

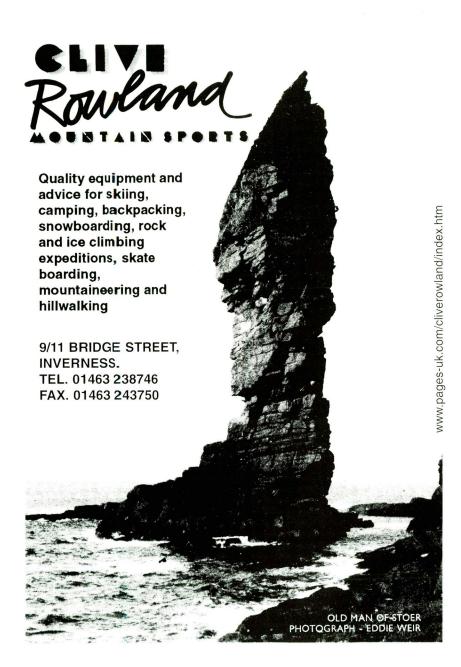
C	ONT	ENTS	3				0.4.01
						J	PAGE
-	-		-	-	-	-	251
				-	-	-	253
BSTANC	E OF	THINC	GS HOP	PED FO	R		
-	-		-	_	_	-	260
y P. J. B	iggar		-	-	-	-	271
ENCE B	y Rob	Milne		-	-	-	277
By R. T	Rich	ardson		-	-	-	282
LITY B	y Cliff	Smith		_	-	-	283
CUS By	Peter '	Warbur	ton	_	_	_	291
JOURNI	EY HO	ME B	y John	Mitchel	1	-	298
HE GUR	KHA I	By Ian	R. Mitc	hell	-	-	310
COTTIS	Н МС	UNTA	IN TA	BLES	-		
-	-		-	_	-	-	312
TH A CC	OMPU	TER	?	-	=	-	
fen Fritz	:=		-	-	-	-	317
	-	1	-	-	-	-	323
- ٧	:		-	_	-	-	327
ΓES -	-		-	-	=	-	412
-	-		-	-	-	-	417
ACCID	ENTS	, 1999		-	-	-	423
-0	1-		-	-1	-	-	453
R WARREN	- 1		-	-	-	-	453
-	_	9	-	-	-	-	454
-	-			-,	-	-	455
=	-	,	-		-	-	455
Υ -	-		-	-1	-	_	456
IE CLUE	-		-	-	u .	-	457
-	-	9	2	-	-	-	460
AD -	-		-		-	-	465
-0	-		-	-	-	-	471
	-		-	-	-	-	480
	ITED By BSTANC  y P. J. B; ENCE B; By R. T LITY B; CUS By JOURNI HE GUR COTTIS  TH A CC fen Fritz  N - THA CCID - R WARREN - Y - HE CLUE AD - AD - AD AD	ITED By Des F BSTANCE OF  y P. J. Biggar ENCE By Rob  By R. T. Riche LITY By Cliff CUS By Peter N JOURNEY HO HE GURKHA I COTTISH MO  TH A COMPU fen Fritz  FES  ACCIDENTS  R WARREN  FR WARREN  ACCIDENTS  R WARREN  ACCIDENTS  ACCIDEN	ITED By Des Rubens BSTANCE OF THINC  y P. J. Biggar ENCE By Rob Milne By R. T. Richardson LITY By Cliff Smith CUS By Peter Warbur JOURNEY HOME B HE GURKHA By Ian COTTISH MOUNTA  TH A COMPUTER fen Fritz  ACCIDENTS, 1999  R WARREN  R WARREN  AD  AD  AD  AD  AD  AD  AD  AD  AD  A	y P. J. Biggar - y P. J. Biggar - ENCE By Rob Milne S By R. T. Richardson ILITY By Cliff Smith CUS By Peter Warburton JOURNEY HOME By John HE GURKHA By Ian R. Mito COTTISH MOUNTAIN TA TH A COMPUTER? fen Fritz N I ACCIDENTS, 1999 R WARREN	ITED By Des Rubens  BSTANCE OF THINGS HOPED FO  y P. J. Biggar  ENCE By Rob Milne  By R. T. Richardson  LITY By Cliff Smith  CUS By Peter Warburton  JOURNEY HOME By John Mitchell  COTTISH MOUNTAIN TABLES  TH A COMPUTER?  fen Fritz  -  -  I ACCIDENTS, 1999  R WARREN  -  -  -  -  -  -  -  -  -  -  -  -  -	ITED By Des Rubens  BSTANCE OF THINGS HOPED FOR  y P. J. Biggar  y P. J. Biggar  ENCE By Rob Milne  By By R. T. Richardson  LITY By Cliff Smith  CUS By Peter Warburton  JOURNEY HOME By John Mitchell  HE GURKHA By Ian R. Mitchell  COTTISH MOUNTAIN TABLES  THA COMPUTER?  Fen Fritz  ACCIDENTS, 1999  R WARREN  ACCIDENTS, 1999  R WARREN  ACCIDENTS, 1999  ACCIDENT	ITED By Des Rubens  BSTANCE OF THINGS HOPED FOR  y P. J. Biggar  ENCE By Rob Milne  By R. T. Richardson  LITY By Cliff Smith  CUS By Peter Warburton  JOURNEY HOME By John Mitchell  HE GURKHA By Ian R. Mitchell  COTTISH MOUNTAIN TABLES  TH A COMPUTER?  Fen Fritz  ACCIDENTS, 1999  R WARREN  ACCIDENTS, 1999  R WARREN  AD  AD  AD  AD  AD  AD  AD  AD  AD  A

#### EDITED BY K. V. CROCKET

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Back Cover: Dave Hollanger on the Shroud 'La Linceul', TD+, North face of the Grandes Jorasses. Photo: Jonathan Baird.





# THE SCOTTISH MOUNTAINEERING CLUB JOURNAL

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#### **EDITORIAL**

This is my last Journal. I have enjoyed the experience over the last 14 years, and the pleasure remains unabated, but it makes good sense to depart while the going is good and the Journal can be handed over to my successor in a good state of health.

My spell as Journal Editor has been enriched, or complicated perhaps, by accelerating changes in technology. I have seen the raw material change from ghastly, hand-written copy or at best neatly-typed, double-spaced MSS, to word-processed print-outs in small fonts. Then was unleashed the first affordable PC-compatible desktop and small, square floppy disks began to proliferate with near-universal formats. The Editor's practice moved from 'observe and discard', to 'search and replace'.

At the other end, the printer was alerted to the changes, and a slow acceptance of digital material began, firstly with clumsy codes, manually inserted into each document. Next, as the printing industry reluctantly woke up to the revolution taking place in the real world, this interim step disappeared, and desktop publishing software emerged. Floppy disks began flying through the letterbox. Latterly, these have been largely replaced by e-mails. These, while speeding up things somewhat, add their own unique flavour to the process including the palpable risk of hard disk destruction by a rogue virus. The entire spell has been exhilarating, and I enjoy it still.

Visibly, the Journal has thickened, so that I am in the happy state of having twice as much good material from contributors compared with when I began. More climbers and walkers, more writing, easier communication. Colour photographs have been introduced. Even more prominently, my final issue

Sunset on Cerro Torre, Torre Eggar and Cerro Stanhardt from the West Face of Fitzroy. Photo: Alan Mullin. crashes through the design barrier with a photographic cover, a long-overdue change held back by a tiny, but loquacious, cabal. To a winter climber well-inured to waiting for the right conditions, this small victory was only a matter of time.

Very few organisms have remained successful without evolving; the Club and its Journal should not be an exception. A huge increase in the numbers walking and climbing has seen a likewise increase in both New Climbs and Accidents. These are, as previous Editors well know, space-hungry items in the Journal. Both are necessary and must be archived, but pressure is mounting for some sort of compromise between maintaining an interesting and readable Journal, and continuing the recording of information. In all probability the virtual pages of the Internet will, and should, take some of this pressure. The compromise will be one of the challenges my successor will face, and as current webmaster for the Club I will be in the happy position of aiding any such change. It is good to be in the position of quitting while the going is still good. No regrets on looking back, more interesting projects to look forward to.

One project which attracted my attention this year was the George Mallory Photography project, initiated by three photography students in Switzerland. Working in conjunction with a media artist, they were struck, as many of us have been, by the recent discovery of the remains of Mallory on Everest. One artefact not found however, was Mallory's camera. What, the students asked, would we see on the 24 images preserved by the deep-freeze atmosphere of the Himalayas? Did the two mountaineers reach the summit? What did their last climb look like?

Now switch to the Journal and those who have gone before. The routes pioneered by previous generations are set in stone, or occasional ice, and for this we are eternally grateful. Added dimension is given by any of their writings and photographs. Without these we would have only the bones. We need insight into the authors of these routes; their methods, inspirations, madness even. People paint the rocks, shatter the ice, enrich the medium. The Journal, as an annual publication, cannot sensibly comment on fastmoving events. Rather, we can afford to take a longer view of changes in the landscape of Scottish mountaineering.

A major source of my continuing enthusiasm has been the contact with Journal contributors. Friends have been made, my knowledge deepened, and new areas opened up by countless people. No need to name any, their names are in 'my' volumes for any to read and enjoy. And how much the poorer we would be, and our successors would be, without their efforts. Some have the courage to pioneer new routes and repeat others; fewer yet have the gall to submit an account in writing to an editor. Preserve it in stone, preserve it on paper, expose it in cyberspace.

I must thank all who have ably assisted in this endeavour; their input has always been invaluable. Each and every stone in the wall supports, and is supported by, its neighbours, and I have been deeply and humbly grateful to have been, for a stretch, part of that wall.

# W. H. MURRAY REVISITED

## By Des Rubens

It was still possible to have heroes in the Seventies <sup>1</sup>. I have still, errant pages taped in, scuffed and stained, the Dent copy of *Mountaineering in Scotland*, priced 8/6d. Its archaic font and diminutive type harked back to a bygone age. The cover shows a Homburg-hatted climber, many-pitoned, boldly tackling the impossible by employing ascent techniques reminiscent of the Munich school of mountaineering. A more proper illustration would have been a ladder of crafted ice steps surmounted by a forthright mountaineer spiritually strengthened after a bout of honest labour.

The book was often with us (the respected Cohen, Geddes, Gibson *et al*) on escapades. To cries of anguish, one copy fluttered down from a belay on the steep Meadow Face of Beinn Tarsuinn. Another copy accompanied us to far away Pakistan where nightly readings were held at base camp at 14,000ft. For us, Bill was a heroic figure of a more innocent age. This was not so much through the quality of his climbs, though we respected these. Rather, through the images conjured by his writing he articulated much of what we felt of our own early experiences of the hills. As Edinburgh University students being bussed to the hills in numbers sometimes requiring two of Allan's of Gorebridge's larger buses, we envied his personal discovery of the empty hills of the Thirties. To us, his time was a Golden Age of Scottish mountaineering.

Of course, as students at the tail end of the Sixties, our respect for the man and his contemporaries was coloured by the anti-authoritarianism of the time. The tales brought back by student club representatives attending SMC dinners were eagerly awaited. These tales of our (still living) Victorian mountaineering heritage were as remarkable to us as to those scientists who discovered the living fossil coelacanth brought up from far down in the Indian Ocean. Descriptions of pipe-smoking, quavering-voiced, tweed-jacketed eccentrics were recounted in dramatic form around many a squalid bothy fireside or campsite <sup>2</sup>.

Now, having earned our respectability through decades of sober behaviour, it can be disclosed that during those student days a Bill Murray evening was held. The parts of the Bills, Archies, Bells *et cetera* were allocated for historic re-enactments. Mrs Malloch was played by a bewildered girlfriend roped in for the occasion. Quantities of Mummery's Blood <sup>3</sup> were consumed and readings of The Works were held.

The Works, as *Mountaineering in Scotland* and *Undiscovered Scotland* were referred to, were critically analysed, and phrases stockpiled for use in times of drama. For a large party in difficulty on smooth slabs the cry

was 'boots off'. For some suspect initiative, usually brought on by spindly arms, we needed a piton like the 'Queen of Spain's legs', ... not only ought never to be seen, but must not be supposed even to exist. On beating one of our many retreats in the face of weather, darkness and disintegrating headtorch batteries <sup>4</sup>, the party was much comforted by being 'tied to men of high heart, that whatever the outcome, they, at least, will not falter'. Despite this infantile taking the piss (well, it was so much youthful fun), we were with Bill. While sometimes gently derided, the spirituality of his writings struck a vibrant chord. Our enthusiasm and love for the Scottish mountains in all their glory and wrath and beauty paralleled his.

Then, he was a remote figure. Later, through the SMC, we did come to know Bill and some of his fabled contemporaries. Not least was Ben Humble, who became a friend. (There was, in similar vein, a Ben Humble Memorial Meet, but that's another story.) Conversations with Bill were valued and his keen interest in modern climbing surprised us. The eccentricities of some of his friends were well documented in The Works. That these gentlemen were as eccentric in later life added to their charm when we met them. Even now, a very few are still doggedly completing ascents, well into their 80s.

Despite his influence, I had done remarkably few of Bill's accounted routes. The Glen Coe ascents eluded me, due to weather, conditions and crowds. Later, to avoid the crowds, I went elsewhere, mainly the North West. Later still, loss and new directions diminished interest further. But only this year<sup>5</sup>, age and a distaste of long drives took me back to Glen Coe and a delightful rediscovery. The Buachaille – what a mountain! Pre-dawn starts, Alpenglow, and the wonderful scenery rekindled a joy of winter climbing.

And so, on a fine March weekend at the Lagangarbh Hut, with friends Geoff Cohen, Simon Brown and Gordon MacNair, the answer to the first question of the day had to be Garrick's Shelf Route. Buachaille Etive Mor, that most splendid of earthly mountains, maintained the silence of a minister as we ascended the lower slopes. The few other pilgrims on the ascent were, to a soul, bound for Crowberry Gully. We redirected a few wanderers away from Easy Gully and found ourselves below the first obstacle of the climb. On this occasion, we were earlier in the day than Murray, Mackenzie, MacAlpine and Dunn. On their unsuccessful first attempt on Garrick's Shelf in December 1936, they had been delayed by Dunn who once again '...had forgotten his boots and had had to return to Inverarnan and back like a rocket to collect them.' Cohen and Brown were directed to Naismith's Route, while MacNair and I repaired to the start of the Shelf. There was a surprise at this point. On a visit in January the access ledge had overlooked a 40ft. drop to the Crowberry Gully. The gully had so filled in with snow that the drop was now a simple slope. We

roped up and MacNair opened his innings, making short work of a tough morsel in the form of a steep rock pinnacle. The shelf then opened up for a few pitches, with constant, though straightforward, front-pointing. As we approached the final pitches, the climbing steepened abruptly and the exposure overlooking Crowberry Gully increased dramatically.

It was my lead. I examined the first of the top pitches with interest, this being close to the point where Murray's party had been forced to retreat because of bad weather, extreme difficulty and nightfall. The initial crack, which yielded to Murray only on his third attempt, proved straightforward, being on this occasion clear of snow and easily protected with modern equipment. The same was true of a laborious outward-tilting mantelshelf. After the mantelshelf, Murray had attempted to effect an escape onto easy ground on the Crowberry Ridge. I was now level with the final 6ft. of rock that had thwarted these escape attempts. Murray's initial movement on this short section of rock would, of necessity, be made without handhold, a down-and-out strain being placed upon the feet; the foothold being a sloping slab covered with verglas. I examined the critical section. Even with the benefits of glorious weather, enough hours of daylight left to play a cricket match and the passage of 63 years of technological progress, the move still appeared very hard. To have attempted such a move 30ft. above a belay at dusk would indeed have been risking disaster. On that occasion, in rising storm, Murray recorded that 'I reported my position and the party consulted.' Following which the decision to retreat was made, leaving the party with 14 hours of tribulation before a dawn return was made to Rannoch Moor.

Turning my attention to the present, I pondered the difficulty of reaching the next port of call, a square-cut recess directly above. Murray, on his successful ascent with Bill Mackenzie in March 1937, regarded this part of the climb as the crux, being very severe and occupying them for two hours. Reaching the recess over steep ground involved some of these delicate moves on poor snow and with no positive axe holds. Such climbing always taxes my imagination. In this case, the final moves were surmounted by the precarious method of the 'breath holding' technique. I thought this the hardest move on the route under the conditions in which we found the climb. We continued out of the square-cut recess and over a dramatic pinnacle that proved, as Murray records, unusually delicate.

The final pitch consisted of a groove 'choked by an icefall of one hundred and fifty feet, twice bulging in fifty-foot pitches, which tried the leaders severely'. In contrast to the rocks below, these old horrors yielded without difficulty to front pointing. From the top of the Shelf, we were rewarded for our toils by a delightful ascent of the sunlit Crowberry Tower. The outlook from its summit is remarkable. So we came to the summit of Buachaille Etive Mor as the afternoon light yellowed the final slopes. The

mountains cast giant, blue shadows east over the Moor of Rannoch towards distant Schiehallion. We looked around us to pay our respects to the mountains of Argyll and Lochaber. We were content. In contrast to our own experience, Murray and his friends had undergone, both in defeat and victory, physical pain and trial in order to achieve their climb. Murray, perhaps affected by the difficulties and precariousness of the route, described the climb as leading through snow and ice scenery of deathless beauty. Although many changes have taken place in the climbing world since the first winter ascent of Garrick's Shelf, the beauty of scenery that Murray described is still there for all mountaineers who climb on the Buachaille in winter.

Our ascent of Deep-Cut Chimney on the following day proved to be an emotional experience. In contrast to Garrick's Shelf, Deep-Cut Chimney falls within a category of routes filed under 'sociable'. For us, this added to its interest. On the climb, some friendly English fellows accompanied us, a few minutes in the rear. Gordon led off and, after 100ft or so, surmounted a fine overhang to the belay. On following, I found the exit from the overhang awkward, due to the familiar lack of purchase for the axes. Eventually, I struggled up in the usual undignified fashion and joined my companion.

Shortly afterwards, the top third of one of the aforementioned Englishmen appeared, friendly and chatty as before, and free with his opinions of the joys of the climb. After some time his output of talk became more desultory as he continued to fail to make progress. I felt sympathy, though I did not express this. The situation was awkward and even embarrassing. To offer a rope could be taken to imply that he lacked ability and might therefore be interpreted as an insult. Even in 1999, insulting other climbers, particularly from the more sensitive areas of some of Scotland's larger cities, can create problems for the initiator. We were long-learned in avoiding any possible disparagement of our fellows, at least until they were known to be from our own tribe. Furthermore, the situation of the Englishman was already demeaning, with his axe ringing ineffectually on the Glen Coe porphyry around our ankles. On the other hand, not to speak out and offer help could also be problematic, at least for the Englishman. There was no immediate security to protect him, while a fall could be detrimental to him in respects additional to embarrassment. Gordon and I exchanged glances and breathed deeply. The gentleman in question solved this delicate social problem by requesting a rope in a strangulated tone. Feelings of relief were experienced on all sides.

With everyone (to our knowledge) on the climb again secure, I turned my attention to the next pitch, which gave access to a beautiful little cirque of an amphitheatre. After 40ft., the slope reared up to a rocky wall. This was the crux of the original ascent where Murray and Mackenzie had

been faced by two overhangs, one of snow and the other of rock. Today, the pitch was largely rock. Indeed, it consisted of the largest area of clear rock in the area, with only the odd bucket hold surviving in sheltered crannies. Unless the popularity of ice-climbing changes, the snow cornice that taxed Murray's wits is unlikely to form before the onset of another ice age.

The rock wall ice pitch, having been demolished by the pounding of many crampons, was thus straightforward and unattractive. However, a few feet to the left, an unsullied pillar of grey ice topped by a short, snowy groove also gave access to the amphitheatre. Instantly, I made up my mind to make an ascent of this attractive feature and without further ado stepped onto the ice. Revelling in the steepness, the Chimney falling away below, and the figure of my companion diminishing as height was gained, the joy was that of simply being in this exposed place. Other distractions were out of sight, or just being quiet, allowing full concentration on climbing. The grey pillar was ascended by the fun techniques of whacking, bridging and kicking. The exhilaration was, unfortunately, short-lived. Bridging wide and awkwardly, I stretched over the top of the pitch to make the final move up onto easy ground. The axes slithered through weak polystyrene. I experimented elsewhere on arcs up to the limit of shoulder-wrist-pick radius. More weak polystyrene.

While strains on muscles, ligaments, cartilages and all these other things that keep the body stable increased directly over time, ideas circulated haphazardly within the brain, as chaotic as Princes Street on Hogmanay. Why hadn't I put in a runner at the start (no convenient cracks, idleness?) Why hadn't pegs been carried (principle?) How did I get into this situation (forgetfulness?) What would be the consequences of falling off (hospitalisation, probably?) What would other people say if I did, given the modest grade of the route? Why did I forget the First Rule of winter climbing?

The gyrations of thoughts ceased and rationality succeeded in overcoming emotion. Something had to be done, and shortly, but the brain, comfortingly, was now in order and again in charge. Then, and now discomfitingly, a great blast of spindrift engulfed the climb. My head being immediately above the parapet, cold material at maximum velocity was injected forcibly into gaps and orifices of clothing and body.

Meanwhile, the pain acting on various body parts continued to increase as before. I was minded of Bill's words on a wet day on Slav Route. 'Mountain nature is not chivalrous and wields the sword ... most fiercely when the plight of the climber is sorest.' The discharge eased and I was able to attend to the problem. The only solution was to firmly plant both axe picks into the defective snow and slowly transfer my weight acting through my crampons to the axe picks, all the time ready to reverse the

process should the force on the picks be greater than the holding force of the snow, as seemed probable. I managed it. A higher and more secure foothold was gained, thus bringing the long sought and familiar, (unfortunately) dispensation. Sanctuary was won and reprieve sayoured.

Modern experiential theories encourage practitioners to review actions in order to make future behaviour more effective. I did so at this point, concluding that I ought to be more careful in future when I went ice climbing. The fact that I had come to the same conclusion many times in the past without having gone to the trouble of studying the theories was, however, discouraging. A major advantage of climbing in the Thirties was the unavailability of such distractions.

Returning to practicalities I recalled Bill's problem in 1939, in gaining this beautiful little cirque, as being similar in some respects. Then, he was blessed with high-quality hardness of snow material. However, he also deployed his ice pick for security, and his mind was taxed by uncertainty as he did so. On this occasion, on transferring his weight onto his nailed boot on the top of the snow cornice, he wrote: 'I let go the rib, flung my whole weight on to the foot on the cornice, at the same instant whipping the axe-pick into a crack in the rock above.' This account could be accepted as an early-recorded example of tooling, although here used to secure a position, rather than make upward progress.

We had gained the amphitheatre. Where the pioneers escaped right, we tackled the 40ft. crack, which on Bill's ascent had been lacquered in black ice and therefore impossible. The initial moves were indeed scanty, icy and tricky, but thereafter led through a delightful chimney to the upper rocks. These also were enjoyable, and sufficiently interesting to merit keeping the rope on. Finally, unlike Murray and Mackenzie, we went on to the summit of Stob Coire nam Beith. The pioneers, eschewing the summit, as in the modern idiom, had chosen to descend an easier part of the face where, through the twilight, 'there whizzed three feet above our heads an enormous boulder...I like to think of it as a shot fired in celebration: to commemorate a first ascent and to mark the close of a year's campaign'.

I was delighted to have enjoyed two grand days on Bill's routes. One inevitably reflects on the similarities and differences of our experiences. This exercise is probably not very profitable, but was undertaken nevertheless. Like most of us, I am interested in risk. The consequences of falling off a climb are not usually as stark in the present day. Although one can still get into difficulties through lack of forethought, it is sometimes assumed that the pioneers were men who always acted with complete deliberation and where risks were always seriously measured. Yet there is a rare moment in Bill's writings where he described a loss of control. At one point on the retreat on Garrick's Shelf Route, the fixed rope somehow rolled off its hitch above. 'A split second later I landed astride Dunn's

shoulders. We are, most of us, guilty of making mistakes during our careers, and most of us are lucky.' It was always thus. However, it is perhaps pointless to dwell overmuch on these matters. In an era when we are guilt-ridden over mountain exploitation, it is good for us, sometimes, to recall the words of Bill Mackenzie. After the first ascent of the Buachaille following Murray's release from wartime prison camps, he remarked: 'The one thing that matters among mountains is that we enjoy them.'

From the summit, we descended to Coire nam Beith. As we did so, we beheld the wonderful grandeur of the views over Loch Leven and Ardgour and the stunning exposure of Glen Coe. The white world of the peaks contrasted brilliantly against the dull green below. From heaven above, the winter light shafted down on the world. We were with Bill Murray.

#### References and notes:

- 1. This homage assumes a familiarity with or, better, experience of immersion in, or, further, a Biblical wisdom of the works of W. H. Murray. To assume such familiarity in readers of this Journal is, naturally, entirely reasonable. That a few Murrayisms creep into the text is inevitable and will, hopefully, be accepted with the usual tolerance.
- 2. As this era coincided with increasing environmental awareness, there was even talk within our circles of approaching the conservation groups to encourage an embargo on changes to the SMC constitution, thus preserving the club's archaic structure for the enjoyment of future generations.
- 3. This mountain elixir consists of equal parts of Navy rum and Bovril, served boiling hot. Mummery's Blood never gained lasting popularity in our circles, perhaps because of the availability of more modern (and, it has to be admitted, more palatable) stimulants.
- 4. Difficulty was also a problem.
- 5. 1999.
- 6. Things are quite often bad at the top of a pitch. Actually, this may be the second rule.
- 7. Unfortunately, not because it was a dispensation, but because it was familiar. You knew this, of course.



# ON FAITH AS THE SUBSTANCE OF THINGS HOPED FOR: READING W. H. MURRAY

#### By Andrew Young

The title of *Things Not Seen: An Anthology of Contemporary Scottish Mountain Poetry* <sup>1</sup>, Stuart B. Campbell writes in his foreword, 'is adapted from a chapter heading in W. H. Murray's *Mountaineering in Scotland*.' But why this adaptation? Why this particular phrase? The piece in question – undoubtedly a classic in the eyes of many, if for a multiplicity of not altogether consonant reasons – is 'The Evidence of Things Not Seen', and reflects upon a moonlight winter climb of Murray's much-loved Buachaille Etive Mor in 1939 <sup>2</sup>. This may profitably be read alongside chapter 20, 'Crowberry Gully in Winter' <sup>3</sup>, and chapter 2 of *Undiscovered Scotland* <sup>4</sup>, 'The First Day on Buachaille'.

The latter is concerned both with Murray's earliest visit to Buachaille Etive Mor, in 1935, and with his first climb there upon his return to Scotland after wartime imprisonment. Both of the previous Buachaille climbs, in 1939 and 1941 (undertaken very shortly prior to mobilisation with the Middle East Forces), culminate in a sense of anticipated revelation or epiphany withheld. To the extent that these disappointments might also have given rise to 'despair', by 1945 despair is dismissed as folly – reserved 'for the very young or very old'. The degree, however, to which Murray's conception of faith may have altered during the war years is somewhat

otherwise, remained unspoken.

\* \* \*

obscured both by retrospective editing and by what, deliberately or

Campbell's assertion that the 'Things Not Seen' collection 'reflects the individuality of the Scottish experience' sits uneasily alongside Angus Dunn's introductory declaration that 'if you are a poet, your vocation is to speak about those things that are difficult to say — and sometimes to find a way to say what can't be said...Different answers from every one of [the poets in this book] — but all of them familiar to anyone who has ever looked out into the great emptiness behind An Teallach or walked in the Quiraing — or the Hindu Kush'. Already a tension appears to arise between aspirations to universal truth and the claims of elect particularity. If the Editor overstates his case — Charlie Orr's *Death on the Mountain* is hardly underpinned, as Campbell would have it, by the 'unique role of Scotland's hills in mountaineering history and the experience of climbing in Scotland'; Harry Gilonis might have read, and appropriated, Hölderlin somewhere other than on Orkney — might Dunn not himself be straying rather far from Murray, saying what can't be said?

In The Death of Norman MacCaig, Janet King speaks of MacCaig 'gazing/ Always obliquely,/ Beyond the surfaces of things –/ Who will surprise us now/ With their lopsidedness, their unfamiliar/ Clarity?' Beyond the surfaces of things, we may not have yet reached the realm to which Murray alludes in the phrase 'things not seen'. Like MacCaig, again in King's words, Murray may be read as '[a]t once cosmic and playful', and yet his own reflections on the limits of language in 'The Evidence of Things Not Seen' do not manifestly escape from what may be thought an overly oblique, syncretic playfulness or, perhaps less charitably, from a dogged theism that remains untouched by his excursions into Romanticism. Granted that Murray's writing does pose an interpretive challenge, it may help to begin with to outline what he did not mean by the unspoken or the unspeakable.

In one arguably innocuous sense, the unspoken behind what is said – or the unseen behind what is seen – forms but the necessary background to any meaningful utterance or perception. This is not to say that meaning must be unequivocal, but that discrete descriptions, for example, require an interpretative background in order for any sense to get off the ground. We may be more or less astute in any attempt to bring that background, unconscious and shifting as it may be, to the fore. I say 'arguably' innocuous for two reasons. Some may wish to believe that meaning is possible in the absence of language, and I shall leave it to them to explain. Of more interest is the view that language, whether at root universal and innate or particular and less susceptible to formulaic reduction, itself manifests a certain metaphysical slant. Our linguistic abilities, that is to say, may reveal a prior grasp of the ultimate nature of reality – and in this sense provide evidence of things unseen – or, more troublesome this, our particular language (English, say, or Gaelic) may betray a disposition towards some other characterisations of the ultimate nature of reality. In the first case, it might be added, the transcendental notion will be that more may be understood – whether it can be spoken of or not – than may be said within the sphere of science or comprehended within the sphere of quotidian activity or emotional disposition. In the second case, unless we are to imagine that a particular language nonetheless coincides with the movement of some greater form of spiritual progress, the metaphysical characterisations to which such a language may be disposed will be hurdles to our understanding of reality – to be overcome if we are optimists or to be suffered more or less grudgingly if we are sceptics. All camps will come across those, be they best portrayed as sceptics or pragmatists, who would rather we stopped talking about 'the ultimate nature of reality' altogether. The temptation, bloody-minded as often it may seem, is to catch these folk at it despite themselves.

Whatever our stance on metaphysics and, with luck, regardless of our ability to articulate such a stance, merely to rummage around behind 'surface' description, bringing contingent, empirical presupposition and

association to the fore, would not appear to be the mandate of poetry, even if some of what passes as poetry may indeed do little else. Something further is required, yet here opinions will again diverge - to no small extent depending upon our views on the limitations of language and the relationship between language and (the possibility of) metaphysics. Those views will influence our reading of Murray, our reading of these poems at hand, and what we take to the hills and take from them. We may even imagine that the converse possibility always holds, regardless of what the authors may have intended or believed and regardless of the 'true' nature of the hills. I cannot tell, for example, what Colin Donati means by 'the wordless/mystery of the mountain' in 'Midsummer Noon in a High Place', although it is conceivable that certain not unreasonable interpretations may influence, if not simply accord with, a reader's metaphysical stance. I take it, however, that Donati may well believe that this and other mountains, more or less supremely, are in some fashion indicative of a further reality – or further aspect of reality – that remains, at least to this point, ineffable. The poem may or may not have been intended to give some inchoate form of expression to that which is ultimate and ultimately inexpressible. This constitutes one view of that 'something further' that is required of poetry and, on one reading of Murray himself, it may appear to coincide with his own views on metaphysics and its relationship to language and to literature. There will be something missing, however, and to this I will turn after noting one, subsidiary, qualification.

By 'The First Day on Buachaille', Murray is writing as follows:

'I knew these hills so very well that they startled me into no transports of ecstasy – not even after long absence – but they had the greater power to bestow a content that I cannot name, save in terms that must seem vague to any one without a practical knowledge of them – the Recollection and the Quiet...It might then be asked whether I mean that mountains are necessary to happiness or to the true completion of any man. Quite to the contrary...They contribute happiness in so far as they elicit a man's love, at first it may be only of themselves, but in the end of the All of which they are just a part.' <sup>5</sup>

This may be chastening to those who have imagined that Murray looked to the hills, perhaps even the Scottish hills, as a supreme symbol of a Greater Reality. Close as he may come to it, and close as the editors of this 'anthology' may come to it, it would be less than fair to attribute to Murray the view, shared by an alarming number of Romantics, that great – in this case, Scottish – mountaineering literature is 'the articulation of some kind of not wholly self-aware spirit within a nation, and worthless unless it is that'. <sup>6</sup>

It is to 'nature' more broadly that Murray directs his own, still Romantic, attention. Again, this broader statement of metaphysical conviction is to be found in 'Effects of Mountaineering on Men'. 7:

'The way in which beauty, the infinite One, reveals in the symbols of nature the infinite diversity of its life, allows us to glimpse the universe as the outer expression of an inner and spiritual unity: the one as the many and the all as one.'

I will return to the specifically Romantic aspects of Murray's writing and its reliance on symbolism. For now, I want to draw attention to the source of which Murray's adapted chapter title is itself an adaptation – the missing clue to which I alluded above. This, I take it, is the beginning of Hebrews 11 (King James version):

\* \* \*

'Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen. For by it the elders obtained a good report. Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear.'

The author of 'The Epistle to the Hebrews', as Karen Armstrong notes<sup>8</sup>, was addressing Jewish Christians during a transitional period in Jewish history when, as now, 'the old symbols that once introduced people to a sacred dimension of existence no longer function[ed] so effectively'. With neither the Law nor the symbolism of traditional Temple rites any longer 'speaking' to him of God, Hebrews was composed with the intention of replacing both the Law and the liturgy and imagery of the Temple with Christ, the human 'copy' of God, as the central symbol which might provide Jews with a 'direct link' to the divine. Armstrong summarises:

'In order to work effectively, a symbol has to be experienced as a direct link to the more elusive and transcendent reality to which it directs our attention, but our author can only see the Temple as a human artefact...Now, by virtue of his sacrificial death, Christ had entered into the celestial sanctuary once and for all. He had bypassed the [Temple] symbolism and introduced believers to the sacred Reality itself. For our author, the figure of Christ had become the new symbol that brought humanity to the divine...But, as with any religious symbolism, there were difficulties. Our author is poignantly aware that it is hard to live a religious life without any tangible replicas of the divine here below. Jesus had gone away, into another dimension, and Christians had to have faith in what was unseen.'

On the one hand, it is Christ himself who is 'unseen'; on the other, the symbol of Christ is 'evidence', albeit in far from an empirical sense, of the numinous. Armstrong does not pursue the point, yet we are asked to have faith in the verity of precisely that figure who is to be elevated into the principal symbol that is intended to contribute the greatest substance to our faith. If it is not clear that such a paradox troubled Murray, nor is it clear exactly what he took the relationship to be between the (implicit) symbol of Christ and his more explicitly employed nature symbolism. I

don't doubt that Nature, as 'evidence' of things not seen, was intended to supplement, rather than displace, Christ as such evidence. What remains unspoken is the nature of that supplementarity. Murray took his symbols where he found them, reluctant as we should be to see him appropriated by the neophyte travellers of this indiscriminately eclectic New Age. Just this may follow, however, from the likelihood that he would indeed concur with what is both Armstrong's most crucial and most problematic tenet, namely, that 'we can only speak of the divine in terms of signs and symbols'.

'Since the scientific revolution...Western people have often assumed that 'God' was an objective but unseen reality (like the atom)...[b]ut theology should be regarded as poetry...Theology is merely an attempt to express the inexpressible 'as felicitously as possible'. But...some of our poetic symbols lose their power and immediacy, as our circumstances change.'

Murray's circumstances changed, it might be supposed, quite radically, but without leading him wholly to renounce his pre-war conception, and anticipation, of epiphanic ecstasy. The credendum, though – that we may still attempt to 'eff' the ineffable 'as felicitously as possible' – will remain problematic for those of us who ask further: what (felicitous) criteria could be offered that might establish any such degree of 'felicity'? In what sense is the entire enterprise not question-begging? This question is deferred, if it is noted at all. Instead, what Murray offers in 'The Evidence of Things Not Seen' is an ambiguous retreat from the possibility that God might indeed 'speak' to him directly to a resigned concession that, for him at least, the ineffable has been but faintly 'shown'. The ambiguity derives from the implicit introduction of the further consideration that only a nonlinguistic manifestation of sublime Meaning is ever possible for humanity as a whole. The difference may emerge from a reading of the contrast between Coleridge's *Frost at Midnight* and Tennyson's *The Vision of Sin:* 

[s]o shalt thou see and hear The lovely shapes and sounds intelligible Of that eternal language which thy God Utters, who from eternity doth teach Himself in all, and all things in himself.'

But, whereas Murray begins his narrative with Coleridge, he concludes with Tennyson:

At last I heard a voice upon the slope Cry to the summit, 'Is there any hope? To which an answer peal'd from that high land, But in a tongue no man could understand; And on the glimmering limit, far withdrawn, God made Himself an awful rose of dawn. The Romantic Coleridge, reacting against the burgeoning mechanism of Western science, subscribes to an organicist metaphysics, the language of a kind of which I have already noted in Murray. To this extent, both the Christian and the Romantic in Murray steer well clear of the reductive potential of natural science. But is this 'eternal language' that of the biblical tradition of interior illumination, as Eco puts it, so that 'we must conceive of a language that, although not translatable into any known idiom, is still, through special grace or disposition, comprehensible to its hearer'?

If this is so, it is 'language' prior to the hubris of the tower of Babel, and despite the Judaic world-explanatory model of paternal transgression and sin to which Murray, with only a hint of irony, still subscribes. At odds with this interpretation, without far more by way of reconciliation which Murray does not sufficiently pursue, is the tradition of mystical vitalism which influenced Coleridge. <sup>10</sup>

Recalling Stuart B. Campbell's 'challenge...to collect writing which went a few steps further than merely describing the scenery', consider Berlin on Schelling and Coleridge:

'Any work of art which is simply a copy...simply the product of careful observation – that is death. Life in a work of art is analogous with ...what we admire in nature, namely some kind of power...vitality bursting forth. That is why...the great works...are called great, because we see in them not merely the surface...but also something of which the artist may not be wholly aware, namely the pulsations within him of some kind of infinite spirit of which he happens to be the particularly articulate and self-conscious representative.'

Evidently, this vitalist view is but one version of the Romantic quest for epiphany, one version of the view that understanding - be this of nature or a genuine work of art - must go beyond the simply mimetic or descriptive to some spiritual transfiguration of what is described. I suspect that, on one level, when Murray writes that he lacks the 'quick vision' of Coleridge, we may read this as gentle chiding - again, against further hubris - as well as an indication of modesty. Nonetheless, if God does not 'speak' directly to him, an epiphany of sorts is, to Murray's not wholly Romantic mind, achieved: 'To my unaccustomed eyes the scene at first bore the appearance of unreality; yet the more I gazed, the more surely I knew that I saw not an illusion greater than is usual, but truth made manifest 11: as though our everyday world had been a dull image in the crystal mirror of Shalott, only here woven on the magic loom by an artist...throwing into high relief the hitherto obscured beauty that underlies the world. Unlike the Lady of Shalott, I failed to break the spell and gaze straight upon the ultimate reality; yet the hills that night were big with it; its signs unmistakable'.

Thus far, there can be little doubt that Murray, however coy, is pursuing some notion of the sublime as that which can be 'shown', if not (yet) said. Questionable as this is in itself, what then could be the difference between

this kind of epiphanic experience and some further possibility that still remains? If Murray's reading of Tennyson's 'a tongue no man could understand' draws an impersonal limit, this is as far as any of us might hope to progress - a consequence of universal human finitude rather than a consequence of any individual failing. Murray does not help us to resolve this ambiguity with further references to Tennyson's *The Lady of Shalot* and to Goethe's *Faust*.

Even discounting standard erotic readings of *The Lady of Shalott*, in which the poet's own idealised female object turns from the passive narcissism of self-contemplation to the Camelot of patriarchal activity, the consequence of the broken spell – the aversion of her gaze from her own static image and the passing shadows of Lancelot – is one of self-annihilation. The gaze 'upon the ultimate reality', the putative source of the Romantic vision, results in the dissolution of the self - in death rather than in a reconciliation through (sexual) sublimation and cosmic 'oneness'. Read in the equally standard terms of Plato's cave and a two-world metaphysical theory of 'true Being' and the 'mere appearances' of the world given to our senses, it might be thought that even Tennyson's poetry remains firmly within the phenomenal world of caverned shadows if art itself can but adumbrate the domain of sensible reality which reflects, we are told, the domain of ideal form. What is 'revealed' to us, through Tennyson's art no less than Murray's, remains appearance.

Two-world Platonism does seem to persist in Murray's 'mystery of the universe, of which the forms of man or mountain may be likened to veils that reveal its being yet mask its very essence <sup>12</sup>. '... Ask Nature what she does and we are answered, as Faust was answered:

So at the roaring loom of Time I ply And weave for God the garment that ye see Him by.'

Again, much as it may be tempting to defer to Murray's implicit claim to a pedigree of metaphysical insight, Goethe's Faust does not help to pin him down. Faust itself is notoriously replete with syncretic allusions bolted together, not the least of the challenges to interpretation being provided by Goethe's equivocal use both of Christian and of pantheistic imagery and by his ambivalent attempt to reconcile New Testament God of the Word symbolism with Old Testament God of Deed symbolism 13. 'Faust' (part 1, lines 508-9) reads: 'So schaff ich am sausenden Webstuhl der Zeit/ Und wirke der Gottheit lebendiges Kleid'. The feminine 'Gottheit' is by no means evidently the Christian God, while the identity of the speaker of these lines – der Erdgeist or Earth Spirit, devil and god compounded – is not consistently made apparent either to Faust or to the reader. This is in part the consequence of Goethe's shifting use of symbolism during his reworking of Faust in later life, but if Faust himself was unsure of whom he was addressing, and of who responded, it is not clear that Goethe settled the matter for himself. Thus, for Murray to render this as 'ask Nature what she does' is to defer this central question of identity and to leave





unresolved the relationship between God and pantheistic or Romanticised Nature (the latter rejected in Goethe's more sober, later stance).

'We snatch in vain at Nature's veil' says the pessimistic Faust (line 672) before the Chorus of Angels, introduced by Goethe out of nowhere, snaps him out of it. By the end of *Faust* (part 2), we are presented with the lines:

'All that must disappear Is but a parable What lay beyond us, here All is made visible.' 14

Goethe's faith in sublime Meaning – the 'open secret' to which Murray refers – is asserted, however short Faust has in fact fallen of achieving his 'eternal moment', however short Goethe's art falls of epiphany.

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David Craig <sup>15</sup> would prefer to circumvent this heritage of two-world metaphysics entirely. 'No world was withheld', he says to Murray; 'all there was to see, you saw.' Craig baulks at 'The Evidence of Things Not Seen', imagining that Murray has lost sight of 'the earth itself...[for there is] no [ideal] Rock, there are only all the particular rocks that stand up out of...this tangible planet which is our habitat'. Craig is not alone among contemporary readers uncomfortable with Murray's spiritualism. Indeed, by the time of 'Effects of Mountaineering on Men', Murray may seem to be continuing with an unresolved distinction between his understanding of a 'last reality underlying mountain beauty' <sup>16</sup> and the possibility of 'any sensitive and intelligent man...[experiencing that beauty] ...not of something different, nor of greater power. The eye of his soul has been more clear, that is all'. <sup>17</sup> A Christianised Platonism – all that Craig detects – vies with a pantheism that may derive from Spinoza, so that the sense in which God is to be found in the world, if at all, remains opaque.

Oddly, Phil Bartlett <sup>18</sup>, while noting Craig's exasperated criticism – albeit without observing that Craig's own position is itself, and despite itself, that of a (one-world theory, materialist) metaphysician, immediately persists with the assertion: 'that mountaineering can produce true visionary experiences is not in doubt. It is only their interpretation which causes discussion'. Fortuitously, Bartlett provides an astonishing example of precisely what is at issue, namely the brute assertion of truth and of meaning in the absence of all interpretation, which is to say, in the absence of language. As with Kant, it might appear that reason must necessarily yield to faith. But Bartlett bypasses the heritage of Kant's autonomous, noumenal subject of transcendental experience and heads straight for the authority of Wittgenstein <sup>19</sup>, presented as the first to see theology 'not as a justification or even an explanation of religion but as a symbolic way of expressing what is essentially inexpressible[:] religious experience'. But there are problems with this.

Granted that the influence of Wittgenstein's early writing was strong enough to have affected Murray at least indirectly, we might consider its core:

'We feel that even when all possible scientific questions have been answered, the problems of life remain completely untouched...There are, indeed, things that cannot be put into words. They make themselves manifest. They are what is mystical.' <sup>20</sup>

The early Wittgenstein's understanding of what can be 'shown' but not said should not be equated either with the views of the author of Hebrews or with emotive and paradoxically self-possessed Romanticism, but why this is so needs to be noted just as we need also to recall that Wittgenstein later revised his position. While the extent of that revision is still contested, attention to the differences strikes me as providing the most rewarding background against which Murray might now be read.

The passage above, which is strictly meaningless by the early Wittgenstein's own account, rests upon a particular theory of language. This pictorial theory professes to eliminate metaphysics from the domain of meaningful speech by privileging (a rather narrow conception of) the discourse of natural science or 'fact'. Ethics, aesthetics and, indeed, theology, to the extent that these attempt explanatory or justificatory theory, do not meet the criteria of meaningfulness that Wittgenstein ascribes exhaustively to the description of facts. But this is not to say that he would necessarily have baulked at Murray's not wholly ironic or self-effacing remark in 'The Evidence of Things Not Seen': 'let us speak of the unspeakable, for there is no speech so profitable'. Wittgenstein's Tractatus is not to be dismissed as Logical Positivism. Religious language might be nonsense, but still - often enough - 'important' nonsense. <sup>21</sup>

While we may struggle hopelessly against the cage of language, this very struggle may be an 'intimation' of the importance of God – of the World. The same was felt by Wittgenstein of certain poetry and of the adoption of a way of life that combines stoical acceptance of fate with living for others. What is 'shown' in this way of life transcends quotidian 'fact' and hence remains ineffable. But it is also a way of life through which the contingent, linguistic self is dissolved in a greater unity of immanence and transcendence; and in this dissolution our hitherto separate identities become merged with God. However meaningless this must strictly remain, we become God. There is a fine line between piety and hubris.

The pictorial theory relied upon a mystical 'feeling' of the world as a 'limited whole' <sup>22</sup>; such feeling in turn relies upon a prior metaphysical conception of the very possibility of viewing it as such a whole – sub specie aeternitatis. In abandoning this theory of language and, thus far, of 'language' itself as the transcendental ground upon which the mystical/ineffable may be embraced, does the later Wittgenstein <sup>23</sup> nonetheless leave room for 'evidence of things not seen'?

In his later writings, religion (as well as aesthetics and ethics) may appear to remain above all an 'attitude' or way of life rather than theory. While the discourse of 'science' is no longer privileged as uniquely meaningful, it seems that philosophy can still do no more than describe discourse - the various 'language games' played out within contingent and shifting forms of human life. And yet the suggestion is that religious discourse properly described and understood is a matter neither of rationalising belief - for example, by way of cosmological or ontological 'proofs' of God's existence - in order to justify faith, nor of establishing its 'probability', nor indeed of metaphysical theory that would purport to explain 'why there is something rather than nothing' or what the place of humanity in Being might be. Would Murray have concurred? How disingenuous, let alone empirically accurate, is this conception of religion, impervious now to criticism, as a practised way of life divorced from speculative metaphysics? It seems that behind this 'mere' description of (proper) language, the mystical/ineffable still hovers.

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In his foreword to 'Things Not Seen', Campbell quotes Murray's observation that from '[a survey of mountaineering literature] we can hardly fail to observe the frequency with which writers express perceptions of a beauty that baffles their powers of description'. 24 As baffling is Campbell's reluctance to retain the context and point of this observation, namely the accompaniment of such perceptions 'by a certainty of the universal unity or by the premonition [sic] of an ultimate reality, the spiritual ground of things seen'. It does not seem satisfactory to reduce this, as Campbell does, to difficulties in expressing 'feelings aroused by the view', and to supplement this - watering down rather than adding to Murray - with the exhortation to express in addition the 'views, positions and opinions' which we bring to the mountains. No description, poetic or otherwise, can be 'mere' description any more than any human being can experience the 'immediate physicality' of climbing. But this should not lead us to confuse meaning with Meaning, nor lead us to share Murray's neo-Kantian regard for 'the instinct that holds as ineffective and of little true value to man the perception of a beauty in art or nature that does not bring in its train right action'. 25

Poetry, I believe, is capable of re-formulating the language in which we articulate our understanding of beauty, of meaning, and of our selves-in-relation-to-others. It does not transcend the contingency of our status in the world, allowing us to say that 'this is all that there is; the rest can be but shown'. Even as some poetry may indeed continue with such ostensive aspirations, the attitude of love as an ethical or aesthetic way of life may 'intimate' or 'show' nothing but itself. If this is so, Murray's writing is

invaluable as a record of admirable, even inspiring, but ultimately failed syncretism – a monumental effort to say what cannot be said about 'what cannot be said'.

#### References and notes:

- 1. Editor, Stuart B. Campbell; Advisory Editor, Angus Dunn; Aberdeenshire Council, 1999.
- 2. SMC Journal, Vol. XXIII, No.137, 1946, pp.281-286; Mountaineering in Scotland, Ch. 22.
- 3. This is a re-working of *The Last Day on Buachaille* which appeared in *SMC Journal* Vol. XXIII, no. 133 (April 1942).
- 4. Published along with Mountaineering Scotland in one volume by Bâton Wicks, 1997.
- 5. 'Undiscovered Scotland', p. 14.
- 6. These words are taken from Isaiah Berlin's 'The Roots of Romanticism', Chatto & Windus, 1999, p. 99. Berlin's is a more wide-ranging discussion of anti-Enlightenment doctrines of art concerned with the 'value' of 'the unconscious or sub-conscious or pre-conscious element in the work either of the individual artist or of a group, a nation, a people, a culture'.
- 7. 'Undiscovered Scotland', p. 225.
- 8. Introduction to 'the epistle of Paul the apostle to the Hebrews', Canongate, 1999. Armstrong herself does not subscribe to the view that St Paul was the author of Hebrews.
- 9. Umberto Eco, 'Serendipities: Language and Lunacy', Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1999, p. 24. See also Murray's 'Cairngorm Blizzard', 'Mountaineering in Scotland', p. 221: 'We felt the gross illusion that here were the only realities of a mechanistic universe bleak rocks, bitter wind, snow, and withering cold'.
- 10. Berlin, 'The Roots of Romanticism, pp. 97-99. That I know of, the most instructive historical treatment of Romanticism's epiphanic theme more generally is to be found in Charles Taylor's 'Sources of the Self', Harvard University Press, 1989, in particular parts IV and V.
- 11. The theme has already commenced in 'Twenty-four Hours on the Cuillin', 'Mountaineering in Scotland', p. 4.
- 12. Compare Keats' 'Written Upon the Top of Ben Nevis': '...mist is spread/ Before the earth, beneath me,.../...all my eye doth meet/ Is mist and crag, not only on this height,/ but in the world of thought and mental might!'
- 13. See Marshall Berman's 'All That Is Solid Melts Into Air', Penguin, 1988, p. 47. Again, if Goethe's attempt to reconcile the life of contemplation with the life of action in a redemptive 'Faust' fails to convince, it is unlikely that Murray's reliance upon the attempt will result in greater conviction.
- 14. Philip Wayne's Penguin translation has 'Here the ineffable/ Wins life through love'.
- 15. 'Native Stones', Pimlico, 1996, pp. 135-41. It is not evident that Craig's protests would suffice to stave off Murray's charge of bleak 'mechanism'.
- 16. 'Mountaineering in Scotland', p. 4.
- 17. 'Undiscovered Scotland', p. 223.
- 18. 'The Undiscovered Country', The Ernest Press, 1993, p. 111.
- 19. Ibid., p.113.
- 20. 'Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus' (first English edition 1922), Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1961, proposition 6.522.
- 21. A more detailed recent account may be found in Brian R. Clack's 'An Introduction to Wittgenstein's Philosophy of Religion', Edinburgh University Press, 1999. If Murray is read in the light of early Wittgenstein, this would place him within the school of what Clack, at p. 48, nicely terms 'Logical Romanticism'. Again, however, we are obliged to reconcile the view that there is no value within the world of 'facts' with the view that the world and God are One.
- 22. 'Tractatus', 6.45.
- 23. A more detailed discussion of the contrasts between transcendental and 'detranscendentalized' conceptions of philosophy and language in Wittgenstein may be found in 'Wittgenstein, Heidegger, and the reification of language', in Richard Rorty's 'Essays on Heidegger and others', Cambridge University Press, 1991.
- 24. This appears in 'Undiscovered Scotland', pp. 222-3. 25. Ibid., p. 222.

# **BRIDGING THE GAP**

#### By P. J. Biggar

'I have seen you, You have told me your story.' J. Conrad Chance.

ME AN' JONO really stormed up to the hut, man! Jeez it was a great evening! April. There'd been this big snowfall that week, Ben was just like a Christmas Cake and there was Tower Ridge rearing right up above us! That was the one we wanted, me and Jono. He'd never been to the Ben before, in fact he'd never done a winter route before, though he'd got all the gear mind. Me, I done a bit in the Lakes and a couple of gullies on Snowdon, but I reckoned we'd be okay. After all, lots of idiots get up Tower Ridge most weekends in winter don't they?

Tell you what, it's a bit technical getting into that hut the first time. We were standing there fiddling with that metal grille thing for ages, it's a bit like a portcullis on some old castle. Jono's fingers were going white and he was shivering. We should've been sensible and put something on when we were coming up, but we just kept going, the hut seemed so near. Anyhow, we were faffing about there and getting nowhere fast, when these old guys turned up! One of them was old enough to be my Dad, tall, wiry-looking chap with a bit of a stoop and some grey hair left.

'Well boys,' he says, 'having trouble? Let's have a wee look...' Well spoken he was, a Scotsman. Probably a lawyer in Edinburgh. The little fellow, his mate, didn't say much, but I reckoned he was from Devon or somewhere way south. He had strong hands and a big chest, the little bloke, as though he worked on a building site. He was old too, but not so old as the tall guy, his hair hadn't gone grey yet and he wasn't using sticks.

They had us into that hut before you could say Jackknife, and it was as well too 'cos Jono's teeth were starting to chatter, and I didn't feel none too smart either. Know what? It was colder in the hut than it was outside! Jono collapsed on a bench and just sat there; he was a horrible colour. But them two old guys bustled around lighting stoves and putting kettles on. The tall one, his name was Mac, opened a sort of cupboard at the end of the porch place; he bent down and I could hear him striking matches.

'If you're cold,' he says to Jono, 'just stand in there for a bit. The Three Witches'll soon warm you up!'

'Aha,' says I, 'that must be the famous drying room?'

'That's it,' says he and grinned, 'the best in the country bar none.'

He was right too; half-and-hour later Jono came through to the main room looking a bit human again.

Well, we sat round this old black stove drinking tea out of little white cups, that is, the three of us drank tea:

'Young Harvey here,' says Mac, 'is the only member of the construction industry who never drinks tea, isn't that right Harvey?'

'I never could stand tea,' said the other, so quiet you couldn't hardly hear him. 'I don't know why, just never could.'

'His only other vice is, he doesn't drink whisky, 'says Mac. 'But rum's a different matter, eh Harve?'

'I like a drop o' rum,' said Harvey getting up from the table and heading for his basket, 'as a matter of fact...'

'As for women,' Mac bent towards us and winked, 'he out-paramour's the Turk!'

'Well I'll be blowed!' says Harvey and grins sheepishly. He didn't look like the womanising type to me. Not like Jono with his curly blonde hair and winning smile; he can pull them and no mistake. I've kept Linda well out of his way, you bet your sweet life!

They were close too, them old guys. Just sat there drinking quietly and passing the odd comment every now and then. Mac had a good look through the hut book to see what'd been done. I asked them what they were thinking of doing.

'No idea,' says Mac. 'We'll just see what the day brings.' But presently he went out quietly into the porch place and we could hear him rattling metal-ware as he packed his sack. Harvey just sat there spreading his pieces as he called them. Something told me he didn't have as much experience as Mac; he seemed sort of like an apprentice, bit like Jono and me I suppose. But I guessed those two were up for something big as well. Shortly afterwards, other guys started to come in and I lost sight of Mac and Harvey. They just melted away quietly into the shadows. When we staggered outside in the morning, oh man! It was one of those days you dream about! No wind, sun, snow! Guys were toiling up from the valley so we didn't waste time. There was just one set of footprints but they went straight on, and the gully you go up was virgin, man. I knew the way 'cos I'd been there once before when we came up with the Scouts from my school in Southend. 'Course that was in the summer - camped in Fort Bill. God, the midges! Mr Murphy was going to take us up the Ridge that day, but Fatty Jamieson got stuck and started blubbering and Mr Murphy had to climb down and shut him up, and in the end we all had to go back down. Anyway, that first chimney is no joke in winter. I was shaking like a leaf when I got to the top and Jono's eyes were out on stalks when I hauled him over the edge.

What a place! This huge ridge all coated with snow and dripping with ice, and we had it all to ourselves! I told Jono all about Fatty Jamieson and Mr Murphy and we started laughing like a couple of school kids.

Well, we soloed the next bit – it's just a walk – and guess what? I see this neat little row of steps appear out of nowhere. They go twisting on up the ridge and we followed them. We come to quite a steep chimney with some ice in it, but Jono, he says: 'Look, Chris the steps go round the

corner, let's follow them.' So we did, and there was a nice easy-angled shelf, much easier than the chimney, and the little steps went right up it. It wasn't as easy as it looked mind, 'cos there was a lot of fresh snow. Jono's hands got cold again and I made him put his mitts on. But it saved us a lot of time. And the steps went on and we followed them. We were really

yomping along and it felt great!

Soon, the bit they call the Little Tower starts looming over us and Jono starts looking a bit nervous. You always know when he's worried 'cos he plugs his Walkman in. Between ourselves, I'd been a bit worried about this bit too, 'cos the route finding's a bit dodgy hereabouts, but our luck was right in, mate! Those little steps just went winding on upwards. I could even see where whoever it was had belayed and it was bomber! We got the second rope out, and I set off. Not easy, man. Good III. Cracker of a pitch! Good gear too and I could see just where he'd placed it as the snow was all scuffed. I was going well and getting near the top when I heard it! Someone was bloody singing! And I knew the number! My uncle Pat used to play the old piano in a little band – trad jazz and all that old wallops.

'Cold empty bed...springs hard as lead,' comes floating down from above, so I joins in with 'Just like Old Ned...wish't I was dead.' And we both gave it all we'd got in the final lines: 'What did I do, to be so black and blue?' And I smashed my picks in and scrambled over the top and, of course, it was old Mac, standing there in the snow in his tattered red cagoule

and paying out the rope old-style, round his waist.

'Very good!' says he. 'You know your jazz.' And he handed me a KitKat. To me, he looked like someone who'd just led a pitch he'd been a bit worried about before. The singing was sort of a release. Well, we chatted away, merry as larks, till at one point he looks round to see where Harvey

has got to, and his mood changed just like that.

'Harvey!' he bawls. 'You're off route, man! Go right! RIGHT!' And he gestured with his arm. But it was too late. Young Harvey, as Mac called him, had set his mind on going left; even I could see it was steep and slabby and led nowhere. 'He just follows his nose!' Mac complained to me. 'I shouldn't have let him go on – I was tired you know – he's good on rock but he's never been on a big winter route before, and he doesn't know the ground...' his voice trailed off in despair. 'You'd better wait till we've sorted this out.'

'Well I'll be blowed!' comes drifting down from above.

I brought Jono up and we must've stood there an hour before them two old codgers got back on route. It looked real hairy too! Poor Harvey had to climb back down out of the little cave he'd got himself into. Old Mac, he climbs right up to just under him – and he takes out all the gear! Then he climbs back to the crest of the ridge. Little Harvey did well too, climbs down cool as you like, but it all took time. I reckon the old guy was boiling inside, but there was no shouting, nor agro, nor nothing. But just fancy!

Taking out all your mate's gear! I reckon he just stopped thinking for a bit.

Do you know, even when we got up the next bit, we were still glad to follow their steps. It wasn't direct at all. We went round some huge powdery blocks and along a little ledge over not very much. The weather was changing by this time; the wind was picking up; the sun had gone, and the cloud was starting to come down.

Mac wasn't singing any more when we caught them up. He was hunched up over a hot drink – Harvey had a flask with him. The rime was sticking to Mac's grey hair which poked out under his orange helmet – I reckon it was his only bit of new gear – and his face looked sort of haggard. Little Harvey was stuffing a sandwich. He didn't look none too bright either, and he was saying even less than usual. Mac just waves us through: 'Go on boys,' he says, 'we've kept you back.' Oh, sure, it was decent of them an' all that, but they didn't need to do it. They'd saved us as much time as they'd cost us. But then, p'raps they were a bit fagged? They were getting on a bit. Anyway, we didn't need telling twice, and we forged ahead towards the Great Tower which was coming in and going out of the clagg. It looked just AWESOME!

'Course, by this time, other people were starting to arrive. I stood for ages at the end of the Eastern Traverse while Jono went on round the corner, and a bloody great queue built up behind me. Mac and Harvey turned up, and then a whole troop of Northerners arrived from God knows where! You could tell little Harvey didn't like the crowds. He just sat there sort of sunk into himself, but Mac fussed around and made him take a proper belay an' that.

It was starting to snow a bit by now, and I was just thinking 'where the f...has Jono got himself to?' when the rope comes tight. Old Mac he tucks in close behind me and we stepped along good-style. Piece of piss that Traverse thing, especially if you don't look down. I paused to whip Jono's runner off and Mac he stops to put one on. 'See you presently,' says he. When I got round the corner there was this huge thing the size of a house. I think sometimes you can get under it – I've seen photos – but now it was all snowed in. There was just this little passage up to the right, and Jono was up there looking real pleased, but dead worried at the same time, if you know what I mean. 'Where do we go now?' he says.

I was scrabbling about trying to get the guidebook out of my sack when old Mac comes ambling along. 'Up there,' he says, and points. And sure enough, there's this little chimney. 'There's a wall,' Mac says. 'It's steep for 20ft., but then it eases off. You two carry on up. We've nearly cracked it boys,' he says, 'but we'll need to get a move on, there's not hellish much light left.'

When we got up to that wall I thought he was having us on! Steep or what? Man, it was vertical! And there was nothing on it, just bare rock! I looked back down the chimney to where Mac was hunched up against the

wall. I shouted down to him. He just pointed straight up, I could see the

flash of teeth as he grinned.

Christ it was hard! I nearly came off a couple of times, but desperation got me up. I dragged Jono up on a tight rope. He was near out of his mind with it, but when he'd calmed down a bit he staggered on to have a look at the Gap.

Down below, in the shadows, I could hear someone hammering metal. Then there was a lot of puffing and grunting, and eventually, old Mac was looking up at me; he looked really pooped, man! He was pleased as punch to get up to where I was. He gets out this tatty old yellow sling, puts it round a block, runs the rope through the krab and forgets to tie back into it!

'Thanks Chris,' says he. 'I must be getting old. That was an awful lot harder than I remember it.' He shouts down for Harvey to some on, but nothing much happens. 'He probably can't get the peg out,' says Mac,

and he takes in the rope as hard as he can.

The wind was getting up a bit, and we stood hunched over looking down at our feet. I had plakkies, yetties and snap-ons. Mac's crampons looked like Mallory had worn them on Everest! The points were all ground down to nothing. Leather boots, naff canvas gaiters with holes. He had breeches on too, and his socks had slipped down; you could see bare flesh. You don't get that with salopettes. He turns towards me: 'Remember,' he says, 'when you get down into the Gap, you don't need to climb straight up the other side. There's a shelf to the left; it's usually easier.' Just then another head popped up below us, but it wasn't Harvey. Some of the Northerners must've climbed through him. Mac was angry. I could hear him cursing under his breath. My rope came tight and I could hear Jono shout. With a quick 'see you' to Mac I set off.

Along at the Gap it was like crazy, man! There were people everywhere. These teams kept coming up out of this steep chimney on the right. There was ropes crossed and swearing and shouting! I looked down sort of carefully, 'cos it's very exposed, and there were still more people coming up. Jono was down in the Gap, just about jammed against the rock behind two great big Northerners. There was another two trying to climb the other side. One of them was standing on the other's head! The cloud had lifted a bit by this time, but the light was going fast. I thought: 'Bugger this!' And I slithered down to Jono. He looked pretty grim; his Walkman was going full blast; you could hear it hissing. I ripped the plug out of his

ear.

'This is going to take ages!' he wails. 'And, hey Chris, guess what, I think I've forgotten my head-torch!' That decided it! Something had to be done quick. I wormed my way behind one of the Northerners and threw our ropes down the other side of the Gap to keep them out the way. Then I got a quick gander at Mac's shelf. The light was coming from the other side and it was all in shadow.

'You'll not get oop there!' grunted one of the Northerners. 'This is the way, int'it Albert?'

'Aye, lad,' said Albert. 'But there's nowt on it see? We'll have t'try castin' rope in a minute...'

I sidled up the first few moves. It felt none too secure and I started shaking. There was a lot of loose snow on the rock and a big drop to the left. As I looked along the ledge a little something caught my eye. There was a peg. If only I could get to it we might be okay. It was as well Jono was still awake, man! 'Cos no sooner had I clipped that peg than both my feet come off! I was really pumped now and I managed to find a couple of good placements and swing myself over. I fairly shot up back to the crest of the ridge.

I got one glimpse down to the valley and the sea was all turning red. I could hear all them Northerners along at the Gap, and I brought Jono up as quick as I could. Poor old Mac was standing on the other side of the Gap by now, just a little dark figure in the twilight. He gave me a big wave, then the cloud swirled in.

There wasn't much left, but we roped it all the way.

'This is better than SEX!' bawls Jono. 'Hey Chris! We did it! Tower Ridge!' We was all hugging each other and dancing about! Then it struck us. We still had to get down. And it was cold and gnarly and really dark, and Jono had forgotten his torch! He was all for finding that summit shelter thing and sitting it out, but me? I was still pumped and I reckoned we could get down that Number Four Gully, if only we could find it.

Well, we struggled along, this screaming wind in our faces, falling over the rope and catching our crampons on rocks. Sometimes you couldn't see your hand in front of your face it was that bad. Jono put his foot right through something and I had to haul him back. We was pretty well gone when something glinted in the torchlight. You Little Beauty! This tiny aluminium marker with the number four punched in holes! It was only just poking up through the snow. If we'd been in cloud just then, we'd have missed it sure as fate.

I edges over to have a look down, and Jono comes too.

'I'm not going down there, mate!' he says. Next moment we both were, but not the way we meant! Swoosh! When we picked ourselves up and found nothing broken – 'cept Jono's Walkman – we started laughing fit to bust and couldn't stop.

It just took forever to get back to the hut. The main room was all cosy and warm in the gaslight. There was a good crowd in. Mac and Harvey were talking quietly at the far end of the table and drinking red wine out of an old plastic bottle. They looked totally knackered, man! Mac told us they'd abbed off to avoid the snarl up in the Gap.

It's a pity for young Harvey,' says he. 'He hadn't done the route before.'
Know what? I felt sorry for them poor old farts! I even offered them a drink...

## RELUCTANT PERSISTENCE

#### By Rob Milne

SKREETCH! went my crampons. 'I'll bet that scared Rab!' I thought, 'It scared the hell out of me!' I quickly wedged myself back into the slippery V-groove. Why was I scared and where had that fun climbing mood gone?

The fun atmosphere was there in the morning as we stood in the warm sunshine at the base of Gangway on the Cobbler, debating what to do. Water was dripping down the dark rock walls, and with the lack of wind, the sunshine was warm and relaxing. The weather was too nice not to climb. We were reluctant to do the route, but also persistent enough to want to give it a try. Although the steep rock walls were dark and bare, the climbing line was well snowed up. The ledges were white like whipped cream on the tiers of a cake, and white snow oozed out of the crack like foam cavity insulation. We hummed and hawed for 20 minutes. For years we had passed below the crack, stopping and looking closely, turning our heads as if to hear it whisper an invitation.

We couldn't think of a good excuse not to try the line and we couldn't think of any other line to try (the Cobbler is now climbed-out in winter).

Reluctantly, Rab slotted a fist jam and pulled up under the overhanging start. A high tool placement gave him no excuses, but the trouble of placing a good nut almost did. A few minutes of persistence was enough for success and he stepped back down.

We weren't committed to the route yet. The first moves were slightly overhanging and harder than expected. Getting gear was hard. Do we give up or try again? More sunbathing. Two climbers pass by and mumble about us being crazy, we promise we are just having a look. I could see that Rab's mind was locked onto the route in spite of his lack of commitment. Up he went again.

He must have leaned on one arm for 15 minutes trying to get a nut in. From 20 years of climbing together, I knew what he was thinking. 'Focus on gear, then move up. Never back down.' But maybe we should just call it quits for the day? No, The crack looks superb. Focus on gear. His crampon points were only just above my head and I could hear the tone of his grunts. 'Was this worth doing? How long should I try? Why is it so hard to get this damn nut in?' To commit to the route or not, that was our dilemma. It is so much easier when you are high on a route and know you have to do it.

When he got the nut in, he had no choice but to move higher. The feeling of adventure – not knowing the outcome of the day, was high. Each time he reached up and cleared more snow, it seemed that he wouldn't get gear and would have to come down. Failure was always five minutes away.

After another hour of 'Watch me' and, 'I'm still trying to find some gear' and, 'This will be easy if I can just get some gear', Rab finally pulled around a corner and finished the pitch.

It felt good to move up and put my nose right against the crack. I had stared at the crack for many hours. Certainly, for the last two hours. And all during the snowstorm when we did the first winter ascent of N'gombi. I had developed a craving to slot my tools into its small folds and become intimate with its curves and depths. Up I went, first a fist jam, then a high hook, feet delicately and precisely placed on a small ledge. I get great pleasure from sliding my pick gently into a thin crack and leaning back. Feeling the shaft bend and then hold firm as the pick locks against the side of the crack. Unlike thin rock climbing, it feels like I am pulling up on a bar, helped by the wrist loop. I rearrange my feet on small ledges and feel the comfortable stretching of my calf muscles. At least half my muscles are in use at once, stretching and straining together. Generating warmth and fitness.

For 15 minutes, this mixed climbing was great. But when caressing a nut from a crack changed to a seemingly pointless struggle, my mood changed.

My left forearm was totally pumped. I had no idea what my crampon points were on. They had gone through the shallow layer of snow and stuck to something. As long as I don't move my ankles, they should stay put. Easier said than done when trying to jerk a wire out with your right hand. 'How am I going to do this?' I thought in panic. 'Fingers in the crack? Try the other hand? What can I use for a secure placement? Are my feet going to pop? If I hold on with the right, can I shake out my left arm?'

No wonder Rab had wanted me to watch him here. From somewhere out of the uncertainty, determination eased out. Concentrate. Focus. Think. Slowly I worked on the nut again. I was surprised my left arm was pumped and reassured myself that I was too strong for it to let me down. I have often found that such lies work. Stupid arms. Stupid head!

With the nut out, the next moves came into my focus. A rubbery arm, bad placements, a steep corner, and just above a huge ledge. So close to paradise and in so much trouble. Why can't I think how character building these situations are when I am in them? I knew I had to move and before I got more tired. Pull straight down, place the feet carefully and move in balance. Enjoy the strain of the muscles and most of all, trust that rope! Trust the rope, that was it – the concept that let me relax. I leaned out on a dodgy placement and reached high. Careful arrangement of my centre of gravity and delicate movements. 'Slow and steady' yielded a locker placement. I could now look forward to the hot aches on the comfort of the ledge.

Rab took ages to get started on the next pitch. It was a narrow V-shaped chimney and not at all secure. Classically unfriendly, and inviting at the same time. It didn't look hard, but he made a lot of fuss about it. Once into the narrow chimney, though, he didn't have many problems with the rest of the pitch.

My turn. I pulled up and into the V-groove with the grace of an albatross taking off. There wasn't much to hold onto, but my youth was spent wiggling up wide cracks and narrow chimneys. A shoulder to the right, a hip to the left. Palm down and elbow against the wall. The ice along the bottom permitted a solid pull with my tool and I could wiggle up to the chimney section.

I am not sure when my mood changed from comfortable to desperate. I wasn't that tired, the chimney was wide, but just right for my size. My feet weren't on much, but I didn't need much. I had a solid axe placement. The only thing missing was my confidence. And I couldn't see it, or any

foot ledges.

I pulled the pick onto a solid hook in the blocky overhang. I just wasn't comfortable. No other reason or excuse. I wasn't trying to settle down, but I wasn't happy being unhappy. The hardest obstacle in climbing was with me, unhappy for no reason. I climbed as fast as I could. I worried, but had solid placements. I was worried that I would get tired, but I wasn't even straining myself. That inner calm and comfort seemed to have gone walk about. Was I unsure? Was I reluctant? I wasn't even thinking. I wasn't in a panic, just not happy.

I persisted and let technique drive me upwards. A tool in the lip of the overhang. A solid horizontal placement for my pick. Leaning against the slippery wall, but with feet on small undulations of the other wall. Fiddle with swapping placements in the top of the overhang and make a powerful pull and turn. Wham! My tool was into turf and I floated up the rest of the

pitch.

The mood of desperation was still dominant as Rab handed me the rack. I definitely didn't feel like more adventure. But it was my turn to lead. I swallowed and blocked myself from thinking about it. I glanced up briefly to fix the problems into my mind. It looked awful. Rab and Tom had done this pitch on the first winter ascent of Fold Direct. 'It isn't as bad as it looks,' Rab calmed me. 'The big groove is only a couple of moves. And the roof above has big flakes to grab.'

I worked mechanically to get the first nut placement. Normally, a happy calm descends while I concentrate. It was taking its time. I placed a nut and bridged over the first step. The excellent gear and making the moves well gave my confidence a boost. 'Any time now,' I hinted to my calm. But the reluctance was still winning.

After placing a secure Friend, I moved into the bottom of the groove, and swallowed hard. A couple of moves? Sandbag! It looked pretty high.

I shifted the huge rack to my left side so that it wouldn't get stuck in the groove, but that didn't help. The groove still looked hard.

I always laughed at the movies with sporting themes when the coach said: 'Focus!' What the hell did that mean? I can't imagine thinking about last Friday's party in the middle of a short race. But the meaning became clear as I balanced into the bottom of the V-groove. My mind was a blank, except for puzzling over where I would get gear, and how smooth the left wall looked. There was a thick layer of cruddy snow covering the wide corner crack. I wedged myself into the base and cleared the snow. The crack was too wide for the gear I had. Reluctantly, I squiggled a little higher and dug again.

Now I understood focus. My mind was blank, except for working out how to get some gear. The moves didn't matter, the nice atmosphere was forgotten and last Friday's party was history. I decided to try higher and stepped up with one crampon point on a small ledge the width of my thumb. Unfortunately, with the wide crack and cruddy snow, my tools were not at all secure.

But I was still focused. Nothing else was in my mind. I held in a precarious position and tried a wire. Then another wire, then another wire. Persistence. Wide cracks were my favourite, the weather was good, Rab was just below and the moves were not hard. My calf started to burn a bit, but I knew I could stand forever on it.

And then my foot slipped. Skreetch! The vacuum of thoughts that I called focus got filled in a hurry. 'The last gear is a long way down. This isn't secure at all. None of these damn nuts fit. I haven't had lunch.' The fear that I thought I had left at the base of the groove was back with me. I pulled hard and struggled to wedge myself back into the corner. I did not want to do this.

I took a deep breath and went back to work. It would have been better if I thought about last Friday's party, since worry was now the dominant thought. Reluctantly, I persisted more. I tried clearing the crack more. I tried more nuts. Nothing was working. I moved my foot, but the holds were tiny. I couldn't stay wedged against the icy walls for ever. But I was trained well enough not to move up, even though two more moves would have me over the top. I slipped again and quickly wedged myself back into the groove. Time to make a decision.

'Rab,' I called down, 'I don't think I can do this.'

'In that case we are abbing off,' he shouted up, with a tone of resignation and a hint of disgust.

'Bastard,' I thought. He knows how to kick a guy when he is down (or not up).

Reluctantly, back to work. The focus was back. Somehow I was a bit higher and a perfect nut placement was surprisingly in reach. I expected a wave of relief. I thought I would smile. I waited for that relaxed feeling of

happiness you get when you find a 'Thank God' hold. No emotions at all, just the blank feeling of focus. Almost effortlessly I moved my foot onto a higher wee hold, shifted an axe onto something flat, but not secure, and moved a few inches higher.

Wham! I nailed the turf with my right tool and pulled up. I didn't even look down at the groove, I had left too much fear behind and didn't want it to come chasing me up the next section.

The relief still didn't come as I moved under the overhanging final obstacle of the pitch. The chockstones looked easy, but they blocked the chimney with a 4ft. roof. I didn't enjoy arranging gear. I didn't find relief in another bomber nut. I didn't feel anything. For me, leading is often this way. Like when your fingers freeze and then the hot aches come. No feeling, then too much feeling. But at least after leading the feeling is a good one. Somewhere inside I knew that the good feeling would come. For now, I concentrated on working out the roof.

It was taking too long to figure out the moves. I looked at it from the left, nothing. I looked at it from the right, nothing. The gear was at my feet and the fear was rising. I wanted to stop.

Reluctantly, I poked some more. Eureka! One can sling the lip of the roof like a chockstone. A short game of throw the sling through the hole and I had bomber gear at head level. A smirk developed. I hooked a tool at the lip. 'Bomber,' I thought. A smile developed.

I needed to swing out from under the roof and onto the left wall, holding with only my left arm. 'Awesome,' I thought. 'Put those muscles to work. Look at the cool chimney/groove system below. This is going to be an impressive move.'

With a big smile I almost floated around the chockstone and into the turf above. I didn't bother to clear the lovely white snow to find gear, I just placed my crampon points on a tiny ledge and stood up. This mixed climbing is almost as much fun as last Friday's party. Elated, I stepped into an alcove and set an anchor.

Rab came up quickly and effortlessly. Marvelling at the speed he had climbed, I tried to remember the hard moves. Gradually, I realised there weren't any. The problems were all trying to get gear and feeling gripped at the same time. But I had persisted and done it. And it felt good.

Success seemed to be just around the corner. If we complete this route, that will be 20 winters since Rab and I first did a new route together, a long partnership that has seen the rise of modern hard mixed climbing.

I stepped out from under the roof and gazed up a white, turfy groove. 'Home free,' I shouted with relief. Our persistence, no matter how reluctant, had paid off again.

**Note:** First winter ascent of Gangway (VI,7), The Cobbler, by Rob Milne and Rab Anderson. This pair first made a new winter ascent 20 years ago.

#### IN THE SOUTH GHOST

Legend says men's bones have lain here.

Fugitives from ancient battle,

a howling ghost devoured their flesh.

This place is aptly named.

Now it is the trees that fight a hard battle and win a narrow victory on thin soil beneath frescoed grey and yellow walls of rock.

The riverbed is a gravel desert.

Bleached broken stumps stand in the cracked clay of the dry lakebed. Grey ice on the frozen lakes stretches westward to the distant mountains. Dust clouds rise in the cold wind.

Up in the dry canyon we thread through polished walls of scoured rock, or over shifting stones, feet sparing the small tentative trees. Scents of sulphur and juniper.

The canyon winds upwards, rock walls surround us, bare of snow. And then, a blue-white braid appears, stark against the rock. Ice is alien in this place.

This is a coy climb. It twists and hides. Steep brittle falls of ice are linked by thin white ribbons laid on black slabs of rock. Strike gently where you can.

There is nothing but sky and rock and this thread of ice, one single way leading us up across the grey-black rock. The sun salutes our folly.

At last, a steep ice-wall, the final twist and the route's grand joke. A fringe of icicles drops its glittering shower ten metres through the air. No one will hang from this gibbet today.

We feel no disappointment. The route to this high amphitheatre has been reward enough. We sit in the sun and are content. The mountain cups us in its hand.

Down the ropes at last, treading delicately on the fragile ribbons, striding down the brittle walls, dropping suddenly into shadow. Silence and chill enfold us.

Down through the canyon's gut and the labyrinth of the forest. Trudging the desert of the valley floor beneath the high walls. Coyote prints in the drifted powder.

Tree-fractured moonlight, smell of wood smoke, laughter and talk in two languages.
Embers fade while memory burns.
Go to the Ghost and it will haunt you.

R. T. Richardson.

The South Ghost (more correctly The Ghost Lakes) is a popular ice-climbing area in the Ghost Wilderness of eastern Alberta. The (uncompleted) climb, with a French and Canadian team, was Lacy Gibbet.

## THE SEA OF TRANQUILLITY

#### By Cliff Smith

IT HAD been a good winter. Conditions, while not brilliant, had been reasonable, but more importantly I'd always been in the right place at the right time. The routes I'd done had all been memorable for all the right reasons. The combination of climb and companion had left that satisfying feeling I get when everything feels right. The whole winter had been right; even when I got it wrong it felt right.

Yes it had been a good winter and long too. I enjoyed routes well into April, even the beginning of May yielded climbs of character, quality and condition.

As the days lengthened and colour returned to the landscape my thoughts turned to summer. It's one of the great joys of Scottish mountaineering that the passing seasons bring so much variety, challenge and adventure. It had been many years since I'd had such a good snow and ice season and yet now I was looking forward to what the summer had to promise. But winter was not finished with me yet. I'd gone up to Glen Coe for the day with three friends, a familiar drive north via Callander and Crianlarich, and a familiar day padding around familiar hills. A beautiful early summer day, one of those days that we all know and love, one which exercises the body and cleanses the mind.

I can't remember much about the day to be honest; it was as uneventful as it was enjoyable. I do remember the unusually large amounts of snow lying at quite low altitudes, especially as we were now fast approaching June. I sat and enjoyed the situation over a sandwich and a flask, revelling in the beauty and simplicity of my surroundings, not really aware that the first germ of an idea had already been sown.

That seed was well watered on the return journey. As we sped south towards Edinburgh, tired bodies relaxed, the conversation ranged far and wide; from previous days out to future plans. If the bodies were tired the imaginations were most certainly not. As we traversed Rannoch Moor the sky was clear and the moon bright; brilliant stars shone and the great shapes of magnificent hills rose in the distance. I think all of us were lost in that state of fatigue mixed with contentment that overtakes you after a good day in the mountains. That mellow combination had a tight grip of me and I was happily immersed in my own inward thoughts.

It was then that I began to become aware of words around me. It felt like a dream but I recognised the voice. Suddenly, my peace was gone, as I struggled to get my brain into gear. I felt tension and anger flood into me; this all felt so foreign and unwanted. Then I saw it, Ben Lui massive and brooding in the darkness, beautifully lit; lit so beautifully that my

inner calm returned almost instantly. It wasn't just the sight of this fine mountain that was causing the stir; it couldn't have been – we'd all seen it so many times before. No, the real reason for the excitement was there for us all to see, a thin ribbon of snow running straight up the middle of its huge face. I could hardly believe my eyes, Ben Lui's Central Gully complete. I fumbled in the dark for the light on my watch to check the date, sure enough it's June, unbelievable. Now I was not the only one in the car that night that was wide awake, the whole car buzzed with excitement. Central Gully complete, this was an opportunity far too good to miss.

I ached for the car to stop, to get my boots on and to set out into that clear, bright night. I imagined cramponing up crisp hard snow uncluttered with ropes, moving up uncomplicated ground to reach the superb climax of the summit at the very head of the climb. It felt like I already knew the climb; I have a well-thumbed copy of Murray's Mountaineering in Scotland and Undiscovered Scotland, not the originals you understand but the reprint (it's signed though, and one of my most treasured possessions). I love the cover of that book, it so perfectly sets the scene for the read, framing the text that has been a source of so much inspiration to me. I'd dreamt of Ben Lui's Central Gully ever since I first got that book and here is my opportunity, as exciting as it is unexpected. My thoughts came to a grinding halt as I realised that we had just passed the turn off to Cononish. I could not believe what I was hearing. I heard but could not comprehend; talk of having to get up for work in the morning, of waiting families and dinners in ovens. I tried to persuade my companions to reconsider, to seize the moment, to live for the present but to no avail. The tarmac continued to speed beneath me and I spent the remainder of the journey in a dark and silent mood.

It gnawed away at me all night, how could I have let such an opportunity slip away so easily? I cursed my lack of ability in the spoken word, how I envied the world's great orators, people who could persuade others to move mountains for the cause. Me, I failed to stop a Renault Espace from stopping at Tyndrum!

I went to bed that night with a deep sense of frustration; sleep did not come easily. When I awoke my mind immediately returned to Ben Lui. I knew it was there, I knew it was in good condition, I knew I'd never done Central Gully before. Over breakfast I listened, as usual, to the radio. The weather forecast came on and I found myself hearing them predicting continued high pressure with cold stable conditions for the early part of the week with things deteriorating by the weekend. They also forecast a big rise in temperature; if I wanted to do this climb I would have to move and move fast.

I spent the morning on the phone to no avail. Everyone I spoke to was either at work or had other commitments, nobody was able to take time

off midweek at such short notice. Undisturbed by this I resolved to go alone, and began to plan my trip. Dead easy I thought to myself, early start from home, a pleasant drive to Tyndrum, cycle along the track to Cononish, stash the bike, blast the route, whizz back home in time for tea,

bingo!

But somehow that didn't feel right, it just didn't feel right. It wasn't what I did and it wasn't how I went about mountaineering. Being in the mountains meant more than rushing and doing and ticking and chasing. I knew what was missing; it was people. It was everyone I'd ever gone to the mountains with and it was everyone I wanted to go to the mountains with in the future. I'd tried everyone though and nobody was free. I'd just have to go on my own. I knew I didn't want to but I had no option. Only I did.

It came to me as most good ideas come to me, or what I think are good ideas, without warning as a bolt from the blue and yet it was so simple. Why don't we go after work? Simple, finish work, pile into the car, drive, cycle, walk, climb, return, sleep, work. Now my time spent boosting the profits of BT were much more productive. Not only did I manage to persuade people that it was a good idea, fun even, but that if we were going to do it, it would have to be tonight. At last I moved my mountain! So at 5.30 that evening three of us assembled with an air of keen

anticipation.

The drive was different for me, I felt strangeness within, and I had difficulty recognising what was happening. The speed of it all, the headlong rush to do something for the sake of it, the exactness of the plan; all combined to create an unsatisfactory taste. Yet somehow it felt right, just as if what we were doing was meant to be. People, that was the difference. I enjoyed the company of fellow mountaineers who knew and understood what I myself knew and understood. I felt happy and secure in their company, safe to express myself in a language that was both rich and basic. Yes this was to be a good night, I could feel it in my core as clean and as unsullied as fresh Cairngorm granite.

I was surprised how quick the journey was. I know it's not far to Tyndrum but the speed we got there surprised me. Not half as much as the shock I got as the cold struck me when I opened the car door. Fantastic, a cold crisp evening beckoned. I trembled but not with the cold, inside excitement, a child-like quality in me which I recognised instantly and welcomed every time he came out to play. The pleasure of preparation is another ritual I've come to know and love. Donning boots and shouldering rucksack, checking map and stowing flask. The difference this time was mechanical. My plan to cycle to Cononish had seemed a good one at the time. Now as I compared my trusty Edinburgh Contour against the two sleek lightweight mountain bikes I was not so sure. As you might have predicted I was quickly left behind, no longer in the peleton but cast adrift, destined to spend the rest

of the cycle in my own pool of Petzl light, bouncing from one impending collision of death to the next. By the time I caught up with the others they had found a place to leave the bikes and had just about readied themselves for the short, but steep, ascent to the start of the gully. My legs screamed, calves on fire, knees like jelly, wrists and elbows made of blancmange.

I enjoyed the journey. I enjoyed the rest even more. I knew the next bit was for me and as I set off in pursuit of the two dots of light I knew it was only a matter of time before they were mine. Sure enough I caught them up and was soon forging ahead. I love the plod at the front of kicking steps and breaking trail. I was surprised at how little evidence there was of previous ascents but secretly revelled in the cleanness and beauty of my surroundings. The slope steepened and the snow hardened. Conditions by now were superb, the cold clear night was enhanced by the stillness broken only by the snick of my crampons, the stab of my axe and the gasps for breath of the two hares somewhere below me. Serves the buggers right. I wanted the route to go on and on, I wanted to savour the experience, to milk it for all it was worth, but as is the way of these things it had to end.

It ended with a suddenness that overwhelmed me. One minute I was immersed in the climb, moving up and loving the feeling of freedom. No ropes and no physical attachment to the mountain yet an attachment that felt strong and secure as if I were tied to the mountain by wire hawser. The next I was on flat ground; I had expected this, I'd seen the photographs, have taken photographs since, of the climax to the route, but having done it I felt complete and utter satisfaction. I sat on the very lip of the gully and peered down the slope. I could make out the shapes of my two friends moving slowly and very close together up the final headwall. It was steep but easy, made so by the conditions that night. The quality of the snow produced climbing of unbelievable purity, it eased progress, reassured minds and created the mood.

We reassembled on the summit, a band of happy climbers content with our lot and thrilled to be where we were. We talked for ages about the climb and our feelings for it. We described the sensations that we felt and I have never been treated to such clear and compelling descriptions before. It was as if I was being treated to the climb all over again only this time it was in slow motion and told with such vividness I could almost feel the climb. The joy was unrestrained and emotional. I have no idea how long we sat on the summit revelling in the situation and enjoying the company. It could have been hours, but in reality, it was probably no more than two or three minutes. We operated in autopilot, nobody made the decision to leave but we all recognised the time. Appreciating the situation and knowing instinctively that we must return from whence we came is all part of the game. Now my knees have been giving me gyp for a while.

The battering they receive each winter is taking its toll; I'll be like Fyffie one day! I'd half spied an easy runnel on the ascent but you know what it's like in the moonlight, you can never be quite sure of what you've seen.

I found myself standing at the top of this inviting ribbon of snow, the angle looked okay, not too hard, not too soft, going in roughly the right direction, couldn't see the bottom though. Those of you that know me know that I don't like bum sliding, the legacy of countless courses at the Lodge having it drummed in that this might be fun but it is dangerous and we should be more responsible in the mountains. Well to hell with Glenmore bloody Lodge and WHOOSH! It did go to the bottom in roughly the right direction and it was fantastic fun. It was quick and exhilarating but more importantly it saved my knees from some serious grief. Oh, this winter was turning out great, but as is the way with these things I now had a price to pay. Lying forgotten was my bike and 20 minutes into the cycle ride I wish I had forgotten it as every bump and boulder on the track etched its memory on my backside.

Two lights duly disappeared into the distance and I was left to complete the journey in my own private world. In a perverse sort of way I quite enjoyed the ride, it contrasted so starkly with what had gone before and succeeded in highlighting the pleasure of the climb. Back at the car we quickly changed and readied ourselves for the journey home. It was a sombre drive, as if the beauty and difference of our experience was being diminished by the return to reality. Inside I felt elation and calmness, I felt no need to communicate verbally with my friends. The silence we found ourselves in said more than enough, certainly more than any words could express.

Work the next day arrived far too quickly. Lack of sleep and a mountain of paper ensured that the day went quickly enough and I was soon at home surrounded by familiarity. It got to that stage in the evening when sleep was well overdue that the phone went. By the tone in Cath's voice I knew it was for me.

It still surprises me how news travels so fast. Have a fall off some classic V. Diff. and you can guarantee the phone will be red hot all night. This time it was Tich, who'd heard a rumour that we'd been up to something a wee bit different. I filled him in on the details as quickly as I could, my body demanding sleep. But it was my brain that was closing down. I heard him mumble something about June and snow and Cairngorms and tomorrow and I say yes and I go to bed.

I don't even remember crawling into bed, but I remember waking. It's a beautiful day, perfect except that I've got a full day at a desk to look forward to. The phone goes. It's Tich. Tonight, then I remember where the conversation went to last night before I went to sleep.

The A9 is a road that I both love and hate. It's a necessary evil that I have to endure to reap the rewards at the end of the line. This time I have the luxury of not having to drive so I can relax and soak up the atmosphere. Somehow we manage to miss out the worst of the Edinburgh rush-hour traffic and soon find ourselves engaged in the usual A9 game of chance.

By the time we arrive at the Coire Cas car park it was an absolutely superb summer evening, heavenly colours combining with rich colours and sounds to create an unbeatable scene. The car park was all but deserted save for a few hill stragglers. We passed a couple sitting on the tailgate of their car, fresh from what had obviously been a memorable day in the mountains. It was nice to pass pleasantries with fellow mountaineers and to inquire about conditions on the hill. Snow it appeared was still about, especially in the gullies, and was apparently in excellent condition. As we passed the look of disbelief on their faces was there for all to see. I had to pinch myself to believe that I was part of this surreal scene. Here I was on June 21, on one of the best days of the summer so far, the sun is splitting the trees, not a cloud to be seen, dressed in T-shirt and Oakley's. On my pack glinting in the sun two ice axes and a set of recently-sharpened crampons.

I rarely make the trip into Sneachda in the summer, however it's a regular trip throughout the working winter months. As we started up the track it struck me just how ugly and dirty the place is when it's clear of snow. Somehow I have become blind to the scars that slash across these slopes, I can't even smell the stench of diesel, but today it hits me with all the force of a Cairngorm blizzard. It's a depressing sight, a testament to the folly of building a destructive ski centre in such a fragile and sensitive environment; God knows how they can justify expansion when faced with such overwhelming visual evidence of their impact.

Pressing on we soon left behind the ski area and followed one of the many paths that lead into the coire. Again I was surprised at the sight of such large and intrusive paths where normally I see footprints in the snow; we really are loving our mountains to death I thought. We gathered at the 'Toblerone' boulder to discuss our options. Even from this distance conditions looked very good. All the gullies looked complete, picked out by a strange iridescent light. I hadn't noticed the moon before but now I could appreciate its true beauty. The Sea of Tranquillity looked down upon Earth and certain inhabitants of Earth looked up and wondered. As a child I could clearly recall the TV pictures of man's first steps on that distant place; the grainy black and white images lived in my memory and I often wondered what the moon really looked like. I had to content myself with the moraines of Coire an t-Sneachda and I was not disappointed. A clear, cloudless night had drawn in and the temperature had dropped considerably. This was more than any of us could have wished for; the only difficulty was deciding which routes to do. Jacob's, the Slant, Aladdin's, Central,

Spiral, Crotched, The Runnel, Broken, Red, all beckoned, all easy, all done before but never in such impeccable conditions.

Talk about children in a sweet shop. We talked excitedly as we fitted crampons and helmets; it was a pleasure to do these tasks with warm fingers and without the spindrift stinging your face. It was cold but not in that through-to-the-core cold you get in mid-winter, this was a cleaner more amenable cold that froze your breath but not your soul. I could relax, everyone here knew what they were doing, no-one needed checking, and all were here for the same reason and the right reason. We should do The Runnel.

My first step confirmed that everything was as expected. My crampons bit into iron hard névé but needed that extra bite just to make sure they were secure. It's the best feeling in the world for the snow and ice climber. I could feel the quality of the medium, I had to kick in with just enough effort to confirm its firmness: any more and it would have been an effort; any less and it would have been too easy – heaven. Rising from the top of the snow bay straightforward climbing led to a fine looking chimney. Normally ice resides here but tonight it was conspicuous by its absence; things looked like they might get interesting. Tentatively, I moved up, here in the gloom of the chimney it was awkward to place your tools, never being quite sure what you were aiming at or whether the placement would hold.

The half-light played tricks with your eyes and vision, shapes and distances were distorted, most interesting of all was the lack of colour. I was in a monochrome mountaineering world, inhabited by Patey, Haston, MacInnes and Bonington. I imagined watching myself on some small black-and-white television set as the BBC outside broadcast sent my pictures to homes throughout the land. Somewhere out there a small boy would be watching me and planning his own adventure one day. Take your time I thought and you too will take your place in history, become a star of your very own show. Dreams are what keep me going sometimes and tonight's dream was unreal, however, reality meant some delicate, balance moves that proved to be entertaining enough without being unduly taxing.

Soon I was moving easily up the exit slopes of the route. As I pulled onto the plateau I became aware of the situation, alone on my very own sea of tranquillity. A strange ethereal scene as distant and different as I have ever seen laid before me, and I savoured the moment. Before long I was brought back to earth by strange movements in the periphery of my vision, as slowly but surely, one by one, grey figures gradually emerged into view like bizarre alien figures on a stark and lifeless planet. Lifeless was one word that could not describe the mountain that night; first it was the obligatory hip flask of malt, then a bottle of red wine appeared, quickly followed by a couple of cans of 80/- and a wee bit more whisky. I could

just hear the mountain safety sages whispering in my ear, but I never listen.

As a spectator I scowled, admonished such recklessness and penned my letter to *The Scotsman*. As a participant I took the first swig and rejoiced in the warm peaty flow of good malt. Talisker, such a fitting climax to a splendid night. The party that ensued was remarkable for two reasons; one that we consumed so much alcohol in so short a space of time and two, that we all got back to the car park safely. It's at times like these that I find it easy to understand what the mountains mean to me. When I'm tired, with all the trimmings of easy city living stripped away, I can think. I can appreciate and understand. I often think that it's a pointless game, but know that this can never be so. I can never argue with the end result and tonight confirmed this in the most spectacular fashion. It had been a wonderful winter mountaineering experience. A re-affirmation of the beauty of the mountains, the challenges and the pleasures that they bring, pleasures that in this case were intensified by the surreal and magical surroundings. The quality of the experience had been further enhanced by the people that I had climbed with; we all shared the same appreciation of what we were doing but it was the manner in which we did it that was so special.

Rising above all of this was the majesty and beauty of Scotland's mountains. Yet again I'd been in the right place at the right time with the right people. To be treated to two fine, classic winter climbs, both of which had been in the most glorious of conditions and so late in the year had been such an unexpected bonus. As predicted the thaw came, spring took over and colour returned to my climbing world. It had, however, been a good winter.



## NOT PICCADILLY CIRCUS

#### By Peter Warburton

INTELLECTUALLY, I have been a late developer as well as a low flyer. That, with the alleged benefit of hindsight, is the only satisfactory explanation of the decision I reached in the winter of 1951-52 that I was ready for the Alps. At the time my experience consisted of modest excursions on British hills and in the Pyrenees. Since my preference was for solitary travel and as guides were beyond my purse, it will be apparent that the ingredients of disillusion, if not of disaster, were all there.

The outline planning was nevertheless reasonably competent and a preliminary day on hills overlooking the Val de Bagnes, which was not then flooded, went well, leaving me with the erroneous impression that I was rather a fine fellow. On Bastille Day 1952 I set off from Fionnay wearing a spacious new pair of Lawrie's breeches, carrying an ex-War Department ice axe that was too long for me and which I did not know how best to use and weighed down by an overfilled 'Commando' rucksack with a congenitally low centre of gravity and an impressive array of webbing straps for the carriage of spare Bren guns and other military

ecetera but which failed to keep hold of baguettes.

The first day's destination was the Chanrion Hut - '2465m, Acc 42. Keeper in summer. 4hrs 30min from Fionnay'. It took me somewhat longer, largely because I chose the left bank of the river where there seemed to be a steeper but shorter alternative route. This path did not fulfil its early promise but I supposed that a crossing of the torrent would be easier farther upstream, where the flow would surely be reduced. Lesson one was that this theory, valid at home, did not apply to glacier fed streams. Lesson two was that the bottom-heavy character of the sack had a significant adverse effect on my long jump performance. Daunted by the force and angle of the flood, the slippery aspect of every potential staging post and the lack of any suitable launch pad, I tried to test my range before committing myself to the deep. It was embarrassing to find that this training programme was engaging the close attention of a small audience smugly established higher up and on the true path. They were probably too far away to appreciate the nonchalant air I attempted on completing an inelegant, but more or less, dry landfall. By taking an immediate rest, I made sure they had a 20-minute lead.

George Abraham was among those who visited these parts. In *Modern Mountaineering* he notes that 'The Chanrion Hut . . . yields some good climbs on the peaks of the frontier range, which may become interesting and exciting if the passports happen to be left down at Fionnay. The Bersaglieri are harder to dodge than avalanches. The Points d'Otemma (11,136ft.) and the Ruinette (12,727ft.) are worth any risks involved'. The

Pointe d'Otemma seemed too close at hand and not quite high enough for an alpinist of my calibre. I settled on La Ruinette (3875m) for my debut. Whymper, who with two guides made the first ascent in July 1865, is dismissive. This was a mountain that could be walked up, the effort being redeemed only by the view from the summit. It sounded in every way suitable.

Sleep that night, my first in any hut, was subjected to frequent interruption by the departure, in twos and threes at all sorts of ungodly hours, of the rest of the company but by 5a.m. I had the place to myself and was able to settle properly. An early start is always a good idea. Shortly after eight o'clock on a fine sunny morning I set off for La Ruinette, passport safely stowed in an inside pocket.

Glaciers were quite outside my experience but the Glacier de Breney proved to be free of the difficulties I had anticipated and, with confidence still intact, I made steady progress up steep slopes on the far side. Above 3250m the angle eased but the going became more arduous through kneedeep snow. Concentrating on the business in hand, I failed to notice the deteriorating visibility. As wet cloud closed in I saw, some distance away, two figures just recognisable as among the hut's early risers. They were on a course set to converge with mine and I looked forward to the possibility of sharing the labour of trail breaking. I interpreted their wave as a greeting, but it must have indicated a decision to turn back.

I plodded on, nursing a growing conviction that the middle of this upper snowfield, the Glacier de la Ruinette on the map, was not the best route and that progress might have proved easier along its margin. When, cool and damp, I reconciled myself to retreat I put this theory to the test. A compass bearing led to a dreary landscape of gullies made unpleasant by every combination of mud, mobile scree and boulders and melting snow. Each gully in turn became impassably steep obliging me to emerge, contour the slope and repeat the process. 'Catabatic,' I muttered, committing myself yet again to the unknown: it was a word chanced upon in the dictionary and meaning 'affording an easy descent'. None of them did. Thick mist and extreme caution on my part made for a very slow descent.

The appearance of bersaglieri or members of the gendarmerie would have provided a welcome diversion (my passport although a little bent was still dry) but gendarmes, animate or otherwise, were absent. They are indeed a comparative rarity. My only confrontation had been when two, on motor-cycles, made an unwelcome surprise appearance at our camp at the head of a remote Pyrenean valley. The company, nearly all French students, burst spontaneously into a song with the much repeated refrain: 'Merde (or would it have been Merdes?) les gendarmes, la-haut sur là Montagne'. The consequence had been a thorough search for contraband, illegal Spanish Republican frontier crossers, anarchists and other undesirables. Irrelevant recollections can be soothing in trying circumstances.

The lower glacier was in far livelier condition than earlier in the day and fading light contributed to the imagined hazards of the crossing. On the home stretch, accelerating down the lateral moraine toward the hut, I met a party of four coming in the opposite direction. For the second time that day I thought what eccentric hours these Continentals kept. It came as a complete surprise when they introduced themselves, in mildly indignant tones, as a search party. There was on their faces that momentary flicker of disappointment that rescuers experience when the object of their charity turns up, alive and demonstrably capable of forward motion. My thanks were tactlessly diluted, as I too late realised, by a subsidiary clause to the effect that there had been no real need. It would have been diplomatic to have wrung them each by the hand and/or sobbed on the leader's shoulder. That is what I intend doing if it ever happens to me again.

Back at the hut the rescue quartet conferred. My German was not good enough to follow their private conversation word by word but it was clear that there was general support for the proposition that here was a 'gefährlicher Kerl' in serious need of education. A spokesman was appointed. They chose the right man for the job. English was confident, his manner magisterial. The case for the Alpine start was deployed at length followed by a section on the crucial importance of returning to the hut by 3p.m. at the latest. For good measure he appended a passage on the dangers of unprotected river crossing, revealing himself, to my chagrin, as one of the witnesses of my unorthodox techniques of the previous day. I considered myself fortunate that he had been a few minutes too late to catch my tentative and erratic return crossing of the lower glacier. The lecture assumed an oratorical character as it progressed and I could not but admire the closing flourish of the peroration: 'The mountains iss not Piccadilly Circus'.

I might have spoken of the havoc caused to my digestive system by keeping unnatural hours. I could even have told of my only pre-dawn start; how we had set off at 3.30a.m. like so many Christmas card carollers behind a leader bearing a candle in a lantern; how this irresponsible youth, with the advantage of illumination, had far outdistanced his flock as we contoured a steep and pathless mountainside; how, when we reassembled at first light, two of our number were missing, one of whom when found was a hospital case. Instead I was meekly receptive. After all, these were serious mountaineers, serious indeed to a fault (indeed a day or two later it struck me that I had heard no laughter in the Chanrion Hut) but they were well-meaning and it was good of them to have turned out to look for me in the dank dusk. Naturally, I repressed the thought that they might, just possibly, be right. Years later, reading a fuller account, I learned that Messrs Whymper, Almer and Biner had set out at 3.50a.m. I can only conclude that they were motivated by eagerness to get away from the chalets at Chanrion - 'a foul spot, which should be avoided' - combined with thoughts about the length of their planned route for the rest of the day.

The following day I toiled wearily over the Col de Fenetre. Hopes of a bus service on the Italian side of the pass were revealed as unrealistic as soon as I reached the valley bottom. The track was a mere 2m wide, hewn from the rock and with a surface that suggested it doubled in season as a watercourse. The first sign of life was a gang engaged in road works. The foreman's words clearly went beyond wishing me the time of day, but my limited Italian is largely operatic and his was something else. There was no meeting of minds. 'Scusi, ma non parlo Italiano' I admitted, grudgingly. This statement produced disproportionately long and unpleasantly raucous laughter from the whole cast. They were beginning to look more like Verdian conspirators than comic opera brigands. I went my way at a comfortable thinking pace, turning the matter over in my mind. The verb had sounded like 'fare saltare', which bore a strong family resemblance to the French faire sauter - English, 'to explode'. The male chorus had vanished, so too had an oddly silent group of women, clad from head to foot in black, who had been working in a nearby field; they wielded hoes, but long-handled scythes would have suited them as well. With discreetly lengthening stride I gained the partial cover of a dilapidated wall as the first of a series of charges detonated, scattering fragments of rock in an interestingly random way. This was certainly not London W1.

That night was spent at Valpelline in a feather bed watched over by a portrait gallery of members of the ruling family of the Kingdom of Sardinia, Piedmont and Savoy. The snag was that the one bus of the day left Aosta at 6.45a.m., making a quasi-Alpine start unavoidable. As I struggled to hold my own among a crowd of ruthless old women armed with market baskets, I reflected that my situation might have brought a brief half-smile to the faces of my Chanrion mentors.

Still following, at a safe distance, in Whymper's steps I returned to Switzerland over the Theodul Pass. It was not far above the Hornli Hut that our paths again diverged. In my case discretion prevailed. I withdrew to Zermatt, finishing the holiday with some pleasantly undemanding outings mostly below the snow line.

My second Alpine venture was delayed until 1957 when the eccentric idea took hold that the Dauphine, being a little lower than the Pennine Alps and so carrying less summer snow, would be more suited to my undoubted talents. Again things did not always go according to plan, notably on the alarming occasion when the only way forward led into a series of crumbling tunnels that had formed part of long abandoned frontier fortifications. Disconcertingly, the associated buildings had been either swept away or left tottering by landslides. In the longest tunnel blocks of stone that had once lined roof and walls had fallen in, providing stepping stones of a kind until the water became deeper than the blocks. To add to

the unease a bend in the tunnel denied even the comfort of a cliché. It would have proved false comfort since the light of day revealed that 30m of track at the tunnel exit were missing, gone without trace, exposing a precipitous slope of bare, hard-baked clay which could not be avoided. To the right the ground fell away at a dizzying angle to a river gorge 1000m below, with very little between to hinder a falling object. The ground was too hard for kicking steps. Cutting an experimental footstep with the axe confirmed that the effort required would overbalance a novice. Driving in the spike as a downhill support held the same danger but by this method I advanced, foot by foot, wondering all the time whether a spirited dash might not have been the better course.

Subsiding in a hot heap on the doubtful sanctuary of the resumed mule track I reviewed the priorities that had left me without space for a safety line. Was the second wet-weather Trollope necessary and were two Thermos flasks (chilled white wine and milk) essential? Incidentally, it is a point worthy of inclusion in lists of Hints for Travellers, that a halfempty milk flask is a mistake, being apt to yield butter. The contents of the other flask, discounting the background hint of plastic left on the palate, remained wholesome and nourishing to the spirits. I gradually regained my composure: what on earth would I have done with a safety line anyway? The nomination for the one truly surplus item went to my father's 1914 Baedeker. For one day only I had mistakenly relied on its small-scale maps. It was impossible to reconcile my desolate surroundings with any landscape depicted by Baedeker. It did not need a tracker to establish that neither mule nor booted foot had passed that way for a long time but retreat being out of the question, I advanced.

I arrived that evening in Italy, an unexpected outcome but not by that stage a total surprise. The stamping of passport was then providing employment and gentle exercise for rather more uniformed officials throughout Europe than is now the case. It was rumoured at the time that the Italians were particularly keen on this little ceremony and had been known to incarcerate for a few days, just for the fun of it, those who, on leaving the country, produced passports that bore no evidence of their entry. It did not seem entirely impossible. Local officials would have authority to detain suspects 'pending inquiries' and I had been abroad enough to have got over my surprise on first discovering that the British

were not universally popular.

The following morning I studied the Customs post from a prudent distance and was pleased to note a design fault that left it without windows on the rear elevation. On the strength of this observation I decided not to put temptation in anyone's way by presenting myself unstamped. The Abraham brothers, not being of the milord tendency, would probably have approved of the tactic, but what is certain is that they would have been nimbler over the ground. The trouble was that the grazed area behind the building was divided into small enclosures by awkward fencing that deflected me closer towards officialdom than intended. At which point the inadequacy of my reconnaissance became obvious. In a recess in the back wall of the post there was a solitary window. It framed the head and shoulders of a uniformed figure. I was near enough to see that he needed a shave and that he was viewing my progress with a mildly puzzled air. I nodded in a friendly way, which briefly intensified his bemusement. Although his manner suggested someone who would find any strong emotion too tiring to sustain, there remained the possibility that this was a skilled actor who had already pressed an alarm button. Perhaps his colleagues were even now pouring out by the front door, sabres rattling? Happily, not so. I left Italy unchallenged. What a relief these anti-climaxes can be.

In France a 1914 Dauphine Guide Bleu - a second-hand investment of my own proved very satisfactory and cannot be blamed for the fact that respectable summits again eluded me. Later reading cast a shadow over what had been a splendid stage from Ailefroide to La Berarde over the Col de la Temple (3322m). This was the itinerary of the unnamed Frenchman on the day 10 years earlier when Barford was killed and Ward and Murray badly injured in a stonefall. Murray's hauntingly underwritten account is unforgettable: 'I told him what had happened - that Barford was dead in the bergschrund and that Ward and I were doubtful of having enough strength to get down the glacier to the valley. Would he go with us, to make sure we arrived there? He surveyed us carefully. We must have been an ugly and bloody sight. He reflected. Then he explained that he had been making for the Col de la Temple in order to descend to La Berarde, where he had an engagement. If he were to go down the Glacier Noir with us that would take him in the opposite direction. Therefore, with our permission, he would continue on his own way. Meantime, was there anything he could do for us? A mouthful of wine perhaps? He was most courteous. He could not possibly have cared less.'

Another notable crossing was the Col du Clot des Cavales (3128m) if only because it was where the long-serving Commando rucksack finally earned retirement by getting firmly wedged, leaving its wearer indignantly pedalling the air while descending an uncomfortable gully in a series of jumps thus giving added meaning to the word Clot.

Sooner or later we all find our level. It was in 1959 that I discovered mine. The Engadin caters ideally for my taste in hills and does so without disrupting cherished breakfast schedules. Established in one of the less-fashionable villages such as Zernez and armed with a regional season ticket valid on trains and postbuses, I am in my Alpine element. Piz Lischana (3105m) makes a good first day, especially on return visits when you know that the summit ridge can be deceptively corniced. Piz Ot is another favourite, although at the summit (3246m) it is disappointing to find a Gipfelbuch full of trite sentiments of the 'Ach! Die Welt ist doch so

schön!' variety. Two rather more strenuous outings are to Piz Linard (3410m) and to Piz Quattervals (3165m). Given an early start, say about 8a.m. these too can be fitted into the day without serious risk of missing dinner in comfortable valley quarters. These are quiet hills. Only Piz Languard (3268m) the easy day from Pontresina seems much frequented. Elsewhere, the few people I have met have mostly been on their way down as I went up but, although they may well have been up half the night themselves, all have shown civilized tolerance of others' eccentricities. There has been the occasional quizzical look or a diplomatically oblique reference to the length of the route ahead, but never a lecture on the subject of sloth.

The special feature of the district is the Swiss National Park, small in area (16,870 hectares) but very effectively protected against tourist development. Wildlife is the clear first priority but conservation of the mountain walker is not neglected. There is a useful network of well-maintained paths in valleys and over some of the passes. The only public road across the area has a bus service and there is a good rail service along the Inn valley line running parallel to the park boundary.

Another Alpine possibility for degenerates like me is the Dolomites. Retreating there from bad weather in Austria in late June, I found too much snow for my comfort. On a second, early September visit, there was far too much traffic on and off the hills. On stretches of mountain road I had to co-exist on unequal terms with a bonnet-to-bumper flow of motor coaches, each modestly proclaiming on sides and back the wonderful facilities within. Exposed only to the noise and fumes without, one loses sight of the spectacular scenery.

Two specialities of the region that had been hidden from my admiring gaze on the first visit were fully revealed in September. The strategically-placed steel ropes, if a little hard on the ungloved hand, offered welcome confirmation of the feasibility of the route. Even more reassuring were the occasional fixed ladders allowing the cautious pedestrian, who abounds in these parts, to surmount short, vertical sections. The necessary period of consideration can cause informal queues to form, giving me the rare opportunity to dispense advice and encouragement to the timid. Once this circumstance even led to my being invited to go to the head of the queue and lead the pitch.

I could have become reconciled to the *via ferrata*. However, other intrusions were less acceptable, specifically the proliferation of mountain transport systems of every shape and size with their attendant crowds of the fashionably dressed taking their ease in bar-restaurants at the top stations.

This piece may be read as an antidote to accounts of high endeavour and achievement, but even the subversive element has its standards. As Chanrion man said...

#### HAROLD RAEBURN'S JOURNEY HOME

#### By John Mitchell

In August 1914 during the early days of the First World War, when mobilisation in Europe made travel difficult and dangerous, Harold Raeburn was in the Caucasus and found himself faced with a difficult journey home.

The primary source for this article is Raeburn's 1914 diary in the Scottish Mountaineering Club archive in the National Library of Scotland. The neatness of the entries, the cleanliness of the diary and the tone of the entry for 2. 8.14 suggests that the diary was written up at home from notes made at the time.

His diary reveals some of the uncertainties and consequences of war: anti-German feeling; intense patriotism; spy phobia; rumour and counter rumour, and the haphazard travel arrangements. At the same time it reveals Raeburn's interests and demonstrates the humour which was an integral part of his character.

I have abridged and paraphrased most of the entries. Any direct quotes have been identified.

- 30. 7. 14: Russia mobilises
- 1. 8. 14: First ascent of Laboda.

Germany declares war on Russia

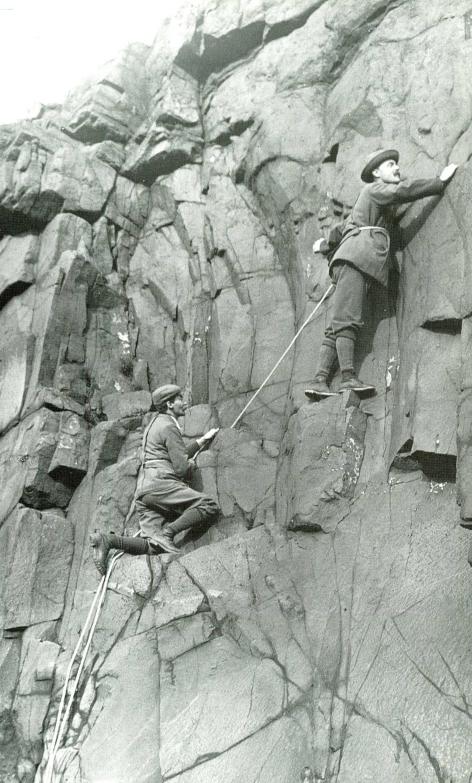
- 2. 8.14: The expedition went to Dsinago to collect horses. Initially, the authorities would not release them although they had been pre-booked. One of the porters reported that his brother, a soldier, had disappeared. Thus they heard the first rumours of war.
- 3. 8.14: They left Dsinago through a very narrow gorge. The road ran hundreds of feet above a cleft where the River Urich flowed in a swirling torrent, in and out of limestone caverns. Raeburn noticed buzzards, wagtails, chats, and quails<sup>1</sup>. They stopped for tea at Diechau. Payment was refused. However, a high price was demanded for a lineika<sup>2</sup> and two horses for the journey to the railway.

It was almost dark before they left by a poor road. Maize grew in the fields and many plover-like birds could be seen. Trees were smaller close to the steppe.

They were forced to camp overnight, pestered by flies, mosquitos and people, at the Tercyk ferry. They could not attract the ferryman's attention although the lights in Elchatov could be seen clearly. One of their tents was kicked down by a horse. Raeburn was extremely tired but could not sleep.

Germany declares war on France

4. 8.14: The river was crossed at daybreak. At the station they got definite news of war<sup>3</sup>. Austria had declared war on Serbia and Russia was





mobilising against Germany, who was the real enemy. Mobilisation meant many thousands of men on the move so that transport for the expedition was problematical. Initially, they were told that no passenger trains would run, then that two would.

The delay at the station lasted for eight hours. Troop trains passed constantly *en route* to Vlad and Tiflis. They ate in a first-class restaurant which was almost full of officers, officials, women and children. No-one was the worse for drink. Raeburn never witnessed officers drunk on the journey. The third-class restaurant,

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Page from Harold Raeburn's diary.

presumably where the private soldiers might go, was kept closed when troop trains were in the station. Tea was the usual drink but also 'quite good lager – not dear, and excellent cheap Crimean and Kaukasian (sic) wines'.

Eventually, they boarded a train, squeezed into a corridor jammed with luggage. Martinson encountered an acquaintance, Mr Isaef, another climber, who had been to 13,000ft. at the Zitch saddle on Laboda. He was intending to go to the front from Vlad.

After a long journey they reached Naltshik where two carts were hired for the trip to the Hotel Ravkaz. Raeburn thought the hotel poor with 'defective sanitary arrangements' although they had a good dinner in the orchard during which they were entertained with piano music. The 'fruit was unripe, as usual'. That night Raeburn 'slept soundly'.

Great Britain declares war on Germany

5. 8.14: The next morning was fine and not too hot. Visas had to be collected from a local official. He was suspicious of Martinson and questioned him closely. However, as he was too young for military service, and his passports were in order he was allowed to leave.

The town was 'go ahead' with extensive building works and several attractive villas. It would make a good expedition base because there were lots of stores.

Following a shave and haircut at a 'very swell place' Raeburn and party prepared to catch the early train to Kot.

6. 8.14: They had to wait seven hours at the station. Martinson and Mirandoff lost patience and jumped on one of the many troop trains going south.

Dawn from Mt. Elbrus looking at the Central Caucasus with the twin peaks of Ushba prominent. Photo: Dave Snadden.

Mountain shepherds in the Caucasus. Photo: J. H. B. Bell, SMC Collection.

When the scheduled train came it was so full Raeburn's party had to board an open wooden seated day carriage. It made slow progress to Min Vode. No-one knew when the train would leave. Raeburn describes 'an awful scene' – women and children struggling to get into already full carriages while porters dragged baggage over their heads.

They are at the Gogoschurche restaurant, where the proprietor did not remember Raeburn from his previous visit<sup>4</sup>. It was crowded, but 'few escaped without paying'.

The train finally left after midnight.

7. 8.14: In the middle of the night they were disturbed by bottles thrown through their carriage window from a passing troop train. A little girl got glass fragments in her back, but otherwise no-one was hurt.

They reached Rostov in the afternoon. Having booked in to the Hotel Moscow they visited the British consul, a 'fattish young man' called Edwards. His instructions were that British citizens were to go home via Petrograd and Gulf of Bothnia. Raeburn instantly rejected this advice because there was no guarantee they would get there. They found the consul of 'very little use indeed, and to know very little of anything and to care less!' They decided to go to Odessa via the Sea of Azov and Kertch.

In the hotel gardens that evening Raeburn tried kvas again. 'Not bad in hot weather but yeasty and not too wholesome.' He thought it around 3%, a rather low proof. Two gypsy girls appeared and wanted to read the parties' hands but 'they thought not', no explanation given. Tucker had slept most of the day.

- 8. 8.14: Next day there were patriotic parades in which the flags of the Allies were displayed. Business seemed much the same as usual although no longer conducted in German. Raeburn noticed that the hotel boot boy was cheeky to a shabby, elderly German in a frock coat who had been the hotel manager<sup>5</sup>. Arrangements were made with local agents to send the expedition's luggage to Britain<sup>6</sup>.
- 9. 8.14: Aboard the *Eisk*, 'a small dirty steamer without boats', Raeburn met an Englishman who was a fishing company agent. He was angry at 'some young nuts' being agreeable to some girls on board. The mate had allowed the lads aboard because they were army volunteers. Raeburn saw no reason for the Englishman's anger; they were merely 'stupid and lazy boys'.

The River Don was slow and wide, there were flat marshlands to the south and slopes up to the steppe level on the north. Passing villages and towns they saw men and boys swimming far out into the river. The boat had to change course to avoid a dog which was swimming across the river at a point where it was about three quarters of a mile wide. There were large flocks of geese grazing on the banks. Gulls, cormorants and pelicans were also seen.

The boat entered the Sea of Azov by a shallow channel marked by posts.

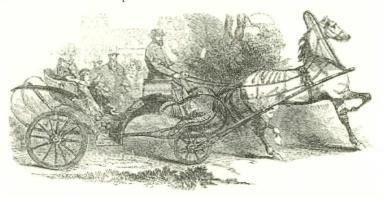
It called at Taganroe, a good port with lots of vessels in the roadstead, including nine Austrian and two German, seized by the Russians.

10. 8.14: The party was comfortable; they had open bunks without bed clothes but had American cloth-covered cushions. The food was quite good, the wine reasonable, and the beer excellent. There were no set meals but passengers ordered what they wanted at any time and it would arrive in a couple of hours.

The ship called at Eask where there was a good harbour which was being dredged and enlarged. The local industries were fishing and agriculture. There was a great deal of building going on and signs of prosperity, as in South Russia generally. Excellent shops and a few

guesthouses. Pigs rooted about on the beach and in the sea.

Raeburn observed that the girls wore bright dresses, hobble skirts and high heels, but the young men were not so 'dandified'. He saw many children but few people of mature years. The people at Polsk were said to be Tartars; the girls were 'not at all bad looking', and generally people were slim and well shaped.



The ship rolled in heavy seas in the evening and weathered a thunderstorm. She was small with a low freeboard, making only around five or six knots. Raeburn did not fancy a day in the North Sea with her.

11. 8.14: They sailed to the Straits of Kertch opposite the Eisk peninsula. There were now few people aboard. Sheep loaded at Actaro. Slow progress was made to Kertch through the night.

12. 8.14: At Kertch they transferred to the Chernypore, a Caucasus steamer of 1500 tons, which left immediately for Odessa. Accommodation was quite good although in second class. There were six persons to a cabin. Tucker got a berth beside a porthole but it was stuffy even when open.

The sea was blue and sparkling. Dolphins played round the bows of the ship, overhead flew great-backed and herring gulls and terns. Raeburn

enjoyed a 'most charming day'.

The ship was crowded, there were many officers going to Sevastopol. Several Greeks one of whom Raeburn nicknamed the 'ancient Greek'; he was very bitter against the Germans. Another 15st. Greco – Indian was dubbed the 'light horseman' because he claimed to be a member of the Behar Light Horse. Raeburn wondered 'what the horse thought'.

The dinner was excellent, three courses, two cups (glasses) of tea, sugar, bread and butter. The wine was Crimean, Caucausian and Bessarabian.

Half bottle Krasny Sagen 35 kopek = 9d (= 4p.)

13. 8.14: Feodos was a picturesque pleasure resort with first rate hotels. Richards swam in muddy inshore water. Many stone villas with tennis courts. 'The best tea cakes we have struck in Russia.'

Left for Sevastopol via the south point of the Crimea passing picturesque

stacks and rocks and a castle built on high crags.

As they neared their destination they heard gunfire coming from some warships. Suddenly, a torpedo boat fired shots in the air. The captain of the *Chernypore* threw the engines into reverse, the ship trembled, swung in a circle and stopped. The torpedo boat closed and a heated conversation ensued by means of megaphones. Their ship had sailed into a minefield narrowly escaping being blown up. They were escorted into Sevastopol's side harbour.

The officers disembarked and left in droshkies<sup>8</sup> or cars. The authorities, suspecting a spy on board, asked all second-class passengers to gather in the salon where passports were checked. However, no-one was arrested. Only those disembarking at Sevastopol were allowed ashore. The ship sailed in the evening for Odessa.

14. 8.14: A fine, breezy day. Dolphins again played round the boat's

bows. Odessa's harbour was full of shipping..

Raeburn's group booked into the Hotel d'Europe. Odessa was very busy. It was a fine town with impressive buildings, good shops and hotels and an excellent electric train service. The cafes provided very good tea and cakes. Paper boys sold war news in the streets.

They visited the British consul J. F. Roberts. Raeburn thought him 'young, fat, and devoid of energy'. His Greek clerk planned a route for them through Constanza and Greece to Italy, but by then they had committed themselves to the *Efrat*, a cargo steamer which was to sail to

Constantinople in the morning.

15. 8.14: Richards went to the ship to book cabins but was told there were no first or second ones left, and that he would need passports. After returning to the hotel to collect these he found that he could get three second-class cabins very easily. Tickets including meals and wine or vodka cost £2. 0s. 6d. each.

War news: a great battle in Northern France, two million men engaged. German ships captured in the North Sea. Turkey said to have bought two German ships<sup>9</sup> but ordered by the Allies not to fit them out. Turkey had not yet declared war, but considering it<sup>10</sup>.



Harold Raeburn's journey home - August-September 1914.

After many delays the *Efrat* sailed in the late afternoon. A large French patriotic demonstration was held as there were many French reservists on board. Speeches, toasts and *The Marseillaise*.

At dinner, Raeburn met a Scotsman who had been an engineer on an Austrian vessel seized at Tagaurog. He was accompanying 15 Arab sailors to Alexandria. All his possessions had been lost or stolen.

After an excellent meal, Raeburn attended a *cafe chantant* between decks at which French ladies sang long, sentimental songs before they fell victims to 'mal de mer' although the sea was calm.

16. 8.14: At Varma some Bulgar officers who had been 'aloof and sulky' cheered up as they disembarked, singing patriotic songs. There were German, British and Austrian vessels in the harbour.

17. 8.14: At sunrise the ship entered the heavily-mined Bosphorus. A British ship<sup>11</sup> had been sunk nearby with some loss of life. The cliffs were heavily fortified. They reached Constantinople around 9.00. Raeburn

thought it in a splendid situation, many minarets. St. Sophia looked beautiful.

They discovered that an Italian steamer was sailing to Venice. With help from the British consul Tucker was able to get first-class tickets on the *Sardegna* and they boarded around 6pm. Kites were scavenging garbage from the water.

Two warships, the *Goeben* and the *Breslau*<sup>12</sup>, having escaped from the Black Sea and the Mediterranean along with other German and Austrian boats were at anchor.

- 18. 8.14: Left for Piraeus. There were fine views of the Asian and European sides of the narrow passage as the ship entered the Sea of Marmara. They saw bare green hills, barley fields, scattered trees and villages, and several vessels including a German yacht. The ship had to stop at the east end of the Dardanelles because the Turks said it was too dark to go through the minefields. At sunset there was gunfire from the European side.
- 19. 8.14: In the morning bumboats came out selling fruit, bread and sardines for the crowd of deck passengers. The *Sardegna* was guided through the straits by a Turkish boat. There was a Franco-British fleet of warships waiting off the Dardanelles. The sea was an intense blue in the day and in the evening the sunset was most beautiful, very red. They reached Piraeus at night.
- 20. 8.14: The harbour was full of shipping. Athens could be seen in the distance through the smoky atmosphere. People came on board selling papers, cigarettes and fruit. A money-changer tried to cheat Richards until a steward threatened him.

Because the Corinth canal was said to be blocked they sailed across the Bay of Salamis and round Cape Matapan.

They stopped briefly at Patras. It was a warm and beautiful night, with a phosphorescent sea and shooting stars. Below decks it was stuffy. A German claiming to be half Dutch tried to ingratiate himself. Raeburn's attention was drawn to another passenger 'tall, good looking, very short-sighted elderly man, German, or more likely Austrian. Some high official in Turkey I'm sure or on a diplomatic mission'.

- 21. 8.14: Another beautiful day with a partial eclipse of the sun in midafternoon. They sailed close to a French battle squadron. Sunset by Corfu. A friendly Greek passenger told Raeburn that the island gave excellent shooting woodcock, hares, pig and small deer. He said that the Kaiser had a holiday estate there. Raeburn suggested that he might need it for permanent residence after the war!
- 22. 8.14: The ship arrived at Brindisi, a dirty and unattractive town. Tucker and Richards went ashore to buy papers and post letters. Thus they got their first reliable war news.
  - 23. 8.14: Heavy seas; the boat was rather top-heavy. There were not

enough lifeboats for all passengers. An elderly man, who seemed very anxious, had a row with the ship's officers 'nearly having a fit!!' Venice was sighted at midday. They went in past the Lido and anchored opposite the Grand Canal and St. Mark's Square.

After walking in the Square, Raeburn thought the Campanile 'a bit like a factory chimney but St. Marks very fine', the inside particularly. The war had affected Venice severely; there were few tourists about. Raeburn

received a letter from 'E'13 saying she would not come.

24. 8.14: Raeburn thought Venice a curious place where people did lots of walking because there were no vehicles, only slow gondolas. He reconnoitred the route to the station through the complex town. The weather was very hot, although not unpleasant. Raeburn was badly bitten by mosquitoes. He considered the town 'delightful for a visit but too cramped for a stay'.

25. 8.14: The next day they travelled to Milan by train where Tucker and Richards left to make their own way home<sup>14</sup>. He went to visit an Italian friend, Dr. Ronchetti<sup>15</sup>. Raeburn was impressed by the cathedral; he thought the dome 'the most splendid building I have ever seen in my life'. Later that day he left for Zermatt. Lake Maggiore was just as beautiful as Loch Lomond but larger. Two motor cyclists raced the train towards the trans-alpine tunnel. At Visp he was received by a supercilious booking clerk when attempting a transfer ticket to Zermatt. The weather was dull and cool.

26. 8.14: Arriving in Zermatt he found most hotels shut. There were many English and a few Americans in the town. A train had been arranged

on the 28th to evacuate the English.

Raeburn met Newmarch<sup>16</sup>, who had been in the Caucasus with Solly<sup>17</sup> and Cockin<sup>18</sup> in 1893. He also noticed a curious lady climber of uncertain age but with a childlike face, small features and a very high forehead. 'Not pure white, possibly quadroon or mulatto'. She spoke perfect English but did not associate with anyone in the hotel.

27. 8.14: A terrible day, the worst he had experienced in the mountains. Very cold with torrential rain. The day was spent writing and reading newspapers. Some English ladies were getting lectured by a pest of a German priest about the German successes, news of which was posted in all the hotels.

An Irish/British colonel was adamant that the Germans would be in Paris within days and that the British army would be cut off and annihilated. Raeburn vigorously argued the contrary. The colonel was shaken but unconvinced. Raeburn also attempted to 'put a spoke in the oily priest's wheel'.

28. 8.14: Most of the English left on the special train. Very few people about now; only a few stray Americans. The rain had turned to snow overnight transforming the town into a winter picture. Raeburn climbed

to 2000m then down by the Triff gorge. Up the Shoehorn by two easy routes, followed by a visit to a wineshop owned by a Matterhorn guide. He told Raeburn that 44 men had been called up from Zermatt and so the women were doing most of the harvest work.

29. 8.14: Raeburn went climbing with a young American called Stephen who had climbed in the Lake District. His father raced a yacht on the Clyde<sup>19</sup>. To the Taesch Alp. The weather had improved and the snow was melting. They came across a young couple, 'looked German but more likely Swiss'. The girl was clad in 'rather tight knickers'<sup>20</sup>. Although the mists had lifted there was no view of the Weisshorn.

30. 8.14: Left by a packed train on a beautiful morning. After a long wait at Lausanne, Raeburn caught a slow train to Geneva. On board he had a friendly argument with an American who maintained that the German army was invincible and that France was already as good as beaten. When Raeburn pointed out the economic difficulties faced by Germany the American replied that France was a fine orange to squeeze. Raeburn replied that the orange was not yet picked.

At Geneva, despite being told by an English clergyman and his wife that it was impossible to get tickets, Raeburn managed to get one easily. It was valid for the journey to London via Paris, Calais or Boulogne. The Germans were already holding the Calais/Boulogne railway line and were close to Paris, so Raeburn was not overly optimistic about getting home.

Raeburn found himself sharing a carriage with five schoolgirls<sup>21</sup> in the care of a 'very stout man' who knew no French. Their school mistress, who was to remain in Geneva, recruited Raeburn to look after the girls.

They had a pleasant, but slow, journey alongside the Rhone. There were soldiers all along the line and many stations had been prepared as hospitals. There were no difficulties crossing the frontier into France.

1. 9.14: At Lyons they had to wait for a connecting train from Marseilles. Although told it was full, a bribe of five francs got them a very comfortable carriage. Trains full of wounded soldiers passed incessantly – closed trucks had been converted to hold double tiers of hammocks. Many of the men appeared to have head wounds.

Paris had not yet been attacked but there were many refugees in the city. Raeburn managed to get two rooms for the girls and one for himself and Mr Light<sup>22</sup>. After breakfast, Raeburn went to the Gare St. Lazare to see if it was possible to get out of Paris. The Germans were reportedly near Pointoise but, if the line was clear, a train would leave for Dieppe the next morning. Outside the British Consulate Raeburn saw several exhausted-looking British soldiers. There was a lot of activity at the Ministry of the Interior. At first he thought it was the French Government leaving Paris for Bordeaux, but later discovered it was preparation for the Battle of the Marne, which would stop the German advance on Paris<sup>23</sup>.

While walking near the Opera one of the girls remarked that it would be

a pity if the Germans were to bomb such a beautiful building. Prophetic words, because shortly afterwards there was a loud explosion. Looking up they saw a German Taube aeroplane. Almost immediately it dropped another bomb. Soldiers rushed out of cafes and started shooting at it. However, it flew off unscathed to the north-east. Raeburn took the girls to see the damage.

The second bomb had fallen in the Rue Joubert, a narrow business street. Although there was lots of fallen plaster and broken glass no-one had been hurt. People seemed unafraid and not even angry. Raeburn thought it an act of 'mean blackguardism' and the bombing of non-combatants as futile as the dropping of ridiculous propaganda leaflets.

Although Paris was blacked out in the evening, they had a pleasant

walk by the Champs Elysees.

2. 9.14: The party went in taxis to the station where they found two enormous trains already nearly full. There was no room for a party of seven so they commandeered an empty guard's van. It had seats and sliding doors so it served as an observation car.

It was very much a stop/start journey particularly around Pointoise. They saw large numbers of soldiers retreating to the south-west. The railway line was strongly defended. Troops were resting and bathing in streams at the track side. The girls tried to give presents to them but officers were reluctant to allow the men to approach the train.

They embarked on a crowded steamer at Dieppe and had a 'splendid passage' on a calm sea. At sunset they passed part of the British fleet steaming through the channel. On arrival at Folkestone, passengers, all of whom had filled in landing cards, were allowed ashore without inspection so any spies would have easily passed through. There were so many people it would have taken days to examine them all. Raeburn was not even asked for his passport.

'Mr Light' and the girls were to stay overnight at the port so Raeburn travelled on to London on his own. He found the city full of French

refugees.

3.9.14: A meeting with Tucker. He and Richards had got back to London in three days. London was crowded; recruiting was going on everywhere. Business appeared much as usual although there had been a panic during the first week of the war.

4. 9.14: Having seen Richards, Raeburn caught the 11.15 train to Edinburgh.

5. 9.14: Edinburgh. Cold, wet and miserable. City as normal except for

large numbers of soldiers.

Once home, Raeburn, at the age of 49, volunteered for the Royal Flying Corps. He was rejected on grounds of age. He then worked 15 -16 hour shifts in an aircraft factory during the war. His health was badly affected by overwork.

#### The British Caucasus Expedition 1914.

Harold Raeburn 1865-1926. Scottish mountaineer, brewer. Joined SMC in 1896 proposed by W. Douglas and W. Naismith. Vice-president 1909-11: because of his modesty declined election as President. Climbed in Scotland, Alps, Norway, Dolomites, Caucasus, Himalaya, climbing leader Everest reconnaissance expedition 1921. Reached 22,000ft. despite two months' illness. Member Alpine Club (1904) and honorary member of Fell and Rock Climbing Club. 'Leading Scottish mountaineer with a reputation from the Alps to Norway and the Caucasus,' MacRobert, p.59 A Century of Scottish Mountaineering. Ed. Brooker. SMT 1988.

'Raeburn...ranked with Collie as the two best of Scotland's mountaineers at home and abroad,' p.209 *The Scottish Highlands*. Murray. SMT 1976. Chapter three in *The Edge* by McNeish and Else is devoted to Harold Raeburn

Henry Scott Tucker. Died 1944. Solicitor. Admitted to Alpine Club 1910. Proposed by H. E. Newton and W. P. Haskett Smith. Climbed in Devon, Cornwall, the Lake District and the Highlands. First traverse of the Rateau, and Meije traverse 1906. Many other Alpine routes.

R. C. Richards. Raeburn describes Richards as being a member of the Climber's Club but may have been mistaken. Their club archivist can find no record of him. He was not a member of either the Alpine Club or the Scottish Mountaineering Club. Possibly a member of the Swiss Alpine Club. No other information available.

Rembart Martinson (19), a Russian cadet of Danish descent whom Raeburn had met and climbed with in 1913. *Aide de camp* to the 1914 expedition dealing with interpreting, hiring porters and horses.

Alexander Mirandoff (28), expedition cook. Raeburn describes him as being colourless and timid. However, he could make 'a neat and reasonable cooking fire as opposed to a conflagration'. Married, army reservist, received call up papers 6. 8.14.

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#### Notes and references:

- 1. Raeburn was a keen ornithologist.
- 2. A light, low, four-wheeled vehicle. Horse drawn.
- 3. Raeburn's emphasis.
- 4. Presumably on the outward journey.
- 5. This was typical of widespread anti-German feeling from the beginning of the war. Scotland was not exempt from this. In May, 1915, there were anti-German riots in Greenock, Annan, Dumfries, Perth, Alloa and Leith.
- 6. On Tuesday, December 1, 1914, Raeburn gave a talk to SMC members about the expedition. The baggage had not yet arrived home so he had only a few photographs to show.
- 7. It is this kind of detail that brings Raeburn's diaries to life.
- 8. A four-wheeled open cart.
- 9. The Goeben and the Breslau. This was something of a *cause celebre* during the first few weeks of the war. Were the ships German or Turkish, were they to be crewed by Turks or Germans?
- 10. Russia declared war on Turkey (the Ottoman Empire) on 1. 11.14. See note 12 below. (Editor's Note: consistent with other signs of chronic incompetence in matters foreign shown by Great Britain at this time was the tale of two dreadnoughts. In August, 1914, a Turkish naval delegation arrived in Britain to take possession of these two warships. They had already been paid for, partly using money raised by public subscription. The day before the handover however, the War Office ordered their requisition, without compensation. Public opinion in Turkey, which had been leaning towards a pact with the Allies, swung in favour of Germany. The rest, including the violent and, for the Allies, disastrous campaign in the Dardenelles is, as they say, history.) 11. The Craigforth, 2900 tons, registered in Leith.
- 12. On 27. 10. 14, the *Goeben* and the *Breslau* re-entered the Black Sea accompanied by Turkish warships. They shelled Russian ports and sank two Russian ships.
- 13. Raeburn's sister Edith?
- 14. Raeburn seemed in no hurry to get home. Perhaps because the expedition had been cut short and possibly, like many others, he thought the war would be over quickly.
- 15. He had sent Raeburn photographs and information on M. Adai and N. Tsaya. Ronchetti lost part of his foot through frostbite on Adai but was still able to climb.
- 16. Francis Wells Newmarch 1853-1918. In Caucasus in 1893, 94, 95.
- 17. Godfrey Allan Solly 1858-1942. In Caucasus 1893, 94. Advocate of guideless climbing. Member of SMC, attended Easter meet at Inveroran in 1894. Climbed in Glen Coe and on Ben Nevis with Collie and Collier.
- 18. John Garforth Cockin 1846-1900. In Caucasus 1888, 90, 93, 96. Early explorer in Caucasus. Killed on solo descent of Weisshorn.
- 19. Yachting was another of Raeburn's interests. He became a member of the Royal Forth Yacht Club in 1900.
- 20. Knickerbockers, trousers favoured by lady climbers. Sometimes worn under the usual long skirts which were removed at the foot of the route and put on again on the descent. See photograph by Ruth Raeburn opposite p.127 in *Mountaineering Art*.
- 21. An English girl called Johnson, an unnamed Scottish girl of around 19, three 'Kentish maids' called Reader aged between 16 and 10.
- 22. Was this his real name or another example of Raeburn's sense of humour? See the 'light horseman' above.
- 23. The French government left for Bordeaux on 2. 9.14.

### THE CROFTER AND THE GURKHA

By Ian R. Mitchell

Scene: A tent in Coire Lagan, Skye, summer 1899.

(Two men are finishing off a meal, among cooking utensils, climbing equipment etc. One man is dressed as a Gurkha soldier of the Indian Army, the other – who speaks first – is a bearded Highlander.)

**John Mackenzie:** You have eaten little for a man who yesterday did the run to the summit of Sgurr Mhairi and back, and that in less time than we have been sitting at meat. Take some more of the *stapag*, it is an excellent mixture of oatmeal and cream, and very sustaining.

**Harkabir Thapa:** I follow the habits of my countrymen, who eat little so as not to burden the body. And I did not find the run excessively tiring, especially as I was completing it for second time, so as to satisfy the doubts of the Macleod sahib. I was thus familiar with the ground.

**John Mackenzie:** And only a glass of water to drink? I myself am liking a good dram of what we call the water of life, *uisghe-beatha* in our language, as well as the same good meal the gentlemen in the next tent are eating, after a hard day on the mountains.

**Harkabir Thapa:** We do not generally touch spirits, for the same reason that we eat in moderation, feeling such abstinence beneficial to the body. I thank you for your most generous offer, but I will decline your spirit and keep to the water, which is here of great purity.

You speak of your language; is it not the same as that of Major Bruce and the Professor *sahib?* 

John Mackenzie: Professor Collie does not have the Gaelic, my language, and so I must converse with him in the English, which I have, though few on the island have it. I guide the tourists from the hotel onto the Cuillin, and for that it is necessary that I can speak with them. This provides me with my income, for the land which I have brings in little. It belongs to Macleod, the man who doubted your run, causing you to repeat it. Now things are a little better on the island, since Macleod and the other lairds lost the power to evict us.

Harkabir Thapa: I see the land here is poor, and the people are poor. But they are not so poor as in my homeland, where most dress in rags like your beggars. My mountains are many times higher than on your island, but unless men learn to fly there will never be work for guides there. The only way people have to escape hardship is to join the Indian Army. Our pay is sent home to our families to save them from starvation.

And Major Bruce has been kind to me, bringing me to climb the highest mountain in Europe, and then to Skye with the Professor. Many of the *sahibs* are not so kind, and unlike your *sahib*, he has made an effort to learn my language and that of the other tribes. The kindest *sahib* I ever met was the *sahib* Mummery, who dies on the mountain of Nanga Parbat.

**John Mackenzie:** The Professor is not my *sahib* as you call the Major. I am a free man, and I guide whom I please...I love being on the mountains, and would go on my own if Professor Collie was not there. As a boy I climbed many of the Cuillin peaks for my amusement. *Sgurr a' Ghreadaidh*, which lies not far from here, I climbed as a boy of ten.

**Harkabir Thapa:** You call the Professor 'Sir', as I answer the Major, but the Professor calls you by your name, as the Major does with me. Likewise you carry the equipment, as I do. And we are both eating here in the mess tent, while the *sahibs* eat with the other *sahibs*.

John Mackenzie: On the mountains we are equal. We discuss what we are to climb, and sometimes I lead, and sometimes he does. But he cannot introduce me to his friends, as they are not of my kind...I would like that he would wish me to come with him on some of his trips abroad, to Scotland, or to the English hills, or to Norway, where he hopes to go and where he tells me it is just like Skye. But he has not done so and I do not like to ask. I have never left Skye.

Harbakir Thapa: The mountain we climbed today...

**John Mackenzie:** *Sgurr Alasdair* it was called, and that was a new way to the summit of the mountain, by a route which the Professor and myself have not done before. The mountain is named after the sheriff, the man Nicolson who climbed it first, about twenty years ago.

**Harkabir Thapa:** That was a mighty projection on the mountain that the sahibs photographed. It is still possible to see the great shadow it is casting. What will you call it?

**John Mackenzie:** I think I will name it *A' Cioch*, which in my language is meaning a woman's breast.

**Harkabir Thapa:** I am not certain that such is a fitting name for a rock. However, I can see the resemblance in question.

I prefer to sleep here, in this tent in the mountains, where we can watch the sun set and rise again in the morning, rather than on the floor of the Major sahib's room in the hotel, in case he needs me to fetch some water or other task in the night. But you do not stay with the Professor at the hotel?

**John Mackenzie:** I walk three miles back to the *clachan* of Sconser where I spend the night in my own house. I rise early in the morning to be back for the gentlemen, or the *sahibs* as you call them. We may not be their equals, but they would be hard put to manage without us. Perhaps one day the guide will be more of the master than the servant.

**Harkabir Thapa:** Perhaps. And perhaps one day men can fly to my mountains and my people will not need to join the *sahibs*' Army. A man is allowed to dream. Good night. How do you say that in your language?

John Mackenzie: *Oidche Mhath.* Harkabir Thapa: Oy Kaa Maa.

**John Mackenzie:** Now you know more Gaelic than the Professor! Good night.

# TWO CENTURIES OF SCOTTISH MOUNTAIN TABLES – THE REVOLUTIONARY CONNECTION

#### By Peter Drummond

NEARLY a decade ago, 1991 saw the SMCJ publication centenary of Hugh Munro's Tables. They were designed by a hill-walker for hill-walkers (though he would not have recognised this term), and were surely the first list designed for that specific leisure purpose — mountaineering for its own sake was a late 19th century phenomenon. But the compilation of lists, classifying and sometimes ranking objects, is a feature of Western civilisation going back certainly to the 18th century, when the great Swedish scientist, Linneaus, was its best-known practitioner. It is not surprising then to find lists of Scottish hills going back to the century before Sir Hugh's.

Date	Author	Source	No. Hills	No. 3000ft.+
1789	Ainslie	Мар	66	15
1803	Chalmers	Gazeteer	c.150	12
1817	Playfair	Gazeteer	126	22
1823	Rhind	Guidebook	214	28
1832	Thomson	Pictorial diagram	28	15

Researching historical sources is like exploring a river – one goes in the opposite direction to the flow of time, and may have to guess at confluences which is the tributary, which the mainstream. In my journey I had a head start, for I was guided straight to one list which appeared in 1825, six decades earlier than those included in the Hall and Baddeley Guides 1 of the 1880s. Ian Mitchell's book Scotland's Mountains before the Mountaineers 2 throws a brief spotlight on an annual publication called simply The Scottish Tourist by W. Rhind, the 1825 edition. With no particular context, it contains a couple of pages entitled Altitude in feet of Mountains in Scotland above the level of the sea (pp398-9), listing 213 eminences alphabetically. These ranged from Bennevis at 4375 feet to Annan Hill at 256 feet – the criteria for 'mountain' had clearly yet to be defined. Ian directed me to the Mitchell Library where he had unearthed the book in question; the volume brought out to me was, however, the 1823 edition, thus taking me two years farther back into the mists of time. It had the title Alphabetical List of the Mountains in Scotland, was spread over eight small pages (pp31-38) and had several heights different from

the 1825 edition and five different mountains: Firmouth and Scroneach, both of Aberdeenshire, went out in the 1825 edition, while Galla Hill and Argyle Stone came in. It is clear that the habit of revising mountain lists long predates the SMC's oft-berated revisions of recent years.

Shifting briefly downstream, less than a decade later John Thomson's atlas of 1831 opened with two pages devoted to watercolour, *Comparative Views*; one of Scottish rivers, the other of the *Heights of the Principal Mountains of Scotland*. The latter, reprinted, is now available commercially from outdoor shops, and apart from the feat of making all Scottish hills resemble the jagged peaks of the Cuillin, is also remarkable for arranging its featured 29 hills (28 if we discount 'Glencoe') in order on a height axis at the side, a progression from Rhind's alphabetical order.

Moving upstream again, I tried to find what sources Rhind may have filled his buckets from. One possible tributary I spent several weeks wading up were the many volumes of the first Statistical Account of the 1790s,3 in which parish ministers described their flock and its lands, sometimes including the hills. Some ministers 'lifted up their eyes to the hills', while others were blind to them, but they present a fascinating picture of contemporary views of high ground. 'Knockdolian rises in a conical shape...and is of singular service as a landmark to vessels in the Firth of Clyde', and 'Beinmore Assynt's sides are covered in grass and daisies – in some places it is very rocky but it affords excellent pasture for sheep', to quote but two. But I digress up this tributary...another article will chart its delights. For even if Rhind had read all these volumes, it would have accounted for barely a third of his tabled heights.

Both the Mitchell Library in Glasgow and the National Library's Map Rooms in Edinburgh contain many old maps and gazetteers. Most of the maps do show hills, often marked with hachures, with names or spellings that differ from those we now use: for example, Suilven appears as Sugar Loaf, Criffel as Crawfell or the Long Fell, and Ben Wyvis as Benuaish. But in these early 19th century maps, heights were virtually never marked on the map. Lists did appear, however, in gazetteers or in tables in corners of maps. Although my order of discovering these was not sequential to their date of publication, this little expedition log will continue the preceding upstream pattern.

In 1817, shortly before his death, Principal James Playfair of St. Andrews University published a geography of Scotland <sup>4</sup> that has, tucked away in his appendix 8, a *Table of Heights of Mountains* listing 126 peaks in alphabetical order within shires: while some might snort at the 117ft. 'mountain' that he lists for the Piazzo at [Holyrood] Abbey, most of his list would be in modern baggers' sights. Nearly half of his list appears in Rhind's Table, so it clearly had contemporary authority too. As with Rhind too, more than two-thirds of Playfair's listed hills are south of the Highland

boundary fault, and mountainous Inverness-shire has but four representatives (Ben-nevis, Mealfourvonie, Scarsough and Scurdonuil).

The next significant point upstream is in the opening years of the century. Chalmers' gazetteer <sup>5</sup>, on surprisingly modern lines, focuses mainly on settlements, but includes other features – including about 150 hills or mountains. In its initial summary, he incorporates a list of the dozen highest (known) peaks, descending from Bennevis at 4370ft. and Cairngorm at 4030ft. down to two at exactly 3000ft. – Benivenow (Ben Venue) and Benchochan (in Aberfoyle parish – perhaps Beinn a'Chroin at 3104ft.). A mere 12 Munros indeed – but while a small step for a modern bagger, it was a big step towards ranking by height.

Finally, we come to the Well of Dee of this particular search. It appears to lie in the corner of a map by John Ainslie, a Jedburgh man born in the year that Prince Charles Edward Stuart raised his standard of rebellion at Glenfinnan, who became a land surveyor (and bookseller) in Edinburgh. In 1789, when Frenchmen other than Charles were engaging more successfully in revolution, Ainslie published a map of Scotland in nine sheets on a scale of four miles to the inch: it must have sold well, because revised editions continued until 1840. The space at the corners of the maps. reflecting the unnameable sea, where modern maps might carry a key or legend, were filled with etchings of rural life or more prosaic but useful data. And on the left, moored as it were in the Atlantic, is a table Heights of the Most Remarkable Hills: this earliest Scottish hill list contains 66 separate eminences in apparently random order, from the inevitable Bennevis at 4370ft. down to Dunse Law at 630ft.: 15 of his peaks are over 3000ft., and all but five over 1000ft. Table 2 (overleaf) also appends a dozen peaks in England, nine over 3000ft. – surely the first table of furths. Some peaks on his list may need a little head-scratching. Kirk Yetton in Edinburgh is Caerketton, Bendochie is Bennachie, Noath is the Tap o' Noth, and the Scarry Hills is Scaraben; otherwise most of the names will be familiar to today's walkers, more than 210 years on. The table must have been well-known in its day, for virtually all its chosen peaks were incorporated into Rhind's 1820s annual. However, sic transit gloria, and Ainslie's revolutionary map was forgotten. Until now.

#### References and notes:

- 1. See references in SMCJ 1998, Vol. 36, pp704-5, to these two annual publications for sporting tourists of the shooting kind.
- 2. Published 1999, Luath Press, Edinburgh reference on page 47.
- 3. The Statistical Accounts of Scotland in 21 volumes, edited by Sir John Sinclair, were published in the 1790s. Sir John produced a summary volume with lists of population and the like, but nowhere does he list mountains in one table.
- 4. James Playfair, *A Geographical and Statistical Description of Scotland*, 1817 reference on pp341-4.
- 5. W. Chalmers The Gazetteer of Scotland, Dundee 1803.

Table 2. Based on Ainslie's 1789 Heights of the Most Remarkable Hills From the Level of the Sea.

Hill	Shire	Height in feet
Arthurseat	Edinburgh	814
Carnethy	Lamburgh "	1700
Kirk Yetton	44	1555
North Berwich Law	Haddington	940
Dunse Law	Berwick	630
Largo Law	Fife	1010
East Lommond		1260
West Lommond	66	1280
Dunnion	Roxburgh	1031
Minto Hills	Kozburgii "	858
Rubers Law	44	1419
Eildon Hills	44	1330
Carterfell	44	1602
Wisp	44	1830
Chiviot	Northumberland	2682
Peat Law	Selkirk	1557
Three Brethern	SCIRITE "	1760
Minchmoor		1877
Hangingshaw Law		1780
Blackhouse Heights	44	2370
Ettrick Pen		2200
Windlestraw Law		2295
Ben Lomond	Stirling	3262
Kingseat	Perth	1196
Farragon		2584
Ben Lawers	44	4015
Benmore	66	3903
Schiehallion	46	3564
Bengloe	66	3724
Benderig	44	3550
Benchonzie	66	2922
Benvorlick	44	3300
Benledi	66	3009
Benclach	66	2420
Hartfell	Dumfries	2582
Scrifield	Kirkcudbright	2044
Lead Hills	Lanark	1564
Tinto	Lana K	2368
" by Rev. Ferguson		2230
Paps of Jura	Isle of Jura	2476
Scarsough	Inverness	3412
Bennivis	"	4370
Cairngouram		4060
Mealfourvounny		3060
Kermanearn	Kincardine	1020
Kermanearn	Killeardille	1020

Bowfell

Hill	Shire	Height in feet
Kerloch	Kincardine	1890
Klochnabane	66	2370
Mountbattock	46	3465
Bendochie	Aberdeen	1420
Bin Hill	"	1045
Beneagan	"	1582
Noath	44	1830
Buck of Cabrach	44	2377
Coryhabbie	"	2558
Benrinnes	"	2747
Benwyves	Ross	3720
Pap of Caithness	44	1929
Ord of Caithness	66	1250
Scarry Hills		1876
Mistylaw	Renfrew	1240
Burhullion	Wigton	814
Fell of Mochrum		1020
Knock of Luce		1014
Larg		1758
Cairnsmoor	Kirkcudbright	1728
Knock Dolton	Ayr	930
Cairntable	ů.	1650
Heights of	of some of the Most Remarkable Hills	s in England
Skiddaw	Cumberland	3270
Grasmine		3141
Saddle Back	"	3048
Carrock	66	2265
Grisdale Pike	"	2904
Ingleborough	York	3700
Wharnside		3840
Pindle Hill	Lancashire	2640
Snowdon	Wales	3470
Helvellin	Westmorland	3324
Crossfell	44	3300

3440

# MUNRO-BAGGING WITH A COMPUTER...? NAISMITH'S RULE AND THE LONG WALK IN

# By Steve Carver and Steffen Fritz

It is more than 100 years since W. W. Naismith first published his walker's rule in the pages of this Journal. In the 1892 edition, he describes a solo round trip from Crianlarich over Cruach Ardrain, Stobinian and Ben More to Luib, which he carried out on May 2, 1892. In his description Naismith concludes:

'Distance, 10 miles; total climb, 6300ft.; time, six-and-a-half hours (including short halts). This tallies exactly with a simple formula, that may be found useful in estimating what time men in fair condition should allow for easy expeditions, namely, an hour for every three miles on the map, with an additional hour for every 2000ft. of ascent.'

In metric terms, this may be translated into a speed of five kilometres per hour on level ground, with half-an-hour being added for every 300m

of ascent.

Several refinements have been made to Naismith's Rule since 1892. These range from Tranter's Correction that takes fitness, fatigue, load carried, ground conditions and prevailing weather into account, to the (American) Backpacker's Rule that assumes Naismith to be an optimist and so adds 50%! Aitken makes simple refinements according to ground conditions by assuming that while five kilometres per hour can be maintained on paths, tracks and roads, only four kilometres per hour can be made on all other terrain <sup>2</sup>. Langmuir <sup>3</sup> makes the following further refinements:

'Naismith's Rule of five kilometres per hour plus half-an-hour for every 300m of ascent; minus 10 minutes for every 300m descent for slopes between 5° and 12°; plus 10 minutes for every 300m descent for slopes greater than 12°.'

It is thought that the rule is generally applicable for reasonably fit mountaineers negotiating typical terrain under typical weather conditions – which from experience of Scotland often means hard going in mist and rain.

Apart from these corrections, little else has changed in the way Naismith's Rule is actually used. Current methods of application rely heavily on guesswork, local knowledge and manual calculation. This article describes the computerisation of Naismith's Rule for accurately mapping remoteness in mountainous terrain.

# Mapping remoteness using Naismith's Rule.

Recent research into wild land in Scotland by the authors has required that we develop a method of drawing maps showing the relative remoteness of the Scottish Highlands. But what do we mean exactly by 'remoteness'?

# Defining remote - or just how long is 'the long walk in'?

One of the defining characteristics of many Scottish mountains is their remoteness, but this is neither easy to measure or describe in general terms. Yet it is an essential element of the mountain experience since the physical nature and geographical location of mountain landscapes often instils a deep feeling of remoteness as distinct from the close, crowded comfort of 'civilised' urbanity. Indeed, this is one of the reasons why many of us go to the mountains in the first place – to get away.

Remoteness may be defined geographically as the distance of one point in the landscape from another measured 'as the crow flies'. However, this makes the assumption that the difficulties encountered in traversing the landscape on foot are the same in all directions. This is clearly not true, particularly in mountainous areas. Another, more useful, definition of remoteness therefore, is the time taken to travel between the starting point (usually a road or car park) and the destination (such as a Munro). In other words, just how long is 'the long walk in'? You would be correct in assuming at this juncture that the answer to mapping remoteness lies in the application of Naismith's Rule; which, of course, it does, or at least by our estimation.

Using travel time as a measure of remoteness in mountain areas requires that a number of geographical factors other than straight-line distance be considered. These include the various cost or push (benefit) factors that not only influence the ease of travel in a particular direction, but also the route chosen. 'Cost' factors have the effect of slowing down walking times in that some cost beyond the effect of distance covered is applied opposite to the direction of travel. Typical cost factors are slope (when walking uphill), headwinds, thick vegetation and difficult ground conditions. 'Push' factors have the effect of speeding up walking times in that some additional force is applied in the direction of travel. Typical examples are slope (when walking down gentle slopes) and tailwinds. It should be noted that certain cost/push factors, especially slope and wind direction, are strongly dependent on direction of travel; both of which are accounted for in Naismith's Rule with Tranter's Correction.

A third, and final, definition of remoteness is that of perceived remoteness. The fitness and skill of the mountaineer can greatly influence their perceived remoteness having reached a particular destination. The fitter the individual, the greater the distance that can be covered in a certain time. The greater their skills of climbing and navigation, the greater the distance that can be covered/height gained, especially on technically-difficult terrain. The physical effects of some variables such as slope, ground cover and prevailing weather conditions will have a lesser effect in fit and skilled individuals.

Nonetheless, geography remains an important factor governing fatigue, as a mountaineer's speed declines with time and distance covered. Other

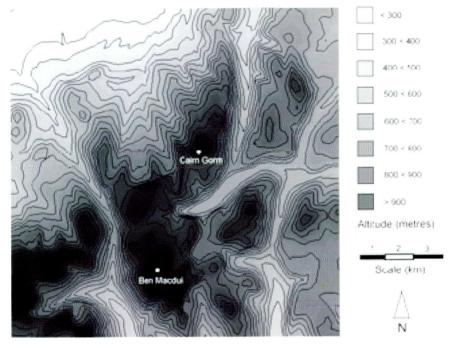


Fig. 1 – Digital elevation model (DEM) of the Central Cairngorms.

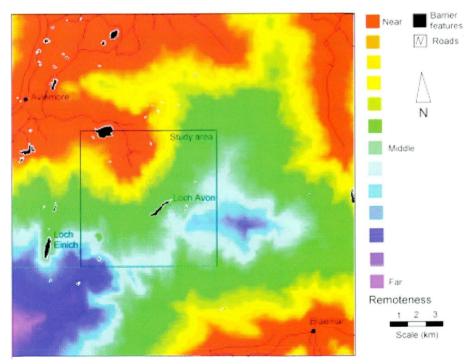


Fig. 2 – Remoteness map of the Central Cairngorms.

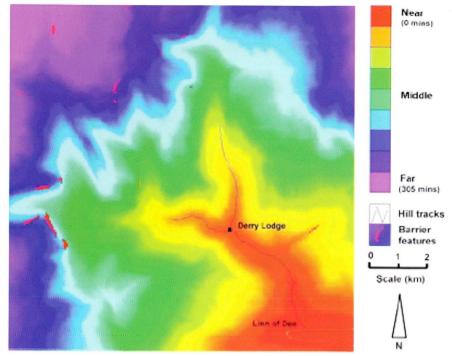


Fig. 3a - Cairngorms with mountain bikes.

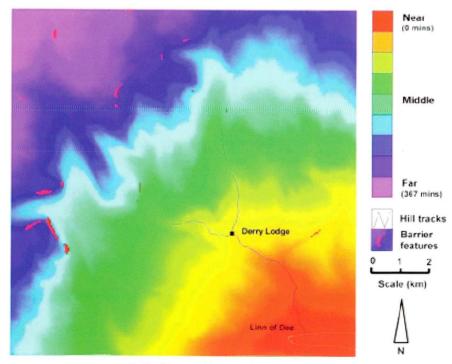


Fig. 3b - Cairngorms without mountain bikes.

variables that might have a detrimental effect on perceived remoteness are the presence of human artefacts in the landscape such as bothies and hunting lodges, hydro-electric schemes, pylons, walls, fences, plantation forests, livestock, old crofts/shielings, hill tracks and ski lifts (or dare we say funiculars?). These can significantly detract from the feeling of remoteness, especially when located deep within roadless areas. On this note, another variable that may have a significant effect in influencing the perception of remoteness is visibility. If it is not possible to see a nearby dam or hill track because of an intervening mountain or prevailing weather conditions, then the feeling of remoteness may be enhanced.

While perceived remoteness is important for wider studies of landscape character, this article focuses the idea of 'the long walk in' as a definition of physical remoteness based purely on the time taken to walk from the nearest road, taking the physical characteristics of the landscape into account.

Back to mapping remoteness.

Being a mountaineer (of sorts) Naismith's Rule is familiar, but it took a map from Bob Aitken's PhD thesis to prompt the question as to whether it would be possible to map walking times, and hence remoteness, using a computerised version of Naismith's Rule. In his thesis, Aitken uses time taken to walk from the nearest road as a proxy for wildness, and he does this by manually drawing rough walking time contours onto Ordnance Survey maps using local knowledge and Naismith's Rule as a guide. It was decided to automate this rather laborious and time-consuming procedure using computer mapping software known as Geographical Information Systems (GIS)<sup>4</sup>.

The method of mapping Naismith's Rule described here uses Dijkstra's shortest path algorithm (a technique borrowed from mathematicians and re-programmed into the GIS) to calculate the quickest route from starting point to destination taking terrain and other variables into account. This works by estimating the relative difficulty of all possible routes between the start and end points of the proposed walk and choosing the quickest 5. The variables that determine the difficulty of the walk and hence the speed at which a mountaineer can complete the route include:

- Terrain variables such as how steep the slope is and which direction it is facing.
- Presence of tracks and paths as these often constitute the route of least resistance.
- Conditions under foot such as thickness of vegetation and how rough, loose, rocky or boggy the ground is.
- Prevailing weather conditions, including wind speed, wind direction, visibility and temperature.
- Barrier features that may block normal progress such as lochs, crags and burns that are too deep to be forded.

 Hydrological conditions, including changes in stream levels and depth of snow cover.

Because it is not known which route a walker will take, the method can only consider the quickest possible path as determined by the shortest path algorithm. However, using this approach it is possible to map the remoteness of any mountain area using Naismith's Rule and appropriate digital datasets. The key datasets required are a digital elevation model (DEM) <sup>6</sup> and a map of roads, hill tracks and footpaths. Other datasets providing information on water features and ground cover are also useful in making relevant corrections and allowing for the effects of barrier features blocking normal progress.

### Back to the future...from 1892 to 1999.

In June, 1999, the authors re-traced much of Naismith's 1892 solo trip based on his description in the SMC Journal. The route was made circular by dropping from Bealach-eadar-dha Beinn into Benmore Glen and thence along the A85 back to Crianlarich. The exact route was logged using a pair of Global Positioning Satellite (GPS) receivers and a record of the height gained and lost kept on a digital altimeter. The statistics for the trip are as follows:

Horizontal distance covered: 18.6 kilometres – 11.6 miles.

Total height gain: 1615m – 5328ft. Time taken: 6 hours 43 minutes.

Number of snack/rest stops: 7, totalling 36 minutes

Weather: dry, overcast, light wind, cloud-base approx. 3000ft.

This tallies reasonably well with the statistics for Naismith's trip, even allowing for the uncertainty surrounding his exact route and changes made to allow us to return to our car. If nothing else, it proves we could just about have kept up with him on the hills!

The route taken in 1999 was transferred from the GPS to the GIS and the computerised version of Naismith's Rule used to predict the route and the total time taken for the whole trip allowing for the terrain negotiated.

The route predicted by the computer is based on linking the summits and other points visited by Naismith in 1892 as mentioned in his article. This is compared to the GPS log of the route taken in 1999 and shown to be quite similar. The predicted time was compared to the actual recorded time and shown to be about 60 minutes longer. In this case the computer over-estimates the time taken, partly as a result of differences in actual and predicted route and our inclusion of Langmuir's corrections for steep downhill sections, and partly, we confess, from the authors' desire to put in a quick time. This notwithstanding, both the actual and predicted times tally remarkably well with basic Naismith calculations based on distance covered and height gained/lost.

Mapping remoteness in the Cairngorms.

It is expected that most readers of the Journal are familiar with the Cairngorms, so they do not need any further description other than to say that the central parts of the massif, being several kilometres from the nearest road or track, are certainly remote by UK standards. In recent years, concerns have been expressed over the attrition of the remoteness of the area by, for example, the development of new access tracks <sup>7</sup> and increasing use of mountain bikes. In addition, concern has been voiced over expansion of skiing facilities (most notably plans for a new funicular at Coire Cas) and erosion of popular footpaths caused by the large numbers of visitors attracted to the area.

In order to plan the management of the Cairngorms effectively it is important to have information on the relative remoteness of different parts of the area. This information can be used in conjunction with other datasets to identify necessary programmes of action. Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH) is the principal organisation responsible for the management of the natural landscape of Scotland. SNH are using the techniques of remoteness mapping described here to pursue a number of aims and objectives in the management of the Cairngorm Mountains <sup>8</sup> including planning visitor surveys, footpath management, access management, identifying areas for removal of human artefacts and development of wild land policy.

Remoteness maps of the central Cairngorms are shown here as an example of the use of the computerised version of Naismith's Rule described above. Figure 1 shows a DEM of the central Cairngorms overlaid with roads, rivers and lochs. Figure 2 shows the relative remoteness of a wider area of the central Cairngorms based on access from metalled public roads and with the addition of barrier features (lochs and steep ground greater than 45°). Here Naismith's Rule is modified to show walking speeds of 5 km/h on paths and tracks and a maximum of 3.33 km/h in all other areas to take rougher ground conditions into account.

Predicting the effect of restrictions on mountain bikes.

Mar Lodge estate is owned by the National Trust for Scotland (NTS) and managed under agreement with SNH. Recreation management is a contentious issue at the present time because of efforts by NTS to restrict the use of mountain bikes on the hill track from Linn of Dee to Derry Lodge and beyond. The two maps in Figure 3 show how proposed restrictions on the use of mountain bikes on hill tracks will affect remoteness when travelling into the central Cairngorms from the Linn of Dee. Figure 3(a) shows the remoteness map for the area under current conditions where the use of mountain bikes on the Linn of Dee to Derry Lodge hill track is commonplace. Here Naismith's Rule has been modified by assuming that a speed of 15 km/h is attainable along this track using a mountain bike. Figure 3(b) shows the alternative remoteness map for the

same area under conditions where the use of mountain bikes is prohibited. Here, all public access is on foot from the Linn of Dee at reduced speeds of only 5 km/hour along the track and other footpaths and 3.33 km/hour in other areas. Comparing the two maps in Figure 3 shows how the proposed access restrictions by the NTS will affect the relative remoteness of this part of the Cairngorms and reinforce the principle of the 'long walk in'. In real terms, the difference between the remotest part of the area represented in Figures 3(a) and 3(b) is in the order of 60 minutes.

# Concluding remarks.

We hope to have shown how Naismith's Rule can be computerised in order to draw maps of remoteness for mountain areas. Now, we don't suppose for even a minute that everyone will soon be carrying PCs into the hills and using computer-generated maps of Naismith's Rule to help plan their days out or just how long it will take to bag Beinn Fhionnlaidh. On the other hand, we do see a role for this work in helping SNH and others look after our hills and mountains. Using techniques of computer mapping we can show how mountain bike access and other developments can significantly shorten the length of the 'long walk in'. We hope to be able to provide this kind of information to SNH when implementing the proposed Scottish National Parks Act. Being able to quantify and map impacts on the essential character of the hills is clearly an advantage when putting a case for or against a particular development at a Public Inquiry. be it for a ski lift or a national park. In the same way, using such techniques to help develop a national wild land policy for Scotland's mountains could help protect the very qualities of the landscape; its remoteness and challenge, that we hold so dear. Wonder what auld Naismith would think?

#### References and notes:

- 1. Naismith, W. W. 1892. in *The Scottish Mountaineering Club Journal*, II, 136.
- Aitken, R. 1977. Wilderness areas in Scotland. Unpublished PhD thesis, Aberdeen University.
- 3. Langmuir, E. 1984. *Mountaincraft and leadership*. The Scottish Sports Council/MLTB. Cordee, Leicester.
- 4. GIS are variously defined as combined computer software, hardware and database systems designed for the input, storage, retrieval, manipulation, transformation, analysis and output of geographical data. They are computer mapping systems that have the ability to perform complex and detailed analysis on any data with a geographical co-ordinate reference, such as an OS grid-reference. GIS are used by all the organisations that need to handle and analyse geographical data in digital form. These range from the utilities (water, gas, electricity and telephone companies) and the emergency services, to local government and the military. See Heywood *et al.* (1998) for further details on GIS.
- 5. Sedgewick, R. 1984. Algorithms. Reading, Addison-Wesley.
- 6. A DEM is a digital map of height (elevation or altitude) represented in a GIS as a regularly or irregularly spaced set of point height values.
- 7. Watson, A. 1984. A survey of vehicular hill tracks in north east Scotland for land use planning. In *Journal of Environmental Management*. 18, 345-353.
- 8. Carver, S., Fritz, S., Ferguson, M. and Bishop, S. 1999. *Mapping remote land in the Cairngorms using GIS and computer models.* SNH Report, Commissioned Research Programme, Aberdeen.

TRIO 323

# **TRIO**

# By I. H. M. Smart

# The Shades of Night:

THE shades of night were falling fast. Big snow flakes drifted down from a gloomy sky, swirling in the occasional puff of wind. Snow-laden woods in the silent dusk of winter are dark and deep and awesome. The two of us were skiing along the floor of a remote valley on our way to climb Mount Assiniboine, the 'Matterhorn of the Rockies', at that time a remote mountain. We were making a quick raid rather than laying siege and so were lightly laden. Success depended on moving fast and making no mistakes. In the gathering darkness we looked around for a suitable tree to bivouac under. This is the appropriate thing to do when benighted in the northwoods. The valley floors in this part of the world are not scoured by fierce winds. Trees grow straight and under vertical snowfall branches are bent rather than broken. The lowest fronds of spruce trees arch to the ground, leaving a snow-free space between them and the trunk to form a natural igloo where you can create a happy home. You can make a tiny fire from the dead wood of the old inner branches and relax comfortably after supper in sheltered candlelight, philosophising about the meaning of life while the wild world outside gets on with whatever it is up to when we are not looking at it. It is also a lot more comfortable than camping in a small tent in heavy snowfall.

As we cast about looking at the various residential properties on offer we came across ski tracks, the first evidence of our own kind we had seen since we left the road a couple of days ago. They were going at right angles to our route They looked fresh and the tadpole shape of the ski pole marks gave us the direction. The success of our raid demanded singleness of purpose, yet we somehow found ourselves following this trace of a fellow human through the flat monochrome world that surrounded us. The tracks continued through the pillared halls of a tenebrous wood to an open meadow. From the far side a ray of gold shone through the snowspangled darkness. The kindly light led us to a picturesque log cabin with deep snow on the roof. We unclipped our skis, knocked, pushed the door open and suddenly left the cold dark world at our backs and entered an alternative universe of warmth and colour. Firelight flickered across the rough-hewn logs of the cabin walls. In the mellow glow of a hurricane lantern we could see a rifle, and snow shoes hung from wooden pegs on each side of the fire. We could feel we were standing on a deep pile carpet

of yellow wood chips, richly patterned with bits of dark brown tree bark. The aroma of pine resin, coffee and toasted bread filled the warm air.

A voice from the fireside broke the spell. 'Come on in, you guys. The coffee's ready. Pull up a bench and thaw yourselves out. It sure is one cold night out there. You're mighty lucky to hit this place. There's a grandpappie of a snowstorm goin' to hit us.'

The minimal accommodation reserved for us somewhere out there in the swirling darkness could not compete with the opulence before us. And so we spent a very pleasant evening before a cheerful fire with genial, interesting companions and talked late into the night. The next morning we woke up late and consequently missed our window of opportunity. As it happened it didn't matter. We would never have reached Mount Assiniboine as the blizzard lasted for days. In the end it was difficult enough just getting back to the road. Nevertheless, we were not to have known that when we diverted from our route. Warmth and comfort, as we all know, are sore destroyers of initiative. Enterprises of great pith and moment with this regard their currents turn awry and lose the name of action, as my old friend Hamlet once pointed out.

# Stairway to Heaven:

We were returning from the ascent of a minor, but shapely, rock peak of little mountaineering significance. Nevertheless, it had sufficient merit for the powerful Shiva, creator, preserver and destroyer to have shrines on its flank. It had also attracted some exiled Tibetan monks who had built a monastery into its side; the sounds of their horns and chants could be heard rising from time to time from far below. Our camp was perched on a shoulder of the mountain which we shared with some shepherds and their flocks, a holy man and a few big trees. It was very picturesque.

Each afternoon towering anvil-headed clouds, harbingers of the approaching monsoon, assembled over the distant plains of India and in the evenings spectacular lightning played across the darkening southern sky. On our last afternoon the cloud front moved in unexpectedly and overwhelmed our little Shangri-la. By some trick of light the hue of the surrounding vegetation was reflected into the air. An unnerving dense green colour filled the quietness between our camp and the cloud base a few hundred feet above.

Then quite suddenly a dark wind enveloped our ridge, bringing bountiful rain. Bright forked lightning and thunder of intimidating loudness sent a panic through the flocks on the ridge. We abandoned our tents. Everybody, man, woman, sheep and goat headed for the only solid shelter available, a nearby dry-stone fank with a minimal metre-high roof. As I ran I saw

TRIO 325

above us two balls of lightning joined by a wiggly band of light, just like you see in horror films.

Inside the crowded shelter a noisy stream of prayers rose to the heavens. I crouched in the dung in a praying position pressed against a goat, a sheep, a shepherd and a girl from Tasmania while something mighty struck outside. I remember thinking through my fear that, all things considered, this would not be a bad way to go. It would be quite romantic to be struck by lightning in such a picturesque site in the company of fellow mortals, all of us fearful of impending dissolution while a stream of interwoven prayers, human, ovine and caprine provided a broad ecumenical stairway to heaven.

However it was not to be. After the storm had passed we found that a tree a few yards away had indeed been rent asunder and some goats, for whom there had been no room in the fank, had been killed. Maybe we had been given a warning; perhaps a merciful element somewhere in creation was allowing us all a little more time to obtain a little more merit. According to Buddhist doctrine, acquisition of merit is essential for securing a worthwhile future existence. The recommended route of renunciation runs uphill, is difficult to find let alone follow, but leads eventually to a restful state of non-being somewhere on the far side of oblivion. On the way, however, there are tracks that lead astray to seductively cheerful log cabins, where unsteadfast souls are recycled back to the main road to begin the weary trudge all over again. On the other hand the whole concept of ratcheting yourself up some spiritual stairway using serially acquired merit may be completely wrong; the true heaven may be encounters with congenial souls in fleeting safe havens whether in the dark woods of the north, under low-roofed biggins in high Asia or wild winter nights in the CIC hut.

# The Aphrodite Moment:

Don't get excited by the title. What I am writing about is rather technical and boring and has nothing to do with the acquisition of merit or convivial nights in transcendental log cabins. It is about how we perceive the world, specifically about those moments of heightened awareness we all experience from time to time.

Often they happen when we are coming off a mountain in the aftermath of an adrenaline buzz, but equally often they may arrive in a period of tranquillity, the result of mood coinciding with the resonance of a particular place at a particular time in a particular light

On these occasions you and the ambient world achieve for a moment a numinous, eirenic harmony.

The ancients, being ignorant of modern neurophysiology, used to attribute these supranormal states of mind to possession by forces which were at heart also human, even if a bit more than human. Horace really seemed to think that after a beaker or two of Falernian wine he was in the presence of gentle, jovial Bacchus (Quo me, Bacche?) and in Sappho's poems there is no doubt that during these moments of transcendental beauty she felt herself to be in the very presence of Aphrodite.

To the ancients, Gods and Goddesses were metaphors used to explain and make bearable the things they did not understand. Nowadays, the myths we make up about the world are less humane and comforting than the larger than life, but still recognisably human, Gods and Goddesses. According to the moderns we are supposed to be here all alone, fashioned from subdividing particles that pop in and out of existence, while inside our heads a cocktail of neurochemicals allows us to perceive a limited model of whatever it is that surrounds us.

We may indeed be a marvellous aggregation of transiently ordered particles pushing against the grain of a universe mindlessly maximising its own disorder but operationally, that is for the practical purposes of making the most of our subjective inner lives, we could do worse than respond to the aura of the mysterious Aphrodite. Here is how C. M. Bowra recreates the mystery of her presence.

'Aphrodite was not entirely or primarily the goddess of love. Physical desire and passion strictly belong to Eros; Aphrodite's sphere was wider and slightly different from his. She is more the Goddess of beauty than of the desire for it. She is the Goddess of flowers and of the smiling sea. Her power lies in the enchantment which she throws over visible things. In her own way Aphrodite stands for absolute value, for the magic light that falls at times on life and makes it seem so desirable that men are almost driven to madness. Just as Artemis stood for the remote ideal of innocence, so Aphrodite stood for the sudden unexpected moments of entrancing beauty which occur in the visible world and seduce those who see them into a state far removed from their ordinary experience.'

My most authentic encounter with her was in fact in her native Greece while descending a steep hillside in the fire-flied dusk through a grove of dark olive trees under a crescent moon. She, or her equivalent, is present in Scotland, too. Most of us have experienced those rare moments of magic that are in her gift. Alas, I suspect they do not stem from some mystical epiphany but result from wobbles in our neurochemistry with no information content other than what we give to them. Nevertheless, there is always the possibility that the wobbles may indeed be caused by the arrival of a message from outside. It might even be a real telephone call from Aphrodite herself. It certainly feels like it at the time.

# **NEW CLIMBS SECTION** OUTER ISLES

### **LEWIS SEA CLIFFS, The Channel Walls:**

The Hooded and the Channel Walls lie to the west of the aerial by the Painted Geo and have been developed over the past few years by R. & C. Anderson.

The following routes lie at the northern end of the narrow rift forming The Channel. Scramble up to belay on the neck, before the rocks drop down again.

The Great Divide – 30m E1 5a\*. R. & C. Anderson. 3rd July, 1999.

A short, steep greasy crack proves difficult to protect. Instead climb the seaward side of the fin and step across on to the landward side. Move up to ledges and traverse left into the middle of the wall. Boldly climb a line of weakness up right, then continue to the top.

The Great Divide Direct – 30m E2 5c\*\*. R. & C. Anderson. 11th July, 1999. Where the original route traverses left, climb straight up to horizontal break, traverse right and make an awkward pull into the crack above. Climb the crack directly to the top.

### Screaming Geo:

North-West Arête – 14m E3 6a. S. Crowe, K. Magog. 16th May, 1999. Climb the arête between It's Raining Rocks and Pinky, mainly on its right side, escaping right near the top.

An immaculate wall of perfect rock extends south from Lighthouse Arête to the arch. The climbing is quite bold on the main initial pitches, but on perfect rock. Descent: From the block strewn slope above, the south end runs into a 4m lightcoloured wall, with two large blocks. Abseil from a huge thread beneath the rightmost (south) block, slightly diagonally leftwards (looking down, i.e. towards the arch) to belay a few metres above the south end of the platform.

The Quiet Man - 45m VS\*. G. Latter, J. Rabey. 15th April, 1999.

- 1.25m 4b Follow a line of faint grooves to a good ledge at a wide left-slanting fault.
- 2. 20m 4b Continue up the fault, breaking out right and over ledges to finish at the abseil blocks.

The Heebie-Jeebies – 50m E1\*\*\*. G. Latter, J. Rabey. 15th April, 1999. Abseil directly down from the leftmost (north) block to a good spike above the

centre of the platform. A brilliant main pitch on perfect rock.

1. 30m 5a. Follow a super left-slanting pink ramp, continuing up the black ramp above to below a beautiful pink wall.

2. 20m 5b. Climb the crack to ledge, step left and up a shallow groove to another ledge. Step right and continue more easily to belay further back. This pitch could be avoided by easier lines on either side, giving a fantastic 3\* HVS.

**Note:** There was a piece of string round the thread beneath the north block at the top, and another on a large flake about halfway down, midway between the above lines. Someone has been down there, and therefore must have climbed out, presumably at least climbing the line between the above two routes.

### Aird Uig, Torcaso Geo (MR NB 0295 3530):

The Geo is mentioned on pp 100-101 in the guidebook as having two VS/HVS routes on its North Wall with no easy way out. One of the routes below may correspond with one of these climbs.

The first two routes lie on the jet black South Wall (north-facing), towards the seaward end of the Geo where an area of rock protrudes slightly, just to the right of a sea cave, to form a pillar with a pedestal at its base. Two cracklines run up the pillar.

Running Scared – 25m E1 5b\*\*\*. R. & C. Anderson. 17th July, 1998. Step right around the edge into a corner and climb the right-hand crackline on perfect rock.

No Hiding Place – 25m E1 5b\*\*. R. & C. Anderson. 17th July, 1998. The left-hand crackline is almost as good.

The following routes lie on the North Wall (south-facing) at the extreme seaward end of the wall just before the end of the geo, where there is an obvious slanting chimney/crack with a pink quartz vein to its right, and to the right of this a long corner line.

 $42nd\ Street$  –  $40m\ E2\ 5c**$ . R. & C. Anderson. 6th July, 1999. The long corner line, gained by a crack leading from the lower ledge to the higher ledge.

Life in the Old Dog Yet – 40m E3 5c\*\*. R. & C. Anderson. 6th July, 1999. The pink quartz vein. Either follow the initial crack of 42nd Street, or a line just to its left to join it at the higher ledge. Move up the corner of 42nd Street until it is possible to traverse left into the middle of the wall, jugs, then move up the quartz vein to a roof and ledges just above. The fine crack in the headwall leads to the top.

*Generation Gap* – 35m HVS/E1 5b. R. & C. Anderson. 6th July, 1999. The chimney crack, possibly climbed before.

Happy Returns – E2/3 5c\*\*. R. & C. Anderson. 6th July, 1999. Just left of the chimney, climb the crack in the black wall and then its continuation.

The final route is an escape route starting from ledges at the north-east corner of the Geo.

*Escape From Victory* – 50m Severe/VS 4b\*. R. & C. Anderson. 11th July, 1999. 1. 20m 4b. Climb the corner on good black rock, then traverse right and step down to a good ledge on the back/West Wall.

2. 30m 4b. Traverse ledges across the back wall and finish up a short V-groove in the south-east corner of the Geo.

### BEINN NA BERIE, The Little Big Wall:

The hillside at the eastern end of the Traigh na Beirigh sands is dotted with minor bits of rock. One of these is a small, insignificant-looking wall not far above the

machair. On closer acquaintance the wall is found to be composed of smooth, near perfect gneiss and provides a number of fine climbs, which although short, give some excellent moves. The crag is unaffected by the sea, which makes it particularly useful.

The left end of the wall has a fine crackline running up it with a pocketed wall to its right, then towards the right side of the smooth central section are some thin cracklines rising above embedded blocks. All climbs except one were cleaned on abseil.

*Traighding Places* – 20m HVS 5a\*. R. & C. Anderson. 14th July, 1999. The obvious corner at the left end of the wall has an awkward exit.

Tunes of Glory – 20m E6 6b\*\*\*. R. & C. Anderson. 9th July, 1999.

A superbroute up the staggered crackline running up the left edge of the wall. Climb the first crack to its top, move right to the upper crack (wires), stretch a Friend 0 into a tight placement on the right, then continue past this to the top.

**Note:** Tried first in 1998. Cleaned and top-roped. Led placing all of the gear ground up with one fall/yo-yo. Also red-pointed clean. Effectively climbed twice – just to make sure!

Barrier Reef – 20m E6 6a/b\*\*\*. R. Anderson. 16th July, 1999.

Brilliant climbing up the pocketed wall in the centre of the wall. Gain the first pocket (Friend 3 forced in; good DMM Peanut 1 in thin crack to left). Reach the large pocket (Friend 4, awkward to seat; Friend 3.5 in pocket above, forced in tight with close together cams facing down). Move left to another large pocket (Friend 0 just below; back up wires on left if required). Up on the right is a thin crack (Black Diamond Stopper 3 or similar with Wild Country Rock Yellow/0.5 or similar just below). Pull past these to a hold, then a layaway and another hold (stopper 1, then crucial RP3 inserted right to left into a keyhole at the back of the hold). A stretch gains a break (good wires) and then the top.

Note from R. Anderson: Cleaned and inspected; no prior top-roping. Unfortunately, due to poor weather and the end of the holiday the gear was left in overnight and all I had to do was clip the draws in. I spent most of the last day waiting for the rain to stop and only just squeezed the route in between showers. The gear is pretty specific hence the reason I have noted it all – given the time and the weather (and knowing what went where) I would have placed it all ground up which would not have been a problem.

Just to the right are some embedded blocks from where the next three routes start.

*Cnip-Fit* – 15m E4 6a\*\*. R. Anderson. 14th July, 1999.

Start on the blocks and from a letterbox (Friend) swing left into a thin crack, then move up this to its top where it is possible to blindly stretch a Rock 6 up right into a superb placement in a pocket. Gain the break up on the right and follow its diagonal continuation up left to pull onto the ledge and finish more easily.

Berie-Berie – 15m E5 6b\*\*\* . R. & C. Anderson. 15th July, 1998.

Start on the blocks and move up past a horizontal break to a flange (RP3 or similar in this and the same just to the left). Gain the horizontal break above, step right (a

small horizontal slot just up and right provides additional, awkward to arrange protection – Rock 2 in right side Rock 3 on left) and climb to another horizontal (gear) then gain the ledge and finish as for Milk-Traigh up right.

Milk-Traigh – 15m E2 5c/6a\*. R. & C. Anderson. July, 1997. Just right of the blocks, climb the obvious crack to its end, then pull up left to a ledge and finish up right.

#### SOUTH UIST, Beinn Mhor, Hellisdale Buttress:

The cliff has six gully lines numbered 1 to 6 from left to right. Other (and harder) climbs done in the Eighties may surface. The relationship to the route in SMCJ 1999 is unknown. J. Hart also made FWAs in the Loch Avon area in the early Seventies. The best area for rock climbing is at the higher west end of the cliffs where there is a largish area of clean white slabby rock. Towards the left (east) end of this area is a large triangular slab bounded on the left by a grassy rake and on the right by an overlap. Above the top of the triangle is a prominent vertical corner taken by the following climb.

Open Book Corner – 120m VS  $4c^{**}$ . D. Allan, D. Marriot. 16th June, 1986. Start below the corner and climb up to belay below a small overhang. Traverse left, then step down, before carrying on up and left to a grassy rake. Continue up right to belay below the steep corner. Climb the corner via a crack just to its left, then step right and climb a second crack to belay on a grass terrace (crux). Carry on straight up crossing a ramp to finish above. Scramble to the top.

Up right from the above route a short vertical cliff crosses the corrie floor and abuts the main face. The next climb starts 5m down from the corner where the two cliffs meet

Slab Buttress - 120m VS 4b\*\*. J. Hart, D. Allan. 10th June, 1984.

Climb directly up to a grass ledge, then rightwards up slabs to a terrace. Traverse down left over slabs, then back up leftwards across the terrace and up a corner left of a brown and white mark. Continue directly up smooth slabs across a grass ledge and up slabs to under a block. Traverse left and up to a nose. Swing round it and go up a ramp corner to the right to finish.

Slab Buttress West - 120m Severe\*\*. J. Hart, D. Allan. 27th May, 1984. Start 5m right of the last climb in the corner where the short cliff meets the face. Climb up the corner, then up slabs to a grass terrace. Climb a crack above, then trend right to a nose of rock. Continue up the rock nose to a grass ledge and finish between the two right-hand rock noses on the skyline.

Red Corner - 60m VS\*. J. Hart, D. Allan. 27th May, 1984.

A climb on the buttress between Gullies 3 and 4. Scramble up Gully 3, climb the right wall and up grass ledges to the foot of the red corner. Climb the stepped corner (crux) to a grass terrace. Climb the corner to the left over a vertical step to the top.

Winter: D. Allan soloed all of the gullies in the winters of 1983 and 1984. Gullies 1 and 5 were Grade I, the rest being Grade II. Lengths rising from 60m for 1 to 200m for 6. All worth a star. Also:

5 to 6 Traverse - III\*\*.

Climbs Gully 5, then up a short icefall and ramp into Gully 6, crosses Gully 6 and goes up a groove (crux). Continue up a ramp, then a chimney to more broken ground and the top.

### PABBAY:

**NOTE:** Many routes have been climbed on Pabbay, Mingulay and Berneray in recent years and descriptions kept secret. Given the reported high quality, the secrecy seems in a poor spirit.

The Peninsula opposite the campsite:

Halfway along the peninsula that lies east of the beach and the ruined house is a 10m high smooth wall with a basalt chimney on its right-hand side.

*The Ethics Police* – 10m E3 5c. S. Littlefair, O. Metherell. 10th June, 1998. Climbs the left-hand side of the wall, bold to start.

Rising Damp – 12m VS 4c. S. Littlefair, O. Metherell. 10th June, 1998. This route can be found 5m to the right of the basalt chimney. Climb the groove right of the sharp arête, stepping right to follow the ramp line.

### The Arch Wall:

Full Fathom Five - 115m E2 5b. S. Littlefair, O. Metherell. June, 1998.

This route climbs the big arête left of The Priest

Abseil in down the arête and belay in the chimney/pod 15m right of the arête.

- 1. 20m 5a. Climb the pod and steep cracks above until a pull left on to a sloping ramp. Belay.
- 2. 40m 5b. Trend left across the steep wall and climb the groove in the arête. passing through a steepening (crux) until the groove closes.

3 and 4. 60m 4c. Climb grooves and cracks up the lichenous wall.

### The Galley:

Dream of White Faeces - 60m VS 4c. S. Chinnery, S. Littlefair, A. Loftus, O. Metherell. June, 1998.

This route traverses the obvious horizontal break in The Galley. Descend The Complete Works to a ledge.

1. 30m 4c. Traverse the obvious break.

2. 30m 4c. Traverse the break until a move up can be made to finish the traverse above the overhang.

### The Poop Deck:

My Private Pabbay Diary – 30m E2 5c. S. Chinnery, O. Metherell. June, 1998. 1. Climb the thin crack up the left-hand side of the front face of the projecting butress up through a small square-cut niche to a ledge.

2. Climb the upper wall up to a rightward-rising ramp line to the centre of the upper wall. Finish at the same point as Human Cargo.

#### West End of Allernish Peninsula:

At the westernmost point of the Allernish peninsular is a small box inlet. Abseil down a wall next to a deep chimney.

Sudden Squall – E2 5c. D. Long, A. Loftus. June, 1998. Climb the right-hand side of the right arête of the inlet.

*Windy Corner* – H. Severe 4b. D. Long, A. Loftus. June, 1998. Climb the obvious left corner of the inlet.

Squall Wall – H. Severe 4b. D. Long, A. Loftus. June, 1998. Climb the corner system in the left-hand side of the left wall.

### MINGULAY, The Wee Geo:

Lord of the Isles – 20m E4 6a\*\*. M. Somerville, B. Kerr (on sight). July, 1999. A superb route which tackles the overhang on the black slab. Surmount the overhang (blindly placed RPs) at the slight left-facing groove and make an extremely dynamic move (fly) rightwards for a jug. Finish easily.

EIGG, An Sgurr, Beehive Buttress, Lower and Upper West Wall:

Sunny Side Up – 35m Severe. J. Walker, A. Faulk, J. van der Horst. 30th May, 1999. This line climbs both the Lower and Upper sections of the West Wall of Beehive Buttress. Start at the base of the leftmost rock of Beehive Buttress. Climb easy rock to a possible belay (25m) and then continue directly up the short steep wall behind.

### Ocean Wall, Gully Left Wall:

Murphy's Law – 15m VS 4c\*. C. Cartwright, N. Wilson. 30th May, 1999. The left wall of the boulder-filled gully bounding the east side of Ocean Wall is dominated by a left to right-rising ramp system. The ramp peters out 5m below the top of the wall. This line climbs the obvious left-facing corner dropping from the top right end of the ramp. Climb the corner, stepping right at top, before pulling back left through a bulge on excellent jugs.

Staircase – 25m VS 4c. A. Faulk, J. Walker. 30th May, 1999. The obvious ramp line start to Murphy's Law.

# Ocean Wall, East-Facing Flank:

High 'n Dry-40m HVS  $5a^*$ . C. Cartwright, N. Wilson. 30th May, 1999. This route ascends the narrow east-facing flanking face of Ocean Wall, as taken by Lego Route. The essence of the route is two shallow, offset, left-facing corners starting 10m up the face. Start at a small recess in the basalt dyke left of centre of the wall. Climb bulging though intricate ground (crux) leading up to the first of the shallow corners. Climb this corner, step right into a second corner and continue on to easy upper slabs and the arête above.

**Note:** The above party assumes that Lego Route climbs the line on the right of this face leading naturally, as does High 'n Dry, to the easy arête bounding Ocean Wall and East Flank of Ocean Wall. This line of what is believed to be Lego Route was certainly climbed by N. Stevenson and K. Murphy on 30th May, 1999, at VS 5a.

#### Ocean Wall:

*Unnamed* – 60m HVS. N. Stevenson, K. Murphy. 30th May, 1999 This route climbs a line on the right-hand side of Ocean Wall, right of and parallel to Frozen Ocean. Start at the obvious break as for Frozen Ocean.

- 1. 30m 5a. Follow Frozen Ocean through the overhang, traverse the slabby ramp to its end and move up rightwards to blocks in a small niche.
- 2. 30m 4c. Climb the crack above the belay, then flakes leftwards before heading directly for the top.

### MULL, Creag Liath:

Piping – 16m HVS 5a\*. C. Moody, A. Soloist. 14th October, 1999

Left of the main rock mass is a rib with a large detached block near the top. Start on the left side and climb the rib, with a bold awkward start. At the block step left and climb the crack that forms the left side.

Flusie - 20m E1 5b\*\*. C. Moody, C. Black. 7th September, 1999

Start just right of Sloeworm. Step off the boulder and climb up right to the rib, place gear in the crack on the right then climb the rib keeping on the left side of it. Finish up the blunt face.

Bracken Spraying – 18m HVS 5a\*. C. Moody, C. Black. 22nd July, 1999. Round right of Flusie, climb the steep crack on the east face.

#### Balmeanach:

Thirty One Lesbians - E2 5b. C. Moody, C. Black. 19th May, 1999.

Start at the middle of the pillar left of the main face, at a step in the cliff base. Climb up, straight forward but poorly protected, although a large rock can be placed before gaining the mid ledge. From the ledge make reachy moves over the bulge and continue to easier rock. Follow the easy but loose ramp up right. Possibly E3 for short climbers.

Glam Rock - 16m E2 5c\*. C. Moody, C. Black. 19th May, 1999.

Start between Mushroom Picking and Milanda Shelf. Move up to the crescent-shaped overhang, left of the dangling fence. Climb the crackline above with an awkward bulge.

Raven's Crag (MR 433 303):

A remote cliff with a fine outlook over the islands from Jura to Skye and the Outer Hebrides. At 360m and in an exposed position it best visited in good weather outwith the stalking season. M. MacLeod and C. Moody climbed here in 1987, but an hour's walk from the main road for short routes was a bit over the top in those days. Routes described left to right.

#### **Block Buttress:**

This is the northernmost crag with a huge block leaning against the base at the south end.

Block Rib – 25m Severe\*. C. Moody. 1st July, 1999.

Climb the rib to the right of the huge block, starting just right of the base of the rib.

The next route is on the buttress to the right.

*Charge Of The Tiger* – 30m E2 5b\*\*. I. Taylor, C. Moody. 12th June, 1999. Towards the left side of the buttress is a rib with a crack up the right side. This route climbs the edge left of the crack. Fine sustained climbing with a bold start.

Right again is a 35m-high section of cliff, although it is best to scramble off after 25m.

Your Paps Are Cloudy – 35m E1 5b\*. C. Moody, M. Shaw. 12th June, 1999. Start left of the wide crack. Climb the crack in the shallow corner which slants left a little. Finish up the easy crack above.

*Unnamed* – 25m Severe. A. N. Other, P. Jarvis. 1989. The wide crack.

Feadag – 25m E1 5b\*\*. D. Brooks, M. Shaw. 12th June, 1999. Excellent climbing, fairly hard for the grade. Start round right of the wide crack.

Start up a corner then move left on to the wall for a few moves then continue up the corner.

Amossyhing – 25m HVS 5a. C. Moody, I. Taylor. 12th June, 1999. Farther right is a prominent crack. Start right of it, climb a crack then move left and up to gain and climb the prominent crack.

At the right side are three grassy chimney/gullies; there is a V. Diff. right of them. It starts at a boulder and climbs the left edge of the minor buttress.

### **Slanting Buttress:**

Critical Path Item – 20m E1 5a\*\*. I. Taylor, C. Moody. 12th June, 1999. A crack left of Waggy and running parallel to it.

*Waggy* – 20m VS 5a. D. Brooks, P. Jarvis. 1989. The obvious right-slanting crack.

*Ignoramie* – 20m VS 4c. D. Brooks, M. Shaw. 12th June, 1999. Climb the steep wall on the right to gain a crack which leads to a block overhang.

The wide mossy crack just right gives a V. Diff. but there are some loose blocks to avoid.

#### Scoor:

Monster Spider – 8m E1 5b\*. C. Moody, M. Burgess. 19th August, 1999. A shelf runs right from the base of The Cave Monster to a short wall, climb the crack that starts from the right side of the dark pool.

#### Ardtun:

Blazing Windows – 15m E2 5c\*. C. Moody, C. Black. 17th May, 1999. Twin cracks left of Gong Bird which look straightforward. Mostly climbing the left crack.

Playing The Accordion – 15m E2 5c\*. C. Moody, J. Ferrie, D. Walker, W. Hood. 1st May, 1999.

The crack right of Collie Dolphins. The climbing is not obvious.

Radioactive Rose – 15m HVS 5a. C. Moody, C. Grindley, S. Kennedy. 26th June, 1999.

Right of The Pelican Brief are several grassy grooves, beyond which is a left-facing corner with a 4m high grass-topped pillar 3m left. Climb the corner which is about 10m left of Atomkraft.

Atomkraft Nein Danke – 15m E1 5a/b. C. Moody, A. Soloist. 14th September, 1999. The obvious wide crack in a right-facing corner. Gain a grassy ledge then climb the crack. Runners included a Friend#6 and an RP#3.

*Irradiated Slaters* – 15m E1 5b\*. C. Moody, C. Black. 17th May, 1999. There is a corner 15m right. Start up a short crack to its left, then pull left into the main crack which is followed to the top.

*Kiribati* – 10m HVS 5a\*. C. Moody, C. Black. 1st January, 2000. The crack left of Walkabout, with a bulge high up.

#### The Green Hill:

Get In Quick – 12m E1 5a/b. C. Moody, A. Soloist. October, 1999. The wide crack in the left-facing corner to the right of Pancakes At Iochdar.

#### Erraid:

The three cracks behind Sentinel are left to right, V. Diff., VS 4c and VS 4c. From the Upper Tier go to the archway entrance, turn right and move down the easy gully.

#### SKYE

### **GLEN SLIGACHAN CRAGS:**

There are a number of fine crags on the lower slopes of Sgurr na h-Uamha (M.R. 476 240) where Harta Corrie meets the main glen. The rock is rough gabbro offering excellent friction. There is the occasional loose rock, but this should not detract from the climbs. Blade pegs are useful as the rock can be very compact, but protection is generally good when found.

### The Main Crag (M.R. 488 245):

This crag is more than 100m high and roughly triangular in shape on its NE face. The SE face is composed of vast rolling slabs.

*Luke's Climb* – 50m H. Severe 4b\*. R. Simpson, D. Morrison (alt.). 9th April, 2000. At the left side of the NE face an obvious heathery ramp leads rightwards on to the face. Start at the far right of the ramp (peg belay).

1. 25m Climb the slab into a shallow corner and go up the right wall. Make an airy traverse right to the central slabs. Go up these for 5m to a crack.

 $2.\,25\,\mathrm{m}\,4b$  Climb just right of the corner to an obvious break. Climb this awkwardly to a spacious ledge.

Scramble off left to easy slabs leading to the top of the crag. Descent is by a trap fault down the left side of the SE face.

The SE face gives the following route:

*The Runaway Slabs* – 100m Moderate – V. Diff. R. Simpson, D. Morrison (both solo). 9th April, 2000.

Climb the slabs centrally on good rock with excellent friction. Much variation possible.

### **Laceration Crag:**

This lies about 200m south of the Main Crag and slightly higher up the hill. The most prominent feature is a long off-width which gives the next route.

Slash and Burn-40m Mild VS 4b. D. Morrison, R. Simpson (alt.). 9th April, 2000. 1.25m 4b Climb the slabby right wall of the chimney till forced to move left. Bridge up to a small tree which is passed on the right with difficulty to move just outside

a chimney-cave (peg belay).

2. 15m 4b Climb the slabby corner above with good moves leading to a trap chimney.

Graded for the use of pegs. Descent is to the right passing below slabby walls.

### The Mortuary Slab:

This large slab overlooks the Bloody Stone. From the top of Laceration Crag, the slab is seen in profile. A slight descent leads to its foot.

Post Mortem – 30m V. Diff\*. D. Morrison, R. Simpson. 9th April, 2000.

Start 20m from the right edge at an obvious break (small cairn). Climb the crack for 5m to where it forks. Follow cracks and grooves leftwards to the easier slabs above (good protection). Descend by moving right, scrambling over slabs to the top of Laceration Crag.

### SGURR NAN GILLEAN, Coire a' Bhasteir:

*MacLaren's Chimney –* 50m IV,5. C. Gardiner, N. Edwards, M. Moran. 29th February, 2000.

A good winter pitch; finish up NW Face Route or Just a Boy's Game (200m to the summit).

Forked Chimney – 75m IV,5. M. Moran (backrope solo). 15th December, 1999. Follows the main chimney in three pitches. Finish up a snow amphitheatre to the West Ridge.

Gingini Chiminee – 35m VI,6. M. Lates (unsec.). 4th March, 2000.

The line between Forked Chimney and Flutings Climb is sometimes completed by an icicle dripping past the cave.

1. 15m Climb to the cave (on good névé on this occasion).

2. 20m Place good Friend protection in the cave roof, then spirit up the delicate icicle starting inside and working out. The difficulties end after 15m. The easy finishing pitches had to be missed due to icicle failure.

*Deep Chimney* – 70m IV,5. N. Marshall, D. Ritchie. 13th February 2000. Follow the summer route. Above the large jammed block a finish was taken on the right wall.

Far better than the summer description would suggest.

#### **South-West Face:**

100m directly below the summit lies a snowfield. Ice sometimes flows from this snowfield down a shallow depression in the face below then over rock steps to the foot of the face. The following route follows this ice and gave a fine direct route to the summit.

White Dreams - 285m IV,5. N. Marshall, D. Ritchie. 20th February, 2000.

- 1. 30m. Climb steep thinly iced slabs to a snowy ledge.
- 2. 30m. Continue up thin iced slabs, then steep snow to a ledge on the right.
- 3. 30m. Climb the short steep ice pillar above (crux), then easy snow.
- 4. 55m. Follow easier ice up the depression above to gain a snow basin and climb to its top.
- 5. 50m. Exit rightwards up steeper ice and gain the main snowfield.
- 6. 40m. Follow easy snow to the top of the snowfield.
- 7.50m. Climb mixed ground trending right to finish at a fine thread belay under the summit cairn.

#### AM BASTEIR, North Face:

*Am Basteir Chimney* – 145m IV,6. A. Nelson, D. Ritchie. 12th December 1999. Follow the summer route, the first two pitches being common to White Spirit.

- 1. 40m. Climb the chimney and shallow gully above.
- 2. 40m. Climb easier ground and snow slope to below a steep chimney.
- 3. 40m. Continue up the fine technical chimney (crux) to belay on The Deadline.
- 4. 25m. Climb the continuation fault above to the top.

**Note:** A correction to the description of White Spirit (SMCJ 1999). There were six pitches on this route not five. The description should read:

- 4. 50m. Follow this fault rightwards over broken ground and ledges to belay in an alcove.
- 5. 40m. Continue easily rightwards along the narrowing ledge in a superb position to belay in the chimney of the Squeeze Box.
- 6. 40m. Climb the chimney and fault above to finish just short of the summit.

#### SGURR AN FHEADAIN:

*Cameron's Gully* – 70m I. D. Morrison, R. Simpson. 4th March, 2000. This climbs the deep gully on the Coir a Tairneilear face direct to the summit, with two short steepenings and good rock scenery.

**Note:** Stag Gully (Coire a' Mhadaidh) is only 1m wide, not 2m as stated in the guide.

### SGURR A' GHREADAIDH, Summit Buttress:

*Hamish's Chimney* – II/III. M. Lates, R. Lawson. 11th December, 1999. Follow the summer line.

#### SGURR A' MHADAIDH:

Whispering Wall – 155m V. P. Ramsden, M. Fowler (alt.). 11th December, 1999. Takes the lower two thirds of the summer line before trending right to finish.

- 1. 30m Start in the dyke line and climb up trending left to below a large block.
- 2. 35m Pass the block on the left and move up to gain the left-hand end of a

prominent snow shelf. Move along this for 7m, then climb the steep and poorly protected wall above trending left to the edge of the wall. Surmount a small overlap to the foot of a chimney.

- 3. 45m Climb the chimney to a snow ledge. Veer up leftwards to an exposed position overlooking Deep Gash Gully. Move left, then trend back right to the left-hand end of a snow ramp.
- 4. 45m Follow the ramp rightwards to gain the crest of the buttress.

#### INNACCESSIBLE PINNACLE:

*The Naked Saltire* – 30m E2 5c. M. Lates, D. McLaughlin. 8th August, 1999. A perfect crackline up the north wall of the Pinnacle (probably the same fault as South Crack). Athletic moves off the ground (crux) lead to a pod. Continue up the crack, sustained to the crest. Probably slow to dry.

### **CORUISG HUT CRAG:**

Half Century Crack – 30m E1 5c. S. Brock, C. Heald. 12th May, 1999. On the right side of the crag is a very prominent groove with a crack which peters

On the right side of the crag is a very prominent groove with a crack which peters out just below the top. Start up a grassy rake on the right and traverse left into the crack at one-quarter height. Climb the crack to a well protected crux at the top.

#### BLAVEN:

Clough's Cleft – V,6. F. MacCallum ,M. Shaw, D. Ritchie. 4th March, 2000. Follow the summer route finishing directly by the continuation chimney at the top. This natural winter route, although short, provided superbicy mixed climbing. Due to the narrowness of two chimney sections rucksacs are not recommended.

Chock-a-Block Chimney – 105m V. M. Fowler, P. Ramsden (alt.). 12th December, 1999.

- 1. 25m Climb easily up the bed of the gully.
- 2.25m Climb steeply up rock on the right of the gully for 7m until it is possible to traverse a precarious slab to regain the gully fault. Climb up and exit awkwardly on to an easing.
- 3. 20m Tackle the next series of overhangs via a through route to a deep cave.
- 4. 35m Exit on the left, trend back right to regain the bed and continue on snow.

### **ELGOL, Schoolhouse Buttress:**

**Note:** From C. Moody. No Excuses (SMCJ 1999) sounds the same as Pew with a View (SMCJ 1998).

#### Suidhe Biorach:

Rapid Learning Curve - E6 6b. N. Hancock. 1999.

A line through the triple roofs and arête between Arc of the Covenant and Tree Route, with the crux being the lip of the final roof (full description not received).

### **NEIST, The Upper Crag:**

Towards its northern end, the Upper Crag has a hidden section of black, north-facing wall which is split by a very prominent crack. The wall is best approached by descending a slabby recess some distance farther north and then walking back along the base of the crag. Gigantic blocks on the slope below the crag make an approach from the Green Lady much more difficult.

Comrades in Arms - 45m E3 6a. W. Jeffrey, S. Abbott. 26th June, 1999.

The party invested in several giant camming devices (Camelot 4.5s) to protect the main crack. Williams also contributed but couldn't get up the route. It is best to arrange a belay from a stake at the top before climbing. Climb cracked blocks and move right to gain the main crack line. Struggle up this off-width crack with great difficulty. Where it slants right, make a stride right to another crack, then follow this up and left to a fine niche. Climb up to a roof and pass this on the right. Continue with sustained interest up cracks and grooves, on slightly crumbly rock, to the top.

### Green Lady Area:

The next three lines are on the Upper Crag close to the Green Lady. Approach as for that feature but continue to a separate gully 50m farther north. Descend this gully for 20m, crossing a sheep fence. Follow a section of short, steep wall on the right. The first two lines climb zigzag cracks on this wall - easily seen from the Green Lady. They are short but fun.

Snicketboy – 20m Severe 4b. M. Hudson, R. Brown. 30th October, 1998. Climb a thin jagged crack at the immediate base of the gully. Emerge presently on a grassy shelf, step 2m left, and finish up a V-corner over some tricky gravelly

bulges. Good block belays.

2 & 8 Crack – 15m HVS 5a\*. M. Hudson, R. Brown. 30th October, 1998. Climb the striking chimney crack 10m to the left of the base of the gully. Brutal wedging and jamming. Belay on blocks as for the previous route.

Some 10m left of the previous route, there are a series of flake ribs. The next route takes a striking line up the second flake. Continuously interesting. *Thousand Island* – 35m VS 4c\*\*. M. Hudson, J. Hudson. 27th December, 1998. Start precariously up a steep, foot-wide ramp to gain a chimney-slot. Back-and-foot up this before bridging out right onto the sloping rib. Climb the open groove above via some airy bridging, and finish more easily.

Descend the Green Lady gully to reach the next two routes. *Potato Picker Fingers* – E1 5b? W. Gordon Canning, O. Higgins. 3rd July, 1999. The obvious crack on the gully wall left of Seagulls.

Robert the Bruce – 25m Severe 4b. D. N. Williams, G. Archibald. 22nd July, 1998. A surprisingly enjoyable climb up the rib and cracks a short distance to the right of Temptation. The route finishes immediately to the left of a prominent pinnacle which bears a fanciful resemblance to the figure after whom the route is named.

Walking north from The Financial Sector just past the loch is a belay stake. The next three routes are below. To approach them, go down Tower gully and turn north or down Green Lady gully and head south. Here is a 40m-high wall with a band of overhangs and a corner to the left. It contains the following three routes. Shimmering – 35m E1 5b\*\*. C. Moody, L. Gordon Canning. 8th June, 1999. Right of Route With A View is a 12m high flake, this route climbs the obvious crack just right. Climb the awkward left-facing corner above the right side of the flake, climb the right side of the small block above then pull left and climb the crack to the top. The next route is just to its right.

Deep Blue – 40m E2 5c\*\*\*. N. Smith, R. Lupton. 1st May, 1999.

To the left of the main wall is a recess with a corner to its right and left. A large overhang spans between the corners at 15m. The route climbs the left-hand corner reached by firstly climbing easy slabs. Climb the corner crack to under the roof. Follow the crack through the roof and up the wall above. Good rock throughout.

Shining Path - 40m E3 5c\*\*. N. Smith, R. Lupton. 1st May, 1999.

The route starts at the base of the obvious crack located in the centre of the main wall. Climb the easy lower cracks (loose) up to a shallow corner. Here the crack closes then flares. Climb to top of the corner stepping up, right and then back left to reach easier ground (crux). Continue up a larger corner to finish with an off-width splitting the headwall. The lower rock is loose, the upper rock good.

#### **Financial Sector:**

Both C. Moody and N. Williams note that Gampy's Wallet (SMCJ 1999) seems to be same route as Hurricane Hideaway (SMCJ 1998).

C. Moody notes that Jam For Brains (see below) must be near Worm's Eye View (SMCJ 1997).

Jam for Brains – 40m E1 5b\*\*. S. Campbell, C. Cartwright, N. Wilson. 31st May, 1998.

Climbs the prominent corner system hidden behind (ie. north of) the obvious standing pillar/dyke at the northern extremity of the Financial Sector.

- 1. 15m 4c. Climb a short corner to gain an awkward chimney. Struggle up this to a large sloping ledge.
- 2. 25m 5b. Gain the corner above and climb this to a ledge. Step delicately up to a higher ledge and climb the left-hand crack through a roof to easier ground.

Unnamed - E2 5c. I. Lewis, T. Charles-Edwards. Summer, 1999.

Start at the basalt flake/pillar. Climb the crack up the cliff which starts by the right (south) side of the pillar, then make an awkward move right and continue to the top.

Waterfront – 25m E2 5c\*\*\*. C. Cartwright, S. Campbell. 18th July, 1998. To the right of the standing pillar/dyke is a clean wall above a grassy gully. A prominent crack, curving up to the right, is protected by a suspiciously poised Damoclean block low down. Climb delicately up to the poised block and use this to enter the crack above. Follow the strenuous but well protected crack to the top. Loom of the Land – 30m E1 5b\*. C. Cartwright, S. Campbell. 18th July, 1998. This line climbs the shallow right-facing corner and well-defined upper crack splitting the next buttress north (left) of Terminal Bonus (Two belay stakes in place). Scramble up broken ground to the base of the corner which is followed to

Ronnie Biggs – 35m E2 5b/c\*. C. Moody, R. Lupton, S. Scott Moncrief, L. Gordon Canning. 13th November, 1999.

a ledge on the left. Move right and pull up into the crack Follow this to the top.

The rib between Earthbound and Terminal Bonus. Start down left of Terminal Buttress at a pointed block with a faint crack just left. Climb the faint crack (crux) to the juniper ledge, step left and continue just left of the small overhang above. Move up right above the overhang and follow the rib to the top.

The next two routes have a common start with Insider Dealing. *Midas Touch* – 30m VS 4c. S. Abbott, P. Airley. July 1999. Start up Insider Dealing, but carry on up where that route moves hard right. Follow the obvious left-curving slab, and break out right to finish.

*Black Scholes* – 30m HVS 5a. S. Abbott, P. Airley. July 1999. Start up Insider Dealing, then follow Midas Touch until it is possible to move right to a roof. Follow a crack direct to the top.

Nostromo - 40m E1 5a\*. A. Holden, M. Hudson. 21st March, 1998.

This route is situated on the south-facing section of the Upper Crag between Sonamara and The Fin. It is finely-positioned though with some poor rock. From the clifftop a grassy fin is visible near sea level. Just to the left of this the cliff forms three ribs. The climb takes the central rib, bounded on either side by a gully. Approach from the seashore by scrambling up steep rocks and grass or from the clifftop by abseil. Start to the right of the rib. Climb easy but suspect rock, trending left to reach the left side of a semi-detached pinnacle on the arête. Climb a crack to reach the top of the pinnacle. Continue up the rib on the left side till it is possible to move onto the arête. Finish directly up this. Good nut belays.

### The Lower Crag, Destitution Point:

Descend as for the Green Lady and head north towards the second obvious headland (the first headland is Poverty Point).

Captain Pug Wash - 20m E1 5b\*. N. Smith, R. Lupton. 20th April, 1999.

Climb the crack on the south face of the point, left of Cogless (SMCJ 1999). Climb through the overhang at 5m and up the crack in the wall above. There are jammed blocks in the lower crack but good rock elsewhere. Other short routes have been climbed left of this one.

*True Colours* – 20m E3 5c\*\*\*. N. Smith, R. Lupton, M. MacLeod, L. Gordon Canning. 20th April, 1999.

This route can be seen from the approach. Climbs the left-hand overhanging crack of an inverted V recess on the land-facing wall, left of Man of Straw (SMCJ 1999). Abseil down the route belaying on a small ledge at the base of the crack. Climb a shallow corner to an overhang, fist jam right into a corner leading to a further roof. Climb the final roof and crack to finish. Excellent rock.

### **Poverty Point:**

Aqualung – E2/3 5c\*\*. C. Moody, N. Smith, R. Lupton. 27th March, 1999. The corner left (west) of the prow (right of At The Welks).

Michelangelo Buonarroti – 30m E1 5b\*. C. Moody, B. Taylor. 7th March, 1999. The obvious two corners right (east) of the main prow. The tidal start was avoided by stepping in from the left.

The following lines are to be found on the Lower Crag, immediately north of Bernard's Dilemma. Approach down the gully as for that route. Belays have to be made well back from the clifftop on boulders and blocks often well above the path – a separate belaying rope is helpful. A solitary stake at present caters only for Cornflake Wall, 1 & 1 Groove and Barabbas.

Wofty Wall Towers – 18m HVS 5b. J. Walters, D. Pattullo, R. Brown. 23rd May, 1998.

The detached tower in the centre of the wall 5m north of Mixed Fruit (SMCJ 1998) has a crack and corner on its right-hand side. Overcome this deceptively strenuous crack to gain a ledge and access to easier climbing, via a ledge, on the wall and tower above.

#### Yellow Walls:

North of Curving Crack (SMCJ 1998) is a 100m-long bay with an impassable zawn at the north end. This is home to fulmar and shag colonies and climbing should be avoided until after the nesting season (March-August inclusive). The final 30m of the bay consist of a series of taller yellow walls and corners which reach down almost to high tide level.

Sugaree – 32m VS 4c\*. M. Hudson, P. Arden, A. Holden. 22nd August, 1998. This route takes the right-hand area of the yellow walls just before the ground rises up in blocks to the right. Start at a smooth area of wall sporting a sequence of sharp jugs. An improbable seepage may be flowing 1m to the left. Lots of small wires needed. Use the jugs to pull up steeply into balance and step left to a short groove. An awkward series of moves leads up this to a fishy ledge. Move up and right into a smooth left-facing corner. Some awkward mantelshelves lead to the easier steep wall above, climbed 2m left of the corner. Belay well back on big blocks.

10m left of Sugaree and a little higher is a very smooth yellow wall holding a line of cleaned flakes and steps. This and the next two lines share a stake belay just above the clifftop path. Rope lengths given are to the stake.

Cornflake Wall – 40m VS 4b\*. M. Hudson, A. Holden. 30th October, 1998. Climb the central crack system steeply, but easily, until forced leftwards across the wall. A steep move up leads to a sentry box. Step back right to a fishy ledge. Finish diagonally right and exit over a precarious flake in the corner.

5m right lie two fine-looking parallel groove lines. Both are well protected, steep and strenuous, with exacting finishes.

1 & 1 Groove – 45m HVS 5a\*\*\*. M. Hudson, A. Holden, N. Bassnett. 31st October, 1998.

Climb the right-hand groove.

Barabbas – 45m HVS 5b\*\*\*. A. Holden, N. Bassnett. 30th October, 1998. Climb the left-hand groove.

The next route climbs the ridge or headland that juts out opposite the Yellow Walls across the small zawn. Plenty of seacliff atmosphere for the grade. It is possible to descend a blocky north-facing, guano-filled gully 100m north of the zawn. Scramble back south along the base of the cliff to gain the promontory: avoid rough seas. As for the Yellow Walls, this area is home to shag and fulmar colonies, and climbing should be avoided during the nesting season.

Zawn Ridge – 40m Severe 4b\*. M. Hudson, P. Arden. 20th February, 1999.

At sea (barnacle) level, traverse as far as possible into the zawn until ensconced on a small sheltered platform below a steep chimney-crack leading straight up the ridge. Climb this chimney (crux) till a blocky ramp is reached – possible belay. Follow the ramp up and right in an atmospheric position poised above the zawn. At

a shattered ledge, step left and climb a slim corner then follow the blocky arête above, belaying on blocks at the landward end of the ridge.

#### Cumhann Geodha:

Coelenterate Corner - 15m HVS 5a\*. G. Latter, M. Boyce. 1st July, 1999.

The corner in the centre of the face, starting from small mid-tide ledge on the left.

### Bay 5, Lighthouse Wall:

How the West Was Won, with Alternate Start – 25m HVS 5a\*. G. Latter, M. Boyce. 1st July, 1999.

The right corner bending left to join the original route at mid-height.

Orca – 25m E2 5b\*. G. Latter, M. Boyce. 1st July, 1999.

The steep corner at the back of the bay, the base gained by a diagonal abseil westwards from the fenceposts. Climb the corner, finishing with care up the final wall.

Note: G. Latter is not sure how this relates to Neisty Beisty.

Farther west, beyond the foghorn and the last described route in the guide (Horny Corner) is a short (c. 12m) immaculate wall, with two faces dropping into the sea. Ideal for deep water soloing, as there are no ledges at the base (beware of the jellyfish). Two routes following prominent crack-lines on the less imposing west face were climbed – down the rightmost line (Severe 4a), traversing left and up the undercut leftmost one (VS 4c). Both G. Latter, 13th July, 1999. An area of excellent rock, worthy of further exploration.

### **DUNVEGAN HEAD, Am Famhair:**

This is a free-standing arch/sea stack on the north-east coast of Duirinish, just over 1km north of Galtrigill towards Dunvegan Head, at M.R. 183 558. Park at the end of the road. The stack is visible from the clifftop path after a 20-minute walk, and a steep path leads down to the stack, which is accessible at all states of tide.

Am Famhair - 20m VS 4b. A. Holden, M. Hudson. 25th May, 1998.

Start up the north-west face at a right-facing corner. Climb the corner to a ledge on the left at half height. Traverse left round the arête and climb cracks to a loose finish. The top is grass with no obvious belays: descend by simultaneous abseil.

#### TORR A' CHRUIDH:

This small outcrop is situated about 30m above the sea near the mouth of Loch Greshornish (M.R. 365 562). It has prominent columnar jointing (end on), and attains a maximum height of 15m. D. Peck reports an ascent of an obvious shallow groove on the left.

### STAFFIN, Elishadder Wall:

Skyscraper - 40m E2 5b\*\*. P. Donnithorne, E. Alsford. 1st June, 1999.

Climbs the overhang-capped groove right of Received with Thanks. Start at the ivy patch and climb easily up right to the groove. Sustained bridging leads to the big roof which is skirted on the left to finish up a nice crack.

#### Kilt Rock:

Godzilla – 40m E3 6a\*\*\*. E. Alsford, P. Donnithorne. 1st June, 1999.

The groove between Skyeman and Wide-eyed has some tricky moves low down and fine sustained climbing all the way to the top.

The following lines are to be found on the lichenous east face. Most of the routes

### Sgeir Bhan (Staffin Slip North):

referred to were reported in SMCJ 1998. Walk left or south of Staffin Classic, past an ivy-covered wall, to an area of four distinctive semi-detached columns. Between the first two columns, a clean wall tops off a steep vegetable patch. *Silvester Moon* – 43m HVS\*\*. R. Brown, D. Pattullo. 31st December, 1998. Takes twin cracks on the right-hand side of the wall adjacent to column one. 1. 13m 4a. Negotiate a passage to the ledge. Start right, traverse left, then back right. 2. 30m 5a. Climb the right-hand layaway crack to a small stance. Move up and over

**Note:** Big Farm Weekly lies between Loose Woman and Persistent Vegetated State (SMCJ 1997). Fourth Column climbs the smaller detached column some 15m left of Big Farm Weekly.

Mr Scratchy - 23m E1 5b\*. M. Hudson, A. Holden. 21st August, 1998.

the roof on good holds. The twin cracks above give good sport.

The boot-width crack on the front of the fourth column – the first ascent team kept their walking boots on. No single move of this climb is remotely enjoyable, yet it remains an honourable undertaking. Camalot#4s and hex#11s protect. Jam upward past a rest ledge and chockstone at 8m, calling on a painful repertoire of arm wedges, boot and body jams. Impossible to grade but toughest at the top. Descend by simultaneous abseil as for Fourth Column.

Farther uphill (left of the crack of Skyscraper), a large corner constrains the path. The following line takes the arête on the higher face.

Frequent Flyer – 20m HVS 5b\*\*\*. D. Pattuulo, R. Brown, J. Walters. 22nd May, 1998.

A good route with consistent, clean climbing and adequate protection. Start beside the small detached flake and climb the crack for about 8m to an obvious ledge. Move right and continue up the arête and crack to the finishing crux.

The next route starts 3m left of Dogs and Wolves, and takes the right-hand side of the big square-cut overhang.

Independence - 15m E2 5c\*\*. C. Spencer, M. Hudson. 4th July, 1998.

Climb direct to the roof. Move out and left over the overhang using undercuts to gain steep jams. Swing out and finish direct on steep but straightforward ground.

Immediately left of A White Tail of Hogmanay a crack twists into a triangulated groove capped at mid height.

*Vienna Triangle* – 15m El 5b\*. R. Brown, D. Pattullo J. Walters. 22nd May, 1998. Climb the crack and lose oneself in the triangle. Escape by moving left before reaching the block on the upper headwall.

### RUBHA HUNISH, Meal Tuath:

Details of the route reported in SMCJ 1998 are as follows:

*Drifting Too Far From Shore* – 80m E8\*\*\*. W. Birkett, D. Birkett. 17th September, 1996.

Takes the central weakness of the crag by discontinuous grooves through overlaps, to reach a fine crack running directly up the headwall. Start 10m left of Northern Lights just left of nose.

- 1. 55m 6a. Climb the weakness, trending up the cracks formed by detached pinnacles, to the wall below the first band of overhangs. Step up left to gain the overlap and pull over (first crux) to gain a shallow corner. Climb to a small roof, pull into the corner above (second crux), and continue to easier ground. Pull up the corner and over a detached block to gain a poor stance and belay just down and right of a huge detached boulder.
- 2. 25m 6c. A serious, sustained and precarious pitch. With immediate difficulty and poor gear, climb a shallow corner directly above belay to join a diagonal crack which comes in from the right. Continue up crack to overhang in headwall. Pull up strenuously right through this to gain crack splitting final headwall. Continue without respite to the top.

### **Meal Deas:**

About 25m south-west of the Minch and Tatties buttress lies a tall pyramidal tower, the tip of which is split by a crack. The next route gains and climbs this crack, finishing up the cliff face behind.

Questionnaire - 60m VS\*. M. Hudson, A. Holden. 27th May, 1998.

Approach by mounting the scree left of the tower to the right-hand corner, then making a short scramble rightwards up a dusty bank to belay on some giant flakes. This avoids the fudgy lower section of cliff.

- 1. 30m 4c. Traverse easily rightwards, then climb round onto the front face in a spectacular position. Gain the crack in the face above, which is followed (crux) to a ramp. A more vegetated arête leads to the top of the pinnacle. Belay back at the saddle where the pinnacle joins the main cliff.
- 2. 30m 4c. Climb carefully up to the left-hand of the cracks directly above, which is followed on good jams to the clifftop.

# NORTHERN HIGHLANDS SOUTH AND WEST (VOLUME ONE)

#### **NEW GUIDE:**

Since the new guide is some way off, a summary of all the crags in this area is now on the SMC Website (under Activities). In addition, there are full descriptions for the routes at Gruinard (including Jetty Buttress) and the Stone Valley Crags.

#### GLEN SHIEL, Creag Lundie Slabs (MR 153 108):

M. Hudson sent some route descriptions. The Kyle/Dornie climbers use it for evenings, so the routes may have been climbed many times.

#### SAIL CHAORAINN:

Distant Groove - 70m III,4. A. Nisbet. 27th March, 2000.

The crag is on the west side of the north top (1001m) and is well seen when walking north from the south top (1002m). MR 133 158. It is also disappointingly small. The route takes a central groove, trending right to a rockfall scar, up its left edge before moving left to a steep finish. The left edge of the crag was also climbed (scrappy Grade II).

#### SGURR AN LOCHAIN:

Direct Evasion – Climbed direct up the chimney groove on pitch 1 to the stance

below the narrow cave. IV,5 overall and worthwhile. N. Edwards, C. Gardiner, M. Moran on 27th February, 2000.

### BEINN FHADA, Coire an Sgairne:

Tramlines - 140m IV,6. D. McGimpsey, A. Nisbet. 1st March, 2000.

Climbs the crest left of the great wall. Start up a groove system left of the crest until flakey ground leads out to the crest above its first steep section. Pull over a bulge and climb twin cracks in the second corner left of the crest. The finishing crest is easy. Grade II apart from one short pitch. The route has been climbed in summer but including both the steep sections in the crest (Severe but rather vegetated).

### MORUISG, The Great Grey Slab of Moruisg (SMCJ 1997):

Rock Surfer – 95m HVS\*. R. Biggar, J. R. Mackenzie. 23rd August, 1999. Moving left along the rake below the main slab, the most arresting feature is a steep smooth slab with a prominent A-shaped notch cut out of the bottom overlap. Start

- 1. 45m 4c. Climb up to the notch on friction (crux) and through it (first protection above) to continue up the slab to a terrace and Friend belay by Close to the Edge. A fine and bold pitch, easier than it looks.
- 2. 50m 4b. Climb the initially easy slab left of that route to the steeper top section. Climb straight up to the shallow corner right of the double overlapped corner of The President's Men and finish up this on better holds.

Brittle Times – 90m E1\*. R. Biggar, J. R. Mackenzie. 23rd August, 1999.

This varied and bold route takes the slab to the right of the big grassy corner and left of The President's Men on scanty protection. Move up the rake to start up a smooth slab left of the first pitch of The President's Men.

- 1. 20m 4b. Friction the slab and up edges to the terrace.
- 2. 45m 4b. Climb the slab right of the big corner and just left of an overlapped edge, over steeper overlaps to an easing and Friend belay in a slot above.
- 3. 25m 5a .Climb the steeper concave slab midway between the big corner and the top pitch of The Presidents Men, taking a smooth slab left of a thin grassy crack to the top.

#### GLAS BHEINN:

The Beasts Lair – 130m IV,5. J. Lyall, R. Webb. December, 1999.

From the Bealach a' Glas-chnoic, walk just south of west for 1km until a deep chimney/gully appears on the left. This is the route (MR approx. 890 446).

Slab Boys – 150m IV,4. M. Eurolander, R. Webb. February, 2000. As for Slab and Groove, except climb the slab all the way on a strip of ice.

#### **FUAR THOLL, Mainreachan Buttress:**

Moriarty - 180m E4. B. Davison, A. Nisbet. 31st July, 1999.

A line just right of Sherlock and forced to share two belays and a short section. Start at a small rib right of the bay at the base of Sherlock.

1. 30m 5a. Climb the rib, then go diagonally left across a steep wall above the bay to enter and climb a chimney-corner which leads to the right end of the ledge of Sherlock.

2. 15m 6b. Climb the groove above the right end of the ledge to roofs. Swing out left on to the arête and traverse delicately left to the belay of Sherlock.

3. 15m 5b. This pitch is a direct version of Sherlock's pitch 4, possibly the original line but not the necessary line to make Sherlock HVS (the grade in the current guide is Scottish VS). Start up the groove of Sherlock but continue over a bulge and the groove above.

4. 40m 5a. Traverse right, then go up to a ramp. Follow this a short way, then climb

straight up grooves.

5. 50m 4b. Take a right-trending line up a depression (parallel to Sherlock).

6. 30m. Finish straight up.

**Note:** D. McGimpsey and A. Nisbet repeated Enigma/Sleuth, Original Winter Route on 29th February, 2000, but with a start near the summer route of Sleuth. Despite the description in the current guide, the line marked in photo B35 of the MacInnes guide is accurate and the route was probably the hardest in Scotland at the time (it was considered VII,7).

Sleuth Start - 60m VII,7.

A recommended start near the summer route which keeps the route nearly separate from winter Enigma below the Great Terrace and, although slightly harder than the Original Route crux, is in keeping with it. Start right of Sleuth summer and about 25m up from the toe of the cliff at a short ramp which slants up leftwards into a steep groove of vertical flakes. Climb the ramp and groove to a ledge (20m). A line of weakness now slants up left to join the summer route and continues to the First Terrace, joining the Original Winter Route (40m).

#### Lower South-East Nose:

A Right Cheek – 130m VS. A. Nisbet. 20th May, 1999.

A route up the steeper ground right of the Nose Direct, crossing the fault of Lair Wall. Start below a lighter coloured rib which forms the right side of a bay with a rowan tree.

1. 45m 4c. Climb the rib to the first stance of Lair Wall.

2. 45m 4c. Move right and climb near a crackline which goes to the right end of a roof system. Move out right in a spectacular position and up to a terrace.

3. 40m. Move left and climb a rib of booming flakes to scrambling (also an alternative finish to Nose Direct).

### SGURR A' CHAORACHAIN, Summit Buttress:

**Note:** B. Davison and A. Nisbet made a free ascent of Big Daddy on 1st August, 1999 at E3 5c.

### BEINN BHAN, Coire an Fhamhair:

Genesis - 310m VII, 7. A. Cave, D. Hesleden. 20th February, 2000.

Climbs the stunning line formed by an overhanging chimney/chasm at the left side of the cliff. Sustained at a reasonable grade and with good belays, this route has an intimidating ambiance. The situations are superb.

1.30m. Climb up to the base of the overhanging chimney and traverse out left along an obvious narrow turf ledge with interest to belay up and left.

2. 35m. Climb rightwards across a steep wall onto a small ledge and then climb the short leftward-facing corner. Move out right to a second corner and climb its right

wall on thin ice to a terrace above, gaining the main chimney line. Belay out left on a huge natural thread.

3. 25m. Move right and climb up under a hanging icicle. Climb a steep left-facing corner on the right. At its top traverse right along turf and mantel boldly up to belay on a huge monolithic block. Steep and exposed.

4. 45m. Traverse left across the wall (minimal protection) to reach thin ice in the main chimney line. Follow this (bold) to a giant chockstone. Climb under and then

on to the chockstone and belay. Fantastic.

5. 25m. Climb the steep groove above with interest.

Now follow easy snow for two-and-a-half pitches to the top (150m).

### Coire Toll a' Bhein, Breach Buttress:

The Weed - 230m IV,5. D. McGimpsey, A. Nisbet. 19th December, 1999.

A direct route up the rightmost ridge (Illegal Grass, SMCJ 1998 is an indirect version). Start as for Illegal Grass to the steep band. This was tackled centrally starting up a big block with jammed flakes. Two further groove pitches led to the easier final crest and the top tower was taken direct.

# BEN DAMPH FOREST, Kinlochdamph Crag (Creag na Saobhaidhe) MR 869 477. West-facing cliff base 150m:

A sandstone crag with interesting climbing features but slightly lichenous. Some routes are slow to dry; others are quick in the afternoon sun. The crag is seen from the A896 Lochcarron to Shieldaig road. Park on this and walk or cycle down the tarmac road to Ceann-loch-damh, cross the river (no bridge) and follow the path until climbing the heathery hillside to the crag. 30-40 minutes.

The crag is separated into two halves by a large pinnacle at its base. Left of the pinnacle are several grooves. Right of it is an impressive prow high up and a smooth overhanging wall at the right end of the crag. The left end of the frontal face of the crag coincides with the end of trees at its base. Here the crag turns from west-facing to NW-facing and vegetated. In the arête forming this change of aspect is a slim bottomless groove, the first route from the left.

Raven Seek Thy Brother – 30m E2 5c. M. Moran, A. Nisbet. 24th June, 1999. Start at the base of the cliff below the groove. Climb a short steep wall to pull on to the ledge below the groove. Climb the groove, very helpful until the last move, to gain a ledge. Finish up a difficult short wall.

Beauty and the Beast – 30m E2 5c. M. Moran, A. Nisbet. 23rd June, 1999. A left-rising line. Between the end groove and several big grooves to the right is a cracked overhanging wall forming the left and of the front face. Start just left of the

cracked overhanging wall forming the left end of the front face. Start just left of the leftmost big groove and climb a shallow chimney and slab on its left to the overhanging wall. From an obvious undercling flake, reach left over the overhang and mantel on to a big sloping ledge. Move left and gain a higher ledge. Move left again and finish up the difficult short wall as for Raven Seek Thy Brother.

Den of Iniquity - 30m E4 6b. M. Moran (unsec.). 23rd June, 1999.

The leftmost of several big grooves left of the pinnacle. Start at the same point as Beauty and the Beast but go straight up a corner to step right into the groove. Climb the groove by imaginative wide bridging over an initial overhanging section, then more easily to the top.

Here be Dragons – 25m E1 5b. A. Nisbet, M. Moran. 23rd June, 1999. Climbs the next groove right, a smaller one with two chimneys. Start from the left edge of a big vegetated platform 5m up from the base of the cliff. Step left into the base of the groove (or climb direct from below) and climb a short wall to the first chimney. Climb this chimney, a wall and the second chimney to holly trees on a ledge. Fight through the hollies and up a corner to finish.

*Ivy League* – 25m E1 5b. A. Nisbet, M. Moran, W. Skidmore. 16th June, 1999. The next groove, deep and left-facing. Start from the back of the platform. Climb a left-slanting crack (originally ivy covered), making use of a flake on the right, to a ledge at the base of the groove (hard). Continue up the main groove with one hard section near the top.

Beasts' Lair – 30m E1 5b. A. Nisbet, M. Moran. 24th June, 1999. The groove/corner behind and just left of the pinnacle. Start in the cleft behind a huge block which lies between the pinnacle and the cliff, at its outer end. Chimney up to gain a small corner and the ledge at its top. Move right into the corner and climb it to a big ledge just below the top. Move left across the back wall of the ledge to finish up a flake.

Cat's Claw – 6m Severe. M. Moran. 26th April, 1999. Climbs the back side of the pinnacle by a stiff pull up on to the arête.

Needle's Edge – 18m E1 5a. M. Moran (unsec.). 28th April, 1999.

Takes the smooth right-hand edge of the front face of the pinnacle; climb the lower arête to a good break then make committing moves up left on to the unprotected upper arête which eases to the top of the pinnacle.

Sleeping Dog Climb – 45m V. Diff. M. Moran, A. Moran. 1st May, 1999. Moving 15m right from the pinnacle, the last easy line before steep walls is a chimney under the left side of the prow.

1. 20m. Climb the chimney.

2. 25m. Traverse left where the chimney meets the overhanging upper wall, bridge across a gap and hand traverse a flake to reach a good break leading up to the top of the crag. The finish is slow to dry.

Crusade Corner - 50m Severe. M. Moran. 1st May, 1999.

1. 25m. Climb the chimney of Sleeping Dog Climb until it is possible to bridge across to a traverse shelf leading down and right to a belay under the overhanging prow.

2.25m. Move right into the corner right of the prow; climb it past bushes to a deeper

finishing chimney.

Hasta la Bista – 50m E2 5c. J. Allott, M. Moran. 16th June, 1999.

About 5m right of the chimney are two roofs, the right above the left. Start under the left roof.

1. 22m 5c. Climb right-slanting slabs under the roofs until a short overhanging crack just to the right of the right roof leads up to a midway terrace and belay under the prow on Crusade Corner.

2. 28m 5a. Traverse 8m right and climb open slabs to a striking final prow; climb the crack in its right side or, if wet, traverse 5m to an easier finishing crack.

### Creag Dubh an t-Sall (MR 862 532):

A sandstone crag which gets the afternoon sun. The black area is easily seen when driving east towards Beinn Damh on the south side of Loch Torridon.

Gondola - 20m VS 4b\*. M. McLeod, C. Moody. 6th April, 1996.

At the right side of the crag is a prominent arête. Climb the shallow chimney right of it.

*Che Guevara* – 20m VS 4c\*. C. Moody, M. McLeod. 6th April, 1996. Start up Gondola. Traverse on to the arête and climb it. A more direct start would be harder.

Nematode – 30m VS 4c. C. Moody, M. McLeod. 6th April, 1996. To the left is a watercourse. Climb the open corner just left of it.

Rock Agus Roll – 30m E1 5b\*\*. C. Moody, M. McLeod. 6th April, 1996. A few metres left. Climb up to gain a crack which leads to the right side of an overhang. Step right and climb a crack up leftwards. Move up right to finish up a steep crack.

Telegraph Pole – 30m E2 5b\*\*. C. Moody, M. McLeod, R. Lupton. 12th May, 1996.

Just left is a crack. Gain it from the left and climb it to finish up twin cracks.

Cuir Tigear Na Do Thanc – 30m E3 5c\*\*. C. Moody, M. McLeod. 6th April, 1996. Left of Telegraph Pole the cliff base is vertical; left again it is slabby with a crack which has a patch of grass 3m up. Go easily up beside the crack, then follow it steeply until it ends. Step right and climb another crack. Continue straight up with sparse protection to finish up a left-facing corner.

# LIATHACH, Coire Dubh Beag:

*Nil Can't* – 250m II. J. Abery, R. Bennie, E. Gillespie, J. Leedale, A. Nisbet, J. Preston. 22nd January, 2000.

Start up the large snow ramp passing under The Executioner and continue to its end where it becomes a shallow chimney. Go up this to a terrace, then turn straight up and climb short walls and terraces to finish on the crest at the top of the final tower of Rambler's Rib.

#### Coire Dubh Mor:

*Wacky Races* – 300m III,5. D. McGimpsey, A. Nisbet. 19th February, 2000. A route up the large rambling terraced buttress formed left of the snow gully of Way Up. Start at the base of the buttress and find the easiest line on turf or ice to reach a barrier wall at half height. Climb this fairly centrally (crux), then finish trending right.

Round the Bend – 150m V,7. S. Allan, A. Nisbet. 27th December, 1999. Climbs an iced groove right of the icefall of The Bender. Start up a series of shallow

iced grooves parallel and right of The Bender to reach the main iced groove. Climb the groove to where it overhangs and the ice finishes. Step left and climb a shallow, parallel but less overhanging groove to a terrace. A Friend#0 was used for aid to clear snow from the exit (almost managed free). Finish up a chimney on the right, then a shorter chimney.

Chinook – 160m VI,6. S. Anderson, M. Moran, M. Welch. 4th March, 2000. Climbs the ice line which sometimes forms 15m right of Poacher's; a good independent route.

1.50m. Climb icy grooves passing a big pedestal on the right to a cramped stance under an overlap.

2. 40m. Swing on to an ice fringe at the lip and follow the slab corner above to belay in a dry corner left of an icicle.

3. 25m. Climb the steep icicle and move right to block belays.

4.55m. Move 5m back left, climb iced rock, an ice corner and a mixed chimney to easy ground.

Test Department Variation Finish – 70m VII,7. C. Piccolruaz, J. Oberhauser. 12th March, 1999.

A mixed finish up the final wall, trending right up thin slabby ground to a vague crest (the normal route trends left up an icy groove).

The Sinister Prawn – 230m V,6. D. McGimpsey, A. Nisbet. 19th February, 2000. The right side of the face has a steep prow high up. This is on a rib left of the gully of George. Start at the base of George but move out left on fairly steep ice on to the rib. Climb a series of icy/turfy grooves to the impressive prow. Pass this on the right via grooves and a final awkward short wall (which could be easier or harder depending on the amount of ice). Finish direct up mixed ground.

## Meall Dearg, North Face:

*Coriolis* – 250m III. P. Astle, N. Cooper, A. Nisbet. 21st February, 2000. Gain and climb a turfy groove left of North Ridge (originally called North Flank). Where this peters out, climb steep turf direct to the final tier of North Ridge. Climb this on the crest, then continue up the easier upper crest to reach the east ridge of Meall Dearg.

#### BEINN EIGHE, Coire Mhic Fhearchair, West Central Wall:

**Note:** J. Currie and G. Robertson repeated Blood, Sweat and Frozen Tears, and thought it high quality and worth VIII,8.

#### Sail Mhor:

No. 2 Gully – 300m VI, 7. B. Davison, D. McGimpsey, A. Nisbet, D. Wilkinson. 4th March, 2000.

An impressive deep gully with a fierce headwall. The gully is easy until it turns left. Soon there is a chokestone pitch which can bank out and leads to the headwall. Continue up the back of the gully until forced to traverse left. Either climb ice in the left corner or a pile of blocks just to the right until steep ground forces a return traverse to near the gully bed (45m). Climb the gully into a small cave (25m). Chimney out the top of the cave to the final groove which finishes on a flat platform

on the crest of the buttress, here joining Lawson, Ling and Glover's Route (25m). Follow this to the top.

### SGURR BAN, North-East Face (MR 976 601):

The most prominent feature of the cliff is a right-slanting ramp which becomes a gully and splits the cliff into two halves. The right half is bigger but with less good rock (and a big rock fall scar). Where the ramp first becomes gully, the right wall is formed by a rock island. The wall opposite this island is the left half of the cliff, and has a steep prow with three cracklines which provide the best rock climbs. This steep wall is bounded on its left by a gully.

The Grotto - 80m III. A. Nisbet. 2nd December, 1999.

The gully is unfortunately short (low in the grade), but with a remarkable 15m subterranean pitch. It starts from near the base of the ramp, easy at first. A big chockstone blocks the gully and a pitch was climbed on the wall to its left followed by a short traverse back in. The gully is now blocked by an apparent overhanging wall. Enter a cave at the base of the wall, then back and foot outwards, go under a chockstone, then back and foot inwards to exit through a hole. The gully is easy to finish.

Ban the Bomb - 50m E1 5a. B. Davison, A. Nisbet. 29th July, 1999.

From the base of the gully section, scramble up left for 10m on to a ledge (about V. Diff.). Start here. The rock is poorer than on the prow. Go diagonally left along a flake-line passing under clean white rock to reach a pinnacle-block. Go up from here on grey rock trending first right then left to the top.

Hope - 50m E2 5b. B. Davison, A. Nisbet. 30th July, 1999.

The left-hand crack-line. Start from the same ledge. Pass a roof by moving out left and back right (requires faith but low in the grade).

Faith - 50m E2 5c. B. Davison, A. Nisbet. 30th July, 1999.

The middle crackline, which leads directly up from the start of the scramble to the ledge. It has two hard bulges separated by steep rock. The hope is that the crack is dry; otherwise add a grade for bridging.

Charity - 50m E1 5b. B. Davison, A. Nisbet. 29th July, 1999.

Start level with the top of the rock island. The right crack-line is on the right side of the prow and passes right of its band of overhangs.

Spin Gully - 200m I. B. Davison, A. Nisbet. 27th March, 1999.

The ramp and gully, best included on the ascent of Sgurr Ban by dropping down from the col and climbing the ramp and gully to finish nearly on the summit.

Scarface - 75m E1 5b. B. Davison, A. Nisbet. 29th July, 1999.

Climbs the impressive crest of the right section but a big rockfall scar drops some hints. Start round on the front face about 10m up a ramp which forms the base of the cliff.

- 1. 30m 5b. Climb a left-facing corner, much harder than it looks, in several steps to a big flake-line (visible from the top of the left section of cliff).
- 2. 30m 4c. Traverse right to the last flake. Stand on it to pull on to the wall above

and climb this trending slightly right to reach the left edge of the huge rockfall scar. 3. 15m 5a. Climb leftwards through the steep final wall.

# TORRIDON CRAGS, Creag nan Leumnach, Lower Crag:

Kermit's Crack - 30m E3 6a\*. P. Thorburn, I. Taylor. August, 1999.

Climbs a thin crack between Vanishing Frog and the descent chimney. Bridge up the descent chimney to a ledge, then pull left on to the wall. Climb to a break, then pull through a steepening above. Go up the wall, then trend right and go up to finish on a heather ledge.

**Upper Crag:** 

Completely out to Lunge – 25m E5 6b\*\*. I. Taylor, P. Thorburn. August, 1999. A bold route with a bouldery crux, which climbs the shallow scoop right of Block and Beak. Start up Block and Beak to a ledge, then go right and pull on to a small ramp. Climb the wall above until a long lunge gains a projecting hold. Just above is a good break for large Friends. Finish more easily.

### MEALL A' GHIUBHAS, Nature Trail Area:

There are several areas of crag to the SW of Loch Maree which are approached from the Nature Trail paths.

## The Quartzite Crags:

Situated at about 400m, these crags are approached by the eastern trail and are at MR 998 638. Though promising from a distance, they are fairly loose and unlikely to be more than 60m high. Some are sound, particularly moving uphill and though it is likely climbs have been done, none are recorded. The soundest and perhaps most obvious is the farthest uphill, a slabby sound buttress just right of the path. *Path Buttress* – 40m Diff. J. R. Mackenzie. 1st May, 1999.

Start at the lowest point, climb the rib, move right and climb the steeper top section centrally.

## The Great Red Slab (MR 987 648):

Approx. altitude 400m, North-facing. Most easily approached from the western path of the Nature Trail. Follow this to the 300m level. Traverse across heather well below the crags to a lone tree. Go straight up through jungle for another stretch whereupon the slab suddenly becomes visible. Composed of superb sandstone of a clean and rough nature, save the lowest tier which is more blocky, it gives excellent climbing in the lower grades. Descents are to the right down a slippery gully.

Money Lenders Slab - 100m Severe\*. J. R. Mackenzie. 1st May, 1999.

Start at a little cave below a wide corner to the right of centre of the lower tier. Climb the steep left wall of the corner, step right and pull over via a small tree. Move a metre right, climb a pair of wedged flakes and step right on to the slabby nose. Climb this pleasantly to a small ledge and then climb the slabby wall to the right of a short corner to easy ground. Move up to the next tier which is of sound clean rock. Climb a shallow groove which is left of centre direct to the top; this gives the best climbing on the route.

*Great Expectations* – 150m V. Diff.\*\*. J. R. Mackenzie. 1st May, 1999. This climbs the right edge of the slab, overlooking the retaining west wall. An

excellent climb, gaining interest with height, all on superb clean rock. Start at a steep little slab at the base; climb this to easy slabs which lead naturally to the edge. Climb the steeper slabs above through grooves and corners, all on the right edge, to a much steeper section. This is climbed overlooking the edge on good holds, stepping left past a loose block. Climb more slabs and corners overlooking the right edge to a final steep wall on the left which is split by a slanting crack. Climb the left wall of the crack, which has two loose flake holds, to a rather stretchy exit.

The Great Red Slab – 80m V. Diff. R. Simpson, D. Morrison. 26th March, 2000. This route starts up and right of Great Expectations, though possibly joining it at the top. Start 2m right of a short left-slanting chimney (cairn).

1.30m. Climb a short steep wall to a niche. Move right and climb slabs past a small detached block to a ledge below and left of a large detached block.

2. 25m. Climb the slabs above to a obvious stepped corner. Climb this to a ledge, climb to another ledge and belays.

3. 25m. Step left and climb slabs, passing a right-facing corner to easy ground and belays.

### Cave Crag (MR 987 651):

About 300m west of the Great Red Slab, and level with its base, is a small crag with a prominent cave. Climb into the cave which becomes a chasm. On the right wall isan obvious crack.

Chasm Crack – 10m M. Severe. D. Morrison, R. Simpson 26th March, 2000. This gives an entertaining climb up slightly friable rock to a ledge, just below the top of a huge detached pinnacle. Either abseil off the *in situ* sling, climb to the top of the pinnacle and jump the gap (not recommended), or traverse via a through route and down climb awkwardly to another large chasm.

Note: There are dangerous hidden holes at the top of the crag.

#### North-East Face (MR 981 638):

Persecution Rib – 200m Severe. J. R. Mackenzie. 1st May, 1999.

The face is characterised by a long broken rib of steep tiers separated by scree and grass. The rib is left of the existing winter route but is a poor climb; a central start might improve it a little. Start at the steep wall at the base. On the left is a jutting block; climb over this from the left, move up right and climb a short chimney. Traverse left to below steep slabs which are followed to the crest. Go up easy ground to the next tier, which is taken left of centre, as is the tier above that. The final tier is of better rock and is taken by the centre of three grooves.

# TORRIDON SANDSTONE CRAGS, Creag an Fhithich (SMCJ 1995, p651):

The sandstone crags well seen from the Ben Damph Bar (using their correct name). Many of the grades given in SMCJ 1995 seem too high.

4 Trees – 30m Severe 4a. D. Allan. 25th April, 1999.

Climb the left side of the slabby left section just right of four small trees. Start at a small left-facing corner and finish up a crack beside the last tree.

#### Seana Mheallan:

Left of Left in the Lurch and right of Rowantree Crack is a recessed area of rock. It consists of an inset slab with a steep headwall which angles into a corner with a

vertical left wall. The following routes lie in this area. Forgotten Corner and Rejection both finish up the twin cracks in the corner as for Reject (SMCJ 1994). Forgotten Corner – 25m VS 4c. A .Fyffe, A. Salisbury. 18th May, 1999.

This is the big right-facing corner. Climb the corner, slabby at first, and continue up the steepening to step left to the obvious ledge. Finish up the twin cracks in the corner.

Skirting the Issue – 25m VS 4c. A. Fyffe, A. Salisbury. 18th May, 1999. Start at the foot of Forgotten Corner and climb the short steep groove and diagonal crack to a triangular vegetated niche. Continue up the corner cracks above and exit right below the top steep main corner. Finish easily.

Rejection – 25m HVS 5a. A. Fyffe, A. Salisbury. 18th May, 1999. The obvious jam crack in the left wall. Gain the crack from the foot of Forgotten

The obvious jam crack in the left wall. Gain the crack from the foot of Forgotten Corner and follow it to the ledge on the left. Finish up the twin corner cracks.

### Western Sector (SMCJ 1995, p 650):

The first two routes are on a prow with three grooves (cairn below) which offers a preliminary change of aspect 50m before the main change to the Western Sector. *Cairn Terrier* – 15m VS 5a. A. Nisbet, C. Watkins. 13th June, 1999.

The left groove has a bulge blocking access to a well-defined V-section leading to the top.

Cairnaholics Anonymous – 15m Severe 4a. A. Nisbet, G. Nisbet, C. Watkins. 13th June 1999.

The middle and right grooves diverge about 5m up. This is the slabby right groove, almost a ramp.

*Unnamed* – E1 5b\*\*. C. Moody, L. Gordon Canning. 9th June, 1999. The crack left of Unmasked. Climb up left then climb the crack to the right of the bulging nose.

Clockwork Rat – 20m E1 5b. A. Nisbet, C. Watkins. 13th July, 1999. Strenuous, but well protected. Start up the corner of Mechanical Sheep but soon move right to gain a crack in its right wall. Follow the crack round the right arête to a roof and rockfall scar. Go through the left side of the roof and finish up the

Sleeping Sickness – 12m HVS 5a. C. Moody, L. Gordon Canning. 9th June, 1999. At the right side of the wall with Mr Bean, just right of the roof, are three faint cracklines running up slightly left; follow them.

## DIABAIG, Crofter's Crag (SMCJ 1999):

Jammy Dodger – 8m 4c. R. McAllister (followed by others). 11th July, 1999. The left side of the next wall left of the corner of 8-Ace is climbed largely on jugs but unprotected.

#### SLIOCH:

continuation crack.

Stepped Ridge – 250m V,5. N. Wilson, R. Webb. 5th April, 2000. Start as for the summer line, then climb by grooves and cracks just left of the crest.

Difficulties increase with height, the crux being the last pitch which is common with the summer direct route. The extra length over the summer routes takes into account the initial gully. There is also a farther 100m of Grade I ground to gain the summit ridge.

### COBLE CRAGS (SRON A' CHOIT):

These are a line of crags overlooking Loch Maree above Victoria Falls at Slattadale (MR 905 706). Six routes of up to 20m were climbed in June 1999 in addition to four previous routes.

#### STONE VALLEY CRAGS, Atlantic Wall:

*Fisherboys* – 12m HVS 5a. P. Tattersall. 21st September, 1999. An obvious thin crack-line in the buttress 10m right of Ancient Mariner.

### Red Barn Crag:

Then What? – 10m 5a. P. Tattersall. 21st September, 1999. The rib 15m right of Hun in the Sun. Climb a wall using finger jugs to the blunt arête.

### Rum Doodle Crag:

Go Lightly - VS 4c. P. Tattersall. 21st September, 1999.

Climbs the buttress left of Totter's Slab. It has a chimney on its right-hand side. Climb the middle of the wall right of the arête past a tiny roof.

# GAIRLOCH CRAGS, Loch Chriostina Crags (Sheet 19; MR 837.820):

Five minutes north of Poolewe on the B8057, these north-facing crags are up to 30m high and are composed of a smooth gneiss that is mossy in places. The climbing is quite sustained and often technical with smallish wires providing the main protection. They dry slowly and are no more than 5 to 10 minutes from the road with limited parking opposite the crags by an old gun emplacement. There are two lines of crag; a lower cleaner tier and a bigger upper tier. The lower tier is described first going from left to right.

Crack Route - 12m Severe.

The leftmost scooped slabby wall separated from the bigger crags to the right by a grass apron. Climb the cracks on the right side of the scoop.

Candle Buttress – 12m VS 5a. J. R. Mackenzie, D. S. B. Wright. 17th September, 1999.

The slender buttress on the left flank of the two biggest ones. Climb up the 'candle' direct by pleasant climbing.

Boor Constrictor – 18m E3 5c\*. J. R. Mackenzie, D. S. B. Wright. 11th August, 1999.

The left-hand of the two central buttresses giving a thin and sustained climb with awkward protection. Start centrally and gain the first horizontal break above the overlap. Move up in the same line the to the next break and step right to a big foothold. Climb more easily to the top.

Slanting Crack - 20m E2 5b\*. G. Ettle, D. S. B. Wright.

The obvious left-hand crack on the right-hand central buttress. Tricky to start with improving protection with height, a fine line.

The Upper Tier:

Left Crack – 25m VS 4c. J. R. Mackenzie, D. S. B. Wright. 11th August, 1999. The left side of the top tier has a slabby buttress steeper than it appears from below. This line takes a slanting crack on the left with the hardest moves in the first half, well protected.

Hanging Flake – 25m HVS 5a\*. D. S. B. Wright, J. R. Mackenzie.11th August, 1999.

A good route with entertaining climbing up the steep slabby wall to the right of the crack. Climb up to a small flake with interest and continue direct to the top on hidden holds.

## Rubha Mor, Opinan Slabs (Sheet 19; MR 879 978):

The slabs are mentioned in SMCJ 1999 have been given this name. The 'easy angled wall accessed by a ramp' now has 10 routes about 20m long. The 'short red slab' is close on the right at sea level, so the two cairns act as a landmark for both slabs. There are now three routes of 10m on this slab, two of which were noted in SMCJ 1999. Recent routes by J. R. Mackenzie, either solo or with I. McWhirter, and one with R. Brown. There are also two routes on the vertical wall below the ramp and two routes on a wall right of 'the short red slab', by J. R. Mackenzie and R. Brown.

### LOCH TOLLAIDH, Raven's Nest, Flag Wall:

This is the overhung short wall just past the left end of Raven's nest and which has two routes.

Crossroads - 10m E5 6b\*\*\*. P. Tattersall. April, 1998.

The wall has an interesting cross intrusion feature. Climb the wall through the left half of the cross to gain a thin crack (Rock#3 at its base) through a bulge. Hard, well protected moves lead to a short hanging groove and easier ground.

Path – 8m E1 5b. P. Tattersall, A. Katzenmeier. February, 1996. The crack on the right, avoiding the temptation to step back at half height.

MacDonald - 40m E4 6a. P. Tattersall, A. Katzenmeier. June, 1999.

Start up Semi-Automatic to reach a diagonal crack which that route now follows left. Pull over a small roof and step right into a groove. At the top of this, climb slightly right to reach better holds. Swing back left on jugs before climbing up to a slab. Climb its left edge to the top (two spikes).

## Fraggle Rock:

Joyful Departure – 15m E3 6a\*. P. Tattersall, A. Katzenmeier. April, 1998. A crack-line at the right-hand end of the roof-line right of Fraggle Roll (Friend#4 at the lip).

The Snapper – 20m HVS 5a. A. Fyffe, A. Cunningham. 25th April, 1999. Right of Waldorf is a downward slanting crack for 5m. At the right end of this are some grooves. This takes the central and best defined of these. Climb up into and up the groove to a block, pass this and go to a roof. Trend up and right naturally to finish.

### The Cloiche Wall:

Distraction - 25m E4 5c. P. Tattersall, A. Katzenmeier. May, 1998.

Halfway between Someone Else's Dream (originally called Pump Action) and White Fright (regraded as E35c) is a shallow groove which ends at about 3m height. Climb the groove and the line above, trending slightly right to reach another left-facing groove. The wall on its right is climbed to join White Fright.

### **Hidden Crag:**

Frog Dance – 20m E4 6a. P. Tattersall, A. Katzenmeier. April, 1999. The thin line 10m right of Buena Vista.

### CREAG MHOR TOLLAIDH, Lower Crag:

Fatg - 20m E2 5c\*. P. Benson, A. Reid. 18th September, 1999.

The route is on the sidewall at the far right of crag, up from Hamilton's Groove and arête. Start below a cave and follow a crack and slabby wall on positive holds to finish up a steep wall to grassy ledge. Probably E3 6a without stepping back on to the roof of the boulder at 5m.

### GRUINARD, Carn Goraig:

The Wicked – 30m E1 5b\*. G. Ettle, P. Thorburn, D. S. B. Wright. 9th July, 1999. Up and left from the main crag is an area of obvious steep walls. This route climbs the prominent crack to a heather ledge, then by the arête on the right on excellent rock in fine situations to belay. Walk off left.

### Carn nam Buailtean (MR 000 869):

Approach as for Carn Goraig, skirting the western edge of this crag and continuing for 1km or so to a line of clean pale crags that run along the hillside. About a mile from the Gruinard River. The hill of Carn nam Buailtean sports many crags of which below are a sample.

The crags are numerous but the main ones are situated on a craggy dome that faces south-west and lies on the right of the hillside. It sports a slender and very clean pale buttress on the right, Sylph Buttress, a broader slabby crag with a tree-covered ledge that starts lower down to its left, Blank Buttress, and a less conspicuous brown coloured crag between them, Stealth Buttress. Above Blank Buttress is a slabby wall that rises from a tree covered balcony, Rock of Ages Buttress. To the left of the craggy dome lies a broad gully and high up on the left of this is an architecturally satisfying crag, Golden Buttress which has a clean-cut slab. At the foot of the gully on the left is the steep Nose Buttress with characteristic black rock.

To the right of Sylph Buttress is a steep broken buttress on a spur of the hillside, Broken Buttress, and beyond Nose Buttress to the left lie a line of slabby buttresses that stretch along the western frontage of Carn nam Buailtean at a much higher level. Between Broken Buttress and Carn Goraig itself lie many one pitch crags, mostly steep, but all on superb rock. All in all this area has the potential for many 15m to 80m routes.

During the months of July and August the crags are visited by colourful species of horse-fly and clouds of midges. This area is not suitable, therefore, for those of a nervous disposition during those months.

**Sylph Buttress:** 

This is the pale slender crag that lies to the right of the big slabby buttress, split into two halves by a thin heather rake. It is bounded on the right by a block-filled gully which has an overhanging left wall. The rock is impeccable white gneiss save on the gully wall which has seen substantial rockfall and has a much less attractive darker fissile rock. Routes are described from right to left. Descents are down the gully to the right, which involves a short straightforward section of down-climbing down a broad crack on its true left bank.

Sylph – 70m Mild VS 4b \*. J. R. Mackenzie, R. Biggar. 11th June, 1999.

This good climb takes the right edge of the buttress. Start on a shelf below a prominent dead tree.

 $1.40 \mathrm{m}$  4a. Climb a short steep wall at its left end via cracks to a slab. Move left to an arête and climb this on superb rock to below the steep upper section which is split

by a crack.

2. 30m 4b. Climb the arête via the crack in an exposed and fine position, past the awkward crux and continue in the same line to the top. A lovely pitch.

*Nymph* – 85m E1 5c\*\*\*. R. Biggar, J. R. Mackenzie. 17th June, 1999.

A superb route with a great second pitch, very well protected. The climb follows a thin central crack-line over the two bulges on the left half of the buttress. Start at a lower tier which lies below a grass shelf.

1. 20m 4b. Climb a steep narrow slab quite boldly to the grass and belay below a

pair of clean ribs.

2. 45m 5c. Climb the right-hand rib then move left to the corner to a bulge, move up and right to a block and arrive beneath the lower bulge at the central crack. Climb the bulge on generous holds and up the crack in the slab to the next bulge. A thin overhanging crack on the right, crux, surmounts the bulge and the climb continues up the slab above to a stance below a further bulge.

3. 20m 4a. Climb the bulge on good holds and finish up a short slab.

Satyr - 65m VS 5a. J. R. Mackenzie, D. S. B. Wright. 25th June, 1999.

A pleasant route that takes a line to the left of Nymph. Start as for Nymph's second pitch. Climb the corner over the bulge and up the thin crack (crux), well protected, to the first overlap. Step up right and climb the slab to the next overlap, taken by the groove on the right, or the left, to a slab and belays by the left edge below an arête (45m 5a). Climb into a groove and climb the clean arête to the top (20m 4a).

#### **Stealth Buttress:**

This lies up a grassy ramp left of Sylph Buttress. The best descent is down the gully as before. There is a prominent nose on arrival with a large flake at its foot and to the left a steep reddish slab with a capping wall. The rock is perfect but protection can be rather skimpy.

Foxbat – 80m VS 4c. D. S. B. Wright, J. R. Mackenzie. 25th June, 1999.

Start at the large flake.

1. 35m 4c. Climb the clean frontal slab direct to a short wall. Climb this directly (crux) to a ledge above.

2. 45m 4c. Climb the clean nose above to a crack, step left and climb a thin slab to below a slab and headwall. Climb the slab to the wall which is turned by the 'hand-traverse' crack and slab above to finish.

Stealth Fighter – 90m E2 5c\*\*. J. R. Mackenzie, D. S. B. Wright, 25th June, 1999. To the left of the last route is a steep reddish pock-marked slab, noticeable by the absence of protection. This fine but serious route climbs the slab direct and takes the capping wall centrally. Rs essential. Start at the lowest point of the slab below some pock-marks.

1. 25m 5c. Climb up to a blank section; a scattering of small R.P. runners only. Step right and up the slab thinly to an obvious hold and up to some welcome protection under a small overlap. Continue thinly up the red slab on the left to a point where a delicate traverse right gains a heather groove and stance with excellent belays. 2. 20m 5b. Step right and up to the overhang and boldly through this on hidden holds

and better protection to a grass ledge above.

3. 45m. Climb the straightforward slab up and right to near the 'hand-traverse' of Foxbat but finish up the left-slanting groove.

#### Blank Buttress:

This is the slabby buttress to the left of Sylph Buttress. It has a prominent tree-covered ledge at one-third height and steep blank slabs above that lead to a short top tier. Descents are easiest by abseil from trees above the top tier; 50m will reach the tree-covered ledge and a scramble down to the left or a shorter abseil from the trees will reach the base. Continuing above the top tiers leads to steep heather with Rock of Ages buttress on the right and a shorter steep crag on the left.

Point Blank - 65m HVS 5b/c. R. Biggar, J. R. Mackenzie. 17th June, 1999.

This route takes a more or less central line up the slabs to the right of the tree-covered ledge. Start near the grass rake up to the right.

1. 25m 4c. A pair of prominent grooves are climbed awkwardly past some heather. Continue on clean rock up right to a little niche.

2. 20m 5b/c. The fine bald slab is now taken directly above the stance, initially via a crack which then blanks out. Some very tenuous moves (crux) are then made to the left to reach a groove which is quite bold and followed to a ledge.

3. 20m 5a. Climb the steep bulge above which has a thin exit, poorly protected, to heather and a corner. Possibly quite hard for the grade. Some thin, but not sustained, climbing on excellent rock.

Step Dancer – 70m HVS 5a\*. J. R. Mackenzie, D. S. B. Wright. 30th July, 1999. To the left of the wall that supports the tree-covered ledge, the brown slabs form a clean tongue. Start two metres left of a vegetated groove.

1. 30m 5a. Climb directly up excellent sustained rock with good protection, over the overlap and up to a ledge below a prominent curved crack.

2.40 m 5a. Climb up a short distance, then traverse left to a scoop which is followed more easily to the short top tier, a slab, climbed centrally to the jungle above. Tree abseil.

# **Rock of Ages Buttress:**

Above Blank Buttress lies a superb wall, reached by scrambling up the grassy rake or by climbing from below, to arrive at a wooded balcony. Descents are best down the broad gully round to the left. The wall has a roof to the left and a steep slab to the right guarded by a short wall. To the right of this wall is a tree.

Rock of Ages – 35m E1 5b\*\*\*. J. R. Mackenzie, R. Biggar. 17th June, 1999. An excellent route, varied and sustained; protection rapidly improves with height.

Start to the left of the tree and climb the short wall on sharp holds to a thin groove. Move boldly left to the slab and good holds. Gain a thin crack and climb this to a steeper section. Continue up the crack with difficulty to a wall. Traverse thinly left to a suspect block in a groove. Climb the headwall above by the central thin crack in a great position to arrive at a sentry-box right of a cracked block. Exit onto the final slab via a thin crack on the right.

#### **Golden Buttress:**

This lies at the top left of the wide gully left of Blank Buttress. Very clean with strongly cut features, it is very prominent from below with an undercut slab on the front face, a widening ramp and a crack-split wall with a large roof to the right. Descents are easiest to the left which rejoins the broad gully.

Glistering Slab - 55m HVS 5a\*\*\*. J. R. Mackenzie, D. S. B. Wright. 25th June,

1999.

A splendid climb on impeccable rock, well protected. The line follows the best part of the slab to the left of a deep crack. Start below the frontal slab on a grass shelf above broken grooves.

1.35m 5a. Traverse the slab rightwards below overhangs, usually a bit wet, to reach a narrow gangway that cuts above the right wall. Climb a groove on the left and emerge on the superb slab in a great position. Follow a thin crack over all the obstacles en route, to reach a spacious stance below a scooped slab.

2. 20m 4b. Climb the steep rib on the left to finish.

*Heart of Gold* – 60m H. Severe 4a\*. D. S. B. Wright. J. R. Mackenzie. 30th July, 1999.

This route takes the hanging corner on the upper right of the crag reached by the scooped wall below the roof. Reach this wall via a grassy ramp on the right of the crag that has a short rock step. Low belays below the roof.

1. 30m 4a. Climb the scooped wall from right to left on good holds via two ledges with perched blocks to exit below the hidden corner. Continue up the corner to a

belay on the left.

2. 30m 4a. Step right to a fine slab and climb this direct to a grass ledge (optional belay). Move left to the top tier and climb the concave slab to its crest; step left and easily up the broken wall to the top of the buttress. Some very pleasant open climbing involving both walls and slabs.

## Car Park Area, The Sidewall:

A steep line of crag running down right from Triangular Slab; west-facing. *Atlantic Pillar* – 14m H. Severe 4b. J. R. Mackenzie. 5th August, 1999. A well defined slabby rib with an undercut base is the first feature at the top left end. Climb it direct.

Staircase – 12m V. Diff. J. R. Mackenzie. 5th August, 1999. A black, diamond-shaped wall 5m to the right is climbed first to the right, then to the left.

One Scoop or Two? – 10m VS 4c. J. R. Mackenzie. 5th August, 1999. Well down to the right a steep red wall. Climb its left side via a pair of scooped holds to a crack which leads up right to the top. Sustained.

There is also a route by J. R. Mackenzie at the top left end of the Flake Buttress, Black Wall Special. Gain a diagonal crack and ramp, then climb the wall above – 10m H. Severe 4b.

## Inveranvie Crag, Optic Wall:

Slippery Nipple – 20m VS 4c\*\*. C. Grindrod, J. Grindrod, J. R. Mackenzie. 28th March, 2000.

A sustained and thinly-protected wall giving good climbing. Start left of the cracked overhang of The Parting Glass and climb the wall direct to the left-hand section of the M-shaped overhang. Climb through this and finish up the wall.

## **Gruinard Lower Crag:**

*Breakpoint* – 20m E3 5c. R. Anderson, D. McCallum, S. Anley. 31st May, 1999 The slabby wall just right of Halcyon Days. Gain the right end of a diagonal break, then move left up this to climb the wall and finish directly.

Who Shot JR - 16m HVS 5a\*. D. Allan, R. Plenderleith. 16th May, 1999. Start at the same place as Halcyon Days but follow a thin crack steeply up right. Traverse right across a yellow streak (and Ueejit) into a small corner. Climb the corner to a heather ledge and up the crack above.

### **Gruinard Jetty Buttress:**

Gaffers Wall - 30m E4\*\*. J. R. Mackenzie, R. Biggar. 16th May, 1999.

Between Right Charlie and Dave's Dilemma is an overhanging wall providing an excellent steep route.

- 1. 12m 5b. Surmount the initial overhang and step left on to a shelf. Climb up to and over a slanting flake-crack to gain the ledge just right of Right Charlie.
- $2.18m\,5c$ . Climb up the shallow fault above, parallel with Right Charlie; sustained and strenuous to the top with some good wires.

**Note:** C. McNee and D. Kirk climbed the corner of Bus Stop direct at Mild Severe on 1st January, 1999, naming it New Millennium?

#### **BEINN AIRIGH CHARR:**

Original Route (the Glover, Walker, Corry and Ling route) – IV,4. J. Lyall, R. Webb. 27th December, 1999.

Climb the summer line taking the fine chimney in the upper buttress.

#### A' MHAIGHDEAN:

A Ridge Too Far – 300m IV,4. M. Hind, R. Webb. January, 2000.

The next ridge east of Pillar Buttress. Climbed in mistake for Pillar Buttress in nil visibility, a detailed description will be provided after the ascentionists have been back in the summer.

## FISHERFIELD FOREST, Na Bearta Buttress:

Good Friday Direct – 130m HVS 4c. A. Nisbet. 12th July, 1999.

A direct version of Good Friday Slab, taking a line up the cleanest slab, but with limited protection providing a fine feeling of exposure.

- 1. 30m 4b. As for the normal route. A crack in the wall to the left might be worth exploring.
- $2.30 \mathrm{m}\,4\mathrm{c}$ . Step left and climb a vague rib direct to the shallow groove of the normal route.

3. and 4. 70m 4c Start up the crack of the normal route, but soon step right and climb direct up slabs to join and follow a crack, then another which lie in the slab about 8m right of the shallow gully. Sustained climbing but the best belay position is unknown.

# MULLACH COIRE MHIC FHEARCHAIR, Tom an Fhioda:

Nid Rib - 200m V. Diff. A. Nisbet. 14th May, 1999.

The route is at MR 075 731 and climbs a rib near the right end of the cliff overlooking the valley containing Loch an Nid. The right end of the cliff, just before it turns the corner and peters out, holds a big scoop with overhangs at its top. This is the rib forming its left side.

# Sgurr Dubh, North Face:

Vagrants Buttress - 120m VS 4b. A. Nisbet. 14th May, 1999.

The left end of this impressive, but unhelpful cliff, (mostly gneiss but some rock to its left is suspiciously like gabbro) holds a scree gully with a short headwall. Right of this is formed a buttress before the main face is reached; the route climbs the right edge of this buttress. Start at the right toe of the buttress and climb a steep rib to a more vegetated section. Climb direct through an overhang to a slabbier finish.

### AN TEALLACH, A'Ghlas Thuill:

Central Buttress - 350m II. A. Nisbet. 24th December, 1999.

This is the buttress between Hayfork Gully and North Gully (an old name). Start where the crest just right of Hayfork Gully meets the base of the buttress. Climb just right of the crest of the buttress before moving right to climb a shallow gully which leads to the steep band (perhaps a similar start to the right-hand version – Unnamed in SMCJ 1999). Continue in the line of the gully, which passes just left of the nose of the steep band, until the upper crest on the right can be gained by the first line of weakness. Follow the upper crest to the top.

Haystack - 170m VI,7. D. McGimpsey, A. Nisbet. 6th January, 2000.

A sensational route up the impressive left wall of Hayfork Gully. Start about a third of the way up Hayfork Gully at the first break in the left wall and where a gully runs up on to a platform on the rib on the left (at the top of the steep wall of Miniscule Rib). Climb out left towards the gully to where a ramp leads right across the main wall (10m). Climb the ramp to below a chimney in the centre of the face (50m, 25m). Climb the steep chimney (20m). Go rightwards up a ramp then back left to the top of a crack which is the continuation of the chimney. Take a complex line through steep walls ending on the highest ledge which is above and left of the point above the continuation crack (35m). Go left round the corner past a prominent thread and climb more easily direct to the top (30m).

*Tiny Gully* – 150m IV,6. B. Davison, D. McGimpsey, A. Nisbet. 5th April, 2000. The gully which cuts back left on to the rib. Gain it by a traverse and climb it past an overhanging bulge of chokestones to the platform on the rib. Traverse left to finish up the shallow gully of Minor Rib.

Miniscule Rib – 250m V,6. D. McGimpsey, A. Nisbet. 3rd January, 2000.

The immediate crest left of and at times overlooking Hayfork Gully. Start up the

shallow gully between Minor Rib and Hayfork. Follow this and its right branch over a bulge to reach a terrace on the right below a steep wall which overlooks Hayfork. Climb the wall by a crack right of centre, then a right-slanting flake-ramp to a niche below a wide crack (25m). Step up to the wide crack, then traverse right, up and back left to its top (actually a pinnacle). Climb a corner on the left to easy ground (20m). Move left and climb the shallow gully of Minor Rib to the top.

Cake Fork - 180m II. P. Greening, T. Moore. 18th December, 1999.

Climb First Prong until it is possible to traverse left along a shelf (approx. 50m) to below an obvious icefall. Climb a short tapering groove to another icefall. Climb this direct, or the wall to the right (easier). Follow an open gully to the top.

### Toll an Lochain, Sail Liath:

The following two routes lie on the front (or right-hand) face of the right-hand buttress (of the three). The rock is good but vegetated on ledges giving pleasant climbing when the turf is bone dry (rare!). Cleaner but harder variations are possible. The climbing is much better in winter.

Sandeman's Pinnacle – 140m VS. D. McGimpsey, A. Nisbet. 8th August, 1998. Start 30m from the left edge of the buttress (the ramp) at a right-slanting shallow chimney, the first easily climbed feature.

1. 40m 4a. Climb the chimney and continue diagonally right in the same line to a big flake at the first obvious break in the steep wall above.

2. 50m 4c. Move left over the flake, then up slabs to the right of a corner. Cross the corner and climb near its left edge to a big pinnacle.

3. 50m. A right-trending line leads to easy ground.

Winter: VI,6. D. McGimpsey, A. Nisbet. 12th December, 1999.

As for summer except pitch 2 used a line more suited to winter. After moving left over the flake, a traverse left crossed the corner and the wall above was climbed to join the summer route. At a vertical wall about 10m below the pinnacle, a short traverse right led into the corner which was climbed on turf until a return traverse led to the pinnacle.

Forgotten Face - 160m VS. D. McGimpsey, A. Nisbet. 8th August, 1998.

Start in the centre of the face at a clean brown slab below a left to right turf ramp. 1. 30m 4c. Climb the slab trending left to the turf ramp, then right up the turf to above the start.

2. 25m 4b. Traverse left along a clean slabby break to a large block.

3. 45m. Go round the block on the left and back right above the belay by the higher of two big right-slanting ramps. Before the ramp appears to peter out, go up left on steep blocky ground.

4. 30m 4a. Go up a right slanting ramp, starting with an awkward corner to the base of a big groove (well seen on the skyline from below).

5. 30m. Climb the groove to scrambling.

Winter: VI,6. D. McGimpsey, A. Nisbet. 5th December, 1999.

A line based on the summer route. The left to right turf ramp was climbed from its start. The clean slabby break has a thin line of turf but was very poorly protected (pitch 2). A more direct line was taken at the top of pitch 3 and turfy ground was climbed on the left of the final groove.

Gobhlach Buttress – 350m IV, 4. D. McGimpsey, A. Nisbet. 20th December, 1999. In the centre of the lower part of the buttress are two icefalls. The left is steep and forms two ice pillars. The right is the start of this route (Goblach Grooves is farther

right – SMCJ 1994). Start right of the base and trend left to the icefall (or climb it from the base if formed). Climb ice, then traverse right to climb a steep iced corner. Trend left up iced grooves for two pitches to gain a right-slanting ramp which is followed easily before moving left to finish up the crest.

*The Ghoul* – 180m III. B. Davison, D. McGimpsey, A. Nisbet. 5th April, 2000. A left-slanting ramp, the lower of two which cut through the steep wall up right from Lost Gully, starts with an ice bulge but then becomes easier and leads on to upper slopes. Traverse left towards Lost Gully ramp, then return right to join and finish up The Spectre.

#### Glas Mheall Mor:

D. Whalley notes that the crag has been climbed on before, notably by Kinloss MRT, and is a good option when winds are high and you are getting old. Ice forms readily producing various icefalls on the crag, all Grade II or III.

Smear Test - 150m III. S. Price, J. Coats. 19th December, 1999.

Start 15m right of the lowest point, just left of an obvious corner. Climb a steep wall for 5m, move right and continue to another wall left of the corner. Continue over broken ground to a horizontal block (50m). Step left on to a small ledge and continue up a series of steps to a vertical wall (50m). Move right and take a right-slanting gully to easy broken ground.

Chairman's Choice - 60m II/III. P. Greening, A. Barnyard, D. Whalley. 19th December, 1999.

This route climbs the short wide icefall on the left-hand side of the face. Climb the obvious icy slab and over a bulge to good belays on the left. Go up the ramp on the right and up the steeper wall above. Descend by ramps to the right.

Southern  $Up\ Men-75m\ III,4.\ P.$  Greening, A. Barnyard. 19th December, 1999. To the right of the previous route is a large shield of rock which contains three icy grooves. Start below the left-hand one. Climb the smear to an ice thread below the roof at the bottom of the groove. Climb the groove (exposed) to a large spike. Climb the icefall on the right, then pass the steeper section on the left. Climb a steep wall direct (crux) or traverse left to a turfy rib and finish up a right-slanting ramp.

# NORTHERN HIGHLANDS NORTH AND EAST (VOLUME TWO)

#### **CREAG GHLAS. West Face:**

**Note:** The unnamed route (SMCJ 1999, p106), 'Julian's Line', is called Beware the Greeks.

### MEALL NA FAOCHAIG (Gleann Meinich, Strathconon), MR 235 541:

The west end of the ridge of this hill has a broken heathery crag opposite the West Buttress of Creag Ghlas at a similar altitude. The only worthwhile conditions would be under consolidated snow, a rarity. Approach by walking along the track from Strathconon and cross the burn below the crag.

Meinich Buttress – 150m III,4. J. R. Mackenzie. 20th December, 1999.

The line taken follows the steepest part of the crag where a shallow groove cuts up the final section just left of an apparent edge. Concave mixed ground of ice, rock and heather leads to the groove, marked by a few small trees. A broken icefall ran down the left side and gave steep awkward climbing with the crux at the top. Easy ground lies above.

### SGURR NA MUICE, South-East Face:

Spare Rib – 200m III, 4. G. Cullen, J. R. Mackenzie (alt.). 13th February, 2000. To the right of the triple icefall of Streaky and to the left of the snow ramp of Porker is a buttress split by a narrow gully; this provides the line, a nearly continuous line of ice with two good final pitches. The grade assumes good icing (technical 6 otherwise).

Approach by easy ground up the nose and head for a triangular buttress below the crags.

Start to the right of this and climb a double icefall to easy ground (40m). Continue up iced slabs and steps heading for the narrow gully in the headwall. Climb an icefall to a rock barrier, traverse right below this and either pull over if ice exists or continue to the end and pull over there. Continue up left to below a vertical turf chimney (40m). In good conditions climb the chimney or, as on the first ascent, gain a ledge just left of the chimney and climb a technical slanting crack and slab to the same point (very well protected). Climb up left to an icefall; either climb this or avoid it by a zig-zag right then left (45m). Climb the less steep continuation icefall direct over its final bulge to a snow ramp (35m).

### North-East Face:

*Pig Iron Buttress* – 130m IV,3. J. R. Mackenzie, R. Biggar. 15th January, 2000. This is the buttress to the right of Pearls before Swine. On this ascent approached via the Left Start of Three Little Pigs. A serious first pitch. Start at the lowest rib of rock which lies closer to Tusker than Pearls before Swine. Climb a sustained series of grooves and awkward steps to below a steeper chimney (visible from below as a square-cut notch) which lies just left of Tusker's bigger groove (50m). Climb the chimney, easier than it looks, move up right to below a steepening groove (25m). Climb the fine turfy slab and overhang on the right to easier ground and the top (55m).

## BEN WYVIS, Creag Coire na Feola:

Hansel and Gretal – 200m III. J. R. Mackenzie, R. Biggar. 5th April, 2000. To the left of Tapered Buttress is a line of icefalls, shortest on the left. The most reliable one is near the left where it is thickest and forms an ice hose bottomed by an ice corner. Start right of a narrow iced V-gully at the corner and climb ice to a stance below the hose (20m). Climb the hose on the right to reach a snowy rake. Either descend left from there or continue up either easy-angled ice or snow to a steeper and possibly corniced exit.

Tapered Buttress Direct – 230m IV,6. R. Biggar, J. R. Mackenzie. 5th April, 2000. This is the narrow buttress left of the main icefalls of Gael Force Grooves. It takes a direct line up turfy ground immediately right of smooth slabs/icefalls. An easier route should be possible to the right bypassing the steep section on pitch 2.

Start at an inset corner left of the base. Climb this and then straight up; the two runners on this pitch provide landmarks. A loose spike and a revolving chokestone (50m). The crux can be seen above on the skyline as a steep wall. Climb up to it via

a narrow groove right of the rock slabs/icefalls climbing a turf-capped overhang en route. The crux wall starts above a ledge and gives a vertical step with sloping holds apart from one (50m). Continue easily up to steepening snow (50m). Continue up the rocky arête left of a similar arête (Discovery Buttress) 50m. Continue up the steepening arête to a fine finish (30m).

### FANNICHS, An Coileachan, Garbh Coire Mor:

The Gallous Palace – 150m V,6. D. McGimpsey, A. Nisbet. 14th December, 1999. Climbs the left edge of the right-hand depression in the slabby wall which forms the left side of the corrie. It features a left-facing corner which breaks through a steep band of rock. Climb up to below and just left of the corner. Pull into the base of the corner, then climb the wall just right of it. The top half of the route is easier up turf.

## Fionn Bheinn, Creag Toll Mor (MR 152 620):

A north-facing crag lies at the crest of Toll Mor near the east top. The easiest approach is via the Achnasheen road up dreary slopes; allow two hours – plus. The schist crag is very steep and has turfy and rocky lines. Despite its meagre height the climbing is quite exciting and concentrated and in the right conditions (frozen hard and not too much snow), just about repays the walk-in.

Dedication Grooves – 70m IV,5\*. J. R. Mackenzie, R. Biggar. 12th December, 1999.

Roughly in the centre of the crag and 20m to the right of a chimney-groove is a stepped wall with hanging icicles. Climb up to the bulge with the icicles, step up right and pull over the bulge above the icicles. Continue up a ramp on the left to a saddle stance (30m). A steep groove lies above. Climb up to a block and step right to climb a blank wall, then the easier groove. Continue in the same line past a prominent block and over the cornice (40m). Good technical climbing with easier sections.

#### **RHUE SEA CLIFFS, Gem Walls:**

Rhue-ff – 12m E1 5a. P. Mather (unsec.). 17th September, 1999.

Follow the short hanging corner to the right of Watch this Space, traversing out right under the first roof. Continue up the easy slab above, moving round the right side of the second roof.

#### **ARDMAIR, Fish Farm Walls:**

Loan Shark Direct Finish – E1 5b. N. Taylor (unsec.). 30th December, 1998. An exciting direct finish through the bulges beneath which the original route traverse right. Follow Loan Shark to the heathery break. Climb the steep hanging corner on the left-hand side of the upper wall to an exit left in a fine position. Some coincidence with Brent Spar is possible.

#### **CUL BEAG:**

A large clean dome-shaped wall (Stag's Wall) lies about 100m left of Curved Chimney. It is easily identified by a dirty central corner dividing the steep left-hand section from a slabbier wall on the right.

Bad Hand Gang – 65m E3\*\*. G. Robertson, T. Rankin (on sight). 4th September, 1999.

This lovely climb takes the obvious groove line bordering the right edge of the steep left-hand wall. Protection is generally excellent, although large Friends are useful. Start below a prominent layback crack.

1. 30m 5c. Climb the crack for 5m to footholds. Step across left into the groove and follow this past several interesting sections to a good ledge where the crack widens.

2. 35m 5b. Climb the wide crack above, step left on to a broad ledge, then move easily left again to below a gigantic flake. Climb the excellent flake to a chimney slot from which a pop out left leads to easier ground.

### STAC POLLAIDH, No.1 (West) Buttress:

Three Day Grooves – 100m IV,5. D. Allan (back-roped). 22nd February, 2000. 60m left (north) of Baird's Pinnacle and 30m right of the north end of the buttress is an open book groove, 30m up which is a diamond-shaped overhang with a crack in it.

- 1. 45m. Climb the groove (crux) and continue up to the overhang which is turned on the left.
- 2. 25m. Climb easy ground to a big right-facing corner directly above.
- 3. 30m. Climb the corner, then easy ground to the summit.

December Grooves – 100m IV,6\*\*. D. Allan, P. Ingram. 14th December, 1999. There is a prominent V-groove 15m left of Baird's Pinnacle (it is between North-West Corner and West Buttress). The route follows this and on the top tier, a left-facing groove which lies on the right side of slabby rocks. Start directly below the groove and follow a thin crack up a short steep wall. Turn the overhang near the top of the groove with a traverse left. Easy ground leads to the top groove which is climbed more or less direct. An excellent climb with good protection and belays.

**Note:** D.Allan thinks that South Rib and Party on the Patio are the same route. A. Fraser does not agree, but neither party is sure.

Sweeney Todd – 70m E3. D. Green, S. Richardson. 25th September, 1999. The well-defined pillar between Enigma Grooves and November Groove.

- 1. 25m 4b. As for Pitch 1, November Groove.
- 2. 25m 5c. The left side of the pillar is cut by a thin right-slanting crack. Climb this to easier ground on the right edge and continue more easily to the platform of Enigma Grooves.
- 3. 20m 5a. Between the final chimney of Enigma Grooves and the exit cracks of November Groove is a right-facing square-cut corner with an offwidth crack at its back. Grunt up this to the top.

## No. 2 Buttress:

The Orifice - 35m E3. A. Crofton, G. Robertson. 10th July, 1999

- $1.10 m\ 5b$ . Round to the left of the slab of Vlad the Impaler is a small alcove, out of the left of which springs a corner crack which takes you to good block belays on a commodious ledge.
- 2. 25m 6a. Traverse right from here to below an undercut flared off-width. Climb this and the corner above to the big ledge at the top of Vlad.

Seismic Shockwaves – 20m E3 6a. A. Crofton, G. Robertson. 10th July, 1999 Down and right of this buttress is a small south-facing wall. Just right of its centre is a right-facing undercut corner gained by a large projecting block. Climb this and then twin cracks to a ledge. Above is a technical flake-groove which takes you up to an awkward pull on to a slab and the top.

Go up and right from this buttress and a small ridge projects southwards. On its right wall are three cracks. The uppermost is short and a bit grassy, the middle one is clean and provides continuous jamming to the top (Jamalmadingdong 20m E1 5b), and the left one takes you to a ledge where round to the left, a block on the frontal face allows twin cracks to be followed to the top (Highland Spring 20m E2 5c).

Ol' Red Eyes - 100m HVS 5a. A. Fraser, I. Magill. 22nd June, 1999.

This is situated on the upper buttress of No. 2 Buttress overlooking Pinnacle Basin. The toe of the buttress is a slim pillar flanked by two chimneys.

- 1.15m 5a. Climb a thin crack up the pillar, move right to a further crack and follow this with difficulty and 1NA to below an overhang.
- 2. 25m 4a. Step right into a chimney and follow this to a ledge. Traverse left for 12m across slabs to the foot of a chimney/corner.
- 3. 15m 4a. Climb the chimney/corner, continue up slabs, then a prominent V-groove to a terrace.
- 4. 15m 4a. Climb a bulging crack at the top of a gully, then easily to the top.

**Note:** An ancient ring peg was discovered on the first belay, presumably gained by the chimney to the right of the pillar. This would avoid the aid point and probably give a more balanced route.

#### **REIFF, The Pinnacle Area:**

Brickinit - E4 6a. R. & C. Anderson. 1999.

The bouldery wall/arête between Juniors Groove and Rockettes Climb; a long stretch enables a Rock 6 to be slotted in at the small overlap, just protected by a side runner on the right.

### Seal Song Area:

Lateral Thinking - 20m E4 6b. S. Crowe, K. Magog. 31st May, 1999.

Start up The Executioner to the half-height break. Traverse left to gain the corner of Modern Thinking. Step up this, then continue left more easily with a spectacular mantelshelf to finish.

**Note:** This route must traverse across others recorded in SMCJ 1996, p81. *Hairsplitter* – E2 5b. R. & C. Anderson. 1999. The edge right of Skullsmasher.

#### **Bay of Pigs:**

Sea of Love - 8m E2 5b\*. N. Holmes. June, 1996.

From the first ledge on Creeping Jenny, swing out rightwards to an obvious hold then move up to finish leftwards via a faint flake.

#### Minch Wall:

Beating Heart - 10m E5/6 6a. S. Crowe, K. Magog. 29th May, 1999.

Climbs the centre of the wall left of Friends for Life. Boulder up to the prominent undercut, Place a small cam (00 HB or similar), blind and awkward, then continue

to a good break above. Arrange better protection and continue more confidently to finish up the slab. Top-rope practice used.

**Note:** The route has been top roped before (and thought 6b) but not led due to the difficulty of placing protection.

#### Slab Inlet:

Cool Dudes – 12m E1 5b. S. Richardson, T. Whitaker. 30th May, 1999.

The blunt edge 3m right of The Ali Shuffle. Start from the ledge of Ali Shuffle and climb up on good holds just left of the edge to a thin section. Move up then right (runner in hidden break on right) and continue up on improving holds to the top.

### Rubha Ploytach:

Omission - HVS 5b\*\*. E. Ash, R. Salter. 7th August, 1999.

The 'fine right-angled corner' right of Lilidh, mentioned in the line before Ros Bhan on p230. Hard to start, especially for the short. Possibly slow to dry.

#### THE POINT OF STOER:

Waiting Patiently - 12m HVS 5a. D. Kirk, S. Ni Riain. 30th May, 1999.

The sharp south arête of the curved arc-shaped pinnacle immediately north of the start of the tyrolean to the Old Man, with an abseil back off the block at the top of the route.

Gazumped - 12m VS 4c. D. Kirk, S. Ni Riain. 30th May, 1999.

On the same pinnacle as above. Take a thin crackline on the west (seaward) face, going slightly right to left and passing over a small overhang just below the top. Abseil as above.

#### SUILVEN:

Erebus – 120m VII,7. M. Franklin, R. Webb. 20th December, 1999.

Climbs the north edge of the NW Buttress. Pass the scrappy lower tier on the left to gain a terrace. Traverse right about 10m until the terrace narrows and steepens. Above is a two-stepped corner which in turn is below twin grooves.

- 1. 10m. Climb the corner.
- 2. 40m. Climb the left-hand corner until it peters out, swing into the right-hand corner and continue to a small ledge. Above, the corner continues into an overhang. Make hard moves left to regain the left-hand corner and continue up this.
- 3. 40m. Move up and left to gain a surprisingly steep corner and climb this to below a vicious-looking chimney.
- 4. 10m. Climb the chimney, which lives up to its look.
- 5. 20m. Continue to easy ground.

#### **BRAEBAG:**

Unnamed - 60m IV,4. J. Lyall, R. Webb. December, 1999.

Find the 'extraordinary defile' described in SMCJ 1998, p624. Descend it to the bottom of the lower tier and turn right (in descent).

- 1. 30m. Climb the first line of weakness to the top of the lower tier.
- 2. 25m. Above is a slim right-facing corner. Climb this until forced right and keep moving right to gain a rib.
- 3. 5m. Climb an awkward groove to the plateau.

Small Beginning - 30m III. N. Wilson, R. Webb. January, 2000.

From about halfway down the defile, a similar but less impressive defile can be seen about 150m away at the top of the first tier to the north. This route climbs the left edge of the buttress to the left of this second defile (both defiles are Grade I).

### **QUINAG, Barrel Buttress:**

Chang – 300m V,7. D. Allan, A. Nisbet. 15th December, 1999.

An intricate line and a sensational finish through the steep walls right of Cave Gully. Reach the foot of the upper buttress by the crest of the buttress immediately right of V Gully (Badajoz). Once at the upper buttress, start about 10m left of Raeburn, Mackay and Ling Original Route below a narrow chimney. Gain and climb the chimney to a ledge. Above is overhanging so traverse left, initially with difficulty, then go up to a ledge under steep ground. Traverse right, go up to a higher ledge, traverse right again and go up a steep groove to a big ledge. Go right until near the base of the final chimney of Original Route, then return diagonally left until below a final wall poised above overhangs. Climb this (crux) to finish.

Stout -75m VS. D. Allan, A. Nisbet. 12th August, 1999.

Start 3m right from the left edge of the central pillar (ie. about 3m right of Original Route).

1.35m 5a. Make hard moves up a small groove, then traverse 10m right along a foot ledge. Return diagonally left up flakes, then go straight up to a grass ledge.

2.40m 4b. Go right along the ledge and climb an obvious line leading left to a ledge, then move right and climb short walls to the top. Better but near Mild, go left and up to its twin cracks, then climb a fine crack leading slightly right.

Grouse - 60m VS 5a. D. Allan, A. Nisbet. 12th August, 1999.

Climbs the first groove left of the big right-hand fault which forms the right side of the buttress's central pillar. Start 5m left of the fault. Climb the steep groove and cracks to an easier-angled vegetated section. Move left and finish up the left arête.

Nippy Corner – 60m HVS 5a. D. Allan, A. Nisbet. 21st August, 1999.

The right-hand buttress (right of Coopers Gully) is capped by a very steep wall. The route climbs a big corner line round on its right side. Start below a lower tier directly below the corner (reached by a 50m abseil down the line).

- 1.30m 4b. Climb the lower wall initially up then diagonally left until below and left of the corner.
- 2. 30m 5a. Climb the corner, sustained at the start (possibly slow to dry).

# CARN AN TIONAIL, Creag na h-Uidhe (Sheet 16, MR 384 374):

This west-facing crag can be approached from West Merkland (5km, 1hr. 30min.). It is fairly extensive but low in altitude, so requires very cold weather. *Y-Gully, Right Branch* – 200m II\*. D. Allan. 14th March, 1992.

This is the fourth gully from the left end and is more or less in the centre of the face.

*Y-Gully, Left Branch* – 200m III,4\*\*. D. Allan, G. Cumming. 19th March, 1995. The branch can be climbed direct at II/III but it is much better to do a right-hand finish which involves a fine 25m ice pitch, then a right traverse behind a huge hanging icicle and a finish up an iced chimney.

#### East Crag:

*V-Gully, Left Branch* – 220m II. D. Allan. 13th February, 1994. There is a crag with this obvious gully on the east side of the hill.

### SCOURIE, Rubh' Aird an t-Sionnaich Sheet 9; MR143 435):

The crag is of Lewisian gneiss and faces SE. The routes were climbed by D. Allan, B. Mackenzie and R. Murray on 25th and 27th July, 1997 (leader's initials given). Only the seaward end of the main section is affected by high tide.

Approach: Park at Eddachilles Free Church off the road just south of Scourie village. Walk 1km west to the point. The climbs are described from the right where you arrive.

Chokestone Corner – 20m Mild VS 4b\* (D.A.).

The open left-facing corner at the right end of the crag. Start at the first large jammed stone in the gully and climb up and right.

Chokestone Crack - 20m VS 4c\* (D.A.).

Start on the second large jammed stone in the gully and climb right of the two noses.

Old Peg Route - 20m Mild VS 4b\*\* (R.M.).

Start at the same place and climb and climb left of the nose.

Black Bob's Crack - 20m VS 4c\*\* (D.A.).

Left of the central bulging black wall are two parallel cracks. This climbs the deep right-hand crack and the continuation crack on the steeper headwall.

There is a pleasant traverse round to the left from here above the high tide mark. *Twin Cracks* – 20m VS 5a\* (B.M.).

Halfway along the traverse are two shallow corners. Climb the right one, then twin carcks steeply on big holds to a ledge. Finish up a shallow groove.

The Wee Corner – 8m Severe\* (D.A.).

Take the short corner at the top right end of the platform.

Right Thin Crack - 8m HVS 5b\* (B.M.).

The narrow crack just left of The Wee Corner.

Left Thin Crack – 10m E1 5b\* (B.M.).

The narrow crack just left of Right Thin Crack.

Right-Hand Corner – 12m VS 5a\* (R.M.). The corner just left of Left Thin Crack.

*Left-Hand Corner* – 12m VS 4c\* (D.A.).

The climb finishes up a right-slanting corner/ramp.

Pugwash Ahoy – 15m V. Diff. \*\*\* (RM).

Traverse left from the foot of the platform to the arête which marks the end of this part of the crag (there is a deep cleft to its left). Climb the arête.

# Roads Depot Crag (MR 158 439):

This small 10m crag is of Lewisian gneiss and is south-facing. Routes by D. Allan on 29th August, 1997.

Approach: Park on the access track to the Roads Depot off the road just south of Scourie village. The crag is 150m to the north and is invisible from the public road. Routes described left to right.

1. Left Corner - VS 4c\*.

2. The Ridge - VS 4b/c\*.

Climb shallow grooves up the ridge.

3. Central Corner - HVS 5a\*\*.

4. Deep Crack - VS 5a.

The big right-leaning crack and continuation chimney.

5. Chimney Crack - VS 4c\*.

The crack right of the previous climb. Start on the right.

### SHEIGRA, The First Geo:

Something Worth Fighting For – 25m E6 6b\*\*. R. Campbell, N. Craig. June, 1995. Climbs through the overlap and cracked headwall near the right end of the south wall (right of Here and Now). Step off a boulder on to the grey wall and ascend first rightwards, then back left to an overlap (very serious). Pull into a slight groove above (protection) and continue straight up to a shake-out below the upper headwall. From a flat hold, pull straight up a thin crack above, crucifix right, then crank straight up to finish.

## ARKLE, Loch an Nighe Crag (MR 292 452):

A gneiss crag, fairly steep but with some vegetation. Further routes would need cleaning.

Rocking Robin - 30m E1 5b. D. Allan, A. Nisbet. 22nd August, 1999.

The left of two right-slanting, right-facing corners, climbed until near the top when a pull out left on flakes reached heather. Belay 15m back.

## FOINAVEN, Creag Coire na Lice:

On the south side of the lochan is an obvious large boulder. From here the route is almost directly above and straight up the centre of the wall.

North Wall Groove – 160m HVS. A. Crofton, G. Robertson. 11th July, 1999.

1/2. From near the centre of the lower tier a left-to-right slanting rake and short walls lead to the grass terrace at halfway.

- 3. 30m 5a. In the centre of the steep clean section of the face a left-facing groove starts just above and right of a pale rib. Start from a small cairn and scratched arrow below the groove where there is a small spike belay. Climb the wall above to gain the groove left of the pale rib. Follow this to a steep wall, step up on to the rib and from here climb the steep wall until a traverse can be made back right 6m to a comfortable stance at the bottom of the groove.
- 4. 25m 4b. Climb the groove to another great stance under the roofs. Much easier than it looks.
- $5.25 \mathrm{m}$  4c. Traverse right under the roofs in an exposed situation. Move round the rib and continue easily to the top.

## Lord Reay's Seat:

Leftfield – 220m E2\*. G. Robertson, T. Rankin. August, 1999.

A fine mountaineering route, sustained and exposed with a little loose rock, taking a direct line of grooves in the left crest of the steep central nose. The top two pitches follow Pobble's Direct Finish (which deserved E2 5b, not HVS, is an excellent feature and very sustained, though dangerously loose). Start 20m right of Pobble

at the right-hand of two caves, below a clean groove (right of the light-coloured patch of rock mentioned in the guide).

- $1.\,45\,m$  5b. Enter the groove boldly from the left (crux) and climb it to the top. Trend slightly rightwards up short walls and a corner to good ledges below the jutting prow.
- 2. 25m 5b. There is a clean groove just left of the prow. Climb into and up this (loose), then pull out right on to the exposed rib which leads to a ledge below a steep groove.
- 3. 30m 5b. Climb the groove, then move up right to the crest which leads to ledges beneath the right-hand corner of the 'crinkly slab'.
- 4. 30m 4b. Climb straight up to the base of the huge left-facing corner (Pobble Direct Finish).
- 5. 40m 5b. Climb the corner, exiting right near the top.
- 6. 50m. Easier climbing to the summit.

#### **CREAG SMOMHAIRLE:**

**Note:** The following opinions are from D. Allan.

Black Gold – Remove both stars for a horrible top pitch.

The Ramp – Deserves one star, if not two.

Bardot Thodol - Regrading of pitches as 5b, 5a, 4c.

## SHETLAND, Esha Ness Lighthouse:

Sunday Morning – 35m VS 4c. T. Sawbridge, M. Snell. 30th May, 1999. Climb a crack in the wall to the left of Mary. Move right on to a rib at the top

### The Drongs (Main Drong):

Ramsay Dyce - 65m Mild XS. M. Snell, T. Sawbridge (alt.). 2nd June, 1999.

- $1.\,40\text{m}$  5b. From the gap, take the rising traverse right to a hard step and then up a short chimney
- 15m 4c. Climb a wall and corner direct to an easy slab, then up to the lower summit.
- 3. 10m 4b. As for the previous route.

**Note:** This route is named after the boat that took the team out to the Drongs. The boat hirer, Keith Oliver, can be contacted on 07899 9944798.

## **CAIRNGORMS**

### **LOCHNAGAR: Southern Sector:**

The name Perseverance Wall is suggested for the buttress just right of The Red Spout and with the following three routes (Perseverance Rib was the first route climbed here).

The Vice - 80m IV, 5. R. Birkett, K. Neal. 30th January, 2000.

A counter-diagonal to Perseverance Rib. Start up a groove right of Perseverance Rib and climb this, then move left on a short piece of easy ground (25m). From here move straight up to climb a short chimney with a chokestone (20m). Follow a series of large blocks forming an arête to finish left at the top by a huge boulder (35m).

*Gale Force Groove* – 70m III. S. Muir, P. Mather. 15th December, 1999. To the right of Perseverance Rib is a less prominent triangular ridge with a V–groove (containing a square block roof at half-height) leading to its apex.

1. 30m. Climb the groove to the square block and step right.

2. 40m. Continue up the groove over turfy bulges to finish along a small rib to the plateau.

Jason's Groove - 70m III. P. Mather, S. Muir. 23rd January, 2000.

To the right of Gale Force Groove is another obvious line which finishes at a notch in the skyline to the right of a tower, best seen when standing below it. Climb the groove to the notch, then either climb a snow gully or traverse left on to the rib separating the two grooves and finish as for Gale Force Groove.

#### The Cathedral:

Mullahmaloumouktou - 90m E2. S. Richardson, D. Green. 10th July, 1999.

A good natural line up the front face of the mummy-shaped tower at the left end of the cliff. Start by scrambling up a groove left of Transept Route and belay at the foot of the left to right ramp cutting the lower half of the tower.

1. 25m 5a. Make a steep entry on to the ramp which leads over an overlap to a small

stance on the right edge of the tower overlooking Transept Route.

30m 5b. Climb the left-trending groove, and move left below roofs at its top to reach the arête. Climb up steeply to a good stance with a deviation left then right.
 20m. Continue up the cracked wall above and move along the horizontal ridge

to a belay below the final chimney of Transept Route.

4. 15m 5c. Climb the crack in the steep wall 5m left of the chimney of Transept Route to the top.

The Sorcerer – 80m V.6. J. Ashbridge, S. Richardson. 5th December, 1999. An interesting climb taking a series of grooves and chimneys on the right flank of the Magic Pillar. Start by climbing easy mixed ground and belay just right of the prominent corner of No Worries Groove.

1. 20m. Climb the square-cut corner, passing short prominent twin cracks at half-

height, to reach a good ledge.

2. 20m. Continue up the corner above and pull over a difficult capping bulge to reach a terrace which is level with the top of the initial corner of No Worries Groove.

3.40m. Move right for 5m along the terrace to reach a long straight chimney which cuts deep into the right flank of the buttress. Climb this with interest to its top and exit right below the final capping overhang to reach the plateau (large cornice possible).

### **Central Buttress:**

Footloose – 65m VII,8. P. Benson, G. Robertson. 19th December, 1999.

This excellent short route with contrasting pitches takes the crack and groove immediately left of Mantichore. Start at an overhanging crack just up and left of that route.

1.25m. Boulder into the crack and follow it boldly to a good ledge. Continue steeply

up right over a turfy bulge to join Mantichore at its first belay.

2. 40m. Climb the groove directly above by a thin crack on its left wall. Where the crack goes blind, make a hard mantel, then move left into another groove which is followed out left to easy ground. A superb pitch.

### **Shadow Buttress Group:**

Giant's Head Arête – 220m V,6\*. G. Robertson, P. Benson. February, 2000. Takes the obvious groove in the rib between Giant's Head Direct and Giant's Head

Chimney. Good exposed climbing, climbed under powder. Follow the lower chimney to the overhang. Traverse right as for Giant's Head Chimney and belay on the left as soon as the trough is gained. Step immediately left on to the slab rib and make a rising traverse left into an open groove (visible from the corrie floor). Climb the groove for a short way then the turfy crack in its left wall to a good spike belay. Climb grooves in the left side of the crest which is gained via an awkward wall just before it joins the Direct. Finish up this.

#### **Shadow Buttress B:**

**Note:** A flake used on the crux of Raeburn's Groove was pulled off during a repeat attempt (which was abandoned to become the variation on Raeburn's Groove – SMCJ 1997, p 337). It has since been climbed by W. Moir and N. Ritchie who found this pitch to be technically hard and sustained despite its short length. The route is now worth VII.7.

The Dark Side of the Moon – 180m VI, 5. C. Cartwright, S. Richardson. 9th January, 2000.

The prominent left-facing corner on the Douglas-Gibson Face of Shadow Buttress B. The corner is crackless and smooth with little turf, so icy conditions are required. On this occasion the ice was 2cm to 3cm thick and of variable quality resulting in two serious first pitches. Start 10m left of Eclipse below the corner.

- 1. 20m. Climb the corner to a small ledge and peg belay behind a small flake.
- 2. 50m. Continue up the line of the corner until it arcs up and left after 25m. Climb a short corner on the impending right wall to reach a hanging ice gully which leads to a terrace.
- 3. 40m. Climb the gully to belay below a pronounced buttress.
- 4. 50m. Continue up the gully left of the buttress, then move right up a chimney to exit below the final tower of Shadow Buttress B.
- 5. 20m. Finish up Shadow Buttress B to the top.

# Tough-Brown Face:

Diedre of the Sorrows: A. Cave and D. Heselden made the second ascent on 16th January, 2000, and in very icy conditions, finished up the last pitch of Dirge (the steep groove above the grassy niche of Post Mortem). This direct line would seem the best way to go. VIII,8, but harder than the pitch below.

*Mort* – IX,9. B. Davison, D. McGimpsey, A. Nisbet. 15th January, 2000. By the summer route except that the left side of a prominent rib was climbed above the roof on pitch 2 rather than the right. Very icy conditions.

*Rolling Thunder* – 95m VIII,8. A. Mullin (back-rope solo). 5th December, 1999. This serious route is very strenuous, technical and poorly protected throughout. Follows the summer line without the rightwards traverse at half-height to create a fine direct winter line.

1. 25m. Start as described for summer and after the small roof trend up left on two grass ledges to reach a big ledge below a overhung corner with a slabby left wall. At head height in the corner is an in-situ copperhead which is all the protection available for the crux above. Use the blind corner for thin hooks which allow a diagonal crack in the middle of the slabby wall to be used. There are thin hooks in

this and in the corner which allow turf to be reached and in turn the belay ledge. Very serious.

2. 20m. Directly above is the continuation fault with a nut at its base. Climb this to reach a grassy ledge with a ramp trending out rightwards. Ignore the traverse out right and continue straight up the overhanging corner above (*in situ* nut at its base). Climb the corner boldly to reach a thin turfy groove which leads directly to the next belay on the long ledge.

3. 20m. Above are two fault lines. Ignore the obvious right-trending wide crack and use a blind groove farther left to reach a sloping foothold out on the left arête. Once gained, use a lump of turf on the arête and the blind groove to make a high step up to reach good turf and then the slanting roof junction and an *in situ* belay.

4. 20m. Traverse up and right to reach the left side of a huge roof. Step down right and make an exposed and bold traverse right below the roof to break out up right onto a turfy ledge. A series of blocks and ledges lead out right to easy ground and the ridge.

**Note:** Climbed on sight with some of the crux moves (pitch 1, above the copperhead) being practised on a tight rope before stepping back down to the ledge and re-climbing it (not resting). There was helpful ice under the final roof, although it meant no protection. Five falls in total taken on the route.

### Tough-Brown Ridge:

Mordwand - 200m IV, 5. S. Richardson, G. Robertson. 21st January, 2000.

The sinister-looking wall to the right of Backdoor Route. Good turf and protection result in an enjoyable mixed route which holds snow well after a thaw. Start 30m up and right of Backdoor Route directly below a smooth left-facing groove situated 30m up the wall.

1.50m. Climb mixed ground up to the groove and pass it on the right via steep turfy walls. Continue up and left to an excellent stance on the left edge of the wall overlooking the Variation Start to Backdoor Route.

2. 50m. Move back right on to the wall and climb diagonally right and surmount a steep step to reach an easier groove-line above. Climb this to a good stance. 3 and 4. 100m. Easy ground leads to the crest of the buttress. Follow Backdoor Route to the top

#### **Black Spout Pinnacle:**

Once in Ten Years - V,4. R. Clothier, N. Harper. 16th January, 2000.

A snow-ice route up the blank fault between The French Connection and Katsalana, finishing approximately up the latter. Technically easy but poorly protected in the unusually icy conditions.

Extortionist – 35m E2 5b\*. J. Lines, C. Ord. 29th August, 1999.

Start 5m right of Epitome at a right-facing corner. Climb the corner to a roof and pull left on to the wall. Make a couple of thin moves up to better holds and finish into a short V-corner. Move up on to The Springboard to the belay and abseil point. Sustained and well protected with one harder section.

Hood Route – VII,7. J. Currie, G. Robertson. 9th January, 2000. Climbed in very icy conditions. The route was started by the first pitch of Epitome.

#### The Stack:

Stackattack – 130m VI,6. S. Richardson, C. Cartwright. 23rd January, 2000. A varied mixed route which spirals leftwards from the foot of Redemption to reach

The Stack, then breaks out right from the Icy Recess Variation of The Stack to finish up the exit gully of Torquing Corpse. Requires icy conditions.

- 1. 50m. Start at the foot of Redemption an exposed horizontal break. Traverse the break leftwards, make an awkward move around a bulging nose, then move up and left to a good stance on the traverse line of Torquing Corpse pitch 2.
- 2. 20m. Move left and climb the steep left-facing corner, as for the Icy Recess Variation to The Stack.
- 3. 20m. Continue up the Icy Recess, but instead of escaping out left at its top, break out right across an overhanging wall to reach the bottom section of the exit gully of Torquing Corpse. A wild pitch!
- 4. 40m. Continue up the gully to the top.

#### The Stuic:

*Millennium Buttress* – 90m V,5. J. Ashbridge, S. Richardson. 1st January, 2000. The broad buttress between Daybreak Corners and Twilight Groove.

- 1. 40m. Start below the centre of the buttress and climb grooves and mixed ground just right of the crest to a huge block which forms a window that can be seen from below.
- 2. 30m. Move up to triangular slab. Climb it using cracks on its right side, then step left and climb a groove through the steep headwall above past a rockfall scar.
- 3. 20m. Easy ground leads to the final ridge of The Stuic and the top.

First Light – 70m IV,5. C. Cartwright, S. Richardson. 21st November 1999. The left side of the steep wall to the left of The Stooee Chimney is cut by a vegetated fault.

- 1. 30m. Climb a steep groove to ledge below the wall. Continue up the fault above, passing through a niche to reach a good stance.
- 2. 40m. Continue more easily up the crest of the buttress to the top.

*The Slot* – 70m IV,6. S. Richardson, C. Cartwright. 21st November, 1999. The prominent chimney cleaving the centre of Slot Buttress.

- 1.35m. Climb a groove to a ledge. Continue up the steep chimney to a good stance.
- 2. 35m. Finish up the continuation chimney and easy ground to the top.

### CREAG AN DUBH LOCH, Central Gully Wall, Buff Slabs:

Stark Direct Finish - E4 6a. J. Lines, W. Moir. 11th August, 1999.

3a. 35m 6a. Directly above the belay is a thin crack in a vertical red wall. Climb this for a few moves, then move right into a right-facing corner. Move right and up and climb the right-hand of twin grooves to easier ground. The belay is 20m higher.

### MAYAR, Corrie Fee:

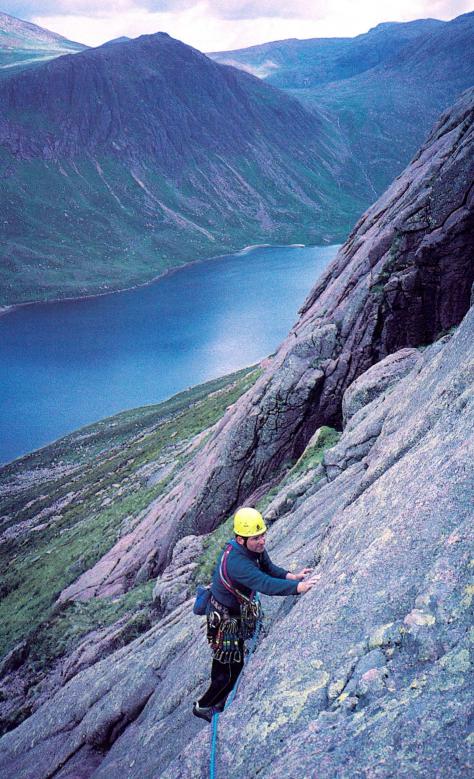
A-B Direct - 250m II. D. F. Lang. 13th February, 2000.

Start at the lowest point of the buttress left of the base of B Gully. Climb up and left from a rock alcove to emerge on the heathery and turfy buttress. Ascend more or less directly but avoiding the shelf of that route by climbing directly up to join the ramp of Central Route. Just short of the edge overlooking B Gully Chimney, ascend to reach a groove, then work up over the capping blocks to emerge on a short arête overlooking the upper chimney of A-B Intermediate. Move delicately along the arête to land at the col of A-B Intermediate.

Dave McGimpsey on the crux pitch on the first winter ascent of 'Mort' IX,9, Tough Brown Face, Lochnagar. Photo: Brian Davison Collection.

The corries of Beinn a' Bhuird and Eastern Cairngorms from Lochnagar. Photo: Niall Ritchie.





### GLEN CLOVA, Craig Maud:

Pinnacle Ridge – 200m II. S. Richardson. 4th January, 2000.

This is the buttress between Curving Gully and North Gully and the winter ascent approximates to the summer line. Start at the bottom left corner of the buttress and follow an easy ramp up right. Move through mixed ground to snow slopes which lead into an icy recess. Climb this and finish up the centre of three grooves.

#### BEINN A' BHUIRD, Coire na Ciche:

The Magic Carpet – 110m V,4. D. McGimpsey, A. Nisbet. 11th January, 2000. The ice streak which occasionally forms down the slab left of The Carpet. Climb the slab left of the first pitch of The Carpet (largely banked out on this occasion). The main ice streak was initially too thin so a parallel streak nearer The Carpet was climbed until the main streak could be regained and followed to the top. The Carpet itself was well iced and would have been slightly easier than this route.

The Slugging Match – 150m II. D. McGimpsey, A. Nisbet. 11th January, 2000. The obvious slabby ramp which forms the left edge of Slugain Buttress, gained by an ice pitch and followed to its apex. From here the higher of two left-traversing lines led to snow slopes immediately right of the Great Slab (the left edge of the upper recess and also the finish shown in the guide to Slugain Buttress, although a right-hand finish is the normal line). Probably a grade harder under powder.

#### Coire an Dubh Lochain:

Note: Fever Pitch (SMCJ 1997) is considered E5 6a\*.

### **Dividing Buttress:**

Seventh Veil – 90m E6\*\*. J. Lines, W. Moir, N. Morrison (on sight). 4th August, 1999.

Climbs the centre of the slab left of Streakers Root. Start up and left of Streakers Root at some boss holds on the slab.

- 1. 40m 5c. Climb up into a clean groove with a pinkish right arête. Climb this to an overlap, then the slab direct just right of a pink streak to gain a crack. Climb the crack to an overlap and move right into Streakers Root to belay (beneath a roof in a short right-facing corner).
- 2. 25 m 6b. Step down and move left on to the lip of the overlap. Move up via a flake to a curious thread in a pocket (the only runner). Step in the pockets and make thin moves up the centre of the slab into a scoop. Follow the vague left rib of the scoop to a diagonal fault, climbed to its top.
- 3. 25m. Scramble up right, then away left as for Streakers Root pitch 4.

### Coire nan Clach, Crystal Buttress:

Approx. 300m NW of Dividing Buttress is this slabby buttress with pink and green streaks and an overhanging north wall.

Bag of Crystals – 70m E2 5b. J. Lines (on sight solo). 29th July, 1999.

Start at the right end of the buttress at the start of the overhanging north wall. Climb a steep left-curving groove to pull on to a ledge (crux), then move 5m right along the lip of the wall. Climb a faint groove and when it fades, step right to a pink streak. Climb this to a ledge, step left and go up a rib to ledges (40m). Scramble left and up.

#### **Cracked Buttress:**

A clean NE-facing slabby wall with a horizontal and a diagonal crack.

The Recluse – 60m E2 5b\*. J. Lines (on sight solo). 29th July, 1999.

Start at the toe of the buttress. Move up and pull through a small overlap to follow holds directly up past the horizontal and diagonal cracks to reach some small flakey hand holds. Follow these up diagonally right, pull through an overlap via a crack and go up to ledges (30m). Scramble up the pleasant slabby rib on the left.

Snowdrop - 100m III. S. Richardson. 19th March, 2000.

About 100m right of Crocus Gully is a funnel-shaped snow scoop. Climb a right-slanting mixed ramp for 50m to gain the scoop which leads to steep cornice exit.

Promontory Gully - 180m I. S. Richardson. 19th March, 2000.

Climb the straightforward snow gully through the centre of the Promontory as for the summer line. From here broad snow slopes lead up the crest to the cornice which is normally small at this point.

#### Garbh Choire:

North-West Slab - 120m III. B. Davison, A. Nisbet. 6th February, 2000.

The buttress right of North-Couloir (and Groove) forms a slab with a steep wall at its base and bounded on the right by an arête. Start in the centre of the steep basal wall and climb an obvious break to gain the slab. Zig-zag up the slab on ice until a snow band leads out right to the arête. Climb the line of the arête to the top.

### **COIRE SPUTAN DEARG:**

*The Fly* – V,7. D. McGimpsey, A. Nisbet. 19th November, 1999. By the summer route. Pleasingly helpful cracks.

The Slide - 35m Mild VS 4b. D. McGimpsey, A. Nisbet. August, 1999.

About 15m left of The Chute is a steep rib. Climb the corner on the right of the rib until just below a midway platform (this is the original start to The Swing), then step right to gain and follow a groove to the top.

Winter: V,6. D. McGimpsey, A. Nisbet. 10th December, 1999.

The ascent started just left of the rib of The Swing and climbed the groove formed by its left side to the midway platform. Tricky moves right gained the groove of The Slide, followed to the top.

The Chute – 50m VI,7. J. Preston, V. Chelton. 29th February, 2000. Climbed in two pitches, behind and on to the block (15m), then left and up the crack (35m). Well protected, but still high in the grade.

*Terminal Wall* – VI.6. D. McGimpsey, A. Nisbet. 19th November, 1999. Close to the summer route. Included a bold section of hooking through and above the overhang on pitch 1.

#### BRAERIACH, Garbh Coire Mor:

The Fiery Groove - 120m III. A. Nisbet. 30th March, 2000.

A series of grooves are formed by the right edge of Phoenix Buttress. These often fill with ice late season and are partly protected from the sun by the buttress. Start

up the snow bay right of Phoenix Buttress, then climb ice in the second groove to the right of the buttress. A left-slanting groove leads into the nearest groove to the buttress. This leads to the top above the right side of the buttress.

#### Coire Bhrochain:

Central Chimney - 60m II. A. Nisbet. 30th March, 2000.

The chimney cleaves the amphitheatre wall between the left and right branches of Central Buttress Gully. In late season it can form a narrow runnel of ice. Move on to the rib on the right near the top for the most likely break in the cornice.

### CARN ETCHACHAN, Upper Tier:

**Note:** After the small overhang on the wide sloping shelf of Inside Edge, J. Preston continued direct up the corner to the large ledge, an easier and more logical line. G. Ettle climbed Pagan Slit in icy conditions at hard V,6.

At the far left end of the Upper Tier are some terraced walls, well left of Crevasse Route.

Outer Limits - 105m IV, 6. G. Ettle, L. Noble. December, 1999.

- 1. 30m. Climb an easy iced crack-line to belay on the left.
- 2. 30m. Follow the crack to the steep wall above, then gain the obvious roofed chimney on the right. Climb this with a technical exit right. Move up, then hard left to below a crack-line.
- 3. 15m. Climb the crack to easy ground.
- 4. 30m. Go up right to finish.

Gonaeno Groove – 105m VI,7. M. Garthwaite, G. Ettle. 13th December, 1999. Start as for the previous route but heading slightly right into a black chimney and steep iced walls above.

- 1. 30m. Climb an easy fault-line over one bulge.
- 2. 20m. Climb the chimney.
- 3. 25m. Climb up blocky ground to overhangs. Step right and swing over a roof to another steep wall. Ascend on ice to easy ground.
- 4. 30m. Finish up right.

#### SHELTER STONE CRAG:

*Threadbare* (winter), *True Finish* – 60m IV,4. A. Mullin, A. Nisbet. 17th November, 1999.

This is a much better finish to Threadbare (or Consolation Groove) in winter, climbing the original finish to Consolation Groove (summer), which is V. Diff. Start from 'the shoulder', the level section from where the winter ascent traversed off. Climb the crest above, a cracked wall. Continue up a right-slanting groove and a short wall to an easier crest (45m). Finish up this.

The Flake - 70m V,7. A. Mullin, A. Nisbet. 17th November, 1999.

Climbs a prominent right-slanting flake-crack in the wall above the High Ledge, forming an X-shape with Citadel Winter Variation, Independent Finish. Good climbing, gained by an abseil from the top down to the High Ledge, then a descending traverse to near the left end of the High Ledge, close to where Sticil Face joins it. Climb a steep capped groove, then continue diagonally right up the crack-

line until a short steep wall leads to a big ledge below the flake-crack (45m). Climb this past an initial roof (crux) and a large wedged flake to the top (25m).

#### Central Slabs:

Unnamed - 105m E7\*\*\*. J. Lines, P. Thorburn. 1st August, 1999.

The linking of Realm of the Senses, L'Elisir d'Amore and a previously unrecorded route called Hard Lines (R. Campbell, J. Lines, 20th July, 1996) to give a continuous route.

- 1. 30m 5c. The left-hand Variation Start to The Pin.
- 2. 30m 6c. Realm of the Senses.
- 3. 45m 6b. L'Elisir d'Amore with a direct finish (climbed before but not recorded). Climb Thor for 15m to the peg in a pocket, then move up the white streak on the left to a good hold and runner. Move up the flake on the left to make a thin move left to a pocket in a pink streak. Go up the pink streak to a line of pockets leading left into a corner. Climb out of the corner using the left wall to where the original line traversed left for 20m to belay. Instead, climb straight up on reasonable holds and follow the holds curving rightwards until they run out at a shield. A flake groove is seen on the right (the continuation fault line of The Harp); make a thin move to gain this and continue up it to the top. Scramble up and right to a two-peg belay in a short overhung corner.

**Note:** R. Campbell notes that Cupid's Bow is now E5 6b after a fall caused the protection peg in the crux to snap. G. Ettle and M. Garthwaite repeated Consolation Grooves in snowy conditions and agreed with VII,7.

The Steeple, Dusk Till Dawn Version – 285m IX,9. A. Mullin, S. Paget. 20th November, 1999.

The route is technically very arduous throughout. Climbed almost entirely in the dark with the exception of two pitches; 24 hours spent on the route without a bivouac. Takes in the summer line of The Steeple with the exception of pitch 4.

- 1. 30m. Summer Steeple.
- 2. 25m. Summer Steeple.
- 3. 45m. Climb up and left on ledges to reach a steep blank looking wall with a right-trending flake crack at half-height, climb this to reach the grass terrace.
- 4. 15m. Traverse easily right to reach the block belay below Needle pitch 4).
- 5. 30m. (revised pitch length) Take the Postern crack and then go left to large bay below steep slabby corners.
- 6. 20m. Climb the overhung wall and corner with a hard exit left at half height to gain a ledge (common with the top of Needle pitch 4.)
- 7. 45m. Above is an overhung wall left of a slabby ramp and barring access to the base of pitch 5 of Steeple. The layback crack of Steeple was climbed, then over a fierce bulge to reach a ledge 5m below Steeple corner).
- 8. 15m. Climb the corner with a serious start to reach a niche and awkward hanging belay.
- 9. 30m. Two nuts for aid were used to start this pitch. It becomes extremely sustained and serious thereafter with a hard exit over a roof at the top.
- 10. The sting in the tail as in summer.

**Note:** This was the third attempt on the line. Pitches 1, 2, 3, 7, 8, 9 were not climbed on previous attempts. Although we had an excellent knowledge of the cliff and the

route, most of these pitches proved to be very demanding in the dark. Climbed in excellent winter condition. Frozen turf was essential in order to do this route, and although the top 30m were climbed in thawing conditions (little snow), the turf remained frozen. No pegs were placed on the ascent, although two were *in situ* on the layback pitch. The grade is uncertain; it is certainly no lower.

#### **HELL'S LUM CRAG. The Lower Slabs:**

Goofey - 45m VS 4c. A. Fyffe, M. Diggins 7th August, 1999.

Start at the lowest point of the slab and climb a thin crack just right of a deeper, vegetated crack and left of the left facing corner to the overlap. Step left into the next crack system and follow this easily to the headwall which is climbed by the right hand of three cracks.

Mars – 40m E1 5b. M. Diggins, A. Fyffe 7th August, 1999.

The thin crack right of Pluto is gained over a steeper, bulging section (crux). Follow the thin cracks and finish up the green crack in the rib left of the right facing corner of Pluto at the top.

Note: Start same as Firestarter (SMCJ 1999).

#### The Glasnost Slab:

Anarchy – 45m HVS 5a. A. Fyffe, M. Diggins 7th August, 1999.

Pleasant climbing up the vague rib which defines the left side of the slab. Start from the ledge and climb shallow grooves up and left to an easing. Move right into a short left-facing corner and climb the wall above to gain a slanting, left facing groove with a crack in its left wall. Climb the groove and continuation fault to easy ground. Scramble left on rock ledges to a descent.

#### The Frontal Face:

Prince of Darkness, Variation: E2 5b\*\*.

A variation to pitch 2 to give more sustained climbing.

- 1. 25m 4a. Start as before and move to below an obvious single crack splitting the slab.
- 2. 45m 5b. Make a bold move to gain the crack and climb it (well protected). Continue to the red slab.

Devils Advocate - 50m E4 6a\*. J. Lines, T. Hui Li. 23rd June, 1999.

A slightly contrived line, but with superb climbing. Start at a thin vertical crack in a slim green buttress about 4m to the right of Lion of Judah. Climb the crack to a small footledge at 4m. Step up and make a very thin move up and left to better holds. Place a runner in the crack above, then step down and move right on to the slab. Make awkward moves up and slightly left to below twin hairline cracks. Climb between these (marginal RPs) to the top.

What the Hell! – 145m E2/3. J. Lines, P. Thorburn. 31st July, 1999.

An eliminate trying to take hard ground between Kiwi Gully and Escalator. Start just right of Kiwi Gully at a smooth slabby buttress.

- 1. 45m 6a. Make a very thin start up the slab and continue on improving holds. Scramble up to beneath the long overlap at its right–hand end.
- 2. 25m 6a/b. Climb a thin crack through the overlap just right of Beelzebub cracks

(6b for the short), move up the slab to a break and continue up to beneath the next overlap.

3. 25m 4b. Move up to the overlap, then left and cross it via a small right–facing notch. Climb a pink streak to the glacis.

4.50m 5a. Climb vague pink streaks on the right into the niche of Devils Alternative and finish up this route.

Note: The unnamed route in SMCJ 1999, p125 is called Dust Devils.

#### STAG ROCKS:

The Troglodyte - 25m HVS 5a\*. G. Latter. 13th July, 1999.

Climbed in error for Quartz Digger's Cave Route. Start 6m down left of the cave (as per guidebook description). Move up and climb a steep left-slanting ramp, then a groove leading to easier ground and the belay on the parent route.

*Albatross* – 70m IV,4. A. Fyffe, A. Cunningham, S. Blagbrough. January, 2000. The ramp below and right of Bambi and slanting up rightwards is quite wide. Climb the ramp and a steeper section at the top to gain the higher of two ledges and a flake belay overlooking the defined groove of Purge. Go diagonally right across Purge to finish up a steeper, shallow fault leading to easy ground (as for Albino).

Roamin' Wall – 55m E1. G. Latter, M. Fitzsimons. 24th July, 1999.

An attempt to climb the centre of the triangular wall at the head of Amphitheatre Gully (right of the corner pitch of Amphitheatre Wall). Climbing on-sight, damp gritty rock forced a somewhat unsatisfactory deviation into the corner on the right.

1. 30m 5c. Climb close to the centre of the slab past a number of horizontal breaks, until forced into the corner on the right (old PR) for a short way. Return left along an obvious traverse line to finish up a steep jam crack.

2. 25m 4b. Finish up the fine top pitch of Amphitheatre Wall.

# COIRE AN t-SNEACHDA, Mess of Pottage:

Between The Three Decrees and Yukon Jack are two crack-lines. They will bank up.

Sharks Fin Soup - 90m V,6. J. Preston, G. Ettle, I. Taylor. 10th December, 1999. The left-hand crack climbs up through a fin-like flake and its thin continuation for 40m to join The Haston Line.

*The Despot* – 90m V,7. G. Ettle, J. Preston. 19th November, 1999. The right-hand crack gains a short left-facing corner which is steep but amenable. Continue in the same line to finish up Yukon Jack.

*The Truncator* – 85m VI,7. M. Garthwaite, G. Ettle. 20th February, 2000. Start as for No Blue Skies.

- 1. 20m. Move up the diagonal fault a few metres. Climb up a steep break in the overhangs above to slabs and a belay in the obvious groove.
- 2. 25m. Follow the groove right into Melting Pot. Go up this for 10m.
- 3. 20m. As for Trunkline. Break out right on to the pillar and up blocky terrain to belay on The Message.
- 4. 20m. Climb a crackline just right of The Message.

#### Aladdin's Buttress:

The Celtic Edge - VII,7. K. Grindrod, J. Wiggins. 26th January, 2000.

Based on the summer line of Edgewood, except finishing up Doctor Janis on the last pitch. The crux was pulling out from crack on to slab on pitch 2, with a second crux on the undercut slab on pitch 3 (a little helpful ice).

#### **COIRE AN LOCHAIN, No.1 Buttress:**

Note: G. Ettle thought Ventricle VII,8.

#### No. 4 Buttress:

Puffer Extract – 70m V,6. N. Lowry, T. Woodhead. 13th December, 1999. Start up Deep Throat.

1. 40m. Start up the initial wide groove of Deep Throat. Instead of moving into the crack of Deep Throat, climb straight up past a couple of small bulges into a corner capped by an obvious overhang. From this corner traverse left over a thin steep slab to join Puffer, at the

point it moves 'though the overhang at a gap'. Belay 5m up the groove in a small snow bay several meters below the larger snow bay where Puffer and Deep Throat belay.

2. 30m. Puffer now moves rightwards. Instead, take a direct line above through a steep corner. Continue up leftwards through easier ground.

#### **GLEANN EINICH, No. 3 Buttress:**

At the base of No. 3 Buttress is an obvious boiler-plate slab, usually with a water streak down its left and right sides. The slab can be gained by 15 minutes of steep heather from the head of the loch.

Spooky Time - 60m E6 6a\*. J. Lines, E. McTavish. 23rd August, 1999.

A slab climb of some character with some gritty rock to earn the name; 60m rope necessary. Start on a ledge on the right beneath the blank slab. Climb a short slab to a finger rail. Move left along this to a vertical pink quartz seam. Climb up to a flake (poor Friend#/2). Step up on to the slab and smear until an easing in angle. Move up to a weird flake/pocket (good Friend#2 and others), then move up and diagonally left along a line of quartzy knobbles until an easing in angle. Pad directly up the easy—angled slab between water streaks to the top.

### NORTH EAST OUTCROPS

### Findon Ness (p103):

Siva – 20m E3 5c. W. Moir, M. Levack. 23rd May, 1999. Start up Guru then go up to climb through a notch in the huge beak/roof.

# Tilly Tennant (mistakenly written as Castle Rock of Muchalls in the guide, p140):

Diedre Esoteria – 12m VS 4c. N. Ritchie, W. Moir. 29th January, 2000 The corner right of the prow.

*Wild Is The Wind* – 15m E5 6a. W. Moir. 29th January, 2000. The intermittent crack-line up the prow.

# Petries Hole (p 169):

Blackballed – 8m E3 6a. W. Moir, P. Allan, N. Ritchie. 26th February, 2000. The undercut nose and line of flakes on black granite just above the sea.

The following were sent by M. Reed; the relationship to Blackballed is unknown: Access is as per the guide (p169). The crag forms a ridge running east to the sea and has separate little walls in its length. The biggest wall, close to the cave, is birded, but the smaller walls are not too bad. The routes were climbed on—sight and soloed.

As you descend the slabs toward the sea, in a small hidden gully is a short east-facing wall of poor, crumbly granite with an obvious black rectangular shaped right arête, capped by a slab, and possessing a strange–shaped rock feature: *The Lonesome Lug* – 8m H. Severe. M. Reed. 21st May, 1999.

Blacklist - 5m Severe. 21st May, 1999.

Going east again, pass an open green gully (descent) and a black north-facing wall with a flake-crack.

East of Blacklist is small slabby, south-east facing wall which can be traversed leftwards at V. Diff. to the south side of the crag. The next lines need a low-ish tide. *Cold Shoulder* – 8m Mild VS. M. Reed. 21st May, 1999.

From the middle of the traverse, go straight up the centre of the scooped wall on perfect rock which becomes mossy near the top. Variation possible.

The next routes start from the ledge below the south–facing wall, reached from the traverse. The old VS mentioned in the guide, is the big green central crack. Watch the tide!

Coral Dew - 8m VS 4b\*. M. Reed. 21st May, 1999.

Climb up from the right end of the ledge, up a vague scoop, to a prominent small spike and a small ledge. Finish up the blunt rib. A bold wee number.

Alienation - 8m E3 6a\*\*. 26th May, 1999.

The cracked wall right of the VS. Climb the right-hand crack to pockets, then the left-hand crack boldly to the top. A wee cracker! The second ascent, by T. Rankin, confirmed E3.

Humerous Hughie - 8m Mild VS\*. M. Reed. 26th May, 1999.

Start up the  $\overline{VS}$ , move left along a diagonal break, and then climb the obvious green left-facing corner to the top. A fine wee climb.

Solitude - 10m VS 5a\*. M. Reed. 26th May, 1999.

Start from the lower ledge, down and left of the VS (low tide.) Go up the black wall passing a small triangular niche, then up to a small flat—topped protruding block. Go up, then right to the highest point of the wall (or finish direct if no birds.)

Dry Moss - 10m H. Severe. M. Reed. 1st July, 1999.

The green mossy crack at the left end of the wall, straight up. Definitely no stars.

Seals Cave (p 170):

Tide and Time - 30m E6 6b. M. Reed, T. Rankin. 5th April, 1999.

From a belay on the ledge of Crocodile, go left on to the big wall on gritty rounded holds. Follow a line up and left of the arête to climb a slim groove right of an obvious brown rock scar. From the top of the groove make a move up, then traverse left on gritty rock to a black horizontal break and good gear (2xFriend#0). The crux

follows, up via a small undercut to a shield-like flake, then up over Crocodile's ledges to the top.

Velitand – 20m E4 6a. M. Reed, P. Benson. 20th February, 2000.

Climb the hanging crack/groove above the small square roof in the big corner to the right of Crocodile's belay. This was climbed in a bitter wind and required one rest to warm up frozen digits.

The next routes are at the north end of Seals Caves, below the small hanging quarry. The only existing route mentioned in the guide is Piranha (p 172).

Trilogy – 25m E1 5a. M. Reed (Top roped before solo). 13th March, 2000. Start from the mantel block below Piranha's crack. Step left on to the streaked wall, climb up the wall initially using the left arête, then the natural flake-line going right to rejoin Piranha at its fine top corner.

Salmon Pink – 25m E2 5c. W. Moir, N. Morrison. 13th February, 2000. Start up Piranha then take the first shelf-line left. Climb the overhanging crack and hanging corner above.

Salmon Chanted Evening - 25m E2 5b. W. Moir, N. Morrison. 13th February, 2000.

Take the second shelf left out of Piranha and climb a crack just right of the hanging corner of Salmon Pink.

*Heavens Hound* – 15m H. Severe. M. Reed. 1st February, 1999. Right of Pirhana. Takes the line of least resistance up good rock right of Pirhana, then coming back left to exit. It now has a more direct partner in:

Clunk Clique (Every Trip) – 20m HVS 5b. M. Reed, E. Brown. 11th March, 2000. This goes straight up (where Heavens Hound goes left) through the steep ground right of Piranha, using a prominent small flake that juts out perpendicular to the rock, on to a ledge, then up to a good spike common with Lung Shadow. Great gear.

Lung Shadow – 15m HVS/E1 5a. M. Reed, N. Anderson. 24th March, 1999. Start from directly below the left end of the big roof and climb the grey-streaked wall to an obvious spikey jug. Pull round the roof on good holds in dark rock to a good spike. Finish easily.

The big roof feature now sports two high-quality climbs: Teardrop – 20m E4 6a\*\*\*. M. Reed, N. Anderson. 24th March, 1999.

Climb easily up to a white-stained nose, pass it on the left and stand on it. Go right along the juggy rampline for a move or two, then go back left to the top of the first groove. Continue up the second groove to the top and a thread belay on the slab above. This route has now had three ascents and was originally recorded climbing the first groove direct at E4 6b.

The Tyburn Jig – 20m E5 6b\*\*\*. M. Reed, J. Duncan. 18th March, 2000 (three falls), 19th March (clean).

This superb route climbs the very obvious hanging crack left of Teardrop on good

rock. Climb easily up to the crack, climb it to a rest on Teardrop, then go left to break through the lip of the roof using some quartz holds just underneath. The exit on to the slab had to be brushed, and the entry into the crack was tried on the abb rope. **Note:** Initially thought soft E6.

# Berry's Loup (p 146):

Girls Just Wanna Have Fun – 10m HVS 5b. W. Moir, P. Allan, N. Ritchie. 20th February, 2000.

The recess and jam-crack through the overhang left of Cyndi Louper.

Descend a chimney below the previous route to reach the next three routes:  $The\ Issue-10m\ E1.$ 

A remarkable wee roof-crack, a desperate free-climbing challenge.

Avoiding The Issue – 10m E1 5a. W. Moir, N. Morrison. 13th February, 2000. The wall right of the overhang via a flange.

Tender Cleft – 12m. Diff. W. Moir. 11th March, 2000.

The first crack reached on the slabby east face, around the corner from the previous climb.

#### Silkies Cliff (p147):

Silkworm-12m HVS 5a. W. Moir, R. Hewitt, N. Ritchie. 11th March, 2000. The groove in the arête right of Silk Cut.

*Wireless Wall* – 14m E3 6a. W. Moir, R. Hewitt. 11th march, 2000. The left-slanting crack, slab and quartz overhang left of Wire-Nest Corner.

Last Tangle In Partick – 14m E1 5b. N. Ritchie, C. Munro. 11th March, 2000. The slim hanging corner left of Wireless Wall followed by a steep crack through the headwall.

*Holy Willie's Prayer* – 12m VS 5a. N. Ritchie, W. Moir. 12th February, 2000. The undercut corner just right of Hell's Hole.

*Heavenly Pursuits* – 12m E2 5b. W. Moir, N. Ritchie. 12th February, 2000. Another undercut corner with two overhangs lies 5m right. Climb it direct.

**Note:** M. Reed notes that he managed to get to a small island, only just off the mainland, between Murdoch Head and Longhaven. Access is down the steep grassy slopes opposite, then a jump on to the island at low tide. The main feature of interest to the adventurous climber is the gorgeous 8m gently overhanging east wall of perfect pink granite. The base can be traversed at 5a, and the face has a line of flakes up the left centre which went on–sight solo at 5c, with the added bonus of deep water under its base, called Treasure Island. Just to its left is a very short and steep groove with a finger crack (6a). Also climbed were three other lines, the grooved right arête at VS, a short cracked wall behind and right at HVS 5a, and it's right arête at H. Severe. The west side is only of interest to birdwatchers (30th July, 1999).

### MORAY AREA, COVESEA, Boulders Bay (p 250):

Family Affair - 12m E2 5b. J. & B. Hall. 26th March, 1999.

Start directly below the hanging arête between Past Imperfect and Sleepy Hollow. Climb up to a first thread and swing left on to the front face. Move diagonally left, then back right to go straight up the hanging arête. Three threads in place.

Stress Relief - 12m E2 5c. J. Hall, B. Woodward. 7th May, 1999.

The wall left of the Orphan Annie arête gives a bold route with two variations which touch at the key peg runner.

Left Variation – Bolder. Start up the centre of the wall (or more easily up the corner at its left edge), then move right to a ledge next to the arête (peg). Step left (crux) and climb up past the right side of a big flake on the wall.

Right Variation – Climb the wall just left of the arête with occasional handholds and runners on the arête.

# **CUMMINGSTON, Prophet Walls (p 237):**

Africa - 15m E4 6a\*. C. Hornsby. 1999.

An aesthetic, but escapable route, climbing the front face of the nose. Boulder up the centre of the wall below the geographical feature 'Africa'. Place protection in the left-facing corner of The Prophet and climb boldly up to gain a standing position below the final headwall (crux). Further protection may be placed in the Prophet crack before finishing.

# The Arch Wall (p 243):

Archibold - 10m E4 6a. C. Hornsby. 1999.

Climb Bullworker to the overhang and place protection. Hand traverse hard left 2m placing small Friends in the overhang lip. Move up and left using a shallow scoop. Make difficult and bold moves leftwards (avoid going straight up) to gain the centre of the arch and finish directly up.

#### HIGHLAND OUTCROPS

# LOCH LINNHE, Stac an Eich (p122):

R. Everett notes that Let Sleeping Dogs Lie is E5 6b.

# GLENFINNAN AREA, Boathouse Crag (Highland Outcrops p 141):

*Hypertension* – 15m HVS 5a\*\*. S. Kennedy, C. Grindley. 18th August, 1999. The obvious crack—line to the left of Very Gneiss Wall. Start up a short corner before moving left below a bulge. Surmount the bulge and climb the crackline directly to the top.

Antidote – 15m E1 5\*. A. Hart, C. Grindley, D. Hood, S. Kennedy. 27th May, 1999 Climbs the slabby wall left of Hypertension. Move diagonally up leftwards to a heather ledge. Make awkward moves up then left until close to the left edge. Finish up a shallow crack in the upper wall. Sustained.

Sedative – 15m HVS 4c\*. S. Kennedy, C. Grindley. July, 1998. Follows the vague vertical fault line starting a couple of metres right of Very Gneiss

Wall. Climb to the horizontal break at mid height. Step right, then climb directly to the top. Sparsely protected in the lower section.

#### MALLAIG CRAGS, Carn Mhic a'Ghille-Chaim:

The first major buttress to the right of the Central Pillar is split in two by a deep corner. The left half contains a prominent wide S-crack. The next three routes are on this buttress, and share a common belay point (rickety tree and  $2^{1}/_{2}$  Friend). All the routes dry very quickly.

Gael Warning –35m VS 4c. M. Harris, D. & M. Ballance. 25th September, 1999. The wall left of the S-crack contains a thinner, snaking crack in its upper half. Start below this at a shallow, gardened groove line. Go up the groove to a heather ledge and small spike. Move left for a few feet, then straight up a thin crack, moving left to join the snaking crack at an obvious quartz patch. Go up the crack to its end where the angle eases, then move right around the corner to the tree. The climbing and wire protection are both excellent.

Tinky Winky's Chalkbag – 35m Severe. D. & M. Ballance, M.Harris. 25th September, 1999.

Climb the deep corner, mainly on the right wall, on good clean rock. A few loose blocks in the corner are easily avoided.

Senile Dementia – 25m E2 5c. M. Harris, D. Ballance. 9th May, 1999.

Takes a steep line up the bulging right-hand section of the buttress, starting just left of the descent gully at an easy right-leaning ramp. Start up the ramp, then climb a strenuous overhanging crack to a good hold on the obvious block (which is solid). Make an awkward move to stand up, then continue up easing cracks to the tree belay. (Climbed in the rain on the leader's 40th birthday).

The next two routes are on the rightmost buttress of the crag. This has a large slab on its left flank, which is bounded on the right by a striking leaning arête. *The Noo–Noo* – 35m VS 4c. D. Ballance, M. Harris. 23rd August, 1998.

This takes the left-leaning crack in the large slab. Start just left of the toe of the buttress and climb directly up slabs (keeping right of heather) to a ledge and detached block. Now move left into the crack and follow this, finishing direct at the top.

The Judgment - 35m E1 5a. M. Harris, D. Ballance. 9th May, 1999.

Climbs the leaning arête. Technically very straightforward but exposed, with spaced protection. Start as for The Noo-Noo to the ledge and detached block. Climb straight up past a hole (good hex possible) to a small overlap. From here, move right to the edge and follow this to a jug in a wide crack. Finish easily in a fine position. (Benjamin Franklin: '...at forty, the judgment...')

# Cnoc a'Bhac Fhalaichte (Tarbet Crag, MR 795 920):

This crag faces SW at low altitude and dries extremely quickly. Unfortunately, it lies six miles from the road end at Bracorina, and is reached by a pleasant track along the north shore of Loch Morar. The arduousness of the approach would be greatly mitigated by use of the scheduled boat service to Tarbet from Mallaig, or by canoe via Loch Morar.

The left side of the crag consists of very steep walls broken by ledges, and has several mysterious metal (belay?) stakes on top. The right side of the crag consists of an impressive shield of rock. The following route takes a fine line up this shield: a long, slim corner line facing right, and leaning to the right. This is well seen from the cairn at the top of the low pass between Tarbet and Swordland. From the cairn, walk up to a gear-up spot below the far right—hand end of the cliff. The descent is straightforward, down the gully to the right of the cliff.

Music, Movement and Mime - 50m E3 5c. M. Harris, D. Ballance. 24th May, 1999. 1. 15m. Walk left a few metres from the gear-up spot, then jungle-bash up to belay at the highest trees.

2. 35m 5c. Move up easily at first, then left on to a huge detached block. Go up steep cracks above (passing a small tree) to a niche. Stand on a large flake on the right, then move boldly up and right (crux) to gain the continuation of the crack-line which is laybacked to a resting place. Continue up the shallow right-leaning corner line to the top.

# Ardnish Peninsula, Paradise Walls (MR 719 806):

One route has been led on the slabby far right walls above the Paradise Walls: *The Cure for a Forty Footer* – 30m. Diff. S. Culpan, J. Watson. 2nd April, 1999. Follow a diagonal orange crack on an obvious clean ramp.

#### **Lizard Crag:**

This immaculate little crag is situated right by the idyllic beach at MR 700 806. The Lizard – 25m HVS 5a\*\*. J. Watson, S. Culpin. 2nd April, 1999. Climb the steep groove at the bottom to gain a slab where technical moves lead up

Climb the steep groove at the bottom to gain a slab where technical moves lead up the headwall. Finish up and left along a flying arête.

The Snake – 20m E3 5c\*. J. Watson (unsec.). 2nd April, 1999.

Five metres left of the previous route a steep corner gains a difficult break which leads right on to the slab of the previous route. Finish as for The Lizard.

#### Glac Ruadh:

The following routes are located on a large area of slab overlooking the gorge known as Glac Ruadh, immediately behind (north of) the hill containing the Gleann Mama slabs (see SMCJ 1998). MR 737 848. To reach the gorge it is best to cut over the side of the hill just before Gleann Mama farmhouse.

*Mindstorm* – 45m VS 4c\*. S. Kennedy, C. Grindley, D. Hood. 30th May, 1999. Takes a fairly central line up the slab starting close to the lowest rocks. Climb an easy initial slab to a short corner. Move up the corner and break out left. Climb directly up slabs to finish.

*Whiz Kid*—40m. Mild Severe\*. D. Hood, C. Grindley, S. Kennedy. 30th May, 1999. Climb the corner line to the right of Mindstorm via some short steps.

#### ARISAIG, Sidhean Mor:

The hill is at 600m above Loch nan Uamh near Arisaig (MR 728 867). Approach up Borrowdale Burn path to top of a gorge and flat area with overgrown ruined crofts. Take the right-hand branch of the river up Coire an Eas Bhain and follow it

to the first of two small lochans at which point the 30m dome-shaped crag comes into sight at the top of Sidhean Mor. It is made of good clean schist and would probably dry quickly after rain.

*Brae Fahrt* – 20m. H. Severe 4b. D. Collier, J. Hartley. 30th July, 1999. Starts at the lower end of the north-facing wall of the crag. Ascend a leftwards-slanting ramp using a corner crack on the right up to an area of loose blocks. Negotiate them to step right on to a slab and wide crack rising to the right. Finish easily.

Fairy Tricky – 15m HVS 5b\*. D. Collier (unsec.). 30th July, 1999. Start at the upper end of the north-facing wall of the crag up a zig–zag crack. Start vertically up to a rightwards hand traverse leading to a vertical crack and easy to the top. The crack now turns out to be a detached flake.

One for Ewan – 25m Mild VS 4b\*. J. Hartley, D. Collier. 30th July, 1999. The obvious curving crackline to the right of the west-facing slab which gives a fine route on solid rock (larger gear useful).

**Note:** There are other reasonable-looking routes to be climbed here, especially on the west-facing slab.

### **DUNTELCHAIG, Seventy Foot Wall:**

Save the Tree – 15m E3 6b. I. Taylor (unsec.). 11th August, 1996. Climb the hanging groove in the nose right of Slings, then finish up a thin crack. Side runners placed in Slings.

#### **HUNTLY'S CAVE:**

Sunfish - E4 6a\*\*. J. Watson (unsec.). 4th April, 1999.

An exciting line up the fish-faced nose left of Cave Route and right of Huntly's Wall, finishing up the latter route. Climb the difficult Alternative Start to Cave Route to below the big prow, where gear can be placed in abundance. Launch boldly up and left, using the 'eye' of the fish as the crucial hold, to gain ledges and a well–earned breather. Exposed.

#### CREAG DUBH:

Snoopy, Variation – 12m HVS 5b. J. P. Dyble, S. N. Riain. 22nd August, 1999. A variation to Snoopy pitch 2, climbing direct the arête which is left of the second half of the pitch. The previous guide places Snoopy right of Rib Direct while the current guide has Snoopy 'left of Rib Direct', but this seems to be a mistake.

# LAGGAN, Creagan Soilleir, Pine Tree Crag:

Approximately 50m right and slightly lower than the main crag is an attractive steep wall of pinkish rock crossed by two left-trending diagonal veins of quartz. Dries very quickly.

*Frank Fish* – 10m E2 5c. D. Green, S. Richardson. 27th September, 1999. The shallow left-trending depression in the centre of the wall. Start 1m left of the right edge.

*Heather the Weather* – 10m HVS 5a. S. Richardson, D. Green. 27th September, 1999.

The prominent flake-crack on the right side of the wall. Finish over the final bulge on good holds.

#### **BINNEIN SHUAS, The Fortress:**

Xanadu - 25m E1 5b. S. Richardson, T. Whitaker. 12th September, 1999.

Up and left of Cube Wall is a steep wall with a cracked left edge taken by an unnamed Hard Severe mentioned in the Highland Outcrops guidebook. This route takes a right-curving line right of the arête and finishes up a short wide crack in the centre of the wall. Start 5m right of the left edge and climb a thin crack to a ledge on the arête. Move up and right across twin cracks, step right into a small rounded niche and gain the short wide crack above which leads to the top just right of a huge perched block.

# **DUNKELD, Upper Cave Crag:**

**Note:** R. Everett notes that Marlina (p296) is probably 7c, based on his ascents of other 7c routes. Also, it should probably be spelled Marlena.

#### **GLEN OGLE, Sunnyside:**

Happy Campus – 6c. R. Anderson. April, 1999. The roof between Let it All Hang Out and Hang On.

#### **Bournville:**

J. Horrocks notes that Voodoo Ray (p335) climbed without use of the arête is 6c (rather than 7a) – about the same as using the arête! Using the arête is rather precarious, and going up the wall direct is rather blind.

### ABERFELDY, Weem, Weem Rock:

Bark Backerache – 6b. R. & C.Anderson. May, 1999. Route at extreme right end of crag, just right of Crowing at the Enemy. Lighten—up – 6a. R. & C.Anderson. May, 1999. The edge just left of Crowing at the Enemy

# Notes from SMCJ 1999, p141 (J. Horrocks):

- 1. The line taken by Blinded by the Night had previously been climbed without the bolts at VS/HVS and finished at the bolt lower-off of one of the routes to the right. The bolts have now been removed (but not the lower-off).
- 2. Ghost Trail perhaps 6b+ rather than 6c.
- 3. Dazed and Confused 6a is rather badly bolted at present.
- 4. Kinmont Times finishing direct is 6b/6b+.
- 5. Loose Living FA G. Ridge, not team Anderson!
- 6. Clutching At Straws is more like 7a.

# GLEN LEDNOCK, Creag na h-Iolaire:

R. Everett notes that Black September (p316) is E3 6a, never E4.

Rumour has it that the new crags on the other side are poor; definitely not worth the given stars, in the independent opinions of two teams.

# BEN NEVIS, AONACHS, CREAG MEAGHAIDH

# **BEN NEVIS, Observatory Buttress:**

Saturday Rib - 150m III. S. Richardson, R. Clothier. 3rd April, 1999.

The rib left of Good Friday Climb.

1. 50m. Start at the foot of Good Friday Climb and climb mixed ground to gain a snow slope. Climb this to a mixed arête left of Good Friday Climb, Left-Hand Finish and move up to the foot of a steep buttress.

2 and 3. 100m Climb the buttress and finish up the crest of the buttress to the top.

#### **Indicator Wall:**

Soft Ice Shuffle - 120m IV,4. S. Richardson, R. Clothier. 3rd April, 1999.

The short buttress just left of Indicator Wall. Start 20m up Good Friday Climb where a ledge leads right onto the crest of the buttress.

- 1.30m. Climb an icy groove up and right to a cave. Exit left by a short wall and climb mixed ground to a stance on the left.
- 2. 50m. Step back right into an icy groove and climb this to the top of the buttress. Climb ice then snow to the exit gullies of Indicator Wall.
- 3. 40m. Take the left of the three gullies to the top.

#### Pinnacle Buttress of the Tower:

Smooth Operator – 210m VI,7. S. Richardson, C. Cartwright. 26th March, 2000. A good sustained mixed climb close to the crest of Pinnacle Buttress between Stringfellow and Butterfingers. Start below the initial gully of Stringfellow.

- 1.50m. Climb the gully for 3m them move right on to the buttress and climb a right-slanting slot to reach the crest. Continue up steep mixed ground to reach the terrace. Move right and belay below the right-trending shallow gully of Butterfingers.
- 30m. Climb the steep right-facing corner left of Butterfingers and continue up the left-slanting gully above to the cave stance.
- 3. 30m. Exit the cave on the right then step back left onto the steep wall above. Climb a vertical right-facing corner and squeeze up the continuation chimney to a good stance just right of the crest of the buttress.
- 4. 10m. Climb the awkward wall behind the stance to reach the good platform at the top of Butterfingers pitch 3.
- 5. 20m. Move right around the edge (as for Butterfingers) then climb straight up the left-facing corner above which leads to the platform of broken blocks on the crest of the buttress. Junction with Stringfellow.
- 6. 20m. Move up a short left-facing corner and climb the centre of the headwall to reach the summit of Pinnacle Buttress.
- 7. 50m. Continue along the ridge to the foot of the Great Tower on Tower Ridge.

#### Garadh na Ciste:

Raeburn's not so Easy – 285m III,4. K. Bell, D. Thompson. 13th March, 2000.

- 1. 40m. The original first pitch of Raeburn's Easy Route.
- 2. 45m. Go up the snow slope slightly right to an iced slab.
- 3. 45m. Climb up the right-hand edge of the iced slab and cross a snow slope to a small rock outcrop.
- 4.30m. Go straight up the snow slope to a cave at the right-hand side of a rock band.
- 5. 40m. Traverse right for 10m and ascend a bulging iced chimney-corner.





6. 40m. Make a rising traverse right around a corner to rocks below an icefall. 7. 45m. Climb on good ice for 25m, then finish up a steep snow slope to the cornice plateau.

# Creag Coire na Ciste:

The Gift – 110m III. A. Ferguson, C. Sutcliffe. 11th March, 2000.

The route lies between North Gully and Four Play. Start at the base of North Gully. Take the ice smear on its (true) left wall up on to the buttress. After about 35m the crest of the buttress is reached and a further 10m of easy ground leads to a rocky outcrop. The route then proceeds along the top of the buttress to the snow fan and plateau.

#### **Jubilee Buttress:**

*Morton's Neuroma* – 170m V,5. N. Gregory, C. Foubister. 10th February, 2000. To the right of Central Gully (on the Trident Buttress) between it and Jubilation is a small buttress. There is steep icefall at the toe of the buttress.

- 1.50m. Climb the steep ice fall at the toe of the buttress for 6m to easier ground and a peg placement on the right wall. Follow a rising left traverse to a second steep ice fall; follow this (exposed) to a shallow gully and a poor belay on the right at its top.
- 2. 60m. Climb up and right to the main snow apron via short icy steps.
- 3. 60m. Continue direct to join Central Gully coming in from the left where the snow apron narrows.

#### Carn Dearg:

**Note:** B. Poll and A. Teasdale climbed the last pitch of Bewildabeast at VI,6 as a direct finish to Gemini on 13th March 1999 (thinking it was new).

Wray's Wrib - 120m III. S. Powell, J. Wray. February, 1994.

From the top of the first pitch of Waterfall Gully. Step right and follow an ice-filled groove up and right to a snowy rib which forms the right-hand side of the middle section of Waterfall Gully. Follow this rib to a small buttress, climbing this by a crackline right of centre into a snowy saddle. Climb the groove beyond to re-join Waterfall Gully after it exits rightwards in to the basin.

# North Wall of Carn Dearg:

Macphee's Route – 165m V,6. C. Cartwright, S. Richardson. 12th February, 2000. An interesting and unusual route following the summer route in its entirety. The climb takes a rising traverse across the North Wall of Carn Dearg and is recommended in wild weather or conditions of deep snow. Start by following a shelf 50m right of Staircase Climb to reach a vegetated groove on the left edge of the North Wall.

- 1. 40m. Climb the groove and ensuing chimney to a belay on Broad Terrace.
- 2. 25m. From the left end of the terrace climb a narrow vegetated groove (Macphee's 'broken crack') and exit right on a slab to reach the left end of Flake Terrace.
- 3. 40m. Traverse the terrace rightwards to a stance at the top of a downward step. 4. 20m. Slither down a chimney, then negotiate the Crevasse by climbing down into it and moving along its base. Belay on a huge block at its end above a narrow chimney.

5. 40m. Climb down the chimney and traverse right to a prominent block to the left of The Shroud. From here a 25m abseil leads to easy ground at the foot of Cousin's Buttress.

#### Raeburn's Buttress:

The Crack - 360m VIII,8. C. Cartwright, S. Richardson. 13th February, 2000.

A major undertaking and compelling winter line. Very sustained and strenuous. Due to the steepness of the lower section, very snowy conditions are required for the route to be in acceptable winter condition. The winter route differed slightly from the summer line, so a full description follows below. Start by scrambling up mixed ground to a block belay at the foot of steep slabs which guard access to the crack soaring above.

- 1. 25m. Step left and climb a short vertical wall to gain a vegetated slab. Move up and right and pull over a series of overhanging steps to reach a block belay just right of the crack.
- 2. 15m. Climb the overhanging chimney-crack to a stance on the right.
- 3. 25m. Move back left to the crack and climb it over a bulge (two rests taken). Continue up the crack to a good platform on the left.
- 4. 20m. The crack bulges above. Step down and right to a ledge, move along this for 3m, and climb a series of overhanging walls to where the angle abruptly eases. This is the variation climbed by Robin Smith in 1956.
- 5 to 7. 125m. Continue up the crest of Raeburn's Buttress for three pitches. The angle steepens as the buttress narrows, and the final blade of rock was passed on the left by a vegetated groove above Intermediate Gully.
- 8 to 11. 150m. An exit can be made from the top of Raeburn's Buttress by moving into the snow bowl left of South Castle Gully, but this likely to be avalanche-prone if there is sufficient snow for The Crack to be in condition. Instead, trend up and left up the right side of the upper section of Baird's Buttress via open snow grooves to reach easy angled snow slopes leading to the summit of Carn Dearg.

#### The Castle:

The Castle Direct - 90m IV,4. S. Powell, J. Wray. February, 1994.

In the upper reaches of the Castle, the normal line follows a gully just left of centre then exits right. The line of the Direct takes a straight line up steep ground some 25m to the right of that gully, exiting directly at the normal finish point of the Castle.

### AONACH MOR, Coire an Lochain:

Proposal - 70m V,6. M. Pescod, T. Barton. 6th February, 1999.

Start below a crack on the left side of the buttress containing Stirling Moss, some 5m up and left of that route.

- 1.35m. Climb to a ledge at the base of the crack and climb it steeply to a large ledge.
- 2. 35m. Step right and climb the crest of the buttress to finish easily.

**Note:** A. Kimber notes that Siamese Twin (SMCJ 1998, p648) has been climbed before on numerous occasions as a variant to the normal line on Left Twin which is only 2m to its left. The line has been recorded as such in his guidebook (p 138).

Back Street Boogie – 70m VI,6. M. Pescod, F. MacCallum. 20th December, 1999. On a small buttress behind the Prow, i.e. farther left (or farther away from Easy

Gully). To get to the base of the buttress go around the Prow and up a short gully. The buttress is set up and back a short way. The climb itself goes straight up the front of the buttress which is only about 5m wide.

1. 30m. Climb up ice slightly leftwards to a bulge that leads to an ice slab. Gain a right-facing corner and climb it (mixed) to the top of a pillar.

2. 40m. Climb the steep wall above on turfy cracks (strenuous), continue to a snow crest that leads to the summit.

**Note:** The line of Smoking the White Owl was first climbed in the winter of 1984 by R. and F. Kincaid. S. Powell (who sends this note), then soloed it the following winter.

#### **AONACH BEAG, North Face:**

Aquaphobia – 125m VI,6. A. Cave, K. Cool. March, 1999.

Essentially, this climbs the slim ice pillar right of Stand and Deliver.

1. 35m. Climb up to the base of the pillar.

2. 40m. Climb the pillar steeply and then make awkward moves up on rock and out left on to ice to finish just right of Stand and Deliver. (A good finish would be to go straight up the crack above, however during the 1st ascent there was a major thaw happening so we stayed on the ice).

3. 50m. More easily to the top.

Excalibur – 260m VI,6. C. Cartwright, S. Richardson. 27th January, 2000.

A good directice line up the unclimbed buttress between Royal Pardon and Camilla taking in the previously 'untrodden snowfield' in the centre of the buttress. Start 10m left of Camilla just left of a blunt rock rib.

- 1. 50m. Climb left of the rib to reach a steep ice wall which leads to easier ground above the rib.
- 2. 30m. Continue up ice to belay below a steep slot which slices through the barrier wall below the 'untrodden snowfield'.
- 3. 20m. Climb the slot and belay at the foot of the snow field.
- 4. 40m. Climb the 'untrodden snowfield' and belay below a vertical left-facing corner which cuts through the buttress at the top right side of the snowfield.
- 5. 50m. Climb the corner and continue up steep ice to the crest of the buttress. 6 and 7. 70m. Finish up snow slopes to the top.

Mean Streak – 250m VII,6. M. Hind, R. Webb. February, 2000.

Climbs the thin ice streak left of Royal Pardon. Start by the foot of Kings Ransom.

1. 20m. Climb up and right to a prominent spike.

- 2. 35m. On the right skyline, on the arête overlooking Royal Pardon, is an even more prominent spike at the foot of a thin ice streak. Climb to this.
- 3. 50m. Climb the streak and easier, but not trivial, ground above to a flake.
- 4. 30m. Move right and climb an awkward ice bulge to join Royal Pardon. 5 etc. 115m. Continue up Royal Pardon.

The White Queen - 300m II. B. Davison. 6th April, 2000.

Start up a slabby buttress left of the start of Queen's View (SMCJ 1995) initial runnel/chimney to reach the snow basin. From here the route takes the ridge right of Queen's View, starting close to where its gully narrows. Follow a fault up right

on to the crest of the ridge and stick to it as close as possible. A snow slope leads to a second buttress on the ridge. From a block at its base follow a right to left turfy ramp and easy rocks to snow. Bypass the final rock buttress on its right and finish on snow right of the summit.

The Black Prince – 300m II. A. Nisbet. 6th April, 2000.

After the same start up the slabby buttress into the snow basin, take the easiest line up a broad ridge to finish up snow leading to the final few metres of the NE Ridge.

**Note:** Starting up the shallow snow gully left of these routes to reach the snow basin, then traversing right to finish up the wide snow couloir which forms in 'the easy ground' left of King's Ransom looks like a pleasant and easy Grade II (there were footsteps in it).

#### **MEALL GARBH:**

Moonstone – 165m VII,7. C. Cartwright, S. Richardson. 19th December, 1999. A good and varied mixed route taking a direct line up the steepest part of the crag just left of Central Gully. Start below the left branch of Central Gully directly below a prominent 20m high diamond-shaped shield of rock at one-third height on the crag.

- 1. 40m. Climb a discontinuous turf break through the slabby wall to belay below the diamond.
- 2. 20m. Climb a steep corner on the let side of the diamond, and continue up the groove which forms the diamond's upper left side.
- 3. 15m. Climb leftwards up an icy scoop and move across snow to belay on a large block as for Inclination.
- $4.\,20 m.$  Climb the turfy scoop as for Inspiration to belay on a ledge below a diagonal crack with two old pegs.
- 5. 15m. Step down and right and climb the vertical wall on the right using well spaced turf. To a stance under a roof.
- 6. 15m. Move right under the roof and climb a thin hanging ice smear to easier ground.
- 7. 60m. Snow slopes lead to the cornice.

### **CREAG MEAGHAIDH, The Post Face:**

*Moonlight Fright* – 295m V,6. N. Lowry, T. Woodhead. 22nd January, 2000. Start 5m right of South Pillar.

- 1. 25m. Climb the obvious corner/fault line, moving through a bulge at 20m.
- 2. 30m. Continue up the corner, stepping right beneath a wall. Climb out to snow slopes.
- 3. 45m. Climb mixed ground near the right side of the main face, passing over Post Horn Gallop, to the foot of a narrow right-slanting snow ramp.
- 4. 35m. Move up the snow ramp and round the right edge of the main face to steep snow overlooking South Post Direct.
- 5. 30m. Make moves back left on to the face of the buttress and continue up right alongside a snow crest overlooking the top bowl of South Post Direct.
- 6. 20m. Climb into the left side of the upper bowl of South Post Direct to below the right face of the top tower.
- 7.30m. Move back diagonally left over steep snow slopes to crux moves round the

arête of the top tower. A small chimney leads to easy ground on top of the tower. 8. 80m. Continue up easy ground to the plateau.

#### **Great Buttress:**

Born Slippy - 335m VII,6. A. Clarke, N. Kekus. 23rd January, 2000.

A good icy mixed climb, starting at a curving right-facing corner, just left of the right edge of Great Buttress and following the corner to a steep barrier wall, the same wall breached by the crux second pitch of Postman Pat farther right. The mixed wall leads to ice smears and a rising traverse to join the top of pitch 3 of Postman, finishing up this. Follow the corner (thin ice present) to an awkward exit onto a shelf, below the steep barrier wall (60m). Slightly on the right is a snow-filled groove, capped by a small overhang. Climb this and the ensuing ice smear to belay at some loose blocks (45m, crux). Continue up icy grooves above (40m). Make a diagonal rising traverse rightwards to belay at the top of pitch 3 of Postman Pat (30m). Finish as for the Postman (160m).

**Note:** P. Thorburn and D. McGimpsey climbed Postman Pat via a direct icicle which had formed down the start to pitch 2 (i.e. avoiding the left traverse). Grade VI.6 overall.

#### BEN ALDER, Garbh Coire Beag:

Culra Couloir – 300m III. C. Cartwright, S. Richardson. 6th February, 2000. The prominent wide left-slanting gully on the left side of the Alderwand face gives a fine mountaineering route. An ice pitch at 200m leads to the upper slopes and cornice which is best tackled via the snow ridge up and left.

#### GLEN COE

### **BUACHAILLE ETIVE MOR, Lagangarbh Buttress:**

To Kill a Mockingbird – 55m E2 5c. A. Nelson, T. Blackmore. 24th May, 1998. Left of Blotch Buttress is a higher black-streaked wall with a roof at the end. This route climbs the smooth red wall right of the roof. Start at a cluster of square blocks below a thin crack. Climb the steep wall above, then directly up to a grass ledge (45m). Climb the crack in the wall above (10m).

The Dial – 90m III/IV. A. Nelson, D. Gunn. 16th February, 2000. A winter ascent of the summer route.

# Lagangarbh Corrie (Coire na Tulaich):

High on the NW-facing side of Lagangarbh Corrie at the foot of the steepest part of the descent route is a prominent icy wall. There are two obvious ice lines on either side of the wall. This route follows the rightmost one.

Sliver – 80m III/IV. D. Gunn, A. Nelson. 31st December, 1999.

Start behind a wall formed by a rocky island with easy snow on each side. Climb the ice steeply to a belay at 50m, then finish more easily to the summit ridge.

Four Feather Falls – 120m III/IV. C. White, P. Harrop. 27th January 1999. High on the west side of the coire, left of the buttress with the obvious curving chimney, a four-fingered icefall forms (the chimney is a Creag Dubh summer route called Nae Sae Bad, published in the Lomond rock interim guide produced in 1985). Start directly below the fall in a snow bay. A 10m runnel leads to grooves

followed to the foot of the main icefall (90m). Climb the right-hand ice fall to finish just short of the ridge. The right-hand fall was the only one fully formed that particular day. Good short day or poor weather alternative.

The Spate – 100m IV,6\*\*. P. Moores, A. Nelson. 13th February, 1999.

A left-slanting chimney line, icy to start then more mixed, leading to a chockstone at 45m. Surmount the chockstone followed by a step left to gain access to an upper chimney and then a snowy shelf. Traverse up rightwards to finish. Good early in the season. Probably takes the line of Awrong (p116 current guide).

### **BIDEAN NAM BIAN, Lost Valley Buttress:**

Tiger Feet - 165m IV,5\*. R. Anderson, R. Milne. 16th January, 2000.

The icefall running directly through the line of Sabre Tooth.

- 1. 45m. Start as for Sabre Tooth, climb up right into the initial snow bay, then follow a slim, left-facing iced corner to belay as for Sabre Tooth at the base of its corner pitch above the terrace.
- 2. 50m. Step right and climb the icefall running down the wall just right of Sabre Tooth's corner to a belay in the groove above the corner.
- 3. 50m. Continue to the small upper buttress and climb a groove line slanting slightly left up this to below the final snow slopes.

4. 20m. Easy to the top.

### **Lost Valley Minor Buttress:**

Old Farts Corner - 80m IV,5\*. R. Milne, R. Anderson. 23rd January, 2000.

The left-facing corner opposite Grannies Groove high up the gully on the right side of the crag, just right of Chimini Minor.

1. 50m. Climb the iced corner to turf and continue to an awkward exit where easy ground leads to a belay just above.

2. 30m. A choice of easy lines leads to the top.

**Note:** Well banked, as were the lines of Chimini Minor and Over the Influence, which were much easier looking than when first climbed. Old Farts Corner has been seen with more ice in it and also with none.

#### **GEARR AONACH, North-East Face:**

Harebell Wall – 45m Severe 4a\*. G. Latter, M. King. 28th August, 1999.

Another fine well protected pitch. Start up the short vertical crack 6m left of Hairy Kipper. Climb the crack then move leftwards and up on good holds, veering slightly right to a prominent crack in the headwall. Climb this, which leads into a short left-facing groove. Exit either directly or steeply rightwards, then direct.

**Note:** The above party found a jammed nut near the top, so it seems the route has been done before, but it is a good route, and a worthy companion to both neighbouring routes Hairy Kipper and High Flying.

#### **East Face:**

D. Gunn notes that winter ascents of Mimsy have been claimed twice (SMCJ 1986 p340 and SMCJ 1995 p680).

#### **AONACH DUBH, Far Eastern Buttress:**

*North-East Nose* – III 4. A. Nelson, A. Paul. 10th December, 1999. Follow the summer line with a tricky move at the top.

**Note:** D. Gunn notes that Eastern Slant (SMCJ 1992, p113) and Hu-a-Choy (SMCJ 1997, p357) seem the same, possibly following the summer route, Blister.

#### Barn Wall:

Sword Fence – 200m IV,5. A. Nelson, A. Paul, D. Gunn. 14th December, 1999. Follows the easiest line up the wall between Bowstring and Barn Wall. Start below a protruding cracked block at 20m. Climb up to and over this. Bear left, then up to big ledge. Go up at the right end of ledge, then hard left along a thin ramp. Go up walls above to a shelf. Continue up easy ramps and walls to the top.

# STOB COIRE NAN LOCHAIN, North Buttress:

The Day After - 70m VI,7. A. Nelson, D. Ritchie. 4th April, 2000.

On the right side of N. C. Gully is a large fin of rock which forms a deep chimney and cave on its right side.

1.40m. Climb the chimney by its left wall and continue up and left to a ledge (easily

accessible from higher up N. C. Gully).

2,3. 20m, 10m. Left of a sharp overhang is an obvious V-groove directly above the ledge. Climb this in two pitches to the top.

#### **BIDEAN NAM BIAN, Church Door Buttress:**

Dark Mass - 140m VI,6. M. Bass, S. Yearsley. 4th March 2000.

A spooky route. Based on West Face Route on the lower spur, it then takes a complex line through the upper headwall above West Chimney. Start as for West Face Route.

1. 10m. Climb up and through a narrow crack between the buttress wall and a

detached pinnacle.

2. 35m. Stand on top of the pinnacle. Climb the steep crack past the left-hand end of an overlap to enter a vice-like slot. Thrutch up the slot, and step left where it widens. Continue more easily up the buttress.

3. 30m. Broken ground leads to a junction with Flake Route which is followed to the ledge and boulder traverse on the fourth pitch of West Chimney Route.

4. 40m. Above the ledge and boulder traverse is a cracked wall. From the top of a large block on the traverse climb the wall by left-trending cracks (8m), then move up and rightwards into a shallow chimney/groove. Climb this, moving right at its top, and cross a short difficult slab to reach a peg (possible belay). From the peg a series of discontinuous ledges lead down and right to the arête (difficult to protect). Swing round the arête and climb two short steep corners directly upwards to easier ground. Traverse horizontally right for 5m to a belay below a steep corner.

5. 25m. Climb the corner, step right and follow a groove line to the top.

**Note:** It is possible that the route coincides with Un Poco Loco (SMCJ 1994) for a section on pitch 4.

#### STOB COIRE NAM BEITH:

Crackwork Grooveplay – 150m IV,4. A. Nelson, T. Blackmore. March, 1999. Between Crack Climb and Central Gully a slab leads to a steep crack and left-facing corner. Climb the corner to the base of a V-groove. Go up the groove to a chockstone to reach the upper section of 'Central Gully'.

### Creag Doire-Bheith:

The following routes are located on the right hand section of the crag containing Alan's Arête (SMCJ 1998, p 657), just right of the central vegetated area. The

routes are worthwhile and get the benefit of any evening sun. Two prominent cracklines will be seen near the right edge. These are climbed by the initial two routes described.

Whiplash – 22m HVS 5b\*. S. Kennedy, C. Grindley. July, 1997.

The right-hand crack-line. Start on a sloping shelf up right of the lowest rocks at an undercut section. Step left and pull into the crack. Climb the crack directly to easier ground.

*Aristocrack* – 25m HVS 5a.\*\*. S. Kennedy, D. Hood. 10th September, 1999. The left-hand crack-line. Start a couple of metres below the start of Whiplash just below a small tree. Pull leftwards into the base of the crack. Climb the crack directly via a small roof to reach easier slabby ground.

Avizandum – 25m VS 4c\*. A. Nelson, S. Kennedy, D. Hood. 16th September, 1999. Sustained climbing up the wall left of Aristocrack. Start by the lowest rocks and climb a rib left of a mossy groove. Step right into a shallow corner system from the top of the rib. Climb the corner to a small pedestal. Move left into a short hanging corner. Climb the corner and slabs above.

*Shangabbit* – 22m E3 5c\*. A. Nelson, S. Kennedy. 12th September, 1999. Steep, fingery and bold, climbing the steep wall right of Whiplash. Start just left of a detached block 3m above the start of Whiplash. Make steep moves directly up the wall on side pulls to a bulge at 4m (HB#4 high on right). Move up leftwards from the bulge to better holds (Friend#0). Climb the clean rib above to a ledge.

#### AN T-SRON, East Face:

The slabby wall described in SMCJ 1996, p 104.

Cold Turkey - 130m IV 4. A. Nelson, A. Paul. 25th February, 2000.

A winter ascent starting up Coco Leaf.

The corner/groove holds ice which is climbed to mixed ground and a belay under a roof on the right (50m). Continue past a sloping shelf and through mixed ground to the ridge (80m).

# Bidean nam Bian, Bealach Fhaolain (MR 137 539):

*Gunbarrel Gully* – 250m I/II. A. Nelson. 10th February, 1999. Climbs the obvious parallel gully line with occasional short steps.

### STOB AN FHUARAIN, Coire nan Craimh (MR 125 527):

MacEwan Sexport – 40m VS 4c. A. Nelson, A. MacEwan. August, 1999. Climbs a clean black slab left of the corrie burn before the steep rise into the Coire nan Craimh. Climb the slab just right of centre starting up thin flakes, continuing past a horizontal break then a tricky bulge to finish up quartz holds.

# BEINN MAOL CHALUIM, Creag Dubh (MR 132 524):

The Foxes Pass – 90m III,4. A. Nelson. 10th February, 1999.

Climbs the obvious turfy left-facing corner which splits the crag at the Bealach Fhionnghaill.

#### **GLEN ETIVE, Trilleachan Slabs:**

*The Baldest* – 115m E2\*. D. Jenkins, C. Stead, C. Forrest. 8th August, 1999. On the Upper Slabs. Start just left of the leftmost obvious corner (Take Your Chances) at a three-inch-wide flake-crack.

1.35m 5a. Climb the crack-line, heathery in parts, to its top, and belay in the corner on the right (top of first pitch of Take Your Chances).

2. 45m 5c. Climb the rib, move obviously left, then go up the slab to gain the foot of a right-trending scooped ramp. Follow this to arrive at a groove. Go up the groove to below a short clean-cut section. The next 6m or so is the crux. Either climb the short groove and go left by a blind crack to belay at heather, or step left onto the steep slab and so reach the same point.

 $3.35m\ 5b.$  Climb up and gain a slab sandwiched between two laps. Go leftwards towards a big corner, exiting rightwards at the top of the corner. Abseil point in the

grassy bay on the right.

#### ARDGOUR:

Holly Tree Slab - 40m Diff.\*.

The obvious gneiss slab on the south side of the road between the two parking places for Garbh Bheinn, 10 minutes from the road (MR 91? 59?). Start at the lowest point, avoid the grass patches low down, then head for the apex of the slab. There are easier routes either side of this one.

#### **SNAKE CRAG (MR 929 607):**

This gneiss crag can be seen from the long approach car park, there is some seepage but the rock is black so looks very wet from a distance. Approach is mostly flat on a path but a bit boggy -15 minutes.

*Scheme Wars* – 16m Severe. D. Hood, C. Moody, S. Kennedy. 30th April, 1999. Climb up past the left side of the pale detached block to gain a ramp. Traverse left, then up to finish.

*The Timber* – 16m Severe. C. Moody, D. Hood, S. Kennedy. 30th April, 1999. Go direct to the left side of the nose which is near the top of the crag. Follow a ramp out left.

Pitcon – 16m E1 5a/b. C. Moody, C. Grindley. 8th May, 1999. Go direct to the right side of the nose with a bulge to finish.

Lamb's Foot – 20m Severe\*. C. Moody, C. Black 17th April, 1999. A fault runs up right; start at the base of the fault. Climb up using a thin crack-line to a steep wall. Step left and follow the hidden ramp up right, then finish straight up.

*Bring On The Hail* – 18m VS 4b. C. Moody, C. Black 17th April, 1999. Start right of the base of the diagonal crack/fault. Climb up to a grass patch on the fault and continue straight up. Steep with spaced protection.

Putyan – 18m VS 4b. C. Moody (back-rope) 7th May, 1999.Climb the black rock past the right side of a holly bush at mid-height.

Magic Triangles – 20m HVS 5a. C. Moody, C. Grindley. 8th May, 1999. Start at the triangular block in the grass. Climb up to the diagonal crack/fault, make an awkward move up this, then pull up left and continue to gain the triangular recess. Move left to finish up Putyan.

*The Battle Of Courthill Street* – 20m Severe. S. Kennedy, D. Hood, C. Moody. 30th April, 1999.

Start up One Snake Or Two? and follow the ramp up left.

*One Snake Or Two?* – 15m Severe. C. Moody, C. Black. 17th April, 1999. Start just right of the blunt edge where the steep wall meets the slabbier rock on the right. Move up left on diagonal cracks. Before reaching the heather pull over the bulge and continue up a thin crack finishing left of the tree. Belay on small wires 10m farther up.

Lambleg Slab – 15m E1 5a/b\*. C. Moody, C. Grindley. 8th May, 1999. Just right of One Snake Or Two? gain a ledge, then another ledge up right. Climb the steep slab and continue right of the tree.

The pale wall up on the right is a 10m Diff\*.

#### BEAR CRAG (MR 930 609):

Looking from the car park another crag, often with a waterfall, can be seen behind China Crag. This is the crag mostly hidden behind the waterfall crag. The slab on the left side is Diff.

Garden City – 16m VS 4c\*. C. Moody, C. Grindley. 8th May, 1999. The main fault.

Unnamed - 16m Severe\*. C. Moody. 1st April, 1999.

Start at the right side of the steep wall where a crack runs up right. Climb straight up. A climb just left is easier except for the bulging start. There is also a Diff. to the right which crosses a grass ledge high up.

An unnamed V. Diff. climbs an obvious scoop rightwards. Step right, then climb the buttress.

# Crag Name Unknown (MR 941 603):

This is the gneiss crag overlooking the burn above Inversanda which can be seen from the road.

*The Gathering* – 25m HVS 5a. A. Nelson, M. Shaw, S. Kennedy, C. Grindley, C. Moody. 7th June, 1999.

Start just right of the toe of the buttress. Climb easily towards the roof, then move out right. Continue up, then left.

#### GLEN GOUR, Wooden Gazelle Crag (MR 934 650):

This gneiss crag is far up the glen on the north side of the burn. The end of the crag can be seen from the road but clean rock cannot be seen till well up the glen -1hr. 10min. from the road.

Fallow Chili – 40m HVS 4c\*. C. Moody, C. Grindley. 4th July, 1999. The rib at the left end of the crag. Start up a corner just left of the tree, step right on to the rib and climb to the top. Maybe E1 5a with different route finding.

#### THE SLAB:

Gazelle - 25m VS 4c. C. Moody, C. Grindley. 4th July, 1999

Attempts to climb the rib on the left side. Near the top where it steepens, avoid the difficulties by stepping left, moving up the corner, then back right again.

Dik Dik – 25m HVS 5a\*. C. Moody, C. Grindley. 28th August, 1999.

Start at the black streak. Climb up left, then follow a crack back right to a circular recess in the centre of the face. Step left (mossy but easy) or climb more directly and finish up the right-facing corner.

Catapult – 25m E2 5b\*\*. C. Moody, C. Grindley, S. Kennedy. 28th August, 1999. Start at the right side and follow the obvious line up leftwards. Fairly bold.

*Three Blind Mice* – 85m E2/3\*. T. Fryer, Y. Taylor, J. McKenzie. 24th July, 1999. Farther right is the highest section of cliff.

1.30m 5a. Follow a shallow right-trending groove with a black left wall, then trend left on slabby rock. Pull over a bulge, then go rightwards across a slab and finish rightwards up a short groove to a blocky ledge.

2. 30m 5c. Traverse left for 3m, then make long reach over a bulge. Trend slightly rightwards, then go left before pulling over another bulge via a thin crack. Go up the rib to the left of the heather groove to belay left of a heather ledge.

3. 25m 4b. Trend left up slabby rock to the top.

#### ARDNAMURCHAN, Beinn Gheur:

*MacGillivray's Grip* – 45m VS 4c. F. Templeton, C. Templeton. 13th August, 1999.

The crag is situated on the flank of Beinn Gheur, east of the road from Acharacle to Doirlinn, about 400m towards Acharacle from the phone box. Approaching Doirlinn the road leaves the River Shiel and cuts through a steep-sided, heavily forested wee glen. There are parallel buttresses rising above the treg line. To the left of these crags is a wide open gully. The crag is triangular and left of the gully – 10 minutes walk.

Ascend an initial bulge in the centre of the crag. Move rightwards to the edge and continue upwards to a larger overlap. Traverse left to the foot of a small double niche. Go up here breaking out left at the top. Move up rightwards and follow the edge to the top of the crag, a pinnacle (25m). Climb on to a sharp grass and moss arête and cross this to large cracked blocks (10m).

#### ARDNAMURCHAN, Rubha Carrach:

Heart of Darkness – E4 6a\*\*. R. Campbell, P. Thorburn (on sight). May, 1998. Climbs sensationally up the right-hand groove line in the seaward prow. Start up the right wall of the cave and climb with increasing difficulty on to a limy ledge. From here it would be possible to finish straight up, probably harder. Move up and right across a wall (crux) to better but dodgy holds on a ledge. Climb over scary blocks to a traditional Rubha Carrach finish.

#### THE ARDNAMURCHAN RING CRAGS

A number of route descriptions and comments have been received and passed on to the authors of the new guide, due out very soon.

#### SOUTHERN HIGHLANDS

#### **KNAPDALE NOTES (R. Everett):**

Pocket Wall is worth three stars.

The Razor's Edge is solid HVS.

Metamorphosis is a terrible route, not worth a star.

The Trial is E1 5b (easier than Pocket Wall).

Several bolt belays have appeared on the tops of many of these buttresses, and there are peg runners in The Changeling, Metamorphosis and Not Waving But Drowning.

#### **BEN VORLICH CRAGS:**

Two routes were climbed by R. Anderson (E1 5a) and M. Garthwaite (E5 6a) but no details given.

#### **BEINN IME:**

*Chockstone Chimney* – 160m IV,4/5. S. McFarlane, G. Houston. 20th November, 1999.

Start at the lowest point of the buttress forming the right-hand wall of Fan Gully at a short corner leading to an obvious chimney.

- 1. 45m. Climb the short corner to easier ground leading to a belay below a large chockstone at the base of the chimney.
- 2. 45m. Climb up to the dubious chockstone where climbing back on foot leads to a bay below an icy chimney. Climb the left wall on very thin ice leading to belay on the left overlooking the crag.
- 3. 70m. An easy shallow gully leads to the top.

#### THE COBBLER, South Face of North Peak:

Gangway – 40m V/VI,7. R. Anderson, R. Milne. 30th December, 1999.

Follow the summer line of Gangway to Fold Direct, then finish up this in three pitches. Climbed under a heavy coverage of snow, thawing in the sun. (See article, this issue.)

# ARDVORLICH (LOCH LOMOND-SIDE), The Hidden Walls-MR 324 123:

These two fine mica-schist walls face away from the A82 3km after Loch Sloy power station and can only be found by wandering up through the bracken from the parking spot by the Ceann Mor peninsula (10 minutes, 5 minutes when the bracken's not out!). The left wall has two routes.

That Sinking Feeling – 20m E3 6a\*. C. Lampton, J. Watson. Spring 1998.

The groove by the left arete is followed with difficulty to the big slots on the next route, finishing by the same.

*Tripping the Waves* – 20m E2 5b\*\*. J. Watson, G. Foster. Summer 1997. The next groove is followed with interest to a difficult move up to the quartzy slots where Friends can be placed to protect the exciting headwall.

The wall on the right has one direct line so far, from the overhang at the bottom to the apex of the wall.

Magic Carpet Ride – 25m E2 5b\*\*\*. J. Watson, C. Lampton. Spring 1998.

A tremendous and bold wall climb. Start at the overhang and surmount this on good holds to a Friend placement. Tiptoe up and right to a peg, then straight up wall to a farther peg. From here a bold assault is made straight to apex of the wall (crux). **Note:** These routes were retro-bolted in summer 1999 and are currently being debolted by J. Watson.

#### STOB GHABHAR, Coire Dhomhnaill (MR 232 470):

Leave the A82 at Bridge of Orchy and park at Victoria Bridge and take the West Highland Way (mountain bikes used) north from Forest Lodge. When the northern end of the Forestry plantation at MR 282 463 is reached, walk east over moorland toward Coireach a' Ba. After crossing the Allt Coire Dhearbhadh skirt the tip of Sron nan Giubhas, a prominent ridge which descends westward from the northern spur of Stob Ghabhar and continue westward for 2km to enter the small Coire Dhomhnaill. From here the line of a prominent stream will be seen draining the upper reaches of the corrie, however the gully itself remains hidden. Remain on the southern side of the stream and climb steeper ground from the corrie floor to reach a point where a deep cleft splitting the buttress on the left can be seen, from here a steep 15m icefall barring entry to the upper gully is visible.

The Great Divide – 275m III\*\*. D. Stewart, N. Wightwick. 13th April, 2000. A deeply incised gully cleaving a surprising line through an obscure buttress.

1. 75m. Enter the gully and climb snow to a stance below the icefall, belay on the right.

2. 25m. Climb the icefall and move up to a belay on the right wall.

3 & 4. 125m. Easy ground now leads to a point where the gully splits to form a narrower chimney on the left and an open groove on the right.

5. 50m. The open groove leads over short steps to the ridge.

# BEINN DORAIN, Creag an Socach:

The Enemy Within – 110m VII,7. S. Richardson, C. Cartwright. 28th December, 1999.

A difficult climb taking the easiest line up the vertical wall between False Rumour Gully and Days of Future Past.

1. 35m. Climb the first pitch of Days of Future Past and belay on the right edge of the vertical wall in an obvious niche with an old peg and thread.

2. 25m. Step down and left and make a rising left traverse above roofs to reach a good stance on the crest of the buttress below a large roof. A demanding pitch with few positive placements and spaced protection.

3. 50m. Climb the steep corner to the left of the prominent prow above the roof and gain an easier groove system which leads to the top.

Golgotha - 150m VII,7. C. Cartwright, S. Richardson. 5th March, 2000.

A right-to-left rising line with a spectacular finish up the vertical wall to the left of Messiah. Start directly below the 'conspicuous rib' of Scorpion.

- 1. 40m. Climb a short wall just right of the initial snow gully of The Prophet to gain a right to left ramp. Follow this past a narrow section to the base of the rock ramp of The Sting.
- 2. 25m. Ascend the rock ramp and groove above (The Sting pitch 2) and step right onto a terrace at its top.
- 3. 30m. Trend up and right up mixed ground across the wall right of Antichrist to join the curving ramp of Second Coming. Move up to belay in a niche on the right

level with a ledge which extends rightwards across the vertical wall on the right. 4. 35m. Move right along the ledge and pass behind a huge flake. Continue the traverse slightly down and right to reach a slim turfy groove (crux) which leads to a good stance. A serious pitch with sensational exposure and spaced protection. 5. 30m. Continue up the groove-line above to the top of the crag.

#### **BEINN AN DOTHAIDH, North East Coire:**

Rebate - 250m V,5. P. Figg, D. Johnson, M. Bass. 18th December, 1999.

Start at a tiny snow bay underneath the steep left wall of West Gully, between the foot of the buttress and the ramp of Journey to the East. The climb takes the icy corner above which is well adorned with icicles.

- 1. 45m. Climb the icy corner, initially on its left side. At 15m step right awkwardly on to a rib, then continue upwards to easier ground.
- 2. etc. 215m. Climb the buttress above by icy walls finishing up the easy mixed buttress to the left of Taxus Original finish (ground shared with Femme Fatale and Spring Fever).

**Note:** J. L. Bermúdez and A. Thomas straightened out Clonus on 16th January, 2000, by continuing up in a straight line after the crux over a bulge to reach the normal belay - V,5. It may have been climbed before, but is a better and more logical line.

#### BEN CRUACHAN, Drochaid Ghlas:

Century – 100m V,6. C. Cartwright, S. Richardson. 20th February, 2000.

An interesting mixed climb up the wall to the left of Drumnadrochaid. Start just left of the parallel grooves of Drumnadrochaid below a groove with a prominent 3m finger of rock on its left side.

- 1. 30m. Pull up a small wall into the groove and climb it exiting right at the top. Follow a ramp up and left to a good stance at its end.
- 2. 35m. Climb up to the steep headwall which is cut by a prominent slot. Move up the wall to a roof, step left into the slot and climb it to a terrace.
- 3. 35m. Trend left up snow and finish up the easy left-facing corner above to reach the summit ridge.

# MEALL NAN TARMACHAN, Cam Chreag, Fan Buttress:

Note: J. Irving notes a return to the crag with The Cider House Rules (SMCJ 1999), climbing the line to the right. Reading the guidebook with a highly critical eye suggested that the two routes might be Chimneys One and Two, but this seems unlikely as neither is chimney like and both would be very technical and sustained grade II's. There are two narrow gullies that would seem to deserve the name of chimney better. The name is an Abbey Road reference.

Something Grooves - 100m III. J. Irving, G. Allan. March, 2000.

Right of The Cider House Rules a line leads up the turfy face. It is well defined in the lower half leading to an overhang. This was avoided on the left, and a belay taken on a rocky island in a sea of turf. Further turf lead to easy ground and the top.

#### GLEN ALMOND:

*Pinnacle Gully Buttress* – 120m II. C. McNee, D. Kirk. 31st January, 1999. Take the buttress immediately left of Pinnacle Gully, keeping generally to the crest. The quality is reported as similar to the previous winter route on the crag (SMCJ 1986, p384). The crag is described in the Southern Scotland District Guide.

#### LOWLAND OUTCROPS

### THE GLASGOW OUTCROPS, Auchinstarry Quarry:

This needs substantial revision in the guide due to further 'rock stabilisation' work and change in routes. Routes 46 to 54 in particular are probably no more.

#### **Bowling Crag (near Dumbarton):**

Bowling crag has been cleaned and lower-offs put in place to help resurrect this worthwhile little venue. The crag is situated by the cycle path in the woods directly across from Bowling train station (the Railway Tavern is good for a pint) and gets the sun in the afternoon. The rock is generally sound quarried basalt. Old bolt-heads suggest the walls have been climbed on before and aided, but since they're not documented the main routes have been led free by John Watson and given descriptions and grades. The routes are well worth their 10 or 15 metres, packing in some eccentric moves! For the faint-hearted, all routes can be top-roped (though someone will have to lead!), and double-rope technique is a must for route 3.

#### From left to right:

Tom's Chimney – HVS 5a. Bridge up the chimney, using natural rock and the brick wall, to gain a brick ledge (crux). Place crucial gear and either finish through the blocks, or step delicately right and finish up a scoop. Way better than it looks.

*Yogi's Wobble*—E15b\*. Climb the arête and step out on to the wall, clip a peg, then take the groove direct with a precarious step-through. Bold but worth it for that move.

*Booboo's Knob* – E2 5b\*\*. Superb, sustained balances from the arête of the last route traversing across the horizontal break to finish up Yosemite crack. Drop a point if you tweek the old bolt-heads!

Astroboy – E2 6a\*. The crack in the middle. A boulder problem start to gain the peg leads to the crack which traverses at the top to the left lower-off. Take RPs and a rock#2.

Yosemite Crack – E3 6a\*\*. The fine obvious fingerlock crack, turning the nose on the left, leads to a perplexing finish. Finishing up the wall direct from the flake bumps the grade up to a powerful E4 6b.

*Eiger Suction* – E4 6b\*. Gain the groove by the sycamore tree with difficulty, and continue through the bouldery crux (RP#0) to better holds and small Friend placements. Go left along horizontal cracks to finish up the previous route. Hard for the grade.

# THE GALLOWAY HILLS, Craignaw:

The Dow Spout - 150m II/III. A. Fraser, J. Thomson. 20th December, 1999.

This is the prominent waterfall which occasionally cascades down the east face of Craignaw, about 500m south of the summit. A lovely climb, sustained scenic and varied although infrequently in condition, requiring good conditions then a hard freeze. Rumoured to have been climbed previously.

# THE DUMFRIES OUTCROPS, Clifton Crag, Hollowstones Wall:

Infill - 10m E1 5b. S. J. H. Reid, S. Stout. 26th June, 1997.

The thin crack-line between Outcast and the upper section of Hollowstones Chimney is climbed by devious means. Start from the grassy platform as for Outcast, gained by climbing the first easy section of Jeune Ecole. Climb 2m up Hollowstones Chimney and make a bewildering move leftwards across a slab to gain a short slanting crack and ultimately easier ground to the top.

*Infill Direct* – 10m E2 5c. C.King, S.J.H.Reid. 22nd October, 1997. The direct start - strenuous!

### Jigsaw Buttress:

Stiff Upper Lip – 22m VS\*\*. S. J. H. Reid, C. King (Alt.). 22nd October, 1997. A rising girdle. The first pitch makes an excellent Severe in its own right. Start as for Lipstick.

1. 12m 4a. Climb up to below the crack on Lipstick and traverse right to gain a rightwards slanting line of jugs that leads to a finish at the top of Liplet.

2. 10m 4c. Descend slightly the corner of Ratten's Rest and traverse the horizontal break under the grooves, crossing Wall Street, and finishing as for The Groove. Beware dubious blocks.

**Note:** S. Reid notes that the access details for this crag are wrong in the guide. They should be: From most areas, the approach will be via the A710 south from Dumfries. A few miles before reaching Sandyhills Bay there is an narrow lane on the right (west) and some outcrops can be seen on the hillside to the north of this lane. Follow the lane for about a mile to a small lay-by on the left just past Upper Clifton Farm. A granite stile leads into a field. Walk across this, well to the left of the farm buildings, to an angle in the far wall. A second stile is hidden some 15m to the right. Cross the next field to a gate in the far corner, under Hollowstones Wall. (There has been known to be a bull in the second field – tread cautiously!). There is no need to ask permission (as mentioned in the current guide). Please keep dogs on a lead when in the fields. In spring, birds often nest near the Main Area or Red Slab and these buttresses should be avoided.

# THE SOUTH-WEST SEA CLIFFS, Portobello, Cracked Block Bay:

Man Shot by Shed – 15m E1 5a. N. Taylor (unsec.). 3rd May, 1999. About 3m left of Only Monsters is a similar route which climbs the seaward wall of the block just left of centre. Interesting rock with minimal protection (only a large Friend just below the top).

# Labrax, The Central Slab (SMCJ 1999):

*The Lotus Eaters* – 16m E1 5b\*\*. A. Fraser, I. Magill. 23rd July, 1999. Fine climbing to gain, then follow the central crack on the slab.

# Right-Hand Slab:

Caledonia Dreaming – 20m HVS 5a\*\*. A. Fraser, I. Magill. 1st September, 1999. A good varied climb. Climb the left arête of the Cranberry Jam slab, using the cracks on the left to gain the ledge at the foot of the wide crack. Traverse right for 2m to the edge. Continue with difficulty to gain and climb the shallow crack just left of the edge.

# Laggantalluch, Laggantalluch Head:

Sea Monkey – 20m E2 5c\*. N. Taylor (unsec. on sight). 2nd May, 1999. Start 4m left of Seal Song. Climb a steep left-slanting diagonal groove and crack system to a small rectangular overhang. Pull through its left side with difficulty,

then move up and right to a welcome rest. Continue easily up a small yellow slab, then move back left to follow twin wide cracks to the top.

**Note:** Peregrine Corner (SMCJ 1999, p158) may well be the same as Stolen Moments (SMCJ 1997, p367).

# THE CENTRAL OUTCROPS, Cambusbarron West Quarry:

About 5m to the left of Cha is a clean slabby buttress with two prominent converging cracks.

Mutant Crocodiles – 15m E1 5b\*\*. M. Somerville, A. Morriss, A. Walker. June, 1999

An excellent route which tackles the left-hand crack. Starting beneath a small overhang, climb the crack and finish direct.

*Queer Uncle Henry* – 15m E1 5b\*. M. Somerville, A. Morriss. August, 1999. Gain the right-hand crack by climbing the short corner. Move left on to the slab, climb the crack, then finish up Mutant Crocodiles.

*Arse On Stumps* – 15m E2/3 5c. M. Somerville, A. Morriss. August, 1999. An bold eliminate line which starts 1m to the right of Queer Uncle Henry. Climb the short arête of the smooth slab up to the overlap. Step left, move up and finish up the slab, stepping slightly rightwards, avoiding the right arête.

Looney Tunes – 9m E5 6b\*\*. M. Tweedly, M. Somerville (both led). May, 1999. A bouldery, gritstone-like (complete with unprotected crux and bad landing) route which climbs the front face of the Cha buttress using the right-hand arête. Starting from a tiny ledge make hard awkward moves to gain the horizontal break. From here step right onto the arete and finish straight up. The route was top-roped prior to the ascents and has been graded for an on-sight lead.

Jason's Dilemma – 13m HVS 5a. M. Somerville (on sight), A. Morriss. March, 2000.

Starting just right of Force 8, climb up and right to a huge hold. Climb the crack/ arête above this until just below the top, where a traverse left avoids the horrendous looking top-out.

Almost directly opposite Cha is a (fairly) obvious buttress with some prominent clean cracks.

*Dark Side of the Spoon* – 9m E3 5c\*. M. Somerville (on sight). August, 1999. Climb the clean hand crack with help from the left arête of the buttress. A good, well-protected struggle.

Following the walls round to the extreme right end of the quarry (about 250m right of Dark Side of the Spoon) is a tiny natural bulging buttress.

Somnambulism - 5m HVS 5b. M. Somerville. August, 1999.

Climb the bulging mossy wall with some nice moves. Gritstone micro-routes come to Cambusbarron!

# EAST LOTHIAN, Traprain Law:

The Fox – 7m E3 6a. M. Somerville, J. Barker. February, 1999.

At the top of the Law there is a blank diamond-shaped wall. Starting on the left make hard thin moves up the centre of the wall on small sloping holds, passing a poor quadcam#0, to reach better holds and some RP's at the top. Avoid the corner on the left. Side-runners reduce the grade.

# MISCELLANEOUS NOTES

# The W. H. Murray Literary Prize.

As a tribute to the late Bill Murray, whose mountain and environment writings have been an inspiration to many a budding mountaineer, the SMC have set up a modest writing prize, to be run through the pages of the Journal. The basic rules are set out below, and will be re-printed each year. The prize is run with a deadline, as is normal, of the end of January each year. So assuming you are reading this in early July, you have, for the next issue, six months in which to set the pencil, pen or word processor on fire.

#### The Rules:

- 1. There shall be a competition for the best entry on Scottish Mountaineering published in the *Scottish Mountaineering Club Journal*. The competition shall be called the 'W. H. Murray Literary Prize', hereafter called the 'Prize.'
- 2. The judging panel shall consist of, in the first instance, the following: The current Editor of the *SMC Journal;* The current President of the SMC; and two or three lay members, who may be drawn from the membership of the SMC. The lay members of the panel will sit for three years after which they will be replaced.
- 3. If, in the view of the panel, there is in any year no entries suitable for the Prize, then there shall be no award that year.
- 4. Entries shall be writing on the general theme of 'Scottish Mountaineering', and may be prose articles of up to approximately 5000 words in length, or shorter verse. Entries may be fictional.
- 5. Panel members may not enter for the competition during the period of their membership.
- 6. Entries must be of original, previously unpublished material. Entries should be submitted to the Editor of the *SMC Journal* before the end of January for consideration that year. Lengthy contributions are preferably word-processed and submitted either on 3.5" PC disk or sent via e-mail. (See Office Bearers page at end of this Journal for address etc.) Any contributor to the SMC Journal is entitled to exclude their material from consideration of the Prize and should so notify the Editor of this wish in advance.
- 7. The prize will be a cheque for the amount £250.
- 8. Contributors may make different submissions in different years.
- 9. The decision of the panel is final.
- 10. Any winning entry will be announced in the *SMC Journal* and will be published in the *SMC Journal* and on the SMC Web site. Thereafter, authors retain copyright.

# The W. H. Murray Literary Prize (2000).

For the third year, the panel of four deliberated over the qualifying articles which appear in this year's issue. If anything, judging was even more difficult than last year – in part due to the varied nature of the articles, in part due to the personal interests of the judges. In the end, however, there were two clear front runners; *W. H. Murray Revisited* by Des Rubens, and *The Sea of Tranquillity* by Cliff Smith. As a newcomer to the Journal, Smith is to be commended for hitting the second spot with his first attempt, which only leaves us to congratulate Des Rubens as being the winner of this year's prize. (Interestingly, both are club members, making Des the first member to win the prize.)

Some comments on articles follow: *Murray Revisited...*'not only puts two of Murray's climbs into a modern context, it also recounts the antics of a group of influential Scottish climbers in their formative Edinburgh University days.'

'I thought that *Murray Revisited* was written with honesty and modesty, two characteristics which go a long way towards forming good writing.'

'The Sea of Tranquillity is beautifully written...it is not easy to overcome the fact that a description of a perfect day is unlikely to be as exciting as a tale of disasters.'

'I very much enjoyed *The Sea of Tranquillity* and thought it rather charming in that it described some intensely rewarding Scottish mountaineering that would be accessible to many climbers.'

The two rotating judges have now served their three-year sentence and we thank Simon Richardson and Dave Hewitt for their hard work. The two remaining judges, the President and Editor, will in fact also be in a state of flux due to terms of office and resignation respectively.

#### KEV'S LAST CLIMB

The WALK into Meagaidh was a real buzz, we kept stopping to wait for people, dogs and children, well that was our excuse. It was May and the weather was just fantastic, 29° (and no one was in a rush. We talked about the other times we had done this approach, mainly in winter as that was the main attraction for us, to climb the frozen weeps and icefalls that make Meagaidh such a fantastic playground for masochistic winter climbing.

On one occasion Kev and I after a SMC dinner and drinks seminar, toiled and tumbled our way as far as the descent to the burn. Here we had a discussion about going on, was it the after effects of the dinner, or the fact that the snow was waist deep in places that had us retrace our steps back to the car. Across on the other side of the burn two more organised members glided over the snow on cross-country skis.

Another time after climbing Pumpkin in semi-frozen conditions the four of us, Nick, his Lordship, myself and Kev played tag on the raised track of old sleepers as we ran down, or was it a game of see how hard we could knock each other over. Needless to say my knees have never recovered from this exercise in plastic boots.

We sat by the lochan in glorious sunshine, the dogs swimming in the clear waters, none of us brave enough to go further than paddling. After a while the parties split up, Kev's parents, a few friends and the children staying by the lochan before walking back to the cars.

The rest of us started up the track towards the Window. Passing under the cliffs of the Inner Coire of Meagaidh, we could now see that Easy Gully had snow most of the way to the top. We had come fully prepared for an ascent on snow, that is we were wearing bendy soft walking boots, shorts and tea shirts. The Yorkshire Mafia section of the SMC, comprising Nick Harper, John (his Lordship) McKenzie, myself and Kev, decided to make one last winter climb of the season. John qualified to be a kind of Yorkshireman, having resided long enough in York during his mission to show us heathens how to climb, albeit on crags no one else had looked at. Hence his name in native Yorkshireese, 'Lord John of the small crags'.

We had somehow located a state-of-the-art collapsible walking pole, John also found an 'Ice dagger' shaped piece of rock. This comprised our total climbing equipment, but so what, Easy Gully is only a snow plod! Whoever was in the lead now took control of the pole to help give balance as we tried to kick steps in the still frozen snow. We progressed upwards, passing the start of Centre Post which was the last climb I had done with Kev. I looked around for my Stichtplate which I had dropped from near the top, but alas the Meagaidh magpies must have found it.

Upwards past the start of South Post, which Nick, Kev and I had climbed in the Eighties when there were proper winters. Then the first two pitches were up a fabulous column of blue water ice; I had climbed up Easy Gully to take photos of Kev and Nick on these pitches and then taken a top rope straight up to save time. Nick then decided to save even more time and continued on solo to the top.

We passed by the start of Last Post which Glen and I had tried to climb, the mountain was in first-class climbing condition, that is covered in deep loose snow. I had somehow burrowed up the first pitch and had taken a belay over on the left of the chimney. Glen came up disappearing from time to time as snow poured down the chimney from above. As he led off back right to the route I told him to see if he could find a decent runner as my belays were a bit suspect in the shattered rock where I was. He dug out a solid lump of rock which took a good blade peg, continuing onto the bottom of the chimney where he stood for a few minutes as snow poured down and over him.

'Up or down,' I shouted, about which time gravity took over and down it was; I went with him as the belays pulled out. We stopped and I looked up 25ft. to the runner Glen had placed, it held us both from a glissade down Easy Gully. Looking down I could see Glen's crampons as he was hanging upside down. I lowered him back to the start of the route.

I climbed up to the runner, thanked Mr Chouinard for his steel work, fixed an abseil and decided someone was trying to tell us something, such as time to retreat! At the same time, Nick and Kev were spat out of Raeburn's Gully on the top of a snow slide as they tried to get to Smith's. We decided then to continue

up Easy to the top where it was now a white-out. We looked around for signs of Kev and Nick having successfully topped out of their intended route, blissfully unaware that they had also had a message and that they had gone to the pub.

Returning to our summer snow plod, a bergschrund now appeared; the even slope of the snow was interrupted by a gap and a wall of ice with which we had no gear to climb. A diversion up rock on the left of the gully and we were past the problem, the nice, safe grass slopes up to the top now beckoned us. 'Back on the snow!' Was the command from his Lordship, and who were we mortals to argue with tradition and breeding. The snow was covered with leaves of grass, which had blown off the nice, safe slopes, and the surface of the snow was rough and granulated. A slide down this surface over the bergschrund and onto the rocks at the bottom of the snow slope dressed as we were in protective shorts and tea shirts, would have been interesting to say the least. We topped out, the snow finishing as a nice arête.

That was Kev's last climb, not by a long way his best or hardest but given the time of year and the ineptitude of his climbing partners on this occasion, we hoped he would be satisfied. The rest of the party now joined us at the top overlooking Pumpkin, having made it up via the Window. Behind us a small herd of deer glissaded down the snow, which lay beneath the true summit of Meagaidh. A ptarmigan ran between the boulders, dragging her wing to distract us from her brood of young, which lay motionless in the heather. It was virtually windless and the sky was cloud free. We had some lunch and a wee drink for friends gone but not forgotten.

We finally left Kev there at the top of Pumpkin where he can enjoy all the seasons, the fantastic sunsets and looking out over the mountains he so much cared for. So if you pass by this part of Meagaidh, stop and have the crack with him.

**Postscript:** Kevin Wilson had been climbing for many years including the Himalayas five times, and 10 or more trips to the Alps. He bought a house in Fort William so that we had a base to use after the drive up from York, and somewhere to recover after the walk back from the Jacobite Bar. Joining the SMC in 1986 and then somehow convincing the committee that they should allow two more Yorkshiremen, Nick and myself, to join. He was always the one who wanted to make the trip up north, never tiring of the long drive.

He had climbed Pumpkin with Richard Harrison, a climb that he had done before with Nick, John and myself in the Eighties. They had taken off the rope, sat and had some lunch and then set off up the final easy slopes. Two weeks before Kev and I had climbed Centre Post in perfect conditions, the snow then was rock hard and we had climbed the last pitches together. I guess it had snowed since that day, and as Kev and Richard were near the top, there was a snow slide. Both of them were caught in it, Richard hit a boulder and stopped, Kev was carried over the edge. The date was April 4, 1996.

It had been Kev's wish that his ashes be scattered on Meagaidh, he had completed his last climb with us, carried by Nick and supported by many of his friends.

### THE SCOTTISH MOUNTAINEERING TRUST - 1999-2000

Trustees met on September 30, 1999 and February 24, 2000 (the meeting on February 11, 1999 was covered in last year's Journal).

During the course of these meetings support was given to the Jonathan Conville Memorial Trust Winter Course 1999-2000; the An Teallach Mountaineering Club – Strawberry Cottage renovations; the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds – Cairngorm Plateau Survey; John Muir Trust Schiehallion Appeal; the Scottish Mountaineering Club – Cataloguing of SMC Library; the Cairngorm Mountain Rescue Team for a new base and headquarters; Argyll and Bute Council for a new bridge at Clashgour, Blackmount; the Dundonnell Mountain Rescue Team for new team vehicles, and the Footpath Trust project – Ben Wyvis. Support is also being given to the National Trust for Scotland for footpath works on Ben Lawers and Glen Coe. The JMCS were given further support for the new gas installation at the Loch Coruisk hut.

Standing grants are made over to the Mountaineering Council of Scotland towards administration costs including the access officer.

The Trustees have sought advice this year on the technical aspects of a footpath project by the Footpath Trust in Coire an Laoigh, Beinn Eighe. Any feed back from Club members regarding any SMT-funded path work would be much appreciated.

The SMC benefits through annual royalty payments for the use of the Club's name in publications. A substantial portion of the production costs of small print Journal pages is met by the publications company. The Munro CD ROM project achieved excellent sales. The new version of the CD ROM is now on the market.

The Directors of the publications company during the period are T. B. Fleming (Chairman), D. J. Bennet, K. V. Crocket, C. D. Grant, A. Kassyk and T. Prentice (Publications Manager). D. C. Anderson attends Board meetings as Convenor of the Publications Sub-Committee.

The present Trustees are R. T. Richardson (Chairman), T. B. Fleming, D. C. Anderson, R. K. Bott, G. S. Nicoll, A. Kassyk, G. E. Irvine, P. W. F. Gribbon, S. M. Richardson and B. R. Shackleton. A. Kassyk and P. W. F. Gribbon are Trustee Directors and provide liaison between the publications company and the Trust. J. M. Shaw is the Trust Treasurer.

# The following grants have been committed by the Trustees.

£1015
£2000
£500
£500
£10,000
£1000
£3500
£640
£10,000
£6000

James D. Hotchkis, Trust Secretary.

# MUNRO MATTERS

By C. M. Huntley (Clerk of the List)

The new additions to the List of Munroists and amendments follow. The columns used are Munroist's number, name, year of Munros, Tops and Furths. \*SMC member. \*\*LSCC member.

LO	CC member.							
2067	Julie A. Brown	1999		2118	Vernon Miles	1999		1999
2068	M J. Haxton	1999		2119	Jan Murray	1999		
2069	Sarah J. Richards	1999		2120	Hugh Murray	1999		
2070	Ian A. Hunter	1999		2121	George S. Ellis	1999	1999	1999
2071	Paul Baldwin	1999	1999 1997	2122	Ron Hilditch	1999		
2072	John C. Craig	1999		2123	D. H. Barham	1999		
2073	Caroline J. Wood	1999		2124	Chris Freeman	1999		
2074	Iain Meldrum	1999	1999	2125	James Henderson	1999		
2075	Martin G. Hinnigan	1999		2126	Alexandra Lightfoot	1999		
2076	Alison Barclay	1999		2127	Thomas Wood	1999		
2077	Graham Heafford	1999		2128	J. L. W. Wright	1999		
2078	Marek Wilkojc	1999		2129	I. Hayden Arthurson	1999		
2079	Grant Wilson	1999		2130	George Mitchell	1999		
2080	Walter Baxter	1999		2131	Brian M. Clark	1999		
2081	Nick Anderson	1999		2132	Steven Bell	1999		
2082	Alexander Baird	1999		2133	Joanna M. Robson	1999		
2083	*John M. Dunn	1999		2134	Michael W. L. Robson	1999		
2084	Elspeth A. Smith	1999	1998	2135	Peter J. C. Wooley	1999		
2085	Clifford V. Smith	1997		2136	Kathleen M. Meechan	1999		
2086	Lesley Hawkins	1999		2137	Dougal M. Meechan	1999		
	Mike Hawkins	1999		2138	David Southern	1999		
2088	James McAllen	1999	1984	2139	Julie Catterall	1999		
2089	Oliver Overstall	1999		2140	Paul Simonite	1999		
2090	John A. Owen	1999	1998	2141	Sylvia T. Davie	1999		
2091	Roger Holme	1999		2142	Anne Partington	1999		
2092	Steve Tompkins	1999		2143	Andrew A. McMillan	1999		
	Michael C. Day	1999		2144	John Crowder	1999		
2094	Grant Bulloch	1999		2145	Ann Lyall	1999		
2095	Lance L. Haworth	1999		2146	John Lindsay	1999		
2096	Jerry Ubysz	1999		2147	Neville Cohen	1992	1992	
2097	Alan Duval	1999	1988	2148	Robert Gilmour	1999		
2098	Matthew Shaw	1999		2149	Alastair Swanston	1999		1999
2099	Doreen Coupe	1999		2150	Rod Payne	1999		
2100	Michael Coupe	1999		2151	Bruce MacG. Reynolds	1999		
	David E. Bee	1999		2152	William S. Vannan	1999		
2102	Grace Kerr	1999		2153	Neil Piper	1995	1995	1999
2103	Rob Kerr	1999		2154	Simon J. Archer	1999	1999	1997
2104	Martin Ridges	1999	1999 1999	2155	Ronald N. C. Douglas	1999		
	John Shaw	1999		2156	Anthony Hart	1999		
2106	Bob Taylor	1999		2157	Graeme Leckie	1999		
	John O. Chalmers	1999		2158	Chris Phillips	1999		
2108	Douglas Gilchrist	1999			George A. S. Wilson	1999		
2109	Glen S. Breaden	1999		2160	Miss T. Y. Waddell	1999		
2110	Alexander J. L. Stalker	1999		2161	Donald Brown	1999		
	Jane Hodgson	1999		2162	Wilma J. Milton	1999		
	Martyn Hodgson	1999			Keith Moir	1999		
	Bruce Cuthbertson	1999			Jim Bell	1999		
	Thomas Bailey	1999		2165	Stanley Cartmell	1999		
	Grant Lowe	1999			Graham M. Haines	1999		
2116	Brian Cotterill	1999			Jill Adams	1999		
2117	Neil A . Fraser	1999		2168	J. Colin Andrews	1999		

2169 Peter Smith	1999		Jane Clark	1999	
2170 Derek Barker	1999		Bruce Henderson	1999	
2171 R. J. B. McGill	1999		Mark Crane	1999	
2172 Ian Clark	1999		Rod Crawford	1999	
2173 Alan Clark	1999		David R. Anderson	1999	
2174 Graham Hood	1999		Francis Cooke	1999	
2175 Marilyn Stronach	1999		Angus J. F. Mitchell	1999	
2176 Fraser Stronach	1991		Suzanne Dougall	1999	
2177 Daniel Black	1999		Pete Younger	1999	
2178 Christopher A. Lawes	1999	2236	Margaret E. Thomas	1999	1999
2179 Brian J. Thomson	1999	2237	Maximilian S. Grant	1999	1999
2180 John A. Ganley	1995	2238	David Shipton	1999	
2181 Peter Ganley	1995		Mike Jones	1999	
2182 Anne Morrison	1999	2240	E. Ann MacKinnon	1999	
2183 Murdo McEwan	1999	2241	Mary Abercrombie	1999	
2184 Peter N. Davidson	1999	2242	Colin Abercrombie	1999	
2185 Alan Grooby	1999	2243	Elaine Bonham	1999	
2186 Angus Kay	1999	2244	David W. Smith	1999	1999
2187 Tom Ward	1999 1999	2245	David Wymer	1999	
2188 Sandra McGrath	1999		Jane R. Richmond	1999	
2189 Mike McGrath	1999		Stephen Cogbill	1999	
2190 David G. Martin	1999		Glynn M. Roberts	1999	
2191 Heather Morning	1999		David F. Roberts	1998	
2192 David Galloway	1999		Olive McCann	1999	
2193 Tom Nicol	1999		Mark Dalman	1999	
2194 Lottie Gregory	1999		Phillip L. Harris	1999	
2195 Russell G. Scott	1999		Kenneth Gibson	1999	
2196 James A. Davidson	1989		Andy Greig	1999	
2197 Bob Hardwick	1999			1999	
2197 Boo Hardwick 2198 J. F. Sime	1999		Alison Loneskie		
			Morris M. Hogg	1999	
2199 R. Keith Gault	1999		Ginny Pollard	1999	
2200 W. Norman Shanks	1999		Ken Craig	1999	
2201 Roger M. Lawton	1999		James Anderson	1999	
2202 Alan J. Fielder	1999		Peter D. Barlass	1999	
2203 John Anderson	1999	2261	Martin Cole	1993	
2204 Ian Ferguson	1999	22.62	DD	1999	
2205 Anthony Duffy	1996		David Bell	1999	
2206 James Williamson	1999		Donald Leitch	1999	
2207 Lesley Armstrong	1999		Robert Robertson	1999	
2208 George Bintley	1999		Allan Stewart	1997	
2209 Anthony B. Cresswell			David S. Norrie	1999	
2210 Eric Mansfield	1999		Norman Shand	1999	
2211 Evelyn A. Kenyon	1999	2268	Susan Henderson	1999	
2212 Geoffrey Kenyon	1999		George Henderson	1999	
2213 David Monteith	1996	2270	Anthony Key	1999	
2214 Gordon Wyse	1999	2271	John Reed	1998	
2215 Martin J. Withey	1999	2272	John E. McPherson	1999	
2216 Patricia Buchanan	1999	2273	John Behan	1999	
2217 D. J. Allan	1999	2274	Andrew W. Christie	1999	
2218 Gordon Borland	1999	2275	Frank Low	1999	
2219 Sandy K. W. Johnston	1999	2276	Bill McDonald	1999	
2220 David Martindale	1999		David Paton	1999	
2221 Kenneth Siddle	1999 1999		James G. McLaughlin	1999	
2222 Robin Storie	1999		John McFadzean	1999	
2223 Ruth Wolfe	1999		Peter Dinnage	1999	1992
2224 Bobby Robb	1999		James A. Thomson	1999	
2225 John Kirk	1999		Adrian Deuling	1999	
2226 E. David S. Ellis	1999 1999 1996		John Urquhart	1999	

2284	Mike McCaul	1999		2296	Mike Dunlop	1999
2285	John Keohane	1999		2297	Alex J. Taylor	1999 1999
2286	Bill McMahon	1998		2298	Christine Sneddon	1999
2287	John Pickersgill	1999		2299	Malcolm D. Hughes	1999
2288	Hugh Murray	1995 1995		2300	Bill Tring	1999
2289	Stuart Macfarlane	1999		2301	Alexander Birne	1999
2290	David Vallery	1999		2302	Alexander Watson	1999
2291	Neil Sandilands	1999		2303	David G. Linton	1999
2292	Graham Wright	1999		2304	Roger W. B. Gaff	1999
2293	Phill Warner	1999		2305	John Findlay	1999
2294	James J. McLaren	1999		2306	Pam Pulford	1999
2295	John Young	2000	1999	2307	Robin A. Pringle	2000

#### **AMENDMENTS**

Amendments give the addition of Munros, Tops and Furths, but only show the total number of rounds compleated and the year of the latest round. The columns given are Munros, Tops and Furths.

203	David Foster	1999 1999	1221	John F. Wilson	1999 199	7
		x2			x2	
327	R. Stewart Logan	1999 1999 1987	1295	William Beattie	1999	
		x10 x10 x3			x2	
477	Mark Kirby	1986 1992 1987	1611	Alex Smith	1996 1999	1999
555	Robin Howie	1999 1992 1987	1722	John Newman	1997 1999	)
		x7 x3	1747	Anthony Halhead	1997	1999
840	Ian S. Robertson	1999 1990 1993	1779	David Judd	1997	1999
		x2	2025	Edward T. Meek	1998	1999
1045	Steve Fallon	1999 1993	2026	Colin D. G. Pennycool	k1998	1999
		x7	2039	Geoff Mattock	1998 1998	3 1999
1061	Bill Fairmaner	1999 1995	2058	Alan Stewart	1998 1999	)
		x2				

As IN the past, I have greatly enjoyed the letters that have accompanied the requests to be added to the List of Munroists and below I have tried to summarise the year with a few of the comments and tales. There are 241 new names added to the List, which is 100 more than in many of the recent years.

Almost all names are for compleations in 1999, although there are always a few late notifications. Through no fault of his own Neville Cohen (2147) appears to have taken many years to actually contact me but this is not the case and he seems to have suffered with a real 'lost in the post' occurrence. Unfortunately, the first time he was aware that perhaps the letter never reached me, was when the new Tables came out and his name was nowhere to be found. Delaying the reporting of a compleation can leave a potential Munroist in a dilemma if the list changes and they then find themselves missing a few new summits. For example, Grant Wilson (2078) completed the existing list in 1996 but didn't get to register. Then in 1997 when some of the Tops were promoted he realised that this was an opportunity to have another Last One celebration and then finally get his Munroist's certificate. Similarly, Mike Jones (2239) who originally completed in 1996 but only came to register when he found the SMC web site. Perhaps it was also a chance for Mike to write of a particularly wild weekend he had a few years ago when, while staying at Corrour – he climbed Braeriach in a severe white out. It was only when they walked out to the cars a day later, that they heard on the radio of the Chernobyl accident, and of the advice from the Government not to drink rain water in Scotland (and England and Wales).

This year I have received one notification of a double round. This is from Martin Cole (2261) who goes onto the List with two rounds and is optimistic of a third. He has recently married and his wife is expressing a keen interest to compleat herself. Alex Taylor (2297) must not have been so confident of his walking plans as he comments that his compleation was a bit rushed as he was about to get married. Last year was evidently an eventful year for Margaret Thomas (2236) and Max Grant (2237) who recorded their Munro compleation and then combined the celebration with their wedding a few weeks later. They say the event was in 'recognition of the twin challenges they have survived, and will continue to survive together'.

The compleation of the Munros as a couple is relatively common and you can see from the List the incidence of the same surname for successive numbers. However, this is not 100% foolproof as by a coincidence the only Roberts added to the List, Glynn (2248) and David (2249) are actually not related (or so I assume). Family links continue to tread through the List. In 1999 J. F. Sime (2198) son of George Sime (67) compleated after 61 years 3 months, which is almost a record for *M. longus*, Daniel Black (2177) is following his brother, Robert (1617), and Elaine Bonham (2243) is following her husband, David (1341). Elaine chose Sgorr Dearg to compleat on, as it had the significance of being David's last Munro, and the scene of him breaking his leg necessitating a helicopter lift to Fort William. One last family link could include Neil Foster (2117) who gave his first son the middle name of Munro. The family have still to decide whether the motive was the hills or that his partner's family name is Munro.

First Munros are often in the distant past and many will struggle to remember the actual dates. However, Peter Younger (2235) certainly chose a distinctive hill as his first, when he climbed the Inn Pinn. It seems that Peter was fooled into believing the climb was a straightforward scramble, because the mist was right in and he was unaware of the exposure. Anthony Duffy's (2205) first was Ben Nevis, which he climbed with his nephew. Unfortunately, the mist was a disadvantage to this pair, as the nephew chose to run ahead for the last few hundred yards and when Anthony arrived at the summit the youngster was nowhere to be seen. After searching the top, Anthony descended to call out the MRT only for them to find the missing nephew huddled in the summit shelter.

Moving on to last-Munro celebrations. John Pickergill (2287) had tried to climb Meall Garbh (Lawers) on three occasions and each time was beaten by the weather. This meant it became inevitable which hill was the last one unclimbed, and on this ascent the weather was only marginally better which helped to ensure that the champagne was well chilled. Kenneth Siddle (2221) had initially thought of arranging a sociable affair for his final tick on Beinn na Lap, but as the date got nearer he decided to opt for a solo day out with only his wife knowing of the plans. The day went well apart from the torrential rain at the top, and finished with a relaxing hot drink in Nevisport that afternoon.

Obviously, not all days involve getting wet, cold and not seeing a view, as Thomas Bailey (2114) could explain. He has spread his round over 20 years and reckons he has only visited nine misty summits, which suggests he was either very selective in his choice of days to start a walk, or very disciplined in turning back when the weather closed in.

In the 1995 SMCJ, I thanked John Owen (2090) for pointing out an error concerning an earlier Munroist, H. H. Mills who had been erroneously omitted. In my comments I mentioned that John was very near to being compleat himself.

Anyway, he is now officially on the List and he wonders if he has a claim to uniqueness, in that he is the first to have his compleation predicted in this section. There are a number of late starters and very long duration of rounds this years. John Shaw (2105) only started aged 65 years and duly reports his compleation eight years later, while David Morton (2190), Lottie Gregory (2194) and John Crowder (2144) all strung together rounds of 44 to 46 years. Even longer were Anne Morrison (2182) spreading the ticks over 55 years and John Dunn (2083) who in 53 years climbed all the Munros and Corbetts.

The Gaelic names of the hills are typically the only link many walkers have with the native language of the Highlands and Islands. Not so for Francis Cooke (2232) from Eire and he is very complimentary of the OS in Scotland, who he states have managed to avoid the meaningless gibberish of anglicised Irish names created for the Irish maps. He says he gets great pleasure from recognising and translating the beautiful Gaelic names of the Scottish hills. Travelling from Galway, Francis has obviously followed a very disciplined approach to the ticks, managing to compleat in only 23 separate trips to Scotland. Another Munroist now resident even farther away is John Findlay (2305) who works in the US, although the majority of hills were visited while in his home county of Lanarkshire. When in America, John delights in reminding the Yanks that their saviour of the National Parks was brought up 'just doon the road frae us'.

I have often heard of Munroists struggling to decide what was to be their preferred choice as the last Munro. However, Murdo McEwan (2183) concluded that the actual date of 9/9/99 was satisfactorily symmetrical and was more important than the hill. As events turned out he ended up having to work that day and only left the central belt for Ben Lui once that had been done. However, the top was still reached before midnight and so his aim was met. For something a bit different, David Davidson (2184) took a hill pony, equipped with a deer saddle, part of the way to his last summit. I noticed in a photo that the pony seemed to be carrying most of the packs, so hope that purists won't consider the use of a pony on a par with using a chairlift.

Throughout, the letters have been tales of nearly failing to compleat, minor accidents and brushes with bad weather. One is from Neil Sandilands (2291) who took 33 years from start to finish but with a gap of 13 years due to a back injury. However, after a car accident and the subsequent physiotherapy he took on a new lease of life and was able to get back in to the climbs again. Another is from Alexander Baird (2082) who managed to ascend and descend the South Glen Shiel ridge only to slip 20ft. down a stony bank leading onto the road. This resulted in a badly bruised eye which meant he looked more 'pirate than presbyter' when a few days later he had to address the Assembly of the Church of Scotland. A bad weather example is from James Thomson (2281) who managed to climb Meall Chuaich on a poorish day, with snow, only to find the real problem started back at the car. While away, the road had been closed and was littered with wrecks of cars. Fortunately, two policemen were not far away and helped to get him started and at least pointing in the right direction.

I could not possibly finish without noting that Stewart Logan (327) is now onto his 11th round of Munros and Tops having completed the 10th on the last day of the last century, while Steve Fallon (1045) and Robin Howie (555) are only into their eighth rounds. For variety Robin managed to ascend each hill in this round as a separate walk from the road, and then had a TV crew in tow for the Last Munro day. I don't think the crew ventured too far into the mist.

# **Centenary of the First Compleation:**

To mark the Centenary of the Rev. A. E. Robertson's compleation in 1901, the SMC is planning to organise a celebration dinner. This should be held in a Highland venue on a Saturday evening during May 2001. Please write to me at the address below for further details enclosing a SAE. It is anticipated that the actual meal will be limited to Munroists on the List although this will be dependent on the number of responses.

#### A List of Corbetteers:

Since the first Munroist also went on to compleat the Corbetts, this additional embellishment has been seen as the post-graduate course that required no further recognition or List. However, for a variety of reasons, notwithstanding the time and effort that Dave Hewitt and James Lamb have put in to establish an accurate historical record of who has actually ticked all the Corbetts, the SMC would like to begin more formally recognising a round of the Corbetts. The intention is that anyone writing in would go into the next edition of the Tables and also to offer a certificate to those who wish one. There is no intention to use a similar numbering system as used for Munros. If any readers feel they are entitled to a Certificate please write to me at the address below. Dave Hewitt has already published a List of those he knows to have completed the Corbetts and I would be pleased to hear from anyone who is not yet known. Equally, I am certain that there will also be those who will enjoy the personal pleasure of anonymity.

Those wishing to add their names to the List of Compleat Munroists should write to the Clerk at the address below. There is no formal registration form but I appreciate a letter from the prospective Munroist giving a few details of experiences, time take on the round, age, etc., etc. Once registered Munroists can purchase a tie and/or Brooch. A colour A4 certificate is available to mark the Compleation so please enclose an A4 sae. All notification should be sent to Dr. C. M. Huntley, Old Medwyn, Spittal, Carnwath, Lanarkshire, ML11 8LY.

Finally, a reminder that the entire list is accessible on the Club's web site at www.smc.org.uk

A search facility has just been added to the site, making it easy to find any name. The SMC webmaster has the facilities for scanning prints, so that any compleater can also have this photographic record added to the web site, and linked to their name. Please send any such prints to the Clerk. Hopefully, we will soon be able to scan slides, while digital photographs are of course welcome.

#### CEATHREAMHNAN

Tell me not of Ceathreamhnan. Of corrie, ridge or peak. Guard me from revisionists, Of Ceathreamhnan they speak. Update, if sound in wind and limb! How easy 'tis to preach. I fear the tops of Ceathreamhnan Are far beyond my reach. I live but for the present now It gives me plenty scope. With back turned to the future I Can face the past with hope.

Rov Murray.

# SCOTTISH MOUNTAIN ACCIDENTS 1999 REGIONAL DISTRIBUTION

(Geographical Divisions are those used in SMC District Guidebooks)

REGION	CASUALTIES (of which fatalities are bracketed)			INCIDENTS									
				Actual Rescues			Other Callouts					S	
	Injuries	Exhaustion/Exposure Hypothermia, Hyperthermia	Illness	Total Casualties	Incidents with Casualties	Cragfast or weatherbound	Separated	Lost	Overdue or Benighted	False Alarms or Hoaxes	Total Incidents	Animal Rescues	Non-Mountaineering Incidents
Northern Highlands	<b>9</b> (4)	<b>3</b> (1)	2	14 (5)	13	-	1	2	5	-	21	-	1
Western Highlands	12 (2)	2		14 (2)	12	-	1	2	4	1	19	1	1
Ben Nevis	28 (4)	6 -	5 -	<b>39</b> (4)	34	3	-		4	3	44	î	1.—
Glen Coe (Inc Buachaille)	<b>16</b> (1)	2	-	<b>18</b> (1)	18	15	1	1	1	-	36	1	-
Other Central Highlands	20	1 -	<b>2</b> (1)	<b>23</b> (1)	22	4	2	2	3	-	33	-	1
Cairngorms	<b>23</b> (1)	<b>9</b> (2)	<b>3</b> (1)	<b>35</b> (4)	31	5	-	11	16	2	65	-	7
Southern Highlands	<b>28</b> (6)	<b>3</b> (0)	<b>2</b> (2)	<b>33</b> (8)	32	3	1	4	9	3	52	1	12
Skye	<b>12</b> (1)	1 -	1 -	14 (1)	14	4	-	-	1	2	21	-	1
Islands (other than Skye	8	2	<b>2</b> (1)	12 (1)	11	-	-	-	4	-	15	-	-
Southern Uplands	<b>5</b> (2)	4	2 (1)	11 (3)	9	-	1	2	2	3	17	-	10
All Regions 1999	<b>161</b> (21)	<b>33</b> (3)	<b>19</b> (6)	<b>213</b> (30)	196	34	6	24	49	14	323	2	33
Previous year 1998	145 (22)	19 -	18 (5)	182 (27)	169	29	15	14	59	14	300	3	36

# MOUNTAIN RESCUE COMMITTEE OF SCOTLAND SCOTTISH MOUNTAIN ACCIDENTS 1999

# Compiled by John Hinde

Three persons are still unaccounted for. See Western Highlands – August 26-29, 1999. Southern Highlands – November 21 to December 11, 1999. Southern Uplands – December 20-21, 1999.

If statistics do not seem to agree with last year's tables it may be because of late

receipt of reports.

Figures for 'Separated' appear lower than usual because I have used different criteria for assessment; separation is still a considerable cause of incidents. Poor navigation and simple slips remain the major causes. Incidents are not categorised as 'Lost' except when uninjured people actually have to be found before rescue. Lost persons who manage to extricate themselves before being found are normally classed as 'Overdue'. Where injuries occur due to bad navigation the incident is classified as 'Incident with casualties'.

I am getting the general impression, which I have not fully researched, that more superbly equipped parties are getting into trouble through lack of experience. As usual, more incidents occur in, or following, good weather. As everybody knows there is a much more widespread use of mobile 'phones, even in my own parties.

Police have been mentioned in only a few of these precis, but they have been concerned in all of the incidents.

## NORTHERN HIGHLANDS

JANUARY 11 – Party of four went to climb 1978 Face Route, Corrag Bhuidhe of An Teallach. They separated into two pairs, one group descending to leave the others climbing by head torchlight. Coming down next day they drove off not knowing they had been reported overdue. Dundonnell and Kinloss MRTs, RAF Sea King. 41.

January 17-18 – Carrying a flask of coffee but no food, after a long drive from Greenock, a pair climbed Gleann na Sguaib Face of Diollaid a'Mhill Bhric on NW Ridge, Beinn Dearg. At the top, one (28) got exhaustion exposure because of deep, wet snow. He was left in a bivvy bag. Found at 02.40 by Dundonnell MRT sweep search and stretchered down, hypothermic but discharged from hospital that day. 112.

April 9-10 – Traversing Liathach E to W, walker (31) got lost in mist. He stayed put overnight then came down at dawn. Found descending by RAF helicopter. Torridon MRT and SARDA. Leuchars MRT turned back *en route*. 48.

May 5 – Am Fasarinen Pinnacles, Liathach. Descending rock when facing in, man (40) fell 22m down steep rocks, cutting his scalp and breaking a leg. His doctor companion gave first aid and went for help. Four rescuers were winched on to the ridge, putting casualty into Stokes Litter, awaiting RAF R137 return after refuelling. Winchman and patient were taken to Broadford hospital, then R137 came back to winch other three rescuers. Kinloss and Torridon MRTs. 75.

May 15 – Bad Step of Corrag Bhuidhe. (See note at end of this section.) Woman (35) was having difficulty seeing next foothold when descending. Man (33) deposited rucksack and went back up to help. Either she slipped and knocked him off, or he tried to grab her as she was falling. Both were killed falling about 200m

- to the east into Constabulary Couloir. Wife of dead man somehow descended into the couloir and performed CPR for almost two hours till RAF Sea King arrived for recovery. Dundonnell MRT. 50.
- May 24 Casualty (48) assisting her husband across a small burn (Allt an Odhar) on a path on Fuar Tholl, Glen Carron, slipped injuring a lower leg. Stretchered by Torridon MRT. 5.
- JUNE 17-20 Leaving Achnashellach on 17th heading for Annat, woman (58) lost path near Bealach na Lice. Alarm was raised by B and B proprietor when she did not appear on 19th. Suffering mild hypothermia she was found that night by RAF Sea King. Kinloss and Torridon MRTs and SARDA. 210.
- June 30-July 1 Novice solo walker (56) with no navigation knowledge got lost without compass in mist and rain on Ben More Assynt and Conival. He found a bothy by chance at Glencoul, spent the night and walked out to road next day, where he was found by the wife of a member of Assynt MRT driving to work. Assynt and Kinloss MRTs, SARDA, RAF Sea King helicopter. 323.
- JULY 2-3 Man with medical condition (39) walking path from Slattadale to Loch Tollaidh (moderate walk near south shore of Loch Maree) was overdue at rendezvous. He did not find his transport so retraced part of walk, but got lost when his medication began to wear off. Found by route search 3.2km from foot of Loch Maree. Dundonnell and Torridon MRTs and SARDA. 39.
- JULY 3-23 The above man (39) went missing again from his holiday home. A vain three-day search ensued by 10 SARDA dogs, Central Scotland Police Diving Team, Dundonnell and Torridon MRTs. His body was found on July 23 by an angler 10.5km from the foot of Loch Maree and recovered by boat. 615.
- JULY 10-11 Three scramblers at Bad Step of Corrag Bhuidhe, An Teallach in mist heard someone falling below them. They alerted rescuers on mobile phone. Dundonnell MRT and HMCG helicopter found body of woman (59). She had become separated from a companion, slipped and fell about 250m. Stretchered down to Loch na Sealga, where keeper took them by boat to vehicle access next morning. 432.
- JULY 16-17 Man (77) was overdue returning from Cona Mheall, Beinn Dearg. He returned to Aultguish Inn under his own steam and Dundonnell MRT was recalled. 37.
- JULY 25-26 Woman (23) left her rucksack with two companions to look for a lost camera when descending from South Coire of Ben More Assynt towards Inchnadamph at 21.20. Tired, but on correct route she decided she was lost and missing her companions returned to coire. Found by RAF Sea King next day returning via Ben More Assynt and Conival. Assynt and Kinloss MRTs and SARDA. 177.
- August 20-21 Ill-equipped solo student (19) tried to find her way from Assynt Field Centre to Eas a Chual Aluinn (waterfall) in good weather. She got hopelessly lost and benighted. Wearing Wellington boots she was 7km off course and separated from her objective by the whole range of Conival/Ben More Assynt. Found, tired but OK, next day by Assynt MRT. Leuchars team in R137 recalled when *en route* to assist. 110.
- September 5-6 Descending SE just below Liathach summit man (36) slipped, falling 3m dislocating a shoulder. Groups of six whistle blasts were heard by another walker who used a phone to alert rescuers. Casualty's wife also went for help. Terrain and low cloud delayed reaching him till 0230. Dundonnell and Torridon MRTs cared for him till break in weather permitted winching by RAF R137. Kinloss MRT recalled. 506.

September 6-17 – Body of a woman (49) inadequately clothed in hiking gear and poorly shod, was found by passer-by on 16th near her tent at the head of Cam Loch, about 4km west of A835 near Elphin. Death may have been due to fasting. Police and HMCG helicopter. 57.

September 24-25 – Two men (47, 42) mobile phoned to inform landlady they were spending night out on Liathach because of benightment. Torridon and Kinloss MRTs called out. Search started at first light due to bad weather. Pair found and airlifted by HMCG. 145.

OCTOBER 2 – HMCG helicopter called out for fallen walker at Ardmore, Sutherland.

OCTOBER 16 – Scrambling up Corrag Bhuidhe of An Teallach with three friends, male (48) slipped and fell, sustaining serious head injury with unconsciousness, and a broken arm. Mobile phone call summoned RAF Sea King airlift and Dundonnell MRT. 18.

OCTOBER 16 – Woman (37) and man (31) walked from Loch Broom to Badralloch on Little Loch Broom, then out to Scoraig. Not realising how far along the peninsula they had gone they took a 'short cut' back over the hill but got benighted on cliffs about 1km from their hotel. They lit a fire which was spotted. Airlifted out by HMCG helicopter. 10.

OCTOBER 25 – Becoming unwell at Waterfall Footbridge, Coire Mhic Nobuil, Torridon, walker (54) took medication for angina. His wife or daughter went for help. He walked off with Torridon MRT to surgery, then was airlifted to

Raigmore by RAF Sea King. 27.

Note: Accident Black Spot, Corrag Bhuidhe of An Teallach. Dundonnell MRT are concerned at the frequency of accidents, which may be due to erosion of the Torridonian sandstone on the Corrag Bhuidhe Bad Step, which produces a gritty covering on an already tricky route.

In the same location the following have occurred. August 8, 1966 – One fatality. May 15, 1999 – Two fatalities. July 10, 1999 – One fatality. October 16, 1999 –

Serious injury.

The team intend to publicise the risks as a cautionary note. As a scrambling route, ropes are rarely used, but a rope and helmets may be recommended, or alternatively taking the easier route to the south avoiding the Bad Step.

#### WESTERN HIGHLANDS

January 31 – Old lady (90) walked up Loch Hourn from Corran, Arnisdale. She slipped on seaweed and could not remember falling, perhaps a few minutes or hours before. A member of Glenelg MRT found her. She was stretchered and sent to hospital. Leg injury. 5.

March 4 – Experienced walker (52) descending Sgurr Thuilm by stalkers' path was nearly down into the glen when she slipped, sustaining an ankle injury. Airlift to

Belford Hospital by RAF R137 helicopter. Lochaber MRT. 41.

March 7 – Man (52) stumbled and slid 30m down a snow chute about 400m NE of Gleouraich summit. He was winched into RAF Sea King suffering a scalp cut.

Companion had raised alarm at 13.20. 11.

May 10-11 – Five adults (f52, f29, m54, m33, m26) and two male children (8, 2) walked in good weather (some mist) from Glencripesdale, Loch Sunart over rough, remote ground to Rahoy, Loch Teacuis. They were fairly experienced walkers with spare clothing and food but not equipped with adequate navigation gear or torches. They tried then to follow the coast (Caol Charna) round the headland formed by Monadh Rahuaidh. The shore got too difficult. They were forced into dense woodland and got lost in darkness. At 23.00 they contacted police by mobile phone, and were found by RN Sea King at 0310. Three men were given a torch and directions to Glencripesdale. Two women and two children were airlifted. All were uninjured. Lochaber MRT. 33.

May 14 – Wife (34) fell 2.5m in Coire Mhullidh, Glen Strathfarrar (SE slopes of Sgurr a' Choire Ghlais) suffering bruising and slight head injury. Husband walked down to glen and raised alarm. Airlift in good weather by RAF Sea King.

Dundonnell MRT stand-by. 8.

May 22-23 – Poorly equipped and shod party of four attempted a difficult walk in wind and rain. Only one carried navigation gear and was experienced. From Glenfinan they had tried to reach Glenaladale over the hills but a descent into the glen was too steep. They contoured round Beinn Mhic Cedidh and Beinn Odhar Beag to try and regain A830 but got stopped by Abhainn Shlatach. Woman (39) injured a knee trying to cross the spate burn, so three sheltered in a tent while the experienced leader crossed and went for help. Lochaber MRT stretchered the woman across the river and got her and two boys (15, 14) with cold trauma into Belford Hospital by 02.00. 44.

June 3 – HMCG helicopter callout for missing person on Morvern Peninsula. 8. June 28 – Girl (15) in a party of five in good weather slipped on wet grass spraining an ankle. Coire Mhoraigein of Bac an Eich. Reference NH203485. Airlift by

RAF Sea King. 13.

August 21-22 – Search by Glenelg and Kintail MRTs, HMCG helicopter and SARDA for man (37) who separated from his companion. They walked from Falls of Glomach over Beinn Bhuidhe, but missing man went over Sgurr-an Airgid and spent the night there. 123.

August 21-23 – One of two missing Labrador dogs returned home. The other was found stuck down a ravine of Borrodale Burn, Beasdale, Arisaig. Lochaber MRT called out, hoisted the dog to safety about midnight on the second day. 16.

August 26-29 – Despite extensive searches over three days a man (68) solo walking, last reported seen on Five Sisters of Kintail between Saileag and Sgurr nan Spainteach. He had an angina problem but intended to walk most of the ridge. Intensive searches were carried out by Glenelg, Kinloss, Kintail and Leuchars MRTs, five SARDA dogs, Police dogs, HMCG, RAF and RN helicopters. Still missing. 3000.

SEPTEMBER 25 – Man slipped when he was in NE Coire of Druim Shionnaich. He (35) fell breaking an ankle. One of his two companions used a mobile phone and

he was airlifted to Raigmore by RAF Sea King. 25.

September 26-28 – Lack of usual telephone calls to wife and son of a walker (48) on holiday in Glenelg had worried them so they reported him as missing. His car was found on A87 at the east start of the Five Sisters of Kintail walk. On 28th a local farmer reported seeing a pink object through his telescope, which turned out to be the body of the deceased. With the farmer and police on board RAF Sea King went to location on lower slopes of West Face Sgurr na Ciste Dhuibhe. No rucksack or upper body clothing were found. He had probably descended from Five Sisters before completion and fallen off a cliff through overhanging trees. Glenelg, Kinloss, Kintail MRTs, SARDA. 200.

OCTOBER 8-12 – Walker (32) did South Cluanie Ridge in two days. Descending NW Slopes of last peak (Creag nan Damh) on 8th he slipped on wet grass, fell 7m into a gully with leg injury and broken jaw. He also broke mobile phone which he had not used since day before. He got into sleeping and bivvy bags and was found by MRT search on 12th, not even hypothermic although wet. Lift by RAF Sea King.

Glenelg, Kinloss, Kintail, Leuchars, SARDA. 695.

OCTOBER 14-15 – After completing four Munros N of Loch Mullardoch, walker (60) was benighted by a river crossing 15 minutes from his vehicle. He turned up as Dundonnell MRT started searching next morning. 36.

OCTOBER 30 – Shore walker (40) reported missing Loch Nevis. Lost, he was found by Mallaig Lifeboat at Ardnamurach and reunited with his group at Tarbet.

Lochaber MRT, HMCG Mallaig, RAF Sea King. 49.

November 22 - Man (37) was overdue from the NE slopes of Beinn Sgritheall. He had separated from two companions to return to base and they were concerned about his asthma. Glenelg MRT found him at 22.30. Kintail MRT called out. The problem had been a sprained ankle. RAF Rescue 138 had been *en route*. 84.

DECEMBER 30 – Hillwalker (50) found by shepherd floating face down near the east shore of Loch Dughaill, Achnashellach. He had a large rucksack on his back. It seems he tried to cross River Carron at its inlet into L. Dughaill and fell into the water. Due to the weight of the rucksack he was unable to regain his footing. Body recovered using ATV. Drowning caused his death. N. Constabulary.

#### **BEN NEVIS**

January 6 – Search by Lochaber MRT, RAF Sea King and SARDA after a rucksack of clothing, with rope and karabiners attached to grab handle, was found in Observatory Gully near avalanche debris. Above the sack items could be seen which had fallen out as the sack rolled down. Before search began the rucksack had been collected and no one was reported missing. 112.

February 9 – Soloing Tower Ridge, a climber (28) was crossing Tower Gap when one of his axes pulled out causing a fall of 140m (the whole length of Glover's Chimney) into soft snow with ankle, pelvis and rib fractures, bruises and abrasions. Nearby climbers heard his shouts and raised alarm. Two RN Sea

Kings, Lochaber MRT, JSMTC. 88.

February 16 – Climbing instructor (31) was belayed on Tower Scoop, with his leader, another instructor, climbing above him. Despite wearing a helmet he was killed when struck on the head by rocks or ice dislodged, probably by another party. Left by his companion and evacuated by Lochaber MRT and RN Sea King. 115.

February 17 – Change of snow texture, from hard to soft, on steep ground 200m from CIC Hut, caused soldier (36) to stumble with slight shoulder injury. He was undergoing winter skills training. Aided by companions, then Lochaber team in area, he got airlifted by RN Sea King also in area. 6.

February 20 – Police received radio message on CIC Hut frequency, 'We have a casualty. Can you assist?' Lochaber MRT flown by RN to hut. Nothing found.

55.

MARCH 1-2 – Lochaber and Kinloss MRTs searched Observatory Gully for three well equipped Italian climbers who spent the night in the summit refuge after completing Zero Gully. This had been their expressed intention, but language difficulties caused hosts to expect them back to B and B the night before. RAF Sea King. 151.

MARCH 3 – Two men (29, 26) descending Nevis in a white-out navigated into Surgeons' Gully where they were cragfast at 18.00 using mobile phone to alert Lochaber and RAF St. Athan MRTs. Located at 22.00 by teams, lowered some way, then airlifted by RAF Sea King to Belford. Some rewarming carried out. Dressings used. 250.

MARCH 13 - Triggered avalanche. Gale, but it was not snowing at the time. Roped

pair nearing the top of Point Five Gully had difficulty finding a belay. Deceased (m23) belayed with two ice-axes. Leader (f23) about 10m above him was in very loose snow which slid so that both fell down Point Five into Observatory Gully, then rolled and slid to the foot of Observatory Ridge, a fall of about 400m. Nearby climbers found man dead. Woman had spinal, pelvic and facial injuries. Lochaber and Kinloss MRTs, RN Sea King. 257.

MARCH 20 Two men descending Nevis Track from summit went off course. Casualty (42) tried to go to his right on snow (no crampons or axe in freezing weather) but slipped, falling 150m in Upper Coire Eoghainn, fracturing a femur and causing facial abrasions. Companion descended Waterslide to Top Car Park and alerted climbers. Evacuated to Belford by HMS Gannet helicopter and

Lochaber MRT. 135.

March 20 — Comb Gully. Leader (20) had been preparing gear to start. He 'unlocked' his belay but his ice stance collapsed and both roped climbers fell 75m coming to a halt by ice-axe braking. Leader had a deep ice-axe gash in a thigh. Two members of Kinloss MRT on a nearby climb saw them fall and dressed the wound. They had a faulty radio but lowered casualty to CIC Hut and contacted Lochaber MRT. Airlift by RAF Sea King. 35.

March 24 – Pair climbed Ben by Carn Mor Dearg Arête then attempted to descend Mountain Track to Achintee in 10m visibility with spindrift. From GR 164712 man (33) slipped and successfully braked with his axe. However, trying to stand up he fell again and slid feet first, face down about 300m (altitude) into Coire Eoghainn. Lochaber MRT found him at GR 165708 with limb injuries, cuts and

bruises. Airlift by RAF Sea King. 100.

MARCH 27-28 Two boys with their father and uncle descended Nevis Track in strong wind, mist and rain after a night on summit. Three of the party had inadequate boots and none carried helmets, ice-axes or crampons. Boy (14) slid about 90m down snow in Red Burn Gully sustaining facial injuries, broken wrist and hypothermia. Going to help him, his uncle (31) slid 60m down snow sustaining skull fracture and hypothermia. All four were airlifted by RN Sea King. Lochaber MRT. 128.

April 2 – Body (40) found at the foot of Number 5 Gully by a passing climber. Apparently he had fallen 450m when trying (solo) to top out at the left side of the cornice of the small coire at the top of the gully. Lochaber MRT, RAF Sea King.

38.

April 14-15 – Cragfast at Tower Gap, Tower Ridge, because of weather and nightfall, two climbers, both men (50, 34) were rescued next day by Lochaber

MRT and airlifted by RAF helicopter. 149.

APRIL 19-21 – Lochaber MRT and RAF Sea King rescued two hypothermic climbers (46, 36) from above Glen Nevis Waterslide, Coire Eoghainn. Despite gale warnings the two men had camped, climbed NE Buttress, crawled on all fours with ice axes and crampons around the coire rim and spent a further night in a snow hole. Leuchars and Kinloss MRTs recalled. Treated overnight at Belford Hospital. 208.

May 15 – Mobile phone call at 22.10 from two male climbers (36, 33) cragfast on Great Tower, Tower Ridge. Airlifted OK by RAF Sea King and Lochaber MRT

by midnight. 27.

May 18 – A slip when trying to place a second running belay on Pandora's Buttress, Polldubh Crags caused a leader fall of 6m. On dry rock he had been 18m up the climb with one runner in place. He stopped upside down hanging from the runner with his back severely bruised and abraded. His second used mobile phone to

alert Lochaber MRT. Stretchered to road and kept in Belford Hospital overnight. 18.

JUNE 25 – Descending Ben Track from summit, (m28) got cramped legs and companions helped him down. Another group called out Lochaber MRT and RN Sea King returning from a previous incident. Meantime casualty had got down uninjured with no help from team. 30.

MRT and RAF helicopter. 26.

July 3 – Walker (30) used mobile phone when cragfast at the top of a gully on Carn Dearg NW of Ben Nevis. RN helicopter lifted four Lochaber MRT who helped subject abseil to foot of gully where he was airlifted OK. 35.

JULY 9-10 – Descending Mountain Track at 21.30 (m52) slipped on scree at 950m, breaking his wrist and cutting his face. Companion went for help. Casualty was

escorted down by three members of Lochaber MRT. 17.

July 13 – At 09.30 six climbers abseiled into Douglas Gap from the top of Douglas Boulder prior to climbing Tower Ridge. The last pair, both wearing helmets, abseiled together because one of them was inexperienced. As they started to descend, the additional weight caused the belay to fail. They both fell about 30m striking the rock face several times. The novice (f24) suffered slight elbow injuries, but the experienced man (25) had serious head injuries. Rescued by RN Sea King and Lochaber MRT. 108.

JULY 17 – Schoolgirl (16) in a party of six on Nevis summit plateau strained ligaments in her hip and felt unable to continue. Rescued by Lochaber MRT and RN Sea King for treatment in Belford Hospital. Discharged later that day. 50.

JULY 18 – Fell running down from halfway point of Mountain Track (Half Ben Race) female (45) tripped when 200m above second aluminium bridge. She banged her head and later required five scalp stitches and overnight observation in Belford Hospital. Evacuation by Lochaber MRT and RAF Sea King. 35.

JULY 22 – Man (40) descending Mountain Track became hypoglycaemic. He contacted his wife by mobile phone. She contacted Lochaber MRT and he was

aided to hospital. 12.

- JULY 27 Man (40) accompanied by his daughter, sprained a thigh descending Mountain Track near Halfway Lochan. Escorted by Lochaber MRT. No medical aid. 12.
- July 29 Man (31) met another walker on Mountain Track on a very hot, sunny day. They decided to do Carn Mor Dearg Arête together. At about the lowest point of the ridge, the man stopped to look at the view. He lost his footing and fell backwards for about 60m. Lochaber MRT called out (mobile phone). He had to be stretchered to a more accessible place for airlifts by RN Sea King to Belford Hospital, then to Glasgow Southern General because of serious head injuries. 117.
- August 3 Just above Halfway Lochan on Mountain Track, woman (35) suffered epileptic fit from which she did not regain full consciousness so her friends alerted Lochaber MRT and RAF Sea King. Airlifted to Belford and released after treatment. 34.
- August 3 Woman (51) slipped on Mountain Track on second zig-zag above Halfway House sustaining slight head injuries, cuts and bruises. Companions used mobile phone. Team and helo used which were already engaged on above rescue. 12.

August 18 – Wearing lightweight fashion boots at Steall Meadow, a woman (37)

stepped back on flat grass breaking her ankle. She had been taking a photograph of Steall Waterfall. RAF Sea King helicopter. Lochaber MRT. 36.

August 21 - Woman (42) accompanied by her husband stumbled descending Mountain Track just above Halfway Lochan. She sprained a knee. Airlift by RAF and Lochaber MRT notified by mobile phone. Released from Belford after treatment. 14.

August 28 – Man (39) had chest pains descending Mountain Track. Airlifted, examined and soon released from hospital. RAF and Lochaber. 45.

August 28 – Woman (30) slipped descending Mountain Track and had difficulty moving her legs. Airlifted and treated at hospital for groin strain. RAF and Lochaber. 14.

August 30 – Descending Mountain Track just above Halfway Lochan, schoolgirl (15) slipped on loose stone, landed awkwardly and badly sprained an ankle. Mother contacted Lochaber MRT and RN Sea King. 48.

September 4 – Ben Race runner (m48) slipped descending near Halfway Lochan sustaining minor head injuries. Airlift by RAF Sea King, Lochaber MRT. 25.

September 4 – Ben Race co-ordinator (m41) suffered severe back pain (sciatica) near Halfway Lochan and was airlifted by RAF Sea King and Lochaber MRT. 25.

September 4 Ben Race runner (m71) suffered exhaustion descending at Halfway Lochan. Airlift by RAF Sea King, Lochaber MRT. 25.

September 4 – After ascending Tower Ridge with a companion, climber (54) got exhausted during descent. Ochils MRT staying at CIC Hut on exercise helped him down to just below Coire Leis Refuge for airlift by RAF Sea King to hospital. He was released after treatment. Lochaber MRT. 51.

SEPTEMBER 5-6 – Three men (38, 37, 33) were found next day by Lochaber MRT descending the track from the summit after delays and benightment on Tower Ridge. They had deviated off route at one stage and overcome low cloud, rain and greasy rock. 41.

September 10 – Retired man (69) was persuaded by another group to alert teams when he had thigh cramps on Carn Mor Dearg Arête. Lochaber MRT and RAF Sea King scrambled. Later he was fit to continue, obtained a mobile phone and cancelled the emergency, descending unaided with his companion. 18.

September 18 – Participator (f24) in a charity walk suffered an epileptic fit at second zigzag above Red Burn on Mountain Track. Lochaber MRT member came across casualty and radioed for other team members and RAF Sea King. 23.

September 26-27 – Two from party of four about 100m below top of Observatory Ridge were reported as fatigued and unable to continue. One stayed with them while another raised alarm at 21.25. At 23.10 RAF Sea King spoke to three people near Halfway Lochan all uninjured and getting down OK. Lochaber MRT. 95.

OCTOBER 9 – Pair climbing NE Buttress in mist and rain stopped for something to eat below Mantrap. One (26) climbed a chimney below Mantrap and waited for his friend. Friend (m29) wearing harness but unroped, slipped climbing the chimney and was killed by falling down the Orion Face. Lochaber MRT and RAF Sea King. 158.

DECEMBER 19-20 – Students (f19, m21) went to climb Mega Route X but the ice had not formed completely and they climbed Point Five Gully instead. Change of plan and minor technical problems (belays) caused benightment, descending to CIC Hut to collect camp gear. Found by Lochaber MRT and RN helicopter near the hut, but they declined an airlift after midnight and walked down. 50.

#### **GLEN COE**

JANUARY 5 – Descending Bidean Coire with subject of following incident, Student (20) fell 240m because snow had balled up in her crampons. She suffered fractures of neck and leg and abrasions. Glencoe MRT stretchered her 600m down coire to airlift by RAF Sea King. 60.

January 5 – Student (m20) was descending with casualty of above incident. When she fell his shouts were heard by other climbers. He got cragfast at foot of Church Door Buttress. GMRT belayed him down then escorted him off the hill. 60.

- January 20 Two ropes each of two men (33, 32) (17, 17) climbed to top of Curved Ridge separately. They met up. Darkness had fallen. They decided there was a severe avalanche danger if they crossed the bowl at the top of Curved Ridge, so they planned to stay overnight. Meantime, alarm had been raised. RAF Sea King was unable to airlift due to poor visibility. GMRT climbed up to them and rescued all four with a mixture of abseiling, belaying and leading them down. 175.
- February 6-7 Three men (35, 33, 32) attempting climb in Crowberry Gully/Ridge area found it beyond their ability. Cragfast, they used light signals and were aided down by GMRT. 56.
- February 7-8 Four descending Bidean nam Bian got as far as An t-Sron when it got dark. Because of this and tiredness, three men (29, 25, 24) stayed there. Other went for help. GMRT and RN Sea King got them down at 00.15. 79.
- February 10 Instructor (31) descending steep snow in Coire nam Beith tripped over his crampons, fell 6m, tearing foot ligaments. Stretchered by GMRT to the 'gates' where he was airlifted by RAF. 30.
- February 10 Man (36) descending snow on east side of Coire nan Lochan tripped over crampons. He ice-axe braked but a crampon caught in snow breaking that same lower leg. GMRT attended (already involved in nearby coire). Airlift by RAF. 30.
- February 13 Roped pair (m50, m44) climbing Dinnertime Buttress, W. Face Aonach Dubh crossed right and got cragfast on upper rake above B Buttress. Strobe light was used by pair to initiate rescue. Low cloud at top of buttress prevented airlift, but pair were lead off the hill by GMRT before midnight. 100.
- February 13 Darkness fell preventing four Aonach Eagach traversers (m32,30 f30,30) from seeing the Clachaig Gully path down Sgor nam Fiannaidh. RAF R137 was in the area attempting above rescue. They torch signalled the helicopter. All four winched on board. GMRT. 19.
- February 15 Roped party of six men (57, 53, 32, 23, 22, 17) attempted Curved Ridge, Buachaille Etive Mor. Near top the difficulties outweighed ability. When dark fell they signalled help. GMRT lowered them from ridge for walk to road. 127.
- February 16 Unroped pair descending steep snow of Coire na Tulaich from top of Buachaille Etive Mor. One (24) slipped, partially managing to arrest his fall of 300m, but hitting rocks at foot of slope broke an ankle. GMRT splinted and stretchered him. 63.
- February 21 Three students (f22, 18, m19) were reported missing by their leader. She had been going in front down a steep snow slope SW of W Summit Bidean nam Bian. Triggering a small avalanche she had become separated from the group. Fearing they had been caught in the avalanche she went down to the road. GMRT found the three unhurt trying to get down. Kinloss MRT. 38.
- February 23 Roped climber (47) injured a limb descending Bad Step, Am Bodach of Aonach Eagach when his handhold broke off, causing a fall of 2m. Airlift by RN helicopter and GMRT. 28.

- May 17 Descending track (scree) very close to summit Sgor na h-Ulaidh walker (28) slipped, twisting his knee. Used mobile phone. GMRT and RAF Sea King airlift. 50.
- $\mbox{May}\,30\mbox{-}31\mbox{--}$  Party of five plus dog overdue on Aonach Eagach turned up OK next day. Mild weather.
- JUNE 12 Aonach Eagach traverser (21) descending gully direct from Sgor nam Fiannaidh to Loch Achtriochtan slipped on wet grass and scree. He fell 45m hurting an ankle and fracturing a wrist. Aided down by GMRT. RAF helicopter recalled when it was found he could walk down. 40.
- June 18-19 Solo walker (58) in Crowberry Basin of Buachaille Etive Mor had a fatal fall between 18th and 19th. His body was found by passers-by and stretchered down by GMRT. 31.
- June 29-30 Poorly equipped (only three had navigation gear) and without proper waterproofs or spare clothing, all wearing black leather military boots, seven female and five male students (average age 20) climbed Stob Coire Sgreamhach from Lairig Eilde. They had intended to do Beinn Fhada, but because of bad weather did Bidean nam Bian instead, intending to continue along the ridge to the road. Poor navigation in gale, rain and mist caused a descent into Summit Gully, Stob Coire nam Beith, where they got cragfast. GMRT alerted by mobile phone giving approximate location. Overnight they found group and led them to where they could be winched by RAF Sea King. One student (f20) was taken by ambulance to hospital with cold trauma. 245.
- JULY 1 Descending from Lairig Eilde into Dalness, Glen Etive, woman (38) slipped on rough path injuring a limb. Stretchered to Air Ambulance by GMRT. 33.
- July 17 Party of three (f39, m35, m8) stopped by Allt Coire Gabhail in spate in Lost Valley. They managed to get across before GMRT reached them. 13.
- JULY 18 Male student (29) suffered arm and leg injuries in a 30m fall when roped climbing Central Buttress, Buachaille Etive Mor. A piece of rock slab had given way. Other climbers saw the fall. Airlift by RAF Sea King. GMRT. 75.
- JULY 19 Party of three in Lost Valley walked higher, got lost in cloud, lost their map then called help on mobile phone. They (f23, m28, m22) were found on Stob Coire nan Lochan by GMRT, searching ridges and tops of Bidean nam Bian. 75.
- August 9 Leader (55) near top of Drainpipe Corner, East Face Aonach Dubh, fell 8m on to a heather ledge, then rolled, when one of her footholds broke off. She sustained a broken leg, cuts and bruises. At that point a member of GMRT emerged having completed a climb of his own. He radioed his team who carried a stretcher up. Airlift by RAF Sea King. 50.
- August 9 Descending Lost Valley path (f50) slipped on scree and vegetation breaking her ankle. Airlift to hospital by RAF R137 in area on Aonach Dubh rescue. GMRT. 13.
- August 21 East to West Aonach Eagach traverser (m45) suffered leg cramps and exhaustion just east of Pinnacles of Stob Coire Leith. Nearby GMRT member radioed RAF airlift. 12.
- September 4 Climbing down Bad Step (Am Bodach, Aonach Eagach) facing in, man (50) lost a handhold on wet rock and scree. He fell 24m sustaining deep laceration to a forearm and slight injury to same hand. GMRT and RAF R137 airlift. 44.
- September 15 Inexperienced, badly-equipped men (51, 26) attempted to reach Pap of Glencoe from Invercoe but could not get down when dark fell. They flashed torches and were aided down OK by GMRT. 17.

OCTOBER 5 - Couple (f35, m41) climbing Drainpipe Corner on Weeping Wall, East Face Aonach Dubh, got cragfast. Their rope snagged on a bush above the waterfall. Passers-by alerted GMRT who freed their rope and got them down. 44.

OCTOBER 9 – Man (38) soloing Curved Ridge slipped on wet rock, fell 18m injuring his leg. Two (from party of five) went to summit where they used a mobile phone. RAF Sea King winched casualty and the other two. GMRT. 38.

OCTOBER 16-17 – Descending west from Sgor na h-Ulaidh summit, solo walker (49) followed a fence line north into steep ground near Allt na Muidhe where he slipped and got cragfast. GMRT, alerted when he was overdue, spotted torch flashes and escorted him down, 76.

November 6 – During E to W Aonach Eagach traverse woman (31) panicked just west of Meall Dearg. Mobile phone alerted GMRT and cragfast she was winched

aboard RN helicopter. Three companions continued walk. 20.

NOVEMBER 6 - Refer to above rescue. Solo (f52) doing the ridge in the other direction, stumbled injuring wrist. She applied first aid and continued, intending a self-rescue. Soon after she met above party and learned that Sea King was on its way, so she was airlifted to Belford Hospital. GMRT. 20.

DECEMBER 19 – Novice (39) intended to climb Curved Ridge, Buachaille Etive Mor, in winter conditions, with no ice-axe, crampons or navigation gear. He strayed on to a harder route, D Gully Buttress, got cragfast and alerted GMRT and RN

Sea King by mobile phone. Winched off. 55.

DECEMBER 28 – Unable to complete E to W traverse of Aonach Eagach before dark, two men (37, 34) descending Sgorr nam Fiannaidh got cragfast in a gully.

Escorted off by GMRT after using mobile phone. 37.

December 29 – A broken crampon caused three unroped climbers to retreat from 800m on Curved Ridge, Buachaille Etive Mor. The men (all aged 21) were delayed in their descent by the one wearing only one crampon, so they got benighted and cragfast at the Bad Step. Torch signals alerted Glencoe MRT who escorted them off uninjured. 60.

# OTHER CENTRAL HIGHLANDS

January 22 – Not carrying crampons, man (51) descending west slopes of Stob a' Ghlais Choire, Blackmount, slipped on snow/ice. Companion, some distance below, tried to break the fall but could not hold on. Casualty fell 300m suffering bruises and a severe head cut. Glencoe MRT stretchered him to a safe area. RAF Sea King airlift, 118.

January 27-29 – Guide had spotted two male outdoor instructors (44, 22) climbing Raeburn's Gully, Creag Meaghaidh, on 28th. Their car was still parked at Aberarder on 29th when avalanche category was 3. Lochaber and Leuchars teams met them. They had intended to stay camped in Coire Ardair another night

but decided to cut their visit short. RAF Sea King. 160.

February 5-6 – Man (40) suffering slight hypothermia was found by Lochaber MRT on a broad terrace about 1.5km SE of Leum Uilleim summit. He had climbed the mountain from Corrour Station in a white-out the day before but got lost coming down, sheltering under a rock till daylight. Glencoe, Kinloss and Leuchars MRTs, RAF Sea King, SARDA. 404.

FEBRUARY 7 - Alone on Meall an Doire Dharaich, 1.5km east of Kinlochleven, following a domestic incident, an ill-equipped schoolgirl (14) wearing trainers, slipped in freezing conditions injuring her back. She used mobile phone and was

stretchered down. Glencoe MRT. 24.

February 8-9 – Search by Glencoe MRT for missing walker (40) on Creise was called off at 00.30. Helicopter was unavailable due to weather. He was found by team at 09.00 and airlifted to hospital with chest and face injuries from crag SE of Creise on Cam Gleann Face. 60.

February 11 – A roped pair had just decided to retreat from Peter Pan Direct, in Coire Daimh, Beinn Udlaidh, when a block of ice fell and struck the second (38) who was knocked unconscious. He was lowered to a ledge by the leader who then down climbed. With help, leader lowered casualty (head and arm injuries) to foot of climb for airlift by RN Sea King. Arrochar and Strathclyde MRTs. 60.

February 14 – Man (28) in a party of five tripped over a crampon descending Aonach an Nid of Aonach Mor. Mobile phone alert. With broken leg splinted by a ski pole, evacuated by Nevis Range personnel in a piste machine then Gondola.

Lochaber MRT. 9.

February 14-15 - Five men (53,42,41,41,41) climbed Staghorn Gully, Creag Meagaidh, then got lost in a white-out. Benighted in bad weather they bivvied then walked out to Garvamore Farm, Upper Spey, where they were airlifted to Aberarder Farm by RAF Sea King. Kinloss and Lochaber MRTs. 167.

March 7 – Ice collapsing around his axes and crampons caused the leader of a roped pair to fall from Ramshead Gully, Coire Daimh of Beinn Udlaidh, pulling his second off his ice-screw belay. The two (both 19) sustained head injuries despite wearing helmets. The leader also had huge bruising and torn ankle ligaments. RN Sea King airlift, Arrochar, Leuchars and Strathclyde MRTs. 43.

March 10 – In a group of five going from Corrour Station to Staoineag Bothy, man (58) died of a heart attack less than 1km from destination. RAF Sea King and

Lochaber MRT. 52.

MARCH 13 – Standing at the foot of the 2nd pitch of Left Twin, Aonach Mor with two companions, a climber was struck by a large lump of ice dislodged by another party higher up. He (32) was wearing a helmet but sustained facial bruising and bleeding. Helped down to foot while another radioed for help. Airlifted by RN Sea King on exercise. Declined medical help. 5.

March 21-22 – Missing solo walker (55) doing Sgor Gaibhre Horseshoe came off early ending up near Loch Ericht dam. He spent the night in woodland and was found on a road by a keeper next day. Meantime, Tayside teams, Kinloss, SARDA and RAF Sea King searched. Leuchars recalled en route. 147.

APRIL 5 – Lochaber MRT called out to rescue canoe instructor (31) who with two companions had tried to paddle R. Spean from Laggan Dam to Inverlair Falls. He had to eject from boat, tried to swim to bank but was swept down and was stuck on an small island above the falls. His companions had managed to get ashore but no safety line had been laid across the river prior to starting. It was arranged for the siphons at Laggan Dam to be turned off. Once the river level fell he was able to walk ashore, 13.

April 20 – Diabetic (59) got separated from his two companions in a white-out on the summit of Beinn Udlamain at 13.00. They walked out to Dalnaspidal. He phoned in safe from Kinloch Rannoch at 19.15. The shortest possible distance from B. Udlamain to L. Rannoch is 16km as the crow flies. Tayside and

Cairngorm MRTs.

May 2 – Descending NE from Stob Coire a' Chairn into Coire Gabhail, Mamores, a woman (52) slipped on wet grass breaking her ankle. Lochaber MRT and RAF

Sea King. 23.

May 17 – On path at lowest point of col between Stob Ban and Sgurr an Iubhair, Mamores, woman (66) slipped on scree and broke her ankle. RAFR137 Sea King airlift, 14.

- JUNE 16 Award hike at headwaters of River Findhorn in Monadh Liath. Schoolgirl (15) in party of six experienced chest pains and breathing difficulties when 8.5km SW of Coignafearn Lodge (Amhainn Cro Clach). Air Ambulance lift to Raigmore. Found to be well. 6.
- JUNE 18 Wife worried because her fit husband (60) had high blood pressure and was late. He turned up 4 hours late from Loch Dubh, Monadh Liath Mountains, just 10 minutes before Cairngorm MRT planned to start a search. 1.
- JUNE 25 Woman (57) solo walking Mamore Lodge to An Gearanach and Glen Nevis lost the path near Steall Waterfall and was overdue. She turned up 5 hours late so RN Sea King *en route* and Lochaber MRT searchers were stood down. 40.
- JULY 14 Cairngorm MRT stretcher requested, but not used, in rescue of a schoolgirl (13). She had fallen 12m down steep bank of R. Gynack at Kingussie. Minor injuries. 2.
- JULY 15 Descending NE Ridge, Sgurr a' Mhaim after Ring of Steall with three companions in poor weather, man (53) twisted his ankle. Airlift by RAF Sea King. Lochaber MRT. 72.
- JULY 15 Same helicopter (above rescue) lifted schoolboy (13) from bealach just west of Carn Liath, Creag Meagaidh Range. Descending, he had slipped and damaged foot ligaments. Lochaber MRT. 13.
- August 6-7 At 22.30 walking with a companion on Sgurr a' Mhaim above Steall Waterfall, man (32) slipped on peat moss and fell 9m on to his head. Sometime later the companion attracted other walkers who alerted Lochaber MRT. Casualty aided down overnight and conveyed to Belford Hospital where he was detained for injuries. 16.
- August 8 Man (52) attempted to solo Easy Gully, Creag Meagaidh. He crossed two waterfalls but was unable to cross a third. He got cragfast three-quarters the height of the gully and managed to alert rescuers by mobile phone. Winched off by RAF Sea King. Lochaber MRT. 19.
- August 22 Student (20) tourist walking on Craigellachie Crag in National Nature Reserve, Aviemore, got cragfast at edge of cliff. He was spotted by a German tourist. Cairngorm MRT walked him off. 14.
- August 29 Crossing a burn near the head of Glen Noe, Loch Etive (north of Ben Cruachan) student (18) on award hike slipped on wet rocks and fell heavily. He suffered bruising and was unable to go on. Airlift by RN Sea King. Strathclyde Police MRT. 22.
- September 5 Polish student (24) got cragfast on steep ground east of Steall Waterfall when trying to get a better view. His companion alerted Lochaber MRT. He was aided down. 22.
- September 24-25 Walking from Rannoch Forest to Ben Alder Cottage (bothy) man (64) slipped on wet grass. His foot went into a hole breaking a tibia. Friends assisted him to bothy and one went for help. Airlifted by RAF. Cairngorm MRT. 10.
- October 14 When he was a stalking guest, on Creag Dhubh, Newtonmore, a Danish national (56) got lost and separated. However he found a road and got a lift. Meantime his son and the gamekeeper reported him missing and Lochaber MRT was alerted. 10.
- DECEMBER 19 Woman (52) broke her ankle stumbling near summit of Stob Coire na Gaibhre, Grey Corries. Lochaber MRT and airlift by RN helicopter from HMS Gannet. 13.
- December 28 Skiing off piste down 'The Long Ridge' Sron a'Ghoire, Creag Meagaidh, one of a pair (35) fell injuring his knee. Companion raised alarm at

Aberarder and he was airlifted by RAF Sea King. Discharged after treatment. Kinloss and Lochaber MRTs. 53.

December 30 – Woman (39) in a party of five fell 70m with head injuries when a step cut in hard snow collapsed under her on the North Ridge of Stob Ban, Mamores. Weather was good at the time, but inclement weather precluded airlift by RN helicopter. A neck splint was fitted and she was stretchered right down to glen by Lochaber MRT. 192.

#### CAIRNGORMS

**1998 late reports:** January 31-February1 — Aberdeen MRT stretchered a man (21) from Glas Allt Mor to Derry Lodge road. The day before, in a party of two, he had twisted a leg on last pitch of Corridor on Creagan Coire Etchachan. He had attempted self-evacuation using a sweeping brush as a crutch. The brush was returned to Hutchison Hut. 35.

DECEMBER 28 – Walker (40) injured his knee on Oxen Craig of Bennachie and was

airlifted to Aberdeen by RAF Sea King. 2.

1999: January 8-9 – Climbing the crux of The Message on Mess of Pottage, Coire an-t'Sneachda, the leader (m23) lost footing and fell on top of the second man (22). Second was knocked unconscious for a time. One of leader's crampons had pierced second's helmet; the other crampon caused two deep neck lacerations missing the second's carotid artery by 6mm. Leader had slight injuries. Party did not feel safe to abseil, and were unsure how best to lower a casualty. Third climber (f21) blew whistle. Party was found in low cloud by Cairngorm MRT with two SARDA dogs and hoisted to plateau at 22.00. Second man had recovered and all walked off by 01.00. 171.

January 12— Aberdeen MRT and Braemar MRTs reported casualties evacuated by RAF helicopter from the corrie of Lochagar. One man (51) had his leg broken in four places when knocked over by another climber when ascending a snow

slope. 123.

January 12 – Casualty with ankle injury evacuated from Lochnagar Corrie. 123. January 12 – Casualty with rib injuries evacuated from Lochnagar Corrie. 123.

JANUARY 14 to April 3 – Walker (49) left his car on A93 at foot of Gharbh-choire to make the round of Glas Maol, Cairn of Claise and Carn an Turc, with snow cover and intermittent snow showers. Searches for him, some in desperate weather were made on 15,16, 17 and 30. Teams involved were: Aberdeen, Braemar, Kinloss, Leuchars, RAF helicopters, SARDA, Tayside. His body, with a skull fracture, was found by Aberdeen MRT on April 3 below a steep snow gully in the coire containing Loch Kander above Glen Callater. It is thought he may have walked through a cornice. Evacuation by RAF Sea King. 4806.

JANUARY 21 – Intending to walk from Cairn Lochan to Coire Cas three soldiers (30, 26, 26) signalled on mobile phone at 22.10. They had no idea of their location (Strath Nethy) but were asked to fire flares, which were spotted and RAF Sea King lifted them. Cairngorm MRT and SARDA had been assured the men would not get lost, so team had searched avalanche areas such as Twin Burns and Goat

Track. 159.

JANUARY 23-24 – False alarm. Tayside teams searched Coire Fee because a car had been left in Glen Clova. A pair had been camping overnight unaware of any

problem. 53.

FEBRUARY 6 – Overdue returning from Mess of Pottage, two men (26, 25) had wandered down to Loch Avon. It was fairly calm with 15m visibility. Found returning down 1141m Ridge at 21.45 by Cairngorm MRT member with search dog. 36.

February 6-7 – Overdue from Coire ant-Sneachda, three male students (23, 21, 19) had climbed Aladdin's Mirror then Red Gully. Delayed on second route, they had then found soft snow in corrie floor. They only had one torch. They were found by dog low down in corrie still wearing ropes and climbing gear, having abandoned their rucksacks for the night. Cairngorm MRT. Snowstorms in Strath

Nethy ruled out helicopter use. 36.

February 7-8 – Two men (50, 27) climbed Aladdin's Couloir in Coire an t-Sneachda then got lost on plateau. They found Loch Avon at 15.00 thinking it was Loch Morlich. They thought Fords of Avon Bothy was Sinclair Hut (demolished), and that Faindouran Bothy was Rothiemurchus Lodge. Finally, admitting they were lost they bivvied (only one bag) at 01.45 then carried on down Glen Avon reaching Inchrory Lodge at 11.00. They phoned and were airlifted. Meantime, Braemar, Cairngorm, Kinloss, Leeming, RAF Sea King and SARDA searched for them. 324.

February 7-8 – Man (21) and woman (22) inadvertently climbed Central Buttress, Lochnagar, trying to get out of the corrie and got stuck under the cornice. Braemar MRT lifted by RAF helicopter after lights were spotted on the climb.

Aberdeen MRT. 70.

February 13-14 – Parallel Gully A of Lochnagar. Leader (37) reached crux pitch in darkness and failed to lead it. Second (31) refused to abseil – there was a large amount of spindrift blowing into the gully. They phoned for help at 20.00 hours. Braemar MRT member was lowered 60m down to men and attached lines to them whereby they were assisted to the plateau. Aberdeen MRT brought stretchers which were not needed as cragfast pair walked down. RAF Sea King

stayed in Ballater due to high wind and no casualties. 364.

February 14-17 – Father (44) and son (16) spent three nights on Cairngorm Plateau: Sunday in a snow hole high on west slopes of Cairn Lochan; Monday and Tuesday in an inadequate shelter in the area of Gairbh Uisge Beag/Feith Buidhe of Ben Macdui. Son had lost gloves digging shelters; slopes were too iced for safe descents; wind gusts of 187km/hr were recorded on Cairngorm; both had become frostbitten and hypothermic. They left the shelter at 16.00 Wednesday abandoning stove, seven tins of food and three ice axes – the son could not hold an ice-axe. They had one pair of crampons. Conditions had improved a little. They moved towards the Goat Track covering only 1 to 2km in 3 hours. When on the east slopes of Cairn Lochan at 19.00 they saw the lights of several snowholing parties in Coire Domhain below them. They shouted, were taken to the bivvies by London Mountaineering Club, succoured by them and at the igloos of a Glenmore Lodge party. After several approach routes had been abandoned, RAF Sea King evacuated them to Raigmore. 46.

February 15-16 – Two men (39, 31) were reported overdue climbing Fiacaill Couloir, Coire an t-Sneachda. Got lost at the top of the climb but managed to get out of the wind and dig a snow shelter near Cairn Lochan summit. Cairngorm MRT had done a midnight check of the foot of the climbs. Next morning the pair went south instead of north, going down Coire Domhain. Near the foot of Coire Raibeirt, Loch Avon they joined five who had spent the night in the Shelter Stone. They were all found by two members of Cairngorm MRT, who escorted them up the coire and off the hill, carrying the rucksacks of the missing pair. Deep snow and tiredness slowed the return of this party. Well equipped but without a survival bag. The finding of deep snow to dig a shelter was a major factor in their

survival. Kinloss and SARDA also involved. 259.

February 15-16 – Ten minutes after the previous incident, pair (f46, m39) were reported overdue climbing The Runnel, Coire an t-Sneachda. They completed

that climb (or Aladdin's Couloir). Got lost at the top of the climb (16.00) and stopped at dark and got into bivvy bags near the head of Coire Raibeirt. Cairngorm MRT had done a midnight check of the foot of the climbs. At 11.15 next day they heard the woman whistling and shouting from the bivvy site. Some metres away from the man she was in a Goretex bivvy bag and recovered quickly, being walked off the plateau. The man was severely hypothermic, poorly equipped in an orange plastic bag, frozen to the ground, his face a mask of ice. A group shelter was erected. Reinforcements brought a stretcher up from the car park but it took two hours as the conditions were bad. Met by doctor, but RAF Sea King could only get to the Hayfield. Airlift halted at Grantown by blizzards. Patient declared dead. Kinloss and Leuchars MRTs and SARDA. 296.

February 15-18 – Bothying group of three walked to Achlean, Corrour, Hutchison Hut. Fords of Avon. Glenmore over four days and were a day overdue from

floundering in deep snow. Cairngorm MRT.

February 16-17 – Hypothermia victim (50) had left his car on A9 to cross two Munros east of Drumochter Pass summit. His body was found by Cairngorm MRT at 11.15 next day 1.8km SSW of Carn na Caim. He wore fleece, anorak with hood up, gloves and hat. He carried no spare clothes but had unused emergency blanket, and also unused torch. He had chocolate, fruit and a half-flask of tea. He had dug a snow trench 30cm deep on a gentle slope and got into it in an orange bivvy bag, around and over which the snow had drifted. He was moved away for helicopter lift. Also Tayside teams were involved, Kinloss, Leuchars and SARDA. 628.

February 16 – Party of six learning winter skills from a professional on back wall of Coire Cas reported overdue. They turned up OK at 1810, three hours late.

Cairngorm MRT. 2.

February 20 – Two men reported overdue on Cairngorms (no route given) turned

up at 23.30. 2.

February 20 – Two climbers reported overdue at 22.15 from climbing Red Guard, Carn Etchachan. No action taken by Cairngorm MRT. Because of distance of route from Coire Cas Car Park, depth of new snow on ground, probable fresh snow on route, it would be unrealistic to expect them back before midnight. They

turned up OK at 23.30.

February 20 – One of a pair soloing in Central Gully fell to the bottom despite trying to ice-axe self-arrest. Male (31) sustained back injuries and fractured ulna. Keswick Rescue Team on winter skills course in the coire (Coire an t-Sneachda) had a doctor in their party and used the stretcher from the rescue box. Helicopter was diverted from another job by mobile phone. Patient was winched and flown to Raigmore Hospital within 70 min. of the fall. Cairngorm and Leuchars MRTs also contributed to the speedy exit. 24.

February 20 – Pair climbed Aladdin's Couloir, but descending the Goat Track, male (33) caught his crampon on a rock, falling more than 100m and breaking a tibia and fibula despite ice-axe braking all the way. He stopped before hitting the rocks of the coire floor. Cairngorm and Leuchars MRTs alerted by someone's mobile phone but batteries went flat. He was lowered down then stretchered to car park suffering cold. Helicopter had turned back to RAF Lossiemouth from

Grantown, 323.

February 21 – During an Aberdeen MRT exercise, an unroped party of three were climbing the buttress to the left of Silver Chimney, Coire na Poite, on the East Face of Carn a'Mhaim. As the leader reached the top of the route two men were swept down 120m by a loose snow avalanche of which the leader was unaware, but which may have been triggered by him. One member (30) sustained an open

femur fracture, the other (31) facial cuts. Aberdeen and Braemar MRTs rescued the worst injured man by stretcher lower, and snow mobile evacuation. Helicopter from RAF Boulmer was used because Lossiemouth R137 was driven back by bad weather. 159.

February 21 – During the above exercise, two men (40, 24) were almost swept down by the same avalanche and were left cragfast by it. They were escorted to

safe ground by Aberdeen and Braemar MRTs. 159.

FEBRUARY 23-24 — After crossing Lurchers and Cairn Lochan two men (41, 28) phoned from the Goat Track in calm weather with good visibility, then they 'vanished off the face of the earth'. They had got down to Loch Avon then wandered over the Saddle down Strath Nethy. They spent the night in the glacial spillwater channel south of Stac na h-lolaire from which there was no phone contact. Next day they got a signal from the crest of the ridge to the west and were escorted to Coire na ciste by Cairngorm MRT. SARDA. 40.

February 24 – Mountain guide (36) assessing two others was descending unroped below No. 4 Buttress, Cairn Lochan. He kicked hard into névé and hit a rock so breaking a fibula. He lost a crampon and fell 90m, being unable to ice-axe arrest, which caused slight head injuries, abrasions and bruising. Companions radioed

RAF Sea King. Cairngorm MRT. 5.

MARCH 3-4 — Party of six TA got lost in blizzard and white-out returning from Macdui. They dug in near the top of Hell's Lum Crag. One (34) with a hamstring injury, recovering from a recent accident, not too fit to start with, exhausted and mildly hypothermic. They had used the Chairlift that morning. Fortunately, three climbers who had just done Deep Cut Chimney came across them. They took one along and left the other five with a group shelter. When they could get a signal out they raised the alarm on a mobile phone. Cairngorm and Kinloss MRTs stretchered the casualty out between midnight and 04.00 in blizzard conditions which ruled out helicopter use. 451.

March 4-5 – Two very well equipped male climbers climbed Fiacaill Coire an t-Sneachda (Fiacaill Ridge). They could not navigate in mist on high plateau so dug in and mobile phoned for help, saying they were on east side of coire. Although weather cleared at 21.00 hours they stayed put and flashed distress signals, which were seen by Cairngorm MRT on west side of coire (Fiacaill

a'Choire Chais). Escorted off at 02.00. 132.

MARCH 6 – Two men overdue from climbing Deep Cut Chimney, Hell's Lum turned

up at 23.10. Cairngorm MRT informed.

MARCH 8 – Climbing Vertigo Wall, Creag an Dubh Loch (m31) fell 10m, injuring his ankle, before the rope tightened. He and his companion abseiled off then walked off with four colleagues. All five went ahead at his request. They reached Spittal of Glen Muick, waited 4 hours then informed police. Due to his injury he had not gone much farther than where they left him, 1.4km above the head of Loch Muick. Braemar MRT stretchered him out. 42.

March 12 – Climber (47) who fell from near the top to the bottom of The Runnel, Coire an t-Sneachda, was lying face down not breathing. Other climbers went to help and put him in recovery position; then his breathing recovered. Broken leg, chest injuries and bruising. Rescue box stretcher was used to convey him to RAF

Sea King airlift. Cairngorm MRT. 8.

MARCH 13 – Airman suffering illness on overnight exercise airlifted from Devil's Point by RN Sea King on exercise. Leuchars MRT. 7.

MARCH 15—Cairngorm MRT informed about six overdue in Saddle, Bynack, Strath Nethy area (very vague). They turned up at 23.30. 1.

March 20 – Woman (29) fell 15m from the ridge of Fiacaill Coire an t'Sneachda

on the Coire an Lochain side. She sustained severe body bruising, fractured clavicle and facial lacerations. Her companion phoned from the site. Full Cairngorm MRT callout. Party of 12 Glenmore candidates were finishing their winter ML assessment on Cairn Lochan. RAF Sea King lowered stretcher and winchman, then casualty was lowered to coire floor for airlift to Raigmore. 70.

MARCH 20-21 – Topping out on Shadow Buttress A, Lochnagar, in thin conditions at 20.00 two men (41, 37) tried to navigate off without using map and compass (which they carried) by following the the coire rim. After two hours they bivouacked. At first light they took a bearing down Glas-allt and walked off. Aberdeen, Braemar and Kinloss MRTs. 92.

MARCH 23 – Walking at The Ladder on the Lochnagar path, man (32) slipped and

suffered a slight knee injury. Airlift by R137. Braemar MRT. 22.

April 2 – Roped climber (24) slipped on a rock, snow, ice climb in Coire an Lochan of Cairn Lochan (possibly Y Gully) suffering lower back puncture, abrasions and

bruising. Airlift by RAF Sea King. 10.

April 6 – Grampian Police MRT called out for walker (68) continually falling behind his party when walking Lairig Ghru (Aviemore side to Braemar). He had also fallen near Pools of Dee causing a slight back injury. Airlifted by RAF Sea King from Corrour Bothy not requiring medical attention. Suffering slight exhaustion. 13.

April 12 – Three walkers (m26, f24, f24) were stranded on Fiacaill a'Choire Chais in gale, mist and snow because they had become separated from their navigator, the only one who carried map and compass. He had fallen down into Coire Cas and escaped independently. They used a mobile phone to alert Cairngorm MRT

and they were guided off by midnight. 130.

April 14-15 – A plan to cross Lairig Ghru and return by Lairig an Laoigh was defeated by chest deep snow. Two men (45, 37) elected to return to Aviemore by same route over Lairig Ghru from Corrour Bothy. They only got to site of demolished Sinclair Hut and snow trenched on second night. Spouses raised alarm and the pair were contacted on mobile phone. Airlifted by RAF Sea King. Braemar and Cairngorm MRTs. 48.

April 20 – Mountain biker (55) planned Tilt/Geldie/Feshie Traverse in 10 hours. He turned up in Kingussie 2 hours late delayed by snow on the tracks. Cairngorm

MRT. 1.

May 21 – Undertaking West-to-East challenge, male walker in mist phoned on mobile to say he was exhausted and lost. Later mist cleared and he thought he could see Loch Etchachan but scenic description he gave indicated he was at top of Northern Corries Goat Track. His GPS reading was 991024 (Coire Domhain). Mention of a helicopter to take him north decided him to walk south and he arrived at Braemar next day as planned. Cairngorm MRT. 2.

JUNE 5 – Overdue group of six on Duke of Edinburgh practice hike. Walking north from Gaick they took a wrong turn ending at Baileguish where they camped in

the wrong glen. Found by gamekeeper. Cairngorm MRT. 1.

JUNE 10-11 – Cairngorm MRT standby for walker (40) planning to walk Pitlochry to Kingussie by unspecified route in a day. He turned up OK at 20.30 on second

day. 1.

JUNE 18 – Pair moving together roped with leader placing protection, on After-thought Arête, Stag Rocks, Cairngorm. At 60m the leader, climbing instructor (21) put both hands on a block and pulled up. The rock dislodged, striking him, causing him to fall 3m till he was held by his gear. He sustained fractured pelvis and ribs and a small forehead cut despite wearing a helmet. Second secured him on stance, placed him in care of nearby climbing first-aiders, then went for help.

Stretcher lower and carry by four Glenmore MRT to RAF Sea King airlift.

Cairngorm MRT standby. 100.

JULY 3-4 – Regular soldier (35) estimated time to walk Sugar Bowl, Lairig Ghru, Corrour Bothy, Derry Lodge, Macdui, Sron Riach, Luibeg, Corrour Bothy, Lairig Ghru, Norwegian Hut as 10 hours. He was overdue! Cairngorm MRT estimated he would be back next day having taken 23 hours. He turned up 10 minutes early. 2.

JULY 18-19 – Walker (60) on Beinn a' Bhuird become separated from her son on the 18th. She was found OK by RAF Sea King next day. Aberdeen, Braemar,

Kinloss, Leuchars MRTs and SARDA. 81.

JULY 24 – Party of five on Creagan Gorm, Glenmore. Schoolgirl (16) could not continue to walk after second asthma attack. Treated with oxygen, steroids and nebulizer and stretchered off by Cairngorm and Glenmore MRTs. 61.

July 24 – Man (64) stumbled on west slopes of Cairngorm near Fiacaill a' Choire Chais breaking an ankle. Stretchered down by Cairngorm MRT and Ranger

Service. 56.

August 5-6 – Search by Braemar and Cairngorm MRTs and RAF Sea King for male walkers (52, 15) overdue on tops around Lairig Ghru. Well equipped they

booked in OK by phone before they got back to their bikes. 22.

August 11-12 – After watching eclipse at Linn of Dee, two men (60, 41) set out to cross Lairig Ghru although they did not have map sheet 43. They set off past White Bridge to Falls of Tarf, then followed the Tarf upstream for about 10km. Realising they were wrong they went north for another 6km and spent the night in the bucket of a JCB about 3km west of the ruins of Geldie Lodge. Next day they went north to head of Eidart and down to Loch Einich where they contacted one of their wives by mobile phone. Cairngorm MRT was unaware that that the pair did not have two maps and were not on the map they carried till they got well up the Eidart. Kinloss and Leuchars MRTs on route were informed when pair put up a flare when RAF Sea King was deployed to their location. 100.

August 15 – Walker (25) injured leg on steep path on south side of Ben Vrackie, Pitlochry. Rescue by RN Sea King. Taypol S and R. Kinloss MRT. 40.

August 15 – Paramedic descending from above rescue twisted his knee and was aided down to a Land-Rover by Kinloss MRT.

August 17 – Cairngorm MRT alerted for mountain biker (14) overdue between Ryvoan and Glenmore, but he turned up 2 min. before team agreed to start search.

1.

September 6 – Male walker (61) suffered fatal heart attack on path above Clova village, about 1km from Loch Brandy. Stretcher carry by Taypol S and R. 12.

SEPTEMBER 30-October 1 – Kilted walker (64) slipped on a wet log descending Coire Garbhlach, Glen Feshie, in near darkness when head-torch batteries failed. He lay all night with a broken leg and was found by deer stalkers next day who used a mobile phone. Cairngorm and Kinloss MRTs, RAF helicopter. 96.

OCTOBER 23-24 – Woman (56) left home in Glen Shee at 18.30 for a short walk. She got lost when mist and darkness fell. She was found by a passer-by next morning some miles away. Tayside MRT, Taypol teams and SARDA searched. 40.

November 5-6 – Two men attempting Cairngorm Four Thousanders Walk starting at Cairngorm only got as far as Cairn Lochan. Wind and snow prevented them erecting a tent which they left lying with their emergency gear inside it and started to walk back to Cairngorm. They had lots of very good, new equipment. After an hour, hopelessly lost, they used mobile phone but batteries were exhausted soon after midnight. Dialling 999 did not automatically mean their location would be found with immediate rescue. Searches by Aberdeen, Brae-







CHARLES WARREN



RONNIE MARSHALL

mar, Cairngorm, Kinloss and SARDA located them hypothermic and widely separated; one (20) in Coire Raibeirt at 09.45, his companion (27) near Loch Etchachan at 14.30. Both had to be stretchered to below cloud for airlift by RAF Sea King. Discharged next day. 646.

November 28 – Australian student (m16) suffered suspect fractured ankle, head cut and abrasion in a 2m fall, rock climbing at Logie Head, Cullen. RAF helicopter

and local coastguards. 6.

DECEMBER 21-22 – Two superbly equipped men (19, 18) with food for eight days phoned that their tent had been trashed giving a Macdui reference. It was 22.00 in desperate weather. In fact, they were high on the East Ridge of Braeriach. Braemar MRT searched that night. Next afternoon they phoned correct reference. RAF Sea King airlifted teams on to Sron na Lairig. They were walked down uninjured to helicopter lift. Cairngorm, Kinloss, Leuchars MRTs, SARDA. 780.

DECEMBER 26-27 – Tayside MRT and SARU and RAF Sea King searched Driesh, Glen Clova when regular flashing lights were reported in good, winter weather. A hill party had come down at a similar time and it may have been their head

torches which were seen.

# **SOUTHERN HIGHLANDS**

JANUARY 3 – Kinloss MRT helped Tayside Police and paramedics evacuate a male walker with back and head injuries in Loch Tummel area. Spinal board was used with 'Nec-Loc' splint for stretcher back-roping down steep ground to airlift by

RAF Sea King. 25.

January 10 - Solo walker (m54) seen to slide/tumble fatally 300m down Central Gully of Ben More, Crianlarich. Others went to help and used mobile phone. No ice-axe found though presumably he had one. One crampon missing; remaining crampon made up of two heel sections riveted together. Remains stretchered off by Killin MRT. RAF Sea King rediverted. 76.

January 16 – Practising ice-axe braking on SE Ridge, Ben Ledi, man (31) landed awkwardly on névé and broke his ankle. Stretcher carry by Killin MRT. 46.

- JANUARY 23 Woman (51) slipped wearing wellies on wet grass on Fiarach, Tyndrum, breaking leg, only 150m from Auchreoch. Stretcher carry by Killin MRT. 2.
- January 23 Separated from their group by a spate river that the others had managed to cross, two men (55, 50) got benighted and met further burns in spate. Aided by Killin MRT. 24.
- February 7 Descending ice on north slopes of Beinn Dubhchraig, man (49) turned to speak to a colleague and tripped on his crampons. He slid face down and head first for about 150m suffering chest injuries, cuts, bruises and fractured thumb. Killin MRT, RN Sea King. 44.

February 9 – Walker slipped crossing a burn on Ben Lomond with bad pelvis damage. He dragged himself out and alerted path workers by shouting. Stretchered

by Lomond MRT. 68.

February 13 – Arrochar and Strathclyde MRTs and SARDA found walker (42) on Beinn Achaladair S. Top delayed by coming down in dark with no headtorch. 22.

February 17 – Woman (31) descending NE Ridge, Ben Lui, in crampons, lost her footing and fell 30m. Stretchered down by Killin MRT with head chest and arm bruises and abrasions. Detained for observation in Stirling RI because of knock on head. 112.

MARCH 7 – Descending 'Bad Step' NE Ridge Beinn an Lochain, having ascended by same route, walker (51) slipped from halfway down 3m snow step. His iceaxe pick pulled through. He fell on to sloping ribbon of snow, then fell over band of crags. He sustained fatal head and back injuries in a total fall of 80m. Stretchered by Arrochar and Strathclyde MRTs and airlifted by RN Sea King. 47.

MARCH 21 – Male walker (49) slipped on wet path through forest between the Brack and Ben Donich, fracturing an ankle. Found and evacuated by police helicopter. Arrochar and Strathclyde Police MRTs. 20.

March 21 – Walker (59) slipped on Ben Venue south path. He slid into mud and fell forward while leg lodged, tearing knee ligaments. Evacuated by ambulance

helicopter. Killin and Lomond MRTs. 40.

MARCH 27 – Well equipped solo walker (39) got as far as West Shoulder of Ben Lui, about 60m from summit, when he 'froze' unable to move up or down. He used mobile phone to contact police and was winched off by RN Sea King. Killin MRT. 23.

MARCH 28 – Man (47) slipped on East Ridge of Schiehallion injuring a leg. He used mobile phone. Both Tayside teams involved. RAF helicopter evacuation. 110.

April 4 – Walker (28) without map or compass, lost in mist in Gleann a' Chroin, 6km north of Callander, mobile phoned and was able to describe his location. Found by Killin MRT and evacuated by Land-Rover. 48.

April 11-12 – Four girls (17,17,16,16) overdue on award hike on path over south shoulder, Ben Lomond in mist and rain. Pitched tent intending to walk out next day. Found by Lomond MRT at 03.30 hours and escorted down, with two younger girls suffering mild hypothermia. SARDA involved. 106.

April 19 – Accompanied by friend, walker (69) descending SSW from Ben Cleuch, was nearly down to Daiglen Burn when he slipped breaking a lower leg. Tried

to walk out then winched by RN Sea King. Ochils MRT. 45.

MAY 3 – Male solo walker (41) overdue after nightfall on Dumyat, Blairlogie, returned OK. Ochils MRT. 2.

JUNE 19-20 — Group of four scouts arranged to meet award scheme instructor on Skythorn Hill, Broich Burn, Ochils, in heavy rain. Instructor (50s) failed to return to car and was found wet but OK by Ochils MRT and SARDA dog on The Law, 2.7km distant at 02.00. 48.

June 26-27 – Fell runner jogged over Bishop Hill, Lomond Hills, and spent the night in his summer cottage. He had been reported missing. Both Tayside MRTs and

SARDA. 13.

JULY 10 – Woman (47) slipped on rocky path in rain and mist near Cobbler summit, breaking her ankle. Reached by Arrochar MRT and double strop lifted by Rescue 137 (RAF).

JULY 12 – Scouts playing in gorge of Inveruglas Burn, Loch Lomond, in sunny weather. Boy (13) jumped and landed badly fracturing an arm. Arrochar MRT used entonox and vacuum splint, stretchering him to ambulance. 8.

JULY 26-27 – Killin MRT assembled to search for man (38) overdue walking from waterfall near Balquhidder Church (Rob Roy's Grave). He phoned in OK from St. Fillans. 27.

JULY 28-29 – Killin MRT, 83 civilian volunteers, SARDA and RN helicopter searched R. Dochart and head of Loch Tay for a man (88) missing from an afternoon walk. Found dead in the river at 05.45 hours having fallen from a viaduct. Ochils MRT standby. 791.

August 1 – Paraponting on south slopes of Dumyat, Blairlogie, man (30) fell from height on to rockface. Parachute caught on rocks preventing further fall. Ochils MRT on site. Casualty later died from rupture of a main abdominal artery, from which blood flow had been stemmed by him sitting in parachute straps. Once lowered to horizontal, blood flowed. Signs of internal bleeding not detected till after RAF Sea King airlift to hospital. 32.

- August 1 Woman (55) slipped on path near burn west of Glas Bhealach, Beinn Ime. Self recovery despite head injuries. Arochar and Strathclyde Police MRTs. 4.
- August 1 Rocky path on the Cobbler pipe track. Woman (36) slipped and injured an ankle. Stretcher carry by Arrochar and Strathclyde Police MRTs. 45.
- August 7 Lomond MRT aided walker (43) down from 400m on Ben Lomond. In a party of six near top of Tourist Path she had taken a severe thigh cramp and her husband used mobile phone. Passing doctor advised her to keep moving slowly downhill. 8.
- August 9 Couple (m53, f50) lost and blocked between cliffs and Loch Katrine's south shore returning from Ben Venue. They used mobile phone as they were too tired to continue. Found by Water Board boat search. Killin MRT. 21.
- August 22 Party of six ascending Crags Footpath, Callander Craig. Man (77) on an eroded section of rock, slipped and fell 3m injuring sternum and numbers 7 and 8 vertebrae. Killin MRT used necksplint and stretchered him to open ground for air ambulance airlift. 18.
- August 29 Two male bikers (38, 36) assumed they could cycle round Loch Katrine but had difficulties when they reached Ben Venue crags on south shore. When it got dark they used mobile phone for help. Killin MRT, Water Board boat and police. 34.
- September 5 Ledard Burn Path SW of Ben Venue. Retired woman (62) slipped on wet and slippery path, resulting in triple fracture to ankle and lower leg. Killin MRT and RN Sea King. 44.
- SEPTEMBER 11 Walking from Rowardennan to Aberfoyle, five schoolboys navigated to the wrong (S) side of Bruach Caorainn Burn (in spate). With no apparent way across without a long diversion they were spotted by a passer-by on correct side who alerted Police. Lomond MRT got them across by river crossing rescue to Land-Rovers. 23.
- September 26 Walking Meall Garbh of Tarmachan Ridge with her husband and dog, woman (64) stopped for a brief rest. The dog wandered off; she followed, slipping on steep rock and grass slope, sliding 80m causing head injury. She was detained overnight in hospital for observation after airlift by HMS Gannet Sea King. Killin MRT. 14.
- September 28 Descending Dumgoyne, Campsie Fells, with five others male (24) slipped on steep wet grass and fell 30m breaking an ankle. They had deviated from path. Casualty wore light sports shoes. Winched by RN Sea King and Lomond MRT. 19.
- September 28-29 Man (69) walking in Wellingtons near Kilmelford, descended a steep ravine at Loch Avich to cut hazel sticks. He slipped on wet terrain falling 9m with fatal head injuries. Recovered overnight by Strathclyde Police MRT helped by Auxiliary Coastguard. RN Sea King. 74.
- SEPTEMBER 30-November 15 Body of a fell runner (43) who was missing from 30th was found by a shepherd on west upper slopes of Dumyat, Blairlogie on November 15 after the bracken had died back. He may have died of illness. Searches by Ochils MRT, RAF and RN Sea Kings, Kinloss, Leuchars, Lomond MRTs, SARDA. 1200.
- OCTOBER 2 Ascending Ben Ledi footpath from Stank Glen with a companion, man (49) collapsed from heart attack. Resuscitation failed. Airlift by RN Sea King but he was dead on arrival at hospital. Killin MRT. 13.
- OCTOBER 10 Descending Stank path of Ben Ledi in rain and strong wind, woman (48) slipped breaking her ankle. She was alone but passing doctor used mobile phone. Airlift to Stirling by RN Sea King. Killin MRT standby. 22.

October 22 – On Ben Glas (Beinn Chabhair) below Lochan a'Chaisteal, man (31) was descending boggy ground. A leg got stuck in deep mud. All his body weight went over and dislocated his patella, which then relocated itself. RN helicopter unable to land. Killin MRT recovered casualty using Argocat. 36.

OCTOBER 24 – Descending wet ground on Ben More, woman (31) slipped and went over on an ankle, spraining it. Companions helped her down to a hill road for rescue by Land-Rover. She declined treatment. Killin MRT called out. 5.

- October 30-31 Four schoolboys (15) neglected to take tents on a cadet expedition in Glen Douglas and Glen Luss, missed a manned check point, and were overdue at finish. Parents were worried because of severe weather warnings so Arrochar MRT used borrowed thermal imaging cameras and SARDA. Group was found in secure bivouac for night near Glen Luss exit road. Team assisted walk out. 84
- October 31 Pair of walkers separated in good visibility on Beinn Lochain, Lochgoilhead. One got down to farm after getting lost in forest and reported male (41) missing. Second eventually used torch to descend, but torch failed in an area surrounded by burns. He sat to wait and was found by Arrochar MRT, Police and HM Coastguard about 10 minutes from roadhead. After food and drink he walked out. 57.
- November 4 Four air cadets reported missing in Strathclyde area. Turned up cold, wet and tired as search was planned. SARDA handler attended; four stood down *en route*. Arrochar and Lomond MRTs.
- November 7 Whistle heard on hills behind Craigleith Golf Club. Negative cursory search carried out by Ochils MRT.
- November 14 Ochils MRT and SARDA on exercise in the Ochil Hills were asked to investigate reports of whistles heard. Nothing found.
- November 14 Man and daughter overdue from walk near Fintry. Turned up OK shortly after callout was instigated. Lomond MRT and SARDA.
- November 14-18 Arrochar MRT pair searched Ben Donich, particularly the deep rock fissures of the NNE Ridge, for a missing dog. They did not find the dog for which the owner had already searched for three days. 10.
- November 21-December 11 Hired car was abandoned at car park on open moorland and rugged coast at Mull of Kintyre. Arrochar MRT, Strathclyde Police, HM Coastguard, SARDA and RN Sea King searched vainly for two days. Hirer was Wolfgang Peinal (36) from Germany. He was still missing on December 11 after extensive inquiries. 1324.
- November 28 Four well equipped males overdue from Beinn Reithe (653m) on Ardgoil Peninsula were overdue by 2 hours after dark. They turned up soon after Arrochar MRT callout. 10.
- November 29 Pair of walkers (60,57) allowed 7 hours to walk from Loch Katrine Pier to Strathyre by a 29km route. Both men were overdue but were traced by Killin MRT 5 hours late due to navigation problems. 8.

#### SKYE

- April 1 Malicious hoax call by mobile phone to licensed premises stating companion had leg injury from fall on Trotternish Ridge. Caller hung up with no further communication. Vain area search by Police and Skye MRT. Similar to hoax of 31 July, 1997. 33.
- April 1-2 Woman (22) went for an evening shore walk at Ru Idrigill, Uig. She tried to climb sea cliffs but got cragfast where cliffs steepened. She was located by Skye MRT before 06.00 and she got down OK. 40.
- May 19 Solo climber (45) on Pinnacle Ridge, Sgurr nan Gillean slipped and badly bruised thumb. Nearby member of Skye MRT helped him off the mountain. 3.

May 28-29 – Climbing Engineer's Slant on Sron na Ciche, deceased (48) began to abseil in bad weather, but he had failed to tie on the rope properly and fell. Companion had abseiled first and got himself down to the foot of the crag to raise alarm after the fall. Recovery by Skye and RAF MRTs, RAF Sea King. 132.

JUNE 12 – Hillwalking accident on Sron na Ciche. Descending from a climb with

his friend, man (35) slipped injuring an ankle. Airlift by HMCG. 24.

JUNE 15-16 – Roped pair (m22, m21) got two-thirds up a climb on Sron na Ciche when it rained at 17.30. They abseiled till dark at 22.30 but weather was worse and they did not know exactly where they were. They bivvied in a small gully and completed abseils next day. Found by Skye MRT when walking off the hill. 42.

June 20 – In a guided party of five on Sgurr Alasdair, a woman (41) slipped and dislocated a shoulder. Party moved down to facilitate airlift by HMCG helicop-

ter. 100.

JUNE 21 – Walker (48) descending rocky path at Old Man of Storr slipped, fell and injured his ankle. Passer-by alerted Skye MRT. Airlift by HMCG helicopter. 34.

JUNE 26 – Man (64) descending Coir' a' Mhadaidh slipped breaking an ankle when accompanied by member of Skye MRT. HMCG helicopter airlift. 22.

JULY 6 – Male fell when descending a gully in Coir' a'Ghrunnda, accompanied by a female student. He fell 8m suffering pelvic injuries. Skye MRT used necksplint, stretcher and rewarming aids. Airlifted by HMCG helicopteer. 27.

JULY 6 – Man went ahead of his two companions in Coir' a' Ghrunnda. He fell, sustaining arm and leg injuries. Skye MRT and RAF Sea King airlift. Analgesic

and rewarming aids. 27.

JULY 6 – Female student (22) attempting descent to rescue casualty in above accident, got cragfast. She blew her whistle and got help. Rescue by Skye MRT.

HMCG helicopter. 27.

JULY 16-17 – Boy (11) walking at 20.40 hours with his father and brother 500m north of Sligachan, went ahead alone. When he did not return to the campsite Skye, Kinloss and Leuchars MRTs, SARDA and RNLI searched for him. At 05.00 he was found 2km north of campsite, cold but uninjured by HMCG helicopter. 626.

August 3 – Descending Coir' a' Ghrunnda with her husband, woman (46) slipped

straining a knee. Skye MRT and HMCG helicopter. 16.

August 4 – Man (49) descending slab in Coir' a' Ghrunnda with his wife, slipped and fell 3m injuring his pelvis. She went to Glenbrittle for help. Skye MRT and RAF Sea King. 50.

August 8 – Three-quarters of the way up a gully on The Storr a man (26) got cragfast. Another walker heard his cries. Aided off by Skye MRT. 11.

August 10 – Woman (23) slipped and knocked her head going to Bealach nan Lice from Am Basteir. After 2 minutes of unconsciousness she seemed fine, but on continuing felt sick and dizzy. Airlift by RAF R137 for overnight hospital observation. Skye MRT. 40.

August 10 – RAF Sea King was alerted to search Glen Sligachan for woman (60) with irregular heartbeat, but she and another walked out unaided. Skye MRT. 23.

August 11-12 – Skye MRT and HMCG helicopter called out to search for walker (37) overdue from Cuillin Ridge. He had got down 4 hours late the first night, but failing to find his wife and camper van bedded down for the night. 31.

August 16 – Taking a boat from Elgol to Loch na Cuilce (L. Scavaig) two male Spanish students (25, 22) went into the Cuillin and got exhausted. They were airlifted by HMCG from ledge on Loch Coruisk slopes of Sgurr Dubh Beag. 7.

OCTOBER 15 – Descending path from Old Man of Storr with a friend, casualty (64) stumbled and broke her leg. Passers-by used mobile phone to alert Skye MRT and HMCG airlift. 19.

## ISLANDS OTHER THAN SKYE

**1998** Late Reports: September 8 – Walker (50) in party of 14 at Ceum na Caillich (Witch's Step) fell injuring her head and a leg. Crag lower and stretcher carry by Arran MRT. RN Sea King. 148.

September 22 – Man (35) walking on Goat Fell overdue. Found uninjured by Arran

MRT. 12.

- 1999: April 23 Man (65) injured leg walking Goat Fell Tourist Path. Arran MRT stretchered him for an airlift by RN Sea King. 84.
- May 11 Hillwalker (52) in Glen Sannox injured her arm. Stretcher carried by Arran MRT. 32.
- May 30 Walker (f60) 1km NE of Loch Urie, Monamore Glen, Arran, suffered leg injury. Arran MRT. 21.
- JUNE 30 A sweep search by Arran MRT located two hypothermic female students at Sloc Ruaridh, Loch Urie, Arran. They (both 25) wearing trainers, were lost in mist and required rewarming aids and evacuation to hospital. 33.
- JULY 5-6 Good weather search of forests of south end of Bute for woman (69) suffering senility. She was found physically fit and well. Arrochar and Strathclyde Police MRTs, SARDA, HM Coastguard, RN and police helicopters. 378.
- JULY 8 HMCG helicopter searched for missing walker at Loch Buie, Isle of Mull.
- JULY 15 HMCG helicopter searched for missing hillwalker at Hushinish on west coast of Isle of North Harris. 8.
- August 4 One man of a pair of walkers on Claughland Hills (Dun Fionn 3.5km SE of Brodick, Arran) fell and injured leg. Arran MRT used traction splint, entonox and stretcher carried him to airlift by RN Sea King. 23.

August 28 – HMCG helicopter callout for hillwalker with broken limb at Loch Skipport, S.Uist. 8.

- September 3-4 Solo walker (39) staying at Dibidil Bothy, Rum, went out to take photographs about midday. He regained consciousness at 17.30 lying at the bottom of a gully with seawater lapping around. He managed to regain bothy with no recollection of events leading up to what had presumably been a fall. He had head, back, arm and leg injuries, abrasions and bruising. At 04.30 next day he signalled SOS to a fishing boat. Airlifted to Broadford by HMCG helicopter. 12.
- September 17 Male walker (63) in a party of 14 died of a suspected heart attack on Goat Fell, Arran. Good weather. Arran MRT, RN helicopter. 34.
- October 16 Scout group of seven set out too late and under-estimated difficulty of walk (Goatfell). They got benighted with only one torch. Aided down by Arran MRT. 1.
- OCTOBER 16-17 Walker (39) on Glen Rosa Path below Cir Mhor slipped in darkness, injuring his leg. Arran MRT used entonox and Loxley splint for carry out to ambulance by 02.00 hours. 28.

#### SOUTHERN UPLANDS

February 28 – Galloway MRT and SARDA searched for walker (23) doing circuit of Benyellary, Merrick, and Loch Enoch from L. Trool. Without a map and compass he had carried on in mist with snow on tops after his companion turned back. He walked out OK but finished up at Loch Doon.

April 2-3 – Galloway MRT and SARDA found two lost women (43, 35) in the small hours of a clear night. In earlier mist, using a compass on The Merrick, they

had gone NNW to Kirriereoch instead of SW to Benyellary and were found in Kirshinnoch Glen. Using a mobile phone they were able to give bearings on

police car lights and team flares. 168.

April. 11-12 – Two women and a man (all 30s) found by RN Sea King just before dark on second day. On misty Corserine they had gone west instead of east and wandered on forest roads sleeping in wet forest overnight and getting very cold and hungry. Did not go to Backhill of Bush Bothy despite seeing it. Galloway and Moffat MRTs. Leuchars stood down *en route*. 244.

MAY 15 – Outdoor instructor walking down Criffel with a child on his shoulders slipped and fractured ankle. Moffat MRT stretcher carry to ambulance. 140.

JUNE 14 – Missing walker found by RAF Boulmer helicopter on Southern Upland Way just as Moffat MRT assembled. 45.

August 28 - Woman (64) on an organised walk, slipped or possibly fainted, on Moffat Grey Mare's Tail path, falling to her death. 60.

September 1-2 - Man (68) camping 100m from rescue team base, failed to inform friends of his intentions. He had been walking with his dog in Galloway Forest Park near Black Loch. Galloway MRT and SARDA.

SEPTEMBER 22-23 - Man (57) pitched his tent 50m from his car in locked car park (near Black Loch, Galloway Grey Mare's Tail), which should not have been used at night. Female walker reported driver missing. Galloway MRT, Police, SARDA and rangers were called out and he was wakened by noise. 85.

SEPTEMBER 25 - Hypoglycaemic fell runner did not respond to treatment on the hill and was evacuated by Moffat MRT to hospital for drip treatment. 6.

DECEMBER 11-12 - Hoaxing male called at Police Station offering to return and leave a route plan, which he did not. He left a vague false route at a guest house. This caused two days of searching of Moffat Hills in foul weather by Galloway, Moffat and Tweed Valley MRTs, SARDA and RN Sea King. Found in Carlisle on 13th. 1500.

DECEMBER 20-21 – Search of foreshore and cliffs near Eyemouth for boy (12) believed to have been washed from rocks into heavy seas. Nothing found. SARDA, RAF Boulmer Sea King, Borders SRU, HM Coastguard, RNLI lifeboat.

# NON-MOUNTAINEERING

**1998** late reports: September 12 – Airlift by HMCG helicopter of male 'quadbike' driver (34) who fell off and fractured a clavicle at Loch Langavat, Lewis.

November 22 – Arran MRT rescued an ewe by cliff lower on Torr Nead an Eoin, Lochranza.

1999: JANUARY 2 – Galloway MRT and HMCG assembled to search coast for paedophile who had not reported to police. He reported just as search started. 14.

JANUARY 3 – Glider caught by wind gust at top of Long Fell (383m) 8km NE of Dalbeattie, spun and nose-dived into soft ground. Pilot (47) sustained crushed lumbar vertebrae, cuts, bruises and cold. He used a mobile phone. Stretcher carry through trees by Galloway and Moffat MRTs and SARDA (found by search dog). 100.

January 10 -12 – Leuchars MRT searched for Alzheimers patient (64) in Methil and Silverside Woods. He was found OK two days after the search. 112.

January 16—Cairngorm MRT helped police and snow plough crews on Grantown-Bridge of Brown and Nethybridge-Corriechullie roads for 18 people trapped in cars in snow drifts, 76.

- February 10-11 SARDA dog Ben found man (63) hanging from tree on second day of searching Mabie Forest near Dumfries. Overdue the previous day, he had regularly walked his dog but had recently shown signs of depression. Galloway and Moffat MRTs. RN helo. 395.
- February 17 Gamekeeper setting off flares to attempt to scare deer out of woodland on Bora Chnoc, Moyle, Glenelg, caused Glenelg MRT to be called out. 19.
- February 20-21 Extensively damaged motor car found on its roof below A897 Helmsdale to Melvich road at Caen. There was no trace of driver so police dogs, Assynt and Kinloss MRTs and RAF Sea King searched the area. Telephone message confirmed the driver was OK in Lancashire. 200.
- February 22-23 Search for and recovery of a dead man (28) from foot of cliffs known as The Pot, at Bullers of Buchan, Aberdeenshire. He had been a patient at Royal Cornhill Hospital. Grampian Police, RAF Sea King.
- February 23 Moffat MRT called out to Crighton Hospital. Missing patient from psychiatric hospital turned up as team assembled at 02.00. 20.
- February 25-26 Rescue by Strathclyde Police MRT of man (52) suffering hypothermia, alcohol and drugs overdose, and self-inflicted cuts to throat and wrists. Wearing a suit and city shoes he had been out overnight in open country and thick woods near Beith, Ayrshire. After cries for help had been heard by a dog walker, he was found just before midnight of second day. 35.
- MARCH 5 SARDA handler called for boy (15) missing in Dunblane. He turned up OK before team arrived.
- MARCH 5 Leuchars MRT called out to assist with Bulldog aircraft crash with two aircrew on RAF Leuchars airfield, Fife. 95.
- MARCH 7 Arrochar and Strathclyde Police MRTs and SARDA with police air support searched for schoolgirl (12) missing at Gartocharn. Traced to friend's house, 33.
- March 17 Cycling with a companion along Loch Carron shore path just south of Plockton, man (37) clipped a rock with his bike, falling 2.5m down to the shore, with slight pelvic injuries and abrasions. Doctor and Ambulance requested Kintail MRT help stretchering him. 8.
- March 23 Woman (78) in early stages of dementia, wandered from a residential home and caught herself in a barbed wire fence. Six hours later she was spotted in woods from a road. RN Sea King checked out the sighting and airlifted her back, cold and disoriented. Galloway MRT, HM Coastguard and SARDA. 51.
- March 31 Male (29) evading police sought refuge up a large tree overhanging a gorge. Strathclyde Police MRT roped up and climbed, tied a rope on to subject and rescued him. He was taken to hospital suffering from cold. 5.
- April 1-2 Strathclyde Police MRT searched hills and dense woods near Dolphington, Lanarkshire for a man who had abandoned his car. He was found by a passer-by 4km distant and was taken to mental hospital for treatment. 48.
- April. 2 Galloway MRT dealt with a road traffic accident they found *en route* to a Merrick Call Out. Motor-cyclist had fractured his lumbar spine in collision with a car on A75. 10.
- April 12 RAF Leuchars MRT tasked to search for reported light aircraft missing at Blairgowrie, Perthshire. Nothing found or reported. 24.
- April 13 Boy (14) sledging on Wood Hill, Tillicoultry, fell off, injuring a leg. Five companions did not miss him, but found him half-an-hour later. Stretchered down by Ochils MRT. 43.

- April 22-23 Farm worker (m21) fell from AT Vehicle with back injuries near Kilfeddar Farm, New Luce, Wigtownshire. Galloway MRT requested RN Sea King as farm road was too rough for spinal transport. 38.
- $\begin{array}{l} M_{AY}\,1-Paraglider\,(55)\,landed\,at\,about\,300m\,on\,NW\,Slopes\,of\,An\,t\mbox{-}Sron, injuring} \\ a\,leg.\,\,He\,\,alerted\,\,GIMRT\,\,by\,\,radio\,\,and\,\,was\,\,stretchered\,\,down\,\,to\,\,road.\,\,17. \end{array}$
- May 3 Four SARDA searched banks of River Forth for elderly woman missing from home at Fallin. Central Scotland Police found her body next day outwith initial search area.
- MAY 3 Motor cyclist (43) injured his back slightly at Tigh-na-Sleubhaich on General Wade's Old Military Road, Mamores. Ambulance alerted Glencoe MRT and RAF Sea King but ambulance managed to get to casualty before helicopter took off. 11.
- MAY 5-7 A sheep got down to a difficult spot on Red Craig, Glen Clova. First rescuers found it too inaccessible. A larger Tayside MRT party needed a 150m runout of rope, but rescued a double amount as the ewe produced a lamb during her 'confinement'. 33.
- MAY 8 Vulnerable male (40s) missing from psychiatric hospital at Larbert walked several miles to next town and turned up OK. Search by SARDA.
- May 13 Moffat MRT searched banks of swollen River Esk. An elderly male was missing when looking for his dog on a quad bike. Team found the bike then his body in the river. 100.
- May 22 Police in St. Andrews called RAF Leuchars to help in recovery of a dead man fallen on to a ledge in St. Andrews Castle. 8.
- May 31 Fish farmer (24) injured his back on a barge in Loch Hourn. Rescued by Glenelg MRT by boat and stretcher. 3.
- May 31-June 1 Gamekeeper (23) hunting fox fell 45m over Blue Craig on Stonefield Hill, Glen Almond sustaining fatal injuries. He was found by another keeper and recovered by Taypol S and R stretcher carry. 56.
- JUNE 13 Tweed Valley MRT and SARDA searched Gordon Moss, 13km NW of Kelso, for a male (18) missing since May 19 primarily for police to rule out the area. 84.
- JULY 11 Negative search by five SARDA handlers for man (53) reported missing walking on outskirts of Dalkeith. His body was later found outwith search area. 8.
- JULY 12 Scouts playing in gorge of Inveruglas Burn, Loch Lomond, in sunny weather. Boy (13) jumped and landed badly fracturing an arm. Arrochar MRT used entonox and vacuum splint, stretchering him to ambulance. 8.
- JULY 18 Woman (47) missing in Ellon, Aberdeenshire. Search by Aberdeen and Braemar MRTs and HM Coastguard, SARDA and RAF helicopter. Found OK by police 8km away. 52.
- JULY 21 Cairngorm MRT on standby and RAF Sea King scrambled for four boys (15, 13, 12, 12) swept down fast-flowing River Spey in a dinghy without lifejackets. They had swim trunks, a yellow/blue dinghy and not a lot else. Starting at Feshiebridge thinking the Feshie flowed into Loch Insh, they had reached the Spey and were swept towards Aviemore. Found OK at Kinrara Estate by a canoe instructor. 21.
- JULY 25 Man (39) from overturned boat in Loch Ericht swam 45 minutes and walked 13km to get help. Man (37) attached to boat by tangled fishing lines eventually got ashore and was found by RAF Sea King walking out. Man (48)

- still at boat died of hypothermia. All three wore lifejackets. Cairngorm MRT called out. 20.
- JULY 29 Ten men set out to gather sheep on Ben Corodale (527m), South Uist. Some consumed alcohol. Man (45) fell 8m down a bank hurting his back. Rescued by HMCG helicopter.
- JULY 29 Another man (38) missing during the above incident turned up as helicopter set off. 7.
- JULY 31 Two dog handlers of SARDA searched for youth (16) missing near hospital in Melrose area. Nothing found. He later found his own way home. 8.
- August 5 Tweed Valley MRT and SARDA searched for male (14) missing with drugs near Innerleithen. Found OK by police. 5.
- August 7 Two SARDA handlers called out, then stood down en route, for car driver missing from crash scene in Central Police area.
- August 21 Cairngorm MRT called out at 06.00 to search for girl (15) missing in Grantown. She turned up OK at 06.20.
- September 22-23 Two people deer stalking got separated in a storm on hills above Cairnryan. One reported man (54) missing. Galloway MRT and forest rangers called out. He was found OK. 26.
- September 25 Two SARDA handlers called out to search for female (18) near Falkirk. Stood down *en route* when she turned up OK
- OCTOBER 14 When he was a stalking guest, on Creag Dhubh, Newtonmore, a Danish national (56) got lost and separated. However he found a road and got a lift. Meantime his son and the gamekeeper reported him missing and Lochaber MRT was alerted. 10.
- OCTOBER 20 SARDA search of woods near Dunoon for missing male. Nothing found. 5.
- OCTOBER 24-25 Moffat MRT and SARDA all night search of river banks at Dumfries for missing psychiatric patient (m17) who turned up safe at Lockerbie. 180.
- OCTOBER 27-28 Three SARDA searched near Balmaha, Loch Lomond, for man (late 40s). Body found by estate worker 3km from search area. 14.
- October 30 Shore walker (40) reported missing Loch Nevis. Lost, he was found by Mallaig Lifeboat at Ardnamurach and reunited with his group at Tarbet. Lochaber MRT, HMCG Mallaig, RAF Sea King. 49.
- November 14 Search of Arbroath sea cliffs by HM Coastguard and RAF helicopter for depressed man (25) who later returned home. 15.
- November 28—Coastal fisherman fell from rocks into the sea at Blowup Nose, 7km due south of Aberdeen Harbour. Wearing a dry suit he got back on to cliffs but he was then trapped under an overhang. Suffering some hypothermia he was winched to the clifftop by RAF R137 Sea King after dark. Rain and strong wind. 8.
- DECEMBER 3 Search of coast paths/cliffs from St. Cyrus to Inverbervie in strong winds, sleet and snow by HM Coastguard and RAF Sea King helo. Male subject (55) turned up OK. 8.
- DECEMBER 6-7 Search for depressed person (41) possessing valium ended when he was found OK at home, in Borve, secreted in a loft space. Kinloss and Skye MRTs. 308.
- DECEMBER 20 Search in darkness by RAF Sea King for member (34) of special needs group walking to north of Bin of Cullen. Found by Grampian Police. He ran off into woods. 8.

## IN MEMORIAM

# CHARLES BUCHANAN MONCUR WARREN j. 1968

Charles Warren, who died at Felsted, Essex, a few days short of his 93rd birthday, was the oldest surviving member of the pre-war Everest Expeditions. His father was a doctor in West London and Charles followed in the profession with distinction. After school at Eastbourne he read medicine at Cambridge and qualified at Barts Hospital in London. During the war he served as a GP and began to specialise in paediatrics. After the war, and by now married to Dorothy Lowick, a radiographer, they settled in Essex, where Charles became consultant paediatrician at the Chelmsford and Colchester hospitals. Here he was renowned for developing the technique of performing exchange blood transfusions on infants with neo-natal jaundice. In combination with colleagues he made great contributions to the treatment of jaundicial infants and conducted meticulous studies in the management of Wilson's disease. He was elected FRCP in 1967.

Charles started climbing while at Cambridge, visiting Scotland, North Wales and the Lake District with longer vacations in the Alps. Notable companions at that time included Lawrence Wager, Ted Hicks, Peter Lloyd and Ivan Waller. With his good record in the Alps he joined Marco Pallis, in 1933, on an expedition to the Gangotri Glacier when he climbed Bhagirathi III (as it is now called). This was a notable achievement for its time, involving severe rock climbing, led by Colin Kirkus, at 21,000ft. in an Alpine-style ascent during which they survived for six days mainly on pemmican and boiled sweets. This success led to his joining Eric Shipton's Reconnaissance Expedition to Everest in 1935 and the subsequent attempts in 1936 and 1938. These were unlucky years dogged by heavy snow, bad weather or early monsoon. In 1935 Charles found the body of the lone climber, Maurice Wilson, on the East Rongbuck Glacier; and following the retreat from the mountain, a glorious month spent climbing some 26 lesser peaks.

However, during these expeditions Charles climbed to over 24,000ft. and made noted contributions to the knowledge of high-altitude medicine and the effects of oxygen. He also brought back the first colour slides of Everest, and made friends, with his sherpa, Tenzing Norgay, who visited him in Essex in 1953.

After the war, Charles continued to climb whenever he could, usually with members of the Alpine Club and the SMC, especially with Iain Ogilvie who was his regular partner for more than 20 years. He particularly enjoyed the Alpine Club Centenary celebrations in 1957 at Zermatt when his party, including Graham McPhee, Iain Ogilvie and Willie Speirs succeeded in climbing the Dent d'Herens, despite the gloomy forebodings of the then President of the AC. (For a fuller account of this episode see Willie Speir's obituary in SMCJ No. 189 p. 734). He was on Mt. Kenya and Kilimanjaro with Douglas Scott and Willie Speirs and went to Mt. Kenya and the Ruwenzori with Iain Ogilvie.

When Charles joined the Club in 1968 he became a regular attender at the New Year and Easter Meets, occasions which gave him increasing pleasure after he ceased going to the Alps in the late 1970s. In 1977 he fulfilled a long-standing ambition to complete the traverse of the Cuillin Ridge. With his old friend, Ivan Waller, who had done the ridge only a fortnight before, they bivouacked, in perfect weather, high above Coire a'Ghrunnda after completing the southern end and reached their goal in fine style late the next afternoon. Not bad going for two men in their 70s.

Charles remained active well into the 1980s, renewing old friendships at the Easter Meets where he delighted in the company of Bertie Mills and walking with Iain Ogilvie, George Roger and Charlie Gorrie. Occasionally, he attempted something more adventurous. He had long wanted to do some fine, classic Scottish rock climbs, and at Easter Meet 1981 conditions were perfect. With Dick Allen and myself we climbed the Cioch Nose, Applecross and on the next day Ardverikie Wall, a total of more than 1000ft. of V. Diff./Severe rock with never a moment's hesitation or anxiety. He wore for this occasion a pair of boots, made for him by Lawrie which he had used on Everest in 1938.

Although no tiger on rock and ice Charles had great staying power and seldom showed signs of fatigue. He was the perfect companion, whether on the hill or driving across Europe to the Alps where his enthusiasm for a well-rounded holiday produced fascinating diversions to view old bridges, art galleries and churches. He had a fine collection of early English watercolours and a great love of the Romantic period in art and literature, both of which, together with a lively interest in the contemporary mountain scene, helped to keep him alert to the end.

But other things were more important to him. A few years ago we sent him a card from an Easter Meet. He was not well and could not be with us. In his reply let Charles have the last word:

'That card with the signatures of my old friends did me much good... Letters from grateful parents, for example, please me more than all things, including my mountaineering memories; and the old ticket collector at Chelmsford Station who once stopped the train for me because I had been kind to his child. No, there are things that matter; our human relationships. Not necessarily getting to the top of a high mountain. That is good fun but rather unimportant. But how glad I was to have had the opportunity to do something supremely unimportant, but of tremendous interest in life.'

Oliver Turnbull.

# ARCHBOLD C. HANNAH j. 1979

Archie Hannah was a late developer in the hills, leaving it until his late 50s before making any ascents of the steeps. Throughout the Seventies, however, he ascended a considerable number of the classic routes, including Crowberry Gully and No. 6 Gully on Aonach Dubh at the age of 64, and when he applied for membership in 1979, the pages of his application were certainly well filled. I am told that the only objections were on account of his homespun equipment!

I met him only once. I recall a day in March at the CIC when conditions were not great – new snow and high wind. Everyone was paired off except Archie who had arrived on his own. He seemed a little out of place in dated hill gear amidst a sea of Goretex and plastic. Most of the teams were back in the hut before too long and Archie also – he had made three attempts to leave the hut before making it as far as the foot of the NE Buttress on his way up to the Arête. We left him in the hut on his own on the Sunday night. He was hoping still to get out the next day if the wind dropped. He was keen to talk about climbing and in the Saturday evening debates, I remember him becoming quite vociferous on the subject of the cleaning of holds: 'You should climb the rock the way you find it,' he kept saying.

The Club should always have a place for the like of Archie Hannah.

J. R. R. Fowler.

## J. W. (HAMISH) DALLACHY j. 1931

Hamish Dallachy was born in Paisley in 1908. He was educated at Glasgow Academy and Glasgow University, became an apprentice Chartered Accountant and qualified in 1929. He became a partner in Craston Thomson and Allison in Glasgow in 1935 and continued to practise in that firm until his retirement in 1989.

He joined the Club in 1931, and at his death in November last year, he was our fourth most senior member. None of his early climbing companions have survived and we have no record of his most active climbing days, but he continued to walk in the hills of Easter Ross and Arran until about 1990.

Hamish had an admirable record of service to his many interests, and the groups of which he was president or treasurer or secretary included the Incorporation of Tailors, the Grand Antiquity Society, Scottish Cricket Union, Glasgow Academicals Club and, not least, the Institute of Chartered Accountants of Scotland, of which he was president in 1964/65. I knew Hamish as a very agreeable and good humoured ex-president. He was also a member of the Scottish Ski Club, the National Trust for Scotland, the RSAC, and both Kilmalcolm and Shiskine golf clubs.

T. B. Fleming.

#### RONALD C. MARSHALL 1934-1999

RONNIE died on the streets of Aberdeen from the colloquial 'massive heart attack' and according to the experts was to all intent, dead before he hit the pavement. Not a bad way to go, it might have been better out on the hills but the hassle of rescue or recovery would have affronted his self-effacing sensibility.

A skilful craftsman, he learned and exercised his trade as a shipwright, building fishing boats for a Granton company, till after 15 years' service, he was sacked for swearing at his foreman (so called industrial misconduct), patently a carve up, for foul language was the way of communication in the yard.

He took this as a profound betrayal by the company and eschewed regular employment thereafter, working freelance only when he needed money, and as his needs were modest, it meant he led quite a relaxed life.

His skills were much sought after in the repair of dosses etc., but tribute is due to the ice axes he reshafted (these were the days of ice axe belays) where he replaced the original shafts using hickory pickhandles, planed down to a flat, oval section and oiled to great strength.

My old axe head shows the metal dented from hammering into the snow ice but neither the shaft nor the rivets moved.

At one point during a prolonged stay in Glen Coe, he and a pal were making cromachs of alder and horn to augment their meagre living, till a trader, much impressed by the work asked them to produce a first order of 30 with expectations up to several hundred.

Their response was: 'F..k that, it's too much like work,' and they quickly abandoned their venture into merchandising.

During another tour of duty, he joined his Etive Club friends to work for the Forestry Commission, planting a large proportion of the commercial forests that mar Glen Etive today. They lived in a bunkhouse and on wild, wet mornings would engage in heated debate with the foreman seeking a day off for inclement weather, often with success, then to the confusion of the overseer would go out for the day walking the same hills.

Ronnie introduced the Currie lads to our group, a vital ingredient which nourished the wave of rock and ice exploration of the Sixties. He was capable of leading the new big climbs of the day and, of course, making his own, e.g. Rainmaker, where he and Elly went weekend after weekend all the way up to the climb, only to be rained on, so much so that the name was made before the climb.

One day, intent on upsetting Smith, we did the girdle of Aonach Dubh, but on reaching the Barrier Pitch I realised it was too much for us. However, Ronnie went with Smith the next day to help him across the pitch. He sat on the ledge for nigh on five hours, encouraging Wheech to success, but I often wondered where he would have been without the patience of my brother.

Ronnie enjoyed company but by nature was a true loner, perfectly content in his own company. In later life he loved wandering from bothy to bothy, occasionally happening upon old cronies to happily blether the night away, then like a will-o'the-wisp would be gone before the others were out of their bags in the morning.

He was a credit to Scottish climbing and I salute his memory with his first winter ascent of Vanishing Gully when he hacked a way up the major ice pitches, only to be too knackered to cut the last few feet, yet managed to retrace his unprotected steps to the belay and encourage Tiso to finishing the climb – true grit.

J. R. Marshall.

# WILLIAM ROXBURGH SHIPWAY 1926-2000

IT MUST be unusual for a non-member of the Club to find an obituary place in these pages. Bill Shipway, however, was an unusual man. He never sought membership because he was not a rock climber, but never had the Club a more faithful friend and propagandist. He must have numbered scores of SMCers among his acquaintance, he devoured the Journal with fervour and close attention, and he contributed to its pages – see Vol. XXXV, p 589 for a characteristic piece.

Bill had been a hillwalker all his days, but it was only after retirement as assistant chief accountant at Standard Life that he got seriously on the Munro trail. Once bitten, he pursued the objective with typical single-mindedness, compleating in 1993 on Mullach Coire Mhic Fhearchair in the Letterewe Forest. Those who accompanied him during the run-up to compleation can testify to the intensity – as well as the patience and good humour – of his passion to finish the job. One memory in particular lingers. Approaching Cluanie Inn en route for Beinn Sgritheall on a particularly foul day of wind and driving rain, Bill was heard to say: 'Ah, there's the Cluanie curtain - but once we're through it things will be OK.' And they were, if only just.

But Bill Shipway was not merely an enthusiast, he was also a perfectionist. His wife, Mary, was often heard to say that he climbed every hill three times - when he prepared, when he did the walk, and when he wrote it up afterwards. His preparation was meticulous, with notes from earlier climbs and guidebooks. estimates of distance and time, and compass bearings against the risk of meeting bad conditions. And his logs of walks accomplished are a mine of colourful and incisive observation.

It is one of the ironies of the hills that he should have met his end on a perfect winter's day on as innocent a ben as Vorlich of Loch Earn - the victim of a freakish patch of black ice for which no one could have reckoned. To Bill, a man of firm faith in the tradition of Naismith, Somervell and Hamish Brown, that would occasion no more than a wry smile.

Dr. Donald G. Mackay.

# PROCEEDINGS OF THE CLUB

#### New members

The following were admitted and welcomed to the Club in 1999-2000.

Donald J. Ballance (35), University Lecturer, Glasgow.

Finlay J. Bennet (27), Area Officer – SNH, Strathcarron, Ross-shire.

Robert J. F. Brown (65), Mechanical Engineer, Dingwall, Ross-shire.

Ewan D. Clark (39), General Practitioner, Portlethen, Aberdeen.

David Eaton (33), University Lecturer, Glasgow.

Kevin Howett (43), National Officer – MC of S, Crieff, Perthshire.

Andy Hyslop (41), Retailer, Ulverston, Cumbria.

R. John Irvine (27) Doctor, Edinburgh.

Nigel Kenworthy (38), Royal Air Force, Burghead, Morayshire.

Clifford D. Smith (37), Outdoor Centre Manager, Edinburgh.

Jason M. Walker (31), Doctor, Glasgow.

## The One-Hundreth-and-Tenth AGM and Dinner

The 1999 AGM and Dinner brought us back to Strathpeffer where heavy snow on the Friday evening threatened to see the bulk of the travelling members stranded on the wrong side of Drumochter. However, the inviting price of bed and breakfast in the Ben Wyvis Hotel induced a few to make the Friday journey including Tom Weir, whose driver treated his celebrated passenger to a sample of his car control skills on the Strathpeffer road.

The first business on Saturday (hill activity was never considered) was the official opening of the Naismith Hut – a little premature perhaps but when were we ever again going to get so many members in the area at the one time. With the road to the West now passable and the skies clearing to reveal a magnificent snow covered landscape, some 40 or more members and guests listened to No. 1 speech from the President before getting acquainted with a certain Bailie Nicol Jarvie supplied by the Secretary. For most members it was their first visit to the hut at Elphin and no one had any doubts that this is going to be an excellent base. The Professor must have realised that at the impending AGM he had nae chance!

A return down the A835 brought us to one of the shortest AGMs on record. Members seemed strangely apathetic to the issues of the day, including the contentious proposal to alter the appearance of the Journal, which was approved virtually without comment. The curious motion to sell the building we had earlier opened melted away like the snow outside but did engender some useful discussion on Club fiscal policy. A seemingly innocuous question on the topic from Gerry Peet drew a bamboozling response from the Treasurer and no one dared interrogate further.

The Dinner was, for once, excellent, particularly if you had the duck of which double helpings seemed to be provided for everyone. Our guests from the JMCS, the Yorkshire Ramblers, the Climbers' Club, the Cairngorm Club and the Grampian Club seemed well pleased. Nos. 2 and 3 speeches from the President were followed by an eloquent reply from author, David Craig. The President's walk on Sunday is unreported.

## SKI-MOUNTAINEERING MEET, 2000.

The omens were good for this third consecutive visit to Strawberry Cottage, Athnamullach, Glen Affric on February 18-19, for the first SMC ski-mountaineering meet of the new millennium. The forecast promised clear weather and the week before had seen a reasonable fall of snow. The climbing forecast reported good skitouring conditions on Creag Meagaidh, suggesting those on foot should only venture out if fully-equipped with a sense of humour.

Arriving at the end of the metalled road in Glen Affric at 9pm, they assembled in quiet anticipation. Their breath formed huge white clouds in the car headlights and they stamped impatiently in the snow like a herd of wild horses. Then they were off, up the snowy track and shortly arrived at the hut on a perfect, cold, clear, crisp night. The moon was out and they retired with the prospect of a fine day ahead.

Saturday dawned bright, cold and clear. There was no doubt over the objectives for the day. The two highest hills north of the Great Glen.

Unlike the orderly line produced when ski-touring in the Alps, the SMC team soon had the south-western flank of Mam Sodhail covered with an inter-weaving network of tracks as they all aimed for the summit in a 'deil tak the hindmaist' approach. They regrouped at point 1056m then skinned around the rim of Coire Coulavie in a more traditional style. They soon reached the ruins of the old survey hut and the large summit cairn, where the pristine blanket of snow was unceremoniously trampled underfoot.

The air was still and the view was clear, sharp and superb. West to Skye, Applecross, Torridon, and the Fannichs. South over Cluanie, Knoydart to the profile of the North-East Buttress on the Ben. North to Carn Eighe and Beinn Fionnlaidh and east along the Mullardoch and Affric hills. There was no sign of another living thing and the sun blazing down gave the day an Arctic feel.

A few stalwart members and guests descended to the intermediate bealach above Loch Uaine and then skinned up to the trig pillar on the summit of Carn Eighe. Sometimes you can feel very alone and isolated in Scotland. The day was passing too quickly and they reluctantly skied back under the summit of Mam Sodhail and back to Glen Affric with whatever style they could muster.

The evening was a splendid affair with champagne and cake to celebrate a birthday and more food and drink to celebrate the quality of the day.

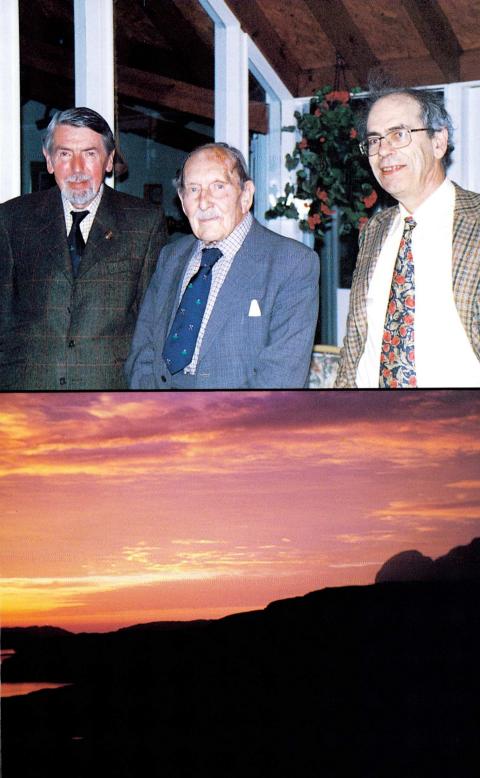
Next morning a depleted team headed south from the hut up Gleann na Ciche to take a long approach via Coire na Geurdain to the east ridge of Mullach Froach-choire. The strong winds precluded a visit to the summit and the star of the day was Heather the spaniel, who marched along the knife edge ridge without axe and crampons, shaming her human companions with almost feline disdain. A somewhat hesitant ski descent through crusty snow on the south-east flank of the ridge brought them back to the floor of the glen all too quickly and they returned to the hut for afternoon tea before heading home. Tired, especially Heather, but happy.

Members present: I. Angell, J. Bickerdike, R. Chalmers, C. Jones, T. Pettifer, C. Ravey. Guests: Steve Deakin, A. MacDonald, Paul North, Heather the Spaniel.

C. M. Jones.

Leif and Andrea Anderson on board the 'Orion' while searching for the 'Rospico' in Greenland. Photo: Douglas Anderson.





## EASTER MEET - KINTAIL LODGE HOTEL

This well attended meet, which marked the return of the Club to Kintail after no less than 74 years, was chiefly remarkable for the presence of our senior member Colin Russell who had been present in 1926. On that occasion he had walked in from Glenfinnan.

This time he came by car, and at dinner on Saturday night met one of our guests, Ronald Turnbull, who had followed as far as possible the mountain route taken by Colin all those years ago. Scribes and photographer were present to mark this event and we await the result with interest.

The weather was very good and gave three excellent days of sunshine and high cloud enabling us to take advantage of the lengthening days of this late Easter. Some even ventured onto rock, with Richardson, Wallace and Slesser forming a past-presidential rope to climb the Cioch Nose in dry conditions.

Practically every hill of note around Kintail received a visit including the Five Sisters, Ciste Dubh, Beinn Fhada, A'Glas-Gheinn, the complete South Cluanie Ridge, The Saddle, Sgurr na Sgine, Sgurr an Aigrid, Sgurr Mhic Bharraich and Garbh-Bheinn (Skye).

Those present included the President Bryan Fleming, Robin Campbell, Bob Richardson, Malcolm Slesser, Bill Wallace, Dick Allen, Paul Brian, Mike Fleming, John Fowler, John Hay, Peter Macdonald, John Mitchell, Bill Myles, Colin Russell, Nigel Suess, Oliver Turnbull, Noel Williams, Andrew Wightman. Guests: Mike Esten, Mike Gee, John Harvard, John Nicholson, Ronald Turnbull, Mary Wightman.

It is proposed that the Easter 2001 meet be at the Naismith Hut, Elphin.

Oliver Turnbull.



Suilven from the Naismith Hut, Elphin. Photo: Derek Pyper.

The Club's oldest member, the Rev. A. Colin Russell (1925), with President Bryan Fleming and Robin Campbell at the Kintail Easter Meet. Photo: John Fowler.

# **JMCS REPORTS**

**Edinburgh Section:**—The Section has a healthy membership level of 90, including several Honorary Members. In addition, we currently have 15 Aspirants – rather impressive as we haven't had a recruitment drive for several years.

Over the past year members have been enjoying diverse mountaineering pursuits, including rock and ice-climbing, skiing (mountaineering, Nordic and downhill), mountain biking, Munro and Corbett ascending and sailing – this latter to reach particular peaks efficiently by four members on the Scottish Islands Peak Race. One of us even goes fishing.

The Herriott-Watt climbing wall continues to be our winter season midweek gathering place, but more recently, there has been an additional drift to Alien Rock

on (increasingly crowded) Mondays. When will Ratho be ready?

Our Meets Secretary compiled a series of interesting summer Wednesday evening venues and weekend meets. The attendance at the latter varied with the weather; a recent meet at Blackrock Cottage was particularly memorable and thoroughly enjoyable, with a range of routes, in a variety of snow/ice conditions, being tackled.

During the year, various parties have climbed rock routes including Clean Sweep, Savage Slit, Vulcan Wall (Corrie Laggan), Kipling Groove in the Lakes, King Rat on Creag an Dubh Loch, among many others. Memorable winter days have been experienced on East Buttress of Beinn Eighe, Naismith's Route on the Buachaille, and Observatory Ridge. One party also climbed both Hidden Gully on Stob Coire nam Beith and SC Gully on the same day – pretty good in far-from-excellent conditions; full marks too for beating (almost) the queues to reach SC Gully. To avoid queuing in the more popular winter venues there has also been interest in other less-explored cliffs and corries, to repeat some new(ish) winter climbs.

Members continued to mountaineer farther afield in the quest of new experiences and challenges. Countries and areas visited by assorted parties included Ireland (brilliant weather and food); Wales (terribly dreich); Spain (sunny for some, wet and even snowy for others); Norway (popular for some years with several members, unfortunately, weeks of relentless drizzle were experienced in 1999); French and Swiss Alps (so-so, but skiing weather was good), and the Bernese Oberland (lots of precipitation in all its varieties). As a response to several recent poor winters for ice at home, a minority have enjoyed exhilarating visits to chip their way up frozen waterfalls in France and in the Banff region in Canada. Rock climbing activity has extended to exploring Mingulay and big peak bagging in Equador, where a party ascended Chimborazo and Cotopaxi, among others. In search of other fine weather rock venues members have also enjoyed new routes in the Bugaboos, Joshua Tree and Zion in North America, and in Thailand.

Just one member joined the ranks of the Munro compleators this year, and her mass ascent of Buachaille Etive Beag was joined by several members. The group enjoyed champers, then descended in improving weather (everything looks better after consuming alcohol when a little dehydrated) to the Kingshouse for a fine buffet and artistically-decorated cake.

During the year, the Section revised its Constitution and produced notes on its Duty of Care. To ratify all this an EGM was held, attended by 18 members. There was some very worthwhile discussion.

Another departure from our usual activities was a winter skills training/revision weekend organised for 14 members by Stuart Buchanan. This was based at Jock's Spot and instruction costs were partly subsidised from club funds. A mixture of new and long-standing members participated. Hopefully, the event will contribute to greater safety awareness and reinforcement; at least some got to actually practising self-arrest etc. instead of merely being full of good intentions at the onset of every winter.

The huts continue to be popular, with both members and other clubs – although bookings at the Smiddy have declined. We think this is partly due to the Government hiking the cost of motoring to unreasonable levels, so folk are not prepared to travel so far for weekends. The kitchen area at the Smiddy has been refurbished, apart from a few final cosmetic details. This work was jointly funded by the Section and a generous grant from the Scottish Mountaineering Trust, which was much appreciated as without it the work could not have been tackled to such a standard. Fraser Fotheringham carried out the joinery work. Fraser, aided by his wife, Alex, has been our Smiddy Custodian for many years but this year relinquished this task to concentrate on other projects.

The club showed its appreciation to Fraser and Alex by presenting them with an inscribed quaich and a bottle of malt at Easter.

The AGM and Annual Dinner were held at the Fife Arms Hotel, Braemar. This venue has not used by the Section for many years after some members were banned for outrageous behaviour at one memorable event. It would be entirely inappropriate to divulge the hair-raising details here. However, many of those responsible are now senior members of the club, much respected and all that sort of thing.

By the AGM we lacked anyone in the role of Secretary. Bruce – elected at the 1998 AGM, after several months of inspired and diligent service to the Section – had left us for pastures new south of the Border. Richard Wellor bridged the resulting gaping hole most manfully until the 1999 AGM, fitting many tasks into a whirlwind of a personal schedule. Euan Grieve has since been volunteered (without any resistance on his part) into the role.

The Annual Slide Night was held at Clan Buchanan's. Well attended (ie. crowded)), good slides, good company and refreshments.

The Section has also started contributing to the presentation of lectures at the Eastern Section monthly slide nights and our attendance at these has increased somewhat.

In January this year members were saddened by the death of lan Simpson, a member of some years' standing who was vice-president in 1992. Ian and his partner fell while climbing Wavelength or Fluted Buttress Direct, Coire an t-Sneachda. Ian's funeral was attended by several members and our heartfelt sympathies are extended to his family, especially his wife, Marilyn.

Officials elected were: Hon. President, John Fowler; Hon. Vice-President, Alan Smith; President, Beryl Leatherland; Vice-President, Stuart Buchanan; Treasurer, Charles Stupart; Secretary, Euan Grieve, 10/8 Tay Street, Edinburgh. E.mail: euan@eh11.freeserve.co.uk; Membership Secretary, Douglas Hall; Meets Secretary, Euan Scott; Smiddy Custodians, Simon Fox and Alex Dunn (Bookings), 4 King's Cramond, Edinburgh; Jock's Spot Custodian, Ali Borthwick, 2 Aytoun Grove, Dunfermline. Committee member: Patrick Winter.

Euan Grieve.

## Perth Mountaineering Club (JMCS, Perth Section):-

The Club welcomed five new members and, allowing for two non-renewals, membership increased to 93. There was a full mix of hill activities appropriate to all seasons. Increased climbing interest was sustained. There were 22 scheduled meets, including weekend and day venues, plus numerous midweek evening meets at local crags and various indoor locations. Winter Club Nights were again held, when members' slides were shown, including Lorraine Nicholson's presentation of her visit to the Canadian Rockies. The Annual Joint Lecture with Perth Society of Natural Sciences was well attended as usual, and member, Jeff Banks, gave a slide talk about his trip to Greenland.

This year's annual 'Midsummer Madness' multi-route long weekend was through Fisherfield Forest. Sublime weather, maximum daylight and the bonus of moonlight camping ensured all parties and individuals attained lots of high points and delightful memories as they progressed through to emergence at Kinlochewe.

Two trips were made over the Border. A day raid to Northumberland's Kyloe Crags brought good, but brief, rewards before the monsoon arrived and a visit was made to Alien Rock in Leith on the way back. The other visit was to the Lakes where the handful attending again enjoyed the luxury of a weekend in Low House in Coniston. Sub-tropical weather attended both of the rewarding days on the hills and rocks, the first day being noteworthy for the incredible masses of flying ants on the tops.

Core activities in the homeland hills were widespread, including Skye and Jura in addition to the mainland. On Jura, Ron Payne rounded off his Corbetts and Ray Lee with a much larger retinue compleated his Munros on Stob na Broige on the Buachaille, with balloons and other festive trappings.

Recent overseas forays ensured a plentiful supply of material for Club Nights. Chris Bond and Alan Vaughan went (were not sent) to Siberia. Chris was also in Nepal, before making yet another visit to his beloved Atlas Mountains in Morocco, while Alan added Arizona to his memories. Lorraine Nicholson travelled to Sikkim, and Dave Baker's vocational peregrinations included sailing in the South Pacific and climbing volcanoes

We were deeply saddened by losses over the past couple of years. May Grant was newly retired when she became ill and left many grieving friends. Our last surviving Founder Member, Honorary Member Chris Rudie died at the age of 90 years. Veteran members Leonard Moss and William Shand were also taken from us, both also perhaps with consolation of advanced age. We also learned of the death of long-retired member, Jack Murray, whose son Peter is a current member.

Editor Ray Lee's greatly appreciated quarterly Newsletter continued to inform and entertain all members and keep faithful contact with those situated in Skye, London and other far away places. The Millennium was variously celebrated. A major project was the Club's publication of its Perth JMCS Millennium Journal in limited edition (for copies, at £12 plus postage, contact the Treasurer or Secretary). A Millennium Dinner was held in the Invercauld Arms, Braemar, with record attendance. The main speaker was Robin Campbell, who brought along as one of the Club guests his constant friend, Sir Hugh Munro, or rather his alter ego who sat there as a benign and reflective inspiration throughout. The following day a large contingent *en masse* and *en famille* made a celebratory climb of Morrone in weather for loitering long on the summit. On Millennium Day a large party climbed the Ochils' 'Millennium Hill' – Innerdownie (2000ft.), when members, families, friends and children, ages from nine weeks to 75 years, topped out with balloons and novelties and celebrated with beverages ranging between mother's milk and liebfraumilch.

Officials elected were: *Hon. President*, Robin Campbell; *Hon. Vice-President*, Iain Robertson; *Hon. Member*, Donald McIntyre; *President*, Pamela Dutton, Tel: 01738 583261; *Vice-President*, Alan Bailey; *Secretary*, Chris Bond, 5 Colenden Cottages, Stormontfield, Scone, Perth, PH 2 6BL, Tel: 01738 552640, E-mail Chrbon007@aol.com; *Treasurer*, Tom Rix – Tel. 01250 874306; *Meets Secretary*, Grahame Nicoll; *Newsletter Editor*, Ray Lee; *Committee*: Ron Payne, Dave Pritchard, Beverley Robertson and Phil Taylor. *Auditor*, John Rogers.

Chris Bond

Glasgow Section:—1999 was an eventful year for the Club. Four new members were admitted bringing the total to 96, with 23 life members. A total of 19 meets occurred within Scotland, the average attendance being fairly good. Meets took place in the Ling Hut, CIC Hut, Raeburn Hut, Lagangarbh, Glenbrittle Hut, Milehouse, Mill Cottage, Muir of Inverey, and Jock's Spot.

Winter climbing did not feature greatly in this years' calendar unfortunately. Some members found success on routes on Aonach Mor during early March. Dave Eaton and Scott Stewart ventured North West and climbed the likes of Fenian Gully on

Beinn Dearg.

The spring-summer rock climbing was far more successful. Members explored climbing opportunities at Ardnamurchan during a glorious May bank holiday weekend. Various members made the most of the remaining better weather climbing in Glen Coe, Ben Nevis and the Cairngorms. Dave Eaton, Mark Evans and Scott Stewart extended their climbing expertise, heading south to the Lakes, Wales and Pembrokeshire.

Three members celebrated their last Munro this year. Ian Thomson enjoyed fair weather, a good turnout and a fine cairn lavished with many a bottle of malt whisky on Sgor Gaoith. Scott Stewart was not so lucky with the weather on Beinn Heasgarnich. However, a good turnout combined with the Killin Folk Festival took peoples' minds off the weather. Ann MacDonald and company ascended Spidean Coire nan Clach in sunshine. Three memorable weekends for one reason or another.

Renovations to the hut at Coruisk have given more space and light. March 2000 will see the new stove being fitted, giving heat all year round, making. Some members were active abroad. These included Davie MacDonald and Neil Marshall tackling Spanish bolt-clipping in Majorca; Donald Ballance in Arizona; Ann MacDonald and Colwyn Jones in Yosemite, and Dave Ritchie climbing in the Canadian Rockies,

Nepal, Grand Teton and the Alps.

Officials elected: *Hon. President*, Sandy Donald; Hon. *Vice-President*, Andrew Sommerville; *Hon. Member*, Alan Thrippleton; *President*, Donald Ballance; *Vice-President*, Dave Eaton; *Secretary*, Vicky Stewart, 260 West Princes Street 2/R, Glasgow G4 9DP. Tel: 0141 334 6859; *Meets Secretary*, David Lawson; *Treasurer*, Andrew Sommerville; *Coruisk Bookings*, Sandy Donald, 15 Smeaton Avenue, Torrance, Stirlingshire, G64 4BG. Tel: 01360 622541; *Custodians Maintenance*, Alex Haddow, *Committee:* Alan Dunn, Mark Evans, John Fenemore, Claire Gilchrist, Ann MacDonald, Scott Stewart and Ian Thomson.

Due to the non-submittal of last year's report, these are the details of the officials that were elected at the AGM in 1998: Hon. President, Ian Thomson; *Hon. Member*, Alan Thrippleton; *President*, David Lawson; *Vice-President* and *Secretary*, Donald Ballance; *Treasurer*, Andrew Sommerville; *Coruisk Bookings*, Sandy Donald; *Custodians Maintenance*, Alex Haddow. *Committee*: Niel Craig, Mark Evans, Ann MacDonald, Vicky Stewart, Scott Stewart.

Vicky Stewart.

**Lochaber Section:** The Section enjoyed a successful and active year with more meets than in previous years and an increase in the membership which now stands at almost 60 members. As well as the traditional mountaineering pursuits, many members now take part in a wide range of outdoor activities. At past meets we have had mountain bikes; parachutes; the odd canoe, and some unconfirmed reports of golf clubs.

In the early part of the year there were meets to Braemar, Skye and Achnasheen. The Braemar meet, staying at the excellent Muir of Inverey cottage, was particularly

well attended by 18 members.

In the summer months a lot of members dispersed themselves around the globe to various climbing and walking venues. Some travelled to the more traditional countries of France, Italy and Austria and a few farther afield to Iran and Chile. At the end of July several members got together and embarked on a successful trip to the Dolomites. Based in the Val Di Fassa, they had some great days on the Sella and Vajolet Towers and other mountains.

In the latter half of the year there were meets to Glen Affric and Ling. The Glen Affric meet, to Strawberry Cottage, was blessed with glorious weather and two great

days were enjoyed on the hill.

At the end of October the section travelled to a new venue for the Annual Dinner – the Tomich Hotel, Cannich. The weekend was a great success with more than 30 members and guests enjoying some excellent hospitality and facilities.

The mainstay of the section's income is generated from Steall Cottage, Glen Nevis, which the section leases out to other clubs. Throughout the year, hut bookings were very steady and income was up on previous years. The club utilises the skills and labours within the section to maintain and improve the cottage and its facilities. Plans for the coming year include a complete re-vamp of the gas system and improvements to the heating.

Apart from the formal meets, locally-based members meet regularly on Thursday evenings in the Nevis Bank Hotel, Fort William. Sometimes these evenings will

incorporate a slide show or talk.

Officials elected were: *Hon. President*, Billy Munro; *Hon. Members*, D. Scott, H. MacInnes; *President*, Davy Ford; *Vice-President*, Sam MacPherson; *Treasurer*, George Bruce; *Secretary*, Kenny Foggo, 4 Parkan Dubh, Inverlochy, Fort William; *Hut Custodian*, John Mathieson, 43 Drumfada Terrace, Corpach, Fort William, Tel. 01397 772599; *Committee Members*, Graham Livingston, Paul Brian, Ian Walker.

Ken Foggo.

**London Section:**— Membership is steady at around 50 with an additional 10 life members. The section now has mixed membership (beyond age only) and many continue to be active.

The section had a quiet year in terms of meets. However, three winter meets are scheduled for Scotland this coming winter.

The section owns a club cottage in North Wales which is open to other section members and their families, particularly in the summer months. Anglesey and the North Wales coast are both within 30-minutes drive. A major renovation programme is in the offing as a millennium present to all visitors.

The AGM and Dinner were held last November at the Giler Arms.

Officials elected were: *President*, Chris Bashforth; *Treasurer*, Dave Hughes; *Secretary*, Steve Gladstone, 36 Meadow Close, Solihull West Midlands, B94 6PG. *Hut Booking*, Rod Kleckham. Tel: 01252 721049.

John Steele.

# SMC AND JMCS ABROAD

#### Europe

SIMON RICHARDSON reports:—Doré Green and I spent two weeks climbing in the Alps last July. We started off by visiting an old haunt, the East Face of the Petites Jorasses above the Italian Val Ferret. Way back in July 1983, Roger Everett and I had climbed the face by the original route first climbed by Bonatti and Mazeaud in 1962. Roger and I made the third ascent of the face, and had the glacier to ourselves climbing perfect sunny granite which was more like Yosemite than the Alps. It was clear even then, that the face was ripe for development, and during the 1990s the ubiquitous Michel Piola established a series of modern bolt-protected climbs.

Doré and I set our sights on Piola's Pantagruel (ED2) which takes a line of grooves and walls to the right of the Bonatti-Mazeaud, and is the only route which tackles the imposing headwall at the top of the face. We arrived at the tiny Gervasutti Hut to find it full of Italian parties, including a friendly Italian couple who were also intent on climbing the route. The prospect of queuing on what previously was a neglected and almost unknown face was something of a shock, but due to a mix-up at the bergschrund we ended up in front. Ten varied pitches led to a terrace at two-thirds' height. The other parties all abseiled off from here, but our crux loomed above. The headwall was 7b territory – too hard for me to lead – so I gladly handed over the sharp end to Doré who polished off the next three pitches allowing me to climb the final easy few rope lengths to the summit ridge. The descent was a dream down bolt-equipped abseil points to the glacier.

While on the Italian side of the range we also visited the East Face of Monte Gruetta which I'd first climbed in 1996 with Chris Cartwright. I'm not in the habit of re-climbing alpine faces, but another modern classic called La Roue de la Fortune (ED2), looked too good to pass by. Unlike the Petites Jorasses this provided superb technical climbing in a remote cirque with no one else around.

Having sated our alpine sun-rock appetite we then went to the Switzerland to try our luck on the North-east Rib of the Finsteraarhorn (ED1). Despite its reputation for loose rock and stonefall, the remoteness of the fine feature had attracted both of us for many years. Rising nearly 1200m in a narrowing buttress to the summit of the highest peak in the range, I had often thought of it as the Walker Spur of the Oberland. The eight-hour approach to the remote Aar Bivouac hut set the tone, and we spent the next two days climbing the route in total solitude. As expected the rock was like digestive biscuits, but the cold weather kept the stonefall in check and the upper part of the face was severely snowed-up. Here I was able to balance Doré's rock climbing skill with some Scottish mixed experience, and we arrived at the Finsteraarhorn Hut late on the second day. A seven-hour trip back to Grimsel the following morning over two high alpine passes rounded off a very satisfying outing.

We were now all set for a final route on Mont Blanc, but the weather had other ideas, so we finished our holiday being severely humbled by the steep limestone cliffs of the Rochers de Presles in the Vercors.

Bryan and Ann Fleming returned to their favourite resort, Obergurgl, in July for 10 days of high-level walking. They travelled from London to Otz by a succession of trains of diminishing size and comfort but, while this was more entertaining than flying, it was astronomically expensive and not to be recommended. This year they rented a self-catering apartment in the Familie Scheiber's Hotel Wiesental. This proved to be the best arrangement ever, providing a perfect combination of freedom and relaxation with the hotel's excellent restaurant available when wanted, not to mention a magnificent view of the Gurgler Glacier. Highly recommended to sybarites.

#### Greenland

#### In the Wake of the Sea Breeze

Douglas Anderson reports on last season's aquatic frolics in Greenland:— It was 9pm and we were still a few pitches short of the summit. Just as the angle of the ridge relented so the rope drag increased dramatically and I had to battle for every inch to the ledge I had set my sights on. It turned out to be a wonderful place for a stop. Slotting in some big nuts I brought Andrea and Leif up as fast as my knackered arms could haul in the rope. It had been a hot afternoon, and after seven hours of continuous climbing we were tired and extremely thirsty. We squeezed the last drops of tepid water from our single SIG bottle, but it wasn't nearly enough and left us more parched than ever.

We haggled in that family kind of way – giving no quarter – over the division of the last bit of chocolate and then relaxed, gazing out over the sparkling fjord. It was Leif's turn to lead (he had been nagging me for hours) but first I needed to call Orea on the radio. 'Orion – Orion – Orion – do you read me?' After a moment or two she came on air. 'Aldebaran – Aldebaran – I read you!' Orea was back at camp as usual, resting with her nose in a book, but also on radio watch listening out, not just for us, but hoping for contact with our three friends then sailing the 38ft. yacht, *Rospico*, outward bound from Liverpool to join us in Greenland.

The crew of the *Rospico* comprised John, raconteur and bold mountaineer, father Dave the unflappable skipper, and son Robin, stoical and droll, capable of taking adversity in his stride but who unhinged completely when attacked by clouds of Greenland mosquito.

Some years previously John, while crossing the mouth of Sermalik fjord in the company of the Anderson family, had at my suggestion stopped for lunch on the small island of Erit. While we sat at leisure on the rocky skerry I recounted to John how in the late Sixties the famous mountain explorer and yachtsman, W. H. Tillman, had spent an anxious day or two on the same spot. Tillman's pilot cutter, *Sea Breeze* had, as a result of a number of miscalculations, been caught in the icy Sermalik without an engine. Things rapidly went from bad to worse when violent katabatic winds struck suddenly and drove ice down upon the vessel until it was crushed against the very rocks upon which we sat. Eventually, when the wind dropped the pressure of the ice eased, but the vessel, badly holed, slid back into the sea and disappeared beneath the waves while he and his stranded crew looked on helplessly.

So it came to pass one dismal winter night, when beer and boredom had emboldened spirits and clouded judgment, John persuaded Dave that it would be

a grand adventure to sail to Greenland in search of Tillmanite relics and to dive on the wreck of the Sea Breeze. So now Andrea, Leif and I sat on our ledge looking out over the distant pack, while they, we hoped, were sailing the last leg across the stormy Denmark Strait towards us.

Searching with my binoculars out to the horizon things did not look promising. The floes were very close packed and few open leads could be seen. As I scanned the impenetrable mass I recalled how a week earlier we had watched a huge Russian icebreaker struggle for hours to reach harbour in similar conditions. If things did not improve significantly, at best they were going to have a nerve-wracking time working the thin-hulled 38ft. glass fibre Westerly through the pack; at worst they might easily end up wrecked and cast ashore like the crew of the *Sea Breeze*.

I reported the conditions to Orea and observed that perhaps the pack was moving and hoped it might clear a bit over the next 24 hours. Orea had raised the *Rospico* and she relayed this to the crew. We learned in return that they were hove-to and drifting storm bound about 300 miles off the coast and for the time being they were having difficulty preventing themselves from being blown back to Iceland. Although we had planned it this way, I was still in awe of the fact that we could be sitting happily on this rocky ridge and be speaking live to our friends storm tossed hundreds of miles away to the east.

We gave the crew a good serving of moral support and then unsympathetically told them to stop messing about and to get a move on – the summer was passing. Then the battery in our radio failed and we were alone again on our mountain. Despite our bravado, I for one was exceedingly glad not to have the anxiety of a North Atlantic storm to deal with that night. We topped out around midnight and were back at camp by 3am, well pleased with our day on the hill and the success of our radio hook-up.

We moved north-east for the next few days and although we kept our radio schedule we failed to raise the *Rospico*. By the third day we were beginning to get concerned for their safety. Then in the fading seconds of our evening radio watch we faintly heard them calling. Struggling to hear over the static, we learned a huge wave had struck them broadside, slamming the *Rospico* through 100°. In an instant a heavy fuel bottle strapped to the guard rail stove in one of the cabin windows and as the *Rospico* lay on her side, water poured through the breach flooding the saloon. In the same moment, the momentum of the capsize threw John against the roof and smashed four of his ribs. He had lain strapped in his bunk for 24 hours as the storm tore at them before things calmed down sufficiently to get under way. Tired and shaken and in a bit of a mess below decks, they were now motoring and hoped to make land fall in about five hours. This was great news and a considerable relief.

We, however, were well out of position to be of any help to them, and despite their optimism, I had a suspicion their adventures were not over yet. It would take considerable determination to make progress through the coastal pack.

We tumbled round trying to strike camp as quickly as possible and soon we were loaded aboard and moving south. Orea and I led the way aboard *Aldebaran*, our trusty old inflatable, and a veteran of many Greenland adventures. Andrea and Leif followed in our wake aboard *Orion*, which I had recently purchased in order to reduce the scope for family arguments. Like many families with a high-teenage

content, strife was endemic, and I hoped that putting 100yds. of water between the warring factions might ensure a more relaxing atmosphere. Although a costly solution it had the upside of increasing our range and safety factor by a significant margin. Both boats were almost identical and could pace each other fairly closely.

It was a freezing cold and dead calm night, and we skimmed along carving slow sweeping turns between widely-spaced floes, at times slicing through new ice forming on the water. The midnight sun painted both sky and sea in changing tones of pink and purple as hour after hour we cut through the cold night air at a steady 15 knots. I stood searching for the most efficient line between floes and past isolated towering bergs that dotted the sea. Often I glanced back to check that the others were keeping pace. In the perfect calmness the boats adopted almost frozen attitudes as they planed across the water. The hours passed uneventfully until we entered a narrow fjord and floes began to pack in around us.

We made increasingly frequent turns, doubling back to dodge through some rapidly-closing gaps. Suddenly, we were in the thick of it, fighting to clear the passage before we became permanently trapped in the screw ice. We were trapped, then free, then trapped again. Eventually, we became embayed by a group of large floes moving rapidly with the current. This trap proved our salvation. The bay held its integrity, protecting us as it swept along. The pressure increased as the clump of pack squeezed and ground its way along underneath a high cliff and it looked as if our sanctuary might be crushed out of existence at any moment. We sat with engines on idle watching for a moment when the pressure might ease and a gap open on the far side.

After what seemed an age the solid bank of floes began to ease. We motored slowly forward towards a weakness, then a gap widened and we darted out. The ice field was in turmoil again, one gap closing, another opening, but we were through the worst. We soon had the boats back up on plane and headed on south.

Around 3am we had run our course and we moored to a granite rock sticking out from the sea. It was very steep-sided down into the water, and about 200ft. high. I thought it would make a fine bivouac spot and from the top we should be able to see the *Rospico* a long way off.

Looking out from the summit the prospects for the *Rospico* looked anything but promising. There was an open lead about 200yds wide near our rock but that seemed to be closing, while beyond impenetrable pack stretched in all directions to the horizon. I radioed the crew of the *Rospico*. They were in good heart but tired, having had to battle against a strong offshore wind for the past few hours. Things were now calm and they estimated to be about 12 miles off. However, the ice around them was noticeably thicker. I told them the inshore ice was very heavy and the probability of passage unlikely, but I gave them the best available course.

On the summit of the rock I sat down with my binoculars to try to see the *Rospico*. I had their exact position and was now able to focus my search. Eventually, I spotted a lonely mast moving slowly through the pack. The mast was far away, made doubly tall by ice inversion. For a long time I watched it zig-zag along but get no closer.

They were now struggling with impenetrable pack ice. Time and again they made forays into the tighter ice only to be rebuffed. I provided moral support but they

were too far off to give useful directions to easier ice, had there been any. John suggested we try to reach them but for the time being the idea held no charm. It was 6am and my team was sound asleep on the rocks below. We agreed on rest before any further adventure. The *Rospico* withdrew from the denser pack and anchored to a large floe to let the crew catnap for a few hours.

At 9am I became alarmed that floes would crush our boats, so I roused everyone and we bailed out in search of a place where there would be room to manoeuvre. At 10am, John came on the radio to say they were motoring. I could see no sign of them but when I plotted their new position I soon realised a large imposing cape to the south-west was in the way. We bundled into the boats again and it wasn't long before we were squeezing between ice and rock under the towering granite cliffs of the cape. Feelings of anticipation ran high and we expected to see them the instant we rounded the cape but it was not to be. Minutes dragged slowly by until clearing another point we picked up the mast top of the *Rospico* protruding beyond a thick band of pack. It was a very exciting moment to get so close and I felt that surely now luck would favour us.

We nosed into the ice, slowly shoving our way towards the *Rospico* until only 200yds. of close packed floes separated us. We could have completed the journey on foot. The pack was suddenly gripped by a strong current, a retreat was suddenly urgent, but within seconds there was no way either forward or back.

Despite our efforts to keep our two boats together we were soon forced in different directions by ice driving between us. With outboard at full throttle Orea and I thrust our boat out of the water onto a floe. Some distance away the others became embayed. I was anxious having the family divided, but there was nothing to do but sit quietly as the ice carried us eastwards. The *Rospico* shadowed our drift in the offing as best it could.

In due course Leif, with unusual modesty, wandered off across the floes to find a secluded place to obey the call of nature. He was comfortably established at his toilet when the ice suddenly began to separate again. Their boat was still held fast as Leif's floe began to depart, opening a widening lead in a matter of moments. Orea and I looked on anxiously as Leif sped along the floe's edge, toilet paper fluttering in one hand, pulling up his trousers with the other. Fortunately, the floe he was on turned and briefly bumped another and he dashed across. We soon made our escape, but the strain of having the family divided and independently dodging among the floes was becoming too much for my nerves. I asked Leif and Andrea to position themselves in the inshore lead as rescue boat while Orea and I made another attempt to reach the yacht. We worked our way back into the shifting pack often making progress by sliding the boat along on top of the ice with the engine poking through a narrow slot between floes. We eventually clawed our way to the far side of the ice field but there was no hope of getting the thin-hulled *Rospico* back the way we had come.

After only the briefest of hellos we reluctantly made our way back as the pack closed about us again. Over the radio Dave advised somewhat despairingly that they were reaching the end of their tether but they would make a last try farther west. I was sceptical about the chances of success in that direction but had no alternative to offer.

An hour later, having positioned myself on the top of a craggy islet, I could see the *Rospico* some miles off following a narrow lead into the heart of an impossible ice field. I called them on the radio and advised an immediate about turn. I advised that passage ahead was impossible but that I felt there was a viable option (the only one) five miles to the east. Dave was doubtful, but I told him to hurry because the weakness in the pack was small and could change at any time. It took agonising minutes to turn the yacht in the narrow lead and head back. At full bore the *Rospico* could manage seven knots but as I watched it seemed a snail-like pace as it crept back along the lead.

It was stressful watching her, thinking the weakness would fill at any moment. Eventually, I couldn't stand it and I went for a walk across the islet. When I came back Dave came on the radio urgently looking for instructions. His voice rang with the tension of the past 24 hours. I told him to hold his course for a few more minutes. Having studied the pack very intently I knew only by re-engaging at exactly the right point would success come within our grasp. 'Rospico,' I said over the radio, 'When you round the next floe I want you to turn hard to port into the pack'

'Are you sure? It doesn't look good to me,' said Dave, scepticism audible in his voice.

'Trust me, this is going to work. Just turn to port exactly when I say.'

From my crag top I guided their manoeuvres over the radio and soon the *Rospico* was at last through into open water.

Once aboard, hands were warmly clasped and whisky poured and many toasts were drunk: To eternal friendship... To the joy of being free of the ice... To the benefits of package holidays...

We were all very pleased to be united at last and could relax and indulge in some plain sailing. For an hour we motored along in this state of unrestrained bliss, content to admire the scene and embroider our tales of adventure. Then over the bows of *Rospico*.... Oh for heavens sake... we could see a solid wall of pack closing rapidly from the east. It looked certain to catch us against the coast which now rose in sheer unbroken cliffs, blocking all passage north and west. Rapidly scanning the chart I noticed a group of dangerous rocks making escape to the south uncertain. It was equally clear that no matter the risks we had no other choice. Dave immediately put the helm hard over and lay course for the largest of the group, thinking that if we were to be crushed it would be best to have some place to jump for. For the time being I kept from the others the fact that written on the chart in small letters beside this largest rock, was the name, Erit!

#### Patagonia

Scottish winter activist Alan Mullin and British expatriate climber, Kevin Thaw, climbed the Czechoslovakian Route on the West Face of Fitzroy in February 2000.

The 2700m high face was first climbed over two months using fixed ropes by a very strong Czech team in 1983. Mullin and Thaw made the third overall and first free ascent of the route over two days.

They continued up the Californian Route to a high point 250m below the summit when a fierce storm forced them to descend.

It was a remarkable performance and one of the finest achievements by British climbers in Patagonia in recent times.'

## **REVIEWS**

**Last Climb:** The Legendary Everest Expeditions of George Mallory: David Breashears and Audrey Salkeld (National Geographic Society, 1999, 240pp, hardback, colour plates and black-and-white photographs, £22.50, ISBN 0 7922 7538 1).

The story of Mallory and Irvine must be the most enduring mystery of mountaineering. This is the stuff of myth and legend – a quest into the unknown on the world's highest peak, enveloped in a mystery that seems to have grown with the passing years. It has to be said that it makes for an excellent story, and this National Geographic publication tells it very well indeed. From the first chapter, describing Mallory's background, and his formative years in the intellectually and aesthetically refined upper middle class circles of Edwardian England, there is a well-judged momentum that drives the story. The first two Everest expeditions, in 1921 and 1922, provide an important context for the events of 1924, and are fully described. There is a sense of mounting excitement, first as a feasible route onto the mountain is eventually discovered, and then as the second expedition makes remarkable progress, setting two new height records. This sets the scene for the fateful events of the third expedition. The pace does not slip as the authors carefully present and analyse the evidence of what might have happened high on the mountain that day, and finally draw their conclusions.

To the authors' credit, their analysis is well balanced, and they are not tempted into wild speculation based on inadequate evidence. Not surprisingly, there are differences of opinion with views expressed in other recent books on Mallory and Irvine, and some inconsistencies too, in matters of apparent 'fact'. But in the end this does not matter, because for Breashears and Salkeld the crux is not in the speculative detail. They choose to focus on the remarkable spirit of these individuals and their companions, who forged a path so far into the unknown, whether out of a sense of adventure, or from personal ambition, or through a concept of duty which now belongs to a bygone era.

They also lay to rest some of the ghosts of the past, the implication that somehow somebody was to blame, Irvine through his inexperience or Mallory through overambition. Much has been made of the remarkable achievements of these early pioneers, in the light of their inadequate equipment. This is acknowledged, but Breashers and Salkeld also highlight just how far out on a limb these early expeditions were. The achievements of 1922, for instance, are placed in the context of a series of near calamities – the fall by his three companions stopped by Mallory alone, Finch and Ingle struggling to find their camp in a maze of crevasses, late at night and exhausted - any of these could have easily turned into tragedy. It is difficult to escape the conclusion that the early Everest climbers were sticking their necks out a long, long way, and catastrophe was never far away. Certainly, when the weather deteriorated, as in the afternoon squall on the day of the tragic summit attempt, the climbers' clothing and equipment would have been little defence against the cold and the effects of increasing exhaustion. What is perhaps most remarkable, in the light of more recent experience on Everest, is that there were so few fatalities in the pre-war years.

Mallory was the one individual most closely bound up with the Everest adventure of the 1920s; he had a leading role in all three expeditions; he gained public recognition due to his fund-raising lecture tours and he was charming and

472 REVIEWS

articulate. As a result he was well known, even a public figure. When tragedy struck him, rather than any of his lesser known companions, it is perhaps not surprising that it had such an impact on the public consciousness, then and ever since. Unfortunately, the discovery of his body last year has been treated by some authors and publishers in a rather ghoulish manner, more concerned with solving the mystery than with respect for the dead. This book, to its credit, deals with its subject using great dignity and respect. The most powerful element of this is perhaps the moving foreword by Mallory's son, John, who was only three when his father died. His personal loss, of the father he hardly knew, serves to balance the otherwise seductive notions of high ambition and heroism perpetuated by legend and reinforced by the passage of time.

The book is lavishly illustrated, especially with some superbly atmospheric black-and-white prints from the 1920s expeditions. The action shots taken high on the mountain are a poignant reminder of the loneliness of the high-altitude climber. On balance, this seems to me to be the best of all the recent books on Mallory and Irvine. And as for the question of whether they might have made it to the summit, you'll just have to read the book for yourself to find out. In fact, you'll probably need to read all the different books on the subject (I've seen at least five), and then

draw your own conclusions!

Adam Kassyk.

Creagh Dhu Climber. The Life and Times of John Cunningham: – Jeff Connor. (Ernest Press 1999. 250pp., £14.50, ISBN 0948 153 547).

This book describes an interesting corner of Scottish mountaineering history and is well constructed and written. It is a biography of a remarkable man who was a key figure in the first ascents of a number of very hard rock climbs in Arrochar and Glen Coe in the late 1940s and 1950s, who explored and climbed in various other parts of the world, served as an instructor at Glenmore Lodge and continued to climb at a high standard into middle age, until his premature death by drowning off

an Anglesev sea cliff in 1980.

John Cunningham's story is told in the context of the Creagh Dhu Mountaineering Club, one of several groups generated in the depression years of the 1930s from the Glasgow engineering and shipyard workers who sought an alternative to poverty and unemployment by roughing it in the wilder country within reach of Glasgow. They were among those who frequented the famous Craigallion campfire, which is said to have remained continuously alight for years. In post-war years the unemployment had gone but the traditions remained and the young Cunningham developed within the small and exclusive Creagh Dhu Club, noted for its hard climbing and its hardihood. It was a club which remained outside the Scottish mountaineering establishment, partly because most of its exploratory climbing was concentrated in Arrochar and Glen Coe and partly because of its own intensely private character. Numbers were limited to about 30 with membership by invitation only and refused if any existing members objected. In spite of these features the Creagh Dhu became well known in climbing circles on both sides of the Border on account of its rock climbing exploits and its occasionally riotous social gatherings.

In 1952 several Creagh Dhu went to New Zealand and Cunningham spent some time there before joining Hamish MacInnes on an ill-planned visit to the Himalaya. Everest was the objective but they lacked the material resources for the task. Bad luck and bad weather attended this venture as they were to do on two later Himalayan expeditions with which Cunningham was involved in 1956 and 1958. In 1955 he went to South Georgia as a mountaineer with an expedition led by Duncan Carse who some may remember as *Dick Barton, Special Agent.* The party spent some weeks surveying parts of the unexplored mountainous interior and climbing some peaks. Violent blizzards led to several of the expedition spending a couple of unprotected days in a crevasse from which they escaped alive only with difficulty. In the early 1960s he spent several seasons with the British Antarctic Survey, surveying, dog sledding and also making the first ascent of Mount Andrew Jackson (11,700ft.), the highest peak in the Antarctic peninsula. That year there were several Creagh Dhu working there and Cunningham and three others climbed the peak in an exclusively CDMC venture, the remaining pair of the party having been persuaded to stay behind on account of bad weather and technical difficulty.

The snow and ice experience gained in the Antarctic was to be valuable in the years ahead as in 1965 Cunningham took a teacher training course at Jordanhill prior to joining the staff at Glenmore Lodge - Scotland's prestigious outdoor training establishment. It was while there he was to play a role in the development of the crampon front-pointing and double-axe technique that is the world-wide practice in ice climbing today. In the Cairngorms he made more hard first ascents on both rock and ice and his work at Glenmore gave him other climbing opportunities such as a visit to the big granite walls of Yosemite. He proved to be a very popular and successful climbing instructor and also had to teach skiing and canoeing (although never at home in the water). In 1973 he married and began a family and in 1976 moved to a post at the IM Marsh PE College in Liverpool. Although now in middle age his climbing standard remained consistently high from fitness training, frequent action and natural talent. He had obtained his British Mountain Guide's Certificate in 1973 and during vacations occasionally took Alpine climbing parties for a company called Mountain Ventures. This was an activity which promised well for the future but it was not to be and John Cunningham drowned at the age of 52 when he and three students were swept off the rocks after completing a coastal traverse at Anglesey.

John Cunningham left little in the way of writings and never sought publicity for his climbing achievements or for the Perry Medal and citations from the British Antarctic Survey for exploration, leadership, and occasional heroism. He was never a celebrity figure, even among the mountaineering public. However, he was a strong personality who had a marked and lasting impression on those who knew him, including many former students. This book has been published 20 years after he died and is written using information gathered by its author from those whose contacts with John are still vividly remembered. Many were and still are, Creagh

Dhu, widely scattered, but still in contact with each other.

I never met John Cunningham but I recall climbing on Buachaille Etive Mor more than 50 years ago with a companion who had proudly told me he was 'an apprentice to the Creagh Dhu'. He pointed up to a figure climbing on the Rannoch Wall and said in an awed voice: 'Look, that's John Cunningham'. Later that day I felt a sense of awe myself when I craned up at another bigger and steeper rock face to trace the improbable line of a recently-achieved Cunningham new route. That former apprentice is in one of the more than 70 photographs of different sizes, half of them in colour, which illustrate this book. They illustrate not only the life of an unusual and impressive individual but also outline the character of a unique group called the Creagh Dhu Mountaineering Club. It still exists but the lifestyle which fostered it has changed and is unlikely to return.

Bill Brooker.

474 REVIEWS

A High and Lonely Place: – Jim Crumley. (Whittles Publishing, 2000, £15.99, ISBN 1870325 68 0).

This is an excellent book; well worth buying and keeping by your bedside. It is written by a thoughtful, sensitive man who, nevertheless, has his feet on the ground, the ground in this case being the Cairngorms.

There are three interwoven strands to this book. In the first there is the writer's obvious aesthetic delight in these mountains which he knows well and writes about with passion. He evokes their beauty at all seasons of the year and at all times of day and night. He knows about moonlight and starlight and storms and calms. He can commune with trees and wildlife. These are all attributes which endear him to this reviewer. The photographs are at first sight flat and subdued. At second sight they have a subtle dream-like quality that evokes the sense of mystery and haunting loneliness that is the jewel in the heart of the Cairngorms. I am sure this effect is intentional as they reflect the message in the prose. In the second strand he writes as a scientist and presents the ecological case as objectively as a worried man can. These strands are the really enjoyable part of the book. In the third strand he confronts the future and makes the usual plea to look on wilderness as an irreplaceable asset which can't be given a monetary value. Here he faces the dilemma we are all in – how to preserve high and lonely places as valuable parts of a civilised society. In modern, politically correct terms, however, the Cairngorms are a 'resource' that must 'earn its keep' or 'wash its face' by increasing throughput of visitors and providing employment in the tourist-support systems. And why not? Why shouldn't the general taxpayer be given easier access to his own. Why shouldn't more people earn a living in pleasant Aviemore rather than among the urban horrors of darkest England?

The mountains are not the private preserve of a high-falutin elite with an over-developed sense of aesthetics like you and me and Jim Crumley. He tries his best to answer this one. He convinces me, but I don't think his aristocratic reasoning will carry much weight with the movers and shakers of the leisure industry. The hard fact is that although I agree with everything Jim Crumley says, nevertheless, if I were young I would rather set up a sports shop in Aviemore than in Glasgow and, of course, I would want more customers and I would support expansion of the economic base of Strathspey. He advocates the positive decommercialising of the whole area so that developers cannot even put their plans forward. The money changers he believes should be swept out of the temple (and you ken fine what happened to the Man that tried that one).

I think one of the root problems is that most people find unsullied wilderness boring after a few minutes exposure so that if you want to make money out of it you must jazz it up in some way, hence the proliferation of hotels, shops, swimming pools, jacuzzis, theme parks, adventure playgrounds, lounge bars, bowling alleys, casinos, dodgem cars and all the other things that we aesthetes consider to be psychological bordellos. A fact of life is that Blackpool and Soho will always make more money per hectare than an Art Gallery.

Nevertheless, a compromise must be found. The Countryside Commission plan for the Cairngorms of many years ago did face up to reconciling these opposites. It recommended an outer economic zone where the main function was to facilitate the money flow and a sacrosanct inner zone of 'unsullied wilderness'. The idea was to

create the myth that the success of the economic zone depended on maintaining the 'unsullied wilderness' as the goose laying the golden egg. We had better get a move on implementing something like this. Time is running out. As we all know world population is increasing and the knock-on effect is already apparent in the increase in the number of refugees seeking demographic asylum in less-crowded parts of a Europe without frontiers. In the next 50 years desirable real estate like Scotland is going to be developed as never before. These are 'facts of life'. Realistically, we must think in terms of 'damage limitation'. Legislation we may succeed in introducing now will be impossible in a few decades when the population pressures are many times greater. The demand on the environment for recreation and profit in these not so far-off distant days will make today seem a golden age of space, uncluttered freedom, moderation and enlightenment.

Meanwhile, get Jim Crumley's book and start thinking of ways the future can be mitigated.

I. H. M. Smart.

Everest: The Man and the Mountain: – J. R. Smith. (Whittles Publishing, 1999; paperback, £37.50, 235mm x 175mm, 306 pp. ISBN 1 870325 72 9.)

This is not a mountaineering book – the author specifically directs readers interested in the climbing exploration of Mount Everest to look elsewhere. It is, nevertheless, a book with much to interest mountaineers. The chances are that you know Mount Everest was named after a Surveyor General of India, but have no idea why he is thus commemorated.

The author presents a detailed portrait of Sir George Everest and his work, together with a historical account of the discovery of the earth's highest point. In his introduction Smith justifies this as the first biography of Sir George Everest: 'Little if anything is known of the man unless the reader happens to be a geographer or surveyor. Yet surely if the highest known peak of the world bears someone's name, then the person behind the name must have been exceptional. Certainly, that is so, but not in a glamorous way.'

The picture that emerges is of a man of extraordinary persistence, dedicated to a task of Herculean magnitude. Born in 1790, he was educated at the Royal Military Academy at Woolwich. He joined the East India Co. as a Lieutenant and arrived in India on July 11, 1806, one week after his 16th birthday. Little is known of his early career except that from 1813 to 1816 he was in Java, where he spent some time surveying the harbours and rivers. On his return to India he was involved in surveys for semaphore telegraphs, intended to replace the use of runners for sending urgent messages. (Runners in relays could cover at best 70 miles a day.)

His deployment in survey work was recognition of his knowledge of mathematics and astronomy, largely self-taught beyond the elementary curriculum at Woolwich. In 1818 he was appointed as Chief Assistant to William Lambton, Superintendent of the Great Trigonometrical Survey (GTS), whom he succeeded in 1823. This post, together with that of Surveyor General of India to which he was appointed in 1829, occupied the rest of his working life until he retired in 1843.

The object of the Survey, begun by Lambton in 1799, was to provide a framework for the future detailed mapping of the whole of India. The GTS comprised a series

476 REVIEWS

of longitudinal and meridian arcs forming a grid of triangulation chains covering the entire sub-continent, subsequently infilled by lower-order triangulation. Arc measurement also had scientific value. From a knowledge of the linear distance apart of two points of similar longitude and their angular separation from astronomical observations, it is possible to determine the size of the earth and, in combination with other arcs around the world, its shape.

The GTS included a meridian arc from Cape Comorin, the southern tip of India at 8°N, to the foothills of the Himalaya in Kashmir at 30°N, a distance of more than 1500 miles. This Great Arc was Everest's special passion. This book is a scholarly work that reflects the depth of research undertaken by the author in the National Archive of India and many other sources. (294 references are listed.) Much of the serious technical material has been taken to the book's five appendices. Even so, the author's thoroughness is such that the biographical narrative becomes heavy going at times.

Ultimately, however, the book provides a fascinating insight into the character of Everest the man: a mathematician, engineer, explorer, inventor, linguist and student of oriental religion and philosophy, but a man who did not suffer fools gladly in his pursuit of his goals. The many quotations from Everest's journals bring graphically to life both the challenging nature of the fieldwork, and the vision, resourcefulness and leadership needed to manage such an enterprise. Despite numerous periods of illness due to malaria and typhus his determination to see the job done and done right earned him the nickname, *Neverrest*.

In this era of digital terrain modelling and differential GPS with its sub-metre accuracy the task of obtaining sights over large distances and reducing the vast amounts of data by manual computation is almost unimaginable. For mountaineers the section dealing with Mount Everest's height and the issue of its name are of particular interest. Observations were made of many of the high peaks of the Himalaya from stations up to 150 miles away, and the peaks were only slowly identified. The first observations of Peak XV (as it was initially known) were made in 1847, but it was not until 1856 that a reliable value of 29,002ft. had been obtained and Everest's successor felt obliged to give the highest peak in the world a name.

His attempts to obtain permission for a survey party to enter Nepal were denied and he was therefore unable to apply Everest's own teaching that every geographical object should be assigned its true local name. The name was reluctantly accepted by the Royal Geographical Society, beginning a controversy that still rumbles on. Everest himself pointed out that his name could not be written in Persian or Hindi and was unpronounceable by a native of India. The book gives a detailed account of the source and relative merits of the numerous other names proposed then and subsequently, including the Tibetan name Chomolungma. Curiously, there is no commentary on the provenance of the modern Hindi name, Sagarmatha, other than to give its meaning. Closer survey possible after the opening of Nepal's borders in 1950 produced in 1954 the current official height of 29,028ft.\*

The book gives a useful summary of the various subsequent measurements and, perhaps more importantly, of the sources of error and why an absolute determination of a mountain's height is impossible. The inspiration for the book's publication was the bicentenary of Sir George Everest's birth, but the timing is opportune given

the current level of interest in the mountain. It provides an absorbing counterweight to the plethora of books in the aftermath of the 1996 tragedy and will serve as an invaluable reference source. Surprisingly, there are no biographical notes on the author.

John Peden.

\* It has now been popped up to 29,035ft., due to more accurate GPS readings from on high (*Ed.*).

Darkness and the Azure: Tales about the mountains, mountain people and mountaineers:— Anne Sauvy. (Bâton Wicks, 229x150mm, 192pp, £8.99, ISBN 1898573 42 5).

This is the third collection of short stories by this Parisian lecturer and alpinist. I reviewed *The Game of Mountain and Chance* (1995) in the 1996 SMCJ, and I can only say that her writing has, if anything, continued to grow in strength, character, impact and intelligence. We never doubted the last trait, but now it shines out of the pages like the Trident Buttresses on Nevis at sunrise. I'm not even going to single out any of the short stories for illustrative purposes. I could say that at least one of them should be obligatory reading for politicians before they start work every day.

Reading a story recalls the first time I heard the Brandenburg Concertos of Bach and revelled in their exuberant brilliance. Sauvy's stories are like entering a secret garden, where exotic plants flourish, fountains sparkle, birds sing. In that garden there may be dark wells, hidden caverns, but there is also warmth, sunlight and song. We are a happy, privileged tribe, and she is one of our greatest storytellers. I'm sure you must have this book already. You don't? Borrow mine. I insist. I'll bring it round. I'll drive up the road with it. Really.

**The Andes.** A **Guide for Climbers:** John Biggar (2nd Edition, October 1999, 256pp, maps, sketches, photographs, BigR Publishing [Andes], £19, \$36.95, ISBN 0-9536087 0 0 ). Distributed in the UK by Cordee, and in the US by Alpen Books.

This is the only comprehensive guidebook to the peaks of the Andes, an area becoming more popular as increasing bureaucracy and costs in the Himalayas have forced some expeditions to look elsewhere. There are 100 peaks of 6000m, all of which are described, additionally to which 170 lower peaks have route descriptions. The guide, a paperback, has maps and sketches of the approaches and routes up the mountains, along with colour photographs. There are two new chapters on Patagonia, so that the guide includes a vast range of climbing; from easy high-altitude strolls in Argentina, to ED ice or rock peaks in Patagonia. The first section of the guide provides a good basic primer for travellers to this region of the world. You may not be able to do anything with the weather in Patagonia, but it won't be the fault of this invaluable guide!

Corbett Tops and Corbetteers:— Alan Dawson and Dave Hewitt. (TACit Press, 1999. £3.70, ISBN 0 9534376 1 2)

The latest booklet from the TACit Press stables and full of Corbett data and names of those ferreted out by the dynamic duo. There are 219 Corbetts, summits of between 2500ft. and 2999ft. with an all-round drop of 500ft. The booklet also includes the Corbett Tops, summits in the same height range but with between 30m and 152m of drop. Finally, included are the Scottish Council Tops – the highest points of all 32 local authorities in Scotland.

Ken Crocket.

478 REVIEWS

## Journal of Kindred Club

American Alpine Journal, Vol. 41, 1999.

If you desire a picture of the contemporary focus of the climbing world, read this journal. This year is no exception, with the combination of short articles on important climbs and a comprehensive summary of what has been done in South America and the Himalayas.

Interestingly, as the journal editor points out, there are very few articles about 8000m peaks. He points out that this is not because people are not climbing them, but because they are mostly climbed by well-established routes and often as part of commercial expeditions. The mix of articles demonstrates that the focus of the adventure climber is now on smaller peaks. Another explanation comes from one of the few articles about an 8000m peak, a follow up article on THE Everest tragedy, *After Thin Air.* It points out that Krakauer's book grossed \$50m, the IMAX movie about \$60m, and all the spin-off media together close to \$500m. As it says: 'That is why the media loves these tragedies so much!'

In contrast, is the article by Alex Huber on climbing Cho Oyu and El Nino. One an 8000m peak and the other an extreme free climb on El Capitan. Both proper modern climbing. His account of small teams and big challenges almost makes you feel like you could do the same. If any one theme does dominate the book it is big wall rock climbing. Sandstone walls soloed by the lovely Amanda Tarr, and a solo wall on Mt. Thor in Greenland by Jason Smith. Then the biggest rock wall in Mexico, halfway around the world to Patagonia and halfway around the world the other way to Shipton Spire in Pakistan. Down to the frozen bottom of the world for climbing and exploring Antarctica's mountains, north to the recently-discovered rock climbing in Madagascar and a final thawing-out on the rock of North Africa and the Middle East. But my personal favourite is Carlos Buhler's account of the new route on Changabang with a Russian team. The article itself is a bit dull, but it still brings back the images of the previous year's British teams and their epic climb. It represents the epitome of modern alpinism.

The journal has many 'trip inspiring' photos. In particular are the aerial shots of the unclimbed big walls on Baffin Island and the intriguing rock spires in Antarctica. These displace the traditional collection of route photos of Himalayan peaks. There is enough in this one issue to inspire a lifetime of new routes. But the photos are the only aspect of the journal which I was not happy with. Virtually all the photographs are in black and white. Although I can sympathise with the need to hold down production costs, page after page of black and white photos gets very dull. A book well worth having, not only for the record of climbs, but the stories of excellent adventures and photos of future ones.

Rob Milne.

Scottish Ski Club Journal. Edited by Mike and Kathryn Jardine.

All shiny and sparkly, just like the snow slopes. Includes race results, 'improvement' work on Cairn Gorm, and an interesting section on the story, and final demolishment of the SSC Lawers Hut. This was second-hand and cost a princely £15. And who thought that skiers had all the lolly?

Oread Mountaineering Club: 50th Anniversary Journal. Editor Harry Pretty. ISBN 0 9535736 0 5.

This club was founded in 1949, by a happy bunch of outdoor enthusiasts who climbed grit. It was called the Burton-on-Trent (Anorak) MC for a while, until the word Oread was found in a crossword puzzle (to save your dictionary time it means mountain nymph). In this anniversary collection, mainly of clubbish recollections and stories of famous and infamous meets, there are *Forewords* by The Duke of Devonshire, Peter Harding, and our very own Grandee of Gartocharn, Tom Weir. This journal could at first glance be assumed to appeal only to members and exmembers of the Oread, but, like our own Journal, once you make the mistake of delving between its covers, you stand the risk of being lost for hours.

The most obvious, and happiest, trait which comes out of this volume, is the sense of humour of its members. The pages are filled with daft stories, one-liners, honed insults and much else in this vein. Harry Pretty appears throughout the club's history, and has carved his own stone with this fine volume. I can only best represent the atmosphere with the following extract: 'Conversation between two (male) Oreads:

A: 'You know, a fine thing about the Club is that there's not a man among them with whom I wouldn't gladly spend a weekend'.

B: 'And there's not a woman among them either, with whom...'

The Pinnacle Club Journal. No. 24, 1997-1999. Editor Jane Stedman.

From time to time, climbers are killed on the hill, but it was still a jar to open this Journal and dive straight into an account of the alpine death of one of the Pinnacle Club's members. At first I thought it was their obituary style, but later found these in their more normal positions, towards the back. At least I raised a smile there, on reading that the deceased, Louise Dickie, had been a 'long-standing yoga enthusiast.'

There are articles from many parts of the world, some familiar. I've also done 'The Great White Book' in Yosemite, and I agree with the amusing article which describes the 'hideous descent route'. A page listing both Births and Deaths sets this journal apart from most others.

The YRC Bulletin. Summer 1998, Issue 9.

Two Scottish articles include a 1952 traverse of the Cuillin Ridge (including walking back over the bealach from Sligachan to Glen Brittle), and a very wet Knoydart camp.

Ken Crocket.

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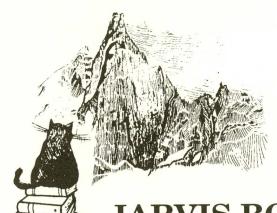
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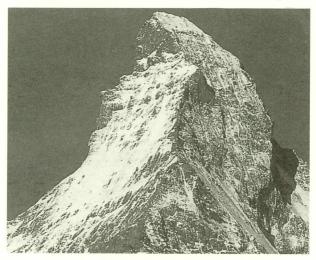
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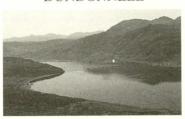
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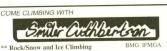
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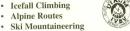
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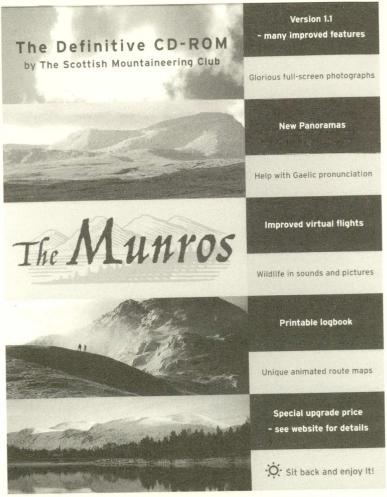
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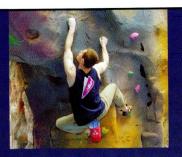
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