

THE
SCOTTISH
MOUNTAINEERING
CLUB JOURNAL



VOL. XXIX

No. 160

MAY 1969

TEN SHILLINGS AND SIXPENCE

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THE SCOTTISH MOUNTAINEERING CLUB, 369 HIGH STREET, EDINBURGH, 1

OBTAINABLE FROM

Douglas & Foulis, 9 Castle Street, Edinburgh, 2

J. B. Wylie & Co. Ltd., 406 Sauchiehall Street, Glasgow, C.2



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THE CORUIISK AFFAIR

IN 1968, historians will record, occurred The Coruisk Affair. An affair restricted to a small part of Scotland and to few participants, but because of this very isolation an affair which more clearly than others such as Crichel Down spotlighted the current difficulty members of a democracy had in controlling their public servants.

There were two features of this Affair. One concerned the sudden driving, by public bodies, of a jeep track into an internationally-celebrated 'wilderness area'; and the other concerned the extraordinary behaviour of these bodies in apparently refusing not only to wait until sufficient information was available but even to discuss the matter with the very people whom the scheme was supposed to benefit.

Now the first scandal, the destruction of an amenity by a project whose uselessness was obvious to any informed person, though bad enough, could be put down to well-meaning ignorance. The second was uglier. It smacked of the bulldozing arrogance of the unsure, who begin by assuming infallibility and end by not daring—whatever the consequences to others—to admit a misjudgment. Because both these possibilities were all too relevant to the present political malaise, The Coruisk Affair blazed throughout Scotland.

We deal with the Affair here, however, for two reasons which are relevant to this *Journal*. Firstly, not before have climbers and walkers, with an apparently foolproof democratic mechanism on their side, gone down astonished without effective redress—as farmers, landowners, 'residents' and other individuals and commercially-unexploitable minority groups have gone down elsewhere—before petty authority dressed up as the Public Good.

And secondly we have, thanks to Mr A. G. Cousins, an absorbingly detailed account of the Affair from its accidental uncovering to its unsavoury conclusion. Each of us, separating fact from opinion, but noting both, may form his own judgment of the Affair. It purges the soul to read Mr Cousins' Report: how can simple 'blame'

Photograph opposite

Too Long in This Condition? Coruisk.

T. Weir

attach to any, even the most pathetically exposed, of the protagonists? Reading his clinical history of the implacable progress of the disease—a mortal one, many might consider, for present society—indignation gives way to horror, horror to melancholy.

Yes, the people whose behaviour so chillingly reveals itself here—these are your servants, paid by you, some of them paid by you to look after your Scottish countryside for your benefit.

But they are not ogres. They are well-meaning, many of them more concerned with their duty than their careers, some of them informed and perceptive men striving to educate their colleagues. A few are understandably prone to wrath when faced with opposition, or with their own mistakes, but they have no wish to go down in history as figures of fun, or of scorn. They are struggling like ourselves, though even less successfully, in a very imperfect form of Society.

How can we help them? How do we prevent a repetition of The Coruisk Affair? Presumably, by information and by control. Keep them informed: see that members of committees—not just chairmen—have access to facts and educated opinion. (Towards that end, Mr Murray's letter in this issue contributes powerfully). Then control them: see that they *read* the facts and opinions, *meet* the delegations, that they *justify* their decisions from this evidence. For, regrettably, Mr Cousins' Report makes such genteel coercion appear necessary.

How do we ensure this coercion, this control? Believers in democracy—and there are still many left—will be heartened by Mr Cousins' tirelessly legitimate approach. Others, confirmed in their cynicism, may be tempted to use the less parliamentary methods apparently regarded by one person in the report (naturally, an M.P.) as more efficacious. All, however, must work together, all lovers and users of the *uncommercialised* Scottish outdoors, and so prevent any one group being used against the rest: in this immediate context, to prevent future 'Access' being made ostensibly for Rescue of Selfish Climbers (and only later, for Profitable Development; c.f. *S.M.C.J.* 1962, xxvii, 259-264). And all, we trust, will have had their eyes opened, intentionally or otherwise, by the participants in The Coruisk Affair.

Passages in small type below constitute the main text of *A Report on the Loch Coruisk Access Improvement Project*, 1968, by A. G. Cousins. Paragraphs are numbered in the order they appear in that Report. Linking comments and italicisation (though not of course the words italicised) are editorial.

Considerable efforts were also made by our Hon. Secy., Mr D. J. Bennet; he wrote to the B.B.C. and Press, and on behalf of the S.M.C. proposed the resolution in para. 13. Like us all, he expresses his admiration of the indefatigability of Mr Cousins in exposing this disgraceful Affair.

It begins in a regrettably familiar way. Mr Cousins is startled to hear of the scheme as one already quite decided upon:

(1) The project first came to my attention about 19th April 1968 when a letter from Lt. Col. D. Barker-Wyatt, M.B.E., R.E., was passed to me. This letter outlined work to be done on the Isle of Skye by a Manchester-based T.A. Unit during the period 8th to 22nd June, '68. The letter requested the use of the Loch Coruisk Memorial Hut. The work to be done was a two mile Land-rover track from Kilmarie to Camasunary. The track was to be for use by estate, police, search and rescue vehicles only. It would not be open for use by other private or public vehicles. A wire suspension footbridge was to be built across the Camasunary river, the footpath from there to the Scavaig river was to be improved and a similar footbridge built over the Scavaig river. Where the footpath crossed the rock feature known as the Bad Step the rock was to be blasted so as to make steps and a three-foot wide pathway across it. The purpose of the work was to speed up the rescue and evacuation of injured tourists and climbers from the Coruisk area. The letter stated that the work was originally asked for by the Police, Rescue Organisations and Skye Council.

He tries to discover who has 'decided' it:

(2) I was very surprised by this information and decided to find out who had advised on the work and who had been consulted about it. I wrote first to Mr W. H. Murray, O.B.E. (a member of the Countryside Commission for Scotland, Chairman of the Scottish Countryside Activities Council and President of the Ramblers Association) informing him of the substance of the letter and suggesting that the scheme should be discussed and that the Bad Step should not be altered in any way. Mr Murray replied (on 23rd April) expressing his horror at the scheme and confirming that it was news to him. *No mention of these proposals had previously been made to any of the bodies he represented.*

(3) I then wrote to the following asking for details of the justification for the scheme and for information on what consultations had taken place:

(b) The Association of Scottish Climbing Clubs—Mr T. M. Wright, Secretary. *The Association had not been approached at any time about the project.*

(c) The Scottish Mountaineering Club—Mr D. J. Bennet, Secretary. *No approach had been made to the Club. The Club objected to the project and wanted full discussion of the matter with all parties concerned.*

(d) The Mountain Bothies Association—Secretary. The Association did not feel competent to express opinion on the project.

(h) The Junior Mountaineering Club of Scotland—Mr G. Peet, Secretary. *The Club wanted discussion of alternatives to the proposals before any work was done. No previous word of the project had been communicated to them.*

(e) The Mountain Rescue Committee of Scotland—Mr H. MacInnes, Secretary. The reply (on 3rd May) was that *no mention of the proposals had been made to the Committee and that the scheme would not be of very great value to rescue work. They contacted Lt. Gen. Sir Derek Lang with a request to hold the project pending discussions and wrote to the Secretary of State on the matter. The M.R.C. of S. were almost unanimously opposed to the project in its stated form.*

However, we're getting warmer.... (Note the brisk efficient dismissal...):

(f) Inverness-shire Constabulary—Mr A. McClure, Chief Constable. The reply (on 1st May) advised that the scheme was for search and evacuation purposes and that, *'all bodies concerned in search and rescue operations have agreed with the proposal afoot for this project as a whole.'*

The Army is less confident:

(g) Lt. Col. Barker-Wyatt, 75 Engineer Reg. (v.), Manchester. Some of the questions I asked (such as did he really expect to complete all the work in two weeks) *were unanswered* but the reply did state that the request for the work, under the M.A.C.C. scheme, had come from the Association of County Councils for Scotland. He stated that *full liaison had been maintained through the 'recognised official channels.'*

The 'County,' even less combative, flees embarrassedly into its files:

(a) The Skye Council—The Clerk to the Council. The reply was *simply that my letter had been passed on* to some other department. I heard nothing further from them. They appeared to take no part in the subsequent negotiations.

(8) Mr W. M. MacKenzie (President of the S.M.C.) telephoned Lord Hunt (President of the British Mountaineering Council) *who had no previous knowledge of the project.* Lord Hunt wrote (on 14th May) *to the Secretary of State for Scotland* pointing out the effects of the project, *the strong opposition* to it and *requesting that the scheme be held in abeyance* until the opinions of, for example, the M.R.C. of S. had been sought. I understand that this letter was not submitted to the C.C. for S. I feel that later events might have been different *had the B.M.C. published the letter.*

(9) Mr W. M. MacKenzie also telephoned Professor Robert Grieve (Chairman of the Highlands and Islands Development Board). Professor Grieve said that the Board had approved a sum of £1680 for the project—*being assured at the time that all interested bodies had been consulted and agreed to it.* The total budget for the project was £4130. When it transpired later that there had been a lack of consultation the H.I.D.B. decided to regard the project as 'lying in suspense' until consultation had been carried out between the appropriate interests.

[Is it yet considered that 'consultation has been carried out'? Has our money been paid over?].

(11) Mr David Whitham, one of the trustees of the Coruisk Memorial Hut and one who was fully aware of matters concerning the Hut, access, and tourist activity in the area stated that *he was opposed to the project going forward without full discussion.* He later offered financial help toward installing a telephone link with the Hut, as an alternative following quotations he had from the G.P.O. Mr Whitham later *resigned* as a trustee of the Hut.

The landowners, as happily nowadays, are *not* the villains, though of course a nice new road is a nice new road:

(5) The Scottish Landowners' Federation were unable to advise me of the name of the landowner at Camasunary, but I later learned that they were Mr Mark Johnson, 'Rutherford,' Kelso, and his brother. I informed him of the J.M.C.S. objection to the project and asked that he should withhold permission for the work pending discussions. He replied (on 5th May) that he had been approached by the Police and *rescue organisations* to give his permission for the work and he was fully in agreement with the proposal.

They are helpful and co-operative:

(10) During an informal meeting between Mr Mark Johnson, Mr W.M. MacKenzie and myself the project, its effect on the area and alternative schemes were fully discussed. We studied drawings of the bridges and the planned route. Mr Johnson told us that he first heard of the project over three years ago. At our meeting *he agreed to instruct the T.A. Unit that the only work they were to do was a vehicle track from Kilmorie to Camasunary and the footbridge over the Camasunary river. We felt that would be a suitable and useful compromise.* I later confirmed this agreement to him by letter.

An understandable inexactitude of terminology:

(12) On 7th May I sent Inverness County Council my analysis of the project with alternative proposals and I advised them that several bodies were opposed to the project. By this time it appeared that *no consultations had been held with any bodies other than Inverness-shire Constabulary, the landowner, the T.A. Unit, Inverness County Council and Skye Council.* In view of this, *the statement by Mr McClure that all bodies concerned in rescue had been consulted and approved the project, was now obviously incorrect.* He has recently written in answer to my enquiry on this point, that at the time he had in mind 'those with whom statutory responsibility lay, the riparian proprietor, and those local people who render, and have rendered over many years, valuable assistance to the local police.'

Yet how do the Inverness-shire Police keep themselves (and others) informed of the situation?

(17) Mr Ben Humble, who is well known for his mountain safety and rescue work, informed us from his records, kept since 1926, *that there had been no occasion when a road to Camasunary would have saved life.* He has told me that recently no reports detailing mountain accidents have been received from Inverness-shire Constabulary unlike for instance Argyll and Ross-shire from which fully detailed reports are received. He keeps records of mountain incidents for the M.R.C. of S. *It is on such records that much of the mountain safety work is based.*

(13) *At the A.G.M. (on 11th May) of the A.S.C.C. a resolution was passed unanimously opposing the project and requesting Inverness County Council to afford the opportunity for discussion of alternative plans.* The meeting asked me to represent the Association on this matter. The resolution was sent to I.C.C. and published in the press. The Secretary of the A.S.C.C. wrote to the Secretary of State for Scotland, to Mr Russel Johnstone, M.P., and to the G.O.C. Scottish Command. All these communications were acknowledged. He also wrote to the Area Commander, Highland Area, the Director of Volunteers, Territorials and Cadets (M.O.D.) and to Mr Mark Johnson. *None of these latter communications was acknowledged.*

(7) I telephoned Mr Little of Inverness County Planning Office and was told that planning permission for the work had not yet been given and that the matter was to be discussed by the Council on 13th May. I told him *I should welcome an opportunity to speak at the meeting* and asked if he would advise other interested bodies of the meeting.

Here are the strategy and tactics of your servants' technique 'below stairs':

(14) The Inverness County Council meeting on 13th May approved the project, with a bypass above the Bad Step instead of a pathway across it,

and urged the C.C. for S. to favour the project. The meeting was *not in the nature of a public enquiry*, it was a meeting of the planning committee and *was not opened to objectors*. As there was no general advertisement that the meeting was to take place, not all those who were opposed to the project knew to write to or contact the Council. Objections were received from English mountaineering clubs, the Ramblers Association, the S.C.A.C. and others. It should be noted that *the objections were principally to the project going ahead without full discussion of its necessity and of alternatives*. I.C.C. kindly sent me a copy of their letter of 16th May to the C.C. for S., requesting their decision in favour of the project. No statistics of incidents involving search or rescue are given in this letter. The letter mentions, '... most occasions ... many cases ... cases of mishap ...' with no reference to incidents. I suggest that gives a very exaggerated picture of the situation. I wonder why a telephone is mentioned as being impractical.

Who do you think has most experience? Who knows best?:

(15) The Skye mountain rescue team were told by a police representative, at their A.G.M., about this time, that *they should not come to any decision on the project as the decision would be made in Inverness*. They had not been consulted earlier about the project.

Gentlemen—have some thought for others!:

(6) In a telephone conversation with Lt. Col. Barker-Wyatt he informed me that *their preparations were almost complete* and that he felt *they must not be stopped at this advanced stage*.

Cousins tries to let people know what their Servants are intending to do. The Press behaves predictably:

(4) In order that the public should be informed I contacted *The Glasgow Herald* and *The Scotsman* and told them of the proposals, the lack of consultations and the requests for a halt pending discussions of alternatives. The Glasgow Herald *showed no interest in the information*. The Scotsman and later other newspapers published letters, reports and articles on the subject. *The Guardian* took considerable interest in the matter. There was some editing of letters published in the press and *several valid points of objection were thereby unpublished*. Some information given in the press was *very inaccurate and caused misunderstandings*.

In its columns the Public, experts or tourists, were—equally predictably—opposed by their Planners:

(25) As far as possible I read all the press items on this matter. They were clearly either for or against the project as follows:

FOR—

Mr A. H. Hutchison, Mr S. P. L. Johnson, Inverness Planning Committee, The Countryside Commission for Scotland.

AGAINST—

J. C. Donaldson, W. H. Murray, E. MacKintosh, C. E. Giles, E. M. Black, E. Thompson, R. Hesketh, A. G. Cousins, D. J. Bennet, Sarah Innes, S. M. Nicolson, M. Hamilton, S. L. Philp, E. D. G. Langmuir, S. R. Orr, T. Weir, R. Duncan, H. M. Brown, E. B. Leitch, E. Strachan, W. D. Brooker, H. Fullerton, A. H. Hetherington, Association of Scottish Climbing Clubs.

The B.B.C. took few risks:

Mr J. MacKenzie, a member of the Skye rescue team, was interviewed and he was in favour of the project. *No objectors were interviewed.*

But could not avoid considerable illumination:

'Checkpoint' (B.B.C.I) showed film of the area The confrontation between Mr McWilliam (Chairman, C.C. for S.) and Mr T. Weir showed clearly that *even though Mr McWilliam was told of the lack of consultation, the requests for discussion, the informed objections from various directions and that statistics showed there was no need for the present project, he seemed determined to proceed.* It was unfortunate that the B.B.C. did not invite interested representatives to be interviewed during the filming. Had they done so more constructive points and accurate information would have been recorded.

Some of the Upper Servants become rather anxious:

(16) I had a letter from the Secretary of the S.C.A.C., dated 17th May from which I understood *he had been assured that the H.I.D.B. were not backing the project expense.* He informed me that Mr P. M. Jackson, M.P., was *supporting the protests and requesting Dr Dickson Mabon, Minister of State at the Scottish Office, to stop or postpone the project.*

Note the modern political touch. What, no agitation, no marches?

(18) I visited Mr P. M. Jackson, M.P., at the House of Commons on 21st May and gave him all the information I had together with copies of correspondence. He was anxious to support our protest at the project *going ahead without reasonable consultation.* In a written answer he had been informed that the amount to be spent by the T.A. Unit was approximately £1500. He offered his support to any project such as *a sit-down or demonstration* but I told him I did not think we (S.M.C./J.M.C.S. and other Clubs) would support that sort of action. *This was because our whole case was built on the lack of democracy and common sense shown by others.*

And this, gentlemen, is how their Democracy operates:

(24) Mr P. M. Jackson, M.P., arranged an interview at the Scottish Office on 30th May with Dr Dickson Mabon. During the interview I informed Dr Mabon that as President of the J.M.C.S., I was representing the A.S.C.C. on this matter. Mr Jackson and I gave Dr Mabon all the information we had and copies of correspondence for which he asked. I drew their attention to the *lack of consultation* and to reports of statements made regarding the visit of the representatives of the C.C. for S. to Coruisk on 25th May, *which were very misleading.* I asked them to note that *this project was stated to be for mountain rescue purposes yet no rescue organisation, as far as I could discover, had been consulted and the M.R.C. for S. were in fact opposed to the project.* Dr Mabon gave us a very full hearing. He promised to convey my representations to the Secretary of State that day when he was reporting other representations for, but mostly against, the project. He pointed out that the C.C. for S. had gone to some trouble to investigate the proposals. *He suggested that even if the decision went against our objections, I should declare publicly that we (the mountaineers, etc.) respected the decision of the C.C. for S.* My impression was that *he felt we should accept the sacrifice of this part of Skye rather than bring any criticism on the newly formed C.C. for S.* I replied that at present there could be little respect for the C.C. for S. as they had not acted in what we understood was the spirit of their responsibility. We considered

that despite good advice they had made the wrong decision. I requested that the Secretary of State should even yet curtail the project to the vehicle track and the Camasunary footbridge only. I had no word of his decision *but the Army work went ahead on Skye*, with the one modification, that was, no blasting of the Bad Step.

This was the Visit, well staged, casted and reported. Note *why* the famous 'Bad Step' was relieved:

(19) I learned that representatives of the C.C. for S. were to visit Loch Coruisk on 25th May to see the proposed route for themselves. This was an informal visit and as time was short it was hurriedly arranged. Five members of the Commission attended together with Mr Eric Langmuir (Chairman of the M.R.C. of S.), Mr Johnson (landowner) and Mr McClure (Chief Constable, I.C.C.). *Representatives of the many organisations objecting to the project were not present.* The press reported that the Commission's deputation met all those who had an interest in the project. This was something of an exaggeration. Mr McWilliam (Chairman of the C.C. for S.) was reported as saying that a compromise had been reached which was accepted by those objecting. *This was not the case as no compromise had been offered to the objectors.* The proposal to blast rock at the Bad Step was dropped when it was realised that any blasting there may cause the whole thing to collapse into the sea leaving a passage which would be difficult to negotiate. This possibility I had earlier brought to the attention of Lt. Col. Barker-Wyatt.

(20) A small group of members of the J.M.C.S., inexperienced in mountain rescue, demonstrated that a stretcher patient could easily be carried across on the Bad Step. This was done safely by using one natural belay as the bearers walked across the rock slab. Though this was done *on 25th May*, the party from the C.C. for S. *did not witness the demonstration.*

(21) Mr Langmuir informed the party during the visit that *the M.R.C. of S. had decided against the project and asked for discussions before the work was started.* Mr McClure made considerable protest at policemen having to wade the Scavaig river en route to the Coruisk Hut during emergency visits. Full discussion of alternatives to the proposed project *were not held* during the visit.

By now, one will have anticipated this:

(22) On 27th May the C.C. for S. announced that its majority decision was to make *no objection to the project.* I consider that on this matter the Commission had acted as Inverness County Council had done, that is, *they had reached a decision without full consultation with the interested parties.*

Alas, put not your trust but could you blame him?

(23) Mr Mark Johnson *cancelled the previous agreement* (limiting the Army work) which he had made with Mr MacKenzie and myself. His reason for this was, he wrote, that he felt he had, '*. . . . no alternative, but to abide by their decisions*'

And what kind of a mess resulted? Military presumption evidently outstripped military performance:

(26) *On 9th June I walked over the whole route and my impressions, after a week of Army work, were;*

- (i) The track would not be completed. Completed sections were *much too rough to carry a seriously-injured person in a vehicle.*

(ii) The bridges would be completed. They would be substantial and of pleasant appearance.

(iii) No work would be done on the shore path or Bad Step by-pass owing to shortage of time.

(iv) *There had been little attempt to obtain local knowledge before starting the work.*

(27) Mr W. H. Murray invited me to attend the official opening of the project and inspection of the work on 20th June, at which time it was due to have been completed. The weather during the work period had been remarkably fine. The party included members of the C.C. for S., Inverness-shire County Police and the Army. The incomplete and in places impassable track was unsuitable for transporting a patient in a vehicle. At times *Land-rovers could not negotiate 'completed' sections of the track due to gradient and surface conditions. In general bottoming had not been used. In a few places culvert pipes had been used and several of these had already been crushed by Army vehicles.* The party was told that a considerable amount of work remained to be done on the track. The footbridges were complete but grouted ground anchors of the Camasunary bridge, *having been incorrectly installed,* were pulling away from the bedrock. No work had been done on the shore path or the Bad Step other than the painting on the rock of arrows indicating a by-pass route. The Army personnel had obviously worked hard *but the state of the work showed that there had been a singular lack of appreciation earlier of the extent of the task they were undertaking.*

An example of the 'evidence' proffered by the 'Authorities'; medicine, unfortunately, is not yet far enough advanced:

(28) An accident which occurred one New Year recently was mentioned by one spokesman as being very significant. It was stated that had the track existed then *the lives of the climbers involved would probably have been saved.* This was not so because from my knowledge of the events of that search and rescue, the facts are that the unfortunate climbers *had died before they were rescued.* The time taken to reach them was due to lack of information as to their exact position, the gathering of the rescue party (some drove overnight from Kintail) and the ice-bound state of the ground. Vehicles could not have driven over the track on that occasion. From the rescue point of view *a telephone at the Hut would, on that occasion, have been more useful than a track.*

The kind of evidence certainly not accepted:

(29) Extract from minutes of a meeting of the M.R.C. for S. on 21st September, '68:

'J.H. and H.MacI. (members of the Committee) both reported having evacuated cases from the (Coruisk) area, and that in their opinion the existence of the jeep track added nothing to the safety or comfort of an injured climber. It would be infinitely more valuable to mark the high level route by natural cairns leading to Glen Brittle. There was a general expression of opinion that, on amenity grounds, the bridge at Scavaig should be removed, but that this committee could make no representations other than that they would have been just as satisfied with a wire to carry a stretcher.'

Some of Mr Cousins' comments:

One wonders why this project, stated to be one in the interest of mountain rescue, was not mentioned earlier by the initiating authority to the M.R.C. for S., on which they have a representative.

The improvement and maintenance of the vehicle track as a reliable route for access and transporting injured persons will cost a considerable amount. I feel that the sum should be made public knowledge before it is spent.

The reasons for objections to the project are still valid and therefore serious consideration should be given to the removal of the Scavaig river footbridge, in favour of substituting say a wire guided pontoon on Loch Coruisk. Should the question of expense be raised I can offer volunteers, qualified personnel, to undertake the work. The suspended portion of the bridge can be quickly dismantled without damage, ready for use elsewhere.

The shore path should remain untouched as rescue considerations cannot justify the spoiling of this natural route. An equally feasible route for carrying a stretcher to Camasunary lies inland.

The Bad Step by-pass route at present indicated by arrows painted on the rock by the Army, is more dangerous should a slip occur, than the simple direct route across the natural rock itself.

It is my hope that the bodies concerned in this matter *will not consider the subject closed* but will press on with a view to providing whatever facilities are agreed necessary for mountain safety, search and rescue purposes and to returning Coruisk to its former unspoilt natural condition.

His unavoidable conclusion:

AN UNNECESSARY INTRUSION INTO ONE OF THE FEW REMAINING REMOTE MOUNTAIN AREAS OF SCOTLAND HAS BEEN PUSHED THROUGH BY INSENSITIVE AND ILL-ADVISED AUTHORITY DESPITE REQUESTS FOR DEMOCRATIC DISCUSSION OF BETTER ALTERNATIVES, IN THE INTEREST OF MOUNTAIN SAFETY, SEARCH AND RESCUE, BY AN OVERWHELMING NUMBER OF WELL INFORMED PEOPLE WHO KNOW AND LOVE CORUIK.

Mr Cousins considers the future effects of the 'Proposal':

1. To facilitate access by the shore route will encourage those who at present would be deterred, by wading a burn or scrambling across some rock, to walk into an area where they are incompetent to wander.
2. An increase in accidents will occur as incompetent people will enter an area where some hill walking experience is advisable. The competent tourist-walker can walk in at present.
3. An increase in tourist visits will bring with it the need or request for a shelter, then toilet, litter disposal—tea room. This would destroy Coruisk as an area of unique mountain beauty.

And, may we add, would make it a rather profitable investment. Those who might consider this an unworthy suggestion should ponder the revelations of the above Report, themselves scarcely imaginable by the 'normal decent man.'

DEDO DE DEUS — 'HARVEY'S' STORY

By E. J. Henley

PROFESSOR SLESSER'S version of our ascent of Dedo de Deus and of how he transformed an old, frayed, nylon rope into a case of Chevas Regal (*S.M.C.J.*, 1968, xxix, 1) is badly in need of elaboration. His overly modest account of what surely must be acclaimed as the 'rope trick of the year' hardly makes him out to be the rogue and black-guard he really is. Indeed, the true saga of how a feeble, middle-aged, New York City cliff dweller whose previous highest ascent had been to the top of the Empire State Building (in an elevator) found himself nearly strangled near the end of a tortuous 5300-foot, fourth-degree climb (the great Herzog called it 'very challenging') may be of interest to readers. It may also serve as a deterrent to other novice climbers who may be foolish enough to trust Malcolm Slessor.

I freely admit that I went of my own volition; indeed, it was I who suggested the near fatal climb, and introduced Slessor to Carlos Costa Ribeiro, our Brazilian guide and gracious host. It was, in fact, my second attempt at Dedo de Deus. Ribeiro and Mauro Andrade, who was then one of my graduate students at the University of Brazil, had attempted to yank and shove me up the 'tourist trail' to the top of the rugged peak the previous month. The fact that Ribeiro and Andrade, two of the strongest, most resourceful rock climbers in Brazil, had not succeeded in hoisting me more than 500 feet over the well trodden trail to the summit is an accurate testimonial to my physical condition and skill as a mountain climber. I still recall, with a warm glow, how Ribeiro and Andrade walked over to me as I lay panting and prostrate on a gentle 45-degree slope and said with typical Brazilian tact and *gentileza*, 'Professor, at times when climbers are faced with insurmountable obstacles, they show more courage by retreating than by going on.'

It was in a naive, American spirit of Rotarianism that I introduced Ribeiro to Slessor and offered to drive them to the base of Dedo de Deus. It was my intention to walk with them to a comfortable vantage point and then enjoy a picnic lunch and a restful afternoon with a good book, leaving the climbing to the professionals. In preparation, I loaded my knapsack with two bottles of Beaujolais, a small roast chicken, biscuits, a package of Gruyère cheese, containers of cold slaw and potato salad, carrots and cauliflower, a tin of Toll House cookies, two pears and an orange, silverware, napkins, and a tablecloth, an autographed copy of Professor Slessor's *Red Peak*, my camera, a pair of high-power binoculars, sneakers, a first-aid kit, mosquito repellent, an inflatable cushion, a box of

Suerdicki cigars, and a flask of Remy-Martin. The cognac wine and cigars were, as I recall, chosen with some care since I had to consider the *bon vivant* tastes of my erstwhile Scottish friend.

The ninety-minute drive behind us, we arrived at the base of the mountain at the uncivilized hour of 5 a.m. I did not partake of the conversation in the car, partly because I was too sleepy, but mostly because it was in a foreign language, mountain-climberese. There was a certain amount of semi-abrasive, verbal sparring since Slessor had never climbed in Brazil, and he was understandably curious to learn what the Brazilians considered to be a difficult climb, and what techniques were used. Ribeiro responded to Slessor's questioning as one might expect a proud native of an underdeveloped country to parry the thrusts of a European superman. His general attitude, quite understandably, was that of a confident young challenger who was eager to know how hard the champion could hit. It was the beginning of a friendly rivalry; I was to be its first victim.

We cast a few coins in the fountain next to the shrine in memory of the climbers who had died attempting to scale the formidable peak, and then began the four-hour trek to the base of the Finger. Had I not been struggling unsuccessfully with the tropical underbrush, a heavy knapsack, and a pair of ill-fitting mail-order boots, I would have noticed that we were taking an entirely different route to the one Ribeiro, Andrade, and I had taken three weeks earlier. Adding to my confusion was the fact that I was perspiring so much that my glasses were fogged, and I was suffering from what Jack Benny once called the clothing sickness—my tongue was coated and my breath was coming in short pants.

At approximately 9 a.m. I practically fell into Ribeiro and Slessor who had been racing along ahead. They had removed their knapsacks and were pensively scrutinizing the 1000-foot high rock pinnacle which loomed up immediately ahead. It was an heroic sight; I felt like a roach at the foot of an obelisk.

I was very grateful to Ribeiro for having taken us to see this epic view. After consuming some food and a bit of cognac and snapping some photos, I suggested we move around to the other side of Dedo de Deus, where we could begin our ascent. The conversation, which had previously been carried out in English, Portuguese, or German, in all of which I am relatively proficient, suddenly lapsed into French, leaving me voiceless and voteless. It was apparent, however, that Ribeiro was having a difficult time convincing Slessor that an ascent was even remotely possible. It involved, as it turned out, pulling one's way up about 700 feet of a 90-degree slope, followed by a thumbhold traverse across thirty feet of the exposed face and finally a series of two hundred-foot French chimney wriggles up ten-inch wide, damp openings inside the peak.

There were four reasons why I did not spread my tablecloth right then and there. (1) It was too early in the day; *Red Peak* could not possibly hold my interest for more than four hours. (2) The first few hundred feet of the ascent promised to be fun, since much of it could be accomplished by climbing up the branches of trees which grew in miraculous fashion in the granite rock (this also made it look deceptively safe). (3) I had already consumed half a bottle of wine in an attempt to maintain my water balance. (4) I had become somewhat emotionally involved in the contest.

There was much talk of the equipment which would be required. The two Professionals donned hand-tooled leather boots and appropriate paraphernalia, and I was outfitted with a pair of canvas-topped bedroom slippers with rope soles called 'alpagadas' which cost 50 cents and are usually worn by impecunious fishermen. There was a long discussion of whether or not Slesser would need expansion bolts and pitons, but ultimately he was dissuaded and he set out only with muscatons, wedges, and an old ninety-foot rope which looked suspiciously like the one I had seen his wife hang the laundry on. Ribeiro also carried a ninety-foot rope, but for some reason they did not want me to take my brand new 30-meter nylon rope.

By some untold miracle, I managed the first 700 feet. The procedure was roughly as follows. Ribeiro would shimmy gracefully up a crevice or tree and then fix a rope so I could pull myself up. My legs never touched the side of the mountain. I was, however, making good use of my knees and elbows, which were a bloody mess. I do not know how Slesser negotiated the climb because whenever I reached Ribeiro, I collapsed in a soggy heap. No one was paying any attention to me at all. Slesser was alternately complimenting Ribeiro on his artistry as a climber and then berating him for his complete disregard for safety precautions. Ribeiro was romantically involved in the thrill of climbing and the glories of the vistas. It took us approximately three hours to negotiate the 700 feet, and to reach our first crisis; we were at the point where it was necessary to traverse the open face.

The 'jeito' for reaching the open face was to crawl along the branch of a small tree. If done properly, the tree bends and drops you against the side of the cliff whereupon is fastened an iron spike. As you clutch the spike and pull yourself out onto a barely perceptible ledge, the tree moves away from you; it is literally a point of no return unless one is wearing a parachute. It was an ideal place for me to settle down with my remaining bottle of wine and book. Why didn't I?

The traverse, incidentally, is named the Maria Cebolla (Mary Onion is a literal translation). 'Maria Cebolla Day' in Brazil is the equivalent of the American 'Sadie Hawkins Day' where the ladies are allowed to marry any man they can outrun. It is descriptive

because the traverse slopes steeply up; hence, it must be negotiated quickly without loss of forward momentum.

When I proposed that I stay and wait for the two protagonists, Ribeiro, who had already negotiated the traverse, argued that it was not safe to descend via the Cebolla. I then offered to meet the duelists at the foot of the mountain, if they would let me borrow one of the ropes for the descent. This was vetoed by Slesser because Ribeiro had fixed one of the ropes for the traverse and had left the other one as a belay (the fixed end of the belay, as it turned out, was tied to a cactus). I was given no choice; I became an unwilling participant in an unscheduled Olympic event.

It took us four hours to climb the remaining 200 feet. Although most of the delays were due to 'Harvey's' cramps, Slesser's desire to recover two 25 cent wooden wedges which Ribeiro and I would willingly have abandoned proved to be a major hang-up. It was almost five o'clock and nearly dusk when we started our descent. The simplest way down would have been to rappel; however, this would have deprived our two adversaries of the challenge of racing down the chimneys, so back into the bowels we went. At this point I had the good fortune of losing my glasses. I say good fortune, because I am considerably myopic and without my glasses the descent was much less terrifying.

It was dusk-turning-to-darkness when the final and fateful crisis came. We were confronted with a forty-foot rappel, the first five and the last twenty of which were free fall, for the cliff had a negative slope. Slesser was the first one down. He eschewed a belay largely, I suspect, because he did not trust either Ribeiro or me to secure it properly.

I followed with Slesser's rope as safety looped around my chest. My rapid, giddy descent was interrupted violently approximately eighteen feet from the bottom. The safety rope had tightened in a vice-like grip around my chest and I was spinning like a top in mid-air. The belayed and the fixed rope (both of which were in the same karabiner) were tangled and knotted!

Despite my total lack of climbing experience, I immediately made the correct diagnosis and with what little wind was left in my crushed chest, I called out bravely, 'Cut the safety rope, Carlos.'

'Don't you dare,' bellowed Slesser, 'that's my rope. It cost 7 pounds.'

What took place in the next twenty minutes is too bizarre and shameful to recount. It was patently obvious that Ribeiro could not pull me up; I could not detach the safety rope without endangering my life by releasing the rappel; there was no way that Slesser could get to me, since I was four feet from the cliff in mid-air.

I am convinced to this day that had I not offered Slesser a case of Scotch I would still be hanging battered and bruised above the foot of Dedo de Deus. If Malcolm Slesser saw, as he wrote, the

Finger of God wagging at him as we left the scene, it was because Deus was saying 'For shame! For shame!'

[POSTSCRIPT Adherents of this divine digit may be interested in the following, kindly sent by Col. Roger North: 'The Brazilian P.O. issued a special stamp in April, 1962, to mark the 50th anniversary of the first ascent of the Dedo de Deus. The stamp is emerald green and white, with a design showing the peak itself behind a rope and rucksack. "8.00 cruzeiro" is in the top corner and "Ia Escalada ao Dedo de Deus—1912-9 iv—1962." Execution is rather indistinct, but sufficiently clear to show the formidable nature of the peak.' It may be bought for a few pence from dealers.

We regret that the 'do' instead of 'de' in our last issue derived from Slesserian Portuguese—*Hon. Editors*].

THE SHELTER STONE CRAG

By James Renny

IN the heart of the Cairngorms a mighty granite bastion broods over the south-west end of Loch Avon. Tumbled in the generous leavings at its base lies the Shelter Stone, the monstrous boulder-refuge which gives the crag its name. For over half a century climbers have been attracted by its splendid remoteness and unmatched rock scenery, its 800-foot swoop of polished granite slabs and steep holdless walls. However, it is only in the last ten years or so that routes worthy of the crag's sensational appearance have been made. Since in my view these recent routes provide some of the finest climbing in the country, I have written this brief outline of the history of climbing on the crag, in the hope that more climbers may be tempted to visit it.

It was in 1907 that the first routes were recorded. Not surprisingly, they fell to Harold Raeburn, one of the finest climbers of his day. In company with Goggs, Raeburn first descended a fairly straight-forward rib on the extreme left of the crag, *Castle Wall*, and then reascended by the steep 650-foot pillar which bounds the Central Slabs on the left. This fine natural line, although very much on the flanks of the crag, was exceptionally hard for its time and is still considered Severe.

Succeeding generations of climbers, perhaps overawed by the immensity and imposing verticality of the cliff, perhaps finding easier pickings elsewhere, failed to follow Raeburn's lead. At any rate, fully 40 years passed before another climb was recorded. This was *Clach Dhiàn Chimney*, the result of the third attempt to find a way up the complex right flank of the great central nose (the first two had been terminated by accidents, one fatal) and was climbed

by W. S. Thomson and a C.C.P.R. party. It follows the line of a deeply-cut chimney which peters out below the final line of crags.

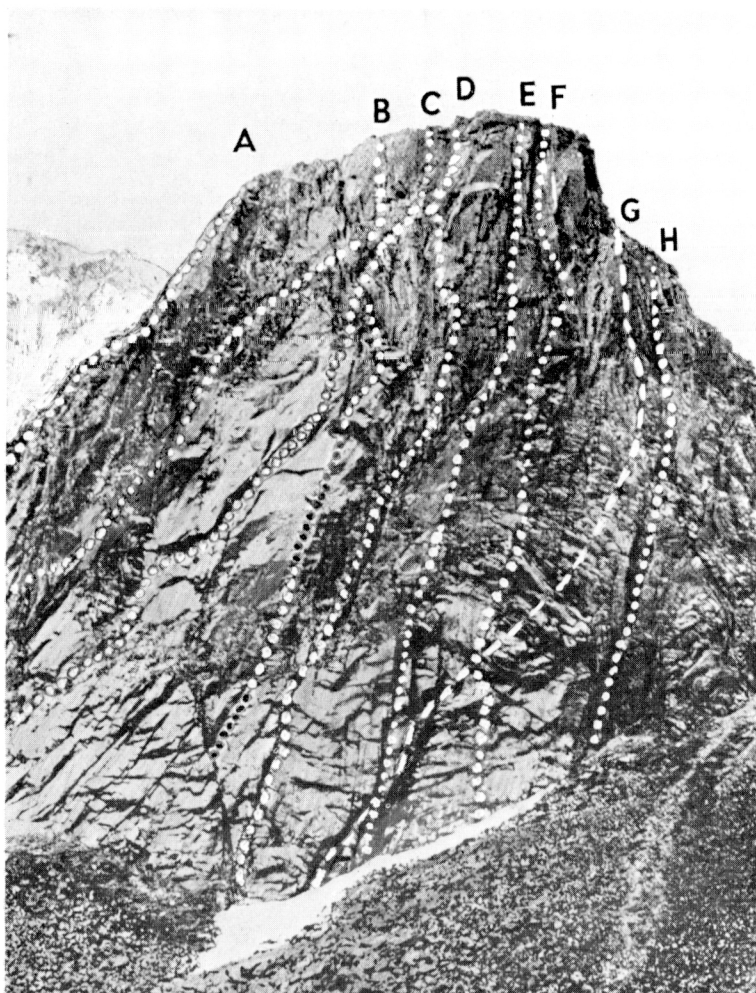
Shortly after this, in 1953, Taylor and Patey climbed *Sticil Face*, which takes the line of the gully between *Raeburn's Buttress* and the Central Slabs and crosses the face above these slabs to finish on the left of the central nose, a route unfortunately marred by heavy vegetation. Significant was the fact that, despite the classical nature of the line, it was nonetheless Hard Severe.

However, in spite of these fine efforts, no-one had yet succeeded in climbing on the well defined central part of the cliff—on the left the breath-taking sweep of the pink Central Slabs; on the right the jutting grey nose, seamed by monolithic cracks and guarded by an apron of steep walls and slabs. It was obvious that it was on these sections of the crag that the best lines and greatest difficulties would be found.

In the middle fifties a young Aberdeen climber, J. Y. L. Hay, showed by his ascents of *Djibangi* and *The Dagger*, two very good new routes in the modern idiom on nearby *Creagan a' Choire Etchachan*, that he, of the Cairngorm regulars, had the best chance of climbing the central portion of the crag. In 1956 Hay and Adams made their attempt. However, in trying to find a way up the apron of slabs below the nose they were forced further and further right, eventually finishing near *Clach Dhian Chimney*. This climb, *Postern*, was Hard Severe. One year later, Grassick, Lillie and Nicol, again attempting a direct line, could do no better than straighten out Hay's line a little, in its upper section.

The breakthrough came in 1958, when Ronnie Sellers, like Hay a gifted young Aberdeen climber, and G. Annand forced a line up the centre of the cliff. They followed a prominent chimney and groove system dividing the pink granite of the Central Slabs from the grey granite on their right which led on to the left wall of the great nose. They then climbed the nose by its left-hand side, the crux pitch, a smooth crack in a vertical wall, requiring the use of artificial aid. *The Citadel*, as it was named, was undoubtedly the hardest route on the cliff and was not repeated until 1966, the climbers being McArtney and Lawrie, again from Aberdeen. Shortly after this, Sproul, Renny, MacEacheran and Burnett from Edinburgh made the third ascent, climbing the crux pitch free and finishing the slabs above in a thunderstorm. To date it has had a further two ascents.

In 1961, Malcolm Smith, editing the first volume of the Club's rock-climbing guide to the Cairngorms, clearly felt that with the ascent of *The Citadel* the Shelter Stone Crag had parted with the last of its secrets. Thus, 'The Central Slabs . . . , nearly 500 feet of unjointed granite, are manifestly impossible. This is also the case with much of the rock forming the great, vertical bastion to the right . . . , unless mechanised techniques are employed to excess:



J. Renny

The Shelter Stone Crag. A, Raeburn's Buttress; B, Sticil Face; C, Thor (starts on left) and The Pin (starts on right); D, The Citadel; E, Steeple; F, The Needle; G, Postern; H, Clach Dhian Chimney.



J. R. Marshall

The late great Robin Smith, most prolific of our posthumous contributors; a portrait requested from as far afield as Africa, the United States and New Zealand.

....(But) undoubtedly a great challenge is a direct finish (to *Postern*) by the stupendous 100-foot hanging crack, cleaving the perpendicular rocks midway between *The Citadel* and the right skyline.'

The literature of mountaineering is full of such dangerous statements, but few can have waited so short a time for falsification! Edinburgh and Aberdeen climbers had been looking for a direct ascent of the nose ever since Sellers' climb and in 1962 Robin Smith, the most brilliant climber of his era, and Davy Agnew, a Creagh Dhu strong man, climbed directly from the lowest rocks to the summit of the nose, accepting Mac Smith's challenge of the enormous (in fact, 170 ft.!) hanging crack *en route*. 870 ft. long, *The Needle* (in the Haystack!) was climbed completely free—a remarkable achievement on a route of such length and severity. It boasted at least five long Very Severe pitches and a triple crux, the second (the 'crack for thin fingers') being perhaps the most demanding. Smith's reputation no doubt delayed its second ascent until 1967 when two young Aberdonians, Forbes and Rennie, succeeded after a hard fight. That same year Sproul and Porteous, and Renny and MacEacheran, made the third and fourth ascents respectively. It is a much harder and more serious climb than *The Citadel* and for sustained severity, purity of line and cleanness of rock (a rare event in the Cairngorms) it ranks with the great contemporary routes of Glencoe and Ben Nevis.

In 1968, we have seen the most significant development of the cliff to date, three excellent lines of the highest standard. Perhaps the most impressive of these is *Steeple*, climbed by Spence, Watson and Porteous from Edinburgh, which follows an obvious line of grooves and cracks between *The Citadel* and *The Needle*, finishing up a 200 ft. corner-crack of uncompromising steepness and directness. Apart from two moves low down, the climb is once more entirely free.

The other two routes lie on the 'manifestly impossible' Central Slabs. A thin crack line immediately left of *The Citadel*, *The Pin*, gave Carrington and Gardner from Glasgow an extremely sustained free route—surely a phenomenal achievement—while further left, Rennie and Strange's *Thor* followed the long curving dièdre. Unfortunately, a great deal of artificial aid had to be used on this last route.

In 1969, with four long and sustained free routes of the highest class and much unvisited rock, the Shelter Stone Crag need not be ashamed of its vegetation.

[We follow with Carrington's account of his remarkable climb, 'The Pin'].

THE PIN

A New V.S. on Shelter Stone Crag

By Robert Carrington

WE dragged ourselves away from the Centre—without too much difficulty for the summer was ending and cash was low. We drove slowly up the twisting road; then a quick pad up through the pylons, over the rounded top, and steeply down to Loch Avon and the Shelter Stone.

There it was, obvious once the large slabs could be forgotten, a long straight wire of a crack on the right of the slab. We—Jimmy Gardner and myself—quickly made our way up the rubbish till we reached the steepness. We weren't the first: the last party had left a peg and crab.

The first pitch looked magnificent, steep and a holdless crack. The toss put me in the lead and the first step from the homely ledge showed me the steepness to be expected; very small holds and sparse, with protection frighteningly lacking. Halfway up and a resting place. Which way now, right or left? Neither promising—well, only way—straight up. A few funny moves and I was up to a ledge and my first breath for five feet.

Jimmy's pitch is easy to the overlap. Up he goes, moving unhurriedly till he stops. I look up from the parties at the Stone to see how he's getting on. An extremely uncompromising position and it looks easy. A few desperate downward movements and he informs me it needs a peg. I don't believe him, it really looks easy, and claim he's off form and am promptly offered a go. I reach his highest point and see his problem—no holds. The next problem, how to get down. He definitely is not off form, and I humbly batter in a leeper and keep going.

From the belay Jimmy goes up to the dripping overlap. A tentative attempt at it free, and then the decision for a nut. After many attempts he fits a nut, pulls up, swings left; a heave and he's out of sight. A little while later the rope stops and brings me up. The slabs are deceptive and once again the easy, isn't.

Well that's all for today, rope off the 150 ft. to the bottom. Slow work this; only 150 ft. in more than 5 hours. Back down to Irish steak and games of cards.

The new morning was born its usual dull self and it had just stopped raining. While two Sandhurst fellow-dossers argued about who buttered the bread and who got the butter out of the pack we settled down to a lazy day. Approaching afternoon we roused

ourselves and decided to have a look from the top. It was too wet for climbing and courage and nerves needed a day to recover.

We made our way up a gully in the process of collapsing, then traversed right to overlook the slabs. Arriving at the top of the buttress to the left of the slabs, we surveyed the hanging garden of slipping slimy vegetation which barred our way to the top of the climb. Donning the rope, I led out across this treacherous jungle, fixing runners all the way. After about 450 ft. we safely arrived at the exit crack and belayed.

Then followed the complicated task of fixing abseil and safety ropes, learning how to prusik, and hoping my stars were in the correct positions. Slowly I lowered myself down the cliff trying to garden the crack as I went. The rope wasn't long enough to reach the previous day's highest point but what I saw gave my stomach that feeling which was becoming quite a regular feature of the summer—maybe it was sunstroke. Then came the complicated bit—fixing the prusiks. Thank God for the top rope; it always takes me two shots to fix the slings; I must practise in safety some day. Slowly spidering my way up the cliff I had ample opportunity to survey the difficulties. Not vertical, but steep and with very strange holds and little choice. Back across the grass and rubbish, then up to the top instead of risking our bodies in the gully. Down to the doss and a large meal and more cards.

The next day rose wet and we quickly breakfasted for the trip to the bright lights of the centre. We freewheeled down to Aviemore to save cash, then after many cups of tea in the Cafe retired to the Skittles Bar for a quick pint and a sight of the mini-skirted bowlers; the Shelter Stone really lacks in this respect—maybe the S.M.C. could help Before we lost control of ourselves we left for the solitude of Loch Avon.

The next morning, the last, promised well and left early hoping to get a wash if the afternoon was warm enough. We climbed up the previous stuff—it was still tricky. We arrived at the final belay. Jimmy cleared the mud off the holds and poured it down my neck. I suppose I did the same to him the last pitch. He moved up into an awkward position and reckoned a peg was necessary, but the crack was blind. Next he tried nuts and managed to flick one into a pocket; and then returned to Earth exhausted. Now Jimmy's a wee bit wee so I had a go thinking I might be able to use the nut hanging there 15 ft. above my head. I moved up and, semi-laybacking from three fingers, I grabbed the nut and out it popped. Sticking my fingers in the now vacant pocket I explored the next pocket—no joy. My strength flew out through the soles of my P.A's. The only way out now is to swing on to the wall and rely on friction once there. A quick move and I'm over, but mud doesn't help the friction and as I take one foot off to clean it the other slips; like trying to stay in the same place on an escalator.

No time to stop; just keep going and hope the Almighty is smiling. Many awkward moves later and I reach the belay at the top.

Jimmy came up with a bit of grunting; well, he is small. Then we piled up the gear and unanimously decided to abseil down rather than cripple ourselves with P.A. foot. The sun was still on the belt of sand so we shot off for a quick wash and a tin of cold rice to celebrate.

Magma

Climbers are fools, forget
What burns below.
Pluto's King—
What price their ice and snow,

Their high so tricky prize
On one day's granite?
Night unties
It all to bloody blankets

Or a bird in the bag.
Deliberately
They borrowed a crag
And plotted against the heart's

Tumult: they crystallised
Their brief desire
Impossibly close
To the rich destroying fire.

G.J.F.D.

SCOTTISH EXPEDITIONS TO THE HINDU KUSH

1965 and 1968

The first Scottish Expedition to the Hindu Kush, in 1965, took its place as the 16th Feich Trip of the Corriemulzie M.C. (see *S.M.C.J.*, 1968, xxix, 44 and 103) with eight new peaks among its successes. The second S.H.K.E., also of strong C.M.C. flavour, comprised P. V. Brian, D. B. Martin, R. A. P. Mellor, R. A. North, I. G. Rowe and J. Tancred, and went out last year to climb the much higher Lunkho I (22,400 feet); it succeeded, after every discouragement, including an almost simultaneous Austrian ascent by another route.

We give here, firstly, a typical back-packing day in the first S.H.K.E., as retailed by Tranter in the 1966 *C.M.C. Journal*. In the jargon of that Club, 'G.F. (or General Factotum)' was Tranter himself; 'The President,' John Wedderburn; 'The Treasurer,' Wull Fraser; 'The Bothy Secretary' or 'Private Guts,' Gavin Johnstone. 'Flatface' was an orographic feature.

Secondly follows Rowe's account of S.H.K.E., 1968.

Shike on the March, 1965

By P. N. L. Tranter

DESPITE its name, the Hindu Kush is no soft-number. The following account, though notably lacking in start or finish or even much between, may emphasise the point.

'Avalanche' said the President, looking grimly at Flatface. The Treasurer looked closely at his watch. 'There's a storm brewing. These clouds are earlier than yesterday.'

'Piffle,' the G.F. snorted, 'only a fool would try to judge the weather in the Hindu Kush. And as for your avalanche, that crack was there a week ago.'

The Bothy Secretary gave each of us an acid look, and held his peace.

For a few minutes there was silence on the glacier, till a serac crumbled in the sun and sent a shower of boulders down the icefall.

'Well, time to be off, I suppose,' said the G.F. squirming his shoulders into his rucksack which, like all the others, weighed over 80 lbs.

The Treasurer looked glum. 'You people are too impatient. This trip's supposed to be enjoyed. I've only been here half an hour and I need a decent rest.'

'What about your bloody storm?' muttered the G.F. darkly in his beard.

By now the President was standing, gasping for breath for the air is thin at 15,000 feet and standing up with 80 lbs no mean labour. He looked sternly at the G.F., 'On you go,' he said, 'I'm not going to go ahead and fall down the next crevasse.'

'Bah!' said the G.F. 'Don't let's start *that* again. Rope up if you want to, but don't ask me to tie on to your apron strings.' And so saying he gazed despairingly at Koh-i-Krebek and stolidly refused to move.

'Well' said the President with resignation to the Bothy Secretary, 'will *you* rope up with me for the Upper Glacier?'

'Oh yes, of course,' said Private Guts without hesitation, 'but just hang on a moment. I like to make my own pace on these marches and not flog myself to stay with someone else.' The President had half the rope uncoiled before a sudden thought struck him. 'How can we rope up if you want to make your own pace?'

Guts looked slightly apathetic. 'Umph,' he said.

The President sat down.

'Do you *really* think we need to rope up here?' said the G.F. quizzically, as if he thought it likely that the President was shamming. 'Seems plumb stoopid to me.'

The four of us gazed balefully at the wide uncrinkled white expanse of the Upper Shosh Glacier, three of us marshalling our thoughts.

'Of course' said the President, with awe-inspiring force. 'More lives are lost by fools taking chances on so-called safe glaciers than anywhere else in mountaineering,' and the way he said 'safe' made the G.F. wince.

The G.F. was stung. 'That damned glacier's as safe as a house. Anybody falling down a crevasse on it ought to be shot. In any case he couldn't manage it if he was wider than 3 inches. Roping up here is a *criminal* waste of time—the sort of thing that *leads* to accidents, just like Blyth and Neill nearly killed me on La Meige.'

'Do you really think these crevasses are less than 3 inches wide?' said the President looking again at the wide, unwrinkled desert. 'I've found dozens already at least 10 feet, completely hidden by bridges.'

'Well I haven't.'

The President gave the G.F. a pitying look as if to say 'poor fool, he'll not last long that way.' Then, adopting a meekly authoritative manner, he looked at his boots and said, 'When I was in Greenland, I saw men fall down crevasses when I'll swear you couldn't see a trace on the surface.'

'Perhaps *you* couldn't,' said the G.F.

'Are you suggesting *you* could have?'

'Yes,' said the G.F. pleasantly. 'A climber must watch his every step all the time, looking to right and left and not just straight ahead, use his intelligence. If there's a crack to the left of him, he must assume it continues in front of him. That's what I call

a trace.' And to hear him speak you could only assume the President had never looked left or right in his life. 'The only crevasses *I've* ever seen anyone fall down I wouldn't have gone near unroped had I been paid.'

'Sorry,' said the President viciously, 'I'd forgotten you were a genius and can disregard everything ever written in a climbing book. Do you think all their authors a crowd of imbeciles?'

'Yes,' said the G.F. defiantly. 'By the way, I hope *you* always remember to leave a note of your route at the local rescue post before you climb a Munro. And of course you'd *never* go alone.'

Silence.

The Treasurer tore his eyes away at last from Tirich Mir. 'By the way, it's just occurred to me. Don't you think it might be better to rope up on this glacier?'

Guts, who had now looked grim for rather over a week, looked slightly grimmer.

The sun had gone behind a cloud, and in an instant the sweltering heat was frozen in its tracks. The Treasurer, who regarded cold with even more disdain than he did the talk of his companions, did not appear to notice, but the rest of us reached hastily for cagoules. The G.F. who, however much worse-tempered, was usually better organised in matters of detail, was wearing his before the others had found theirs in their packs, and, looking about him with an air of resigned condescension, shrugged into his vast pile of luggage and lurched slowly off up the glacier.

Plod, gasp, plod, gasp, plod, gasp, plod, gasp . . . at the pace of a spastic snail, he moved straight as a die across the wide, white desert, leaving behind an even line of boot prints some 3 inches deep and, according to the Treasurer, much too far apart. And gradually, each in his own time, the others followed.

First the President, whose technique was altogether different. He pushed forward like a scalded cat, an unkempt, shambling figure that collapsed in the snow in a derelict heap at intervals of two yards, only to surge forward again betimes. Despite contrasting styles, the two men's speed was somewhat similar.

Next the Treasurer got up from his seat on the rock—for the Treasurer always sat on a rock when the rest of us lounged in the snow—brushed some snow from his stockings, adjusted the rolling of his sleeves to achieve a perfect symmetry, picked up his pack as if it contained a load of feathers and placed it squarely on his shoulders, and marched like a grenadier bolt-upright up the glacier. Thuswise he would march till the end of his strength and then twice as far beyond, until he caught up with the G.F. and the President.

Then finally, after watching a spiralling chough with rapt attention for fully 40 minutes, Guts decided he should probably proceed—after all, had he not given the others plenty of time to beat a track up to Camp II?

Private Guts is a man of iron will. This marching was enjoyable—damn it, the whole trip was enjoyable (as in fact it was), 80 lbs was nothing, oxygen unnecessary, deep soft snow made splendid going. The view was a joy to look upon, great icy Himalayan peaks glimpsed through the eddying storm. Only the steely glint in his eye and the regular drip of sweat from his nose betrayed the effort of will.

Somewhere out ahead, the flailing President had caught the plodding G.F. and converse was resumed. Life now seemed different. The two of us struggling against every element of nature, not least ourselves. Faced with a job that took our every ounce of strength, sterile argument seemed as futile as it was. Although the President still followed religiously exactly in the G.F.'s tracks and the G.F. made great show of testing every little fissure he could find, the subject of crevasses was avoided like the plague.

Instead, of course, we talked of food—till this became too painful and we must needs desist. But now that peace was re-established, the will to keep it so was very strong. We talked of home, of Liz and Johnny striding through the rain in Harris, of Chris and Jimmy grinning on a glacier in Greenland. Where would Blyth be? Perhaps in a pub, or in a debtor's court—certainly nowhere near a hill. (In cold fact he was in Fort William jail at the time). And as the miles inched by unnoticed in the whiteness round about, and that pressing wolf exhaustion crept nearer to the door, the Hindu Kush lost its reality and the rest of the world seemed altogether nearer. At any moment Uncle might appear, complete with mournful tidings, a guide-book under one arm and a load of chickens in the other. Alas, that was a mirage, but the shatterment was real.

At last the two men reached the limits of their strength, and even talk could not disguise it from them. For 10 long minutes the G.F. had been eyeing a boulder on ahead and when he reached it he crumpled in the snow in a state near ecstasy. The flailing President had long since ceased to flail, and only crept along with dragging feet or will-power as his fuel. The collapse of the G.F. had been his fervent wish for half an hour, and now he had it their reconciliation was complete and absolute. He looked about him for a moment as if to say 'So you've stopped, have you? I wasn't going to bother. But if you want to . . .'. But this was standard ritual between them. The G.F. would have done the same had their roles been reversed and no offence was meant or taken as the President tottered to the snow beside him.

Just at that moment, a strange white light began to pierce the gloom and the swirling mists parted to the east. Through a gap in the splintered granite wall that hemmed the glacier, a vast mass of gleaming, dazzling white could be seen, as if it hung suspended in the sky. Even though now a familiar sight, Tirich Mir never failed

to take our breath away, a monster mountain 70 miles away, that towered a full 2 miles above the welter of mere fifteen thousanders that lay between.

There was silence for a moment on the glacier, a silence part of awe and part exhaustion. But soon the President was digging in his pack, rummaging about with fixed intent and the G.F. knowing what he was about, watched his every move. This was the moment of triumph, the moment that each had longed for since the march began. At length, with a gleam in his eye that bid fair to outshine Tirich Mir, the President withdrew his arm from his pack and sat back.

In his hand he clasped a small round tin, its pinkish label torn and soiled with sweat and dust. For a while he just looked at it, savouring his thoughts, but the G.F. was less patient and snatched the thing away.

This was no time for delicate finesse. Holding the can firmly on the crystalline snow he smote it hard with the pick of his axe with practised skill and soon a ragged gash was torn across the top. (G.F.'s note. This technique took some days and many crushed fingers to perfect). A moment's leverage and the contents were exposed and the G.F. licked his axe with relish.

It was a tin of salmon.

Solemnly, as if partakers of a regal feast, the two men ate each a quarter of the flesh, ice-axe and fingers serving well for knife and fork. Each could with ease have eaten all the tin and twenty more besides, but instead, religiously, they left a half of it untouched, for Guts and the Treasurer would need it too.

Stamping a huge arrow in the snow that pointed at the tiny tin, the two men left it there and plodded onwards.

Two hours later, without another word, they reached Camp II.

Scottish Hindu Kush Expedition, 1968

By I. G. Rowe

THE consolation for the return to an old environment is to luxuriate in juxtaposition. If I must sit in a greasy Glasgow bus it is better to imagine it bumping up the valley of the Oxus, following Marco Polo through Samarkand in Partick, under the towering Pamirs at Govan. Or perhaps our porters dream of the Mystic Occident in the Wakhan winter; it's all relative.

There I sat one day last July in a ring with the WILY PATHAN RABBLE. Remember, said Jim, fifty years ago they castrated your grandfather. I slapped bank notes in the circle and lost my

first bargaining encounter. They bound up their ridiculous loads in woollen ropes, clanking pans, Daz, Instant Whip, staggering off up that stony valley on fragile brown pins, new comic animals of Western Junk, smelling of sheep, up that valley where Uparisina stood like a petrified flame, definitive white in definitive blue, and I thought, so this IS IT, how easy it all is. They would stop, and I would say 'Come on!' and they would mimic 'Come on!' and get up and move through the hot merry morning. And then they stopped in a copse and started to smoke opium and make bread while I became impatient and Alan and Paul became amused at me and them. Twenty glassy-eyed men in a shaded copse of surprising green. Ultimately with four of them we established Base Camp after several days of ferrying; the old headman, Fakir, was wanting to return to the valley and indicated as much by obscene gestures of the fingers. Off they went to sample the food and toilet paper they had stolen. Who used the sexy page of *Funeral in Berlin*? **READY FOR THE FRAY. THE CHIPS WERE DOWN.**

Dave's mother's little red flags soon winked across the glacier to Advance Base by the lateral moraine on the east side. **BEFORE OUR EYES THE PEAK WE HAD VENTURED SO FAR TO SEE.** The valley was closed by a great six thousand-foot wall. Lunkho was the hump at the west end, and Pt. 6845 m. or Little Lunkho the shapely peak at the east end. That was what we should have gone for straight away, knowing that the Austrians were in the next valley and probably high on Lunkho's N.W. flank. Over the wall was the Pakistani backyard of Chitral and Swat. This camp was two little tents, by thaw and freeze becoming orange heads on ice mushrooms.

Camp 1 was across the glacier, up an ice fall, and in the middle of a high glacier tucked into Lunkho's back pocket by the arm of the north ridge. A lassitudinous focal point in a paraboloid of reflecting whiteness, where stones stopped short of the tent like collapsing marathon runners and avalanches begat fatalism. **DWARFED BENEATH THE MIGHTY WALL.**

A couloir led up to the North Ridge, Whymper style, and the ridge prickled a bit before dropping to a col otherwise inaccessible. After that, a few snowy gendarmes and then the ridge broadened into a whaleback as it joined the Summit Ridge. No real technical difficulties; yet we were very unlucky. We would get into a striking position both technically and logistically and then lenticular masses of cloud would roll over from Chitral or Samarkand; four times we tried. On the first, Alan and Paul came down before the weather. On the second we met new and unstable snow above the col, and bad weather. On the third Dave carved a staircase in the snow above the col and we left a high dump before going down into the valley to the west for a forty-mile round trip back to base. On the fourth Alan and I sat in a high snow cave for thirty-six hours while

a BLIZZARD RAGED outside and the primus refused to work and threatened to suffocate us. On the descent we failed to find Camp 1 in the whiteout and spent the night in a bivouac in an avalanche track 200 yards from the partially-buried tent.

By this time we had had similar bad luck on other side of the high surrounding peaks and were feeling a bit disenchanted. In the last week of the Expedition Paul and Dave went off to Koh-i-Quala Panja (21,000 feet) and Patrick and Jim to a new peak, leaving Alan and I for Lunkho.

On 1st September we set off from Advance Base under a high fierce sun in that perfect lapis-blue sky. My diary:—

'All the way up the ice-fall Alan had trouble with his bindings and several times lost one or both crampons from his boots—one time in particular causing him to slip and land up to the thighs in water bed at 15.45. At 23.15 we got up, saw that it was a fine cold night By the time the meal was cooked and Alan's boots thawed out, it was 02.45, and we set out much later than intended. Despite the variable snow in the couloir we made good time, largely because we moved simultaneously during the final stages. Dawn came up on the traverse to the col . . . the snow had avalanched off exposing not a few of the old steps, so that we could again move with confidence . . . up, yet again, the familiar pitches, the view opening up to the Soviet Union and China as we made height. At the steep gendarme before the snow cave, Alan was leading on a piece of ice which started to move; he quickly climbed it! . . . the snow was getting worse as the sun rose and we were glad to arrive at the cave at 14.30, 11½ hrs from Camp 1.

'There had to be something, so the primus refused to work, so that I had to sit out in the tunnel with it between my legs . . . not as unpleasant a job as when Alan had done it in a blizzard. Sleep at 17.00.

' . . . first pitch at 02.30 . . . it was hard work on bad snow. Subsequent pitches were little better in the darkness. Alan was having trouble with his boots . . . and was worried about his toe, numb since the bivouac of 28 August. I was feeling eager . . . and performed better than Alan in the early stages; he complained my steps were too far apart.

'There was little to distinguish one pitch from the next; snow quality was never consistent in any and it was all exhausting work—sometimes tiptoeing up on crampon points (rarely), or wading through thigh-deep powder . . . a half-dozen steps was enough, and one had to stop to rest . . . did not feel inclined to take off duvet or windproofs due to a westerly wind sweeping across the ridge . . . not strong but very cold so that our cramponed feet were numbed . . . above we could see clouds billowing over the ridge; these gave us some sorry around midday, but later they dispersed. At around 13.50 and 21,000 feet we left our sacks and

continued to climb without them to a rock band near the crest of the Frontier ridge. Quite a hard pitch this, led by Alan. I led through and arrived on the . . . knife-sharp crest of a ridge, one foot in Afghanistan and one in Pakistan. The southern side plunged away down to a long, dirty, difficult-looking glacier, and eventually the depression of Chitral could be seen. Further off, the Karakoram, and to the west, more of the Hindu Kush, culminating in Tirich Mir, or Noshag, swathed in ominous cloud. The cloud patterns were quite dramatic and we were quite lucky to be in the clear.

'The summit lay along the ridge to the east, as defined by the Austrians with a level some days before. We followed their still-extant tracks for several rope lengths, more or less horizontally, and saw that the gendarme they had selected as summit was still some distance away, though no more than 100 to 200 feet higher. Therefore, being concerned about the descent, and Alan's feet, we selected a hump of snow on the ridge and called it our summit . . . It was 15.00 hrs and we had been climbing for 12½ hrs. . . . At last we could stop batting our heads against our wall of bad luck . . . I felt the completion of a vendetta.

'We commenced to descend at a point slightly further east than our arrival point. This paid off, as there were no difficulties and the snow was good; in fact, once we started down there was little hindrance to our descent and we made very good time back to the Cave.

'Alan's feet were very ugly; his right toe was numb as before, but now in addition his left toes and foot were swollen red and numb; his boots had to be pulled off, and the inners were frozen to the outers, which were solid . . . cooied down at 20.00 after taking Ronicol.

'4th September. Woke 07.00 to find the worst with Alan's left foot. The toes had developed large blisters overnight . . . we would have to get down as soon as possible. After cornflakes and coffee we used the stove to thaw out his boots . . . eventually achieved with a not-too-subtle use of a hammer.

' . . . started down at 09.00. We were lucky to find that the old steps were still in good condition and after the first pitches we made good time down to the col, Alan using the heel, largely, of his left foot, and moving very well despite the pain.'

Perversely the descent was most enjoyable. We had time to savour the mountain and the situation. An apogee of existence. All going down to comfort and retrospection with the delicious re-awareness that oxygen was giving. Did we really? Yes we did, and in the future we will always have done it. Look now, me, and pull it all in, all those mountains and this moment, and in the future you will always remember that you realised the moment, and did not waste it.

Later that day we were very tired, heeling down that interminable couloir, a terrible toe-bashing couloir for frostbitten feet, a

tired Alan full of pain, to a lazy tent squat on the glacier. A rest for him while I packed some gear. Strange is the utter desolation of a damp paperback novel left in a high camp while so much goes on above Up again in the slow afternoon to plod over to the ice fall and down to Advance Base. A brave sprint at the end by Alan to beat the sunset and we ended that most splendid day.

Next a long lie and a whole day to hobble slowly down to Base. Alan was immobilised from that moment until his arrival in Aberdeen some 10 days later. He has lost all of the toes of his left foot.

Jim and Patrick had been successful on their peak, which was named Koh-i-Andaval (18,500 feet). Paul and Dave had retreated high up on their mountain by adverse snow conditions. We were all replete and ready to go.

AN EXCURSION IN SCOTLAND

By Royal Robbins

[For the benefit of our older Salvationists, the author is one of the best known young climbers in the United States. The exploits of his group on the pitiless fly-frying Yosemite granite have had a great influence on advanced-aid climbing in Europe. His impressions of a snatched, wet and pitonless day in Glencoe are therefore all the more interesting; they include a visitor's glimpses not only of the rock and the weather, but also of the varied fauna haunting the neighbourhood—*Hon. Eds.*].

WHEN Chouinard returned to the States from his visit to Scotland, he said he had been treated like a king. He spoke highly of the manly, hardy race from the northern part of the British Isles. I wondered if I would be received the same way. Everyone likes Chouinard.

Impressions . . . legends . . . the Scots figure early in the consciousness of Americans—the edifying parables of Robert the Bruce; the great hero, Wallace; MacBeth, a rough but good man gone wrong . . . an evil woman led him astray . . . one mustn't get in with bad company; and the other characters in that play—Duncan, who was all good, the smooth-cheeked princes, they were Scots too.

When I met the reality I understood more deeply the legends. I visited Scotland while on a lecture tour down in England. It wasn't really a lecture tour. I showed some slides and a movie, and said a few interpretative words. Not really lecturing. I remember the reception at the Alpine Club: exceedingly polite, exceedingly unenthusiastic. One can't blame them. It was mostly the old guard, the conservatives who disdain pitons. And what I offered

was mostly American ironmongery, and some monkey tricks on big rock walls, hardly *grande alpinisme*. They must have felt like spectators at a zoo.

Tom Patey was the cause of our trip north. He telephoned us while my wife, Liz, and I were in the Lake District, and turned his considerable powers of persuasion to the task of convincing us of the propriety of making what we considered an impossible trip. Patey was enthusiastic. He would come down from Ullapool if we would come up from the Lakes. Meet us half-way. The time was late afternoon; with a lecture awaiting us just two days away, we found Tom's logic less than cogent. His enthusiasm, however, was so infectious as to be virulent. We caught the bug.

Late that same night we motored north along winding, narrow roads. I was occasionally startled into wakefulness when the car careened around a particularly bad curve. Liz was driving. I remember little except waking up amid amber lights. They were eerie, those long rows of amber lights in the black, wet, Glaswegian night. It seemed not a gay city.

I stumbled into a phone booth and called the number we had been given. Tom came out and led us to Mary Stewart's home in the country. In the morning we awakened to a life which one occasionally reads about in books, but rarely sees in reality, at least in the sedate American sort of reality to which we were accustomed. There were about half a dozen children, robust youngsters, beaming with superb health. Their frontier dress gave a hint of their wild free-spirited nature. The older ones cared for the younger, the strong for the weak. And there were the animals. Mary loves animals. There were dogs and cats of various aspect, goats, a horse, and . . . a lamb. Behind the house were 200 cats in cages, which Mary used, alas, for research.

Scattered about the house were individuals of widely varying sorts, folk-singers, do-wells and ne'er-do-wells, even a climber or two. All had come to Mary Stewart's pad for a bit of comfort and relaxation, and to escape the cares of the world.

Patey insisted we go to Glencoe. I felt more like sitting around Mary's place, taking it all in, but resistance was futile against such a tornado of energy. I can't remember when I first met Tom, but I had long admired him as one of those rare persons who have so much life that it rubs off on those around them. We had recently been involved together in a television stunt on the Anglesey sea cliffs in North Wales.

Tom drove north like he had only a few hours to live, and didn't want to waste a second. He talked continuously, telling Liz and me of this adventure and that, and relating pithy anecdotes of various climbing personalities, and other stories as well—doctor tales of marvellous complications which arise as a result of vaginitis. I couldn't help but suspect that Dr Patey embellished the stories a

bit, added a bit of Ullapool colour, as it were. But we didn't mind. As the car rattled north, Tom told us how proud of it he was. It was a red Czechoslovakian crate, and the wonder was, to us, that it ran at all. Patey says he's not mechanically adapted. If true, that car was a fine companion, as it seemed the most ill-adapted mechanical contrivance to which I had ever dared trust my life. But it got us there, and somehow got us back.

As we approached Glencoe, Tom pointed out various areas of climbing interest, and indicated several couloirs from which acquaintances had been avalanched. We bounced to a stop on a gravel lot. Before us stood the Buachaille. In front of it, much closer, was a white building, the S.M.C. hut. As we strolled by it, toward the mountain, Patey, ever anecdotal, told us how naughty Dougal Haston had estranged the leadership of the S.M.C. by painting the interior livid colours because he was bored by its drabness.

We were on our way to the Rannoch Wall, to do Agag's Groove, an easy Very Difficult route, which shows, damn it, how times change. The weather looked terrible, but Tom assured us he thought it would only rain. Only rain? I thought of the white, warm, Yosemite granite, and of the endlessly blue skies of the California summer days. Only rain? But clearly it rained a lot in Glencoe. Every footfall squeeged into the turf. We seemed to be walking on a gigantic sponge. The rock face was a long time getting closer. These hills are bigger than I thought, I thought. It's no wonder that in the winter, with the short days and the fearful Scottish ice climbs—of which we have heard, even in California—it's no wonder the epics occur, and that the stories find their way 6000 miles to the West Coast. But this was to be a fun rock climb, and Tom would take good care of us.

The route was pleasant, but undistinguished—just the sort I wanted. Liz and I roped up at the bottom, while Tom soloed ahead, to show the way. He kept close by, relating how one climber had fallen off here, another there. I can remember little of the route, except that it was enjoyable and just hard enough, considering we used no pegs. I was faced with a series of problems, none fearful, each of which had possibly several solutions, but only one elegant one which, when I found it, gave a feeling of pleasure, when my body moved up—a feeling akin to the thrill of solving a chess problem with just the right balance of simplicity and complexity. That is to say, the possibilities were, or appeared to be, complex, but the solution, when found, was beautifully simple. Such climbing, abundant in the British Isles, is comparatively rare in my country. One needs a steep wall which is rough, textured with small ledges, knobs, holes, jam-cracks, rugosities, bulges, shelves, flakes, horns, corners, ripples and overhangs, so the climber has something of a choice of whether to pull, push, wedge, cling, bridge, straddle, or

fall off. In the States, the free-climbing problems, though sometimes very hard, tend to be simpler in terms of intellectual problem-solving. This is particularly true of Yosemite. There, the smoothness of the rock limits the possible ways one can get up a given section of rock. The holds which a cunning mind might ferret out on a British crag often just don't exist in the Valley. I have observed that British visitors to the Valley fare no better than the locals on such walls as the north face of Sentinel Rock, which is 1500 feet of slippery jam cracks. And even Don Whillans had to sweat on the super-smooth Crack of Despair. But on the Crack of Doom, regarded by Yosemite veterans as just as hard, he found a very Whillansesque solution, an ingenious but straightforward combination which enabled him to pop up a section where I, for one, passed half an hour in intense struggle and finally overcame by dint of brute force and determination. While I am not the cleverest of American climbers, I believe this episode to be typical. And I believe it is at least partly a result of where the emphasis is placed in one's home training ground. In America, stress is on strength, gymnastic ability, and *technique*, in the sense of making movements (liebacks, jam-cracks, etc.). 'Working things out' is less important partly because of the type of rock we have, and partly because we use a lot of free climbing protection (mostly pitons). With good protection, a leader can afford to go all-out whether he has worked out a solution or not. If his security is middling, then judgment and cunning become his most reliable assets.

Anyway, Agag's Groove made no exorbitant demands upon my physical capacity, but what with those long, pitonless runouts, to err might be human, but it would also be fatal. Yet it was refreshing to climb with just a rope, *sans* paraphernalia. And I was feeling a bit northwallish clinging to the cold rock which a drizzle was now wetting. Liz came up happily, without apparent effort. It was her sort of climbing, if not our sort of weather.

When we reached the top, the yellow rays of the lowering sun were bursting through new rents in the clouds and lighting the vast moor to the east. My first moor. A moor at last. I had long heard of the great Scottish moors, and here was one for real. It, and the surrounding mountains seemed eerily desolate, and brought to my mind Jack London's tales of the Alaskan tundra. Patey had earlier described a frightful massacre that had occurred here. It seemed a fitting place for dark deeds and heroism.

The descent was a trifle dangerous, with the wet rock, and the lichen, moss, and grass which occasionally covered it. Tom saw us safely off the crag, and then, bursting with energy, ran cross country to fetch the Red Blitz to meet us at the end of our more direct descent. We walked straight down and passed what I presumed was a climber's hut. Some men were in front and one shouted

something incomprehensible. But I sensed it was shouted not to us, but *at* us. Anxious to avoid a situation in which I might be called upon to do something *honourable*, I light-stepped it, with Liz on my heels, from stone to stone quickly across a creek and reach the safety of the Far Side. And if you think that's easy, try it.

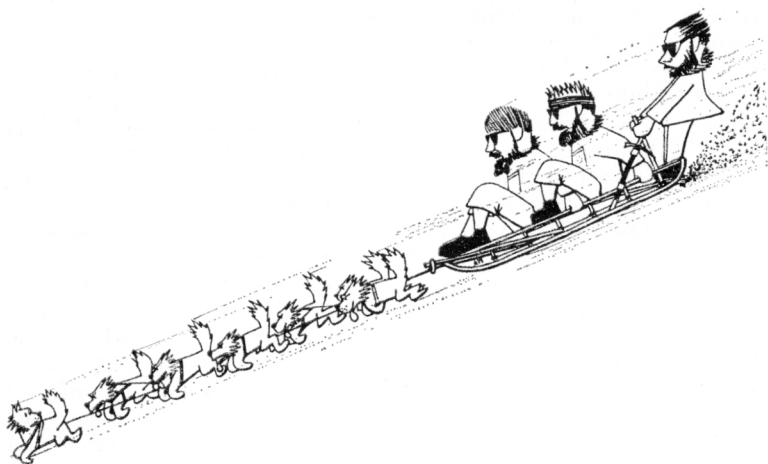
Later, Tom told us we were lucky they hadn't stoned us while we were crossing the creek. And at another time, another place, Davy Agnew, upon hearing me relate the story, told me exactly the same. Creagh Dhu boys, they were, and tough as they come. Jim McCarthy of Manhattan, no patsy himself, had first told me of this fabulous group, and described them, much to my astonishment, as such a rough bunch that they made the New York Vulgarians look like cream puffs in comparison. I didn't *really* believe this, at first. But now I have heard so many stories that I no longer doubt. Some of the best stories came from Agnew. Davy and I worked together as fellow ski instructors in the Leysin American School, in Switzerland. And as I write this, we are again co-performers in the production of a ski movie. Davy is a burly, strong, smiling man with a generous spirit. He skis like the wind, does back flips off the balconies of Swiss chalets, drinks with his friends, and is capable of slowly breaking the fingers, one by one, of a man who, in a fight, has grabbed him where he shouldn't. So, when Davy tells me of his mates in the Creagh Dhu who are *really* tough, I listen with awe.

As we drove pell-mell and lickety-split back toward Glasgow, Tom told us of Joe Brown's first trip to climb Ben Nevis in the winter, and of how happy the Scottish climbers were when the Human Fly fell several hundred feet down an icy couloir, and all this related in the spirit of good-natured, healthy, competition.

That night I showed the Yosemite climbing film which I had brought for my lectures to a small group in Mary's home. To give the right impression, I presented it professionally; that is, I lectured and played music on a tape while the film wound out its 40 minutes. By the time it was half-way through, I felt a pompous ass treating that small group as an Audience, and my embarrassed voice dribbled off into occasional self-conscious interjections. Later, the party improved as the drink flowed and Patey sang his wonderful songs. Brian Robertson was there. I had first met Brian after the Dru Direct caper that John Harlin and I had cut. Brian had been on the regular Dru west face route at the time and had taken some pictures of us, which he later tried to sell to John. I confess I remember feeling slightly superior to this commercialism, not realizing that a poor American climber was affluent compared to a poor Scottish one. I'm less uptight now. (Anyone want to buy some pictures?) Despite Tom's repeated refusals, Brian kept urging him to sing 'John's Song,' a Harlin-deflating ditty in the Patey manner. Considering that John had just died on the Eiger in circumstances prophetically described by Tom's song, and that I, a former friend

of John's, was sitting in the room, I thought Brian's repeated insistence a piece of marvellous Scottish *sangfroid* in the face of that grinning, expectant gloater waiting out there in the darkness for all of us. Finally Brian sang it himself, but rather diffidently, as if he *must*. I met Brian again in that haunt of the egoists, Yosemite Valley. He came to the Valley camera in hand, with modest ambitions and without fanfare; that is to say, with a sensible attitude, and proceeded to enjoy himself, to do good climbs, and to win the respect of the hyper-critical, snobbish Yosemite climbers. I remember Brian on the Camp 4 boulders: he was at first stopped by their peculiarly rounded and smooth character, but he kept at them with the dogged persistence of the famous Scottish spider, and was soon doing the hard ones.

Next morning, although a bit haggard, we drove south feeling proud and happy to have fitted so much living into so little time. We did not realize then that we had forgotten the lecture film, nor that when I had recorded the singing I had erased the music I used to accompany the film Mary Stewart saved us in the nick of time—but that is another story. As far as we knew, we were living happily ever after.



AAAAAANOW!—as on page 162.

COILS

A start of fear
 At the end, or the start
 Of the climb of the year,
 A manifestation of many of motive
 To force contemplation.

The sun sets and rises like hope
 As you coil up or uncoil the rope.

Remember long roads and black bogs to be crossed,
 In the thoughts, on the hill, in the wind or the frost.
 Are there some who never think,
 Never gasp, never blink?

Remember him stiffly doubled and the snow spattered red,
 Remember pulling him straight, his arm waving, dead,
 I felt indifferent,
 Even triumphant.

Remember long frozen-booted days and tentward plods,
 Sunshine, slow evenings, the pub, and glimpses of demi-gods.

Most days are reminiscent
 Therein the commitment

The sun sets and rises like hope
 As you coil up or uncoil the rope.

I've had enough of thinking
 Which way to go
 I'm just a nine till five man
 It won't matter if I know.

Yesterday a hard climb
 Just to find the score,
 Just to push the boat out,
 Just a little more.

Superannuated climbers
 Sitting on a rock,
 Following the guide book,
 And talking cock,
 Exaggerating cruxes
 Good for the vanity,
 Paying income taxes,
 Condemned to mundanity.

Inanimate environment
 That I'm animate inside,
 Not trying to break out,
 But trying to hide.
 I won't conquer transience
 Win time to understand,
 I'll be dead at the bottom,
 Long before I can.

There is no solution
 In quick forgot achievement
 Aesthetics are inadequate,
 Acquaintance breeds bereavement.

Let me have the cruxes
 Then there's no delusion
 Fear, dissolving complexes,
 Demands no false solution.

I. G. ROWE.

THE STAUNINGS ALPS AGAIN

By Donald Bennet

It was midnight at Reykjavik, and an old DC-6 rumbled along the runway. It was 'Slessor's Special,' northward bound for Mesters Vig with a load of climbers, and struggling to get off the runway before it plunged into the Arctic Ocean. There was a heartfelt cheer as we became airborne, and it was a great moment for Slessor, whose new career as a Travel Agent and Tour Organiser had literally just got off the ground for the first time.

Over Scoresby Land we jostled to look out of the windows. The horizon was suddenly filled with fantastic peaks, and cameras clicked. They were the Staunings Alps, as large and spiky in reality as they had been in our imagination, like the blade of a giant rip-saw drawn across the red northern sky. Back to earth with a bump after two hours, we climbed out into the cold arctic twilight. The midnight sun was just below the horizon and Mesters Vig looked dreich, a dusty runway, a row of wooden huts and hundreds of empty petrol drums littering the end of the runway. A disorganised chain gang of climbers unloaded the aircraft, tents were pitched and we snatched a few hours' sleep.

Next morning the harbour at Mesters Vig was busier than it had been since the days when the *Magga Dan* made its occasional visits to pick up rich lead and zinc ores from the mine. Now inflatable dinghies were being inflated and folding canoes unfolded. Climbers turned sailors earnestly discussed the tides, the winds and the state of the pack ice drifting menacingly half a mile offshore. First afloat was Graham Tiso's tiny craft, but by the time it was loaded the boat was just about submerged, only the cargo being visible above water. Our own dinghy, appropriately named the *Rubba Dan* in the best tradition of polar vessels, appeared marginally safer but slower. The manufacturers proclaimed their craft 'safe as the Ark,' but the Ark did not have to sail in these ice-berg-infested waters.

There were six in our group and the plan was that the *Rubba Dan*, piloted by Charlie Allan and Dave Jones, would sail round to the head of Alpe Fiord (where the good climbing is), with all the food. Meanwhile Norman Tennent, Robin Chalmers, Pat Gunson and I would walk sixty miles through the Staunings Alps, crossing two new passes on the way, to meet up with them in five or six days.

Two days and twenty miles later we were camped in a white-out in the middle of a maze of crevasses on an unknown and unnamed glacier. We thought of calling it the Blisterbrae in honour of

Tennent who was having trouble breaking in new boots (from Scotland's Leading Supplier). The outlook was gloomy and unless the weather cleared we were unlikely to find a pass at the head of the glacier that we had to cross. Gunson was detailed to lie with his head outside the tent; he might not sleep, but with luck he would see the pass if the weather cleared.

The weather did clear and we pressed on. The climb to the pass was easy and we looked down the other side at the glacier dropping to the Schuichert Glacier, the main ice-stream in this part of the mountains and our highway to the interior. The big moment had arrived when skis, which had been carried uphill so far, were taken off our backs and fastened on our boots for what we hoped would be a long downhill schuss. But this was not Coire Cas, worn smooth by a thousand skis, this was crusty, hummocky, crevasse-ridden snow and the schuss became a series of cautious snowplough turns and traverses; but it was better than walking. Soon we were eating lunch on the moraine of the Schuichert. The afternoon was purgatory as we plodded in blazing sunshine up the hard dry ice of the Schuichert Glacier, the longest ten miles I know.

Another two days and we were still on the move, slowly but surely, towards Alpe Fiord. From the Schuichert we had crossed the Trumpington Col, discovered by Cambridge climbers in 1963, and had good ski-ing across the Lang Glacier in perfect weather. The southern skyline was dominated by a chain of snow peaks with graceful ridges arcing between them. We were standing thoughtfully at the foot of our last obstacle, a barrier of rock and snow forming the pass between the Lang and Sefstroms glaciers. The pass was only a few hundred feet above us, but stones were trundling down with monotonous regularity, and the gully below the pass was scarred with avalanche debris. It was a danger that none of us liked. The only alternative was to climb one of the snow peaks to the south, traverse to the next one westwards and hope to descend from it into the Sefstroms. It looked like hard work, but the prospect of getting onto the tops after so many days' walking was good.

Easy climbing, encumbered by large sacs with skis sticking out awkwardly and catching on the rocks, brought us to the first peak, and a narrow snow ridge to the second. Both were cairned; they were probably the Diadem, two of three peaks climbed in this area by the Austrians in 1957, but we could at least claim the first traverse. The descent went well until the final drop to the Sefstroms Glacier on loose rock and steep scree. Always our skis would catch something loose and send it crashing down. The rocks ended a hundred feet above the bergschrund; a quick rappel landed us on firm ground, and skis were put on again. Slushy snow and sagging bridges over the crevasses brought us to an early halt and we camped a long way short of where we wanted to be.

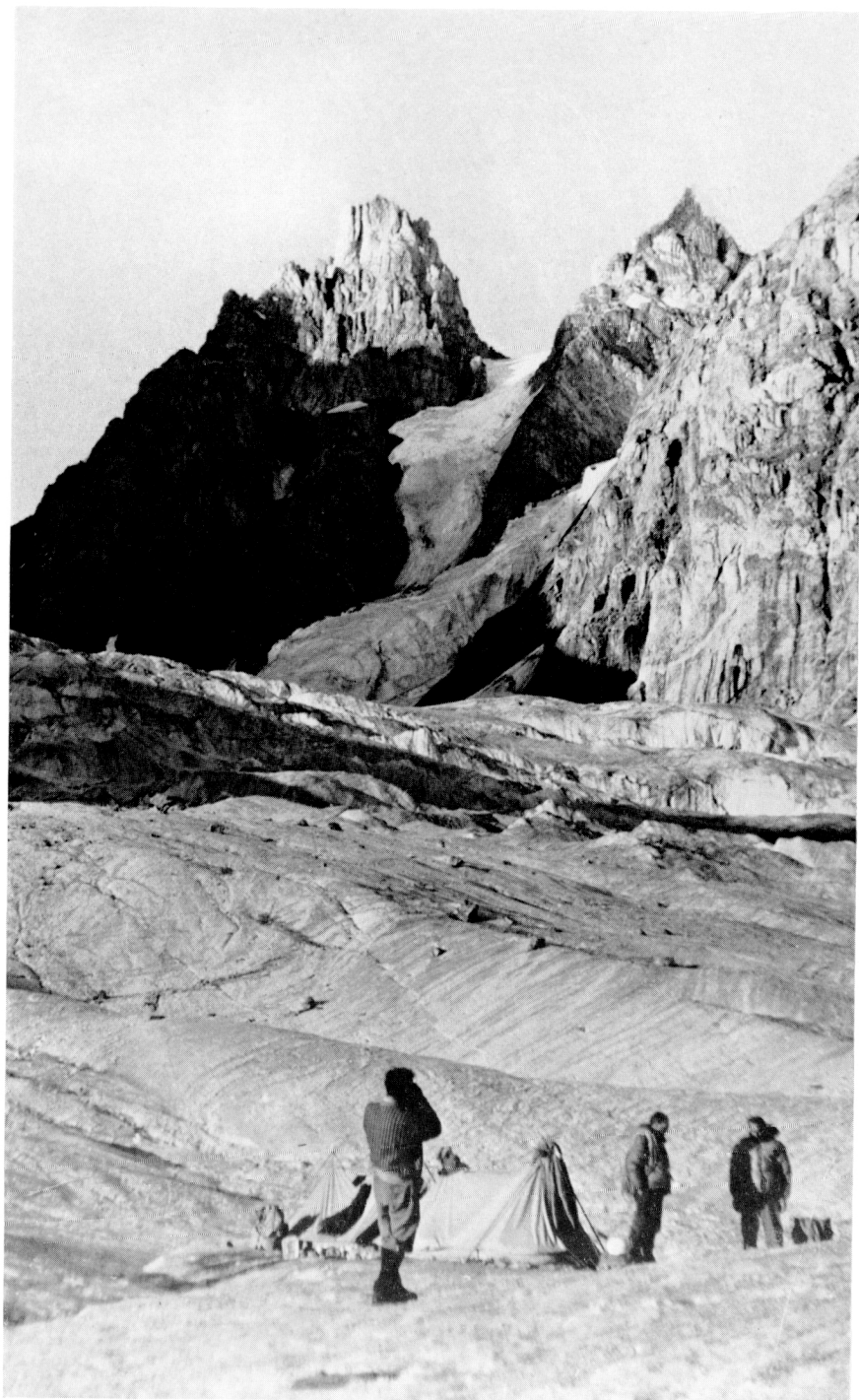
We slept while the sun declined and the glacier froze, then were off on skis again early next morning and threading our way through the icefall of the Grantabrae. By nine all difficulties were behind us, and ahead the familiar peak of Inverarnan showed that Alpe Fiord was near, only ten more miles. The last of the food went into breakfast and after that there was nothing to do but keep going and hope to find the *Rubba Dan* and its crew waiting to welcome us with big brews.

As we dropped down the last mile to Alpe Fiord alarm and despondency increased; no sign of the *Rubba Dan* or its crew at the appointed rendezvous. Unpleasant thoughts passed through our minds about their possible fate, and worse still our own plight, foodless and miles from the nearest food box. We lay on the rocks by the fiord contemplating our situation until Chalmers, scanning the fiord through the binoculars, spied a tent two miles away and we had to scramble cursing over slabs that dropped steeply into the fiord to reach it. Hard feelings and fatigue were soon mellowed by the pleasures of reunion and a surfeit of food and whisky.

Plans to spend a few days quietly by the fiord were spoiled by vicious katabatic winds that spilled off the ice-cap and swept down Alpe Fiord straight at our tents, threatening to blow them flat. Sand blew into everything and we crouched inside the tents, Tennent nursing his blisters and Gunson sleeping off the exertions of the previous days. It was so unpleasant that we determined to get back into the mountains as soon as possible. Tennent was out of action for a few days so five of us made the return trip up the Sefstroms Glacier.

Our first sortie took us up a side glacier where some fine snow and ice peaks looked promising. But as so often happens in this land of ultra-clear visibility they turned out to be much further away than they looked, and it would have taken all day at the rate we were going just to reach the foot of them. Nearer at hand another peak rose in a series of steep rock buttresses. The summit above and beyond them was invisible to us where we stood, and we had no idea what to expect, but at least we could start climbing without any more floundering in soft snow.

The lowest rocks were loose and gritty and no one was impressed; only Gunson and I in a spirit of bloody-minded obstinacy wanted to go on and we did. As we climbed higher the rock became better and steeper and we were determined to get to the top, even though we could still not see where it was, or how far away. Eventually we emerged onto a narrow ridge and scrambled over a few gendarmes to the summit, a little cone of snow beyond the highest rocks; the aneroid read seven thousand nine hundred feet. There was no sign of any previous ascent so we built a cairn and named our mountain Christinaborg. It was eight p.m. but time meant nothing; we knew we could descend throughout the night if necessary. It would be a



D. J. Bennet

Peaks above the Sefstroms Glacier, Greenland, climbed by the S.M.C. in 1958 and 1968: from right to left, Beaufort, Tirefour and—just out of the picture on the left—Tantallon, a fine many-spired peak cut off the original photograph by ignorant and pinchbeck Editorial economy.



D. Bathgate

Brian Robertson, jumars and a bergschrund; on the South Face of Huandoy.

bit colder, but otherwise no different from climbing by day. We were a couple of hundred feet above the bergschrund when the stillness of the night was shattered by the roar of stonefall directly above us; we clung to the rock and the air around us was filled with flying rocks and sulphurous dust. The noise died as the rocks buried themselves in the snow below us and we raced for the safety of the glacier. The mountains were filled with lovely colours that night, summits flushed red and gold in the midnight sun and ice cliffs glinting green and cold in the shadows below.

The time had now come when skirmishing with minor peaks was over and we turned our attention to our big goal—the Sefstromtinde, 9200 feet high and one of the great peaks of the Staunings Alps. Ten years ago I had tried it with Len Lovat, Ken Bryan and Stan Paterson, but our effort had been half-hearted, too easily turned back by technical difficulty and bad weather. For ten years the defeat had rankled, and as far as I knew the mountain was still unclimbed.

The first half of the route was obvious, a broad rock ridge rising from our camp on the Sefstroms Glacier straight up towards the summit, the south west ridge of the mountain. We had been up it before and it was a scramble. Then the fun began; a group of gendarmes about three hundred feet high straddled the ridge and barred progress. Ten years ago we tried a direct assault and even climbers of the calibre of Lovat and Bryan made little progress. This time I was determined to find another way, some outflanking move that would avoid a direct confrontation with these intimidating pinnacles.

The easy lower rocks provoked a mood of over-confidence, and there were some among us who were almost writing the mountain off as climbed before they were half way up. I did not want to discourage them by describing the difficulties higher up, and anyway I thought that in ten years they might have been magnified in my own imagination. But they had not, and as we climbed over a crest and the gendarmes suddenly reared up in front of us I had the same old sinking feeling in the pit of my stomach. They were still there as big and bad as ever, but with one difference; the south side of the ridge, which ten years ago had been a wall of ice was now bare rock, and there were ledges.

Gunson and I set off and soon found an easy ledge that led below the gendarmes. Beyond them we crossed a steep stone swept couloir, front points scraping on the pock-marked ice as we raced for safety on the far side. We were no sooner across than rockfall rattled down, and the others were discouraged from following us. This was a pity as there were no more difficulties, and we climbed pleasant sunwarmed ribs of rock and snow arêtes on the south face for another three hours. As we neared the top scraps of paper and a sardine tin dashed our hopes of a first ascent, and in the cairn a

note in a cigar tin told us that the first ascent had been in 1964 by three Swiss climbers. We added our names and consoled ourselves; it had been a good climb and we were in a superb position. Only the other nine thousanders of the Staunings Alps, about ten of them, equalled us in height; everything else was dwarfed. The most spectacular view was to the north where we looked straight down nine thousand feet into Alpe Fiord, dark and sunless in the late evening. Westwards the main Greenland ice-cap shimmered like a desert of undulating snow dunes. We lay on a sunny ledge below the summit for a while, but the prospect of the long descent prevented full enjoyment and forced us to move.

Meanwhile back at the camp there was a visitor, none other than Doctor Slesser himself, who had paddled his canoe up Alpe Fiord, called on Tennent and then strolled up the Sefstroms Glacier to meet us. Two days later he and Gunson climbed a most impressive tower of rock between Beaufort and Tantallon (two of our 1958 peaks), thereby polishing off the last unclimbed peak in this corner of the Staunings, where the S.M.C. has certainly left its mark.

That evening we all returned to Alpe Fiord, and as we came down from the mountains at midnight the sky was so calm and clear that the possibility of bad weather seemed remote. The high winds had dropped and the waters of the fiord were glassy calm, reflecting every colour of the sky; but it was the calm before the storm. Next morning we woke to the unexpected sound of rain on the tents (the first since our arrival), and outside snow was lying almost down to the water's edge. The sky was filled with dark clouds and the mountains were blotted out altogether. It looked as if climbing was out for the next few days, so we struck camp and departed down the fiord on the first stage of our homeward journey.

AND AGAIN

By Brian Hill

CREVASSES, crevasses, crevasses—and more crevasses! Nothing but crevasses! Big ones, wee ones—long ones, short ones—broad ones, narrow ones, fat ones, thin ones. . . . Sometimes there weren't any crevasses—just great holes in the ice and huge tottering seracs. We sat on the brim of the biggest crater and fumed. . . . Before us stood Dansketinde, the highest mountain in the Staunings, bathed in all its glory beneath the mid-day sun: but between us and it lay an impossible maze of crevasses. We turned back in despair.

We had been in Greenland 10 days and hadn't climbed a thing. For five days we had negotiated icefall after icefall, crevasse after crevasse, sweating blood to no avail.

But there is a mountain called Norsketinde. It's the second highest mountain in the Staunings and only a few Tisos smaller than Dansketinde. Now there are lines and other lines and this mountain had the best one of them all. Not a puny wee unidentifiable hairline crack wandering up an overhanging and vertical cliff but a beautiful slender couloir splitting a 4000 ft. face exactly in half, rising to the very summit.

At 6.30 the following morning, Roger Gaff, our faithful and inexpendable cook, was hunched over the porridge pot, the day's temperature indicated by his dripping nose and rigorous stirring. We waited for the warmth of the sun then left at 9 a.m., Willie Anderson and I for the couloir, while Roger and Tony Blenkinsop went to have a look at the S.W. ridge. More crevasses, but easier ones this time and by 11 a.m. we were ready for the gully. It was a glorious morning, brilliant and cloudless. We thought of the gully falling down but were convinced by the lack of debris that it would stay up for another week of unsurpassable weather.

I led off, Willie crossed the bergschrund and off we went up 45-degree snow-ice. We soon made mince of the snow stakes and killed off the dead men, rivets breaking as we vainly hammered them into belays. So we banged in screws and pitons alike.

Now I am not superstitious, but it was at the thirteenth belay at 1313 hours on Tuesday 13th August when we heard a grumble, and the grumble grew into a rumble and still we couldn't see anything. We're safe, we thought, it's another mountain. Then the grumble grew into a magnificent roar as hundreds of tons of rubble poured into our gully. 'What a way to go,' I thought as I shrank beneath my helmet and rucksack, awaiting annihilation. You can conquer peaks by wit, skill or courage but there's little you can do when it all falls down on top of you. The noise died away and, remembering that I was an atheist, I stopped praying. We brushed off the snow and admired the clouds of dust overhead. Rivers of mud and stones still trickled into the gully from the ridge on our left. More stones whizzed down at us from further up the couloir. Above to the right, about two pitches away, a projecting rib looked as if it would afford some protection. We hurried on, dodging the onslaught of loosened stones. Then just as Anderson was crossing the burn running down the middle of the couloir a stone hit him. I tightened the grip on the rope, wondering which fate would overcome him, drowning, falling or being flattened. He just swore. Distances were deceptive. It was another six pitches before we reached the protecting projection. Here we had lunch and listened to the artillery. Then just as I was about to gulp my favourite cheese my heart leapt into my throat instead. There was that noise again! It was bigger than last time, but fortunately below us.

We were only about half way up and we had already received two avalanches and a constant barrage of stones. How much more?

It was nerveracking, to say the least.

We carried on, keeping well on the right of the couloir, thus avoiding most of the stonefall. The gully was steadily steepening and the snow-ice had now a thin covering of slush. We cramponed up and up, pitch after pitch monotonously.

Avalanche danger was still not over. A small offshoot gully appeared on our right, filled with slush and mud; a distinctly unsafe pile of slimy boulders was perched awkwardly at its head. The main gully steepened considerably. It was my lead here. I took out my dagger and started running up on points. Next thing I knew, I was braking mightily on the axe and nothing was happening. I mantleshelved on it and gradually drew to a halt beside Wul. I thought I had gone about ten feet, but through the foul air I saw the slide of forty feet where I had ploughed aside the slush and laid bare pure ice. I apologised to my companion, who hammered in his peg a bit further, and began again as if nothing had happened, cutting great buckets. But then my arms got tired, so I cut small steps. Then my legs got tired. I therefore cut medium-sized steps and when I all got tired, gave up, belayed and shouted for Wul. He ran up, passed by and continued at great speed up to the safety of the next rib.

Now beyond this rib was another gully in a somewhat similar state to the one just described and as Wul continued past the rib this gully let loose and he was up to his waist in a river of slush. He fought round and climbed on to a platform on the rib. Once he was safe, boulders came down as well. My turn then to run the gauntlet, and after receiving a mouthful of gritty slush I was safe on the platform. We had by now completed 31 pitches and 1000 feet still remained to the top. The sun was leaving the face and the temperature dropped rapidly. The next section to the top was the finest of the whole climb. We could reach the ridge on our right and this gave us every type of climbing. Ridges, arêtes, slabs, chimneys, corners, overhangs, and the occasional snow arête thrown in for good measure. . . . What's more, it was safe!

The 41st pitch took us up a 30 ft. wall to the summit. Now all the great men have said that one should feel achievement and satisfaction on reaching the top, but after 12 hours and a mile of climbing all I thought of was the mile of descent down that corroding face. Anderson stepped on to a patch of snow to look over the north side and all but disappeared through great holes in an unsuspected cornice. It was 11 p.m. and light, though down to the south was a great darkness which we thought to be a storm brewing up. Against this gloom the conical shadow of our own mountain was cast by the glow of the midnight sun. We had little more than a few nuts, sugar lumps and two chocolate éclairs left. We demolished everything except the two sweets, which we would keep till we were safely off the mountain.

Then began the descent to the couloir. To reverse the rock pitches was easier than we expected. A little verglas added to the interest and we were soon back at the rock platform. Now that the gully was in shadow it was completely silent. There was no stone-fall. Then my companion went daft. Various expressions flickered across his face, then filling his lungs he bellowed 'Rumpy-dumpay!' Poor chap, it's been too much for him. However, he had heard Roger Gaff shout from the camp, three horizontal and one vertical miles away. We descended the couloir in four hours, and only one stone fell. It was very tiring, mostly being at that awkward angle when you can't decide whether to face out and run down, or face in and jab down. We reached the bottom at 5 a.m. and had our last chocolate éclairs. It was ecstasy in itself. This place, clear of all debris 18 hours before, was now littered with boulders of every shape and size. We sat on the biggest. The Eiger has nothing on this.

After 1½ hours of crampon-chafing we were back to the master chef, who rose and prepared us a most magnificent 'nosh.' The ridge attempt had failed and Tony Blenkinsop, who now lay groaning in the back of the tent, had had the rare privilege of studying one, or rather two, of those thousands and thousands of magnificent crevasses, from their very depths.

A LITERARY DIVERSION

By Douglas Fraser

FROM time to time I have amused myself with speculations on how various poets might have written had they been mountaineers. Of course, many poets since Wordsworth have climbed more or less seriously but there are others it would be hard to imagine on a rock face or even on a fairly gentle hillside. Of these I think I would elect Oscar Wilde as the one least likely to have climbed. However, that is hardly the point. To reveal a great truth, climbing is one thing and writing poetry another. The poets I am going to deal with, or insult if you prefer, have not to the best of my knowledge (which is minimal) written poetry about climbing, whatever their outdoor activities may have been.

Gerard Manley Hopkins certainly showed his appreciation of Highland 'wet and wildness' in his poem 'Inversnaid.' Anything he wrote on climbing would have been strenuous and enthusiastic, as

I have tried to bring out in the following attempt at a Hopkins sonnet.

Up, I'll up ever, scorning the treadmill track,
 Stretch and strive—O precious more than gold
 The rock's rude wrinkles. Heaven these to hold,
 Lift and lever to ledge, edge into crack,
 All ways upward—elbows, knees and back,
 Hardy henchmen, tenacious to act as told.
 Glorious, hapt and helmeted against the cold
 A green and glittering ladder in ice to hack,
 Thwack and hew, thews used to the toil,
 Steadily mounting a gleaming, glassy stair
 Till the awaited moment—heart leaps, eye leaps
 Up to—ah where, amid the mists that boil,
 Soaring rainbow-radiant through the air,
 Cloud-cleaving, the snowy sickle-summit sweeps!

A. E. Housman, who knew the view of 'the coloured counties' from Bredon, is apt to be the parodist's pitfall, for his seemingly simple verses prove to be anything but simple to imitate reasonably well. It is safe to say that his thoughts on climbing would have been pessimistic and I have taken my cue from that in the following verses intended to be in the Housman manner.

There, where the buttress looms aloft
 And leans against the sky,
 Daring the steepest crags full oft
 A lightfoot lad went I.

Now up the grassy slopes I trudge,
 Bartering risk for sweat.
 Though Time has partly paid his grudge
 I reach their summits yet.

Soon will those tops be out of bounds
 Save to my dimming eye
 Till 'neath the least of grassy mounds
 Safely, at length, I lie.

To finish in a lighter vein, one poet whose style is easy to imitate is Ogden Nash. What is not so easy to match is the genuine wit that illumines his verse. He is a man who is always conscious of the difficulties and snags in human affairs and his approach to mountaineering would doubtless follow the same lines. This, with suitable apologies, is my idea of Ogden Nash in the Highlands.

One of the disconcerting things about Scottish mountaineering
 Is the way the mountains have of disappearing,
 So that an expedition that seemed perfectly straightforward
at sea level

May prove in the event to be the very Devil.
 Say that you plan to climb some out-of-the-way Munro
 And the route you have to follow can be seen quite clearly
from below.

No sooner have you ascended a few hundred feet
 Than highly opaque mist envelopes you like a winding-sheet:
 You struggle on with map and compass to the best of
your abilities,

Hoping to find some landmark that will tell you which hill it is.
 Instead you seem to be on a vast plateau
 With no rising ground whichever way you go.
 There is a cairn of sorts; but does it mark the summit?
 The map won't tell you, however much you thumb it.
 Which is why one wonders vaguely now and then
 Whether Munro-baggers are all honourable men.

MOUNT BOUVIER, ANTARCTICA

By A. McKeith

THE long dark Antarctic winter on Adelaide. Ten dismal faces. Ten conflicting personalities. And one of the worst winters recorded on the island, exposed as it is to the first onslaught of hoolies (note 1) from the open ocean. Grey skies and winds gusting to 140 m.p.h. Freak low temperatures, cracked pipes, frostbitten toes. Freak high temperatures, driving rain and feet of slush, flooded huts. Freak high tides, 40-foot waves, huge blocks of ice exploding on the rocks, the water sucking at the very foundations of the huts. And with each new hoolie, the blinding drifting snow, accumulating and lying 20 feet deep on the deck, engulfing the huts. And for a brief instant the sun shines, the temperature drops, the fog (note 2) freezes and imprisons the drifting bergs; then just as suddenly the sky blackens, the wind howls, the ice cracks and disappears and the ironical rain lashes down. 'What are we doing here?'

Adelaide Island, some 80 miles long and 10 to 15 miles broad, lies off the west coast of Grahamland, a few degrees inside the Antarctic Circle. The base sits on a rocky promontory at the southern extremity, a hotch-potch of multicoloured huts, lining

the High Street from the jetty to Hampton House, the main living quarters. And dominating the depressing scene, the 80-foot 'Eiger' topped by the meteorologists' hut, spouting, at intervals, weather balloons and drunken 'met' men toppling down the south face on to the bunkroom roof.

From base and the 150-foot ice cliffs on either side, the Fuchs Ice piedmont slopes gradually up past the aircraft landing area to the mountains which dominate the east side of the island throughout its length, the piedmont on the west providing a conveniently safe approach to the hills on that flank. The mountains themselves are certainly as large as any in Grahamland, despite their absolute altitude at least as large as the average Alpine peak, and their sprawling vastness and complexity makes them all the more interesting. Most of the main mountain tops in the southern half of the island had already been climbed: Mt. Ditté, Mt. Liotard, Mt. Mangin, Mt. Barré and Mt. Gaudry—the highest and most impressive at 9190 feet, rising 7000 feet in one sweep from the piedmont. Beyond those, the chain was split by the vast Shambles Glacier, some 8 miles wide, draining the piedmont to the east, and to the north again stood Mt. Bouvier, unclimbed and almost untouched, perhaps 8000 feet, and second only to Mt. Gaudry. The main north-south ridge of the Bouvier Massif, harbouring several tops and numerous glaciers, was supported on the south-west by the Snake Ridge rising in one graceful curve of over 5000 feet from the piedmont to the sharp summit cone of the highest top. This was the mountain and the route on which I had set my heart.

The only previous attempt on the mountain by this route, of which I knew, was one by Davie Todd and Jimmy Gardner back in '65, and this was thwarted by the weather within a couple of hours of their starting. This, in fact, was the main problem in considering climbing at all on Adelaide. The only predictable fact concerning the weather was that it would be 99% grim, as sure as fate. Even Glencoe has nothing on Adelaide, so that's quite something. . . . From this one can only assume two things: that in the northern hemisphere, all bad weather converges on and funnels through Glencoe, before spreading out across Scotland and the rest of Europe, and all bad weather in the South Pacific and the Antarctic Ocean converges on Adelaide before diffusing across the peninsula and the rest of Antarctica.

Then comes the Spring, late September, with the daylight hours spinning out fast.

'Be ready to leave in two weeks,' says Mike the geologist. 'We're heading north to work around Mt. Bouvier till the middle of November.'

I welcomed the opportunity to get out in the field at last, for although we had already been out for several short trips of a week or so, the poor weather had virtually confined us to base.

After three weeks of the winter's worst, the wind dropped on the 8th of October. Mike and I loaded our sledges, nipped up to the dog spans and set off north with wary glances at the still threatening sky. We made barely 7 miles. For 4 days the temperatures and the wind soared sky high, a blistering plus 11°C, a local record, with gusts of 120 m.p.h. Great mounds of slush threatened to crush the tent and engulf us. The canvas cracked whip-like and a rip widened in the outer tent. We travelled north very slowly, despite taking every opportunity with each lull in the weather, and it was 11 days before we set up camp at the foot of Mt. Bouvier at 2500 feet, some 50 miles north of Base.

At the beginning of November, Dave Rinning, the tractor mechanic, was due out in the muskeg with more food supplies for us. Dave and I planned to attempt to climb Bouvier at the earliest opportunity. Meanwhile, with three weeks to go till then, I persuaded Mike, who wasn't particularly interested in climbing, and whose prime concern appeared to be to fill rucksacks and boxes with huge boulders, into climbing Bouvier South. This peak, one of the subsidiaries of Mt. Bouvier, stood at the south end of the main ridge, its 2000-foot west face bearing a remarkable resemblance to the north face of the Eiger. We took the dogs up an impressive glacier and a broad ramp onto an ice platform at the top of a 2000-foot cliff overlooking the piedmont, then, leaving the dogs and the sledge staked out on the platform, we climbed the peak by its south-west ridge. It was one of these climbs up an impressive peak which turned out to be surprisingly easy. At every turn, each apparently impossible step, each barrier, was outflanked with absolutely no difficulty, and after a long traverse under a line of teetering seracs, we emerged on the ridge directly below the summit, a perfect dome-like arête. Mike's altimeter registered 6800 feet, but I was inclined to be sceptical. The view was quite incredible: across the frozen fiords to Grahamland, a myriad of unclimbed peaks from one horizon to the other, backed by the ice plateau, and to the south, the mountains of Alexander Island, 150 miles away but still quite clear. Uncharacteristically, and despite the fact that this was Mike's first climb, everything went according to schedule, even the faithful weather (which manked in by the time we got back to camp).

In these three weeks waiting for Dave to appear in the muskeg, only two days could have been remotely described as good. Mike took full advantage of the rare opportunities, collecting rock specimens, while I snooped around the foot of Bouvier eyeing up the Snake Ridge. One evening I took the dogs north from camp, 2 miles, and up on to the first platform of the Snake Ridge, staked them out and wandered up 1500 feet of the ridge leading to the summit of a 4500-foot peak, Sneak Peak, in the lower part of the ridge. From there, I could see that although the south side of the ridge fell away 2000 feet directly to the piedmont, there was a broad

basin on the north side, sloping comparatively gently up to within 300 feet of the col which separated the peak on which I stood from the upper part of the Snake Ridge. This, I thought, would be the best route for us. We should be able to take the dogs right up to the basin just below the col, and completely eliminate that lower part of the ridge I had just climbed.

At the end of the three weeks, I began to wonder if Dave's arrival could coincide with even so much as a day of good weather. Then three days after he was due, I opened the tent flap and looked out—eight-eighths baby blue, cold, clear, calm, sunny, perfect—freakish, but still no sign of the muskeg. What now? This might be my only opportunity for weeks to come. No, I couldn't afford to wait. I decided to go it alone. I harnessed up the dogs and headed over to the foot of Snake Ridge, where I dropped Mike for a day's geology. Then 'UP DOGS HUIT!' (note 3) and off up a long slope over a series of well-bridged 20-foot crevasses into the basin, the Pit o' Hell, at the foot of Mt. Bouvier's 4000-foot west face, a sheet of glassy ice, criss-crossed with an intricate mesh of crevasses, and soaring up finally in the 1000-foot summit rocks. The dogs pulled well up the long slope towards the col below Sneak Peak, where I staked them out. Skis on, over the bergschrund, then crampons to the col. I stood on a rise above the col and stared at muskeg tracks 2000 feet below. Dave must have arrived only minutes after I had left. I looked up the ridge. The summit seemed so near. But I knew I owed it to Dave to go down again and return for another attempt with him. I refused to admit to myself that I was extremely apprehensive about making an attempt on such a big mountain on my own. Climbing solo on rock is one thing, but climbing solo in crevassed country is quite another. I had known from the start that although I reckoned the route comparatively safe, the risk to which I intended to expose myself was considerable. I went back down with the dogs.

I was just in time. The dogs charged into the new camp at the foot of Snake Ridge. Dave and Ian were on the point of leaving to follow me up the ridge over Sneak Peak. Ian Willey from Newcastle was one of the 'Met' men out from base for a few days' holiday. Although neither of them had done any climbing before they came to Antarctica, I had, by then, climbed with both of them in the southern mountains of Adelaide, and they were already sufficiently well versed in the basics of snow and ice climbing. Oddly enough Dave was a Currie man, with the makings of a Currie hardman. And now Ian was quite keen to join Dave and I on the climb. We decided to give the dogs an hour's rest and get some food inside us before setting off again. I found it very hard to believe that the weather still looked settled.

Although the sun still set for a few hours at night, there was now sufficient twilight to enable us to consider climbing right

through the night if necessary. It was the middle of the afternoon before we got away, one riding the sledge, the other two jogging along behind, shouting at the dogs.

'PULL AWAY! PULL AWAY, COUNT! OUK! OUK! RRRRRRR-AH! (note 4) C'MON, PULL AWAY! WHAT D'YUH THINK THIS IS—A PICNIC, HUH!'

Although the air temperature was well below zero, perhaps as low as minus 15°C, the vicious heat of the afternoon sun, mirrored into the Pit o' Hell by the west face of Mt. Bouvier, had turned the snow into porridge. We wallowed knee-deep up towards the col, but I was not unduly concerned. I already knew that the conditions on the ridge were almost perfect. We left the dogs at the same spot, strapped on crampons, and within a matter of minutes, had climbed up to the col and passed the point which I had reached earlier that day. The ridge rose gently at first, undulating and quite broad, but crevassed, then gradually swept up more steeply, almost merging with the west face, to the rocks abutting the main south ridge. But this was not to be Ian's day. The ridge gulped and swallowed him up to his armpits in a crevasse. He took all these little trials and tribulations quite nonchalantly. His brow was wrinkled and his face bore an almost hurt expression, as if someone had offended him, when Dave and I hauled him out. We climbed on up towards the rocks looming large above, front-pointing as the angle increased. The surface was absolutely perfect, crisp snow-ice. Immediately above the rocks, an icefall spilled over the south ridge and a jagged line of seracs cut off all hope of an exit on the right, but to the left there appeared to be several possibilities although the ice reared up to quite a high angle. At the foot of the rocks, I uncoiled the rope and, opening it out to its full 300 feet, set off up to the left. The rocks were on a much larger scale than anything I had expected, a row of granite pinnacles reaching up 500 feet to the south ridge. Although I had to cross patches of bare glassy ice at a high angle, I encountered no appreciable difficulty and Dave and Ian followed hand over hand up the rope, which I fixed.

Standing on the crest of the ridge, with the view opening south and east over Grahamland, we could see the rest of the route to the summit quite clearly. By following the extreme left edge of the icefall where it toppled over the west face, we should reach, in a few hundred yards, the main obstacle of the upper section, a 300-foot step in the ridge which, from this angle at least, looked ferociously steep.

The altitude and the sudden strain after the winter's inactivity were already beginning to take effect. Our stops became more frequent. We sprawled on the snow in a variety of careless contortions. Dave threatened to puke all over the mountain. Ian wailed and said he was finished. I had hallucinations and kept imagining a fourth member of our party. All the classic symptoms!

The route through the icefall we found with little difficulty, hopping crevasses and balancing on ragged edges, spikes rasping on sheets of glassy ice. Then the steep step on the ridge stood before us. On the left the cliffs of the summit ridge dropped away abruptly from a series of slender pinnacles, and further to the right, a huge cap of ice overhung a broad bergschrund. There was no outflanking this obstacle. In the last 1000 feet or so, the surface of the snow had changed considerably, and it became apparent that the continued effect of the sun and storm, hoar frost, blowing snow and wind, had covered the entire surface with millions of hard icy projections, so hard in fact, that even on the steepest part, I found myself relying not so much on the front points of my crampons, as on these projections, which I selected and used almost as if I were climbing on rock. Dave and Ian followed once again hand over hand up the fixed rope.

Although we now stood above all the main difficulties, the summit still seemed depressingly far away. The sun, showing weakly through a bank of cirrus on the southern horizon, had little heat. The temperature dropped abruptly and a breeze sprang up from the north. We were glad of our heavy sledging anoraks and our mitts. 'I'm going to puke any minute now!' says Dave. But he didn't.

We unroped and dropped everything except our cameras. We at least retained our desire to record every step of the way in minute detail. The camera is the status symbol of the 'fid' (note 5). Without a camera, a fid is not a fid, he is a nonentity. The 'superfid' on the other hand possesses many cameras, a movie perhaps, an array of lenses, a tripod, a flash gun and enough film to keep most professional photographers going for a lifetime, and all this he must constantly display like a string of expensive beads round his neck.

The summit ridge now rose in a frustrating series of ice bosses and sharp arêtes. The drop down the west face was impressive with enormous accumulations of hoar frost clinging to the summit rocks, often more than 50 feet long, pointing down into the Pit o' Hell and carved into funnels, flutes and pipes by the wind.

Then at last there was the summit, 50 yards along the ridge and a short rise. My breath came in short gasps, rasping in my throat with the last dash to the top. My heart pounded and I really did feel quite elated; or was it the thought of that cup of tea? We had promised ourselves a cup each from the flask in Ian's pocket, as soon as we reached the top, but not till then. It was very cold and we lingered only to take a few photos. The sun, now very low, cast a purple light across the whole of Grahamland/Adelaide from one end to the other spread beneath us. Even the 150-foot ice cliffs of ice shelves in the fiords, appeared completely insignificant. A magnificent view.

'I'm definitely going to puke any second now!' says Dave again.

'Oh well, just give me plenty warning and I'll get my camera focussed.'

We set off down. I kept my distance from Dave. Apart from his complaint, both of us seemed fit enough, but Ian felt very tired. I warned him not to let his concentration lapse for an instant and to keep his feet well apart, waddling duck-wise. A fall here would almost certainly be fatal, either west down the summit cliffs or east down open ice slopes into areas of huge crevasses. Ian and Dave abseiled down the steep step in the ridge and I followed. Then we struck off again through the icefall, this time unroped, which struck me as being safer than moving together roped. It was on the very edge of the west face, whilst leaping a crevasse, that Ian fell. The points of the crampon on his right foot seemed to turn sideways as he stepped on a glass hard patch of ice, and he slipped off the ridge. The slope dropped away sharply at first, some 70° for 100 feet, then eased gradually to 50° falling at that angle for over 3000 feet into the Pit o' Hell. 'Oh no, oh no!' I whimpered, helpless and blaming myself for his fate, then 'Brake, Ian, brake!' He'll drop his axe, he's sure to. I had forgotten that I'd advised him to wear the wrist strap despite the apparent inconvenience. 100, 200 feet he fell, bounding and leaping like a barrel in the rapids, head over heels, rolling sideways, then somersaults. He couldn't possibly survive, then miraculously he was in the braking position, and he ground to a halt 300 feet below us. And then the classical irony.

Dave and I, still shaking from shock, had sped through the icefall, then Dave set off down the ice slope beside the rocks of the Snake Ridge, while I stood back from the edge and started to coil the rope which I'd been dragging behind me. I was taking up coils with my left hand. Suddenly, with this increased weight, the snow surface below me collapsed, and I was swallowed up to my waist in a crevasse. I hauled myself out and struggled and cursed with a granny knot of a rope for 10 minutes. Meanwhile Ian had traversed across the face to join Dave. I tossed the rope over onto my back and raced down after them.

'Hey, that was a pretty nasty fall, eh?' I said.

'Saved me 300 feet.'

'Are you blooded at all, Ian?'

He pulled out his shirt and revealed a huge blue bruise, oozing blood, two ribs standing out black in the middle.

'I've bashed my ankle and my wrist, but they're not too bad either. I should be able to manage down without any help.'

We took it pretty easy on the way back down to the col. The sun, now dancing on the horizon, cast an eerie glow over the mountains. Far below us in deep shadow, the barks of distant dogs sounded. 'Sounds as though there's a dog off.' The barking increased and the black specks milled round the sledge.

'Heh, a fight!'

But we could do nothing. Normally there would have been somebody close by to wade in and stop the fight. For they are really vicious with each other when they fight. One dog or another invariably ends up with a few nasty gashes. This was no exception. Bran had taken a hunk out of Yuri's foreleg, and he was hobbling about on the other three legs. We all jumped on to the sledge, letting Yuri run behind, and the rest of the dogs, excited and starving after their long vigil, charged frantically down the slope, trailing saliva, legs spinning, tails bobbing, tongues flopping, dragging arthritic old Dizzy along by his harness.

NOTES (1) Storms.

- (2) The sea—a term from whaling days.
- (3) Contrary to popular belief, the command 'MUSH' is not in use and, to the best of my knowledge, never has been, except perhaps in films of Hollywood origin. On the other hand, 'UP DOGS, HUIT!' the command normally used to get a dog team on the move, has a startling effect. A fresh dog team and an empty sledge move off at breakneck speed, and the dogs have absolutely no regard for further commands, for sluggish drivers, or for any obstacle or obvious danger, such as the edge of an ice cliff or deep crevasses. On one occasion near base, my team charged off down the hill, leapt over a cornice and for an instant the entire team and the sledge with me clutching feverishly at the handlebars, were suspended in mid-air like Santa Claus and his reindeers. Then the illusion was shattered as everything turned upside-down and crumpled in a great howling heap in the gully below.
- (4) As well as 'UP DOGS, HUIT,' the other commands normally used are—'PULL AWAY' while the dogs are actually moving, and particularly if they are showing signs of slacking; 'OUK' to turn right; 'RRRRRRR-AH' to turn left and 'AAAAAANOW' to stop. Most dogs soon learn the first two and the last command, but it takes a dog of higher than average intelligence, like Count, the leader of my team, to master and obey instantly the two directional commands.
- (5) A 'fid' is an employee of the British Antarctic Survey. Originally the Survey was known as the Falkland Islands Dependencies Survey (F.I.D.S.), as was that sector of Antarctica now known as British Antarctica Territory. The initials FIDS were then used to describe all employees of the Survey and the term has stuck.

EAGLE RIDGE OF LOCHNAGAR IN WINTER

By Douglas Lang

This is the diary of an Epic Climbing Day, involving Neil Quinn and myself, the roots of which are lost in oblivion. The urge to record these few lines comes from the belated realisation of what we had tackled.

THE sight of Eagle Ridge in full winter garb is awe-inspiring and frightening. I am amazed that we ever had the audacity to try and climb it. Whenever I look on those Icy Towers my heart still jumps a beat.

In the winter of 1965 I more or less hibernated from demoralisation. The calls of Quinn took me to the foot of Zero Gully; this I refused, even with steps cut all the way.

New Year, 1966, found us back on the trail of new ground. In Glencoe, the weather was dismal and we only managed Twisting Gully before heading for home. Then a sudden freeze induced telephone calls and a late-night drive to Glen Muick on January 8th. At 2 a.m., bed-down in that unnamed, infamous tin hut in Glen Muick. At 5 a.m., Rise and Die. Horrible breakfast—the thought of ham and steak at that hour We left the car at 7 a.m.

I think about the Tough-Brown Traverse, long on our books. Quinn has other ideas, unknown to me, but he assumes I'm a mind-reader. You see, we have trodden Eagle Ridge before; many times in summer, but winter has stopped us at the 50 ft. Tower. The wall below the Tower gives a good fight, but the Tower is much more menacing: those memories of downhearted abseils to the Corrie Quinn has lived this route a hundred times, but he's like that. I've scarcely given it a thought, certainly not today. We move on and on, up that track, over the bealach, sweep down to the corrie and up to the first aid box. Everything but the bottom of the cliffs is shrouded in mist. Neil asks me if I've got the wooden wedge. No, what for? The Crux of Eagle. *Eagle*? It's Tough-Brown isn't it? It was Eagle.

At 10.30 a.m. he moves up the first pitch, an ice-groove with an awkward exit over a ledge at the top. I lead on up a shallow gully, then easily to the base of the Tower. Neil tackles the corner-wall below the Tower; easier than on our previous encounter, but still hard. Then the Tower, this is it.

Fifty feet of steep ice-encrusted granite; at least there *is* ice this time. Play safe, Lang A peg runner induces movement. I'm too short to cut holds in the iced groove on my right. Shall I cheat—stand in a sling and gain height? I do. I move up—then BANG—I am 20 ft. below Quinn. 'Testing the runner?' he asks.

I grit—it's got to go, and it does. Exposed moves land me at a sentry box. I dig myself in the powdery snow. Quinn appears, returns my gear and leaves on the left. He brings me up and I move on. Finding a way back to the crest, I waste time and he's angry, but I get there. We are just below the Summer Crux. Neil leaves the pack and heads off up a steep slab reaching the Knife Edge. In front of him the 12-foot vertical wall looks desperate; snow lying on ice, and the crack obliterated. A peg runner required? Yes. He's high up in the now-excavated crack, and drives home the peg with the adze. Somehow he squirms up, arms, legs, stomach, knees. O.K., come up. But I have to leave a peg behind.

The wall ahead of us looks horrible, with no holds showing on the right traverse. A peg runner high up spurs me on. It's hard: I'm off, and the peg comes out. The landing area is a high-angled slab entrenched in snow. Try again. Another downward flight; and I am done, physically. Quinn has a try. He's there? No . . . , he's off, too, and looks angry: his crampon has caught in his hammer sling. Back again, he tries a different combination but it's no use, he lands once more on the snowy slab.

By now it is dark, and headlamps are donned. Another attempt at this blasted little wall again sends him below me. Finally, patience and our sixth attempt sees him through, but it is a long time before he completes this 120 ft. pitch. The rope tugs, I get ready, and the belay peg comes out in my hand. I tremble at this pitch, especially in the dark. Eventually I make it by a hairs-breadth, forced to abandon a second peg.

The cornice rim above beckons, renews enthusiasm. Lead, he says. Surely not that way? Yes, up to the crest and out, along a small snowy groove in a slab, overlooking the Douglas-Gibson Gully. Another shallow groove leads upwards to easy ground and the Plateau. Quinn is beside me; 6.45 p.m.

The weather up top is bad, with wind and mist. A bite to eat, the rope to coil, and then we head for lower contours. Churning through big drifts we eventually land steeply at a wood—Glas-Allt Shiel. Collapsing in the twigs, we munch barley sugars; an hour should see us to the car



MACKIES' AT ONE

By E. C. Thomson

MACKIES' in Princes Street is, alas, no more.

For a great many years Edinburgh members of the S.M.C., and quite a number of other members besides, have understood the words *Mackies' at One* to mean the meetings of members and their friends for lunch on the first Thursday of every month at an extended window table in the Coffee Room of Mackies' Restaurant, Princes Street. It was a wonderful spot for a national mountaineering club to meet in the centre of the Capital City, looking straight across to the precipice of Edinburgh Castle rock and on a clear day to the more distant slopes of the Pentland Hills.

The monthly Thursday has met regularly for approximately thirty years, but it is not so generally known that this is but an extended version of the weekly Thursday lunch where a table has been reserved for the S.M.C. and their friends for a considerably longer time. Of course over such a long period there have been reconstructions and alterations in the building which have seemed to threaten the security of our window seat. Faced with some new manageress, perhaps, we have not hesitated to claim that 'the mountaineers' had an unbroken connection with Mackies' of 'at least fifty years.' There was always the faithful 'Dorothy' there to testify that she had been serving us off and on since about 1930.

Just how old, then, is the tradition of the 'mountaineers' connection with Mackies'? The longest surviving member of the table is undoubtedly Douglas Menzies who has retired from business and now lives in Galloway. He writes that he started going to Mackies' in the year 1900 and continued to do so, apart from the period of the first war, until 1942. As he does not speak of joining an existing table it appears that, although he did not become a member of the S.M.C. until 1910, he is undoubtedly the 'father' of the table. In due course he was joined by W. A. Morrison who entered the club in 1902 so it seems that the table can claim a continuing history going back to 1900 and the S.M.C. a connection with it since 1902.

Between 1919 and 1925 was probably the table's most influential period. Eric Buchanan became Editor, Murray Lawson, Librarian and several others were either active or senior former members of Committee. As a very junior guest, the writer remembers to this day with a blush, the ghastly moment's silence when he innocently asked that august assembly 'Where exactly is this Glen Brittle?'

When the writer returned in 1935 from a ten-year sojourn in Glasgow he had at first some difficulty in recognising the old table. Many of the Veterans had prospered in business and become Club men, but at last Donald Mackay and David Kellock were identified at a table in the back smoking room where snack lunches were now the order of the day. David was then a comparative newcomer but Donald was undoubtedly the slender link with days that were gone. They formed the nucleus of the old table and others of the old days such as Harrison, Menzies and Evershed Thomson still dropped in from time to time. It was then, I would say, that the Thursday tradition was tending to become established. Kellock tells an amusing story of this period. St. Clair Bartholomew had just returned from exploring the upper reaches of the Brahmaputra with Kingdon Ward, the well-known botanist, and was shortly going off to Central Africa. We had a very young and innocent waitress and snacks were the orders she was accustomed to receive. Bartholomew, whose mind didn't run in his circumstances to snack lunches, surveyed the menu with a lordly air and ordered Roast Duck with several extras in the way of vegetables and potatoes. Mary's eyes opened wide with wonder and she exclaimed with awe 'That would be three and six, sir!' St. Clair realised the situation at once and to save the young lady embarrassment said 'Thank you, so it is. I'll just have a mutton pie and a cup of coffee.'

Just about this time Sandy Wedderburn joined the S.M.C. The Club was at that time becoming acutely conscious that a gap had appeared between the ageing members and the younger generation. The formation of a separate Junior Mountaineering Club in 1926 had led to a situation where new members of our club had already got to know each other in the J.M.C.S. without meeting the older members. To Sandy must be given the credit for a bold attempt to bridge this gap. He suggested that the Mackie tradition should be kept in being but that on the first Thursday of every month a special room be taken on the third floor and that crates of bottled beer be made available by private enterprise for those who weren't used to lunch without it. The first lunches were a success—the members rose to over twenty—but then the Second War broke out, the numbers dwindled till Mackies' were no longer able to allow us a room to ourselves. They would prefer to put two or three tables together in the public coffee room on every first Thursday for those who were left and of course in these conditions, no beer! The old smoking room had meantime been demolished and so we became heirs to the glorious viewpoint where our weekly and monthly lunches have been held for nearly thirty years until Mackies' was closed two days after the last Thursday monthly lunch which was held on 5th September 1968. One last reminiscence of the immediately post-second-war period had its amusing side. It was the first meeting after an Edinburgh Autumn Holiday week-end. We were

greeted by the young manageress with the question 'Well, Gentlemen, where were you climbing last week-end?' There was a slightly embarrassed silence, a reluctance by everyone to be the first to admit that none of us had been on the hills at all. At last in an endeavour to turn the situation one of us said 'I'm afraid none of us were out on the hills; were you?' 'Oh yes,' replied Miss Macintosh, 'on Sunday we were up Bidean nam Bian and on Monday we traversed the Aonach Eagach Ridge from end to end!'

What of the future? Thanks to the initiative of Robin Gall Inglis and the understanding co-operation of Crawford's Restaurants and their staffs we have been given a window table on ordinary Thursdays on the first floor of their Restaurant in Castle Street, and on the first Thursday of each month two or three tables are put together on the same floor along the north wall of the room so that our traditional lunches may continue. This is being as well supported as before the closing of Mackies', but we would all especially welcome younger members of the Club to keep the tradition going.

Lastly, it would be inappropriate to close these notes without a tribute to the generations of Mackies' manageresses and waitresses who have served us so well over all these years and to thank our new friends in Crawford's, Castle Street, for their understanding and co-operation.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

(Views expressed are those of the correspondents).

Wilderness Areas

SIR—At the Club's A.G.M., when we were discussing the O.P.M.A.C. intrusion at Coruisk and Camasunary, a member asked whether the Countryside Commission or other body had defined wilderness areas. I replied that the only definition I had seen had appeared in clause 25 of the Planning and Development Report submitted by Study Group 9 (the Scottish Group) to the *Countryside in 1970, Second Conference*. At the time, I could give only a rough outline. Since this Report by the Scottish Group, of which Professor Robert Grieve was chairman, led to the Countryside (Scotland) Act 1967, and to the founding of the Countryside Commission, members might now like to hear the exact wording of clause 25. It reads:

'There is a strong case for certain areas being safeguarded as "wilderness" areas. These would be remote areas where the intrusion of man and man-made things would be at an absolute minimum—above all, the vehicle would be excluded. Entry beyond a certain point should be only for those prepared to carry their requirements for travel on their backs; they should be areas where human self-reliance could be tested.'

The Cuillin and their close approaches like Camasunary are the prime example of a wilderness area. The intrusion by O.P.M.A.C. was made with the good intention of aiding mountain rescue. Apart from the hard fact that

the jeep track and bridges have not aided mountain rescue at Coruisk, we have to make it plain to well-intentioned planners that mountaineering and other recreations involving self-reliance must also involve risks, and that while we organize mountain rescue there is a limit to which engineering facilities can be carried if they are not to destroy the character of wilderness country. This limit has in my view been exceeded in the Camasunary track and bridge at the Scaavaig burn.

In placing high value on wilderness areas, accessible only on foot, we have in mind that much Highland country, now lying virtually unused, can and ought to be made productive, but also that the people of a nation are individual persons whose needs are diverse. The need of many is occasional recourse to wild landscape, free of man's engineering works, where they can enjoy quiet, or adventure, or both.

Where should such wilderness areas be, and how many? There is need to start thinking and acting about this right now. I know of no group of persons so well qualified as members of the S.M.C. to produce such a list, for their knowledge of the ground is unusually intimate and extensive. I ask that the Club make such a list, and submit it to the Scottish Countryside Activities Council and to the Countryside Commission.

The subject has dangers and difficulties. If the list is too long, it will be discounted by developers as an exercise in selfishness. Some planners may infer from the appearance of a list that all regions not listed are free for development, therefore it should be made plain that 'wilderness' is not to be confused with, although it heavily overlaps with, regions of outstanding natural beauty (like Loch Lomondside and the Trossachs), which ought to be areas of special planning control under the Countryside (Scotland) Act.

I give my own list below. Its very omissions may give members food for thought and disagreement. A completed list would have to be detailed in giving boundary lines, and give brief reasons for inclusion. This I have not done below, for I have no doubt that the Club will make additions and deletions to the list. Debate is needed. The first thing to decide is whether we agree with Study Group 9's definition.—Yours, etc.

W. H. MURRAY.

Wilderness areas: 1, Glencoe (the whole area between Kinlochete and Loch Leven); 2, Ben Alder group; 3, Glen Nevis (from Polldubh including tops of Nevis, Aonachs, Grey Corries, and Mamores); 4, Knoydart; 5, The Cuillin; 6, Cairngorms (the whole interior excluding north slopes of Cairn Gorm); 7, Lochnagar; 8, Kintail and upper Affric; 9, Applecross; 10, Torridon and Flowerdale Forests; 11, Letterewe and Fisherfield Forests (all ground between Loch Maree and Little Loch Broom); 12, Inverpolly and Glen Canisp Forests.

P.S.—Since writing the above, I have seen another definition of 'wilderness' in the *Scottish Geographical Magazine* for December 1968. It appears in the article by David L. Linton (Dept. of Geography, University of Birmingham), *The Assessment of Scenery as a Natural Resource*, page 232:

'Wild landscapes, though they contain pockets of treeless farmland (or even varied forest and moorland, or richly varied farming landscapes), are dominated by ground too steep or too rough for expenditure on improvement. Even burning is irregular and local. The wild character is commonly attested by survivals of native woodland of oak, birch or pine, of juniper bushes or lone pines on the hillside, or of rowan and birch in gullies. This is commonly acclaimed as the most attractive of the land-use landscapes . . .'

This definition occurs in a list of seven categories of landscape.—W.H.M.

[The Club Committee is taking up this matter—*Hon. Editors*].

Metros

SIR—Following on the discussion at the 1968 Annual General Meeting of the Club regarding the Guidebook Committee's tentative proposals for a future reprint of *Munro's Tables* with the mountain heights therein expressed in metres, I would appeal to them to reconsider the matter before such a proposal is put forward as policy.

I suggest that *Munro's Tables* should be left unaltered in their present form, and, as such, handed down to posterity as a major geographical classic of the pre-metric era; and that a new List of Scottish Mountains with metric heights (the names of selected features not named on the new O.S. maps, however, to be taken, for convenient reference, from *Munro's Tables*) compiled by the Guidebook, or *ad hoc*, Committee, and published by and with the authority of the S.M.C.

The introduction of Metric Standards of Measurement will raise awkward possibilities in the compilation of any new List of Scottish mountains on this basis. If the List was limited to the logical minimum height qualification of 1000 metres, it would result in many fine mountains below this height being unrecorded, and by this fact, make them less likely to be visited; so I suggest the somewhat illogical figure of 900 metres as the standard height, and in order to maintain and extend the interest in the mountains which have been the objective of climbers and hill-walkers for so many years, that also their subsidiary eminences below 900 metres in height (with at least 100 metres of reascent thereto) be recorded.

Such a List will ensure the retention of all the so-called 'Separate Mountains' in *Munro's Tables* (which term I suggest should be changed to 'Principal Eminences') with the addition of 25 new names; and it will record a number of well known and prominent hilltops that have not appeared in any hitherto published List.

Another reason for the suggestion of 900 metres as the standard height for inclusion in such a List is that there are between three and four hundred actual mountain summits between 800 and 900 metres in height (on the above basis, and to increase the qualification would eliminate many worthy 900 metre summits), and the attainment of them all would be beyond the interest of the average hill-walker, and be liable to lead to our sport developing into sheer 'peak-bagging' for the mere sake of completing the List.

Scott Johnson indicated at the A.G.M. that the new 1" O.S. Maps (or their kilometre equivalent) were unlikely to be published within the foreseeable future, though new 6" and 2½" were likely to be available in a few years' time. The contour interval on the new 2½" maps is not yet known, so in regard to the basis for qualification of 900 metre 'Subsidiary Eminences' (I suggest this name in preference to 'Top') a minimum of one metric contour ring, indicating 20-25 metres of reascent, might be considered, with an added factor of, say, 1 kilometre walking distance. This latter factor would operate especially in the case of 'plateau massifs,' and a greater distance be determined on.

In leisure moments during the past few years I have compiled a manuscript List on the above suggested basis of *what is likely to be disclosed* on the new Metric Maps, which M.S. I would be glad to put at the Club's disposal in due course, in the hope that it might be of interest to the Guidebook Committee in their consideration of the nature of the subsequent issue of *Tables of Mountains in Metric Heights*.—Yours etc.

ROBT. GALL INGLIS.

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

The Editors reminded members at the A.G.M. that *S.M.C. and J.M.C.S. Abroad* is not primarily an exercise in chest-beating but a record of members' experiences from which others intending to visit the area may know what to expect and whom to contact for further information. Symbolically, we have brought this section forward in the *Journal*. Although many ultra-montanes were neutralised last summer by expeditions (accounts of which will be found elsewhere in this issue) we print much interesting information below by members who did not wish to supply full articles.

Asia

A. L. CRAM writes: 'In April 1960, my wife and I sailed from Mombasa to Bombay and drove by Land Rover and trailer, with all our equipment, via Delhi and the Bakhra Dam, directly over the foothills to the Kulu Valley. The late Major Banon of Manali found for us three Ladhaki porters, Wangyal, Sonam Angchik and Zigmet, five horses and two horsemen. On 11th June in deep snow and a snowstorm, we trekked over the Rohtang La, 13,050 feet into Lahaul. After a training walk in another snowstorm from Sissu, we climbed the peak conspicuous from Tandi above the junction of the Chandra and Bhaga rivers in the region of the Kolumbat Goh, shown as over 19,000 feet. This was on 18th June from a camp high above Tandi. The route lay up an easy ridge, with scrambling in places and a final steep rise. The weather worsened all day and the top was in mist.

'Passing through Kyelang, we descended some 1000 feet from Kusring and crossed the seething Bhaga on a fibre bridge to Tinnu village. Three clefts breach the wall above. We ascended into the rightmost, to the left of point 18,330 feet on our map. The group lies between the Sissu and Milang Nalas and could form a separate system. Walking led to a roof of slabs across the head of a deep ravine where we were nearly wiped out by volleys of large stones. A cobblestone hurtled over my wife's head as she lingered to examine a rhododendron. A large black yak bull was stamping on the screes up the slope and keeping above us until I could reach Angchuk and snatch my .270 Winchester whereupon he wheeled and galloped off without sending down as much as a pebble. Later, I saw yaks ill-treating each other with missiles, with much cavorting up and down. When the ravine levelled out into a glacier trough, a ledge or two was scraped on steep detritus opposite an avalanche runnel. Partly by guidance from the noise of falling ice, we were able next night to find our tents in rain and mist. On 22nd June we set off with the good intentions of making a reconnaissance but were teased by rib, gully slope up the open face of the main peak above camp, until I threw a stone on to the ridge. We were then well above the great clean rock peak along the ridge to our right, but minutes later were caught in a storm of wind and snow (at 2.45 p.m.). Descent was slow, since the ice had rotted with the rise in temperature. At night and in pouring rain we backtracked by disturbed stones to our tents.

'Returning to Tandi, we went down the Chenab river and ascended the Thiroi Nala, camping in the upper valley above Chokhang and Ningahar villages. Frank Solari who with the late Hamish McArthur took the first known climbing party to visit the nala had suggested an attempt on Phabrang 20,250 feet, possibly the highest point in the district and situated on the north-west side. What our map did not reveal was that Phabrang was not at all visible from the bottom of the nala but lay back towards the Miyar Nala miles to the northwest. The further ascent was made up the northwest

walls of the nala the more the outliers hid the main peak and the weather was continually drizzly and cloudy. Eastern Lahaul does seem drier than the western part. The glaciers seen from the nala are sent down from outliers and not from Phabrang itself. On 29th June, on a rather rainy day, we ascended the left wall from an upper meadow. A rotten ridge led to a conspicuous pinnacle, reminiscent of the Aiguille Zsa-de-Zsa at Saas. This we climbed, eventually by an exposed traverse on the left flank, and cairned. We used to call it the 'Aiguille Isabel' after my wife. The height could be over 14,000 feet. On 30th June we ascended further up the nala and camped on ice in great rock cirque. Next day we climbed rock cemented by ice and clean rock to an airy rock summit (cairned) only to find ourselves cut off from the higher peak to our right by a great gendarme, similar to that on the Wellenkuppe but without benefit of a lower traverse. To our left the great cockscomb rose into cloud and through a pass, we glimpsed what we later discovered to be the northern end of the Phabrang main ridge. During the night a very heavy snowfall compelled us to retreat to the nala on 2nd July. On 5th July we ascended the great cleft near the spring, below a cliff where fine blue poppies were blooming and acres of edelweiss spread across the valley. (The most varied selection of alpine flowers is at the foot of the Ningahar nala.) Once again camp was set up in an icy bay near the foot of the cockscomb peak which rose above in a forbidding ridge. Rain fell nearly all day and during the next day when we climbed to the peak above camp. Phabrang must have risen mightily across its eastern glacier two or three miles away but was hidden in cloud. Somewhere in this sector, if a pass or easy traverse permits access to the eastern glacier of Phabrang, could lie the most favourable approach to Phabrang, since the carry would start at about 12,000 feet in the nala, 1000 feet higher than base camp at Ningahar nala, and the distance would be shorter. To our left we glimpsed another cockscomb peak, which proved later to be the eastern end of the East Ridge of Phabrang, which end has to be turned to gain access to the Phabrang East Glacier from Ningahar nala head. Our three porters who had carried for five persons were looking worn; food was very short and we returned across the Rohtang La in forced marches in almost continual rainy weather.

'We drove back to London through the Khyber Pass and by Kabul to Farah, Herat, Meshed, Teheran and Istanbul, with a visit to the Black Sea. We had a walk on the hills near Demavend. Rainy weather persisted from Mount Ararat onwards but we snatched one day to make our second ascent of Mont Pelvoux from the Refuge Lemerrier in the Dauphiné.

'In 1963, we went by sea from Beira to Bombay and drove to Manali. Twelve crates and bales of equipment and food went by train and lorry, a great part to outfit porters from the skin outwards to boots and goggles, sleeping bags and axes. Our own modest equipment, photographic and sound-recording gear fitted easily into our Silver Dawn Mk.V. A great deal had changed in India since the Chinese War and with the Pakistan War looming. The Inner Line had been drawn south and we required a Magistrate's warrant to enable us to visit Lahaul. The wayside tourist restaurants had disappeared, only the Taj Mahal, Laurie's in Agra and Claridges in New Delhi had improved and were serving seven-course dinners with sole and partridge and air-conditioning. Major Banon had died but his son, John Banon, Local Secretary of the Himalayan Club, looked well after our interests. We engaged Wangyal and Sonam Angchuk (Zigmet having retired), Zambo, Tashi Lama, Rigzen, Tanzim and Polgon as porters, along with seven horses and a horseman. We crossed the Rohtang on the day it opened on 29th May. Our horses fell often in the deep snow downhill. As jeepable roads and tracks have been made from Manali into Lahaul, it should be possible to transport food, equipment and porters in one day to formerly remote nalas, although of course only when snow conditions permit in late June. The borax and wool trade has fallen away. Only in the lonely side nalas does the ancient charm

remain. Displaced Tibetans make roads and the Chinese, not far away, bide their time (according to the former). On 4th June, too early for the display of wild roses along the Chandra, we turned up the Thiroi Nala and on the 5th scrambled to the top of Shiling on the east side above Chokhang. Even from here at 13,650 feet, Phabrang was curtailed by the ridge to the west. A level round of photographs was taken. Our mare foaled. The headman at Chokhang entertained us and admitted to being a lecturer at Chandigarh University. We recorded local songs and admired the prayer room where both Bhuddist and Hindu pictures associated. Between 7th and 15th June we climbed three times up the west side of the nala at different points, each time establishing a lower and a higher camp on ice and taking each peak and ridge to the northwest. The ridge was always narrow and alpine, with teeth and cornices and formidable declivities on either hand, but it was not until our final peak that Phabrang was suddenly fully revealed in bright sunlight. This was the first time we had seen it recognisably, in two expeditions. The main ridge ran north and south; at right angles a long ridge ran east and west eventually joining our ridge over the cockscomb outlier. The south face fell steeply to inclined snow and then into a glacier plunging down an ice fall into a gorge. The north and west faces were severe problems. The south face had a spur, and this was not only difficult but access from the Miyar Nala was far from easy. All that remained was to discover the appearance of the angle formed by the north and west ridges but hidden from us over the west ridge. Access to this angle was not visible. Moreover a party of two, without support group, in unexplored remote ground without possibility of rescue has to elevate care to a religion. Wangyal and Ankchuk were by this time quite capable mountaineers, the remainder had been out with other parties and as unlikely to slip as a bull tarkin, but tended to be highspiritedly rash; mountain-bred, they had blessedly no romantic affections or fears for mountains. Hills were simply places they lived in. They never sent down any stones but put loose ones out of the way, and now and then to show independence would perform goat-like antics, but they did not like to see me being too carefree. Curiously, perhaps innately, they disliked glissading, and that was how I won my rounds.

'We moved into a base camp at the foot of Ningahar Nala and practised rope work and scrambling and descending on the cliffs. We were kept busy making still, movie and sound records and treating the horses; my wife held a frequent medical clinic for the villagers. Angchuk wrote out scrolls for us and gathered herbs for medicine and incense. On 17th June we made a reconnaissance to the top of the nala and found a way up the cliffs from the snow tongue to the left of a large waterfall. We returned carrying full loads next day and camped on the only level ledges visible. Two porters returned to save food and extra tent and bedding. On the 19th we carried painfully up a steep moraine and then under falling ice from a glacier nose and camped in a glacier hollow below the east outlier of the Phabrang west/east ridge. Angchuk suffered from a pinching boot and we were 500 feet lower than hoped. On the 20th we climbed steep snow and finally gained the great east-flowing glacier from inside the angle. There were some mighty waves of ice, 300 feet up and down, which I found trying, either hastening ahead or after the party to take cine pictures. The porters put on a really fine act, striding along when they heard the whirr of the shutter and sinking at the end of each sequence. Camp III was put down at altimeter height of 17,660 feet, two miles or less from the angle, which we could at last see offered the only attractive way to the summit. A fourth camp safely out from the walls would gain some advantage, at 18,250 feet. At night, heavy snow fell and continued throughout the day of the 21st. The 22nd was clear but balls of new snow began to run after sunrise. Tashi Lama and Taznin volunteered to bring up food from base, while the rest of us walked into the angle and then right across the northrunning summit ridge to a point where it plunged down

to the north. The risers above us were mighty red rock towers and ice slopes. The north and west sides were mighty rock cliffs and a second rock summit stands out to the north west. Leaving a cairn we returned to camp, astounded to find Tashi and Palgon returning with some food for us all. On 23rd June we all walked into the angle and up the slope of the summit ridge. The angle itself was less favourable. Overcoming a small schrund and three narrow crevasses, loose rocks and icy slopes led steeply up to the final ice slope at well over 19,000 feet. The angle of this slope everywhere inside the angle was severe and when I called for the 300 foot nylon line and ice pitons brought thousands of miles specially for this place, it was to find they had been left off a load at base during equalising procedure. While steps could be kicked up the layer of new snow, this was becoming less adhesive and steps would have had to be cut for 500 feet down steep ice in the afternoon. It fell to me to make a decision as unpopular as it was correct in the absence of crampons for every member of the party and a single safety piton. We withdrew some 8000 feet to base camp in one slog. Any final pictures of the porters would have required an extreme telephoto lens. Early in the season Phabrang carries too much snow in the angle, and late in a dry season easy rock might lead to the final ice slope which could be steely dry. No difficulties exist above the slope to the summit.

'On 27th, the horses negotiated with difficulty the wadis and boulders leading to point 12,670 feet, opposite Sattu-da-Par, the site of the Solari/McArthur camp. We searched for the latter's burial place in this wilderness of pool, streams, ice, shifting rocks and sands, without success. On 28th, Tanzim and I climbed the slopes above the camp and up an icy cleft but descended in bad weather. The rock peaks above the cleft remain unclimbed and might require a high camp. On 29th June, leaving Angchuk behind, unwell, we put three successive camps on the glaciers in a zig-zag march on interesting ground, the last camp on the snow plateau just below the col at the head of the nala. On 1st July we traversed the easy rock peak to the left of the col, climbed by the first party but we had some difficulty in discerning the 20,000 foot plus peak beyond, where McArthur became ill. On 2nd July, we climbed the very steep ice slope to the peak on the right of the col, climbed by two of the Solari/McArthur party and then on steep rocks round behind and up an exposed chimney to the top, which is over 19,000 feet. The 20,020 foot Garstang Peak, opposite stood up well and many peaks rimmed a snow basin at our feet, presumably unclimbed. A dominant group lay to the north accessible from Chamba District, very fine indeed and likely untouched but likely to be politically/logistically difficult to reach. We returned to our 1960 camp site in the upper nala and made explorations towards Phabrang and very likely found a route to the east glacier of Phabrang but we had no food left to mount a long assault on the mountain; crossing the Rhotang La very hungry on 8th July in a sustained drive towards Banon's hospitality.

'The cost of porters, horses, food and fodder rose steeply between our two journeys. One reason was the lavish hand-outs to porters of equipment and surpluses of tinned foods given or dumped by previous sponsored expeditions, arousing expectations unlikely to be fulfilled by privately financed parties. As porters immediately sell gifts of equipment in Manali, only to find themselves without it for subsequent hire, we handed over tents, sleeping bags, boots, axes and ropes and all else we could not carry to John Banon, to enable him to hire it to other parties and keep going a fund of stores as Secretary of the Himalayan Club on the spot. In effect, porters will benefit by equipment for new jobs, rather than being cheated by shopkeepers as in the past. All equipment left by us in 1960 and by other parties had been immediately passed over for a few rupees. No mountaineering equipment or tents are available in India, from local manufacture. Particularly useful were American aluminium packframes instead of rucksacks.

Any sort of load can be tied to these frames which weigh little. The lively pleasure we had on these journeys was in no small measure due to the assistance given us by the Banons and to our safe and good-humoured porters and surefooted ponies and horsemen. No-one sustained as much as a cut or a bruise simply because they were mindful of each other. We drove back to London via Lahore, Karachi, Abadan, Baghdad, Beirut, Damascus and through the Iron Gates pass to Iskenderun and Istanbul. An exhilarating part of the run was up the oil pipe-line road from Baghdad to Jordan with the Rolls clocking 60 road miles every hour through the night in the Arabian desert, so that in two whole days we journeyed from the Persian Gulf to the Mediterranean, at Beirut.

America

DR HUGH SIMPSON writes of Petit Piton, 2461 feet of volcanic rock and jungle: 'The jolly-faced, inky-black West Indian pulled over the lever to 'Full Ahead.' The kids shrieked with delight as the sleek launch assumed the planing attitude. The speedometer clicked rapidly, 15kts - 20kts - 25kts - 30kts, as we bounced over the Caribbean. Quite the quickest way of reaching the Pitons, I thought, working out that our previous car recce from Castries, the capital of St Lucia, had taken three times as long. We now came around a cape and ahead lay the scruffy little native village of Soufrière, the Khatmandhu of the Pitons. On the south side of the village we could see the imposing spire of rock rising 2461 feet straight out of the blue Caribbean waters. At first sight there seemed no obvious line of weakness, no easy route to the top, but surely all that vegetation dangling about and the solid wall of rain forest enveloping one side showed that it was easier than it looked?

'Mr Pelham-Reid, very English, owned the local plantation and everything else. He had laid on the trip for us through the Governor. He had found us a guide for the jungle, gave us a mango breakfast in his colonial verandahed house overlooking the sea, and a servant to baby-sit for the children.

'By 8 a.m., thanks to his super-efficiency, we were already on our way. Even so it was pretty hot. Francis, the West Indian guide, set off at a maniac pace. At first it was easy, through acres of cocoanut groves, but the going became rapidly steeper and the jungle thicker. A stone chute gave us a line from the tangled mass of lianas, thorns and grotesque roots. Sweat poured down my face to form a deepening stain on my only trousers. Bathing trunks with these thorns would have been murder; I was glad I had abandoned that idea. Francis' machete slashed intermittently, sometimes to clear the giant bramble thickets, sometimes to mark the way, sometimes to make sure there was no fer-de-lance lurking underneath a leaf. Fortunately the bush was dry; the trade winds on this side saw to that. The stone chute ran out now, and there was nothing but bedrock. One's hands loved the warm easy rock holds as the ground became ever steeper. Francis was appalled at our inclination to stay on the rock 'dangereuse!!! . . . ' he muttered in the local patois. He preferred the roots, scaling them like a monkey, moving up quicker than they fell down. Suddenly sunlight flashed through above our heads and looking through the gap I saw a thousand-foot, holdless, vertical rock wall directly above. No vegetation at all.

'Now we began to traverse towards the sea and crossing a shoulder we reached a new face. Alas, the dry Montaña left us; now all was dank dead and rotten. No sun and no trade winds here. The easy scrambling was over. Now the serious concentrated effort began. Below, the mountain side fell away to oblivion and the Caribbean beyond. Slippery mud chutes were the difficulty; handholds of rootless hyacinth-like parasite plants and giant wet

mouldy onions. Francis was little dismayed by the change in difficulty. He danced about on the high-angle mud with his great long bare toes acting as 20-point crampons. He cut steps in the mud with one flash of his machete; little was said. We thruthched our way up. A massive scarlet gladioli-like plant gave colour to the gloom. Vast ants ran up one's arm. Sweat poured down. Vicious spikes grew on smooth-looking dangling roots, and rope-like vines sprang back to swipe one's face.

'Exhaustion was setting in—but the slope was easing a little. The exposure was less. The sun was brighter and suddenly we broke through onto the summit. What a view!! The easier Gros Piton (2916 feet) dominated the south whilst over the blue sea gleamed the island of Martinique and Guadeloupe. Inland was jungle with one clear patch riveting our eyes. Steam was pouring out! The crater of the volcano of which our Piton was the plug. While we balanced on the summit Francis set fire to a tree and our children saw the smoke signal down below. We broached the orange juice tin and wished that we had six. The devastating sun soon drove us back into the jungle gloom. The descent was faster than one intended and worse on one's hands. One hung onto a root—slithered a length—clutched onto another lower down. One's feet flayed a gap in the vines and one hoped not to be swimming in the near future as the sea licked hungrily below. Thought of coconut juice spurred us on and we reached Pelham-Reid's plantation at 12.30 p.m. Francis nonchalantly walked up a vertical coconut palm and lurled one down each, shouting 'catch!' He slashed off the top and we swigged down the half gallon of cool, fantastically refreshing juice. Then we walked back down the path, avoiding the ripe mangoes as they dotted to the ground; 'don't eat,' said Francis, 'only for pigs'—and Scots, as he found out.

'Pelham-Reid was thrilled to see us successfully back. He had not relished the adoption of four children, particularly as the breast-fed baby was nearly due its next feed. 'By gad, Sir' he said, 'damn good show. Rum punch? My own brew ye' know'; he clapped his hands for the servant to bring the glass.'

A. L. CRAM writes: 'In April 1966, my wife and I went from Malawi to Lisbon, by air, and to Recife in Brazil. By sea we continued to Belem, the port at the mouth of the Amazon. Reliable Blacks of Greenock had forwarded our heavy equipment, which we stowed on a Booth Line steamer for discharge at Iquitos, 2,300 miles up-river. We ourselves went in short hops by D.C.3's to Manaus, 800 miles up and then were forced down on a muddy jungle airstrip at Santa Barbara, by failure of one of the two engines. Eventually, we reached Leticia in Colombia and boarded a river steamer at the Peruvian river port of Benjamin Constant, having had several trips into the mighty million square miles of virgin forest. Spending some time at Iquitos, in trips up side rivers by canoe, we filmed birds, animals and plant life, all of which is particularly rich and varied. My wife was enchanted by the gigantic greenhouse of orchids and strange green-leaved growths, which I reminded her retailed at five and ten guineas each in Britain. Thereafter we travelled round with her fantastic plant collection, most of which is alive today in this country.

'We continued by river steamer to Nauta, where we took the Ucayali tributary to Pucallpa, 3,000 miles inland and 600 feet above sea level. The other tributary, the Marañon, we expected to see next at its source in the Andes. Temperatures in the sun reached 134 degrees F., but began to drop steeply as we drove the 250 miles up-country to the ancient Inca town of Huanuco, circa 6000 feet and changed to horses for the ride to Margos, circa 8000 feet, a rather alarming trail in places. We were given a 'civic' lunch and reception at one village and made to sign the minutes as the first visitors to these parts. With two Indian guides, horses and a string of pack

burros we rode over the mighty puna up to 15,000 feet to Lauricocha (*cocha*=lake) the source of the Marañon which actually rises in the magnificent group of the Cordillera Huayhuash, with Sarapo, 6265 m. and Yerapuja 6040 m. We climbed a minor peak for pictures. We circled back, living in our mountain tents, over the headwaters of the Huallaga tributary in fierce hailstorms and showery weather. Indians, we found, rise at first light, eat little, chew cocoa leaves and go stolidly on up to 30 miles per day, logically fulfilling their contract to get you there, and halt only at nightfall. A great deal of time was spent walking the horses up long steep slopes or down pathless declivities among the mesas, our guides preferring straight courses. The squat drystone, smoking thatched cottages, surrounded by cattle and horses, with bonneted wided skirted, shawled women and men hunched in plaid-like ponchos glimmering through the bright morning mists, were disturbingly Brigadoon. From Huanuco, we drove across the Andes by car and train to Lima, before travelling to Huaraz, 10,260 feet, the principal town in the Callejon de Hualyas in the Cordillera Blanca. With two Indian porters, recommended by the local Andean Club, and a few burros, we went up the Quebrada Ishinca and set up a high camp on the ice below Ranrapalca, circa 19,000 feet from which we made a number of excursions to various minor peaks. On 19th June, we passed close under the final rocks of Ranrapalca and over Ishinca, 18,143 feet, continuing along increasingly broken ice and ridges to the neighbourhood of Palcaraju Oeste, 20,046 feet. At a later date, we set out from Huaraz with our porters by hired car and camped under Punta Cauish in the Yanamarey Group. On 26th June we walked up the corry to the left and up steep detritus and snow to a col. The ridge to the right was followed over teeth and a deep cleft to point 16,781 feet. Next day from the corrie we climbed over slabs into a cleft filled with exceedingly unstable cottage-sized blocks at the top of which a small glacier required crampons. Rotten rock led to point 17,126 feet Yanamarey Sur, climbed by two Swiss in 1965. On 28th June we took to the grass on the right side of the pass then up a rotten ridge with a gap to rocks so fractured as to deny title to remain in position to point 16,876 feet. A vast number of lesser peaks remain unclimbed in the Andes, possibly with hardly known Indian names. Once more from Huaraz a hired car brought us to the northern end of the Callejon, the Canon del Pato, where we crossed a wire pulley bridge to a hacienda. Three days' strenuous walk led over the shoulder of the Quebrado Alpamayo with descent into the Quebrada. On 9th July we crossed the foot of Alpamayo to the right side and ascended over ice to a glacier pass behind Quitaraju, with impressive seracs. The danger from the bursting of glacier lakes in this region is very high. On July 10th we re-crossed the Quebrada and put down a high camp at the pools below Pilanco Sur. The porters went down as food was short. Their capacity was great. In two days, the four of us devoured a whole sheep and 4 kilos of potatoes. In the Yanamarey, 10 kilos of beef and mutton, a sack of bread and half a bag of potatoes, tinned food, fats, sweets and fruit and vegetables, a whole cheese and chocolate with other items barely sufficed. We also began to suspect our own appetites had been sharpened by the exercise and cool dry air. Michel and Antonio were experienced climbers, they carried heavy loads and did whatever was asked of them, save spare the rations, and were good actors for our film, although their impassive faces showed neither joy nor pain. They spoke Quechua and our communication with them was in Spanish, a language essential for a small private party in Peru. On 11th July my wife and I climbed three tops above our camp of about 16,500 feet, on the ridge leading to Tayapampa, said to be unvisited. One was the top of steep rocks seen from the lake, the second a small ice-dome and the third had an engaging rock ridge for some 300 feet. After return to Lima, we went by air to Cuzco, the old Inca capital on 19th July. After viewing Sacsayhuman fortress and Ollantaytambo we spent some time in the 'Lost City' of Machu Picchu and collected plants, scrambling round the hills of 8000 to 10,000 feet and saw

the headwaters of the Urubamba river, the last of the four Peruvian tributaries of the Amazon. Journeying to Puno in the extreme south of Peru we spent a day with the Uros Indians, who live on floating islands of reeds on Lake Titicaca, 12,500 feet. In August we hopped, all the way by V.C.10 B.O.A.C., from Lima to Montego Bay, to New York, to London and to Malawi.'

Africa

A. L. CRAM writes: 'Between 1961 and 1966, we walked over the great majority of the hills in Malawi, a mountainous country in many ways resembling Scotland. Long but narrow, many separate groups extending from 4000 to 10,000 feet present a diversity of vegetation and rock formations. Temperatures in the sun could rise as high as 120 degrees F.; while in winter (in August) frost and snow were experienced on Mlanje, a plateau of about 7000 feet with a number of tops, the highest being Sapitwa, 9848 feet, an easy scramble. Dense rain forest, low prickly scrub, creepers, nettle trees, mossy rock and smooth granite slabs presented unique problems while the rich flora of Southern Africa was a continuing pleasure; proteas, orchids, aloes, euphorbias, lilies, amaryllis, gladioli, convolvulus, velozia, geraniums, nerina, streptocarpus, and flowering shrubs and trees grew as wild and indigenous plants with rarities such as the red disa. Some of the best climbing was on the bare rocks round Lake Malawi, where on the same day one might see tropical fish and plants, monkeys, crocodiles, rare birds, butterflies and cobras. We tended to narrow down and increase our visits to groups which had the best plants or which offered some special interest or climb. In the former, were the Nyika Plateau, 8551 feet, and the Vipya Plateau, circa 6000 feet, in the north and the Zomba and Mlanje Plateau in the south, each about 7000 feet. In the latter category were the Ndirande, Michiru, Chiradzulu, Soche and Mikolongwe groups in the south round about 5000 to 7000 feet and of course the peaks of Mlanje itself. One of these we visited each week. In 1964, great fun was had with a party of villagers during a search for man-eating hyenas on Malosa peak. Eventually we found their hide-out in a rockfall and their activities were curbed. Possibly the villagers had been exposing their dead and the animals had been anticipatory, for they seemed to haunt the dwellings of the aged. Oddly, the mortality rate among hyenas is increased by motor cars more than firearms; an abrasive effect of one nocturnal scourge upon another.

'Mozambique, too, has many interesting hills, but situated in dry bush and with poor roads they were hard to reach. Zambia is devoid of hilly interest, but Rhodesia offers the Matopos Hills with their cave paintings and the plants on the Vumba and Chimanimani ranges, to which we paid a number of visits. In August, 1966, we spent some days walking and scrambling in the Drakensberg from the Natal Royal National Park, including a three-day trudge up to the Sentinel, circa 11,000 feet. The exquisite flora demands a visit earlier in the year. In September we walked over some of the Cape Hills and admired the wondrous plants and flowers on Table Mountain, particularly the flowering heaths.'

IAIN OGILVIE writes: 'I managed to stretch a plane change at Nairobi to make a very rushed visit to Kilimanjaro and enjoy my own private New Year meal.

'On 1st January I engaged a porter at Laitokitok on the north side and climbed through the jungle to spend my first night in a fine cave. On the following day I crossed the moorland to the Saddle and spent my second night at Kibo Hut. On the third morning I left my porter at the hut and reached Gillmans Point (18,640 feet) on the crater edge before sunrise. My

efforts to reach Uhuru Peak, the true summit, $1\frac{1}{2}$ miles round the crater and some 700 feet higher, were defeated by 3 feet of soft snow and lack of acclimatisation, as I had climbed to over 18,000 feet in 46 hours. On the morning of the fourth day I was again dashing over the plains of Kenya to catch my aeroplane.'

HAMISH M. BROWN revisited the Atlas briefly for 'Easter holiday with pleasant-peasant fellow teachers from Braehead who mainly painted, made music and beat up Marrakech. From Tizi n' Tacheddirt with Ann Winning (B.F.M.C.) over Djebel Tacheddirt to Iguenouane, 3875 m., 'an easy day for a lady.' Others from A.B.M.S.A.C. in party did the full traverse of Ann-rhemmer and Toubkal by the O.S.O. Arête.'

Iceland

G. J. DUTTON writes: 'No one nowadays will go to Iceland to climb. But one might have to wait several days at Reykjavik, that Hebridean Tokyo, bag-watching between Greenland charterage; or—as in this case—be tempted to take a young family mini-Simpsoning to an accessible remoteness. Meaty advice on Icelandic climbing comes from Peter Kidson of *Icelandair*, or from the Anglo-Icelandic Field Research Group, 161 Piccadilly, London, W.1. Here follows salt for the meal; take it as such.

'We brought one Land Rover. I recommend two, insurance being poor and disaster imminent; you grind from cairn to cairn through sump-shattering lava-fields, or from island to quaking island across glacial torrents. Not that you are alone. The 180,000 native tourists infest a space larger than Ireland—and with an uninhabitable interior—unbelievably thickly. Everyone appears to have a Jeep, Land Rover, Gypsy, Bronco, Scout (or Russo-Japanese improvement thereof), or to travel hilariously in 6-wheel-drive buses accompanied by 4-wheel-drive cooking vans and 24-hour cooks; all with walkie-talkies, transistors, chromium strips, three-tone horns and near-beer. The roads are as hideous with litter and fumes as Highland ones; but even off them, in the deserts, there is no escape. For nobody walks. Lavas, moraines and even crater rims are scored with their tyres, the sands beside the few huts are embroidered with their gyrations; in the rivers they splash and wallow, exhausts bubbling; they roar up to the limit on 40° scree, schussing delightedly down. And all night, to headlamps, they sing. This exuberant fun is commendable but its vitality, to decadent southrons, exhausting.

'Roughly three-fifths of Iceland is a basalt plateau similar to Tertiary areas in N.W. Skye and Eigg; great tilted tables, cliffed in shaly sequences. The other two-fifths, disturbingly, is still being made; most is less than a million years old, some of it only a few thousand or a few hundreds—or even tens—of years old. Huge slobes and plugs extruded under the last ice now hunch embarrassed in the sun; at their knees crouch crags and craters blown up or out more recently still, even since the Scots-Irish and their successors the Vikings landed. All are savagely attacked by frost and thaw.

'The Gael said of Highland looseness 'My love is Beinn Eighe; she with me would go,' but Icelandic hills are aggressively promiscuous, cracked viragos only too eager to give you everything.

'Of the two recommended climbing areas I sampled Akureyri, up the pleasant Glerá Glen, where between a late winter and the subsequent early one there was good solo snow-bowling and terrace-clutching; fine views, offering basic basalt bread buttered with small glaciers. Above Oxnadalur nearby, ridges appeared sharper and better policed than the Cuillin, though less reliable than the Aonach Eagach.... At Oxnadalshéið are snow peaklets and bright primary-school glaciers. All around here unwind endless moors, fine for sponge-bashing under a wide sky, with thin-legged piping accompaniment.

'The other recommended region—Kerlingarfjöll—was too many petrol-haunted hours away; we left it to the week-end skiers (it is a development area) bucketing obsessively through the dust. Like the remaining hills visited, it is volcanic and Recent. Volcano-bagging is a form of inversion; the summit cairn is presumably the bottom of the crater. I narrowly escaped a glissading jeep on one of them, so they have their dangers. Sulphur-sprung mountains, winking and scrofulous, offer pathic delights; an ice-axe may test the pustular crust. In the evening, hot-bath-hot springs, some coy in caves, mollify outraged flesh. The finest challenge is Herdubreid, the broad-shouldered, heaving 1500 m. from a vast plate of cinders; after a half-circuit I retired, baffled. Some 2000 feet of purgatorial fragments, then erect, smooth, *sound* basalt columns, supporting a snow-caked pie-plateau; there must be a solo way up (and even down) but prudence and the next day's storm lost it to me, and I would return, if for that alone. Prudence was ignored on the Bláfell, prospective viewpoint for the Langjökull ice. Horror of driving further left no choice but the north side. The approach tore my breeks on the only barbed wire for infinities, guarding a desperate hectare of grass seed. In the black corrie, sun tipped off stones to fall. Escape rattled across cones of rubble, then up a detachable ridge whose instant-screes were perforated 20 feet below the crest. Light grinned through its jiggery-pokerwork and we shook together. Disengaging to ice, I cut until it rubbered back all strokes, diving under an overhanging lip of wet black Aberfantastic ash; a rapid crawl finished at a stationary pinnacle at the corrie lip. Descent utilised a downward escalator of moss, on the southwest side.

'There are terrifying dinosaural spines along the southeast edge of the Langjökull, easily reached from Hagavatn, and interesting (and older) crags along the road south of Borgarfjörð; pleasant Mod. to Diff. cindery ridges in the Tindafjöll of the south. The best views were in the steaming Landmannalaugar region of south Iceland, especially from the picnicky grass-backed Svartikrokur: sands braided among mineral forests of orange and green, red-eyed mountains antlering over black deserts that stretch cratered and cauldroned to the largest icecaps outside the Pole. Even the jeeps, puffs of dust about one's feet, lost their sting. Fine views also were from Thoröfssfell over to the Thorsmörk icefalls and the Markarfljót valley through which flush periodically—after subglacial eruptions—Amazonian volumes of ice and water. Such *jökullhlaup* make icecap journeys thoughtful, but the inevitable snowmobiles (nobody sledges . . .) might be a more immediate danger.

'Hekla offered tamer views. From the delightful farm of Naefurholt the ascent (for those with uninsured vehicles) is an unexciting 17 km. plod, capped with thousands of feet of twenty-year-old loose blocks and ash (down which glissading is excellent) and, last year, 300 feet of joyfully hard snow below the summit cone, there uncrevassed. The craters are unwashed bottomless pots in a dirty-white 7 km. split along the ridge, steaming and allegedly warming up for another burst. So the 1947 lava scramble may in its turn be plastered over by the 1969 lava and the route will be different, and perhaps there will be no Naefurholt farm to start from . . . Slowly one begins to realise what it's like to live and play hard directly above the opening Atlantic Ridge, and one warms to salute the proud independence of this astonishing island, below which Scotland grovels in pampered, orostatic and—hoot aye, Mac—southern ease.'

Norway

SCOTT JOHNSTONE writes: 'Looking for an area in which to combine good climbing with a family holiday my wife and I chose the Jotunheim. Also in the party were Dan Pigott and Mike and Judith Dean.

'From camps near Turtagro all members climbed the Dyrhaugstinden (easy, with a good scramble for the last hundred yards of narrow ridge). Scott and Dan climbed Midtmaradalstind *via* Laev Skar leaving various party members distributed in shady nooks en route. This route is more difficult than the guide book suggests, involving a long ascending and exposed stomach traverse at one point, which is about Very Difficult standard. Same party also had an easy day on Nordre Soleitind. The Johnstones and Pigott climbed Store Skagastolstind *via* Heftyes Rende. This route is a long undistinguished scramble as far as the Hjørnet, when it perks up for the last 600 feet of excellent airy climbing of about Difficult standard. On these days other members took in minor peaks, passes and glaciers.

'Camp was then shifted to Raubergstulen on Galdhøpiggen. From this pleasant site the Smørstabbtinden were accessible in about an hour's drive, although, of course, bleaker sites are available much nearer. Any of these lovely peaks, which rise from a big glacier complex, can be climbed in four hours or less from the road. Scott, with three companions climbed Storebjorn from the Smørstabb glacier *via* the lowest point in the col of its N.W. ridge, returning over Lillebjorn and its narrow N.W. ridge to the Leirbreen glacier. This is a really delightful route with all the characteristics of an Alpine excursion. No difficulty to those with Alpine experience. Scott and Pigott climbed the S.E. ridge of Store Smørstabbtind, reputedly Severe, but a 'two-pitch' climb of no great appeal. At the head of the first hard pitch the route goes *right* not left, as the guide-book says, out on to a 'dolomitic' wall where a peg (in place) is welcome. On these days other members pass-walked, scrambled or fished, as appropriate to each.

'All members except Pigott ("once is enough") trudged up Galdhøpiggen. The warning notice at the roping-up point was duly obeyed and was justified when the leader fell through a concealed crevasse. Bikini-clad and kinky-booted tourists are apparently immune from such hazards. Maybe the weight of the rope makes the difference!

'The area offers great scope for family climbing. Our 11-year old could cope with enough to make "baby-watching" no real chore, while for the free members sufficient good climbs were available and all accessible from comfortable base-camp sites. The guide book *Mountain Holidays in Norway* is rudimentary but adequate for the adventurous if the correct map is read in context. This is *Vest-Jotunheimen* scale 1:50,000. Excellent weather throughout, from 24th July - 7th August.'

Pyrenees

A. L. CRAM writes: 'In March and April, 1968, my wife and I toured the Spanish side of the Pyrenees, making several excursions on foot. We spent a week or two round Torla and climbed on to the ridges and tops at a number of points. Snow was deep and very wet and rain and mist were all too common. Although suiting our purpose to examine the mountain flowers, there could hardly be a worse time for visiting the peaks. On 17th April, we climbed the highest point in Spain, Mulhacen, 3470 m., in the Sierra Nevada. Although only a few miles inland from the Mediterranean, deep hard snow, cloud and blizzard harried us on the last 2000 feet. We even cut a few steps on a direct route up. Rainy weather persisted throughout our walks on Spanish hills and we left in a downpour, soaked, at the end of the month on the hills above Pamplona.'

Alps

J. D. B. WILSON writes on 'A Long Haute Route': 'For those who enjoy mountain travel, with some climbing thrown in, the Alpine springtime has

much to recommend it—often fine weather, days as long as in August, many empty huts (and even the most popular less so than in summer). But more than that is the joy of finding almost pristine Alps, uncluttered, and unbesmirched with litter—and with an apparent extra 5000 feet of height due to the lower snow-line. That's the credit side. On the other is the necessity of carrying all the kit needed to negotiate snow of varying and doubtful depth. Basic ski equipment, for one, weighs about 16 lbs., and although most of it is on the feet this extra is certainly translated into an equivalent number of foot-pounds of energy expended when going uphill. But then, if the energy wasn't there, *you* wouldn't be either.

There are lots of climbing-cum-ski routes along the line of the Alps, but much depends on season and conditions, as to which is the best. My own choice took us by way of the Silvretta (Galtur-Wiesbadner hut—Fuorcla du Confin—Silvretta pass—Klosters) to the ski area of the Parsenn where legs are strengthened. From there the Scottish-trained find no difficulty over the Weissfluh-Mattjishorn-Langwies traverse—or for that matter, further, by Arosa/Hornli-Parpaner Schwartzhorn and Tschertschen to Chur. That much from Austria took Dick West and myself a week including 2 days of piste-bashing on the Parsenn. A fast party would take 4 days. We were joined by three Swiss friends at Wallenstadt and made our way through the Glarus alps by way of the Spitzmeilen (but not on skis), Sernfthal, Legler hut, Karpfe, Linthal, Clariden hut, Claridenstock, Planura hut, Fuorcla del Cambrialas, Cavadiras hut, Oberalpstock, Sedrun and so to Andermatt. That took another week, and the 7 days were pretty occupied. We should have met the Slessers here but found we were separated by too much avalanche country around Gletsch (the Slessers being in Goms). To join them at Munster involved West and myself in three days of very repaying travel by the Rotondo hut, Rongergrat, Cavanna pass, Bedretto valley, Corno hut, and pass, and into the upper Rhone valley by the Aeginthal. The whole area south-west of the Furka is splendid ski-mountaineering country. The weather broke at this point and West had to get home. Having finally met up with the Slessers we had to do something so went briefly to Zermatt and climbed the Breithorn in a screaming wind. The lack of snow here after the eastern and central Alps was astounding, and didn't encourage a long stay. June Ross (L.S.C.C.) joined me at Easter and we restarted the Long Haute Route from Fiesch, going by way of the Marjelensee, Concordia hut, and the Loetschenthal. This is certainly the way, and season, to get around the immensity of the Oberland glaciers. We skied to Blatten and took public transport to Saas Fee and the Langefluh. From there we went Britannia hut, Allalinjoch to Tasch, and Zermatt, where we were joined by Jimmy Russell. Thence it was the familiar Haute Route—Schonbiel, Col de Valpelline, Col du Mont Brule, Col de l'Evêque, Vignettes hut, Pigne d'Arolla, Brennay, Chanrion. Here we were snowed upon and escaped *via* the Col du Fenêtre du Durand to Aosta, and thence by public transport under the king alp to Chamonix. Return to Switzerland was by the Albert 1re. hut, Cols du Tour and d'Orny, and so to Orsières, six weeks away from Galtur. My time had run out, but the other two linked up the missing Orsières-Chanrion section by the classic traverse of the Col du Sonadon by Valsorey, and escaped this time from Chanrion by the Cols de Lire Rose, Mont Rouge, Cheilon and Pas de Chèvres to Arolla.

Statistics of a trip like this are disappointing but require quoting for honesty's sake. We averaged about 10 miles per day, had 60,000 ft. uphill on foot, and 85,000 ft. downhill, plus a further 150,000 ft. down onfoot, but up with mechanical aids. It all seems so much more at the time. A good eye for line is generally of more value than first class ski technique, but on most days there occur short passages where the ability to control one's skis accurately is at least a comfort. Good judgment of snow (both for safety's sake, and pleasure of descents) is of much more importance than in summer, and forms one of the fascinations of mountain travel in spring.

'As to equipment, one finds one must carry at least one ice-axe between two, light-weight crampons for all (dependent on the country), 120 ft. light line for three, the same sort of clothing as in summer plus cagoule and down-filled anorak (very comforting in bed). Generally speaking, an altimeter is of more use than a compass. Ski-equipment is fairly personal, but piste-skis are an embarrassment. Skins should be new at the beginning of the trip and the Swiss "Gezante Harscheissen" (detachable steel blades on the side of the skis under the feet) are a great help on hard steep traverses. All this, plus four days' food, in a rucksack will ensure that the ski-mountaineer will remain more a mountaineer than a skier.'

JOHN PORTEOUS, J.M.C.S., writes: 'Mike Watson, myself and two refugees from Dumbarton Rock—Messrs Carrington and Jackson—hit the spaghetti trail in early July. In the Dolomites the weather was reasonable—generally clear during the day but with a spectacular thunderstorm every evening. The following were climbed:

'Catinaccio: July 5th—Catinaccio Central-Steger Direct on East Face (R.C. & J.J.). Piaz Crack on Punta Emma and S.W. Ridge Torre Delago (M.W. & J.P.). July 6th—Catinaccio North-Di Francheschi (R.C. & J.J.). Steger Direct (M.W. & J.P.).

'Tre Cime: July 8th—Cima Piccolissima-Cassin on S.E. face (R.C. & J.J.). Cima Piccola-Spigolo Giallo (Yellow Edge) (M.W. & J.P.). July 9th—Cassin on North face Cima Ouest (R.C. & J.J.). Comici on North face Cima Grande (M.W. & J.P.) (bivouacked, having lost descent route).

'Civetta: July 12th—Punta Civetta-N.W. Face-Aste Susatti (R.C. & J.J.—a magnificent line). July 14th—Carlesso Menti on Val Grande (M.W. & J.P.—having spent previous day ascending and descending the wrong shale bing). July 14/15th—Phillip Flam (R.C. & J.J.—with one bivouac in foul weather—this route fully lived up to its reputation).

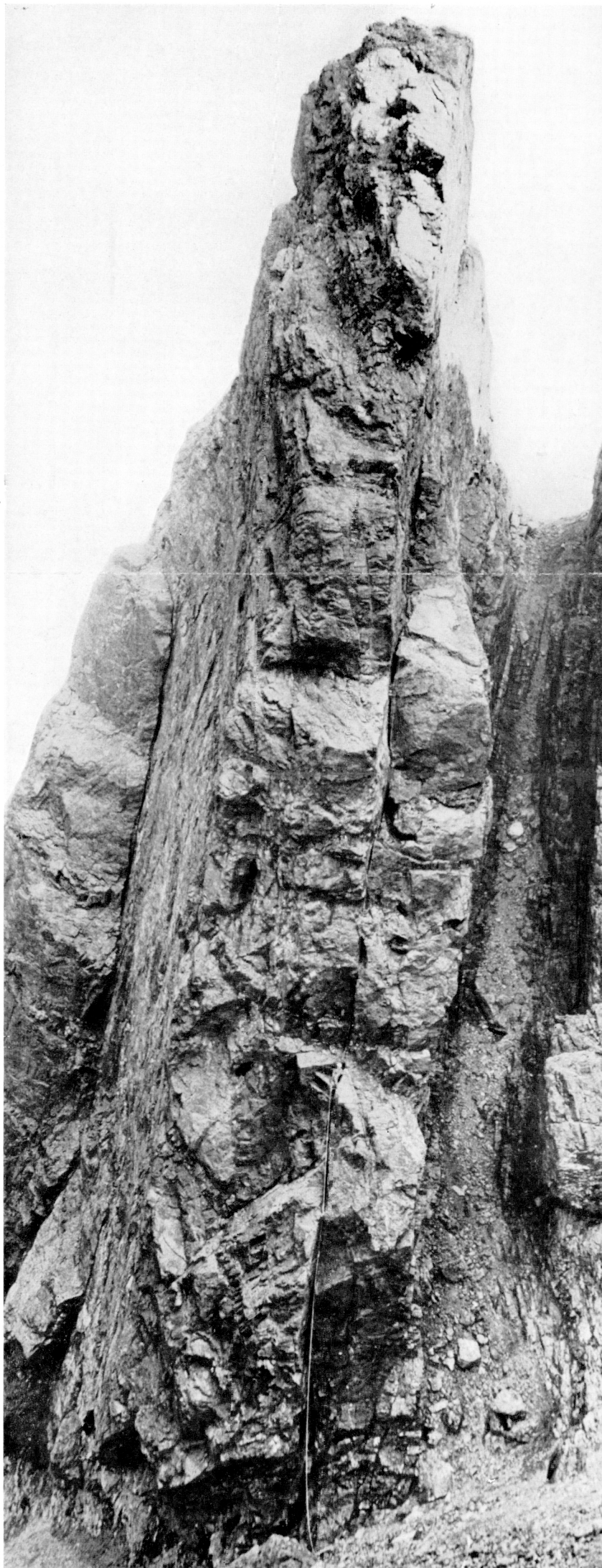
'We then crossed the highest pass in Europe, by mistake, to reach the Western Bregaglia but fresh snow on the hills and rain in the valley kept us moving to Mt. Blanc. It was on our first climb there—the South Ridge of the Noire—that John Jackson was killed.'

H. M. BROWN writes: 'In August five out to Martigny, camp base there, good centre. From Leukerbad up to Gemmi Pass and Lammernhütte where bad weather gave the Steghorn and a traverse of various summits of the Wildstrubel and off across the big snowfield of the Plaine Morte. Exit over the Pointe de la Plaine Morte as fog down to the Rhone and new snow. From Susanfe Hut cross the Susanfe Pass to Salvan with the Haut Cime of the Dents du Midi made interesting, as done in winter conditions. Cross to Cogne for a last wash-out.'

DAN STEWART had several interesting days in the Southern Dolomites (Pala Group) with varied partners including the North-West ridge of the Cima di Pradidali and the West (Scarf) Arête of the Cima della Madonna.

J. MCK. STEWART writes: 'In September I visited the Austrian Stubai and Ötztal with other members of the A.A.C. Perfect weather gave good climbing on grade III rock with ice and snow in excellent condition.

'3rd, traversed Wilder Freiger by the frontier ridge from the Sulzenau Hut. 5th, Zuckerhütl by N.E. ridge from Dresdner Hut. 6th, Stubai Wildspitze by S.E. ridge en route to Hildesheimer Hut. 8th, traversed Hintere Schwärze by the N. ridge from Samoar Hut. 9th, Similaun by N.W. ridge from Samoar Hut. 10th, Fineilspitz by N.E. ridge from Hauslab J. on way to Hochjochospiz. 11th, Fluchtkogl and Kesselwandspitze from Guslar J. en route to Vernagt Hut. 12th, traversed Ötztal Wildspitze from Brochkogel



M. Heller

A new route on Blaven, by Dr P. Gribbon and a St. Andrews U.M.C. party who named it 'Splinter.' It was climbed again unknowingly by I. Clough and party, who first recorded the route, calling it 'The Great Prow.' As the new Skye Guide went to final Proof, the St. Andrews precedence was acknowledged, but it was too late to change the name, and 'The Great Prow' it remains. Photographed from the Clach Glas-Blaven col. Arrows show climbers on first ascent.

slabby groove. Go up this and move out left at top under large roof to peg belay (110 ft.). Step left into bottomless groove and climb this (peg runner) to large overhang. Traverse left to edge; a few feet higher there is a small stance (75 ft.). Traverse left into a deep crack and up this to stance and peg belay under final overhang (120 ft.). Step back into crack and surmount overhang to easy ground leading to summit.

Sgùrr Sgumain: North Buttress.—Two new routes have been made on the very steep Glenbrittle Face of the buttress, described in the 1958 guide as 'teeming with overhangs.' In the centre of the face is an overhanging wall bounded on the right by a line of corners and chimneys and on its left by two obvious corners. The first route described below takes the chimneys on the right and the second follows the righthand of the two corners on the left.

—*Purple Haze*. 310 ft. Very Severe.

M. J. Guilliard & J. R. Irwin. 23rd June 1968.

Under the initial overhangs is a stony terrace from which this and the next route start. Start by a small orange slab which is the first break in the overhangs as one descends this terrace. Climb up to right along obvious diagonal fault to good stance and peg belay below steep wall (70 ft.). Continue in same line to foot of corner. Peg belay (60 ft.). Climb corner above stance to large sloping ledge (40 ft.). Go straight up three short steep corners to foot of final groove (70 ft.). Go up groove to below final overhang, make extremely long step left onto arête and finish up this (70 ft.). This brings one to the large terrace below the final wall. An escape was made on the right.

—*Frostbite*. 460 ft. Very Severe.

M. J. Guilliard & J. R. Irwin. 24th June 1968.

Start 20 ft. left of *Purple Haze* where the terrace turns a corner. Climb up and slightly right to join loose stony rake directly below right-hand corner (see above). Peg belay (80 ft.). Go up corner on good holds to stony ledge and climb short wall to grass ledge and belays (110 ft.). An easy diagonal break leads up right to big red-brown corner capped by large overhang which is avoided on the left to reach arête. A magnificent pitch (130 ft.). Continue to big rocky terrace and move up to obvious final groove (70 ft.). Climb obvious layback crack to good ledge, surmount overhang on dubious holds and continue to top of buttress (70 ft.).

Sgùrr Mhic Coinnich: Coireachan Ruadha Face.—*Magpie Cracks*. 220 ft. Very Severe. J. Harwood & R. A. High. 17th June 1968.

On J Buttress left of the great gully is a huge sloping terrace 100 ft. up. Start on terrace, left of smooth overhanging wall (arrow). Make a rising traverse left across slab to gain corner crack. Go up this (120 ft.). Move left and climb to top by cracks and walls.

Sgùrr a' Ghreadaidh: North-West Face.—*Scimitar*. 275 ft. Very Severe. J. Harwood & R. A. High. 16th June 1968.

The crack line in the middle of the buttress left of Hamish's Chimney. Start 200 ft. left of Hamish's Chimney. Climb shallow groove to overhang. Traverse left (peg runner) and go up and left to start of crack (125 ft.). Follow crack line to top.

Sgùrr Thormaid: South Face.—*Peridot*. 720 ft. Very Severe. J. Harwood & R. A. High. 16th June 1968.

Takes the easiest apparent line up the previously-unclimbed face overlooking the descent to Coruisk from Bealach 2920 ft. It is well seen from Sgùrr na Banachdich. Start left of and above the lowest point of the buttress at some pale grey rock. Go up slab and corner to huge sloping grass ledge and

J. to Mittelberg J. on way to Braunschweiger Hut. 13th, traversed Innere Schwärze Schneide by S. ridge from Tiefenbach J. from Braunschweiger Hut.'

He will be pleased to provide information on this area of the Alps to any member interested.

Six Glasgow J.M.C.S. members—I. BURLEY, R. CAMELFORD, E. GLEN, A. McINNES, R. RICHARDS and D. SOMMERVILLE—were in the Austrian Alps for the greater part of the Glasgow Fair enjoying one of the worst Alpine summers for many seasons while missing the best summer in Scotland for 13 years. The first few days were spent in the Zillertal based at the Berliner Hutte. They only succeeded in climbing one peak—the Schönbichlerhorn—and this only in lieu of a crossing to the Furtschagl-haus. Inches of snow at the hut on the fourth morning forced them down to Mayrhofen to socialise with the Lochaber Section. Their next base was Sölden where the four fitter members of the expedition spent two nights at the Hildesheimer Hutte, ascending the Zuckerhüt and Wilder Pfaff in reasonable conditions, to be 'snowed' back to Sölden on their second morning. In glorious weather the whole party went up to Vent and hence to the Breslauer Hutte to snatch the Ötztaler Wildspitze before being forced back to the valley and home some two days early.

They offer two pieces of advice—don't travel on the autobahns at the week-end and if you're taking advantage of the seller's market in laid nylon ropes make sure you have the owner's permission before selling.

NEW CLIMBS

FIRSTLY I must express personal gratitude to all contributors for their encouraging response to my suggestions last issue. Preparation this year required little more than general tidying-up and occasional pruning. Secondly, I remind contributors once more that the new 'alphabetical order' rule for route-makers is purely experimental. Those nursing grievances should communicate with me (anonymously, if desired) and if sufficient objections are received we will revert to the old system. Alternatively, one might hope that those whose efforts seem belittled by the new rule will take up pencils and write a full account of the matter for inclusion in the main section of the *Journal*! One final suggestion: many decades ago a tacit ban was placed on eponymous nomenclature. There have been various recent attempts to circumvent this ban by naming routes after friends (or enemies), but no further evasions of onomastic responsibility will be countenanced. . . . !

ROBIN N. CAMPBELL.

SKYE

Many fine new routes have been discovered on the east side of Blaven. These and a few others elsewhere arrived in time for inclusion in the forthcoming new edition of the *Skye Rock-Climbers' Guide* and are therefore not repeated here. The following routes were unfortunately received too late for incorporation in the new guide.

Sgùrr nan Eag: North-East Face.—*Leviathan*. 475 ft. Very Severe. J. Harwood & R. A. High. 19th June 1968.

A fine climb, rising between overhangs from near the Chasm into the centre of the cliff. Start between Ladders and Chasm Left Edge in a corner. Climb wall (just left of Ladders' second pitch) to reach leftward-leaning

up this to its top. Peg belay (120 ft.). Move right 10 ft. and climb into an obvious deeply-cut trap dyke. Climb this, hard at first, till the angle lessens (480 ft.). Go up right by short walls directly to the summit (120 ft.).

Sgùrr a' Mhadaidh: Coire Tairnealar.—*Vixen Groove*. 450 ft. Severe. B. K. E. Edridge & D. C. Forrest. 12th July 1968.

This climb follows an obvious groove about 50 ft. left of, and parallel to Mantrap. Start from slabby bay about 150 ft. above the bottom rocks and right of the overhanging central portion of the buttress containing Shining Cleft. Follow obvious groove to Foxes' Rake in four pitches with an awkward chimney-cave (loose) at about 300 ft.

Marsco: North-West Buttress.—*The Boojum*. 390 ft. Very Severe. J. Harwood & R. A. High. 20th June 1968.

This route lies on the crag facing Sligachan and is much more impressive than it looks from a distance. There is a cave in the centre of the cliff just left of the highest point. Although the first pitch is loose, the others are on sound rough rock. Start at highest part of buttress. An overhang guards the base of the crag with another, 30 ft. above. Climb shallow groove through lower overhang to reach obvious leftward traverse (peg runner). Take this traverse until it is possible to climb straight up to the cave. Peg belays (140 ft.). Move out of cave on right and step back left onto its lip. Go up slightly left to base of clean rib buttress (130 ft.). Climb this to the top.

South-West Face.—*The Snark*. 800 ft. Very Severe. J. Harwood & R. A. High. 20th June 1968.

Although slightly contrived, this route offers really enjoyable climbing on superb rock. Start directly below middle of Central Buttress (cairn and arrow). Climb up wall and over small overhang. Traverse left and go up small corner to ledge (80 ft.). Continue up and slightly left until at about 60 ft. an exposed gangway on the right can be gained. Follow this to groove and go up to First Terrace (150 ft.). Scramble up slabs to crack right of pedestal below a steep smooth wall. Go up crack and belay on far side of pedestal (90 ft.). Climb undercut crack on left to groove with large detached pinnacle, move onto right wall and go up to crack leading to Second Terrace (130 ft.). Scramble up Shoulder and go straight up final wall to finish by prominent V-cleft with two small overhangs (350 ft.).

Old Man of Storr.—*Portree Face*. Very Severe. G. B. Lee & P. Thomson. September 1967.

This face of the Old Man has a 20 ft. pillar at its foot. Climb this from the left easily and then overhanging wall above to belay in cave (a wide angle in a hole and a tied-off knife-blade were used for aid). Traverse right into steep groove and climb this to peg belay below overhang. Step left to foot of steep crack and climb this a few feet. Make a hard move right (peg runner), go up to obvious traverse line left and round arête to peg belay in final crack. Climb crack to top. In descent the top pitch was first descended before abseiling.

ARRAN

Cir Mhòr: Lower North-East Face.—*Silo*. 1200 ft. Very Severe. I. G. Rowe, A. J. Trees & M. Watson. 18-19th May 1968 (1 bivouac).

An obvious leftward-slanting fault-line cleaves the centre of the face midway between Gullies A and B₁ and roughly parallel to the former. At about half-height the fault bifurcates, the fork enclosing a prominent triangular nose of excellent rock. This route starts at the base of this line in the

leftmost of a group of prominent vertical cracks. Above this it takes the right fork, a well-defined corner-chimney system, until a left traverse may be made to gain the crest of the triangular nose, which is followed to the top. The abundance of greenery (much has now been removed) and the poor quality of the rock on certain pitches made this imposing line difficult to grade and called for much possibly-dispensable aid. In spite of this, the fine situations and the high quality of the upper pitches made the climb well worthwhile.

At the foot of the vertical crack is a dark recess gained from the right by two pitches over vegetations slabs (200 ft.). From recess climb chimney (loose) to top of large detached flake on left and continue by slimy corner-crack above (1 wedge, 1 peg) to large ledge (70 ft.). Climb excellent chimney above (80 ft.). Continue by grassy walls and grooves, resisting a leftward trend, to ledge below gardened crack (125 ft.). Follow crack past spike to ledge. Step delicately left and follow crack to belay (110 ft.). Climb straight up to rightward-slanting groove which is followed until a leftward hand-traverse can be made round a flake. Belay on the flake (60 ft.). Traverse left and climb by any means the disgusting, green, slimy chimney to cave with through route to stance (100 ft.). One is now in the corner-chimney system right of the prominent triangular nose. Scramble up and right and climb a slimy crack (*étriers*). Move back into the gully on the left (120 ft.). From the gully gain the crest of the nose, using a peg in a horizontal crack (40 ft.). Follow crest pleasantly to a belay overlooking gully (120 ft.). Traverse right onto gully wall, then go up to overhang and step left to ledge and belay (70 ft.). Follow faults above to the top (120 ft.).

—*Pothole Slab*. 380 ft. Very Severe.

J. Gillespie & W. Skidmore. 28th June 1968.

The sweep of slabs between C and D Gullies is bounded on the left by a long wet groove. Start in the middle of this slab below a curious water-filled hole (cairn). Climb straight up on small holds until possible to step left onto small grassy ledge. Peg belay (5, 90 ft.). Traverse right by microgranite vein past a groove, then go up to larger ledge and peg belay (4, 110 ft.). Find a line up more broken rocks above and take a peg belay in wet corner with arrow scratched on right wall (4, 100 ft.). Climb up on right by short crack, move left into corner and surmount strenuous flake crack curving leftwards to groove which finishes abruptly on open ledge at cairn (5, 80 ft.).

A' Chir : Coire Daingean Face.—*Mosque*. 700 ft. Very Severe. I. Fulton & J. M. Shaw. 20th July 1968.

The route lies on the same buttress as Pagoda Ridge and takes a fairly direct line to the top of the buttress. Start 20 ft. right of Pagoda Ridge at base of 'terminal slab' (arrow). Climb straight up slab to overlap and traverse left below it to jutting block. Climb overlap and go up and right to small stance and peg belay (130 ft.). Climb slab above and move right to flake on edge of next overlap. Mantleshelf onto this and continue to next overlap. Climb this and the slab above directly to reach flake belay (110 ft.). Climb bulging wall right of belay and slab and grass above to cracker belay below overlap (100 ft.). Pull up overlap and go up right on pock holds to small undercut corner. Climb corner and traverse hard right to below overhung recess. Climb recess (loose) and go up and right to belay on rib (140 ft.). Climb slab on left and then go easily left to join Pagoda Ridge. Finish by that route or the slabs on its right.

North Goatfell : Coire Dearg Slabs.—A prominent belt of overlapping slabs lies high up on the south-west face of the mountain. They are fairly continuous and about 300 ft. in height. A series of divergent grooves curve up and right across the slabs. All start rather towards the left and quite close together. From left to right, No. 1 is the most direct, easiest and least

attractive, No. 2 is the most central and the best line; 3 and 4, though less attractive and often wet, are probably much harder. Away to the right of this area a prominent diamond-shaped slab stands out and appears to form its right boundary. In fact a heathery terrace, invisible from below, slants down from left to right from the top of the main slabs and cuts off the Diamond Slab (see *S.M.C.J.* xxviii, 212). The following two routes lie up the main slabs.

—*Whit Fur.* 300 ft. Difficult.

H. Stirling & W. Wallace. Whitsun 1968.

No. 1 groove (see above). Climb the groove to spike belay (110 ft.). Re-enter groove (now degenerate) and traverse up and right over slab to sloping grass ledge and block belay (60 ft.). Finish directly up slabs (steep at first) to broken ground (130 ft.).

—*Whit Whey?* 300 ft. Severe.

H. Stirling & W. Wallace. Whitsun 1968.

No. 2 groove (see above). Starts about 20 ft. right of *Whit Fur*. Climb 10 ft. slab to start of groove. Then climb groove strenuously for 25 ft. or its left edge. Continue in groove to reach lower edge of prominent flake blocking groove (peg runner) and jutting out right. Traverse right and go up to small stance below another groove facing left. Nut belay (110 ft.). Climb groove (friable) or slab on right to peg belay below and right of main upper slab (70 ft.). Climb easy grassy groove and 40 ft. of upper slab to peg belay below small overlap 15 ft. left of huge block resembling a profile (110 ft.). Climb overlap and short slab to finish (20 ft.).

Mullach Buidhe: Glen Sannox Face.—This peak lies about $\frac{3}{4}$ -mile north of North Goatfell and has two tops fairly close together. From its north top a clean well-defined though easy-angled buttress falls 250-300 ft. to the corrie. More or less directly below, a large obvious gully (floored by a felsite(?) dyke) runs down for about 600 ft. Its lower end is marked by a triangular belt of pale water-worn slabs. The north wall of the gully is steep and well-defined and forms a prominent edge with a long and fairly continuous belt of slabs on the mountainside. The following climb attempted to follow this edge. Start at the top of the pale slabs where the gully begins.

—*Anticlimax.* 600 ft. Severe.

H. Stirling & W. Wallace. August 1968.

40 ft. of easy rock and 50 ft. of very steep vegetation lead to point level with fierce little rib on the right forming the edge. Peg belay and sloping grassy stance on left (90 ft.). Descend about 10 ft., go a few feet right and climb up and out on the near-vertical gully wall to peg belay and very small stance beside large block below steep chimney (40 ft.). Gain top of block with difficulty (peg runner), climb chimney (strenuous) for 30 ft. and escape left onto edge. Block belay and stance 30 ft. higher (crux, 60 ft.). Follow edge giving delightful and relatively easy climbing to the top (400 ft.).

Cioch na h-Oighe.—*Galway Slabs.* 280 ft. Severe. A. J. Maxfield & D. F. Price. 30th August 1968.

Takes the easiest line up the slabs between the 1896 route and the Bastion. Start above the first pitch of Ledge 3. Traverse delicate slabs on left until left-hand corner is reached. Go up to grass ledge and belay (110 ft.). Move 20 ft. right and then go up onto a slab with an overhang at its top. Move up and left across slabs to grass ledge and thread belay (60 ft.). Reach large open groove above and to the left by short crack and climb left wall of groove to Ledge 4 (110 ft.).

North Glen Sannox.—Several climbs have been discovered by A. J. Maxfield and his companions on the south side of this glen on the east face of the

ridge dividing Coire nan Ceum from the corrie to the west (O.S. ref. 453969). The routes are described from left to right looking at this face.

—*Ardito*. 200 ft. Very Severe. A. J. Maxfield & R. Wilde. 3rd June 1968.

Start at left end of crag at gully which finishes in wide chimney. From gully climb behind large chockstone. Climb over the chockstone and continue up chimney to grass ledge (100 ft.). Move right onto a rock edge and follow to the top (100 ft.).

—*Fuocco*. 250 ft. Very Severe. A. J. Maxfield & R. Wilde. 3rd June 1968.

The route climbs an obvious chimney in the upper part of the cliff. It has a remarkable hanging chockstone resembling a 15 ft. tongue. Start about 200 ft. right of *Ardito*. Climb wide crack then short wall to grass ledge with good belay under overhanging nose (110 ft.). Traverse left 20 ft., then climb wall above and move right into foot of chimney (50 ft.). Climb chimney, passing behind the hanging 'tongue' and then go up to grass ledge (60 ft.). A short wall leads to easy ground and the top (30 ft.).

—*Pompière*. 300 ft. Very Severe. A. J. Maxfield, D. F. Price & R. Wilde. 3rd June 1968.

The right end of the crag (facing north-east) is dominated by a right-angled corner-crack. The route enters this corner from the right and follows it to the top of the crag. Start about 200 ft. right of *Fuocco* where the crag ends in a corner buttress. Climb slabs on right of buttress to platform (100 ft.). Traverse left onto buttress and left again to grass ledge and block belay (30 ft.). Traverse ledge 30 ft. to its end whence the large corner-crack can be seen. Cross intervening wall with difficulty to reach ledge below corner-crack (70 ft.). Climb corner crack to easier ground and so to top of crag (100 ft.).

An alternative and easier variant is to climb a gangway and subsequent crack above the block belay at the end of the second pitch (Severe, 110 ft.).

NORTHERN HIGHLANDS

Foinaven: Creag Dubh.—This is a fine gneiss cliff at the head of Coire Duail and on the east face of Ceann Garbh. Though mentioned in the 1953 *Northern Highlands* guide it was still unexplored at the time of the 1966 *Foinaven Supplement*. The cliffs attain a height of approximately 700 ft. From right to left the main features are as follows. A very broken right wing is bounded by a deep gully beyond which are the Central Slabs. A prominent landmark is a sizeable corner halfway up the slabs with a red left wall. Beyond the Central Slabs, the tallest part of the cliff, is a recessed area with an indefinite crack-groove line. Further left again is a sweep of steep overlapping slabs forming the right edge of a line of grooves easily identified by the red rock in their lower part. A pillar bounds the grooves on their left, then a recessed corner and further slabs. The crag steadily diminishes in height left of the Central Slabs. The rock is excellent and there is considerable scope for further routes.

—*Red Grooves*. 500 ft. Very Difficult. M. G. Bond & I. Clough. 27th August 1968.

The climb follows the conspicuous line of pink cracks and grooves on the right of the sweep of steep overlapping slabs. Scramble to start and follow crack and groove for two pitches of 100 ft. each. A 30 ft. pitch leads to grass ledge and thread belay. Go right then up groove on left to grass ledge and peg belay (110 ft.). Climb groove on right, exit right and follow short chimney to ledge and belay on left (100 ft.). Continue by cracks (60 ft.) and scramble to top.

Creag Dionard, Second Dionard Buttress.—*Hugsy-Bugsy*. 200 ft. Very Difficult. Dr & Mrs A. W. Ewing. May 1967.

Start at the lower end of the cliff where two converging grassy rakes meet. Climb obvious broken corner 15 ft. to first rake. Traverse 10 ft. right and then climb a series of short walls separated by mossy ledges keeping left of obvious crack. At 80 ft. when angle eases trend rightwards to gain the crest of the buttress. Considerable variation is possible on the upper section.

Beinn a' Chaisgein Mòr: Carnmore Crag, Upper Tier.—*Carnmore Corner*. 210 ft. Very Severe. R. Carrington & J. R. Jackson. 19th June 1968.

The obvious corner right of Gob. In the bottom section follow the left-trending crack in the right wall. Start at foot of crack and climb it, passing old pegs, to belay below obvious overhang at 140 ft. One peg was used for aid at 100 ft. where crack becomes very steep. Move right and finish more easily up corner (70 ft.).

Ben Lair: North Face.—*Easachan*. 1000 ft. GRADE III. Q. T. Crichton & G. N. Hunter. 3½ hours. 26th February 1969.

At the east end of the main crag a rounded slabby buttress borders a deep-cut bealach. The gully is on its right. Follow deep gully, keeping left, to 60 ft. ice-chimney. Continue up narrow gully to huge chockstone. Climb corner on left to gain upper snow-basin. The gully now continues for some distance through fantastic rock-scenery to large bulging ice-pitch. Climb this directly and follow steep snow-ice to top.

—*Geòdha Ban*. 1200 ft. GRADE IV. Q. T. Crichton & G. N. Hunter. 4 hours. 27th February 1969.

This gully starts some 200 yards left of a large prominent standing block halfway along main crag. Looking up, there are two obvious deeply-cut parallel snow gullies. Follow the left-hand one. Several short pitches lead to an impressive chockstone ice-pitch, climbed on the left. A long section of snow now follows through grand rock-scenery to a 300 ft. ice-fall. Climb corner on left and traverse ice-bulge to easier-angled ice. Follow ice-choked chimney above to finish up 200 ft. of perfect snow-ice in narrow chimney leading to cornice passed on the left.

Sgòrr Ruadh: North-East Face.—*Raeburn's Buttress Direct*. GRADE IV. W. D. Brooker & S. H. Wilkinson. 5 hours. 20th December 1967.

The route lay up the steep profile of the buttress as seen from the Coire Lair approach path. The buttress has a broad frontal zone rather than a clearly defined crest. It presents a steep lower face of about 400 ft., consisting of steep slabby walls separated by discontinuous terraces. A chimney, lying right of centre, divides the face. The line followed began at an embayment just right of a small tongue of broken rock at the lowest rocks. An upward traverse right by ledges led to the brink of the chimney, which was full of ice. The wall left of the chimney was climbed to a ledge and continued to another terrace. From here a steep wall rose for 100 ft., forming an incipient tower close to the chimney. A groove was followed leftward, culminating in an ice-choked section passed by ledges on the vertical wall to its right. From the narrow terrace so reached, a sensational right traverse led for 50 ft. over large detached blocks beneath an overhang to a recess in the chimney. Going right, easy ground was reached and the crest line followed to the summit. Pegs were used for belays.

Sgùrr a' Chaorachain: The Cioch.—*Sideburn*. 270 ft. Severe. G. Anderson & A. Ewing. Spring 1968.

On the left of the south-east face of the Cioch above the obvious encircling terrace are two well-defined corners. The route follows the westerly,

more open one. From the terrace climb ill-defined buttress slightly right of corner to reach grassy ledge, from which the corner is easily reached (120 ft.). Climb the corner and exit left at top (150 ft.). Easy rocks lead to the summit.

CAIRNGORMS

Cairngorm: Coire an t-Sneachda.—*Invernookie*. 400 ft. GRADE III. J. Porteous & K. Spence. 4th January 1969.

The route follows the obvious initial right fork of Fiacail Couloir. Surmount ice groove and bulge, follow snow ramp left over bulges heading for steep groove and climb this to cave. Exit right onto Fiacail Ridge.

Coire an Lochain.—*Chute Route*. 320 ft. GRADE IV. M. Harris, D. K. Scott & R. Shaw. 3 hours. 24th December 1968.

The route follows the steep chute right of Vent Rib and left of Central Crack route. At the end of the difficulties (240 ft.) Milky Way joins it from the right.

Stag Rocks.—*Stag Route*. 450 ft. GRADE III. J. T. Campbell, B. S. Findlay, N. D. Keir & G. S. Strange. 3 hours. 5th January 1969.

A narrow snow runnel splits the upper cliff between Triple Towers and Serrated Rib. This route follows a shallow gully left of Triple Towers and enters the snow runnel below the final tower. The lower gully contained several ice-pitches, the largest of which was avoided on the right.

Ben Macdhui: Shelter Stone Crag.—*Steeple*. 840 ft. Very Severe. K. Spence & M. Watson (pitches 1-6): J. Porteous, K. Spence & M. Watson (pitches 7-9). August 1968.

Start left of the steep grass gully which splits the lower section of the face, about 30 yards left of the start of The Needle. Climb 20 ft. up gully and belay at start of large dièdre. Climb this, passing two small overlaps, the first requiring a cracker for aid, and belay beyond the second (100 ft.). Continue in the dièdre, exiting left at top (80 ft.). Climb by short walls and grass ledges to below steep line of weakness leading to rightward-slanting ramp (150 ft.). Climb up and right to peg belay (1 cracker for aid, 60 ft.). Traverse right and go up corner and continue up the ramp (60 ft.). Climb obvious line of layback cracks up and right to foot of obvious corner splitting upper part of face of The Needle (150 ft.). Climb corner strenuously to an awkward belay in a niche (55 ft.). Continue up corner, becoming slightly loose, and belay at top (75 ft.). Finish by thin crack on right, which leads by ledges and cracks to top of crag (90 ft.).

Central Slabs.—*The Pin*. 230 ft. Very Severe. R. Carrington & J. Gardner. August 1968.

The route follows the thin crack splitting the slabs just left of and parallel to the central pitches of The Citadel. Scramble over lower slabs for about 200 ft. to peg belay below thin, clean-cut crack. Climb crack directly to stance and peg belay (60 ft.). Climb crack/groove directly (1 peg for aid at mid-height) to belay on ledges below overhanging wall (70 ft.). Climb wall above (1 nut) to peg belay and very poor stance (30 ft.). Climb overhang and continue up crack/groove to grassy ledges (70 ft.). Finish by Sticil Face. (See article this issue).

—*Thor*. 420 ft. Very Severe & A2. M. Rennie & G. S. Strange. 7th September 1968.

Midway between Sticil Face and The Citadel the Central Slabs are broken by an obvious rightward-curving dièdre. This is the line of the climb. Scramble

up grass ledges to gain lower terrace at corner directly below the dièdre (arrow). Climb corner to overhang, swing left with 1 peg (wet) and go straight up and right (2 pegs) to belay at base of dièdre (120 ft.). Using pegs, climb dièdre to a fixed bolt. Belay in étriers (A1, 130 ft.). Continue line of dièdre rightwards using pegs to grass tuft. Tension down right from fixed peg above overlap to gain line of cracks going up and right. Climb cracks to belay in vertical fault (A2, 120 ft.). Climb fault (2 pegs) to upper terrace (50 ft.). Go up left and finish by Sticil Face. (See article on this crag elsewhere in this issue).

Braeriach: Coire Bhrochain, West Buttress.—*Direct Route.* 700 ft. GRADE IV. J. Bower, G. R. Simpson & G. S. Strange. 3½ hours. 13th April 1968.

The summer line was followed approximately, with much variation possible in the middle and upper sections. The climb was finished by the rightmost of the twin chimneys on the right flank of the Tower and then by the rib on its right.

Garbh Choire Mòr.—*Vulcan.* 450 ft. Very Severe. J. J. Light & J. Vigrow. 4th July 1968.

The route takes the line of a very prominent V-groove to the right of She-Devil's Buttress, almost certainly 'the rightmost of the twin chimney-cracks between She-Devil's Buttress and its unclimbed neighbour' (see *Guide*). Start in the bay right of the lowest rocks of She-Devil's Buttress below groove. Climb to grassy recess from the snow (150 ft.), and gain the bottom of groove. Climb this for 80 ft. to stance on right. Continue up steepening groove over series of overlaps (1 peg, 110 ft.). Move up more easily for 20 ft. and climb subsidiary groove on right to regain main groove below steep wall. Climb final 10 ft. to easy groove (100 ft.).

—*Pinnacles Buttress.* 350 ft. GRADE III. J. Bower, G. R. Simpson & G. S. Strange. 2 hours. 12th April 1968.

Summer route followed throughout on hard snow and ice using the north face variation on the lower pinnacle. A fine double corniced snow crest led to the col and the plateau was gained from the second pinnacle by a steep snow arête.

—*Phoenix Buttress.* 500 ft. Very Difficult. J. J. Light, A. W. Manwell, A. G. Nicol & R. A. North. 17th September 1967.

The large rightmost buttress of the Pinnacle trio, a typical Cairngorms buttress—well vegetated, indefinite and varied, but a good line with few escapes. Scramble up to bottom of well-defined corner from snow (100 ft.). Climb its right edge or (easier) a vegetated groove on right (20 ft.). Continue up indefinite grooves for 150 ft. and work up to right of steep nose. Traverse left round this to good ledge (50 ft.). Climb groove above or, better, the crest of nose and continue up to piled blocks beneath steep wall. Step right and up short steep corner onto large slab. Move up to right into loose shallow groove, which follow to plateau.

Beinn a' Bhùird: Coire na Ciche.—*The Watchtower.* 240 ft. Very Severe. J. Bower & A. Fyfe. 2nd June 1968.

The route ascends the small buttress left of the cul-de-sac in Twisting Gully and finishes beside the tower formation on the edge of the Hourglass. Start at triangular block at foot of buttress. Cross left edge of buttress to a chimney, which follow for 10 ft. Pull onto edge and traverse right to a spike (10 ft.). Step left, then straight up by cracks to broad ledge followed by steep slab to top of buttress (80 ft.). Up right over huge blocks and pull onto

the edge of the Hourglass below the tower. Traverse right, then up crack to mossy ledge (90 ft.). Swing left into chimney on right of tower and up to plateau (30 ft.). Peg belays and runners as required.

Meall Dubhag : Coire Garbhlach.—*Hermit's Ridge*. 350 ft. GRADE III. B. S. Findlay & G. S. Strange. 2nd November 1968.

Climbed in deep powder after the first heavy fall of the winter. The ridge was gained by a gully on the left and the summer route followed through out. Difficulties were confined to the 60 ft. chimney which was ice-glazed.

Creag an Dubh Loch : Main Face.—*Theseus Grooves*. GRADE IV. J. T. Campbell, B. S. Findlay, G. R. Simpson & G. S. Strange. 7 hours. 12th January 1969.

A magnificent route providing steep and sustained climbing for over 1000 ft. Start at the Hard Severe summer pitch and follow two obvious grooves to reach steep hanging snowfield. From topmost point climb depression trending leftward to gain foot of steep ramp obvious from the lochside. Follow ramp slanting rightwards and break right near top to reach crest of Central Gully Buttress, which follow to plateau.

Central Gully Wall.—*Cougar*. 470 ft. Very Severe & A2. M. Rennie & P. Williams. 16th June 1968.

The route takes an obvious line of corners leading to a slab at one third height, then traversing the slab to break through the roofs by the easiest line of weakness between Mousetrap and The Giant. Start at a large grassy ledge with piled blocks above Mousetrap. By a short traverse right climb a wet corner, which may need a peg if really wet, and belay up on right on top of a block (30 ft.). Step back into corner and after 15 ft. go left then back right to belay below huge bulge (70 ft.). Follow cracks leading left over a bulge and up corner (4 pegs) to belay on ledge (110 ft.). Climb wall above to belay on the slab (30 ft.). Traverse slab by crack and step down into corner with large overhang. Climb this (4 pegs), continue past a ledge and climb wall to reach better ledge and belay (120 ft.). Climb behind belay and easily up to overhang on right (peg and sling in place). Continue right round corner and mantleshelf onto block. Climb a dead crack with stone protruding from it (7 pegs) and finish up slab to large terrace (110 ft., loose pegs, crux). Finish by scrambling to plateau (200 ft.).

—*King Rat*. 950 ft. Very Severe & A2. J. Bower & A. Fyffe. 9th June 1968.

The route follows the prominent crack system to the right of Mousetrap. Start just left of the Direct Start of Waterkelpie Wall and right of an overhanging recess (arrow and cairn). Climb shallow chimney till it steepens, move right onto rib and up to stance by triangular niche (50 ft.). Climb groove above to spikes, cross left wall of recess and emerge on main crack line, which follow to grass ledge (100 ft.). Traverse right from ledge then straight up to shallow cave below big roof. Climb up and left across side of roof (A2, 4 pegs), step onto the prow of roof and go up to ledge (100 ft.). Climb corner above, move left onto rib, up this, then right to grass ledge (90 ft.). Climb up and left and follow a corner, first on right then by slab on left and enter it by shallow curving crack. Pull onto rib and traverse left to ledge (120 ft.). Continue up rib, traverse left, then up slab to ledge below the wet leaning corner of Waterkelpie Wall (90 ft.). Climb corner, then go up overhanging wall on left of small roof (1 peg). Step right, then go up and left into corner with small ledge (90 ft.). Move right round rib into chimney-crack system and climb this to grass terrace (310 ft.). Scrambling to plateau. Peg belays and runners as required.

White Mounth: Eagle's Rock.—*Green Slab.* 350 ft. Severe. G. N. Hunter & D. F. Lang. 24th August 1968.

The route lies right of an obvious fault on a green slab at the extreme left of the cliff. Start at arrow on slab, climb directly to surmount overlap below wall (150 ft.). Continue up left then up layback corner to thread belay on spacious ledge. Step down left, cross a few feet to block, climb onto it then go straight up wall above on small flakes. Step right into rightward sloping corner (crux). Follow easy corner to surmount overlapping edge and Follow easy corner to surmount overlapping edge and climb twin cracks in slab above to flake belay. Easy climbing to top in 130 ft.

—*A Likely Story.* 520 ft. Very Severe. G. N. Hunter & D. F. Lang. 25th August 1968.

The route lies on the steep boiler-plate slabs right of the prominent gully. Start at arrow, and climb to peg belay on ledge behind rowan tree. Climb up, then traverse right for 30 ft. to small overlap (peg runner). Climb short wall, move left along sloping ledge to crack and climb this to peg belay on small ledge. Cross big slab on left to spike belay and stance below crescent-shaped overlapping corner. Surmount wall to crack in corner, climb this, then traverse right under overlap to another corner using 5 pegs. Continue up smooth corner into overhanging recess and use a peg to gain ledge and peg belay above. Climb up left and traverse slab to peg belay and ledge below wall. Climb flakes on right, traverse up right under overhang and go round and up corner into large overhanging recess (peg runner). Climb left wall with good spike onto slab and finish up grooves to belay on grass rake (150 ft.).

Craig of Gowal: East Face.—This hill lies 1 mile south-west of Broad Cairn (O.S. ref. 235805). Much of the rock is broken and vegetated, but in the centre there is a sweep of clean granite slabs, broken only by overhangs. The following route takes this line.

—*The Gowk.* 620 ft. Very Severe. G. N. Hunter & D. F. Lang. 10th August 1968.

Start at arrow up left of the lowest rocks. Climb to large ledge, move up left by series of crescent-shaped ledges to spike belay on sloping ledge (130 ft.). Climb short wall, then up slab to small overlap and traverse right to ledge. Continue up shallow corner to black overhang, break through overhang on good holds and follow slab and whaleback to ledge and block belay (120 ft.). Traverse down left on small holds (peg runner) to small ledge under large overlap. Place peg to tension left to projecting ledge. Gain ledge, then climb short wall and slab above to belay behind large grass tuft (80 ft.). Climb crack on broken wall left of belay, then directly up slab to small overlap (peg runner). Traverse right and break through overlap using rounded flake. Continue by slabs and walls to peg belay in wide diagonal crack (100 ft.). Up belay crack to spike belay below huge terminal overhangs (90 ft.). Traverse right under overhangs, climb sporting corner (damp) to 15 ft. crack at top. Again go right across a sloping ledge on wall and up a short slab to peg belay at top (100 ft.).

The obvious gully to the left of the above route was climbed in March 1965 by G. N. Hunter & S. A. M. Viveash. It gave a pleasant GRADE II climb.

Mayar: Corrie Fee.—*Girdle Traverse.* 800 ft. GRADE III. M. Forbes & G. Miller. 3½ hours.

The traverse was made from left to right. From beneath bulge overhanging B Gully, traverse by easiest line past overhanging corner to point overlooking large ice bulge in Look C Gully (300 ft.). Abseil into gully, cross up and out to belay on tree (80 ft.). Continue beneath rock buttress through

trees (130 ft.). Go up and across to buttress adjacent to D Gully (200 ft.). Climb buttress to snow slope (90 ft.). The climb was made under very poor conditions during a thaw.

CENTRAL HIGHLANDS

Creag Meaghaidh: Inner Corrie.—*The Wand.* 700 ft. GRADE V. Q. Crichton, G. N. Hunter, D. F. Lang & N. Quinn. 8 hours. 16th February 1969.

This is the left-hand of twin ice-falls, the right-hand being Diadem. Climb as for Diadem to the ice-falls. The ice-fall provided over 200 ft. of very hard ice at an extremely high angle and was climbed in four pitches, pitch three requiring an ice-peg for tension and direct aid. Above this the angle eases and a variety of routes are possible.

Pinnacle Buttress.—*Left-hand Gully Direct.* GRADE V. G. N. Hunter & N. Quinn. 5 hours for direct start. March 1969.

This is the unnamed gully first climbed by Ritchie & Marshall in 1957. On that ascent the first and formidable pitch was avoided by a traverse. Start in obvious groove directly below main upper line of gully, go straight up steep ice and surmount bulge at half-height to niche and peg belay (80 ft.). Traverse right 20 ft. and then go straight up on very steep ice to Appolyon Ledge (130 ft.).

Binnein Shuas: East Sector.—*Usquebaugh.* 570 ft. Mild Severe. G. N. Hunter & D. F. Lang. 9th June 1968.

Start at red water-worn streak about 50 ft. below the start of Hairline Grooves (cairn). Climb wall to grass ledge and continue by water-worn corner on left to peg belay above white scar (150 ft.). Climb staircase behind belay then up rib to block belay below overhang (140 ft.). Break through overlapping corner on left to follow sloping corner to grass ledge and climb slab above to block belay on terrace (130 ft.). Climb short overhang behind belay (arrow), continue up steep slab to scoop and climb rib on left to peg belay at top (150 ft.).

Far East Sector.—*Soft Shoe Shuffle.* 300 ft. Very Severe. G. N. Hunter & D. F. Lang. 25th May 1968.

This route lies on the steep clean wall about 300 ft. right of Ardverikie Wall. Start at cairn on flat slab and surmount awkward overhang to reach flake. Traverse right to obvious crack and climb this to flake belay on ledge. Traverse left under overhang for 25 ft., break through overhang on large blocks and go up to peg belay on ledge. Climb corner on right then go diagonally right following line of flakes to flake belay and stance at 60 ft. Continue up obvious steep quartzband on left and climb directly breaking through several overhangs on good holds to block belay at 130 ft. 200 feet of easy climbing leads to the terrace.

—*Whiplash.* 150 ft. Very Severe. G. N. Hunter & D. F. Lang. 26th May 1968.

This route is on the lowest crag of the far eastern section. An obvious series of grooves and a chimney split this short but clean wall. Start at cairn and ascend grooves to reach spike on left of the overhanging chimney. Move up left to reach small sloping ledge. Climb corner above to good spike and traverse right under overhanging edge to gain the chimney (peg runner). Follow the chimney to stance and peg belay. Climb steep left wall to reach small ledge and continue up right on small holds to thread belay at top.

Creag Dubh, Newtonmore: Sprawl Wall.—*Girdle Traverse*. 500 ft. Very Severe. J. Porteous & K. Spence.

Climb the first pitch of Tree-Hee (100 ft.). Continue by the second pitch of Jump So High (65 ft.). Climb steep crack right of belay (1 peg) and belay on grass ledge on left (45 ft.). Make descending traverse for 25 ft. on grass ledge then climb up and left to ledge (peg runner). Descend ledge a few feet then climb groove and step left to belay (70 ft.). Traverse up and left to join Stoop So Low above first pitch (20 ft.), climb second pitch of Stoop So Low for a further 20 ft., traverse hard left on steep wall for 20 ft. and climb groove to tree belay (90 ft.). Climb through jungle to belay on last pitch of Slanting Groove (40 ft.). Finish up this (90 ft.).

BEN NEVIS

Càrn Dearg: 5 Gully Buttress.—*Turkish*. 590 ft. Very Severe. J. Ferguson & C. Higgins. June 1967.

Above the wide terrace connecting No. 5 Gully with the top of Càrn Dearg Buttress the most prominent feature of this buttress is a very large open corner high up. This route approaches the corner from the left by a line of grooves and corners and continues by the corner's left wall. Climb directly to first belay on Chickenrun, before the left traverse (130 ft.). Move up ramp to climb awkward corner and continue to the foot of the large corner (120 ft.). Climb left wall of corner, moving leftwards till standing on large loose blocks. Place peg and tension left 10 ft. to ledge then up to belay on platform (100 ft.). Move left, climb short steep wall and scramble to top of short gully (120 ft.). Continue to foot of final wall then bear hard right for 100 ft. to belay on crest of buttress (120 ft.).

The Castle.—*Turret Cracks*. 200 ft. Very Severe. I. Clough & D. G. Roberts. 16th June 1968.

The climb follows a thin crackline left of the prominent line of chimneys on the vertical final tower of The Castle. Leave the ordinary route at ledge immediately under the above-mentioned chimneys and where it begins the rightward traverse of the slabs. Start at a large pinnacle block and follow corners leftward to belay on pedestal slab. Now follow the steep cracks above in two pitches.

GLENCOE, GLEN ETIVE & ARDGOUR

Beinn Trilleachan: Etive Slabs.—*The Pinch*. 700 ft. Very Severe. R. Carrington & J. R. Jackson. 18th April 1968.

The route follows the obvious line of cracks on the slab right of Hammer. Start between the corners of Hammer and Agony. Climb grassy cracks in two pitches to the belay on Hammer below the scoop (200 ft.). Go up slab and cracks right of Hammer to peg belay (70 ft.). Move up slabs trending leftwards to join Hammer at the end of the tension traverse and continue to the Hammer belay above the overlap (150 ft.). Move up slab behind, surmounting two steep corners to belay below final wall (120 ft.). Move left and finish by the chimney of Claw.

Buachaille Etive Mòr: Broad Gully Upper Buttress.—This name is suggested by I. Fulton for the buttress above the buttress containing Hawker's Crack and Pedlar's Groove, it being, naturally, Broad Gully Lower Buttress.

—*Meson*. 140 ft.

Very Severe. I. Fulton & N. Muir. 1st September 1968.

Start below and left of prominent square-cut overhang in centre of face (arrow). Climb crack to small spike belay beneath obvious corner. Climb corner and continue to top of buttress.

Great Gully Upper Buttress.—*Yamay*. 140 ft.

Very Severe. I. Nicholson & K. Spence. September 1968.

This route follows the prominent crack and corner between Yam and May cracks. Climb to a small roof, traverse wall on right (2 peg runners) and climb the corner above (1 peg runner).

Cuneiform Buttress, West Face.—*Snowba's*.

400 ft. Very Severe. C. Higgins & J. McLean. May 1968.

Start 100 ft. left of damp 60 ft. gully-chimney, roughly in centre of face. Climb the overhang and layback onto slab on left. Continue, bearing leftwards and bypassing a large ledge leading off right, to belay on ledge below greasy corner leading diagonally rightwards (100 ft.). Climb corner (peg runner) and move right on ledges passing bulging walls to gain overhung corner. Climb corner, move right to end of small ledge, then go up and across mossy wall (peg runner) to belay on ledge (100 ft.). Move direct from belay up corner and jumbled blocks to gain easier ground leading to the foot of a large corner (120 ft.). Ascend corner to finish (80 ft.).

North Buttress, Slime Wall.—*Lecher's Route*

Direct. 90 ft. Very Severe. J. Porteous & K. Spence. August 1968.

This direct start follows the prominent groove immediately right of the groove of Bludger's Route. The first pitch is as for Bludger's. Climb the detached flake behind the belay to reach the foot of the groove. From top of flake step left onto steep wall and pull up onto the arête (10 ft., crux). Return right to groove and climb this for 50 ft. Go left 10 ft. to belay above crux pitch of Bludger's. Continue as for Lecher's Route.

Bidean nam Bian: Church Door Buttress.—*West Chimney*. 600 ft. GRADE IV. A. Fyffe & H. MacInnes. 4 hours. 8th February 1969.

Start at bay in West Face and climb obvious chimney, moving right above first chockstone and up to cave below overhanging wall. Go through tunnel on left to emerge on ledge. Up obvious chimney above and left over top of arch on Flake Route. Climb 30 ft. chimney on this route and trend up and left over some awkward slabs to top, thus producing a climb from bottom right to top left.

—*The Gangway*. 200 ft.

GRADE II. A. Fyffe & H. MacInnes. 20 minutes. 8th February 1969.

Above the steep West Face of the buttress a chimney slants back left. Follow this to crest of buttress and continue straight to top.

—*Crack-line*. 260 ft. Very

Severe. J. Hardie & W. Thomson. 14th June 1968.

Start 25 ft. left of Crypt Route at groove with twin cracks (arrow). Climb groove to ledge on right and continue by cracks to a peg belay 40 ft. below the arch (110 ft.). Take groove line slanting to left end of the arch. At 50 ft. swing left into steep groove, follow to conclusion and step left onto mossy slab leading to a corner with belay (110 ft.). Climb by cracks on right wall of corner (arrow) to belay at top of Raeburn's Chimney (40 ft.). Finish as for Crypt Route.

West Face.—Kingpin. 350 ft. Very Severe. J. Hardie & W. Thomson. 17th August 1968.

Start about the middle of the face (cairn and arrow) below a small crack. Climb crack to slab, traverse slab leftwards to steep wall and climb this (2 pegs) to belay in a niche (60 ft.). Go up right wall of niche, move into black groove and climb this a few feet until it is possible to step right onto the face. Mantleshelf onto small ledge below short chimney, gain the chimney (1 peg) and bridge up it then traverse left about 5 ft. to small stance and peg belay (60 ft.). Return to top of chimney and climb a sloping ramp using pegs to a small hooded recess. Exit from recess slightly left (1 peg) and climb to ledge, then up crack to belay below prominent corner (100 ft.). Climb crack in corner to roof and swing right onto face (1 peg). Climb the face to ledge and peg belay (90 ft.). Climb groove above to top (40 ft.).

West Face. — Inquisition. 180 ft. Very Severe. J. Hardie & W. Thomson. 15th June 1968.

Towards the righthand end of the face there is a prominent white groove left of large overhangs. Start below this in a recess (cairn and arrow). After a few feet move right to steep smooth groove. Climb this (peg runner), traverse right 40 ft., move up and right into groove, which follow to small overhanging ledge and peg belay (80 ft.). Swing out right and up small groove to a wall. Climb the wall, stepping right at some jammed blocks, and continue more easily to grass ledge with jammed block belay.

Bishop's Buttress.—This name is suggested by W. Thomson for the smaller buttress just to the west of Churchdoor Buttress. The following two routes lie on the north-east face of this buttress.

—*The Crook.* 190 ft. Very Severe. J. Hardie & W. Thomson. 17th June 1968.

Start at prominent crack near centre of face (arrow). Climb crack 40 ft. to rightward-sloping ledge, which follow past small recess into bay with belay (80 ft.). Climb leftward-slanting groove, then small wall and follow easier groove to large grass ledge (110 ft.).

—*Mitre.* 210 ft. Very Severe. J. Hardie & W. Thomson. 17th June 1968.

Start at crack to the right of The Crook (arrow). Climb crack 20 ft., traverse up and right to edge of buttress a further 20 ft., then go up past small recess and crack to slab and belay below prominent groove (80 ft.). Climb groove, step left at top, go up a few feet then step back right into bulging groove. Climb this and continue up to corner and peg belay (110 ft.). Climb left wall of corner (20 ft.).

—*Ambush.* 250 ft. Very Severe. D. N. Thomson & R. Turner. 17th August 1968.

Start at most obvious line of weakness on the buttress (arrow). Climb crack to hole and go straight over twin jammed blocks to stance (40 ft.). Traverse right a few feet to corner and go up to sloping mossy ledge. Continue up groove for 80 ft. and move round onto large triangular mossy stance. Climb directly above stance to grass terrace and finish by 50 ft. wall on left. Unlike the previous two routes this lies on the west face.

Geàrr Aonach: East Face. Lost Leeper Gully. 1000 ft. GRADE III. H. MacInnes & G.S.W.C. party. 13th February 1969.

To the right of Gully A and bounding the left end of the Mome Rath Face this route zig-zags up the lower broken rocks to enter the gully about mid-height up the face and continues giving at least two ice pitches to the top.

—*Mome Rath Route*. 450 ft. GRADE IV.
A. Fyffe & J. McArtney. 4½ hours. 16th February 1969.

Summer route followed to foot of first chimney which was climbed till it faded out slightly, after about 60 ft. A left traverse was then made into another chimney. This was climbed for a short distance to bay on left. A slabby ice-plated rib on left was then climbed to short, steep corner-chimney at top of cliff (the finish of Slithy).

—*The Wabe*. 450 ft. GRADE IV. I. Clough,
J. Hardie & H. MacInnes. 5½ hours. 16th February 1969.

This route follows the ice-fall that more or less comes down the line of the summer route, about 75 ft. left of Mome Rath. Climb 20 ft. wall to snow ledge. Go up rock and ice heading left to small stance and flake belay 10 ft. below prominent nose (150 ft.). Turn nose on left and go up right to belay on block of summer route. Follow summer route up recessed panel to stance on rib. Move right, up, left and up to finish in 150 ft.

—*Rev. Ted's Gully*. 1000 ft. GRADE II/III.
H. MacInnes & Rev. Ted ? February 1960.

This is the gully on the immediate right of the Mome Rath Face, a long left-slanting couloir running the full height of the face. Enter it from the right and follow it up. A variety of finishes can be taken, the direct one probably being the best and hardest.

To the right of this the face is split by a wide horizontal terrace; the upper wall, although grassy in summer, gives good winter climbing. This section is again split vertically by a large right-facing corner gully:

—*McArtney Gully*. 500 ft. GRADE II/III.
H. MacInnes & G.S.W.C. party. 3rd February 1969.

The lower part of the corner is reasonably straight-forward but in the steep upper part a vertical chimney followed by a diagonal groove and corner give the crux of the climb.

—*Lady's Choice*. 500 ft. GRADE III. Niki
Clough & A. Fyffe. 3½ hours. 14th February 1969.

The route is on the big wall to the right of McArtney Gully and starts above an obvious pale block. A groove line curves up to the right and then back left to finish in a steep chimney with a chockstone.

—*Ingrid's Folly and Peregrine Gully*. 1000 ft.
GRADE II.

To the right again is a long recessed gully running the full height of the face to the left of a long broken buttress directly above the Lost Valley Boulder. The start is five minutes diagonally up to the left from the Boulder. Follow the gully, over and under large chockstones, until only an easy slope leads to the top. By traversing horizontally to the left from this point an interesting continuation can be made up Peregrine Gully, which has another through-route pitch and a passage below a massive wedged block.

—*John Gray's Buttress*. 1000 ft. GRADE II.
H. MacInnes. January 1968.

This is the long broken buttress referred to in the description of Ingrid's Folly. The route-finding is interesting.

—*The Graduate*. 500 ft. GRADE III/IV.
D. A. Knowles, J. Loxham, A. Wilson & D. Wilson. 5 hours. 8th February 1969.

This climb follows the great right-angled corner to the right of John Gray's Buttress.

West Face.—*Grand Finale.* 400 ft. GRADE III. J. McCartney, D. Selby & C. Wood. 3 hours. 21st February 1969.

About 200 yards below the bivouac cave opposite the East Face of Aonach Dubh lies an obvious gully, imposing in winter. It rises in three excellent pitches then eases off into the upper slopes. Avoid first small ice pitch by slabs on right and continue to foot of first ice pitch proper. Climb this and next very steep ice pitch (back and foot) over large chockstone to piton belay. Continue up a further ice pitch to top.

Aonach Dubh: East Face.—*How-Do.* 200 ft. Severe. R. Bannatyne & J. Magee. 17th August 1968.

Start at the detached block of Long Crack. Climb conspicuous fault trending left with short bulge at 80 ft. Belay on ledge above (90 ft.). Climb fault above by walls and grooves to large grass ledge and belay (110 ft.).

North Face.—*Pleasant Terrace.* 900 ft. GRADE III. I. Clough, J. McCartney & G.S.W.C. party. 5 hours. 14th January 1969.

Reach Pleasant Terrace by the normal route from Sloping Shelf (250 ft.). Continue for three easy but spectacular rope-lengths before finishing by the upper part of Fingal's Chimney.

—*Fall-out.* 420 ft. Very Severe. J. Ferguson & C. Higgins. May 1958.

Start at prominent chimney 60 ft. right of Stook. Climb chimney to belay (120 ft.). Continue in chimney to ledge and move right a few feet to foot of another chimney (40 ft.). Climb chimney on left wall, exiting beneath chockstone by a squeeze to bridge chimney. Move left to crack, climb to ledge then to foot of small chimney, which follow to below overhang passed on the right wall to belay above (130 ft.). Continue more easily to wall with diagonal crack. Climb crack and rock above to top (130 ft.).

West Face, E. Buttress.—*Blind Pew.* 200 ft. Very Severe. J. Ferguson & C. Higgins. July 1967.

Start as for Big Top. Climb first 50 ft. of Big Top then go straight up corner to mossy ledge. Traverse ledge rightwards then go up to awkward stance and belay (120 ft.). Move out on undercut flake to ledge on left, climb wall (3 pegs, 1 sling) to overhang above, traverse right below overhang, step round edge then cross to belay midway on second pitch of Big Top (80 ft.). Finish as for Big Top.

—*No. 5 Gully.* 1000 ft. GRADE III. Niki Clough, A. Fyffe & Kathleen MacInnes. 4½ hours. 18th February 1969.

To avoid the lower overhanging pitches start at a subsidiary gully on the left (the line of Original Route, F Buttress). Climb narrow chimney to cave below ice fall. Up back of cave and diagonally right across ice-fall to tree on crest of buttress. Straight up this small buttress to Needle's Eye and move right into gully proper. Up small ice pitch and straight up gully, taking left chimney where gully is split by rib above mid-height. Continue easily straight up.

An t-Sròn: East Face.—At the top of the valley directly across from Stob Coire nam Beith is a prominent buttress about 500 ft. in height. Left of a long slabby section is a bay above which two diverging gullies cleave the cliff:

—*Sack-o'-coal Couloir.* 500 ft. GRADE III. J. McCartney & party. 3½ hours. 18th February 1969.

The left-hand line. Start up easy snow ramp heading for well-defined corner at top. Enter this via a steep crack-corner and continue up slabby corner with chockstone finish.

—*Smashed Spectacles Gully*. 500 ft. GRADE II/III. I. Clough, R. Fox, F. Jones & C. Wood. 3 hours. 18th February 1969.

The right-hand line gives a short steep pitch followed by an awkward chimney topped by an ice bulge before easier climbing leads to the top.

SOUTHERN HIGHLANDS

The Brack.—*Mainline*. 410 ft. Very Severe. J. Crawford & W. Skidmore. 27th July 1968.

Follows only obvious line on main wall left of Elephant Gully and gives Arrochar's longest rock climb. There is one very short artificial section. Start 50 ft. down left of gully at thin flake crack above ledge. Gain and climb this strenuous crack using peg on detached plinth to reach good holds on top slab. Cross slab to ledge and peg belay (5; 60 ft.). Go up steep crack for good holds over bulge and continue to overhang where runner assists move left to steep rib. Follow rib for 6 ft. and step left to ledge and peg belay in corner (5; 60 ft.). Climb holdless corner (5 pegs—good crack) to top and pull left with difficulty to ledge. A short wall leads to large ledge with chockstone belay at right end (5; A1; 60 ft.). Go back left to slab corner and surmount bulge (peg runner) followed by long step left to ledge. Gain higher ledge and climb awkward wall and slabs to large grass ledge and peg belay below long diagonal fault (5; 90 ft.). Climb the long corner or slab on its right to good finishing hold and so on up grass and easy groove to belay under wall (4; 100 ft.). Move right to easy rocks leading to top of crag.

—*Sideline*. 150 ft. A3. R. Richardson & W. Skidmore. 20th October 1968.

A complex single-pitch artificial route on the overhanging wall left of Elephant Gully. Start at cairn where left wall of gully meets main face. Traverse left under roof for 30 ft., go up to a second roof, fix a rope and de-peg this section. Move right and climb straight up level with small ledge on left and follow crack-line rightwards up the face over a bulge into final groove to large ledge and peg belay (30 pegs). Walk into the gully.

The Cobbler: South Peak, North Face.—*McLean's Folly*. 100 ft. Very Severe. R. Carrington & J. Gardner. August 1968.

This route is a direct version of Grossen Zinnen and starts as for that route. Traverse 10 ft. left and then go up and right to cave. Climb out of cave on right and continue up groove to easy ground (peg runner in cave).

Beinn an Dòthaidh: North-East Face.—*Taxus*. 800 ft. GRADE III. A. W. Ewing & A. J. Trees. 2½ hours. 8th March 1969.

The line followed is the left-hand branch of West Gully. The first pitch was on ice followed by three pitches of steep snow with occasional ice. The gully then undergoes a further bifurcation. Climb left branch to snow ridge. Follow this until an easy leftward traverse leads into a narrow gully. Climb this to summit.

NOTES

Skye Notes

New Guides.—The new edition of the Club's *Rock-climbers' Guide to the Cuillin* is now in press and should be available by the time this issue appears. In two volumes, it was edited by Jim Simpson. Two new District guides, one on Skye and the other on the remaining islands, will appear soon.

Sgùrr a' Mhadaidh: Tairnealar Face.—D. C. Forrest suggests that the start of Vixen Groove (see *New Climbs*) is the same as for Archer Thomson's Route, which, he remarks, appears to be incorrectly marked on the diagram in the present *Rock-climbing Guide*.

Arran Notes

Tòrr Nead An Eoin.—W. Wallace writes, 'In view of the increasing interest shown in this crag and the confusion surrounding the routes recorded there, the following notes may be useful. The hill lies $1\frac{1}{2}$ miles S.E. of Lochranza. The rock face on the west side is apparently interesting geologically, the northern part being schist and the southern part granite. The latter is too broken up for climbing but the former is of considerable climbing interest. The schist face, about 250 ft. high and triangular or pyramidal in shape, is bounded on the north by broken ground and on the south by a messy gully, Verdant Gully (see *Guide*, p. 80). Immediately north of the gully and cut off from the main face by a diagonal grassy rake is a large tower about 150 ft. high, teeming with overhangs. Eilethya (see *S.M.C.J.*, 1968, xxix, 56) takes an evasive line up this tower. The main face, lying north of the tower, has the following principal features:—(1) A deep groove running from bottom right to top left, the line of the original route, Aquila (see *Guide* p. 80), and the best line on the crag. (2) A prominent horizontal grass terrace crossing the central part of the face about 70 ft. up. (3) A discontinuous belt of overhangs about 30 ft. up. Two other routes follow fairly direct lines up the face to the left of Aquila, Grey Wall (see *S.M.C.J.*, 1965, xxviii, 112) and First Footing (see next issue!). One other route, a girdle, has been described but not located. The face is steep and exposure considerable. The rock is generally sound but lacks natural belays. The crag is totally different from anything else on the island and being low ($\frac{1}{2}$ hour from road) is often dry when the other crags are mist-fast and wet.'

A' Chir.—A new route was made on the Coire Daingean face at Easter 1968 by John Jackson, J. Park & J. M. Shaw on the buttress between Crack Climb and Imposter Crack. Due to Jackson's tragic death in the Aiguille Noire last summer, we have no details yet; next issue should carry them.

Mullach Buidhe.—H. Stirling & W. Wallace climbed the North summit buttress (see *New Climbs*), as a sequel to Anti-climax, by its line of least resistance. It was a pleasant and clean Difficult and it came 'as a bit of a bonus at the end of our day's activities.' Though not a first ascent the climb is nameless and Wallace suggests 'Bonus'

Northern Highlands Notes

Fionn Loch Area.—Hugh Stirling points out that the *Ghost Slabs* are not, as reported last issue, on A'Mhàighdean but on **Beinn Tarsuinn Chaol**. Further, he suggests that the editorial use of 'Carnmore' as a designation for the region is inappropriate and that 'Fionn Loch Area' would be better. In particular, he suggests that the naming of Carnan Ban as 'Carnan Ban, Carnmore' is misleading and 'Carnan Ban' on its own is good enough. He notes also that the location of the Ghost Slabs is misleadingly described in the existing *Guide*. They get around, as he says. These points will be noted for the next *Guide*.

Cairngorms Notes

Lochnagar.—D. Lang & N. Quinn note that on what was probably the second winter ascent of Parallel Buttress (this January) they found the pitch from the Necklace to the Tower to be the crux of the climb. Time 6½ hours.

Ben Nevis Notes

Guide.—The new edition of the *Rock-climbers' Guide to Ben Nevis*, edited by James R. Marshall, is now in press and should be available early this summer. It is rumoured that Mr Marshall has repeated all but four of the summer routes. . . .

Glencoe Notes

Winter Climbs.—A. Fyfe and J. McArtney concede that many of the winter climbs they completed this year may not be original. As we have no record of these lines we have included them. Most of them follow natural winter lines, but are seldom in this winter's prime condition.

Aonach Dubh : North Face, Rabbits' Hole.—Apparently some confusion surrounds the location of this route with respect to that of Fall-out (see **New Climbs**). Rabbits' Hole lies left of Stook, whereas Fall-out lies right.

Beinn Mhic Chasgaig : Bird's Eye Buttress.—D. C. Forrest notes that Secretion Slab (see *S.M.C.J.*, 1967, xxviii, 332) gives **400 ft.** of climbing and not 200 ft. as reported.

Trilleachan Slabs.—Reviewing Volume II of the *Rock-climbers' Guide to Glencoe* in *F.R.C.C.J.* (1968), I. Roper rightly deplores the fact that descriptions of many routes on these slabs are in fact seriously outdated regarding the amount of artificial aid required. We cannot correct fully here, but of the more popular climbs, **Spartan Slab** now requires no aid whatsoever and **Swastika** is normally climbed free as far as the top of the quartzband. This is, of course, partly from the widening and cleaning of cracks, the result of early pegging.

Aonach Dubh : Lower N.E. Nose, Freak-Out.—C. Viganò has pointed out that this route uses the start of a climb made by P. Walsh & H. Swales on this face in 1960. However, Walsh & Swales then traversed off right, finishing by Original Route.

Southern Highlands Notes

Craig-y-Barns.—A new artificial line on Upper Cave Crag has been completed by K. J. Martin & A. C. Petit (the upper half having been done earlier by G. & R. Farquhar). It follows the overhanging groove in the wall left of Mousetrap, which peters out lower down, is dubbed Rat-catcher and graded A3, is much more sustained than either Mousetrap or Rat Race and requires no bolts.

Southern Scotland Notes

Grey Mare's Tail.—G. Anderson, W. Anderson, D. Bathgate & I. MacEacheran took advantage of the coldest spell ever recorded in this area to make a winter ascent of this classic piece of scenery (450 ft., GRADE III). Although the centre of the fall was still running, the two flanks were well-frozen and were climbed, by different ropes, on 18th February 1969.

Miscellaneous Notes

Guidebooks.—The Guide-books Sub-committee wish to hear from persons willing to co-operate with them as editors of the under-noted guides. Payment would be on a royalty basis with a lump sum payable on receipt of an acceptable manuscript, the details of which would be negotiated with the committee. Some rock-climbing guides will of course be subdivided. Applications should be made in the first instance to Malcolm Slessor (District Guides) and to Arthur Ewing (Rock-climbers' Guides) at addresses under **Office Bearers**.

DISTRICT GUIDEBOOKS: **Western Highlands; Southern Highlands; Southern Scotland** (Borders, Cheviots, Galloway, etc.).

ROCK-CLIMBERS' GUIDES: **Arrochar & District; Glencoe & District; Cairngorms; Skye; Northern Highlands.**

The British Cordillera Blanca Expedition, 1968.—This expedition comprised three club members, David Bathgate, Ian MacEacheran and Brian Robertson, with Don Whillans as leader.

Nevado Huandoy, the objective of the expedition, rises to 21,000 feet and has had several ascents, but none via the towering South Face, 3000 feet of ice and rock. Choosing this route the expedition faced standards never before attempted at such an altitude.

The Base Camp at 14,000 feet lay between two lakes and commanded the South Face of Nevado Huandoy.

The First Camp was four hours away on the Moraine at approximately 17,000 feet. The Second Camp was a snow cave just below the South Face at 18,000 feet.

The line of attack was via a steep snow ramp which sloped at an average 45 degrees and 1500 feet in length. The ramp terminated in the centre of the Face where the main difficulties began. The ramp was fixed with rope.

On 12th July, all the expedition moved up to the top of the snow ramp, and while Bathgate and Robertson started work on a rock and ice traverse, Whillans and MacEacheran established a bivouac site at 19,700 feet and then returned to the snow cave.

Three possible routes led from the top of the ramp. The first, to the right, was discarded because of bad rock which was continuously overhanging. The second, in the centre, which started from the highest point on the ramp, was the route eventually chosen. The third possibility, however, was probably the best of the three but began some 400 feet to the left of the ramp and looked extremely long and devious. All three routes entailed climbing on bad rock which in the main was either vertical or overhanging and the climbing between 19,700 feet and 20,100 feet was going to be the crux of the whole climb. Bathgate and Robertson were to spend the next two days working on the problem, returning to the bivouac site each night. Circumstances however, caused the climb to be abandoned. The rock traverse above the ramp had proved unjustifiably dangerous.

Later, a ten-man Argentinian expedition to the South Face of the Nevado Huandoy abandoned their original plans after several days' observation of the South Face.

Whillans and Bathgate returned home by the Rio Huallaga and the River Amazon.

The expedition had an insufficient quantity of fixed rope and was short of man-power. Six climbers would be a minimum-sized party.

Edinburgh East Greenland Expedition, 1968.—This expedition, led by Graham Tiso, with W. Anderson, A. Blenkinsop, R. Gaff and B. Hill, spent August month in the much frequented Central Staunings Alps (as well as other expedition described earlier in this issue, there was one by **Dundee University**—details of which have arrived too late for inclusion, though not for a moral). Tiso's group climbed 10 peaks (9 virgins) mostly round Alpe Fjord. They travelled from Mestersvig by outboarded rubber boat and base-camped 7th August on north side of Gully Gletscher snout. Then up nearest lateral moraine for 2 miles to below first icefall, crossing then to south side of glacier; icefall difficult. Camped above fall on 9th. Second icefall easier, crossed near north side in 4 hours; attempted north-most peak of ridge west from Korrspsids, and a terminal peak on the north ridge, unsuccessfully. Third icefall crossed on north side. Final camp below south ridge of Danske Tinde. Norske Tinde thence ascended by stoneswept couloir (4000 ft.) splitting S.E. face, and (700 ft.) Grade III rocks to corniced summit, over 12 hours (A. and H.). S.W. ridge defeated B. and G. Party withdrew to Alpe Fjord, camping at snout of small hanging glacier (3000 ft. up), just north of Gully Gletscher; a 2064 m. snowpeak south of this glacier fell in 6 hours on 19th August to B., G. and H.; T. and A. failing on peak west of point 2064 m. After bad weather, they crossed the fjord and camped on south side of Trekant Gletscher. On 22nd, T. and H. traversed a 4-peaked ridge rising W.N.W. of glacier to 1800 m., taking 30 hours there and back. Next day, A., B. and G. climbed a 1000 m. pinnacle (Grade III, 1 more Grade VI) west of camp. Returning to Mestersvig, A. and H. climbed peaks on a ridge rising from Menanders Bay on Kong Oscars Fjord.

Adventure and Safety.—If, as the propaganda tells us, hill-travelling is considered nationally desirable in promoting self-reliance, then clearly there are limits beyond which mountain rescue facilities, however well-meaning and aggressively organised, must not be encouraged; *vide* Mr Murray's letter this issue. But there should be no limits to *education in mountain safety*, and for this reason all welcomed the Scottish Mountain Safety exhibition *Adventure in Safety*, organised by the M.R.C. of Scotland and the Glasgow Education Authority over 20-26th September last year. Not only was the idea excellent, but its execution outstandingly successful. As well as the joint organisers, Messrs. Hinde and Humble, five of the other nine members of the Exhibition committee were also members of the S.M.C.—which is obviously aware of its 'responsibility.'

It is impossible to quote all the helpers and demonstrations listed in the Official Report and in the Souvenir Guide; to select among them is, knowing their ardour, imprudent. A brief survey, then, to show the scope:

Prevention Hall illustrated Scottish mountain accidents and contained the following stands—(1) M.R.C., (2) Equipment, (3) Police, (4) Map and Compass, (5) Ice Axe, (6) Avalanches, (7) Mountain Weather, (8) Exposure and Exhaustion, (9) Mountain Aid; photographs of River-Crossing; and Rescue outwith Scotland. Training Hall bristled with outdoor organisations. Demonstration Hall housed an artificial ice slope, grooved for axe-braking, and climbing walls. Trades Hall held commercial interests. Outside demonstrations in 'orienteering' and film shows were staged. Some 6,000 visitors were enthusiastically escorted around and by their appreciative comments appeared to have enjoyed it as much as the organisers, who deserve our congratulations on their splendid success. The only way to make mountains safe is to level them; the only way to make tourists safe is to give them exhibitions like this one.

The Ballad of Dr Stack by 'Anon' was sent to the Editors. Unfortunately it's too long to print, but a few verses (to the tune of 'MacPherson had a son') leave no doubt of the personage celebrated: 'He's climbed on Rakaposhi / And on the Mustagh Tower, / And with a painter's ladder / He climbed the Man of Stoer . . . In the far and distant north / Each ploy he schemes with vision / For the good old S.M.C. / And a fee from Television . . . Faster we must go / We'll climb this new route free, / Surgery's at 6 o'clock / And we didn't start till three . . . When ninety years of age / He'll solo up the Eiger / He's no cream puff / This Doctor's tough / He's not a paper tiger . . .'

Munroists.—Last issue bagged all known Munroists from No. 1 to No. 73. To continue, with conventions as set out there: (74) Miss M. McCallum, 1967, 1968, —; (75) M. J. Moulton, 1968, —, —; (76) R. Smith, 1968, 1968, —; (77) Miss L. W. Urquhart, 1968, —, —; (78) Mrs E. MacKay, 1968, —, —; (79) A. J. Main, 1968, —, —; (80) *R. D. Walton, 1968, —, —; (81) W. Shand, 1968, 1968, —; (82) G. G. Shand, 1968, 1968, —; (83) R. L. Pearce, 1968, —, —; (84) R. Cook, 1968, —, —; (85) Barbara M. Tulloch, 1968, —, —; (86) Helen M. Scrimgeour, 1968, —, —; (87) *J. Hinde, 1968, —, —. No. 53, *G. M. Smith, should now read 1963, 1966, 1968. We are, as ever, obliged to Mr Maxwell for much of this information.

High Pressure.—Dr Adam Watson's paper *Public Pressures on Soils, Plants and Animals near Ski Lifts in the Cairngorms* (from *The Biotic Effects of Public Pressures on the Environment*, National Environment Research Council, 1967) outlines the environmental deterioration inexorably following on today's slaphappy non-biological 'planning.' His evidence of caterpillar-tractors beginning the unstoppable galloping erosion to a Mud Bowl—which has always threatened these slopes, of the destroyed vegetation, of fouling, of all biological (and that includes mental) impoverishment, is familiar to everyone who sees, or thinks. However, this destruction is yet relatively small. The boys have only just begun. Watson outlines their future plans which—as we always knew—include the road through the Lairig Ghru to 'open up' (at autopsy?) Cairn Toul and the Garbh Choire; and other take-overs we have not the heart to mention. It is clear this crass selfishness will not stop until all the high ground of Cairngorms both sides of the Dee valley (upper and lower river) has been made what these people—with no sense of irony—call 'productive.'

Whatever brass they may accumulate in pocket or on neck, their names will never be forgotten by the generations who inherit the ruins they have made, or have permitted. If we are to save anything of the noble landscape

handed down to us and which we—and the present ski-herds—precari-ously enjoy, then we must act along the lines of Mr Murray's letter in this issue. It is useless under the present political and economic system to hope for a scientific official approach to planning, still less to development. We ourselves must fight for some sort of rationality, even if it means being rude to the irrational you-can't-stop-us men and their affluent emotions.

Scottish Mountaineering Accidents 1968

Our correspondent reports that in 1968 48 accidents were recorded on Scottish hills, 6 being fatal. There were also 11 searches for parties merely lost or benighted: a welcome drop in fatalities and large-scale searches.

So far, it seems that 36 incidents at least concerned hill-walkers (with 2 deaths) and 20 concerned climbers (4 deaths). At least 40 were under 25 years old. 28 incidents concerned parties from south of the Border; in Glencoe, of 22 accidents, 15 were to English, 4 to Scottish, and 2 to continental parties, with 2 to Service units; in Skye 6 out of 8 accidents were to English parties.

In Glencoe, the chief accident area, 4 accidents were on one day (14th April), and 4 over the September Holiday weekend, straining Mountain Rescue in the glen.

Of other areas, Cairngorms and Lochnagar had 8 accidents and 5 searches, Ben Nevis 4 and 2, N. & W. Highlands 3 and 2, Central Grampians, Arrochar, etc., 2 and 2, Skye, 8 accidents.

Helicopters are being increasingly used; most spectacular in 1968 were lifts from Loch Avon and from high on Ben Nevis.

In Glencoe the brunt of the work falls on Hamish McInnes and his stalwarts of the Glencoe M.R.T. and every effort requires to be made to cut down avoidable accidents in this area and lessen calls on the Teams; in Skye, Pete Thomas has done invaluable work in immediate rescue; in the northern Cairngorms the Glenmore Lodge staff are invariably first out; the other teams which have all given us valiant service are Aberdeen, Braemar, Cairngorm, Ross-shire, Skye, the R.A.F. teams—Kinloss, Leuchars and Stafford, and Police teams from various areas. To all of those and to other Service and civilian helpers we owe our warmest thanks, although unfortunately we cannot list in this *Journal* individual teams at each incident.

GLENCOE

13TH JANUARY — Miss G. Dewar (20), Renfrewshire, Heriot Watt M.C.—fell off icy path, Lost Valley. Multiple bruises—*no ice axe*—vibram-soled boots.

27TH JANUARY — Glasgow man (20), slipped in hard snow, Lost Valley; head injuries—*no ice axe* or crampons.

6TH FEBRUARY — R.A.F. exercise, Glencoe, 3 avalanched, wind-slab. Cpl. McIver swept down further; climbed to rock face. Found at midnight.

20TH FEBRUARY — Youth Hosteller (22), English, lost control, glissading Stob Coire nan Lochan; fractured clavicle.

27TH FEBRUARY — Climber (23), English, slipped on snow, fell on rock descending Buchaille Etive Mòr in dark—head injuries.

4TH APRIL — J. Banather (25), London, lost control glissading Lost Valley, *lost ice axe*, severe facial injuries.

14TH APRIL — Mrs Bachelor-Smith (57), Romsey, slipped on hard snow, Bidean nam Bian, well equipped, but no crampons. Internal injuries.

14TH APRIL — H. Leak (20), Hull, fell climbing Etive Slabs.

14TH APRIL — L. Carris (30), Carlisle, hold broke, fell 40 feet—no helmet, severe head injuries.

14TH APRIL — T.A. Party, Glasgow—Bidean—officer ordered descent of hard snow, men scared and inexperienced, no crampons—one fell, hip injury. J. McArtny stopped others, to annoyance of officer . . .

8TH MAY — English climber (24), slipped Aonach Eagach—head, hand injuries.

11TH AUGUST — J. Grimshaw (21), Manchester, Mountaineering Assistant Instructor, instructing abseiling on Sgòr nam Fiannaidh, using chockstone—which came out; fell—compound leg fracture.

15TH AUGUST — Party from Church Y.C., Sheffield, split into 3 groups on N. face, Aonach Dubh under inexperienced leaders unaware of dangers; search party.

18TH AUGUST — W. Hirt (22), Germany, fell solo hill-walking, Beinn Ceitlein, Glen Etive; walking boots *no map or compass*; fractured skull.

31ST AUGUST — Party from Salford University M.C., D. Briggs (22), leading Pamela Higson (20), new route on Gearr Aonach. Higson fell, Briggs held her but Higson fell again pulling Briggs off belay. Briggs' peg belay came off, both fell, Briggs 220 feet approx.; other 2 peg runners may have come out. Briggs, broken arm and bruises; Higson, serious head injuries—both well equipped, wearing helmets.

1ST SEPTEMBER — C. Stephenson (45), Bearsden, slipped descending Aonach Eagach by route mentioned in Poucher's book—blustery misty weather. Located 200 feet down from ridge—bruising, shock, slight exposure.

2ND SEPTEMBER — Margaret Fletcher (17), one of 12 Countrywide Holiday Assn. under 1 leader, traverse Aonach Eagach. Torrential rain, blustery wind. Slipped at MR 146584 on wet rock fell 200 feet, rolled another 100 feet. *Fatal*.

3RD SEPTEMBER — K. Hodgson (19), Liverpool, poorly-equipped hill-walker traversing Aonach Eagach alone fell early afternoon but torch spotted in darkness. Parties out till after dawn; broken ankle, back injuries.

5TH SEPTEMBER — P. Johnson (42), South Africa, with party descending Bidean slipped and fell 6 feet: heavy build, landed awkwardly, fractured ankle. 200-ft. stretcher lower before carried to safety.

18TH AUGUST — 2 St. Andrews U.M.C. climbers in Raven's Gully swept by stones from higher party. Leader, belayed, struck on head by stone deflected to hand. *Helmet cracked, no head injuries*, but finger injuries. (Not officially listed).

24TH DECEMBER — J. Lucas (24), Bradford, little experience snow and ice climbing; *no ice axe*, no crampons, traversing N.W. gully, Stob Coire nam Beithe, slipped and slid down; *fatal*.

27TH DECEMBER — C. McDougal (18), Old Kilpatrick, MR 145545, Bidean, slipped when traversing; fracture skull and neck.

28TH DECEMBER — P. Johnson (19), Berkshire, Imperial College M.C. but little snow and ice experience, *no ice axe*, descending slipped and slid 200 feet—lacerations.

BEN NEVIS AREA

6TH MARCH — J. Mannion (28), and D. Lockwood (21), at C.I.C. Hut. Left hut 9.45 a.m. saying they were climbing Observatory Ridge—weather good, ridges clear. Shouts heard 6.30 p.m. When the two did not return by 10 p.m., Rescue Teams alerted, set out 1.30 a.m. Summit plateau searched by night, finding no track. Party descended Tower Gully and Observatory Gully, others searched foot of Point 5, Zero and foot of Observatory Ridge. At 10 a.m. R.N.A.S. Lossiemouth called on and Scout Helicopter carrying

rescuers searched C.M.D. arête, Ben Nevis summit and Observatory Ridge; landed near C.I.C. Hut. Later N.E. Ridge searched by helicopter and the two men seen descending near second platform; did not require help but steps cut by rescuers for lower 200 feet of their descent.

They had mistaken N.E. Buttress for Observatory Ridge in clear weather. Up till time they met Rescue party they thought they had been on Observatory Ridge. Mannion 5 years' climbing experience. Had climbed up near Slingsby's Chimney and carried on till late, bivouacked in snow hole and continued traversing east and descending in the morning. Party had 120 feet rope, ice axes and crampons, hammers, pitons and adequate clothing. They had emergency food supplies but no torches, map or compass.

17TH MARCH — J. Clarkson (42), S.M.C., J.M.C.S. Meet at C.I.C. Hut. 3 left for top of Carn Mòr Dearg, conditions clear, but spindrift. Party equipped with axes and crampons and carrying rope. Snow hard, ideal for climbing, though gusty wind strong. About 1 p.m. above steepest part of slope about 800 ft. above hut; just after, a strong gust of wind, and Clarkson seen to slip, try to recover and then slide uncontrolled down. May have moved from one foot to other when gust struck and so off balance. With crampons on slid head first, trying to brake, was seen to lose axe as he disappeared over steep part of slope. Found dead about 100 feet up from hut.

18TH MARCH — G. McNair (22), Buckinghamshire, Cambridge University M.C. Cornice collapsed when climbing No. 4 gully fell 300 ft. with avalanche. Rescued by helicopter.

23RD JULY — R. Jones (15), in camp Glen Nevis with Derwent Adventure Scout group, missing in evening—*found dead* next day in Achintee Gully—wet and slippery underfoot—shorts and baseball boots—probably slipped and fell 90 ft.

16TH AUGUST — W. Angert (19), Germany, no experience—left camp Glen Nevis in morning to take photos on ascent of the Ben. Call out when failed to return by 10 p.m. All night search—no result then helicopter and dogs called on, finally located in gully south side Meall an t-Suidhe—fractured femur.

19TH AUGUST — R. Allan (24), and J. Grue (22), both London, left C.I.C. Hut to climb Observatory Ridge—party at hut phoned Police when failed to return by 8 p.m.; driving wind and hail. 16 rescuers out from 10.30 p.m. till 6.30 a.m. Men found sheltering on summit, walked down path with team.

7TH SEPTEMBER — Ben Nevis Race; strong cold wind. R.A.F. teams covered event with 4 parties at strategic points. J. Edwards, R.A.F., knee injury—carried. P. Rickens, R.H.A., exhausted on summit, exposure. Carried. J. F. Mather, Greenock Harriers, stumbling around, exposure and exhaustion; escorted. J. G. Jardine, wandering round; exposure and exhaustion; escorted. Many others given clothing and hot drinks. Weather was good for Nevis in early September. Recommend that all be fit, know mountain navigation in adverse weather, be equipped to stand weather and aware of exposure, should have climbed Nevis beforehand.

CAIRNGORMS

2ND JANUARY — Large parties called out for three walkers not returned to Glenmore; had descended to Loch Avon and eventually returned by Strath Nethy.

3RD JANUARY — G. Tiso, Bathgate, Langmuir and Briggs on search for above missing folk avalanched in Coire Raibeirt, Tiso torn ankle ligaments—retreated to Shelter Stone. Carried radio; Tiso evacuated by helicopter—others walked back.

5TH FEBRUARY — Large party of naval apprentices from H.M.S. Mohawk on trek from Aviemore *via* Glen Feshie and Glen Geldie to Inverey. Bad conditions and 3 separated from others and camped—evacuated by helicopter—one distressed, feet nearly frostbitten.

25TH FEBRUARY — Party of R.N. cadets, H.M.S. Caledonia, left Glenmore to travel by Lairig and Laoigh to Glen Derry. Weather good but snow made walking difficult; hard frost at night. After setting them off, officer i.c. went to meet them at other end of Expedition. C. Carmichael (19), B. Abbott (18) and A. Donald (19) camped in Glen Derry (038958) and were located there suffering from exposure and exhaustion—Carmichael and Abbott in bad way, would have died if left. Much criticism of Naval control—Navy shrugged off criticism saying that boys just a bit tired. This annoyed Braemar M.R. team who rescued them and deputation bearded admiral at Rosyth—had assurance of better control in future.

31ST APRIL — R. Burnett (49), Cairngorm Club. Team Leader Aberdeen M.R. team. Above team providing rescue service for skiers on Beinn a' Bhùird. Burnett and three others glissading on a plastic sheet when Burnett landed on own axe—bad injury caused by spike.

2ND JUNE — Cpl. Jackson, R.A.M.C., did not return from walk on Meall an Lundain. During search next day turned up at Mar Lodge; 60 man-hours involved.

5TH JULY — G. Rae (18), G. Stewart (18), Falkirk, and R. Weir (19), Airth, planned route Loch an Eilean, Lairig Ghru, night at St. Valéry Refuge, then to Inverey Y.H. Well-equipped, plenty of food—very little hill-walking experience. Ascending to Lochan Buidhe Rae, who carried only compass, separated from others in mist, carried on to Lochan where he met man who guided him down; phoned police at 4.30 a.m. saying had lost other two. Large parties called out. Other two found at Sinclair Refuge—had gone up and down looking for Rae.

5TH AUGUST — Mr & Mrs Smith (26), reported missing, search overnight; found at Sheiling; lost way in mist, unable to navigate, had been on Ben Macdhuil and to Loch Avon—saw Glenmore flares.

22ND JULY — W. Slessor (27), and J. Cadger (21), Aberdeen and Etchachan Club. Climbing Juniper Rib, Coire Etchachan. Cadger led first pitch of 80 ft., used doubled No. 4 nylon sling as thread belay; tested, found satisfactory as did Slessor; Cadger led a further 20 ft., had to retreat, turned, faced outwards, slipped and fell. Slessor took strain, belay came out; both fell to bottom of climb. Slessor fractured skull and broken ribs, Cadger minor injuries. Neither wearing protective headgear.

25TH AUGUST — Crusaders' Union Party on trek from Corroul to Cairngorm Car Park—three lagged and parties called out; back safe early morning.

29TH SEPTEMBER — Aberdeen party, 4 men, 4 women, led by A. Buchan (40) (said to be experienced—22 ascents of Lochnagar). On descent T. Spencer (20) on steep bouldery face boulder gave way and he fell 80 ft. to boulders—said to be broken neck and abrasions. After accident one man stayed with victim (no whistle, no torch) one headed for Braemar, while Buchan went to Spittal of Muick, met a walker at Foxes' Well, asked him to raise alarm and then returned to Spencer. Did not stay, headed back towards Spittal of Muick. Braemar messenger arrived first, Police and Braemar team called out. This man returned with teams but pegged out on way, did not stay where left and was temporarily lost. Teams carried out rescue, dismissed at 12.30 a.m., Buchan assumed to be at Spittal of Muick. At 3.30 a.m. he was still missing, last seen exhausted with no spare equipment. More teams called, Buchan reached Spittal 6.10 a.m., denied being lost, came down slowly because of darkness and no torch.

27TH OCTOBER — Party of 4 from Aberdeen on Lochnagar, descending at dusk. K. Robb (17), slipped and fell on bank of burn (205872); possibly slight concussion. Two stayed with him, one went for help. Did not know exact location of accident, only that had followed burn to Garbh Allt Shiel. Advance party were misled into searching wrong burn. Consequences serious had injuries been worse. Party reasonably clad but no torch or whistle.

16TH NOVEMBER — R. Quelch (19), English, Aberdeen University student, started climbing this year. Climbing alone in Black Spout Gully of Lochnagar; fracture of lobster claw on crampon, lost balance, fell 20 ft., fractured clavicle. On return journey, R. Burnett, Aberdeen team, fell out of Land Rover . . . minor head injuries.

18TH DECEMBER — J. Douglas (18), Cheshire, P. Reynell (22), Hants., and Celia Naughton (20), U.S.A., left Loch Morlich Y.H., 9 a.m., planned route over Cairngorm and down to Loch Avon—return by Lairig an Laoigh. North from refuge did not get far, high wind and drifting snow against them; spent uncomfortable night in refuge. Party met one near summit of Cairngorm at noon on 19th, other two following slowly. Douglas mild frostbite of toes.

NORTH AND WEST

14TH APRIL — J. Park and two sons on Mound Rock, Golspie, Kenneth (age 9) above steep gully on east side, lost footing on slippery grass and fell 80 feet (wearing normal leather shoes). Father went to help, slipped also, no injury. Boy unconscious, fractured skull.

12TH JUNE — Winifred Pratt (61), experienced hill-walker, Manchester, with companion descending Beinn Liath Mhòr, Achnashellach, stepped on stone which gave way, rolled down 200 ft.; fractured wrist and clavicle, lacerations.

6TH JULY — M. Adams (21), London, on hill-walk, Kinlochewe area, at approx 028606 slipped on wet stones and fell; fractured tibia. Companion returned to village for rescue party.

17TH JULY — R. Henderson (41), Kirkcaldy, Ordnance Survey labourer, one of four taking equipment to summit of Beinn Airidh Charr. Returning, Henderson and his mate stopped at 911771 for a rest. Mate moved on while Henderson finished smoke; when he did not appear mate returned to halting place, then contacted the other two men and searched for Henderson—no result. Returned to Poolewe and informed Police at 10 p.m. Search and helicopter. At 10 a.m. Henderson found at ruined house at Ardlair near shore of Loch Maree (913755); had lost way and wandered till found ruin; did not have strength or initiative to find way back.

15TH SEPTEMBER — J. Cadenhead (69), Paisley, left Strathpeffer to walk to Ravens Rock by Golf Course—had to cross Forestry ground ploughed into deep ditches. As suffers from partial paralysis unable to get out when fell into one; lay till daybreak, managed out, on way back when met search party (100 man-hours).

CENTRAL GRAMPIANS, CRAINLARICH, ARROCHAR AREAS

15TH APRIL — R. McBride (16), Kilmarnock—one of a Church Organisation rushing down tourist path from North Peak of Cobbler—lost balance and fell over rock. Lacerations—unconscious.

24TH JULY — R. Cruse (16), German, with German Scout party at Montrose House Camp Site—unauthorised night climbing, stuck, lost and benighted on Conic Hill (428919)—slight exposure.

19TH AUGUST — N. Razey (16), with Venture Scout Group at Lochearnhead, descending out of mist in Kirkton Glen, Balquhiddy, jumped from rock to wet grass, lost balance, fell over rock face 20 ft. to loose rock below; broken leg.

9TH DECEMBER — A. Hunter, Alloa, left Laggan 11.30 a.m. to walk to Laoch Dubh (632012) and return that evening. Party called out when did not. Located at bothy 620985 (not marked on map) which he had found the previous night when lost and wandering in dark—*no map or compass*, or any basic mountaineering equipment.

SKYE

8TH JANUARY — Man (26), slipped east face Marsco, snow and ice. Well equipped, ice axe.

2ND JUNE — T. Gaunt (39), and friend, Leeds, lost proper route on Amphitheatre Buttress. Gaunt, leader, could not move up or down. Second tried to climb up to him but had to belay some distance below. Gaunt fell; when found, suspended from rope and had been killed instantly. Rope, No. 4 nylon, held fall of body weighing 16 stone.

2ND JUNE — R. Jones (29), London, leading direct route on Eastern Buttress. Sròn na Ciche, came off. Cause unknown. Hit ground as strain came on second. Had climbed the route before and quite experienced. *Fatal*.

21ST JUNE — R. A. Rayner (21), London, fell 12 ft. trying to avoid Mauvais Pais, Sgùmain Ridge. Lacerations of head. Tried wrong side (fourth such incident here in 5 years).

6TH AUGUST — I. Nave (19), Workington, fell ascending Sgùrr Thòrmaid. *Fatal*—thought to be loose rock.

13TH AUGUST — D. Clarke (19), Leeds, trying to climb to rope thrown down by friends as unable to climb Crack of Double Doom. About 10 ft. up left wall of Central Gully when pulled off loose block which broke ankle. Evacuation awkward as he was 800 ft. up the face.

4TH SEPTEMBER — D. Jones (22), Margaret Wilkinson (18), Surrey, with another traversing Bidean nam Bian. Roped girl, no experience, in middle wearing shoes. Last man Jones was moving when a block came away and he fell into a gully pulling the other two. He landed in a gully after 20 ft. and girl fell beyond him.

7TH SEPTEMBER — Man fell north face Glamaig. Hit on head by falling stone. Cut forehead, fractured rib and bruising.

IN MEMORIAM

DAVID MYLES, M.D.,
1895-1968

ALTHOUGH few of our members can have known Dr Myles of Forfar, he was a very active member of the Club from 1933, when he joined, attending many Meets and Dinners and serving on the Committee from 1937 to 1945 where he gave valuable advice on mountain rescue problems.

After then he had less time available. He had a large medical practice in Forfar with many private patients in the county and glens of Angus. He was dedicated to his profession and his family, and he died in harness. He was a Fellow of the B.M.A. and very active on committees, and also served on the University Court of St. Andrews.

Myles started climbing in his student days with the Dundee University Rucksack Club, when they used to camp at Corrour bothy below Cairn Toul. I once read in the log book of hard winters and glissades from Ben Macdhui, over 2000 feet to the frozen Dee.

He was one of my closest friends, from our first meeting in 1931 with the Perth J.M.C.S., of which I was Hon. Vice-President (the Hon. President then was Sheriff Valentine who was taking to fishing).

So Myles was a link between the old S.M.C. pioneers and the young J.M.C.S. entrants. I remember an Easter Meet at Fort William in 1933, attended by G. A. Solly, then about 75 years old. We took him with us to Mamore Lodge and up Binnein Mòr, which he wanted to climb. And he went well, though going pretty slowly near the top. Someone anxiously consulted Myles. The reply was quite short, 'He's all right but he needs his lunch. Then he'll do Na Gruagachan as well.' And Solly did just that, and then descended, snow and steep, quite steadily.

Of course most of Myles' climbing days were on the Cairngorms and Angus mountains—very long days often, and ending after dark! I remember another long day at a New Year Meet from Loch Awe. We left a car at Taynuilt, ferried the Awe, and up Loch Etive and then up Glen Noe for a long, hard climb to the Taynuilt peak of Cruachan. There was much ice, and we got up just in time to see a glorious winter sunset. Then down glissading, as far as we could to Bridge of Awe and a few miles walking to the car at Taynuilt.

Myles did not lead on rock of any difficulty, but he was perfectly reliable as second. For instance, on the first route on Eagle Buttress, Lochnagar, we were three, a New Zealander, Myles and I. Myles did protest at the first really severe pitch. So we made a flanking movement, and finished a good climb of moderate difficulty. Four years later the direct route was made. Myles was justified in his protest.

He was fond of the Cuillin and the lesser known hills of the far north-west. At that time I think he still counted his Munros, but he had not the leisure to finish. As a student he had done some walking in the Alps, and he had only one real climbing holiday in the Alps before I knew him. He rented a cottage on the Prosen Water to which he used to retire on his weekly off-day, and many were the happy visits I can look back upon. Later, when he was unable to climb, he fished. He was the ideal companion, in fair weather or foul, full of good humour and quaint conceits. I shall not look upon his like again!

JAMES H. BELL.

(Myles' excellent tale in *S.M.C.J.*, 1936, xxi, 15 is very well worth the reading—*Hon. Ed.*).

A. G. WALDIE

I FIRST met Gordon Waldie in the early 1950's. Slessor, working carless in Dumfries, had innocently interested a motorised colleague in climbing. Convenient to Slessor, this was revelatory to the colleague. In fact, Waldie met 'the first Scottish winter he'd ever enjoyed.' The two of them arrived in the original 'Waldiwagen,' a commodious van, and we did the N.E. ridge of Aonach Mòr in wind, mist and hilarity, Waldie periodically launching an accurate arrow into the flying abuse of his companions; and so keen was his Border wit that the barbs were only noticed during extraction.

His whole manner was deliberate, almost fastidious, yet spiced with the necessary self-mockery. I recall him at the old Biolay, fitting on a marvellous wardrobe just purchased *chez Schnell*; but before wearing the hat he gravely brushed in a little dirt, lest it look too new, blue eyes twinkling in an expressionless face. That week we lodged also in someone's old bell tent, stuffed with irons, food and unwashed plates; people like Marshall and the Rock-&-Ice crawled in and out. Waldie had to lie among old bacon and spilt

fat. Patiently he tidied away the mess each visitor left. 'They are not,' he explained, 'like you and me; they are not used to looking after themselves.' He was indeed superbly organised. Everything for the day had its correct place in his sack. His methodical imperturbability in packing at, say, 3 a.m., roused more urgent companions to fury, finally breaking them to obedience. I have seen the technique used effectively on Dr Slessor. His skill in lion-taming was outstanding, and employed with discerning relish.

On a climb he was, naturally, very sound, and by no means slow; always a delightful companion, courteous and unselfish. A Hawick man, he joined the S.M.C. in 1955, climbing first from Dumfries, where he and Slessor founded the Galloway Mountaineering Club, which owed everything to his firm but indulgent eye. His article *Rock Climbing in Galloway* (*S.M.C.J.*, 1958, xxvi, 251), sums up his Gallovidian explorations.

When his profession as engineer sent him to Blackpool he quickly became a leading light in the new Fylde M.C., climbing largely in the English Lakes but occasionally bringing his fellow-members north to climb and ski (for he became proficient on piste and tour). At Middlesbrough, his last move, his activities continued little diminished, and he attended many Club meets.

He did a good deal of Alpine climbing, sometimes alone. Much is recorded in *S.M.C. Abroad*; more often, as he said in his last letter to me—'I continued walking and peak-bagging along the length of the Bernina and Bregaglia range . . . but I don't think I troubled to put my perambulations into the *Journal*.'

His last climbing was in Skye and the Lake District in the summer of 1967. He had planned to join Russell and Wilson on the Haute Route the next spring, but the illness which had troubled him for a year or so grew rapidly worse and he died the next January. His death, because of his habitual quiet courage shockingly unexpected, has forced us to realise how true a companion we have lost and how fortunate we are to have known that calm independence and savoured that kindly, quizzical, glance.

G.J.D.

JAMES CLARKSON, B.Sc.

JAMES CLARKSON, born in 1927, moved to Scotland to join the staff of Naval Construction Research Establishment, Dunfermline, after having taken his degree at Bristol University. He died while ascending Càrn Mòr Dearg from the C.I.C. hut on Sunday, 17th March, in wintry conditions and gale-force winds.

Outside his work, and prior to his marriage to Mary in 1962, Jim lived for the hills. His talent for organisation gained him considerable success at his work as well as making him a mainstay of the Edinburgh section of the J.M.C.S. for many years. It was his ability both to organise and to inspire others which made Jim a natural leader, not only among people new to mountaineering, but also in leading the successful expedition to Central East Greenland in 1961.

Soon after he joined the Edinburgh J.M.C.S. in 1951, Jim took an active part in its affairs. He was President during 1958-59 and for many years acted as either secretary or treasurer. There were times when the Section and the name James Clarkson seemed almost synonymous! In 1962 Jim was elected to the S.M.C., a membership he cherished, but he remained loyal to the J.M.C.S., continuing to climb with the Edinburgh section and serving on its committee.

When he first started climbing his initiators thought—'This lad won't ever be any good.' It is certainly true that Jim lacked some of the attributes commonly associated with mountaineers. However, he persevered, finding a new life and companionship in climbing, and whilst he never achieved the highest technical standards on rock, he nevertheless helped put up several good new routes under winter conditions and was an adviser to many.

Over the years we have seen Jim mature and his attitudes change, so that recently he joined the scorned 'plank pushers,' extending his mountaineering activities to include ski-ing. His approach to the mountains, however, was always characterised by his tremendous enthusiasm and a single-mindedness that was evident in all that he thought worth while.

Jim sought to learn all he could about the mountains in which he climbed and his retentive memory enabled him to accumulate a vast knowledge and an experience of many areas. This made him the ideal companion for the keen young climber, for Jim was quick to measure people's capabilities and could, therefore, arrange the routes to suit the whole party. Many of us owe Jim a debt for his guidance and encouragement during our early days on the Scottish hills.

In writing of the loss of our friend Keith Murray, in these same pages Jim wrote—'but our memories in the Edinburgh J.M.C.S. are of great and happy days at Glencoe, in the Lake District and in Greenland.' These words are so true—and our memories extend to North Wales, Arctic Norway and to many Alpine adventures, times of frustration or of pain, but overall of mirth, the elation of success and the bond of comradeship.

Jim was indeed fortunate in being able to share his love for the hills with his wife, whose activities have only been reduced since the birth of their son Alastair in 1966; to both of them go our deepest sympathies.

C.H.C.B., R.J.T.

DONALD G. DUFF, M.C., M.B.E., F.R.C.S.

IN 1945 the E.U.M.C. had a winter meet at Achintee Farm and it was there that I first heard of Donald Duff. Gordon Parish took me to meet him and we found him battling his way to the Belford Hospital in filthy weather on an old bicycle. This typified the man—independent, scorning hardship and always keeping himself fit. Even in the coldest weather he never wore an overcoat or a sweater to work. His love for the mountains was great and the Belford Hospital was always known as an emergency bothy for stray mountaineers. The hospital saw many other facets of his interests and it was not unusual to find him coming up from the boiler house where he had been carrying out experiments on rock fusion in furtherance of his interest in vitrified forts.

Perhaps he is most widely known for the Duff Stretcher which he developed for Mountain Rescue work—and it was always a source of pride to him that one was taken on the 1953 Everest ascent. He formed and led the Lochaber rescue team and a 'call-out' on Ben Nevis always benefited from his boundless energy, and it is all too often forgotten that when the team staggered wearily to bed after a hard night Mr Duff had to then begin his work as a surgeon on the casualty. Because of this devotion he was awarded the M.B.E. and made an Honorary Member of the Club, which he had joined in 1946.

I knew him best as a medical colleague from working in Fort William. He was always approachable by his patients—a somewhat rare trait in many N.H.S. hospitals—and his medical skill was diverse. In these days of

specialisation one rarely finds a man who is a surgeon (and known for a specialised instrument for neurosurgery) a good General Practitioner and also skilled in Obstetrics. In his medical work he gave vent to his inventive leanings in a variety of instruments that might have looked strange but nevertheless were highly effective in his hands.

J.S.B.

WILLIAM McKNIGHT DOCHARTY, M.C., F.R.G.S.

WILLIE DOCHARTY had many friends and I consider myself fortunate in having made his acquaintance soon after his return to Scotland in 1933, thus starting a friendship which ended suddenly in July this year after preparations had been made for an excursion to Tomintoul to climb 'some wee things.'

His excursions were all prepared in detail by what he described as 'swotting'; this included an itinerary on which were noted the distance to be traversed, the heights of cols and tops, and the probable time required. The routes were planned to have the sun behind him as much as possible. The 'swotting' included a careful study of train and bus timetables. He often used his bicycle, and his pleasant and persuasive manner could result in it accompanying him on a Highland bus. His friends, not always able to accompany him, and notably John Dow, found pleasure in driving him to and from the hills.

Willie Docharty was seldom off-course in bad weather or mist. He carried his map in a waterproof case for easy and frequent reference, along with a sheet of paper on which were recorded the time and barometer height at each summit, col, or special feature. He refrained from drinking hill water in order to 'conserve the calories,' but carried one or two small thermos flasks of tea, always filled under his own supervision, and their contents were shared at the summits. I shall not forget his pleasure at being met, with a tray of tea and scones, by the two young ladies who, earlier in the day, had rowed us ashore from a motor launch at Li, and who were awaiting our return to the launch after a climb on Ladhar Beinn.

His father was a well-known artist, and this is probably the reason why Willie's eye for colours did not agree with those produced by modern colour photography. His photographs are all in black and white, and the results leave no doubt of his artistry and skill. During his service with the King's Liverpool Regiment in the 1914-18 war he was awarded the Military Cross, but received a wound which would have resulted in the loss of a leg had he not collapsed on the operating table. The wound eventually healed, and the surgical treatment that followed restored his leg to such good condition that it only occasionally troubled him on the hills, chiefly when descending snow slopes.

The Ordnance Survey must, I think, have a special file for their correspondence with him, a correspondence which was mutually appreciated. The hill lore of shepherds and gamekeepers, and the derivation of place names, always had a particular interest for him, and no local information was ever overlooked. On one occasion it resulted in a lift in the County roadmen's truck up Glen Shiel to a suitable place for starting a traverse of the Five Sisters. Old buildings, antiquities, and books of travel had a fascination for him, and it was a red letter day when he managed to acquire a full set of the *S.M.C. Journals*. He was particularly interested in the early excursions of the members, and impressed by the long distances that they traversed before motor transport became common. He had a gift of making friends easily, as many of the members of the Club will know.

Willie spent a number of years in Egypt when employed by the P. & O. Group Companies, and while on leave-journeys home he made several

excursions to the Alps and the Dauphiné, along with a Dauphiné innkeeper friend who was later shot by the Germans as a member of the Resistance. His business career was with shipping, and the deliberate obstruction of the Suez Canal in 1956 made him bitter on the evils of vandalism.

He compiled three books; the first, *A Selection of some 900 British and Irish Mountain Tops* was followed by two Supplementary Volumes which included *A Selection of 1000 Tops under 2500 feet*. The three volumes were attractively produced, and in addition to the beautifully written Forewords and Epilogue, they contain most comprehensive and detailed statistics along with reproductions of some of his photographs and panoramas. They were printed for private circulation, and he presented copies not only to many of his friends, but also to a number of Mountaineering Clubs and libraries, both in the British Isles and overseas. He was a member of the Alpine Club, and his last expedition abroad was as a selected member of the Yukon Alpine Centennial Expedition in August, 1967. He had made a previous excursion to Canada to a Meeting of the Canadian Alpine Club, of which he had been made an honorary member.

Willie Docharty would not have been able to collect the wealth of information which he has put in his 'Trilogy' if it had not been for the help of his sister-in-law, Mrs Davies, who for some weeks each year took his place at home in nursing his wife who had been bed-ridden for many years. This allowed him to have more than an occasional day on his beloved hills. It might be considered as an act of Providence that his wife died about a month after her husband.

J.M.T.

ARTHUR GEDDES, D.ès L., Ph.D.

ARTHUR GEDDES, who died on 5th April, 1968, was a geographer of international repute, whose life was permeated by a deep and practical involvement in the economical development of natural resources for the benefit of mankind.

A man of wide culture, with a great compassion for the underprivileged he combined with his work in the Department of Geography at Edinburgh University, to which he was attached for nearly 40 years, an abiding and constructive interest in the improvement of land use in India (where he had spent part of his youth) and in the problems of the present economy of southern France (where he was connected with the Scots College at Montpellier).

Imbued with a great love for his native land, Geddes was particularly involved with many aspects of the development of the Highlands and Islands of Scotland, and made many valuable contributions thereto through his teaching, his publications and his connection for a time with the Scottish Development Department. A Gaelic scholar and musician also, he collected and published his translations of Hebridean folk songs.

Geddes joined the Club in 1931 and although his opportunities for climbing were limited, he was a regular attender at Meets, and members will recall with pleasure the evenings when he entertained them with violin renderings from his Gaelic song collection. On the hills he was a reliable and unfailingly stimulating companion with a range of interests which made even the worst of days rewarding.

Our sympathy goes to his widow and family.

R.R.E.

We regret to report also the deaths of **Thomas McQuillen** (1932), **W. G. Marskell** (1944) and **Standish O'Grady** (1950), for whom obituaries are not yet available as we go to press.

PROCEEDINGS OF THE CLUB

Easter Meet 1968—Torridon

THE MEET was probably the most successful in recent years, due in no small measure to the magnificent weather, which combined with a fair amount of snow and the splendid mountain scenery gave all of us some unforgettable days.

Climbs included:—Liathach, Northern Pinnacles and Traverse, Beinn Eighe (two or three parties doing climbs in Coire Mhic Fhearchair), Beinn Alligin, Sgùrr a'Chaorachain by the direct route on A'Chioch, Beinn Bhàn, Slioch (where an ex-President spent many hours in an unfrequented gully), the Bonaith Donn of Beinn a'Mhùinidh, Beinn Damh, Maol Chean-dearg, Scòrr Ruadh, Ben Wyvis and doubtless many other hills.

Present:—The President (W. M. Mackenzie), J. M. C. Aitken, J. H. Barber, J. H. Baxter, D. J. Bennet, K. Bryan, D. L. Campbell, A. G. Cousins, D. J. Fraser, B. Fraser, R. Grieve, J. M. Hartog, B. H. Humble, T. D. MacKinnon, W. H. Murray, G. Roger, C. S. Rose, J. Simpson, C. G. M. Slesser, W. B. Spiers, J. S. Stewart, A. M. Smith, W. T. Taylor, E. I. Thompson, D. Turnbull, W. Wallace and C. B. M. Warren, and guests, J. W. Brydie, T. Murray, R. Soep, W. Robertson and J. G. Speirs. There were also about six members staying at the Shildaig Hotel, but little is known of their activities.

D.J.B.

Reception

IAN ROWE described fascinatingly the Hindu Kush Expedition he led in the summer, illustrated by excellent slides. As we already have his pungent description earlier in this issue, and as this issue is already Far Too Big, we leap to the

Annual General Meeting

where agrophobia confines us to a mention of the (hush) Loch Coruisk Affair and the (hushed) Allt a'Mhuillin Telephone Aerial, mute inglorious memorials of futility. More pleasantly we welcomed as new members, Robin D. M. Chalmers, Arthur D. Hill, Brian T. Hill, James Houston, Peter F. MacDonald, James McDowall, R. Alan North, Neil W. Quinn, David Whitham and Charles B. M. Warren. As the wrath of the Hon. Treasurer is even greater (and even more practical) than that of the Hon. Secretary, we must leave this for the

Dinner

the 80th of its kind, held at the Grosvenor Hotel, Edinburgh, and which appeared to pass off successfully, with Michael Holton as one of the guests—but our Dinner correspondent has forgotten to send his report and lest we awaken him to space-devouring let us crampon rapidly *aux pointes* to the

New Year Meet 1968—Locheearnhead

THE initial proposal (Newtonmore) and other places nearer home having failed to materialise, the Meet, somewhat reduced in numbers, was held at Locheearnhead. The weather generally was characterised by some high gales,

accompanied by mist and snow, but one exception was 2nd January, a day of glorious sunshine.

Climbs included were: Ben Vorlich, Stùc a Chròin, Ben Chonzie, Meall Ghaordie, Meall nan Tarmachan Beinn Ghlas, Ben Lawers, Meall Garbh, all the Carn Maig hills from Dall to Fortingall, An Càisteal (Falloch), Stobinian, Càrn Liath (Ben-y-Gloe) and Buchaille Etive Mòr (Chasm North Wall).

Present:—The President (A. H. Hendry), H. M. Brown, W. L. Coats, J. N. Ledingham, G. Peat, G. S. Roger and W. B. Spiers. Guests:—R. Aitken, Dr D. R. Riddell and Dr Chas. Warren. Visitors:—J. M. Aitken, I. G. Charleson.

W.L.C.

J.M.C.S. REPORTS

Edinburgh Section.—The Section had another excellent year with the membership increasing in number and the climbing done increasing in both quantity and quality. The year was however marred by the tragic death of Jim Clarkson on Càrn Mòr Dearg in March. Though a member of the S.M.C., Jim still climbed regularly with us, and at the time of his death was our Honorary Member and Treasurer. A fund has been set up in his memory, and is being used to provide funds for the conversion of The Smiddy, a derelict building which we have leased at Dundonnell, into a climbers' hut. This is now showing some evidence of the work lavished on it and we hope that this year will see it ready for use. Labour is however in shorter supply, and completion is hindered largely by the 220 miles between Edinburgh and Dundonnell.

The sixteen official Meets were all well attended except for the April Meet to Carnmore and the October invasion of the Lake District, where bad weather cut down numbers. However, no Meets had to be cancelled. Our march on Carnmore was heralded by a protracted and inconclusive correspondence with the owner, but we intend to go back again this year. Otherwise we ranged from Torridon and Glen Brittle in the west to Lochnagar, Ben Alder and the usual centres of Glen Coe and Ben Nevis and Creag Meaghaidh. Unofficially the section was also very active and every weekend saw members in remote corners of the country—a party in Skye at the time of the Army's attempts at road engineering were even accused of having pinched the bit of the bridge which had been lost. The summer also saw various parties abroad, in the Alps, Norway and even in Greenland and East Africa. The evening Meets ranged from talks and slide-shows in the winter to the usual climbing Meets at Traprain and Aberdour in the summer.

Membership for the past year stood at 68 ordinary and 8 associate members, an increase of 11 and 1 respectively on the previous year, and it is still rising.

Office-bearers.—*Hon. President*, G. J. Tiso; *Hon. Vice-President*, B. T. Hill; *President*, J. S. Thomson; *Vice-President*, J. W. Marshall; *Hon. Secretary*, D. J. Hogarth, 21 Crawford Road, Edinburgh 9; *Hon. Treasurer*, D. J. S. Pullin, 18 Viewforth, Edinburgh 10.

Glasgow Section.—The Glasgow Section has again had an excellent year, both in activity and membership.

New members admitted numbered 18 from 45 enquiries—a figure which has remained remarkably consistent over the years. Membership has continued to rise and now stands at 150, a rise of 9.

We seem to have struck a particularly rich vein of new members and enthusiasm and climbing standards are at an all-time high, in fact the only sphere of climbing which is able to accommodate an increase in standard is winter climbing—which has always been a strong point of the Glasgow Section. Given the good winter which did not materialise last year, we should see this rise take place.

The evening meetings were held jointly with the S.M.C. and were as popular as ever. The Photographic Competition was this year judged by W. B. Young of the S.M.C., which effectively nobbled our main competitor.

The Annual Dinner of the Section was held in Glencoe at The Clachaig, which marked our return to the glen after several years in the wilderness. The function was so successful at The Clachaig that it may well be held there over a number of years.

Climbing Meets have been well attended, although transport as always has been a problem from time to time. We covered all the popular areas such as Nevis, Skye, Cairngorms, Arran, Lake District, Creag Meagaidh, etc. The winter Meet to Lochnagar gave a great day on the Saturday, with conditions underfoot and weatherwise as perfect as one could wish; on Sunday we were struck in the wee sma' hours by a blizzard which forced a return *via* Aberdeen. That was the only winter Meet which met with any difficulty on the roads.

The hut erected at such great effort in December '67 at Creag Meagaidh was uprooted and damaged by the January '68 hurricane. The damage is to be repaired as soon as a work party can be organised.

At the Mountain Safety Exhibition held in Glasgow during September the Section organised a stand featuring the ice axe and its use.

The retiring Secretary would like to thank the members for their support and helpful criticism during his two years' of office, and is pleased to note that next year's committee will show a welcome drop in its average age.

Finally, quite the nicest compliment paid to the Glasgow Section for a long time was from one of our newer members who has come to us from south of the Border. He said that he admired the integrity of our climbing, in that we climbed at all seasons of the year, and in all weathers. This is something to remember when people become too wrapped up in hard climbing.

Office-bearers.—*Hon. Member*, W. H. Murray, O.B.E.; *Hon. President*, G. S. Roger; *Hon. Vice-President*, D. J. Bennet; *President*, D. E. Whitham; *Vice-President*, G. W. Wilkinson; *Hon. Secretary*, Drew Sommerville, 133 Stirling Drive, Bishopbriggs; *Hon. Treasurer*, Ian Burley, 10 Cressy Street, Glasgow, S.W.1.; *Coruisk Hut Custodian*, R. J. Watters, 376 Dumbarton Road, Glasgow, W.1.

BOOKS

The West Highlands of Scotland. By W. H. Murray. (1968; Collins, 'Companion Guides.' 415 pp., 43 b. & w. photographs, many sketch maps, hotel lists, etc. 36s.).

The conjunction of Murray and the West Highlands raises expectations. They are justified. This is a most excellent guide. It is designed for the intelligent tourist whose legs are not tar-bound. The popular places are dignified by serious appraisal; the secret ones not grossly exposed, but delicately indicated so that the discerning alone, who alone deserve them, may be rewarded; this technique Murray perfected in his early descriptions of rock routes, and it preserves the integrity of a scrupulous man who must also write guide-books.

Murray tackles nearly everything along the western watershed from Kintyre to Cape Wrath, and the inner islands as well, always with admirable courtesy and restraint; though sometimes—as with the great white elephant of Corpach, and its Inverloch droppings—a pained expression may be guessed at. Politics is well cordoned off, though now and again a remark breaks through which in lesser men might savour of Opinions. But stimulants are not wanted in guide-books, and that lucid uniformity which in his otherwise excellent book on the Hebrides kept him from the knife of Mac-Diarmid or the salt of Scott-Moncrieff is here absolutely right. Immensely and *practically* informative, written with great topographical sensitivity, this is the best Scottish guide on the market, and must be bought, even by those who think they know it all.

One searches hard for stones to throw: that unworthy jacket, that apologetic space allotted to the *contemporary* verse, song and music the author tells us are here so important (the curious conviction of a 'Pictish' Deirdre complete with 'Druids' is no substitute!), that uneven bibliography (but he *gives* us a bibliography) recommending a 100,000-word Gaelic dictionary and virtually nothing on its literature, a few misprints . . . mean and petty stones easily caught and flung back by the author. Find more if you can write a better guide than this!

Enough. Mr Murray has awarded sympathy and respect to a countryside otherwise at the mercy of demagogues.

G.J.D.

The Book of Modern Mountaineering. Edited by Malcolm Milne. (1968; Arthur Barker. 304 pp. Continuous illustration. 63s.).

Mr Milne argues in his introduction, 'a book of this sort must be highly selective; there are, as there must be, notable omissions.' But of course there need not be—in fact, a comprehensive review of modern mountaineering would be expected to deal *only* with notable events and there is great demand for such a book. Littered through the major mountaineering journals of the past decade or so there are masterly review articles of this or that mountain area. Yet instead of such a practical and practicable compendium of scattered knowledge, Mr Milne has chosen to provide us with 'an anthology which seeks to capture the essence of a noble sport: the essence not only of its techniques and achievements but also of its philosophy and mysticism.' The perennial problem—how to write a mountaineering book that will also sell to non-mountaineers—gets its all-too-frequent solution: keep technical and factual content to a minimum, fluff up with photographs and put in some high-sounding 'philosophical' stuff. (Incidentally, to call such writing philosophical is to do that discipline a considerable disservice).

Having said this much, it must be clear that I regard this book as belonging to a bastard genre. However, it is an exceptionally well-endowed bastard. The writing is uniformly good, if sparse. There are reasonable reviews of modern climbing in the home hills and in such far-flung areas as Antarctica, the Patagonian Andes, Alaska and the Ruwenzori (but almost nothing on the Alps, the Andes proper, the Himalayas excepting the Karakoram and the Everest region, or the North American chain). The photography is marvellously lavish—no more than a handful of pages lack photographs—and some of it certainly does 'capture the essence of the sport,' noble or no. One thinks in particular of John Cleare's wonderful study of Hoston on p. 291, caught racked with effort and anxiety on the Old Man of Hoy, equipment trailing disembowelled in great fronds from his waist. By the photography alone, *The Book of Modern Mountaineering* is astonishingly sharp-priced at 63s.

R.N.C.

The Alps and Alpinism. Edited by Karl Lukan. (1968; Thames & Hudson. 200 pp. 282 photographs, 12 in colour. £4 10s.).

This is a beautifully-produced book and many of the illustrations particularly those of historical interest, are fascinating. Covering, in under 200 pages 'the development of the Alpine world, from Neanderthal Man . . . ' the text is necessarily rather slight. However, if you are the kind of person who reads his Sunday colour supplement first this is possibly the book for you. Perhaps Patey might buy a copy for his waiting-room?

A.W.E.

Great Langdale. By J. A. Austin. **Scafell Group.** By G. Oliver & L. J. Griffin. (F.R.C.C. Climbing Guides to the English Lake District, 4th series. Edited by J. Wilkinson. 21s.).

As editor of the Lakeland Guides produced from the 'thirties' until the present series, H. M. Kelly set a standard of precision, simplicity of language and reliability which was a model for the generation. John Wilkinson has retained this approach in all its essentials but has imposed his own ideas of what this generation of climbers needs. The result in each of these first two guides in the new series is an attractive yet obviously workmanlike volume with its plastic cover in mauve or red, bold, easily read print and a style which somehow conveys enthusiasm as well as matter-of-fact information. The illustrations are of the same high standard as the text, as one would expect with Heaton Cooper once again at work here. It is also good to see tribute paid to those who have made great contributions to Lakeland climbing such as Arthur Dolphin, one of the most brilliant and self-effacing of British climbers, who introduced a new standard of climbing in these two areas in particular. Robin Smith, to our pleasure, is given special credit for his own important discoveries on Scafell during stolen visits at weekends.

An important innovation is a new system of classification which subdivides the old grades from 'Difficult' onwards and adds the grading 'Extremely Severe' for the very hardest climbs. This kind of treatment has obviously been needed for some time. Without it, the two new guides would contain very nearly 200 routes within the old grade of 'Very Severe' and such routes as Moss Ledge Direct and Ichabod on Scafell would appear in the same grade instead of, as now, being grouped in the 'Very Severe (mild)' and 'Extremely Severe' categories respectively. Amid all the exactness of definition and restrained use of language there appear in both guides some delightfully descriptive expressions—Gimmer Crack is 'comfortably, old-fashioned,' Phoenix on the East Buttress of Scafell 'of awe-inspiring steepness.' I can only agree with both expressions having relaxed many times in seeming security in the Crack and having only gazed with undoubted awe at the wall on which Phoenix lies. Another innovation is the list of climbs recommended to visitors new to the district. In each area the choice made is varied and should be really helpful to the party sampling Lakeland climbing for the first time.

Great Langdale provides about as good an area as any in Britain where, within just a few square miles, one can find a whole range of small to medium-sized crags of great interest and mostly so accessible that it is easy to climb on several on the same day. This very accessibility has produced a spate of worthwhile new climbs, most of them really hard ones, and this new guide at last makes this richness of material available to the climber. The author, Alan Austin, has also ensured that in Pavey Ark there is a crag of real mountain character with a network of technically exacting routes on it. Those in any doubt may be convinced if they sample Astra or indeed any of Austin's routes.

A look at the Scafell guide, if nothing else, explains and amply justifies Joe Griffin's frequent excursions across the Border. Scafell contains the

finest concentration of Lakeland climbing and Oliver and Griffin have done full justice to it. Now at last we have complete descriptions of two of Britain's most serious and exciting climbing grounds, the East Buttress of Scafell and Esk Buttress; while the main crags of Scafell appear to have undergone a revolution to judge by the description of Central Buttress, still 'Very Severe (Hard)' as 'certainly the most popular route on the mountain.'

Both these guides are compulsory reading for those who wish to enjoy in anticipation, or in retrospect, the delights perhaps of treading gently up the Pinnacle Face of Scafell on a summer evening or of grappling fiercely with the overhangs of White Ghyll, when the rain comes down with Scottish force. They will be no less useful on the crags themselves.

J.W.C.

Borrowdale. By P. J. Nunn & O. Woolcock. **Pillar Group.** By A. G. Cram. **Dow Crag Area.** By D. Miller. (F.R.C.C. Climbing Guides to the English Lake District, 4th series. Edited by J. Wilkinson. 21s.).

Little need be added to J.W.C.'s remarks above: these new guides continue the very high standard of accuracy, depiction and presentation of the first two guides of this new series. Neither our own guides nor those of the C.C. surpass them in quality.

R.N.C.

Two Voices. By J. K. Annand. (M. MacDonald, Edinburgh. 7s. 6d.).

One was of the sea, one of the mountains, said Wordsworth, and these two aspects of Nature have inspired our member, J. K. Annand to write the Scots poems which, threaded together, make up the impressive long poem which he has now given us in book form. Annand is at home in his subject matter and at home in the Scots language and the result is very much one voice, telling us of his life-long love affair with the Scottish hills and of his experiences in the Navy during the War in the grim business of convoying in Northern waters, the two themes being conceived as bound up in his Norse ancestry.

He writes with verve and gusto in a no-nonsense canon of Scots that is based on his knowledge of the spoken tongue, not quarried from a dictionary. The result is easy to follow and at its best can rise to heights of great eloquence. This is not a book from which to quote isolated felicities, its strength deriving from the cumulative effect of a sustained imaginative effort.

Two Voices should delight every Scottish mountaineer. Many of us must have felt but been unable to express the ideas that emerge excitingly from these pages. But above all, the sheer enjoyment of climbing comes through again and again.

D.J.F.

Mountain Rescue. Various authors. (1968; H.M.S.O. 178 pp. 74 illustrations. 12s. 6d.).

This, the training manual for R.A.F. Mountain Rescue teams, is much more than an account of modern rescue methods: it is best described as a standard instructional textbook plus detailed information on first aid, mountain communications, search and rescue techniques and sundry other matters, mostly connected with the training and deployment of rescue teams. As textbooks go, it is an exceptionally good one, second only to Blackshaw's; the section on snow and ice climbing is particularly good, although, as usual, glissading is condoned. Most sections of the book are enlivened by humorous cartoons by Don Aldridge, which illustrate the subtler technical points in a memorable way.

R.N.C.

The Book of Rock-climbing. By Walt Unsworth. (1968; Arthur Barker. 112 pp. 44 illustrations. 25s.).

Another textbook, this one for the beginning rock-climber. One feels that it is a bit redundant, adding little to the appropriate sections of Blackshaw's *Mountaineering*. It deals in a straightforward way with most aspects of rock-climbing, with the emphasis, as usual, on proper use of equipment. Like most such books, only one chapter is devoted to the heart of the matter—getting from A to B, although perhaps this, like riding bicycles, is simply something that cannot be learnt from books.

R.N.C.

The Climber's Bedside Book. By Showell Styles. (1968; Faber. 256 pp. 28s.).

In this book Styles has presented several of the good chestnuts of mountaineering literature, and has padded it with abbreviated biographies of Fifty Names Famous in Mountaineering and One Hundred Notable Mountains. The object of this exercise is to provide a volume which will entertain, stimulate or inform The Climber before he rolls over for his presumably well-earned rest.

The author has not just reproduced the tales but has re-written them in his own prose. The resulting lack of immediacy in his translations of the deeds of others must necessarily resemble journalism; it is a risk which he has been prepared to take, balancing the second-hand nature of this journalistic jumble sale by the quality of the goods. He need not search for an excuse as tenuous as that which he has chosen, as most of the stories need none for their reproduction.

Of interest to Scottish readers, or dozers, kippers, etc., Slessor spoils the air again on p.39, and Murray, our 'modern hard-climbing expert,' is used as evidence that even today one can see an angel on every pitch (p.82, *The Dream of Eternity*). Other sleep inducers are the Herzog story and the Toni-Kurz-on-the-Eiger one. Two very interesting ones are 'The Conquest of Mac' and 'Prisoners Dream,' the former being about a unique first ascent by gambling backwoodsman of McKinley, and the latter a touching account of an ascent of Kilimanjaro by Italian prisoners of war in Kenya. I found the list of names rather antiquated, and the list of mountains could well be replaced with more stories. I cannot remember the last time I settled that 'drowsy argument between sleeping bag and sleeping bag' by consulting an encyclopedia—mountaineering, sexual, or otherwise.

It's a pleasant enough little book, all told, and I think it would make a good primer for beginners, especially with a bibliography whose contents should be prescribed reading for most of us. As a device to fulfil the original requirement? Well, as Mr Styles so rightly states, 'It depends, of course, on the mountaineer and the bedside.'

I.G.R.

Selected Climbs in the Pennine Alps Vols. I (37s. 6d.) & II (28s.). Edited by R. G. Collomb. **Selected Climbs in the Bernese Alps.** (32s. 6d.). Edited by R. G. Collomb. (1968; Alpine Club Guidebooks. General Editor, E. A. Wrangham). **Bregaglia West.** (16s.). Edited by R. G. Collomb & P. Crew. **Bernina Alps.** (30s.). Edited by R. G. Collomb & J. Talbot. **Graians West.** (25s.). Edited by R. G. Collomb. **Engelhörner and Salbitschjen.** (25s.). Edited by J. Talbot. **Maritime Alps.** (25s.). Edited by R. G. Collomb (1967-8; West Col Alpine Guides. General Editor, P. Crew).

Such a vast flood of new guides cannot be reviewed now in detail. When the flood dries up, we shall attempt it. For the moment a few general remarks.

The format of all is essentially the same; only durability, quality of paper and amount of photography distinguish the more expensive Alpine Club series from the West Col series. All guides constitute selections from Continental guidebooks and thus suffer certain limitations. But they do answer a now-critical need. The current concentration of British climbers on Mont Blanc will at last be diluted. No Scotsman worth his salt could read Collomb's Bernese Alps without wishing himself up the great icy north walls of that group. Reading this guide one wonders how Willy Welzenbach's magnificent achievements in this region have received such scant recognition in the English-language mountaineering literature.

A general point of criticism which applies across the entire series: why no maps? The guides are unreadable without one, unless one knows the area well.
R.N.C.

The Mountain World, 1966/67. English version edited by Malcolm Barnes. (1968; S.F.A.R. and Allen & Unwin. 224 pp., 56 plates, many maps. 50s.).

Production and photographs as outstanding as ever. Starts forcibly with Haston on the winter Eiger, the ethics pondered by Schwarzenbach. Among the wide range of articles are three on the Hindu Kush, a Russian report on Khan Tengri, several Himalayan accounts including the Indian one, two on Bhutan, Amshetz interested by—and misidentifying—Mt. Kenya, Germans in the Staunings, 1966, and a chronological table of Greenland ascents, Slesser and Minchetti on Brazil, the Cordillera Blanca, the less exciting but equally fascinating cones and rarefied deserts of the Southern Puna de Atacama (with prehistoric cellars at 5000 m.—some were over 6700 m.!)—eerily unexplored by this generation—and a fine article on U.S. ascents on the highest Antarctica peaks, 500 miles from the pole. It concludes with a list of height 'records'—that remarkable self-effacing Scot, Dr A. M. Kellas, with only two porters (*no* guides), climbed Pauhunri, 7128 m., shortly after Longstaff, with the Brocherels and a porter, climbed the better-known Trisul (7120 m.), and this record stood 17 years until 1928 (Pik Lenin, 7134 m.).

G.J.D.

The Cairngorms. By Sir Henry Alexander; 4th Edition, major revision by Dr Adam Watson and others. (1968; Scottish Mountaineering Trust, Edinburgh. 250 pp., 32 photographs, coloured map. 40s.). **The Central Highlands.** Edited by Campbell R. Steven. (1968; Scottish Mountaineering Trust, Edinburgh. 190 pp., 32 photographs, coloured map. 38s.).

Readers of this *Journal* should need no introduction to the S.M.C. District Guides, those unique and indispensable companions to all interested in hill pursuits, sketching the history, geology and wild life of each district and dealing fully and authoritatively with its topography, access, accommodation, shelter, hill travel for foot or ski, and with selected mountaineering routes on rock, snow and ice. For long unobtainable classics, unrevised whilst the more specialised S.M.C. Rock Climbers' Guides were rolling off the Press, they are now being reissued right up-to-date, packed with new material. The two above are well-written, modishly (perhaps over-modishly) printed, and the Editors (local, district and general) and Designers (West Col Productions, the English firm) deserve great praise for getting them out so rapidly (events of 1968 are recorded); however, in the haste the photographs have been very poorly reproduced—but the printers have apologised Don't wait for a better re-printing: these volumes are compulsive and compulsory reading and, for the vast amount of information, unobtainable elsewhere, ridiculously cheap.

G.J.D.

A Periodical.—*Mountain* 1 is the continuation of *Mountain Craft*, revamped by snappy-new-editor Ken Wilson. It includes (in mercifully microscopic print) a list of notable Scottish climbs, supplied by the reviewer. Little resemblance between the published list and that submitted to Mr Wilson obtains. An incredible profusion of errors were incorporated by the staff of *Mountain* and the writer was given no opportunity, despite considerable protest, to correct these. To those many climbers whose names have been mis-spelled, misplaced or transformed I offer unreserved apology and I am sure Mr Wilson will do likewise. In addition, several fine climbs were omitted by the reviewer from this list since they fell outside its terms of reference (which terms the editor omitted to include, despite explicit instructions to that effect). The original list was designed to sample climbs in certain designated areas only (those areas being Cairngorms, Ben Nevis, Loch Laggan Area, Glencoe Area and Arran) for reasons of space, documentation and week-end accessibility from major cities. However, if required and on the understanding that no further mishaps of this sort will occur, we shall continue to give *Mountain* relevant information, hoping that by this means adequate recognition will be given to Scottish mountaineering by the magazine.

R.N.C.

Several other received books cannot be reviewed this issue because of late arrival; this includes Peter Crew's *Encyclopaedia of Mountaineering*.

Journals of Kindred Clubs.—This issue being over-large already we can only mention briefly other journals, in spite of this year's batch being of particular interest. For instance the *Alpine Journal*, 1968 (1) is Blackshaw's first issue and intriguingly different from previous ones, carrying a pome, bad words and 'bad' writing, a reprint from *Ascent* and Amatt's superb account of the N. face of Søndre Trolltind; issue (2) has Clough reconsidering the Fortress, a joke on Personality Tests for Climbers which proves to be meant seriously, Crew having enough of Cerro Torre, a plea for Norwegian hill conservation, now threatened by 'people who lack the ability to linger,' Slessor ski-ing, the Army in 'Gibbon country,' Mountain Rescue in Czechoslovakia—a highly authoritative State organisation, with hotels like 'a vast barrack block, right in the middle of the Giant Mountain plateau'; radiating out in all directions are 'tall posts placed at 10 yd. intervals to guide walkers and skiers,' yes, and fines for disobeying rules: some people want that sort of thing here—but you can't have your cake and eat it, they had over 5000 'incidents' in 1967—presumably from the barrack blocks: *that's* productivity for you; very much more to the safety point is a note on the rapid failure of fixed (synthetic) ropes in storms; the *A.J.*, after this comes out *once* a year, to save costs; we wish them the very best. The *American Alpine Journal*, 1968, is *superb*, swiftly and slickly edited, far too good to detail—ranging from terrifying Rocky Nordwandering, Chouinarding by R.R., and the 1923 ascent of the Grand Teton *sans* rope, axe and nails and with combined theatratictics including a 3-man abseil from one pair of trousers.... *Ascent*, 1968—wonderful photographs, incredible tale of Mt. McKinley S. face direct (17 days on one stormledge), excellent Chouinardia on iceclimbing (Scottish, Austrian and German methods contrasted with Swiss and French) and illustrating properly (at last) crampon technique; Pete Sinclair's brilliant exposition on harassment of climbers by the U.S. Park Service, 'which is always quick to point out that its two primary functions—to preserve the wilderness and make the wilderness available to the public are paradoxical. Almost anything can be rationalised as a sacrifice of one to accomplish the other—building roads, for example....'; climbing, he points out, is not a *special* use of wildernesses, but a normal use; we had

hoped to reprint this article (and had kind permission) but space is desperately short: it *must* be read. The *Sierra Club Bulletin* covers the last four years, spent defending the U.S. Wilderness Areas for the people against Governmental theft: more compulsory reading, unfortunately. The *New Zealand A.C. Journal*, 1968, includes a revealing account of 'British Climbing in the Alps,' a salty one of the C.A.C.'s Annual Kamp, the usual enjoyable N.Z. tales and—inevitably—conservation. The *Himalayan Journal*, 1966, includes 'The Development of Mountaineering in the Hindu Kush.'

G.J.D., R.N.C.

Other Journals received with thanks, whose reviews have been cut off to tailor the page, are: *Appalachia*, 1968; *The Mountain Club of South Africa Journal*, 1968; *Canadian Alpine Club Journal*, 1968; *Mountaineering*, 1968; *Polar Record*, 1968; *Sheffield University M.C.J.* 1968; *Fell and Rock C.C.J.*, 1968; *Wayfarer's Journal*, 1968; *Cambridge M.C.J.*, 1968.

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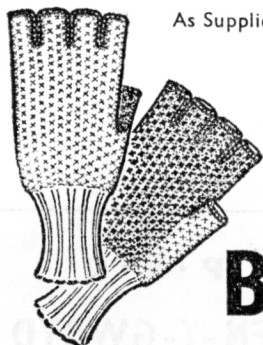
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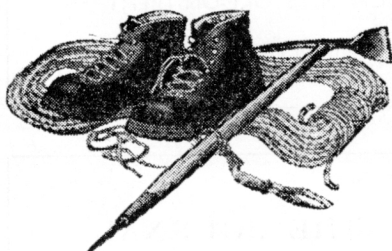
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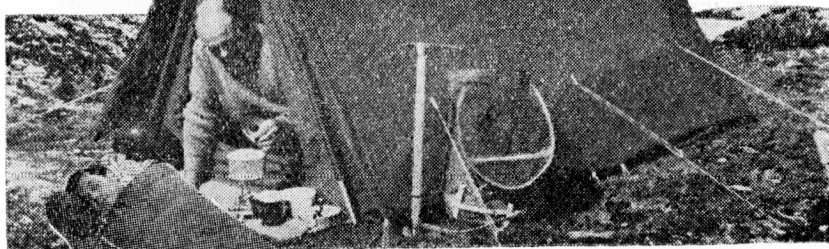
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