ice-fall which forms on the lower rocks beneath the middle ledge and to the right of No. 3 Gully.

Climb 70 ft. to the base of some large icicles; avoid these by a 30-ft. rising rightward traverse. Traverse back left above icicles, then follow the steep ice-runnel to a tree belay at 160 ft. The rest is easy snow.

ARROCHAR

Creag Tharsuinn.—*McLay's Gully*. (FIRST WINTER ASCENT.) Severe. Three hours. W. Skidmore, J. Crawford & J. Madden (G.M.C.). 30th January 1965.

The entrance to the gully was barred by an awkward ice-pitch, bulging at the top. Thereafter steep hard snow, apart from a Severe move (about mid-height) over an ice-glazed boulder. A good gully climb.

—*McLaren's Chimney*. (FIRST WINTER ASCENT.) Severe. Five hours. W. Skidmore, J. Crawford & J. Madden (G.M.C.). 31st January 1965.

This well-known chimney of the early days, somewhat neglected since, proved an excellent ice-trap and gave a climb of high character and difficulty. There were four pitches, all involving much cutting on ice and possibly similar in difficulty.

Ben Narnain.—*Leekie*. 90 ft. Difficult. M. G. Anderson (J.M.C.S.) & M. Durham (E.M.C.). 19th July 1964.

Some distance beyond the Narnain Boulder there is a large rock outcrop, the right-hand end of which is distinguished by a prominent nose; 20 yds. left of the nose is a gully bounded on its left by an obvious buttress. Climb this to the top.

SOUTHERN HIGHLANDS

Some Climbs on Dumbarton Rock

Since the integration of the *Gŵr y Gogledd*, its original citizens, Dumbarton Rock has been strangely neglected, and only recently have the routes and boulder problems been fully investigated.

As a training-ground 'The Rock' is superior to 'The Whangie,' and these notes may popularise it as the West's answer to Craig-y-Barns. There are some twenty-four routes on the main face, and over fifty boulder problems; although often extremely short, they afford great variety. The difficulty of some is quite formidable.

The rock is igneous, slabby and almost unclimbable when wet; but it dries remarkably quickly, twenty minutes being an average time after heavy rainfall.

There exists (in MS.) a written *Guide*, in two sections: The Boulder Problems, and the Face Climbs. Here we will deal only with the latter. The routes are numbered from left to right, as one comes along the path from the main road. Intending climbers should, of course, be familiar with any relevant bye-laws. These notes are purely descriptive, and we are indebted to Mr. B. Shields for them.

(1) **Executive Wall** (30 ft. Severe. M. Connolly).—Some 80 yds. from the road, on the left side of the path, a small wall with an arrow and the initials M. C. The original route bears slightly left; if the route is taken direct the standard is about V.S.

(2) **The Neilweg** (110 ft. Very Severe. B. Shields & M. Connolly).—Twenty yards right of (1) there is a thin vertical crack on the green wall with dièdre on the right. Climb the crack to a grass ledge and belay (a piton runner was used in the crack) (40 ft.); continue by the crack to the top (70 ft.).

(3) **Boulevard** (100 ft. Very Severe. N. McNiven).—A few feet to the right of (2) a sloping shelf runs diagonally upwards left to right; climb it. A hard route, with three cruxes, the start is difficult; there are other hard moves half-way up, and at the top.

(4) **Hailstone Climb** (100 ft. Very Difficult. M. Connolly).—A few yards right of (3) and just left of a gully is a groove with a scratched arrow at its base. Climb to a small ledge, step left and continue straight up. At the top there is an airy pull up on to vertical grass. (Not recommended as the turf at the top is unstable, and the protection poor.)

(5) **Monsoon Gully** (120 ft. (Mild Severe. B. Shields & M. Connolly).—The large wet prominent gully. At the top there is a delicate step left round a block. Finish by near-vertical grass, with piton belay necessary. (At the crux an overhanging crack can be seen on the right which would give the gully a direct finish. So far unclimbed.)

(6) **Nameless Crack** (80 ft. Difficult. N. McNiven).—A few feet right of the gully there is an easy angled crack topped by superimposed blocks. A pleasant route, which joins (5) just below its crux.

(7) **Alleyway** (80 ft. Very Severe. N. McNiven).—Just right of (6) (where the face ends) a sloping shelf can be seen, which looks like a 'Boulevard' in miniature. Climb the shelf which is awkward to a grassy ledge (25 ft.). From the ledge step left and climb by blocks to the top (55 ft.).

(8) **Angels Pavement** (200 ft. Very Severe. N. McNiven).—This is a traverse of the face from Alleyway to Executive Wall. The traverse is usually no more than 15 ft. from the ground and the crux is the very awkward move at the foot of Boulevard.

(9) **Ganglion Grooves** (60 ft. Very Severe. K. Haggerty & B. Shields).—On the face between Alleyway and Stonefall Crack and at right angles to Alleyway just right of a clump of ivy there is a bulging groove. Climb the bulge for 15 ft., reach for a dubious flake, swing right on to a slab, surmount another bulge and continue by the groove to a grass ledge near the top; traverse delicately leftwards and finish by a crack.

(10) **Route Three** (65 ft. Very Severe. B. Shields & K. Haggerty).—Climb direct to the piton runner below the roof on Stonefall Crack, continue above as for the Crack; one very hard move.

(11) **Stonefall Crack** (70 ft. Very Severe. N. McNiven).—On the face overlooking the boulders, there is a prominent crack with an overhang at the top. Enter the crack, then traverse diagonally left to the corner

(fixed piton). Traverse right, using a vertical finger-crack and finish on the left wall of a 15-ft. chimney; climb over the castle wall and belay.

(12) **Stonefall Crack Direct** (Very Severe. N. McNiven & B. Shields).—Climb the crack direct; the route is considerably harder than the original.

(13) **The Big Zipper** (100 ft. Artificial. B. Shields & A. Baillie).—The climb is on the overhanging face to the right of Stonefall Crack. A prominent clean-cut corner overhangs in its lower half. Mantleshelf on to the traverse ledge of Chemin de Fer and climb the corner crack by 'artificial' technique. Two expansion bolts, two wedges, three jammed nuts and seven pitons were used; with the exception of one channel peg all are in place. Protection is poor.

(14) **Chemin de Fer** (110 ft. Very Severe. N. McNiven).—This is on the overhanging face to the right of (11). The route goes up the large crack on the left of the face, which curves leftwards at the top. Climb leftwards to the foot of Stonefall Crack, pull up on to a ledge then traverse delicately rightwards into the crack. (An alternative is to climb directly from the foot of the crack but the former is more interesting.) The climb is very exposed and the angle is 110 degrees. At the top mantleshelf on to a ledge and belay. To escape, a long free abseil is necessary; a piton has been left on the floor of the ledge for this purpose. The first ascent took six hours, from the difficulty of pitonnage in the friable rock; seventeen pegs and a wedge were used. The climb was repegged in December 1963 in four hours using fourteen pegs and two wedges; all the pitons are in place.

(15) **Requiem** (150 ft. Very Severe. B. Shields & M. Connolly).—This is the central crack of the North Face overhang. Climb up the first few pegs of (14), then traverse diagonally to the right, on pegs and expansion bolts, to gain the foot of the centre crack. Climb this with pegs and wedge, until it fades out; continue using expansion bolts to reach to top of the faces. The route is climbed on one runner. The flake of the traverse is dangerously loose and would provide little protection if the first piton in the main crack came out. All pitons are in place.

(16) **Longbow** (110 ft. Very Severe. B. Shields & J. R. Houston).—To the right of (15) are two prominent dièdres; Longbow is the one on the left, with the overhanging right wall. Climb for 20 ft. to reach a small ledge, continue by the crack using pitons; revert to free climbing in the upper reaches. Six wedges and seven pitons are in place. An awkward and strenuous route.

(17) **Windjammer Crack** (110 ft. Very Severe. B. Shields & J. R. Houston).—A few yards right of (16) there is an overhanging crack with a prominent nose at the top. Climb the crack, passing wedge runners at 40 and 70 ft. Sustained climbing throughout. The overhang is turned by a layback to the right.

On the seaward face, some 20 yds. right of Windjammer Crack, there is a prominent vegetaceous gully. Routes (18) and (19) are on the left of the gully and route (20) is a few yards right of it.

(18) **Frendo** (100 ft. Very Severe. B. Shields).—Climb the gully for 20 ft. where a prominent arrow is scratched at the foot of a steep slab. Climb this for 35 ft. Then follows several feet of grass and rock, a delicate move on to a slab, and a finish on good holds.

(19) **Frendo Variation** (100 ft. Severe. B. Shields).—The crux of (18), the delicate upper section of the lower slab, is avoided by a 15-ft. left traverse, followed by a pull-up on to steep grass. A rightward traverse over loose blocks leads to the original route where it moves on to the upper slab.

(20) **Grey Slab** (80 ft. Very Severe. B. Shields & M. Connolly).—Just right of (18), near the top of the gully, there is a steep slab (arrowed). Follow the line of least resistance. The finish is that of No. 18.

(21) **West Face Gully** (Very Difficult).—Further information not available.

(22) **Plunge** (90 ft. Difficult. L. Mitchell).—A few yards right of the gully, there is a ridge marked by an arrow and the initials L. M. Keep to the right of the ridge and at the top traverse right, below the Castle wall, which is climbed to a belay.

(23) **Old Socks** (30 ft. Severe. B. Shields).—Some 8 yds. right of (22) there is a small overhang marked by an arrow; climb the overhang direct.

(24) **Poison Ivy** (30 ft. Very Severe. B. Shields).—Eight yards right of (23) there is a steep red slab, topped with ivy. Climb by the centre of the slab, which is very delicate but affords good friction.

(25) **The West Face Girdle** (450 ft. Difficult and Very Severe. B. Shields & M. Connolly).—This route traverses the small wall on the west face between the water and the path. It extends from the railings of the park on the south side to the foot of (18). For most of its length the traverse is Difficult. Midway there is a 35-ft. section which is Very Severe; thereafter a 50-ft. Severe section occurs beyond (24). The route is entertaining when the tide is in.

NOTES

Arran Notes

Beinn Tarsuinn, Meadow Face, The Rake.—An attempt at a second ascent of this route was foiled at the 'black cave.' The party, which included one of the original ascenders, was demoralised by the nature of the place and wet greasy rocks! They suggest two days of dry weather before attempting the climb; and the cave pitch may prove, to some, as hard as (or harder than) the crux.

Cir Mhòr, Rosa Pinnacle, West Flank Route.—On a repeat ascent, the party makes these notes: The climb is strenuous, particularly at the beginning. The final move on pitch 3 needs care when water seeps on to

the slabs ; dry conditions are desirable. Pitch 4 awaits a traverse across a slab from the piton runner to the belay, to straighten out the route ; probably a delicate move, but looks feasible.

Ben Nuis Chimney.—R. McDonald (J.M.C.S.) reports a successful ascent of the first pitch, without artificial aids.

Amendments to Published Descriptions.—W. Wallace comments on the following inaccuracy in the *Arran Climber's Guide*. On page 73, 'V' Gully—'The final 50-ft. pitch on the left is difficult in standard.' This finish gives two pitches totalling at least 150 ft. and should be graded as Very Difficult. And, in *S.M.C.J.* (1961), xxvii, 157, the pitch lengths for **Tidemark** on Cioch na h-Oighe are inaccurate. The first two total 100 ft., not 170 ft., and they are better climbed as one pitch. The last pitch is 50 ft., not 100 ft., which gives a total length of 240 ft. He considers the route a 'serious one with magnificent situations.'

Ben Nevis Notes

This winter has seen the fifth ascent of Point Five Gully by B. Robertson and J. Knight (10½ hours) and the fourth ascent of Zero Gully by D. Bathgate & I. McEacheran (8 hours). Zero Gully was climbed a week later by two more parties, M. MacFarlane & A. Colvin (Etive M.C.) and G. Oliver & A. N. Other (F.R.C.C.). These routes are fast becoming old classics !

Cairngorm Notes

Cairngorm: Coire an t-Sneachda, The Mess of Pottage (see Vol. I., *Cairngorms Climber's Guide*, page 221).—D. Haston and party climbed a route about this line, which proved considerably harder than the Guide's grading. Possible that the buttress becomes covered over with high-angled snow later in the season.

The climb as they found it is as follows : From the right-hand corner of the buttress, at the foot of Jacob's Ladder, climb up leftwards by a line of weakness on iced slabs and awkward bulges to the foot of a steep iced chimney ; 200 ft. Climb the chimney, then diagonally left to reach plateau by a steep snow shelf. Three hours, Grade IV.

Cairngorm, Coire an t-Sneachda.—On the buttress between **Crotchet** (?) **Gully** and **Pygmy Ridge**, a *direttissima* was made by F. Harper (Squirrels) and B. W. Robertson, in February 1965. It was about 500 ft., Grade III. The lower 300 ft. were ice-covered slabs at some 50 degrees. (Note received too late for topographical checking.)

Beinn a'Bhùird, Coire an Dubh Lochan, Bloodhound Buttress.—This has now been climbed without a top rope. The route followed was the one chosen by the pioneers in 1953, as described in the *Cairngorms Climber's Guide*, Vol. I, page 18.

The crux pitch was the one requiring the top rope on the first ascent : climb the right hand of the two cracks, using direct aid to gain entry round an awkward corner. Sufficient gardening was done to render the climb virtually free of vegetation but this would soon reappear if left undisturbed for long. The party was M. Higgins & J. C. Innes ; the route is 300 ft., Very Severe.

Fatal Avalanche on Beinn a'Bhùird.—Although we are not giving Accident Reports this year, it should be noted that two were killed by what appeared to be a wind-slab avalanche on this hill on 28th December 1964. In cold clear weather about 1.30 p.m. a party of four descended the south-west slopes of Beinn a' Bhùird towards Quoich Water, following a small burn (Map Ref. 087963). Without warning or sound, a slab avalanche half a mile wide came down from above and engulfed three on that side of the burn. It seemed to have come from about the 2150 to 2200 ft. contour on a slope of only some 30 degrees, piling up at the burn below 2000 ft. Avalanches due to wind-slab, common enough in Scotland throughout the winter, are much more unpredictable than wet-snow slides or cornice-collapses ; and though the 'hardboard' echo of wind-slab is obvious and hair-raising enough when one is on it, it cannot be suspected from the innocent ground below. So when the detaching blocks silently move off from above, their stressed-skin binding having failed, any party underneath is understandably off its guard.

Braeriach, Thisbe.—The last pitch of this route was climbed direct, instead of going left beneath it ; in February 1964, by J. Knight & I. McEachern.

Southern Highland Notes

Craig-y-Barns, Dunkeld.—B. W. Robertson sends his description of The Rat Race, promised last issue (*S.M.C.J.* (1964), xxviii, 43) :—

' Long time ago demi-gods were to be seen swinging in the tall primeval trees behind Dunkeld, with names of Wheech, Hastoni, Macniven and of that now grand old master of the hills Campbell. Thanks to these four Craig-y-Barns became one of the best training grounds for the Edinburgh school.

' Over the years most of the prominent lines fell to them, lines up vertical and overhanging grooves. All except one. One would not surrender its virginity to these fine upstanding fellows.

' In the middle of the upper cave-crag runs a crack : up an overhanging wall, and at 100 ft. it ends in a line of roofs, 6 to 10 ft. out from the vertical. The natural continuing line was a traverse below the roofs to a ledge,

visible from the crack, 50 ft. to the right. This traverse proved very hard and defeated many attempts until late '63. It was called The Rat Race :

'Hard, free and artificial climbing to ledge 70 ft. above ground. Continue up to roofs, using pegs, traverse (free) right to three bolts, and continue right, to a ledge. Fix peg belay at the back.'

Miscellaneous Notes

Munros.—Uncoiling the list again, we come to (conventions as in previous lists, *q.v.*) : (56) J. N. Ledingham, 1963 ; (57) A. R. Thrippleton, 1964 ; (58) J. G. Fleming, 1964 ; (59) W. D. Fraser, 1964 ; (60) H. M. Brown, 1965.

And—heavens—someone appears again : P. N. L. Tranter, 1964, who was No. 45 in 1961, and must have forgotten. Ledingham remarks that he did all but five by 1951, when he emigrated to Sutherland and sheep : like so many others, he chose Muile nam Mòr-Bheann as his final toast. Hamish M. Brown, aggressively educative, sends these interesting notes :—

BEARDS, BOYS AND MUNROS

I suppose I am like No. 44 who having listed various records (usually held by himself) nobly protests against conscious record-breaking. These things do tend to 'happen'—so with us ; I say *us* for unlike many who boast in 'most solo' my Munros have usually been gregariously grabbed. Here are some statistics.

Fifteen years lie between first and last, with two years abroad producing nothing and six years only three or less. The greatest haul of new Munros in a year was eighty-four. Twenty-five only still remain as solo ascents. For my sins I have climbed ten on ski, sixty both in summer and winter conditions and 156 in winter only. Two hundred and nineteen have been done with teen-agers of which 204 were with boys and girls of one school, Brahead in Buckhaven, Fife. Two hundred and twenty-five 'reascents' make a bag totalling 507—for now. Biggest day was ten from the traverse of the Mamores (done piecemeal previously) with boys aged 16, 14 and 13. Once I thought of completing the list, 'tops' were carefully collected and odd revisits made for missing bumps.

The four years at Brahead have resulted in regular visits to Rannoch, Glencoe, Glenelg, the Cairngorms, and Ben Nevis ; Lochaber, Knoydart, the North West and Skye received frequent attention. Keen boys join the Brahead, Fife, Mountaineering Club (The 'B.F.'s'—pupils, F.P.'s, staff and invited friends of the school). With their peregrinations they know Scotland's hills as few lads, or adults, can. They are not just Munro-baggers, though several have passed their fifty, and one his 100, before leaving school at 15/16 ; but have become good all-round climbers. One pupil, just before leaving, led up from the C.I.C. Hut to summit by Tower Ridge in one and a half hours. Canoe-ing, trekking, camping and all field studies are equally part of 'mountaineering' to us. Which is why it is

fun before anything else : walking or paddling over Rannoch Moor, living in a snow cave on top of the Cairngorms, suffering the wet of Glencoe or sailing to the Isles. Big routes like Agag's or Crowberry Ridge always thrilled, a ten-hour blizzard along the Aonach Eagach was quite a Hogmanay, a hectic retreat down the Nevis Cliffs another. One 'Fab day' with 4000 ft. of step-cutting, blizzards and white-outs was a traverse of the Ben, the Arête, and the Aonachs to Spean Bridge. A trek, camping and climbing, from Killin to Skye was perhaps the best ever. Ladhar Bheinn in Knoydart proved the hardest Munro : packs lugged up the bealach, the hill climbed, temperature 80 plus, and four miles up Loch Hourn before water was found ! This is balanced by aquatic ascents of Clachaigs and Chasms, or equalled with grillings in the Cuillins. Few bothies and huts were unvisited (why are so few used?). Ben Alder, Affric Y.H., Ling in Torridon are favourites. Two weeks in Cairngorms saw every Munro climbed, both Lairigs walked, all bothies and howffs occupied and several evenings of rock-climbing. Not bad at 13. Other schools have joined in, catching the gay freedom and initiative—and discipline—for in four years there have been no accidents and help has been given in search and rescue by the boys too. In all, fifty expeditions of a week or more and 150 shorter ones.

So much for the Munros. And the boys. Now some of them are able to grow their own beards—I'd better shave. There is a lot to do still.

HAMISH M. BROWN.

Top Secrets.—We have referred before to the amusing, but also irritating, policy of the Ordnance Survey in not giving away positions of the new strategically important hydro-electric dams and lochs ; despite their clear depiction on other maps. This body is equally cautious on mountain matters.

REVISED HEIGHTS OF SCOTTISH MOUNTAINS

There were reports in the press during 1964 that the Ordnance Survey were issuing revised heights for several of the Cairngorm peaks and Ben Nevis. There was also a belief that Beinn Tarsuin had been demoted.

The Director-General of the Survey was therefore asked in March 1965 if he would give the S.M.C. official details of the changes, and the following reply was received :—

'It is the case that most of the mountains in this country have received slightly different heights, as a result of a recent re-observation of the triangulation network, but the reasons for the changes vary from place to place, for example, the exact point of reference may have been changed.

'It is not the policy of the Ordnance Survey to alter the height of a well-known mountain unless there is some entirely valid reason for the change. This applies in particular to Ben Nevis where the apparent change in height arose simply from the change in height of the cairn from which observations were made. The old height of 4406 ft. will be retained.

'The implications in detail of the policy are at present being studied, and I would prefer to say no more at the moment. We will arrange for you to be kept informed of any important developments.'

We are still deciphering the meaning of this letter and for the time being readers must interpret it as best they can. We can, however, point out that the O.S. must have found an 'entirely valid reason' for changing the height of Ben Macdhui, although they have not mentioned this in their letter. The height given in the 1964 Tourist Map of the Cairngorms is 4300 ft.

J. C. D.

Additions to the Library

The Drove Roads and Bridle Paths round Braemar (Kyde, 1958); *The Welsh Peaks* (Poucher, 1962); *The Highlands* (Finlay, 1963); *Hill Walking in Arran* (Meek, 1963); *Rock Climbers' Guide to S.E. England* (Pyatt, 1963); *Red Peak* (Slessor, 1964); *In Mountain Lakeland* (Griffin, 1964); *The Craft of Climbing* (Murray and Wright, 1964); *Guide to Duns* (1963); *Sleep till Noonday* (Purslow, 1964); *Guide to Llanberis North* (Climbers Club); *Tryfan and Glyder Fach Guide* (Climbers Club, 1964); *Cwm Idwal Guide* (Climbers Club, 1964); *Rock Climbing in Britain*, 2nd ed. (Wright, 1964); *The Island of Mull* (Turner and Finlay, 1963); *The Climbers' Fireside Book* (Noyce, 1964); *Those Greenland Days* (Lindsay, 1932; presented by W. C. Carmichael).

Kindred Club Journals Received—Current copies of *Climbers Club Journal*; *Harvard Mountaineering*; *Wierchy*; *Appalachia*; *Polar Record*; *Tararua Trampers*; *Revista Mensile*; *Sierra Club Bulletin*; *La Montagne*; *D.A.V. Journal*; *Alpine Journal*; *Mountain Club of South Africa Journal*; *Mitteilung des Deutschesalpenvereins*; *New Zealand Alpine Club Journal*; *Edinburgh University M.C. Journal*; *Birmingham University M.C. Journal*; *Irish M.C. Journal*; *Canadian Alpine Club Journal*; *Cambridge University M.C. Journal* have been received, with thanks.

Scottish Mountain Accidents

A list of Scottish mountain accidents is not being printed this year. It is becoming increasingly difficult to obtain accounts of incidents accurate in facts or numbers. One man, however willing, cannot be expected to do it. There is apparently no central pool of information available to, or from the Mountain Rescue Committee, Scottish Branch. This is strange; for records of the past, for planning for the future, or merely for public education, an accurate authoritative annual list would seem to be desirable. (Of mountaineering accidents, not ski-slope mishaps: those should be, but obviously are not, the concern of the commercial organisations responsible.)

Presumably such a list will eventually be made. In the meantime, with the help of several members, we are trying to collect incidents omitted from previous years. We would thank especially A. I. L. Maitland, John Hinde and B. H. Humble for their great assistance hitherto.

As we go to Press, we hear from Lt.-Col. J.K. Arthur, chairman of the Branch (to whom we are much indebted for courteous and informative correspondence) that after the impending reorganisation an authoritative list will probably be compiled. Simple lack of resources has prevented its appearance so far. In 1964 there appeared to be 13 fatalities, some 32 injuries or illnesses, and a few 'official' benightments. One death was due to a second fall by an already injured man who was not properly secured. One skull at least was saved by a North Face helmet (which was itself shattered by the fall . . .) But further analysis must wait.

IN MEMORIAM

TOM LONGSTAFF

1875-1964

I FIRST met Tom Longstaff at Achiltibuie in 1950. No man planning his first exploration of the central Himalaya could afford to lose a chance of discussion with him. He was then in his seventy-fifth year, small in stature and spare of frame. He looked almost frail—until I looked him in the eye. Instantly I knew the presence of a strong personality, possessed of energies in the measure that can make for greatness. The cheekbone was high, the nose thin like a hawk's, the eyes cool, deep-penetrating when he chose, the mouth firm as a fighter's—it might have been the face of a desert Arab (or of an Englishman for that matter), but more particularly, the face of a man born to adventure, to the penetration of the unknown, whether on physical, mental, or spiritual plane.

In his dealing with me, as with all men, he remained at once upright and downright. The moment he started to talk, generously pouring out his vast store of Himalayan knowledge, some powerful dynamo seemed to switch on inside, the current to course through his body, and electric sparks, one would swear, to shoot out from the point of his red beard. Fifty years ago he was indeed a prodigy in power and performance, yet he never aged in spirit. 'Whom the Gods love die young,' said Byron: true words if we take them to mean that men who live true to their lives' purpose stay young in heart without regard to age of body. Such a man was Tom Longstaff.

He did with his life the one thing that from boyhood he had most wanted to do. In his autobiography, *This My Voyage*, he declared that his ambition from the age of 15 was to be a mountain traveller. He defined his terms: 'Mountaineering is but an expression of the basic instinct to explore the unknown.' And of travel, he added, 'Since happiness is most often found by those who have learned to live in every moment of the present, none has such prodigal opportunities of attaining that art as the traveller. . . . Attainment of a set objective is but a secondary matter; the traveller should not anticipate the journey's end. So long as he loses consciousness

of self and is aware in all his senses of the present scene, almost any part of the world is as good as another. Mountain or desert, it is all one.'

Tom had the good fortune not to be limited by money in following his chosen career. He was the eldest son of Mr Llewellyn Longstaff, who made practicable the National Antarctic Expedition under Captain Scott by giving £25,000 to the fund started by the R.G.S. before any assistance was granted by Government, and who afterwards gave another £5000 to the relief expedition. Tom was educated at Eton and Christ Church, where he graduated both in Arts and Medicine. His hospital experience he gained at St Thomas's.

He then applied himself to exploration with characteristic thoroughness. He first trained himself as a mountaineer in the Alps, qualifying for membership of the Alpine Club (1900), the S.M.C. (1902), and the R.G.S. Widening his operations, he carried out an expedition to the Caucasus in 1904, making five ascents without guides, which added much to his reputation. Next year he travelled a thousand miles in the central Himalaya through Kumaon, Nepal, Tibet, and Garhwal. Accompanied by Alexis and Henri Brocherel of Courmayeur, he climbed to the rim of the Inner Sanctuary of Nanda Devi (the first men to look into it), and reached 21,000 ft. on Nanda Kot. In Tibet he climbed the great western ridge of Gurla Mandhata to a height of 23,000 ft., from which he fell 3000 ft. in an avalanche without injury.

On his return to England he joined General C. G. Bruce and Mr A. L. Mumm in a plan to celebrate the A.C. Jubilee with a reconnaissance of Mount Everest. Although the plan was strongly supported by the R.G.S. the political difficulties proved insurmountable. 'Never,' said Longstaff, 'has Mount Everest attracted me as it did then when it first loomed as an adventure unvaunted by publicity.' He turned instead to the exploration of Garhwal.

His objective for 1897 was Trisul, 23,360 ft. His record of that climb is one of the epic tales of exploratory mountaineering. His party was small, privately financed at low cost, ill-equipped by modern standards, but extraordinarily fast-moving. It got results. The actual ascent was only an incident in that year's programme. The approach involved the reconnaissance and forcing of the great outer curtain of the Nanda Devi Sanctuary; then the Rishi Gorge had to be crossed, Trisul reconnoitred, the route selected, and the ascent made by four climbers. All this was done in little more than a month. The final climb of 6000 ft. was done from the last camp in a day. That in itself was a physical feat that few have been able to emulate in these last sixty years of Himalayan climbing.

In 1909 Longstaff was again in India, exploring the Karakoram. He found and crossed the Salto Pass, discovered the Siachen Glacier, the largest on earth outside polar regions, and surveyed the hitherto unknown Teram Kangri, 24,489 ft. Next year he went to Canada and crossed the Purcell Range of British Columbia. His reputation was now at its height. In seven years he had carried out five expeditions among the great ranges and was indefatigable in research. On the outbreak of war in 1914 he

served on the General Staff at Simla and then with the Gilgit Scouts, which gave him the chance to make several journeys into the Hindu Kush.

By the time the first attack came to be made on Everest in 1921, Longstaff had become Britain's principal pioneer of Himalayan climbing, but he had little use for big, heavily organised expeditions, and loathed the hurly-burly that these entailed. He went out to Everest in 1922 as adviser to General Bruce, for his knowledge of the high Himalaya, their weather and snow and ice conditions, has never since been matched by any man of any nation. Keen observation allied to a thoroughly trained mind gave him a remarkable faculty—that of being able to forecast, by deducing temperature, wind, and snow-precipitation from the position of a mountain as marked on a map, what particular snow and ice formations and conditions would be found on some unseen face. He was never yet found wrong. The snow and ice levels and conditions found on the north of Everest by the first reconnaissance were exactly as foretold by him.

After the First World War he led or took part in eight expeditions: twice to Spitsbergen in 1921 and 1923, Mount Everest 1922, the Garhwal Himalaya 1927, thrice to Greenland in 1928, 1931 and 1934, and to Baffin Land in 1934. In 1928 he was awarded the Founder's Medal of the R.G.S. In 1938 he married Charmian, who has given so much hospitality to members of the Club at Achiltibuie, Ross-shire, where they have lived for the last twenty-odd years. In 1947 he was elected President of the Alpine Club (an honour which he said that he valued before knighthood), and shortly afterwards was made an honorary member of the S.M.C. But whatever honours are conferred by man, none compare with those bestowed by Providence. Here is Longstaff, aged 32, on the summit of Trisul:

'I cut a few steps in ice up on to the cornice. Henry stood back to hold in case it gave way as I crawled to the top. I craned over on my belly to look down the astounding southern precipice. Spread below were all the middle hills we had marched through; then the foothills; then the plains with rivers winding. To the west all was clear: the whole scarp of the Western Himalaya so vast that I expected to see the earth rotating before my eyes. The western foothills gave the impression of those little waves that on a calm day are born as the sea shallows and lap gently on the shelving shore of some great bay. I was very lucky. I had not the least feeling of exultation or achievement: the reward was far greater.'

Tom would have been horrified if we had thought of him as a highbrow, but many great travellers are moved by a vision or a sympathy of mystic kind. Thus, on my own return from Garhwal, he wrote to me, 'Now you will know what I mean by "living in the present": just forget all before-and-after, and soak the moment into you, so that it will never come out. Enjoy—and for always—as you can through concentration.'

This attitude to life is enough to explain why Tom Longstaff, at the age of 89, was still as young in heart as on the day he climbed Trisul. He was a man whom the gods loved.

W. H. M.

ROBERT LORIMER BEVERIDGE
1904-1963

ROBIN, as he was known affectionately, passed from George Watson's College to Edinburgh University, where he graduated M.B., Ch.B., in 1927. After hospital appointments in Edinburgh and Kirkcaldy, he moved to Dumfries in 1929. In 1930 he was appointed Assistant Surgeon to Dumfries and Galloway Royal Infirmary, in the same year took his Edinburgh Fellowship and in 1933 became Surgeon to the Infirmary. In 1936 he gave up general practice and specialised in surgery, and from then onwards was senior surgeon in the South West Area until his final retirement.

In 1955 he had an attack of coronary thrombosis from which he made an almost complete recovery, but the trouble struck again in 1959 and forced an end to his activities on the hills, as well as to his surgical work, in 1960. Undefeated, he built a house planned to meet all the requirements of his wife, and himself, at the foot of Criffell and beside Loch Kinder, and gradually transformed a substantial piece of rough and rocky ground into an attractive garden, also keeping hold of his fondness for fishing by his proximity to one of the best lochs in the Stewartry.

With his wife he made a tour to Canada, Australia and New Zealand in 1960-61, and was planning a world circuit in reverse for 1964-65, involving longer sojourns with his younger son in New Zealand and his elder son in British Columbia, when a third attack was final on 26th December 1963. A funeral service in the large hall of Dumfries Infirmary packed the place to repletion.

Robin's love of the hills was lifelong. The first of innumerable expeditions was in 1917 when at the age of 13, as one of a small camping party, he ascended from Glen Nevis to greet the sunrise on the summit of the Ben, followed by a fortnight of visiting other West Highland tops. He became a member of the Club in 1940 and attended Meets as often as he could arrange to get away. He was a neat and careful mover on rock, and had he had more opportunities for practice could have become a climber of above-average competence; but his conscientiousness in his professional duties was undoubtedly a major cause of his early breakdown and death. He was noted in medical circles for the excellence of his diagnoses, but he did not have that requirement of the ideal surgeon, the power to look upon his patients merely as cases; in his mind they were all human beings. And as the most difficult operations in the South West naturally fell to him, he was rarely quite free of the burden of responsibility with its attendant worry.

Somewhat shy and reserved, he was not a natural 'mixer.' But those who were fortunate to know him intimately will not easily forget the departure of a charming companion, on the hills and elsewhere, and a reliable and serene friend.

J. D.

J. CURRIE HENDERSON

CURRIE HENDERSON's death happened so unexpectedly that it was difficult for those of us who knew him to realise our loss. He had attended the Club Dinner in December 1963, and went to Ben Cruachan the following morning with a number of friends. Not long after starting he collapsed and died on the hillside.

Currie's enthusiasm for mountains developed in the early thirties, and he soon joined the J.M.C.S. He became a member of the S.M.C. in 1949. Enthusiasm was, in fact, a keynote of his life. In climbing he had that gift of transmitting confidence so that a route seemed a grade less hard to his companions than it might otherwise have been. Among mountains, as with life in general, he was a whole man, enjoying different aspects, whether rock or snow and ice or simply being in wild places. Although a keen skier, his toleration of crowds on mountains was too low to let him become a really proficient downhill man, his chief delight being in cross-country and finding good slopes of unsullied snow. Most of his climbing was done in Scotland, but he had several seasons climbing and ski-ing in the Alps and Norway.

His other interests were wide and varied. He excelled in making things ; taking them to pieces and building them up into something different, like that magnificent old Bentley so many of us knew. Driving cars well, appreciating good cooking and wine, being interested in your interests ; he will be remembered for these things too.

His profession was medicine, general practice in Glasgow, with a break for a number of years in Rhodesia and Italy before and during the war, in which he served as Medical Officer.

It has been a great privilege to know him, and we offer our deepest sympathies to his wife and family.

D. S.

LORD MALCOLM DOUGLAS-HAMILTON

SURELY a man can never feel more inadequate than when he is called upon to write the obituary of a friend ; especially when 5000 miles and fifteen years have enforced a separation which correspondence has failed adequately to bridge. Lord Malcolm Douglas-Hamilton, D.F.C., is presumed dead. The plane that he was piloting disappeared over Africa many months ago and it has not been found. I understand that the only passenger was his son.

Only once did I fly with Lord Malcolm. I had joined him in Skye for a day's climbing—the Waterpipe Gully and along the ridge to the Inaccessible Pinnacle. He drove me back to Inverness where my bicycle was put on board and we flew down the Great Glen (trying to find a route

below the clouds) and finally landed at Turnhouse. At that time he held the rank of Group Captain and it was obvious that he was as much at home in the air as on the hills.

He was extraordinarily generous and was always eager to share the joy he had in all outdoor activity. So I had the opportunity to sail round Skye and, although I am one of the world's poorer sailors, I shall never forget the thrill and pleasure of being at the helm as we beat our way up the narrow loch to Carbost in lashing rain. We landed on Rhum and made the circuit of the peaks of that glorious island after being received by Lady Bullough at Kinloch Castle.

The finest day I ever had with him was undoubtedly the traverse of the Pinnacle Ridge of Sgùrr nan Gilleán in perfect winter conditions some time in February or March of that memorable vintage year, 1947. The most unforgettable day was in Coire Lochan of Cairngorm. We were almost at the top of the cliffs; he was leading two A.T.C. cadets and I was on a ledge 100 ft. below. Somebody slipped, Lord Malcolm's belay failed, and he was catapulted into space. I saw him as one sees a swimmer coming down in an underwater film. Fortunately he came directly towards me, for there was no time for conscious action, and I broke his fall. We do not choose our destiny. Perhaps he would rather have met his end on Cairngorm than at some lost and random spot in the African jungle.

He had much to give and his life was one of service. Lord Malcolm was a fighter pilot in the Royal Air Force, and after the war Member of Parliament for Inverness-shire. The S.M.C. knows what he tried to do at Glen More to introduce young people to the hills. His pipes will sound no more; Allt Dearg cottage (which he opened freely to our Club) and the Cuillins that he loved will not see him again. But there will be many, even amongst those who never heard his name, who will be influenced by the mountains that he helped them reach.

D. B. McL.,
Claremont, California.

As we go to press, no detailed obituaries are available for the following, whose deaths we must regretfully record: **Charles W. Walker**, a very old member of the Club, **F. D. Campbell Allen**, formerly well known at Meets, and **T. H. Gibson**, of Selkirk.

PROCEEDINGS OF THE CLUB

Easter Meet 1964—Inchnadamph

ONCE again the Easter Meet was fortunate in respect to both the weather and the hotel. With another large party in residence, the latter was practically bursting at the seams and to cope satisfactorily with the appetites of 100 per cent. male residentiary, out on the hills every day, must have imposed an unusual strain on the staff, particularly in the matter of individual tastes in sandwiches.

The snow and the cloud cap, when it did descend low enough, seemed to disdain anything but Munros and since there are few of these in the locality most days consisted of a genial tramp over tops whose only defect was that they are not in the top category; Conival and Ben More Assynt alone did on one day prove somewhat inhospitable with mist and a high wind on the snow-caked ridge, but otherwise conditions were such as might have been ascribed to summer but for recollections of last year's so-called holiday months.

In contradistinction to all this, it is understood that, possessed of local knowledge, one party, which included the President, did a new climb which involved step cutting for 1000 ft. of ascent. Of this, no doubt, more will be recorded elsewhere.

Tops visited included Conival, Ben More Assynt, Suilven, Canisp, Quinag, Cùl Mor, Stack Polly, Ben More Coigach, Seana Bhràigh, Beinn Dearg (Inverlael), and Stac of Glencoul.

At a meeting held for the purpose, the vote was in favour of Loch Laggan Inn, for the Easter Meet, 1965.

Present were; The President, J. W. Baxter, D. Campbell, W. L. Coats, M. H. Cooke, J. C. Donaldson, R. R. Elton, C. D. Elton (Guest), A. Geddes, J. Hartog (Guest), B. H. Humble, R. M. G. Inglis, D. McArthur, K. McCrae (Guest), I. M. M. McPhail, D. H. McPherson, R. W. Martin, —, Muirhead-Moffat (J.M.C.S.), T. Nicholson, C. R. Steven, H. Stirling, T. E. Thomson, D. G. Turnbull, L. Watson (J.M.C.S.), F. R. Wylie.

W. L. C.

Reception

OUR correspondent writes: 'The Guest of Honour, Mr C. Bonington, gave a pleasantly gripping account of work being done on the current Last Great Problems confronting travellers in the difficult territory of Xeno's paradox. The audience, most of whom preferentially frequented the less newsworthy habitats among the mountains, were informed how climbers are now belaying in relative comfort among the more inhospitable ecological niches by developing specialisation of technique and singleness of mind.

'Most significant of all was the speaker's account of the practice of the American Siege-master, John Harland, who has been forced to take the inevitable evolutionary step of increasing the specialisation of the individual

by integrating him into a 'metazoan' rope; the anterior end is developed for putting pitons in and the posterior end for taking them out; in between are 'fat cells' of nutritive role, whose task is the transport of energy sources and energy-conserving mechanisms, their number being a function of the length and severity of the climb. The adaptive radiation of this cordate organism into the most inaccessible of mountain habitats is anticipated with interest.

'At another social level, the Reception was, as ever, the most gruesome episode of the Club's year.'

Annual General Meeting

THIS year we print no report. Our correspondent was elsewhere at the time. His irresponsibility here is only excelled by that shown in the Dinner Report (*q.v.*). Meanwhile, the relevant circulars may be consulted for wishful details.

Dinner

THE 76th Annual Dinner, at the Grosvenor Hotel, Haymarket, Edinburgh, was, according to our correspondent, 'good and well-attended. The speakers spoke, and having spoken, sat down with obvious relief. The speaker to The Guests somehow transformed his speech into a eulogy of the S.M.C.'s (or certain of its members') part in Mountain Exploration. From an excess, or lack, of modesty two other members who need not be (for they were not) mentioned, gallantly trudged out to make their own point at the other side of the door. Such agreeably foreseeable reflexes apart, the Dinner was pleasantly dull. The new President gave his benediction and then the rest of us departed in peace.'

Our correspondent has imagined evilly, for which he apologises. It appears that the above two members have been libelled, and their behaviour over-represented. The excess was of liquid, the reflexes merely cystic. But we leave the misinterpretation as an illustration of the Methods of the Press (the Dinner would otherwise have been too pleasantly dull).

New Year Meet 1965—Crianlarich

FOLLOWING last year's experience at Glencoe, the magnet was brought back again to Crianlarich, but it is hinted darkly that the magnet's powers of attraction are ageing, and perhaps even being cancelled out by a magnetic field of opposed polarity. If so, the latter would appear to be of an alternating variety—alternating between the peaks and the hollows throughout the greater part of the twenty-four hours.

As regards the peaks, those around Crianlarich, likewise the Hotel staff, are so well known to members that what is there left to say about them? Concerning the peaks, only this that, although their vital statistics may not change, their vestments are as unpredictable as fashion itself.

On this occasion they certainly excelled themselves for three successive days. With an ample mantle of snow to within a few hundred feet of the road, goffered round the summit rocks by a crisp frost, they were matched by blue sky and sunshine punctuated by only occasional patches of mist or cloud. Thus garbed they presented a temptation to delay descent until dusk, the longer to admire the panorama, extending to Mull and the Firth of Clyde and the better to appreciate the soft mutations of the sunset colourings on cloud and hill.

Complaint, if any, was confined to a lack of consolidation in places so that what could otherwise have been a satisfactory gully climb degenerated into a floundering sprauchle.

Practically all the local tops and a few further afield were visited, but in the absence of complete records it would be invidious to particularise.

At a meeting held for the purpose it was decided that the locations for the New Year Meet, 1966, be Crianlarich and Inverarnan.

The President and numerous other members were frequent visitors at the Hotel, those centred on the official rendezvous being: H. M. Brown, E. S. Chapman, W. L. Coats, B. S. Fraser, C. C. Gorrie, C. B. C. Handley (Guest), A. H. Hendry, —, Hewitson (J.M.C.S., Guest), R. M. G. Inglis, J. N. Ledingham, J. E. MacEwen, K. McCrae (Guest), J. H. Ogilvie, G. Peat, E. C. Thomson, T. E. Thomson, C. Warren (Guest), F. R. Wylie, W. L. C.

J.M.C.S. REPORTS

Edinburgh Section.—The present membership stands at 42, with 6 associate members. Nine new members were admitted during the year; 20 failed to pay their subscriptions. . . .

Seventeen week-end meets were arranged jointly with the Edinburgh Mountaineering Club, of which 7 had to be cancelled from lack of support. Evening meets were arranged every fortnight during the summer. These were very well attended. Winter lectures were held jointly with the S.M.C. and these also were very well attended.

During the year members climbed in Skye, Wales, the Dolomites and the Alps.

Only 10 members attended the Club Dinner which was held in the Roy Bridge Hotel.

Office-bearers.—*Hon. President*, D. Leaver; *President*, M. Anderson; *Treasurer and Bus Convener*, J. Clarkson, Glenelg, Wester Aberdour, Fife. *Secretary*, R. McDonald, 113 Waverley Crescent, Bonnyrigg, Midlothian.

Glasgow Section.—To comment first on the social activities of the Section: the winter of 1963-64 saw another highly successful series of evening lectures, which seemed to attract an ever-increasing audience. The highlight was, without doubt, the account of the visit to Asiatic Turkey by several members which was notable both for its enterprise and achievement. As the present season will mark the end of the long association which

both clubs have enjoyed with Rowan's, it would not be out of place to record our appreciation for the use of the smoke room over so long a period and to hope that when new premises are found, they will be both as pleasant and as conveniently situated.

The Annual Dinner at Tyndrum in December was a pleasant and successful function with the quality of the speeches and the post-prandial playing of the pipes reaching a somewhat higher level than in previous years.

The Section was represented at the Annual Dinners of the Glasgow University Mountaineering Club, The Ladies' Scottish Climbing Club and the Lochaber, Edinburgh and Perth Sections of the J.M.C.S.

A final upward glance must be directed to that pinnacle of gastronomic excellence which represents the retiring committee dinner. This was held at Kintail in February and set a standard which it seems unlikely will ever be surpassed.

The extra mural climbing activities of members have been on at least as wide a scale as those of previous years, the most notable expedition being the visit to Peru, which was so well described in a subsequent lecture. Another party travelled to the Lofoten Islands only to have their activities severely curtailed by the weather. Mention must finally be made of the journey of a Herald to the fair land of Greece, but it is sad to relate that the party which followed the flight of this auspicious messenger did not pay homage to the throne of Zeus on Mt. Olympus and were, in consequence, forbidden to gaze upon the face of Aphrodite.

To return to the plebeian tread of the *hoi polloi*, it may be reported that the year has seen 38 enquiries from prospective members, of which seven have progressed to the standard of membership. Eleven members were admitted during the year from earlier enquiries, so bringing the total of new members for the year to 18. The membership of the Section stands at 158.

Office-bearers.—*Hon. President*, K. Bryan ; *Hon. Vice-President*, A. G. D. Small ; *President*, W. M. Thom ; *Treasurer*, T. B. Fleming, 134 Kenmure Street, Glasgow, S.1 ; *Secretary and Hul Convener*, A. A. Thrippleton, 14 Portland Park, Hamilton, Lanarkshire.

Lochaber Section (Lochaber Mountaineering Club).—At the year end membership had increased to 47 and the prospects are excellent for the future. Climbing activity in Scotland has been at a high level and for the first time in Club history, bus meets are being planned for 1965.

Renovations are in hand to improve the amenity of Steall Hut, which proved very popular last year.

The 1964 Annual Dinner broke new ground in that it was followed by a dance, which succeeded in shaking the participants to at least as great a degree as the illustrated exploits of the tigers of the mountaineering world have done at earlier functions.

Mountain rescue training and activity has continued with the active co-operation of the Police and Cairngorms Mountain Rescue Team.

Office-bearers.—*Hon. President*, P. L. J. Heron ; *Hon. Vice-President*, D. G. Duff ; *President*, A. Hill ; *Treasurer and Custodian of Steall Hut*, J. A. Sutherland, British Linen Bank, Fort William ; *Secretary*, W. Robertson, 1 Montrose Square, Inverlochy, Fort William.

London Section.—Meets were possibly not so well attended as in the previous year, but some 15 were held, mainly in North Wales, but with 2 in Derbyshire ; and the now almost traditional ski-ing Meet was held in Glencoe at Easter. Membership stood at 79 at the end of 1964, with 2 Honorary Members.

The major event of the year was the acquisition of a Club Hut, not in Scotland as was originally hoped, but in Wales where most of the climbing Meets are in fact held. The Hut, Glanafon Cottage, is in the village of Bethesda, Caernarvonshire, which lies at the end of the Nant Ffrancon pass. The pass leads up to the main climbing areas of Snowdonia. We could have wished for a Hut actually in the pass, or the valley ensuing from it, or in the parallel valley of Pen y Pas, but here restrictions by landowners, County Councils and the Ministry are very great. A hut built by the University of London in the Ogwen valley, Snowdonia, in local stone, with only narrow slit windows facing the road, and standing well back from the road, is believed to have cost £6000 to £7000. Unfortunately we do not have this kind of money.

One of the problems still besetting all climbers in Wales is the controversy over camping, particularly in Llanberis pass and the Ogwen Valley. In the pass it was forbidden at one time, some four years ago, excepting only on sites, the sites being on farms. The farmers, all tenants, were then ordered not to allow people to camp on their land, so climbers went back to camping anywhere. An uneasy truce seems to operate now, with no one quite sure who has rights and who has not. It is all rather unfortunate. Seven years ago it couldn't have happened ; there were half as many climbers then. Scottish climbers may find this somewhat difficult to understand, but Snowdonia, as well as being a National Park, is small, and a considerable part of it is privately owned.

The Section broke tradition this year and held the Annual General Meeting and Dinner at the Pack Horse, Hayfield, Derbyshire, instead of London. It was felt that a break would be refreshing, and Derbyshire seemed more or less centrally placed and affording opportunity for members further north to attend. It was a good occasion and one of the best Dinners we have had. We hope it may be possible to hold subsequent Dinners at places outside London.

Office-bearers.—*Hon. President*, E. R. Zenthon ; *Hon. Vice-President*, W. Wallace ; *Hon. Member*, K. Reed ; *President*, P. J. Whitechurch ; *Treasurer*, J. Della Porta, 18 Stratton Road, Merton Park, S.W.19 ; *Hut Booking Secretary*, W. Morgan, 14 Keswick Avenue, Merton Park, S.W.19 ; *Secretary*, R. J. Purslow, 252A Kew Road, Richmond, Surrey.

S.M.C. AND J.M.C.S. ABROAD

Africa

IN March, MYLES MORRISON was in South Africa, and while in Cape Town had two good days on Table Mountain.

Later, about 100 miles north of the Cape, he enjoyed an interesting route up the west face of the Gydo Berg, a sandstone mountain of 6000 ft.

GEORGE ROGER was also there, at Easter, and had several very enjoyable days on the mountains, including Table Mountain, Devil's Peak, Constantia Bergh and Observation Point above Bain's Kloof.

During January to March 1965 an expedition organised by HAMISH M. BROWN wintered in the Atlas Mountains of Morocco. He writes: 'These peaks are easily accessible, cheap to live in, have good huts and transport available in way of mules and porters. Several parties have gone there in the spring and run into the peculiar difficulties of the region and gone home rather weakly and written off the area. (Others like Noyce and Weir have rightly had splendid days there.) During our more leisurely stay we came to know the difficulties and explore the region as few people have even in summer. The weather is largely good, there are fine rock faces clear of snow even in winter and the mixed routes are big and as good as any in the Alps. The weather is unbearably hot in summer, of course. We met no extreme cold, as warned, though in contrast to hot day temperatures it felt cold at night. Bivouacs were quite comfortable. We had no altitude trouble, though one felt the first big climb or two. Skis and skins were a blessing as snow is often thigh-deep and impossible after mid-day. Skiers would find it a paradise. (There is one resort with a set-up similar to Cairngorm but at half the price and only a dozen people using it during week-days.) The peaks rise to 13,500 ft. with huts up to 10,000 ft. (We found two huts no English reports ever mentioned!) The rock can be superb or poor; the snow behaves similarly. Blizzards (and how!) come about every ten days, last for possibly two, when you change huts or move. Apart from several fine routes put up by Contamine, Charlet and others in 1952, nothing big has been done, though the possibilities are vast. We put up about a dozen new routes, ranging from easy snow climbs to hard artificial routes—and have listed dozens of lines, all waiting for tigers. The party intends to return next winter, but to cover the known 'plums' and at the end of it produce a worth-while English guide we require a few more in the party—another rope of 'hard men' and possibly a few useful Salvationists! There are more British going there now than anyone else and the literature on the area is largely useless and misleading. Various photos will no doubt get printed, and articles, but anyone interested in going for all or part of the time contact me at 21 Carlin Craig, Kinghorn, Fife.'

Asia and America

G. J. DUTTON had occasion this last December to do a girdle traverse of the globe and from the mountain point of view remembers, and cannot forget, the whole chain of the Himalayas from Nanga Parbat to Kangchenjunga displayed between breakfast and late lunch. Such window-shopping apart, he sampled the steep turf and concrete of Hong Kong peaks and various small hills in Japan, an astonishingly mountainous country. Winter blizzards sweeping in over the higher Nippon Alps, with ice rims on the blue lakes, were an invigorating sight from the 6000-footers already wrapped in snow and shivering bamboos. Warmer, but less bracing, were some scrambles over volcanic mud at 40° (inclination and Centigrade), with fire and brimstone under the lid and steam behind the jug-handles. Hell of a place to slip. A decadent interlude in Hawaii yielded only unbearably loose tuff on Diamond Head and the glories underwater. Reality was achieved twenty-four hours later on the snow slopes of Mt. Baker in the Washington Cascades, culminating in a visit to D. MOORE, S.M.C., the Eskimo Doctor of British Columbia. Despite unheard-of weather in the Evergreen Belt (it was below freezing point) progress was made up noble peaks and the invaluable bush inspected. So rapid is development that motels are appearing where ten years ago Mummeries were hacking; a week's bivouac has become merely a night for an easy lady. Contact was established with S. Paterson, late of the J.M.C.S. in Baffin Land, though as he missed three Greyhounds in succession their husky trip to the Olympics was abandoned; the snow was so deep, anyway, they were sledging in Seattle.

DENIS MOORE has climbed many interesting peaks in British Columbia and Alaska. Requests for accounts of them and even a personal call have produced only the following interim meditation, best called perhaps,

TALKING OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

The word filtered through that the *Journal* commissar was to pay a visit. It hardly seemed possible, there was mention of Japan, wild talk of business in Hawaii, it was all confused, it couldn't be. Seven years had slipped unproductively by, no contribution, not a single line even in S.M.C. Abroad. Not good enough.

Sleep became disturbed, how foolish the idea, just a twisted fragment from Smart—there was a tricky one. Mid-December too, nobody travelled then, and more: talk of a Scottish Coast Range expedition; another sortie into the arena of international diplomacy?

The letter arrived 10th December, real, and the postage fully paid; he would be here within the week, himself, possibly even with brief case, the compleat man from the Ministry requiring an explanation for a noteless sojourn in this mountain retreat.

Stan Paterson had recently moved into Washington and was available for support. Perhaps we could entertain Himself in some plush Seattle

hostelry and deflect his attention from the absence of literary output. He could be regaled with Scottish goings-on in the Pacific Northwest, thus further extending the horizons sketched so proudly by the heid yin. And of course a toast to our American hosts for their Everest achievement, such force and competence in spite of years devoted to conspicuous consumption.

The weather would be foul, it would be hopeless to take to the hills. His letter said two days to see British Columbia. Two days even with faultless weather and a fast aeroplane would only be enough to give an inkling.

He would have to be talked at continuously for two days with more than a chance he might also have something to say for himself. The jet set are hard to impress and accumulate *exotica* at an alarming rate.

There are few flat places here and the land is a weave of extensive Alpine tracts bursting through the richly wooded lower hills which are carved by lake and river. One needn't go far to escape to utter solitude in so vast a mountain region. The canoe has much to commend it and our first venture started only an hour's drive from Vancouver.

We paddled up the Pitt River and Lake, heading for Mt. Blanshard, a minor peak where summit rocks rise to about a thousand feet above the timber. The lethargy of a warm afternoon and an adverse tide made for frequent stops to contemplate the dragonflies and an occasional otter. By and by we came to a shingle fan at the mouth of a creek to enjoy a bivouac and restore ourselves for the trials ahead. Their largely vegetative nature had been alluded to previously and I soon found a detached contemplation of the sylvan magic was not possible. One is totally involved and if you have but one synthetic moral fibre this is where it will be revealed. At length we crashed into the open to find ourselves at the foot of a snow gully. Firm snow made easy going to the ridge and on to the rocky summit without difficulty. Sitting there in perfect weather at 5000 ft. we enjoyed the endless sea of peaks which were now in view. So many, too many, so we idly picked out one elegant example of some 7000 ft., a little over 10 miles distant. Access involved 20 miles by canoe up Stave Lake then through the bush and so to the top which was reported to be a moderately challenging rock climb. With two canoes our party of four made three attempts, totalling ten days in action. The action comprised a series of tempests and near-disasters on the lake rounded off by ramblings and bivouacs in the rain-soaked bush. Since we never at any time reached a thousand feet above sea-level, this saga possibly doesn't merit inclusion. Good weather and time would favour a more laudable outcome. For the ambitious the name is Mt. Judge Howay and only two or three ascents have been made. Apart from an occasional rotting cabin and flume the works of man were not in evidence.

Further afield we crossed the grasslands of the Chilcotin country, an attractive dry ranching area, in approach to the eastern slopes of the Coast Range. A fearsome road not really suitable for ordinary cars eventually gets one to the north end of Chilco Lake. The lake is at 4000 ft. and its

outlet is one of the principal spawning grounds of the sockeye salmon. At this end the timber is light and once above it hill walking of generally Scottish character is possible. At the far end of the lake, which was our destination some 50 miles off, the snows and ridges of greater mountains are visible.

Having been delivered there by motor boat for a better-than-two-week stay we soon settled into this very remote wilderness; our camping arrangements were the simplest and our surroundings induced a great tranquillity.

Game trails were our routes as we passed to and from the various peaks we elected to visit. The idyll was not without its jarring features; to lose the trail was to face the untamed bush and even the eloquence of other writers only hints at the real thing. Personal attendance is essential.

At times a great loneliness would assail one even in the presence of one's jovial companions. Respect for the solitary prospector or trapper increased each day.

This is grizzly bear country and it is fashionable to maintain a front of indifference about these monsters. 'One never meets them, they are frightened of you, they don't even like your smell,' etc. However, on seeing their claw marks on tree trunks well beyond arm's reach or encountering their still-warm traces on the trail one felt one's private misgivings had some foundation.

I have since encountered one in the bush and if it was frightened it concealed it well. My impression was rather that it had just managed to overcome its curiosity enough to wander slowly off without closer investigation.

The Chilco mountains presented no superlative difficulty but the interest of traversing little-known peaks, some hitherto unclimbed, was a satisfying experience.

One's involvement in the scene is complete.

In flying one sees without being involved and while the grandeur is evident one views it as a spectator imprisoned in the machine. In this way we once passed in faultless conditions at a modest height along the whole coastline of the province.

Hour by hour, inlets, islands, ocean, forest, glacier and mountain, a stop at the Queen Charlotte Islands, land of the Haida, aristocrats of the coastal Indians. Thence northward along the fog-bound panhandle. Here the map starts to bear the occasional Russian name. That bad-weather product the Bering Sea is not too far distant.

We sought Lituya Bay from which to climb Mt. Fairweather. We flew sandwiched between the ocean and low cloud, wondering how complete our detachment from the scene would remain; a wild coastline, many fishing boats, the occasional whale.

From Lituya Bay we had a three-day journey to reach base camp. The first we moved up the coast, now in the forest, now on the beach; meadows covered by wild lupin. The day ended enjoying the near-midnight sunset making magic of the surf thudding on to the garnet beach.

Lunchtime that day had been a particularly agreeable affair at the camp of two elderly prospectors ; the conversation extended through much of the afternoon. They were part of the essential Alaska ; shipwreck, fortune, earthquake and assorted hardship all contemplated with boundless optimism. They had sourdough on their shelf and the works of Robert Service signed by himself. Their father had been on the Klondike.

The Fairweather glacier nearly reaches the ocean ; would that it had made it. However, once through the greenery and still at less than a thousand feet we were confronted by Mt. Fairweather itself only a few miles distant and rising to 15,000 ft. We spent two days walking up the glacier to its base absorbing the size of it and its neighbours. Fairweather had only been climbed once almost thirty years previously, but many of its only slightly lesser neighbours were not only unclimbed but unnamed. Much good climbing remains to be done.

Our prime objective provided a truly great mountaineering route involving over 10,000 ft. on the mountain itself. Unusually hot weather made it possible to complete only one other ascent before returning. Our departure from Lituya Bay was ahead of the originally planned time. This change, ostensibly for meteorological reasons, was in fact made to ensure the unhurried enjoyment of the pleasures of the Red Dog Saloon in Juneau. It was a fortunate change, for an hour after leaving the bay a cataclysmic tidal wave, following an earthquake, obliterated our camp site.

Once established at the Red Dog our salvation was celebrated and the more reflective pondered the inscrutable machinations of the fate. No truly coherent philosophy developed but agreement was general when one member touched on the barrenness of temperance.

In exchange I had to bear with descriptions of Nanda Devi seen from a great height and lyricism engendered by the fragrance of a Waikiki evening, the discourse occasionally interrupted to scratch an irksome sunburn.

That's the jet set for you.

D. MOORE.

The Alps

I. H. OGILVIE writes : ' This year I was in the Alps for a fortnight in late July and early August with Charles Warren and Ivan Waller. We started with an easy two-day trip from Engelberg to Isleten on the Urnersee over the Engelberg Rotstock and the Ure Rotstock. This was followed by a four-day crossing of the Glarner Alps from Linthal to Amsteg, climbing the Todi and the Claridenstock on the way.

' We then moved to the Engadin, crossed the Muretto Pass into Italy and traversed Monte Disgrazia by the north-north-east ridge and the south-west face. This expedition merits a note as it is now only too rare to be able to do a first-class route on a major Alpine peak without seeing another party. We started from the Taveggia fixed bivouac, situated on a spur off the main ridge. Snow and ice conditions and the weather were almost perfect. A col was reached up 1000 ft. of glacier and a further

1000 ft. of mixed rock and snow followed on a fine ridge. This led to a steep edge of ice which rose to the rocks of the upper part of the north face. This is the crux of the climb and is both steep and exposed. The final section was climbed on steep but easy rocks to the summit ridge just east of the summit. A descent was made to the Val Preda Rossa.

'A break in the weather prevented further climbing.'

D. R. KLECKHAM (J.M.C.S.) writes: 'With LINDSAY ADAMSON (Edinburgh J.M.C.S.), I spent my first Alpine season in the Pennine Alps during the last two weeks of July 1964. It was his first season also.

'The first four days were spent at Arolla, where we climbed the Mont Collon by its West Ridge, in what must have been a record-breaking time (it was certainly heartbreaking!); then, seeing that our ambitious programme was not working out as planned, we decided to turn our attention to the more exciting Zermatt area—before we became completely dedicated to sun-soaking.

'Nine days were spent there, where we made an attempt on the Hörnli Ridge of the Matterhorn, starting from the revolting Hörnli Hut at 5 a.m., after a cold, blanketless, sleepless night. Stopping for food and rest at the Solvay Hut two-thirds of the way up at about 9 a.m. we were strongly advised by a descending guide to retreat in view of our late start and the oncoming bad weather. Reluctantly we turned. After several days of lounging in the sun we set off to traverse the Leiterspitz from W. to E. This climb proved to be a fitting climax to a most enjoyable holiday, and our only regret is that we weren't fitter and therefore more able to use the glorious weather to better advantage.'

O. C. MUSGRAVE (J.M.C.S.) paid a brief visit to Zermatt at the end of July and climbed the Rimpfischhorn and the Dom.

WILLIAM JAMES 'took four stone, five Rooineks and six days high-route crevasse-hopping from Chamonix to Zermatt. When the bad weather broke they bagged the Grande Fourche, Aiguilles Dorées traverse, Matterhorn, and snow-ploughed an Allalinhorn traverse from Täsch for the honsec impi.'

BRIAN ROBERTSON writes: 'Ian MacEachern and myself arrived in Chamonix on 6th July. A few days later, we climbed the W. Face of the Point Albert for training, the same day as the tragedy on the Aiguille Verte. Later, in fine weather, we made a new "super-direct" start to the S.E. ridge of the Aiguille de Blaibière (Grade IV, V, VI, 200 m.). Then, with a very heavy pack, the Grépon via the Mer de Glace; we bivouacked on the Nautillons side going down, at 11,000 ft.

'While MacEachern headed for Spain and fun, I joined a party of up-and-coming lads, J. Brown, C. Bonington and T. W. PATEY for an attempt on a new "direct" of the Leschaux *nordwand*. But we were foiled when an Englander fell down the gully on the right, into Patey's arms. With a ladies' platoon from the Pinnacle Club we carried him to the hut. Back in Chamonix we met two Americans, J. McCarthy and R. C. Williams,

so Bonington and I hurried to the Dolomites with them to try a new "direct" on the N.W. face of the Rivetta. On a training climb, Bonington and I did the N.W. face of the Torre di Vadgrande, in half guide-book time. Two days later, on the "direct" a vote was taken whether we should retreat; we retreated. With an English lad we "just about" climbed the N.W. face of the Cima Su Alto.

'Back in Chamonix, with R. HOLT (also of Squirrels) we managed the E. face of the Grand Capucin, but were caught in a storm on the second day. Borrowing money from fellow-Squirrels, I went home. A very disappointing season.'

HAMISH M. BROWN with friends spent several weeks wandering and climbing in various combinations.

'1. Graian Alps. In the Vanoise from Pralognan, traverse Pointe du Vallonnet, 3372 m., and Grand Bec, 3403 m., a splendid rock ridge; from Felix Faure Hut, Pointe de la Rechasse, 3208, and the Grande Casse, 3861, the area's finest peak. In Tarentaise from Val d'Isere cross the steep Passage du Dôme 2754 and sit out a thunderstorm. From a chalet, traverse La Grande Sassièrè 3748, a slag-heap, and from a howff the splendid Mt. Pourri 3779 via Brèche Puiseux. In Maurienne from Evettes Hut traverse Pointe Tonini, 3325, to La Ciamarella, 3676, in Italy. 2. Dauphine. From Promontoire Hut, Le Meije 3983. Retreat in bad weather following fatal accident to another party. Our tent was burnt down, too, so we removed. 3. Chamonix. Alone up Petite Verte, 3508, from Aig des Grands Montets and return by Argentière glacier. Aiguille du Goûter by E.N.E. Arête, very loose but away from people. From Goûter Hut (120 in 60-place hut) traverse Mt. Blanc, to the Midi via Mt. Mandit and Mt. Blanc du Tacul, 8½ hrs.

'Savoy gave two weeks without meeting any "Britishers" and the hills usually to ourselves. Some splendid peaks so a neglect hard to understand. A tough, delightful countryside. The Meije accident caused by party knocking down half the mountain which missed eight of us but killed the next two blokes. Same almost happened on Goûter. Sheer overcrowding is a real danger. A helmet is a necessity under these conditions—even for Mr Average. It is not affectation but an essential.'

LESLIE DUFF and GEORGE ROGER were in the Alps from 22nd August until 5th September and visited the Lepontine Alps and Bernese Oberland. From Binn they climbed the Ofenhorn and crossed the Ritter pass to Alpe Véglia and thence over the Kaltwasser pass to the Simplon. They also went up to the Geisspfad pass and looked down on Alpe Dévero. A thunderstorm broke while they were on the pass, and it was most impressive.

From Binn they went to the Concordia hut by way of Fiesch, the Märjelen-see and the Gross Aletsch glacier and had a very good day on the Grünegghorn and Grünhorn. They crossed the Grünhornlücke to the Finsteraarhorn hut and had a grand day on the Finsteraarhorn and returned to the Concordia hut. A most enjoyable holiday and, apart from one thunderstorm, excellent weather.

BOOKS

The Climber's Fireside Book. By Wilfred Noyce. (1964 : William Heinemann Ltd. 288 pp., 16 illustrations. 30s.)

To me an anthology can only be satisfactory when each item in the book is complete in itself and 'The Climber's Fireside Book' does not fall within this category. Excellent though the choice of excerpts are, their too-often fragmentary nature merely filled me with a sense of frustration. The items that appealed to me more than others were the very slight episode 'Last Climb' and 'Planning for Rum Doodle' which, uplifted from its context, I found far more enjoyable than the original book. But at 30s. this book is not for me.

J. C. D.

The Perpetual Hills. By Hugh Merrick. (Newnes. 243 pp. 32 full-page photographs. 35s.)

Mr Merrick is a man who has rendered great services to mountaineering here by translating many books by German authors, among others, Buhl's 'Nanga Parbat Pilgrimage' and Harrer's 'The White Spider.' This book, although not in the same league as these, makes good enough reading, provided you subscribe to the highly romantic view of mountains and mountaineering that Mr Merrick appears to hold. I say appears, since the book is half Mr Merrick, half anthology. The quoted passages are mainly from the great English Romantics, Young, Noyce *et al.*, there are a great many poems, and Mr Merrick's own writing I found a trifle sugary.

Having got that off my chest, let me hasten to say that there are many good things in the book. The chapter on recent Himalayan climbing is particularly good, and there are a lot of quotes from Lord Schuster, whose writings show him to have possessed one of the best-balanced minds in mountaineering.

The book is very prettily printed and heavily illustrated. Although the photographs are incidental to the text, many of them were previously unpublished, which is reason enough for including them. There is a two page shot of the Matterhorn which is particularly good.

R. C.

The Mountain World. 1962-63. English Version, edited by Malcolm Barnes. (1964 : G. Allen & Unwin. 239 pp., 70 illustrations (12 in colour). 36s.)

The latest volume covers not only the mountains but also the air above and the earth beneath for it includes articles of interest on caving in Switzerland and balloon flights across the Alps. For the rest there is the customary wide selection of accounts of climbs and exploration, and every continent except Africa is represented. The articles are written in a great variety of style and all are most interesting to read. The illustrations are of excellent quality and include some in colour for the first time.

We must confess to being disappointed that the description of the first winter ascent of the North Face of the Matterhorn did not include more details of the actual climbing, and would it be in order to ask if Malcolm

Slesser did a bit of Rum Doodling on his way to the summit of the Peak of Communism (see p. 140, para. 1) ?

The book is one to add to any mountaineer's library. J. C. D.

Rock Climbing in Britain. By J. E. B. Wright. (1958, reprinted with new appendices, 1964 : Nicholas Kaye. 143 pp., photographs and diagrams. 16s.)

This book is a reprint of one already reviewed (*S.M.C.J.* (1959), xxvi, 420), with some new English outcrops and British Guidebooks added to its list. It still 'gives a good all-round picture of the British mountains with useful general diagrams and suggestions for first visits to the Scottish hills by English climbers.' The Scottish climbing information is still 'a bit sketchy,' the Cairngorms in particular being patted most vaguely on the head, and the North and West praised for their virgin innocence. Patey has been there since. It is now of course even more out of date than it was in 1959 and in Scotland anyway is not a book for anyone who 'can lead above a Difficult.' As a simple introduction to the classic English and Welsh climbs for the tweed-clad father of a family it is valuable.

G. J. D.

The Scottish Peaks. By W. A. Poucher. (1964 : Constable, London. 442 pages, 200 photographs, 31 maps. 25s.)

We certainly need a *concise* book which describes the characteristics of the various Scottish mountain groups, the ways to reach them and the knowledge and equipment required to travel safely among and over them in all weathers.

This is not such a book. After brief, usually sensible, notes on equipment (in which An Aneroid gets more space than An Ice Axe) it describes ways up selected peaks, and gives their photographs and maps, often with Mr Poucher's recommended route drawn firmly across them. The abundant pictures are often good and usually better than the Windsor-soup reproductions sometimes associated with this photographer. The verbiage is of formidable nineteen-thirty vintage, panoramas and clichés hauled unhesitatingly into place. Mr Poucher has been at this game a long time. Here he is describing how invaluable his book(s) must be to a party of novices :

'The cogitations of our young friends will follow a normal course . . . they will formulate the plans for their next holiday long before it is due. . . . To solve this problem they will often get out the map, and while scanning it with happy anticipation compare it with the various guidebooks which describe this marvellous countryside. There they will *read* what their authors have so lucidly written, but much will inevitably be left to their imagination.

'It is here that my long experience of the Scottish Peaks will help to solve their problems ; for by consulting this volume in conjunction with my other works . . . they will not only be able to choose their centre with certainty, their routes to the peaks in accordance with their powers as climbers, and the subjects for their cameras . . . but they will also be

able to *see* beforehand through the medium of my camera studies precisely the type of country that will satisfy every one of their needs.'

There's service for you! Mr Poucher knows his public, so presumably it still exists, bravely sandwiched between the Fun Lodges and the proto-Squirrels. But, more seriously, what standard of technique is this public assumed to possess? If 'our young friends' are so naïve, how will they be able to assess 'their powers as climbers'? If a reader is inept enough in mountain country to require (or tolerate) Mr Poucher's underlining of embarrassingly obvious routes (cf. only Plates 73, 116, 156, 167 . . .) then can we assume that in his climb up from the Arête in snow over the top of the N.E. buttress of Nevis—that death-trap to the springtime rubber-soled—he will be able to use an axe competently enough 'to ensure stability of each step' lest he be 'precipitated' into 'the depths,' etc.?

How many grades of incompetence are to be led into such places? Surely some more objective assessment of the difficulties of the mixed Scottish terrain could have been made: to recommend red stockings is thoughtful, but no substitute. Even if commercially undesirable, some fuller reference is needed to those published Scottish mountain guidebooks which do so assess routes of access.

But apart from such a reference, there is little at present that the author could do. It is not his fault that he has to bite off more than he intends to chew. The Scottish hills are becoming more and more popularised, and it is imperative that a book such as we outlined at the beginning should be available as soon as possible. It should be authoritative, up to date and preferably scrutinised (or even produced) by the Scottish Mountaineering Trust. Then authors like Mr Poucher could refer to it as a Standard Indispensable, and get on with their job of entertaining a public.

And we could be more happy about this most informative, courteous, well-produced and very well-priced little book.

G. J. D.

A Rock Climbers' Guide to Northumberland. Compiled by members of the Northumbrian Mountaineering Club. (1964: Dalesman Publishing Co. Second Edition, 68 pp., 15 diagrams, 7½ by 5 in. 10s. 6d.)

This useful Guide brings up to date the earlier (1950) edition of 'Some Northumbrian Rock Climbs.' New sections are added, covering Peel Crags adjacent to Crag Lough, Jack Rock near Warkworth and Kyløe Crags. Many new routes on Crag Lough and Wanney are included.

The diagrams of Crag Lough are a great help in locating the ninety-nine climbs described in this area. Similar 'elevations' of Simonside would perhaps have been better than the sketch plans. The paper and general finish of the Guide leaves something to be desired: it would be a blotting pad in wet weather!

That so much good hard climbing exists in Northumberland may come as a surprise to many climbers unfamiliar with the county. Its nearness to Scottish climbers in Edinburgh and the Borders should not be overlooked. Some recent restrictions regarding access to Wanney Crag and Kyløe can be overcome by application to the landowners through any reputable club.

The Guide is a great credit to all those many contributors, in the Northumbrian Mountaineering Club and elsewhere, whose collective efforts have made the North-East an excellent area for outcrop climbing.

H. S. T.

A.M.C. Massachusetts and Rhode Island Trail Guide. (1964 : Appalachian Mountain Club, Boston, Mass. 310 pp., maps and plans. \$3.75.)

The other two A.M.C. guides deal with the White Mountains and the Mountains of Maine. This is fascinatingly different. Massachusetts and Rhode Island are almost as tightly populated as parts of the British Isles. Their exercise grounds, pockets in the real estate, are here delineated with the same determination that won them. Tiny trails, mere bouldering problems of 113 miles, are lovingly detailed and buttoned into maps. Those who wonder why such apron-strings are necessary should remember that neither compass nor common sense can prevail against the bush of even the suburban eastern states, nor against an unwary guideless descent into the wrong motel. And as for size—the smaller the cage, the greater the urge, and the need, to expand it with nomenclature—witness only Salisbury Crags, Dumbarton Rock, Craig-y-Barns and—soon—the Scottish Highlands.

G. J. D.

Mountain Flowers of New England. (1964 : A.M.C., Boston, Mass. Some 150 pp., with note spaces, over 200 drawings and 143 colour photographs. \$4.50.)

A most civilised book from a valuable U.S. institution. Intimidatingly competent, beautifully produced for the price. If rather too earnestly eastern, at least no Dame Floral whimsy, and no clangour of peg-supported egos. A refreshing mountain guide, such as the S.M.C. used to look like producing, and the S.M.T. doubtless never will either.

G. J. D.

Tryfan and Glyder Fach. Cwm Idwal. Edited by A. J. J. Moulam. (Climbers' Club. Revised reprints. 12s. 6d.)

The Climbers' Club has really gone modern in its latest series of rock-climbing guides to North Wales. The fuzzy old pictures and line drawings have disappeared to make way for Brian Evans' sharp clear diagrams, very much *à la* S.M.C. The superiority of diagrams to photographs is strikingly revealed by comparing the cover photographs with their diagrammatic counterparts. All the shadows have vanished and the landmarks are brought out much more clearly. As for the text, little has been done in these areas since the last series so that the guides are more or less reprints with *addenda*. I liked particularly the historical introductions. I think development of individual crags is as interesting as anything in British mountaineering history. The blank pages at the end are another useful idea. New routes can then be pasted right in, instead of having to keep a Book of Horrors as we do up here. The weather-protected soft plastic covers seem a better idea than the hardbacks favoured by ourselves and the F.R.C.C. It fits a hip-pocket much more comfortably and can stand up to a lot more punishment.

I have only one thing to criticise in these guides and that is the archaic Welsh grading system. I have myself suffered because of it, fighting on Lliwedd Severes and walking up V.S.'s in the Pass. One route, Hangman's Wall on the Milestone Buttress, receives the grading 'Just Very Hard Severe' which is Just Very Hard to believe! This 'hazy Northern illogicality,' as Noyce refers to it in the Preface to Cwm Idwal, is a piece of whimsy which has no place in present-day rock-climbing. The sooner the Climbers' Club introduce graded lists and abolish their X.S. grade the better.

R. C.

A Kindred Journal. Kruschev, like Sirjohn, was put out, and not only because of Slessor's book but also for indulging in a Cult of Personality. It has been repeatedly brought home to the Editor, by various purist reactionaries, that the early S.M.C. members wrote about the individual hills, not about their individual selves. Hence their articles fascinate and their personalities persist. To-day, the reactionaries claim, we have tedious descriptions of Scrouch and Pandlebelly on some dank eczematous slab, sunless and joyless as their bitten fagends. We have the furtive sniggerings thrust on us of their emergence into delayed puberty; we have to admire their stinky-fingered literature because they may soon reach 21 years without the final salutary crack on the head.

Although in ulcerogenic moments it is conceivable that the present S.M.C. can be regarded as equally, and separately, derived from the *camaraderie* of the school lavatory on the one hand, and the knitting parties of the S.M.T. on the other, neither the rudeness nor the respectability are sunless and joyless. Yet one should seriously ponder why in recent climbing literature the mountain itself is affected to be little more than a place for thieving misanthropes to get up, as it is, in the ski-ing glossies, no more than a place for the Gin-and-Surbiton Fringe to go ever so expensively down. Presumably because the route has replaced the mountain, and the first ascent has replaced the route, and the leader has replaced the first ascent. Glory be to Pandlebelly. And Pandlebellyberg, Pandlebellyspitz or poor old Ben Pandlebelly is just a dirty great heap of excrement. Fit only for chartered accountants to crawl over. Pandlebelly, all the more honour to him for being unemployable, does not like chartered accountants. That understandable view is no reason for deriding the mountain as well. Its mineral dignity must support, or extinguish, accountant and Pandlebelly alike.

Not that the *S.M.C. Journal* offends much here. As well as revering our elderly mountains, we have even encouraged new Personalities, modest or glaring, fit to print beside the retiring Ling, Raeburn and Kellas. But, groan the reactionaries, how many are we nourishing more suitable to join the skeleton in our cupboard, Aleister Crowley, A.C., that other distinguished member and contributor (*S.M.C.J.* (1895), iii, 288), who was horse-whipped by the chartered accountants of the Alpine Club after giving his enjoyable account of why he didn't want to go and rescue a particularly objectionable Italian from a Himalayan avalanche? This Personality

grew into The Great Beast and defaecated on his friends' carpets, a more adult procedure heartily recommended to all his fellow-aspirants in the Club who have, in the wistful immaturity of youth, paddled with Pandlebelly in the national clubrooms.

What brought all this on? Two things. The not-shared horror of respectable readers of the latest *E.U.M.C. Journal* to reach us, which is always enjoyable reading, good or bad (try it and see), and the shared dislike, with respectable readers, of another example of commercialisation of the genitals, now dreadfully frequent in climbing literature. This book bounced back twice. Let the last reviewer have his say. Laugh if, or while, you can.

Sleep till Noonday. By Richard Purslow. (Heinemann. 221 pp. 18s.)

Two people approached have already declined to review this book, so the writer will be candid. Not a book to be recommended. It is deplorable that the literature of our sport should be debased by sexual adventures.

R. G. I.

Journals of Kindred Clubs. The reviewer was entrusted with this ticklish task presumably because his estate is as yet childless (cf. last year's *Journal*). However, digestion of the mass of material, separation of the second-rate from the third, etc., proved impossible and he has contented himself with a nibble here and there.

Alpine Journal, 1964, is, as usual, the pick of the lot. Apart from the amount of unique information therein, I got most enjoyment from Norman G. Dyhrenfurth's account of the American siege of Everest (p. 1), listing many record-breaking efforts including the Highest Call of Nature by Big Jim Whittaker between the North and South Summits (how about that, Mao Tse-Tung!), and H. A. Osmaston's story of early mountaineering in Uganda (p. 228), when the route to the Chief's daughter's heart involved the solo ascent of neighbouring Amiel, a forbidding obelisk by any standards. She remained a virgin, as did Amiel until 1959. Also of interest were the notes on Soviet climbing by A. Ovchinnikov and E. Gippenreiter (p. 293) which reeked of endearing Russian bombast, e.g., 'height of key pitch is 500 m.; steepness above ninety degrees; no water for drinking.' The revival of the *Climber's Club Bulletin* after thirty-two years seems a very good idea. In fact, this may be a solution to our own *Journal* problems [suggested wearily by the present Editor, *ad nauseam*.—Ed.] Interested members are referred to the Bulletin's editorial introduction. New climbs are printed laterally in page-sizes for transference to the blank pages in the back of guide books. There are also a few short articles. G. C. Joshi, the Indian Sovereign Scholar, goes about two better than our last President ever went with a note on the Nature of Mountaineering (p. 44): 'The track to snowy peaks is not strewn with roses; on the contrary, it is a path covered with thorns of hazard and peril, nevertheless, at the end of it there is the full-blown rose of mountaineering awaiting the eager-adventurous-cum-heroically tired Alpinists thus saluting them with most cordial expressions

of welcome in a spirit of meekness with a view to enlighten, humanise, refine and elevate Alpinists' ethical, intellectual, mental and social nature as also instilling in them feelings of fraternity, truth, cosmic love, freedom, justice and equal opportunity whereby they will walk in the light of benevolence, companionableness and the hidden honey of human compassion.' *The Journal of the Mountain Club of South Africa*, 1963, is about 3 guineas worth of glossy pictures, beautiful printing, etc. It contains no less than four articles by Rusty Baillie, who has spent some time in Scotland. They are all very good reading and well written, if heavily foot noted. I was highly impressed by the mass of new routes being produced and by their imaginative names, e.g., Xiepxeopxiorop (cf. recent developments in Scotland: Spit, Snot, Gob, Dan and Slaver). Connoisseurs of absurdity will enjoy the 'Alien Vegetation Committee' who held three 'anti-hakea meets in the Du Toit's Kloof area and two anti-pine meets on Table Mountain.' Black trees, perhaps? *Mountaineering*, 1964, does a lot that the *Alpine Journal* does without improving on it at all. Nat Allen's tale of hemp rope, drizzle, sandshoes and Joe on Cloggy is illuminating as is, at the other extreme, a terrible story of pegs in Clachaig Cully by Luis Pedrisa. Lastly, the *Yorkshire Ramblers' Club Journal*, 1964, had the funniest article of all, an amusing traverse of the Grépon described by C. R. Allen, full of things like this: 'Owing to lack of forethought we were obliged to walk along the *Route aux Bicyclettes*.'

R. C.

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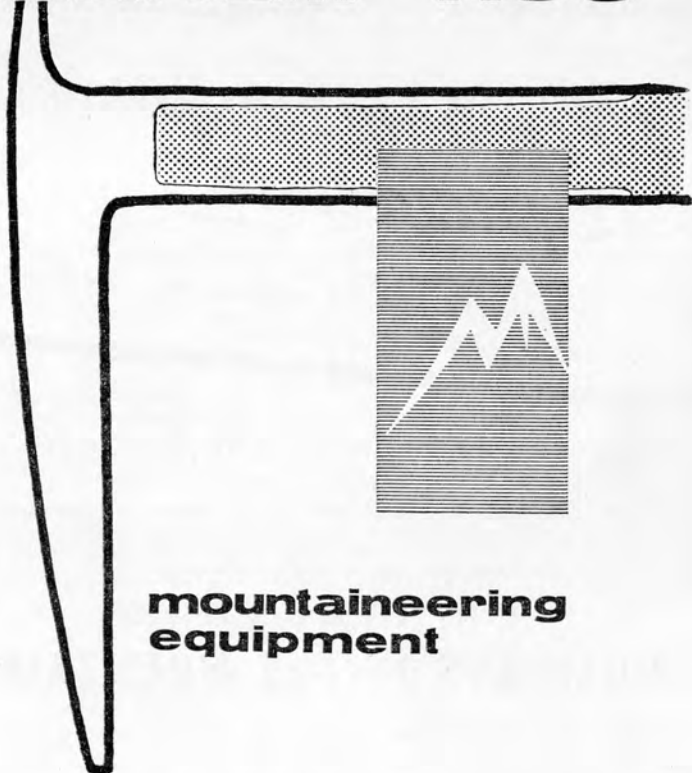
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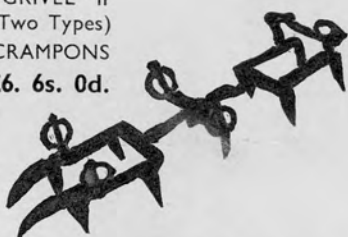
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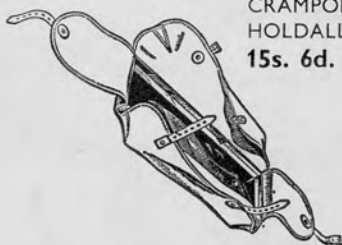
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