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Photo: J. D. B. Wilson

J. H. B. on the first ascent of the Long Climb, Ben Nevis, 1940

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EDITORIAL

A journal such as ours, now in its 85th year and containing as it does, a continuing record of the thoughts, deeds and attitudes of successive generations of Scottish mountaineers, is almost an organic thing with a life and character of its own. It is more than a collection of articles or a record of new climbs; more than an account of Club activities or a vehicle for expressing the eccentricities of Members. It embraces all of these but it is much more. Editors come and go (we are now on the 12th) and may lend something of their own character to the *Journal*; some, like Douglas, Bell or Dutton have shaped it more than most, but the *Journal* of 1976 is the same in its essential spirit as that which was so nobly embarked upon by Stott in 1891.

The Club of today is no doubt a very different socio-economic mix from that of the 1890's but the mountains are the same mountains and their effect on men is probably very similar. Certainly anyone familiar with the *Journal* through the years will appreciate the enduring and unchanging nature of the Scottish Climber in his various forms and idiosyncrasies.

Editorial sloth and the realism of the Honorary Treasurer preclude publication three times annually as was once the case—or are we just less literate today? However, we share with the *Alpine Journal* the distinction of maintaining annual publication. Perhaps the reason that we have survived while other club journals have faltered is to do with the fact that ours is not only a club journal, it is a *national* journal. Originally its article contributors were confined to the Club although even at its inception, outside contributions were invited to 'Notes and Queries, Reviews of Guide Books and Maps, Scientific Information, and, in general, everything that has a bearing upon the aims and objects of the Club.' So it is today, with the addition that articles by non members have been a feature for many years.

We trust that the *Journal* will continue in its traditional shape and purpose—to serve the interests of the Club and the Scottish climbing fraternity by dealing principally with mountaineering

matters in this country. This is not to say that accounts of High Adventure in Foreign Parts are not welcome, it is rather that we shall endeavour to concentrate on what we are best fitted to do and leave the sensational super direct ascents of exotic nordwands to the glossies which are better equipped to cover such activities. After all, Scotland offers a wealth of mountaineering subject matter for the literate deployment of Perception, Sensitivity and Wit. It is not necessary to be an historian or an hard man to contribute to the *Journal*.

On the assumption of the Editorship a matter for prime concern is the retention of the standard achieved by our predecessor. The continued success and high standing of the *Journal* is in considerable measure due to the efforts of Robin Campbell, to his skill in rounding up worthwhile contributions and in maintaining and developing the style of wit and satire so effectively set by *his* predecessor. We gratefully record here the continuing avuncular interest of both living ex editors and their useful advice in the assembly of this maiden edition.

By now you will be saying 'What pomposity! What are we in for from this stuffed shirt, who pays dull compliments instead of insults?' Fortunately, there are safeguards. Flanking the Editorial Chair are the figures of Iain Smart as Assistant Editor and Ken Crocket as New Climbs Editor, the one an iconoclast and the other a confirmed cynic. Both have applied valuable correctives in the compilation of this issue. We express the hope that in due time the team can be expanded until the Editor is able to remain securely at Base Camp while directing his colleagues as they tackle all the difficult pitches up above.

WINTER DREAMS

By K. V. Crocket

ORION: *Late M.E.—One of the Giants of Greek mythology, a mighty hunter.*

ONE of the more evocative sights on a late autumn evening, as twilight falls silent and low mist gathers, is that of the constellation Orion lifting into view. To the city dweller, gazing with beer-blinkered eyes through a canopy of haze and mercury arc lamps, this sight is usually dimmed, if visible at all, but go a few miles out and the distant suns take on a sparkle and colour very different. The appearance of Orion, along with longer nights and a certain bite in the air, points to the imminent arrival of winter, and with that, the esoteric and elusive snow and ice game. Orion is also the label on the best winter route in Scotland.

Back in '74, Stead and I had reversed the first three pitches of Slav route in poor conditions, thinking we'd started up the Orion Direct. This doesn't say much for our route-finding abilities, but then most of the features were buried. Walking down past the dam that same night, the constellation Orion hung in the clear sky above the summit, but it didn't mock, it shone.

The end of winter '74 saw me missing a chance at the face in good conditions, preferring that hardest and most soulful of winter routes, the Aonach Eagach by moonlight (without the Kingshouse).

And so to '75. My big boots were almost knackered and my climbing became more and more frenzied as I tried to extract every last stitch and hook. Finally I took a week's holiday on the Ben with Chris, still climbing happily with me despite past routes. The week started very cold and stayed cold. Saturday and Sunday we did 3 Gully Buttress, both days. Monday I felt like a change of route. The Ben was in a funny mood; soft snow and hard water ice. I wasn't sure whether I was fit enough or not, the cold was stupefying. I had almost written off the face for another year when Fate, in size 10 boots, stepped up in the guise of Ronnie Richards. Now Ronnie was training for Everest and looking for a sparring partner, I was fairly quick on my feet and thought I could last the distance, with encouragement, so we agreed to face up the next day. Chris was understandably happy to look for something else with Mike Coleman, who'd done everything hard anyway.

Monday saw me wheezing my way past Tower Ridge with Ronnie up in front. He was bigger and stronger so I'd let him run on to break steps. An amused shout from the hut informed me that my renegade helmet was still abed, and I cursed my way back down. It

was tempting to rely on a hard skull and luck, but the previous day an English rope had lost a couple of teeth to a shard of ice, and vanity precluded that option. I retraced my steps and reached the foot of the cliffs, where Ronnie was flogging the slopes with measured and calculated flicks of the rope.

I must have remembered a description from somewhere, for a warning bell rang in my head. Seconds out, I thought, and bagged the first option. This led up and right by easy snow to a duff belay, the first of many. Ronnie led through the second round, bridging up a groove with hard ice and old holds, a good memory being useful as you couldn't see your feet for bulges. I punched on out and left, catwalking along a ramp and pulling round an edge into a splash of blood. I did a quick cast around for teeth (there might have been gold), but, disappointed, continued to an exposed rib. A curious mantelshelf out right indicated half a pitch of pleasant if featureless slab padding to the Basin, but I was fooled again and took an indifferent belay halfway up the slab, and it was Ronnie who gained the Basin.

Looking down on me entering the Basin, he was burbling away about the snowfields on the Eiger, but I was quite happy where I was. The Basin was aptly named, and I escaped via the slippery boiler plates at the top, traversed along the rim a bit, then broke through a steep snow arête to gain the bounding wall on the right. This pleased me twice over: I had a good belay, and Ronnie had the slab traverse. At this point I broke out lunch and we exchanged pleasantries, but it was his turn to lead and I won. Besides, I had the camera.

It was more wall than slab, with holds leading flatly up and right to icy ledges and a problematical finish. Ronnie sounded dubious, but I felt he was just flattering me and pushed him on, pointing out runners and rests and so on. I lengthened the belay to watch the action and take photographs (and I needed a high shutter speed). I nearly dropped the camera when, twenty feet or so out, he stopped and looking back with a grin asked me if I wanted a photo. This occurred twice more before he demolished the pitch, pulling over a wall at the top to belay out of sight above. I took this pitch seriously, as the ice was too thin for the picks to bite and it had to be climbed in balance. Additionally, a voice from above informed me not to test the belay as there wasn't.

Although it wasn't particularly hard, we felt some slight relief at passing this pitch and reaching more orthodox ground. The climbing immediately following the traverse gave the greatest enjoyment of the day; sustained pitches of IV, no one move standing out as hard, no move easy enough to ignore, no protection, beautiful route finding up parallel grooves, round corners and edges, hard ice all the way and no hanging about.

The smaller snow basin was reached and immediately christened the White Spider. It was my turn to be Fly, and I slid the exit lines about like abacus beads, finally selecting a likely candidate in a steep gully at the left end. A solid peg runner at the foot induced further progress, and I pointed over a bulge into the gully. It was more chimney than gully, blocked by an overhang, but that wasn't my problem, and belaying in a bridging position to a tied off screw and a duff peg I brought Ronnie up. The mist, which had been down since the slab traverse, was swept away, and looking down from this insecure perch I could see Observatory Ridge impossibly far below.

Above was also impossible, but Ronnie traversed right under the overhang, points bouncing off the hard ice, to gain a fat rib of ice. We'd been going like trains for five hours or so, apart from five minutes for lunch, and the sustained nature of the climbing was beginning to tell on our concentration.

Ronnie bored his way up the rib, stabbing it to death in the modern vein, while I idly calculated the horizontal resistance of a half in screw . . . a shout from above broke into my day dreams and I dismantled my web. The key had been turned I guessed, it's time for the tumblers to fall. Ronnie was much too wise for the mountain, though, and several footholds marked useful resting places. We both felt the fun was just about over.

He looked delighted as I joined him, and following his gaze I saw the plateau edge and grinned back. We climbed the easy final snow slope with almost comical care and broke onto the horizontal.

'Great route' we agreed, and shook hands. To complete our pleasure, Chris and Mike appeared, having done two routes. Chris was shaking his head.

'See that Mike? He's done everything!'

We were all happy.

GARDYLOO—*Pseudo Fr. for garde l'eau. An old Edinburgh cry before throwing slops, etc. from the windows into the streets.*

I lowered my forehead until it rested on the wet ice and felt real despair. My left foot gave another heart-seizing lurch, front points slicing down the skin of wet snow ice and grazing the water ice beneath. Thirty feet up the second pitch of Gardyloo Buttress, with the belay out of sight below an overhang. Further down, Observatory Gully paused above Tower Scoop then plunged without a break into the Allt 'a Mhuilinn. The trap had not only been sprung, it was well oiled too.

Chris and myself hadn't emerged from our cocoons until nine, to find a beautifully clear but abysmally warm day. We'd followed the

tiresome trail up Observatory Gully, grateful for steps in the deep snow, and cramped up at the foot of Tower Scoop, where avalanches had bared the cold, hard heart of the gully bed. There I compared the twin lures of Indicator Wall and Gardyloo Buttress, both as innocuous as a double barrelled shotgun, before deciding to go for the classic, which is seldom in condition.

Here a word about my hapless companion. A recent arrival on the scene, his scanty knowledge of the Scottish winter arena was based on an implicit faith in both his gold coloured crampons and myself, though the latter was soon to weaken.

The first pitch led steeply in one and a half hours up switch-backing grooves and bulges to an icicled hollow 160 ft. above the foot of the buttress. My belay here didn't fool anyone; a dead man at my feet, a nut jammed in the ice, a screw which didn't, and had to be persuaded to every so often.

From below this bolt-hole, Smith had gone on a long doddle left, then back right and up a steep wall, but on closer inspection, the logical line was the steep ramp above the hollow, gained by an overhanging icicle and topped by the inevitable bulge. At the time it looked easier too.

The overhang took half an hour to fall, a cunning thread runner being excavated in the ice, and also used as a hand-jam before pulling over the bulge and onto the ramp. I wrung out my gloves and surveyed the scene. The ramp was a typical Nevis corner; blank right wall leaning over a slabby left, both pushing you gently off into space, and all steeper than suggested from below. Reaching down to the lip of the overhang I pulled out a screw runner, thinking it would be more useful higher up the pitch and make it easier for Chris to follow. And so to despair. Twenty feet further on I found myself committed on rapidly deteriorating ice, two or three inches of wet snow ice concealing water ice, which plated off when struck . . .

Chris's disembodied voice came floating up from space below, he sounded worried. I was worried too. There were several teams sprauchled out along the Great Tower, they sounded worried as well. I looked down and worked out the line of fall, this is a bad habit of mine. The thread runner was all that was between us and a long whoopee down Observatory Gully, and who knows the strength of a wet icicle?

Thirty feet remained to the bulge. My calves ached with the strain of continuous front pointing and my forearms burned from hanging onto the picks. I had a few quiet words with myself and continued the struggle. The next twenty feet took over an hour, climbed almost entirely on the left foot and pick, the ice in the corner itself being too soft to rely on. The pick had to be used gently, yet hard enough to break the water ice. The left foot would then come gingerly up and kick a dimple in the ice. Even at

the best of times I'm amused at the advice given in certain quarters to 'tap the front points gently in and step up.' This normally results in skinned knees and a dangle from the picks. Today I would have died laughing. I too would have screwed my courage to a sticking place, but it wasn't freezing. I felt very lonely at this point.

Moving in spasmodic lurches, the ropes inched up until I was under the bulge. This far, my sole consolation was in knowing that Chris, unable to see anything and tied onto rubbish, must have been just as gripped. The bulge, fortunately, was a bit of an imposter, and I was even able to manufacture another icicle runner. I rested here and wrung out my gloves again. The final move demanded a high step up for the left foot, and I fractured some ice to provide a catch for the crampon points. (At least today was an advance on my last weekend on Nevis, when I discovered I had left my crampons at home). A last rest, a warning shout to Chris, and I pulled myself over the top with a scream of relief and delight.

Even a dead man belay in soft snow couldn't dampen my spirits. Chris followed superbly, as he had on the first pitch, as indeed he had to, not committing the error of rushing at the ice. He rolled over the bulge shaking his head.

'You're mad,' he said. I took this as a compliment.

The third pitch led up the runnel which drained the upper rocks, and was truly enjoyable after the rigours below. The rope, naturally, expired twenty feet below the cornice, and Chris led on past into the warm sun. On top we solemnly shook hands, an emotional event which indicated an eventful ascent, and I compounded this view by dancing about gleefully shouting such nonsense as:

'Gardyloo Buttress!' and,

'Smith Lives!'

But Hell, I thought, I was entitled to.

And that night it froze.

RAVEN—O.E.:—A widely distributed corvine bird . . . which feeds chiefly on carrion or other flesh.

We paused by a midden heap at the bad end of Argyle Street and rescued John from his flat. He was alone, the rats probably got his mate during the night. That made three of us, Ian being the third man, but we went on anyway, with a stop to gape at Loch Tulla which we won't in a few years when the damned trees grow . . .

Cruising past Jacksonville, the habitual neckcrane up Great Gully produced the astonishing sight of Raven's Gully apparently in condition. Ian and myself became quiet and thoughtful, John very quiet and pale. We reassured him, told him about the short pitches,

the five star belays (the two star company), no bother at all with so much daylight about (and I remembered the three previous attempts, the first ending in a spectacular backward somersault off the summer crux).

Cramming the sacs with much gear though too few goodies I discovered I was helmetless, but once in Raven's you've got blinkers on anyway, so I made do with an undersized balaclava, moulded (as it were), from the bed of my rucsac, and hideous safety orange so never worn. Throughout the day this insisted on popping off my head at the most awkward of moments.

We scabbled up North Buttress, sidled across icy slabs, and dreeped down into Great Cully, that chop route to beat all. This we rushed up, cramping over frozen avalanches, hidden burns and waiting crevasses, to enter Raven's with relief.

As was traditional, we soloed the first pitch, finishing up a loose overhang below the big chockstone. The small cave here is too familiar, and I belayed in five minutes flat, greeting Ian with a wide grin.

'What are you so happy about?' he asked.

'I'm belayed,' came the smug reply. He attacked the chockstone with a resigned, if not condemned, sigh.

For a stone which has seen so much action and had so much abuse hurled at it, the cube of rock above remained as innocent looking and impassive as ever. It pressed down heavily on Ian, but John had gained the cave by now, and light humour and wit buoyed it up.

Climbing as a threesome gives a fun day—for the two at the bottom. The leader's progress is given a running commentary, his style criticised, mistakes analysed and worries howled down. We were disappointed with Ian. He smoothed up the pitch without pegs, defying gravity with two nuts and a sling from a jammed pick. As he belayed above the rock his runners tinkled at our feet. There was consternation in the ranks until I remembered rope loops. Even then, things didn't go according to plan as the rope came snaking down, my rope. I warned John about putting crampon points through the rope, and promptly fell off the stance as my weight came on the rope. Anyway, I pulled, Ian pulled, we pulled all three, and soon we were joined in happy confusion above the chockstone.

'This is your pitch, John,' we chorused, 'this' being twenty feet of soft deep snow leading to the next cave. He took it bravely though, and ploughed on like a bull after china.

We gathered again and looked round in awe; towards the heart of the mountain was an icy cavern, dark and gloomy with facets of moss shining green through verglas, crystalline life, while straight out there were only verticals. Above, high above, was the sky, blue no longer.

Over our heads, just out of reach, was an intermediate chockstone (discerning readers might deduce that Raven's is composed entirely of chockstones; perhaps someone, someday, will pull out the keystone . . .). This was supposed to be lassoed, but the days of the Wild West were over, and I placed honest back to gully wall and walked up. A few moves above the jammed block was an abandoned krab on a peg. This was the second item of gear we'd found in the gully, and we suspected that someone had recently gone 'doon the watter.' I was nonetheless grateful for this runner, as the following moves were hard and poorly protected.

The left flank was a Slime Wall in miniature; grooves and corners but no holds, while the right was formed by the inevitable, enigmatic chockstone, giving away nothing. The thin crack in the corner was blind and my pegs bounced out cheerfully. I humbly battered in a favourite nut (as a sacrifice), and listened to the terriers yapping at my heels. One is sympathy and two is discord, I thought. The picks were useless in the soft snow at the bulge so it had to be old fashioned; an elbow bend in a hole above, and a right knee grinding away at the slope on the right. So much for style. A move later both knees were bent in supplication—back to the primitive, arms burning, lungs rasping. A teeth gritting session and a heave saw me over the bad bit, and thirty feet of hand jamming in deep rubbish found me cowering in a deep cave.

We decided it was time for John's debut, and prodded him into the fore. He poised on a springboard of snow and stepped up onto a wall, to crash back down again onto the belay. The backup team convulsed with laughter, and I'm convinced that for an instant the gully walls dilated and contracted in silent mirth. John very properly ignored all this, and finished the pitch in good style, belaying at what proved to be the gully junction.

The right fork continued under a giant chockstone, but we were bent on a winter route and belayed further left, Ian and John handing me a long leash to wander about at will. This gave me one of the most beautiful sights I've yet seen in winter. Rummaging about in the right fork I mantelshelved over a wall, to find myself at the mouth of a beckoning cavern. (At this point Ian was leading the penultimate pitch, and John was dropping his glasses down a crevasse).

I entered the cavern wide eyed, and found myself in a crystal world. The side walls and roof were encased in ice, and shone dully, while the far wall was a tiny, stepped waterfall, frozen in silent motion. This swept up at the bottom to form a slippery glass carpet. The ice had grown small spheres of a milky lustre, and the whole resembled an overturned barrowload of crystalline, frozen grapes. Ravens sometimes collect beautiful, shiny objects for their nests, I recalled, and left the shrine strangely moved.

I re-entered the gully to find a thaw upon us and gentle snow falling. John had struck lucky lower down the gully, and produced his glasses from a rabbit hole with a magician-like flourish. Above, Ian was alternately girning about the difficulties and chortling over the quality. The gully fanned out here, and we followed frozen turf, snow ice and loose snow in a corner to a peg belay below the last pitch.

It was fast becoming gloomy now, and the atmosphere was thickening from the impressive to the malevolent, with the occasional spicing of snow. I set off into the gloom, delighted to find still-frozen turf and snow ice. This was winter climbing as it should be; mixed ground, turf, snow, occasional rock holds.

A hundred feet out a ledge was gained, and I traversed right to the final chockstone. This was the Raven's last stab. Diggings revealed a complete lack of holds in an undercut, flaring crack, and I had fed a sling and my newly-won krab into the slot before giving up on protection. Spindrift began teasing from above, and the baying pack below were becoming restless. A left leg and arm were jammed in the slot and vague swimming motions with the right limbs produced some progress. More spindrift. More strokes. Finally, as the insults and complaints from below reached a crescendo, I toppled over into the caressing snows above, spent.

Revenge took the form of a long time spent belaying, and I may have (inadvertently) sent down a lot of snow. John came into view first, cold and half blind from snow covered glasses, and I sent him on to find a belay. Ian followed, unimpressed by my babblings, but a wave of snow produced a satisfying squawk, before the nestlings were safely united.

The snow slope above, a traverse down and right, and the wheel had gone full circle back to Great Gully.

'Quite a day,' Ian remarked through the murk. Aye, I thought, must be desperate in summer. John was still very quiet but not so pale.

SAGA IN THE SUN

By Ted Maden

DURING spring in the northwest I met up with the Phenomenon, and for three perfect days we climbed tall, classic rock climbs up tall Torridonian cliffs, followed by long walks over sunset hills and down into the gloaming. Then the Phenomenon strode forty miles with all his gear into the Promised Land, while I hesitated on the brink. For I sensed from the weather and his silences and the odd purposeful remark that a Saga was about to be enacted upon the Big Crag above the Fair Loch, and I was not at all sure that I was in the mood for Sagas. The necessary impetus came from another brilliant afternoon and some tangential thinking about getting fit for the Alps, a ridiculous notion as I had not been to the Alps for years, and what is more I still haven't. Nevertheless a frenzied car journey brought me in late afternoon sunshine to the start of the walk into the Promised Land; a ten mile walk, not the forty mile one.

The moor was brown but spring was all around, from tiny yellow primroses to the quality of light that bathed the distant hills. Across a spur there unfurled a breathtaking view, down onto a little lochan, out across the broad basin where blue shadows were lengthening, to the ring of peaks that encircles the head of the Fair Loch, flooded with evening sunlight. Along the long, easy reaches of the stalkers' path the sun went down and dusk deepened. At the barn the thinnest of deep red lines marked the horizon and the night above was brilliant with stars.

Flickering light from the flames of a fire illuminated the faces of the faithful; the Phenomenon, powerful, grey-bearded, bespectacled presiding over the brews; the Pioneer, intent in conversation, which was interspersed at intervals by fiendish laughter; the Hard Team, a mixed doubles pair of considerable ability; and various other teams.

'It's early for you, Ted. Don't you usually arrive at five in the morning?'

'Nonsense, that was only once.' (Well, twice anyway).

'Have a brew. No, we haven't done much yet.'

Seemed they had not done anything desperate. No point in making plans. Let that wait till morning; squeeze in by the fire.

Next morning the teams set forth with firm plans and faces. The Phenomenon and I strolled open-endedly up to the base of the Big south-facing Crag, there to beat around and seek for inspiration. In due course we discovered a way up an incipient ramp past a big wobbly block into a gneiss black scar, which led steeply up on

surprise holds and eventually out above a black roof, and so onto easy ground up into the Central Bay of the crag. This had been a secret theory for years; it seemed a good omen.

The Central Bay was only half way up the crag, however. Above was the Upper Wall, beetling with verticality and roofs and bristling with fearsome routes, at least some of which the Phenomenon had not climbed. Slightly to the left of the most fearsome routes was a steep and impressive corner, reputedly not too difficult, its sheer left wall covered with green hair, its top arching out under a great roof to an escape onto the upper reaches of the Fair Buttress. The Phenomenon had climbed this corner several times, so I feigned pleasant surprise when he agreed to do it again. But really I was not surprised, because I knew, and he knew, that reversing the corner would be the key to the Girdle. So under the roof where all was steep we memorized the holds, precise configurations of griptight jugs on a shattered handhold fault that cut back under the roof, and tiny toeholds among green hairs on the vertical wall. This exercise accomplished, we took a trip of exhilarating exposure up the final section of the Fair Buttress, thence down for dinner and a stroll round the Dark Loch, and still we hedged and still not a word was spoken as to the true motivation underlying our studies under the roof.

Commitment came dramatically next morning. The Hard Team were supposed to be continuing to burn off the hard routes. Instead they unexpectedly announced immediate plans for the Girdle.

'You can't do *that*,' exclaimed the Phenomenon. '*We're* doing the Girdle.'

He grabbed me and the Pioneer, the three of us grabbed ropes and gear and proceeded in disarray around to the left of the crag where the start of the Girdle should be.

The Big Crag invites a girdle traverse from middle left to top right, starting arbitrarily in an indeterminate area below which we now stood, then gaining and crossing a high zone of slabs to the upper reaches of the central Fair Buttress, quitting this down yesterday's corner beneath the big roof, and so onto the climax, a rising traverse of the beetling Upper Wall.

An upstanding rock finger, conspicuous in this indeterminate area, marked one of the Pioneer's early climbs and seemed to point the way. Reaching this involved gripping solo moves up slabs and twigs of heather, the Phenomenon throwing top ropes to his weaker team mates. At the rock finger the Pioneer became helpfully ambiguous as to the line of that early climb. Seizing an opportunity to seem bold, I led fifty feet up a steep groove to a sort of belay and a full stop. The Pioneer followed, vagueness merging into total non-recall. This was Not the Route. The Phenomenon was not easily deterred, however, and from the belay moved slightly down

and slightly right, then mostly straight up a Purple Wall of intimidating steepness and lack of protection. High above his last runner he was heard to mutter,

'There's GOT to be jugs.'

I watched the ropes and my sleeves and gloves and belays and most of all the whites of the Pioneer's eyes. The pitch was topped by an innocent looking, deceptive, wicked little groove, on reaching which the Pioneer and I both bleated for tight ropes.

'Technical,' observed the Phenomenon.

We basked in sunshine on pleasant ledges, but spirits were now low. They improved after barley loaves and small fishes, however, and we began to think less about Out and more about continuing the search for the Girdle. We proceeded rightwards in brilliant sunshine, across grassy ledges, down beneath a cluster of overhangs on another of the Pioneer's climbs, out across the zone of slabs above an increasing void, up a beautiful, steep crest of firm, pockety gneiss and so onto the nose of the Fair Buttress at the point of entry into yesterday's roofed corner. All this took time, however. The sun had lost its fierceness; it was too late to continue with the second, crucial half of the Girdle. We rushed up the final section of the Fair Buttress again, the Pioneer, discoverer of this and so many other climbs hereabouts, expressing elation at the position, exposure and outlook onto the lonely, gleaming expanse of the Fair Loch far below, stretching away into the distance.

Back at the ranch, greetings from the Hard Team. Now they had done Everything. Tomorrow would be the Race for the Girdle.

Tomorrow, no Phenomenon. Sleeping bag still there, empty. I paced fretfully up and down, watching the Hard Team make their preparations, which, fortunately, were leisurely. After an hour he turned up. It seemed that he had discovered a stick which was so admirably suited for walking that, with excess energy to burn, he had taken it on a lengthy hike. He's like that.

The Hard Team commenced their attack on the Girdle by climbing the Fair Buttress from its base. The Pioneer was resting on his laurels and climbing elsewhere with pleasant company. The Phenomenon and I took the easy route into the Central Bay, then went up a steep section of the Fair Buttress to the entry into the top of the roofed corner. Such was the Hard Team's pace that they were already close on our heels, having climbed direct from the base of the crag.

Looking up at the roofed corner from below had been impressive. Staring down it with intent from above was mind-blowing. I launched diagonally downwards with much trepidation, clutching the handhold fault, searching for sketchy footholds between green hairs on the wall, fixing shaky runners to encourage the Phenomenon who must follow. From the end of the hand traverse I bridged

downwards into the confines of a narrow, bird lined chimney, then slithered down this and a slab below to a belay in another incipient chimney, which was set into the wall one hundred feet below and directly in the firing line from where the Phenomenon would start to follow. Fortunately he climbed down beautifully and threw no stones. I congratulated him, he congratulated me and all was sweetness and light—and sun. The converging walls and roofs were acting as a giant crucible to reflect and concentrate the solar rays. The Phenomenon traversed away across a slab to the right but then off route and into inexplicable difficulties. Tasty comments followed. The crucible was heating up. Eventually all was sorted and I joined him beneath the forbidding Upper Wall proper, which was to provide the climax of the Girdle.

Voices high above. Incredibly the Hard Team (remember the Hard Team?) were emerging round a corner far up and onto the left side of the Upper Wall, where all corners were vertical and capped by roofs and only the eye of faith could pick a line. They had bypassed our roofed corner entirely, keeping to the crest of the Fair Buttress until just below the top, and now a semblance of a possibility might allow them to break rightwards on very steep rock below the summit roofs to make a Traverse of the Gods. The Race for the Girdle was on.

Since yesterday's start the Phenomenon and I had led through, in a manner of speaking, though by a series of coincidences which may reflect my eye for a good belay he had generally taken the sharp end where it was sharpest. Now it was my turn, but in the heat of the sun I was beginning to wilt. Therefore the Phenomenon led powerfully up the sundrenched wall, while the Hard Team tiptoed across on nothing, high above and directly beneath the summit roofs. I followed to a point high on the Upper Wall and then went briefly into the lead and a bid for a pulpit stance some forty feet higher to the right. The pulpit offered an oasis on this sheer, sweltering wall, and, moreover, occupied a strategic position just below the only break in the continuous line of roofs. The system of roofs sloped downwards from top left to mid right, whereas the top of the cliff rose higher to the right. Thus above and to the right of the roofs was the Summit Wall of the Upper Wall, an unfrequented domain which would provide the final link in the Girdle. The pulpit was the key to the break; towards this pulpit I was heading up and right and the Hard Team were heading down and right. The Hard Team won. I tried to reach the pulpit via a steep, thin wall, but baulked, bridged widely across a huge void and suddenly round a corner into a shady niche. No belay. Rope dragging round a sharp edge. Still no easy way to the pulpit. A dangling coil of the Hard Team's rope was caused to dangle further; my rope became intertwined and in due course I was belayed on a long loop to a rock bollard some twenty feet above my stance in the

shady niche. After these manoeuvres the Phenomenon nearly swung off on a loose hold. I was glad of the good belay.

In due course we climbed to the pulpit, the Phenomenon after a detour to the right, I directly with difficulty. Then the way went through the break in the roof and across spectacular ledges. The Hard Team were now well ahead; having crossed the spectacular ledges they were finishing brilliantly by a traverse of the vertical, and I mean perpendicular, walls of the great open corner which bounds the Upper Wall on the right. By now number two on our rope was definitely crumbling, so after crossing the spectacular ledges we settled for a more modest finish than theirs, while watching their progress boggle-eyed. Nevertheless, modest was a relative term up here. The great roof of the Upper Wall, now directly beneath, cut off from sight the whole height of the Big Crag, revealing only the boulders some eight hundred feet below. Between us and the top of the crag reared the original and seldom repeated finish of an earlier climb. This provided a steep and imposing finale to the two day enactment of the Saga of the Girdle.

On top both teams basked in the sun. Idly the Phenomenon and I discussed minor improvements to our line. Some other time perhaps. For the present, total contentment. The Race for the Girdle had produced two girdles, independent of each other except for the break through the roofs, both following natural lines with epic situations. It had been the greatest visit ever to the Promised Land.

FIVE TIMES LUCKY AT BEN ALDER

By Philip Gribbon

'Of all the remote unget-at-able mountains in Scotland, Ben Alder ranks among the first.'

THIS gem, give or take a few inexactitudes, comes from W. H. Murray's classic work, *Undiscovered Scotland*. I have begun, with hindsight, to appreciate his title from a fresh viewpoint.

Ben Alder lies somewhere amidst the ranges that roll through the hinterlands of the Central Highlands. Ben Alder is 'troublesome to reach.' Choose a loch at any point of the compass: Rannoch, Laggan, Ericht or Treig. Ah yes, it's going to be a fair hike-in, but with some time, energy, ambition, and luck it should be no problem to knock off this lump, a big Munro, 'so shapelessly graceful,' ash-pale under an Empty Quarter of the skies. Just the same as any other Munro. Put it in your mind, and climb it. Nae bother!

Nonetheless Ben Alder threw an indefinable aura around its flanks. There are tall tales about the mountain. People who swam into the frigid winter waters, or strode on frost-bitten feet under the moonlight. Ben Alder, a mystery mountain, a wide land with a jinx.

In the beginning, it was a perfect weekend with the summer sun spitting out of the sky, the gorse burnishing the slopes, the trees splashed green with late spring fever, and the hills a-beckoning. What could be more desirable than a voyage up the entrenched Loch Erich to the eastern spurs of Ben Alder, camping by the canoe, and even climbing the hill, if the spirit moved us. However it didn't matter how serious, or otherwise, were our intentions, because we got no further than a wee glen in the Angus foothills, and that, my friend, is nowhere near Ben Alder. We came over the Dundee hillroad and had a brief glance over the Carse of Gowrie at the Grampian hills spread out sharply across the blue horizon, Ben-y-gloe, Vrackie, Schiehallion, and all that lot, with somewhere Ben Alder, unseen but not unseeing, unknown but not unknowing, its topmost tantalising tip thrust up derisively on a western backcloth. It was a revealing moment, but fraught with inanimate disintegration, because at the sight of our promised land the timing chain jumped joyfully off its sprocket, snarled a nest of links round the driveshaft, and in sheared delight demolished the car engine, once and for all.

Let's try again. Take him stealthily from the back, with gay abandon. We crammed into a tent on the first winter snows beside the concrete bridge near the outlet from Loch Laggan. That's miles away to the north of Ben Alder. Sure, I know that. Now. We were to travel light, to storm over the intervening hills with minimum gear. Some friends agreed to carry our food in to the bothy: some friends could have found less devious means of getting some extra grub. We made such reasonable progress towards the bealach that the dynamic hillbashers decided to take in a Munro. Soon over the bealach we were floundering in a desert of powder snow with all the lee slopes transformed to fluffed meringue pies. The woman was sinking up to her oxters; I was delving even deeper. We hit the stalker's road with relief, and saw the last roseate tinges on the dusken clouds at the same time as we saw the bothy. She thought we had made it, but I knew it was the wrong bothy. Somewhere beyond the sinuous spines of the ridges, further even than the ashen headwalls of the corries, some friends would be sitting comfortably in the other bothy, now lost for the night in a distant valley. Ben Alder had blocked us from our food. Still, Culra bothy accepted us thankfully: we had half a tart and some coffee and there was a wee rodent-ravished clump of solidified sugar on the shelf. We had been on the beds for hours when the straggling crawlers walked through the door: the hill had bashed them. On the morrow I got Geal Charn and Creag Pitridh on the scorecard; perhaps, it was

the inspirational brilliance of the successive waves of white hills a-sparkle in a sun-shimmering plaster of snow, with ne'er an icy twist of chill breath to cut the still air, or perhaps, I was hunger-struck, daft, and deranged; it could have been the sun . . .

All right, let's make a full frontal approach, and to hell with the ghosts. This time Benalder Cottage would be the right bothy, the spirits would ensure we got up at the srike of dawn.

However, we arrived too late to walk in from the hydro dam at the southern end of Loch Ericht. We had to use our tents. They were fully aerated, wind-billowed fridges, wistfully sucking in the snow; encouraging shivering submersion in the bags and discouraging disgorgement to face the winter shroud slipped across the pale hill shoulders. Bothy-bound, with the Colonel in his canoe weaving an erratic pewter-boned wake across the loch, and with the wandering walkers trudging disconsolately around the shoreline indentations, we approached the mists in Ben Alder. A curtain of drifting snow, first to mottle, then to scour, came soft-fingering through the desolation, plastering the pines, huddling the deer, burying our footsteps with silent whispers. We found the cottage in the dusk, our firewood in the dark. Our shadows hung flickering on the walls; we basked in the warmth, our thoughts roaming far and wide, no thought for the coming unknown.

Cur-rumble! Its sound was shattering and overwhelming in the deep intangible darkness of a claustrophobically confined space. It was inexplicable, indefinable, all-pervading, nebulous and unnerving. The vibrations ran to their decay out of the floorboards, each to match the awesome tremors of our unmitigated shock. Gone the quiet patterns of half sombulance, the unconscious beat of tired bodies, to be overtaken by stifled gasps, throbbing hearts, listening, waiting, wondering. Everyone suspended in disbelief, burrowing deeper to limbo within their bags, incommunicado. The tense minutes flew; the slightest creak in the rafters, a dying quiver in the fire embers, and the primitive alert signals flashed up out of our subconscious. Cluny MacPherson perched in his cage, McCook at the front door, I fitfully dozed into a lifeless dawn, awakening to a mouthful of her long silken locks, and the blown snowflakes splattering on the window panes. We never broached our reason for staying at Benalder Cottage: we knew that the highland plateau was blizzarded whiteout.

We gathered some deadwood under the swaying branches of the larch trees. We were buffeted by the squalls marching down Usige Alder. We toiled back to the cars. Oh yes, what about the poltergeist? Damn't, but hadn't the Colonel with his last indolent sleepy stretch mischievously tipped with his toes one of the unstable fire side boulder seats into a rocking, rattling spasm of damped oscillations that had shattered our slumbers? He was quite unrepentant . . .

My lack of success was becoming noticeable. We tried the same approach in early summer, but we couldn't even get through the locked gate beside Loch Rannoch. She appreciated her afternoon tea, with the rain lashing solidly across the Moor, and a shadowy electronic snowstorm bringing a glorious day on the turf at Hampden Park. We came ashore on an island paradise in the heart of the wilderness, the sunset a glimmering through the night over the ringing hills, the air scented with bluebell, birch and burning bracken. We steamed beside the fire, while herons slowly wheeled over the waters. Ben Alder was lost in the quiet reflections dancing off the dappled surface of the loch.

The mountain of the rocks and the waters was acting with a coy and hesitant reticence. The game had gone too long. Who wins?

The gates were open, Ben Alder was beckoning in the sunshine. We were sharing our fortune. We walked awash through the crunching sands, following the Culra river to the bothy. We were alone, with the mountain waiting.

Rain belts, ploughing in quick succession down the glen, raced each other on their way. Each northern ridge presented its undoubted charms for our choice and glistened silver gilt in the late summer sun. The swollen streams, free in their turmoil, rushed from the Bealach Dubh, tumbling below the purple sheen of the ling fields, and the unchastened deer browsed among the blaeberreries. We ambled, under the curses of the blackbirds, over the rocky outcrops up the Long Leachas ridge to the bleak undulations of the high plateau; we skirted the lips of Garracoires; we reached the summit of Ben Alder in the mist. Done! She had enjoyed our we dander

I had enjoyed the knowledge of the days of failure. I had had to anticipate the inevitable moment of a so-called success. The Ben Alder saga appears to be complete. I harbour still a few regrets

AN INTRODUCTION TO THE NEW WAY

By W. D. Brooker

To a confirmed traditionalist, the inexorable march of climbing technology is a disturbing and even distasteful thing. It brings a continuing pressure for change—change in the equipment one uses, the techniques one employs and even in the kind of climbing one essays. To one who was brought up to regard a nail-scrabbling, grunting thrutch up a slimy, vegetated, granitic chimney as the acme of rock climbing experience, the modern idiom does not come easily. Yet its attractions cannot be denied. I admit to some

degree of conversion. I have acquired, even purchased, a modest amount of Gear. Memory is vivid of an occasion some years ago when I was given a taste—even a large and forcible spoonful—of the light-footed Modern Way. I enjoyed it.

We had known that the next day would be a real sparkler as soon as we had emerged from the nicotine laden atmosphere of Lagan-garbh into a brilliant starry night with the puddles crunching underfoot and long ribbons of snow clearly visible against the black arrowhead of the Buchaille. At length we slept, anticipation for the morrow merged in dreams; mine of a leisurely passage along the snow clad tight-rope of the Aonach Eagach, of a day of true recreation; drenched in sunshine, carefree with photography and devoid of all harrowing moments. Such a ploy was well suited to my sober maturity and cautious disposition, to say nothing of my depressing lack of physical fitness.

Alas for mice and men! The breakfast chaos brought a concerted attack from the vigorous youth of Edinburgh. 'Leave it for your really old age,' from Bathgate. 'We'll look after you very carefully,' from Ewing. In the wisdom of lengthening teeth, Marshall knew how to produce the final temptation with 'It's only twenty minutes from the car park.' And so it was that I found myself enduring the anxieties of a journey in Marshall's car down Glen Etive toward the Trilleachan Slabs with the Aonach receding behind me.

The morning had amply fulfilled the promise of the previous night and the early sun had set the Buchaille ablaze on our right as it picked out every detail of ice gully and warm brown buttress. Loch Etive was like a mirror, shattered at its rim, as a herd of deer splashed across the shallows on our approach. By the time we were ten minutes along the path the sun was on us and it was clear that Eastertime or not, the problem was going to be one of keeping cool rather than warm. The Slabs came in view, a great plaque of pale rock stamped on the mountainside, cunningly arched above and grooved on the left with a ragged brown fringe of leafless birch trees, reminiscent of Bathgate's beard.

As we drew nearer the question as to which particular altar was to be the scene of my sacrifice was raised. Spartan Slab was too straightforward it seemed and didn't really take in the best area of the Slabs. The Long Wait was discarded as too long, I was relieved to hear. Its title had an ominously prophetic ring. Swastika was mooted as the finest route of all and eventually selected, principally I think, because they fancied it themselves. Anxiously I surveyed the cliff. It was made of colossal slabs overlapping like tiles on a roof with an occasional straggle of turf or holdness groove to break the monotony. 'They seem pretty free of vegetation, anyway,' I remarked brightly. 'Free of holds too,' said Campbell encouragingly. They showed me the line followed by Swastika. It lay up a line of grooves to the middle of a huge curving overlap which arched across

the Slabs about 200 feet up. Beyond the overhang it traversed left along The Moustache, a thin sliver of turf miraculously glued to the brink of the overlap, and then disappeared in a vast sheet of smooth granite crossed by another lesser overlap.

At a huge flat-topped boulder we organised. Campbell and Marshall went off on some ploy of their own. Bathgate undertook to look after me and Brumfitt and Ewing were to come along behind us on a separate rope. 'Where are your P.A's?', I was asked. 'I haven't any,' said I. 'I'm told they hurt the feet and anyway, I don't go in for that kind of climbing, just traditional stuff.' They looked at me with mingled disdain and incredulity. P.A's, it appeared, were not merely fashionable but essential on the Trilleachan Slabs. Being neither a purist nor proud I said I would use the rope where my boots failed me and it was left at that.

Bathgate led off up a blank rib of rock in an easy flowing style. 'I thought it went up the groove,' I called. 'Better fun out here,' was the reply, and so the tone was set for the day. I too left the groove for the slabrib and found there were just sufficient tiny wrinkles to make progress. A pitch later, a flutter of red high on the left, below the great overlap, caught my leader's eye. Spurred on by avarice he left the route again to claim his prize, a karabiner and sling abandoned no doubt by some frustrated aspirant. Leaving a runner, created by what I now know as a jammed nut, he completed a hairy traverse for 40 feet to regain the route at a piton belay under the overlap. With a regretful eye on the attractive line past a huge block directly to his belay I dutifully climbed up leftwards to the runner. In the absence of footholds my boots flat on the slab could only be held in place by clamping hard to a tiny fingerhold. The nut was wedged tight and the powerful jerk required to free it would have sent me in a pendulum across the slab. 'Sorry, Dave, I'll have to leave it,' I called, and was thankful I had when I found the only way to follow Bathgate was to diagonal across to the right using rope tension through the runner. Bathgate, who has an insatiable appetite for gear then reversed the traverse to collect his sling.

We were now below the eave of the overlap and at the crux of the climb. My apprehension began as I watched my agile partner clip into a piton runner under the overhang, reach outward and then make a prehensile swing into space up and over the lip of the roof. It grew as I saw him edge leftward for what seemed an interminable distance with his heels protruding over the rim. At length my turn came. As I unclipped the runner I was acutely aware of the hundred or more horizontal feet which separated me from Bathgate on his diminutive stance and what it could imply for me in terms of reversed parabolic motion. The route description mentioned a piton as being used above the overhang but I was derisively told that this was only for 'cream puffs.' From an undercut right hand hold my left clawed forth and found a huge quivering flake of turf. Both

hands on it next with feet just keeping contact as my body arched back. A violent effort brought my right foot up on the ledge but how to follow with the rest? Up came my left leg and the great clumsy boot snagged between right leg and the rock. Back I flopped. Once more the same thing happened and I could feel the onset of weariness as my arms began to straighten out. One final explosive convulsion and my left foot came through and with elbows now well crooked I rolled on the ledge. Like Wellington at Waterloo I knew it had been 'a damned close run thing'. In contrast, the delicate teeter along the crumbling hair line of the Moustache seemed like child's play, but I could not forbear thinking that one day the Moustache would finally give way with unfortunate results for anyone on it at the time.

There followed 150 feet of delightful slab work on massive granite seamed with thin veins of white and pink quartz affording just adequate holds for progress, in my case with the aid of little rope tension. The slab sheet was curtailed above by a lesser but still formidable overlap and bounded on the left by a wall forming a groove with the slab and cleaving its way right to the top of the cliff. At the overlap the route lay downward and to the left, round an awkward corner into the dièdre, and then by layback past the overhang to a niche above. A final out of balance shuffle brought one back on the slab to the right with easy access to a splendid turfy stance some 20 feet higher. This was a splendid pitch full of satisfying moves, both delicate and strenuous, and not nearly as exacting as it had appeared from below.

I relaxed and looked round. The day was glorious and our situation superb. Away to our right swept the pale grey slabs, drenched in sunshine. Beyond was the yellow-green trough of Glen Etive, rimmed by snow peaks whose icy summits shimmered in the calm air. Beneath us, sheets of unbroken granite plunged toward the looking-glass surface of Loch Etive. Beauty, tranquility, 'the romance' . . . shattered all too soon by sight and sound of a sweating Brumfitt as he grunted his way up the layback.

Debate ensued as to our course. The true line of Swastika continued easily enough up the huge groove but finished by a vertical pitch involving artificial climbing. In consideration of my boots, the holiday atmosphere and Bathgate's exploratory ambitions, it was decided to break out upwards and slightly right to finish by the Long Wait. The top of the crag was girdled by an imposing 60 foot wall below which lay a green haven furnished with trees and other vegetation. This was the target but to reach it a 100 foot barrier of very smooth slab had to be climbed. Bathgate proceeded to tackle the problem with his usual aplomb. The angle was not high but over two stretches there were absolutely no holds at all and he had to rely entirely upon friction, faith and the flow of encouraging comments from below as he eased his gradual way upward. After an

exemplary piece of balance climbing he gained the haven and I followed, shamelessly using the rope to reach him. My shrunken ego was slightly restored by the fact that our companions also asked for top ropes and used them on the hardest section.

The intimidating wall contained a generous crack which gave a ready breach in its facade and we were soon at the top and starting our descent. This was by a network of grassy ledges involving a hellish series of grassy slithers. At last I rejoiced in my choice of footwear!

The remainder of the day was spent indolently lying on my back watching the antics of other parties on the Slabs above. As I watched and relaxed on a warm slab, I reflected this was a real playground, a great place. My theoretical eye tried to connect up vegetated ledges and lines of weakness where a man shod in honest all-round mountaineering fashion could make his way. Nae Chance! You needed the Gear for this place alright. Still, the returns would be good and it was indeed only a very short walk from the road. There were probably other similar places. Next week, with a mixture of hope and regret, I bought P.A's. I daresay some of the hope has been fulfilled but I regret to say they still hurt the feet!

THE LONG CLIMB

By Malcolm Slesser

I was on the great slab rib of the Long Climb, and wondering why. Or to be more precise, I was at its foot, contemplating a rightward traverse over a yawning abyss, and the reality that I was supposed to climb the perpendicular rocks above. Only the fact that the rope ran upwards too, and that Bill Wallace had disappeared that way about twenty minutes earlier gave me any encouragement to continue.

My morale was admittedly low, and it was not surprising. I had been woken from a deep and rapturous slumber by the repulsive prospect of an unshaved Wallace face, proffering what passes for breakfast in his stable; sugarless coffee and bread without any marmalade at all, let alone the Oxford variety. Even the spectacle of the great golden orb hanging low over Rannoch Moor or of the midges clustered round Wallace's appetising neck, failed to raise me to good humour. With neither sugar nor marmalade, I was inclined to go back to sleep in the hope that things would be better next time I awoke. But Wallace is one of those men who prefers to pack into one day what most mortals pack into three, and I was conveyed

upon a cushion of exhortation to his car and so to Achintee. There fortunately he left me in peace, and we traversed into the Allt a Mhuillin in agreeable silence, happily avoiding the torrid sun, for it was still only 8 a.m.

I had never seen the Orion face so dry, nor so warm. Even at that hour there were warm rafts of air creating a sensation more of evening than morning. The Orion glacier was big this year, and we disappeared from sight as we wormed our way between the snow and rock, to emerge at the bottom of the cliff.

I have little recollection of the lower three pitches. It was already warm. We were lightly clad, our sacks bulging with all the bad weather gear that accompanies some members of the S.M.C. wherever they go. I had never done the route, apart from a winter ascent with Ken Bryan back in the sixties, and then we had avoided the great slab rib. But Bill Wallace is one of those people with a fine memory for the detail of climbs, and he knew exactly which pitches he was going to do, and which were to come to me. Since Bill is an excellent climber this usually means he takes the best pitches, but then, every now and again, he judges himself off form, and fixes it the other way round. Me, I just take my medicine. But I was relieved not to be leading the great slab rib, and as I now raised my eye up its improbable declivities I was obsessed with two thoughts. Had he a decent belay, and did Bell really lead this without first trying it with a rope from above? Well, of course, Bill is about as safe as they come, and so, I swung across the gap and inserted one P.A. into the vertical groove. The sensational thing about the great slab rib is not its difficulty—it is simply a hardish severe—but the fact that it goes on and on and on. What did Bell wear I wondered? Stocking soles, as was his wont, or rubbers? Surely not nails*. From time to time I came across Bill's neatly placed nuts, and wondered what Bell had used. But Bell had used nothing. He simply led the pitch without security, all 130 feet of it.

Bell had done his route thirty five years before, almost to the day. It was the culmination of a great deal of exploration on the Orion face, and readers should go back to his original article in the November 1941 *Journal* to capture some of the atmosphere of that time. First, was the selfless way he pointed out to Wedderburn, who had two Yugoslavs with him, that there was a good line just to the left of Zero Gully. They did, and it became Slav route. Bell, McPhee, Alec Small (our President), Violet Roy, George Dwyer and John Wilson all played a part. But it was Wilson and Bell who made the Long Climb on 14th June, 1940. 'We are both convinced' says Bell in his article 'that this "Long Climb" of 1480 feet is the longest and finest route of sustained difficulty on the Ben.'

*See frontispiece for the answer—Ed.

It remains the longest but is surpassed, surely, by O'Hara's Minus One Buttress. Yet the Long Climb's real joy is that it is no mere rock climb but a mountaineering route. Perhaps only three pitches are hard severe. But the route finding is demanding and for those who have no eye for a route, the climb can be both hard and dangerous.

Bill was adequately stitched on to the rock when I reached him, and my early morning mood having passed, I took pleasure in my turn to lead, till a few pitches later, I found myself pawing at some green turf, faced by a holdless wall. But such, of course, are the pleasures of climbing without a guide book, and so as one who has written two, I can never really understand why anyone buys these things for they do spoil one's sense of discovery. Back on the route, I called Bill up, and we scrambled up to the Basin, where a tiny wedge of snow helped down our lunch. The day was now hot, and we thanked our lucky stars not to be in the sun.

Above the Basin, the rocks steepen again, and though one can climb almost anywhere, at one point the lines converge on the second slab rib which is more open, and less impressive in its opening moves, but on superb rock. Bill led it. Belaying he left me to contend with the steep wall above. Finely tuned now, I delighted in this pitch, and soon we were romping to the summit.

But times have changed. Bell and Wilson doubtless debouched on to a pristine summit, upon which they were probably the sole occupants. Not so today. All the world were picnicking on the summit snow. Eschewing the marvellous view down the Lynn of Lorne, we dangled our feet over the northern edge, ate snow, and considered how lucky we were, but how much luckier were those first two, Bell and Wilson. How much better too, they must have been, than us. Hemp ropes, hardly any aids, no nuts and no P.A's. Yet their account is brief, and records no tense moments or dramatic decisions.

But then—they were truly mountain men.

We ran down the path passing three hundred and twenty-seven people.

ONCE IN A WHILE

By G. J. Dutton

Editor's Note—

In our last issue some doubt was cast upon the authenticity of the Doctor. To dispel any such question we are happy to report that he is still active—more surprisingly perhaps, he remains on good terms with our contributor who pens this account of a recent outing.

SKI ING is a vice few of us can altogether avoid. I had succumbed to temptation several times, once even tasted a polythene-wrapped package course under sardonic Continental instruction. The Apprentice, well trained by early glistades in vibrams down Twisting Gully, took to it readily. Goggle-hats and numbers fitted in well when he felt too tired for climbing or when the particular bird-in-hand leaned agreeably towards *apres ski* complaisance. Obviously our ski-tracks did not often cross. Moreover, the Doctor's performance on boards, though darkly hinted at, remained unknown to us.

One weekend, however, we did, more or less, ski together. The Apprentice's girl friend and his mini-van had both suffered mechanical failure at the last moment. Snow was flour on marble; good for ski-ing, shocking for gullies. He came to my door on the Saturday morning, disconsolately magnificent in heliographic steel-and-plastic boots, and carrying the glittering balance of a hundred pounds sterling on his shoulder. Such splendour in distress moved me to pity, though I preferred the kind of sartorial ostentation more usually displayed by The Weasels—rusted ironware and egg-hardened rags. Could I, would I, join him? But I had no car that weekend, either We thought of the Doctor, our traditional transport in emergency. We rang him up.

'Where were you off to? Glen Scree? Ha, so was I. Excellent snow I believe. Jolly good idea. Like to see how you fellows ski. You can't have been at it very long' So he met us with his old Mercedes and we strapped our planks aloft, beside a long leather canoe-like object.

At Glen Scree the fair was in full swing. We took down our skis. The Doctor unlaced the canoe and drew out a pair of huge sledge-runners, turned up fully a foot at each solid hickory toe. He laid them massively down, then extracted two long bamboo poles, ending in plate-sized wattle baskets. A large shapeless rucksack appeared on his back. As he wore his regular poacher-pocketed climbing tweeds, fishing hat, gaiters and clinkered boots he struck uncommon silence into the chromatic throng about us. Shouldering his burden and scattering lesser fry, he strode off. We had agreed to go on to the plateau, although the Apprentice, dreaming of effortless thousands of feet of Jaguar (a curiously revolting Grade II descent), remained reluctant. I followed. The Apprentice roared at us over the juke-boxes.

'You're not *climbing* up? What's the lift for?'

The Doctor smiled back benignly across an open sea of mouths.

'We can't waste time on a lift. We're late already. I told you, you should have brought your skins.' He turned, causing a travelling ripple of ducking, and marched on. I hurried after him.

When the crowd had thinned sufficiently for us to see the snow beneath us, we stopped and put on skins. The Doctor produced from his rucksack two seven-foot lengths of genuine seal skin. 'Damned fine animal it must have been,' he said reverently as he buckled the harness. 'Never let me down in twenty-five years. Tore out a big chunk on a tin the first time we did the Haute Route, and lemmings ate a bit that Lapland trip; but there's always enough left for patching.' He pulled the last thong tight and stepped aboard into great hinged and bolt-headed bindings. A pause to press his pipe; then he clanked away elk-like and I shuffled after, in unyielding contemporary footwear. No wonder the Apprentice—who would be clamped irreversibly flat to aluminium and fibreglass—preferred the chairlift.

Hoots followed us from the queue where that metallescent youth was indulging in ignoble gibes.

'Can't think how he can waste good ski-ing time—never mind money—on those antiquated sack-elevators,' remarked the Doctor, plunging upwards through a Gate. A local Beer Trophy was being run, and I scuttled alongside, ears burning.

True enough, we were quite a way up before the Apprentice reached the end of the queue. Then he whisked above us, attempting to spear the Doctor's hat with a flash of Japanese chrome steel. 'I'll get a couple of runs in while I'm waiting for you' he shouted. Wagging his glitter in triumph, he vanished into the blue. I heaved along grimly, exiguous on icy rubble. The Doctor, well ahead, elaborated on the superior rhythm of climbing in skins. 'Now even with trikes your feet would be slipping about in a place like this. Effortless with skins.' Push. Slide. Push. Slither. Slide. Push.

We climbed higher. We stopped once to reassemble a gentleman in an ankle-length cagoule and a label. My companion felt him all over, pronounced him fit as a fiddle, slapped him on the back and returned him to his erratic and billowing descent. He did not get far. 'Carrying too much sail,' observed the Doctor. Push. Slide. Push.

Nearly there. Above us an individual appeared at great speed, bent in a stiff right-angle. We paused. Ski-sticks and expression fixed unwaveringly ahead, legs wide apart, he charged past us to the enemy below. Appropriately, he was capped with a Balaclava. Our respectful resumption was momentarily interrupted by the trajectory of his Instructor, bewailing the errant lamb—'Benzeneez, benzeneez'—and cursing fluently in Austro-Glaswegian. The rest

of the flock clutched each other on the pebble-dash wall above. We agreed the slopes were busy enough for the time of year. Slither. Push. Slide. Push.

The air rarefied and I became aware of a great silence. We had topped the corrie. The upper station of the lift lay just visible on our left. No sign of the Apprentice. 'He's probably gone down again for his run,' I remarked, not without envy.

'We can't wait all day. If he doesn't come by the time I've finished waxing, he's obviously funk'd it,' said the Doctor. 'Seems to admit he needs more practice. Though I'm not at all sure we haven't beaten him. Those things are so slow.'

We had in fact beaten him, as we discovered later. At that moment, and for the next three hours, the Apprentice, blue as his boots, was dangling thirty feet above icy scree in a cold iron chair, consoled by a boisterous north wind. The drive sprocket or some such appendage had jammed. The papers made a lot of it the next day.

Meanwhile, the Doctor applied a glistening tar-like concoction, smelling of Andalsnes boat yards, to his considerable square footage. He rubbed each hull energetically with a slab of cork, explaining the eminent practicability of this composition. 'Your plastic soles'll be ripped to pieces on any really interesting bit of ground. All I need do is give another rub—just like this—and be as smooth as ever. Sure you don't want some?' I declined, but my apprehensions, always alert in the Doctor's company, shifted uneasily.

No Apprentice. 'The lad's not coming. Playing at Sliders. Even a lift can't take as long as this. Let's go.' And the Doctor poled off bonily across diamonded whiteness.

There was an uncanny lack of orange peel. There were no other tracks. The sun shone out of a cloudless sky. Miles of glistening plateau. The Doctor was moved to song, not one of his several accomplishments. I cruised behind, lulled by the more agreeable purr of powder beneath smooth plastic. Bliss.

Yes, it was a good day, although, being early January, a short one. I steered him away from the worst stretches of dragon's teeth ('nothing like rough stuff to test your technique!'). I followed gratefully his tracks, twin country lanes, through fathoms of drift. I skidded, marvelling, above his flagship manoeuvres on steep ice (gold would not have tempted me beneath them—nor within range of his poles, wielded with true Bannockburn fervour). I drank unashamedly his ice-cold wine and tea at our farthest point. 'Nothing like it; cools you and warms you at the same time. Just the thing for today. I bet *he's* slogging beer right now, hogging the fleshpots between runs. Must have done tens of thousands of feet—but *he's* young, and needs the practice. Takes a long time to learn how to ski.'

We sailed leisurely back. At times, I clattered frantically and expensively across windsawn patches of granite and heather; the Doctor did not appear to notice them, being occupied with his pipe, which was not drawing well that day ('this damned north wind'). At times, too, I narrowly escaped engulfment by the craters his baskets left among the polished windslab.

His falls, for—mercifully—he too had falls, were collapses worthy of such imperial progress. When the powder clouds had blown away, crossed limbs and hickory stood magnificent in ruin against the landscape. A grunt, then Ozymandias himself creaked and elevated out of the depths, raising himself with impossible flexions of hinge, leather and tendon. He would dust himself down, search for his pipe, and explain at length how, given that precise conjunction of dynamics and meteorology, such a fall in such a direction in such snow was quite inevitable; almost, it seemed, praiseworthy. After which, climbing over the rim of his late demonstration, he would punt away, apparently satisfied. He was, however, notably more cautious for fully three minutes after each fall, and later in the day I detected a slight limp and a recurrent reindeer like clang as if some weight-bearing machinery had come adrift in his bindings; but there seemed more than enough to spare and our speed remained respectably high on the Amundsen scale.

At last we returned to our starting point, not far from the top station. The Doctor cast anchor with both sticks, fiddled a chain or two and sprang lightly ashore. Puffing his pipe, he raised seven feet of hickory and examined below waterline, to the wonder of a small crash-hatted green-goggled urchin, Number 10.

'Hm, not bad. Picked up very few stones this time. Excellent wax. Pity I've almost finished the last barrel. Comes in drums now; not half so good.' Then he suddenly straightened up and dropped his timber, pinning beneath it the fluorescent ski-lets of Number 10. 'There he is! Just coming off the lift. For the *n*th time, I'd say. Look how he's staggering. Punch-drunk, these fellows.' The Apprentice indeed slid drunkenly towards us, skis crossed, eyes staring. He had in fact just been released from his three-hour dangle at minus five. He could not speak.

The Doctor picked up his ski, reassuringly patted the liberated Number 10, and climbed back into the cockpit. He put away his pipe and prodded the still speechless Apprentice with a monstrous basket (I was fascinated by the curved iron hook beneath it). He beamed invitingly.

'Come on, now—a race down, eh? Give us ten yards' start; remember you've been practicing all day, and we're stiff.'

He sculled furiously off, leaving black streaks on the snow.

A couple of wee smashers, preening nearby, tittered.

My leader of a hundred icy cruxes, the Apprentice is nothing if not game. He rumbled some improbable liquid nitrogen oath, rolled eyes to the sky, and hurled himself stiffly down. I followed, circumspectly. It was, after all, Jaguar.

There is a small rock island near the middle of Jaguar. The Doctor, leaning back contemplatively in a shower of ice, rode his sticks like an experienced cavalry general; a tug at the reins, and he was carried off safely leftwards, out of the fray. The Apprentice, bombing down inert and frozen, remembered too late. Jaguar struck—hard. He somersaulted several yards and continued, mercifully beyond teeth and claws, on his back, head foremost. Eventually he came to rest, against a pair of spectators. The Doctor, completing his hundred-metre flourish, sallied in on one knee, bent in a pensive Telmark. He slowed gracefully to a halt; rose, and leaned, sticks beneath chin. He looked down, Wellington from his horse. The spectators held gloved hands in silence.

'Well, well. You fellows just do too much Downhill for one day. You should take time off, sit around a bit. Chair and a nice cold beer in the sun for an hour or two. That's what I'd do if I had to stay and practice here. Not race up and down like this. You get careless. Lose control. Must keep control on a mountain, you know; otherwise, even ski ing can become dangerous.' He and the sun gleamed together, through gold-rimmed Polaroids.

The Apprentice glared up weakly. His crash hat was dented. Small blue fragments lay about him on the snow.

In the bar we grew mellow. The Apprentice was gratefully welcoming back his various joints. 'Oh, ski ing's good fun once in a while,' said the Doctor, raising his Glen Rauchle, 'but not a patch on glissading. Glissading's straightforward. Don't need all these contraptions. But mind you, one thing you do need'—he tipped back reminiscently—'you do need a good long axe.'

THE WINTER MITRE

By G. S. Strange

1974 was a good winter. Even in January there was an unusually large build up of snow above 3,000 feet and several old winter ghosts had been laid. By early March the snow and ice had again retreated to its shadowy haunts. It looked as if the season was going to fade out quietly. On a rather inebriated Thursday evening following four tedious days of examinations I met Dennis. He informed me that there had been a great blizzard on the hill and that a few days earlier he had been unable to go beyond Allt na-Guibhsaich. Certainly the Silver City had been noticeably tarnished for over a week by a freezing haar. I wondered what the high corries would be like. Dennis is always keen for a day in the mountains so we arranged to meet and lay a plot that Saturday evening.

The weather was unchanged as we drove up Deeside. We abandoned the Beetle just past Invercauld House and set off into the mirk of Glen Slugain. We first encountered the snow beyond the avenue of pines and from there it was a slushy thrash in the wake of some unknown team. The Howff is a damp place at the best of times; but with bodies, stoves, and candles inside and a foot of thawing snow outside it is particularly so. Fortunately the unknown team was both friendly and willing to make room for us. It was then simply a matter of choosing a space with a tolerable rate of condensation drip. While we brewed up the lads were telling us amazing stories about their day sun trapping in Coire na Ciche. Apparently they had been above the cloud all day. 'Hourglass looked like Cerro Torre' they enthused; but added that the snow was too soft to climb on. We set the alarm for a modest 6.30 a.m. and turned in.

The random flat stones of the Howff wall seemed less damp than usual. Wax droppings from numerous candles had formed miniature ice pitches between the courses. I traced a likely line upwards to within a few feet of the iron roof. Here crystals of frost were glinting and little ice lobes had formed at the apex of the corrugations. Their significance was gradually absorbed by my slowly reviving consciousness and provoked immediate reaction. 'Wake up Dennis, it's freezing.' A quick breakfast was followed by an attempt to prune our pile of gear to a minimum. It came to light that Dennis had only one axe and no peg hammer. Visions of past epics in the Garbh Coire were temporarily dispelled when one of our friends kindly volunteered to lend us a Terrordactyl. Grateful though we were, I think we were both rather sceptical about its value especially as neither of us had used such an advanced and costly implement before. Nevertheless it went into a sack along

with all the other paraphernalia and then we were off into the frozen stillness of a perfect winter's morning.

Through the ravine between outcrops, then up the gully, hurrying to see the view beyond; as if possessed we rushed on down across the moor towards the old stalkers' path, crashing through thin crust, struggling up and charging on again. It was one of those mornings when enthusiasm far outweighed fitness and soon we settled, each to his own individual pace, preoccupied with finding the least tiring solution to the drifted track. By the time we had passed the hulk of Clach a Cleirich the sun had burst over the shoulder of Càrn Eà. Soon its warm rays would penetrate the petrified glen and revert the firm névé back to the mushy hindrance of the previous day.

A chill breeze was blowing as we crossed the Sneck and stood at last above the wide expanse of the Slochd Mór. To our left the snowy basin of the Garbh Coire was dominated by a magnificent isolated buttress—the Mitre Ridge. In other winters I had passed this way to climb in this remote corrie; but although the routes chosen on these occasions were worthy objectives, I nevertheless felt in retrospect that we had unwittingly avoided the real challenge of the corrie, namely an ascent of the ridge itself. Perhaps that day we would put this right. With crampons biting into windslab we started down towards the sun. The scenery and atmosphere grew convincingly Alpine, especially lower down where the slope was troughed with icy runnels and lateral deposits of frozen avalanche debris. We leapt a gaping rimaye onto the Garbh Coire glacier then weaved our way through a maze of crevasses to reach a prominent rognon below the ridge.

I cannot recall how long we sat on that warm granite slab. The dazzling sunlight flattered the most humble of features, investing even the ribs of Stob ant-Sluichd with an air of majesty. A pair of ptarmigan were performing standing glissades on the snow above us. Their harsh croaks and the occasional swish of snow sliding off the rocks were the only sounds to disturb the silence. The appearance of a small avalanche at the foot of South East Gully stirred us into action. The Ridge is reputed to resemble a Bishop's Mitre and that it may well do, but from our vantage point below the North West Gully it was difficult to discern that it was even a ridge. The 'Voie Normale' follows a complicated course on both the East and West Faces and the crest between before passing three prominent towers near the plateau. Due to foreshortening, the first and second towers merge together with the result that the steep West Face appears to be topped by two huge pointed horns.

We elected to avoid the hard groove which starts the route in summer and soloed up by devious ledges to its right. The first section of the climb follows a shelf onto the West Face where a hidden chimney leads up to the crest. Somehow, I had it in my mind that in keeping with the events of the day so far, we were in for a pleasant

romp up this old classic before returning to the Howff via the North and South tops of Beinn a'Bhuird. As a gesture we roped up for the Shelf and I started up an innocuous chimney hard in against the wall. With curved axe in one hand and Alpine hammer in the other, the mountain hardly stood a chance. But, wait a minute! The shaded West Face was veiled in pure powder snow, with no vestige of a crust. I soon began to lose my cool as the expected dance became a scrabbling thrutch and the 'crampon-rock' set in. A few frozen-in blocks and some divots saved an embarrassing situation. The remainder of the pitch was easier and after a full run-out I reached the hidden chimney.

Wishing to be as thin as possible I left the sack at the stance and entered the narrow confines of what turned out to be a treadmill. My rate of progress was in direct proportion to the pile of snow at the bottom so that when Dennis' knees had vanished I thought it was time to place a runner. Having reached the very depths of the lum, I recalled the words of Mac Smith, namely that the chimney belies its forbidding appearance well out. Well! Out I must go. The vertical side walls were thickly verglassed and the immediate problem was to transfer from a back and foot position to a full straddle. Convincing myself that the growing pile of snow would make a good landing I managed to attain a situation level with the overhang at the top. It should then have been simple to move right onto easy ground; but there was nothing to pull over with. I placed a peg runner above the overhang and kicked off with my left foot, simultaneously lunging with the axe at a tuft of grass showing through the snow. All was well. The concealed roots were sufficient to take my weight for the rightward lunge. A straightforward powdery gully led in about 50 feet to a col on the ridge crest.

Our return to the sun at the col marked a distinct change in conditions. We were now on the crest of the Ridge where the sun had been shining at an oblique angle. Unlike the soft powder of the West Face the snow here was partially consolidated. The further out on the East Face we went the firmer grew the snow.

The next pitch was the big slab leading up the Crest to below the first tower. This was where the fun started. A short wall about ten feet high bars access to the slab. In summer the problem is solved by a delicate foot traverse out right above the gully; but on the first winter ascent Patey and Brooker climbed the wall directly using combined tactics. Remembering how Brooker managed to project Barclay some eight feet up the overhang on the first ascent of Amethyst Wall (*sic*—Ed.), I held little for our chances at the human pyramid game. Besides, Dennis winced noticeably at the thought of my standing on his head in crampons. I made a rather half-hearted attempt at the traverse only to end in a heap in the gully. Next I gave the Wall a try. By standing in a short sling on the belay peg my foot was almost level with Dennis' head. Since I

could have reached the same position using a shoulder I reckoned we were not actually cheating. I made a futile attempt to climb the wall. The flat top was buried beneath two feet of crystallised snow which, although unable to support the axe with my weight on it, was too firm to be brushed away for a flying mantleshelf. It was back to the traverse. This time I fiddled a small nut into a crack. From the security of this doubtful runner it was only about eight feet horizontally to the end of the traverse; yet it seemed impossible to cross without keeling over backwards. At head height was a sloping rock shelf covered with three inches of snow. Utilising the warmth of bare hands I compressed the snow into small mounds which with a little imagination could be mistaken for jug handles. It was then just a case of shuffling the feet along without using the jugs. With some relief I reached the far end of the traverse and started up the slab. By now the sun had gone and it was freezing. The slab was at an agreeable angle. It just required care as the snow tended to crumble away. A small overlap wasted more time before I was ensconced on a good ledge below the impending tower. For a while I was warm and content to appreciate the impressive situation. A narrow band of snow leading left dipped quickly into the void and obscured all but the lowest rocks of the East Face. Looking down towards the West Face only the edge of the slab could be seen against the great sweep of the corrie floor. Dennis was having difficulty removing an obstinate peg with the Terrordactyl*. The pick kept striking the return of the groove thus deflecting the blow off target. This was the second peg he had to leave in. If only he had brought a peg hammer. I wondered why he was taking so long to reach me. I wanted to shout at him for being so slow; but, of course, my impatience was totally unjustified. It had probably taken me over an hour to lead the pitch; yet here I was demanding that he should climb faster after being nearly half way up in only ten minutes. The cold was increasing and I was beginning to sense the inadequacy of my two jerseys.

Traversing out across the snow band I suspected that the next obstacle would be the turning point. Once above the steep wall in front progress should become easier and then it would be just a matter of time before we gained the plateau. About 15 feet out from the stance I reached a little fault—the Splintered Chimney. Perched with front points at the limit of firm snow and my nose flush against the wall I started to excavate chunks of snow and lumps of Splintered Chimney. It would have been rather foolish to press on at this stage without a good runner. The right side of the Chimney was a short column of disintegrating flakes. Selecting the flake with the largest mass I tapped a Leeper between it and the parent wall.

*Now fully converted to two Terrordactyl axes (1976) but a peg hammer is still required.

Not satisfied with this I gave the flake a few blows for good measure to prevent the peg slipping. Bridged on the topmost flake I was once again faced with the ridiculous problem of moving from the vertical to the near horizontal without any visible holds. Not being particularly bold in situations like this I usually waste all my energy looking for a runner or perhaps a non-existent hold. This was no exception. Warning Dennis that there was a good chance he would have his hands warmed very soon, I swung up into a layback position. It was almost disappointing to discover the moves easier than expected. Annoyed at my hesitation I chose to ignore a rusty peg which had been uncovered in the fray and hurried up some excellent névé to belay beneath an icy corner.

The wind was becoming stronger as we gained height. This time I couldn't see Dennis on the wall below so I huddled close under an overhang in an attempt to avoid the spindrift which was creeping down the corner above. Cloud was building up and every now and then the summit tors of Ben Avon would disappear. Dennis' expression on arrival at the belay reflected my own thoughts. 'When was this climb going to relent?' The icy corner above was in two tiers. I decided to avoid the first tier by jamming up a clean-cut chimney on the right. A traverse then led back to the second tier. No time to look for runners; just keep climbing. Thankfully the ice was good and I was able to tool my way up to the col at the top of Cumming-Crofton Route. Here the wind was gusting fiercely with powder swirling everywhere. Across at the Sneck long streamers of cloud were threading through the gap and pouring down into the corrie. Soon it would be dark.

The quickest way past the second tower is by an exposed step round its left hand corner. It is a simple balance move that could be executed with hands in pockets on a fine summer's day. There seemed to be sufficient snow in a short groove immediately below the bad step to permit a direct ascent to the ledge leading round to the final arête. If this could be climbed the step would be by-passed. Once committed to the groove I realised that the last few feet of snow was just drift. That meant that I was about two feet short of the ledge and faced with the old problem again. This time I had neither the strength nor the inclination to search for non-existent holds. I made full use of a small angle before crawling on to the ledge. Round the corner there were no more steep walls, just a long narrow arête before the last col. To save time I kept below the wind-swept crest by following a series of overhung ledges parallel to the arete. Soon I was on the gentle slopes at the top of East Wall Direct. The last pitch up a slanting crack was climbed in the gathering gloom with tongues of mist licking at our heels. The final tower was an island in a sea of cloud. We reached the top in time to see a faint red glow in the western sky. Then we were suddenly engulfed.

The journey back to the Howff followed the usual pattern of such events; an initial concentrated effort to follow the plateau edge, then nagging doubts about cornices and magnetic variations. Once the valley had been located and the pressure was off, little incidents like balling crampons and failing head torches seemed like major catastrophes. We were never actually lost, merely somewhat disorientated. The worst part was crossing the moor between the Quoich and Glen Slugain. We had obviously missed the gully and were beginning to wander in circles. Thoroughly dejected we sat down in the snow for a rest. After a few moments we became aware of rushing water close at hand. It sounded like the waterfall opposite the entrance to the gully. We stumbled forward about twenty yards and almost fell down a steep slope into the tiny door of the Howff. It had been quite a good day!

THE WINTER FACE OF THE BLACK SPOUT PINNACLE

By Doug. Lang

WITH lurching wheelspin the car slides to a halt on the wrong side of the Cairn O'Mount. Hell! A 4 a.m. rise only to get stuck before we are properly out of the Mearns. The sun appears but it is blowing a gale. Dejected, Neil and I head back to work since after all, it is a Thursday. We resolve to try again on Sunday.

Optimistic as ever, we head off in rain at 5 a.m., this time up the A93 toward the Devil's Elbow. The rain increases. Disconsolate we make a quick about turn at Dalrulzion, return for a nap and then trundle off to do a round of the sand dunes at Tentsmuir, by way of anti-climax.

Next Thursday, we repeat the initial performance, this time reaching the Lochnagar corrie with frost crunching underfoot. The cliffs are plastered and it looks good. Alas! It's a familiar tale, iron stuff on the track but junk snow on the cliffs. Sulking, we head up Black Spout Buttress as we had better do something. The forecast is correct and all sorts of meteorological hell break loose at mid-day, as we head back down to the glen.

By the weekend the freezing level has risen to 5,000 feet, but we take a chance, forsake the C.I.C., and point the car at Braemar. We are in luck; there is a slight frost, hardening as we gain height. The stuff plastered on the cliffs is not perfect by any means, but much more stable than of three days earlier. Test the 'Terror.' It's reasonable. We are in business, so on with the gear and off we go.

We choose a line starting lower down than, and to the left of, Pinnacle Face, where a little snow chute separates the Mound from the main face. Neil climbs a groove and finally takes a belay on an overhung wall below and left of a large slab. We ponder the possibilities and I opt to take the slab directly. A small inset slab protects the big slab from attack. With care and caution, nicks are fashioned in the thin ice, points are placed in the nicks, adze is laid on higher nicks. With held breath, a sense of insecurity and no protection, height is slowly gained. The process is repeated up the edge of the main slab till finally a half decent hammer lodgement allows a high step onto a small but welcome platform. Ahead lies a groove, full of trashy snow. I climb it with the dubious encouragement of a poor peg runner. On exit from the groove, where am I? Quivering calf deep in thawing granules on a sea of plunging slabs. Keeping as calm as possible I take stock of the situation and tiptoe gingerly to a bulge where I unearth a rock pocket which takes a nut and another doubtful peg. 'O.K. Neil, come on up.'

The Smiler has noticed that it is thawing and questions the whole proceedings, but after a mixture of encouragement and ridicule from me, the rope comes in. He finds it tricky; so much so that at one point I even detect some tension. When Neil arrives I sense he is less than happy. He hands over the sack, takes two steps to the right and stops. Then come yells, curses and accusations. Why have I brought him up here in these lousy conditions? I could hardly tell him the truth, namely that I didn't trust an abseil from the doubtful belay. Instead I babbled on about how there was a layer of ice under all the junk and if he applied all his skill and kept his self control we could pluck this plum right from under the noses of the Aberdonian kami-kazes. Due to either my powers of persuasion or Quinn's trusting nature he is finally convinced and leads off rightwards, up a long, rising traverse of the face. The line is obvious, but much steeper than it appears at first glance. Eventually after 140 feet he achieves a peg belay beside a big black wall.

On arrival at the stance, I can see there are three possible climbing exits. We have now crossed Pinnacle Face route and we can climb the revolting hanging corner of its final pitch. Alternatively we may turn the corner by gaining a high slab on our right, an equally unpleasant prospect. The third choice may prove a winner. By moving down 15 feet I manage to balance round a corner and reach a wide ledge leading to the chimney of Route I. Deliverance! Better snow and euphoria bear us upwards at speed. The mist clears. What a situation! What a place! Nowhere like it, not even on Nevis! Two rope lengths and two hours later we are atop of the Pinnacle and on top of the world!

ANOTHER EXPERIENCE

By Andrew James

THE Himalayas, the Hindu Kush, the Andes, these ranges immediately spring to mind when considering something bigger than the Alps. Then you begin finding out about national visas, climbing permits, transport, portage etc., and before long you realize you are getting involved in a major expedition, when perhaps all you really wanted was simply a climbing holiday. Well we went through these preliminaries, then East Africa was suggested. Robert Watters and I had been discussing the idea for some time and it didn't take too much persuasion to bring Dave Spence into the scheme, making three of us from the Glasgow J.M.C.S. With my wife Louise, the party of four was complete and the target was set—Mt. Kenya.

Preliminary enquiries showed that we could fly to Nairobi and back for £120, and if we avoided the expense of hotels whilst not on the mountain, we could probably have a four-week trip for a total outlay of about £200 each; this amount should also allow us to visit a few game parks and the Indian Ocean too.

Dave, Louise and I flew out via Cairo, where we had an unscheduled but interesting 24-hour stopover: up the Pyramids and round the Sphinx for as little as you could get away with! In Nairobi we met up with Robert, who had flown up from Zambia, where he had been working for the previous year. Robert had booked us into an hotel for the first night but the high prices drove us out to the Boy Scout camp the next day. From there we made our arrangements for transport and porters to the mountain. We bought all our food and outstanding equipment (the weight restriction 18 kilos per person on international flights hits hard at climbers) and still had time to enjoy some wildlife parks. Since it was Christmas, we also enjoyed some seasonal festivities. I should add that a hired car was of invaluable assistance during these first few days.

Within a week we had transported ourselves and our supplies to Naro Moru River Lodge, some 30 miles from the mountain and at 7,500 feet above sea level. The journey was made by the inexpensive 'Peugeot Taxi' service—a very fast trip! Naro Moru River Lodge, set in beautiful grounds, is one of the main starting points for trips up to Mt. Kenya and all our portering arrangements had been made through there. We spent a night in one of the attached bunkhouses, where we weighed out the loads for the porters and made our final plans for the start of the action.

The following morning was beautifully clear as we set off in a Land Rover, up into the Mt. Kenya National Park. The dirt road twisted and climbed up through the forest and after paying our

dues and those of our porters at the Park entrance, we soon arrived at the road end, some 10,500 feet above sea level, where the porters were lounging around awaiting their parties. As we had already discovered, Mt. Kenya is a popular place and we weren't alone on the mountain! We were also dismayed to find that we had just lost two of our porters arrested by the police for alleged pilfering of gear from climbers' sacks. The additional loads were therefore shared out amongst the remainder with the attendant haggling over weight and extra payment. Eventually all was settled and spreading ourselves at intervals between the porters, in order to keep a watchful eye on them, we started up through the last part of the forest and out above the trees. The walk up to Two Tarns, our proposed base, only takes about 7 hours but most parties spend a night at Klarwill's Hut at the head of the Teleki valley and complete the walk, up to 14,730 feet on the following day. We planned to do this in the hope that it would help us to acclimatise. The route is most interesting, starting up through the forest alive with numerous colourful birds, of which we saw many, and wild animals, of which we saw none! The path breaks out of the trees into an area of giant heather, about 10 to 12 feet tall, which grows around the bottom of the 'vertical bog.' Above this the flora changes to a region of giant groundsel and higher up still to the domain of the huge lobelias, which grow right up to the snow line.

Our heads started aching at around 12,000 feet and after a night in the stuffy and overcrowded hut, they were really throbbing. The next morning Robert and Dave set off early with the porters whilst Louise and I lingered around the hut taking photographs of the hyrax, a rodent resembling a very large guinea pig. We followed on later. The morning was again very fine and clear and the views of the mountain were superb. Just before we reached Two Tarns we were met by our porters, running down the hillside in fine spirits. We soon discovered that after depositing their loads, Dave and Robert had given them a half full bottle of Johnny Walker Black Label. They stopped to have their photos taken again before careering off down the mountain once more. The rest of the day was spent sorting out food and gear and everyone hit the sack early, nursing sore heads.

The next day was Hogmanay. No-one had slept well and most of the party were suffering from upset stomachs with attendant vomiting and diarrhoea, in addition to splitting headaches. Our exertions that day were confined to an exploratory stroll round the lake! We had brought up a haggis and some wine for a special dinner that night but no one was able to consume too much and by nine o'clock everyone had retired—only Robert was able to stay up and see the New Year in. A dose of codeine allowed me a reasonable night's rest but the others were up throughout the night bringing up Robert's cooking from the previous evening's meal.

During the course of the next few days we climbed some of the lesser peaks and made a trip round to the north side of the summit core. Heavy snowfalls on two days restricted our activities but since one or more of us was always feeling sick, we welcomed the excuse for a rest. We were fast learning all about mountain sickness. We were also picking up a few pointers on cooking and food in general at higher altitudes. Due to the reduced atmospheric pressure, it is very difficult to prepare rice and spaghetti, and the cooking of many items takes longer than usual, unless you have a pressure cooker, which we didn't! next time, perhaps! We therefore existed on an exceedingly limited diet, and variety here would, I'm sure, have provided a moral boost and encouraged greater consumption. On the tenth day, we packed our gear and padded up to Top Hut at 15,720 feet for our summit attempt on the following day.

Dawn found us at the foot of the 'Normal Route.' We were all carrying full bivouac equipment, since we planned on staying in the shelter on the summit of Nelion that night. We soloed up the first few pitches, then Robert and Dave roped up and set off ahead of Louise and I, up to the top of Mackinder's Chimney. The climbing had started. It was a beautiful, clear morning then, but by the time we had reached the Gendarme the wind had risen, the cloud had rolled in, and it was snowing heavily. In addition, our weakened physical condition was beginning to tell and will power was beginning to take over. At this point, Robert and Dave who were feeling relatively fit, were ahead of Louise and I by some 200 feet—the hardest 200 feet of the climb. I led up the first pitch, which I found very strenuous at this altitude, and Louise required some 'assistance' to reach the stance! The next section was partly covered with rotten ice which was quickly being obscured by the falling snow. I made my way up this pitch and belayed. At this point, Louise intimated that only a winch would drag her up any further, and so, since no winch was available, there was no alternative but to descend. It would have been pure folly for us to have proceeded further, even if I had been feeling one hundred percent, which I wasn't. We managed to contact Dave and Robert, who were bombing on towards the summit, told them we were retreating, wished them good luck, and prepared to abseil off. Two and half hours later we landed on the scree at the base of the route, just as darkness fell, and we trudged across the glacier back to the hut, where we were welcomed with mugs of tea by some other climbers who had been watching our retreat. We just drank up and collapsed into our bags, utterly shattered. Meantime, Robert and Dave had reached the summit, and were spending the night in the shelter.

We descended to Two Tarns the following morning, still feeling very tired but relatively fit—at last. The successful pair, having spent a comfortable night on the summit, were foiled by the weather

in their attempt to reach Batian, and so descended. That evening we had a long discussion on the physical and mental approach to high altitude mountaineering. We had all learnt much from our experience.

TABLES OF THE MOUNT

(Mt. Lafayette, highest peak in the Franconia Range, Franconia State Park, New Hampshire)

Lafayette
 At over five thousand feet
 Has a bald head,
 Just. One is asked not to tread
 On the delicate summit vegetation,
 A regulation
 Not enforced
 From Lafayette's own devastation
 Summer lightning, winter frost
 Desolating wind,
 But enjoined
 Because each year
 More people than before
 Intrude bare flesh and bright
 Promiscuous primary colours right
 To his bouldery top and there
 Tramp about,
 Deflower.
 These temporary possessors
 Of such fatal feet
 Can be transgressors
 Further. Lafayette
 Desires
 They start no fires
 Make no unnecessary din
 Carry out more trash than they bring in.

G.J.F.D.

© GJFD

J.M.C.S.—THE HISTORIES

To mark the 50th anniversary of the foundation of the J.M.C.S., the histories of the Glasgow, Edinburgh and Perth sections were chronicled in the last issue of the *Journal*. As the J.M.C.S. marches onward into its second half century we record the all too brief life and early mortality of the Inverness Section with an account by its former Honorary Secretary. At present the Lochaber and London sections drift Unanchored in the Ocean of Time. We trust that Diligent Chroniclers will emerge in due course, lest these currently lusty adolescents be consigned to Limbo, being rootless and without Recorded Paternity.

J.M.C.S.—INVERNESS SECTION

By J. D. Sturrock

THE Inverness Section of the J.M.C.S. was formed in January 1938, with a nucleus membership of eight. Of this number, however, the majority of the members were incomers to the district, or transient, and only a very small proportion were 'natives,' a factor which was to prove important at a later date. The original members were all experienced in hill work but only one or two were experienced rock climbers or had done much on snow and ice. The Honorary President was the late J. A. Parker, S.M.C.

During the brief life of the Section, until the outbreak of the Second World War, the membership increased to twenty. New members, in accordance with the Rules of the J.M.C.S., were accepted only after having attended Meets of the Section as guests and having satisfied the Committee as to their suitability.

Regular monthly Meets of the Section were held right through 1938, and until July 1939, and practically every weekend there were groups of members out on the hills. While Munro-bagging, covering a wide area, in all weathers, was unashamedly indulged in, a considerable amount of climbing was also enjoyed, the most popular venue being Ben Nevis, where the run of the mill climbs N.E. Buttress, Observatory Ridge, Tower Ridge, Castle Ridge, Castle Direct, Tower Gully, etc.—were tackled with considerable frequency, but so far as known no attempts at new climbs were made. Some of the less sophisticated routes in Glencoe, on Sgòran Dubh and elsewhere were also undertaken. A few short but interesting

routes were pioneered (it is believed) by members of the Section (notably the late T. C. Corsie and young R. B. Frere) in other parts of the Highlands; ones that spring to memory being the Monolith Crack and Mica Arête on a vertical crag overlooking Loch Duntelchaig, a slabby pinnacle on Mac a' Madhr above Inverlael (now swamped by forestry) near Ullapool, a face on Creag Ghlas in Gleann Meinich, Strath Conon, and several others of which, unfortunately, no records were kept. Joint Meets with the Glasgow, Edinburgh and Perth Sections respectively were also arranged and greatly enjoyed. There were also numerous indoor meetings of the Section for discussion and argument, and talks to the Section were given by *inter alios* F. Spencer Chapman on his ascent of Chomolhari, and N. E. Odell on the ascent of Nanda Devi.

The Section's first formal Meet was held at Mealfuarvounie on 27th January 1938, at which six members and one guest attended. In splendid snow and ice conditions the Chockstone Gully (which thereafter became a favourite evening exercise for Section members), draped with icicles and gleaming with verglas, was, with some difficulty, overcome. The last formal Meet before the outbreak of the Second World War was at Inchnadamph on 30th July 1939, when nine members and one guest clambered up Suilven, some via the Grey Castle and the less ambitious by the easy Bealach Mór. This last Meet, unfortunately, in fact signalled the premature demise of the Section. With the outbreak of hostilities in September 1939, practically every member of the Section went off to join one or other of the armed Services, only one senior member, in a reserved occupation, and one under age remaining to carry the Section's flag for the next six years, and very little climbing was done during those dark times. When the war came to an end those members who survived it were scattered far and wide throughout the U.K. An attempt was made to resuscitate the Section and two or three 'reunion' Meets were held in the Autumn and early Winter of 1945, but the nucleus of resident members had been reduced to four, and petrol rationing and other transport problems made it next to impossible for distant members to take part in the Section's activities. The last Act was played at the C.I.C. Hut on 8th/9th December 1945, when T. C. Corsie, J. K. Gunn, A. M. MacPhee and J. D. Sturrock, all original members of the Section, overcoming most frustrating transport difficulties, foregathered for a nostalgic Greetin' Meeting, and after a spot of gentle climbing on the Ben, reluctantly drew the curtain. It can, with truth, be said that the Section did not die a natural death ('in infancy' as Bill Murray once put it) but was mortally wounded in the War.

TECHNICAL SECTION

Two of our more senior members have recently been engaged in the analytical study of problems in which they hold enthusiastic interest, the first with furrowed brow, the second with what seems to be a smirk. We feel that others may benefit from their discoveries

THE MECHANICS OF MOVEMENT

By W. L. Coats

Why does a hen stick its neck out in apparently spasmodic jerks as it struts across the yard? The key, incidentally, is probably to be found in the word 'strutting' which in itself is a rather jerky movement. I have never come across an explanation of this phenomenon but had come to the conclusion that it was an inevitable consequence of the process of walking, in like manner to swinging of the arms or swaying of the shoulders or hips which appear to be a natural consequence of the process of walking on the part of human beings. So now I am going to stick *my* neck out, at the risk of having my head chopped off by the biologists, the physiologists or who ever and give what appears to me to be the explanation of the behaviour at least as it concerns human beings.

To my feeble intellect the penny dropped while attending a lecture by an eminent professor of engineering on the conservation of energy. The expression 'conservation of energy' referred, in this case, not to the means for preventing its dissipation, but to the fact that the total energy inherent in a system, apart from frictional losses, remained constant irrespective of variations in the amounts of energy possessed by different parts of the system due to movement of these parts relative to each other within the system. To illustrate this, various fascinating demonstrations were used. In one of the two demonstrations which my memory vividly retains, the Professor seated himself in a swivelling chair mounted on ball bearings to minimise friction, and in each hand held a heavy dumb-bell close to the shoulder. The Professor, seated thus in the chair was then set rotating. He then stretched his arms out to full length (still at shoulder height) and the speed of rotation dropped considerably. On retracting the hands back to the original position rotation speeded up to only slightly less than the original speed (there having inevitably been some loss due to friction, small as it was, in the interval). Suffice to say that it triggered off the thought that a similar principle, namely conservation of momentum lies behind the swinging of the arms or other oscillating movements of the body when walking and presumably also the ejaculatory movements of the hen's head.

Conservation of momentum implies that despite movements of the individual parts of the system relative to each other, the centre of gravity of the system *as a whole* must move forward in a straight line at a uniform velocity. This is a necessary requirement for progressing with the minimum expenditure of energy. Now consider what this involves.

Those who are old enough to remember sailing on paddle steamers will recollect the slight to and fro surge associated (on most of them) with their forward movement at speed. The effect was even more marked on some of the earlier steamers with only one crank on the paddle shaft and these provide a simpler and more obvious explanation of the effect. This was simply due to the to and fro movement of the relatively heavy moving parts of the machinery, to compensate for which the rest of the vessel had to surge

slightly in opposition so that the centre of gravity of the vessel as a whole should move forward at approximately a steady speed.

A somewhat similar state of affairs existed in steam locomotives and due to the much higher speed of the reciprocating parts, the effect, if not countered would have set up such severe forces as to shake the machinery to bits, or rocked the engine to such an extent as to make it leave the rails. These effects were countered in order to achieve smooth running, by attaching balance weights so disposed that when one set of moving parts was moving in one direction, the balance weights were moving in the other direction, so that the total momentum in a forward direction remained substantially constant. (That was not the whole story but the other aspects do not concern us here).

If you stand on one foot and swing the other foot backward and forward pendulum wise, it will be noticed that the body tends to rock slightly to and fro in opposition—equivalent to the case of the paddle steamer. If now the arm on the same side of the body is swung in opposition to the leg, the rocking tendency of the body dies down; in other words a balancing effect has been introduced as on the locomotive.

If the swing of the foot has an amplitude of 6 ft. and a frequency of 50 to and fro movements (50 cycles) per minute this is equivalent to the leg movement when walking at approximately $3\frac{1}{2}$ m.p.h. In other words, when walking at $3\frac{1}{2}$ m.p.h. with a 3 ft. stride each foot has to be picked up from rest, accelerated to something well in excess of 7 m.p.h. and brought to rest again 50 times per minute. To balance this fluctuating movement some other part of the body, not necessarily the arm, is used to perform the function of the balance weight in the steam locomotive to damp out the to and fro rocking tendency of the body—a not inconsiderable matter when carrying a heavy pack. Generally this movement is probably acquired instinctively when walking and perhaps in different manners by different persons according to which they find most conducive to smooth progress with the minimum of effort consistent with the nature of the terrain being traversed.

For example, when moving up hillsides where progression is upwards as well as forwards I have noticed that arm swinging tends to give place to body swaying and as the ground becomes more steep (and more particularly when carrying a pack), to a slight bending forward of the trunk, co-incident with each forward (and upward) movement of the foot. I confess to being unclear as how this latter movement conforms to the theory already put forward. It might be that the effect is to move the hips back slightly in opposition to the forward movement of the foot; or to lower the centre of gravity of the trunk in opposition to the momentarily upward movement of the foot which, at that time is being raised at a faster speed than the upward movement of the body as a whole. It might be argued that the action was caused simply by the need to transfer the weight of the body forwards on to the uphill foot; if so it can only be anticipatory because it takes place while the foot is being moved forward and upward. Try walking upstairs, two steps at a time, firstly by springing off the ball of the foot without letting the heels touch the ground, and secondly, keeping the heels flat on the ground; and finally repeat the latter with hands clasped behind the back. Forward bending of the trunk begins to assert itself as a matter of necessity.

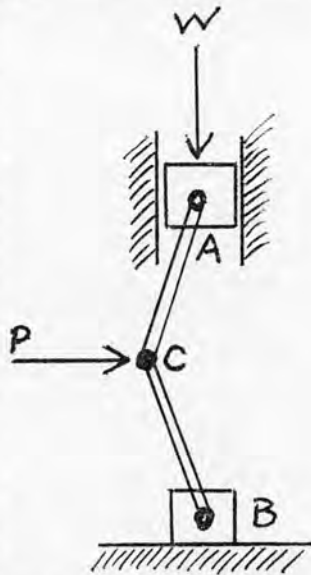
And so, as soon as I find that the rhythm in use on easier slopes no longer seems to be working, or perhaps even anticipating that stage, I change to the other method. In short, an appreciation of the principles involved and their helpful effect enables one to put them into operation as soon as conditions underfoot change instead of waiting until one is forced into a different rhythm through inability to maintain the previous one with comfort and perhaps having suffered some avoidable fatigue in the interval; like changing to a lower gear in anticipation of a hill and not waiting till the engine begins to labour. Similarly, if I may digress for a moment I find that when approaching steeper ground where I know that deeper breathing will inevitably be required,

if I start to cultivate deep breathing in advance I feel the benefit when I do reach the steeper ground and my second wind comes more quickly and sometimes the transition is unnoticed.

Reverting for a moment to the subject of compensatory movements of body and limbs to achieve a smooth progression it would be interesting to know if any of this has a bearing on the subject of carrying a heavy pack high instead of low in so far as it affects the relative position of weights the movements of which have to be mutually counterbalancing.

Reference has already been made to ascending the stairs with heels flat on the ground. In point of fact I have read that people native to hill country who regularly have to ascend steep slopes, invariably do so with their heels on the ground. This, I find lessens the fatigue on the ankle and calf muscles which, I imagine, are not so strong as the thigh muscles and so tire more quickly. In walking on level ground propelling is done with the rear foot. To attempt to do this on a steep ascent, involving as it does, pivoting on the ball of the foot, imposes on the ankle and calf muscles the task of pushing up a load equal to the full weight of body plus pack.

Consider now the action of a toggle. In the diagrammatic illustration A is a block constrained between guides so that it can only move up and down, and connected to B, a fixed point on the ground, by two links pivoted at A, B and C. A horizontal force P, applied at C will, with the configuration shown be sufficient to lift a weight W equal to about three times P. Applying this principle to the ascent of steep slopes, if, without raising the lower heel from the ground, the weight of the body is moved forward on to the upper leg, with the knee well bent, and the latter then straightened (on the toggle principle) a much smaller muscular effort is required than if an attempt is made to push up with the lower foot; moreover it would appear to be the thigh muscle which is here the operative one.



Much of this may appear to experienced climbers to be a case of parading the obvious; or if not they have probably 'arrived' there unconsciously, by instinctively drifting into rhythms that they find least fatiguing. Most certainly there are many who seem capable of moving rapidly up and down hills without giving any thought to these matters (and I think I can hear their guffaws at my attempts to define the art of climbing in mechanical terms) and I envy them. Such has never been my good fortune above all when carrying anything more weighty than a light day sack. So as the years progress I find it increasingly necessary to give thought to such matters if the ascent of hills is to remain a pleasure and not a task. And if nothing more, they give interesting food for rumination when wandering solo as I often do.

MAINTAINING THE SPIRIT

By Iain H. O'gilvie

*'... usquebaugh, at first taste affects all the members of the body; two spoonfuls of this liquor is a sufficient dose; and if any man exceed this, it will presently stop his breath, and endanger his life.'*¹

*'He walks into the sea up to his middle with his clothes on, and immediately after goes to bed in his wet clothes, and then laying the bedclothes over him proceeds to sweat...'*²

Yes! They were a tough lot! But modern technology has improved both the whisky and the bathwater and our lot is a much easier one.

Unfortunately our national habit of sinking whisky as if it was beer, has led to technological research being largely devoted to production with the result that some of the finer points of consumption have been overlooked. I am therefore encouraged to hope that this note may usefully fill a gap.

It cannot be disputed that nothing is nicer when one comes off the hill, than a dram and a hot bath; preferably both; preferably both together; in fact, preferably a dram in your bath. There are however snags. For example, the older types of bath, commonly found in Highland hotels so often used for New Year and Easter meets, have curved tops to their parapets and even modern ones, though flat on top, have a ridge round the edge so that a whisky glass placed there, may get upset. Some people have recourse to putting a glass on the floor beside the bath but this is also unsatisfactory. The glass is difficult to locate and water is liable to trickle down the arm and dilute the whisky. In extreme cases, when the bather has actually decided to wash and not just to soak, the whisky may even be polluted by soap suds. This not only spoils the whisky but may result afterwards in a general looseness of the bowels.

Original experiment³ indicates, however, that, provided you don't propose to make a pig of yourself and that the bottle isn't quite full, it will be buoyant and can be conveniently floated in the bath. It is however important to ensure that there is not too much whisky in the bottle as buoyancy will be close to zero and with the top off, there will again be a danger of dilution⁴. This can be guarded against by having a stiff dram before getting into the bath.

As the level of the whisky drops, some bottles will be seen to keel over at an alarming angle but research has shown⁵ that, with the exception of Dimple Haig, Antiquary and one or two other types, which become unstable, the bottle will not coup⁶ even when empty.

The procedure described above not only ensures that whisky is conveniently to hand at all times but that you can have a hot toddy without all this nonsense of having to dilute it with boiling water.

Specific gravity is also important. For absolute alcohol it is 0.792 and the % age of absolute alcohol in proof alcohol is 57.06, both at 60°F. Therefore, by simple arithmetic, the specific gravity of proof alcohol must be 0.881. Distillers state that it is 0.920 and explain this away by a supposed loss of volume when alcohol and water are mixed. There is no scientific justification for this and it should be ignored as being merely a blind to conceal normal sampling losses.

For easy reference, since not all bathers have a slide rule conveniently at hand, a table giving typical characteristics of a few significant indicator brands is given overleaf.

BRAND	ORIGIN	°PROOF	SP. GR.	C ⁷
Glenmorangie	Tain	70°	0·917	·99
Glenfiddich	Dufftown	80°	0·905	·75
Smith's Glenlivet	Tomintoul	100°	0·881	·50
Talisker	Skye	175°	0·792	·25
Auchtermuchty	Not known	0°	1·000	0
Laphroaig	Islay	200°	N.A. ⁸ ±	∞

A warning must be given at this point about the introduction of a chilled bottle into hot water. Senior members will remember all too well an unfortunate incident some years ago, when during an early research programme, a bottle of Talisker had been left⁹ on the window sill of an unheated bedroom. Returning late and cold from the hill, the researcher seized it and jumped straight into his bath. The bottle at once shattered and, as the bath was already full the whisky⁴ became so severely diluted as to be virtually unpalatable and the programme had to be abandoned.

A more recent researcher¹⁰ may have had this incident in mind when he started work on the development of the 'Bather's Liquid Comforter.' This is reported to be a bicompartmented container, one half of which is vacuum insulated and can hold a bottle embedded in crushed ice. The other contains a bottle exposed to hot bath water. The whole clamps onto the side of the bath by means of ingenious rubber clips. The bather can indulge in the luxury of alternate drams of hot malt and cold blend¹¹. The present author can conceive of no valid reason for drinking cold whisky but this may be a refinement to the self inflicted agonies ritually performed in the latter stages of a Sauna bath.

Research continues.

Ogilvie has applied to the S.M.T. for the Sang Award as a means to further his work in this field. We regret to report that the Trustees have turned him down on the grounds that his normal life style is well able to maintain his researches at the fullest possible pitch.

¹'A description of the Western Islands of Scotland.' Martin Martin. Gent. 1703.

²Ibid.

³Archimedes. He was a Greek, poor chap, and must have had to use Retsina or Ouzo.

⁴There is little danger of pollution at this early stage.

⁵The stability of a floating body is a function of the draught. (Tipler's Law).

⁶Tech: = Go airse over tip, with consequent loss of contents.

⁷Credibility factor.

⁸But ref. Martin Martin above.

⁹Levison-Smith—Crianlarich—New Year 1923.

¹⁰Unidentified but reported to be a senior member of the Club.

¹¹'Bugger up the Blend but don't muck about with the Malt'—Confucius.

FAREWELL TO MY BOOTS

Farewell!

How many blisters have you rubbed in each toe!

O woe! O woe!

Up many a snow gully or ridge,
beset by blizzard, rain or midge,
have you scraped a bare foothold,
or trudged many a weary mile
in summer's heat or winter's cold.

Full many mighty peaks have you ascended,
each new Munro by hurrahs attended as I,
your wearer, ageing fast approach the day when,
at last, climbing days are in the past.

As sole departs from upper,
and the last Tricouni falls away,
would that I could enshrine you, or bury you
deep in some great snow wreath.

O woe! O woe!

It seems a sacrilege or sin
to put you in the rubbish bin, ah me!
beneath potato peel and fire's ashes.
O would that I were dead!

But no! In bulging rucksack carried,
now by Cobbler's summit rocks you lie,
dropped deep within a cleft—

Beyond the reach of man—but of memory not bereft.

K. K. HUNTER.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

J.M.C.S.: Glasgow Section, History

SIR—It is unfortunate that this account does not include the 1930-35 period. There were meetings in member's houses long before those mentioned by Bill Murray and many other members than the two mentioned gave hospitality.

I joined the Club in 1930. The first Meet I attended was in Glencoe, when a notice at the Inveroran end stated *PASS THROUGH AT YOUR OWN RISK*. The new road was then in the making and the old road had been neglected for some years. The new road was opened in 1934, not 1936, as I went over it in the former year at my next Meet in Glencoe. It was I think finished in that year, nor is mentioned the great change when by Unna's efforts the Forest of Dalness was purchased and presented to Scottish National Trust.

The position before that is well shown by notes of that Meet in 1931 in the *Journal* when this area was still a Deer Forest. A party traversing Buchaille Etive Mór 'met the tenant of the forest on the summit and he was extremely annoyed at our having spoiled his stalk. The President, later called on the tenant (Mr Stockdale) at Dalness House and an amicable agreement was reached, whereby the good name of the Club was preserved, and it was arranged that we should not be on their beat on the following days.'

It was in April that year after an accident on Stob Gabhar that as per account of the Meet 'A new rule has been unofficially imposed on the Club, viz:—

A. Thou shalt have no incident.

B. In the event of contravention of (A) thou shalt at all costs keep it from the public press.'

We were able to keep that rule for many years and many of us wish it was still so. But with increasing number of incidents and the press feeding on them and giving the least affair much more publicity than it deserved, the coming of Rescue Teams and now the involvement of the Police we were compelled to keep accurate records chiefly because Press Reports were invariably so sensational and often so inaccurate. Yours etc.

B. H. HUMBLE.

SIR—Last issue your reviewer pointed out that the latest S.M.T. publication of Munro's Tables contained a new section—on Munroists. I would like to stress two points whose mention would have improved the otherwise excellent review of an otherwise excellent book. The first is that the List of Munroists also had its Sir Hugh: he was (and happily still is) Mr Eric Maxwell, the G.O.M. of the Grampian Club, who at great labour first collected information on fellow eccentrics and published it in his Club bulletins. The second is that the *Journal* took over from Mr Maxwell the publication of these Lists of Munroists and with his valued help (and penetrating comments) kept them up to date. Your *Journal*, Sir, I trust, still keeps them up to date I am sure your valued metre-reader will be happy to acknowledge these primary sources of information next time he comes round to print. It would be good to have Mr Maxwell's unique services recorded by the S.M.T. as well as by the S.M.C.J. Yours etc.

G. J. DUTTON.

(EDITOR'S COMMENT: True enough—S.M.T. publications should always stress the value of this *Journal* in keeping both themselves and the General Public up to date with New Climbs, District Notes and—as noted above—even Munroists . . .).

NEW CLIMBS

EDITORIAL inadequacies have necessitated the recruitment of specialist assistance for this section. Of prime importance is Ken Crocket, whose ruthless cynicism and razor edged efficiency merits him the appellation of 'New Climbs Editor.' Regional credibility has been provided by Greg Strange for the Cairngorms and Peter Macdonald for the Northern Highlands.

Discerning frequenters of the Upper Register will notice that, in conformity with the most recent S.M.T. Guidebooks, we have extended the grading of summer rock climbs to include a *Hard Very Severe* category. The reasons are obvious. Equally obvious is the fact that many existing Very Severe routes may require reappraisal in the light of this subdivision of the highest grade. Future contributors are asked to take note.

SKYE

Sgùrr An Fheadain.—*Resolution.* 500 ft. Very Severe.
C. Rowland & A. S. Rowland. May 1974.

Left of the start of Waterpipe Gully is a steep wall with two chimney systems. The route takes, initially, the right hand chimney, then transfers to the left. Start at easy slab (cairn).

Climb slab to sapling, go up corner for a few feet then move up wall on right to gain chimney. Follow this to spike belay (140 ft.). Follow grass rake to top then across wall on left to good stance at large ash (60 ft.). Traverse left to join other crack system and take this diagonally right to steep grassy recess. Climb short corner on left or slab on right to gain good ledge and poor peg belay (140 ft.). Move a few feet right and up to good stance at foot of short corner (30 ft.). Climb corner and easy diagonal line leftwards to the top (130 ft.).

Blaven: East Face, The Great Prow.—*Twilight Slab Variation.*

A. J. Kennedy & G. Rooney. 6th June 1975.

From the pitch two crack just before the Red Slab, traverse left across the prominent slab on the front of the Prow. Peg belay on edge. Continue up and right to large block then straight up to join original line for final pitch. The variation leaves unchanged the overall grade of the route.

RHUM

Barkeval.—*Black and Tan.* 170 ft. Mild Severe.
C. Ross & A. J. Young. 28th May 1975.

Well up the gully between Broad Buttress and Narnia Arête (cairn). Climb a black, streaked slab to a corner with a grass ledge and poor belay (55 ft.). Take the paler slab above, crux at start, to good stance 6 ft. down past the top (70 ft.). Follow slab and corner above to cairn (45 ft.).

—*Guinness.*

140 ft. Severe.

H. M. Brown & C. Ross. 28th May 1975.

On the gully wall of Broad Buttress. Gain a chimney and follow this to ledge (45 ft.). Move up right, then exposed step up and left (crux), to follow crack then chimney, ending high on Broad Buttress (95 ft.).

Askival: South East Face.—*Rouma Route.* Very Difficult.

This is probably a variation to Ogilvie's Route of 1938, but as the line of that route is uncertain, the following description is appended.

South of the East Ridge are some scree filled gullies, beyond which lies a prominent slab split by a chimney (cairn).

Climb the chimney or harder, the slab, and two small steps leading to a steepening (80 ft.). A chimney above leads to a serrated crest with an unclimbed vertical step (70 ft.). Ogilvie turned this on the right, but better is either of two corners to the left. If the first corner on the left is taken it should be left before it ends to step right onto a narrow crest which ends the route. Scrambling lands one about 40 ft. along from the summit of Askival.

ARRAN**Cir Mhór: South East Face.**—*The Crack.* 140 ft. Very Severe.
I. W. Cranston, J. W. Earl, R. G. Hutchinson. 29th May 1973.

This route climbs the big flake crack which lies between the recess pitch of South Ridge Ordinary Route and Lower East Chimney, to finish on the Terrace of South Ridge Direct.

Start low down in the Sub Rosa Gully at two parallel cracks beneath the impressive flake crack (arrow). Climb the right hand crack, transfer to the left at 20 ft., move up into a groove and continue over slightly loose rock to grass ledge and belay (50 ft.). On the left is a groove. Climb to the top of this, level with the flake crack. Traverse left along a rounded ledge to gain the crack which is climbed to the Terrace of South Ridge Direct (90 ft.).

—*The Eyrle.* 210 ft. Very Severe.

J. W. Earl & R. G. Hutchinson. 24th May 1975.

Start in Sub Rosa Gully 50 ft. above Lower East Chimney where a finger of rock lies against the base of the crag, directly beneath a groove containing a large pinnacle at about 90 ft.

Climb the finger of rock and move right into a corner. Climb this until it is possible to move left onto the arête. Move up and left to the pinnacle and belay (110 ft.). Climb the groove directly behind the belay and continue up a steep chimney to join the South Ridge at the large platform beneath the three chimneys pitch (100 ft.).

—*The Engie.* 220 ft. Very Severe.

J. W. Earl & R. G. Hutchinson. 25th May 1975.

Start in Sub Rosa Gully 130 ft. above Lower East Chimney. The climb starts at an obvious chimney some 15 ft. right of a large block leaning against the crag.

Climb up for a few feet until it is possible to traverse left across a slab to a grass strip (awkward). The good crack above is followed directly to an awkward finish. It is best to take a belay on the right to protect the second (120 ft.). Traverse left to belay on grass ledge beneath the start of the fine leftward trending crack which splits the upper wall (30 ft.). Follow the crack to finish at the large platform beneath the three chimneys pitch of the South Ridge (70 ft.).

—*The Geordie.* 300 ft. Very Severe.

J. W. Earl & R. G. Hutchinson. 24th May 1975.

Start as for The Engie. Climb the obvious chimney crack to an awkward exit (100 ft.). Step down and left and climb a dirty chimney. Move left and belay beneath a vee shaped break in the centre of the overhangs (120 ft.). Climb the overhanging crack to the large overhang, move left beneath this then continue more easily to the South Ridge (60 ft.).

North East Face.—Book In.

230 ft. Difficult.

K. Schwartz. 7th August 1975.

First shelf up and right from Garrick's Route. Follow messy gully and go horizontally left as soon as possible, reach edge and follow this to col at head of Pinnacle Ridge.

—Manners.

250 ft. Difficult.

K. Schwartz. 7th August 1975.

Start just right of Book In. Climb easy rib right of subsidiary gully to through route behind massive chockstone. From top of boulders above go left across 10 ft. slab (Severe), then straight to top by slabs and grooves.

Cloch Na H-Oighe.—Slipway.

140 ft. Very Severe.

J. Madden & W. Skidmore. 7th June 1975.

Follows the small steep buttress rising above ledge four at the final boulder belay of Tidemark, and is a good continuation to that route.

Start a few feet down the ledge at open corner. Climb right wall via flake and spike and follow groove to grass ledge on left. Peg belay or runner (50 ft.). Gain and climb narrow ramp up left using belay peg, step down left and traverse to cracks. Go up to square cut recess and exit left to large chockstone belay (50 ft.). Scramble to top (40 ft.).

A' Chir: Coire Daingean.—Chestnut Edge.

300 ft. Severe.

B. Clarke & J. Mackenzie. 18th August 1974.

Takes the seemingly continuous right edge of Slab and Flake Buttress, overlooking Gully 7.

Start at a shelf, climb mossy rock to clean slab and niche on right. Go up then left across steep slab to prominent crack; up this to ledge and large spike. Gain a slab and ledge overlooking gully. Climb steep cracked pinnacle to ledge and walk to finish.

NORTHERN HIGHLANDS**Bein a'Mhuinidh: Lower Band: Waterfall Buttress.—Spider.**

K. Schwartz. 31st July 1975.

250 ft. Difficult.

This route lies midway between Variation Route and Coloured Corner, just left of a block pinnacle low on the face. Climb straight up three steep sections, cross grass ramp, finish easily. (See Northern Highlands Notes).

Creag Mhór Thollaidh: Lower Tollie Crag.—Friday The Thirteenth.

J. Lamb & P. Whillance. 17th June 1975.

260 ft. Hard Very Severe.

Takes the obvious corner capped by an overhang at right end of crag. Start as for Rumble-Fyke.

Climb the steep corner of Rumble-Fyke (without pitons for aid), and follow grassy ramp leftwards to the foot of the corner. Climb corner to roof, traverse out right to lip of overhang and follow large crack above to junction with Rumble-Fyke at steep groove. Finish up easy groove.

Upper Tollie Crag.—Second.

160 ft. Severe.

Miss R. Morrow & K. Schwartz. 31st July 1975.

The second ridge left (east), of Upper Tollie Crag, 100 ft. left of Minute.

Beinn Bhàn: Coire na Poite.—*Mad Hatter's Gully.* 450 ft. GRADE IV/V.
M. Freeman & G. Stephen. 1st February 1976.

The lower half of the gully is a wide, deep snow channel which is followed easily for 500 ft. to where the gully proper starts. Steep ice grooves were then taken to an overhang. This was passed by a left traverse to a ledge, until a wall led to another ledge leading back diagonally rightwards to gain gully. Continue up groove until gully opens out leading more easily to the plateau.

Sgòrr Ruadh: North East Face.—*Robertson's Gully.* 600 ft. GRADE IV.
A. Nisbet & N. Spinks. 31st January 1976.

From the entrance to Coire Lair, a snow gully can be seen curving rightwards and ending at a step on Academy Ridge. Further into the Coire, a steep left branch of the gully becomes prominent, going straight up the cliff parallel with Academy Ridge. (This is named Robertson's Gully in the District guide). There is a deep cave just over half way up.

The gully is climbed direct through a series of chockstone filled chimneys to the cave, which is avoided on the right, re entering the gully by the higher of two traverse lines above the cave. (The gully may be easier with a good build-up of snow or ice).

Central Couloir.—*High Gully.* 400 ft. GRADE III.
M. Hillman & A. Nisbet. 1st February 1976.

High on the left wall of the Central Couloir, just below and opposite to Brown Gully, is a large, two-tiered icefall which forms below a narrow gully. The route climbs the icefall and gully, avoiding the upper step on the right and entering the gully by a chimney which is the left hand of two possible entrances.

Sgùrr An Fhìdhleir.—*Fidelio.* 900 ft. Very Severe.
D. M. Jenkins, P. F. Macdonald & A. McHardy. May 1975.

This route follows a prominent line of weakness on the East Face, between the Direct Route and The Magic Bow slabs, taking the main, rightwards slanting overhang at about their mid point and finishing at an obvious, slabby corner. The first main feature is a large open corner to the right of a rock beak, about a third of the way up the face.

Climb preliminary tiers to lesser overhangs and traverse left into the open corner. Above the corner, follow leftward trending grooves to a break in the main overhangs. Climb through the break and continue by grooves in three excellent pitches to the top. On the final pitch, the slab was climbed direct by a thin crack.

Beinn Dearg: The Glensgualaib Cliffs.—*Wee Freeze Gully.*
D. M. Jenkins & P. F. Macdonald. 1st February 1976. 800 ft. GRADE IV.

The rightward slanting gully roughly midway between Emerald and Fenian Cullies. From below it appears to fade out at half height but in fact it continues further. From its termination a direct line is taken to the top.

—*Pickwick.* 600 ft. GRADE II/III.
M. Freeman & G. Stephen. 31st January 1976.

Follows the obvious rightward trending groove system starting 10 ft. right of Orangeman's Gully.

Continue rightwards when the line becomes indefinite, then swing back left into a large snow bay. Choice of finishing routes.

Alladale: The Alladale Wall, East Wing.—*Narcissus*.

J. Lamb & P. Whillance. 20th June 1975. 600 ft. Hard Very Severe.

Climbs through the diamond shaped depression, taking a line left of Snowdrop and eventually joining that route for the last 300 ft. of scrambling to the top. Pegs were used for some belays.

Start in centre of depression. Climb up to weakness in overlap, climb overlap, move right on lip and continue to ledge. Move left and climb slab to steepening rock and overlaps. Move left to foot of corner and climb this to grass ledge. Traverse right along fault line then up to broken corner. Climb left wall to grass ledge, move right into depression. Scrambling leads to top.

Glenbeg: Western Main Crag.—*Campiglio*. 350 ft. Very Difficult.

Miss R. Morrow & K. Schwartz. 29th July 1975.

The ridge to the right (east) of the gully below The Madonna. Reached by going right about 250-300 ft. below The Madonna.

Follow the ill-defined crest close to the steep left side.

Beinn Eighe: Coire Mhic Fhearchair:**Eastern Buttress, Sandstone Tier.**—*Bloodstone Start*. 350 ft. Mild Severe. W. S. McKerrow & D. M. Nichols.

This is probably the best line on this tier, being direct and clean, unlike the so-called Direct Chimney of Patey's, which is both dirty and dangerously loose. Start at cairn midway between East Central Gully and the Direct Chimney. Above is a ledge under short, wet overhanging chimney.

Gain ledge, go right round corner, back left up fault then steep crack to enter recess with twin rock spikes above. Pass spikes, go up and right towards East Central Gully then back left more easily to Broad Terrace.

Far East Wall.—*Sting*.

300 ft. Very Severe.

J. Ingram & G. Strange. 5th May 1974.

This route follows a line on the left hand section of the crag between Sidewinder and the impressive grey wall. Start at cairn on upper ledge.

Climb obvious left trending groove to grass ledge, traverse right and gain niche. Step off large flake on left and follow steep crack until holds give out, using a nut, gain fixed peg and move left to ledges. Climb by short wall, bulge, then prominent hanging chimney crack to easy ground.

Sgùrr a'Chaoirachain: South Face.—*North Circular*.

T. Doe & J. Duncan. 20th June 1973. 210 ft. Hard Very Severe.

This is a girdle left to right across the buttress containing Sword of Gideon. It starts on the edge of the gully defining the left edge of the buttress.

Using a crack gain the large ledge which is an obvious feature of this section of cliff, follow ledge, step down and round corner. Move right to reach the crack of Sword of Gideon, reverse crack to ledge, move right to another ledge, follow this and go round corner. Continue to reach easy ground. (See Northern Highlands Notes).

Achnashellach: Fuar Tholl, South East Cliff.—*Right End Buttress*.

W. S. McKerrow & D. M. Nichols. 22nd February 1976. 550 ft. GRADE III.

Start right of lower rocks, right of a huge overhanging chimney.

Ledges and short pitches followed by an easy section lead to a steep middle band, after which straightforward climbing to summit.

CAIRNGORMS

Northern Corries: Coire an t-Sneachda.—*Fiacail Buttress.* GRADE III.
M. Freeman & G. Stephen. 13th December 1975.

Summer route followed. Though short, an interesting, sustained route for its grade.

Loch Avon Basin: Hell's Lum Crag.—*Squirk.* 400 ft. Very Difficult.
Miss R. Morrow & K. Schwartz. 13th August 1975.

Start between The Escalator and Sneer. Climb steep buttress by a crack and groove and continue through overlaps. Cross rightwards leading ramp at half height to gain the left hand of two obvious cracks (the right hand crack being Sneer).

Creagan a'Choire Etchachan, Meadow Face.—*Bodkin-Variation Finish.*
G. Reilly, B. Simpson & M. D. Webster. 28th September 1975. 150 ft. Severe.

This provides a better finish, taking the exposed rib left of the original line. From belay above poised slab move up left and climb groove until it steepens at 40 ft. Step round left and climb cracks to gain crest of rib. Follow this to top, finishing above horizontal flake.

Beinn a'Bhuird: Garbh Choire, Mitre Ridge.—*Mitre Direct.*
A. McIvor & G. Stephen. 28th June 1975. 680 ft. Hard Very Severe.
(See Cairngorms Notes).

Start 20 ft. left of the Original (Direct) Route at some snow.

Move left onto rib and climb cracks and grooves for 150 ft. to belay below twin breaks in overlap (poor stance). Climb overlap and continue up cracks, ribs and grooves to belay below obvious notch in steep wall (150 ft.). Traverse slightly rightwards, climb steep corner, go up cracks on edge of buttress to obvious poised flake, then continue to shoulder of ridge (150 ft.). Traverse right then go up to foot of steep wall (100 ft.). (Pitch common to ordinary route). Traverse right across slab to make awkward mantelshelf onto sloping shelf below overhanging wall. Make delicate traverse back left to gain leftmost of twin cracks. Climb crack up gently overhanging wall to reach easier rock (30 ft.) crux. Continue to top of tower and belay (70 ft.). Scramble up and move along arête (friable rock), to foot of second tower (30 ft.). Move slightly rightwards round edge of tower, climb crack for a few feet, then swing back left onto edge and climb steep slab on small holds to top of second tower (60 ft.). Scramble to plateau.

Lochnagar: Black Spout Pinnacle.—*Pinnacle Grooves.*
R. Archbold & G. Strange. 29th June 1975. 250 ft. Hard Very Severe.

Follows a direct line of grooves from foot of Pinnacle Face to easy ground on Route I.

Climb the right hand initial groove of Pinnacle Face to belay on grass ledges on right (50 ft.). Move right then go left and up to large downward pointing flake. Layback up its left side to step into smooth groove on left. Climb groove to grass stance and belay (60 ft.). Continue up groove left of prominent overhang to grass ledge on right (60 ft.). Step left, then go up about 30 ft. Here grass ledges lead horizontally right for 50 ft. to start of The Link.

The Link.—*Independent Start.*

100 ft. Very Severe.

G. Muhlemann & G. Strange. 29th June 1975.

Just right of start of Route I is a recess with steep vegetated crack above. Scramble to foot of this crack and climb obvious parallel cracks in short chimney on left. Continue up leftwards over vegetation then steep slabs which lead to stance at end of first pitch of The Link, 60 ft. above the spring-board.

—*Direct Finish.*

20 ft. Hard Very Severe.

G. Muhlemann & G. Strange. 29th June 1975.

From ledge after swinging block, move up right and climb overhang direct.

Tough-Brown Face.—*Dirge.*

500 ft. Hard Very Severe.

D. Dinwoodie & A. McIvor. May 1975.

A tortuous line up the steep slabs between Crypt and Post Mortem, joining Post Mortem high on the face. Start just right of first grassy dièdre of Crypt.

Climb a shallow corner and pull over bulge. Move up right and go straight up to small ledge. Follow obvious traverse line right and go up to small ledge below obvious 20 ft. corner (100 ft.). Climb the corner, hard exit, and step up right to grassy ledge (30 ft.). Climb the vee cleft above (damp), and step down left. Using a high peg, tension down left under bulge to a cramped niche. Go left and up to deep crevasse behind two big detached flakes. Go along the flakes to belay at far end (100 ft.). Climb up to heather ledge and follow a grassy ramp away up right to a good stance on lip (120 ft.). This is junction with Post Mortem which comes up the overhang below.

West Buttress.—*Causeway Rib.*

GRADE IV.

R. Archbold & G. Strange. 18th January 1975.

Climbed in powder snow conditions. No particular crux on a sustained route.

White Mounth: Eagle's Rock.—*The Stretcher.* 250 ft. Hard Very Severe.

D. Dinwoodie & A. McIvor. 4th May 1975.

On *A Likely Story* slab. Start at white trickle mark near lowest left corner of slab.

Climb up to first overlap, move left along lip and up bulging scoop above to belay crack (60 ft.). Move right over slabs and up by a big hold to crack running down from next lap. Climb double overlap above crack and go away up left below another overlap and straight up to ledge below sharp nose in final big overlap (130 ft.). Climb lap just right of nose and go up right to gain grassy crack leading to heather (60 ft.).

—*Flamingo.*

400 ft. Hard Very Severe.

R. Archbold & G. Strange. 4th May 1975.

This climb lies on the slabby grey buttress immediately left of Gibber. It is not a watercourse and may be dry when other routes on this section are wet. Start at recess below small buttress at foot of lowest continuous rock (as for Gibber).

Go up left then follow easy rocks up and left to belay close to left-bounding watercourse (140 ft.). Go up left side of flake, and from its apex climb overhang split by crack to make a very thin move onto smooth slab above. Go left then up right to belay (50 ft.). Descend slightly and move left into prominent vee groove. Follow this until possible to move right to heather platform.

Continue via chimney to large blocks (100 ft.). Climb slabby face above fairly centrally, to exit by vegetation on right. Easy rocks to top.

—*Sliver*.

500 ft. GRADE III.

R. Archbold & G. Strange. December 1974.

The watercourse left of Flamingo, climbed on fairly continuous water ice. Escapes seem possible to left.

—*Sliver*.

500 ft. GRADE III/IV.

R. Archbold & G. Strange. January 1976.

The icefall right of Gibber. Variation possible but no obvious escapes. On this ascent the icefall was abandoned after 100 ft. in favour of a line trending up rightwards.

Creag an Dubh Loch: Broad Terrace Wall.—*The Sting*.

L. Brown & P. Nunn. June 1975. 500 ft. Very Severe.

Start below Falkenhorst under a prominent triangular, overhanging groove.

Climb groove at right hand side, taking overlap to reach apex of groove. Climb the overhang, avoiding loose block (peg runner), continue up crack above to sloping grassy ledge. Go up slightly right to another ledge with detached block. Climb short groove to small stance and belay (100 ft.). Follow main groove to ledge on left, climb over loose blocks then go up left easily to large rock ledge. Climb deep crack at back of ledge to another ledge and belay (100 ft., junction with Falkenhorst). Traverse horizontally left 15 ft. to shallow groove and climb this with difficulty to large grass recess (80 ft.). Climb left hand corner at back of ledge to recess below short overhanging wall (30 ft.). Climb central crack, loose block finish, to reach belay on large ledge (60 ft.). Easier climbing trending left leads to top (130 ft.).

CENTRAL HIGHLANDS

Aonach Beag: Stob Coire Bhealaich.—*The Ramp*. 1,000 ft. GRADE II.

K. V. Crocket, R. Hockey, B. E. H. Maden, R. Miller & R. Pillinger.

8th February 1975.

Approaching from Glen Nevis, this climb is found about a mile before the North East Ridge of Aonach Beag, with which it can easily be confused on a clear day by experienced parties. (G.R. NN 206712). Just north of the Aonach Beag Sgùrr Choinnich Beag col, a prominent buttress falls into the corrie on the east flank of Stob Coire Bhealaich. This is the (unnamed) top half a mile south east of Aonach Beag. The buttress is attached to the top by an obvious ridge. Left of the crest of the buttress is a long, tapering snow slope which appears from below to be a couloir. It is, in fact, a ramp rising through a fairly steep face, and in the good snow conditions encountered gave an excellent long climb.

Climb the ramp, several pitches, to the top (800 ft.). Continue by the ridge to the summit, very exposed on the left (200 ft.).

BEN NEVIS

Number Three Gully Buttress.—*Two-Step Corner*. 400 ft. GRADE IV.

D. Kirtley & D. Montgomery. March 1975. 2 hours.

On the steep left flank of the buttress is a corner, interrupted by the traverse line of the original route. Start right of the original route and follow the corner to a belay on the ledge. Climb the corner above, now very steep, which presents a cornice finish.

North Wall of Carn Dearg.—*Harrison's Climb Direct.* 900 ft. GRADE IV.
K. V. Crocket & C. Gilmore. 7th February 1976.

This is virtually a distinct route, two pitches only being in common with Harrison's Climb.

The first pitch takes the direct start and was climbed on steep ice to a flake belay. Harrison's Climb was then followed as far as the large icefall in the original description. From the right end of this a rising line rightwards led to the buttress edge overlooking Raeburn's Buttress. This is on Cousin's Buttress. The route now followed Cousin's Buttress for several pitches (previously avoided in winter), to reach easier ground in the upper corrie.

GLENCOE, GLEN ETIVE & ARDGOUR

Garbh Bheinn of Ardgour: Subsidiary Buttresses.—*Garbh Choire Buttress.*

This attractive buttress lies high on the south flank of the Garbh Choire, between the Leac Bheag Buttress and the Garbh Choire Slabs, and several hundred feet above these. (See *S.M.C.J.*, xxx, 1974, 277). It is easily reached by a path traversing in from the Bealach. The name Garbh Choire Buttress is suggested.

—*Percussion.*

J. Cant & P. Gribbon. April 1974.

250 ft. Hard Severe.

Near the left end of the buttress is a corner crack starting at a large block (cairn). Climb corner to small slab, traverse rightwards across slab under an overhang to gain foot of groove with an overhanging crest. Flake belay. Climb groove and overhang to finish. A good, sustained route.

—*Cantilena.*

K. V. Crocket & I. Fulton. 16th June 1974.

330 ft. Severe.

At the right end of the buttress is a flying buttress. Start up corner left of this, move onto and climb rib to slab, go up and left, climb overlap via rib, climb second slab and wall to belay. Climb to block overhang, pass this on the left then climb right and up wall on superb holds. Scramble to top.

North East Buttress: Second Tier.—*Near Enough.* 310 ft. Hard Severe.
W. Anderson & G. Grassom. June 1975.

At the far right end of the tier is a prominent corner. Start 25 ft. right of the corner at a crack line.

Take crack line to small recess with belay on right (130 ft.). Continue on crack line trending slightly leftwards aiming for a shallow scoop. This is just right of top of corner. Climb scoop to belay (130 ft.). Traverse left and up to easier ground (50 ft.).

SOUTHERN HIGHLANDS

Beinn an Dòthaidh: North East Coire. *Taxus Icefall Finish.*

350 ft. GRADE III/IV.

J. Crawford, D. Dawson, J. Madden, W. Skidmore. 25th January 1976.

Takes the large icefall on the summit wall from where Taxus Gully bends abruptly left. Three pitches on ice.

—*West Buttress.*

400 ft. GRADE III.

J. Crawford, D. Dawson, W. Skidmore. 1st February 1976.

This is the main buttress in the corrie, bounded left and right by Twofold Gully and Haar respectively. (North West Buttress is the name suggested for this whole section of cliff in the district guide, but the name is perhaps more applicable to the single buttress immediately right of West Gully).

A series of chimney grooves run full height centrally, providing an obvious winter line. Gain system from right using broad, tapering shelf, climb directly to top on rock, snow, ice and frozen turf.

Creag Coire an Dòthaidh.—*Salamander Gully.*

K. V. Crocket & J. A. P. Hutchinson. 25th January 1976. 500 ft. GRADE III.

This is the large cliff at the head of Coire an Dòthaidh, for which the above name is suggested. The cliff faces west and is of winter interest only. At the left is a shallow gully, leading to a prominent icefall. This is fed by a spring on the plateau, and should be in condition after a few days freeze.

A gully leads to the icefall. This was climbed in two sections; a groove on the left leading to a traverse right across the icefall, then up and left over bulges to the top. A slab of ice was taken right to a smaller ice pitch which led to the plateau. Escape is possible below the icefall.

—*B.O. Buttress.*

C. Gilmore & C. Grant. 25th January 1976.

650 ft. GRADE III.

This route climbs the centre of the buttress fairly directly, using a series of elegant short traverses to pass steep walls in the lower part. Start at middle of crag at broad scoop to right of ill defined rocks. Above is a prominent red wall.

Climb to belay at foot of red wall (100 ft.). Traverse right, climb short corner then go up and left to ledge below short wall (130 ft.). Go right to end of ledge then back left and up to belay (120 ft.). Climb straight to top (300 ft.).

Beinn Dubh, Glen Lochy.—*Sickle Gully.*

1,000 ft. GRADE III.

R. Lambert & J. Mackenzie. January 1969. 5 hours.

This is the central gully of three found on the north face of Beinn Dubh. The summer ascent is noted in *S.M.C.J.*, xxx, 1973, 182. The gully may be unique to the area, being narrow and Nevis-like in character, with gully walls 50-200 ft. in height. The crux was a 70 ft. pitch near the top, where the gully narrows. In thin conditions the gully will have more pitches, including one of over 150 ft.

Creag Tharsuinn.—*Terminal Wall.*

200 ft. Very Severe.

J. Johnson & W. Skidmore. 29th June 1975.

On the pale, high right wall of upper MacLay's Gully.

Climb lower gully to grassy groove on right leading to belays under large roof. Peg and sling found here (10 ft.). Climb left wall to flakes and go up to second overhang. Take corner crack until possible to step left down to main crack line. Follow this over bulges and sentry box to small ledge and thread belay high on face (110 ft.). Climb crack to top (50 ft.).

—*V-Groove*.

250 ft. GRADE IV.

K. V. Crocket & I. Fulton. 24th January 1976.

Start left of the summer route directly below the chimney. Climb steep wall to enter chimney. This was taken as far as the final bulge at 90 ft., where rotten ice forced an exposed traverse across the left wall to a stance on the buttress. A sustained, serious pitch (140 ft.). Climb grooves and short walls overlooking the easy finish of V Groove to a belay just below the top (110 ft.).

—*Curving Gully*.

350 ft. GRADE II/III.

A. Craig & J. Mackenzie. 31st January 1976.

A choice of starts, the best being a small ice pitch 30 ft. right of the gully mouth. Follow main branch of gully on left, up steep groove, then follow right fork to ice pitch leading to rake.

—*Arch Chimney*.

400 ft. GRADE III.

A. Craig & J. Mackenzie. 31st January 1976.

From base of rake follow shallow gully to ice pitch. Climb this by right wall to enter small amphitheatre. Climb fine steep left fork to iced chimney and so to top. A fine route of continuous interest.

The Brack.—*May Route*.

300 ft. GRADE III.

K. V. Crocket & C. Stead. 31st January 1976.

Start at short corner and follow grooves and short walls to top of crag. Here a difficult rock band barred the way and a short traverse left led into a gully, finishing by an ice pitch.

—*January Buttress*.

300 ft. GRADE II/III.

K. V. Crocket & C. Stead. 31st January 1976.

This small buttress lies to the left of May Route, and is separated from that route by a small gully. The buttress is the natural continuation to the Inglis Clark Arête.

Gain and climb a sloping groove on the right flank of the buttress, finish easily by the gully on the right, or more directly by an ice fall on the left wall.

Beinn an Lochan.—*Saxifrage Gully*.

250 ft. GRADE III.

B. Clarke & J. Mackenzie. 15th December 1974.

The narrow chimney crack at the blockage was climbed directly.

Creag Liath.—*Hand-Out Crack*.

60 ft. Very Severe.

B. Clarke & J. Mackenzie. June 1974.

Right of Farewell is a vertical crack with a small tree at 40 ft. Ledges lead to the crack which is climbed with difficulty to the tree. Finish up the wall above.

—*The Pod*.

50 ft. Very Severe.

B. Clarke & J. Mackenzie. June 1974.

Right of Hand-Out Crack is a peapod-shaped corner. Climb this, finishing up the right wall on hidden holds.

—*H'eck*.

120 ft. Very Severe.

B. Clarke & J. Mackenzie. June 1974.

Left of Fall-Out is an overhanging flake crack. Climb the left side of this to ledge and belay. Strenuous (40 ft.). Traverse right to ledge and climb bulging wall above to small tree (peg), trend left up grooves to finish (80 ft.).

Kilpatrick Hills: Loch Humphrey Crag.—*The Old Kilpatrick Nerve Tonic*. 115 ft. Severe.

B. Clarke & J. Mackenzie. 8th August 1974.

Gain a tree filled terrace to start up the left side of the buttress (arrow). Climb cracked wall to tree, traverse right and belay beneath crack (70 ft.). Climb corner and slab above (45 ft.).

REGIONAL NOTES**Orkney**

Island of Hoy.—*Rora Head* (near Old Man of Hoy). From Rackwick, Rora Head is reached in about 45 minutes. A gully leads to the sea with a short abseil down a loose section. On the right is a square cut buttress, almost 400 ft., of good, clean rock. It was climbed by C. Remy & Y. Remy in May 1975, was graded a VI, and some dirty birds were encountered.

Skye

Sgùrr a'Mhadaidh—*Thunder Rib*. F. J. Rech & A. Taylor. May 1975. We have an account of a route hopefully different from the original ascent. The left traverse on Thunder Rib, though devious, is the natural line of weakness; any line followed on this buttress without the use of a detailed description will almost certainly approximate Smith's line. (A more detailed description will be found in *S.M.C.J.*, *xxix*, 1970, 317). Additionally, rumour has it that J. Amatt did a direct ascent, requiring the use of aid, but declined to mention it in case Smith had gone the same way free! Mr Amatt is invited to correspond with us on the subject.

Sgùrr Mhic Coinnich.—*Mongoose*. The first ascent of this was wrongly attributed to an L. G. Brown and an R. G. Wilson (*S.M.C.J.*, *xxx*, 1975, 383). This was due to an error in correspondence and a rapidly ailing Editor, for which we apologise. It was, in fact, climbed on the first ascent by P. Botteril & J. Lamb, 24th June 1974.

Rhum

H. M. Brown ruminates: The guide book cover picture is of Barkeval, *not* Trollaval.

The N.W. sea cliffs were explored and proved disappointing, the rock being generally loose and vegetated. The big 'sail' of rock at Schooner Point is an unrelenting array of shattered pillars, all overlapping the wrong way.

Northern Highlands

Fionaven: Creag Urthard. Please note that the main lines indicated by the photograph in MacInnes's 'Scottish Climbs,' are wildly and hopelessly inaccurate. This has led to several teams expending honest sweat to no avail.

We promise to publish an up-to-date and definitive diagram in the 1977 *S.M.C.J.* In the interim, be advised that several routes are in fairly close proximity to each other, in the area around *Fingal*, and accordingly, we can accept no further routes between the second waterfall and *K.W.H.*

Sgùrr a'Chaorachain: South Face. This crag is now saturated and can, with decency, hold no more lines. We can mention that there are several one-pitch variations to Sword of Gideon, all of which, including that route itself, were climbed by R.A.F. teams before Patcy went on record.

Cnap Coire Loch Tuach: South Eastern Crag. K. Schwartz writes, there are three clean, slabby buttresses on the south eastern side of Cnap Coire Loch Tuath, increasing in size towards Loch Prille and lying between Grid references 293824 and 297827. The leftmost buttress gave excellent climbing of about Difficult standard.

Letterewe Forest: Beinn a'Chasgein Mór: Carnmore Crag. Two girdle traverses of this crag were completed on Easter Monday, April 1974. We feel that detailed descriptions would be repugnant; being foreign to both the atmosphere and history of the area, and recent publication policy. However, for a general synopsis, see Article this issue.

The perpetrators were—on the 'left to right' girdle, P. Buckley, B. E. H. Maden and, (on the first half) M. J. O'Hara. On the high level girdle of the upper wall, A. Farrel & M. Harris. We are grateful to B. E. H. Maden for this information.

Beinn a'Mhuinidh: Lower Band: Waterfall Buttress. This crag is virtually exhausted, and accordingly we feel it should be 'rested,' at least for the immediate future.

Creag Mhór Tollaidh: Upper Tollie Crag.—*The Bug.* The party of the first ascent were P. Botteril & J. Lamb, 11th June 1974, and not as recorded (*S.M.C.J.*, xxx, 1975, 385).

Ben Nevis

Observatory Ridge.—*Indicator Wall.* From our War Correspondent—J. Barry (Mountain & Arctic Warfare Cadre), writes that some of his group made a solo winter ascent. Presumably this was done in single file.

Tower Ridge, N.W. Face.—*The Chute* (Ruritarian Climb). B. E. H. Maden writes: These appear to be winter and summer versions of the same route. The C.U.M.C. party referred to in the Ben Nevis guidebook as being on the first summer ascent consisted of, B. E. H. Maden, D. Fagan & M. J. O'Hara.

Maden recommends that the route be henceforth called *The Chute*, summer and winter.

Cairngorms

Creagan a'Choire Etchachan. We have received from I. Reilly & A. Gibson a description of an alternative start to *The Shoath*, using the crack system 10 ft. right of the initial corner. It provides a good alternative when the corner is wet.

Glas Tulaichean (Glen Shee area). D. Lang has sent details of six routes which he and companions climbed last autumn on this distinct peak 5 miles west of the Devil's Elbow. The climbs are all on a slabby, south facing belt of rock in the 'North Coire' (unnamed on 1-inch O.S. map). Grid ref. 056767. The rock is clean, solid, compact mica schist with quartzite intrusions, and provides pleasant, fairly easy climbing. The routes climbed were graded from Moderate to Very Difficult, up to 250 ft. in length. Lang particularly recommends two lines (*Central Route* and *Flanking Edge*), on the central and right section of the right hand mass of rock.

Beinn a'Bhuird.—*North Face of Squareface.* G. Strange writes: With R. Archbold in June 1975, I attempted to climb the left hand section of this impressive face. The climbing was not technical; but distinctly unpleasant on very brittle, coarse grained granite. After a few, fairly anxious hours we reached a point near the top of the obvious crack in the left skyline slab. Fear then drove us back to finish repulsively in the prominent funnel. Future aspirants would be better employed on the fierce crack near the centre of the face.

—*Mitre Ridge.* In light of Stephen and McIvor's new line up the crest of the ridge (see *New Climbs*), it would appear reasonable to alter the name of the 1933 *Direct Route* to *Original Route*. This would avoid the use of pretentious titles such as 'Super Direct' etc., for what is clearly a fine modern solution to this classic.

Ben Macdhui: Shelterstone Crag. J. Lamb and P. Whillance note free ascents of *The Pin* and *Steeple*, made in May 1975.

Lochnagar: Black Spout Pinnacle.—*Winter Face.* Notwithstanding two ascents of *Route 1*, this was the first known complete ascent of the *Corrie Face* of the Black Spout Pinnacle. Previously, in January 1966, Grassick, Light and Nicol had climbed the summer line of *Pinnacle Face*; but darkness forced a retreat by abseil after joining *Route 1*, 400 ft. below the summit. In 1972, Dinwoodie and Stuart, while attempting a second ascent of *Pinnacle Face*, found a relatively straightforward diagonal fault above the summer crux which led to the final steep corner, thus by-passing the difficult flake pitch. Their attempt was abandoned after Dinwoodie fell at the top of the corner. In 1974, benefiting from an uncommonly heavy build-up of snow on the Pinnacle, Lang and Quinn made the ascent of *Winter Face*, described in the article in this issue.

Starting from the *Mound*, they crossed *Pinnacle Face* via the obvious diagonal fault (part of which had been used by Dinwoodie and Stuart) and joined *Route 1* about 40 ft. below its junction with *Pinnacle Face*. A few weeks later Dinwoodie and McIvor climbed *Pinnacle Face* to the summit.

Central Buttress. We have note of a winter ascent of Patey's *Direct Route* on Central Buttress, made in March 1975, by N. D. Keir and M. Geddes. The previous winter, Keir with M. Freeman had taken a more direct line closer to *Shallow Gully* (see *S.M.C.J.*, xxx, 1974, 274). Additionally, in March 1975, Keir and D. Mardon climbed *Sinister Buttress* by a line close to, but right of the *Direct Route* (*Terrorist*—GRADE IV).

Creag an Dubh Loch.—*Falconhurst* (*S.M.C.J.*, xxx, 1974, 274). This should read—*Falkenhorst* (i.e. Falcon's eyrie).

Dubh Loch Monster. The piton on the second pitch has been eliminated by J. Lamb & P. Whillance.

Culloden. A free ascent by J. Lamb & P. Whillance. Instead of moving left from monster flake belay, climb overhanging crack direct from belay into groove above. (Pitch three).

Ardgour

Garbh Bheinn.—*The South Wall of The Great Ridge.* G. Strange notes: In May 1975, R. Archbold and I traversed the upper tier of the South Wall. Crossing from left to right and keeping fairly high, most of the climbing was of a pleasant Severe nature, except for one excellent pitch across *The Clasp*.

MISCELLANEOUS NOTES

Forging Ahead: First Award Marks J.M.C.S. Jubilee.—The J.M.C.S. are to be congratulated on winning the first national award given by the Association for the Preservation of Rural Scotland for their reconstruction of the former smithy at Dundonnell as a climbing hut (see *S.M.C.J.*, 1973, xxx, 189 and 1975, xxx, 346). J. H. Clark reports:

"The Association for the Protection of Rural Scotland recognises the climbers' hut, The Smiddy at Dundonnell, Ross and Cromarty, as a particularly fine example of a reconstructed building with an appropriate change of use. This work by the Junior Mountaineering Club of Scotland (Edinburgh Section) undoubtedly contributes to the rural scene in Scotland and is the Award Winner for 1975."

This citation accompanied the presentation in Edinburgh on 15 December 1975 of the inaugural A.P.R.S. Award by the Rt. Hon. Viscount Muirshiel, K.T., C.H., C.M.G., Chairman of the Scottish Grand Committee, U.K. Council for European Architectural Heritage Year 1975. The Award takes the form of a plaque of metal filled resin of traditional Scottish look yet modern design by the sculptor Hew Lorimer and was executed by Max Allan. It bears the date 1975 and was installed in The Smiddy at the conclusion of the Club's Jubilee Year with which the presentation happily coincided.

'A report by the Judging Panel of five A.P.R.S. Members states, "The decision was very difficult because the standard of the final few was so high. In fact, only a hair's breadth separated the winner from the entry which had to fall into second place the restored group at Maxwelton, Dumfriesshire.

"The winner, the Climbers' Hut is situated close to the main road at the foot of An Teallach, a dramatic mountain in the marvellous wilderness area of the North West. The simple building, an old smiddy, has been extremely well adapted to serve its purpose as a short-stay shelter. The work displays very careful thought and a high standard of execution. There is an excitement about the place that is all too rare in building terms. The retention of the forge and many tools and implements, the Spartan but by no means crude arrangements, even touches of humour and most of all the respect that is shown by the users of the place, all add up to a satisfying job. The work was carried out on a very limited budget, largely by voluntary and unskilled labour. The establishment of a plantation of Scots Pine close by illustrates the care shown by the climbers."

Planting of these trees was carried out on the weekend of 8th March and this small enclosure is known as the Jubilee Plantation.'

Rip van MacWinkle.—George Roger reports that he has read in the *Glasgow Illustrated Magazine* for December 1975 that the famous J.M.C.S. Jubilee Dinner held last October was in celebration of their 150th Anniversary. The article included a photograph showing several founder members present at the dinner all of whom looked remarkably fit considering the youngest can't have been much under 170. Long live this most senior Mountaineering Club!

Chaos at the Turnstile.—There is undoubtedly a lot of Munro-completing going on which is not being reported to the Authorities. The only new reports received since the last *Journal* have been sent in by informers. In each case the act of completing was committed several years ago so they cannot be allotted their proper place in the sequence until the special Last Trump for Munroists is sounded when they will be allotted their true places and receive their just deserts. They are provisionally (121) Colin Turner, 1972,



Romsdalshorn—Perhaps the most climbed summit in Norway for British visitors. From Andalsnes camp site. *Photo: Hamish M. Brown*



—, —; (122) Janet Clark, 1973, —, —; (123) John Mills, 1973, —, —; (124) Don Smithies, 1973, —, —. Two corrections to previous entries have been sent in. (92) Reg. Hainsworth and (84) R. Cook have both done the Tops and should read 1973, 1973, — and 1969, 1969, — respectively.

While others never flagging.—(61) H. M. Brown writes to say that he completed the Munros for the fifth time in 1975. He explains:

'It is a hard job convincing folk I am not essentially a Munro-bagger. 1975 also gave me several months in Norway, ski-ing in the Pyrenees, trips to Munroless regions such as Ardgour, Sutherland and Rhum as well as rock climbing and canoeing. To be labelled a Munro-bagger is quite unfair!'

The bad news—for Munroists, is that any tallies lacking Sgùrr nan Ceanraichean, 5 miles east of Achnashellach, are incomplete. On the latest O.S. Map it has been elevated to the peerage with a height of 915 m. No doubt other reclassifications will emerge as the new maps are published. We hope to include these in the next issue.

With oak leaf clusters.—Last year the Scottish Sports Council could have been awarded the Ignobel Prize for Bureaucratic Literature (*S.M.C.J.*, 1975, *xxx*, 396). This year they have achieved the hat-trick. The *Sunday Times* has awarded them a similar prize for Bureaucratic Sportsmanship. This newspaper reports, perhaps inaccurately, that of £75,000 granted to the S.S.C. £60,000 was spent on 'administration.'

Winter Gradings.—One cannot fail to notice that misconceptions about the numerical grading system are arising. References to pitches of 'Scottish Grade IV' etc. are appearing in other journals and the glossies. We would remind readers that a numerical Winter Grade is merely a broad assessment of the overall seriousness of a given route in winter conditions and is not a technical standard. Existing nomenclature for technical standards, Severe, Very Severe, etc. are still applicable for individual pitches on a winter climb. The whole thing is directly analogous to the French adjectival system of D, TD, etc. for the routes, and the accompanying numerical classification IV, V, VI, etc. for technical difficulty within the route—only rather Irish (or Australian), if you see what we mean.

The Life Membership Fund

Danse McAbre.—The retiring Hon. Treasurer, J. C. Donaldson, sends us this summary of how to maintain the equilibrium of a Life Membership Fund, short of sending time-expired members a flask of hemlock. In our opinion the whole point of becoming a Life Member is to gamble and win. It will be harder now that the Club is playing with loaded dice.

'Members might like to know a little more about the Fund than was disclosed at the A.G.M. at Stirling, especially in view of my appeal to existing members for additional voluntary contributions.

'A Life Membership Fund should, if it is properly constituted, provide an agreed annual sum for the ordinary funds of the body with which it is associated. This sum is made up partly of interest credited to the Fund, the balance being drawn from the capital sum contributed by the member on becoming a Life Member. The interest is never enough to cover the sum drawn although at first it will almost do so. However, with the lapse of years the interest element drops and a larger sum has to be drawn from capital. If calculations are correctly made the sum originally contributed should run out the year the member dies.

Photo: D. J. Bennet

C.I.C. Hut, North-East Buttress and the Douglas Boulder, Ben Nevis

'I have always had the feeling that our Life Membership Fund did not comply with the requirements of a well regulated Fund, and that, very probably, it was bankrupt. My principal reason for thinking this was that the rates for commutation were based entirely on the length of membership, no consideration being given to the member's age which seemed very unsound to me. Thus anyone joining the Club at 20 could at 40 commute for £8 8s 0d. In the case of a healthy member this sum might have to cover 40 years.

'The probability that the Fund was insolvent ought to have been apparent to Members 60 years ago but the *Journal* does not reveal any evidence that this ever occurred to Members. . . .

'In 1913 there were 73 Life Members and 23 of them had only about £1 2s 0d each capital left in the Fund. Only six of the 23 died before 1920, another 5 died in the twenties, six more in the thirties and the final six were spread over the forties. Certainly all who survived 1920 must have been carried by the other members for the rest of their memberships.

'At the present time there are 51 Life Members, 43 at old rates and 8 at new rates. Of the 43 I calculate that 12 have already exhausted their investment and the remainder have not enough left to allow of any increase of the sum of 50p per annum drawn for ordinary funds. The bulk of the present Life Membership Fund represents the capital put in by members who commuted at the new rates.

'One other major point is the rate of interest credited in the past to the Fund. The policy followed by the Hon. Auditor and myself in recent years has been to credit the fund with interest at the average rate earned by the Club on its investments. Previously, it appears to have been a fixed rate of 4% less tax irrespective of what the Club was receiving. Now I have looked back at the accounts as far as 1930 and for 30 years the Club never received more than 3½%, the greater part of that period being 3% with an even smaller return for some years, the ultimate absurdity being achieved in 1954 when the interest credited to ordinary Club Funds after deducting the sum transferred to the Life Membership Fund was 2d. This was the return on £1,000 of capital held for purposes other than those of the Life Membership Fund, which was, therefore, being subsidised at the expense of General Funds.

'The A.G.M. approved the reopening of the Fund for Members aged 65 and over. Those who were present at the meeting know that there was a prolonged and animated discussion on subs and when a discussion goes on too long the result may not always be what the proposer of a motion intended. In this case I think Life Membership may turn out too cheap so I would counsel my successor to watch the position carefully—after I have commuted!

'Lastly I would like to express my appreciation to those Members who have already sent me donations and also to say that I fully realise the problems of older members who have been caught by inflation. Neither I, nor any other member I am sure, would want them to feel that they must contribute over and above their original payment.'

As a *Coup de Grace* we have this addendum:

The Treasurer wishes to thank those Life Members who have responded to his appeal for donations. He would be glad to hear from any other Member who commuted at the old rate and who would like to make a voluntary contribution to the Fund.

TO THE BARRICADES!

ALL of us are increasingly aware of the growing pressures being exerted on the mountain environment and its traditional freedoms by Organisation Man. Such activities are often well intentioned but even more often misguided. Much as we regret having to give space to matters which frequently have no direct relation to mountaineering we feel that there is a need to alert members to possible threats to our interests, maintain some record of what is being done in defence, and to exhort members to assist where they can. The Mountaineering Council of Scotland, of which the Club is a member, clearly represents the principal phalanx of defence and its tireless secretary, Sandy Cousins, the spearhead.

The Grampian Way

This controversial proposal by the Countryside Commission for Scotland has already been the subject of debate in the Press, with Club members participating on both sides.

Sandy Cousins writes:—'Under Section 39 (1) of the Countryside Scotland Act, 1967 (Part III) the Countryside Commission says it "... is required to submit proposals for long distance routes to the Secretary of State for Scotland ...' (Where a NEED is established, one hopes).

'The Commission sought the views of the various interested parties a couple of years ago on a route up Loch Lomondside, over Rannoch Moor and across the Devil's Staircase to Fort William. This seemed to have general consent and the scheme is going ahead though it will take several years to complete. A detailed Report was published. This is generally a low level route along lochside, glen and existing Rights of Way. It is fairly close to roads and habitation so "escape" is fairly easy and thus mountaineers saw little danger to walkers.

'The Scottish Countryside Activities Council, on which the Mountaineering Council of Scotland (and thus the S.M.C.) is a member, has mixed feelings about long distance routes. While the M.C.S. sees no need for them it concedes that many walkers think they need them. Mountaineers do not wish to deny others enjoyment but point to the S.M.C. Guide Books, Moir's "Hill Paths and Tracks," the information by the Scottish Rights of Way Society. There is also traditional freedom to walk in OUR country—with due respect for landowning, agricultural and other interests. In six years the M.C. of S. has only had one adverse comment about climbers—a good record of co-operation. The S.C.A.C. has a route well surveyed by the late David Jack linking the Pennine Way to Glasgow and feels the Commission might well study that and think of such a walk before launching into areas of the Highlands where problems of numbers, ecology, safety, etc. are more apparent.

'Long distance routes may have greater relevance in England and Wales where the establishment of all-year access in the face of their trespass laws presents a problem.

'However, even there the British Mountaineering Council already reports misgivings on future proposals and some regrets on the effects of the Pennine Way. This is a very difficult matter on which to achieve balance but it is reported that the Countryside Commission in England have decided not to proceed with any new Ways.'

THE STATE OF PLAY.—At the time of writing (March, 1976), the C.C.S. have issued detailed proposals which will be submitted to the Secretary of State for Scotland for his approval after opportunity for comment by interested bodies has been afforded.

The proposals fall into two main parts: (a) the route from Elgin to Glenmore Lodge, (b) from Glenmore to Blair Atholl.

The first section is at low altitude and follows a combination of country roads, tracks and disused railway lines from Elgin—Millbuie—Knockando—Grantown-on-Spey—then through the Abernethy Forest to Glenmore. This section does not seem to have encountered much opposition and does not encroach upon mountain country.

The second half of the Way passes Forest Lodge, Glenmore to the Sinclair Hut and thence by the Lairig Ghru to either the White Bridge or Inverey and then via Glen Tilt to Blair Atholl.

The suggested improvements on this second section include sign posts, map boards, warning notices, work on paths and the conversion of the lower Geldie stable or of Ruigh nan Clach to a bothy. The estimated capital costs of these works approach £30,000 and the costs for the whole route are estimated at about £120,000.

The Grampian Way seems to have generated far more opposition than support. Most of the objections are to the part of the route which traverses mountain country and are on grounds which include safety considerations, intrusion into wild country and the encouragement of casual visitors who may lack the requisite competence and create needless 'people pressure' on a route which is already well known and fairly heavily used. Among other bodies the Grampian Region has indicated its disapproval, as have a number of mountaineering clubs, including the S.M.C. The M.C.S. has compiled a cogently argued and comprehensively adverse comment which is being forwarded to the C.C. of S.

It will be both interesting and instructive to see whether in the face of this considerable body of popular opposition, the Secretary of State for Scotland will give assent to the proposals. At present the C.C.S. are sticking to their guns. If their plans are frustrated one can feel a certain amount of sympathy for them as they have put so much time, effort and money into the project. However, it is worthy of comment that although the C.C.S. list 22 corporate bodies whom they consulted in the preparation of their report, the M.C.S., which represents the interests of the hill walkers and climbers who are the principal recreational users of the mountain country traversed by the Way, is not listed. Such consultation with mountaineering interests as did occur only took place after the plans were virtually complete. This seems a pity, as there is a good deal of common ground between the aims and attitudes of the C.C.S. and ourselves. Let us hope that this may be the basis for constructive co-operation in the future.

POSTSCRIPT.—We are happy to record that the C.C.S. has changed its mind since the above was written. As reported in the Press, the proposals for the second part of the Grampian Way have been shelved and the Commission is thinking again. We offer our congratulations to the Commission on its readiness to change its mind.

High Level Shelters in The Cairngorms

It has been estimated by Slesser (who is familiar with such calculations) that if all the files on this subject were piled one on top of the other they would extend from the C.I.C. Hut to a point level with the top of the Douglas Boulder. It is not our purpose to add to this body of wisdom and loquacity but merely to record (a) The Curran and St. Valery Shelters were finally demolished last summer and (b) summarise briefly the long series of events which led to the demolition. These events illustrate that the Sinister Powers of Interest are as alive today against Truth and Reason as they were in the days of the Cornisk Affair (*S.M.C.J.*, 1969, *xxix*). To be more serious, the 'bothies affair' raises matters of much greater import than the fate of the shelters themselves. Once again the issue arises of whether a matter primarily

affecting mountaineering activities and mountain safety is to be decided by the informed opinion of the mountaineering and mountain rescue organisations or subject to arbitrary decisions by local politicians. That the Cairngorm Mountain Rescue Association played such a central role in this affair will have done nothing to improve their reputation or credibility in the climbing world. The account given here is considerably abbreviated. A fuller version appears in the Cairngorm Club *Journal* No. 96, 1975.

The chronicle goes like this . . .

1963: The Army erected St. Valery and El Alamein for the now defunct Cairngorm Trust. 1967: The Navy erected the much larger Curran for the Cairngorm Mountain Rescue Association. There was no consultation beforehand but at the time Adam Watson, John Duff and Ben Humble all wrote letters pointing out the dangers of this bothy. In 1968 the Mountain Rescue Committee for Scotland expressed its unanimous opposition to high level shelters.

The Stage was thus set . . .

November 1971: The Lochan Buidhe accident occurred in which six young people died of exposure after failing to locate the Curran. (*S.M.C.J.*, 1972, xxx, 88).

This tragedy had a considerable impact on educational mountaineering; everywhere committees gathered and re-wrote their rules, and inevitably . . .

February 1972: A judicial Public Enquiry was held at which the question of the Curran being a contributory cause was raised. The jury recommended that its future and that of the other two Shelters 'should be left to the experts.'

But who were they? What about the Mountain Rescue Committee?

The M.R.C.S. Committee decided the Shelters ought to go. The Nature Conservancy (hardly expert, but with an interest) agreed. However, dissent arose from the Cairngorm Mountain Rescue Association, some of whom made use of the Curran. Totally outnumbered at the M.R.C.S. Annual General Meeting where they had no supporters, they rallied local political support. The matter was now an Issue and to resolve it . . .

High Authority took a hand . . .

November 1972: The Secretary of State asked the Scottish Sports Council to consult various interests and pending the result, demolition plans were suspended. The Mountaineering Council of Scotland circulated all its member clubs to ascertain their views. January 1973: The S.S.C. and M.C.S. both independently showed that the vast majority of informed mountaineering opinion agreed with the M.R.C.S. and favoured removal. It could now be said that the experts had spoken—and virtually with one voice.

However, the local lobby didn't believe in experts. It took the matter to the Man in the Street—and launched a Press campaign.

The letters flew thick and fast, many of them displaying a total lack of awareness of the issues. Not surprisingly a majority of these letters expressed dismay at the proposed demolition. After all, the arguments in favour of removal, conclusive though they might be, were not readily apparent to those not familiar with the realities surrounding winter safety and survival on the high plateaux. These arguments will be apparent to most readers of the *Journal* and it is not our intention to reiterate them here. (See photograph facing page 65). In the end, however, the result of the press and political activities was that demolition plans for early June were temporarily cancelled.

High Authority it seemed, was prepared to initiate, but not to follow through . . .

October 1973: The Scottish Office finally sat itself securely on the fence with a letter saying that buildings authority demolition warrants would be

needed for the shelters, disclaiming any powers to act itself in the matter and suggesting that one of the police or local authorities concerned should convene a meeting of all relevant parties to resolve the issue. This was done by the Inverness-shire Joint Police Committee who first called a meeting with the County Councils of Inverness and Banff and their opposite numbers in the N.E. Counties Police. This meeting decided to hold a further meeting with the addition of the M.C.S., the M.R.C.S., the C.C.S., the S.S.C., the Nature Conservancy, the Aberdeen, Braemar and Cairngorm Mountain Rescue Associations,

It looked like the final showdown . . .

February 1974: The meeting was held at Inverness. There was little discussion of the issues, the Inverness-shire side was in favour of preservation and all the rest, with the exception of Banffshire, wanted demolition. In the end a Working Party was appointed which later recommended that (a) El Alamein be removed to Strathnethy at 023060, St. Valery to the Lairig an Laoigh at 047075 and the Curran to the ruins of Upper Geldie Lodge at 955867. At last, everything seemed to be resolved, the full democratic process had been followed, and removal would be able to go ahead in the summer of 1974. Not so; the requisite demolition warrants had left the final decision to the relevant County Councils. In the case of the Curran and St. Valery this meant Banffshire County Council.

This was the Achilles Heel sought by the preservationists . . .

June 1974: Banffshire was in the N.E. Counties Police area and had been represented at the Inverness meetings. Nevertheless, when their own Police Committee requested a demolition warrant this was turned down by the Banffshire Planning Committee. Requests to their Chairman for an opportunity to present the arguments fell on deaf ears and in October 1974 even the Chief Constable of the North Eastern Constabulary had his appeal to the Planning Committee to change their minds refused.

It seemed as if the tortuous inter-connections of local politicians was going to make the whole lengthy process of consultation and decision a farcical waste of time and money . . .

However, the local government structure was due to be re-arranged. On May 15th, 1975, the Curran and St. Valery refuges would fall within the new Grampian Region and the El Alamein refuge within the Highland Region. There was no doubt Aviemore politicians would still carry weight in the Highland Region, but none at all in the Grampian Region.

8th May 1975: Faced with this reality and its own impending extinction, Banffshire County Council yielded and issued a demolition warrant to the N.E. Police Authority.

8th-13th June 1975: The Curran and St. Valery shelters were removed by the Navy with the aid of the Police and M.C.S. volunteers. Neither has yet been re-erected. El Alamein remains undisturbed.

As a postscript, we mention that shortly after their formation the Highland Region approached the Grampian Region to see if the latter were prepared to allow the former to take over the whole Cairngorm plateau, at present largely Grampian territory. The Grampian Region were not interested in discussing such a proposal.

We might be forgiven a slight sigh of relief.

Power Line to Skye.—The North of Scotland Hydro Board published its proposals for a 132 KV overland Transmission line to carry an increased electricity supply from the National Grid to the Isle of Skye in autumn, 1974. The route they wished to take lay either (a) from Loch Cluanie by Glen Shiel and Glen More, or (b) from Loch Quoich by Kinloch Hourn and Bealach

Aoidhdailean, to Glenelg, and thence by an overhead cable strung between 300 feet towers across the Kylorhea to Skye and by the Kylerhea Glen to Broadford.

The Mountaineering Council of Scotland and the Club both lodged objections as did a few other clubs, public bodies and numerous individuals. The matter was dealt with at a Public Enquiry in June 1975. W. D. Brooker put in an appearance at this occasion with various labels, M.C.S., S.M.C., etc. attached to him, summed up as 'Mountaineering interests.' He writes . . .

'Our objection was to both the overland routes preferred by the Board and we favoured (a) generation in Skye with (b) overland transmission from Crudie Bridge by Strathcarron as an acceptable alternative; if the latter, a submarine crossing of the Kyle was urged. In the event of our objection being overruled we placed the relatively unspoiled Kinlochhourn route as the one which was the more important to preserve from power lines.

'It had been clear from a study of the Board route on the ground, that contrary to their claims, little attempt had been made to minimise the effect on the landscape. Along with other objectors we suggested some major alterations to their proposed line at a number of points, and a couple of changes which had not been suggested by others. Ultimately we based our position on the argument that what were good economics for the Board were not necessarily so for the country as a whole and there was a good case for subsidy to allow a solution which might be more costly but which would preserve amenity.

'It was interesting to notice that at the Enquiry our views were in almost complete accord with both the Countryside Commission and the landowners. The National Trust diverged slightly in valuing Glen Shiel more highly than Kinloch Hourn. Perhaps in the future it may be possible to co-ordinate objections to proposals of this kind and thus save a great deal of duplicated effort.

POSTSCRIPT.—The Secretary of State's decision has now been published (May 1976). Basically the Hydro Board have been given permission to proceed with the Quoich-Kinloch Hourn route, with certain modifications. The Reporter's conclusions contain some ominous points, such as (5) *the Reporter is not of the opinion that wilderness areas should be afforded greater protection than more accessible countryside of equally high scenic value*, and in (10) *the main criterion to be taken into account in the choice of transmission route, other things being equal, is the number of people who will be affected. In this respect the Quoich route is clearly preferable to the alternative routes examined.*

We have therefore lost our case for the preservation of the Quoich-Kinloch Hourn route. However, objections have not been altogether fruitless as the Hydro Board has not been allowed to adhere entirely to its original plans. At the most sensitive point between Loch Quoich and Kinloch Hourn, its choice of route, roughly along the line of the road, has been refused. Instead it has been asked to consider the 'Mountaineering Council deviation' passing to the east of Loch Coire Shubb as a way of minimising scenic impact.

Similarly, the original route by Glenelg, Kyleakin and the Kylerhea Glen has been refused. Instead the Board has been asked to use what is called 'the S.E.P.D. deviation,' suggested by several objectors, including ourselves. This crosses Glen More at Balavoulin Farm, traverses the hillside high up below the summit of Glas Bheinn and crosses the Kylerhea between its northern entrance and the middle of the narrows. On Skye the permissible route then passes to the north of Beinn na Caillich, either on the hillside or by the Loch Alsh shore, to reach Gleann na Béiste and rejoin the Hydro-Board's original line near the mouth of Glen Arroch.

The adoption of these modifications while hardly making the outcome satisfactory will go some way to reducing the intrusive effects of the power line at its most scenically vulnerable points, namely the descent to Kinloch Hourn and the Kylerhea crossing and approaches.

Traffic Hazards on the Hills.—G. J. Dutton reports that he narrowly escaped being run over by an aggressive snowmobile when on ski near Glas Maol. These recent phenomena of the winter hills appear to be on the increase. They disport themselves in large noisy groups, often leaving a spoor of empty beer cans and the like. The possibility that they may be extending their range has disturbing implications. We gather that the matter is being looked into and to this end it would be helpful if encounters with this new denizen of the high places were reported.

SCOTTISH MOUNTAIN ACCIDENTS 1974 and 1975

WHILE accepting that Mountain Rescue activities are not strictly speaking, part of mountaineering, we believe that the maintenance of a continuing record of mountain accidents in Scotland is important both for the historical record and for the understanding and avoidance of such events. It is not our intention to attempt to publish a full list. The complete accident list is now too long to publish in its entirety and the reports which reach the M.R.C.S. do not always contain full details. B. H. Humble, who compiles the Report, would welcome supplementary detail from climbers who may have been involved in accidents.

When space allows, we intend to include incidents which are of particular interest or which typify certain hazards.

We are indebted to the Mountain Rescue Committee for Scotland for the information which appears in this survey and record our appreciation of the efforts of the Mountain Rescue Services.

1974 M.R.C.S. Survey Extract

'For the second year in succession there was a decrease in the number of accidents on Scottish hills, the number being very low compared with the greatly increased number of climbers and hill walkers now seeking the hills. It is noticeable also that in recent years the trained Mountain Rescue Teams have been called on for incidents not in any way connected with hill walking or mountaineering—more in the nature of Public Service, and have answered all calls for such work. These have included rescuing a fisherman who had fallen down the bank of a river, rescuing lads photographing birds' nests, digging out cars stranded in snow, rescuing a pony trekker who had fallen off his horse, and other such incidents, while they have also acted as Marshalls and Rescuers during incidents on Ben Nevis and Ben Lomond Hill races, all voluntary work. There were also four cases of sudden illness during hill walks.

'In all, there were 40 accidents, of which 9 were fatal, all confined to Ben Nevis and Glencoe. There were no deaths in the Cairngorms or elsewhere on the hills in 1974.

'There were also 20 searches for people lost or benighted—9 of these parties turned up next day either before or while the search was being mounted. Six were lost due to poor navigation, usually under bad conditions. Several were in exhausted condition when found. Benighting is at times unavoidable due to sudden weather changes or unforeseen difficulties, and with the equipment and training now available, parties are often quite able to cope with it, but friends and relatives are always anxious and search teams are alerted.

The most notable rescue was that on Ben Nevis last February when two men of Lochaber Mountain Rescue Team carried out the longest lower yet done in Britain, aided by other members of the team and Kinloss M.R.T.

The most notable search was when three of a very large party of hikers from Aberdeen became separated from others in bad conditions, involving an all night search in rain and wind and found next day by Kinloss M.R.T. On that occasion teams from Leuchars and Kinloss R.A.F., Aberdeen, Braemar and Gordonstoun, plus dogs and helicopters were all called. The clothing of the party was inadequate and two elderly folk were suffering severely from exposure and exhaustion.

A notable point has been the great increase in the use of helicopters for the rapid evacuation of casualties—19 times in all, with the total number of helicopter hours being 78 over the year. The skill of pilots and crews cannot be too highly praised.

Dogs have also been called on on many occasions and on one occasion a search dog found a body on Ben Nevis.

The civilian teams involved were Dundonnell and Kintail, Gordonstoun, Cairngorm, Glenmore Lodge, Braemar, Aberdeen, Lochaber, Glencoe, Ochils, Lomond, Moffat, Border Search and Rescue plus Police from Ross-shire, Inverness-shire, Argyllshire, North Eastern Counties, Perthshire, Angus and Arran, plus Kinloss and Leuchars R.A.F. teams. Our warmest thanks are due to these for all their fine work.

SOME 1974 INCIDENTS

A Difficult Rescue

FEBRUARY 16TH—Two climbers (22 and 24), both from Cheshire started to climb Observatory Ridge but took a westwards line rather than the crest and forced further and further to Zero side of ridge. Leader was just below top of steep section when he fell (about 70 feet) and was held by his second. Unhurt, he started to climb back but fell a second time, getting a bad shaking and bruising his ribs (thought he had broken a rib). There was no spare rope and to abseil from this point would have been very difficult, so they started yelling for help. A party on N.E. Buttress heard them mid afternoon and alerted Rescue Team on completion of their climb. Kinloss R.A.F. M.R.T. also called on. Both teams combined and sent parties to foot of the ridge and to the summit. Police snow-trac vehicle proved most valuable to transport equipment and advance party to half way lochan. At first light next day it was decided to lower two men down from top of Zero Gully. Ian Sutherland and Ian Sykos, as the only men present who had climbed Zero, had this unpleasant job. Weather fine but very cold and windy on the plateau and very chilly work for the lowerers there. They were lowered on two 500-foot pre-stretched nylon ropes, the stranded two being about 1,000 feet from summit. Lowering was straight forward with good radio communication and good visibility from top to bottom. They were able to swing across from the gully to the side of the ridge (the only technically difficult part of the job). The two men were very cold but seemed O.K. It was then decided to lower the two to the foot rather than climb back up and three 500 foot ropes tied together used for this. Though lowering was getting hard to control and ropes were getting very elastic, the final section completed without incident and all got to foot after three hours. The longest single lower yet done in Britain.

Some typical Nevis accidents

MARCH 3RD—Man (21) Edinburgh, slipped when descending relatively easy snow slope Càrn Dearg, fell about 400 feet. Fractured skull—Fatal. *Crampons worn but helmet in rucksack* and not worn at time of fall. Evacuated by helicopter filming in the area.

MARCH 9TH—Man (19), Glasgow, slipped and fell about 800 feet No. 4 Gully; facial lacerations. Hard snow, *ice axe but no crampons*. Evacuated by helicopter.

MARCH 10TH—Party of four from Yorkshire had climbed No. 3 Gully. High wind and thick mist on summit. Tried to get off by compass bearing. Spread out in line to find path. One slipped and slid out of sight; a second went to investigate and slipped also, *hard snow ice*. Other two got down and summoned help. First body found by Lochaber M.R.T. and second by Kinloss M.R.T. Both had fallen a long way—*both fatal*. Second one lowered over steep ground for about 1,800 feet then lifted by helicopter. Keith Stewart and William Mitchell (40 and 42).

MARCH 10TH—Girl (21), English, went to meet climbing companion bottom slope, Observatory Gully. Slipped on hard snow and fell down—*no ice axe or crampons*. Spinal injury, evacuated by helicopter.

MARCH 14TH—Two couples, Mr & Mrs Bewes and Mr & Mrs Hughes, all from London, (ages 26, 27, 28, 31); weather good but low cloud—were seeking a way off Nevis. They had ascended by tourist path but could not find it for descent. Mrs Bewes fell down south west side into Five Finger Gully. The other three chased after her in an attempt to stop her sliding. They were lucky to stop on a small area of level ground 1,000 feet below. Robert Hughes who had avoided injury made his way to Fort William and raised alarm. Lochaber Team called out and located the three. Mrs Bewes died as team arrived (fractured skull). Kinloss M.R.T. arrived at incident later and took over and handed over for helicopter evacuation. *No ice axes, no compass, no crampons*. Dogs called out.

And on the proposed 'Grampian Way'

MAY 29TH—Man from England (35) took ill with severe stomach pains on walk through Lairig Ghru. Evacuated by helicopter to Raigmore Hospital. Condition found not to be serious.

JULY 20TH—Party from Outward Bound School, Burghead, on trek Braemar to Aviemore—rain and strong winds, two lads suffered from exposure and exhaustion. Party well equipped, put boys into tent and kept them warm. Evacuation by helicopter.

AUGUST 13TH—Four French girls left Braemar for Aviemore—reached Lui Beg, mistook Allt Càrn a Mhaim for Lairig Ghru, crossed saddle between Ben MacDhui and Càrn a Mhaim at 10.30 p.m. Raining heavily, descended to Lairig Ghru expecting to see Aviemore. Lone walker directed them to Corrou Bothy where they spent the night. Girls met by member of Aberdeen M.R.T., given some food and escorted back to Derry Lodge, then transported to Braemar. All between 17 and 21, no suitable waterproofs and although they had *sixteen pairs of shoes* between them, none suitable for hill walking and had had nothing to eat since breakfast previous day.

1975 M.R.C.S. Survey Extract

'It is very evident that there has been a great increase in the number of hill walkers and climbers on our hills this year. The Police and Civilian Teams are now more experienced than ever. With a grant from Shell Oil, there have been large joint team training weekends in the Borders, Arrochar and North West Highlands, as the type of work involved varies according to the terrain. The Mountaineering Council of Scotland has also done much good work in the way of Accident Prevention by arranging weekend courses for climbers in various areas with highly skilled mountaineers giving instruction in use of ice axe and crampons and use of map and compass, improper use or lack of such being among the main accident causes. There has also been a much greater use of helicopters for rapid evacuation of casualties. Much of this work

is under the most difficult conditions and our warmest thanks are due to the skilled pilots. Radio communication in searches has also been much improved. An instance of this was when a party of touring skiers were avalanched in the Lairig Ghru in March. An uninjured man got to the Army Hut at Rothiemurchus and phoned to Glenmore Lodge. At the same time there was an accident in Coire an Lochan and helicopters had been called. One was directed to site in the Lairig, lifted the injured men and conveyed them to hospital in Inverness. Helicopters have also conveyed rescue parties and search dogs to the area involved. Search dogs have also been much more used. On one occasion a search dog found a body in the snow and on another found a young lad lost in mist.

'There were a number of occasions where teams were called out for incidents not connected with hill walking or mountaineering—children lost from home, patients lost from hospital grounds, and for a motorist who had wandered after an accident.

'In three incidents through inexperience and poor footgear, casual scramblers became cragfast. The silliest of these, and showing complete lack of responsibility of the parent concerned, was in the *month of December*, when a father allowed three young lads to climb on the Duntelchaig Crags between Inverness and Aviemore, one lad aged 10 and wearing only plimsolls, trousers and two sweaters, became stuck high up. As the alarm was not raised till early evening, the Rescue Team had to drive from Aviemore, lower a man down from top of crag and get boy off safely, while the Police lit up the whole cliff face with searchlights.

'The Civilian Teams involved were Dundonnell, Glenelg, Kintail, Cairngorm, Glenmore Lodge, Lochaber, Glencoe, Ochils, Lomond, Moffat, Arran, Tweed Valley, Lammermuir and Borders, and Police Teams of the various Regions, plus as always, much help from the R.A.F. Teams from Kinloss and Leuchars and helicopters from Lossiemouth. Sea King helicopters from Prestwick were also used during a search in Arran.

SOME 1975 INCIDENTS

Noteworthy Climbing Accidents

JANUARY 19TH—Leslie Littleford (31) and Simon Mawer (26) both experienced and well equipped, started Hadrian's Wall route of Observatory Ridge at 9 a.m., conditions then good. They had completed the difficult sections of the route when Mawer was avalanched from top of the chimney. Littleford's dead man belay came out but fall arrested by a MOAC nut placed in the chimney. Lochaber M.R.T. men were in Observatory Gully and the two were able to contact them (Mawer had slight facial cuts). Weather had much deteriorated by this time, and they could not be reached from below. Lochaber Team attempted to reach summit with view to lowering a man down, but attempt had to be abandoned, due to heavy snow showers and almost gale force wind, at 10 p.m. Team got to summit at 5 a.m. Two of them, Sutherland and Anderson, were lowered about 1,000 feet to the ledge, and then lowered them down. The two were in good shape as they had been protected from the high winds overnight.

Earlier that day Simon Richardson (25), Liverpool, had been avalanched in Tower Gully, rescued by Lochaber M.R.T. and taken to C.I.C. Hut, thence to Belford Hospital—fractured ankle and ribs.

JUNE 8TH—Colin Rowe and Brian Tilley from Royal Marines Commando Group, H.M.S. Condor, Arbroath, in camp at Dubh Loch—both experienced climbers. Commenced climb known as King Rat on Creag an Dubh Loch (850 feet graded VS) at 7.45 a.m. By about 11 a.m. Rowe was leading with Tilley about 50 feet below him. Rowe had his rope attached to a belay peg when attempting an overhang. Suddenly a rock which he held gave way and

he fell. Belay held for a few seconds then gave way and Rowe fell to ground, landing on a grassy bank. Tilley received severe rope burns of his hands, Rowe fractured pelvis and lacerations of leg. Another Marine with them at foot but not climbing, went to help and other climbers arrived. They waited till 1 p.m. hoping Rowe would recover a bit and then one went to Spittal of Muick for help. Attempts made to contact Aberdeen Team who were in the area, failed, and Police and Braemar Team called in. The Aberdeen Team located after that and arrived before the others and carried Rowe to Glas allt Shiel, then evacuation by ambulance.

SEPTEMBER 7TH—Woman (20), Nottingham, fell and pulled out running belay upper section West Buttress Sgùrr Mhic Coinnich. 5.30 p.m. Kinloss M.R.T. called on, raised the girl from where she had fallen to Collie's Ledge where she was put on to stretcher then carried to main ridge and lowered down An Stac screes to spot where helicopter could load her. In very bad weather conditions with heavy rain and wind, the girl had been on ridge overnight 17 hours after accident before she was located, and a further 10 hours before she was put into the helicopter. Some brilliant flying.

MARCH 27TH—Colin Finch (18), University of Birmingham Climbing Club, left C.I.C. Hut with other two to climb No. 2 Gully Buttress and descend by No. 4 Gully. Delayed on route, got to summit about 8 p.m. in thick mist. Missed route to No. 4 Gully then on taking a bearing missed tourist path. Came out of mist in Five Finger Gully, traversed right and when descending soft snow removed crampons. Followed down ridge side of gully. Finch fell, slid about 100 yards in soft snow, then 100 feet fall into deep gorge. Very large party on search next day including Police, Lochaber M.R.T., R.A.F. Valley M.R.T. while men and search dogs landed by helicopter (about 40 searches in all). Dead when found, multiple injuries. About 218 man hours—evacuation by helicopter.

JANUARY 27TH—Thomas Carnie (18), East Kilbride, St. Andrews University M.C., with companion, had completed climb of The Vent, Coire an Lochan, appears to have slipped over cliff edge—multiple injuries—*fatal*. Very bad conditions, visibility almost nil with gale force winds. Road blocked with snow. Helicopter requested from Lossiemouth, plus Police, Glenmore and Cairngorm Teams. Foot evacuation by Glenmore Team.

MARCH 30TH—Party from Slough Mountaineering Club at Cairngorm Club Hut at Inverey, led by experienced climber. At 10 a.m. 10 of them entered South East Gully, Creag an Dubh Loch—none roped. About 3.30 p.m. three of them had surmounted the cornice, placed a dead-man belay preparatory to throwing down a rope. Man below, Andrew Maskroy slipped and fell, lost his ice axe and somersaulted 300 feet down. Peter Clark who was just above ice pitch, was dislodged by falling snow started by Maskroy. Patricia Gough (29), Reading, was struck by the falling climber and fell from top of ice pitch. Andrew Bucknell (35) also dislodged and all four fell to foot of gully. The three men uninjured, but Mrs Gough broken tibia and fibula of left leg. The leader, Stephen (J.M.C.S.) went for help to Spittal of Muick. Two members of Braemar Team who lived locally set off with stretcher. Meantime members of the party had started to evacuate Mrs Gough. Police, Braemar and Aberdeen Teams called on, Aberdeen Team stopped at Banchory as their assistance not required. Evacuation by the other teams to Allt na Guibhsaich where transferred to ambulance. Report comments on fact that two many were in gully at same time, all unroped and that (except leader) most were with little experience.

Two Avalanches . . .

JANUARY 19TH—Three members, Lomond M.C., climbing steep slopes Beinn Achaladair, unroped, caught by avalanche—all fell about 500 feet down. All injured, one went to farmhouse for help and Glencoe M.R.T. called on. One had broken femur, one broken ribs and lacerations, one puncture

wound by ice axe—two carried down by stretcher. Weather fine at first, then gale force winds, sleet and snow.

MARCH 30TH—Party of eight members of Scottish Ski Club on ski tour avalanched north side Lairig Ghru near Sinclair Hut. Three injured. One uninjured made his way to Rothiemurchus Hut and phoned Glenmore Lodge. Glenmore Control contacted helicopter which had been called on for previous incident and directed them to the Lairig. Rapid evacuation by helicopter.

The hazards of climbing too slowly . . .

FEBRUARY 16TH—Three experienced climbers from England and all well equipped, overcome by darkness when climbing Crowberry Gully. Spent night on hill, and finished climb next morning and met by rescue party when descending. Good conditions.

Of high camping . . .

SEPTEMBER 3RD—William Wood (17) and Miranda Bruce (20) both from London, pitched their tent near top of Craigendarroch Hill, Ballater. At 8.30 p.m. Wood went down to Ballater for water. While still daylight he started up but in fading light strayed from path and tried to climb straight up south face of hill. Became cragfast about 40 feet from summit. Cries for help heard by folks in Ballater, who raised alarm. Two members of Braemar M.R.T. climbed on top of hill, lowered a rope and got him up uninjured.

And today's reassurances

AUGUST 24TH—Isabella Jamieson (46), Grangemouth, became cragfast on hill side, Glen Nevis, near Steall. Shouted for help and had to be roped down. Poorly clothed and shoes worn smooth.

MAY 30TH—Man from England took ill with severe stomach pains while on walk through Lairig Ghru—good weather. Evacuated by helicopter at first light next day.

MAY 18TH—Man (19) with companions, ridge walking, Sgùrr a Mhadaidh, overcome by exhaustion. Skye Police, evacuation by helicopter.

Summary

In the absence of the complete accident list we feel it is worthwhile to give more statistical information. For convenience we have tabulated this below.

In the first two columns are the casualties arising from accidents. Minor incidents in which the victim did not require outside assistance have been omitted.

The next two columns contain cases of illness or people becoming cragfast. In both sorts, mountain rescue help was called upon and the significant increases in this category are indicative of the growing number of unfit or inexperienced people on the hills today.

The 'Other Searches' columns show the incidents in which no actual casualties were involved but call-outs occurred. The separation between the first two categories of these is somewhat arbitrary but is an attempt to divide the instances in which people were actually lost from those in which they were merely overdue. The occasional 'false alarm' where a search is mounted for someone who is actually off the hill has been separated from the others.

All incidents tabulated are those which, in the Editor's judgment, involved people who ventured on to rough or mountainous terrain for the usual reasons. Incidents involving hapless fishermen and motorists, or wandering mental patients and inebriates are omitted, not because they are unimportant, but because the record of their succour is not a concern of this *Journal*.

SCOTTISH MOUNTAIN RESCUE CALL-OUTS 1974 & 1975

	Accidents (fatalities in brackets)		Other Rescues		Other Searches and Call-Outs			Total Incidents
	Injury	Exposure	Illness, &c.	Cragfast	Lost	Overdue or Benighted	False Alarms	
Northern Highlands								
1974	2	1	—	—	1	—	—	4
1975	—	—	—	—	2	—	—	2
Ben Nevis Area								
1974	10 (5)	—	—	—	2	3	—	15
1975	15 (2)	1	2	1	—	—	—	19
Glencoe Area								
1974	11 (4)	—	—	1	—	1	—	13
1975	12 (1)	1	—	1	—	2	—	16
Skye								
1974	4	—	—	—	1	—	—	5
1975	2	—	2	1	—	—	—	5
Cairngorms Area								
1974	5	2	4	—	1	4	1	17
1975	10 (1)	1 (1)	5 (1)	2	1	7	1	27
Central Grampians and Ochils								
1974	1	—	—	1	1	—	—	3
1975	3 (2)	1	1	—	—	—	—	5
Arrochar and Trossachs								
1974	—	—	—	1	1	—	—	2
1975	2	—	—	—	2	1	1	6
Arran								
1974	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	1
1975	2 (2)	—	—	—	—	—	—	2
Southern Uplands								
1974	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
1975	1	—	—	—	1	1	—	3
All Areas								
1974	34 (9)	3	4	3	7	8	1	60
1975	47 (8)	4 (1)	10 (1)	5	6	11	2	85

CONCLUSIONS

In some instances full details are lacking but as far as information goes, other points of interest which emerge are:—

1974 Report

Origin and nature of parties involved: About 40% Scottish, rather over 50% English, just under 10% from elsewhere. 3 from Youth Organisations, 2 School Groups, 1 Scout party, 1 Service Unit.

Seasonal distribution: In summer conditions—about 60%. In winter conditions—about 40%.

Summer Conditions: 8 Rock Climbing accidents—7 to roped parties and 1 to a solo climber.

Apparent causes: falls (4), piton came out (1), abseil mishap (1), rock falls (2).

2 accidents to climbers scrambling down steep ground in Skye, possibly loose rock. 2 fatalities to inexperienced walkers venturing on steep ground.

Winter Conditions: At least 2 accidents to roped parties—apparent causes: fall (1), cornice collapse (1). Also 1 soft slab avalanche accident. 1 crampon injury from a slip.

Slips on Snow: No fewer than 11 accidents occurred in this way, producing 7 fatalities. Two or three were walkers without ice axes, others to climbers descending after making ascents. In 7 cases an ice axe was carried but control was lost.

The M.R.C.S. Survey rightly points out that:—

'This emphasises the advice so frequently given that all who go to the hills in winter should have training in the use of ice axe and crampons before going high and especially rigorous training on safe lower slopes in the use of the ice axe for braking and stopping slips on hard snow.'

Press reports of more recent accidents endorse the importance of this advice and confirm this aspect as the main source of serious injury or death in Scottish Hills.

1975 Report

Origin and nature of parties involved: Just over half were Scottish, the remainder being largely from England. Services parties were involved in 7 incidents. Rather over half the accidents occurred to people hill walking as opposed to climbing. Of the fatalities, 5 were to hill walkers, 3 to climbers, 1 to a ski-tourer and 1 due to natural causes.

Seasonal distribution: Incidents were almost equally distributed between summer and winter conditions.

Summer Conditions: Among hill walkers a common cause was a slip on steep grass or scree while descending. There were 4 cases of slips on the Nevis tourist path to casual walkers with unsuitable footwear, such as smooth soled boots or shoes, plimsolls and Wellington boots.

There appeared to have been 8 rock climbing accidents. Apparent causes: falls by leaders (4), rock fall (1), belay or piton giving way (3), one during an abseil.

Winter Conditions: Most accidents occurred to climbers, often during the descent after completing a climb.

There were 8 slips on snow producing 3 deaths, in two instances crampons had just been removed. There were no fewer than 9 accidents to people engaged in snow or ice climbing, in 4 cases unroped. Of 6 avalanche accidents, 3 were to climbers in gullies and 3 were on steep snow slopes.

IN MEMORIAM

J. H. B. BELL, D.Sc.

It is difficult to know how to commemorate adequately in print a man like Bell. An issue of the *Journal* could be entirely filled with history and anecdote—but to what end? One might as well make every page a photograph of a Scottish hill, and try that way to memorialise the Highland landscape. He is too big. To those who knew him, Bell will remain a great force quite undiminished by death. We can only address the following lines to those who never knew him, and we hope in some degree they will personalise the man who in his own lifetime passed from mere legend into myth. There is firstly an outline—they can all only be outlines—of Bell's contribution to climbing in Scotland, by a leader of the generation most directly inspired by him; then follow sketches of the man himself in action—in battle, feast and argument—by two of his companions; finally a meagre account of his achievement as *Journal* editor—and it can be meagre, for is not *that* achievement, at least, firmly in place between boards? But the anecdotes keep breaking in—as they must, with Jim Bell, for always that irrepressible twinkle, that outrageously pungent humour, lay behind the granite authority of his logic.

After those attempts at memorial, there follow the new climbs he made, to speak for themselves.

J. H. B. Bell as Climber

JIM BELL started hill-walking in his teens, always alone and with the aid of a bike to cover the long distances out of Fife. Thus he cycled 55 miles to climb Schiehallion, returning the same day. He explored the Cairngorms, and when 16 walked up Ben Nevis after cycling 47 miles from Newtonmore against high wind. He first visited Glen Coe in 1919, and still alone explored the hills of North Wales. In 1921, while rock-scrambling alone at Wasdale, he had the luck to meet Frank Smythe, who led him up his first hard climbs. The two became firm friends and went to Tyrol in 1922, when they climbed the North-West Ridge of the Gross Venediger. Earlier that year, Bell had joined the S.M.C. He received his first introduction to snow-climbing at Easter on Nevis, when E. Roberts led him up No. 2 Gully.

His standards began to rise rapidly. In 1924 he and Smythe traversed the Cuillin Main Ridge and shared leads on the Cioch and Crack of Doom. Then Bell led his first two new routes, the West Trap Route on Sgùmain (severe), and the Cioch West Ridge (diff.). While climbing continuously at home, he was now off to the Alps every summer, at first with Smythe when they made long traverses like the Jungfrau by the Guggi route over the Silberhorn, and thereafter with S.M.C. parties, when he climbed the Matterhorn by the Zmutt Ridge, the Grépon by the Mummery Crack, the Dent Blanche and Mont Rosa by their classical routes, and many others.

In 1929, Bell began that steady output of new Scottish routes, which he continued annually without lapse until 1950 (save during the last three years of war). In assessing that record, the first thing to remember is that Scottish climbing had virtually been killed out by the first world war. The S.M.C. was far from dead, in the sense that during the twenties its members wrote new guides to preserve the records, built the C.I.C. hut, and founded the J.M.C.S., but there was no one left to give a new lead on rock and ice until Bell and Macphee arrived on the scene. They were the two outstanding mountaineers between the wars; their enterprise in summer and winter became the most powerful stimulus since the days of Raeburn and Collie. The new young climbers were about to emerge from their shells; they needed encouragement and example, and were given it.

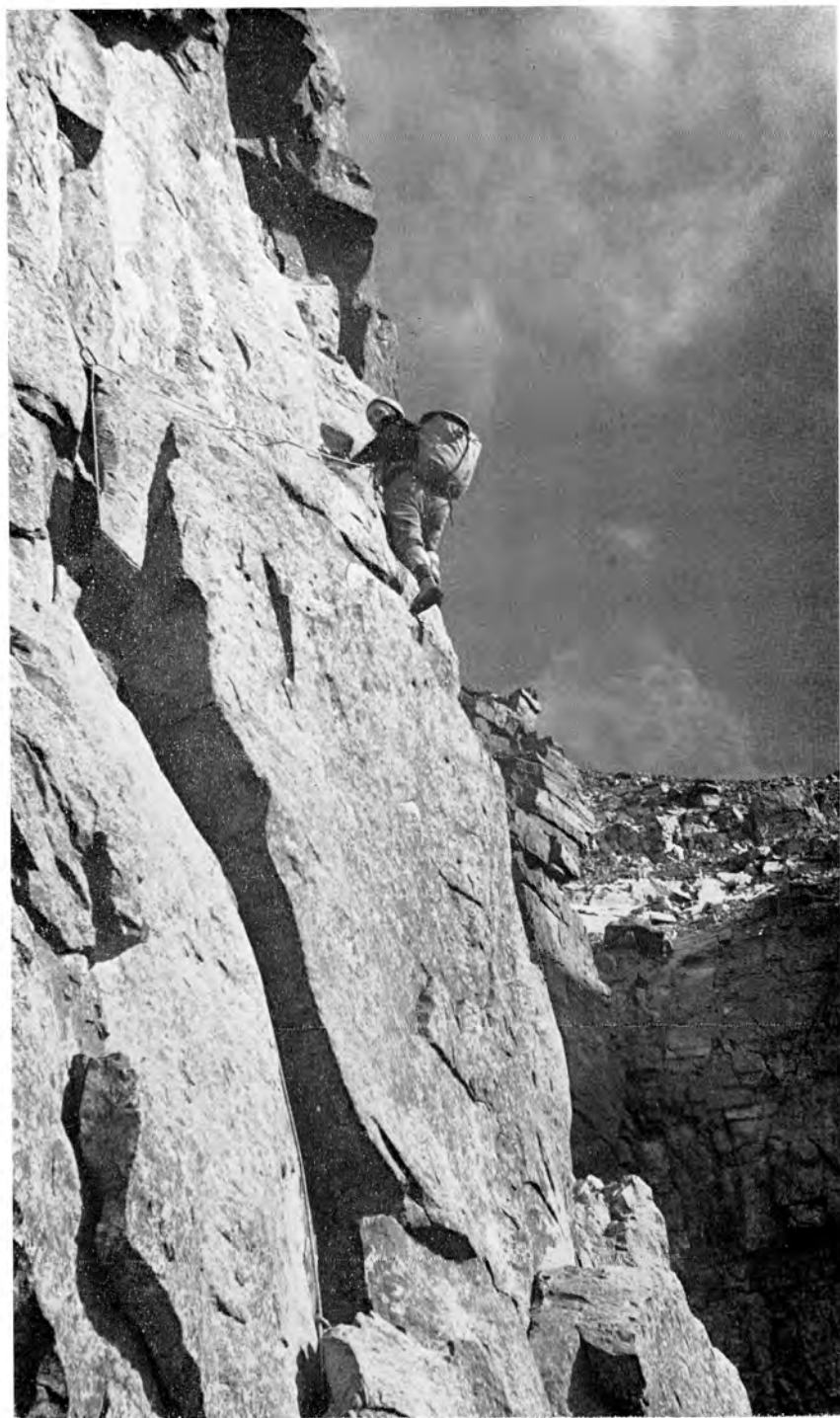


Photo: D. J. Bennet

Drew Somerville on the Final Tower of Central Buttress, Coire Mhic Fhearchair



The Càrn Mór Crag, Fionn Loch

Photo: K. V. Crockett



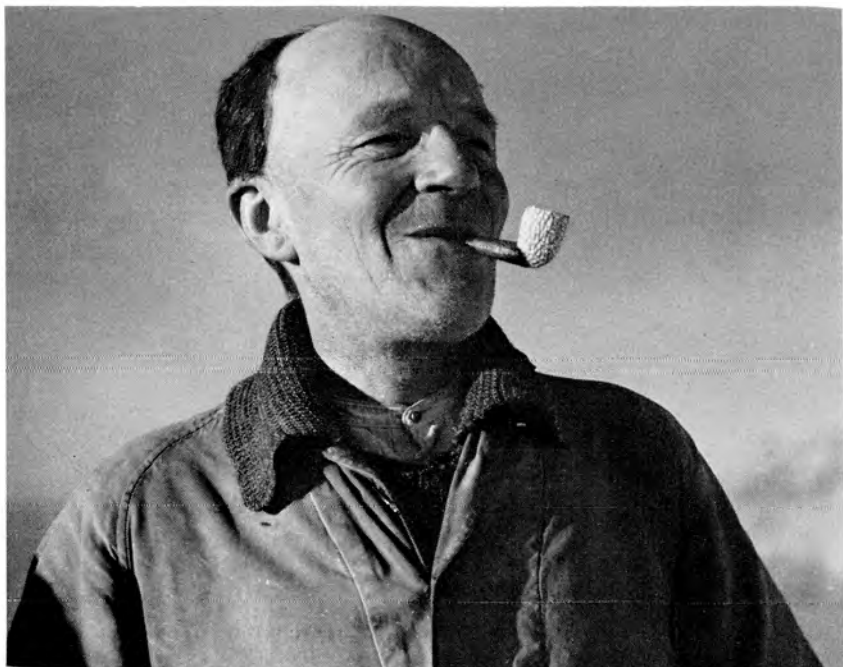
The Rhum Hills seen over Harris on the West Coast (Allival and Trollaval)

Photo: Hamish M. Brown



The Disappearing Doss—
Brooker and Taylor contemplate the problem of entry to the Curran Bothy, buried under 12 ft. of snow

Photo: D. Griev



J. H. B. Bell and R. M. G. Inglis—
Two Devoted Servants
of the Club—
Doyens of the Ultramontane
and the Salvationist.

The second important thing to know is that Bell had extraordinary generosity of mind and width of interest, whether in relation to people, events, or ideas. His talk covered the full spectrum from the earthy to the metaphysical. His friendships had equivalent range. He suffered no exclusions. This open minded quality was basic to his mountaineering and the quality of the contribution he was about to make. When I look at his list of 70 new routes, I find three points of first importance: their wide range, their diversity of character, and their unequal standard. His choice showed no exclusions. These characteristics were particularly important at the time the routes were made, as shown below. They account too for the strong influence of the *S.M.C.J.* under his editorship from 1936-59—an influence made vital by his deliberately seeking out the most active young climbers of the day, both men and women, and inviting them to join his rope at weekends.

When Scottish climbing revived in the 1930's, climbing groups tended (partly for transport reasons) to concentrate development on one chosen area, like Arrochar, or Glencoe, or even on one cliff like Rannoch Wall. Bell's wider ranging activities and flow of new routes from the remoter parts of these same areas, and from farther afield on Creag Meaghaidh, the Cairngorms, and the Northern Highlands, were a constant reminder of the potentialities of Scottish rock. They incited, broadened, and speeded exploration by other parties. Bell may have fathered some three score good routes, but he grandfathered still more.

Likewise, he broadened his contemporaries' ideas about climbable rock. That clean sound rock is alone worthy of attention seems a natural preference; it came close to becoming gospel until Bell's critical comments aroused second thoughts. I have already recorded the terse words with which he converted me: 'Any fool can climb good rock. It takes craft and cunning to get up vegetatious schist and granite.' When we realised the vast amount of such rock in Scotland, his new testament gained prime importance. His personal example was still more eloquent. The extraordinary neglect of Lochnagar was made evident by his climbs on Eagle Ridge (1935 and 1941), Parallel Buttress, the Labyrinth of Creag an Dubh Loch, the direct start to Tough-Brown Ridge, Shadow Buttress B, and others done in 1941. They revealed the wealth of the Cairngorm area, soon to be exploited by enthusiastic Aberdonians.

His enthusiasm for bad rock was sometimes enough to chill the blood of the orthodox. Here is Bell in a seventh heaven of delight writing of Hesperides Ledge on the Comb: 'It is a steeply inclined, curving shelf and is a perfect garden of mossy and lush vegetation . . . there are several exceedingly delicate corners to negotiate with a most precipitous drop on the right. The vegetation is loosely anchored, the rocks are rather loose, and there are practically no positive holds . . .'

When he could feel at home on rocks like that, Bell not surprisingly often did not bother to use a rope on clean sound rock classed severe in nails (like Raeburn's Arête on Nevis) if he had agreeable company. On the other hand, he never disdained safe and moderate climbs. He produced many and rejoiced in all exploratory climbing. His catholic tastes came as a bonus to the average climber, providing many routes that all could enjoy.

Bell climbed on every kind of winter rock. His new winter routes were by chance and timing less influential than those of Graham Macphee, W. M. Mackenzie, and others. His two outstanding ice-climbs were the Centre Post of Coire Ardair (1,000 feet), where the big pitch was turned on the right by C. M. Allan, and Green Gully on Nevis, both in 1937. They followed rather than led development. His earlier routes on Creag Meaghaidh, and on Nevis his combination of lower Slav Route with upper Zero Gully, were on snowy rocks free of ice.

Bell's personal contribution to active mountaineering was thus chiefly in the field of rock-climbing. His most outstanding routes were the complex of Orion climbs on the west face of the North-East Buttress of Nevis. He made the first of these, his 1,000-foot Basin Route, in 1935 with Miss V. P. Roy, and six more between 1940 and 1943. All these climbs below and above the Basin, midway between Zero and Minus One Gullies, intersected in the shape of Orion. The longest and best was Alpha-Delta, now called the Long Climb (1,200 feet), done with J. D. B. Wilson. His seven other best routes were Diamond Buttress of Bidean nam Bian (1931); Observatory Buttress, Left-hand Edge (1936); Eagle Ridge of Lochnagar (1936 and 1941); Parallel Buttress of Lochnagar (1939); Labyrinth of Creag an Dubh Loch (1944); and the two winter routes already mentioned. From 1946 to 1950 he made numerous new climbs with his wife in Wester Ross, notably Bell's Buttress in Coire na Caime of Liathach.

When I first began climbing with Bell in 1938 I appreciated his manner of dealing with hard rock. Needless to say, he had a quick eye for a new route, and at close quarters a keen nose for the best line. His climbing style did not have the smooth flowing grace of Geoffrey Young's *beau-ideal*. Apart from his expertise in every kind of hard move, which he made with an india-rubber-like suppleness, he had two notable styles of attack at the crux of a climb. He never dilly-dallied, or spent time making hesitant, tentative moves. He stood back, took quick stock, and then if the rock were near vertical, took his holds decisively and went up with a vigour that positively emanated out of him; if the rock were slabby and holdless, and always if wet he took to his stocking soles and went on to the rock with a delicate tread, catlike in its implication, 'I know where I'm going.' He could make his chosen line on unknown severe rock look like a foregone conclusion. His strong point was this decisiveness: vigour of mind pairing with vigour of body. He was fallible like us all, but I never heard of him ever coming off his holds.

On ice he would often use crampons, which few others in the days of nails thought worth their weight. No man had a higher respect for tradition than he, but this did not inhibit experiment with new techniques. In using pitons or other aids, he was much in advance of his time. In the Centre Post in 1937 he used crampons and hand-daggers for quick movement on ice, but no development followed for the daggers were ice-pitons (highly precarious). In March 1939, I went with him to Creag Meaghaidh to try the same Post by the direct route. When I joined him in Glen Spean for that battle he arrived armed with a big bagful of sawn-off brass curtain rods, which he meant us to use for nailing the ice of the big pitch. Tubular pitons, he had correctly discovered, gave better grip in water-ice. He had ringed their tops and filed their bottoms. We could use tension climbing if need were. My inward dismay at the thought he might want me to lead (I had never practised the technique, and wondered about brass) was relieved next day when we found insufficient ice in the gully. I had grim forebodings for next winter, when the attempt must be renewed, but was saved by that eleventh hour outbreak of war. Had Bell been born thirty years later, and experimenting in the late sixties his searching and practical mind would have found itself in its element.

I consider Bell to be the best and most influential all-round mountaineer that Scotland produced between 1930 and 1950. His ideas and example went deep and wide, leavening Scotland's climbing practice, stimulating exploration, and affecting both of these to the present day, unknown to most practitioners. His editorship of the *Journal* coincided most fortunately with a period of revolution in Scotland. He made the various new climbing forces known to each other, and linked them by airing their ideas. He kept all abreast of events, at the time presenting articles that related Scottish conditions and practice to those of the world's greater ranges. In short, he tried to keep us all in balance, and succeeded.

As for Bell himself, I never met a tougher character, nor a kinder man.

W. H. MURRAY.

J. H. B. Bell as Companion

POSSIBLY no one would have appreciated more than Jim Bell himself the logical fitness of the fact that at the very hour that the Junior Mountaineering Club of Scotland were celebrating their Jubilee—he died. So came to a close a complete era in the development of the Club, a half century of great progress, including the founding and advancement of the Juniors, characterised by the personality and performance of Dr Bell.

By the mid 30's to say that you had climbed with Bell had the same prestige formerly associated with saying that you had climbed with Raeburn. Even then he was something of a legend. Not a legendary figure, withdrawn and remote, for it was his nature to cultivate climbing companions of all sorts, from professors to the youngest newcomer, from Smythe to Small. It was such a pleasing revelation when a party of us introduced him to the Cobbler climbs how he allowed us to lead him on routes, although he very soon contrived to follow on unroped. Typical too that he also first used a Youth Hostel and was so convinced of their useful function that he became a Life Member despite benefiting seldom himself. A pity in a way, for I recall a spellbound group listening to a brilliant spontaneous discourse on the benefits of free carbon to the human system—after he had burned his toast.

There were summer 'meets' with him on Dumyat, free ranging and individual, everyone taking their own line and when I first heard that ringing text 'Any bloody fool can climb on good rock.' Followed by the corollary 'And when you've finished with that handhold kindly put it back where you got it.' Such evenings always finished with long philosophical, scientific and musical discussions seated on the pavement outside some chip shop in Stirling. There was an extension of such a meet one May day on Buachaille when Bell allocated a rock rib to each of us around Lagangarbh Buttress, and suggested we meet again on the ridge above. A rambling afternoon was spent going up and down and across a variety of routes. Lying out on the top Bell compressed the exploration to just two ways worthy of note, led off to the summit and down Curved Ridge; prevailing on Hamish Hamilton to show him the way up Agag's, to fill out the day.

He enjoyed climbing of all grades provided it satisfied his own standard of genuine mountaineering, was ever careful, but never refused a challenge. The North-East Ridge of Aonach Beag was suggested as a Hogmanay target, and so two of us with Bell set off from Glen Nevis. A frozen radiator had delayed us a lot and it was after 1 p.m. when we reached the col below Sgurr a' Bhùic. Snow and ice made the long contour to the North-East Ridge a rather time-consuming struggle and sunset found us still short of our aim, now out of the question, facing 400 feet or so of bristly snow-covered rock with a ledge running left easily to the summit ridge and a 250-foot gully straight ahead. Bell rhapsodised. How to reach your summit and make a safe way home at such an hour and in such conditions was a problem seldom met by simple Munro-baggers, so how fortunate we all were to be confronted by just such a proposition. Now a prudent man would go for the ledge and caution but there was more honour in climbing the gully. And were we not all honourable men? We went up the gully. It was a dark descent.

Dr Bell, it must be remembered, did not enjoy any great degree of leisure. He was a hard working industrial chemist, taking his D.Sc. at Edinburgh in 1932, and free only at weekends after one o'clock on Saturdays. His 23 visits to the Alps were rarely more than a fortnight at a time. His two visits to Russia were not only landmarks in his own career, scientific and mountaineering, but laid the basis of those first approaches, surely due to his personal appeal, by Soviet to Scottish mountaineers after a long period of separation.

As well as being a most competent scientist he was deeply interested in philosophy, political theory and music, with a closely wrought logical approach to any question whether on mountaineering or life in general; and his

conversation at all times displayed his width of knowledge and his incisive search for probity. While generously sociable with a group of friends he did not relish formal social occasions, avoided Club Dinners and could not be persuaded to accept the Presidency. But in effort and distinction he was a peerless servant of the Club, and did appreciate his election as an Honorary Member.

Others will evaluate his place as a climber and *Journal* Editor but in addition he had a rare individuality. Often in the company of Sandy Wedderburn we would, after attending a concert by the Scottish Orchestra, compress ourselves into the redoubtable Austin Seven and head out for Glencoe, Jim driving with his legs wrapped in a travelling rug against the cold and invariably taking his logically direct route over the Anniesland roundabout, discoursing the while,—Marx, dialectical materialism, Engels, Russell, Mozart, the Aonach Dubh buttresses, hand-made pitons, Forfar bridies, civil rights, Cambridge, and more supporting proof of his theory that there had to be three concurrent factors to induce a major accident. Kingshouse would appear out of the dark; and stiffly we entered.

Let the last word be from someone of similar stature, Tom Patey, when he wrote—

'He was the prophet of the true gospel.'

Not only a prophet but a participant extraordinary.

A.C.D.S.

It was with deep regret that I learned a few weeks ago of James Bell's death. He was the last of my old climbing companions and one of my greatest friends.

His reputation as a first-class rock climber requires no emphasis from me. He had a first-class brain as well as a deep appreciation of good music and literature.

My first meeting with James was in the year 1929 when he gave some useful instruction on rock climbing technique to a group of J.M.C.S. members in Glencoe. Some months later he asked me to join him in Glencoe where we made a successful assault on the Diamond Buttress of Bidean nam Bian. My recollections of that day are of a vegetation-covered jumble of boulders, many of which we accidentally dislodged on our way up to the rock pitches, which were safe by comparison. A full report of that climb was sent to the *S.M.C. Journal* (xix, 1931, 247). After that time we met on an average every fortnight, and went over many of the standard climbs, as well as a few new ones. A number of those new climbs as well as variations of old ones were included in the revised guide book on the Glen Coe region covering winter as well as summer conditions.

One of the most memorable days was spent in Skye in June 1934. We decided to try the whole of the main ridge of the Cuillins and return to base in one day. We started from our camp in Glen Brittle at about 2 a.m. and made our way to the foot of Gars-Bheinn. The weather was hot and humid, and the horse flies gave us their undivided attention. By the time we reached the lower slopes of Gars-Bheinn we were both bleeding freely. Fortunately we were travelling light with very little food or clothing. It was still hot when we reached the ridge but our chief problem was thirst and we were glad when we came to a spring of clear cold water a little below the ridge. Here we consumed our remaining food supply, then decided to push on without further delay as the weather showed signs of changing. By the time we reached the Bhàsteir Tooth, the mist was swirling over us and we completed the section to Sgùrr nan Gillean in typical Skye weather—soaking rain and poor visibility. We had some difficulty in getting down to lower ground and had to retrace our steps once or twice before we could see our way ahead across the moors. As we were

soaking wet by this time, we decided to stay the night in comfort at Mary Campbell's cottage where we arrived at about 10 p.m. After supper we were glad to rest on feather beds instead of the unyielding earth. On returning to consciousness I was in time to see James finishing off the last of the ewer of water on the washstand.

One incident remains in my memory which took place in the Chasm above Glen Etive during a descent of the 'Cave Pitch.' My hand hold came away and I fell over backwards and downwards, landing on a heap of rubble just above the next pitch. My first conscious impression was of a rough voice bawling 'Stay where you are, you silly bugger!' I took his advice; just as well in the circumstances. My position was precarious, with blood streaming over my face from a cut on the forehead. Fortunately there was an easy escape route and I willingly agreed to use it, with Bell supporting me.

Only once during our climbing association have I seen James make an error of judgment on a mountain. We had just completed a fairly difficult snow and ice climb in Zero Gully on Ben Nevis. The weather had behaved well and we were somewhat elated at our success when we reached the top. As it was late afternoon, we decided to descend by No. 1 Cully to the Nevis hut. There was a cornice at the top of the gully and instead of roping up, James decided to jump, expecting to land in soft snow. Unfortunately it was hard packed and he accelerated down the slope, losing his ice axe when he hit a bergschrund, which set his body spinning about its longitudinal axis. He eventually came to rest a few yards from the edge of a small lochan with a little unfrozen water in the middle. In a few moments I was relieved to see him rise to his feet and make his way slowly up the snow slope to recover some of his lost property, which got scattered around during his descent. Meanwhile I cut my through the cornice and cautiously made my way towards the softer snow away from the avalanche track and glissaded down to join James. It must have been a painful journey for him in the dark down to the Nevis farm where his car was parked. We then drove to Clackmannan.

A year later Dick Morsley repeated the involuntary slide down the same gully, even to landing up on the surface of the lochan. He related the incident in vivid detail to Bell, who nodded sympathetically and asked 'Did you see anything of a small silver watch on your way down? It was mine.'

I left Scotland in early 1938 for South Africa but we maintained a regular correspondence. His letters were well worth reading. Our last meeting was during a leave period in 1965 and as he had retired by this time to his house in Auchtermuchty, we had many hill walks together where he introduced me to some interesting rock problems on the friable formations of the West Lomond. Finally, he and his wife accompanied me to Switzerland. Unfortunately the weather was so bad that we got in very little serious climbing.

James Bell was an unusual man; his powers of endurance were phenomenal and he maintained his physical fitness up to a good age; but like our late mutual friends, Jack Dow of Dumfries and David Myles of Forfar, he has now passed on.

C.M.A.

J. H. B. Bell as Editor

IN a sense the achievement of J. H. B. Bell as editor of this *Journal* has already been 'obituarised'—on his retirement after an unrivalled 24 years in that arduous post (*S.M.C.J.*, xxvii, 1960, 1). But that is now 16 years ago, and those who never knew Bell probably have never read that summing-up either.

'... his influence in opening up the hills of Scotland (not just those of Glasgow or of Aberdeen) has been extraordinary, and his ventilation of Scottish climbing circles no less forthright. That glinting eye, clay pipe and

black Clackmannan shag, those uncompromising boots and knickerbockers, and—above all—those unerring pungent and deflatory comments, have combined with more easily recorded achievements to place Dr Bell among the greatest of the Giants with whom this Club has been so liberally blessed.

'It is hardly surprising that these qualities have soaked into the *Journal* during the past twenty-four years. When he entered office he flung open windows immediately and presented articles linking Scottish mountaineering in all its aspects with the craft as practised abroad. He followed this up with histories of the Club and of climbing in Scotland, and with most valuable surveys of other Scottish clubs, whether suitably pedigreed or not. This way there came into these pages the first hints and glimpses of that Revolution in Mountaineering whose unctuous recounting now seems obligatory to all clambering scribblers. Anyway, Dr Bell was aware from the first of those vagrant hordes unwashed, unshaven and chip-eating, sleepers in howffs and travellers in fish-lorries, those who—in their unconscious days—are the salt of the sport; the *Journal* benefited accordingly, their climbs and doings appearing alongside white-collar accounts and together with those less spectacular (yet surely admirable) adjustments of clinometers and discreet doubtings whether *X* is visible from *Y*, or *vice versa*.

'It is for maintaining the catholicity of the *Journal* over such a difficult period in the sport, for catering so well for both Salvationist and Ultramontane over twenty-four years and at the same time for so keeping up with Developments that we can swallow, in a couple of contemporary gulps, Greenland, Himalayas, Slesserian equations and Artificial Greeks—it is for holding all these different ropes so firmly, so competently and so regardless of distraction that every member of the Club is indebted to Dr Bell and that his successor in office deems it his first duty to record here his sincere gratitude and humble admiration.'

And 16 years and 3 editors later (we have just begun on the 3rd) the gratitude remains and the admiration is increased.

Bell's own first editorial (*S.M.C.J.*, *xxi*, 1936, 2) is, characteristically, much more to the point. He begins bluntly by stating a fault and how he intends to remedy it. 'For some time it has been noticeable that, although the Club membership has been steadily increasing, the amount of climbing adventure outside Scotland . . . has considerably diminished. There may be many causes for this, but it has seemed to the new Editor desirable to inaugurate a series of articles on the relationship of Scottish mountaineering to the complete art as practised on the greater mountain ranges of the world . . .' And in that first volume he brings up the big guns to pound home 'Scottish Mountaineering and its Relation to Climbing Abroad.' 'The General Aspect' was by Ling; 'Remarks on Snow and Ice Conditions' by MacPhee; 'Contrasts' by Solly; 'Rock Climbing' by Wedderburn; with 'Scenery and Photography' and (even!) 'Ski-running' to close with. This theme of putting Scottish climbing in a broad perspective was always dear to Bell. He insisted that 'our Scottish mountains offer possibilities for the development of a very advanced technique in . . . snow and ice craft, rock climbing and route finding in bad weather conditions, such as were not previously believed to be available . . . (and) . . . still not understood by foreign or even English mountaineers.' Physically and mentally there was no hint of a Provincial Cringe in Bell. Learned in the physical and mental resources of his own corner of Europe he put forward and compared their advantages and limitations with those elsewhere. That's what was, and is, so refreshing and so timeless in his outlook. It caused him to write a most excellent book—now of course unobtainable—an 'Introduction to Mountaineering'; it was with him to the last volume—see him here in a book review on his last page but one (*S.M.C.J.*, *xxvi*, 1939, 420): ' . . . As a book for a beginner, the section on hill walking seems far too brief. The mountaineer is taught to concentrate on tools and mechanism before he has sufficiently trained his natural powers and

senses on the mountains. (The author) still underrates the training value of Scottish peaks in winter conditions. Why should such training *start* on Ben Nevis? . . . ' And this is the Bell who chilled young Murray's blood with his brass tube ice pitons. His scientific logic continued always to experiment, but always on a tested foundation.

That first volume concentrated, too, on the meat in Scotland. Five articles, by Ogilvie, Wedderburn and himself, spotlighted present climbs in Coire Ardair. And he fixed on the next generation, which was to fulfil his requirements and lead the way to self respect in Scottish Mountaineering. He devoted an article to 'The First 10 years of the J.M.C.S.' These urchins contributed, too—names of the contemporary unwashed—Murray (W. H.), Humble (B. H.), Small (A. C. D.), Dunn (J. K. W.), MacKenzie (W. M.). . . . Other names, also, in the obituary section of that first volume: Naismith, Rennie, Stott, T. S. F. Campbell He strode the gap, and it was well for the Club he was the man to do it.

His foibles? Of course, being a rounded man, he had them. But lack of a sense of humour was certainly not one. Yet so many of those who never knew him overlook that dry brand of his. It glints richly on his pages. Never, perhaps, as obviously as in the article contributed by David Myles—already a crony in his first number—recounting a climb with The Lad and the Doc (surely this rings another bell?)—it's all J. H. B. B.-brand humour, this article, especially the episode of the glissade. 'Down came the Doc and, cannoning none too gently from the rounded icy lip of the fall, he shot into the depths. "That ledge was hard" he commented. "Nae harder than the kirk seat ye should be on the day," says the Lad. . . .'

His respect for things Scottish did not extend to Gaelic orthography. Conversant with the words, he dismissed accentual marks. 'No one knows what they mean' he declared challengingly to his successor. 'I always cross them out.' His successor took the hint, and put them in. His humour is everywhere evident. In that first volume he sanely discusses Mountain Rescue (he forecast the commercial exploitation of its emotive appeal), and in passing remarks 'We have no organised body of professional guides in Scotland, nor, let us hope, is such a body likely to arise.' He thought little of Clubs, in fact, for which one's entry qualifications could be obtained with such professional assistance.

Of course, we are ending with anecdotes. They bring out the man behind his terse, accurate prose. . . . After a snowbath with the then Hon. Treasurer—or was he the Hon. Sec.?—the two were photographed in what was at that time known as the nude. The photograph was handed round, admiringly. Bell, as befitted him, stood frank and open. His companion was shown side ways, with a delicately interposed hand. Bell's comment—'Aye The Banker, Ian, aye The Banker' needs no bush.

And that one about the Political Platform. Bell was as radical and logical in his political views as in others, and the company he kept must have scandalised the majority of his conventional nineteen-thirties-bourgeois fellow members. He went once, the story goes, with his friend Willie Gallagher, the Communist (or was it Jim Maxton, just as bad, I.L.P.—or even with both) to a Marxist rally. Being with his distinguished friend he too was asked up on to the platform. As each V.I.P. climbed on to the stage, his name was intoned impressively to the breathless audience, together with the name of the body he represented—Workers' Solidarity Group, Independent Labour Party, Bridgeton Branch of the Communist Party, etc. Bell went up to the recounting call of 'Doctor J. H. B. Bell The . . . Scottish Mountaineering Club'. Even the flags must have blushed. But not Bell. He would savour the situation to the full. He loved original routes.

Anecdotes of Bell will continue as long as the S.M.C. or its *Journal* last. Let us close here as everyone will who talks of Bell, by affirming his

astonishing kindness, his very real humility. His successor, whether on (too rare) jaunts on the hill, or at Alloa or in the richly evocative paternal Manse at Auchtermuchty, was invariably received with a gentleness and generosity which set off the intermittent pungencies of phrase as the conscious artefacts they were, and which demonstrated his immense inner strength. He bore his last illness with that strength, and with the devotion of his wife, his trusted companion on many an earlier adventure.

Those who have not yet met him can pick up his *Journals*, and confirm all that we have written above.

G. J. D.

List of New Routes made in Scotland by J. H. B. Bell

- 1924 *Sròn na Ciche*—*Cioch West Ridge*. D. With Frank Smythe.
Sgùrr Sgùmain—West Trap Route. 1,600 ft. S. With Smythe.
- 1929 *Buachaille Etive Mòr*—N. Face, Central Buttress. 350 ft. VD. With A. Harrison.
Ben Nevis—Great Tower. 100 ft. VD. With E. E. Roberts.
- 1930 *Creag Meaghaidh*—Pinnacle Buttress, Edge Route. 800 ft. With D. C. Macdonald.
Bidean nam Bian—Diamond Buttress, N. Route. 500 ft. D. With Harrison and Bartholomew.
Buachaille Etive Mòr—Cuneiform Buttress. 350 ft. VD. With Harrison. Central Chimney variation. S. Made 1934 with E. A. M. Wedderburn.
- 1931 *Bidean nam Bian*—Diamond Buttress Direct. 500 ft. S. With C. M. Allen.
Stob Coire nan Lochan—Summit Buttress. 350 ft. VD. With Allan.
Do. N. Buttress, N. Face. 350 ft. M. With Allan.
Do. SC Gully. 500 ft. D. With Allan.
Buachaille Etive Mòr—Central Buttress Direct. 320 ft. VD. With Allan.
Do. Central Buttress Central Chimney. 250 ft. S. With Allan.
Do. The Chasm. Converging Walls Pitch 10. VS. With Allan.
An t-Sròn—The Chasm. 1,200 ft. D. With J. McNab.
- 1932 *Aonach Dubh*—West Face. B. Buttress (700 ft.) by Pinnacle Face. 300 ft. D. With Allan.
Do. Amphitheatre: Bell's Pinnacle. 150 ft. D. With Allan.
Sgòran Dubh—Diamond Buttress. 400 ft. VD. With Allan and Myles.
- 1933 *Stob Coire nam Beith*—Arch Gully Direct. 600 ft. S. With Allan.
Ben Klibreck—West Buttress. 350 ft. D. Solo.
Ben Hope—N.W. Face. 350 ft. D. Solo.
- 1934 *Creag Meaghaidh*—Winter. Rocks N. of Posts. With Allan, Heaton Cooper and H. M. Kelly.
Buachaille Etive Mòr—Spillikin Route, CB. 200 ft. VS. With Allan and Miss M. B. Stewart.
Do. Chasm, South Wall Exit. MS. With Allan and Miss V. Roy.
Ben Nevis—N.E.B., Platforms Rib. VD. With Allan and Miss M. B. Stewart.
Aonach Dubh—Lower N.E. Nose. 300 ft. S. With Allan.

- 1935 *Do.* West Face, F. Buttress. 450 ft. S. With Allan.
Do. Amphitheatre, Central Ridge. 200 ft. S. With Allan.
Ben Nevis—Basin Route. 1,000 ft. S. With Miss V. P. Roy.
- 1936 *Buachaille Etive Mòr*—Lagangarbh Buttress, Crest Route. M or S.
 With J. R. Wood, A. C. D. Small and Miss E. Johnstone.
Lochnagar—Eagle Buttress. 700 ft. With W. G. McClymont and
 D. Myles.
Ben Nevis—South Trident Buttress, Lower half. S. With McClymont.
Do. Observatory Buttress, Left-hand Edge. 400 ft. S. With Allan and
 E. A. M. Wedderburn.
Creag Meaghaidh—North Post. With Allan, Gorrie and Ogilvie.
Do. Pinnacle Buttress. 1,000 ft. S. (Red Scar Route). With Wedder-
 burn. Also traverse of Appolyon's Ledge.
- 1937 *Ben Nevis*—Winter. Green Gully. With J. Henson, R. Morsley and
 P. A. Small. (Probably done in 1907 by Raeburn).
Do. Observatory Ridge, West Face. S. With J. F. Hamilton.
Creag Meaghaidh—Centre Post. 1,000 ft. With Allan.
- 1938 *Sgòran Dubh*—No. 1 Buttress, Roberts' Ridge. 450 ft. VD. With
 E. E. Roberts and D. Howe.
Ben Nevis—Observatory Buttress, N.W. Face. 250 ft. D. With
 E. J. A. Leslie, W. H. Murray and E. A. M. Wedderburn.
- 1939 *Lochnagar*—Parallel Buttress. 700 ft. S. With W. H. Murray.
Craig Mellon—Maud Buttress. VD. With Myles.
- 1940 *Ben Nevis*—The Comb by Hesperides Ledge. VD. With J. D. B. Wilson.
Buachaille Etive Mòr—Belial. 160 ft. VD. With J. R. Wood.
- 1940 *Ben Nevis*—Six Orion routes. Long Climb, 1,200 ft. S. With J. D. B.
 —43 Wilson.
- 1941 *Do.* Girdle Traverse. (With J. D. B. Wilson part way).
Lochnagar—Shadow Buttress A. 700 ft. M. With Miss N. Forsyth.
Do. Shadow Buttress B. 700 ft. S. With Miss N. Forsyth.
Do. Eagle Ridge, Direct finish. S. With Miss N. Forsyth.
Do. Tough Brown Ridge, Direct. S. With Miss N. Forsyth.
Do. West Buttress, Gargoyle. With Miss N. Forsyth.
Creag an Dubh Loch—Labyrinth. 700 ft. S. With Miss N. Forsyth.
- 1943 *Ben Nevis*—Càrn Dearg, N. Wall, Route B. 100 ft. VS. With Kellet
 and Miss N. Forsyth.
- 1946 *Beinn Dearg*—Ghrandda Slabs. 500 ft. S. With Mrs P. Bell.
Beinn a' Mhuinnidh—Bonaith Donn, Route II. 420 ft. VD. With
 Mrs P. Bell.
Do. Bonaith Donn, Route I. 400 ft. VD. With Mrs P. Bell.
- 1947 *Do.* Waterfall Climb Variation. S. With Mrs P. Bell.
Do. Double Flake. S. With Mrs P. Bell.
Sgùrr a' Chaorachain—Cioch, S.E. Face. With Mrs P. Bell.
 Several short climbs around Gruinard Bay. With Mrs P. Bell.
Liathach—Coire na Càime, Bell's Buttress. 500 ft. S. With Mrs P. Bell.
Sgòran Dubh—Crowberry Rib, No. 1 Buttress. 460 ft. D. With Mrs
 P. Bell.
- 1948 *Creag an Dubh Loch*—Hanging Garden. 300 ft. VD. With Mrs P. Bell
 and W. S. Thomson.
- 1948 *Goatfell*—Rosa Slabs. 600 ft. VD. With G. A. Collie and C. C. Gorrie.
- 1950 *A' Mhàighdean*—Pillar Buttress. 300 ft. VD. With Mrs P. Bell.

ROBERT M. GALL INGLIS

By the death of Robin Inglis, while on a holiday cruise to Norway, the Club has lost one of its most dedicated and useful members. He joined the Club in 1929 at the age of 21 and was one of the comparatively small number of second generation members. His early experience was gained with his father, J. Gall Inglis, an original member, with whom he shared several expeditions before coming up for membership, including attendance at a Blair Atholl Meet when only sixteen.

Robin was associated with his father and uncle in the publishing business of Gall and Inglis, well known for their Cyclists' Touring Club guide book and numerous ready reckoners and astronomical publications. His business experience was of great value to the Club through the services he provided in recording facts, checking records, writing reviews and *Journal* articles and, latterly, as General Editor of the Guide Books and Librarian. It was a well deserved and much appreciated tribute to his work for the Club that he was elected a Vice-President in 1971.

Although no tiger on ice and rock he was a sound hill man, reliable with map and compass, a regular attender at meets and a welcome companion to many of his contemporaries.

His activities with this Club occupied much of Robin's time but he was also deeply involved in Church work as an elder, formerly of Mayfield North and latterly of Bristo Memorial, Craigmillar, Churches, a Lay Reader and a representative to Edinburgh Presbytery. Among his other leisure pursuits he was a keen member of the Astronomical Society of Edinburgh of which he was a past President.

He will be missed from the councils of the Club more than many who may have had a more spectacular climbing record. His memorial stands in the increasingly popular volumes of the Club Guides. He is survived by his wife and two daughters.

R.W.M.

I WOULD like to offer a tribute here, as a past Editor of the *Journal* and on behalf of other Officers of the Club, to the very great service given to the Club by Robin Inglis. This service was given most freely, and with enthusiasm, over a long period and constitutes, to my mind, the essence of whatever virtue institutions such as ours possess.

As Editor I was in frequent correspondence with Robin in connection with the flow of books and journals through the *Journal* for review, and with matters concerning *Journal* distribution, which he managed from his premises in Newington Road. He was a model (albeit a somewhat old-fashioned one) of efficiency in these matters: I was, of course, incompetent and hopelessly dilatory. Yet his good nature never failed him; obliged to deal with a man who would not have lasted a week in his business, he drew my attention to each new oversight with only the most vestigial suggestion of reproof—a slight raising of voice and lowering of bushy eyebrows indicating concern, as if for my health.

However, this instance of personal generosity was, in the Robin Inglis Canon, a very minor Work, not to be compared with, for example, his efforts to maintain and control the unruly monthly lunch parties at Mackie's nor with his heroic defence of the Library against the depredations of young and vicious members in the early sixties. The former Club institution has been well described in a recent *Journal* (*S.M.C.J.*, xxix, 1969) and its value needs no underlining here—it was surely largely due to Robin's harryings and

proddings that, in the confusing years following the passing of Mackie's, the members of the group did not find themselves lunching separately, on different days, in different parts of the city: as for the latter, this story has not so far as I know been told (except in the closed counsels of the Club Committee) but certainly deserves to be. Following closely on the opening of the High Street Rooms there was a period during which they were used, and used heavily, for purposes having little to do with mountaineering by the groups of members and hangers on which clustered around Robin Smith and Jimmy Marshall. The Clubroom's central position made it an ideal location for continued 'discussion' after the pubs had closed their doors and, as often as not, there was so much of this 'discussion' that the symposiasts would forgo the arduous journey to their homes, involving as it did the descent of stairs, the crossing of roads and the mounting of kerbs. Instead, they would retire to the comfortable haven of the Library and enjoy the warmth provided by its one-bar electric fire and hideously patterned Axminster rug. On other occasions, most particularly during the dead period of late autumn, weekend 'conferences' would be held in the Rooms, often involving distinguished 'speakers' from a sister club in Glasgow—one well known for the general good manners and decorous behaviour of its members. As may be easily imagined, the Rooms endured a good deal of wear and tear as a result of these activities and the Library bore the brunt of it: books were borrowed by E. Hillary, S. Tenzing, M. Tse tung and other infrequent visitors to the Rooms. Such books were very often not returned, and the gaps in the shelves which they had formerly occupied were commonly found on Monday mornings to contain unwholesome and occasionally embarrassing mementos of the weekend's proceedings. Accustomed as he was to the limpid proprieties of Poole's Synod Hall, Robin must have found this chaotic ferment of Club activity in and around his Library as alarming as a vision of the outer circles of Hell. Each visit to the Library, now made with extreme circumspection, disclosed fresh evidence of vice and debauchery amongst the membership on a quite unprecedented scale. But he reacted to this epidemic of Library abuse, after an initial phase of stunned awe, with tolerance and humanity: he might have clamoured for expulsions, he might have removed the Library from the Rooms, he might have enlisted the help of the Police, handily placed on the opposite side of the street. He did none of these things, but simply informed the Club Committee of the situation by means of delicately-worded memoranda and installed a new lock to keep out non members and known vandals (this obstacle was avoided by a detour, at Very Severe, across the crumbling walls and rotting drainpipes to the North Window). In time, the fit subsided and the Library resumed normal operation with, thanks to Robin's indulgence, no harmful rift in the fabric of the Club.

It might be thought that the mildness of his reaction stemmed from an awareness that, at least, the Library was being used by these miscreants, and to great effect. But in my view his tolerance was much more categorical than that: as a devout Christian he believed that it was wrong to resist evil with evil and so eschewed any action that might have smacked of malice. In losing Robin Inglis the Club has not only lost a valuable servant and ally, it has also lost a man who typified the selfless attitudes of the Victorian founders, attitudes without which no truly amateur and eclectic institution can hope to survive.

R.N.C.

R.G.I.'s devotion to the Club has been so perceptively expressed above that the late editor's predecessor need only briefly acknowledge here his own indebtedness to R.G.I.'s generosity; in storing old *Journals* and *Journal* plates, in compiling indices, in assembling notebooks and—with great secrecy—in assisting the Club and *Journal* in many small ways financially. It is no paradox that the modest unassuming character of Robin Inglis is now seen as a powerful influence on today's Club.

G.J.D.

HARALD I. DREVER

LAST summer Professor Harald Irving Drever undertook his twelfth and last expedition to Greenland. For almost forty years he had been captivated by unbounded enthusiasm for Ubekendt Island and his friends in Greenland.

In 1937 he went on an exploratory voyage to the coast of the Canadian Arctic and northwest Greenland as a student member of a Cambridge University scientific expedition. His name was given to a minor inlet of Baffin Island: he was amused when Drever Arm was later substantially extended by aerial photography. His first visit to the Ubekendt Island was by chance. Sir James Wordie, his expedition leader, was 'sensitively responsive to his youthful exuberance and enthusiasm,' and allowed him a quick visit to its 'dark rugged repellent cliffs.' Something geologically unusual lay there, thought Drever. He was right. He and his companion came back 'like two dishevelled revellers home from a spree.' They had found a key rock, the first layered gabbro in west Greenland. He arrived in St. Andrews University in 1938 and continued to work in the field both in Scotland and in Greenland.

At home he drilled igneous boundaries in Cuillin corries, and worked the Outer Isles, the Shiant and Soay. There were some interesting diversions from his work. He survived two unappreciated immersions in icy water. He was convinced by necessity: roll his kayak or perish. He crossed open water to Upernivik Island, 'bristling with peaks rising above snowfields and glaciers, the finest mountain group to be found anywhere in Greenland.' He attempted one of the highest peaks, but was snowed off. He, with a seal hunter for company, made a traverse of the island. They crossed 'with provisions, for two days, an ice axe, a rope, crampons, an ice piton, camera, compass, aneroid, pocket sextant, primus, a geological hammer and a waterproof sheet to sleep under.' He was impressed: 'the finest and most beautiful peak, clean cut in form, and over 7,000 feet high which, he thought, "might prove impossible"'—the familiar problematical mountain. The Horns of Upernivik were to be successfully climbed. Thirty years later . . .

He was again there when the war broke out. His party stowawayed home, but his own plans to winter through the dark arctic night and then to travel over the spring sea ice by dog-sledge were never to be realised. His war service taught him to ski during Army mountain warfare transport exercises in the snows of Lebanon. Although he had been brought irrevocably to a slithery downhill slope, an Addiction to Ski-ing, he was also adding to his mountain horizons: he joined the S.M.C. in 1946.

He took his Greenland attachment further than most. He involved himself with the people and their future. He devoted much effort to help and encourage their advancement. In his modest way he felt it was 'his privilege to play a minor and peripheral role in their life.'

Drever was an enthusiast. He was always full of encouragement to his protégés. He introduced me to the mountaineering potential of Upernivik. In 1967 we canoed across to his new permanent base at the Schotiske Universetets Hutte, a prefabricated donation from the Carnegie Trust. The geologists weren't at home, but were run to earth along the coast. We walked across the dark sands to the skirl of pipes. 'Dr Drever, I presume?' Our greetings had a classic formality. 'I knew you'd say that! Come and have a drink!' We accepted his hospitality in his desolate camp by the grey sea.

P.W.F.G.

DONALD L. CAMPBELL

DONALD joined the J.M.C.S. in 1934 and was one of the group including Mackinnon, Mackenzie, Murray and others who helped the section to become a power in the climbing world. He attended most Meets until 1939. His most usual companion was Angus Smith but he also climbed with myself and the other three mentioned.

After Angus went off to London I often climbed with Donald and the late George Marskell. A grand companion on the hills and a fine and careful climber, he covered most of the standard routes in Glencoe, Nevis, Skye and elsewhere and I have never known him to get into trouble.

Donald joined the S.M.C. in 1950 and served on the committee from 1966-69. For almost 20 years from 1950, Angus, Ian McPhail, Donald and myself, attended and climbed together at every Easter Meet, always having a special dinner at some Highland Hotel on the way south on the Monday night. I have hundreds of memories of these happy days.

After graduating in Engineering at Glasgow University he joined Albion Motors and as a keen Territorial he was called up in 1939 with the rank of Lieutenant. He then spent five years in the Middle East gaining the rank of Acting Brigadier in charge of Transport.

After the War he was for a short time with North British Locomotives then became Manager of one of the branches of Mavor and Coulson of which firm he later became a Director. In 1969 he was sent out to reorganise their interests in South Africa which he did with great success. Every year on his annual trip to this country he never failed to visit me at my home and in 1972 it was grand to have a reunion of the four of us at my house.

His sudden death in Johannesburg on March 13th was a great shock to his many friends and all of us will miss him sorely especially so as he was looking forward to his retirement to this country in 1977. To his devoted wife, his son and daughter and their grandchildren we offer our heartfelt sympathy.

B.H.H.

PROCEEDINGS OF THE CLUB

Easter Meet 1975—Dornie

THE Easter Meet based at the Loch Duich Hotel, Ardelve, was attended by the President, Honorary President, 21 Members and 9 Guests.

Fred Wylie kindly arranged for a boat to take parties from Arnisdale over to Knoydart on Easter Saturday, however with new snow only 1 car out of 5 reached the summit of Mam Ratagan and the parties withdrew to Glen Shiel. The President's party set off for the Saddle in a blizzard and were blown to a standstill on the first top and retired in good order. Another party pressed on and traversed the mountain. Parties were out every day and enjoyed wonderful weather on Sunday and Monday. Honorary President Sandy Harrison was as active as ever and we were delighted to have him and his party with us again.

From reports received the following summits were achieved:—Cairich, Creag a' Mhaim, Druim Shionnach, Aonach Air Chrith, Maol Chinn-Dearg, Sgùrr nan Ceathreamhnan, Sgùrr na ciste Dnibhe, Sgùrr nan Saighead, Sgùrr na Creige, The Saddle, Sgùrr an Fhuarail, Ciste Dhubh, Aonach Meadhoin, Sgùrr a Bhealaich Dheirg and Beinn Ghlas (Loch Tay) on the homeward journey. There may well be other ascents not reported.

It was a very successful and enjoyable Meet. Our thanks to Mr and Mrs Snowie and their staff for looking after us so well.

Present were:—The President, Honorary President, H. M. Brown, I. M. Campbell, M. H. Cook, R. R. Elton, R. G. Folkhard, J. M. Hartog, R. M. Gall Inglis, J. N. Ledingham, R. C. S. Low, J. Russell Marshall, H. H. Mills, M. Morrison, K. Macrae, T. Nicholson, I. H. Ogilvie, G. S. Roger, W. T. Taylor, B. G. S. Ward, C. B. M. Warren, J. A. Wood, F. R. Wylie; and Guests:—R. Aitken, K. Brennan, J. Broadfoot, C. Cox, C. Elton, J. Harrison, D. Harrison, L. Watson and J. Whitehouse.

New Year Meet 1976—Roybridge

A VERY enjoyable Meet was held in Glen Spean attended by 21 members and 2 guests. Parties were out every day despite very wild weather on 2nd January but the following day was superb. Summits achieved included Stob Coire a Mheadhoin, Beinn a' Chaoruinn, Stob Coire Sgriordain, Chno Dearg, Stob Choire Clairigh and its several tops and Geal Charn (Monadhliath).

Once again many of us enjoyed a very fine party on New Year's Night at Douglas and Audry Scott's delightful cottage which was greatly appreciated. Our thanks too to Mr and Mrs Smith and their staff for their excellent arrangements for the Meet at Glenspean Lodge Hotel, our third successive New Year visit.

Present were:—The President, G. K. Armstrong, W. L. Coats, M. H. Cooke, C. C. Gorrie, R. Holt, J. N. Ledingham, A. H. Hendry, H. H. Mills, W. M. Mackenzie, I. D. McNicol, K. Macrae, T. Nicholson, I. H. Ogilvie, G. Peat, G. S. Roger, D. Scott, I. Smart, C. B. M. Warren, W. Wallace, F. Wylie; and Guests:—A. Jones and C. Lloyd.

Reception, A.G.M. and Dinner, 1975

THIS year the Club deserted the Edinburgh-Glasgow cycle for the first time. Judging by the number present Stirling was a convenient venue and the facilities of the Golden Lion Hotel proved adequate except for the lack of recognition of the rate at which members and their guests can dispose of tea and sandwiches. Apart from that the consensus seems to be that the departure from custom has been a success and there are even mutterings about moving the event further north in the future.

THE LECTURE AND RECEPTION.—The lecture was also in its way historic. Ronnie Richards produced a dazzling collection of slides taken on this year's ascent of the South West Face of Everest. Ronnie's commentary was modest and mercifully free of the Sandhurst accent that frequently accompanies public display of these hallowed slopes. The famous gully through the Rock Band was duly recognised as an oriental copy of a well-known Buchaille prototype. After the lecture the tea and sandwiches episode was even more of a scrum than usual. A meagre trickle of tea was provided in two separate rooms and time that should have been spent in polite conversation with the variety of ladies present was taken up in coarse scrummaging with one's fellow members in an attempt to obtain sufficient nourishment to see one through the A.G.M.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING.—This was preceded by the Special General Meeting which was required to validate the Annual General Meeting. The members present threw away the opportunity to strike a blow for constitutional continuity, freedom from the clutches of the Committee and extra drinking time by overwhelmingly carrying the motion to allow the Eighty-Seventh Annual General Meeting to be held in Stirling.

With Alex Small taking his first stint in the chair the meeting got under way quietly enough. During his report, (notable for the contribution made to Club funds by income from the huts, C.I.C. in particular) Jim Donaldson intimated his impending retirement from the Treasurer's hot seat and indicated that he was training Bill Wallace as his successor. The proposal to increase the subscription to £5 was being argued and looked like being accepted against token resistance when Ben Humble, absent in the flesh, tossed in a letter bomb. George Roger ably declaimed a letter from Ben which did not just oppose the motion but raised a number of other salient questions, e.g. the size of the Club, its relationship with the J.M.C.S. and its general place in Scottish mountaineering activities. Mild uproar ensued—dazzled by the radical views expounded speakers charged off in all directions (indicating that there are perhaps grounds for debate on the Club's role and organisation). However, time for soul-searching was not available and the meeting was brought to heel before passing a complex motion which raised the subscription to £5 except for those of sixty-five and over who will only be required to pay £3.50 per annum (pension books to be submitted as proof?). Thus we have passed in a short span from subsidising youth to subsidising age.

Another topic which occasioned extended debate was the proposed Grampian Way. Although not all members felt passionately opposed to a 'developed' Lairig Ghru there are many who do and there was a general feeling that the bureaucratic careerists are gathering power and momentum and that they are going to be well-nigh impossible to stop. Delay and diversion may be the only tactics.

DINNER.—This year we had space and a grace. On the food feelings were divided, but the majority opinion appeared to be that it was an improvement over last year's. (Club Dinners seem to be cursed with peculiar soups—this year it was labelled 'Cream of Chicken Centurion' and apparently contained discarded fingernails).

The speeches were unexceptionable. Alex Small in his first Presidential offering eschewed fireworks but took the opportunity to remind us of our roots and origins in a year which has seen the death of that great exemplar of Scottish Mountaineering—J. H. B. Bell.

Robin Campbell disposed of, rather than proposed, the Guests, dredging the murkier pages of Scottish history for examples of anti-hospitality—of which he found many.

Paul Nunn in reply expressed his bemusement at finally encountering the S.M.C. after so many years of wanderings in the Scottish wilderness. Alas, most of his subtle circumlocutions passed over the heads of the, by now, inebriate throng.

All in all the departure from the customary circuit did not produce a noticeably different function, demonstrating once again the Club's ability to absorb and resist change and revolution.

J.M.C.S. REPORTS

Edinburgh Section.—This year saw the Section holding a total of 16 week-end meets. The outstanding meet of the year being the 50th Anniversary meet to Carnmore, an area not often visited by the Club. The meet was very well attended with many routes being done during the spell of fine weather. All the other main areas were visited including two trips south of the Border. The mid-week meets to local outcrops were, as usual, entertaining.

The membership has remained reasonably stable at 70, slightly down on last year.

The Smiddy, the Section hut at Dundonnell, made the year a memorable one by winning the Association For the Preservation of Rural Scotland's Annual Award.

The Section's Annual Dinner was again held in the Fife Arms Hotel, Braemar. The hotel supplied an excellent meal which was enjoyed by members and guests. Principal guest this year being J. R. Marshall.

Hon. President, M. Fleming; *Hon. Vice-President*, J. H. Clark; *Hon. Member*, Iain H. Ogilvie, M.B.E.; *President*, A. Dunn; *Vice-President*, J. R. R. Fowler; *Treasurer*, W. M. S. Myles; *Hut Custodian*, J. H. Clark; *Secretary*, I. D. Brodie, 10/4 Primrose Street, Edinburgh, EH6 8DJ. Tel. (Business) 031-554 0805.

Glasgow Section.—The year has again been a very active one for the Glasgow Section, with well attended meets, the 50th Anniversary Dinner, and a well-supported Alpine Meet. The highlight of the year was undoubtedly the Dinner held to celebrate the 50th Anniversary of the Club, where 152 people, mainly from the West of Scotland, enjoyed excellent speeches from Bill Donaldson, Ben Humble, Bill Murray, and Alex Small—the former two providing the wit and the latter two some thought-provoking comment on the future of mountaineering in Scotland—whilst our President, Bill Duncan, ably chaired the speeches. It must indeed have been a proud moment when two of our founder-members, A. G. Hutchison and R. N. Rutherford, stood to take a toast to the Guests.

Eight people, some with their families, were blessed with perfect weather for the Alpine meet in the Dauphine, and once members had braved the hair-pins, and the suicidal French drivers, on the road to La Berarde, every day was a climbing day.

The high standard of lectures during the winter months was maintained by Willie Baxter, who showed a fine series of slides of Scottish wild-life, including some of wild-goats on Ben Lomond; John Allen of the Rucksack Club, who gave an account of the classic routes on the Brenva Face of Mont Blanc; and Bill Young, who demonstrated why it was that he continually won the photographic competition, and spoke amusingly of his own early days in the Club.

After a scourge of non-paying members, there are now 92 members, 6 of whom joined during the year.

Secretary, Peter Hodgkiss, 595 Clarkston Road, Glasgow, G44 5QD.

London Section.—The Section has been undergoing another phase of mountaineering club life over the past year or so. Activity abroad has been at a greater level than at any other time in the Section's history, with the consequence that domestic meets have suffered. It seems that a happy medium is almost unattainable and that if a committee strives for a high level of activity then hut works, walking weekends and the general grand get-togethers of clubs are all in some way put in jeopardy. Nevertheless because of increased activity from members nationally (south of the border) we are attracting mountaineers from other clubs.

Our winter meets were once again well attended and meets in Scotland included visits to Lochnagar, Creag an Dubh Loch and the Cairngorms. Skye was also visited at least once during the year. In the latter half of the year meets dwindled to near extinction, but signs are that a better year lies ahead.

Hut works have been at a very low level, consequently finances are in a healthy state. Since the installation of the hut safe outstanding fees have become almost negligible. An extensive conversion programme has been proposed for the coming year, basically giving members free cooling and lighting but having pay meters for two gas fires.

Section membership stands at 67 with 4 prospective members.

The Section Annual General Meeting and Dinner was once again held at the Royal Goat in Beddgelert, North Wales. The Section was represented at the Whole Club function in Braemar and the Anniversary Dinner in Glasgow. The latter being an excellent evening for which the Glasgow Section should be commended.

Hon. President, Joe Della Porta; *President*, John Steele, Flat I, 72 Cathcart Road, London, SW10, Tel. 01-351 0096; *Treasurer*, Dave Edmunds, 67 Bourton Road, Olton, Solihull, Warks.; *Secretary*, Peter Foster, Tel. 021-706 6746; *Hut Booking Secretary* (Glanafon), Dave Carson, 9 Nadin Road, Solihull, Warks., Tel. 021-382 0586.

Perth Section. Membership of the Section has again dropped slightly and now stands at 60 which is two less than last year's total. Ten week-end and four Sunday day meets were held during the year and most of these were well attended.

Snow and ice activity on meets has been negligible while rock climbing has been sporadic. It would appear that despite activity by members outwith Club occasions there is no climbing group regularly attending Club meets. It is to be hoped that this is only a passing phase. On a brighter note hill walking has gone from strength to strength and the enthusiasm of the participants at 8 o'clock in the morning has to be seen to be believed.

Our Section's Annual Dinner Meet was this year held in the Killin Hotel on the shores of Loch Tay and was as usual a very successful and enjoyable function. The location took advantage of the excellent accommodation available at the Fearnan Outdoor Centre which was the scene of a very entertaining post-dinner sing-song. The other well attended meet held during the year was a day trip to Glen Tilt for which the Club had permission to use the private road to Forest Lodge.

This year's Joint Annual Lecture with the Perthshire Society of Natural Science was given by Donald Bennet, who is not unknown to the pages of this *Journal*. He gave a lively and humorous illustrated account of his three expeditions to the Staunings Alps of East Greenland.

Our Section's A.G.M. was held in Perth in mid-November and most of the matters on the Agenda were quickly dealt with. It was decided to increase the portion of the annual subscription allocated to the S.M.C. *Journal* by 0.25 pence to allow for inflation but to keep the basic annual subscription at £1.00. To achieve this with the sharp rise in postage costs it has been found necessary to reduce the frequency of Club circulars to one every two months.

The only other item which caused lengthy discussion was the Club's decision to become a member of the Perth and Kinross District Sports Council— one of the many local sports councils throughout Scotland founded under the recent regionalisation. The Secretary at present represents mountaineering and skiing interests on the Executive Committee of this Sports Council.

Office-Bearers—*Hon. President*, Chris Rudie; *Hon. Vice-President*, John Proom; *President*, John Reed; *Treasurer*, Iain Robertson; *Secretary*, John Rogers, 19 Stormont Park, Scone, Perth.

Lochaber Section.—1975 has been another successful year for the Club with membership increasing to around the 90 mark, of whom the large majority are active locally. All the organised outdoor meets and slide shows during the winter season have been well attended. Especially pleasing, in view of the distance to travel, was the large turnout for the Lakes meet held in glorious weather in Borrowdale last April. The slide shows presented varied from walking to climbing at home and abroad, and though none were by household names demanding large fees, all were well presented, very interesting and informative, and very well supported.

During the summer several members of the Club travelled to the Alps and numerous routes were done in the Mont Blanc range.

Steall hut is still as popular as ever and the Club's caravan in Skye was used practically every weekend throughout the summer. The Annual Dinner Dance was once again a big local attraction. In addition to this annual event arrangements have already been made for 1976 to hold the first of what is hoped will be an annual male dinner at Arrochar.

Thanks are due to the committee for the work done in organising meets, both indoor and outdoor, producing circulars and for taking a very real interest in and informing members of all proposals, such as 'long distance walking routes,' affecting mountaineers today.

Office-Bearers—*Hon. President*, J. Ness; *President*, W. Adam; *Vice-President*, D. Watt; *Treasurer*, W. Adam; *Hut Custodian*, N. Parrish; *Secretary*, L. Houlker, 30 Camaghael Road, Caol, Fort William.

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

North America

S.M.C. Abroad exists to let members know who was recently in the area they may wish to visit, or may soon find themselves in, and therefore from whom they may obtain useful information. To that end, G. J. Dutton writes that he was last summer in the White Mountains of New Hampshire over a long weekend between meetings, and sampled the curious delights of trail bashing, feeding hugely and sleeping hilariously at A.M.C. huts, using a borrowed cushion cover as rucksack, a plastic bag as anorak and traversing most of the Franconia range. A few very high standard rock faces (overlapping slabs) poke out, such as the Profile on Cannon Mountain and the N.W. cliffs of Mount Lafayette. The rest is fir-knotted, pine-entangled and spruce-woven, fly-infested and strangely addictive. Recommended for a longish between-flights at Boston or that airt.

Africa

JOHN STEELE writes, 'the following report is a brief account of Len Smith's sojourn through Africa.

'In the autumn of 1974 LEN SMITH and MARTIN CHAMBERS (J.M.C.S.) visited the Atlas Mountains. There they made a survey of the Toubkal Massif then moved to the Ovanoukrim Massif. It was here that they found a number of very promising rock faces, most of which were unclimbed. This they learned from the local experts. Consequently they climbed three new GRADE V rock routes on the eastern side.

'While Martin headed for South Africa, Len joined up with the Kenyan Mountaineering Club and climbed on Mount Kenya. Routes included the West face of Batian and a new GRADE VI route on Point Tiggot. He then moved to the Rowenzori and soloed the Shipman/Tilman route on Mount Speke. Len completed his African safari with an ascent of Mount Kilimanjaro.'

Asia

EVEREST S.W. FACE.—We congratulate the successful British Expedition of 1975. This great achievement has been written up elsewhere but we record the participation of our members, HAMISH MACINNES, ALLEN FYFFE and RONNIE RICHARDS.

RONNIE RICHARDS writes, 'After travelling overland to Nepal in May 1975 and helping with the transport of the Everest Expedition equipment also in Nepal, I visited the Karakorum area before returning to Nepal and Everest in July. I was fortunate to be able to join a light expedition comprising Doug Scott, Bob Wilson, Rob Wood, Clive Rowland and Tony Watts (the latter two now living in Scotland). We intended to climb Solsun Brakk, 21,040 ft., on the west side of the Biafo Glacier. The contrast in style and preparation, scenery and environment was fascinating and complete!

'The Pakistan authorities are anxious to encourage tourism and since reopening the Karakorum to climbers two years ago have considerably simplified the red tape. In 1975 the only permitted approach to the high central area was by air from Rawalpindi to Skardu past Nanga Parbat and flights are only risked in perfect weather. Bottlenecks and delays of two weeks at both ends were not uncommon. We were travelling very light so as to move fast and flexibly since we had limited time available but were set back by delays in Rawalpindi and then in Skardu when cargo did not arrive. I waited and followed the others some days later with the gear, travelling the usual route, first by jeep up the Shigar valley and then on foot from Dusso. Porters were quick to exploit their scarcity value and would regularly strike for more pay above official rates, a wearisome ritual in the grilling sun and barren terrain. Six days' march took us past Askole and on up the Biafo glacier to Hobluk, our initial Base camp.

'Waist deep slush higher up the massive glacier highway and prolonged winter snows on the mountains decided us to switch our dwindled time to exploring the nearby Uzun Blakk glacier basin and making Alpine style ascents there. Bad weather was alternating with two to three days good, which was barely enough to clear avalanches and fresh snow from the predominantly rock peaks. After Bob and Tony had had to return, we climbed to 20,000 ft. up an impressive spire on steep mixed ground before retreating in the face of rock difficulties (an impending final headwall), lack of supplies and threatening looking weather. Doug and Rob returned during the subsequent bad spell after which Clive and myself managed to snatch a peak of nearly 20,000 ft., again using a bivouac and nocturnal ascent to minimize avalanche danger. Clag and snow accompanied our walk out next day. Early morning views of incredible spires and walls, the Ogre and Latok mountains opposite and K2 and other giants in the distance remain unforgettable.

'Many other expeditions to the Karakorum had suffered similar delays with inflated costs and had not managed intended plans. Future parties should bear this in mind but, given time, small expeditions can find many areas of unlimited scope in sensational mountain surroundings and fairly easy access. However, it remains to be seen how the authorities regulate future expeditions (by quota or high royalties) and control access and the porter situation, for the present bottlenecks cannot cope with the increasing numbers of expeditions and trekkers.'

R. C. S. Low plus three members of the Alpine Club spent an enjoyable 25 days, in November 1975, on a trip to the Langtang Valley, which lies due north of Kathmandu, on the Tibetan border.

'For a start the route followed the Trisuli river and then by Dhunche and Syabru into the Langtang Valley. Ascent was made of five minor tops between 15-17,000 feet from a base at Kyangjin Gompa and then from a high camp, three of the party climbed Yala Peak 19,000 feet.

'Return was made by a route south over the Ganga La from which it had been hoped to make another ascent. However, having spent fourteen days over 13,000 two of the party were not going too well, so a leisurely return was made to Kathmandu through some glorious country. Apart from one day of cloud the whole trip was made in brilliant sunshine, though mighty cold at night.'

Norway

The ubiquitous H. M. BROWN writes, 'The summer of 1975 was spent with a young B.F.M.C. party wandering by Dormobile up to the Arctic and back—a good Munro-bagging trip! Norway has fantastic scenery and hills to suit all tastes but it is the rock-climbing potential that makes one marvel at its comparable neglect, no doubt due to its failure to rank, credit-wise, with Chamonix etc.; with rock everywhere, and nobody to impress, the Norwegians prefer to fish anyway.

'Jotunheim—We began by Lakes Tyin and Bygdin (Slingsby country) at Eidsbugaren where we climbed Hegbrothogdi, then sailed to Torfinsbu and through the Svartdalen to Gjendebu, a pass of Andean grandeur, with rock faces for a fanatic's satisfaction. Knutsholstind (2,340 m) was climbed en route. A high camp under the Corbett of Rundtum led to Galdeberg (2,074 m) and back to base. Uranostind (2,157 m) gave a more dramatic peak, a glacier start at 3:30! A long road flanking led to Gjendesheim where we sailed in to Memurubu, 'overnatting' and out over Bessho (2,257 m) and the Bessegen ridge of Peer Gynt fame. Using a break in the weather the long trek north was made via Dombas and Trondheim to Moi Rana.

'Svartisen and Okstinder—This second-largest ice cap is split by the Vesterdalen, a big valley in which we were based on a bothy, the Pikhaugytte. Pot-holing country too but its main memory was of major river-crossings. Two crossings and a complex route gave us Snötinden (1,594 m) the highest summit. We also had a good traverse of Kamptinden and Sniptind. A day or two was given to the Grønli cave system and playing on the much-studied Austerdalsbreen. Retreating south from the polar circle we just bagged Oksskolten (1,915 m) the highest peak in North Norway before the weather broke again. We drove south by Sweden and had a rest in Hell. Height bears no relation to difficulty and our longest climbs were in the north. We also fed the mosquitos.

'Snöhetta (2,286 m)—for long regarded as Norway's highest gave an unplanned 34-mile day from Kongsvoll. Fokstua bird sanctuary and the Rauma valley led to the dramatic descent through Romsdal.

'Romsdal—From the Vengedal (crawling with G.B. cars) the party did the Romsdalshorn, Vengetind, Sore Vengetind and Kalskratind in various combinations. From the Trollsteig traverses were made of Bispen and Kongen, of Breidtind, and of Finnann and Ringshorn. This was the only area we encountered British climbers, presumably because it has a guide book in English (off favoured routes not always reliable). It also has spectacular peaks and climbs of all grades including the Troll Wall and such objects of special interest. Touristy motoring via Geiranger, Hellysylv, led to the Jotunheim again. En route we motored up Dalsnibba, higher than the Ben. There's an idea, now, for the Scottish Countryside Commission!

'Jotunheimen—From Spiterstulen I traversed Styggehó (2,214 m) while the others were over Galdhoppigen, then we all toiled over Glittertind (2,470 m) the dullest peak of all, to Glitterheim. The return by the Veobreen and Store Memurutinden (2,364 m) and Leirhoe (2,328 m) gave two more big 'uns.

Some managed to trek through to Loirvassbu and bag Visbretind before the weather broke and from Krossbu I managed to fiddle Store Smorstabtind (2,208 m) as a last fling before we drove by Ardal and Gudvangen to Voss and party break-up.

'Everywhere the glaciers are much receded compared to maps available, and one of the interests was seeking out and climbing good looking peaks with little or no information.

'Prices are high: usually more than double the U.K. but by taking most food, tents, and gear, expenses were reduced mainly to eggs, bread and veg.; toll roads; ferries and camp sites. The weather (again giving our Norway luck) was usually very good and the breaks definite. On all but the very popular hills we never met *any* other climbers. Off mountains Norway also has its attractions and distractions. Motoring is one of them. The country often reminds of Scotland but the scale is vastly bigger both on the horizontal and vertical. It's a bit like the Alps before the climbers came! Recommended, especially for longer spells but good short visits could be made using the posh mountain huts and climbing between them. Expensive and luxurious but easy. I'll be happy to give any further 'gen' to anyone interested in Norway which I've now wandered in on several occasions.'

The Alps

MIKE COLEMAN writes, 'It may interest members to know that Neil Harding and I made what I think is the first British ascent of the Dru Couloir in the French Alps, in January. The ascent took 4 days; the descent 3 days (including a forced bivvy of one day on summit). It's an astonishing route combining long sections of free-climbing/Al pegging (though mostly pegging) with extreme ice climbing at angles up to a sustained 80°. The temperature fell to -15°C most nights while bivvy points were abysmal. In all, a hard won EDsup I feel.

CHARLES WARREN, OLIVER TURNBULL (A.C.) and GEORGE ROGER had a very brief but enjoyable visit to the Dauphine. We left by car on Friday 25th July and were camped in a delightful spot near Les Etages on Saturday evening having motored about 1,200 miles. The training walk on Sunday was up the Vallon des Etages over the Col de la Lavey and down the Glacrier du Chardon to La Berarde when we were greeted by some of the J.M.C.S. party. We went next day to the Chatellier Hut and on Tuesday traversed the Pic Nord des Cavales—up the east and down the south ridge—an excellent day. We moved next day to the Promontoire Hut and went up to the Breche de la Meije with a view to climbing the east ridge of Le Rateau but the ridge was so loose we abandoned our attempt and returned to camp. On Friday 1st August as we were striking camp we had a very pleasant meeting with PETER HODGKISS, GRAHAM WYLIE and MURRAY EASTON who were homeward bound. We motored to the Vercors group and camped that night below the famous and historic Mont Aiguille. It was first climbed in 1492 on the order of Charles VIII by one of his knights who with 7 companions reached the summit using ladders in accordance with the tactics employed in those days for assaulting castles. We climbed it on Saturday morning—a most enjoyable climb and a grand finish to the holiday. We left that afternoon at 2.30 and 25 hours later arrived at Charles Warren's house at Felsted, Essex, having covered 800 miles. Our grateful thanks to Oliver and his very fine motor car.

PETER HODGKISS writes, 'The following members of the Glasgow Section of the J.M.C.S. were in the Dauphine for the second half of July, camping at La Berarde—RONNIE CAMELFORD, MURRAY EASTON, PETER HODGKISS, CLIVE LAVIOLETTE, FRED MACGILL, GEORGE WILKINSON, GRAHAM WYLIE, BILL

YOUNG and son Ian. Various permutations did the climbs listed, the perfect weather allowing every day to be used with exhaustion eventually intervening. Traverse of the Pointe du Vallon des Etages—a fine rock peak but a long day from La Berarde, naively following an optimistic guide-book time; Pic Coolidge—an easy peak but a superb view-point for the 'big routes' on Les Ecrins and Ailefroide; the Boell route on the Aiguille Dibona; Pic Nord des Cavales—abounding in superb rock-climbs on impeccable rock; traverse of La Meije from the Promontoire to the Aigle hut, a long day compounded by the slowness of some French parties away from the hut first, and by an electric storm lasting about three hours and causing excitement on the steel-cable section after the Breche Zsigmondy: the day finished with an abseil from an ice-bollard in the gathering dark; Les Bans—from the Pilatte hut, a magnificent establishment boasting showers and haute cuisine; traverse of the Tete de la Gondaliere—another misguidedly long day from La Berarde.

'La Berarde is undoubtedly the best *centre* for the Dauphine, and whilst the camp sites were crowded at weekends, the well appointed huts were quiet midweek and, away from the classic routes, there were remarkably few people on the mountains. LES BROWN and DOUG LANG paid a fleeting visit and also traversed La Meije, and GEORGE ROGER, OLIVER TURNBULL, and CHARLES WARREN were found camping in a secluded dell, where the latter's 1936 Mcade tent which had been to the North Col on Everest, was viewed with reverence.'

JOHN STEELE sends the following summary of the London Section's activities in the Alps last year, 'JOHN TURNER, BILL STEPHENS and myself spent two weeks in Arolla at the end of July.

'Despite his many years in the mountains this was Bill's first Alpine venture. Consequently John spent the first week guiding him around at a relatively low level. I, on the other hand, was only too pleased to be out of the 'Anglaise' campsite. While the other two visited the Dix hut, I bivouacked on the upper Cheilon glacier in the middle of a violent storm. The following morning I traversed Mont Blanc de Cheilon by its East and West ridges, encountering more crevasses on the easier descent route. From a bivouac on the glacier moraine below the Blanche de Perroc, I climbed the peak by its North West ridge, using the ice face under the summit wall as an escape from the tottering rock which now hardly justifies the description as a ridge. Having reached the summit I then traversed the Main Ridge of the Grandes Dents, passing several impressive towers, to the Grande Dent de Veisivi. After a day's rest I climbed the Douves Blanches rock ridge in glorious weather. The upper Dièdre (crux) fortunately held little ice, while on the whole route I encountered only one peg in situ.

'We finished off the first week by a long walk up the Arolla glacier, taking in the Col Collon, Col de Tsa de Tzan and passing directly below Mont Brules' north face, which was in very bad condition. John Turner then made a one-day traverse of the Pigne d' Arolla and Cheilon while Bill and two other British made an abortive attempt on the Tsa. Our last few days were spent catching up on sunbathing and of course drinking interrupted only by the not so arduous task of haymaking for some of the local maids.'

ANDREW RUSSELL and LEN SMITH (J.M.C.S.), having invested in an old London taxi climbed in various parts of the Alps between June and September. Amongst other routes they climbed the North ridge of La Grivola, the North face of the Grand Casse (4½ hrs., 3,000 ft., TD., possible 2nd British ascent), the North face of Ciaforon (AR. solo), the Grand Paradiso/Hervetet Traverse and perhaps best of all the Lauper route on the Eiger (22 hrs., one bivouac in bad conditions). They then headed south to Turkey and finished off the season with a tame ascent of Mount Ararat.'

PETER STOKES and IAN CARTER (J.M.C.S.) visited Chamonix at the end of July. During their two week stay they climbed the Point Shella/Aiguilles de Tour Traversé, the North Buttress route on the Aiguilles de Chardonnet, the East face of the Crepon, the North West ridge of the Blatière and finished off a good trip with the Brenva Ridge of Mont Blanc.

ANDREW HUGHES, ERIC ROSEBURY, ERIC HALLIGEN and COLIN OWEN (J.M.C.S.) also visited Chamonix. This was their first Alpine trip so routes were approached cautiously. Nevertheless after a few training climbs they made ascents of the Petit Verte and the Petit Charmoz.

JOHN and LIZ FAIRLIE (J.M.C.S.) now resident in Germany had a varied and active season. As well as skiing trips they climbed the Petit Darrey, the Pointes de Econdis, the Finsteraarhorn, Mont Velin and many lesser peaks.

J. McK. STEWART writes, 'I visited the Bernese and Pennine Alps during August with Geoff and Marjorie Pearson.

'Saturday 2nd, from Leukerbad over the Gemmipass to the Schwarenbach Inn, and next day via the Lämmern Hut we ascended the glacier to Wildstrubel Main Peak, I just short of summit, others to the top.

'On the 4th, up to the Rindersattel from where we climbed the Rinderhorn by its North Ridge, final 600 feet bare ice and exposed. 5th, from Schwaren bach down into the Gasterthal and up to Selden for night at Heimritz, and on 6th we traversed the Kanderfirn to the Mutthorn Hut.

'Next day, we crossed the Petersgrat, and climbed the Tschingelhorn by its S.W. Couloir, returning to the Hut, and on the 8th over the Petersgrat, descending the Tal Gletscher to Fafleralp in the Lötschental, and by a circuitous route we arrived at Belalp above Brig. 9th, a good day up the Sparhorn, but the weather broke on return to the Hotel after nine days of perfect conditions. Our plans for the Finsteraarhorn were abandoned on the 10th after a morning on the Aletsch Cl. in foul weather, we returned to Belalp and on the following day descended to the Rhone Valley and by Postuato arrived at Saas-fee. 12th, continuous rain during walk to Saas-Almagell and back.

'On the 13th, in perfect weather we footslogged over the Egginerjoch to the Britannia Hut, and after a night in an over crowded hut, I spent an easy day, whilst Geoff and Marjorie did the Strahlhorn.

'On the 15th, we descended the Gletscher to Plattjen and Saas Fee, and left Brig on Saturday for home.'

DONALD MILL (who should have known better) was in Chamonix at the beginning of August with PETER STOKES (J.M.C.S.), Ian van Hinsbergh, and Ian Carter. Routes included—Chardonnet North Spur, Grepon East Face, Blatière N.W. Ridge, and Brenva Ridge. He writes:—

'Conditions seem to have been excellent earlier in July but by the end of the month the Heat Wave Had Taken Its Toll: freezing level was around 4,000 m even at night and ridges were the only safe place to be (when you could get onto them: the soft ice of the Envers Glacier kept us off the East Ridge of the Plan).

'So, nerves shattered by the constant buzzing of the rescue helicopters, we went in search of a vision of clear blue water and sunny walls of a different granite, to Cornwall, where it rained for the rest of the holiday.'

Pyrenees

H. M. BROWN writes, 'At Easter I joined the Eagle Ski Club on their Jubilee tour of the Pyrenees—much less demanding, vocabulary-wise, than the Tatras of the year before. The Eagle Ski Club exists purely as a ski-mountaineering body and organises tours at all levels. They have been to Poland, Morocco, Demavend (and all over Europe) in the last few years. An annual training course is held in the Oberland every spring which really does do just that—worse than being Assessed at Glenmore Lodge. I've often been the lone Scot on their trips yet feel there must be many (even in the S.M.C.) who would find it providing a service. The Pyrenees were no picnic.

'Nine of us met at Pau to be ably led and spoiled by Michael de Pret-Roose and Martin Epp. Their navigation at times was unbelievable—good, that is. With poor maps and nil visibility, constant snow and avalanche dangers they wiggled through complex country in superb fashion.

'We used huts which proved well-appointed (even opened specially for us!) and often linked them together. The Pic d'Anie, 2,504 m, from Lescun and the Refuge L'Abéronat was our furthest west. Memories of good vino, blazing fires and bonny lassies. And Cairngorm storm-like conditions on the hill. (I used to believe one stayed indoors for such).

'Urdes saw us loading up like donkeys and then peching up to the Col d'Ayous, a cold, bleak spot, in gathering dusk. Nil visibility and corniced ridges delayed the experts for two hours while it snowed on. My sleeping bag set off down and a wild rush and rugby tackle followed to save it. We broke down a cornice and threaded through cliffs to a hut which only had one corner showing. Navigation had to be accurate!

'An enjoyable descent and a GRADE II gully up led through to the Refuge de Pombie under the Pic du Midi d'Osséou, 2,884 m, our planned peak but we arrived in a blizzard, and next day had our work cut out merely to escape down to Gabas. Marvellous wild scenery as we traversed under the avalanching east face—SKADI all switched on! Hotel cuisine was welcome.

'The route on was impracticable in the conditions so after a day piste-playing we went round via Lourdes to Pont d'Espagne. Blazing sun and sparkling forest scenery saw us up to the Wallon hut. Self-catering and no loo. Where to go? A French gang replied 'un peu partout.'

'The Pic de Cambales, 2,965 m, was done the next day. Ski-ing up picces marked on the map as sections for 'skis-off' was entertaining; doing kick turns where one felt like belaying. A flanking route into Spain led to the top. (Last time in that region we'd had our passports taken by guards to see we stayed in Spain).

'It snowed all night, so next day we set off in another pea-souper for a pull to the Col d'Arratille, 2,500 m, into Spain again, and sun; then back over the Col des Mulets, to France and cloud and the concrete box of the Refuge Oulettes. It froze hard. Clear skies. So early off.

'The Vignemale, 3,298 m, was a fitting climax, a rise to pass round the great north face, an exposed traverse, a long ascent with superlative views and a tricky climb to the summit. For such high moments we will suffer; glad addicts of delight.

'The run down in deep powder was bliss. I only wish my suspicions of ski-ing had been laid twenty years ago. Or that I had earlier met with Eagles—who climbed on skis. It's a great combination.'

Other Expeditions

St. Andrews in South Greenland.—We have received the preliminary report of the 10-man 1975 St. Andrews University Expedition to the Itivdlerssuaq valley in the Cape Farewell region of South Greenland, which

was led by Dr P. W. F. Gribbon. The expedition carried out botanical, archaeological and hydrological work as well as climbing 40 virgin peaks, some of considerable difficulty. The expedition was a varied one with much travel on foot and by canoe. One party was 'joined at Herjolfsnes by the Queen of Denmark who made a brief visit by helicopter.'

We quote the following additional extracts:

'The exploration was carried out in the region of a big valley called Itivdlersuaq that cuts through the mountains from Tasermiut fjord to the Ilua fjord system. These fjords run 50 miles inland from the outer coast to the main icecap and are overlooked by steep mountains and small glaciers. The Big Valley is a major transverse glacial trench that provides access to the spectacular mountains that rise to 6,000 feet. Some of the mountains north of the Big Valley had been visited by the 1971 St. Andrews expedition, but the sharp needle like mountains south of the Big Valley were virgin territory. All the earlier explorations by British, French and Irish parties had been north and east of this Big Valley region. The position of the Cape Farewell area means that it shares the same weather pattern as the British Isles and this offers the possibility of a miserable wet summer as a reward for the choice of these mountains as an object of exploration. However the relative ease of access to South Greenland combined with the lowest costs to reach anywhere in Greenland mean that the Cape Farewell region is achieving some measure of popularity. The 1975 St. Andrews expedition therefore were not alone in the Cape Farewell district: three large parties of French tourists and mountaineers, one R.A.F. team, and one Irish group were our distant neighbours somewhere over the valleys and mountains that crowd the countryside.

'Everyone was present at the gathering day on 4th July at the base camp. The programme for the next month was devised and put into operation. A four-man advance party was placed at Sallies Kitchen in a corrie under the rampart of the hills to the south: their job was to ferry in supplies, to probe a feasible route for entering the Land of the Towers, and to survive the onslaughts of the mosquitoes. The remaining six members acted as the mere pack animals that brought the loads along the Big Valley. It was only in the sixth valley on the rampart that a high col at 3,000 feet gave a safe and relatively easy route to the desolate camp site in Hellhole Hollow.

'A four man party of the best and most dedicated climbers operated around the peaks that surrounded the melting snows and the stones of Hellhole Hollow: they climbed five major hills by some stylish and demanding routes. The other six members entered a side valley north of the Big Valley and camped by a scenic and peaceful Lost Loch ringed by a variety of attractive mountains: they enjoyed their climbing and they savoured their rest days in the sun; they ascended six hills, all of which were full of interest and character.'

For further flavour we quote the account of two ascents:

Anvil (1,520 metres)—This elaborately structured mountain was protected by 3,000 feet walls and buttresses rising above the glaciers. Its highest point was a huge anvil shaped block perched on the largest of the three pinnacles sprouting from its south ridge. It was attempted unsuccessfully by the north ridge by the members of the 1971 St. Andrews expedition. This time it was ascended by a cunning and serpentine route that wound across the head of the Lost Loch cirque and used a steep gully to gain the concave ice slope that ran to the final rocks. The party of Mackenzie, Gaskell, Gribbon and Matheson used combined tactics to hoist each other on to the anvil block, and on the descent they were forced to bivouac above the bergschrund on the glacier. Time 21 hours: GRADE D.

Frenchbird (1,242 metres)—On Pamiagdruk Island an enchanting shattered torso of red rock girdled with a sculpted skirt of white snow dominated Ilua fjord. It was climbed up its east ridge to the high skirt and then up an icy cleft to the summit spine of pinnacles. The party of Brown, Matheson, Mackenzie and Gribbon found a rock peg imbedded by the French in 1957 on the subsidiary top and made their own cairn of stones to hide the bones of the sea trout that they had carried up for lunch on the main top. Time 13 hours: GRADE AD.

Edinburgh in Hindu Raj.—The following items have been abstracted from the preliminary account of the Edinburgh University Hindu Raj Expedition 1975, sent us by D. Rubens. (The expedition was a recipient of the Sang Award).

'We made applications for the Wakhan in Afghanistan and the Hindu Raj area in Pakistan. The Wakhan was quickly rejected. Just before we left, the Pakistan government informed us that our application for Thui Zom was rejected. Instead, we were given Thui I (21,800 ft.) which had been climbed by the Japanese in 1974. Thui I is close to Thui Zom and lies on the watershed between the Yarkhun and Thui Valleys, about ten miles south of the Wakhan corridor.

'We drove from Edinburgh to Rawalpindi in seventeen days. The journey started unpromisingly when the van was pushed off the boat at Ostend. It broke down in every country en route. A week was then spent in the humid city of Pindi, coping with the bureaucracy, meeting our liaison officer and trying to get on the necessary flight to Gilgit. The latter was a very tedious procedure.

'From Gilgit, two jeeps took us up beautiful valleys to the picturesque town of Yasin. At the roadhead beyond Yasin, we hired porters for the trek up the Thui valley. Four days later and twenty-eight days after leaving Edinburgh, we established a base camp on a lateral moraine of the Borum Bar glacier at 14,500 ft.

'Base camp was surrounded by a cirque of a half-dozen fine mountains. Thui I lay back from the head of the cirque which was three hour's walk above base camp. Later a tunnel tent was pitched here. The head of the cirque was ringed by large ice-cliffs which formed the edge of a large plateau at an altitude of 20,000 ft. At one point, the ice-cliffs were breached by a tributary glacier, which formed the thoroughfare between the main glacier and the plateau. The plateau gave access to the three tops of Thui I and two further peaks we called the 'Twin Peaks,' both about 20,000 ft. Thui 1.5, 20,400 ft., a fine mountain between Thui I and Thui II to the west, lay above base camp on the west side of the cirque. Two snowdomes of about 18,000 ft. lay on the far (east) side of the B.B. glacier.

'All these mountains were climbed except Thui 1.5 and the highest point of Thui I. The Thui I peaks were possibly 2nd ascents; the other four peaks were 1st ascents.

'We all enjoyed climbing in these remote mountains though acclimatisation and regaining fitness after four weeks of travelling proved trying. Alpine starts proved necessary due to the enervating effects of the sun after about 10 a.m. On the best days, we had views of Tirich Mir, Noshaq, Nanga Parbat, Rakaposhi, the Pamirs and the Baturi group.

'This area is a fine one. Thui Zom and Thui II still await first ascents. The 8,000 ft. north face of Thui Zom is a magnificent challenge, a sort of double Grande Jorasses. Several other unclimbed peaks exceed 20,000 ft. However until access to Gilgit is improved expeditions will be subject to delays of up to a fortnight each way. Royalties on peaks and porters' wages must be a larger part of an (official) expedition's budget than hitherto.'

REVIEWS

New Ordnance Survey, 1:50,000 Maps. On 20 February 1976, the Ordnance Survey published their new 1:50000 Series Maps for Scotland and Northern England, having done so in 1974 for Southern England and Wales. Before climbers rush off to buy them, thinking these maps are not just the latest but the best, they might like to consider the following detailed comparison of old and new.

First, the new maps in their shiny new magenta covers are the shiny new price of £1 15 each, compared with 50p for the old ones which are still on sale. Is the extra cost worth it?

The new maps are larger in scale, 2 cm to 1 km or about 1¼ inches to 1 mile. In the old series, 77 maps covered Scotland. You will now need 83. The sheet size is slightly bigger, but this is no problem as few will wish to open out an entire map on the hill. When folded, the map with its covers takes up nearly ¼ inch more length and almost as much extra width. It will therefore not fit so easily into anorak pockets, rucksack pockets and plastic map covers. The result is that the covers will have to take more pushing and will wear sooner.

One obvious problem is that we are now too familiar with the old maps. Many are so used to the old one inch to the mile scale that they can estimate distances on the map accurately by eye. The summits will seem a lot further away with the new scale, and in unfamiliar terrain we will tend to over-estimate distances and not plan as full a day as we might. It will also take a while for many of us to get used to metric heights and contours. To avoid confusion, watch what the contour interval is. On the 'first series' of the new maps, it is about every 15 m, or 50 ft., exactly the same as in the old one inch maps. However, in the 'second series' it is every 10 m on areas where metric contours have been surveyed, so there will be many more contours than we are used to, for a given increase in height. The result is that the hills will seem on the map to be steeper and higher than we are used to. It is hardly the best thing to bolster the confidence or vigour of 'has beens,' 'old men' or the variety immortalised by Tom Patey as 'Cairngorm Mannies,' to whom the hills they knew as cager young men are steeper and higher in reality, let alone on the map!

Why are there these differences in the new maps? The 'first series' is merely a slight enlargement of the old one inch map, and so if you compare the two you will find that the contour lines are exactly the same; in the new maps they have merely been relabelled in metres. The 'second series' of the new maps is completely redrawn, not simply enlarged. Some sheets have been resurveyed and are therefore more accurate. Other 'second series' sheets were merely redrawn from the old one inch maps by surveyors who added revisions in the field. It is worth looking in the bottom right corner of each sheet, to see exactly what kind of revision or resurvey has been done. Eventually, the Ordnance Survey will be issuing completely resurveyed 'second series' maps, with contours every 10 m, for the whole country. These will replace the new 'first series' and any of the new 'second series' sheets which were not resurveyed.

The 'first series' maps are not just enlargements of the old one inch sheets. They show many changes in the lowlands, such as new public roads, railways that have gone out of use, and some of the new houses and new reservoirs. In the hills, they are of little more help than the old one inch maps. A useful feature is that they illustrate new forestry plantations, but they do not show new forest roads made since the old one-inch maps. As knowledge of the location of the forest roads is important for travelling easily through forests on the way up or down the hill, the new 'first series' maps are not adequate. They

do show big new hydro electric dams and lochs, such as the new Cruachan Reservoir, and the road up to it, but not the many new bulldozed tracks on moor and open hill. Both series of the new maps show tourist facilities far better than the old maps, such as camp sites and caravan parks, and a completely new feature is to indicate the location of mountain rescue posts, mountain rescue kits, and mountain refuge huts.

The only part of Britain with completely resurveyed 'second series' sheets is in the Scottish Highlands; this was because the Ordnance Survey decided that the old one inch maps there were not sufficiently accurate as a basis for revision. All the islands and mainland north-west of Glencoe are included, plus virtually all of Sutherland and most of Ross-shire and Inverness-shire except the eastern lowlands from Dornoch to Inverness. The Kingussie, Grantown, Braemar and Ballater sheets are also included.

The resurveyed maps show many steep slopes and cliffs that can be dangerous in winter or even at times in summer, in places where the old one inch maps indicated gentle slopes. They illustrate not only the new woods but also the new forest roads and many of the recent bulldozed tracks out on the hill. However, they are not consistent in what they depict about vehicle tracks on the hill. For instance, some old peat roads good enough to drive a car on, and some new tracks wholly excavated by bulldozer, are classified as footpaths. In the Cairngorms Deeside area, all cliffs are shown, not just the haphazard selection as on the one inch maps. Also, dangerous cliff edges that previously were not in the correct place, are now accurately located.

On very rugged terrain with sharp ridges, as in Glen Shiel, the old one-inch maps make it much easier to see the broad layout of where the various ridges go. It is hard to see this on the resurveyed maps, because the many symbols for rocks now obscure the ridge lines and contours. Nevertheless, with this one proviso, the new maps are a lot better than the old for showing detail in the rugged country of the west. They also show far more deer stalkers' paths up the hills, for instance in the big area of hill country from Glen Shiel to Glen Deesay. On smoother terrain, such as the Mounth or the Cairngorms, where rocks and ridges are scarcer, the maps are particularly good.

Small patches of woodland and even scattered trees used to be drawn on the old Ordnance Survey maps of the 1920's and 1930's, using symbols for the scattered trees. The seventh series one-inch maps omitted these and many of the small patches of woodland, and the new resurveyed maps carry this change even further. Also, previous maps showed by symbols whether a wood was coniferous or hardwood, whereas the new 1:50000 maps give no such differences. For hill walkers, these details on the old maps were all useful, and it is unfortunate to see them go. Other details of vegetation have gone, such as large boggy areas on the moors, and the distinctions between enclosed fields, the rough grassy pasture nearby, and the wide open hill. Scree are more often shown on the resurveyed 'second series' maps, but some big scree are still omitted and there seems to be no obvious standardisation of what is to be depicted as scree and what is not.

A comparison of woodland on the 'first' and 'second series' of the new maps, in a place overlapped by both, shows great inconsistency. Take, for example, the Muir of Dinnet or the Glen Tanar woods. On the Strathdon sheet (first series), woodland covers a much smaller area than in the same place on the Ballater sheet (second series). The second series is nearer the mark, except for patches of open woodland. It is fairly obvious that new plantations have been added in the revision for the first series, but big changes in natural woodland have been ignored.

Printers' errors occur, as always, but are reasonably few. The larger scale has given space for extra place names, which the map makers have added on the resurveyed 'second series' sheets. In north-east Scotland, one can detect a welcome gallicisation in a few names, instead of the usual anglicisation.

For instance, near Loch Muick, the corrupted spellings Creag na Slowrie and Creag-an-Dubh-loch have become Creag na Slabhraidh and Creag an Dubh-loch, and the anglicised Craig Dearg is now Creag Dearg. Strangely, the nearby Drum Cholzie has gone the opposite way, to Drum Cholzic. Also, the maps introduce a few translations or anglicisations in parentheses (e.g. Lurcher's Crag, Angel's Peak) although neither appeared on the old one-inch sheets.

Munro-baggers will have it all there at last, the definitive list of metric heights (omitting the odd case such as Cairn Toul where the height is left out, so keeping curiosity ever fresh!).

To sum up, the new resurveyed 'second series' maps are the best set of hill maps ever produced in Britain. The advice to potential map buyers is that all of them are excellent value (sheet numbers 1-4, 8-11, 13-20, 22-25, 31 36, 39 41, 43 and 44). For the other numbers, you may find it better not to buy the new ones if you already have the old one inch maps, but to wait till the resurveyed editions come out.

ADAM WATSON.

The Story of Scotland's Hills.—By Campbell Steven. (1975; Robert Hale. 102 pp., 32 illustrations. £3.50).

Campbell Steven has concentrated on writing for the interested layman a history of climbing on Scotland's hills, but his book will be useful for nearly all Scottish climbers and many from outside our country.

The title is misleading. From it, one might expect a short chapter on geology and geomorphology, and another on the history of the local people who have lived and worked in the hill country, including their social, cultural, political, and land-use problems. Many lay readers are interested in these things, but the book gives little or nothing about them, apart from a little about cattle droving and the St. Kildan wildfowlers. In this sense, it avoids two important parts of the story of Scotland's hills. By virtually ignoring the social aspects, it gives a rather rosy, tourist impression about the Scottish hill country. In the rapidly-changing Highlands of 1976, this can no longer be considered adequate.

The book begins with chapters introducing the variety of the hills and their names. A third gives early historical references by people who travelled there, including interesting accounts of the St. Kildans who climbed the sea cliffs. A chapter on the heights of the hills describes the early map makers and our latest Ordnance Survey maps, and introduces the reader to Sir Hugh Munro, his catalogue of 'Munros,' and the sport of climbing them. Chapter 5 gives some comments by early tourists such as Pennant and Queen Victoria, and ends with the first rock climbs on Skye in the mid 19th century. Two chapters with many interesting quotations follow, on the observatory at Ben Nevis and the early collectors of Cairngorm stones. The next five chapters, on the history of climbing and skiing in the Scottish hills, make the most detailed part of the book, and the part the author knows best from his first-hand experience. Campbell Steven begins 'The Golden Age' with the first mountaineering clubs in the 19th century and ends with the spectacular rock and ice climbs now being done. In such a wide survey, he has had to be selective. Also, he has named few mountaineers still alive, no doubt because it is hard to name a few without others feeling left out, so this part cannot be as complete as the 'Golden Age.' Tom Patey is given a special place, as he so well merited.

The last chapter, on 'The Heritage,' warns of the dangers of litter and modern 'development.' Surprisingly, therefore, the author seems to equivocate about a Feshie road whose 'value can be even more cogently argued today,' but then omits any arguments. He also takes a big swipe at the modern young climber and his derisive, 'de-bunking,' blasphemous writings and attitudes,

asking 'if things have not got more than a little out of perspective.' One might use the same phrase for the author's comments. Some are justified and worth giving, but to make no mention of the many modern young climbers who do not show such writings and attitudes indicates a lack of balance. Indeed, one wonders if the author knows many young climbers, or has merely decided from the things some of them have written. It is unfortunate that this, the sole example in the book of a serious analytical criticism, is so wide of the mark.

This exception illustrates the fact that, although the book is an enthusiastic descriptive account of the story of Scottish mountaineering, it is too euphoric and does not provide any depth of analysis on what has happened, is happening, or is likely to happen in future. The author avoids the controversial, and the result is at times too passive and complacent, as on conservation. In other places the result is unreal, if one thinks of the many recent controversies, such as the M.C. of S. in relation to the B.M.C., the proposals of the Countryside Commission for Scotland on a parks system, the C.C.S. plans for 'access agreements,' the plan for a big hut on Ben Nevis, the bothies on the Cairn Gorm plateau, and the idea of banning descriptions of climbing routes in the North West. The book mentions none of these, but they are certainly part of the story of Scottish mountaineering. The reader will have to look at 'Climber and Rambler' to get a better modern picture of the real climbing world. Possibly these aspects were left out because the book was aimed at a big lay readership. However, lay readers would surely have appreciated more on these topics, especially on events in the last few years, and this could have been done by sacrificing some of the more parochial details about climbing clubs in the 20's and 30's. This book gives the impression of having been written hastily, and, being merely descriptive, it says nothing new. The history which will stimulate and satisfy S.M.C. members and other climbers and hill walkers will require more work and thought, and still remains to be written.

None of these criticisms detracts from the fact that this book is worth reading not only for laymen interested in Scotland's hills but also for climbers. Few, if any, members of the S.M.C. or other clubs will fail to learn many interesting facts from it, especially in the chapters on the history of mountaineering and the climbing clubs. This reviewer realized the depth of his ignorance about Scottish clubs in the 20's and 30's. Many will wish to buy it, as it is a book for dipping into for useful reference as well as one for reading easily right through. There are many interesting photographs of the hills and of pioneer Scottish climbers. Campbell Steven has made a worthwhile collection of material from a great variety of sources both modern and old, and produced the fullest history of mountaineering in the Scottish hills yet written.

ADAM WATSON.

Peaks and Pioneers.—The Story of Mountaineering, by Francis Keenlyside. (Elek, London. £15).

In this large coffee table book the author has traced the history of mountaineering in the great ranges largely through the writings of the pioneers themselves. Many of the legendary stories of mountaineering are collected in this book, and are linked by the author's own contributions. The choice of source-material is limited by being all in the English language (or translations), and many of the extracts are from the *Alpine Journal*, which is hardly surprising as the author is a past editor of that journal. The result is a fairly satisfactory coverage of the milestones in mountaineering with writings by many well-known climbers—past and present.

This is a very handsomely produced book, lavishly illustrated, and only the price need deter one from adding it to one's library.

D.B.

Mountain Medicine and Physiology.—Proceedings of a Symposium for Mountaineers, Expedition Doctors and Physiologists. Edited by Charles Clarke, Michael Ward and Edward Williams. Published by the Alpine Club.

This book represents the published proceedings of a symposium held at Plas Y Brenin Mountaineering Centre during late February 1975.

The mere holding of such a meeting was a most praiseworthy initiative; a variety of physiologists, physicians and mountaineers, professional, semi-professional and amateur was assembled, and the scientific papers presented dealt with such topics as high altitude hypoxia, hypothermia and expedition medicine.

These various contributions, and the points made in subsequent discussion have been faithfully reported by the editors, producing a book which will be read with interest by anyone actually or potentially concerned with mountain medicine, whether as patient or practitioner.

Your reviewer reached Plas Y Brenin after a gruelling nocturnal crossing of the Carneddau, but felt no tendency to post stress somnolence in the morning after, undoubtedly because of the high quality of the papers and discussion.

Hypothermia was dealt with during the first day; and there was much discussion as to treatment. Squadron Leader Davies' 'hot bath' treatment, and the Lloyd system of warming inspired air were demonstrated, and evinced great interest. However, it is clear that the best management and treatment of hypothermia are still matters for debate, and must depend in part upon practical and geographical considerations.

Other outstanding contributions are a presentation on High Altitude Cerebral and Pulmonary Oedema by Drummond Rennie, and a racy account of the duties of an expedition M.O. by Peter Steele. Much excellent advice here.

However pride of place, both at the symposium itself, and in this excellent published account, must go to those splendid veterans Dr N. E. Odell and Brigadier H. W. Tilman. Dr Odell treated us to a fascinating account of his stay at 27,000 feet in 1924, and Brigadier Tilman denigrated what he called the 'quails in aspic' school of expedition cooking in an admirably abrasive manner.

Added to the initiative, courage and academic distinction of this old guard can be added the technological expertise and contemporary science of the modern alpinist, then the Alpine Club should continue to produce 'alpinistes savants' in the grand tradition. I see these formidable figures, caparisoned with evermore sophisticated equipment, striding grandly through the 20th Century and into the next. Anyone who wishes to follow the same route should certainly purchase this excellent volume.

A.G.N.

Carneddau.—By Les Holliwel. (Climbers' Club Guide, 150 pp. £2.60).

In the decade that has elapsed since the previous edition of the Carneddau guide a considerable amount of exploration has taken place, most notably on Llech Ddu which has become '... second only to "Cloggy" in Snowdonia for its high concentration of hard climbs.' That such a description should now be possible is largely due to the contribution of the Holliwel brothers, and it is clearly appropriate that Les Holliwel should be the author of this new guide book. The Carneddau, largest and most northerly of the mountainous areas in North Wales, contains the large cliffs of Craig Yr Ysfa and Ysgolion Duon, as well as Llech Ddu. From a modern viewpoint, the chief merit of the area lies in the Amphitheatre of Craig Yr Ysfa and Llech Ddu, and the climbs here are contrasted with the more vegetated mountaineering style routes to be found elsewhere. However, the author has made a painstaking survey of the whole area and, whilst describing the better climbs, he candidly indicates

that the main virtues of some of the minor crags are simply their remoteness and position. Attention is also drawn to the winter climbing potential (conditions permitting!), and the complex, wet, north-facing Ysgolion Duon sounds particularly appealing in this respect.

A. C. Cain has provided some very clear diagrams of the cliffs, and the accompanying keys give name, grade, and page reference at a glance. Other features include a table of numerical pitch gradings for routes of Hard Severe and above, and a list containing the details of the first ascents, interspersed with some interesting comments from the author. These combine with the Historical Notes to give some pleasant browsing in a guidebook which will surely add to the attraction of the area.

R.J.A.

Chair Ladder.—By Robert Moulton and Terry Thompson. (Climbers Club Guide. 154 pp. £2.70).

This guide covers the cliffs previously dealt with in V. N. Stevenson's 'Cornwall Volume II,' now out of print. It contains over eighty new climbs, including those on the recently developed St. Loy Crag. With a more condensed layout, the guide is no thicker and only half an inch taller than before.

R.J.A.

Journals of Kindred Clubs. Two short pieces attract attention in the 1973/74 *Climbers' Club Journal*—The first, by James Perrin, is a thought-provoking personal view of the driving forces and pressures associated with high standard climbing. The second is an account by the late Andrew Maxfield of his explorations in Aberdeen's giant Rubislaw Quarry. Among the longer articles is an interesting account of the 1972 British Alpine ski traverse. With no less than four articles on the Munros, and another on the Alpine, 4,000 m peaks, the 1973 *Rucksack Club Journal*—has a rather dominant theme. Among the other contributions is an impressive report of the first ascent of the Fitzroy South Ridge by the 1972 British Argentinian expedition, and a tempting account of sailing a small boat to some of the Western Isles. *The 1975 Wayfarer's Journal*—is limited in size but high in quality with a mixed bag of good entertaining material, reminiscent and reflective; rather than epic narrative. *The Cairngorm Club Journal, 1975*—is literary but rather dull, with the emphasis being laid on the mountain periphery—flowers, place names, accidents, etc., rather than on the climbing. At the other extreme comes the first issue of a new and lively club, *The Jacobites' Journal*—full of short accounts of derring do in the modern style and well seasoned with swear words, it even includes a list of climbs done by Jacobites during the year. *The Eithachan Club Journal*—emerges in the form of a fistful of duplicated sheets (bind it yourself) called 'Penthowff.' It is well worth the effort, however, with a collection of dissertation, poetry and philosophy that deserves a better format.

J.M.C.S. Jubilee Dinner Photograph

Jim Messer writes:

'The photograph facing page 113 was taken in the Central Station Hotel, Glasgow, on Saturday, 11th October, 1975.

'I have not been able to identify all the Members and Guests present after many consultations with various people, therefore, I would be grateful if those who are not named, or named incorrectly would inform me as soon as they can. It is hoped to include the corrections and additions in the 1977 edition of the *Journal*.

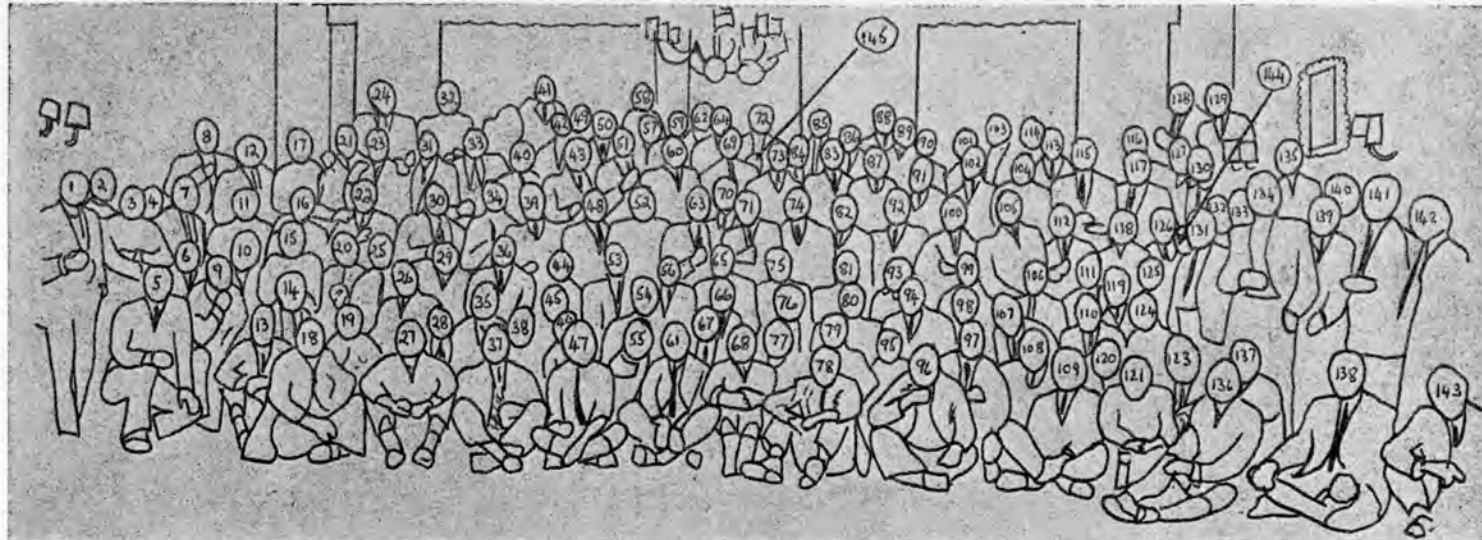


Harrison's Climb Direct — C. Gilmore climbing

Photo: K. V. Crockett



J.M.C.S. Jubilee Dinner, Glasgow Central Station Hotel, Saturday, 11th October, 1975. Spot the Villain — *Key on facing page*



- | | | | | | |
|-----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|------------------------|-----------------------|
| 1. Dougie Simpson | 25. Hamish Henderson | 49. | 73. | 97. Hamish Tear | 121. Alex Small |
| 2. | 26. Les Kaczynski | 50. Bill Forbes | 74. Ian McNicol | 98. Martin McNicol | 122. |
| 3. | 27. Bill Duncan | 51. Stewart Orr | 75. Bill McKenzie | 99. Bill Murray | 123. Donald Urquhart |
| 4. | 28. Jim Clark | 52. Charlie Gorrie | 76. Roger Booth | 100. | 124. John Dunn |
| 5. John Gillespie | 29. Archie McAlpine | 53. | 77. | 101. Duncan McPherson | 125. P. A. Fletcher |
| 6. | 30. Tom McNeil | 54. | 78. Norman Tennent | 102. Ian Cummings | 126. William Speirs |
| 7. Jim Allingham | 31. Tom Gaynor | 55. | 79. Ian Brodie | 103. Sandy Cousins | 127. Bill Boyd |
| 8. Drew Sommerville | 32. Geoff Mason | 56. Jimmy Russell | 80. Bob Sprunt | 104. | 128. Paul Bryan |
| 9. Sandy Steele | 33. David Witham | 57. | 81. Archie Hutchison | 105. Chris Kerr | 129. Robin Campbell |
| 10. Dave Miller | 34. Bill Watson | 58. Hugh Stirling | 82. Bill Bennet | 106. Ben Humble | 130. Dick Brown |
| 11. Bill Taylor | 35. Bill Torrens | 59. Ian Burley | 83. Ian Young | 107. John Low | 131. Rob Anderson |
| 12. | 36. | 60. Donald Bennet | 84. Mike Mucklow | 108. Bill Myles | 132. John McLeod |
| 13. | 37. Ian Sutherland | 61. Jim Messer | 85. | 109. Jimmy Ness | 133. Iain McLeod |
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| 24. Douglas Barclay | 48. Sam Brown | 72. Brian Whiting | 96. | 120. | 144. Alasdair Beaton |
| | | | | | 145. |

'The Dinner was a great success, the credit for the work going to Brian Flemming and his committee. The only sad factor was the limited time available for old friends to reminisce and renew acquaintance with companions they had not seen for years.

'Finally please send any information to Jim Messer, 8 Westfields, Bishopbriggs, Glasgow, G64 3PL. Before August if possible. If anyone should want a copy of the original photograph they are obtainable from:

Stephens Orr Studios, 247 Sauchiehall Street, Glasgow, C2. 041-332 9124.
Quote Reference:

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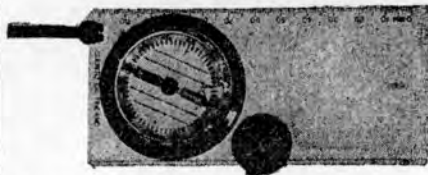
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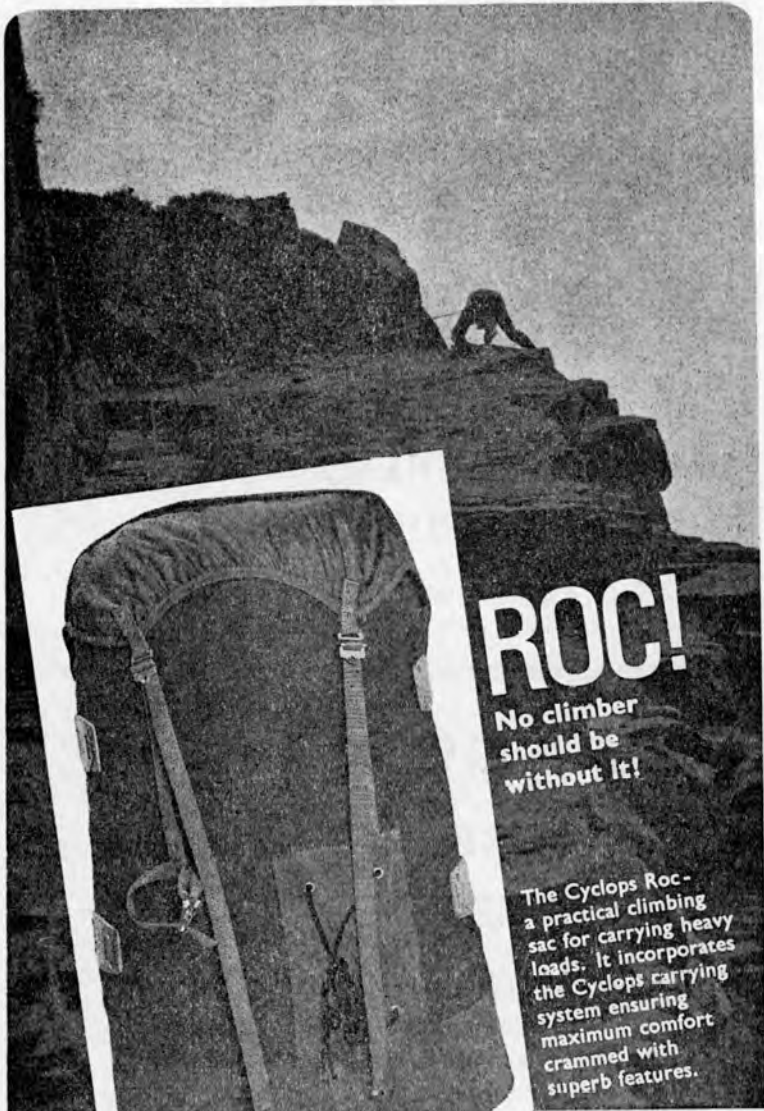
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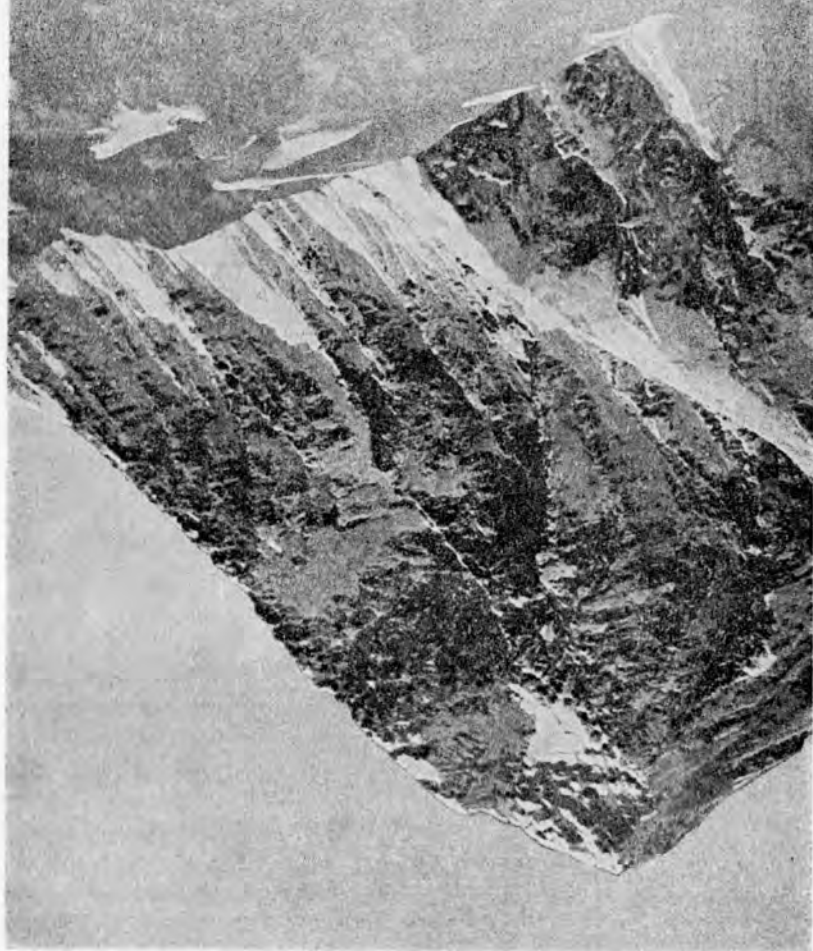
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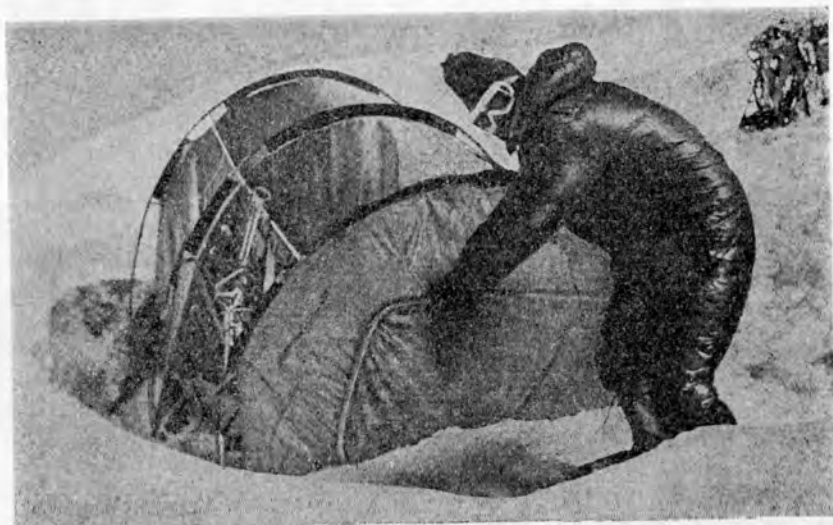
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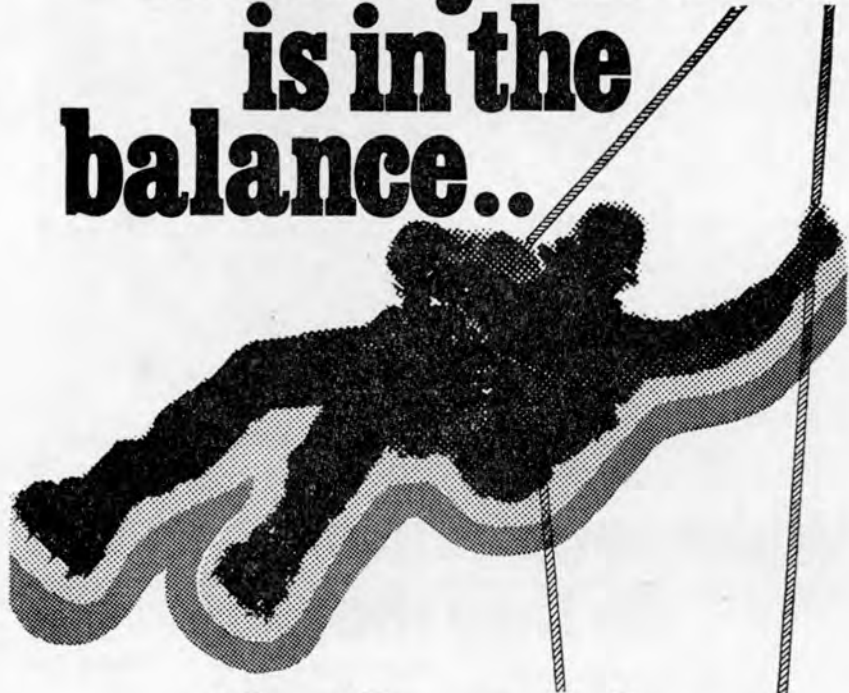
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